

Daily life 681

Chapter 681 Vestiges And Entrusted Will (1)

"What do you think will happen to them?" asked Su Jinjing once Yang Qing had arrived atop Ellie.

"Hopefully a better fate than the one they left behind. As long as they are not reckless, arrogant, or lose heart, they may very well experience a boon from it.

Wu Shen even without expending too much effort will realize his fist intent. It's only a matter of time before he does so, and when he does, even if he doesn't reach the palace realm, his reaching the quasi-palace stage is a definite possibility which should give them enough capital to eke out a place in the territory of the Diamond Body Sect.

Elders Ling Qi and Xin Zephyr would also boost their abilities. The former is a top-tier orange-grade alchemist and healer. Any organization would be in a hurry to scoop him up even rank 3's.

As for Xin Zephyr.." Yang Qing paused as a sympathetic sigh escaped his lips.

"She's a skillful sword cultivator. She may have not unlocked her intent like Wu Shen, but her sword qi has been cultivated to the tip along with her sword sense, and her foundations as a tenth-stage core formation expert are firm.

If she can overcome this hurdle in one piece and regain her confidence, then she has a chance of a complete reformation and may end up finding her path to greater heights.." said Yang Qing.

Su Jinjing nodded her head in silence as she wore the same look Yang Qing was wearing. Xin Zephyr was standing at a precipice. One side was a golden paradise that held countless opportunities while the other was a dark abyss that hid countless dangers. It was up in there on which side Xin Zephyr would eventually fall on.

If she managed to overcome the mental blow she had suffered, then her will would be reformed and strengthened which brought no small amounts of benefits one of which was tempering their hearts which would likely bud with an embryonic Dao form as a result.

But if her despair swallowed her, then the best outcome was for her to stagnate at her current cultivation base, along with her abilities never being what they once were. For a sword cultivator, having an unstable heart made one's sword dull. At worst, her despair will end up creating a mental and heart demon that will ravage her body from the inside, eventually leading to grave consequences such as qi deviation, regression, and or loss of her cultivation base, or worse she ends up losing her mind, rampaging and killing anything in sight.

Some reports of entire villages being slaughtered to the last man or some clan or sect getting fractured from the inside had been as a result of a cultivator who lost their mind to the frenzy brought on by the eruption of a volatile mental and heart demon.

This was why Ling Qi was surprised by the offer made by Wu Shen for both him and Xin Zephyr to join them as elders. The latter's state was evident to everyone present and if something very very wrong were to happen and she could not keep her mind in check, then the Flowing Fist Sect would be at risk.

"We can only wish them the best. We have already done all we can, the rest is up to them..." said Yang Qing as he ushered Ellie to fly back to the Deer Mountain Range.

Even without the presence of Ling Qi and Xin Zephyr, the atmosphere on the journey back was still relatively heavy as Su Jinjing and Yang Qing flew in silence, each lost in their thoughts.

"Jinjing, i'm okay.." said Yang Qing with a light smile on his face, and eyes closed.

He felt Su Jinjing throw secretive glances his way on the journey over. It wasn't hard to guess why considering the events that had transpired.

"Are you sure?" Su Jinjing worriedly asked with a piercing gaze trying to see through Yang Qing.

"I really am okay.." Yang Qing said with a comforting smile.

Su Jinjing focused her attention on Yang Qing's eyes. His eyes shone with pristine clarity reflecting the authenticity of his words. It was unwavering and unblemished hiding no lie in them.

After she confirmed that he was indeed telling the truth, Su Jinjing exhaled in relief as she said,

"That's good then.."

"Thank you Jinjing.." Yang Qing said as he gently patted her shoulder who smiled in return.

The atmosphere mellowed slightly and the flight back was relatively free with Yang Qing and Su Jinjing exchanging a few laughs and words as they made a game of the places they flew past.

It wasn't long before they reached the ravine that separated the unclaimed territory and the Deer Mountain Range.

