

Refining 31

Chapter 31 – Reversing Yin and Yang

Qin Yu quickly returned to the corpse of the strange fish. With a hurried apology he began to skin it. Yes, starting from inside the strange fish, he began skinning it down. This was because it was likely the key for Qin Yu's survival.

An hour later, the entire fish skin was peeled off. Looking over the skin, he took a deep breath of relief as he found that the skin was completely intact. It seemed that even in its fierce battle with Blacksky Demon, its skin hadn't been damaged at all. From this it could be seen how amazingly defensive this skin was.

After folding the skin into his storage bag, Qin Yu sat down and swallowed several pills as well as a few spirit leaves he had obtained from the medicine garden. He couldn't care much about wasting anything because even though the fish skin was in the storage bag it wouldn't last too long. He needed to recover as soon as possible.

Four days later, Qin Yu stood up and bones cracked throughout his body. Although he wasn't completely restored, he had looked over the fish skin and saw that it was beginning to deteriorate, so he had no choice but to push forwards.

He walked over to the cave opening and took out the entire fish skin. Then, he stepped in and tightly wrapped himself in it so that nothing was revealed. With that, he rushed out of the light barrier.

In the next moment he felt as if he had been struck on the head by a hammer. His field of vision darkened and he spat out a mouthful of sweet blood. It was like countless fists were pounding him over and over again, nearly causing his body to collapse in on itself.

With a stuffy cough, Qin Yu took out the strange fish's inner core. It released a dim light in the dark and the fish phantom within began to roar again and again. Unexpectedly, the fish skin started to gradually balloon outwards. Although he still experienced a sharp smashing feeling that left him dizzy, it wasn't terrifying as if he would die at any moment.

He calmed down a little, but as more time passed his heart turned increasingly cold. This was because he found that no matter how he struggled he couldn't go against the flow of water. He could only remain in the strange fish's protective skin and slowly sink downwards.

As he felt an increasingly strong downward impact, Qin Yu could only stare on helplessly. He thought he had struck the jackpot and would be able to escape here alive, but it turned out all his thoughts were a joke.

Dang –

Dang –

The low rumbling sound became increasingly heavy. Qin Yu's organs began to shake along with it, and the wounds that hadn't yet fully healed began to open up once more. Blood started to flow from his head. He closed his eyes, waiting for his final moment to arrive.

Perhaps he really would die here. He reflected deeply on his choices. Did he truly not regret? Soon, he realized that he really didn't have any of those heroic and noble dreams of sacrificing himself for the good of others.

Well, whatever. At least someone would be able to live.

But many years from now, will she still remember me?

As this thought passed through Qin Yu's mind, the sound of the fish skin tearing rang out and a terrifying impact struck him like a falling mountain!

But this impact immediately disappeared and Qin Yu's chest hadn't yet collapsed. It was like it had never been there at all.

He landed on solid ground. Qin Yu looked around. As he stared at the horrifying channel of water that could crush bones and flesh still falling down around him, he spat out another mouthful of blood. He cursed and laughed out loud, "What fucking dogshit luck I have."

A blood red light filled this space, and even though it was dim it emitted an unimaginably mighty energy. As the column of water came smashing down, it couldn't shake this red light at all. As if detecting an outsider, the blood red light suddenly brightened. Qin Yu was shocked and then discovered that what emitted this blood red light was a blue stone on the ground.

This stone was in the shape of a cow. The aura of the endless flow of years swirled around it.

Intuition told Qin Yu that all the strange things occurring deep in this pool were caused by this blue stone. The blood red light he was bathed in gave him a strange feeling, as if some unknown existence were indifferently spying on him from a great height.

He froze on the floor, not daring to move. But at this time, with a popping sound, Li Yunmo's storage bag was destroyed without warning and the 36 jade boxes tumbled onto the ground.

Pa –

Pa –

The 36 jade boxes opened and the items inside began to float upwards. They flew towards the blue stone cow and slowly circled it. Faint threads like meridians and blood vessels started to appear on the blue cow, rapidly blinking in and out. Slowly, the red light began to gather on the top of the blue cow's head.

The, as Qin Yu watched in shock, a bead of red blood flowed out from the cow's head. With a wild howl that erupted deep within Qin Yu's soul, images began to appear in his mind. He saw a 100,000 foot demon stepping atop the earth, its feet cracking the ground, causing mountains to collapse and rivers to disintegrate!

Qin Yu's pupils suddenly widened and flooded his eyes, turning them completely black just like Blacksky Demon's. But this black was incomparably deep, like the nihility of the world, capable of submerging and swallowing all of existence.

Unconsciously, the statue seemed to control his movements, forcing him to move forwards. The items scattered in the air and he fell to his knees in front of the cow statue. Then, the bead of blood shot into his mouth.

“Ahh!”

Qin Yu reared back his head and cried out in agony. His waist twisted so much that others would think he would snap in half. Blue veins stuck out all over him like wriggling insects. All of his skin began to turn red as blood started to seep out from his pores.

Qin Yu felt like his insides were on fire. A burning pain dove into his soul and no matter how much he screamed he couldn't release it. At this time, the 36 items floating in the air trembled and disintegrated to dust as if they had undergone tens of thousands of years of erosion. The powder gathered onto Qin Yu and began flowing into his body.

A cool feeling started to rise from the soles of his feet to the top of his head, saving Qin Yu from that burning pain. But before he could let out a sigh of relief, this cool feeling changed, turning into another burning feeling as if boiling oil were being poured all over him. Qin Yu cried out in pain again but was unable to speak. Black demonic flames shot out from his orifices and his body started to crack like a dried up riverbed.

There was a reason why the Demon Body was called the highest body transformation cultivation method of the demonic path. Even if one collected all the necessary items, successfully cultivating it was no different than walking through the gate of death. It had an extremely high failure rate. Unfortunately, even though Qin Yu had obtained a complete cultivation manual of the Demon Body, it hadn't recorded this information. Of course, even if it did record such information, today's situation wouldn't have allowed him to reject it.

Qin Yu's talent was ordinary and he didn't possess a powerful bloodline. Although his mortal body was much more powerful than other cultivators', it was far from meeting the standard of cultivating the Demon Body. In other words, it wouldn't be much longer before he was burned down by the demonic flames and turned into a pile of ashes.

After the blue stone cow emitted the drop of blood it became extremely ordinary. But, as demonic flames gushed out from Qin Yu's orifices, the blue cow statue suddenly flew up atop Qin Yu's head. It was like a million mountains suppressing him. The demonic flames dimmed and were nearly extinguished.

“Ahh!” He heard an angered roar in his soul and he seemed to rise up into the air. As he opened his eyes, he discovered that he had leapt through time and space and arrived in a war from ancient times.

There was still that massive demon phantom in front of him, its roars causing the earth to crack and seas to sunder. But at this time, a finger appeared in this scene. It was ordinary in size and even the textures on it could be seen. It came from the highest ninth heaven and endless winds and spiritual strength gathered around it, causing the clouds and colors of the world to change as it grew larger and larger.

The demon phantom seemed to feel a threat. With a roar, its arms tore through the clouds. Fist and finger met, and in that collision it was forced knee deep into the ground!

Close behind, a second finger came. This finger didn't absorb spiritual strength to grow but remained an ordinary size. Yet as it appeared, countless blurry figures appeared in the world. Some were large, some were small, some were complete, some were incomplete. But, all of them emitted a heaven-shaking aura.

These figures stepped forwards, turning into motes of light that fused into the finger. The finger began to release an increasingly bright light until it was blinding and dazzling.

Bang –

With a thunderous explosion, the second finger struck down at the demon phantom. The demon phantom roared again and again as it was smashed waist deep into the ground. Perhaps because it had felt it couldn't win, demonic clouds began to rise up from the demonic phantom, revealing its true form. It was actually a demon cow as large as a mountain. It struggled with its four hooves and tried to break free from the earth. But at this time, a third finger descended from the heavens.

As this finger appeared, it immediately overshadowed the might of the two previous fingers. In fact, it could be said to be on a completely different level. This was because this third finger galvanized the strength of the world, causing the entire world to start fighting. The demon cow roared in unwillingness. Its figure started to rapidly shrink and then it was blasted into the ground by the finger, leaving behind an unfathomably deep hole.

Afterwards, the earth began shaking for a thousand miles all around. Rocks and soil gathered, forming mountains. The ground ruptured, turning into deep valleys. Wind and clouds gathered and began pouring down a mind-boggling amount of water, forming an endless current of water that gathered from all directions and poured into the round hole.

Qin Yu watched this all with wide eyes, his mind trembling. Without a doubt, what he was seeing was the origins of this terrifying water column that existed beneath the pool as well as the origin of the blue stone cow. It was because of this that the blue stone emitted a drop of demon blood that opened up his Demon Body cultivation.

His soul rapidly fell downwards and he instantly returned to his body. Those heaven-startling scenes seemed like an illusion, but...they definitely all happened!

Qin Yu opened his eyes. The dried blood that covered his eyelids broke apart and fell down around him. In the next moment his bones and tendons and flesh began to shake. The sound gathered, becoming increasingly loud, like a great drum that beat like thunder or a massive river quaking about, causing all the dried blood that covered him to flake off.

His clothes had long since been caked with blood. At this moment his clothes broke apart and revealed skin, fresh and white, just like shining jade. But although this skin seemed tender and delicate, it actually contained a strength ten times that of a wild beast, capable of ripping apart a fierce tiger!

The Demon Body was renowned as the technique where a hundred attempts meant a hundred deaths, a thousand attempts meant a thousand perishing. But somehow, in such a confusing and ridiculous way, it had succeeded here. As Qin Yu felt the powerful strength flowing in his body, what he thought of were those three fingers that descended from the heavens. These images were clear, like marks that had taken root in the depths of his soul, unable to be forgotten.

“Boundless Blue...Blue Spirit...Blue Sea...” Qin Yu whispered to himself. He didn’t know why but he knew the names of these three fingers, and even felt faintly that he could display them.

With a thought, he lifted a finger. Strong winds whipped up and magic power poured out from his body like a broken dam. However, it stopped in the next moment. Qin Yu’s complexion paled and he realized that he didn’t have the strength to use any of these three fingers, since the magic power required was more than enough to drain him dry.

The blue stone cow that fell to the side flashed in the wind. As if it had finished its final mission, it quietly disintegrated.

But in the next moment the terrifying torrent of water was no longer blocked by a barrier and began to savagely beat Qin Yu into the ground!

Distant mountain, old forest, waterfall, deep pool –

A plump wild boar was humming and drinking water from not too far away. It glanced over from time to time in confusion, puzzled as to why that deep pool wasn’t emitting the horrifying aura from before. It hesitated, wondering if it should go and take a drink from the cool pool waters, but at this time a black figure floated up from the water.

Bang –

The pool waters erupted into the air. Qin Yu fell to the ground and sucked in a deep breath of air, unable to help laughing out in joy. A strange fluctuation spread out from his body, immediately turning the skies dark and causing stars to appear.

For a thousand miles around, day had been replaced with night, yin and yang had reversed!

Bang –

Demonic energy fell down from this night sky and shined down on Qin Yu. He stopped laughing and his lips started to twitch.

This phenomenon seemed a bit too flashy; it was best to hurry up and escape. He didn’t need to be a genius to know that it wouldn’t be long before those righteous cultivators that loved hunting evil beings would soon fill this entire area!

Chapter 32 – Misunderstanding

Ning Ling hugged her knees as she leaned back against the stone wall. The black robe around her seemed to have his scent. Bright sunlight poured down, wrapping around her, but even so, she didn’t feel any warmth at all. Instead there was a cold chill percolating in the depths of her heart, causing her face to pale.

She had already been awake for five days but Qin Yu had yet to return. He hadn’t left behind anything at all besides this black robe, and it was because of this that Ning Ling felt her heart tighten in pain. This was because she knew just what this meant.

Qin Yu had this black robe, numerous pills, and he also showed he had the judgment and thinking required to escape. As long as he left her behind, he could have survived by himself. But in the end he didn't abandon her. He gave her a chance to live and chose to be swallowed up by the darkness alone.

Ning Ling stared at the cave opening, as if she could see his back on the day he left. She was unable to suppress the sorrow in her heart and began to weep, her tears as heavy as a rainstorm. It had been five days. With Qin Yu's current state at the time he left, it would have been impossible for him to persist until now. If he hadn't come back then he would never come back.

In all her years, Ning Ling had never felt such a bitter grief before. It was like a meteor crossing through the horizon, illuminating its brief journey through life before immediately vanishing the next moment. No matter what happened, Qin Yu had left behind a deep mark in her heart that would never be erased.

She wiped her tears, put on the black robe, and walked outside. As she stepped out of the cave, although her eyes were red there was an unprecedented coldness in them. This was different from the indifference of before, as if she had completely sealed away her emotions.

Woosh –

The sound splitting air rang up. A black demonic saber shot out, rushing towards her, its aura violent and cruel like a prison of hell. It stirred up strong winds that whipped up her hair and ripped off her black robe, sending it flying towards the cave. Ning Ling raised her hand to grab it, but she couldn't. She watched as the robe fell into the cave, as if they were in two completely different worlds. Sorrow began to gush out from her eyes.

When the demonic saber was ten feet away from her, it was locked down by an invisible strength. It emitted a shrill cry as to crack and shatter.

A miserable shout rose up from not too far away. In the next moment, a figure shot into the skies, the billowing demonic energy revealing a Golden Core cultivator. This cultivator was stronger than Blacksky Demon, but even so, this sort of demonic path powerhouse was alarmed and terrified, just like a stray dog being chased.

Shua –

An old man appeared in the air, his eyes half-open and half-closed. But as he spoke, it was like claps of thunder, "Since you came, you should stay behind!"

With a flick of his sleeve, space seemed to twist. The demonic Golden Core cultivator flew into the heavens like a fly before falling down to the earth and smashing into the cave entrance. Blood erupted from his entire body as he began disintegrating into nothing.

Just a single strike had killed a demonic Golden Core cultivator and had also crushed him to paste; just what sort of strength was this!?

Ning Ling didn't look at this old man, instead looking at the black robe buried within the crushed stones, her eyes sad. But at this moment, all her emotions were hidden away, leaving behind nothing but endless cold in her eyes.

It was unknown when the old man appeared behind her. He cupped his hands across his chest and said, "Seventh Miss, we should return home now."

Ning Ling turned around. She took a light breath and said, "Old Cloud, I want there to not be a living demonic cultivator for a thousand miles around."

Old Cloud frowned. "The dead cannot be brought back to life, so why must Seventh Miss be like this? If I really were to do that then I fear it would create immense waves."

Ning Ling's voice chilled, "And if I insist?"

Old Cloud sighed. Just as he was about to agree, his complexion suddenly changed. He turned and looked towards the distant mountain forests. Up above his head, the heavens began to darken and stars began to appear. A terrifying beam of demonic energy fell down, and the entire area for a thousand miles around fell into a deathly silence. Every living creature felt panic and fear rise up from the depths of their heart.

