

Daily life 591

Chapter 591 Leaving For The Deer Mountain Capital

Once Yang Qing and Luo Meili arrived back at the branch, they each went their own way. Luo Meili went to her room to meditate, while Yang Qing passed by the kitchen grabbed a few dishes, and went to one of the springs around the mountain to calm his mind.

The both of them traveled back in silence, each lost in their thoughts, but if one had to guess, they would guess it probably had to do with the outer sect disciple who chose to remain despite what they had endured.

"Hopefully Ma Qi and the rest have a chance for a fresh beginning, as for the others.." Yang Qing let out a sigh as he poured himself a cup of thousand-leaf bamboo glacier wine.

"At least they had a choice, something they didn't have before.." he added as he took a small sip of the wine and rested his head back while soaking his body in the boiling spring.

The dense spiritual qi and the pearlshade peony that was growing around the spring helped him relax as he made peace with the day's happenings.

It wasn't long before his mind completely relaxed and he fell asleep. By the time he came to, it was the night had already passed and it was already dawn.

"That was refreshing.." Yang Qing muttered as he stretched his body feeling completely relaxed from his body to his mind.

"I wonder how the effects would be if I added the water from the brook of clarity?" he wondered as he rubbed his chin in contemplation before he shook his head.

"I can't be that wasteful, I'd rather have Xiao Ye cook with it.."

Just as he was about to head to the library to research the broken wind chime artifact that contained the incomplete Ethereal vine root cultivation art.

Now that he was free he thought he'd spend the day researching it. From the high praise it received from the Judicial Review Committee, he was eager to explore it, like a young child given a new toy.

However, all that enthusiasm was cut short when Administrator Mo Guang appeared timely before him.

"Branch Chief I trust you had a good rest?" Mo Guang said as a polite smile appeared on his face.

Yang Qing who was all too familiar with such a look had alarm bells ringing in his mind.

"Just a bit.." Yang Qing said with an awkward smile.

"Do you remember the matter we discussed yesterday.."

"The one about the Deer Mountain Kingdom?" Yang Qing hesitantly asked pretending he wasn't sure about it when he clearly did and was hoping it was postponed for one reason or the other.

"That's the one. Well, their envoy is already waiting outside the branch to lead you back to the Capital.."

"Senior Mo Guang is there a reason I need to meet with the royal family? My placement here is temporary. I will only be here for a month.."

"Well, it's not like I don't understand where you're coming from. Under different circumstances, your presence would not be required and we would just wait until there was a permanent replacement.

But as it stands, because of the events that transpired, the kingdom is a little bit antsy because of what happened and also because of the survey findings shared with them. Your presence though temporary is needed to assuage their fears.." Mo Guang kindly said.

"Also fresh eyes are needed.." he added with a serious expression.

"Okay. I will meet the envoy shortly, let me ask if Su Jinjing or Luo Meili would like to join me first.." Yang Qing said as he cupped his fist.lightsnovel

Mo Guang nodded as he went his way.

A few minutes later, Yang Qing appeared outside of the barrier of the branch with Su Jinjing and Luo Meili to his left and right.

In front of them stood a slender middle-aged man with black hair tied in a daoist topknot. His robes were straight and made of the best materials and designed perfectly. Even those unaware of him would instantly assume he was a person of stature because of his bearing that had an erudite feel to it and how he dressed.

"You must be the current branch chief, my name is Jia Shun I am the Imperial Secretary of the Deer Mountain Kingdom.

Pardon me for interrupting your busy schedule, I hope you don't take offense to the sudden invitation.

The king would have come to the branch himself but the matters in the capital have made it impossible for him to come himself. He extends his deepest apologies.." said the well-dressed middle-aged man as he performed a humble and apologetic bow.

Seeing his humble attitude one would not think he was someone just a few levels below the king or that he was a first stage palace realm expert to boot.

"It's nothing Imperial Secretary Jia Shun. It's understandable. I don't mind heading to the kingdom, i have actually never been there myself and would be honored to see the rich history of the Deer Mountain Kingdom..." Yang Qing said as he cupped my fists.

"I hope you don't mind but I will be bringing my colleagues with me. This is Su Jinjing and she is Luo Meili.

We will be in your care.." Yang Qing added as he pointed to the duo who both cupped their fists in greeting.

"No, No, it's not a problem at all. Our kingdom is honored to be graced by your presence..

If you don't think it is beneath you, we can use my companion Meifen to travel back.." the Imperial Secretary said as he pointed to the 10-meter osprey behind him.

The osprey looked like it was cloaked in shadow flames with feathers and eyes that glistened with charming darkness like that of a polished dark-colored stone or gem.

Yang Qing instantly recognized the osprey as the Obsidian nightflare osprey, a spirit beast skilled in camouflaging itself and flying undetected.

Yang Qing could understand why the Imperial Secretary brought it along since it could even fool the spiritual senses of a cultivator with its camouflaging skills. The one before him was at the quasi-palace stage and from its display, Yang Qing was sure it could even hide from a few first-stage palace realm experts who had just freshly broken through.

The osprey quivered slightly when its gaze fell on Luo Meili, which drew a curious look from the Imperial Secretary. The osprey behaved arrogantly even amongst other palace realm cultivators but it seemed to avoid eye contact with a cultivator who was just at the 11th stage of the core formation realm.

"The Order is truly a fearsome place.." he thought to himself as he could feel a faint suppression coming from Yang Qing despite Yang Qing completely reigning his cultivation pressure.

lightsnovel And it wasn't always Yang Qing that he felt this way with, he felt the same with the previous branch chief and the chief inquisitor Hao Da, especially the latter who even made the king feel slightly nervous around him.

"Please.." the imperial secretary said as he welcomed the trio atop the osprey which obediently extended its wing for the trio to use as a bridge to its back which caught the Imperial Secretary by

surprise as he again meaningfully stared at Luo Meili as he wondered what this gentle looking woman could have to terrify the obsidian nightflare osprey so much into obedience.

However, he immediately pushed the matter to the back of his mind as he had other matters to worry about, especially with the state of the capital after the loss they had suffered.

"I hope they don't create a scene.." he nervously thought to himself.

Chapter 592 Spirit of the Deer Mountain Capital

It took close to an hour before they finally reached the boundaries of the Deer Mountain Kingdom.

Yang Qing couldn't help but sigh at how enormous the kingdom was. It was one thing to hear that its territory rivaled that of a rank 2 kingdom or empire but it was another to experience it personally.

