

## Daily life 631

### Chapter 631 Didn't see it coming

The two spirit beasts excitedly followed Yang Qing when he asked them to join them on his little excursion.

Ever since they got captured by Feng Xin, their world experienced a seismic shift. They got access to resources they never thought possible, saw powerful spirit beasts that shook them to their core but were still somehow alive which was something they never thought possible either.

They saw terrifying human cultivators that were of the same caliber of terror as Feng Xin, which put them on edge every single day especially Haishi who had an easily intimidated personality.

But eventually, both of them were able to adapt to the unnerving situations and the drastic shifts in view till they were somehow used to it.

It wasn't all bad for them as they didn't have to risk their lives to improve their strength. Though the training they were put through was extremely demanding, they didn't run the risk of ending up in another spirit beast's stomach if they failed as was the norm in the Green Fog Region.

Haishi and Bolin both seemed to have adapted to their new lives at the Order, swiftly even. But considering how ruthless and dangerous the Green Fog Region was, the speed with which they called the Order home could be understood, especially when both considered their circumstances.

Other than being the only two to have survived the ambush on Feng Xin, they both didn't have much to go back to. They were not overlords of territories that they would feel the pinch of not going back. Haishi was a wimp who liked staying in her lair and the only times she got out was to shadow the green-flowered babirusa when it went to search for spiritual herbs.

With green flowered babirusa dead and already in the stomach of Yang Qing and the rest, and even hers because her willpower ended up failing her and she succumbed to that barbecued pork goodness, she didn't have much else to go back to. She couldn't find another partner like the green-flowered babirusa that would let her follow them all over the place without attacking her.

As for Bolin, he only had one friend in the area, the green flash viper. Even though he thought his friend had likely survived Feng Xin's attack, he had no intentions of going back even if he was given the chance to. His time at the Order made him realize how exhausted he had been of his life at the Green Fog Region.

He enjoyed soaking in his pond and eating a few insect spirit beasts whenever the urge struck him but other than that he didn't have much ambition for anything else. However, because of his known friendship with the green flash viper who was one of the false kings of the eighth zone, he was constantly dragged into fights for dominance which he never wanted to be a part of.

The vie for supremacy between his long-time friend and the other false king, the black cosmos caiman left him constantly on guard and exhausted.

After experiencing a sense of peace and rest he had at the Order, he had no intentions of ever going back.

To the two of them, their current lifestyle was afforded to them by Feng Xin but after being at the Order for some time and learning a bit of how things worked they knew it would not have been possible without Yang Qing's support, especially for Bolin.

He was destined to be on the slab of some alchemist's table being researched and cut apart, but he wasn't because of Yang Qing's writing on his back. He would occasionally rub it like it was some protective halo that would protect him against anything.

The two were thankful to Yang Qing for their current lifestyle which was why they liked to be around him, it also didn't hurt that Yang Qing was easygoing and affable to them.

This was why Yang Qing's betrayal hurt them so much when he dumped the two in dangerous parts of the Deer Mountain Range.

Bolin had his poisonous abilities sealed by Yang Qing and was left with his regenerative abilities from his wood element, which Yang Qing encouraged him to use unceasingly if he wanted to survive, while Haishi was thrown into a territory that had a ghost-eyed owl, a phantom blade mantis and a few other spirit beasts skilled in perception.

Worse was, they were all stronger than Haishi. She was encouraged to hide to her heart's content in the area.

The two didn't see it coming. They thought they would be sharing a meal, trading stories, and laughing as they did the previous day not running and hiding for their lives in an unfamiliar territory.

Despite the shock, they quickly adjusted themselves as they carefully gauged their surroundings. Yang Qing nodded in appreciation when he saw how swiftly they moved and reacted. They clearly earned their reputation as residents of one of the most dangerous forests on the continent. Their mentality, adaptability, and swiftness were admirable as spirit beasts that lived in a region where your life hung on a balance every second of every day.

Yang Qing left his spiritual imprint marking on both of them which was a safety measure in case something unexpected happened. His imprints would protect them whilst also alerting him.

After confirming his imprints were functional Yang Qing left for the locations mentioned by Meifeng.

The first stop was an area a few kilometers north of where he had mercilessly left Bolin and Haishi. Yang Qing spread his palace sense around the area before finding what he sought. He detected an area with rich spiritual energy circulating.

When he arrived at the area, he found a pond made of lightning gypsum that was filled with what looked to be boiling blood as indeed it was.

Yang Qing detected the blood contained the auras of multitudinous spirit beasts. They seemed to have come from spirit beasts of varying strengths but they were all in the core formation realm.

"This looks like the body refining concoction that Grandpa and the rest used to dunk me in when I was small except it wasn't as potent or smelled this nice.." Yang Qing said as he took a big gluttonous whiff as he walked towards the pond.

Chapter 632 Blood Pond

"Silver cloud fire boar..Zodiac dawn eagle..Twilight ivy bull.. Silver ray rabbit..Ruby thunderhead serpent...glittering sungrass stag.."

With every whiff he took, Yang Qing would ecstatically close his eyes as he named a spirit beast.

By the time he reached the pond, he had named at least twenty spirit beast names. His eyes glittered like a child's when he finally reached the pond.

"The blood wine and soup that could made from this.." he muttered greedily as he put his hand into the blood pond.

The lightning produced by the gypsum instantly attacked his hand when he brought his hand over, but whether it was his hands or his robes, both were left unscathed.

The lightning produced by the gypsum was no more potent to him than a calm breeze brushing up against his skin.

He carefully scooped up the boiling blood like it was something precious as he sifted through it with his fingers, forming a small waterfall as it poured back into the pond.

"I don't know how long it has been here, but the potency and the richness don't seem to have waned one bit.." muttered Yang Qing.

After admiring the contents of the blood pond for a bit, Yang Qing focused on what had brought him here which was the investigation of the traces of the daughter of the obsidian.

He already had a register of her aura that he picked up at the battleground. Using it as a reference, he searched for similar traces in the area.

It wasn't a surprise when he found the majority of her trace wafting in and around the blood pond.

lightsNovel A little study of the blood pond, Yang Qing had confirmed more or less what he suspected. The blood pond seemed to be a refining pond just like the one he had at his clan. They used it on them during the body refining phase of their cultivation, except the blood pond before him was much larger in scale and sophistication.

Had he been dunked into the contents of the pool when he was in the body-refining stage, his body would have instantly exploded from the potency of the energy within the pond. Yang Qing judged he could barely handle it if he was in the late stages of the foundation realm.

The blood used was of powerful spirit beasts each having reached different stages of the core formation realm. Yang Qing even detected one that had already reached the peak stage of the core formation realm, though, from the vibrancy of its energy, he felt it was put in recent in comparison to the rest, at least not more than 100 years ago.

He could feel some sort of latent spirituality that was absent from the rest.

The more he studied the blood pond, the wonderous it was in his eyes. It was perfectly positioned above a high-grade spirit vein, and the geomancy also put it above the zone that was rich in Yang energy which would help in the breaking down and the mixing of the blood of the spirit beasts.

The pond was like one big cauldron. As for the lightning gypsum, the lightning had assimilative properties to it. It was more than likely used to strike apart the body of whoever was soaked in the blood pond and then help them slowly assimilate the blood contained within it.

