

Daily life 351

Chapter 351 Potential End Of A Journey (2)

Zou Yi could feel his palms turn sweaty and cold. His heart pounded so loudly that it threatened to break out of his ribcage. His hearing had gone at some point, other than the sounds of his heartbeat and his heavy breath, he couldn't hear anything else. It felt like his whole head had been submerged in water. His vision was the next to get affected as it seemed blurrier than usual. He wasn't sure if it was because of the pool of sweat coming out of his body that affected it, or if it was his irregular heartbeat that had affected his breathing and now his vision.

The only thing that seemed intact was his sense of touch. He could feel the cold touch of the century iron pebble, which was oddly comforting to him.

Do I use the fist art, the pebble, or the poisoned sword?

Zou Yi didn't have time to make a decision because within seconds he was already in the midst of the chaotic battle.

Before him, there were piles of branches and pieces of trees that were cleaved apart along with the corpses of spirit beasts strewn about that never saw it coming.

There were two figures in the middle of that chaotic mess that were moving their weapons so fast that it seemed they had more than two hands and every time they clashed their weapons it felt like thunder had rumbled.

Zou Yi who had not yet decided on his move felt his body move on its own as he flung the century-iron pebble at the small figure blitzing all over the place as she swung her sword creating a destructive force that made the attack he had suffered from the snapping willow seem like a gentle poke in comparison.

"Is she human? is Lai Rou?" he muttered in shock.

"What are you gawking for?!!!" roared He Shan as he rapidly fired half a dozen arrows at Yin Rong who had effortlessly dodged Zou Yi's thrown pebble by a hair's breadth.

He Shan's arrows were dealt with just as swiftly. She danced through some and destroyed some with one of her swords.

She was a dual wielder and had two swords of similar style. They were as thin as cicada wings with a bronze hue on the surface of the blades and sword hilts that had engravings of white petals on them.

"What are you doing?" she coldly said as she charged straight at He Shan, who quickly used the traceless leaf gliding movement art to draw distance between himself and her.

His steps were light and his movements fluidly angular. It seemed as if he was swimming in the air as he rapidly fired more arrows, with Yin Rong using her petite body to narrowly dodge them.

The ease and precision at which she dodged the arrows made it seem like she could read He Shan's mind. Even with her dodging, the speed at which she charged at He Shan didn't slow either.

Seeing that she was already so close, He Shan drew the axe from his hip in preparation for a frontal clash.

Yin Rong crossed her blades to attack but before they could connect with He Shan someone appeared in front of him with a lanky build, torn robes, and tiny blade marks all over his arms, and legs. I think you should take a look at

It was Lai Rou. He was wielding a slender black-shaped saber. The design was simple and looked a little crude in the making and was longer than normal sabers as it was around 6 feet long.

However, despite its crudeness, Lai Rou was able to deflect the attack from Yin Rong's swords which created a wave that almost threw He Shan off balance.

In the few seconds it took He Shan to orient himself, Yin Rong and Lai Rou had traded over ten blows, though it was more Lai Rou taking the blows.

He Shan and the rest couldn't help but take a gulp at the sheer display of might between the two. He couldn't believe Lai Rou the participant he'd written off as a weakling and more likely to be the first to be eliminated would show such skills with the saber and even hold his own against someone who was already in the early stages of qi refinement while he was in the iron body stage.

However, he was in no mood to wonder at how He Shan got so powerful in such a short amount of time since he had to immediately attack Yin Rong who looked to just be about to get the better of Lai Rou who was being pushed backward with the rapid swings of her blade that made it seem they were dragonfly wings.

Seeing the skills of Yin Rong, and feeling its force up close, He Shan decided range battle was better for him. He poured his whole effort and concentration into firing his arrows, with single-minded devotion and abandoned any thought of anything else.

Zou Yi who had already launched his last pebble and missed had no option but to fearlessly charge in, in the hopes his skin had become thicker from the beating he had received from the monstrous puppet with six arms.

Just like He Shan, he abandoned all other forms of attack he had prepared and focused on his fists. Zou Liqin whom he had seamless cooperation ran side by side with him in his charge at Yin Rong.

Yu Mei ran just behind them with a sword in hand. Even though she had the highest cultivation base, her combat ability was not the highest.

She had focused solely on the meditation art which though helped trigger the awakening of her physique and the eventual breakthrough to the qi refinement realm, was lacking in offensive capabilities, and her heart mirror wasn't combat oriented either.

The best she could do at the moment was brute force it with her cultivation base and swing wild and to not be a liability to her teammates, she could only do so after their leads.

Lai Rou who looked to be barely hanging on offered an eye of gratitude to the four of them, as he tried to keep Yin Rong at bay.

Every person present knew what was going on.

Just like that, an already chaotic battle turned even more chaotic as five people ganged up against the lone Yin Rong.

"Good, Good, Good, I'll just butcher you all here!" Yin Rong furiously said as her eyes turned cold and two white rose symbols appeared on the upper side of her hands.

Chapter 352 Potential End Of A Journey (3)

Everyone present including Lai Rou who had presumably fought her for quite some time, were visibly wary the moment they saw the white roses appear on Yin Rong's hands and the white flames on her blade.

The temperatures fluctuated immediately the moment the flames appeared which was rather ironical for a dip in temperature to appear because of such pure white burning flames that looked like they could melt any metal as if it was butter.

Zou Yi and Zou Liqin both had grim expressions. They had seen their fair share of natural physiques at the Zou clan for them to recognize Yin Rong had a natural physique of her own, which meant other than watching out for her exquisite skills in dual sword wielding they had to be wary of the attributes of the physiques, and from the look of things it wasn't a utility based one like Yu Mei's but an offensive type.

Yin Rong's breathing became a little bit labored as she breathed out a faint mist with every breath and sucked it back in with every inhalation.

One of He Shan's arrows arrived in the midst of her sudden transformation. She casually struck it with one of her white flame-coated swords and it burst apart into white crystal-like shards that glittered like stars as they disappeared leaving behind a faint mist that had a rose scent to it.

Zou Yi took a nervous gulp when he saw the arrow burst apart. He couldn't help but imagine what if it was his hands. However, it was already too late since he was already within striking distance of Yin Rong.

He immediately executed the flurry waves fist art, which made his fists fluid, flexible as water, and carried the ferocity of a monstrous wave. He held no reservations in his swing even though Yin Rong was tinier than him.

Yin Rong casually blocked his fist with the hilt of her sword which created a 'gong' sound from the deflection. Zou Yi felt a sharp sudden pain crawl up his right arm which was accompanied by a burning sensation that had pain-induced frost in it.

He hurriedly tried to draw his fist back only to find out his movements within that arm were slightly sluggish. It wasn't sluggish enough to be noticed by a normal eye, but it was sluggish enough for Yin Rong to exploit it.

She quickly swung her free sword, aiming at Zou Yi's unguarded torso. Just as her sword was about to connect, Zou Liqin tried to deflect it sideways with her palm technique.

A ripple-like wave appeared from the point of contact between her palm and the swords which ended up creating a loud ringing sound. However the blade didn't budge but her attack did manage to halt it for a few milliseconds which was enough for Zou Yi to jump backwards, the attack missing him by an inch.

