

## Daily life 191

### Chapter 191 Descendants Of The Ancient Races (2)

Yang Qing went on with his evaluation completely oblivious of their thoughts.

Once Feng Jiao was done with the crystal he proceeded on with the last part of the evaluation, which was to pour a drop of his blood essence on the heart stone steele.

An emotion of excitement and anticipation flashed in both his and Feng Lei's eyes.

"So that's why they wanted a double evaluation." Yang Qing inwardly thought when he noticed their reactions.

From their excited expressions, it wasn't too hard to guess their intentions. The heart stone steele, other than detecting the stability of the realms and exposing the use of forbidden arts, also served as a bloodline appraiser.

Based on the siblings' reactions, their target seemed to have been that particular aspect. Yang Qing didn't mind indulging them since the costs of hiring an appraiser was something a little beyond the means of a rankless sect, and it also came with risks, especially if the appraiser had nefarious intentions.

With sufficient resources and proficient skills, one could do a bloodline hijacking, which in worst cases usually left the victim dead or with a fate far worse than death. It was why one wouldn't do a bloodline appraisal lightly without having sufficient power or backing to ensure their safety.

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After Feng Jiao dropped his blood essence, the heart stone steele lit up like always and then words appeared on it.

Cultivation realm: peak of the first stage of the foundation establishment realm

Status: stable

Lifespan: 3,740 years

Bloodline: Star dusk aspen (minor), silver vinewood (major)

Element affinity: wood, metal, wind

...

The writing remained there for a few minutes before it disappeared. However the hall room was completely silent with different reactions all around.

The youngest, Feng Yu had shining eyes that were glued on the heart stone steele. He switched his gaze between the heart stone steel and his index finger a couple of times, almost as if debating something before he finally shook his head in dismissal as his attention turned towards the foundation white haze crystal.

The eldest prince had a puzzled expression as his gaze probed deeper into the stone. He only managed to tear his eyes away from it when the words disappeared.

Bu Zhe had only spared a cursory glance before he turned it back to the outside of the door. After Yang Qing's polite warning, he didn't want to know more than he should. It was one of the few lessons the royal palace had taught him.

Yang Qing and the Feng siblings were the only ones who seemed invested in the results.

Yang Qing's pupils shrunk the moment he saw the words star dusk aspen appear on the stone.

"A treefolk bloodline ...no wonder his lifespan is this exaggerated, despite having only broken through to the foundation establishment realm. It almost matches an early-stage core formation realm..."

Mmh, the silver vine wood must be his variation bloodline from star dusk aspen," thought Yang Qing as he grew increasingly excited at what bloodline the other brother had.

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"I take it the reason you wanted to both have an evaluation, is to have your bloodline appraised?"

"Don't look up just behave normally."

Yang Qing transmitted his voice into both Feng Jiao's and Feng Lei's minds. They may have been startled at first but they quickly masked it at Yang Qing's warning.

Feng Jiao nodded imperceptibly in affirmation of Yang Qing's question.

"Your bloodline ancestry is tied to the treefolk race. I don't know if you know of them since much of their information isn't spread around as much. Their history could be considered as old as the dragons and phoenixes.

Just like the golems or the star gaze race, they are a non-human race whose bloodline may loosely be considered part human part, part spiritual tree, however they are their own race and have absolutely no ties to the two parties.

You belong to the star dusk aspen tribe, though your bloodline is thin that's why it has devolved into the silver vinewood bloodline. I don't know much about the star dusk aspen tribe but you can find out more at the Order if you choose to come as students with your quota entry.

However, I should warn you, please don't reveal your bloodline to anyone else. The treefolk bloodline is highly coveted in alchemy circles and also by those who wish to extend their lifespan.

If word of you having treefolk bloodline got out, you'd be used as blood slaves, so be careful."

Because of the gravity of the results, Yang Qing decided to use thought transmission to warn the two elderly siblings while clarifying their results to them in case they couldn't make sense of it.

If they carelessly revealed the information, they would more than likely invite a huge disaster that would draw in major organizations.

As for prince Jiao Wenyan and captain Bu Zhe knowing, he wasn't too worried about it. The prince didn't seem like he had any clue as to what the star dusk aspen was.

Information about the treefolk race was small and those who did have access to such information were top-tier organizations that had a long history and deep network of information. The organizations that fit that criteria would have to be at rank 2 at the very least.

Though Yang Qing still decided later when he was done with the evaluations, he would place a seal on both their memories regarding this matter to prevent any mishap from happening. Additionally, he had decided to shield the results of the heart stone steele going forward, no matter how normal or abnormal the results will be.

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"Don't worry, they won't tell anyone, I'll personally make sure of it," said Yang Qing when he saw their worried expressions to which they both nodded back in gratitude.

Feng Lei stepped over next and his results were similar to his brother's when it came to the first test. The foundation white haze crystal lit up with a deep orange color with a few motes of blue showing up.

After knowing their bloodline, such a result didn't surprise Yang Qing anymore. He even felt like the two siblings were letting down their bloodline. At the party he went to at the Yu family's home, Dean Zhu Lao revealed that the treefolk just like the blue fairy was a descendant branch of the ancient races. With such an ancestry the two siblings should have had higher grade pillars.

Maybe it's their cultivation art that let them down

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Prince Wenyan's facial expression turned into one of shock when he saw the results of the grade of the pillars. One person having such a talent was already rare but now there were two in such a short span and they were from the same family to boot. His gaze turned wary as it fell on the two brothers and their clueless grandson.

Just as he was calculating a few things, he felt a terrifying pressure descend on him. When he nervously turned he was met with Yang Qing's polite smile that made him inadvertently gulp in fear.

Yang Qing resumed the evaluation after he had made his message clear. Prince Wenyan's calculations couldn't escape his eyes.

Better to nip everything in the bud before an eagerness for results brings calamity to both the Summerfield kingdom and the Broken peak sect and maybe potentially even extend to the Spiritual temperance sect.

After Feng Lei had finished with the foundation white haze crystal, he nervously proceeded to pour his blood essence on the heart stone steele.

He and his brother waited with abated breaths for his results to reveal themselves. They only heaved sighs of relief when it showed that he too had the star dusk aspen bloodline.

Everything else was similar to his brother, the only difference came in the major bloodline and element affinity.

Feng Lei had the flaming midnight maple as his major bloodline while his elemental affinity was; fire, wood, and earth.

After that, Yang Qing went through the motions of completion as he handed them a copy of their certificate, confirming the Order's approval of them being a rank 5 sect. While the original certificate got sent to the admission headquarters via a secret art.

The two siblings thanked Yang Qing deeply for his magnanimity and help on their way out as they forcibly dragged their reluctant grandson with them.

Chapter 192 Clearing A Hundred Evaluations

Outside the hall room

"With their composed looks, it looks like everything went well for them?"

"Does anyone know which sect they belong to?"

"They are from the Broken peak sect, they are not locals. It's an upstart sect that hasn't been around for long,"

"An upstart huuh.... so they have no backer, interesting,"

"You bastard, you dare scheme openly with someone from the Order just next door. You clearly have a death wish,"

"Where are you going? I was joking... I was joking there's no need to run away....Wait even you too? I was joking,"

"We don't know each other,"

"Hey, stop coming my way,"

"Luo'er these are the types of people you should avoid. They are harbingers of death that would spill over to you even if you're a bystander. You are to avoid people like them like a poisonous miasma.

Let's add a few more meters away from him just in case,"

"Yes, master,"

"Which organization does that person belong to?"

"He is from the Dragon gate sect,"

"Huuuh!!!!With a name like that how is it still a rankles sect?"

"There are plenty of people like that around the world. Using domineering names especially in their attack moves when it's nothing but blowing smoke,"

"Oh yeah like senior brother Wen Chu. I remember the first time he mentioned his trump card move, the thundering sky rending meteor fist, I thought it was an earth-shattering technique.

It was such a letdown. He even lost to a vine comb chicken using that move,"

"Don't even speak about that person. Every time I think of him, he just triggers my mental demons.