He would have taken the flight over as a pleasurable sight visit had he not known about the 13 perilous zones that were spread about in the territory.

That knowledge took away the thrill of appreciating the landscape of the Deer Mountain Kingdom. The forest was lush and numerous, the air was clean, the spiritual qi was dense, and the rivers and other water bodies spread vitality and freshness all throughout the territory while other areas had an ethereal mystical beauty to them.

However, neither Yang Qing nor the Imperial Secretary seemed in the mood to sightsee. Normally in such a scenario, the host would take the opportunity to show off the beauty of his kingdom, but immediately after they left the vicinity of the branch, both the Imperial Secretary and the Obsidian night flame osprey went on high alert.

The imperial secretary took out a few artifacts which based on how they were used Yang Qing guessed were warning and defensive artifacts while the obsidian nightflame osprey covered them with its obsidian dark flames, isolating their presence.

Despite the measures they had taken, they both were as tense as they could be. A constant fear and alertness that something could ambush them at any moment.

They only relaxed after close to half an hour had passed and they were close to a mountain that was shaped in the image of a deer's antlers.

"We are almost there.." the Imperial Secretary said with an awkward smile because of the cautious display they had made on the way over.

Yang Qing didn't mind them taking longer as he had been an avid follower of an abundance of caution and entertaining paranoia no matter how absurd. You never know when it might just save your life.

When they were close to the peak of the antler-shaped mountain, the Imperial Secretary took out a purple silk jade which he poured his qi into it and triggered a reaction. The air around the peak of the mountain vibrated before countless runes glittered along with the appearance of a dome.

The purple silk jade talisman created a cone-shaped covering over them that glittered with countless runes and then it smoothly faced through the dome without incident.

"This must be the rumored Juniper twilight sanctuary array. Truly seeing something is better than hearing.

The reputation does it no justice.." Yang Qing said as he sighed in admiration of the complexity and how alive the array before him felt.

Within the sphere of influence that the Deer Mountain Kingdom could control, rumor had it that within that territory lay a gold-grade array.

The Deer Mountain Kingdom has been in existence for at least 50,000 years, which is considered a rather long time for a kingdom of its stature. When the kingdom was being established, it was rumored that it was founded on the ruins of some ancient empire that had long been destroyed by the ravages of time.

That ancient empire was thought to have been as powerful as a rank 1 empire in its heyday. Though not much about it is known and its existence is only made true through rumors here and there, one of those rumors does lend credence that such an empire may have existed and that rumor was built on the bones of the Juniper twilight sanctuary array.

The array was rumored to be gold grade array and the Deer Mountain Kingdom used to cover important parts of their territory.

The Deer Mountain Kingdom was not known for its proficiency with arrays. Creating something that was able to cover multiple territories was considered to be out of their wheelhouse, but it was undeniable that they had an array that covered multiple territories in the name of Juniper twilight sanctuary array.

It was because of the presence of this array that the kingdom has been able to endure for so long in a place as terrifying as the Deer Mountain Range and even establish itself as one of its hegemons.

From the records Yang Qing read the kingdom was almost destroyed five times and the worst was when they faced a spirit beast stampede after their failed attempt at reclaiming the other territories within the range.

Over a dozen spirit beasts in the palace realm swarmed the kingdom along with thousands upon thousands of spirit beasts who were at the core formation realm. Half the kingdom got destroyed in the process while the other half held on thanks to the array.

However, though the kingdom survived, the array suffered extensive damage. When the kingdom unearthed it, it was rumored to be damaged already, and the recent stampede only added to it.

Even damaged, Yang Qing couldn't help but sigh at the majestic power it contained, and this was only at the periphery of the kingdom. Its power was bound to be multiple levels higher than what he felt from the protective ward before them.

"We are unworthy of it and only block its brilliance due to our inabilities. In the hands of others it may very well get the chance to show so its true brilliance..." said the Imperial Secretary with a tone that was a mix of heartfelt awe and admiration with a mixture of regret and unwillingness.

Yang Qing could understand his sentiments. If the array operated at full capacity, they would have little to worry about as a gold-grade array operating at full capacity could defend against those in the domain realm. The kingdom would be a true sanctuary in this terrifying range. Its defense would be no worse than that of the branch.

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"Well this is interesting.." muttered Yang Qing as he noticed peculiar reactions from the Imperial Secretary.

As they traversed over different territories that belonged to the different aristocratic families of the kingdom, he would have varying reactions though he tried to hide it well.

"The situation of the royal family must be worse than the reports suggested.."

It wasn't long before the outline of the capital appeared in all its grandness and history.

The capital was surrounded by colossal walls that bore evidence of the struggle of the Deer Mountain Kingdom. There were mottled and cracked, signs of the countless wars it had endured, but despite how it looked, the wall and everything within it exuded an air of unyielding spirit and a crowning record that it defended all within it to the end.

The cracks let out an ephemeral golden glow like that of a dying flame but within it contained a grand essence of stability and indominability.

Once inside, Yang Qing and the rest could finally feel the vibrancy of a capital that has stood the test of time and has survived for 50,000 years.

Everything from the buildings down to the pathways exuded an air that had the richness of history weaved into it.

The buildings were mostly made of timeworn jadestone while the alleyways and the streets were paved with resilient petrified wood stones.

Whether it was the buildings or the pathways, they all had the markings of spirit beasts attacks weaved into the very fabric that they seemed indivisible from either the building or the pathways themselves.

The markings served as a silent witness to the enduring spirit of the capital. They told of the triumphs, trials, and tribulations of the Deer Mountain Kingdom over the past 50,000 years.

It wasn't just the buildings and pathways, the sides of the road, or In front of some of the buildings, there were human statues placed before them. Beneath each and every one of those statues was an epitaph that was emblazed with the tale of the person the statue was made of.

The epitaph depicted their heroic tales in the defense of the kingdom against invaders be it spirit beasts or humans.

Each of the statues was a hero, a citizen, one to whom the Deer Mountain Kingdom owed a huge debt of gratitude, because their actions either paved the way or were the last bastions who prevented the destruction of the kingdom.

Even as statues, their eyes still had the same heroic bearing that evoked a sense of awe, admiration, and respect to those who passed next to them.

Yang Qing could see from young to old, all show the same reverential look as they passed by the statues. The statues that still stood sentinel providing assurance and comfort to the residents of the capital.