Once they were a few hundred kilometers in the Deer Mountain Range, Yang Qing stood up.

"Jinjing, I'd like you to head back to the branch with Ellie. I'll try to search if there are any survivors by myself..." said Yang Qing.

When he saw the frown on Su Jinjing's face he hurriedly added,

"While Senior Ye Xun has likely scanned this place and ensured its safety we can't be completely sure of it. There are tonnes of crafty ways for those with nefarious intentions to hide themselves and their plans even from a seasoned expert like her, if the potential sacrifice in Deer Mountain Kingdom is anything to go by.

I can't risk you and Ellie being out here longer than is needed. For now at least.." Yang Qing said with an imploring tone.

"Fine.." Su Jinjing said with a defeated sigh as she ushered Ellie.

"Let's go, Ellie.."

"And boss make sure to take care of yourself.." she added as Ellie was flying away.

"I will.." Yang Qing said as he flashed and turned into a phantom fog disappearing into the clustered trees, heading in the direction of the graveyard torch.

Because of his yin-yang jade bones, his purple-grade art, and his affinity with nature, Yang Qing was able to conceal his aura effortlessly by blending it with his surroundings, and his sensory perception was even higher in such a setting.

Chapter 682 Vestiges And Entrusted Will (2)

Anybody below the domain realm would find it difficult to ambush him within the range. Almost every piece of vegetation within the area acted as his eyes and ears, and if by some bad luck, he was ambushed, he could guarantee he would not be killed in an instant. His Vitality Dao aside, which made him difficult to kill, he had a lot of cultivation arts that worked stupendously in such a setting.

His affinity aside, Yang Qing took out a purple talisman that contained the strike of a domain expert, just in case, and hid it underneath his robe with a sliver of his qi coating it for ease in instantly triggering it should there be a need for it.

After crossing his fingers for good luck and bad-mouthing Lei Weiyuan to cheer himself up, Yang Qing rapidly blitzed through the forest without leaking his presence or creating a disturbance.

He bypassed the territories of a few spirit beasts that were at the peak stage of the core formation realm with even one or two that were at the first stage of the palace realm, but none of them detected his presence.

Yang Qing's attention slightly drifted on the rush over when he spotted a few trees with their fruits already ripened like the sunfire persimmon tree or the diamond dew apple tree. He bypassed more and more, the deeper he went, his eyes shining with greed and his mouth drooling in response.

"No wonder the organizations around risk their lives to remain here despite the countless dangers that surround them.." muttered Yang Qing as he used all his willpower to resist the temptation of going over to pluck a few fruits.

His willpower was almost broken when he detected a couple of honeycombs belonging to the empyrean gold wasp, and silversilk bees. He could feel their intoxicating sweet aroma coming from them trying to ensnare his senses begging him to cover for a sip.

Yang Qing hurriedly increased his speed to escape its allure.

"Scary.." he said as he wiped off the drool with fear in his eyes. He almost gave in to the siren-like honey.

With an increase in pace, it wasn't long before he arrived at the general vicinity of the graveyard torch.

Yang Qing had never seen one himself, and the only descriptions he had seen of them were from books and scrolls at the institute.

Being here, he could finally sense it. Yang Qing had stood at a standstill and wherever he had stood, visually, wasn't all that different from other areas around him, but Yang Qing could feel it, just inches ahead, beyond the unassuming silent shadow moss or the ember glow laurel next to it, or the ramhorn birch tree, he could feel the vestiges of the spirituality of the spirit beasts that had selflessly given their entire bodies and accumulations down to their spirits to nurture the next generation of spirit beasts.

He could hear the presence of their voices, even dead, he could feel the breadth of their spirits which had been enshrined in the area, along with an ethereal grand power that shrouded that spirit.

Yang Qing recognized that power, it was the same power that had shaped his inner world when he broke through to the palace realm. It was the power of Dao.

The dao power and the vestiges of spirituality belonging to those spirit beasts worked in tandem to create a hallowed ground that seemed to affect the senses of every living being that came within an inch of that place.