"Yin and yang reverse, a demonic pillar has been born!" Old Cloud's voice was deep and bass, each word seeming to roll in the air, as if it were as heavy as a mountain. "Seventh Miss, a supreme elder of the demonic path has arrived. No matter what, I cannot allow you to mess around here anymore. We are leaving!"

Ning Ling's eyes turned red once more. She turned and bowed, "Qin Yu, I promise you that in the future I will kill this Blacksky Demon with my own hands and bathe the demonic cultivators in a sea of blood!"

Woosh –

Old Cloud sighed. He flicked his sleeve and lifted up Ning Ling. A long sword picked the two up and they fired off into the distance, soon disappearing from sight.

Four hours later, Qin Yu stumbled his way here. As he stood outside the completely collapsed cave, he fell silent. The anticipation and excitement that was stirring in his heart began to gradually turn cold, before finally drowning out all his thoughts.

Qin Yu knit his eyebrows together for a long time. How could this be? He had crossed the thin thread of life and death several times to return here, and he didn't believe that the heavens would give him such a result!

Taking a deep breath, Qin Yu began sifting through the rubble. With the strength of his Demon Body, he began to casually toss aside massive stones. But, he didn't seem to care about this at all as he freely used his physical strength. He sweat in silence, allowing his clothes to become wet.

Suddenly, Qin Yu's body stiffened. A familiar black robe appeared before him. He cleaned away the surrounding stones and picked up the dusty black robe. As he saw several dried bloodstains around it as well as a sharp hole made from a sword, his breath caught in his chest.

After a long silence, Qin Yu folded the black robe and put it away into his storage bag. He turned and walked away. At this moment, the 18 year old's back was still straight, but he seemed to exude endless sadness and grief. Just by watching him one's nose would burn and their eyes would turn misty.

Forcefully blinking his eyes, Qin Yu began to increase his speed. He was like a racing horse that sped through the mountains. When he arrived deep in a mountain valley, he reared back his head and screamed with all his strength. His thunderous voice reverberated through the valley, as if his heart and lungs were being ripped out.

Outside the valley, two young female cultivators that were hurrying along were shocked. A naive-looking woman saw Qin Yu, and for some inexplicable reason she felt a pain in her heart. She softly said, "Senior-apprentice sister, that person seems sad."

The senior-apprentice sister frowned. "There was a world phenomenon just now. A great demonic being is sure to appear soon. Let's not stick our noses into other people's business and hurry up instead."

"Okay." The naive-looking young woman gently nodded as she flew away with her senior-apprentice sister. But, she couldn't help but turn her head and look at Qin Yu's back. Why was he so sad? Did he lose a loved one? How pitiful! This must have been the actions of the demonic path. According to what her master said, the demonic path was intentionally stirring up trouble as they tried to invade the Southern Empire. They absolutely could not be allowed to succeed, otherwise who knew how many more people would be caught in their evil grasp!

From start to finish, Qin Yu never realized that two female cultivators had passed by the valley and that one of them had felt a great deal of sympathy for him. After he let out his cry, he took deep heaving breaths until he calmed down. Then, he looked up to determine where he was and began walking towards the Eastern Mountain Sect.

Perhaps nothing had happened to Ning Ling. No matter how small a chance, he could not ignore it. He didn't want to believe that this woman who had entered his life, whether he wanted to or not, had completely departed this world.

Five days later, Qin Yu stood at a northern river. As he looked at the flowing waters, he recalled that Ning Ling had stood at this riverbank and pointed a finger at it, asking him earnestly, "Junior-apprentice brother, what river is this?"

With his heart falling, Qin Yu turned his eyes back to his path, wanting to continue onwards. But as he looked into the distance, his complexion changed. Five figures were fleeing ahead of them with demonic energy tumbling behind them. They were being chased down by three demonic cultivators.

Before Qin Yu could think further, the fleeing group approached him. A middle-aged cultivator saw Qin Yu and anxiously shouted, "Hurry and run!"

Seeing Qin Yu standing there as if he didn't hear, the middle-aged cultivator assumed he was scared frozen. He hesitated and thought it was a shame, but he lowered his head and continued to flee with the four others around him.

A tall demonic cultivator laughed, "There's actually someone that doesn't fear death. I just happen to need some brave heart blood to refine my demonic energy!" With a howl, he grasped out, his five fingers rushing forwards as if he wanted to rip open Qin Yu's chest and take out his heart.

Qin Yu looked up, his eyes so cold that it caused the demonic cultivator's heart to shiver. Before the demonic cultivator could respond, a fist instantly appeared and enlarged in his eyes.

Dang –

With a loud cracking sound that left one's scalp tingling, the demonic cultivator flew backwards. As he struck the ground one could see he had become a pile of ruined flesh and blood; it was almost impossible to see a human shape anymore.

The remaining two demonic cultivators cried out in alarm and turned to escape.

Qin Yu's eyes locked onto someone and Spirit Stab shot out. As this person froze in place, Vorpals Edge slashed out and a head fell to the ground. At the same time he shot out the Corpse Sealing Nail and a giant hole was blasted open in the chest of the last person, causing him to stumble dead to the ground!

In almost the blink of an eye, three demonic cultivators were slain. The five fleeing cultivators turned, their eyes widening and their faces filled with disbelief. But soon they all revealed looks of hesitation. Just now, they only had thoughts of escaping on their own, so if this person were to vent their anger on them...but at the same time, they didn't dare to leave like this. They could only brace themselves and greet this person.

"Greetings, my lord!" The five people were all Foundation Establishment cultivators. Although Qin Yu's aura was also at that level, with the way he brutally killed those three people just now, they could only refer to him as such since they felt it was wrong to call him senior.

Qin Yu eyed the middle-aged man who had warned him just then. He asked, "What happened? How could those demonic cultivators dare to chase you so blatantly in the Southern Empire?"

The middle-aged cultivator felt his heart weigh heavy in his chest. He replied, "My lord, four days ago the demonic cultivators invaded the Southern Empire en masse, and countless sects were uprooted or eradicated." He continued, "My lord, it's best if you don't continue onwards."

Qin Yu's complexion changed. "Do you know what happened to the Eastern Mountain Sect?"

The middle-aged cultivator cried out in his heart, "This...this is..."

"Speak!"

"The Eastern Mountain Sect was one of the first to be attacked by the demonic path. Nearly all the cultivators there perished, and the scene was...tragic."

Qin Yu fell silent. The air around him nearly froze solid. He didn't have much feeling towards the Eastern Mountain Sect, but he inevitably felt dispirited to think that a place he was so familiar with had been destroyed in the flames of war.

Of course, the main reason was that a hope he had been lying to himself with had been thoroughly destroyed with this information.

As the five people were dripping with a frightened sweat, Qin Yu waved his hand, no longer interested in them, "You can leave."

The middle-aged cultivator seemed to want to say something but he was stopped by his companions. The five of them fled in a hurry, perhaps hoping to flee as far as possible from the wanton destruction of the demonic path.

After a moment of silence, Qin Yu continued forwards. He was already close to the Eastern Mountain Sect. Even if he learned it had been destroyed, he wanted to confirm this with his own eyes. In any case, since the Eastern Mountain Sect was already destroyed there shouldn't be any demonic path powerhouses remaining there. At most, there would be some small fish swimming around that wouldn't pose a threat to him.

He still had the Soul Burying Flag within his storage bag. The deeply sleeping Blacksky Demon within was only at early Golden Core realm, but he was still more than enough to deal with multiple scenarios.

Chapter 33 – Hidden Depths

After half a day, Qin Yu arrived at the entrance to the Eastern Mountain Sect. The tall archway of bluestone had been destroyed and the imposing words upon it were long since ruined. Black smoke billowed everywhere and the entire land was in ruins. The sect that had a foundation of over a thousand years had been thoroughly eradicated.

Qin Yu thought of Lang Tu's grave, but with the entire Pill Disposal Department having collapsed, he could only stare on helplessly...as for Ning Ling, she naturally would not be found here. As he prepared to leave, mourning cries reached his ears. A chicken with its buttocks half scorched black came half-flying half-tumbling towards him from across a ridge.

"Ka! Ka! Ka!"

With its bouncing motions and the few teardrops it managed to squeeze out from its eyes, for better or worse it was coordinating its actions in a decent performance. Qin Yu understood its meaning, which was roughly:

This overlord was enjoying a life of joy and infinite contentment. I was planning to live in seclusion, separating myself from human affairs, but a great calamity descended upon my home and destroyed my family. Although this overlord is struck with deep sorrow, I have decided to join you and leave this heart-breaking land and take vengeance for this blood enmity in the future! If you help me and I rise in the future, I will not treat you poorly!

It seemed powerful and arrogant, domineering in all its actions. But when combined with its appearance and how it was tumbling forwards, it was simply laughable to the extreme.

That was right, the only one with such ridiculous and explosive acting and that could seem so self-satisfied was our one and only chicken overlord!

Qin Yu lightly said, "You and I could be called fated friends. If you want, then you can follow me from now on."

The chicken overlord leapt up, using its half-burnt feathers to fly up and fall onto Qin Yu's shoulder. It strutted its head, putting on a look as if saying, 'at least this brat knows what's good for him.'

Qin Yu didn't pay any attention to it. He took a step forwards and quietly walked away. Although he wasn't too worried about safety here, it was always best to be cautious. However, before he left the entrance he actually met a group of cultivators, several of them familiar faces.

Tao Jie was happily surprised, "Junior-apprentice Brother Qin Yu! That's right, I heard you went home to visit your family, so I guess that was why you were able to avoid this catastrophe. Otherwise I fear you would have..." Tao Jie looked at the crumbled entrance of the Eastern Mountain Sect, his eyes red and silent.

A few people standing beside him had dispirited expressions. They should also be Eastern Mountain Sect disciples.

Xu Wei glanced at Qin Yu, his eyes dim and dark. There wasn't any of the arrogance and loftiness from before.

Thinking about it, the destruction of the Eastern Mountain Sect had likely destroyed his pride along with it.

Qin Yu cupped his hands across his chest. "Greetings, Senior-apprentice Brother Tao Jie."

Tao Jie stopped his silent sobbing. "Fortunately, Senior-apprentice Sister Ning left after you left, otherwise she wouldn't have been able to escape." A look of relief filled his face. It was obvious that his attitudes towards Ning Ling and Qin Yu were on completely different levels.

Qin Yu lowered his head, not saying anything.

Another cultivator stepped out from the crowd and patted Tao Jie's shoulder, "Fellow daoist Tao Jie, there's no need to be sad. The ranks of the Eastern Mountain Sect died in battle against the demonic path, causing tremendous damage to them. I admire these actions from the depths of my heart. Furthermore, you and I will soon be joining the demonic path resistance army so we will have plenty of chances to take our revenge in the future."

With such calm, confident, and steady words, several female cultivators in the crowd looked towards this new person with shining eyes. The man cupped his hands across his chest and turned to Qin Yu, "Fellow daoist, since our meeting can also be called a stroke of fate, how about we travel together and look after each other? If we soon enter the army we will have even more chances to take revenge for our sects."

Tao Jie nodded, "Junior-apprentice Brother Qin Yu, you should come with us. This fellow daoist Zhao Chan is a disciple from the Divine Water Sect. There is an orthodox cultivator alliance gathering point not too far away. Once we reach there we will be safe. You can make further plans after we arrive."

He sincerely wanted Qin Yu to come with them. After all, even though he might not have liked him too much in the past, they still originated from the same sect. After the Eastern Mountain Sect was destroyed, these sorts of relations were even more precious.

Xu Wei frowned.

Qin Yu maintained his calm. He looked at Zhao Chan and slowly shook his head, "I don't want to drag you all down, so it's best if I go my own way." Seeing Tao Jie's look of disappointment, Qin Yu hesitated for a moment. "Senior-apprentice Brother Tao Jie, with the demonic path having invaded the Southern Empire, the hearts of the people can be hard to discern. You should also be careful."

Zhao Chan's eyelids jumped up. He glared at Qin Yu, his complexion darkening, "Is fellow daoist Qin Yu saying that I am a snake hiding my colors?"

Qin Yu's expression didn't change. "I was just thoughtlessly speaking. If I offended you, then I ask for your understanding. Then, farewell!" he turned to leave.

"Unbelievable. A mere fourth level Foundation Establishment cultivation and he says such things. Just who does he think he is?"

"That's right. If he doesn't come with us, I wonder just how far he'll make it. I wouldn't be surprised if he is immediately cut down by a demonic cultivator!"

A female cultivator from the Eastern Mountain Sect stared at him with contempt. "You only managed to coincidentally obtain a lucky chance from the Grandmaster, otherwise you would be nothing more than a mere outer court disciple. How could you even be placed on the same level as us?" With the Eastern Mountain Sect destroyed and the Southern Empire in chaos, this young woman wanted to find a new backer she could rely on. Without a doubt, this Zhao Chan from the Divine Water Sect was the best choice. As she saw Qin Yu spout his rude remarks she couldn't help but expose her previous biases.

This young woman was Lin Lin.

At the Foundation Establishment trial she had done everything in her power to draw closer to Xu Wei, but now she didn't even spare him a glance.

Everyone's expression changed.

"So this is the cultivator from the Eastern Mountain Sect with heaven-defying luck. He doesn't seem like much!"

"If it is him, then I know a little bit more. You all might not know, but this fellow daoist Qin Yu is known for being a self-serving individual who cares about his own life above all else. He has abandoned his fellow sect disciples more than once, so why would someone like him ever think about joining the orthodox sects army to fight the demonic path?"

"Let him go, it would be an embarrassment to have someone like him as a companion. Hurry and send him away, it hurts my eyes just to look at him."

Lin Lin coldly spoke from a lofty position. At this time, he still couldn't understand the situation. For him to fall to this step, he only had himself to blame!

"Wait a moment." Zhao Chan said with icy eyes. "Fellow daoist Qin has provoked us and yet is so eager to leave. I can't help but suspect you are a spy for the demonic path. If you left, I wonder if it wouldn't be long before our group would be reporting to hell!"

These words caused many cultivators to form ugly expressions.

Tao Jie hurriedly said, "Fellow daoist Zhao Chan misunderstands. Junior-apprentice Brother Qin Yu is a disciple of my Eastern Mountain Sect and has a deep enmity with the demonic path, so how could he be a spy?"

Zhao Chan indifferently replied, "I must apologize, fellow daoist Tao Jie. In order to ensure everyone's safety, I must insist that Qin Yu stay. If he really wants to leave then he shouldn't blame me for being ruthless!"

Lin Lin spoke up in support, "Senior-apprentice Brother Tao, Qin Yu's cultivation is mediocre and yet he can show up at the sect entrance completely unscathed. There are so many demonic cultivators in the surrounding area, so isn't this a bit strange?" She thought she was being incredibly smart so she smiled in smug satisfaction. And as Zhao Chan heard her words, he was suddenly stimulated as if someone had poured chicken blood on him.

Tao Jie hesitated, "This..." He looked at Qin Yu, waiting for his explanation.