Yang Qing couldn't help but admit the Deer Mountain Capital had the aura and majesty of a long lived kingdom.

The Red Maple Empire though was an Empire of the same rank as the Deer Mountain Kingdom, they lost in sheer presence. An award from time to those who have endured it.

Chapter 593 Strange statues

Once they were at the capital the Imperial Secretary noticed Yang Qing's, Luo Meili's, and Su Jinjing's awed looks as they looked around.

He secretly mindfully instructed the obsidian nightflame osprey to decrease its speed so the trio could enjoy.

There was a small tug on his lips as he took in their reactions. All who came to their capital would all have the same reaction as they soaked in the spirit of the history of the Deer Mountain Kingdom, established over thousands of years.

It was something that filled the citizens of the kingdom with great pride. However, moments later a worried look that was mixed with anger couldn't help but appear on his face before he hurriedly quelled it.

"Power really corrodes the mind the longer you swim in it if you're not careful. If only we could be like them.." thought the Imperial Secretary as his gaze fell on the citizens below who were laughing, sharing stories and meals together, others were arguing over a particular part of the history of their kingdom, while children were running around the statues pretending to be the heroes from those statues.

Because of the constant dangers the totality of the Deer Mountain Range posed on the Deer Mountain Kingdom, its citizens were united on the common goal of ensuring the survival of their home. Every victory, every loss, every celebration, every mourning bonded them closer and closer together, but the same could not be said of those at the top.

They would laugh and share meals and conversations, but none of it was real. In secret and now in the open, they were constantly scheming and attacking each other trying to pull each other down.

They were at each other's throats same as any spirit beast out there. They lacked the sense of camaraderie and togetherness shown by the citizens of their kingdom, despite all of them having seen the struggles the kingdom has been through to reach where it was.

The Imperial Secretary tried to understand why, just why did those who made an oath to protect and safeguard the kingdom were now the ones tearing it apart brick by brick.

"If it's because we have been at peace for too long that they forgot maybe what happened the other day with the two obsidian serpents and the information the Order shared with us, should be sufficient to drive fear into them and rebuild the sense of fear and urgency we seem to have lost.." thought the Imperial Secretary.

It wasn't long before the royal building was in sight.

It was made entirely of black luminous jade and was engraved with gold runes that let out a gentle glow that matched perfectly with the radiant light falling from the sun.

The black luminous jade that gave off a feeling of the night starry sky, the flickering of the runes, and the sunlight that fell on it, all seemed to give the building an austere and mystical quality.

The building felt like a solitary warrior who had just survived a terrifying battle in which millions fell, and only they remained standing amidst the pile of corpses and destruction. Even though they were battered all over, the breadth of their spirit as the living managed to dwarf the presence of the tragedy around them.

The royal building that stood out with the luminous black jade served as a constant reminder and source of refuge and pillar of support to its people, that it was still standing, be it night or day, it was still standing.

"We will have to go by foot from here, Judge Yang Qing, i hope you don't take offense..." the Imperial Secretary politely said as he ushered the obsidian nightflame osprey downwards.

"It's no problem.." Yang Qing casually said as he took the sights around him particularly two statues that drew his eyes.

The two statues were of a dragon turtle. The stones they were made out of were weathered and had cracks all over, however, those statues which looked like they were days away from turning to stand released a subtle majestic presence that made the hairs on Yang Qing's back stand on end.

Yang Qing wasn't completely certain but he felt those statues had some vitality to them. He was most sensitive to the aura of life, and for some reason, he could detect a faint life aura coming from the two statues. It was like that of the dying flames of a candle.

"Meili, Jinjing, do you feel anything from those two statues?" asked Yang Qing through secret transmission.

Both Luo Meili and Su Jinjing shook their head sideways.

"Why do you ask?" curiously asked Su Jinjing.

"I am not too sure, they seem strange.." said Yang Qing as he felt the life aura from the two statues, disappear.

"Imperial Secretary Jia Shu did your kingdom make those two statues? They have excellent craftsmanship. It's rare to see a statue so lifelike. It has managed to capture the aura of the turtle dragon so perfectly.."

The Imperial Secretary turned his gaze to the two statues as a small smile appeared on his lips.

"Those two statues were not made by anyone from the kingdom. They have been there since the start of the kingdom.

At a glance, we could tell that there was something special about them but to date, we don't know what. We did try to repair it but every craftsman we have brought either from the kingdom or outside, has failed to restore it.

They couldn't so much as chip it even slightly and any material they used to fill in the gaps of the cracks, all dissolved and disappeared, no matter how sturdy it was, every material used suffered the same fate.

The first king and those who succeeded him after, have kept the two statues around as a symbol of where he has come from. They represent the resiliency of our kingdom perfectly. We don't know when they were made, but they are still hanging on to this day.

I hope that the Deer Mountain Kingdom can borrow their luck and reliance and last as long as them.

I think maybe that's why they've been kept around.." Imperial Secretary Jia Shun said as he patted the heads of the two statues.

"Sorry for that, let's go in. The king and the rest should be waiting.." he added as he led them to the core part of the building.

The royal building was built like a ring with different smaller buildings joined together to create a larger part.

Where they were was like the outer wall, and they were moving to the inner walls. The two guards that were at the entrance gate were caught by surprise when they saw the four of them appear suddenly out of nowhere, but they quickly recollected themselves when they saw the Imperial Secretary.

After a courtesy bow and greetings, the guards opened to the four to lead them to the inner parts of the palace.

Chapter 594 Bold wick that guides through a stormy night

Imperial Secretary Jia Shun led them across different pathways before they finally stopped at a door that was made of drifting sunset oakwood that created a solemn atmosphere in the hallway.

The second stage palace realm guard that was standing guard at the door was the only identifier Yang Qing needed to know that they had arrived at their destination. That and the multiple wards and runes that covered the door and what was behind it, with some of them being wards that seemed to block a cultivator's spiritual sense from spying on what was inside.

Yang Qing felt like his spiritual sense was facing off against a deep muddy lake every time he tried to use his spiritual sense to see what was past the door.

The Imperial Secretary straightened his robes out of habit as he led Yang Qing, Luo Meili, and Su Jinjing into the room.

When they stepped in, they were greeted by a waft of gold orchid and spirit sandalwood essence which seemed to cleanse them of all their weariness.

