

Refining the Mountains and Rivers

Chapter 16 – Seeing Ning Ling Once More

Within the dense forest, Qin Yu took off his black robes and continued to move forwards. The multi-hued miasma of poison wasn't able to affect him in the least. He journeyed forwards dozens of miles until he found a cave. He chose not to kill the few wild wolves living inside because the smell of blood in these wooded mountains would have been far too conspicuous.

He carefully concealed his traces and blocked the cave entrance with a boulder. After waiting within for two hours and making sure that no one had followed him, he was unable to continue any longer. He fell asleep to the smell of dried grass around him. He didn't sleep for long. Soon, he woke up, and after a moment of remembering where he was, he straightened up, sat down cross-legged, and swallowed a few pills.

It was only now that Qin Yu could think about everything that occurred at East Stream Town. Even though he had managed to survive unscathed, his clothes were still dripping with sweat.

From the very start, Liang Taizu already had thoughts of aiming at the 'alchemist Grandmaster'. Even without Zeng Mo'er's words, he still would have suffered troubles. He took out pieces of a broken stone from his chest pocket and bitterly smiled. His poisonous finger, Cang Mangzi's Golden Core, the Pill Disposal Department's Corpse Sealing Nail....he had used every method at his disposal and only then was he able to fool his enemies and live until now.

But would he be so lucky next time?

Strength was everything! This meant that he would have to cultivate even more diligently!

However, there was still another important matter before him.

Li Yunmo's storage bag!

As a Golden Core cultivator, and also a demonic realm Golden Core who committed all sorts of atrocities, one could imagine just how wealthy he was. He took out the storage bag and undid the seal, his appearance filled with rapt

attention and wariness as he probed it. However, after noticing that there were no changes around him, he relaxed.

He waved his hand and the contents of the storage bag formed a small hill in front of him; it was actually a number of jade boxes, all of them in various sizes. The jade boxes were pitch black with occasional blood spots on them. They emitted a cold energy that immediately lowered the surrounding temperature.

Qin Yu's eyes flashed. He looked over the jade boxes for several moments to determine that there wasn't any problem with them. Then, he picked up a jade box and opened it. Within it were the bones of some unknown creature. The bones were crystalline, as if they were crafted from jade.

Just what use was this? He laid down the jade box and picked up another one, opening it.

What he saw was a bunch of slippery, tentacle-like objects. They continued to wriggle and emitted a sour, acrid smell.

He quickly opened a third jade box.

What he saw was a palm-sized shell. The patterns on it were rarely seen, but why was there a crack in it?

A solemn demonic Golden Core cultivator's storage bag only held such things? As he looked through all the jade boxes, his complexion began to dark. There were a total of 36 jade boxes in total, and they all contained weird and macabre items. None of them were useful!

He forced a smile and shook his head. He put away everything. He was afraid that if he continued looking, he would be so angry he would suffer internal injuries.

The greater the expectations, the greater the disappointment!

...

Half a month later.

Within the cave, Qin Yu opened his eyes. A sharp light flashed within his pupils, soon followed by happiness. Perhaps the events in East Stream Town

had stimulated him and caused his potential to erupt at an unprecedented rate, but his cultivation had taken another step forwards, allowing him to reach the third level of Foundation Establishment in this short period of time.

Although he still had many pills and he had collected a massive amount of materials, Qin Yu still paused his cultivation to consider his future path.

Should he return to the Eastern Mountain Sect?

This thought swam in his mind. Simply put, he was considering the advantages and disadvantages.

If he returned, he would have to cultivate cautiously so that he wouldn't be discovered by others.

If he didn't return, then he would be like now, able to wander around freely without rules.

Of course, there was one certainty, and that was that the outside world couldn't compare to the safety of being within the sect.

After a long time, Qin Yu let out a deep breath.

He decided to return to the Eastern Mountain Sect!

The reason was for his own safety.

His cultivation was still too weak. If he were to run into a slightly large storm, he would die without a grave. With the little blue lamp in his possession, he fervently decided to grow as strong as possible, but his own safety still came first. The longer he lived the stronger he would become. If he died, everything he did would come to nothing.

An hour later, Qin Yu left the cave he lived in for half a month. He washed himself in a nearby stream, eliminating the stench that covered him, and then he flew towards the Eastern Mountain Sect.

....

The sky was clear. Although there were stars, one couldn't see the moon, and it was so dark that one couldn't even see their own fingers before their face.

Even so, the dim starlight was more than enough for Qin Yu to discern which direction he was going in.

He smoothly entered the Eastern Mountain Sect. It was only when he stepped past the Pill Disposal Department's array formation that he started to skip forwards, a light smile on his face.

