

101 Zhao Ya Is Moved

As xiaojie was adamant to acknowledge Zhang Xuan as her teacher, Yao Han had been looking into Zhang Xuan's background these few days.

This Zhang laoshi was once known as a genius, reaching Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi realm by sixteen years old. However, his legacy stopped there. He had been stuck at that cultivation realm ever since and as time passed, the genius became trash.

At eighteen years old, he took the teacher examination and passed in one go, thus becoming Hongtian Academy's youngest teacher. Back then, his name rang brightly, incurring the envy of numerous teachers.

Initially, they thought that this young teacher would be able to produce good results and soar to great heights. Yet, the reality was cruel. After news of the cultivation of his student going berserk spread out, all of the students he admitted withdrew from his lessons and he was left alone. Eventually, he even scored a zero for his Teacher Qualification Examination, causing his reputation to sour further.

Thus, Hongtian Academy's youngest teacher became a joke and the greatest trash.

These rumors were everywhere! So he thought that it was just a moment of folly on xiaojie's part, but as long as he properly enlightened her, she would realize her mistake and see through the true nature of this trash of a teacher!

At this moment, upon hearing that he scored perfectly for the first round of the Apothecary Examinations, his deep-rooted thoughts started to waver.

Apothecaries had to have an in-depth knowledge of medicinal herbs and also a deep understanding of the human body. Otherwise, it would've been impossible for them to concoct pills suited for cultivators.

So, how could someone who passed the first round of the apprentice apothecary examination possibly cause a student's cultivation to go berserk?

“No matter how good he is in theories, it is useless if he is unable to utilize them practically. The second round of the examination is Medicinal Herb Discernment Time Trial. Of the ten medicinal herbs, if he were to get a single one of them wrong, he will fail the examination...”

Wen Xue harrumphed furiously.

She still felt resentment toward Zhang Xuan. Initially, she thought that he was a playboy intentionally acting to attract her attention. In the end, he turned out to be someone capable, causing her face to burn in embarrassment and become unable to face the other party.

At this point, they saw two people walking over.

They were the two out of the three who passed the first round of examinations, Sun Tao and Qian Wen Man.

“How is it, did you two pass the examination?”

Wen Xue hurried forward and asked them.

As frequent candidates for the apprentice apothecary examinations, they were well-acquainted with one another.

“No!” The both of them shook their heads in disappointment.

They felt discontent, but this loss was something they could concede.

After all, they had to concede even if they didn't want to. The other person scored full marks in the first round, and in the second, he was even able to point out the mistakes of true apothecaries... His abilities were way beyond their imaginations.

“Then... What about Zhang Xuan?”

Upon hearing that they didn't pass the second round, Wen Xue couldn't help but ask once more.

“He... passed. He is an apprentice apothecary now!” Sun Tao said.

“Apprentice apothecary?” Wen Xue’s small stature staggered.

Previously, when she was conversing with the other party, it had been clear to her that that fellow had zero understanding of medicinal herbs and such. In fact, he wasn’t even clear on what an apothecary was... Initially, she thought that it was a joke for him to register for the examinations, so she was filled with disdain toward him. Yet... Not only did he pass the round of examinations, he even went on to bash through the remaining two to successfully become an apprentice apothecary!

This slap caused a fiery and stinging sensation on her face.

She had toiled for so many years, only to be remain blocked out in the very first round...

Yet, the other party became an apprentice apothecary so easily...

She even mocked the other party for his thick skin...

Where did her confidence originate from?

“That... When will Zhang laoshi come out?” Zhao Ya looked around but didn’t see Zhang Xuan anywhere. Thus, she asked the two.

She wasn’t as surprised as Wen Xue was. That’s because the image of Zhang laoshi in her heart was omnipotent, and becoming a mere apprentice apothecary should mean nothing at all to him.

“He went to the book collection vault. He intends to return tomorrow afternoon to undergo Pill Debate to become a certified apothecary!” Sun Tao still found the situation unbelievable even as he said these words himself.

How much guts did it take for him to choose to undergo Pill Debate right after becoming an apprentice apothecary?

“Undergo Pill Debate to become a certified apothecary?” Wen Xue staggered and her eyes were about to pop out from their sockets. Giddiness filled her head.

“Tomorrow afternoon?”

[Are you for real!

Why does it sound like a joke to me?

Also... What in the world is a Pill Debate?]

“Pill Debate is another method for one to become an apothecary. One has to debate with ten official apothecaries and emerge victorious over them!” Seeing the perplexed looks of the crowd, Sun Tao explained. “This examination is even more difficult than Pill Forging and the penalties upon failure are much greater!”

At this point, he shook his head subconsciously.

“I have once read of Pill Debate in the books. The difficulty of it is much greater than the Pill Forging examination. One needs to triumph over ten official apothecaries in terms of knowledge on practical aspects of pill forging! It is an exceptionally difficult test!” Uncle Li suppressed the shock he was experiencing and nodded his head to affirm what Sun Tao said. At the same time, he couldn’t help but be baffled, “He is able to become an apprentice apothecary at such a young age, so he shouldn’t lack time. Why is he so anxious such that he had to choose to undergo Pill Debate. He could just tread upon the normal route to learn Pill Forging. After all, the consequences of failing a Pill Debate is difficult to bear!”

His accomplishment of becoming an apprentice apothecary under twenty years old was an incredible feat even when taking the previous thousand years of history of Tianxuan Kingdom’s Apothecary Guild into account. He wouldn’t lose out much to slow down and learn Pill Forging properly. There was no need for him to put himself at risk by undergoing Pill Debate.

One must know that the difficulty of Pill Debate was several times that of Pill Forging and successes were rare.

“I’m not sure too. He seems to be looking for books regarding unique constitutions! However, these books are only available to certified apothecaries,” Sun Tao mused for a moment and recalled the conversation between Zhang Xuan and Ouyang Cheng, “oh, he also mentioned something about half a month.

It seems that there is something urgent that requires him to become an apothecary within half a month to find those books!”

“Half a month? Unique constitution?”

While Wen Xue and the others simply found the situation baffling, Zhao Ya paled and trembled uncontrollably.

She had a unique constitution, Pure Yin Body.

This was something that Zhang laoshi told her.

Half a month, wasn't that the day of the Freshmen Tournament? To be rushing to accomplish it within half a month... Could it be that Zhang laoshi intends to awaken her unique constitution to raise her strength?

After all, a unique constitution held no might if it wasn't awakened!

It must be it!

Clenching her fists tightly, Zhao Ya suppressed the emotions in her heart. She looked at Uncle Li and asked, “Senior, you said that the penalties upon failure are great, may I ask what the penalties are?”

“This... I'm not too sure either!” Uncle Li shook his head.

He had only read of Pill Debate in the books, so he wasn't really aware of the penalties.

“Oh, I know. Master Ouyang had spoken of it previously!” Sun Tao contemplated for a moment and said, “There is a total of three penalties. Firstly, one has to pay each apothecary with a hundred thousand gold coins, so that's a total of a million gold coins for the ten of them! Secondly, he has to suffer a hundred God Slaying Flogs! Thirdly, he is banned from the apothecary examination for ten years!”

“A million gold coins? A hundred God Slaying Flogs? Banned from the apothecary examination for ten years?”

Zhao Ya's body trembled even more intensely.

This punishment was way too severe!

In order to help her awaken her constitution, Zhang laoshi was willing to go through so much peril...

[Teacher... Thank you!

Even if I, Zhao Ya, were to be smashed to smithereens, it would be difficult for me to repay this gratitude!]

Unable to hold back her billowing emotions any longer, tears streamed down from Zhao Ya's clean jade-like face.

102 To the Top of the World

“Hu! It’s finally done!”

Zhang Xuan had been flipping through the books since afternoon, and it was already around ten at night. Finally done with his work, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

There were all kinds of books on in the basic tier book collection vault, and they were all regarding pill forging. Even though his cultivation realm had risen by leaps and bounds recently, flipping through that huge collection of books still caused him fatigue.

After flipping through all of the books, he confirmed that there were no books regarding unique constitutions in this book collection vault.

Naturally, he was unable to find an answer to his question.

That was to say, he had to become an apothecary to look through the advanced tier book collection vault to achieve his goals.

“This knowledge should be enough for the apothecary examination!”

Even though the Apothecary Guild in Tianxuan Kingdom was only a small branch, it had the powerful headquarters backing it. As such, even if the country were to fall, the guild would not. After a duration of several centuries, perhaps even a millennium, even a basic tier book collection vault would contain a vast amount of knowledge in it.

Even a true apothecary couldn’t possibly finish all of the books and assimilate all knowledge in them for his own.

However, Zhang Xuan was able to do so.

With this much knowledge, if he were to claim to be the second most knowledgeable person in pill forging in Tianxuan Kingdom, no one would dare to claim themselves to be the first.

Of course, this was all just theory. If he were to really try it, putting aside pill forging, he might even have difficulty starting the fire.

“I should go and grab a bite!”

Fondling his protesting stomach, Zhang Xuan stretched his back and walked out of the book collection vault with widened strides.

Right after eating breakfast, he went to lessons, underwent the Enlightenment Will Trial and took the apprentice apothecary examination... After busying himself for an entire day, his stomach had already started growling furiously long ago. If not for the rise in his cultivation realm and enhanced physical body, he might've found himself unable to persist on for that long.

The basic tier book collection vault was inside the examination hall for apprentice apothecaries. Walking out, he saw Ouyang Cheng and Du Man sitting inside. They were holding brushes in their hands, seemingly scribbling something on a piece of paper, and bewilderment, dilemma, contemplation, and confusion could be seen on their faces...

“What are you all doing?”

Seeing the two apothecaries in such a state, Zhang Xuan walked over curiously.

“Ah...”

The both of them were trying to figure out what Zhang Xuan was doing. Upon seeing him walk over, the both of them were taken aback. They hurriedly used their hands to cover the contents of the paper on the table.

Zhang Xuan lowered his head to take a look.

A few words come into his sight.

“Speculation on his motive for flipping through books in the book collection vault. Number 1: Act cool (30 votes); Number 2: Boredom (1 vote); Number 3: Investigating the material of the books (1 vote)...”

After reading the first few lines, black lines streaked across Zhang Xuan's face.

[Is this about me?]

He was the only one flipping through books in the book collection vault previously.

[It is definitely about me, but... What the heck do the votes mean?]

Furthermore, why is 'act cool' in the first place, and the number of votes on it...]

"Cough cough, we were just curious of your actions of flipping through the books in the book collection vault. Thus, we couldn't help but discuss it..."

Exposed, Ouyang Cheng suppressed his embarrassment and revealed the truth.

Ouyang Cheng has a reputation for being a strict and stern apothecary. To think that he would be hiding in the room with another apothecary to discuss the motive behind an apprentice apothecary's action of flipping through books, even getting others to vote on it... No one would believe it even if word was to spread out.

"I wanted to look for a book... I wasn't able to find it, so I continued flipping through all of the books in the vault!"

Zhang Xuan casually answered.

He mustn't reveal the truth about the Library of Heaven's Path, but his action of flipping through the books was indeed a little bizarre, so it couldn't be helped that others would hold suspicion toward his actions. Looks like he had to be more careful in the future.

Even so, he was just flipping through books. Others might hold doubt toward the intention behind his actions, but at most, they would just be unable to make heads or tails out of his actions. It was impossible for them to suspect the possibility of an existence of a massive library in his head.

"Such a simple answer..."

Upon hearing the answer, Ouyang Cheng and Du Man looked constipated.

They had been discussing the matter for an entire afternoon, even skipping their meals to do so. They thought that there was some special significance behind his actions. Never would they dream that the answer was so simple.

“What else would it be if not for that?” Zhang Xuan asked.

It would do as long as it didn’t involve the revelation of the existence of the Library of Heaven’s Path. He could tell a lie without feeling embarrassed over it anyway.

“Err... Alright then!”

Ouyang Cheng shook his head helplessly. After investigating and analyzing the issue for an entire afternoon, he didn’t expect the other party’s answer to be so simple. Thus, to alleviate the awkwardness of the situation, he could only change the topic. “I have already informed the ten apothecaries about the Pill Debate. They will be here tomorrow, so make preparations for it. It will be conducted here tomorrow afternoon!”

“Great!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head. After asking a few more questions about how the Pill Debate would be conducted, he turned around and took his leave.

After walking out of the room, he heard Du Man’s voice ringing behind him.

“You lost, pay up...”

“I lost, but you didn’t win either. You wagered most of your money on him acting cool...” Ouyang Cheng said with a displeased tone.

Zhang Xuan staggered.

[You all are respectable apothecaries, alright! To gamble over me...

Furthermore, acting cool? Your head that I am acting cool!]

With a stifled sensation at his chest, Zhang Xuan walked to the entrance of the Apothecary Guild and caught sight of Zhao Ya

and the others.

“Why are you here?”

Bewilderment flashed across his eyes.

[This is the Apothecary Guild, not the academy. Why would Zhao Ya be here?]

“Zhang laoshi, thank you!”

Upon seeing him, Zhao Ya could no longer suppress the emotions in her and kneels to the floor. Gratitude reflected in her eyes.

“Stand up, stand up. What are you thanking me for?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

[What happened to this lass?

Kneeling down upon seeing me. Could it be that... her ‘illness’ is cured?]

At this point, he asked, “Have you eaten the Frigid Sun Mother Grass yet? How are its effects?”

Upon hearing ‘Frigid Sun Mother Grass’, Yao Han, who considered the possibility of whether Zhang Xuan was ignorant of the value of the herb before gifting it to Zhao Ya, trembled.

[It looks like he knows the herb! If so, he should know the value of it as well!

To give such a valuable herb to his student so casually, and to put himself in peril by taking the apothecary examination for the sake of awakening his student’s unique constitution...]

Regardless of how Zhang Xuan’s lessons were, just this responsibility of his was sufficient to leave him in awe.

“Zhang laoshi, I apologize for my previous insolent attitude and doubting your kindness. Please forgive me!”

Yao Han stepped forward and bowed in apology.

His previous actions were truly laughable.

[How can such a responsible teacher be inadequate in his teachings? Seems like the rumors outside are untrue after all.]

“This...”

Upon seeing the both of them behaving like that, Zhang Xuan blinked his eyes.

[Can anyone tell me what is going on?

I had only taken an apprentice apothecary examination, why are they suddenly behaving so bizarrely?]

Soon, he made sense out of the situation.

Actually, his reason for coming here wasn't just to awaken Zhao Ya's unique constitution, it was more for Yuan Tao instead. He didn't expect such a simple action to induce such feelings of gratitude in her.

However, he came to a realization after contemplating over the situation slightly. In the perspective of others, Pill Debate was something that was likely to end in failure. It was a huge risk to take, and yet he chose to proceed ahead even so. In their eyes, he had become a teacher who could give up his all and bash through all obstacles just for his students!

Just this sentiment itself was priceless!

Upon understanding this all, Zhang Xuan was at a loss for words.

His actions had moved Zhao Ya. But similarly, the other party's actions had also moved him.

In the past, he had only treated these students as anchors to prevent him from getting expelled. However, at this moment, he realized the simple fact that all humans have emotions. They would treat you like how you treat them.

The children's desire for knowledge and the gratitude they felt toward him made him understand the responsibilities of a teacher and the heavy burden they shouldered.

“Don't worry. As my students, I will bring you all to greater heights, all the way to the top of the world!”

Clenching his fists tightly together, Zhang Xuan made a solemn vow.

At this moment, he had finally made his metamorphosis from a transcender to a teacher.

Boom!

The moment such a thought appeared, at the apex of the of the Library of Heaven's Path, an intense peal sounded and a golden book formed. However, Zhang Xuan didn't notice it.

103 Fighter 6-dan Pixue

Realm First Half

“Zhang laoshi, I don’t have sufficient money to pay for the Frigid Sun Mother Grass now, so I will pay you a portion first. Treat it as our Baiyu City buying it from you. After all, we can’t expect you to go bankrupt while teaching xiaojie...”

Xiaojie -> Young mistress

Oblivious to the changes that had occurred in Zhang Xuan, Yao Han stepped forward to pass over banknotes worth twenty thousand in total.

“There’s no need for it. It’s just a medicinal herb, it’s just a small affair!” Zhang Xuan shook his head.

The responsibility of a teacher had just dawned on him, so how could he accept money from a student at this moment?

Furthermore, it was just a stalk of Frigid Sun Mother Grass. Frigid Sun Grass was only worth hundred gold coins per stalk, so a Frigid Sun Mother Grass shouldn’t be worth much either. His fortune counted in the millions, so why would he bother about that petty sum?

Furthermore, he obtained this stalk by acting cool, not even spending the least bit of money on it. His heart didn’t ache giving it away like this.

“This...” Upon seeing his resolute determination, Yao Han could only keep his money. Feeling impressed, he commented, “Zhang laoshi, I’m really impressed by your generosity. To give a herb worth a hundred thousand gold coins just like that, it’s laughable that I’ve thought that you were trying to scam our xiaojie...”

“What? Worth a hundred thousand gold coins?” Zhang Xuan’s lips quivered.

[This Frigid Sun Mother Grass is worth a hundred thousand gold coins?

Are you for real?

If I knew that it was worth a hundred thousand gold coin, I should have accepted your money!]

Other people gave presents to their teachers in a show of filial piety, so why was it that when it came to him, he was paying them instead...

“Yes!” Yao Han looked over with a peculiar expression, “Could it be that Zhang laoshi doesn’t know of its price?”

“I...” Even though his heart was bleeding, he knew that he couldn’t retract his words at this point. As such, he assumed a stern face once more. With an arrogant aura that treated all worldly objects contemptuously, he said, “Of course not, money means nothing to me at all. Zhao Ya is my student, and a herb worth a hundred thousand gold coins is but a small matter. If it’s beneficial to her, there’s no need to hesitate over mere money!”

Since what’s done is done, he could only go ahead and sell her the favor.

“Xiaojie has truly found a good teacher!”

Seeing his attitude, Yao Han was truly in awe of him.

[No wonder xiaojie kept praising him. Just his morals itself is sufficient to send others in awe like me.]

Standing by the side, Wen Xue looked on the situation in embarrassment. If only there was a burrow here, she would’ve dived in immediately.

The other party was such an upstanding and noble teacher, yet she mistook him as a pursuer of hers, treating him disdainfully... Her actions were truly laughable!

Thankfully, he had a generous heart and was indifferent to her rudeness. Otherwise, his identity as an apprentice apothecary was more than sufficient to have her permanently expelled!

“Let’s return. I have to prepare for the Pill Debate tomorrow as well!”

A single act had cost him a hundred thousand gold coins... Besides, the money wasn't anything much. After all, Baiyu City was paying for it, not Zhao Ya...

Suppressing the urge to cry, Zhang Xuan walked out to the streets.

By the time he returned to the academy after having dinner, it was already nearing midnight.

“Since I'm not tired yet, I should look into how I can break into Pixue realm!”

In his previous life, he was a nocturnal owl. Furthermore, given his level of cultivation, his physical condition was much better than how it was back then. Even though it was already late at night, he wasn't tired in the least.

After exposing the might of a Pixue realm expert in the Enlightenment Will Tower today, the academy should be making a move soon to confer him the title of an elder.

Upon becoming an elder, he would be granted entry into the elders' Compendium Pavilion.

By then, he would be able to obtain sufficient Fighter 6-dan secret manuals to perfect his Heaven's Path Divine Art.

Of course, before then, studying it was okay as well.

After all, he had duplicated quite a few secret manuals from Master Lu Chen's residence. Even though only a partial of the words were true and as such, unable to be linked together to form a complete version, it was still worth studying.

With a jolt of his mind, a dozen books or so which he saw in Master Lu Chen's residence appeared in his consciousness.

“Actually, Pixue realm cultivation isn't very difficult. The only difficulty one will face is the sequence of breaking through the acupoints!”

After scanning through the numerous manuals, Zhang Xuan came to a realization.

[It is said that there are 108 acupoints on a human body. However, only 72 of which can be opened. Furthermore, there

is a specific sequence to opening these acupoints. Everyone's physical body is different and as such, there is a different sequence for everyone to follow to achieve optimal results. If one didn't find the correct route, it's likely that they might only be able to open thirty to forty acupoints and be stuck there for the rest of their lives.

It's just like cleansing the silt and mud off a river. Only by cleansing from the upper stream can the river be cleansed entirely. If one were to start from the center, not only will the river not be cleaned thoroughly, it may even cause a blockade!

This is precisely the reason why the first acupoint to open is important. If one were to get it wrong, it will have disastrous repercussions.]

“This book 《Golden Flame Technique》 says that the first acupoint to open should be the Shenli acupoint, only with strength can one break through the other more important acupoints. On the other hand, this 《Art of Sun Adaptation》 says that one should start from the Zhongshu acupoint because it is in the direct center of the human body...”

The acupoint one should start with was different in every single book and each of their reasoning seemed logical.

Others might end up becoming confused upon reading through all these, but Zhang Xuan possessed the Library of Heaven's Path. With but a single glance, he knew that all of it... were false!

“Being unable to find the correct acupoint is equivalent to being unable to find the source of a river. If an error was to occur from the very start, it would be difficult to push on afterward. Forget it!”

After studying for a moment longer, Zhang Xuan realized that none of the manuals held the correct answer to the first acupoint he should break through. Just when he was about to give up, an idea popped up in his mind.

“If what is recorded in all these books are false and given that a human only has 108 acupoints in total, if I were to try them

one by one, wouldn't I be able to figure out the sequence of which I should open up my acupoints?"

The method to break through acupoints was simple, one just had to use their zhenqi to surge through it. The main problem was the sequence to doing so. Since these were all wrong, of the 108 acupoints in his body, there had to be a correct one!

Other people might be unable to try them one by one, but such a problem didn't exist for him!

As he possessed the Library of Heaven's Path, after eliminating all mistakes, what was left should be naturally correct!

"Give it a try!"

At this point, Zhang Xuan didn't hesitate any further. Picking up a brush and paper, he wrote out the 108 acupoints on a human body out and canceled away the incorrect first acupoints from the various secret manuals from it, followed by the other acupoints that were proven to be in the correct positions for him in the sequence listed in the books.

After which, only twenty acupoints were left of the 108.

However, there was no need to worry. Zhang Xuan hand copied a manual and alternated the twenty acupoints in the first acupoint within the sequence one by one.

Weng!

A new secret manual appeared in the Library of Heaven's Path, displaying the errors and flaws of it.

At his thirteenth try, his mind jolted and the secret manual reflected the first acupoint that had no flaws.

"Haha, I've succeeded! To think that it would be the Xinqiao acupoint. Since the Library of Heaven's Path has not pointed out any errors in it, it means that this is the first acupoint I should break through to enter Pixue realm!

"Xinqiao acupoint is a hidden acupoint in a human body. Without pure zhenqi, it's impossible for a Fighter 5-dan pinnacle to open it. No wonder it isn't written in any of these manuals..."

After verifying the first acupoint he had to open, Zhang Xuan was filled with excitement.

Xinqiao acupoint was located in the depths of one's heart. It was reputed as one of the 36 Locked Acupoints. Without sufficiently pure zhenqi, not only would one be unable to open it, one's cultivation might even go berserk while attempting to open it.

If not for the verification by the Library of Heaven's Path, he would've never believed that this would be the first acupoint he needed to open.

It was no wonder that he was unable to find the correct sequence in the manuals he duplicated. To think that the correct acupoint for him to start with was one of the Locked Acupoints.

From the looks of it now, even though it was termed as 'Locked Acupoint', but with the correct sequence, one would be able to break it open!

104 Fighter 6-dan Pixue Realm Second Half

“Let’s begin!”

Everything else went easy after discovering the correct acupoint. The method to breaking them open was about the same. Without much hesitation, Zhang Xuan directed the zhenqi in his body towards the Xinqiao acupoint.

Boom!

Not long after, there was a loud explosion and Zhang Xuan’s body swayed uncontrollably.

Instantaneously, Zhang Xuan felt a qualitative improvement in his mental state.

Regardless of whether it was his vitality or his reaction speed, they improved by leaps and bounds.

He had successfully broken through Fighter 6-dan Pixue realm!

If he closed his eyes at this instant, he could sense radiance emitting from an acupoint within his body, like a star in the middle of a dark night.

Goo goo goo!

With the acupoint opened, spiritual energy immediately gushed in, inducing a rise in his strength by a single ding.

“Great!”

Sensing the changes in his body, Zhang Xuan knew that he had successfully accomplished a breakthrough to the next realm.

“Even without cultivation technique manuals, I can always try to fumble around for the correct part by experimenting with every single possibility. Even if there are ten thousand possible

routes in my cultivation, as long as I toss out all of the erroneous ones, I will eventually find the correct one...”

His eyes twinkled with excitement.

It was just a conjecture he came up with abruptly, so he didn't really expect to succeed.

Of course, such a method was only possible for Pixue realm. There was a total of 108 acupoints in the human body and they were all fixed in place. Thus, it was possible for him to try them one by one. However, if he really tried to create a cultivation technique of his own out of nowhere, even with the Library of Heaven's Path, he would surely tire himself to death.

Actually, Zhang Xuan didn't know that the reputation for the 36 Locked Acupoints didn't come from nowhere. Without the purest zhenqi, it was impossible for one to break open the acupoints.

Using a simple analogy, if the other acupoints are paths, the 36 Locked Acupoints are pinhole-sized paths. Impure zhenqi is like muddy water. Even though it can flow through the other paths with ease, it is an impossible task for it to pass through the pinhole-sized paths! Just the silt in the muddy water itself is sufficient to plug up the path. If one tries to break through it forcefully, they might end up crushing their acupoint instead, causing an imbalance in their body, and ultimately, death.

Zhang Xuan cultivated the flawless Heaven's Path Divine Art and his zhenqi had no impurities in it whatsoever, like completely pure water. Even when facing pinhole-sized paths, it could easily pass through to break open the acupoint successfully!

“I should continue with the second acupoint!”

With a single successful experience, Zhang Xuan continued to look for the second acupoint. After awhile, the second acupoint was successfully opened as well.

The hardest part of the Pixue realm was in finding the correct sequence to open the acupoints. As long as one found it, breaking through the Pixue realm was an extremely easy task.

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Zhao Ya's residence. Yao Han was sitting at a distance not too far away from Zhao Ya.

“Xiaojie, tell me about this Zhang laoshi and your physical condition. Why do you need to consume the medicinal herb?”

Initially, he was prejudiced against Zhang Xuan, but after seeing him put himself in peril for his students and gifting a medicinal herb worth a hundred thousand gold coins so casually, he couldn't help but doubt the notions he had of him.

His actions might be a façade, but that tranquil and nonchalant aura of his and that disposition of an enlightened expert couldn't be feigned.

How could one who possessed such aura, disposition, and morals possibly be a villain who fooled women?

Looked like he had been mistaken from the very start!

Furthermore, xiaojie had been healthy all along. Why did she need to consume this medicinal herb? Not to mention, such an expensive and valuable one?

Filled with doubt, he couldn't help but bring them up upon reaching her residence.

“Zhang laoshi... Initially, I was prejudiced against him as well until I saw his capabilities personally and listened to his lectures....” Zhao Ya started to recount everything that happened ever since she met Zhang Xuan.

Upon speaking about her physical “illness”, her face flushed red.

In the past, she would definitely be too embarrassed to speak of it. She would wonder if she had problems with her innate nature and her body. However, upon getting the truth of the matter from Zhang laoshi, she managed to get past that barrier of hers.

For a person possessing Pure Yin Body to cultivate a pure yin cultivation technique, it resulted in yin energy accumulating in her body and if not for her outstanding mental resilience, she would have given in long ago.

“Pure Yin Body? Xiaojie has Pure Yin Body? To think that we were unaware of that! We even made you cultivate the White Jade Pure Maiden Skill....”

Upon hearing the symptoms and pain the girl had undergone throughout the years, Yao Han’s face paled.

He was of the same generation as Zhao Ya’s father and he had long seen Zhao Ya as his own daughter. If not for Zhang laoshi seeing through to the crux of the problem, xiaojie might still be trapped in the quagmire of pain, unable to pull herself out of it. Unable to see through this all despite being a senior who had been beside her all this time, he felt intense self-reproach and remorse.

Back at the Apothecary Guild, he had heard her say that she had a unique constitution. Back then, it wasn’t convenient for him to ask about it. Never in his dreams would he imagine that it was of this kind, and that such aftereffects would occur upon cultivation a pure yin cultivation technique.

“Since this Zhang laoshi is so capable, why would his reputation be so...”

After listening to the words of the young girl, this Zhang laoshi seemed to be an incredible figure of great capabilities. However, if he were that incredible, his reputation should have long ago rung far and wide. Why would the results of his investigation be that he had failed the Teacher Qualification Examination and even caused a student’s cultivation to go berserk?

“Today, due to Liu Yang’s affair, the Education Bureau conducted an Enlightenment Will Trial...”

Zhao Ya went on to talk about the incident that occurred at the Enlightenment Will Tower.

“What? You mean... it was due to Elder Shang Chen’s intentional oppression that his reputation is so poor? Zhang laoshi, in consideration for the image of the academy, didn’t expose him? His strength is already that of Pixue realm pinnacle?”

Yao Han shuddered.

If he didn't hear this news firsthand, he would have never believed it.

For the head of the Education Bureau of an established academy to be so shameless!

On the other hand, for Zhang laoshi... to be such a noble person!

Looked like he was indeed mistaken!

Not just him, everyone was mistaken about him!

"I have never seen Elder Shang Chen, but Shang Bin laoshi, who is his grandson, is interest-motivated and vicious. Naturally, his grandfather can't be any better..."

If anyone else heard such rumors about the head of the Education Bureau, they would definitely doubt the reliability of the news. However, Yao Han didn't have the slightest hesitation in believing Zhao Ya's words.

He had never met Shang Chen, but he had met Shang Bin.

The wounds on his face were the doing of the other party!

Since the grandson was of such character, how noble can the grandfather be?

Birds of the same feathers flock together!

"Uncle Yao, now that you know about Zhang laoshi's affairs, I hope that you can be more respectful to him from now on!" After concluding her explanation, Zhao Ya looked at Yao Han with a grim expression.

"Rest assured! Your uncle isn't a foolish person. I know what to do from now on!" Yao Han nodded his head. The next instant, his expression darkened. The authoritative and self-confidence of the butler of a powerful family exuded from him as he continued, "However, this Shang Chen and Shang Bin had caused me to bear misunderstandings about Zhang laoshi, not to mention how they soiled his reputation. I must converse with the city lord and have them punished!"

"Yeah! Such vile people deserve to be punished!" Zhao Ya nodded her head.

She was unlike Wang Ying.

Wang Ying had a docile and honest nature while she, as the daughter of a city lord, possessed a valiant disposition. Otherwise, she wouldn't have barged into Zhang Xuan's classroom angrily upon hearing others praise him.

This was precisely the reason why, upon hearing Yao Han say that he would teach the duo a lesson, she didn't hesitate and immediately nodded her head in agreement.

If not for this head of the Education Bureau, Zhang laoshi wouldn't suffer such injustice and be viewed mockingly and contemptuously by the rest of the world.

Otherwise, given his capabilities, how could he possibly be unable to recruit any students?

They must be taught a lesson, and a severe one at that, one that will send their reputation down the drain!

“Uncle Yao, I will be troubling you to spread this information. The more people know of it, the better!” At this, Zhao Ya issued a command.

“Yes!” Yao Han nodded his head.

105 New Worries First Half

Pipa! Pili pala!

Throughout the entire night, the sound of him breaking through in his cultivation could be heard every now and then as his strength soared continuously.

“To think that the night would be over in a flash!”

Finally, Zhang Xuan opened his eyes.

The sun had already risen.

Despite going without sleep the entire night, not only did Zhang Xuan not feel fatigued, he even felt revitalized instead.

With the level of purity of his zhenqi and the uniqueness of his Heaven’s Path Divine Art, breaking through his cultivation realm was an extremely easy task. It was just that it took time for him to identify the correct acupoints. Even so, in a single night, he had opened over twenty acupoints!

Going by conventional standards, a fighter could only open 72 acupoints in their entire body. Every 18 acupoints opened was considered a tier.

That was to say if one opened 1-18 acupoints, he was in Pixue realm primary stage, 19-36 acupoints for the intermediate stage, 37-54 for advanced stage and 55-72 for pinnacle!

However, due to the low purity of zhenqi that most people possessed and incorrect sequence they opened their acupoints in, the cultivation of most people stopped progressing after opening thirty to forty acupoints. The only way for them to grow stronger was to try to break through Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm.

As a result, the classification above remained in theory. Based on Tianxuan Kingdom’s standards, Pixue realm basic stage was classified as opening 1-10 acupoints, intermediate stage 11-20, advanced 21-30 and pinnacle 31 and above.

As long as one opened 31 acupoints and above, regardless of whether it was 31 or 72, they were all considered as Pixue realm pinnacle in Tianxuan Kingdom!

When Zhang Xuan was still at Dingli realm pinnacle, he already possessed 8 ding of strength. After recultivating his first three cultivation realms, his strength was boosted by 12 ding. Adding them up together, he possessed a total of 20 ding of strength before breaking into Pixue realm. After opening 20 acupoints, just taking into account zhenqi itself, he possessed 40 ding of strength. That was equivalent to a Pixue realm pinnacle expert!

Other people had difficulty opening a single acupoint in the course of half a month while he opened 20 of it in a single night. Furthermore, 90% of the time was spent on researching the correct sequence. No one would be able to believe that it was possible for one's cultivation realm to soar that rapidly.

However, if the flawless Heaven's Path Divine Art didn't have such effects, it wouldn't be worthy of the word 'perfect'.

After grabbing some food to eat, he headed to the classroom.

.....

"You're saying that... In order to find a way to awaken your unique constitution, Zhang laoshi was willing to undergo Pill Debate to become an apothecary?"

In the classroom, Zhao Ya revealed what had happened yesterday to Wang Ying and the rest.

"Zhang laoshi had created cultivation techniques for us, and now he is putting himself at risk for our welfare..."

"No matter what, we must achieve good results in the Freshmen Tournament. Otherwise, we would've truly let down Zhang laoshi, and his efforts to groom us would be in vain!"

The eyes of Zheng Yang and the others burned passionately. Even the usually lazy Yuan Tao was agitated.

Warriors died fighting to protect their soulmates. Zhang laoshi had done so much to protect them. If they still knew none of the gratitude at this point, they would truly be ingrates!

“No, I have to start cultivating right now!”

“Me too!”

In an instant, zeal consumed everyone and only a single goal retained in their minds. That was to bring glory to Zhang laoshi by astonishing everyone with their strength in the Freshmen Tournament!

“What is wrong with them all?”

Upon walking into the classroom, he saw that not only were all his students present, every single of them were cultivating seriously and diligently. Zhang Xuan found the situation slightly queer.

Was there something wrong with these fellows?

“Teacher!”

Just when he was about to start his lessons, he saw Wang Tao, Wang Yan, and Zhao Yanfeng walking over.

Zhang Xuan had already agreed to have Wang Tao and Wang Yan listen to by the side of the class. However, why was Zhao Yanfeng here too?

“I impertinently made my own decision to withdraw from Lu laoshi’s tutelage. If my decision had caused you trouble, please punish me!”

As soon as Zhang Xuan walked into the classroom, Zhao Yanfeng immediately confessed.

Hearing these words, Zhang Xuan came to a realization why Lu Xun picked a fight with him out of nowhere.

So this was the reason.

Despite being the most reputable star teacher in the academy, two students of his withdrew from his lessons to listen to the lessons of the worst teacher. No matter who it was, they would definitely find this situation unacceptable.

How could he continue teaching other students in the future if word were to spread out? How could he win his student’s trust like this?

“Alright, you can listen to my lessons!”

Since the matter had already happened, if he sent Zhao Yanfeng back, others might think that he was afraid of Lu Xun. As such, he could only pretend to be unaware of the matter.

In any case, he wasn't obliged to offer pointers to students listening in his lesson. They were free to leave if they want to and it wouldn't really waste any time of his.

“Stop for a moment. You all should have already tried to cultivate the cultivation techniques I passed you all yesterday!”

Ignoring the trio, Zhang Xuan turned his attention to Zhao Ya, Wang Ying, and the others.

“We have!”

The eyes of his students glowed in excitement.

The cultivation technique Zhang laoshi had created for them was incredible! With just a single night of training, they felt the energy within their body growing stronger. Just the effort of a single day was comparable to what they achieved in ten previously!

As such, they felt even more impressed with the teacher before them.

“Un, let me see your punching routines. Wang Ying, we'll start from you!”

Zhang Xuan turned his gaze over to her.

“Yes!”

Wang Ying stepped forward and swiftly executed a punching routine.

“Not bad!”

After which, Zhang Xuan casually offered some pointers and pointed out a few flaws in her cultivation.

The same occurred for Zhao Ya, Liu Yang, and the others.

All in all, the speed at which his five students were cultivating at were rather fast. In fact, it was an astonishing speed compared to other students.

Even so, if they were to continue at this pace, there would still be a significant gap between his students and Lu Xun's.

Lu Xun was a star teacher of the academy. Those who studied under him were basically the top students of the entire academy.

The entrance examination assessed a student's overall performance and their potential. Zhao Ya, Wang Ying, and the others were only able to squeeze into the top hundred via their potential. If one were to only consider their fighting prowess, only Zhao Ya was better off among the five of them. The other four would probably be ranked below 500.

This was especially true for Yuan Tao. His placing in the entrance examination was reflective of his strength.

It was impossible to have the several hundred of students under Lu Xun fight with the five students of his. That would be unfair. As such, he would pick five of them out to fight with them.

To choose the top five out of several hundred powerful students, it was clear to see how difficult it would be for Zhao Ya and the others to triumph over them.

Putting aside the others, the top three students of the entrance examination had come under his tutelage and all three of them had already broken into Fighter 2-dan!

Given how the five of them were unable to defeat Zhu Hong, who was ranked fourth, despite ganging up against him, how could they possibly deal with the other three individually?

Even though potential, talent, and personality could help to boost a student's ranking in the Freshmen Tournament, what was valued the highest was still strength!

Without strength, everything else was empty talk.

Once they lose on the sparring field, all of the former would be negated by the others.

“Wang Ying’s legs has just recovered and her body hasn’t adapted to the changes in her body yet. As such, she is unable to utilize her strength properly. With two months of rest, her condition should improve, but half a month... That is too difficult!

“Zheng Yang has just escaped from his trauma, allowing his mastery of the spear to improve rapidly. However, it’s possible for weapons to be banned in the Freshmen Tournament, given the nature of it as a sparring contest. His advantage might very possibly become his downfall. I have to find a way to boost his bare-handed fighting skills within this period!

“Also, it will take at least half a month for the condition of Liu Yang’s right arm to improve, and by then... Sigh, time is truly lacking!”

Looking through the conditions of the few via the Library of Heaven’s Path, Zhang Xuan rubbed his glabella and his worry reflected on his face.

106 New Worries Second Half

If he were to train them conventionally, he was confident that he could induce a massive improvement in his five students, grasping the entire school by surprise.

However, it was too daunting a task to achieve it within half a month to make it in time for the Freshmen Tournament.

Regardless of whether it was Wang Ying, Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang, Liu Yang or Wang Tao, each of them had problems with their bodies. Even though he knew the remedy to treating each of them, it was hard for him to resolve their problems entirely within this short period of time.

The Library of Heaven's Path could see through flaws, but it didn't show him the correct way to resolving them.

The methods he came up with to solve the problems that his students encountered were the conclusions he came up with after researching innumerable books, so the effectiveness of them all could only be considered average.

That short amount of time he had wasn't sufficient to solve their problems entirely, needless to say, induce a rapid growth in their cultivation.

Of course, if he were to impart the Heaven's Path Divine Art to them, their cultivation would surely soar immediately. However, Zhang Xuan knew that he mustn't impart the cultivation technique to anyone else.

Possessing a treasure beyond his ability to guard was a crime. It was possible that it might bring him calamity if news of his cultivation technique were to spread out.

Even if the Library of Heaven's Path was able to identify the locations of the mingmen of his opponents, it wasn't of much use if he was battling against enemies far above his cultivation realm.

Putting aside the fact that true experts did not have such weakness and even if they had, if he was unable to match up to them in terms of speed and strength, he might not be able to damage the latter even if he were to hit them squarely at their vitals!

“Zheng Yang’s situation is slightly easier to resolve. I can try to find a battle technique for him. Within half a month, he should be able to achieve some level of accomplishment in it. This should be sufficient for him to deal with most opponents!”

“I have helped Wang Ying to open up the blocked acupoints on her legs. However, two years of injury has caused severe damage to her fundamentals. Her meridians and muscles require a long period of recovery. Conventional methods can’t possibly allow her legs to recover completely in half a month, needless to say, attain a higher level! Unless... her legs are nourished with a specialized medicinal solution!”

“On the other hand, Liu Yang needs some pills to clear his obstructed meridians!”

“As for Zhao Ya and Yuan Tao, just as what I have analyzed before, it should be sufficient as long as I find a way to awaken their unique constitution!”

All these sounded easy, but carrying them out would prove to be difficult.

Putting aside the others, even Zheng Yang’s problem, which seemed easy to solve, was tricky. He had learned the way of the spear for many years and he might find it difficult to grasp bare-handed techniques. If he was unable to assimilate the battle technique to his own, it might potentially become his downfall instead, causing his fighting prowess to regress instead!

Learning powerful battle techniques took time and learning weak ones were pointless. To assimilate a technique to his own in half a month... The difficulty to do so was clear for all to see.

“Putting aside the matter of Zheng Yang’s battle technique, Wang Ying’s medicinal solution should be able to be found in

the Apothecary Guild. That is to say, the problems of the four of them can be settled at the Apothecary Guild!”

Determination reflected in Zhang Xuan’s eyes, “Looks like I have to pass today’s Pill Debate by hook or by crook!”

Actually, after the threat of his expulsion had passed, he could’ve taken it easy and taught his students leisurely. However, since Lu Xun came running over to undermine his dignity, as a transcender with a cheat code, how could he possibly allow him to climb over his head?

Sayings such as ‘The river reverses its flow after 30 years’ were all nonsense. One didn’t simply wait for revenge to come by itself. Since the other party is willing to send his face over, naturally, Zhang Xuan wouldn’t go easy on him.

Furthermore, even though it seemed as though he had settled the Education Bureau and wouldn’t be fired in the short term, but there were still a lot of people waiting for him to make a fool out of himself. After all, he stepped over the dignity of a school leader as a teacher and caused a scandal in the school. People were already gossiping about how the school didn’t know how to choose its personnel. There wasn’t a single organization that would allow the existence of a ticking time bomb in their ranks.

If he was unable to make his stand in the Freshmen Tournament, all kind of pressure would come stacking upon him, making his life difficult.

Thus, he had to win, regardless of the price he had to pay.

As for why he didn’t choose to simply leave the academy when there’s a massive world out there... As a teacher, if he were to lose upon being challenged, it was no different from a guilty criminal escaping pursuit. It would leave a stain in his records in the Teacher Guild and by then, he would probably be unable to even be promoted to a high-level teacher, much less say, master teacher.

However, this wasn’t the main reason. The main reason was that these five students of him already held absolute trust in

him. He had already become an important person in their lives, and as a teacher, he could not let them down!

“Alright, I’ll start the lessons now!”

Upon arriving at a conclusion, Zhang Xuan didn’t panic and started teaching his students calmly.

His lectures were based on the numerous correct theories he had gathered from all the books in the teachers’ Compendium Pavilion.

They were profound albeit boring, giving the listeners an epiphany.

Not only did his five students benefit greatly from his lecture, even Wang Tao, Wang Yan, and Zhao Yanfeng, who were listening in by the side, flushed red in agitation. They felt as though they had just eaten a ginseng fruit.

At this moment, they realized that just by listening in, even without Zhang laoshi’s personal guidance, they had struck the jackpot.

As long as they continued listening to his lessons seriously, their cultivation would surely rise by leaps and bounds.

What Zhang laoshi was explaining was a new type of training system, an entirely new perspective, something that would revolutionize the entire world of cultivation.

“I’ll end the lesson here! Cultivate properly when you all return, I will check your cultivation tomorrow!”

Looking at the time, it was already nearing noon. Zhang Xuan gestured for them to leave.

“Yes!”

Zhao Ya and the others rose and bade Zhang Xuan farewell.

“The Pill Debate is about to start, I should head over now!”

Time didn’t wait for anyone. Since he applied for the Pill Debate, he naturally would not give up on it. Zhang Xuan walked out of the classroom toward the Apothecary Guild.

Soon, upon reaching the guild, Wen Xue came welcoming him.

The contemptuous gaze yesterday had been replaced with that of respect.

Even though the person in front was younger than her, he was already a certified apprentice apothecary. She dared not to offend him.

“Apothecary Ouyang Cheng asked me to wait here for you. He says that the ten apothecaries are here and the Pill Debate can start at any time now. Of course, if you wish to go back on your words, you can also choose to cancel this Pill Debate!”

Wen Xue said.

“There’s no need to cancel it!”

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

It would take too much time for him to become a 1-star apothecary through Pill Forging. Since he was able to do it today, there was no reason for him to back off.

“This way!”

As though seeing through his intentions, Wen Xue shook her head and brought him in.

It was the building where the apprentice apothecary examination was held. However, they proceeded deeper within and soon, they arrived at a vast hall.

Several hundred square meters large, ten chairs were placed in a circle at the center. There was a giant cauldron placed behind the circle of chairs and a flame burned majestically beneath it, bringing one a stifling sensation.

Pill Debate, in order to ascertain whether a theory was true or not, had to be verified on the field. The cauldron was here for such use.

“Zhang Xuan, you’re here. It isn’t too late to regret now. Rest assured, with your talents, if you were to become my apprentice, I will make sure that you will be able to forge pills within half a year to pass the apothecary examinations!”

Jiya! The door opened and Ouyang Cheng walked out. His words carried a tone of persuasion to it.

He still didn't think that it was likely for this young man to pass the Pill Debate.

“Half a year is too long!” Zhang Xuan shook his head.

[What a joke! If I had half a year of time, I wouldn't have to go through the trouble to come knocking at the Apothecary Guild in search of books.]

“Alright!”

Knowing that there was no way to persuade him otherwise, Ouyang Cheng shook his head in disappointment.

In his perspective, Zhang Xuan was still young and thus, it couldn't be helped that he would be complacent. Once he blew it up, he would know the difficulty of Pill Debate.

“Esteemed guests, please enter!”

Upon his shout, numerous human figures entered the room. There were exactly ten of them, and some of them were middle-aged while others are elderly. Even the youngest of them was probably at minimum 40 years old.

The apothecary from yesterday, Du Man, was also within the group.

These people were wearing a robe specially made for apothecaries. There was a unique emblem hanging on their chest, and the single star on it was exceptionally conspicuous.

1-star apothecaries!

107 Pill Debate Begins

Normally, if one wanted to take the examination for a 1-star apothecary, a 2-star apothecary had to be present to witness the proceedings.

However, Zhang Xuan was taking the Pill Debate examination instead of the traditional Pill Forging examination. As such, his examination only required ten 1-star apothecaries to conduct the examination. Even so, the entire proceedings had to be recorded using a Record Crystal, so that the headquarters could check and verify it. In fact, even some apprentice apothecaries were qualified to look through it and if it was proven that some of the examiners went easy on the examinee or so, all apothecaries involved in the proceedings would be stripped of their position and expelled.

This was precisely the reason why no one dared to go easy on others during a Pill Debate. Regardless of how formidable the power backing the examinee was, they were unable and unwilling to do so.

“Guild Leader Ouyang, you said that someone wants to undergo Pill Debate? It can’t be this young brat here, can it!”

Upon sitting down, they glanced at Zhang Xuan and a bizarre expression appeared on their faces. An apothecary took the initiative to pose the doubts of them all to Ouyang Cheng.

Those who undergo Pill Debate were either master teachers or scholars who were well-versed in pills and medicines. Upon receiving the notice, everyone thought that it would be an elderly. Never in their dreams did they expect to see a young man who was barely even twenty.

[Guild Leader Ouyang, are you sure you aren’t joking with us? You really aren’t pulling our legs?

Forged pills are just like white wine; the older the alcohol is, the more fragrant it is. Age may not mean much, but a veteran with numerous years of research behind him is definitely in a

better position than someone who had just started studying the subject.

A fellow who isn't even twenty yet wants to undergo Pill Debate...]

Even if he started to learn from his mother's womb, how much can he learn?

"Zhang Xuan may be young, but he has a deep comprehension of medicinal herbs. He even achieved a perfect score in the apprentice apothecary Written Paper examination!" Upon seeing the doubtful looks on everyone's face, Ouyang Cheng explained.

"Perfect score?"

"That means nothing at all!"

"The apprentice apothecary Written Paper only assesses the student's understanding of the medicinal properties of herbs, their classification, and traits. Scoring full marks can only mean that he has a solid foundation. However, to conduct a Pill Debate based on that, calling all of us over for that, aren't you being a little too reckless?"

"Pill forging isn't just about understanding the properties of medicinal herb and their classification. It is much more profound than that. One has to feel and comprehend the art of pill forging. If he hopes to become an apothecary just because he knows some basic stuff, isn't he being a little way too optimistic?"

The crowd chirped in, their tones filled with contempt and disdain.

Written Paper was just an examination conducted for apprentice apothecary. Official apothecaries often came into contact with medicinal herbs and scoring full marks for them meant nothing at all.

"Er..."

Upon seeing so many people treat him contemptuously before he even got an opportunity to speak, Zhang Xuan felt a little helpless.

If an apothecary's skill was proportionate to his age, you might as well dig a few of them up from the graves!

Pill forging? They would be formidable if they didn't turn themselves to ashes in the midst of doing so.

"Cough!" Zhang Xuan coughed to interrupt the commotion occurring among the apothecaries and spoke, "Guild Leader Ouyang didn't invite you all here to talk about age. I may be young, but that doesn't mean I'm unable to match up to the rest of you in terms of forging pills!"

"Match up to the rest of us? You aren't even an apothecary, and yet you are so arrogant that you'd look down on us?"

"Youngsters should be humbler. Despite not knowing much about pills, you dare to undergo Pill Debate. You sure are gutsy!"

"Arrogant fellow, when the Pill Debate begins in a moment's time, I hope that you still can talk as casually as you are doing now!"

...

The moment he spoke up, all their arrows came aiming toward him.

A deep frown was on every single one of their faces as they attempted to tear him apart with their words.

Pill Debate was actually equivalent to challenging the wisdom of ten apothecaries with the knowledge of a single individual.

All the apothecaries who gathered here upon Ouyang Cheng's call were all famous figures in Tianxuan Kingdom and every single one of them were of high standing. If they were to lose to a master teacher or an elder, it was still a result acceptable to them. But for an immature brat who wasn't even twenty yet, if they were to really lose to him, how could they still uphold their dignity?

Thus, they didn't have any intention to treat Zhang Xuan kindly from the moment they saw him. On the contrary, they tried to oppress him from the very start.

It was an attempt to crush his confidence.

As a bachelor in his previous life, he was tortured daily by the loving display of couples every day. Even so, didn't he manage to overcome them and live on?

This kind of attacks no longer worked on Zhang Xuan anymore.

“Alright!” The scent of gunpowder was already apparent even though the Pill Debate had yet to begin. Upon seeing the argument escalating, dark lines streaked across Ouyang Cheng's face. He hurriedly interjected, “There is no use talking about it all, everything should be proven with capabilities instead. After all, capability doesn't differentiate between ages. Since I have gathered everyone here to conduct a Pill Debate, then let's just go straight to the point and begin!

“I'll first talk about the rules of the Pill Debate!”

Afraid that the crowd might come up with even more toxic words, Ouyang Cheng immediately began explaining, “Pill Debate isn't a true debate. Rather, the ten apothecaries will raise questions for the examinee to answer. As long as there's a question he is unable to answer or answers erroneously, the examinee fails! If both parties are unsure of the answers to the questions raised, a test can be conducted on the spot to verify the answer. Whoever's theory is able to produce higher quality pills will win.

“Of course, the questions raised by the apothecaries must be within the sphere of the knowledge of a 1-star apothecary. Also, the examiners are not allowed to pose a question about secrets unknown to others.”

At this point, Ouyang Cheng scanned the surroundings and asked, “Are there any other questions?”

The rules were simple and the explanation was clear.

“No!”

The crowd shook their heads simultaneously.

As an apothecary, even if they had never heard of Pill Debate, they should have done their homework on it beforehand.

There was a limit to the questions they could raise to the examinee. After all, how could an apprentice apothecary possibly answer a question about forging a grade-3 pill or some profound pill forging method?

“Since there are no questions, then let’s...” Ouyang Cheng raised his hand grandly and just as he was about to announce the start of the Pill Debate, Zhang Xuan stood up with a frown, “Hold for a moment!”

“Why? Are you scared now? It’s too late now!”

“It’s too late for you regret your decision! We can either begin the Pill Debate now or you can admit your defeat straight up!”

Upon seeing Zhang Xuan halt the proceedings, they thought that he wanted to resign and sneered coldly at him.

“Regret my decision? You want to make me regret my decision with those standards of yours?” Zhang Xuan activated his aggression-pulling aura.

“What did you say?”

An elder bellowed loudly.

As expected, the apothecaries here immediately erupted upon hearing his words. If looks could kill, he would have been sliced into numerous pieces by now.

“I’m sorry, I’m not saying that your standards are not up to par. I’m saying that... all of you here are unable to make the cut!”

With his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan emanated a haughty disposition.

[Why?

You want to bicker with me? Do you believe that I can choke you all to death with a few words?]

“You...”

“Arrogant!”

“Ignorant brat!”

Instantaneously, everyone exploded. Everyone flew into a rampage and their beards flew along with their vigorous breathing.

Seeing the atmosphere heating up and that he had become a public enemy for all of them here, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction. With a smile, he looked toward the center of the room and asked, “Guild Leader Ouyang, it seems that they look down on me just because on my age. To tell you the truth, I also look down on them. Actually, I don’t think that there is much point to a mere debate, so why don’t we increase the difficulty of the examination?”

“Increase the difficulty?”

Ouyang Cheng frowned.

[Pill Debate is already difficult by itself, and you want to increase the difficulty? Also, how do you intend to go about increasing the difficulty?]

The others were also bewildered.

[Lad, do you find your death lacking splendor, so you want to find a more exciting way to do so?]

“Simply, Pill Debate is just theoretical and words are empty!”

Ignoring the bizarre expression everyone was shooting him with, Zhang Xuan raised his hands boldly, carrying a majestic disposition with him, “How about this? As long as any apothecary here dares to forge pills before me, regardless of what methods he uses, I am able to point out the name of his forging method and the errors he commits in the process. If any of those here finds what I say incorrect, I can admit defeat immediately!”

108 Meng Yan

“What?”

“We are official apothecaries, and you, a mere apprentice, dares to claim that you are able to point out our mistakes?”

“What are you putting on an act for? We apothecaries have numerous means up our sleeves. Putting aside whether you can point out our mistakes, if you can even recognize the method we are using to forge pills, we can consider it your win!”

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan’s words, everyone exploded once more.

An immature brat dared to claim that he had the ability to see through their forging methods and flaws just by seeing them forge a pill before him?

“Is he mad?”

At one side, Ouyang Cheng and Wen Xue felt frenzied.

At the very most, one could only ask some remote questions in Pill Debate. As long as one was well-versed in the knowledge of pill forging, much of it could be rationalized and inferred. However, to point out one’s forging method and the errors in it?

Pill forging was just like a person’s handwriting; there are ten thousand different types of handwriting for ten thousand different people. Even for the same pill, there were at least a thousand different methods of forging it. The movements in each method were profound and intricate and a slight difference in their motions could mean an entirely different forging method.

Furthermore, each and every pill forging methods that were able to be passed down through the generations were the blood, sweat, and tears of innumerable people and had been refined countless times toward perfection. It might not be

entirely perfect, but at the very least, these apothecaries had been using it daily and never found anything off about it.

Even if a 3-star apothecary were to be here, it would be hard for him to point out the errors in it!

This wasn't just a mere rise in the difficulty anymore, it was an overturn of the rules, raising the difficulty to the heavens!

If an apprentice apothecary undergoing a Pill Debate was equivalent to the difficulty to three-digit addition and subtraction, what Zhang Xuan proposed was equivalent to Goldbach Conjecture!

The difficulty wouldn't just increase, it would be increased to an unimaginable level!

[Brother, are you sure you aren't jesting?]

Wen Xue looked at him as though she was looking at a monster.

Yesterday, he wasn't even sure about the existence of a book collection vault in the Apothecary Guild and he didn't know what books he had to read for the apprentice apothecary examination. Yet, today, he suddenly became an expert, putting on airs here. If she didn't witness it personally, she might have thought that he was afflicted with dissociative identity disorder.

Even though a human's personality changed over time, it should be impossible for such a massive change to occur in a person in a single day!

Even if he wanted to act cool, there should be no need for him to play it so big!

“Why? You dare not agree? Are you afraid that you will be embarrassed after I point out your errors? Or are you afraid of being humiliated when I point out your forging method?”

Ignoring their stares, Zhang Xuan chuckled lightly.

He had already contemplated over the matter and came up with a solution for passing the Pill Debate.

Even though he was done looking through the basic tier book collection vault in the Apothecary Guild, there was still a certain level of difficulty for him to successfully pass the Pill Debate.

After all, there were so many apothecaries assessing him and it was hard to tell whether they might have capabilities beyond that of the books. They might come up with questions beyond what was written in the books!

If he failed to answer their question, it would be an immediate loss!

Since that was the case, he should find a way to prevent them from bringing up such problems.

In other people's perspective, to determine a forging method and pointing out the flaws in it through watching how a person forged pills was much more difficult than undergoing a Pill Debate. However, Zhang Xuan possessed the Library of Heaven's Path, which allowed him to easily see through the flaws of others. What was nigh impossible to others became an absolutely simple task before him, only requiring reading word-by-word off a book.

An apothecary forging pills was equivalent to a fighter executing his battle technique, a book would be compiled by looking at it.

Thus, Zhang Xuan intentionally drew aggression from the others to incur their rage. After which, by behaving contemptuously, the others would definitely think of him as arrogant and agree to it.

As long as they agreed to this method of examination...

[Hehe, once you all agree to it, everything else will be a piece of cake. Witness as I play you all to your deaths!]

“Since you are looking for excitement, we will fulfill your request!”

“Indeed, since you are adamant on acting cool, we'll see how you cry afterward!”

As he expected, the crowd immediately exploded yet again after his taunting.

Every single of them was tempted to pay greetings Zhang Xuan's eighteen generations of ancestors and all of his kin.

[Embarrassed your head! The heck that we would be humiliated!

We just fear whether you have sufficient capabilities to do so!]

The ten apothecaries' fighting spirit roused. If not in consideration of their identity, they would have charged forward to bash him.

"Since all of you have the guts to agree to it, then let's begin!" Upon seeing how he was able to settle the issue so easily, Zhang Xuan chuckled. Then, looking at Ouyang Cheng, who was standing at the center of the room, he said, "Guild Leader Ouyang, can we begin?"

"Err... Of course!"

He didn't expect a simple Pill Debate would escalate to this point. Ouyang Cheng felt helpless and frustrated. At this moment, he had no choice but to go along with it.

"May I ask which apothecary would like to go first? I am willing to offer you all free pointer!" Zhang Xuan flung his sleeves arrogantly.

The faces of the crowd flushed red in anger.

"I can't stand watching him act like this any longer. Allow me to teach this brat a lesson first!"

Finally, an apothecary couldn't hold in his rage any longer and stood up.

It was a middle-aged man in his forties. His face was slightly gray and his eyes glowed as though they were lanterns. With a single look, it was clear that he wasn't someone with a good temper.

"It's Apothecary Meng Yan!"

"Meng Yan's temper may be awful, but he's a true 1-star primary stage apothecary. Given how he's able to forge over a

dozen kinds of pills, he isn't someone to be underestimated!"

"Indeed, a few of his apprentices even made it big. Furthermore, he has many kinds of forging methods. It is most suitable for him to make the first move!"

Seeing the middle-aged man stepping out, the rest of the apothecaries secretly nodded their heads in agreement.

How could there be any mediocre figures among the 1-star apothecaries? This Apothecary Meng Yan might not be the most capable apothecary among the group, but his skills were not the worst of the bunch. They would be able to see the capabilities of that arrogant fellow through him.

"Lad, I will start forging now. If you are unable to tell the forging method later on and point out the flaws in it, prepare to be punished!"

With a cold sneer, Meng Yan walked over to the cauldron.

He casually grabbed a few medicinal herbs from the shelves by the side, and by controlling his zhenqi, he induced the flame beneath the cauldron to become even more vigorous.

Xiong xiong!

The flames burned furiously off its fuel and a slight chiming sound resounded from the cauldron, as though it was a giant bell.

Huhuhu!

Stalks after stalks of medicinal herbs were thrown into the cauldron and under the high temperature, a unique scent of medicine floated into the air.

"This is pill forging?"

Zhang Xuan might have read quite a few books in the basic tier book collection vault, but this was the first time he was seeing someone forge a pill.

"Incredible!"

He couldn't help but be impressed by it.

In terms of cultivation realm, he was in no way inferior to the other party. However, the way how the other party threw the medicinal herbs into the cauldron so casually without the slightest hesitation or pause, and how every single stalk of medicinal herb was placed under optimal conditions for it to best unleash its medicinal properties, it was something he could not hope to match.

This required continuous practice over time.

He might excel in theories, but this didn't mean that he was capable of materializing it into physical actions.

After a moment of looking at it, after integrating the knowledge from the basic tier book collection vault and the analysis on them by the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan soon realized that...

He was unable to discern anything at all!

He wasn't even able to see what forging method the other party is utilizing, much less see through the flaws in his actions.

No wonder everyone stared at him as though he had gone mad upon hearing his request. If even Guild Leader Ouyang, who wielded the greatest ability among the group here, was unable to see through his forging method and had a perplexed expression at this very moment, how could an apprentice apothecary possibly see through it?

"Flaws!"

After confirming that he was unable to see through it through the sea of knowledge he had accumulated, Zhang Xuan didn't hesitate any longer and he willed for a book to be compiled.

Weng!

With a loud explosion, the Library of Heaven's Path jolted and a book suddenly appeared in his mind.

Written inside were this Apothecary Meng Yan's pill forging method and the flaws in them.

"This..."

After taking a look, a bizarre expression appeared on Zhang Xuan's face.

109 Tranquil Heart Pill

“Not bad!”

“Meng Yan is getting more and more adept in his pill forging technique!”

“Indeed! If he is able to identify a flaw in his pill forging method, I will twist my head off!”

Zhang Xuan noticed that the gazes of the other apothecaries were fixated on Meng Yan and they nodded their head in approval in response to the display of his skills.

They were able to tell what the other party’s pill forging method before and they had once used it as well, so they weren’t too unfamiliar with it.

This was also precisely the reason why it was harder to find flaws in it. Even they were unable to see the slightest mistake in the other party’s forging. Every movement of his strictly adhered to the forging method without a single error in it.

“Guild Leader Ouyang, do you think that he will be able to see through the forging method and the flaws in it?”

After bringing Zhang Xuan over, Wen Xue didn’t leave immediately. At this instance, she was standing behind Ouyang Cheng and she couldn’t help but ask him the question.

She wasn’t even an apprentice and thus, she was unable to see through the various intricacies of pill forging. So, she could only place her expectation on this guild leader before her to explain the situation to her.

“Flaws?” Ouyang Cheng shook his head, “To tell you the truth, Meng Yan’s pill forging method had been passed down for more than 300 years. It went through the hands of countless individuals and even if there is an error in it, it would have long been corrected. Anyway, given my level of standard, I am unable to see any errors in it!”

“Not even you are able to discern any flaws?”

Wen Xue covered her mouth in shock.

Ouyang Cheng was the most capable apothecary in Tianxuan Kingdom, reaching the astounding level of the 1-star intermediate stage. If he was unable to discern anything, how could Zhang Xuan, who had just become an apothecary apprentice, possibly tell anything from it?

Hu!

After a moment, the flames weakened. Meng Yan opened the lid and the fragrance of medicine gushed out from the cauldron.

The pill had been formed!

Meng Yan pinched lightly and grabbed three pills from the cauldron. Each of them was round with a smooth surface. They were roughly the size of a longan and radiated a unique glow.

“Alright, as expected of Apothecary Meng Yan. Not only was the pill formed, it even reached the level of Satiation. Incredible!”

Looking at the pill in his palm, everyone couldn't help but be impressed.

Upon being forged successfully, the pills would assume different appearances depending on the efficacy of its medicinal property. It could be classified into four tiers, namely Formation, Satiation, Perfection, and Inscribed Pill.

It was already incredible for typical 1-star primary stage apothecaries to reach the level of Formation when forging grade-1 pills. To reach the level of Satiation was already something beyond what those of his level was capable of.

“Hmph, lad, I am already done forging my pills. So, what method did I just use and what flaws are there in it!”

Meng Yan returned to his seat and looked at Zhang Xuan coldly.

Upon hearing his words, the gaze of the others focused on Zhang Xuan. They wanted to see what kind of shocking words this arrogant lad would speak of.

Initially, they thought this lad would speak immediately. However, his eyes simply stared forty-five degrees upward with a sorrowful expression on his face. He shook his head slowly and sighed.

“Hurry up if you have something to say!”

Seeing this fellow still persisting on keeping up the act, Meng Yan clenched his fist and smashed it on the table.

Peng!

Given his formidable strength and the current fury he had accumulated, a crack appeared on the table, putting it in a state of near collapse.

“Since you aren’t embarrassed by it, then I will begin speaking!”

Seeing that the atmosphere was sufficiently heated up, Zhang Xuan looked over calmly with a lowered head and said, “If I’m not wrong, the pill you forged should be the Tranquil Heart Pill which fighters often consume!”

“That’s right!”

Meng Yan nodded his head.

It was easy for an apothecary to see what a kind of pill it was, so it couldn’t be considered a formidable feat.

“The method you used is Ten Formulas of Tranquil Water!” Zhang Xuan continued.

“That’s right! This is Ten Formulas of Tranquil Water. This is the most suitable method to forging Tranquil Heart Pill. It doesn’t mean much for you to see through this!”

Not expecting for the other party to be able to discern it, Meng Yan was slightly shocked. However, he didn’t pay the matter much heed.

Ten Formulas of Tranquil Water was a unique method to forge Tranquil Heart Pills. It was said that an apothecary created this method while looking at the surface of the water of a mountainous stream. The entire technique emphasized greatly on delicacy and quietness. There weren’t too many intense

movements in it, as though it was a quiet stream, flowing slowly and steadily down the mountains. As it fulfilled the concept of Tranquil Heart Pill, it was easy for a pill to form using this method to forge it.

Given that he was able to tell that the pill forged was Tranquil Heart Pill, it wasn't that difficult to infer that the method used was Ten Formulas of Tranquil Water.

“True, it doesn't mean much. However, it is a pity that you have warped the Ten Formulas of Tranquil Water beyond recognition, causing it to lose the fundamental meaning behind it!” Zhang Xuan flung his hand and said with a stern voice.

“Warped beyond recognition? Nonsense! If it is truly warped beyond recognition, how can I possibly successfully forge the Tranquil Heart Pill, even reaching the level of Satiation at that?”

Meng Yan retorted furiously.

“Since you don't believe my words, then I shall point it out clearly to you!” Zhang Xuan stepped forward and pinched the pill lightly to place it on his palm. His gaze swept through the room as he asked, “Who can tell me what effects should this pill possess?”

“Tranquil Heart Pill is a grade-1 pill. It helps cultivators to calm their mind so that their thoughts will not wander. This kind of pill is effective even on Fighter 8-dan Zongshi realm experts and as such, it is one of the best sellers of the Apothecary Guild!”

Wen Xue said.

As a receptionist, she had sold all kinds of pills. It was natural that she would have a deep understanding of the effects of this Tranquil Heart Pill.

“Indeed, this pill can help cultivators to calm their minds!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction. “However, it's a pity that this pill which Apothecary Meng Yan doesn't have such effects! On the contrary, it might even cause a person's cultivation to go berserk if consumed!”

“Nonsense!”

Meng Yan's expression darkened.

The other party's action of doubting the efficacy of his pill in public was equivalent to humiliating him.

"You need not be so quick to refute my words. Let me finish my words first!" Ignoring the other party's burst of outrage, Zhang Xuan chuckled and continued, "If this pill was created by Apothecary Meng Yan yesterday, I wouldn't say such words. However, it is a pity that it isn't yesterday now and this pill is destined to be a failure!"

"Yesterday?"

"Is there any difference to it?"

"Lad, clarify your words! Don't try to mystify us!"

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan's words, the crowd had no idea what Zhang Xuan was driving at. As such, they couldn't help but raise their doubts.

"I will explain to you all right now! Forging pills aren't just about technique and skills, one's mental state plays a huge part in it as well! Only by infusing one's mental state into the pill will the efficacy of the medicine be heightened! Tranquil Heart Pill requires the mental state of the apothecary forging it to be serene and only through such can the pill be forged perfectly! I believe all of you should have seen the bad temper of Apothecary Meng Yan. He can be set off easily with a single word. With rage in his heart, how can he possibly forge the Tranquil Heart Pill which calms others?"

At which, Zhang Xuan slightly knocked on the table before Meng Yan.

A crack had appeared in the table after the latter's previous punch. At this moment, unable to take the pressure any longer, it fell apart.

Upon the sight, everyone came to a realization.

His words were true. Pill forging was intricately linked to one's state of mind. It was inappropriate and unsuitable for one to forge a Tranquil Heart Pill when under such rampaging emotions.

“Of course, his fiery temper isn’t sufficient to ruin the pill. The crux of the problem is that there is killing intent within Apothecary Meng Yan right now. If I’m not wrong, you probably killed someone this morning and you still bear resentment toward the person. Most probably, you were betrayed by someone you trust. This resentment and killing intent have been infused into the Tranquil Heart Pill when you were forging it. Even though only a sliver of it had slipped in, to the cultivators who consume it, it could have disastrous aftereffects. It increases the possibility of their cultivation going berserk exponentially. If so, it will result in fatal damage onto their fundamentals!”

Zhang Xuan said.

“You... You...”

Meng Yan’s body swayed. He looked at Zhang Xuan as though he was looking at a ghost and his face immediately turned ghastly white.

110 You Are About to Die

Just like what Zhang Xuan said, Meng Yan was hiding resentment and killing intent within his heart.

He was also betrayed by someone he deeply trusted in.

Just that, it was something that happened this morning. He thought that his rage had already ceased and never would he have thought that he would infuse these emotions into his pill.

But... How was he able to tell?

Through the pill he forged?

How was that possible?

“It’s true?”

“This...”

Upon seeing Meng Yan’s expression, even the most dull-witted of the lot could tell that what Zhang Xuan said was the truth.

They stared at one another in disbelief.

[Not only was he able to discern the killing intent in him through his pill forging, he is even able to deduce that he was betrayed by a trusted person. You... Are you an apprentice apothecary or a fortune teller?]

“If you all think that there’s something wrong with my words, there is an easy way to ascertain it. The guild should have Pill Sample Beasts, right? We can feed this Tranquil Heart Pill to it and see whether it will calm down or rampage!”

Upon seeing Meng Yan at a loss for words, Zhang Xuan chuckled lightly.

Usually, in order to ascertain the authenticity and effects of a pill, the Apothecary Guild would prepare some Pill Sample Beasts to test them.

This savage beast was extremely sensitive towards pills. Upon consumption of the pills, one could determine the effects of the pills through its response.

It corresponded to the lab rats used in clinical trials in the world of Zhang Xuan's previous life. Only after passing the tests could the medicine be fed to humans. This was to ensure the safety of those consuming it.

“Un!” Ouyang Cheng nodded his head and an apprentice apothecary walked out of the room. In a moment, a cage of savage beasts that resembled white mice was brought over. Opening the mouth of one, the Tranquil Heart Pill was fed to it.

A short moment later, the Pill Sample Beast started to get agitated, running around the cage and clawing everything in sight. It didn't seem to be calming down in the least.

“Normally, after consuming a Tranquil Heart Pill, the Pill Sample Beast would lie quietly by the side. Yet, after consuming this pill, the Pill Sample Beast becomes visibly agitated.”

In the midst through Zhang Xuan's words, the Pill Sample Beast who consumed the Tranquil Heart Pill ran toward another of its kind, climbed on top of it and started to conduct insertion exercises forcibly onto the other party.

“Cough cough, the strong sexual drive experienced by the one who consumes the pill shows that not only does the pill not calms one, it even induces anger in them! If I'm not wrong, the person whom Apothecary Meng Yan killed today is a woman, one whom he had a sexual relationship with! Her eventual betrayal resulted in his outrage, causing the pill to contain strong emotions of possessiveness and frenzy!”

“This...”

Upon seeing the drugged Pill Sample Beast in the cage crushing on another Pill Sample Beast and forcing itself on the other, not giving the other party a chance to retaliate at all, the other apothecaries stared at one another in astonishment.

[Is this really Tranquil Heart Pill?

Are you sure that it isn't an aphrodisiac!

It is fortunate that it isn't fed to a human. Otherwise, not only will their heart no calm down, they will even turn into a...

Cough cough, it will cause disastrous effects!]

Everyone shuddered upon thinking about the possibility.

“This morning, I saw the concubine that I dote on the most conducting adultery on me with the butler. In that instant, rage filled me and I killed both of them on the spot!”

Upon seeing everyone's gaze focusing on him, Meng Yan shook his head as he explained.

Since the other party had already said so much, there was nothing for him to hide.

This incident had made him furious. For the entire day, he had been in bad mood. The reason why he stepped out was to embarrass Zhang Xuan so as to vent his frustration.

“Is that for real?”

“Seeing through so much through looking at another forge pill?”

...

Seeing Meng Yan admit to it, the others stared at Zhang Xuan as though he was a monster. If their gazes were contemptuous before, they had a grave expression on at this very moment.

One's pill reflected one's state of mind, but... to see that an apothecary had killed someone earlier this morning, even inferring that the person was his concubine, through watching him forge pills...

[The heck, you must be a constable, right!]

Otherwise... How could he possibly tell that much?

“Alright, I have already pointed out the flaws in it. Apothecary Meng Yan, do you need me to go on?” Ignoring the shocked expression on the others, Zhang Xuan said with a smile.

The Library of Heaven's Path could see through all flaws. It was a simple task for him to tell that he had been betrayed by

his concubine and that his pill carried killing intent and resentment.

“There’s no need. I admit defeat!”

Meng Yan surrendered.

The numerous apothecaries on the field, including himself, weren’t able to see through the problem in the pill he forged. Yet, the other party was able to see through it directly, even telling so much about it... It was a clear loss, even if he didn’t wish to accept it!

“Just like that... he surrendered?”

Wen Xue’s eyes widened.

An apothecary admitted defeat to an apprentice?

If she didn’t see this for herself, she wouldn’t dare to believe it.

However, it made sense when she thought about it. To be able to see that far, that fellow’s eye for discernment was too incredible. He had no choice but to admit defeat!

“Alright, next!”

Now that the first person had admitted defeat, Zhang Xuan had achieved first blood. He turned to look at the remaining nine people with a smile.

“I shall face him!”

An elderly stood up.

If they thought that Zhang Xuan was here to cause trouble previously, after Meng Yan’s incident, they finally understood that this fellow was an expert, expert among experts.

No wonder he was so confident as to dare to challenge the Pill Debate, even raising the difficulty at that.

“It is Apothecary Chen Xiao!”

“Apothecary Chen may not be the best among us in terms of pill forging, but he is the oldest!”

“He is an extremely rational and calm person, unlike Meng Yan and his fiery temper. I believe that he will be able to

defeat that lad!”

...

Seeing the elder stand up, everyone secretly nodded their heads in approval.

This Apothecary Chen Xiao was the oldest among the ten of them, as well as the most level-headed one. Surely there wouldn't be any problems if he was the one to make a move.

Huhuhu!

The flame beneath the cauldron crackled. In a moment's time, he extracted a few pills from it.

It was the same pill as the one Meng Yan forged previously, Tranquil Heart Pill. It was also perfectly round and smooth with radiance glowing off its surface. However, it was clearly of higher quality, reaching Perfection.

“Alright, I am done forging the pills. You don't need to identify the forging method, it's the same as the one Apothecary Meng Yan used previously, Ten Formulas of Tranquil Water. If you're able to point out the flaws in it, I will concede and admit defeat!”

Apothecary Chen Xiao said calmly as he grasped the pills he just forged in his hands.

“Incredible!”

“This is truly a wise move!”

“To use the same forging method to forge the exact same pills. Previously, he was able to point out the killing intent in Apothecary Meng Yan's heart as the flaw in his pill forging, but Apothecary Chen Xiao's state of mind is serene and he is a level-headed person. He should be unable to find another one of this kind of flaw on him!”

“Let's see how he will fare this time...”

...

Upon seeing Apothecary Chen Xiao's actions, everyone couldn't help but exclaim internally that it was indeed the older ones who were more cunning.

Even Zhang Xuan couldn't help but nod his head.

The other party was indeed extremely wise.

Even though the other party had clearly told him that he used the same forging method so that he doesn't have to guess it, his actions were, in fact, making it more difficult for him to answer.

However, to the Library of Heaven's Path... this was nothing at all!

Zhang Xuan looked at him, seemingly nonchalant to his actions, "If I'm not wrong, Apothecary Chen Xiao should have trouble sleeping and eating recently!"

"Ah?"

Apothecary Chen Xiao was taken aback, "It's true that I have been having problems sleeping, and my appetite isn't good recently. However... this should have nothing to do with pill forging though?"

[So what if I don't eat or sleep?

You just have to tell me about the flaws in my pill forging. Why are you telling me about my body condition?

Besides...

About me not sleeping well and having no appetite... How did you know about it?]

"Nothing to do with it? You're wrong! It is related to it in every way!"

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

"Related to it in every way? Enlighten me."

Apothecary Chen Xiao couldn't help but look over.

"Hehe, if I'm not wrong... You are about to die!"

Zhang Xuan said.

111 Death Aura

Pu!

He thought that the other party would speak of some theory to convince him of it. Hearing his words, however, Apothecary Chen Xiao almost puked blood.

[Just because I'm not eating or sleeping well, you say that I'm going to die? You're the one who is going to die, your family is the one who is going to die...]

Not just him, the other examiners also glared at him furiously.

Apothecary Chen Xiao was an esteemed figure in the circle of apothecaries and they had always respected him. Yet, this fellow dared to curse him straight to his face. [Do you dare to spout any more nonsense?]

"I have been an apothecary for many years. Even though I have been stuck at this level for very long, I have been working diligently and studying hard to improve myself! I might not be a talented genius, but I am well aware of my body's condition. The reason why I haven't been sleeping well and eating well is because of the numerous miscellaneous affairs in my household I tend recently. There hasn't been anything off about my physical condition other than that. So, why do you say that I'm about to die?"

Apothecary Chen Xiao harrumphed.

Apothecaries often came into contact with medicinal pills and even though they were inferior to physicians in terms of diagnosing, they were still slightly learned in the aspect.

"You aren't wrong. There isn't anything wrong with your body!" Zhang Xuan calmly replied to the suspicions he rose.

"Nothing wrong? Then, what are you talking about?"

"How spiteful, how can you take these words as a joke!"

"This is a Pill Debate, not a session for you to curse Apothecary Chen Xiao!"

...

Upon hearing him admit that there was nothing wrong with Apothecary Chen Xiao's body, everyone started to bellow at him angrily.

If there was something wrong with his body, they could let this matter slip. However, since there was nothing wrong with his body, how could such nonsense be acceptable?

Feeling baffled, Ouyang Cheng and the others stared at him.

“Hehe!”

Zhang Xuan was completely nonchalant to the rebuke of the crowd. He simply smiled lightly and said, “Who says that one cannot die if there's nothing wrong with their body?”

“What do you mean?”

Upon seeing his calmness and confidence, Apothecary Chen Xiao felt goosebumps rising all over him. Just as he was about to continue questioning him, Zhang Xuan waved his hands and said, “Since you don't believe me, let's first take a look at the pill!”

At which, the eyes of the crowd fixated on the Tranquil Heart Pill Apothecary Chen Xiao had just forged.

“Apothecary Chen Xiao is a level-headed and calm person. He has reached a high level of mastery in his skills in forging pills and if I were to forcibly speak of a flaw of his, none of you will believe me. It would be troublesome to verify my claims as well!” Zhang Xuan smiled, “Since that's the case, I won't talk about the flaws in his forging method. I shall just talk about this pill here. Just like the one Apothecary Meng Yan forged, if this Tranquil Heart Pill is consumed by a cultivator, it would aggravate his anxiety and even cause his death!”

“What?”

“I have been examining Apothecary Chen Xiao's method in forging the pills closely and there isn't the slightest mistake in his actions. Furthermore, his pill has reached the level of Perfection, so how can it worsen one's anxiety?”

“This isn't a place for you to spout nonsense!”

No one believed Zhang Xuan's words at all.

The reason why there was a problem with the Tranquil Heart Pill that Meng Yan forged was because he killed his concubine, resulting in the killing intent in his body to billow such that even he was unable to curb it. On the other hand, Apothecary Chen Xiao had a calm nature, which was compatible with the state of mind one required to forge Tranquil Heart Pill. If so, how could it worsen one's anxiety?

[Even if you wish to spout nonsense, you should've had something better to say!]

"If you don't believe me, we can try it out! There are Pill Sample Beasts here!" Zhang Xuan pointed to the cage.

Other than the two that were exercising together, there were still other Pill Sample Beasts in the cage which were lying calmly by the side.

"Let's give it a try then!"

An apothecary who didn't believe his words casually picked up a Tranquil Heart Pill and placed it into the mouth of a Pill Sample Beast.

After consuming the Tranquil Heart Beast, the Pill Sample Beast didn't get agitated as the previous one did. It also didn't grab another one of its kind to exercise on it. Instead, it laid by a corner, not moving at all.

"How is it? A Tranquil Heart Pill can calm a person's mental state. The lack of movement in this Pill Sample Beast means that the pill is taking effect. What else do you have to say?"

The apothecary harrumphed.

The others also looked toward Zhang Xuan.

Previously, Zhang Xuan said that consuming this Heart Pill Beast would worsen one's anxiety. Now, it was clear that the pill was working as it should and there wasn't anything queer about it. They were curious to see how he would answer.

"Give it a moment!"

Zhang Xuan didn't say anything else and simply sat quietly on his chair.

After ten minutes, the Pill Sample Beast still didn't move at all. At this point, the apothecary who fed the Pill Sample Beast the pill couldn't hold it in any longer, "See, it hasn't moved at all. This clearly shows that the Tranquil Heart Pill is working as it should. Are you trying to waste our time by having us wait?"

"It's okay now!"

Zhang Xuan said.

"It's okay?"

The apothecary frowned, "What do you mean? It is clear that this Pill Sample Beast isn't anxious in the least given how it is still lying quietly by the corner. How do you want us to see?"

"The reason why it is lying quietly by the corner doesn't necessarily mean that the Tranquil Heart Pill has taken effect. It can also mean that... it is dead!"

Zhang Xuan said.

"Dead?"

The apothecary was taken aback. He immediately rushed forward, opened the cage and grabbed the Pill Sample Beast out. With a single glance, his eyes narrowed abruptly "This... This... How is this possible?"

The Pill Sample Beast in his hand had already breathed its last. Its body was already starting to turn cold.

How long had it been?

To turn cold within ten minutes, it meant that it had died a short moment after consuming the pill!

"It's really dead?"

"The Tranquil Heart Pill should only calm a person's spirits, so why would it kill a Pill Sample Beast?"

"A Pill Sample Beast's constitution is suited for testing pills, it is impossible for ordinary pills to kill it. What... is going on?"

...

A commotion broke out.

After eating a Tranquil Heart Pill... the Pill Sample Beast died?

If a cultivator were to consume it, wouldn't it mean his demise as well?

"This... This..."

Apothecary Chen Xiao's complexion darkened. He retreated several steps consecutively and disbelief could be seen in his eyes, "This is impossible... I followed the forging method strictly, there isn't the slightest error in it. Even if I fail to form a pill, it shouldn't turn into poison. Why was the Pill Sample Beast poisoned to death..."

It was a huge crime for an apothecary to poison someone to death through the pills he forged. He had never met with such an incident throughout his entire life, so why was all of these occurring now?

"Zhang Xuan, this... What's going on?"

With a bewildered expression, Ouyang Cheng sought clarification.

At this point, everyone's gazes also focused on Zhang Xuan.

He was able to tell the problem in this Tranquil Heart Pill and he knew that the Pill Sample Beast would die. Who else was more appropriate to explain the situation other than him?

"I have already revealed the flaw in his forging method, so I should have already passed this test. Do I really have to explain it?"

Zhang Xuan didn't reply Ouyang Cheng. Instead, he turned to look at Apothecary Chen Xiao.

He was able to identify the problem in the pill and he successfully pointed it out. This bore testimony to his abilities and in this clash between him and Apothecary Chen Xiao, he could be considered to be the victor.

"If you explain the situation, I am willing to admit defeat!"

Apothecary Chen Xiao gritted his teeth.

Even if Zhang Xuan were to win in this clash, as long as Chen Xiao didn't admit defeat, he would be able to conduct a round of examination.

As the oldest one of the ten apothecaries, his surrender would cause the confidence of the others to waver. As such, this matter was of utmost importance.

“If that's the case, then allow me to speak more on the matter!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head, “There are no problems with the sequence and technique you forged the Tranquil Heart Pill with. In fact, you even infused your own tranquility into the pill. Rationally speaking, the pill should be of extremely high quality with high effectiveness. However, it's a pity that... you are about to die. Your body is already filled with death aura and naturally, the pill you forge will come into contact with this aura as well. This is the reason why the Pill Sample Beast died upon consuming the pill you forged!”

112 Cheng Jiang

“Could it be that... I am really going to die?”

Apothecary Chen Xiao’s mouth quivered and his entire body shivered slightly.

The first time Zhang Xuan said these words, he thought that the other party was cursing him, so he didn’t pay it any heed. However, upon seeing the Pill Sample Beast die upon consuming the pills he forged, he was rattled. Even more so, he felt fear.

“This...”

Seeing him in such a state, everyone felt bad for him. They wanted to console him, but they couldn’t find the right words to say.

If he weren’t on the verge of death, how could a Pill Sample Beast die just like that from eating the pill he forged? It was clear that what the other party said was true!

“I have explained what I should. Who wants to challenge me next!”

Zhang Xuan scanned the surroundings.

“No... Brother Zhang Xuan, don’t be in such a hurry!” Apothecary Chen Xiao couldn’t hold it in any longer and looked to him in panic.

Instead of addressing him as a “lad,” he addressed him as “brother” now.

“Why? Is Apothecary Chen Xiao unable to accept the results and would like to experiment once more?” Zhang Xuan looked over.

“No, I... want to learn: how will I die? If you can tell me the truth, I am willing to have my body smashed to smithereens to repay this favor to you!” Apothecary Chen Xiao pleaded.

There weren't any problems with his body. Even if his appetite dwindled and his quality of sleep decreased, it shouldn't cause his death!

As the person in question, how could he know nothing when he was already on the verge of death?

"I will tell you honestly then. Even though there were no mistakes in your skill and movements when you were forging the pill, your body is slightly stiff. It is clear that your vitality and strength aren't what they used to be. Most important of all, parts of your skin have started to turn gray, similar to the livor mortis that appears on corpses! If I'm not wrong, you have applied a special kind of medicine on your skin to conceal it from sight. In actuality, your entire body is already speckled with gray spots!"

Zhang Xuan looked over with piercing eyes.

Looking as though he had been struck by lightning, Apothecary Chen Xiao's eyes narrowed as he retreated backward in fear.

Just like what the other party said, there were spots on his body. He thought that it was a kind of rare disease and he intended to find time to seek out Master Yuanyu and have him take a look. After all, it didn't hurt or itch, so he didn't pay much attention to it. To think that it would be livor mortis!

"Sir, please save me!"

Suppressing his gasps of shock and fear, Apothecary Chen Xiao no longer held any doubt for the other party's words. He clasped his hands together and pleaded.

His address also changed from "brother" to "sir."

Regardless of who it was and how long he has lived, no one wished to die, especially when death appeared before them.

Everyone would seek any means to live on!

"Have you obtained some treasure recently? If I'm not wrong, you probably took it from a corpse. I shall not explain any further. If you wish to live longer, it is best that you not touch

it anymore!” Zhang Xuan waved his hand. “I will end my advice here. Good luck!”

“You—you...”

Hearing his words, Apothecary Chen Xiao froze once more.

What the other party said was true. He had obtained a cauldron recently and it was much better than the one he had been using. He had been treating it as a precious treasure, stroking it daily. If he could, he would even sleep beside it every day.

This cauldron was taken from the hands of a corpse, one that had departed not too long ago.

This person gave him the cauldron in hopes that he would take revenge for him. However, his enemy was way too powerful, so he only agreed to do so casually back then. He did not intend to exact vengeance in his stead.

After which, the person died and he no longer bothered about the matter. Could he mean... this cauldron?

He obtained his cauldron clandestinely, not even his family members knew of it. He... How did he know of it?

Apothecary Chen Xiao took a good look at the young man before him once more. This time, agitation could be seen on his face, as though staring at a specter.

“Alright, who’s the next one?”

Ignoring the elder, Zhang Xuan turned to look at the other eight remaining examiners.

Actually, Chen Xiao was inflicted with not an illness but a curse.

He agreed to seek vengeance in another’s stead, and in exchange, the other party gave him his most precious treasure. However, he went against his words and the other party predicted that he would do so. As such, he imprinted the curse on the cauldron. If he got close to it, his life would be gnawed away. Even though it wouldn’t cause any illness or side effects, his lifespan would reduce tremendously.

Unless he made up his mind to exact vengeance for the other party!

Of course, Zhang Xuan wouldn't say these words out loud.

Putting aside the fact that he had barely met Apothecary Chen Xiao and wasn't indebted to him, more importantly, the other party was an ungrateful person. He made promises but didn't fulfill them. Zhang Xuan despised these kinds of people.

After consecutively getting two apothecaries to admit defeat, none of the other examiners volunteered to take him on. No matter how foolish the other eight were, it was clear at this point that Zhang Xuan was someone with true ability. For a long time, the entire hall was silent and no one dared to step forward.

“If none of you wish to continue the Pill Debate, please admit defeat and declare me the victor!”

Zhang Xuan smiled.

“Tranquil Heart Pill requires your heart to be calm to forge. Under usual circumstances, you need to adjust your state of mind for three days through consuming vegetarian meals and cleansing yourself with water. Given how they had to forge the pill out of a sudden without making the necessary adjustments in their state of mind, it is natural that the pills they forged would be affected by their emotions. As long as we avoid forging such pills, he should be unable to point out any flaws!”

“Indeed! Only the forging of Tranquil Heart Pill is affected by your emotions and state of mind. The effects of such for other pills are minimal so it will do as long as we do not forge Tranquil Heart Pills!”

Muttering broke out among the crowd and soon a voice rang out.

“I will face him!”

An apothecary stood up.

It was a middle-aged man about the same age as Du Man. He had a square-shaped face and his eyes shone with determination and calm.

“It’s Apothecary Cheng Jiang!”

“He is the apothecary who possesses the greatest potential among us all. Just within three years of becoming an apothecary, he was already able to forge more than a dozen kinds of pills. With sufficient time, there is a high possibility of him surpassing Guild Leader Ouyang!”

“Nothing will go wrong since he’s the one making the move!”

.....

...

The eyes of the crowd lit up.

Initially, everyone was resolute to pulling this Zhang Xuan lad off his high horse. Yet two apothecaries, Meng Yan and Chen Xiao, who challenged him had fallen to him. This struck a blow at their confidence and they urgently needed someone to boost their morale.

“Zhang Xuan, you were able to notice the slightest details in the previous two clashes, to the point of even discerning an apothecary’s vitality, emotional state, and mental state. I am impressed!”

Walking out, Apothecary Cheng Jiang nodded his head in approval with a smile.

“I am unworthy of your praise!” Zhang Xuan replied.

“You were even able to discern the killing intent from Apothecary Meng Yan. If I were to forge a Tranquil Heart Pill, my flaws would surely be unable to escape from your notice. Thus, if I may propose presumptuously, I would like to increase the difficulty of the challenge. I wonder if you’re brave enough to accept!” Apothecary Cheng Jiang said.

“I am willing to listen to the details!”

Upon hearing that the other party wanted to increase the difficulty of the challenge, Zhang Xuan looked interested.

“I have just created a new pill forging technique and come up with a name for it a few days ago. I have not displayed it to anyone before. If I gave this problem to you, even if you are

learned in all methods that have existed since immemorial times, you will surely find it hard to answer!” Apothecary Cheng Jiang said. “Thus, I contemplated and decided against having you give the name of my technique. As long as you can name three pill forging techniques I referenced from, I am willing to admit defeat!”

“Creating a new pill forging technique? Incredible!”

Pill forging techniques were similar to the battle techniques of a fighter. Those who could create one of their own were definitely talented individuals, people who left their mark on history.

As long as they did not burn out before their time was up, it was just a matter of time before they made a name for themselves.

Upon hearing his words, the other apothecaries looked at him, full of admiration.

“Apothecary Cheng sure is remarkable. This question is truly difficult!”

“Indeed. Since it is a brand new pill forging technique, it is bound to be different from the originals. Compared to pointing out the flaws in pill forging techniques, to identify the references in a newly-created pill forging technique, three at that, the difficulty is much greater!”

“This time, Zhang Xuan will most probably be defeated!”

“Of course, this is such a difficult question. Even a 3-star apothecary would be stumped by it, much less an apprentice apothecary!”

The crowd couldn't help but lament Zhang Xuan's predicament.

In some Chinese religions and culture, eating meat can be considered to be a sin due to the bloodshed resulted in its production. Sometimes it's associated with state of mind—those who consume meat tend to be more short-tempered whereas those who consume vegetarian meals tend to be calmer.

113 Forging Technique

Telling the references from a complete pill forging technique—using an analogy—was like creating a solution of water from numerous wells and demanding for another to identify the origin of the water. It was an impossible task!

Unless one witnessed him creating the pill forging technique step by step, it would be impossible to identify three references. The difficulty of the task Cheng Jiang proposed, compared to simply finding the flaws in a pill forging technique, was at least five times harder!

Zhang Xuan's eyes narrowed.

As expected of the apothecaries, they weren't as easy to deal with as he expected.

This fellow might be a bundle of smiles and look magnanimous. However, he was truly the most shameless of the group.

Even if Zhang Xuan agreed... identifying the references in a pill forging technique was basically an impossible task! Given how Zhang Xuan raised the difficulty earlier, the privilege should be extended to the other party as well. If he disagreed with it, other people might criticize him because of that in the future, thus leaving a stain on his reputation.

“Why? I know that this is a difficult matter to ask, and it is normal that you will reject me. However... if you reject my offer, can I consider it your loss?” Cheng Jiang grinned widely.

“Loss?” Zhang Xuan shook his head. “It just happens that I would like to see Apothecary Cheng's new forging technique. Let's begin!”

This method of his would normally be effective against other people, making them fly into a panic. However, it was ineffective against Zhang Xuan.

The reason why Zhang Xuan could identify flaws in the pill forging techniques of others wasn't because of his discernment ability. Rather, it was because he possessed the Library of Heaven's Path. As long as the library remained with him, regardless of whatever forging technique—whether it was just created or yet to be created—they would all be clearly displayed in the form of a book. This was no problem for him at all.

“Alright!” Seeing him agree to it, a gleam flashed across Apothecary Cheng Jiang's eyes. The corners of his lips crept upwards as he gathered the necessary medicinal herbs and headed to the cauldron.

Hualala!

The medicinal herbs flew in the air. His every action was fluid and elegant. Looking it from afar, there was a unique sense of aesthetics to it.

“It is indeed a new forging technique. I have never seen it before!”

“If I'm not mistaken, he is forging Juxi Pill!”

“Yes. Juxi Pill is useful to people of cultivation realms below Fighter 7-dan. It is exceptionally useful for those in the Juxi realm. It isn't a valuable pill in comparison to the others, but it is one of the most useful ones to the fighters. Usually, this is the pill apprentice apothecaries will practice for the Pill Forging examination. As such, most apothecaries are extremely familiar with the method to forging it. This is also the reason why Apothecary Cheng Jiang is able to better showcase the uniqueness of his forging technique. Furthermore, his motions are more fluid, making it difficult for others to discern the references!”

“In any case, I am unable to tell the pill forging techniques he referenced from...”

“Me neither...”

.....

...

The apothecaries watched Cheng Jiang for a moment before shaking their heads.

“Apothecary Cheng sure is vicious!”

Standing by the side, Ouyang Cheng shook his head. “Given his standard as a 1-star apothecary, he is able to forge the most basic Juxi Pill easily with fluid motions, making it difficult for others to discern the forging method easily. Furthermore, given the short time required to forge it, you couldn’t analyze it even if you wanted to. Looks like Zhang Xuan will probably fail here...”

Apothecary Cheng Jiang could forge more difficult grade-1 pills, but it would be troublesome for him. He couldn’t forge them as easily as he could the Juxi Pill. This was just like how Yang Guo could wield the Heavy Iron Sword, but he was unable to control it as freely as he wished.

On the other hand, if he forged the most basic Juxi Pill, it was like Yang Guo wielding an ordinary sword instead—effortless.

This Apothecary Cheng Jiang may have had a wide smile on his face, but he was actually the most scheming of them all. Not only were his movements fast in forging Juxi Pill, the time required to forge it was also short. A normal grade-1 pill would take at least half an hour to forge. On the other hand, Juxi Pill could be forged in less than fifteen minutes.

Seeing three references in such a short period of time?

How was that possible?

It was clear that he is intent intended to do in Zhang Xuan!

“Is he... going to fail?”

Upon hearing Ouyang Cheng’s judgement, Wen Xue clenches her fists tightly.

“It should be difficult for him to pass this test...”

Ouyang Cheng sighed.

“Interesting!”

Initially, he didn’t bear any ill intent for this Cheng Jiang. However, he didn’t expect this fellow to be so despicable and

use such low-handed methods. Zhang Xuan's gaze turned icy. As a cultured, knowledgeable, ambitious, and worldly transcender, how could he allow others to bully him without trying to retaliate?

Hu!

Finally, the Juxi Pill was successfully forged. A total of seven or eight pills rolled out from the cauldron.

"I am done forging. Zhang Xuan, please!"

Apothecary Cheng Jiang looked at him and chuckled with confidence.

It was true that his forging technique had more than three references to other forging techniques. However, his movements just now were extremely fast and fluid. It was almost an impossible task for the other party to see through any of them!

Besides... even if the other party was right, he could deny it!

There are so many forging techniques, and naturally, given how no one here could see through the references behind his forging technique, it was up to him to say whatever he wanted!

[For a brat who came from some remote corner to use me as a stepping stone to achieve victory in the Pill Debate.... Dream on!]

"If I can point out three references in your forging technique, will you admit defeat?"

Zhang Xuan looked at him with a hint of amusement in his eyes.

"Of course. I am an official apothecary. Given my standing, there is no reason I would go back on my words just to deal with an apprentice apothecary!" Apothecary Cheng Jiang flung his sleeves haughtily. Arrogance exuded from his tone.

"Great. Since you have put it like that, then this matter is simple!"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head and walked forward. He circled around the cauldron once before lowering his head to look at

the Juxi Pill in his hand.

He pinched one and held it up, placed it before his nose, and took a whiff of its scent.

“This Juxi Pill has vibrant colors and a radiant outer appearance. Going by conventional standards, it should have already reached Perfection!” Zhang Xuan complimented. However, his tone abruptly changed. “However...”

“Due to the limitations of Apothecary Cheng’s forging technique, Perfection is already the limit. It is impossible for him to forge an Inscribed Pill!”

“It is just a Juxi Pill, what’s the use of forging an Inscribed Pill?” Apothecary Cheng Jiang scoffed.

This Juxi Pill was the most basic pill an apothecary could forge. It increased the rate at which a fighter could gather spiritual energy from the surroundings. It was a waste of an Inscribed Pill to occur in this kind of fundamental pill!

“That’s true!”

Zhang Xuan nodded his head, reluctant to tug with him on this matter. Instead, he smiled and continued, “The question I should answer is with regards to your forging technique. There is no point debating this topic. Alright, since it’s a request on your part, I will answer your question. Putting aside the forging techniques you have referenced previously, let’s first talk about how many forging techniques you know. With this, it should be easier to conclude which are the few forging techniques you referenced from!”

“Three years ago, Apothecary Cheng Jiang used **【Rain of Ten Thousand Streams】** to forge a grade-1 **【Vitality Rejuvenation Pill】** to pass the apothecary examinations. In the same year, you learned **【Convergence of the North River】** and successfully forged **【Soul Soothing Pill】** .

“The spring of the second year, during Apothecary Bai Ming’s birthday celebration, you sneaked into his study and copied his **【Illusory Silk Hands】** with which you forged **【Body**

Nourishment Pill】 . From then on, your reputation spread far and wide!

“That winter, when you asked Apothecary Lin Mu to demonstrate his 【Frost Threaded Hands】 , you secretly took it for yourself!

“In the summer last year, you spent 50,000 gold coins to bribe Apothecary Jin Chen’s butler to duplicate a copy of 【Golden Spring Fleeting Cloud Dexterity】 !

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...

“In the third month of last year, you enticed Du Man’s apothecary apprentice Zhu Huahua and obtained Apothecary Du’s personal forging technique 【Hundred Intertwining Method】 ...

.....

...

“Now, if I added them up, Rain of Ten Thousand Streams, Convergence of the North River... Summing together all of these forging techniques, there are a total of twelve of them!”

Zhang Xuan counted slowly as though counting his own precious treasures. After that, he turned around to look at the apothecary whose face had paled at some point. “Apothecary Cheng Jiang, are there any mistakes with what I said?”

“You—you...”

Cheng Jiang stumbled backward. His eyes narrowed, as though he had seen a freak.

Yang Guo is a character from Return of the Condor Heroes by Jin Yong.

In the novel, after his hand was chopped off by Guo Fu, he was saved by a condor and chances upon the grave of a great swordsman, Dugu Qiubai. There are four swords there, one of them being the Heavy Iron Sword. The sword is known for

being extremely heavy and difficult to utilize in battle. Yang Guo took a long time before he managed to gain control of it.

114 Convergence of Ten Thousand Tributaries

“What? Cheng Jiang, is what he said true? I demonstrated the skill to you out of kindness, and you secretly picked up my Frost Threaded Hands?”

“Dammit, no wonder I wasn’t able to find you for a long time after the banquet started. Confess, when did you sneak into my study?”

“Cheng Jiang, we are fellow apothecaries. If you wish to learn my forging technique, you could have asked me sincerely for it and I might have taught it to you. Yet you chose to entice my apprentice with benefits to obtain my Hundred Intertwining Method. Aren’t you being too underhanded!”

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A pill forging technique was similar to a fighter’s battle techniques. Most of them were exclusive to a certain clan or sect and mustn’t be taught to outsiders lightly.

This Cheng Jiang actually secretly learned the forging techniques of other apothecaries without their permission, even resorting to stealing to obtain them. Upon hearing Zhang Xuan’s words, the entire room burst into outrage.

Everyone here was a member of the Apothecary Guild and they often exchanged knowledge on the art of pill forging. If he was truly interested in learning their pill forging method, he could indicate his interest, conduct a ceremony to acknowledge the other party as his mentor, and learn their skills. Then their relationship could be annulled and they would still be friends!

However, secretly learning in this manner was akin to a fighter stealing the battle techniques of other experts. It was a huge taboo that one should never commit.

“Everyone, don’t listen to his nonsense...”

Sensing the heated atmosphere, anger and fear flashed across Cheng Jiang’s face as he hurriedly tried to absolve himself from the accusations.

“I’m spouting nonsense?”

Zhang Xuan walked forward. The corners of his lips crept upwards. “Just now, to forge Juxi Pill, Apothecary Cheng took a total of 23 medicinal herbs. I shouldn’t be mistaken on this aspect!”

“You’re right!”

All certified apothecaries were aware of the medicinal herbs required to forge Juxi Pill. This wasn’t a secret, thus there was no need to deny it.

“When you mixed White Lotus Grass, Wisteria Root, and Golden River Flower together, your pinky was angled backward whereas the tip was bent forward, as though picking a flower. If I’m not wrong, this method is referenced from Apothecary Bai Ming’s **【Illusory Silk Hands】** !”

“Afterwards, when you extracted the Green Sun Essence, your five fingers opened wide with which you gently stroked the herb, as though extracting frigid air from ice, not daring to exert too much strength. This should be referenced from Apothecary Lin Mu’s **【Frost Threaded Hands】** !”

“Then, when you added Purple Osmund Grass and White Mane Flower in, to prevent the properties of the two from clashing with one another, you specially circled them twice around the cauldron before throwing them in. Through doing so, not only would the medicinal properties of both be better utilized, they would only lose their violent nature. As such, their properties would not clash with one another. Apothecary Jin Chen’s **【Golden Spring Fleeting Cloud Dexterity】** seems identical to this move of yours!”

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...

“After that, when the pill was forged, in order to prevent it from coming into contact with the searing cauldron, you used zhenqi to produce a unique air net with your hands. Even though your movements are inconspicuous, if someone watches closely, they are still recognizable. Apothecary Du Man, isn’t that similar to your 【Hundred Intertwining Method】 ?”

Zhang Xuan didn’t allow the other party to refute his words at all, dumping it all out en masse. At this point, he paused for a moment as he smiled brightly. “If... Apothecary Cheng thinks what that I just said is nonsense and that I made it all up, the Record Crystal has been recording the entire procedure and we can look through it anytime. Everyone can bear testimony to whether the words I’ve been saying are nonsense!”

“You...”

Cheng Jiang face paled and his entire body trembled uncontrollably.

He knew that what the other party said was completely true!

Apothecaries had their own schools and inheritances. In order to improve swiftly, he went around stealing other people’s techniques. He thought that he had done it very secretly... How did this fellow know?

Furthermore, down to the very details?

In an instant, he felt like he was standing nude before everyone else. A deep feeling of fear rose from the depths of his heart.

“What? Do you still think I’m spouting nonsense?” Ignoring the other party whose face had paled to the extreme at this moment, Zhang Xuan stepped forward. “If you think there’s any mistake in what I’ve said... is this forging technique that you ‘self-created’ through merging everyone’s forging techniques called 【Convergence of Ten Thousand Tributaries】 ?”

“You’re a demon...”

Apothecary Cheng Jiang staggered and fell to the floor.

The name he had come up with for this forging technique was indeed 【Convergence of Ten Thousand Tributaries】 !

It was a name he had come up with a few days ago and he had yet to tell anyone about it. In fact, not even his apprentices knew of it, so why... does the other party know the name?

To be able to see through everything down to the very details such that him stealing the other people's forging technique was unable to escape his eyes.... Was this fellow a demon?

‘How can this be...’

Apothecary Cheng Jiang was terrified.

“Convergence of Ten Thousand Tributaries—you utilized all of the different techniques to forge that river of yours. How arrogant! It sure is an incredible forging technique!”

“To steal our forging techniques, integrate them together as one and claim that you have created a new forging technique. Cheng Jiang, you sure are capable!”

“To think that I’ve regarded you as my brother and my best buddy, yet you chose to do this to me. Fine!”

“From now on, our relationship is severed!”

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...

Upon seeing the expression on Cheng Jiang’s face and recalling the movements he made while forging the pill recently, they would truly be fools if they were still unable to understand the situation.

The faces of the apothecaries here turned red in fury. Their wrathful eyes fixated on Cheng Jiang.

They weren’t exceptionally skilled apothecaries and their forging techniques were not really secrets that must not be leaked to the outside. But... this fellow, if he had expressed his desire to learn their techniques, getting rejected wasn’t really a big deal. However, his actions of learning their techniques behind their back was definitely something an apothecary should never do!

Not only that, he had even arrogantly bragged that he had created a new technique by himself. Created, your head! You simply took all of our techniques to form a hodgepodge. You call that creating a new technique?

If that's so, everyone would be creating new techniques every day!

Not to mention, naming it Convergence of Ten Thousand Tributaries...

How can anyone be that shameless!

At this point, they no longer viewed Cheng Jiang as their equal. Disgust was the only thing that could be seen on their faces.

“Please calm down!”

Upon seeing the indignation of the crowd, Zhang Xuan smiled. He interjected into their commotion and turned to look at Cheng Jiang, who was still in a state of disbelief. “Apothecary Cheng Jiang... is this considered my victory?”

“You—you...”

Seeing his smile, Apothecary Cheng Jiang shuddered. “You win.... I admit defeat!”

He has no choice but to admit defeat. The other party's ability to discern had already reached the level of demons. He feared that if he continued competing with him, more of his secrets would be revealed. As such, he could only hurriedly nod his head.

At this moment, he regretted his action of intentionally making things difficult for the other party. Even though the other party had pointed out the flaws in Meng Yan and Chen Xiao's pill forging, he had clearly spared their dignity. Yet he sent a slap directly at his face, exposing his darkest secret in public....

It was foreseeable that once news of these matters spread, he would lose his standing within Tianxuan Kingdom's Apothecary Guild. He would be shunned and viewed with contempt by all.

All credibility and reputation he had built up throughout the years would be completely destroyed and others would just think of him as a fraud and villain.

Upon his surrender, Zhang Xuan smiled.

Initially, he didn't have any serious conflict with any of them so he couldn't be bothered with the other party's personality flaws. Yet, this fellow tried to take advantage of the situation to force him into a corner!

'You want to humiliate me? Try it then!

'As a transcender with a golden ring, how can I allow myself to be humiliated by you like this?

'Since you decided to charge straight at me, don't blame me for not going easy on you. It just happens that I can use you to warn the others that I, Zhang Xuan... am not an easy target!'

"Apothecary Cheng has admitted defeat!"

Zhang Xuan surveyed the surroundings. "Anyone else?"

In that instant, the room fell utterly silent.

115 Acupoint Soothing Pill

Even though the person in front of them had only pointed out the flaws in the pill forging techniques of three apothecaries, the abilities he had revealed in doing so induced fear and terror in the remaining few.

Not just them, even Chen Jiang's swift and fluid actions—factoring in the short duration he took to forge the pill—were clearly seen through by Zhang Xuan, who had also analyzed the origin of his movements, and deduced that he had stolen the forging techniques of others....

That ability of discernment and knowledge of his was something none of the people here could match up to.

“Three apothecaries have admitted defeat, seven more to go. Who will go first?”

Seeing all of them silence, Zhang Xuan continued to stare at them.

Pill Debate required ten apothecaries to admit their defeat before Zhang Xuan could be declared victorious.

“This...”

Silence continued to linger about the remaining seven apothecaries.

It was one thing if the other party's ability to discern matters was impressive, but of the three apothecaries he faced previously, one was exposed for being cuckolded, one turned out to be on the verge of death, and the last one had his reputation tarnished....

They were only here for the Pill Debate. They didn't want their secrets exposed because of this!

The other party's ability to discern was so incredible that he could immediately tell a difference if their state of mind was in the slightest bit off. Given such circumstances, who would still dare to challenge him?

Furthermore... they couldn't admit defeat without competing in Pill Debate!

If they did so, it was equivalent to going easy on the other party, which was considered as an act of cheating. Once revealed, they would be stripped of their apothecary qualification.

As such, the awkward silence continued to linger in the atmosphere as no one dared to step forward.

“Please hurry up, we can't possibly continue to drag this matter on like this!”

Sensing the awkward atmosphere lingering about, Ouyang Cheng couldn't help saying, “I'll go!”

After a momentary silence, Apothecary Du Man stood up.

He was acquainted with Zhang Xuan and had even bet over him. What he thought to be an arrogant fellow turned out to be a figure with incredible capability and outstanding discernment ability.

Even he himself was far from a match for him in this aspect.

However, he didn't have a choice either way. After all, they couldn't continue stalling time here like this.

“Apothecary Du Man, allow me to go instead!”

Just as Du Man was about to start forging so that Zhang Xuan could point out the flaws in the process, an elder stood up.

“It's Apothecary Bai Ming!”

“Just now, Zhang Xuan exposed that Cheng Jiang had secretly learned his Illusory Silk Hands. He was extremely furious. Why would he make a move now?”

“I have no idea. Let's watch!”

.....

Upon seeing this elder, the others shuddered.

Even though Apothecary Bai Ming wasn't the oldest of the group, he was the most qualified and respected one.

That was because he wasn't just a mere apothecary; he was also the de facto head of one of the Four Great Clans in Tianxuan City, the Bai clan.

He was a person who held great authority and strength in his hands.

“Since Apothecary Bai is going to make a move, I'll back down first!”

Apothecary Du Man returned to his seat.

He was unable to match up to Bai Ming in terms of qualifications and standing.

“Zhang Xuan, you possess incredible ability of discernment and analysis. However... you just happened to be lucky. In actuality, you don't really possess much knowledge on pill forging!” After the examiner had been confirmed, Bai Ming glanced at Zhang Xuan, his tone hostile.

It was no wonder that he was so angry. While he was angry at Cheng Jiang for stealing the secret manual passed down within his family, being exposed in public also made him feel humiliated.

After all, it was shameful for the powerful Bai clan to be unable to prevent a lone apothecary from stealing from them. If word spread, the Bai clan would become a laughingstock.

“Lucky? Why would Apothecary Bai say that?”

Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

“Simple. Regardless of whether it was Meng Yan, Chen Xiao, or Cheng Jiang, the flaws you said may seem to make sense. However, if we think deeper into things, it was also possible for you to have investigated their personality flaws and the recent happenings around them beforehand, and worked backward to infer the flaws in their forging techniques!”

Bai Ming harrumphed.

“Worked backward?”

“Now that Apothecary Bai said so, it does make sense!”

“Indeed! For example, in Meng Yan’s case, if you knew he killed his concubine in the morning in advance and that he had killing intent and rage within him, you could safely deduce that the Tranquil Heart Pill he forged would be ineffective!”

“The same for Apothecary Chen Xiao as well! If you knew he was sick and didn’t have much time to live, you could infer that there would be a problem with the pills. After all, the Tranquil Heart Pill reflects the forger’s state of mind. Even a pig could tell that something would be wrong with those pills if it had heard of that information beforehand!”

“Now that you all have put it in such a way, it truly explains a lot of things. If he had made preparations beforehand and dug up the matter of Cheng Jiang stealing our forging techniques, it would be a simple matter to guess the references in his forging technique!”

.....

Bai Ming’s words were like a rock thrown in water, generating countless ripples on the surface. Everyone “came to a realization,” seemingly understanding what had just happened.

It was because they were unable to understand how the other party was able to see through those flaws that they felt fear. Now that they understood the “reason,” the fear they felt vanished.

In fact, if they they of this information beforehand, they could also make the same judgement that Zhang Xuan did on the flaws of the forging techniques of the previous three.

“Oh? Working backward? What an interesting thought!” He didn’t expect Apothecary Bai Ming’s imagination to be so vivid. Smirking, Zhang Xuan continued, “Regardless of what methods I used, I can pass as long as I can identify the flaws in your forging techniques!”

“Indeed. It will be your win if you manage to see through the flaws in my forging technique. However, I want to change the rules as well!” Apothecary Bai Ming said.

“Oh?”

“The gist of it will still be the same, I will forge a pill while you identify a mistake in my forging technique. However... I want you to point out true mistakes in my forging process, such as in my skills, ability to control flames, and the way I mixed the medicinal herbs together rather than involving emotions and other miscellaneous stuff. This way, you can’t use the knowledge you know of beforehand to work backward to identify the flaws in my forging technique!”

Bai Ming harrumphed.

“That’s right!”

“This way, he won’t be able to talk about emotions and the sort!”

“With these rules, he can’t work backward to deduce the flaws even if he wants to!”

“This is what I call pointing out flaws...”

.....

The apothecaries nodded their heads in agreement.

To speak the truth, everyone had been frightened by Zhang Xuan’s ability to point out the flaws in them. As a cultivator, charging forward and emerging victorious among millions of people, who hadn’t done anything against their conscience before? It would be embarrassing if this lad were to reveal their darkest secrets.

Thus, the new rule that Apothecary Bai Ming came up with immediately received everyone’s approval.

He was only allowed to point out flaws in pill forging. Bringing in external matters such as murder or being on the verge of death was prohibited.

Even if they were apothecaries... such scares weren’t what humans could handle!

“Are you certain?”

Upon hearing the rules set by the other party, how could Zhang Xuan possibly remain oblivious to what they were thinking? One corner of Zhang Xuan’s mouth curved upwards.

“Of course!” Apothecary Bai Ming flung his sleeves. “Now, it is a question of whether you’re brave enough to accept the challenge!”

Zhang Xuan could not be bothered to argue with him over the matter.

“Great!”

Seeing him agree to it, Apothecary Bai Ming heaved a sigh of relief. After pondering for a moment, he grabbed a few ingredients and walked to the cauldron.

Fwoosh boosh!

The fire started burning furiously and Apothecary Bai Ming began his pill forging.

Not too long after, the fire weakened and three round pills were extracted from the cauldron.

Grade-1 pill, Acupoint Soothing Pill! It was specially prepared for Fighter 6-dan experts to soothe their acupoints, allowing them to travel further in the Pixue realm.

Back then, Elder Shang Chen spent a huge price to purchase one for Shang Bin. The latter gave it to the Sky Shattering Lion as the cost of teaching Zhang Xuan a lesson.

Even so, the Sky Shattering Lion eventually betrayed him, filling Shang Bin with resentment against it.

No matter what, the Acupoint Soothing Acupoint was considered one of the superior grade-1 pills, something that Tranquil Heart Pill was far from matching up to.

116 Apothecary Bai Ming's Breakdown First Half

“Amazing!”

“Only Apothecary Bai Ming possesses such capabilities, to think that he could successfully forge a Acupoint Soothing Pill under such circumstances!”

“It is extremely difficult to forge an Acupoint Soothing Pill. Even more so, Apothecary Bai Ming's forging technique is so complex that I have never seen it before. Now I am curious to see what Zhang Xuan will say!”

“Hehe, let's wait for the show then!”

Upon seeing Apothecary Bai Ming forging an Acupoint Soothing Pill, most of the apothecaries present laughed.

The higher grade a pill was, the more complex the method required to forge it. Acupoint Soothing Pill could be considered one of the higher grade pills among the grade-1 tier and its forging method was incomparably complex. Even the rest of them were unable to perceive any mistakes in his forging technique, so how could an apprentice possibly see anything?

“Alright, I'm done forging the pill. Tell me, what's the name of the forging technique and the flaws in it!”

Sneering, Apothecary Bai Ming brought his breathing back to normal and gestured grandly.