Fen'er make sure you make the most out of the opportunities you will get at the Order. Your master doesn't have much talent and your senior brother...forget it.....

Fen'er my only hope and request isn't something big like turning the Light hollow sect into a great sect but please, please, Fen'er don't turn out to be like your senior brother. That foolish boy will be the death of me one day.

If you turn into your senior brother, then your master will just have to leave the sect and go swim in the Bestial churning sea forever,"

"Senior brother was right, master is always so melodramatic,"

"YOU!! Is that what you discuss with that useless braggart?"

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"Uncle Master, I'm not feeling okay, can we reschedule the evaluation?"

"Not this again. How long do you want to delay this time? We already wasted 8 years because you were afraid your realm wasn't stable enough for the evaluation.

You're already in the fifth stage of the foundation establishment realm.

The clan patriarch said if you make any more excuses don't bother coming back, the clan will cut its ties with you.

We already poured all our resources into you, we can't survive without the quota from the promotion. Make your choice, Undergo a simple evaluation that you will likely pass or start living on your own.

If you choose the latter, you can be sure you will meet much scarier things than an evaluation,"

"Fine, I'll get evaluated. Since the clan has entrusted me with this task, I Lin Mu will complete it perfectly....

But uncle master what if I suddenly lose all my cultivation base when undergoing the test or get qi deviation that makes me drop to the qi refinement realm? I don't mind what will happen to me but what about the clan? You heard what the judge from the Order said, there are penalties involved.

Uncle Master, uncle master, uncle master are you listening?"

"It seems like the Wind drifting sect is the next to be evaluated,"

"I hope they fail,"

"Ppsch! do you have a death wish? Even if they are an unranked sect they have the backing of the Chu family. Your whole sect may get annihilated because of your careless words,"

"What backing? It's just some rumor that grew out of proportion. A friend of mine from the Xiao family told me the real story. The chief disciple of the Wind drifting sect helped a scion from the Chu family get into a carriage when he was drunk.

Then that scion in his drunken stupor said he was a good brother. The scion doesn't even remember his words from that day, however those from the Wind drifting sect decided to exaggerate that whole encounter and the words he said. They most likely hired a few shameless bards to spread the story,"

"Really? That's what happened?"

"I don't believe him. The whole thing seems made up. How is someone like him friends with someone from a top-tier rank 4 family like the Xiao family?"

Maybe he is trying to do the same thing as the Wind drifting sect. Raise the prestige of his sect by pretending to have an association with some bigshot,"

"Mmmh, that sounds reasonable. I heard their sect had to even rent out half their building halls and land to merchants so they could make ends meet,"

"Really? Suddenly my sect doesn't seem that bad off,"

"But your sect doesn't even have a gate,"

"It's because we are free-spirited and has nothing to do with our circumstances,"

"Why is your face turning red then?"

"You?"

"Stop it, don't cause a scene, the guards are looking this way,"

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The successful evaluation of the Broken peak sect alleviated the tense atmosphere that Yang Qing's earlier statement had created.

Though some organizations were still tense about the whole thing, most couldn't wait to be evaluated.

Yang Qing increased his speed through the evaluations with the duration of each evaluation not lasting more than five minutes. In just four hours he had already conducted eighty evaluations just a few evaluations away shy of reaching the hundred-half mark point.

There were occasions when the duration exceeded five minutes but it was only when the results prompted further explanation from Yang Qing like he did for Murong Yan or the Feng brothers who had their bloodline explained.

Of the eighty evaluations, only seven of them had failed. Some had used forbidden arts at the expense of their lifespan to break through, some had used special artifacts to create the illusion they were in the foundation establishment realm, while others used special arts to boost their cultivation base temporarily. It was a milder form of a taboo breakthrough except it would wear out within a set timeline, so the penalties were small.

Whatever means they used, they were all exposed by the discerning heart stone steele and got sentenced to a three-year ban from the Institute and their application for another evaluation. The ban would take effect the moment they had a real foundation establishment expert at the helm.

The penalties for trying to cheat in an evaluation were less severe since the Order was a bit sympathetic to the plight and desperation of these unranked organizations whose shot at turning their lack was getting ranked and getting a quota spot.

As for the organizations that successfully passed their evaluations, most had ordinary results that one would expect from unranked organizations. The bulk of them had the white grade or red grade pillars and for the latter type, it was the low-ranked type.

With such a result Yang Qing avoided explaining to them what significance the colors they formed during the first test meant. He didn't want to dampen their joyous moods.

When it came to bloodlines, none came close to the treefolk bloodline shown by the Feng brothers.

Despite the generally lackluster results, there were a few standouts whose results in terms of grades of their pillars matched the grade of the Feng brothers. There was even one who had exceeded them and had a blue-grade pillar.

When his results appeared, it drew looks of shock from Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe. Bu Zhe even forgot his duties from that moment on as he kept getting dazed over and over.

The person with the blue grade pillar was a 28-year-old youth by the name of Lin Mu who had come on behalf of the Lin family.

His evaluation had also lasted the longest since Lin Mu spent the bulk of the time begging Yang Qing to spare him and his clan in case he suffered qi deviation, a mental demon attack, or some other injury that would cause his cultivation base to fall.

When Yang Qing revealed to him that he had blue grade pillars and what it meant, Lin Mu seemed distraught and overtaken with fear at the impending doom instead of being happy. He even begged Yang Qing a couple of times if there was a way to downgrade his pillars, and when that didn't work he switched tactics and begged some more for Yang Qing to escort him back to his clan since he didn't feel safe going back with his uncle alone. His uncle almost vomited blood during the whole thing and didn't even get a chance to celebrate their promotion and having a blue-grade clan member.

Other than Lin Mu, there was another person that stood out. It was a 15-year-old youth by the name of Mu Fen, who was from the Light hollow sect. During his evaluation, it revealed he had a quasi-blue grade pillar.

His master, who was also the sect master of the Light hollow sect, wept endlessly at the results as he mocked another disciple of his. He only stopped when his qi almost ran amok from all the excitement. He then started lamenting as he attributed the amok qi being a curse from the disciple he had just mocked.

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By all accounts, Yang Qing didn't have a dull moment. It was even more enjoyable than he expected. There was food being brought over, he didn't have to move from place to place, Lei Weiyuan wasn't here to hound him and he met interesting characters like Lin Mu and the sect master of the Light hollow sect, during his evaluations who kept him entertained.

It was an otherwise good day, which was why Yang Qing ended up finishing 100 evaluations without even noticing it. He was now only left with a hundred more before he closed the chapter on the Spiritual temperance sect's region.

### Chapter 193 Instant Change

After the hundredth evaluation mark, Yang Qing decided to take a short fifteen-minute break to have his meal while also transmitting his voice to explain the rules and regulations of the evaluation procedure to the organizations that had just arrived.

Prince Wenyan was more reserved in his interaction with Yang Qing unlike before when he was calling Yang Qing, brother Yang Qing. The discovery of Yang Qing being a palace realm cultivator had an impact on how he saw and related with Yang Qing, even without meaning to.

In the southern continent, one could be considered a true cultivator once they stepped into the palace realm, anything below that was generally considered just a stronger ant, with the exception of monstrous geniuses in that realm.

Yang Qing noticed the reserved attitude the prince had with him but there was nothing much he could do to make him at ease as before. Any move or suggestion he made would be taken as an order by prince Wenyan.

He chose to let things be and move at their own pace.

The fifteen minutes break flew by. Yang Qing requested Captain Bu Zhe to let in the next organization after he had taken his last bite.

Two men walked in at Captain Bu Zhe's guidance. One of the men was a gaunt middle-aged man built like a bear. He had wild-looking black hair with a ferocious glint in his eyes. He didn't seem like the type to care about his appearance since he had sleeveless robes that seemed like they had been torn at the shoulders.

Beside him was a thin, pale-looking young man with short hair that covered his eyes.

The contrasting look made both of them stand out.