Nearly two months had passed. Even though he had left behind some anti-poison pills, it was enough to teach the chicken overlord a lesson. This little fellow had followed by his side for too long and had learned to steal pills and other medicines, allowing it to become even more intelligent and spiritual. If he didn't let it suffer a bit of pain now, it would become completely lawless in the future.

Walking down the stone steps, Qin Yu swept his eyes around. Then, his smile froze.

Someone had come!

Footsteps echoed behind him. Qin Yu quickly turned around and came face to face with a pale man. The shock on this person's face immediately turned to joy and he began to gnash his teeth.

Kacha –

Even the lightest sound was particularly clear in the quiet underground.

Qin Yu's heart shrank. He stepped forwards and chopped down at the poisoned man, causing him to softly slump to the ground, unconscious.

Qin Yu shoved his fingers into the man's mouth, and with a little bit of fumbling around, he pulled out a broken tooth. The unconscious man's body twitched.

Looking at this tooth that was covered in blood as well as flashing with a faint light, Qin Yu's complexion immediately turned ugly.

"Calm down!"

Qin Yu took a deep breath and forcefully suppressed the rising panic in his heart. He looked down at this person, earnestly staring at his face. Soon, he recalled the memory of just who this man was.

Yu Yi, outer court disciple of the Eastern Mountain Sect!

Qin Yu's face darkened.

The Pill Disposal Department's array formation only permitted entry and not exit, but, the Eastern Mountain Sect clearly had methods to bypass this because when he first arrived here, he hadn't found the corpse of the last person who was here. If Yu Yi were here, then that indicated the Eastern Mountain Sect had discovered that he had left somehow.

He had to flee!

Just as he thought of this he immediately suppressed it. Yu Yi had likely already sent out the message that he had returned to the Eastern Mountain Sect, so it was too late for him to run away now. Even if he did manage to escape, he would only draw others into his mess. Although he didn't have a family, there were still people that he cared for.

If he couldn't run away then that meant he could only deal with this new situation head on. Qin Yu rushed into the resting room. As his eyes swept over the stone that blocked the underground entrance, he realized that the underground space had been discovered.

With a deep roar, he combined his magic powers with the strength of his body and moved the stone away. He shouted out, "It's me! If you don't want to die, then hurry up and get out here!"

With fluttering sounds, the frazzled chicken overlord rushed over. It put on a sad and petulant act, like a little child wanting to find pity, but Qin Yu immediately stopped it with a hand.

He pulled out two storage bags. Just as he was about to throw them away, a light suddenly shined in his eyes. He dumped out all the jade boxes from within Li Yunmo's storage bag and placed them into the golden and silver thread storage bag. Then, he tossed that storage bag into the hole.

"Take the storage bag and hide it away. Make sure that no one can find it!"

The chicken overlord took the storage bag in its beak and flew away.

Qin Yu's heart calmed down a little. He picked up the stone and covered the entrance once more, and then put the empty storage bag back into his chest.

Suddenly, the entry token began to heat up. Someone had rushed in!

Qin Yu turned and rushed out, panic coloring his expression. He saw a man with wild gray hair, thin cheeks, and brown eyes that made his heart tremble. The old man waved his sleeve and Qin Yu fell to the ground, completely frozen.

The old man searched him and soon found the storage bag. He coldly sneered and opened it, his complexion immediately dark.

“Boy, what was in this storage bag?”

Qin Yu was panic-stricken.

The old man frowned. He lifted his hand and unraveled a bit of the spell.

Qin Yu shouted out, “Grand Martial Uncle, please forgive me!”

This old man was one of the Eastern Mountain Sect’s two great Golden Core cultivators, the High Master of the current Sect Master – Huang Danguai.

“You recognize me?” Huang Danguai revealed a strange smile. “Then hurry up and speak the truth. Otherwise, you should also have heard of my methods.”

Qin Yu shivered. “It’s empty, the storage bag is empty!”

Huang Danguai said, “Since you want to experience them, allow me to help you.”

He lifted a hand and struck Qin Yu. Black gas gushed out. Qin Yu cried out in pain as he tumbled onto the ground, violently spasming.

Huang Danguai coldly sneered, “Are you going to speak or not?”

“Grand Martial Uncle, this disciple hasn’t lied at all...kill me...just kill me...”
Qin Yu cried out in pain and misery. Of course, most of this was just an act. For over an entire year, he had lost track of the number of vicious poisons that had been stored within his body, and he had already developed an extremely strong resistance to poisons. Although Huang Danguai’s poison was fierce, it wasn’t to the point of causing him to collapse.

At this time, another voice sounded, "High Master, he is still a sect disciple. How about we clarify the situation before dealing with him."

