

Daily life 471

Chapter 471 Guest at the table

After finishing up with the Judicial Review Committee, since it was still just noon, he decided to pass by the Thousands Flavor Restaurant.

"Is Cao Ying not around.."

When Yang Qing arrived at the restaurant he noticed that Cao Ying was absent and now there were two new faces.

It was a young girl and a young boy both 14 years of age.

From the stability of their auras, their cultivation base that was at the early stages of the foundation realm, Yang Qing knew they were other students from the Institute doing the work program, same as Cao Ying, who had more likely gone back to the Institute with his three-month long break over.

"Senior brother Cao Ying already left, but before he did, he left as instructions on all his regulars. Though we are still immature, we will try our best to serve you.." said the 14-year-old boy with enthusiasm as though he had received an imperial edict.

"There's no need for that.." Yang Qing said with a small laugh.

He had once been like that, in fact, he had been worse in his early fawning bootlicking days, when he was just starting out.

"What's your name?"

"I'm Shao Da, senior Yang Qing.." said the 14-year-old boy as he cupped his fists.

"Well, Shao Da, nice to meet you.." Yang Qing said as he cupped his fists back in greeting, which came as a shock to the young Shao Da.

"I'll have shredded pork with sweet bean sauce and a pot of jasmine tea..I'll have it there.." Yang Qing said as he pointed at his regular seating spot which was conveniently empty.

Shao Da acknowledged the greeting and speedily went to the Kitchen, his enthusiasm unabated. He even went to the extent of using the swallow crane movement technique to move about.

Yang Qing couldn't help but shake his head at the scene.

He nodded in greeting to the faces around him as he made his way to his seat.

At this time, Dai Chen, Zhang Qingge, Kang Huilang, Xia Boqin, and Yu Huifeng should have been at the restaurant having their meals.

It was a habit they had created ever since they started working as judges. They'd spare time, if possible at noon, and have their meals together. But at this moment, none of them was available.

Yang Qing guessed Dai Chen and Zhang Qingge were getting their affairs in order in preparation for the one-month-long break given by the Judicial Review Committee, to take care of the issues caused by today's events. As for the remaining three, they had all left for the tribulation mountain for their breakthroughs to the palace realm.

If they went by Yang Qing's timeline, they would be absent for three to four months to successfully break through and stabilize their cultivation realms.

"Hopefully Yi Jie will be out by that time.." thought Yang Qing, as his thoughts started to slowly drift to today's events.

At first, it was just on the areas he could have improved on, but inevitably his mind went to the dead members of the sect, from the innocent ones to the guilty ones.

He wondered if the founder had once been a nice person, but was beguiled by the mastermind behind the red abyssal thorn tree.

He wondered how she met him, why she did the things she did, and how the other sect members just went along with whatever she was doing.

"Things maybe would have gone a different path if just one of them would have chosen the right thing. Maybe things would have not reached this point..."

Though Yang Qing knew deep down his thoughts were just wishful thinking. From the moment the mastermind of the red abyssal thorn tree appeared in the sect founder's life, the fate of the Ice Emerald Sect had already been sealed.

With that person's means, especially as a soul formation expert, they could have brainwashed the entire sect into doing their bidding if they so wished. It was as easy as blinking to them.

Yang Qing let out an exhausted sigh as he decided to close his eyes in an effort to rest his mind and silence the voices and the pictures in his mind, and the endless what-ifs scenarios that were playing in his mind to no end.

He opened them a few minutes later when his stomach rumbled as a result of the wafting tantalizing scent of the food being cooked up in the kitchen.

A small smile appeared on his face at the thought of the shredded pork and sweet bean sauce about to be brought over.

However, when he opened his eyes his pupils froze in shock when he discovered there was someone seated opposite to him, staring at him with a worried look which they hurriedly tried to cover up when they saw Yang Qing open his eyes.

"Mao Mao...How long have you been here?" Yang Qing asked as he stared at the beautiful young lady seated opposite to him who had her long hair tied and hanging over her left chest, the unique purple big limpid eyes that had revolving clouds in them.

Yang Qing remembered how tongue-tied he was the first time they interacted when she had been chosen to be his understudy to take over his courtroom in preparation for him leaving for the palace courts.

Those eyes were mesmerizing and captivating, while her demeanor was heavenly, but that picture was swiftly ruined when he discovered her secret quirky hobby as an out-of-control gossip hoarder.

"How have you been?" he softly asked.

Whatever else, he had to admit Mao Yunru was absolutely stunning.

Mao Yunru blushed slightly at Yang Qing's slight gentle admiring gaze.

How does this lazy oaf always manage to get me this flustered? Luckily he is too dense to notice, otherwise, he would never let me live it down, knowing his shamelessness.

Mao Yunru hurriedly recomposed herself, covertly before she engaged Yang Qing.

"I've been good...Have you just come back?" even though she tried to control it, she couldn't hide the worry in her tone.

"Yeah about an hour or so now.." Yang Qing said with an air of melancholy around him.

Mao Yunru didn't know what to say next. She felt like she couldn't ask how he was doing, because clearly he wasn't doing well, and asking that question, felt like she would be digging more into his wounds.

Luckily for her Yang Qing saved her the awkwardness of finding the right words with his next words.

"Thank you for worrying, Mao Mao.." he said with a thankful smile.

"Well, I have to. I do owe world canvas Yang Qing after all, for all the pearls of wisdom he shared with me on being an excellent judge.." she said, which drew a laugh from them both.

Shao Da came by moments later with Yang Qing's order of shredded pork with sweet bean sauce, and jasmine tea.

Mao Yunru was surprised when Yang Qing asked her to order whatever she wanted. In the months they worked together, it was the first time he had been that generous. Usually, he'd buy them the cheapest meal within reason, which usually cost a middle-grade spirit stone at most.

"Must be because of all the gifts he got the other day.." she enviously thought as she imagined how many scoops of juicy information she could get with just a tiny amount of what Yang Qing had received on the day of his ceremony.

"I must qualify for the palace courts too.." she thought with renewed vigor as her eyes burned with resolve.

"What's wrong with her? Is it because I offered to buy her a meal?" Yang Qing puzzledly thought as he saw Mao Yunru's strange look.

"I guess I mistreated them a bit.." he ruefully thought as he rubbed his nose in embarrassment.

He made a silent note to do better, and treat his team to good food every once in a while, well everyone except Feng Xin. He wasn't nearly paid enough to be able to afford that bottomless eating calamity.

A whole hour quickly passed by with the two sharing laughs, meals, and stories though it was mostly Mao Yunru sharing her stories, from the cases she got, or other weird stories she had come across from around the continent, courtesy of her local information dealer.

In that whole hour, Yang Qing felt unburdened. It was like he had been transported to a different realm where he was unburdened by tens of thousands of lives he had taken earlier in the day.