Yang Qing even detected some mysterious glyphs that seemed more natural than made and seemed to aid in the process.

"Did the fire adler bear do this or was this something his master had left him and he decided to use it on the obsidian serpents' daughter?" muttered Yang Qing.

The level of sophistication employed in the pond left him wondering. Whether it was the fire adler bear's doing or its master, whoever built the blood pond had exceptional skills.

They managed to mix the blood of the different spirit beasts into a homogenous mixture. Despite it having different properties, it didn't clash and seemed to blend seamlessly with each other. The level of difficulty of pulling such a feat wasn't to be underestimated considering the blood used came from 27 different spirit beasts all at the core formation realm.

This was like dealing with extremely potent and volatile ingredients in alchemy and blending them in the pond made the difficulty no different than brewing a high-tier complex blue grade potion.

Then there was the geomancy abilities shown by the positioning of the pond, the glyphs that seemed more natural than man-made, and how everything was combined to work so seamlessly together.

Such a feat was worthy of praise even by the standards of the Order. Yang Qing couldn't help but wonder where they learned it all.

"Was it him?" muttered Yang Qing as he recalled the middle-aged man, however, immediately dismissed that thought as it didn't fit the timeline.

Yang Qing roamed around the pond expending his spiritual essence and using every art in his arsenal to try and glean anything from the area.

His efforts were somewhat rewarded when he detected a faint savage aura floating around that mixed in with the pond.

The aura answered the question as to why the area seemed like it had been given a wide berth by other spirit beasts. The savage aura seemed to act like a fearsome deterrent to them. It was innocuous to humans which was why Yang Qing missed it the first time he looked around, but to spirit beasts, it was a glaring sign of terror for them to keep off this place.

Yang Qing spent close to an hour trying to see if he could detect traces of anything and anyone else, and when he didn't, he decided to move on, but not before scooping a few cup fulls of the blood pond and storing them into one of his empty wine jars.

"Consider this payment for the amount I've taken.." said Yang Qing as he dropped a feather of the celestial nesting weaver into the blood pond.

The blood pond seemed to quiver with an almost lifelike excitement when Yang Qing produced the colorful ethereal looking feather of the celestial nesting weaver, and when it gently fell into the blood pond, it was like pandemonium broke and a ravenous beast had been woken from slumber.

The primeval agitated roar was instantly quelled when the feather touched the pond. It was like that of a master silencing his subjects.

"So pretentious.." Yang Qing muttered in disgusted envy as he produced his golden flames whose terrifying heat made the air tremble.

He doused the feather in the flames turning it into golden starry ash that dissolved into the pond. Without his flames, the celestial nesting weaver's feather would have swallowed the pond dry.

Every part of the bird was greedy like that. With the feather completely broken down by Yang Qing's flames, it easily dissolved into the blood pond adding a sense of celestial mystique to the pond. The blood exuded an air of nobility.

Yang Qing unable to stand the showiness of the feather quickly left for the next location.

Chapter 633 Foundation Circle

On reaching the next location Yang Qing couldn't help but show a look of surprise. It didn't take long for him to find the area he was looking for and finding it was even easier than the first location because of the nature of the area.

The next region was a nexus harmonic garden. This was a region in which spiritual plants of different elements grew together without an imbalance or competition for resources.

Just like the blood pond where the different bloodlines blended together into one homogenous solution, in a nexus harmonic garden, spiritual plants of different elements seemed to coexist together.

A nexus harmonic garden could either form naturally or artificially and Yang Qing could tell that the one before him was a natural one.

The soil below and the spiritual qi surrounding the area had the perfect balance of the five elements with not one being overpowered by the other which was how spiritual plants of different elements were able to grow within the area.

The medical valley had something similar but theirs was through human manipulation and its scale was much larger than the garden before him.

The area had about forty spiritual herbs spread over three acres which was the sphere of influence of the nexus harmonic garden. As for their grade, the bulk were at the middle tier of sky grade which was a decent quality. Given enough time, their quality was likely to improve.

Just like before Yang Qing scanned the area for any traces that might be in the area and like before he detected the traces of the daughter of the obsidian serpent and the fire adler bear. However, he was surprised when he detected another familiar aura mixed in the area, it was Meifeng's.

"They likely used this place to quell the volatility in the absorbed bloodline by using the harmonic energy present in the area.." muttered Yang Qing as he walked around the area in search of more clues.

When he didn't find much he moved on to the other area. Meifeng had given him four locations.

The next place he visited had a shallow lake that had a single mosaic flower at the center. Despite it being midday the area had a cool temperature, and the origin of it seemed to be both the lake and the mosaic flower working in tandem.

"An inner flame mosaic flower.." muttered Yang Qing as his pupils turned into a pristine pure white color.

The unassuming yellow flower floating at the center of the lake had a different look when he transformed his eyes.



A pale blue flame releasing gray mist was produced from the stamen of the flower to its petals down its sepals as it gently covered the whole lake.

The lake looked like it was bathed in an eerie pale blue flame that had a slight chill to it.

Yang Qing knew the decrease in temperature of the area was the doing of the flower before him.

It was a yin-natured spiritual herb that was great at refining the soul.

Yang Qing used his soul attunement to sense any residual trace auras around him. Because of his affinity with yin energy, he was able to easily capture the traces floating about than the previous two places.

He detected two distinct auras in the area. One belonged to the fire adler bear and the other belonged to the daughter of the obsidian serpents.

Yang Qing triggered some of the yin glyphs in his arms which transformed his hair into pure white like that of a jade moon with his eyes turning into the full moon as his body radiated with pure white chilly glow.

He wanted to take advantage of the yin energy in the area and try to see if he could study the trace of the daughter of the obsidian serpent's daughter and see if there were any special qualities within her trace.

In doing so, something unexpected happened. He sensed something abstract. It was an ephemeral feeling like something was there but at the same time, it wasn't there. It was like trying to remember a word you know but it keeps escaping your mind.

Grand lunar of solace

The misty glyph markings in his body suddenly lit up with an intense radiance while his eyes started revolving around as they showed different phases of the moon as they shone with the same dao markings that were on his body.

Yang Qing focused on the ephemeral feeling he sensed for almost two hours before he sensed the tiniest of traces and even when he did capture the trace he couldn't tell much from it. It was like the trace was covered with a thin veil.

Even if he couldn't tell much from the trace, it at least told him there had been another person there.

"I wonder if the trace is for the Lady Gild that Meifeng mentioned?" wondered Yang Qing as his look went back to normal.

Yang Qing rested up for a few minutes to recover his expended soul essence before he moved on to the last and final location.

The last location had nothing of note except for a boulder in the middle of a forest. Yang Qing instantly recognized the boulder the moment he laid eyes on it. The boulder looked to be made of two colors. The front side was slightly dark, it looked almost like a shadow, while the back side was dark orange.

It was like the essence of the setting of the sun was captured within that boulder.

"The sunset heart seeking boulder.." Yang Qing muttered as he placed his hand on the boulder.

He could feel a slow warmth being released by it that seemed to calm his mind.

The sunset heart-seeking boulder was great for tempering the mind and the heart by promoting a meditative environment.