‘Even though I don't know where you got the information on us, but if you wish to successfully pass a Pill Debate depending solely on that, dream on!’

‘Without true capability to point out the flaws in a forging technique, you will never earn my respect!’

“Are you sure you want me to say?” A peculiar expression appeared on Zhang Xuan's face as he said those words.

“Quit trying to mystify things here. If you can’t find the words, just admit defeat!” Apothecary Bai Ming harrumphed.

“Alright then!”

Zhang Xuan shook his head. With his hands behind his back, he slowly walked to the center of the room.

“The forging technique you used is called 【Thousand Mountain Hands】 and is said to have been created by a 2-star apothecary named Feng Xuan. You must put the medicinal herb into the cauldron based on a special sequence, similar to the mountainous regions, one mountain after another like you’re traversing the lands. Similarly, you throw the medicinal herbs in wave after wave. The way you control the fire is also based on such a sequence, strong at one moment, weak at the other. By forging pills in such a method, it is easier for the medicinal properties to fuse together and thus makes it likelier that a pill is formed! However, its flaws are also clear to see. It’s difficult to raise the quality of the pill itself!

“Therefore, even though you managed to forge three Acupoint Soothing Pills successfully, they are of the lowest level. It is nearly impossible for you to reach Satiation. Such forging techniques are only suitable for the mass production of pills by low-skilled apothecaries. Put bluntly, none of the slightly better apothecaries would learn such a skill, because it means putting a barrier in front of their future path. No matter how many times you practice the skill, it is impossible to raise the quality of the pill in the slightest. As a result, there is no reason for them to learn it.

“Unless... you don’t think that you have any potential left in you, that’s why you are giving up on yourself!” Zhang Xuan smiled and shot a meaningful glance at him. “Apothecary Bai Ming, may I know if what I said is true?”

“Hmph!”

Upon hearing the words of the other party, Bai Ming gritted his teeth, embarrassed and angry.

As the de facto head of the Bai clan, as well as a 1-star apothecary, he possessed exceptional standing in the capital.

Yet, by the words of the other party, he became an...
apothecary with low standards... no more potential left....

However, he was unable to refute his words.

The flaw of the Thousand Mountain Hands was exactly as the other party said. Even though he was able to produce the Acupoint Soothing Pill easily, it was difficult for him to further refine its quality.

“You don’t need to feel gleeful over this. So what if you can point out these? You need to point out the errors in my movements previously before it can be considered your victory!” Taking a deep breath, Bai Ming suppressed his anger.

“Alright!”

Instead of arguing with him, Zhang Xuan stepped forward and walked toward the cauldron. “Then allow me to start from the very basics!

“As long as you are an apothecary, you know that you require incredible control over the flame and the cauldron to produce high-quality pills. Earlier, Apothecary Bai Ming started forging his pills right after picking up the medicine. How much do you know about this cauldron? What about the flames?

“You don’t need to refute my words by saying that the specifications of these cauldrons are roughly the same. I can clearly tell you that even with the same medicinal herb, flames, and cauldron, the medicine you forge can be different. This is due to a miniscule difference or a tiny mistake made by the apothecary that the pills forged will be a quality lower than what it should be!”

His hands stroking the cauldron, Zhang Xuan continued, “If you don’t believe me, I can show you now.

“This cauldron has a height of 7 chi and 3 cun and width of 3 cun and 2 chi. It was created by a 3-mo craftsman in the Stone Well Workshop seven years and three months ago. A total of 147 pills have been forged using and of it, of which 88 were grade-1 pills and 59 were pills lower than grade-1! During the transportation of the cauldron, it suffered three impacts. There

are a total of thirteen slight scratches throughout the entire cauldron. It won't cause too much trouble when forging ordinary pills, but it will scatter the medicinal effects and spiritual energy within the pill. As such, due to the insufficient medicinal effects harnessed within the pill, the quality of the pill will drop!

1 chi -\u003e 30.3cm, 1 cun -\u003e 3.03cm

“This cauldron is slightly thicker than a cun and it requires an incense's time and thirty-four breaths for the heat to completely permeate the cauldron. Also, the thickness of the cauldron walls on the left and right are slightly different, around three hair strands off. Don't underestimate the difference in this thickness! With the same flames, there will be a five percent difference in the temperature between both sides. The medicinal effects of Scattered Floral Grass and Lone-eyed Dragon Grass of the Acupoint Soothing Pill will be completely different when placed on either side!”

“Are you for real?”

“There is even such a thing for a cauldron?”

.....

Upon listening to Zhang Xuan's casual explanations, the jaws of the apothecaries fell to the floor and they felt like they were going insane.

Even though they knew that a difference in the cauldron could result in the formation of different pills, never did they imagine that there was such wisdom behind a cauldron.

Furthermore...

This was a cauldron that the Apothecary Guild brought in specially for this Pill Debate. How did he know so much about it? To even know where it was made, how thick the walls were, its size and how many pills it had forged?

The heck, you are about to bash through the heavens!

To see all these with a single glance, are you... a monster?

“Alright, I will continue to talk about the flames then!”

Ignoring the astonished expression on everyone's faces, Zhang Xuan pointed to the flames burning beneath the cauldron and continued, "This is where the heat of the **【Heavenly Coal】** originates from, as well as the hottest part. With the heat here, even metal could be easily melted. By propelling it with a fighter's zhenqi, you can easily control the strength of the flames and thus the temperature of the cauldron."

"However... the flames do not come into direct contact with the medicinal herbs. They are placed in the cauldron, and in there, they form pills. How much heat from the flames permeates through the cauldron walls and how much of it is left in the cauldron is what we need to grasp clearly in our minds."

"Heavenly Coal is a coal exceptionally suited for forging pills. Not only is it capable of reaching high temperatures, the permeability of its heat is also incredible. For normal coal, after permeating through a cun of cauldron walls or so, only thirty-seven percent of the heat will be retained. On the other hand, the Heavenly Coal retains forty-six percent! Only by knowing this much can you ascertain the temperature the medicinal herbs inside are under, how long it will take for the medicinal properties of the herbs to be best unleashed, and how you can forge the highest quality pill!"

"Of course, these are only the bare basics that an apothecary needs to know, so they can't be considered as flaws. I am just casually introducing them!"

Zhang Xuan smiled and glanced at Bai Ming standing off to the side. "However, I would like to ask Apothecary Bai Ming: before forging the pills... did you notice these?"

Apothecary Bai Ming felt his hair standing on end and he almost fainted on the spot.

'Notice? Notice your head!

'I am just forging a normal pill! Given how complicated these things are, how the heck would I know?

'Besides, even if I had been concerned with them, there was nothing I could do. You can't expect me to find a ruler and

start measuring the entire cauldron before testing the temperature of the coal bit by bit!

‘If I started doing so, it would be two days before I could start forging!’

117 Apothecary Bai Ming's Breakdown Second Half

He felt stifled within, but Bai Ming also knew that he was unable to refute Zhang Xuan's words.

It was the basics to check the cauldron and flames of the cauldron before forging pills. Even apprentices were aware of it. His action of going straight to forging was clearly a huge mistake.

Using the words in Zhang Xuan's previous world, if a person didn't buckle their seat belt, check the tires, and scan the surroundings before starting to drive, they couldn't refute anything if an accident occurred.

Right now, that was the emotion Bai Ming was experiencing. Lectured by an apprentice apothecary in public, yet unable to refute anything at all. It was clear just by thinking of how stifled he was at this moment.

"Alright, now that I have touched on the cauldron and the flames, I shall talk about the fusing of the medicinal herbs!"

Knowing that the other party would be unable to reply to his words, Zhang Xuan could not be bothered to continue interrogating him over those mistakes of his. Instead, he walked over to the medicinal racks. "Acupoint Soothing Pill requires a total of 47 types of herbs. Given the number of herbs that are involved in the forging process, there are herbs that complement one another, as well as herbs that clash with one another. As such, if you don't control the process properly, it is very easy for the medicinal herb to clash with one another and the pill will be ruined!

"Let me first talk about Apothecary Bai Ming's forging sequence!

"The first herb he put in was Heart Grass! Heart Grass has calming properties and is resilient to high temperature. As

such, it requires strong flames to extract its essence. It is correct to place it into the cauldron first so that it can come into contact with the flames earlier to incite its medicinal properties. However... seven breaths after placing Heart Grass in, he placed in the second herb, Split Palm Flower!

“If I’m not wrong, that Heart Grass he took was only half a year old. As such, its medicinal properties are not strong enough and most of it was concentrated on the leaves instead of the meridians. For such a herb, the medicinal effects will be swiftly released upon meeting strong flames. Under normal situations, he should have placed Split Palm Flower in after four breaths. Yet, he delayed it three entire breaths, causing a loss in the medicinal effect by thirteen percent. Fail!

“On the other hand, Split Palm Flower has a maturity of five years and the medicinal effects of it is relatively stronger. He should have slowly released the Split Palm Flowers by the left wall of the cauldron, and the duration of its descent should be roughly half a breath. During this time, the heart of the cauldron would unleash the medicinal effects of it, allowing it to better mix with Heart Grass. However, Apothecary Bai Ming threw the medicinal herb straight in, depriving it of the opportunity to be heated by the cauldron in advance. As such, its medicinal effect wasn’t fully unleashed and fourteen percent of the medicinal effect was lost. Fail!

“The medicinal effects of these two herbs clash with one another, so he should have quickly placed in Scattered Floral Grass, which has a pacifying effect for the two. Yet he threw in the violent Lone-eyed Dragon Grass, worsening the clash between the two herbs. As such, eleven percent of the medicinal effect was lost! Fail!

“The Lone-eyed Dragon Grass is a herb with yang properties. After placing it into the scorching cauldron, he should have added Cooling Grass to counteract its effects. Yet Apothecary Bai Ming added Wisdom Mother Grass instead. Wisdom Mother Grass is able to neutralize all medicinal herbs, and as such, it is the best choice to serve as a medium between herbs. However, it is precisely because of that that it completely neutralized the yang properties of the Lone-eyed Dragon

Grass, greatly reducing the medicinal effect of the Acupoint Smoothing Pill. Fail!”

“... Fail!

“... Fail!

“... Fail!”

.....

Zhang Xuan spoke faster and faster, akin to a machine gun. His every word was logical with evidence to back them up. Every single failure struck like a hammer on Apothecary Bai Ming’s face. His face grew paler and paler and his body trembled uncontrollably.

Pill forging was by no means simple. Even with the same herbs, if the maturity was different, it could have different medicinal properties. Not to mention, an apothecary needed to pair them together in a way that complemented them to mix them together and such. Even for a single Acupoint Soothing Pill, three days wouldn’t be enough if Zhang Xuan were to go in depth.

This was also the reason why apothecaries were one of the front-runners in the Upper Nine Paths.

“Everything he said is true!”

“To recall the sequence in which Apothecary Bai Ming added the forty-seven medicinal herbs with a single look? What kind of memorization ability does he possess?”

“The most shocking thing isn’t him remembering the sequence in which the medicinal herbs were placed in.... It is that he was able to tell the maturity of every single medicinal herb and come up with a method to complement them so as to best unleash its medicinal effects.... Is he really human?”

“Now that I’ve heard his words, an apothecary really has to take a lot of factors into account. It is no wonder that my pills are unable to reach Perfection or Inscribed Pill. So this is the reason....”

.....

...

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan's words, everyone became mute. It was as though their heads had been smashed with a bat, their mouths agape and their eyes wide.

The heck!

This is what you call pill forging!

What we were doing before was simply wasting herbs and insulting this occupation!

Most probably, if they were to use the method he spoke of to forge this pill, the pill would be able to reach higher heights. Perfection and even Inscribed Pill wouldn't be problems!

This was no longer a theory that a 1-star apothecary could come into contact with. Only the more advanced apothecaries would pay attention to such minute details!

Everyone was dumbfounded. At this moment, the thought of suicide even ran through Apothecary Bai Ming's head.

Listening to the words of the other party, his entire pill forging sequence was a failure. How could this be considered pill forging? He must be forging feces instead!

Furthermore... at least when one forges feces, they don't waste any materials. Yet, when he forged a pill, he wasted all of the medicinal herbs used in it...

Pu!

The stifling sensation in his chest grew heavier and heavier, and he puked a mouthful of blood.

All along, he thought of himself as talented in pill forging, and that he was truly a highly-skilled apothecary. Yet, upon hearing the words of the other party, he realized that his standards couldn't even match up to that of a child's!

All of the confidence he held in the past was completely shattered. The current him feared to even approach a cauldron now.

His body trembled violently. Just a moment ago, he stood up proudly and determinedly to punish Zhang Xuan for his

humiliation. Yet, at this moment, his complexion was turning more and more awful, as though he were going berserk.

A moment later, he gritted his teeth.

“That’s right. Given my standards, what kind of pills can I possibly forge? All I’m doing is wasting medicinal herbs! From today onward, I, Bai Ming, will not forge a single pill anymore. If I break this vow, let the Heavens tear me apart!”

A vow resounded in the hall.

“What?”

“He vowed not to forge a single pill anymore?”

“Apothecary Bai Ming...”

.....

Upon hearing the vow he made, everyone was flabbergasted. They couldn’t help but shudder, upset at the thought of the loss of a comrade.

For an apothecary to vow to never forge a single pill anymore was equivalent to bidding the world of pill forging farewell. The effort he had put in for his entire life had all gone to waste.

And the reason for that was a mere apprentice apothecary pointing out the flaws in his pill forging process!

“Isn’t he being too rash....” An apothecary couldn’t help but comment.

“If you were criticized like that, what would you do?” another apothecary responded.

“I...” The former paused halfway through, unable to find a word to say.

What the other party said was true. If he were in the place of Apothecary Bai Ming, upon realizing that his forging technique was nothing but flaws and the hard work he had devoted into it was nothing but rubbish, the confidence he had held for countless years would probably collapse in an instant!

The moment he lost all his confidence, the trauma he received from it would cause him to be unable to forge a single pill for the rest of his life. Rather than suffer in anguish over it, he might as well simply make a vow to never forge a single pill anymore!

Pill forging wasn't a joke. Mental state, skill, confidence... all of these factors were absolutely required. Without confidence, how could one be called an apothecary?

“To make an experienced apothecary lose all of his confidence and fear forging just by pointing out his mistakes...”

Such a thought flashed across their minds in an instant. Taking another glance at Zhang Xuan, their hearts skipped a beat.

It was no wonder that he was reluctant to speak of their flaws in pill forging. It was not that he was unable to discern anything from it and resorted to other methods to make up for his weakness. Only now did they know... the other party wasn't in the least as ignorant as they thought. Rather, it was because he knew too much that he feared he would shatter the last bit of confidence they had!

Brother, we would like to ask you: Are you the apprentice apothecary or are we?

118 The True Pill Debate

First Half

“I admit defeat!”

After declaring that he would no longer forge pills, Apothecary Bai Ming bowed deeply to Zhang Xuan.

It had been slightly more than two hours since the beginning of the Pill Debate and there were already four apothecaries who had admitted defeat.

This conclusion was unexpected for all involved. Even Ouyang Cheng shuddered in disbelief.

Previously, he didn't hold high hopes for Zhang Xuan's victory. He didn't expect it to end up like this!

It was completely one-sided!

It was no wonder that he was able to achieve a perfect score on the apprentice apothecary examination, even recognizing medicinal herbs that the examiners got wrong. His abilities were simply way too impressive!

On the other hand, Wen Xue's eyes were full of fear and her body trembled nonstop.

To think that she had mocked a person who could leave these apothecaries speechless.... Was there something wrong with her head or was she simply too gutsy?

It was fortunate that the other party had no intentions of fussing over the matter with her. Otherwise, she could've even been expelled from the Apothecary Guild!

“I'll go!”

Upon seeing Bai Ming admit defeat and the silence that lingered around them, Du Man stepped forward.

“Please go easy on me!”

Forcing a smile onto his face, Du Man walked over to the cauldron.

The pill he forged was grade-1 too. It was slightly inferior to the Acupoint Soothing Pill and Tranquil Heart Pill from before.

His movements were fluid and swift. Soon, he managed to successfully forge the pills all of which were at the level of Satiation.

The other party's attitude was amiable. Besides, they also became acquainted yesterday. As a result, Zhang Xuan didn't say too much and simply pointed out a few of the more obvious mistakes. The latter admitted defeat straight afterward.

At this moment, out of the ten apothecaries, five had already admitted defeat.

The Pill Debate was halfway through.

“Let's continue. Who will be the next?”

With his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan scanned the crowd calmly. Silence continued to linger around them.

In the Pill Debate of other apprentice apothecaries, the examinee would always look at the examiner in fear, afraid that the other party would intentionally come up with difficult questions. Yet this fellow was the exact opposite. All of the remaining apothecaries cowered back, afraid of their names being called. If not witnessed it firsthand, no one would believe it possible.

“I'll go!”

After another moment of silence, an elder stood up.

Apothecary Lin Mu!

Apothecary Cheng Jiang had once used the excuse of wanting to view his skills to secretly learn his personal forging technique, Frost Threaded Hands.

“Apothecary Lin, please wait a second! This time, I would like to test him along with you!”

Right after Lin Mu stood up, a middle-aged man stood up as well.

Apothecary Jin Chen!

“Together?” Lin Mu frowned.

How can two people forge pills simultaneously for the other party to point out their flaws?

“The fact that he can see through our flaws means that his ability to discern is impressive and he has undergone good education. It’s very likely that he is under the guidance of a master teacher. However, I don’t believe that the knowledge he has stored in his head can be as impressive as his discernment ability, especially given his age! So... let’s not forge pills and instead bring up questions. Let’s not be fooled by him!”

Apothecary Jin Chen harrumphed.

“This...”

Lin Mu was stunned.

“That’s right, why didn’t I think of this?”

“He isn’t even twenty yet. Even if he could read right after he was born, how many books could possibly be read? How much of the content of each book could he possibly recall?”

“A true Pill Debate involves raising questions about pill forging for the examinee to answer. He must have known that he didn’t have enough knowledge, so he intentionally heightened the difficulty to perceiving flaws in forging techniques instead. It is true that the difficulty has been raised, but if he had the guidance of a master teacher and came into contact with good education from a young age, it wouldn’t be difficult for him to see through our mistakes!”

“That’s right, master teachers are extremely knowledgeable while on the other hand we are only 1-star apothecaries. His discernment abilities can’t possibly be weak being the disciple of such a figure. If so, it’s understandable that he sees through our mistakes!”

.....

Apothecary Jin Chen's words relit the flames in the four remaining apothecaries and they regained their confidence.

The fact that the other party was able to see through their mistakes by viewing their pill forging could only mean that his discernment ability was outstanding. It didn't mean that he had to be knowledgeable.

Since that was the case, questioning him might just turn out to be his weakness. All along, everyone had been fooled by this fellow.

"That's right!"

Lin Mu came to realization and nodded his head fervently.

It was no wonder that everyone agreed with Jin Chen's view. After all, accumulation of knowledge required time and effort. This Zhang Xuan, even with an optimistic estimate, couldn't possibly be twenty yet. Even if he read every day, how many books could he have possibly read?

Furthermore, he still had to remember their contents!

"You want to ask me questions instead?"

Not expecting these people to come up with such a conclusion after a long moment of contemplation, Zhang Xuan simply smiled faintly in response. "Alright then, let's begin!"

After reading through the books in the basic tier book collection vault and the teacher's Compendium Pavilion, the knowledge in his head right now was significantly greater than that of these apothecaries. Even if they wanted to test his knowledge, he didn't have anything to fear.

"I'll see whether you can retain your confidence when I stump you later on!"

Upon seeing that the other party held no fear whatsoever, a cold gleam flashed across Apothecary Jin Chen's eyes.

"According to the rules of a normal Pill Debate, I can raise three questions. If you are able to answer all of them, I will have to admit defeat! On the other hand, if you fail to answer any one of the three... you will have failed. All that you have accomplished beforehand would go to waste!"

There was a complete list of rules and regulations for Pill Debate. The ten apothecaries weren't allowed to bring up as many questions as they pleased. Otherwise, wouldn't the examinee tire himself to death when undergoing Pill Debate?

The examiners could only pose three questions each, and if the other party's answers were correct, they had to admit defeat. However, if he couldn't answer any one of the questions or he answered erroneously, it would be a straight failure, regardless of how many questions he had answered before that!

"Sure!" Zhang Xuan was also well-aware of the rules. He nodded his head.

"Alright then, here is my first question. When forging a grade-1 Body Tempering Pill, even when the pill comes out from the same cauldron and was at the same level of quality, it is possible for one pill to have outstanding effects while another has miniscule effects. What are the reasons behind this?" Apothecary Jin Chen asked.

Upon hearing this question, the other apothecaries' attention was piqued.

Body Tempering Pill was a pill often consumed by Fighter 4-dan. It could temper a person's physical body, allowing one to improve swiftly in the Pigu realm.

This was also the reason why they often forged such a pill. However, just like what Apothecary Jin Chen said, there would often be situations in which the medicinal effects in each pill were different despite coming from the same cauldron.

Consuming the pills that came from the same cauldron, some experienced tremendous effects and advance far in the Pigu realm while others found it completely ineffective for them.

"Apothecary Jin Chen sure picked a difficult question!" Zhang Xuan shook his head. "There is no clear answer to this question in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom. Yet you posed this question to me. How do you expect me to answer it?"

"However... other people may be unable to say anything about this subject, but I have my own ways!"

Smiling lightly, Zhang Xuan said, “As for the matter you said, an apothecary named Cheng Ye had already proposed it thirty-seven years ago. Back then, he gathered twenty-three apothecaries and researched the matter for three days straight. He wrote the conclusion to their discussions in a book titled 《Cheng Ye’s Body Tempering Theories》 . If you have read it, you should know what his conclusion is!

“He thinks that the reason for this difference has something to do with the constitution of a cultivator. Some people are born with a body compatible with Body Tempering Pill while others’ physique may be resistant to it. It’s just like how some people have a high tolerance for alcohol while others don’t!

“Back then, this theory received the approval of many people. However, eighteen years ago, 3-star apothecary Zhang Jian noticed something that disputed this theory. If it was due to the constitution of an individual, then why was the second consumed pill effective for some individuals when the first one wasn’t?”

119 The True Pill Debate

Second Half

“Clearly, the theory about the difference being attributed to the constitution does not hold!

“Thus, Apothecary Zhang Jian investigated the matter and wrote the conclusion of his research into 《Discussions of Tempering Pill》. This book clearly details his opinions and he disagrees with the notion that the difference in effects of the Body Tempering Pill is due to one’s constitution. Rather, it was because the medicinal effects of the herbs weren’t distributed fairly among the different pills during the forging process! As such, even in the same cauldron and among pills of the same quality, there could be different medicinal effects!

“This theory was accepted for a few years until twelve years ago, when someone cast doubts and overthrew it! The one who doubted the theory wasn’t an apothecary but a 1-star master teacher. He questioned: if the medicinal effects weren’t distributed fairly among the different pill, then why did such a phenomenon only occur to Body Tempering Pills and not other pills?

“Therefore, he proposed a bold suggestion. It was recorded in 《Ning Han’s Verbal Records》. This book wasn’t widely sold and there is only a single copy of it in the guild’s basic tier book collection vault. If you all haven’t read it, it is in the 19th bookshelf, at the extreme right corner!”

Zhang Xuan chuckled and continued, “This master teacher named Ning Han came up with a bold proposal. He thinks that the reason there was such an occurrence among Body Tempering Pills was because of the difference between the maturity of the herbs and the forging technique of the apothecaries! Of course, he only brought it up as a theory and didn’t experiment!

“Eight years ago, Apothecary Zhao Yue from Hongxuan Kingdom received an epiphany from this book and conducted an experiment. He changed eighteen of the main medicinal herbs used in the pill and tried forging it using forty-two different kinds of forging techniques. He wrote his conclusion in a book titled 《Detailed Explanation of Body Tempering》 . It just so happens that there is one of them in our basic tier book collection vault. It is on the 27th row, on the upper left corner, beside 《Yang Zhen’s Pill Forging Guide》 and 《The Method to Forging Jade Blood Pill》 ! If all of you doubt my words, you can find someone to fetch it here!

“I believe that the answer in the book is the most accurate one, and it should be able to answer your question!”

At this point, Zhang Xuan stopped and gesture for Ouyang Cheng to dispatch someone to fetch the book.

“There’s no need....”

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan’s explanation, the complexion of Apothecary Jin Chen, who was still gleeful a moment ago, darkened to the color of the bottom of a wok and he stumbled two steps backward. In an instant, he seemed to have aged many years.

“What? If we don’t fetch the book here, I fear that Apothecary Jin will not accept my answer!” Zhang Xuan said.

“Your answer is correct. I have read the book and it is identical to what you said!” Apothecary Jin Chen nodded his head.

“Correct?”

“Identical?”

“That shouldn’t be possible.... Apothecary Jin Chen simply raised a casual question and he was able to answer it so simply. Furthermore, out of the countless books in the vault, he was able to remember its exact position.... How is that possible?”

“Is he still human? You must be pulling my leg!”

.....

Upon hearing his acknowledgment, the room broke into a commotion once more.

Previously, they thought that due to the limitations of his age, Zhang Xuan wouldn't have the time to read many books. After this round, they realized that compared to him... they were the ones who hadn't read many books!

Not only was the other party able to accurately remember the contents, time the book was written, and title of the book, he was even able to point out its exact location in the vault...

For them... it would already be wonderful if they could remember the contents detailed within!

Looked like there really was a huge difference between humans!

"Since Apothecary Jin Chen has acknowledged my answer to be correct, let's proceed onto the second question!"

Zhang Xuan chuckled.

'You want to compete with me in memorization ability?

'What a joke! I have the Library of Heaven's Path in my mind. With a jolt of my consciousness, the book comes flying to me. I only have to read according to it. Regardless of how good your memory is, you can't possibly be more accurate than me!'

"The second question. When forging a grade-1 **【Strength Enhancement Pill】**, why do cracks appear on a cauldron, making it difficult to continue with the forging?" Apothecary Jin Chen pondered for an entire ten minute before asking.

"Incredible!"

"He chose an excellent question!"

"Indeed, the cauldron often cracks while forging a grade-1 **【Strength Enhancement Pill】**. On the surface, it seems like an apothecary's question, but to answer the question, you require knowledge of smithing as well!"

"Indeed, let's see how he will answer the question!"

.....

Upon hearing Apothecary Jin Chen's second question, everyone's attention was piqued again.

An apothecary's cauldron was forged by blacksmiths, and the matter of it breaking during pill forging wasn't strictly within the boundaries of pill forging anymore.

However, if one scrutinized the question carefully, it was still related to pill forging. It was precisely because it lay at the boundaries of the two that many apothecaries did not bother to learn about it, let alone answering such a question.

Since everyone could tell what he was trying to do, how could Zhang Xuan remain oblivious? The corners of his lips curled upward and he replied, "As for this problem, Apothecary Wu Xiao's 《Cauldron Maintenance》, Apothecary Zhao Qian's 《Important Matters to Note for Pill Forging》, Apothecary Niu Xuan's 《Miscellaneous Things You Have to Know》, Apothecary Pang Bo's 《Protect Your New Cauldron》 ..."

Without pausing, Zhang Xuan listed the titles of dozens of books before concluding, "... The answers are detailed in these books. Actually, it wasn't really a difficult question. The cauldrons that you all use are made of ordinary Nine Refinement Metal. This metal may be strong, but it is unable to withstand the clash between extreme cold and heat. The main ingredient required for Strength Enhancement Pill is the blood of a cold-attribute savage beast. When something that cold comes into contact with the hot cauldron, it's natural that the cauldron's unable to withstand it!

"If you wish to resolve the problem, it is best to use Heavy Iron Cauldron instead! Or you can also change your cauldron every time after you forge Strength Enhancement Pills!"

Zhang Xuan smiled.

This question might seem difficult, but it was recorded in the books of the basic tier book collection vault as well. It was just that the number of books in the vault was too vast and the apprentices in the guild would often choose to research pill forging techniques so that they could become an official

apothecary faster. As a result, there was no reason for them to look into these kinds of miscellaneous books!

Furthermore, after becoming an official apothecary, one's standing would become completely different. With more guests paying them a visit and with more authority, they would have less time to read books. There were many things that they could learn from the book collection vault, but they never found the time to look for it and as such they were ignorant of them.

This was precisely the reason why the other apothecaries were unable to answer such questions. On the other hand, for Zhang Xuan who had duplicated a basic tier book collection vault in his mind, he had no difficulty answering this question at all.

“I wonder if Apothecary Jin Chen is satisfied with my answer? If not, I can still go on....”

“There's no need, your answer is correct!”

Cold sweat appeared on Apothecary Jin Chen's forehead.

When he started to forge Strength Enhancement Pills, he met with such a problem. So he went around asking others to seek an answer. Eventually, he found his answer in a book and that book was one of the dozen books which Zhang Xuan had just listed, 《Protect Your New Cauldron》 by Apothecary Pang Bo.

He thought that this was the only book which had detailed information on this subject, so he raised this question to trouble the other party. Yet this fellow was able to list more than a dozen books in a breath.

It was fortunate that he didn't name the book earlier. Otherwise, he would be humiliated when the other party listed this huge collection of books.

The heck, what is the head of this fellow made of?

How could he remember everything so clearly?

Upon seeing this situation, Ouyang Cheng and Du Man exchanged glances and smiled wryly. This was nothing! If you all knew that this fellow could even point out the specific page

in the book, you probably wouldn't have insisted on conducting your test like that!

In fact, the other party proposing to point out flaws in their forging technique was indeed raising the difficulty for him. If you wish to triumph against him in a competition of knowledge...

We're afraid that you could only do it in your dreams....

120 Not a Thing

“Since I’ve answered the second question already, name your third one!”

Seeing the other party conceding the second question, Zhang Xuan couldn’t be bothered to continue lingering about the matter.

“I admit defeat! These are already the two most difficult questions I can think of. I will just be making a mockery of myself if I continue asking!”

Apothecary Jin Chen shook his head.

The other party’s action of listing out the names of so many books felled his confidence. He knew that if he continued like this, the only one being embarrassed would be him. He might as well surrender at this point. At least he could retain some dignity.

“You aren’t going to ask the third question?”

Zhang Xuan was taken aback for a moment before coming to a realization.

Since he was able to easily answer the most difficult questions he could come up with, he would most likely be humiliating himself if he continued.

Zhang Xuan was impressed with Apothecary Jin Chen’s decisiveness.

“It’s your turn!”

He turned around to look at Lin Mu.

Upon seeing Zhang Xuan’s attention turned onto him, Apothecary Lin Mu gritted his teeth and asked, “I have a question which, honestly speaking, I don’t have an answer to either. If you can’t answer it, it won’t be considered your defeat! However, if you can answer it, I will admit defeat right away. It will be pointless even if I ask any further than that anyway!”

In the Pill Debate, the examiner had to know the answers to the questions they were posing. Otherwise, when you don't even know the answer yourself, how can you determine whether the other party's answer is correct?

Now that Apothecary Lin Mu had confessed that he wasn't able to answer this question either, logically speaking, it was already beyond the boundaries of the Pill Debate. Zhang Xuan could reject to answer his question.

It wouldn't be considered his defeat if he chose to do so.

"Speak!" Zhang Xuan casually said.

'Reject? Are you kidding? Since I can answer two fewer questions, it is obvious that I should answer his question.'

"I have been researching **【Meridian Expansion Pill】** for a very long and regardless of the forging method, the medicinal herbs, or the cauldron, I double-check them to make sure there is nothing wrong with them. But for some reason, I am unable to form the pill. I would like you to tell me the reason for my failure!" Apothecary Lin Mu asked, after hesitating for a moment

"What kind of question is this?"

"Aren't you being a little too difficult here!"

"That's right, you should find the reason behind why you're unable to successfully forge a pill yourself. How do you expect him to answer that question out of the blue?"

.....

Upon hearing Lin Mu's words, everyone was dumbfounded for a moment before peculiar expressions crept onto their faces.

When posing a question during a Pill Debate, one had to ask something that the other party could answer. Asking the other party how many moles you had on your body, how many meals you had yesterday, how many women you had relationships with... Even gods would be unable to answer these questions!

Right now, Lin Mu's question was similar to those. You simply said that you were unable to forge the Meridian Expansion Pill, how do you expect the other party to answer your query?

“Cough cough, Apothecary Lin Mu, you have to ask a question with basis behind it. This question isn't suitable, you should switch to another one....”

Ouyang Cheng, who was conducting the Pill Debate, couldn't stand looking at the situation any longer and spoke up.

“I was being too rash....”

Upon hearing the words of the others, Lin Mu realized that his question was inappropriate. Thus, he shook his head and just as he was about to say something else, Zhang Xuan beat him to it. “You weren't really rash. How about this: you try to forge a Meridian Expansion Pill for me first. I can't do anything about it through just your descriptions alone!”

“Alright!”

Lin Mu didn't expect the other party to agree. Nodding his head, he walked over to the cauldron.

Actually, he didn't intend to ask this question initially, it simply popped into his mind all of a sudden.

Recently, he had been thinking of forging Meridian Expansion Pills, but for some reason, he was unable to succeed. He had researched many different books, tried many different forging techniques, and everything he could think of, but his forging still ended in failure! Upon seeing Zhang Xuan pointing out the mistakes of the others so easily, he couldn't help asking him.

As long as he was able to find the mistake behind it, he was confident that with his skills he could successfully forge it.

Thinking that it was impertinent to ask this of him on such an occasion, he thought that the Zhang Xuan would reject his question. He didn't expect him to actually accept his question.

Fwoosh boosh!

The flames burned furiously and all kinds of medicinal herbs flew inside.

Lin Mu's ten fingers looked like they were playing the zither, continuously dancing all about. Peering from afar, it seemed as though he were playing a heavenly tune instead of pill forging.

With a single look, Zhang Xuan could tell that the apothecary before him had immersed himself in the art of pill forging for countless years and was already well-versed in it.

With such skills and a completely flawless forging sequence, he was still unable to successfully form the pills. This perplexed him.

“There is no errors at all!”

“With such skills, he could successfully forge a Strength Enhancement Pill. Why would he be unable to form the Meridian Expansion Pill?”

“Indeed, that's strange....”

Everyone's attention gathered on Apothecary Lin Mu as he started his forging. The more they watched, the more puzzled they became.

It was exactly as he said. Regardless of whether it was the medicinal herb, his movements, or any other significant factors, there wasn't a single error at all. Reasonably speaking, he should at least be able to form the pills. In fact, the pill would likely reach Satiation!

To be unable to form the pills... That was impossible!

Unfortunately, reality glared straight back at them. Soon, the flames died down and upon lifting the lid of the cauldron, a black sludge of medicinal waste presented itself before the people.

Fail!

“This doesn't make sense!”

Ouyang Cheng's wrinkled his brow to the point it folded into creases.

As the guild leader of the Apothecary Guild and a 1-star intermediate stage apothecary—the highest of the group here—his discernment ability was also outstanding. After looking at the entire process, his conclusion was the same as the others, that pills would be formed. Yet the results were contrary to his expectations. A puzzled expression hung on his face and he contemplated the matter seriously.

“Sigh!”

Upon seeing the pitch-black medicinal waste in the cauldron, Apothecary Lin Mu sighed and shook his head. He lifted his head to look at the young man. “This is the question I would like to ask you. If you can answer it, I will admit defeat straight away! However, if you can’t answer, I will switch to a different question. It won’t affect the results of the Pill Debate!”

“Can’t answer?”

Zhang Xuan laughed. Stepping over to the cauldron, he circled around it and examined the medicinal waste. After that, he lifted his head to look at Apothecary Lin Mu with a bizarre expression on his face. “Apothecary Lin Mu sure is vigorous despite your age. I never thought it possible!”

“Vigorous despite my age?”

Lin Mu was taken aback.

‘What does me being vigorous have to do with whether I am able to successfully forge the pill or not?’

‘Is there even a relationship between the two?’

The other apothecaries also looked over with doubtful expressions.

Previously, they would have publicly criticized him and doubted his words. However, after witnessing his vast knowledge and his ability, they understood that he had good reason for saying such words.

“Indeed. Upon walking over, I noticed a fragrance unique to women on Apothecary Lin’s body. Furthermore, the scent is

refreshing, pure and full of life. If I'm not wrong, she should not yet be eighteen years old!" Zhang Xuan said.

"Indeed, I just brought a concubine into my household. She hasn't reached eighteen yet!"

Apothecary Lin Mu's face flushed red.

He was already nearing seventy. He had a foot in the grave, but he had brought a seventeen year old concubine back home. Even though it didn't mean anything much in this world, he was still embarrassed to have the fact pointed out in front of so many other apothecaries.

"Could it be that... the reason why I am unable to forge the Meridian Expansion Pill is because of my concubine?"

Soon, Lin Mu arrived at a conclusion. Puzzled, he stared at Zhang Xuan.

If there was no relationship between the two, given Zhang Xuan's previous actions, he probably wouldn't point it out.

Just that... how was accepting a concubine related to forging pills?

They were two completely different things!

"You're right... If I'm not wrong, that concubine of yours... isn't a thing!" Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment before replying calmly.

"Not a thing?"

Lin Mu was flabbergasted for a moment before frowning. Infuriated, displeasure showed on his face. "Why did you start insulting her?"

121 Vying to Go Firs

‘I asked you to look for the flaws in my method in forging the Meridian Expansion Pill, yet you insulted my concubine, saying that she wasn’t a person. What do you mean by that?’

Even though Lin Mu was good-natured, he was still displeased by those words.

Not only did his face darken, the others also had bizarre expressions on theirs.

What was going on?

Why did he suddenly start insulting others?

“Apothecary Lin, please calm down!”

Zhang Xuan seemed to have guessed that the other party would react like that and he looked at him playfully. “Have you been working hard every day, not resting even during daytime?”

“Er...”

Upon being posed with such a question, Lin Mu’s face reddened and he was a little embarrassed. “I just married my concubine, so I might have... might have... worked a little hard!”

An old man like him married a young wife, not to mention a beautiful lady who wasn’t eighteen yet, so it was no wonder that Lin Mu would shower plenty of love on her. If he could, he would be in bed all day long.

“Haha!”

“Apothecary Lin, I didn’t expect that you would still be so active!”

“You are truly vigorous, truly an old man with the zeal of a youngster!”

“Impressive, I am truly impressed!”

.....

Upon hearing the conversation of the duo, the other apothecaries couldn't help chuckling.

It was common for men to bring in concubines into the household, but for him to bring in a concubine who hadn't reached eighteen yet and work hard every day, both day and night.... This Apothecary Lin Mu had way too much "drive."

Upon hearing the laughter of his old buddies, Lin Mu felt embarrassed. Looking at Zhang Xuan, he said, "There... should be nothing wrong with that!"

It was perfectly normal for males and females to be in love with one another; it was a natural phenomenon of complementing the yang with yin. Furthermore, his cultivation had reached Pixue realm, so it wasn't a big deal for him to go at it several times in a single day!

In fact, it wasn't a big deal for ordinary humans to go at it several times every day either.

"If that was all, there would be nothing wrong with the situation. However... in order to become more fiery, did you consume some medicine that you shouldn't have?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"This..."

Gedeng. Lin Mu's heart skipped a beat.

The other party was correct. Even though he possessed a high cultivation realm, he was still advanced in age, so his physiological functions weren't working as well as they had before. In order to take better care of his concubine, he consumed some medicine to boost his stamina and strength recently.

"If I'm not wrong, your concubine persuaded you to consume that medicine, right?" Zhang Xuan continued.

"Er... You're right!" Lin Mu nodded his head.

As an apothecary, he knew that all medicine was poisonous in a way or another, so he was reluctant to eat it. However, he was unable to stand his ground against the persuasion of his

concubine. As such, he could only consume it. The medicine was provided by the other party, and after which he felt like a wolf, full of incomparable vitality. Furthermore, it left him excited for quite a period of time.

“Despite your correct forging method, sequence, and such, you are still unable to forge the Meridian Expansion Pill!”

With both of his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan circled around Apothecary Lin Mu. Choosing not to pursue the matter about his concubine, he continued to talk about pill forging.

“Initially, I was unable to find the reason and that left me puzzled for a moment. I even wondered if it could be a mistake with the cauldron when I suddenly recalled a certain line in a book!

“The book is known as 《Discussion on Pill Formation》. It was written by a 3-star apothecary, Senior Mu Yang. The book is in the basic tier book collection vault, and written within are several hundred reasons why a pill might fail to form. Of which, there was a certain line and quoting directly from it, ‘Upon losing one’s breath, one’s spirit would be incomplete. Even with perfect skills, it would be hard for the pill to form!’ The meaning is simple. It means that if one’s essence is lacking, even if the forging technique and sequences are completely correct, it will be difficult for the pill to be successfully formed. This formation of pill here refers to Meridian Expansion Pill!

“Upon thinking of these, I walked over to you and caught the scent of the fragrance of the body of a young lady and rouge. As a result, I asked you about your concubine! Actually, just by marrying a concubine and working day and night, you shouldn’t have lost your essence to the point that the pill wouldn’t form. The main problem here was that... you have lost your core!”

“Lost my core?”

Lin Mu was taken aback.

“That’s right, humans have a core and losing it results in catastrophic effects. Given that you are an apothecary, you should have heard of it. If you have just worked day and night,

given your strength as a Fighter 6-dan Pixue realm, it wouldn't be anything much. You should recover fully by resting for half a day. However, you shouldn't have eaten the tonic she gave you. Those tonics were actually poison that stimulate your spirit, making you imagine hallucinations. It is true that it grants you overwhelming vitality and battle power in the short run, but the poison also flows about your entire body and damages your core!

“As time goes by, your body will gradually grow weaker and weaker. In the end, you will die! On the outside, it looks no different to the usual aging process and even more accomplished apothecaries would find it hard to tell the difference! If I'm not wrong, if you were to continue consuming the pill like that, you would age swiftly and—within a single year—you will definitely die! Even deities would find it hard to save you then!

“Meridian Expansion Pill is a medicine that can widen a cultivator's meridians and can be considered to be a tonic. Losing your core, you are unable to focus your spirit, breath, and psyche, and as such, it is difficult for you to forge such a pill. Failing to forge the pill was very normal!”

At this point, Zhang Xuan paused for a moment. “For this kind of medicine to even fool an apothecary like you, it must be incomparably precious. It would be hard to imagine that... your concubine is unaware of the matter. That is why I said that she is not a thing. If I have offended you, I hope that you can forgive me!”

“This... this...”

Lin Mu shuddered and he staggered backward.

The words of the other party were completely rational, such that it felt like he had witnessed it all happening.

It was true that he felt his battle power rising upon consuming the medicine by his concubine. In the past, he would feel his back aching right after a single go. Yet, after taking the medicine, three to five times was an easy feat for him.

Initially, he thought that he was slowly growing stronger. Never would he have thought that he was being drugged!

Dammit! Dammit!

“That bitch, to think that I showered her with so much love. She actually tried to backstab me....”

Clenching his fist tightly, Lin Mu’s eyes turned red.

“Alright, if Apothecary Lin thinks what I said is not true, there should be a way to verify what I just said! I have finished answering this question!”

Zhang Xuan gestured.

“What you said is completely true, I thank you for your guidance. I admit defeat for this Pill Debate!” Without any hesitation, Apothecary Lin Mu admitted defeat.

The other party’s words were spot-on and his analysis completely rational. Given how he was unable to find a single mistake in what he said, he had no choice but to admit defeat.

Furthermore, it was true that his body condition had slowly been deteriorating recently. Initially, he thought that it was due to his age. To think that his concubine was the cause of it!

Zhang Xuan simply smiled faintly, choosing not to interfere in Lin Mu’s affairs.

It was the other party’s problem. He found it bothersome to get involved.

Afterwards, he glanced at the three remaining apothecaries. “You’re the only ones left. Just ask any problems that you have all together!”

Of the ten apothecaries at the start, seven had already admitted defeat. As long as these three did so as well, he would pass the Pill Debate and become an official apothecary.

“Genius Brother Zhang Xuan, if that’s the case, I happen to have a question that I need to inquire of you!”

An apothecary stood up.

“Brother Lu, don’t be too anxious. Going by seniority, I should be the one to go first. I happen to have thought of a question as well!” Another apothecary stood up.

“Both of you, stop arguing. I should be the one to ask first. No matter what, I became an apothecary earlier than you two....”

The last elder also hurriedly stood up.

“Eh?”

Just a moment ago, they were still cowering in his presence. He had asked them to pose their questions many times previously just to receive a silent response. Yet now they were all vying to ask him questions. Zhang Xuan was bewildered.

Did they... take the wrong medicine today?

122 Pill Debate Ends

Not just Zhang Xuan, even Ouyang Cheng and the others were dumbfounded by their actions.

‘The hell, can anyone tell me what is going on?’

‘Weren’t they still behaving apprehensively a moment ago? Why are they vying to go first, as though seeing a beautiful lady and charging towards her?’

“You all...”

Wen Xue was also completely baffled.

“I get it, this bunch of fellows, they really...” Du Man shook his head with a wry smile on his face.

“Get what?” Ouyang Cheng looked over.

“Previously, Zhang Xuan was able to point out their flaws through pill forging. It gave a feeling akin to being stripped naked in public. Under such circumstances, no one would be willing to pose questions!” Apothecary Du Man said. “But now, not only did he solve Apothecary Lin Mu’s problem, he even pointed out a hidden threat for him. It is clear that this is an opportunity for them. Given that, who wouldn’t get excited?”

“That’s true....” Comprehending the situation now, Ouyang Cheng nodded his head.

It is easier to know someone else than to know yourself!

It was difficult to notice one’s own flaws. With a single word from Zhang Xuan, they might be able to correct their flaws and induce a giant improvement in their pill forging skills!

“It’s a pity. I was truly foolish then. I shouldn’t have admitted defeat so early on. Otherwise, I could have brought up some doubts I have been harboring inside me for a long time....”

With a pained heart, Apothecary Du Man shook his head.

How did he miss such a good opportunity just like that?

“Just let it go since you’ve already passed it by. You’re at fault for not treasuring the opportunity anyway. On the other hand, I have been dedicated to my responsibilities, making my best to ensure this Pill Debate is impartial. As such, I didn’t even get a chance to pose a question. Say... when this Pill Debate ends, will he give me a chance to ask a question or two? I also have quite a few questions....”

At this point, Ouyang Cheng’s eyes shone brightly and excitement filled him.

Apothecary Du Man had no words.

Wen Xue didn’t know what to say either.

‘The hell? You are a 1-star intermediate stage apothecary, as well as the head of the Apothecary Guild. For you to brazenly say that you want to consult an apprentice... Dedicated to your responsibilities you say? Why do I not see a single hint of what you just said? You’ve just been sitting idly by...’

“Alright, one at a time!”

Soon, Zhang Xuan understood what was going. Shaking his head helplessly, he casually pointed to an apothecary among them. “You!”

“Me? Great!”

Upon being chosen, he hurriedly stood up. “I have a question that I would really like to ask. Recently, I’ve had insomnia and wake up seven or eight times every night. I also often get nightmares. Can you help me check if I have any illness, or if someone is scheming against me, or... if there is a problem with my concubine?”

Zhang Xuan was speechless.

So were the others.

“Cough cough. Apothecary Liu, we are in a Pill Debate, not a fortune-telling or patient treatment session. Pay attention to what you are saying....”

Ouyang Cheng couldn’t help but intervene.

“Ah? But... that’s my question! This is what I want to ask....” Apothecary Liu said with a resolute expression.

“Alright. How about this: you try forging a pill and I will try to see what I can through that!” Zhang Xuan felt a splitting headache consuming him as he waved him away.

“Alright!” Apothecary Liu nodded his head in excitement before rushing over to start forging.

“How about you? What problems do you have?”

After settling the first fellow, Zhang Xuan’s attention turned to another apothecary.

“My question is actually quite simple. It isn’t as shameless as Apothecary Liu’s!” The apothecary spoke with a righteous tone. “My daughter is getting married within these two days, and the one she is marrying is a man called Zhou Xuan. He hails from foreign lands and even though I have investigated his background for quite a while, I have not been able to get any useful information on him. Can you help me check if that lad is reliable or not? If he isn’t, I will reject this marriage....”

At this point, he hesitated for a moment as he looked at Zhang Xuan questioningly. “So... do I have to forge pills as well?”

“Pu!”

Zhang Xuan almost threw up blood.

‘Forge pills? Forge your head!’

‘What does your daughter getting married have to do with me or forging pills?’

‘I am just a person who is undergoing Pill Debate to become an apothecary, I am not here to divine your fate....’

‘Besides, even if I can divine fate, if you don’t tell me the situation with your daughter, what can you forging pills do?’

‘Are you sure you aren’t pulling my leg?’

“Apothecary Qin, what the heck does your daughter getting married have to do with pill forging? Why are you asking Brother Zhang for that? What a joke!” The final apothecary flung his hands and harrumphed.

“But... this is the question I want to ask right now....”

Apothecary Qin was conflicted.

“You should at least ask something related to pill forging! You continue to think on that matter, I will go first!” The last apothecary stepped forward toward Zhang Xuan before saying, “Brother Zhang Xuan, seeing how young you are, you probably aren’t married yet. I have a beautiful daughter who can serve as your concubine. Look... if not, my niece is also willing. Ah? If you think that I am taking advantage of you, I still have an elder sister and a younger sister....”

Zhang Xuan was lost for words.

‘The hell! You are already sixty years old with half your foot in the grave. Your younger and elder sister... how unusual and hardcore a taste do I need for that....’

It took a long while before the chaos settled down and everyone got back to the main topic at hand.

“My question is this. The main ingredient of an Antidote Pill, Poison Neutralizing Grass, is too weak and it often burns to ashes before it can reach the bottom of the cauldron to mix with the other medicinal herbs. Where did I go wrong?”

“Poison Neutralizing Grass isn’t resistant to high heat. This is something commonly agreed upon by everyone else. If you throw it directly it into the cauldron, it is inevitable that it would burn up. However, you can soak it in Purple Sun Water for three days before using it in your forging. Not only will it not burn up, its medicinal property will also be unleashed to the maximum....”

“I would like to ask why is it that I often find my breath getting irregular when I am forging pills....”

“That is easy to answer....”

.....

...

After getting back on track, the remaining part was simple. Most of the questions could be solved using the knowledge Zhang Xuan had gained from the basic tier book collection

vault. If he really found himself at a loss, he would then proceed to get the other party to forge pills and utilize the Library of Heaven's Path to analyze the mistakes in his process.

An hour later, he finally finished answering the questions of the three remaining apothecaries.

“Alright, now that all ten apothecaries have admitted defeat, I hereby declare the winner of this Pill Debate as Zhang Xuan! From today onwards, he will be a new 1-star apothecary of the Apothecary Guild!”

When the Pill Debate came to an end, Ouyang Cheng announced the results and handed a 1-star badge and a robe over.

“This is the emblem of an apothecary. With this, no matter which Apothecary Guild you go to, you will enjoy special privileges when purchasing pills...”

“OK!”

Taking the two items from Ouyang Cheng's hands, he casually placed them into his storage ring.

Everyone had guessed that there was some incredible figure guiding him from behind, so they weren't really surprised by that storage ring in his possession.

Besides, being an apothecary was a lucrative occupation. The storage ring which could cost millions might be exorbitant, but it was nothing much to them.

“Guild Leader Ouyang, where is the advanced tier book collection vault? I would like to take a look....” Zhang Xuan asked.

His main reason for undergoing the apothecary examination was to go to the book collection vault. Thus, the first thing he decided to do upon becoming an official apothecary was to head there to take a look.

“I'll take you there!”

After which, Ouyang Cheng first walked out of the room and Zhang Xuan followed closely behind him. Before he could

travel far, the voice of the previous apothecary rang out behind him.

“Apothecary Zhang Xuan, do consider it for a bit. If my elder and younger sister won’t do, I have an aunt too. She isn’t married yet....”

Zhang Xuan staggered and tears streamed down his cheeks.

‘Your aunt...

‘Is old enough to be my great-grandmother....’

123 Solution Found

The Apothecary Guild's advanced tier book collection vault wasn't too far away from where they conducted the Pill Debate. It barely took a few steps before they arrived there.

“There are a total of ten official apothecaries in the Tianxuan Kingdom Apothecary Guild. Most of them only head here to pore through these books upon encountering truly difficult questions. As such, this place tends to be quite deserted. Anyways, feel free to pick out any book that you would like to read!” Ouyang Cheng introduced, pushing open the doors.

Zhang Xuan voiced his acknowledgment before heading into the room.

Even though there weren't too many official apothecaries in Tianxuan Kingdom's Apothecary Guild, the books inside were more than a few. It might be unable to compare to the hundreds of thousand of books in the basic tier book collection vault, but there was still more than ten thousand books inside.

They were densely packed in a dozen or so bookshelves.

“Feel free to take a look. If there's anything you are unable to comprehend, you can ask me. I will be in that room!”

Ouyang Cheng casually pointed.

“Looks like I have troubled Guild Leader Ouyang!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head with a smile.

“There is nothing troublesome about this. You are an official apothecary now, and I will likely have quite a few questions I will need to consult you on in the future!” Ouyang Cheng chuckled and walked out of the vault.

He knew that the other party had his own goals and secrets for coming to this book collection vault, so it inappropriate for him to linger around here.

“I should start looking around!”

Upon his departure, Zhang Xuan cracked a grin. Walking over to the first rack, he started to flip through the books.

He would have to spend a significant amount of time to find that specific book. Since he was bound to be delayed in any case, he might as well copy all of these books into the Library of Heaven's Path. It would be more convenient to look through them in the future and he could learn more on pill forging as well.

Hualala! Hualala!

The flipping of pages echoed in the advanced tier book collection vault.

After a period of time, Zhang Xuan stopped and his eyes gleamed.

“Indeed, the book I wanted to browse through is here....”

Diligence paid off. Eventually, he found the book regarding unique constitutions and the pills required to awaken them.

“Tianxuan Year 373, Emperor Shen Ling's daughter, Princess Shen Qiu, had Pure Yin Body. She managed to awaken it upon consuming a grade-3 pill....”

“Unravel Yin Pill?”

Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

He continued to browse through it.

“Tianxuan Year 126, there was an individual who had Emperor Bloodline. He was unable to awaken it using pills. He eventually awakened it by smearing the blood of the Colossal Rhinoceros Beast on his body.... However, the probability of success is extremely low!”

In another book, he found the method to awaken the Emperor Bloodline.

“I need to see whether it's right or wrong!”

He copied the two lines onto a piece of paper and with a jolt of his mind, the contents and flaws of the paper he just copied appeared in the Library of Heaven's Path.

“Pure Yin Body can be awakened using the Unravel Yin Pill. Flaws: It can only awaken around ten percent of the constitution, thus it is incapable of unleashing the full strength of the constitution....

“Emperor Bloodline can be awakened using the blood of the Colossal Rhinoceros Beast. Flaws: It can only awaken around ten percent of the constitution, thus it is incapable....”

Upon seeing the flaws written in the library, Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

“Only ten percent?”

Previously, he thought that he would be able to fully awaken their constitution through the use of pills. He didn't think that it could only awaken ten percent.

“However, ten percent is sufficient!” Zhang Xuan smiled.

Unique constitutions were extremely powerful. Even if it was just awakened by ten percent, it was enough to increase one's cultivation by leaps and bounds. It was more than sufficient for a mere Freshmen Tournament!

“Now, I have to look for a grade-3 Unravel Yin Pill and the blood of the Colossal Rhinoceros Beast!”

Upon confirming what he needed, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief. He finished flipping through all the books before walking over to Ouyang Cheng's room.

He was the head of the Apothecary Guild. Most probably, he was the only one who could obtain these two items for him.

After flipping through the books in the Apothecary Guild's advanced tier book collection vault, Zhang Xuan had a rough idea on what Wang Ying and Liu Yang required, and he could buy it along with the other things.

“Apothecary Zhang Xuan!”

Upon seeing Zhang Xuan walk over, Ouyang Cheng hurriedly stood up.

“Guild Leader Ouyang, there is something I need to trouble you for!”

Zhang Xuan cut to the chase and spoke of his purpose here, “I would like to purchase a few items and I may require your assistance!”

“Oh? What do you need? It shouldn’t be a problem as long as it is something the guild has!”

Ouyang Cheng nodded his head.

“I need an Unravel Yin Pill, a Meridian Rejuvenation Pill, a portion of Colossal Rhinoceros Blood, and a portion of Body Nourishment Medicinal Solution!” Zhang Xuan said.

Meridian Rejuvenation Pill was for Liu Yang’s consumption. After practicing a battle technique beyond his cultivation realm, the meridians in his right arm had withered and required the Meridian Rejuvenation Pill to heal it.

On the other hand, the Body Nourishment Medicinal Solution was for Wang Ying. Her legs had yet to fully recover top form and she was still unable to fight like a normal cultivator. As such, she required the nourishment of this kind of medicinal solution to hasten her recovery.

“It should be easy to obtain Meridian Rejuvenation Pill and Body Nourishment Medicinal Solution, and I can help you look for it. However, the Unravel Yin Pill and the blood of the Colossal Rhinoceros Beast... This is slightly trickier!”

Ouyang Cheng didn’t expect that he would require so many things and a deep frown appeared on his face.

“Trickier? Is it possible to obtain it?” Zhang Xuan looked at him.

After going through so much trouble to look for the solution to unlocking his students’ constitution, he would truly be infuriated if he was unable to obtain the items required for them at this point.

“We don’t have these items in our guild. However, if I send in an application to headquarters, it should be possible to obtain them!” Ouyang Cheng said.

“That’s great....”

Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

“However...” Ouyang Cheng frowned once more. “The headquarters are simply too far away. Even if they got another branch from the other, closer kingdoms to send it, it would still take a minimum of ten days!”

“Ten days?”

Zhang Xuan was surprised for a moment. Then, he recovered and continued, “That’s fine by me too. If it has to take ten days, then so be it!”

There were still fourteen days until the Freshmen Tournament. Things might get a little pressing if it arrived ten days later, but he should still be able to finish his preparations in time.

“Alright, I will send in the application to headquarters now then. You can obtain it within ten days. As for the Meridian Rejuvenation Pill and Body Nourishment Medicinal Solution, I can get them for you right now!”

Guild Leader Ouyang smiled.

“OK, I will be inconveniencing you then!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head. “How much do the four of them cost? Do I pay for all of them now or do I pay when they are all here?”

After inheriting Yang Mo’s fortune, he had more than a million gold coins in his possession. He could be considered a wealthy man in the capital now.

Purchasing a few medicinal herbs to raise his students’ fighting prowess didn’t matter much to him.

At the same time, he could also show how noble he was as a teacher!

‘It’s just a small sum of money. Am I a stingy person?’

“Meridian Rejuvenation Pill and Body Nourishment Medicinal Fluid aren’t too expensive. Totaling both of them up, it is around four hundred thousand gold coins!” Ouyang Cheng calculated for a moment before continuing, “The Unravel Yin Pill and Colossal Rhinoceros Blood would be slightly more expensive. The former is one of the more advanced grade-3 pills whereas the Colossal Rhinoceros Beast is a primordial beast, a whole level higher than that of savage beasts!”

“Right now, you are an apothecary, so you are entitled to special privileges. I can sell them to you at a discount. The Unravel Yin Pill will cost around twenty million gold coins whereas the blood of the Colossal Rhinoceros Beast will cost three million! How about this, I will lower the price down for you. Twenty-three million will suffice!” Ouyang Yang calculated for a moment before saying.

Upon noticing the abrupt silence in the atmosphere, he lifted his head to take a look. Unknowingly, Zhang Xuan was already ten meters away from him. Waving his hands constantly, he said, “I’m just casually asking about those things, don’t take it as real...”

Ouyang Cheng couldn’t even choke out a response.

124 Thinking of a Solution

Zhang Xuan was on the verge of tears!

He thought that these things would cost a maximum of a few hundred thousand gold coins. With that fortune of a million gold coin that he possessed, spending a little slight amount more didn't mean much. Anyway, he didn't really work for the money. Yet, never in his dreams did he expect that the cost would total more than twenty million....

He prided himself on his wealth, but before such an outstanding sum, he wouldn't have enough money even if his wealth multiplied severalfold!

What kind of damned situation was this!

Initially, he was determined to awaken their bloodlines to make up for their weaknesses, thus causing their fighting prowess to soar. They would be able to astonish everyone with their strength at the Freshmen Tournament, and at the same time, Zhang Xuan would gain the image of an expert who cared not for money. Yet, never in his dreams did he expect that he would have to spend so much.... This was too much!

If he knew that he would need that much money earlier, he wouldn't have tried to act cool from the start!

“Why don't... I just forget it!”

Suppressing his bleeding heart, Zhang Xuan was conflicted.

He was far from the required sum, so he definitely couldn't buy these items. Yet, all of the effort he had put into this—taking the apprentice apothecary and full apothecary examination—was for these items. Could he allow it all to end in vain?

Accomplishing nothing at all in the end?

Furthermore... he had already bragged about it. Zhao Ya and the others knew that he was trying to look for ways to awaken

their constitution. If he were to return empty-handed, how could he lift his head in front of them in the future?

“No, giving up just because it’s too expensive isn’t my way of doing things!”

If he truly gave up on these items, Zhao Ya and the others wouldn’t be able to awaken their constitutions and it would merely be a dream to triumph over Lu Xun fourteen days later!

A transcender should not give up before even trying!

Furthermore, as Zhao Ya and the others’ teacher, the one to point out their path for them, his sense of responsibility would not allow him to simply sit idly by.

Even though he had just become a teacher, he had chosen to take on the responsibilities that a teacher ought to shoulder.

If he didn’t have enough money, he could just look for ways to earn more!

At this point, Zhang Xuan walked back up to him. Looking at Ouyang Cheng, he asked, “Cough cough, Guild Leader Ouyang. Is it possible for me to put those items on my tab first? I will find ways to repay this debt to you in the future.”

“This... it can’t be done!” Guild Leader Ouyang shook his head. “None of those in our branch can forge grade-3 pills, so we need to purchase it from the headquarters. As a result, I can’t delay the payment for you....”

“But... twenty million, I won’t be able to take it out within a short period of time....”

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

“There’s no way around it. How about... you try to learn how to forge pills first? Given your knowledge in the field, there should be a lot of ways for you to earn money,” Ouyang Cheng advised.

The young man before him had knowledge that surpassed that of all of the apothecaries in the entire branch. If he were to forge pills personally, even though twenty million might sound fearsome, for a high-level apothecary, it truly wasn’t a huge sum.

“One can earn a lot of money from forging pills? That Meridian Soothing Pill that you all forged previously, how much could one be sold for?” Zhang Xuan couldn’t help asking.

“The Meridian Soothing Pill isn’t easy to forge. And as such, it’s one of the more profitable pills among grade-1 pills. A single pill should be able to sell for fifty thousand or so. If you forge ten in a day, you will earn twenty million in less than two months!” Guild Leader Ouyang asserted.

Apothecary was an extremely lucrative profession. However, it depended highly on the market conditions and whether the supply of medicinal herb could keep up with production. Even though it was possible theoretically, even official apothecaries would find it difficult to forge pills every single day.

“Two months?”

Despair streaked across Zhang Xuan’s face.

In two months’ time, the Freshmen Tournament would have concluded and everything would be over.

If that’s the case, he might as well work on their strength the conventional way. There was no point in him exerting so much effort here.

Besides, the reason why his theoretical ability was that impressive was because of the Library of Heaven’s Path. If he were to forge pills personally... It wasn’t a feasible plan.

Even though every single word of his was profound and logical, if he were to do it personally, he couldn’t even complete the very first step of extracting essence from the medicinal herbs.

He had seen the others forging pills previously and without several dozen years of training and refining his skill, it was impossible for him to get to their level of expertise.

“Is there... any other better way of earning money?” He couldn’t help but ask for an alternative method.

“Better way of earning money?” Guild Leader Ouyang shook his head. Just when he was about to shoot down the possibility,

a thought popped into his mind. “The most lucrative occupation in this world is—without a doubt—master teacher. They can earn a hefty fee just by offering some guidance to others. Apothecaries aren’t that bad either, but when compared to master teachers, there is still a huge gap between the two.”

There were many occupations in the job. Appraisers and apothecaries could be considered as some of the more lucrative ones, but they still paled in comparison to master teachers.

Cultivators often find themselves reaching a bottleneck in their cultivation, unable to break through even till their last breath. However, a single pointer by a master teacher could possibly be the key for them to reach higher realms.

With a rise in the cultivation realm, not only would their lifespan increase, their ability to earn money also quickened. As such, most people were willing to dump all of their fortune just for a single pointer from a master teacher.

Indubitably, master teacher was the most lucrative job in the world, unmatched by any other occupation.

However, it wasn’t easy for one to become a master teacher. One had to have students of their own, teaching experience, reputation, and on top of that, one had to go through numerous trials as well.

For example, Zhang Xuan with his Library of Heaven’s Path was able to easily solve many problems. However, without students of his own, he couldn’t take the master teacher examination.

“Can you pay in my stead first? I will search for a way to pay you within ten days!”

As Zhang Xuan said this, a bold idea emerged in his mind.

“Alright!” Ouyang Cheng was oblivious to his thoughts. However, seeing the grim look on his face, he didn’t seem as though he was joking. So he nodded his head.

“I will be leaving first!”

After which, Zhang Xuan walked out.

“Since master teachers were good at earning money... if I pretend I am a master teacher... would I be able to earn money swiftly?”

At this point, Zhang Xuan started to analyze the pros and cons of the bold thought he just had.

Using ordinary methods, it was impossible to earn twenty million gold coins in ten days unless one robbed a bank!

However, if he pretended to be a master teacher, there might be a possibility of him earning the sum within the duration!

If someone tried to do so and were exposed, it was highly likely for that person to be beaten to death on the spot. After all, a master teacher possessed vast knowledge, and it would be easy to give himself away especially when he said something flawed. However, Zhang Xuan was different!

With the Library of Heaven's Path and his ability to hoodwink others he gained in his previous life, it was truly a simple feat to scam others.

Of course, it wasn't really considered as a scam. After all, with the Library of Heaven's Path and his Heaven's Path Divine Art, he could see the flaws in others. Raising their cultivation realm would be something easy and pleasant.

“Alright, I shall do it that way!”

After analyzing the situation, he felt that he could do it and nodded his head in satisfaction.

If he wanted to help Zhao Ya and the others to grow stronger and win the bet he had with Lu Xun, those few items were a must. As such, he had to earn that sum of money.

This was the only way to earn twenty million within ten days.

“I have to prepare some things in advance. Given my current age, no one will believe me if I go around shouting that I'm a master teacher. I need to disguise myself. At the very least, I should look thirty.”

Master teachers were just like apothecaries. If you said you were a master teacher when you didn't even look twenty, you

would probably drown in the other party's spit before you could even finish your words.

No matter what, he had to disguise himself and alter his facial features. Otherwise, putting aside the fact that it would be difficult for him to induce trust in others, this might also bring him endless trouble in the future.

"Next, as a master teacher, I would need uphold my own identity and reputation. I can't possibly run to the house of others and offer to give them guidance. If so, they would just think of me as a scammer."

He lived in the information age previously, and even though he had not done such things in the past, he knew a thing or two about it from the news.

Given the esteemed position master teachers had in this world, it wasn't practical for him to run to other people's house to offer them pointers and demand money from them in return.

"What should I do?"

Since he couldn't run to others to offer his services, how could he look for clients? Without clients, how could he make money?

Zhang Xuan frowned.

125 Renting a Mansion

“Right, I should first look for a residence. As long as I can build a reputation, people would definitely come scrambling to me... This way, I can avoid knocking on the doors and retain my dignity as an expert, while earning money.”

An idea popped into his head.

As a master teacher, one had to uphold his stature. He couldn't simply go around visiting houses. As such, he could only lie in wait for willing preys to take the bait.

As long as someone were to come knocking, he was confident of subduing them with his hoodwinking prowess and Library of Heaven's Path.

“Yup, I should first look for a base of operation!”

After contemplating carefully, he realized that this was indeed the best way to go about it. With a snap of his fingers, Zhang Xuan made up his mind.

He would do it this way.

With a concrete idea in his mind, he didn't dawdle and immediately proceeded to the reception to purchase pills and medicinal solutions that could change one's outer appearance and skin color.

Even though he didn't really know disguise techniques, as a member of modern civilization, he still had some basic knowledge regarding make-up. Using those pills and medicinal solution, it didn't take long for him to transform from a young lad below twenty years old into a yellowish, middle-aged man that possessed a dignified gaze.

After staring into the mirror for a long period of time, he ascertained that there were no problems with his disguise and nodded his head in satisfaction.

After which, he walked out of the Apothecary Guild.

“In order to convince others, I need to be dressed in luxurious clothes...”

Clothes make the man. Given his current dress-up, many would believe him if he claimed to be a beggar. He needed to look the image if he wanted people to believe that he was a master teacher.

“There is a clothing store right ahead.”

With such a thought in his mind, he noticed a clothing store that was nearby and entered. When he finally exited, he had already transformed into a totally different person.

With a brocade hat and marten coat, he was dressed extravagantly. It was clear from his appearance that he was a person of noble standing.

These clothes cost him a total of twenty thousand gold coins. He could feel his heart bleeding.

“I should just treat it as an investment.”

Consoling himself, he walked along the street. An hour later, he arrived at Tianyu Commercial City once more.

It was already late in the afternoon and the sun was about to set.

Knowing that he was lacking time, Zhang Xuan proceeded forward in large strides.

He knew that it was impossible to find accommodation in a short period of time singlehandedly. However, Tianyu Commercial City was reputed for selling everything possible under the sun. Thus, it was guaranteed that there was information on this aspect available as well. Furthermore, he didn't need to purchase an accommodation, it was sufficient for him to just rent one.

As he had already been here before, he had become quite familiar with the surroundings. After strolling around, he soon caught sight of a realtor agent center.

“Old master, are you here to buy a house?”

Upon noticing his entry, a plump boss stepped forward immediately to welcome him.

“Old master?”

Zhang Xuan was taken aback for a moment before coming to a realization. He had already modified his appearance at current, he looked like he was in his forties. He was no longer a young lad.

Thus, he nodded his head and placed both hands behind his back, assuming a disposition befitting that of an old master. He deepened his voice, making him seem more mature. “I want to rent a mansion!”

“Mansion? Old master, your decision to visit our us to rent a mansion is a wise one!” The boss’s eyes gleamed.

Those who were able to rent out mansions were all wealthy men. Just by raising the rent by a slight amount, these landlords would be able to earn a huge sum!

“Old master, may I know what your requirements?”

As though he saw a fat lamb before him that was waiting to be butchered, the boss asked excitedly.

“It must be clean, large and has the best location. It would be perfect if the renovations are in place so that I can move in immediately!”

Zhang Xuan said.

“This...”

Upon hearing the other party’s request, the eyes of the boss twinkled and he almost leaped in joy.

No doubt about it, this was a huge lamb for him!

Putting aside all other factors, just the requirements Zhang Xuan stated had made it impossible for the mansion to be inexpensive.

How could someone who wanted to rent a mansion like that be poor?

He was so happy that he almost squealed, but he acted as though he was troubled. “Old master, we do have such mansions, but the cost of the rent would be slightly pricey...”

By saying so first, the plump man would be able to demand a higher price later on.

Hehe...

“Price isn’t a problem!” Zhang Xuan gestured haughtily.

Right now, he was a ‘master teacher’. It would truly be embarrassing if he were to squabble over the measly sum of money.

“Alright then, I will bring old master to look at mansions until you find one that is to your liking.”

Upon hearing such impressive words from the other party, the boss’s smiled so wide that it was about to reach his ears.

Without any hesitation, he closed the shop and led the way, holding a bunch of keys.

Zhang Xuan followed behind him. Soon, they arrived at a vast mansion.

“This is a mansion a rich businessman bought last year. However, he died last year and his son indulged in prostitutes and gambling. As a result, he had no choice but to put this mansion up for sale or rent. This mansion is newly renovated and its location is good as well. Do you want to take a look?”

Stopping before the mansion, the boss looked at Zhang Xuan to gauge his reaction.

This mansion was the largest and most luxurious one of their realtor center. Regardless of whether it was the location or the size, there was nothing one could find faults with. Thus, he brought the other party here at first time’s notice for him to take a look. He would only bring him to the other mansions if it was unsuitable. If the other party were to lay his sights upon this one, he would have truly struck it rich.

“Let’s enter to take a look!”

Zhang Xuan didn’t say anything excessive.

Since he wanted to impersonate a ‘master teacher’, his residence had to have class. It mustn’t be too small. As for the money Zhang Xuan had to spend, it wasn’t really a problem.

“Great!”

Upon observing how the other party didn’t decline, the boss smiled and hurriedly opened the doors.

It was a wujin courtyard. There were man-made mountains and ponds. Not only was it large and spacious, there were all kinds of plants planted around the entire mansion. Upon entering, one would be surrounded by greenery and the fragrance of flowers, inducing a feeling of ease.

“Not bad!”

After taking a look, Zhang Xuan nodded his head secretly.

This mansion was exactly as he imagined. He could simply take his baggage and move in at this very moment. Everything he needed was present and he didn’t have to go the extra mile to prepare anything.

Furthermore, it was close to Hongtian Academy, just a ten minute walk away.

After his lessons, he could head straight back here, not having to spend much time traveling to and fro.

“This will do. How much is the rent?”

Fancying the residence, Zhang Xuan gestured majestically and got straight to the point.

“This is the most luxurious mansion in our realtor center. If old master wishes to rent it, it would be hundred and fifty thousand gold coins every month!”

The boss hurriedly said.

“Hundred and fifty thousand?”

Zhang Xuan frowned.

He wasn’t sure about the property market in this world, but hundred and fifty thousand a month to rent a mansion seemed way too expensive.

Hu!

Without saying anything, Zhang Xuan suddenly clawed at the boss before him.

“Old master, what do you intend to do...”

Hearing the sound of his fingernails tearing through air, the boss was terrified and cowered backward immediately.

With just a movement, his level of cultivation was revealed:
Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi pinnacle!

His cultivation realm wasn't high.

“Oh, I just want to see your level of cultivation.”

Zhang Xuan retracted his palm and placed behind his back. Then, looking at the other party again, his eyes narrowed, “You said that you will rent this mansion to me at hundred and fifty thousand a month? Tripling the rent of fifty thousand a month, do you take me for a fool?”

Wujin Courtyard:

To understand what a Wujin Courtyard is, one must know what a Siheyuan (also known as Courtyard Houses) is. The most typical example of it were the houses of generals/officials in the ancient past. There will be a courtyard in the middle and rooms of various purposes surrounding it.

Siheyuans can be split into various categories depending on its size. The smallest is the Yijin Courtyard (One Entrance Courtyard). Wujin Courtyard (Five Entrance Courtyard) is considered as the largest.

Upon stepping into the house, there will be a narrow walkway (first entrance), accommodations for guests (second entrance), a living room (third entrance), main accommodations for the family (fourth entrance) and accommodations for daughters/female servants (fifth entrance). Since there is a courtyard between each of these places, it is called Five Entrance Courtyard.

126 I Am a Master Teacher

“Cough cough...”

Upon hearing those words, the boss’s expression changed. He let out a laughter and replied immediately, “Old master, what are you talking about? This is a wujin courtyard mansion and has such a prime location. Hundred and fifty thousand a month is truly not expensive...”

“Inexpensive?”

The corners of Zhang Xuan’s lips crept upward, “The original owner of the mansion is called Du Qiao and he is indeed a merchant. However, he isn’t dead yet. Due to encountering bandits, a huge blow was dealt to his business and thus, he decided to sell this mansion. However, he was unable to find a buyer so he decided to lease it out instead. According to your agreement with him, it should be fifty thousand every month and you will be entitled to a fifteen percent commission... Yet, you are offering me hundred and fifty thousand now, isn’t your appetite a little too big?”

“Old master, you... you...”

Upon hearing his words, the boss staggered backward.

Are you for real?

The contract on this house signed between Du Qiao and him was exactly as Zhang Xuan said, fifty thousand a month, just that... This was supposed to be confidential. They didn’t tell any outsiders when signing the contract, so how could this fellow be aware?

“Why? Do you wish to deny it?” Zhang Xuan stared at him calmly. “The contract was signed three months ago at Emerald Pavilion, and the one who accompanied by your side then was the top hostess, Cui Ling. The wine you two drank was the Crushing Waves with eight years of maturity and the dish you two ate was the Ruby Rabbit Meat. During which, you even had Ming Xin Yue play a tune. After sealing the deal, both of

you happily invited three ladies in... Do you need me to recount the events that occurred one by one for you?"

"Ah..."

The boss looked as though he had seen a ghost and fear surged through him.

The words that the other party said were spot-on, as though the man was there in person.

This is too terrifying!

"You... Who exactly are you?"

Frightened, the boss trembled.

Standing before the other party, he felt as though he had been stripped naked, causing him to feel guilty subconsciously.

"I am merely a person who wants to rent a place, I just don't wish to be taken advantage of!"

Zhang Xuan's expression was serene.

"I was overly obsessed with profits. This mansion is exactly as what old master said, it costs fifty thousand every month!" After the other party revealed so many things about him, the boss was truly frightened. He dared not to fool around and hurriedly admitted his fault.

"Un!" Watching the other party concede, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction. He casually whipped out a stack of bills, "Here is a hundred thousand, I will be renting the place for a month. For the excess amount, help me to get some servants. Also... During the time I am here, you shall be my butler. No need to speak of fifty thousand or hundred thousand, if you perform well, I will give you however much money you need. You will definitely make more money than running that realtor center of yours."

As a master teacher, he couldn't possibly clean such a large mansion personally or do everything by himself. It was necessary to have servants and maids to assist with the chores.

The reason why he wanted this fellow to serve as his butler was even simpler.

He was good at scamming!

To outright offer three times the original price, he had the enormous guts.

His reason for impersonating a master teacher was to make quick bucks and he desperately required such talents.

“I will get how much I want?”

The boss’s breathing hastened.

His realtor center only earned him twenty thousand gold coins or so a year. It was not often that people would come to rent mansions like this, and moreover, it was useless if the other party failed to fall for his exorbitant scams.

This is precisely why he felt a surge of excitement upon seeing the bills worth a hundred thousand gold coins and hearing the other party’s offer.

The heck! I knew that he was a fat lamb, but I didn’t expect for him to be such a massive one!

“Why? Are you unwilling?”

“No... No, I am willing.” The boss grabbed the bills from Zhang Xuan’s hands hurriedly. His movement was even faster than when he dodged Zhang Xuan’s attack earlier.

How could he be unwilling when such a good opportunity was presented in his face?

“Un! I will only be staying in Tianxuan City for a period of time. If you serve me well, I will make you sure you earn ten years worth of salary within a single month. As for what you should do... I think you should know it better than anyone else.” The other party’s response did not let him down. Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

“Rest assured, old master. I will definitely serve you well.”

Upon hearing the other party’s promise, the plump boss nodded his head vehemently.

Un, Zhang Xuan responded.

It was of utmost important to balance the carrot and the stick to keep a person loyal. At the very beginning, he exposed all of the other party's secrets, inducing fear in the other party's heart. After which, he offered him massive benefits. It would be queer if the other party was instead unwilling to give in to him.

“What is your name?”

“Your humble servant's name is Sun Qiang!” The boss quickly replied. “You can call me Xiao Qiang!”

“Xiao Qiang?” A strange expression appeared on Zhang Xuan's face.

“Yes!” Sun Qiang nodded his head.

“There are some tasks that I will delegate to you right now.”

Suppressing the urge to call the other party ‘cockroach’, Zhang Xuan waved his thoughts away and said, “Firstly, I want you to find maids and servants for this mansion by tonight. Tomorrow, when I come over, I want to see them here. Secondly, through your connections, I want you to spread the news of me living in this mansion. Say that... A passing master teacher, Yang Xuan, will be staying here for a short period of time. The more people know of the matter, the better it is.”

Naturally, he wouldn't use his real name. Yang Xuan was a web name that he used in his previous life, thus he casually chose to use it.

“Master teacher?”

Taken aback, Sun Qiang lifted his head and stared at the old master doubtfully.

“Un, I am a master teacher. I am here to look for something. So, it would be best if you could get the news as far as possible.”

Zhang Xuan harrumphed. “Of the hundred thousand I have just given you, there should be a remaining sum after hiring the servants. Do a good job, and I will make sure to reward you greatly. I have taken a look at your cultivation realm and I

have noticed that you have been stuck at Zhenqi realm pinnacle for over a decade now. It would be a small matter for me to help you break through during the time I am in Tianxuan Royal City.”

“Thank you, old master.” Sun Qiang quickly kneeled to the floor.

It was just as the other party said. He had been stuck at Zhenqi realm pinnacle for over a decade, but somehow, he was unable to overcome this boundary. If he were to receive the pointer of a master teacher, Fighter 4-dan wouldn't be a dream for him.

He secretly lifted his head to sneak a peek. The old master whom he had just met with had his hands behind his back as he stood before the background of the setting sun. The faint yellow light that scattered on his body made him resemble an unworldly immortal.

Upon this sight, admiration arose instantaneously from the depths of his heart for this old master.

At this moment, he was completely convinced that the other party was a master teacher.

If he weren't a master teacher, how could he have known about his secret dealings? If he weren't a master teacher, how could he possibly be so rich and generous...

However, what that truly convinced the boss were his disposition and his actions. Majesty exuded naturally in every single action of his. In fact, if someone were to claim that the person before him wasn't a master teacher, he would think that the person was lying.

“Old master, rest assured. I will accomplish this matter perfectly.”

Sun Qiang was filled with motivation.

Master teachers. This is the noblest group of people in the world. Even the emperor of Tianxuan Kingdom, Shen Zhui, has to act respectfully and politely around them. For an ordinary and insignificant figure like him to be able to serve such an incredible figure, it was almost as though the Goddess of Fortune had blessed him.

“Go!”

Upon observing the other party’s complete submission, Zhang Xuan gestured for him to leave.

“Yes!” Sun Qiang left excitedly.

Only after his departure did Zhang Xuan relax his body and stretch his back. He sighed.

“To think that acting like an expert would be so tiring...”

Xiao Qiang is another word for cockroach.

127 List of Opponents

If someone were to know of Zhang Xuan's thoughts, he would probably be tempted to strangle him.

You impersonate an expert and find it tiring? Why don't you kill yourself...

After Sun Qiang's departure, Zhang Xuan didn't remain in the mansion for long. By the time he returned to his dormitory, the sun had already set.

Today's morning lessons, the Pill Debate, and then looking for a base and acting like an expert. He felt exhausted after going through so much today.

Initially, he had planned to research content on the next phase after Pixue realm but unknowingly, he fell asleep right after lying onto his bed. By the time he woke up, it was already morning.

Upon entering the classroom, he realized that his students were already present.

He took a look at each of their conditions and nodded his head in satisfaction.

These students seemed to also know the importance of the Freshmen Tournament and thus, they were extremely diligent in their training. Even though it was just a single day, they had made significant improvements.

After offering them pointers individually, Zhang Xuan clarified some doubts they had. Then, just as he was about to end the lesson, he saw a person walking in through the door.

“Zhang laoshi, Lu Xun laoshi challenged you to a 【Teacher Evaluation】 and this is the name list of students who would be competing with yours!”

When Zhu Hong delivered the war declaration previously, he was beaten to a pulp by Yuan Tao and the others. The one who came this time is a teacher.

Different teachers had different number of students under them. For star teachers like Lu Xun, his students often numbered in the hundreds and if all of them were to be involved in the duel with Zhang Xuan, it wouldn't be fair. Thus, in the Teacher Evaluation, both teachers would choose a few students to represent them in duels.

Zhang Xuan had a total of five students, so there was no need for him to choose among them. It would do as long as the other party chose five students to compete with each of his students.

“Good!” Taking over the name list, Zhang Xuan took a look and a bizarre expression appeared on his face immediately.

He thought that the other party would choose some of his more highly-ranked students, given the number of outstanding students under his tutelage. He didn't expect that the five students he chose would have similar rankings to his own students, with the exception of Yuan Tao (The main reason for that was because the other party didn't have students of Yuan Tao's ranking).

The first one on the list is Zhu Hong, who barged into the classroom previously, and the other candidates he chose corresponded to Wang Ying, Zheng Yang and Liu Yang's rankings, so there aren't huge differences between them.

In Teacher Evaluations, the challenged teacher had the choice of whether to accept or to decline. Once the challenged teacher accepts the challenge, the other party could choose any of the students under his tutelage to compete with him. Theoretically speaking, Lu Xun could send five of the top ten students in the entrance examinations and it wouldn't be flouting the rules. As such, Zhang Xuan had been preparing for such a scenario. He hadn't expected that the other party would send him such a line-up, so he was a little taken aback.

“Un? Mo Xiao, isn't this fellow...”

Taking a closer look, a familiar name appeared. Perplexed by the matter, he suddenly heard Liu Yang's voice.

Liu Yang had also seen the contents in the name list and felt that something was amiss.

“Zhang laoshi, even though the ranks of our opponents in the list are similar to ours, we won’t be a match if we were to cross blows. There is something weird...”

“Un?” Zhang Xuan looked over at him. “What can you tell from it?”

“For example, take a look at this Bai Chao. My ranking in the entrance examination is 93rd whereas he is 90th. There isn’t a large difference in our ranking, but this fellow is skilled in punching techniques and his cultivation realm is one small level higher than mine. If we were to talk about fighting prowess, two of me wouldn’t be an opponent for him. The reason why our rankings are around the same was because he fared too badly for the theoretical examination.”

Liu Yang pointed to another name, “This Du Lei as well, he is skilled in movement techniques. Wang Ying is ranked 67th while he is ranked 69th. It might seem as though he is slightly weaker than Wang Ying, but he possesses incredible speed. His attacks are also vicious and precise. In a one-to-one duel, Wang Ying definitely isn’t a match for him.”

“It’s true that I am unable to defeat him.”

Wang Ying’s face flushed red and she nodded her head in agreement.

“Mo Xiao is my friend and I have never defeated him.” Zheng Yang started speaking. “Just that... Wasn’t Mo Xiao admitted under Wang Chao laoshi? We signed up for his lessons together but I failed the examination...”

“Not just him, I remember clearly that Bai Chao was under Hong Xun laoshi and this Du Lei was under Zhu Hong laoshi.” Liu Yang said.

“What’s going on?”

Zhang Xuan stared intently at the teacher who passed him the name list.

“Oh, Mo Xiao, Bai Chao and Du Lei withdrew from their teachers’ tutelage yesterday and acknowledged Lu laoshi.” The teacher nodded his head. “I have already sent you the name list and my job is done. Farewell!”

At this point, the teacher turned around to leave.

“Acknowledged Lu laoshi?” Upon hearing these words, Zhang Xuan immediately understood what was going on.

This Lu Xun is truly a bastard!

He thought that the other party sending students of similar ranking was an attempt to make this challenge fair. In reality, he had already done his research and analyzed his students thoroughly.

Zhu Hong was ranked fourth while Zhao Ya was ranked seventh. There isn’t a huge difference in their rankings but when it comes to fighting, as seen before, if it weren’t for Zhang Xuan secretly informing her of his mingmen, even two Zhao Yas wouldn’t be a match for him.

The other party must have already known about Wang Ying’s injury to send Du Lei, who is skilled in movement techniques and possesses superior speed. From the very start, Wang Ying’s legs are already her weakness, so how could she keep up with someone with such outstanding speed? Isn’t this just becoming a standing punchbag for the other party?

Zheng Yang’s spear mastery might be excellent, but the other party sent Mo Xiao, who is a level higher than him. Liu Yang injured the meridians in his right arms due to training in battle techniques beyond his level, but the other party sent Bai Chao, who is skilled in punching techniques...

As for the one who corresponded to Yuan Tao, his name is Kong Jie and he is ranked in the three hundreds. However, after Liu Yang’s brief introduction, Zhang Xuan came to a realization immediately.

This fellow isn’t adept at battle techniques or anything else, but he possesses exceptional offensive ability and was an aggressive fighter.

It was ideal to send a person like this to deal with Yuan Tao, who specializes in defense.

The heck!

In the view of those unaware of the situation, Lu Xun's action of not choosing among his outstanding students and instead, picking those who hold rankings similar to his own was for fairness. But, he was actually choosing opponents that curbed his students.

For this, he even took students from other teachers to place them under his tutelage.

If Zhang Xuan were to train his students in the conventional method, his students would improve, but so would the other party's. To triumph over the other party with half a month of effort is nearly impossible!

After all, his five students have problems of their own and those problems aren't minor things that can be solved swiftly.

"That bastard, he is trying to use me as a stepping stone!"

Zhang Xuan's rage flurried.

When the other party tried to trample on his dignity previously, he was furious but not to such an extent. After all, as a member of the modern civilization in his previous life, on which days did he not get his face slapped? He was already used to it!

But now, the other party is trying to step on his face to reach higher grounds. He wants to attract more attention so as to add to his reputation. Zhang Xuan will not allow this to happen.

I am not a staircase for you to step on as you please! Neither am I a melon for you to chew off as you please!

"I will go all out. Within ten days, I will definitely earn twenty million and obtain the pills and medicinal solutions for them!"

Zhang Xuan clenched his fist tightly.

It was his first time getting so furious after transcending over.

Slapping my face? I can still endure it. But to step on my face to reach higher grounds?

Dream on!

In the past, he thought that he was on the losing end spending so much money to buy those items for his students. In his mind, no matter what, he had to get the money back from his students. However, from the look of it now, it wasn't his loss.

This isn't just for his students, this is for him as well!

Lu Xun, just you wait! You might be gleeful now, but you will be in for a rain of tears later on!

In another classroom, Lu Xun sneezed. He rubbed his nose as he muttered, "Is someone thinking of me?"

128 No One is Coming

After instructing them to cultivate their personalized cultivation techniques properly and informing them he might be out for a few days, Zhang Xuan left the academy.

He found a remote alley, and when he emerged on the streets once more, he had already transformed into “Master Teacher ‘Yang Xuan’”.

There were still fourteen days before the start of the Freshmen Tournament and he has to make every second count.

In just a moment’s time, he was already approaching the mansion. Before walking up, he could already see two guards standing gallantly by the door. Their strength had already reached Fighter 4-dan Pigu realm.

“Not bad, looks impressive!”

The two guards were dressed in uniform. It didn’t look extravagant but had a unique style, giving the impression that they were guards of a powerful clan.

To be able to hire guards and prepare everything else within such a short period of time, it looks like that Xiao Qiang’s ability to complete tasks was not bad.

“Old master!”

Upon seeing him walk over, the two guards hesitated for a moment before shouting out in unison.

“Un!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

Looks like the butler Xiao Qiang had already informed them of his appearance and dressing. Otherwise, it should have been impossible for them to recognize him in one glance. This way, he managed to avoid the awkward situation of being unable to enter one’s own home.

Upon entering the residence, he realized that the interior was tidied spick and span. The surroundings were filled with flower pots and upon stepping in, fragrance surrounded him.

“Old master!”

“Old master!”

The guards and maids drew closer and paid their respects to Zhang Xuan.

Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction and he walked majestically toward the lounge.

“Old master, following your orders, I have already recruited the necessary personnel. There is a total of 30 maids and 5 guards...”

Even before reaching the lounge, Sun Qiang ran up to welcome him. The glee of one who had successfully completed the missions delegated to him could be seen on his face.

He was probably the only person who could gather so many people of quality within this short period of time.

“Not bad!” Zhang Xuan complimented. “Have you spread the news that I asked you to yesterday?”

“Rest easy, old master. I have already spread the word. It won’t take long before everyone in Tianxuan Royal Kingdom will know that I am serving a master teacher.” Sun Qiang looked at him in reverence.

He didn’t know why his old master wanted to publicize his identity as a master teacher, but he must have his reasons for having him do so.

“How did you spread it?”

“I made a commotion out of me selling my shop and told everyone in the commercial city that from today onward, I will be a butler at the mansion of a master teacher. The commercial city is filled with many nosey people, I believe that it won’t take long for everyone to know of it.”

Sun Qiang quickly replied.

“Un!” Zhang Xuan responded.

Indeed, that was the best way to advertise. Not only did it seem not intentional, the news would also spread fast. Of

course... It would be hard to tell how the results are at this point.

“Old master, is there anything else that you need me to do?”

Seeing that the old master was satisfied with him, excitement flashed across Sun Qiang’s eyes as he asked.

“Nothing else...” Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment. “You should have spent quite a bit of money hiring those maids and guards, do you still have sufficient money?”

He only gave hundred thousand to his butler. The rent of the mansion took up fifty thousand already. In total, thirty maids and fifty guards were hired, so it was likely that the remaining fifty thousand wasn’t enough.

“It is more than enough. The moment they heard that they would become the guards and maids of a master teacher, they charged forth to take up the offer. They were willing to accept low wages, some were even willing to work for free. Fifty thousand is more than enough.” Sun Qiang said.

At this point, Sun Qiang still found it hard to believe the prestige that a master teacher possessed.

There were quite a few people who did not believe that he was truly serving as a butler to a master teacher. Even so, quite a few guards and girls rushed to him and expressed their interests to serve his old master.

No other occupation possessed such rallying power.

Putting everything else aside, just a casual pointer or two from a master teacher could be equivalent to years of their training. Just this itself was sufficient to cause countless people to go frenzied.

“Bring me a cup of tea.”

Knowing that the news is already out, what he had to do now was to wait for people to come knocking. As such, Zhang Xuan went into the lounge, sat on a chair and waited patiently.

Soon, a maid brought him a cup of tea.

This maid is around sixteen to seventeen year old and her name is Wan-er. She has a beautiful appearance and her eyes are exceptionally bright. Initially, upon seeing Zhang Xuan, her movements were a little restrained. However, after realizing that he wasn't a hot-tempered person, she heaved a sigh of relief and ease returned to her actions.

Knowing that panicking is futile, Zhang Xuan waited quietly for someone to come knocking while sipping on his tea.

He waited from morning till afternoon. The sun was about to set but still, no one had come over. There wasn't even a single person who had gathered outside out of curiosity.

“Old master, do you need me to hang a sign outside saying that ‘a master teacher is here’...”

Sun Qiang walked over, appearing very anxious.

“...” Zhang Xuan was speechless.

He would only look like a true expert if someone had learned of the fact unintentionally. If you hang a sign outside, it would seem as though I am running a business. How can I act as an unworldly expert like that?

Furthermore, ‘a master teacher is here’... Why does it feel like ‘a dog is on the premises, please enter with caution’?

“Looks like no one will be visiting today. Let's go out for a walk.”

Ignoring the words of the other party, Zhang Xuan stood up.

Even though Sun Qiang had put out word that there is a master teacher here, a large portion of people still chose not to believe it.

After all, given the status of a master teacher, there was no way one would come to Tianxuan Kingdom and, not to say, live here.

Furthermore, even if one were to really live here, he should reside in an extravagant place like the palace. Renting a mansion and hiring you as the butler, you must be dreaming...

“Go out for a walk?”

Sun Qiang blinked in surprise. “Then... What if someone visits in the meantime?”

He understood that this old master of his was trying to make a reputation for himself within the shortest period of time. After waiting for an entire day, if someone were to come knocking while he was out, wouldn't his effort of having waited the entire day go to vain?

“Tell the guards to stop everyone at the door. Regardless of who it is, without my permission, they aren't allowed to enter.”

Zhang Xuan said.

A master teacher must have dignity befitting of one. Regardless of who it is, even if the person were Emperor Shen Zhui, he wouldn't be allowed to enter without the master teacher's permission!

“Yes...”

Sun Qiang nodded his head vehemently.

“Let's go!”

Since waiting is pointless, he might as well go out to look for opportunities himself. After today comes to an end, there will only be thirteen days left to the Freshmen Tournament and nine days for the arrival of the medicines. Time waits for no one.

Walking along the street, the crowd moved to and fro by him. The sun was about to set in the west and the sky was dyed with a shade of orange. It was already autumn and the wind that blew felt chilly.

“Of everyone you know, who is the richest?”

After taking a few steps, Zhang Xuan turned around to ask.

“Reporting to the old master, it is the boss of Tianyu Commercial City, Lord Ling Tianyu. His wealth is equivalent to that of the national treasury and he is a true billionaire!” Deep admiration could be seen in Sun Qiang's eyes.

“The boss of Tianyu Trading Firm? Billionaire?”

Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up. "He'll be it!"

His reason for impersonating a master teacher was to earn easy bucks. Naturally, he had to pick out wealthy targets.

"Where does he live?" Coming to a decision, Zhang Xuan asked.

"Reporting to the old master, during this period of time, Lord Ling has been living in his trading firm. Do you want to meet him?" Sun Qiang asked doubtfully.

"Un, let's go take a look!"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head and with an impressive wave of his arm, the two walked toward Tianyu Trading Firm.

129 Southern Green Jade

As usual, Tianyu Trading Firm was bustling and large streams of customers were flowing in and out continuously. With his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan walked in.

“Old master, Lord Ling’s office is just in front...”

After walking a distance, Sun Qiang pointed to the front.

Zhang Xuan lifted his head and an extravagantly decorated lounge appeared before him. There were two green jade stone lions standing before the door. They were towering and exuded majesty.

The eyes of the stone lions were pitch black and filled with spirit, making the lions seem life-like. With a single look, one couldn’t help but feel intimidated.

“I’ve heard that Lord Ling had specially invited a 6-mo craftsman to create this pair of stone lions. The material used is the **【Southern Green Jade】**, the best jade in Tianxuan Kingdom! Furthermore, given that it was crafted by a 6-mo craftsman, just a single one of these lions is worth several million.”

Sun Qiang eyes glimmered with burning passionate.

Many wealthy people place valuable items before their door to showcase their wealth and prestige. At the same time, it serves as an auspicious symbol for fortune to roll in. It seemed that even this Ling Tianyu was unable to escape from this tradition.

“Several million?” Zhang Xuan was surprised.

Previously, Zhang Xuan thought that he could be considered rather wealthy with a single million in his possession. Upon hearing Sun Qiang’s words, he realized that he was nothing more than a beggar to those who were truly wealthy.

“Old master, why don’t I enter first to report your arrival to Lord Ling so as to have him welcome you?” Sun Qiang looked over.

In his perspective, even though Lord Ling Tianyu's wealth could rival an entire national treasury, his standing was still beneath that of a master teacher.

A master teacher was a powerful figure whom even Emperor Shen Zhui dared not to offend, not to mention that Ling Tianyu, despite his wealth, was only a merchant.

"There's no need for that!" Zhang Xuan waved his hands. "I will just take a casual look."

Strolling slowly, Zhang Xuan approached the two towering stone lion and touched it.

Cool and smooth to the touch, it was an extremely comfortable sensation. It was clear that it was top-quality jade.

His fingers retracted right after contacting it. Zhang Xuan continued to view about, touching the objects here and there. Only after a long period of time did he stroll back with his hands held behind his back.

Looking at his old master who acted as though a countryside bumpkin who had never seen the world, Sun Qiang was filled with doubt.

"Let's take a seat over there!"

Ignoring the queer expression the other party gave him, Zhang Xuan chuckled softly.

There was quite a number of resting spots in Tianyu Trading Firm. There was one nearby and upon taking a seat, Zhang Xuan ordered for a pot of tea.

Sun Qiang stood by the side, thoroughly confused with the situation.

His old master said that he wanted to look for Lord Ling, yet upon arriving, he refused to enter, even stopping him from announcing his arrival. Instead, he chose to sit here to drink tea. What was he up to?

"Are you curious why I chose not to enter the room to meet the Lord Ling you spoke of?" Seeing through his thoughts, Zhang Xuan smiled faintly.

“Your servant dares not to speculate the thoughts of old master!”

Even though his thoughts were exposed, Sun Qiang did not dare to confess to it.

“There’s no need to be nervous, just say whatever that is on your mind!” Knowing that the other party was just holding himself back due to his identity as a master teacher, Zhang Xuan said.

“I... only find it weird... Old master is a master teacher, he would not reject you if you were to demand to meet him...” Sun Qiang couldn’t help but say.

“If I were to reveal my identity, he would not reject me, and he wouldn’t dare to either. However, do you believe that... even without revealing my identity, I can make him come to me on his own accord!” Zhang Xuan said.

What a joke! Revealing my own identity to meet a merchant is unbecoming of the status of a master teacher!

An astonishing impact could only be achieved if the other party willingly ran over and discovered his identity through various speculations.

“Without revealing your identity?” Sun Qiang did not think that what Zhang Xuan said was possible. “That should be impossible. Lord Ling is only a merchant, but given how he is able to open such a huge trading firm, he must have a powerful backing. In fact, nobility and influential figures might not even be able to meet him as they please. How can you possibly meet him without revealing your identity?”

To be able to open such a huge trading firm in the capital, where every inch of land is equivalent to gold, he must be backed by the royal family. Even though he is only a merchant, he isn’t a person that we should underestimate.

If he revealed his identity, the other party would definitely come knocking. But without doing so... why would he make an effort to welcome him? If Lord Ling were that carefree, he wouldn’t have been able to build this business empire of his.

Even though Sun Qiang was a shop owner of this commercial city, he knew that his standing wasn't sufficient to earn the lord's attention.

"Hehe!"

Chuckling softly, Zhang Xuan lifted his cup with elegance, "Whether you believe me or not, I will make him appear obediently before me today. However, before that, you are to follow my every command, and not to disobey in the slightest!"

"Yes!" Upon witnessing the old master's overwhelming confidence, even though Sun Qiang remained full of doubts, he couldn't help but nod his head and agree to it.

"Good. Knock down the head of the stone lion on the left for me." Zhang Xuan said.

"What?"

Sun Qiang staggered, nearly fainting on the spot.

He thought that the old master would think of some incredible plan. Yet... this?

Lord Ling valued the stone lions, which were worth millions, highly. If he were to knock the head off, his head would be knocked off his neck soon after!

"Old master, I don't want to die yet..."

Sun Qiang was on the verge of tears.

"I am here, you won't die that easily. Rest easy!" Zhang Xuan waved his hands to usher him over.

"..." Sun Qiang's mouth twitched.

Of course, I won't die that easily, they would get me to pay for it first. How could they let me off so easily by simply just killing me? But... even if they didn't kill me, I would be crippled at the very least.

"Why? You dare to disobey the words of your old master?"

Zhang Xuan frowned and authority exuded from him.

He was already used to being a teacher and now coupled with his slightly withered and yellow face, it brought out an imposing disposition.

“I...”

“Rest easy, if you knock down the lion’s head, I will help you break through Fighter 3-dan when we get back later. With me here, there won’t be any problems. Not only will that Ling Tianyu not blame you, he will even thank you and send you gifts.”

Knowing that the other party feared that Lord Ling, it was indeed preposterous to have Sun Qiang do such a thing. Thus, Zhang Xuan waved his hand majestically and promised him some benefits first.

“Er... Alright!”

Upon the promise and recalling the fact that his old master is a master teacher, no matter how incredible Lord Ling was, the lord would probably not dare to be too audacious. After hesitating for another moment longer, Sun Qiang clenched his jaws and hardened his determination.

He had been stuck in Fighter 3-dan for too long. He had tried all kinds of methods but to no avail. He thought that he would never be able to take another step forward. Now that an opportunity had presented itself before him, he would do anything to grab hold of it.

That was precisely the reason why he didn’t hesitate for long when the other party invited him to be his butler.

With the determination of a soldier marching to his death, he turned around and walked over to the stone lion by the left. The zhenqi in Sun Qiang’s body surged and a powerful aura gushed out from him.

Despite looking plump and weak, he possessed incredible strength. The wind rustled alongside his fist and, with incredible might, he hammered straight across!

One couldn’t be considered as an expert at Zhenqi realm, but he would still possess a strength of 450kg upon reaching pinnacle. Even though this jade lion was made of a resilient

material, when the mighty fist landed, it crumbled like fragile glass with a crisp resonance.

Kacha!

The head of the stone lion that was worth millions fell to the floor and shattered into fragments.

130 Is Your Family Doing Well?

The stone lion had been conspicuous from the very start. Upon being smashed, a ring similar to the resonance of a bell echoed in the air, further attracting the attention of countless other people.

“What happened? Did someone smash the lord’s stone lion? This...”

“That fellow... Is he sick?”

“Lord Ling considers the stone lions as his treasure and caresses them a few times every day. Yet, he dares to smash it? Who is this? He must be tired of living!”

...

...

The crowd which was strolling in the mall was shocked.

Before the utterances ceased, an enforcement team on patrol walked over and upon witnessing the situation before him, fell into a state of disbelief.

These two stone lions were highly treasured by Lord Ling Tianyu. In addition to the fact that each of them was worth several million, the pair was unique commodity that cannot be found on the market. Yet, this fellow smashed it with his fist...

The heck, are you that sick of living?

“Don’t let him get away! Grab him, Lord Ling will reward all those who helped!”

After a momentary period of shock, the head enforcer shouted.

Aooo!

Without any hesitation, the crowd, resembling a pack of wolves, rushed to surround Sun Qiang. They pulled up their sleeves and cracked their knuckles.

“So fast?” He didn’t expect the enforcers to arrive so quickly. He was blocked before he could return to old master’s side. Sun Qiang was terrified and his expression changed, saying in a hurry, “Can I... explain it? Actually...”

“There is nothing to explain, beat him up!”

“Let’s talk after pummeling him!”

After several roars, countless fists came raining down on Sun Qiang.

To dare to break the stone lion before their eyes, you must be insane!

“I...”

Looking at the innumerable fists above him, Sun Qiang almost puked a mouthful of blood out of indignation.

Old master, didn’t you say that it would be alright? So you are a fraudster...

Actually, the enforcers couldn’t be blamed for going on a violent frenzy. They were in charge of resolving disputes and protecting the properties and fortunes of the trading firm. The stone lions were Lord Ling’s favorite object, yet one of it was destroyed before them. If he were to pursue the matter, they would probably all be fired. It would be abnormal if they weren’t angry instead!

“Er?”

Zhang Xuan, who was sipping on his tea in wait of Sun Qiang’s return, upon realizing that no one came back after such a long time, turned around to take a look and in an instant, his eyes widened.

This was too fast!

Shouldn’t they have reported to Lord Ling before settling the matter?

Why did they... start beating him up without first trying to clarify the matter?

“If I were to head there, I would probably be beaten up as well...”

His mouth twitched and Zhang Xuan sat motionless on the spot.

What a joke! Even though he wasn't weak at all, it was impossible for him to handle such a large mob! It was best to pretend to not know him at all...

"Old master..."

Watching his old master avert his gaze, Sun Qiang, who was being frenziedly pummeled on the moment, was on the verge of tears.

Old master, didn't you confidently claim that I would be alright?

"Hold it right there!"

Just as the patrolling enforcers were getting satisfied hitting Sun Qiang, a loud bellow reverberated and a dignified middle-aged man walked over with large strides.

Upon reaching the entrance and noticing the stone lion shattered on the floor, the corners of his mouth twitched. It was apparent that his heart ached at the sight.

The head of Tianyu Trading Firm, Ling Tianyu!

After the lion was destroyed, someone had rushed to inform him. Otherwise, it was impossible for him to appear that quickly.

"What happened?"

Ling Tianyu glanced coldly at the enforcers.

"Lord Ling, we were patrolling when this arrogant man here destroyed lord's lion in a single strike. After which, he tried to escape, but we managed to grab hold of him..." The head enforcer stepped forward and quickly explained.

"Him?"

Killing intent appeared in Ling Tianyu's gaze as he stepped toward Sun Qiang.

At this point, Sun Qiang had already suffered innumerable blows and his clothes were in tatters. It was fortunate that he

had managed to protect his face.

“Sun Qiang?”

Ling Tianyu recognized him and with a cold voice, he said, “If you don’t give me a good reason, I will dump you into the river to feed the fishes right now!”

“I...” He shivered in fear involuntarily. After hesitating for a moment, he gritted his teeth, “It was my old master who made me smash it!”

“Your old master? When did you start serving someone?”

Ling Tianyu was taken aback.

As the boss of a trading firm, he didn’t have the leisure to bother about the affairs of insignificant figures. Even though Sun Qiang created an uproar when he sold his shop yesterday, it wasn’t sufficiently important for someone of his identity to bother himself with.

“I met my old master yesterday, my old master is the person sitting over there!” Sun Qiang pointed.

“Un?”

Ling Tianyu frowned. Looking over, he saw Zhang Xuan sitting with his back faced to them and he was slowly sipping on his tea, indifferent to the commotion going on here.

“Old master!”

Upon given a chance to explain that it was his old master who made him do it, Sun Qiang heaved a sigh of relief and walked over to Zhang Xuan.

“Were you the one who ordered him to smash my stone lion?”

Walking over to him, Ling Tianyu frowned and glared coldly at Zhang Xuan.

As though oblivious to his presence and words, Zhang Xuan continued sipping on his tea, clearly disrespecting this Lord Ling.

“Audacious!”

“How dare you refuse to answer Lord Ling’s words, you are seeking death!”

“To have ordered his subordinate to break lord’s stone lion, this fellow is in for a ride of misfortune...”

...

...

Upon seeing the fellow ignore Lord Ling’s question, not even standing up to face him, the enforcers became furious and swore at him.

Where did this fellow come from? This wasn’t the place for you to be masquerading!

To be acting so arrogantly, did you think that we dare not kill you?

“May I know sir’s name? Why did you order your subordinate to smash my stone lion?”

Ling Tianyu was a worldly person who had seen the world. He waved his arm to stop everyone’s criticisms.

“Sit!”

Zhang Xuan continued to sip on his tea, not even lifting his eyelid to look at Ling Tianyu.

Sun Qiang hurriedly ran over to fill an empty teacup.

Upon seeing his actions, Ling Tianyu’s rage flurried once more and his face darkened to a fearsome point.

The other party’s actions indicated the level of respect he had for him. He was allowed to drink tea alongside him, but wasn’t worthy of having the other party to pour tea for him!

He had built this giant Tianyu Trading Firm from scratch and became a powerful figure in Tianxuan Kingdom. Even prime ministers and wangye had to regard him as a peer, not daring to act haughtily before him. To treat a person of his standing in this manner, that fellow was way too arrogant!

However, the more it was like that, the harder he tried to suppress his anger.

Since the other party dared to do so despite knowing his identity, he must have some background. If he wasn't even able to keep his temper in check, he would have never been able to build Tianyu Trading Firm to its current size.

“I wish to hear a rational explanation!”

His eyes narrowed as he took a seat opposite to him.

Zhang Xuan remained impassive to his questions and continued drinking his tea calmly, as though the other person's rage was invisible to him.

The tea was scalding hot and he sipped on it for an entire minute. Just as the other party was about to lose his patience and Sun Qiang was about to wet himself did he slowly put down his cup, raise his head and look at Ling Tianyu.

He looked to be in his forties and his pitch-black eyes gave him a dignified disposition. Judging solely by his appearance, it was clear that he was a person who had great achievements.

Without saying a word, Zhang Xuan gestured to Sun Qiang.

“Old master, this person is the head of the trading firm, Lord Ling Tianyu!” How could Sun Qiang not understand the meaning behind Zhang Xuan gesture? He quickly stepped forward to introduce the other party.

“Oh!” Zhang Xuan answered. Then, he picked up the teapot and slowly poured tea into the cup, “Ling Tianyu...”

“Is your family doing well?”

131 Master Cheng Yuan

Silence!

The mall that was bustling just moments ago turned completely silent.

Is this for real?

Am I hearing things?

This fellow not only smashed Lord Ling's stone lion but also cursed his entire family?

Isn't he way too daring...

Sun Qiang staggered and he was barely able to keep himself from running away.

Old master, you are a master teacher! Are you intentionally trying to do me in?

Lord Ling does not know you, so you can simply turn around to leave. However, all of my family members live in Tianxuan Kingdom...

"What did you say?"

He had already been suppressing his rage. Upon hearing such words from the other party, Ling Tianyu almost exploded.

We don't know each other, yet you proceeded directly to curse my entire family. This isn't a just provocation anymore but an obvious attempt to insult me, to humiliate me!

"Oh? Didn't get my words? Then I'll phrase it in another way then. Are the physical conditions of your family members still alright?" Even though the other party looked as though he was about to explode at any moment, Zhang Xuan remained impassive.

"There's no need for you to bother about whether my family is doing well or not!" A cold gleam flashed through Ling Tianyu's eyes and it appeared that he would burst at any moment.

“There’s no need for me to bother? I was thinking that saving a life would bring me good karma but since you don’t need it, let’s just forget it then!”

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

“What... do you mean?”

“Nothing!” Zhang Xuan gulped the tea down. “Southern Green Jade is truly a good material. Not only is it beautiful, it can boost one’s blood circulation and soothe one’s meridians if carried frequently. However... The matter is completely different for Southern Blood Jade.”

“This material devours one’s vitality as nourishment to evolve into a Jade Spirit. Your cultivation has reached Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm primary stage and given your rich zhenqi and powerful physical body, there’s no need for you to fear. However, the same cannot be said about your family. If I’m not wrong, you coming into contact with it daily could bring its aura back home. Most probably, someone at home is already ill down to the bones and is on the verge of death.”

“Alright, Xiao Qiang, let’s leave!”

Finishing his words, Zhang Xuan put down his cup, tidied his appearance and stood up. Ignoring the other party, he slowly strolled from the mall with his hands behind him.

Sun Qiang hurriedly followed behind him. He looked around in fear that someone would beat him up once more.

“Sir, please wait a moment...”

Just when everyone thought that Ling Tianyu would stop that arrogant man to chastise him and teach him a lesson, they witnessed his towering figure tremble faintly as he shouted out hastily.

Zhang Xuan stopped.

“Sir, are you saying that... the stone lion isn’t made of Southern Green Jade but... Southern Blood Jade? Yu Rou... Yu Rou’s illness is because of this?”

With a pale face, Ling Tianyu asked.

Most people knew that he was a billionaire and even officials had to treat him with respect. However, only he himself knew that after withstanding half a year of undulating anxiety, he was about to collapse.

Yu Rou was his wife.

When he was poor and struggling to make a living, this virtuous wife of his would always starve so that he could have another bite, claiming that she had eaten outside.

Later, his business gradually grew bigger and his cultivation realm rose rapidly. However, he knew very well that without her, he would be an unwanted pile of bones in the wilderness right now.

That was precisely why despite his fortune, he didn't philander outside and instead, stayed dedicated to this wife who had accompanied him through thick and thin.

Yet, the heavens are unpredictable. Half a year ago, she was suddenly afflicted with a severe illness. She could only lie weakly on the bed and now it is possible for her to pass away at any moment.

He searched the entire Tianxuan Kingdom for physicians, even inviting Master Yuanyu to diagnose her condition.

Yet, all of them ended up with the same conclusion, that the illness had penetrated deep into her bones and all she can do is to wait for death.

Especially in the past few days, she seemed to be unable to hold on any longer and could really stop breathing at any moment.

He had been keeping vigil by her side ever since she fell ill. It was due to important matters to settle at the trading firm that he had no choice but to come. With the issue with his wife, he was already feeling irritable. Upon hearing that a stone lion had been destroyed by someone for no apparent reason, he rushed here in a rage, losing the calm that a successful businessman should possess.

He thought that the other party was simply causing trouble. He didn't expect that he would say such words.

To be able to tell that his family member is sick...

Saying that the stone lion is not made of Southern Green Jade but Blood Jade...

“Your wife should be an ordinary human with a cultivation realm of at maximum Fighter 2-dan, am I right?” Zhang Xuan said impassively without turning around.

“How... How did you know that Yu Rou is my wife? Furthermore, how do you know her cultivation realm?”

Ling Tianyu was astonished once more.

He had only mentioned Yu Rou but the other party knew that she was his wife immediately, even able to point out her cultivation realm instantly. His judgment was simply too accurate.

“The Southern Blood Jade devours one’s vitality to nourish itself and those who are Fighter 2-dan and below do not possess any resistance against it. If they were to be afflicted with it, their body functions would rapidly deteriorate, hair would turn white, the skin would loosen and speech would become indistinct... They won’t be able to live beyond half a year!” Zhang Xuan said calmly.

“This...”

Ling Tianyu’s eyes narrowed.

The other party’s description fitted the symptoms of his wife perfectly.

“I was just passing by when I saw this thing. In order to prevent it from bringing harm to anyone, I ordered my butler to crush it. If Lord Ling found my action rash and inappropriate, I will have my people send compensation over tomorrow!”

Zhang Xuan waved his hand, unwilling to say anymore. His tone was neither happy nor sorrowful and he didn’t seem to be furious due to the other party’s misunderstanding. Just that, his tone was bleak, “I believe that with Lord Ling’s ability, you should be able to find my residence, so I doubt that you need to fear me escaping!”

At this point, he simply walked away.

“Old master...”

Seeing that his old master was leaving right after saying a few words, Sun Qiang was dazed for a moment before hurriedly chasing him.

“Lord, do we need to stop them?!”

Seeing that the two of them were about to disappear into the horizon, the head enforcer walked over and asked.

“There’s no need!” Ling Tianyu stood rooted to his spot. His expression changed rapidly, paling in one moment and turning green in the other. It was unclear what went through his head.

He was a merchant, unlike the innocent teachers and students, Zhang Xuan had met before who easily believed in others. After going through innumerable ordeals, he no longer believed in anyone that easily.

Even though the middle-aged man who popped out of nowhere was spot on with his words and left him surprised, he didn’t charge forward with agitation to stop him.

After all, he had consulted many physicians about his wife’s illness and it was easy for one to look into the matter.

“Get Master Cheng Yuan here!”

Master Cheng Yuan was the appraiser in Tianyu Trading Firm.

Even though he wasn’t yet an official appraiser, he was a true high-level apprentice appraiser who was much more capable than a fraud like Yang Mo. Most of the treasures bought by the trading firm had to be appraised by him beforehand.

It didn’t take long for Master Cheng Yuan to appear.

“Brother Ling, for you to request for my presence so urgently, is there something wrong?”

As a high-level apprentice appraiser, even Ling Tianyu could only be considered of equal standing to him.

“Please help me to check whether this stone lion is made of Southern Green Jade or Blood Jade!”

Ling Tianyu pointed to the fragmented stone lion on the floor.

“I have already appraised it, it is Southern Green Jade!”

Stroking his beard, Master Cheng Yuan chuckled.

Naturally, this sculpture had to have been appraised by him beforehand before it could be brought here.

At which, he walked forward and lowered his head to look at the fragments of the stone lion. His eyes instantaneously narrowed and he staggered backward, “This... This... How is this possible?”

132 The Proud Sun Qiang

“What’s wrong?”

Upon seeing the abrupt change in expression on Master Cheng Yuan, Ling Tianyu lowered his head hurriedly to look at the fragmented stone lion as well.

At the section where the jade split apart, blood-colored lines could be noticed. Under the reflection of light in the surroundings, it looked exceptionally savage and terrifying.