Alas, the time got cut, when Mao Yunru had to go back to her courtroom to resume the cases she had left. Yang Qing deeply thanked her for her company as she went away leaving him behind to finish the last pot of jasmine tea he had left.

"I guess I'll need to visit home regularly during this period while keeping in touch with Feng Xin and the rest.."

Yang Qing intended to hide himself away for the month and later until he felt more like himself, but his interaction with Mao Yunru, changed all that. If he hoped to be better, he couldn't hide away.

After he finished his meal, Yang Qing left, with Shao Da giving him a zealous energetic goodbye.

Chapter 472 Checking in on starlight

?

The day was still young after he left the restaurant, so he decided to head back to his abode and check on the starlight crab.

Ever since he came back with it, he has been up and down, from the ceremony to the entrance exams, to Ma Yuan's case, that he barely had any moment to check on it.

He had brought it back due to its lack of interest in food, and its foolhardy nature. It was about one of the few spirit beasts that he noticed didn't fear Ellie despite being weaker than it, and in terms of bloodline superiority, Ellie as a cloud-swallowing kite, had a noble bloodline that could be tied to the lineage of the Yuan bird but despite, the starlight crab still dared attack it back then.

Yang Qing hoped to train it a bit and use it as a guard in his pond to prevent Ellie from constantly stealing his fish when he was not around which was why he even went to the extent of giving it the wisdom pearl of a first-stage palace realm cyclone arc prawn.

Yang Qing walked over to the pond starlight was staying and found it immobile with its smooth white carapace filled with mots of light in the shape of stars, standing out in the crystal clear pond, adding a radiant beauty to it.

Ignoring its stubborn nature, when it came to outward appearance, the starlight crab stood out even more than the celestial nesting weaver.

"It seems to have improved its cultivation base.." Yang Qing muttered to himself as he closely examined the changes that happened to the starlight crab's body.

When Yang Qing met it, it was at the fourth stage of the core formation realm, but now it had already reached the fifth stage and it was already stable.

Other than that, Yang Qing managed to detect a swirling wave in some of the stars on its carapace.

"It seems to be progressing rather well with the pearl.."

The violet pearl wisdom pearl Yang Qing had given it was neatly tucked away beneath its mandibles. It let out a gentle pulsating glow that seemed to synchronize with the light being let out by the stars on the starlight crab's carapace.

An ethereal mystic light continuously surrounded its body, soaking it, with the greatest concentration being at its head.

The light was evidence of the starlight crab assimilating the insights contained in the wisdom pearl of the first stage palace realm cyclone.

Yang Qing went to his terrace and picked up one of his rattan chairs and came with it and sat next to the pond, as he waited for the starlight crab to complete its session of contemplation.

An hour went by before the starlight crab opened its eyes and in typical fashion, to the first time Yang Qing met it, it attacked first the moment it opened its eyes to detect someone next to it before it redirected its attack when it saw it was Yang Qing.

It let out strange sounds, which Yang Qing guessed was the starlight crab apologizing based on how awkwardly it was rubbing its claws together as it was making those sounds.

"Seems like you have a lot of energy. How about a match, we see how much of the wisdom pearl you have excavated.." suggested Yang Qing with an innocent smile.

The starlight crab flinched at his proposition as it clearly remembered how it had been effortlessly beaten by the flicker of a finger the first time they met.

It shriveled its body up, as it weakly waved its mandibles as if to say,

"Energy? What energy? Can't you see how desiccated I am?"

Yang Qing ignoring its claims, pulled it out of the water, as he took it to the open field next to his courtyard.

"Don't worry I won't be attacking. I'll only be defending.." Yang Qing said when he saw how it continuously let out pitiful noises.

"Where is the dauntless crab from before?" he wondered as he saw the increasingly shameless display of weakness it continuously showed.

However, it immediately perked up when it heard Yang Qing say he would only be defending. It made a few movements with its claws to confirm with Yang Qing if what he said was true, and when Yang Qing confirmed it was, a glint of delight that likely came from the prospect of getting revenge on Yang Qing flashed through its eyes, as it immediately attacked Yang Qing.

Yang Qing couldn't help but shake his head with a bitter smile at its petty vindictive nature.

A wave of horizontal and vertical scythe-like golden streaks were immediately produced by the starlight crab each aimed at Yang Qing in a bid to slice him apart.

The sharpness and speed had increased a few notches from their last fight.

Yang Qing nodded at the increase, as he effortlessly swatted the golden streaks with ease with one hand on his chin and the other defending.

The starlight crab had a momentary pause of disbelief when it saw how easily its all-out effort had been dealt with before it produced more golden streaks as it darted all around Yang Qing to penetrate his defenses.

A storm of golden radiance constantly bombarded Yang Qing's location. Some streaks were as long as an ocean tide, while others were as thin and unnoticeable as the sun's reflection from a smooth surface.

"There's more flexibility..good.." Yang Qing muttered as his hand turned into a blur shredding every single streak like he was parting fog.

The starlight crab used every attack and every trick it could muster to try and even scratch the hem of Yang Qing's robes, but its attacks, no matter how powerful or well-hidden they were, were all effortlessly destroyed by Yang Qing's hand.

"That's enough.." Yang Qing said after thirty minutes in when he saw the starlight crab had almost completely expended its qi in its attacks.

"Your attacks have improved from where they were before. They were rigid which gave them more forceful power, however, they could be easily broken through when one knew where to hit.

Right now they're more malleable and flexible, which increases the degree of variation and lethality to your attacks, while also increasing their endurance.

Good improvement starlight..If you keep working at it, you may one day be able to do this. Speed of light, heaviness of water.."

A small green droplet appeared from Yang Qing's finger and in it was a swirling red, golden light.

The starlight crab only glanced at it for a second, before it felt its vision change. One minute it was in the vast grassland, the next it was lying on its back beneath the pond, with its body trembling all over.

It felt like it had been smashed by an ocean. Its body ached all over before that pain transformed into one of relief and comfort. All the fatigue and pain in its muscles instantly disappeared, as a sense of

pleasure and ease washed over them, and the qi it lost, was instantly restored, it could even feel the mental strain it had transform into relaxation.

"Who is that human? Will i ever land a hit?" it wondered as it slowly got up and secretly glanced at Yang Qing who was sprawled on a chair by the terrace.

After staring at him for quite sometime, it went back to the bottom of the pond, as it contemplated the sensation it felt when its body was hit by the green droplet.

Chapter 473 Plans for the backyard

After his little match with the starlight crab, Yang Qing decided to attempt to meditate at the grounds they had been training at.

His abode was like a wild natural forest. Other than the courtyard, he did not have any other man-made features in the area. Almost all his resources were spent on the nest of the celestial nesting weaver, so his cultivation abode was usually bare, save for the pond that housed different schools of fish, the green flame tree, the duality tree, and the purple lightning bamboo field.