The design of the room was worthy of a royal assembly hall. The flooring was made of star rainstones. At the same time, the walls to the side were decorated with silver silk thread tapestry that depicted the history and the progression of the kingdom at different periods while above them the ceiling had vivid paintings of the deer mountain kingdom surrounded by terrifying colossal spirit beasts, rain of meteors and lightning coming from above, wave of poisonous miasma on one side, and an engulfing flame and water tide in the other.

All around, the kingdom was surrounded by terrifying circumstances but within the kingdom, there were hundreds of thousands of dark silhouettes raising their weapons in valor and defiance.

The more Yang Qing looked at the painting, the more alive it felt. The silhouettes were no longer blurry indistinct figures that all looked similar to each other. Their distinction became more evident by the second. Their face, gender, down to who they were. Yang Qing could tell there was a butcher among them, a bread maker, a soldier, a scholar who just passed his official appointment exam, a general, a young husband who had just become a father, a young lady who had just been brewing potions and still had a ladle in her hand.

The painting grew more alive by the second. He could feel their breaths, their valiant roars that seemed to shake the soul. Yang Qing could even smell the blood from the blood-filled moat that was outside the walls of the kingdom.

"Such a skilled painter more than likely was an experienced blue-grade painter by the time they did this painting.." thought Yang Qing as he felt how distinctly alive the painting use.

Blue-grade painters could rouse the spirits of those who see their works and give life to their own, similar to how blue-grade blacksmiths created weapons that instantly gave rise to weapon spirits.

"My late great-grandfather drew that painting. He called it the bold wick that guides in a stormy night.."

A wisened gentle voice sounded as Yang Qing was admiring the painting.

"The name suits it perfectly.." Yang Qing said with a gentle smile as his gaze fell on the procession before him. His gaze centered on a middle-aged man with silver hair, a well-groomed beard, a handsome face that had a scholarly beauty to it, and eyes that hid deep wisdom and the vicissitudes of time.

He wore a simple silver robe that matched his air, but even with the simple aura that enveloped him, he was like a blinding star to those around him. To his left and right he was surrounded by those with majestic presences but they seemed to dull next to him.

"Welcome Judge Yang Qing to our humble kingdom. We are honored to have you grace us with your presence.." the middle-aged man said as he offered Yang Qing a respectful daoist salute that one would give their peer. It was his respect and greeting to Yang Qing as a fellow palace realm expert.

Cultivation still held true regardless of the structures in place. A core formation emperor who lorded over millions would still have to lower their heads to a vagabond that was in the palace realm.

Everything stripped away, power was the one common demonitor throughout the continent and the world as a whole.

"The pleasure is all mine, King Zhou Luan.." Yang Qing said as he offered a daoist salute of his own to the middle-aged man who was the current king of the Deer Mountain Kingdom and a fourth-stage palace realm expert.

"I trust the journey over wasn't hard on you.."

"It wasn't. Imperial Secretary Jia Shun ensured it was a pleasant journey. My colleagues and I were enamored with the beauty and richness of your kingdom.

The breadth of spirit contained within the walls of your kingdom is something of great admiration.."

"I almost forgot these are my colleagues and friends, Luo Meili and Su Jinjing.." Yang Qing added.

"It's my deepest honor to meet you both.." said the king.

"The pleasure is all ours.." they replied.

Following the trend, the Imperial Secretary dutifully stepped in and introduced the people that were standing next to the king.

The procession was in the form of an upside-down 'U'. At the center was the king and his queen, three consorts, and his nine children.

The queen had radiant white hair and was the picture-perfect image of a cold jade beauty who despite the solitary aura she radiated most couldn't help but want to risk it and draw close to her. Her name was Huo Mei and she was a first-stage palace realm expert unlike the three consorts she wasn't from a noble family but rather someone who had risen as one of the generals of the kingdom. Her valiant aura that had been honed in her prior role remained to date.

The three consorts standing next to her despite not having a militaristic background didn't lose in looks or aura. The qualities of each one were just as distinctive as the queen's.

One of them had dark hair and she exuded the sophisticated air of nobility. Her presence incited respect, and calmness to all who saw her. One could easily mistake her as the leading authority figure of the kingdom just from presence alone. Her name was Zhang Cuifen and she was at the twelfth stage of the core formation realm.

The consort next to her was golden-haired and she radiated the aura like she was the burning sun. An aura of blinding vibrancy just like the sun. Her name was Chu Delun and just like the first consort she was at the peak stage of the core formation realm.

Ending the group of consorts was a young woman with purple hair. She had a still and gentle temperament that made her instantly amiable to all who saw her. One couldn't help but want to confide in her just from the calming presence she exuded. Her name was Song Yun and she was a ninth-stage core formation expert.

Both three consorts came from prestigious backgrounds. In the Deer Mountain Kingdom, there were several aristocratic families but five of them stood out from the rest in terms of power and prestige.

The five families were; the Zhang family, the Chu family, the Song family, the Shi family, and finally the Meng family.

These were the five duke families of the kingdom, each owning territory that was as large as a small rank 4 kingdoms, each had palace realm experts at the helm and each of the families was one of the founding pillars of the Deer Mountain Kingdom, along with the royal family, the Zhou family.

From what Yang Qing knew, the current king had married one daughter from each of the families, but the consort from the Meng and Shi families seemed to be absent. Along with their absence, were three princes.

On record, the king had thirteen children, which was 8 sons and 5 daughters. He lost a daughter who was the twin to his current eldest son born of his queen.

The daughter joined a prominent rank 3 sword sect early on as she showed a talent for the sword at a very young age. She managed to rise the ranks of the sect to become a legacy disciple of the sect. However, an accident happened when she and a few members of the sect were exploring a mysterious realm. The realm collapsed because of an unstable node that broke down which ended up with the mysterious realm being shredded by void energy and spatial storms. All who were in at the time, died, which included the daughter of the king.

As for the remaining missing children, two princes died in the attack from the obsidian serpents, and the two deacons from the Blue Flame Soul Crow Syndicate, while the surviving prince was currently being healed at the Medical Valley of the Order.

Yang Qing guessed the missing consorts likely had a relationship with the deceased princes the injured prince.

Chapter 595 Morphing characters

After the queen and consorts were introduced then came the princes and princesses. The king had not yet chosen a crown prince but as per the notes recorded by the previous branch chief, it seemed like the king was leaning more toward the surviving twin, the child he had with the queen.

However, though the king supposedly was leaning towards him as his next heir to the throne, his mother was a former commoner with no background whatsoever other than her accolades as a general of the kingdom.