Yang Qing wasn't sure if it was because of his personality, or if his physique had something to do with it, but the emotions evoked by the ground were immense for him, evoking a sense of reverence from him.

The more he gave himself to those feelings, he could hear those voices clearly and even understand them despite being a human himself.

"This squirrel ventured unfettered within this range with nothing but my hardened teeth and claws. I bet they could tear through dragon bones given the chance. Alas, my blinding radiance made most afraid to approach, which is how I ended up without a mate. The price of being amazing (sigh)..

Nevertheless, I lived free and unfettered without regrets. I bit through all who slighted me, I honored promises and relationships, I starved, I hid, I ate beyond my fill, and wasn't one to hide my victories. That was my freedom and as my last act, I now entrust all that I have ever had to some young ambitious hatchling out there.

Use my inheritance as you will, may the spirit of freedom continue.."

Yang Qing almost spat at how shameless that voice had been.

"This Silvermoon rhino only managed to reach the peak of the core formation realm. I lost a lot of fights than I've won, but my horn has always helped me dig a safe passage through. May my inheritance do the same for you.."

"The blades of the ghost blade mantis are swift, silent, and lethal. I was average among my peers but I had no hesitation every time I struck. I hope my blades can serve as a whetstone for another more powerful blade that can cleave through the entire range.."

"I had my leg and torso gnawed off by that foul-mouthed earth-carving squirrel. Whoever inherits my accumulations, all I ask is just smash those damn teeth of his.."

"I am the ancient sable scorpion, I don't know if anyone will remember me, but none of that matters. I leave my inheritance to whoever is fated along with a few words from someone who has lived a bit.

Keep your eyes clear and claws hidden but don't hesitate to reveal them when your spirit calls for it, even if the circumstances seem vastly scary or impossible. Denying what's in your spirit is a far crueler death, trust this old scorpion on that.

Lastly for those looking to venture out to the Green Fog Region, I won't discourage you, only make sure your will is strong before you step in there. I reached the palace realm and could fight toe to toe with Lynx, but when we reached there... no matter how strong I thought I was, my mind and heart weren't prepared for that place.

Waiting a little bit is okay, but when you take that step, please don't hesitate. I shamed the range with my actions, and my spirit fell along with it. I hope my cowardice body and flimsy accumulations will help the next spirit beast not to falter.."

Yang Qing stepped over the ephemeral boundary and walked into the territory covered by the hallowed ground. The voices grew both in number and clarity that he could almost feel their frames of mind before they enshrined themselves.

The voices felt more alive the deeper he walked into the place. The air was cooler with a solemnness around it filled with dusk-

like ethereal mist mixing in with the trees, shrubs, grass, and the ground.

Yang Qing absorbing the emotion and intent left behind, suddenly stopped as he detected the presence of a figure a few hundred meters ahead of him.

Chapter 683 Unique Birth

Beneath the sapphire crystal grove tree was a swan, a swan whose feathers were bathed in sacred white golden flames that complemented the hallowed atmosphere of the graveyard torch.

The swan was half the size of Ellie, but it was still larger than Yang Qing. Just one of its wings was enough to shelter and cover Yang Qing's entire body.

It had pristine white feathers filled with golden glyphs that exuded a purifying aura and regal look in its sun-colored eyes which were currently trained on Yang Qing.

"Human, what are you doing here?" asked the swan.

Its voice was that of a mature woman. It was filled with the same dignified elegance as her body.

"Second stage of the palace realm but with her abilities she would still handle her own well enough even against those at the fourth stage.." thought Yang Qing.

He was mildly surprised to find such a unique spirit beast in this place. The spirit beast in question was a celestial sacred swan.

The celestial sacred swan was unique even when compared to mythical beings like dragons, and phoenixes. This sense of uniqueness was in how it was formed. Unlike normal spirit beasts where copulation was needed, celestial sacred swans had no parents.

