

Carefree 131

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 131: Pathway

"Name: Fang Yuan

Essence: 11

Spirit: 10.5

Magic: 9

Profession: Dream Master

Cultivation: [Dream-Building Master (High Elemental Gathering Stage)], Wu Zong

Technique: [Eagle Claw Iron Skin Technique (Grade 13) (???)], Ecstasy Spell, Shadowstep

Skill: [Medicine (Level 3)], [Botany (Level 4)]"

.....

"As I reached the stage of a dream-building master, I have also reached the high elemental gathering stage..."

As he looked at his stats window, Fang Yuan touched his chin.

He realised that the stats listed were based on his knowledge and comprehension.

For example, after Fang Yuan knew the difference between Elemental Gathering Realm and Elemental Breaking Realm, the stats for his cultivation had a big change.

"I'm afraid a normal spiritual knight needs at least 10 years in order for them to reach the high elemental gathering stage? I only spend a few months to get it....."

Fang Yuan realised that he was more suitable to become a dream master and his speed of breakthrough was also faster.

Plus, he only spent a few months to be on par with those who had spent at least 10 to 100 years of training.

Inside his mind palace, the dream elemental force was flowing in his mind like water and was very pure. If he were to improve a little more, he would probably be like Liu Yan and able to reach the threshold of the elemental breaking realm.

"Of course.....when becoming a dream master, one will not be at the elemental breaking realm straight away. There needs to be holy training as this involves turning illusion into reality!"

"However, if one wants to turn a dream world into reality, does one know that the rules of comprehension and the energy needed are scary? Hence, when training to become a dream master, one could choose different pathways to do it. To simply put it, one would not start with forming the whole

dream world. One could start with a normal knife, a spiritual pill or a spiritual spell in the dream world. One could even start with just a normal rock.....If one could achieve this, one would be holy!"

"Even though the process of making such world involved one to start from small objects to big ones, the time needed was very long.....Some dream masters even got stuck at this stage for their whole life..."

A world, and even the smallest world in the universe did contain many scary rules?

Even though one would spend their whole life trying to make such a world, not many of them could become the actual dream masters who could produce such worlds. Many of them remained stuck at the holy illusionary stage.

"Also.....within that stage, there are different pathways for dream masters to go and hence there will be different specialisations!"

Fang Yuan recalled the content that he had inherited from Master Wenxin and his eyes started to glitter. "For example, the simplest would be the study of dream worlds. Complementing with the techniques for dream-building, it would help a dream spell master produce spiritual spells. Also, having a soldier's fundamentals would help a dream soldier master, or maybe one could play a support role as a dream alchemy master, or a dream array master who would research on the heavens and earth. The most tedious one would be the spiritual beast master who can create live animals. The most mysterious one would be the dream divine master, who would be able to predict one's future and luck..."

Basically, the pathway of becoming a dream master covered all kinds of spiritual knights.

A dream master could achieve what a spiritual knight could achieve and even if there is something a spiritual knight couldn't achieve, it would not be hard for the dream master to achieve it, if not why would they be called the dominators of their full-time career?

"The difference between a dream master and both a spiritual alchemy master and spiritual array master will be that for dream masters, the raw materials that they get are produced by themselves from the dream world and hence the cost of it is very little. Their skills can be trained in the dream world and this is one of the advantages. Of course, the main point is that a dream master is able to comprehend the rules of heaven and earth during battles and training for alchemy and arrays! They are constantly improving the dream worlds that they are displaying!"

"All dream masters only wish for one thing, which is to display a dream world that is holy and big!"

Fang Yuan's eyes glittered and sighed while he shook his head. "Unfortunately.....I'm still quite a distance away from that stage!"

A dream spells master who was at his basic level could produce a spiritual spell from the dream world and this was no different from a spiritual knight! What did this show? It meant that with one's imagination, one would be undefeatable with the confusion of illusion and reality.

Anyway, if one would want to reach this stage, one would have to make a breakthrough in the holy illusionary stage first and that would also be the elemental breaking realm for a spiritual knight!

Plus, it was more difficult for a dream master to make that breakthrough as compared to the spiritual knight.

If one wanted to display something from the dream world into the real world, even if it was just a small rock or a sand particle, it represented a supernatural power! Mind could affect matter and consciousness could affect reality!

"However, since this is more difficult, the benefits of breaking through the holy illusionary stage are greater. One would be at the top even if one was in Da Qian Empire....."

Fang Yuan sighed and waved his hand in the sky.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

The Red-eyed White king Bird landed and started to rub Fang Yuan's palm.

Ever since he had managed to tame this bird through dream-building, the bird had become closer to Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan even made the bird forgot about the revenge it previously had.

It was the expertise for a dream master to tamper with one's memories and create illusions.

"Have some more!"

Fang Yuan took out a big amount of Flame Jade Rice and Questioning Heart Tea for the bird to feed on.

The Flower Fox Ferret and the Iron-tailed Black Eagle were feeling a little jealous with regards to the treatment the Red-eyed White King Bird had gotten.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

Even though the Red-eyed White King Bird previously did not feed on spiritual rice and spiritual tea daily, it was still joyful and it quickly ate the spiritual food. Sometimes, it also used its beak to rubbed against Fang Yuan and this made both of them even closer.

'This Red-eyed White King Bird is special and its abilities is much higher than that of the Iron-tailed Black Eagle even without any prior spiritual food supplements. If now it is constantly being supplemented, there is a possibility that it can reach a higher level!'

This was the reason why Fang Yuan was treating the bird so well.

After all, to a spiritual knight who was in the elemental gathering realm, the Iron-tailed Black Eagle was only used as a mean of transport. The eagle would not be useful in battles but what about another bird which had the elemental force?

Fang Yuan had more hope for the Red-eyed White King Bird which had the possibility of breaking through.

"Keke!"

"Chirp! Chirp!"

That scene triggered both the Flower Fox Ferret and the Iron-tailed Black Eagle. Both of them came to Fang Yuan to show their abilities by bringing a few preys they had hunted.

"Haha....you two!"

Fang Yuan laughed and said, "Since the bird has fully recovered, the bird will take over the role of taking care of the rest of the Red-eyed White Birds. You two will not have to hunt for prey daily to feed the young birds....."

Even though through Fang Yuan's previous attacks, the Red-eyed White Birds population had incurred quite a big loss. However, the Red-eyed White King Bird was still here. Along with the young birds and the eggs, plus Fang Yuan's spiritual objects for them, the bird population would develop quickly.

"As for you two.....you two shall follow me to the Prefecture Master's mansion!"

With regards to the fight between the spiritual beasts, Fang Yuan was quite surprised by it and of course, he would not forget this two even though he now had a new pet, which was the bird.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

The Iron-tailed Black Eagle lay facing down. It spread its wings to signal Fang Yuan to get up quickly. It then gave a stare to the Red-eyed White King Bird.

'What is this.....Big black. Where has your pride of being an eagle gone to?'

Fang Yuan was speechless and as he saw the unwilling look from the Red-eyed White King Bird, he couldn't help but laugh.

.....

"Master!"

In the Prefecture Master's mansion, everything was going smoothly. The only ones that still needed coaching would be Lanruo and Chen Ziyang.

"Hmm, Ziyang, your Eagle Claw is not bad now!"

Fang Yuan was surprised that in just a short period of time, Chen Ziyang had managed to break through the 4th Gate and could concentrate his inner power from the Eagle Claw.

Even though Chen Ziyang already had prior experience in martial arts and didn't have to pass through the initial stage, Fang Yuan didn't expect him to have practised the Eagle Claw Technique to such a level.

"I'm able to achieve this is because of your guidance and help of the spiritual rice!"

Chen Ziyang bowed with much sincerity.

After all, even though he was the son of the Chen family, he didn't have Vermillion Jade Rice for all meals daily.

In fact, it was because Fang Yuan had found a type of rice that was better than the Vermillion Jade Rice and hence he was willing to give out the Vermillion Jade Rice to his men and disciples.

If Chen Ziyang knew that what he had enjoyed was what Fang Yuan had abandoned, he would be shocked.

"Master....."

Since they had known each other for quite some time already, Lanruo was not shy when in front of Fang Yuan anymore. "I don't really understand some of the spell language and the techniques in the alchemy. For example, the Three Yang Fire and the Three Yin Fire, and also the Settling Jade Liquid and Rising Sun....."

"For these....you will have to wait. I have some matters to settle today. I will answer all your questions tomorrow!"

Fang Yuan was feeling a little ashamed but he didn't show it on his face. He waved his hand the two disciples to leave first and then he went to the prison.

In the prison, there was a cell that was rather clean and he saw Ling Yin in it.

"How are you, Miss Ling Yin?"

Fang Yuan greeted her and smiled at her.

Ling Yin was sitting down with her knees crossed and she opened her eyes slightly to take a glance at Fang Yuan. She then replied sorrowfully, "You can forget about getting any intelligence from me!"

"Miss Ling Yin, why are you rejecting me straight away?"

Fang Yuan unlocked the cell with a key and held onto her chin.

Ling Yin's whole body was trembling but she was not resisting, as she knew that it would be of no use since Fang Yuan was powerful than her.

"Since you are not willing to die, it means that you still have matters to settle. No matter what it is, whether is it with regards to revenge or repaying someone's kindness, as long as you are not willing to die, we will have room for discussion, isn't it?"

Fang Yuan seemed to be very confident.

"My master is already dead and you still want to know the secrets of alchemy? Dream on!"

Ling Yin's expression changed.

A real alchemy master couldn't be cultivated just by looking at manuals. One would need a senior's guidance as well to become an alchemy master. That was why Liu Yan was willing to give Lu Renjia's alchemy books to Fang Yuan.

Liu Yan didn't believe that Fang Yuan could cultivate an alchemy master on his own.

"Dream?"

Fang Yuan smiled and showed a mysterious look.

This unpredictable attitude of his worried Ling Yin.

"That's alright..."

He smiled and was rather gentlemanly. "I initially wanted to trade with you, your knowledge in alchemy for your freedom... But since you are not willing, then..."

"Pa!"

Fang Yuan snapped his fingers.

"Whooo! Whooo!"

A layer of Ecstasy Fog appeared and covered Ling Yin.

"You..."

Ling Yin stared at him and said a word before falling asleep.

Even if her miniature elemental force was not sealed, she would still succumb to Fang Yuan's Ecstasy Spell, not to mention the state she was in now.

"My lady... Let's meet in your dream..."

Fang Yuan placed his palm on Ling Yin's forehead and initiated the dream accessing process.

...

It was daytime with a slight drizzle. A thick fog was all around.

In the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, within a large manor, Ling Yin stood up and yawned as she rubbed her eyes.

She had the look of a 12-year-old with two hair buns. She was in a pink robe and wore silk shoes, with two yellow flowers at the side. She was like a mini sculpture, adorable.

"This is... My home..."

Ling Yin was confused. "Why do I feel like I have forgotten something important..."

"Ling Yin!"

A voice travelled from the front of the manor, and Ling Yin threw all her thoughts aside. She stuck out her little tongue and said, "Oh no, I've woken up late today, will Master scold me?"

She ran all the way and arrived at the alchemy room.

In the middle of the alchemy room stood a large cauldron, and beneath it was Beast Charcoals burning. There was no smoke, only red flames, and anyone who stood near it would sweat profusely.

"You've missed the morning lesson, why are you so late today?"

Lu Renjia was wearing a brown robe in front of the cauldron, looking much younger than before.

"Don't be angry master... I... I was working late last night, and slept a little later than usual!"

Ling Yin knelt down and begged for forgiveness, and was worried that she would be beaten by the bamboo rods.

“Hmm, I’ll remember this... I will test you today. You will start reciting the alchemy technique and alchemy song, then I’ll test your medicine identification... If there are any errors, hehe...”

Lu Renjia displayed a strict master face and continued, “Let’s start with the Nine Transformation Alchemy Formula, then the Fire Hand Palm! Recite!”

“Yes, Master!”

Ling Yin obediently agreed and without hesitation started to recite. “Nine Transformation Alchemy Formula starts with the elements, first with ancient fire, then with wood...”