"Nu Bing of the Wild roar sect presents my disciple Su Liwei for evaluation," said the bear-like man as his voice boomed in the building hall.

Even though he was just in the tenth stage of the qi refinement realm, his momentum and aura were enough to rival someone who had just stepped into the foundation establishment realm.

"Disciple Su Liwei presents himself to the Order for evaluation and willingly adheres to all protocols and regulations attached to it, including the penalties," Su Liwei said.

His voice matched his build perfectly. It was soft, low, and had a solitary coldness to it like a lake in the middle of a cold, misty, and silent night.

Yang Qing nodded back as he invited Su Liwei over to have his test.

Su Liwei cupped his fist and slowly approached Yang Qing. Even till this moment, his head was slightly lowered with his hair covering his eyes. It was only when he came in front of the foundation white haze crystal did he finally look up.

He nodded with a polite smile to Yang Qing then proceeded to place his palms over the crystal. However, with a blinding speed that shouldn't be seen in a first-stage foundation establishment cultivator, he removed a small red pearl from his sleeves with one hand and a rotten wood with the other hand.

The red pearl had a resplendent red glow to it that matched the shining brilliance of a ruby while the rotten rectangular wood had worm-like black symbols on it that wriggled almost as if they were alive. The movement of those black symbols became more intense the moment the glow from the red pearl fell on them.

The youth still maintained cold silence as he violently charged toward Yang Qing.

The energy that exploded from him during his charge was that of a fifth-stage core formation expert. As he made his move, his eyes finally revealed themselves. His iris matched his sclera and was pure white like it had been fashioned out of marble while his pupils were wriggling black worms like the ones on the wood he had in his right hand.

Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe were caught off guard by the sudden change of events that they froze in their reaction.

Yang Qing was the only one who remained undaunted as he rested his face on one of his hands looking coldly at the running youth.

The gaunt sect master he had come with crumbled into red dust that flowed into the red pearl whose color turned darker with an intense dark red glow.

"I've been wondering when you'd make your move, you filthy remnant of the dark helminth ghosts," Yang Qing said as he flashed and appeared in front of Su Liwei.

Su Liwei flinched only slightly at Yang Qing's sudden appearance but his reaction didn't stop as he plunged the rotten wood into his stomach and clenched his hand that had the red pearl into a fist which he swung at Yang Qing.

Within a few milliseconds, his entire look had transformed from his sudden actions. His upper robes got burned with a black flame that was produced from the rotten wood. The flames burned the rotten wood into ash and then jumped onto his torso.

Beneath those flames were the wiggling worm-like glyphs that lurched themselves into Su Liwei's skin like leeches turning his pale skin darker till it resembled charred wood. Su Liwei's entire body turned charred black with small fissures appearing all around him save for his left arm which had the red pearl.

That arm had turned dark red and produced a red mist that congealed behind Su Liwei to form an indistinct figure of a red snake with infinity-shaped pupils.

The transformation had happened almost instantaneously.

"You have grossly overestimated yourself coming here. There's a reason your organization barely survived a week under the Order's onslaught."

Before Su Liwei could register Yang Qing's words he felt his vision change. A sharp cold pain was coursing through his body from his back and his left arm was floating above him as it disintegrated like dried clay. Minute red dust reflection floated slowly above the disintegrating arm.

His thoughts and his body's response seemed to be in a lag like time had frozen and everything had been magnified. When he turned his vision downwards, the floor he had been standing on was absent and what was there was a bottomless elephant-sized hole.

He still had trouble registering what just happened. The rotten block of wood he used was a cursed artifact that would grant him the immediate strength of a quasi-palace realm expert while the red pearl was a genuine monarch-grade artifact that had a lethal attack mechanism to both the soul and body. One needed to have at least a quasi-palace realm strength to activate it, which was why he needed the rotten wood to boost his fifth-stage core formation cultivation base to the quasi-palace realm stage.

Today's attack wasn't just a chance encounter. He had planned everything perfectly for today's attack. Creating a shadow sect, researching the evaluation procedures and the strength of the personnel during the evaluation over the past five years, and sourcing artifacts that had a short activation time and high lethality.

About the only thing that had gone awry for him was the joint evaluation, since conducting the attack within the base of the Wild roar sect had better odds.

But even in his plans, he had accounted for a change of location, and with the support of the two artifacts, his attack was all but guaranteed to succeed since both the Summerfield kingdom and the Order personnel would only be at the core formation realm.

But things went completely different from what he had envisioned. He had a worst-case scenario but the current scene was miles above what he expected.

"What happened? Did...they....lie...to...me....."

Was...i.t...a...t...r...a...p...f...r...o...m...t...h...e...b...e...g...i...n...n...i...n...g?"

He didn't have the strength to talk and his thoughts along with his vision were turning sluggish. He mustered whatever strength he had left, to look upwards.

He still hoped by some chance his attack had succeeded. At this point, he would settle even for a small injury instead of the fatal injury he had expected and hoped for.

All that he managed to see was a white-haired young man standing above him surrounded with a resplendent misty white glow staring indifferently at him with eyes that were in the image of a full moon.

He didn't even have the energy to be shocked. His gaze turned hazy as he surrendered himself to the drowsiness and the beckon of death that was calling him.

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Su Liwei was not the only one confused about what just happened. Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe were just as confused despite being witnesses to the whole thing.

Both Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe had prepared themselves to attack the moment they gained their senses from the sudden attack. However, before they could even make a move, they were frozen where they stood by the pressure Su Liwei released the moment he stabbed the rotten wood into his navel.

The gaze of the red snake with the infinity symbol made them feel like their souls were being wrung of everything they had.

Just as they thought they were on the cusp of death, things took a turn in an instant. A sudden flash of white light appeared and obliterated everything including the pressure and the torment they were under including the silhouette of the red snake that was behind Su Liwei.

Everything had changed too fast for them to even register what just happened. In the time it took to blink an eye, Su Liwei had attacked Yang Qing as he rapidly transformed into a fiendish being with a red snake silhouette behind him, then a moment later he was not there.

All that stood before them was a massive hole in the middle of the hall, Su Liwei floating over the hole, missing a lower body and an arm that was disappearing like burning paper, and standing next to him was someone who resembled Yang Qing except he was pure white in every part of his body with a gentle glow being exuded from his body with an accompanying faint white mist.

#### Chapter 194 Dark Helminth Ghost Sect(1)

Even if Yang Qing wasn't radiating a fearsome aura like the one Su Liwei had been releasing mere moments ago, his presence still made both Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe take inadvertent gulps as beads of sweat formed on their hands and palms.

For some reason, they felt Yang Qing was there at the same time he wasn't, like he existed in a different space and all they saw was an afterimage of him.

However, just as prince Wenyan was debating whether to approach Yang Qing, a white fog suddenly appeared and surrounded both Yang Qing and the slowly decaying Su Liwei.

It was only when the fog started forming, did they notice a small white raven flying above Yang Qing.

The fog they saw surrounding Yang Qing came from its mouth. It blew out the fog as it flew clockwise around Yang Qing and the crater he had created.

Within a few seconds, Yang Qing and Su Liwei had disappeared from their view.

Both Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe stared at each other with dumbfounded, fearful expressions. The fog didn't just obstruct their view but also restricted their spiritual senses. It even started affecting their souls as they felt their entire senses get sluggish the longer they stared at the fog.

The past few seconds had put them through a rollercoaster of emotions and they still didn't even know what just happened in those few seconds.

Who was the attacker? And why did he target Yang Qing? And would their kingdom be in danger since Yang Qing got attacked under their eyes?

There was a lot to consider but they dared not move, they even refrained from speaking to each other for fear of triggering something else. The only form of communication they had was trading looks of fear.

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"How is the building still standing?"

It was in the brief reprieve and silence that Prince Wenyan noticed something off.

While the building hall they were in was packed with all sorts of defensive arrays, it was still not to the level that it would handle the clash of palace realm cultivators.