As the lines were within the jade and the Southern Green Jade wasn’t transparent, it was impossible to see it without smashing the lion apart.

“Is it really Southern Blood Jade?”

His face darkened. Even without Master Cheng Yuan’s reply, he knew that it was impossible for this object to be Southern Green Jade!

He sent a palm down at the stone lion.

Kacha!

The remaining body of the stone lion was blown into smithereens and scattered all over the ground. Casually picking up a piece, he saw blood-colored lines on it.

“It is Southern Blood Jade, my judgment was off!”

Upon seeing the blood-colored lines densely filling the surface of the jade, Master Cheng Yuan looked as though he had aged ten years in an instant.

He was extremely confident in his discernment abilities. That was precisely the reason why he possessed an exceptional standing in the trading firm, becoming brothers with Ling Tianyu even.

Yet, to think that he appraised the largest and most valuable object in the trading firm erroneously.

“These lines were all concealed within the jade, to the point that one was unable to see it from the outside. Probably even the craftsman sculpting it wasn’t aware. It wouldn’t be weird for you to appraise it as such!” Ling Tianyu didn’t blame the other party. Instead, he turned to look at him and asked, “Right now, I would only like to know if the Southern Blood Jade can really devour one’s vitality?”

“I have read about the Blood Jade in the books and even though I haven’t seen it for myself, that was how it was stated in the legends.” Master Cheng Yuan nodded his head.

“So it’s real...”

Ling Tianyu’s face paled once more. He lifted his head to look at the head enforcer, “Do you know who Sun Qiang’s old master is?”

“I’m not sure!” The head enforcer shook his head. Then, he suddenly recalled something, “Oh, right... Yesterday, Sun Qiang made an uproar while selling his shop and said that he was going to serve a... passing master teacher. We all thought that he was bragging and we laughed for quite awhile afterward. How could a master teacher possibly allow someone like him to wait on him...”

“Master teacher?”

Ling Tianyu staggered backward. He felt his kneecap weaken and he nearly fell to the ground. At this moment, he felt so regretful that he could knock his head against the wall.

The other party was a master teacher?

It was no wonder he was able to keep his calm upon seeing him and identify the material as Southern Blood Jade when Master Cheng Yuan wasn’t able to, even accurately listing the symptoms of his wife...

Yet, he didn’t believe the other party and hesitated to ask him for help.

This hesitation had caused him to miss out on a chance in befriending a master teacher and saving his wife.

“Lord...”

Upon seeing the expression on the lord, the head enforcer seemed to have come to a realization. His face changed, “That old master... a moment ago, it can’t be that he is a master teacher?”

“He must be!”

Upon recovering, Ling Tianyu hurriedly commanded, “Hurry up and look into where they are living. Prepare the carriage, I will visit him now.”

He had missed out on the opportunity once, he couldn’t let it pass him by the second time.

“Yes!”

Upon hearing that the middle-aged man from before was a master teacher, all of their faces paled from fright. They carried out their orders with great haste.

There wasn’t a single master in Tianxuan Kingdom. Even the Guild Leader Huang from the Teacher Guild was only a high-level apprentice master teacher.

To think that a master teacher would pass by them and that they would be unable to identify him, even almost attempting to batter him...

Just with such a thought in their mind, cold sweat streamed down their backs and they felt that they could faint any moment.

Before leaving yesterday, Sun Qiang had emphasized on where he was going to live, so it wasn’t hard for them to find their residence.

“Let’s go!”

Knowing the residence of the other party, Ling Tianyu immediately headed out without any hesitation.

.....

“Old master, where are we going?”

Sun Qiang was drenched in cold sweat walking out of Tianyu Trading Firm. Only upon seeing no one obstruct their

departure did he heave a sigh of relief. After he had finally calmed down, he couldn't help but ask his old master.

“We're returning!”

Zhang Xuan waved his hands.

“Just like that?” Sun Qiang was perplexed.

When the old master first headed out, he said that he wanted to look for Lord Ling. Initially, he thought that he would be discussing something with him. Instead, all they did was to go there, destroy the stone lion that the other party treasured, say a few words and leave...

He found the situation a little inconceivable and he was unable to make sense of it.

“Un!”

Zhang Xuan didn't bother explaining it to him.

Their residence wasn't too far away from the trading firm. It didn't take long for them to return.

“It's already late and I want to rest. Regardless of who comes over, block them at the door and deny them entry!” Upon returning back to his room, Zhang Xuan commanded.

“Yes!” Sun Qiang nodded his head despite having some objections deep within.

No one came despite waiting for an entire day. Now that the sun had set, who would come?

Departing from Zhang Xuan's room, Sun Qiang was about to find a place to treat the wounds from the beating, which he suffered previously, when he saw the guards rushing toward him.

“Brother Qiang, there is someone seeking an audience!”

The guard said.

“Seek an audience? Who?”

Not expecting that anyone would come knocking, Sun Qiang was taken aback.

“It is... Lord Ling!” The guard replied.

“Lord Ling? You mean Ling Tianyu?” Sun Qiang shuddered and almost fell to the ground.

When the old master mentioned someone coming over, he didn't take it for real. To think that it would be true, not to mention... It was Lord Ling Tianyu whom they just met!

Could it be that he could no longer wait and wanted to demand compensation for the stone lions today?

“Hurry up and welcome him, I will call old master over...”

After saying so, he suddenly recalled Zhang Xuan's command and his body froze, “Wait!”

Old master had just said that regardless of who it was, block them at the door and deny them entry.

It was clear that he knew Lord Ling would come. His intentions were also clear... He refused to meet him!

Refusing Lord Ling's audience?

If it was on any other occasions, Sun Qiang wouldn't dare to do so even if he had ten times his guts.

In the past, he was always the one crying for an audience, only to be ignored. This time, the other party was taking the initiative to come over to meet his old master...

Should he bring him in or refuse his request?

The heck, the worst that could happen was death. Just listen to old master's commands!

Gritting his teeth, he came to a decision and said.

“I will follow you to the gates!”

Since he was already beaten up and he had offended the other party, regardless of what intentions the other party had visiting the mansion, he could only obey old master's commands to the very end.

Soon, he arrived at the entrance.

As expected, he saw the imposing Lord Ling standing at the gates with Master Cheng Yuan behind him.

Upon seeing him, the two smiled delightfully, “Brother Sun, may I trouble you to tell your old master that Ling Tianyu seeks an audience?”

“Brother... Sun?”

He had prepared himself to face an angry Ling Tianyu pursuing the matter of the smashed lion and demanding compensation. Never in his dreams did he expect that the other party would treat him with such an amiable attitude. Sun Qiang couldn't help but be dumbfounded.

As a small merchant who had a store in the commercial city, he had to live subserviently. Any single enforcer could simply walk up to him and demand money from him... When did he gain the honor of having Ling Tianyu address him as ‘Brother Sun’?

In the past, even if he were to kneel before the other party, the other party probably wouldn't spare him an additional glance!

In an instant, he felt a surge of heat through his heart, his face turned red and his body felt light as though he were floating in the air.

Exultation!

Yes, this is exultation!

133 Shut Outside

Seemed like Ling Tianyu became aware of the fact that the old master was a master teacher, that's why he rushed here.

As such, his own standing rose as well.

However, that was to be expected. After all, he became the butler of a master teacher, a figure whom even the prime minister of the kingdom had to fawn up to. No matter how impressive Ling Tianyu was, he was just a merchant. What was there to fear about him?

With such thoughts, all of Sun Qiang's fears disappeared. He straightened his back and with a haughty aura, he said, "I'm sorry but the old master has already slept. He gave clear orders that he would not meet anyone. My apologies, but Lord Ling has made a wasted trip."

Exhilarating!

It was simply too exhilarating!

All along in the past, he had always spoken to Lord Ling with subservience, not daring to say anything excessive and, less to say, to reject him. Not even to mention, to be able to do it so brazenly and openly?

"Asleep?"

The corner of Ling Tianyu's mouth twitched.

He had come chasing after them just a short moment after they had left. There was at maximum a three to five-minute delay between them, and he had fallen asleep within such a short period of time... Who were you fooling?

Looks like he had really offended this master teacher and that he was infuriated with him!

To offend a master teacher... Putting aside the fact that he was just a merchant, even Tianxuan Kingdom's Emperor Shen Zhui would be unable to survive his wrath.

Besides, his wife is on the verge of death now. Since this master teacher was able to tell the symptoms of her illness without even diagnosing her, he had to have a solution. No matter what, he mustn't give up.

Thus, Ling Tianyu began to speak with prudence, "My subordinates had acted rashly, causing Brother Sun to be wounded. Here is some medicine that is highly effective for healing injuries. These too. I don't mean anything, I just hope that Brother Sun can help me convey my request..."

At which, he retrieved a jade bottle and a stack of notes.

Sun Qiang didn't attempt to receive the gifts and instead, lowered his head to take a look, squinting his eyes involuntarily.

As a merchant, exploring the commercial city was a daily affair and hence, he had a decent eye for goods. The pills inside the jade bottle were called **【Wound Restoration Pill】** and it was a truly divine medicine for treating wounds. This was a treasure that only official apothecaries of the Apothecary Guild could forge and every single pill was worth over ten thousand gold coins.

Yet, the other party gifted him an entire bottle...

Most importantly... The notes in the other party's hands were in denominations of five thousand and there was a total of twenty to thirty of them. That was to say, just for reporting his presence to the old master, he had made over hundred thousand gold coins!

The heck!

Was there a need to be so generous?

However, even though he was astonished, he knew that the reason for the other party's attitude and gifts were out of respect for his old master. It pretty much had nothing to do with him. If he were to accept them and the old master were to get angry, like bubbles, everything would burst and disappear into thin air.

As such, he gritted his teeth and replied, “I’m sorry, but please show some self-respect! The old master has already personally ordered that he wouldn’t meet anyone so there isn’t anything I can do. If the lord really wants to pay a visit, I think you can try again tomorrow!”

Suppressing the ache in his heart, he gestured grandly, seemingly contemptuous of the other party’s action of trying to bribe him.

There was no other way. From today onward, he would be the butler of a master teacher and his standing would be different from what it used to be. As such, he should adopt befitting mannerisms.

He must also learn to act suave!

If he were to be bribed by this small amount of money and just a few pills, how would the others look upon him?

“Tomorrow?”

Ling Tianyu had an awful expression.

It was unsure whether his wife could survive through the night. If he were to really wait until the next day, perhaps only a corpse would be left.

“I plead Brother Sun to help me. I really have urgent matters to seek your old master.”

Ling Tianyu took out another stack of bills and pushed it over with an expression full of sincerity.

“I’m sorry, but there’s genuinely nothing I can do.”

Seeing how much money the other party took out, Sun Qiang found himself on the verge of caving in. Thus, he waved his hand and walked back in, “Close the doors!”

After which, he walked into the courtyard

Jiya!

The doors closed.

“Brother Sun...”

Ling Tianyu shouted hurriedly. Even though he was Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm while the guards were only Pigu realm, he dared not to barge in.

“Brother Ling...”

Master Cheng Yuan was at a loss for words.

“Sigh, it’s my fault. If I had stopped the master just now, things wouldn’t have ended up like this.” Even though the other party shut the doors on him, Ling Tianyu didn’t get angry. Instead, he only sighed and shook his head.

If anyone were to be blamed, it would be he himself. He insisted on verifying the other party’s identity, incurring the displeasure of the master teacher. In a way, he brought this all upon himself.

“Then, what should we do now?”

Master Cheng Yuan asked.

“I’ll wait! Even if it takes an entire night, I’ll wait! I have already missed the opportunity once, I don’t want to miss it a second time!”

Determination was reflected in Ling Tianyu’s eyes.

It was precisely because of his will of steel that he was able to become such a powerful tycoon from a nameless poor kid. Besides, if doing this could save his wife, he was willing to wait here as long as it takes for the other party’s anger to be appeased.

In fact, even if it were Shen Zhui, the emperor wouldn’t utter a single word of complaint if he was hindered at the door.

Master teachers had the capability and standing to do so.

.....

“Did I really just shut the doors on him?”

Walking into the courtyard, Sun Qiang still felt as though he was dreaming. His entire body felt light.

Who was the person outside?

Ling Tianyu!

Even if he wasn't the richest person in Tianxuan Royal City, he wasn't far from it. He was undisputedly a true billionaire.

Even a prime minister or powerful official would rush to welcome him when he came to visit, keeping their haughtiness in check. Yet, he kept him outside the doors... Just the thought of it felt unreal.

Yet, not only did he do so, the other party didn't even dare to show a hint of dissatisfaction toward his actions.

Given how he was able to shut the gates on such a person, did it mean that his position will simply grow higher and higher, eventually becoming an esteemed person in Tianxuan Royal City?

It seemed like abandoning his store to serve as the butler was the wisest decision that he made in his entire life.

“This is... a true master teacher!”

At this very moment, every single hint of doubt on his old master's identity vanished.

Previously, when the other party said that he was a master teacher, he remained a little doubtful of his identity. However, witnessing how respectful Lord Ling behaved, he understood that it was true. Only a true master teacher had such charisma and means.

Aren't you formidable?

So what if you're formidable?

Before a master teacher, everyone else is trash.

“Let's go look for old master!”

After indulging in his glee for a moment, Sun Qiang proceed toward the main hall once again. He saw that the light inside the room had not been extinguished and the old master sat quietly, yet to turn in for the night.

“Old master, Ling Tianyu came.”

Stepping forward, he clasped his hand respectfully.

“Un!” Zhang Xuan replied casually, not paying much heed to it.

“He wants to... meet you...” After a moment of hesitation, Sun Qiang couldn't resist speaking of the affair.

“Let's talk tomorrow. If he can't even wait a single night, tell him that he doesn't need to come anymore.”

Zhang Xuan said calmly.

After touching the stone lion, he knew that the material wasn't Southern Green Jade and naturally, he knew of its dangers.

The Library of Heaven's Path did not display the method to resolving the issue, but it did describe the symptoms an ordinary person would face when their vitality had been sapped by the blood jade. For the time being, his wife was still safe. Since that was the case, it wasn't a big deal for the other party to be waiting outside for awhile.

With this billionaire waiting outside his mansion, his reputation would soon spread far and wide.

He had no choice but to do so to earn twenty million in nine days.

“Alright!”

Sun Qiang nodded his head and departed from the room.

134 The Doubtful Du Yuan

Ignoring Ling Tianyu who was waiting outside, Zhang Xuan continued to work on opening his Pixue realm acupoints.

After toiling for the entire night, he opened another thirty acupoints in one go. In total, he had already opened more than fifty acupoints.

His zhenqi strength had also reached 70 ding.

Along with the 90 ding from his physical body, he could wield up to a total of 160 ding of strength with ease. Putting aside Pixue pinnacle experts, he would be able to match up to even Tongxuan realm experts easily.

In the Tongxuan realm, one opened the most important Tongxuan Meridian in their body, unleashing the body's true might. At the primary stage, one would possess 100 ding of strength. At the intermediate stage, 200 ding and in such a manner, reaching the pinnacle of the Tongxuan realm, one would possess 400 ding.

Currently, Zhang Xuan wielded 160 ding of strength in total, which is slightly stronger than a Tongxuan realm primary stage.

It was unimaginable for a Pixue realm to possess such strength; it would definitely cause an uproar if word were to spread out.

Everyone knew that there was an immeasurable difference between the Pixue realm and the Tongxuan realm. In the entire Tianxuan Kingdom, there probably wasn't another person like Zhang Xuan.

After stretching his back, Zhang Xuan pushed open the door and walked out.

"Old master, Lord Ling had already been waiting outside for an entire night." Sun Qiang walked over.

"An entire night?"

He was so engrossed in training that he forgot about that fellow.

“Then...” Zhang Xuan tapped his finger on his forehead, seemingly thinking about something.

Based on the old master’s attitude, Sun Qiang thought that he was going to let Lord Ling in and stared expectantly at him. Then, he heard the indifferent words of the other party, “I think... I’ll eat first!”

Sun Qiang staggered and fell to the floor.

The head of Tianyu Merchant Firm, a billionaire, had waited outside an entire night, yet his master wanted to eat first...

However, as a subordinate, he dare not criticize his master’s actions, quickly getting the servants to prepare the meal.

To speak with honesty, the servants and maids hired by Sun Qiang were impressive. They prepared quite a huge spread that also tasted good.

After finishing his breakfast, Zhang Xuan strolled around the courtyard. Looking at the morning sky and gauging that it had reached ten, he finally got Sun Qiang to open the gates.

.....

Du Yuan was the young master of Du Clan, which was one of the Four Great Clans of the Tianxuan Kingdom. All along, he had been a unambitious profligate, an incomparable playboy.

Usually, all he would do was to walk his dog, play with his birds and hang out in red light districts.

He was already twenty-four, but he was only in Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi realm. Among the scions, he could be considered as trash among the trash.

However, it was not because he wanted it to be so, it was because he had no choice on the matter!

Initially, his father was the most suitable candidate to become the clan head. However, for some reason, he contracted a major illness a decade ago, causing his meridians to be damaged and his acupoints to be blocked. His prowess

plunged from being a Pixue realm expert all the way to a mere cripple.

His competitors took advantage of this opportunity and oppressed his successor.

Du Yuan had inherited his father's talents, also possessing the lawful rights to vie with the others. However, after a decade of oppression, his father's influence had weakened and if he were to display his talents at such a moment, he would definitely evoke further acts of repression.

Helpless, he could only play the role of an unambitious scion and live aimlessly day after day.

When he woke up today, the sun was already hanging high in the skies. Only then did he lead his beloved canine out of the door to linger the streets.

“Un? Isn't that... Lord Ling Tianyu of Tianyu Merchant Firm?”

He stopped his footsteps abruptly.

A familiar figure had appeared before him.

Ling Tianyu was one of the few truly powerful figures in Tianxuan Royal City, possessing massive wealth and that very few dared to offend him.

Although Du Yuan was a dandy, he still was a member of the Four Great Clans. As such, he came into contact with the upper echelons in the city on a regular basis. This Ling Tianyu had an extensive business relationship with his Du Clan and he had met him several times.

This person was of equal standing to his grandfather, why would he... be standing beside the road? Not to mention, he was soaked in dew and looked like a mess. It was as though he hadn't returned for the night.

“Whose mansion is this?”

Soon, he noticed what was wrong about the situation.

This Lord Ling Tianyu seemed to be waiting outside a mansion for the owner to open his gates.

He often loitered on this street and knew this mansion had been empty for a very long time. Besides, even if someone resided within, what kind of identity did he possess to be able to make Lord Ling wait out here?

“I’ve heard that Lord Ling had been waiting here since the last night!”

“Indeed, I’ve seen it for myself as well! It seems like Lord Ling wants to meet the owner of the mansion, but the other party simply ignored him. A butler came out and told him that he could either continue waiting here or to never come back...”

“The heck, are you serious? Who is he? To make Lord Ling Tianyu wait for an entire night? Furthermore, with such arrogance?”

“I’ve no idea as well... Thus, I came here early in the morning to take a look. To think that he really waited for an entire night...”

.....

...

Just as he was perplexed over the matter, he heard the conversation that went on from afar.

“Waited for an entire night?”

Du Yuan gasped.

Only those who had come into contact with the upper echelons would know exactly how powerful Ling Tianyu was.

Although he was a mere businessman, he was well-acquainted with the clan heads of the Four Great Clans, as well as the nobles and the royal family. Every year, he would donate a substantial sum to the national treasury. Even Emperor Shen Zhui treated him as a money tree and dared not to offend him.

For a person of such status to wait outside another’s gates for an entire night...

If he hadn’t witnessed it personally, he would have never believed such rumors.

Are you for real?

Who is the owner of the mansion, to be capable of such incredible feat?

“Do you all know who the owner of the mansion is?”

Du Yuan couldn't help but approach the few chatting onlookers.

“I've no idea. He seemed to have just moved in yesterday!”

“He caused quite a commotion. Right after moving in, he recruited dozens of guards, servants, and maids!”

“I have seen the owner of the mansion. He seemed to be a middle-aged man in his forties and his face is slightly yellowed and emaciated. I have never met him previously!”

A few who knew the details spoke.

“Middle-aged man? Recruited dozens of guards and servants?”

Du Yuan was even more perplexed after listening to their words.

“Look, the gates are opening...”

At this moment, the firmly shut gates opened slowly. Jiyaaa! A plump man walked out.

“Sun Qiang?”

Du Yuan recognized the plump man.

This fellow ran a realtor agency in the Tianyu Merchant Firm. Back then, he visited his agency to look for a residence for his lover. After the other party knew of his identity, he assumed a subservient attitude immediately. He was a typical streetwise vendor.

Why is this fellow here?

Could he be a servant here?

Just as he was pondering, he saw Sun Qiang gesture grandly, “Lord Ling, our old master invites you in!”

His voice was devoid of courtesy, as though he didn't think much of the other party at all.

A small vendor of the Tianyu Merchant Firm actually dared to speak to his big boss like this?

Du Yuan thought that Ling Tianyu would get angry, but contrary to his expectations, not only was he not enraged, gratitude even appeared on his face. He stepped forward and stuffed a bunch of items into the other party's hands, "Thank you Brother Sun for your help. Here are some tokens of my appreciation, hold on to them first. I will definitely send a generous gift in the future!"

"Ah?"

Du Yuan's eyeballs were about to fall out of his sockets.

The heck... Can anyone tell me what was going on?

What he had just seen was completely incomprehensible to him. He felt as though the entire world had gone wrong.

135 Matter of Minutes

“I didn’t know that master was trying to offer me guidance and acted inappropriately before you. I seek your forgiveness!”

Upon entering and noticing Zhang Xuan who was seated at the center of the room, Ling Tianyu felt slightly apprehensive.

His attitude towards this master teacher yesterday was indeed inhospitable, even doubting the goodwill the master demonstrated. It was already a blessing that the other party was willing to allow him entry.

“There’s nothing for me to forgive!” Zhang Xuan waved his hands. “I’m not that petty!”

Sun Qiang’s eyes widened.

You left the other party outside for an entire night to be drenched in dew, only allowing him entry after consuming your breakfast slowly. You call that not being petty?

“Yes, yes!” Ling Tianyu’s face flushed. He was about to continue speaking when Zhang Xuan extended out his palm and looked at him calmly. “Do you know why I had you wait outside for an entire night?”

“I...”

Awkwardness showed on Ling Tianyu’s face.

Isn’t it because you feel that I had slighted you, so you wanted to put me in my place?

I admit my mistake, alright?

“Do you think that I am purposely making things difficult for you?” Zhang Xuan looked over.

“No, of course not!” Ling Tianyu shook his head hurriedly.

“There’s no need for you to deny it. It is normal that you would think so!” Zhang Xuan didn’t seem to be angry. Instead, he said earnestly, “Actually, it is for your own good that I had you wait outside for an entire night!”

“For my own good?”

This time, not only was Ling Tianyu perplexed by his words, a bizarre expression had also emerged on Sun Qiang’s face.

Making someone wait at the door was for his own good?

What kind of theory is this?

“If I’m not wrong, your wife should be severely ill and is on the verge of death, and the reason why you are looking for me is for me to save her.” Zhang Xuan gazed at Ling Tianyu.

“Yes!”

Upon hearing the other party mention his motives, Ling Tianyu jolted.

“If you want me to save her, you would have to bring her over to me. However, you had come into contact with the Southern Blood Jade yesterday and the vitality-consuming aura was still lingering in your body. If I were to agree and you had come into contact with her once more, she probably would have died before you managed to get her here.”

Zhang Xuan sighed and continued on, “Thus, I had you wait outside for an entire night so that you can cleanse yourself of that aura. At the same time, you wouldn’t hurry home, thus preventing a catastrophe from happening. Of course, if you refused to listen to my words and left, your wife would have died and you wouldn’t have to come back. Even a master teacher didn’t possess the ability to resurrect the dead.”

After hearing these words, Ling Tianyu’s expression changed and he began to ooze cold sweat.

In actual fact, he was raging within as a result of the other party’s actions of making him wait outside for the entire night. Even though he didn’t dare to speak of it, he had felt great displeasure.

A master teacher wasn’t just about the strength he holds and his ability to guide others, he should be magnanimous as well.

In his view, this master teacher was trying to humiliate him on purpose.

After hearing those words did he realize that... He was truly mistaken. The other party truly had his intentions at heart.

Despite treating the other party so insolently, he still paid such careful heed to his matter...

Truly the disposition of a master teacher, impressive!

He felt like a hypocrite for doubting the intentions of a gentleman.

While he felt gratitude toward the other party, relief surged through him as well.

It was fortunate that he had managed to hold on yesterday. Otherwise, if he had returned back home, he would have truly regretted his actions for life.

Sun Qiang, who was still standing by the side, had his eyes opened wide with astonishment.

As expected of a master teacher, every single move of the old master was profound.

He thought that the old master was intentionally trying to humiliate the other party. Only now did he realize that the thoughts of the old master weren't something a person like him could fathom.

"Thank you, master!"

Ling Tianyu bowed deeply.

"Send someone to bring her over to me so that I can take a look. If she is too ill, even I might be unable to do anything about it." Zhang Xuan said.

"Yes!" Ling Tianyu's eyes reddened in agitation. He hurriedly took his leave alongside Master Cheng Yuan.

After the two of them left, Zhang Xuan turned to look at Sun Qiang.

"Xiao Qiang, I have promised you to help you to help you break into Fighter 4-dan and I do not renege on my words. Execute a punching routine so that I can see your condition!"

"Yes, old master!"

Hearing that the old master was going to help him break through, Sun Qiang nodded his head in excitement.

Soon, he completed the entire punching routine. However, not only wasn't Sun Qiang pleased by it, he was even slightly embarrassed. "Old master, I was injured yesterday... My body has been weakened significantly and I might not be in the condition to break into Pigu realm today..."

To achieve a breakthrough in realm, one would have to be in tip-top condition. Yesterday, Sun Qiang was beaten up and he sustained quite a few injuries on his body. No matter how incredible the old master was, it was unlikely for him to break through his current realm in such a state.

He hadn't really noticed it before, but the moment he started executing his punching routine, he felt an aching pain all over his body and his zhenqi didn't flow as fluidly as it usually did.

"Don't worry!" Zhang Xuan interrupted him with a smile. "The reason why you have been stuck at the Zhenqi realm for so long was because the zhenqi you had cultivated was too impure. As such, it was unable to pass through your meridians to nourish your body. In such a state, one's zhenqi might even stagnate. Putting aside being unable to achieve a breakthrough, one's strength might even deteriorate."

"Yes!" Sun Qiang nodded his head.

In the past two years, he felt that his stamina had been on a decline and that his realm was slowly deteriorating as well. If not for him persistently cultivating to remain at his current realm, he might have even fallen to Zhenqi primary stage.

"At Fighter 4-dan Pigu realm, one's zhenqi would surge through one's body and nourish one's flesh and bones. Usually, it would be difficult for your impure zhenqi to surge through your entire body. However, the current situation is different. After yesterday's beating, your body was damaged, causing the stagnated zhenqi from before to be jolted back into action. At the same time, the blocked passageways of your meridians had been cleared significantly..."

"Old master... had others beat me up... for my own good?"

Before Zhang Xuan could finish his words, Sun Qiang's body shuddered due to intense emotions and tears of gratitude streamed down his face.

Old master had Ling Tianyu wait at his doorstep for his own good. Initially, I thought that it was a mistake on his part that I was beaten up but... To think that it was for my own good as well!

Yet, I mistook his kind intentions...

“Huh?”

Seeing tears streaming down the face of his plump butler, Zhang Xuan was confused.

I just wanted to say that your injury does not affect your training, why... What were you thinking of? Did you brain spasm...

However, this is good as well. All the more, this can help to build my prestige as a master teacher...

“Cough cough!” Zhang Xuan coughed and said, “Indeed. At the very least, my efforts weren't in vain since you were able to understand them. Alright, put these aside, if I'm not wrong, Ling Tianyu should have given you medicine to cure your wounds!”

“I...” Sun Qiang's face flushed.

For my sake, old master was even willing to be misunderstood. Yet, I shamelessly took the other party's medicine...

I am truly unable to compare to him...

“It's not a big deal. As long as you work for me loyally, it isn't really a big deal for you to take some things.” Seemingly guessing the thoughts in his mind, Zhang Xuan interrupted. “Take the medicine out. Prepare yourself, you will try to break into Fighter 4-dan now.”

“Right now?” Sun Qiang didn't expect things to progress so quickly. “Old master, is there no need to look for a quiet chamber? Also, if I were to try breaking through now, I'm

afraid that Lord Ling would return before I can even succeed. If so, I would delay your affairs...”

“There’s no need for it. It is just a matter of minutes, why would you need a quiet chamber?” Zhang Xuan waved away his concerns.

“Matter of minutes? Break through... in such a short time?”

Sun Qiang was taken aback. Looking at the old master, his eyes widened in disbelief.

136 Master Teacher Yang Xuan

Although Fighter 3-dan wasn't considered an advanced cultivation realm, it wasn't a low one either. Despite more than a decade of effort, Sun Qiang was still unable to break through, the difficulty clear to see here.

Initially, Sun Qiang had thought that it would take at least half a day or even a full day of effort. Yet, the old master said that... it was just a matter of minutes?

Brother, do you think that it is eating or drinking?

Sun Qiang felt that his outlook of the world was collapsing and was about to go mad.

That amount of time isn't enough for zhenqi to surge through his body!

"Why? You don't wish to break through?" Seeing his daze, Zhang Xuan frowned.

"No, that's not it... Old master, what do I need to do..."

Suppressing his agitation, Sun Qiang quickly replied.

"Consume the pill first, then use all your strength to propel the zhenqi through your meridians. As for the rest, leave it up to me." Zhang Xuan said.

"Alright!"

Those were very simple instructions. Without any hesitation, Sun Qiang took out a pill and swallowed it.

As expected of a pill forged by an official apothecary, it was indeed good stuff. The moment he consumed it, he felt his entire body growing warm and energy surged through his body.

Zhang Xuan approached him, took out a few silver needles and pierced them at several locations where his meridians

were blocked.

After his experiences in helping Zhao Yanfeng break through and solving Wang Ying's leg disability, he realized that it was likely that he would need to use them often. As such, he specially prepared and kept a box of silver needles in his storage ring.

In order to locate the blockages, others would need to infuse their zhenqi into the other party's body to probe meticulously. However, Zhang Xuan was different. As long as the other party executed a battle technique, the Library of Heaven's Path would compile a book with all of their flaws in it. All he had to do was to insert the silver needles at the correct location and use his pure zhenqi to clean away the residue.

Zhang Xuan infused his zhenqi into the silver needle. Just as though a clear stream flowing into a murky river, turning the the entire river clear, the zhenqi which had stagnated started to merge into the flow once again.

The accumulated effort that Sun Qiang spent on training over the decade was fearsome. Under the nourishment of the pure zhenqi, the stagnated zhenqi started to circulate through his body once more, causing power in his body to increase explosively. In less than a minute, his zhenqi had already circulated through his entire body once!

Boom!

He broke through Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi realm immediately. But, the improvement in cultivation realm didn't just stop there; it continued to rise steadily.

Hu!

Finally, after an unknown period of time, it stopped.

“My cultivation...”

Picking himself up, Sun Qiang examined his strength and a look of disbelief appeared on his face.

He thought that being able to break through Pigu realm would already be an incredible feat. To think that he would reach Pigu realm advanced stage right away!

“Barely... five minutes have passed?”

However, what left him even more surprised was how accurate his old master’s words were. It was truly a matter of minutes...

The heck, when did breaking through become such an easy feat?

If it were that easy, why did my cultivation realm remain stuck at the same level for more than a decade? Am I really cultivating or am I eating crap...

Sun Qiang felt as though he was dreaming, and that he was on the verge of fainting.

“Alright, all you have to do afterward is to fortify your cultivation!”

Ignoring Sun Qiang’s dazed expression, Zhang Xuan retrieved his silver needles and returned to his seat.

Actually, the reason why the other party broke through so quickly was because of the party’s consistent effort throughout the years, as well as the pure zhenqi Zhang Xuan possessed. It was impossible for it to be as fast if any of the factors weren’t present.

The pure zhenqi had dredged up those stagnated zhenqi which he had accumulated from before. It was as though clear water melting cubes of ice; naturally, the volume of water increased significantly. As such, breaking into Fighter 4-dan became an easy task.

Otherwise, if he could help Zhao Ya and the others break through just by using his needles, he wouldn’t have to go through so much effort to earn money for the pills.

Of course, more importantly, Zhang Xuan didn’t want to leave the impression that they could achieve something without working for it. There was still a long road ahead of them; if they were to cultivate such a mindset, their achievements would definitely be limited.

“Thank you, old master!”

After recovering from his shock, he immediately kneeled to the ground and bowed with great sincerity in gratitude to the old master. He knew that the only reason why he could achieve such a rapid improvement was because of the old master.

If not for him, he wouldn't have been able to receive respect from a figure like Ling Tianyu and enjoy such a grand treatment. He would be stuck in Zhenqi realm for his entire life, never to break through.

He would have never felt the sensation in his body right now!

“I must make sure to work diligently in the future. I must not screw up this opportunity given to me...”

Sun Qiang made up his mind.

“Ling Tianyu should be arriving soon. Go out and welcome him!”

After he was done helping him break through, Zhang Xuan did not dawdle and casually gestured with his hands.

“Yes!”

Sun Qiang took his leave.

.....

“Who could the one living in this mansion be? To be able to transform Sun Qiang's status completely, to the point that even Ling Tianyu had to treat him respectfully, addressing him as Brother Sun...”

Outside the mansion, Du Yuan got increasingly confused. Only after a long period of time did he finally understand that it was due to the owner of the mansion that Lord Ling, who was of equal standing to his grandfather, treated Sun Qiang with such respect.

However, he fell into contemplation once more. He couldn't think of any nobles in Tianxuan Royal City that had such standing to make a billionaire wait outside willingly for an entire night, and furthermore, to be so delighted when the gates opened for him.

Jiyaaa! These doubts were running through his mind when the gates opened and Ling Tianyu and Master Cheng Yuan walked out.

“They are leaving just like that? No one... is sending them off?”

Du Yuan blinked his eyes, unable to believe what he saw.

Initially, there was, at the very least, still a butler who came to welcome the two in. But now that they were leaving, there wasn't any company... No matter how incredible the master was, the butler should have at least walked the guests out!

No matter what, Ling Tianyu was a true billionaire, a person of exceptional standing. Even his grandfather would have to welcome him and walk him out of the hall if he were to visit the Du Clan. Then, his father or the elders would accompany him to the gates as a sign of respect.

Yet, when Ling Tianyu walked out of the mansion, he had to push open the gates personally; even the guards at the doors were putting on such airs...

Who the heck could it be?

Du Yuan was overwhelmed by curiosity.

A moment later, just as he was about to step forward to ask the guards, ‘jiyaa!’, the gates opened once more. Sun Qiang walked out with his hands by his back.

“This...”

Upon seeing the acquaintance, Du Yuan decided to step forward for an inquiry, when he staggered out of a sudden. His eyes widened to the point that they were about to pop out of his sockets.

Can anyone tell me what is going on?

Previously, when this fellow came out, he was only Zhenqi realm pinnacle. How is he suddenly in... Pigu realm advanced stage?

It had just been ten minutes or so, and his cultivation realm had improved by an entire realm...

Are my eyes playing tricks on me?

Du Yuan's entire body shuddered.

"Oh? Isn't this Du Yuan gongzi? What kind of wind brought you here?"

Just when he was about to go into a frenzy from the ridiculousness of the situation, he heard Sun Qiang's voice. Lifting his head, he realized that the other party was already standing right before him.

"Oh, I just happened to pass by..." Suppressing the astonishment in his mind, Du Yuan asked prudently. "Weren't you working in the market? Why did you..."

"I'm currently serving as the butler of this residence, following my old master!" Confidence exuded from Sun Qiang's eyes.

Previously, when speaking to the sons of prominent families, he would have to speak prudently, afraid that he might get beaten up for no reason. But now that even Ling Tianyu had to lower his head before him, there was no reason why he should fear a mere junior.

"Your old master is..." Du Yuan asked hurriedly.

"You don't know our old master?"

With his hands behind his back, Sun Qiang lifted his head. Admiration and excitement could be seen on his face.

"Master Teacher Yang Xuan!"

137 Touching Your Wife

“Ma, ma... Master teacher?”

Du Yuan shivered.

Everyone knew as a fact that Tianxuan Kingdom was one of the weakest kingdoms and had no master teacher to assume command. When did one arrive? Furthermore, one that allowed this fellow to become his butler?

No wonder Ling Tianyu was willing to wait for an entire night and had acted so prudently around Sun Qiang...

Even if it were just a lowest level, 1-star master teacher in the mansion, it would nevertheless be an existence Emperor Shen Zhui dare not to underestimate.

For such a man, not to mention a single night, even if Ling Tianyu had to wait for half a year, he wouldn't dare to have a single word of complaint.

In fact, if his grandfather knew, he would definitely rush here to pay respect to him as well.

A master teacher can raise or destroy an entire country and his words are akin to gold.

This was his status!

If his father could receive the guidance of a master teacher, the trauma he had sustained might be able to be dispelled and perhaps, he might even revert to the genius he was previously.

In that instant, Du Yuan was filled with envy for the man before him.

Sun Qiang used to be just a lowly figure in the commercial city. He had to bow respectfully whenever he saw Du Yuan, afraid to offend him. Yet now... Du Yuan was the one who had to speak carefully so as to not get on the other party's nerves.

Otherwise, even without the master teacher making a move himself, a single word of Sun Qiang's could send countless

experts, who were looking for an opportunity to fawn over him, to teach him a lesson.

“Yang shi... When did he arrive in the kingdom? Why hadn't I heard of him?”

Suppressing the astonishment within, Du Yuan asked.

If a master teacher were to really visit Tianxuan Kingdom, the entire capital would have shaken in an uproar and everyone would have been aware. But why was it that he hadn't heard of such a matter?

“The old master likes to keep a low profile, so he doesn't want others to know of it. It is enough that you know of it, don't go spreading the word. Alright, I still have things to attend to. If Du gongzi doesn't have anything on, it would be best for you not to loiter around here. Otherwise, if the old master were to see it, it might cause unnecessary misunderstandings. It would be troublesome then.”

After the incident with Ling Tianyu, Sun Qiang had regained his confidence. As a result, an air of superiority started to grow around him, and his tone reflected so.

“Yes, yes!”

Du Yuan nodded his head hastily.

After finishing his piece, Sun Qiang turned around and went back to the gates. Not long later, a carriage arrived and Ling Tianyu stepped down from it. Two guards entered the mansion and fetched a palanquin.

“Lord Ling, please enter!” Sun Qiang welcomed him.

“Thank you, Brother Sun!”

Ling Tianyu clasped his hands to return the greetings. Then, the few of them entered the mansion together.

“I've heard that Ling Tianyu's wife is sick. It seems like he knows that there is a master teacher here, that's why he stood here for an entire night to plead with him to save her...”

Instantaneously, Du Yuan managed to fill in the gaps of the story.

Master teachers were not only capable of guiding one's cultivation. Pill forging, medicinal skills... There wasn't a single occupation that they weren't adept at. That's also the reason why they were able to stand at the peak, above all other occupations.

It wasn't a secret among the upper echelons of Tianxuan Kingdom that Ling Tianyu's wife was sick. Du Yuan had also heard of it and according to the rumors, even Master Yuanyu was unable to do anything about it. Upon hearing that a master teacher had arrived at the capital, it was natural that he would want rush forward at first minute's notice.

"If this master can treat an illness that even Master Yuanyu was helpless about, then doesn't that mean that there is a hope for my father as well?"

Du Yuan's eyes lit up instantaneously.

The moment such a thought occurred to him, all thoughts of leaving vanished from Du Yuan's mind immediately. After a moment of hesitation, he walked toward the tea stand opposite of the mansion.

I'll drink tea there. After all, I can't possibly offend a master teacher!

.....
"This is my wife, Yu Rou. I beseech Yang shi to save her!"

In the room, the guards left right after placing the palanquin down. Ling Tianyu kneeled onto the floor to plead with Zhang Xuan.

The man and his wife together had been through thick and thin and they had an extremely close relationship. As long as he was able to save her, no amount was too great a price!

Clearly, he had heard of Zhang Xuan's 'name' from Sun Qiang's mouth.

"Un!" Zhang Xuan stood up. Upon seeing the lady on the palanquin, he frowned.

The lady seemed to be around Ling Tianyu's age, but time didn't seem to have left many scars on her face. Even though

she wasn't exceptionally beautiful, she exuded a natural disposition that induced trust and tranquility in others.

However, such a blessed woman was lying motionless on the palanquin with her eyes tightly shut.

“Her condition seems to be worse than I have expected!”

Zhang Xuan's face darkened.

He had only come into contact with the Southern Blood Jade and from it, he knew that the object could cause nearly irreversible damage to ordinary humans. Initially, he thought that as long as he destroyed the blood jade and nourished the body of the patient, she should recover swiftly. However, upon catching sight of the lady, he knew that he had underestimated the severity of the matter.

It was clear that the other party had fallen into a coma. If she didn't receive treatment soon, even Zhang Xuan might find himself powerless to save her.

“I was still thinking that... If she was awake, I could ask her to execute a punching routine so that I can compile a book, find the flaws and treat her. But now... What should I do?”

Zhang Xuan was in distress.

He had thought the matter out too simply previously. If the other party was awake, he could have her execute a battle technique and the Library of Heaven's Path would compile a book, from which, he would be able to learn how he should treat her!

This way, even if he wasn't able to find a clear remedy for the matter, he would still be able to say some things about her condition and perhaps, come up with some solution to alleviate her condition.

However... her lying there was no different from being a corpse, how could he go around doing it?

It was impossible to get her to execute a punching routine...

Sigh, it sure isn't easy acting as an expert! It is getting harder and harder to make a living nowadays!

“Yang shi, can my wife be treated?”

Seeing that the other person had walked several rounds around Yu Rou, Ling Tianyu’s frown deepened and anxiety was displayed clearly on his face.

“Don’t be so anxious, I’m still observing her condition!”

Zhang Xuan was already feeling extremely stressed. Now, upon being questioned by the other party, he felt even more dispirited.

He had already boasted about his abilities. It would be embarrassing to fail at such a crucial moment.

If he were to fail with the very first customer, not only would all of his preparations be in vain, his reputation would also be shattered. His prestige as a master teacher would be shaken.

By then, it would truly be a dream to earn twenty million gold coins in nine days.

“Oh...”

Upon hearing that the other party mention that he was still observing the situation and not that there was no cure for his wife, Ling Tianyu heaved a sigh of relief. Even so, he couldn’t help but rub his hands together nervously by the corner.

“Flaws... flaws! Why won’t you come out...”

Circling another two rounds, he kept shouting such words in his mind. Yet, the Library of Heaven’s Path was totally unreactive, as though it was dead. Zhang Xuan felt so depressed that he could have spat a mouthful of blood.

It looked like... Just like how it was the many other times before, the library could only compile a book of weaknesses when a person was executing a battle technique. He circled around the person, shouted in his mind, gritted his teeth and scratched his head furiously...

But... As expected, it was all useless...

“Looks like I have really failed at such a crucial timing...”

He circled a few more rounds and confirmed that there was truly no movements in the library at all. Just as Zhang Xuan

was about to helplessly declare to the other party that he was unable to cure her, a thought suddenly flashed through his mind.

He stopped and lifted his head to look at Ling Tianyu with a look of excitement.

“Yang shi...”

Seeing his movements come to a halt, Ling Tianyu’s nervousness surged once more. He understood that the other party had arrived at a conclusion and intended to tell him about it.

Life or death, his wife’s fate hinged on this moment!

“There’s no need to worry. The situation isn’t that bad yet!”
Upon seeing his nervousness, Zhang Xuan consoled him.

“Yang shi, you can just speak the truth. I can bear the truth, no matter what it is...”

Ling Tianyu gritted his teeth.

“There’s nothing much I can tell you now. How about this, you lift your wife up so that I can touch her!”

Zhang Xuan said.

“Touch... my wife?”

In an instant, Ling Tianyu’s face became as dark as ink.

-laoshi is an address for normal teachers whereas -shi is an address of master teachers.

138 Treatable

You want to touch my wife before me? Furthermore, I am to lift her for you...

Even though you are a master teacher, you can't humiliate me like that!

Ling Tianyu clenched his fists tightly and the sound of him grinding teeth resounded in the room. He was on the verge of going on mad.

Hearing those words, Sun Qiang, who was watching the situation by the side, nearly fainted as well.

As expected of the old master, he sure is domineering!

To have the husband help up his own wife for you to touch...

As a master teacher, he could have all the women he wanted. Yet, to think that he would have such an interest. Looks like I have to hide my wife from him in the future...

Of course, I have to find a wife first...

“Forget it, it is better not to lift her up, given her condition. I will go over and touch her myself!”

As Zhang Xuan's sight was fixated on the lady lying on the floor, who was dressed in elaborate palace attire, he was oblivious to the two's expressions. After seeing no one move into action after saying those words, he gestured with his hands to renounce his previous order.

Given the lady's situation, it was best not to lift her up. If she were to die from the movement, Zhang Xuan would be in trouble.

“You will go over and touch her yourself?”

Ling Tianyu felt that the other party was trampling on his dignity mercilessly.

Since I won't help you, you are going to help yourself?

To not even spare a lady who is in a coma, you are unbecoming of the title of a master teacher. You are a beast!

As he was on the verge of losing control of his temper and about to enter a rage, the other party was already before Yu Rou and had stretched out his hands toward her wrist.

“Ah?”

Even if it would spell his death, he was unwilling to allow anyone to defile his wife’s dignity. But just when he was about to get violent, such a scene unfolded before him. Ling Tianyu was stupefied.

The heck, what is going on?

Didn’t you say that you are going to touch’ her?

Could it be that the touch’ you spoke of refers to feeling her pulse? There are acupoints on one’s wrist and a teacher would often come into contact with a student’s wrist when guiding them on their cultivation. However, that is what you call touch too?

Do you need to act so darned misleading?

Brother, let me tell you. If not for your identity as a master teacher, you will be beaten to death if you speak in such a manner outside...

Sun Qiang’s mouth was also twitching.

Old master’s ability in linguistics is really... atrocious!

Everyone thought that he had vile intentions in mind when he said that he was going to ‘touch’ Ling Tianyu’s wife. Yet... To actually mean this...

Why did you have to make such a proper and upright matter sound so wretched...

To make me misunderstand your intentions as well...

Feeling one’s pulse was also called touching one’s pulse. Zhang Xuan spoke casually and he didn’t think that his words would cause such a huge misunderstanding. He was also oblivious to the fact that the physicians in this world did not ‘feel one’s pulse’ while diagnosing the patient. Rather, they

operated just like the Western doctors in his previous life, conducting all kinds of test to analyzing the patient's condition instead.

Thus, when Ling Tianyu heard him say touch, it was impossible for him to fathom that he meant touching his wife's pulse, as there wasn't such a practice in this world. This was also the reason why such a misunderstanding was generated.

.....

...

Zhang Xuan didn't know that their minds had gone through a roller coaster ride. Rather, he was pondering over the idea that had emerged in his mind just a moment ago.

The Library of Heaven's Path other ability —— Appraising Treasures!

Back then, when he competed with Master Mo Yang, he had used such an ability. As long as it was a tangible object, he could compile a manual on its weakness just by touching it. Right now, this lady was deep in a coma and her condition was not much different from a dead person. As such, it was impossible for her to execute a punching routine...

Was it possible for a book on her to be compiled by touching her?

That was the reason why he wanted to touch the other party. Of course, in his mind, he simply thought of this lady as a tangible object.

If Ling Tianyu were to know of his true thoughts, he would probably vomit blood.

His wife wasn't dead yet... And to be treated as an object...

“Indeed!”

The moment his finger came into contact with the other party's wrist, the Library of Heaven's Path, which had remained inert for quite some time now, jolted and a book appeared before him. Zhang Xuan almost leaped into the air due to intense joy.

It was only a conjecture on his part. To think that it would truly work!

He turned his attention to the book hurriedly and the words 'Yu Rou' was written on the cover.

Flipping over, the details of the other party's life and her flaws were written within.

"Yu Rou, 43 years of age, a citizen of Tianxuan Royal City, the wife of Tianyu Merchant Firm's boss, Ling Tianyu, Fighter 2-dan primary stage..."

"Flaws: No.1, the meridians within her body are weak, making it impossible for her to practice profound cultivation techniques to generate zhenqi! No.2, her talent toward cultivation is lacking, her ability to sense spiritual energy in the air is too weak... No.8, the body had been corroded by the aura of the Southern Blood Jade, causing her Eight Extraordinary Meridians to be blocked. The specific locations where the eight meridians are blocked are..."

Several pages of the book were densely filled with such information.

All of Yu Rou's flaws were detailed within.

"Looks like it is only a problem of blockages in her meridians. This is easy..."

After reading the book, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

Initially, he was still worried that he would not be able to find a remedy if her illness turned out to be difficult to cure. If that happened, he would just explain the problem to Ling Tianyu and send him away. At the very least, he was able to account the situation to the other party. However, since it was only a blockage of her meridians, things became so much simpler.

It was similar to the problems that Liu Yang, Wang Ying and Zhao Yan faced and it wasn't complicated to resolve.

Of course, that was only to him. Anyone else, even if it were a Fighter 8-dan Zongshi expert, would also find it unfathomable to solve such problems.

The meridians of a human's body are inherently weak. Once it becomes blocked, one could only try to penetrate through the blockage through consistent effort over long periods of time.

However, Zhang Xuan was different.

As he cultivated the Heaven's Path Divine Art, his zhenqi was completely pure and free from contaminants. With as such a zhenqi infused into one's body, any kinds of blockages, even if it were due to a thin and narrow meridian, could be broken through immediately. There was no problem whatsoever.

This was also the basis for why he was able to help Zhao Yanfeng and Sun Qiang break through so quickly and resolve Wang Ying's problem so easily.

“Yang shi, how is it?”

Upon seeing him done feeling his wife's pulse, Ling Tianyu's anxiety started to surge once more.

“It is not a difficult matter to solve your wife's illness!”

Zhang Xuan returned to his seat and gestured majestically.

“Not a difficult matter?”

Ling Tianyu's eyes narrowed. His tightly clenched fists finally loosened and he kneeled to the floor in agitation, “Yang shi, I beg of you to save my wife!”

He had gone through all means to save Yu Rou, but even the number one physician in Tianxuan Kingdom, Master Yuanyu, was helpless before her illness. He thought that it was all hopeless, but the heavens had left a path for him. This Yang shi was able to treat her!

The exhilaration he felt at this moment was clear to see.

“Death is abhorred by the heavens. If I did not intend to help you, I wouldn't have interfered in your affairs at Tianyu Merchant Firm!” Zhang Xuan waved his hands and had him stand up. However, a frown soon appeared on his face, “But...”

Even though it wasn't difficult for him to treat her, if he were to make a move so easily, wouldn't all of the efforts he made

before be in vain?

“Regardless of what that is needed, as long as it is something Yang shi speaks of, I will definitely fulfill the requests even if it means my bankruptcy!”

Ling Tianyu said.

Seeing how cooperative the other party was, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

Indeed, a businessman’s instincts are sharp! Just a single word and the other party understood what he was hinting at!

“Your wife’s body had been corroded by the aura for an extremely long time. It is not very possible for her to be completely treated within a short period of time. It will probably take ten days... nine days. Furthermore, you will have to spend quite a sum of money to purchase expensive medicinal herbs for her treatment every day!”

Initially, Zhang Xuan wanted to say ten days but recalling that one day had already passed, he immediately changed his words.

Actually, given his pure zhenqi, it would only take a moment for him to treat her completely. As for the reason why he said that it would take nine days... Of course, it was to make more money.

Facing a lack of money, he had no choice. Even though her treatment was dragged out, at the very least, she would be saved. This was much better than watching her die!

“Yang shi, what medicinal herbs do you need? I will go and buy them now!”

After hearing that Yang shi could treat his wife, Ling Tianyu had already regarded him as a deity. He wouldn’t fuss over how long it would take and how expensive the medicinal herbs were.

However, the moment he said those words, the calm Yang shi suddenly looked over with a darkened face and a cold glare.

139 Great Loss

It was no wonder why Zhang Xuan wasn't happy. Even though he had said expensive medicinal herbs, it was actually an excuse. Given how his pure zhenqi was more than sufficient to open up her blocked meridians, why would he need medicinal herbs?

If the other party were to buy it himself, how could he earn his money?

Just as he was thinking about how he could get the other party to fork out the money obediently, Ling Tianyu slapped his forehead suddenly and grinned, "Yang shi, actually, I am not really knowledgeable about medicinal herbs. I'm afraid that you would have to buy the required herbs yourself!"

After which, he presented a stack of bills.

It was not that he understood the meaning behind Zhang Xuan's actions. Rather, all fighters had their own secrets. Since this master teacher is able to treat his wife when even Master Yuanyu found himself helpless before her, he must have his own exclusive secret treatment formula.

Wouldn't he be exposing the other party's secret treatment formula if he were to buy the medicinal herbs?

It was no wonder he was displeased!

As such, he immediately changed his words.

"Un!" Just by reflecting briefly, Zhang Xuan understood the reason by the changes in Ling Tianyu's actions as well. Without explaining in the least, he gestured for Sun Qiang to accept the stack of bills.

How could a master teacher personally grab that stack of money personally? It is unbecoming of his position!

"Alright, I will begin her treatment now!"

After successfully laying his hands of the gold bills, Zhang Xuan didn't dawdle any further. He walked over to Yu Rou,

whipped out his silver needles, and inserted it at the points where her meridians were blocked.

Simultaneously, zhenqi was infused into the other party's body.

Tzzzzzzzz!

The pure zhenqi swept through her body and all the shackles in her body disappeared instantaneously.

Ying ning! The unconscious Yu Rou slowly opened her eyes.

“This...”

Ling Tianyu and the others present in the room were astounded.

Didn't you say that it would be difficult to treat her... That it will take nine days of effort along with an exorbitant sum?

Yet, in a few moments, she was already awake. Furthermore, it looked as though he had merely placed a few needles on her...

“Crap, I made a blunder...”

Clearly, Zhang Xuan didn't expect that the other party would awaken so quickly as well. Zhang Xuan nearly threw up blood.

If she woke up so quickly, how could he continue to suck money off Ling Tianyu?

The Library of Heaven's Path only detailed flaws on a person's body. It didn't record what would happen once those flaws were resolved and as such, Zhang Xuan wouldn't have known the unblocking of which specific meridian would help her regain her conscious. Initially, he had intended to spread the workload over nine days, clearing a few areas of meridian blockage every single day. This way, he would be able to drag out the treatment and earn a greater sum from Ling Tianyu. Yet, he didn't expect that just by clearing a few points, she would awaken.

Cough cough.

She woke up too quickly... It felt as though there was no difficulty in his treatment at all. How could he dupe the other

party's money like that?

Zhang Xuan felt dismal.

“Incredible, Yang shi!”

After the initial astonishment, Ling Tianyu felt completely impressed by the other party's means.

Even though it looked like he had just placed a few needles on the other party's body, it was actually an extremely profound art. It contained secrets that outsiders would find hard to comprehend. Otherwise, why wasn't Master Yuanyu able to do the same? On the other hand, this Yang shi was able to cure his wife in an instant through this art.

Clearly, this was the disparity between their capabilities!

“Er?”

Initially, Zhang Xuan thought that the other party would feel as though he had wasted his money for naught. Contrary to his expectations, the admiration in the other party's gaze simply deepened. Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief, waved his hands casually and said, “The first day of treatment only helps her regain her consciousness. I will look for some special herbs to help her nourish her strength. After I'm done, I will send someone to bring it over.”

“Alright!”

Ling Tianyu hurriedly nodded his head.

“Un!” After which, Zhang Xuan didn't speak any longer.

“Then, we shall not disturb Yang shi any longer...”

After which, he gestured for his subordinate to lift the palanquin and prepared to leave.

“Tianyu...”

Before the two subordinates could even lift the palanquin, the lady on the palanquin spoke and slowly stood up.

“Your body is still weak. Quickly, lie down...”

Seeing her stand up, Ling Tianyu hurriedly walked over.

“There’s no need for that. My entire body has gone numb after lying for half a year. I want to walk about...”

Under the support of her husband, even though Yu Rou’s body was still weak, walking did not pose a big problem.

“This is Yang shi. He’s the one who treated you.”

Ling Tianyu quickly introduced.

“Yang shi? Master teacher?”

Yu Rou’s eyes narrowed and she quickly bowed down, “Yu Rou thank Yang shi for saving my life...”

“It’s just a small thing.”

Zhang Xuan was weeping within, but on the surface, he maintained an indifferent and casual expression.

Witnessing his attitude, Ling Tianyu and the others felt even more impressed.

This is a true master teacher!

After solving a major problem, he didn’t bother vying for compliments or demand rewards. His attitude was truly admirable.

It was laughable that they misunderstood him just now... To think that they evaluated such a gentleman by their standards.

Soon, Ling Tianyu brought his wife out of the courtyard. After which, Sun Qiang immediately presented the gold bills in his palms.

Taking a casual glance, Zhang Xuan was astonished within.

There were ten notes of a hundred thousand each in there. In total, it added up to a million.

Yang Mo had to dupe innumerable people in order to earn that much money. Yet, a master teacher was able to receive that much in just a single treatment session... It was truly frightening.

However... After the initial astonishment, Zhang Xuan’s head hurt once more.

A million may seem like a huge sum but to his current situation... It was an insufficient and meager sum.

He wanted to stall the treatment for an additional few more days to earn a little bit more money. Yet... Not only did the other party regain her consciousness, she even walked out of his mansion herself. It wasn't wise for him to drag it out under such a situation.

“The condition of Lord Ling’s wife was something that had left the entire Tianxuan City stumped. Yet, with a moment of effort, old master was able to get her to regain her consciousness. In fact, she even became well enough to walk. Incredible...”

Sun Qiang muttered under his breath excitedly. His admiration for the old master overflowed from within and appeared in his words and expression.

However, hearing those words, Zhang Xuan felt even more depressed.

It wasn't easy for him to ensnare a billionaire. Yet, due to his lack of knowledge on the treatment's effectiveness, he failed to grab a huge sum from the other party. Just the thought of it caused sadness to well up within him.

“Forget it, a million is still money anyway!”

Since he was unable to drag it out, he might as well get it over and done with. Zhang Xuan passed Sun Qiang a gold bill, wrote a list and had him go out to buy some herbs.

As a person who became an apothecary through Pill Debate, Zhang Xuan was unable to forge pills. Even so, prescribing some medicinal powder to nourish one's body was still a simple task to him.

Let's just treat these medicinal powder as expensive 'precious medicinal herbs'!

The other party wouldn't check on it for fear of incurring his wrath anyway.

.....

“Boss, another pot of tea!”

Du Yuan found a table to occupy at the tea stand and casually threw a gold coin over.

“Coming!”

The boss was a fifty-year-old or so elderly. He brought a pot over to Du Yuan’s table with a wide smile.

“Boss, I have something to ask you...”

Seeing that the tea stand was directly opposite the mansion, Du Yuan couldn’t help but ask him.

“Customer, feel free to voice any queries that you have...”

Upon seeing the gold coin in Du Yuan’s hand, the boss’s eyes immediately lit up.

“I would like to ask about the opposite...”

As he spoke, Du Yuan pointed to the opposite mansion, but his words stopped abruptly when he saw the gates to the mansion opening slowly.

“Hm? Sun Qiang is coming out again?”

Initially, he thought that it was Sun Qiang who come out to settle some affairs. However, he soon realized that he was wrong when he saw Ling Tianyu, who had just entered a moment ago, supporting another person out.

“Is this... Ling Tianyu’s wife?”

Du Yuan shuddered. His heart almost stopped from astonishment.

He had met Ling Tianyu’s wife twice and as such, he was able to recognize her. It was just a moment ago that she was carried in on a palanquin...

And she is already on her own feet?

Must it be so exaggerated?

Could I be seeing things...

If he didn’t know for a fact that Ling Tianyu’s wife was truly ill, he would have thought that the other party was just acting...

The heck, this was an illness which even Master Yuanyu was helpless about. It hadn't even been ten minutes since she was carried in... And she was walking about ...

Du Yuan didn't know whether something was wrong with his eyes or instead, something was wrong with the world.

140 News Spreads

Tianxuan Royal City, in the interiors of the Du Clan Residence.

A middle-aged man walked out of a room that overlooked a tranquil pond, carrying a pot of cooling tea.

Every day after lunch, he had a habit he engaged in and that was... drinking cooling tea!

This was the time when he would be the most relaxed. He had already ordered for no one to interrupt him, even if it were his own son.

He was once a radiant genius of Tianxuan Kingdom's Du Clan, a serious contender for the position of clan head. However, he is only an ordinary elder now.

Du Miaoxuan, Du Yuan's father!

Even though his cultivation had fallen tremendously after a severe bout of illness and his faction had already weakened after the years of oppression, his presence nevertheless commanded respect. No one dared to disobey his orders. No one would dare to interrupt his moment of tranquility.

“Right now, I still wield a certain level of control over the situation. However, when I die, my successor will surely be expelled. If it comes down to that... I should have Yuan-er leave the clan first! Otherwise, there could be complications!”

Lying on the reclining chair, his eyes were gently shut.

At this point, his words seemed to still hold some weight. That was because the other party did not consider him as a threat for the clan head position and allowed him to be. However, if he were to die or if the old clan head above him were to retire, his faction would definitely be unable to hold on and hence, collapse without fail.

The outsiders only saw the glory and prestige of being in a powerful clan, but they failed to see the schemes and

underhanded fights that occurred within. The intensity was in no way inferior to the struggle for power within the royal palace; a single moment of carelessness could result in being crippled and damned for all eternity.

“Father, father...”

Just when his mind had quietened and he began to muse over the future, a panicked voice rang. Then, he saw his profligate son charging in with an agitated look.

“Didn’t I say to not interrupt me at such times?”

Du Miaoxuan’s face darkened.

“Father...”

Du Yuan froze for a moment. Only now did he recall that it was his father’s personal resting time.

“Get out!”

“Oh...”

Witnessing his father’s rage, Du Yuan’s swallowed his words and walked back out.

“Wait a moment, for you to come looking for me so anxiously, is there something wrong?” After taking a sip of cooling tea, Du Miaoxuan’s anger subsided. Lying horizontally on the chair, his eyes were half-closed.

“A... A master teacher had arrived in the city and he cured Ling Tianyu’s wife’s illness. I was thinking that... isn’t father injured as well? Perhaps, we could pay him a visit so that he can take a look...”

With a lowered head, he uttered the news which he had just gathered. However, before he could finish his words, he sensed a peculiarity in the atmosphere. Upon lifting his head his head to take a look, he almost fell to the ground.

Unknowingly, his father, who was lying on the chair a moment ago, was already standing right in front of him. His eyes were as round as a gong and his body quivered uncontrollably. Even though the cup of cooling tea that he held in his hands had spilled onto the ground, he seemed to be totally unaware.

“Father...” Du Yuan stared at his father with a shocked expression.

“Father what father, repeat what you just said. A master teacher had arrived in the city?”

Grabbing his son’s shoulder suddenly, Du Miaoxuan lost all traces of serenity that was seen on mere second ago.

“It was witnessed personally, so it is definitely true...”

Du Yuan quickly spoke of everything he had learned.

Actually, he knew about his father’s condition. His meridians were blocked as a result of that severe illness and everyday, when afternoon came, his zhenqi would flow erratically and he would behave embarrassingly.

Because he was afraid of others discovering it, he cultivated the habit of drinking cooling tea.

It served as a front for concealment.

“Father, this master teacher possesses extraordinary means. Shall we pay him a visit...”

After recounting what he had seen, Du Yuan asked. But before he could finish his words, he noticed that his father, usually a calm man, was already 10 meters ahead of him, shouting, “Why are you in a daze? Hurry up! Let’s pay the master teacher a visit...”

“...” It took Du Yuan a long moment to regain his senses. “Father, your shoes...”

Previously, his father had removed his shoes to lie on the chair and he hadn’t put them on yet. Furthermore, his clothes were still in a mess... yet, he wanted to leave like that... One must know that he is an extremely austere man. One of the things he hated the most was a messy outer appearance.

“Oh...”

Hearing his son’s words, Du Miaoxuan came to a realization. He tidied up his appearance quickly and proceeded with big strides. It was after he left the residence that he realized

something, “Right, son. Where does that master teacher you spoke of live?”

“...”

Du Yuan.

...

“What did you say? A master teacher has appeared in the city? He treated Ling Tianyu’s wife within ten minutes?”

“How is that possible? It must be a fake rumor. Even Master Yuanyu was helpless before her illness. No matter how incredible master teachers can be, their medical capabilities can’t possibly exceed that of a true physician!”

“I also think that it might be an exaggeration. After all, such things only happen in one’s dream.”

“I heard that the person is called Yang Xuan. Of the nine great kingdoms around Tianxuan Kingdom, there are only a few master teachers and I have never heard of this name!”

“Perhaps he might just be an incredible physician, and the rumors simply went out of hand. If he were a true master physician, how could it be possible for Emperor Shen Zhui to not know of it?”

“Emperor Shen Zhui had been looking forward to having a master teacher in our empire more than the rest of us. I heard that he had specially sent quite a few invitations to them. If one had arrived in the capital, how could it be possible for him to be unaware?”

“Regardless of the truth, we just have to send some people to look into it to know the truth...”

The same situation appeared in countless great clans and powers.

Ling Tianyu could be considered as one of the more prestigious figures in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom. How could anyone not doubt after hearing that he had camped outside a mansion overnight?

The moment their investigations revealed that a master teacher was involved, news started spreading like wildfire.

Even so, no one really believed the rumors.

Even the lowest 1-star master teacher had to be welcomed with a state ceremony, so how could one just appear in such a humble mansion so abruptly without the slightest bit of news?

...

Such heated debates had broken out everywhere, but the person-in-question, Zhang Xuan, was oblivious. At this moment, he was looking at Sun Qiang with a deep frown on his face.

“That’s weird, why does it not appear when I touch him?”

After Ling Tianyu left, he couldn’t help but experiment generating books by touching others upon recalling the incident.

Eventually, he touched every single part of Sun Qiang’s body, but nothing happened.

“Xiao Qiang, lie down.” Zhang Xuan ordered.

“Lie down?” Sun Qiang’s mouth twitched and he was on the verge of tears.

Going by logic, no matter what the old master wanted him to do, he was willing to cooperate fully. But... touching his body as he pleased... he felt as though he was about to go mad.

Previously, he was alarmed when he heard the old master say that he wanted to touch Ling Tianyu’s wife; he thought that the old master had a unique interest in such things. In the end, when the misunderstandings cleared up, he heaved a sigh of relief.

In the end, it seemed like his interest wasn’t in females, but in males...

Even more so... He wasn’t satisfied with just touching, he wanted him to lie down...

My innocence... My chastity...

“Old master...”

“Hurry up!” Zhang Xuan frowned in displeasure. He was unhappy about Sun Qiang’s protest, especially when all he wanted him to do was to lie down.

“Yes!” With tears welling up in his eyes, Sun Qiang lied down and waited for old master’s ‘bestly assault’. However, all the old master did was to touch his wrist and the other parts of his body. With a perplexed voice, the old master said, “That’s weird, why isn’t there any reaction?”

“Reaction? Old master, what... what kind of reaction do you want?” Sun Qiang shuddered.

To be fondling his body, could it be that... He wanted him to be aroused first?

After so long, it turned out that he was a ‘bottom’?

When that thought emerged in his mind, Sun Qiang shivered in disgust.

“No reaction at all... Ah, correct!” Just as his mind began to run wild, the ‘old master’ slapped his forehead, seemingly thought of something. The old master lowered his head to look at him, “Xiao Qiang, don’t move. I will try knocking you unconscious...”

“...” Sun Qiang felt his head spinning.

What is going on?

Old master, what do you want to do...

Could it be that... You feel embarrassed because I’m conscious?

141 You're a Beas

Finally overcoming Sun Qiang's attempts to struggle, Zhang Xuan managed to knock him unconscious.

Upon contact with the unconscious Sun Qiang, a book immediately appeared in Zhang Xuan's mind.

Only then did Zhang Xuan understand how it worked.

For those who were conscious, executing a movement, even if it wasn't a battle technique, would cause the compilation of a book on them. As time went by, the contents detailed inside would also change automatically. After all, humans were beings with learning capabilities and as such, their flaws would constantly change.

On the other hand, those who are unconscious are treated as objects. A book would be compiled upon coming into contact with them.

The two scenarios do not conflict and the difference was clear and simple. It was a matter of whether the person in question was conscious or not.

Knowing that the library had such an ability, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

If he were to meet with another case like Ling Tianyu's wife, he just had to touch them. He wouldn't panic as he did this round.

"Old master, an elder from Du Clan, Du Miaoxuan, requests an audience!"

After waking up, Sun Qiang examined his body and after confirming that he hadn't been assaulted, heaved a sigh of relief. He took his leave hurriedly, but after a moment, came back to report.

"An elder from Du Clan? Have him come in!"

Zhang Xuan waved his hands and returned to his seat.

Looks like the news regarding Ling Tianyu had spread rather quickly. Someone is already here to pay a visit.

...

“You say that you witnessed it yourself? Sun Qiang himself claimed that a master teacher resides in here?”

Outside, Du Miaoxuan turned to look at his son doubtfully.

Due to his illness, his cultivation fell tremendously. As such, when he heard that a master teacher had come to visit, he lost his decorum immediately. But on his way here, he gradually calmed down and noticed suspicious points.

Why would a master teacher suddenly appear here without any news? Furthermore, how could he be staying in such a small mansion?

Also, a true master teacher has countless disciples and followers. There was no need for a master teacher to hire the boss of a realtor store as his butler.

There were too many illogical parts to the story.

“Sun Qiang said it himself. Also, I witnessed the happenings with Ling Tianyu’s wife personally!” Du Yuan explained.

“Un!” Du Miaoxuan nodded his head.

Regardless of whether the other party was a true master teacher or not, this was a chance. If he turned out to be a fraud, he could choose to leave at any moment.

Jiyaaaa!

The doors to the courtyard opened and Sun Qiang emerged.

“The old master happens to be free, please enter!”

Du Miaoxuan and Du Yuan exchanged a glance before entering the mansion.

The mansion was decorated in the manner similar to how a philistine merchant would and there was nothing outstanding about it to him. The further Du Miaoxuan proceeded, the more he thought that the other party could be a fraud.

Soon, they arrived at the main hall.

“Old master, this is Elder Du Miaoxuan and his son, Du Yuan!” Sun Qiang said.

“Un!” Zhang Xuan turned around and invited, “Please be seated!”

“Yes!” Du Miaoxuan and his son sat on the guests’ seats. At the same time, they secretly assessed the ‘master teacher’ before them.

He looked to be in his forties, but his skin was smooth, so it was likely for him to be younger than he appeared to be.

Gedeng, Du Miaoxuan’s heart skipped a beat.

The man had concealed his appearance.

When he was younger, he once left to accumulate worldly experience and had opened his eyes to many different things. He had once seen such a face-changing technique.

If he were a real master teacher, why would he change his appearance?

Clearly, he was a fake!

Perhaps, he might be working together with Ling Tianyu, and this inexperienced son of his took it for real!

As such, his heart chilled and his face darkened.

Noticing his expression, Zhang Xuan felt a little dismal.

Didn’t this fellow come over after hearing how he helped Ling Tianyu?

Why was he displaying such an attitude to a master teacher?

He remained silent, and Du Miaoxuan didn’t speak either. As such, the air in the main hall stilled and the atmosphere grew awkward.

“It’s like that, my father had once fallen severely ill and it caused a great fall in his cultivation. After hearing that Yang shi is here, we came over hoping that Yang shi could take a look to see if there’s possible a remedy for his problem...”

Seeing that his father remained silent, Du Yuan hurriedly spoke up, full of anxiety.

Wasn't father very excited on the way here? Why isn't he speaking now that he had arrived? It would be terrible if we offend Yang shi because of this.

“Am I a physician?”

Zhang Xuan lifted his eyebrows in displeasure.

Since he was feigning as a master teacher, he had to carry the prestige of one. Given how the other party clearly doubted his identity, if he were to anxiously go straight into treating the other party, wouldn't that be unbecoming of his status?

“No... That's not it!”

Du Yuan was taken aback. He tugged on his father's sleeves immediately, “Father...”

“Oh! My son didn't put his words properly, please forgive him!”

Upon confirming that the fellow before him was a fraud, Du Miaoxuan no longer maintained the respectful attitude he held just before. Even so, he maintained basic courtesy, “I met with some problems on my cultivation and upon hearing of Yang shi's arrival, I could not help but make a visit hoping to learn from you. I hope that Yang shi would be so generous as to guide me along!”

“Problems with your cultivation?”

Taking in the other party's words, Zhang Xuan was affirmative that the other party was suspicious of his identity. He frowned in puzzlement.

Considering both his disposition and background, there shouldn't have been any problems at all. Why would the other party doubt him?

It was no wonder that he wasn't able to realize his mistakes. He was a mere librarian and a true-blue shut-in in his previous life. The reason why he was able to convince Ling Tianyu was because the man did not possess much experience in the pugilistic world, and as such, he was blind to the flaws in his disguise. However, his camouflage was indeed insufficient to

fool experienced and streetwise veterans such as Du Miaoxuan.

“Father...”

Detecting the lack of respect in his father’s voice, Du Yuan started to panic.

Father had always been a calm and prudent person, why is he acting so recklessly today?

The other party was a master teacher! Even Ling Tianyu had to kneel outside for an entire night before he could pay him a visit. It was already a blessing that we were allowed to enter immediately, so we should make full use of the opportunity. But why...

“Oh? What do you want to learn?”

Even though he was curious why the other party doubted his identity, Zhang Xuan wasn’t worried in the least. Instead, he looked at him with interest.

Even though he was pretending to be a master teacher, he wasn’t truly deceiving his customers. With the Library of Heaven’s Path, even a true master teacher would be unable to match his abilities in identifying one’s problems. So... You doubt me?

I will make you not dare to doubt me.

“I have just learned a new battle technique and found it hard to grasp. I hope that Yang shi can correct me!”

Immediately after finishing his sentence, Du Miaoxuan stood up.

From what he sees, the person before him is definitely a fraud. Since you want to play off as a master teacher, I will execute a punching routine before you. When you find yourself stumped, I will tear off your disguise!

Wuuu!

Before Zhang Xuan could reply, Du Miaoxuan clenched his fists and started moving around the room.

As expected of an ex-genius, his fists were forceful and it brought an intense pressure to the audiences. His techniques and moves were also profound.

Du Miaoxuan was a Pixue realm expert. Due to the severe illness, he plunged to Dingli realm. Even so, his strength didn't fall much in comparison. With his current strength, he would be able to match with even Pixue realm intermediate stage experts!

It was no wonder that he was able to remain as an elder in Du Clan despite being in just Dingli realm. He had true strength indeed.

Hu!

After finishing his punching routine, he retracted his fists.

“Please offer me your guidance!” Du Miaoxuan clasped his fists as he stared at Zhang Xuan with piercing eyes. He wanted to hear what would that fraud had to say.

“You want me to offer you my guidance?”

Aware of his thoughts, Zhang Xuan looked at him impassively.

“Yes!” Du Miaoxuan replied calmly.

“Your Fleeting Fist is indeed incredible, you should have reached 3-dan for it already. However... You seem to be unable to control your strength effectively. If I'm not wrong...”

At this point, Zhang Xuan opened his eyes and a playful smile crept onto his lips.

“You are a beast!”

142 Kneeling Outside

“What?”

Hearing those words, Sun Qiang and the others present in the room froze.

Especially Du Yuan, his complexion turned awful immediately.

Even if there were problems with his father’s punching routine, how could an upright master teacher humiliate someone so casually and call him a beast?

That was a personal attack!

“Yang shi, even if my father has offended you, there shouldn’t be a need for you to insult him in such a manner...”

Gritting his teeth in anger, Du Yuan protested.

“Insult?” Zhang Xuan shook his head. “Ask your father whether I am insulting him or not.”

“Father...”

Du Yuan turned around to look at Du Miaoxuan. With a single glance, he was astonished. His father’s body was trembling uncontrollably, and the calm that he possessed a moment ago had disappeared without a trace.

“I beg for Yang shi to save me...”

Putong!

Just as doubts sped through his mind, he saw his father exclaim and kneel to the floor.

“Ah?”

Du Yuan was taken aback.

A confused expression had also appeared on Sun Qiang’s face.

Is Du Miaoxuan mentally impaired? Or is he a masochist?

His tone was so forceful a moment ago, but when he failed to perform as an expert, even getting insulted by the old master at that, he immediately kneeled down?

“Xiao Qiang, send our guests off!”

Ignoring Du Miaoxuan was kneeling on the floor, Zhang Xuan waved them away.

What a joke, what do you take me for? You doubted my identity and even tried to test me, and now you expect me to save you?

“Yes!” Sun Qiang drew closer. “Please leave!”

“Please forgive me for being blind, I beg of you to give me a second chance...”

Upon hearing that Zhang Xuan was evicting them, Du Miaoxuan was horror-struck. He kowtowed immediately while feeling intense regret over his actions.

If only he had listened to his son, such a situation wouldn't have occurred.

Doubting the identity of a master teacher was equivalent to challenging his authority and prestige, it was no wonder that he was displeased.

Witnessing an influential elder of the Du Clan kowtowing over and again, Sun Qiang was at a loss. He hurriedly shot a gaze at the old master.

“Why? Does my words not matter anymore?”

Zhang Xuan frowned. Even though there was no anger in his voice, his voice was authoritative.

“Yes...”

Sun Qiang shuddered and gestured the other guards in hurriedly, “Men, send Elder Du out.”

Hearing the commands, a few guard quickly walked over.

“Elder Du, please!”

The few guards stepped forward.

“Father...”

Du Yuan was still unable to comprehend the situation. Why did his father not feel anger upon being insulted as a beast by Yang shi, and instead, kneeled down and begged to be saved?

“I was too rash and I admit my fault. I will wait at the gates to beg for Yang shi’s forgiveness.”

Du Miaoxuan kowtowed once more and walked out of his own accord. Du Yuan hurriedly followed behind him.

The moment he passed the gates, he dropped to his knees in the middle of the street facing the mansion, motionless.

“Father...” Du Yuan was about to go insane.

No matter what, his father used to be a strong contender for the position of the clan head. Even if he is now an ordinary elder, his continues to hold a distinguished position as compared to the other elders. For him to kneel in the middle of the street... Why?

Was it because the other party called him a... beast?

Could it be that... Father is truly a masochist?

“You kneel down as well!”

Before he could fully understand the situation, he heard Du Miaoxuan’s cold voice sounding from beside him.

“Father...” Du Yuan gritted his teeth. “I don’t understand...”

“That Yang shi is a true master teacher. I had spoken inappropriately earlier and offended him. Thus... I have to apologize to him! A master teacher is someone that cannot be insulted, even in the slightest.”

“Kneel down! We can only hope that he would forgive us because... he is a true master teacher. Only he is capable of curing my illness.”

“He can cure you?”

Du Yuan was confused.

He didn’t recall Yang shi mention anything related before!

All he did was to insult him ‘You are a beast’. Could that be the reason why father became so certain?

The more he pondered, the more confused he got.

...

“Old master, Elder Du and his son are kneeling before the gates!”

Hearing the subordinate’s report, Sun Qiang looked at the old master with a strange expression.

Is the old master capable of casting magic?

Initially, Du Miaoxuan wasn’t respectful at all and his tone wasn’t polite either. Yet, after an insult, the other party was frightened out of his wits and kneeled down immediately. In fact, he even refused to be chased out...

If he hadn’t seen it for himself, he would have thought that it was nonsense.

But the facts were laid clearly before him, he has no choice but to believe it!

“Is your family doing well? Touch your wife... You are a beast... Looks like master teachers like to speak in such a manner...”

Sun Qiang concluded based on his experience with the old master.

Putting aside this Du Miaoxuan, Ling Tianyu seemed to be the same as well. Back then, when he broke the jade lion, the billionaire was filled with rage. In the end, the old master simply asked ‘is your family doing well?’ before going ahead to request to touch the other party’s wife...

Looks like master teachers don’t like to go about doing things the normal way. Instead, they preferred to beat around the bush and exaggerate matters.

Yet, this method seemed to be extremely useful.

“Looks like these merchants and elders have to be dealt with the stick instead of the carrot. Un, maybe I should give it a try in the future?”

Sun Qiang’s eyes lit up.

In his view, the reason why Du Miaoxuan switched his attitude so quickly was because the old master got angry. Seems that in future, when he meets such people, he shouldn't act subserviently. Instead, he should speak imposingly and authoritatively.

Only through this way can he instill respect in the other party.

After all, wasn't Elder Du frightened to the point of kneeling down?

Sun Qiang's thoughts became increasingly fertile.

"Next time, when the old master isn't around, I should give it a try... If it really works, the old master's impression of me might improve..." Sun Qiang thought excitedly.

"Let them kneel!"

Not aware of what his butler had come up with in the blink of an eye, Zhang Xuan casually gestured.

"Old master, what do we do now?" Sun Qiang asked.

Zhang Xuan frowned.

That was also what he was thinking.

He couldn't just rely on the money others present to him in gratitude!

Taking Ling Tianyu as an example, even though he gave a million in a single go, Zhang Xuan is still a long way off from reaching twenty million. But if he were to open his mouth to request for money, it would be unbecoming of his identity as a master teacher. Others would simply label him as a fraud.

If he refused money and simply waited for others to thank him, how much could he earn?

What if the other party thought that he, as a master teacher, cared not for material wealth but instead valued relationships heavily, wouldn't he cry himself to death?

After contemplating for some time, Zhang Xuan spoke, "I will be going out for a moment. There's no need for you to follow me. Instead, you need to do something for me."

At which, Zhang Xuan explained his plan in detail to him.

“This... This...”

Hearing his words, the butler widened his eyes in shock.

This works too?

“Go!” Zhang Xuan explained no further and urged him along.

“Yes!”

After the previous few incidents, he understood that the old master has his reasons for doing things. Thus, he didn't ask excessively and turned around to leave. A short while later, he returned again.

Clearly, he had arranged everything that Zhang Xuan delegated him.

“If anyone comes knocking, have them wait at the door.” After instructing so, Zhang Xuan walked out of the mansion.

At the gates, he didn't even spare a glance at the kneeling Du Miaoxuan before walking away.

“Father...”

Seeing that Yang shi had no intentions of bothering himself with them, Du Yuan panicked and called his father.

Since the other party had already left, what use was it for him to be kneeling here?

“I am not doing this just to show Yang shi. This is also to display my determination on this matter and my reflection on my mistakes. If I were to leave now, I would probably be left stuck with my problem for life.” Knowing what his son was thinking of, Du Miaoxuan explained.

“I got it...”

Du Yuan lowered his head in depression.

For an elder of the Du Clan, an ex-contender for the clan head position to be kneeling in the middle of a street... What is this...

143 Fetching Money

“Did you hear? When Lord Ling sought the old master to treat his wife, he took out a million gold coins in one go, he sure is generous!”

At this moment, suppressed mutterings could be heard in the courtyard.

It appeared to be the guards of the mansion. After seeing the old master leave the mansion, they started to gossip among themselves.

“A million? Is that for real?” The other guard was clearly skeptical.

“Of course it’s real, I saw it myself. It is definitely real! A million gold coins might be an astronomical sum to us, but it means nothing to a master teacher like the old master. I heard Brother Sun say that the old master only accepted it to ease the other party’s mind. He didn’t want him to feel like he owed him a favor.” The first guard said.

“Now that you mention it, I recall that Lord Ling had also kneeled here for a night. Initially, the old master was unwilling to bother with him, but after he stuffed a sum to Brother Sun, Brother Sun, out of benevolence, helped to speak up for him, and only then did he manage to enter...” The second guard replied.

The words of the two were hushed, but they were separated by only a small gate from the street. Du Yuan’s cultivation realm was low, so he could be unable to hear their conversation clearly, but those words echoed in Du Miaoxuan’s ears distinctly.

“Yuan-er, get up. Return to the clan now and bring all my savings here...”

Du Miaoxuan’s eyes lit up.

He was streetwise and full of experience, but that was limited to sparring, battles and logical debates. In terms of bribery and

gifting, he was could not compare to a businessman. Previously, he hadn't thought of offering the other party money, but hearing those words, he was immediately enlightened.

That's right! Even though master teachers don't accept money because of their identity, butlers are willing to accept it!

The mansion, the servants, food, and drink; which of it didn't require money?

Even a physician had to be paid after consulting him. It would be weird if the other party was welcoming since he had come empty-handed.

“Alright!”

Du Yuan did not understand what was going on, but hearing father's words, he stood up immediately.

“I've heard that Brother Sun was reprimanded by the old master because of the matter. It seems that Lord Ling had offended the old master by doubting his identity previously. A master teacher's prestige must not be sullied. To plead with him using just a million gold coins, how would he be able to uphold his reputation in the future? The old master said that that was a one time off matter, and it mustn't happen again. Truthfully speaking, a million gold coins is truly like the heavens to us. Yet, to the old master, it wasn't even worth a plea!”

The first guard spoke.

“Indeed! When I passed by the front courtyard, I heard some people talking about it. I thought that they were lying...” The second one continued.

Outside.

“Wait a moment!” Before Du Yuan could leave, his father's voice echoed in his ear once more. “Dig out those precious pills that I bought recently and sell them all. Also, bring over those savage beast skins that I had accumulated over the years together with the money...”

“Father...” Du Yuan was taken aback.

What was going on with father?

Bringing the money, selling his possessions...

“Of course it’s real! I have asked Brother Sun on the matter personally. He said that when Lord Ling passed the million gold coins over, the old master didn’t even take a glance at it. The reason why he treated her was because Lord Ling’s wife was on the verge of death and saving someone brings one good karma. If the one who came over to plead with him was healthy, lively, and able to execute battle techniques, he definitely would ignore him...”

The voice of the first guard sounded.

“Ah?” Du Miaoxuan began to shake. Clenching his jaws, he continued to command Du Yuan, “Sell that sword of mine as well. Also... Wasn’t the Third Elder interested in taking over my businesses? Talk to him. As long as he is willing to pay, all of those businesses shall be his!”

“Father...”

Those were already father’s greatest chips within the clan. If he were to sell them all, what will happen in the future?

Du Yuan was stupefied.

“Hurry up!” Du Miaoxuan urged him.

Observing the stern expression on his father’s face, Du Yuan dared not to retort. He turned around to leave at once.

“The fact that he was able to execute a battle technique showed that his body is alright. He definitely has a screw loose to doubt a master teacher!” The second guard chastised. “Even though the old master didn’t care not for wealth, that person didn’t even bring a single gold coin with him. Without offering anything, he wanted the old master to exert effort to offer him pointers, wasn’t he daydreaming?”

Du Miaoxuan gritted his teeth. “Also, bring you and your mother’s savings over as well...”

“...”

Du Yuan staggered in his footsteps, nearly bursting into tears.

From the looks of it, his father's is already completely deranged.

.....

The conversation between the two guards was exactly what Zhang Xuan delegated Sun Qiang.

Without 'reminding' the other party, how long would it take for them to send the money over?

In any case, those were words of the guards and it had nothing to do with him at all. They did not dare to accuse a master teacher of being a money-grubber either.

"As expected of the old master. Even after doing someone in, he wants him to pay up..." Back when Sun Qiang received the task from the old master, he also was speechless.

From the very start, the other party would have given substantial rewards to the old master to thank him for offering him his guidance. However, it was uncertain how much the sum would be. After hearing the conversation between the two guards, who would dare to be stingy?

To be able to think of a way to earn more money without sullyng his prestige; to scam others without dirtyng his hands... Too scheming!

Initially, just like other people, he thought that the old master did not care for money. From the looks of it... A master teacher is still human and had their own expenses to upkeep.

.....

Leaving the residence and darting into a remote alley, Zhang Xuan removed his disguise completely.

It was exhausting to have kept the disguise on for the entire day.

"The guild should be done preparing the Meridian Rejuvenation Pill and the Body Nourishment Medicinal Solution. I should first get them for Wang Ying and Liu Yang!"

His purpose for disguising himself as a master teacher to earn money was for this. For the time being, he is unable to obtain the Unravel Yin Pill and the Colossal Rhinoceros Blood, but these other two items were easy to obtain.

Stepping into the Apothecary Guild, the two items were indeed ready. As for the remaining two, Guild Leader Ouyang had already sent an application and the headquarters would send it over from another branch.

Apothecary Guilds can be found in all large kingdoms. There were pills and treasures that Tianxuan Kingdom didn't possess, but that didn't mean that the other kingdoms didn't have them. As long as they send a request to the headquarters, the goods would be transported from the closest kingdom with stocks. This way, the delivery process was sped up. Otherwise, given how far the headquarter is from here, ten days are too short for them to bring it here!

Paying a million as a deposit, he obtained the two items successfully.

“Right, Guild Leader Ouyang, do you have Breath Forging Pills? Can you get me some?”

After housing the two objects in his storage ring, Zhang Xuan asked.

Breath Forging Pill is something extremely useful for Fighter 1-dan Juxi realm initiates. If Wang Ying and the others were to consume it, their training speed should be boosted significantly.

“I forged quite a bit of them previously and I still have a few remaining. I can give them to you right away!” Guild Leader Ouyang smiled and passed two jade bottles over.

Upon receiving the jade bottle, he looked inside and saw that there were dozens of pills in each bottle. Zhang Xuan understood that the other party was expressing his goodwill and it wasn't pleasant to reject him. As such, he nodded his head and accepted it.

Even though the quality of the Breath Forging Pill wasn't exceptionally high, it was nevertheless a grade-1 pill. Every

single pill costs tens of thousand, yet Guild Leader Ouyang shared dozens of them in a single go generously.

144 Spear Exper

If it were any other 1-star apothecaries, even if they were friends, it was impossible for him to be so generous. However, Zhang Xuan was simply too incredible. He was able to rival all the other apothecaries with his words and regardless of whether it was pill forging, herbs... He was perfect in nearly every single aspect, as though there was no way whatsoever to defeat him in the Pill Debate, leaving everyone speechless in his wake.

Relying on just this ability, he would surely be able to rise to incredible heights if granted sufficient time. This gesture of goodwill was, in a way, an investment for the future.

After keeping the Breath Forging Pills, Zhang Xuan suddenly recalled something and inquired, “Guild Leader Ouyang, do you know anywhere that sells secret manuals on spearmanship?”

Wang Ying had the Body Nourishing Medicinal Solution whereas Liu Yang had the Meridian Rejuvenation Pill. The Unravel Yin Pill and the Colossus Rhinoceros Blood had not arrived, but when Zhao Ya and Yuan Tao consume it and awaken their constitution, their cultivation realm would definitely soar significantly.

Of his five students, he only lacked a solution for Zheng Yang.

Zheng Yang specialized in the way of the spear, and Lu Xun had looked for someone who was even more proficient than him to be his opponent. If he doesn't search for some powerful moves to impart to him, he could possibly become the weakest link.

He had looked through the books in the teacher's Compendium Pavilion and there were some books on battle techniques, but very few relating to spears. That was also the reason why Wang Chao laoshi was so popular. Countless spear practitioners come applying to the academy in admiration of his name.

Since Wang Chao was able to ‘give’ Mo Xiao to Lu Xun, the two must share an exceptional relationship. In that case, it wasn’t a viable option for him to visit him to ask him about the way of the spear. At the same time, he did not know anything about the spear. Thus, he could only ask around to see if there were any secret manuals on spearmanship sold in the capital.

“Secret manuals on spearmanship? You wish to learn the way of the spear?” Guild Leader looked at Zhang Xuan in astonishment.

Apothecaries are highly esteemed in society. Instead of learning pill forging, why are you learning the way of the spear instead?

“Un!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

“Spearmanship is relatively uncommon compared to swordsmanship and there are significantly fewer people who learn it. There are even fewer who manage to become masters of the art. I just happen to be acquainted with one. His family heritage is of the spear and his skills are incredibly powerful and profound. He is famous for his spearmanship, even when considering the entire capital!”

Ouyang Cheng stroked his beard and chuckled.

“Oh? Can you bring me to learn from him?” Zhang Xuan’s eyes lit up.

“This person is often holed up inside his house, he rarely meets with outsiders and doesn’t easily impart his spearmanship to others. However, I am a good friend of his, so perhaps he might sell me this favor!”

Ouyang Cheng said.

“Then I’ll be troubling Guild Leader Ouyang for this.”

Knowing that the other party was trying to strike up connections, Zhang Xuan nodded his head and secretly decided to guide him in his pill forging whenever he gets the chance to.

“Let’s go, I’ll bring you to meet with this old friend of mine.”

Seeing that the other person understood his intent, Ouyang Cheng nodded his head in satisfaction.

After leaving the Apothecary Guild, the two of them walked for nearly an hour before arriving at a residence.

As Ouyang Cheng was good buddies with the master of the residence, the guards did not obstruct his path and they were able to enter the residence smoothly.

“Guild Leader Ouyang, please wait a moment. My old master is still training, he will be out in a moment!”

The butler brought them to a small gazebo and said.

“Un, it’ll do for him to look for me after he finishes his training!” Guild Leader Ouyang knew of the other party’s habits and gestured with his hand to show that he wasn’t bothered by it. Then, he beckoned to Zhang Xuan, “Apothecary Zhang, come and sit!”

“Alright!” Zhang Xuan sat down and surveyed the surroundings.

The courtyard was large and the renovations were simple but elegant, creating a tranquil atmosphere. There were no servants or attendants in sight in the entire courtyard. It seemed like the owner of the residence wasn’t an extravagant person.

“My friend is called Wang Chong. We were acquainted over twenty years ago and he had immersed himself in the way of the spear for his entire life. In terms of spearmanship, he is definitely one of the top figures in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom. Emperor Shen Zhui had even once complimented his as spearmanship as peerless.”

Sipping on his tea, Ouyang Cheng introduced the owner of the residence.

“Incredible!” Zhang Xuan had always held respect toward those who were able to reach the pinnacle of their occupation.

Regardless of the occupation, to be able to emerge on top of thousands and thousands of people showed their determination and talent.

“Old Ouyang, are you talking bad about me behind my back again?”

Halfway through their conversation, a bright voice sounded. Then, an elderly walked over with widened strides.

Even though he looked fifty or so, his body nevertheless appeared to be brimming with strength, as though he had a boundless supply of energy. He was dressed in a training robe and grabbed a spear in one hand. Just like the butler said, he was probably in the midst of his training and came over without even changing his clothes.

“Talking bad behind your bad? I’m not that bored so as to do so!” Ouyang Cheng stood up smiling.

Judging from their tones, Zhang Xuan could tell that they were close friends.

“That’s more like it. How do you have the time to look for me today?” Wang Chong stepped into the gazebo and caught sight of Zhang Xuan. Perplexed, he asked, “Is this your junior?”

“Cough cough!” Ouyang Cheng nearly spat his tea out. An awkward expression appeared on his face.

The heck he is my junior!

I want to fawn over him so that he can guide me with my pill forging. You saying that he is my junior nearly sent all of my efforts down the drain...

Secretly sneaking Zhang Xuan a glance and confirming that he wasn’t angry, he heaved a sigh of relief. Afraid that his old friend would say anything worse, he hurriedly introduced, “Let me introduce you to him. This is the newest 1-star apothecary of our guild, Zhang Xuan!”

“1-star apothecary?”

Wang Chong was surprised for a moment before feeling shocked.

As an old friend of Ouyang Cheng, he knew very well how difficult the apothecary examination was. Seeing how young the other party was, he initially thought that Zhang Xuan was

Ouyang Cheng's junior. The thought that he was an official apothecary didn't even occur to him.

It was something inconceivable to him.

Even the butler by the side was astonished.

“Not just so, Apothecary Zhang got promoted through Pill Debate. Singlehandedly, he left ten apothecaries speechless. In the field of pill forging, there isn't a single person in the entire capital who is more knowledgeable than him!”

Ouyang Cheng continued.

“Pill Debate?” Wang Chong was flabbergasted.

Even though he wasn't an apothecary, he had heard of such an examination method from Guild Leader Ouyang's himself. For a fellow who wasn't even twenty years of age to become an apothecary through Pill Debate, even though the fact was lying right before him, he found it difficult to accept.

“Guild Leader Ouyang is being too generous, I just happen to possess a little bit of knowledge. In terms of pill forging, I am still a rookie...”

Zhang Xuan hurriedly said.

He was speaking of the truth. The reason why he was able to succeed in the Pill Debate was because of the Library of Heaven's Path. If he were to really dabble in pill forging, it was likely that he would be unable to forge even the easiest pills.

The three men chatted for awhile longer after that. Zhang Xuan knew that Ouyang Cheng was complimenting him before Wang Chong intentionally to leave a good impression of him on Wang Chong. This way, it would be more likely for the Wang Chong to impart him the way of the spear.

Indeed, after the banter, Ouyang Cheng smiled, “Actually, I have something I need to trouble you with!”

“Oh?” Wang Chong's looked at Ouyang Cheng.

“It's like that. Apothecary Zhang highly appreciates the way of the spear. If Brother Wang has the time, you two can exchange

views!”

Ouyang Cheng said.

“Oh? So Apothecary Zhang is a spear expert as well? That’s great...”

Hearing those words, Wang Chong’s eyes lit up in excitement.

He was a spear fanatic and loved pitting himself against other spear experts. For Zhang Xuan to have become an official apothecary at such a young age, he probably possessed superior talent. How could he not be excited to spar with him?

“I... Cough cough, I have never learned spearmanship before...”

Upon seeing that the other party was determined to duel with him, an awkward look appeared on Zhang Xuan’s face.

145 Heaven's Path Spear Ar

His previous self had expended all of his effort and attention into raising his cultivation realm, allowing him to reach the Zhenqi realm at an exceptionally young age. As such, he had never come into contact with spearmanship.

Naturally, the current him who was a true-blue earthling had never come into contact with it either.

“Have never learned before?” Wang Chong was taken aback.

If he had never learned spearmanship, what views could they exchange?

A strange expression also appeared on Ouyang Cheng's face.

Hearing that Zhang Xuan wanted to learn spearmanship, he thought that he possessed at least a certain level of foundation in the art. That was also the reason why he termed it exchanging views instead of learning from him. In that way, Zhang Xuan would be able to retain some dignity, just... To think that he had never learned spearmanship!

Awkward!

If only he knew that he hadn't learned spearmanship previously, he would have just directed him to any random spearmanship teacher. There wouldn't be a need to trouble his old friend.

“The situation is like this. I have a student who wants to study spearmanship, so I would like to learn a few moves now and teach him...” Seeing that everyone's gaze was on him, Zhang Xuan could only reveal his motive.

“Learn a few moves now? Teach someone else?” Wang Chong staggered backward and nearly fainted from astonishment.

Are you joking?

As the saying goes, a month with the stave, a year with the saber, and a lifetime with the spear!

Countless people had embarked on spearmanship from young, only to be unable to become a true initiate for their entire life. You haven't even learned the slightest thing, yet you intend to teach your student...

Aren't you being too gutsy? Or do you think that spearmanship is easy?

In an instant, Wang Chong's face darkened. The favorable impression he had of Zhang Xuan fell apart.

He had been training in the way of the spear for his entire life and already regarded the spear as an essential part of his life. He hated it when others belittled his art. Yet, this fellow hadn't even learned a single about it but intended to go about muddling his students... That was truly an insult to the way of the spear!

If not for his respect for the other party's identity as a 1-star apothecary and for his old friend Ouyang's dignity, he would have thrown him out.

Suppressing his displeasure, he stated, "Spearmanship is hard to practice and learn. It is an impossible task to achieve anything significant in a short period of time. If you were to teach others without fully grasping the art, it is likely that you misguide them!"

His voice was steeled.

"Er..." Noticing the displeasure on the other party's face, Zhang Xuan knew that it was probably impossible for him to learn spearmanship directly from the other party. After a moment of hesitation, he asked, "How about this, does Brother Wang have any books regarding spearmanship here? If so, can you allow me to browse through them?"

"Browse through books?" Wang Chong frowned.

Spearmanship is a type of battle technique and every single movement requires the guidance and correction of an expert, as well as the refinement over a lengthy period of time. If one could learn that easily by reading books, one wouldn't have to train that hard.

However, even though he was skeptical of Zhang Xuan's purpose, upon witnessing him give up on his previous intentions, he heaved a sigh of relief and said, "Sure, I have a lot of such books here. It is also good for you to learn about how profound spearmanship is so that you won't be so reckless. I'll bring you over!"

As a spear master, nearly every single book on spearmanship that was in the kingdom was in his possession. As long as his family's secret spear technique wasn't leaked, it wasn't really a big deal for him to allow outsiders to browse through those fundamental books.

"Thank you!"

Zhang Xuan hurriedly nodded his head.

Spear arts, just like all other battle techniques, needed long hours of refinement in order for the form and the essence of the skill to shine through. However, Zhang Xuan was different. As long as he had sufficient books, he was able to create a powerful and concise spear art that was easy to learn.

"This is my study. I have almost all spear related books in Tianxuan Kingdom in here, as well as some exclusive collections!"

As the trio reached the study, Wang Chong gestured majestically with a proud expression.

He had paid quite a hefty sum to gather all of these books. These books had also helped to augment his spearmanship, bringing it to greater heights.

Looking inward, Zhang Xuan saw seven to eight entire bookshelves filled with all kinds of books elaborating on every single aspect of spearmanship.

"Ouyang, it has been long since you last came. Let's go grab a drink!"

Knowing that Zhang Xuan would take some time to read through some books, Wang Chong did not intend to wait here for him. Instead, he beckoned Ouyang Cheng toward another room.

“Alright!” Ouyang Cheng said and the two of them walked out.

“I should begin!”

Watching them leave, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief, walked up to a bookshelf and started flipping through the books.

Hualalala!

The sound of books flipping started to echo in the room and all sort of books on spearmanship formed in his mind.

Some of these books were on the very fundamentals, some of them detailed common moves and some of them were just basic introductions... All in all, there were truly all kinds of books on spearmanship that one could possibly imagine in here.

As expected of a spear master, his collection was truly abundant.

Flipping through the books continuously, he soon imprinted into his mind all the eight bookshelves of books in the study, which added up to a total of a few thousand books, within an hour.

Standing quietly on the spot, Zhang Xuan started to digest the newly compiled books in his mind.

“The correct training method...”

His mind jolted and all of the books on spearmanship melded together to form a single book before him.

He started flipping through it.

“Weapons are an extension of the arm. Only by training it to become a part of your arm can one be considered to be a true initiate. Spearmanship is the same as well...”

The spear art created by the Library of Heaven’s Path through compiling so many books was incredibly profound and gave one the feeling of enlightenment. While looking through it, Zhang Xuan used his finger in place of a spear to practice its moves.

Huhuhu!

From time to time, with the augmentation of zhenqi, his finger would pierce through the air menacingly. It was as though his body had become the spear itself, and at any moment now, he would pierce through the heavens.

The spear was termed as the king of weapons. To become a true expert, one had to have the disposition of one capable of piercing through the heavens.

Without numerous storms and the accumulation of experiences over time, it was impossible to forge such a disposition!

If someone were to notice the current Zhang Xuan, they would definitely yell in exclamation.

That was because the current Zhang Xuan already possessed the disposition. Even though it couldn't be determined whether his spearmanship had reached a high level of mastery, just the aura he was exuding was sufficient to crush the confidence of countless cultivators, destroying their will to fight.

Fully immersed in the book, Zhang Xuan was completely oblivious to these changes. Instead, he continued emulating the movements with his hands.

Tzzzzz!

Burst after burst of zhenqi shot out along the trajectory of his fingers and impacted the floor, creating countless holes on it.

It was fortunate that he had kept his strength in check. Otherwise, Wang Chong's study would probably be wrecked just like Master Lu Chen's.

After an unknown period of time, Zhang Xuan finally stopped and exhaled turbid air.

"I'm already done cultivating it?"

His eyes lit up.

In just a moment's time, he had already practiced the entire sequence of the spear art compiled in the library once.

"I'll call it Heaven's Path Spear Art!"

Weng!

The book jolted and a name appeared on it... Heaven's Path Spear Art!

"It's a pity that there are too few books and too many mistakes in them. I only managed to create a single move!"

Zhang Xuan lamented.

The books were all on the basics of spearmanship. The Library of Heaven's Path compiled all of the correct theories and created a spear art from it.

"I wonder to what extent will this move augment my strength, and how much strength I would be able to execute through it!"

Even though it was just a single move, he knew that it was impossible for it to be anything simple, especially after experiencing the Heaven's Path Divine Art and the Heaven's Path Golden Body.

His fighting prowess would definitely be boosted significantly if he were to execute it.

"I'll impart this to Zheng Yang when I return!"

The reason why he was here specially to learn spear art was so that he could impart it to Zheng Yang. Even though it was just a single move, at the very least, the journey he made here wasn't in vain.

It could be imagined that if Zheng Yang were to fully grasp the skill, his spearmanship would definitely improve by leaps and bounds. By then, defeating that Mo Xiao wouldn't pose any problem.

All that came from the Heaven's Path had to be exceptional. There was no doubt about this.

"Time to go!"

After reading all the books and obtaining what he wanted, Zhang Xuan did not dawdle in the study excessively and walked out with big strides.

146 Spear Inten

Under the gazebo, Wang Chong and Ouyang Chong were seated across one another, drinking.

“You say that this Apothecary Zhang... passed the Pill Debate examination?”

Even until now, Wang Chong found it hard to believe.

Pill Debate is virtually a special privilege for master teachers, something that is meant for only the very best. Yet, a young man who wasn't even twenty managed to pass this examination. Even though he was hearing it firsthand from a reliable source, he nevertheless dares not to believe it to be possible.

“Indeed, Apothecary Zhang's knowledge on herbs and pills is superior even to that of mine. He is bound to reach great heights!” Ouyang Cheng couldn't help but be impressed whenever he recalled Zhang Xuan's deeds.

“Even though he is incredible in pills and herbs, his understanding of the spear is too shallow. Spearmanship isn't a game, one can't learn just by looking. If it were that easy, I wouldn't have had to immerse myself in it for my whole life thus far.”

Wang Chong's face shone with pride and overwhelming confidence reflected in his eyes.

“Indeed, the spear is the most complicated among all weapons. How could it be easy to achieve mastery?”

Of the numerous weapons, the spear was the hardest weapon to master. Countless cultivators had taken on the challenge only to end up locked out of the gates of success.

Sighing, Ouyang Cheng suddenly remembered something and glanced at Wang Chong, “There aren't any exclusive spear art secret manuals in your study, are there?”

He brought Zhang Xuan here. If his old friend were to accidentally reveal some family heirloom secret manuals to him, he truly would have to feel apologetic.

“Of course not. The spear arts that I created, as well as my family’s secret manuals, are all kept in my mind. They are only passed down by word, other people are unable to learn it even if they wanted to!”

Wang Chong chuckled, “Those that are in the study are all regarding the basics and fundamentals of spearmanship. It is useful for those who have just come into contact with the spear. It’s not a big deal to allow Apothecary Zhang to browse through them. Besides, letting him read through them is a good idea, he should realize how difficult spearmanship is and drop his immature thoughts!”

To be thinking about teaching spearmanship when you know nothing at all, what a joke!

If spearmanship were that easy, he wouldn’t have possessed the fame that he has now, such that even Emperor Shen Zhui complimented him personally.

The Spear Master wasn’t a title that came out of nowhere.

For this matter, he had absolute confidence and pride!

“Indeed...” Ouyang Cheng nodded his head.

There isn’t a single weapon or battle technique that can be mastered easily. They require continuous training to refine every single move to the very perfection. If it could be grasped that easily, experts would be worth nothing at all.

“Apothecary Zhang is still young and it is natural for him to be ambitious. After he’s done browsing through those books, I will reveal a spear art to him so that he would realize the difficulty and give up on those ludicrous thoughts!”

Even though Wang Chong was unsatisfied with Zhang Xuan’s actions, he dared not to underestimate him, especially after knowing his talent in pill forging.

“Alright, I guess he should probably give up after that and focus on pill forging. I am still looking forward to our first 2-

star apothecary in our Apothecary Guild...”

Ouyang Cheng chuckled. Just as he was about to continue speaking, he saw Wang Chong’s body stiffen abruptly before trembling uncontrollably.

Dang lang!

He was oblivious to the fact that the wine cup he held in his hand had dropped to the floor and shattered into pieces.

“Wang Chong...”

Looking at the spear master, whose strength was top-notch in the entire Tianxuan City, acting so strangely all of the sudden, Ouyang Cheng was horrified.

He had never heard that his old friend was sick!

Why did he start convulsing all of the sudden?

“It’s Spear Intent, Spear Intent!”

Just when he was considering what pill he should pop into his friend’s mouth to save him, the latter suddenly recovered. His eyes glowed as though a priceless treasure was right before him.

“Spear Intent? What is that?”

Seeing that he was fine, Ouyang Cheng heaved a sigh of relief and looked at him curiously.

What could it be, for it to be able to make his friend, who was as steady as a mountain, behave in such a manner?

“Those who reach a certain level of mastery in the sword can form the Sword Intent. Similarly, those who are able to exude Spear Intent are the true spear masters. These few years, the reason why I had confined myself to the residence was so that I can temper my mind to enter such a state. However, it is a pity that I had been unable to achieve a breakthrough... When did such an expert appear in the residence? Or did someone manage to achieve a breakthrough before I did? Let’s go over to take a look!”

He stood up abruptly and proceeded toward the origin of the Spear Intent.

After developing Spear Intent, whatever one did with the spear would be a spear art.

He had always strived for this goal, but he had managed to find the way. He never imagined that someone who could form Spear Intent would suddenly appear in his residence. Who could it be?

The two of them rushed toward the source of Spear Intent. On the way, they happened to see Zhang Xuan strolling leisurely out of the study.

“Where is he?” Before Zhang Xuan could say anything, Wang Chong asked hurriedly.

“He? Who do you mean?” Zhang Xuan had no idea what the other party was talking about.

He had been immersed in reading and practicing the Heaven’s Path Spear Art, so he hadn’t paid much attention to the situation outside. What happened? Did an enemy invade?

“I felt an astonishing wave of Spear Intent here, why is there no one?”

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was clueless, Wang Chong looked around hastily. However, the surrounding was completely empty and there weren’t any other people in sight.

“Could it be that you’ve been thinking of it so much that you began to imagine things?” Ouyang Cheng asked.

His old friend had been dreaming about Spear Intent day and night. Could it be that his longing had finally turned into delusions?

Otherwise, why was he unable to sense anything himself?

“At my level, I am just a step away from forming Spear Intent. Just a moment ago, I had clearly felt a Spear Intent surging into the skies. I am positive of that!”

Wang Chong was very confident.

He had been exploring the secrets of the spear everyday fanatically, and it would be truly embarrassing if he had mistaken Spear Intent as something else.

“Wait, wait. What is that Spear Intent you both are talking about?”

Looking at the heated discussion between the two, Zhang Xuan could not hold back his curiosity.

All the books that he had read were on the bare fundamentals. Spear Intent is an extremely advanced topic and it wasn't recorded in any of the books. As such, Zhang Xuan was ignorant.

“Spear Intent is a special state of mind which a practitioner can reach only if his understanding of the spear reaches the extreme...”

Wang Chong tried explaining before shaking his head, “You have never learned spearmanship. You won't understand it even if I explain it to you...”

Even though the other party did not go into details, Zhang Xuan got a brief grasp on the situation. “So, the reason why you are looking around here is because someone had released Spear Intent here just a moment ago?”

“I'm not very sure as well. I felt it vaguely just now and it should be in the vicinity...” Wang Chong nodded his head.

The appearance of the Spear Intent was only for the briefest moment, as though a flash of lightning. Even Wang Chong could only sense it vaguely, and as such, he was unable to ascertain the exact location. Otherwise, he would have rushed forward directly rather than to stay distressed over here.

“Right, you were here just now. You should be clear about where the person is!”

Suddenly recalling something, Wang Chong turned around to look at him with glowing eyes.

He was a distance away, so he was unable to sense the exact location. However, Apothecary Zhang had been here all along. With his help, he would surely be able to find the master!

At the very least, after they confirm the location, they would know whether the person is a member of the clan or an outsider.

As a clan specializing in spear, all members of the clan immersed themselves in the way of the spear. Even the guards were skilled in spearmanship. Even though Wang Chong could summon all of the guards here to question them one by one, if the person in question simply kept mum or was unaware of it himself, it would be much simpler to pinpoint the exact location.

“But... I don't know what Spear Intent is?” Zhang Xuan hesitated.

“That's simple. Even though I have yet to fully comprehend Spear Intent, I am able to imitate with it a 70% to 80% likeness. It should feel something like this!”

Wang Chong exerted and a sharp piercing aura gushed straight toward Zhang Xuan. It felt as though it was capable of piercing through anything.

“So this is Spear Intent?” A bizarre expression appeared on Zhang Xuan's face.

“Indeed, it should feel something like this. Do you know where it came from?” Dispelling the aura, sweat droplets streamed down Wang Chong's forehead. Still gasping for air, he inquired.

Even though he only imitated the aura for a brief moment, it took a toll on his body and weakened him.

“This...” Zhang Xuan felt slightly embarrassed. “Is the Spear Intent you spoke of... this?”

The next instant, Zhang Xuan's entire body seemed to have turned into a spear and exuded a frighteningly piercing aura, as though he would pierce through the heavens at any moment.

Contrasting the two, Wang Chong's Spear Intent was like a blade of grass before a towering ancient tree.

Incomparable.

147 Can I Learn From You?

“Ah? Spear... Spear Intent?”

Wang Chong’s body swayed and he nearly fainted.

Are you for real?

How can you display Spear Intent? Furthermore, such a pure Spear Intent!

He was astonished. Noticing Zhang Xuan’s embarrassed look, he nearly threw up blood.

Embarrassed? Embarrassed your head!

Brother, can you not fool others like that? Didn’t you say that you never learned the way of the spear? Didn’t you say that you didn’t know what spear arts were?

I have started learning the way of the spear since eight and I had spent forty years since then dedicating my life to it. Even so, I am still a long way from achieving Spear Intent... Can you explain to me roughly, what is with that overwhelming Spear Intent of yours?

Didn’t you say that you do not know what Spear Intent is? Then what in the world is this?

Tears streamed down Wang Cong’s face.

You shouldn’t play with someone like that!

It was laughable that he had reprimanded the other party so brazenly earlier on, saying that he wouldn’t understand it even if he explained it...

Where did this self-confidence come from?

Or rather, the one who didn’t understand was he himself...

He hated the fact that there wasn’t a hole here for him to dive into.

“This is Spear Intent?”

Ouyang Cheng was stunned.

Right after displaying a moment of Spear Intent, his old friend was already sweating profusely and panting for air, as though he had been constipated for a few days straight. Yet, this fellow was able to execute it easily as and when he liked, as though it were merely eating and drinking...

Are you the spear master, or Wang Chong is?

“You... Didn’t you say that you have never learned about spears?”

Overwhelmed with shock, Ouyang Cheng asked. Wang Chong also hurriedly shifted his attention to hear how the other party would explain it.

“It is true that I haven’t learned it before!” Zhang Xuan replied truthfully.

“If you have never learned it before, how can you have such a powerful Spear Intent?” Wang Chong was about to go mad.

If you were able to display such powerful Spear Intent without any prior experience, given my achievement despite how I have spent my life immersing myself in the art, I must have been spending my time on learning nonsense...

“Oh, I was just reading the books in the study and an epiphany struck me. I realized that executing spear art in this form felt the most comfortable, so I got into the form. I didn’t know that this is Spear Intent!”

Zhang Xuan said after a short moment of contemplation.

Zhang Xuan wasn’t trying to feign ignorance. Rather, the books in the study were truly only about the very basics of spearmanship, so there wasn’t a single one that detailed Spear Intent. He only happened to grow such a disposition due to the Heaven’s Path Spear Art formed through these books.

As for how Spear Intent could be used and how useful it was to a spear wielder, he had no idea at all.

Wang Chong’s tears continued streaming down his face.

You described it as though it were as easy as eating and drinking, do you know how much effort I have put into the matter, only to fail time and time again?

For the past decade, I had been building my mental fortitude, entering desolate lands, overcoming the frost and withstanding the heat. Even so, I have yet to succeed. Yet, you simply came to the study, read some books and unintentionally... managed to reach such a level!

My heart! My liver! My youth!

If there were a huge pit before him, he would have definitely jumped in to bury himself alive.

Can you not destroy my confidence like that?

If you said that you had put in a lot of effort, trained daily and simply happened to achieve a breakthrough, I would feel a little better. But you have only spent two hours reading through books, and... and yet you have already achieved a breakthrough...

Furthermore, what you were reading weren't profound secret manuals. They were just elementary books on spearmanship...

If word were to spread out, all spear masters in the capital would definitely die from shame.

"Wang Chong, humans aren't born with equal talents. Perhaps, Apothecary Zhang... may truly be gifted in the way of the spear!" Seeing his despondent old friend who had been struck a heavy blow, Ouyang Cheng tried to console him.

"Alright, I can only take it as that!"

As expected of an expert spear practitioner, he had already forged his will to become as resilient as steel. Even though he was dispirited, he soon readjusted his mental state. Just as he was about to speak, he heard a young man's perplexed voice echo in the air.

"You say that I have comprehended Spear Intent, but what does Spear Intent do?"

Wang Chong's staggered once more. Enduring his crumbling heart, he explained, "Spear Intent refers to one's understanding of the spear; reaching Spear Intent means that the spear has already become an extension of the practitioner's arms. Under such a state, any movement he makes can be considered as a

spear art. This is something that can only be achieved when one reaches the pinnacle of spearmanship!”

“Any movement made can be considered as spear art?” Zhang Xuan’s eyes lit up. “Great! If my student can comprehend Spear Intent, he would be able to achieve victory in the Freshmen Tournament!”

Since Spear Intent is that formidable, Zhang Xuan decided to give Zheng Yang a good lesson when he returned. As long as he is able to achieve such a state, even if he didn’t possess profound spear arts in his arsenal, it is unlikely for him to lose to his opponent.

“You want to help your student comprehend it as well?” Wang Chong trembled.

Spear Intent is a person’s understanding toward the spear. Do you think that everyone is as overpowered as you so as to be able to achieve a breakthrough just by looking at some books?

He wanted to convince the other party to drop the idea, but he didn’t know where he should start from.

“Right, I have learned a technique when I was looking through the books earlier back, but I have no idea how powerful it would be. Since Brother Wang is a spear master, can you offer me some pointers?”

