

Refining the Mountains and Rivers

Chapter 7 – Poison Core and Golden Core

An hour later, he had gathered a dozen some spirit grasses in front of him, 20 some fruits, and eight or nine lustrous flower petals that flowed with spiritual energy. This 1000 foot wide medicine field had been here for countless years, slowly producing treasures, but now this was all that was left over!

Qin Yu clenched his jaws. But soon, he sighed. If it weren't for the chicken overlord then he wouldn't have found this medicine field. If he thought like this, then all of these harvests were thanks to the luck of that brainless fellow.

With this in mind, Qin Yu's heart calmed down a great deal. He carefully gathered these treasures and placed them to the side. Then, he turned and washed his face. As he cupped a handful of spring water, the water was unexpectedly sweet and refreshed the heart upon entering his mouth. And, what was even more astonishing was that this spring water contained faint traces of spiritual strength!

Qin Yu's eyes widened. Then, he sighed. The creations of the heavens and earth were mysterious and miraculous. There was a medicine field in this underground space, and near this medicine field was a small springs opening. If so, then there should be a small spirit vein beneath the springs. The spirit plants and grasses had absorbed this spiritual energy and had their growth accelerated.

It was only when all these coincidences gathered together that this miracle-like medicine field was created.

“What a blessed cave paradise. Ignoring the pill toxins in the air, this place is also good for cultivating.” Qin Yu looked up to see a thatched hut in the distance. “I wonder which senior was cultivating here and why they would choose this place?”

There was once someone that lived in this mysterious space; this was information that the chicken overlord had brought back a while ago. The broken illumination array formations on the stone walls also confirmed this.

However, the master that once lived here should have left or died.

Qin Yu pushed open the door and looked around.

It seemed that it was the latter.

There was a skeleton on a tattered round cushion. From his posture, he had died in deep meditation. In front of the skeleton were three jade slips. The area was covered in a thick layer of dust, leaving everything in dim pall.

Besides that, there was nothing else in the entire thatched hut.

Looking at the color of the bones, this person should have died hundreds of years ago. Qin Yu straightened his clothes and bowed in respect.

Not to mention how long ago this person had died, just the medicine field they left outside was worthy of this bow.

He walked closer and bent down to pick up a jade slip. This was the first time that Qin Yu had seen such a high grade item of the cultivating world. He hesitated for a moment and then pressed the jade slip against his forehead, probing it with his divine sense.

Within the jade slip was a letter. Or, it was more accurate to call it the final words of the man who had died in meditation.

The contents were as follows:

My name is Cang Mangzi. Without meaning to, I unintentionally obtained an inheritance and stepped onto the road of cultivation. I was a wandering cultivator who spent my life chasing after the dao of alchemy. I heard that in the Southern Empire there was a great sect called the Eastern Mountain that was personally guarded by an alchemy powerhouse. Travelling the tens of thousands of miles, I came to exchange ideas and compare notes. However, my choice drew disaster upon myself. I was trapped deep in this place until I reached my waning years...

The contents were very long and detailed. In short, this fellow Cang Mangzi had come to the Eastern Mountain Sect to exchange and compete with skills in alchemy. Although he managed to win, he was tricked and plotted against and was trapped at the bottom of this place. With all the pill toxins ruining this land, he was sure to die. But, the ancestors of the Eastern Mountain Sect didn't know that Cang Mangzi actually possessed a poison-attuned body. Although the pill toxins were terrifying, they couldn't take his life.

Cang Mangzi managed to survive. However, during that time the Eastern Mountain Sect had been in their glory years, and they had a Nascent Soul realm master personally guarding their sect. Moreover, there was also that sinister and cruel array formation that only allowed entry. In other words, he was stranded here. This person could be considered a genius in the dao of alchemy. Following an unorthodox route, he found a way to extract raw materials from failed pills and possibly use them to create pills once more.

Of course, these sorts of extracted materials were more or less contaminated with pill toxins. Even with his poison-attuned body, he couldn't completely withstand swallowing all these pill toxins. In the end, Cang Mangzi couldn't find a way out and his cultivation was stalled here until he died a bitter death in meditation.

This underground space was also inadvertently discovered by Cang Mangzi. If Cang Mangzi were to ever find out that the medicine field he placed so much time and effort in was used to benefit the chicken overlord in the end, it was unknown whether he would laugh or cry.