The only place in the whole kingdom that was fortified to that extent was the core region of the palace, and even then, it could just barely survive a few hits from an early palace realm cultivator.

As for the building hall, the best it could do was defend against those in the late stages of the core formation realm, more specifically those who had reached the tenth realm. Anything above that and the energy from the clash would leak outside as the building slowly but surely, collapsed.

The building was wholly intact, with no cracks, save for the location in the middle of the hall that had a massive hole in it. The rest of the building was seemingly okay.

As Prince Wenyan was lost in his thoughts, he saw a sudden flash of translucent membrane-like light, like the ones seen on an insect's wings or refracted water, appear on the walls and then disappear just as fast.

Prince Wenyan managed to spot a few complex white runes appearing within that flash.

It was then that he saw Captain Bu Zhe fearfully skip back as he stared at the door like it was some extremely poisonous creature.

It didn't take him long to figure out that the refractive flashing light was as a result of Captain Bu Zhe's attempt to go outside.

"What happened?" Prince Wenyan used a voiceless transmission technique to communicate with Captain Bu Zhe.

"I don't know. I tried to open the door but it suddenly repelled me back," Captain Bu Zhe fearfully answered.

Prince Wenyan paused for a bit before a look of realization hit him.

"So that's why....."

It must be Master Yang Qing's doing. It seems like he has isolated the place with some sort of barrier." Prince Wenyan thought as his gaze scanned all around the building.

"Don't touch anything else, let's just wait for him to finish his matters. Let's wait on his instructions first rather than acting autonomously. We may end up spoiling his matters or triggering something if we act carelessly," he added.

Captain Bu Zhe nodded in response. He even moved a few steps away from the door and the wall for good measure.

When the repelling reaction of the door struck him, that brief hit made him feel like his entire being was encapsulated in ice. His Qi movement even felt sluggish till now and he felt a very real shivering coldness in his entire being down to his very soul.

That interaction had made him extremely wary as he couldn't even react to the attack. As the man in charge of the protection of the king, he exercised honing his perception and spiritual sense, so he could react swiftly to any situation. Not many people within the kingdom could best him in that regard, but the attack from the door had shattered whatever pride he had in those skills.

There was nothing scarier than not knowing how you were even attacked.

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Inside the fog

"You came with quite the interesting artifacts. Even with your entire organization destroyed, it seems you still have some reserves left.

A lean camel is still bigger than a horse. Your foundation as a former rank 1 organization isn't for nothing.

Some even touted your Dark Helminth ghosts sect as the second Crimson wave but alas it wasn't meant to be," Yang Qing said as he crouched next to the hole as he eyed the disintegrating Su Liwei, playfully.

Su Liwei already had his eyes shut welcoming death but hearing Yang Qing's words that were laced with mockery, he opened them and glared at Yang Qing's way.

"So scary," Yang Qing said as he raised his hands in a look of feigned fear.

"Seeing that they only sent someone at the fifth stage of the core formation realm to attack someone from the Order, must mean you're a disposable pawn.

Torturing you for information will be useless since you more than likely know nothing and what you do know is either trivial inconsequential stuff or information planted in you for misdirection .... whichever the case Su Liwei, I'm afraid I will have to deny you the honor of playing the part of an unbending zealot for your organization.

So please put away that ' I won't spill anything' look you are throwing my way," Yang Qing said as he sat down in a lotus position.

"But there is something you can help me with, otherwise you wouldn't be alive right now."

Yang Qing's look turned cold as he removed a few things from his storage.

Su Liwei was still sluggish in his reactions but his pupils shrunk when he heard Yang Qing's words.

Yang Qing was particularly easygoing with a lot of matters even with enemies, however, there was a particular kind that he abhorred with his entire being. The Dark helminth ghost sect was one of them.

Chapter 195 Dark Helminth Ghost Sect (2)

By the time he joined the Order, they had already been eliminated, but something in him disliked organizations like theirs.

Those that treated lives so callously to the point that they'd make a hungry, bloodthirsty, and deranged spirit beast seem like a saint compared to their actions. Those whose path was tainted in so much blood that the earth would wail with their steps.

Yang Qing wasn't sure if it was because of his Yin Yang jade bones, but he was usually too sensitive when it came to matters surrounding ruthless bloodthirsty organizations like the Dark helminth ghost sect and the Scarlet blood ghost hands.

The Dark helminth ghost sect was a dark sect that was renowned eight hundred years ago.

Originally it was not a sect but a royal unit that handled matters for the Emperor of a certain rank 3 empire. It was known as the emperor's 'dark hand'. They handled all matters the Emperor wanted to be handled, from within the shadows with extreme efficiency.

They were a source of nightmares to that Emperor's enemies.

However, while that unit was the reason the Emperor had a firm hold of power, it also became the reason that emperor died. That unit had done so many things at the Emperor's behest and some at their own volition as a show of fealty to their Emperor including snatching some gold-grade cultivation art for their emperor.

They were successful in their attempt but their Emperor got killed through a soul attack by an unknown organization as a result of it.

The unit went unhinged in a revenge spree as it slaughtered any and all who may have had ties to the Emperor's assassination. Even the emperor's own children were not spared in that spree.

They slaughtered a quarter of the empire before they moved on to the empire's enemies. They created an ocean-sized trail of carnage in their wake and soon they were not killing to avenge their master, but killing to feed the cultivation art they had stolen, the trigger of everything.

The art fed on the lives of the living and the dead. It swallowed both the blood qi and corpse qi and fed it to the user of the art.

That unit had found another master in the cultivation art they found. They lived for it now and they slaughtered to feed it. The unit later reformed into the Dark helminth ghost sect. Their numbers were few but their power was undeniable.

Despite the bloodthirsty nature of the art, it didn't eat away at the rationality of the user. Weird as it was, it could be considered a well-balanced art that addressed the yin and Yang nature through blood and corpse qi refinement. However, the only caveat was, one could only make progress with it through slaughter and desecration of corpses. This was exactly what the sect did, and faithfully at that.

At the height of their power, the Order had only been officially active for 200 years. In those 200 years, they had not made any waves, only handling a few cases here and there nothing noteworthy, building their reputation a little at a time.

The Dark helminth ghost sect became the first real case and test for the Order to really reveal its fangs to the Southern continent.

The Order's reaction had been thunderous and swift at the time. The Dark helminth ghost sect's founder had just reached the soul formation realm when he got eviscerated by a blinding sword streak that destroyed him along with half his base, with the rest of the survivors being taken care of by four people from the Order.

To date, to both outsiders and even those within the Order, not many know who those four people were or the owner of the sword streak that decimated half the base of a rank 1 sect. All that is known, is they were from the Order and the Dark helminth ghost sect was the mirror that revealed the Order's edge.

The Dark helminth ghost sect is one of two rank 1 organizations that have been recorded to have fallen beneath the Order's blade. Though the Dark helminth ghost sect was attacked with the intent to destroy completely, the other organization was left with a path of survival. But in terms of shaking the continent with its news, the destruction of the Dark helminth ghost sect paled in comparison to the attack on the other organization.

This was because in terms of strength and reputation, the Dark helminth ghost sect and that organization, were miles apart even though they were both rank 1 organizations.

Even though the Dark helminth ghost sect had a notorious reputation and had spread fear in its wake, its impact was subjective. Excluding the holy lands at the time, other rank 1 organizations never considered the sect a threat, even some rank 2 organizations with serious depth were undeterred by them. They tolerated the sect as a form of entertainment or pawn they could use for their own objectives.

The targets the Dark helminth ghost sect chose over the years was also proof that they too, were cognizant of this fact. There were areas they dared not step into. Their overall fear factor in the Southern continent paled in comparison to the Crimson wave which exceeded them in quantity and quality.

The Dark helminth ghost sect had a single soul formation expert and about a dozen domain experts. They rarely recruited new members so their numbers were always few. Its recruitment policy was more like a clan's than a sect's. Only relatives or people with deep personal relationships with the royal unit were considered for recruitment into their ranks.