Zhang Xuan had no concept of Spear Intent, so he wasn’t as shocked as the other party. Recalling the move that the Heaven’s Path Library created, he couldn’t help but speak up.

The person before him was a renowned spear master in the entire kingdom. He would definitely be able to point out the strengths and weaknesses of the move.

“You even comprehended a technique? Fine, I am also interested to see what kind of move a genius like you is able to comprehend!”

Wang Chong nodded his head and sent a subordinate to fetch a spear over.

Soon, he returned carrying two spears.

“The best way to test the strength of a move is through sparring! Apothecary Zhang, show me the move you have just comprehended!” It was as though Wang Chong had transformed the moment a spear was grasped in his hands. His aura was ferocious, as though a savage ancient beast had awakened from his sleep.

In his view, even though the other party had comprehended Spear Intent, his absolute strength and ability to wield the spear should still be inferior to him. Even if the other party has any special moves, he should be able to handle it with ease.

“Alright!” It just happened that Zhang Xuan wanted to try out his move. Thus, he casually grabbed the other spear.

He had never once grabbed a spear in his life. However, after comprehending Spear Intent, the spear felt like a perfect fit in his hands.

“Let’s begin!”

The moment Zhang Xuan felt so, his aura evolved immediately, as though the ordinary young man from before had become a domineering conqueror.

Hu!

Charging forward, his spear shot out explosively from his palms.

This technique was something he created after compiling the essence of thousands of manuals. All of the complexities had been simplified into this one single concise move. The zhenqi in his entire body churned and the spear flew out as though a massive rising from the ocean, soaring into the skies.

“What?”

Initially, he didn’t pay much heed to Wang Chong, but upon witnessing the spear piercing straight at him, goosebumps were raised on his body immediately and he was almost scared witless.

The move may look simple, inelegant and even ugly, but it focused all of the cultivator’s strength and spirit into a single point. This... This... This was supreme spear art!

Boom!

Without much time to think, Wang Chong's exerted all his strength in one stroke and met Zhang Xuan's blow with one of his own.

Unleashing his full strength, his cultivation realm was also revealed... Fighter 7-dan, Tongxuan realm!

Ding!

The two spears met in the air and a massive shock wave was generated, sending intense gusts to the surroundings.

Deng deng deng deng!

Zhang Xuan retreated seven to eight steps before stopping. On the other hand, Wang Chong was still rooted to his spot.

It was clear who the victor was in the simple face-off.

Zhang Xuan didn't use his full strength. He had limited it to 40 ding and naturally, wouldn't be able to withstand a full strength attack by a Tongxuan realm advanced stage expert.

However, due to the incredible resilience of his body and his pure zhenqi, even though he was forced back, he wasn't injured at all.

"As expected of a spear master, incredible!"

Seeing that the other party had managed to easily deal with a move derived by the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan was impressed.

On the other hand, Wang Chong nearly fainted from fear.

The other party's seemingly simple spear art had forced him to execute his trump card. Furthermore... Even though he didn't retreat a single step and it looked as though he had the upper hand, there was a dull pain in his chest and his blood flow had become erratic. He had been wounded considerably in the face-off.

If not for him suppressing forcefully, he would have spurted a mouthful of blood.

No matter what, he was a Tongxuan realm advanced stage expert... For him to be unable to match up to a Pixue realm opponent... It was a difference of an entire cultivation realm between them.

Normally, it would be impossible for one to defeat an opponent who had a higher cultivation realm.

It was hard to tell what he would think if he were to know that the young man before him had only used half of his strength in this face-off.

“This move is truly incredible...”

After taking a long time to adjust his breathing, Wang Chong couldn't help but compliment.

The move was simply too amazing!

He had always thought that he was a genius, and he had also created quite a few spear techniques. However, compared to this move, they were all trash. The difference between the two was like comparing dirt to gem.

“That's great. I want to impart this move to my student. Can Brother Wang offer me some pointers so that I can improve it?”

Zhang Xuan asked.

“Pointers...” Wang Chong's face flushed.

Apothecary Zhang, are you here to slap my face?

Putting aside the fact that you have achieved Spear Intent and that every single move of yours is a spear art, this move... I can't even comprehend the move, how can I offer you pointers?

Even though he was a spear master, he wasn't able to tell how his opponent executed the move and how the attack came at him... He felt so embarrassed that he could commit suicide.

“This move... has no problems. You can impart it to your student like this!”

After saying those words, Wang Chong's face felt a burning sensation on his face.

An hour ago, he had thought that the young man didn't understand spearmanship, and that he was insulting the way of the spear. But now... He felt that he was the one insulting the way of the spear.

The other party had only read two hours of books, and not only did he comprehend Spear Intent, he had even created such an incredible technique. On the other hand, he had practiced spearmanship for more than forty years, but had only reached such a nonsensical level...

In an instant, he felt blood welling up in his chest, ready to spurt out at any moment.

After the embarrassment, a daring thought suddenly emerged in his mind.

The essence of the other party's technique was to concentrate one's entire strength to one single point. In this aspect, it resembled Spear Intent greatly. If he were to learn the move, he might be able to break through the final barrier obstructing him and achieve Spear Intent.

"Apothecary Zhang, can you... teach me this move?"

After a moment of hesitation, he asked red-faced.

"You wish to learn? Sure, I can teach you!"

After a moment of surprise, Zhang Xuan agreed to his request with a smile.

Hearing the conversation between the two, Ouyang Cheng staggered.

Wasn't Zhang Xuan the one who came here today to learn spearmanship from Wang Chong?

How did... their roles... get swapped?

148 Student Dueling Platform

Without the Heaven's Path Divine Art to complement the Heaven's Path Spear Art, even if the other party learned it, it would be significantly weaker than his.

Furthermore, it was a move he had devised through the other party's books, so teaching the other party wasn't a big deal.

Thus, Zhang Xuan agreed to Wang Chong's request without much hesitation.

Of course, it was impossible for him to impart him the full version. After all, the Heaven's Path Spear Art was too fearsome. It would be unparalleled even if he were to just impart a portion of it.

“I...”

Wang Chong had raised this request without harboring much hope. Upon hearing Zhang Xuan agree to it, his entire body trembled in agitation and his eyes reddened.

Experts usually only imparted the moves they created to their children and disciple, never allowing it to leak out. Putting others aside, he was one of them as well. Other than his son, he had never taught anyone else the moves that he had created.

Yet, Apothecary Zhang was willing to impart such a profound move to him so easily. This magnanimity and personality...

“This move is extremely profound, I can't learn it for free...”
Hesitating for a moment, Wang Chong said.

Even though the other party was willing to impart him the move, it wasn't appropriate for him to take something without giving anything back in return.

It was just like how one had to send betrothal gifts when marrying other's daughter. How could there be free lunch in this world?

“Apothecary Zhang is lacking gold coins to purchase some pills. I think it would be best for you to pay him some money to serve as the tuition fee!” Ouyang Cheng interjected.

Zhang Xuan had yet to pay him for the pills he had bought in his stead. He knew the other party was definitely looking for a way to earn money to repay him, and since his old friend wished to repay the favor, it was best for him to simply give Zhang Xuan money.

Furthermore, after imparting the battle technique to Wang Chong, Zhang Xuan would be considered as half a teacher to Wang Cong. If Zhang Xuan turned out to be very demanding thereafter, he might be unable to repay this favor and this would put him in a very difficult position.

Putting others aside, what if Zhang Xuan wanted to learn the spear arts Wang Chong had created... Should he teach it to him?

“Alright!”

Understanding the intentions behind his old friend’s words, Wang Chong hurriedly nodded his head. He turned around to delegate some tasks to the butler.

Not long later, the butler came in with a stack of bills and passed it over to Zhang Xuan.

“This is the tuition fee. I hope that Apothecary Zhang can accept it. It would be inappropriate for me to learn your spear art for free...”

“Hm?” Zhang Xuan’s eyes widened.

Am I dreaming?

I came here to learn spear art, but... why did I become the one teaching... Furthermore, I am even earning money?

However, Zhang Xuan found it hard to reject his money, looking at that stack of bills which was worth at least two million.

Upon keeping the money, Zhang Xuan began to display the technique slowly and explained the concept and workings behind it in detail.

As expected of a spear master, although Wang Chong had not yet achieved Spear Intent, his knowledge of spears had already permeated deep into his bones. With a single demonstration, he had already almost fully grasped the concept. Even though his might was still far from Zhang Xuan's original version, there were no problem with his form and his movements.

“Apothecary Zhang, thank you for imparting me the move!”

Only after learning this move did Wang Chong truly understand how powerful it was. He was astounded by its might. He could already foresee that if he were to continue practicing the skill, in less than a year, he would be able to achieve Spear Intent and grow even stronger.

Regardless of whether he had paid the school fee or not, Zhang Xuan had already become half a teacher to him.

By ‘half a teacher’, it meant that one had learned a move or two from another person, or had been granted pointers from him.

Since he had already grasped the move, there was no need for Zhang Xuan to remain here. Along with Ouyang Cheng, he bided farewell and left.

“Guild Leader Ouyang, help me keep an eye on those pills. I will claim them from you when the time comes!”

Leaving Spear Master Wang Chong's residence, Zhang Xuan said.

“Rest easy!” Ouyang Cheng nodded his head.

Previously, he simply thought that as long as this young man studied diligently, he could become the first 2-star apothecary of Tianxuan Kingdom. However, such thoughts had vanished altogether from his mind.

From a complete beginner, just by reading two hours of books, he was able to easily create a move that even Wang Chong revered, furthermore achieving Spear Intent... Such a person would surely strike it big and his name would ring across the world.

“Return to the academy!”

The Body Nourishment Medicinal Solution and Meridian Rejuvenation Pill were already in his possession, so he thought that he should pass them over to his students so that they could cultivate even faster.

After bidding Ouyang Cheng farewell, he returned to his classroom swiftly. However, when he arrived, he only saw Wang Ying in the classroom; the rest were absent.

“Where are the others?”

Zhang Xuan frowned.

He had been finding all means to help them raise their strength swiftly, yet this bunch of fellows didn't even come for training.

“They... They...”

Not expecting Zhang laoshi to appear at such a moment, Wang Ying was terrified. Cowering backward in fear, she stuttered.

Zhang laoshi had said when he left class yesterday that he would be busy, and he might be unable to make it for lessons for the time being. Why is he back so soon?

“Speak!”

Zhang Xuan's complexion darkened.

In order to awaken their unique constitution and heal their wounds, he went through the trouble of undertaking the apothecary examination and disguised himself as a master teacher. Yet, they were skipping out on lessons. He was truly infuriated.

If he knew that this would happen, he would never have bothered expending such effort on them. Was he giving them dowry?

If students didn't working hard themselves, no matter how much assistance the teacher provides them, it would still be difficult for them to achieve great heights in the future. After all, rotten mud would just slide down no matter how high you carry them up.

The more he thought about it, the angrier he got. At the point, Zhang Xuan's face was completely cold.

"Teacher..." Wang Ying shivered.

She had a weak character, and upon seeing Zhang laoshi's rage, she was scared speechless.

Jiyaa!

At this point, the door opened. Before anyone could walk in, a voice echoed, "Wang Ying, hurry up and come. They have started fighting..."

Halfway through his words, the owner of the voice saw the icy-faced Zhang Xuan and the remaining words cluttered in his throats.

"Zhang laoshi..."

The owner of the voice shuddered.

Fatty Yuan Tao.

"Started fighting? Getting someone to help? Did I get you here to cultivate or to fight?" Zhang Xuan's voice was icy.

"I..." Yuan Tao's face paled.

"You have barely learnt a thing or two and you are already out fighting others. Is it that you don't need me as your teacher anymore?"

Truthfully, Zhang Xuan wasn't angry, his heart simple ached.

Even though he hadn't gotten along with these students of his for long, he had already treated them as his closest kin and had worked hard for their sake. Yet, they went out to engage in a group fight, running back to call for backup when they found themselves in a bad position...

He felt frustrated over how they simply had not matured.

"Zhang laoshi, that's not it..." Anxiety appeared on Yuan Tao's plump face.

"That's not it? Then tell me, what does fighting and you calling Wang Ying to help means? If I were to hear of any

false words from your mouth today, I will expel you. Don't even dream of calling me teacher ever again!"

Zhang Xuan flung his robe backward furiously.

If these children were not worth grooming, he wouldn't want to waste his effort as well. The most that could happen was for him to lose and leave Tianxuan Kingdom and Hongtian Academy.

With the Library of Heaven's Path in his possession, where else could he not go in this vast world?

The reason why he stayed was because his previous self's longing for this place and his sense of responsibility toward his students.

"It's..." Yuan Tao shivered for a moment before gritting his teeth. "It's like this. Today, the academy is allocating cultivation resources and they said that you are... the worst teacher in the academy, so you don't have any rights to claim it! We felt furious with their words and went over to argue it out with them. As such, a conflict broke out..."

"Allocating cultivation resources?"

Zhang Xuan was stunned for a moment before he recalled.

Every month, the academy would allocate cultivation resources to each teacher. The amount of resources a teacher received depended on the amount of students the teacher had, the results of his Teacher Qualification Examination, as well as his overall evaluation.

The teachers could use these resources themselves or to reward the better students in order to encourage them to work harder. Usually, these cultivation resources were allocated by the **【Student Bureau】**.

Student Bureau was the department that was responsible for managing and conducting examinations for students, as well as to distribute cultivation resources to the students and teachers.

Zhao Ya had scored within the top ten of the freshmen and did not have to share a dormitory with the others. It was the department which allocated her dormitory to her.

“Bring me over!” Knowing that they were standing up for him, Zhang Xuan felt a surge of warmth in his heart. His rage had also quelled significantly.

Those lads...

“Yes!”

Yuan Tao did not dare to say anything else. He immediately led the way, with Wang Ying also tagging along. The three of them started to walk toward the Student Bureau.

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Student Bureau.

“The Teacher Guild had already endorsed Zhang laoshi’s innocence on the affair, Zhou laoshi, why do you still refuse to allocate the resources belonging to him?”

Zheng Yang glared at the young man before him furiously.

That was a previous student who had become a teacher in the school, Zhou Tian.

“Innocence? Are the documents here? Did they any notify us?” Zhou Tian lifted his eyebrows and a hint of mockery appeared on his face. “Since there’s nothing at all, Zhang Xuan remains the worst teacher in the school who scored a zero for his Teacher Qualification Examination. It is a waste to grant him resources. Don’t blame me for having not allocated resources to you, blame yourselves for acknowledging the wrong teacher!”

As the ancient saying goes, wealth, peers, teachings, and land. Of which, wealth came first, and from this, it was clear to see how important it was for one’s cultivation.

TL: This is a Buddhism term that states the four things one need to achieve enlightenment. Without sufficient wealth, one is unable to immerse himself in his cultivation. Without peers, it is difficult for one to reach great heights. Without teachings, it is likely for one to stray from the correct path. Without a suitable land, it is likely for one to be affected by his surroundings.

This was precisely the reason why Wang Ying hesitated back then when Zhang Xuan said that she might face a shortage of cultivation resources.

Every month, Hongtian Academy would allocate some cultivation resources to its students and teachers. Most of them were low-level pills. Even though it wasn't of much use to the teachers, it was excellent tonic for students who had just started cultivating.

This was the reason why many people were able to improve rapidly.

Today was the day of the allocation, but they were not informed. Naturally, they took the initiative to inquire about the matter.

“Even if the documents from the Teacher Guild had yet to be passed down, I recall that all teachers of Hongtian Academy, regardless of how terrible their results are, as long as they had students, they would qualify to claim the Breath Forging Powder! What rights do you have to not even give that to us?”

Zhao Ya stepped forward.

Breath Forging Powder was the most common cultivation resources used by the lower grade students. It allowed the students in Juxi realm to better sense the spiritual energy in the air.

The Breath Forging Powder couldn't be considered as a pill and even Wen Xue, who hadn't qualified as an apprentice apothecary could make it, thus making it inexpensive. According to the school rules, any teacher with students was entitled to it.

You may be able to find excuses to avoid allocating the expensive cultivation resource to us, but if you refuse to give this to us as well, it would be clear that you are trying to make things difficult for us!

“There's such a rule, but there's also a clause stating that if the students weren't worth grooming, the Student Bureau could choose not to allocate any to the students. You all refused to

follow by the Student Bureau's arrangement and made a fuss here. Hence, it is logical that I would reject your request!"

Zhou Tian said arrogantly.

"You..."

Seeing that the other party was determined not to give it to them, Zhao Ya's breathing hastened and her face flushed.

"Why? Are you unsatisfied with my arrangements?"

The corners of Zhou Tian's lips crept up. "If you are not satisfied, that is a **【Student Dueling Platform】** over there. You can challenge my students and if you are able to defeat all of them, not only will I give you the Breath Forging Powder, I can even give you the Breath Forging Bead! Remember, this is a Breath Forging Bead. Weren't you all causing a ruckus demanding for me to give Zhang Xuan his resources? Even though this isn't a true pill, it isn't far from that. It is effective even for Pixue realm experts. An ordinary teacher could only claim one every month. If you dare to take on the challenge and succeed, I will give you all three of it!"

The Student Dueling Platform was one of the means to settle a conflict between students and teachers. Of all methods, it was only second to the **【Teacher Dueling Platform】**. The way it operated was simple. As long as the one challenging the teacher was able to defeat all of the students under him, that teacher would have to apologize to the student.

149 Zhang Xuan's Decision

“Breath Forging Bead?”

“Three of it?”

Hearing those words, Zhao Ya and the others' breaths started to hasten.

Breath Forging Bead was something unique to the Hongtian Academy. It was something that couldn't be bought even at the Apothecary Guild. It increased the pace at which fighters absorb spiritual energy, allowing them to improve quickly.

“Zhang laoshi had done so much for us without expecting any returns. As his students, it's time for us to repay the favor!”
Zheng Yang's gaze was resolute.

Since young, he had been training diligently alone, trying to fumble his way through his cultivation. He thought that even in school, his teacher would only clarify his doubts and solve some problems... However, the warmth that Zhang laoshi had given him was much more than that.

He created a cultivation technique just for him and pointed out his flaws. Just so for their sake, he even took the risk to partake in a Pill Debate...

As he thought about everything that had occurred, he couldn't help but feel moved. Motivation welled up in him.

“Zhang laoshi may care not for these resources, but... every teacher is allocated some of them. If he becomes the only teacher who doesn't get any, his prestige and reputation will be sullied. As his students, we have to fight for his sake, no matter what it takes!” Zhao Ya gritted her teeth.

Zhang laoshi casually gave her the Frigid Sun Mother Grass which was worth a hundred thousand gold coins. Even though the Breath Forging Bead wasn't bad as well, it was unlikely that he would care much for it. However... This is no longer a problem over the resource allocation, but dignity.

Of so many teachers in the academy, he was the only one who wasn't given the resources. If word were to spread out, people would look down on him.

Since he isn't at the academy, then... Teacher, we will protect your dignity in your stead!

We shall guard your prestige!

Determination filled Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang and Liu Yang's eyes. Not a hint of hesitation could be seen.

"Fine, we'll challenge the Student Dueling Platform!"

Nodding their heads in agreement, Zheng Yang retrieved the spear at his back and started fitting it together. Then, with a flick of his wrist, the air moaned under the pressure of the spear.

"This is what you have chosen for yourself, don't regret it!"

Zhou Tian sneered coldly. He raised his hand and beckoned, "Everyone come out, someone is challenging you. It's time to teach them a lesson. As long as you defeat them, I will give every one of you some Breath Forging Powder!"

Hualala!

Accompanied by a roar, a group of people came out. They were all freshmen and there were around forty to fifty of them.

"I have a total of 47 students. No matter how many of you go at them, as long as you can defeat all 47, I will consider it your victory!" The corners of Zhou Tian's lips crept upward.

"47..."

Zhao Ya and the others' mouths twitched.

They didn't think that a new teacher who just joined this year would be able to recruit so many students.

"Let's fight. We mustn't embarrass ourselves and Zhang laoshi!"

There were rules for the Student Dueling Platform. One could choose to fight their opponents one by one or to take on all of

them at once. As long as they were able to defeat all of the students under the teacher, it would be their victory.

Since they had already made up their minds, there was nothing for them to hesitate about.

With a leap, Zheng Yang first stepped into the ring.

Hu! One of Zhou Tian's students leaped up as well.

The duel began immediately.

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“Zhou Tian?”

On their way over to the Student Bureau, Yuan Tao explained the situation to Zhang Xuan. Hearing so, Zhang Xuan frowned.

He had never offended this teacher, be it his previous self or after he reincarnated over. Why is he picking on him?

Even though the academy appeared to be calm on the outside, it was filled with internal strife. Many rivalries and schemes went on in the shadows. However, he didn't recall any conflict with that teacher from the Student Bureau. Teachers of the Student Bureau rarely did such things as it would incur the ire of the other teachers.

Furthermore, Zhang Xuan had just toppled the head of the Education Bureau. Even though the students were unaware of it, as a teacher, he should have heard the news. To pit himself against him despite knowing it, was he asking for a beating?

“I've heard some rumors that... he was once Elder Shang Chen's disciple. The reason why he was able to remain at the school as a teacher was because of the elder's arrangements...” Yuan Tao said.

“So that's the case!”

If so, the situation made sense.

He had caused Elder Shang Chen to be stripped of his position as the head of the Education Bureau, and even now, he was at

risk of being punished by the Teacher Guild. As his student, he had to stand up for his own teacher.

“However, my face... isn’t that easy to be slapped!”

Knowing the reason, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

It’s not impossible to slap my face, but... your hand has to be strong enough so as to not hurt yourself!

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Peng! Peng! Peng!

After a few fists landed on his back consecutively, Zheng Yang felt a tinge of sweetness in his mouth and he seemed to be unable to bend the hand which wielded the spear anymore.

In the past few days, his cultivation had improved tremendously. Zhou Tian laoshi’s students were not a match for him, but they were too numerous!

That was already the fifth opponent, and he was on the verge of collapsing.

If it were an ordinary dueling match, Zheng Yang wouldn’t have been so tired. However, the other party seemed to have planned it out beforehand and was hopping around the battlefield intentionally, refusing to face him head on, with the goal of draining his stamina.

“Persevere! You have to persevere on!”

Zheng Yang bit the bullet. With the last sliver of energy he had remaining, his spear shook and he defeated his fifth opponent.

“Haha, can’t withstand it anymore?”

With a loud chuckle, the sixth student leaped onto the stage and kicked Zheng Yang’s chest. The latter staggered seven to eight steps backward. If not for his dogged tenacity, he would have fallen off the ring.

“If you can’t take it, stop putting on a show here. To dare to challenge Zhou laoshi’s prestige, scram!”

The sixth student sneered and sent his stave straight at him.

Given the speed of the stave, if Zheng Yang were to be hit, he would definitely be injured severely.

“I have to block it...”

With a ferocious expression on his face, Zheng Yang tried to raise his spear for a block. However, he realized that he was one move too slow, he wouldn't be able to make it in time.

Knowing that the stave would surely hit him, Zheng Yang closed his eyes and braced for the impact.

He thought that he would fall off the Student Dueling Platform immediately spurting fresh blood, but for a long time, nothing happened. He opened his eyes hurriedly and saw a figure before him. That person wasn't of a tall stature, but his back view looked extremely reliable.

The stave that the sixth opponent brandished was grasped between the person's fingers. No matter how much strength the former exerted, he was unable to shake his weapon out of the latter's hand.

“Zhang laoshi...”

With a single glance, he recognized the person.

That figure before him is his teacher, Zhang Xuan laoshi.

He... isn't he out? Why is he here...

The one who stopped the stave was indeed Zhang Xuan. Arriving with Yuan Tao, upon witnessing the situation, he immediately dashed forward and jumped onto the ring.

It was just ten days before the battle with Lu Xun laoshi. If these students of his were to get injured at such a time, Zhang Xuan would have to surrender for the Teacher Evaluation duel.

As Shang Chen was overthrown by Zhang Xuan, Zhou Tian harbored resentment for him. Knowing that he wasn't a match for Zhang Xuan, he intentionally provoked his students, Zheng Yang and the others, for this purpose.

As long as Zheng Yang and the rest were injured, he calculated that they would not stand a chance in the Teacher Evaluation.

Seeing that it was too late to stop the duel through any other means, Zhang Xuan leaped onto the stage himself.

“Zhang Xuan, what do you mean by this? Your students are competing in the Student Dueling Platform. Why? Do you intend to make a move on my students despite being a teacher?”

Seeing him rush over, Zhou Tian wasn't too surprised. A menacing gleam flashed through his eyes.

“Make a move on your students? You sure are thinking too much!”

With a flick of his finger, the other party's stave broke into many pieces. Patting his hands, he glanced over.

“Then what do your actions mean? Do you wish to take back your words? However, it seems like it is too late. Your students have already agreed to challenge the Student Dueling Platform, and they have already injured five of my students. No matter what, the challenge must go on! This matter isn't up to you! Unless...”

At this point, Zhou Tian's lips curled up into a cold smile, “Unless... you concede defeat and admit that your students are inferior to mine!”

“We mustn't admit defeat!”

“Even if we have to give it our all, we will definitely win...”

Hearing the plain mockery in the other party's voice, Zheng Yang and the others clenched their fists and their faces flushed red.

If they were to really admit defeat like that, they wouldn't be able to uphold their pride in the academy in future.

“Admit that my students are inferior to yours?” Zhang Xuan shook his head. “You must still be dreaming!”

“Hmph! Since that's the case, let's continue. I request that you get down from the ring!” Zhou Tian flung his robe. “For a teacher like you to interfere in a battle among students, aren't you bullying the weak?”

“Don’t be in such a hurry!” Zhang Xuan smiled. “I am not admitting defeat, but I didn’t say that I will allow our students to continue competing!”

“You wish to stop the duel? The Student Dueling Platform has already begun, and you don’t have the right to stop it. It is too late to regret.” Zhou Tian harrumphed.

“My students’ decision is my decision. Since they decided to challenge the Student Dueling Platform, there’s nothing for me to regret!” Zhang Xuan looked over. “However... I think that a mere Student Dueling Platform is too uninteresting. Why don’t we conduct a 【Teacher Dueling Platform】 ? Just that... do you dare to accept the challenge?”

“What? Challenge the Teacher Dueling Platform? Is that fellow insane?”

“Is there something wrong with his head?”

“Teacher Dueling Platform means that the students challenge the teacher. It is already difficult for those students of his to achieve victory in the Student Dueling Platform, yet he wants to challenge the Teacher Dueling Platform? Isn’t he daydreaming?”

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Upon hearing Zhang Xuan’s words, the teachers and students present in the Student Bureau were dumbfounded.

When a student is dissatisfied with a teacher, he can challenge all of the students under him via a Student Dueling Platform to force him to admit his mistakes. On the other hand, Teacher Dueling Platform meant that a student would be challenging the teacher directly. If he were to lose, admitting defeat would be one thing, but the dignity of the teacher would be sullied.

Of course, given that the cultivation realms of the students are far beneath that of teachers, it is impossible for students to win in a normal duel. For the sake of fairness, the teacher has to lower his cultivation realm down to that of the student in a Teacher Dueling Platform.

Even so, the fight could not be considered to be totally fair. Being able to become teachers, their experience and grasp over the flow of battle are obviously far superior to that of mere students. Even if they were to duel at the same power realm, it was impossible for a student to emerge victorious over a teacher.

Zhao Ya and the others all staggered and nearly fainted on the spot.

They thought that they had been audacious to challenge the Student Dueling Platform. Yet, Zhang laoshi managed to top them and requested for the Teacher Dueling Platform instead...

You... must be joking!

Even though this Zhou Tian laoshi wasn't exceptionally powerful among the teachers, barely reaching Fighter 4-dan Pigu realm primary stage, he was still a true teacher of the academy. He wasn't someone a bunch of Juxi realms could defeat.

"Teacher Dueling Platform? You want your students to challenge me?" Zhou Tian looked as though he had heard the most hilarious joke in the world.

"Why? Don't dare to?" Zhang Xuan looked at him.

"Haha, you are truly courting death!" Zhou Tian burst into laughter. "Fine, I'll agree then. If you win, I will give you ten Breath Forging Beads. However, if you were to lose... Hehe, I won't demand any items, you just have to kneel down before me!"

150 Imparting Spear Ar

“Alright. Anything will do as long as you don’t go back on your words.” Zhang Xuan chuckled and agreed.

“Zhang laoshi...”

Hearing him make such a decision, Zhao Ya and the others panicked.

Are you pulling our legs?

They had improved significantly in the last few days, but defeating a teacher in a duel is... impossible!

Agreeing so readily, isn’t it akin to admitting defeat?

“Since you’re so confident, let’s do it then. Are they going to take on me all at once or go one by one?”

Zhou Tian said with a grin.

Zhang Xuan only had five students in total. Even if he were to suppress his cultivation, they would still not be a match for him.

“Taking turns? You’re thinking too much. Given your strength, any one of my students would be able to easily defeat you!”

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

“You...”

Seeing that the other party was looking down on him like that, Zhou Tian’s face darkened.

Lazy to bother with the fellow, Zhang Xuan turned his attention to Zhao Ya and the others.

Meeting his gaze, his students felt extremely anxious.

They weren’t even able to win in the Student Dueling Platform, and now they had to challenge the teacher...

“The few of you hadn’t fought previously. If I let you challenge Zhou laoshi, it truly is... bullying the weak. Zheng

Yang, you will face him!” Zhang Xuan looked around and then casually pointed at Zheng Yang.

Hearing those words, the surrounding crowd almost fainted.

Brother, is it alright for you to be putting on such a big show?

Even if you really wanted to boast, it should be realistic, right?

Putting aside Zheng Yang’s abilities, he had just fought several opponents and is running low on stamina. Didn’t you witness that he could not even move his spear anymore? He might not be able to kill even a chicken now, yet you want to pit him against Zhou Tian?

Furthermore... Bullying the other party?

Bullying the heck!

Looking at the fellow’s condition, even if Zhou Tian didn’t make a move, he probably would fall by himself in no time...

Not only did the others put on confused expressions, even Zheng Yang’s mouth was twitching.

“Teacher, I...”

He was about to go insane.

Zhang laoshi, can you stop pulling such pranks?

He knows how much he is worth, and he wouldn’t even be able to fight any student who comes his way this moment, needless to say, Zhou Tian laoshi... Even if he were to suppress his cultivation to that of a Fighter 1-dan... It is still impossible for him to emerge victoriously!

Just as he was about to inform Zhang laoshi of his physical condition, before he could speak, the other person’s calm voice sounded once more, “Don’t feel happy yet, it isn’t too late to celebrate after defeating this Zhou laoshi!”

Happy?

Happy my foot!

I am on the verge of tears, can’t you tell?

Zheng Yang’s body staggered and he looked as though he would faint at any moment now.

“Courting death...”

Catching sight of this scene, Zhou Tian thought that Zhang Xuan was doing this intentionally to shame him. His mouth twitched in rage and anger gleamed in his eyes.

“Before the fight, I will teach him a new spear art. Surely Zhou laoshi will be fine with it?”

Ignoring the strange looks the others shot him, Zhang Xuan asked Zhou Tian.

“It’s a little too late for that!” Zhou Tian harrumphed.

“It doesn’t matter whether it is late or not. It would suffice as long as it is enough to defeat you!” Zhang Xuan smiled. He walked to Zheng Yang and said, “Here, teacher will teach you a spear art. Look carefully and learn!”

After which, he took the spear from the other party’s hands, and with a slight tremble of his palm, stabbed forward in a crooked trajectory.

The move appeared to have no depth to it, looking like a random movement. It didn’t bear the slightest resemblance to a spear art. It seemed like a casual, playful stab.

“This fellow... Is he joking?”

“You call that spear art? The spear art of “an aroused boar meeting a sow” would even be better than that!”

“I’ve seen people who swindle their own parents, but this is my first time seeing a teacher swindle his own student. Zheng Yang is probably done for!”

“To have met such a teacher, he is doomed matter how talented he is...”

Zhang Xuan taught Zheng Yang before everyone’s eyes, and everyone saw the move clearly. For a moment, their minds were unable to keep up with the situation.

Do you call that spear art?

Even the technique a cleaner use to sweep the floor is several times more profound than that move of yours...

“Have you grasped it yet?”

Ignoring the discussions in the crowd, Zhang Xuan looked at Zheng Yang.

“Yes...”

Zheng Yang wanted to cry.

Does such a move even need to be learned?

He first came into contact with the spear when he was six... Any random move in the books is far superior to the one his teacher just taught...

“Alright, since you have grasped it already, go and defeat Zhou laoshi!”

Zhang Xuan nodded his head, gently dusting Zheng Yang’s body.

Hearing his teacher’s instructions, Zheng Yang was about to cry when he felt Zhang laoshi’s palm on his shoulder. A surge of zhenqi flowed through his meridians.

The zhenqi was extremely dense and pure. All clots in its path fell apart immediately and he felt the shackles on his body being removed. As though having eaten a nutritious tonic, all fatigue vanished and he felt refreshed.

Fatigue is just like an illness, and it is often caused by the blockages in one’s meridians. Under Zhang Xuan’s pure zhenqi, it wasn’t difficult to clear those blockages.

“Don’t resist me. Follow the movement of my zhenqi and adjust your breathing along with it!”

He was still feeling surprised at Zhang laoshi’s actions when he heard his voice sound beside his ears.

Knowing that his teacher would never do him in, Zheng Yang focused his attention hurriedly and adjusted his breathing.

Kacha! Kacha! Kacha!

The zhenqi that gushed into his body flowed through his meridians in a unique path. In an instant, Zheng Yang felt as

though he had become a spear that could pierce through the heavens.

“This is... the inner breathing method of the spear art?”

No matter how foolish Zheng Yang was, he immediately understood what was going on.

Regardless of whether it was a spear art or other battle techniques, on top of the moves, one had to know the corresponding inner breathing method.

Only when one's inner breathing is aligned with the technique can one unleash the greatest might possible. Otherwise, it would look flashy at best when in fact there is little might behind the attack.

Even though Zheng Yang had never come across any exceptionally powerful spear art, he had been living with the spear by his side since young. The spear had already become a part of him and the moment he felt the inner breathing within his body, he understood that the technique is much more profound than any other spear arts he had learned before.

The move looked so simple that even a fool would be able to learn it. However, when paired up with this inner breathing method, it was clear that it was a drastically simplified move that was packed with profound spear theories, a truly fine piece of art!

“To think that there would be such a powerful move in the world...”

In that instant, he appeared to be in a daze. He could hardly believe what was happening.

Profound is no longer sufficient to describe the move, it is completely inconceivable that such a move could exist.

Zheng Yang was still bathing in agitation when Zhang laoshi's voice echoed in his ear once more.

“Don't let your thoughts wander now. Try to get accustomed to this inner breathing method and align it properly with that spear art!”

“Yes!”

Knowing that Zhang laoshi was imparting him an incredibly profound move, Zheng Yang focused his attention and tried to comprehend the inner breathing within him.

Every single battle technique has an inner breathing method unique to it. To learn a battle technique, one has to slowly open up all of the clogged meridians required for it. It is an incredibly tiring and long process, requiring long hours of effort.

Using Zheng Yang as an example, he is only at Fighter 1-dan Juxi realm and there is only inner breath in his body. He hadn't even formed zhenqi yet. It would have taken a minimum of two years' effort for him to open up the path required for the move.

However, Zhang Xuan's presence made all the difference.

Zhang laoshi's zhenqi was extremely pure and wherever it flowed through, the clots would immediately be undone, thus opening up the meridians. In less than two breaths, he had already opened up a smooth passageway for Zheng Yang's inner breathing of the technique.

"Just like that, I have... mastered it?"

Upon sensing the smooth passageway through the inner breathing, Zheng Yang instantly understood this fact. In this short moment, he had completely mastered the move, as though he had been practicing it for multiple years.

"Alright, keep this surge of zhenqi in your body. Continue feigning weak and powerless, and when the duel with Zhou Tian begins, you must strike him in full one blow!"

Zhang Xuan's voice continued to sound.

Comprehending the meaning behind his words, Zheng Yang nodded his head secretly. At the same time, he was perplexed... Why is Zhang laoshi's zhenqi able to remain in his body without creating conflicts in his body?

The attributes of one's zhenqi would change according to the cultivation technique a fighter pursued. As such, when one's zhenqi flows into another person's body, putting aside the question of whether the former is able to help the latter to

achieve a breakthrough, it is likely that a conflict would occur, and this would cause the receiver's cultivation to go berserk.

Yet, Zheng Yang did not feel any discord or discomfort within when Zhang laoshi's zhenqi entered his body. He found it inconceivable.

However, he also knew that this wasn't the time to be thinking about such things. After 'struggling' to clasp his hand, he exclaimed, "Zhou laoshi, come!"

After which, he staggered up the ring.

Zheng Yang appeared as though he would fall if a strong gust were to blow at this moment. Witnessing his condition, the crowd stared at one another, flabbergasted.

The heck, are you serious?

To fight a teacher using a spear art that even pigs can execute and a body that will cave in at any moment, how do you intend to win...

Zhou Tian's face twitched as well. A thought suddenly popped into his mind.

I fell for his trap.

This fellow had probably intended to sacrifice this student from the very start to make a fool out of him.

Imparting a move that can't even kill a chicken to deal with him... Isn't he implying that he couldn't even match up to a chicken?

"Zhang Xuan, you sure are despicable!"

Thinking that the other party was intentionally humiliating him, Zhou Tian gritted his teeth and stepped into the ring as well.

"Zhou laoshi, please go easy on me..."

Portraying an extremely weak image, Zheng Yang struggled to lift his spear.

Seeing how even such a simple movement could send sweat trickling down his forehead from fatigue, everyone was

speechless.

It had been long since someone challenged the Teacher Dueling Platform. One wouldn't have imagined that the first one in years would be so eccentric.

If word were to spread out, it would surely cause an uproar.

“Teacher... Why don't I substitute Zheng Yang!”

Zhao Ya spoke, unable to endure it anymore.

“Just watch!” Zhang Xuan didn't explain the situation to her.

Seeing how confident her teacher was, even though Zhao Ya was perplexed, she did not dare to question any further.

Instead, she turned her attention to the stage.

“Go easy on you? Blame your beloved Zhang laoshi for your plight!”

Deducing Zhang Xuan's intentions, Zhou Tian was infuriated.

“Then... I will apologize for my discourtesy beforehand!”

Knowing that the other party would not make the first move in consideration of the disparity between their identities, he didn't dawdle further and shot his spear straight at the other party.

The tip of the spear was shaky, as though there wasn't any strength behind it.

It was the trash move that Zhang Xuan had just taught him.

“Hmph!”

Seeing that the other fellow had actually dared to use such a move against him, Zhou Tian felt even more furious. He suppressed his cultivation to the level of a Fighter 1-dan Juxi realm, and without using any weapon, faced Zheng Yang's attack bare-handed.

Facing a spear bare-handed!

Even so, no one thought well of Zheng Yang. They all thought that the fellow would be in for a beating.

“Now...”

Noticing that the other party was underestimating him, facing him with bare hands, Zheng Yang's eyes lit up. He immediately triggered the surge of zhenqi which Zhang Xuan left in his body earlier on and in an instant, his disposition changed. If he were a tame lamb a moment ago, he would be a ferocious tiger at this moment.

Boom!

The spear shot straight toward Zhou Tian's chest.

“What?”

Zhou Tian's eyes narrowed. He felt an overwhelming sense of danger from that attack.

151 I Am Here to Slap Your Face

As firstly, a teacher and, secondly, a Fighter 4-dan Pigu realm expert, although Zhou Tian had never learned spearmanship, he could tell how powerful the move was.

The force behind the spear was so powerful that it compressed the air before it to the extent that a strong gust of wind was sent into the surroundings. Even if Zhou Tian had not suppressed his cultivation, he would have found it difficult to deal with such a move!

How could a Juxi-realm lad possess such incredible strength?

He felt like he was going insane.

“Zhang Xuan, you tricked me...”

At this moment, he realized that he had fallen for the other party’s deception.

No wonder that fellow was so confident. When did this Zheng Yang become so powerful?

Without much time to think, he dared not to keep his strength suppressed any longer. Zhenqi immediately gushed forth from his hands as he attempted to seal the spear’s might.

However, even Wang Chong, a Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm spear master was unable to stand against this Heaven’s Path Spear Art, needless to say, him.

Peng!

The pole of the spear struck Zhou Tian’s chest forcefully. He tasted a metallic tang in his mouth, and blood spurted forth from it. He flew off the Teacher Dueling Platform immediately and fell to the ground, battered.

Silence.

Complete silence.

“What?”

“Zhou Tian laoshi was defeated with a single pierce?”

“What the heck is going on?”

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After a moment of astonishment, a commotion broke out.

Initially, seeing that Zhou laoshi was dealing with a student who looked as though he would fall at any moment, they thought that he would easily crush him with a single finger. But... What is going on?

With just one pierce from the student, Zhou laoshi went against the rules and released his full strength. Even so, he was sent flying.

Am I seeing things?

Can anyone tell me what the heck is going on?

Zhao Ya, Liu Yang, and the rest widened their eyes in disbelief.

This fellow had been with them every day, so they knew his strength very well. How did he suddenly become... so powerful?

Furthermore... Even if others were to train intensively, there would just be small improvements... This seems to be going way overboard!

Sending a Fighter 4-dan Pigu realm expert flying with a single strike...

Are we dreaming?

No, it's not that we're dreaming. It's that spear technique!

The few of them turned at the same time to look at Zhang Xuan.

They had also realized that the reason why Zheng Yang was able to become so powerful so suddenly was because of the spear art Zhang laoshi had just imparted him.

Just that... How could that nonsense of a spear art which probably couldn't even kill a chicken be so powerful?

Zhou Tian's students had raised their arms to cheer their teacher on, but before they could say anything, such an outcome appeared before them. Astonishment covered every single one of their faces and they were at a loss.

"Teacher..."

Coming to their senses, the whole lot rushed forward to help Zhou Tian up.

"You..."

Standing up, Zhou Tian regulated his breathing and felt slightly better. He glared coldly at Zhang Xuan and just as he was about to speak, he saw Zheng Yang approach with his spear in hand. The latter clasped his hands together and bowed, "Zhou laoshi, thank you for going easy on me!"

Puu!

Hearing those words, Zhou Tian's face flushed and he spurted out another mouthful of blood.

Going easy your head!

If I could, I would have beaten you to death. Who knew that you would have such a bizarre spear technique...

For a teacher to lose to a student...

He felt a stinging sensation on his face, as though he had been slapped by someone else.

"Zhou laoshi, you said earlier that if I were to win, you will give us ten Breath Forging Beads. I will have to ask you to hand it over!" Zheng Yang stepped forward excitedly.

Even though he was infuriated, he knew that he had truly embarrassed himself this time. If he were to renege on his words after losing the Teacher Dueling Platform, he would truly lose all dignity he possessed.

Gritting his teeth, he retrieved a jade bottle from his pocket and passed it over.

Accepting it hurriedly, Zheng Yang opened the cap and saw a row of Breath Forging Beads inside. Its fragrance diffused into the air and one could feel an overwhelming spiritual energy.

“Teacher...”

Zheng Yang brought the Breath Forging Beads to Zhang Xuan quickly, his face full of joy.

The reason why they spent the entire afternoon causing a ruckus at the Student Bureau was to obtain these training resources for Zhang laoshi. Even though it was tiring... they had managed to succeed in the end!

“Damn it!”

Zhou Tian’s heart was bleeding.

A teacher could only obtain a single Breath Forging Pill a month. Ten Breath Forging Pills was a huge fortune to him.

Even if he were to hand it over, he wouldn’t allow Zhang Xuan to use them.

“Hmph, Zhang Xuan, your students were the ones who won those Breath Forging Beads. You weren’t entitled to them in the first place. I don’t think that you will be so shameless as to consume something that belongs to your students!”

So what if you got those beads?

Your students went through so much trouble to obtain the pills, do you have the cheek to consume them yourself?

If you aren’t able to consume it, it is equivalent to not obtaining it!

“Consume it?” Zhang Xuan took the jade bottle and shook his head. “Who would use such trash?”

After which, he flicked his wrist.

Putong!

The jade bottle was discarded into a nearby pond.

“Ah?”

“This...”

Witnessing this scene, everyone was taken aback. Even Zhou Tian was dumbfounded.

What are you doing?

Those ten Breath Forging Beads are worth several thousands! You threw it away just like that?

Even Zheng Yang, Zhao Ya and the rest were stunned.

“There’s no need to be so shocked. Even though Breath Forging Beads can help a cultivator gather spiritual energy faster, consuming too much would make one reliant on it. It isn’t good for one’s future cultivation!” Looking at their confused expressions, Zhang Xuan whipped out another jade bottle and threw it to his students. “These are some stuff that I have prepared for you. After you have finished it, I will get more of it!”

Doubtfully, Zhao Ya and the others caught the bottle and opened it. Upon seeing what was inside, they leaped in shock.

“Breath Forging Pills?”

The pills inside were round and radiant. They exuded a fragrance that permeated right into one’s body.

To think that it would be... Breath Forging Pills!

That is a true pill that is extremely useful for cultivators. Comparing it to Breath Forging Beads is like comparing gem to dirt, the two items on totally different levels.

“Breath Forging Pills cost tens of thousands per pill in the market, and he took out two bottles at once? How many dozens of pills are inside those two bottles?”

“He gave true pills forged by official apothecaries to his students?”

The bodies of the crowd swayed. They felt as though the world had gone insane.

Given how many Breath Forging Pills there are inside, it should be worth at least hundreds of thousands of gold coins in total. Yet, he threw them so casually to his students...

Darn, do you have to be so extravagant?

No wonder the Breath Forging Beads did not catch his eyes. What a joke! Anyone who possessed so many Breath Forging Pills would not even cast a second glance at that trash.

Puu!

Zhou Tian staggered and he nearly passed out.

He only felt his cheeks growing warmer and warmer. He was nearly losing his sanity from all of the slaps on his face.

Just by teaching his student a trash move, his student was able to beat him up so easily. The Breath Forging Beads which he values so highly was discarded by the other party like trash...

Brother, aren't you the teacher who is paid the worst in the entire school? When did you become such an incredible figure?

"Teacher... are these really for us?"

Not only did the crowd feel as though they were going mad, Zhao Ya and the others were also in a state of disbelief.

"Of course they are for you! It's not that I want to nag, but as my students, is there really a need to vie over those little things from the academy?" Zhang Xuan shook his head in disappointment. Then, with a flick of his wrist, a gourd appeared in his hand. "Wang Ying, the meridians in your legs are injured. This is the Body Nourishing Medicinal Solution that I have found specially for you. Pour it into a pail of water and soak your legs in it for three days. Your legs should recover entirely by then!"

"Liu Yang, you practiced the wrong battle technique and injured your hands. I got this Meridian Rejuvenation Pill for you from the Apothecary Guild. As long as you train properly after consuming it, your wounds should be able to recover quickly!"

"Yes!"

Wang Ying and Liu Yang stepped forward and received two items from Zhang Xuan.

"Body Nourishing Medicinal Solution? Could it be that Body Nourishing Medicinal Solution from the Apothecary Guild?"

“Have you heard of it?”

“Of course I have. Back then, I heard that the item could heal a person’s wounded meridians swiftly, so I had someone to look into it for me. According to him, a gourd like that costs three hundred thousand gold coins!”

“Three hundred thousand? Are you serious?”

“The Meridian Rejuvenation Pill is a true pill forged by apothecaries. It is even more expensive than the Breath Forging Pills. It is said that a single pill costs two hundred thousand gold coins. It might be cheaper to have an apothecary or apprentice apothecary buy it in your stead, but the price wouldn’t be far from that.”

“Two hundred thousand? That is to say, he spent five hundred thousand just like that?”

“Don’t forget those Breath Forging Pills as well. In total, it costs more than a million? And he gave it to the students just like that?”

“Is Zhang laoshi still accepting students? I want to come under his tutelage...”

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There were quite a few knowledgeable persons in the crowd. The Body Nourishing Medicinal Solution and Meridian Rejuvenation Pill weren’t considered secret medicine and many people have heard of it. Upon hearing the prices, everyone went into a frenzy once again.

A low-level teacher in the academy is only paid a maximum of three hundred to four hundred gold coins in wages every month. In fact, even high-level teachers do not earn more than thousand a month. Yet, he just casually took out a million for his students’ cultivation...

Putting aside other teachers... Even Zhou Tian’s reward for defeating Zhang Xuan’s students was only Breath Forging Powder. Look at the other party, he casually whipped out real pills and top-quality medicinal solutions...

The heck, why is there such a huge disparity between them even though they are both teachers?

In a split second, gazes of admiration were focused on Zhao Ya and the other students while looks of disdain fell upon Zhou Tian.

Taking all of these into sight, Zhou Tian nearly vomited blood again.

Zhang Xuan, damn you!

You must have done it intentionally.

You took all of those out before me to slap my face...

I am, after all, the teacher who is in charge of resource allocation, the one who holds the most lucrative position in the academy, and yet, I became a petty person who fought with another teacher over a measly amount of resources that the other person saw as worthless...

“Let’s go!”

Being done passing the items to his students, Zhang Xuan waved his hand and led his students away. He left quietly, leaving amazement in his wake.

Isn’t it clear? Of course I did it intentionally!

Didn’t you want to slap my face? I shall return you the favor then.

To tell the truth, I came here to slap your face!

“Yes!”

Watching their teacher leave, Zheng Yang and the others quickly recovered from their shock and followed behind him in a daze. At the same time, their faces flushed in embarrassment.

Initially, they came here to vie for resources and to uphold their teacher’s prestige. Who knew that... in the end, they would realize Zhang laoshi never did care for those resources.

Of course, for someone who could whip out so many pills and medicine so easily, how would those Breath Forging Powder

and Breath Forging Beads catch his attention?

“Teacher, these pills are really... too valuable...”

Upon returning to the classroom, Zhao Ya stepped forward.

She was already given a stalk of Frigid Sun Mother Grass previously. Her conscience did not allow her to receive these pills...

“Cultivate properly, it would suffice as long as you win for me in the Teacher Evaluation!” Zhang Xuan beckoned.

“Teacher, rest easy. We will definitely give it our all...”

Upon hearing those words, Zhao Ya and the others nodded their heads in unison.

Their teacher had given so much to them. If they were to lose in the Teacher Evaluation, they would be truly ashamed to meet him.

“Un!” Seeing how motivated they were, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction. “Zheng Yang, come over!”

After which, he walked into the small room.

Zheng Yang knew that it would definitely be the matter with the spear art today. He had been perplexed over the issue as well. Not daring to keep Zhang laoshi waiting, he quickly followed behind him.

152 Treating Du Miaoxuan

“Teacher, this spear technique...”

Upon walking in, Zheng Yang could no longer suppress his curiosity.

“That technique is something that I have just created. I will tell you the cultivation method now!”

Zhang Xuan recited the cultivation method to him once.

“This... This...”

Upon hearing the entire cultivation method, Zheng Yang was stunned.

The spear technique is simply too profound. All the other spear arts which he had learned previously are trash compared to it.

Previously, he thought that the skill is shaky, crooked and does not have a good form, but that isn't true.

The emphasis on this technique isn't its form. One can execute it either inelegantly or gracefully. Even though there is only one move to it, it still surpasses countless other spear techniques. Not only is the move flexible, containing countless variations, it holds peerless might behind it.

“Alright, I am done imparting the full technique to you. Without my permission, you are not to teach anyone else the skill!” Zhang Xuan said.

“Yes!” Zheng Yang dropped to the floor and kowtowed to Zhang Xuan.

After having immersed himself in spearmanship for countless years, he understood how precious this skill was. He also understood that if he skill were to be leaked, a bloody storm would ensue.

“Even though this spear art is simple, it is the basis of all spearmanship. There are still ten days until the Freshmen

Tournament, and I hope that you can achieve a breakthrough in your spearmanship. Do not let down my efforts!”

Zhang Xuan instructed.

“Teacher, rest easy!” Zheng Yang nodded his head with resolution. Then, he lifted his head abruptly and asked, “Teacher, may I know what this spear technique is called?”

“The name of the technique? I haven’t named it. If you come up with a good name, feel free to name it so!” Zhang Xuan waved his hand casually.

Even though he had named it Heaven’s Path Spear Art, it was a collective name for the set of techniques. There should be a separate name for the move and Zhang Xuan could not be bothered to come up with it. Thus, he decided to leave the task to his student.

“Yes!” Knowing his teacher’s personality, Zheng Yang suppressed the astonishment in his mind and left the room.

After he left, Zhang Xuan rubbed between his eyebrows.

After solving Wang Ying and Liu Yang’s hidden physical traumas, their fighting prowess would definitely soar greatly. As for Yuan Tao and Zhao Ya, after their unique constitutions are awakened, their improvement would surely be greater than the rest. Of them all, only Zheng Yang was lagging behind. However, with this spear art, it was hard to tell which of his students would be the strongest in ten days.

After calling the other students in and offering each of them some pointers, Zhang Xuan left the academy.

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“You say that... Du Miaoxuan has already been kneeling at the entrance of the mansion for an entire day?”

“Even though Du Miaoxuan had lost the fight for the position of the clan head due to his illness, he is still an influential figure. For him to be kneeling at another’s door for an entire day... Could the owner of the mansion really be a master teacher?”

“If that’s true, then all of us have truly guessed wrongly before...”

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In the time that Zhang Xuan left the residence, learned spear art and imparted it to Zheng Yang, the entire Tianxuan Royal City had fallen into an uproar.

Although many people continued to doubt the identity of the mansion’s owner after Ling Tianyu’s incident, Du Miaoxuan kneeling at the entrance for an entire day had caused them to waver.

As a dignified elder of one of the Four Great Clans, Du Clan, and as an ex-contender for the position of the clan head, only a master teacher held the prestige to have a person like that kneel at his doorstep.

“Let’s go over and take a look!”

“We have to see what is going on. If the other party is truly a master teacher, we must quickly make acquaintance with him!”

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When word spread out, countless powers and influential clans could no longer remain uninvolved. They quickly sent their men to look into the matter. In fact, some of the powerful leaders and clan heads even came to take a look at the situation personally.

Luo Chong was one of them.

He is the guild leader of the Blacksmith Guild in Tianxuan Royal City, a true 1-star intermediate stage blacksmith.

The best blacksmith in Tianxuan Kingdom.

Even Emperor Shen Zhui has to spend massive amounts of money to buy his weapons. Countless nobles lined up to purchase his weapons, only to leave in vain. Every single

weapon he crafts is sought by many and as such, prices skyrocket.

Initially, given his position and standing, even if a master teacher were to come over, there was no need for him to please him and make acquaintance with him.

After all, even though blacksmiths are not as prestigious as master teachers, they are still one of the top classes which ranks at the forefront of the Upper Nine Paths, and they have their own pride and standing.

Even so... He came.

Other people may not know, but he was aware of his own problems. Recently, he began to be unable to achieve the state of Heart of Tranquil Water in his smithing. The items that he crafted often fell apart at the very last step to become a failed good.

He had crafted the same way as he always used to, so the situation did not make much sense to him. Initially, he thought that it may be a problem with his stamina, so he specially rested for a few days before beginning to craft again. However... It made no difference at all.

For the number one blacksmith of Tianxuan Kingdom to be unable to craft weapons... If news were to spread out, not only will his standing be affected, his rivals and enemies would probably come knocking to ensure that he falls from the high pedestal he stood on previously.

Thus, upon hearing that a master teacher had appeared in the city, he couldn't hold himself back and secretly came to see if it was true.

If it was true, no matter the price, he had to find out the problem and have it solved.

“Indeed, it is Du Miaoxuan!”

Luo Chong recognized the middle-aged man who was kneeling by the corner of the street.

He is the most famous elder in Du Clan. There is few among the upper echelons of Tianxuan City who doesn't know him.

Back then, the other party even implored him to craft a sword for him. Thus, even though there was a distance between the two, Luo Chong was still able to recognize him immediately.

“This fellow is an extremely prudent person. For him to kneel down willingly like that, the person in the mansion must be capable of solving his problems. Furthermore... It seems like he is truly impressed by the person!”

With one look, Luo Chong made a judgement on the situation.

If the person in the mansion isn't of high standing and is unable to solve his problem, Du Miaoxuan's actions would be equivalent to embarrassing himself. Given Luo Chong's understanding of him, he wouldn't do such a thing unless he was extremely certain.

Jiyaa!

Just when he was making wild guesses at the situation, the doors to the mansion opened and a plump butler emerged.

“The old master invites you in!”

Sun Qiang beckoned him over.

“Thank you Butler Sun for speaking on my behalf...” Du Miaoxuan was overjoyed. He hurriedly stood up and walked over.

“Let's go!”

Sun Qiang didn't bother with pleasantries and led the way. Then, the doors to the mansion shut tight once again.

“He went in!”

“Du Miaoxuan went in. In a moment's time, we would be able to know the truth after he leaves through observing his behavior!”

“Indeed, let's continue waiting here...”

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...

Upon seeing Du Miaoxuan enter the mansion, the various powers of the capital were not in a hurry to leave. Rather, their

eyes continued to focus on the situation with great intensity, as though a hawk.

Luo Chong was in no hurry to leave either. He sat quietly and waited with patience.

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...

“I apologize for doubting Zhang shi’s incredible abilities before, please forgive me!”

The moment he entered the room, Du Miaoxuan immediately kneeled to the floor, void of the suspicions and arrogance that he held before.

“Get up!”

Zhang Xuan gestured.

After leaving the academy, he went to a remote alley and disguised himself as ‘Yang Xuan’ once again before returning to the residence.

Noticing that this fellow’s anger and resentment had subsided in the half day that he was gone, he got Sun Qiang to bring him in.

“I beg of Yang shi to forgive me for the discourtesy that I showed you before and save me!” Du Miaoxuan continued kneeling on the floor.

“Since I have invited you in, naturally, I would help you. Get up!” Zhang Xuan said impassively.

Hearing those words, delight appeared on Du Miaoxuan’s face. He hurriedly stood up.

Du Yuan, who was standing behind his father, was perplexed.

Isn’t father’s illness a thing of the past? Could it be that this master teacher can treat the trauma which was left behind in father’s body previously by the illness?

“You know why I called you a beast, right?”

Zhang Xuan looked at him.

“I understand!” Du Miaoxuan replied.

Sun Qiang and Du Yuan were still confused.

Previously, just after taking a look, Yang shi said that Elder Du is a beast. Initially, they thought that he was insulting him, but from the looks of it, things aren't as simple as it seems.

Just that, they were truly unable to understand what was it with Du Miaoxuan that made him not angry despite being called a beast. On the contrary, he even seemed excited about it.

However, their confusion did not last for long. At this moment, Zhang Xuan's voice sounded in the air.

“It is a known fact that ten years ago, you fell ill and your cultivation fell tremendously. However, if I am not wrong, you... infused the blood of the Snow Wolf into your body, hoping to alter your bloodline!”

“This caused you to be poisoned by the Snow Wolf. Everyday at noon, white fur grows all over your body, and you turn into a being that can neither be considered human nor animal, just like a beast. Am I right?”

“Yes, Yang shi's words are absolutely right!”

Du Miaoxuan nodded his head hurriedly.

Even though he knew that Yang shi had seen through his illness the moment he said that he was a beast, when Yang shi pointed it all out spot-on, he was still astonished.

As expected of a master teacher. His ability of discernment is superb. This is something that even Master Yuanyu failed to see through.

“This...”

“Blood of the Snow Wolf? A body full of white fur?”

Hearing Zhang Xuan's words, Sun Qiang and Du Yuan came to a realization.

Especially for the latter, his body shuddered uncontrollably.

He finally understood why his father would head to the remote courtyard to drink cooling tea at noon and turn away all

visitors. He thought that it was a habit of his father through the years, but to think that this would be the actual reason.

For him to grow white fur every noon... He was afraid of being seen, that's why he went to hide in the courtyard!

For a person to grow fur all over his body... If he isn't a beast, what else could he be?

No wonder when Yang shi said these words, not only did father not refute his words, he even kneeled outside the entrance... So this was the reason why.

“Snow Wolf, a tier-7 white fur savage beast. It possesses strength equivalent to a Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm expert and it is known for its speed. Its blood is one of the main ingredients in 【Tongxuan Pill】 , which helps to open up one's meridians and raise one's cultivation. You probably read some secret manual which caused you to mistakenly believe that if you were to successfully fuse your blood with that of the Snow Wolf, your cultivation would be raised significantly!”

Ignoring the shock on everyone's faces, Zhang Xuan continued.

“Yes!” A bitter smile appeared on Du Miaoxuan's face as he nodded his head to confirm Yang shi's words.

It is just like what this Yang shi said. Back then, he read a secret manual which detailed that as long as he managed to successfully swap blood with that of a Snow Wolf, he would be able to reach Tongxuan realm immediately to become a Fighter 7-dan expert.

Who knew that not only did his dream not come true, it was actually the start of a nightmare.

White fur would sprout from his body daily, making him look neither human nor animal. Even though it was just for an hour every day, the anguish he went through was unimaginable.

One had to have incredible mental fortitude to survive ten years in such a manner. Otherwise, one would have long committed suicide in despair.

“I was immature back then, and I failed to discern truth from the false, believing a manual so easily... Yang shi, I beg of you to save me!” Du Miaoxuan clasped his hands.

Thinking about it now, he must have had a screw loose back then.

Just because he coincidentally found an ancient manual, he thought that it was a precious treasure and explored desolate lands and utilized many means to kill a Snow Wolf so as to obtain its blood. He thought that his cultivation would soar rapidly and he would become the next clan head. Never did he expect to land himself in such a state.

If this isn't a screw loose, what else could it be?

“Failed to discern the truth? That secret manual that you obtained... is real!” Zhang Xuan said.

“Is that true?” Hearing those words, Du Miaoxuan's body jolted. “How is that possible? If it is real, how did I land myself in such a state...”

If what that was detailed in the manual was true, why would he fall into such an unsightly state for so many years?

Furthermore, why would his cultivation fall from Pixue realm to Dingli realm, and thereafter be stuck at that level?

153 Stuffed Yourself When You Were Full Looking For I

“The secret manual is real, but the most important portion had been destroyed by someone else, leaving behind an incomplete version. That is the reason why you are in such a state!” After which, Zhang Xuan did not continue to linger on the topic: “Alright, I will be performing acupuncture on you to resolve the hidden problems in your body!”

“Yes!” Du Miaoxuan took a step forward hurriedly.

With a turn of Zhang Xuan’s wrist, a silver needle appeared. Then, with a flick of his finger, the needle flew straight at Du Miaoxuan.

The Library of Heaven’s Path only revealed basic information and the person’s flaws; the way to solve their problems are not written in it. However, Du Miaoxuan’s problem is similar that of Ling Tianyu’s wife, and he had blockages in his meridians. This caused the blood of the Snow Wolf to fail in achieving its original purpose.

Zhang Xuan just had to clear the blockages to settle his problem.

To Zhang Xuan, such problems are a piece of cake. The zhenqi from the Heaven’s Path Divine Art is as clear and pure as water. Any blockage would be washed away by it immediately.

Hu hu hu hu!

Dozens of needles pierced through Du Miaoxuan’s skin.

Du Miaoxuan could only feel numb and itchy sensations on his skin. That bestial instinct which he had been suppressing before, that which caused him to enter into a berserk all the time, flowed through the opened meridians as though river water, and to the rest of his body.

Geji! Geji!

The moment the blood of the Snow Wolf assimilated into his body, his zhenqi soared instantaneously. With a series of pops that was reminiscent of a live firecracker, the acupoints in his body exploded open one by one.

Pah pah pah pah!

As though he were a magnet, the spiritual energy in the atmosphere gushed into his body frenziedly. In the blink of an eye, he had broken through Dingli realm pinnacle.

Pixue realm primary stage!

Pixue realm intermediate stage...

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...

In a short moment, he had reached Pixue realm pinnacle, but the momentum did not seem to be stopping here.

Boom!

Du Miaoxuan's body shook. Finally, the soar in his cultivation level had come to a stop, That bestial instinct which caused him so many worries had also disappeared without a trace.

Fighter 7-dan, Tongxuan realm primary stage!

His cultivation level had actually risen from a Dingli realm pinnacle to Tongxuan realm! That was more than one entire realm!

“I...”

After sensing the changes in his body, even though Du Miaoxuan is a man with mental resilience, his eyes reddened.

For an entire decade, he had been tortured by untold pain. Every day, he would turn into a beast and white fur would sprout over his entire body. He thought that this affliction would remain with him until his deathbed. Yet, in just a short moment, it was solved by the man standing before him. Furthermore... He even achieved a breakthrough in his cultivation!

Putong!

Du Miaoxuan knelt to the floor. He was extremely grateful to Yang shi, and with no hypocrisy behind his action whatsoever, he said, “Thank you for granting me a new life...”

Not only did Yang shi solve his affliction, he even helped to raise his cultivation realm to Tongxuan realm. Du Miaoxuan saw this favor as equivalent to the noble deed of birth and had already regarded him as his parent.

The new him, upon returning home, would definitely regain his status as one of the top elders in the clan. No one would dare to underestimate him anymore.

To achieve such results, he would have been willing to kneel for even a year.

“Hurry up and take the things out!”

Calming the agitation in his heart, Du Miaoxuan signaled to his son.

“Yes!” Du Yuan hurriedly took out a stack of gold bills and passed it forward.

Initially, Du Yuan thought that his father was mad for kneeling before the mansion and taking out so much cash at once. Only now did he realize that his father was not only rational, he also had foresight.

Tongxuan realm...

So what if he had lost ten years of his life? With the current strength of his father, he would be a front-runner for the position of clan head if he were to want to vie for it now. No one would be able to stop him.

Even if he isn't able to become the clan head, given his strength as a Tongxuan realm expert, earning a back that few million isn't a difficult task.

“This is the capability of a master teacher...”

This is a master teacher, the most respected occupation in the entire continent, capable of determining the fate of a person, either sending him to heaven or to hell.

They were still looking at Yang shi in admiration when Sun Qiang walked forward, took over the stack of money and gestured outward, “Elder Du, Du gongzi, let’s go. The old master wants to rest!”

“Yes. I have intruded on Yang shi today. I will come by and pay my respects to you another day!”

Knowing that the other party was inviting them out, Du Miaoxuan walked out of the main hall along with Du Yuan.

Right as they were stepping out, a faint voice echoed in their ears, “As for why there were missing pages in the Snow Wolf blood secret manual, you should investigate whether it was due to malicious intentions!”

“This...” Du Miaoxuan’s body stiffened. He turned around and bowed once more, “Yang shi, thank you for your advice...”

After which, he turned around to leave.

Back then, Du Miaoxuan was a strong contender for the position of the clan head. It was too much of a coincidence that he would abruptly engage in such a dangerous cultivation technique in a vain attempt to break through to Tongxuan realm. It is hard to believe that there were no human hands behind that incident.

Thus, Zhang Xuan offered him one final piece of advice. Of course, whatever that happened afterward would not be a problem of his.

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“Ten years ago, Du Miaoxuan was afflicted with a major illness, causing his cultivation realm to plunge and resulting in him being eliminated from the race to become the clan head... The reason why he was kneeling before the door is probably to beg this master teacher to resolve this illness!”

Keeping vigil outside the mansion, Luo Chong recalled the various things that had happened to Du Miaoxuan and could not help but guess the situation.

“If Du Miaoxuan’s issue can be settled, then mine shouldn’t be a problem for him either...”

Du Miaoxuan’s illness was one that even Master Yuanyu was helpless toward. Even though Luo Chong had no idea what his condition is, he knew that he had sought many different physicians over the years and they were all helpless.

If that master teacher could easily solve such a conundrum, then the issue he has, that is to have suddenly become unable to maintain a tranquil mind during forging, should be a piece of cake for him!

He was still immersed in his thoughts when the tightly shut gates began to open slowly. Following which, Du Miaoxuan and Du Yuan emerged.

“I wonder if his problem has been solved...”

Hurriedly taking a look, Luo Chong’s eyes suddenly widened, his body stiffening immediately. “Tongxuan realm? This.... This... How is this possible?”

Just moments ago, when Du Miaoxuan entered, he saw clearly that he was Fighter 5-dan Dingli realm pinnacle. How did he... in less than ten minutes that he was inside, step into Tongxuan realm?

Most importantly, he is now in high spirits, appearing vastly different from the man that he was on the way in earlier.

What was going on?

It can’t be that it is real!

Even if a master teacher can offer guidance on breaking through cultivation realms, there has to be a limit to that...

To rise from Dingli realm pinnacle to reach Tongxuan realm in around ten minutes...

Luo Chong rubbed his eyes gently, afraid that he might have seen wrongly.

Staring intently at him once more, he realized that... he wasn’t wrong! The other party is truly Tongxuan realm, and furthermore, judging by how he is unable to control the inner

breath within him, it is likely that Du Miaoxuan had just broken through. Otherwise, as long as an expert of this level hid his cultivation, it is impossible for anyone, even a person of Luo Chong's caliber, to discern.

“Brother Sun, farewell!”

Still in shock, he saw Du Miaoxuan bid Butler Sun farewell and leave.

“I should go over and ask...”

Unable to suppress his urge any longer, he chased after Du Miaoxuan hurriedly.

“Elder Du...”

“Oh, it's Master Luo!” Du Miaoxuan recognized the other person and hurriedly bowed.

“That mansion is...”

Diving straight into the topic, Luo Chong asked.

“That is where Yang shi lives!”

Aware of what the other party wanted to know, Du Miaoxuan nodded his head and verified the other party's doubts.

“Is he really a master teacher?”

Luo Chong's eyes narrowed.

“Yang shi is a man of incredible capabilities. If Master Luo Chong has any problems, you can beg for his guidance. However... Yang shi came to Tianxuan Kingdom with the intention to rest. He doesn't really wish to be disturbed...”

Du Miaoxuan said.

“Doesn't wish to be disturbed?” Luo Chong's complexion turned awful.

Even though he is of considerable social standing, he does not dare to interrupt a true master teacher's rest.

“Actually, there is no need to be frustrated. Yang shi said just now that anyone who wishes to obtain his aid has to pay three million beforehand. Regardless of whether the problem is solved or not, the sum will not be returned.”

Also recalling what Butler Sun said, Du Miaoxuan continued, “Of course, as a master teacher, Yang shi cares not for material possession. The reason why he made such a request is so as to limit the number of visitors. Otherwise, if everyone were to rush to him to plead for guidance, he wouldn’t even need to think of resting, he would probably work to death instead...”

As he said those words, he couldn’t help but be envious. To think that just the entrance fee would be three million, a master teacher is indeed a master teacher. Even their means of earning money is that incredible.

As an elder of the Du Clan, his entire fortune, both liquid and fixed assets, was only worth this amount after so many years.

“That makes sense...”

Hearing that it is a problem that can be solved with money, Luo Chong heaved a sigh of relief.

Three million may be a huge sum, but for a master blacksmith like him, it isn’t a big deal.

“Thank you for telling me this. I happen to have a matter to consult Yang shi about so I will have to take my leave!” Upon finishing his words, Luo Chong walked toward the mansion.

The mansion’s layout is in no way elegant. In fact, it even seems ordinary. If not for Du Miaoxuan ascertaining it personally, he wouldn’t have believed that a true master teacher lives here.

After paying the fee of three million upfront, Luo Chong followed Sun Qiang into a room. In there, he noticed a middle-aged man seated quietly in the middle of the room. Somehow, the person’s presence is so faint that if not for seeing him in the flesh, he would not have noticed the other party.

“Incredible!”

Luo Chong’s eyes narrowed.

Luo Chong is a Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm expert. There are only two possibilities when he is unable to sense a person’s cultivation realm. Firstly, the person’s level of cultivation is

higher than his. Or secondly, the other party's zhenqi is much purer than his.

Regardless of which of the two it is, it points to the fact that the person before him is a true master teacher.

Putting away his arrogance as a master blacksmith, he stepped forward and bowed, "Luo Chong pays respect to Yang shi!"

"Un, from what Xiao Qiang told me, you are a blacksmith?" Zhang Xuan asked doubtfully.

Like apothecaries, blacksmiths are also ranked highly in the Upper Nine Paths and possess exceptional social standing. He didn't expect that such a person would have something to request of him.

"Yes!" Luo Chong replied.

"What unresolvable problem have you encountered?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"Replying Yang shi, recently, all the attempts that I make to forge equipment all end in failure and until now, I am unable to find the reason for it. I hope that you can enlighten me!" Luo Chong did not hide anything and spoke directly.

"Let me see you forge an equipment!" Zhang Xuan said.

"Yes!" With a flick of Luo Chong's wrist, an entire set of equipment required for equipment forging appeared in the room.

As a 1-star blacksmith and the leader of the Blacksmith Guild, he carries such basic equipment with him everywhere he goes.

Starting the fire, forging the equipment, melding the metals together, refining the equipment...

His movements flowed elegantly, reminding one of drifting clouds and flowing streams.

An hour later, a longsword appeared in his hands. However, just as he was about to apply the final touches, a crisp note echoed from the sword and a crack appeared on it.

Failure!

Just like he had said, he is unable to successfully forge the weapon.

Looking at how he was unable to forge even the simplest sword, Luo Chong was depressed.

That was just an ordinary mortal-tier sword, and there are no profound techniques involved in the process whatsoever. It is truly an enigma why such a situation would occur.

Luo Chong turned to look at the master teacher before him and bowed, “Yang shi, please enlighten me!”

“You want me to enlighten you?”

Zhang Xuan stood up and approached the other party. He picked up the broken sword and lowered his gaze to take a glance. Then, he sighed, “If I’m not wrong...”

“You stuffed yourself when you were full!!”

“You stuffed yourself when you were full!!”

This is a Chinese phrase that meant to say that one deserved it. (Thus the title, Looking for it)

154 The Use of the Golden Book?

“What?”

Luo Chong’s face darkened.

Even if you are a master teacher, you shouldn’t insult me like that!

No matter what, I am the dignified leader of the Blacksmith Guild. I am of noble standing, and you say that I stuffed myself despite being already full (looking for it)...

I came here in earnest to consult you, yet you gave me such an answer. Aren’t you are looking down on me...

Even though Sun Qiang already knew that the old master would say such shocking words, he was still unable to control his shock upon hearing those words and nearly knocked his head against the wall.

My great old master, it is really okay for you to speak to a true blacksmith like this?

Cough cough, even an ordinary person would turn all out against you if you say such words to them...

Most importantly... The reason why he came here is to seek enlightenment on why he is unable to successfully forge an equipment. Yet, the first few words you say to him is that he stuffed himself when he was full (looking for it)... Aren’t you being too arrogant?

What does stuffing oneself have to do with forging equipment? The only relationship between the two is that one would feel weak if one doesn’t eat. However, for a Tongxuan realm expert like Guild Leader Luo Chong, this shouldn’t pose a problem at all!

“There’s no need to get so agitated!”

Seeing that the other party was getting agitated, Zhang Xuan smiled, not paying the other party's anger any heed. "You don't need to deny my words so hurriedly. Let me ask you, have you been eating 【Dragon-scaled Prawns】 daily?"

"Indeed, is there a problem?" Luo Chong looked at Yang shi doubtfully.

The Dragon-scaled Prawn is an animal unique to Lake Hong and it made a delectable dish. It is one of the most favorite food in the upper echelons of Tianxuan Kingdom. He also used to eat it frequently, but such an anomaly had never occurred in the past. Could his failure to forge equipment really be related to this?

"If I'm not wrong, these Dragon-scaled Prawns that you ate came from one batch you bought at a single go!"

Zhang Xuan continued asking.

Luo Chong nodded his head. At the same time, a doubt arose in his mind.

How did the other party know this?

His Dragon-scaled Prawns came from the same batch he bought a few days ago. There were several thousands of it, filling two whole crates. In order to ensure its freshness, he even reared them specially in his courtyard's pond.

He would carefully pick the living and healthy ones to eat, so it is impossible for anything to be wrong with the prawns. Furthermore, after consuming it, there weren't any anomalies with his body, and he didn't suffer from diarrhea or any other symptoms either. How can this be related to him being unable to successfully forge weapons?

"That's right then!" Zhang Xuan chuckled. "Do you know when do Dragon-scaled Prawns reproduce?"

"When do they reproduce?" Luo Chong became increasingly confused. He was only interested in eating the prawns, how would he possibly know all these?

"I know..."

Just as he was about to ask Yang shi for the answer, Sun Qiang suddenly spoke.

“Speak!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

“Dragon-scaled Prawns usually bear their offspring near the end of summer, the start of autumn, which is around now!” Sun Qiang said.

He had worked in Tianyu Merchant Firm for numerous years. Even though he had never bought them, he often came into contact with these products and naturally, he possessed a little bit of knowledge on them.

“That’s right. It’s this season!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

The academy’s semester had just started not long ago, and it is currently the start of autumn, which is also the mating season for the Dragon-scaled Prawns.

Hearing those words, Luo Chong felt his head going faint. He was about to go insane from the confusion.

Yang shi, I’m here to ask you why I am unable to forge equipment, not to look into when Dragon-scaled Prawns reproduce... What matter is it of mine that they bear offsprings? It is not like the children are mine...

“There’s no need to be anxious. You being unable to forge equipment has something to do with this!” Seemingly sensing his bewilderment, Zhang Xuan continued to say. “The Dragon-scaled Prawn is considered an yin-type food. Eating too much will weaken a person’s yang energy. Of course, this weakening effect is minimal and negligible, and doesn’t affect a person’s body at all!”

“However, the Dragon-scaled Prawns after mating are different!”

“The Dragon-scaled Prawn infuses all of its essence and vitality into its offsprings, causing its own body to weaken. Furthermore, its body generates a substance that will numb a person’s nerves. With excessive consumption, one’s mind will become dull...”

At this point, Zhang Xuan paused and looked at Zhou Chong with glowing eyes. “Have you been unable to enter the state of Will of Mind 2-dan, Heart of Tranquil Water? Not only so, you find yourself getting irritated easily, causing your forging abilities to take a huge blow, resulting in you being unable to successfully forge an equipment?”

Regardless of whether one was forging pills or equipment, one’s state of mind is of absolute importance. Without a steady mind, it is impossible for one to succeed.

“Could it truly be that... I’ve eaten too many Dragon-scaled Prawns?”

Luo Chong’s entire body shuddered and he staggered two steps backward.

It is true that recently, he had been unable to focus his attention on forging equipment, and that he was unable to enter the state of Heart of Tranquil Water to achieve total serenity. He had tried all kinds of methods and means to calm himself but to no avail. To think that the problem... lies with the prawns.

It was inconceivable to him that a Dragon-scaled Prawn which had undergone the reproduction process would produce a substance that would numb one’s nerves... If not for the other party pointing it out, he would have never imagined that this would be possible. However, why haven’t he heard of it before?

“All animals have their own means of self-protection. Dragon-scaled Prawns are the same as well. They are at their weakest right after their birth, and thus, they produce such a substance to protect themselves. However... They still ended up on the plate anyway!”

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

“I know my fault now. In future, I will never eat Dragon-scaled Prawns again. Yang shi, please guide me on how I can resolve this situation!”

With a pale face, Luo Chong hesitated for a slight moment before hurriedly clasping his fist.

Even though he loves eating Dragon-scaled Prawns, forging equipment is far more important than the former.

“Er...”

Upon hearing the other party’s words, Zhang Xuan was stumped.

Actually, he didn’t know how he should resolve the problem as well.

The Library of Heaven’s Path only detailed the reasons behind why he was facing such a condition. Luo Chong’s main problem is that he had eaten too many Dragon-scaled Prawns, causing the nerve-numbing venom to accumulate in his body, thus resulting in his unstable mental state and him failing in his forging attempts.

As for how he can dispel this venom, Zhang Xuan is truly clueless.

However, even if he didn’t know, he wouldn’t let anyone else find out. There was barely a brief moment of hesitation before he placed his hands behind his back to portray the image of a supreme expert.

“First release those Dragon-scaled Prawns that you have caught. As for the solution to your problem, it will depend on your future actions. However... I can tell you this. As long as you stay away from it for a long period of time, you will recover slowly, but surely!”

He wasn’t deceiving the other party. The detoxification ability of a human body is extremely powerful, especially so for a Tongxuan realm expert. As long as he stays away from the prawns for a period of time, the venom that had accumulated in his body will be passed out quickly.

“Yang shi, thank you for your guidance!”

Knowing the cause and solution to his problem, Luo Chong heaved a sigh of relief. He hurriedly bowed to him.

At this moment, he was already completely impressed by this Yang shi.

Just by seeing him forge an equipment, he is able to tell that he likes to eat Dragon-scaled Prawns and even found the root of the problem as to why he was unable to successfully forge an equipment——He stuffed himself when he was full (Looking for it)!

As expected of a master teacher, his ability of discernment is indeed incredible.

The three million, worth it!

“Yang shi, can you offer me some pointers for equipment forging?”

Finally uncovering the reason behind his problem and knowing that time can resolve it, Luo Chong’s mind started to wander.

He had been stuck at the 1-star blacksmith intermediate stage for a very long time, being unable to break through this limit. Now that there is a master teacher before him, he was tempted to make full use of this opportunity to obtain a pointer or two so that he can break through this impasse.

“Equipment forging?”

Zhang Xuan did not expect that the other party would not leave right after his problem was solved and instead, request to learn equipment forging from him. For a moment, he was taken aback.

Honestly, he didn’t even know what one had to do for equipment forging, so how could he offer him pointers?

“Looks like I am being too impetuous...”

Upon receiving no reply from the other party, Luo Chong felt awkward.

A master teacher only teaches his own students. He is in no way related to him, so it is indeed a little inappropriate for him to have made such a request.

Zhang Xuan waved his hands, “Xiao Qiang, escort our guest out!”

“Master Luo, the old master needs to rest. This way please!”

Sun Qiang stepped forward.

“Yes!” Luo Chong nodded his head and bid farewell.

“It is indeed difficult to pass off as a master teacher...”

Seeing Luo Chong leave, Zhang Xuan rubbed between his eyebrows.

Master teachers grasped the knowledge of innumerable occupations in their minds and they possess discernment abilities unimaginable to others. At present, the reason why he had been able to achieve this much was due to the help of the Library of Heaven’s Path. The moment he stops using it, he will be exposed in an instant.

“I really do wonder how those master teachers gather and store so much knowledge in their mind...”

A person’s energy is limited. After undergoing the apothecary examination, he understood that the knowledge required in just the field is as vast and as deep as the ocean. Without the library, not only would he be unable to pass the examination, he might not have been able to score even a single point.

A true master teacher can’t possibly possess such a cheating machine. It is truly a mystery to him how they are able to learn so much and pass all those examinations, given a human’s limited lifespan.

“Regardless, I have to read more books from now on. After all, the library is still an external object!”

The thought appeared in his mind.

To him, even though the library is incredible, it remains as an external tool. If he were to rely on it for everything he does while not putting in any effort to improve himself, even if he were able to pass off his disguise successfully in a remote and backward kingdom like Tianxuan Kingdom, he will definitely be exposed if he were to go somewhere more prosperous.

Thus, no matter what, his own vault of knowledge is important as well.

The thought appeared in his mind and grew so powerful that he is no longer able to flush it out. With a jolt of his mind, he

looked at the Library of Heaven's Path once more.

Reading books and learning from them in the real world is a slow process, but he is able to speed up the process multiple folds by reading the books inside the library. He had already experienced such wonders for himself previously.

Even though the books in the library are accessible to him with a single thought and he is able to freely look through it, the knowledge nevertheless can't be said to truly belong to him.

It is just like in Baidu and Google in his previous life. Although such technology allows one to look up for solutions to their problems, the knowledge is external to its users. One is unable to utilize them easily and freely.

Only by memorizing everything in his own mind can he be truly considered as knowledgeable.

“Un? What is that?”

Upon entering the library, he noticed something that is out of place.

Unknowingly, a golden book had appeared in the depths of the densely packed bookshelves.

He is extremely certain that he had never seen this manual before.

“Come here!”

With a swipe of his hand, the golden book gently quivered and fell right into his palm.

The book is extremely thin and there doesn't seem to be much content in it. Flipping it open casually, Zhang Xuan was dumbfounded.

There was only a single page to it and there were no content whatsoever in it. It was a blank book.

“What is the use of this book?”

Zhang Xuan was bewildered.

He doesn't know when such a book had appeared in the Library of Heaven's Path, nor does he know why it is

completely blank.

“I should just put that aside for now and focus on gaining knowledge from the other books...”

After examining the golden book for a very long time, he remained unable to uncover its purpose. Thus, Zhang Xuan shook his head and chose to put it aside. He looked at the Library of Heaven's Path once more. Many books had been formed in it, and he intended to look through them properly so as to assimilate the knowledge into his mind.

The moment the thought flashed through his mind, before he could even make a move, the golden book in his hand quivered and transformed into a brilliant ray of light. Under the blinding radiance, all of the contents of all the books in the library came surging into Zhang Xuan's mind.

Before Zhang Xuan could react, everything went dark. He had fainted.

155 5-star Incident

The Chen Clan, due to having an official apothecary within its ranks, is an extremely prominent and distinguished clan in Tianxuan Kingdom.

Usually, in such a clan, there would be no shortage of pills, everyone would have great accomplishments and they would walk with their heads held high. Yet, at this moment, every member of the clan had put on a bitter expression. A depressing atmosphere loomed over the entire Chen Residence.

“Alright, let’s go by this rule. No one is to object or he will face being expelled from the clan!”

In the hall, Apothecary Chen Xiao surveyed the surroundings before speaking sentimentally and desperately.

He was invited as an examiner for the Pill Debate with a fellow named Zhang Xuan, but the other party declared that he would be unable to live for much longer. Feeling that his body functions are indeed starting to fail, he felt extremely dismal. Thus, he started to make preparations upon returning to the clan.

He is an apothecary and his presence brought the entire Chen Clan to prosperity. The moment he dies, those who are envious of his fortune would definitely employ every possible mean to wrestle for a share. If so, it would just be a matter of time before the clan falls.

Thus, in order to prevent such a scenario from occurring, he ordered for all clansmen to sell their assets and disappear from the capital, never to return.

“Clan head...”

After those words were spoken, wails echoed in the air.

They had been living a life of luxury, and many could not accept the fact that they have to move to a far away place so suddenly.

“Enough! What is this clan becoming, for you to be crying and wailing? Chen Cong, make the necessary preparations!” Apothecary Chen Xiao said.

Chen Cong is his son. Knowing that he doesn't have many days left, he had already appointed him as the new clan head.

“Yes!” Chen Cong nodded his head. Just as he was about to leave, a young man walked forward and whispered something into his ears. Then, Chen Cong's eyes lit up and he hurriedly raised his head, “Father...”

“What is it?” Apothecary Chen Xiao lifted his teacup and frowned angrily.

He always believed that his son comprehends the importance of prioritizing, so why is he so disobedient now?

Does he not know that the Clan's prosperity is due solely to his identity as an official apothecary? Without his prestige suppressing the ambitions other clans possess, they wouldn't be able to guard the wealth they had accumulated through pill forging throughout these years.

“Father, a master teacher has appeared in the capital. Perhaps... He can solve your problem...” Noticing the displeasure on his father's face, Chen Cong spoke quickly, not daring to hesitate in the least.

“Master teacher? Could it be fake news?” Apothecary Chen Xiao shook his head.

If it were indeed a master teacher, how could he, a dignified 1-star apothecary, possibly have not received any news?

“I don't know for sure, but I sent Chen Tao to investigate upon hearing the rumors yesterday. This master teacher is known as Yang Xuan and not only did he solve Ling Tianyu's wife's illness, even Du Miaoxuan from the Du Clan knelt before his gates. Furthermore...”

“Furthermore what?”

“Furthermore, when Du Miaoxuan emerged from his mansion less than ten minutes after entering, he had already evolved from a Dingli realm pinnacle to a Tongxuan realm expert.”

Chen Cong hurriedly said. “On top of that... the guild leader of the Blacksmith Guild, Luo Chong, also entered his mansion, and when he left, he was full of praises for the person, claiming that he is a true master teacher...”

Dang lang! Before he could finish his words, the teacup in his father’s hands had fallen onto the ground and shattered into pieces. Following which, his lifeless and pitiful expression vanished and in its place was a face so flushed, it was as though his cheeks were on fire. “Where does this master teacher live? Bring me to meet him now...”

“Right now? I have to first sell the family fortune...”

Chen Cong muttered, but before he could finish his words, his father, who seemed as though he might breathe his last any moment now, had already reached the doorstep and he bellowed, “Selling your head! Hurry up...”

“...” Chen Cong.

“...” The crowd in the Chen Clan.

The wailing in the room silenced in an instant and everyone’s mouth was so wide that a chicken egg could be stuffed into it. Looking at the clan head whose attitude did an 180-degree turn all of a sudden, they became completely speechless.

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Pavilion Elder Qian does not wield actual authority in Tianxuan Kingdom, but he holds a very important position. Every fortnight, Emperor Shen Zhui would summon him to the royal palace and query him.

He is the emperor’s eyes. He gathers all news within the country and sorts them into books for the emperor to peruse.

It is only with these news that Emperor Shen Zhui is able to keep abreast of current affairs and continue making wise decisions for the country, allowing the kingdom to grow stronger steadily and not be threatened by powerful enemies.

Thus, in the kingdom, even personnel who hold true authority do not dare to offend him. They fear that he might pass on incorrect news which could cause the emperor to doubt them.

Today is yet another day to sort and compile the gathered news for reporting. Thus, he had arrived at his personal office early in the morning.

At this moment, the room is squeezed full of people, all of them embroiled in a squabble.

“Causing a ruckus like this, how inappropriate!”

Seeing that his subordinates were arguing among themselves instead of working, Pavilion Elder Qian’s face darkened.

“Yes!” Everyone immediately ran back to their positions fearfully.

“Pavilion Elder...”

A middle-aged man walked over.

“Un, are there any important incidents that happened these few days?” Pavilion Elder Qian sat in his chair and looked over.

This is his job scope. He would ask his subordinate about the incidents that had occurred in the capital and compile them before considering whether he should highlight any individual incident to the emperor.

“In these ten days, there is a total of 17 1-star incidents, 12 2-star incident, and 3 3-star incidents...” The middle-aged man hesitated before passing over a stack of paper.

Countless incidents were detailed on top and they were divided in terms of their importance so as to make it convenient for others to read through it. They were graded stars based on their respective importance.

1-star is the lowest level and it means that the incident isn’t important at all. As the number of stars increase, the more important the incident become. 5-star is the highest number of stars an incident can be given, and the severity of the matter would be equivalent to that of an enemy invasion and the downfall of the country is in sight.

Listening to the report, Pavilion Elder Qian lowered his head to take a look.

“Bai Xun xiao wangye challenged son of Prime Minister Liu Cheng and injured him, causing a huge conflict between the two great clans... Evaluation, 1-star!”

“Royal Secretary Lu Zhong brought a new concubine to his family and she is a citizen of Tianyu Kingdom. Her exact identity is unknown... Evaluation, 1-star!”

“17 people of Tianxuan Merchant Firm assaulted by bandit at Plum Snow Ridge and they were completely annihilated. Bandits likely to be the same ones who escaped from the capital several months ago... Evaluation, 1-star!”

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Even though 1-star incidents are of the lowest severity within the classification, they had far-reaching impacts. Taking the first example of Bai Xun challenging the son of the Prime Minister, for example, if the matter isn't resolved properly, it is easy for the conflict to escalate. If discord were to be sowed among two authorities of the royal court, the internal stability of the country would be affected.

However, it is clear that these people are used to dealing with such matters. They aren't too agitated upon seeing these earth-shaking incidents.

“Un, you did well evaluating them!” Looking through the 17 1-star incidents, Pavilion Elder Qian nodded his head. Then, he flipped to the second page and what was written on it was mainly 2-star incidents.

“A calamity occurred in the Southwest Hundred Ridges and thousands of people lost their homes. Currently, they have been settled... Evaluation, 2-star!”

“Tianxuan Money Vault recently released new bills, the highest denomination is a million... Evaluation, 2-star!”

“Zhunnan Marquis reached Tongxuan realm advanced stage, becoming one of the top ten experts in the kingdom... Evaluation, 2-star!”

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These matters are closely related to the politics and situation of the kingdom. The impacts these matters could possibly bring are much greater than that of 1-star incidents.

After looking through the twelve 2-star incidents, Pavilion Head Qian nodded his head once more. There is nothing wrong with the evaluations here as well.

Flipping over to the third page, 3-star incidents were detailed on it.

“The Teacher Guild stripped Elder Shang Chen of Hongtian Academy of his position as the head of Education Bureau for being not partial in his evaluation of Zhang Xuan laoshi’s Teacher Qualification Examinations... Evaluation, 3-star!”

“Zhang Xuan laoshi and Lu Xun laoshi would be competing in a Teacher Evaluation 12 days later... Evaluation, 3-star!”

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“Incidents regarding the Teacher Guild and academies would automatically be promoted by a single star. Lu Xun laoshi is the individual who is most likely to become a master teacher of Tianxuan Kingdom, and as such, incidents involving him are given an additional star. These two events are indeed worth 3-star, not bad!”

After which, Pavilion Elder Qian nodded his head.

“There are no problems with these... The problem is... is...”

Hesitation shrouded the middle-aged man’s face.

“What’s wrong?” Pavilion Elder Qian’s eyebrows shot up.

“Something has happened these few days and we are unable to determine a star rating for it. That is the matter that we were discussing earlier...” The middle-aged man said.

“Oh? Tell me!” Pavilion Elder Qian glanced at him in curiosity.

“Three days ago, a person named Yang Xuan appeared in the capital. He claimed that he is a master teacher and he settled Ling Tianyu’s wife’s illness...” The middle-aged man said.

“Oh, I’ve heard of the matter. I even specially headed to the Teacher Guild to investigate the matter, but there isn’t such a name in the records of that kingdom. It is probably a gimmick of Ling Tianyu, so there’s no need to pay it much heed. Alright, classify it under 1-star incidents!” Pavilion Elder Qian said.

Master teachers are just like stars in the sky, an existence that others can only look up to. As long as a kingdom has a 1-star master teacher supporting it, its overall might would be bolstered significantly. If the other party is truly a master teacher, how could he come into the capital without anyone knowing of it?

“1-star incident?” The middle-aged man smiled bitterly. “I’m afraid that the matter isn’t as simple as that. If he only treated Ling Tianyu’s wife, 1-star would suffice. However... Yesterday, Elder Du Miaoxuan from the Four Great Clans knelt at his entrance for an entire day, and in the ten minutes that he was in the mansion, he broke through from Dingli realm pinnacle to Tongxuan realm!”

“What? Such an incredible increase in his strength?”

Pavilion Elder Qian was taken aback. A grim expression appeared on his face as he said, “If that’s the case, the matter can be classified as a 2-star incident...”

“Yesterday afternoon, the guild leader of the Blacksmith Guild, Lord Luo Chong, entered the residence and his face was glowing when he emerged. He was full of praises for the master of the mansion and claimed that he is a true master teacher...”

Ignoring the evaluation Pavilion Elder Qian made, the middle-aged man continued speaking.

“Luo Chong...”

Pavilion Head Qian abruptly stood up with completely widened eyes.

Who is Luo Chong?

The guild leader of the Blacksmith Guild, one of the top figures of the Tianxuan Kingdom!

If he thought so as well, could it be that... This Yang Xuan is truly a master teacher?

“Then... then... This incident can be classified as a 3-star incident...”

Pavilion Elder Qian was astonished.

Before he could finish his words, the middle-aged man’s voice sounded once more.

“This morning, Guild Leader Ouyang of the Apothecary Guild and Apothecary Chen Xiao visited his mansion, but they were blocked at the door by the other party’s butler. Even so, not only did they not leave, they waited patiently without a single word of complaint...”

“This... This...” Pavilion Elder Qian’s face turned completely white and he staggered backward in disbelief. “This is a... 4-star. No, it’s a 5-star incident. Hurry up and write all of these down. I have to report this to the emperor, do it as fast as you can!”

“5-star?”

“Is there no need to double confirm it?”

5-star incident... It has not appeared in Tianxuan Kingdom for several decades now.

The crowd, who were unable to determine a star rating for the incident, upon hearing Pavilion Elder Qian’s words, were flabbergasted. Then a brief moment later, chaos broke loose.

156 Resounding throughout the Capital

“You say that even Guild Leader Luo Chong was full of praises?”

“Du Miaoxuan had knelt for an entire day, and not only was his complexion glowing when he left the mansion, his cultivation was even raised?”

“Looks like we have all guessed wrongly, this Yang Xuan is definitely a master teacher!”

“Only a true master teacher can make a person like Du Miaoxuan kneel willingly and leave Guild Leader Luo Chong impressed...”

“Hurry up and prepare my name scroll, I want to pay him a visit!”

TL: It is like a name card when you visit others, detailing one’s occupation, official rank, and everything else on it.

“What? The Yang Residence isn’t accepting any visitors? Those who truly want to meet Yang shi has to first pay three million, and the sum is not refundable?”

“That makes sense as well. Everyone wants to meet a master teacher and if he really met anyone who visited his residence, he wouldn’t be able to rest at all. Only when such standards are implemented will he be able to ward off others, especially those who had malicious intents...”

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Such a situation is occurring in almost all of the powerful clans within the capital.

Everyone was taken aback.

Those who previously claimed that he is a fraud were completely silenced.

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After passing out for an unknown period of time, Zhang Xuan opened his eyes once more.

“This...”

Upon waking up, the first thing he realized was that countless knowledge had been assimilated into his mind. Every single book that was bathed in the golden book’s radiance had been imprinted into his head.

“This golden book can assimilate the knowledge within the library to be mine?”

Zhang Xuan was in a state of disbelief.

In the past, he had to manually browse through the books in the Library of Heaven’s Path. The corresponding knowledge did not truly belong to him then. But now, all of it is deeply imprinted in his head, becoming a part of his memory.

That is to say, the current him, even without the Library of Heaven’s Path, is a true apothecary in terms of his knowledge on pill forging.

“Where is that golden book?”

Zhang Xuan focused his attention into the library hurriedly and saw that the golden book is still there. However, the empty page within it had disappeared without a trace.

“This...”

Zhang Xuan blinked.

The disappearance of the golden page and the sudden infuse of knowledge in his head had occurred at the same time, it looks like the golden page holds such abilities.

“I wonder how this golden book is formed. It is simply too efficient to convert any book’s content into my actual knowledge in such a manner...”

Initially, even with the enhanced learning speed in the Library of Heaven's Path, finishing hundreds of thousand of books would have taken at least two years or so. Yet, with a single glow of the golden page, everything had been converted into his knowledge. Learning has become an incomparably easy process.

“Un? I was unconscious for an entire night?”

Awaking to the delight of unexpected gains, Zhang Xuan looked outside and he was shocked. To think that he would have lost consciousness for an entire night just like that.

Stretching his back, just as he was about to look for some food, he saw his butler, Sun Qiang, walking in.

“Old master, Guild Leader Ouyang Cheng of the Apothecary Guild and Apothecary Chen Xiao are here to visit.”

“Ouyang Cheng? Apothecary Chen Xiao?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

He is currently Master Teacher Yang Xuan, not Apothecary Zhang Xuan. In this identity, he does not know the other party, so why would they suddenly come looking for him.

“Yes. Furthermore... They have already waited 4 hours outside!” Sun Qiang was at a loss for words.

The old master sure can sleep. He returned to his bedroom the moment the sun set yesterday and slept all the way until now, when the sun has already risen high up in the sky... It is truly a wonder just by thinking of it.

He did not dare to interrupt the old master's sleep, so he could only tell the other party that the old master was resting. Who knew that the two of them would continue waiting at the entrance, camping outside for 4 straight hours... They sure are patient.

“Old master, Apothecary Chen Xiao has paid the three million. Look...”

“Have them enter!” Zhang Xuan gestured Sun Qiang to invite them in.

Sun Qiang left the room and in a moment's time, Guild Leader Ouyang and Apothecary Chen Xiao entered.

“Paying respects to Yang shi!”

Not daring to act haughtily before a master teacher, the two of them bowed immediately upon entering the room.

Initially, Apothecary Chen Xiao wanted to come alone. But considering that his prestige may be insufficient by itself, he roped Ouyang Cheng in as well.

“There's no need to stand on ceremony. If I'm not wrong, the reason why you two came so early to look for me should be because... this Apothecary Chen Xiao doesn't have long to live, and he hopes to look for a solution for his problem!”

Just as he was perplexed over the two's arrival, an inspiration flashed through his mind and Zhang Xuan recalled the matter at the Pill Debate.

This Chen Xiao had been cursed by someone else and as such, a death aura engulfed him, eating into his lifespan. Back then, during the Pill Debate, Zhang Xuan felt that he had reneged on the promises he made and that he wasn't worth saving, so he didn't elaborate much about the matter. This fellow probably couldn't find a solution to his problem and upon hearing that a master teacher had arrived in town, he came knocking to try his luck.

That was fine by Zhang Xuan as well. He could make him pay a hefty sum and in this way, he could redress the grievances of the person who entrusted his final will to him.

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan's abrupt words, Ouyang Cheng and Apothecary Chen Xiao nearly knelt down from fright and fainted.

Didn't a master teacher require a person to first display their battle technique, pill forging, or at the very least, examine one's body, before deducing one's problems or illnesses?

How was he able to tell all this in a single look...

Is this still his ability of discernment? Even a seer isn't as incredible as him!

Shocked by Yang Shi's capabilities, Apothecary Chen Xiao's face paled further. He was worried.

For the other party to be able to see through this much with a single look, his illness must be truly serious.

Can it be that he can't even survive to the next day?

"Where is the cauldron? Have you discarded it yet? Also, renegeing on your promises without even trying to fulfill it just because the other party is dead should be an action unbecoming of your identity as an official apothecary!"

Oblivious to the two's astounded expressions, Zhang Xuan recalled the contents of the book and continued speaking.

Noticing that there was no response, he lifted his head to take a look, only to see that Ouyang Cheng and Apothecary Chen Xiao's face were ghastly white.

Especially for the latter, his entire body was convulsing as though he was suffering from a stroke. Unable to hold endure any further, he collapsed to the floor on his knees.

"Yang Shi, save me... I beg you, please save me..."

Apothecary Chen Xiao was scared witless.

No one knew that he had obtained a cauldron from his dead friend. Even Zhang Xuan had only inferred that he had obtained a treasure from a deceased and didn't know what it was exactly. Yet, this person, even without a close examination, was able to tell so immediately...

Are you a deity?

Or else... How would you know...

"Is what Yang Shi said true?"

Even though Ouyang Cheng had no idea how Apothecary Chen Xiao got afflicted with a death aura, looking at his expression at this moment, he realized that what Yang Shi had said was the truth.

He was overwhelmed with awe for the other party.

Without requiring anything but just a single glance, he is able to tell the root of a person's illness, his symptoms, and even the cause... This is too incredible!

“Er...”

Only upon seeing the dumbfounded expression on their faces did Zhang Xuan remember that he is Master Teacher Yang Xuan currently, and he does not know the two of them.

Clearing his throat to break the awkward atmosphere, he said, “It's not difficult to save you. Firstly, you have to bury the cauldron with that old acquaintance of yours, then complete the task that he had delegated to you before his death...

Finally, you just have to get some pills that are rich in spiritual energy to nourish yourself for half a year.”

Actually, the other party's problem isn't really serious. He was cursed by the old acquaintance of his, but as long as he fulfills his promise solemnly and stays away from the cauldron, the power of the curse will slowly weaken and as time goes by, he will recover completely.

“Yang shi, thank you for your guidance!”

Hearing that there is hope for him, Apothecary Chen Xiao hurriedly nodded his head. At this moment, he does not doubt the other party's words in the least.

To be able to tell what his problem was with a single look, he is definitely more than capable of solving his problem.

Having learned the method to save himself, there was no longer any need for the two of them to stay. Thus, they turned around to leave.

Walking straight out of the main gates, Apothecary Chen Xiao still felt as though everything that had just happened is a dream.

The problem that left him in anguish and despair for numerous days, made him order his clan to sell their fortune and move to the rural countryside... was solved in just a few moments?

“There's no need to think too much about it. A master teacher's words are gold. Even though he phrased it in a very

simple manner, his ability to provide a solution to settle the root of a problem is not something others can emulate!”

Upon seeing the dazed look on the other party’s face, Ouyang Cheng glanced backward with a look of admiration before commenting in awe.

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The matter of Apothecary Chen Xiao and Guild Leader Ouyang Cheng entering and leaving the mansion became another affair that the various powers in the capital were concerned over.

“These two apothecaries had barely been in for five minutes and they are already out? Could it be that their problem is not settled? Help me look into it. I want to know what kind of problem that two apothecaries of noble standing could meet with such that they require the help of a master teacher!”

“You say that... Apothecary Chen Xiao had already conducted a funeral at his residence, sold all of his fortunes here, and even wrote a will... But after meeting Yang shi, he immediately swapped the white cloth into red ones and celebrated, as though the crisis had been averted?”

TL: In funerals, the mourning attire, and sometimes the location, would be white. On the other hand, red is the color of celebration (usually used in weddings).

“He was afflicted with a severe illness that could lead to his death at any moment, but in the five minutes that he met Yang shi, was cured of his illness...”

“Looks like we were all wrong. We only know the names of 1-star master teachers. Given the capabilities of this Yang shi... Can it be that he isn’t just a mere 1-star?”

“A higher tier master teacher?”

The entire city shook when the news was spread.

Today, the name of Yang Xuan——

Resounds throughout the capital.

157 Painting Examination

As his fame grew, ‘Master Teacher Yang Xuan’, who is a guise of Zhang Xuan, instead had more time to relax.

Even though there are many wealthy individuals in Tianxuan City, not many of them are capable of whipping out three million gold coins out of a blue. Furthermore, considering their own status, if they truly didn’t have grave problems that were beyond their own means, they would not dare to interrupt a master teacher’s rest.

After Guild Leader Ouyang and Apothecary Chen Xiao’s departure, the courtyard quietened once more.

After resting for an entire afternoon and seeing that no one came, Zhang Xuan removed his disguise and returned to the academy.

“Teacher, Huang Yu xiaojie has come to look for you and she is currently waiting in the classroom...”

Before he even reached the classroom, Yuan Tao had walked up to welcome him.

“What matter could she have for me?”

Zhang Xuan was perplexed. Knowing that it was impossible for Yuan Tao to answer this doubt of his, he returned straight back to the classroom without asking him too much about it. As expected, upon walking in, he saw Huang Yu xiaojie in the room, and she stood so quietly that the scene resembled a still painting.

The reason why she was able to become an assistant master teacher isn’t just because she is the daughter of the guild leader of the Teacher Guild. On top of that, she possessed a relaxed and soothing disposition that naturally gave others a good impression of her.

Sure enough, Zheng Yang, Yuan Tao and others’ eyes drifted toward her frequently but unwittingly, causing Zhao Ya to be so infuriated that she could murder someone.

Wang Ying and I aren't inferior in any way, alright? Why don't I see you peeking at us during lessons usually?

Damn it!

“Master Zhang!”

Oblivious to the thoughts of the young lady, Huang Yu's eyes lit up upon seeing him and hurried forward.

“For Huang xiaojie to come looking for me, is there any urgent matter?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“Master Lu invites you over.” Huang Yu clasped her hands.

“Could it be that he wishes to bring me to the royal palace's Book Collection Vault?” Zhang Xuan's eyes sparkled.

Previously, Lu Chen had promised to bring him to the kingdom's Book Collection Vault to look up Pixue realm secret manuals. As Emperor Shen Zhui wasn't in the capital then, the matter had to be postponed. However, given how he had specially sent Huang Yu to find him, there must have been some progress on the matter.

“Er... That isn't it!” Huang Yu said a little awkwardly.

“Master Lu wishes to conduct an examination for me and Bai Xun and thus, he wishes to invite you over as a judge.”

“Judge?” Zhang Xuan was stunned.

Huang Yu and Bai Xun wished to obtain Master Lu Chen's **【Ink Daylily Canvas】**. Thus, Master Lu Chen declared that whoever proves to be more knowledgeable on painting would be given the painting. As a result, the two of them came looking for Zhang Xuan a few days ago to have him offer them some pointers on painting. However, how could Zhang Xuan possibly know anything about painting? Thus, he could only come up with some random statements, but who knew that the two would regard his words so highly and study them vigorously. This is probably the final examination.

“Yes, Master Lu Chen knows that you have a deep understanding of painting and thinks that you are able to come up with the most precise judgment. Hence, he tasked me to invite you over at all costs...” Huang Yu said.

Zhang Xuan's eyebrows twitched.

He didn't even know what kind of brushes there are, needless to say, to make a precise judgment... This Master Lu Chen sure regards him much too highly.

However, the other party had done a lot for him, and he is still hoping to enter the kingdom's Book Collection Vault. Therefore, he wasn't in a good position to reject the other party's invitation.

Furthermore, Huang Yu had played a big role in helping him resolve the matter regarding the Enlightenment Will Trial.

"So as long as you don't mind me spouting nonsense, I am fine with it. When does it begin?"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head and accepted the invitation.

"Initially, we agreed to start the test at noon, but you were not in... However, we should still be able to make it in time if we leave now." Huang Yu said.

"Noon?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

By the time he woke up, the sun was already hanging high up in the sky. Furthermore, he had idled for quite a long time before walking out of his mansion casually. It is already going to be noon shortly... Aren't they in too much of a hurry to conduct the examination right now?

"Un!" Huang Yu nodded her head.

"Alright then!" Realizing that the other party was clearly determined to pull him over, Zhang Xuan knew that it would be futile to try rejecting the offer. Thus, he had a word with his students before following her out of the academy.

"I know that painting is hard to learn, and it doesn't seem like it would be easy to assess your standards!"

On the way, Zhang Xuan commented curiously.

He had never heard of a painting examination, needless to say, its rules.

After all, Master Lu Chen can't possibly have Bai Xun and her draw at the same time and evaluate them based on it.

Huang Yu was born in the Teacher Guild and she is an assistant master teacher as well. Even though she had never specially learned painting before, it is likely that she possesses an acceptable level of skill. As for Bai Xun... It is truly difficult for a fellow who only knows about martial arts to contemplate over a person's painting posture.

“The examination is something Master Lu Chen and Master Yuanyu came up with. Bai Xun and I hadn't heard of it from them, so we don't really know the details of the examination and how it would be conducted!” Huang Yu shook her head.

“Master Yuanyu?” Zhang Xuan was puzzled

Isn't that fellow a famous physician in Tianxuan Royal City? Why is he determining the format of an examination?

“Master Yuanyu is not merely a master physician, he is also skilled in painting. In fact, even Master Lu Chen is full of praises for him. He drew the **【River Canary Painting】**, of which, the river looked so lifelike that it seemed as though it was flowing. While drawing the painting on a boat, he actually attracted birds to his painting and the melodious chirping traveled far and wide. This became quite a legend in the city.”

Huang Yu's eyes glowed with respect.

“He's that incredible? Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

He had heard of Master Yuanyu from Wang Ying on the day that he accepted her. All along, he had thought that the other party was simply a physician. He would never have thought that the famous physician would be an accomplished painter as well.

To be able to attract real birds to his painting, his painting skills are definitely comparable to Master Lu Chen's.

“Indeed, Master Lu Chen had invited him over as well. He said having three people serve as judges would result in a more objective evaluation.” Huang Yu said.

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Since there are already two true master painters, Zhang Xuan's presence should be more of a supplement than a mandatory

one. When the time comes, he just has to go with the flow. As such, he became less anxious.

The only reason why he is able to impress Master Lu back then was due to the library. Given his absolute ignorance about painting, he should avoid speaking later on so as to prevent himself from speaking anything amateurish and giving himself away.

The two of them chatted as they proceeded forward. Soon, they arrived at Master Lu Chen's residence.

Before they could even step into the entrance, the butler Uncle Cheng walked forward to usher them in, "Master Zhang, Huang xiaojie, why did you two only arrive now? Master Yuanyu says that he has to visit someone else later on this afternoon and he is already getting a little impatient."

"I happened to be out then, causing Huang xiaojie to wait a long time for me." Zhang Xuan said in embarrassment.

The other party had decided to hold the examination this noon, but Zhang Xuan was often away from the academy the past few days, making it difficult to get hold of him either. As such, their arrival was delayed.

"Please enter!" Upon hearing his explanation, Uncle Cheng did not dare to nag further and immediately called for the two to enter.

After obtaining a mansion of his own, the feeling he had upon returning to this place was completely different.

Even though the design is simple and plain, the minute details are exceptionally exquisite. The mansion that he had rented pales too far in comparison to it; the two aren't even on the same level.

Of course, if a true master teacher were to be the one who renovated the residence he rented, there was no way it would have looked like that. The sense of aesthetics of a merchant can't compare to that of a master painter.

Following behind Uncle Cheng, they soon arrived at the lounge. Taking a rough glance at the room, he saw Master Lu Chen and an elderly seated across each other, sipping on tea.

The incomparably arrogant Bai Xun hid in the corner, looking at his surroundings anxiously. Upon seeing the duo, a delighted expression appeared on his face and he hurried forward to welcome them.

“Master Zhang, you’re here...”

Zhang Xuan nodded his head and turned his attention to the renowned Master Yuanyu.

He looked around sixty to seventy year old and possessed a snow-white beard. Even though he isn’t young anymore, his eyes are extremely spirited, giving one the feeling that energy is radiating from his eyes. For him to possess such vigor despite his advanced age, he truly lives up to his reputation as a famous physician.

“Little brother, you’re here.”

Master Lu Chen stood up with a smile.

“Master Lu Chen!” Zhang Xuan clasped his hands.

“Un, come over. Let me introduce you to Master Yuanyu, he is my best buddy, as well as a master painter!” Lu Chen happily introduced the two to each other. “Yuanyu, this is Brother Zhang Xuan, the one that I have told you about. Even though he is young, his talent in painting is probably in no way inferior to yours and mine.”

“Master is truly generous. I just... casually spoke... casually learned a bit.” Zhang Xuan hurriedly said.

Even though he was able to see through the flaws in Master Lu’s painting, it was mainly due to the cheat machine he had on him. If he were to try to decipher it using his own abilities, he probably wouldn’t be able to make heads or tails of it even if he spent three years on it.

“Knowledge and skills have nothing to do with age, and only those who are truly skilled will be deemed as masters. Since you were able to analyze Lu Chen’s 【Summer-Autumn Painting】 and 【Chi Xiong Howling to the Heavens】 and tell what is amiss with them, your ability of discernment is

truly incredible. We really lack youngsters like you nowadays.”

Master Yuanyu said.

His voice was calm and clear, and it granted its listeners a tinge of warmth.

It seemed that he had heard of Zhang Xuan’s matter through Lu Chen’s mouth, and his pitch-black eyes evaluated Zhang Xuan with curiosity.

“I am unworthy of your praises...” Zhang Xuan clasped his hands once more.

Only now did he know the names of the two paintings.

If Lu Chen and Yuanyu were to know his thoughts, they would definitely spurt blood.

A painter would often leave their names, bookmarks or words on it so that their name would remain in the annals of history.

He had seen the names on it, but as it was written in a unique font commonly used by painters, not to mention, it was written extremely sloppily, causing Zhang Xuan to be able to recognize those characters.

For him to be unable to recognize the words discernible by apprentice painter, to the point that he didn’t even know that it was the name of the painting... To be called master with those standards of his... If he were thick-skinned enough to admit it...

Of course, back then, when he came into contact with the paintings, the Library of Heaven’s Path had recorded their names in the books compiled on them. However, as he wasn’t asked about the names then, he didn’t pay any attention to it.

The few of them traded some pleasantries.

Master Yuanyu is indeed a person who is easy to get along with. Other people might look down on Zhang Xuan due to his young age, but not only did he not do so, he even held a level of admiration for him.

“Alright, since everyone is here, let’s start!”

Master Lu Chen stroked his beard.

“Yes!”

Huang Yu and Bai Xun nodded their head simultaneously.

“There’s only one Ink Daylily Canvas, and I can only give it to one of you. Thus, I devised this examination. Firstly, I do not wish to pass on this painting to someone who is completely ignorant of painting. Secondly, I hope to temper you two so as to rid your impatience and complacency, especially for Bai Xun.”

Master Lu Chen said calmly toward the two.

Even though he loved this Ink Daylily Painting a lot, he was willing to pass it on to the later generations. The reason why he had established this examination was for the two to come into more contact with painting and learn more about it.

He had been devoted to painting his entire life, even placing his entire youth into in. Seeing that there is no one to succeed his legacy, he started to panic. At this moment, Huang Yu and Bai Xun came over to request for the painting. As such, he made use of this opportunity to lay down the rules so as to have them learn about it. Perhaps, through his actions, painting can flourish within Tianxuan Kingdom.

Using his words, everyone is too engrossed with martial arts and youngsters who are interested in painting are dwindling. If he does not do anything soon, this craft might even find itself without a successor.

Also, by doing this, it had the effect of tempering Bai Xun’s personality. This fellow was short-tempered and often liked to resolve problems through his fists. Learning about painting could help him to calm his mind, thus keeping his temper in check. Otherwise, given that impatient personality of his, how could he inherit his father’s position and guard the northern border on behalf of the royal family?

158 It's Your Turn

“However, it hasn't been long since you two came into contact with painting. Not only would it be ineffective to have you paint for your examination, it would be an insult to the craft. Thus, after discussing with Yuanyu, we came up with a new examination format.”

It has just been a month since Huang Yu and Bai Xun first came into contact with painting. Even if Master Lu Chen were to have them paint, what kind of painting could they come up with? It would just be embarrassing to have that. Thus, Master Lu Chen chose to use another method to test them instead.

Speaking to this point, he chuckled and continued, “The format would be that... I, Yuanyu, and Brother Zhang Xuan will first paint, and the two of you will then appraise and rate the paintings. The person, whose review is the most accurate and precise, will be presented the Ink Daylily Canvas!”

“To paint? Hm?”

Sipping on his tea, Zhang Xuan had merely intended to show his presence for the examination. But upon hearing Master Lu Chen's words, he staggered and nearly spat his mouthful of tea onto the elder's face.

You must be joking! I am just here to add to your number, yet you want me to paint... Are you examining them or me?

I don't even know how to hold a brush, what kind of painting can I draw?

“I think it's better for me to not to paint...” Zhang Xuan said anxiously.

“Don't reject this offer, let's bond over literature. There are many literature gatherings that require one to come up with poems or drawing. It's rare to have you and Brother Yuanyu here at the same time, so let's interact through our paintings. At the same time, we can have these juniors understand the

true charm of painting. Perhaps, they might even fall in love with the craft and become a master in the future.”

Master Lu Chen stroked his beard and chuckled.

Zhang Xuan was on the verge of tears.