Moreover, this jade slip also mentioned that he had left behind his attainments in alchemy as well as a small cauldron for a predestined friend to make good use of. However, this thatched hut was completely bare. Although there were jade slips, where was the treasure cauldron? Could it be that senior Cang Mangzi had turned muddle-headed before he died?

Qin Yu shook his head and laid down the jade slip. Although he had used up a considerable amount of his divine sense, he couldn't help but pick up another one. As he searched inside, he discovered that it really did contain an exhaustive compilation of alchemy methods, pill recipes, and exquisite alchemy techniques. Qin Yu was left overjoyed.

And, what thrilled him the most was that at the end of this jade slip was actually a Medicine Codex. There was far more content in this Medicine Codex than he expected. It recorded all the various spirit grasses and spirit plants in the world. Not just that, but there were finely drawn illustrations and even details on how to plant and maintain them.

This Medicine Codex was like an encyclopedia on spirit grasses and spirit plants; it was clearly extremely valuable. Perhaps this was the inheritance that Cang Mangzi unintentionally obtained in the past.

Cang Mangzi possessed a natural talent for alchemy and also obtained a powerful inheritance related to it; he was someone who surely had a great destiny and could have become an overlord of his own domain. But in the end, he ended up in the bottom of this pit without a burial ground for his bones. Although Cang Mangzi and Wei Wei were different people, both of them had underestimated how cruel and dangerous people could be, and ended up suffering as a result.

For Qin Yu who had just entered the world of cultivation, this was a profound lesson.

As for the last jade slip, when Qin Yu probed it with his divine sense, it actually absorbed a wisp of it. The jade slip emitted a sparkle for a brief moment which then dissipated.

Qin Yu thought for a moment. He knew that this jade slip should be some sort of token used to represent a person's identity. But after Cang Mangzi died, his aura had disappeared, and now his own aura had been imprinted within.

This was an unintentional loss and he had no choice but to put it away. Fortunately, unless he took this jade slip out himself it wouldn't be seen by others, so there was no way he should provoke unnecessary problems.

And today he had been blessed by what Cang Mangzi had left behind. If he had a change in the future then he could use this jade slip to perhaps locate his descendants and return the favor to them.

He used a bit of strength and crushed the jade slip that contained Cang Mangzi's last words to pieces. Then, he placed the other two within his robes. This was to avoid future troubles.

Qin Yu bowed. "Senior Cang Mangzi, junior has no way of repaying your graciousness today. I can only give you a peaceful burial. I apologize if I offend you."

The soil was thick and deep. Without using much strength, Qin Yu dug out a square pit within the thatched hut.

He carefully picked up the skeleton and slowly placed it into the pit. But at this moment, there were two light 'pa' sounds as two beads fell to the ground.

Qi Yu's eyes widened!

But he didn't stop his movements. He continued to move the skeleton. It was only when he covered the pit and bowed again that he picked up the two round beads.

Of these two beads, one was ash white with cracks all over its surface. Even so, it glowed with a faint golden light within. The other bead was pitch black as if it were solidified ink. Its surface was smooth and clear and emitted a faint black luster.

What were these?

Qin Yu rose up. But at this moment his body suddenly stiffened. On the surface of that pitch black bead, the dim light gathered into an ugly ghost face that bit down on his hand, entering into his body! Billowing black gas burst out like a broken dam, crazily rushing through Qin Yu's body. With it, a chaotic and vicious will shot into his mind.

This black gas was poison!

The bead was formed by Cang Mangzi's poison-attuned body. It had formed over hundreds of years by absorbing all sorts of poisons, and when Cang Mangzi died, it remained behind. And in these past years it had gradually developed a rudimentary consciousness!

A consciousness of pure poison, it was cruel and destructive!

It was true that Qin Yu was immune to invasion from poisons, but that was only at night when the little blue lamp releases its sea-blue light; it was useless to him in the daytime. Because of that, it only took an instant for the violent poison to invade his body. If it weren't for his cultivation having increased to the eighth level of Energy Refining as well as the massive number of body tempering pills he had taken, then he would have already died by now!

Even so, this only helped him for a few breaths of time as the intensity of the pain began to ramp up. Pain, itching, numbness, all sorts of feelings surged through his body, nearly submerging his consciousness. If this were compared to the time he had been beaten up due to the medicine garden incident, then that would have only been called a little tickle.