She was smart, to begin with, and now she could feel her thoughts rushing through her mind, as she grew suspicious. ‘How did I learnt so much of Master’s alchemy techniques?’

As she smelled the concoction, she could immediately identify the pill being made. It was the usual Hundred Grass Pellet, which she could make it herself too.

‘Wait... When did I learn the recipe for Hundred Grass Pellet?’

The young Ling Yin was suspicious, then heard Lu Renjia’s voice again. “Hmm, you are familiar with the techniques which means you are hardworking. However, it is not enough to just know them, you still need to understand!”

Lu Renjia showed a fierce expression, and Ling Yin did not dare to think any further as she shivered.

“Let me ask you, what is the difference between Three Yang Fire and Three Yin Fire?”

“Their difference lies in the type of flame. The Three Yang Fire is charcoal flame, while the Three Yin Flame is...”

Ling Yin answered without hesitation.

“Then what is the Settling Jade Liquid and Rising Sun?”

“Jade Liquid refers to pill essence. When the pill essence settles, it is a sign of the pill condensing. The Rising Sun refers to the method of extracting the pill, generally speaking...”

...

Time passed quickly as the exchange went by, and the young Ling Yin became increasingly suspicious.

Master’s questions were obviously those that she had not learnt, but unknowingly, she would be able to answer them, as though she had ten years of experience in alchemy.

‘I seem to... forget something... Could it be that I’ve learnt alchemy before?’

Suddenly, there was an excruciating pain in her brain as she hugged her head with her hands, and squatted down in pain.

“Mm, you’ve done well in today’s test, go and rest!”

As ‘Lu Renjia’ witnessed this scene, he had a weird expression and waved his hands. A fog emerged from a corner of the alchemy room, and slowly entered Ling Yin’s body.

“Yes, Master! I will take my leave!”

Ling Yin heaved as the pain in her head subsided. She did not think about it anymore and left.

“Whooo...”

As the door closes, Lu Renjia sighed, and suddenly transformed into Fang Yuan, with pity on his face.

“Even though I am in the dream building stage, I am still too inexperienced. While trying to retrieve the secrets and stimulating her, I might even accidentally make the real Ling Yin lucid, and might be at a disadvantage!”

“I have gained quite a lot today, so I’ll just come back tomorrow!”

He smiled and the entire dream world collapsed.

...

“What a good dream!”

In the cell, Fang Yuan gazed at Ling Yin, who was soundly asleep and left the cell.

One would be innocent if he thought that he could conceal any secrets from a dream master!

Although he did not know any alchemy, this direct disciple of Lu Renjie must know, Furthermore, she was personally taught by him, which made her even more valuable.

“What a pity my dream-building skill was only elementary, otherwise I could just flip through her memories while she was awake, and could even reproduce the exact scene where Lu Renjia taught her...”

Fang Yuan only reached the stage where he could edit a spiritual beast’s memories. To do the same to a spiritual disciple, he would need more skill.

“With my new knowledge, I can still manage Lanruo!”

“Furthermore, it would also be good to gain more alchemy experience. After the holy stage, I might even follow the path of a dream alchemy master...”

With this to play cheat, what else could he say?

On the next day, Fang Yuan called for Lanruo and answered her queries.

Huang Fu Renhe was listening at one side, surprised.

He thought that Fang Yuan was only skilled in martial arts, and not in alchemy.

However, it seems that his Master’s alchemy skills was even better than his, which made Fang Yuan even more mysterious in the eyes of Huang Fu Renhe, as his respect for him grew.

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Unknowingly, half a year went by, and the new year has begun.

In Xia Country, the new year was an extremely important festival. In the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, every household was decorated with colourful lanterns and there were hustle and bustle all around.

Furthermore, many people spent a lot of money after surviving the battle. Even the normal household bought many new clothes and tons of meat to celebrate life after the war, and the entire city centre became much more prosperous.

In Qingye City.

“Master look... This is the Blood Clotting Powder which Lanruo personally made!”

Lanruo wore a leopard print coat, and her face was glowing with happiness as she showed off her achievement to Fang Yuan.

“Oh?”

After hearing her, Fang Yuan diverted his attention from the festivities outside to the packet of powder in Lanruo’s hands.

Fang Yuan grew a year older, but there wasn’t any drastic change to him. He wasn’t scared of the cold anymore and wore a thin clothing despite the snowfall outside, which made him special.

He took the packet of powder from Lanruo’s hands and sniffed it. “That’s right, this is good quality Blood Clotting Powder. Good job Lanruo, you are now a qualified pharmacist!”

A pharmacist is not an alchemy master; not even an alchemy disciple, but at least she was making progress.

Based on theory, she only had two more steps. The first being fusing her miniature elemental force to become an alchemy disciple, and the next would be to break through to elemental force to become an alchemy master and able to harness spiritual fire!

Only two steps for Lanruo to become the likes of Lu Renjia, like how in a blink of an eye, a chicken would become a duck.

In reality, Fang Yuan knew that it would be almost impossible.

Although it might seem that a normal person could become an alchemy master in two steps, and even looked much simpler than the 12 Golden Gates, the difficulty of it was immense.

Unlike martial arts where one can advance step by step, the way of a spiritual knight is to reach for the Heavens in one single step!

It was obvious that those without gifts or potential should give up. Only those with gifts, a strong foundation, and luck might have a chance.

Why luck?

This was a problem related to finding a master.

Take Lanruo for an example. If she did not meet Fang Yuan, she had to wait for ages before ‘someone worthy sees potential in her’, before a spiritual knight would take her in as a disciple.

The scariest possibility would be while waiting for the right master to come along, she might be abducted by the Wild Wolves Faction like the previous time, or even worse, taken in by an evil spiritual knight, who would use her as a sacrifice.

Fang Yuan would be satisfied if Lanruo could break through the bottleneck and become a qualified alchemy disciple before she turns 20.

“Master... Is there something bothering you?”

Lanruo raised her head and could sense that something was not right.

“Oh?”

Fang Yuan was surprised. “To detect this you must have a strong magical energy. I’m glad my spiritual food cultivation for you did not go to waste... You’re right, Master is a little vexed.”

“Lanruo wants to grow up and quickly mature so that I can help out Master and Brother!”

Lanruo exclaimed.

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Fang Yuan laughed and pinched Lanruo’s cheeks.

“Master, don’t”

While playing a fool with her, he had forgotten his worries.

“Master!”

When Lanruo left, Zhou Wenwu approached Fang Yuan and greeted him.

As the city master, he now had a beard and looked rather composed. “The Chen Family brought news. The people from the royal family are here...”

“Alright!”

Fang Yuan looked at the heavy snow outside and waved his hands. “Such urgency... They must be here because of Liu Yan. After all, this city master of ours is rather high-profile!”

Chapter 132: Dream Stealing

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Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 133: Princess

Fang Yuan guessed that since the demise of Lu Renjia, Liu Yan's ego began to inflate.

At the rock bottom, the only way was up.

Lu Renjia's betrayal was a hard hit on the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, but was that really the case? When the rebels had gathered together, Fang Yuan's tactic to strike the leader had helped the Secluded Mountain Prefecture alliance to remove Lu Renjia and two Sect Masters, banishing them into defeat. There were no other consequences for the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, and so there was no destruction or consequence to speak of.

Needless to say, Liu Yan took the opportunity to cleanse out the rebels and destroyed the opposing Sects and powers. The split of power among the 6 counties were re-gathered and the power was concentrated in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture. Therefore, this incident was a big growth to his power.

At least there was no such nonsense in the other two Prefecture in Xia Country.

Based on Fang Yuan's thoughts, he was removing all those that might challenge his power and concentrate his influence.

Such a growth in power would undoubtedly lead to wild thoughts.

Furthermore, Liu Yan was a spiritual knight at the peak of the Elemental Gathering Realm, and was just a step away from touching the Elemental Opening Realm!

"Based on the report from Chen Family, Liu Yan only took a short break before coming up with all these tricks. In this half a year, he had the intention to extend his power out of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture..... He might have even done it already!"

Previously during the chaos by Lu Renjia, Fang Yuan had already guessed that external powers would get involved. With Liu Yan's standing now, he would only take revenge on them.

As Fang Yuan knew that in the previous year, the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Armed Forces recruited more and more people. For this, they willingly lowered their standards in recruitment and even allowed [Martial Artists (3rd Gate)] to join. With this move, they had more than 30,000 troops!

"With all these indications, it isn't hard to guess Liu Yan's intention..."

Fang Yuan sighed. "Furthermore... Even the royal family is unsettled! Why did they look for me instead of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture? Trying to get me involved?"

He felt depressed after thinking about it.

"Let the messenger see me!"

Fang Yuan arrived at the main hall and waved.

As a person who cultivates both spiritual techniques and martial arts, and a talent who harnesses elemental force, especially since he was only 20 and had a bright future, he could afford to have such airs.

"Yes, sir!"

Zhou Wenwu did not feel that anything was wrong when Fang Yuan instructed a messenger from the royal family, bowed and made way.

No long after, a few ladies entered the door and greeted Fang Yuan. "I am Xie Lingyun, please accept my greetings!"

The lady in front was tall and fair. She had a flower petal on her forehead and long black hair. She had a simple hairpin and allowed her hair to drape over her shoulders. She had the vibes of generosity, a different vibe from Shi Yutong.

"Your surname is Xie?"

Fang Yuan twitched his eyebrows. "What is your relationship with Xie Quan?"

Xie Quan was the current emperor of Xia Country!

Alas, his name was not feared enough. As a spiritual knight cum Wu Zong, Fang Yuan could call his full name without his title and no one would dare to question him.

At first, this was not his attitude. However, as this lady directly approached him as though she wanted to involve him in this, he would naturally not show any sign of respect.

"That's my father!"

Xie Lingyun forced a smile and looked at Fang Yuan. His eyes were filled with surprise.

"Oh, you're the princess, my apologies! Don't put it to heart!"

Fang Yuan casually apologised, and did not have a sense of respect.

The two servants beside Xie Lingyun were fuming, and only Xie Lingyun was calm and composed. "I am only a humble citizen, how would I dare to accept the title of princess?"

Her attitude impressed Fang Yuan. "May I enquire the purpose of your visit, princess?"

"To eliminate the impending disaster!"

Xie Lingyun maintained her straight face. "I have news that the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City Master Liu Yan has intentions to expand his control and invade Summer Sun Prefecture. Regardless of who prevails in the invasion, the damage in the Prefecture City would be folds of that in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City, therefore I am here to make peace of the situation..."

"You should be looking for the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City Master for this, why me?"

Fang Yuan touched his chin, confused.

"My words carry no weight, therefore I am here to ask for grandmaster's favour!"

Xie Lingyun bowed. "In the previous internal conflict, grandmaster's quick thinking and actions prevented chaos in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, and is all your merit. This time, the danger is much more than before, and I hope grandmaster will help me!"

Her sincere words touched Fang Yuan. "Please recover!"

As he waved, he released his elemental force, and a gentle force supported Xie Lingyun up.

'This force... Indeed a spiritual knight Wu Zong, incredible! And he is exactly same as in the legends, young and skilled!'

Xie Lingyun looked at Fang Yuan and blushed.

To establish relations with such a talented person, why would her emperor father care about a daughter? His purpose of sending her here might just be to offer her to Fang Yuan.

To give up a daughter and gain a strong ally would be common sense to those who do business.

Fang Yuan was not a lustful person, and there were many who would want to sleep with him; he did not have to choose a hard one.

"If you think I have much influence over the Prefecture Master, then you are wrong! I am not the person you are looking for!"

Fang Yuan shook his head and his words were direct, as though they could freeze Xie Lingyun's blood.

"Furthermore, the purpose of your visit is to find out more about me. Since you harbour ill intentions, why must I help you?"

He probed further and his words were like knives.

Xie Lingyun was shocked.

She detoured to here with this intention indeed but thought that this young Wu Zong could be easily taken advantage of. Even if she could not convince him, it was also alright to try her luck.

Never would she have thought that Fang Yuan would not react normally, and did not respond how a normal person would respond.

'This person has no regard for pride and honour like a young man, and only cares about physical rewards!'

