

Refining the Mountains and Rivers

Chapter 11 – Beneath the Skirt

The shopkeeper quickly said, “Miss, even the servant of the Grandmaster staying here has reached the Foundation Establishment realm at such a young age. You cannot be impulsive.”

Zeng Mo’er frowned. The gloominess on her face had long since disappeared. She glared at the tightly shut courtyard doors and turned to leave.

The shopkeeper was secretly embarrassed at himself. The young miss was brave and intelligent, so how could she have lost her temper so easily? She had likely intentionally probed with her question just now, and he had ended up misunderstanding her and talking too much.

As he was lost in his thoughts, he saw Zeng Mo’er move to the last carriage in the back and call out, “Great Grandfather, Mo’er was bullied by someone, you have to help me!”

The shopkeeper’s mouth fell open. But, he rapidly composed himself. He quickly hurried forwards with a few servants and fell to his knees. “Greetings, High Ancestor!”

Within the carriage, a mild voice sounded out. “You little monkey, you were clearly rude to others so how could you blame them for closing the door on you?”

The carriage door opened to reveal an old man sitting on a light yellow round cushion. His hair was neatly tied into a purple-gold crown and there was a faint smile on his common features. Even though he sat in the carriage without making any movements, a strange pressure still covered the entire street.

Golden Core realm!

Zeng Chingming cupped his hands together in greetings. His light voice spread out far, “I wonder which fellow daoist arrives? Perhaps you can open the door and meet with this old man?”

Soon, the courtyard doors opened up once more and the youth from before reappeared. He respectfully walked towards the last carriage and said, "Junior Qin Yu greets senior."

Zeng Chingming frowned. The air around him seemed to thicken, becoming heavier.

Qin Yu revealed a look of dread. He forced a smile and said, "Senior Zeng does not need to rattle me. If the Grandmaster doesn't wish to receive guests then there is nothing I can do about it." Then, after a brief pause he probed, "Well, how about you go in yourself. I can't block you in any case, so the Grandmaster shouldn't blame me."

Zeng Chingming looked at the courtyard for several moments in silence. Then, he shook his head and said, "It's fine. Since fellow daoist is wholeheartedly concentrating on alchemy, then this old man shall not disturb you. However, my Zeng Family is based here and the exchange of three proportions to one is making the situation a little awkward for my Pill Treasure Pavilion."

Qin Yu remained respectful. "Grandmaster said that in the future the exchange rate will be five to one, and we will stay here for at most two months before leaving."

Zeng Chingming smiled. "If that's the case, then allow me to engage in some business with fellow daoist." He waved his sleeves and a blue wooden crate appeared. "There are materials for 300 Essence Soul Pills here. Would it be possible to pick them up in seven days?"

Qin Yu thought for a moment. "Five days will be fine." As he spoke he took out a storage bag from his chest and placed the blue wooden crate inside.

Zeng Chingming's pupils shrank and his smile became even warmer. "Then, I'll have Mo'er come and pick up the pills in five days. Little friend, we will bid our farewells here."

Qin Yu watched as the Zeng Family's train of carriages left. Then, he returned to the courtyard and closed the door. He let out a long sigh of relief, his complexion somewhat pale.

On a table across from him was a small bead with cracks all over it; this was the Golden Core left behind by Cang Mangzi. This was what he had used to suppress that old Zeng monster.

Although it was dangerous, there shouldn't be anyone that would dare to stir up trouble after today.

Qin Yu revealed a smile. His true harvest was soon approaching!

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Within the carriage.

Zeng Chingming sat in meditation with his eyes closed. He suddenly said, "Pass down the order that no one can affront that courtyard." He continued to speak, "And look for an opportunity to establish good terms with that Qin Yu."

Zeng Mo'er frowned. "The Grandmaster is worthy of my Zeng Family's respect, but I can tell with a glance that the boy isn't anyone good at all. What's the point of being on good terms with him?"

Zeng Chingming opened his eyes, smiling as he looked at her. "Oh you, you're still a little chicken that isn't willing to take even the smallest loss." He shook his head and sighed. "Hollow Nascent Soul realm as well as a Grandmaster of alchemy. If he is hiding here focusing on his alchemy, then he should be gathering his mind, body, and soul. When his state reaches the peak he will be a fish that leaps through the dragon gate, and reach the great dao of Nascent Soul. With such a character, how could his disciple be average? And in truth, I was considering whether or not I should try and pair the two of you together."

