

## Daily Life 1041

### Chapter 1041: Sinner

Father Zheng's question resonated powerfully.

No one expected that the magic treasure plagiarism case which had shaken the whole nation three years ago would actually be laid bare here — Father Zheng was holding an auditorium of university students hostage, and the event was being live streamed online, which drew even more attention.

The cultivation police station tried to block the news, but it was already too late — through the efforts of a single person, Daoist Guang, it had already spread all over the whole globe, becoming an event which the whole world was following closely.

As the number one live streamer, Daoist Guang had a huge number of Light Chasers behind him.

Of course, Daoist Guang had chosen to live stream this incident not only because Wang Ling had secretly talked to him about it, but also because Daoist Guang himself wanted more people to know the truth of this case and reflect on it.

Student Zheng Jingxuan hadn't been able to bear the strange looks and had died an unjust death under the public's condemnation; he had chosen suicide as a way to preserve his last dignity.

"If you've never experienced it yourself personally, please don't be so quick to judge others or a situation," Daoist Guang said to everyone watching in the live stream room.

What had really killed Student Zheng Jingxuan wasn't the "plagiarism case" itself, but the reflection of human nature that had followed.

It could be said that it was the online users — who hadn't pondered the incident nor carried out further investigation, who had just been carried away with the trend — who had pushed Student Zheng Jingxuan into the true abyss.

The entire auditorium was lost in silence after Father Zheng voiced the possibility that Liu Yi was a criminal. The latter had yet to appear, but Father Zheng knew very well that Liu Yi was here, lurking in the dark as he pondered his countermove.

All these years, Liu Yi had remained in the background and used work he had stolen to package himself as a talent in the eyes of the people. If he rashly came out now, his esteemed reputation and accomplishments would all disappear.

Father Zheng was waiting for Liu Yi to step forward and admit his mistakes of his own accord.

But it was clear that a person whose fame had gone to his head wouldn't show himself so easily.

“Student Liu Yi, I know you're already here. Even if you aren't willing to admit it, what I said was true.” Father Zheng stood with his hands behind his back and a composed expression on his face, without any sign of nervousness nor fluster.

Father Zheng smiled bitterly. “To be honest, Liu Yi, I don't blame you — I won't blame someone without any talent. When Jingxuan was still alive, I had always been against him going into the field of magic treasure design; the waters in this industry are too deep, and I was worried that he would fall in sooner or later. But Liu Yi, your appearance at least confirmed that Jingxuan was a genius, didn't it?”

Father Zheng looked up at the ceiling and heaved a sigh. “After this plagiarism incident, Jingxuan once talked to me about how the people around him treated him differently. Before the case, he was the center of attention at school, but after, he was treated with disdain and censure wherever he went. Even his closest friends started to keep their distance.

“To the students from his batch, who watched Jingxuan walk step by step into the abyss, who never once gave him a helping hand — looking at this case again, how do you feel now, I wonder? It was the violence he experienced at your hands, and the irresponsible opinions online, that thoroughly pushed Jingxuan into the abyss.”

Everyone was silent.

Principal Zhou Dongye's expression had become exceedingly unsightly.

The cold shoulder was also a type of school violence. As principal, he couldn't avoid shouldering this blame.

At the same time, Principal Zhou felt a little scared.

He was scared that the truth from back then would really be turned on its head.

Even less had he expected that his own "impartial and incorruptible" philosophy would actually harm his own student. Principal Zhou dropped to his knees in distress, his heart slowly crushed by Father Zheng's words.

But this wasn't the outcome that Father Zheng wanted.

"Student Liu Yi, I'm waiting for you here. If you still have a conscience, please come forward yourself." Father Zheng stood on the podium in the auditorium, like a priest who was praying — never had he hoped more than in that moment for that person to come forward himself.

He knew very well that his son Zheng Jingxuan was already dead; there was no point in mourning him or trying to bring him back to life. The only thing Father Zheng wanted was an apology.

So that, at least, his son's soul could forever rest in peace.

After waiting for another five minutes, Father Zheng's countenance gradually turned heavy; it looked like it really was futile to hope for a wicked sinner to apologize.

Whether it was the homicidal maniac who killed an innocent female university student abroad, or the shameless pervert who laid his hands on little kids, they were twisted characters who justified their despicable behavior with the shameless belief that the world owed them. It was precisely because of this that they never truly repented — their deep-seated belief was that this was nothing more than their compensation from Heaven.

Father Zheng had always felt that this sort of scum of society shouldn't have their faces pixelated in the news. Instead, their repulsive behavior should be laid bare so that the world could clearly see their twisted appearances.

Father Zheng initially just wanted to expose the truth of the matter. He didn't want to hurt anyone, not even Liu Yi. He needed Liu Yi to repent and turn himself in. But now, if he wanted Liu Yi to be brought to justice, Father Zheng felt that unless he used slightly unusual means, it would be very hard to expose the truth.

...

On the other side, Gao Tian had already ordered the intelligence department to acquire all the latest information on Father Zheng, but a lot of it was old news.

After Zheng Jingxuan's death, Father Zheng disappeared, and cut off contact with his family for a time. He was placed on a missing persons list as early as two years ago.

But the information was still quite helpful to Gao Tian; at least, it helped him gain a better understanding of Father Zheng.

"Find anything new?" Little Silver asked at his side.

"Nothing special." Gao Tian examined the information on Zheng Tianqiang. Father Zheng was a Songhai local, who grew up and went to university in the city.

There didn't seem to be any problems with the information, but when he looked at the box for the realm registered, Gao Tian frowned deeply.

"Golden Core stage?" Gao Tian found it suspicious.

Judging by Father Zheng's aura, his realm was at the Nascent Soul stage at the very least...

He wasn't a descendant of Mysterious Saint Tyrant Song 1 ... so how had his realm improved so quickly in the span of three years?

Chapter 1042: Abnormal Realm Growth

Modern cultivation society was not short of serendipitous encounters, and many cultivators were able to improve their realms in a short period of time after chancing upon various types of opportunities. This sort of improvement wasn't considered too unusual. Moreover, there was a frequent trend toward minor advancements in realms. In the Cultivation Encyclopedia, there was a special term for this sort of minor improvement in a short period of time: minor ascension.

But Father Zheng's situation was clearly different. Such a huge leap in realm was usually unavoidably linked to illicit drugs or forbidden spells.

"This an abnormal growth rate for his realm. How can anyone improve this fast? This isn't a novel..." Gao Tian stared at the report and began to reexamine the incident in his mind. Zheng Jingxuan's dad hadn't harmed any of the hostages yet, but either way, taking them prisoner was already a crime.

Just like some criminals, who might put a knife to a person's neck, but in fact didn't dare hurt them at all. Killing was a severe crime, and these criminals didn't dare take risks so easily. Unless they were forced to do so, a hostage-taker usually wouldn't harm the hostage, as this would be going overboard.

And to protect the hostage, the police would do whatever they could to accommodate the criminal's demands in order to lower the latter's guard in a rescue situation.

However, there was one exception to this rule, which was a special regulation which the cultivation police had for abduction cases and hostage situations.

"What's wrong with abnormal realm growth?" Little Silver asked, puzzled.

He didn't really understand the situation. After all, he had seen for himself how heaven-defying his Master Wang Ling was... At the beginning, Wang Ling's realm advanced at a rate of one level every two years. Now, it was growing at an ever increasing rate, with the intervals between realm advancements getting shorter and shorter.

Little Silver knew very well that because of this, his Master was looking for a way to perfectly control his strength. Of course, Wang Ling and Father Zheng were in slightly different situations. Wang Ling's growth was natural, while Gao Tian believed that Father Zheng might have cultivated some forbidden spell or taken some illicit drug.

“It’s over.” Gao Tian broke out in a cold sweat as he stared at the report. “If this goes on, there is a high chance that Father Zheng will be killed on site under the special regulation.”

“Is rapid realm growth against the law?” Loopy Toad asked.

“A rapid increase isn’t against the law, but it’s dangerous when coupled with a hazardous move like taking hostages.” Gao Tian’s expression turned heavy. He explained to Little Silver and Loopy Toad, “There is a 95% chance that an abnormal growth rate is the result of using illicit drugs or forbidden spells. The reason they are included in a list of prohibitions is that they severely endanger a cultivator’s body and even the mind after cultivation. If you cultivate forbidden spells to deliberate harm others, you’ll definitely be convicted.

“In our world, even the mentally ill who break the law are held accountable! In addition, their families are also implicated. If family members don’t carry out the proper supervisory obligations, they will also be charged.”