The rest of his abode was unoccupied. The space was a few thousand acres, and Yang Qing had occupied a tiny part of it.

When Yang Qing received this abode, he had grand ambitions of turning it into a mini-blessed ground, however, he had severely underestimated the celestial nesting weaver's gluttony and high standards when it came to the materials it required to build the nest.

So with little resources to spare, Yang Qing abandoned whatever plans he had to make use of the large acres of space and let it be. Let nature take its course.

Because of the uniqueness of his cultivation art, and his peerless jade physique, the vegetation grew rampantly in the area which Yang Qing never bothered to manage, and just let it grow to whatever lengths it could grow to, which resulted in a mini jungle forming in his backyard.

"How come none of them seem to have any changes similar to those seven that I left at the grounds of the Clear River Sword Sect.." Yang Qing muttered to himself as he examined a few of the plants in the area.

Other than being vibrant, lush, and a slightly improved quality, the plants growing in his backyard were not as special as the few he had seen at the sect grounds of the Clear River Sword Sect.

None of the vegetation here seemed to have his universal qi in them, not the plants or even the fish he had.

Even though he mostly cultivated at the nest of the celestial nesting weaver, due to its intrinsic qualities towards boosting the speed of cultivation and comprehension, he did occasionally cultivate next to the pond, beneath the green flame tree, or even next to the jungle whenever the mood suited him.

But in all that time, not once had he ever detected any changes happening to the surrounding living organism, like what happened to a few of the creatures that were at the residence of the sect master Wang Yin, who had their bodies, and natures transformed and influenced by Yang Qing's universal qi.

Yang Qing decided to try and cultivate next to the jungle and see if he could replicate what happened in Deer Mountain Range, though he felt the odds of that happening were slim. Whatever happened there, he had been in a trance-like state, and try as he may, he could not remember the exact sensation of what was happening at that moment.

This would thus make it difficult for him to try and replicate something he has no idea how it came about or its working mechanisms.

Yang Qing sat down in a lotus position and started circulating his cultivation art, however, after ten minutes passed by, he opened his eyes with a defeated sigh escaping his lips.

"Figures, I'm not in the right space for it.." he muttered to himself as he got up heading in the direction of the nest of the green flame tree.

Yang Qing struggled to empty his mind of distracting thoughts, which made it impossible for him to complete one complete circulation of his cultivation art.

When he saw he wasn't getting anywhere in those early minutes, rather than force it, and risk qi deviation, it was better for him to take a break from it, and just rest.

"Mmmh, maybe I should add insects, and other species of plants in the area.." Yang Qing thought to himself as he saw the wildflowers growing about, and the lack of variety in the vegetation that had taken root in his backyard.

All he had was ocean tide grass, which created a nice ambiance and background to the area, and alabaster laurel, and a few other plants here and there, that were common despite being sky-rank plants of the top tier, they were not anything special, and their qualities were only that high because of the dense spiritual qi in the area, and also soaking up Yang Qing's qi, though their bodies were not intrinsically transformed by it, like the few plants and animals at the grounds of the Clear River Sword Sect, they still had their qualities improved from constantly being around him.

After making a mental note to go search for a few insects preferably ones without a cultivation base, and find more seeds either from the Order, Yang Qing made his way up to the flaming crown of the green flame tree.

In terms of cultivation, the nest of the celestial nesting weaver was the best, but when it came to rest, the soul-soothing and restorative effects of the green flame tree, made it the best place for Yang Qing in his current state to rest at.

Even without mental struggles, it wasn't the first time Yang Qing had slept at the tree. Its gentle flames gave him the most comfortable of sleep.

He already had a spot he had made specifically for that purpose. It had a soft-looking quilt, and the branch was covered with flaming green leaves that had the softest and gentlest feel to them, even when covered in green flames.

Yang Qing nestled himself in there, and after an hour, the effects of the tree managed to somewhat dampen the voices and the thoughts in his mind long enough for him to fall into slumber.

Even though the sleep wasn't as deep as it usually was for him, Yang Qing still managed to take a well-needed rest and reduce the mental strain he had on him.

When morning came, for the first time, Yang Qing didn't struggle to get up as he usually did, when he tried to get a few more winks in.

Chapter 474 Brook Of Clarity

Before the early rays of the sun hit, Yang Qing was already wide awake.

"Thanks.." he said as he gently patted the trunk of the green flame tree. Its leaves swayed, with green flames around, almost as if in response to his gratitude.

"It seems it won't be long now before your budding spirit fully forms and you undergo your spirit-forming tribulation.

I can't wait.." Yang Qing muttered in expectation as he cast one last look at the tree, and then took out the blue tear-shaped stone that he had been given by the Judicial Review Committee, to help him get in the Requited Blissful Peak.

Prior to yesterday, Yang Qing didn't know about the peak, but in terms of facilities around the Order, that did the same thing as the peak, he knew of a few. The tribulation mountain, where they went to break through, had special places, to help strengthen the mind, before the onset of their tribulation to increase their odds of success in surviving it.

Yang Qing nestled the stone between his thumb and index finger feeling its coolness, before he finally input a bit of his qi.

A cool azure was instantly produced from the stone, as countless runes were activated. The azure-colored breeze enveloped Yang Qing, and a second later, he had disappeared from where he stood.

Yang Qing's vision blurred for a brief moment, and when it returned he was on a large land with green grass and a solitary tree at the center.

The tree was over a hundred meters tall and looked like it could blot out the sky. It had a golden brown color, with silver leaves that glittered when the rays of the sun hit it. It had fissures on its bark, that released a golden light, giving it an ethereal and mystical look.

Silently standing there it looked like the epitome of tranquility. Yang Qing felt like he could curl up and take the best nap he could ever have beneath its shade.

"What's your name young one?"

Just as Yang Qing was about to lose himself in the endless sea of imagination of how worthwhile sleeping next to the tree would be, he heard an ancient, gentle, and serene androgynous voice, sound in his mind.

"My name is Yang Qing, senior, I was sent here by senior Jia Bohai for help.." Yang Qing respectfully said as he cupped his fist toward the tree at the center.

Without being told, he knew the voice must have originated from it, the saint grade tree, the auspicious grove tree.

"Bohai huh, time sure flies, that kid who used to try and steal my leaves back then, has now become a leader.."

Yang Qing almost choked from shock, when he heard the auspicious grove tree's words. He couldn't believe what he was hearing.

He tried to picture the elder who looked like a wisened sage, stealing leaves from a tree, and the image was unique. Yang Qing hurriedly stifled the laughter that was brewing up from the thought.

"It seems you have not had an easy time.." the auspicious grove tree suddenly said.