Xie Lingyun was sorely disappointed. She knew that she had little to no chance of achieving her goal.

"All the land belongs to the emperor, and all that lives on this land are the emperor's citizens!"

She took in a deep breath, and her attitude took a 180 degrees change. "Grandmaster Fang is also a citizen of Xia County, and yet you have no loyalty to the country? Furthermore... You have already seen me, so how can you expect others to not suspect you?"

As Xie Lingyun said these words, her heart was pounding. She thought that Fang Yuan would be angered, but he froze and started clapping.

"Haha... Well said!"

Fang Yuan praised her. "Finally princess, you are showing your true colours!"

"Will grandmaster be willing to help?"

Xie Lingyun's eyes glittered in anticipation.

"I live in seclusion and is not willing to partake in any of these matters. I only know that there is a Secluded Mountain Prefecture above me, and as for the royal family of the Xia Country, although powerful, will have difficulties controlling those on the ground..."

Fang Yuan sighed, and Xie Lingyun blushed in embarrassment.

The lack of full control was always a contentious part of the royal family's power, and now Fang Yuan had to remind her of it.

"Furthermore, it's really simple to bridge the gap!"

Fang Yuan revealed a suspicious smile. "Think about it... If I killed you and brought your head to the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City Master, do you think I can gain his trust?"

"What?!"

Xie Lingyun shuddered and the two servants behind her stood up, as though they were ready to fight for their lives.

Even if twenty more servants came forward, they would only die in Fang Yuan's hands.

"You are very lucky. Although you offended me, I am very gracious and will not kill you just because of our differences of opinion. Take your leave!"

Fang Yuan waved his hands. "Go where you should go, and don't stay in Qingye City!"

"That..."

Xie Lingyun bit her lip and did not forget her objective.

"The collaboration?"

Fang Yuan laughed sarcastically. "I never work with people who try to dig information from me!"

Hearing this reply, Xie Lingyun sighed, bowed and retreated with her servants.

...

"Master Fang! Master Fang!"

Not long after Xie Lingyun left, gongs were heard and Leader Niu rushed into the Prefecture City in a hurry.

"Niu Dingtian?"

"What are you doing here?" Fang Yuan asked while he was coaching Chen Ziyang in the backyard.

"After receiving news of the princess making a detour, I rushed here and tired out a horse before reaching!"

Leader Niu scratched his head and laughed. "I'm here to remind you that the lady is trouble, don't get involved with her!"

"Thank you, Brother Niu!"

Hearing how he rushed here to deliver news, albeit late, Fang Yuan was still full of gratitude.

"Ah..... If it was last time, this issue would be nothing. But now, City Master's temper is getting worse. Just last month, he lectured Xiang Zilong and his brother over a small issue, causing them to lose face in front of the capital leaders..."

Niu Dingtian sighed.

Fang Yuan's eyes flashed as he heard the news.

Before the destruction of the world, something crazy would happen first; it seemed that this was applicable to Liu Yan too.

...

"Princess..."

In the royal carriage escort, in the largest carriage, a lady servant angrily commented. "That Fang Yuan was too much, how dare he insult you!"

"I don't have enough power, who can I blame?"

Xie Lingyun did not put that to heart but instead laughed. "Furthermore... We have gained something. At least we now know that Fang Yuan is together with Liu Yan. Isn't this a piece of valuable information?"

"I was tasked with an important mission on this trip to the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, so a little unjust wouldn't matter!"

Looking in the direction of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, Xie Lingyun was filled with worry.

She was a messenger and brought the royal's family final condition with her.

If Liu Yan decided to do whatever he wanted, a war would break out!

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 134: The Annual Meet

"The Secluded Mountain Prefecture here is so lively!"

A new year had arrived and the Secluded Mountain Prefecture had sent out invitation cards to invite Fang Yuan, other Wu Zongs, spiritual knights and the rich to the Secluded Mountain Prefecture for a banquet.

As they returned back to the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City, the feeling was different this time.

"Haha.....Brother Xiang!"

Niu Dingtian and the others entered the Prefecture Master's mansion. When he saw Xiang Zilong, his eyes glittered. "I have missed you a lot!"

As he spoke, Niu Dingtian went forward and gave the other a hug.

"Thank you, Brother Niu, for your concern!"

Xiang Zilong's face looked a bit dull and he forced out a smile. "You don't have to raise your voice in the Prefecture Master's Prefecture. The city master has punished quite a number of people recently..."

If both of them were not close, Xiang Zilong would not be reminding Niu Dingtian about this.

Niu Dingtian's expression changed and asked, "Why?"

"The city master is displaying his might....."

Xiang Zilong shook his head and obviously didn't want to speak further as he saw Fang Yuan was present as well.

"Greetings, Leader Xiang!"

Fang Yuan was not really greeting him seriously and continued to ask, "Is the city master here?"

"The city master is seeing another important guest in the study room. All guests please head to the main hall for the banquet first!"

One of the three capital leaders of the Secluded Mountain who walked out the last greeted Fang Yuan.

"An important guest?"

Fang Yuan wavered but his expression was still the same. As he entered the main hall, he was complimented by many other guests.

After all, he was a young Wu Zong and had a bright future. So many people had wanted to establish a good rapport with him.

.....

Coincidentally, Liu Yan who was seeing the guest in the study room had mentioned Fang Yuan as well.

"Hehe.....Princess, I heard that you came to Qinghe County to poach one of my men?"

Liu Yan was giving a cold smile as he looked at Xie Lingyun.

At that moment, Xie Lingyun was standing upright with her drooping eyelids. It seemed that she didn't even dare to take in a deep breath.

The feeling she had gotten from the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City Master was different from the young Wu Zong.

The city master was not only serious and displaying his might, he was greedy and aggressive. She didn't know what to say in such a scary atmosphere.

However, she bit her teeth and continued with a tone of dissatisfaction, "The Secluded Mountain Prefecture is under Xia Country. Since there is a Wu Zong, I am here on behalf of the royal family to find out more. Is that wrong?"

Liu Yan didn't know what to say.

Even though the royal family of Xia Country had not much power now, after all, the royal family was still of legitimism and it was better for him not to go against them.

He then gave a cold smile and continued, "It seems useless to talk about this. What is the purpose of your visit, Princess?"

"I'm here for the conflict.... I heard that you are using military forces against the Summer Sun Prefecture? Have you gotten that order from the royal family?"

Xie Lingyun continued with a stern look. "If not, it is wrong for you to do that and there is no reason for you to do that. Don't force the royal family to form an alliance with the other two prefectures to go against you!"

No matter what was the current situation like in Secluded Mountain Prefecture, when the two prefectures formed an alliance with the royal family, they would be very powerful. Hence, Liu Yan had to reconsider his actions.

"Humph.....The Summer Sun Prefecture Master is the one causing this conflict. He was the one behind causing the rebel which was led by Lu Renjia. Am I in the wrong to have my revenge?"

Liu Yan was pissed off.

"You have no evidence to prove that. How can you say so?"

Xie Lingyun shook her head and continued, "If you are willing to stop whatever you are doing, the royal family can help to mediate the situation by making the Summer Sun Prefecture compensate you....."

In fact, she was here to discuss the bottom line of the situation and the conditions for the mediation. She was using both the soft and the hard approaches at the same time.

However, Xie Lingyun was feeling a little sad in her heart.

Why had it become the case where the royal family had to be the middleman when handling relationships between the prefectures?

Even though she was feeling sad, she didn't want to see an internal conflict in Xia Country. Xie Lingyun then said with her gentle voice, "What more do you want from us in order for you to stop?"

"You are asking me to set the conditions?"

Liu Yan laughed and continued, "I shall gladly set the conditions then.....3 pieces of Flame Jade Rock, 1 Deep-ocean Fire Coral and the length of it should not be less than 38 inches. I will also want 10 Lieyang Calming Pills and the Thousand Years Fire Grass....."

"Si....."

Even though she knew that Liu Yan would take this chance to ask for a lot of things, but when she heard what Liu Yan had wanted, she had to take in a deep breath.

"I see that you have quite a lot of things that you want.....However, the Flame Jade Rock can only be found deep in the volcanoes and a Wu Zong will be needed to obtain these rocks. The Fire Coral which is more than 38 inches is considered as the royal treasure of the Xia Country. Also, the Fire Grass and the Lieyang Calming Pills are high-quality spiritual objects and spiritual pills respectively. They are also the treasure of the Summer Sun Prefecture Master..."

Xie Lingyun gave a wry grin and continued, "If you want one of those, there is room for discussion. However, are you not making things hard for me when you ask for so many things at one go?"

"Humph, if he doesn't give these to me, I shall take it from him on my own then!"

Liu Yan let out a humph and there seemed to be a flame appearing above his eyebrows.

'This Liu Yan....is indeed at the peak of the Elemental Gathering Realm. He is just a step away from achieving the Elemental Opening Realm...'

No one knew that Xie Lingyun had much knowledge about that.

Just by hearing what Liu Yan had asked for, the spiritual objects were of high quality and were fire related. She then knew that he was preparing for that final breakthrough and needed lots of spiritual objects to help him to achieve that.

She would definitely not agree to the conditions.

Or else, if she gave what he wanted and he had achieved the Elemental Opening Realm successfully, she would be in danger in future.

However, if she didn't give what he wanted, there would be chaos and war. Also, Liu Yan could then obtain those things he needed by force.

There was not much difference as both outcomes were the same. This was a difficult decision for her to make.

At this point, Xie Lingyun knew that Liu Yan was crazy. He would want to obtain those supplies needed for the breakthrough at any cost.

.....

"The city master and the ambassador of the royal family have arrived!"

In the main hall, as the guests heard the arrival of those two, they immediately stopped whatever they were doing and looked at the two who had just arrived.

"Hehe.....A new year, a new beginning. Today is the start of the new year and with the well wishes from the royal family, all of us shall have a good drink!"

Liu Yan sat in his seat and said while drinking his wine.

"To the city master! To Xia Country!"

The guests then toasted and drank at one go.

As everyone was drinking, Fang Yuan took this chance to take a glance at Liu Yan and Xie Lingyun. Both of their faces were normal and both didn't look happy or angry. No one knew how their conversation had gone. Both of them maintained the look of a host.

'She thinks she can hide from everyone but she cannot hide from me.....This lady seems to be troubled by certain matters.....Looks like there are a lot of things happening in Xia Country...'

Fang Yuan sighed in his heart and took a quick glance at Liu Yan.

He could feel that the flame in Liu Yan was getting stronger. His magical energy was flaming and he seemed to be merciless.

'Liu Yan's cultivation had improved again. Looks like this was Lu Renjia had left behind after his death.....'

Even since that alchemy master was dead, even though Fang Yuan had taken a copy of the alchemy related books from the dead master, Liu Yan had kept the spiritual plants and spiritual pills that were made long ago for himself and didn't share any of them with Fang Yuan.

It seemed that with the help of the spiritual pills, Liu Yan's cultivation was able to improve and it looked like he could make a breakthrough for the Elemental Opening Realm anytime. No wonder he was so aggressive.

After all, if he managed to achieve the Elemental Opening Realm, he would be ranked number 1 among all other spiritual knights in this country and also the nearby countries!

Not to mention defeating Summer Sun Prefecture, not many would be able to stop Liu Yan if he chose to exterminate the whole of Xia Country and rule it.

After the banquet, a servant came to Fang Yuan and whispered to him that the city master would like to meet him.

Fang Yuan was sighing silently and thought that it didn't seem like a good thing. However, he still followed her to the study room.

"I'm here!"

Under the bright light, Liu Yan was seen standing with his hands behind his back and his back was facing Fang Yuan. He seemed to be enjoying an art piece that was hanging on the wall.

"I have seen you before, city master!"

As Fang Yuan got nearer to Liu Yan, he could feel a stronger pressure from Liu Yan and it felt as if Liu Yan's magical energy was about to blow up.

"I see that your essence, magic and spirit have changed a lot. Looks like you have improved a lot and I'm ashamed of myself.

Since Fang Yuan was becoming the dream building master, he had quite a big improvement in the Elemental Gathering Realm and therefore, his breath was different.