However, even if their numbers were few, they had a few things going on for them that were absent with the Crimson wave. They were meticulous in their dealings, were loyal to each other, and knew how to cover their tracks and improve their odds of survival.

It is why, despite the decimation of their base and their founder, remnants of their organization still exist to date.

Some of the attacks suffered by Order employees are tied to survivors of the Dark helminth ghost sect. Based on the report the Order has on them, a domain expert had survived the attack on their base. That domain expert along with a few members were considered fail-safe plans instituted by the sect to ensure the survival of the embers of their sect.

That domain expert along with a few of the members were absent during the attack on the sect's base. The Order's investigation surmised the absenteeism was a measured action and not some sheer luck and maybe there may be others spread about around the continent who may be activated the moment the current domain expert dies.

The sect has only been shown to be active when an Order employee is targeted. Even though their numbers are few, they can still be considered a thorn in the Order's eyes due to how they operate.

Their attacks are carefully planned and swift in terms of execution. If the execution fails, there are measures to either ensure a safe exit or clues tying to other members are virtually non-existent.

Yang Qing had doubts if Su Liwei would have attacked if he had known he was a palace realm expert.

...

Yang Qing took out a few paper talismans, a small grey candle, and a peach wood which he placed next to the candle.

## Chapter 196 Five Thousand Cardinals Of The Incendiary Flame Of The Blighted Plain

Su Liwei grew more and more anxious when he saw Yang Qing take out a few more objects from his storage ring.

Even if he couldn't judge their exact strength because of his sluggish senses and disintegrating body, he could at least feel the energy they released. They were all higher than the red pearl he had used against Yang Qing.

Seeing so many high-end goods being brought out made him feel uneasy about what Yang Qing planned to do with them.

He hasn't had any contact with anyone from his sect in the past three years and anything important had been wiped from his memory. Any lingering traces he had on him that would tie him to the sect had been wiped too.

The Dark helminth ghost sect had researched and created many measures into ensuring the anonymity of each member from one another.

With their small numbers and the dangers that came with targetting those from Order, they had to use numerous means to ensure one person didn't implicate the other.

With years of practice, they got better at it. This was why to date, despite targetting those from the Order they still managed to survive.

They chose their targets well and in case something went wrong, there were already measures in place to ensure there would be as little collateral damage to the sect as possible.

He may have misjudged Yang Qing's strength, but he had enough confidence that nothing he had on him could implicate other members of the sect.

Even though that's what he thought, a huge part of him still felt worried. As far as he knew, the Dark helminth ghost sect always kept their targets small, not once had they targetted someone at the palace realm.

Their choice of prey were new inquisitors of the outer core courts, administrators, and a few other low-level employees.

Targeting an evaluator could be considered a whale of a target. It was why he had to plan for five years in consultation with some of his seniors before he felt confident enough in his chances. He even added monarch-grade treasures for good measure and underwent ruthless cleansing to make sure that even if he was caught there would not be a thread to follow.

Just as he was sinking further and further into his quagmire of worrying thoughts, he heard Yang Qing sigh in relief.

"Phew!! I hope this works out. If it ends up being someone in the domain, I will have made such a huge loss," Yang Qing muttered as his gaze turned to the paper talismans floating above him, the grey unlit candle, the peach wood, and a few high-grade stones he had placed around the grey candle.

His gaze turned solemn as it landed on Su Liwei, who despite how terrified he felt still couldn't exhibit it on his face. His body was stiff like dried clay and the disintegration was still eating away at his body.

"I hope you'll bring me an excellent harvest," Yang Qing said as the white glow coming from his body turned even more intense.

He started forming seals in his hands so rapidly that his hands turned blurry.

An immense amount of qi leaked out of Yang Qing's body that it congealed into a light green mist and with it came a suffocating pressure that destroyed every board left in the area. Just as it was about to destroy the roof, the talismans floating above ignited into a blue flame that dissolved whatever pressure came its way.

The fog produced by the white raven got thicker, the more Qi Yang Qing leaked. It seemed to be working in tandem with the blue flame to contain Yang Qing's pressure within a set parameter.

If Su Liwei was worried earlier, now it was beyond that. Whatever he was seeing had gone beyond the realm of a worst-case scenario.

He didn't know what Yang Qing was planning, but just the prologue itself was enough to send his mind into a tailspin.

"Five thousand cardinals of the incendiary flame of the blighted plain."

Yang Qing's voice boomed with a sense of majesty as a plain field appeared behind him which then spread to cover the ground below him and Su Liwei.

Numerous white crisscrossing lines appeared on that plain.

Su Liwei still had no idea what was happening, but things turned absurdly terrifying to him by the second.

The qi Yang Qing released, had grown beyond what he had even experienced at one of the branch hideouts they used. That branch had spiritual qi that was dense enough to match a few low rank 3 organizations.

Yang Qing's whole body had turned blindingly white that he couldn't even see him properly. It was like he was surrounded by a pure white flame that swallowed everything around him. The only thing he saw in the midst of that white cloak, was one golden-yellow round object the size of an eye floating in a fixed place within it.

His body started to disintegrate faster. However, unlike before, he clearly felt that something was different this time. He felt something was being drained out of him with every disintegration.

In just a few minutes, only his shoulders were left and that indistinct feeling of being drained got clearer by the second.

He finally saw what was being drained from his body... A speck size drop of blood was floating next to him as it rapidly spun around.

His disintegrating body was rapidly swirling as it fed into the small drop of blood.

However, that was not the only thing bed fed in there.

The floating dust-like shards of the red pearl that had been floating above his arm were also congealing into the spinning blood adding more texture to it.

Su Liwei could feel his end drawing close, however the undaunting feeling he had before towards death had disappeared and was replaced by overwhelming worry.

He may not know precisely what Yang Qing was trying to achieve exactly but he had a few guesses based on what was happening around him.

His essence was being drained, and combined with the red pearl. Below him was the plain with small white threads spreading about from the center like a compass.

He guessed that his essence and the pearl were about to be used as a conduit in conjunction with the plain below him to track something. As for that something, If it wasn't obvious before, now it was. It was the person who gave him the red pearl.

He still hoped he was wrong, however his hopes were dashed when the drop of blood started descending slowly into the plain. By that point, the only part left of Su Liwei was his eyes and forehead. But even that soon mottled away as it combined into the blood drop that was about the size of a melon seed.

The last thing he saw was a grey flame ignite as the blood drop touched the plain.

Chapter 197 Yang Qing Suffers A Loss

The white lines and the plain rippled like the surface of a lake when the drop of blood came into contact with it. That red drop seemed to sink below the plain as it burrowed into one of the white lines.

It rapidly crisscrossed along the white lines like it was a pathway guiding it to something. The faster it moved, the brighter Yang Qing's white light and the grey flame flashed. The rapid crisscrossing went on for almost ten minutes before it finally settled down in on a white line that was in the northwestern part of the plain.

"Ignite,"

Yang Qing muttered from within the white cloak once he saw the blood drop finally settle down. The drop ignited in a deep blue flame. The peach wood which was the only object that had remained unused during the whole thing, darted towards the blue flame.

"This is it, I hope it connects."

Yang Qing muttered to himself as he slowly watched the peach wood produce pink smoke chains that attached themselves to the blue flame as it was being burnt down.

The peach block of wood was rectangular shaped, about six inches long and three inches wide. When it fell into the flames it reduced by half in an instant and then its rate of decrease stagnated almost as if the latter half was immune to the blue flames.

"Move, please move," Yang Qing nervously said once he saw the situation had remained unchanged even after five minutes had lapsed.

As if in response to Yang Qing's plea, the rectangular block of peach wood was reduced by an inch with more pink smoke chains forming every time it burned. Yang Qing's expression eased once he saw the movement.

Even though the progress after was slow, there was no stagnation like before. The blue flame slowly ate away at the peach block as it produced more chains that wrapped themselves around the blue flame like a ball.

This went on for almost an hour till finally the last chip of the peach wood had been burnt away. All that was left behind was a ball of cloudy pink chains that was snuffing out the last embers of the blue flame.