Gao Tian explained the current situation.

In short, it didn’t look optimistic. Whether it was taking illicit drugs or using forbidden spells, there was no guarantee that a cultivator could preserve a stable mental state after trying either method. What Gao Tian was now most worried about was that the upper levels would notice the abnormal leap in realms in the data, and directly take charge across the distance to forcefully attack and kill Father Zheng... At that point, the situation would definitely become an utter mess, and the truth of the case from three years ago might be buried in the chaos once more, leaving things unsettled.

Whether it was the hostages getting injured or Father Zheng being prevented from revealing the truth, Gao Tian didn’t want to see either of these happen.

Elsewhere, in the Cultivation Police Bureau head office, Chief Zhao smacked the top of a table. “Tell me! What the hell is the situation now?! Why hasn’t the Immortal Arts Mobile Squadron made a move? What the hell are they doing? A murderer has taken hostages inside. His realm’s growth rate is so abnormal, something is clearly wrong! If his mind becomes unstable from using forbidden spells or drugs and he hurts the hostages, who can bear that responsibility?!”

The assistant wiped his sweat, and said placatingly on the side, “Don’t be angry, chief... Right now, most of the attention online is focused on that case from three years ago. The suspect, Zheng Tianqiang, hasn’t hurt the hostages, and it may cause a public outcry if we act against him.”

“Sorry, I was being overbearing. I apologize first. But we’re under a lot of pressure from above with this case, and I want it solved as soon as possible.” Chief Zhao rubbed his forehead and took a deep breath. “Who’s in charge of this case?”

“Officer Gao Tian. He was promoted recently; Chief Zhao, you signed off on it...”

“Oh, him. I remember him.” Chief Zhao nodded. “Comrade Gao Tian has been doing a good job. If he’s in charge at the scene, then I can relax a little.”

“There shouldn’t be any problems. Furthermore, Group Leader Little Silver from the Office of Strategic Deception is also there. Group Leader Little Silver has quite a high realm. With his assistance, it’ll be double insurance.”

“A group leader from the Office of Strategic Deception is also there? That’s reassuring.” Hearing this, Chief Zhao was instantly relieved. He gripped the cup in front of him and slowly blew on it before drinking a mouthful of tea.

“Oh, that’s right, Chief Zhao, I just received news that Director Odd Zhuo is on his way there.”

” Pu... ” Zhao Ju sprayed a mouthful of tea on the assistant’s face in front of him. “Why is he going over?”

“I heard he was in the area. Director Zhuo is also the group leader of the Office of Strategic Deception’s supervisory and investigation team. This is probably triple insurance!”

Chief Zhao: “...” What f\*\*\*king triple insurance!

“Chief... you don’t look so good. Do you have a problem with Director Zhuo?” After speaking, the assistant sensed he had said something wrong, and hurriedly shut his mouth.

Chief Zhao glanced at the little assistant. “Let me ask you, who caught the Old Devil a few months ago?”

“Director Zhuo...”

“And in the Immortal Mansion case?”

“Director Zhuo...”

“And Evil Sword God?”

“Still Director Zhuo...”

“Ah Zhen, I’ve been in this position for so many years. If I get one more commendation, I might be able to get a promotion. This Odd Zhuo isn’t part of the police, but he gets all the credit every time. I...” Chief Zhao rubbed his heart, feeling stifled with vexation.

“Then does Chief Zhao mean...”

“Inform the Immortal Arts Mobile Squadron: have a tenth of them keep an eye on Odd Zhuo. Remember, after he’s had a look at the scene, prompt him to leave as soon as possible...”

“Alright, Chief Zhao...”

## Chapter 1043: The Second Force

No. 60 High was already on course to be promoted to a key city high school even though the fragments of the Jade Scroll of School History were still being collected. Like every other key city high school candidate, No. 60 High had to go through the General Administration of 100 Schools’ procedure, and needed Odd Zhuo’s personal examination and approval before he signed off on the matter.

Odd Zhuo had been planning to visit the summer break school construction teams from No. 60 High and some other candidate schools today, but on his way, he received a direct call from Secretary Dakang.



“Little Zhuozi, something’s happened at Magic Treasure Development University; it seems that the Immortal Arts Mobile Squadron was deployed. A police officer called Gao Tian is handling matters at the scene. You go and take a look,” said Secretary Dakang.

“Old leader... I’m on my way right now to meet the school construction teams. Since the police are already there, it won’t make a difference if I go or not...” Odd Zhuo wiped at his sweat.

His main fear was going over, only to find that the case had already wound up and it would ineffably be chalked up to him yet again...

The Police Bureau’s Chief Zhao was already unhappy about the incidents with the Old Devil and the Master of Immortal Mansion – Odd Zhuo felt that interfering with regular police work was indeed inappropriate.

But Secretary Dakang didn’t think so. “Little Zhuozi, you’re wrong. The General Administration of 100 Schools is in charge of all schools to begin with, including universities! The Police Bureau is handling the hostage situation, but what the General Administration of 100 Schools wants to deal with is building school discipline. Most of the online public opinion about that plagiarism case from three years ago is pretty negative. You go and fix school discipline, and the Police Bureau will rescue the hostages. There’s no conflict of interest at all!”

Odd Zhuo: “...”

“We must treat these issues of school violence and academic cheating seriously and rectify them! As for that case from three years ago, I’ve already decided: you’ve been given special approval to investigate it.”

Odd Zhuo: “Already approved? I... I haven’t received the document...”

“It should be on the way.” Phone in hand, Secretary Dakang glanced at the time on his computer screen before saying to Odd Zhuo, “Little Zhuozi, you should be in your car, right?”

“That’s right, Zhong Lang is driving.” Odd Zhuo nodded.

“Wind down the window,” said Secretary Dakang.

“Alright...” Odd Zhuo followed the instruction, and just as the window went down, a document flew right into the car like a hidden weapon. Outside, a courier on a flying sword greeted Odd Zhuo elegantly. “General Director Zhuo, your express package has been delivered! Remember to give us five stars!”

Secretary Dakang: “Immortal Communication Express, Live to Deliver! Extremely reliable! There is absolutely nothing to worry about when you send a parcel with them, not like Federal Divine Express misrouting parcels 1!”

Odd Zhuo: “...”

“Alright, that’s all I have to say. We have to handle school discipline and the students’ mindset. Little Zhuozi, I know you’ve been very busy recently with the development of key city high schools and with visiting some Golden Core universities to understand the problems they’re having. Just like that case of international students being assigned three study partners each 1, you must be strict in handling this matter!”

“Yes!” Odd Zhuo nodded earnestly.

“On the road from poverty to prosperity, our nation has long become used to viewing the world fairly. Many special privileges no longer exist, and more and more, everyone is being treated equally. Isn’t it a joy to have friends from afar come? Being neither servile nor overbearing is the best form of respect!” (Taken from a comment in People’s Daily.)

Secretary Dakang sighed emotionally. “It’s not easy to rectify a school’s unhealthy practices, but as long as we have outstanding civil servants like you, I believe that these schools can surely be led toward establishing new trends! After you’re done with all this, I’ll approve leave for you myself!”

“Yes, leader! I’ll make sure to fulfil my duty!” Odd Zhuo nodded.

The old Secretary’s heartfelt and logical words were so convincing that Odd Zhuo had no way of declining this assignment. As a matter of fact, Odd Zhuo had already been following the incident at Magic Treasure Development University in the car, and had planned to go over and take a look at the situation after he was done with his work.

“Little Lang, change of plans – head for Magic Treasure Development University. It’s an assignment from the old Secretary himself,” Odd Zhuo said in the back of the car.

“Then what about the school construction teams? It’s almost time for the meeting...”

“I’ll handle the issue with Magic Treasure Development University and leave the school construction teams to you. You’ve worked under me for so long, I trust your abilities. In addition, pay more attention to the materials – don’t let them stint on the materials and skimp on the job. If anything happens, you’ll have to answer for it! I have faith in you!”

“Yes! I’ll make sure to fulfil my duty!” Zhong Lang nodded earnestly, his tone the same as the one Odd Zhuo had used when talking with the old Secretary.

...

And then... there was no then...

Zhong Lang drove Odd Zhuo to the scene, and the police officers who saw him arrive couldn’t help wiping at their cold sweat.

“You go and say it... I don’t dare... isn’t offending General Director Zhuo asking for trouble?”

“So it’s fine to offend Chief Zhao?”

