

## Daily life 371

### Chapter 371 Message From The Yellow Plains County

"I'll settle the matter of the Silver Blade sect with the review committee on my way out..

Oh, and the branch chief of the Yellow plains county said you should pay her what you owe."

Yang Qing who had been secretly grinning to himself about how he had a nice start in the palace courts and may actually finish his cases for the day before lunch reached, flinched at Yu Gen's statement.

He remembered throwing the mess with the Scion of the Golden Bamboo Pavilion on her lap when he was doing his evaluations.

In exchange for her temporarily grabbing hold of his mess, he promised a few treasures.

With the examination schedule and how long it run, he had forgotten all about it.

"Did she say anything else?" Yang Qing cautiously asked.

He hoped the Yellow Plains county branch chief was not cut from the same cloth as Assistant Director Jun Pei of the internal logistics division, who would tack on blood-draining fines by the second with a kind smile on her face.

"She did manage to dig up a few things on your behalf, so she hopes you show additional appreciation later.

Most of the information she dug up concerns Lin Duyi himself and some of the things he has done within the Red Maple Empire and other affiliate regions associated with the Golden Bamboo Pavillion.

She has released the previous emperor Duan Hou since it seems he had no part in the matters concerning Lin Duyi, though he may have known and chose to turn a blind eye to it, which we can't necessarily convict him for, so she decided to let him go, but the other person you sent along with them, Yao De, the branch head of the Golden Bamboo Pavilion stationed in Red Maple Empire, was found culpable and had direct involvement in all of the cover-ups within Red Maple Empire.

She sent the results of the investigations along with both of them. I have the case files with me, which I want to follow up on after this. I think in the next day or so, we should have everything we need to charge them and bring them before court.

Also, she did manage to dig up a few things about some of the aristocratic families within the Red Maple Empire, especially the Mo family. They seem to be in bed with the blood-fiend group known as the Grim Scavengers.

The Grim Scavengers have been active in the area, especially on the border between the Red Maple Empire and the Five Clover Sect.

At the moment it's unknown if the royal family and the other families are in bed with them, but she feels it's less likely for the royal family to take that risk, and as far as the Mo family goes, she has met with their patriarch a few times. And while he is ambitious, he is not reckless enough to get in bed with blood-fiend cultivators. It's unlikely he knows of the involvement of some of his family members with the Grim Scavengers.

She is investigating how widespread tentacles of the Grim Scavengers have spread within the Red Maple Empire and the parties involved. Because of personal reasons, she will handle the Grim Scavengers, but the families in bed with them, she will leave them up to you.."

"Personal reasons? " muttered Yang Qing in wonder.

"Senior Yu Gen do you know about the Grim Scavengers?"

There were too many fiendish organizations within the Southern Continent for Yang Qing to keep track of. The ones he knew off were those who had a certain level of renown and infamy around the continent or ones the Order had direct confrontation with such as the Dark Helminth Ghost sect.

He had planned to brush up his knowledge on a few more of them, especially with him being assigned an intelligence network. Having knowledge of dark organizations around the continent could help him in ensuring the survivability of the members of his network.

"The little I know about them is they are fairly new and very ambitious. It's rumored that they have a domain expert supporting them who was a former deacon of the Crimson Tide.

I don't know if that's true or maybe just some propaganda to gain more members but what I can confirm is they have some ability to them seeing how they have been able to escape senior Jin Niu's traps while causing a bit of disturbance on both the Red Maple Empire and the Five Clover Kingdom. I think you should take a look at [pandasnovel.com](http://pandasnovel.com)

It's because of them that Senior Jin Niu was sent there in the first place. Over the past 50 years, she has been rooting them out, and about a decade ago one of the inquisitors under her fell into one of the traps set by them and ended up with a corrupted body and qi due to the ghost sarcophagus blood poison used on him by a senior member of the Grim Scavengers.

The inquisitor in question is alive, but he had to have his body destroyed and cultivation dissipated to be healed completely..."

Yu Gen and Yang Qing sighed simultaneously.

Destroying a body was easy, but reforming one was a complicated process and would require astronomical resources. Then came the period of familiarizing yourself with the body, and then retraining from the beginning.

All the progress one made in their cultivation would be gone just like that, and one would have to start over from scratch. Reforming a body would take a decade at least, retaining to align yourself with the body would take another five years before they can start cultivating again.

"What stage had they reached?"

"Ninth stage of the core formation realm but losing the physique is the regrettable part. He had the Spring Twilight physique which made him highly coveted by the Medicine Valley due to its purification and rejuvenation nature.

He had been sent to the Yellow Plains County branch to help with miasma build-up there from corpse poison, and it was also part of his combat training before he finally settled in the Medicine Valley.

Sadly just two years before he was due back, that happened..."

A short somber silence ensued. While a body could be restored, natural physiques couldn't. What he'd get was just a stronger-than-normal body because of the materials used in reforming his body, but when it came to the Spring Twilight physique, that was gone forever.

Yang Qing could now understand why the branch chief had taken the matter of the Grim Scavengers personally. With such a loss, as the head of the place, she felt responsible for what happened to that Order employee.

The cultivator's journey may have potentially been ended. Even if their body got restored, and their cultivation base too, there was also the mental aspect of it. Losing something intrinsic to you such as your natural physique had a cost to it.

He couldn't help but wonder about his peerless jade physique. If circumstances were to force him to lose his body, would he be able to recultivate again and acquire another peerless jade physique, or does anyone only have one shot at it, and if by some luck he succeeded would he end up with the Yin Yang jade bones or would it be something else.

Yang Qing sighed as he decided to abandon those ominous thoughts.

Yu Gen left moments later and in came Xia Ting with the parties involved in the next case.

At the lead was a middle-aged man with short, well-combed black hair and had amber eyes and a small moustache, and white robes with the emblem of a plate that had a golden duck on it. He was a second-stage palace realm expert.

The last person was a young lady who looked to be in her late twenties. She had curly pink cherry blossom hair tied at the top with butterfly clips. She had chubby rosy cheeks which added a sense of vibrancy and liveliness to her/ Her eyes were round and limpid and she wore light blue robes that had white flower embroidery around at the corner of the sleeves.

Though her robes looked beautiful and new, when it came to quality as per Yang Qing's estimation it couldn't have cost more than 100 low-grade spirit stones. The materials and the arrays on the robe were at most mid-tier earth-grade materials.

While the arrays inscribed on the robes at the bottom of the barrel too. The defensive array could at most block two or three attacks from a middle-stage foundation establishment realm cultivator before they broke.

The arrays may as well not be there since the lady in pink hair was in the sixth stage of the core formation realm. She could sleep soundly and a middle-stage foundation establishment cultivator could punch her or hack her with an earth-grade sword and she wouldn't feel a thing.

"Maybe she bought it for the design.." thought Yang Qing as he prepared himself for the start of the case.