Qin Yu looked at Zhao Chan. He calmly said, "Are you really not letting me leave?"

Zhao Chan's gaze was cold, just like he was staring at a dead person.

A black-clothed cultivator standing behind him stepped forwards, "You demonic path spy, just hurry and die!" The man punched out a fist and the aura of an eighth level Foundation Establishment cultivation erupted. The man's fist was surrounded with a layer of golden light as it emitted a bone-chilling cold.

"He is truly worthy of being an elite disciple of the Divine Water Sect! This sort of water slaughter technique is ten times more profound than anything I've seen before. In the Foundation Establishment realm there are few people that can match this magic art!" A bearded old man stroked his beard as he exclaimed in praise. He was a wandering cultivator that had managed to escape by luck. With his ninth level Foundation Establishment cultivation he was one of the highest in the group, on the same level as Zhao Chan, so his words naturally had a deep effect.

Everyone nodded in approval, a cold sneer on their lips. They looked on, wanting to see the pitiful fate of this boy who didn't know his place.

Qin Yu stormed backwards. The cultivator that was attacking him grinned, "You think you can escape..." But before his voice fell, the man's eyes popped open and his face filled with panic!

A black figure appeared in front of Qin Yu. It was icy cold, emitting a yin chill that left a creepy feeling on everyone's scalps. And, what was most alarming was the boundless demonic aura emitting from his body!

Demonic path, Golden Gore!

As this horrifying thought appeared, there was a dull thump as the attacking cultivator was smashed into the ground. He died where he was, blood erupting from his entire body.

Zhao Chan was panic-stricken, all his previous calm lost. "My lord, please forgive me, this is all a misunderstanding!" He fell to his knees and bowed, sweat dripping down his face.

Qin Yu narrowed his eyes. "You said that I was a demonic path spy and now I am acknowledging it, so where is the misunderstanding?"

Zhao Chan lifted a hand and slapped his forehead. A distorted rune appeared and shattered. Then, his pure water attribute magic power began to fluctuate and transform into dark demonic energy. He respectfully said, "My lord, this junior is a disciple of Elder Visage Demon from the Thousand Illusion

Demon Sect. I was under my master's orders to gather blood nutrients in order to raise the demon beasts."

The several people beside him began to undo their transformations and reveal their true selves.

Tao Jie and the others looked on with fear and alarm. They began to draw backwards together. Several of the female cultivators that were staring before with lovestruck eyes now had pale faces. They never imagined that this Zhao Chan who they were hoping to make into their new backer would actually be a demonic cultivator!

Lin Lin froze where she was, all the blood drained from her face.

Zhao Chan held an inkjade scepter in his hands. He had taken it out the moment Blacksky Demon appeared and held it tightly gripped as if his life depended on it. He carefully swept his gaze over Qin Yu and asked, "May I ask where my lord is from? If I have offended you then I ask for your understanding."

Qin Yu coldly said, "This is Blacksky Demon! You will be forgiven today since you didn't know anything, but if there is another time you will be killed without mercy!"

Then, Qin Yu turned to leave. Zhao Chan relaxed a little. He bowed and said, "Take care..." But before he finished speaking, his heart chilled. As he was about to activate the inkjade scepter, there was an agonizing pain in his head. In the next moment he was sent flying backwards as his head exploded in the air.

When Blacksky Demon attacked he didn't stop. He continued to rush forwards like a demented tiger as he dove into the group of demonic cultivators. Miserable cries rang out in the air as the demonic cultivators all died where they stood.

Shua –

Blacksky Demon returned to behind Qin Yu. His head was lowered and he held the inkjade scepter. Blood dripped down his hands, a horrifying sight that left everyone trembling within.

Tao Jie and the others all watched with shock. Facing this scene, none of them knew what to feel. Awe began to fill their eyes, and as for those people who had taunted him before, their faces were pale and their legs trembled where they stood.

Without saying anything, Qin Yu turned and left. After several breaths of time, he and Blacksky Demon vanished from sight.

The group was left deathly silent. It was a long time before someone spoke up, "He...is he really the lucky cultivator you spoke of?"

Lin Lin's lips began to move, but before she could speak she was stopped by a vicious glare from Tao Jie. "Everyone, Junior-apprentice Brother Qin Yu is not a demonic cultivator, and him saving us today is the best evidence of that. I hope that none of you will speak nonsense about this in the future."

However, most eyes turned to Xu Wei.

Xu Wei took a deep breath, "The sect has already been destroyed, so what are the trifling grudges of the past? I won't say anything about this in the future."

Xu Wei lowered his head and tightly clenched his fists within his sleeves.

The boy they had disregarded in the past could already control their life and death in his hands?

After a moment of thought, the crowd began to nod one after another.

Tao Jie relaxed a little. No matter what, he had to settle this situation here first, otherwise if news were to spread that Qin Yu was a demonic spy, he wouldn't be able to clear his reputation even if he jumped in the Yellow Springs River. As he looked at the destroyed sect archway and thought of how Qin Yu had been mocked and taunted below it not too long ago, he couldn't help but force a smile. Junior-apprentice Brother Qin Yu truly had hidden depths!

Chapter 34 – Auctioning Top Grade Pills

After leaving the Eastern Mountain Sect, Qin Yu placed Blacksky Demon back into the Soul Burying Flag. He didn't know what sort of treasure the inkjade scepter was, but it could also be received into the Soul Burying Flag. It was no wonder that Blacksky Demon had instinctively taken this demonic treasure when he struck down Zhao Chan. With another demonic treasure, Blacksky Demon would be stronger and Qin Yu would also be that much safer.

As he hurried along he encountered many fleeing cultivators. Several days later when he left the southwest region that had been ravaged by the demonic path, he began to think about what his next step should be.

The demonic path had undertaken a large-scale invasion, and with their immense strength it wouldn't be long before the majority of the Southern Empire would be ravaged with the flames of war. Although he had the Soul Burying Flag in his hands, it still couldn't be considered his own strength. Qin Yu's cultivation was only at the fourth level of Foundation Establishment. If he weren't careful his tiny little boat would capsize beneath his feet.

"It seems I need to find some place to hide out." Qin Yu mumbled to himself.

With the little blue lamp, he had no lack of pills. What he lacked was time. With the Southern Empire in chaos, this was the best time for him to concentrate on his own cultivation. The best outcome would be for him to form his own Golden Core. Then, no matter when or where he was, he would at least have the minimum level of strength needed to preserve his own life.

However, before living in seclusion, he had to restock the items on his body. In particular, the more Foundation Establishment realm cultivation pills he had, the better.

Woosh –

Qin Yu departed with a howl into the wind.

Two days later, Billowing Wave City.

As a great city of cultivators within the Southern Empire, this city was naturally splendid and prosperous. Its towering city walls were dozens of feet thick and nearly broke through the skies. They were also supported with array formations that left the citizens feeling safe from all external threats.

Countless cultivators were gathering here from all directions. After a short half month, the large city even seemed a bit overcrowded.

People stood shoulder to shoulder in the wide and long streets. In this hustle and bustle, everyone seemed to be in a rush, their eyes furrowed in hurry. The invasion of the demonic path was like a sword that hung above their heads. Even if it wouldn't strike at them any time soon, it still made it hard for them to find inner peace.

Waves of people had gathered at the largest auction house in the city. Many powerhouses that were rarely seen on ordinary days had turned out in droves. In front of the auction house, many cultivators greeted each other as they entered. Those with experience knew that there must be some great treasure being auctioned today if so many powerful forces had decided to gather here.

Qin Yu walked in with the flow of people. As he entered the auction house, he took a seat in the far back. His fourth level Foundation Establishment cultivation seemed common and ordinary here.

"I heard yesterday that there was a batch of pills delivered for auction so the auction house vigorously spread out this news, leading to today's grand event!"

"Pills? Are you sure you didn't hear wrong? Just look over there, the first row, sixth from the left, that is an Elder from Immortal Eclipse Valley, an alchemy grandmaster who has spent his life refining pills. Do you think such a character would rush here from so far away just for a mere batch of pills?"

"Humph! If these were ordinary pills then the Elder from Immortal Eclipse Valley naturally wouldn't spare this auction a glance. But from what I know, these are Spiritual Essence, Essence Augmenting, and Body Forging Pills, three different types of Foundation Establishment realm pills. There are three batches of 100 pills and all of them top grade!" The cultivator proudly said. "Do you know what top grade pills are? They are the best overall quality possible, a single one is equal to ten ordinary ones!"

"And do you know what this means? The most heaven-defying effect of a pill is when they are used when a cultivator is trying to make a breakthrough and increases their chances of success." Another man sneered as he spoke, "So what do you think the large influences lack the most? Do you think it's those common Foundation Establishment cultivators? No, it is Golden Cores! They are incredibly rare! And these batches of 300 top grade pills have a high possibility of producing five Golden Cores or even more. With the demonic path's invasion, it wouldn't be strange if there was a crazy competition for these pills! There will definitely be a sky-high price today!"

On the side, the meditating Qin Yu appeared as if he didn't hear any of the conversations around him.

The auction soon started. The auctioneer walked up, an old man with a red face. He stepped onto the high platform and cupped his hands across his chest. "Today, powers from all over have gathered here truly bringing honor to my humble little auction house. With the current situation in the world being so tense, I won't speak much and will officially begin the auction."

With a clap, a crystal jade box as large as a fish bowl was lifted up onto the stage by two cultivators. The red silk covering it was lifted away and the 300 pills were clearly revealed in everyone's eyes. Within the crystal jade box, the 300 pills were illuminated by lights glowing within; this scene was simply explosive!

Hu –

The entire auction house began to stir!

The two cultivators standing on the side of the crystal jade box took deep breaths. The aura of Golden Cores slowly released and shrouded the entire platform, capable of instantly responding to the tiniest movement.

The auctioneer clapped his hands together and excitedly said, "Today's first auction will be 300 top grade Foundation Establishment realm pills! Spiritual Essence, Essence Augmenting, and Body Forging Pills, 100 of each kind. After being appraised by the auction house, we have determined that all 300 pills are top grade quality!"

"These three groups of pills will be divided into three auctions and we only accept biddings of raw materials. The first auction will be the 100 Essence Soul Pills with a base price of 1000 Essence Soul Pill materials. Every increase in bidding can be no lower than 100. Let the auction begin!"

From the first row of seats, the Immortal Eclipse Valley Elder immediately called out a bid of 8000 sets of materials. This bid drove the entire auction hall into a frenzy. Everyone drew back in fear at such a terrifying offer, and without incident the 100 top grade Essence Soul Pills were won by Immortal Eclipse Valley.

But following that, the competition for the Essence Augmenting Pills and Body Forging Pills were no less intense; they were even more explosive. The appearance of top quality pills was a rare enough occasion that they could be counted on one hand, so it was completely unheard of for 300 pills to appear from nowhere. If one were to miss such a chance, it was unlikely they would ever encounter something like this again.

Immortal Eclipse Valley showed just how disgustingly wealthy they were. They showed off their ability in the auction and soon won the 100 Essence Augmenting Pills too. The other forces present couldn't sit still any longer. After a short discussion they decided to band together, and thus the last 100 Body Forging Pills were bought by joint forces for a heaven-quaking price of 11,000 material sets.

The Immortal Eclipse Valley Elder's face darkened. He flicked his sleeves and left!

There were also a good number of cultivators that couldn't withstand the heated atmosphere in the auction hall and started to leave with pale faces, their hearts and minds still ringing.

8000 Essence Soul Pill materials, 8000 Essence Augmenting Pill materials, 11,000 Body Forging Pill materials, these were a total of 27,000 material sets. According to market price, while there were minor fluctuations for material prices, each material set could be converted into approximately three spirit stones. This meant that the final total bid was 81,000 spirit stones!

If a Golden Core cultivator possessed several thousand spirit stones they were already considered rich. As for over 80,000 spirit stones, that was enough to cause a Nascent Soul realm cultivator to be envious!

Even though the auction house only took a 20% cut, there was still more than enough profit. Thus, when they received the cultivator who put up these pills, they were absolutely respectful. Of course this was also due to the strong aura of the person as well as their mysterious identity.

A dark and chilling voice sounded out from beneath a hooded black robe. "Where is it?" The voice was hoarse and gravelly, like two dry stones rubbing together.

The auction house chief manager beamed a smile that was brighter than the sun. "A 20% cut was supposed to be deducted, but I have taken responsibility so that fellow daoist will receive 22,000 material sets. And following your request, 10,000 material sets were exchanged for 30,000 spirit stones. There are still 4000 material sets for each pill left."

The black-robed figure took out a storage bag. "Put it in."

The chief manager clapped his hands. 12,000 material sets and 30,000 spirit stones were placed into a box and into the storage bag. After the exchange, both sides tore up their contract to signal the completion of the transaction.

"I want to take a rest here for a while. Is that possible?"

The chief manager's eyebrows wrinkled for a brief moment before he recovered himself. "If my honored guest asks, how can I refuse? Take our honored guest to the best room so that he can rest, and make sure all his requests are fulfilled."

The black-robed figure cupped his hands together and followed a guard away. A light flashed in the chief manager's eyes as he pondered the situation.

"Teacher, this honored guest clearly has a tremendous background, so why not try to form a closer relationship with him so that we can cooperate more in the future?" A youth asked on the side.

The chief manager shook his head, "Are you trying to ask why I am performing business so cut and dry and clearly separating our involvement with this person?"

The youth nodded, "I ask teacher to clear my doubts."

The chief manager's face sank. "You are too young. Do you really think that this world is so happy and wonderful like your dreams? That is over 60,000 spirit stones, a wealth that even tempts my own heart, so do you think all those wolves and tigers gathered outside will let him off? And even if his strength is great, it doesn't matter too much. It is hard for two fists to face four from the enemy. I fear this person won't be able to get a hundred miles away from Billowing Wave City!"

As Qin Yu followed the stream of people out of the auction house, he discovered many individuals with imposing auras sweeping their eyes around, investigating everyone like hawks, as if they were looking for something. He maintained his calm composure as he left the crowd and arrived at a remote corner. From beneath his voluminous robes, a light flashed in his hands as he took out the Soul Burying Flag. A black gas rose up from the ground with a thought and entered into it.

After finishing this, Qin Yu left the corner and joined back into the stream of people. He didn't walk too far from the auction house and entered a shop that was selling all sorts of spiritual plants. He had only been planning to stroll around to pass the time, but soon he had the idea of making some purchases. At the back of the Medicine Codex, there were many methods listed for raising spiritual plants. Since he didn't know how long he would be in seclusion, he might as well take this opportunity to learn.

The materials needed to refine Golden Core level pills could be bought ahead of time. Golden Core and later level pills were incomparably precious and rarely circulated on the market. If there really came a day when he would need such pills then it was best to be prepared early.