Yang Qing was well on his way to say he was okay on reflex, however, Jia Bohai's words from yesterday played in his mind.

"I am not.." he answered

"Care to share.."I think you should take a look at

The question came suddenly to him, which prompted him to pause in shock, but after collecting himself, he went on to explain the version of events that happened from when he met Ma Yuan, to its conclusion yesterday, and everything in between.

Yang Qing's sharing took over an hour for him to cover everything. He was surprised by the ease with which he shared, the level of detail, and even his own perspective, and the questions he had hidden away in his heart.

He found himself revealing it to the tree, and every time he did, he felt the heaviness lighten.

"That is not an easy burden to carry, Yang Qing.." the auspicious tree comfortingly said.

Its trunk suddenly opened up, and a gentle flowing sound of water could be heard coming from within.

"Within me is the brook of clarity..while it won't immediately erase all the guilt you're feeling or the burden of the weight you carry from those events, it will help you see things clearly, the answer you know to be true but are not willing to accept it yet.

It will guide you to it. Though I need to warn you, the first few times you use it will not be easy on you, as all your doubts, and everything you saw will be brought out to bear, and you'll have to continuously face them, before you can see through them.."

"You can take your time and go in when you're ready. There's no need for you to do so at this instant.." the tree added.

Yang Qing hesitated for a bit before he decided to take his time beneath the shade of the auspicious grove tree.

He only got up from it, when he felt he was sufficiently ready to interact with the brook of clarity.

He walked through the trunk and was amazed by the sight he saw. He felt like he had been transported to another world.

There was a small brook with pristine crystal clear water, gently flowing down a hill, surrounded by smooth pebbles to the side, that had undergrowth of their own.

There was small vegetation around, rabbits, short trees, birds, a small slope on the horizon, and a gentle cascading light of the sun that lit the region.

The lighting was dim, like that of the sun falling through a dense canopy, while the air was cool and refreshing, because of the brook below. There was a silence of nature to it.

"You can choose any spot next to the brook. You only need to look at it, and the rest will take care of itself.."

"Thank you for the reminder, senior.." said Yang Qing as he walked around the area, trying to find the perfect spot.

He eventually found one, which had just the right amount of warmth from the sun rays, and gentle cool breeze from the brook.

He sat in a lotus position next to the brook as he hesitantly looked at it. When he did, he saw his reflection, the rocks below, and a reflection of his surroundings, but before he knew it that image changed, while his eyes, turned into crystal clear.

His eyes had turned into the brook itself.

Chapter 475 Torture Of The Brook

Yang Qing felt the scene before his eyes changed. He felt like he had been transported back to the night he met Ma Yuan.

That cool, clear sky night with a chilly scent in the air, a full moon, and a person trying to take his life in the river.

The scene started out with him flying over the skies atop Ellie's back. He was seeing things from a third person's perspective.

He could see himself, clueless, unaware of the rumbling storm that was about to befall him. Though what he knows now, if time was reversed, he would have still chosen to save Ma Yuan, hear him out, and help him in the finding of his wife and child.

The only difference between then and now would be, with a culprit in sight, he wouldn't need to wait that long before acting.

But all that was just wishful thinking on his part. He wasn't sure if there was even a cultivation art, treasure, or realm of cultivation that would enable one to reverse the flow of time and write their wrongs.

If one could reach such a domain, would they be considered mortals?

The scene then played out as it went with extreme clarity. He saved Ma Yuan and they shared a meal.

His short interlude with the starlight crab had been erased, as the scenes focused solely on his interactions with Ma Yuan since it was the trigger of everything.

"Right, I forgot about this in the chaos, the arts tied to the Frozen Serenity Scripture, what did they need them for, and from our fight, it didn't seem like they cultivated them, as the art they used even seemed to deviate from the main art.." Yang Qing muttered to himself as he saw the crystal ice shard Ma Yuan had given him to help in the search of his wife and daughter.

Yang Qing suspected there was something to those arts and to why the Ice Emerald Sect seemed to want to look for them with the same fervor as they did for those with yin-related physiques.

Yang Qing made a mental note to research further into it using the two cultivation arts the Order had on hand, that were a part of the Frozen Serenity Scripture. With the month-long break he had, he could afford to research it further when he wasn't at the Requisite Blissful Peak.

After the scene with the shard, the scenes rapidly progressed to the minimal interactions he had with Ma Yuan, Yu Gen, and Xia Ting before the bombshell news of what the Ice Emerald Sect had been doing came to light.

Yang Qing clenched his fists when it reached this part, and despite his figure being a phantasmal incorporeal concept, he felt like his palms were sweaty as his body heated up. And finally, the scene that he had dreaded the most out of all of them, finally came up. His attack that froze and killed over ten thousand members of the Ice Emerald Sect, innocent and guilty alike.

Before the scene of the attack, the brook highlighted with great clarity, everything Yang Qing had sensed that day either consciously or unconsciously, which made the viewing extremely difficult for him. I think you should take a look at

One of the scenes, was just before they announced themselves to the Ice Emerald Sect and detailed their crimes, Yang Qing's palace sense had already been deployed, so even with the guarding array covering the sect, he could still see what the sect members were doing at the time, which the brook played out before him.

He could see a wholesome look of the whole sect, and every single cultivator within it, and what they were doing, and their emotions doing it.

The same level of detail was still there even to their deaths. Some were horrified when they saw it coming, while others, those too weak to grasp anything were still clamoring hyped up by the sect master's riling words thinking they were the heroes in the story, and that they would get to live through it, in victory, unaware, those were to be their final moments.

Different emotions, different outlooks, different cultivation bases, different stations; some could have grown to be powerful cultivators, some could have grown to guide others, others could have remained the same, while others could have grown to be mediocre. Each with their own trajectories in life, but with one single act from Yang Qing, all that was erased, and they all shared one ending, Death.

This was the part Yang Qing struggled with. The futures he had erased with a single movement. With the great memory afforded to him, he kept playing out scenarios in his head of each of the members, and the life they could have potentially led had they lived.

He only did it for those deemed innocent, as for the guilty, he truly had no remorse. In fact, some part of him even resented them for doing things that led him to that moment. If it wasn't for them and their deeds, the Order would not have been involved and Yang Qing would have not been forced to end the lives of so many.

With the brook of clarity slowly replaying that event, he felt like he was reliving that moment again. He wanted so much to close his eyes, but eyes open or closed, the scene played out for him, he could not avoid it.

The brook of clarity even went as far as to transmit the emotions every single one of those victims felt in the moment of their death.

The last nail to his guilt-ridden coffin was the confirmation of the death of Ma Yuan's wife, Li Lun.

He kept wondering if they had arrived a day earlier from when she was refined and if she would have been saved. However, he knew deep down that was wishful thinking on his part.