“Of course not...”

“Then you go!”

“Shit, why me?!”

Odd Zhuo was looking for someone to explain what the current situation was, when a deputy team leader was pushed to the front by the other officers. “General Director Zhuo... this is a hostage situation. If you’ve come to inspect our work, we welcome you, but please don’t interfere too much.”

“How do you define interfering too much?” Odd Zhuo laughed. “Let me ask you, this hostage situation, where is it happening?”

“At a university.”

“Then what area does the General Administration of 100 Schools oversee?”

The deputy team leader: “...”

“It’s fine, I’m not stealing your job from you.” Odd Zhuo patted his shoulder. “Deputy Liu, don’t be nervous. Rescuing the hostages is your job, while mine is to investigate the case from three years ago, so there’s no conflict of interest.”

After saying that, Odd Zhuo slapped the document with the old Secretary’s signature on Deputy Liu’s chest. “This is a document personally issued by Secretary Dakang of the Alliance of Ten Thousand Schools. He wants me to thoroughly investigate the plagiarism case from three years ago. If there are no objections, I believe Chief Zhao shouldn’t have any complaints.”

“...” Deputy Team Leader Liu took the document with trembling hands, his courage in speaking out earlier completely swept away.

Odd Zhuo: “So, what’s the current situation?”

Deputy Team Leader Liu: “There hasn’t been any movement for some time... The lives of the hostages aren’t under threat for now, but the Immortal Arts Mobile Squadron is already prepared to take action. We’ve taken into consideration the abnormal improvement in the suspect’s realm, possibly from taking illicit drugs or cultivating forbidden spells, which can cause mental instability.”

“Then did he provide any new evidence for the case from three years ago?”

“Not yet so far.”

“What about the Liu Yi who was mentioned before? If Zheng Tianqiang was making empty accusations, wouldn’t Liu Yi have stepped out to refute them?”

“We’ve already sent people to look for him,” Deputy Team Leader Liu replied.

At that moment, a police officer ran over in a flurry. “Deputy Team Leader Liu, there’s a problem!”

“What now?”

“We’ve found Liu Yi! He was at home!”

“Bring him over!”

“He’s dead... He died the same way as those at the apartments...”

“Could this be... dead men tell no tales?” Odd Zhuo thought that the case was becoming more interesting.

Looking at the current situation, it was clear that apart from Father Zheng, there was a second force “working hard” because of that case from back then.

Chapter 1044: Why Are the Melon-Eating Masses Called as Such?

Liu Yi had been killed at home in the same manner as the other Magic Treasure Development University students at Divine Leisure Apartments; there were no visible signs of a break-in when they were killed. This person’s technique was formidable, and they were instant kills... Whether it was strength, motive, or manner of break-in, when all three were combined together, Father Zheng was undoubtedly the prime suspect.

The police were suppressing news of the case for now and hadn’t made it public yet because the case was really too suspicious. Almost all the key figures in the plagiarism case from three years ago were dead. If Father Zheng had killed them purely for revenge, there was no need for him to deliberately plan and organize this hostage drama at all to let everyone know about this incident from three years ago.

It would be enough for him to just kill all of his targets of revenge behind the scenes.

So, the situation now was very clear.

This was a set-up!

At the scene, Gao Tian, Little Silver and Odd Zhuo all had this same thought after hearing the news that Liu Yi had been killed.

But right now, they had no idea at all what this second party behind the scenes was.

In the auditorium, Father Zheng also broke out in a cold sweat. He had been waiting for Liu Yi to come forward of his own accord. Since Liu Yi hadn't shown any signs of repenting after a long while, Father Zheng had been prepared to activate his magic to directly grab Liu Yi on the other end of the screen and interrogate him on the spot.

In the end, when Father Zheng's spiritual senses infiltrated Liu Yi's place, he saw Liu Yi in front of the computer, already dead...

His throat had been directly cut open and the blood had sprayed onto the ceiling. Beads of blood dripped down from the scarlet ceiling non-stop; it was like a scene out of a horror movie.

Dazed, Father Zheng withdrew his spiritual senses.

Liu Yi was dead...

Just like that, the most important person in overturning the case's original verdict was gone, which was a massive blow to Father Zheng. Who on earth was it, to actually be able to stay a few steps ahead and even make a move right in front of him?

Father Zheng was a little afraid of this hidden power. It felt like a curse, as if the intangible power of a curse was thwarting his every move. If he couldn't overturn the case this time, there might not be anyone left after he went to jail who could help clear his son of this injustice that had been buried for three years.

If he wanted the matter clarified, it had to be here and now, when interest in the case was at its peak.

Everyone knew that as bystanders, online users would usually pay attention to something for only seven days. A massive incident would ferment online for a short week before it was drowned out by some new event and people ultimately lost interest in it.

Actually, the situation wasn't necessarily as pessimistic as Father Zheng had imagined, and a very important reason for this was: Odd Zhuo had come.

Odd Zhuo's arrival meant that the case would be 100% solved perfectly and would 100% be credited to Odd Zhuo.

Thanks to Father Zheng, the entire country now knew about this incident. More and more people began to pay attention to the truth of the plagiarism case from three years ago, and naturally, there were students among the melon-eating masses...

Whether it was No. 60 High's class chat groups or the private "happy (copy) study (homework)" small chat groups, they were flooded with messages about the Magic Treasure Development University incident.

Super Chen had been very depressed in the last two days after running into Old Pan when he had gone out to copy homework, but his gloom had been lifted slightly by the Magic Treasure Development University incident. Scientific research showed that when people ate melons (which in layman terms was known as gossiping), their brains would secrete a hormone called dopamine, which made them feel good and happy. It had more or less the same effect as eating sugar.

This meant that gossiping and eating sugar could make people feel happy.

As the saying went, "don't care about things that have nothing to do with you"; why were the melon-eating masses called as such? Because melons were sweet! And something that was sweet could make people happy!

"I think this injustice against Senior Zheng has to be real." Super Chen's words in the chat were surprising.

Anyone else reading the words would think nothing of it, but they made Wang Ling shudder. If he hadn't believed it before, he had to now! Super Chen's blessed mouth wasn't something he was born with, but which he had cultivated. After exploring Super Chen's memories last time, Wang Ling had a brand new awareness and understanding of this monstrous mouth...

“The witness was the key, but now the witness is gone.” Dopey Guo sighed.

“Isn’t there a Liu Yi? This Father Zheng is holding an entire auditorium hostage to intimidate Liu Yi into coming forward. As long as Liu Yi is willing to come out, everything will be fine. Unless, Liu Yi’s dead,” Super Chen added.

Wang Ling: “...”

Dopey Guo: “He really is dead...”

Super Chen: “WTF? I was just saying it casually – don’t mess around!”

Dopey Guo: “It’s true! I have an uncle at the Police Bureau who told me that Liu Yi died so miserably. Also, he died in exactly the same way as those graduates at Divine Leisure Apartments. Right now, the police’s biggest suspect is Father Zheng, since almost all the evidence and the motive point to him.”

Wang Ling was stupefied. “...”

With Super Chen’s mouth and Dopey Guo’s uncles, these two could absolutely open a detective agency. If they had been born a few decades earlier, the world wouldn’t have needed Conan...

“Ai, then things don’t look good now. I saw a lot of people analyzing it online earlier: this Liu Yi was a key person. Father Zheng was counting on Liu Yi to overturn the case. Whether Liu Yi was willing to tell the truth or not, at the very least, Father Zheng needed him alive!” Little Peanut sent a message in the group chat. “As for that Student Fu Fusheng, he doesn’t know anything at all and was manipulated by Liu Yi all along. In the end, the mastermind is dead, and there’s no one alive who can give us the truth.”

“Not necessarily,” Super Chen said suddenly. “I’m thinking there might be one possibility.”

“What is it?”



“There might have been other witnesses at the scene three years ago. And there might also have been other witnesses around when Liu Yi died,” replied Super Chen.

Wang Ling sent several question marks. “???”

“First of all, what I want to say is that I’m not referring to human witnesses. Old buildings like Divine Leisure Apartments will inevitably have cockroaches and ants, right? Maybe they saw what happened three years ago as well as when Liu Yi was killed!” Following another train of thought, Super Chen said, “I know there’s a spell for communicating with living creatures. Dopey Guo should know more about this than I do.”

Dopey Guo nodded. “There is. If you’re a high-ranking pet trainer, you can do it... Maybe we could get Teacher Wei Zhi to help out. Maybe there really is hope. But the problem is, how would we find these cockroaches or ants?”