After having these thoughts, Qin Yu started to earnestly select different spiritual plants. If he didn't look he wouldn't have known there were hundreds upon hundreds of types of spiritual plants here. He didn't need Energy Refining realm spirit plants, so what he looked for were Foundation Establishment realm spirit plants as well as some Golden Core realm spirit plants. There was no need for him to consider anything higher. Of course, even if he wanted to he wouldn't find any. The seeds of Nascent Soul realm spirit plants were valuable and needed to be carefully preserved, so it was impossible that shops like these would take them out for others to peruse.

Qin Yu thought of the packet of seeds in Blacksky Demon's storage bag. If he preserved them so carefully, they were likely uncommon items. He definitely had to try cultivating them; he might be pleasantly surprised.

An hour later, Qin Yu had chosen 37 different types of spirit plants. Perhaps it was because of the chaos in the region, but the prices of everything had dramatically risen, causing him to need to spend nearly a hundred spirit stones. This amount attracted many surprised gazes.

However, as these people saw Qin Yu's young age coupled with his cultivation, as well as his calm demeanor, they thought he was the disciple of some large faction that was secretly purchasing things. Such a person often had a powerhouse from the sect following them, so no one dared to have any evil thoughts against him.

When Qin Yu put all the seeds away he suddenly heard a disturbance from outside. The gloomy cultivators waiting outside the auction house began to race away, and there were even people that lit up signal flares despite being in public. Soon, a massive storm rose up in Billowing Wave City as people rushed out, soon vanishing from sight.

Chapter 35 – Barren Mountains and Wild Lands Lead to Good Cultivation

As the crowd cried out again and again, Qin Yu watched, silently sneering. It seemed it had become known that the person who commissioned the auction had already vanished. But, no matter how those people searched, none of them would ever suspect that Blacksky Demon was in the Soul Burying Flag, and that storage bag was in the inkjade scepter.

This demonic treasure was not a true material object but was formed from pure demonic energy. It was an object that existed somewhere between reality and illusion, thus it was able to contain the storage bag and also be placed into the Soul Burying Flag. After Qin Yu discovered this he decided to revise his plan, thus leading to today's events.

Now it seemed things had turned out quite well.

Three days later, the chaos in Billowing Wave City began to die down. Qin Yu left his inn room and followed the streams of people out of the city. Ten miles away, he turned and looked at the giant city on the horizon. He secretly swore to himself that the next time he came here he would no longer be as cautious as he was. Instead, he would rely on his own strength so that others didn't dare to move against him!

Woosh –

He stepped into the thick forest and found the chicken overlord waiting for him. Without delay, he headed towards the northeast.

Half a month later, a travel-worn Qin Yu stopped before a mountain range that stretched into the distance. As he carefully looked around, his eyes shined, revealing a look of satisfaction.

The mountains were dangerous and perilously difficult for mortals to venture into. Even better was that there was an extreme lack of spiritual strength here so cultivators would have no interest in this land. And, it was also considerably far from the area where the demonic path was running rampant. It was a good place to live in seclusion and cultivate.

Qin Yu entered deep into the forest and investigated for another day. He actually found another even more wild and barren place in the forest. This was a large valley surrounded on all sides by mountains, and with the steep cliffs and high edge that hid this valley, it was nearly impossible to find.

This was it!

When others chose a place to go into seclusion and cultivate, the spiritual strength available was their first consideration. But to Qin Yu, this wasn't a problem at all. He was someone who walked the path of a pill addict from the start, so he didn't desire some paradise filled with spiritual strength.

He chopped down trees and built a house. With his Foundation Establishment cultivation and the power of his Demon Body, all of this was easily accomplished. Half a day later, a wide wooden house was built on the flat land and Qin Yu used a few pieces of leftover wood to make some simple tables and chairs. Now that he had a place to live, what he needed to do next was a little more troublesome. He needed to lay down some simple array formations to conceal himself and his aura from the outside world.

This was also one of the reasons why Qin Yu had exchanged for so many spirit stones earlier.

The school of array formations was broad and profound. Qin Yu hadn't studied it so he naturally didn't have any skills in it. However, the array formations he needed to arrange weren't considered too complex. There were several simple protective array formations contained in the Eastern Mountain Sect's inner court disciple status token, so as long as he had enough spirit stones it wouldn't be too difficult to copy and lay one down.

After spending three days and burying 400 spirit stones underground, the great valley was covered with a thick fog that covered it up.

Qin Yu ascended a mountaintop and looked down at the first array formation he had personally arranged in his life. He also observed the thick mist in the valley. It didn't seem too out of place and blended in with the clouds in the skies. He smiled at his success.

Returning to the valley, Qin Yu looked up at the shining sun in the skies. He had a faint feeling for the mysteries of array formations. If he had a chance in the future he would definitely need to study them well.

Now he needed to grasp time and cultivate!

He stepped into his wooden house. He was incomparably familiar with the place he had built himself, so without further ado he sat down on a round cushion.

He ate some pills and started to cultivate!

When the top grade pill was digested, magic power surged through his body. This was a comforting feeling that ordinary people wouldn't be able to experience, so this was also one of the reasons why he never felt that cultivating alone was a difficult and arduous task. Unfortunately, most of the pills he had had been sold at the auction house, so after several days he could only temporarily cease his cultivation.

As a cultivator that possessed the little blue lamp, it was shameful for him to be lacking pills. Qin Yu summoned Blacksky Demon and took out the storage bag. After sending him away, he plopped the Fleeting Flame Furnace on the ground and began.

With 12,000 sets of materials, he could attempt making 4000 Spiritual Essence Pills, Essence Augmenting Pills, and Body Forging Pills. According to his current success rate he could refine around 6000 pills. In addition to the little blue lamp's purifying abilities, if this wasn't enough to send him to the Golden Core realm then he might as well buy a block of tofu and choke himself to death on it.

Half a month later, 900 new pills had been produced. Qin Yu fell to the ground to rest. Perhaps it was because this was his own house, but he slept well. He awoke at night. He took out the little blue lamp and began to upgrade the pills. Although he had seen this scene countless times before, every time he saw the foot-wide sea-blue light appear, covering the ordinary pills in a pale blue light, he couldn't help but cry out praise from the depths of his heart.

The little blue lamp was truly a treasure that could seize the good fortune of the world!

He sighed with emotion and continued to cultivate.

When it came to cultivating, taking top grade pills was an addictive process. Like this, he cultivated and cultivated and soon two months passed.

When Qin Yu broke through to the sixth level of Foundation Establishment, he suppressed the joy in his heart and furrowed his eyebrows. He felt as if he had forgotten something. Soon, he slapped his head and wryly smiled. "This place is protected well and I didn't spare spirit stones in arranging the array formation, yet I forgot to plant the spiritual plants."

Though he had wasted over two months of growth, it was better late than never. Qin Yu quickly took out a thick darksteel broadsword from his storage bag and left the wooden house, beginning his career as a farmer.

But, he never expected that this sudden inspiration would push open a great door for him, giving him a great assistance on his road of cultivation!

...

Creak –

The doors to the wooden house were pushed open and a black-robed youth stepped out. He was a bit taller and his back a bit straighter, and his slightly naive appearance had matured a little. As he stood at the entrance he stretched his waist and his bones cracked. A breeze rolled over his robes and a faint smile curved up his face.

This youth was Qin Yu!

Now, two years had passed since he started his long seclusion. His cultivation had reached the ninth level of Foundation Establishment, just a step away from breaking into Golden Core.

A bamboo dragonfly fell onto his shoulder. Qin Yu lifted a hand and poured magic power into it once more. It spread its wings and flew away, soon vanishing from sight. The bamboo dragonfly had a thread of his divine sense. If people were to intrude into the mountain valley, he would instantly awaken from his cultivation. The only problem was that he needed to renew its magic power every other month.

This giant valley field had been opened up. A mountain spring was connected for irrigation. The various types of spiritual plants slowly grew, the fields of green forming a shimmering medicine field.

When it came to growing spiritual plants, although it might seem simple from the outside it was actually incredibly difficult and complex. This was especially true when they blossomed and began pollinating. He had to be extra cautious during this period to prevent cross-pollination. Even with the detailed records of the Medicine Codex helping him, his path of being a spiritual plant farmer hadn't been smooth at all. He used up a great deal of time and effort to feed and grow them.

Unfortunately, spiritual plants grew far too slowly, and the more precious, higher rank plants grew even slower. For instance, using three types of Golden Core spiritual plants as an example, it had taken them two years to pass the seedling period and they were still dozens of years away from reaching maturity.

Recalling this, Qin Yu subconsciously frowned. As he thought about the various raw materials for pills he would need in the future, he could only reveal a bitter smile. It seemed that even with the little blue lamp in his possession, his road of cultivation wouldn't be perfectly flat all the way through!

He took a look through the medicine field. After determining there weren't any major problems, he walked in and began maintaining and trimming the plants. He turned the soil, plucked out weeds, caught insects, and irrigated the ground. There were all sorts of minor adjustments needed, such as making sure that some plants weren't watered too much. Otherwise those plants would wilt and die. On the other hand, there were some water-based plants that needed to be watered every day in order to normally grow.

These trivial matters didn't cause Qin Yu to lose his patience. He calmly performed his tasks as if he were taking a stroll through a park, giving off a feeling that he was in a state of peace and relaxation. This was also a form of cultivation and what he cultivated was his heart and the path of righteousness. With this, it would be even smoother when he swallowed and refined pills in the future.

After finishing managing the last section of the medicine field, Qin Yu rose up and let out a deep breath. He walked to a canal and frowned as he saw two dry and withered saplings.

He jogged over to take a look. Although he had cared for them in accordance to the Medicine Codex, the condition of these spiritual plants worsened with each day. Regret showed on his face as he feared they wouldn't be able to last much longer. These two saplings were seeds that came from Blacksky Demon's storage bag. When he first planted them there hadn't been any problems. But once they grew to their current size, they immediately fell into this sick and wilted state.

If they were ordinary spiritual plants then Qin Yu wouldn't have cared. But, he had looked through the Medicine Codex and determined that these were an extinct ancient spiritual plant – the Thousandgold Mulberry. Coincidentally, the ancient beast dominion art that he obtained from Blacksky Demon also

listed a ranked list of 100 ancient insects. In this ranked list, the 73rd ranked insect was the Purpleback Bluewing Ant which just happened to feed on the Thousandgold Mulberries.

In the Southern Empire, it was rumored that the number one immortal faction, Immortal Eclipse Valley, had a Purpleback Bluewing Ant as their guardian beast.

If he could cultivate a Thousandgold Mulberry.....

But unfortunately, these two Thousandgold Mulberries that he had carefully cared for were about to wither away and die.

Qin Yu was filled with helplessness. Thinking about it, he decided that he would dig up these two Thousandgold Mulberries and place them in a basin in his room. If they were going to die anyways then he might as well give it a try. Maybe their wilting was related to the sunlight?

The wooden house was very simple, but the wooden rack used to hold the pills was quite exquisite. There was a bamboo tube that was driven by flowing water. It would rotate from time to time, ensuring that the little blue lamp that hung on it would enhance all the pills on the wooden rack together.

Looking around, Qin Yu casually placed the two Thousandgold Mulberries near a corner of the rack. Then, he turned and entered his cultivation room. He sat down on a round cushion and calmed himself. After a long time, when his mind was calm once more, he flicked his sleeves and five jade bottles appeared in front of him. Each jade bottle held 30 Essence Augmenting Pills for a total of 150 of them.

During this period of seclusion, Qin Yu would use these 150 top grade Essence Augmenting Pills to attack the Golden Core realm! He lifted a bottle and opened it, immediately taking out four Essence Augmenting Pills and swallowing them. After many experiments, he discovered that four pills was the best number to quickly absorb the most medicinal efficacy possible. Any more and it would be a waste.

Bang –

Medicinal efficacy flowed through his limbs and bones, fusing with his flesh and blood and turning into spiritual strength. Then, this strength was absorbed into his dantian sea where it continuously integrated into the base there. With his ninth level of Foundation Establishment, the volume of the base didn't increase. Rather, it began to turn a deep blue and emit a jade-bright light that gave off a sense of endless majesty and grandeur.

Time passed, a day at a time. The great dao base within Qin Yu's dantian sea reached an amazingly vivid blue. Waves of light flowed around it like water, circulating increasingly fast and increasingly urgent.

Suddenly, Qin Yu's eyes popped open and he swallowed down 10 Essence Augmenting Pills. At this time he couldn't care about wasting any more. This was because a cracking sound was emitting from his dantian sea, like the first crack of winter ice. The waves of light spinning around the great dao base began to converge unto it.

The entire great dao base darkened. There was only a spot within the center that glowed like a scorching sun, blazing with a light that was hard to look at. At this time, it was like the great dao base had been a thick layer of earth, and after endless hours of accumulating strength, something was about to be born and break free from that earth!

Chapter 36 – The Little Blue Lamp’s Second Surprise

An incredible traction force erupted from the great dao pedestal and all the strength of the ten Essence Augmenting Pills was instantly sucked in. Qin Yu raised the jade bottle and let the rest of the pills fall into his mouth. He had reached the breakthrough point of his cultivation. If he succeeded today then he would reach Golden Core!

The light within the pedestal grew increasingly bright and radiant. By crazily swallowing pills, Qin Yu was just barely able to keep up with the absorption rate of the great dao pedestal. However, at this time, Qin Yu suddenly stiffened as blood started to flow out from his nose and mouth.

He opened his eyes, his eyes dark and gloomy, revealing deep disappointment.

He had failed.

Luckily, because he had experienced the long process of breaking into the Foundation Establishment realm, he never thought that he would initially be successful to begin with. He took several deep breaths, tamping down the frustration in his heart before he started to check in on his current situation.

Within his dantian sea, the light that flooded out from the center of the great dao pedestal had dissipated and the pedestal itself had darkened. This was obviously because of his failure.

However, the color seemed much more rich and vibrant than before, as if more magic power was gushing out. Qin Yu was startled.

It was like...it was a bit purer than before. How strange...he had never heard of such an advantage after failing a breakthrough!

On Qin Yu’s cloudy face and gloomy eyes, light began to slowly shine out from deep within his pupils.

If the magic power in his body could be considered as 10 barrels of liquid, then what just happened was as if a barrel had been boiled away, leaving behind nine barrels that were purer than they were previously.

Everyone knew the advantages to having pure magic power. This was an enhancement in quality and it was usually only high level cultivation law formulas that possessed the ability to temper one’s magic power. This was the reason those disciples of great factions and families were able to stand above all others!

For instance, whether it was using magic arts or controlling treasures, if someone with purer magic power only had to use 50% of the magic power to accomplish the same thing as someone with less pure magic, then it was obvious who had the advantage. This was the benefit of having pure magic power.

What Qin Yu cultivated was the dilapidated True Wood Arts of the Eastern Mountain Sect, and that cultivation law formula only had a mere three incomplete sections. But today, it seemed as if he had stumbled onto a way to forcefully alter the quality of his magic power!

When others failed breaking into the Golden Core realm, their mortal body would suffer from the backlash of magic power striking back at them. In a best case situation they would end up severely wounded. However, Qin Yu only paled a little with his organs rumbling a bit. With the Demon Body’s powerful regenerative abilities, this sort of minor injury could be healed with a bit of sleep.