"Yeeeeeees!" Yang Qing shouted in glee when the chains combined to form a peach flower which then dissolved into the location the blood drop had been in.

Seconds later, the plain disappeared along with the grey flame. Even Yang Qing's white cloak faded, revealing a faintly exhausted face with a triumphant smile hanging on it.

His hair, his skin along with his eyes, went back to his normal look of green hair and green eyes. The only thing that didn't return to normal immediately was his skin tone which was a bit paler than before, however it gradually returned to its normal composition with every inhale and exhale he took. In just a few minutes his skin tone was normal however there was still a sense of fatigue hidden within the depth of his eyes.

As for the items he had taken out, the flames from the talismans above him had already faded, however, the roof had been protected. The white raven above him was fainter and smaller than before, but the fog still remained dense as it was before. The grey candle along with the high-grade spirit stones had disappeared.

"Even with the help of the spirit-strengthening wicker candle, the top-grade gold art; Five thousand cardinals of the incendiary flame of the blighted plain, still took its toll. Karmic spells are really not my forte, I wonder how Yu Huifang handles them," Yang Qing muttered as he alternated his gaze to where the candle was and the plain.

The art had drained almost half his qi reserves and his soul essence when he cast it to completion. The former didn't worry him too much since he could recover qi much faster than most people because of his special peerless jade physique. High-speed qi regeneration and huge qi reserves were among its special attributes. But when it came to soul essence, even if his recovery was faster than most people, it would still require a day to fully recover.

If he didn't use the spirit-strengthening wicker candle, the drain on his soul essence would have been many times higher than what it was.

"You can erase your memories but even that action leaves clues. Luckily the person who helped you cover your tracks and gave you the red pearl was one and the same person. The qi he left on the pearl and you, were sufficient to form a connection.

Now for the last part," Yang Qing tiredly muttered as he took out his communication talisman.

"I'm not reducing the evaluation numbers on your list, Yang Qing," a curt voice sounded on the other end of the call the moment it connected.

"I'm not calling for that, though supervisor Lei Weiyuan don't you think it's unfair to spring those evaluations on me without giving me ample time to prepare," Yang Qing answered with aggrievement in his tone

"Blood, sweat, and tears Yang Qing wouldn't want that. I was just respecting his wishes as a caring supervisor. So why are you calling? if it's not to complain and ask for less work,"

Yang Qing gnashed his teeth as he breathed in and out to center himself. Lei Weiyuan had the same skills as Ellie when it came to riling him up. Atleast when it came to Ellie, he could throw a punch or fifty but with Lei Weiyuan, he was always on the receiving end of some form of workplace beating.

"Someone from the Dark helminth ghost sect attacked me during my evaluations in Summerfield kingdom..,"

"Attacked?... Again? weren't you just in a fight with someone from the Golden bamboo pavilion a few hours ago? How much bad luck can one person have?"

Isn't this all happening to me because you sent me on these damn evaluations. It's all your fault, old geezer.

Yang Qing chose to ignore Lei Weiyuan's interruption and hurtful remarks as he went on with his report.

"The attacker is dead, but I managed to use the 'Five thousand cardinal of the incendiary flame of the blighted plain' art to mark the location of one of his backers who handed him a monarch-grade artifact for his operation.

Considering the effort I went through to get a lock on him, the backer should be someone in the palace realm. I managed to tag him with the treading cicada peach wood. Those from the special inquisition should be able to track him easily from its scent," said Yang Qing as he winced at the loss he had made with the treading cicada peach wood.

The treading cicada peach wood he had on him, was from a saint-grade tree. It had many uses, one of which was in tracking someone. It could mark someone's body and soul with its scent. Once it connected, the scent could only be washed away by using another saint-grade treasure or a high-tier art that was at least in the gold grade.

The duration the scent lingered on someone, depended on the size of the wood used.

"How long?" Lei Weiyuan.

"About 20-30 days,"

"That should be more than enough time for the special inquisitors to track them. I will inform their deputy director and also have your merits recorded for this,"

"Umm, supervisor Lei Weiyuan, could I maybe get a refund for the...."

Just before Yang Qing could finish his statement the call disconnected.

"You old geezer!!!! just wait, when I become your boss, see how I take care of you," Yang Qing angrily said as he punched and kicked the fog a few times.

Chapter 198 Yang Qing Shares His Wisdom

"The time that passed by is sure to cause a commotion," muttered Yang Qing once he had sufficiently vented his frustration on the fog.

By his estimate, atleast two hours had elapsed. This was sure to make the organizations who came for the evaluation, wary, especially due to the disparity of the time taken and no one to address them within that time.

He had sealed the hall, locking everyone inside, with him, while those outside couldn't barge in, not unless there were stronger than him and thus capable of breaking the seal he had placed in the building hall.

The first hundred evaluations were completed very fast but now one evaluation had taken the same time it would take to evaluate 20 organizations.

That huge difference in time taken would not go unnoticed by them and then when the sect master of the Wild Roar sect and Su Liwei didn't come out, it was sure to add even more questions.

"I'll take it as it comes but for these two, I guess giving them an explanation wouldn't hurt...even the Spiritual temperance sect especially if the Dark Helminth Ghost sect has set up base within their territory," thought Yang Qing as he waved his sleeves and the broken floor repaired itself.

However if one looked close enough they'd be able to notice a subtle difference on the repaired flooring compared to the rest of the hall.

Though the material was the same, the refilled wood Yang Qing just created over the hole he created when he punched Su Liwei, had a more raw natural feel to it. It felt like it was more tree than processed wood.

" I don't know if the Order should create another branch in their territory.

Seems a bit strenuous to have the Deer Mountain branch handle cases in both the Deer Mountain kingdom and the Spiritual Temperance sect's territory.

They both have the same issues. Hopefully there's a plan underway, but just in case I'll have to report my findings to push the matter," Yang Qing thought as he fixed his robes.

...

Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe were a bundle of nerves especially when the hour mark hit without a single peep from Yang Qing.

The only thing that helped them stay still throughout the whole duration, was the fog that surrounded Yang Qing. The fact that it was still active, was proof that Yang Qing was still okay.

A look of relief washed over them both when they saw Yang Qing emerge from the receding fog.

Within a few seconds, the fog along with the white raven disappeared. The building walls also briefly shimmered concurrently with the white raven's disappearance.

Su Liwei isn't there?

Both Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe noticed the absence of the culprit behind the whole thing. However, they were mindful and a bit wary of asking anything.

They had already agreed if Yang Qing decided not to reveal anything, they would pretend the whole thing didn't happen. This was to the extent that they would even hide the matter from the king if need be.

Whatever Yang Qing decided, they would go along with it. In their judgment from the brief experience, the matter seemed a little too big for their kingdom to handle.

....

"The attacker is someone from the Dark Helminth Ghost sect. Your kingdom should have already been formed when they were still around, so you should have some idea about who they are."

Yang Qing on seeing their curious hesitant expressions didn't keep them waiting for long before he gave them an explanation.

Both Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe nodded in affirmation of Yang Qing's presumption of their knowledge about the Dark Helminth Ghost sect.

The Summerfield kingdom, though can be considered young among kingdoms of its rank, has been in existence for atleast eight thousand years.

They, therefore, knew a thing or two about the Dark Helminth Ghost sect, which had been infamous in its existence, up until 800 years ago, before it met its demise at the hands of the Order. And the information they had access to, wasn't light either, considering their station within the kingdom.

"Then that makes things easier. Our history with them isn't a secret. Su Liwei's target was me and only me. He used the evaluation as an opportunity to strike.

He is already dead and the Order will be handling any matters associated with him and his organization. So you can all rest assured that the Summerfield kingdom will not be implicated in this, in any way," said Yang Qing as he tried to ease their tension.

Even if it now existed as a shell of its former self, the Dark Helminth Ghost sect was still leagues above what the Summerfield kingdom could handle.