A smooth slice mark appeared on his tattered robes and part of his chest had faint shallow wound which immediately closed up.

Zou Liqin in the meanwhile was flung sideways when Yin Rong instantaneously swung sideways after her attack missed Zou Yi. Zou Liqin gritted her teeth as she felt her bones almost fracture from that swing.

Yu Mei who had been behind Zou Yi instantly swung her sword downwards at Yin Rong when Zou Yi masterfully moved to the side when she was bringing down her sword.

They were hoping to catch Yin Rong off-guard but Yin Rong sidestepped to the side as if she had expected it with a mocking grin on her face as she launched a kick to Yu Mei's swinging arm which not only almost broke her arm, but also caused the sword in her hands to slip away.

The trio of Zou Yi, Zou Liqin, and Yu Mei couldn't believe how they had been effortlessly thwarted when the fight had only just begun.

"It seems I was wary for nothing.." Yin Rong calmly said as she charged at them with a malevolent smile on her face. I think you should take a look at

Zou Yi and Yu Mei despite not wanting to, found themselves taking a step back out of fear.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WERE YOUR WOUNDS JUST FOR SHOW?!" He Shan madly roared as he charged Yin Rong with his axe.

Despite his fearless display, Yin Rong simply crossed her swords and stopped the axe dead in its tracks. While it seemed simple for her, He Shan's hands were bulged with veins and even small tear marks appeared on his hands as he desperately held onto the axe so it would not slip.

He Shan remained undaunted as he followed up with more attacks each missing the mark or being casually deflected. His moves were fast, ferocious, and precise just as he was with his arrows.

However, before Yin Rong, she made it seem completely harmless, especially the ease with which she dealt with it.

The tables were turned on He Shan when the roles were reversed and he was on the receiving end of her attacks. Unlike her, he couldn't handle Yin Rong's attack with ease. Cuts started appearing on his arms and they grew by the second, but despite that, he didn't shrink back one bit.

"Out with you, you feisty brat.." Yin Rong said as she brought her sword downward aiming to slice He Shan at the shoulders.

He Shan had a vicious glint in his eyes as he made no attempt to dodge and was looking to trade injury for injury as he swung his axe sideways aiming for her stomach.

Yin Rong snorted dismissively at his actions, showing no hints of deviating from her attack. However, her pupils froze when the smooth slice she expected to happen once her sword connected, clashed with something strong.

Only when she looked closer did she notice an abnormal bulging on He Shan's shoulders underneath the beast robe.

He Shan took advantage of that momentary lapse to increase the ferocity of his swing. Yin Rong reacted swiftly and pinned the axe between her elbow and thigh. Though she prevented it from tearing her in half, the force it created did manage to manage to throw her off balance for a few steps.

"See, she can be defeated.." He Shan smugly said as he geared up for another attack.

Zou Yi and the rest, whose eyes had despair and self-doubt in them, had their fighting wills reignited by He Shan's display.

"Can't believe I'm still this fragile that I can waver this easily.." thought Zou Yi with a rueful smile.

"Thank you He Shan I owe you one.." added Zou Yi.

"I'll keep her at bay, use whatever attacks you have. Don't worry about me getting caught up in it..." Lai Rou said as he swiftly charged Yin Rong.

Chapter 353 Potential End Of A Journey (4)

When Zou Yi and the rest joined the fight, he sunk back. Zou Yi was worried he was preparing to escape and leave them holding the bag, but his worries were unfounded.

Lai Rou seemed to be regulating himself, preparing for another go. Only when they clashed against her did they realize how strong Lai Rou was for going toe to toe with her. If they wanted to get out of it, they couldn't do it without him. If he left or was out of commission their defeat was all but guaranteed.

The four all nodded as they spread about, with Lai Rou striking Yin Rong with his saber.

"Don't think it will be easy for you like before.." Yin Rong mockingly said as she swung her swords to meet his saber strike.

Even though she showed a modicum of seriousness when facing Lai Rou, one could still detect a sense of casualness from her as she faced him, however, that instantly changed when their weapons clashed.

At the final moment, the saber in Lai Rou's hand seemed like it had a life of its own as it slithered through the tiniest of gaps between the two swords before they connected and struck one of Yin Rong's arms.

She hurriedly dodged backward, but one of her sleeves had been torn and one could see blood dripping from it.

"Saber sense?!" she said in shock.

"Don't think it will be easy for you like before.." said Lai Rou trying to act pompous like her.

"Sorry I was trying to sound cool.." he said with a smile of embarrassment when he saw the looks Zou Yi and the others were giving.

"Mmph! it's just saber sense. Your cultivation itself isn't strong enough to make use of it.." Yin Rong said as she geared up for another attack.

Even though she sounded unperturbed from her statement, her gaze and demeanor were much more solemn. The white flames that were wavey on her sword became much more streamlined to the point one couldn't tell them apart from the blade.

Seconds later a thunderous clash ensued between her and Lai Rou, except this time, Lai Rou wasn't being put on the defensive. He matched her movements with his saber.

"Our bet may pay off.." Zou Yi thought with glittering eyes as took the terrifying battle before him.

Lai Rou was tall but his body seemed like it had no bones from the flexibility and agility with which he moved, dodged, and attacked. The movements of his saber and his body were so in synch that one couldn't tell the saber apart from his long arms.

With clear hope in sight, Zou Yi and the rest all threw caution to the wind and attacked without a care in the world. I think you should take a look at

At first, they struggled in their coordination and were at times in Lai Rou's way, but with his encouragement, they kept going.

Soon the attacks became much more coordinated and fluid as they took advantage of the gaps in Yin Rong's defense created by Lai Rou, to strike at her. They managed to injure her, but for close combatants such as Zou Yi and Zou Liqin, it came at a cost of injuries of their own even with Lai Rou keeping her at bay.

Despite being swarmed and the growing injuries, Yin Rong showed no signs of shrinking back. She faced them all and increased the ferocity of her attacks, even going so far as accepting certain attacks if it meant she had a chance of trading a greater one in return.

If an outsider saw their fight and the degree of ferocity they had, one would think it was an irreconcilable blood feud that had resulted in a battle to the death.

In some sense, it was indeed true. While they didn't have a blood feud, they were fighting with their lives on the line. They all aimed to take the other party's life in their attacks which only grew in intensity and desperation as time flew by.

Each and every one had their robes bloodied with cuts all over but their expression remained determined. Minutes flew by and soon a quarter of an hour flew by with them locked in a battle that showed no signs of stopping causing chaos and destruction in the area.

There were a few spirit beasts that had been drawn in by the commotion with the goal of trying to fish in troubled waters, but quickly shrunk back in fear when they saw the scale of destruction up close.

As time went by, Lai Rou grew in his ability to use saber sense and when it came to Zou Yi and the rest, their familiarity with the cultivation arts of the 108 steps of the Autumn leaves had also improved while Yu Mei discovered new ways to use her heart mirror especially when Yin Rong was looking to deal fatal injuries she could sense it a couple of times which proved to be a lifesaver to the team more so Lai Rou who was in the front line keeping Yin Rong at bay.