#### Chapter 372 Poisoned By Food (1)

Once Xia Ting had led the two parties to their respective positions, she nodded toward Yang Qing and stepped back.

"Hello to both of you, my name is Yang Qing and I will be the judge in charge of this case. As my colleague may have already told you, the moment you stepped through the doors of this courtroom you are both subjects under the regulations of the Order.

Whatever conclusion and verdict we come to, are to be followed to the letter.." Yang Qing sternly said to which the two parties both nodded in acknowledgement.

"Good. Since you have entrusted us with the duty of bringing this matter to a just resolution we will do everything within our means to ensure just that.

Owner Bai Zhou, your restaurant, the Golden Duck Platter stands accused by Daoist Li Shu of selling her dishes that were dosed with alchemical pills.

As per her statement, she has been a regular member of your establishment for the past twenty eight years and has rarely missed a day without having a meal there.

About three years ago she started experiencing slight difficulties circulating her qi using her qi circulation art. The issues started growing from there. Her qi flow became sluggish and erratic, and some of her meridians appeared to have weakened and others appeared to have been blocked.

This later translated to her skin, where green and purple patches started appearing on different parts of her body. When she consulted a medical practitioner she was diagnosed with Spiritual qi imbalance and meridian blockage as a result of pill poisoning.

As per her statement, she doesn't use pills for cultivation other than the occasional pill for healing injuries and the like, so as per her there is only one place she could have gotten pill poisoning from, which is from the foods from your establishment.

Those are the charges filed against you and your restaurant, Owner Bai Zhou.

You will both take turns, to explain your side of things. Be as clear and direct as you can, and leave no information out that you may think may be relevant to the case.

After hearing both testimonies, there will be independent alchemists and medical practitioners brought forth for the purposes of the cases, to help provide more information that will help shed more light into the situation and offer a resolution that both of you can accept.

Now then, I think as the accuser, we will start with you, Daoist Li Shu..." said Yang Qing as he motioned to the pink-haired core formation expert to start.

"Thank you for the opportunity, Judge Yang Qing. My name is Li Shu and I'm a guest elder of the Shao clan which is a rank 4 clan, though because of this incident, I'm no longer considered one of their members.

I guess I'm an independent cultivator now..." she said as she smiled ruefully.

Even though she tried to hide it with satire and humor, Yang Qing could detect the bitterness and disappointment in her tone.

Based on her words, it wasn't hard to guess that the Shao clan had more than likely cut ties with her when she decided to go against the Golden Duck Platter that was owned by a palace realm cultivator.

The Shao clan most likely thought to themselves they couldn't afford to offend a palace realm cultivator, especially not for an outsider like Li Shu who was only a guest elder.

Yang Qing couldn't help but feel it was a pity. Li Shu was only 180 years old and she was already a sixth stage core formation expert. Though her qi flow was still unstable due to pill poisoning, from a scan Yang Qing could tell she had a quasi blue grade core.

With such a talent, any rank 3 organization would be quick to scoop her up and give her favorable conditions even rank 2 organizations would accept, though not as a guest elder, but she still had the qualifications to pass through their doors as a normal disciple.

From the information he was given, the person with the highest cultivation in the Shao clan was a supreme elder who was at the eighth stage of core formation, however as per the report, he seemed to only have less than 100 years left in his lifespan.

The next Shao clan family member to follow him was the current clan leader who was at the sixth stage of the core formation realm same as Li Shu, though he was not as young. As per the record, he was already above 1,000 years old.

Other than him, there were only six other members of the Shao clan who were in the core formation realm, and all were in the early stages and none showed as much talent as Li Shu. An outsider would be baffled why Li Shu was even in such a clan as a guest elder. I think you should take a look at [pandasnovel.com](http://pandasnovel.com)

Yang Qing asked himself the same question too, before he learnt that when she was in the early stages of core formation realm, one of their clan elders had helped her when she was injured. The elder in question was a peak foundation establishment member who was an alchemist. He helped her with her injuries and Li Shu out of a sense of responsibility offered her services to the clan as a guest elder.

The Shao clan was all too glad to agree since they would be gaining the services of a first-stage core formation expert, and a young one at that. Under normal circumstances, it would have been hard for them to invite someone of her talent, not with the foundations they had.

With her help, they managed to stabilize their footing in Silent Willow County, which was a free-for-all all county under the rule of the Jadebrook Kingdom, a rank 4 kingdom that was top tier among rank 4 organizations.

The royal family had over a hundred core formation experts and about 11 quasi palace realm experts but funny enough never a palace realm expert. Rumor had it, the reason there was no palace realm expert in the kingdom was because they had displeased a powerful cultivator, and from that moment forth every palace realm cultivator to come out of the royal family would die through inexplicable means.

So no one from the royal family dared to break through to the palace realm, and because they wanted to keep hold of their kingdom as the prime rulers, they also restricted the aristocratic families under them by allowing other organizations to freely establish within their territories so they could compete for resources.

Silent Willow County was one of the territories that had an open door policy where all organizations could mix in there, and the Shao clan was but one of the cultivation clans established there and Golden Duck Platter had also opened a major branch within that county.

To survive in such a place Li Shu's help came in handy and she continued to do so even when the elder who had helped died due to old age. She still continued supporting the Shao Clan to help them establish a foothold in Silent Willow County.

But when she got pill poisoning and her case with Golden Duck Platter escalated, it seemed that they cut their ties with her.



From what he read, even when it came to the medical cost, they offered the bare minimum which couldn't cover the whole cost which was why she resorted to bringing the Golden Duck Plater to court to try and get compensation or her cultivation journey ahead would be halted.

Pill poisoning was just as dangerous as hidden injuries when it came to hindering the journey of a cultivator.

The more time passed by without it being removed, it would affect the qi flow, seep into the meridians and internal organs as it slowly corroded the body of the cultivator adding more side effects with every corrosion.

The more it stayed in the cultivator's body, the greater the danger, because you never know what other component of the world would react with the pills accumulated in your body which may result in an almost irreversible damage to the cultivator such as permanently damaging the body's foundation.

Pill poisoning sufficient to affect a sixth-stage core formation expert requires the services of a blue-grade medical practitioner or alchemist to ensure its complete removal and recovery, and gaining the services of one isn't cheap either.

It was why Li Shu more than likely didn't hesitate to file her charges even at the risk of offending a palace realm expert, and whatever backlash that may come from it. She had the fate of her cultivation journey on one hand, and making an enemy of a palace realm expert on the other, and a clan holding a knife in her back.

Even though Yang Qing was meant to be impartial, he couldn't help but sympathize with her plight.

...

Li Shu quickly recollected herself and continued.

"I'm not skilled in many things other than using the spear and eating. Though if I'm honest I love the latter more than the former..."

pandasnovel.com When she said this a gluttonous glint flashed in her eyes, and at the same time Yang Qing had the same look flash in his eyes as his mind wondered what to eat for Lunch.

"He's like me."

"She's like me."

At that moment, they could both sense each other's gluttonous spirits.