If the current Liu Yan who was in the room now was the Liu Yan that had not have any improvement in his cultivation, that Liu Yan would probably not be able to detect that Fang Yuan had improved. Fang Yuan was feeling serious and replied, "I only manage to cultivate another spiritual spell.....City master, you have sharp eyes indeed!"

"I see!"

Liu Yan nodded his head.

He didn't expect that Fang Yuan could achieve the high Elemental Gathering stage in just a short period time and Fang Yuan was now not far from his.

Fang Yuan had also cultivated a few strange spiritual spells, and hence there was a change to his breath. Hence, he agreed with what Fang Yuan had told him.

"What do you have for me, city master?"

Fang Yuan bent his body slightly and asked.

"Don't you think that after Lu Renjia is killed, both of us are not as close as before?"

Liu Yan then continued with a wry grin. "Not only you, even for my men. I'm now only closer to Taoist Mu Li..."

As he spoke, Fang Yuan became alert but was surprised.

'I didn't expect Liu Yan to trust Taoist Mu Li the most.....Hang on, he is actually an evil person on the inside but has pretended to be a good person. How many spiritual knights can I actually get along with?'

Fang Yuan was a little jealous of Taoist Mu Li and started to make guesses about him.

"I have the intention to attack Summer Sun, and hence I will need your help once again!"

Liu Yan didn't even wait for Fang Yuan's opinion and instead, he listed his request out straight away.

"I'm not capable enough, I'm afraid....."

Fang Yuan shook his head and didn't accept Liu Yan's request.

He was not that crazy enough to follow Liu Yan and go against the whole of Xia Country.

If Liu Yan had already broken through the Elemental Opening Realm, he could still consider.

"Hmm?"

Liu Yan frowned and turned around. Fang Yuan could instantly feel a great amount of pressure going towards him.

"I'm living alone and prefer to be separated from the rest of the world. If you do not have anything else for me, I will take my leave first!"

Fang Yuan did not show any fear.

He was a spiritual knight that had reached the high Elemental Gathering stage. Even if he couldn't manage to defeat Liu Yan, he could still be able to escape away from him!

His Iron-tailed Black Eagle was circling above and standing by!

Since he had an escape route, he had nothing to be afraid of.

"If you are willing to help me, after the war, I will let you take on the role of the Prefecture Master!"

Liu Yan also knew that using his power as a city master to force Fang Yuan was the worst method, hence he brought up the conditions.

"Hmm?"

Fang Yuan was startled and said, "Since city master, you don't have the intention to rule the Summer Sun, why do you want to invade it still?"

"There is a saying that even if there are thousands of people stopping me from doing it, I will still bravely do it!"

Liu Yan's reply was decisive.

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 135: Fallout

“Do it?”

Fang Yuan was taken aback.

In Liu Yan’s words, to ‘do it’ should mean to enter the Elemental Breaking Realm.

Since he was even willing to let our his appointment as Prefecture Master, it showed that he did not care too much about power anymore.

Based on Fang Yuan’s magical energy, he could easily tell that Liu Yan was speaking the truth.

“Since that is so... Why not stay low, because with Prefecture Master’s ability...”

Fang Yuan stopped halfway and looked at Liu Yan, aghast.

“You can tell!”

Liu Yan shook his head in despair. “I am over 300 years old, and I am lucky to have extended my lifespan with the help of a Fire Dragon Fruit. However, through the previous few fights, I have depleted my Essence, Spirit and Magic, and have not much longer to live...”

“Based on my condition, my body is starting to die of old age. It would be impossible for me to break through before I die, and I can only follow the crooked ways to break through... The good thing is that in the collection that Lu Renjia left behind, there is such a secret way. It describes how I can use large quantities of similar-type spiritual things to increase my chances of breaking through...”

Liu Yan had greed written all over his face.

If he could break through to the Elemental Breaking Realm, he could lengthen his lifespan, and therefore was willing to take this gamble.

“Prefecture Master, why do you share such confidential information with me!”

Fang Yuan sighed.

Liu Yan did not have long to live!

If this news spreads, imagine how much chaos would it create!

Furthermore, Liu Yan’s sharing was honest and desperate.

“Sadly... I am not interested in this appointment as Prefecture Master, Master should look for someone else!”

Fang Yuan shook his head.

He was not interested in such a large scale rebellion and such a gamble for life and death.

It didn’t matter to him if Liu Yan as dying or not; he was at his prime time! It was not logical to get himself in all this mess for a slim chance of rewards.

“Eh?”

Liu Yan’s fiery eyebrows twitched.

He thought that he understood Fang Yuan well enough, and even helped him a lot previously. Who would’ve thought that Fang Yuan would reject to help him, and this gave him a feeling that Fang Yuan had no sense of gratitude.

“Hong! Hong!”

As the spiritual knight raged, the surrounding air burst into flames, as though many flames were burning at once.

Streaks of colours appeared in mid-air and combined to form a few fire snakes, as though there were about to combine to become a dragon.

‘Eh? Fight just because of differences in opinion? Could it be that fire-type spiritual knights are all fiery-tempered?’

With all these suspicions, Fang Yuan found it even weirder as he looked at Liu Yan.

Liu Yan seemed to have lost his mind after so much cultivation. After all, Fang Yuan cultivated both martial arts and spiritual techniques, and he would need to spend a large amount of effort to take him down. If he made everyone know that there was internal conflict within the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, would that do him any good?

Might the people of Summer Sun Prefecture celebrate as well?

However, Fang Yuan was not willing to sit there and wait for his death.

Before the fire around Liu Yan emerged, a thin layer of fog already appeared around Fang Yuan. It was thick and had occasional waves like clouds, and covered the entire room.

“Hmm... A firefly’s glow and you dare to challenge the moon’s glare? Die!”

Liu Yan waved his hand and 9 streaks of crimson light shot out as though it was released from a bow, and pierced a large hole into Fang Yuan’s chest.

“Pu!”

‘Fang Yuan’ was expressionless. There were ripples all over his body, and slowly it became a fog which dissipated.

“Shadowstep!”

Fang Yuan had split into many images of himself, rushed out of the room door and to the courtyard outside.

“Chirp! Chirp!”

In the air, the Iron-tailed Black Eagle circled around and chirped, as though it was prepared to land.

“How dare you!”

Liu Yan was fuming. He took a few steps out and waved. A green fire dragon was formed and flew around the sky, opening its jaws and lashing out its claws.

“Elemental energy of the Nine Heavens, hear my command...”

As he recited, the elemental energy around was disturbed; he was really fuming mad.

‘Liu Yan...is asking for death!’

Fang Yuan squinted.

“Halt!”

Before the fight could begin, a black shadow flew into the middle of the courtyard and landed; It was the Wind Chasing Falcon, separating Liu Yan and Fang Yuan. Taoist Mu Li leapt down from the bird. “Both of you are talents of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, so why spoil your relationship over a small matter? Sect Master Fang is young and direct, so just apologise and let’s all forget about this...”

He had the attitude of a mediator, and accompanying the gentle breeze and drizzle, Liu Yan calmed down and the fire dragon dissipated.

“Taoist Mu Li is right, I offended Master. Please accept my apology and forgive me!”

Seeing this scene, Fang Yuan was still suspicious, but he knew that he should take a step back, and therefore immediately bowed and apologised.

“Hm... Forget it!”

Liu Yan brushed him aside, and Taoist Mu Li flicked a whistle into the air. As it flew up, it made a high-pitched whistle.

“Dismiss the guards!”

The activated soldiers turned around and like how water would seep through sand, they disappeared in a moment.

“I have other important things, I shall take my leave first!”

Fang Yuan cupped his fists in politeness, leapt on the Iron-tailed Black Eagle and flew off.

“Who would’ve known that this boy had such potential to cultivate to such a realm... Some hard-working spiritual knights don’t even get to achieve what he has now. I’m afraid that I was too reckless in handling today’s situation...”

Only when the black shadow disappeared did Liu Yan sighed.

Only when he fought with him he realised Fang Yuan’s cultivation was already at such a level!

“He is more than qualified to become a Prefecture Master.”

Taoist Mu Li looked serious as well. “He is such a talent!”

He saw Fang Yuan’s abilities and knew that the Prefecture Master would not be able to stop the fight in the heat of the battle, which was why he stood out to mediate.

Otherwise, if both of them really fought, Liu Yan might not be able to take Fang Yuan down, and instead, there would be a commotion with dire consequences.

It would be even more disadvantageous for his invasion plan.

“Pass the order down!”

Liu Yan frowned. “If anyone spreads whatever happened today, I will kill their entire family!”

“Yes Master!”

Taoist Mu Li took his leave, but he appeared secretive...

...

Second day in the Prefecture City.

People from all over arrived here to form a large market, business was very good.

Fang Yuan changed into a brown robe and entered the market.

Even though they only fought a hand, Liu Yan should know his abilities. Together with the Iron-tailed Black Eagle, as long as he was not trapped, he should be able to escape!

Since it was such, there was no meaning to find trouble for him; that would only make him more enemies.

‘It’s good to be at odds, I’ll have one more reason to reject him...’

‘Seeing Liu Yan’s energy yesterday, although it still had a strong spiritual pressure, he felt a hint of evil energy coming from his forehead. It seemed that the secret way from Lu Renjia’s collection is not any good, and it might have dire consequences...’

Fang Yuan was casually strolling through the stalls and stopped by a few to take a look.

At his current cultivation realm, he would not lay his eye on any normal things. The few exceptions also did not pique his interest, and he felt regretful for not being able to find anything good.

‘Although... It would not make sense for all the good stuff to come to me, that’s like a story in a novel!’

Fang Yuan laughed and looked at the sun.

It was noon, and the warm sunlight landed on him, giving him a different feeling.

As he was looking for a restaurant to fill his appetite, a plain-looking horse stopped in front of him.

“Grandmaster Fang, we meet again!”

As the curtains flipped, it revealed an excited Xie Lingyun. “Please enter the carriage, and we can discuss things!”

“Again?”

Fang Yuan shook his head. Although he knew that whatever happened in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture could not be hidden from Liu Yan, and furthermore he fought with Liu Yan yesterday, he still decisively went up the carriage.

“To the best restaurant!”

He ordered her the moment he entered, as though Xie Lingyun was the carriage master.

“Since grandmaster is interested, Xie Lingyun is willing to accommodate. If grandmaster comes by the capital next time, Xie Lingyun can treat you to a vegetarian meal at Clear Spring Temple, and I promise you, it will be unforgettable!”

Xie Lingyun bit her lips and smiled.

“My apologies, but I live on the outskirts of the city and have no interest in the capital!”

Fang Yuan replied sarcastically.

“Please do not take it to heart!”

Xie Lingyun apologised and appeared serious. “It was Lingyun’s inappropriateness the previous time, please forgive me!”

“Since you are here, it seems that you are rather well-informed and know about yesterday night’s fight. However, you can stop pleading for me to help you. Our Prefecture Master is extremely passionate about war, and it is not likely anyone can change his mind...”

Fang Yuan shook his head.

“Indeed...”

Xie Lingyun shuddered and almost froze in the carriage. “Would the accomplishments of the Xia Country be wasted?”

“Stop!”

Fang Yuan waved his hands. “Why are you so desolate? Do you think that by gathering the forces around Xia Country, you cannot defeat Liu Yan?”

“So what if I can defeat him? The neighbouring Yuan and Wu Country are both watching out. Once our country is in a mess, they will send in their troops and destroy us...”

Xie Lingyun forced a laughter.

“They why not aid Liu Yan in breaking through the Elemental Breaking Realm bottleneck? If he can succeed, how would the neighbouring countries dare to offend us?”

Fang Yuan had some doubts but did not wait for Xie Lingyun to reply. “That’s true too... How can you all trust Liu Yan? This is not a long-term solution. If he continues to be greedy, it will be catastrophic! Therefore, all you are hoping for is for the situation to come under control.”

The higher the authority, the stronger the hope for those at the bottom to be settled and for the hierarchy to remain stagnant forever.

At this time, the 'Alpha' or 'Rebellions' would appear, but their resistance would not be strong.