As long as one cultivated next to it they would find their heart and mind slowly synching into one. Scattered messy thoughts would be lined up and an anxious heart would find itself slowly being rid of its anxiousness.

Yang Qing took one of the twigs lying around on the ground, cleared some of the leaves next to it, and proceeded to write something.

"Body, alignment, soul, and heart.." were the words written on the ground. Body was at the top, alignment to the east, soul to the south, and heart to the west. Yang Qing completed the writing by drawing a circle that linked the four.

"Breaking through from the gold body to the diamond body and eventually the peerless jade physique, the training I went through covered these four principles.

It seems like the fire adler bear had been preparing her body for something by having her go through these foundational steps.

But I have never heard of spirit beasts using the foundation circle. It is something we use.."

#### Chapter 634 Singing And Dancing Under The Moon

The foundational circle was something he had learned from his clan's old friend, Alchemist Ma Bo, the guest teacher from the Jade Dao Leaf Imperial Academy.

He was the one who coined the term as he and the rest of the Yang clan members were refining their body refinement techniques.

Body refinement was a complete evolution of the cultivator from a cultivator. Everything that constituted the body had to be worked on, no part could remain neglected especially if one had the hopes of reaching the gold body, the diamond body, and the peerless jade physique stage.

The ingredients used had to match the user's body, the user had to extract every benefit completely from said ingredients, and to finally ensure that they could grasp their abilities, their mind, soul, and willpower had to be elevated to match their body's progress.

Not one aspect could be missed or there would be an imbalance.

Each of the locations he had visited addressed one component of the foundation circle but as far as Yang Qing knew, spirit beasts didn't need it.

It was always said the world was a balance of scales. If it's taken from one part, it will be added to another. It was a coin with two sides.

Spirit beasts progressed slowly in their cultivation but in exchange for that weakness, they had an almost perfect body which was why even a foundation-level spirit beast may have the same lifespan as a human palace realm expert.

Using the foundation circle on them was a bit redundant as it polished something that was already polished.

But it didn't take long for Yang Qing to connect the dots.

"Not unless they are laying the foundation for another physique and the current one is unable to measure up to the demands.." muttered Yang Qing.

From the battleground, he had already detected that the daughter of the obsidian serpents had a purer aura of a flood dragon than her father.

Yang Qing had never witnessed a spirit beast's evolution but considering how vital their bodies' were to them, it stood to reason that evolution meant a complete replacement of everything within the spirit beast and such an extreme transformation had to come with huge risks.

Those risks were only lowered if the spirit beast in question had the particular bloodline already in the system and it was only a process of excavating and strengthening it, but if it didn't then evolution would mean the destruction of the spirit beast's body to form a new one.

As far as Yang Qing knew, obsidian serpents were far removed from the line of flood dragons, so the transformation would likely be an evolution rather than a bloodline excavation.

"The foundation circle could be the way they curbed the risk. Strengthening the body, slowly transforming and molding it so it's able to gradually handle the process.

But is the fire adler bear really this skilled or did he get help but if he did then from who?" Yang Qing wondered as he remembered that ephemeral trace he discovered by accident at the location with the inner flame mosaic flower.

"Maybe Meifeng may have some answers.." he added as he turned to leave the place.

As he made his way to Meifeng's cavern, he picked up Bolin and Haishi who both cut sorry figures especially the former.

He had deep lacerations all over his body, there was not a single part of his body that didn't have a clean cut that was releasing dark smoke.

The sight would make anyone wince as for Haishi, even though her injuries seemed lighter, they were nonetheless bad. A few of her wings looked to be hanging on by a thread and she could barely hover in the air.

They both looked relieved the moment Yang Qing appeared with a bit of resentment but relief quickly washed it away.

They were not strangers to being injured and despite how dangerous the circumstances had been, they had comfort in the knowledge that Yang Qing would show up if their lives were truly in danger even if they didn't know about the spiritual imprint he had left on them.

The resentment they had was because of how sudden it had been.

"You both did well.." Yang Qing said with an encouraging smile as he healed their injuries.

Of course, the two heard none of it but quickly gave in when they sensed Yang Qing's wonderful healing abilities. They felt like they had been the greatest massage in the world that completely washed any form of injury and fatigue from their bodies and even after he was done healing, the deeply satisfied and refreshed feeling didn't go away.

"At least right now you should have some idea of the areas that you need to work on and you can already feel the training you had was for naught, especially you Bolin.." said Yang Qing as he sensed around the area.

There were a few ghost blade mantis and other spirit beasts that had lost their lives. He could tell that the most were at Bolin's hand.

Bolin quickly nodded as he heard Yang Qing's words before he said,

"I am deeply thankful for the efforts you and Miss Luo Meili gave me.."

He performed a deep bow as he said this. The brief reprieve gave him the chance to analyze things clearly.

Before today even after he joined the Order, he would have never thought he would have been able to survive against spirit beasts as terrifying as the ghost blade mantis without his poison.

His poison was what helped him survive the green fog swamp. As a place filled with poisonous beings, and those with a certain level of immunity to said poisons, his poison managed to stand out amongst the masses. It was to the point that the black cosmos caiman had tried to recruit him over a thousand times and when it didn't fail, tried to have him killed just as much but he survived thanks to it.

Other than his poison he had no confidence in anything else. His body was small and lacked the explosive power common in other spirit beasts and his speed while he was agile it could be considered above average at best which would not have been able to help him survive a place as dangerous as the green fog swamp or any other place for that matter.

But today against all expectations in a place unfamiliar to him, without his poison he was able to survive the onslaught of spirit beasts such as the ghost blade mantis despite both sides being at the same cultivation level.

He still couldn't believe it. His body seemed completely different. It felt lighter and he seemed to have fine control of everything within it and the biggest surprise was his rejuvenation abilities. No matter how much the ghost blade mantis sliced him, it would instantly repair and he even felt his skin getting

tougher with every healing cycle. The blades of the ghost blade mantis didn't tear him apart as easily as they did at first which was what allowed him to retaliate back.

He felt like he had been reborn anew with a whole new world suddenly opening up to him. Bolin clenched and unclenched his front limbs still in slight disbelief with wonder in his eyes.

Had he not fallen into the Order's hands, would he have discovered something like this?

He couldn't help but feel exhilarated at how many more discoveries awaited him. Being dumped in the middle of nowhere with vicious spirit beasts wasn't as terrifying anymore.

"I promise to help you see and experience things you never thought possible.." Yang Qing said when he saw the fired look in Bolin.

Though Haishi still seemed to have some bit of wariness, she nonetheless had that intoxicated look one had when they discovered something they never thought they could do.

Yang Qing would help expand their abilities and scope beyond their imagination. Of course, part of the reason was for their benefit but the other was, the more powerful they were the easier his caseload would be.

"Haishi, Bolin, grow stronger, your boss here needs you.." he eagerly thought with an enthusiastic smile on his face.

The two spirit beasts, unaware of his thoughts, reciprocated the sentiment with gestures of gratitude and pride at seeing Yang Qing's smile of 'approval.'

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Cavern of the parasitic purple flower spore sycamore tree,

"Adler isn't good with plants not in the slightest. He is completely horrible with them. Of the many beatings he suffered from Lady Gild, a couple of them were because he damaged a bunch of her gardens.." said Meifeng with a perplexed look at Yang Qing's question.