Chapter 373 Poisoned By Food (2)

However, they both decided to push the matter of being kindred spirits to the side, to focus on the matter at hand.

"When I joined the Shao family is when I discovered the Golden Duck Platter restaurant, which had already established itself as one of the prime locations within Silent Willow County.

It had garnered the love of all the residents of the county from all walks of life and the reputations they had made for themselves was high, even higher than the royal family of the Jadebrook kingdom.

Even though their prices are a bit high, they offer quality meals that would attract those who enjoy good-tasting food or those who would want to use it as a source of cultivation resources.

The ingredients used are all high quality, and the chefs who make them are the best at what they do.

In all my years of frequenting different establishments, few can match the meals served at their restaurant, so when I discovered how good they were, I was over the moon about it.

When I wasn't cultivating or practicing my spear skills, I would spend all my time at the restaurant sampling different dishes.

Without me knowing, I've spent twenty-eight years there in complete bliss. However, about thirteen years ago, I began to notice slight changes to my body."

Li Shu, whose mood was light and brimming with excitement and life, mellowed down, as he stared at her palms.

"My fingertips started growing numb at different times, mostly at night. I'd feel short stinging pains that came and went away.

When it started, I thought nothing of it and assumed it was brought about by me being overenthusiastic in spear training regimen.

But then, the symptoms slowly progressed over the years and it wasn't just numb fingertips anymore.

My muscles started stiffening, then my body temperatures kept rising at certain times especially when there was a strong wind, I'd feel like the wind was fanning flames on my skin. After the sudden surge in body temperature, then came sudden bouts of dizziness, and then finally my qi started getting affected.

Every time I'd try to complete a circulation, it would turn sluggish, or suddenly turn berserk which resulted in a few minor injuries to my meridians.

Then later it wasn't only my qi that got affected, I could feel my whole body was different. It was heavier, and when I scanned my body with my spiritual sense, I noticed foreign substances in there, which no matter how many times I tried to expel them, clinged to every part of me, whether it was my qi, meridians, blood, blood vessels and internal organs.

The only place it had not invaded yet was my dantian and mental sea."

Li Shu showed visible fright as she said this with a trembling voice.

"At the time I thought I was poisoned, so I went and consulted some of the alchemists of the Shao clan.

They did all sorts of tests on me, along with giving me a few potions to try out, but none of what they gave or suggested seemed to work, and they too were stumped on what affected me. I think you should take a look at [pandasnovel.com](http://pandasnovel.com)

Seeing that they seemed to struggle with identifying what was wrong with me, I decided to pay a visit to a friend of my late benefactor..."

A look of sadness flashed in her eyes. Yang Qing knew the benefactor she was talking about was the Shao clan elder who had once helped her when she was injured and then passed of old age a few years after taking her in the Shao family.

[pandasnovel.com](http://pandasnovel.com) "The alchemist's name is Pan Xin and my benefactor Senior Shao Qing thought very highly of him, to the point he attributed, that all he knew was because of Alchemist Pan Xin.

Senior Shao Qing though had a poor talent in cultivation, when it came to alchemy and relevant knowledge, there was no one in the whole Shao clan who could best him. And seeing how he managed to nurse me to health despite my injuries, I assumed anyone he sang this much praise for was bound to be a gifted alchemist.

Despite the costs I knew would come with consulting an experienced alchemist, I decided to seek him out. Which wasn't hard because he was the vice palace master of the Blue River Cauldron Pavilion, a rank 4 alchemy organization located in the next county over called the Snow Plume County.

Thanks to my being acquainted with benefactor Shao Qing, he agreed to see me at half the cost. After conducting several tests, he came to the conclusion that I had suffered pill poisoning due to overconsumption of potions and pills.

I remembered how stupefied I was when he told me that. It made no sense. Believing I was poisoned made so much sense than me having pill poisoning..."

Li Shu's facial expressions showed even now, she still had qualms with the diagnosis she was given.

"Ever since I was small, I haven't been using pills except for the occasional injury. Even when it came to fasting pills, I haven't consumed more than 100 in my whole life.

It doesn't make any sense how I'd end up with pill poisoning. I don't consume pills, and I don't craft pills and potions either, where I'd get it via contact poisoning.

But even then, as a core formation expert more so one who works in refining her body due to my cultivation art, I'd like to think I have a firm control and understanding of my own body's senses.

This was why I was surprised when senior Pan Xin told me that it looked like I had built up the poison over ten years.

How could that have happened without me noticing anything over all those years?

Despite my disbelief, all I could do was accept it," Li Shu said with an exasperated sigh escaping from her lips.

"Senior Pan Xin was kind enough to explain the symptoms to me, which though hard to accept, I finally came to terms with.

But then came the question, where did I get pill poisoning from? Like I said I barely consume any during my cultivation. Even when it came to the resources provided by the Shao family, I only accepted spirit stones, and a few herbs here and there as my monthly quota as their guest elder.

Even though they are not here, and want no involvement in the case, the elder in charge of logistics can attest to that much at least.." said Li Shu.

Chapter 374 Three Options

"Then if I didn't get from the Shao family, there was only one other place that I frequented as much as my abode, and that is the Golden Duck Platter Restaurant.

It was the only place that made sense that I could have gotten the pill poisoning from. I didn't want to believe it at first, but the more I thought about it, the more it seemed like the likeliest of suspects.

At first, after the diagnosis, while I did feel some bit of anger and ill will toward them when I thought they may be the ones responsible for pill poisoning in my body, I had no intention of pursuing the matter further.

With senior Pan Xin already certain I was suffering from pill poisoning, I thought I'd get healed, and after that, I'd find someplace else to eat or if I still wanted to have my meals at the Golden Duck Platter restaurant, I'd be careful with the dishes i ordered.

I felt it would be a pity to completely stop eating there..."

Yang Qing was shocked to see the regret Lu Shi showed for not getting to eat at the Golden Duck Platter restaurant was much more than the look she had as she mentioned her abandonment by the Shao family.

If she has no place to go, I think she'd fit perfectly in the White Baobab Kingdom, mused Yang Qing.

"However whatever intentions I had went to a halt when complications arose in my treatment.

Despite the skills that Senior Pan Xin had as a top-tier orange-grade alchemist and even having the strength of a fifth-stage core formation expert, he still struggled to get rid of the pill poison that had built up in my body.

He used every means at his disposal to remove it, but no matter how much he tried, the pill poison seemed like it had latched itself tightly to my body.

He worked tirelessly for a month, even at the expense of expending his spiritual essence, but he only managed to deal with a third of it.

He even went to the extent of consulting with their palace master who was just at the edge of becoming a blue-grade alchemist, but even with her intervention they only managed to get remove half of it, and even then it came with considerable risk since it seemed like the my contaminated qi could transfer the pill poison to them, over long durations of interactions of our qi during the treatment plan.