Although Liu Yan was neither of those two, he was still a factor which attracted the attention of many. Unless there was a breakthrough, the outcome would still be feared.

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 136: Secrecy

The journey to the Secluded Mountain Prefecture over the new year ended on a bad note.

Fang Yuan returned to Qinghe County completely unaffected by the sudden rise in tensions in the country.

To Fang Yuan, to be able to enter the dream world to practise martial arts, grow and cultivate his spiritual plants and to impart his teachings to his two disciples on a daily basis was a joyful way to live his life.

Furthermore, he had several precious treasures waiting for him to master and control. He did not have the time to bother about what was going on around him.

...

Within the dream world.

"Bang!"

The corpse of the Sect Head of the Five Ghosts Sect fell to the floor.

Ling Yin chuckled dryly and said, "Congratulations on defeating such a great enemy senior. You need not live your life in worry in the future anymore!"

"This person is scheming and had inserted for a spy within my county. His objectives and intentions were not to be underestimated...Thankfully we made him expose them during this operation to hide the treasure map..."

Shi Yutong oozed with confidence. This was so unlike the pathetic state of her future self.

This scene was from the war over the treasure map in Lieyang County!

Furthermore, Fang Yuan was watching from a third person's perspective. Even though he was standing next to the two ladies and observing them, they were completely oblivious to his presence.

"I have a stronger control over Ling Yin's dream world now and I can already retrieve her memories..."

Even though this was in an imaginary realm, it was in fact Ling Yin's memories of what happened before.

To a dream master, nothing was a secret!

"The works of a dream master are simply so..."

As Fang Yuan immersed himself in the scene, he was equally awestruck. As long as a dream master was determined, nobody could hide their thoughts or secrets from him.

Even a person's life experiences, memories, wealth could be taken away in the dream world.

"How is this called a dream-building master? It should be called a dream-stealing master...even a pig could become a Wu Zong pig if it trained for many years in a Wu Zong's dream world!"

Fang Yuan guessed that as long as any dream master had the heart, he could become the top martial artist anywhere he went!

"Of course, I also have to consider the issue of natural talent and amount of effort put in...a dream master must focus on his cultivating path and spend less time on other useless aspects. To invest this way over the long term, might also bring about some negative impacts...but it is also too unfathomable!"

Whatever Fang Yuan was doing to Ling Yin was of another kind. He was not extracting her experience in alchemy. Instead, he was looking through her other secrets.

The bright moon illuminated the dark starless sky as a crow flew south.

The violent commotion from afar died down slowly.

It was obvious that those martial artists realised which side had already won and did not dare to take a second look before escaping swiftly.

As long as Shi Yutong and the head of the Five Ghosts Sect were not both seriously injured, there was no way for any of them to take action at all. It was the best time for them to get away while they still could.

Fang Yuan stood aside and watched silently.

"Treasure map?"

A spark flickered in Ling Yin's eyes.

As Fang Yuan was in control of her dream world, he could also sense the curiosity that popped up in Ling Yin.

"Why? Junior Ling Yin, you are from a rich family and have an alchemy master, why would you be interested in my little treasure?"

Shi Yutong forced a closed lip smile.

A spark flickered again in Ling Yin's eyes as she pressed further, "Senior, you are making fun of me again. Tell me more about it..."

"I only just learnt about this!"

Shi Yutong continued, "Do you know that the ancestors of the head of the Five Ghosts Sect were not from this country?"

"Hmm?" Ling Yin was taken aback and she continued to ask, "Could it be they were immigrants? But there is nothing inappropriate about this!"

"It does not just end there!"

Shi Yutong shook her head, "The ancestors of this person were from the Da Qian Empire!"

"What?"

Ling Yin shuddered.

"Now do you also find that something is wrong? Da Qian is situated so far away from here and the road here is incredibly perilous. His ancestors defied all odds to reach here. They had to be incredibly strong to pass through the many mountains and rivers to reach this place...Furthermore, these people picked a poor rural area like ours to settle down in. It is extremely suspicious!"

Shi Yutong spoke on slowly.

Ling Yin thought about it quickly and then replied, "But...How do you know all this? Did you also plant spies within their sect?"

"I just returned the favour..."

Shi Yutong waved her hand. It was common for big powers to plant spies in each other's sects.

Even if the head of the Five Ghosts Sect did not plant the Guo family as spies in their county, she would have done the same. This was nothing to do with favours, it was most basic thing to do to a potential rival sect.

"The ancestors of the head of the Five Ghosts Sect were from Da Qian, could it be that the treasure map was his?"

Ling Yin's eyes lit up.

"Indeed!"

Shi Yutong nodded her head in admission and replied, "It was rumoured that the particular ancestor was incredible power and unpredictable. However, he did not live a long life and died soon after he reached here. Apparently, he sustained a serious injury and before he died, he left a set of treasure maps split into three sets to be looked after by three of his disciples!"

"Three sets?"

Ling Yin asked curiously, "Why? If he had such a precious treasure, wouldn't it be better to just hand it over to his heir?"

"I am not sure about this, maybe he had a deeper intention!"

Shi Yutong continued saying, "After he died, the three disciples fell out with each other which made it impossible to piece back the full treasure map. It stayed that way until now. Now, the three of them are already dead and they do not have surviving family members. However, it is the descendants of the particular ancestor himself who are now trying to reclaim the treasure map!"

"Based on what know, he has already gotten one set. But, it was stolen away by Han Shou's disciple. The set that just has emerged is the second set! In order to find out the exact location of the treasure, we need all three sets together!"

"The treasure left by the expert from Da Qian?"

Ling Yin's eyes lit up and remarked, "My master might also be interested in this!"

"If Master Lu could help us, it would be great!"

Shi Yutong then said in a serious tone, "If that person had such a valuable treasure hidden, why didn't he leave it to his heir? There must be some complication going on that even he found difficult, how could I work alone? Please ask Master Lu..."

"There are no doubts that this was Shi Yutong. She was clear about her actions and knew the risks and benefits of them. Furthermore, she was not blinded by greed of the treasure...."

Fang Yuan stood aside and watched on. Suddenly, he snapped his fingers.

"Snap!"

He snapped out of the dream world.

After all, this was all the memories Ling Yin had about the treasure map.

He could now know every thought that went through Ling Yin's mind. Ling Yin could not hide even the smallest idea that she had from him. However, he was powerless against Shi Yutong.

This was also after all just Ling Yin's dream, not Shi Yutong's!

"To do this on a Wu Zong like Shi Yutong is a bit too risky based on my current skill level!"

Even though Shi Yutong was held captive by him and definitely knew and experienced a lot more than Ling Yin, Fang Yuan was cautious about entering her dreams.

To use such a technique was almost similar to gambling.

If Fang Yuan were to be injured or killed in her dream world, his magical energy would also be damaged. Furthermore, Fang Yuan was not confident of suppressing the malicious intent in a Wu Zong's subconsciousness.

"When I've reached the peak of the Elemental Gathering Realm, after perfecting my dream-building skills, I might try it out on Shi Yutong..."

Fang Yuan scratched his chin as he thought of what he just saw.

The treasure map was extremely precious, and he already had two out of the three sets. What he did not expect was that the treasure belonged to an expert from Da Qian, which excited him slightly.

"What a pity the head of the Five Ghosts Sect is already dead. If not, I would definitely be able to obtain the most detailed information from his dream world. Now that the sect is destroyed, their archives have probably been completely looted...At least there is still hope in retrieving the archives, I just have to get Zhou Wenwu and my other disciples to carry out this mission for me!"

This was the benefit of being a major power. He could activate the people under him to carry out these tedious and troublesome tasks for him. He could afford to appear after they have found the relevant items.

"Carry on then!"

After considering his options, he stretched out his arms.

"Whoo whoo!"

The entire dream world changed before him.

The sun rose from the east and set in the west quickly. People moved at an incredibly fast-forwarded pace and it was difficult to properly see them.

Of course, this entire world was from the lens of Ling Yin.

Her entire dream world was now under the complete control of Fang Yuan.

"This is the terrifying part of being a dream master...I just have to work a bit harder and soon I can be in full control of her soul. Almost like Red-eyed White Bird, I can even alter her memories and swear allegiance to me..."

Fang Yuan was clear about his potential abilities, yet he was grounded at the same time.

"If this sort of powers were not controlled won't the world be in utter chaos?"

"I wonder if there are any laws or restrictions regarding the advancements of dream masters in Da Qian..."

Fang Yuan was aware of the sinister side of humans. If this sort of powerful ability developed without any form of control, Da Qian would have become a hellish abyss a long time ago.

Of course, laws and regulations were merely just words written on pieces of paper. What could law enforcement officials possibly do to deal with dream masters?

"Master!"

Fang Yuan got out of his thoughts and observed the next scene.

Within the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, Ling Yin came to the front of Lu Renjia and respectfully bowed and reported, "The preparations have already been made. I successfully convinced Shi Yutong to support your claim to the throne!"

"We have to adapt to the changing times!"

Lu Renjia kept his hands behind his back as he sighed.

As Fang Yuan watched from the side, he realised something was amiss and he thought, "This time should be the birthday celebration of the head of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture. It is also before Lu Renjia's rebellion so why isn't he all pumped up and ready to fight? Instead he looks so solemn here. Could the rumours of external intervention be true? Such that Lu Renjia was not in control of the situation?"

Ling Yin also sensed that something was not right as the expression on her master's face was one she had rarely seen.

"Ling Yin!"

Lu Renjia raised his head suddenly and pulled out a secret diagram and ordered, "Memorise this diagram and then destroy it once you are done!"

"This is..."

Looking at the map on her hand, Ling Yin was slightly puzzled.

"This is the location of one of my secret mansions. It is within Lieyang County, and this secret is only between the two of us..."

Lu Renjia dryly said, "If all goes well this time, everything will be alright. If things go south, and if...something bad happens to me, go to this place. Focus your energy on training, do not be involved in the affairs around you, do not look for spiritual knights and do not come out again. Most importantly, do not try to seek revenge for me!"

"Master..."

A strong premonition grew as Ling Yin fell to her knees crying.

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 137: The Reunion

"The Secret Hole Mansion in Lieyang County?"

Fang Yuan's eyes glittered and went forward to take a good look at the secret map.

"Hmm? Who are you?"

There was someone standing beside them all along and both Lu Renjia and Ling Yin had not realised that before. Both of them were very shocked.

"I should leave here as soon as possible!"

As Fang Yuan saw that Ling Yin's face was getting distorted and seemed like she was about to be awakened, there was a sudden lightning and thunder. Fang Yuan, being a wise man, did not want to continue further as the odds were against him and hence decided to leave the dream world.

.....

Back in the real world, in the prison in Qinghe County.

"Pitiful lady..."

Fang Yuan opened his eyes and saw Ling Yin, who was lying on the wooden bed and she looked as if she just had a nightmare. Fang Yuan started to pity her.

He had gotten into her dream these few days to obtain secrets and this had already exhausted her mentally. If he continued to do this, there could be a confusion for her between the dream world and the real world and hence, she might become crazy afterwards!

"Luckily I have almost gotten everything that I need from her already...."

As he recalled the secret location Lu Renjia was at, Fang Yuan was feeling a little excited.

That was the escape route that the alchemy master had prepared for himself and was definitely top secret!

Unfortunately, for Lu Renjia, he didn't expect Ling Yin to be in the hands of a dream master before he was caught and now Fang Yuan knew where he was.

"So he is in Lieyang County....what a coincidence. Looks like I will have a visit to there then!"

Fang Yuan murmured to himself and immediately looked for Zhou Wenwu. Fang Yuan then gave him some orders.

.....

When he thought of doing something, he would do it.

Fang Yuan felt that he himself was more of a person who was more involved in actions. He waited for the news from the investigation made by Zhou Wenwu's men, then he would travel to the city of Lieyang County by his Iron-tailed Black Eagle.

"Since the disintegration of the Five Ghosts Sect, Lieyang County has benefited from that. Even though there are a few chaotic things happening, no war has happened here before...."

Fang Yuan got down from the eagle outside the city and entered the city alone. He enjoyed the scenery along the way.

Because of the trade in ore, the city here was prosperous and it didn't look poor.