"That was a gold and silver thread storage bag. Hehe, although it isn't too high a rank, it is still incredibly rare. At least, it is far better than my own!"

Nascent Soul...

In the 100,000 miles of the Southern Empire, there were no more than five people who had achieved this great boundary. As Zeng Mo'er imagined that such a titanic figure was lurking in that seemingly ordinary courtyard, she felt her heart and mind tremble. However, as she heard her grandfather's latter words she immediately regained her composure and her face blushed a charming red. "Great Grandfather, I will accompany you and never marry

anyone ever! If you keep saying such things then Mo'er will be angry with you!"

Zeng Chingming smiled. He laughed, saying, "Very well, just forget grandfather's words. My family's Mo'er is outstanding and there is plenty of time to choose in the future. There's no need to be in such a hurry."

Zeng Mo'er lowered her head, a lazy look on her face. She wrinkled her nose and humphed inwardly. Who cares if you are the disciple of a Nascent Soul master? This miss still wouldn't take a liking to you!

Zeng Chingming was the greatest advertisement. With his actions today, everyone suddenly learned that an alchemy Grandmaster had arrived at East Stream Town. Within a day, that remote courtyard suddenly became the third Holy Land, following the residences of the Zeng Family and Kong Family. Countless people came to watch in admiration.

As news of the little courtyard's initial offering of making pills for a three to one ratio of materials spread out, many cultivators who purchased material and sold pills at high prices could only clench their jaws. As for those like Cao Hua who had made a small fortune earlier on, whether or not they were beaten up until their heads looked like pigs was another story.

Not many cared about these minor details.

Qin Yu was extremely busy. With the materials of 300 Essence Soul Pills, no matter how extraordinary the Fleeting Flame Furnace was, it would still be incredibly difficult to complete this order in five days. Luckily, he had many pills so he didn't need to rest at all, and with the existence of the little blue lamp helping him, all he needed was for these pills to take shape for them to reach the average standard.

Of course, this was only the average standard. He couldn't take out top quality pills, at least not now. The situation had just stabilized and East Stream Town's other great family, the Kong Family, had also sent people to greet him. He didn't want to break the current tranquil situation.

Without sleep or even a rest, five days later, Zeng Mo'er politely knocked on the door and took away 60 Essence Soul Pills.

Qin Yu frowned, a bit confused as to why this little girl was so angry with him. Before she left she cast him a glare that was filled with a scary amount of

hostility. Luckily for him, he wasn't someone that was overly sensitive nor did he have any interest in Zeng Mo'er. He turned and closed the door, blocking himself off from all the envious eyes outside and restoring his courtyard to tranquility.

The 60 Essence Soul Pills was the final test. Since everything was smoothly completed, there shouldn't be more problems. After announcing that he was suspending the refining of pills, Qin Yu began to swallow pills to cultivate. The reason he had taken the risks to come here was to increase his cultivation. Although practicing alchemy was important, it wasn't like he could place the cart before the horse.

It was clearly much harder to increase his cultivation in the Foundation Establishment realm. If the Energy Refining realm was a pool, then the Foundation Establishment realm was a small lake. To increase his magic powers and fill a pool was simple. But to fill a small lake, the difficulty rose more than ten times over.

He ate pills like food and continued all day without rest. After half a month, Qin Yu's cultivation had only reached the second level of Foundation Establishment. He was originally prepared to cultivate for an additional period of time. He still had plenty of pills remaining so he didn't need to refine any more for a while.

But, the continuous stream of visitors left Qin Yu no choice but to leave seclusion again and again. He tamped down his annoyance and dealt with the waves of young elites.

If a person could be called a young elite, they certainly weren't average. Even if they were the elder senior-apprentice brother of a sect, they still had to have some fame outside. And their cultivation had to be at least at the Foundation Establishment realm; those at the Energy Refining realm would be too embarrassed to even appear.

Since they were young elites, they were certainly busy. Not only did they have to cultivate, but they also had to flatter and please their teachers and masters, they would have to occasionally chat with their fellow apprentice brothers and sisters beneath the stars, and they would also have to perform some good deeds now and then. And if everybody was so busy, there was definitely a reason that they had gathered at East Stream Town.

As a 'Grandmaster's disciple', Qin Yu didn't need much effort to find out the reason.

So, it turned out that the demonic path was recently rampaging through this area of the Southern Empire, committing innumerable atrocities. There were many sect disciples that had lost their lives and even more that vanished and went unaccounted for. The disciples of various sects were gathering together to negotiate forming a Demon Purging Alliance to prevent demonic flames wreaking havoc in the Southern Empire.