This meant that every few days he could try making another breakthrough, and even if he failed he could still purify his magic power. In a situation where the total amount of his magic power couldn't increase, the quality of his magic power would increase instead, becoming more and more concentrated, also meaning he would become that much stronger.

Like this, it would be best if he broke into Golden Core later to give himself more chances to purify his magic power. If he missed such an opportunity then he might have to wait until his Nascent Soul breakthrough.

With these thoughts in mind, Qin Yu was much more happy and excited about what was to come. He took several Body Forging Pills to heal himself. Reality proved that the Demon Body's regenerative abilities were much stronger than he thought they were. After a night of rest, all of his wounds were healed as if they had never been there. After taking a few Essence Augmenting Pills, the magic power within his body was also restored. As he looked at the great dao pedestal that shined brighter than before within his dantian sea, Qin Yu's lips curled up in a smile.

It was time to continue!

He opened a pill bottle and swallowed the contents. The light of the great dao pedestal continued to gather and condense within its center. An hour later, Qin Yu gave a stuffy cough as he wiped blood from the corners of his lips. He smiled as he felt the purer magic power in his body.

He swallowed some pills to recover his body.

Theoretically speaking, the process of breaking through revolved around concentrating one's magic power and overcoming the critical breaking point to reach the goal behind it. So, even if he failed during the process, his magic power should still become purer.

And nobody could compare with Qin Yu when it came to being filthy rich in pills. When he failed his breakthrough he could eat top quality pills, using the massive amount of spiritual strength within them to restore himself. Thus, even if other cultivators failed, the degree to which their magic power was purified simply couldn't be compared to him at all.

Another important reason was the potency of the Demon Body. If the body could be compared to a bucket, then the stronger the bucket was the more of an impact it could withstand and the better it would be able to concentrate power within. If a person's body were to break apart due to the rushing impact of magic power in their body, then any enhancement in magic power would be decreased a great deal.

All of these factors together made Qin Yu different from others. To fail in a Golden Core breakthrough, survive, and also purify his magic power at the same time, this was something that no one else could replicate.

Pa –

A low and deep sound rumbled in the training room. Winds began to rise up from the ground and windows were smashed open. Cracks appeared on the ground, spreading out like a spider web.

Qin Yu's eyes shot open and he spat out a mouthful of blood. A stabbing pain in his chest left him pale white. As he examined his body, the joy in his eyes slowly turned to worry.

This was his seventh failed breakthrough. As his magic power became increasingly pure, the impact of magic power from the failed breakthroughs also became stronger. What had begun with only minor injuries was now truly harming him.

Although he was still fine and only needed to rest for several days to recover, he still couldn't help but worry over his continued defeats. Sooner or later, his body wouldn't be able to withstand the impact of magic power. As he thought of his body suddenly exploding someday in the future because of a failed breakthrough, his face darkened for a long time before he finally forced out a bitter smile.

Indeed, advantages came with disadvantages; there were no absolutely good deeds in this world. If he couldn't find a solution for the time being then he would only put aside these worries of his.

"Golden Core, Golden Core, why must a breakthrough be so difficult?" Qin Yu mumbled to himself. He had completely forgotten about how he had been looking forwards to his breakthrough arriving later.

It took a full ten days for Qin Yu to recover from the backlash of magic power from his failed breakthrough. Hesitating to continue, he rose up and left the training room.

The bamboo dragonfly had flown to the entrance of his wooden house and had fallen into an idle state. Qin Yu shook his head and poured a bit of magic power into it. The bamboo dragonfly shivered for a moment before waking up. As it did, its wings vibrated faster than before and its eyes shined with a miraculous light.

Woosh –

It vanished from sight.

Qin Yu comforted himself. At least the effects of having purer magic power were clearly displayed through the bamboo dragonfly. After pouring in magic power this time, it might be able to last for a full three months before needing a recharge.

He strolled through the medicine field, looking over it. Even after the bamboo dragonfly fell idle, no one had come. There was only a corner of a field of Seven Star Flowers that had traces of being chewed at.

Qin Yu's face darkened and he cursed inwardly. He had told it not to mess around in the medicine field yet it had blatantly disregarded his orders. He would need to find an opportunity to teach it a lesson.

Just as he was thinking, the fog on the edge of valley began to tumble about as a group of a brightly feathered chickens stepped out. A proud and noble looking chicken strutted at the front of the pack, shaking its wings from time to time as hens carefully combed its feathers from the sides.

The chicken overlord looked at the valley with satisfaction in his eyes. Its eyes flitted about as it gave several loud clucks, as if ordering its small group of hens to step backwards. Then, it flapped forwards, landing in front of Qin Yu and twisting about like a spoiled child. It flapped its tail and wings about, as if to say, 'Master, you've finally come out! Let me rub your dog-leg.'

Two years ago, when the chicken overlord saw Qin Yu summon Blacksky Demon at the ruined entrance of the Eastern Mountain Sect and chop up Zhao Chan and his cronies as if they were vegetables, the chicken overlords had become servile and polite in front of him. And this sort of behavior seemed to be becoming increasingly intense over time.

Of course, the chicken overlord was still proud in front of the other hens.

Wait, it was actually far more arrogant and proud than before, as if telling the world that it had a strong backer to rely on and didn't need to be afraid of anyone at all.

Qin Yu kicked it away. He coldly sneered, "You little thing, you've become fatter and bolder than before. You actually dare to violate my orders and steal spiritual plants from the field."

The chicken overlord popped up into the air, its wings wildly wagging about as it cursed the heavens and earth, so aggrieved by this baseless accusation that it looked afflicted.

Qin Yu's eyebrow arched up. He knew this little thing's character and knew that if it really had done something, its go-to action would be to shout out loud and beg for forgiveness, right? However, the valley was protected with an array formation, so if it weren't the chicken overlord, just what else had been able to get in?

Qin Yu walked towards the Seven Star Flower field and inspected the area. He found several shallow footprints, and indeed it really wasn't the chicken overlord.

He ignored the chicken overlord that was complaining with its eyes, as if saying 'Master, you've blamed me with such a grave injustice,' and quickly fell into thought.

He rose up and walked to the edge of the valley. Digging up the ground he found the spirit stone buried beneath. This spirit stone was eroded and quickly crumbled to dust as soon as he touched it. He walked a bit more and found a second spirit stone. Luckily, this spirit stone was in slightly better condition and was a bit more opaque. Even so, it wouldn't be able to last much longer.

He continued, confirming that several other spirit stones were in a similar condition. It seemed that the array formation had been gradually weakening, to the point where some wild creatures had been able to enter the medicine field.

Qin Yu frowned. According to what he knew, this sort of simple array formation should have an extremely light drain on spirit stones. After laying down the array formation it should have been able to last several years. But now, only two years had passed and these spirit stones had been exhausted of their spiritual strength. Something was wrong, but since he wasn't proficient in array techniques he wouldn't be able to find the reason. He could only blame this on the deficient heaven and earth energy here causing the spirit stones to drain faster than normal.

This was only 400 spirit stones. Qin Yu, who had over 60,000 of them, naturally didn't place them in his heart. He simply replaced all of them, lest the medicine field suffer further damage.

He shot a glance at the chicken overlord. Looking at the chicken overlord's sad and pitiful expression, he really had no idea just where it had learned such acting skills. If it wanted to cry, tears would immediately start dripping.

Laughing, Qin Yu took out several pills. The chicken overlord gulped them down like a hungry wolf, its face filled with joy. In the end, two were left. Seeing that Qin Yu wouldn't object, it picked up the two pills and flew towards the edge of the mountain valley. It fell in front of a group of small hens and immediately stood up tall and proud.

Swinging their wings, two hens with the brightest colored feathers walked forth and each received a pill in appreciation. The other hens began to gather together, their eyes red with jealousy. The chicken overlord waved its wings with a teasing motion and led the hens into the forest.

To take top grade pills to feed a spirit beast, and a spirit beast like this useless chicken, there was no one else within 100,000 miles of the Southern Empire that had such daring.

Qin Yu didn't think about it much further, or at least he didn't care too much about it. This was the daring of someone who had near limitless pills at his disposal; he could simply give them away if he wanted.

He had encountered the chicken overlord at the beginning of his journey. Since destiny willed their paths to cross again, he naturally had to treat it well. Of course, although this fellow was stupid and prideful, he still managed to lift up Qin Yu's mood at times.

Qin Yu clapped his hands and washed himself at the water canal. Subconsciously, he turned and remembered that the two Thousandgold Mulberries had been transplanted into his room. He had actually forgotten about them until now, but he feared they had likely wilted and died already.

Qin Yu was filled with regret as he entered the wooden house. But as soon as he entered and looked around, he was stunned. The last time he saw the two Thousandgold Mulberries, they were in a listless condition. But now they were growing vibrantly, almost 10 feet tall. There were even several mulberry leaves that had sprouted and were exuding a boundlessly ancient aura.

Qin Yu was stunned for a long time. His eyes slowly moved towards the little blue lamp. He couldn't keep his calm as his heart began to violently beat in his chest and his mouth turned dry.

The Thousandgold Mulberries had been placed near the wooden rack. There was a system set up with a bamboo tube that was driven with flowing water so that every so often the Thousandgold Mulberries would be exposed to a bit of little blue lamp's light. If someone told Qin Yu that the little blue lamp wasn't related to this change, he wouldn't believe it at all!

If this were true...

What cultivation? What breakthrough? At this time, all other thoughts were cast out from his mind. He turned around and rushed away to pick out different spirit plants from all over the medicine field as he eagerly waited for night to come.

As the sun fell, the long day finally ended. The pall of night covered the mountain valley and the little blue lamp released its deep blue light. As the spirit plants were bathed in the blue light, it was like they were covered in beautiful radiance. Then, something amazing occurred. All of the spirit plants began to sway and their leaves trembled in excitement, as if they were swallowing the most precious tonic in the world. All of them began to grow in an incredibly slow but firm manner.

While the rising sun broke through the darkness and golden sunlight brightened the earth, Qin Yu was still sitting on the ground, dazed, his entire face blank. This sort of daze was not because he was confused, but because he was happily surprised to the point that his mind couldn't process it.

A long time passed. He blinked his eyes and began to pinch himself.

Ouch!

This really wasn't a dream.

Qin Yu reared back his head and laughed, his deep voice echoing out from the wooden house and through the entire mountain valley.

Little blue lamp, oh my little blue lamp, you are truly worthy of being this world's most mysterious treasure.

On this day, besides upgrading pills, Qin Yu discovered another use, and it was that it could accelerate the growth of spiritual plants!

Chapter 37 – Heavenseek Pavilion

With a nighttime of being bathed in a foot of sea-blue light, all of the spirit plants had entered their mature period. This was equivalent to three years of natural growth!

After a moment of jubilation, Qin Yu calmed down and immediately started a new experiment. Since he discovered that the little blue lamp had a second function, why couldn't it have a third or even a fourth? As he thought of these possibilities, Qin Yu found himself beginning to heat up with excitement once more.

Three days later, Qin Yu's experiments came to an end. He had placed hundreds of different types of items within the foot of sea blue light, but the results had cooled his fervid mind.

The little blue lamp was able to accelerate the growth of all plant species. Even if they weren't spirit plants, they would still be able to be enhanced within the blue light. But on the other hand, flesh and blood life forms were unable to draw in the blue light released by the little blue lamp. Similarly, refining materials, magic tools and weapons, spirit stones – those types of items weren't able to be upgraded either.

Qin Yu was a bit disappointed, but as he thought about it he changed his mind. The little blue lamp's two functions could be called heaven-defying, and if it were any more powerful than the heavens themselves might have never allowed such an item to appear in the world. He should be more than satisfied with it as it was.

With the ability to increase the growth of spirit plants, at the very least he shouldn't have any headaches in the future when he was looking for higher level materials to refine pills. Unfortunately, the sea blue light only extended for a foot and couldn't be used in a wide area. As it was right now, he could only use it to accelerate the growth of some higher level spirit plants in their early phase, such as the Thousandgold Mulberry. The Medicine Codex stated that once the Thousandgold Mulberry grew for a thousand years it could become a Greatsun Mulberry, and after 10,000 years it would become the Ancient Starry Sky.

It was said that if a Purpleblack Bluewing Ant were raised within a Greatsun Mulberry, it had a chance of evolving into the 24th ranked insect on the ancient hundred insect decree, the Yinyang Twin Ant. The Yinyang Twin Ant was said to have white and black wings and was fearless of the strength of the five elements. It was incomparably bloodthirsty and possessed mind-boggling killing intent. Even if a Nascent Soul cultivator were to meet one, they would only be able to flee into the wilderness.

As for the final ultimate version, the Ancient Starry Sky, the reason it was called this was because a starry sky would appear on every mulberry leaf. These leaves were said to contain the strength of the starry skies, and if a Yinyang Twin Ant were to eat these leaves as food, it had a chance of evolving into an Ancient Primordial Ant. The Ancient Primordial Ant was ranked sixth on the ancient hundred insect decree. It surpassed the five elements and could fly through the world. In ancient times, if a swarm of these ants appeared, it would be a calamity that swept through the world, destroying all life wherever they went. The horror of this power was unimaginable!

Qin Yu wiped the drool from the corner of his lips. Thinking about it, he definitely had to go to Immortal Eclipse Valley in the future. If he could obtain a Purpleback Bluewing Ant then that was the same as possessing something that could evolve into a true trump card in the future. He would be able to show the power of the Ancient Beast Dominion Art in its entirety!

But for a mere young Foundation Establishment cultivator to go to Immortal Eclipse Valley, that was no different from running into a tiger's den to seek death. Currently, his most important objective was to make a breakthrough in his cultivation and achieve Golden Core. Only then would he have the strength to preserve his own life.

He left the two Thousandgold Mulberries near the wooden rack. Then, he took a short break to refine more pills. He didn't believe that with the massive amount of pills at his disposal it would be impossible for him to blast open the gates leading to the great dao of Golden Core!

Three months later –

A heaven-shaking bang erupted like a strike of thunder, directly blowing apart the training room in the wooden house. The countless pieces of broken wood flew about everywhere, destroying and flattening vast tracts of the medicine field. Dust rose up in all directions and the sound of violent coughing spread out, so intense that it was like someone was going to tear out their chest.

Qin Yu alternated between coughing and vomiting blood. Countless tiny cracks appeared on his body, making him look like a pot that was being burned in a flaming kiln. His entire body was red like a bloody gourd. It was a long time before he managed to stop coughing and each breath he took was like sucking in countless knives that tore away at his throat, heart, and lungs. The pain was so intense it left him seeing black.

The 17th attempt of breaking into Golden Core had failed!

The injuries this time were far more horrifying than Qin Yu had expected. If it weren't for the power of the Demon Body he would have already become a pile of ruined meat. But even though he still had his hands and feet, his entire body was riddled with wounds. If someone else were to be injured so gravely, then if they didn't have some miraculous treasure that could heal the body they would be left a cripple.