This voice was calm and gentle, yet filled with dignity. If there was someone that could speak like this and possess such a cultivation, then it could only be the Eastern Mountain Sect's Sect Master.

Huang Dangui frowned. He nodded, "Very well." He lifted a hand and removed the black gas from Qin Yu's body. Then, he lifted him and flew away.

A Golden Core cultivator could fly at incredible speeds. They soon arrived at the main hall of the Eastern Mountain Sect. With a loud crash, Qin Yu fell to the floor and Huang Dangui sat in his seat.

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master was a middle-aged man with a loose, three foot long beard that made him seem somewhat free and unfettered. He cupped his hands across his chest and said, "I apologize for bothering High Master for the help."

Huang Dangui replied with a light, "Mm," before closing his eyes, completely disregarding any respectful reply.

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master didn't bother with his. His eyes fell on Qin Yu and suddenly turned swift and fierce. "Qin Yu, tell me, how did you leave the Pill Disposal Department?"

Huang Dangui's partly opened eyes shined with a sharp light. It was clear that he was paying attention to this matter.

Qin Yu's voice trembled. "Reporting to the Sect Master, around two months ago at night, someone suddenly broke into the Pill Disposal Department and brought this disciple away."

"What nonsense!" Huang Dangui shouted out loud. "if you want to spout rubbish then I will make you bleed from your head until you die!"

Qin Yu was flustered, "Everything I said is true!"

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master turned around. "High Master, please allow him to explain in detail." He looked back at Qin Yu. "This is a vital matter. Qin Yu, you must consider your situation carefully, otherwise I will not be able to save you."

“Yes, yes, I will tell you everything I know!” Qin Yu’s face filled with gratitude. He seemed to think back to the past and quickly said, “This disciple clearly remembers what happened. During that night, I was cultivating when someone suddenly appeared before me. I was suppressed without any chance to resist. He originally planned to kill me, but when he discovered that the secret tunnel in the resting room was opened by me, he ignored me and leapt in.”

“What secret tunnel?”

Qin Yu revealed a look of shock. “Sect Master, I inadvertently discovered an underground space beneath the Pill Disposal Department. There is a medicine field within, and also a skeleton that belonged to a man called Cang Mangzi.”

Huang Dangui’s eyes shot open, light bursting out from them. “Cang Mangzi, are you sure that it was Cang Mangzi?”

Qin Yu nodded. “I found a jade slip there, and that was what he said...he also said that he had been trapped underground...”

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master’s complexion was dignified. “Continue.”

“After I discovered the underground space, I also found a storage bag near Cang Mangzi’s skeleton. In a moment of compassion, I decided to bury him. When the mysterious person left the underground space, he seemed extremely sad. He knocked me unconscious and took me away from the disposal department.

“After that, he said that we were fated to meet and he wanted to test me. If I qualified, he would accept me as his disciple.” Then, shame appeared on Qin Yu’s face. “I failed due to my own incompetence, so I returned here.”

Huang Dangui sneered. “You said that you buried Cang Mangzi? Then what about the other grave?”

Qin Yu’s eyes widened in surprise. “What grave? There is only one, and that is the one that I personally dug up in the thatched hut.”

Huang Dangui’s gaze deepened. “Boy, you are purposefully trying to conceal things. Do you want to die?”

Qin Yu was horrified. "I had no idea, I truly had no idea! Once that person came out he knocked me unconscious!"

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master asked, "Is Cang Mangzi's storage bag the one in the High Master's hands?"

Qin Yu shook his head, "It isn't. Grandmaster took away Cang Mangzi's bag. The storage bag in Grand Martial Uncle's hands was taken from the Seven Slaughter Demon Sect's Li Yunmo, but Grandmaster gave it to me."

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master's eyes brightened. "The Seven Slaughter Demon Sect's Li Yunmo? Are you speaking about the incident in East Stream Town?"

"How does the Sect Master know of this?" Qin Yu asked, suddenly startled. "Of course, half a month has already passed so that matter of East Stream Town has surely spread out already. Then that is great, I can finally prove my innocence. The one who brought me away was that Grandmaster at East Stream Town."

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master's voice deepened. "Qin Yu, you should know that a great number of people are aware of this matter. I can quickly find someone to testify against you. If you dared to lie, then no one can save you!"

"Sect Master, this disciple can testify that Qin Yu didn't lie." A cold voice sounded from outside the hall. With it, a beautiful figure appeared.

This figure was shrouded in light and her face covered in shadows. Even so, it couldn't conceal the beauty that moved the heart and soul.

Qin Yu's heart trembled. Ning Ling! This person was Ning Ling!

Their gazes touched before looking past each other. She brought her hands together and bowed. "I greet Sect Master and Grandmaster Huang."