

## Chapter 1: Soul of an Alchemist

You Xiaomo stood in front of the mirror, blinking while looking at the stranger reflected at him. It took him quite a bit of mental effort before he was willing to believe that his soul had attached itself to a stranger's body. The young man in the mirror looked about seventeen or eighteen, around the same age as his original body. He was wearing a cyan-colored traditional Taoist robe, with an ordinary-looking turquoise hairpin on top of his ink-black hair, which was as fine as silk threads, giving him a bit of mystical divine aura similar to that of a Taoist practitioner.

It was apparent that the teenager's face was slightly pale, especially his lips, which were bloodless as if he had gone through some severe trauma not long ago. Even his beautiful eyes were red and swollen into a walnut-like state. You Xiaomo felt extremely exhausted; suddenly having a different body was not something anyone would be accustomed to.

After lamenting momentarily, You Xiaomo finally scrutinized the room he'd found himself in. There was a wooden bed, a table paired with a single chair, and a cabinet with a mirror on top. This room was bare-boned with only basic essentials, but as simple as it was, it held an antique ambiance from an ancient era.

To You Xiaomo's dismay, when he tried to make the connection with the attire and otherworldly features, he tragically realized that he had been transmigrated to some unknown ancient era. He was from modern Earth! He could vividly recall the explosion from the apartment next door, caused by a gas leak, that had ultimately blasted him, an innocent neighbor, into this stranger's body. As outlandish as it sounded, this was now his reality.

After struggling internally, You Xiaomo finally accepted this bizarre situation. He put on the shoes he found, and as he was about to scout out this new world, someone pushed open the door from the outside, startling him. Right before they bumped into each other, the person quickly leaped away, shouting with surprise, "Have you finally decided to leave your bed, You Xiaomo?"

You Xiaomo was certain no one would know his real name, which meant this person was calling the original soul's name. He thanked the heavens for not forsaking him and putting his soul into a body with the same name.

You Xiaomo glanced at the person who barged in; he was a relatively handsome youth with a bright smile and who was approximately his age. But his earlier question left You Xiaomo wondering if the original soul was a shut-in.

Before You Xiaomo could ask the young man what he meant by this question, the young man took the initiative and continued, "Cheer up, You Xiaomo! You can still become a mid-level alchemist, even with a green soul like yours. Even mid-level alchemists are rare since plenty of people only remain low-level alchemists their entire lives. Don't be disheartened. We must attend tomorrow's gathering at the Alchemist's Hall, so cheer up!"

You Xiaomo's mind was in turmoil. Green soul? Mid-level alchemist? Why couldn't he understand anything? Fortunately, he could understand the situation a little from these words. What if, by

chance, the original soul was depressed because he thought his green soul was a bad result and thus died of grief all alone in his room? You Xiaomo covered his face, thinking: *What an embarrassing way to die!*

You Xiaomo asked cautiously, "What about you?"

Currently, this young man was his only source of information about this unknown world. However, he didn't want this young man to know he was not the real You Xiaomo, so asking questions directly was not an option. You Xiaomo didn't know that the two hadn't known each other for long. Once the original soul had learned about his inferior aptitude, he'd decisively shut himself off from the world, making it not unusual for him to be slightly ignorant.

Unable to contain his joy, the young man grinned while scratching his head and bashfully said, "My soul is blue."

From the teenager's expression, You Xiaomo could tell a blue soul must be outstanding. However, it still didn't mean he could comprehend the meaning of his words.

"Say, my memory hasn't been great these past few days. I've forgotten many things and can't quite follow our conversation. Is it okay to ask you to help me understand a few things?" You Xiaomo asked with a twisting sensation in his stomach. He couldn't even muster the strength to look the teenager in the eyes and was afraid of rousing his suspicion.

However, the young man was more oblivious than You Xiaomo expected and didn't doubt anything. He then began telling You Xiaomo everything and anything he knew, including where they were. You Xiaomo was soon rendered speechless after hearing what the teenager revealed. He was so shocked that he didn't even notice when the young man had left his room.

This world was completely different from the one he knew. He was in a house within the Tianxin Sect, the most prominent sect on the Longxiang continent, and he was a probationary disciple. The Tianxin Sect had two major departments the warrior and alchemy departments. The warrior department was comprised of practitioners whose souls possessed no color quality; however, they could practice various inner energy control and martial arts techniques.

The alchemy department was home to the alchemists, who all possessed colored souls. The soul's color was separated into shades, from lightest to darkest: pink, yellow, green, cyan, blue, and purple. Those with pink and yellow souls could only become low-level alchemists; green and cyan were mid-level; blue and purple were high-level alchemists. The darker the color, the greater the potential one would hold compared to the lighter colors. For instance, a purple soul's bearer had a much higher potential than a blue soul's bearer; as such, they had a better chance of achieving the status of a high-level alchemist.