Once it seemed like it would be impossible to completely get rid of the poison, and I wasn't willing to risk their lives, I decided it was better to search for an alternative solution.

The palace master of the Blue River Cauldron Pavillion was kind enough to give me three options. I think you should take a look at [pandasnovel.com](http://pandasnovel.com)

One of them was to hire the services of the blue-grade alchemist and have them purge the poison for me, if I could not find a blue-grade alchemist then a palace realm cultivator would do, especially, one skilled with the wood or water attribute since they would be able to purge the poison completely through using the overbearing qi of a palace realm cultivator and with their enhanced spiritual sense, they could easily track it and ensure not a single of the pill poison remains.

As for the final option, it was to consume the morning lily heartseed..."

"With my current means and station, how could I possibly afford any of those means.." she said with a pitiful smile.

Who were blue-grade alchemists? These were alchemists who could refine a potion or pill that could be used by palace realm experts, and for a pill to be considered usable by a palace realm expert, it had to trigger a tribulation upon its completion and survive that tribulation.

Such a pill was no different than a natural Dao treasure. Such pills could be considered as pilfering nature's fortune and blue grade alchemists were those who could steal from nature and imbue that force to their pills.

[pandasnovel.com](http://pandasnovel.com) This was the reason why four in every one hundred thousand orange grade alchemists could successfully become a blue grade alchemist.

Their numbers were always in short supply and in high demand. Li Shu with whatever amount she got as a guest elder of the Shao clan was hardly sufficient to hire their services, even if she saved for a decade, and since she only got her quota in spirit stones mostly, it was even harder.

Just because you had the spirit stones, didn't automatically translate to gaining the services of a blue grade alchemist. Their services were always in high demand and to gain their attention, wealth was but the least factor. You had to have sufficient reputation, connection, or power to gain their help.

Pan Xin had agreed to see her on account of his relationship with Shao Qing but he went above his way because of her potential and cultivation as a sixth stage core formation expert at such a young age.

With his skills as an alchemist, and a seasoned one at that, it wasn't difficult for him to guess Li Shu's young age for a core formation expert, which prompted him to do everything in his power even to the extent of involving the Blue Cauldron palace master. All this was for the sake of sowing good fortune and a relationship with Li Shu who had the potential to reach the palace realm someday.

Having the friendship of a palace realm expert, was the same as having a monarch-grade treasure in your hand. This was why both he and the palace master went out of their way to help her, even at the risk of having their qi infected.

However, when it came to the three options she didn't have such a standing. A blue-grade alchemist would not give her the time of day so easily, even her potential would be insufficient to move them, even if the alchemist was in the core formation realm as her, they would not show her any concern because every blue-grade alchemist was always guaranteed to reach the palace realm, if they were not one already.

#### Chapter 375 [Bonus ]Fulfilling The Two Conditions

As long as they remained alive, their reaching the palace realm was as sure as the sun rising and setting.

When it came to the second option, while of the three it could be considered the easiest, Li Shu didn't know any palace realm expert, and she didn't even know how she could begin hiring one.

The only feasible way she could come into contact with one was if she joined a rank 3 organization, and gained their help after becoming a member, but even then, she would need to prove herself before they stepped forward to help her or they could use her condition as a leash to keep her in tow.

Besides some part of her would have felt guilty of leaving the Shao clan even after they in not so subtle terms left her to deal with her affairs alone, creating a wide berth between them and Li Shu as they could.



While she was disappointed in their behavior, she didn't fault them for it. At the Shao clan, she never did anything. She was never assigned any tasks, and the resources she was given were only slightly lower than what the clan leader got. All the Shao clan wanted was her presence as a middle-stage core formation expert.

The arrangement suited her perfectly since she was unskilled in anything else other than fighting. Still, she felt guilty as she always felt like she was a free loader and she always felt like she owed them a lot especially with Shao Qing saving her life by healing her injuries. It was why despite having opportunities to leave for better organizations who would offer much better terms than the Shao clan, she opted to remain with them to repay her favor.

But now, while she didn't blame for choosing the well-being of the family and it was understandable even, she felt it would be better to part ways after the trial. Though she had decided she would help them down the line, should a need ever arise, but she wouldn't do it for free and would put them through the wringer before agreeing to help them.

When she thought of other alternatives of gaining the services of a palace realm expert, that thought led her to Golden Duck Platter restaurant which was owned by a palace realm expert and was the one who had caused her pill poisoning. It was only fitting that they be the ones to solve it, so she went to them and told them of her condition and suspicions.

They rejected her claims right off the bat claiming she was slandering their restaurant, especially with no other customers exhibiting the same symptoms. One of their managers who was a late-stage core formation expert, even threw in some veiled threats of involving the royal family should she continue with her claims.

She could only shrink back after that and figure out another way forward which led her to file a complaint with the Order.

She didn't entertain the third option since it was the hardest option of the three. The morning lily heartseed could be considered to be a low-tier monarch-grade spiritual material. It had the effects of cleansing the body of anyone who consumes it, it had an especially good effect towards ailments associated with pill poisoning.

However, the problem lay in acquiring it. The morning lily only grew in an area that had the perfect yin yang balance and the spiritual qi in the area had to be gentle in nature. Very few areas met that criterion. The heartseed that formed, grew having the gentle yin yang balance.

Only one in a hundred, morning lilies could form one, and harvesting the seed had extremely stringent requirements. For one to successfully harvest it, they either required a treasure of the Yin Yang attribute, or have the Yin Yang attribute themselves, or had a wood physique and wood qi that was gentle in nature.

If one didn't meet the aforementioned requirements, and they tried to harvest the heartseed, it would dissolve in their hands upon contact.

To Li Shu, finding the location where morning lilies grew was hard enough, let alone the odds of finding one that had formed a heartseed. Then came the difficulty of finding someone who met those requirements. Anyone with the needed physique was bound to be a notable figure, which meant finding them was just as hard as gaining the services of a blue-grade alchemist who more often than not were the ones who predominantly had wood-based physiques.

As for a yin yang treasure, she has never seen one let alone hear about one. Therefore as much as it frightened her to confront the Golden Duck Platter restaurant which had a considerable reputation not only within Silent Willow County, but the Jadebrook kingdom as a whole, and with a palace realm expert at the helm to boot, she resolved herself to do it since her life and fate as a cultivator was in jeopardy and this was the only viable option she had. Plus she was certain they were the ones responsible despite being the only one who seemed to have shown symptoms of pill poisoning.

Therefore she could only get them to pay for her treatment by using the Order's might and then disappear for parts unknown to avoid the ire of the owner of the Golden Duck restaurant.

Disappearances and accidents have been known to happen to those who filed cases against stronger parties. Even though the Order would retaliate upon discovery, Li Shu didn't want to risk it. By the time the Order acted, it would mean she would be dead already or worse. It was safer to disappear immediately after the case. She even had half a mind to ask the Order for their help in the matter.