It was born out of a concept like how weapons and artifacts birthed spirits. It was birthed in an area that needed to fulfill three criteria. One the area had to have a dense and the purest concentration of the cosmic energy of the stars, second the energy needed to contain a trace of the origin power of those stars and third, the area needed to be pure, absent of the disturbance of violence for at least 20,000 years.

Even with all three criteria fulfilled, it wasn't guaranteed that a celestial sacred swan would be formed, as a hint of luck was usually needed.

From time immemorial, Yang Qing had read countless transcripts of organizations trying to rare one but few have ever succeeded in the venture.

But despite the numerous failures, most still continue trying because of its inherent nature. Celestial Sacred Swans were fiercely loyal, and when it came to abilities, they could purge and heal most curses, maladies, and even heart demons.

Their restorative abilities didn't just stop there, in one of the numerous scrolls Yang Qing had read, one of them said, that their heart, the sacred heart, was able to pull you from death and give you a rebirth.

The form of death didn't matter, be it a natural one from old age, or suffering a fatal injury that leaves your body destroyed and only a wisp of your soul remains. As long as one had its sacred heart close to them, the heart would be able to give them a new body.

The scary part was, that the cultivator would retain their cultivation base with a stronger body that was able to absorb cosmic energy from the stars to strengthen itself. They would gain some of the inherent attributes of a celestial sacred swan such as high vitality, immunity to countless toxins and curses, and the ability to absorb cosmic energy which was as potent as spiritual qi produced by a mature dragon vein.

Cultivators normally couldn't absorb it as sensing it was quite difficult and one risked ruining their body absorbing it without an appropriate body that was capable of refining the energy and the sacred heart provided just that.

Because of this, a lot of cultivators either tried to rear one, or hunt them, but they were few and far in between and even one spotted one, celestial sacred swans had esoteric abilities that made them sensitive to those who had malice toward them. Those abilities bordered on karmic precognition, as they could even tell it a minute, an hour, or a day in advance depending on their strengths.

This ability along with other abilities such as speed, and the ability to completely erase and mask their presence made them difficult to spot or catch unless they let you.

Per Yang Qing's unsupported guess, their population may not number more than 200 around the continent but out of those 200, maybe 10 or 20 would ever be caught. Their adaptability and rate of survival were among one of the highest.

Yang Qing couldn't believe he was seeing one in the flesh. He wasn't completely sure if she didn't choose to reveal herself whether he would have noticed her.

Yang Qing placed his hands above his chest in the form of a polite greeting his clan used, as he said,

"Forgive my intrusion, my name is Yang Qing, and I was looking for a few humans who may have headed in this direction.."

"Are they your friends?" asked the celestial sacred swan with the sacred flames surrounding her flickering slightly along with the glyphs inscribed on her feathers.

Even though her tone was still the same as before, Yang Qing could feel a palpable disgust coming from her.

"Not really, I promised someone related to them that I'd look for them, and here I am.." answered Yang Qing.

The celestial sacred swan stared at him for a while, with her gaze unmoving. When she felt that Yang Qing was telling the truth, she unfurled her wings, and her golden white flames burned with an intense radiant light that hid her entire body.

The light shone for a few seconds before it receded revealing a woman. The woman looked to be in her late thirties, with silver hair that gently cascaded down her back like a waterfall, reaching the grass beneath her. The silver hair looked like it had been fashioned from the most precious polished silver threads. She was clothed in regal-looking golden yellow robes that matched her sun-colored eyes.

With an unmatched beauty and a pure and regal aura, she exuded the presence of a banished immortal empress that would make most avert their gaze in inferiority and fear of profaning her beauty.

Her gaze focused on Yang Qing once more, before a small smile tugged at her lips.

"I am glad my guess wasn't wrong in revealing myself to you. Your heart remains clear, unlike the humans I've met before.." she said as her eyes flashed with interest at Yang Qing.