The Wisteria tree had told Yang Qing that Ma Yuan's wife had died a month before they arrived. Yang Qing met Ma Yuan a month and a few days prior. The few days were the one-and-a-half days he spent doing the evaluations. For them to be able to remotely save Ma Yuan's wife, they needed to have deduced the attacker's identity in that one and a half day and then act immediately, and for them to be able to act, the evidence needed to be clear proof.

One and a half days was an impossible time frame to work with considering the only evidence was the crystal ice shard Ma Yuan had and the hazy image of Deng Yaozu. They had little to work with, which was why it took Yu Gen, Xia Ting, and even the enlisted help of other inquisitors, close to a month to uncover everything.

Despite the logic of it, Yang Qing couldn't help but blame himself for not acting fast enough despite it being impossible, especially, when he saw Ma Yuan's decrepit look when he received the news.

The scenes ended where he had delivered the news to Ma Yuan.

Chapter 476 Harvests from the case

When Yang Qing opened his eyes, he felt his heart racing, while his robes were soaked in sweat. His qi flow wasn't as smooth as it used to be due to the state he was in from the replaying of those scenes.

A white chilly mist was instantly produced from the brook below him that had auspicious light flowing through it. The mist covered Yang Qing and instantly quelled his qi and the rampant emotions he had been feeling.

He felt like someone had poured cool refreshing water on his body after living in a scorched desert for a month.

"Thank you senior.." said Yang Qing.

"You did well for hanging on young judge, eventually you'll see it, your inner judgment so to speak.." said the auspicious grove wood tree.

Yang Qing didn't understand what it meant by inner judgment, but he still nodded his head in acknowledgment as he fearfully looked at the gentle crystal clear brook before him.

"How much time has passed?" asked Yang Qing

"Two hours.."

"TWO HOURS?! Will I need to endure the same thing again for the remaining two hours?!" Yang Qing quickly asked with fear in his tone.

No matter how much willpower he thought he had, he wasn't sure he could endure another play-by-play rendition of events from the brook of clarity.

"No, you won't. If we did, you would not be able to endure it, and before long, the budding internal demon in you would have a firm foothold.

For the next two hours, the mist around you will be cleansing, clearing, and strengthening your mind and mental sea, in preparation for tomorrow.

You only need to sit there and relax.."

Yang Qing heaved a sigh of relief as he sat down, soaking in the mystical effects of the chilly mist around him.

Oddly enough in those two hours, he didn't have any of the scattering guilt-ridden thoughts that had been assaulting his mind for the past two days.

It even felt like he had fallen asleep. He got up refreshed, having had the most restful sleep he had ever had in his life.

Yang Qing thanked the auspicious grove tree on his way out. The auspicious grove tree transported him back to his abode the similar way he came in without the use of the blue ear drop stone.

He was surprised when the saint-grade tree showed him over a thousand of such stones littered about within the special region in its trunk.

The stones were nothing more than spatial node keys that brought people to its location because it would be next to impossible to reach where it was, not unless one had the cultivation realm of a soul formation expert who was in the soul adept stage at least.

Yang Qing became increasingly intrigued about the auspicious grove's background and location. It had heaven-defying abilities, and based on its statement, it seemed like it was on a different plane.

"Maybe this is a grotto, or we are in the void.." he mused.

Grottos could be considered mini-worlds. As long as one didn't reveal itself either intentionally or accidentally, it would be next to impossible to locate one. So he felt there might be a chance they were in a grotto, and when it came to the void, it was also another mysterious and perilous zone that required great strength for one to casually traverse through it.

With his four hours up and the spirit-calming effects of the brook of clarity still present, Yang Qing decided to take advantage of his current mood to go eat at the Thousands Flavors Restaurant.

He also had another agenda in mind, which was to see if Dai Chen and Zhang Qingee would be there.

After the experience he had, he wondered and worried if they were going through something similar.

Luckily for him, when he went to the restaurant he managed to find both of them.

"Dai, Qingge, you both broke through?!" Yang Qing said as he made his way over to them.

He could feel by the fluctuations, that the duo had already reached the second stage of the palace realm, and it didn't just stop there, they had both reached the middle tier of the second stage and it didn't seem like it would take long for them to reach the peak of the second stage.

As for Yang Qing himself, he was already at the peak of the first stage, which was a big leap considering just eight months ago, he had only just broken through to the palace realm. The leap was a concerted effort of the foundation he had built before, the surprise discovery of the mysterious radiant jade tree within the deepest recess of his palace realm which he suspected was a representation of his peerless jade physique, and the last, was the green orb, green cocoon had left in his palace realm.

After the fight, he discovered that it was because of that orb that he had been able to move back then, and move Mo Liwei out of the way, and prevent him from being skewered by the red abyssal thorn tree.

When he went to observe it later, he discovered it had shrunk in size, which he didn't regret one bit, as he was able to prevent Mo Liwei's death, albeit for a millisecond.

"It's nothing much. Mo Liwei is the one who made the biggest improvement among us. With the harvest he made, he is directly making the leap to the fourth stage, and then make preparations for breaking through to the middle stage of the palace realm, the same as sister Wei Ying, who has already gone into seclusion," said Dai Chen.

"That's good, but will they be okay after everything?" Yang Qing asked with worry.

They had just gone through a tumultuous event, and breaking through a minor realm, was different than a leap in stages. The risks involved in the latter were higher.

"They will be okay. Senior Xu Biya will be personally taking care of them.." answered Zhang Qingge, who seemed a bit distracted by something.

Yang Qing sighed in relief when he heard that, though, he knew he was just being a worrywart for nothing. Whatever he could think of, the Order more specifically the veterans would have surely thought of it and acted accordingly, which was what they did.

The senior Xu Biya who Zhang Qingge mentioned, was the genial-looking old lady from the Judicial Review Committee who had been present during the deliberations to decide the fate of the Ice Emerald Sect.

With the experiences of the members of the committee, Mo Liwei and Wei Ying were sure to be in good hands.

...

"What's wrong, Qingge?" asked Yang Qing after he saw her look distracted all throughout their meal.

Chapter 477 Origin of the six judges

Zhang Qingge who seemed dazed suddenly looked up at Yang Qing as she answered,

"It's about Jiang Fu, do you think he is okay? senior Meng Chao never called us. It's been over a month now.." she said.

"It really has.."

Yang Qing realized in the middle of the craziness, from the sect evaluations and the mess he dragged in the name of the Golden Bamboo Pavillion, supervising and setting the exams for the new entrants, and the whole fiasco with Ma Yuan, in the midst of it all, the matter with Jiang Fu had sipped his mind.

It had already been a month since Jiang Fu left in preparation to break through to the palace realm. During the welcome party for Dean Zhu Lao, Jiag Fu seemed to have a connection with the Dean, deputy hall master Ren Shu, and superior domain court judge Meng Chao.