The irony was, with her coming to the Order she had managed to find someone who fulfilled two of the options she needed to remedy herself which was a palace realm expert who happened to have a Yin Yang-based physique, as for whether that person had morning lily heartseeds, it was up in the air.

But the seeds other than their purification ability, they were known for their heavenly flavor. If they were graded in terms of taste, one would grade them as ascendant grade, in terms of flavor.

Occasionally missing content, please report errors in time.

## Chapter 376 Bai Zou

"This is why I am now here. With the means at my disposal, I can't afford any of the three options the Blue River Cauldron offered.

I am sure I got the pill poisoning from the Golden Duck Platter Restaurant. I'm not looking for a payout or anything, If there were any other options, I would rather choose them than escalate the matter to this point, but there isn't.."

One could hear the desperation and turmoil in her voice, and the distress the whole ordeal had caused her.

"My plea to the court is for a fair judgment so I can have my pill poisoning treated. That is all. Thank you for the opportunity..." Li Shu cupped her fist and stepped back.

"Thank you Miss Li Shu for your apt explanation. Owner Bai Zhou, the floor is now yours," said Yang Qing as he motioned for the middle-aged man with short hair and white robes and an emblem of a roasted golden duck sown on his robes.

"Thank you for the opportunity, Judge Yang Qing. I would like to be upfront in declaring our innocence in this matter. I find it hard to believe that my restaurant had anything to do with Miss Li Shu's plight.

Our restaurant isn't big and we only have three branches around the continent. The main branch that I mostly take care of is in my hometown in Cinnabar kingdom, as for the other two, one is the one in Silent Willow County and the other is in Green Bridge province of the Gold Finch Empire.

Both these branches are headed by my personal disciples who have been with me for over a thousand years and know how much cooking matters to me and the reputation of the Golden Duck Restaurant Platter.

There is no way they would do anything to jeopardize that, and the branch in Silent Willow County has been operational for almost 500 years, and in that time not once has there been an incident of pill poisoning.."

His tone was gentle and soft-spoken but one could detect the staunch firmness and unshakeable will from it.

Li Shu was a bit taken aback by Bai Zou's demeanor and the accompanying pressure that made it hard for her to breathe.

Even though his outward look was calm and collected, he was very much impassioned, and that led him to inadvertently leak out a bit of his pressure as a second-stage palace realm expert.

The leaked spiritual pressure made Li Shu feel as if a mountain had been dropped on her body and the air had been thinned out.

Even though Bai Zou may not have purposefully targeted her with his pressure and whatever bits caught her were purely the remnants, it was still more than what a sixth-stage core formation cultivator with pill poisoning could handle.

A healthy prime late-stage core formation expert would have the same struggle much less her who was weaker, ill, and also nervous for filing a case against a palace realm cultivator.

Her nervousness was understood since other than Bai Zou being a palace realm expert, there were rumors surrounding him, that most residents of the Silent Willow County had heard about.

One of those rumors was how he had single-handedly decimated a beast tide that numbered five thousand strong in the Cinnabar Kingdom.

The kingdom was a rank 4 kingdom that was filled with numerous forests and rivers and lakes, and in terms of resources, it was rather rich. With all these going on for it, one would expect the kingdom to be strong.

However, before Bai Zou's rise to prominence, it could be considered average at best when compared to other rank 4 nations and organizations.

The reason for that was while it was blessed with resources, a third of its territory was home to some of the most ferocious spirit beasts that the royal family and other residents of the kingdom just couldn't handle.

Their territories were loosely scattered and different areas of their kingdom were constantly being attacked by those spirit beasts which gave them little opportunity to grow or develop. While the constant attacks did help them improve their combat ability, they were restricted in the areas they had access to, and the spirit beasts were wise and calculated in how they performed their attacks.

They prevented the kingdom from mobilizing their attacks by sporadically attacking different territories, which always kept the different powers in those territories on guard.

The death toll on the normal population was also high which meant that their total population continuously dwindled.

Had Bai Zou not appeared, the Cinnabar kingdom would have likely been completely overrun by the spirit beasts, eventually.

From what Li Shu heard about him from the gossip around, his father had been a butcher for the army of the kingdom and he was stationed at the borders of the kingdom.

His job was to process the body of the carcasses of the spirit beasts that fell in battle. With the kingdom constantly fighting against the spirit beasts and having no room for anything else, they could only use those same spirit beasts to help them grow their strength.

They therefore slowly studied them, especially the more common ones, in the hopes of discovering not only their weaknesses but how to use every part of their bodies to strengthen themselves, and this was where the occupation of a military butcher was born.

This job was assigned to those who didn't have a great aptitude for fighting and cultivation. With how many spirit beasts attacked them, and how high the frequency was, the kingdom trained a lot of its citizens to be butchers.

Their jobs would be to quickly process the killed spirit beasts before other spirit beasts devoured them, or some precious ingredients from their bodies got ruined due to the passage of time.

The job was highly dangerous since it involved sending those who didn't have the greatest strength into the most dangerous of places.

However, it wasn't without its benefits, such as gaining merit points with the royal family, and with those merit points, they could redeem them for treasures from the royal vault or gain aristocratic titles. In addition, there were also accidental benefits brought by butchers who had been on the job for a long time.

Due to constant contact with the bodies of the spirit beasts, their own bodies got strengthened and in certain instances even mutated from having their bodies continuously soak up the blood of those spirit beasts as they dissected them.

The mutation would sometimes be beneficial and end up elevating their strength and even natural aptitude, and in other instances, it was no different than poison which resulted in the gruesome death of the butcher.

Bai Zou's father had been one of those butchers. There was nothing noteworthy about him, and the only reason he was mentioned was because he had taught his skills to his son, who inherited his post when he died.

#### Chapter 377 Smooth Wind Butcher

At 14 years of age, Bai Zou joined the army to be a butcher after his father had passed. He had two younger siblings and a sick mother who had been injured in one of the many beast tides that hit the area.

At such a young age, he quickly grew in repute because of how meticulous he was in processing the spirit beast's body, and not only that he had shown to have an almost genius level aptitude for cultivation.

At 16 years he had already broken through to the foundation establishment realm and had blue grade pillars to boot.

The royal family quickly used its scant resources to help nurture him and even offered to move him and his family to the capital and have his post changed from a butcher.

While Bai Zou did agree to have his family move, he wanted to remain as a butcher. It was during that period that he started his cooking. He'd clean damaged carcasses and parts that were unwanted and make a few meat dishes from them.

The royal family acquiesced, though begrudgingly. Little Bai Zou's reputation slowly grew as the butcher of the field, who carved spirit beasts in one hand and cooked them with the other.

With his talent showing, spirit beasts in the core formation realm which usually had the same level of intellect as their human counterparts, even more so considering their long lives, started targeting him.

In their long years of fighting, those spirit beasts always showed a coordination that was human-like along with their cunningness. Over the years they were known to especially target any outstanding geniuses that showed up on the battlefield, even at the expense of sacrificing hundreds of their ranks for the one.