Yang Qing made his way to her cavern with Haishi and Bolin in tow to ask Meifeng about the things he found in the locations she had informed him about.

"What about Lady Gild?"

"She was great with flowers and plants but I don't know about geomancy or the blood pond... maybe she might. She knew a lot of things.." answered Meifeng.

"Did Lady Gild also know the obsidian couple?" asked Yang Qing.

"Not that I know of.." Meifeng said with a pensive look as she tried to recall if there was an interaction between the two sides.

"But then again she was famous, so maybe their paths may have crossed..."

"The timeline doesn't seem to add up,.. she should have already left by the time the fire adler bear came to brag about accomplishing something, which should probably be the evolution of the obsidian serpents' daughter.." thought Yang Qing.

"And you're sure Lady Gild has never returned in the past 1,000 years?" asked Yang Qing.

Meifeng's words made it seem that it was less likely for the fire adler to have created the foundation circle.

"No, she hasn't!" Meifeng hysterically said.



"At least I don't believe so. If she did, then she would have come to see me...fire adler would have come too...the badger too... I would not have been alone if she was around.." she added in a low tone with despondency filling her.

Seeing her state, Yang Qing decided to change tact and shelve whatever questions he had and opted instead to have an impromptu celebration party with her, the diamond beetle, the skylark, the crescent moth, Haishi, and Bolin.

It started slow but with no time, the party was already in full swing with Meifeng dancing around the pond to the background of the melody of the skylark with the diamond beetle, the crescent moth, and Haishi flying around the purple flowers with the light of the moon reflecting of their bodies adding to its beauty, as Bolin and Yang Qing sang off-key to some songs Yang Qing was making up on the spot, horribly at that.

The party went all through the night, with Yang Qing, Haishi, and Bolin leaving midday the next day.

Chapter 635 Forgot Himself

Yang Qing let out a small chuckle when he saw the reluctant look on Haishi's face as they were leaving. She seemed to have formed a bond with the crescent moth and the diamond beetle more so the latter. He had no idea if it was because they were all insect spirit beasts, so it was a form of camaraderie among fellow insect spirit beasts or something else.

She did say she had been close with the green flowered babirusa and maybe her fondness for the diamond beetle may have something to do with it.

The diamond beetle had not yet awakened its sentience, and in terms of cultivation base it could be considered to be at the same level as a qi refinement cultivator, but even then, it had a significant build to it.

It was about the size of Yang Qing's head and would continue to grow the higher its cultivation base grew. By the time it reached the core formation realm Yang Qing had a feeling it would be about the same size as the hulking green flowered babirusa.

Yang Qing couldn't help but laugh again as he saw Haishi and the diamond converse in an inaudible language before they finally left for the branch.

After arriving at the headquarters, Yang Qing excused the two spirit beasts to do what they wanted since Luo Meili wasn't back yet. She and Su Jinjing seemed to still be doing groundwork on the potential.

Yang Qing had a faint shiver when he got the news. It had already been two days since the two left and they were still conducting the investigations.

By this point, he knew there had to be something there though some part of him secretly hoped they were slacking off. But he knew better, other than him, Feng Xin was about the only other person who would dare do that. Luo Meili and Su Jinjing were fastidious in everything they did which was why Yang Qing couldn't help but be worried about what kind of headache they would bring his way.

Yang Qing decided to block out everything administrator Mo Guang told him as he made his way to his study. He would pretend there was no case looming over his head up until he was seated in a courtroom bringing down his gavel but until then, he would bury himself in his investigation.

On reaching his office, Yang Qing decided to pursue the foundation circle angle by calling his family's old friend Alchemist Ma Bo. He filled him in on the details as he described every single part of the foundation circle he saw. With his expertise and long-standing cooperation with the Yang family, as they improved their body refining process, he could think of no one better to consult with on the sophistication of the foundation circle he saw.

After sharing everything on the matter, Alchemist Ma Bo came to the same conclusion as him which was whoever made that setup had to have at least a blue-grade level of expertise in alchemy, geomancy, and spirit beast anatomy along with an accompanying understanding of the human body refinement process.

He did add something after, which was about Yang Qing's suspicion that the circle was built in preparation for an evolution.

Thanks to his post as a guest teacher of the Jade Leaf Dao Imperial Academy and his deep fascination with the body refinement process, he did come across records in the ancient library of the academy

stating that body refinement had some effects on spirit beasts especially one that adhered to the foundation circle.

The effect though was it helped in unlocking aspects of their bloodline or making it purer. When it came to evolution he had not yet come across any evidence that suggested it helped with it and he too had his reservations about the effectiveness of the circle toward the evolution process.

As far as he knew when it came to evolution, even spirit beasts with a high affinity for the creature they are evolving to, the process was difficult, fraught with dangers, and had a high degree of failure and usually, for an evolution to even begin, a natural treasure of affinity was needed, without the whole process was moot.

Yang Qing felt like he had gone back to the beginning when he felt his theory being debunked, but Alchemist Ma Bo did promise to research it further at the Academy whilst also consulting other teachers with specialties in the subject.

Yang Qing decided to adopt the same method as Alchemist Ma Bo and contacted Ren Shu, Lei Weiyuan, and a few instructors from the Institute whose specialties touched on body refinement, alchemy, herbology, and spirit beast refinement.

In the process of sharing all he had, Yang Qing felt his spirits soar as a burden that he had been unwittingly carrying, lighten.

Yang Qing had a wry smile as he realized Hao Da's attack had affected him more than he had realized which made him act contrary to what he would normally do.

Usually, even when he dealt with things he was good at, he liked consulting others and bouncing his ideas off them, but when it came to Hao Da's case which had been a cloudy fog with nothing to clasp at, he didn't know whether it was some false sense of responsibility, guilt towards failing to save Ma Yuan's wife, but without knowing he had been going at it alone like only he could do it, ignoring what made the Order work and his life easier.

He didn't know about other places, but the Order had some things that made it uniquely different from other places, one of which was the invisible line between cultivators was absent.

A foundation establishment cultivator or even one who was at the qi refinement could easily interact with a palace realm cultivator while a core formation cultivator could receive the guidance of a domain expert. The barrier was not there, and it was one of the reasons for their meteoric rise.

Yang Qing had never been under the illusion that because he was a peerless jade physique user who had even managed to form a purple core at the core formation realm, that meant he was heads and shoulders above the rest.

There were a lot of terrifying individuals in the Order, like Chief Song Chuanli who despite being at the core formation realm, should he wish to, with his achievements as a gold-grade craftsman and botanist, could directly leap to the domain realm or the terrifying instructors whose presence is just as terrifying as a domain expert's or the healers of the medical valley that could restore even a cracked dantian and reform a body.

All around there were people with defying abilities, and Yang Qing at some point had forgotten about it as he tried to do everything alone like some sort of hero trying to carry the weight of the world on his shoulders. But he was no hero, he was a parasite who liked sponging off others while lying cozily under the shade. He felt ashamed for forgetting himself. It was time he acted true to his character.