“That’s a question for No. 59 High’s professional pest control team.”

“No. 59 High... pest control team... do you mean...”

“That’s right, it’s that bunch of cats that showed up at No. 59 High before, led by that black cat. I heard that after the spirit sword exchange meet, the black cat took the lead in destroying Shadow Stream’s headquarters. After that, they became famous and rode the momentum by starting a pest control business,” Super Chen said.

Wang Ling, Dopey Guo, and Little Peanut: “...”

Super Chen: “I heard that with that black cat as their head, their business has already expanded to cover all of Songhai’s major districts. It’s much easier for them than it is for us to find cockroaches, ants and whatnot. The most important thing is that they know how to hold back their strength. The people who hire them hate pests like cockroaches and mosquitoes to death, and many want these pests caught alive. Hence, the cats are especially careful when catching the pests. In the end, these things are handed over alive to the clients, who crush them.”

Wang Ling: “...”

Chapter 1045: Lee Zheng Tan’s Business

As Super Chen said, after the spirit sword exchange meet between No. 60 High and No. 59 High, the black cat called Zheng Tan became a cat overlord in the area, and Zheng Tan's small "independent regiment" developed into a dozen or so military divisions.

Zheng Tan had never imagined in its entire life that it would have so many troops.

With the increase in the number of cats under Zheng Tan, business naturally started to expand rapidly. Zheng Tan's pest control team was now very large; in Songhai at least, there were no longer any human firms that could compete with the cat regiment led by Black Tan – cats were innately talented at catching the quick little pests to begin with.

Zheng Tan's pest control team had now expanded overseas, and Zheng Tan even gave itself an English name: Lee Zheng Tan. It had no choice but to follow the trend in order to make foreign connections.

Of course, this was typical trade practice, but it was still fundamentally different compared with certain schools that demeaned themselves by looking for study partners for their foreign students. The business abroad didn't do as well as in the domestic market, and Lee Zheng Tan donated all the international profits toward building local Hope Primary Schools.

Nowadays, even a stray cat knew the importance of equality. There should be mutual respect between living creatures. Demeaning yourself and licking the boots of outsiders was disgraceful, even in the eyes of a stray cat.

"Mr Lee Zheng Tan, we truly admire your team." In that same tree hole outside No. 59 High, Lee Zheng Tan was in foreign business discussions with a white cat with curly fur which held out one paw. This was a breed native to Mixiu: the Curly Spirit Fairy. A native spirit cat, it was inherently endowed with keen spiritual intelligence and formidable combat ability.

But they were too attractive, so many cultivators would rather keep and feed them at home rather than let them fight, for fear that they would hurt themselves.

Thus, the Curly Spirit Fairies in Mixiu gradually lost the ability to survive in the “wild”: when they saw mice and cockroaches, they would meow in fright. Lee Zheng Tan had seen the business opportunity in this, which was why it had expanded the business abroad.

The Curly Spirit Fairy in front of Lee Zheng Tan was called Mary, who could be considered a representative of all of Mixiu’s cats as it came across the ocean to negotiate. Mary’s owner loved her very much and had directly booked an entire immortal boat to send Mary over, stunning Lee Zheng Tan and the other cats around it with this extravagant gesture.

While the deal had been sealed, Lee Zheng Tan wasn’t in a good mood. This was a major venture, and according to Lee Zheng Tan and Mary’s agreement, a large number of cats on this side would be employed on a long-term basis and follow Mary back to get rid of the insects and mice problem which Mary and her compatriots faced.

Partings were always sad.

Another thing that made Lee Zheng Tan unhappy was the news currently being broadcast on TV, which had to do with Father Zheng and the hostage situation, and which was linked to a magic treasure plagiarism case from three years ago.

“Boss, the deal is settled; you should be happy,” the Monk said comfortingly. It and the others had no idea what was wrong with their boss; they sensed that their boss had been absent-minded ever since it had seen the news.

Lee Zheng Tan didn’t say a word. It shook its tail at Mary politely before going out to climb the trunk of the old locust tree. Standing securely atop a branch, it stared off in one direction. The sun was setting at an angle, the light breaking through the tree cover to shine in patches on the black cat’s body, as if spreading a floral skirt over it.

“A riot of flowers gradually enchant the eye...” Looking at this scene, the Monk couldn’t help reciting a poem. It came back to itself a moment later, and turned to look at Mary, their big client. “Miss Mary, our sincere apologies. Our boss is temperamental, and suddenly becomes moody at times.”

“Oh~ it’s fine, I don’t mind at all. That’s the charm of such a cat!” The curly ahoge on Miss Mary’s head kept flicking back and forth, and she had an infatuated smile on her face. Why did Mary want to do such big business with Lee Zheng Tan’s team? A very large part of the reason was that she had taken a fancy to Lee Zheng Tan.

This was an aloof cat that was free of worldly and vulgar taste. Furthermore, it had still been able to act reserved after seeing Mary. This was really too rare! Mary was already deeply attracted to Lee Zheng Tan's temperament. To her mind, a melancholy Lee Zheng Tan was the most handsome cat.

Ah! How good would it be if she could have a child with Lee Zheng Tan in this lifetime!

"Miss Mary? Miss Mary?" the Monk called out softly. Seeing that Miss Mary was still absorbed in the boss's looks, the Monk left dejectedly. Beauty was in the eye of the cat beholder... It was none of the Monk's business.

Instead, it was Lee Zheng Tan's unusual state that the Monk was worried about. Although the boss had indeed become more melancholy after the cat regiment was set up, as its trusted aide of many years, the Monk could still tell whether or not it was truly melancholy that was reflected in the boss's eyes.

In short, its boss was a little strange today.

Was it because of the news about Magic Treasure Development University?

The Monk thought back carefully. Three years ago, the independent regiment had still been very small, and basically had no business dealings with Magic Treasure Development University. However, they did take a job at that Divine Leisure Apartments, where those serial murders had taken place.

And the Monk clearly remembered that under their boss Lee Zheng Tan, they destroyed the base of the most horrible cockroach gang leader in Divine Leisure Apartments: the king of cockroaches in all of Songhai city, Cockroach Wenqiang

The Monk had even stepped on it a few times after this guy was caught, but it never thought that this small cockroach could be so tenacious – not only wasn't it injured in any way, it even yelled again and again that it felt good. That cockroach gang leader was now confined to a fortified goldfish tank and couldn't escape at all.

Why put it in a goldfish tank?

The reason was very simple.

Because it was the king of cockroaches, Cockroach Wenqiang was pretty big, about the size of two human adult palms. It could even fly, and when the steel wings on its back were spread open, their ability to cut through things was extremely destructive.

Why was Cockroach Wenqiang so powerful? The reason was very simple: it was a pure-blooded southern cockroach!! In addition, as the king of cockroaches, it also had an extremely strong reproductive ability, which meant that it could produce thousands of cockroaches in a single brood. These cockroaches would reproduce in turn, and if unimpeded, their population could expand to make one loop around the world.

But fortunately, Cockroach Wenqiang had already been captured by the independent regiment. After the biggest cockroach gang in Songhai was wiped out, the cockroaches in every home were quiet for a period of time at least...

Seeing that its boss Lee Zheng Tan wasn't in a good mood, the Monk was wondering whether to lift the goldfish tank which Cockroach Wenqiang was imprisoned in as a diversion. Just then, the Monk smelled a very familiar scent.

It abruptly lifted its head.

Immortal Meow...

This was Immortal Meow's scent!

Chapter 1046: Why Are Southern Cockroaches So Big?

It could be said that the conflict between the cockroach gang and the cat group started before the independent regiment was established. This was a worldwide underground clash which, like the enmity between cultivators and demons and devils, had been ongoing for over a thousand years.

Every beast in the spirit beast circle knew that the cockroach gang and the cat group couldn't exist alongside each other.

For so many years, the cockroach gang had been despised for their gross habits. For example, they liked to live in greasy and unbearably foul-smelling sewers and didn't care one bit for their own hygiene. They contaminated food with their greasy and bacteria-ridden bodies, carrying deadly germs to all corners of the city.

How terrible were cockroaches in the cultivation world? They were more tenacious than normal cockroaches and had a strong reproductive ability, and cultivators were defeated one by one when they ran into cockroaches. Many cultivators even chose to move out right away after discovering a cockroach nest at home. Once they were discovered, it didn't take more than a few days for these cockroaches to get into every corner of the house; when you opened the door, you would see these black things flitting haphazardly through the air on their steel wings.