With the Demon Body's powerful regenerative abilities and taking a plethora of pills, Qin Yu was finally able to carefully move about a month later. Four months later, he had fully recovered. But he didn't dare to try a breakthrough again, and was so scared that he had even stopped cultivating.

Qin Yu was currently infinitely close to the Golden Core realm and the magic power within his dantian sea had become inconceivably pure. With just a little bit of movement it would begin boiling again, forcing him into another Golden Core breakthrough attempt.

It would be good if he succeeded. But if he failed...as he imagined himself blowing up in rain of flesh and blood, a cold sweat started to form on his body.

Standing in the mountain valley, he looked up towards the sky. Seeing the bright moon above him, he gently sighed, "Breaking into Golden Core...shit, how could it be so difficult! 17 times! 17 damn times! It's already a miracle that I haven't died yet!"

Finally, he couldn't hold back his anger anymore. His roars echoed through the mountains, causing countless wild beasts to turn tail and run.

The chicken overlord shrank back and decided not to return to the valley for the time being, lest Qin Yu direct his anger onto it and stuff it in a cooking pot.

After venting his anger, Qin Yu felt much more comfortable. He turned and sat in front of the wooden house.

He had thought deeply about it these past few days and decided to leave the valley. He had to find out the reason why he couldn't form a Golden Core no matter what!

He examined the array formation and tidied up the medicine garden. The bamboo dragonfly was filled with magic power. The little blue lamp, pills, as well as the two Thousandgold Mulberries were all placed in a storage bag. At sunrise, Qin Yu easily climbed past up the mountains. He turned and looked at the valley where he had lived for three years and walked away.

...

"Some people might not have heard of Immortal Eclipse Valley before, but there is no one who doesn't know of my Heavenseek Pavilion." This saying was uttered by an arrogant manager of a Heavenseek Pavilion from some large city. It spread through the Southern Empire and once word of this reached the ears of the number one faction of the Southern Empire, they actually remained silent. Without a doubt, this only served to verify this claim.

After Qin Yu left the mountain valley, it didn't take him long to hear this. He journeyed thousands of miles until Canyonwell City was right in front of him. On this day, many cultivators were entering the city, all of them hurried with tense expressions. This was because the flames of war that had started in the southwest region of the Southern Empire had spread further during the last three years.

Canyonwell City was built at the bottom of a canyon that was tens of thousands of feet deep. The city bordered the volatile war region so the great sects of the Southern Empire had dispatched cultivators to gather here. They wanted to take advantage of the strong city and location to fight the demonic path in a great war. This also explained why so many cultivators were arriving at the already bustling Canyonwell City.

Qin Yu entered the city along with the streams of people. After a simple inquiry, he found what he was looking for – a remarkable three-story pavilion standing at the end of a long street.

Heavenseek Pavilion!

These words were written in large flowing strokes on a signboard, the will and spirit within shining like a sun, making it hard for others to look straight at it. The imposing aura was strong enough, but, as a place

that was said to sell information of the world and also claimed to know everything and anything, shouldn't such a place be wrapped in a layer of secrecy and mystery instead?

This sort of overbearingness didn't match at all with what he thought Heavenseek Pavilion would be like.

With his heart racing, Qin Yu stepped into Heavenseek Pavilion. Luckily, their hospitality was perfect. A beautiful female cultivator approached him, a smile already on her lips. She bowed and said, "Welcome, guest, to Heavenseek Pavilion. If you wish, please follow me to discuss."

Qin Yu nodded and followed behind. Soon, they entered a separate room.

Some maids brought in tea and snacks. The woman reached out a hand, indicating to a seat, "Guest, please sit down. May I ask what it is you wish to know?"

Qin Yu's eyebrows faintly furrowed together.

The woman's smile didn't dim. "Guest, please feel relieved. Heavenseek Pavilion has an inheritance of nearly a thousand years and we have never revealed any information about our guests."

Qin Yu hesitated for a moment. He asked, "I want to know what the reasons are for being unable to break into the Golden Core realm."

The woman smiled, not caring about Qin Yu's caution. She came into contact with many cultivators and had encountered those that were far more careful than he was.

"Honored guest, every person has different physiques and different life experiences, so the reasons will also be different. You will need to explain your problem in detail for me to find the appropriate information you need."

Qin Yu refused, "It's not convenient for me."

The woman thought for a moment. "If so, there is only one way, and that is for Heavenseek Pavilion to sell you all our information on reasons why a person cannot break through to the Golden Core realm. Of course, the cost of this will be proportionately high. After all, news is different from other commodities; once sold, it is difficult to keep."

Qin Yu's expression was calm. "What's the price?"

The woman calculated some numbers in her mind. Then, her red lips parted and she said, "5000 spirit stones."

This price was indeed outrageously high. A normal Golden Core cultivator might not have such wealth, and what Qin Yu was revealing right now was that he only had a sixth level Foundation Establishment cultivation.

The woman didn't think Qin Yu could match this, but in the next moment her eyes popped out.

Qin Yu nodded, "I can." He casually tossed out 5000 spirit stones. Disregarding everything else, just the ease with which he did this was shocking.

The woman quickly composed herself, "Guest, according to the rules of Heavenseek Pavilion..."

Qin Yu pulled out a storage bag. With a thought, 5000 spirit stones tumbled out, forming a small hill.

The woman received and checked them. With a much more respectful tone, she said, "Guest, please wait."

She left and soon returned, bringing with her a jade slip.

Qin Yu probed it with his divine sense. There was more information within than he had expected. All sorts of reasons and possibilities for a person being unable to condense a Golden Core were listed and they surpassed his imagination. Even so, he didn't dare to assume and carefully looked over and contrasted them with his own problem.

Soon, a piece of information caught his eye.

If a cultivator swallowed too many pills, the residual medicinal efficacy would be left in their body, making it so that they couldn't condense a Golden Core.

Qin Yu's heart fell but he remained calm on the outside. As he finished reading and took back his divine sense, the jade slip in his hands suddenly shattered.

The woman apologized, "Honored guest, the information of Heavenseek Pavilion isn't allowed to leave our doors. I ask for your understanding."

Qin Yu frowned. "I know the rules." He paused and continued, "I want to buy some more information."

He chose four of the reasons listed from the jade slip. The residual medicinal efficacy was of course one of them.

"Each piece will be 200 spirit stones."

"Alright."

With a wave of his hand, 800 spirit stones appeared.

The woman seemed prepared. She took out an empty jade slip and inserted some information into it.

"Guest, please check."

Qin Yu quietly looked over the information for solving the problem with residual medicinal efficacy.

Skythunder Bamboo.

It was a rare, ancient spirit plant, and the thunder it released had the effect of dissolving the impurities within the body. Although he only needed this information, Qin Yu deliberately looked through the jade slip a bit longer before crushing it.

"Farewell."

As he stood up to leave, the woman smiled. "Honored guest has spent a great deal of wealth at my Heavenseek Pavilion, so allow me to disclose an extra piece of information to you. Currently, cultivators from the sects of the Southern Empire have gathered to meet the threat of the demonic path together. In order to inspire morale, many treasures have been put forth, of which one of them is the Skythunder Bamboo."

Qin Yu replied without expression, "Thank you."

After he left, the woman took out a jade slip. Among the things she wrote in it was, 'The disciple of the mysterious alchemy Grandmaster, the Eastern Mountain Sect's Qin Yu, arrived at around 5'oclock at the Canyonwell City Branch Division. He spent 5800 spirit stones to find out the reasons for being unable to breakthrough to the Golden Core realm and four solutions to four different possibilities. According to what can be inferred, the reason should be because of residual medicinal efficacy.'

After labeling the date, the woman turned and slapped the wall. A black hole appeared, which she placed the jade slip within.

As Qin Yu left Heavenseek Pavilion, he naturally didn't know any of this. He glanced back, frowning. When the woman spoke those final words, did she really know what he wanted or had it all been coincidence? He shook his head and put these thoughts to the side, quickly leaving.

Whether it was intentional or not, news of the Skythunder Bamboo was incredibly useful to him. This was what mattered.

Chapter 38 – Neglected

An hour later, Qin Yu appeared in the largest restaurant within Canyonwell City. This was a place where dragons and snakes were mixed together but also a place where information flowed freely. Before he finished eating, he already found what he wanted.

The various factions within the Southern Empire had set up a reward system for those who aided in resisting the demonic path. By killing demonic cultivators it was possible to accumulate merit points and exchange them for items on the hundred treasure list.

The hundred treasure list was sold all over the region at a price of one spirit stone. Qin Yu tossed the server two spirit stones and the server glowed with joy as he hurried away and returned with a jade slip.

Probing the jade slip, Qin Yu found that there were really all sorts of items on the hundred treasure list. There were cultivation method manuals, magic tools, pills, materials, and all sorts of other valuable treasures.

He swept through the list, and at tenth place he found information about the Skythunder Bamboo.

Ancient spirit plant, Skythunder Bamboo (with roots). 800 years old, can be exchanged for 10,000 merit points.

Qin Yu's eyes brightened as he put away the jade slip. He was pleasantly surprised to discover that this was a living plant that was 800 years old. With the little blue lamp, if he could obtain the Skythunder Bamboo then he would be able to solve his problem of being unable to break into the Golden Core realm!

Currently, the only question was what identity he should use to join the battlefield. He couldn't use his status as the Eastern Mountain Sect's Qin Yu for now and he would have to alter his appearance too. Otherwise, it would be troublesome if others were to discover him. To reach the ninth level of Foundation Establishment in three years, even an idiot would find that suspicious.

After leaving the restaurant, Qin Yu went to a magic tool store and used 700 spirit stones to purchase an appearance changing mask, one that could shield him from the divine sense of a Golden Core. After going into a remote alleyway and emerging once more, his appearance had turned into that of an ordinary looking youth, completely commonplace amongst the crowd.

Everything was prepared. All he needed was an identity.

In order to filter out demonic path spies, the cultivator army was extremely strict in investigating the status of those who joined, especially if they were wandering cultivators. Qin Yu thought over and over about it and decided not to enter as a wandering cultivator. As he was deep in thought, he suddenly caught a glance of a group of people across the street and his eyes brightened.

He turned and followed the group. After making a few turns he entered a long alley. Then, the group suddenly turned around and the one leading them coldly asked, "You've followed us all the way. Just what do you want?"

Two cultivators appeared behind Qin Yu, blocking his path.

Qin Yu remained calm. He hadn't covered up his location so it was normal for him to be discovered. He took out a black token.

Kong Xuan's complexion changed. "The Patriarch's command token!" With surprise in his eyes, he whispered, "You are..."

Qin Yu responded, "Who I am is unimportant. What is important is whether or not the Kong Family is willing to abide by their promise."

Kong Xuan hesitated for a moment. Then he cupped his hands across his chest and said, "That Patriarch command token was gifted by my Kong Family to a certain Grandmaster. Although I don't know what relationship fellow daoist has with the Grandmaster, since the token is in your hands and you also know the reason for it, the Kong Family will naturally fulfill our promise."

"Patriarch!" A man on the side anxiously said, "We have important matters to attend to. We cannot delay!"

Kong Xuan's voice sank. "Grandmaster's graciousness to my Kong Family is as heavy as a mountain. There is no need for you to speak again!" He looked up, "May I ask fellow daoist how my Kong Family may help you?"

Qin Yu said, "I want to join the cultivator army and need an identity."

Kong Xuan let out a breath of relief. "This won't be difficult. Since fellow daoist is related to the Grandmaster, it is impossible that you are a spy from the demonic path. The Kong Family will guarantee your status." He turned and ordered, "Kong Lin, bring this..."

"My name is Ning Qin."

"Bring fellow daoist Ning back home and prepare accommodation for him." Kong Xuan cupped his hands across his chest and continued, "I currently have some important business to attend to, so I apologize for any disrespect."

Qin Yu cupped his hands in response, "It's no problem."

Kong Xuan quickly left with his group.

Kong Lin had an anxious look on his face, as if he wanted to follow but had no way to. He looked at Qin Yu, his face gloomy, and said, "Follow me."

His tone was stiff and terse. But, for better or worse he knew this youth was a guest of the Patriarch so he didn't go overboard.

Qin Yu originally wanted to ask some questions, but as he noticed this fellow seemed reluctant to speak, he simply nodded and followed behind, also happy to enjoy the quiet.

The Kong Family had over 200 people here, with the elderly, women, and even children present, as if they had moved their entire family here. This was a bit strange. After all, although everyone knew that Canyonwell City had firm defenses and cultivators had gathered here from all over, that didn't necessarily mean they would be able to hold it.

With the normal actions of the demonic path, if they managed to break into the city, lives would burn away like coal!

Qin Yu's arrival attracted only a little bit of attention. After Kong Lin explained the situation, no one worried about him again; all of them had preoccupied and worried expressions. However, there were some youths that weren't shy and only hesitated for a bit before gathering around to find out more information about Qin Yu.

Qin Yu smiled and spoke with them. He didn't reveal anything as he conversed with them, but these youths were like barrels that had been tipped over, spitting out everything they knew.

So, it seems that the Kong Family was being persecuted by one of their former enemies and as a result they moved their entire family to Canyonwell City in order to seek help to avoid this calamity. No wonder Kong Xuan and the others had all seemed so anxious.

Sitting in a corner of the courtyard, Qin Yu casually chatted with the youths. Several family members warily glanced at him but sneered and turned away as they saw this scene.

To them, Qin Yu was an outsider of unknown origin, and he also seemed to lack any skills. Now with their family facing imminent disaster, no one had time to care about him. Gradually, Qin Yu was forgotten. When the Kong Family ate a meal, no one greeted him or asked him to sit at the table. But the several youths actually sent him some food and Qin Yu smiled without refusing.

As the sun set in the west, Kong Xuan and his group returned. Although he didn't say much, his dark and gloomy expression indicated the result.

The atmosphere within the Kong Family became even more tense.

At dinner, Kong Xuan thought of Qin Yu. As he ordered someone to set up a seat for him, he was suddenly glared at by an older uncle.

"With disaster right before our eyes, how can you find the time to greet outsiders! You and I should be thinking about ways of getting through this mess!"

Worries filled Kong Xuan's heart and he soon forgot about Qin Yu. The Kong Family continued through the night without sleep but weren't able to figure out a plan.

Qin Yu laid down on an animal-drawn cart, resting his head on a pillow brought out by a boy from the Kong Family. He looked up at the skies. There was a dim haze covering the moon tonight; there should be wind and rain coming tomorrow.

Dawn soon arrived. Winds began to howl.

The gray skies left one's heart feeling sad and depressed. At breakfast time, the entire Kong Family was silent, as if a pall of gloom covered them. Even the little children sat politely in their seats, not daring to make a single sound.

Kong Xuan finally saw Qin Yu. A bit of guilt flashed over his face. "There are great changes coming to my family, so I apologize if I have neglected fellow daoist. Allow me to write a letter of introduction for you so that fellow daoist may leave as soon as possible, lest you are drawn into my Kong Family's disaster."