Are you listening to my words carefully?

What I mean is that I can't paint, and I don't want to paint. Yet, you go on rambling about interacting through painting...

The heck that we interact through painting!

“Cough cough, there's really no need for it. It's enough to have you two draw. I haven't done any preparations for this...”

Zhang Xuan could only phrase his words even clearer.

“I have already prepared the brush, paper, and ink slab. Brother Zhang Xuan, there's no need to be so restrained, treat this as your home and draw as you please. At the same time, let them understand what true painting!” Master Lu Chen replied.

“Restrained? Understanding what true painting is?”

This isn't what I am trying to say at all!

“Alright, Ah Cheng, go and prepare the painting tools. Xiao Yu and Bai Xun, watch carefully as we paint and learn from it!”

Lu Chen thought that Zhang Xuan was embarrassed and waved away his concerns with a smile.

“Yes!” The butler Uncle Cheng waved his hands, and a few maids carried in three sets of painting tools and placed it on the table before them.

Zhang Xuan's eyebrows twitched furiously.

He couldn't even draw with a pencil, and he has to do it with a brush now...

If he knew that the examination would be like this, he would never have come.

“Since we're here to get acquainted with one another through our paintings, let's not constrain ourselves to any topic!” Once

the preparations were in place, Master Lu Chen looked at Master Yuanyu with a grin. “Brother Yuanyu, you are a guest, so it’ll be best if you go first!”

“Alright. I will be displaying my inferior skills then!”

Master Yuanyu stroked his beard with a smile and walked forward to the table. Picking up the brush, he mused for a moment before starting on his painting.

His brush flew around the paper with astonishing force and elegance. The moment he started painting, his kind face and disposition transformed. He exuded the aura of an expert painter without an equal, garnering respecting from the onlookers.

“There are four main levels to painting. They are namely ‘Reality Depiction’, ‘Spiritual Canvas’, ‘Infused Intentions’, and ‘Breathtaking Verisimilitude’. Reality Depiction means the recording of the sight one sees in reality perfectly. Even though such a drawing may be remarkably lifelike, it is the lowest level of a painting.”

As Master Yuanyu started painting, Lu Chen explained the various levels that a piece of painting can be assigned to the crowd.

“Spiritual Canvas refers to the level where the scenery and objects one draw comes alive through the infuse of spiritual energy. The entire painting will look as though it is a living scenery. For example, if one drew a fish, the spectators would feel as though the fish is alive, and that it would leap out from the canvas at any moment.”

“The third level, Infused Intentions, refers to the level in which one is able to infuse one’s intentions into a painting! One must first attain a certain state of mind before they start painting in order to produce a painting that can move and allure others. My 【Summer-Autumn Painting】 and 【Chi Xiong Howling to the Heavens】 happens to reach such a level. That’s why one would feel as though the paintings are unfolding before him, as though he has been pulled into its world.”

“Brother Yuanyu and I happen to have reached this level. If we’re sufficiently lucky, there is a small possibility that we might be able to produce a level 4 painting. Breathtaking Verisimilitude refers to a painting in which characters carry a disposition of their own, to the point that even animals and savage beasts are unable to tell the difference between a painting and reality. The Ink Daylily Canvas that Xiao Yu wants and Brother Yuanyu’s River Canary Painting of such a level.”

“Oh!”

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

He thought that whoever whose drawing was the most lifelike would be the better painter. Only after listening to the explanation did he realize that drawing a lifelike painting... was simply the lowest level.

Only when a drawing was infused with the painter’s spirit and unique artistic conception can it be considered a true masterpiece.

In the midst of the discussion, Master Yuanyu’s painting slowly began to take shape.

It is a painting of a Mountainous Jungle Sparrow. Within the tranquil forest, two sparrows are dancing around. Even though they are motionless, one can almost hear the bright chirping of the birds in the air, as though one had entered the mountainous forests, and is surrounded by the fragrance of the flowers and the melodious twitter of the birds.

“Master Lu, is this an Infused Intentions painting?”

Huang Yu couldn’t resist asking.

For it to induce such a sensation, this showed that the painting contained a profound artistic conception. One couldn’t help but be absorbed into it with a single glance.

“Un!” Master Lu Chen nodded his head. “This painting has indeed reached the level of Infused Intentions. However, it barely meets the mark. As for why I say so, it is your job to analyze and appraise it. Whoever who is able to come up with the most precise answer will be the victor.”

“Yes!” Huang Yu and Bai Xun immediately focused their gazes on the painting.

In no time, Master Yuanyu placed his brush down.

He had completed the Mountainous Jungle Sparrow Painting.

“Hehe, looks like my skills have gotten rusty after resting for too long. Here is my humble painting!” Master Yuanyu smiled.

“Lu Chen, it’s your turn!”

“Alright!” Master Lu Chen walked up to the table, picked up the brush, and his hands started to fly about.

Even though they are both master painters of the third level, it is clear through Lu Chen’s fluid movements that he is more adept.

In his painting, a lone boat could be seen floating on the surface of a river. There were no astonishing waves or fearsome storms, but it gave the feeling as though one was trudging ahead against all odds, that the entire world was hindering the boat’s path. Even though the person on the boat was drawn with just two mere strokes, his courage in charging ahead despite the dangers that lurked ahead induced the spectator’s hot-bloodedness.

“Looks like Brother Lu’s technique is superior to mine!”

Even before the painting was finished, Master Yuanyu couldn’t help but comment.

He is skilled in painting and is renowned in the field as well, but when compared to Lu Chen, he is still a long way off.

While the artistic conception behind his Mountainous Jungle Sparrow Painting isn’t bad, if one were to analyze the two paintings thoroughly, Lu Chen’s artistic conception would be a tier higher than his.

He had only contrasted the silence of the forest along with the liveliness of the birds, but the other party had brought out the inner struggle of a person. It is clear that the other party is much more skilled than him.

“How is it? Can you tell anything from it?”

Master Yuanyu turned his attention to Bai Xun and Huang Yu and questioned them with a smile.

“I can tell that Master Lu had used three types of painting techniques and twelve types of painting strokes in his Flowing River Painting. Also, there seems to be the shadow of the renowned painter eighty years ago, Chen Jiao, in his painting.” Huang Yu pondered for a moment before replying.

Chen Jiao was a famous female painter in Tianxuan Kingdom back then. Her strokes were delicate, and she specialized in painting mountains and rivers. In that aspect, she was said to have reached the pinnacle for river paintings, and she was honored as the number one painter in the Tianxuan Kingdom in the last three hundred years.

“I saw that too...” Bai Xun hurriedly said.

“Un, seems like you have good eyes!”

Master Yuan Yu chuckled.

“Three types of painting techniques? Twelve types of painting strokes?”

Zhang Xuan was speechless.

From his perspective, all he saw was Master Lu Chen picking up the brush and drawing randomly. He couldn't tell anything unique about it at all.

Even though he had infused all of the knowledge from the books which he had flipped through into his head through the golden page in the golden book, they were all mainly related to cultivation techniques, battle techniques, and pill forging. There were barely any painting-related books in the teacher Compendium Pavilion, and as such, he is nearly completely ignorant on the topic.

“Haha, Brother Yuanyu, you are way too humble!”

In a moment's time, Master Lu Chen completed the Flowing River Painting as well. Chuckling, he walked over and said, “I have been touring the Benma River these few days and accumulated several days of emotions before unleashing them all on this painting, that's why I was able to up you one in this

painting. Brother Yuanyu is normally busy going around treating others and isn't as free as me. If you were to be like me and immerse yourself into painting, I'm afraid that I would be far from a match for you!"

"Painting is dependant on talent. It is because I find myself lacking talent that I chose to tread on the path of a physician!"

Master Yuanyu shook his head.

"Alright, we two old folks shouldn't be praising one another here like that. Speaking of talents, Brother Zhang Xuan is truly a genius. Despite being young, he possesses a unique view and understanding of painting. I believe that his painting ability is in no way inferior ours."

Master Lu Chen shook his head smiling and gestured Zhang Xuan forward. "We are already done painting. Brother Zhang Xuan, it's your turn!"

Huala.

The moment he said those words, everyone's eyes turned to look at Zhang Xuan.

Master Yuanyu also nodded his head in approval. His eyes were filled with curiosity, he was interested to see what kind of painting Zhang Xuan would come up with.

He had heard Lu Chen spoke of Zhang Xuan's matter before. Even though he does not doubt his words, he still found it a little unbelievable that Zhang Xuan could reach such an incredible level of expertise at such a young age.

Painting is different from martial arts. It isn't something one can succeed in just because one has talent. One needs to accumulate a multitude of experience and emotions in order to comprehend life so as to produce good paintings. Even for him, it was due to him treating innumerable patients that he gained the inspiration required for his mastery in painting to soar, reaching the current level he is at.

However, Zhang Xuan is not even twenty. Even if he was born with natural compatibility to painting, at the very most, he only has a solid foundation that allows him to reach the level of Reality Depiction. If he wants to create paintings of the

level of Spiritual Canvas and Infused Intentions... He probably needs a lot more training.

Of course, he wouldn't vocalize these thoughts. After all, it would be impolite.

At that moment, when Master Lu Chen invited him to paint, he couldn't help but peer over to see what standards that fellow possessed.

Even Bai Xun and Huang Yu looked excited.

Zhang Xuan had performed impressively the previous time he was here, pointing out the flaws and secrets behind Master Lu Chen's painting, even giving him pointers. They couldn't help but admire him for that. Right now, they are truly curious to see what kind of level had this Zhang laoshi, who isn't much older than them, had reached.

"Me?"

Sensing their eager gazes, Zhang Xuan felt his head swelling up.

He thought that the other party was just casually bringing the matter up... To think that he really needed to draw.

How can he draw when he doesn't know a single thing at all?

He can't possibly draw a little chick, add a halo to it, and call it Divine Phoenix.

If he really did so, he probably wouldn't have to dream about stepping out from the residence alive. He would surely be beaten to death.

"This... this... Can I first browse through some books?"

Scratching his head, Zhang Xuan suppressed his embarrassment and asked.

159 Fraudster?

“Browse through some books?”

Lu Chen and Yuanyu exchanged gazes. They were perplexed.

We invited you here to draw, you can feel free to draw anything you like to display your painting prowess...

Browse through some books?

What does that have to do with drawing?

Bai Xun and Huang Yu, who had prepared to be amazed by Zhang Xuan, were also stunned.

To want to browse through books when you are about to draw... Isn't it a little too late for that!

More importantly... Brother, given your high standards, are you sure that reading books will help with your painting at all?

“Yes!”

Even though he could sense that everyone was looking at him with bizarre looks, Zhang Xuan could only suppress his awkwardness.

He truly had no other ways.

Painting?

He also wished that he is an expert who can produce a third level or fourth level painting easily and impress everyone here.

But the truth is that... He doesn't even know how to hold or use a paintbrush... How can he paint like that?

The Library of Heaven's Path allows him to see through all flaws and take the knowledge in books for his own usage. However, it doesn't possess the ability to allow him to become a true master painter in an instant, unless... He read sufficient painting books to form a Heaven's Path secret manual!

The library is able to extract the correct portions of a manual, allowing Zhang Xuan to achieve mastery in any art swiftly and

easily... If this really works out, perhaps he might become a true painting expert in a moment's time.

“What kind of books do you want to read? Could it be that... you have reached a bottleneck in painting?”

After a long moment, Master Lu Chen asked.

Similar to cultivating, one can meet with a bottleneck in painting. There are people who are able to reach the third level with just a few years of training, while there are also people who find themselves unable to reach even the first level their entire life.

He truly couldn't fathom why Zhang Xuan would request to browse through books. After musing for a moment's time, it suddenly struck him that perhaps he had reached a bottleneck and wanted to attempt to break through his current level.

Otherwise, why would he need to browse through books before painting?

Reading and painting are two completely unrelated matters!

“That's not it, it's... it's that... I have yet to reach the state where I can reach the state of mind required for me to draw as and when I like. Before I draw, I need to read a lot of books to calm my mind, and only then will I be able to create high-quality paintings!”

After squeezing out his brain juice, Zhang Xuan finally came up with an excuse.

After all, he can't possibly tell them that he doesn't know how to hold a brush, and he needs to browse through some books... to learn...

If he were to truly say that out, the other party might treat him as a lunatic.

Painting is something much harder to learn than martial arts. It is impossible to reach Lu Chen and Yuanyu's level of mastery without decades of effort, countless wasted paper, and worn-out brushes. To want to learn painting just by browsing through a few books...

Isn't that dreaming?

Even if you wanted to lie, you should at least take the trouble to come up with something more believable...

“A good painting is related to one’s state of mind, luck, and opportunity... Given your age, it is understandable that it is difficult for you to produce a good painting without adjusting your state of mind.”

Master Yuanyu nodded his head in approval.

Master Lu Chen didn’t reject Zhang Xuan’s words as well.

Painting is an art, not a physical technique. Even if one’s physical condition isn’t good, it is unlikely for one’s strength to be impacted greatly.

However, if one were unable to get in the appropriate state of mind, no matter how well one painted, it would only be a painting with form, but devoid of a soul. It can never be considered as a masterpiece.

“It’s my habit... Hm?”

He didn’t expect the two masters to not refute his words. Halfway through his explanation, he paused abruptly in surprise.

But soon, he came to a realization.

Art is the same, no matter what world one came from.

Back then, when Wang Xi wrote the ‘Preface of the Orchid Pavilion’, he was drunk and wrote it casually. But when he woke up and tried to rewrite it, he found himself unable to surpass his previous work. This is the importance of one’s state.

It is just how even if you were to give Master Yuanyu brush and paper and have him redraw his masterpiece, River Canary Painting, he would definitely be unable to replicate it.

Everyone has their own masterpiece, and often, many factors are contained in their work. It was perfectly reasonable for him to request to browse through books to adjust his state of mind.

“Lu Chen, don’t you have quite a bit of painting secret manuals and collection in your study? Why don’t you have our

little friend here go in to take a look? We can wait here while he gets into his ideal state to display his painting skills!”

Master Yuanyu said.

“My study?”

Lu Chen’s mouth twitched.

The previous time that the fellow achieved a breakthrough in his cultivation, he had wrecked his study. Until now, he remains traumatized by the event.

However, he is also curious to see what level of painting had the other party reached. Thus, he nodded his head, “Un, Ah Cheng, bring Brother Zhang Xuan over!”

“Thank you, master!”

Seeing that he had managed to muddle his way through, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief and followed butler Uncle Cheng into the study.

The previous time he was here, he was looking for Fighter 6-dan Pixue realm secret manuals. Back then, he had never thought that he would return here to read up on painting.

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...

When Zhang Xuan stepped into the study, the atmosphere in the lounge turned bizarre.

“Adjusting one’s state of mind... Master Lu, why have I never heard of such a precedent?” Huang Yu couldn’t help but ask.

As an assistant master teacher, she had seen and experienced many different things. Honestly speaking, she had never seen such a strange action.

“The need to adjust one’s state of mind differs from person to person, so it is hard to say for certain.” Lu Chen didn’t reply, so Master Yuanyu spoke up in his place after a moment of contemplation. “Actually, this is more of a habit. In the past, there was an expert who sold firewood before he became famous...”

“I know that, is master speaking of Elder Lu Chai?” Bai Xun asked.

Elder Lu Chai’s original name was Lu Chuan, but as he used to sell firewood for a living before he became famous, people termed him as Lu Chai.

When he reached Tongxuan pinnacle, there was hardly anyone in Tianxuan Kingdom who was a match for him and as such, his name rang far and wide during that period of time.

From a lowly ordinary man who sold firewood, he became an expert whose name rattled the entire kingdom. Elder Lu Chai often spoke of his affairs to motivate the younger generation, so quite a few people knew of his background.

“Indeed, it’s that Elder Lu Chai. You know how hard he worked to raise his cultivation and how he became famous, but you aren’t aware of the fact that he chopped firewood to adjust his state of mind before battling. He would lock himself in his room and spend an entire day chopping firewood so as to get into his top form.”

“Now that Brother Yuan had said so, I recall another expert from a century ago, the Aloof Swordsman Wu Jiangping. He was known to be capable of ‘calming the seas with a single sword’. I’ve heard that before he made a name for himself, he was a bamboo weaver. Before every battle, he would adjust his state of mind through weaving bamboo, thus achieving the level of a Tongxuan eventually and becoming a figure respected by everyone!”

Master Lu Chen said.

“Indeed, there are many such examples. Our friend here seems to utilize books to adjust his state of mind. It is not really a bizarre sight, just that...”

Yuanyu’s words suddenly paused here.

“Brother Yuanyu, feel free to say anything that’s on your mind!”

Lu Chen chuckled.

“Back then, when you were painting, I took a glance at him and intentionally questioned Huang Yu and Bai Xun so as to see how he would react. However... He seems to be confused by what was going on, as though he is completely ignorant of painting and... In fact, I doubt that he was able to notice anything about your painting!”

Recalling what he had seen previously, Yuanyu shook his head, “Brother Lu, you said that he was able to discern the flaws and secrets behind your 【Summer-Autumn Painting】 and 【Chi Xiong Howling to the Heavens】 , so he shouldn’t have been showing such an expression!”

As a physician, Master Yuanyu is adept at paying attention to minute details. Back then, Zhang Xuan was clearly shocked when he saw Master Lu Chen’s painting, and he had seen it clearly.

“Ignorant of painting? That shouldn’t be possible.”

Master Lu Chen isn’t as sharp and attentive as Master Yuanyu, so he found the latter’s words slightly hard to believe.

This Zhang Xuan was able to see through his layout immediately upon walking into his courtyard, and after which, he proceeded on to tear open the top layer of paper on the Summer-Autumn Painting to unveil the contents hidden within, as well as point out the errors in the Chi Xiong Howling to the Heavens...

With such discerning eyes, how can he possibly not know anything about painting?

“This is just my intuition, there is also a possibility that I might be wrong...”

Master Yuanyu shook his head.

He was truly filled with curiosity toward Zhang Xuan.

Before he even saw him, Master Lu Chen had described him in a way such that it wouldn’t be shocking even if Zhang Xuan turned out to be a heavenly being who descended to earth. This had piqued Yuanyu’s interest, but after meeting the

person in question, honestly speaking, he was slightly disappointed.

Master painters had a disposition unique to them, but he did not feel any hint of it from that fellow. Furthermore, that person was filled with hesitation when it came to talking about painting. He couldn't help but suspect whether that fellow is truly a master painter. If not for the sake of his old friend's dignity, he would have started challenging the other party's identity.

If the other party truly had painting capabilities that were in no way inferior to them two, he shouldn't have been like that.

“Could it be that... he doesn't know anything at all? He feigned it all out?”

A thought suddenly popped into Master Yuanyu's mind and he frowned.

If it is true, then everything else makes sense.

It is precisely because he knows nothing about painting that he tried to avoid the topic and claim that he needs to browse through books to alter his state of mind.

It is precisely because he knows nothing about painting that his face reflected his confusion when he saw Lu Chen painting, and that he could not compare to even Huang Yu and Bai Xun.

But that made sense, the other party isn't even twenty yet. Even if he were to boast a vast knowledge on painting, how high can his mastery of painting be?

He probably did an investigation on his old friend's painting beforehand and then pointed it out, feigning knowledge, when in fact, he is a fraud.

If that is indeed true, he would have to warn his old friend so as to not fall for the other party's deception.

“Brother Yuanyu, don't you have to visit someone in the afternoon? Would it be inconvenient for you to wait like this?”

Just when he was pondering about how he should bring up the topic, Master Lu Chen's voice sounded in the air.

“Oh, I heard that a master teacher named Yang Xuan had appeared in the capital. He had resolved Ling Tianyu’s wife’s illness and the problem Du Miaoxuan faced through extraordinary means. Thus, I would like to pay him a visit to learn from him!”

Master Yuanyu nodded his head.

Ling Tianyu’s wife and Du Miaoxuan were his patients. He had been searching for ways to solve the problems plaguing the two, but he wasn’t able to succeed. Yet, that master teacher named Yang Xuan managed to solve everything so quickly. As a master physician, it is natural that he would want to pay the other party a visit in hopes that the latter can offer him a pointer or two, allowing him to tread further in the way of the medicine.

“Master teacher?” Master Lu Chen uttered in disbelief.

He had always been secluded in his residence. As such, he was completely oblivious to the storm Yang Xuan had raked up in the capital.

“Indeed. Why don’t we pay him a visit together this afternoon? I know that you have been hoping to reach the fourth level of painting, but it has been eluding you. Perhaps, with the guidance of a master teacher, you might be able to do so!”

Master Yuanyu smiled.

“Alright, that’s a promise. After we’re done examining them, let’s go!” Master Lu Chen nodded his head in excitement.

.....

While Zhang Xuan was at Master Lu Chen’s residence to conduct an examination for Huang Yu and Bai Xun, a youngster carrying a spear on his back had arrived at the classroom. It is Zheng Yang’s childhood playmate, as well as his best buddy, Mo Xiao.

Initially, the two of them intended to acknowledge Wang Chao as their teacher, but only Mo Xiao succeeded. Zheng Yang became Zhang Xuan’s student instead.

“I have learned a new spear art recently and I came over to spar with you!”

With a jerk of his spear, Mo Xiao seemed to have melded into a single being along with his spear, and he exuded an extremely sharp aura which caused others to frown in discomfort.

“Alright!”

Zheng Yang stood proudly with his spear ready, not intending to back down from the challenge at all.

160 The Fight Between Brothers

Upon hearing that they would be dueling, the rest of the students immediately stood by the corner of the classroom.

Sensing the aura the two emitted, Zhao Ya's face turned grim.

Zheng Yang's fighting prowess was far below hers previously, but after learning a spear art from Zhang laoshi, his strength had been growing swiftly. If she were to fight with him now, she wouldn't be a match for him at all.

"Who of the two do you think will win?"

Liu Yang asked.

"They grew up together, and Mo Xiao's talent and comprehension toward the spear isn't something Zheng Yang can compare up to. I've heard that in the few times that they had crossed blows, Zheng Yang had always been on the losing end. I'm afraid that it would be difficult to surpass him this time as well!"

Zhao Ya hesitated for a moment before saying.

Even though she hated to admit it, Mo Xiao is indeed a fearsome adversary.

Even Zheng Yang himself understands that he isn't a match for this good buddy of his.

Perhaps it is because Lu Xun knew of this that he poached Mo Xiao over from Wang Chao laoshi to have him face off against him. His means were truly unscrupulous.

"I've heard that for this Teacher Evaluation, Wang Chao laoshi had even imparted Mo Xiao a few of his family hereditament spear art!" Even though Yuan Tao's cultivation is lacking, he is well abreast with the news in the academy.

"Family hereditament spear art? You mean the Wang Clan's spearmanship?"

Zhao Ya was taken aback.

“Is the Wang Clan’s spearmanship famous?” Seeing her shocked expression, Liu Yang was puzzled.

“There are two prestigious Wang Clan in Tianxuan Kingdom. One of it is my Wang Clan, one of the Four Great Clans, while the other one is the clan of the Spear Master Wang Chong!” This time, it is Wang Ying who replied his doubts.

As a member of the Four Great Clans, and given that the other Wang Clan was equally famous as theirs, it was natural that Wang Ying knew of it.

“Wang Chong?”

“Indeed. Wang Chong is known as the number one spear expert in Tianxuan Kingdom. Even Emperor Shen Zhui is full of praises for him. He singlehandedly and remarkably built the Wang Clan just by his spear arts, and his skills are the ultimate techniques that countless spear practitioners dream of!” Wang Ying said in admiration.

“So incredible?”

Liu Yang was astonished. He couldn’t help asking, “Then, what’s the relationship between this Wang Chong and Wang Chao laoshi?”

“Wang Chao is the sole son of this spear master. That’s also the reason why countless spear practitioners vie to come under his tutelage!” Wang Ying said.

“So that’s why!” Turning his attention to the two dueling parties, worry appeared on Liu Yang’s face. “Doesn’t that mean that Zheng Yang is in danger?”

“Indeed, the Wang Clan’s spearmanship is formidable. It isn’t something that outsiders are allowed to learn, to think that Wang Chao laoshi would break the rules of the clan and impart him a few moves generously. Looks like they are really determined to win this Teacher Evaluation.” Zhao Yao harrumphed coldly.

The Wang Clan’s spearmanship is a set of family hereditament spear art; it is only passed down to male offsprings of the clan.

Yet, Yuan Tao said that Wang Chao laoshi imparted a few moves to Mo Xiao. From this, it could be seen how highly the latter valued the Teacher Evaluation.

From the very start, Zheng Yang wasn't a match for this Mo Xiao. To make things worse, the latter had managed to pick up the Wang Clan's hereditament technique. How can he possibly defeat him now?

For a moment, the crowd was full of anxiety.

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On the field.

“Wang laoshi has imparted me the Wang Clan's spearmanship's 3rd form, 7th form, and 18th form, so you better watch out!” Mo Xiao said as he twisted his spear and sent a pierce toward Zheng Yang.

“The 3rd form, Onset of the Cold Gleam, 7th form, Remnants of the Setting Sun, and the 18th form, The Returning Forest Canary? Alright!” Zheng Yang's face turned grim.

The Wang Clan's spearmanship is extremely famous. Those who had learned the basics of the spear would be acquainted with it. However, they would only know the forms but not its essence and intent.

“Then, I shall go first. The 3rd form, Onset of the Cold Gleam!”

Mo Xiao moved his spear, and with a loud whistling of the air, his spear shot straight out.

Before even reaching Zheng Yang, its might could already be felt from the shock wave of the taut spear. The spear emanated an intimidating pressure that induced cold sweat.

The move focused all of one's attention and strength on the tip of the spear. Perhaps, even a steel board several inch thick would be pierced through instantly.

As expected of a spear genius. Despite the high difficulty of mastering the Wang Clan's spearmanship, he was able to exert

such incredible strength.

“Good move!”

Witnessing the incredible move the other party was executing, Zheng Yang narrowed his eyes and charged forward to face him with a spear art of his own.

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“What an incredible spear technique...”

The shock wave from Mo Xiao’s stroke blasted into the surroundings. Sensing the incredible force behind his move, everyone’s face turned grim.

“Zhao Ya, since Mo Xiao has learnt such an incredible spear art, why didn’t he keep it for the Teacher Evaluation? Why would he come to look for Zheng Yang at such a timing to duel with him?” Wang Ying was perplexed.

If one learned such an incredible move, he should practice it secretly so as to catch one’s opponent off-guard during the duel. Yet, Mo Xiao came to challenge Zheng Yang, causing the latter to know of it in advance. Zheng Yang would then be cautious against it during the duel later on, making it more difficult for the move to work.

“It’s brotherhood!” Upon seeing the look of confusion on Zhao Ya’s face, Liu Yang said.

“Brotherhood?”

“Un, Mo Xiao grew up alongside Zheng Yang, and no matter what, he is definitely reluctant to face off against Zheng Yang in an official duel. Thus, he specially came here to find his good friend to show him what he had learnt under the pretext of dueling with him so that he would be guarded against it! Didn’t you see him reveal the names of the moves before the duel? Have you ever seen anyone revealing the moves they are going to use before a duel?”

Only a man will understand brotherly feelings. Even though Mo Xiao had done it in a roundabout and secretive manner such that Zhao Ya and Wang Ying were unable to see through

his true intentions, how could his actions escape the notice of Liu Yang!

“So that’s the case!”

Everyone came to a realization and turned their attention over to the duel once more.

Ding ding ding!

In the brief moment the others were conversing, both parties on the field had already crossed blows several times. The crisp sound from the crossing of spears could be heard, and the force of their clashes sent shockwaves into the surroundings. As expected, Zheng Yang was unable to stand his ground against Mo Xiao and retreated continuously.

“Good spear art! I haven’t been slacking while you were working hard. Mo Xiao, allow me to show you the spear art that Zhang laoshi has taught me!”

Despite being in a disadvantageous position, Zheng Yang did not fluster. Rather, he smiled calmly.

He only used his own understanding and fundamentals of spearmanship to fend off Mo Xiao’s blows previously, and thus, he was unable to withstand the other party’s Wang Clan’s spearmanship.

Boom!

The moment after Zheng Yang said so, his spear rose and flew toward Mo Xiao, as though a dragon treading the river. It was just an extremely simple move, but Mo Xiao felt as though a mountain was weighing on him. The overwhelming pressure left him short on breath.

Peng!

Before he could even react, he felt a dull pain in his chest. The form of his Wang Clan’s spearmanship fell apart immediately and he was sent flying, skidding backward seven to eight meters.

“Ah?”

Zheng Yang clearly had not expected the move to be able to wield such strength and was taken aback.

He had been practicing this move ever since he learned it from Zhang Xuan, but he did not think that it would surpass the Wang Clan's spearmanship.

He had always thought that it was due to Zhang laoshi's zhenqi that he was able to defeat Zhou Tian laoshi. Only now did he realize that even without that surge of zhenqi, this is an invincible technique.

Ever since they were young, regardless of whether it was in spearmanship or cultivation realm, Zheng Yang has never been a match for Mo Xiao. Now that he had learnt the Wang Clan's spearmanship, he thought that it would already be incredible if he could stand his own against him. However, he did not imagine that a single move would send the latter flying. In fact, if he hadn't held back at the very last moment, Mo Xiao would have likely have been injured.

"I'm fine!"

Zheng Yang rushed forward to help his buddy up.

"You... What move is that?"

While struggling up, Mo Xiao's eyes were widened in disbelief.

The move he had used was part of the Wang Clan's spearmanship, the number one spear technique in Tianxuan Kingdom. Yet... His spear art was as laughable as playing house as compared to the other party. With a single move, his spearmanship fell apart.

If he hadn't witnessed it personally, he would have never dared to believe it to be true.

"This is the spear art that Zhang laoshi imparted to me!"

Zheng Yang said proudly.

Back then, his greatest wish was to come under Wang Chao's tutelage, and witness, as well as learn, a thing or two from the Wang Clan's spearmanship. However, at this very moment, he is thankful that Wang laoshi had rejected him. Otherwise, how

could he have stumbled on such an opportunity and become Zhang laoshi's student?

“Zhang laoshi imparted you this spear art? Such... Such an incredible spear art, and he simply passed it down to you like that?”

Mo Xiao found the situation unbelievable.

Wang Chao laoshi valued the Wang Clan's spearmanship greatly, and if not for Lu Xun laoshi's request, he would have never imparted these three moves to an outsider.

The depth of this move isn't something the Wang Clan's spearmanship could compare up to. Yet, Zhang laoshi imparted such a move so easily to Zheng Yang... Are you for real?

“Zhang laoshi never holds anything back when imparting knowledge to us, he is a true teacher!” Zheng Yang said affirmatively.

“This...”

Hearing the earnest words of his good friend and understanding that he truly admired this Zhang laoshi, Mo Xiao chuckled.

Initially, he thought that it was regretful that his good friend failed to come under Wang Chao's tutelage. To think that it would be a blessing in disguise, he found an even better teacher and learned an even greater spear art.

Just by seeing the move, he understood that even if he were to learn the entire set of Wang Clan's spearmanship, he wouldn't be a match for his friend.

“This spear art is incredible, I concede defeat. Can you tell me its name?”

Recovering from his shock, Mo Xiao asked.

He should at least know the name of the spear technique which he had fallen in defeat to.

“Name?” Zheng Yang scratched his head in embarrassment. “I don't know its name as well. It is a move that Zhang laoshi

had just created and he hadn't had the time to name it..."

"Created? Hadn't had the time to name it?" Mo Xiao staggered. He nearly fainted from shock.

Which one of those who managed to create a spear art wasn't a spear master that possessed an intense amount of knowledge on spearmanship? Usually, before a move had even been created, they would have already come up with a name for it... He had already imparted the move to his student, and yet he didn't have a name for it?

Furthermore, this move is even more incredible than the Wang Clan's spearmanship. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to call it the number one spear of Tianxuan Kingdom... And it doesn't have a name...

Are you sure you aren't pulling my leg!

"How about this? Why don't you help me think a name for it..."

In the midst of his shock, he heard his friend's voice sounding out.

"You..."

Upon hearing those words, Mo Xiao's face darkened. "Zheng Yang, watch your words! Every battle technique is created through the blood, sweat, and tears of a cultivator and its name will be passed down for countless years to come. Since this move was created by Zhang laoshi, he has to be the one to name it. Naming it yourself... How can this be acceptable? If he finds out about it, wouldn't he think that you are insulting his effort and be infuriated?"

Naming someone else's move after learning it from them? You must be joking!

"Ah..."

Upon hearing the solemnity in his good friend's tone, Zheng Yang was taken aback.

Insulting his effort?

Zhang laoshi has already created multiple cultivation techniques and each time, he had us name it by ourselves...

Recalling this fact, he replied, "Don't worry about it. Zhang laoshi has already told me to name it as I please. To tell you the truth, our cultivation techniques are also created by Zhang laoshi, and he had us name them ourselves as well..."

"What? He allowed you to name the cultivation and battle techniques he created?"

Mo Xiao's body swayed and he nearly passed out.

Other teachers are reluctant to pass on their own moves to their own student for fear that it would leak out. In comparison, not only did Zhang laoshi create cultivation techniques and battle techniques for his own student, he even allowed them to name it themselves...

Zhang Xuan... What kind of teacher is he exactly?

161 Dual Traversing Dragons

Hualala!

Zhang Xuan stopped.

Even though Master Lu Chen had a huge collection of books, Zhang Xuan managed to flip through all of them within two hours. Tens of thousand of books that were identical to those on the bookshelves had appeared in the library in his mind.

《Elementary Painting Cognizance》, 《The Complete Collection of Painting Techniques》, 《Collection of the Setting Sun》 ...

As expected of a painting expert, nearly all of the books one could find on painting in Tianxuan Kingdom could be found in his study. He even had several hundreds of exclusive collection books, those that were hard to find in the market.

Any other master painter wouldn't be able to accomplish such a feat. It was due to his guidance to Emperor Shen Zhui that the latter had his men gather this collection for him.

“It should be sufficient with these books!”

After imprinting all of the books in his head, Zhang Xuan stopped. With a jolt of his mind, he muttered in his head, “The correct version!”

Huala!

The correct verses from the innumerable books were extracted and compiled in an entirely new book.

Zhang Xuan opened the book and started reading through it.

“Painting can be categorized under drawing and calligraphy. It can rid a person of his impatience, allowing one to reach a tranquil state of mind...”

The introduction was mainly on one's understanding of painting. After which, it detailed on how one should hold a

brush, how should one write words, and how should one fill in colors.

All work had techniques to them, and painting wasn't an exception either. Even though it required diligence on the one's part, if one had a good teacher to point out the correct path, one would be able to avoid the common mistakes and improve swiftly.

This library had gathered the essence of painting from tens of thousand of painting books to form one ultimate book. In other words, it was a book that pointed one straight toward the peak; there were no curved routes that had to be taken at all as long as one learned closely from it. Zhang Xuan's understanding of painting increased at a tremendous rate.

Quietly standing on the spot, he slowly read through the pages in the manual.

After an unknown period of time, he suddenly opened his eyes. Immediately, he saw a pair of black eyes before him.

“AH...”

The owner of that pair of eyes found Zhang Xuan's behavior bizarre and was studying to see what was wrong with him when Zhang Xuan's eyes suddenly opened. Taken aback, he yelped and leaped backward.

“Master Lu Chen?”

Only then did Zhang Xuan clearly see the person's appearance. It was Master Lu Chen.

The master painter looked at Zhang Xuan warily, as though he was some kind of primordial beast.

“What's wrong?”

Upon seeing his reaction, Zhang Xuan was perplexed.

It is not like I will kill you, what do you mean by behaving like this?

“You... didn't achieve a breakthrough, did you?”

Master Lu Chen asked carefully.

“Breakthrough? I didn’t!” Zhang Xuan was stumped

“That’s good...” Master Lu Chen was clearly still traumatized by the previous incident. Heaving a sigh of relief, he continued, “Seeing that you were in the room for such a long period of time, I came in to take a look...”

Initially, he thought that Zhang Xuan would be out in ten minutes or so after browsing through a few books. He didn’t expect that this single trip would take up four hours straight. Unable to wait any longer, he came in to take a look.

When he walked into the study, he saw the other party standing before the bookshelves with his eyes closed, as though he was asleep.

He suddenly remembered... The previous time, after reading a few books, he closed his eyes and went into a daze. After which, his study was wrecked and he was flung everywhere, nearly having his precious life extinguished. Then... There is no more then.

This time... It couldn’t be that the same thing had occurred as well...

Just when he was conflicted about what he should do, the other party abruptly opened his eyes. To be honest, it took all of his courage to remain in this room.

“How can breaking through one’s limits be that easy?”

Upon seeing his guarded look, Zhang Xuan immediately came to a realization and shook his head with a bitter smile.

It was one thing if Zhang Xuan didn’t say those words, but after hearing those words, Master Lu Chen felt a dull ache in his chest and his mouth twitched intensely.

Not easy?

Didn’t you achieve a breakthrough that easily the previous time?

In fact, you achieved too great a breakthrough that you were unable to adapt to your strength... If not for the fact that I had cultivated a little, I might have died on the spot...

The more he thought about it, the more depressed he felt. Forget it, it's good that you didn't achieve a breakthrough here this time. Otherwise... I am truly considering whether I should bar you from my study permanently...

"How is it, have you finished adjusting your state of mind?" Lu Chen changed the subject.

"I'm roughly there, let's go out!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Returning back to the lounge, he saw Huang Yu and Bai Xun staring him out. To think that he would spend an entire four hours just to adjust his state of mind, it was truly inconceivable.

"How is it?"

Master Yuanyu's complexion looked awful.

His initial plan was to pay Master Teacher Yang Xuan a visit that afternoon, yet this fellow adjusted his state to the point that the sun was about to set in the horizon. Along with his previous conjecture, he could already be considered extremely patient for not leaving straight away.

"Er... I'm ready!"

Looking at the gazes everyone was shooting at him with, Zhang Xuan felt guilty and embarrassed.

"You should start drawing!" Sensing the atmosphere turning awry, Master Lu Chen hurriedly gestured Zhang Xuan forward.

"Un!" Quickly browsing through the painting technique recorded within the Heaven's Path manual once more, Zhang Xuan walked forward to the table and casually picked up the brush.

Upon seeing that Zhang Xuan was about to paint, Huang Yu and Bai Xun's interest were piqued and they hurriedly looked over excitedly.

They were curious to see what kind of masterpiece this Master Zhang could create after adjusting his state of mind for such a long period of time.

Even Master Yuanyu couldn't help but pay attention. If that fellow was truly trying to deceive everyone here by putting on a show, he would punish him personally...

Just when everyone's eyes were staring at him intently, Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment before asking, "Master Lu, do you have any extra paper? I would like to test the brush first."

Painting isn't like a cultivation technique where one just has to circulate one's zhenqi throughout one's body to start fighting. Regardless of how much a person knows about painting, one has to first try it out with his own body first.

He had neither drawn nor used a brush before. He had to first try out the rigidity of the brush and how deep the color would be when imprinted onto the paper before he could start painting.

It was also for the same reason why he was unable to become a true apothecary swiftly despite reading through so many books on pill forging.

Pill forging required a large amount of practice whereas drawing focused on one's state of mind. Even if one's skill was lacking, if there was soul in their painting, it would still be an impressive work.

"Give it a try then!" Master Yuanyu's expression darkened further.

If the other party was truly a master painter, why would he need to try out the brush?

He was obviously trying to drag things out.

Hmph, drag on for however long you want to. In a moment's time, I'll see what kind of excuses you can come up with.

Oblivious to the bizarre look Master Yuanyu shot at him, Zhang Xuan picked up the brush, made a dab into the watercolor and drew a few strokes onto the paper. Then, he picked up another brush, dabbed it in water and casually painted over the color.

"The most basic color spreading technique? To have to test even this... It can't be that Master Zhang is painting for the

first time?”

Seeing his actions, Huang Yu subconsciously muttered.

Paint spreading is one of the most basic techniques to painting. To put it briefly, one used to water to spread paint over the canvas, creating the effect of a color slowly lightening over the distance. This is just like the Long Fist in martial arts, there's not a single person who is capable of painting who doesn't know of it...

Other people usually just tested the rigidity of the brush and depth of the colors. Yet, this fellow gave every single technique on the book a try, as though a curious infant who was coming in contact with the world for the first time.

A constipated look appeared on everyone's faces.

Brother, we have waited several hours for you. Can you be any faster?

If this goes on, I will probably die of old age before I can see your painting.

“When I first came into contact with the brush, I think I was like that as well, wanting to try everything when actually... I didn't know anything at all...” Bai Xun was doubtful. Even he could tell that something was amiss.

Master Lu and Master Yuanyu's disposition changed the moment they picked up the brush, as though a swordsman had picked up his sword. You... What are you doing?

Even though the Master Zhang whom he respected had the correct posture for holding the brush, his movements were stiff and constrained, as though it was the first time he was holding a brush.

Don't tell me that your 'getting into the state by browsing through books' was actually an excuse to learn painting?

Even Master Lu Chen was perplexed. He truly had no idea what Zhang Xuan was up to.

“I'm ready!”

After taking a moment to adapt to the brush, Zhang Xuan could feel that his movements and the knowledge in his head were finally aligned, and he heaved a sigh of relief.

“Then... You should start!”

Seeing him pause, Master Lu Chen quickly said before the fellow before him could do anything else.

Fortunately, Zhang Xuan simply nodded his head and walked forward to the clean sheet of paper. With a flick of his finger, a brush was sent flying into the air, which he caught and dabbed into ink. At the same time, he gently grabbed another brush with his other hand.

Hualala!

The two brushes started flying about the paper as though they had lives of their own. A painting slowly emerged on the originally blank sheet.

“This is... Dual Traversing Dragons?”

Upon witnessing the scene, Master Yuanyu, who intended to expose him for his fraud, widened his eyes in shock.

Master Lu Chen’s body swayed and nearly passed out.

“What is Dual Traversing Dragons?”

Looking at the astonished expressions of the two masters, Bai Xun couldn’t help asking.

“Usually, when we draw, we often use only a single brush to create the rough outline before adding in the colors!” Lu Chen explained.

Huang Yu and Bai Xun nodded their heads.

In the past few weeks, they had come into contact with painting and learned the basic steps one usually took while painting a picture. One usually did a rough outline first before going on to add in the ink and colors in detail.

“This is just like building a house. One starts off by creating the scaffolding before adding materials to it. Even though this creates a solid foundation for the painting, it makes painting an extremely slow and tiring process!”

Master Lu Chen continued, “Thus, in order to quicken the process, some incredible painters created this Dual Traversing Dragons painting technique. Exactly as its name goes, the painter diverts his attention into doing two tasks at once. His two hands would become completely separate entities, starting on both the left and the right of the paper simultaneously. Without building the outline of the picture, the painter paints according to the concept he has in his mind and... when the two brushes meet one another, the painting would be done!”

“By doing so, the painting duration can be increased by more than a single fold, but the difficulty is extremely high!”

“Firstly, one needs to have a clear image of what their picture would have, and this includes even the minute details. Secondly, one must be able to completely sever their mind into two and multitask without making a single mistake. Finally, one has to be extremely clear about the coloration of the picture. Only then will there not be a problem when the two sides of the painting meet...”

“Honestly, this is an extremely high-level technique. Even Brother Yuanyu and I are incapable of doing so...”

At this point, Master Lu Chen shook his head. Disbelief could still be seen on his old face.

One needed absolute confidence to complete a painting using this Dual Traversing Dragons technique. Without several decades of practice, it is impossible to master this technique. Yet, Zhang Xuan casually displayed such a skill...

Can things get more exaggerated?

“Put aside your shock for now. This kind of painting method needs to come together perfectly at the center before it can be considered as a success. If it fails, the entire painting could crumble!”

Recovering from the shock, Master Yuanyu harrumphed.

It is true that Double Traversing Dragons is an incredible technique, but regardless of how well one drew either side of the painting, if it can't come together as one, it would end in a failure.

Using construction of a house as an analogy once more, even if both sides were to use extremely advanced technology to build an incomparably resilient house, such that even a Fighter 6-dan is unable to destroy it, if in the end... both ends fail to link up together perfectly, the construction would still be considered a failure!

162 Second Level?

“Furthermore, painting revolves around one’s state of mind. Without artistic conception, no matter how vivid one’s drawing is, it is useless. The Dual Traversing Dragons technique forcefully divides a painting into two portions, causing a split in the artistic conception... Thus, even if the two sides match up perfectly in the middle, it would be difficult to reach the third level.”

No matter how well one’s left and right hands manage to coordinate together, one is still severing the painting into two. It is absolute that the artistic conception would be lacking as compared to when one uses only a single hand for the entire painting.

“Flaunting his painting technique, but losing sight of the original goal of painting. Hypocritical!” After explaining, Master Yuanyu shook his head.

After the initial shock, not only did his impression of Zhang Xuan not improve, it even worsened.

To him, Zhang Xuan is arrogant and disrespectful. Not only did he keep them waiting when they had agreed to hold the examination at noon, he even claimed to need to adjust his state of mind before painting, dragging the matter out for four hours straight. And now, in order to show off his painting skills, he chose to flaunt his technique instead of focusing on creating the best work he could, losing the soul behind his work.

Without a calm and peaceful state of mind, but instead, an intention to awe others, it is impossible to create a masterpiece no matter how skilled one is. It is impossible for such a person to become a grandmaster.

“Brother Zhang is still young, and it is normal that he will wish to impress others...”

Master Lu Chen understood his old friend's frank and direct personality and smiled bitterly.

He is a youngster after all. It is normal to want to show off his techniques. We can't expect him to be like us, beings with half a foot already in the grave.

“Creating the best work one can make is the best way to impress others. Dual Traversing Dragon is something those streetside craftsmen use to mass-produce paintings. If he doesn't kick away this habit of his, it would be difficult for him to achieve great things in the future!”

Master Yuanyu said without holding back at all.

“Er...”

Hearing his evaluation, Huang Yu and Bai Xun fell silent.

The both of them are not as experienced and authoritative in the field of painting as compared to the elder before them, and as such, they were unable to refute his words.

Just as Lu Chen wanted to say something, Bai Xun's voice sounded.

“Look, he is starting to connect the both ends...”

The attention of the crowd turned to the painting and exactly as Bai Xun said, Zhang Xuan's brushes were converging, beginning to connect the both sides of the painting.

“This... he can't possibly connect them!”

Taking a glance, Huang Yu couldn't help but comment.

The two halves of the painting were about to be merged, but the individual paintings on each side were completely different, be it the depth of the color, the underlying appeal, and the painting style. Even if Zhang Xuan were to merge the two halves together, it would simply become two different paintings on a single canvas instead of forming one perfect entity.

One half was bright while the other half was dull... Even if he were to combine them together, it would just end in a failure.

Could it be that he had failed?

“It is impossible to combine the two halves together...”

Master Lu Chen had intended to speak up for Zhang Xuan, but upon witnessing the situation, he fell silent. His complexion darkened and subconsciously, he exerted so much force on his fingers that he accidentally plucked a few strands of his beard out.

Even though he didn't want to admit it, based on his comprehension of painting, he could clearly see that the two halves of the painting were irreconcilable. It was as though they were of two completely different worlds; it was absolutely impossible for both ends match. Could it be that it was as Brother Yuanyu said, that Brother Zhang was being hypocritical?

Even though he had only met him once previously, his impression of him was that of a prudent, humble, and polite person. He wasn't such a person before...

If this here was indeed his true personality, it would be difficult for him to reach great heights in the field of painting in the future...

“If he doesn't manage to merge both ends, it would simply be a failure. To think that I waited an entire afternoon just for this...” Master Yuanyu shook his head in disappointment.

When Lu Chen spoke of Zhang Xuan's affairs, he was actually filled with great expectations for the latter. He truly thought that a young painting genius had appeared and that he might be the hope to glorifying painting within the kingdom. Yet, after meeting him in person, he realized that he was just a hypocritical fellow.

Despite being obviously incapable, he chose to feign as an expert by using the Dual Traversing Dragons technique instead of drawing calmly. Now look at what has happened, both ends of the painting turned out to be of completely different, making them impossible to connect. I'll see how you talk your way out of this embarrassment.

Even if you wanted to show off, you should first have to capabilities to do so. Otherwise, you will just make a fool out

of yourself.

Clearly, this Zhang Xuan is one of such fools.

With a sigh, Master Yuanyu closed his eyes slowly, refusing to watch on.

It wasn't that he didn't want to look, but he was afraid that he would be unable to keep his temper in check upon seeing the other party make a fool of himself when he fails to match the both ends together.

“Hm?”

“Wait, that's...”

“How is this possible?”

Immediately after he closed his eyes, he heard exclamations of shock, as though the others had seen something inconceivable.

Frowning, he opened his eyes once more and saw Master Lu Chen, Huang Yu, and Bai Xun staring in shock at what was in front of them, as though they had just seen a ghost.

“What's wrong? Even if he fails to match both ends together, there should not be any need for such shock...”

Perplexed, Master Yuanyu turned to take a look as well. With a single glance, his eyes immediately narrowed and his body swayed. He was immediately plunged into astonishment as well, “This... This... What is going on?”

He was astounded as well.

Right before him, at the boundary where the two ends of the painting came together, a gentle stroke by Zhang Xuan erected a wall, thus creating a barrier that separated both ends into two different entities.

The divide created by the wall erased the dissonance between the two halves of the painting. Instead, the contrast between both sides harmonized together to create a sensation of peering into two different worlds at once.

“It's this courtyard...”

Bai Xun couldn't resist exclaiming.

He had realized what the painting illustrated. What Zhang Xuan's left hand drew is the courtyard they were in. There is someone painting, someone commenting on the painting, and the scenery is calm. On the right is another courtyard and its interiors are filled with flowers and dancing birds. There are also quite a few animals dancing the midst of it, and the sound of the cicadas are bright. It felt like a natural paradise outside of the bustling human society.

On one end is the world of the humans, on the other end is the natural world; on one end is quietness, on the other end is commotion. Two different sceneries, two different states of the mind, and two different sensations. Yet, they merged successfully due to the appearance of this single wall, perfectly harmonizing the two different themes.

“A divine stroke, truly a divine stroke...”

Master Lu Chen complimented.

Previously, he shared Master Yuanyu's thoughts that the painting would surely be ruined. Yet, he never imagined that these two completely different scenes could be perfectly harmonized with a single wall, letting its viewers enjoy an incredibly unique beauty and pleasure.

Commotion within silence, and silence within commotion.

The wall was truly a divine stroke.

A single wall, yet a completely different world. The quality of the painting soared to a whole new level immediately.

“Incredible...”

After a long moment of silence, Master Yuanyu couldn't help but offer a word of praise.

Clearly, he didn't expect the presence of the wall at all.

If the artistic conception of both ends of the wall were the same, the painting would instead be a failure.

“I have embarrassed myself!”

After adding in the wall, the entire painting was completed. Zhang Xuan put down his brush and chuckled lightly. “Please

appraise my work!”

He had just learned drawing so he had no idea what he should draw. Thus, he drew the lounge where everyone was at and the neighboring courtyard.

“Let me take a look!”

Master Lu Chen walked over and studied the painting with a lowered head.

Huang Yu and Bai Xun hurriedly came forward as well.

Previously, they were standing a distance away so as to not disturb Zhang Xuan, so they didn’t manage to obtain a clear view of the painting and was unable to recognize that Zhang Xuan was drawing this place. Now that they came closer, they couldn’t help but be impressed.

The drawing of the courtyard was vivid and lifelike. Under the work of his brush, the beautiful image seemed to be floating out of the paper.

“How pretty...”

Huang Yu’s beautiful eyes gleamed with admiration as she subconsciously offered a praise.

Even though both halves of the painting were created simultaneously, even the minute details were flawless. In fact, even the tables and chairs could be clearly seen within it. The expressions of the crowd in the painting could be clearly made out, and it was as though he had plucked them from reality and imprinted them directly. It was almost unbelievable that a painting could be that elegant.

“It’s a pity...”

After taking a brief look, Master Yuanyu couldn’t help but shake his head. In fact, even Master Lu Chen expressed his pity.

“This painting is so pretty, what could be wrong about it?”

Unable to comprehend the reason behind their sighs, Bai Xun asked.

Honestly, he wasn't able to see anything wrong with this painting. He felt that it was on par with the previous two.

“This painting had perfect workmanship. There isn't the slightest error, and in terms of painting, contrast, complement... It can truly be said to be top-notch. Just that, as I said before, working simultaneously with both hands would cause one to place too much emphasis on the details and neglect artistic conception! Without artistic conception, it can only reach the second level, Spiritual Canvas. This painting is still a huge way off from reaching Infused Intentions.”

Master Lu Chen shook his head.

There were four levels to painting, Reality Depiction, Spiritual Canvas, Infused Intentions, and Breathtaking Verisimilitude.

The paintings that Yuanyu and Lu Chen created previously were both of the third level as the conception of the artist was infused into the paintings. With a single look, one would feel refreshed.

Zhang Xuan's painting was perfect regardless of the theme, its outline, or its workmanship. But, it was a pity that... it was lacking this kind of feeling.

Without artistic conception, the highest level his painting could have reached was the second level, Spiritual Canvas. If so, it couldn't be considered as a masterpiece.

“It is a pity, but Brother Zhang is still young. When he reaches our age, he will surely be able to easily whip out a painting of the third level, or even one of the fourth level!”

Master Lu Chen consoled.

Even though the painting was still far from reaching the third level, he was nevertheless impressed by Zhang Xuan's work.

After all, Zhang Xuan hadn't even reached twenty, and yet he was already able to create a painting of a quality that could awe him.

“It seems that he has true skills!” Master Yuanyu nodded his head in approval. Then, he turned to look at Zhang Xuan and

reprimanded him, “However, it is still better for youngsters to remain humble!”

After the series of affairs, his impression of Zhang Xuan was poor. However, it was true that the painting was of superior quality. Putting aside the lack of artistic conception, he wasn’t able to find any flaws with the workmanship. It seemed that the fellow wasn’t a fraud, and possessed true abilities.

In spite of that, Master Yuanyu was displeased by the airs he put on just because he possessed some capabilities. After all, he made them wait for such a long time just for his painting.

“Humble?” Hearing the other party’s words, Zhang Xuan knew that he must have kept them waiting for far too long and the other party was displeased with his actions. He smiled embarrassedly, “I apologize for keeping everyone waiting for so long!”

“That’s more like it!” Seeing the other party apologize to everyone earnestly, Master Yuanyu nodded his head in satisfaction. “You have good foundations. As long as you polish your painting skills and accumulate more experiences, you will surely be able to paint a painting of the third level soon. Please do not waste your talents because of complacency!”

“Indeed. In order to create a painting with artistic conception, one has to gain a deeper comprehension of the world around by paying careful attention to the surroundings!”

Master Lu Chen advised patiently.

“Thank you for your guidance!”

Knowing that the other party had good intentions at heart, Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

“Alright, now that we’re all done painting, it’s time for you two to start appraising the works...” Watching him accept his advice humbly, Lu Chen didn’t dwell on the issue further. Instead, he turned his attention to Huang Yu and Bai Xun to continue with the examination. However, at this moment, Bai Xun’s shocked voice echoed suddenly.

“This isn’t right... Master Zhang, why don’t the humans and birds in your painting... have any eyes?”

Everyone had been more concerned with the overall structure and concept of the painting instead of the details earlier.

Taking another glance at the painting, they realized that the birds and the humans in the painting didn’t have eyes indeed.

163 I'll Just Draw Another One!

No eyes?

Did he really forget to draw it, or was there another hidden reason?

Everyone was filled with doubts.

Regardless of humans or animals, the eyes are the most expressive. The painting can't be considered complete without their eyes having been drawn.

For an incomplete painting to reach the pinnacle of the second level?

“Brother Zhang, this is...”

Lu Chen turned to look at Zhang Xuan with a look of utmost confusion.

“Oh, I will add them in now...” Zhang Xuan smiled. The brushes began to dance once across the canvas, this time swiftly adding in the missing parts.

Weng!

The moment the eyes were drawn, it was as if the painting was jolted awake. A peculiar sensation permeated into everyone present. All of the humans and animals within the painting seemed to have come alive in an instant, and it was as if these creatures simply could just take a step forward and traverse into the real world.

“This...?”

Noticing the change in the painting, Master Lu Chen and Master Yuanyu were astounded. Their eyes widened in disbelief.

Qiuqiu!

Before they could even speak, the sound of canaries echoed in the courtyard. A group of birds flew to the painting excitedly and danced on it.

“Breathtaking Verisimilitude? Can this be the fourth level Breathtaking Verisimilitude?” Watching the situation before him in a state of bewilderment, Bai Xun asked.

Master Lu Chen had introduced the four levels of a painting previously to everyone here. For the birds to be attracted to the painting and linger around it, it was clear that the painting had reached the fourth level, Breathtaking Verisimilitude.

Didn't the two master say that this painting could only reach the second realm at the very best?

Why... had it transformed into a fourth level all of a sudden?

“Could it be... because of those eyes?”

Covering her mouth in shock, Huang Yu's body trembled in astonishment.

To think that she would have a chance to personally witness a fourth level masterpiece in the making... This is truly something that she didn't imagine to be possible before.

Weng!

However, before she could recover from her shock, the canaries in the painting quivered for a brief moment before flying out from the painting. These canaries danced a few rounds with the other birds before disappearing into thin air.

All of the other figures also seemed to have emerged from the plane of the canvas, smiling at the audience and clasping their hands together in a bow before disappearing slowly.

“This... This isn't a fourth level painting...”

Upon seeing this sight, Master Lu Chen's mouth had fallen so wide that a chicken egg could be stuffed in easily. After a long period of shock did he manage to gather a few words out of his mouth, “That is... a fifth level painting... Spirit Creation!”

“Spirit Creation?”

Huang Yu and Bai Xun were puzzled.

Aren't there only four levels to painting? Why is there a fifth level out of nowhere?

What had happened?

They were slightly stupefied by the occurrences before them.

“Reality Depiction, Spiritual Canvas, Infused Intentions, and Breathtaking Verisimilitude... These are the most common painting realms that were passed down by mouth from generation to generation. Actually, there is another level above all else and that is Spirit Creation! A painting that has achieved such a level possesses the breath, spirit, and soul of a master painter. As though being granted a soul, the painting obtains the ability to absorb spiritual energy so as to grant the beings within it life.”

Master Yuanyu's lips were quivering, “I thought that this existed only in the legends... To think that I would have the honor to witness it for myself...”

The composed Master Yuanyu could not control his intense trembling of his body.

He felt as if the world was going insane.

Just a moment ago, he criticized the other party for being hypocritical, and perhaps that with a few years of experience he could maybe produce an Infused Intentions painting. Yet... The other party immediately created a fifth level masterpiece!

A painting of this level... Probably less than a handful of it were created since the inception of Tianxuan Kingdom!

Even the Ink Daylily Canvas which Huang Yu and Bai Xun were vying for is only a fourth level pinnacle. It is still a far way off from reaching the fifth level.

Those who are able to produce a painting of the fourth level are termed as a master. On the other hand, those who are able to produce a painting of the fifth level are respected with the title, grandmaster. To think that he said that a grandmaster painter was hypocritical, disrespectful, and unpunctual...

The heck!

Am I going insane?

Master Yuanyu felt a stinging sensation on his cheeks. If there was a hole in the courtyard, he would definitely drill himself into it.

That was simply too embarrassing.

To speak the truth, he would even have willingly waited for three days without a single word of complaint to watch a grandmaster create a masterpiece.

“Fi... Fif... Fifth level?”

“There is a fifth level?”

Huang Yu and Bai Xun finally came to a realization and their gazes immediately shot toward Zhang laoshi.

Lu Chen is a secluded expert and he isn't bothered with the affairs of the world. He only knew that Zhang Xuan was a teacher, but he wasn't aware of the exact details. Master Yuanyu also just got to know Zhang Xuan, so he didn't know of the latter's background.

However, Huang Yu and Bai Xun had been to Hongtian Academy and knew a lot about Zhang laoshi's background.

It is said that he is a trash who scored zero in the Teacher Qualification Examination and his students all left him...

But the truth is that he possesses the strength of a Pixue realm pinnacle and the abilities of a grandmaster painter, having not even reached twenty...

Have you ever seen such an incredible trash?

If he is trash, then what are we?

The elites of the trash?

Brother, how are you so amazing? Do you need to be so talented?

Furthermore... If you are so amazing, why did you randomly draw about earlier, as though you knew nothing at all?

Furthermore, to browse through books for four hours straight...

With this kind of level, is there any need for you to browse through books? Do you even need to adjust your state? Even if you were to randomly draw a painting, it would at least be of the fourth level...

“Master Zhang, Grandpa Zhang, can you... give me this painting? As long as you give it to me, I am willing to do anything for you!”

Just as everyone had yet to recover from their disbelief, Bai Xun suddenly turned to Zhang Xuan and looked at him expectantly.

“Give it to you?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

“Indeed. Given how I usually treat you respectfully and how I obediently obey all of your orders... Please give it to me...” Bai Xun hurriedly added in.

“Bai Xun, what are you doing? This is something Master Zhang had just created and his emotions are infused into it. How can he simply give it to someone else so casually? I think it would be best that you spare your efforts!” Seeing how shameless the other party was, Huang Yu frowned and reprimanded him. Then, she swiftly turned her gaze to Zhang Xuan and said, “Master Zhang, I am the first one to get acquainted with you. I won’t ask you to give it to me, but why don’t you... sell it to me? You can offer any price that you like, and as long as it is within my means, I won’t have a single word of complaint!”

“You...”

Initially, when Huang Yu reprimanded him, he thought that his actions were truly inappropriate. Yet, it turned out that Huang Yu had other intentions for saying so. Bai Xun was speechless.

Not expecting that this beautiful assistant master teacher would be so scheming and shameless, he harrumphed and spoke through gritted teeth, “Grandpa Zhang, I don’t mind paying any amount that you come up with as long as you sell this to me. No matter what, my offer will surely be higher than hers!”

“Bai Xun, why are you causing trouble now? Didn’t you want Master Lu Chen’s Ink Daylily Canvas? I won’t fight with you over that one. Now, I only want this one. Surely you should be content now...”

Huang Yu spat through her gritted silver teeth.

“I don’t want that Ink Daylily Canvas anymore, so don’t vie with me over this, alright?” Bai Xun didn’t have any intentions to step down at all.

“...” Lu Chen.

Previously, these two fellows had been vying so intently for his painting that if they could, they would even come to blows over it. The main purpose of this examination today was to determine who had the qualifications to attain it... Yet, now that Zhang Xuan’s painting had appeared, all of them abandoned it immediately...

The heck!

Can you have some principles?

Do you have to be so materialistic?

“You... Bai Xun, why must you always go against me?”

Huang Yu was infuriated.

“You are the one who is going against me! I was the one who first expressed my interest in this painting...” Bai Xun said.

“Enough!”

Seeing the two of them arguing ceaselessly, Master Lu Chen’s complexion darkened and he flung his sleeves furiously.

Hearing his word, the two of them certainly did not dare to bicker anymore.

Lu Chen is the emperor’s tutor. No matter what, he is considered as an elder to them. They would be courting death if they were to continue to bicker before him when he had already expressed his annoyance toward their behavior.

“Even if it is a grandmaster painter, painting a fifth level masterpiece requires a great amount of effort and spirit. Few of such works are born in an entire generation. This painting

was created with much effort by Brother Zhang Xuan, so it should be his choice whether he should keep it for himself or gift it to you. Don't you think that you two are going overboard bickering over his painting like that?"

Master Lu Chen spoke authoritatively.

His words made sense. Even a grandmaster painter would find it difficult to produce paintings of the fifth level. After all, too many factors such as one's state of mind and one's form are involved. It isn't something one can produce on a whim.

That's precisely the reason why even though the Grandmaster Painter Mo Chenzi's reputation rung far and wide a century ago, such that countless master painters came to pay him a visit, he did not leave behind many works of the fifth level. Even the Ink Daylily Canvas that Lu Chen treasured is only at the fourth level pinnacle.

This shows how precious and valuable every fifth level painting is. It contains the heart and soul of its creator, so it is too unreasonable to expect its creator to simply gift or sell it.

If a painting of such level could be bought that easily, given Lu Chen's wealth, how could it be possible for him to not even have a single painting of that level?

It is the product of someone else's effort and is not for sale. Yet, you two are bickering here over it. Aren't you two making it difficult for him to step down from this awkward situation?

"We were reckless..."

"Master Lu, Master Zhang, I was wrong..."

Taking in his reprimand, Huang Yu and Bai Xun immediately realized their mistake and their faces were full of awkwardness.

The other party did not even mention selling it, and yet, they had already begun to bicker over the item. They have truly embarrassed themselves...

"Brother Zhang Xuan, they are still young, so please do not blame them for that..."

After reprimanding the two, Master Lu Chen turned to Zhang Xuan with an apologetic expression.

However, not only did the other party not get angry, he even looked at him with shining eyes. Master Lu Chen was still puzzled at his reaction when he heard the other party's voice resonating, "Master Lu Chen... Is there really someone who is willing to buy my painting? Can it really be sold for money?"

"Cough cough!"

Upon seeing his reaction, Master Lu almost choked on his saliva. If a painting of such caliber cannot be sold for money, doesn't that mean that no one would pick up his painting even if it was dumped on the ground?

He nodded his head speechlessly, "Your painting has reached the fifth level and if you sell it, it should be worth at least two million. Furthermore, it is a unique, one and only product that cannot be found elsewhere on the market..."

"Two million? That's great!"

Delight appeared on Zhang Xuan's face. He turned around to face Bai Xun, "Bai xiao wangye, if you really want it, I will sell it to you for two million!"

"Ah?" Not expecting such a twist, Bai Xun was shocked by Zhang Xuan's reaction.

"Master Zhang, sell it to me..."

Huang Yu said anxiously.

"Calm down, if you want it, I will draw another one for you. It's not like it's a big deal..."

Zhang Xuan waved his hands to calm down the latter.

"..."

Lu Chen and Yuanyu's eyebrows twitched and they stared at Zhang Xuan as though they were looking at a monster. They almost fainted on the spot.

Draw another one? Not a big deal?

Brother, even if you are a grandmaster painter, this is a painting of the fifth level... Draw another one?

You speak as though it is like buying the cabbages in the market...

Are you sure you aren't joking!

If such an incredible painting can be created that easily, paintings of the fifth level wouldn't be so rare that not a single one can be found in the Tianxuan Kingdom.

164 That Beas

“Why, you don’t want it anymore?”

Noticing the deadpan silence in the surroundings, Zhang Xuan stared at her.

“That’s not it...”

Huang Yu hurriedly waved her hands.

“It’s good that that’s not it. I will draw it now then...”

Zhang Xuan didn’t dawdle on the matter. He immediately took out another piece of white canvas, picked up his brushes, dabbed them in ink, and started painting. Not too long later, another painting emerged.

This time, it isn’t a painting about the courtyard. Depicted in the painting is a wild deer on a grassland. It is currently eating grass while warily keeping a lookout at its surroundings. There are wildflowers in the all around and the moment the painting was completed, countless bees were attracted to the surface, swarming busily around it. After which, the wild deer seemed to come alive and leaped from the painting before gradually disappearing in the air.

“It is another painting of the fifth level!”

“This...”

Master Yuanyu and the others were shocked speechless.

Even grandmasters expend incomparable effort and spirit to create a painting of the fifth level, and yet, this fellow drew it as though it was nobody’s business. Furthermore, he drew two of it consecutively without rest...

Do you need to be so impressive?

Do you need to be so arrogant?

Has the world changed, or is he just that capable that he can draw a fifth level painting so effortlessly?

“Do you two want it as well? It is two million per painting...”

Still frozen in shock at the latter’s deed, they saw this Grandmaster Zhang looking at them expectantly.

To him, creating a fifth level paintings takes just a little effort. It also just happened that he was lacking money, and it was much easier to paint than to feign as a master teacher.

After all, if his disguise were to be seen through, he might be beaten to death...

“We... can buy it as well?” Yuanyu and Lu Chen swallowed their saliva.

“As long as you pay, anything goes...” Zhang Xuan said.

“...”

The two of them staggered.

We are talking about paintings of the fifth level! It is so precious that you can’t find it in the entire capital! To think that he would paint it so casually just for money, just for money...

Pu!

Who said that grandmaster painters are ambitious nonmaterialistic experts who view wealth as dirt...

Come out, let’s see if I will beat you to death...

Not too long later, Zhang Xuan created another two paintings and they are of the fifth level as well. The two elders were so agitated that tears streamed down their faces.

They had actually managed to purchase such precious paintings... Furthermore, each of them got one of their own...

They had never imagined such a situation to be possible.

Since Huang Yu and Bai Xun no longer desired the Ink Daylily Canvas, there was no point in proceeding on with the examination. Furthermore, the ruckus that Zhang Xuan had created was so great that the two masters lost their interest in the examination.

“Master Zhang, I will prepare and send you the two million gold coins as soon as possible!”

“I will deliver it to the academy tomorrow!”

Yuanyu and Lu Chen were wealthy, so they were able to whip out two million easily. However, Huang Yu and Bai Xun didn't have so much cash on them. However, given their identities, it wasn't possible for them to refuse to pay up.

Seeing the stack of bills that was worth four million in his hands, Zhang Xuan was delighted.

Initially, he had only come here to repay the favor. Never in his dreams did he think that he would return with so much profits.

Adding to the debt Huang Yu and Bai Xun owed him, he earned a total of eight million gold coins with this single trip!

He had earned a million from treating Ling Tianyu's wife, and the average sum of three million earned from Du Miaoxuan, Wang Chong, Apothecary Chen Xiao, Luo Chong each... He had earned a total of twenty million already!

He isn't too far off from gathering twenty-three million now.

“Wonderful!”

Zhang Xuan clenched his fist excitedly.

Initially, he thought that it would take several years to earn twenty million. But now, it seems that it isn't a big deal at all...

If others were to hear his words, they would definitely spurt blood in his face.

The heck, why don't you just die...

“Brother Zhang Xuan, I will thicken my skin to call you brother. Emperor Shen Zhui would be returning tonight and I have sent a messenger to notify him about the matter. You should be able to gain entry to the kingdom's Book Collection Vault tomorrow!”

Lu Chen said while carefully putting away the painting.

“I can enter the Book Collection Vault tomorrow? Great!”

Zhang Xuan nodded his head delightfully.

The reason why he came to the Lu Residence previously was to search for Fighter 6-dan books. If he were to pay the kingdom’s Book Collection Vault a visit, he would surely be able to compile a full version of the Fighter 6-dan Heaven’s Path Divine Art. Perhaps... He might even be able to form the 7-dan cultivation technique!

In Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm, one’s meridians are fully connected to one another, allowing zhenqi to flow freely through every single part of the body. One’s breath would be aligned with the profound heavens, allowing one’s fighting prowess to be increased by multiple folds. With this kind of strength, even if Zhang Xuan were to leave the academy, there would be no place where he cannot go to and soar to greater heights.

Huang Yu and Bai Xun no longer had the need to undergo the examination while Yuanyu and Lu Chen had received a fifth level painting of their own. Each of their desires was fulfilled and thus, there was no longer any need for Zhang Xuan to remain here so he bade farewell.

By the time he left the Lu Residence, the sun had already set.

Ever since arriving here at noon, he had been busy the entire day.

However, it was all worth it. The Library of Heaven’s Path had formed the **【Heaven’s Path Painting Art】** manual, allowing him, who did not know a single thing about painting, to become a master painter who is in no way inferior to Lu Chen. Even though this occupation belongs only in the Middle Nine Paths, painters nevertheless hold an exceptional position in the world.

This is especially so in the Tianxuan Kingdom, where traditions and social values are highly respected. Painters with true capabilities are able to easily earn respect.

Of course, as for Zhang Xuan, earning money is of the greatest importance at present. In comparison to staying in his mansion

and waiting for others come knocking on his door, this trip alone had earned him eight million gold coins. It could be considered as a huge windfall.

Returning to his residence, Sun Qiang immediately stepped forward to welcome him.

“Has anyone been here today?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“Reporting to the old master, after your departure, no one came to visit!”

“Un!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Looks like the three million entrance fee had scared quite a few people off. However, that was good as well. At the very least, he would be spared much trouble. In any case, he had almost gathered the sum required for the pills and thus, he wasn't as anxious about the matter as before.

Returning back to the room, Zhang Xuan did not continue to cultivate. Even though he had the Heaven's Path Painting Art manual to provide a foundation, producing four paintings of the fifth level consecutively nevertheless accumulated unimaginable fatigue within him. Soon, after lying down, Zhang Xuan fell asleep.

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In the Lu Residence.

Master Yuanyu, Huang Yu, and Bai Xun did not leave together with Zhang Xuan when he bid farewell.

“Seems like it is too late to pay Master Teacher Yang Xuan a visit today...” Looking at the setting sun outside, Lu Chen commented.

It was disrespectful to pay a visit after the sun had set. If it were anyone else, it would not have been acceptable, but Master Lu Chen and Master Yuanyu possessed special standing. Nevertheless, the other party was a master teacher. Even they did not dare to commit the slightest act of disrespect toward the other party.

“It doesn't matter, it isn't too late to pay him a visit tomorrow!” Master Yuanyu replied.

Lu Chen nodded his head. He glanced at the painting Zhang Xuan left behind once more. Until now, he still isn't unable to believe what that had just happened. "Initially, I thought that this Brother Zhang is only a youngster who has a fervent passion and talent for painting. So, I wanted to test and accept him as my disciple. I would have never thought that he would turn out to be a grandmaster painter..."

Speaking to this point, he shook his head with a bitter smile.

If news that he had intended to accept a grandmaster painter as his disciple spread out, he would definitely become a laughingstock.

"For him to become a grandmaster painter at such a young age, I wonder about his background." Master Yuanyu asked.

Painting is an art that is harder to improve in than one's cultivation. If Zhang Xuan were in his seventies and eighties, they might have been surprised by his ability to produce a painting of the fifth level, but such an ability wouldn't have been unimaginable. However, for someone who isn't even in his twenties to create a painting of such level, they can't help but fall into deep contemplation.

There are only two possibilities to such a situation. Firstly, he possesses talents so great that other can only stare in admiration at. Secondly, there is an incredible master teacher guiding him from behind.

Of these two possibilities, Yuanyu leaned toward to the second one.

"I am not very sure of the details. Huang Yu and Bai Xun, you two have been to Hongtian Academy, so you both should know a little more about Brother Zhang. Why don't you two tell us a little bit of his background?" Lu Chen turned his gaze to the duo.

"We do know a bit of it... But, I'm afraid that you won't believe me if I say it and... You might fly into a rage..."

Huang Yu said awkwardly.

"Fly into a rage? Why would I get angry over it? Don't worry and just tell us!" Master Lu Chen was confused.

There was nothing for him not to believe in or get angry over about Zhang Xuan's deeds as a teacher in Hongtian Academy.

As a talented youngster who is highly-skilled in painting, he is sure to be a popular figure with many disciples.

"Alright, then I will go ahead to speak of it then. This Zhang Xuan laoshi... is a famous trash teacher in the Hongtian Academy. He is often insulted by others..." Huang Yu started recounting Zhang Xuan's affairs.

"Scoring a zero in the Teacher Qualification Examination? Causing a student's cultivation to go berserk? How... How is that possible?"

Yuanyu and Lu Chen's eyes widened in disbelief.

Are you joking? How can a grandmaster painter who had produced a painting of the fifth level... be a trash?

Why does the story sound so unbelievable?

"It should be the Education Bureau intentionally oppressing him..." Huang Yu continued on to recount what she had seen during the Enlightenment Will Trial.

"Damn it! I had seen that Shang Chen before and I thought that he was an impartial man. To think that he would be so despicable."

"Xiao Yu, aren't you an assistant master teacher? Besides, your father is the guild leader of the Teacher Guild. You must teach this black sheep a lesson!"

Hearing the 'biased' treatment of Elder Shang Chen and his 'doings', Yuanyu and Lu Chen almost exploded from rage.

They had witnessed Zhang Xuan 'capabilities' personally. How can such a capable person be trash? Since it isn't a fault on Zhang Xuan's part, it must have been Elder Shang Chen pulling strings from the shadows.

How can there be such a teacher in Hongtian Academy?

"I am truly infuriated by this matter... Looks like I have to find some time to talk to Principal Hong about this matter and

have him keep his school in check.” Master Lu Chen harrumphed angrily.

“Err... Actually... When I said that you would get angry, I wasn’t referring to this matter.”

Hearing the other party’s words, Huang Yu scratched her head.

“Isn’t this matter? Could it be that Brother Zhang was subjected to some unfair punishment?”

Lu Chen looked at her once again.

Even though he had kept himself to his residence and rarely interfered with the outside affairs, just banking on his identity as the emperor’s tutor and a master painter, if he truly wishes to teach someone a lesson, even the principal of the Hongtian Academy can do nothing about it.

“That isn’t it... Rather, someone had challenged Master Zhang to the Teacher Evaluation and it will be held a few days from now...”

Huang Yu hesitated for a moment before speaking.

“Challenge? Teacher Evaluation?”

Lu Chen was confused by Huang Yu’s words.

“I’ve heard of the Teacher Evaluation. Even though it is a face-off among students, the teacher’s honor and prestige are at stake. Who is the one challenging him? If he were to know of Brother Zhang’s true abilities, he probably wouldn’t dare to do so!” Master Yuanyu chuckled.

“That might not necessarily be the case. The one who challenged Master Zhang... is an extremely famous teacher in the Hongtian Academy. He is a true celebrity teacher. Furthermore, he has countless students under him, and over two hundred of the top three hundred freshmen in the Entrance Examinations are under his tutelage!” Huang Yu’s words slowly softened until it sounded nothing more than a mutter.

“What is the name of the teacher?”

Lu Chen’s breathing quickened.

“Cough cough, it is Master Lu’s son... Lu Xun laoshi!”

After hesitating for a moment, Huang Yu said.

“That beast... Damn it!” Master Lu Chen’s body staggered.
After which, he howled angrily.

165 Diagnosis of the Three Master Teachers

If Zhang Xuan were to witness this sight, he would definitely faint on the spot.

The most well-known celebrity teacher in the Hongtian Academy is actually the son of his peer, Master Lu Chen...

Perhaps it was because Huang Yu had thought of this that she hesitated upon saying such words.

The father considers Zhang Xuan as a peer, wanting to deepen their relationship. Yet, the son is trying his best to drive him down... It is no wonder that Master Lu Chen would get angry. He can be considered to be extremely well-cultured to not explode on the spot.

“I will take that beast in right now and have him admit defeat...”

After which, Master Lu Chen stood up, desiring to charge out in his fit of anger.

But before he could step out of the room, the butler, Uncle Cheng, hurriedly in.

“Old master, His Majesty has sent someone to deliver a message...”

Upon walking in, Uncle Cheng immediately said.

“A message?”

Lu Chen frowned. He stretched out his hand to grab the yellow cloth in the other party's hands.

He had already sent word that he would be bringing people to the kingdom's Book Collection Vault tomorrow, and Emperor Shen Zhui had agreed to it. What did he mean by sending another message now?

Bewildered, he suppressed the urge to teach that unfilial son of his a lesson and unfolded the yellow cloth in his hands. With a single look, his eyes narrowed.

“This...”

His face was filled with disbelief.

“What’s wrong?”

Seeing the change in his complexion, Master Yuanyu was baffled.

He had known Lu Chen for many years but there were rarely matters that robbed his serenity. It should have been impossible for him to be so shocked.

“Look...”

Master Lu Chen simply passed the yellow cloth over.

Master Yuanyu lowered his eyes to glance at the yellow cloth. Then, he couldn’t help but stagger backward. With widened eyes, he said, “That... That shouldn’t be possible?”

“This is a yellow cloth Shen Zhui had written personally and had someone sent over, so it must be real!” Master Shen Zhui nodded his head. Turning around to face Uncle Cheng, he said, “Ah Cheng, prepare the carriage. I am heading out now.”

“Yes!” Knowing that it must be an urgent matter, Uncle Cheng did not dawdle and hurriedly proceeded to prepare everything.

“Xiao Yu and Bai Xun, you two follow me as well!” Lu Chen turned around and passed the yellow cloth to them as well.

Initially, Huang Yu and Bai Xun were confused by the situation unfolding before them. After reading the contents on the yellow cloth, their eyes lit up in excitement and disbelief, “This... this...”

“Emperor Shen Zhui must be doing this for the Royal Elder... To say the truth, I’ve also taken a look at him and it isn’t an illness. Rather, his lifespan is reaching its limit. If he doesn’t achieve a breakthrough, he might not even live past this month.”

Recalling the contents on the yellow cloth, Master Yuanyu commented.

“Indeed!” Lu Chen nodded his head, worry evident on his face.

The royal family has an elder who has been serving as a stabilizing pillar for the kingdom. It is precisely because of his existence that the kingdom was able to remain peaceful and free of invasion. The moment he passes away... The Tianxuan Kingdom’s foundation will be rattled and many enemies will take the opportunity to conquer the land.

It is a pity that no matter how powerful one is, he will age and eventually reach the end of his lifespan.

The Royal Elder isn’t an exception as well.

A few days ago, Emperor Shen Zhui invited Master Yuanyu forward to treat him. But even though the latter possesses incredible medicinal skills, he isn’t able to extend a person’s lifespan. The Royal Elder will surely die, unless... he achieves a breakthrough to an even higher realm.

However, to achieve that is no easy feat.

The Royal Elder wasn’t able to accomplish this when he was younger and at his peak. Now that he is nearing his end, how can he possibly achieve the breakthrough now?

“I always thought that the emperor had genuinely gone hunting during this period of time just as he had announced that he would. To think that his true intention is to settle this matter!” Upon recalling this matter, his surprise reflected in his gaze.

“Old master, the carriage is ready.”

At this moment, Uncle Cheng walked over.

“Let’s go!” Lu Chen brought the other three along hastily.

The sky had already darkened and the crowd on the street was starting to dwindle. The carriage blazed through the streets keeping a consistent speed.

Not too long after, they arrived at the towering palace gates.

Tianxuan Kingdom Palace!

The four people alighted from the carriage and turned to look at the guard, "Is His Majesty in?"

"Reporting to Master Lu, His Majesty has yet to arrive..."

Recognizing Lu Chen, the guard hurried forward and replied respectfully.

"Since His Majesty hasn't yet arrived, we'll wait here for him. He will surely pass by here." Lu Chen nodded his head.

"Un!" Master Yuanyu and the others had no objections to the matter.

An hour later, a wide and extravagant carriage could be seen moving toward the palace gates from the distance. It was surrounded by numerous guards and cavalries. With a single look, it was clear that it was the royal carriage that only His Majesty was allowed to ride.

Hula!

The curtains in front of the royal carriage were parted and a luxuriously dressed middle-aged man emerged.

"Paying respect to Your Majesty!"

All guards in the surroundings knelt down immediately. Even Lu Chen and Yuanyu bowed their bodies slightly.

The most powerful man in Tianxuan Kingdom, Emperor Shen Zhui!

"Teacher, Master Yuanyu, you are all here..."

Emperor Shen Zhui chuckled lightly. Then, he faced to the rear and bowed to the royal carriage.

Huala!

The curtains to the royal carriage were parted once again and an elderly walked out slowly.

Seeing the elderly, Master Yuanyu, Lu Chen, and the others put on a dignified expression. Even more so, Huang Yu stepped forward and bowed respectfully, "Liu shi, you're here!"

“Un!” The elderly stroked his beard and nodded his head with a smile. Then, he beckoned to the royal carriage and said, “You should all come out as well. We have already arrived.”

Huala! Huala!

The curtains to the carriage parted once more and two elders in their fifties walked out. They were both dressed in green robes and their smiles were extremely tranquil and calming.

“Zhuang shi, Zheng shi!”

Seeing the two, Huang Yu and the others’ bodies jolted as they hurriedly bowed respectfully to the two.

Given how they were respectfully termed with the title of ‘shi’, it was clear that the three are true master teachers.

Emperor Shen Zhui had managed to invite three master teachers simultaneously. It is no wonder that even Lu Chen fell into a state of disbelief when he first read of the matter from the yellow cloth.

Huang Yu is an assistant master teacher serving the master teacher who first emerged from the carriage, Liu shi. On the other hand, Bai Xun is Zhuang shi’s student.

Since their teachers were here, Master Lu Chen brought them along.

Otherwise, these juniors don’t even have the right to pay respect to these master teachers.

“Alright, let’s not waste time and enter first!” Liu shi smiled.

The few of them swiftly entered the palace.

“It is truly my honor for you to visit to Tianxuan Kingdom...”

Emperor Shen Zhui did not dare to flaunt his position at all and welcomed the guests with utmost respect.

“Your Majesty is being too polite. The reason why I am here is not just for your Royal Elder’s matter. Firstly, it is to celebrate Elder Tian’s birthday. Secondly, it seems like a good bud had appeared in your Hongtian Academy and I would like to see if he would be suitable to become my apprentice.” Liu shi smiled.

“Is Liu shi speaking of Lu Xun laoshi? The way he teaches is not bad and he is extremely famous, even in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom. I have heard of his name.”

Emperor Shen Zhui chuckled as he hurriedly introduced him. “Speaking of him, he is Lu Chen laoshi’s sole son.”

“Master Painter Lu Chen, I have long heard of your name.” Turning toward Lu Chen, Liu shi smiled.

“I am flattered by Liu shi’s compliment...” Lu Chen hurriedly bowed.

Even though he possesses exceptional standing as a master painter, he is far from matching up to an official master teacher’s status.

Didn’t you see that even the emperor was acting respectfully around them?

“Alright, let’s drop the pleasantries. Call Shen Hong here. It has been long since we last met. At the same time, Zhuang shi, Zheng shi, and I can take a look to see if we can cure him of his ailment.” After a short banter, Liu shi dived straight into the topic.

Shen Hong is that elder in Tianxuan Kingdom’s royal family.

Hearing his words, Emperor Shen Zhui did not dare to keep him waiting. He delegated the task to the eunuch beside him immediately and the latter left hastily.

Not too long later, an elderly approached under the same eunuch’s assistance.

The elder’s hair had turned completely white and there were deep creases on his skin. The aura of death lingered around his entire body and it felt that he might never wake up again if he were to lie down now.

Without even taking a closer examination, it was clear that he was reaching the limits of his lifespan.

If he were unable to achieve a breakthrough or if there are no other solutions for his problem, he definitely wouldn’t last for more than a month.

“Shen Hong pays his respect to Liu shi, Zhuang shi, and Zheng shi.” The elder bowed.

“There is no need to be so formal with us. Allow us to take a look...”

Liu shi got straight down to business. Walking around Shen Hong, he examined the latter’s condition and soon, a deep frown appeared on his forehead.

The other two master teachers also approached to examine the situation, falling silent as well.

“Do the three master teachers have any solutions for his problem?”

Gedeng! Upon witnessing how they were reacting, Emperor Shen Zhui’s heart skipped a beat.

“Your Majesty, I will just directly inform you of our diagnosis. The deterioration of Shen Hong’s vitality is simply too severe. If it were three years ago, I might still have a way to help him break through his current realm. However, the death aura that plagues him is simply too dense, I don’t have any means at all!”

Zhuang shi was the first to speak.

“I’m also of the same thought. He is advanced in age and if we try to do it forcefully, not only will it fail, it might even cause his death.” Zheng shi shook his head.

Even though master teachers possess the ability to guide one’s cultivation realm to reach higher realms, there are limits to their means. Shen Hong before them is already nearing the end of his lifespan. If they were to induce him to achieve a breakthrough forcefully, not only would the possibility approximate zero, he might even die due to overexertion.

“They’re right!” Liu shi shook his head as well to express his helplessness. “All humans succumb to the natural cycle of life and death. Shen Hong has been watching over Tianxuan Kingdom for many years now, and perhaps this can be considered a kind of release for him.”

Master teachers are used to life and death, so they viewed these matters lightly. Even though Shen Hong was his friend, he had no intention of consoling him or mincing his words.

“Alright!”

A look of disappointment appeared on Emperor Shen Zhui’s face.

Although Master Yuanyu was unable to resolve the Royal Elder’s problem, he nevertheless held high hopes for the three master teachers. Yet, contrary to his expectations, the same old conclusion was reached.

“Actually, you don’t have to be too disappointed. Even though we are master teachers, we are just 1-star master teachers. If His Majesty is able to invite a 2-star master teacher, there just might be a solution for your elder’s issue...”

Liu shi consoled.

“2-star master teacher?”

Emperor Shen Zhui flashed a bitter smile.

He had paid an exorbitant sum just to invite these three 1-star master teachers. Furthermore, the main reason why they were willing to accept was because they were heading for Elder Tian’s birthday celebration and it was convenient for them to drop by. Otherwise, he would never have stood had a chance to invite them successfully.

And to invite a 2-star master teacher?

The other party would probably just ignore him.

Even in a Conferred Kingdom, they were existences of the highest distinction and the emperors would have to welcome them with the highest possible honor. How is it possible for an emperor of an ordinary kingdom like him engage a figure like that?

“Your Majesty, I happened to receive some news and it might prove useful to you.”

Just as Emperor Shen Zhui was about to fall into despair, Master Yuanyu spoke up suddenly.

166 The Kingdom's Book Collection Vault

“Oh?” Shen Zhui turned to look at Master Yuanyu.

“A few days ago, a master teacher arrived in the capital and judging from his deeds, he appears to be more than just a 1-star.”

Master Yuanyu spoke of the news that he had heard of.

“Master teacher? Not just a 1-star?” Emperor Shen Zhui had been away all this time and he hadn't had the time to look through the report Pavilion Elder Qian sent him. Thus, he wasn't aware of the '5-star' incident.

“Yes. This master teacher effortlessly treated the illness plaguing Ling Tianyu's wife, solved Du Miaoxuan's persistent affliction...” Master Yuanyu started recounting all that he knew about the matter.

As a master physician, he was once invited to treat each of these people and thus, he knew the level of difficulty involved. Yet, this 'Yang shi' was able to cure them fully in just a short ten to twenty minutes. Such a feat left him astonished, and that was also the reason why he wanted to pay the latter a visit.

“He is a master teacher just because he treated someone?” Hearing the conversation between the two, Zhuang shi shook his head. “Even though master teachers are capable at all fields, their main duty revolves around guiding others to achieve a breakthrough of their current level of cultivation. Being able to treat them, that simply means that he is a master physician.”

Liu shi and Zheng shi also shook their heads in response to Master Yuanyu's words as well, clearly disapproving of his view.

It was no wonder that they were skeptical. Even though it is said that master teachers are capable of guiding any craft and

can treat others as well, those are actually the higher tier master teachers. The typical 1-star to 2-star master teachers can only help others to achieve cultivation realm breakthroughs and only guide those in the specific crafts that they are skilled in.

Besides, master teachers are prestigious figures who have eyes on them wherever they go. How is it possible for one to arrive in Tianxuan Kingdom without anyone knowing, even renting a mansion and living here?

“Er...” Master Yuanyu was unable to refute his words at all.

This ‘Master Teacher Yang Xuan’ caused quite a huge ruckus recently. However, his deeds mainly revolved around treating and curing others, and he didn’t seem to have helped any others break through their current cultivation realm, with the exception of Du Miaoxuan. Besides, it was only rumored that he is a master teacher. As Master Yuanyu had yet to meet him personally, he was unable to confirm this fact for himself.

“What did you say his name is? I know all of the 2-star master teachers in the surrounding kingdoms.” Sensing his awkwardness, Liu shi stepped in quickly, smiling.

“He is called Yang Xuan. I don’t know much about the details...” Master Yuanyu said.

“Yang Xuan?”

Liu shi hesitated for a moment before shaking his head. “There isn’t a 2-star master teacher going by such a name in the surrounding kingdoms. In fact, I also know of some 3-star master teachers, but I don’t recall any of them being named as such!”

Master teachers have their own circles as well. Even though Liu shi is only a 1-star master teacher, he still has a rough idea of how many master teachers of each tier there are in the nearby kingdoms and is able to name them. Yang Xuan... This is the first time he heard of such a person.

“He is probably a fraud. As you have mentioned, he demands three million before one can pay him a visit. Will a true master

teacher be concerned with material wealth?” Zhuang shi sneered.

Master teachers possess incredible standing. Regardless of what it is that they need, with a single word, all powers would come rushing forward to fulfill their demands, even the royal family. For the other party to have to rent a mansion and demand a three million visiting fee, he is clearly a fraud who is out for the money.

“This...” Master Yuanyu remained conflicted.

In the past two days, news regarding Master Teacher Yang Xuan had been spreading like wildfire. Hence, he had wanted to pay him a visit. Now upon witnessing the three master teachers claim that the other party is likely to be a fraud, he is experiencing dissonance.

“Actually, it is easy to verify whether he is a fraud or not. Elder Tian’s birthday is still a few days away and I happen to be free tomorrow. I can accompany you to his mansion to take a personal look at whether he is a master teacher or not!” Liu shi said.

“I would like to accompany you two as well. Master teacher is a profession that should never be sullied. To think that someone would feign as a master teacher. Hmph, I would like to see the face of that brazen fellow who dares to play with fire!” Zhuang shi harrumphed coldly.

“Bring me along as well. Honestly speaking, I am also quite interested.” Zheng shi chuckled.

“Alright!” Master Yuanyu nodded his head.

It is just like the master teachers had said; it is impossible to pretend to be the real deal. If the man truly were a master teacher, even if the three master teachers were to head there, it would be no big deal. However, if the other party turns out to be a fake, they would expose him on the spot and he wouldn’t have to be conflicted over the matter.

Throughout the entire length of the discussion between the three master teachers, Emperor Shen Zhui did not dare to interject at all.

Even though he is the sovereign of the kingdom, compared to the monsters known as master teachers, he did not dare to be disrespectful in the least. Feeling helpless, Emperor Shen Zhui sighed.

.....

Oblivious to the fact that three master teachers had arrived in the kingdom and that they were intent on exposing his fraud, Zhang Xuan woke up and leisurely stretched his body. The sun was already high up in the sky.

After packing his items for a short while, he ate his breakfast and briefed Sun Qiang. “I will be heading out now. If anyone comes looking for him, have them wait outside.”

“Yes, old master!”

Sun Qiang nodded his head with pride.

He is completely satisfied with his role as the butler of a master teacher. Regardless of whether it was the Four Great Clans or the nobles, all of the existences which he had to fawn up to are now lowering their heads before him.

Regardless of your identity, since the old master says so, you had better wait outside obediently...

He was filled with confidence after the experiences involving Ling Tianyu and Du Miaoxuan.

Oblivious to his thoughts, Zhang Xuan simply thought that he had understood his words and nodded his head before heading out of the residence.

After finding a remote alley, he transformed his appearance and walked toward Lu Chen’s residence without delay.

Master Lu Chen had said that he was going to bring him to the kingdom’s Book Collection Vault today. With that, he should be able to gather sufficient Pixue realm manuals so as to advance his cultivation.

Not too long after, he arrived at Master Lu’s residence.

“Brother Zhang, I have to apologize to you...”

An apologetic look appeared on Master Lu Chen's face when he saw Zhang Xuan.

"Apologize? Could it be that I have been denied entry to the kingdom's Book Collection Vault?" 'Gedeng', Zhang Xuan's heart skipped a beat.

If he were unable to enter, where else can he find the books to feed the Library of Heaven's Path?

"That's not it. I have raised an unfilial son..." Master Lu Chen shook his head.

"Unfilial son?" Zhang Xuan had no idea what Master Lu Chen was driving at.

What do you raising an unfilial son have to do with me? It's not like I know him...

"Indeed. I have only heard of that matter yesterday. It seems like my unfilial son had brought you trouble by challenging you to a Teacher Evaluation. I'm very sorry about that. I'll head over to the academy, later on, to have him admit his defeat..."

Master Lu Chen said.

"Teacher Evaluation?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback. "Master Lu Chen, it can't be that... Lu Xun laoshi is your son?"

"Indeed, it's that unfilial fellow. We had an argument three years ago and following which, he left home in a rage. After that, he had never once returned back here..." Master Lu Chen shook his head.

"Er... Since I am already prepared for the Teacher Evaluation, Master Lu Chen doesn't have to worry about this. Otherwise, he might think that I am trying to back down from the matter and had you do so..."

Zhang Xuan smiled bitterly.

He had never imagined that Lu Xun would be Master Lu Chen's son.

This is too much of a coincidence.

Even so, news of the duel had already leaked out, so it is too late for him to back down now. Since he is going to slap the other party on his face, it is best that he proceeded with it honorably. If Master Lu Chen really were to create a ruckus, wouldn't his reputation fall to the gutters?

If he were to seek assistance from the father after finding himself being unable to match up with the son... What is the difference from looking for a student's parent after finding himself being unable to deal with an unruly student?

This isn't this way of dealing with problems.

“Alright then...”

Seeing the other party's persistence, Master Lu Chen could only drop the matter at that.

“Brother Zhang, that child of mine never once suffered a setback and he grew complacent as a result. It would be good that you could show him that the world is big, and there is always someone better out there. This way, he might rein in his arrogance, helping with his future growth.”

Master Lu Chen spoke of his anticipation.

That son of his was simply too arrogant. Just because of a few words that he said, the son left home and never returned once since then. He had also nearly fallen ill due to the overwhelming anger he felt then.

If this Brother Zhang can teach him a lesson, that would be for the best. Only after suffering a setback can one understand that there are people who are even more capable out there, and only by lowering his head will he walk a further distance.

“Er... Alright then!”

He was just considering whether he should go easy on Lu Xun given his amiable relationship with Master Lu Chen.

However, since the other party said so, given how this Lu Xun laoshi had been trying to do him in, he didn't mind returning the favor.

Chatting while walking, they soon arrived at the palace.

The Book Collection Vault is within the royal palace. It contains the countless books gathered from all across the entire kingdom throughout the countless years since its inception. Only the royal family and the most powerful nobles and officials are allowed entry into it.

As the emperor's tutor, it wasn't a big deal for Master Lu Chen to bring someone into the palace. The guards immediately stood aside to allow the duo entry.

“As expected of the royal palace...”

Zhang Xuan surveyed his surroundings while walking toward the Book Collection Vault.

Even though the Tianxuan Kingdom isn't a huge country, its palace is extremely luxurious. It is in no way inferior to the palaces in his previous life. In fact, in some aspects, it might even be more extravagant than them.

There are countless patios within the royal palace. Without someone to lead the way, it is easy for one to get lost.

Under Master Lu Chen's guidance, they passed by several corridors and soon, they stopped in front of a giant building.

“This is the Book Collection Vault!”

Master Lu Chen pointed with a smile.

Zhang Xuan looked forward and saw a tall building dozens of meters tall before him. Written in gold on the horizontal plaque were three grand words ‘Book Collection Vault’. It looked exceptionally spectacular and radiant as it reflected the sun's rays.

“This is Emperor Shen Zhui's Golden Dragon Token. With it, you can flip through the books within as you like. However, you are not to touch any of the formations within. I won't be accompanying you in.”

With a flick of his wrist, he whipped out a golden token and passed it to Zhang Xuan.

A massive savage dragon was inscribed on it.

“Master Lu Chen, thanks for your help!” Receiving the Golden Dragon Token from the other party’s hands, Zhang Xuan clasped his hand gratefully.

The kingdom’s Book Collection Vault is one of the most important locations in the kingdom. As such, there are bound to be formations and restrictions created by formation masters within to guard its interior. Without this object, it is likely that one would be attacked upon entering its compounds.

“There is no need to be so formal with me, it’s nothing much. Alright, I’ll be leaving now. Feel free to look through whatever books you wish to. No one will interrupt you.” Master Lu Chen chuckled as he stroked his beard.

“Alright!” Zhang Xuan didn’t dawdle any longer. With the Gold Dragon Token in his hand, he walked straight in.

The kingdom’s Book Collection Vault truly lives up to its reputation. There are countless bookshelves within it and one couldn’t see the other end with a single glance. Books on all crafts occupied the shelves and with a brief look, they seem to number in the tens of million.

“It wasn’t easy to get in here. I have to imprint all of these books into the Library of Heaven’s Path!”

Seeing so many books for the first time, Zhang Xuan trembled in excitement. He did not hurry to look for books on cultivation technique and instead, walked forward to the first row of bookshelves and started to casually flip through the books.

Hualala, hualala!

The sound of books flipping started to echo in the Book Collection Vault.

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While Zhang Xuan was busy flipping books in the Book Collection Vault, Master Yuanyu, bringing along Liu shi, Zheng shi, and Zhuang shi had arrived at the entrance of his residence.

“This is where that Yang shi lives...”

Master Yuanyu pointed.

“Un. Knock on the door!” Liu shi gestured.

167 The Arrogant Sun Qiang

Dong dong dong dong!

Stepping forward, Master Yuanyu started to knock on the door. Not too long later, the door opened and Sun Qiang emerged, holding out his belly with conceit.

Glancing once at the crowd, he said, “Pay three million gold coins and wait at the door. The old master will invite you in when he feels like meeting you.”

Master Yuanyu is prominent among the upper echelons in the capital and many people know him. However, insignificant figures such as Sun Qiang never had the chance to meet him.

Besides... He doesn't care who he is anyway.

The old master is a master teacher. Even if you were a tiger or a dragon, you had better lay low obediently.

“Cough cough...” Master Yuanyu nearly choked on his own saliva.

There are three master teachers behind him. For a small butler to act so arrogantly... isn't he afraid of being beaten to death?

“I am Yuanyu and I am here to pay respects to your master...”

Even though he was displeased, he understood that it was possible that the person before him to be the butler of a master teacher. Even though he was of high standing in the Tianxuan Kingdom, he did not dare to get involved in a face-off against a master teacher.

“Who cares whether you are Yuanyu or Fangyu, didn't you hear what I just said? Pay three million and wait out here. Perhaps, you might get an opportunity to meet the old master like that. Otherwise, just scam.”

Sun Qiang waved chubby his hands impatiently, as though chasing off flies.

If you don't have any money, don't put on an act.

“Do you know who our master is?” A guard couldn’t stand watching on and bellowed at Sun Qiang.

“Do I look like I care who your master is? If you want to enter the residence, you have to follow our rules. Stop talking crap here. Stop putting on an act here and just scam if you don’t have the money. If you don’t even have three million, what rights do you all have to be acting so haughtily before me?”

Sun Qiang glanced at him with disdain.

If you are unwilling to spend the money, you should just get lost. Bragging about your master... No matter how incredible your master is, can he be greater than a master teacher?

“You...”

That guard nearly spurted blood.

His master was Liu shi. Regardless of he went, he was always treated with utmost respect. Yet, in the eyes of this fellow, he became a poor bloke and someone putting on an act...

You are the one who is putting on an act, your entire family is putting on an act!

His face flushed. Just as he was about to reveal his master’s identity to reprimand the other party, Liu shi stretched out his hand and stopped him, “We’re just passing by and we would like to pay the old master a visit. We trouble you to help report our presence to him...”

Before he could finish his words, Sun Qiang stepped forward and used his plump hands to pat the other party’s face, “Old man, are you deaf? Or is there something wrong with your head? Did you not hear what I just said? If you want to pay a visit to the old master, you need to pay three million. If you don’t have any money, scam! This is the rule... If you don’t know what rules are, they are standards that one needs to abide by. Get it?”

“Ah...”

Seeing his actions, Master Yuanyu shuddered and nearly fainted in shock.

Slapping Liu shi’s face...

The few guards following behind him was taken aback. They stood rooted to the spot in a daze. They were on the verge of going insane.

The heck!

This fellow actually dared to slap Liu shi's face? Even saying that there is something wrong with his head... This is no longer a matter of being courageous or not. You are really courting death...

Even Liu shi was stunned.

Clearly, he didn't expect the fatty before him to behave like this. His eyebrows twitched furiously.

No matter what, he is a master teacher, a person respected by everyone else. Countless experts who paid him a visit did not even dare to breathe loudly before him. Yet, this fellow struck his face... At that instant, he was so stunned that he didn't know how to react.

He felt so stifled that blood was threatening to spurt from his mouth.

However, this wasn't the time for him to get angry. The other party obviously did not know of his identity. As a master teacher, an esteemed guest of Tianxuan Kingdom, bickering with an insignificant figure like Sun Qiang is truly an embarrassing act.

With a swift movement, he dodged the second slap from the other party. Suppressing the anger within, he beckoned the person from his back.

"Ah Yun!"

"Yes!"

The guard behind immediately recovered and passed a jade token over. "This is our master's Tutelage Jade Token. Anyone in possession of this is entitled to two hours of guidance by our master. It should be worth three million..."

Some master teachers would distribute Tutelage Jade Tokens with their unique mark on it. As long as one possesses such an object, he is entitled to free tutelage from the master teacher.

This object is the symbol of identity for a master teacher, and it can be traded for money.

After all, a master teacher's lesson is something of great value; very little people had the chance to attend such a lesson. Even Tongxuan realm pinnacle experts would fight with all their might for that opportunity to receive guidance from a master teacher.

In terms of money, it is definitely worth more than three million.

Pah!

Before he could pass the jade token over to Sun Qiang, the latter threw it out as though it was trash, causing it to smash into smithereens on the floor. "Do you have a screw loose? You think that lousy jade of yours is worth three million? Do you take me for a fool? If you don't have any money, scram!"

After which, he shot them a look of disdain before walking back into the residence and shutting the door.

As Tianxuan Kingdom had no master teachers, such Tutelage Jade Tokens weren't in circulation in the market. Naturally, Sun Qiang had never seen it before. He thought that they were unable to come up with the sum and were casually using some broken jade to hoodwink him. In fact, he thought that he was already sparing the other party's dignity by not having the guards chase them away.

"You..."

Seeing the other party toss away the jade token and staring at him with such contemptuous eyes, the guards felt so infuriated that they were on the verge of fainting.

The heck, why would someone find such an unreasonable person to serve as their butler?

"Brother Sun, don't be in such a hurry. Here are bills worth three million gold. May I trouble you to inform Yang shi of our arrival..."

Seeing that the other party was about to close the doors, Master Yuanyu could not longer hold himself back and stood

forward to resolve the matter.

If this matter was left to be, the three master teachers might very well blow their top. He was only a mere physician and he was afraid of getting implicated in a fight among master teachers just because he brought them over.

“Un, that’s more like it. At least you understand fast!”

Taking over the stack of bills, Sun Qiang lowered his head to verify its authenticity before nodding his head in satisfaction. Then, he lamented, “If you have money, why do you all still take out some rotten jade? I’ve seen stingy people, but I’ve never seen such stingy people. Don’t you know that I, Sun Qiang, am a very principled man? If you wish to enter without paying up... Don’t even dream about it!”

Hearing those words, everyone’s mouth twitched furiously. Even Yuanyu almost failed to hold in his anger.

Brother, do you know that the rotten jade you just smashed is a Tutelage Jade Token? Do you know how much it is truly worth?

A Tongxuan realm expert would not hesitate to put their life on the line just to obtain one of that. Yet, you simply discarded it so casually, so though it is something worthless...

Are you really a master teacher’s butler?

Otherwise, how can you fail to identify such an object?

“Alright, wait here. The old master had some affairs to attend to and he is currently out. When he returns and finds time for you, he will summon you in.”

Keeping the gold bills properly, the fatty gestured.

“He’s out?” Master Yuanyu’s eyebrows shot up.

The heck! If he went out, why didn’t you say so earlier? After accepting the money, you tell us that we have to wait for him to return...

It is one thing if I had come alone. However... How can you keep these three masters waiting here?

“Can I bother you to quickly report the news to the old master? We really have urgent matters for your old master...”

Suppressing his anger, Master Yuanyu asked.

“What is the matter, to be of such urgency?”

Sun Qiang inquired.

After the other party paid the sum, his attitude became obviously much better than before. After all, customers are the gods (emperors).

“No matter what it is, we’re here to speak to the old master, not to you!” The guard who took out the jade token earlier could no longer repress his rage.

“Un? Why, you feel embarrassed to say so? Me, elder brother Qiang, have followed the old master for quite some time and have learned many things from him. If it is just a simple matter, there might not be a need for the old master to get involved, I might be able to solve it...”

Sun Qiang lifted his plump face haughtily and sneered coldly.

What a joke! I am the old master’s successor. I have witnessed his means with my own eyes. All that needs to be done is to firstly bluff the subject, have them reveal their own flaws, and then finally try his best to hoodwink the other party. Given my abilities, I should be more than capable of deceiving you fellows who aren’t even willing to pay up.

“You’ve learned many things from him?”

The guard was about to speak, but Liu shi abruptly interrupted him, “Since you’re able to tell, why don’t you tell me what’s wrong with me?”

“You?”

Sun Qiang’s fat body circled around Liu shi before stepping backward. Recalling the old master’s disposition and attitude, he lifted his head forty-five degrees upward and looked at the other party calmly, as though an nonmaterialistic expert.

“You... Is your family doing well?”

“What did you say?”

Liu shi was taken aback by his words and nearly fainted from shock.

He had merely requested the other party to diagnose his condition, why did he suddenly start insulting him?

Master Yuanyu's body staggered. He felt so stifled that he could knock his head against the wall.

The heck... Heavens, you might as well strike me dead with a bolt of lightning... I truly can't take this anymore...

This... The pressure is too great...

The anxiety I had felt in the past few minutes seems more than what I had experienced in my entire life.

Ignoring their astonishment and anger, Sun Qiang tried his best to recall the gestures and words of the old master and chuckled lightly, "Oh? You didn't get my words? Then I'll phrase it in another way then. Are the physical conditions of your family members still alright?"

168 The Discerning Ability of a Master Teacher

Pu!

Everyone's body shook, as though they had been struck by lightning.

Initially, they thought that perhaps Sun Qiang may have made a mistake, or perhaps their ears were playing tricks on them. Yet, that fellow repeated the same message.

Cursing Liu shi's family...

Furthermore, so brazenly. The heck, fatty, where did your confidence come from?

Master Yuanyu was frozen on the spot and tears streamed down his face.

I had only spoken of Master Teacher Yang Xuan's existence, I didn't mean to offend anyone... Now great, if Liu shi were to be maddened, it would definitely cause an uproar. If Yang Xuan turns to be a real master teacher and he pursues the matter, a battle would definitely ensue. Afterward, ... there would be no more afterward...

The crowd was shocked. Sun Qiang thought that the reaction meant that he was spot-on and he stood proudly.

That was the method that the old master used to scam Ling Tianyu. The moment he opened his mouth, the other party immediately gave in. He had imitated Zhang Xuan's disposition and gesture down to the very details, making him seem like a superior existence which had seen through the fabrics of the world.

With his head tilted upward, he glanced downward to see if the other party had conceded to his greatness and knelt down to call him 'master'. Yet, he only saw the frosty look on the other party's face. In fact, even his guards drew their swords.

“Old master, I am going to kill him...” The guard bellowed as he prepared to charge forward.

“Hm? Why isn’t it working?” Looking at the guard’s behavior, no matter how foolish Sun Qiang could be, he realized that something was definitely amiss. Gedeng, his heart leaped. Could it be that his statement was inaccurate? Even so, he decided that he must uphold his status and authority.

Whenever the old master spoke, he often incurred the wrath of others. But after his words proved to be right, the other party would immediately give in.

Upon thinking of this, Sun Qiang’s confidence surged once more, “How about this, allow me to touch your wife... Oh, since your wife isn’t here... You... are a beast, you’re looking for it...”

After musing for a moment, he recalled the other catchphrases of the old master.

The surroundings were completely silent.

Big brother, I thought that you were quite bold to have cursed Liu shi’s family. To think that you still have more up your sleeves...

Wanting to touch Liu shi’s wife, calling Liu shi a beast, saying that he was asking for it... I have seen brazen people, but I truly haven’t seen anyone as brazen as you...

Liu shi’s face was also steeled. His face twitched uncontrollably and he looked to be about to pass out from anger.

If not for his incredible tolerance, he would have definitely killed this fellow with a single slap of his.

“Old master, please allow me to kill this foolish lad who dares to insult you!”

The guard, Ah Yun, clasped his hands as he asked Liu shi for permission.

“Tell him who I am!”

Liu shi flung his robe.

He actually desired to kill the person before him as well. However, the other party's arrogance caused him to be apprehensive.

If not a master teacher, how would a lowly butler dare to behave in such a manner?

If the other party were truly an incredible master teacher, he wouldn't be able to withstand the other party's wrath when he finds out that his butler was killed.

Thus, it was better for him to behave prudently, deciding to first reveal his identity and observe the other party's attitude.

"Fatty, our old master is the Honorary Grand Duke of the Beiwu 2nd Tier Kingdom, Master Teacher Liu Ling..." Ah Yun stepped forward and declared.

"Like I care whether you are some grand duke or whatsoever..." Halfway through his words, his plump body trembled as he asked, "What did you say? Master teacher? He is a master teacher?"

He might be able to snub the grand dukes of other countries, but the same cannot be said about master teachers.

"Indeed, our old master is a 1-star master teacher. For you to insult him, you are truly courting death!"

Ah Yun clenched his teeth.

A master teacher is not an existence that can be sullied by anyone. To curse his entire family in public, demand to touch his wife, and call him a beast... Just these were sufficient to warrant his death penalty over a hundred times.

"Courting death?"

Sun Qiang's mouth twitched. He nearly knelt from the fear that he felt.

He thought that he could just act cool and peacefully pass off as an expert for once while the old master wasn't present in order to improve the old master's impression of him. Yet, in the midst of doing so, he became a fool instead.

The old master did the exact same things as well, but why is it that he was always able to get the other party to kneel in fear, not daring to even breathe loudly, while on the other hand, he just had to meet with a master teacher...

Why is there such a huge disparity even though we are both humans?

Insulting a master teacher... Isn't this equivalent to committing suicide?

What should I do?

Sun Qiang's plump face folded into countless creases and he was on the verge of tears.

"Go and report to your old master that Master Teacher Liu Ling, Master Teacher Zhuang Xian, and Master Teacher Zheng Fei are here. As for your matter, I will settle it personally with your old master!"

Seeing the previously arrogant plump butler trembling in fright, Master Teacher Liu Ling waved him away.

If the other party were truly a master teacher, letting off his subordinate could be considered a favor to him, equivalent to giving him face. On the other hand, if the other party turns out to be bogus, he could make a big fuss and take him down immediately, thus exacting vengeance for the insult.

"The old master has been out since morning... I don't know when he'll be back..." Upon hearing that the other party would not be dealing with him for now, Sun Qiang heaved a sigh of relief.

Upon knowing the other party's identity, he no longer dared to behave as arrogantly as he did before.

"You don't know when he'll be back?" Liu Ling and the others frowned.

They can't possibly keep waiting here for him.

"Yes!" Sun Qiang nodded his head.

"Alright then. Here is our name scroll, you take it for now. We'll pay our visits when your old master is back."

Liu Ling beckoned and the guard, Ah Yun, stepped forward to pass a name scroll.

“Yes!” Sun Qiang did not dare to refute his words and immediately accepted the name scroll from the guard’s hands. Upon seeing the words ‘master teacher’ on it, his eyebrows twitched uncontrollably.

“Let’s go!” Since the other party wasn’t here, the three master teachers couldn’t be bothered to waste their time on a butler. Thus, they turned around to leave.

Only after seeing them disappear into the distance did Sun Qiang heave a sigh of relief. He wiped away the cold sweat on his body before walking into the courtyard.

Upon entering, he felt his knees give in and he fell to the floor, paralyzed.

Looks like one can’t just simply go around feigning to be an expert. Otherwise... One might not even know how he dies... I will never do it ever again...

.....

“Liu shi, why didn’t you directly kill that fellow who insulted you?”

When the crowd left, the guard, Ah Yun couldn’t help but inquire.

Those who are able to become master teachers are by no means kind. Liu shi never hesitates when it comes to killing others. But why was he able to tolerate the plump butler saying such words to him?

“Brother Zheng, what do you think of it?”

Ignoring his question, Liu Ling turned to Zheng shi, Zheng Fei, and asked.

“The master residing in the mansion doesn’t seem to be a simple figure. If he is truly a master teacher, it is likely that his capabilities are superior to ours.” Zheng Fei nodded his head with a grim look.

“Indeed!” Zhuang shi, Zhuang Xian, nodded his head as well.

“But... didn't we not see the owner of the mansion?”

Hearing the conversation between the three master teachers, everyone felt puzzled.

They didn't see the old master the plump butler spoke of. If so, how can they be so sure that the other party's capabilities are superior to theirs?

Even Yuanyu, who was following behind, felt perplexed.

“We didn't see him, but we saw his butler.” Liu shi said.

“That weak fellow?” Ah Yun became even more confused. Was there anything special with that weak fellow?

“You all have only seen the surface!” Liu shi shook his head.

“I have taken a look at the butler's constitution. It is not just poor; it can be considered to be extremely inferior. Logically speaking, his limit would have been Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi realm. However, did you see how strong he actually was?”

“Fighter 4-dan Pigu realm advanced stage...”

Ah Yun hesitated for a moment before speaking.

“Indeed, he has reached Pigu realm advanced stage.

Furthermore... Based on how he doesn't seem to have perfect control over his zhenqi, his breakthrough should be something that occurred recently. Putting this together with what Master Yuanyu said, that this Sun Qiang is someone he hired on a whim and that he was previously just a merchant in the commercial city... It is very likely that the rise in his strength is due to the guidance from the master of the mansion...”

After which, a grim expression appeared on Liu shi's face.

“Given such inferior constitution and unexceptional cultivation technique, the zhenqi in his body should have long sunk due to excessive impurities, clogging all of the meridians throughout his body. Yet, he was able to induce a breakthrough in him in a few short days, even raising his strength by an entire realm... It would be hard for me to induce such growth in others.”

As master teachers, they specialized in guiding one's cultivation. As such, they were able to easily recognize Sun

Qiang's unique condition.

There are clots in Sun Qiang's meridians, causing his impure zhenqi to sink. According to logical deduction, it should have already been an incredible feat for him to reach Zhenqi realm pinnacle. Yet, contrary to their expectations, the latter had achieved Pigu realm advanced stage. No matter how foolish they were to be, it is obvious that the other party possesses exceptional abilities.

If Zhang Xuan were to hear their conclusion, he would definitely be astounded.

Master teachers aren't just for show, their discernment abilities were indeed impressive.

It is no wonder that it could become a profession that everyone on the continent fears. The sharpness of their eyes isn't something just anyone can match up to.

"If I'm not wrong, the other party had used an extremely pure zhenqi to destroy the shackles in his body and meld the sunken zhenqi, thus allowing him to achieve a breakthrough. Then, the sunk zhenqi he accumulated over numerous years caused his cultivation realm to soar, eventually stopping at Pigu realm advanced stage!"

The silent Zhuang shi hesitated for a moment before speaking.

If Sun Qiang were here, he would definitely be shocked. His experience was exactly as how the master teacher before him had described it to be.