Hence, getting rid of cockroaches and protecting the environment of the cultivation world required all cultivators to work together. The cockroaches reproduced so rapidly that it was impossible to eradicate them, so at the very least, they had to be suppressed through a cull of their numbers every year.

There was now a cultivator Pest Control Guild specially responsible for dealing with all kinds of pest problems, which would put up mission announcements in the lobby depending on the pest situation in various regions. Cultivators who undertook these assignments would receive a soul collector in the shape of a watch, which recorded the number of cockroaches killed. The assignment was considered complete once a quota was reached.

When the assignment was completed, cultivators would receive an official certificate issued by Huaxiu Alliance as well as immortal fate merit points which could be directly exchanged in the guild for cultivation resources.

This was easier said than done; several years after this operation was launched, Huaxiu Alliance and the Pest Control Guild realized that it was difficult to completely suppress the pest problem by relying on the strength of cultivators alone. Moreover, they incurred additional losses.

Given how widespread these pests were, a lot of cultivators who undertook these assignments chose to directly use their killer moves to get rid of them, some even using holy magic weapons to kill cockroaches... In the end, a huge number of cockroaches were eliminated, but their deaths were followed by major building damage...

Thus, the gains didn't make up for the losses.

After careful consideration, Huaxiu Alliance decided to start using spirit beasts in some areas to help kill pests, and the results of such a measure were exceptional!

A large part of the reason why the independent regiment was able to grow was due to support from Huaxiu Alliance. Not only was Lee Zheng Tan leading all cats in protecting the environment, it had also found a way for its cat group to survive and expand.

Of course, there was another very important reason the group was able to develop to this extent apart from the support from Huaxiu Alliance, which was that Lee Zheng Tan had caught the cockroach gang leader, Cockroach Wenqiang, himself.

Like the Monk said, when it was caught, it was a huge cockroach the size of two human adult palms.

But the truth was that this wasn't Cockroach Wenqiang's ultimate form.

Lee Zheng Tan had gone to a lot of effort to catch it. When Cockroach Wenqiang was caught, this guy had shrunk into a corner and stopped moving. Lee Zheng Tan had estimated that Cockroach Wenqiang was about to shed its skin at that moment, and it ordered the nearby cats to surround and take the weak Cockroach Wenqiang down.

And then, that was it. Cockroach Wenqiang was now imprisoned inside a glass fish tank and couldn't escape at all. After it was caught, Lee Zheng Tan had used waterboarding on it right away.

Of course, it was impossible to directly drown Cockroach Wenqiang. As the king of cockroaches, there was no need to explain how tenacious it was; even immersing it in wine was useless, and it would still live as well as ever. Thus, quick-witted Lee Zheng Tan had dissolved some oral contraceptives in water and immersed Cockroach Wenqiang in it for seven days and nights... directly making it sterile.

After finding out that it could no longer have children, Cockroach Wenqiang flew into an indignant rage. "You've gone too far!"

“What rubbish – our country only just implemented the two-child policy, while you have hundreds of millions of kids. You have some nerve.” Lee Zheng Tan flung the words at Cockroach Wenqiang, and the latter was dumbstruck.

Given how tenacious Cockroach Wenqiang was, there was no way to kill it directly. Lee Zheng Tan simply decided to keep it in order to control its underlings; as long as Lee Zheng Tan had Cockroach Wenqiang, the other cockroaches would stay in line. The most important thing was that Lee Zheng Tan could even use Cockroach Wenqiang as bait to continually draw out nearby cockroaches; all that the cat regiment had to do was just wait for them to come out.

After seeing the news about Magic Treasure Development University, Lee Zheng Tan’s feelings felt tumultuous for some reason. Sitting on that tree branch, it felt disconsolate for a while, before it went down to the fish tank to stare at Cockroach Wenqiang inside, its eyes glowing strangely.

Cockroach Wenqiang wasn’t the least bit concerned since it knew that Lee Zheng Tan wasn’t able to kill it, and it gloated. “Did you find a way to kill me? It’s impossible – your realm is no more than peak late Foundation Establishment stage at most. A Soul Formation cultivator hit me with his palm before and thought that I would be crushed to dust, but I didn’t die.”

“I know.” Lee Zheng Tan cut off Cockroach Wenqiang’s drivel. The latter just wanted to remind Lee Zheng Tan not to bother wasting the effort; of course, Lee Zheng Tan understood this fact very well.

“I’ve come to negotiate with you. If you agree to my request, I might even let you go,” Lee Zheng Tan said to Cockroach Wenqiang in front of the fish tank.

“You’ll let me go?” Cockroach Wenqiang didn’t dare believe it; its mouth opened and closed several times, while the two tentacles on top of its head trembled slightly at the words.

“The condition is that you must be able to fulfil my request,” said Lee Zheng Tan.

“Let’s hear it.” Cockroach Wenqiang’s feelers swayed rapidly like two windshield wipers; this was a particular habit it had when it was pondering a problem.

“A serial killer case – you might have already heard of it. I know that you have subordinates wherever there are humans. So, can you find a witness?” Lee Zheng Tan didn’t beat around the bush and directly asked the question.



“Humans treat us like bugs and kill us without mercy. Why should we testify for them?” Cockroach Wenqiang laughed.

“Every living creature has the right to live, and you aren’t an exception. But your fault is that you overproduce, which is a problem for other living creatures. This is why they want to exterminate you. If you can find a suitable witness, this may be a good opportunity to improve the situation.” Lee Zheng Tan gave a serious analysis.

Cockroach Wenqiang pondered it.

Finally, it agreed to the request. “I can try looking, but you need to fulfil a request of my own.”

“What is it?”

“The food you gave me in the past two days was subpar. I want better food.”

“What do you want to eat?”

“There is a villa in the eastern suburbs owned by a fan of crispy noodle snacks. I want to eat his crispy noodle snacks. I don’t need a whole packet, the remains is good enough. Get people to search for the plastic packaging at the nearby garbage point; even some crumbs will do.” Cockroach Wenqiang started to drool as it spoke.

When it had still been a small cockroach, it had fed on these crumbs daily before growing to its current size. The later generations it produced were in turn several times larger than normal cockroaches.

So why had southern cockroaches become bigger and bigger over the years?

Everything could be traced back to the moment Wang Ling fell in love with crispy noodle snacks as a kid...

Chapter 1047: The Great Earthquake

In the end, the biggest reason for the meteoric rise of Cockroach Wenqiang and the cockroach gang was the leftovers from the crispy noodle snacks that Wang Ling had eaten. What kind of divine treasure were the leftovers of the Immortal King's crispy noodle snacks? Just a little bit was enough for a small cockroach to grow to the size of a rabbit...

Wang Ling knew this was his fault, which was why he had come forward to take responsibility now. To be honest, if Super Chen and Dopey Guo hadn't mentioned using a cockroach as a witness, Wang Ling probably wouldn't have remembered this matter.

Back when the cockroach gang had been at its worst, Wang Ling had thought about solving the problem himself; in the end, it was at that moment that Lee Zheng Tan's independent regiment stepped out and dominated the scene. Wang Ling didn't make a move, because if he did, all the cockroaches in the world would have been destroyed in an instant. Every living creature existed for a reason. Even if cockroaches were pests, they were still part of the food chain. As long as they could be controlled, there in fact wasn't any need to kill every last one of them.

And now, Wang Ling had once again shown up in his long-unused guise as "Immortal Meow" because he wanted Cockroach Wenqiang to atone for its sins with its own actions.

So when Wang Ling appeared here, all the cats were utterly stunned. The Monk was already too excited to speak and fell flat on its bottom as it gripped its head with its paws with a disbelieving expression on its face. Wang Ling's Immortal Meow persona had always been a legend in the cat world, and something big always happened every time it appeared. When they saw Wang Ling, all the cats couldn't help kowtowing in worship, and Lee Zheng Tan was no exception.

Cockroach Wenqiang was astonished when it saw that even Lee Zheng Tan had knelt down after Wang Ling appeared. "So you're the boss behind the cats..." It had been suspicious before: there was no way Lee Zheng Tan could have taken down the cockroach gang with its cats alone. After Wang Ling showed up, Cockroach Wenqiang instantly understood.

Staring at Cockroach Wenqiang, Wang Ling didn't open his mouth.

A voice sounded directly in Cockroach Wenqiang's mind.

In accordance with Immortal Meow's regality, Wang Ling chose to speak telepathically, and requested that Cockroach Wenqiang testify in court.