His words caused Qin Yu to view him in a different light. Qin Yu smiled and said, "It's no problem, life is full of little twists and turns. I'm sure this will pass soon too."

Qin Yu smiled, but his smile was annoying to some others. The Kong Family's great uncle coldly snorted, "You don't know the greatness of the heavens and earth! If it were just a little problem, why would my Kong Family be in such distress!" He turned and scolded, "The family is already tired from dealing with this and yet you continue messing around, wanting to be a guarantor for someone of unknown status. What if you draw another disaster onto yourself!"

Kong Xuan's face turned red. "Great uncle is too anxious. Fellow daoist Ning Qin has the Patriarch's command token of our family, so there naturally isn't a problem with his status."

The great uncle's complexion changed. He seemed as if he wanted to say something else but then he coughed without speaking again. If it were the Grandmaster who came here the entire Kong Family would treat him with utter respect. But, what arrived was only a Foundation Establishment realm cultivator, so how could anyone attend to him in such a situation?

Kong Xuan embarrassingly said, "Fellow daoist Ning Qin, please eat."

Qin Yu nodded, no longer saying anything.

Not many people were in the mood to eat. The breakfast was soon removed. Kong Xuan went to his study to write a letter and then handed it to Qin Yu, "Fellow daoist Ning Qin, take this letter to the army to receive your identity token."

Qin Yu cupped his hands across his chest, "Thank you."

Kong Xuan waved his hand, "It was my Kong Family that was disrespectful to you. I hope that fellow daoist does not mind. Allow me to escort you out."

As the two reached the courtyard, the doors were suddenly smashed open. Several black-clothed cultivators stood outside, "Kong Family, it's been many days since we've met!"

The one shouting was a middle-aged man. He strode in, arrogantly sweeping his eyes around.

Kong Xuan's complexion changed. He clenched his teeth. "Han Sheng, my Kong Family has already moved to Canyonwell City. What else do you want?"

Han Sheng sneered, "I don't want to do anything. It's just that my family's old ancestor has an interest in Senior Kong's Golden Core, so I ask the Kong Family to give it up."

"You are delusional!" Kong Xuan roared out. "Han Sheng, don't you dare go too far, otherwise even if we must all die here, don't think that my Kong Family will fear you!"

A deep voice echoed out from beyond the courtyard doors, "All of us die here? By relying on you juniors? You are not worthy!"

An old man with gray hair walked in. He was tall and imposing and a divine light flashed in his eyes. An invisible aura covered the courtyard.

Kong Xuan and the other Kong Family cultivators behind him suddenly paled.

Golden Core realm!

Although this was only an early period second level cultivation, it was enough to trample across the entire Kong Family!

Kong Xuan gnashed his teeth and cupped a hand across his chest, "I greet Senior Han. With senior's Golden Core cultivation, do you really plan on bullying and attacking us juniors?"

Han Sheng and the others drew back. They bowed, "Greetings, old ancestor."

The Han Family's old ancestor had an indifferent expression, "These words are what you should have been asking old freak Kong. After he broke into the Golden Core realm in the past and chased my Han Family out of East Stream Town, did he care for his status back then? There is no need to speak any further. Hand over old freak Kong's Golden Core or don't blame me for taking it myself."

Qin Yu stood at the side, listening to the cultivators argue on both sides. He approximately understood what was happening. The Kong Family and Han Family used to be two cultivator families in East Stream Town. However, over time the two sides had accumulated great grudges, and after the Kong Family's old ancestor reached Golden Core, he chased the Han Family out.

No one expected that the Kong Family's old ancestor would die and that a Foundation Establishment Elder of the Han Family would manage to find a lucky chance and break into the Golden Core realm. Because of that, the relationship between the two families had been flipped upside down. Not long after the Kong Family left East Stream Town they were found by the Han Family and forced to endure humiliation and bullying. Finally, they were ordered to hand over the Golden Core left behind by the Kong Family's old ancestor.

Although a Golden Core was an inanimate object, if one carefully refined it, it could last for dozens or even hundreds of years. It possessed great power and could be considered a magic tool. The greatest benefit of it was that it allowed someone to meditate and perceive that boundary, providing them with a great advantage once they tried to break into the Golden Core realm.

For ordinary cultivator families, if they didn't have a deep and long inheritance, the chances of them producing a Golden Core cultivator would be nearly zero. The Han Family wanted to take away this Golden Core and exterminate all hopes that the Kong Family would rise once more in the future.

The Kong Family originally came to Canyonwell City to request help from a friend of their old ancestor. But yesterday, they had waited for four hours drinking tea and yet they weren't able to see him. This led to the Han Family visiting them and intimidating them today.

In all fairness, there was nothing wrong with this. In the past the Kong Family had chased out the Han Family, and with the tables flipped, it was the Han Family harassing the Kong Family. The Kong Family could have been said to have brought this disaster upon themselves.

Qin Yu had helped the Kong Family retrieve their old ancestor's Golden Core in the past, and today all he received was a letter of recommendation in return. This could be said to have profited the Kong Family. Now, he didn't have any intention of interfering in their current problems.

Of course, this was not unrelated to the attitude of the Kong Family. Although he didn't care about it too much, he couldn't help but feel a bit colder in his heart.

Kong Xuan's complexion paled. If he were to hand over the Golden Core, he would be a traitor to the Kong Family. But if he didn't, he feared that the Kong Family would suffer a grave misfortune today. As he hesitated, the great uncle roared out, "We cannot hand over the old ancestor's Golden Core! With the factions from all over having gathered at Canyonwell City, I don't believe the Han Family will dare to do anything to my Kong Family!"

Qin Yu glanced at him, berating the man for being an idiot. These days, with the invasion of the demonic path, every Golden Core cultivator was occupied so who would bother paying attention to the declining Kong Family? This old fellow shouted out as if he were being noble and principled, but it was likely because of his own selfishness. With his ninth level Foundation Establishment cultivation, he was certainly the most qualified person within the Kong Family to meditate over the Golden Core.

His ignorant shouts would likely draw a great disaster onto the Kong Family.

Chapter 39 – The Kong Family's Exalted

As expected, the Han Family's old ancestor flicked his sleeve and the great uncle emitted a pitiful cry as he was sent crashing into the drawn cart that Qin Yu laid in last night. The great uncle vomited a mouthful of blood, pale and horrified, clearly not expecting that the Han Family would actually attack them.

"Since you would rather do things the hard way, then from this day on I will completely scatter the Kong Family!" As the Han Family old ancestor spoke, the aura of a Golden Core rushed out, pressing down on everyone's chests like a giant boulder, leaving them all gasping for breath.

Kong Xuan bitterly laughed. "Cause and effect, karma returning to you really doesn't feel good at all. My Kong Family cannot complain about today's disaster, but fellow daoist Ning Qin is not connected to my Kong Family. I ask that Senior Han allows him to leave in peace."

The Han Family old ancestor's cold eyes didn't reveal any agreement or disagreement.

Han Sheng quickly said, "Old ancestor, if this person slept overnight at the Kong Family, he definitely must be connected. Since we decided to attack, we should cut the grass and exterminate the roots."

Kong Xuan anxiously said, "I can vow that fellow daoist Ning Qin and the Kong Family are completely unrelated!"

"The more eager you are to clear him, the more my Han Family is unwilling to ignore him. Whether or not this boy is related to the Kong Family, today he can only blame himself for being born into a life of bad luck!" Han Sheng turned and respectfully bowed, "Old ancestor, please make a decision!"

The Han Family old ancestor's eyes shined with a bright light. He lightly said, "You deal with him." A mere Foundation Establishment cultivator couldn't be considered anything at all.

Han Sheng diabolically grinned, "Grab that boy!"

First they would get rid of these useless people and slowly deal with the Kong Family afterwards. In any case, he didn't want outsiders meddling in their business.

Qin Yu frowned and looked at Kong Xuan. As he saw that the worry in the man's eyes wasn't fake, he shook his head, a cold light beginning to rise from his eyes. Perhaps it was his good intentions, but he had actually been dragged down with him. Looking at the two Han Family members approaching him, Qin Yu thought that perhaps meeting the Kong Family in Canyonwell City was a stroke of fate. Maybe he could help them out one more time.

Well, there was another consideration. If the Kong Family were destroyed today, the letter of recommendation that Kong Xuan wrote for him might become useless.

Looking up, Qin Yu's eyes fell onto the two Han Family members. Then, he glanced at the Han Family old ancestor. Flames seemed to burn in the depths of his eyes. After 17 failed breakthroughs, the magic power within his body had far surpassed the Foundation Establishment realm in terms of quality and quantity. He also wanted to know what level his strength was at, and this Han Family old ancestor seemed like a good experimental subject.

Golden Core cultivators had sharp senses and minds. As Qin Yu's gaze fell on him, the Han Family old ancestor had a strange feeling and turned to meet his gaze. As their eyes met in the void, the old man's heart skipped a beat and he felt a faint threat. He silently thought that he should stop what was going to happen, but it was too late.

Bang –

A deep and dull sound began to ring as wild winds whipped into existence. The two Han Family members were suddenly sent flying backwards. They smashed through a wall, causing it to collapse around them.

The Han Family old ancestor's pupils shrank. As he saw that the two people were only shocked and not severely wounded, he relaxed a little. Still, his tone and expression remained dignified, "Just who are you?"

Everyone from the Kong Family was stunned. They watched Qin Yu take back his hand, their eyes still wide and their hearts shaken from watching the two Foundation Establishment masters from the Han Family be sent flying backwards.

Qin Yu calmly said, "I have no relation to the Kong Family. I was just about to leave, but since your Han Family will not allow me to, I can only stay behind."

The Han Family old ancestor was shaken for a moment and was unable to maintain his lofty and arrogant attitude. He glared at the sweating Han Sheng and then cupped his hands across his chest, "It was indeed my Han Family that made a mistake first, so I will apologize to fellow daoist first. Everyone stand to the side and allow fellow daoist Ning to leave!"

Kong Xuan finally recovered his composure, but as he did his heart began to fill with joy and regret. If he knew Senior Ning Qin had such a cultivation, why would he have bothered going out to ask for help from others? As he thought about how he had failed to greet Senior Ning Qin, he cursed that old bastard uncle of his. If it weren't for him, then his Kong Family wouldn't have been so embarrassingly disrespectful!

And as he was thinking this, he suddenly heard the Han Family old ancestor speak. In response, he fell to his knees and cried out, "Senior Ning Qin, please rescue my Kong Family!"

The Kong Family members weren't idiots. Even though they hadn't recognized Mount Tai, they still fell to their knees together, all of them filled with shame and fear.

Qin Yu swept a glance over them. Everyone within the Kong Family felt their hearts leaping up and down, afraid that Qin Yu would just nod his head and leave. They needed his help, but...if they were standing in his place and were treated as he was last night, they wouldn't choose to help. For a time, all of the Kong Family members wanted to cry.

"Oh..."

Kong Xuan's breath caught in his chest. This word was like a thunderclap that rang in his ears, making everything turn dark around him. His only thought in his mind was 'You old bastard I hope you die, you have ruined my Kong Family!'

"I think there are some youths in the Kong Family that aren't too bad. I've decided to stay behind and play with them for a day."

With a deep breath, the light returned to Kong Xuan's eyes as if he had been revived from the dead. "The Kong Family is overcome with joy. We welcome senior to stay as long as you desire!"

The Han Family old ancestor's complexion darkened, "Has fellow daoist Ning already made up your mind?"

Qin Yu pointed towards the young boys from yesterday. "They are just children so how can they understand the grievances of the adults? The past should remain in the past."

The Han Family old ancestor's eyes wavered. After a long moment of silence he said, "Since fellow daoist Ning wants to meddle, then you must first defeat this old man!"

Qin Yu smiled. "Then I must ask fellow daoist Han for guidance." He wanted to help the Kong Family but he had no intention of developing a grudge with the Han Family. This old man Han was only a cautious person who had allowed room for both of them to draw back.

The Han Family old ancestor shook his head, "Currently, Canyonwell City does not allow high level cultivators to fight in private. Tomorrow, on the army battle stage, I will respectfully await your appearance."

The Han Family left.

What old man Han said was true; fighting between high level cultivators was forbidden in Canyonwell City. But, he had likely wanted to use this chance to go back and find out more about Qin Yu and also make more preparations. Concerning the fight, Qin Yu didn't care too much but he wasn't too happy either. He frowned as he thought about having to expose his strength in public.

Kong Xuan's heart shrank as he saw this. Could it be that Senior Ning Qin wasn't a match for the old ancestor? If so, then his Kong Family would never be able to escape this disaster. For a time, his heart was a confused mess.

Qin Yu realized that his expression was different. He refused the warm invitations of the Kong Family and went back to a room to meditate, leaving the worried Kong Family outside.

Pata –

Pata –

The rain began to slowly fall.

Although Canyonwell City was large, they didn't have a Nascent Soul to guard it. This was because here, both righteous and demonic factions had restrained themselves and hadn't invested their peak strength. While the honored status of a Nascent Soul was an explanation, the ultimate reason was that this invasion into the Southern Empire could only be considered a local war between the righteous and demonic factions.

The Golden Core realm could be called the peak war strength on the battlefield, thus when news of Qin Yu's battle against old man Han spread out it immediately stirred up immense waves. Countless cultivators were in high spirits, excited about the prospect of going to the battle stage tomorrow and witnessing this high level fight!

The day passed with nothing occurring.

In the early morning, Qin Yu pushed open the doors. Kong Xuan and the others were standing outside, respectfully waiting for him. The arrogant and prideful great uncle from yesterday was naturally not present. After being severely wounded and shocked yesterday, he had nearly died and had hidden away in his room, terrified.

"Greetings, Senior Ning Qin!"

Hearing the loud shouts from the courtyard, the great uncle's body shook and he smashed a nearby bedpan.

Qin Yu wasn't in the mood to haggle with him. He glanced around and said, "Lead the way."

Kong Xuan used both hands to take out a letter. He respectfully said, "The letter I wrote yesterday was too crude, not worthy of senior's great prestige, so please accept this new letter."

Qin Yu didn't take it. "What status did you give me?"

Kong Xuan braced himself, "Kong Family's Exalted."

The corners of Qin Yu's lips curled up. "You planned this quite well."

A cold sweat formed on Kong Xuan. "I beg Senior Ning Qin to agree. All women of age within the Kong Family are willing to serve as maids and slaves for you!"

Several dressed up young girls stepped forwards, charming smiles on their faces as they bowed down.

Qin Yu frowned, "Have them leave!"

Kong Xuan blanched. The several young girls also had gloomy expressions on their faces.

Qin Yu lightly said, "Does the Kong Family see me like this?"

As Kong Xuan was about to explain, Qin Yu took the letter. "Remember, this is a choice your Kong Family made. If you are implicated in some way in the future, don't regret it."

Kong Xuan was ecstatic. "We won't regret, we won't!" He turned and added, "Hurry up and greet the Exalted!"

Qin Yu shook his head, "Let's not delay."