With the sudden realization, Yang Qing quickly arranged every piece of information he had gathered thus far along with rising questions that came from said questions. Once everything was in order, he made calls to every single person he could think of who could help, which also involved informing special inquisitor Xiang He of the fleeting shrouded trace he had detected at the location with the inner flame mosaic flower.

What he didn't realize was because of his actions, he had unearthed a thread that had been wiggling around the continent from a long-forgotten past whose remnants still haunt the continent to this very day.

Gears kept turning in Yang Qing's mind the more exchanges he had with his colleagues from the Order. The gloomy fog was showing signs of light and possibly revealing what lay within it.

Yang Qing's eyes and grin grew wider and wider when he saw that it wouldn't be long till the mystery was solved, but he eventually met a roadblock and to progress further, it would need the accounts of a certain stubborn couple who were there.

"They should be back tomorrow, hopefully, their attitudes will have changed by then.." muttered Yang Qing as he thought of the obsidian serpent couple.

They were at the nexus of it all. They knew what the fire adler bear did to their daughter, they could maybe know who the mysterious partner to the fire adler bear had been, and they knew what exactly was done to their daughter for her evolution into a flood dragon to be a success, and through their insight, he could maybe find some clues that showed how the Blue Soul Flame Crow Syndicate even discovered their daughter.

But all that was predicated on them being willing to share what they knew and were not still laying blame on the Order and the Deer Mountain Kingdom for the death of their child.

But if they were unwilling to cooperate...

Yang Qing couldn't help but sigh when his thoughts reached this point.

If they refused to cooperate, then their souls would have to be searched which though wouldn't kill them would ruin their chances of ever reaching the domain realm because of the strain soul reading would leave on them. The more powerful a cultivator was, the more damage they took when their souls were forcefully read, and the couple being palace realm experts that had reached the seventh stage, Yang Qing could only imagine the damage they would suffer.

He hoped they would reconsider.

With nothing else to do, Yang Qing decided to take a walk around the branch as he wondered inwardly if he had truly gone over the effects of the Ice Emerald Sect or did he still have some lingering effects from the ordeal.

Considering his actions, he felt it was likely that he hadn't completely rid himself of it

Chapter 635 Forgot Himself

Yang Qing let out a small chuckle when he saw the reluctant look on Haishi's face as they were leaving. She seemed to have formed a bond with the crescent moth and the diamond beetle more so the latter. He had no idea if it was because they were all insect spirit beasts, so it was a form of camaraderie among fellow insect spirit beasts or something else.

She did say she had been close with the green flowered babirusa and maybe her fondness for the diamond beetle may have something to do with it.

The diamond beetle had not yet awakened its sentience, and in terms of cultivation base it could be considered to be at the same level as a qi refinement cultivator, but even then, it had a significant build to it.

It was about the size of Yang Qing's head and would continue to grow the higher its cultivation base grew. By the time it reached the core formation realm Yang Qing had a feeling it would be about the same size as the hulking green flowered babirusa.

Yang Qing couldn't help but laugh again as he saw Haishi and the diamond converse in an inaudible language before they finally left for the branch.

After arriving at the headquarters, Yang Qing excused the two spirit beasts to do what they wanted since Luo Meili wasn't back yet. She and Su Jinjing seemed to still be doing groundwork on the potential.

Yang Qing had a faint shiver when he got the news. It had already been two days since the two left and they were still conducting the investigations.

By this point, he knew there had to be something there though some part of him secretly hoped they were slacking off. But he knew better, other than him, Feng Xin was about the only other person who would dare do that. Luo Meili and Su Jinjing were fastidious in everything they did which was why Yang Qing couldn't help but be worried about what kind of headache they would bring his way.

Yang Qing decided to block out everything administrator Mo Guang told him as he made his way to his study. He would pretend there was no case looming over his head up until he was seated in a courtroom bringing down his gavel but until then, he would bury himself in his investigation.

On reaching his office, Yang Qing decided to pursue the foundation circle angle by calling his family's old friend Alchemist Ma Bo. He filled him in on the details as he described every single part of the foundation circle he saw. With his expertise and long-standing cooperation with the Yang family, as they improved their body refining process, he could think of no one better to consult with on the sophistication of the foundation circle he saw.

After sharing everything on the matter, Alchemist Ma Bo came to the same conclusion as him which was whoever made that setup had to have at least a blue-grade level of expertise in alchemy, geomancy, and spirit beast anatomy along with an accompanying understanding of the human body refinement process.

He did add something after, which was about Yang Qing's suspicion that the circle was built in preparation for an evolution.

Thanks to his post as a guest teacher of the Jade Leaf Dao Imperial Academy and his deep fascination with the body refinement process, he did come across records in the ancient library of the academy stating that body refinement had some effects on spirit beasts especially one that adhered to the foundation circle.

The effect though was it helped in unlocking aspects of their bloodline or making it purer. When it came to evolution he had not yet come across any evidence that suggested it helped with it and he too had his reservations about the effectiveness of the circle toward the evolution process.

As far as he knew when it came to evolution, even spirit beasts with a high affinity for the creature they are evolving to, the process was difficult, fraught with dangers, and had a high degree of failure and usually, for an evolution to even begin, a natural treasure of affinity was needed, without the whole process was moot.

Yang Qing felt like he had gone back to the beginning when he felt his theory being debunked, but Alchemist Ma Bo did promise to research it further at the Academy whilst also consulting other teachers with specialties in the subject.

Yang Qing decided to adopt the same method as Alchemist Ma Bo and contacted Ren Shu, Lei Weiyuan, and a few instructors from the Institute whose specialties touched on body refinement, alchemy, herbology, and spirit beast refinement.

In the process of sharing all he had, Yang Qing felt his spirits soar as a burden that he had been unwittingly carrying, lighten.

Yang Qing had a wry smile as he realized Hao Da's attack had affected him more than he had realized which made him act contrary to what he would normally do.

Usually, even when he dealt with things he was good at, he liked consulting others and bouncing his ideas off them, but when it came to Hao Da's case which had been a cloudy fog with nothing to clasp at, he didn't know whether it was some false sense of responsibility, guilt towards failing to save Ma Yuan's wife, but without knowing he had been going at it alone like only he could do it, ignoring what made the Order work and his life easier.

He didn't know about other places, but the Order had some things that made it uniquely different from other places, one of which was the invisible line between cultivators was absent.

A foundation establishment cultivator or even one who was at the qi refinement could easily interact with a palace realm cultivator while a core formation cultivator could receive the guidance of a domain expert. The barrier was not there, and it was one of the reasons for their meteoric rise.

Yang Qing had never been under the illusion that because he was a peerless jade physique user who had even managed to form a purple core at the core formation realm, that meant he was heads and shoulders above the rest.

There were a lot of terrifying individuals in the Order, like Chief Song Chuanli who despite being at the core formation realm, should he wish to, with his achievements as a gold-grade craftsman and botanist, could directly leap to the domain realm or the terrifying instructors whose presence is just as terrifying as a domain expert's or the healers of the medical valley that could restore even a cracked dantian and reform a body.

All around there were people with defying abilities, and Yang Qing at some point had forgotten about it as he tried to do everything alone like some sort of hero trying to carry the weight of the world on his shoulders. But he was no hero, he was a parasite who liked sponging off others while lying cozily under the shade. He felt ashamed for forgetting himself. It was time he acted true to his character.