But the world was filled with wonderful coincidences. Those several breaths of time that he gained to put up a last ditch struggle might have seemed futile,

but they really did save Qin Yu's life. The cracked ash-white bead in his hand suddenly burst out with a dazzlingly golden light. Faintly, one could see a blurry figure sitting deep within that golden light. This golden light pierced into Qin Yu's body like countless needles, suppressing everything!

Within the underground space, a powerful pressure swelled out like a tide, fluctuation without constraints.

Golden Core! This was a Golden Core!

This round bead was actually the Golden Core left behind by Cang Mangzi after his death.

Qin Yu froze on the ground, stiffening up like a statue. The violent poison and vicious will that rampaged through his body was nailed to the ground, unable to move. Even so, it didn't give up. Like a wild beast it desperately fought back, colliding again and again with the strength of the golden light.

All of this was occurring within Qin Yu's body. The battle was like countless knives that slashed away at every inch of flesh and blood in his body. This sort of pain surpassed anything he had ever experienced in his life. His blood vessels suck out and his mouth opened wide, but he couldn't emit even half a sound!

Qin Yu wanted to faint, but it was impossible in this pain. Instead, his consciousness became even sharper. It was also at this time that some memories began to inexplicably appear in his mind, turning from blurry to clear.

These were Cang Mangzi's memories!

Whether it was the poison bead or the Golden Core, they were both things born within Cang Mangzi's body and contained his aura as a result. Now that they were violently clashing in Qin Yu's body, the shockwaves they released were absorbed by him and turned into images.

In the past when Cang Mangzi died of old age, the poison bead and Golden Core were able to mutually balance each other out. It was also because of this that the strength of the poison bead hadn't erupted. If it had, then with the Eastern Mountain Sect having gone into decline, this entire area would have turned into a land of death hundreds of years ago.

Because of the existence of the poison bead, the Golden Core was stimulated and it began to instinctually absorb the strength of the heavens and earth to suppress the poison bead. This was why it had managed to persist until this day without fading away.

Time passed. To Qin Yu, every second was an incomparably long time. In the throes of excruciating pain, it was as if tens of thousands of years were passing.

Then, night finally arrived!

As if noticing Qin Yu's condition, a foot-long area of blue light appeared on his chest. The pure blue light was dazzling to the eyes. The poison bead trembled for a moment and the violent will and instinct that invaded Qin Yu's body screamed before vanishing, as if it had been torn to pieces by a giant invisible hand!

The grotesque face on the poison bead collapsed, turning into a black torrent that crazily poured into Qin Yu's body.

Or, it was more accurate to say that it was being forcefully dragged in!

The mighty black waves flowed into Qin Yu's body and gathered on the index finger of his right hand. The ghostly green knuckle area began to rapidly turn black. Compared to the violent poisons that Cang Mangzi had absorbed through his life, the poison of the corpsefire talisman was nothing at all!

After taking several deep breaths, there was a light cracking sound. The poison bead shattered into powder.

Qin Yu slumped to the ground!

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He gasped, his entire body shaking and weak. His robes were matted with sweat. As the poison bead shattered, the golden light erupting from the Golden Core also faded away. The powerful pressure in the air disappeared along with it.

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With another light sound, an additional crack appeared on the surface of the Golden Core and it returned to its ash-white appearance, looking no different from a pebble on a riverside. If he hadn't personally witnessed the power of this ash-white bead, he would have never believed that it was the Golden Core of a peak Golden Core master, someone close to the Nascent Soul realm!

Before, the figure in the golden light was the divine phantom within the core. It was a hollow Nascent Soul that could have become a true Nascent Soul. The memories that appeared in Qin Yu's mind gave him a clear understanding of what this Golden Core was. His lips twitched and he bitterly smiled.

Cang Mangzi's Golden Core had already reached a spent state. And now, suppressing the poison bead had exhausted the final dregs of its strength; it could be said to be completely wasted.

Of course, if one had to discuss its usefulness, it still did have some use...for instance...helping to put on an act.

By pouring magic power into the Golden Core, it would release the aura pressure of the Golden Core realm. This could only be used one time before the Golden Core would thoroughly disintegrate. He nearly lost his life and had suffered excruciating pain as if he were being boiled alive in frying oil, and yet all he obtained was a hollow Nascent Soul Golden Core that could only be used like this one time.

Qin Yu didn't know whether he should laugh with joy at barely managing to escape death, or cry for his own bad luck.