They had a domain expert and a few palace realm experts at the helm. Who knows how many other talents had joined their ranks over the years?

The red pearl and the rotten wood were monarch-grade treasures, which showed the sect still had a few reserves in them capable of easily toppling a rank 4 kingdom like the Summerfield kingdom, should they decide to turn their attention their way.

Yang Qing's statement helped ease whatever worries Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe may have had though Prince Wenyan still seemed a bit troubled.

" I thank you Judge Yang Qing on behalf of my kingdom. I would also like to offer an apology for being negligent in our duties which allowed such an attack to happen.

I'm deeply ashamed and sorry for it, if there is anything we can do, please do not hesitate to ask," Prince Wenyan solemnly said as both he and Captain Bu Zhe bowed in guilt, moreso the latter as he had been put in charge of maintaining security.

"Don't be so hard on yourselves, there's nothing to apologize for. I sprung up the whole thing on your kingdom at the last minute.

And even if I had given you ample time, the person from the Dark Helminth Ghost sect would have still got in.

This is a sect that has managed to evade even us, a few times and etch out survival for the past 800 years.

Such a reputation is not unwarranted, they have the skills to back it up. I'm afraid even the Spiritual Temperance sect would be in the same situation, were they placed in the same shoes as you.

So brother Wenyan, brother Bu Zhe, my humble advice would be this; if you want to take responsibility, do so for the things that are within your power to do so, as for things that aren't, just shake them off and leave it to those who can. Beating yourself up about it won't change anything, you might as well let it go, life is easier that way.

I do it all the time," Yang Qing said as he smiled in satisfaction when he remembered the pile of trouble he dropped on the domain-level branch chief of the Yellow Plains branch.

The domain leader of the Golden bamboo pavilion was someone else's problem. He was just a puny palace realm expert. He had zero guilt whenever he dumped problems above his pay grade to others.

It's one of the reasons he would never leave the Order no matter how many times he complained or how they ruthlessly exploited him. There was never a shortage of people willing to take care of his problems in strides. It was as easy as breathing to them, the same way he easily disciplined the three palace realm experts on behalf of Ellie.

Chapter 199 Chaos Under The Lake

Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe looked at each other, confusion written in their eyes at Yang Qing's advice. But when they saw him smiling and the genuine look on his face, they couldn't help but laugh along with him as they shook their heads.

"We will do just that," said Prince Wenyan. He had already decided after the evaluation he was going to urge his father to dump the problem on the doors of the Spiritual temperance sect.

Despite their cavalier attitude regarding matters outside their sect grounds, surely they would have a reaction if an organization such as the Dark Helminth Ghost sect, planted its footprints within their territory.

He even felt a vague sense of satisfaction at the thought of dumping it on them.

"Maybe I should remove myself from the competition for the throne, letting others carry the weight doesn't seem bad at all," he thought before he shook his head and smiled ruefully.

"Master Yang Qing, can we inform the king about this?" Captain Bu Zhe tentatively asked.

It was then that Prince Wenyan noticed he had overlooked Yang Qing's opinion in involving his father.

"It would be best. Even though the Dark Helminth Ghost sect would not be in a position to act on you since we will be tracking anyone with ties to Su Liwei, It doesn't hurt to be extra vigilant," said Yang Qing.

"I'll also be disclosing the matter to the Spiritual temperance sect after I'm done here," he added a second later.

Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe became visibly delighted at this.

The word of someone from the Order would carry more weight than their own. And Yang Qing would less likely be turned away at the gate while for them well.....

Most people thought they had a subordinate relationship with the Spiritual temperance sect but they knew it couldn't be further from the truth. They were glorified errand runners for the sect. If they went there without an invite from them, they would be turned away just like the rest of them. They'd get a solid beating accompanied by a stern warning for their troubles.

His grandfather, the previous king, suffered such a treatment when he was still king. He had a deep relationship with them going back over a thousand years.

He soon came to realize he grossly overestimated the weight of that relationship when he went unannounced to their sect to seek guidance in his cultivation. He had been at the peak of the core formation realm at the time, just inches away from becoming a quasi-palace realm cultivator.

He needed assistance on just that final push, therefore he went to his 'old friends' the Spiritual temperance sect.

He left a chipper smug old man but came back a vengeful, bitter very older man with no life in his eyes. He abdicated his throne that very same day and left for parts unknown.

From what his father told him, his grandfather took up fishing and farming in some fields within the kingdom.

His grandfather's beating served as a reminder and warning to the Summerfield kingdom about their place within the Spiritual temperance sect's eye.

Yang Qing personally delivering the news to the Spiritual temperance sect had saved both him and his father, a potential beating. Moreso him, since his father was shameless enough to leave him with the bag to handle the whole thing.

The more he thought about this, the more he felt he should really give up the throne.

A thousand years later the Summerfield kingdom had gained a weird rumor and reputation, it was that the king's seat was cursed. In those thousand years, kings would abdicate their throne within short periods of each other. Some even sat less than a day in that seat before they gave it away, while the heirs apparent would run away or wail at being chosen as the next king.

The rulers started locking their successors after that, to ensure there was someone to succeed him/her after they left.

No one ever knew where the previous kings went off to after they left their posts, but the farming techniques of the kingdom exploded by leaps and bounds in those a thousand years, with the source of that upsurge being unknown. But that is a story for another day.

....

"Judge Yang Qing, what do we tell those outside?" Prince Wenyan asked after he had resolved himself to find a new path, during that brief pause.

"We tell them nothing,"

"Pardon.."

"There's no need to explain anything as any explanation we offer, will only draw more conclusions from them.

Better to just leave everything to their own imaginations, which with time, will get preoccupied with their evaluations.

So let's go on with business as usual,"

"Okay then," Prince Wenyan said as he motioned for Captain Bu Zhe to arrange for the next organization to be evaluated.

Both he and Yang Qing returned to their earlier positions like nothing had happened.

As for the servants who had been in the hall with them, Yang Qing had them sent away after his meal. He had already detected Su Liwei when the evaluations began thus when he detected his turn had come, he had the servants sent away before Su Liwei came into the hall.

Just as expected, the organizations were at first full of confusion and questions at the delay, especially when they didn't see the Wild Roar sect come out. But when they got no reply from the guards or Captain Bu Zhe, that curiosity got shelved the moment the evaluations began progressing like normal.

Under the euphoric cheers of promotion and despair of being caught cheating, the organizations soon forgot there had been a two-hour delay or a sect master had gone missing during an evaluation.

Organizations dropped like flies within the Spiritual temperance sect region, the missing sect master and his disciples drew curious thoughts when they didn't come out but a few hours later, they were long forgotten.

...

Inside a gazebo in the center of a lake was a young man leisurely throwing worms into the lake as he held a communication talisman in one hand.

"It seems like what you feared, has happened. One of the division leaders in charge of the operation got marked,"

" I told you this may happen, cancelling the operation would have been a safer option.

The opponent this time wasn't someone they could handle.

What was he marked with?"

"Based on his description, it seems to be the treading cicada peach wood,"

"Will you help him? Though I think it's safer to just eliminate him. If he was marked, then the special inquisition has already been dispatched as we speak. There's not much time, better to cut our losses and eliminate any traces he has on him to us,"

"To others, the peach wood might be trouble but alchemy and spiritual plants are our forte. We will help him. We still need the Dark Helminth Ghost sect to act in the open as we prepare in the shadows."

"Does it have to be the Order?"

"Are you having second thoughts, you can still back out if you want. I know you have attachments to it, I won't fault you for it. You have already helped us plenty enough."

"I'm already on this road, I can't leave it. And the reason I'm hesitant isn't because of loyalty, it's because I know how powerful they are. The Radiant Sword sect would be an easier target in my opinion."

"It's precisely because they are powerful, that it has to be them. The destruction of the Star Collapsing Sword sect was an eye-opener for us.

The Order is a much bigger threat. They also have more enemies than the Radiant Sword Sect, making it easier for us to rope in more people against them.