If he were to become the king, the five peak aristocratic families would constantly hinder him at every turn and would even go to the extent of interfering with his inauguration. All that prince had for backing was his mother's reputation and the Zhou royal family but even then, from the notes Yang Qing read it wasn't all in the Zhou family who supported him.

The amount of opposition he would face was what made the king hesitant about hoisting the seat on him despite the many qualities he had both as a cultivator as he was already a quasi-palace realm cultivator with a talent for the saber, in addition to his ability to make friendships whether it was the nobility or the commoner selling buns by the road, he could easily mix in with both worlds.

But even with all that going for him, his weak background put him at a disadvantage compared to the rest of his siblings. The front-runner among them was the third prince whose mother was the first consort, Zhang Quifen.

Though the five clans were relatively at the same level in terms of power and accumulation, the Zhang family had a slight edge over the rest of the clan because of its history. It was commonly known as the family of heroes.

Of the statues built around the capital, almost a third of them were comprised of a member of the Zhang family. It was the one family thought to perfectly embody the chivalric and unyielding spirit of the kingdom. Their members have always made their name by being on the front lines.

Their heroism was revered by all whether it was the commoners, the military, or even some of the other aristocratic families that were not part of the five peak clans. So as someone born into a family of heroes, the third prince who showed the same chivalric spirit had a leg over the rest as the next heir. Even his younger sister was in full support of him.

In the course of the introduction, Yang Qing discovered the meek-looking fifteen-year-old princess with brown hair, her mother was from the Meng family who had just lost two children in the attack against the obsidian serpents.

The consort's name was Meng Zhi and she had three children; two sons and a daughter. From the notes he read, Meng Zhi was deeply infatuated with the king to the point that when she was chosen to be married, she wept for five days in joy.

"The recordings did say it was rumored she had a special physique too.." muttered Yang Qing as he noticed her daughter try to hide her melancholy as she offered a noble like smile and greeting.

The other missing consort Shi Ruo only had one child with the king who was the injured prince. Of the five consorts, she wasn't the most impressionable as she spent all her time buried in books or alchemy

experiments. The only thing that could tear her away from her experiments and books was her son who she doted on heavily.

The Shi clan may not have the same exemplary reputation as the Zhang clan, but in terms of wealth, there was no one wealthier. Their ply of trade was in alchemy and herbology which gave them a lot of connections and wealth both within and outside the kingdom.

The remaining consorts; the gentle and amiable consort Song Yun had two daughters and the vibrant consort Chu Delun had two sons who had taken up her family's gold hair.

Once the Imperial Secretary was done with their introductions he moved to the left which had the current heads of the five peak clans and a few other well-established families before he finally moved to the right where he finished off with the introduction of the high officials deemed worthy of being present such as the chancellor who was an old man with graying hair and a third stage palace realm expert, along with a few governors.

With the introductions done and the pleasantries out the way, the servants were ushered in as they brought in trays filled with all kinds of dishes that left Yang Qing's eyes glowing.

Yang Qing has always been a big advocate of authenticity, especially with your likes. There is no need to play coy with the things you like, be direct. Which was why he didn't bother hiding his unrefined epicurism nature. He liked food...a lot... and he hoped the royal family would read into that open hint and bring in more food.

His hint was received well. For the next half an hour countless dishes were continuously brought to the table like a parade with Yang Qing being the master conductor as he sampled each dish. It didn't matter if he knew it or not, or if it looked strange or not. It could be meat or seaweed, Yang Qing didn't discriminate, he ate them all which drew him no small amount of well-hidden looks, but Yang Qing didn't care.

After his month was up, he wouldn't be here. He didn't have to worry about face and looking refined or like a proper cultivator and it wasn't like there was anyone he wanted to impress. He could sense the tenseness and how guarded those present were against each other. They smiled and talked but everything they did was layered behind probes, deceit, and sizing each other up. Whether it was the heads of the five families, the other aristocratic families, the consorts, the princes, or the rest of the high officials.

The only ones who seemed out of the dangerous play were the youngest princess Meng Ling who seemed absent-minded half the time, the Queen who ate reservedly in complete silence, and Yang Qing who ate unreservedly.

Probably because of his free attitude, the different factions started talking to him more freely they even shared a few laughs and jokes here and there. The third prince even decided to imitate him as he sampled different dishes here and there, while the eldest prince who was known for his gifted skills in communication managed to stir up Yang Qing's interest by bringing up various niche cuisines he had read about which covered different parts of the continent.

Slowly by slowly the atmosphere warmed up and it felt more like a family branch which technically could be considered one if Yang Qing and the officials were not there.

"What a bunch of sly people.." Yang Qing muttered to himself as he took in how almost everyone at the table seemed to be so close. They were patting each other's backs as they laughed enthusiastically at each other's jokes, filling each other's cups of wine, and sharing tidbits here and there, which ended up with compliments being traded all around.

If Yang Qing was some wet behind the ears guest, he would be easily fooled into thinking this group was united and would go through thick and thin together without batting an eye. But he knew better and he had constantly dealt with those who were much slyer than present company.

Would the people present compare to the old fossils of the Order? They would work you to death, trick you into doing more work for little pay, and somehow you end up feeling indebted to them. They had mastered the art of exploitation to a tee.

Present company were children when Yang Qing compared them to the mighty foe he has been dealing with for the past few years.

Chapter 596 Unknown variables

Yang Qing's gaze danced around the table as he calmly took in their interactions from the subtle of nuances.

Did one's gaze linger slightly for even a microsecond when it fell on a certain someone?; did the back move ever so slightly during a back pat, or did it seem welcomed?; was there even a slight hesitation

during the back pat, or was it more natural? The flow of conversation, the interjections, Yang Qing observed it all.

Everyone here was skilled at wearing masks but instinctual habits were the hardest to get rid of.

Cultivators were considered to be the best liars because they had good control over their bodies. Things that mortals could give out during a lie such as an accelerated heart rate, dry tongue, a bit of perspiration here and there, a story with plot holes, such problems did not appear in cultivators who had perfect memory and could control their heartbeats along with every other part of their body as easily as breathing.

Catching such a person in a lie was extremely difficult let alone a seasoned cultivator who had seen and experienced almost everything under the sun. Their thoughts were unfathomable and as deep as the ocean but even with their skills, there were things Yang Qing discovered over his years as a judge and being a duplicitous being himself were hard to change or hide.