It was rumored that the Eastern Mountain Sect's elder senior-apprentice brother Han Dong and the rising talent Wei Wei had lost their lives to the hands of the demonic path. Even though he was indignant about so many outer court disciples dying, Qin Yu could only suppress his grievances. After all, he had added to the problem to begin with.

After his pill refining and cultivation was interrupted several times, Qin Yu simply moved his chair to the courtyard entrance and began declining all requests for pills and audiences.

But soon, he regretted his decision.

His reputation of being the direct disciple of an alchemy Grandmaster attracted numerous green-headed flies to buzz around him, and their flattery stunk to the high heavens. After lasting for less than an hour, Qin Yu retreated in defeat. He rose up, preparing to greet the guests when he suddenly heard cries of exclamation in his ears.

A white cloud flew in from the horizon with a young woman atop it.

If Zeng Mo'er's beauty originated from the combination of her facial features and her temperament, creating a charming aura all around her, then this young woman was perfect from head to toe, every single feature of hers reaching the peak of perfection. It was hard to imagine just how such a perfect individual could be born in the world. She was like a goddess descending to the mortal world. Her tranquil gaze released a natural elegance that made it difficult for anyone to think of blaspheming her.

Qin Yu's mind shook, and a strange numb feeling rose from the depths of his heart. But he quickly suppressed it. However, in the next moment his eyes popped wide open. He gasped out in surprise and quickly lowered his head.

Ning Ling frowned. The white cloud beneath her was formed from a magic tool. Just now the circulation of her magic power had stagnated, causing it to scatter. But, this was only for a brief instant. The circulation of her magic power quickly recovered and the white cloud hadn't truly dispersed, so no one should have seen beneath her skirt. But for some unknown reason, she felt something strange just then...

Her vision immediately sharpened. She swept her gaze over the crowd below her, coldness in her eyes. But before she could continue looking, her attention was interrupted by several people flying upwards.

The chief disciple of the Skycloud Sword Sect approached, his face as cold as ice. "Why is junior-apprentice sister Ning injured? I will go and demand justice for you!"

Ning Ling greeted the several people. She said in a soft voice, "I happened to encounter a Little Monarch of the demonic path on my way here and I exchanged several moves with him. That person is definitely worthy of being called a promising youth of the demonic path. He is an extremely formidable individual. If fellow daoists are to stumble across him in the future, you must all be careful."

The several young elites were enraged.

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"Little Monarch of the demonic path, Liang Taizu! I came here to discuss exterminating the demonic path, and yet he dares act so rampantly! He best not meet me in the future, otherwise I will make sure he is caught in a life or death struggle!"

"This is exactly the reason I came here! In my Seven Star City we have already had four disciples fall beneath their treachery! It's good that junior-apprentice sister Ning was able to withdraw safely today."

"Come, since we met today, we must carefully discuss how we will hunt down this pig!"

The ones who spoke up were all talented individuals of outstanding ability. They crowded around Ning Ling but only served to contrast against her, making her noble and elegant demeanor that much more amazing. Countless people were left in a dazed haze, all of them ashamed at their own inferiority.

Ning Ling nodded. Her gaze swept over the ground again, but that young boy had disappeared without a trace. She maintained her expression as she entered East Stream Town with the several people.

After closing the courtyard door, Qin Yu let out a long breath of relief. Although he hadn't done anything wrong, he still felt a little guilty. But, the problem was that his actions hadn't been intentional. His eyes actually possessed the ability to faintly see through things; how had he never discovered this before!

When the white cloud began to disperse but hadn't scattered, his line of sight was still covered up. But for some reason Qin Yu was actually able to see through it with utter clarity. He had seen beneath her skirt and saw her slightly torn underwear as well as the bloodstains that covered her leg. The blood had contrasted against her snow-white skin, making the sight even more stirring.

Qin Yu forcefully shook his head, but he couldn't prevent himself from recalling the sight. The image was like a mark that was branded in his heart, one that he feared he would never forget. Hah, since he couldn't forget it, it was still fine. In any case, he was unlikely to see her again in the future, so he should just consider this a wonderful accident. And if he were extremely bored in the future, perhaps he could...no, that was dirty, just too dirty!

Qin Yu slapped his head. Lechery sprung from warmth and nourishment and he was far from reaching this step; he needed to rid himself of such thoughts. He pushed open the door to the house, deciding to not go out in the future.

However, there were some matters that couldn't necessarily be avoided even if you wanted to.