In the end, Cockroach Wenqiang had a very tough attitude. “The terms you agreed to before can’t be changed, or don’t expect me to testify! In any case, you can’t beat me to death, and I won’t starve to death here either. Let’s see who dies first!”

Its attitude was so vile that Wang Ling choked on his words. This cockroach that had grown this big on the leftovers from Wang Ling’s crispy noodle snacks, and who was so arrogant about how invulnerable it was, had actually learned how to act like a tyrant? Wang Ling felt that he had to teach Cockroach Wenqiang a lesson.

Hence, in the next moment, Wang Ling lifted his cat paw and ordered Lee Zheng Tan to release Cockroach Wenqiang from the fish tank.

Cockroach Wenqiang was a little stunned. It didn’t know what this white cat, which had suddenly shown up, was capable of, but since it could boss Lee Zheng Tan around, its realm should be higher than Lee Zheng Tan’s, right?

Golden Core? Nascent Soul?

Cockroach Wenqiang assessed Wang Ling’s realm, and felt that the white cat’s level was only just so – it didn’t know exactly what breed the cat was, but how high could a spirit beast’s realm go? Cockroach Wenqiang had provoked all the spirit beasts in the Pet Trainers Guild before, and none of them had been able to directly kill it.

It was a cockroach that had endured blows from Soul Formation cultivators – what kind of battles had it not seen?

How ridiculous.

After it was released from the goldfish tank, Cockroach Wenqiang could breathe free air once again. It stared at Wang Ling and crossed its legs in a very arrogant manner. “Let’s hear it, how do you want to fight? I’m telling you, I’m a cockroach that can’t be killed.”

All the cats: “...”

Lee Zheng Tan started to cover its face with its paws. It had never seen someone court death so much...

But this was normal. Wang Ling's Immortal Meow persona was no more than a legend in the cat world which only the old cats of Lee Zheng Tan's generation knew about; it was only by hearing the stories from the old cats that newborn kittens learned about "Immortal Meow," and even fewer cats had seen Immortal Meow for real.

Lee Zheng Tan's independent regiment thus seemed more like a cat group favored by Wang Ling. The cats in the independent regiment had already seen Wang Ling no less than three times. This was also why many cats were willing to follow Lee Zheng Tan; in their eyes, Lee Zheng Tan was a cat favored by "god." If they followed Commander Lee, good things might happen to them.

But there was no way for Cockroach Wenqiang to understand the beliefs of the cat world. It even started to taunt Wang Ling, and was certain that Wang Ling's slap couldn't hurt it at all. "How about this, let's make a bet. If you can knock me out with one swat, I'll testify."

It could be said that this was the first time that Wang Ling had ever met such an arrogant cockroach... Even the Old Devil and Evil Sword God had seen their lives flash in front of their eyes after Wang Ling slapped them – the moment they were slapped, they were convinced they were going to die.

Cockroach Wenqiang, on the other hand, actually thought that it would only be knocked out at worst – this baffling confidence annoyed Wang Ling.

Of course, he wouldn't swat Cockroach Wenqiang to death, since he needed Cockroach Wenqiang to find a witness from back then.

But he could still teach Cockroach Wenqiang a lesson.

Gathering a measure of strength, Wang Ling imbued his paw with primordial qi. Deep blue streams of air instantly sprang up out of his paw, rising up like colored vapor.

The materialization of spiritual energy...

The cats were petrified.

It could only be said that Immortal Meow was in the end Immortal Meow... This was the manifestation of spiritual power at its peak, and was proof of a high concentration of spiritual energy, which led directly to spiritual qi taking the form of vapor when it was released.

It was the sign of an expert.

Because there were very few cultivators that could materialize “spiritual energy.”

Cockroach Wenqiang broke out in a cold sweat. It never expected this white cat to be so different from any spirit beast it had ever seen before. Even a Soul Formation cultivator couldn’t materialize spiritual energy... unless the cat was...

At True Immortal level?

A True Immortal cat?

How was that possible?

Cockroach Wenqiang was alarmed. If that really was the case, then this Immortal Meow could be recorded down in The Cultivation Encyclopedia as an object of historical research. How could there be a living spirit beast like this in the world?

“Ready?” The next moment, Wang Ling opened his mouth and spoke in his form as Immortal Meow for the first time.

Before Cockroach Wenqiang could react, that paw pulsing with power was already flying toward Cockroach Wenqiang. In the blink of an eye, hundreds of li around No. 59 High started to shake violently in a great earthquake...

And just as Wang Ling’s paw was about to land on Cockroach Wenqiang’s head, Cockroach Wenqiang was so scared it fainted...

And Wang Ling withdrew his paw just in time.

No one expected this sudden earthquake.

Songhai was a coastal city and didn't sit on any cracks in the earth's crust. Earthquakes were very rare events. The magnitude of this sudden earthquake was 12.0, and it lasted for two seconds... Although it didn't cause any damage, this slap of Wang Ling's was in the end recorded down in The Cultivation Encyclopedia by geological experts, and caused human cultivators to reflect on protecting the natural environment.

Only Wang Ling and Lee Zheng Tan's cat regiment knew that this "great earthquake" had been triggered just to scare a cockroach...

#### Chapter 1048: Miss Little Liang

Wang Ling's swat frightened Cockroach Wenqiang so much it passed out on the spot. At the same time, cultivators at the Songhai Earthquake Monitoring Center bustled about – the incident had happened suddenly and the monitoring magic devices were broken before anyone could react. Everyone was baffled as they stared at the spinning gauge pointers. What the heck was this?

The director of the monitoring center frowned deeply.

This sudden event had lasted for less than three seconds, which hadn't caused any actual damage to Songhai city. Another city, however, might have been reduced to rubble. The anti-quake technology in major cities was at the highest standard. Every building basically had an automatic stabilizing barrier which could cause everything inside to become weightless.

That was to say, if the building collapsed, the falling rocks and debris, and even the people inside, would float, so no one would get hurt.

But this sort of emergency protection technology was only found in big cities like Songhai city and Jinghua city. Because of how expensive the technology was, it would still be roughly three years at the very least before it covered the entire nation.

"Director..."

“Write up a research report for President Qi immediately. This happened too suddenly, and I’m worried that it’ll have a significant impact on the living environment of cultivators.” Director Zhang of the research institute had a grim expression on his face. In many cases, this sort of event suddenly happening without warning tended to be a sign of an even bigger catastrophe.

Over the years, resources in the cultivation world had been overexploited, and many creatures had become endangered species; such unrestrained exploitation was bound to take a toll on the ecology. Environmental protection was an issue for all of humanity, which had to do with the life and death of all cultivators as well as the future development of large-scale projects against the backdrop of an age of national cultivation.

Director Zhang Qiuhua had no choice but to pay close attention to the matter.

Added to that was the rapid consumption of spiritual qi in the last few years. It was estimated that it would still be several thousand years before spiritual qi dried up completely, but since the problem had already made itself known, it was something that all the cultivators of the world had to face.

And this was what Director Zhang Qiuhua did: call for everyone to start thinking about environmental protection.

The next Global Environmental Protection Cultivators’ Summit was coming up, and Director Zhang Qiuhua decided that he had to bring this abnormality up as a focal point during the summit.

And so, Wang Ling’s swat this time led to a push in awareness about environmental protection among cultivators, which was something he hadn’t expected.

On top of that, even Wang Ling himself could never have expected that his swat would actually result in freaking extra summer vacation homework... After Wang Ling was done with the operation and went home, Teacher Pan sent a message in the class chat group, telling everyone to write an essay of no less than three thousand words on the topic of environmental protection.

Wang Ling regretted it... If he had known earlier, he definitely wouldn’t have used so much strength.

Of course, it was too late now...

...

Half an hour or so later, Cockroach Wenqiang regained consciousness. It could only be said that Little Qiang deserved its name 1 – it was certainly tenacious. Moreover, this cockroach had grown up eating the crumbs of Wang Ling’s crispy noodle snacks, so it had a lot more vitality than the rest.

Although Wang Ling’s swat hadn’t landed directly on Cockroach Wenqiang, the wind pressure it created in the three seconds as it fell had already flattened Cockroach Wenqiang into a pancake... Despite that, Cockroach Wenqiang was still alive and kicking, and after half an hour, Wang Ling saw its body fill up bit by bit like an inflatable doll.

“Am – am I still alive...” When it recovered, Cockroach Wenqiang had lost all its earlier confidence after feeling like it had almost died... It was very confident in its invulnerability, but it had actually seemed to see its life flash before its eyes under that swat just now.