On the street, there were many martial artists who were quite powerful. Many of them had either daggers or sword with them and they were very alert. The atmosphere was quite tense.

"Looks like the rumour is true!"

He recalled the report from Zhou Wenwu and gave a smile. "The Five Ghosts Sect.....has become active again!"

Ever since the battle for the treasure map broke out, the Five Ghosts Sect Master lost his life and left behind a few elders and disciples. The Five Ghosts Sect was then known to have incurred a big loss. Also, with suppression from the Spirit Returning Sect, many of the disciples had their names hidden to keep a low profile.

This matter was supposed to remain like this. The disciples could either thrive somewhere else or continue to suffer here. It would take at least 10 to 100 years for the sect to be rebuilt.

However, it was different now!

The Spirit Returning Sect was involved in the rebel. Even Shi Yutong had been taken away by Fang Yuan and was kept in the prison ever since.

The Spirit Returning Sect was being rooted from the ground and the sect would not have a firm position in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture.

However, Lieyang County had always been on the side of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City Master and there were rumours saying that the remaining few from the Five Ghosts Sect had put in much effort to fight against the rebel forces.

Hence, there would be rewards. With the support from the new governor of the county, the disciples of the Five Ghosts Sect gathered once again to rebuild their sect!

This was definitely not an easy task!

Even though the Spirit Returning Sect was out of the picture now, there were others who had depended on the embezzlement of the funds of the Five Ghosts Sect and they would definitely not agree to this and there would be a conflict between the two parties.

Fang Yuan thought of the worst case scenario. It was that the governor was likely to claim the power of the sect when both parties were busy fighting.

It was just too mainstream to claim the power by force.

After all, Lieyang County was different from the Qinghe County. Lieyang County didn't have a governor who was Wu Zong and the governor hence could not use force to suppress the whole county. Hence the governor could only use that approach.

The two parties had also realised what the governor was trying to achieve but could only continue with the governor's plan. Hence, this was the beauty of having great power.

"Eh?"

Suddenly, Fang Yuan saw a familiar person and followed the person immediately.

"The battle of the Five Ghosts Sect, Strong Flame Sect and the Big River Faction is the headline here in the Lieyang County. The alliance of the brothers from the Bull's Head Mountain, the Black Wind Village and the Eighteen Mountains will have to be pushed into the limelight as well!"

It was a man who was 84 inches tall who spoke that and he was carrying a giant axe. It made people became fearful of him.

"Isn't he Wang Fugui, whom I have met in Shaoyang City, the owner of the Bull's Head Mountain?"

Fang Yuan simmered with laughter. "Well, this fool is also here."

"Eh? Are you not Brother Fang?"

When Wang Fugui saw Fang Yuan, his eyes glittered and went close to Fang Yuan. He then greeted Fang Yuan loudly.

"Haha.....I have been missing you since the last time we separated!"

"Slow down slow down!"

Fang Yuan shifted Wang Fugui's big hand away using his shoulders. "What are you all doing?"

"Hehe.....I shall introduce to you the brothers from the Bull's Head Mountain. I'm here with them is so that I can take this chance to have a firm position here in Lieyang County and become famous!"

Wang Fugui pounded his chest with much confidence and introduce a few other muscular men to Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan looked at those muscular men and thought that many people would have avoided them. He then shook his head silently.

This group would definitely attract lots of attention as they walked down the street noisily.

Especially now there was a normal person standing with that group, Fang Yuan could sense that many pairs of eyes were staring at them right now and couldn't take it anymore.

"I wish you all the best in your future endeavours. I shall take my leave first....."

Fang Yuan shook hands and couldn't wait to leave.

However, Wang Fugui pulled Fang Yuan back and whispered to him, "Recently, there is a young Wu Zong in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture who has become famous. He is originally from Qinghe County and his age is not big at all. Also, he is highly skilled in medicine. Is that person you, Brother Fang?"

If it was someone else who had asked Fang Yuan, he would just say it was someone else who coincidentally had the same name as him.

However, Wang Fugui had previously seen how Fang Yuan defeated Gui Wusheng and that had left a deep impression on Wang Fugui. Hence, Wang Fugui would have thought that person was Fang Yuan.

"Yes, that person is me....."

Fang Yuan answered softly.

He already knew that Wang Fugui was bold but cautious. He was not as reckless as he seemed to be, or else, Wang Fugui would have revealed Fang Yuan's identity to the public already.

"Hehe....don't worry, Brother Fang. My mouth is very tight. I have not mentioned to anyone about the previous incident!"

Wang Fugui laughed and knew the benefits of keeping a secret.

Although Fang Yuan didn't really have to hide his real identity during this visit, he just didn't want to have unnecessary trouble.

"I owe you!"

Fang Yuan shook hands with him and continued, "Wang Fugui, do you know where the Five Ghosts Sect is right now? Bring me there, please!"

"No problem!"

Wang Fugui patted his own chest with confidence and gladly accepted the request. His eyes were filled with excitement.

With an expert now to suppress the enemy, the group of them knew that victory would be on their side definitely.

"The Five Ghosts Sect previously had a big temple in the city and also another piece of spiritual land. However, ever since the Five Ghosts Sect Master was killed, the temple was claimed over by the Spirit Returning Sect and the spiritual land was separated and taken over by other great powers! Even though the remaining people from the Five Ghosts Sect had gathered together, it was hard to recover those lost assets and they had to find another place to rebuild..."

Wang Fugui was leading the way and was talking non-stop. "If Brother Fang, you didn't look for me, one would not know where they were right now....."

"Hey, Wang Fugui, are we not heading to the Big River Faction to look for trouble?"

Beside him, one of the men, who was confused, shouted and questioned him.

"Get out!"

Wang Fugui slapped the man and then continued talking to Fang Yuan. "You see, this is one of the matters my brothers have wanted to settle and the matter is the biggest one in the whole of Bull's Head Mountain. It is just a small faction. I shall even out with them later!"

"Why? Has the Big River Faction provoked you again?"

Fang Yuan asked with a forced smile.

"It's nothing....."

Wang Fugui then continued loudly, "Who here is not clear of the bottom line of the Big River Faction? They are just a bunch of water pirates! Previously, we have business on land while they have theirs on the sea. We have nothing to do with each other. However, they have stolen our business once they are back on land. We cannot endure that any longer!"

The group then were busy chatting and laughing. Their noise level was quite high and passer-bys had to avoid them.

Not long after, they reached a building.

"Isn't this....a martial arts centre?"

Fang Yuan wiped his sweat and asked, "Wang Fugui, are you sure you have brought me to the correct place?"

"It's definitely this place. I'm correct!"

Wang Fugui pointed and said, "I had heard that since this place was claimed by a sect, the place was run by a disciple....You see, which normal martial arts centre would be guarded by such skilful people?"

"That's true!"

Fang Yuan walked a few steps forward and looked at the two tense-looking disciples who were guarding the entrance of the centre. He used his magical energy and could feel that the disciples had energies that were similar to Xuan Yin Heart Technique in their bodies.

Normal disciples would not know the mystery behind the Xuan Yin Heart Technique. However, the Five Ghosts Sect was specialised in evil techniques and it was very easy to recognise that.

Fang Yuan, who had researched on Xuan Yin Heart Technique in the dream world for many years and had encapsulated that technique into the Eagle Claw Iron Skin Technique when he had broken through Wu Zong, thus empowering his Yin and was known as the sect master of the Xuan Yin Heart Technique, definitely would not recognise that energy wrongly.

"Remain where you are! Who are you? Our martial arts centre has been closed for a few months and it is now the Five Ghosts Sect's temple. What are you trying to do?"

The two disciples had already seen the big noisy group and started to have muscle cramps, but they still stood out and shouted at the group.

"Both of you?"

Fang Yuan squinted his eyes and continued, "Are not qualified. Ask your leader to come out now!"

"Bang!"

He released a little amount of his energy and two disciples could instantly feel the coldness of the Yin energy. They then scurried off in shock.

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 138: Convince

How skilled was Fang Yuan?

Notwithstanding his cultivation as a dream master, just by his Wu Zong status, he was able to start a sect on his own!

Needless to say, he did the unthinkable and broke through the 13th Gate using the Eagle Claw Iron Skin Technique, and fused the various heart techniques into it.

Xuan Yin Heart Technique was just one of it!

By releasing his energy, how could the two lowly disciples of the Five Ghosts Sect take it? Their legs went numb and both of them collapsed. They were shocked out of their wits.

"Great one, where do you come from?"

There was chaos in the martial arts centre. After a short while, numerous Five Ghosts Sect disciples escorted an old man with white hair out, as though they were meeting a strong enemy.

He stared at Fang Yuan, full of curiosity.

"I shall not mention my name. I am here to request a favour!"

Fang Yuan exclaimed.

"Mm?"

Although the old man had a good temper, after hearing what Fang Yuan said, he almost broke out. "Who asks for favours like this? I have yet to see everything in this world!"

He looked at the mysterious Fang Yuan but did not act rashly. "May I know what favour is that?"

"Very simple!"

Fang Yuan continued. "I want the secret records of your sect and the diary of your grandmaster. Of course... and the last secret mystery of the Xuan Yin Heart Technique!"

"What?"

The old man changed his expression.

Although the secret records of the sect and the diary of the grandmaster were not martial arts, they still involved the privacy of the sect. How could they easily give it to a stranger?

Furthermore, he still asked for the secret mystery of the Xuan Yin Heart Technique!

To a sect, this action was akin to pulling out its roots!

"Are you intending to force me to fight you?"

The old man took two steps forward and looked extremely stern.

"Grandfather Wuhun, no..."

Behind him, a small girl appeared and shouted, but was held back by the other female disciples.

"Oh, so you're the last surviving Five Ghosts Sect Death Gate Elder!"

Fang Yuan continued mocking him. "So? Do you want to fight me?"

"I have no intention to bully anyone, I am only retaliating in self-defence..."

Gui Wuhun looked at the increasing number of martial artists surrounding and sighed.

"Keke... Are you seeing this? My brother's robbery is so stylish!"

Among the crowd, Wang Fugui patted his chest honourably.

"It seems that those people are not admiring us, but looking down on us..."

As he scanned the crowd, his eyes glittered. "I think I spotted a few enemies of ours!"

"Mm? Where?"

Wang Fugui swung his axe. "Haha... My axe is thirsty. Don't run, have a taste of my axe!"

...

Gui Wuhun focused and seemed to be oblivious to the surroundings. He focused his strength in his arms and released it out, as though he had marked out territory, and engulfed the young man opposite him.

'The rebirth of the Five Ghosts Sect shall begin from this fight!'

The scene where all the disciples escaped after the sect was destroyed kept replaying in his mind.

This enraged him, making him push his strength to the limits. This nearly allowed him to break through to the 4 Heavenly Gates bottleneck!

Even though his opponent was an expert in inner force, he had the confidence to end this battle swiftly.

"Elder Wuhun is impressive!"

Many Five Ghosts Sect disciples bowed in respect as they witnessed this scene.

The anger and desolateness that all of them had experienced were all let out; they needed a victory to rebuild their confidence in the sect.

"Good!"

Fang Yuan clapped his hands.

It was extremely favourable to the opponent. Even if Gui Wuhun was facing off a [Martial Artist (9th Gate)], he might be able to defeat him and claim victory.

But Fang Yuan was different!

He was never close to a [Martial Artist (9th Gate)], and would only disappoint Gui Wuhun.

"What's wrong?"

Gui Wuhun adopted his stance but realised that the young man did not move at all, which made him doubtful.

By allowing his opponent to focus his strength, Fang Yuan was either a fool or extremely confident!

Just this simple thought made Gui Wuhun feel uneasy.

Even a 4 Heavenly Gate martial artist would respond!

"He!"

He had no means to escape!

As his energy was focused to the limits, he could feel his veins almost exploding with energy. Gui Wuhun struck out his palm, forming a ghostly shadow towards Fang Yuan!

"Five Yin Hand!"

Gui Wuhun pushed his Xuan Yin Heart Technique to its limits, stretched his arm out and struck his claw down, disrupting the Yin energy as a swirl appeared in the middle of his palm.