With the sudden realization, Yang Qing quickly arranged every piece of information he had gathered thus far along with rising questions that came from said questions. Once everything was in order, he made calls to every single person he could think of who could help, which also involved informing special inquisitor Xiang He of the fleeting shrouded trace he had detected at the location with the inner flame mosaic flower.

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Chapter 637 Deciding On The King's Grandfather

The trio had a hearty meal, with the two siblings being shocked at the level of skill of the chef. They had assumed Yang Qing to be bragging, but the level of skill shown by the chef had surpassed the ones shown by their chefs. It was to the point that it prompted the third prince to inquire if there was a way for him to rope in some chefs from the White Baobab Kingdom.

Yang Qing and the chef exchanged a smile before they said he could try. The third prince read enough to know it wouldn't be easy.

Yang Qing saw the third prince still held intentions of trying and he wasn't about to dissuade him from it by telling him how futile it would be because of the gluttonous king who would never take it lying down.

The rest of the conversation went as Yang Qing had expected which was platitudes here and there, with the third prince trying to cozy up to him so he could eventually be one of his 'connections' down the line.

Though Yang Qing had no intentions of doing so, he didn't outright reject him. One can never have too many friends, you may never know when you might need them.

The third prince easily read Yang Qing's olive branch which was more than he expected when he came here.

The connection attempt was more of him going through the motions. He had zero expectations that he would gain any form of assistance from Yang Qing in gaining the throne and was just making the visit and attempt so it could be seen he had tried it.

Perception mattered as it guided the narrative and he wasn't about to be the only prince who didn't attempt to form a connection with someone from the Order even though he had no expectations of it happening whatsoever.

Though he wasn't getting an endorsement through the olive branch and was just friendship, to the third prince it was just as valuable which was evident by how he left in high spirits when their meeting was done.

As if by design, after the third prince and his sister left, the other prince and princesses showed up later in the day at different times. Only the eldest prince and the Meng princess didn't make an appearance. The latter's absence could be understood as she was completely out of sorts during the meeting at the assembly hall due to the loss of her brothers.

As for the eldest prince not making an appearance, Yang Qing could more or less guess as to his absence and it was all tied to the king.

"He may not have the backing of an aristocratic family like the rest, but he has it where it matters, and if the king's grandfather gets well, then it's all but guaranteed for him.."

Yang Qing suddenly froze as he realized in all the running about he had forgotten about the promise he had made to the king and the Imperial Secretary about forwarding their case to the higher-ups.

After seeing off the last guest, Yang Qing went to the gazebo that was close by and made his call to the Judicial Review Committee.

The moment his communication talisman connected, an aged voice that had a sagely undertone to it, sounded.

"Yang Qing, I hear you've been quite busy in your role as the branch chief. From the reports we've received, we hear you have worn the shoes rather fittingly.. you're a man of many talents.."

"See...see...seenioor Long Enlai, what do you mean?!"

Yang Qing almost stumbled into the river along with his communication talisman the moment he heard the words from Long Enlai.

A soft chuckle sounded from the other end, as Long Enlai said,

"Why did you call? If it's a follow-up on the case, the evolutionary reports are still being compiled. You will have to wait a bit.."

Yang Qing had also roped in the committee in his speculations. Considering their insights and experience he would be foolish not to.

"No, it's not that. It's about the king's grandfather.." said Yang Qing.

He went on to explain his injuries and the discovery Ye Xun made when she went to drop off the king and the Zhang family head and his suspicion that the Blue Soul Flame Crow Syndicate may have had a hand in the exacerbation of his injuries.

"Their involvement may be plausible...mmh.... this may be doable. There is someone from the valley familiar with curses and soul attacks that invade the mental sea of consciousness or trigger heart demons. I'll ask them to conduct the assessment.

Yang Qing, the king, what do you make of him?"

"He seems like someone willing to do anything to preserve the kingdom even things he may not agree with, but he also seems like someone who once decides on something, will stick to it to the bitter end, despite the consequences..." answered Yang Qing as he thought on his impression and interaction with the king.

"Good, then being bait shouldn't be something unbearable for him.."

Yang Qing paused for a second before he followed the train of thought of Long Enlai.

"You intend him to continue playing along even after his grandfather's injuries get healed?"

"Yes.."

"To what end?"

"For it to be convincing enough to force the rats to come out to play, it would test the limits of what he is willing to endure.

Of course, ultimately it's his choice whether he wants to or not. We will still heal the injuries if we find the Blue Soul Flame Crow Syndicate was involved in the affair.

As for him playing along, this is only predicated on the collaborator being shrewd enough to cover their tracks from us to the point we are forced to play it out but if they're not, then there would be no need for it. The thread that leads back to them would be found soon enough, either by us or the king himself after all a local cat knows where all the rats and snakes hide within his territory better than a roaming leopard.

Healing his grandfather may embolden him to act. The only question is, is he decisive enough to act? and what lengths is he willing to go to.."

Yang Qing had a pensive look on his face before he said,

"From what I could sense of him, sacrificing his children is something he would easily do.."

"I suspected as much. I will send the person over today..and oh, the obsidian couple should be reaching there shortly, from the report given, they should have some clarity now. Talking to them should be

easier now. We will leave them in your care for now, find as much as you can before we transfer them to another branch.

Take care, Yang Qing.."

"Thank you, Senior Long Enlai.."

## Chapter 638 Revealing Yang Qing's Checkered Past

"It wouldn't hurt to have the death of his daughter checked out. Maybe the Shadow Hawks have something. That reminds me, I still haven't met the members of my network.

To think I thought life in the palace courts would be slow-paced.." muttered Yang Qing with a wry smile.

He chose to become a judge because he assumed it would be one of the safest jobs out there and he wouldn't have to do much other than sit in an opulent courtroom and pass verdicts on cases.

He had been disillusioned that it would be smooth sailing but it was the farthest thing from it. From the first week, he was swarmed with cases from dusk to dawn with little to no breaks in between.

It was from that moment that he hatched the idea of rapidly scaling up the ladders of justice within the Order. The higher up he moved, the less he would deal with.

He moved from the outer core courts to the inner core courts believing the situation would be better, but the number of cases was just as numerous as the ones from the outer core courts, then he moved to the superior core courts and he thought to himself surely the cases should reduce.

Yes, the number of cases reduced, but they became more complex and draining. In addition to working cases more duties were added to him as a superior core court judge. He felt he was worked harder by the Order as a superior core court judge than he ever did as an outer core court judge.

After that realization, he cultivated like a dog and worked like a donkey to ensure he would reach the palace realm and the outer palace courts by association.

He told himself, that maybe it was because he was still in the core formation courts that he still felt swamped, and maybe once he jumped to the palace courts above him, things would be easier.

He never tried to ask Dai Chen or Zhang Qinggee how life as a palace court judge was, or the number of cases they dealt with for fear their response might not be what he expected.

The idea that life would be easier at the palace courts was what kept him going, but now that he was here, he realized it was the furthest thing from the soft life he envisioned it being.

He destroyed a sect, got attacked by a soul formation expert almost dying in the process, and now here he was doing a job that up until a few months ago he would have never accepted for how dangerous it was.