It even went to extreme cases where they'd mark those geniuses using scent-related racial abilities of some of them, and then attack them when their guards were lowered.

There was once a young general about 37 years of age and in the late stages of the core formation realm who had sword qi already developed at that age and was showing promise of becoming a palace realm expert.

His brilliance shone to all, including the spirit beasts who upon realizing the danger he posed to them, had him marked with the dust of a grey ash moth during one of the clashes.

The spirit beasts used the scent of that ash, to continuously track him as they waited for an opportune moment, and when it did, over a dozen late-stage core formation spirit beasts skilled in stealth and poison attacked him with no care for their lives.

He managed to slaughter about half of them, but he got poisoned in the end, and gotten eaten by the remaining two surviving spirit beasts at the end.

The royal family and other powers became even more cautious after this incident, however despite knowing that their geniuses could be targetted, they could not afford to hide them. They barely had any breathing room or the luxury of hiding them from the constant and brutal attacks of the spirit beasts especially during the tides, where every man, woman, and child would have to be used, to protect whatever little territory they had control over.

The best they could do was train them to the best of their abilities and offer as much protection as they could by assigning them, protectors. The protectors were usually aged war veterans in the late stages of the core formation realm, who had one foot in the grave. They only had one duty, to protect the genius even at the expense of their lives, which was why every protector was taught a destructive taboo art that would unleash a fearsome attack at the expense of their life.

The taboo art was something the royal family had been working on for thousands of years and its might when executed by a late-stage core formation expert, was sufficient to heavily injure a quasi palace realm expert.

With such firepower in their hands, the old veterans could ensure the safety of their protectees, even against a sudden beast tide or ambush like the young general had suffered.

παΠδςNovel com Bai Zou with the talent he had shown was assigned one. He ended up forming a friendship with the old veteran, a friendship built on cooking. The old veteran wasn't exactly a skilled chef, but he had an obsession with duck recipes which he taught Bai Zou.

His restaurant's main dish, the golden flame roast duck was rumored to have originated from said veteran, and a few of the other duck recipes on the menu of the Golden Duck Platter restaurant.

Regardless of whether there was any truth to that statement, what was true was his deep friendship with that old veteran, which was why Bai Zou was hit hard when the veteran sacrificed himself to save Bai Zou when he was in the late stage of the core formation realm.



At the time his reputation among the populace of the Cinnabar Kingdom and the spirit beast was at an all-time high, especially the latter whom he had butchered a few of the top figures over the years. I think you should take a look at [pandasnovel.com](http://pandasnovel.com)

This was why they sent a mini beast tide after him that was composed of about 300 spirit beasts, all at the core formation stage, and in the midst, there were about 4 of them that were already at the peak of the core formation stage.

The area Bai Zou had been stationed at the time became a blood bath at the onslaught of that attack with over half a million cultivators dying. Bai Zou managed to escape alive because of the veteran who executed the taboo art which opened a space for him to escape.

Over the next decade in a mad frenzy, he charged to the frontlines of anywhere with a rumored beast tide and slaughtered his way through their ranks.

He managed to increase his cultivation base within that short time to the peak of the core formation stage and develop slaughter qi and later slaughter intent which helped push his cultivation base to a quasi-palace realm expert and become the topmost figure of the kingdom.

As a quasi-palace realm cultivator, the Cinnabar kingdom behind him began its counter-attack and were finally the ones raiding their territories of those spirit beasts and bringing it under their control little by little, and within thirty years they had taken half of the territories and made it their own.

Within those thirty years, Bai Zou managed to break through to the palace realm, and along the way, he gained the moniker 'the smooth wind butcher'.

It didn't matter whether the spirit beast was skilled in defense or not, they were all the equal beneath his butcher blade. Whenever he swung his blade, there was no ostentatious display of power that came with most techniques that resulted in the destruction of the surroundings. Whenever Bai Zou swung his butcher's knife, the attack was silent and never went beyond the target and even the target never realized they'd been sliced until it was too late and their body were splitting ever so gently apart.

He had honed his slicing skills to the tip, where every movement of the blade, energy used, and containment were done with utmost precision and with one goal in mind which was to perfectly slice the spirit beast with minimal wastage of both his qi and the spirit beast materials.

Countless spirit beasts fell beneath that butcher knife and got harvested. Even as a palace realm expert he never forgot his roots.

Finally, they charged the main territory where the most powerful and ferocious of spirit beasts lay, the Aurora wild forest.

If it wasn't for the fearsome roars, the threat of brutal death, and being eaten, it was one of the most beautiful places in the whole kingdom with aurora lights shining at night and it was also the spiritual qi in the area was the densest in the whole kingdom.

The royal family had long day dreamed of making that area their own, ever since they spotted but they could never set foot there, but with a palace realm expert who had honed his skills in butchering spirit beasts, maybe they could finally do it and finally have full control over every inch of land within their kingdom.

But sadly things didn't go as planned, they barely made it halfway into the forest before they were routed back, and with serious injuries at that, with Bai Zou's injuries being the heaviest.

The forest housed a spirit beast in the palace realm, that was in hibernation and got woken by the commotion and retaliated. Its cultivation realm remains unknown but in its half asleep state, it managed to wound Bai Zou and slaughter a third of the parties who had charged in.

A ceasefire ensued in the kingdom, with the spirit beasts restraining themselves within their remaining territories while the kingdom abandoned all thoughts of getting close to the Aurora wild forest.

It was after that fight that Bai Zou settled and opened the Golden Duck Platter Restaurant.

To Li Shu, while she admired the cooking of his restaurant and thought it was divine. When she entertained the thought of filing a suit against him, all she felt was dread.

She was taking someone who was known to cleave hard-skinned core formation spirit beasts as easy as putting a knife through butter and had a knack for it, and she was filing a complaint against him, and

when she felt his spiritual pressure that had the brutality of slaughter in it, she would have run away had her legs not given out immediately.

...

"Ahem."

## Chapter 378 Experience From The Instructors

Just as Li Shu felt she was about to be cleaved in half, a gentle breeze covered her bringing a sense of calmness and refreshes on every part of her body. Even her qi which felt sluggish in one instant and erratic the next seemed to have been affected by the breeze as a vibrancy returned to them.

She hurriedly looked up to see Yang Qing smile gently at her.

"Breath, Owner Bai Zou.."

Bai Zou felt his agitation settle down as he too got covered by a cool gentle breeze. Even though he had not lost himself to anger, those who developed slaughter qi or slaughter intent, while they did have an advantage over most when it came to sheer destructive force due to the nature of their intent or qi, that nature made them susceptible to erratic mood changes.

The overbearing nature of slaughter qi or intent, put pressure on their mental states which made them prone to mood swings or going berserk. This was why most slaughter qi users who were not of fiendish origins usually supplemented their cultivation with arts that strengthened their souls and mental states.