This claw focused all the strength he could have ever mustered in his entire life. The moment he struck out, he had the mentality of 'this would be the strongest claw I could have ever struck in my lifetime'.

Not just the Five Ghosts Sect disciples, but the surrounding martial artists were all in awe. Even Wang Fuhui slowed down and took a glance at the fight.

"Kacha!"

A shadow flashed by, bringing with it wind and sand.

As the fight was about to reach the climax, the layer of energy surrounding the both of them disappeared, revealing the normal ground.

Fang Yuan remained composed and stood still.

Gui Wuhun maintained his stance. He struck at a small pit on the ground, and his face went pale.

"Grandfather Wuhun!"

The small girl shrugged away and ran into the middle of the battlefield, with tears in her eyes. "Stop fighting!"

"Pu!"

Seeing the small girl running towards him, Gui Wusheng spat out another mouth of blood.

"Elder?"

The Five Ghosts Sect disciples rushed towards him.

How did the godly Gui Wusheng lose?

Not just by one move, but mysteriously as well, confusing them.

"No worries... Just some blood clots, I will be much better after spitting it out!"

Gui Wuhun pulled the little girl towards him and became serious. Suddenly, he greeted Fang Yuan and bowed. "Are you Sect Master Fang from Qinghe County, secluded valley?"

He could not think of another Wu Zong as young as him.

His heart was bitter.

If he knew who Fang Yuan was from the beginning, he would not have initiated the fight from the start.

"Fang Yuan?"

"Qinghe Doctor?"

"Sect Master of two sects?"

"Such a young man, making everybody else ashamed of themselves!"

...

A person's name was like a tree's shadow.

Everyone knew of Fang Yuan's name in the entire Secluded Mountain Prefecture.

But not everyone saw him in person before, which led to this fight.

"That is me. Do you have anything else to say, Gui Wuhun?"

Fang Yuan nodded his head."

"Haha..."

Among the crowd, Wang Fugui laughed hysterically, looked at Fang Yuan, and boasted quietly. "Did you see that... that is my brother! I've seen his potential the first time we met, and we have become sworn brothers since..."

"You are wise!"

Suddenly, they seemed to look up to Wang Fugui.

...

"Since sect master is here personally, what else can I say? The Five Ghost Sect is at your disposal!"

Gui Wuhun gave in and used his strict face to stop those disciples who were still angry.

He knew that if he did not make the correct decision, Fang Yuan could easily wipe out the entire Five Ghosts Sect.

This was all the sect had left, so how could he let everything here be wiped out?

"Very well!"

Fang Yuan approached the entrance of the martial arts centre. "Give me all your secret records. I will stay here for a few days!"

"We will accede to your request!"

Gui Wuhun bowed. "Let out the finest room in our centre for Sect Master Fang to rest... All our disciples will have to greet Sect Master Fang from now onwards, and are to be respectful towards him!"

"..."

There was silence among the Five Ghosts Sect disciples. A moment ago there were angry and were not willing to give in, and now there were expected to become obedient servants. It was really a test of their minds.

A few who adapted quickly already started to fawn upon Fang Yuan. "It is our Sect's honour for Sect Master Fang to see our secret collection. Please enter and enjoy some tea!"

"Mm..."

Fang Yuan gave Wang Fugui a 'Do anything you please' look, and entered the martial arts centre.

Gui Wuhun followed him closely, carrying the little girl and looking troubled.

"This girl... What's her name?"

Fang Yuan asked as he continued walking.

"This..."

Gui Wuhun hesitated for a moment, then replied. "His name is Little Xia, the daughter of my friend!"

"Indeed a friend!"

Fang Yuan turned around, looked at Gui Wuhun, and remained silent.

The energy of this little girl reminded him of the Five Ghosts Sect Sect Master.

Never would he have thought that such a rough brute could have such a cute and delicate daughter.

Furthermore, there seemed to be an unknown secret in the Five Ghosts Sect.

The other disciples seemed to be clueless about it.

...

"Master?"

Outside the martial arts centre, the other martial artists have dispersed, leaving Wang Fugui and company behind.

"Why did the sect master enter and leave us here?"

"Did we not come here to destroy their place? Why did it become like this?"

They were all clueless and looked at one another. They all had the same thought. "Did master anger Fang Yuan?"

Wang Fugui was sorrowful, and his heart was pounding.

He forced himself to look composed. "Brother... He has his own ways of doing things, what do you guys know about? Hurry up and follow me to destroy the Big River Faction!"

His confusing words indeed confused them, as though he meant that 'there is someone above us'. All of them straightened their backs and followed Wang Fugui with much pride, as they made their way to destroy the Big River Faction.

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 139: The Secret Mansion

"So I see, it's the Xuan Yin Heart Technique!"

Back in the temporary headquarters of the Five Ghosts Sect.

Since Fang Yuan had displayed exemplary martial art, all his requests were strictly acceded to by Gui Wuhun. Even if Fang Yuan had wanted to know the last mystery behind the technique, Gui Wuhun didn't dare to disobey.

"Previously, the Xuan Yin Heart Technique from Elder Han only comprises of the 12 Gates and the method to break through Wu Zong. However, that was not the real version.....The secret was only made known to the oldest sect master and the inherited elder."

When Fang Yuan had taken the Xuan Yin Heart Technique from Elder Han, Fang Yuan didn't trust him and even found some problems with this technique when he was practising it in the dream world. It looked like he was correct about the defect of the technique.

"After the 4 Heavenly Gates, the version of the Xuan Yin Heart Technique I have with me is different from the real one. The version I have is evil in nature and.....the Miniature Elemental Force I have trained will be restrained when it meets the real version. This is a secret method used by the Five Ghosts Sect to control many elders and disciples!"

The real version of the technique was passed down by ear and mouth.

Luckily, Gui Wuhun was the elder who had inherited it and Fang Yuan was then able to get the mystery behind this technique.

"This technique should not be called the Xuan Yin Heart Technique, it should be renamed as.....Xuan Yin Body Refining Spell! A martial artist who has reached the peak of the 12th Gate can use this spell to refine his or her body to become the Xuan Yin Metal Body. The power obtained will be similar to a Wu Zong with elemental force!"

Of course, the Five Ghosts Sect didn't have any martial artists who were at the peak of the 12th Gate previously. Or else, the situation would have been different if there was a Xuan Yin Metal Body cultivated by the Five Ghosts Sect.

"This martial art.....is a type of spiritual spell previously. It is then changed by someone into a heart technique and the person has managed to design such a marvellous control technique. That person is indeed a talented one!"

After pondering for quite a while, Fang Yuan sighed.

Luckily he avoided the evil pathway even though he had read through the content regarding the Xuan Yin Body Refining Spell. He had pushed for the strengthening of his Yin from his Eagle Claw Iron Skin Technique and managed to avoid that dangerous stage.

Currently, as he had gotten the full inherited copy of the Xuan Yin Body Refining Spell, with the exception of perfecting his Eagle Claw Iron Skin Technique with a few spiritual spells, there was no other use to it.

However, the Five Ghost Sect Master's recordings and notes which were kept by the inherited elder shocked Fang Yuan a little.

"From the description, his ancestor has great magical power....."

Fang Yuan read one of the pages and shook his head.

Even though the recordings were recorded based on someone else's account and there could be some mistakes here and there, most of the content should be accurate.

"It was said that this ancestor had such great magical powers that the techniques he had passed on were shocking. The requirements were very high and even his three greatest disciples were not able to fully inherit them. As time passed, the techniques were lost but the Xuan Yin Body Refining Spell became well known and that was what made the Five Ghosts Sect special!"

"Unfortunately, there were originally 3 pieces of treasure maps. 2 of them are in the Xia Country and had been taken away by the Five Ghosts Sect Master. The last one was missing and had probably ended up in a foreign country already....."

Fang Yuan rubbed his forehead as he had a little headache.

If the last piece was in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture or even somewhere in the Xia Country, there was still hope even though it would be very hard to find the last piece. Anyway, he wouldn't have to look for it personally as he had his men to do it.

However, if the last piece really ended up in the hands of a foreign power, the consequences would be very serious.

"Hoo....."

As he placed the last scroll back onto the bookshelf, Fang Yuan got up and stretched himself. "Maybe I should put that matter aside first and focus on Lu Renjia's secret mansion....."

He was looking forward to examine the condition of the place that alchemy master was living in.

Fang Yuan was currently in a small room with the doors shut. No light could enter the room and the only light source was from the table lamp.

In the whole of the martial arts centre, this place was guarded the heaviest. After all, the last inheritance of the Five Ghosts Sect was stored here.

"Did you manage to find anything, Sir?"

At that moment, when Fang Yuan walked out of the study room, he met Elder Gui Wuhun who asked him with much respect.

"I did!"

Fang Yuan nodded his head.

"We are honoured to have been able to help you!"

Gui Wuhun smiled till his eyebrows were almost joined together like an old chrysanthemum and continued, "The governor of Lieyang County know that you are here and he is here to visit you. He is waiting in the guest hall....."

He looked at Fang Yuan with a look of anticipation.

If Fang Yuan had followed his own intention, he would have rejected to see the governor.

However, since he had just troubled Gui Wuhun to look through the secret manuals and now Gui Wuhun only needed him to show his face to the governor, this was just a small request and Fang Yuan felt that it was rude to reject. Hence, he replied, "No problem, please lead the way!"

"Yes, Sir!"

Gui Wuhun was overjoyed.

He was old and experienced. Hence, he knew how influential the governor of Lieyang County was, but he had the intention to sow discord. Without hesitation, he wanted to help the sect to establish a good rapport with Fang Yuan.

Also, Fang Yuan was already right at the doorstep.

With the current position Fang Yuan had in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, Fang Yuan would not have to say a word. With him, the life of the Five Ghosts Sect in Lieyang County would be way better than before.

.....

Three days later, in the Melting Sun Peak.

This place was the most famous landmark in the Lieyang County, but the name sounded fierce!

The Melting Sun Peak was filled with fire. Hence, within the 6300-yard radius, there were no plants grown there.

Also, the fire gave out poisonous gas and normal human beings would die from breathing in the gas!

Hence, this place was very good for mining but not many dared to risk their lives to come here and mine. The place was therefore kept in its original state.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

At that moment, a shadow of a black eagle was hovering over the Melting Sun Peak and was letting out a high-pitched chirp.

"Keep going, don't stop!"

On the back of the eagle, there was a person and it was Fang Yuan, who had come here to look for the secret mansion of Lu Renjia!

He rode the Iron-tailed Black Eagle and circled around the vicinity for a few times. His eyes then glittered. "This is the place. Land there!"

"Chirp!"

The eagle flapped its wings and a big gust of wind blew away the poisonous gas.

Even if the poisonous gas was 10 times stronger, the gas would not be able to poison Fang Yuan and the Iron-tailed Black Eagle.

"Lu Renjia had been travelling a lot since young and had stayed in Lieyang County for quite some time already. He even managed to build a secret mansion just in case he was in trouble....Unfortunately, it was useless!"

Fang Yuan, who had managed to obtain the memory from Ling Yin, had no difficulty in locating the secret mansion.

He would reach the mansion after passing by a giant lava lake.

"According to the map, at the edge of the lake, the entrance to the mansion will be right above the wall of a cliff....."

Fang Yuan found the cliff and touched it.

The rock here felt different from those elsewhere. The rock here was a little warm.

Also, there was the presence of vegetation here.

There were vines that were red in colour and were very tough. The vines had sharp thorns and they grew over half of the wall of the cliff. It looked scary to many people.

"This place is really well hidden!"

As he released some of his magical energy, he didn't manage to find anything. Fang Yuan then knew that Lu Renjia had an extra setup. He then sighed lightly. His foot tapped on the raised rocks lightly and his whole body rose like a cloud.

His lightness skill was very good and he was able to jump up by a few yards to the middle section of the cliff.

"3 pieces of raised rock to form a finished shape. This is the place!"

When he saw the exact symbol here, which was like the one in the secret manual, he felt happy and grabbed the wall with his fingers.

"Chi! Chi!"