Yang Qing sighed as he lay his back on one of the cushions in the gazebo.

"Now that I think about it, life was easier back then. I dealt with a dozen cases a day but they had no lingering surprises in them unlike now.

Maybe the domain realm will be easier.." he muttered conveniently ignoring that he had said that exact same thing when he was in the palace court.

"I'll have to meet them after I get back before I'm swarmed with unexpected things...." added Yang Qing with another tired sigh as he thought about the intelligence network handed to him by one of the division leaders of the Shadow Hawks during his induction after his promotion ceremony.

Yang Qing feeling too lethargic to do anything else, remained in the gazebo as he stared at the moving clouds above him which seemed to oddly resemble meat dishes and cozy futons the longer he stared at them.

Time quickly passed by with him drooling over the clouds and before he knew it he sensed a few familiar presences headed in his direction.

Yang Qing got up as his gaze fell on the four approaching figures. One of them was Mo Guang and he was flanked on the other side by a valiant-looking woman in red hair wearing black robes.

Between the red-haired woman and Administrator Mo Guong was a man and a woman who looked to be in their early sixties both with greying hair, similar-looking robes, and deep black eyes that glinted like a crystal.

The duo seemed to be fidgeting and extremely vigilant of their surroundings. Their bodies were tense with their eyes darting around them almost as if in fear of something suddenly attacking them.

"Branch chief Yang Qing this is..." the administrator had just begun his introduction when Yang Qing smiled as he said,

"Senior Fan Tao, I didn't expect it would be you. Last I heard you were at the Bestial Churning Sea."

"Seems like you know each other.." said Mo Guang with an awkward smile.

"We do.." answered the lady with a smile of her own.

"Seems like you've grown manlier since last I saw you, Yang Qing. That little fledgling clung tightly to my robes at the Blood Charcuterie Market town is now a full-fledged palace realm cultivator .."

Yang Qing who had already puffed up his chest at being called manly quickly deflated as a huge wave of embarrassment washed over him.

"Senior, you promised not to tell.." Yang Qing bashfully said as he warily looked around at the reactions of those present. The elderly man and woman were too fidgety to react, while Mo Guang was seasoned enough to contain his mirth.



"How's the weaver?" asked the red-haired lady with an amused smile as she saw Yang Qing's aggrieved look.

"Foul-mouthed, insufferably arrogant, world's greatest parasite, loathful.." Yang Qing rattled on, getting more heated up by the second.

"I bet he'd say the same thing about you if I asked him.."

"Well, he's a vindictive liar. Of course, he'd badmouth me given the chance.." mumbled Yang Qing which drew a peal of pearly laughter from the red-haired woman.

"I am glad to see you're doing okay.." said the red-haired lady as she threw Yang Qing a concerned but relieved look.

"Thank you.." said Yang Qing with a thankful smile.

The red-haired lady before him was one of the few instructors he wasn't terrified of at the Institute. She was one of the heads of the beast hall department.

They have always been close since his Insitute days, especially with her being a fellow glutton.

When Yang Qing wanted to visit the blood charcuterie market, she was the one who took him. Though she bled him dry of his merit points. So much for being fellow eaters.

Being bamboozled out of his merit points aside, when it came to spirit beast zoology, there was no one better. She was the one who helped him hatch the celestial nesting weaver and source the right materials for laying the skeleton of its nest.

She was also the bane of spirit beasts because of the inherent fear she induced in them owing to her taotie bloodline.

Yang Qing could understand why the elderly couple before him seemed overly agitated. Taoties could devour anything from the earth to the river of stars and everything in between. Anything was considered a delicacy to them.

The red lady named Fan Tao had a thin bloodline of the taotie, but that thin bloodline still had a suppressive and domineering effect on spirit beasts. It made them feel like they were about to be devoured which was likely what the elderly couple were feeling hence their behaviour.

#### Chapter 639 Meeting with the old couple (1)

The elderly couple in between Mo Guang and Fan Tao was the obsidian couple. The ferocious stubbornness they had before had been replaced by abject fear and paranoia.

"How come you're with them?" asked Yang Qing.

Fan Tao was a seasoned domain expert and her reorienting palace stage spirit beasts seemed a little beneath her even if one of said spirit beasts was showing signs of evolving into a flood dragon.

Yang Qing knew for a fact that she had killed and butchered a flood dragon once upon a time and the flood dragon was among a long list of terrifying spirit beasts that had fallen by her hand.

Her taotie bloodline may terrify certain spirit beasts but for those with powerful bloodlines, it's an irresistible tonic. This fact made her a target over the years but despite the target, she still lives. Part of it is because of the backup the Order provides, but the other is her terrifying combat prowess.

Her handling the obsidian serpents was like using a sword capable of shattering the stars to carve up a chicken.

"I was free and I needed to check out a few things at the Bestial Churning Sea. So when I heard the favor was for you, I decided why not.

You owe me.."

"I don't have any merit points to give you.." Yang Qing hurriedly said when he saw her mercantile gaze.

"Fine.." she reluctantly said with a light chuckle.

"Here.." she added as she gently patted the two elder's backs who visibly flinched at the point of contact.

"I kept telling them I won't eat them and they still don't believe me.." she said with a sigh.

"Can you blame them considering where you just came from? You ate in front of them, didn't you?" Yang Qing asked as he suspiciously eyed the red-haired lady.

"It couldn't be helped. One of the sellers had two arms belonging to an elusive fire dream octopus. Can you believe it?! " the red-haired excitedly said with an animated expression.

"ELUSIVE FIRE DREAM OCTOPUS!!!" Yang Qing instantly yelled with an agitated expression.

"Yes, and they belonged to one that had reached the domain realm.." the red-haired woman said with matching excitement.

"How was it?" asked Yang Qing as he swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

Fire dream octopus was in the top twenty of their delicacy list. The creature was skilled in creating illusions that were so vivid that they were indivisible to the real thing. When cooked or even when eaten raw, provided you had the mental willpower and soul to handle it, its meat could transform into every flavor you could think of and seamlessly blend them all together into one unique flavor.

That aspect earned it the name the 'flavor of dreams', an object of great desire among food lovers alike.

Yang Qing couldn't believe Fan Tao had stumbled onto two arms when even a whiff would incite a riot.

Fan Tao on hearing Yang Qing's question, closed her eyes as if savoring the memory of it as she said,

"Million times better than what you can imagine. I almost wept from the taste.."

"That good?" muttered Yang Qing with disbelief mixed with envy.

"You have no idea.." said Fan Tao as she opened her eyes.

"It's why I need to hurry back. If the arms appeared in the market, it must mean it was acquired close by, likely the Bestial Churning Sea. I want to try my hand at finding the main body.." Fan Tao said with a fervent glint in her eyes.

Yang Qing couldn't help but sigh in envy as he said,

"I wish I could go.." which he quickly swallowed back when he saw the teasing look from Fan Tao likely remembering how he fared back then.

"I could take you with me.." s

"No, nope, as much as I would like to, I can't afford the trip.." Yang Qing hurriedly said.

"But if you were to find it, would you.." Yang Qing mustered the most imploring look he could make as he stared at her.

"You know the answer.." answered Fan Tao with a light chuckle.