"Of course, of course, Lord Exalted, please follow me." Kong Xuan respectfully said, feeling a great stone lifted from his heart. As long as Qin Yu agreed then the Kong Family would have the protection of a Golden Core level cultivator. Even if he lost on stage today, the Han Family wouldn't dare to bully them too much.

To have a Golden Core, to not have a Golden Core, to small cultivating families, this difference was as great as the heavens and earth. As for the implication that Qin Yu spoke of, he knew that everything in this world came with a price. Since the Kong Family would enjoy the protection of Qin Yu, they naturally had to prepare for any backlash that followed.

From this aspect, Kong Xuan could be considered an intelligent individual.

The northern end of Canyonwell City had been evacuated of citizens and a temporary military station had been set up there. All of the cultivators from different factions had gathered here and security was strict. Kong Xuan led the way, unimpeded. As they walked forwards, eyes fell onto Qin Yu and all of them were amazed.

Wasn't it said that a mysterious powerhouse from the Kong Family was going to fight the old ancestor of the Han Family? This was just a Foundation Establishment cultivator!

News quickly spread out, creating an uproar. As more and more cultivators confirmed that Kong Xuan was leading a Foundation Establishment youth to the army station, all of them became enraged as if

they had been personally deceived. However, even though a small number of people left in a huff, the vast majority of them stayed behind. All of them wanted to see how this Foundation Establishment youth from the Kong Family would be beaten into mush.

Foundation Establishment versus Golden Core, this was just a massive joke!

Kong Xuan personally appeared with a formal letter of recommendation. Soon, Qin Yu received with his army identity card. This sort of thing was used to calculate merit points. After refining it, one could record the cultivation, height, and identity of demonic path cultivators killed, and then use the merit points to exchange for items on the hundred treasure list.

Ignoring the strange looks from the army cultivators, Qin Yu faintly smiled. After so much trouble he had finally joined the alliance army. Now, all that was left over was to gather enough military merit points to exchange for the Skythunder Bamboo.

But before that, he had to finish this matter with the Kong Family.

“Let’s go.”

Kong Xuan nodded. As the two were about to leave, a light flashed in front of them and a middle-aged cultivator rapidly appeared. The man had a noble and dignified air to him, and the blue clothes he wore exuded their own uncommon magnificence. He said in a deep voice, “Kong Xuan, with the great war before us, you should know that powerhouses in the alliance are forbidden from private battles...”

As his eyes fell onto Qin Yu, he stopped talking and frowned, “Who is he? Didn’t you come to get an identity token for the Kong Family’s Exalted?”

Kong Xuan respectfully bowed. “Greetings, Senior Zhu Bluecloud. Reporting to senior, this person is my Kong Family’s Exalted, Senior Ning Qin.”

Zhu Bluecloud’s face darkened. “Kong Xuan, I will warn you one more time that the alliance does not permit high level cultivators to have private battles. You must immediately go find your Kong Family’s Exalted and prevent him from taking the stage!”

Kong Xuan wryly said, “I was not lying. This person is Senior Ning Qin.”

Zhu Bluecloud started to laugh from anger. A Foundation Establishment Exalted? You actually dare to say such words? If this were true then would old man Han have retreated yesterday? It was like people thought he was an idiot!

“Kong Xuan, if you continue to pretend to be stupid then don’t blame me for using my status as an Elder of the alliance army to punish your Kong Family!”

Chapter 40 – Victory

Qin Yu suddenly said, “Han Beishan has stepped on stage.”

Zhu Bluecloud’s complexion became even uglier than before. What a wonderful Kong Family this was. It was already enough that the family Patriarch was pretending to be a fool, but even a mere junior had dared to call a Golden Core cultivator by his name. This was completely brazen!

“Kong Xuan, you need to manage your family’s juniors. If you continue to recklessly spout nonsense then I will make sure you regret it!”

Qin Yu glanced at him. “Han Beishan went on stage, so why didn’t you stop him? Now you want the Kong Family to leave? This could be considered preferential treatment.”

“Shut up!” Zhu Bluecloud said, angered. “What a rude junior, you actually dare to disrespect me! Today I will definitely punish you lest you forget how vast the heavens and earth are in the future!”

Kong Xuan shouted out, “Senior Zhu, he really is my Kong Family’s Exalted. You have made a mistake!”

Zhu Bluecloud stiffened. He turned and looked at the cultivators at the registration area and saw them quickly nod in reply. Then, his complexion turned strange. A Foundation Establishment Exalted? Had the Kong Family gone crazy or had the world changed? Since when would a Foundation Establishment cultivator challenge a Golden Core?

He looked at Qin Yu, unsure. “Stop stirring up trouble! I will explain matters to the Han Family, so hurry up and bring this boy out of here. If you really want to die then go to the battlefield and kill some demonic cultivators. There will be plenty of opportunities for you to die there.”

Although these words were hard to hear, they were actually meant to save Qin Yu’s life. Qin Yu smiled, thinking that this Zhu Bluecloud wasn’t that bad at all. “Don’t worry, no one is going to die.” Then, he stepped forwards.

Kong Xuan briefly bowed and hurried to follow.

Zhu Bluecloud’s complexion turned even uglier. Since when had he ever been disregarded by a Foundation Establishment cultivator like this? This Kong Family junior was just far too rampant! He had likely reached his current cultivation smoothly so he lacked awareness of just how much skill he had, and believed he could fight at the Golden Core realm with a few minor methods. It was like he didn’t know what death was!

He wanted to wash his hands of this mess, but if that boy could reach the sixth level of Foundation Establishment at his age, that meant he wasn’t too weak. It would be a pity if he died on the battle stage. He might as well go and watch the fight, and if he were in trouble he could go and save him still. Humph, he wanted to see just what sort of expression that boy would have then.

Zhu Bluecloud turned and left, finally able to scatter a bit of the dreariness in his heart. He revealed a faint smile. He didn’t want to admit it, but that boy had caught his attention.

The battle stage was a place where cultivators of the alliance army came to settle their private grudges. Besides those deep blood feuds that couldn’t be controlled, most other problems were settled here. Even so, it was dangerous when cultivators fought, and blood was often spilled in the process of deciding the winner and loser. The battle stage was covered in pits and bloodstains, and an invisible killing intent filled the air.

Han Beishan stood on stage, his eyes closed deep in meditation. He was like a proud and noble grandmaster. Countless eyes gathered on him, awe shining in them.

“He is truly worthy of being a Golden Core cultivator. Even if he is only at the early realm, this sort of bearing and aura is uncommon, far surpassing anything I could attempt!” A ninth level Foundation Establishment cultivator said, sighing with envy.

Those standing beside him were mostly similar. They all nodded in agreement. They had all touched upon the peak of the Foundation Establishment realm, so they were well aware of the massive disparity that existed between Foundation Establishment and Golden Core.

A big fellow with a dark face cursed, “I came today to watch a Golden Core battle and use it to verify the feelings of my cultivation. Who knew that all my plans would be ruined like this. After today, I will definitely get back at the Kong Family for this!”

“A Foundation Establishment realm Exalted, this is just the biggest joke in the world. I wonder if the Kong Family was frightened silly or if they are trying to delay for more time!”

“We’ve already come, so we might as well just watch this as a play. I also want to see the expression of that Kong Family Exalted after Senior Han is finished with him!”

Kong Xuan listened to all of this and rolled his eyes back into his head, secretly scolding these people for being idiots! Foundation Establishment realm? Could a Foundation Establishment cultivator casually wave his sleeve and send two Foundation Establishment masters from the Han Family flying backwards, and even frighten that old freak Han Beishan into retreat? Senior Ning Qin was definitely at the Golden Core realm, but he was simply using some unknown method to conceal his aura. Perhaps he might not be as strong as Han Beishan, but he definitely had the ability to protect himself.

Just you wait! You’ll all be left rubbing your eyes!

Kong Xuan respectfully spoke out loud, “I ask Exalted One to take the stage.”

The Kong Family cultivators behind him all chimed in unison, “Exalted One, please take the stage!”

Like this, it was hard for them to not draw attention even if they didn’t want to.

The gaze of the entire audience instantly gathered onto Qin Yu. Many of these looks were filled with shock and surprise. It was only now that everyone was able to confirm that the Kong Family had found a Foundation Establishment Exalted.

Hum –

The scene turned noisy for a moment.

On the battle stage, Han Beishan opened his eyes, a divine light shining within them. The aura of a Golden Core rose up, as if a giant python were looking down on everyone from above, leaving their scalps tingling with awe.

The chaotic and noisy audience suddenly quieted down!

Countless complexions paled as they cried out in alarm. A Golden Core cultivator was truly horrifying.

Qin Yu looked up and their gazes met in the void. He stepped forwards, separating himself from the crowd.

Zhu Bluecloud had caught up just in time to see this. He curled his lips; what an attention-loving boy. However, he knew that the gaze of a Golden Core cultivator wasn't easy to deal with. Han Beishan had used a bit of his divine sense to suppress the area, and the boy would likely find this difficult to withstand.

Hehe, the Golden Core great dao wasn't just talk. The more interesting scenes were yet to come.

Qin Yu stood in front of the battle stage. He tapped his feet and leapt up, steadily falling onto the platform.

Han Beishan's pupils shrank.

In the back, Zhu Bluecloud's expression turned earnest. He could clearly feel that Qin Yu's step hadn't the faintest fluctuation of magic power. In other words, he relied purely on the strength of his mortal body to jump the 10 feet onto the stage. A cultivator that paid even a little bit of attention to training their body could accomplish this, but to fall so steadily and smoothly, there wouldn't even be one in 10,000!

Could this boy's trump card be his bodily strength? A smile began to play on his lips as he suddenly thought that this boy was to his liking. Who didn't know that Gate Smasher Zhu Bluecloud had relied on his powerful body to obtain his current fame so long ago?

Qin Yu cupped his hands across his chest. "Fellow daoist Han, if you will."

Han Beishan sucked in a deep breath. "Let's fight!"

He lifted a palm and slammed it outwards. Strong winds stirred up, spinning forwards like a revolving sword.

Zhu Bluecloud cursed out loud. He never imagined that in facing a mere Foundation Establishment junior, Han Beishan would actually use the entirety of his strength, leaving him no time to save him. As he thought that this junior he had taken a liking to would soon be turned into a pile of flesh and blood, his face turned pitch black.

Qin Yu's eyes narrowed and he rushed forwards like a wild tiger released from its chains. With overwhelming momentum he raced into the cyclone, completely flipping over everyone's expectations of what he would do. Even Han Beishan was stunned as his eyes widened with utter disbelief.

Robes tore and blood splattered out, but nothing was able to prevent Qin Yu's advance. Han Beishan prepared to draw backwards, but just as he moved he suddenly came to a violent stop. An iron-hard palm grabbed his throat. Blood flowed out and he was sent tumbling to the ground.

Qin Yu's hair was messy and his robes were torn. He slowly opened his mouth and said, "You've lost."

At this time, the entire world seemed to come to a halt!

Qin Yu released his hand and turned to leave. Cultivators started to hurriedly back away as if a mountain had fallen into the sea. Their eyes were all filled with bewilderment.

Han Beishan lay stiff on the ground. His clothes were completely soaked in a cold sweat. If this were the battlefield he would have long since become a corpse. As his scalp tingled he stammered, "From this day on, the enmity between Han and Kong is no more."

Qin Yu nodded and departed.

The Kong Family cultivators and Kong Xuan were all ecstatic with joy. If one looked carefully, they would find that even their legs were shaking with excitement.

They won!

Their Lord Exalted had actually...won!

Bang –

The entire battle stage audience blew up into an uproar.

"He was able to forcefully resist the magic arts of a Golden Core and subdue Senior Han with a single strike. This person is terrifyingly strong..." A ninth level Foundation Establishment muttered with wide eyes. If he could learn this method then couldn't he completely crush Golden Cores!?

The people around him also had similar ideas. And, a single question rose up in their minds – Did Lord Ning Qin accept disciples?

At this time, a person eerily said, "Who said that they would get back at the Kong Family for today?"

A dark-faced big fellow turned and left, pretending he was completely unrelated.

Several people watched as the big fellow left, their eyes filled with contempt. But soon, they discovered that this large fellow had run off to chase the Kong Family cultivators and they started to curse themselves. There was no way they were going to let him take the initiative!

Woosh!

Woosh!

In the blink of an eye, the battle stage area had emptied out as countless cultivators rushed over to the Kong Family! As for Zhu Bluecloud, he simply stood there. As a Disciplinary Elder of the alliance, he was usually greeted with respect and awe by the cultivators in Canyonwell City. But right now they were treating him as air. A hundred Foundation Establishment cultivators flew past him in a hurry, none of them slowing down.

His lips twitched as he mumbled to himself, "I was wrong!"

Qin Yu had already expected this would occur. After leaving the stage it wasn't long before he parted ways with the Kong Family. He walked into an alley and put on a black robe. He came out just in time to see swarms of cultivators rush over to the Kong Family. Smiling, he turned and soared out of the city gates without hesitation.

After obtaining an alliance cultivator status and resolving the Kong Family's crisis, he didn't plan on delaying any further. If the Skythunder Bamboo were exchanged for by someone ahead of time, then that would produce endless headaches.

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Three months later.

In the wilderness, billowing demonic energy howled in the air. A demonic path Golden Core had a deathly pale face filled with fear. He never imagined he would actually meet that dark star today. The news from yesterday said that he was over a thousand miles away, so how could he appear here today? The demonic cultivator roared in his heart, 'You dog-shit scout, you've ruined my life!'

With a forehead dripping with sweat, the demonic path Golden Core sharply twisted his head around. A cold air swept past his scallop and the few strands of severed hair that fell down left him panic-stricken.

Shit! This magic art was clearly Vorpall Edge. How could a trash Foundation Establishment technique be so strong!?

Filled with fear, all his fighting spirit had long since fled. Right now, all he thought about was running away. But at this time the sound of breaking air rose up behind him and he cursed out loud again!

After avoiding the attack from a small black flag, the demonic cultivator was given no time to relax. Demonic energy tumbled and surged as a black figure appeared from it, holding an inkjade scepter in his hands. As the demonic cultivator was about to evade, an agonizing pain shot into his mind and he froze in place. He could only watch with wide eyes as the inkjade scepter came falling down on him.

Bang –

A headless corpse crashed into the ground. Blood gushed out like a fountain!

After striking the demonic path cultivator dead, the black figure dispersed into gas that flowed into the flag. Then, the flag flew into a youth's hands. The youth fell to the ground and took out a token. Looking at it shine, he smiled, "This is the tenth one."

This youth was Qin Yu.

Canyondwell City was now embroiled in the flames of war, and the righteous and demonic paths were caught up in a raging battle. He didn't go to join in on the fun but instead penetrated into regions controlled by the demonic path to kill demonic path powerhouses. The standard that the alliance used to calculate merit points was based on cultivation. Hunting and killing high level cultivators would naturally be faster for accumulating merit points.

A single Golden Core was worth 100 Foundation Establishment cultivators!