It even recalled its mom in heaven in that instant. Back then, its mom had been stomped on 3600 times by a cultivator and had died in pain.

Losing a mother at an early age – was there anything more miserable than that?

And so, Cockroach Wenqiang started to become tougher by nature. For its dead mother’s sake, it decided to live on. It and its siblings hid under their mother’s flattened body, and only after the cultivator left did they drag their mother into the sewer to be buried. Cockroach Wenqiang had already vowed to live on; it ate whatever it could, and it swore to grow into a cockroach that couldn’t be stomped to death no matter what.

The scenes that flashed before Cockroach Wenqiang’s eyes were of its wretched life since young.

Cockroach Wenqiang was clearly a cockroach with a story, but now wasn’t the time for it to recall the past – in its experience, ten thousand words might not be enough to finish narrating what it remembered.

How much did people hate flashbacks? Like with the migrant worker manga 1 Naruto, which stuck in flashbacks before pivotal plot moments and made people burn with impatience. Hence, using flashbacks would get you nowhere, and readers would suspect you of padding your word count.

“Are you going to help or not?”



Wang Ling's question rang out in the next moment, and Cockroach Wenqiang trembled all over at the sound. Just one swat from Wang Ling, which hadn't even made contact, had already given Cockroach Wenqiang trauma.

It was just a normal question, but in Cockroach Wenqiang's ears, it sounded like an aggressive interrogation, and it shuddered.

"I... I'll help," Cockroach Wenqiang replied shakily; it knew that at that moment, it already had no other choice.

...

On the other side, Odd Zhuo soon received the news from Wang Ling.

"As expected of shifu; he was actually able to find a new witness in this situation." Odd Zhuo couldn't be any more excited; a few minutes ago, Wang Ling had texted him to say that he had found a new witness.

Odd Zhuo then told everyone else the news.

All the police as well as the school leaders and teachers of Magic Treasure Development University who were at the scene were astonished when they heard it.

"A new witness? There's a new witness?"

Principal Zhou Dongye found it hard to believe.

The most important witness, Liu Yi, was already dead, and it was very likely that it was Father Zheng who had killed him – how could a new witness appear, in a room that had been completely closed off?

"Mr Zheng, the police have already found a new witness who can prove your innocence as well as the truth of the suicide three years ago. So, Mr Zheng, please immediately let go of all the students inside; the police will definitely give you an explanation after this." There was no time to lose; Odd Zhuo started the final round of negotiations with Father Zheng.

The scene was silent for a few minutes.

The door of the auditorium opened slowly.

With tears in his eyes, Father Zheng walked out of the auditorium with both hands up.

Three years ago, the police had wronged his son.

Three years later, he chose to believe that the police could still clear his son of wrongdoing and let the world know the truth.

No matter how they thought about it, no one could figure it out.

“General Director Zhuo, what on earth is going on?” asked Gao Tian.

“A young lady called Little Liang has just been found, who says that she saw Liu Yi killed with her own eyes,” replied Odd Zhuo.

“Who is Miss Little Liang...”

“A blattaria order of insect, aka: a cockroach.”

“...”

Chapter 1049: Lie Detectors In the Cultivation World

“I was wrong, I was really wrong... I’m a disgrace to the motherland that cultivated me. I sincerely apologize to the students I held hostage in the auditorium. I will accept however long my jail sentence will be.”

Father Zheng confessed bluntly to his crimes in the interrogation room. Although he hadn't hurt anyone, he had still taken people hostage, and before the new witness testified in a public court hearing, Father Zheng couldn't be cleared of suspected murder yet.

At that moment, Gao Tian, Odd Zhuo and Little Silver were all in front of Father Zheng in the interrogation room. Little Silver was in charge of recording the statement. For Little Silver, he could be said to be collecting reference materials. He had been learning to write novels recently, but couldn't be said to be talented. He had written more than a hundred thousand words, but had yet to sign a contract.

Little Silver thought it was because he didn't have enough reference materials. Hence, he helped Gao Tian take down the statement, which could be counted as one way to collect reference materials.

Gao Tian's and Odd Zhuo's respective interrogations had different aims. In order not to steal each other's credit, the division of labor was very clear: Gao Tian only asked about the hostage situation, while Odd Zhuo asked about the magic treasure plagiarism case.

"Did you take the auditorium hostage because of the plagiarism case three years ago?" Gao Tian asked.

"That's right – I need to know the truth of the matter, even if I have to pay a hefty price for it," answered Father Zheng, his hands in Spirit Shackles.

Initially, only the Old Devil had gotten this sort of treatment. In the last few months, however, the realms of the criminals caught, which Odd Zhuo had shouldered the credit for, had gotten higher and higher. Later, Wang Ling and Wang Ming discussed the issue, and Wang Ming decided to get the research institute to mass produce Spirit Shackles.

Spirit Shackles had now become standard prison equipment.

"If no new witnesses had come forward, would you still have done this?" Gao Tian asked.

Father Zheng thought for a while and said hesitantly, "That's hard to say..."

"You should have gone through legal channels – that's the right way to go," Gao Tian said.

“But I really had no choice... I tried online complaints and offline petitions, but nothing worked since I didn’t have any feasible evidence. Moreover, the witnesses I was looking for were all killed by someone else before I arrived... I haven’t hurt a single person in all of this.”

Father Zheng said articulately, “That includes Liu Yi. In the beginning, I just wanted to use magic to pull him out from behind the screen, but when I crossed over, he was already dead.”

“Mm.”

Gao Tian nodded.

He compared Father Zheng’s statement with the evidence and clues they had so far. Father Zheng’s words were very credible: most of what he said could be corroborated, and it was very detailed; it was almost identical to the information which the police had.

There was only one thing that Gao Tian and the rest in the interrogation room were curious about, and that was Father Zheng’s unusual increase in realm.

What happened?

“Explain how your realm increased so fast. Don’t tell me it was by happenstance: this isn’t a novel, and you’re not the main character.” Gao Tian fixed his gaze on Father Zheng; it wasn’t just him, but all the police officers who had been following the case were also curious.

“I don’t know if you’ll believe me...” When it came to the sudden growth of his realm, Father Zheng also seemed a little flustered. He looked Gao Tian in the eye and replied, “It was because of a pack of frozen dumplings...”

“Fro... frozen dumplings?”

The answer surprised all the officers in and outside the interrogation room.

“What’s that about?” Gao Tian asked.

“This actually happened a few days ago, on September 14th...” In the face of this inquiry, Father Zheng told him everything about how he had increased in strength. “For so many years, I’ve been secretly looking for evidence and trying to get the case overturned. I basically spent all my living expenses on private investigations. To save money, I usually go to the cultivation department store to buy things from the returned goods section.

“That day, I bought several packs of frozen food as usual. In the end, after eating one pack at home, I suddenly felt my whole body steaming up. There was a huge leap in my realm and my body was brimming with energy... And then, that was it: my realm increased, just like that.”

“...” Hearing this, Gao Tian, Little Silver and Odd Zhuo sucked in cold breaths of air.

That was right.

No pushups, no squats, no leaving the air conditioner off on a hot summer day 1... Father Zheng’s increase in realm was all because of a pack of frozen dumplings...

The point was that this was also consistent with the information the police had.

It was clearly written in the report that Gao Tian was holding: After Father Zheng was detained, the police found an empty pack of frozen dumplings at his rental. They also confirmed that these dumplings had been bought from the returned goods section of the store, and had been sold at sixty percent off at the time.

Although it was hard to believe, Gao Tian was utterly convinced... Because, apart from the testimonies they had, the interrogation room’s lie detector didn’t find anything unusual in Father Zheng’s words. This was an extremely precise lie detector: as long as a question wasn’t answered truthfully, the lie detector would emit a “beep beep” warning sound.

Of course, this warning wouldn’t sound outright, but was transmitted through the earphones that Gao Tian, Odd Zhuo and Little Silver were wearing in the interrogation room. The average prisoner was usually unaware of the lie detector’s existence, which served to prevent prisoners from deliberately preparing their answers before an interrogation.

So Gao Tian and the rest of the officers were astonished.

Why... did a pack of frozen dumplings have such tremendous power...

“F\*\*k... What was in the dumplings? Celery and pork? Or mushroom and three delicacies? I’m eating them tonight!” The officers outside the interrogation room couldn’t sit still, especially Chief Zhao himself. He was also paying close attention to the case, and when he learned the “secret” of Father Zheng’s advancement, he was so excited he almost jumped up.