Chapter 684 Decisions Made (1)

Yang Qing was half tempted to pump up his gait and smugly take in the pleasure of being admired by a beauty and maybe even take a recording or two, but he immediately shook his head free of those self-incriminating ideas.

"Sad that I can't make a recording otherwise I would use it to rub it in Yi Jie's, Feng Xin's, and that bastard Kang Huilang's faces.

To think they dubbed me a shameless misinformed toad for saying I had the looks and presence of a fallen immortal. See, even a celestial sacred swan with all their unhealthy obsession with perfection chose to reveal themselves to me.

Mao Mao you've really lucked out having me.." thought Yang Qing with a smug look on his face that was quickly interrupted by the celestial sacred swan.

"Human Yang Qing, seems like you have some prideful thoughts there. I can't help but wonder what it's about.." the celestial sacred swan said with a slow but regal tone, as a dangerous smile appeared on her face.

Yang Qing quickly extinguished his thoughts as his boot-licking defense mechanisms kicked in when it detected the danger.

"Forgive me. I was just thinking this was my greatest fortune of several times to be in such a noble presence. Forgive me for lacking the composure to control myself," he said with a humble performance accompanied by a gentle inclined apologetic bow.

"It seems humans everywhere are gifted with a glib tongue. Most of the ones I've met usually use it to hide their vile intentions toward me, at least this time even if I detect a little insincerity in the words spoken by you, human Yang Qing, your intentions are not vile.." said the celestial sacred swan with a light chuckle when she saw Yang Qing rubbing his nose in embarrassment.

The embarrassment didn't last long as Yang Qing had long since padded his skin with countless layers. You would be hard-pressed to find anyone within the Order with a thicker skin.

Yang Qing's gaze instantly turned solemn, his cheeky behavior, completely removed.

"It might be presumptuous of me, but how do I address you?" asked Yang Qing.

The brows of the celestial sacred swan rose slightly in surprise at Yang Qing's swift change in demeanor.

"You can call me Gu Xing.." said the celestial sacred swan, with a strange flash in her eyes, which Yang Qing interpreted as a look of melancholy, one that seniors often used when they reminisced about old friends that they had outlived.

"You can call me Yang Qing, just Yang Qing is fine...Human Yang Qing sounds odd.." said Yang Qing with an awkward smile.

"Sorry Hu..I mean, sorry Yang Qing, just Yang Qing.." Gu Xing answered with a cheeky smile.

"I don't normally converse with humans that much, well not long enough to know their names. I normalized calling you all the same over the years and it has become a habit. Sorry for that.." she added.

"It's okay. So why did you decide to reveal yourself?" asked Yang Qing with a puzzled expression.

He knew she had already sensed him when he was about a kilometer away. Such a distance was more than enough for her to hide herself or even create an ambush but she openly revealed herself which was something he didn't think celestial sacred swans did.

Of course, he had never met one, and his assumptions were purely based on what he had read on some scrolls, but if the tales were true, then he would have expected the celestial sacred swan to exercise an abundance of caution towards the unfamiliar, especially a human cultivator who didn't look weak at that.

"Just a feeling.." Gu Xing casually answered as she took a seat beneath the sapphire crystal grove tree. Even just the casual act of just sitting evoked grace and matchless beauty capable of stirring the hearts of many.

Though it didn't work on him as his heart had already been set elsewhere, Yang Qing had to admit, Gu Xing, had an unmatched beauty and presence.

"Feeling?" asked Yang Qing as he mirrored her actions by sitting himself.

"Yes, a feeling.." Gu Xing said with her eyes shining with curiosity.

"I have never met a human like you..You have this smell and presence, it is like seeing nature encased in a human body. It resembles my body, so I got curious about how there could be a human with such a nature-filled presence.

From what I know of your kind, you're harbingers of greed and destruction.." she said as she picked some dust from the ground.

"Just like those humans who were here. They cared not of the sanctity of this place and contaminated it with their greed. Stealing the inheritance blood crystals.." she added, her tone rife with disdain.