Sadly for them, they were not the only ones. Yin Rong's roses had vines in them that extended to her neck with white leaves at the side. This seemed to have increased the destructive capabilities of her attack by making it more colder and Zou Yi wasn't sure but he felt different the more the fight went on, he couldn't tell where and how.

Other than that, her sword skills became much more refined. They weren't the only ones who chose one art from the 108 steps of the Autumn leaves. Yin Rong had done so too. The sword art 'the dual flow transition'. Her attacks were forceful and gentle at times; nimble and firm. It kept contrasting and alternating, which added variability.

They would have despaired were they to face her alone or with their numbers short of one of them. But as the fight progressed the more Zou Yi and the rest struggled to keep up. They could finally tell the gap between them and Lai Rou and Yin Rong.

The grace of their movements, the ingenuity of their attacks. How they pulled off dodges like they had eyes on the back of their heads and transition to an attack just as fast.

One hour quickly passed by, with the fight ongoing and by the look of things, it was soon approaching its end.

Five kilometers around the battlefield had nothing but cracked ground, mist, and smoke that was filled with different colors and scents spread about being carried by erratic winds. The winds not only carried the scented smoke, but roars that were too wild to be human, and too soft to be from a beast and were followed by the sound of trees falling and ground trembling.

Chapter 354 Potential End Of A Journey (5)

Half an hour later, in the middle of a destroyed forest.

"Liqin..... are..... you... awake?"

"Just....barely....You?"

"Barely..in the next few seconds, I don't know.

Yu...Mei...are you...?"

"She's....un..conscious..."

"Seems...like...you...are okay, He Shan. Your..your... poisons ...didn't seem like they worked.."

"Bastard...you..threw them wrong.."

"You still..."

"He Shan is unconscious, Zou Yi.."

"How are you still awake with those injuries?"

"I learned to stay awake whether injured, starving, sick... ever since I was a kid, otherwise...let's say if I didn't, injuries such as these are the best I could have hoped for.."

"Thank you all for all your help by the way. It seems I dragged you all down with me. If only I was a little bit stronger.."

"What are you saying? it's because of you holding her back that we survived this long and who would have expected her ability to contain poison too...if it wasn't for that, we would have won..."

But still..she was a monster..you too Lai Rou.."

"Liqin?..."

"She's unconscious too, and it seems I'm about to join them too. Thanks, Zou Yi....

Zou Yi....it seems him too...

Why is my heart still this excited despite being defeated....i hope this ..isn't the end...."

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The peak of Autumn Mountain.

"Those kids really put on a performance.." said Kang Huilang as his gaze fell on a certain area.

"That they did.." said Yang Qing with a soft smile of appreciation appearing on his face.

"That girl Yin Rong is quite something for coming out on top despite the odds. She may not have sword sense yet, but her combat sense is exemplary. The way she used her physique, her skill with sword art, and the trap she lay with the poison in her physique.

The different departments of the inquisitor are bound to get in a battle for her.." said Xia Boqin.

"Lai Rou wasn't bad either. Had his foundations not been as shaky as they were, the result would have been different. Saber sense and sword sense users appearing in an Orange grade test is a welcome surprise.." said Dai Chen with a glint flashing in his eyes.

"That it is... I hope the Order isn't stingy with its awards.." Yang Qing gingerly said.

The fight between Zou Yi's party against Yin Rong had been captivating even to them, especially with the ferocity at which they went at each other and the skills they displayed. However, the biggest standouts were Lai Rou who developed saber sense, and Yin Rong whom despite being beset by five people, among them a saber sense user still managed to come out on top.

Of course, she didn't come out unscathed and her victory hinged on the hidden ability of the blazing white rose physique which produced traceless paralytic poison in every shard that exploded.

However, the poison wasn't fast acting and it needed the victims to be injured or worn out to a certain degree before it kicked in. She was secretly dosing them in the midst of the fight while masking its effect with the frost-numbing effect of her ability. Which was why someone poison conscious as He Shan never noticed it until it was too late.

Her judgment throughout the battle was exemplary. The others also managed to showcase their abilities despite losing in the end.

The only question now was if they would be able to reach the peak on time. In the two hours they had fought, two more people had arrived bringing the total participants to twelve, leaving only three open spots, one of which would be for Yin Rong if she manages to reach the peak. I think you should take a look at

In Zou Yi's team of five, only two would make it, that is if, by the time they regain consciousness, those spots will still be available.

Yang Qing at this moment could only hope they make it in time. While he didn't mention anything about a deadline for the test, one did in fact exist, and would only be triggered after the fifteenth person reached the peak.

The moment the fifteenth person crossed the finish line, a three-day deadline would be in effect, and those who don't reach within that timeframe would be eliminated. The participants would only know about it after the fifteenth person is announced, and if they are unconscious when he makes the announcement, he can only sigh at their bad luck.

Of the group, Yu Mei already had her spot reserved and Lai Rou had a chance of getting in via special recommendation if he failed to make it in time because of achieving saber sense which was an excellent

feat. He Shan had a chance of making it through recommendation too via his skills in alchemy as for the two siblings, it was in the air at the moment.

While Zou Yi did show excellent judgment on a few occasions, it wasn't enough to warrant a special recommendation, and for Zou Liqin the odds were already against her, especially after her results in the first test. The only way she would make it is if she crossed the finish line in time.

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"Huh? Is the sky moving... wait I'm the one moving!!" He Shan jumped in fright as he hurriedly went for his axe only to realize it had broken while fighting against Yin Rong.

He clenched his fists in preparation for an attack, only to find Lai Rou gazing at him with an innocent smile.

"Can you help me in pulling them?" Lai Rou awkwardly said as he pointed to the unconscious Zou Yi, Zou Liqin, and Yu Mei who were in what looked to be a makeshift hammock made of vines.

He Shan nodded in an absent-minded manner as he grabbed one of the vines Lai Rou was using to pull.

"Are you sure you're okay to be doing this?" hesitantly asked He Shan as he looked at the bloody wounds on Lai Rou.

His old robes were soaked in blood and every part of him was still bleeding with his left arm even showing bone as a faint mist came out of it. Despite the wounds on him, Lai Rou didn't so much as flinch, and from the area they were, it seemed like he had been dragging them along for quite some time.

"It's okay, I can handle this much, besides we can't afford to waste too much time. Fifteen people have already reached the peak and...."

"We have a three-day deadline to reach the peak..two hours have passed since the fifteenth person was announced.." said Lai Rou.

"What?!" He Shan almost dropped the vine in shock.

"Three days?" he asked to which Lai Rou nodded back in confirmation. He was unused to talking to people. Since coming for the test, it's the most he had talked to people.

"Okay," He Shan said with a sigh after he had calmed down.

He took one end and Lai Rou the other, and they dragged Zou Yi and the rest at a moderate pace so as not to aggravate their injuries, or draw the attention of some unwanted spirit beast in their injured state and injured party to look after.

Luckily, they didn't have to do it for too long because twenty minutes to thirty minutes later the whole party had regained consciousness, after which He Shan dropped the deadline bombshell on them.