He had been slow to be promoted, not only because his track record was lacking. There was in fact another major reason: he had hit a bottleneck in his cultivation.

Chief Zhao had been stuck at the Nascent Soul stage for a long time. There was a fixed standard he had to meet if he wanted to be transferred to a central department like Huaxiu Alliance, which was that he had to be at the Soul Formation stage or above.

After consulting each other in whispers, Gao Tian and Odd Zhuo decided to have Father Zheng undergo a physical examination. If it really was because of a pack of frozen dumplings... then they should be able to analyze the composition of the dumplings from a comprehensive test of Father Zheng’s stomach fluid.

“Well, I’m done with my questions. It’s Director Zhuo’s turn now.” Gao Tian capped his pen and steepled his fingers together.

“Done?” Odd Zhuo asked.

“Yes.” Gao Tian nodded affirmatively.

Since the evidence could be corroborated, Gao Tian felt that there was no need to continue asking questions about the hostage situation itself – instead, he was more interested in overturning the case from three years ago.

But he wasn’t in charge of that, so he could only leave it to Odd Zhuo.

“First of all, I want to understand Student Zheng Jingxuan’s family situation a little more. May I ask why you divorced Madam He Xiulan, Student Zheng Jingxuan’s mother?”

Odd Zhuo’s first question was a little personal, but it was necessary: his family situation was also a big reason for Student Zheng ultimately deciding to kill himself.

“Ah Lan and I divorced because of personality differences,” Father Zheng answered.

Odd Zhuo and the others instantly heard the lie detector’s warning sound in their earphones: “Beep beep... beep beep...”

“Father Zheng, please answer your question truthfully.” Odd Zhuo’s eyes turned sharp.

Father Zheng was a little flustered. “Be- because... Ah Lan caught me cheating on her...”

“Beep beep... beep beep...”

“Because I discovered that I like men!”

“Beep beep... beep beep...”

Father Zheng almost shed tears. “F\*\*k! Because our sex life was unsatisfying! Of course... it was mainly my fault! Is that good enough?!”

This time, the alarm didn’t go off...

## Chapter 1050: Court Hearings In the Cultivation World

Odd Zhuo wasn’t interested in prying into someone else’s personal affairs. He had assumed that Father Zheng was hiding some truth related to the case; he hadn’t expected Father Zheng’s astonishing confession, which stupefied all the officers at the police station.

After understanding the situation, Odd Zhuo realized that Student Zheng Jingxuan’s suicide was actually a tragedy triggered by a combination of factors: Student Zheng’s mother, Madam He Xiulan, was a very formidable person, which caused Zheng Jingxuan to have a dread of women, and he could only use his grades to continually boost his own morale.

Thus, when Odd Zhuo and Gao Tian looked up the information on Student Zheng, they discovered that he had an exceptionally outstanding academic record — he was first in his year in almost every exam, and he won a number of competitions. This wasn't limited to magic treasure design competitions, but also included competitions for steering spirit swords, refining pills and so on — Student Zheng had outstanding achievements and stood out among his peers.

Such eye-catching achievements made him the center of the crowd, and he quite enjoyed being placed on a pedestal, which gave him a psychological thrill that he grew accustomed to.

But everything changed too quickly — Student Zheng was framed for magic treasure design plagiarism. It was his own work, but someone else stole it and set him up. The public opinion online put a lot of pressure on him, and it was during this time that Zheng Tianqiang and He Xiulan agreed to divorce each other, directly leading to this tragedy.

Falling from the pinnacle to the bottom in an instant — Zheng Jingxuan completely lost his sense of self. Perhaps, in his final moments before he killed himself, he found his last life-saving straw: Lin Shiyao.

He had written something like a suicide note as an excuse not to implicate her, and cut off their ties before committing suicide in order not to drag his angel into this.

After Zheng Jingxuan's death, Lin Shiyao drowned in self-blame. She hated her cowardice, that she hadn't stretched out her hand to Zheng Jingxuan at the most important moment; instead, swept up in the rumors, she started to doubt her boyfriend. She also regretted her ignorance, that she hadn't pulled him back at the final moment — most of all, she hated herself.

But it was already too late. A dead person couldn't be brought back to life. Just like that, the magic treasure plagiarism case and Zheng Jingxuan's death was buried for three whole years. As Father Zheng said, he tried many times to investigate and appeal through regular channels, but the mastermind behind the scenes left him no room to breathe. In the end, a desperate Father Zheng was forced to take this route.

September 19th, the thirty-sixth day of the summer break.

The Cultivation Police Bureau and the General Administration of 100 Schools instituted proceedings respectively with regards to Father Zheng taking hostages as well as the magic treasure plagiarism case from three years ago: the Police Bureau was requesting a prosecution in the case of the hostages, while the General Administration of 100 Schools was requesting that the magic treasure plagiarism case be reopened.



This was a public court hearing which the entire nation and even a lot of foreign online users were following closely. The public gallery was full: apart from the media reporters, Principal Zhou Dongye of Magic Treasure Development University, as well as those who were still alive and had been involved in the plagiarism case three years ago, had been summoned to court by the Police Bureau.

When Gao Tian led Father Zheng to the dock in Spiritual Shackles, Father Zheng saw a familiar face — Student Fu Fusheng, who had accused Zheng Jingxuan of plagiarism back then, also sat in a second defendant dock, and should be here as a defendant in the plagiarism case. At the same time, Student Fu Fusheng was probably the one who knew the most now of all the people involved three years ago, as practically all those who had insider knowledge were dead.

Father Zheng had resented Fu Fusheng before, but he now felt that Fu Fusheng really didn't know anything and was just a poor schmuck who had been used; otherwise, why was he still alive?

The judge presiding over this hearing in Songhai Intermediate Cultivation Court was called Liang Xin, who was a righteous-looking middle-aged man with slicked-back hair. Since this case wasn't just about the hostage incident, but was also linked to a possible overturning of a case ruling from three years ago, the presiding judge, the other judges, the jurors and the court clerk who had heard the case three years ago had all voluntarily stepped back from participating, to ensure a fair and equal trial.

“All rise — court is now in session!”

Liang Xin was expressionless. It was his superior who had directly assigned him this case. Because the two cases would be trialed together, plus given what Father Zheng had done previously to grab attention, all of society was paying very close attention to it; Liang Xin was well aware of how serious this matter was.

The presiding judge and the other judges existed to crack down on crime and to clear the innocent.

There was a solemn silence in the courtroom. After Chief Judge Liang sat down and hit the gavel with a sharp sound, the trial officially commenced.

“Defendant Zheng Tianqiang, on 18th September, 4396, you seized an auditorium at Songhai Magic Treasure Development University and held fifty-three people hostage. While the hostages weren't injured, the auditorium and other public facilities were damaged. You are now charged with the

destruction of public facilities and the crime of taking hostages. Do you object to the charges?” Chief Judge Liang asked.

“No,” Father Zheng answered from the defendant dock.

Chief Judge Liang nodded and turned to the second defendant dock. “Will second defendant Fu Fusheng please rise.”

Hearing his name called, Fu Fusheng gradually started to look nervous. He knew very well what type of impact this plagiarism case would have on his life. Even if he was Liu Yi’s pawn, it was true that Liu Yi had stolen Zheng Jingxuan’s high school magic treasure blueprint and given it to Fu Fusheng to use in the competition. What was more, Fu Fusheng had used that blueprint and even accused Zheng Jingxuan of plagiarism after the competition... Now that the case had been reopened, there was no way for Fu Fusheng to escape being labeled as a fraud; most importantly, Raven Studio would be dealt a heavy blow.

Fu Fusheng hadn’t known at the time that the blueprint he had used wasn’t Liu Yi’s design. He had thought that Liu Yi was a talent, and never expected him to be such a sly thief.

Chief Judge Liang rapped the gavel. “Fu Fusheng, please ensure that what you say next is the truth. If you are suspected of dishonesty, you may be charged with perjury.”

“Chief Judge, I swear to tell the truth,” Fu Fusheng said after taking a deep breath.

“Was the design blueprint for the ‘clean green spiral furnace’ in the magic treasure design competition three years ago your original work?” asked Chief Judge Liang.

Fu Fusheng pondered for a while before raising his head and saying resolutely, “Yes!”

The whole scene exploded at this word.

Odd Zhuo, Little Silver and Gao Tian never thought that Fu Fusheng would actually choose to change his testimony at that moment.