"To be able to meld the sunk zhenqi with his and break through the clots in his meridians, that person's zhenqi must be at least intermediate tier. Or else... his cultivation must have reached Zongshi realm!"

Liu shi nodded his head, agreeing to Zhuang shi's words. Then, he turned to Ah Yun and said, "Regardless of whether he is an expert who possesses intermediate tier zhenqi or a zongshi... Even if he isn't a master teacher, he isn't someone that we can afford to offend. On the other hand, if he is a master teacher, even if he isn't as experienced as us, it is likely that he wields a greater level of potential. If he had slaughtered

his butler back then, it would have been equivalent to falling out with the other party, thus making it impossible to reconcile with him in future. If so, we might as well sell him a favor. After all, that butler is just an insignificant figure. He was probably scared witless after knowing of our identity.”

“Yes!” Ah Yun nodded his head.

He knew that his old master possessed incredible discernment abilities and that he was able to tell the truth through minor details. Thus, he did not inquire further about the matter.

“Incredible!”

Upon listening to their deduction, Master Yuanyu widened his mouth in astonishment.

It is no wonder that master teacher is such a prestigious occupation. With a single glance, they were able to analyze so many details. Their eyes are truly fearsome.

“But old master, that person isn’t in his mansion, so what should we do now?”

Ah Yun asked.

“Even though he isn’t in his mansion, it doesn’t mean that we are devoid of ways to verify his identity. Inform Emperor Shen Zhui of the matter and tell him to summon the few people who had been treated by this Yang Xuan to the royal palace. I want to take a look at them personally...”

Liu shi delegated.

“Yes!” Ah Yun nodded his head.

Upon hearing those words, Master Yuanyu was impressed.

It wasn’t of great importance that the person in question wasn’t present. It wasn’t a secret that Yang Xuan had helped Ling Tianyu, Du Miaoxuan, Luo Chong, and Apothecary Chen Xiao... As long as they were to gather and question them, they should be able to understand the situation.

It would then be clear whether the other party is genuinely a master teacher.

169 The 6-dan of the Heaven's Path Divine Art

Zhang Xuan was oblivious to the visit by the three master teachers. At the moment, he was in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, and his eyes were gleaming with excitement.

“It's complete...”

After reading books for an entire afternoon, he had finally finished flipping through all of the Pixue realm books in the Book Collection Vault. He had also managed to compile a complete version of the 6-dan Heaven's Path Divine Art in the library.

The front part was exactly as he had deduced before, so he only had to follow the steps behind.

“Time to cultivate!”

In any case, he was here alone, so there was no need to restrain himself. Without any hesitation, Zhang Xuan sat onto the ground and started cultivating.

Pipa! Pipa! Pipa!

The moment he started training, a dense congregation of spiritual energy immediately surged into his body from the heavens, causing the acupoints in his body to blow open consecutively. A series of crisp ‘pops’ reminiscent of frying beans echoed in the vault.

After an unknown period of time, Zhang Xuan opened his eyes. A look of astonishment appeared on his face as he was in a state of disbelief.

“I actually managed... to open all 108 acupoints?”

Legend has it that there are 108 acupoints in a human's body. However, only 72 of which can be opened. Furthermore, there is a specific order to how these acupoints could be opened. With differences in every individual's physique, there is a

different order that everyone has to follow in order to achieve the best results. If one fails to follow the exact sequence, one might very well only open thirty to forty acupoints in their life and thereafter be stuck permanently.

He had initially thought that even with the Heaven's Path Divine Art, it would be considered an incredible feat to open 72 acupoints. Never in his dreams did he expect to be able to open all 108 acupoints.

At this moment, the acupoints throughout his body were twinkling, as a sky full of stars. He felt strength surge through his entire body.

If others were to learn that he had opened all of the acupoints in his body, they would definitely die of shock.

“108 acupoints mean that my strength has been boosted by 108 ding. Before reaching Pixue realm, I already have 20 ding of strength, and adding in the 90 ding from my physical body, my total strength is 218 ding. That is equivalent to a Tongxuan realm intermediate stage expert...”

Doing a rough calculation of his strength, Zhang Xuan's eyes gleamed with excitement.

In Tongxuan realm, one possesses 100 ding of strength in the primary stage, 200 ding in the intermediate stage, 300 ding in the advanced stage, and 400 ding in the pinnacle stage.

It is unheard of in Tianxuan Kingdom, or even in the surrounding kingdoms, for a Pixue realm pinnacle to possess the strength of a Tongxuan realm intermediate stage.

Yet, Zhang Xuan had easily achieved such a feat.

Even he himself couldn't help but suspect if he was dreaming.

There aren't many people in Tianxuan Kingdom who can rival him now.

After all, the strongest person in Tianxuan Kingdom currently is only at Tongxuan realm pinnacle.

“I should continue and see if there are Fighter 7-dan cultivation techniques...”

Zhang Xuan stood up and continued into the depths of the Book Collection Vault expectantly.

“What a pity...”

After circling around the entire Book Collection Vault once, Zhang Xuan could not help but shook his head in disappointment.

There wasn't any Fighter 7-dan cultivation technique in the Book Collection Vault.

But now that he thought about it, it was to be expected.

After all, Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm experts can be considered as the top-notch fighting power of the Tianxuan Kingdom. As such, the value of 7-dan cultivation techniques is incomparably valuable. Thus, how can one possibly leave such books lying around here, especially when visitors can be granted entry?

They would most probably be kept somewhere accessible only to the emperor.

“Since there is no cultivation technique, I should check out the battle techniques...”

Thinking of such, he walked with big strides toward the region where the battle technique manuals are stored.

There is a massive collection of books in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault. Even though the battle techniques kept here are not exclusive profound arts, its redeeming factor is that there are plenty of them. Just a single move can have several thousand different schools to it.

Zhang Xuan stopped before a certain bookshelf and glanced toward the books on it.

It is the region where the movement and leg techniques are stored.

《The 72 Lake Manoeuvre》、《Whirlwind Legs》、《34 Styles Chain Kicks》、《Eluding Traversing Dragon》

All kinds of movement and leg technique secret manuals filled the entire shelf.

“Wang Ying’s legs were once injured. Even though she has the Body Nourishing Medicinal Solution to heal her legs, it would still be difficult for her to match up to the swift Du Lei. However, if she were to learn a good movement and leg technique, it should increase her chances of victory significantly.

Thinking of this, Zhang Xuan started flipping through the books.

Hualala, hualala!

In an hour’s time, Zhang Xuan had managed to imprint all the books related to movement and leg techniques into his head, and two books had formed in his head.

Heaven’s Path Movement Art and Heaven’s Path Leg Art!

Casually flipping open the manuals, he immersed his concentration into the books. Four hours later, he managed to master the two moves.

Due to the books in the Book Collection Vault being about the most basic and fundamental moves, only a single movement was created, just like how it was for the Heaven’s Path Spear Art.

That was especially so for the Heaven’s Path Movement Art. It allowed him to move a distance of twenty meters the time of a tenth of a breath. His movement was so fast that it seemed as though teleportation.

Of course, attaining such breakneck speed causes a huge strain on the body. If it weren’t for him cultivating the Heaven’s Path Golden Body, such instantaneous movement would have caused his blood vessels to burst. Even so, given his current physical capabilities, he can only execute the move once. If he were to overdo it, it would cause him to bleed from his ears and nose due to excessive pressure.

Still, it is an extremely fearsome move. If one were to suddenly perform an instantaneous movement when battling with another person, even a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert can be destroyed in an instant if he isn’t guarded against it.

After learning the movement and leg techniques, he moved to the fists technique region and once again started flipping through the books, forming a single punching move.

Two hours later, he had easily completed learning the fist movement.

Just like the movement technique, even though it is just a single move, it allows his strength to be enhanced by a single fold instantaneously.

Given his current strength of 218 ding, a single fold meant that he was able to execute a punch with 436 ding of strength behind it. In other words, by executing the Heaven's Path Fist Art, his fighting prowess would rival that of a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert.

Of course, this pushes his physical body to the limits as well. Just like the movement technique, he wouldn't be able to use it repeatedly. Given his current level of ability, he can only execute three punches at maximum.

Continuously flipping through the books and studying them, time passed slowly.

Fortunately, Zhang Xuan had foreseen that he would be staying in the Book Collection Vault for an extended period of time and had prepared some food in his storage ring in advance. Otherwise, he would surely die of hunger before he could even begin to train.

.....

Countless lanterns hung and lit the palace.

“Apothecary Chen Xiao, why are you here?”

Walking into the main hall, Du Miaoxuan was filled with bewilderment.

He was just an ordinary elder of the Du Clan, and following the deterioration of his cultivation, even that title had become just a name. Yet, he was summoned abruptly by Emperor Shen Zhui today and thus, he was completely confused by what was going on.

Upon walking into the palace, he saw that Apothecary Chen Xiao, Ling Tianyu, and Luo Chong were all here.

“I have also received His Majesty’s summons. It must be something that has to do with Yang shi. After all, all of us here have benefitted from Yang shi’s grace!”

At this moment, Apothecary Chen Xiao no longer looked as sickly as he did previously. On the contrary, he was filled with vitality and liveliness.

“That might be possible...”

Du Miaoxuan nodded his head in agreement. Ling Tianyu and Luo Chong also suddenly came to a realization.

However, there was no need for them to ponder over the matter as they would soon know the answer. At this moment, Emperor Shen Zhui walked into the main hall with large strides. Smiling, he introduced to the crowd.

“I am not the one who invited everyone here today. It was the three master teachers.”

“Master teachers?”

Du Miaoxuan and the others were taken aback. They hurriedly stood up and saw three dignified elders following behind the emperor.

“Sit. You must be Ling Tianyu. I heard that your wife was sick. Can you tell me about what happened during the treatment?” After trading some pleasantries, Liu shi turned his attention to Ling Tianyu.

After a moment later.

“You say that... Yang Xuan, with a single look, discerned that your stone lion is made of Southern Blood Jade and deduced from it that your family member was sick? Then... With a few needles, not only did your wife awake from her coma, she even gained the ability to walk immediately?”

Liu shi widened his eyes in disbelief.

“The Southern Blood Jade absorbs a person’s vitality. Given how your wife was stuck in a state of coma, this meant that her

illness had already reached an extremely severe state. In order to resolve the issue, not only does one need to find the exact blockages of the meridians, one also requires intermediate-tier zhenqi to break open those blockages. To be able to see through those exact spots, such that there weren't any hesitation in his movements... Can a master teacher really possess such sharp eyes?"

...

"The moment you entered, before you could even forge pills, he could tell that you were afflicted with death aura and would die at any moment? One who is afflicted with death aura would have a dark mark at their glabella, so it isn't surprising that he would be able to tell that much. Also, apothecaries often come into contact with cauldrons, it was natural that he would deduce as so... However, to be able to deduce all these without asking a single question... Why do I feel like he isn't a master teacher but a fortune-teller..."

"Also, he could tell that your unstable state of mind was caused by your consumption of Dragon-scaled Prawns just by your forging movements without asking a single question at all? You must be joking..."

...

Upon hearing everyone's experiences, the three master teachers became baffled.

The heck, is he some enlightened deity?

Even though master teachers possess sharp eyes, it isn't that exaggerated!

"Looks like... there are only two possibilities. Firstly... That Yang Xuan's standard is much higher than ours, to the point that we are unable to comprehend the full extent of his abilities."

After a long moment, Liu shi concluded with a grim expression.

"Or secondly... He knows of their conditions beforehand and searched for a solution before curing their illness at a single

go, thus astounding everyone here. In other words... He is an opportunistic fraud who is looking to make a fortune.”

Zheng shi and Zhuang shi nodded their heads. They shared Liu shi’s judgment as well.

“If it is the former, it isn’t a big matter for me to pay him a visit and learn from it. But if it turns out to be the second...”
Speaking of which, Liu shi’s eyes turned cold. “As a master teacher, I have the responsibility to expose such black sheeps so that they do not sully the reputation of master teachers.”

170 Brewing Storm

Tianxuan Kingdom

“Beiwu Tier 2 Kingdom Liu shi and Zhuang shi, as well as Hanwu Kingdom’s Zheng shi, have arrived at the kingdom and they went to pay a visit to this Yang Xuan together?”

“Indeed. It is said that after they paid him a visit, they summoned Ling Tianyu, Du Miaoxuan, and the rest of them into the royal palace. No one knows what happened in there, but the second day, the three master teachers visited the mansion once more... Furthermore... They had turned up at the mansion for five consecutive days, but were nevertheless unable to meet with the master of the mansion?”

“The heck! That’s way too intense, he even turned away master teachers? I know about Liu shi and he is one of the more capable 1-star master teachers. To think that such a person would be turned away at the entrance... Just exactly how capable is this Yang shi?”

“I’m afraid that he probably isn’t just a mere 2-star master teacher!”

...

No one has ever heard of Yang Xuan’s name. In fact, the Teacher Guild was unable to find anything about him either. As such, many people were doubtful of his identity and thought that he wasn’t a real master teacher.

However, the situation has changed.

Liu shi, Zheng shi, and Zhuang shi are three official master teachers. They are public figures famous within the surrounding kingdoms. The three of them had paid Yang shi a visit, but for five consecutive days, they did not even get past the entrance. No matter how foolish one might be, it was clear to see that Yang Xuan isn’t a simple figure.

“He is a master teacher, but his identity doesn’t exist... Probably, his name, Yang Xuan, is fake...”

“Master teachers love to travel and experience the life of an average civilian. Through such, it trains their mind and tempers their soul. Could he be a high-tier master teacher who is in the midst of his exploration?”

“I don’t know about that... But if it’s true, then Tianxuan Kingdom has truly struck gold!”

“Indeed! Master teachers are a symbol of a country’s strength. If a country has a 1-star master teacher, it can apply for a Tier 2 Kingdom position. With a 2-star master teacher, it can apply for a 1st Tier Kingdom position. Finally, If it has a 3-star master teacher, it can apply to become a Conferred Kingdom!”

“Once a kingdom is conferred a title, it gains the right to build massive transportation formations to import and export resources, resulting in the country to prosper. The benefits from doing so are unimaginable...”

...

All kinds of rumors had spread throughout the kingdom.

“Your Majesty, even though the three master teachers aren’t sure, and they still hold suspicions, from your humble servant’s perspective, Yang Xuan seems like a person of great capabilities. Otherwise, he would not have been able to treat so many people easily. Even if he isn’t a master teacher, he is likely to be a great physician. There might be hope for the Royal Elder.”

In the palace, an old eunuch analyzed the available news.

“Un, send someone to stand guard at his entrance. The moment Yang Xuan returns to his mansion, report back to me immediately. I will pay him a personal visit.” A grave expression appeared on Emperor Shen Zhui’s face.

“Yes!”

The old eunuch nodded his head hurriedly.

...

“This is a rare opportunity. Wang Chao, if we catch Yang Shi’s attention and become his apprentice, we will surely be able to become master teachers!”

In a wide classroom in Hongtian Academy, Lu Xun stared excitedly at the young man before him.

“Indeed. No matter what, we have to pay him a visit and leave a good impression before him!” Wang Chao nodded his head excitedly. “Even if we are unable to become his apprentice, we will surely be able to achieve a breakthrough if he offers us some words of guidance.”

“Un!” Lu Xun nodded his head.

“Right, so how is the matter with Zhang Xuan going?” Wang Chao suddenly recalled and asked.

“Him?” Placing his hands behind him, he stared into the distance with an aura of superiority. “He is just a stepping stone for me to become a master teacher. He means nothing at all, so don’t worry about it. All of the students I have chosen for the battle are undergoing secret training, and in a few days, they will be able to break through to the next realm. They will win the Teacher Evaluation by an overwhelming lead and as such, the attention of the master teachers will be on me!”

“That’s great! I’ll have to congratulate you in advance then...” Wang Chong clasped his hands enthusiastically.

...

Such situations occurred throughout the kingdom. The appearance of a Yang shi had caused all powers within the kingdom to stir. All attention were fixated on Yang Xuan’s mansion and in an instant, this seemingly inconspicuous mansion became the center of buzz within the capital.

A storm had begun to brew.

.....

At the moment, Zhang Xuan had reached the final bookshelf within the country’s Book Collection Vault.

Five days of continuously flipping books without any rest or sleep had exhausted all of his strength. Putting aside cultivating, he wasn’t even in the mood to speak.

“There’s still one last row...”

Knowing that it wasn't easy to enter the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, Zhang Xuan was determined to first imprint all of these books onto the Library of Heaven's Path before doing anything. Even so, just this task itself had him exhausted to the point of possibly fainting at any moment.

Seeing that he had finally reached the final row, Zhang Xuan's eyes glowed in delight and tears threatened to flow out of his eyes.

After working hard for the past few days, he finally sees the end of his work.

“Un? These are books on poison...”

This row pertains to the uses of poison, creating poison, discerning poison, and inflicting poison on others. Similar to others topics in the library, only books on the very basics of the subject were available.

“I shall flip!”

Hualala! Slowly, with the movements of his fingers, the books were gradually imprinted into his mind, one at a time.

Of the countless jobs, the occupation poison master, based on its fighting prowess, is more than qualified to be listed among the Upper Nine Paths. But similar to assassins, it is a despised job. They can only hide in the shadows, never to see the light of the day. As such, very few people are willing to take on the craft, causing it to eventually fall into the ranks of the Lower Nine Paths.

Naturally, Zhang Xuan isn't willing to become a poison master either. However, it was still beneficial for him to look through these books as it could help him guard against other poison masters.

While one shouldn't bear ill intentions against others, one mustn't let down his guards.

Two hours later, he finished flipping through all of the poison-related books.

“I should first return to take a nap...”

After successfully imprinting all of the books in the Book Collection Vault into his mind, Zhang Xuan suddenly felt the fatigue he had accumulated in the previous five days crushing down heavily at once. All he can think about right now is to find a location to sleep.

Even though he has already reached Pixue realm pinnacle and his body is significantly stronger than others, five consecutive days without rest while keeping his mind on the edge has left him on the brink of collapsing.

Even so, the effort was worth it.

The Tianxuan Kingdom has more than a millennium of history behind it. Even though the books in here aren't exceptionally profound such that they can be considered as secret manuals, there are huge quantities of books on the fundamentals of nearly all occupations.

Usually, under such circumstances, others would find it difficult to discern the truth from the false, especially with the overwhelming content contained in this library. They would simply get increasingly muddled the more they read. However, to Zhang Xuan who possesses the Library of Heaven's Path, this isn't a problem at all.

As long as he is willing to, he can extract the most precise knowledge of each job and form a Heaven's Path manual, retrieving the genuine wisdom in each book for his use.

Walking out of the kingdom, Zhang Xuan looked at the sky and only then did he realize that he had spent five entire days in the vault.

"I can't rest yet. It is almost ten days since I ordered that Unravel Yin Pill and Colossus Rhinoceros Blood, so the items should be arriving soon..."

While he was walking along the streets, he suddenly recalled that the ten days deadline was about to come to an end and this wasn't the time for him to go straight to sleep. The items he had entrusted Guild Leader Ouyang to buy on his behalf should be reaching soon.

“I should first return to the mansion to take a look. Hopefully, someone has requested something of me in the past few days. This way, I would be able to gather the sum required for the items...”

He was still lacking two million gold coins to pay for the items. After getting into a remote alley and changing his appearance to that of ‘Yang Xuan’, he started walking toward the mansion.

.....

Zhang Liao and Zhang Mo are two famous burglars in the Tianxuan Kingdom. They specialize in robbing the rich to help the poor. In a way, they can be considered as righteous burglars.

Due to their nimble movements and well-planned operations, they have never failed throughout the numerous years in their career. The Tianxuan Kingdom offered a high bounty to capture the duo, but it is laughable that they do not even know the duo’s appearances.

“That in front of us is Du Qiao’s residence. This person is a despicable tycoon. He has committed plenty of immoral acts throughout his life. Although he had a recent encounter with bandits which dealt a huge blow to his business, an emaciated camel is still larger than a horse. We should have plenty of money to utilize if we were to rob from him...”

Zhang Liao chuckled and took a large step forward.

Due to the intense hunt for them, they left Tianxuan Kingdom for half a year. Upon returning, they immediately set their sights on Merchant Du Qiao.

“Un. However, we need to first plan carefully. We have to ascertain the skills of the guards in the residence and their habits before we can make a move.” Zhang Mo nodded his head.

Whenever the duo decides to conduct burglary, they will observe the target thoroughly to confirm the layout of the residence and determine the weakness in their defense. Only

when they are absolutely certain that they will succeed will they strike.

This is precisely the reason why they had yet to fail a single time after stealing from over fifty households.

“The residence right ahead. I have been here once... Ah?”

Turning around the alley, Zhang Liao walked forward. Just as he was about to sneak into the mansion which they had decided upon to survey its interior, he was shocked by the sight before them.

Zhang Mo’s face also turned pale. His eyes widened in shock.

A large queue had formed at the entrance of the mansion. There were several hundreds of people lining up before the gates. It is one thing to have many people wanting to visit the master of the household, but... The gates to the mansion were tightly shut, and there didn’t seem to be any signs of it opening anytime soon.

“Look! Isn’t that... the Eight Arms Dragon, Liu Kaiyuan?”

Zhang Liao suddenly recognized a person in the crowd and his face turned ghastly white.

“It’s him... The Eight Arms Dragon Liu Kaiyuan. He is a renowned figure among wandering cultivators. As a Tongxuan realm advanced stage expert, he is one of the top-notch figures in the kingdom. However, wasn’t he injured during an expedition to capture a savage beast, and since then disappeared from public view? Why is he here? Furthermore, waiting at the entrance?” Zhang Mo was astonished.

“Wait... Is that... Iron-fisted Stone Dragon, Feng Jun? As a Tongxuan realm intermediate stage, he is the number one expert of Hanxue City. It is said that his iron fists are capable of disintegrating boulders. He is a powerful figure who even Emperor Shen Zhui regards as a peer. Why is he here... queuing up?”

“Eagle Eyes Duan Jiujiang? Steel Caltrop Long Xuanhai? Pale Scholar Hu Xiaobai...”

Initially, he thought that those who were queuing up were just ordinary civilians. However, upon recognizing a few of them, he took a closer look. As his gaze scanned through the faces of those figures in the queue, Zhang Liao's body trembled and he nearly fainted from fear...

These people are all top-notch experts of Tianxuan Kingdom! Even the weakest of them all is a Tongxuan realm primary stage.

Even though they do possess several tricks up their sleeves, if they really were to encounter any single one of these people, they probably wouldn't be able to escape. They would be beaten to death on the spot.

Just that...

Back then, when Emperor Shen Zhui invited them for a gathering in the royal palace, very few of them actually turned up. Why would such arrogant and rebellious experts who dare to even disregard Emperor Shen Zhui's invitation be queuing at this mansion's entrance?

Surely I am seeing things...

Zhang Liao and Zhang Mo exchanged gazes. Puzzled, they scratched their head furiously.

If these people were only queuing up, they might not have been so shocked. But judging from how they did not even dare to breathe loudly for fear of offending the people living in the mansion... Not daring to knock the door even though they were kept outside...

The heck! Heavens, can you tell me whether it is them who have gone mad, or is it just me?

Isn't this Du Qiao's residence?

How can a lowly merchant possess such prestige?

How did he get these experts to willingly wait at the door, not daring to even utter a single word of complaint?

171 Old Master is Back

Huala!

Unable to accept the sight before them, a frenzied look appeared on their faces. Suddenly, an elder walked approached with big strides.

Seeing him, respect immediately appeared on everyone's faces as they opened a path for him.

“Is this... The Ninth Heaven of Benevolence, Old Master Zhang?” Forcefully suppressing his shock, Zhang Liao swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

“It is said that Old Master Zhang is already in his nineties. Thirty years ago, he had already reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle... Of course, he isn't respected for his age or his prowess. Rather... He used to be a star teacher in Hongtian Academy and countless experts were personally groomed by him. In fact, nearly half of the experts here had been to his lessons... But why would he be here?”

Zhang Mo's mouth was opened so wide that an egg could be stuffed into it.

This Old Master Zhang entered seclusion in his residence twenty years ago, having never left his residence since then. Moreover, even if Emperor Shen Zhui were to meet him, he would have to address him as 'teacher'... What is such a figure doing here?

Could it be that Du Qiao's residence had been passed to him, and these experts are here to visit him?

Wait a minute...

The moment this thought arose in their minds, the duo immediately realized that their guess was wrong. That's because... That Old Master Zhang also stood at the entrance of residence respectfully, not appearing to be proceeding further.

“Even Old Master Zhang is waiting outside the entrance?”

Zhang Liao and Zhang Mo exchanged glances and their lips started trembling.

Even though Old Master Zhang has already retired for many years, there isn't anyone in Tianxuan Kingdom who would dare to show him disrespect. Even the emperor would step forward to welcome him personally into the palace. Yet, such a figure is currently waiting patiently outside locked gates...

“Brother, are we still going to... steal from the mansion?”

After a long moment of silence between the duo, Zhang Liao turned to look at his elder brother.

“Steal? Steal your head... Putting aside whether we would be able to get in, even if we are to get in, with so many experts guarding the door, I'm afraid that... we would be beaten to death before we even get to lay our hands on anything...”

Zhang Mo shuddered in fear. The thought of it sent him to the verge of tears.

The heck, how do I steal from such a residence?

Just the subordinates of these Tongxuan realm experts are enough to turn us into meat cakes...

What is wrong with this residence?

Why are there so many experts who have come to pay a visit?

“Regard of who it is... For him to have such incredible rallying abilities... Does the royal family not care about the matter at all?”

Suddenly, a thought flashed through Zhang Liao's mind and he couldn't help but comment.

Zhang Mo was taken aback as well.

How can the sovereign of the country allow another individual to hold greater prestige than him?

Regardless of that fellow's identity, his ability to rally so many experts at once poses a great threat to the royal family. Putting aside the fact that each figure who came is more incredible

than the previous, the most shocking fact is that... they are all willing to wait patiently at the door for the master to invite them in on his own accord. For fear of interrupting the other party, they did not even dare to knock on the door. For an individual to wield such prestige, even Emperor Shen Zhui should feel threatened by his existence...

Hualala!

At this moment, a golden carriage arrived at the scene.

“It is Emperor Shen Zhui... He has come. Looks like there’s a show to watch...”

Witnessing the carriage and the figure who emerged from the carriage, Zhang Liao and Zhang Mo shuddered.

Speak of the devil. Emperor Shen Zhui has arrived in person; he must have decided to make a move due to the pressure from the other party’s capabilities.

Even though there are many experts present, they are still far from sufficient to go up against an entire kingdom.

Besides, rumors have it that Tianxuan Kingdom’s Royal Elder has achieved Half-Zongshi level, causing the surrounding kingdoms to not dare move recklessly. Even though the people gathered here are all incredible figures, they aren’t sufficient to go up against an expert of that level.

“Your Majesty, you have come!”

“Paying respects to Your Majesty!”

“Your Majesty, looks like you have arrived earlier today. I have helped you book a slot. Come over...”

...

Just when the brothers thought that a huge battle would unfold, they saw the experts at the entrance of the mansion greeting the emperor with bright smiles.

Soon, Emperor Shen Zhui found a spot to stand within the crowd and similarly, he started to wait outside the entrance with a respectful expression.

“What?”

The two burglar brothers swayed at the same time.

Can anyone tell me what is going on?

For the emperor of Tianxuan Kingdom to join the queue and wait patiently...

Can anyone tell me who in the world... lives in the mansion?

Huala!

Before they could recover from their astonishment, another carriage stopped by the side of the road and three elders walked over. They were dressed in similar clothes and a gleaming star was weaved on the fabric covering their chest.

“Is this... the uniform of a master teacher. 1-star master teacher? Three 1-star master teachers?”

Zhang Mo recognized the clothes the three elders wore and clenched his fists tight.

“I get it! These three master teachers must be conducting a lesson and these experts are here to listen...”

Zhang Liao suddenly came to a realization.

That must be the case! Only master teachers can possess such incredible rallying powers. Without a saying a word, many experts came over on their accord, such that even Emperor Shen Zhui himself came over to personally listen to their lesson.

“Paying respects to Liu shi!”

“Zhuang shi, it has been long since we last met. You still look as dignified and majestic as before.”

“Zheng shi, the last time I met you was seven years ago. To think that you have come to Tianxuan City...”

...

A commotion broke out the moment the three master teachers arrived. The previously arrogant crowd immediately opened up a path for them.

“The three master teachers, feel free to stand in front of me...”

Initially, the two brothers thought that the three master teachers would open up the gates and invite the crowd in. However, reality betrayed their expectations once again. After seeing Emperor Shen Zhui give up his position to the three master teachers, the three master teachers stopped right before the gates and waited patiently, just like the rest of the crowd.

“The heck...”

Zhang Liao and Zhang Mo felt as though they were on the verge of collapsing.

Tongxuan realm experts, a highly respected Old Master, the emperor of the country, and even master teachers; all of them were standing before the mansion, waiting patiently for the gates to open...

Who in the world could be in the residence?

It was laughable that the two of them had discussed on how they should go about stealing from the residence...

Pu!

It was lucky that hadn't begun to act. Otherwise, they would have been dead by now.

Jiya!

They were still trembling with shock and relief of having escaped from a potential calamity when they saw the tightly shut doors slowly opening and a plump man walked out.

“He... Isn't he the owner of the realtor agency in Tianyu Commercial City, Sun Qiang?”

Zhang Liao recognized him.

After engaging in burglaries in Tianxuan City for numerous years, he was well acquainted with many people of vastly different standings in the city.

The plump man before them can be considered as one in the lowest tier of society.

Yet, he actually resides in the mansion? Is he the one who is keeping so many experts and influential figures waiting?

“Butler Sun, may I know if Yang shi is back yet?”

Old Master Zhang stepped forward, clasped his hands, and asked politely.

“I’m truly sorry, but the old master isn’t back yet. Please return for now. Once the old master is back, I will send someone to inform you...”

Seeing the large gathering of experts before him, Sun Qiang’s mouth twitched before speaking.

As the news spread further and further, more and more people began to gather. While he was astonished initially, all he feels now is numbness.

Of course, what that made Sun Qiang even number was that... the old master had gone missing...

It was as though he had evaporated from the world. No matter how hard he looked, he was unable to find him...

If he doesn’t find him soon, he is truly afraid that the crowd that had gathered here might go on a rampage.

If so, he would be the first one to bear the brunt of their rage...

Facing so many experts, if not for his incredible mental fortitude, he would have long collapsed.

“Sigh, he isn’t back yet? But that isn’t a problem, we can wait here for him...”

Hearing that Yang shi isn’t back yet, the crowd couldn’t help but feel disappointed.

“I think it would be best if you all return for now...” Afraid that something might happen, Sun Qiang tried to persuade them to leave. Then, upon catching sight of a figure, his eyes widened. Hot tears streamed down his face and he charged forward toward the figure. “Old master...”

...

“This... What is going on?”

Upon reaching the doors to his residence, Zhang Xuan saw the huge queue outside his mansion and was stupefied.

172 Catching a Pig?

“Old master?”

Upon seeing Butler Sun’s abnormal reaction, everyone immediately understood that Yang shi had returned. All eyes immediately turned to look at the approaching figure and saw a yellowish-faced middle-aged man looking at them with a perplexed expression.

“Is this the old master that kept everyone waiting?”

Zhang Liao and Zhang Mo had a dizzy spell witnessing the situation before them.

This fellow looks like an extremely ordinary person. How did he manage to get an emperor and several master teachers waiting outside his door so willingly?

They hadn’t been in Tianxuan City for the past half a year and as such, were completely oblivious to the storm that the presence of ‘Master Teacher Yang Xuan’ had created.

“Xiao Qiang, what is going on?”

While the duo experienced a dizzy spell, Zhang Xuan felt severe vertigo. Just by looking at the crowd, he immediately understood that these were the people looking for him to solve their problems accumulated throughout the days when he was absent. But... Sun Qiang, what do your hot tears and your reaction as though you are a puppy who had reunited with its owner mean?

It was just a few days of absence, do you need need to be so agitated and excited...

“Old master, you are finally back. These people are here for you...” Sun Qiang hurriedly introduced. But halfway through his words, he was interrupted by another voice.

“Yang shi...”

Emperor Shen Zhui clasped his hands. “I am...”

“Did I permit you to talk?”

Zhang Xuan was just about to find out from Sun Qiang what had happened in the past few days, but this fellow abruptly interrupted their conversation. Displeased, Zhang Xuan frowned.

Where did you come from? Don't you have the least bit of common sense? Can't you see that I'm currently busy?

You're lucky that I have a good temper. If it were any other master teacher, he would have long beaten a fellow like you to death...

Putong! Putong!

Zhang Liao and Zhang Mo fell to the ground.

You are too incredible, my brother. That is the emperor of Tianxuan Kingdom... To speak to him like that...

Even Sun Qiang was flabbergasted.

As expected of the old master, you are nothing short of impressive... Even the emperor means nothing to you...

“I...” Emperor Shen Zhui's face flushed.

“Continue speaking...” After reprimanding the fellow who interrupted their conversation, Zhang Xuan turned his attention back to his butler.

“Oh!” Recovering from his shock, Sun Qiang hurriedly continued, “In the few days while you were absent, these people had come to pay a visit to you. There is Emperor Shen Zhui...”

“The emperor is here as well?”

Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

Zhang Xuan had intended to return the house the moment he gathered sufficient money and return back to his original identity. Yet, to think that even the emperor of the country would be alarmed by his actions.

Agitated, he asked, “Where is he?”

Upon hearing those words, a peculiar expression appeared on everyone's face. Even Sun Qiang staggered and nearly fell to the floor...

In the end, it turned out that his old master didn't manage to recognize the emperor. To think that he was so impressed with his action...

"Cough cough. It's me!" Emperor Shen Zhui coughed.

"You?" Zhang Xuan nearly sputtered blood. To think that he would happen to reprimand him right after returning from his Book Collection Vault...

"Shen Zhui pays his respect to Yang shi. Allow me to introduce to Yang shi, these three are Liu shi, Zheng shi, and Zhuang shi..."

Emperor Shen Zhui hurriedly introduced.

"Liu shi... What? Master teachers?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

Isn't it a renowned fact that there are no master teachers in Tianxuan Kingdom?

When did three of them pop up? What had happened in the few days when I was gone?

"Liu Ling (Zhuang Xian, Zheng Fei) pays respect to Yang shi!"

Liu Ling and the others stepped forward and clasped their hands. At the same time, they took the opportunity to assess the middle-aged man before them.

With a single glance, the three of them frowned immediately.

"Follow me in first!"

Oblivious to the reaction of the trio, Zhang Xuan rubbed his glabella and waved his hands, gesturing for them to enter.

After all, he can't possibly keep the emperor and the three master teachers waiting at the doorstep, right?

"Brother Liu, what did you see?"

Upon stepping into the courtyard, Zhuang Xian secretly sent a telepathic message to Liu Ling.

“He has donned a disguise. This isn’t his actual appearance. Based on his skin and movements, he should be an extremely young man under thirty. In fact... He probably hasn’t passed twenty-five years of age!” Liu Ling frowned.

Even Du Miaoxuan was able to see through Zhang Xuan’s disguise, so how could the three master teachers miss it?

“How can he possibly be a master teacher at his age? He is probably a fake...”

Zhuang Xian harrumphed.

Master teachers are just like academics; the older they are, the wiser and more valuable they become. It is one thing that he refused to reveal his true appearance, but for his age to be under twenty-five... How can he possibly be a master teacher?

To become a master teacher, one needs to undergo numerous examinations and every single examination holds tremendous difficulty. Due to the limited knowledge one can possibly accumulate over time, it is impossible for someone to become a master teacher in his twenties!

“He is probably a fake. I will think of a way to expose him later.”

Zheng shi nodded his head in agreement.

After hearing Ling Tianyu and the others’ description of the other party, they became suspicious and wanted to verify for themselves other party’s identity as a master teacher. However, when they noticed his poor disguise with their own eyes, they immediately came to a conclusion that the other party must be a fake.

If he isn’t a fake, why would he put on a disguise, a poor one at that?

If he isn’t a fake, how is it be possible for a person in his twenties to possess such high standards that even they aren’t able to perceive?

“Furthermore, did you observe his bloodshot eyes and lethargy? If he is a master teacher, how would he allow such a condition to occur?”

Liu Ling said.

Not only was he able to see through Zhang Xuan’s disguise, he also noticed his fatigue.

After examining the other party carefully again, he felt his rage surging up. Because regardless of whichever aspect he looked at, this fellow didn’t seem to be a genuine master teacher.

A fake had made them pay visits to his mansion for five days straight. Regardless of who it was, it was reasonable to feel enraged, needless to say, a fake master teacher.

Oblivious to the fact that the other side had already seen through him, Zhang Xuan walked up to the main seat upon arriving at the main hall. Then, he looked at the three master teachers and asked, “May I know what affairs do the three master teachers have for me?”

“Oh, I’ve heard that Yang shi is a skilled physician and is adept at helping others achieve breakthroughs in their cultivation. Thus, I came presumptuously in the hopes that you can enlighten me on a matter...”

After shooting a glance at the other two, Liu Ling started speaking.

It was unlikely that a direct approach would work. Since he was intent on exposing the other party’s fraud, he had to first grill for his incapacibilities.

“What’s the issue, speak!”

All Zhang Xuan had in mind was to earn another two million to purchase the items from the Apothecary Guild and to find a place to sleep. He was too tired to bother about pleasantries and simply waved his hands casually.

“Act! Continue acting!”

Seeing the other party’s disinterested expression, the three master teachers felt so infuriated that their eyes narrowed and

their faces turned green.

Seems like he is quite a composed person.

However, your acts will not work on us. We will not leave unless we expose your fraud!

“It is a problem with my cultivation, please guide me!”

Upon seeing the urging glances from the other two, Zhuang Xian stood up and clasped his hands. “I am currently at Tongxuan realm pinnacle, just a step away from Half-Zongshi. However, I can clearly feel that the rate at which zhenqi gathers in my body has slowed greatly. No matter what I do, I am unable to make the final leap. I have tried all kinds of methods to accomplish a breakthrough, but it is to no avail. I hope that you can give me some pointers.”

“Tongxuan realm pinnacle?”

Zhang Xuan felt dismal.

Because he was unable to find any books regarding cultivation method in the Tongxuan realm in the Book Collection Vault, he is still stuck in Pixue realm pinnacle. He has no idea what kind of abilities one would possess upon reaching the Tongxuan realm, so how can he possibly guide the other party?

“How about this... You try executing a few moves for me to take a look!”

Zhang Xuan knows that his knowledge of the Tongxuan realm can't possibly match up to the other party. Since the other party was stumped by the question, he understood that it is impossible for him to solve it without resorting to the Library of Heaven's Path.

“Execute a few moves? Sure!”

Zhuang Xuan understood that only by executing a battle technique can one analyze another person's issue. Thus, without any hesitation, he stood up and launched a booming fist.

Huhuhu!

The air groaned in agony under the intense might behind his fist.

As expected of a Tongxuan realm expert. His zhenqi surged through his body furiously as though a soaring dragon. The strength of his fist compressed the air in the surroundings and created a sonic boom.

Soon, he finished executing his battle technique.

Zhuang Xian, Liu Ling, and Zheng Fei turned their gazes to ‘Yang shi’, interested to see what he would say. However, the other party had a dull look on his face, as though he was at a loss of what to say.

“Please offer your pointers!”

Upon seeing him behaving in such a manner, Zhuang Xian’s complexion became extremely awful. He didn’t even bother to address him as ‘Yang shi’ anymore.

No matter what, he is a master teacher. It is one thing if the other party is a higher tier than them, but that is clearly not the case. How can they possibly stand lowering their head to a fake?

You were the one who had me execute a battle technique, and yet you are blanking out now... It can’t be that you have turned dumb after watching my battle technique!

“You want me to offer you pointers?”

Ignoring the other party’s displeasure, Zhang Xuan lifted his gaze to look forward.

“That’s right!”

Zhuang Xian harrumphed.

He had already thought it through. The moment the other party starts speaking, he would search for loopholes and expose him before everyone else, then disgrace this fraud in public.

Logically speaking, when the queue had formed even before they could confirm the person’s identity, they should have persuaded the others against waiting outside. However, they had their own considerations for not doing so.

If the other party turns out to be genuinely a master teacher, they would have offended him by persuading the others to leave. On the other hand, if the other party is a fraud, they can expose him before everyone else, causing him to fall from his grace. At the same time, it would serve as a reminder to everyone else that the identity of a master teacher is not to be sullied, and no one should ever impersonate one.

“My pointer is simple. I’m afraid that you won’t believe my words...”

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

He truly has no other choice now but to go on ahead with it. Otherwise, if the other party were to discover that it is a disguise on his part, he wouldn’t even be able to escape. However, after the several days of experience disguising as Yang Xuan, he has grown accustomed to it.

With an impassive expression, he waved his hands and said, “Do you wish to break through Tongxuan realm pinnacle to reach Half-Zongshi realm?”

“Of course I do!” Zheng Yang said.

What a joke! Which cultivator would not wish to achieve a breakthrough?

Who doesn’t wish to reach higher levels?

Just like how a physician is unable to treat himself, a master teacher similarly can’t offer pointers to himself. He had wanted to break through his cultivation realm for a long time now, but all along, he had been unable to succeed.

His two old friends, Liu Ling and Zheng Fei, had broken through long ago. He could only watch anxiously as the two drifted further and further away from him.

“I can help you break through your current cultivation realm within ten minutes, but...”

Zhang Xuan paused.

“Break through... within ten minutes?” Zhuang Xian was taken aback.

Even Liu Ling and Zheng Fei had looks of disbelief on their faces.

As good friends of his, they had also taken a look at his situation and their verdicts were that it would be impossible for him to break through his cultivation realm in the short term. Yet, the fraud before them actually claimed that... he can do so in ten minutes?

“I have already presented you an opportunity. The final choice is up to you!”

Zhang Xuan lifted the teacup from the table and sipped on it slowly and calmly.

Usually, his actions would look incredibly cool and intimidating, and those present would feel as if a heavy mountain weighed down on them. But now, his eyes are bloodshot with his eyebags tugging against his eyes, and his lips are both dry and purple. Not only does he not look like an expert, he looks as though he had been busy engaging in vigorous exercises at night. There is an indescribable dissonance between his appearance and gesture.

“I... Alright, I want to break through. Please offer me your guidance!”

After a moment of hesitation, Zhuang Xian gritted his teeth and accepted.

If it you are able to help me break through my cultivation realm as you claim, I will acknowledge that you are a true master teacher. But if you aren't able to do so... That means that you are a fake, a fraud!

“Are you sure?” Zhang Xuan gazed at him.

“Yes!”

Zhuang Xian nodded his head.

“Alright then. Xiao Qiang, fetch a gunny sack over. Then, call a few guards and get them to bring wooden sticks along with them...”

Zhang Xuan said.

The three master teachers and Emperor Shen Zhui exchanged gazes and puzzled expression appeared on their faces.

Gunny sack?

Guards?

Wooden sticks?

Weren't you going to help him break through his current bottleneck? This... What are you up to?

Are you catching a pig?

173 Yang Xuan, Screw You!

A normal person would only use a gunny sack and wooden sticks when catching a pig. However, upon hearing that such items would be used to help him advance his cultivation, Zhuang Xian felt a pool of blood accumulating in his chest and the flesh on his face twitched uncontrollably.

If not for the incredible self-control he had cultivated through the years as a master teacher, he would have long flown into a rage.

There are only a few means which master teachers use to guide one's cultivation; refining one's cultivation technique, identifying the flaws in the cultivation, consuming all kinds of pills... Yet, this fellow uses gunny sacks and wooden sticks...

The heck!

How can a gunny sack be used to advance one's cultivation?

Other people eat pills to advance their cultivation, do I eat the gunny sack to do so?

Furthermore, calling for the guards... And each of them is equipped with a stick...

Dueling can stimulate one's hidden potential, and it is indeed a method to achieve a breakthrough in cultivation. But... the guards in your mansion are way too weak!

I am a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert! Even if they were to wield blades and swords, they wouldn't be able to harm me in the least.

“This...”

Hearing the command, Sun Qiang walked out scratching his head in confusion.

After being with the old master for a period of time, he knew that the things the old master does tend to be beyond one's imagination. Even so, he had completely no idea what the old master was up to this time.

However, since the old master had made such arrangements, he definitely had his own intentions. Thus, as the butler, he just had to follow his instructions.

Soon, Sun Qiang managed to gather seven to eight guards and every single one of them was equipped with a wooden stick. Just in case, they even brought a total of four gunny sacks.

“Old master!”

Upon entering, the guards bowed in synchrony.

“Zhuang shi wishes to achieve a breakthrough in his cultivation, and he hopes that you can assist him with it.” Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

“It’s our honor to do a master teacher a favor...”

The few guards were first taken aback before delight crept onto their faces.

When Sun Qiang was bringing them over, he had also mentioned to them that the three elders in the room are master teachers. Given their current strength, it would have been impossible for them to meet one usually, needless to say, interact with them. At this very instant, they are given the opportunity to do a master teacher a favor. Naturally, they are extremely delighted.

If this Zhuang shi were to truly achieve a breakthrough and remember their assistance, riches and power wouldn’t simply be a dream!

This is a favor to a master teacher...

It is a rare opportunity.

“It’s good that you are all willing to help!” He nodded his head in satisfaction. Zhang Xuan turned to Liu Ling, “May I trouble Liu shi to seal the acupoints on Zhuang shi’s body so that he would be completely immobilized?”

“Seal his acupoints?” Zhuang Xian frowned. “Why?”

If my acupoints and meridians are sealed, that means that I won’t be able to move at all. Aren’t you here to help me

achieve a breakthrough? If you seal them, my zhenqi would be unable to flow through my body and if so, how can I cultivate?

The others were perplexed by Zhang Xuan's words as well.

"If you wish to achieve a breakthrough, just do as I say."

Shaking his hands, Zhang Xuan looked at him with determined eyes.

Seeing the old master's expression, Sun Qiang trembled subconsciously.

The expression... Back then, when the old master had him smash Ling Tianyu's stone lion, that was the expression that he shot him with... He believed the old master's words, nearly dying from a beating due to that.

No doubt at all, if Zhuang Shi really were to believe in his words, he would be in for a ride of misfortune.

This old master of his who often brought calamity to others while escaping unscathed...

"I..." Zhuang Xian was about to say something when he saw Zhang Xuan looking over with an indifferent expression. "If you don't wish to achieve a breakthrough, let's just forget the matter. I can't be bothered to waste my effort."

After which, he sipped on his tea calmly. His gestures were so peaceful that it seemed like a still painting.

"Alright, I'll do whatever that you say."

Seeing the other party's attitude, it was clear that it didn't matter to him whether Zhuang Xian was willing to go through with it or not. Gritting his teeth, Zhuang Xian turned to Liu Ling and said, "Brother Liu, I will have to trouble you for this."

You want me to back down? Dream on!

I'll see just how you will help me break through. If you fail to accomplish what you claim, just wait and see...

"Alright!"

Even though he was doubtful of the ‘fraud’s’ words, Liu Ling nodded his head and stepped forward. He placed his palm on Zhuang Xian’s body and zhenqi flowed from the tip of his fingers into Zhuang Xian’s body, sealing all of the main acupoints.

“Done.” After sealing all of the other party’s acupoints, Zhuang Xian is no longer able to move. Then, Liu Ling turned to Zhang Xuan and said.

“Un!”

Zhang Xuan double checked Zhuang Xian’s condition before nodding his head.

This Liu shi didn’t slack off at all. He sealed the acupoints in the other person’s body tightly.

“Later, regardless of what happens, I hope that the two master teachers will not interfere in the matter.”

Zhang Xuan turned to Liu Ling and Zheng Fei and said.

“Alright!”

Even though they were unsure of the other party’s intentions, the two of them nodded their heads in agreement.

“Let’s begin!”

Chuckling lightly, Zhang Xuan took the gunny sack from Sun Qiang’s hands, stepped forward to Zhuang Xian, and placed it over the other party’s head.

“What are you trying to do?”

Zhuang Xian was still pondering over how the other party was going to help him achieve a breakthrough when the other party placed the gunny sack over his head. He nearly spurted blood.

I am a master teacher, a person with of great prestige. Explain to me... What do you mean by putting this gunny sack over my head?

Ignoring the ruckus he had caused, Zhang Xuan turned to the guards and said, “It’s your turn. Don’t you all want to help Zhuang shi achieve a breakthrough in his cultivation? Let’s

begin then. Use the stick to flog him as hard and as brutal as you can!”

“Ah?”

The guards were contemplating what they should do after the master teacher expresses his gratitude toward them when they heard the old master’s words. They staggered and burst into tears.

Old master, are you serious?

Beating a master teacher?

Didn’t you say that we are going to help him achieve a breakthrough? How will he be grateful to us for this?

We think that living is a wonderful thing and it’s still too early for us to die...

“Why? Hurry up and hit him! Don’t worry, there’s a gunny sack over his head, he won’t be able to know who’s the one who hit him.” After saying this, Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment before continuing, “If you’re still worried, why don’t you... put a few more sacks over his head? This way, there’s no way he would be able to identify you...”

“...”

It would have been better if Zhang Xuan had not said a word. After hearing him, the guards cried even louder.

The other party had already seen their faces clearly the moment they walked in. What is the use putting the gunny sack over his face at this moment?

The other party isn’t deaf, so he can hear their words clearly. Furthermore... this isn’t a matter of how many gunny sacks we have over his head, alright?

Regardless of how many there are, he would know that it is our doing...

Watching the spectacle by, Liu Ling and Zheng Fei’s mouth twitched as they stared at one another in shock by the side.

Are you trying to help him achieve a breakthrough... Or are you angry that we doubted you and that you want to exact

vengeance on him?

I've never heard a case where of a breakthrough just by covering a person's head with a gunny sack and having a group of people beat him up with wooden sticks.

However, since they had agreed not to interfere in the matter, it isn't their place to speak up now. They could only sit by the side silently, their faces steeled.

"Hurry up! This is something Zhuang shi had agreed on! Are you sure you can bear the responsibility for delaying his breakthrough?" Zhang Xuan frowned.

Since the guards refused to listen when he spoke kindly, he could only rage at them.

"Yes..."

A bitter look appeared on the faces of these guards.

They thought that it would be an incredible honor to be of assistance to a master teacher. Yet, never in their wildest dreams did they expect things to turn out as such... However, the old master is a master teacher as well, so they dare not to disobey his commands. They could only grit their teeth and get on with it.

"Let's go!"

Since they are doomed no matter what they choose, there is no longer anything for them to worry over. It isn't really a big deal once they had thought the matter through.

Walking forward, the guards lifted up the wooden sticks in their hands and began to flog Zhuang shi, who was beneath the gunny sack, harshly.

Pah! Pah! Pah! Pah!

Even though Zhuang Xian's acupoints were sealed, his hearing continued to function properly and he had heard the surrounding conversations. Upon feeling the wooden sticks falling on his body as though a torrential rain, he felt vertigo and the final string of his rationality nearly snapped.

Yang Xuan, screw you!

You obviously aren't trying to help me achieve a breakthrough! You are making fun of me...

The more he thought about it, the more furious he felt. Rage surged through his entire body, threatening to set him aflame.

In the decades since he had become a master teacher, he had never suffered such injustice, having his head covered by a gunny sack and beaten with wooden sticks.

This is an unimaginable humiliation to him!

It was one thing if the ones beating him are powerful experts. However, the guards in the mansion only had cultivation levels of Fighter 3-dan to 4-dan...

More importantly... His meridians had been sealed, so his zhenqi is unable to flow through his body. As such, he is unable to soothe his injuries or cushion the blows. He can only bear the brunt of the attacks with his physical body and indescribable pain permeated every single part of his body.

Just as he was about to explode in frenzy, he heard 'Yang Xuan's' voice echoing from beyond the gunny sack.

"The places where you are hitting aren't right. Ah, yes, that's it..."

Before Zhuang Xian could even process his words, he felt an incredible force smashing right in his face, leaving a surge of stinging pain in its wake. The next few strikes all came flying straight at his face.

Initially, the pain was only limited to his body. Now, even his head isn't spared.

"The heck..."

Feeling his lips swelling, Zhuang Xian was on the verge of tears.

What was I trying to do? Despite knowing that he is just an imposter, I requested him to help me achieve a breakthrough. I must be courting death...

Just as he was about to let loose insults, he heard another conversation starting outside.

“Old master, how long should we hit him for?”

A guard couldn't help but ask.

They couldn't possibly go at it forever, there has to be a time limit.

“How long? Let me think about it... How about this!” ‘Yang Xuan’s’ voice hesitated for a moment before saying, “Hit him until he dies...”

“Hit me until I die? You...”

Zhuang Xian was truly enraged.

I'm here to achieve a breakthrough in my cultivation, not to commit suicide. Yet, you commanded your guards to hit me until I die... Yang Xuan, from now on, you will be my mortal enemy. If I don't kill you, my surname shall not be Zhuang...

Screaming within, Zhuang Xian no longer bothered about rebuking the other party. Bearing with the pain, he channeled zhenqi from his entire body violently to the sealed acupoints.

If I don't penetrate the sealed acupoints to regain my freedom, I will really die here today...

You aren't helping me achieve a breakthrough at all, you are obviously trying to murder me...

The more he thought about it, the more furious he got. If rage was a grain of sand, there would be a small mountain inside of him right now.

“Use more force! Haven't you eaten yet?”

The voice beyond the gunny sack roared.

Zhuang Xian's eyelids twitched. With excruciating pain all over his body and the humiliation he had experienced; he could no longer suppress himself.

Boom!

After an unknown period of time, under his furious attempts, the sealed acupoints were finally burst open. With a jolt of his hands, the gunny sack which covered his head was torn apart.

Kacha! Kacha!

The wooden sticks in the guards' hands were also shattered into pieces by the shockwave of his and scattered onto the floor.

“Yang Xuan, screw you...”

With a furious roar, Zhuang Xian turned to look at the mastermind, only to see the ‘fake master teacher’ sitting on his high seat, sipping on his tea calmly. With an impassive expression, he glanced at him and said gracefully, “Zhuang shi, mind your identity. As a master teacher, how can you insult someone in public?”

“Insult? I want to kill you...” Zhuang Xian felt increasingly incensed. Bellowing, he prepared to charge forward.

How about you try having a gunny sack put over your head and be flogged by wooden sticks?

Identity? To hell with identities!

If I don't kill you with my own hands, I shall abandon my title as a master teacher...

“Take a look at your own cultivation before deciding on whether you want to kill me or not...”

Zhang Xuan paid no heed to his fury, slowly lifting his eyelids.

“My cultivation?” Zhuang Xian was stunned for a moment and looked internally at his own condition. With a single glance, his eyes immediately narrowed, “How... How is this possible?”

174 The Confident Ah Yun

He could sense the raging strength flowing through his body. He is now several times stronger than he was a moment ago. Clearly, he had already broken through Tongxuan realm pinnacle.

“Half... Zongshi?”

Zhuang Xian’s mouth was wide open.

Fighter 8-dan Zongshi realm is the level where one gains the capability to create their own schools and become the conquerors. Even though just a thin line separates it from Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan pinnacle, the breakthrough is equivalent to a butterfly breaking out from its cocoon.

This is the first true obstacle that one would face throughout the 9 dans of a Fighter. Countless geniuses found themselves stuck at this hurdle.

Half-Zongshi is the buffer between the two realms. In order to reach Zongshi realm, one has to first reach this level.

The Royal Elder of Tianxuan Kingdom which had kept the surrounding kingdoms in check using his overwhelming strength is also just at this level.

Zhuang Xian is a master teacher, and in order to reach this level, he had devoted countless resources and effort, only to fail repeatedly. But why did he... upon being covered in a gunny sack and beaten up by a wooden stick, suddenly break through this hurdle?

This... this is too inconceivable.

By the side, Liu Ling and Zheng Fei exchanged gazes and saw the confusion in each other’s eyes.

They had looked at Zhuang Xian’s condition and tried numerous methods to solve his problem. Initially, they thought that with the accompaniment of age and a deteriorating vitality, achieving a breakthrough had become impossible. Yet,

just with a single beating, he managed to successfully break through his current realm...

Can things get even more ridiculous?

Getting beaten up is the solution to breaking through? Then, to reach Zongshi, shouldn't the two of them find a group of person to beat them up as well?

Perplexed, all gazes shot toward the fellow who was still busy sipping on his tea, trying to see if they could discern anything from the each other's expressions. However, it was a pity that he appeared completely indifferent, as though nothing had happened at all... Of course, his eyes were still bloodshot, his spirit still withered, and his eye bags still tugging at his face.

If not for the miracle he had just performed, they would be wondering where the fellow had gone to enjoy himself the previous night.

"Yang... shi, what is going on?" As the other party didn't seem like he would say anything, Zhuang Xian took the initiative to ask.

How he addressed the other party changed from Yang Xuan to Yang shi once again.

"You aren't going to screw me anymore?" Zhang Xuan lifted his gaze.

"I..." Zhuang shi's face flushed and cold sweat flowed profusely down his body.

The other party was obviously helping him achieve a breakthrough, but not only did he not understand the goodwill behind the other party's actions, he even insulted him in public... He is truly the ideal example of an ungrateful person.

Embarrassed, Zhuang Xian could only lower his head and apologize, "Please forgive me for my ignorance..."

"Alright, I don't intend to blame you for that either." Zhang Xuan gestured. "The battle technique which you displayed earlier is extremely stable. There isn't any part which is particularly amazing, but neither were there any mistakes in

your movements. That indicates that you have had a good teacher from young and you work really hard.”

“Yang shi is right. My father is a 1-star master teacher.”
Zhuang Xian nodded his head.

“Your solid foundation became both your strength and your weakness. As your father is a master teacher, since young, you have always thought that his teachings are all correct. Thus, you dare not disobey his words. Subconsciously, you began to cultivate a habit of sticking to the conventional means. The route of a cultivator is to go against the heavens, not to stick to conventional wisdom. Even though your cultivation advanced swiftly at the start, it transformed into a limiting factor when you reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle.”

Zhang Xuan lifted his head and glanced at him, as though lecturing a student. “Zongshi, just as the name goes, refers to someone who starts a school of his own. If one doesn’t possess his own thoughts and comprehension of cultivation, instead choosing to follow the route of the predecessors, how can one succeed? Even though Half-Zongshi cannot be considered as a true Zongshi, the same concept applies as well.”

“After years of cultivation and accumulation, the zhenqi and strength that you had harnessed was already sufficient for you to break through to reach Half-Zongshi. However, you doubted yourself, you didn’t believe that you could reach that level. If I’m not wrong, your father must have never reached this state in his lifetime. In fact, something might have occurred to him when he was trying to reach this realm!”

“You... You...”

Zhuang Xian staggered backward.

The other party’s words were spot-on.

Even though his father was a 1-star master teacher, he was never able to reach Half-Zongshi in his lifetime. In fact, while trying to achieve a breakthrough to that level, his cultivation went berserk and he became a cripple. In less than a year after that, he met his demise. Even on his deathbed, he was filled with regret over the matter.

This incident had caused a trauma in Zhuang Xian. He was never able to exert his full strength whenever attempting a breakthrough from Tongxuan realm pinnacle to Half-Zongshi.

Just that, that was a secret he had concealed in his heart for a very long time. He had never spoken of it to anyone... How did the other party know of it?

Was it because he had watched him execute his battle technique?

“Due to this fear, no matter what pills you consumed or what cultivation technique you tried, you were unable to achieve a breakthrough.” Zhang Xuan stood up and walked over to the center of the main hall. “You came to request for my guidance. In order for you to succeed, you have to first get past your fear. Otherwise, it would be all for naught.”

“However, because you have buried this fear in you for countless years, how is it possible to overcome it all of a sudden? The only method is to utilize anger to dispel the fear within you. Thus, I had someone cover your head and beat you up with wooden sticks. Since you don’t know the true reason behind my action, you would think that I am humiliating you and you would bear hatred against me. This way, resentment will overwhelm your fear. Given your countless years of accumulated zhenqi and the rage in your heart, breaking through your current realm is expected.”

With both of his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan stood silently at the center of the main hall. The sunlight that spilled in from outside cast a shadow of a giant behind him.

“This...”

Zhuang Xian contemplated the other party’s words and couldn’t help but be astonished.

The theory sounds simple but is incredibly profound. In truth, the difficulty in deducing everything through watching a set of battle technique, finding the exact solution to the problem, inferring the likely ending beforehand without a single flaw is in no way easier than their endless cultivation to reach Zongshi realm.

If they hadn't witnessed this personally, they would not have dared to believe it possible.

"Yang shi, thank you for granting me a new life. I, Zhuang Xian, will never forget Yang shi's grace for as long as I live."

After recovering from his astonishment, Zhuang Xian immediately knelt down.

He was thoroughly impressed with the other party's means and there wasn't the slightest bit of reluctance in his actions.

"You no longer doubt that I am an impersonation?" Zhang Xuan smiled, but there was no hint of humor behind his expression.

"Er..." Zhuang Xian rubbed his hands together nervously.

Looks like the other party had known that he had doubted his identity, just that he couldn't be bothered with it.

Upon realizing this, he felt even greater respect for the other party.

Even though he had seen through their ploy, not only did he not get angry, he even helped him to achieve a breakthrough in his cultivation. This is how a true master teacher behaves, possessing the disposition of a true expert...

Witnessing the problem of their good friend being settled so easily, no matter how foolish Liu Ling and Zheng Fei could be, it was apparent that even though the person before them appears young, he is a true master teacher.

Even though his means... are slightly unorthodox, if he isn't a master teacher, how can he have such an in-depth understanding of a fighter's cultivation, instantly seeing through and solving a problem which had thoroughly baffled them and induced Zhuang Xian's breakthrough?

However, regardless of whether his means are orthodox or unorthodox, Zhuang Xian's breakthrough means that the capabilities of the person before them far exceeds their own.

No longer daring to underestimate the other party, they exchanged gazes and Zheng Fei stood up. "Yang shi, I have

also met with a problem in my cultivation, and this problem has baffled me for a very long time...”

.....

Outside the mansion.

“Do you think that the rumors are true, that the three master teachers are paying a visit to this Yang shi because he is a 2-star master teacher?”

After seeing Emperor Shen Zhui and the three master teachers entering the mansion, the crowd outside couldn't help but gossip.

No one present was certain of Yang shi's capabilities, but to have three 1-star master teachers visiting him at once, it is unlikely that the other party is an ordinary person. At the very least, he should have reached the level of a 2-star master teacher.

“I'm not very sure as well. I paid a visit to Ling Tianyu a few days ago and he was full of praises for Yang shi. A while back, his wife was sick, we have all seen that for ourselves, but when on my visit, she had already fully recovered, as though what I've seen before is an illusion.”

“I have also paid a visit to Du Miaoxuan. Not only is the disease that had plagued him for so many years gone, his cultivation, just as the rumors state, has reached Tongxuan realm!”

“This Yang shi is indeed incredible...”

...

As the few of them secretly discussed, they couldn't help but feel amazed by the other party's abilities.

“Actually, if everyone is curious about Yang shi's affair, we should be able to get an answer by asking them.” Suddenly, someone pointed to the front.

Following the direction where the finger was pointed, they saw the guards of the three master teachers standing quietly not too far away. As the head, Ah Yun was equipped with a sword and he emanated an intimidating aura.

Emperor Shen Zhui and the master teachers had entered the mansion but they, as guards, are unqualified to enter and could only keep guard outside.

“Indeed, they are the guards of the three master teachers, so they should be aware of the actual situation...”

The others immediately nodded their heads in agreement.

Of all people, the three master teachers should be most aware of the capabilities of this Yang Xuan. On the other hand, the ones who are closest to the three master teachers here are these guards of theirs.

As long as they ask them, they should be able to extract some useful news.

“Brother Yun...”

A middle-aged man stepped forward and clasped his fists.

Clearly, he recognized Ah Yun.

As a top-tier 1-star master teacher, Liu Ling is famous in the surrounding kingdoms. As his guard, Ah Yun also has his fair share of glory. Numerous people had approached to bootlick him.

“So it’s Brother Liao.”

Ah Yun recognized the latter. He is a solitary swordsman of the Tianxuan Kingdom, and he is called Liao Yongjin. Five years ago, he paid a visit to Liu shi to consult the latter on a problem he faced in his cultivation.

“It is sufficient that you call me by my name. I am truly unworthy of you addressing me as Brother Liao!” Seeing that the other party had recognized him, Liao Yongjin was delighted. After trading a few greetings, he brought up the question that everyone had been thinking of, “Since Liu shi and the other master teachers are here to pay a personal visit to Yang shi... Does it mean that they know of Yang shi’s exact identity?”

“Pay a visit?”

Ah Yun sneered, "Rather than saying that they are paying him a visit, it is more appropriate to say that they are going to tear off his mask."

"Brother Yun, what do you mean?"

Liao Yongjin was taken aback by the other party's words and he asked hurriedly.

"Simple. Liu shi and the others don't think that Yang Xuan is a master teacher. On the contrary, they believe that it is likely for him to be an impersonator, so they specially made the trip here to expose his disguise before everyone else."

As Liu Ling's guard, he had been following him around these few days. He had overheard a fair share of the conversations among the three master teachers.

Even though Liu shi and the others were surprised by the incidents with Ling Tianyu's wife, Du Miaoxuan, and the others, they thought it more likely that Yang Xuan is a fake and he is intentionally playing out a show.

After all, as master teachers, it is unbelievable for them that someone can solve problems that would leave them stumped easily, furthermore using methods that are difficult to comprehend.

Under the front of paying the other party a visit, they are actually conducting an investigation.

"Yang shi... might be a fraud?"

The moment Ah Yun's words sounded in the air, a commotion broke out.

If this is true, it would be no small matter.

They took great pains to queue for so long, only to realize that the other party is a fraud...

"Rest easy, Liu shi and the others have entered for quite some time now. We should be able to get an answer soon."

Flinging his robe, Ah Yun calmly said with a haughty expression.

If he isn't a fraud, how can he have such a dumb butler who speaks such dumb words?

Jiya!

Right after he said those words, the tightly-shut gates opened and a few figures emerged.

“Brother Sun, it is enough that you send us off here. I have truly benefitted greatly from this meeting today. I know that Yang shi cares not for material possessions, but these are tokens of our appreciation, so please do help us pass it to him.”

Standing at the door, Liu shi chatted with Sun Qiang with a wide smile on his face. At the same time, he was stuffing items into the latter's hands unceasingly.

“What?”

Ah Yun's body froze.

175 Striking it Rich

As the guard of a master teacher, he is absolutely clear of the standing and prestige the three master teachers possess in this kingdom. Yet, when the three master teachers emerged from the mansion, only the butler could be seen escorting them to the door... the 'fraud' did not even show his face!

Is that for real?

Didn't you come here to expose that fellow's disguise? To be fawning on a butler and piling gifts on his hands... Even calling him 'Brother Sun', what is going on?

Ah Yun felt that he is mistaken, severely mistaken.

Can it be that... Yang Xuan is really a master teacher?

Just a moment ago, he had confidently declared that the master teachers had entered the mansion to expose Yang Xuan's fraud before everyone. Upon witnessing the situation, he felt light-headed.

Didn't you say that he is a fraud? Then why are you treating his butler with such respect?

Furthermore... To addressing him as Brother Sun?

Liu shi, you are already in your sixties while Sun Qiang isn't even forty. To call him Brother Sun...

Why do I feel goosebumps rising on my body?

"It is fortunate that we didn't listen to his words, otherwise we would have regretted it for life!"

"Indeed, he doesn't know anything at all, yet he tried to feign knowledge..."

"Expose his fraud? Have you seen someone exposing a fraud like this? By behaving so respectfully to a butler in his master's absence?"

...

Immediately after recovering from the shock, the crowd criticized Ah Yun harshly.

Those who came here to wait at Yang shi's door possess great reputation and prestige in Tianxuan Kingdom. They might be fearful of Liu shi, but the same cannot be said of Ah Yun.

When he spoke those words with great confidence earlier on, everyone believed him immediately. But now, they realized that they were fools to have trusted him so easily.

After hearing those words, Ah Yun was so infuriated that his body trembled uncontrollably, sustaining great damage within.

You were the ones who asked me, so I told you out of kindness on my accord. Yet... now you treat me like this... If I had known earlier, I wouldn't have said anything...

.....

“You want me to help your Royal Elder achieve a breakthrough in his cultivation?”

Zhang Xuan examined Emperor Shen Zhui who had put on a cautious expression.

After helping Zhuang Xian achieve a breakthrough in his cultivation, Liu Ling and Zheng Fei lost all doubts about his identity. They proceeded to ask him a few questions about cultivation. Having read the books in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, Zhang Xuan now possesses an incredible amount of knowledge at his disposal. Furthermore, with the Library of Heaven's Path ability to see through flaws, he took just a few words to leave the duo fully impressed.

After a brief consultation, the three of them stood up and took their leave. On the other hand, Emperor Shen Zhui remained behind.

He had come for the Royal Elder's matter. The moment the three master teachers left, he immediately took the chance to speak.

“Yes...” Emperor Shen Zhui looked at him with utmost anticipation.

If Tianxuan Kingdom loses the protection of the Royal Elder, it probably won't take long before other countries begin to invade.

The survival of the fittest is not just a phrase that describes the world of cultivators. Countries are also governed by this primitive law.

"I have only come to Tianxuan Kingdom to rest. I do not wish to get myself involved in such troublesome affairs..." Zhang Xuan shook his head.

It isn't that he is unwilling to help, it is just that... the other party's Royal Elder has already reached the level of Half-Zongshi. If he were to achieve another breakthrough, he would become a full-fledged Zongshi.

Even Zhang Xuan himself has not yet attained Tongxuan realm. Although he had managed to help Zhuang Xian reach Half-Zongshi realm, luck had played a heavy role. He does not want to attempt something beyond his means and risk exposing his disguise.

"I beg for Yang shi's assistance. Tianxuan Kingdom is willing to offer anything in exchange for your help on this matter..."

Hearing his rejection, Emperor Shen Zhui knelt down hurriedly.

He had spent great effort to invite the three master teachers, only to realize that they are helpless on the matter. His only hope is Yang shi. If the other party were to really not lend a helping hand, the Royal Elder wouldn't last for long.

"Do you think that I lack anything?"

Zhang Xuan's eyes narrowed.

"I dare not think so..."

Emperor Shen Zhui was shocked.

He suddenly found his words ludicrous. The other party is a master teacher of greater capability than Liu shi and the others. If he wanted something, a single word of his would send countless people rushing to fulfill his demands. As a tiny

kingdom, how can Tianxuan Kingdom offer anything of interest to him?

“Un, how about this. Help me gather manuals on Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm. It doesn’t matter whether they are valuable or not. After you gather a thousand of such books, I will consider guiding the Royal Elder.”

Zhang Xuan said impassively.

“Ah?” Emperor Shen Zhui was taken aback.

Didn’t you claim that you don’t lack anything? Tongxuan realm manuals... What do you mean by that?

A thousand books at that?

His mouth twitched.

Tongxuan realm experts are the top-tier fighting power of Tianxuan Kingdom. There aren’t many of such manuals even within the royal palace. Yet, to ask for a thousand of such books? What is Yang shi up to?

“If you find it difficult, then let’s just forget it...” Zhang Xuan waved his hands.

“It is no difficulty at all. Yang shi, rest assured. I will definitely complete the task you ask of me within five days...” Emperor Shen Zhui clenched his jaws and agreed to it.

This is his only chance. If he misses it, he would definitely regret it for life.

“Un!” Zhang Xuan casually gestured, not speaking any further.

Recognizing his intent, Emperor Shen Zhui took his leave.

The moment he left the main hall, Zhang Xuan’s eyes lit up.

He didn’t think that the problem with gathering Tongxuan realm manuals, which had left him with a splitting headache, could be settled that easily.

Given his capabilities, finding a book or two regarding Tongxuan realm isn’t a problem, but it would be nearly impossible to gather a thousand books. However, it is different

for Emperor Shen Zhui. As the sovereign of a country, it should be simple for him to gather a large number of Tongxuan realm manuals.

Most importantly, he doesn't require quality, only quantity.

He doesn't need any of those family hereditament secret manuals, he just needs a sufficient number of manuals.

“Old master...”

Sun Qiang walked over.

“What happened in the past few days? What are those people outside doing?”

He was put under the scrutiny of the three master teachers and Emperor Shen Zhui from the moment he arrived at the entrance of his mansion. As such, until now, hadn't had the chance to clarify the situation.

“Reporting to the old master, in the few days of your absence, your name has spread far and wide in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom...”

Sun Qiang explained the occurrences in the past few days in a concise manner to him. Zhang Xuan then understood what had actually happened and he couldn't help but be impressed by the rallying ability of a master teacher once more. It is no wonder that everyone dreams of becoming a master teacher.

“Old master, this is something that the three masters left behind...”

After which, Sun Qiang passed over a storage ring.

“Un!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

As he thought, given how wealthy the three master teachers are, how can they possibly not give any benefits when he had put in so much effort to guide them?

After dripping blood onto the storage ring to claim ownership, he peered into the ring and his eyes widened immediately.

The quality of the ring is much better than the one he is currently using.

Even though they are both low-tier storage rings, the space inside the storage ring that Liu shi gave is 30-meter-cube one, ten times larger than the 3-meter-cube one that he has in his hands.

Putting every aside, this ring is probably worth several million by itself.

Numerous treasures were placed within, be it precious herbs or the mountain of gold coin. Judging with a casual look, he assessed the value of contents within to be probably greater than ten million.

“Such an incredible sum...”

With just a single glance, Zhang Xuan couldn't help but sigh.

Master teachers are truly generous. Just a casual gift from them is worth several tens of million.

Of course, he also knew that it was a friendly gesture from Liu shi and the others. Otherwise, there was not a need to spend such a great amount just because he had offered them guidance on their cultivation.

“In the few days that old master was absent, Lord Ling Tianyu had also visited several times and he brought another five million gold bills over...”

Sun Qiang presented another stack of gold bills.

Even though he knew that his status had risen, he did not dare to hide the money other people had passed to him and handed them over to the old master honestly.

“This is the entrance fee collected from other visitors in the past few days. I have compiled a name list...”

After which, Sun Qiang handed over a booklet. Casually flipping through it, Zhang Xuan was astonished, “So many people?”

“Reporting to the old master, a total of twenty-seven people visited the mansion and paid the entrance fee. Here is a total of eighty-one million...”

After which, Sun Qiang gestured and two guards carried a chest in. It was filled with numerous money bills.

“The heck...”

Looking at the mountain of gold bills within the chest, Zhang Xuan felt as though he was going insane.

Initially, he thought that earning twenty million would be a nigh impossible task. After seeing the sum before him, he realized that he had underestimated the prestige of a master teacher.

Just by announcing his name, despite not getting to see him beforehand, people are willing to deliver such huge sums... No other occupations would be able to achieve such a feat.

“Help me tell those who had paid up to visit tomorrow. I will solve their problems one by one. As for those who didn’t pay the entrance fee, get them to leave. From today on, I won’t be accepting any other requests...” Rubbing his glabella, Zhang Xuan gestured.

Since he has already accepted their money, he can’t possibly refund it. Moreover, dealing with the twenty-seven people’s problems would be sufficient keep him busy for quite awhile.

“Yes!” Sun Qiang nodded his head.

Placing all of the gold bills in the chest and those on hand into the storage ring, he took out a single bill and gave it to Sun Qiang. “Here is your reward. I’ve already said it, I will reward you greatly for following me!”

In order for a steed to gallop swiftly, one has to first feed it sufficiently. In fact, if not Sun Qiang’s effort in dealing with visitors these few days, he might not have earned this much money.

Besides, this fellow must have probably suffered quite a few scares in the last few days. This is just a small sum of money. With his identity as a master teacher, he can easily make as much money as he needs.

“A million...”

Noticing the denomination of the bill in his hand, Sun Qiang was shocked and he knelt down immediately.

This amount of money is something he could never have earned in his entire life.

“Starting from today, regardless of what the old master commands me to do, I won’t bear a single word of complaint...”

Sun Qiang made a solemn vow in his heart.

After following the old master, he gained not only pride and money, but also achieved a breakthrough in his cultivation. Such kindness and attention from the master... these are things which he would have never achieved by himself by simply muddling along for a lifetime.

It can be said that the old master had opened a whole new world to him. It is as if he had granted him a new life.

“Alright, I’ll be heading out for now. Help me deal with those people at the entrance!”

Zhang Xuan waved his hands.

To him, the most important matter now is to collect his medicine and help Yuan Tao and Zhao Ya awaken their unique constitution. And after that... sleep!

After five days without rest, he is thoroughly exhausted. If not for the rise in his cultivation realm, he would have long fainted into a deep slumber.

“Yes!” Sun Qiang nodded his head.

Aware that the front entrance is swarming with people, Zhang Xuan left the mansion through the back door. After finding a remote alley, he took off his disguise, changed his clothes, and transformed back into his original appearance.

With his looks restored, he immediately started walking with big strides toward the Apothecary Guild.

.....

“Teacher!”

In Lu Xun's classroom, various students stood neatly in a line.

Of which, there are Zhu Hong, who sent the war letter to Zhang Xuan's classroom, Mo Xiao, Zheng Yang's good friend, and a few other people.

If Yuan Tao, Liu Yang, and the others were present, they would surely be able to recognize that these five are the ones who would be competing with them as according to the list.

A few days ago, they were only Fighter 1-dan Juxi realm cultivators. But right now, the aura they exuded felt clearly deeper and stronger. They had all managed to advanced to Fighter 2-dan.

“Not bad!”

Seeing the improvement in his students, Lu Xun nodded his head in satisfaction. It appears that the large amount of resources invested and the effort that he had devoted to nurturing them have not gone to waste.

Having attained Fighter 2-dan, his students should be able to easily defeat Zhang Xuan's students.

“Lu laoshi, Master Teacher Yang Xuan... has appeared!”

Just when he was about to delegate some matters to his students, Wang Chao laoshi entered abruptly. Excitement could clearly be seen in his eyes.

176 Apothecary Hong Yun

“He appeared?”

Lu Xun turned to look at his good friend.

“Un, today, Liu shi and the others paid a visit to Yang shi’s mansion along with Emperor Shen Zhui. Shortly, when the three master teachers emerged, their attitudes were extremely respectful. It seems like Yang shi is definitely a master teacher. Furthermore, his tier should be significantly higher than that of Liu shi and the others...”

Wang Chao revealed the news that he had just received.

“Higher than Liu shi... Doesn’t that mean that he is a 2-star master teacher?” Lu Xun’s eyes glowed brightly. “Let’s hurry up and prepare, we should pay him a visit as well...”

He had been waiting for an opportunity like this. If he were to catch Yang shi’s sight, he would definitely be able to soar to incredible heights.

“Un!” Wang Chao nodded his head. However, in the next instant, a bitter look appeared on his face, “However, after the news spread, there are countless people who wish to pay Yang shi a visit. I’m afraid that we won’t get a chance at all!”

“Furthermore, I’m sure that you’ve heard of Yang shi’s rule. Those who want to pay him a visit has to pay three million upfront. Otherwise, one wouldn’t even be allowed to enter... Even my father would find it hard to fork out so much money. I’m afraid that...”

Even though they are star teachers, they earned only two to three thousand gold coins per month. Forking out three million... is nothing more than a dream to them.

Putting aside paying the other party a visit, just this condition alone is sufficient to spell their failure.

“Don’t worry, I have already thought the matter through!” Lu Xun flashed a confident smile. “On the surface, everyone has

to pay three million to enter Yang Shi's mansion. But in fact, in consideration of everyone's dignity, definitely no one would pay it upfront. That's to say... As long as no one says anything, we shouldn't be exposed!"

"You mean that... we should try to sneak in along with the others? I don't think that it is a good idea... The other party isn't a fool. I'm afraid that we will be locked out of the door if we don't pay the sum upfront!"

Hearing the other party's reasoning, Wang Chao was stunned.

"It's not sneaking in with the others. I'm saying that... we should make use of our identities as star teachers to get past this barrier. Given our fame throughout the kingdom, who would dare to disrespect us? As long as we find the correct person to submit our qualifications to, the matter should be able to be settled easily!"

"After all, master teachers are also interested in accepting apprentices. We are the two most famous teachers in Tianxuan Royal City, so it wouldn't be wrong to say we are the most eligible candidates. As long as we compose a proper name scroll and highlight our achievements in teaching, he might just accept us as his apprentices. It doesn't matter whether we have the three million or not! What we have to do is to search for means to submit our name scroll. As for gathering money, that is of secondary concern at the moment!"

"This..." Wang Chao blinked his eyes.

"Fighting prowess isn't the only factor in becoming a master teacher. More important than that, one must be able to nurture his students. Given how many capable students we have under us, we will definitely catch his attention."

As he spoke, Lu Xun got increasingly excited that his eyes began to radiate, "If that doesn't work, we can invite him to the Teacher Evaluation. When he witnesses how I manage to crush Zhang Xuan and how outstanding I am, perhaps he will be impressed and happily accept me as his disciple..."

"What you say makes sense... Given our identity as star teachers, submitting our qualifications shouldn't be difficult. If

so, it might work out even without us paying the entrance fee!” Wang Chao finally understood Lu Xun’s plan.

The Teacher Evaluation is a good opportunity. If Master Teacher Yang Xuan watches the duel, he will definitely form a favorable impression of Lu Xun and accept him as his disciple. As long as Lu Xun succeeds, he can help to persuade Yang Shi to accept Wang Chao as well.

“Alright, let’s prepare for a bit before we pay our visit to Yang Shi...”

Without much hesitation, Lu Xun started to make arrangements.

.....

Apothecary Guild.

Guild Leader Ouyang, Apothecary Chen Xiao, Apothecary Bai Ming, and more than ten other apothecaries were seated in the hall with a respectful attitude.

Hu!

A violent wind blew and a massive aerial savage beast slowly descended from the sky.

An elder stood on the beast. Before it had even landed, he gently leaped off its back and settled stably on the ground.

“Paying respects to Apothecary Hong Yun!”

Guild Leader Ouyang and his party stepped forward to welcome him.

Apothecary Hong Yun, a famous 2-star apothecary in one of the nearby kingdoms.

“Un!” Apothecary Hong Yun nodded his head. Then, he lifted his eyebrow and asked, “Where’s that Zhang Xuan?”

“Apothecary Zhang Xuan... probably isn’t in the capital, that’s why he didn’t come...” Guild Leader Ouyang said with an awkward expression.

The past few days, Zhang Xuan had been spending his time in the kingdom’s Book Collection Vault. Upon leaving, he put on

his disguise and returned to his mansion immediately. Even Zhao Ya and the others face difficulties finding him, needless to say, him.

“Atrocious!” Apothecary Hong Yun flung his hands. With a steeled face, he bellowed, “Even though the Pill Debate is a tradition passed down from the ancient times, it has a set of unique rules that has to be followed by. This time, other than delivering the Unravel Yin Pill and Colossus Rhinoceros Blood, I am also going to assess this Zhang Xuan. If he is unqualified, I will strip him of his qualifications immediately.”

“Yes!” Guild Leader Ouyang nodded his head.

“Bring me the Record Crystal from that day. If I discover any bias in your actions, everyone who was involved in the Pill Debate will be punished!” Apothecary Hong Yun frowned and commanded authoritatively.

“Yes, Apothecary Hong Yun. This way please...” Guild Leader Ouyang hurriedly stepped forward to lead the way.

Soon, they arrived at the location where the Pill Debate was held and took out the Record Crystal.

“Activate it!”

Apothecary Hong Yun sat down and sipped on a freshly-brewed cup of tea before staring impassively at the others.

Upon hearing the other party’s words, Guild Leader Ouyang immediately infused his zhenqi into the Record Crystal. Instantly, the crystal started to shine and the recorded contents began to play before them.

The image of Zhang Xuan stepping into the room appeared.

“Is this Zhang Xuan? Guild Leader Ouyang, you are also a veteran of the guild, how can you be so foolish? How can someone that young succeed in Pill Debate?” After seeing Zhang Xuan’s young appearance, Apothecary Hong Yun immediately raised his eyebrows.

Which one of those who had dared to challenge the Pill Debate had not studied pill forging for several decades? At the very

least, they were fifty to sixty-year-old. Yet, this fellow isn't even twenty... What can he be possibly capable of?

Clearly, the other apothecaries had intentionally given in to him!

“How about this? As long as any apothecary here dares to forge pills before me, regardless of the method he uses, I am able to point out the name of his forging method and the errors he commits in the process. If any of those here find what I say incorrect, I can admit defeat immediately...”

Zhang Xuan's voice echoed from the Record Crystal.

“Arrogant!” Apothecary Hong Yun sneered coldly. “Even I can't guarantee to be able to see through all of the errors in a 1-star apothecary's forging technique. Yet, as an apprentice, he claims to be able to do so? What a joke... He truly is naive!”

The Record Crystal continued to play. Soon, it displayed the scene regarding Apothecary Meng Yan. Zhang Xuan pointed out that there was killing intent in him, and thus, it was unlikely for his Tranquil Heart Pill to work.

“That Apothecary Meng Yan's movements are hasty and he doesn't look tranquil in the least. It isn't surprising that he can see through this...”

Watching up to this point, Apothecary Hong Yun hesitated for a moment before speaking.

As a 2-star apothecary, his discernment ability isn't something Guild Leader Ouyang and the rest can match up to.

Apothecary Meng Yan's state of mind was clearly unstable and one could tell that he was irritable at that moment. It wasn't difficult to conclude that the pill he forged would be a failed product.

After which, Apothecary Chen Xiao started forging.

“Death aura? This... Apothecary Chen Xiao's pill forging is too quiet. I can only tell that something is amiss with him, but I can't say for sure that he is about to die...”

Apothecary Hong Yun was slightly perplexed.

The other 1-star apothecaries thought that Zhang Xuan had looked into their affairs before working backward to derive the conclusion. On the other hand, Apothecary Hong Yun, as a 2-star apothecary, has much sharper eyes. Even though he isn't able to tell as much as Zhang Xuan was able to, he is nevertheless able to discover a thing or two from Meng Yan and Chen Xiao's state then.

After which, it was Cheng Jiang's turn.

Then, Bai Ming.

“This cauldron has a height of 7 chi and 3 cun and width of 3 cun and 2 chi. It was created by a 3-mo craftsman in the Stone Well Workshop seven years and three months ago...”

“This cauldron is slightly thicker than a cun and it requires an incense's time and thirty-four breaths for the heat to completely permeate the cauldron...”

On the Record Crystal, Zhang Xuan spoke calmly and steadily. Wisdom and self-confidence were displayed clearly in his gaze.

“This...”

Apothecary Hong Yun's anger had vanished completely. Instead, he was staring fixedly at the crystal with widened eyes.

He has had the opportunity to come into contact with apothecaries of higher tiers and heard them converse with one another. It seems that before forging pills, one should first study the cauldron thoroughly so as to understand how to make full use of it to forge higher quality pills.

All along, he had thought that these are distant concepts inapplicable to him. Never in his dreams would he expect to hear such words from the mouth of an apprentice. Furthermore, the other party had spoken of every single step in great detail.

“Reporting to Apothecary Hong Yun, after the incident, I took the effort to look through the scroll regarding the cauldron and did a comparison to his words. Regardless of the weight of the cauldron, its thickness, when it was forged, how many times it

had been transported, and the kinds of pills that were forged through it... Apothecary Zhang Xuan's words are completely correct! There isn't even the slightest bit of error!"

"We specially conducted an experiment as well and indeed, it took precisely an incense's time and thirty-four breaths for heat to permeate the cauldron..."

...

Guild Leader Ouyang explained.

Actually, even without his explanation, Apothecary Hong Yun, who spends his days forging pills, could roughly tell that the words of the other party are correct.

"...causing a loss of the medicinal effect by thirteen percent. Fail!"

"...As such, its medicinal effect wasn't fully unleashed and fourteen percent of the medicinal effect was lost. Fail!"

...

"This... This... Impossible!"

Upon hearing the entire string of 'failure' from Zhang Xuan, Apothecary Hong Yun's body stiffened. He couldn't help but clench his fist together tightly.

"After that, we did a series of tests based on the Zhang Xuan's words. The percentages that he gave are completely accurate. This is a log of the tests we did. Please look through it..."

Guild Leader Ouyang handed over a book.

Since it was a Pill Debate, naturally, they couldn't let it end that easily. After Zhang Xuan left the examination hall, Guild Leader Ouyang and the other apothecaries worked overnight to test all of the figures that he provided and the results left them dumbfounded. To think that... it would be absolutely accurate. There wasn't even the slightest bit of error.

"This..."

Flipping through the logs, Apothecary Hong Yun felt as though he was going mad.

The signature of the apothecaries were all present and the timing between each step was recorded extremely clearly. Thus, it is impossible for it to be falsified.

To remember the sequence in which he added in the 47 medicinal herbs with a single look and to deduce the reaction of every single process thoroughly, as well as the loss of the medicinal effectiveness...

The heck, is that person really a human?

Apothecary Hong Yun tried to see if he could deduce the figures by looking at the forging process on the Record Crystal but soon, he shook his head. Even with his abilities, he isn't capable of such a feat.

Thus, he continued to watch on. What came afterward was the usual Pill Debate process. The various apothecaries came forward to pose questions of their own.

"...It just happens that there is one of it in our basic tier book collection vault. It is on the 27th row, on the upper left corner..."

On the Record Crystal, Zhang Xuan smiled faintly, gestured grandly, and spoke of the names of the books, as well as the position of them in the guild's book collection vault.

"These books... I have read almost them all and it is exactly as he had said..."

Apothecary Hong Yun's breathing hastened.

He might be unable to confirm the authenticity of the words that Zhang Xuan had said earlier just by looking at the Record Crystal, but as a 2-star apothecary, the number of books he had read and his knowledge of pill forging far surpasses that of Guild Leader Ouyang and the others. He had browsed through many of the books that the other party had mentioned and the contents... were identical to what he had said.

Honestly speaking, when he heard that the Tianxuan Kingdom Apothecary Guild had allowed a fellow who isn't even twenty to become an official apothecary through Pill Debate, he was extremely infuriated.

He thought that Ouyang Cheng and the others had gone easy on him.

That was precisely the reason why the headquarters sent him to investigate the case.

On his way here, he had already thought of how he should find flaws so as to fail this Zhang Xuan and strip him of his apothecary qualifications. Yet, he didn't think that he would find himself impressed by the other party even before finishing the contents in the Record Crystal.

If the contents of the Record Crystal isn't a show and happened for real... Then this Zhang Xuan truly holds an inconceivably deep understanding of pill forging...

“...Apothecary Wu Xiao's 《Cauldron Maintenance》 , Apothecary Zhao Qian's 《Important Matters to Note for Pill Forging》 , Apothecary Niu Xuan's 《Miscellaneous Things You Have to Know》 , Apothecary Pang Bo's 《Protect Your New Cauldron》 ...”

Zhang Xuan continued to speak on the Record Crystal and elegance exuded from his every single action.

“I have read those books as well. His reply is completely... correct!”

“...Correct!”

“...Correct!”

Apothecary Hong Yun's joints started to pale and his lips quivered non-stop.

He came here to enforce punishment, but before even looking through the entire Record Crystal, he realized that there isn't a single valid reason to do so...

“Guild Leader Ouyang, Apothecary Zhang Xuan is waiting outside and he requests for an audience...” An apprentice said.

Danglang!

Astonished, Apothecary Hong Yun unintentionally released his grip on the teacup in his hands. It fell onto the floor and

shattered into numerous fragments.

Turning around, he saw a listless fellow with bloodshot eyes and heavy eyebags enter.

177 Exploding Cauldron

“Is he that confident fellow showed by the Record Crystal?”

Recovering from his shock, Apothecary Hong Yun calmed his breathing.

The fellow in the Record Crystal emitted wisdom and self-confidence as he displayed his deep understanding toward pill forging. Yet, the fellow before him is listless and his eyes were bloodshot...

Was he bullied by someone?

Apothecaries often come into contact with medicinal herbs and as such, they are exceptionally particular about maintaining their bodies. Usually, they wouldn't allow themselves such fatigue. Besides... an apothecary is one of the top professions among the Upper Nine Paths. As such, they pay great attention to their image and prestige. When has anyone ever seen such heavy eyebags on the face of an apothecary?

This isn't cool.

Apothecary Hong Yun isn't the only one who is perplexed, puzzled expressions had also appeared on the faces of Apothecary Ouyang and the others.

Is this really the fellow who achieved a perfect victory in the Pill Debate? The person who caused them the temptation to dive into any hole they could find?

How unbecoming...

...

Oblivious to the thoughts running through their minds, upon walking into the room, Zhang Xuan saw that more than a dozen of the apothecaries of the Tianxuan Kingdom were gathered here and felt baffled.

These apothecaries are usually extremely busy. It isn't a simple feat to gather them like this. Back then, it was due to

the importance of the Pill Debate that ten of them could be gathered in a day's notice. But why are they so many of them present today?

However, it isn't his business why the apothecaries are gathered here. Zhang Xuan shook his head, choosing not to involve himself in the matter. Enduring the fatigue which is on the verge of overwhelming him, he walked toward the center of the lounge.

“Guild Leader Ouyang, have the items I bought arrived?”

“They have arrived. Over here...”

Guild Leader Ouyang handed over the items that Apothecary Hong Yun had just delivered.

The tier-3 Unravel Yin Pill and the blood of the Primordial Colossus Rhinoceros.

Upon receiving the goods, delight appeared on Zhang Xuan's face. He kept the items into his storage ring and passed over the stack of gold bills which he had prepared beforehand in return.

“Farewell...”

Witnessing that the other party had counted the money and confirmed that there were no problems whatsoever, Zhang Xuan prepared to leave.

He is simply too tired. It is great that the items had arrived. This way, he can quickly bring them to Zhao Ya and Yuan Tao for their consumption and he can finally enjoy his long-awaited rest.

“Apothecary Zhang Xuan, hold it for a moment...”

Apothecary Hong Yun finally recovered from his shock and stood up.

“Who are you?”

Tired and irritable, Zhang Xuan was displeased to see that someone had blocked his path.

“I am Hong Yun... I have a doubt in pill forging that I would like to consult you on. I hope that Apothecary Zhang Xuan can

accept my request...”

Apothecary Hong Yun said.

After viewing the contents in the Record Crystal, he is seventy to eighty percent convinced by the abilities of the person before him. Still, he has to question him in person to ascertain whether there was any fraud involved in the process.

“I’m not free!” Zhang Xuan’s lips curled up in displeasure.

“I’m not your teacher. If you have any queries, go and look them up in the books. Why would you ask me to answer your question? Go and find someone else to bother...”

What a joke, can’t you see that I’m busy? I want to return back home to sleep. Who has the time to answer your question? Why are you so insensitive to your surroundings?

Besides... Who the hell are you!

If every apothecary were to pose a question to me, won’t I die of exhaustion?

Guangdang!

All of the apothecaries in the room fell onto the floor.

Guild Leader Ouyang nearly choked to death on a mouthful of phlegm.

Brother, this is a 2-star apothecary sent by the upper echelons to look you, yet you dare to tell him to go and look for someone else to bother...

“Cough cough!” Holding in the urge to spurt blood, Guild Leader Ouyang stepped forward and added, “Apothecary Zhang Xuan, Apothecary Hong Yun is a 2-star apothecary sent by the headquarters...”

“2-star apothecary?” Zhang Xuan was startled. Taking a glance at the fellow blocking his way, he lifted his tired eyelids slightly and replied, “Alright. Feel free to ask anything you are unsure of. I’m in a hurry...”

“...” Guild Leader Ouyang.

“...” The other apothecaries.

The other person is here to test you. Why does it look as though he is consulting and learning from you now? More importantly... in a hurry? Your head. Aren't you worried at all? If you were to fail his evaluation, the other party has the right to strip you of your identity as an apothecary...

The crowd was shocked by Zhang Xuan's words. On the other hand, Apothecary Hong Yun felt depressed. If not for the fact that he had watched the other party's performance in the Pill Debate through the Record Crystal, he would have already gone into a frenzy.

"When the tier-1 Breath Restoration Pill is forged, it would often turn slightly yellow. I would like to ask how one can solve this problem."

"And you call yourself a 2-star apothecary when you don't even know this? Breath Restoration Pill allows one to recover depleted energy and the main ingredient is the White Banquet Grass. This object is white and upon contact with a person's zhenqi, it will turn a shade of faint yellow. This isn't a problem with the medicinal herb but because the apothecary's zhenqi is filled with too many impurities. If one were to possess a purer zhenqi, such a condition would not occur. To prevent the pill from turning yellow, one can also add a stalk of Green Sun Grass while forging the pill. This herb absorbs the impurities in one's zhenqi, and as such, prevents the White Banquet Grass from turning yellow..."

Zhang Xuan casually gestured.

The golden page had allowed him to convert all of the contents contained within the books from the basic tier book collection vault and advanced tier book collection vault of the Apothecary Guild into functional knowledge. Even without using the Library of Heaven's Path, he was able to easily solve the problem the other party brought up.

More importantly, it is because the other party had asked a question regarding tier-1 pills. If a more advanced question were asked, Zhang Xuan would have had no way of answering.

“Pure Lotus, as the main ingredient of the pill, tastes extremely bitter. However, adding licorice into the mix makes the concoction unstable. How do you solve this problem?”

Apothecary Hong Yun continued asking.

“The bitter taste of the Pure Lotus comes from the golden colored seed pod on top. This part doesn’t contribute to the pill at all, and by getting rid of it, not only will the pill not be bitter, it would have a slightly sweet taste. Adding licorice is an excessive action, so naturally, it will result in the explosion of the cauldron.”

Zhang Xuan stared at the other party as though looking at an idiot, “You are a 2-star apothecary, and you don’t even know this? How did you even get your qualification?”

“...”

Apothecary Hong Yun nearly choked on his anger.

“Alright, if these are the kinds of problems you have for me, the answers can be found in the guild’s advanced tier book collection vault. If you’re free, do read more books. I have something on, so I will be taking my leave...”

Zhang Xuan yawned and walked toward the exit.

He feels that if he doesn’t sleep anytime soon, he might die of fatigue.

Upon hearing his words, Apothecary Hong Yun was dumbfounded.

Can’t you show some respect for me?

No matter what, I am a 2-star apothecary from the headquarters and I am a tier higher than you. Other people treat me with utmost respect upon seeing me, yet you don’t even look at me properly when conversing with me, telling me to go and find someone else to bother and read more books...

Read your head!

I am examining you, can’t you tell that much? Of course, I know the answers...

A look of displeasure appeared on his face and his eyebrows shot upward.

“Wait a moment. As long as you can answer this question... I won’t ask anything else. Also, I will give you the Unravel Yin Pill and Colossus Rhinoceros Blood for free.”

Finishing his words, just as he was still wondering if the other party would take up his offer, he saw that Zhang Xuan was already standing right in front of him. The fatigue in his eyes had disappeared without a trace and in its place is overwhelming vitality, “Are you serious?”

The Unravel Yin Pill and Colossus Rhinoceros Blood are worth a total of twenty-three million gold coins. If he can obtain them for free, it would be for the best.

He would be able to save a huge sum of money...

“You... Materialistic!”

Apothecary Hong Yun was so angry that his beard was flying up from his agitated breathing.

When he was talking to him earlier on, the other party wasn’t even willing to open his eyes. Yet, upon hearing that he would be able to obtain the items for free, he became so excited that he immediately dashed to him...

To think that he, as a 2-star apothecary, would be inferior to a pile of gold coins in the other party’s eyes...

He felt like going on a rampage.

Actually, Zhang Xuan’s actions were not intentional.

His values are still of the period when he was still a librarian in the other world. It has been just a few days since he had transcended over and he hadn’t truly understood how this world operated. Thus, he doesn’t have a concrete idea of a 2-star apothecary; no matter how incredible the other party is... can he be more practical than money?

After all, he burnt so much brain cells just to earn this twenty million...

“The problem is... Whenever I forge a Vitality Restoration Pill, the cauldron would always end up exploding...”

Apothecary Hong Yun started raising the question.

Upon hearing the question, Ouyang Cheng and the others stared at one another in shock.

Vitality Restoration Pill... This is a top-grade tier-2 pill that is used to restore a person’s expended vitality. It is said that even 3-star apothecaries are not able to forge the pill easily.

Apothecary Hong Yun actually asked a 1-star apothecary how to forge a top-grade tier-2 pill...

This is way too shameless.

He has obviously overstepped the boundaries.

Upon seeing the gazes from the others, Apothecary Hong Yun’s face flushed.

Honestly, the reason why he brought up this question was that he was infuriated with Zhang Xuan. Aren’t you intelligent? Let’s see how you answer a question which even I, a 2-star apothecary, is unable to answer.

If you are unable to answer my question, I shall teach you a lesson and pop your egotistical bubble. I will show you the correct attitude to assume when you speak to a 2-star apothecary.

“Vitality Restoration Pill?” Zhang Xuan had never read books pertaining to the tier-2 pills and as a result, he didn’t recognize its name. He simply thought that it might just be a rare pill which isn’t detailed in the book collection vaults of the Tianxuan Kingdom Apothecary Guild.

Of course, it doesn’t make a difference whether he knows or not. In any case, he hadn’t intended to depend on his knowledge to solve the question. It has been less than half a month since he had transcended over, and even with the cheat known as the Library of Heaven’s Path, allowing him to learn rapidly, it is impossible to match up to these apothecaries who possess decades of experience.

“Let me see you forge a pill...”

Confident, Zhang Xuan casually waved his hands.

“Alright!”

Detecting his disrespectful tone, Apothecary Hong Yun became increasingly enraged. Very solemnly, he decided to severely discipline Zhang Xuan if he is unable to come up with a good answer. Thus, he stepped forward to the cauldron, retrieved a few medicinal herbs from his storage ring and started the forging process.

The Vitality Restoration Pill is one of the bestsellers among tier-2 pills. As Apothecary Hong Yun hasn't been able to successfully forge the pill, he carries a few sets of ingredients everywhere, studying the matter whenever possible.

Xiong xiong xiong!

The flames licked the sides of the cauldron, providing the heat required to refine the medicinal herbs.

As a 2-star apothecary, Apothecary Hong Yun's skills are clearly on a much higher level than Apothecary Chen Xiao and the rest. Regardless of control over the medicinal herb, flames, as well as over the refinement of the medicinal herbs... None of the other apothecaries present are able to compare to him.

Different herbs were thrown into the cauldron in an extremely fluid manner. Under the intense heat of the flames, shortly, a dense pill fragrance started to emanate from the cauldron.

The pill fragrance is infused with a considerable amount of spiritual energy. Even with just a single whiff, one feels energized.

Zhang Xuan had been awake for five continuous days and had accumulated quite a bit of fatigue. With a single whiff, he felt some fatigue disappearing from his body. His bloodshot eyes also eased to a small degree.

Boom!

However, just as the pill fragrance reached its densest, it ceased abruptly. A violent energy surged outward from within

the cauldron, and unable to stand the might, the cauldron blew apart.

Kacha!

A pile of charred medicinal residue flowed from the remains of the cauldron.

Not only did he fail to form a pill, it was the scariest failure that could happen during a pill forging process... cauldron explosion!

If not for the crowd having been warned in advance and was prepared for it, they might have been wounded by the violent aura that shot forth from the cauldron.

Having suffered the full force of the explosion, Apothecary Hong Yun was entirely covered in soot and his hair spiked upward, as though he had been struck by a bolt of lightning. Placing his hands behind his back and assuming the disposition of an expert, he turned around to look at Zhang Xuan.

“I am done. Tell me what went wrong in the process...”

178 Conflicting properties

“Er...”

Noticing his appearance, Guild Leader Ouyang and the others were tempted to laugh, but they did not dare to.

Hong Yun is an apothecary of far higher standing than them. Even Emperor Shen Zhui would have to treat him with the utmost respect, not daring to slight him in the least.

Yet, at this very moment, he looks like charcoal and his hair is standing on ends. If not for the movements in his eyes, one wouldn't doubt that this is a corpse.

However, they understood that it isn't an appropriate moment to be laughing. All of their gazes had converged onto Zhang Xuan.

They were curious to listen to what he has to say.

Offering a pointer to a 2-star apothecary... This is something unimaginable to them.

They wanted to see if the young man who had awed them in the Pill Debate can shine once more.

However, the young man simply turned to look at Apothecary Hong Yun with a bizarre expression and inquired, “Are you sure that you are a 2-star apothecary?”

“What do you mean?” Apothecary Hong Yun flung his robe angrily.

“What is the property of Blue Floral Grass?” Ignoring the other party's displeasure, Zhang Xuan asked.

“Blue Floral Grass has a purplish color and is a warm herb.” Apothecary Hong Yun replied.

“What about Golden Dime Flower?”

“Golden Dime Flower consists of two colors, golden and silver. As such, some people term it as Silver-leaf Golden Flower. It is a herb with mediating property.”

“Even though these two herbs possess mild properties, when used together, an extremely violent reaction results.” Zhang Xuan said.

“I know that. However, the Vitality Restoration Pill recipe has been passed down for a long time. If the reaction between the two can result in the explosion of the cauldron, then it would have happened to other people as well.” Apothecary Hong Yun shook his head. “Besides, there isn’t any mistake in the sequence in which I place the medicinal herbs. In fact, I even added a Purple Aroma Grass between the two to mediate between their properties. In terms of sequence and timing, there are no errors at all!”

He had consulted another expert on the forging process of the Vitality Restoration Pill. Every single medicinal herb and movements were identical to the other party, yet the result was entirely different. This was what left him baffled.

The other party had also said that the fusing of the two medicinal herbs would result in a violent reaction, which he also knew and had taken preventive measures. It is impossible for the explosion of the cauldron to be due to this.

“I didn’t say that your sequence is incorrect or that there’s a problem with the two medicinal herbs!” Zhang Xuan said calmly.

“What do you mean?”

Apothecary Hong Yun, as well as the other spectators, felt perplexed.

If that isn’t the problem, that what could be it?

Otherwise, why would his cauldron explode when there are no errors?

Besides... If there’s nothing wrong with the two herbs, why did you even ask about them?

Ignoring the bizarre looks everyone shot at him, Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back and walked toward the exploded cauldron. On the ground nearby, a stalk of Blue Floral Grass and Golden Dime Flower each could be seen.

“The Blue Floral Grass and Golden Dime Flower react to result in a violent explosion when they are mixed together... It’s true that adding a Purple Aroma Grass can help to solve the problem, but... while other people may be able to do it, but you can’t!”

Zhang Xuan smiled lightly.

“I can’t? Is there something special about me?” Apothecary Hong Yun frowned.

I am a distinguished 2-star apothecary, and furthermore, I am one of the better-skilled ones in the tier. So why am I the only exception?

“That’s right, there’s something special about you. If I’m not wrong, you have never eaten any medicine which uses Purple Aroma Grass as the main ingredient!” Zhang Xuan turned to look at him.

“Er... I am allergic to Purple Aroma Grass and so, I cannot consume it...”

Apothecary Hong Yun nodded his head.

“Actually, it’s not due to an allergy. Rather, the attribute of your zhenqi is incompatible with it...” Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back and continued, “Because you cultivate using the Vast Flame Formula, your zhenqi inherently carries the property of fire. On the other hand, the Purple Aroma Grass grows in the water, giving it the property of water. Hence, your zhenqi overwhelms the water property of the Purple Aroma Grass, causing it to lose its effectiveness. As such, while it is effective for others to utilize the Purple Aroma Grass as a mediating factor in forging of the Vitality Restoration Pill, it does not work for you. Therefore, when the other two herbs come into direct contact, a violent reaction results and causes the cauldron to explode!”

“You... How did you know that I cultivate the Vast Flame Formula?”

Apothecary Hong Yun’s face turned pale.

The Vast Flame Formula is a family hereditament cultivation technique handed down through his clan. He had practiced it

from young, and it has been several decades since. As a result, his zhenqi does indeed carry the fire attribute. However, this was a personal secret and he had never told any outsider. In fact, not even his good friends know of it. How is this fellow able to tell so easily?

“It doesn’t matter how I know it. If you don’t believe me, you can try adding Blue Floral Grass and Golden Dime Flower to the Purple Aroma Grass which you have refined. If it doesn’t explode, that would mean that my conjecture is wrong.” Zhang Xuan didn’t bother explaining.

Just by having the other party display his pill forging technique, a book was compiled by the Library of Heaven’s Path. Not mentioning the name of the cultivation technique, if he really wished to, Zhang Xuan could have clearly mentioned every single flaw on that cultivation technique. It isn’t a big deal to him.

Apothecary Hong Yun hesitated for a moment but eventually decided to give it a try. Thus, he took out a Blue Floral Grass, Golden Dime Flower, and Purple Aroma Grass and refined them into medicinal essences. After which, he mixed the three of them together.

Boom!

Exactly as what the other party said, the concoction exploded immediately.

“This...”

Apothecary Hong Yun’s body trembled.

He had already studied the Vitality Restoration Pill for numerous years, but he had never succeeded in forging it. He had always thought that the problem lied with his movements and the sequence which he added in medicinal herbs. He never once imagined that it would actually be his zhenqi which had rendered the Purple Aroma Grass’s mediating property ineffective.

If he hadn’t heard himself, he would have never believed it.

“Is there a solution to the problem?”

Recovering from his shock, Apothecary Hong Yun turned his sight to the young man.

At this moment, he is already completely impressed with the other party.

Initially, he had come with the intention to strip Zhang Xuan's apothecary qualifications. However, that thought had vanished completely from his mind.

To be able to tell his cultivation technique and pinpoint the clash in medicinal herbs just by watching him forge the pill once... Even though he has no idea of the other party's pill forging technique, just his discerning ability itself is more than sufficient to qualify him as a 2-star apothecary.

“To think that a 2-star apothecary can't solve such a simple problem by himself?” Displeasure appeared on Zhang Xuan's face.

Even though the library points out the flaws of a problem, it doesn't give him a direct solution. Of course, he can't mention this out loud... What if the other party claims that he did not solve the problem satisfactorily and refuse to pay up?

The reason why he took the effort to answer the other party's question was money. Otherwise, why would he waste his precious sleeping time?

“Thank you for your guidance...”

Upon hearing the other party's criticism, Apothecary Hong Yun's face flushed.

The other party's words made sense. As a 2-star apothecary, it was already absurd for him to pose such a question to a 1-star apothecary. To ask for the solution when the other party had already directed him to the core of the problem... what an embarrassment.

The Purple Aroma Grass was only a mediating factor. As long as he can find a mediating herb that doesn't clash with his zhenqi, the problem should be solved.

“This...”

The Apothecary Hong Yun, who was incomparably arrogant and authoritative when he arrived, now looks like an elementary schooler, not daring to refute the criticisms. Guild Leader Ouyang and the rest tucked at their hair, wanting to knock their head against the wall.

It was clear that Zhang Xuan's explanation was spot-on. Otherwise, it would be impossible for the other party to submit to him like that.

For a newly appointed 1-star apothecary to lecture a 2-star apothecary to the point that he does not dare to refute his words at all...

The crowd swallowed a mouthful of saliva subconsciously.

“Guild Leader Ouyang, you should have heard Apothecary Hong Yun's words. Return that money, along with the one million deposit that I paid in advance...”

Ignoring everyone's shock, Zhang Xuan walked straight up to Guild Leader Ouyang, stretched out his hand, and grabbed the money bills which he handed to him previously.

“ ... ”

Everyone was speechless.

Since you are such an incredible apothecary, you should be able to earn that bit of money just by selling a few pills. Do you have to act in such a manner just because of this bit of money?

Ignoring their bizarre gazes, Zhang Xuan kept the money and nodded his head in satisfaction.

The reason why he went about looking for money, even disguising as a master teacher to guide others, was to pay for these items... Yet... In the end, when the items arrived, he didn't even have to spend a single gold coin...

If he knew it would end up like this, he wouldn't have gone through so much effort to disguise himself as a master teacher. In the end, look at how exhausted he became doing so...

Zhang Xuan felt dismal.

Apothecary Hong Yun was done examining Zhang Xuan. Knowing that this young man holds true capabilities, he longer dared to hold him back.

Leaving the Apothecary Guild, Zhang Xuan headed to the academy.

.....

Hearing that Master Teacher ‘Yang Xuan’ had appeared, Lu Xun and Wang Chao could no longer remain seated. After composing their name scrolls, they rushed out of the academy in a hurry. At the entrance, they happened to see a listless young man walking in.

That fellow had bloodshot eyes and his hair was a mess. With a single look, it was clear that he hadn’t slept for several days.

“Lu Xun, it’s Zhang Xuan...” Wang Chao said with a restrained voice.

“Him?” Lu Xun glanced at the listless young man and shook his head. Contempt appeared in his gaze. “To think that a teacher of the academy would be so ignorant of etiquette and walk around in such a ragged state. It truly is a wonder to me why the academy would recruit such a person in the first place!”

“I think that this fellow must have been feeling stressed over your challenge, and had spent the last few days without sleep trying to think of a countermeasure, thus reducing himself to such a state...”

Wang Chao chuckled.

Who is Lu Xun laoshi?

The most famous star teacher in Hongtian Academy! There is a long queue of students who desire to come under his tutelage.

Even an elder would find himself sweating profusely if challenged by him. The young teacher who had just joined last year is surely scared out of his wits by now.

Otherwise, why would he be in such a state?

“Thinking of a countermeasure?” Lu Xun laoshi shook his head. Self-confidence radiated from his gaze. “To want to surpass me in the field of teaching in the Hongtian Academy... Dream on!”

“Indeed. Honestly speaking, he can only blame himself for his ill luck. He just has to pop up when you require an opponent to rise up and attract the attention of the master teacher. He truly deserves it...” Wang Chao chuckled.

Even though Emperor Shen Zhui had invited Liu Shi and the others with secrecy, announcing to others that he was going on a hunt, there were actually quite a few well-informed people who already knew the truth.

In order to attract the attention of the master teachers to become their apprentice, Lu Xun was already prepared to look for someone to serve as his stepping stone. Even if Wang Tao and Wang Yan had not withdrawn from his tutelage, he would have invented another reason. It just happened that Zhang Xuan came into his path voluntarily, so naturally, Lu Xun chose to make use of him.

“Let’s go! We have to hurry to Yang Shi’s mansion now. Otherwise, who knows how long we will have to queue.”

Lu Xun nodded his head.

To him, Zhang Xuan is merely a small stepping stone for him to become a master teacher, a meaningless itch on his back. He holds no resentment or anger toward him at all.

“Indeed, Yang Shi should be our goal. This Zhang Xuan is only an insignificant figure in the academy...”

Wang Chao nodded his head. No longer bothering with Zhang Xuan, the two of them walked past Zhang Xuan arrogantly, not even giving him a proper look in the eyes!

.....

Seeing two teachers walking past him with their heads held high and haughtily, as though enlightened experts unmoved by material desires, Zhang Xuan was puzzled.

Who are these two... fools?

Even though he had accepted the Teacher Evaluation duel with Lu Xun laoshi, he had never met the other party. Thus, he didn't recognize him at all.

There are several hundred teachers in Hongtian Academy. Zhang Xuan arrived just last year, and he hadn't formed good interpersonal relationships. Given how poor he was faring then, he didn't have the leisure to be concerned about other teachers, so it was natural for him to not recognize the academy's celebrity.

179 Teacher, You've Worked Hard!

Ignoring the two fools, Zhang Xuan proceeded straight to his classroom.

“Teacher, you’re back!”

All of his students were present in the classroom. Upon seeing him enter, they bowed deeply.

“Good, looks like you have all been working hard the past few days.”

Scanning the room and noticing the rise in their cultivation, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

In his five days of absence, his students actually had massive improvements. Wang Ying, Liu Yang, and Zheng Yang had all attained Fighter 1-dan Juxi realm pinnacle.

Even though Zhao Ya remained stuck at Juxi realm pinnacle, her strength is much greater than the others. It seems like she isn’t far from reaching the Dantian realm.

As for Yuan Tao, who has the weakest foundation out of all of Zhang Xuan’s students, he had advanced from Juxi realm primary stage to Juxi realm intermediate stage.

The Breathing Forging Pill and the cultivation technique which Zhang Xuan imparted him seems to have worked wonders.

The current Zhao Ya, even without his advice, should be able to easily defeat Zhu Hong.

“Zhao Ya and Yuan Tao, follow me.”

After examining everyone’s conditions once more through the Library of Heaven’s Path, Zhang Xuan felt pleased. Then, he gestured for the two.

Entering the small room within the classroom, Zhang Xuan whipped out the pills which he had just obtained from the Apothecary Guild. “Zhao Ya, this is the Unravel Yin Pill. It can awaken your unique constitution. Later at night, find a large wooden pail, fill it with water, and soak yourself in it before consuming the pill.”

He passed the Unravel Yin Pill over.

“Thank you, teacher...” Even though she didn’t know that the pill is worth ten million, it is nevertheless an authentic pill forged by an official apothecary and she knew that it is definitely extremely valuable. She accepted the pill from Zhang Xuan’s hands in delight and her heart was quietly filled with gratitude.

“Yuan Tao, do you know why I accepted you as my student?” After passing the pill to Zhao Ya, Zhang Xuan turned to look at his plump disciple.

“I...” Yuan Tao scratched his head.

Actually, he had been baffled these few days as well.

He is the student who scored the worst in the Entrance Examinations. Back then, he thought that Zhang laoshi accepted him because he was unable to find any students and used him to add to his number. However, after witnessing this Zhang laoshi’s capabilities later, he immediately understood that he had been mistaken.

How is it possible for such an incredible person to be unable to find students?

Thus, even though he had been working hard alongside Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang, and the others, an inferiority complex had started to develop within him.

He felt as though he would drag the others down.

As such, he had subconsciously kept his shameless personality in rein.

“There’s no need for you to feel inferior. As long as you cultivate earnestly, you will be able to reach greater heights

than Zheng Yang and the others!” Reading the doubt and fear he bore in his heart, Zhang Xuan said.

Emperor Bloodline. Even in comparison to other unique constitutions, it is considered one of the strongest. If he were to fully awaken this constitution, his cultivation would definitely soar. In this case, exceeding Zheng Yang and the others would be an easy task.

“Teacher... I... Can I really reach greater heights?” Yuan Tao face flushed as he said in agitation.

These few days, he had been worried that Zhang laoshi would dump him because of his inability. He didn't expect that Zhang laoshi would bear such high expectations of him.

“Rest assured, I am not mistaken.” Zhang Xuan waved his hands casually. Then, with a piercing gaze, he stared at him. “However... you lack talent. In order to surpass the rest, you will have to endure greater hardship. Are you willing to do so?”