He still remembered the case he had which was a three-way disagreement between the Yellow Lotus Sect, their core disciple Zhao Qi, and the Mountain Springs Pavilion merchant organization.

The case ended up being a ruse that the Yellow Lotus Sect had set in motion as a bid to protect Zhao Qi, in the event that the sect got destroyed.

It had a few twists here and there, however, the biggest twist was the presence of the spiritual wisp of a quasi-soul formation expert inhabiting their core disciple, Zhao Qi.

The expert had once been the founder of a rank 2 sect, 900 years ago by the name of the Crystal Palm Jade Sect, and had been one of their strongest combatants who was the reason the sect had managed to hold on for 3 years despite being besieged by multiple rank 2 sects at the time.

The sect had been destroyed because there was a rumor they had found a saint-grade treasure at the Millionsfold Treasure Ocean, which turned out to be true, as that expert survived the final onslaught thanks to the treasure.

The expert's name was Deng Chao, and when he made an appearance, Yang Qing noticed something, something that seemed familiar at the time that he couldn't place his figure on until the end of the case, which he later realized was the crystallized smooth shine, the incorporeal figure had on his entire body, though that shine was more concentrated on his hands. He had seen something similar in Jiang Fu.

His hands were smooth as if they had been carved from white jade, though he usually hid it. Yang Qing guessed that maybe Jiang Fu and Deng Chao may have had the same connection, his guess was maybe their cultivation art had the same origin, or maybe a familial tie, which was why he had asked Deng Chao if that was his real name, to which he said it wasn't but didn't explain further.

Meng Chao had made an appearance that day during the case, specifically because of the presence of Deng Chao whom he admired for his bravery in the fight those years back. Meng Chao had stood witness to everything that happened back then, to helplessness to intervene because towards the end, quasi-soul formation experts intervened, and the Order at the time was too young and understaffed to do anything about it, including himself.

However, Meng Chao continually made investigations into what happened to that sect that day, including the identities of the third hidden attackers, who eventually destroyed the Crystal Palm Jade Sect along with Deng Chao.

According to what Lei Weiyan had insinuated that day, it seemed like Meng Chao had made significant progress in the investigation.

Yang Qing that day did go to find Jiang Fu and verify his guess on him having ties with Deng Chao, but he missed him, as he already left to prepare for a breakthrough to the palace realm.

However, the interaction between Dean Zhu Lao, Ren Shan, and Meng Chao during the welcome party more than confirmed his guess as Meng Chao even told him he would invite him over to discuss something that concerned them both.

The meeting never happened and Yang Qing had almost forgotten about it. If it wasn't Zhang Qingge bringing the matter up, he would have taken some time before he remembered the matter.

Jiang Fu was one of the few people Zhang Qingge wasn't shy with. She had taken to him ever since she was small during her days working at the restaurant in her early years. It was a nerve-wracking job for someone so shy and nervous.

It was Jiang Fu who helped her get through that period. Despite being one of the busiest chefs in the restaurant, he always walked with her as she did the rounds, and after her shift was done they'd share deserts.

Yang Qing became friends with them during one of those times, as he realized he could score free dessert and tea personally made by one of the greatest tea brewers in Jiang Fu.

In exchange for free dessert and tea, Jiang Fu had Yang Qing help Zhang Qingge with her rounds at the restaurant, to which Yang Qing readily agreed, and he even pulled over Xia Boqin whom he was already friends with at the time since they were in the same year, to help. Yang Qing knew Xia Boqin with his righteous nature would help, then he went on further and roped in Kang Huilang, who owed him from a lost bet, and later Dai Chen joined too.

Dai Chen was a year ahead of them, but he became friends with Yang Qing first, on account of Yi Jie, whom Yang Qing always hung around with, and Feng Xin. Yi Jie had already been brewing wine since their institute days, which drew in the wine fiend Dai Chen.

When Dai Chen came in, Yu Huifeng who always secretly liked him back then, wasn't far behind, so she too got roped into the help Zhang Qingge bandwagon, and thus the six-judge friendship was born along with Jiang Fu who made after-work deserts and tea a regular thing for them.

Chapter 478 Tea house sanctuary

"If you're not doing anything, we can go ask Old Lei if Meng Chao is around.." said Yang Qing, which drew a welcomed nod from Zhang Qingge.

"Speaking of which, how are your sessions going from the suggestions of the committee?"

"It's okay, though on my end I wasn't given anything new. I went to the same place, I was told to go when the news about Lai Lei's injuries reached me.

It's a place called the Tranquil Heart Resonance Cave. I've been going there for at least four days a week, but with the month-long break we have been given, I can go every day now.." Dai Chen answered in the same carefree demeanor Yang Qing has always known him for.

"Am the same as Dai Chen. Because of my issue, I've been going to the citadel of imbueement. The seniors at the committee said I can just continue going there, since other than help with my nervousness and the other thing.." Zhang Qingge's voice turned low, as she looked downwards with her ears reddened with embarrassment as she said this.

"They said it can help me process the events of the Ice Emerald Sect too.." she added, as she buried her head deeper into the table, drawing smiles from Dai Chen and Yang Qing.

"You haven't had it easy.." Yang Qing said with a sigh as he looked at Dai Chen.

His carefree personality sometimes made them forget, Yang Qing included, that he had been carrying a heavy weight all this time since Lai Lei got injured.

"Well it wasn't easy back then, but right now with him on the mend, and my trips to the cave, it is better.."

"I'm glad for that.."

Zhang Qingge who had been burying her head, looked up as she patted Dai Chen's back.

The trio then went on to explain the mechanism of the areas where each one of them was sent. Yang Qing realized that his, was the worst. He couldn't help but wonder if the Judicial Review Committee had a grudge against him, and he was also shocked that the two other places the two were sent to, were also anchored by saint-grade treasures.

He couldn't help but wonder just how many saint-grade treasures the Order had on hand, and how did they even get so many?

The tranquil heart resonance cave was apparently anchored by a pearl from a threading mirage oyster that had been at the peak of the soul formation realm. The thread mirage oyster was skilled in illusory techniques and they were so powerful that they could even fool the world itself.

Once under its powers, anybody in the domain realm and below could not even tell whether what they were seeing and experiencing was real or fake. What the memory-altering gu could do, was child's play in comparison to what the oyster could do to someone within a second.

It was said it could read one's heart, and your entire life with a single glance. No one at the domain realm and below who has come across it, has ever survived, and those that have, can never be trusted.

Unless one is a seasoned soul formation expert, more so one with ways of combating measures that beguile the mind, you will never know that you're in the presence of the thread mirage oyster.