With a deadline on hand, the group pushed themselves to the limit to make sure they made it on time.

Along the way, with He Shan's guidance they picked certain herbs which he used to make healing salves that they wrapped on themselves in. The quick first aid helped them in having enough energy to increase their momentum.

A day later they finally reached the peak of the mountain after a mildly gruesome struggle. With their injuries, they would have struggled to make it in such a short time without working together.

The team was all smiles for making it this far with two days to spare. They even forgot the dreadful training waiting for them for missing the top fifteen.

Zou Yi could feel his face turn hot and steamy when he saw Yang Qing and the other judges seating below a maple tree.

"We did it.." he said to Zou Liqin and the rest who were just as emotional. It had been a long couple of days.

The team grinned at each other as they gingerly made their way forward with joy and a little life in their haggard steps.

Fifteen steps, ten steps, five steps...

Zou Yi gulped in greed as the waft of the delicacies Yang Qing and the rest were eating, reached him.

"It won't be too forward if I asked for a tiny bit, would it?" Zou Yi thought.

However, before he could delight in his flights of fancy he had Lai Rou yell,

"WATCH OUT!!"

Chapter 355 End Of The Test

Before he could register Lai Rou's warning, his body froze as he saw a massive fist suddenly materialize in front of him. It was so big that it seemed to bloat out the sky. It brought with it a pressure, that Zou Yi forgot everything including moving.

His legs gave out and he wasn't the only one. To his left and right, Yu Mei and Zou Liqin were on the floor with the same look of fear Zou Yi had. He Shan struggled to stand but his hands were trembling with his eyes wide open as an unresigned glint flashed in them.

The four had already resigned themselves to death, but they suddenly saw a figure flash passed them and rapidly slash at one single point in the fist. A small crack was formed and a hole immediately after.

Before Zou Yi could register what was happening, he felt his vision change like he had been thrust forward. He wasn't the only one, the same thing happened to Yu Mei, Zou Liqin and He Shan.

They were all thrown through the hole that had appeared through the fist.

They didn't understand what was happening, but the moment they crossed over through the hole, all the death-inducing pressure disappeared.

"Congratulations on reaching the peak, Zou Yi, Zou Liqin, He Shan, and Yu Mei. The Order and the institute by relation, welcomes you..." said Yang Qing.

Zou Yi and the rest didn't have time to register Yang Qing's words as they hurriedly looked back only in time to see Lai Rou being pummeled back below by the fist.

"Lai ROU!!" they all yelled.

At that moment they understood what had happened. There was a trap at the finish line, which they had all overlooked except Lai Rou. Even with He Shan's salves, he was already heavily injured and had used whatever little strength he had left to push Zou Yi and the rest forward at his expense.

They all wanted to go after him when the fist disappeared but a barrier appeared that halted them from going back. It was Yang Qing's doing. If they moved it would count as interference in the examination which came with penalties in addition to being eliminated.

The four could only compromise by asking Yang Qing to let them stay till the end of the test, to which Yang Qing acquiesced.

Half a day almost passed by with no signs of Lai Rou, then the day ended with still no signs of him. Zou Yi and the rest were all filled with worry the more time went by. Only one day was left.

On the third hour of the final day, they were surprised to see Yin Rong make her way over. When she was almost at the table they finally saw the source of the death-inducing fist that almost destroyed them had it not been for Lai Rou's timely intervention.

The source was an unassuming statue of a bullfrog next to the grass close to where Yang Qing and the rest had sat. I think you should take a look at

Zou Yi couldn't help but smile bitterly at their carelessness. The bullfrog had been the marker for the special zones, which desensitized them to it being a trap.

Zou Yi and the rest now hoped for Yin Rong's elimination. But it seemed like Yin Rong anticipated it as she charged ahead and dodged it by a hair's breadth and made it to the table Yang Qing and the rest were.

Based on how easily she evaded it and the familiarity of it, Zou Yi instantly assumed Yin Rong had faced it before and that was why she arrived later than them. What had happened to Lai Rou may have happened to her as she immediately passed out after Yang Qing congratulated her and welcomed her into the Order.

Four more hours passed by before finally Lai Tou made it with five more hours to spare which came as a relief to Zou Yi and the rest. Just like Yin Rong, when the fist appeared he opted to dodge it rather than confront it and finally made it.

Zou Yi and the rest celebrated when he was finally congratulated by Yang Qing. Yang Qing gave them a moment before he sent them away to the Institute to be enrolled and also the preparations for their month-long death training from the instructors.

While Yang Qing did exaggerate about them dying, the training would be so severe that they would feel like it. He could only offer a silent prayer for them.

The remaining five hours quickly passed before they finally called a close on the test. It had taken three weeks, and Yang Qing was forced to stay at the peak as he closely monitored the participants. He didn't mind it since he wasn't alone, and it was much more relaxing than sitting in a court room all day and it was refreshing to see the young seedlings showcase their talents.

Of the one thousand participants only 103 had made it through. Most of those who were eliminated were done in by the traps and the spirit beasts on the mountain. But there was a small group that had managed to reach the peak and faced the monstrous fist that was created of Kang Huilang's fist intent that had been watered down to the extreme. This group was hit by the fist and failed to overcome the fear and trauma created by the fist and thus opted to quit when they saw how far down they had been launched and the fearsome fist waiting for them at the top.

The Order had no need of those who lacked the courage to keep trying. If they cowered before a fist, how could they have the guts to face the entire southern continent, which was something every employee of the Order had to be prepared to do?

The way Yang Qing and Kang Huilang had set it, getting passed the fist intent wasn't impossible even for someone without a cultivation base.

There were a few ways to get passed it all of which required keenness, bravery, and skill to pull it off.

Most participants opted to dodge it and a few faced it head-on like the first-place finisher Liao Jiayi who went head-on with it and managed to keep it at bay and the other five who were there with him all attacked and made it through. Other than them, all the rest dodged.

"I wonder how the other tests went?" wondered Yang Qing as he got up and did a stretch out of habit.

From the following day, his cases would resume. He did not look forward to it at all. If he could, he would have rather supervised entrance tests all year long.

Chapter 356 Different Grades Of The Entrance Examinations (1)

"Dai, what happened to the other tests?"

Yang Qing had just finished storing away the tea and wine pots and table that they had been using for the duration of the test when he saw Dai Chen store away the light blue rhombus-shaped talisman that had dense golden runes on it.

It was a special type of communication and recording talisman which only found its use in examinations.

With the talisman, the examiners could monitor different entrance tests that were undergoing in the same duration while also sharing information.

The higher officials of the institute used these talismans to monitor the situation across all the tests while also giving their own special instructions should it be needed. One such instance was giving Yu Mei a direct entry into the Order the moment her physique showed.

"Among the blue tests, yours was the last to finish among the eight, and as far as results went, there weren't any surprise physiques like the ones here, but there were a few weapon senses showing up, and the completion rate was more or less the same as here.

The four gold tests are still ongoing. Like always, there are a lot of promising individuals in there showing their mettle despite how difficult those tests get.