"Is there no bottom line to what your kind will go to, to gain strength? Dishonoring the sacrifices made by these spirit beasts means nothing to your kind.

To honor those who enshrined their wills in this place, I killed them all, their ashes entombed here to atone for what they did.." she said as she dusted her hands.

"Is that so.." Yang Qing said with a sigh.

"I am sorry for what they did.." Yang Qing said as he solemnly cupped his fists.

Gu Xing with a perplexed look on her face asked,

"Why are you apologizing for them? You are not part of their organization, are you? From what I can feel and tell, it's not like you need these crystals.."

"I may not know them, but it doesn't mean I am not remorseful for what they did, especially since we are the same race after all. Some part of me feels shame like I was with them in the act.." answered Yang Qing.

Gu Xing stared at him for a short while, her golden sun eyes flashing before she said,

"You humans are hard to figure out. I wish there was more like you out there..."

With the heaviness in her tone, Yang Qing could tell she likely had horrible experiences with humans.

"Have you always been here?" asked Yang Qing in wonder. If she had been, there was no way the Hua Clan or the other members of their alliance, would have been able to get their hands on the crystals.

He even had doubts about whether whoever had fed the information to those organizations about the location of the graveyard, would have been able to know of the location without alerting Gu Xing to their spying.

The sensory abilities of a celestial sacred swan were powerful enough to make them even sensitive to domain senses.

A small frown appeared on Gu Xin's face as she said,

"About 800 years ago I detected an unfamiliar presence lurking at the boundary of this place. By that time, I had served as the guardian of this place for 11,000 years. The sanctified nature of this place suited me perfectly and the various leaders of this range, agreed to me being the guardian of this graveyard.

I have seen many things over the years, but that presence made my body shiver from fear and disgust. Like if I end up in that figure's hands, death would be the least of my worries. That presence was like an amalgamation of pure terror. I couldn't even tell what it was.

Knowing I would not be its match, I left this place to bring in reinforcements. I went to search for Lady Gild but she had already left, her disciple was already in closed seclusion, and other powerful figures that I thought would be capable of handling that presence had already left.

Left with no choice, I left the range in search of at least one of them. I knew most had gone to the Green Fog Region, so that's where I went.

I left a few spirit beasts to monitor the situation in case of any changes while also leaving a wisp of my spiritual imprint on this tree.." said Gu Xin as she placed her dainty masterfully crafted hands on the scarlet crystal grove tree next to her.

"The search proved unfruitful as the region was bigger and more ferocious than I could imagine, but luckily I didn't receive any report of the intruder coming in. But erring on the side of caution despite receiving no report I decided to continue the search up until four months ago when my imprint alerted me of several figures sneaking into the area and stealing the crystals.

At that moment, it didn't matter whether it was that strange presence or not, I rushed back to honor my role as the guardian regardless of whether I would lose my life or not.

I arrived yesterday, just in time to catch those humans trying to steal from this place again.."

Chapter 685 Age Of The Graveyard

Yang Qing's brows joined together in deep consternation wondering about that eerie figure.

"You said eerie, eerie how?" he asked.

Gu Xing's pupils flickered slightly before she closed her eyes, trying to recall the sensation and everything she felt that day.

"I can't quite describe it.." she said with her eyes trembling.

"Though if I was to find words for it, I would say it gave off the same sensation as you, except different.." she added as she cupped her palm under her chin in deep thought.

"Like me?" asked Yang Qing in confusion.

He had been called an oddity over the years but not once had he ever been called eerie.

Gu Xing realizing her words may be misconstrued slowly said,

"The familiarity isn't on the eerie sensation. In that regard, you're completely different. That figure was surrounded by a cold veil of death while in your case you're an amalgamation of warmth and life.

The similarity is in how you both seem to encompass different things into one. Like from you I can feel the vitality of the plants, the earth, the water bodies, the air, the star, the moon, the sun, and other living organisms all encapsulated within your breadth. I can feel nature's essence from you.