The pearl of the heart resonance cave was already at the saint grade, and it had the effect of bringing out the questions of the heart even the unconscious ones that one may overlook. Dai Chen felt it suited him best with the things he endured, and also as a sword cultivator, it was the best in firming themselves.

As for the citadel of imbuelement, it was a unique saint-grade treasure. It was a building and the whole building was the saint grade artifact, and it wasn't by design.

From what Zhang Qinggee heard about the building, it was originally a tea house, and it dates back a million years ago at least.

The tea house itself wasn't anything special. It didn't have a tea so magnificent it could transform one from a carp to an immortal, it wasn't made from the grandest of materials, and all who stepped in felt like they had been transported to another world. It was just a regular tea house that was frequented by locals and it only had two things going for it. One, it always had customers coming in, and the other, it was next to a beautiful lake.

Because of those two things, it was always bustling with life from all walks. Scholars, farmers, merchants, and regular city guards, people from different stations in life would all come to the tea house and trade laughs and talks over a cup of regular green tea and some chrysanthemum cake.

The teahouse became a place of laughter and talk amongst all its patrons without discrimination and it remained that way for years and years. Kings, emperors, officials, and other rulers, and even the topography changed, but the tea house remained constant, a haven for light talk, and interactions. A place to forget all your weariness and just enjoy conversation, tea, and a semi-decent view.

With how volatile things were, by some odd fate, the tea house despite lacking in background or any means of ensuring its survival, waded and survived through countless years, before the years turned to millennia and millennia turned into tens of thousands of years, and that turn to hundreds of thousands of years. It weathered through it all, till finally it vanished, and something indelible became forgotten, till a rumor started floating around about an ancient three-storied rustic building, that could protect you.

To all who entered it, they would find sanctuary and to a lucky few a stroke of fortune capable of helping them transform in a single bound.

The founder of the Su clan a rank 1 clan located in the westernmost region of the continent next to the Blue Origin Ocean, was one such person. Rumor was he had once escaped death because of that tea house, he stumbled onto it as he was escaping his pursuers. His life not only got protected because of it, but he also got a fortuitous encounter that helped him reach the heights he did, which was a soul formation expert.

Stories similar to his regularly floated around the continent, about the tea house of sanctuary and dreams, and to those who were lucky enough to find it, will have their fates changed, for the better.

And that tea house now ended up in the hands of the Order.

From Zhang Qinggee's experience with it thus far, she said that the building housed the spirits of countless people. Which was why it was given the name citadel of imbue ment. The spirits seemed sentient, and they didn't exactly enhance her strength, all they did was talk to her about random mundane things.

Among the spirits, there were regulars, and there were new faces every time Zhang Qinggee went in, each with their unique perspectives and stories.

When Zhang Qinggee first went there, she was petrified, when she saw hundreds of spirits clamoring onto her to talk with her, but eventually she grew used to it and it was now one of the best highlights of her days. They always made her laugh and feel comfortable and had tonnes of life wisdom to share with her, and she always felt better unburdening herself to them, especially, with her berserker breakdowns from nervousness, and now the recent case with the Ice Emerald Sect.

Among those spirits, there were those who had similar experiences and were helping her through it.

Yang Qing couldn't help but look at her enviously. He wished he had been sent to the tea house.

"About that chrysanthemum cake?" Yang Qing curiously asked with a glint in his eyes.

"There's no food in there.." Zhang Qinggee said with a smile of exasperation with how Yang Qing's thoughts always seemed to lead to the same thing.

Chapter 479 Yang Qing tears up

The trio took their time to finish their meals at the Thousand Flavors restaurant. Other than eating they also discussed a few things here and there, which mostly centered on their experiences at the places they were for coalescence.

After the meal, the trio headed toward the courts in search of Lei Weiyuan.

With their clearance levels, it would be impossible for them to gain access to the domain courts and especially the superior domain courts which was the highest level of domain courts.

To reach it, they could either do it via the Judicial Review Committee, however, that was too much hustle or they could go via someone who has access to the area, someone like Lei Weiyuan.

It didn't take long for the trio to reach the building. Meng Chao had only talked about the matter with Yang Qing and Zhang Qingge, however, Dai Chen decided to tag along since he didn't have anything else to do, and he too was close to Jiang Fu, the six of them were, though Zhang Qingge had the closest of relationships with him, however, whether it was Dai Chen, Yang Qing, or the rest, they would be just as invested in Jiang Fu's case, particularly if there was a danger to his life.

The trio were soon in the big hallway of the court building where Lei Weiyuan was already waiting for them with his hands clasped behind his back with the same solemn appearance he always wore.

Yang Qing almost on reflex flinched before he regained when he saw him before he remembered he wasn't missing work which drew a smug smile on his face as he sauntered off to meet with Lei Weiyuan.

"Thank you for meeting us supervisor Lei Weiyuan.." he gingerly said with life in his tone and steps.

Yang Qing seemed to derive some odd pleasure in this scenario, where it was a typical working day, but he didn't have to work, and he could get to rub it on the face of his greatest nemesis.

Lei Weiyuan didn't reply as he cast a deep meaningful glance at Yang Qing.

"What? The Committee said I have the month off.."

Yang Qing's image of nonchalance and carefreeness immediately broke under Lei Weiyuan's stare and was replaced by feigned calmness that had wariness mixed within.

"I know.." Lei Weiyuan calmly said before he turned to face the mimicry chaos sky metal flowing up the hall like pillars.

"Let's go, Meng Chao is around, he will see you..." he added with his back facing them.

"What's with him.." Yang Qing warily wondered as he maintained a relative distance from Lei Weiyuan.

Dai Chen and Zhang Qinggee exchanged looks with each other as they smiled at the interaction between the two.

As antagonistic as they seemed, they had the closest relationship. Lei Weiyuan was known to be generally stoic, however, all that changed whenever Yang Qing was involved. His change was even a surprise to his peers who had known him for quite a while.

Lei Weiyuan led them to the black-colored mimicry chaos sky metal which led to the domain courts.

The sensation was the same as what they felt whenever they used it to get to the palace courts. It was instantaneous and smooth, much better than using teleportation arrays that always left one feeling dizzy, hazy, and groggy after each trip, with the feeling compounded the greater the distance of travel.

The halls of the domain courts came into view.

Yang Qing's eyes were wide open from the moment they stepped in. There was something he always wanted to confirm, his life's ambitions and goals, and whether he was on the right track, and the halls could answer exactly that.

What he saw in the hallway, answered his question, and the answer it gave brought tears in his eyes, tears of gratification.

"What's wrong?" Lei Weiyuan asked, showing an uncharacteristic concern in his voice, which was always absent whenever he interacted with Yang Qing.

Yang Qing who was too affected by what he saw to notice it, absentmindedly answered,

"It's nothing much, I just felt my life being validated, and I couldn't help but feel emotional.." Yang Qing answered as he wiped a few drops here and there with a gratified and thankful smile on his face as he admired the empty hallway.