The instructors really go all out with these things. Your fist intent trap with Huilang really falls short with how bad theirs is.."

When Dai Chen said this, Yang Qing, Kang Huilang, and Xia Boqin all smiled wryly with looks of fear on their faces.

"I still can't believe what they do counts as tests. It's like they wanted to have us killed in the most brutal way possible..."

Xia Boqin took the last gulp of his wine as he said this.

"No matter what they say, I'm sure they were out to kill us.." Yang Qing grimly said.

"No doubt about it.." added Kang Huilang.

"We are lucky...They are getting more and more creative with it by the year..." said Dai Chen as he went on with his explanation.

"The tests are still ongoing and from what I've been told by one of the examiners, one of them is about two months away from completion. The others are working with the same timeline, just like they always did, except I see they are more generous with the rewards this time..."

Yang Qing and the rest grew curious when Dai Chen said this, more so Yang Qing who knew what a cold-blooded miser the Order was.

"What are they getting? Have they increased the merit points or something?" curiously asked Yang Qing.

"The merit points for first place have been increased from 30,000 to 50,000. In addition, they get two months in the cleansing five-element jade spirit pool, and a chance to pick one treasure in the open vault that is the equivalent of 10,000 high-grade spirit stones...."I think you should take a look at

"What?!!!" Yang Qing and Kang Huilang suddenly yelled.

"The most I can get from supervising and setting this examination is 15,000 merit points and maybe one treasure in the monarch grade...How are they earning more than me before they even start?

How bad is the test?"

With how generous the offers were, Yang Qing instantly assumed it was payment for the beating the participants were going to get during the exams.

Here soak in this top-tier jade pool that even rank 2 organizations would slaughter each other to the roots and stems for, and use it to wash away the mild trauma and broken bones, severed body parts, and the blood and tears you've lost.

Here grab these merit points to make up for whatever self-confidence of yours we have ruthlessly shattered.

Yang Qing had this nagging feeling that the first place would likely go for a defensive treasure.

The awards were just too generous to be used for a test. If he was given the same exact results, he would be over the moon, especially with the chance to get into the five-element jade spirit pool for two months.

The pool was a natural Dao treasure like a dragon spiritual vein. It was formed from the coalescing of five elements; water, wood, fire, earth, and metal which were blended together by the governing laws of the world to create a minimized pool that was no different than a half-formed liquid-shaped world.

The liquid formed within the five-element spirit jade pool was usable to all cultivators up to the peak of the domain realm.

Those in the body refining realm or without cultivation could cultivate in the pool and see drastic improvements within a month.

Even without doing the strenuous exercises required in the body refining stage and copious amounts of herbs, as long as one soaked in the pool for a month, they were guaranteed to reach the silver body in one shot and if they are in the silver body, achieving a gold body is within the realm of possibility. And if they are given two months, then reaching the gold body is all but guaranteed even without a guiding cultivation art.

Those with natural physiques also gain lots of benefits from the pool, especially when it comes to unlocking more of their physique and its attributes. The pool does a lot for those with natural physiques that are tied to the five elements. Mao Yunru with the purple mist body would benefit a lot from the pool.

For those in the qi refinement, they could have their meridians expanded, their qi purified and their bodies attuned to the five elements, especially ones they have a natural predisposition for.

The list goes on up the cultivation realms. In Yang Qing's case, the pool had the dao charm of the five elements which would massively guide him in setting up his own palace realm foundations that required a firm understanding of the dao to grow.

However, for all its benefits, the five-element jade spirit pool wasn't renewable and was scarce in its supply. After every use, it needed a three-month rest period, and a lot of monarch-grade natural treasures rich in the five elements needed to be fed to the pool during that period so that the pool's origin isn't damaged from over-extended use.

In a year only four people could use the pool, and the method of choosing those who could do so was extremely stringent.

Chapter 357 Different Grades Of The Entrance Examination (2)

Yang Qing couldn't believe that the Order was willing to fork it out as the price for finishing an entrance examination.

"They will definitely be overworked to the death to pay back every last drop.."

Yang Qing was too deep in his thoughts to notice the envious vindictive smile forming on his face that happened to be hit perfectly by the cascading sunshine and the shade of the maple leaf tree.

Dai Chen and the rest ignored him as he finished,

"The purple test has been going on for three months, and from what Instructor Han has told me, he expects it to run for four more months.."

Dai Chen put away the light blue talisman as he finished.

"The timeline sounds about the same. I wonder how many will even reach the finish line? How many reached in your time Dai?" asked Yang Qing.

"There were about seven...yours was one of the highest at thirteen...I remember the sensation it caused when four peerless jade physiques appeared in the same test, and a swarm of monsters to boot.

The purple jades is what they called it..." Dai Chen as he admired Kang Huilang, Yang Qing, and Xia Boqin.

"Such an ethereal name doesn't match the hell that was there.." Yang Qing fearfully said, with the other two mirroring his sentiments.

The Order had three categories of tests namely; blue, gold, and lastly purple.

With the huge number of participants they got, the wide spectrum they fell under, and the desperate need for talents by the Order, they created and categorized tests into three grades which was done with the degree of talent of the participants.

It was done with the goal of helping the participants shine in their own way, rather than throw a blanket test and throw them in altogether.

The light of a firefly would easily shine in the darkest of nights, however, it would dim when compared to the brilliance of the sun.

The Order the hungry exploiters that they were, wanted both the firefly and the suns to cog their wheels thus creating three different types of tests that would help with that.

The blue-grade test was the weakest test and it was for those with lack of a better term, average aptitudes but had a chance of showing something special if given the chance.

Unbeknownst to the participants, the day they apply to join the Order they are given a shallow screening, and from that screening, they are categorized which tests they should fall under.

Most participants fall in the blue grade tests since it takes those with no cultivation bases, poor foundation or low cultivation bases, and natural physiques that are considered 'normal' in their output. The normal part was as per the Order's judgment which was skewed when compared to others.

Of the participants available in Yang Qing's test, Liao Jiay'i's placement in the blue grade test was a mistake. For someone with the Kunpeng's bloodline, his test should have been at the gold grade at least. I think you should take a look at

However Yang Qing could think of a number of reasons why he appeared in the blue grade test, one of which was his age, and the other was, his physique had been sealed and only unsealed parts of itself when he clashed against a frost horned python and the next was when he fought head-on with Kang Huilang's fist intent.

The surface preliminary test may have missed it. When it came to Yu Mei, while her crystal heart glazed physique granted her direct entry into the Order and also made it easy for her than most people to reach the domain realm, it had no offensive capabilities as of yet and she had not yet unlocked any attribute from it and even if she did, any test above the blue grade would have eliminated her.

Her physique wasn't suited for the brutality of the gold grade and purple grade test and as per the Order's judgement, it was a normal physique. Yin Rong's blazing white rose physique fell under this category too.

Other than intake potential, the blue grade test deferred from the other tests when it came to timeline. It could only keep going for a maximum of two months.

If within that timeframe no one would have reached the finish line, they would all be considered eliminated and no special recommendation would be filed for the lot. However, it was a rare occurrence.