They could either do it through a cultivation art, or a natural treasure or object with spirit calming properties such as the yellow plume ginseng tea leaves which were known to calming properties that had an effect on those that were in the domain realm.

However most opted to use a cultivation art or engage in secondary occupations that helped renew and strengthen the mind such as painting, playing an instrument, sea or sky gazing. In Bai Zou's case, Yang

Qing assumed cooking was what helped him contain the overbearing nature of his slaughter intent, which was ironically why he had a mildly drastic reaction when he felt his restaurant was being targeted.

"Sorry, I lost myself for a second there.."

Bai Zou cupped his fist in apology to both Yang Qing and Li Shu, whose skin seemed to be improving from the pale complexion it had a few seconds ago.

"Is he really a first-stage palace realm expert?!"

While Yang Qing's qi had a calming effect on him, a part of what made him regain his senses was shock, from how easily Yang Qing had affected his state.

Yang Qing didn't conceal his cultivation base, so it was his for Bai Zou who was in the second stage of the palace realm to detect it when he came into the courtroom. Therefore he knew Yang Qing seemed to be close to the peak of the first stage.

However, Yang Qing despite being weaker than him by a one minor level, managed to influence his state before Bai Zou had an opportunity to react.

This was truly shocking for Bai Zou who had long grown to be hypersensitive to his surroundings no matter if it was his kitchen at the restaurant in Cinnabar Kingdom or within the courtroom of the Order, his guard was never down owing to years of being on guard against the spirit beasts.

But before he could react, Yang Qing had penetrated whatever defenses he had before he could even respond. I think you should take a look at [pa1dasnovel.com](http://pa1dasnovel.com)

Yang Qing on the other hand thought nothing of it. Breaching Bai Zou's defense was a non-issue for him.

Bai Zou was just one minor level higher than him and when it came to foundations of the dao, type of core, and other factors including his peerless jade physique, he was miles ahead of Bai Zou, and there was also one other factor which was the instructors at the institute.

He had been brutalized for four years by them when he was just a puny qi refinement cultivator and they were levels higher than Bai Zou, and among them, there were a few of them who had slaughter intent that was denser, and much more refined than what Bai Zou had, and they would occasionally wash the young students with it, to train their minds and 'prepare' them.

Bai Zou's slaughter intent was like a peaceful meadow in springtime to Yang Qing when compared to the slaughter intent of those instructors and he had to soak it up for years. If he couldn't handle someone like Bai Zou when they were almost at similar levels then he might as well hand over all his yearly salary to those instructors as a thank you for how well they took care of him.

"Judge Yang Qing while I sympathise with what daoist Li Shu has endured, I can say with certainty it has nothing to do with our restaurant.

Every ingredient we use is carefully prepared and sourced, to bring out the greatest flavors and ensure its quality. It is for this reason that the restaurant has grown its fame over the years.

The meat dishes we serve such as the golden roast duck, the ducks that we use are ones that we rear ourselves and we do not use any pills like other establishments do, so as to fatten them up in the shortest amount possible and also boost their growth, or trick the customers it has more spiritual energy in it, than it actually does.

We rear them by using naturally produced spiritual herbs, and we monitor their growth and the quality of their meat. If any is found with fault, we do not serve it. I respect cooking, and I would not desecrate it by doing something untoward like pill dosing.

Even when it comes to the restaurant, I don't do it to earn money. You can see from the prices that are charged and the quality of the ingredients I use. What I make is just enough to have just a tiny bit above breaking even.

παΠdαsNovel.com I opened the restaurants to live out the dream I shared with an old man that I admired greatly, which was opening a restaurant that served the most excellent meat dishes in the continent, that could be enjoyed by people in all walks of life.

A hope that those meat dishes could be a sort of reprieve for them. .."

Bai Zou's look turned melancholic as he said this.

"Judge, I'm sure you have heard a little bit about Cinnabar kingdom?" asked Bai Zou

Yang Qing nodded.

Chapter 379 Lesson From The Last Moments

"The stories though, have truth to them.... Words ultimately fall short of truly depicting certain things...the hell it was...the constant fear that at any moment you may die, your wife may die, your child may die, your parent may die, your brother, sister, or girl you want to marry. We did not have the luxury of the living...."

"Fear was our constant companion, fear was our way of life from dawn till dusk and dusk till dawn. There are those who enjoy the sounds of crickets chirping by the water, the cicada noises announcing summer, and the bird chirps announcing spring.

These noises symbolize life, change of seasons, something to be enjoyed and celebrated, but to us...."

Bai Zou had a pitiful smile and his frame seemed to have grown frail. He stared at his hands which were trembling as he chuckled to himself.

"Even as a palace realm cultivator I still haven't escaped it, it seems.." he lowly muttered to himself.

"When we hear cricket sounds, we know it's the writhing melody crickets, whose cries induce illusions and hallucinations that dig up your worst nightmares, cicada noises act as a precursor to the sun blistering smog that will boil your smoke alive.

To this day I don't know if the smog is brought about by the cicada or what the source is, but the damage it does is unimaginable.." Bai Zou said with a slight tremble in his voice.

παΠδαςNovel com "As for the birds, a quick painless death is all a Cinnabar citizen can hope for when met with their flock. But if you have horrible luck then your innards may very well end up being used as an incubation chamber for their eggs whilst you're still alive.

In the Cinnabar kingdom, whether you have lived there for 10 years, 100 years, or 1,000 years if you're lucky or unlucky depending....fear is a constant factor to you all. You never get used to the place, and your only reprieve is death.

Of the stories about me floating around, more so in respect to my father is how he taught me my butchering skills, but what they don't say is, the day he died I was there. He was butchering the carcasses like usual, however this time it was different than the other harvesting expeditions he had been to.

Within those corpses, there was a yellow agate jackal that wasn't completely dead. When my father went to carve it up, it used whatever life and strength it had left to tear him apart in the most brutal way possible before it died.

Before any of the other butchers could react, my father had his arm torn off, his torso was being chewed into. But even in all that carnage, where I could hear that jackal grind his bones with a malevolent grin, not once did he yell in pain.

I could never forget his look at that moment, and to this day I have never forgotten it. As that jackal was tearing him apart, he had this peaceful smile on his face, one of pure relief.

At the time, I could understand why he looked so relieved as he was being brutally torn apart. But the long I lived, the better I understood it, which was why when the royal family came asking me to take a different post, one that wasn't as dangerous, I refused.

I wanted to be a butcher, and not because of some altruistic sense of duty to defend others, or protect the kingdom, no, it was because I wanted that release, the release I saw on my father's face that day.

That final moment is something I consider as his final lesson to me. I think you should take a look at [παΠδαςnovel.com](http://παΠδαςnovel.com)

The peace and comfort that came from knowing, I won't have to endure this anymore, I can now sleep forever.

The constant fear does things to someone to the point death even though brutal seem like the best gift one can get.." Bai Zou solemnly said.

"I would have ended up the same as him, had I not met my mentor, the protector assigned to me.