When it comes to that figure, it felt like different things were forcibly stitched together and transformed into one eerie horrific entity.."

Yang Qing silently tapped his knee with his index finger as he tried to figure out if he had ever come across something that fit the description given.

"When you came in, did you hear their voices?" Gu Xing softly asked as she opened her eyes.

"The ones of the spirit beasts who left their inheritance crystals here?" asked Yang Qing.

"Yes.." Gu Xing said slightly surprised even though she half suspected it, given the intense aura of life she sensed from him and also his reaction when he was coming here.

"Generally humans can't hear the voices, at least that was what I was led to believe until you showed up.

Spirit beasts can hear them, but for them to be able to hear it, they need to have already formed their wisdom pearls.

Without it, they can't hear them, nor can they make the best of the inheritance blood crystals left behind.

The voices are the spiritual manifestation of the crystals..."

Gu Xing gracefully stood up and gently brushed her hands against the scarlet crystals growing on the grove next to her.

"Not all spirit beasts can form these crystals.." she said with a deep sense of appreciation.

"Every spirit beast that can do it, was some talent at one point or another. They may not have a standout talent.." she said with her gaze meaningfully falling on Yang Qing before moving back to the scarlet crystals.

"But, they had talent enough to stand out from the rest.." she added while fiddling with the crystals almost as if she was playing a tune with them.

"The stronger they were, when they were alive, the longer their voices linger in the present. I think you could tell.." she said as she turned to face Yang Qing, with her robes swaying elegantly with her turn.

"Is she trying to seduce me.." wondered Yang Qing in a slight panic before he shook those nonsensical ideas which he hoped were true, away.

"I did.." he answered.

Some of the voices he heard, varied, somewhat. The variation came from the quality of the voice. Though they were all low, almost whisper-like, some contained a lot of life in them. It made Yang Qing feel like the speakers were alive and well, talking next to him. He could clearly feel their emotions, and even character through the others.

As for other voices, some while they had that spirit of life in them, it wasn't as intense for example from the voices he heard, the squirrel bragging about its teeth that could shred through a dragon's bone had more life in it, compared to the voice of the ghost blade mantis.

Then there was the last group whose voices completely lacked liveliness. They lacked life and emotion in them. They were too low to even make out their intent without straining yourself and they seemed to be just at the brink of disappearing.

Pulling a bit of her hair that was swaying with the wind, to the back of her ear, Gu Xing said,

"The stronger the spirit beast both in terms of will and cultivation, the longer their voice lingers and the stronger the vestiges they left behind."

"How long do you think this place has been here?" she asked with a sense of mystique about her.

"I didn't even know there was such a place here.." answered Yang Qing.

"If I was to guess, maybe ten to fifteen thousand years, at least.." Yang Qing added after a few calculations based on the number of scarlet crystals shining on the grove tree behind Gu Xin.

"You're still short, by one zero.." Gu Xin said, drawing a surprised look from Yang Qing.

"That long?" he asked.

"Yes, even one of the leading figures of this range didn't know when it started. During her time, it had already been there.." she said with a look of respect as her gaze fell on the grove tree.

"I was like you when I was first told that..." she said with her back turned to Yang Qing.

"The amount of inheritance crystals formed doesn't exactly match the duration..." she added as she turned back to face Yang Qing.

"This range is somewhat unique.."

"Unique how?"

"For a place filled with spirit beasts, it is not as violent as it should be. Not like the Green Fog Region or the Bestial Churning Sea.."

"You've been there?" Yang Qing asked with surprise.

With her identity and the number of powerhouses that frequented the place, even with her heightened sensitivity to danger and the ability to conceal herself, most of the frequenters of the Blood Charcuterie Market Town, would be able to see through her and capture her effortlessly.

These were cultivators who had made their bones fighting those ferocious spirits beasts habiting the Bestial Churning Sea. Dealing with a celestial sacred swan would be nothing to them.

Chapter 686 Clue From The Voice

Seeing Yang Qing's befuddled look, Gu Xing couldn't help but chuckle lightly.