For example, it is difficult to control the unconscious habits one has developed over the years to the point that they have permeated to their very soul like dislike or wariness towards something or someone. He could see little clues here and there from the people around him.

The present company was all on guard against each other which was a huge mental strain as they had to probe each other while ensuring that they didn't give anything out. Small cracks were bound to appear while maintaining such a delicate dance.

For example one of the daughters of consort Song Yun would imperceptibly nod her head whenever the eldest prince said something even if it was inane, or the eldest son of consort Chu Delun whose chopsticks stiffened ever so slightly when the third prince offered to refill his bowl as he was getting another serving or the head of the Shi family slightly widened smile from the head of the Meng family when he saw the head of Song family pat the back of the Chu family, the youngest Meng princess who seemed to avoid eye contact with the head of the Meng family.

It is difficult to hide the biases and opinions one has built over a long time all in one sitting especially in a room where you're all wary of each other constantly watching each other like wolves. Yang Qing creating an atmosphere of unexpectedness and casualness made it even harder as he didn't exactly follow the normal script.

Yang Qing made a silent note of everything he saw. While those little details didn't reveal any secrets, they did help him get a sense of the people around him which he needed especially if one considered that among those laughing, drinking, and eating, one of them was likely a traitor.

The Blue Soul Flame Crow syndicate didn't just appear randomly in the Deer Mountain Range considering the events that transpired. They had likely been here for quite a while if one considered the ease with which they killed a first-stage palace realm obsidian serpent before it could even call for help and was only able to do so in its dying moments.

The only way they could pull something like that off was if they knew about it beforehand. The Order's presence in the area removed the likelihood that they had a base in the area, so the only way they could have detailed knowledge of the obsidian serpent was if they were fed that information by a local and considering the strength of the spirit beast, there was only one suspect capable of knowing the whereabouts of the spirit beast without alerting it, and that was the Deer Mountain Kingdom.

Someone among them was likely colluding with the Blue Soul Flame Crow Syndicate. They may or may not know what the syndicate was after, though that was secondary, because whoever the traitor is they contributed to the deaths of two inquisitors and heavy injuries to the branch chief, Hao Da, and the remaining inquisitor.

Just for that alone, Yang Qing was determined to gather as much information and clues as he could in his short time as the branch chief, and figuring out the dynamics of the people before him was the first step.

Everyone present was a suspect, whether it was the king, his queen, the consorts, the prince and princesses, the families backing them, or the high officials, none was innocent in Yang Qing's eyes.

Only someone high up could have pulled off what they pulled off and the present company had the people with the highest stations within the kingdom. The traitor was likely to be here or have a relationship with one of the members present.

"Which of you threw in their lot with the Blue Soul Flame Crow syndicate, I wonder.."

One hour quickly flew by and the empty plates were cleared off the table leaving only jars of wine and cups.

There was also a subtle shift in the atmosphere as the casualness from before slowly disappeared being replaced by a slightly austere air.

The third consort Song Yuan excused herself to her chambers as she left with Meng Ruo, which was a suggestion made by the king when he saw how increasingly distressed she seemed.

Once they had left, a short silence ensued before finally, the old chancellor broke the silence.

"We are truly sorry for what happened to your people. If we had gathered enough information maybe the losses would not have been as dire.." said the old chancellor.

"The Blue Soul Flame Crow Syndicate was involved in the matter. Any sighting of them is bound to prompt urgency which doesn't give a lot of room for preparation. If you let them be, who knows what they may do?

Reacting quickly was the best choice, it's only the results..." Yang Qing had a momentary pause as he continued.

"We are not the only ones who suffered from this.

I am sorry for your losses, the princes you lost, and the royal guards.." said Yang Qing as he cupped his fist.

Even though he suspected every single one of them of being responsible for what happened, he did feel pity for those who lost their lives and potentially from one of their own at that. Of all the worst ways he ever thought of going, that was one of them, a dagger in the back by someone close. He may be a little self-serving and loved his life a little too much, but to him, that was a line he would not cross, and he detested those who did.

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Chapter 598 Resolve of a king

As for the remaining families; the Chu family had never hidden their ambitions for the throne. Even back then when the kingdom was just in its infancy stage, the founder of their clan constantly squabbled with his ancestor for the throne. That spirit has been continuously passed down to the present generation.

They have always eyed the throne. He couldn't do anything about them since they had an almost similar foundation. The Zhou royal family would end up with a pyrrhic victory if they decided to eliminate all sorts of cordiality with them. Other than that their family had the best weapon refiners and artifact makers within the kingdom. If a gold-grade artificer was to appear within the kingdom, it would be from their family. They were vital if they ever hoped to restore the Ebony Twilight Sanctuary Array.

Besides to him if he was asked which family he was least wary of among the five, it would be the Chu family. He knew where he stood with them and they never hid it, and they always did their things in the open.

It was the Meng, Song, and the Shi family he was most wary of. On paper, the Meng family was the only one of the peak clans that had allied themselves with the royal family, their loyal supporters, but King Zhou Luan never quite trusted them. He was only thankful that he didn't have that same worry when it came to consort Meng Zhi. She was deeply infatuated with him to the point that she would willingly betray her father without hesitation.

"Zhi'er, I hope she recovers from this.." he thought.

As for the Song and Shi families, the Song family was the one he considered the most dangerous of the five families. It wasn't because they had eyes for the throne or showed dissatisfaction with the royal family.

Of the five, they were the ones that didn't seem to care about all that and it was the part that King Zhou Luan considered dangerous. They were cordial with the royal family, the five peak clans, and other aristocratic families. He wasn't sure if it was him being overly sensitive or too paranoid, but he always felt the Song family was different compared to the rest of the families.

The four families despite their designs and inclinations to the throne, all had a level of concern for the welfare of the kingdom as a whole, but when it came to the Song family, King Zhou Luan always felt that to them it didn't matter a whole lot whether the kingdom lived or died, they would be okay with either outcome.

He always found it hard to read them, and he wasn't the only one who felt so. His grandfather, who was currently the strongest expert in the kingdom as a sixth-stage palace realm expert always told him to be cautious of the mercurial Song family. Back in his day, he could never see through the Song family head of their generation, and some part of his instincts always told him despite always having a higher cultivation base than the head, he always felt there was a chance he would lose if he fought him.

The king always kept close vigilance on them, even his gentle-looking consort. As for the Shi family just like the Chu family, if the Deer Mountain Kingdom was ever to get a gold-grade alchemist, it would be from their clan. Because of their trade, they had a lot of resources and connections that extended all over, they were sufficient enough to make King Zhou Luan wary of them.