How powerful was his Eagle Claw Technique? These vines were very sharp, but with his fingers slaying through, the vines then broke and a small platform was revealed.

The platform was very small and could only fit one person.

Fang Yuan went on top and saw a red coloured moss above the cliff. It looked strange and Fang Yuan went up to have a look. However, he couldn't find anything useful and it was as if he had been obstructed.

"Good stuff!"

His eyes glittered and said, "Even though this moss is not really spiritual in nature, it was special still. I'm not sure whether this can be relocated to somewhere else...."

Such spiritual object was grown here likely because of the unique environment. Even though Fang Yuan had the intention to relocate this plant, he had no confidence in doing so.

Then, there was an echo after he hit the wall of the cliff. He figured out for a while and managed to find the mechanism behind it.

"Kacha!"

With a loud noise, the dust from the rocks came down and the wall, which was right in front of Fang Yuan, had started to move and it revealed a tunnel. The end of the tunnel seemed to have a red light shining brightly.

"Hoo! Hoo!"

A light breeze came through the tunnel and the ventilation of the air suggested that there were other tunnels connected as well. There was no bad air.

"Interesting! This is interesting!"

Fang Yuan was bold. Plus, this place was built as a backup place for Lu Renjia, hence it would not be built in such a way that would endanger the lives of Lu Renjia himself and his disciples. Hence, the place was not dangerous and Fang Yuan went straight in.

Not long after, he reached the end of the tunnel and there was a strange alchemy room right in front of Fang Yuan.

"This is....."

What he saw was a cave that was not small. Beside the cave, there was a small magma lake and it was boiling hot.

In the magma, there was a huge alchemy furnace and the surface of it had many lines. The material of it seemed to be gold or rock and the colour was dull. There were many red lines moving vibrating as well.

"An alchemy furnace that is using the underground fire? This is indeed a good place to practise alchemy!"

Fang Yuan sighed upon seeing that.

If this room was discovered by Huang Fu Renhe, he would probably not leave this room ever once he entered it.

After all, when one is practising alchemy, it would be much more convenient with the help of the underground fire.

Other than the alchemy furnace, there were a few cupboards beside the cave and they were metallic. The jade bottles that were placed in these cupboards would bring coldness to whoever who touched them.

"If one wants to store the medicinal pills here, the pills will need to be stored in a special place. This person is indeed rich as he is using Cold Jade Bottles to store the pills....."

Fang Yuan sighed with envy and now he knew how rich this alchemy master was.

He was very happy as he counted the number of things he could get this time that were of great value.

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 140: Level 5

"Elemental Gaining Pill, A pill to replenish elemental force and strengthen the body..."

"Calming Pill, to clear one's mind and be at peace..."

"Muscle Building Pill, bones and muscles will heal wounds within seven days..."

The entire shelf was filled with jade bottles, and beneath every bottle, there was a label describing the pill's name and usage, which overwhelmed Fang Yuan with information.

For Lu Renjia to keep all these here, they must all be spiritual pills made from spiritual ingredients, and all had spiritual abilities.

Normal martial artists would fight to their deaths just to get their hands on any one of these pills.

Of course, at his level, not many spiritual pills would have an effect on him.

Fang Yuan scavenged the shelves, and could only find 3 bottles which might be useful to him.

“There are 10 pills in the bottle of Elemental Gaining Pill, 5 pills in the bottle of Calming Pill, and 18 pills in the Muscle Building Pill!”

Fang Yuan tossed the bottle in his hand. “There are only two types of pills here which will aid my cultivation, I wonder if I will improve in my cultivation after swallowing all of it at once?”

Thinking about how Liu Yan took over half of Lu Renjia’s assets and used them to break through to his current state of cultivation, Fang Yuan wanted to try it out as well.

“The wealth of an alchemy master is ridiculous...”

After accounting his pills, Fang Yuan let out a long sigh and as he admired Lu Renjia’s assets.

Of course, not all the pills on the shelf were spiritual pills. Half of them were normal ingredients, water and some money.

When Lu Renjia was preparing this secret mansion, he had already thought of all the circumstances in which he would come here to hide, and therefore prepared for it already.

“There are about 10,000 taels of silver here. Including the valuable resources here, he can get back on his feet wherever he might run to...”

Fang Yuan flipped the bottom of the shelf and dragged out two large jade boxes.

Opening one of them revealed a purple animal hide, with purple scales as large as eyes, glittering. It would strike fear in whoever laid their eyes on it.”

“High-grade spiritual beast’s hide?”

He touched his chin and tried to feel the energy from the beast’s hide. “I’m afraid the animal is of Wu Zong level when it was alive!”

It was not easy to tame a spiritual beast.

It was even more so for a spiritual beast of Wu Zong level. Even if Lu Renjia personally tried, he could only get some valuable ingredients from it.

However, it was still an extremely valuable item.

Fang Yuan held the hide in his hands, pulled it and was rather satisfied with its hardness. If he directly wore it over his body like a cape, it would still be stronger than any normal armour, and might even have a considerable defence against spiritual spells.

“A pity I am not an alchemy master. Otherwise, I will be able to use it as a material to make a strong armour... By keeping this, Lu Renjia should also have the same intention...”

After much thought, Fang Yuan opened the second jade box.

At that moment, his eyes were filled with a baby green colour.

In such a big jade box, half of it was filled with crystal clear liquid, like liquid lead and mercury. There was a green glitter from the middle, as though it had a mind of its own.

“Spiritual seed?”

Fang Yuan carefully removed the green colour from the middle and realised that it was a green crystal. In the middle of the green crystal was a jet-black seed that was not obvious to the naked eye. The green glitter seemed to have seeped out from the crystal.

“This crystal is a form of seal, and together with the liquid, is able to preserve the life of any plant...”

Fang Yuan made a guess and explained to himself.

Like the jade bottles, there was a description under both jade boxes; they seemed to be have been prepared for Ling Yin.

“Star-eyed Leopard hide... Who knew that such treasures exist in Xia Country, and where did Lu Renjia find this?”

Lu Renjia directly described the origins of the purple hide. It was from a treasured mutated beast and was a good material for armours. It had increased defence capabilities against spiritual spells.

As for the other jade box, the origins of the spiritual seed was not as clear. The only thing mentioned was that this unknown spiritual seed had a strong will to live, but a pity that it was hard for it to germinate.

“Spiritual seed?”

Fang Yuan sighed. “Only one such seed and it is able to display so many traits, could it be from the Heavens?”

Spiritual objects were classified into the four grades namely Heaven Grade, Earth Grade, Mystery Grade and Yellow Grade. It was easy to obtain spiritual objects of Mystery Grade and Yellow Grade, but it all depended on luck for one to find a Heaven Grade or Earth Grade spiritual object. In the history of Xia country, these spiritual objects only appear once in a few hundred years, and are nicknamed the deity plants!

Maybe spiritual plants of Heaven Grade only appeared in the Da Qian Empire.

“Eh?”

Suddenly Fang Yuan’s expression changed!

This was because the green-glowing crystal in his hands suddenly flashed, and as the liquid inside it started to swirl, it appeared as though it was about to melt.

“How is this possible... Why is the seal melting so quickly?”

Fang Yuan frowned. He noticed the normal-looking seed within it started to glow yellow, and he could feel energy emitting from it.

“This is...”

He was familiar with this scene. Regardless if it was his first time planting the Vermilion Jade Rice, or the germination of the Vermilion Fruit, this yellow glow would always appear as the breakthrough for his [Botany]!

“It is indeed you...”

Fang Yuan brought his stats window out and noticed that the ‘4’ behind his fully filled experience bar jumped. It broke through the bottleneck and became Level 5!

[Botany (Level 5)]!

“Even though it did not germinate, I could still experience a breakthrough in my [Botany] just by coming in contact with its energy?”

Fang Yuan looked at the seed which appeared normal once again, shocked. “This is not possible if it is an Earth Grade seed... Could it be... Heaven Grade? How did this treasure lie in Lu Renjia’s hands?”

It was a pity that he did not have the chance to access Lu Renjia’s dream to unveil this secret.

Based on his prediction, Lu Renjia only knew that this seed was valuable, but did not know its real value!

“Value!”

After recovering from his shock, Fang Yuan was overjoyed. “With the breakthrough in my [Botany], even if I get nothing from this journey, it would still be worth it!”

He only said this after noticing the description of his [Botany (Level 5)]:

“[Botany (Level 5)] – You are a grandmaster in the world of botany! All plants that go through your hands will evolve special traits, and their maturity period will also be shortened!”

This ability of his was rather god-like.

After this tip, Fang Yuan immediately thought of the Vermilion Fruit back at home.

With spiritual fertilizer, spiritual land and his own abilities, it was possible to mature the Vermilion Fruit’s shoot.

“Great, this is great!”

Fang Yuan nodded his head, and looked at his stats window:

“Name: Fang Yuan

Essence: 11

Spirit: 11

Magic: 9.5

Profession: Dream Master

Cultivation: [Dream-Building Master (High Elemental Gathering Stage)], Wu Zong

Technique: [Eagle Claw Iron Skin Technique (Grade 13) (???)], Ecstasy Spell, Shadowstep

Skill: [Medicine (Level 3)], [Botany (Level 5)]”

Consuming the Flame Jade Rice, cultivating the way of a dream master and this breakthrough now all led to the big change in his stats window.

“In the future, Xia Country will be in a mess. To hold my ground, I need to have real strength and ability!”

Fang Yuan clenched his fist, full of anticipation.

...

Summer Sun Prefecture.

As Fang Yuan was visiting Lu Renjia’s secret mansion, a devastating thing happened in Summer Sun Prefecture.

Because of complacency, the Summer Sun Prefecture’s three cities were invaded in one day as the Prefecture Master’s power was at stake.

The sunset was red as blood.

In a faraway city, there was chaos as people were fighting.

Waves of uniformed Secluded Mountain Prefecture soldiers were killing their way in but were made to halt by the arrow rain, which made them eventually retreat back embarrassingly.

“Prefecture Master!”

In front of the capital leaders, Xiang Zilong’s eyes were bloodshot as he knelt in front of Liu Yan. “Why not take a rest here for the night! We can surely take down Huangshi City tomorrow!”

“Hmph, a bunch of useless fools!”

Liu Yan was clad in golden armour as he witnessed the Secluded Mountain Prefecture soldiers being pierced by the arrows, as he exclaimed.

“I made an effort to leave the inexperienced soldiers to defend at the counties, and brought the experienced ones here, and yet we still need so much effort to invade a district town!”

His eyebrows were twitching, showing his anger.

“A Wu Zong is now in charge of Huangshi City, and is therefore different from last time! Furthermore... Our troops have taken down three cities already, and are all worn out... I deserve to die!”

Xiang Zilong tried to explain, and as he looked at Liu Yan’s eye, he shivered and apologised.

“Keke... Don’t worry, Prefecture Master!”

Taoist Mu Li, who was at one side, chuckled. “Our army is tired, and the enemy’s arrows are almost used up. Later, I shall aid our soldiers to take down this city!”

“Chirp! Chirp!”

After finishing his sentence, he leapt on the Wind Chasing Falcon and disappeared.

Not long after, a green spiritual light appeared from the city walls, accompanying a certain Wu Zong’s rage.

Seeing this opportunity, the Secluded Mountain Prefecture soldiers tried to attack once more and finally opened the city gates. Everyone squeezed in and brought the fight to the alleys.

“Very well, since the enemy is stupid, pass the order down to burn down the entire city!”

Liu Yan witnessed this scene and passed down the order.

“What?”

Xiang Zilong was shocked. “Prefecture Master, please reconsider. The common people are innocent...

“Hmph! This entire city’s people are all rebels and are against me, and I shall treat all of them the same!”

Liu Yan snickered. “If I don’t do this, how do I strike fear in the enemy? I am decided, so stop trying to make me reconsider!”

He not only ordered to burn the city but also personally joined in. In the city, the nine green fire dragons were flying about, and thick smoke filled the sky; the entire city became hell.

“If you hate me, come fight me!”

Seeing the entire city becoming like hell, Liu Yan remained emotionless. He held a blood-coloured jade in his right hand. “For me to break through, this sin is nothing!”