The Myriad Beasts sect fell because of the same thing, now it's their turn. Rather fitting for them to share the same fate since part of it is built in their former territory.

Take care of yourself and avoid doing anything that would draw suspicion before the second phase is set in motion,"

"I will,"

The young man calmly placed the communication talisman on his lap as he admired the lake below him that was filled with an endless number of beasts continuously fighting for the worms he dropped.

Any one of these beasts could cause terror within the continent, since the weakest of them was at the palace realm and the stronger were at the quasi-soul formation realm.

"Time for some chaos," the young man muttered as he gently smiled, throwing another worm into the lake.

Chapter 200 Warning The Spiritual Temperance Sect

Yang Qing crazily spread through the remaining evaluations with the goal of trying to make up for the time he had lost when dealing with Su Liwei.

He abstained from even taking a break or even having a bite to eat, which he had to admit was harder than he expected. In the end, he even felt a bit faint, which he wasn't sure if it was from hunger or the fatigue he had gotten from using the gold-grade art to plant a mark on Su Liwei's backer.

His efforts and self-sacrifice finally paid off as he managed to finish the last evaluation at the five-hour mark. He had taken almost half the time it took him to clear the first a hundred batch.

Of course other than his extreme desire to make up for the lost two hours, there were other factors that worked in his favor during the evaluation of the second batch.

Unlike the first batch, the second batch did not have standouts in terms of bloodline or the quality of their grades. Most ended up with white grade pillars, while a few got red grade pillars and only one person among the hundred organizations had managed to form an orange grade pillar, and it was in the lowest tier at that, similar to the one Murong Yan had from the Murong family.

...

"Judge Yang Qing, are you sure you won't stay? Father has already prepared a banquet for you and also a place to rest for the night."

Prince Wenyan tried to persuade Yang Qing into staying when he saw him pack up the evaluation artifacts in preparation to depart.

"I wish I could stay but I have about 1,000 more evaluations to conduct and two and half days deadline to complete it by.

With how my schedule is, it's even hard for me to even find the time to say goodbye to the king despite how rude and unthankful it may seem.

But after everything is done and I get some free time, I'll make a point of coming back here. Your kingdom has the perfect environment for relaxing and unwinding. When that time comes, I'll be in your care," said Yang Qing.

"I guess it would be rather inconsiderate of us if we kept insisting. Please inform me beforehand when you do decide to come back. We'll make sure to arrange a grand tour and show you the best of what our humble kingdom has to offer," Prince Wenyan said as he handed Yang Qing signal call connection arrays for his communication talisman.

Yang Qing gladly shared his in return and then put his communication array away.

"Prince Wenyan, Captain Bu Zhe, I offer you my sincerest gratitude for the aid you rendered in supporting me in my evaluations. Please offer my thanks to the king too. Your help saved me a lot of trouble and time.

If any of you ever needs assistance with anything provided it's within my means, please don't hesitate to reach me, I'll be glad to return the favor your kingdom showed me today," Yang Qing said as he cupped his fists in gratitude.

"The pleasure is all ours," both Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe enthusiastically said as they cupped their fists in return.

"Take care of yourselves."

Yang Qing's voice echoed in the hall room as he disappeared in the form of grey smoke in typical fashion as he did in all the other places he had been to prior to coming to the Summerfield kingdom.

Both Prince Wenyan and Captain Bu Zhe collapsed to the floor a few seconds after Yang Qing had disappeared, with tired expressions showing on their faces. The pressure they endured throughout the day came flooding all at once the moment Yang Qing left.

"We have a long way to go," Captain Bu Zhe muttered as he stared at the floor Yang Qing had punched a hole through during his attack against Su Liwei.

"That we do," Prince Wenyan said as he sighed. He knew his talent wasn't the greatest when it came to cultivation but it never bothered him much since he had the resources to make up for it and his true talents lay elsewhere. He was always self-aware of what he was good at and what he wasn't, but today's experience made him realize how weak he was.

Were he the target of Su Liwei's attack, he would have died without even knowing how he died.

"We need to warn his majesty about the Dark Helminth Ghost sect but that will have to wait an hour or two...I never thought the day would come when I'd be so exhausted to the point of feeling unbearably drowsy.

When was the last time I slept?... I don't think I've done so ever since I stepped into the core formation realm.

Captain Bu Zhe, I'll be resting here for a while." Prince Wenyan said as his voice grew lethargic towards the end.

"Captain..?"

Prince Wenyan turned his head Bu Zhe's way when he didn't receive a response, only to see him with his back against the wall, his head plopped backward, eyes closed and his mouth mildly open.

"Seems you beat me to it," Prince Wenyan thought as he lightly chuckled to himself.

He removed a white neatly sown cultivation cushion from his storage ring and used it as a makeshift neck pillow as he rested himself on the wall next to Captain Bu Zhe.

Faint sleeping noises started echoing around the hall room.

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"After meeting with the Spiritual temperance sect, the Blue Lotus kingdom will be the next evaluation point. By my count, they should have about 300 organizations within their territory.

That's a good number. If I finish it in good time, I may have some time to spare toward the end," Yang Qing gleefully thought as he crosschecked a few things on his map before he stored it away.

"Even though she steals from me all the time, it wouldn't be bad to reward her with a few samples of the magma koi fish coming in," Yang Qing mused as his gaze fell on Ellie.

Ellie was flying at a breakneck speed in the Spiritual temperance sect's direction. Although she could maintain her current momentum for two hundred days straight before fatigue kicked in, the three-day trip journey was sure to take its toll on her by the end of it.

During the journey, other than maintaining her speed, she had to be continuously on high alert especially when they traversed across dangerous territories like the Deer Mountain kingdom. Doing both those things at once would take a huge mental toll on her.

Yang Qing paused his calculations of how many magma koi fish to give her when he detected the energy fluctuations of a high-tier blue-grade formation ahead of him.

The area his gaze fell under was a large open space of land that had grass, a few trees, and a summer-white cloud over it. Even though that's what it seemed like, the view from Yang Qing's eyes was different.

His pupils turned black and white with a few indistinct scripts in their recess as he fixed his gaze on the land about a kilometer away.

From his view, there was a transparent dome covering an enormous area. The source of that dome was a semitransparent tree at the center of the dome. It was over 100,000 meters tall with a canopy that could cover the whole of the Summerfield kingdom with enough room to spare.

The dome seemed to be originating from the center of the canopy along with some blue-white runes that were produced along with it.

"It seems there's not much I can glean from it...the Spiritual temperance sect has a formidable formation master ...or is it some artifact?" thought Yang Qing as he shook his head in defeat.

Even though he could be considered a blue-grade formation master himself, he still struggled to decipher the profundities of the formation before him, though that was to be expected.

Even though he was a blue-grade formation master, just like alchemy, the scope of formation arrays was so wide that one couldn't say they knew everything within their sphere of expertise.

...

"Ellie, stop here. I'll be going in by myself," Yang Qing said once they were about two hundred meters from the dome

Below them, there was a small courtyard outside the coverage of the dome. It had a few simple buildings, a small pond, and a garden filled with sky-rank herbs and a few monarch-grade herbs.

Even though the courtyard seemed bare and unprotected without the covering of the dome, it had a well-concealed short-burst killing array attached to it. Based on his estimates, Yang Qing deduced it had enough firepower to threaten the life of an early-stage palace realm expert like himself. But as for whether that array could successfully strike its target, was a different matter.

Inside the courtyard, there were three people. One was a peak stage core formation expert, another was at the fifth stage of the core formation realm, while the last one was at the first stage of the core formation realm, and based on the fluctuations she released, she didn't seem to have broken through very long.

Yang Qing lept off Ellie's back as he gently floated toward the entrance gate of the courtyard.

By the time he landed, the three cultivators were already on high alert. Yang Qing could already detect the killing array had already been primed for an attack and the three cultivators were releasing qi fluctuations typical of those preparing themselves for a battle.

"I mean you no harm friends, I'm just here to report something to your sect then I'll be on my way," Yang Qing gently said to try and ease the tension.