Over the past few years, he felt he was walking a very tight and lonely rope. He couldn't trust the families that were meant to support the kingdom with him, and that distrust extended even to some of his children connected to those families. The Zhou royal family that was his backing was also fragmented into different factions instead of being a united front against outside forces they were constantly undermining each other.

And now they had a catastrophe to deal with. He wasn't sure the kingdom could weather it through as they did so countless times before, not as they were.

Just as he was sinking into despair, he felt a warm touch on his hands. A touch he knew better than his own that was always able to keep him afloat. He held on to it tightly as a slight smile appeared on his face thanking the owner of that hand.

"Thank you, Mei'er.." he said via his palace sense.

The queen didn't respond as she kept the same silent look of a seasoned war veteran, albeit there was one change to her which was her slightly reddened lobes.

No one noticed the hand-holding or the exchange between the couple.

"Does he seem livelier.." wondered Yang Qing as he noticed a faint ripple in the king's wizened-filled eyes.

He didn't dwell too much on it as the matter at hand didn't permit him to do so.

"Please speak frankly your majesty.." Yang Qing gently said as he took a sip of his wine.

"Considering the circumstances we are in, I know we are not in any position to request it, especially with what happened to Branch Chief Xue Wang and his team, but I have no option but to ask.

Could the Order please intervene with the obsidian serpents and the fire adler bear, I beg you.." said King Zhou Luan as he stood up and bowed his head deeply.

"Your Majesty you mustn't!!!"

Both the chancellor and the Imperial Secretary frantically stood up to stop the king, but a pressure released by the king held them in place. The other high officials, the princes and princesses, consort Zhang, and consort Chu all looked just as surprised by the king's actions.

He was the highest figure in the kingdom both in station and even as a cultivator if he was compared to those of his generation but here he was begging. It was a shock to them who had idolized him or saw him as different from themselves.

As for the five family heads, they all hid their thoughts well. Other than a few flickers in their eyes, no one could tell their thoughts on the matter.

"Hui, Hei Shan, this is what I must do. If my bowing my head can save my kingdom then I would gladly do it a thousand times over.

Dignity and honor don't matter where life and death are concerned. Do well to remember that.." impassionately said the king.

Chapter 599 Mausoleum of reflection

Almost immediately two figures stood up simultaneously as they bowed deeply similar to the king, echoing his words.

"Please, branch chief Yang Qing, intervene on behalf of our kingdom in this time of peril.."

The two figures were the eldest prince Zhou Yu and the third prince Zhou Guang.

Immediately after them, the remaining princes and princesses all stood up making the same plea.

It all happened too fast and Yang Qing was slightly taken aback by it but he still retained his composure.

The circumstances snowballed even further when finally the current head of the Zhang family stood up.

Some of his features could be seen in consort Zhang Quifen who showed an even more drastic reaction of dumbfounded shock when she saw him stand up.

He had a slender build, and a handsome face, and looked to be in his early forties. He had the sharpness of a warrior that had slain countless, and the calmness of one who had seen and endured plenty, and a bearing worthy of a clan of heroes.

His movements drew the eyes of all around him even the other heads who had inscrutable expressions on their faces when the king stood up, finally had visible reactions, and it was one of surprise. The third prince who was already bowing had the same look of shock as his mother, along with his sister who had bowed a few moments after him.

Even the austere queen had a change in her eyes. Other than surprise, Yang Qing noted there was also respect in her eyes.

"He seems to have the same impact on those around him as the king, if not stronger.." muttered Yang Qing as he saw the head of the Zhang family stand up. Other than the king, he had one of the highest cultivation bases of everyone present, he was a third-stage palace realm expert.

Even though he reigned in his cultivation base, Yang Qing could tell from the momentum force of his body down to his every gesture, his foundations were firmer than anyone present, even the king's. Yang

Qing surmised at the very least he had a deep blue core during his core formation realm when he broke through from the core formation realm to the palace realm.

After standing up, he immediately cupped his fists. It was a warrior's salute of respect. The Thousand Hall Battle Pavilion had a similar greeting by those who acknowledged each other's skills. It was a form of recognition, acceptance, and respect.

"Our clan's customs forbid us from bowing to anyone other than our parents. While the king is right, in front of life and death, things like dignity and honor do not matter only the result does. On this, for our clan, we value the code set by our ancestors more than our own lives.

While I can't bow, I can still plead. On behalf of the kingdom I love, the kingdom those before me willingly and gladly gave their lives for, I am asking the Order for any help they can give to help us protect it.

The Zhang family will remember the debt and will repay it to the last man, woman, and child if need be, should a need ever arise. That is my solemn oath as its head and a member of the Zhang family.." said Zhang's family head, with a soft tone but within it, it carried enough momentum to part the seas and the clouds.

"Zhang Ru, you?" King Zhou asked in surprise.

"I love this place, same as you.." replied the Zhang family head replied with a smile.

"You're putting me on the spot here, some of you are my seniors here. There's no need to bow.." Yang Qing said with a rueful smile when he saw the imperial secretary, the chancellor, the other high officials, and the other family heads who looked like they were just about to replicate what the king or the Zhang family head were doing.

"Please sit down.." Yang Qing implored.

Yang Qing's gaze turned solemn after they had all sat down.

"You should all know the Order's stance in these matters. We can't directly intervene in certain things otherwise it might be misconstrued by others as us overstepping our bounds.

If we step in directly, us along with you will draw the ire of countless and some may even be more dangerous than the fire adler.

We can take the hit, but can your kingdom handle it? It won't only be dissatisfied organizations that would eye you with malcontent but other fiendish organizations similar to the Blue Soul Flame Crow Syndicate will set their sights on you, because in their minds for us to break our own rules to help you it means we have a deep connection.

Since they can't target us lightly, you would be the easiest target for them to vent their frustrations.

Trust me, what they can do to you is a thousand times worse than anything the obsidian serpent couple or the fire adler could do to you.." said Yang Qing.

It felt like the room they were in had been plunged into an abyss. The air seemed colder, and darker, with grim and worried expressions being shared all around.

Yang Qing wasn't lying to them with the statement. The Order no matter the situation unless it involved fiend cultivators, taboo powers, or anything that violated their guidelines, wouldn't intervene. The best they could do was give notices and warnings here and there and offer suggestions, but direct involvement was forbidden.