After reading the books in the Apothecary Guild's advanced tier book collection vault, he knew that activating the Emperor Bloodline through such a mean would be an extremely painful process. If he were to cave in, not only will the awakening process be a fail, he might even die as a result.

That's why Zhang Xuan did not pass the item directly to the other party. He wanted to stimulate the other party's determination, to harden his resolve.

To cultivate is to go against heaven. Without the determination to face one's death in the midst of doing so, it is impossible for one to emerge above the countless others who tread on the same path.

“Teacher, as long as my cultivation can improve swiftly so that I won't burden the others, I am willing to bear any hardship.” Yuan Tao knelt onto the floor. Unwavering determination reflected in his eyes.

As a wandering cultivator, he had gone through numerous hardships, and he understood that finding a good teacher isn't

easy. No matter what, he would never give up on this opportunity.

“Alright, this is the item that I have prepared for you. After returning to your dormitory tonight, spread it all over your body. The process might be extremely painful, but as long as you grit your teeth and bear with it, the rewards will be spectacular. Are you willing to give it a try?”

Upon finishing his words, Zhang Xuan passed the blood of the Colossus Rhinoceros forward.

“As long as it can raise my cultivation, I am willing to bear as much pain as needed!”

Yuan Tao clenched his jaws.

Even though he is often joking about and looks half-hearted, he is actually the most determined of the five.

“Spreading this thing isn’t a one-time off thing. After the pain fades, you have to continue to spread another layer over your body. I’ll give you five days. Before the start of the Freshmen Tournament, I want to see your improvement. Otherwise, don’t bother looking for me again!”

Zhang Xuan said authoritatively. At the very end, there was even a sharp edge to his tone.

“Teacher, I will not let down your trust!”

Upon hearing those words, Yuan Tao knew that Zhang Xuan had given him an ultimatum. Holding the jade bottle in his hands, his eyes burned with extreme motivation.

Zhang laoshi did not give up on him just because he is the weakest of his students. Instead, he went through the effort to obtain this object for him so that he can advance his cultivation. As his student, if he were to back down now, he truly would be letting down the effort and concern his teacher had put into him.

Even if it spells his death, he was determined to accomplish it so as to meet his teacher’s expectations.

Yuan Tao gritted his teeth.

“Great. Call Wang Ying in.”

Seeing the resolution in the duo’s eyes, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

Shortly, Wang Ying came walking into the room. The young lady is just as she was before; the instant she saw Zhang Xuan, her face flushed.

“Teacher, you called for me...”

“Un, how are your legs feeling after using the Body Nourishing Medicinal Solution?”

Zhang Xuan glanced at her.

“Teacher, my legs have fully recovered. Thank you! This... is the money my father had me pass to you for the Body Nourishing Medicinal Solution. He says that you are already my benefactor for being willing to teach me, and he can’t possibly let you pay for my expenses on top of that...”

Wang Ying stepped forward and handed over a bill denominated five hundred thousand.

The Body Nourishing Medicinal Solution is sold in the Apothecary Guild, so it wasn’t a difficult task to look up its price. As an official apothecary, Zhang Xuan was given a discount for the purchase. If an outsider were to purchase it, it would cost a minimum of three hundred thousand gold coins for one gourd.

It appears that after Clan Head Wang Hong found out about Zhang Xuan giving a gourd of Body Nourishing Medicinal Solution to his daughter, he had specially looked into its price.

“Alright then, I’ll accept the money.” Zhang Xuan did not decline the other party’s offer.

A teacher should not be responsible for paying for a student’s expenses. The reason why he had been paying for them is that the Teacher Evaluation is just around the corner, and he is in a rush to obtain those items for them to raise their cultivation.

By accepting this, the Wang Clan and Wang Ying would not feel indebted to Zhang Xuan, and their teacher-student relationship would remain pure.

“Show me your punching routine!”

After accepting the gold bill, Zhang Xuan instructed.

“Yes!” Wang Ying extended her arms immediately and began her graceful maneuvers.

Along with his improvement in cultivation, numerous cultivation and battle techniques had been retained in Zhang Xuan’s mind. Even without the Library of Heaven’s Path, he is able to tell that her legs have fully recovered.

Soon, Wang Ying finished her punching routine and broke out in a slight sweat.

“This is the leg technique and movement technique that I have created specially for you. Practice well. I will give you five days, and no matter what method you use, you must reach a minor accomplishment in the two skills.”

Zhang Xuan passed the two manuals to Wang Ying.

Those are the Heaven’s Path Movement Art and Heaven’s Path Leg Art, but Zhang Xuan had already simplified the manual. Even though it isn’t as powerful as the original version, it can still be considered a top-notch battle technique. Once Wang Ying masters the technique, her speed will be boosted drastically.

“Thank you, Zhang laoshi...”

Flipping open the manual to take a look, Wang Ying’s breathing hastened in agitation.

After she recovered from her injury, she had been looking into the leg-related battle techniques within the Wang Clan. Those battle techniques are among the best within the entire Tianxuan Kingdom, but in comparison to the one which Zhang laoshi had given her... what a vast difference!

They belong to absolutely different leagues.

Just by this itself, she understood how precious the manual is.

“Call Liu Yang in!”

Oblivious to the other party’s gratitude, Zhang Xuan instructed.

Soon, Liu Yang entered.

Due to him practicing a battle technique too early when he didn't possess sufficient zhenqi, a trauma developed in the meridians in his right hand. As such, the strength in his right hand was unable to compare up to that of his left. However, after the nourishment from the Meridian Rejuvenation Pill, the damage to his arm had recovered fully.

After having him display a punching routine and observing that he had improved significantly in his punching technique, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction. Then, he imparted a manual of the Heaven's Path Fist Art, which he fathomed in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, to him.

After which, he had him call Zheng Yang in.

After several days of practice, his Heaven's Path Spear Art had matured. Even though the technique consists of one simple movement, it is versatile and can be modified to form countless other moves, causing his fighting prowess to increase immensely.

In a fight, even Zhao Ya may not be a match for him. Even though he isn't the one with the highest cultivation realm of the five, he is definitely the strongest at present.

"Looks like your spear training is going well. However, your cultivation is still way too low. Try to reach Fighter 2-dan within five days."

Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment before saying.

This student of his is indeed a genius. Even though he had imparted him the skill only a few days ago, he has almost mastered it. In terms of spearmanship, there is nothing to criticize. However, what is holding him back is his cultivation.

"Yes!" Zheng Yang nodded his head.

It is impossible to reach Fighter 2-dan without a year and a half of training following conventional methods. However, Zheng Yang is different.

It isn't because of his talent. Rather, Zhang Xuan's explanations of the Fighter 1-dan realm during lessons had

touched on the very essences, providing with him a deep insight into Fighter 1-dan. Coupled with the Breath Forging Pill and a personalized cultivation technique, breaking through his current realm isn't difficult at all.

“Go cultivate...”

Finally, after briefing each of his students, Zhang Xuan can no longer hold back his fatigue. Without a care, he leaned back in his chair and fell asleep in the classroom.

Soon, the sky darkened.

“Where is Zhang laoshi?”

Even though the students were done cultivating, Zhang laoshi had yet to appear from the partitioned room inside the classroom. They couldn't help but feel perplexed.

“Zhao Ya, I think you should go in and check on him...”

“Alright!” Zhao Ya pushed open the doors to the room, full of curiosity, and immediately noticed Zhang laoshi leaning against the chair, sleeping peacefully.

“Teacher... is asleep!”

She sneaked out silently, her eyes reddened.

Obtaining these medicine, imparting new fist technique, movement technique... Needless to say, Zhang laoshi must have been toiling sleeplessly these few days to accomplish all of these for their sake.

No wonder he seemed to be exhausted earlier, such that his eyes were bloodshot.

“Teacher...”

Zheng Yang and the rest were touched by Zhang laoshi's gestures.

A Pixue expert can usually withstand staying awake for two to three consecutive days without a problem. How tired was he that he could fall asleep while sitting on a chair?

As a student, it is definitely a great blessing to have such a teacher.

“We should cultivate properly, meet the goals teacher had set for us, and achieve victory in the Teacher Evaluation. Only then will we not let down the efforts teacher put in for us.”

Zhao Ya clenched her jaws.

“Indeed, teacher has given too much for us. If we lose just like that, we won’t be able to face him in future!” Zheng Yang nodded his head in agreement.

After which, they turned to look at their teacher simultaneously, who was deep in sleep leaning backward on the chair. The five of them clenched their fists and the same voice echoed in the hearts...

Teacher, you’ve worked hard!

180 Awakening Zhao Ya's Unique Constitution

Zhao Ya's residence.

Upon receiving the news that his subordinate sent him, Yao Han shook his head with a bitter smile.

When he heard from Zhao Ya that Zhang Xuan laoshi is a Pixue realm expert, he couldn't help but suspect him for the assault back then. Thus, he had been investigating discreetly and eventually, he managed to verify Shang Bin laoshi's movements and he... didn't leave his dormitory that day!

In other words, he isn't the person responsible for beating him up before Zhang Xuan's dormitory back then.

With this piece of news, it isn't difficult to deduce the culprit. Very clearly, the one who made a move on him is likely to be xiaojie's teacher, Zhang laoshi.

“That fellow is truly scheming...”

Until now, whenever he recalls the scenario back then, Yao Han can't help but feel an urge to vomit blood. As a teacher of the academy, shouldn't you be righteous and moral? Yet, you chose to pull an underhanded sneak attack, even going ahead to frame someone else... How shameless.

“Forget it. At the very least, with such a teacher, xiaojie shouldn't be at any disadvantage.”

Even though he felt displeased, recalling the fact that Zhang laoshi generously gave the Frigid Sun Mother Grass, an item so exceedingly precious, to Zhao Ya without the slightest bit of hesitation, he nevertheless swallowed his anger with a bitter smile.

With such a teacher, who doesn't put himself in unfavorable situations, xiaojie shouldn't have to worry about being bullied by others. In a certain sense, this is a good thing as well.

“Butler Yao...”

Just as he managed to put away the message to avoid xiaojie from finding out, a guard walked in with big strides from the outside and announced, “The old master has sent news.”

After which, he handed over a Record Crystal.

“Un!” Yao Han nodded his head. Pinching the Record Crystal, he infused zhenqi into it and instantaneously, a tall and dashing middle-aged man appeared.

Zhao Ya’s father, Baiyu City Lord, Zhao Feng!

“I have received the news regarding Xiao Ya. A few days later, I will enter the capital to pay a visit to this Zhang Xuan laoshi.” Within the Record Crystal, Zhao Feng’s gaze was sharp, and he exuded the disposition of a natural leader.

“Pure Yin Body... There was a precedent in Xiao Ya’s mother’s lineage. It takes both money and luck to awaken it. I will have to obtain the tier-3 pill which is worth several tens of million for Xiao Ya... the Unravel Yin Pill!”

“Upon reaching the capital, I intend to plead with His Majesty to purchase one from the Apothecary Guild for me. You should also make some preparations in advance. Also, I will have someone pass you ten ten-thousand gold bills, give the money to Zhang laoshi. After all, I can’t have him spend his own money on top of having saved my daughter. I don’t wish to owe favors, and I won’t allow my daughter’s benefactor to be at a disadvantage as well!”

In the Record Crystal, City Lord Zhao gestured authoritatively, and overwhelming majesty exuded from his actions.

Baiyu City is the second largest city in Tianxuan Kingdom. It is known for producing white jades. As the city lord, Zhao Feng possesses absolute authority and controls the massive wealth within the city. Naturally, developed the disposition and mannerisms of a conqueror.

Zhang laoshi having recognized Zhao Ya’s Pure Yin Body and even extending a helping hand, was already a huge favor. As the city lord of Baiyu City and a powerful official, how can he

allow him to further spend money from his own pocket to pay for his daughter's treatment?

This is an action unbecoming of him as a city lord!

“Butler Yao, the city lord had me bring this...” The guard who passed the Record Crystal to him a moment ago passed another few money notes over.

“The city lord had also specially instructed me to have you convey to Zhang laoshi that he will repay the favor of teaching xiaojie in the future...” The guard continued speaking.

“I got it!” Yao Han nodded his head.

“Do not let xiaojie find out about this. You can leave now!” Just when Yao Han was about to continue instructing him on the arrangements, he suddenly saw Zhao Ya walk in.

“Uncle Yao, it's good that you're here. Help me get someone to prepare a wooden bucket. Also, can you help me check how much the Unravel Yin Pill cost? Is it more expensive than Breath Forging Pills?”

Upon entering, Zhao Ya ordered immediately.

Zhang laoshi had given her a pill. Even though she doesn't possess the money to repay him now, she should at least know of its value. This way, she would know at least know how much Zhang laoshi had done for them.

“Unravel Yin Pill? Is that a pill which Zhang laoshi had told you about?” Upon hearing xiaojie talk about the pill which the city lord had just mentioned, Yao Han was taken aback. After which, he felt a surge of awe for the latter.

Even though Zhang laoshi is indeed underhanded when it comes to scheming against others, his knowledge is indeed impressive. He was able to easily obtain news which the city lord had spent a great amount of money to look into.

Impressed, Yao Han smiled and said, “The Unravel Yin Pill is extremely useful for one with the Pure Yin Body. Rest assured, xiaojie, the city lord will be coming over in a few days' time to purchase it for you...”

Not only is a tier-3 pill expensive, one needs proper connections to purchase it. It is impossible for an ordinary person to buy it even if they have sufficient money to do so.

This is precisely the reason why City Lord Zhao Feng is making the trip personally to plead with His Majesty to liaise with the Apothecary Guild on his behalf. Otherwise, even as a city lord who possesses exceptional standing in Tianxuan Kingdom, he nevertheless doesn't possess sufficient status.

The Apothecary Guild is a powerful organization that traverses across innumerable borders and countries. The branch in Tianxuan Kingdom is merely a small outlet compared to the innumerable others scattered around the world. Possessing powerful backings, even Emperor Shen Zhui dared not to lay his hands on the Apothecary Guild, needless to say, a small city lord like Zhao Feng.

Just as Yao Feng was considering whether to tell xiaojie of the message the city lord sent, he saw her whipping out a bottle. "There's no need to, Zhang laoshi has already given me a pill, instructing me to cultivate well these few days!"

"Given you a pill?" Yao Han's eyes widened in shock.

The city lord had just mentioned that it is a tier-3 pill which costs tens of million for one.

Even the Baiyu City would suffer a huge budget deficit spanning several years if they were to spend so much money at once...

Zhang laoshi... casually... gave one to her?

Yao Han felt that his head was about to burst apart from madness.

He had seen generous people, but... he had never seen such a generous person!

This is no longer a matter of generosity...

This is absolutely inconceivable.

"Xiaojie, can I take a look at that pill of yours?" Suppressing his shock, Yao Han redirected his attention.

“Here!” Zhao Ya handed over the bottle.

After receiving the bottle, Yao Han casually opened it.

Hu!

A dense fragrance gushed out immediately. With a single whiff, he felt every single pore on his body open, bringing him an incomparably refreshing sensation.

Even though he doesn't possess an in-depth knowledge of pills, just the effect of the scent itself is sufficient for him to realize that the pill is definitely authentic.

To casually give a tier-3 Unravel Yin Pill to a student...

Where exactly does this Zhang laoshi come from?

Previously, he was still harboring thoughts of getting back at the other party when xiaojie isn't around. However, upon seeing the pill, the thought was erased from his mind immediately.

The previous time, when he tried to castrate the other party, he was beaten up so badly that even his parents found it difficult to recognize him... If he were to really make a move again, it would be likely that the other party escapes unscathed once again while he would be sent back to Baiyu City in a coffin...

To say the truth, this Zhang laoshi is really too complicated.

Yao Han had initially thought that he is a trash teacher of the academy, and he is a despicable pervert who preyed on female students' immaturity to lay his hands on them. Yet, in the twinkling of an eye, he transformed into a Pixue realm expert, as well as a nonmaterialistic saint who gives his all to his students. That, Yao Han can still accept. Then, the other party even went on to take the apothecary examination and casually gave xiaojie a Frigid Sun Mother Grass and an Unravel Yin Pill... This is no longer a matter of his prestige or his strength.

Without backing from someone powerful, it is impossible for him to achieve such feats.

“The pill is here. I will be consuming the pill then!” Knowing that this Uncle Yao of hers often stood in a daze ever since he took the beating, Zhao Ya paid no heed. Holding the Unravel

Yin Pill, she arranged for the pail to be brought into the room and hastily started training.

Time waits for no one. She doesn't want to disappoint Zhang laoshi.

As such, Yao Han was left by himself in the room. After an unknown period of time, he turned to look at the Record Crystal in his hands and with a bitter smile, he shook his head, "Master, I know that you do not wish to owe any favors. But... I doubt that you will be able to repay Zhang laoshi anytime soon..."

To gift the Unravel Yin Pill, which even his master is unqualified to buy, to xiaojie so casually... How can his master repay such a favor?

He will never be able to repay the favor no matter how hard he tries...

...

Oblivious to the distress Uncle Yao was suffering, Zhao Ya returned to her room and filled the wooden pail with hot water before sternly instructing that no one is allowed to interrupt her. Then, she took off her clothes and stepped into the pail.

Following immediately, she retrieved and swallowed the Unravel Yin Pill.

It felt as though she had swallowed a mouthful of scalding soup. A violent wave of scorching energy gushed into her meridians immediately.

Unravel Yin Pill is actually a pill which contains pure yang medicinal property. Usually, when such a medicine is absorbed into the body of an ordinary cultivator, it is absorbed by the body and converted into zhenqi and other nourishment, augmenting his strength. However, if a person who possesses the Pure Yin Body were to consume this pill, a calamity would result.

Yin and yang are at odds with another; it is impossible for the two to coexist. Under the stimulation of the pure yang medicinal property of the Unravel Yin Pill, the Pure Yin Body would be forced to awaken to protect its host.

Even though the concept sounds simple, it is actually an extremely complicated and risky process. A single mistake can cause one's cultivation to dissipate.

“Maintain one's tranquility and drive one's cultivation technique.”

Knowing that the pill is valuable, Zhao Ya did not dare to waste even a single sliver of the medicinal essence. Zhao Ya focused her attention and followed the cultivation technique which Zhang laoshi imparted her to propel circulate her zhenqi.

As befitting of a cultivation technique compiled by the Library of Heaven's Path, immediately, she felt the violent aura within her body calm down significantly. At the same time, the Pure Yin Body, which had laid dormant all along, started to come to life.

Boom!

After a moment later, a giant whirlpool of energy manifested within her body, and the energy of the Unravel Yin Pill was swept along, circulating throughout her entire body furiously.

Kacha! Kacha! Kacha!

The previous hurdle she faced was shattered immediately, and in the blink of an eye, she broke through to Fighter 2-dan Dantian realm.

Under the impact of the medicinal essence, as though the valve to a flood had been opened, her unique constitution, which had been tightly sealed for over a decade, awakened abruptly.

If anyone were present, they would be able to see her skin transform to become increasingly smooth, tender, and bouncy visibly. Even though the previous Zhao Ya is also considered a rare beauty, due to her young age, she had looked immature. However, at this very instant, she exudes the aura of an absolute beauty.

Those possess the Pure Yin Body are favored by the heavens. The moment their constitution is awakened, not only will their cultivation be boosted significantly, their skin and figure also improve tremendously. Even though there isn't a vast

difference in terms of appearance, she now carries an absolutely pure disposition, as though an inviolable fairy which had descended from the skies.

If she had paled in comparison to Shen Bi Ru before, at this very instant, in terms of just her appearance and disposition, the other party would not be able to raise her head before her. She truly had become the number one goddess in Hongtian Academy and Tianxuan Kingdom.

These are the effects of the Pure Yin Body. Just by awakening it, one transforms from the very core, evolving from an ugly duckling into a swan. Not to mention, Zhao Ya was a beauty from the very start. After the metamorphosis, she became even more dazzling.

And all this is because she had awakened just ten percent of her constitution.

It is unimaginable how she would look like if she were to awaken it fully.

Boom!

After a long period of time, a loud explosion echoed. The pail shattered into smithereens, and Zhao Ya slowly opened her eyes. A powerful aura surged forth from her body.

181 Lu Xun's Visi

Approximately when Zhao Ya began to cultivate after consuming the Unravel Yin Pill, in the forest behind Hongtian Academy, Yuan Tao was finally done adjusting his state, and he stared fixedly at the jade bottle before him.

He was a wandering cultivator, and due to his lack of proper guidance, his results in the entrance examination were poor. Unlike Zhao Ya, who has a private dormitory of her own, he could only squeeze in with the others. Since Zhang laoshi said that applying the paste in the jade bottle will be painful and dangerous, it was clear that he can't do it in the dormitory. Thus, after pondering over the matter, he decided to come here.

It was quiet with no threats of an assault by a savage beast or so, making it a suitable ground for cultivation.

“I should begin!”

As he had already made up his mind previously, there was nothing for him to hesitate about. He opened the bottle immediately.

Weng!

An overwhelming smell of pungent blood gushed out from the jade bottle. Following promptly, he felt an extraordinarily violent energy and it made him tremble involuntarily.

After taking off the clothes on his body, piece by piece, he poured out the liquid from the jade bottle and spread it on his body.

Ssssssss!

The moment the crimson-red fluid came into contact with his skin, Yuan Tao felt as though his entire body was pierced with needles. The pain was so excruciating that he felt as though his skin was being torn over and over again.

“AH...”

Under the excruciating pain, Yuan Tao collapsed onto the floor.

This pain far surpassed all other which he had experienced in the past. It felt as though someone was carving his skin off with a sharp dagger.

His face lost all colors quickly, taking on a shade of absolute paleness. Cold sweat dripped off Yuan Tao's face and his body shivered unceasingly.

“The pain...”

His sight blurred and he found himself losing grasp on his consciousness.

No matter what, he is just a sixteen to seventeen-year-old child. Regardless of what he had gone through and what he had suffered in the past, he would still cower in the face of excruciating pain.

“Why don't I... give up... the present state of things is not that bad, why do I have to raise my strength?”

The thought invaded his mind, striking at his will repeatedly.

“If I give up... Will Zhang laoshi reprimand me?”

Just as he felt his determination wearing thin, a figure suddenly appeared before him.

Zhang laoshi!

He was looking at him with that ever impassive expression. His eyebrows were creased, and his displeasure was apparent.

“No, I can't betray the trust he has in me...”

Noticing the seemingly angered Zhang laoshi, Yuan Tao shivered and illimitable fighting spirit came gushing out from him anew.

Before meeting Zhang laoshi, he was always the butt of jokes. Not only was he plump and had poor comprehension ability, his cultivation realm was sorely lacking. He had pleaded with more than ten teachers, only to be chased out of each of their doors. No one wanted to bother him.

He thought that he spend his life without achieving anything. But... he met Zhang laoshi.

It's Zhang laoshi who did not despise him for his figure or his ability. It's Zhang laoshi who specially tailored cultivation techniques for him, even toiling through the night to obtain this liquid so that he can improve and break through to higher realms!

To him, Yuan Tao felt indebted. The other party had put effort into grooming him.

If he were to be unable to take such little bit of pain, how can he have the cheek to face him in the future?

Zhang laoshi, rest assured. I will not let you down. I will persevere on and obtain your approval!

An unyielding resolution bloomed in his heart. When his eyes opened once more, he realized that the heart-wrenching pain had dulled by a fair bit.

After an unknown period of time.

The pain slowly subsided. Lowering his head to take a look, Yuan Tao realized that the red substance he had spread over his entire body had been completely absorbed. At the same time, a thick layer of armor resembling scales had appeared on his skin.

Even though he had no idea what it was, he knew that his defensive ability had been increased by multiple folds.

“Zhang laoshi said that it isn't sufficient to just apply the substance once. Continue!”

Seeing that there is still a fair bit of liquid in the jade bottle, Yuan Tao spread it over his body once more.

After going through the agony once, Yuan Tao felt a little hesitant. However, upon thinking of Zhang laoshi, Yuan Tao steeled his heart.

Eventually, he utilized the entire bottle of red substance.

“This is...”

Lowering his head to take a look, Yuan Tao realized that a layer of cuticle had formed on the surface of his skin after he had absorbed the red substance, and it is somewhat reminiscent of fish scales.

“I should give it a try...”

Doubtful, the flames of curiosity appeared in Yuan Tao’s mind, and he charged straight at a tree nearby.

Kacha!

With a crisp sound, the bowl-size thick tree was immediately broken at the trunk. At the same time, all he felt on his body was an itch. There wasn’t even the slightest bit of pain.

Yuan Tao’s eyes narrowed.

Just how strong are his defensive and offensive abilities now?

“Teacher... I have succeeded...”

Recalling the suffering that he had gone through, Yuan Tao clenched his fists and tears came streaming down his cheeks.

At the very least, I didn’t betray teacher’s trust in me...

Zhang laoshi, I have succeeded in meeting your goal!

.....

At the same time, Wang Ying, Zheng Yang, and Liu Yang were also working hard.

After receiving a movement technique manual and a leg technique manual from Zhang laoshi, Wang Ying did not hesitate in the least and returned back home immediately to train. Her fighting prowess is rising progressively.

Zheng Yang continued to push against the boundaries of Fighter 2-dan so that he can reach Dantian realm within five days.

Liu Yang had also started practicing Heaven’s Path Fist Art. The sound of his fists created sonic booms here and there.

While the five great disciples were busy training, the respected teacher, Zhang laoshi finally woke up, stretching his back lazily.

“How did I fall asleep here?”

Upon opening his eyes, he realized that he had fallen asleep in the resting area in the classroom. There were no beddings, but he didn't feel the slightest chill. Unknowingly, a layer of clothes had been placed on him to keep him warm.

There were both male and female clothing in the mix...

His five students, fearful that he would catch a cold, took off their coats for him.

“These little fellows...”

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

Due to the overwhelming exhaustion he felt yesterday, he fell asleep the moment he sat on the chair. His students probably carried him here gently before covering him with their clothes.

Looks like he had really overexerted himself. Otherwise, given his strength, it shouldn't have been possible for him to be moved without realizing it at all.

After the sleep, the fatigue which he had accumulated over five days disappeared entirely.

Looking through the windows, he realized that it is already noon the next day.

“Since I've accepted their money, I should attend to their problems...”

As a 'master teacher', he had accepted eighty million from the others. Given his fatigued state, it is one thing for him to have ignored them yesterday. However, now that he has recovered, he should at least offer them some pointers in return for their money.

Otherwise, he would feel guilty.

Returning back to his residence, he saw Sun Qiang welcoming him anxiously with tears brimming from his eyes.

After eating some food, Zhang Xuan had Sun Qiang invite the people in, according to the sequence in which they paid up.

These people were mainly those who had met a wall in their cultivation and hoped to achieve a breakthrough.

A person's cultivation is just like a river flow. If one is unable to achieve a breakthrough, it means that there must be something hindering him from doing so. Possessing the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan is able to easily locate the blockage site and, utilizing his silver needles and pure zhenqi, inducing a breakthrough isn't a difficult task at all.

After all, these people had cultivated for an extremely long time and the accumulation of their hard work had brought them to a state where they are merely a single step away from breaking through, just that this step had obstructed their path for a very long time.

What Zhang Xuan had to do was to merely assist them across the door. Using the river analogy once more, just by inducing a crack in the obstruction, the overwhelming volume of water which had accumulated over time would blast open the entire blockage through sheer force.

Of course, while the principle sounds simple, it is nigh impossible for any other master teacher to accomplish the same feat as Zhang Xuan.

Be it physique, cultivation technique, habits, every single person varies immensely from the other... Thus, the blockage in each and every person differs greatly. It is just like how there are no two identical leaves in the world, the blockages in the meridian within a cultivator's body were vastly different.

Without the Library of Heaven's Path, it would be impossible for one to know where the source of the problem is, needless to say, help the other person achieve a breakthrough.

...

Outside Zhang Xuan's residence.

Sun Qiang opened the door and shouted, "Next..."

"I'm sorry, can you let us through?"

The moment Sun Qiang's words sounded, another voice came from the back and two young men came forward with widened

strides.

They are Lu Xun and Wang Chao from Hongtian Academy, and they are here to visit Yang Shi.

As they were dressed in teacher's robes, even though the crowd was displeased by their action of cutting their queue, they nevertheless opened up a path for them.

"Butler Sun, we are..."

Wang Chao stepped forward and clasped his hands.

They had waited for an entire day, and initially, they thought that their statuses as star teachers would be able to attract Yang Xuan's attention and that he would quickly summon them in. Yet...

Yang Shi did not appear the entire day. Whenever Sun Qiang emerges, he would just shout for the next in the queue to enter. He refused their name scrolls, and this caused them to panic.

"Scram!"

Before Wang Chao could even finish his words, Sun Qiang frowned, "Did you think that this is your house, for you to charge forward like this? Go to the back of the queue!"

"I..."

To be bellowed at by a mere Pigu realm butler, Wang Chao's face flushed and he nearly exploded into rage.

As a star teacher, regardless of where he goes, Wang Chao receives tremendous respect. There are no master teachers in Tianxuan Kingdom, and as such, Lu Xun and he are the most welcomed figures in the capital. He thought that just by stepping forward to reveal his identity, he would be able to hand over his name scroll and enter the residence. Yet, beyond his wildest dreams, before he could even finish his sentence, this plump butler demanded him to scram.

"Why? Do you wish to violate the rules?"

Sun Qiang flung his hands majestically, "Do you want to try me? Without even lifting a single finger of mine, there will be someone to throw you out."

The heck, where did this bumpkin come from?

To dare to cut the queue outside a master teacher's residence, he must be truly ignorant.

Even though Sun Qiang isn't a master teacher, the people who are here to pay Yang Shi a visit would be more than willing to do the job for him.

Hearing these words, Wang Chao became so angry that his body started to tremble with agitation.

Anywhere else, such an insignificant figure would have been easily crushed by him with a single, casual blow, and no one would dare to speak up for him. Yet, this person is now asking him to scram, even threatening to throw him out...

His face flushed, and he clenched his fists tightly. Even though he was angry, he didn't dare to rebuke Sun Qiang.

After all, they are here to earn Yang Shi's favor and become his apprentice. If they were to offend his butler even before meeting him, all hope would be lost.

"Butler Sun, please calm down. I am Lu Xun, a teacher from Hongtian Academy. I wish to pay Yang Shi a visit, and I hope that you can help refer us to him..."

Extending his hand to restrain his good buddy, Lu Xun stepped forward with a smile on his face.

"Lu Xun laoshi?"

Sun Qiang was taken aback.

Even though he was just an ordinary merchant in the commercial city who rarely came into contact with top-notch figures, he had long heard of Lu Xun laoshi's great name, him being an incredibly famous figure in the capital. He is the sole son of the emperor's tutor, Master Lu Chen, as well as the most likely person in Tianxuan Kingdom to become a master teacher.

Not only so, despite being under twenty-five, he has already achieved Pixue realm. His talent is top-notch, even within the entire kingdom.

Due to his identity, even Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm experts treat him with the utmost respect.

Yet... Sun Qiang just asked him to 'scram'?

Cough cough, his luck is truly bad.

He had just offended three master teachers, and now, he has offended another potential master teacher...

He had seen how the old master criticized others however he wished, and it looked easy then. Yet, why was it that difficult for him to do the same?

182 Throw Him Ou

“This is our name scroll, I hope that Butler Sun can help us pass it to Yang shi. If we were to be summoned by Yang shi, us brothers will be extremely grateful for your help.”

Seemingly seeing through Sun Qiang’s fear, Lu Xun smiled faintly. He placed his hands behind his back and displayed a confident smile.

Since young, his life had been smooth-sailing. Furthermore, with the reputation that he had made for himself in the past few years, a confident demeanor had grown in him.

Within the Tianxuan Kingdom, who would dare to treat Lu Xun with disrespect?

In the past, he relied on his father’s prestige as the ‘emperor’s tutor’. But now, he had made a name for himself as the ‘Star Teacher Lu Xun’.

“Alright!”

Nodding his head, Sun Qiang grabbed the name scroll and walked into the residence.

Even though Lu Xun is merely a celebrity teacher now, given experience, it is extremely likely that he would become a master teacher. As a lowly butler, Sun Qiang did not want any involvement in a matter between master teachers. Thus, he decided to leave the matter to the old master.

“Abusing his authority, acting like he is in charge!”

Upon seeing the plump man change his attitude after hearing Lu Xun’s name, Wang Chao harrumphed coldly and a look of disdain appeared on his face the moment Sun Qiang disappeared into the mansion.

He had investigated Sun Qiang’s background beforehand. He was only the boss of a realtor store and for some reason, he caught Yang shi’s sight, causing the massive change in his social standing.

Despite reaching Pigu realm only after forty years of age, being fat like a pig, and possessing no special capabilities whatsoever, he dared to bellow at him. If not for his identity as Yang shi's butler, he would have long taught him a lesson.

"He's just an insignificant figure. Brother Wang, you need not pay him any heed." Lu Xun chuckled.

"So it's Lu Xun laoshi and Wang Chao laoshi. I apologize for failing to recognize you two."

"You both are famous celebrities in the entire kingdom. I've been wanting to pay you a visit, and it is truly a pleasant surprise to meet you here."

"It is truly my honor to be meeting you two. I might have to impose on you two in the future..."

Hearing the exchange, those queuing behind them dispelled their anger immediately and acted politely to them.

Teachers can be classified into two categories: ordinary teachers and master teachers.

Ordinary teachers can be further subdivided into low-level, high-level, and star teachers.

On the other hand, master teachers can be differentiated as apprentices (also known as assistant master teacher) and certified master teachers.

Lu Xun and Wang Chao belong within the first classification, but they had attained the highest level, therefore gaining the qualification to become a master teacher. As long as they receive the acknowledgment from a master teacher, they would be promoted to become an apprentice master teacher immediately and soar to great heights.

Possessing such a status, even though those waiting by the doors are powerful experts with exceptional standing in the kingdom, they did not dare to offend them.

Furthermore, they are here to pay a visit to Yang shi. If things go well, they might well become Yang shi's apprentice. Flattering them then would be too late.

Upon seeing the attitude of the crowd, Lu Xun and Wang Chao chuckled simultaneously as they clenched their fists in agitation. At this moment, they felt an overwhelming sense of superiority, as though a single word of theirs can change the fate of others, as though they had already become apprentice master teachers.

The reason why they had been trying to make a name for themselves at such a young age is precisely because of this.

“Please do not get angry at that butler. When you both become Yang shi’s apprentice, he will never dare to say such words again.”

A cultivator fawned upon them.

“Indeed! Once you become Yang shi’s apprentices, you will be considered his disciples. On the other hand, he is just a butler, a servant!” Another person chirped in.

“You’re all being too polite. How can becoming an apprentice master teacher be so simple?”

Even though Lu Xun’s words seemed humble, a confident smile was displayed on his face, as if to say “who else but me?”.

But that is to be expected. He is known as the most incredible star teacher in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom. If a master teacher were to be looking for an apprentice, no one in the entire kingdom would be able to compete against him.

“Lu laoshi, you’re being too humble. I’ve heard that Liu shi has the intention to accept you as his disciple!”

“I’ve also heard of it. But judging from how even Liu shi paid a visit to Yang shi personally, if you can become Yang shi’s apprentice, your starting point will be even higher.”

“If you become Yang shi’s apprentice, your standing will probably not lose to any other 1-star master teacher. When that time comes, we’ll be relying on you two...”

A few more people offered their flatteries.

“Don’t worry. If Yang shi really accepts me as his apprentice, I won’t forget any of you.”

Lu Xun and Wang Chao chuckled together. They stood proudly before the others as though a lotus rising above the mud, inviolable beings whom others can only look up to respectfully.

Jiya!

At this moment, the entrance opened and Sun Qiang emerged once again.

Seeing him reappear, the duo stepped forward immediately.

“Sorry for the trouble, Butler Sun. Please lead the way.” Wang Chao chuckled haughtily as he proceeded to walk toward the mansion.

However, before he could even take a few steps, a plump figure blocked his path. Then, he saw Sun Qiang look at them with a peculiar expression.

“Could it be that Yang shi did not allow us to enter?” Wang Chao’s face darkened.

That shouldn’t be! They had listed their accomplishments in detail on the name scroll. As well-qualified star teachers, how is it possible that they are rejected?

“Enter? Who allowed you to enter? You two have two choices. You can either join the queue from the back or... scram!” Sun Qiang gestured with his hands authoritatively.

“You...”

He didn’t expect that the other party would continue behaving like that even after the name scroll had been handed over. Lu Xun and Wang Chao were infuriated.

“Is this Yang shi’s intentions? As a lowly butler, you should know your place to not falsely report your master’s words!”

Lu Xun stepped forward.

He had his moment of glory when everyone else thought that Yang shi would summon them in. If they were to be rejected like this, his reputation would fall into the gutters immediately, and he would find it difficult to lift his head before anyone else in the future.

“Falsely report? Men, throw these two troublemakers out.”

Sun Qiang could not be bothered with them and beckoned for the guards.

Huala!

Several guards appeared from behind the gate, and each armed with a rod, they walked toward Lu Xun and Wang Chao.

“You...” Wang Chao’s face was flushed red. “Sun Qiang, how dare you...”

What do you mean by this?

Thrusting rods at me?

Do you think that we’re beggars?

We’re star teachers, respected figures in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom... If we were to be driven away by you like that, what will become of our dignity?

“Why would I dare not to? My old master has already instructed that no matter who it is, if one wants to meet him, he has to queue up and pay three million gold coins. Teachers are no exception. Otherwise, if everyone were to visit with just a name scroll in hand, won’t the old master be exhausted to death? To think that you are a star teacher, pui! To dare cut the queue without even paying. Please do not tarnish the reputation of teachers any further!”

Sun Qiang stared at the two contemptuously. He waved his arm, as though driving away flies, and said, “Throw them out!”

He also felt anxious earlier on. But when he handed the name scroll to the old master, the latter only asked a single question: Have they paid yet?. Upon hearing that they had not paid the sum, he simply ordered Sun Qiang to handle as per the rule.

From this, it can be seen that star teachers... do not mean anything to the old master at all.

Oh well, even when the three master teachers paid their visit, the old master did not hold them in high regard. If so, what would a mere star teacher mean to him?

Huala!

Upon hearing Sun Qiang's command, the guards stepped forth, "The two teachers, please!"

As they said so, strange looks appeared on their faces.

"I always thought that teachers value their dignity a lot. It turns out that they wish to sneak in just by using name scrolls and avoid the entrance fee?"

"Yang shi's actions are applaudable. He views everyone as equals, and even teachers are not given special privileges. I am impressed!"

"To have cut queue when they don't have money. They sure are thick-skinned. To think that I wanted to befriend them just now..."

"It is impossible for such low-class people to attract Yang shi's attention. To think that they wanted to become his apprentices... How hilarious!"

...

Not just the guards, the crowd also harrumphed coldly.

They had paid the exorbitant sum and queued continuously for several days. Even so, they haven't been summoned. On the other hand, the two of them, without even paying up, wished to enter the mansion. What a joke! They are asking for a scolding!

"..."

Observing clearly the contemptuous looks that the crowd shot them, Lu Xun and Wang Chao nearly spurted blood.

The strong sense of humiliation caused their heads to feel faint.

To avoid an awkward situation, they had intended to pay the three million visiting fee in private. Lu Xun had composed the name scroll earnestly with the expectation that even if the other party refuses to meet them, he would at least pay some consideration to their identities and keep quiet about the fee.

In contrast, not only did the plump man reveal the matter, he even looked at them scornfully...

Tears threatened to stream down Lu Xun and Wang Chao's faces.

The heck!

This time, they truly lost every shred of their dignity. If there were a hole in the ground, they definitely would have dived in instantly.

"You..."

Just as he was about to continue with some small talk to calm down the situation and restore his dignity, Wang Chao felt a grip on his arm. Lu Xun was pulling him away.

"My apologies, Butler Sun. We were too rash today. We will be taking our leave..."

After which, he turned and left.

That Butler Sun is a tough nut to crack. He dares to say anything and everything. If they do not leave but continue bickering with him, not only will they simply get more infuriated, they would also be humiliated further.

Those who are able to become star teachers are, by no means, fools. Upon seeing his good buddy turn around to leave, Wang Chao also recognized his concerns. Glaring hatefully at Sun Qiang, he turned around and left as well.

"Lu Xun, what do we do now?"

Upon leaving the crowd, they walked into a remote alley. Then, Wang Chao couldn't help but ask.

Initially, they thought that submitting their name scrolls would help them impress the other party. As long as they were summoned in, they were confident that, with their knowledge, they would be able to impress Yang Shi. However, never in their dreams did they expect that... not only did the other party reject their entry, his butler even pointed out in public the fact that they didn't pay the entrance fee. The anger and dismay they felt sent them to the verge of insanity.

“What else can we do? We can only obtain the three million entrance fee and then enter with our heads held high.”

Lu Xun clenched his jaws.

Only by meeting Yang shi can they display their abilities to win his favor. Since they can't even meet with the person in question, what is the purpose of arguing with the butler?

“Three million? Where can we find such a sum? Wang Chao's face was as bitter as a bitter gourd.

“You know it as well. My relationship with that old man isn't good. Even if he has the money, he will never give it to me. Besides, how can I break it to him?”

Lu Xun shook his head.

“My old man could have taken out such a sum. But a few days ago, he learned an incredible spear art and paid several million as the tuition fee, so our clan is broke now. We might not be able to produce even a hundred thousand now...”

Wang Chao smiled bitterly.

That father of his had been immersed in that spear art like a fool for the last few days, to the point that he was not even willing to spare time for this son of his. Besides, even if he really has the money, obtaining it from him would be unlikely to happen.

“Sigh, so what should we do now?”

The duo was troubled.

“Lu Xun, if it comes down to it, how about you try asking Emperor Shen Zhui for a loan... Didn't you grow up in the palace? It shouldn't be hard for you to borrow three million from him. Besides, it isn't too late to repay him the sum when you become an apprentice...”

Suddenly recalling something, Wang Chao proposed.

“Emperor Shen Zhui?”

Lu Xun rubbed between his brows for a moment before replying.

“Alright!”

183 Treating Shen Hong

While Lu Xun and Wang Chao were thinking about how they could borrow three million to pay ‘Yang shi’ a visit, the person in question, Zhang Xuan, had his eyebrows deeply knitted together.

Lu Xun’s motive for paying a visit was clear to see. It didn’t matter to Zhang Xuan whether he met the other party or not, and he didn’t instruct Sun Qiang to make things difficult for him either.

The both of them are merely embroiled in a Teacher Evaluation, and there really isn’t any grudge to speak of. Thus, there was no need for Zhang Xuan to intentionally make things difficult for the other party. Besides, he doesn’t have the leisure to be thinking about this at the moment, because... a black-clothed man is standing before him.

This person had entered through the back gates. Fully dressed in black, even the figure’s face was concealed, making it impossible to identify the person. Initially, Zhang Xuan thought that the person was here to cause trouble. However, the moment he entered the main hall, he bowed immediately and removed the black cloth concealing his face.

“Emperor Shen Zhui, you...”

Upon making out the other party’s appearance, Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

He had thought that it was a burglar or a bandit. He had never fathomed that it would be Emperor Shen Zhui, whom he had just met yesterday.

As the sovereign of the country, the entire kingdom belongs to him. Yet, instead of entering openly through the front door, he sneaked into the mansion dressed in black. Acting so secretly, what is he up to?

“Please pardon my intrusion. I am here to plead with Yang shi to... save the Royal Elder!”

Upon noticing his questioning gaze, Emperor Shen Zhui quickly explained.

“Save your Royal Elder?” Zhang Xuan was perplexed.

Sneaking into the mansion dressed in black, it doesn't seem like saving someone... but trying to kill someone?

“Didn't I say that I will help you?”

Zhang Xuan frowned.

In return for saving their Royal Elder, he had already stated his terms yesterday which the other party had agreed to. So, why did the fellow barge in like this?

Could it be that this fellow found gathering Tongxuan realm secret manuals a difficult task and had chosen to resort to force instead?

When this thought flashed through his mind, Zhang Xuan was alarmed.

To be able to become the sovereign of the country, Emperor Shen Zhui's fighting prowess has to be extraordinary. At the very least, it is likely that he has reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle. Even though his own cultivation had improved by leaps and bounds recently, he nevertheless isn't a match for an expert of that level.

However, Zhang Xuan dismissed the thought as soon as it appeared.

Putting aside the fact that the other party knows that he's a master teacher, he wouldn't dare to do so given that he is, in fact, pleading with him to save his Royal Elder.

If he enters a rage and refuses to help or, instead, makes an intentional mistake during treatment, the Royal Elder might actually ascend to heaven earlier than expected.

“I acknowledge that it is inappropriate for me to have visited so abruptly today, and I should have gathered the Tongxuan realm secret manuals before inviting Yang shi over, but who knew that... yesterday, the Royal Elder's condition worsened all of a sudden... He might not even survive the day...”

Emperor Shen Zhui sensed the displeasure in the other party, and he hurriedly bowed down and explained: “Thus... I took the liberty to barge into Yang shi’s mansion. I hope that Yang shi can make a trip to treat the Royal Elder.”

“Might not even survive the day? Even if you want me to treat him... There shouldn’t be any need for you to be dressed like this...”

Zhang Xuan was speechless.

You are a dignified sovereign, a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert. Even if your Royal Elder is on the verge of dying, you should need not dress in black and scale walls.

It makes it seem that you are here to murder someone. It’s fortunate that those guards aren’t highly-skilled. Otherwise, you could have died for no reason.

“The Royal Elder’s health is the greatest secret of the entire kingdom, and it is imperative for it to remain confidential...” Emperor Shen Zhui explained.

It was because of the Royal Elder’s presence that Tianxuan Kingdom had been able to remain in peace for many years. There are already quite a few who know that the old ancestor’s health had been deteriorating, and if Emperor Shen Zhui were to pay an open visit to Yang shi and the other powers find out, they would be able to guess the real reason. If Yang shi fails to treat him, their ambitions would definitely be ignited and they may take advantage of this opportunity to strike.

At the same time, if Emperor Shen Zhui were to send someone else here in his stead, it would be disrespectful to Yang shi. He has no choice but to conceal his appearance and sneak over.

As a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert, it wasn’t a difficult task for him to hide from sight to creep in here.

“Un!” Having heard the other party’s explanation, Zhang Xuan came to understand the situation. “Alright, I’ll follow you to take a look.”

Looks like this emperor has regarded him as the final straw of hope.

However, it doesn't matter to Zhang Xuan either way. If he were to save that Royal Elder, the emperor would definitely not dare to delay the matter regarding the Tongxuan realm secret manuals.

As long as he can obtain a thousand books on Tongxuan realm and create a compilation, his strength would surely soar.

“There are too many eyes outside. I might have to trouble Yang shi to leave through the back door with me...”

Upon hearing him agree to it, Emperor Shen Zhui's eyes gleamed in delight. But he continued immediately with an apologetic voice.

“It's no problem!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

After calling Sun Qiang and informing him briefly, he secretly left the residence under the lead of Emperor Shen Zhui.

Hu!

Two figures leaped across the skyline of Tianxuan Royal City as though flying birds. If those who had yet to reach Dingli realm were to look up, even if they were to focus all of their attention, they would only see two shadows flitting by.

They are Zhang Xuan and Shen Zhui, who are in a rush to the royal palace.

As a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert who possesses remarkable movement techniques, Shen Zhui's movement was extraordinarily swift. However, when he glanced behind at Yang shi, who was following him, his confidence shattered immediately.

En route, he had utilized over twelve movement techniques, and he had become so tired from running that he was about to collapse out of exhaustion. Yet, Yang shi continued to traverse with ease, without the slightest bit of urgency. His breathing was calm, as though this was a simple feat to him.

Even though he was unable to exactly perceive the other party's prowess, from this itself, it was clear that the other party's zhenqi is much more vigorous. Furthermore, the other party's movement technique is far superior.

They couldn't even be compared.

With such powerful zhenqi and amazing movement technique, it is impossible that the other party is a weakling.

It is no wonder the three master teachers were impressed with him. Without a doubt, his strength definitely surpasses Tongxuan realm pinnacle. In fact... It isn't impossible for him to be a Zongshi realm expert!

Upon thinking of this, Emperor Shen Zhui felt even greater respect for Yang shi.

While Shen Zhui became increasingly fearful of the other party, in truth, Zhang Xuan was feeling extremely dismal at the back.

From the very start, this fellow had been dashing ahead with all of his might. If he fails to keep up, his identity might be exposed. Thus, he could only clench his jaws and try his best to stay close.

He is only at Pixue realm pinnacle. Even though he has opened up all 108 acupoints and his strength is equivalent to a Tongxuan realm intermediate stage cultivator, he is still a far cry from the top experts in the kingdom.

It is fortunate that he had managed to learn Heaven's Path Movement Art a few days ago, allowing him to travel at greater speed. Otherwise, the other party would have disappeared from his sight right from the very start.

Even so, there were a few times which he nearly got shaken off. Thus, he made use of the Library of Heaven's Path to look into the flaws of the other party's movement techniques and his habits, predicting his movement in advance and taking a shorter route, thus avoiding the fate of being left behind.

“It is fortunate that there are many flaws in his movement technique. Otherwise, if the other party really did manage to shake me off, I would have to give up on feigning as an expert...”

There are likely to be two reasons why the other party is traveling at such great speed. Firstly, the condition of the Royal Elder in the palace is grave. Secondly, Shen Zhui wants

to test Yang Shi's capabilities. If the other party is truly a formidable master teacher, his speed should be exceptional. If the other party fails to catch up with him, even if he doesn't point it out then, he would definitely be doubtful of the person's identity.

It is precisely because of this that Zhang Xuan felt dismal.

What is this? The trip to the palace to save a person had suddenly become a race. He had to exert all of his strength just to keep up. If not for his image as an 'expert', he would have long sent a kick to the other party's face.

Is he here to request for my help or to race with me...

Furthermore, he had to keep up without displaying the slightest bit of fatigue. If not for the fact that he had broken through recently and that the zhenqi in his body had increased tremendously, he would have given himself away.

The heck! It truly is difficult to pass off as an expert. This really isn't something a normal human can achieve.

If Sun Qiang were to hear of his thoughts, he would definitely express his utmost agreement. It was precisely because of him trying to do the same that he nearly caused his own death...

Until now, he remains traumatized by the event.

"Since I have already obtained the things that Zhao Ya and the others need, when I finally gather the Tongxuan realm secret manuals, I will have this 'Yang Xuan' disappear..."

Zhang Xuan made up his mind.

Even though impersonating a master teacher had allowed him to receive enormous respect, it came with its fair share of trouble as well. If he were to be seen through, it would already be considered letting him off easily if he were to be pummeled to death.

Now, it appears to be a wise decision to have 'Master Teacher Yang Xuan' disappear the instant he receives the Tongxuan realm secret manuals.

Without any rest, in ten minutes or so, they reached the royal palace.

It seems that proper instructions had been given, and there were no hindrances at any point. Soon, they arrived at a large hall.

“Right in here...” Emperor Shen Zhui pushed open the door and walked in.

Inside the hall, Liu shi, Zhuang shi, and Zheng shi were present. Creases had formed on their eyebrows as they stared helplessly at the Royal Elder lying nearby.

The stabilizing pillar of Tianxuan Kingdom, Shen Hong.

A few days ago, this white-haired elder was still able to walk independently. But now, he can only lie on the bed and gasp for air. It seems that he may die at any moment.

“Yang shi!”

As they entered, Liu Ling and the others immediately stepped forward to welcome Yang shi.

After the previous encounter, they understood that it is likely that Yang shi is a higher tier master teacher, and as such, they did not dare to act arrogantly in the slightest before him.

“I plead of Yang shi to save the Royal Elder...” Emperor Shen Zhui turned to look at Zhang Xuan anxiously.

“If I can save him, I will do so.”

Zhang Xuan replied before walking forward to the elder.

The death aura that engulfs Shen Hong is much heavier in comparison to that on Apothecary Chen Xiao previously. He can only lie still on the bed. If not for his moving eyeballs, one would have thought that he had already passed away.

It is no wonder that Emperor Shen Zhui specially rushed to look for him. Based on Shen Hong’s current condition, it is hard to say whether he can live past today.

Having walked a circle around Shen Hong, Zhang Xuan still couldn’t identify the problem. Thus, he could only place his fingers to feel the other party’s pulse.

“Un?”

The Library of Heaven's Path remained reactionless.

It wasn't that he had grabbed the wrong hand, but... Shen Hong isn't in a coma. His eyeballs are still moving, and he is still conscious...

"It wouldn't be realistic to have him execute a punching routine now..."

Zhang Xuan's face darkened.

Given that fellow's current condition, it is already a blessing that Shen Hong can keep his eyes open. If he were to really push himself to execute a punching routine, he might really die before Zhang Xuan can do anything.

"Yang shi... Is there a method to treat him?"

Upon seeing him frown, Emperor Shen Zhui could not help but ask anxiously.

This is already his final straw of hope. If Yang shi is unable to come up with a solution, he can only watch as the Royal Elder breathes his last.

"This..." Zhang Xuan scratched his head.

He can't possibly mention that he couldn't discern anything about the other party.

Having the conscious execute a punching routine and touching the unconscious, he had tried the two methods and successfully compiled books in the library through such. But... How can he deal with this those in such a semi-conscious state?

He can't have him execute a punching routine, and touching him is ineffective.

Why don't you pass out for a moment? You are obviously having trouble holding onto your consciousness, what are you doing not passing out!

"Cough cough..."

After a moment of hesitation, Zhang Xuan lifted his head and asked, "This... Is there any object here which can knock him unconscious without... killing him?"

184 Poison Master

“Knock him unconscious without killing him?”

Emperor Shen Zhui, Liu Ling, and Zheng Fei stared at one another as question marks popped above their heads.

Isn't he here to save the Royal Elder?

Why do you need something to knock him unconscious?

Don't people usually infuse zhenqi, feed medicine, or apply acupuncture and such to save others? Does knocking someone out help too?

The corner of Zhuang Xian's mouth twitched. He felt a tightening sensation at his backside and a constipated sensation overwhelmed him.

Even though he had consumed numerous medicine, his face remained swollen. His body was still aching from the beating that he suffered that day. Even though the other party had helped him achieve a breakthrough and he is genuinely grateful to the other party for that... Aren't his methods way too unorthodox?

There are set procedures which typical master teachers follow when helping others to achieve a breakthrough of their current cultivation realm. In fact, it had even a model. Yet, this fellow simply went ahead to blindfold him and beat him up... Even until now, he has yet to recover from the trauma of that incident.

Of course, he understood that his condition is unique and thus, it was within reason that he had to resort to such extreme means. However, why does he have to knock the dying Shen Hong unconscious to save him?

Could it be another inconceivable treatment method...

“There's a type of powder which can knock one unconscious with just a single whiff...”

After hesitating for a moment, Emperor Shen Zhui said.

All kinds of medicine can be found in the royal palace. It isn't difficult to find one that can knock a person unconscious without killing him.

“Good, bring it over!” Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up as he instructed.

Soon, a eunuch brought a jade bottle over.

Opening the jade bottle, he saw that it was filled with white-colored powder.

“Good.”

Nodding his head in satisfaction, Zhang Xuan took the bottle and walked up to Shen Hong. Under perplexed gazes, Yang shi walked up to the Royal Elder who was gasping for air and said with confidence, “Breathe it in! Come on, breathe it in!”

Putong!

Everyone nearly fainted.

They were puzzled over why he required the medicine, but upon hearing his words, they nearly choked to death on their own saliva.

When saving someone, one usually feeds tonic and spiritual essence... Yet, you feed him sedatives...

Are you sure you aren't here to murder him?!

While everyone had entered a frenzy, the royal family's Royal Elder struggled to shake his head, his face full of fear. If not for the fact that he was immobile, he might have leaped up and fled the scene.

At the peak of his health, breathing this in would place great stress on his body. Now that he is on the verge of death, if he were to take a whiff, he might just fall dead.

Do you think that I am not dying quickly enough? That you want to give me a helping hand?

With his heart full of panic, he turned to look at Emperor Shen Zhui.

Weren't you going to invite master teachers over so that I can achieve a breakthrough and extend my longevity?

Why is the person you brought trying to get me to breathe in sedatives?

What are you doing?

This is way too much!

“Cough cough, Yang shi... The old ancestor's body is extremely frail now. I'm afraid that... if he were to inhale it... his body might be unable to handle it!”

Upon noticing the doubtful gaze his Royal Elder shot him, Emperor Shen Zhui's mouth twitched and he hurried forward to stop him.

When he witnessed Yang shi's bizarre methods the day before, he thought that it would be limited to helping others achieve a breakthrough. To think that even his treatment method would be so incredulous.

The Royal Elder had already expended great willpower to hold on in wait of your arrival. If he were to really breathe it in, even if he doesn't die, he wouldn't be too far from it.

“Unable to handle it?” Zhang Xuan stopped.

The other party's words made sense. The fellow looks as though he would die at any moment. He had been depending on his will to survive. If he were to really fall unconscious and the drive holding him here disappears, he may just die on the spot.

So now, I can't knock him unconscious, and neither can I have him execute a battle technique.

What should I do?

Zhang Xuan was at a loss.

He thought that by using the Library of Heaven's Path, he would be able to easily see the root of his illness. Even if he couldn't save him, he could discuss it to prove his expertise. But look at the situation, the other party just has to be in such a state, rendering him completely helpless.

“Then... is there anything that can temporarily boost his vitality, such that he will not die even if he were to be knocked unconscious?”

After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan asked.

Since the other party is on the verge of death, using sedative is out of the question. Thus, he can only find a way to temporarily boost the other party's vitality so that he wouldn't die when he is knocked unconscious.

“Wouldn't die even if he were to be knocked unconscious?”

The others stared at one another.

This Yang shi is truly determined to knock Royal Elder Shen Hong unconscious...

“Liu shi, is there anything among the master teacher diagnosis methods that... require a person to be knocked unconscious?” Zhuang Xian secretly sent a telepathic message over.

There are many methods for a master teacher to diagnose a person's condition. Just like how a physician diagnoses a patient, through these methods, a master teacher can understand the exact condition of the person and point out the very core of his issue.

The 'expert' before them has practices simply too bizarre. Even as master teachers, they are unable to comprehend the logic behind his actions.

“This... Usually, the person has to be conscious to be diagnosed. Unconscious... I really have no idea at all!” Liu Ling shook his head.

He is knowledgeable and had toured many different kingdoms. He had seen people using all kinds of means to wake an unconscious person to diagnose him, but he had never come across knocking a person unconscious to diagnose him.

An unconscious person is not much different from a corpse, how can one identify his problem like that?

...

The few master teachers were baffled. Emperor Shen Zhui was also bewildered. After hesitating for a moment, he said, “This... the Royal Elder has already consumed all kinds of tonics that might possibly extend his longevity and boost his vitality. Just that these medicines are mostly ineffective now...”

Shen Hong had the backing of the entire kingdom. In order to extend his longevity, he had ingested all kinds of medicine and his body had already developed an immunity to medicinal effects. Even if he were to be fed with more medicine now, it is unlikely that it would be effective.

Hearing the other party’s words, Zhang Xuan felt dismal.

Initially, he thought that once the old ancestor is fed with some medicine, he would regain sufficient vitality to execute a battle technique. Yet, this fellow turned out to be a drug junkie, and medicine is ineffective on him...

The hell, am I really going to fail this time?

“I do know of one item that can boost a person’s vitality for a short period of time. It works just like the medicine that Emperor Shen Zhui mentioned; after consumption, it grants a weak person temporary strength and spirit. Furthermore, it has minimal side effects. However...”

Liu Ling had contemplated for some time before speaking. But speaking to this point, he hesitated all of a sudden.

“But what?”

Zhang Xuan turned to take a look.

“However... It isn’t a tonic but a... poison!” Liu Ling said.

“Poison?”

Zhang Xuan was confused.

Doesn’t poison usually harm others? How would consuming poison boost a person’s vitality, and not to mention, cause minimal side effects?

Not just him, even Emperor Shen Zhui was puzzled by his words. He immediately turned to look at Liu Ling with a

strange expression.

“Everyone knows that poison masters are of the Lower Nine Paths. They often concoct poison to secretly harm others. Their despicable means brought them despise. Even so, given how the profession had been passed down throughout the ages, it shows that there is value to its existence.”

Zheng Fei said.

All professions that are passed down are surely useful in some ways.

Even though poison masters possess poor reputation, they aren't entirely scourges of the human society. They are also useful in their own ways. For example, if a person wants to get rid of pest or avoid miasma, they would require the help of such a person.

“Indeed, I've heard of the substance as well. From what I know, it is concocted using more than a dozen venomous substances in a specific ratio. Just like pill forging, it is incredibly difficult to concoct. The various ingredients would need to be mixed in a specific manner in a specific ratio such that they would complement one another and form a perfect balance. In that case, not only would it not be detrimental to one's health, it can even stimulate a person's latent potential and induce the recovery of their vitality for a short period of time.”

Zhuang Xian seemed to have thought of it as well and he nodded his head in agreement.

After which, he turned over to look at Yang Shi with a confused expression. “Even though poison master is an extremely remote profession, this item is extremely common in 1st Tier Kingdoms. Yang Shi... You don't know about it?”

Not just him, even Liu Ling and Zheng Fei were extremely puzzled.

A master teacher has to be knowledgeable about the occupations of the Upper, Middle, and Lower Nine Paths, as well as their skills. During the examination to become a 1-star

master teacher, one has to answer questions on the topic in detail.

As such, there isn't a single master teacher who doesn't know of this.

The person before them is able to offer them pointers, revealing that he is obviously an extremely high tier master teacher. Yet, how can he be ignorant of poison masters and the medicine they concoct?

In fact, it seemed as if it is his first time hearing of it?

"I... don't like poison masters as an occupation, so I didn't study much of it..."

Looking at the doubtful gazes the others were shooting him, Zhang Xuan felt slightly awkward.

Possessing the Library of Heaven's Path, it is no problem for him to offer pointers. However, when it comes to common knowledge, it is easy for Zhang Xuan to give himself away.

As a master teacher, one must have an incredible discerning ability to identify the root of a problem. In order for one to possess such perceptive eyes, one has to have a wide range of knowledge.

Without having a wide range of knowledge as a foundation, how can a master teacher recognize the crux of a problem in a single look and offer guidance?

And what Zhang Xuan lacks is this accumulation of knowledge.

He is able to hoodwink people through the use of the library, but his ignorance shows through readily when met with this kind of general knowledge questions.

"You don't like it? Didn't study much of it?"

The frown on Liu Ling and the others' faces deepened.

As long as one had been to a 1st Tier Kingdom, even the deaf and blind would be aware, needless to say, a high tiered master teacher.

Besides, a master teacher should be open to everything. They had never heard of one refusing to study a subject just because he hated the occupation...

Those are obviously words of an outsider.

If not for the fact that the other party had offered them pointers, and had showcased his incomparably vast knowledge in the field of cultivation, they would have suspected that he is an imposter.

“Do any of you have the medicine?”

Judging from the faces of the crowd, Zhang Xuan realized that he must have mentioned something inappropriate. Fortunately, he was born thick-skinned and this allowed him to remain composed. He changed the topic immediately.

“This medicine has to be concocted by a poison master on the spot as it cannot be stored. Otherwise, changes would occur within the medicine, resulting in the balance between the various venomous substance to be destroyed, causing it to become a deadly poison... How can we possibly have such a thing!”

Liu Ling nodded his head. The doubt in his eyes deepened.

This Yang shi is way too amateur!

It is impossible for a master teacher to ask such a question.

The same thought also sprouted in Zhuang Xian and Zheng Fei’s minds. In that instant, they once again began to doubt Yang shi’s identity as a master teacher.

“Is that so...” Knowing that the other party was already suspicious, Zhang Xuan knew that he shouldn’t linger further on the topic. He immediately turned to Emperor Shen Zhui and said, “Since that’s the case, then I would have to bother Your Majesty to find a poison master to concoct it!”

At this, he paused for a moment. Then, ignoring the gazes that the others cast, he spoke with a majesty unique to master teachers, “I need this medicine to save your Royal Elder!”

“This...”

This time, it wasn't just the three master teachers, even Emperor Shen Zhui was perplexed by Zhang Xuan's demand. "Our Tianxuan Kingdom is a remote country which doesn't even rank into the tiers... As such, we do not have any poison masters in our lands... Yang shi, it can't be that you are not aware of it?"

"You don't have poison masters here?"

Gedeng, Zhang Xuan's heart skipped a beat.

185 I'll Learn For a Bi

He didn't think that after feigning as a master teacher for so long, such that everyone had already believed him to be real... that he would stumble on the lack of trivial knowledge.

If he knew that there aren't any poison masters in Tianxuan Kingdom, he would have never said such words!

Even though there are books on poison in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, they are more for record purposes. They are fundamental books on the uses of poisons, just like the elementary books in the Apothecary Guild's basic tier book collection vault. Advanced concepts for poison masters are not covered. Thus, Zhang Xuan was ignorant of such facts.

It is no wonder that Liu Ling and the others are growing doubtful of him. He doesn't even possess basic knowledge that even commoners are aware of.

Even though he felt dismal at giving himself away, Zhang Xuan knows that the dice has been cast, and it is too late to regret now. If he were to say that he can't treat the old ancestor, the others would definitely think that he's an impersonation. Probably, before Emperor Shen Zhui can make a move himself, the master teachers would have already made mincemeat out of him.

Even so, Zhang Xuan did not panic. He lifted his head slightly and a faraway look appeared in his eyes. It seemed as though he was reminiscing the past, and that many different memories and emotions, be it sweet or bitter, had been dredged up.

"I have neglected this fact. I thought that I am where I had stayed a few years ago..."

From an outsider's perspective, one would think that he had truly forgotten that he is in Tianxuan Kingdom, and he had truly misspoken.

"..."

Upon seeing his expression, question marks appeared above Liu Ling and the others.

Since there were poison masters in his previous place of dwelling, it means that the kingdom he had resided in is, at the minimum, 1st Tier. However, they had been to nearby 1st Tier Kingdoms, but have never heard of the name 'Yang Xuan'...

“Do you know how to concoct this medicine? If so, it would be best if you can make one now. I require it urgently to save a life.”

Seeing that he had managed to divert their attention, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

Facing Shen Hong, who is a single foot into his grave, he truly is stumped. He can only find a way to induce a temporary recovery of the other party and have him execute a battle technique.

Otherwise, if things were to drag on, he might just die before a remedy can be found.

“Make one now?”

Liu Ling shook his head. “Seems like Yang shi really doesn't know much about poison masters. Honestly speaking, the formula for the medicine is simple. It contains only ten type of venoms, and I can recite them by heart. However, to achieve a balance among the ten venoms such that there isn't any side effect and heighten a person's vitality, one has to be an extremely skilled poison master. Thus, it is useless even though I know the recipe!”

Concocting poison is similar to how an apothecary forges a pill. Regardless of skill or the amount of herb used, the slightest mistake can result in a vast difference from the intended effects.

This is precisely the reason why even though the reputation of poison masters are terrible, they remain a highly feared existence.

In fact, there are many powers who specially hire them to deal with matters which are not convenient for them to directly interfere in.

“You can’t concoct it even though you know the recipe?”
Zhang Xuan glanced at him. “How about this, you write down the formula first so that we can bring the ingredients required for the concoction.”

“Since Yang shi insists, I will follow your wishes.”

Liu Ling said no more. After getting someone to bring paper and brush, he quickly wrote down the ingredients.

Zhang Xuan glanced at the recipe.

Monothorn Grass, Demise Flower, venomous extract from a White Bamboo Snake, blood from a Black Toad

There are ten ingredients in total, and each of them is extremely venomous. Any single one of them is more than sufficient to poison a Tongxuan realm expert to death in an instant.

However, when the ten of them are mixed together in a unique ratio, it can become an incredible tonic. The methods of a poison master are indeed incredible.

Even if an ingredient on the list isn’t present in the royal palace, it wasn’t too difficult to search for it. Not too long later, all of the required ingredients were placed before Zhang Xuan. Every single ingredient was deeply colored and the sight induced fear.

“What is the use of having found these ingredients? Without a poison master to concoct the mixture, they are just venomous substances that are useless in saving lives...”

Doubtful, Zheng Fei commented.

Finding these ingredients had squandered them quite a bit of time. Shen Hong, at this moment, is on the verge of collapsing. Yang shi was invited over to see if he can help Shen Hong achieve a breakthrough to extend his longevity, so why is he bothering about such matters? Isn’t it a waste of time?

“Indeed, Shen Hong’s condition is indeed troublesome. We should be putting our heads to think of a solution instead. Even though recovering Shen Hong’s vitality might help, we don’t have anyone capable of concocting the medicine now!”

Even Zhuang Xian could not stand watching on.

He is indebted in Yang shi and shouldn't have doubted the other party's intention. However, from his perspective, what the other party was doing seemed to be meaningless. The most urgent matter at hand is to help Shen Hong achieve a breakthrough, not to bother about this.

“You already said it, the medicine is useful. If so, we just have to concoct it. In any case, we know what ingredients are required, so it doesn't matter if we have a poison master here. Even without a poison master here, we will save him!”

Interrupting the other person's words, Zhang Xuan smiled.

“But... We don't understand the nature of these venoms...”
Zhuang Xian panicked. “If a mistake occurs, the subject will be poisoned to death immediately. If that happens, it will be impossible to make amends...”

“Alright, if we don't know, we can learn. If we can't concoct it, we can give it a try. There's no need to make such a big fuss!”

Zhang Xuan waved his hands nonchalantly.

“Learn?”

“Try?”

Emperor Shen Zhui, Liu Ling, and the others staggered simultaneously. They nearly fainted on the spot.

Brother, you don't even know who a poison master is! How in the world are you going to learn about poison?

Such last minute mugging, there has to be a better solution!

Every single occupation requires one to receive guidance from a teacher. Only after several years of dedicated research and learning can one have accomplishments in the field. Yet, you speak of learning it now? Learn your head!

Don't joke around!

Even though the poison master is a Lower Nine Paths occupation, it doesn't mean that it is easy to comprehend. Rather, it was due to its poor reputation that it fell from

prestige. In fact, the difficulty of becoming a poison master is in no way easier than that of becoming an apothecary.

After all, one needs to have an in-depth knowledge of the property of the various poisons. Otherwise, one wouldn't be concocting medicine but committing suicide.

Thus, every single poison master has to go through countless years of effort before finally becoming certified... Yet, you say that you want to learn now...

By the time you are done, Shen Hong's flesh would have withered... By then, there's no one here for you to save!

The others felt the world spinning around them. On the other hand, Shen Hong, who was lying on the bed, was on the verge of tears.

The heck, how did I offend you?

I just want to live for a few more years to protect Tianxuan Kingdom... First, you want to knock me out. Now, you want to poison me to death. At most, I'll just die right now, so spare me, will you?

I beg of you, stop torturing me...

"Yang shi, tinkering with poison isn't child's play. It's best not to toy around with them..."

Liu Ling could no longer hold himself back and immediately tried to persuade Yang shi otherwise.

If you don't have a solution for Shen Hong's problem, at most, you can just admit that you are helpless. What are you trying by playing with sedatives and poison?

Do you think that poison can be concocted that easily?

If it were that easy, poison masters wouldn't be such a feared existences.

"I know that it isn't child's play, so give me a moment. I'll study for a bit first..."

Zhang Xuan nodded his head seriously...

"Study... for a bit first?"

Your head!

The three master teachers nearly fainted.

“Fine, we’ll see how you study then...”

Liu Ling flung his robe furiously.

Initially, he thought that given Yang shi is a knowledgeable person. Even though his means are inconceivable, his ability to perceive the crux of the problem is astonishing. But now, it seems that he is merely an extremely random person, such that he is even trying to learn about concocting poison now...

The heck!

If you are that incredible, why don’t you ascend to the heavens?

I have seen numerous master teachers, and have even met a 3-star. However, I’ve never heard of anyone being able to grasp an occupation from scratch in a short period of time.

“Hmph!”

Just like Liu shi, even though Zheng Fei did not say anything, his complexion was awful. Clearly, he was dissatisfied with Zhang Xuan’s actions.

Who are poison masters?

Even among the Nine Paths, it is an extremely famous occupation. If one can become one that easily, it would be worthless.

“Un? Didn’t he say that he is going to learn about poison now? What is he trying to do?”

The three master teachers were furious. By the side, Emperor Shen Zhui also glanced at Yang shi speechlessly. However, when he shot his gaze over, he was immediately confounded by the sight before him.

Didn’t Yang shi say that he is going to learn about poison?

Then why is he standing rooted to the spot with his eyes closed?

Brother, if you truly want to learn about poison, you should find a few books and flip through them. Or at the very least, you should at least ask about it. What do you hope to achieve by standing there with your eyes closed? Please at least show some respect for poison masters...

What in the world are you up to?

“Liu shi, look...”

Zhuang Xian also noticed the strange situation and he muttered.

“Sleeping?”

This...”

Liu Ling and Zheng Fei stared at one another and blinked their eyes. At this moment, they were just a push away from ripping their hair out.

Yang shi...

Can you tell us what you're up to?

Didn't you say that you want to learn how to concoct poison?

Standing motionless on the spot, not even sparing a glance at the venomous substances on the table. More importantly... your eyes are shut. Hell, what are you up to?

I've seen eccentric people, but I've never seen such an eccentric one.

The three master teachers felt that their heads were about to explode from frustration.

186 Concocting Poison

Of course, Zhang Xuan wasn't merely putting on a show.

He had flipped through several thousand books regarding poison in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault. Even though they are all elementary and insufficient for one to become an official poison master even if one read through all of them, it is sufficient for him at the current moment.

His current motive isn't to become a poison master. He just wants to look for a way to achieve a perfect balance among these ten ingredients to create a safe medicinal solution and restore Shen Hong's vitality.

He doesn't have to become as skilled as a poison master to concoct the remedy.

It is just like how becoming an official apothecary is troublesome, but an apprentice can still easily concoct medicinal paste.

Hualala! With a jolt of his mind, he flipped through all of the books he had read in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault regarding poison.

“Correct!”

Focusing all of his attention, the correct portions of the books soon formed a complete manual before him.

Zhang Xuan gently flipped it open.

“Poison can kill, but it can save lives as well. If one masters the art of poison, it might even be possible for one to bring back the dead...”

The book was filled with words.

Zhang Xuan knew that that was the correct content extracted from the other books by the Library of Heaven's Path. He started reading without hesitation.

With a single glance, Zhang Xuan was impressed.

It is just like Liu Ling and the others had said. This occupation is vast and profound; it isn't something one can comprehend in mere days.

However, with the Library of Heaven's Path compiling an absolutely correct manual, Zhang Xuan would be able to arrive at the very core of every single principle. As such, he is able to learn swiftly.

Flipping through the various books in his head, his understanding of poison master as an occupation, as well as the nature of poisons, gradually deepened.

Unknowingly, he reached the final page.

Zhang Xuan felt a shudder going through his entire body. He immediately assimilated all of the knowledge he had just learned for himself, and it formed a part of his working memory. Even though he didn't become a poison master, as he had expected, his understanding toward venomous substances had deepened significantly.

“Un? What is this?”

Having gained a deep understanding of poisons, Zhang Xuan suddenly noticed a faint black aura hidden in the depths of his body.

“When did I sustain this?”

In the past, due to his ignorance, even if he had noticed, he wouldn't have thought much of it. However, now that he had learned the basics, he recognized it to be poison.

Just that... he couldn't recall when he was afflicted with it?

Furthermore... if it had been lingering in his body all along, why is he still fine?

“Royal Elder! Royal Elder...”

Just as Zhang Xuan wanted to look deeper to see what it is and whether it would have any adverse effect on him, Emperor Shen Zhui's panicked exclamations sounded by his ear.

Realizing that this isn't the right time to do so, Zhang Xuan opened his eyes and glanced forward.

He saw Old Ancestor Shen Hong, who had been struggling to gasp for air, on the verge of closing his eyes. It seems that he may die at any moment now.

Using the analogy of an oil lamp, if the flame was weak before, the wind is now blowing and the flame might be extinguished at this very moment. Even if Shen Hong tries his best to persevere, it is unlikely that he will be able to survive more than a few minutes.

“Sigh... death ultimately comes to all. Emperor Shen Zhui, please do not grieve too much!”

“Please pardon our helplessness...”

Liu Ling and the rest recognized Shen Hong’s worsening state and shook their heads in unity.

At present, he is no different from a corpse. As 1-star master teachers, they do not have any solutions. Even if they do manage to think of one now, it would be too late to help.

Indignation reflected in Emperor Shen Zhui’s eyes.

He had spent a great sum to invite the three master teachers, only to be told that they are powerless on the matter. Just as he decided that there isn’t any hope, Yang shi suddenly appeared. He had thought of him as his final straw of hope, but in the end... it turns out that he is even more unreliable than the three.

It is one thing for him to not save him, but at such a crucial period, he tries to tinker with sedatives and poisons...

I invited you to save him, not to experiment with him...

The more he thought about it, the more furious he became. He turned to look at the motionless fellow to see what he had to say about the matter, only to see that his eyes had opened.

“Yang shi, my old ancestor is unable to hold on any longer. If you don’t save him now, it’ll be too late...”

Emperor Shen Zhui suppressed the anger he felt and spat through gritted teeth.

“I’ll first concoct the medicine!”

Zhang Xuan said.

With a single glance, even he could tell that if he doesn't come up with anything soon, Shen Hong will most probably die within ten minutes. The only thing he can do now is to concoct the medicine and hope that it is of use!

“Concoct the medicine...”

After hearing those words, Emperor Shen Hong can no longer hold back his anger.

“Yang shi, my old ancestor's life is hanging by the thread! I didn't invite you over to experiment concocting the medicine of a poison master...”

“Oh?” Zhang Xuan turned to look at him. “You mean that...”

“Yang shi, if you have other solutions, please do so. If you are able to treat my old ancestor, the Tianxuan Kingdom is willing to offer anything to you!” Emperor Shen Zhui said.

“Aren't I doing so now? When the medicine is done, feed it to your old ancestor. After he regains some of his vitality, I will find a solution for his problem.” Ignoring the other party's rage, Zhang Xuan replied impassively.

After hearing those words, Emperor Shen Zhui nearly spurted a mouthful of blood.

Didn't you hear what I said?

The meaning behind my words should be clear! Since you don't possess the skills of a poison master, don't try to concoct medicine out of poisons. You should try to think of a way to save the person instead... In the end, my words fell on deaf ears!

Actually, what that he didn't know was that Zhang Xuan had no better alternatives at that moment.

In his present state, Shen Hong will die at any moment even if Zhang Xuan does nothing at all. Even though if he tries to do something, Shen Hong might still die. The best solution at the moment is to concoct the medicine and have him recover some vitality so that the library can compile a book on him. Other than this, Zhang Xuan has no better solution.

Seeing that the fellow was still persisting on concocting his medicine, the three master teachers were infuriated.

“Emperor Shen Zhui, allow Yang shi to concoct the medicine!”

Suppressing his displeasure, Liu Ling flung his robe.

If not for a fear of the other party’s fighting prowess, he would have long made a move on him.

You don’t even know who poison masters are, yet you intend to concoct a medicine out of poison. Do you think that poison masters are a joke?

Arrogant!

It is truly a wonder how you became a master teacher.

Or perhaps... You aren’t a master teacher at all! You just happened to be lucky when helping Zhuang Xian to achieve a breakthrough in his realm.

Zhang Xuan could sense the displeasure in the other party’s voice, but he couldn’t be bothered with it at the moment.

Shen Hong was about to die, and he had no time to waste. Walking over to the venomous ingredients, he poured one of the liquids into an empty bottle.

“Playing a fool...”

Even though Liu Ling isn’t a poison master, he had seen them concoct poison and thus, he knew of the typical sequences and methods.

Even a tenth or a hundredth of these venomous substances, when consumed by accident, will cause one to die on the spot. They are all fearsome substances.

That is the reason why one requires specialized equipment when concocting to ensure a precise quantity.

Yet, without using any equipment at all, you simply pour the substances from bottle to bottle... Aren’t you being too casual!

Do you know how much of the substance you have poured from the bottles?

Do you know the correct ratio between the various ingredients?

Just a single droplet of error can cause a person's death. That's also the reason why poison masters are exceptionally cautious whenever they concoct, fearing that there might be the slightest bit of error. Yet, you dare to pour these poisons around randomly...

The heck! If one were to try becoming a poison master with such an attitude, before succeeding, he would have long poisoned himself to death.

Do you regard that as having learned the subject?

Even a craftsman found off the streets would be much more precise than you!

“When a poison master concocts a formula, he needs to allow the first two ingredients to react before putting the third in, just like how an apothecary's pill forging worked. There are specific sequences and timings to place the substances in. Even the slightest error will not be tolerated. Yet, to be pouring those poison around casually...”

Zheng Fei commented angrily.

You insist on concocting that poison of yours instead of saving Shen Hong, fine, we'll tolerate it. However, there is an intricate and profound relationship between the various poisons. One has to mediate between the various changes in the poisons and to do so, he has to follow a specific sequence and timing. Yet, you are randomly filling the bottle as though pouring wine...

It is impossible for you to have concocted anything good this way. Just by coming into contact with a single drop, Shen Hong will probably die on the spot, not to mention, drink it.

Ignoring the commotion between the master teachers, Zhang Xuan focused all of his attention into concocting the medicine and his movements were fast.

Don't you see that he is already dying?

If he were to do it as the master teachers had said, using measurement equipment and waiting for the poison to react with one another, the other party would have already died by the time he is done.

Of course, he wasn't mixing the poisons together randomly as the other party had perceived him to be doing. The book in the library in his mind was continuously refreshed as he poured the different liquids together. If the flaws were to decrease along with his movements, that meant that his actions must be correct.

In less than ten breaths, the ten types of venomous ingredients had been mixed together. Touching the jade bottle, the content in the book was refreshed once again.

"[Ten Venom Medicinal Solution], concocted by Zhang Xuan. Upon consumption, one regains vitality and reverts to their healthy state for an incense's time. Flaws: 12 aspects. No.1, the consumer doesn't regain his cultivation; No.2, the duration of the recovery is too short..."

The name and effects of the liquid Zhang Xuan just concocted was written on the cover of the book.

"I've succeeded..."

Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

Even though he had been using the library to observe the state of the poison constantly, if not for the thousand books he had studied prior to that, which provided him with basic knowledge of the properties of the various poisons, he would have been at a loss to how he should react to the flaws that appeared within the book. If he were to have truly added the various venoms together randomly, even if he had half a month, he wouldn't have been able to concoct the medicinal solution.

Hu!

Upon successfully completing the concoction, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

"I've succeeded!"

Picking the jade bottle up, he looked at the crowd.

“You’ve succeeded?”

Everyone’s lips twitched.

After pouring the liquids together randomly, you say that you’ve succeeded?

In your own opinion, that is!

“Quick, feed it to him!”

Ignoring the bizarre gazes everyone else shot him, Zhang Xuan handed the concoction to Emperor Shen Zhui hurriedly.

“Feed it to him?”

Emperor Shen Zhui shook his head, “It’s not certain whether the concoction is toxic or not...”

“There’s no time. Hurry up and feed it to him, otherwise, he will really die!”

Knowing that the other party wouldn’t believe him even if he were to explain, Zhang Xuan frowned.

“But...”

Emperor Shen Zhui was hesitant.

“Why? You don’t believe that this medicinal fluid can help him regain his vitality?” Zhang Xuan asked. Even though Zhang Xuan didn’t appear to be angry, there was some kind of mystical strength to his words that gave it authority.

After having feigned as a master teacher for numerous days, his actions and words had started to exude an aura of superiority.

“I...”

Emperor Shen Zhui did not know how he should reply to his words.

It’s not that he had doubts, but that... he didn’t even trust him!

I saw you mixing the ten poisons together randomly with my own eyes. Yet, you ask me to believe you... You must be joking!

Besides, how can I feed the Royal Elder with this unverified solution? What if he dies immediately after I feed him that?

“If you don’t believe me, then let’s forget it. I’ve already given you the chance, and the choice is up to you!”

Seeing the other party hesitating, Zhang Xuan chose not to speak excessively. He placed the medicinal solution he concocted on the table, his face carrying an impassive expression.

“However, you should consider the matter properly. Your Royal Elder will not survive for more than three minutes if you can’t think of any other solutions... Three minutes of his life for an opportunity to extend his longevity. The choice is up to you.”

“This...”

Emperor Shen Zhui clenched his fist tightly.

187 Tons of Nonsense

He doesn't even have the slightest bit of confidence in the medicinal solution that Yang shi concocted. However, it is just like the other party had said. If they can't find any other solution, this Royal Elder of his will not survive past three minutes.

Since he is going to die anyway, might as well give it a try!

In any case, this Yang shi had managed to treat Ling Tianyu's wife, Du Miaoxuan, and the others. Even though his means and actions so far appear unreliable and incomprehensible, this is the best chance he has.

After ten breaths, he gritted his teeth and said, "Fine, I'll give it a try!"

There is no choice but to give it a shot.

There isn't a better solution.

After making his decision, Emperor Shen Zhui clenched his jaws, grabbed the jade bottle from the table, and approached the Royal Elder.

"Royal Elder, pardon me for my impudence..."

After using a spoon to pry open his mouth, he poured the medicinal solution in.

"Wuuuuu..."

Even though Royal Elder Shen Hong was on the verge of dying, he was still conscious. Having the medicinal solution forcefully poured into his mouth, he nearly cried.

He had seen everything that had happened with his own eyes. Yang shi's actions had sent chills down his spine.

He is the Royal Elder of Tianxuan Kingdom, an expert who is even more respected than the king himself. Yet, to be feeding him a medicine that can potentially be toxic without first testing it... It is as though they are treating him as a Pill

Sample Beast! Furthermore, it is the kind of experiment where he will die immediately if there is the tiniest bit of error...

Why is my life so tough? All I want is to live peacefully and die peacefully. Is that that hard to achieve?

Very quickly, Emperor Shen Zhui completed the task of forcing the entire bottle of solution into Royal Elder Shen Hong's mouth.

Cough cough cough!

Shen Hong's eyes flipped and after a few moments of struggle, he stopped moving.

"Royal Elder.."

Emperor Shen Zhui's face paled. He staggered backward and roared in agony.

Is it a failure?

Not only is the Royal Elder the stabilizing pillar of Tianxuan Kingdom, he is also a close blood-related kin to Shen Zhui.

Even though he addresses Shen Hong as his Royal Elder, he is actually the emperor from two generations ago, Shen Zhui's own grandfather.

For his own grandfather to have died before him, not to mention, being the one responsible for the fatal act of having fed him the medicine, the agony he felt was indescribable.

"If the medicine can indeed be concocted that easily, then poison masters would be worthless..."

Liu Ling shook his head. Turning to Zhang Xuan, he said, "Yang shi, even though Shen Hong would have died even if he didn't consume the medicine, it is a fact that he died from taking your medicine. So, it isn't wrong to say that you killed him!"

"Killed him?"

"That's right. You were the one who concocted the medicine, and it was under your orders that the medicine was fed to him. Now that he has died, who else can the responsibility belong to other than your?" Liu Ling stared at him with piercing eyes.

“Yang shi, weren’t you confident in your medicine?” Emperor Shen Zhui questioned angrily.

It was under your orders that I fed your medicine to my Royal Elder. Now, look at what has happened...

“My responsibility?”

“Indeed! Shen Hong is the stabilizing pillar of Tianxuan Kingdom, and now that he has died from your medicine, you should make up for it by taking on his role!”

Actually, he also knew clearly that Shen Hong would have died regardless of whether the medicine was fed to him. The reason why he intentionally said such words was for this.

Shen Hong’s greatest purpose in the kingdom was to deter aggressors and revolutionaries. If Yang shi were to agree to take his place, his presence would definitely provide a much greater deterrence than Shen Hong.

In fact, Tianxuan Kingdom might become a 2nd Tier Kingdom or even a 1st Tier Kingdom due to his presence

“Taking on his role?”

Zhang Xuan shook his head, “No way!”

He intends to destroy the identity once he receives the Tongxuan realm secret manuals from Emperor Shen Zhui. To serve as the stabilizing pillar?

What a joke!

“Impossible? Does Yang shi not feel the slightest bit of regret in failing to save Shen Hong and instead, causing his death?” Liu Yang raised his eyebrows.

“Causing his death? You’re imagining things...” Zhang Xuan chuckled. “Rest easy, how can he die that easily in my presence!”

After which, he walked over to the motionless Royal Elder Shen Hong and sent a slap to his face.

Pah!

The slap was resounding.

Cough cough cough!

After which, the sound of coughs echoed in the room. Shen Hong, who had become motionless moments earlier, spat out a mouthful of medicinal solution and opened his eyes slowly.

“This...”

Everyone was stupefied.

Liu Ling, Zheng Fei, and the others, who were about to reprimand Yang Shi for his disrespectful actions, nearly had their eyes drop to the ground. They thought that their eyes were playing tricks on them.

“Royal Elder, you...”

Emperor Shen Zhui walked forward with an incredulous expression. He did not understand what was happening before him.

“You unfilial fellow, do you wish to choke me to death?
Cough cough...”

Shen Hong’s furious words echoed in the entire room. At this moment, he doesn’t look as though a person who was on the verge of death.

“Yang Shi, what’s going on...”

Emperor Shen Zhui hurriedly looked over.

He had clearly seen the Royal Elder fall motionless. Why did he suddenly wake up and is even able to speak?

What is going on?

He wasn’t the only one who found the entire situation unbelievable. Liu Ling, Zhuang Xian, and Zheng Fei felt the knowledge and experience that they had accumulated over the years were crumbling apart.

The dead coming back to life?

This can’t be real!

“Shen Hong’s body was weak and he was on the verge of death. I asked you to feed him the medicine, yet you simply forced all of it down his throat. The sticky medicinal solution

blocked his breathing airways, therefore sending him into a death-like state... As for why he was able to suddenly wake up, the reason is simple. The medicinal solution that I had concocted is effective!”

Zhang Xuan said impassively.

Even though the situation seems baffling, it is actually quite simple.

The Ten Venom Medicinal Solution which he had concocted had been checked by the library, so naturally, there couldn't be any problem with its effectiveness. Even though Shen Hong was on the verge of death, upon consumption, the concoction took effect immediately and granted him temporary vitality.

Even though feeding him a mouthful would have sufficed, Emperor Shen Zhui forced the entire bottle of it in. With so much medicinal solution clogging up his airways, it is already a blessing that he didn't choke to death.

It was precisely because Zhang Xuan saw through it that he slapped his face, utilizing the impact to open up his clogged airways, allowing him to regain consciousness.

“This...”

Emperor Shen Zhui and the three master teachers were astonished after hearing the explanation.

A medicine that was concocted randomly is actually... effective?

Other poison masters prepare all kinds of measuring instruments for their concoction process, fearful that they might add a single droplet more. Yet, this fellow, just by pouring the fluids around randomly... He actually managed to succeed...

Heavens, surely you are jesting with me!

Of course, that wasn't the most shocking... Just a moment ago, Yang shi clearly didn't even know what kind of medicine this is. Yet, in the next instant, he concocted it as though a veteran poison master...

Heavens above, can anyone tell me what is going on?

Could it be really as he said, that he learned it on the spot?

And just by closing his eyes, he learned all of that on the spot?

Furthermore, he learned poison concoction, which is reputed to be as difficult as pill forging...

The four of them felt as though they were dreaming.

“Thank you, Yang shi, for saving my life...”

Before they could recover from their shock, Royal Elder Shen Hong climbed down from his bed and clasped his hands.

Regardless of how close to death one is, upon consuming the Ten Venom Medicinal Solution, one can regain their vitality and return to a pink state of health temporarily.

Even though Shen Hong didn't regain his cultivation, it wasn't a difficult task for him to walk around.

“There's no need for these formalities. Execute a battle technique for me now.”

Zhang Xuan couldn't be bothered to waste the limited time he had and hurriedly instructed Shen Hong to display a battle technique to him.

That was the motive for concocting the medicine in the first place. Since the other party is sufficiently healthy to stand up, then it would be best for him to hurry.

“Execute a battle technique? My body is weak now and I can't propel the slightest bit of zhenqi. Even if I were to execute one now, it won't make any difference... I think it'll be best for me not to embarrass myself!”

Shen Hong shook his head. “After experiencing death, I have already thought it through. If the kingdom survives without me, it would be for the best. But if it falls in the end, one can only say that it is the workings of fate. There's no need to be so adamant about it...”

“...” Zhang Xuan.

I only asked you execute a battle technique so that I can compile a book on you in the library to tell your physical condition. Why are you suddenly rambling nonsense?

Getting so philosophical all of the sudden...

“It’s good that Brother Shen Hong is able to see through all these after experiencing death! Riches actually don’t mean anything at all, one’s cultivation is the most important. Even though it’s good to possess authority, it seemed like it had impeded your growth. Otherwise, given your talent, you would have long reached Zongshi realm.”

Before Zhang Xuan could even speak, Liu Ling nodded his head in satisfaction. His admiration for Shen Hong reflected in his eyes.

“Indeed! It’s a pity that I have comprehended this fact way too late.”

Royal Elder Shen Hong sighed. Then, he turned to Zhang Xuan and said, “Even so, I would like to thank Yang shi for your help. You’ve given additional time, and even though I didn’t recover my cultivation, I am still delighted...”

Just as Royal Elder Shen Hong was just about to go on, he saw Yang shi’s face gradually turning dark. Then, the latter sent a slap toward him.

Pah!

It accurately hit the back of his head.

Padah!

Before he could finish his words, Royal Elder Shen Hong’s vision went dark, and he collapsed onto the floor, unconscious.

“I only asked you to execute a battle technique. You sure have tons of nonsense to speak...”

Dusting his hands, Zhang Xuan harrumphed

The moment he turned around, he saw Emperor Shen Zhui and the three master teachers staring at him in shock.

188 The Eccentric Method to Treat Shen Zhui 1

It was no wonder that Zhang Xuan became angry. Given the very limited period of an incense's time the Ten Venom Medicinal Solution granted him, that fellow refused to execute a battle technique and chose to ramble on about his comprehension of life instead.

Comprehend your head!

If you don't allow me to trace the root of your problem using the Library of Heaven's Path, you might be released after an incense's time, but I will be forced to guard the kingdom for you!

Besides, my reputation would be ruined!

If my reputation were to be ruined by you, how can I make money in the future?

Thus, upon seeing the other party refusing to execute a battle technique, Zhang Xuan could no longer restrain himself and slapped the other party unconscious.

In any case, he had already consumed the medicine, so he wouldn't die even if he were to go unconscious.

And to Zhang Xuan, slapping him unconscious and having him execute a battle technique meant the same thing.

While Zhang Xuan had slapped him merrily, Shen Zhui and the other three master teachers went into a frenzy.

Didn't you just help him regain consciousness?

Why did you slap him unconscious all of the sudden?

Is there really a method of diagnosing that requires one to be unconscious?

“Yang shi...”

Just as Emperor Shen Zhui was about to question his action, Yang shi swung his arms and said, "Alright, we don't have much time. Let's get down to business!"

Ignoring their shocked faces, he squatted down to feel Shen Hong's pulse.

Weng!

His mind jolted and a book finally appeared in the library. On the cover were the words 'Shen Hong'.

He flipped it open gently.

"Shen Hong, the grandfather of Tianxuan Kingdom's emperor, Shen Zhui, a Half-Zongshi expert..."

Shen Hong's life and his bodily flaws were written on it.

"Yang shi, is there hope for the Royal Elder?"

As he had heard from Ling Tianyu about Yang shi's method to diagnose one's condition by feeling his pulse, he wasn't too surprised by the action. But upon seeing Yang shi frown, Emperor Shen Zhui couldn't help but walk over.

Even Liu Ling, Zhuang Xian, and the others were filled with anxiety.

This Shen Hong had reached the limit of his lifespan. They were unable to come up with any treatment, and even less so, induce a breakthrough in him. Thus, they were interested in listening to Yang shi's opinion.

"Wake him up first!" Zhang Xuan gestured grandly. After having felt the other party's pulse, he was no longer as anxious and uptight as before.

"Yes!"

Emperor Shen Zhui placed his finger on the Royal Elder's philtrum and infused zhenqi into his body. Slowly, Shen Hong regained his consciousness.

(TL: Philtrum -> Area above the lips, below the nose)

"Yang shi..."

Upon awakening from his sleep, Shen Hong stared at Zhang Xuan. Just as he was about to ask the latter why he had knocked him unconscious, the other party's voice resounded.

“Shen Hong, I'll give you two choices. You can achieve a breakthrough to the Zongshi realm and continue living. Otherwise, just as you said, if you don't mind dying, I can't be bothered to save you as well.”

He had to first ascertain the other party's will to live. If he wasn't willing, no matter how incredible Zhang Xuan could be, he would be unable to save him.

“I... can live on? Reach Zongshi realm?”

Initially, he was displeased with Zhang Xuan's action of knocking him unconscious. However, upon hearing his words, Shen Hong's body trembled in agitation.

He knows how difficult it is for one to reach Zongshi realm. He had tried his entire life, only to fail time and time again. Now, at the verge of death, and with no more latent potential within him that can be dredged up... can he really reach Zongshi realm?

“If you wish to achieve a breakthrough, you can definitely do it. But if you don't want to, let's just forget it. I don't want to waste my effort.” Zhang Xuan said calmly.

“Of course I do... I beg of Yang shi offer me your guidance so that I can achieve a breakthrough...”

Not even hesitating in the least, Shen Hong immediately knelt to the floor. All signs of discontentment from before had vanished without a trace.

That ‘epiphany’ from before was just self-consolation for his plight.

For a chance to achieve a breakthrough and live longer, only a fool would reject it.

“It isn't difficult for you to live on. However...”

Circling around Shen Hong, Zhang Xuan seemed to be examining his body condition. Then, he suddenly stopped. With eyes as deep as the abyss, he said, “You have to listen to

my words and follow my instructions obediently. Do not try to go against my words, or else, I won't be able to help you. In short, you just have to do whatever I ask of you and cooperate with me. There's no need for you to ask any questions."

"That's simple! I will do as you say!"

He thought that the other party would come up with a difficult request. However, upon hearing that it would be that easy, Shen Hong quickly nodded his head and agreed to it.

Back then, when he studied under his teacher, it was the same as well.

As such, he thought nothing of it. However, the moment he said those words, he saw Emperor Shen Zhui and the three master teachers looking at him with sympathetic gazes.

Of course, they feel sympathy for him! This Yang shi might be capable, but his bizarre means are truly hard to accept. To be asking for the other party's approval before the treatment has started, even by using one's toe to think, it is clear that he is up to no good.

"What's wrong?"

Upon seeing their gazes, Shen Hong felt puzzled.

He had been on the verge of death the last few days and as such, he was ignorant of what had happened to Zhuang shi. He thought that there was something wrong with his words.

"Nothing..."

Resisting his urge to speak, Emperor Shen Zhui wiped the cold sweat off his forehead.

He had witnessed Yang shi's eccentric means for himself... It seemed that this Royal Elder of his would be ravaged, just like Zhuang shi.

"It's good that you are agreeable. Emperor Shen Zhui, find some female dancers from the royal palace here. They must have good figures!"

Upon seeing him agree, Zhang Xuan nodded his head. Then, he turned to Shen Zhui and spoke in full seriousness.

“Female dancers?”

Emperor Shen Zhui and the three master teachers were baffled.

The dancers in the palace can only dance, they possess extremely low cultivation. What is his purpose of calling them here?

Will getting them here help Shen Hong achieve a breakthrough?

Besides, he requested for those with good figures... Why doesn't it sound like a treatment method at all?

“Yes...”

Even though it was incomprehensible to Emperor Shen Zhui, he knew that it was impossible for him to understand Yang shi's wisdom. Thus, he quickly passed down the command without any hesitation.

The personnel within the palace acted quickly and in a few moments, a dozen of beautiful dancers with voluptuous figures entered.

Even though they paled far in comparison to Shen Bi Ru, they were still stunning beauties. Every single movement of theirs induced great pleasure in the audience.

“Yang shi, are they alright...?”

“Not bad, just that they are wearing too much. Get them to take off those long sleeves and such!” Zhang Xuan instructed.

“Wearing too much?”

Bizarre expressions appeared on the faces of the three master teachers.

Looking for dancers and getting them to strip... Are you sure you are helping him to achieve a breakthrough?

Why does it feel like he is patronizing a brothel and choosing a woman of his liking...

If not for the fact that they were curious to see what Yang shi would do, they wouldn't have stayed a second longer.

They had already witnessed how unorthodox Yang Shi's methods could be. Even so, they had not imagined that... it would be so unorthodox.

Capable master teachers tend to be austere, and their means tend to be upright. Yet... Why does your treatment method seem like finding prostitution instead...

Even though they did not know what he was up to, they had a bad premonition.

...

The dancers were properties of the royal palace. Not just stripping, they would even do other stuff without hesitation when commanded to. Upon hearing the orders, they quickly stripped the long sleeves and such, leaving behind their tight innerwear.

The sight of spring unfolded before everyone's eyes.

"Alright, Emperor Shen Zhui, help me prepare a few more items..." Zhang Xuan turned over and whispered into the other party's ears.

"Yang Shi, feel free to speak of your demands... WHAT?"

Halfway through his words, Emperor Shen Zhui exclaimed in shock. His eyes widened and he almost went insane, "Yang Shi, if... you have such interest, I can send as many people as you like to your residence. Here... isn't appropriate..."

"Don't spout so much nonsense, hurry up!" Zhang Xuan rushed him.

"Yes..." With a tearful face, Shen Zhui hurriedly made arrangements as Zhang Xuan had instructed him to.

Of the three master teachers, Liu Ling was the strongest. Even though Zhang Xuan had spoken in a hushed voice, he nevertheless managed to overhear his words. Instantly, he staggered and a feeling of vertigo overwhelmed him.

"What did he get Shen Zhui to do?"

Looking at his expression, Zhuang Xian and Zheng Fei knew that he must have heard something. They couldn't hold back

their curiosity and asked him about it.

“He wanted Emperor Shen Zhui to bring something over...”

Liu Ling had a blank look on his face.

“Something? What can it be, for Shen Zhui to be so shocked?”

“It’s... aphrodisiac!”

“Aphrodisiac?”

Zhuang Xian and Zheng Fei were dazed for a moment, then slowly, their eyes widened.

The heck!

They knew that Yang shi’s solution was definitely going to be damned. Even so, when they heard of his instructions, they nearly vomited blood.

It was exactly as they had guessed, the other party was indeed up to no good!

They had seen people demanding for tonic, pills, spirit treasures, and secret manuals. That was their first time witnessing someone demand aphrodisiac.

Looking for dancers and having them strip, then finding someone to get this item over. You sure are meticulous... Brother, are you helping him to achieve a breakthrough or are you helping him to exercise?

The trio looked at Shen Hong once again, and endless pity reflected in their eyes.

Even though Zhuang shi was battered while covered under a gunny sack, at the very least, his reputation remained untainted. If he were made to do some uncultured act in public for his breakthrough, he might have just died from anger on the spot.

While the others were still astonished by Zhang Xuan’s request, a servant had already entered, carrying with him a jade bottle. It was filled with specially-made medicine.

Most emperors keep a large back palace, and Emperor Shen Zhui is no exception. It wasn’t difficult to find such medicine in the royal palace.

“Swallow it!”

Taking over the jade bottle, Zhang Xuan walked over to Shen Hong.

“Yes!”

Royal Elder Shen Hong had no idea what was inside, but at that moment, he had full confidence and awe for Zhang Xuan. After grabbing over the bottle, he swallowed the medicine inside without any hesitation.

Looking at the other party’s candor movement, the eyebrows of the three master teachers and Emperor Shen Zhui twitched.

“Alright, go and dance with them.”

Upon seeing him swallow the medicine, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

“Dance?”

Shen Hong was taken aback.

As an elder, he has to dance with these young ladies?

Furthermore... They are all dressed scantily. If he were to really head over, it is likely that he will be in constant physical contact with them...

Just as he was battling the conflicting thoughts in his mind, he suddenly felt a surge of heat spreading from his belly. Then, looking at the dancers once more, an urge suddenly tugged at him.

Tzzzzzzz!

That urge grew stronger and stronger. Soon, he found himself losing control.

It must be said that the medicine which Emperor Shen Zhui found was indeed incredible. The medicine took effect swiftly. In a few breaths, Shen Hong’s eyes had turned red and he was no longer able to suppress his urge.

After consuming this medicine, even if there were no enticement before the person, one would already find the heat unbearable. At the instant, there were so many beautiful and

voluptuous young ladies before Shen Hong. Furthermore, they were dressed scantily. It would be truly weird if Shen Hong could hold himself back.

With a roar, Royal Elder Shen Hong dashed forward.

“Stop him. Make those dancers dance before him, the more seductive their dance is, the better it is!”

Zhang Xuan commanded.

“Yes!”

Cold sweat streamed down Emperor Shen Zhui’s head.

What kind of breakthrough method is this? Feeding the other party aphrodisiac, but only allowing him to watch?

Huhuhu!

Upon hearing the commands, the movements of the dancers became more provocative and sexy.

Their alluring figures swayed suggestively. Light reflecting off their snow-white skin made them seem exceptionally warm, as though jade, inviting one’s hands. Their movements were exceptionally capable of evoking an itch in men. Putting aside Shen Hong, who had swallowed the aphrodisiac, even the three master teachers began to feel the temptation.

“Will this really... help him achieve a breakthrough?”

Initially, they had thought that beating one up was already a very eccentric method. To think that Zhang Xuan had worse methods up his sleeves...

The three master teachers were on the verge of crying.

Witnessing the situation, they felt as though all the theories and principles they had learned in the last few decades were all worthless!

189 The Eccentric Method to Treat Shen Hong 2

“Shen Zhui, what did you feed me?”

Sensing the uncontrollable urge in him, as well as the indissipable heat that rose within him, Shen Hong finally realized that something was wrong and he roared furiously.

“It’s... aphrodisiac...”

Shen Zhui could only answer truthfully.

“Aphrodisiac? I’ll screw your grandma...”

Shen Hong staggered

He never thought that a day would come which his own grandson would feed him aphrodisiac. Damn, are you toying with me?

Shen Hong felt that he was going insane.

“Royal Elder, please don’t blame me. It’s Yang shi who asked me to do so, I had no choice...”

Emperor Shen Zhui was on the verge of tears as well.

When he almost killed the Royal Elder by feeding him the medicinal solution, a trauma was left in his heart. Now, he was reprimanded just because he followed Yang shi’s instructions...

What did I do!

All I want is for you to live longer!

In the end, this is how you perceive my good intentions...

“Yang shi?”

With reddened eyes, he suppressed the agitation within him and turned to look at Zhang Xuan. Zhang Xuan had an impassive and upright look, as though he would never commit such a vile act. Turning around, he slapped Emperor Shen

Zhui on his face. “Bullshit! As a master teacher, Yang shi is an upright person! How could he possibly feed me such stuff? If you dare to push the blame onto Yang shi once more, I will kill you right away!”

“...” Shen Zhui.

Upright?

How in the world is he upright? Didn't he slap you unconscious just a moment ago?

Talking about pushing the blame...

If not for his orders, do you think that I would dare feed you this?

Emperor Shen Zhui felt so indignant that he nearly vomited blood.

He turned to look at Yang shi with a pleading gaze, hoping for him to explain the issue to his grandfather. Yet, that fellow looked at the ceiling with his hands behind his back, as though it was none of his business.

It was as if he was saying ‘you were the one who did it, I don't know anything at all’...

“You bastard! To think that I doted on you so much... Aiya, I can't hold myself back anymore! Don't obstruct my path...”

Royal Elder Shen Hong cursed, and he finally succumbed to the heat in his chest. With the howl of a wolf, he dived toward the beautiful dancing ladies.

Right when he was about to reach them, he suddenly felt a dull pain at the back of his neck.

Padah!

He fell to the floor, unconscious once again.

The one who made the move was Zhang Xuan.

Seeing that the Royal Elder had been knocked unconscious, Emperor Shen Zhui heaved a sigh of relief. “Yang shi, what do we do now?”

“Awaken him. Then, get these dancers to continue dancing before him...”

Zhang Xuan instructed.

“Continue?”

Emperor Shen Zhui’s lips trembled.

“Oh, right. When he wakes up, say that you were the one who knocked him out. Also, when he fails to control his emotion anymore, I will knock him out myself. Of course, you must admit that you were the one who did it...” Zhang Xuan said.

“...” Emperor Shen Zhui.

Knocking the daylights out of a person right after you awaken them. Have you gotten addicted or what?

Furthermore... I have to admit that I’m the one who did it...

Emperor Shen Zhui felt so much frustration in his heart that he could go into a frenzy. He was about to reject the plan when he saw Yang shi look at him with a stern expression.

“Don’t reject me. This concerns whether the Royal Elder can survive. There mustn’t be the slightest error in the matter, otherwise, the plan will end in failure!”

“...” This time, Emperor Shen Zhui really cried.

Royal Elder, it really isn’t me! It’s Yang shi who wishes to do you in...

...

Thus, right after Emperor Shen Zhui woke Shen Hong, the latter was knocked unconscious again. Then, Emperor Shen Zhui woke Shen Hong again, and soon after, he was knocked unconscious yet again... By the side, Liu Ling, Zhuang Fei, and Zheng Fei were stunned by the sight before them. They felt like tearing their hair out from watching the insanity that was unfolding before them.

“Liu shi, you are knowledgeable. Can you tell what kind of breakthrough method Yang shi is employing?”

After a long moment of silence, Zhuang Xian asked.

“I... can't tell anything at all!”

Liu shi's face flushed.

Breakthrough method? How in the hell does this look like a breakthrough method?

Of the hundreds of methods master teachers employ, there are a few fixed rules to helping one achieve a breakthrough. However, there doesn't seem to be any that involves having a person consume aphrodisiac...

What's worse, it is one matter to feed the person aphrodisiac, but to intentionally find beautiful ladies to entice the person and knock him out when he can no longer control himself...

I don't think that he is helping him achieve a breakthrough. Rather, it seems more like he is toying with him!

It is a pity that Shen Hong, despite the prestige he had built up over the years, now appears to be a frequenter of brothels. The moment he wakes up, he charges toward the bodies of the beautiful ladies...

“Like hell he would achieve a breakthrough like this! I think that Yang shi is toying with Shen Hong. I've never heard of anyone who could break through in such a way after consuming aphrodisiac...” Zheng Fei shook his head. With a steeled face, he said, “This is a farce. Liu shi, I think it would be best if we step out to interfere! How can we, as master teachers, allow such absurdity?”

“This...” Liu Ling hesitated.

“There's nothing to hesitate about. Look at Shen Hong, he is already driven mad. If news were to spread out, his reputation would be tarnished, even after his death...” Zheng Fei harrumphed.

Upon hearing those words, Liu Ling and Zhuang Xian lifted their head to look at Shen Hong. As the other party had said, the gentlemanly Shen Hong appeared to be a depraved lunatic at the moment, lunging toward those seductive ladies. Also, the clothes on his body were almost completely ripped apart. His eyes were crimson red, and he seemed to be a wild, hungry wolf.

“But... The method Yang shi used for my breakthrough was also incomprehensible. Can this be the case as well? Even though it looks awful on the surface, he is actually doing it for Shen Hong’s welfare...”

Zhuang Xian’s mouth twitched.

“You have a master teacher as your father, and as such, you were too obsessed with the conventional rules and principles. Thus, his method of inciting you into a rage was understandable. But this... How can Shen Hong achieve a breakthrough like this? Putting aside whether the possibility exists or not, given Shen Hong’s current frenzied state, even he has sufficient zhenqi, it is impossible for him to achieve a breakthrough!”

Zheng Fei said.

Zongshi is the very first difficult hurdle of the Fighter 9 Dans. The gap between it and Tongxuan realm is overwhelming, as though the difference between a fish and a dragon. While it is true that one gains incredible strength upon achieving this breakthrough, countless geniuses, even when in their top form, find themselves unable to make this final step. At this moment, Shen Hong has already lost his rationality and is blindly charging at the beautiful ladies. In such a state, how can he possibly succeed?

Isn’t that a joke in itself?

If it is true, no one would have to cultivate. Won’t one become a Zongshi just by frolicking around brothels?

“But...”

“There’s no buts. Liu shi, it is best that you make your decision quickly. I can guarantee with my own life that it is impossible for Shen Hong to breakthrough like that. If he succeeds, I will chop off my own head...”

Zheng Fei said confidently.

Boom!

Before he could finish his own words, he felt a powerful aura emanating from not too far away. It felt warm, as though the

fiery sun.

“What is going on?”

Hurriedly turning around to take a look, they saw Royal Elder Shen Hong, who was frenziedly charging at the beautiful ladies just brief moments ago, sitting still on the floor, as though a saint. His breath was powerful and deep, reminiscent of the vast ocean. His weakness from a moment ago had disappeared without a trace, and at that very moment, as though a young man, he exuded overwhelming vitality, such that even Emperor Shen Zhui, who was standing by his side, paled in comparison.

Fighter 8-dan, Zongshi realm!

“Did he really achieve a breakthrough?”

All Zheng Fei felt was a stinging sensation on his face, as though he had been slapped hard by someone else. He felt like crying.

He had just mentioned that it was impossible for the other party to succeed, and he was proven wrong immediately...

Reaching Zongshi realm by consuming aphrodisiac?

Can anyone tell me what is going on...

190 Lu Xun Borrows Money

While Zheng Fei was still feeling depressed over the matter, Liu Ling and Zhuang Xian's mouths dropped so wide open that it seemed as though duck eggs could be stuffed into their mouths.

There is a qualitative difference between Fighter 8-dan Zongshi realm and Fighter 7-dan Tongxuan realm, and their life energies are vastly different. As such, upon achieving a breakthrough, one's longevity is extended drastically as well.

An ordinary cultivator usually only lives up to seventy to eighty. On the other hand, reaching a hundred isn't a problem for a Zongshi realm expert.

That is also the reason why breaking into this realm is so difficult; it is as though leaping across a gigantic gorge.

Just by looking at how these master teachers are stuck at Half-Zongshi, it is clear to see how difficult this final step is.

The master teachers had been paying attention to Shen Hong's condition ever since they arrived at Tianxuan Kingdom. His vitality had already deteriorated to the gutters and he was on the verge of death. Even if he has sufficient zhenqi, it should have been an impossible task for him to achieve a breakthrough, considering his terrible state of health. Yet, they had never imagined that this Yang shi could solve this impossibility with just a single pill.

The vast contrast between their abilities made the master teachers feel as though all of the knowledge they had obtained throughout their careers were worthless.

Initially, Emperor Shen Zhui shared the same thoughts as the three master teachers; he thought that that was an attempt of Yang shi to toy with him. Yet, contrary to his imagination, the Royal Elder really managed to achieve a breakthrough!

That is Zongshi realm expert in the bones...

"Thank you, Yang shi..."

After an unknown period of time, Shen Hong stood up and howled abruptly, resembling a massive dragon that had awakened from its slumber. Then, he walked to Zhang Xuan and knelt before him.

Having been trapped in the same cultivation realm for numerous decades, he thought that he would perish without achieving the breakthrough. Yet, to think that at the very last moment, he would succeed!

Witnessing the Royal Elder kneel before him, Zhang Xuan did not step forward to help him up. Contrary to that, he placed his hands behind his back, surveyed the surroundings, and slowly walked around.

“Shen Hong’s vitality was at its ends, and his deteriorating bodily functions had reached the breaking point. At that moment, his will to live had already been shaved thin. It is precisely because of this that he was able to see through life and death, view it as a natural occurrence, and no longer fear death. Under such circumstances, regardless of his state of mind or his physical condition, they were all in the worst possible condition to achieve a breakthrough. Even the more potent tier-2 or tier-3 pills would not have been effective in helping him achieve a breakthrough and reach Zongshi realm!”

Everyone was aware that he was explaining all that happened, so they stayed completely silent, and listened attentively to his words.

“Thus, for him to live on, we had to create a compelling reason for him. Furthermore, it had to be something which he is unable to resist!”

“All men, regardless of time and condition, are unable to resist young beautiful ladies, needless to say, after being fed with aphrodisiac. Under the stimulation of the substance, his body raged once again, returning him back to youthful times... Once all these emotions accumulate sufficiently, achieving a breakthrough becomes much easier.”

“Of course, more importantly, his cultivation technique played a huge role. If I’m not wrong, it should be Blazing Sun

Formula!”

At this point, Zhang Xuan turned to look at him.

“Yes!” Shen Hong nodded his head to affirm Zhang Xuan’s conjecture.

The cultivation technique he had cultivated is the Blazing Sun Formula, the strongest cultivation technique in Tianxuan Kingdom.

“This cultivation technique contains the nature of the blazing sun within it, and a practitioner will find himself with an excess of yang energy. It is an incredibly valuable secret manual, and its true might is displayed when the one cultivating the technique is a man! Rationally speaking, as his vitality had already been sapped clean, even with the augmentation from pills, it was impossible for his body condition to return back to its peak. However, years of cultivation under the Blazing Sun Formula had caused a large amount of yang qi flames to accumulate within his body. Then, at this very moment, they were all triggered by the medicine, and the enticement of the beautiful ladies was equivalent to throwing oil on top of the flames. Instantaneously, a massive fire was ignited within him.”

“Thus, when he focused all of his energy at a single point, it wasn’t difficult at all for him to achieve a breakthrough!”

After finishing his explanation, Zhang Xuan stood quietly on his spot and looked at the others. The surroundings were deathly silent.

In actual fact, he hadn’t mentioned the most important reason behind Shen Hong’s breakthrough.

Regardless of the aphrodisiac or the Blazing Sun Formula, they were merely small contributing factors. The deciding one was... him knocking the other party out.

Everytime he knocked him out, he would infuse a sliver of his zhenqi into the other party’s body and unclog a blocked meridian within his body. Then, having all of his meridians cleared up, along with his raging emotions and energy within

his body, he was able to push through at the very last moment and reach Zongshi realm.

Due to the limitations of his cultivation realm, even though it was easy for him to deceive Sun Qiang and the others, it was likely that Shen Hong would notice his pure zhenqi. In order to prevent him from detecting anything, he had Emperor Shen Zhui claim that he was the one who knocked the other party out.

It wasn't because he wanted to act as a good person.

Upon the other party's breakthrough, Zhang Xuan's zhenqi had already melded completely into the other party's. It was as though a pail of clear water had been mixed into a river of muddied water; it is impossible to locate it anymore.

“This...”

Upon hearing his explanation, the three master teachers were taken aback.

The heck... this works as well?

They were master teachers who had gone through rigorous conventional training, and as such, they have had many opportunities to observe how other master teachers help others achieve breakthroughs in their cultivation. Even so, this kind of breakthrough method... it was they ever saw anything like it.