After the blue grade test came the gold grade test. This was set for those with above-average aptitude as per the Order's standards which included their natural physiques, and their understanding towards their cultivation.

While Lai Rou and Bu Fei could be considered exceptional for discovering saber and sword sense respectively in battle, those participating in the gold grade test fielded a couple of participants who already had a type of weapon sense, and a sturdy foundation to complement it.

The two of them would be the lowest of the rungs if they were thrown into the gold grade test, and their chances of elimination were very high in such a test.

The gold grade test lasted for four months and they were supervised by the senior instructors of the Insitute, unlike the blue grade tests which an outer palace judge was in charge of.

When Yang Qing said those who came in below fifteen would die, it was because they would be thrown into one of the venues of the gold grade test for a month.

The test was five times harder than whatever Yang Qing pulled. The light storm mantis that cleaved Bu Fei's arm would be a fodder creature in that venue.

The last test was the purple grade test. What the participants didn't know was, every participant thrown in that test already gained automatic entry into the Order regardless of whether they made it through the test or not, which was why the instructors went overboard to the levels of insanity when setting it.

Those who qualified for the purple grade test were participants who had a diamond body, a peerless jade physique, or a natural physique that was equivalent to those two body refining stages.

Someone with a gold body could also qualify for the test but they needed to be in the peak of emergent or at the blooming stage when it came to their understanding of a blue-grade cultivation art, and their age needed to be 14 or below, and in the early stage of qi refinement stage. Barely above the second stage.

The group had also those who had mastered a type of intent, and the age was not above fourteen.

Only the cream of the crop could gain the qualifications for this test. However, despite their talent, all who go through it, end up with the same emotion, Fear.

With so many talents participating, one would expect them all to reach the finish line of whatever test it was, however, its completion rate was the lowest of the three grades of tests.

This was despite it having the longest allowance on the duration of completion, which was seven to twelve months.

Chapter 358 First Case As A Palace Court Judge (1)

Yang Qing's year was among the top five in terms of number of people who finished the test. The highest-known record was 145 years ago with the total number of people who completed the test being twenty-eighth.

Yang Qing's year was the fifth, with thirteen participants completing it. The lowest record of finishing participants was one, with the general average throughout the years being four or five.

There was a monument called the Purple grade monument which was fashioned from a 100,000-year-old purple moonstone. In it were the engravings that had the records of the performances of each year of the purple grade test.

The Order conducted only one such test a year and it was the most brutal and ruthless. Other than the test being flooded with ferocious beasts that had noble and special bloodlines, there were prisoners of requiem thrown in there.

For every participant they eliminated, they had a few years taken off their sentences along with being given certain special rewards that improved their way of life at the prison. The prisoners had their cultivation bases sealed, but they were all at least in the late stages of the foundation establishment realm, and in terms of skill were judged to be skillful by the standards of the instructors.

They were even fallen prodigies within their midst. In addition, the instructors even went to the extent of hiring assassins for the test, the formation arrays had no clues in them, and everything could kill you in there even the very air you breathed. There was no such thing as a special zone.

Surviving alone was hard enough let alone reaching the finish line, and worst of all, the test lasted for a bare minimum of six months and that was if four people or more worked together, and one of the four had the greatest luck attribute, and even then when they reached the finish line, they would be half poisoned, missing a few limbs, missing memories, crying, trembling and traumatized beyond belief.

The only good thing was the rewards in the purple grade were extremely generous, and regardless of what number you finished at, as long as you finished the rewards were all the same which were 300,000 merit points, personal tutoring from a domain expert for two months, two blue grade artifacts and one blue grade art, and have the formation hall, beast hall, and the alchemy hall lend you their services for free just once. One could redeem this at any point in their life, it wasn't a must they do it immediately.

Yang Qing got the two black dragon horses via this reward. During his year, he teamed up with Kang Huilang and Xia Boqin. He and Kang Huilang had peerless jade physiques while the latter in addition to the physique, he had also mastered fist intent in addition to having spear sense and sword sense.

Xia Boqin at the time had a gold body which was considered incredible, especially with his background in consideration. However, he had also mastered sword intent at the time and it was all self-taught and he didn't have Kang Huilang's broken harmonious cataclysmic jade bones to assist him. Using the rewards from completing the test, he managed to reach the diamond body stage.

The three of them, in addition to another member, had teamed up for the test. Even with the four of them working together, they only barely made it through. Yang Qing lost an eye, almost every bone in his body was broken, while Kang Huilang had lost both arms at some point, and Xia Boqin was riddled with poison and a lost arm and leg, while the final member of their party survived with one lung and one leg.

He hadn't heard from the last member since she joined the roaming inquisitors and the erratic schedule that came with it, though they still hang out with their group whenever she is free.

Feng Xin and Yi Jie had been in the test too, but the former got eliminated at some point..Yang Qing never learned how, but he had no doubts food may have had a factor, as for Yi Jie he did manage to clinch a position by teaming up with five others, making it a six-man team. Only three made it through, of which Yi Jie was one of them, and Lai Lei, who was the chief inquisitor to Dai Chen.

The purple grade test was a complete horror show and it was set by the collective effort of the assistant deans of the Insitute across all faculties.

In some of the scariest moments in Yang Qing's life, that test was among the top three. It was up there with the method his family used to help him break through to the peerless jade physique and in his early years as an outer core court judge when he discovered the Order wanted to work him to his last drop of qi.

Yang Qing shook his head free of those painful memories as he and the rest made their way out of Autumn Mountain.

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Herb garden soup restaurant

"Are you sure you're going to finish all that?"

Yang Qing flinched as he saw all the different earthen bowls filled with different kinds of soups and gourds sprawled all around the table.

A misty smoke that had a refreshing aroma came from the soup contained in those bowls. Some were as mellow as a lake, while others looked like a volcano waiting to erupt.

Yang Qing grimaced in pain as he watched a lady with short red-brown hair greedily chug two bowls at the same time.

"100 middle-grade spirit stones, gone.." he muttered in pain as he watched the lady speedily empty more bowls and called the waiter to refill them.

Yang Qing's throat instantly dried up. I think you should take a look at

"Xia Ting, even if Judge Yang Qing offered to treat you, it doesn't mean you push it..."

"That will be all for now...Thanks..."

Yang Qing was almost in tears of gratitude when he saw Yu Gen step in for him.

"Uhm wait, could you bring us the Urn of Merry, please?" Yu Gen suddenly said when he took stock of the soup on the table.

Yang Qing who had prepared a word of thanks instantly swallowed them as he cursed Yu Gen who was currently showing the most innocent smile out there.

"Many thanks, Judge Yang Qing for hosting us. We are really lucky to have you as our boss this time.." said Yu Gen.

"Mmh, thanks Yang Qing...I appreciate it.." chirped Xia Ting as she chugged another soup, but this time she only went with one.

"No problems seniors, it's as I should.." Yang Qing said with a fawning smile trying to swallow the blood that was welling up.

I hope your ashes fill up that urn.

"Now where were we...aah! the case concerning Ma Yuan..." Yu Gen went silent as a sigh escaped from his mouth.