He showed me a different form of reprieve, one that wasn't centered on dying, and that was cooking.

Cooking and enjoying good food, helped me live through it, which is why I would not jeopardize my restaurant. The Golden Duck is a restaurant to others but to me, it's a saving grace, a proof of a life being lived, which is why I would treat it no different than my life, because it is.."

Bai Zou's gaze turned firm as he faced Li Shu.

"Daoist Li Shu I can assure you and also the court, our restaurant had nothing to do with it, and if I could help you with your ailment I would. You are our customer after all, and offering reprieve is what I aim for as the owner, but my qi isn't exactly suited for healing, and despite being a palace realm expert myself, I don't know others since I spend all my time in Cinnabar kingdom, and my prior history made it hard for me to do so.

For that I am sorry, but our restaurant had no part in your pill poisoning.." Bai Zou said as he showed a rare gaze of sympathy.

"Thank you for the opportunity, Judge Yang Qing, and I leave the matter to your court.." he added.

Yang Qing gently sighed with a heaviness surrounding the court. Even Xia Ting who always seemed like the energetic sort, had a somber expression on her face, and as for Li Shu, her gaze was complicated and full of confusion.

Yang Qing could understand her current state. Before the case, she was all but certain the restaurant was involved in her current ailment, and with her uneventful life of training and going to the restaurant,



to her, the logic that she was poisoned by the restaurant was sound. But with the insight from Bai Zou and the staunch conviction he had for himself and the restaurant, she had doubts about whether the restaurant was really responsible despite not having any other plausible suspects.

If she didn't get it from the restaurant, where could she possibly have gotten her pill poisoning from?

"Thank you for your words and explanation Owner Bai Zou. With both testimonies in place, we can move on to the next stage.

Xia Ting, please call them over.."

Chapter 380 Similar Quality

At Yang Qing's direction, Xia Ting went to the doors of the courtroom and respectfully called a couple of people over.

A total of five people walked in. Li Shu and Bai Zou looked back in curiosity at the new entrants to the case more so the former.

Li Shu's pupils constricted in surprise as she recognized two of the people. Bai Zou had a similar reaction though not as exaggerated. He had the same look of recognition Li Shu had.

Two of the people nodded toward Li Shu with polite smiles on their faces. They wore dark blue robes that had an emblem of a cauldron that was seated on top of a flowing river.

Of the two one was a middle-aged woman with a short build, black hair tied in a bun that had greying in it. She had light green eyes and a kind-looking face. Next to her, spotting the same robes was a slender tall man, who looked to be in his sixties with grey hair neatly tied at the back, and had a serious expression that resembled someone very studious of their work.

Li Shu offered a slight bow toward them, with an apologetic and guilty smile.

Behind the two, were two men, one seemed elderly and the other seemed to be in his late thirties, early forties. They had different robes.

The elderly-looking man had plain grey robes and his hair seemed to be all over the place in a haphazard manner, like an explosion had hit it or he was struck by lightning. Despite his aged appearance, his skin had a rosey suppleness to it, and his black eyes had a depth of profoundness to them.

The young man next to him had blue hair matching eyes and a milky white complexion. Looking at him made one feel like they were staring at a river that gave life to all sorts of fertile plains filled with verdant vegetation.

And finishing the group was a young man who looked to be in his late twenties. He had short brown hair, tanned brown skin, and an honest simple face. Everything around him gave the amalgamation of the qualities of earth.

All five members that had just entered all seemed different in looks, gender, demeanor and had varying cultivations to each other, such as the two cultivators who had nodded toward Li Shu, the middle-aged lady was at the eleventh stage of the core formation realm, while the elderly looking man with the same robes was at the sixth stage of core formation realm. The elderly man with grey robes was a third-stage palace realm expert, while the blue-haired man next to him was a first-stage palace realm expert and the brown-haired young man trailing the group was a ninth-stage core formation expert, which from the fluctuations he was releasing was just inches away from reaching the tenth stage.

While they all seemed different in one shape or form, there was one area in which they were all similar, which is, that they all smelled of herbs, the kind that could only develop on someone who has been around herbs for years and years.

"Thank you all for availing yourself and sparing the time from your busy schedules to assist us in this matter. I on behalf of the Order would like to offer my sincerest gratitude for your time and assistance.."

Yang Qing stood up and cupped his fists in greetings at the five members who all returned his gesture in kind, adding words of gratitude and honor in their responses.

"Okay for purposes of clarity, I will make introductions on their behalf, though for both of you, you know a few of them.." Yang Qing said as he addressed Li Shu and Bai Zou who nodded back in agreement. I think you should take a look at

Li Shu was familiar with the two blue-robed cultivators who had a cauldron symbol on their robes while Bai Zou seemed to be familiar with a simple-looking brown-haired young man.

"To my right are Alchemist Meng Ye and Pan Xin respectively.." Yang Qing said as he politely gestured to the two blue-robed cultivators Li Shu was familiar with.

"They are the palace master and vice palace master of the Blue River Cauldron Pavillion respectively, and were the ones who did Li Shu's diagnosis.."

The Duo offered a bow to Yang Qing and then to the rest of the cultivators they had walked in with.

Their bows seemed a bit more solemn when they did to the two men next to them i.e. the slovenly-looking old man and the blue-haired young man.

There was deep respect in their eyes as they bowed to the duo.

" Next to them is Alchemist Ma Bo. He is not a foundational member of any organization but is a guest teacher in the Green jade of the Jade Leaf Dao Imperial Academy of the Jade Leaf Empire..."

Li Shu, Bai Zou, the palace master, and the vice palace master of the Blue River Cauldron Pavilion all had looks of shock as they heard Yang Qing's introduction.

The only ones who seemed undisturbed were the blue-haired man and the simple-looking young man. Though the reason for their unperturbed looks was different. The blue-haired man seemed like he already knew the old man's identity, while the simple-looking man seemed like he didn't understand the magnitude of the identity.

To him selling dumplings at a sideways stall and being a guest teacher at the Jade Leaf Dao Imperial Academy may as well have the same importance in his eyes, but to the rest, it was completely different.

The Jade Leaf Dao Imperial Academy was a renowned institution around the Southern continent and shared the same fame just like the One Thousand Battle Hall Palace as a place of training of the same caliber.

Like its name, it was founded and is supported by the imperial family of the Jade Leaf Empire which was a rank 1 Empire and could be considered among the top five empires in the whole Southern Continent.

Everybody around the continent, whether it was a 4-year-old kid climbing mango trees to chase after a grasshopper, a refined scholar, a renowned gossip monger, or an information broker, if you asked them which was the one place that had the greatest pool of knowledge, they would all answer the same thing, the Jade Leaf Empire. This was even with the two holy lands being thrown into the mix.

The Jade Leaf Empire was synonymous with endless knowledge. It was an Empire built upon the foundation of knowledge across all genres be it cultivation or mundane subjects such as tea brewing, The Jade Leaf Empire had it all.