"What if have something to trade?"

"I thought you didn't have merit points? though even if you did, I wouldn't accept them.."

"Not merit points, I got something that I know is definitely worth a whole elusive fire dream octopus and then some.." Yang Qing said with a sense of poise about him as he recalled the wine given to him by the mysterious middle-aged man.

If the gourd was already so precious, what about its contents?

"What is it?" curiously asked Fan Tao when she saw his look.

"Just know it's something good. I can guarantee it.." Yang Qing smugly said.

He would have taken it out if he wasn't afraid the red-haired woman before him would abscond with it. She was shameless enough to do so. He would rather wait till she left, and transfer a tiny bit to another gourd and have her sample that.

"Fine..." answered Fan Tao as her gaze tried to peer through Yang Qing.

"You've really grown.." she added with a smile as she ruffled his hair and turned to leave.

"Take care little gluttonous tree.." she said with laughter as she disappeared.

Yang Qing couldn't help but smile wryly when he saw her still use the nickname she gave him when they first met.

"Wait I could have asked her to take a look at the foundation circle site, with her expertise she could discover much more than I did.." muttered Yang Qing.

However, he soon dismissed that thought when he thought of the exorbitant fees she would charge him for asking for her help.

Yang Qing soon turned his attention to the obsidian couple whom he led to the dream star tree statue that they had once been contained in.

"With what you have seen and experienced, do you still believe we had anything to do with your daughter's death?" said Yang Qing once the trio were within the world within the statue.

The obsidian serpent couple was seated on one side with Yang Qing opposite them, both sides facing each other beneath the fictional somber moon above them.

The couple seemed to be regaining some sense of self with Fan Tao absent, though they still seemed a bit pale.

Clearly, the weeklong experience had left an indelible impact on them.

"Who are you?"

The elderly man finally spoke.

"Just people looking for answers and retribution, same as you.." answered Yang Qing.

Chapter 640 Experience of the obsidian couple

A short silence ensued between the two sides matching perfectly with the dimming light of the moon.

"With what you have seen, do you still think we had a hand in the death of your daughter?" asked Yang Qing as the moon in the sky reflected perfectly in his eyes.

The deep fear that they had before was slowly ebbing away giving the two a bit of a presence of mind to think clearly.

The elderly man couldn't help but smile wryly as he eyed his surroundings.

"A few days ago this was a humiliation. Everything within me was roaring for me to break out of it but now.."

He paused as a flurry of emotions was reflected in his eyes.

"It feels like a safe haven..." he added with a dejected and terrified look on his face.

His wife seemed to share the same sentiments as the trembling of her shoulders had stopped when they were in the space within the ascendant-grade artifact.

"Are you a holy land?" asked the elderly man with slight trepidation in his tone.

It only took a day for both his and his wife's views to be upended. Everything they saw was enough to break any form of resistance and self-pride they had.

Seeing the blood charcuterie market town was already terrifying enough especially when they felt the energy levels of the corpses that were hung on some of the market stalls, for some of them it was so intense that they felt the urge to prostrate themselves to the corpse itself despite it being dead already.

The show and tell didn't just stop there, as their 'guide' the 'she-devil' Fan Tao took them to the Bestial Churning Sea where they saw a level of ferocity they never thought possible and it was only at the region closer to the shores.

They never thought such a place could exist. They had fought against other spirit beasts at the Deer Mountain Range over the years as they were improving their strength and trying to get the best places within the range, but their fights may have well been peaceful bouts compared to the level of carnage they saw in the Bestial Churning Sea.

Had they been dropped into there, they would have died in less than a day. The spirit beasts that roamed the area were absolutely ferocious. Some had cultivation bases that were weaker than theirs, but their presence and the air of brutality and savagery around them were enough to freeze the souls of the obsidian serpent couple.

They shuddered at the thought of what it would be like if they were dropped into that sea where those savage spirit beasts battled each other to death every single second.

However, the scariest thing they saw was Fan Tao who effortlessly captured those terrifying spirit beasts as though they were helpless chickens and she even instantly devoured a few of them that had taken it upon themselves to attack her.

After the trip to the Blood Charcuterie Market Town, and the Bestial Churning Sea, they were transported to another place that had been quite some distance from the Bestial Churning Sea.

The area they were taken to was a forest. It was quiet with a sense of tranquility about it and the denseness of the spiritual qi of the area was to the level of being cosmic.

It seemed limitless and dense. Not once in their lives have they ever been to a place so rich in spiritual qi that even the air around it seemed to be filled with ethereal colorful lights. They could even faintly detect numerous dao charms mixed within the spiritual qi.

However, that purple-blue paradise was the reason they flinched at everything even their shadows.

The forest was home to over a dozen spirit beasts with noble bloodlines. In addition, there were other spirit beasts though they lacked a noble bloodline, they had enough presence to completely make up for it. They didn't lose one iota to those spirit beasts with noble bloodlines which came as a terrifying shock to the obsidian couple, as bloodline suppression and deference were like like an inviolable royal edict to spirit beasts.

They were left in that forest for two days and were only picked up a few hours ago before they were brought here.

They were not attacked while they were there but the presence of the inhabitants of that forest was enough to suffocate them and break them in every which way. They dared not move an inch from where they were left.

They were even too terrified to use their spiritual sense or make use of the dense spiritual qi in the area, afraid that it would trigger the residents' ire. Not that they could easily make use of the spiritual qi in the area. They felt a boundless denseness within it, the kind that it would take them considerable effort and time just to absorb a single wisp, and that was without taking into account the effort that they would need to refine said wisp.

They could feel the gazes of those spirit beasts that carried their thoughts, emotions, and attitudes toward them. There was contempt, mockery, playfulness, and for the majority of the gazes, indifference.



Indifference was the hardest to endure for the obsidian couple as they could somehow see themselves in the eyes of those spirit beasts. Their worth was no different than that of the dew on a blade of grass, it was less even.

In the Deer Mountain Range, they could be considered overlords of an area, but here, they were not even deemed worthy to exist. That truth was like a hammer continuously smashing against their minds and souls aiming to break them apart.

They managed to barely hang on the first night. It was on the second day that all hell broke loose and Armageddon descended on the forest.

Dawn of the next day just as the sun rays were warming their way through the dense canopies, a roar that carried the wrath of the heavens thundered around the forest. The roar shook the souls of the obsidian couple that they found themselves down on the ground gripped in fear, screaming and yelling for mercy.

However, their pleas were drowned out by the roar. The roar stopped and its terror was evident for all to see as the skies above the forest seemed to be filled with flames of different colors that looked like they would burn the planet to a crisp.

Immediately after another shattering roar sounded, from a different spirit beast this time, but it carried the same grandeur and terrifying presence as the first one. At this point, the couple had reached their breaking point. The roar lasted just as long as the first one, which was just a few seconds, but might as well have been an eternity to the couple.

After the roar, its lingering effects created a stormy sea above them that contended with the different colored flames.

A third roar sounded, from another spirit beast, but the moment it did, the couple instantly passed out. By the time they came to, they were already in Fan Tao's domain space, being transported back to the branch.

Even now they could still hear those roars within their very being which made them feel like their souls were shattering and their minds collapsing.