The continent was already rife with organizations accusing the Order of overstepping their bounds even when they were they were within their rights to do so, let alone something blatant as this.

It was why they couldn't touch the Striding Falcon Sect no matter how they treated their outer sect disciples, the best they could do was give those disciples a choice; to leave or to stay, anything beyond that and they risked drawing supporters for the sect, even those who didn't agree with them.

The Order operated on an unfamiliar minefield every single day and on the matter of retaliation by other organizations if they do decide to be direct with their help, there were hundreds of organizations engraved on the walls of reflection within the mausoleum grounds of the Order.

These organizations had a deep closeness with the Order. Every one of them paid the price for it. They were all destroyed for it. The Order created a monument in their memory but on that monument was a vivid description of how they were destroyed.

After graduating, every student would be taken to the mausoleum and read those details. Helping was an admirable virtue to have but one had to exercise an abundance of wisdom and discernment and judge whether their help would save them or drag them into damnation.

Those monuments were a painful reminder of that.

Chapter 600 Northern Lights Sect

A stifling atmosphere swallowed the room whole after Yang Qing's statement but was broken almost immediately by the least talkative member of the group.

"What if we are willing to shoulder the burden and risk that comes with it?" asked Queen Huo Mei.

Contrary to how cold she looked her voice carried a sense of soothing clarity. It was like the melodious chirps of birds as they welcomed spring.

"The Queen is right, what if we are willing to take the risk? The matter of being targeted by other organizations because of your help may or may not happen. The risk isn't certain but when it comes to the two obsidian serpents and the fire adler bear about to break through, the risk they pose to the kingdom is all but guaranteed.." said Consort Zhang Quifen.

"Others don't have to know you helped us..."

A meek voice filled with hesitation, trepidation, and a bit of resolve immediately sounded after Consort Zhang Quifen had made her statement.

Yang Qing turned to the source of the statement. It was a young lady who looked to be seventeen years old. She was a beauty in her own right and bore a striking resemblance to Consort Zhang Quifen and the third prince, she was his sister.

Seeing everyone's gaze fall on her, she shrunk back a little before she feigned a look of composure clumsily at that when her gaze inadvertently fell on her mother and the head of the Zhang family.

"While that seems simple enough to do Princess Zhou Ai, ensuring it is another matter. Things always get out.." Yang Qing gently said.

"As for your willingness to take the risk, while you might be willing, I don't think the Order is. Should anything happen to you because of our intervention, we are the ones who would have to live with the result of it, and who knows what kind of storm such an event would create?

Things are already tense as it is. Do we really need to add more to that flame?" asked YAang Qing.

"That being said.." said Yang Qing as he clasped his hands together.

"When it comes to the obsidian serpents they killed one of our own so it's within our rights to act. You won't have to worry about them anymore.."

"You mean?" asked Imperial Secretary Hei Shan with a look beset by all sorts of overwhelming emotions. There was disbelief, relief, wariness, confusion before it came down to excitement and joy.

"They are not around your territory anymore.." Yang Qing succinctly said which drew shared looks of relief and joy all around.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you branch chief Yang Qing.." the Imperial Secretary hysterically said with tears in his eyes.

"Thank you.." said the king who even in his calmness one could hear the sound of relief in his tone.

Everyone around took turns giving their thanks before the topic circled back to the other worry the fire adler bear.

Truth be told, to them, the fire adler was what gave them the most scare and worry. While the obsidian serpents were a threat, with the array they could hold out for a few years as they figured a way to diffuse the situation.

If worst came to worst, the king was prepared to empty their vaults to hire the services of skilled hunting organizations and have them hunt down the obsidian serpents.

If that wasn't enough he would force the other clans to send their contributions. He was certain if they pulled their resources together they would be able to hire some of the seasoned ones with skills to hunt even late palace-stage spirit beasts, but the fire adler was a different case. They would have to hire the services of a domain expert and it would have to be one who has already stepped at the second stage of the domain realm for them to be able to kill the fire adler without risk of suffering heavy injuries themselves.

Other than the Ebony Twilight Sanctuary Array, they had nothing of value that would draw the eyes of a second-stage domain expert. Their only option was for the Order to intervene. With their abilities a mere freshly broken through domain fire adler was nothing of note. The fact that they already took care of the two obsidian serpents was already proof of that.

"When it comes to the fire adler bear I am afraid we cannot intervene. We do not have any feud with it. Not unless you want us to attack it for what it may potentially do.." Yang Qing said as he narrowed his gaze.

"With the history of your kingdom, I can understand why you would be weary of spirit beasts but once they reach the core formation realm and become more self-aware and less feral, they are no different from us and that fact becomes more distinctive the higher up the cultivation bases they move.

I am sure you are well aware that there are sects, clans, and other cultivation organizations that have spirit beasts among their ranks. And I am not talking as mounts but as respected elders within those organizations.

Some even go as far as to have a spirit beast as its head. The Northern Lights Sect is a prime example. The current sect master is a celestial road lark and she has been holding that seat for the past 20,000 years.."

The Northern Lights Sect was an up-and-coming rank 2 sect whose rise was all but guaranteed. The reason for that was they had a legacy and had developed all sorts of esoteric techniques that were useful in the exploration of unfamiliar territories filled with peril like mysterious realms and ruins that had some functionality.

Rumor was that the founder of the sect was a gifted explorer of the Horizon Odyssey Guild. He founded the sect and poured all his experiences into it. Using the skills taught to them, the sect rapidly grew from the dangerous zones they explored over the years that netted them hefty resources.

There was even a saying when going to a mysterious realm if you want to live to harvest anything, hug the thigh of the Northern Lights Sect.

It was because of its feats that the sect was well-renowned throughout the continent, from young babies playing in the mud to young cultivators drawn by the romanticism of exploring the unknown to seasoned cultivators who knew how much of a feat it was for what the Northern Lights Sect had managed to accomplish over the years.

This same sect whose fame could reach the heavens now had a celestial road lark as a sect master. She wasn't hatched in the sect but had been accepted as a disciple by one of the core elders during one of their adventures.

From what Yang Qing read she had been in the early stages of the core formation realm at the time. She was first admitted as an inner disciple, and slowly rose through the ranks till finally, she became their sect master admired by all within the sect.

Yang Qing mentioned it in the hopes that the Deer Mountain Kingdom would stop looking at every single spirit beast as the enemy.