Yang Qing after parting ways with Dai Chen and the rest, searched for the two roaming inquisitors attached to him to find out the progress of Ma Yuan's case while also being filled in on the progress of the other cases, so he could decide which case to start on tomorrow.

He didn't have any judicial assistant like Mao Yunru to monitor the case logs, so he had to do it himself. Normally that's how things operated. Mao Yunru had been his judicial assistant for a month since she was taking over his cases, along with being promoted to a superior core court judge.

Those undergoing major promotions such as moving from the inner core court to a superior core court would need to undergo on-the-job learning from their senior for a month as a judicial assistant before they took up the post.

Yang Qing did the same before his promotion ceremony to the palace courts. He worked as a judicial assistant for an outer palace court judge for a month. After that period he went back to his court to finish up on the workload Lei Weiyuan had forced him to do after his breakthrough stunt.

Yang Qing had already grown accustomed to having a judicial assistant, that he felt worried and anxious to suddenly going back to handling these things on his own.

Did something happen to Ma Yuan's wife and daughter?

Yang Qing on seeing Yu Gen's troubled look instantly jumped to the worst-case scenario as he waited with bated breath for his next words.

If something really did happen to them, he would be the one to have to break the news to Ma Yuan.

"If things fold out the way they are based on the investigation, then I have to say Judge you really picked quite the case...the details are in there..." Yu Gen said as he passed a recording talisman to Yang Qing.

In that talisman were his step-by-step findings on the case.

"I enlisted the help of your inquisitors; Feng Xin, Zheng Hu, and Su Jinjing to confirm certain matters pertaining to it, they should be coming with the results today or tomorrow..but things are not good

"You found it?!" Yang Qing uttered in shock the moment he poured his spiritual sense into it.

"Yes, we did and some part of me wishes we didn't," Xia Ting somberly said.

Chapter 359 First Case As A Palace Court Judge (2)

Yang Qing couldn't help but frown at Xia Ting's words as he went on to delve into the recordings.

Everything written there was pure conjecture on the part of the two inquisitors based on what they had dug up on the case for the past three weeks as he was supervising the entrance examination for the potential students of the Order.

Right off the handle, Yu Gen had already written to whom they suspected to be the ones responsible for the abduction of Ma Yuan's wife and daughter along with crippling his cultivation.

They suspected the female Ma Yuan had seen attack them was a member of the Ice emerald sect and that lady was one of its elders going by the name of Deng Yaozu.

From what Yang Qing could remember, Ma Yuan had said he heard his wife mention the name Yao when she was pleading for his life from the lady who attacked. Ma Yuan said she had stopped herself midsentence as she said the name, which meant the word 'Yao' was incomplete.

Yu Gen's and Xia Ting's conjecture on her identity and name wasn't that far-fetched. In the report, he also included a short bio of the Ice Emerald sect.

It was a rank three sect of considerable repute and had been in existence for less than 50,000 years. It was located in the southwestern part of the southern continent close to the shorelines of the continent and the Celestial Ocean bordering the south continent and the west continent.

Just like other sects and organizations that rose up the ranks, one of their founders caught a lucky break almost 10,000 years ago while exploring a mysterious realm and ended up getting a natural treasure that helped catapult the sect into what it is today.

The treasure was rumored to be a top-tier monarch grade treasure which in terms of cultivation base was equivalent to someone at the peak of the palace realm.

With the aid of that treasure, in just under one thousand years, they managed to have their first palace realm expert despite struggling to have one in 40,000 years. In the next 9,000 years, more palace realm experts came out from the sect, bringing the current total to seven as per the Order's record.

With the rise in strength, the Ice Emerald sect slowly rose up from being one of the common rubble in their area to being a local hegemon and governing an area that was at least 1.5 times larger than the territory of the Red Maple Empire.

Sects and other organizations that were once competitors slowly turned into lackeys or moved to other areas to set up or became underlings of organizations that were just as strong as the Ice Emerald Sect.

While the rise of the sect wasn't overly unique, it still had aspects that made it stand out, one of which was it was an all-female sect.

They never accepted any males, no matter how talented they were which ruined the flights of fancy of a few of many who tried to get their admissions into the sect.

The reason the sect gave for the requirement was it was because of their sect's treasure and legacy. Originally when the sect was founded it accepted both sexes, however from around 40,000 years ago with reasons unbeknown to outsiders, it became an all-female sect, and the reason floating around currently was it was because of the sect's core legacy art, the Emerald frost flow veiled scripture which from what Yu Gen's notes was an incomplete part that was part of a larger art known as the Frozen serenity scripture which belonged to an ancient sect called the Frozen serenity that existed over a million years ago.

Different parts of the Frozen Serenity scripture could be seen floating around the southern continent across different organizations. Yu Gen had listed a few of them of which the Order was one of them.

The Order had two parts pertaining to the scripture; one was the frostfire art which was a body and soul refining technique, and the other was the Winter's embrace art, which was a meditation technique suitable for even domain experts and in terms of grade was a blue grade art.

Yang Qing couldn't help but think the Frozen Serenity scripture may have been a purple grade or at least a top-tier gold grade art if parts of it could be in the blue grade.

Mmh, maybe their rise had more to do with the part they have rather than the treasure they got...

Yang Qing couldn't help but feel the art in the Ice Emerald sect's hands had a part to do with their rise. Even before the so-called treasure, they had been steadily improving even though they didn't have any palace realm experts at the time.

Yang Qing almost forgot himself to the allure of the mysterious Frost serenity scripture and the sect itself before he quickly focused back on the report.

In the early parts of the report, nothing seemed off and Yang Qing easily read through it including the hierarchy of the sect and the relationships of the sect. I think you should take a look at

From the report, he managed to spot some overlap with his line of thought which painted the Ice Emerald sect more and more as the suspect behind Ma Yuan's case.

Among the relationships listed was the Lunar Bug sect, which had a thorny bordering murder each other relationship with the Ice Emerald sect. The reason for that was the Lunar Bug sect also had a cultivation art from the Frozen serenity scripture.

The different parts of the scripture could be used to complement and add to each other since they come from the same source. With this thought, before the Ice Emerald sect rose to a rank 3 sect, the Lunar had on more than one occasion tried to get a copy of their part of the Frozen serenity scripture to use it to improve their own part by fair means or foul, and they reached a high peak when one of the elders of the Ice Emerald sect got murdered in the process.

The feud has lasted for over 40,000 years and when it started the two sects had been at the same power level, with the Lunar Bug sect being slightly stronger since it was a bit older than the Ice Emerald Sect. It was because of this that the Lunar Bug sect was always tyrannical in its approach.

However, the dynamics changed when the Ice Emerald Sect finally had a palace realm expert while they at the time had three quasi-palace realm experts.

Out of fear, the Lunar Bug sect latched themselves onto a rank 3 empire for cover in exchange for being their subordinate and giving out other resources that were tempting enough that to date that empire still has them under their wing despite the Ice Emerald sect now having more palace stage experts and more seemingly in the works like Deng Yaozu who it turns out was one of the youngest elders of the sect and was a quasi palace stage expert.