A blue soul meant one had the potential to become a future high-level alchemist, so it was no wonder the young man had had such an elated expression. As for the original soul of this body, he, along with some others, were only probationary disciples of the alchemy department brought back three days ago by an elder of the Tianxin Sect. The original soul had somewhat

overestimated his worth. After the evaluation result, when he'd learned his aptitude was the worst out of everyone, he hadn't been able to accept it and chose to hide inside his room.

He was such a mentally weak child!

On top of that, You Xiaomo learned a vital piece of information. Since he was a probationary disciple, he had to pass an assessment half a year later, or he would be expelled from the Tianxin Sect.

As the largest sect on the Longxiang continent, the Tianxin Sect had very stringent requirements for their disciples, especially for alchemists. Half a year later, they would be swept out the door if they could not produce the required product. As a stranger in this strange land, and with a brain that still hadn't comprehended the logic of this world, to You Xiaomo, this news was undoubtedly like a thunderbolt in a clear sky.

## Chapter 2: Merchant Department

After the young man with the blue soul left the room, You Xiaomo eventually learned the man's name. He was called Jiang Liu and resided in the room next to You Xiaomo. He had been unknown when he'd first arrived in the Tianxin Sect. Still, ever since the evaluation results had been revealed, he became famous as a bearer of a blue soul with the potential to become a high-level alchemist.

High-level alchemists were also rare on the Longxiang continent, and many could only hover between low-level and mid-level alchemists for the rest of their lives. However, they would have unlimited opportunities if they could become high-level alchemists. The higher the level of a magic pill the alchemists could refine, the more revered they became. Therefore, a high-level alchemist was always sought after by any big-name sects.

Three days ago, when the original You Xiaomo was brought back to the Tianxin Sect as a probationary disciple with some others, Jiang Liu's results revealed he was a blue soul bearer, and he was immediately promoted to an official disciple. Since Jiang Liu was now an official disciple, he would not have to face the assessment or stipulations in half a year. Furthermore, during yesterday's evaluation, one of the grand elders of the alchemy department had taken a fancy to Jiang Liu. Today, he was to be moved to the inner courtyard, so he had come to bid them farewell. Aside from You Xiaomo, the others envied Jiang Liu.

"How nice. When will I be able to become an official disciple like Jiang Liu?"

"Our dream could be fulfilled in half a year with hard work and prayers."

"If only it were that easy."

"Is it really that hard?" You Xiaomo finally couldn't stop himself from blurting out. He didn't want to be driven out of the Tianxin Sect since staying here was probably the safest place for him in this strange world.

The youth who had spoken earlier glared at You Xiaomo. When You Xiaomo started to feel flustered, the teenager indifferently looked away, saying with a disgruntled face, "Tianxin Sect's requirements for the alchemy department's disciples are very strict. As far as I know, to enter the inner courtyard, one must refine a third-tier medicinal pill, and it must be within the next six months."

Someone let out a gasp, and their mouth opened wide in disbelief. Any low-level alchemist could refine a third-tier medicinal pill, but this would require at least two or three years of dedicated practice, and success was not guaranteed. For any alchemist to refine a third-tier medicinal pill within half a year, they would need another alchemist's help. A second-tier medicinal pill would be more achievable for a sole alchemist.

Hearing the youth say that, everyone was discouraged. While You Xiaomo didn't know what conditions needed to be met for one to become an alchemist, judging by their expressions, it

seemed more difficult than he'd thought. Thinking this way, he felt his future was growing bleaker by the second.

Looking at everyone's depressed expressions, that person suddenly spoke mysteriously, "But it isn't as though we don't have any hope."

"What hope is there? Spit it out." Everyone was hanging in suspense.

The man said enigmatically, "The Tianxin Sect is one of the largest sects, with thousands of disciples. Not to mention the warrior department, the amount of money that needs to be spent annually on the alchemy department alone is enormous. As you all know, although being an alchemist can be lucrative, the initial expenses are very costly. That's why the Tianxin Sect also has a merchant department that specializes in making money."

Hearing this, even You Xiaomo's ears perked up.

"If you can be recognized by the seniors of the merchant department, even if you are not welcomed into the inner courtyard to become an official disciple, you don't have to leave the Tianxin Sect. But, from then on, you will not be allowed to have anything to do with practicing cultivation as a practitioner or alchemy."

Once he finished speaking, everyone was lost in their own thoughts.

When You Xiaomo heard this, he knew the merchant department was about doing business, and disciples needed to be business-minded. Judging from what the teenager had said, it seemed more complex. What kinds of twists and turns were involved, You Xiaomo didn't understand, but he didn't want to give up.

After saying goodbye to them, You Xiaomo decided to go to the academic library.