This is no longer unorthodox, it is simply inconceivable.

It is something that no one would have ever thought of.

To think that one can achieve a breakthrough by eating aphrodisiac... Has the world gone mad?

“There are many different methods to induce a breakthrough in one's cultivation. Most of the time, sticking to the convention principles won't work. As a master teacher, rather than sticking firmly to the old rules, one has to continue learning and trying new things.”

Zhang Xuan waved his hands casually. The setting sun cast a long shadow behind his back, and he looked like an incredible

expert uncomprehended by the world. An unspeakable loneliness emanated from his figure.

“We will keep Yang shi’s teachings to heart!”

The three master teachers bowed immediately.

At that moment, they couldn’t be any more impressed by this Yang Xuan.

There is no way but to be impressed, too godly!

Through a random beating, he was able to induce a breakthrough in Zhuang shi, whose cultivation had been at a standstill for many years. A random mixing of poisons and he was able to successfully concoct a medicinal solution that only poison masters are capable of making. Just by feeding Shen Hong aphrodisiac, he was able to bring the other party up to Zongshi realm...

Even though they had seen all of these with their own eyes, it nevertheless felt like a dream.

“Un!” Seeing that they’ve comprehended the matter, Zhang Xuan nodded his head. Just as he was about to take his leave and return back to his mansion, he saw a pair of eyes appearing before him. The face before him was flushed with embarrassment and excitement.

Taking a step back, he took a closer look and realized that it was Zheng Fei.

He is the person who was the most doubtful of his actions. He was even willing to guarantee that it would be impossible for Shen Hong to achieve a breakthrough, or else he would cut off his head. But now, his eyes were gleaming, as though he had struck lottery.

“What are you up to?” Zhang Xuan was wary of him.

“Yang shi, I’ve also been stuck in Half-Zongshi for many years. Since there are medicine and beautiful ladies here, I would like to try to break through to Zongshi realm as well...”

Zheng Fei held a jade bottle in his hands. He poured out a pill and he was about to swallow it.

“...” Zhang Xuan.

“...” Emperor Shen Zhui, Liu Ling, and Zhuang Xian.

It took much effort before he managed to convince the other party otherwise. Zhang Xuan sighed.

Every person's cultivation technique, personality, and cultivation are different. As such, the relevant methods to achieve breakthroughs are different as well. As a master teacher, there was no doubt that Zheng Fei understood this. However, he nevertheless underestimated the allure of the Zongshi realm.

Increasing one's longevity so drastically... Just this by itself is able to make anyone lose his rationality.

In fact, Zheng Fei wasn't the only one who was moved by Zhang Xuan's actions. Even Liu Ling and Zhuang Xian were staring at him with burning eyes.

Since the other party was able to help the dying Shen Hong achieve a breakthrough, given that they are at the peak of health, wouldn't it be easier for them to reach Zongshi realm?

Upon thinking of this, the three master teachers made up their mind to get close to Yang shi so that he would offer them guidance for their breakthrough.

Understanding the intentions of the trio, Zhang Xuan felt his goosebumps rising. He hurriedly bid his farewell and prepared to leave, but at this moment, a guard walked into the hall.

“Your Majesty, Lu Xun and Wang Chao from Hongtian Academy request for an audience!”

“Why would they be here at this time?” Emperor Shen Zhui was taken aback. Then, he nodded his head and said, “Get them to enter!”

It is highly likely that these two star teachers would become master teachers in the future. Even though he is the emperor of a country, he doesn't dare to offend them. Furthermore, their parents share a deep relationship with him.

Zhang Xuan was also startled.

“Lu Xun? Wang Chao?”

Didn't the duo just pay me a visit? Why are they here now?

Could it be that they noticed me leave the mansion and made a chase?

But that's impossible...

Doubtful, Zhang Xuan, who was about to leave, ceased his footsteps.

Even though Lu Xun had challenged him to a Teacher Evaluation, he had never met him. Since they had happened to stumble upon each other, it was also a good opportunity to take a look at the rival and find out his capabilities.

Emperor Shen Zhui commanded for the dancers to back down and had the servants pack up the hall. As Shen Hong's clothes were all tattered, he wasn't in a good position to meet anyone. Thus, he left as well.

Right after the servants were done packing up and they had assumed their seats, the two young men walked in.

With a clear look at their appearance, Zhang Xuan frowned.

Aren't they the two arrogant fools whom I saw at the entrance of the academy yesterday?

After so much commotion, it turns out that they are the legendary Lu Xun and Wang Chao!

It was no wonder that their gazes were filled with such contempt when they met him. They had probably recognized him then.

“Lu Xun (Wang Chao) pays respect to Your Majesty, Liu shi, Zhuang shi, and Zheng shi!”

The duo clasped their hands.

They had met Emperor Shen Zhui, so naturally, they recognized him. Even though the faces of the three master teachers were foreign to them, their master teacher robes revealed their identities. As for Zhang Xuan, due to an excessively extravagant dress-up and a crude behavior, he

appeared to be an ordinary rich merchant... With a single glance, they decided to disregard the other party's presence.

A star teacher also has his own pride. There is no need to pay respects to everyone he meets.

They had heard of Yang shi and wanted to pay him a visit, but the truth was that they didn't even know of his appearance. As such, they couldn't tell that the person sitting before them was him. Besides, they had just been to Yang shi's residence, and Yang shi was there back then.

"May I know the reason for your visit at such a timing?"

Upon seeing the two of them disregard Yang shi, Emperor Shen Zhui was filled with displeasure. He was about to introduce him when the latter gestured that there was no need to do so. Thus, he could only swallow in his words and question doubtfully.

"Your Majesty, we have a presumptuous request to ask of you." Lu Xun hesitated for a moment before speaking. "We hope to borrow three million from Your Majesty..."

"Borrow money?"

Emperor Shen Zhui was puzzled.

Given their illustrious family backgrounds, why would they need to request this of him?

Besides, why do they need to borrow so much money at that?

"We hope to pay a visit to Yang shi, and Your Majesty has probably heard of Yang shi's protocol as well. In order to enter his mansion, one has to pay three million!" Upon seeing his doubtful expression, Lu Xun got straight to the topic at hand and spoke of his motives. "Once we meet Yang shi, we are confident that we can convince him to accept us as his apprentice. By then, he will definitely return the three million to us, and we will be able to return the sum to Your Majesty."

"Pay a visit to Yang shi?"

Upon hearing his motive, Emperor Shen Zhui and the three master teachers glanced at one another.

The Yang shi that you said you want to visit isn't seated too far from you now. Yet, due to your arrogance, you refused to even greet him and chose to disregard him...

Even so, you wish to become his apprentice...

A peculiar expression appeared on the faces of the crowd. On the other hand, Zhang Xuan scratched his head as he looked at them. He was truly curious why these fellows were so confident that the three million would be refunded to them.

"Why are you so confident that Yang shi will accept you? What if he doesn't accept you, and the three million isn't refunded, how will you repay the loan?"

Lifting up his hand to stop Emperor Shen Zhui and the three master teachers from revealing his identity, Zhang Xuan glanced at them curiously.

191 Zhang Xuan's Legend 1

“I, Lu Xun, have made a humble reputation for myself in Tianxuan Kingdom. At the very least, I have this much confidence in myself. As for whether Yang shi accepts me or whether the three million will be refunded, there is no need for you to worry about it!”

Even before Emperor Shen Zhui and the three master teachers could speak, the middle-aged merchant dressed in fur coat and a silk cap challenged his words. Lu Xun couldn't help but frown.

Since the other party could be seated alongside His Majesty and the three master teachers, this meant that he possessed exceptional social standing. Even so, he, Lu Xun, was confident that his standing would definitely not be inferior. Putting aside the fact that his father was the emperor's tutor, just considering his accomplishment of becoming the most capable star teacher in Tianxuan Kingdom at such a young age, he was more than qualified to be seated alongside the heads of powerful clans.

For example, even Clan Head Wang Hong would have to address him respectfully as Lu laoshi, not daring to act haughtily before him at all.

Yet, this fellow, despite being just a mere wealthy merchant, not to mention, crude, dares to question me? So what if you have some status? I am talking to Emperor Shen Zhui, and it's not your place to be interfering in the matter!

Who do you think you are?

Upon witnessing his confidence, the three master teachers nearly choked on their saliva.

Despite being genuine master teachers, the three of us do not dare to disrespect him at all... Yet, you, a mere star teacher who isn't even an apprentice yet, why are you behaving so arrogantly?

“I’m not worried for you. It’s just that I think that if the money isn’t refunded, you won’t be able to answer to His Majesty. Even if you were to be sold, I doubt that you will be worth that much!”

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

He was simply giving kind advice, but to think that he would receive such a rude reply. Zhang Xuan felt frustrated.

“Mister, please mind your words!”

This time, before Lu Xun could even speak, Wang Chao’s eyes narrowed. “Lu Xun laoshi is the number one star teacher of Hongtian Academy. He is someone who will become a master teacher one day. Do you think that he will default on a mere three million gold coins? What a joke! If I were to phrase it more directly, he might not even accept this sum of money if some other people were to send it his way. Do you think that it is so easy to gain a favor from a future master teacher?”

“Enough!”

Lu Xun interrupted his good friend’s words. Then, with a straightened back reminiscent of a spear, he ignored Zhang Xuan once more and turned toward Shen Zhui. “Your Majesty, you know how I am. Even if Yang shi refuses to refund me the sum, I am still confident that I will be able to return it quickly. This amount of money isn’t worth putting my reputation on the stake!”

Even though star teachers cannot be compared to master teachers, it is still true that they are able to guide others to help them achieve breakthroughs. Three million might be a huge sum, but as long as Lu Xun is willing to work for it, he will nevertheless be able to make back such money within a short period of time.

“This...”

Emperor Shen Zhui hesitated.

Three million didn’t mean anything to Tianxuan Kingdom as a whole, but the reason why he was worried was that he was afraid of incurring Yang shi’s wrath.

“I’ve heard that Yang Shi is refusing to meet with outsiders. Even if you have the money, you might not be able to meet him!” Paying no heed to the other party’s disrespectful attitude, Zhang Xuan continued to speak.

No matter what, this fellow is Master Lu Chen’s son. It is highly possible that the latter does not know that he is here to borrow money. As such, I must try to persuade him.

Given that they were going to cross blows at the Teacher Evaluation, they could be considered as enemies. However, to Zhang Xuan, these are two different matters. Master Lu Chen had provided him much help, and since his son was going to do something foolish, as a senior, Zhang Xuan felt he had the obligation to advise him.

“It is a problem of mine whether I am able to meet him or not. Mister, don’t you think that you’re going to a little too far interfering in my matters?”

Seeing how that fellow kept trying to ruin this plans, Lu Xun was finally displeased. “I am trying to borrow money from His Majesty, not from you. His Majesty will have his own judgment on the matter, so there’s no need for you to be so overly concerned with the matter.”

After which, he flung his robe angrily.

Are you sick? I am borrowing money from Emperor Shen Zhui, yet you just have to keep trying to hinder my affairs. It isn’t like I can’t repay the sum, so what do you mean by this?

Do you think that I, Lu Xun, am an easy target for you to bully?

As a star teacher, if he doesn’t uphold his own prestige and allow others to speak as they please in his presence, how can he instill respect in his students? Besides, the three master are observing the situation. If he were to cower when upon criticism, what rights does he have to become an assistant master teacher?

“Mister, regardless of your identity, this is a matter between Lu Xun laoshi and His Majesty. For you to be interrupting

their conversation repeatedly, don't you think that you're going too far?"

Wang Chao harrumphed coldly.

Know your place! Don't you see that even the three master teachers aren't saying anything?

Will you die if you do not speak?

"Going too far?"

Zhang Xuan was just offering his advice out of kindness so that the other party wouldn't waste this unnecessary sum of money. Yet, he was despised for doing so. He could only shake his head helplessly.

Soon, his identity as 'Yang shi' would disappear, and it was obvious that his decision to want to become his apprentice was a mistake in itself. Initially, he thought that since he had met with them, he would be able to easily dispel the thought from their heads. Yet, his goodwill was thought of as a nuisance.

Not only did the other party not appreciate his efforts, they even thought that he was interfering too much in the matter.

However, it wasn't surprising for the other party to react like that as well. If Zhang Xuan were the one borrowing money, and someone else kept interrupting the conversation, he would be displeased as well.

"You are called Lu Xun, right? I've heard of your name before I even came. I think that Yang... his words make sense. You should reconsider the matter!"

Even though Zhang Xuan didn't mind the other party's sarcastic attitude, Liu Ling could not stand watching it any further.

Initially, he had a good impression of Lu Xun, and he intended to test him before deciding whether to accept him as his apprentice. Yet, he didn't think that he would see this side of him during their first encounter. He is simply too arrogant speaking to Yang shi like that, and the favorable impression that Liu Ling had of Lu Xun disappeared without a trace.

“Thank you Liu shi for your advice, but my mind is made up...”

Hearing Liu shi speak, Lu Xun did not speak to him with the same attitude as he did with the crude merchant. He hurriedly clasped his fists and answered politely.

Upon seeing that the other party was reluctant to accept his advice as well, Liu Ling shook his head and fell silent.

Yang shi had stopped Emperor Shen Zhui from pointing out his identity, so it was clear that he didn't want the latter to know that his identity. Since that was the case, Liu Ling wouldn't get ahead of himself and reveal it either.

“It's merely three million. Given how Master Lu Chen is my teacher, giving it to you is not a problem as well!”

Upon seeing that Yang shi didn't have any intentions of blaming Lu Xun for the matter, Shen Zhui was relieved and he spoke.

This bit of money means nothing to the prestigious clans, needless to say, a kingdom. As the son of his teacher, giving it to Lu Xun straight isn't a problem either.

“Thank you, Your Majesty! However, since I've already said that I would borrow it, I will just borrow it. I do not wish to owe that person a favor!” Lu Xun gestured proudly.

Ever since he had fallen out with that old man of his, he didn't want to be associated with him in any way.

Thus, how can he allow himself to owe that person a favor?

“Go retrieve three million gold coins!”

Knowing that the father and son held conflicts, Emperor Shen Zhui didn't say anymore. He turned to a eunuch by the side and commanded.

The eunuch turned to leave and shortly, he returned with a stack of gold bills.

“Thank your, Your Majesty! I will return it as soon as possible!”

After obtaining the gold bills, Lu Chen clasped his hands once more.

“Un!” Emperor Shen Zhui waved his hands casually.

It would be good if the other party can return the sum, but it doesn't matter if he can't.

Now that the old ancestor has achieved a breakthrough and reached Zongshi realm, Tianxuan Kingdom will only grow more and more prestigious. Once they attract a master teacher here to assume the reigns, it is highly possible that Tianxuan Kingdom becomes a 2nd Tier Kingdom. A mere three million means nothing to him now.

“I won't intrude on Your Majesty any longer then. Lu Xun (Wang Chao) bids Your Majesty farewell!”

After obtaining the money, Lu Xun turned around and left immediately.

After taking a few steps, he stopped abruptly and turned around to look at Zhang Xuan.

“I don't know who you are, but since you're able to be seated with the three master teachers and His Majesty, I doubt that your background is anything simple. However, I would still like to offer you an advice!”

“Oh?” Zhang Xuan turned to look at him.

“When other people speak, it's crude to interrupt their conversation. It's irritating!” A haughty expression appeared on Lu Xun's face as he flung his hands backward. He looked as if he were a sacred lotus, a being untainted by dirt. Then, he turned around and left without stopping again.

Wang Chao glanced at Zhang Xuan and sneered before quickly following Lu Xun out.

Once the duo left, the room plunged into silence. The three master teachers quietly stared at each other.

“That fellow... Where does his self-confidence come from?”

After a long period of time, Zhuang shi could not help but comment.

He was truly infuriated.

For a mere star teacher to be criticizing Yang shi, whom even they have to be respectful toward...

What guts!

“I was considering whether to accept him as my apprentice, but from the looks of it, I should drop the idea. He has no respect for his elders at all...”

Liu Ling shook his head as well.

Lu Xun's fame was so great that it wasn't just limited to Tianxuan Kingdom. Liu Ling and the others had long heard of him, but they didn't think that the first meeting would be so awkward.

“Yang shi, I apologize in his stead. He doesn't... know of your identity and unintentionally offended you...”

Upon noticing that even the three master teachers were displeased by Lu Xun's actions, Emperor Shen Zhui hurriedly turned to Yang Xuan to appease him, in hopes that he wouldn't be angry.

“It's nothing. It is normal for one to get complacent having accomplished so much at such a young age!” Zhang Xuan shook his head and stood up. “Alright, Shen Hong has reached Zongshi realm, and it is time for me to leave. I hope that Your Majesty will send those Tongxuan realm manuals over soon.”

“Yes!” Emperor Shen Zhui nodded his head hastily.

“Farewell!”

After bidding the other three master teachers farewell too, Zhang Xuan clasped his fists once more and left light-heartedly. Hot passion rose in the three master teachers and Emperor Shen Zhui once again.

Did you see that?

Other people would try their best to extort all kinds of benefits after helping someone achieve a breakthrough. Yet, he simply coolly...

In fact, even when he was doubted and insulted by a junior, he did not get infuriated or annoyed.

“This is the kind of attitude and magnanimity that a true master teacher should possess!”

Liu Ling complimented.

“Indeed! I am completely impressed with Yang Shi. If I can become his disciple, it will truly be a great blessing!” Zheng Fei nodded his head in agreement.

“I’ve heard of Lu Xun’s reputation beforehand, but to think that he would be such a person!” Upon recalling Lu Xun’s actions, Liu Ling shook his head in disappointment. Then, he suddenly remembered something and asked, “Your Majesty, you said that he is going to be competing with a teacher named Zhang Xuan in a few days’ time. Is that true?”

In the few days which they had been in Tianxuan Kingdom, their attention had been on Hongtian Academy. The matter regarding the Teacher Evaluation was no secret, so it wasn’t surprising that they would be aware of it.

“Indeed!” Emperor Shen Zhui nodded his head.

After returning to the royal palace, he received Pavilion Elder Qian’s report and gained knowledge of the 3-star incident.

Even though the battle between two teachers isn’t as shocking a news as Master Teacher Yang Xuan’s arrival, it nevertheless attracted the attention of numerous people.

“Since Lu Xun challenged the other party, that Zhang Xuan should be a star teacher of Hongtian Academy as well, right? But why have I never heard of his name?”

Liu Shi asked doubtfully.

In an official challenge such as this, one usually faces another opponent of the same caliber. Lu Xun is the number one star teacher of Hongtian Academy, and this Zhang laoshi accepted his challenge daringly, so they should be on par.

However, why hadn’t he heard of the name of this accomplished teacher?

192 Zhang Xuan's Legend 2

“This is also my first time hearing of Zhang Xuan laoshi. Thus, I had someone specially look into his identity and... Not only is he not a star teacher, he has also been condemned by many...”

Recalling the contents in the report he had read through, Emperor Shen Zhui still found the matter hard to believe. With a bitter smile, he shook his head and said, “Do you know of Zhang laoshi's previous reputation in the academy?”

“Reputation? What is it?”

The interest of the three master teachers was piqued. They turned to look at Emperor Shen Zhui intently.

“It's... trash!” Emperor Shen Zhui said.

“Trash?”

The three master teachers stared at one another.

“That's right. I've heard that this Zhang Xuan laoshi scored a zero in his Teacher Qualification Examination, and he even caused his student's cultivation to go berserk. Thus, he is reputed as the worst teacher Hongtian Academy ever had!” Emperor Shen Zhui said.

“Scored a zero in his Teacher Qualification Examination?”

“Caused his student's cultivation to go berserk?”

“How can such a person remain as a teacher? Furthermore... Since his results are that poor, why is Lu Xun competing with him?”

The three master teachers were puzzled.

Putting aside how poor Zhang Xuan's results were, Lu Xun is the number one star teacher of the academy. Of everyone he could challenge, he chose to compete against a fellow who had scored a zero in his Teacher Qualification Examination...

This is as though racing against a cripple, and competing in a hearing test with a deaf!

Even if he won, what honor would there be?

Furthermore, what if, against all odds, he loses?

“Allow me to first finish my story. That was his former title. About ten days ago, a twist occurred!” Emperor Shen Zhui continued. “A teacher called Cao Xiong challenged him to an Enlightenment Will Inquisition in a contest for a student, and everyone thought that Cao Xiong would emerge victoriously. Yet, a shocking conclusion occurred.”

“This Zhang Xuan laoshi isn’t the trash that everyone put him out to be. On the contrary, he is an expert. He has already reached Pixue realm, and the student held a Trust Level of 64 in him...”

Even though Hongtian Academy had intentionally suppressed the news of the Enlightenment Will Inquisition, it remained a simple task for the emperor of Tianxuan Kingdom to look into such a matter. He was well aware of all that had happened that day, and he spoke of it in detail to the three master teachers.

“Right after accepting a student, his student’s Trust Level in him has reached 64? The level of a master teacher? How... How is this possible?”

“To reach Pixue realm before twenty years of age? What incredible talent! Even students who study under master teachers find it difficult to accomplish such a feat!”

“Inducing symptoms of a berserk cultivation to overcome Innate Sealed Meridians? And to induce a breakthrough in his student from Fighter 1-dan to Fighter 2-dan within ten minutes...”

The three master teachers stared at one another in astonishment. They found the situation too incredulous, and it was as though they were in a dream.

In order to guard the school’s reputation, he was willing to bear the name of the trash without saying anything. In the end, it was only because the other party went too far that he revealed everything...

“If all of these are true, then... Isn't this Zhang Xuan laoshi too noble!”

Zhuang Xian was impressed.

Despite being framed, just so as to not sully the name of the academy, he kept mum about the matter. Such magnanimity and professionalism, even the three master teachers find it difficult to achieve, needless to say, a young man who isn't even yet twenty.

“I've sent someone to the Teacher Guild to investigate and have received a reply regarding the matter!”

Emperor Shen Zhui knew that the three master teacher found the matter unbelievable as well, so with a small gesture, he beckoned a eunuch over and took a letter from his hands. “This is a personal writing from the Teacher Guild's Elder Mo. The contents are exactly as I've said. Please take a look!”

After which, he handed the letter over. Upon receiving it, Liu Ling and the others took a quick and nodded their heads.

That was a paper used by the Teacher Guild, and the seal of the guild was on it. It was unlikely for the contents on it to have been falsified, otherwise, Elder Mo would be punished.

“To think that such a talent is hiding in Hongtian Academy!”

Liu Ling's eyes lit up.

He had intended to recruit Lu Xun as his apprentice, but after meeting the person in question, he couldn't help but feel slightly disappointed. This moment, after hearing the legendary affairs of Zhang laoshi, his interest was piqued once more.

“His conduct is noble, and he is willing to have his reputation sullied for the sake of the academy. Without regards for personal gains or losses, he gives his all for his students... I would like to meet such a teacher personally!” Zhuang Xian commented in awe.

Master teachers hope to accept good apprentices. This doesn't just mean their ability to educate others and their reputation, their morals play an important part as well.

After all, what is the use of recruiting a talented apprentice if he is ungrateful and immoral?

“Your Majesty, someone seeks an audience!”

Everyone was still immersed in their awe for Zhang Xuan when a guard suddenly walked in.

“Who is it?”

“It’s the butler of City Lord Zhao of Baiyu City, Yao Han!”
The guard reported.

“Allow him to enter!” Emperor Shen Zhui nodded his head.

City Lord Zhao Feng is a subordinate that he trusts heavily in, and as Yao Han is a close aide of Zhao Feng, Shen Zhui knows him as well.

“Yao Han pays respect to Your Majesty!” Soon, a middle-aged man walked in and knelt on the floor.

It was Yao Han.

“General Yao Han, please rise!” Emperor Shen Zhui beckoned.

Even though Yao Han is only a butler now, he had followed City Lord Zhao Feng to numerous wars back then, achieving the position of a general through his contributions in them.

“For General Yao to come at this time, does City Lord Zhao Feng have anything to report?”

Knowing that it is impossible for the other party to visit the royal palace without any good reason, Emperor Shen Zhui asked.

“Your Majesty, our city lord intends to visit the capital in a few days’ time, and he had instructed me to ask Your Majesty for permission.” Yao Han said.

As an important official with heavy responsibilities in the country, Zhao Feng is not allowed to leave his post as and when he likes. Even if he wants to head to the capital, he has to inform the emperor in advance. Otherwise, if he were to secretly sneak here and the emperor found out about it, he would be punished severely.

“Visit the capital?” Shen Zhui was taken aback.

“Yes, our young mistress has acknowledged Zhang Xuan laoshi as her teacher, and in order to awaken her unique constitution, Zhang laoshi had undergone the apothecary examination, obtained the precious 【Frigid Sun Mother Grass】 and purchased the tier-3 【Unravel Yin Pill】 for her consumption. Due to the immense gratitude toward him, city lord has decided to come in person to thank him!” Yao Han replied.

“Acknowledged Zhang Xuan? Frigid Sun Mother Grass? Unravel Yin Pill?”

They were discussing Zhang Xuan just a moment ago, and upon hearing these words, they were all stupefied. Recovering from his daze, Emperor Shen Zhui spoke up, “What is the matter about? Recount it to us in detail!”

“Yes!” Yao Han nodded his head. Then, he spoke of how Zhang laoshi had accepted Zhao Ya as his disciple, how he saw through her unique constitution, why he underwent the apothecary examinations, and so on in detail.

Other people might not know the entire story, but after being beaten to a pulp by the other party, Yao Han went through the trouble to look into Zhang Xuan’s matters. As such, he knows of the affairs surrounding him clearly and accurately.

“You mean to say that... This Zhang Xuan laoshi had managed to pass the 1-star apothecary examination?”

“Not just so, in order to help his students to achieve a breakthrough, he spent a great amount of money to purchase pills and medicinal solutions? Even... tailoring cultivation techniques for their individual needs... and requesting nothing in return?”

“Due to the immense fatigue from staying up for multiple nights to create all of the battle techniques, he fell asleep lying on the chair?”

Upon hearing Yao Han’s words, the three master teachers widened their eyes in shock. Agitated, they clenched their fists tightly.

The basic responsibility of a teacher is to impart knowledge, skills, and clarify doubts. If one doesn't value his students, it is impossible for one to be a good teacher.

For his own students, this Zhang laoshi had made so many sacrifices... He even hid all of it from his students. Even as master teachers, they couldn't help but be astounded by Zhang Xuan's character.

Most importantly... He passed the apothecary examination and became an official apothecary!

“If one wants to take on the master teacher examination, one needs to have a supporting occupation. Since Zhang Xuan is an official apothecary, that means that if we accept him as our apprentice, he will be qualified to take on the master teacher examination with just a bit of guidance!”

The eyes of the three master teachers grew increasingly bright.

For a master teacher to guide others, they need to possess a fearsome amount of knowledge as a prerequisite. They have to be well-versed in various fields, to the point that they are qualified to become a member of their guild, or else, it would be impossible for them to offer concrete pointers.

Apothecaries are considered one of the top professions among the Upper Nine Paths. Given that Zhang Xuan is already an official apothecary, if he were to be paired with an acceptable teaching formula and knowledge system, it wouldn't be difficult for him to become a master teacher at all.

Even in Tier 2 and Tier 1 Kingdoms, such apprentices are vied for by numerous master teachers.

After all, it adds to a master teacher's prestige if one's student becomes a master teacher as well.

“He is strong; able to tolerate injustices for the sake of the bigger picture; willing to try new methods to teach his students; doesn't despair or panic when misunderstood; knowledgeable, but is willing to lie low, humble; willing to abandon his all for his students... This truly is a good master teacher bud!”

The more Liu Ling spoke, the brighter his eyes grew. “Zhuang shi, Zheng shi, since there’s such a good teacher in Hongtian Academy, do you want to accompany me to take a look?”

“Liu shi, what are you talking about? It should be you accompanying me to take a look. I’ve been trying to look for such an apprentice all along.” Zhuang shi chuckled.

“As a certified apothecary, I have an in-depth understanding of pill-forging. It would be the most fitting for him to become my apprentice...” Zheng Fei interjected.

Having heard the various outstanding deeds of Zhang Xuan, the three master teachers could no longer hold themselves back.

While teachers hope to strike up good relationships with master teachers, master teachers also hope to accept capable and upright teachers as apprentices.

Given how noble Zhang Xuan’s character is, willing to give up his all for his students, not to mention that his potential far surpasses Lu Xun, how is it possible for the three master teachers remain unmoved?

“This...”

Seeing how the three masters were squabbling with one another over Zhang Xuan so vehemently, Emperor Shen Zhui and Yao Han were astonished.

Other people try all means possible so that a master teacher spares a single glance at them, and yet, it is the direct opposite for this Zhang laoshi. The three master teachers hadn’t met him yet, but they were already quarreling for him.

However, recalling all of the deeds that he had accomplished, he is indeed someone worthy for master teachers to vie over.

“Looks like I should try to get on close terms with this Zhang Xuan laoshi...”

Emperor Shen Zhui made up his mind secretly.

As the sovereign of the country, how can he give up on someone who wields such tremendous potential to become a master teacher?

“General Yao, inform Zhao Feng that he is free to come!”

At this point, he nodded his head immediately and consented to Yao Han’s request.

Regardless of whether it is for this kingdom or for him, it is good news.

Through Zhao Ya, he should be able to easily tie Zhang Xuan laoshi onto Tianxuan Kingdom’s chariot.

Once the kingdom possesses the backing of a true master teacher, the strength of the kingdom would be on the rise, and being promoted to a 2nd Tier Kingdom wouldn’t just be a dream.

“Emperor Shen Zhui, we’ve decided to visit Hongtian Academy, so we won’t be imposing on you for now!”

After a round of quarreling, the three master teacher decided to see firsthand if Zhang laoshi is as incredible as the rumors had put him out to be.

After all, rumors tend to be exaggerated. Only by seeing it for themselves will they be able to make the most accurate judgment of the person.

In any case, the other party also has the choice of choosing who he wants to acknowledge. Thus, it was pointless for them to argue here.

“Three master teachers, please feel free!”

Emperor Shen Zhui did not dare to hinder them, and he nodded his head in consent.

Liu Ling, Zhuang Xian, and Zheng Fei stopped their incessant chatter and quickly headed outside, straight for Hongtian Academy.

“Lu Xun...”

Watching the three master teachers leave for Zhang Xuan, Emperor Shen Zhui thought of Lu Xun, who had left earlier, and shook his head.

From cultivation to knowledge, character and teaching skills, the impression of the three master teachers, as well as

reputation...

This number one star teacher in Hongtian Academy has lost in every aspect...

A complete defeat!

193 That's Yang shi?

Oblivious to the fact that the impression that Emperor Shen Zhui and the three master teachers had of them had been ruined, Lu Xun and Wang Chao headed toward Yang shi's residence, their faces beaming with excitement.

They were mocked and insulted previously due to their lack of money. Now that they have three million in their hands, no one would dare to stop them!

“Later, when we meet Yang shi, just dive straight into the main topic. Say that we're willing to become his apprentice and that we will serve him well.”

Lu Xun deliberated on the possible scenarios when they meet Yang Shi before concluding, “For Liu shi and the others to be so much in awe of him, he must have reached at least 2-star or even higher. If we were to beat around the bush, we might incur his irritation instead. Rather, it might be better if we are straightforward!”

A master teacher has incredibly sharp eyes. It is best not to put on an act before such a person, otherwise, they would definitely be the ones to get unlucky.

Once they incur the wrath of Yang shi, it would be out of the question for them to become his apprentices.

“You're right!” Wang Chao nodded his head in agreement.

“Right, Wang Chao. You said that Elder Wang Chong learned a new spear technique, and he spent quite a bit of money for it. What happened?”

Suddenly recalling the matter, Lu Xun asked.

“Just a few days ago, my father was training in seclusion, so I was unable to reach him. I only came to know about the matter after asking the butler. He said that an expert visited the residence, and my old man spent millions as tuition fee to learn a single spear technique from the other party. Honestly, I

can't imagine what kind of technique can be worth that much money.”

Wang Chao shook his head unhappily.

As a clan of spear masters, even though they possessed considerable properties, taking out a few million at once would still rattle the family's foundations. He didn't know why his father went mad all of a sudden, paying such a huge sum.

“No one surpasses Elder Wang Chong's understanding of the spear in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom. Since he was willing to take out so much money, it must mean that this spear technique is remarkable. You must learn it well.” Lu Xun viewed the matter from a different perspective.

Given the reputation Wang Chong enjoys in Tianxuan Kingdom, even being praised by Emperor Shen Zhui personally, his comprehension of spearmanship has reached an astonishing level. For such an incredible expert to be willing to pay so huge a price, how is it possible that the spear art be anything ordinary?

“I would like to learn it as well, but father refuses to teach it to me. According to the butler, father promised to only impart the spear art to another clan member with the creator's permission. Hence, anyone who tries to learn it secretly will be punished severely!”

Wang Chao pouted.

He felt extremely discontented upon mentioning the matter.

His father had been practicing that mysterious spear technique madly, and Wang Chao knew of it but wasn't allowed to learn. As such, he felt incredibly frustrated within and could only vent his frustration through complaining.

“The Wang Clan's spearmanship tops the entire kingdom, and it is known by all to be a top-notch battle technique. I don't think that the expert's spearmanship will be any stronger. Most probably, the elder is looking for a chance to make another breakthrough!”

After offering him a word of consolation, Lu Xun was about to continue speaking when he suddenly saw Wang Chao gesturing toward their back. Puzzled, he asked, “What’s wrong?”

“Look, that’s the arrogant fellow from the royal palace!”

Wang Chao pointed to his back

Turning around, he saw the middle-aged man dressed in fur coat and silk hat walking in the same direction.

Who else can it be other than that noisy fellow?

“Since he’s able to sit alongside the three master teachers and His Majesty, even though his mouth is vile, he must possess an extraordinary identity. Let’s not provoke him and focus on our matter instead!”

Sensing that his good buddy was about to pick a fight with the other party, Lu Xun immediately persuaded him otherwise.

Even though he had never met that middle-aged man, he was unlikely to be an ordinary person for him to dare to interrupt his conversation with Emperor Shen Zhui.

But... so what about it?

They are star teachers with backing from powerful clans and are considered influential celebrities in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom. No matter how influential the other party might possibly be, it means nothing at all before them.

“Un, I understand. But... Why does it seem like he is following us?”

Wang Chao felt puzzled. He glanced backward once more to look at the other party.

While the duo was speaking, they had turned at several corners, but the fellow was still behind them. What else can this be other than following?

“Perhaps he wishes to pay a visit to Yang shi as well. Let’s not talk anymore. Butler Sun is at the door, let’s go pay him the sum...”

Lu Xun shook his head. He didn't want any troubles before acknowledging Yang Shi as his master. After turning at two more corners, Yang Shi's mansion appeared before them. There were many people still queuing at the entrance, and Butler Sun Qiang happened to be at the door as well.

Wang Chao immediately walked over with his head held high and chest protruding. Putting on a haughty look, he squeezed through the crowd and handed the three million which he had just borrowed forward.

"Butler Sun, here is the fee for both of us to pay a visit to Yang Shi. Now you can let us in, right?"

Didn't you just mock us for being poor blokes?

In just a short hour, we've brought the money here. This is called... slapping your face in public!

In their minds, they imagined that Sun Qiang's face would darken, and he would assume a subservient attitude, bending his back and fawning on them... But the plump man frowned instead. Without even turning to look at them, his chubby hands waved impatiently, "Where did all of your nonsense come from? Didn't I say just now? From now on, Yang Shi won't be accepting anymore money. It doesn't matter how much you pay. So, for those whose names aren't called, don't cause any trouble here and scram!"

"You..."

Rage surged through Wang Chao, and he nearly vomited blood.

As one of the members of the top echelon of Tianxuan Kingdom, he is highly respected no matter where he went. Even Emperor Shen Zhui has to treat him with considerable respect. Yet, a mere butler dared to tell him to scram, not once, but twice. The strong sense of humiliation infuriated him so greatly that he was about to erupt.

"Sun Qiang, do you know who you're talking to?"

With a darkened face, he walked forward and spat through gritted teeth.

“Oh? It’s Wang Chao laoshi...”

Only now did Sun Qiang clearly see the other party’s face, and he lifted his eyebrows, “Why, you brought the money here this time?”

On the previous occasion, he was hesitant because of the other party’s identity as a celebrity teacher. However, after seeing that the old master was completely unbothered by the matter, he realized that it doesn’t matter whether one is a noble or a celebrity teacher.

If you listen obediently, I’ll speak up for you. Otherwise, it doesn’t matter who you are!

The moment Wang Chao heard Sun Qiang’s reply, he nearly passed out from rage.

The heck!

What do you mean by that look of contempt!

What do you mean by ” you brought the money here this time”?

If those who don’t know better were to hear, they would think that I had come multiple times shamelessly without money...

“Wang Chao, calm down!”

Upon realizing that his friend was about to explode, Lu Xun shook his head and took a step forward.

Even though this friend of his has good talent and is skilled in teaching others, he is hot-tempered and due to this trait, had got into plenty of trouble in the past.

If he hadn’t stepped in, it is likely that Wang Chao would have really turned violent.

Beating up this fellow means sullyng Yang shi’s dignity. Not only will Yang shi not admit them as apprentices, he might just drive them away.

Holding back his agitated friend, Lu Xun clasped his hands and smiled, “Butler Sun, I don’t there’s any need to introduce us anymore. It is our fault for not bringing the money here previously, so we brought the money this time along with the

name scroll. May I trouble you to report this matter to Yang shi? If he truly refuses to meet with us, we will give up on the idea and bother you no more.”

With a single look, it was clear that Sun Qiang was a typical street person. Arguing with him would just make things more and more complicated, so Lu Xun decided to avoid unnecessary trouble and dive straight into the topic.

“Old master has instructed that I am not to accept any more name scrolls; other than those who have paid previously, no one is allowed to enter. However, since you two are celebrity teachers, I will play the good man and...”

Satisfied with Lu Xun’s words, Sun Qiang nodded his head. Halfway through his words, he suddenly noticed that the old master had reached the gates. He pushed open the gates and walked into the courtyard.

Actually, Sun Qiang’s tantrum a moment earlier was to conceal the fact that the old master wasn’t at the mansion. Upon seeing him return, he heaved a sigh of relief. He was about to enter the mansion delightfully when he heard an incensed bellow resounding.

“Butler Sun, what do you mean by this? We’ve paid the money and handed over the name scroll, but you still refuse to allow us to enter. Yet, why is that fellow able to enter directly, even without having to address you?”

Wang Chao was truly angered.

When we didn’t bring money, you criticized us and mocked us in public. Now that we’ve brought money, you still deny us entry. We would have just accepted the fact if everyone is subjected to the same treatment, but what is with that fellow with a fur coat and silk hat?

Without submitting a name scroll or paying anything, he was allowed to enter just like that. What rights does he have to do so? Just because he’s rich? Just because Emperor Shen Zhui regards him highly?

Didn’t you say that no one can enter?

What happened to the righteous words that you spoke of earlier?

Wang Chao was so furious that if anger were visible, a pillar of red would split the heavens.

However, right after he said those words, the surrounding crowd turned to look at him immediately, as though they were staring at an idiot. Their eyes were filled with pity.

Looking at those glances, Lu Xun suddenly thought of something. His body shuddered uncontrollably and his complexion turned awful. He turned to Sun Qiang and asked, "Butler Sun, the person who has just entered is..."

"It's our old master!" Sun Qiang harrumphed coldly.

"Yang shi?"

Lu Xun felt as though lightning bolts had struck him, and his entire body swayed.

The furious Wang Chao seemed as though he had been slapped on his face. The words that he had wanted to say, in a split second, all jammed in his mouth. His face turned pale, and he quivered uncontrollably.

That's Yang shi?

And we scolded him back in the palace for being too noisy?

He tried to advise us out of kindness, but we simply disregarded his words out of indignation and even wanted to teach him a lesson...

What... What is going on?

Lu Xun and Wang Chao felt the world begin to spin around them, slowly crumbling apart.

.....

Even though Lu Xun and Wang Chao were prestigious figures in the eyes of many, the two of them celebrity teachers of Hongtian Academy, as Zhang Xuan had come into contact with numerous top individuals within the kingdom in the past few days, their identities were far from being eye-catching.

Looking at them now, they seem nothing more than conceited young men.

It didn't matter to Zhang Xuan whether the duo was traumatized. It sufficed to leave the matter to Sun Qiang; Zhang Xuan could not be bothered.

At this moment, he was sitting on his bed with a grim expression.

After studying the Heaven's Path Poison Art, he had gained an in-depth knowledge of that topic. At the same time, he noticed a bizarre black poison aura within his body.

In the royal palace, he was busy helping Shen Hong to reach Zongshi realm and as such, he didn't have the leisure to look into the matter back then. Now that he is back at his mansion, he is anxious to take a look at it to find out what is going on!

He has been healthy all along, so why is there poison aura lingering in his body?

When did it sneak into his body?

Puzzled, he focused his attention on the black poison aura.

That black poison aura was hidden between his organs and meridians, making it hard to detect. If not for the fact that he had studied Heaven's Path Poison Art and gained an in-depth understanding of poison, he would have never noticed it.

“What kind of poison is this? Why... haven't I seen it before?”

Taking a closer look at it, Zhang Xuan's eyebrows knitted together.

There were more than a thousand books on poison in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, and the various types of poison, their nature, and their scent were all recorded within. Yet, the black poison aura in his body did not match any single one of those written in the books.

194 Three Shocked Master Teachers 1

That is to say, this black aura is a lethal poison which he doesn't recognize.

What exactly is it?

“Let's see if I can expel it!”

With a grim expression, Zhang Xuan propelled the zhenqi within his body.

Even though he has no idea what the poison aura is capable of, it would eventually pose to be a threat if left untreated in his body like that. Since he has become aware of it now, he has to solve the problem as soon as possible.

Otherwise, with a ticking time bomb within him, he will never feel at ease.

The books did detail how can one use his zhenqi to expel poison, and it isn't a difficult process. After spending a brief moment immersed in his thoughts, he mastered the skill.

Gugugu!

Upon seeing the surge of zhenqi, the black aura, as though it had met its nemesis, dived into his meridians and hid immediately.

“It doesn't work at all...”

Zhang Xuan's face darkened.

This poison aura is simply too formidable. To think that it is capable of hiding from the assault of zhenqi. At this moment, it had only dived into his meridians, so it isn't particularly critical. However, if it were to have dived frenziedly into an important organ, Zhang Xuan would have probably died before he can even react to it.

To be able to avoid zhenqi as though it possesses intelligence, what poison is this?

Furthermore, when was I poisoned?

Since he was unable to find any records of the poison in the Book Collection Vault, this meant that it is a poison exclusive to the higher tier kingdoms.

Yet, such a poison aura... was found in his body.

Zhang Xuan felt increasingly baffled.

He tried using all kinds of detoxification method, but upon seeing that none of them were effective, he had no choice but to give up temporarily.

It seems that the black aura is extremely fearful of his zhenqi, so it should not dare to cause any trouble for the time being. Otherwise, he couldn't have survived for so long without noticing it.

However, even though there isn't any threat on his life for the time being, how he was poisoned is a huge issue. It is one thing if he had accidentally come into contact with the poison, but if it were the intentional doing of someone else and he was oblivious, this would be altogether a different matter.

The enemy's first attempt had failed, so that means that there'll be a second try.

"I've to first ascertain whether I was afflicted before or after my arrival and whether it is an intentional act. At the very least, I can be on my guard!"

Warily, Zhang Xuan glanced at the black aura once more and examined it... Eventually, he failed to discover anything new.

It isn't because Zhang Xuan is dumb, but... because the poison is simply too advanced. It is beyond what Tianxuan Kingdom understands, making it impossible for Zhang Xuan to identify it, and even less so, figure out when he was afflicted and who the culprit is.

"I should try using the Library of Heaven's Path!"

Just as Zhang Xuan was about to give up, a thought suddenly appeared in his head.

Even though he is unable to personally discern anything, it doesn't mean that the library will be helpless as well.

To trigger the Library of Heaven's Path and compile a book on something or someone, he needs to touch the object with his fingers or witness a person execute a battle technique. Since the poison aura is hidden in his meridians, it is impossible to touch. As for getting it to execute a battle technique... Cough cough, that is even more ridiculous.

However, verifying the answer to some basic questions isn't difficult for Zhang Xuan.

Grabbing a blank book, Zhang Xuan took out his brush and started writing. "The poison aura in my body only appeared after my reincarnation, and it is an intentional act!"

When Zhang Xuan's finger touched the book, an identical book appeared in his head.

Casually flipping it open, the flaws of the statement he wrote appeared.

After reading through the contents, Zhang Xuan's face darkened.

Based on the feedback from the Library of Heaven's Path, the poison aura was already in this body before his reincarnation, and it was an intentional doing!

That means that... someone wanted to kill him.

"Could it be that... the death of my previous self isn't because of alcoholism and depression, but because of... this poison?"

He had been feeling perplexed over this matter for quite some time. How could a zhenqi realm pinnacle expert die just from drinking alcohol? From the looks of it, it seems that wasn't the case at all.

Thus, Zhang Xuan wrote all kinds of conjectures onto the book.

An unknown period of time had passed before Zhang Xuan put down his brush.

After half day of testing his conjecture, he had obtained a rough idea of the entire matter.

His previous self had indeed died from poisoning, and that opened the path for his reincarnation.

The reason why he had been fine after the reincarnation is because the Heaven's Path zhenqi he cultivated is too pure. The poison aura feared it instinctively and was forced to a corner, unable to budge at all. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for Zhang Xuan to survive to this date.

That is to say, the reason why Zhang Xuan could live to this moment is that he was diligent. Otherwise, without sufficient zhenqi, the poison aura would have counterattacked immediately and Zhang Xuan would have died from poisoning.

“Looks like another mess my previous self left me...”

After settling the problem regarding the Teacher Qualification Examination, Zhang Xuan thought that he would gain freedom and would be able to live a carefree life. Yet now, he realized that he had been simplifying things.

As long as the black aura lingers in his body, he would be in danger.

“I've to find a way to identify the person who wants to kill me.”

If the person who wished to kill him conceals himself, it would be impossible for Zhang Xuan to locate him. However, if the other party dares to make another move, using the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan would be able to identify even his ancestors.

Thus, Zhang Xuan didn't feel fear in the least and was merely puzzled.

His previous self was just an orphan who didn't even have a relative. Not to mention, he also possessed trashy talent. Having not offended anyone, who in the world would use

poison that one couldn't even find in Tianxuan Kingdom to kill him?

Given that the person was able to acquire such an advanced poison, he definitely boasts of some capability. Rather than going through so much effort, why didn't he just kill him straight?

Aren't his actions, as though taking off one's pants to fart, excessive?

Since Zhang Xuan could not make sense of the matter, he decided not to mull over it anymore. Without any clue who the person that poisoned him is, musing over the matter is futile. The best he can do now is to find a method to dispel the poison in his body.

“In order to dispel the poison, I have to first know what poison it is. There are too little books regarding poison in Tianxuan Kingdom. Looks like I have to head to a place with more books...”

Possessing the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan can treat himself as long as he is able to access sufficient books on poison.

However, such books aren't easy to find. Zhang Xuan had read through the entire collection in the royal palace, but it is far from sufficient. As such, it is unlikely that any normal book here would be useful.

After all, this poison is too advanced, so advanced that it can't be found in Tianxuan Kingdom.

Since the poison doesn't exist here, how can the solution be found here?

To rid himself of the poison, Zhang Xuan will have to head for the higher tier kingdoms to look for more books on poison.

“I should greet the three master teachers and inquire them about it later on...”

Even though Zhang Xuan is completely ignorant of the affairs of other lands, the three master teachers, in contrast, must be very familiar.

They hail from higher tier kingdoms and travel often. Thus, they definitely know more about the other lands than him.

“There’s no need for me to panic. I should first solve the issues here.”

Since his Heaven’s Path zhenqi suppresses the poison aura, preventing it from acting up, he should be safe for the time being. Thus, Zhang Xuan shook his head, stretched his back, and gestured for Sun Qiang to call the next person in.

.....

“Liu shi, why do we have to change our clothes?”

The three master teachers were walking on the pavement in Hongtian Academy. Looking at the clothes they were wearing, Zheng Fei couldn’t help but ask.

He usually donned the robe of a master teacher, and regardless of where he went, others always treated him with the utmost respect. It felt weird to be dressed in casual clothes all of the sudden.

“The master teacher robe is too eye-catching. If we were to wear it here, Zhang Xuan laoshi would definitely rush here at first time’s notice and act obediently and respectfully around us. If that’s the case, how can we see his true character?”

Liu Ling spoke.

“Indeed. It is a good idea to conceal our identity. This way, we can see his true personality!” Zhuang Xian nodded his head in agreement.

Zheng Fei came to a realization as well.

Having changed into the clothes of an ordinary person and suppressed their cultivation, no one would guess that they are master teachers. People would simply think of them as ordinary elders.

Only under such circumstances will they be able to peer into the truth.

Soon, after asking about, they arrived at Zhang Xuan’s classroom.

“This classroom is way too small!”

Observing the classroom before their eyes, Liu Ling and company frowned.

They had seen the scale of Hongtian Academy for themselves on their way here, and even the most ordinary teacher possesses a classroom several hundred meters square large. Yet, the classroom before them isn't even a hundred meter square large. Regardless of infrastructure or design, they are exceptionally simple and shabby.

With a single glance, it was clear that this is the worst facility in the entire academy.

“Seems like that Zhang laoshi isn't treated very well in the academy!”

With such poor conditions, it is truly a wonder how Zhang laoshi manages to tolerate. If it were them, they would have long fallen out with the academy, flung their robes, and resigned.

“To be able to remain calm, humble, and motivated under such conditions, it seems that he places his responsibilities above his pride. I am impressed.”

Liu Ling expressed his heartfelt thoughts.

Despite being subjected to unfair treatment, the other party doesn't bear any resentment or vent any frustration on his students. To not allow such humiliation get in the way of his character, that is truly impressive.

“Cousin Wang Tao, I still don't understand what Zhang laoshi spoke about the convergence of spirit energy. Can you explain it to me once more?”

Walking toward the classroom, before they even entered it, they could hear questioning voices from the grass patch before the entrance.

The three men stopped in their footsteps.

“Alright. However, Zhang laoshi's words were exceptionally profound and I understood less than a tenth of it. In any case, I have made a note, so how about we study it together?” The

senior known as Wang Tao hesitated for a moment before replying.

“Great!” The first voice chirped delightfully.

“Look, this is what Zhang laoshi said. In Juxi realm, one should view one’s own body as a part of the natural flow of spiritual energy in the air and converge them together into one’s body instead of forcefully absorbing it. This way, one will be able to better store spiritual energy and the rate of absorption of spiritual energy will increase. Back then, Zhang laoshi brought up ten methods to do so, but I only remember three of them. We can study them together. Look at the first one...”

Wang Tao’s voice echoed from the classroom.

“View one’s own body as a part of the natural flow of spiritual energy in the air?”

Listening to the conversation between the two, the three master teachers became shocked. Their astonishment reflected on their faces.

“I’ve heard of this theory from my teacher... That Zhang Xuan laoshi is capable of speaking such profound logic as well?”

Liu Ling’s jaws dropped.

Whether one is truly an expert, his performance will tell. As master teachers, they stand at the very pinnacle of the occupation of teachers. Naturally, they hold a deep knowledge about imparting knowledge, and they are also capable of telling right from wrong.

Even though they hadn’t sat through Zhang Xuan’s lesson, judging the conversation between the two students alone, they were able to tell that Zhang laoshi’s theories are innovative, correct, and straightforward.

Even they themselves find it hard to conduct a lesson of such standard.

The theories brought up by the duo weren’t incredibly profound, but they point straight to the essence of Juxi realm.

It felt as though they were standing before a vast ocean, endless and unimaginably deep. The more they listened, the more it was beneficial to their cultivation. They had benefited greatly from the exchange.

As the three master teachers continued to listen, they became increasingly amazed. Rooted to the spot, they shuddered with agitation.

195 Three Shocked Master Teachers 2

“To be capable of analyzing a mere Juxi realm so thoroughly, it seems that Zhang laoshi’s comprehension toward cultivation isn’t something that I can match up to. He has long reached the 【Enlightenment】 realm.”

After eavesdropping on the conversation of the duo for another moment, Liu Ling could not help but say.

“To be enlightened means to have grasped the laws of the world. In the Enlightenment realm, one’s cultivation would have reached Zongshi realm. Only at that realm will one form his own school of understanding toward cultivation. Could it be that Zhang Xuan has already reached Zongshi realm?”

Zhuang Xian found it unbelievable.

“It is not that only Zongshi experts are able to reach the Enlightenment realm. Some incredible teachers, through their comprehension and study of cultivation, manage to form schools of their own. By imparting the knowledge and theories they have compiled to their students, they are able to enlighten their student to the truth, thus massively benefitting their students. Such teachers are absolutely rare and hard to find in the world. To think that this Zhang laoshi would be one of them...”

At this point, Liu Ling’s eyes grew increasingly bright. He couldn’t help but mutter, “Such a talented bud!”

“Indeed. Even for me, I can’t help but feel excited listening to his theories toward cultivation! To be able to describe the complex subject of cultivation in the simplest words such that anyone will be able to understand it. His standard is indeed astounding.” Zhuang Xian nodded his head.

“If one were to cultivate according to his theory, improvements would definitely be swift. One probably won’t

exceed a year in breaking through Fighter 1-dan Juxi realm!” Zheng Fei commented.

“However, it is a pity that we’re just listening by the side. We are only qualified to attend the most basic lectures of Zhang laoshi. If we were taught by him personally, we might have already achieved a breakthrough!”

The three master teachers were wallowing in their awe for Zhang Xuan when they suddenly heard the voices before them echoing once more.

“Listening by the side? Those two... are only listening in on his lesson?”

The three master teachers stared at one another as their minds were blown once again.

There are different types of students under the tutelage of a teacher. There are students who listen in, normal students, and direct disciples. Initially, given how the duo was discussing cultivation methods, the three master teachers thought that they were true disciples of Zhang laoshi, and thus, they had been imparted with the purest and most profound theories. However, upon hearing ‘listening in’ did they realize that they are just the most basic students under his tutelage.

If a listener student can learn such profound theories, it would be hard to imagine what his normal students and true disciples will be able to achieve.

“Indeed. When Younger Sister Wang Ying first started to learn under Zhang Xuan, she was only Juxi realm primary stage. After coming under the personal tutelage of Zhang laoshi, in a short ten days, her cultivation rose swiftly, and she succeeded in reaching Dantian realm yesterday night!”

“I’m truly envious. Say, why was I so foolish back then? Why was I so obsessed with coming under Lu laoshi’s tutelage before? If only I had joined Zhang laoshi earlier, I would have long achieved a breakthrough as well...”

The two continued to chat, and their tone revealed their envy for the other students.

...

“She reached Dantian realm from Juxi realm in ten short days?”

Upon hearing the words of the duo, the three master teachers felt as though they were struck by a massive hammer on their head. They thought that they were going insane.

In Fighter 1-dan, one gathers spiritual energy and circulate it around his body to nourish and open meridians. Without accomplishing all of these thoroughly, it is impossible for to reach Dantian realm. In other words, there are no shortcuts whatsoever for this realm.

Thus, without years of hard work, it is difficult to achieve a breakthrough from this realm; even for them, without half a year, it is impossible for them to help their students do so.

Yet, a breakthrough in ten days?

The three master teachers were astonished, unable to believe what they had just heard.

If that is true, doesn't that mean that Zhang Xuan's ability to teach is superior to theirs?

How is that possible?

Boom boom boom!

They were feeling uncertain when the ground below them started to quake.

“It's Yuan Tao. That fellow is probably knocking against walls again... Let's go and take a look!”

Wang Tao's words sounded in the air. Soon, their footsteps grew faint as they gradually walked into the distance.

“Yuan Tao? Isn't that the fellow who scored the worst for the entrance examinations?” Zhuang shi couldn't help but ask.

On their way here, they had inquired about Zhang laoshi's affairs and found out that he had accepted five students. As the student with the worst result during the entrance examination, Yuan Tao was especially conspicuous and, as such, the three master teachers had a deep impression of him.

“Yes, let's go. We'll take a look as well.”

Liu Ling gestured and the trio followed the sound of the footsteps before them.

They are all Half-Zongshi experts. It is impossible them to be discovered by the two students.

After several dozen meters, they stopped after a corner and a few figures appeared before them.

They saw a fatty who was charging furiously toward a wall. Every time he rams against it, the ground trembles vigorously.

“What incredible defensive ability! With such extraordinary defensive capability, even a Fighter 6-dan Pixue realm expert would find it hard to break through...”

Seeing the fatty’s actions, the three master teachers were once again, blown out of their minds.

While Wang Tao and Wang Yan’s do not have sufficiently discerning eyes and are unable to judge how strong Yuan Tao’s defense truly is, but they, as master teachers, are able to tell with a single look. Even for them, they would take quite a bit of effort to break through the fatty’s defense.

For the student who was the last in the entrance examination to possess such overwhelming defense all of the sudden...

The three master teachers felt their head unable to cope with the sudden turn of situations.

“Quick, look over there...”

Zheng Fei suddenly said.

Following the direction where he was pointing, Liu Ling and Zhuang Xian saw a sixteen to seventeen-year-old little girl executing a kick toward a wooden pole which was around a bowl thick, as though a superior bow with its bowstring pulled tautly was released.

Kacha!

The wooden pole broke into two.

“What a powerful leg technique. There must be at least 400kg of strength behind her kick. Not only so, her turn, leg raise, strength exertion, and hip twist... All of her movements were

seamlessly coordinated as one. This shows that she has at least immersed herself in leg techniques for seven to eight years. Otherwise, it is impossible for one to reach such a level!” Liu Ling praised.

Even though it was just an ordinary kick, it revealed the good foundations the lady possessed. Without years of hard work, it is impossible to reach such a level.

“Is this Zhang Xuan’s student as well? But why didn’t we hear about him having a female student who is adept in leg techniques when we asked around?”

Zhuang Xian couldn’t help but ask.

Zhang laoshi only has five students, and as such, it wasn’t difficult to find out what his students are adept at. However, they had never heard of him having a female student who is adept at leg techniques.

“Wang Ying, to think that your leg techniques would become so powerful right after your legs recovered!”

The two young men who were in the classroom previously walked over and complimented her.

“Wang Ying? She’s that Wang Ying whose legs are injured?”

Liu Ling almost fell to the ground.

As the daughter of Clan Head Wang Hong, Wang Ying’s leg injury wasn’t any secret. They had heard the news, but... if her legs had been injured, how can she exert such powerful strength through them?

Furthermore, he had just confidently claimed that the other party must have trained for at least seven to eight years to have built up such a solid foundation for her leg skills. Yet, to think that she had been just treated of her injury...

The heck! How can someone whose legs were just treated exert such powerful strength that can destroy a wooden pole so thick with a single kick?

Why does it feel like a dream?

Liu Ling felt a fiery sensation on his face, and that he was on the verge of going berserk.

While he found the event embarrassing, the other two master teachers didn't have the leisure to bother about that. They were staring in another direction with widened eyes.

“Liu shi...”

Due to his anxiety, Zheng Fei's voice quivered.

“What's wrong?”

Seeing that his two friends weren't going to pester him for his judgemental error, Liu Ling heaved a sigh of relief. Then, he turned over to look at them two.

“Look over there...”

Zheng Fei pointed.

Puzzled, Liu Ling lifted his head and peered over.

The other party was pointing toward a young man. At that moment, he held a spear in his hand and was standing motionless on the spot, resembling a statue.

“What's wrong?”

He wasn't sure what the other party was trying to point out.

That is a posture which spear users often stand in to feel their spear. Those who love to use spears would often stand in such a position to feel the connection between their body and the spear... logically, there shouldn't be anything weird about the situation.

“It's not his actions, it's...”

Zheng Fei wanted to explain, but before he could finish his words, the spear-carrying young man suddenly moved.

There wasn't the slightest hesitation in his movements. As though a dragon rising from the sea, his eyes gleamed with might. In an instant, the tranquil young man seemed to have transformed into another person. It was as if he became an incredibly sharp and taut spear that was capable of even piercing through the heavens.

“This is...”

Liu Ling staggered backward. Flabbergasted, his eyes narrowed to the point that they were as thin as needles. “Spear Intent? Achieving Spear Intent at such a young age?”

As a master teacher, it was natural that he knew of Spear Intent. He had also once seen a master displaying it.

However, those who are capable of releasing Spear Intent are, at a minimum, forty-year-old. The teenager before him exuded a domineering aura along with the movement of his spear, and it is clear that he has comprehended Spear Intent... Even though it is the most basic of it all... that is still Spear Intent!

How did he do it?

Liu Ling felt his entire body turn cold.

This should be the student who specializes in using the spear, Zheng Yang. Back then, given how he was rejected by Wang Chao laoshi, he was probably only capable of the fundamentals. Yet, in just ten days or so, Zhang laoshi had turned him into a spear master capable of releasing Spear Intent...

This is no longer a question of whether he is a capable educator. But... it's a miracle!

Lifting his head to look at his old buddies, the two of them, Zhuang Xian and Zheng Fei, were also standing in a daze on the spot. The same thought had popped into their minds simultaneously.

This Zhang Xuan laoshi... who exactly is he?

196 Eligibility to Take the Master Teacher Examination

Rubbing between his eyebrows, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

After two days of hard work, he finally finished dealing with the problems of those who paid the fee previously. At last, he is free from work.

Most of the people who visited him inquired him about their cultivation while a small portion was afflicted with terminal diseases. Using the Library of Heaven's Path and the knowledge he had accumulated from the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, he managed to look into their flaws and solve every problem successfully.

"It will be the Teacher Evaluation in two days' time. I wonder how much have those brats progressed in their training..."

Stretching his back lazily, Zhang Xuan sneaked out of the mansion.

He had been busy with the matters on this end for the past two days, and as such, he hasn't had time to return to the academy for a look. If Zhao Ya and the others hadn't followed his instructions, it would be difficult for them to achieve victory over Lu Xun's students.

As for Lu Xun and Wang Chao, who had been waiting at the entrance of the mansion, Zhang Xuan left them to be. After an entire day of anticipation, the duo also realized that they had thoroughly offended Yang Shi and that it was impossible for them to be accepted as his apprentices. Thus, they could only leave in disappointment.

After finding a remote alley, Zhang Xuan took off his disguise, reverted to his usual look, and returned to the academy.

"Master Zhang!"

Upon reaching the entrance of the academy, he heard a familiar method of address. Turning around to take a look, he saw Huang Yu and Bai Xun walking toward him with large strides.

“Such a coincidence! We were about to enter the academy to look for you. Since you’re here, we’ll be able to spare the trouble.”

Stepping forward, Huang Yu said with a smile.

“Looking for me?” Zhang Xuan asked.

Didn’t these two fellows complete their painting examination already? They had already bought the paintings, so why would they look for me?

Well, if they want to buy more, I wouldn’t mind painting another for some quick bucks.

“We have something that we need to trouble you with...”
Huang Yu spoke in embarrassment.

“What is it? If it is within my scope of ability, I will try my best to help!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Huang Yu had helped him previously and thus, Zhang Xuan didn’t think that it was inappropriate for him to turn down her request. However, he made sure to leave some leeway in his words. If she were to really ask for the impossible, Zhang Xuan could at least still turn her down.

“Master Zhang, you should know that the reason why we went to Master Lu Chen’s residence awhile ago was to obtain the Ink Daylily Canvas!”

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

He was long aware of the matter. It seemed that she was intending to give the painting to someone else. In the end, Zhang Xuan managed to create a painting of the fifth level, resulting in the duo demanding his painting instead and causing him to feel awkward. Zhang Xuan had felt apologetic to Master Lu Chen for the incident.

“Actually, the reason why we sought the Ink Daylily Canvas was so as to gift it to someone as a birthday present... The

paintings that you gave us are perfect as birthday presents, just that..." At this point, Huang Yu hesitated for a moment. "I'm afraid that Elder Tian might want to meet its painter after seeing the painting, so... I would like to invite you to the birthday banquet as well!"

"Birthday present? Birthday banquet?" Zhang Xuan immediately understood what was going on.

It seems that the reason why Huang Yu was so adamant on obtaining the Ink Daylily Canvas was so that she could gift it to someone else as a birthday present.

"I am not interested in birthday banquets, so I'll pass!" Zhang Xuan shook his head.

Regardless of whose birthday banquet it was, it was no business of his. He couldn't be bothered to make a trip over to please someone else.

"Master Zhang, you really should come along. Elder Tian is a good person, even Emperor Shen Zhui is visiting him as well..." Seeing the other party rejecting his request, Bai Xun added on hastily, his face full of anxiety.

"Emperor Shen Zhui is going as well?"

Zhang Xuan was perplexed.

He had thought that this is an ordinary birthday banquet for nobles and such. If Emperor Shen Zhui is going as well, then the matter probably isn't as simple as Zhang Xuan had imagined it to be.

"Indeed, not just Your Majesty, our teacher is going as well. To tell you the truth, the one who invited you to the birthday banquet aren't us but... my teacher, Master Teacher Liu Ling!" Huang Yu hesitated for a moment before saying.

"Liu Ling is your teacher?" Zhang Xuan's eyes widened in shock and bewilderment. "He knows of me?"

Huang Yu is an assistant master teacher, so it wasn't surprising for her to have a master teacher as her teacher. Just that... He is currently in the identity of Zhang Xuan, not 'Yang shi'. So, how is it possible that Liu shi know of his identity?

Even sending his apprentice to invite him?

“Can it be that... my identity has been revealed?”

A wary look immediately appeared on Zhang Xuan’s face.

If his identity was exposed, he would be in danger!

Putting aside the fact that impersonating a master teacher is a heavy crime, just the fact that he, as an insignificant figure in a remote country who isn’t even in his twenties yet, is able to possess such vast knowledge and incredible eye of discernment means that it was likely that he possesses an incredible treasure!

They would definitely want to lay their hands on this treasure, and this would put him in a dangerous position.

“Not just Liu shi, even Zhuang shi and Zheng shi know you as well. Yesterday, when I told them that you are able to produce a painting of the fifth level, they became so excited that they nearly leaped from their seats!” Bai Xun said.

Even until now, he found what happened yesterday mind-boggling.

His teacher, knowing that he and Huang Yu are acquainted with Master Zhang, called the both of them over to question them about him. Upon hearing that young Zhang laoshi had created paintings of the fifth level, their faces flushed red with agitation, as though they were suffering some kind of panic attack. Then, they commanded them authoritatively that they have to bring Zhang laoshi to the birthday banquet tonight by hook or by crook.

“Master Zhang, this is a good opportunity! I’ve never seen my teacher getting so interested in someone else. Since you’ve caught his attention, it is likely that you’ll become an assistant master teacher soon!” Envy appeared in Huang Yu’s eyes.

“Furthermore, you already have a supporting profession. Along with the identity as an assistant master teacher, you will be eligible to take the master teacher examination immediately!”

All teachers dream of becoming a master teacher, and gaining the appreciation of a master teacher is the ideal opportunity for

them to achieve the goal.

“Supporting profession? Eligible to take the master teacher examination? What do you mean?” Zhang Xuan was perplexed.

“You don’t know the requirements to undergo the master teacher examination?” Huang Yu stared at him with a peculiar expression.

Tianxuan Kingdom doesn’t have any master teachers, and the prerequisites for the examination are not recorded in any of the books. Furthermore, it hasn’t been long since Zhang Xuan transcended over. Thus, it isn’t surprising for him not to know of it.

“Not only must a master teacher be capable of offering someone guidance on their cultivation, he should be able to guide those of other professions as well. Thus, on top of vast knowledge on the topic of cultivation, a master teacher also needs to possess a supporting profession...”

Seeing the puzzled look on the other party’s face, Huang Yu explained, “Using simple words, one needs to be skilled in another profession in order to be eligible to take the 1-star master teacher examination; if one is skilled in two professions, one will be eligible to take the 2-star master teacher examination, so on and so forth. Of course, the requirements for the supporting profession grow higher as you proceed higher up the ladder. The more stars you possess, the more knowledgeable you have to be of each supporting profession. If you’re just going to take the 1-star master teacher examination, having the profession of a painter is more than enough!”

“That is to say, with your supporting profession of a painter and the identity of an assistant master teacher, you will be eligible to take the 1-star master teacher examination! Of course, it is another matter whether you will be able to pass the examination. But at the very least, you will be eligible for it. On the other hand, I... Even though I am an apprentice master teacher, I am still not qualified to take the examination!”

At this, Huang Yu smiled bitterly.

The reason why there are so few master teachers and why the examination is so hard is because of this.

There are countless professions throughout the Upper, Middle, and Lower Nine Paths. Every single profession requires one to devote extensive effort to achieve mastery. Taking Master Lu Chen for example, he had immersed his entire life into painting but is only able to produce a painting of the fourth level. From this, one can see the immense difficulty involved.

There are some, due to the lack of a supporting profession, who remained as apprentices their entire life, never becoming eligible for the examination. Yet, not only is the person before her capable in teaching and possesses powerful cultivation, he has also reached the level of a grandmaster in painting. If he were to become an assistant master teacher, he would easily meet the prerequisites for the examination.

His starting point is so much higher than hers.

It is truly a wonder to her how he had managed to achieve so much despite not being much older than her.

“So that’s why...”

After hearing the explanation, Zhang Xuan finally understood why master teachers are so respected.

So this is the reason why master teachers are able to offer guidance to people of all professions.

In order to be eligible for the examination, one needs to first have a supporting profession. The higher one climbs, the more supporting profession one needs to have. That is why the master teachers possessing multiple stars are extremely formidable and rare. One needs to possess a frightening amount of knowledge to reach their level.

It is no wonder why Huang Yu, despite being an assistant master teacher, is devoting her efforts to learning painting and treats Master Lu Chen so respectfully. It seems that she intends to take painting as her supporting profession so as to earn the rights to take on the master teacher examination.

“I also have a 1-star apothecary emblem. Does this mean that as long as I become an apprentice, I will be eligible to take the

master teacher examination?” Zhang Xuan’s eyes lit up.

After days of impersonating as a master teacher, he came to understand how fearsome the identity is.

With this identity, no matter where he goes, he will be respected. No one will dare to pick a fight with him.

In the past, he wouldn’t have cared for the identity of a master teacher as he possesses the Library of Heaven’s Path.

However, it is different now.

The black aura hidden in his body meant that someone was trying to kill him. However, if he were to gain protection from the identity as a master teacher and the Teacher Guild, the other party would have to reconsider before laying hands on him.

Besides, the sky is the limit. Possessing such an incredible Library of Heaven’s Path, it would be a waste to limit himself to just Tianxuan Kingdom!

With venturing out into the world in mind, both cultivation and a respectable identity are important.

With the identity of a master teacher to rely on, many things would become so much easier and convenient to accomplish.

Drawing a parallel, only an official apothecary is allowed to enter the Apothecary Guild’s book collection vault, and they are granted steep discounts when buying pills.

“Looks like I should hurry up and take the master teacher examination!”

Zhang Xuan made up his mind.

With the cheat code that is called Library of Heaven’s Path, it would be a waste if he doesn’t become a master teacher.

A person just has to execute a punch and he will be able to see the person’s flaws. Just from this alone, supposed master teachers and experts mean nothing before him.

No matter how powerful a person can become, can he surpass the Heaven’s Path?

No one can conceal anything before the Path of Heaven. Besides, even the Heaven's Path is flawed, so how can a human possibly be flawless?

As long as one possesses flaws, Zhang Xuan will be able to tell through the books created by the library!

Only as an official master teacher can Zhang Xuan execute this ability of his without any worry and rise to the top!

Otherwise, given his current identity, gathering sufficient books to create the Heaven's Path Divine Art would be impossible, needless to say, wanting to advance swiftly.

“I have to acknowledge one of them as my teacher?”

In order to become a master teacher, one has to first become an assistant master teacher. To do so, one has to acknowledge a true master teacher as his teacher and have him guide the way.

To acknowledge Liu Ling, Zhuang Xian, or Zheng Fei as his teacher?

This makes no sense.

In the past two days, the trio had been often visiting the mansion, revealing their intentions of wanting to acknowledge Yang Shi as their teacher from time to time. But because Zhang Xuan planned to erase the identity of Yang Xuan soon, he hadn't agreed to it.

But from the looks of it, it is unlikely for them to give up anytime soon.

If he were to acknowledge one of them as his teacher as Zhang Xuan.

And accept them as disciples as Yang Xuan.

Then the situation would truly be incredulous.

That is to say... as Zhang Xuan, he would be their student, but as Yang Xuan, he would be their master!

To become both his own grandstudent and grandmaster...

Furthermore, he mustn't allow both of them to meet, otherwise, his identity will be exposed...

The heck!

How ridiculous that would be!

Briefly thinking of this scenario, Zhang Xuan could not help but feel stifled at his heart.

197 It Has Been Awhile Since We Last Me

“I can’t allow that to happen...”

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

If he does so, he might soon suffer from an identity crisis.

However, if he doesn’t acknowledge one of them as his teacher, he won’t be able to become an assistant master teacher and as such, won’t be eligible to take the master teacher examination.

Just the thought of it made his head hurt.

“Forget it, I won’t think about it for now. However, it is also good to meet the three master teachers as Zhang Xuan. Firstly, I can get closer to them. Secondly, I can ask them about the poison aura in my body!”

After a moment of hesitation, Zhang Xuan made up his mind.

That black aura in his body hasn’t become a danger yet, but he still has to get rid of it. If he were to ask them as ‘Yang Xuan’, it would be unbecoming of his identity as an enlightened expert. Rather, it is more appropriate for him to ask them as Zhang Xuan.

If Lu Xun and Wang Chao were to know of his thoughts, they would definitely go blind from crying.

After failing to acknowledge Yang Xuan, they went to visit the three master teachers yesterday, only to be kept at their door... Yet, with the three master teachers wanting to meet this fellow, he still has to consider twice, furthermore with such reluctance...

Will you die if you don’t act cool?

“When does the birthday banquet start? Also, who is Elder Tian, for the three master teacher and Emperor Shen Zhui to be visiting him personally?”

Zhang Xuan still found the situation peculiar.

To have the three master teachers and Emperor Shen Zhui visit him personally, this Elder Tian is by no means an ordinary figure. However, if he were any formidable figure, Zhang Xuan's previous self should have long heard of him. But why does he have no impression of him at all?

“The birthday banquet is today, so we will make it if we rush over now.”

Upon hearing the question, Huang Yu immediately realized that he had decided to join them and heaved a sigh of relief. She explained, “Elder Tian used to be a teacher at Beiwu Academy, and Liu shi, Zhuang shi, and Zheng shi had all once studied under him. Even though he doesn't specialize in teaching cultivation, he is nevertheless half a teacher to the three of them. Now that he is celebrating his ninetieth birthday, and the three master teachers happen to be in Tianxuan Kingdom, it is only right for them to offer their blessings to him...”

Even though this Elder Tian is a citizen of Tianxuan Kingdom, he was a teacher at Beiwu Academy. Each of the three master teachers had once studied under him and as such, he could be considered as half a teacher to them. The reason why Liu shi had Huang Yu head here was actually to have her attend the birthday banquet.

In the end, due to Shen Hong's affair, the three master teachers had gathered together here. And if the three master teachers are joining in the celebration, how can Emperor Shen Zhui stay out of it?

As for Beiwu Academy which Elder Tian had taught in, it is the largest academy in the Beiwu Kingdom. Huang Yu and Bai Xun were previously students there.

Having flipped through the books in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, these simple geographical terrains of the surrounding kingdoms are available to Zhang Xuan with just a simple thought.

The Beiwu Kingdom is a Tier 2 Kingdom near Tianxuan Kingdom. The master teachers holding the reigns in the country are Liu Ling and Zhuang Xian.

Kingdoms can be classified under Titled, 1st Tier, 2nd Tier and, finally, unranked such as Tianxuan Kingdom.

The higher tier the kingdom is, the more prosperous it becomes. Naturally, more resources go through their hands, and the standard of their fighters will be higher as well.

“Even though this Elder Tian doesn’t teach others how to rise their cultivation, he can be considered as a teacher?” Zhang Xuan was perplexed.

All of the teachers in Hongtian Academy specialize in raising a student’s cultivation. Taking Wang Chao laoshi for example, even though he is a master of spear arts, he is also responsible for guiding his students’ cultivation.

If one doesn’t teach cultivation, how can he be considered a teacher?

“Beiwu Academy is at a much larger scale compared to Hongtian Academy, and there are many different types of teachers there. Cultivation is only one of the subjects taught there. There are many teachers who specialize in different subjects, such as pill forging, painting and such. Students can choose to either specialize in one of these occupations or take it as a supporting course to boost their knowledge and temper their mind. Liu shi and the others, in preparation for the master teacher examination, only came under Elder Tian for a short period of time. As such, they cannot be considered as true students of his. He can only be considered as half a teacher to them.”

Huang Yu explained patiently.

If teachers guide students only on their cultivation, how can the knowledge of apothecaries, blacksmiths, and the other occupations be passed down? After all, the master teachers can’t do all the work by themselves!

If that were the case, wouldn’t master teachers tire themselves to death?

Clearly, there are teachers who specialize in different fields. Elder Tian was such a specialized teacher.

“What does he teach?” Understanding the situation, Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

This is similar to the schools in his previous life. There are teachers who specifically teach Physical Education, Mathematics, Physics, English, and such. It is impossible for a teacher to be proficient in all fields, and naturally, they can't teach every single subject.

“What Elder Tian teaches is the Way of Tea, he is a tea master!” Huang Yu smiled.

“A tea master?”

There was an introduction of tea masters in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault.

It is an occupation of the Lower Nine Paths and sounds unflattering. However, it has a huge following in some of the kingdoms.

Brewing tea can help one relax his state of mind, helping him to achieve tranquility. Formidable tea masters can even brew tea that is capable of calming another person's state of mind, allowing him to achieve calmness upon consumption. It is something that is useful for one's cultivation, and its effects are in no way inferior to Tranquil Heart Pill.

More importantly, the Way of Tea is much easier than pill forging, smithing, painting, and other occupations. Even though it is difficult to become a true master, as a skill, it is easy to pick up. Most of the sons of prestigious families and nobles in the higher tier kingdoms involve themselves in the art.

“Alright, I'll follow you there.”

After getting a clear idea of the situation, Zhang Xuan didn't hesitate further. Since the birthday banquet was going to start soon, he followed behind Huang Yu and Bai Xun and stepped into the carriage.

The place where Elder Tian resided was in the suburbs of the kingdom, and it was a significant distance away from Hongtian Academy. It took the carriage nearly two hours to reach its destination. Before a vast and luxurious garden, the carriage came to a stop.

Upon stepping out of the carriage, the trio was overwhelmed by the crowd before them.

Elder Tian was a teacher at Beiwu Academy and had guided master teachers. Just this fact alone attracted countless powerful individuals to offer him their blessings in person.

“Master Zhang, follow me...”

Upon alighting from the carriage, Huang Yu led the way to the entrance, displayed a name scroll, and easily entered the residence.

As expected of the residence of a person whom the three master teachers are paying a visit to, it is massive and filled with countless corridors. It isn't difficult for those here for the first time to lose their way.

“Liu Shi and the others probably haven't arrived. We should wait for them in the side hall.”

Huang Yu seems to have been here before, and she navigated around the residence with familiarity. In a short while, they arrived at a vast hall.

Even before walking in, they observed that a huge crowd had already gathered in the hall.

“Xiao Yu, you are finally here...”

Upon stepping into the hall, a delighted voice called out immediately. Following which, a young man came running up to her in delight.

This young man appears to be around twenty-three to twenty-four, and he is dressed in white. He has a dashing face which Zhang Xuan can't hope to match up to.

Bai Xun's face darkened upon noticing the person and he quickly stood in front of Huang Yu.

“Bai Xun, what do you want?” A frown formed on young man’s forehead.

“Are you qualified to call her Xiao Yu? I advise you to stay away from her, otherwise, don’t blame me for acting impolitely.” Bai Xun stared at the other party furiously.

“Acting impolitely? You speak as though we’ve never fought before. Have you ever won against me?”

The young man waved aside Bai Xun’s threat and continued, “Besides, this is my home. As the host, I should give my all to welcome my guest. You wish to interfere in this as well? Aren’t you being noseey, Bai xiao wangye!”

“You...” Bai Xun raised his eyebrows as he prepared to enter a fight.

“Enough!” Seeming to have expected that the two would quarrel, Huang Yu’s eyebrows knitted tightly together. Glancing at the two, she said, “We’re here to offer our blessings to Elder Tian. If you two really must fight, do it after!”

“Rest easy, Xiao Yu. I can’t be bothered with a boor like him whose head is only filled with slaughter!”

After which, the young man chuckled lightly, “Xiao Yu, I’ve just learned a new tea brewing method. Let’s go, I will make a pot for you. It’ll definitely calm your mind, and after drinking it a few times, you’ll surely reach Heart of Tranquil Water quickly...”

“I’ll pass. I have to wait for Liu shi here!”

Huang Yu remained completely unmoved to the other party’s passionate welcome and rejected him flatly.

“It’s alright if you don’t want it. I also happen to want to greet Liu shi, so I’ll wait for him here with you then...”

The young man didn’t pay his rejection any heed and simply chuckled nonchalantly.

Since the other party was insistent on staying here, Huang Yu wasn’t in a good position as a guest to drive her host away as well.

“Shameless!” Bai Xun was outraged, but he no longer spoke of fighting with the other party.

From the looks of it, it seems that he isn't a match for the other party. Otherwise, given his fiery temper, he isn't the type to hold himself back due to the occasion.

Despite knowing the temper of the young noble, the young man paid him attention. At this moment, the young man suddenly noticed Zhang Xuan and looked at him with doubtful eyes. “Xiao Yu, this is...”

“Oh, allow me to introduce you two!” Huang Yu glanced over and spoke. “Master Zhang, this is Tian Long, the sole grandson of Elder Tian; Tian Long, this is Zhang Xuan laoshi from Hongtian Academy.”

“Zhang Xuan? This name sounds familiar. I seem to have heard of it somewhere...”

The young man Tian Long frowned as he mused over the name. Suddenly, his eyes lit up and he exclaimed, “Hongtian Academy! You're the one who is going to compete with Lu Xun laoshi in the Teacher Evaluation, Zhang Xuan?”

The news of the Teacher Evaluation had spread like wildfire, and it was difficult for anyone to remain unaware.

“Lu Xun is the most incredible celebrity teacher in Hongtian Academy, and to dare to compete with him in a Teacher Evaluation, you sure are courageous. I'm impressed!”

Even though he said so, there wasn't the slightest bit of awe in his expression. Rather, it was filled with contempt.

Being the son of Master Lu Chen and a famous star teacher in Tianxuan City, Lu Xun possesses tremendous fame. Matched against a nobody like Zhang Xuan, everyone believes that it would be a completely one-sided match.

Seeing the other party behaving in such a manner, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

Yet another arrogant nobody.

“Tian Long, what do you mean by that?” Bai Xun couldn't withstand it any further.

“I don’t mean anything. Just that, humans are valued for knowing their place. To overestimate oneself will only make one’s life difficult.” Tian Long shook his head.

“I dare you to say, who is the one who doesn’t know his place? Master Zhang just wants to keep a low-profile and refuses to flaunt his abilities...” Bai Xun bellowed angrily.

Even though he had heard of Lu Xun, he wasn’t familiar with him. On the contrary, he was completely awed by Zhang Xuan’s prowess. Upon hearing the words of the other party, Bai Xun was enraged.

“Master? What do you mean by master? Do you think anyone can be addressed by the title of a master so simply?”

Tian Long sneered. Flinging his hands, he stared down at Bai Xun haughtily, “That’s the title of someone who has reached an astounding level of mastery in their occupation. Only a person like my grandfather, who has reached the peak in the Way of Tea, can be qualified to be addressed as a tea master. For a mere twenty-year-old teacher at Hongtian Academy to be called a laoshi is already flattering, yet he dares to call himself a master? How naive...”

Sneering coldly, just as Tian Long was about to continue speaking, he suddenly noticed an elder walking over and shut his mouth hurriedly. Then, he respectfully clasped his hands and welcomed him, “Tian Long pays his respect to Master Yuanyu!”

He is the number one physician in Tianxuan Kingdom, Yuanyu.

Toward the greeting of the other party, Master Yuanyu nodded his head impassively. Just as he was about to proceed further in, he suddenly caught sight of Zhang Xuan. His eyes lit up and he rushed forward to him passionately.

“Master Zhang, you’re here as well... It has been awhile since we last met!”

198 Won't Condone It Next Time

“What?”

Upon seeing this sight, the respectful Tian Long's body suddenly jolted, as though a mace had clubbed his head.

What did Master Yuanyu just call him?

Master?

Who was Master Yuanyu? A true master physician, a person who was of equal standing as his grandfather, Elder Tian. No matter where he went, he was respected by everyone, and even Emperor Shen Zhui had to treat him with utmost respect.

Even a genius like him who was known in his generation had to talk to him carefully for fear of offending him. For such a person... to run over to a fellow who was younger than him and respectfully address him as... master?

Furthermore, his attitude seemed as though he had met his idol....

The hell, what was going on?

More importantly, he had just said that Zhang Xuan had no rights to be named master, and at the very next moment, Master Yuanyu came running over. This face slap...

Tian Long felt his face warp in embarrassment, and there was a fiery sensation all over it.

However, that wasn't the end of the incident. Initially, he thought that Master Yuanyu running over for the lad would leave the lad extremely honored and gleeful. Yet he only saw him frowning. “Didn't we just meet a few days ago?”

‘Frowning?’

‘The hell are you frowning!’

Tian Long's mouth twitched.

The other party was an elder, and saying that it had been long since they met... was just basic pleasantries. Yet, this fellow pointed that out in public.... 'Can't you speak properly?'

Initially, he thought that Master Yuanyu would fly into a rage, only to see him smack his forehead, as though he had only realized the fact now. "Yes! Yes! More importantly, I have placed Master's painting in my room and admired it daily. The more I look at it, the more I feel that our levels are different. That's why I forgot that we had just met a few days ago."

"It's just a painting, there's nothing much to admire about it. If you wish to learn, I can teach you!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

"Really? Then I'll be truly grateful for your teaching then..." Master Yuanyu became so excited his beard flew up along with his words.

Putong!

Tian Long staggered. He could almost see thunder rumbling around him.

Yuanyu... Aren't you a master? Why do you look like an elementary schooler at this moment?

Learning from this lad? What the hell are you going to learn from him?

Is he qualified for it?

"He..."

Unable to stand it any longer, he turned to look at Bai Xun.

"Master Zhang is a true master painter that even Master Lu Chen is impressed with. If he isn't worthy for the title of master, who else can be worthy of it?" Bai Xun looked at him with glee and disdain.

'Trying to brag?

'I'll see what you have to say now!'

'Acting so arrogantly previously, even telling him to "know his place."' You're the one who should know your place!'

“Master painter?”

Only then did Tian Long recall that Master Yuanyu was not only a skilled physician, he was a talented painter as well.

However, he couldn't understand what kind of standards a fellow who wasn't even twenty and had a terrible reputation in the academy could reach such that even a master painter like Yuanyu would be so impressed with him.

Even though painting wasn't as popular to the Way of Tea, it was still one of the Nine Paths, and it was difficult to achieve mastery in it.

“He might have just copied the drawing of some master and gained a slight bit of fame from it. Master should just be a respectful address for him. Otherwise, at his age, even if he had learned painting ever since he was born, it should be impossible for him to reach the level of a master...”

Painting was similar to tea making in certain aspects, and as such, Tian Long understood the difficulty of the occupation.

He had been studying the Way of Tea since he was seven, and it had been eighteen years since then. Even so, he had only reached the second level of the Way of Tea, 【Essence Restoration】 .

In terms of apothecary ranking, he was equivalent to a high-level apprentice, but even so, he was still a significant distance away from officially joining the ranks of the occupation.

Given the other party was younger than him. How could he have reached the level of master?

Master was a title given to those who had officially entered the threshold of the occupation.

For example, an official apothecary could be called a master apothecary. Only an official painter or someone who was capable of drawing a painting of the fourth level could be named such.

For a fellow below twenty to draw a painting of the fourth level?

This was like saying that he was able to brew a tea of the fourth level. What a joke!

.....

...

Regardless of whether Tian Long believed it or not, Master Yuanyu's action of greeting Zhang Xuan had attracted the attention of many. Thus, Zhang Xuan waved his hands casually. "You should work first. If you really wish to learn painting from me, feel free to look for me anytime!"

He was here just to visit the three master teachers to ask about the black aura over his body. He didn't wish to cause a big ruckus here. After all, a person should keep a low-profile!

If this fellow were to keep following him, how could Zhang Xuan maintain a low profile?

This didn't align with his goals at all!

"Yes, I'll head over there first then. When I have time, I'll look for Master Zhang to study from you." Master Yuanyu also knew that his identity was way too eye-catching, and that staying here would cause trouble for Zhang Xuan. As such, he clasped his hands and left.

Those who were skilled would be respected as masters. Even though the other party might be young, just his ability of being able to produce a painting of the fifth level made him worthy of respect and learning from.

.....

...

Overwhelmed with shock and embarrassment, Tian Long didn't really hear the conversation between the two. When he looked at Zhang Xuan laoshi once more, not only was he not impressed with the other party, he was even angrier than before.

It wasn't a secret that he liked Huang Yu, which was also the reason why he had been on bad terms with Bai Xun.

Knowing that Huang Yu would come for his grandfather's birthday banquet, he specially learnt a tea brewing method to showcase to her. Yet, before he could even do so, he was humiliated before this fellow. He could be considered to have good self-control to stop himself from attacking him.

“Even if he isn't a true master, just by the fact that Master Yuanyu came over to greet him, he is unlikely to be ordinary....”

Even though he was infuriated, he didn't lose his cool. He calmly pondered on how he could embarrass the other party and regain his pride. Suddenly, a thought popped into his mind.

“Right, they're here as well. I remember someone reporting to me back then. I was too busy waiting for Xiao Yu that I didn't get a chance to greet them. If I brought him over to them now, it should be interesting....”

At this point, he stepped forward and said, “Zhang laoshi, I'm truly apologetic. I didn't know that you were skilled in painting, so do forgive me for my insolence!”

Even though he said this, there wasn't the slightest hint of sincerity in his tone.

Facing this kind of hypocritical fellow, Zhang Xuan couldn't be bothered to waste his time with him. As a result, he casually waved it off. “I'll drop it this time, but I won't condone it the next time!”

“You...”

Despite his polite apology, the other party lectured him like a teacher disciplining his own student. Tian Long felt another stifled sensation in his chest and he nearly burst into anger.

‘Can't we talk normally?’

‘I've heard people say that those who are skilled in painting are all gentle and courteous, and their words tend to be wise and profound. Yet, this fellow could kill a person with his words...’

Is he truly a master painter?

Nearly flying into a rage, he clenched his fist. The angrier he was, the more he knew he couldn't express it. A glint of cold intent gleamed through his eyes, but a smile remained on his face. "Yes, I'll take note of it later. Since we don't know when Liu Shi and the others will come, why don't we head upstairs first? This way, we'll surely be able to see them when they arrive!"

If those familiar with Tian Long saw his current expression, they would immediately understand that someone was in for a ride of misfortune.

"This..." Huang Yu hesitated as she turned to the young man beside her.

Even though she was an assistant master teacher and possessed exceptional standing, Zhang Xuan was considered by Master Lu Chen as a peer of his. Therefore, she dared not make a decision without asking for his approval.

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Many people had noticed him when Master Yuanyu came over to greet him. To him, it was no difference waiting below or on top. In any case, he was likely here for the entire day, so there was nothing to hurry over.

"Alright!" Upon seeing Zhang Xuan agree to it, Huang Yu turned to express her consent as well.

Upon seeing this sight, Tian Long felt even more frenzied.

He didn't know the relationship between Zhang Xuan and Huang Yu, but seeing the two of them exchanging gazes here and there, seemingly intimate with one another, as though a couple....

The strong envy he felt made his face twitch, and his rage was pushed further toward the limit.

Guests were received at the second floor of the side hall. From here, the guests could drink a cup of tea while enjoying the scenery by the window. Guests could overlook the entire mountain mansion, which seemed like a massive garden of flowers. It was pleasing to the eye.

Walking up the stairs, the party of four headed up.

There were many seats on the second floor. Quite a few people were seated, sipping on tea and chatting casually.

Those who were able to attend Elder Tian's birthday banquet were all famous figures of Tianxuan Kingdom, and every one of them had outstanding backgrounds. As such, a personal maid was attending to each and every one of them.

It seemed like these maids were specially trained in the Way of Tea as well. Their movements were smooth, and it created a bizarrely beautiful sight.

"This way..."

Tian Long led the way at the front, scanning the surroundings while proceeding forward, as though looking for someone. Suddenly, his eyes lit up and he stopped.

"Brother Lu and Brother Wang, pardon me for not greeting you two earlier. I didn't know that you were here..."

Following his gaze, the others saw two people sitting at a table not too far away.

They were the star teachers of Hongtian Academy, Lu Xun and Wang Chao.

They had come for Elder Tian's birthday banquet today.

"Tian Long, you are doing this intentionally right?" Upon seeing this fellow bringing them here, how could Huang Yu not understand his intentions? Her face immediately sank.

Everyone knew that Zhang Xuan laoshi was going to face off with Lu Xun laoshi soon, and the two of them had a hostile relationship with one another. Clearly, the other party had ill intentions in mind bringing Zhang Xuan to meet with Lu Xun.

"Xiao Yu, what are you talking about? I just happened to meet with Brother Lu and Brother Wang here. Since we're here, why don't we sit down and drink some tea together? You can also try out my tea as well."

Tian Long's lips curled upward as he sneaked a glance at Zhang Xun.

Kid, weren't you arrogant just now?

"Won't condone it the next time." Won't condone your head!

Now that Lu Xun laoshi is here, let's see how you continue feigning as a master and an expert!

Lu Xun and Wang Chao clearly didn't expect to meet Zhang Xuan here. Wang Chao glanced at Tian Long and frowned. "Brother Tian, don't the guards check the invitation letter? This is Elder Tian's birthday banquet! Why does it seem as though anyone could get in easily?"

Upon hearing those words, Tian Long nearly leapt with joy.

He had heard that Wang Chong had an impatient nature. To think that it would turn out to be such a useful weapon now.

He was still contemplating how to spark off the conflict between them when this guy immediately shot an arrow at Zhang Xuan.

Even though he was delighted, he still feigned that he was in a difficult position. "They must have checked the invitation letter. I invited Assistant Master Teacher Huang Yu and Bai xiao wangye personally. As for this... Zhang laoshi, even though I wasn't the one who invited him, since he is their guest, I am not in a good position to say anything...."

"Guest? A low-level teacher can be invited as a guest for Elder Tian's birthday banquet as well?" Wang Chao sneered.

Zhang Xuan was merely a low-level teacher in the academy. In terms of social position, he truly wasn't qualified to attend Elder Tian's birthday banquet.

"Enough, Wang Chao!"

Lu Xun waved his hands, interrupting his friend's sarcastic remark. He glanced at Zhang Xuan and said impassively, "I'm sorry, Zhang laoshi, Wang Chao tend to speak his mind, so he might appear a little rude. However... this truly isn't the place where you should be. You should return quickly so that Huang Yu xiaojie won't be criticized because of you, and Hongtian Academy's reputation won't be tarnished!"

199 You Must Be Zhang Xuan laoshi!

“Lu Xun, what do you mean?”

Hearing those words, Huang Yu could no longer hold herself back.

What do you mean by criticized? What do you mean by tarnish Hongtian Academy’s reputation?

Zhang laoshi was invited by the three master teachers to the birthday banquet, yet why do you speak as though his presence here was an embarrassment?

“I don’t mean anything else. People should not be in places which their identity does not allow them to be in. Huang Yu xiaojie, I know that you are an assistant master teacher, and you are deeply trusted and doted upon by Liu shi. Even so, you shouldn’t act so obstinately. This is Elder Tian’s birthday banquet, so you should pay more attention to your actions! Elder Tian had been half-teacher, half-friend of Liu shi. If you bring a low-level teacher with such a terrible reputation over, it would be troublesome if you incur Liu shi’s ire!”

Lu Xun shook his head.

Neither sarcasm nor anger could be seen on his face, and it seemed as though he were just recounting facts.

In his eyes, it didn’t matter whether Zhang Xuan really scored a zero in his Teacher Qualification Examination or not. This fellow was just a low-level teacher, and it wasn’t befitting of his identity to be in such a high-class birthday banquet. Forcefully bringing someone of his caliber along would only lower Huang Yu’s standing.

This was akin to bringing a beggar to a luxurious hotel. Regardless of how well-dressed and cultured one was, one would only be pulled down by the companion and become a laughingstock.

A dragon is only a dragon when it is accompanied by a phoenix. If accompanied by a pig, it would become a dog.

“You...”

Hearing those words, Huang Yu was infuriated. She was about to say something when she saw Zhang Xuan walk to the table and sit down in a chair.

He casually poured a cup of tea and lifted his head to look at the two arrogant star teachers.

“After spouting so much nonsense, your main point is that I’m just a low-level teacher with a terrible reputation. If that’s the case... amazing Lu laoshi, why do you want to challenge me to a Teacher Evaluation? Aren’t you just ruining your awe-inspiring reputation?”

Initially, Zhang Xuan couldn’t be bothered with the duo putting on airs. However...

I tried to spare your dignity, didn’t I? Yet, you just had to trample of mine.

Hearing those words, Huang Yu and Bai Xun exchanged glances. At the same time, they were impressed. As expected of Zhang laoshi, his words sure were savage.

But it made perfect sense. Didn’t you say that bringing him over would drag down my prestige?

If that’s the case, as a great star teacher of Hongtian Academy, why did you challenge him to the Teacher Evaluation? Aren’t you simply making a fool out of yourself?

“You?” Lu Xun chuckled softly. He didn’t feel humiliated by Zhang Xuan’s words at all. Lifting his lids, he said, “You are just a stepping stone for me to reach higher grounds. If you have to blame something, blame it on your terrible luck for meeting me.”

“Stepping stone?”

“Indeed. Tomorrow’s Teacher Evaluation will surely attract the attention of Yang shi and the other three master teachers. Brother Lu will display the results of his tutelage to them, earning him the appreciation of the four master teachers. He

will then he able to reach greater heights, becoming a true assistant master teacher. As for you, you are only a foil to the show!”

Wang Chao chuckled gently as he stared at him in sympathy.

‘You are just a stepping stone. Did you think that you are someone incredible?’

‘Honestly, you should feel flattered to be able to become Lu Xun’s stepping stone.’

“Are you two that certain of your victory?”

Upon realizing that the other party had such intentions, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

He didn’t know about the intent of the three master teachers, but it was impossible for “Yang shi” to come and spectate the competition. Even less so, he wouldn’t accept Lu Xun as his apprentice.

“Actually, it doesn’t matter whether he wins or not. There is something that you all might not be aware of!”

Wang Chao and Lu Xun were just about to continue speaking when Tian Long suddenly chuckled and interrupted.

“What?”

Wang Chao glanced at Tian Long.

With a haughty look, Tian Long said, “Actually, Liu shi’s intention for coming to Tianxuan City isn’t just to offer blessings to my grandfather on his birthday. More importantly, he wishes to accept Brother Lu as his disciple. Even though this matter is supposed to be a secret, Liu shi had written a letter to my grandfather to tell him about it. I simply happened to see the letter. That’s why I know about it.”

“Oh? Is that true?”

Clearly unaware of this news, Lu Xun’s eyes lit up.

“Of course! Given Brother Lu’s incredible reputation, it is normal that a master teacher would set his sights on you. As my grandfather’s student, Liu shi dares not hide the matter from him and revealed everything to him. It is precisely

because of this that I sent you an invitation so that he can introduce you to Liu shi during the banquet later, and accept you as his disciple!” Tian Long said.

“I’ll have to thank Elder Tian for this matter then....”

Hearing the affirmation of the other party, Lu Xun stood up with excitement.

Knowing that it was hopeless between him and Yang shi, he turned his attention to the three master teachers. However, in the past two days, the three master teachers didn’t seem to be around. Every time he tried to pay a visit to them, they weren’t around, which made him panic.

Initially, he thought that his plan was doomed, just like how it was with Yang shi. Yet, it turned out that Yang shi had already set his sights on him.

This was wonderful!

“Looks like we’ll become fellow apprentices then....”

Lu Xun smiled kindly at Huang Yu.

“Who is your fellow apprentice!” Huang Yu snorted.

Huang Yu had no idea what Liu shi was thinking of, but since Tian Long already said so, he should be confident of the matter. Could it be that... she would really become peers with this fellow?

Huang Yu felt conflicted.

This fellow was extremely arrogant, and she disliked his attitude.

But honestly speaking, this fellow was also extremely capable, and she was impressed by him as well.

For him to be able to reach such great heights in Tianxuan Kingdom without the guidance of a master teacher, he must have his way with teaching students.

“Did you hear? Brother Lu is about to become an assistant master teacher. Don’t you feel ashamed to stay here?”

Upon hearing such wonderful news, Wang Chao was delighted for his friend as well. Turning his gaze to look at the indifferent Zhang Xuan, he felt another surge of disgust for him.

“About to become? So that means that he isn’t accepted, right?”

Zhang Xuan couldn’t be bothered with this matter at all.

It was just that he didn’t realize Liu Shi was interested in Lu Xun. At this moment, he was considering whether he should use the identity of “Yang Xuan” to advise the other party against this matter.

After all, if “Yang Xuan” accepted Liu Ling as his student, then Lu Xun would be his disciple’s disciple. However, this fellow was self-assuming and arrogant....

This kind of disciple would get on his nerves!

He didn’t want such a disciple!

“Continue acting haughtily then. I’ll see whether you can still do so later...”

Seeing how that guy was feigning nonchalance to the matter, the two men who were trying their best to become his disciple’s disciples stared at him with disdain.

They had seen arrogant people, but they had never seen such an arrogant person.

Once the three master teachers arrived, Lu Xun would become an assistant master teacher. Yet, that fellow didn’t feel embarrassed to remain here.... How could someone be so shameless?

Furthermore, to be seated here sipping on tea.... How can you still be in the mood to drink tea now!

If it were me, I would jump off the building in embarrassment.

“Hehe, Brother Wang, you can’t really say that either. I heard Xiao Yu and Bai Xiao Wangye calling this Zhang Laoshi Master Zhang just awhile ago. I’ve heard he is a true master painter, and he seems to be quite an incredible figure!” Zhang Xuan’s

skin seemed to be thicker than what Tian Long thought it out to be. Seeing that the other party was indifferent to the matter, Tian Long added this.

“Master painter?”

Placing his hands behind his back, Lu Xun glanced at Zhang Xuan with disdain. “You dare call yourself a master painter before me? Don’t you find it hilarious? Even if you want to brag, you should know your limits!”

Even though he hadn’t returned home for many years, he knew better than anyone else how difficult it was to become a master painter.

It was one thing for the famous worst teacher in the academy who got on good terms with Huang Yu to flaunt his new identity. But wasn’t it too much to be bragging about this as well?

“Indeed! Brother Tian, you must have heard wrong. Brother Lu comes from a distinguished family of painters, and his father, Master Lu Chen, is Tianxuan Kingdom’s most incredible master painter. Even Emperor Shen Zhui had learnt from him. Since childhood, Brother Lu has been learning painting from him. How could he possibly not know if another master painter appeared in the kingdom?”

Wang Chao chuckled and shook his head.

“Seeing the two of you speak like this, I feel relieved. I thought that it was real. After all, Master Yuanyu...”

Tian Long was just about to talk about Master Yuanyu’s previous attitude when a commotion broke out below.

“Hurry up, the three master teachers are here!”

“Emperor Shen Zhui is here as well. Let’s hurry over to welcome them....”

Gossip was flying all around the room.

“The three master teachers and Emperor Shen Zhui are here?”

Hearing the commotion below, Tian Long stopped talking. Then he turned to look at Lu Xun and Wang Chao. “Brother

Lu and Brother Wang, let's go down to welcome them as well!"

"Alright!"

Since the three master teachers had arrived, the crowd in the room could no longer remain seated and quickly hurried downstairs.

"Senior Huang Yu, let's go welcome Teacher together!"

Lu Xun chuckled.

"Who's your senior?" Huang Yu harrumphed. Then she turned to look at Zhang Xuan.

"Let's go!"

Knowing that Huang Yu, as a student, had to welcome her teacher, Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Besides, he was here to meet the three master teachers. Since they had arrived, it would be good for him to take a look as well.

Hualala!

The crowd on the second floor filed out, and in a few moments, the entire floor was empty.

Walking toward the main hall, they saw a few figures in the hallway leading here. They were the three master teachers—Liu Ling, Zhuang Xian, Zheng Fei—and Emperor Shen Zhui.

Even though these four people had behaved respectfully before Yang shi, they looked imposing here.

"Paying respect to Liu shi, Zhuang shi, and Zheng shi! Paying respect to Your Majesty!"

Even though there were many clan heads and elders of prestigious clans here, all of their heads were lowered at this moment.

"Just like you all, we're here to offer our blessings to Elder Tian. There's no need so act so constrained around us."

Emperor Shen Zhui smiled.

Even though he said this , the others didn't dare follow the letter of the law. Everyone simply smiled politely, too afraid to speak.

“Let's go!”

Upon seeing the three master teachers and Emperor Shen Zhui walking over, Tian Long smiled and brought Lu Xun and Wang Chao forward. As the apprentice of a master teacher, how could Huang Yu lag behind them? As a result, she walked over with Bai Xun and Zhang Xuan as well.

“Teacher!”

Walking forward, Huang Yu and Bai Xun immediately bowed respectfully.

“Have you invited him yet?”

Upon seeing the duo, Liu Ling's, Zhuang Xian's, and Zheng Fei's eyes immediately lit up.

The past two days, they had donned their disguises and camped at Hongtian Academy, waiting for Zhang Xuan's appearance so that they could accept him as their apprentice. Yet the fellow never returned. It seemed he had disappeared, and even Emperor Shen Zhui was unable to find him.

So they had no choice but to have Huang Yu and Bai Xun look for him as well. Initially, they didn't hold much hope for it either. However, upon seeing that there were no signs of depression on the faces of the two, their hearts skipped a beat.

“We've invited him over. This person beside me is...”

Huang Yu wanted to introduce Zhang Xuan, but Lu Xun interrupted her. With excitement written all over his face, he clasped his hands and said, “Lu Xun pays respect to Liu shi, Zhuang shi, and Zheng shi...”

Initially, he thought that after introducing himself, the three master teachers would immediately display their care and concern for him before going ahead to accept him as their apprentice. In the end, the three simply disregarded him, as though they didn't see him at all. They walked toward Tian Long and surrounded him. A bright smile was on their faces.

“You must be Zhang Xuan laoshi. Finally, we get to meet you in person. You don’t know how difficult it has been for us to find you....”

“Ehhh?” Tian Long was stunned.

200 Elder Tian

“I...”

Tian Long froze. Looking at the three master teachers who were grinning brightly, to the point that they were almost fawning over him, Tian Long was confused. He wanted to say something, but not a word would come out of his mouth.

So... what was going on?

Zhang Xuan was even more confused. After a few days of not meeting the trio... why did the three people suddenly turn foolish?

Putting aside the fact that I am Zhang Xuan, what's with your excited looks?

The one who had scammed your money was Yang shi, the matter has nothing to do with me.... Even if you have seen through my identity, you should look for him instead of me....

“Cough cough, Liu shi, he isn't Zhang laoshi. He is Elder Tian's grandson, Tian Long...” Huang Yu said quickly, who couldn't stand watching the situation any longer.

“Ah? You aren't him? If you aren't him, why didn't you say so? Tsk, you made me happy for nothing!” Glaring at Tian Long, Zheng Fei snorted. If not for the occasion, it seemed he would have slapped the other party's face.

Looking at his ferocious expression, Tian Long was on the verge of tears.

‘It's not that I don't want to say so. But you three simply rushed here and took me to be Zhang Xuan laoshi, not even giving me a chance to explain myself. I am frightened by your suddenly hospitality, alright?’

It wasn't surprising that the three master teachers would recognize the wrong person. In terms of build and looks, Tian Long was superior to Zhang Xuan. Huang Yu had only said that Zhang Xuan was beside her. Before she could even

confirm whether it was to her right or to her left, Lu Xun had interrupted her. Naturally, they thought that the tall and handsome man was the person they were looking for.

“If he isn’t it, then... where is Zhang laoshi?” Liu Ling looked around once more.

“I am Zhang Xuan....”

Knowing that it would only be more awkward if he dragged it out, Zhang Xuan stood forward and revealed his identity.

“You are Zhang laoshi? Indeed, you look as dashing and capable as I thought you to be.” Liu Ling stepped forward with a bright smile on his face.

“Indeed! With such a valiant disposition, you stand out even among everyone else here. I could recognize you immediately from the crowd,” Zhuang shi praised.

“As expected of the ideal teacher of Tianxuan Kingdom. Not bad, not bad,” Zheng Fei quickly added as well.

“...”

Dark lines streaked across Zhang Xuan’s face.

‘I’m dashing, capable, valiant, and an ideal teacher?’

‘If so, how did you all recognize the wrong person? Why did you all think Tian Long was me?’

To think a master teacher could spout bullshit... with such a straight face.

Where’s your dignity?

What about status?

“May I know why the three master teachers are looking for me?” Seeing the heated passion in their gazes, Zhang Xuan couldn’t stand it anymore and hurriedly asked.

“Oh, there are too many people here. Let’s find another suitable location to speak!” Liu Ling said.

With so many people looking, he couldn’t possibly say that he had heard of Zhang Xuan’s affairs, specially went to the

academy to investigate his capabilities, and thus wanted to accept him as his disciple!

If he were to say so, not only would others think him insane, Zhang Xuan would also be frightened away by him.

Where in the world could one find a master teacher recruiting an apprentice so actively?

“Sure!” Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Judging from the other party’s attitude, it was unlikely that they knew he was “Yang Xuan.” Otherwise, they would have long ago made a move on him.

Since that was the case, it just so happened that he wanted to ask them about the black aura in his body as well, so he agreed.

“Let’s go!”

Seeing that Zhang laoshi seemed easy to speak to, the trio heaved sighs of relief. They stood around Zhang Xuan, as if afraid he would run away, and escorted him forward.

Drinking in the view, everyone felt perplexed. On the other hand, Lu Xun felt his world crumbling apart.

Initially, he thought he would earn the appreciation of the three master teachers just by revealing his identity and would become Liu shi’s apprentice. From there on, his name would spread far and wide. But... what was going on?

Not only did they disregard him after hearing his name, they rushed forward to Zhang Xuan, whom Lu Xun had been looking down upon, and fawned over him....

Didn’t Tian Long just say that he was already decided to be Liu shi’s apprentice?

That Zhang Xuan was only a low-level teacher, not to mention he also possessed a poor reputation. So why would the three master teachers surround him?

Gritting his teeth, Lu Xun stepped up.

“Liu shi... I am Lu Xun, Hongtian Academy’s star teacher...”

“Oh, I know. I met you at the royal palace last time.” Liu Ling nodded his head and pushed him away. “Alright, will you excuse me? I have something to speak to Zhang laoshi about, so move to the side. Don’t block the path!”

“...”

Lu Xun staggered as he stared at Liu shi walking into the distance. At this moment, Lu Xun’s body went stiff, and the thought of suicide even flashed through his mind.

‘No matter what, I am the number one, star teacher of Tianxuan Kingdom. To send me away after saying a few words... Shouldn’t you at least ask about my affairs? Yet, you simply pushed me away, telling me to not block the path...’

Toward Zhang Xuan, as though afraid he would disappear into the thin, the three of them surrounded him like he was some treasure. On the other hand, to Lu Xun...

Lu Xun felt utterly stifled.

‘Can anyone tell me what is going on?’

Suppressing the urge to spit blood, Lu Xun turned to look at Tian Long.

Didn’t you have inside news on the matter?

Didn’t you say that Liu shi had written a letter, saying that he wanted to accept me as his apprentice?

Which teacher in the world wouldn’t spare a second glance at his own apprentice?

“I...”

Seeing Lu Xun’s blaming gaze, Tian Long felt frenzied too.

I really saw that letter! I have no idea what is going on either...

While the duo was perplexed over the matter, Wang Chao felt as though his face had been slapped multiple times.

Thinking that Lu Xun would definitely become an apprentice of Liu shi today, he was the one who put Zhang Xuan down

the most previously. Yet, in the end, he only humiliated himself through his words.

He said that the other party was just a foil and a stepping stone. Yet why did it feel like Lu Xun was the foil and the stepping stone now?

He thought that the other party was shameless and that he should just end his life.... Now he seemed like the one who should end his life!

Perhaps...

Wang Chao, along with Lu Xun and Tian Long, looked at Huang Yu and Bai Xun.

If someone knew what was going on, it had to be the two of them.

One of them was Liu shi's apprentice while the other one is Zhuang shi's student.

And they were the ones who brought Zhang Xuan over.

"We... don't know either!"

Huang Yu quickly shook her head.

The three master teachers had only told them to bring Zhang Xuan over. They didn't say what they were going to do, so even they too were confused by the current situation.

Regardless of whether it was Liu shi or Zhuang shi, they held an austere image in the minds of the others. It always seemed like they were on a different level from the rest of them. Yet, at this moment, they seemed like they were fans chasing after an idol, following Zhang Xuan around. Even though they had seen it for themselves, they still found it hard to believe.

"Should we... go over to take a look?"

Unable to comprehend what was going on, they couldn't hold back their curiosity and hurriedly followed behind them.

Especially Lu Xun. If he doesn't receive an answer today, he might just die from his rage and indignation.

Just a moment ago, he was acting so haughtily, as though it was embarrassing for him to be compared with Zhang Xuan. But now, the three master teachers were fawning over him... while he was thrown to a corner....

‘What was good about the fellow? For the three master teachers to neglect me like this?’

.....

“Your Majesty, Liu shi, Zhuang shi, Zheng shi, old master sent me out here to welcome you all after learning of your arrival.”

Before they could walk too far, an elder walked forward to welcome them.

The butler of Tian Residence, Tian Gang.

“Mhm!” Liu shi nodded his head.

Even though he wanted to accept Zhang Xuan as his apprentice right now, they were currently at Elder Tian’s birthday banquet and it was unbecoming for a guest to steal the spotlight from the host.

“This way please. Old master is waiting for you all at the main hall.” Tian Gang led the crowd forward.

“Zhang laoshi, let’s go. Elder Tian was once my Way of Tea teacher and he is a kind person,” Liu Ling explained with a smile.

Facing the kind gesture from the three master teachers, Zhang Xuan could only nod his head in agreement.

After taking a few steps forward, he suddenly saw Emperor Shen Zhui walking toward him with a smile on his face.

“Zhang Xuan laoshi, I have long heard of your name. Now that I’ve met you, you are indeed as incredible as they make you out to be. You will definitely reach great heights in the future and your name will spread far and wide. If you have any requests for me, feel free to speak of them. Tianxuan Kingdom may not be a powerful country, but we don’t lack resources. As long as it’s within our means, I will try my best to obtain it for you!”

Hearing the other party's words, the bizarre look on Zhang Xuan's face deepened.

Naturally, he could tell that Emperor Shen Zhui was trying to express his goodwill. Just that... as an ordinary teacher in the academy, why would an emperor express his goodwill toward him?

Besides, you should have heard of it... my reputation as a terrible teacher....

The personality of these fellows seemed to have changed all of the sudden, treating him so well.

In the past few days, Zhang Xuan had been disguising himself as Yang shi, and he hadn't appeared as Zhang laoshi at all!

Zhang Xuan was unable to comprehend the reason for their change in attitude.

However, this was good as well. He was still thinking that it would be hard to approach the three master teachers as Zhang Xuan, especially given their standing. But from the looks of it, it seemed like he was thinking too much into the matter....

He was truly curious to know how the name of Zhang Xuan suddenly became so prestigious in the few days he had disappeared.

Such that even the Emperor and master teachers would rush forward to fawn over him.

Zhang Xuan simply nodded his head and said nothing else. Seeing the calm on the young man's face, Emperor Shen Zhui was impressed.

As expected of someone the three master teachers had set their eyes upon, just his state of mind was exceptional.

If it were any other youngster, if the Emperor were to praise them and promise them such, they would definitely become gleeful and complacent, thinking that they were exceptional beings blessed by the heavens. Yet the other party only impassively nodded his head, completely unmoved by his words at all. Just his calm itself was worthy of respect.

However, Emperor Shen Zhui was oblivious to the fact that it wasn't calm but... deep in contemplation.

Besides, Zhang Xuan was already used to their presence after coming into contact with them as Yang Shi the past few days. As such, he no longer felt any presence from them, and as a result, he didn't feel nervous at all.

Following behind the butler, they soon arrived at a vast hall.

The moment they walked in, the aroma of tea immediately assaulted their senses, and they immediately felt revitalized.

“Come, sit!”

An elder was seated in the direct center of the hall. In front of him was an exquisite tea set. Hot water, in the form of steam, was rising slowly from it. This was where the aroma of tea came from.

“Shen Zhui (Liu Ling, Zhuang Xian, Zheng Fei) pays respect to Elder Tian!”

The four of them stepped forward.

Zhang Xuan followed behind them and glanced at the elder.

Even though it was his ninetieth birthday, he looked like he was in his seventies. With a snow-white beard, from afar, his appearance was reminiscent of an enlightened saint.

“Yes, yes.”

The elder casually waved his hands, not lifting his head at all.

Lifting up a teacup, he casually poured tea into it. Instantly, the light, refreshing fragrance of the tea leaves immediately surged out from within. It seemed that the tea set had a soul of their own. With just the slightest movement from Elder Tian, hot water poured into the teacup.

His movements were smooth and looked exceptionally beautiful. Even before tasting the tea, everyone was already full of compliments. All eyes were fixated onto every single movement of Elder Tian.

Just the sight of the preparation of the tea felt pleasurable.

“This is the Way of Tea? Incredible!”

Zhang Xuan was just thinking that the Way of Tea could not be compared to pill forging and that sort. However, after looking at the movements of the elder, he immediately realized that there wasn't a single job in the Nine Paths that was ordinary.

“Please!”

The elder beckoned. Several maids stepped forward and presented the teacups to Emperor Shen Zhui and the three master teachers.

There were a total of six cups. After presenting four cups to the others, there were still two left.

After handing out the teacups, the elder wiped his hands dry. Only then did he lift his head to look at the crowd and see Zhang Xuan. He was taken aback by the latter's presence.

“You are...”