The Empire in question was called the Twin River Empire, which though at the moment was recorded to have only five palace realm experts, one of them was presently at the sixth stage of the palace realm, which was two levels higher than the peak expert of the Ice Emerald expert.

The reason the Lunar Bug Sect stood out to him was of the places Ma Yuan lived with his wife, Rapid Twin County was one of the places, and the place in question was under the control of the Lunar Bug Sect.

With the strained relationship between the two sects, Ma Yuan's wife choosing to settle in that location was within reason.

There were a couple of things Yang Qing didn't understand. One was the reactions of Yu Gen and Xia Ting and the other was as far as he could tell the Ice Emerald Sect as far as sect went didn't have a bad reputation to the point of abducting someone's daughter.

The sect had the same reputation as the Spiritual Temperance Sect which was, it was a recluse sect that mostly kept to itself and rarely interacted with others.

But as he continued to read the report, his face started contorting little by little, till by the time five minutes had passed by his forehead was filled with veins, and his eyes were livid.

"Is this all true?!" Yang Qing grimly asked.

He strained his voice to make it as low and as calm as possible, but the boiling rage in it was still evident to the two inquisitors.

"It is.." Yu Gen answered.

"And there is more, it seems to have been going on for over 10,000 years. It is why we had to enlist your inquisitors and not only them but also other roaming inquisitors who were free.

With the findings coming in, you will have to invoke the five-party judge judgment from the Judicial review committee and the Spirit Council in preparation for what comes next.

I'm sorry Yang Qing, dealing with what comes next can't be easy, especially as one of your first cases as a palace court judge..." added Yu Gen with a sympathetic sigh as he saw the complicated gleam flashing in Yang Qing's eye along with mild hesitation.

"It has to be done.." Yang Qing finally said as he plopped back with a tired expression.

"A forced demotion huh... Is my luck good or bad, I wonder?..."

Chapter 360 First Case As A Palace Court Judge (3)

"The case concerning the Ice Emerald sect and Ma Yuan aside we have completed all investigation in two cases, you can decide which to start with.."Yu Gen said as he passed two other jade talismans to Yang Qing.

Yang Qing smiled in gratitude because he knew it was Yu Gen's way of deflecting his attention from the tough decision that was waiting for him.

"How long will it take to have everything?" Yang Qing asked before taking the two talismans.

"Shouldn't be more than three days to confirm everything, after that it will be up to you on how to proceed.." Yu Gen answered with a sigh.

"Three days ..." Yang Qing said as he looked at the ceiling of the garden herb restaurant with a lost look.

"I'm sorry Dai Chen, Zhang Qingge...I will have to shamelessly ask you bare this infamy with me.." he thought to himself.

A minute later he shook his head free of those ominous thoughts and went through the two talismans.

The cases were rather simple and straightforward unlike Ma Yuan's case, which was a welcome relief to him.

One of the cases was between a rank 4 sect called the Silver Blade sect, which had fallen into a disagreement with an itinerant cultivator who had just broken through to the palace realm.

The dispute was a theft case in which the Silver Blade sect were the perpetrators, though out of fear for their lives, they were the ones who had brought the case forward to the Order to have them mediate on their behalf.

The dispute was rather straightforward and Yang Qing felt the two roaming inquisitors had done a thorough job on it. With the information he had on hand, the verdict for the case was as clear as day.

The other case involved a restaurant that was owned by a palace realm expert in the second stage.

Yang Qing's eyes lit up when he saw he had another case involving a restaurant. One of the customers had filed a complaint against the restaurant for selling defective products that resulted in him having complications with his cultivation base.

Just like the case involving the itinerant cultivator and the Silver Blade Sect, Yu Gen and Xia Ting did a thorough job of it, which would make Yang Qing's verdict on the case a lot easier.

He couldn't help but sigh at their work rate. It was just the two of them, and the two cases were in locations that were far apart from each other, but they had managed to dig up everything relevant to the case and the inane stuff, that would help Yang Qing get a rough overview of the parties involved in those cases.

In addition, they also made a lot of headway with Ma Yuan's case which had little clues to go on at the beginning, and the search area was the whole Southern continent.

"Speaking of which..."

"Senior Yu Gen, Senior Xia Ting did the Wind gliding mercenaries provide any information concerning Ma Yuan's case?" Yang Qing suddenly asked.

Yang Qing remembered he had left a piece of the ice shard Ma Yuan had given him with one of their leaders and had even officially commissioned them on the case.

While the Wind Gliding mercenaries were not as big as the Order, they moved around the continent a lot and had formed a lot of connections and goodwill with a lot of people, and were more approachable in comparison to the Order, which even though were respected and liked by those in low organizations, those organizations still feared the Order because of its stature.

There were information and rumors that would be easier for the Wind gliding mercenaries to gain when compared to the Order.

"Yes...it was because of their help that we were able to find clues leading to the Ice emerald sect, and what they have been doing.I think you should take a look at

Even with what we've found I decided to let them dig further into the case, and see how far the sect has gone.

I hope it's okay?" said Yu Gen.

"No, no, it's okay...I'm just glad they were able to help you..." Yang Qing hurriedly said.

With how bad things were, he was all too glad to have involved the Wind Gliding Mercenaries on the case.

He had 40 million high-grade spirit stones to use for the year, and at this moment he wouldn't fill a pinch even if he paid the whole amount to the Wind Gliding Mercenaries escorts after what they dug on the Ice Emerald Sect.

"Maybe I could have a chat with Yun Wei, and have them handle some of my cases till Yi Jie and the rest breakthrough.." thought Yang Qing.

With a massive manpower shortage, using the Wing Gliding Mercenaries seemed like the only plausible way he could handle his cases without falling behind.

They already showed they had the capabilities for it, Yang Qing wouldn't hesitate to pay premium to gain their services for his cases.

"I guess I'll start with this.." Yang Qing said having decided on the case he would start with.

To avoid the matter behind the Ice Emerald Sect he decided to join Xia Ting in sampling the soups of the Herb Garden soup restaurant.

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Inside Yang Qing's courtroom

"I can't believe I let Xia Ting goad me into buying five more Urns of merry. That's a thousand middle-grade spirit stones down the drain..."

Yang Qing sat behind his podium with a paled expression as he recollected last night's events.

Somehow he ended up getting suckered by Xia Ting into buying more soup. After last night he swore never to go back there again if Xia Ting was around.

But considering how that was the 'office' of the two roaming inquisitors, he knew he was only kidding himself.

"Luckily I have the presents from the ceremony to keep me afloat. Yi Jie, you better hurry with your breakthrough, and Feng Xin and the rest.

I think from today I will have to handle their training personally. Otherwise, if things keep going like this, I won't have anything by the end of the year. I will be back to my hand-to-mouth days...

No!...No!...No!..That can NEVER happen!!!"

Yang Qing finally felt what it was like to feel flushed with spirit stones. There was no way he would go back to the beggar lifestyle that he lived before he came to the palace courts, where he had to fawn and be shameless just to get enough to fund his hobbies.

"Well, fawning isn't bad. At least I won't be spending my own spirit stones.." Yang Qing shamelessly thought as Yu Gen came in with ten people.