The hallway was a complete ghost hall, just like what Yang Qing had always envisioned in his mind ever since he stepped into the congested hallways of the outer core courts.

He couldn't believe his eyes, he had to rub them a couple of times to confirm what he saw wasn't an illusion.

"Dai, Qingge, there is nothing in front of us, right?" Yang Qing asked.

He used voiceless transmission to communicate with them lest he alert Lei Weiyuan, who would more than likely find a way to ruin the moment for him in some way.

"It's empty.." they both answered puzzled at Yang Qing's odd question and the tearful smile after their answer.

"Dai, do you think the auspicious grove wood where Yang Qing was sent is that bad?" Zhang Qinggee secretly asked Dai Chen as she worriedly looked at Yang Qing's current crying and smiling display.

"He really must have it tough there.." Dai Chen answered with an equally sympathetic and worried tone.

However, they both put their worry aside when Lei Weiyuan took them to another path way that led them to a different section.

From the moment they stepped in, they could feel a certain level of grandeur radiating from that section. A sense of solemnness that incited awe from them.

Lei Weiyuan led them through one door that led them into a courtroom. The courtroom was smaller than Yang Qing's courtroom even when he was in the core courts, if he compared the size, the courtroom he was in, seemed smaller. However, the small courtroom had a regal bearing that dwarfed every courtroom he had been in, several times over.

Just the materials used incited a greedy and flabbergasted look from Yang Qing. Every single material from the wood used on the judge's podium, to the flooring, were all top-tier ascendant grade materials, that released the glamor and ethereal air that could only belong to them.

The room had a gentle cascading light coming from the rainbow crystalline glass above which created a smooth dim radiant lighting in the courtroom.

Yang Qing took a gulp at the resplendent look and emotions the room seemed to evoke in him.

Chapter 480 Turtle jade Li

"I won't be going in with you, since I have work to do. You all know how to reach the offices. The channel has already been opened by Meng Chao.." Lei Weiyuan said as he turned around to leave.

"So studious.." Yang Qing snidely remarked when he saw Lei Weiyuan fade away before they even offered their thanks.

"Your cases will be waiting for you all, take care.." Lei Weiyuan's voice echoed in the courtroom soon after.

Yang Qing almost tripped on the floor when he heard the voice as he hurriedly looked back with fear in his eyes.

"He ruins everything, that old fiend.." Yang Qing venomously muttered as he lowered his voice as if afraid Lei Weiyuan was still lurking about.

"Let's head in.." said Dai Chen, pulling Yang Qing out of his paranoid state where he kept darting his eyes in anticipation of Lei Weiyuan instantly reappearing.

"Right, right.." said Yang Qing as he kept looking to his back and the door of the courtroom.

The trio made it to the center of the courtroom where a white rune instantly lit up encasing them in its light. The trio instantly vanished and reappeared in an office that had the same grandeur as the courtroom they had come out of.

"Hello.."

A gentle voice instantly sounded the moment they appeared in the office. The originator of that gentle voice was the young man seated behind the large brown oak wood desk. He looked to be in his twenties, slender build, blue eyes that seemed to hold a galaxy and matching hair that was tied together in a bun by a starry vine.

"Greetings senior Meng Chao.." the trio said as they cupped their fists together in greeting to the young man.

"No need of that, be as free as you normally are.." Meng Chao said as he waved his palms and three white futons appeared behind the three judges who immediately sat on them after offering their thanks.

"I heard you had a difficult case the other day.." he said as he eyed the three of them with sympathy in his eyes, more so, Yang Qing.

"I'd like to say it will be okay, but having been there before, i know that does little to ease the burden of it, all i can do is hope your journey will be gentler in some ways, and the way you adjust is entirely up to you.

The burden we share may be the same, but how we adjust to it is entirely different and unique to the person.

In my case, other than the measures of addressing it, i decided to continue an investigation that has now span 900 years, to make up for what i couldn't do then, which i take it is why the three of you are here.." he said with a smile.

Zhang Qinggee shyly looked downward at their reason being called out, despite there being nothing wrong with it.

Yang Qing immediately took over to help her, and he had a stake in the case so it wouldn't be awkward for him to follow up.

"Yes, senior Meng Chao, it's about the matter with Deng Chao or should I say Li Ren, and the thing about Jiang Fu, that you said you'd tell us.."

"Li Ren huh? it seems you got him to open up. did he tell you anything else?"

"No, he stopped at just at the name, and from how he looked, it didn't seem like he wanted to explain further other than the name, so I didn't push.."

"Mmh it's understandable he would be guarded about it even with us," Meng Chao said as he rubbed his chin.

"Sorry, I should have called you sooner, but I got called up for something immediately after your ceremony, and only recently became available, plus I heard you had an eventful month.."

" Your guess was right, Yang Qing, Jiang Fu, and Deng Chao have ties to each other, and his real name more than confirms it, because Jiang Fu's real name is Li Fu, however, he has never used it since his birth, he didn't even know of it and was only revealed to him later when he was a bit mature..."

Zhang Qinggee and Dai Chen had mild looks of surprise from the revelation more so the former, who never heard of it from the person in question.

"Don't blame little Fu for not mentioning it, as he made a promise to his father not to do so.." Meng Chao softly said when he saw the myriad of emotions flashing through Zhang Qinggee's eyes.

"Is he in danger?" asked Zhang Qinggee clad in worry.

For Jiang Fu to hide his name for as long as he has could only mean one thing, he was likely doing so to hide from someone, who would likely harm him were they to know his real name.

"Yes and no.." Meng Chao said.

"Jiang Fu himself isn't in any danger. Whatever danger he would have been in, disappeared the moment he and his father walked through the doors of the Order, and became employees of the Thousand Flavors Restaurant.

However, the Li part of his name is a different case. His entire clan was eradicated, and the foe was powerful enough to even make a peak domain expert like Deng Chao afraid to reveal his name, and that foe more than likely caused the destruction of the Crystal Palm Jade Sect.

The sect was likely not destroyed because of the saint-grade treasure they found, but because they had someone from the jade turtle Li family in their midst..." Meng Chao said as he created a small image of a white jade turtle that had the same shine as what Yang Qing saw on Deng Chao when he materialized in his courtroom, and the same shine that occasionally appeared on Jiang Fu's hand.

"When the Crystal Jade Palm Sect was destroyed, I don't know whether it was out of guilt, or a sense of respect for a strong cultivator and that beautiful art he displayed in the last throngs of his life, but I found myself unable to let go of the events that happened to the sect, so I started investigating it.

Its origins, its journey, and eventually its demise, which led me to the jade turtle Li family, an ancient clan that got eradicated despite having two soul formation experts and a deep long-standing foundation.."