"As curious as I am about many things, I would not step a foot there. I rather like living and having my heart intact.." she humorously said.

"Celestial Sacred Swans have a way of sensing and communicating with each other, including sharing memories. Whenever one of our own is born, we can roughly sense their birth even if we are continents apart from each other.

It's a vague sense, at first, but it becomes stronger the closer one of us is to the hatchling. When I hatched, there was a senior of mine who had been close and was able to pinpoint my location from the shared sense.

Because of our low numbers and the risk we are to your kind, a nurturing system was created. A senior celestial sacred swan would help a new hatchling familiarize itself with its surroundings.

Part of it involves sharing memories. It's like a way of sharing information, like how you humans do with those talismans or books.

It contains a lot of things that will increase the survival chances of the hatchling. It covers a lot from basic, to specific ones that I can't share, even if I find you unique.." she said with a slight smile.

"But among them, it covers dangerous areas we should avoid. The Bestial Churning Sea was on that list. The memories...well, they were pretty vivid and drove the point home.." Gu Xin said with a slight shake in her voice.

She had barely been a few weeks old before the senior showed her the brutality of that place. It left her shaking for years, but at least thanks to it, she had been able to survive the Green Fog Region, which was also another location on the list.

Meanwhile, Yang Qing's eyes shone in amazement at the system of the Celestial Sacred Swan. It wasn't written in any of the books and scrolls he had read. He was giddy at the thought of discovering something new that no one else knew.

His childlike excitement drew a peal of laughter from Gu Xing.

Yang Qing scratched the back of his head in embarrassment as he said,

"Thank you for sharing the information with me. If there's anything you need to know, I will freely answer it, if I can.."

"I will take you up on it.." answered Gu Xing with curiosity shining in her eyes.

"Now where was I.....ah, the uniqueness of this range. This range is not as violent as those places, despite the amount of powerful spirit beasts that are in the area.

Yes, there are occasional fights here and there, but it is not as widespread as one would expect, even amongst the lower-ranked spirit beast, which is something very prevalent in most places.

It feels more like a structured society, like the ones you humans have minus the deceit, insatiable greed, and hypocrisy.

Here you can see friendships spanning across species and cultivation realms. There are even overlaps in said friendship creating an interconnected web spread about the range. And those outside the circle, they're not oppressed for being out of it.

Those friendships have birthed a lot of couples.

Then there are also the ascetics, who like to relatively keep to themselves, secluded in deep meditation for years on end.." Gu Xing said with a sigh of admiration.

Yang Qing couldn't help but be surprised too. With the stories he had heard of this place, from the near destruction of the Deer Mountain Kingdom, Hao Da and the other staff from the Order getting injured and murdered recently, and the destruction of the Hua Clan, Xin Clan, and Moon Essence Cauldron Sect, he had dubbed the area as a volatile place, because of the bloodshed.

But now with some context and clarity, the retaliation made sense. If things were as Gu Xing said that the range was relatively tight-knit, it was no wonder they would retaliate so fiercely to anything that threatened that.

"Now make no mistake, there are spirit beasts here that revel in chaos, for them that do so, they choose to leave this place and venture outside in search of areas where they can have their fill of battle and chaos. This is why most leave for the Green Fog Region.

Once they leave, it's rare for them to ever return and those that do, are those who couldn't handle the survival requirements of those places or those with not long to live, they, therefore, choose to come back here and live out their days in the place they called home when they were young..

Most of these crystals are from them.." Gu Xin said as she gently parsed her fingers through the crystals.

"Whether from regret or a sense of responsibility to this place, they all come here and give back.."

"That's why the number is little.." Yang Qing said in realization.

"Those who manage to come back or decide to come back are few. By deciding to come back, it means they are either too injured to survive there, or their abilities are unable to guarantee their survival there.

The Green Fog Region isn't such a forgiving place that it would let you leave so easily..no wonder their numbers are small..

As for those with friendships or with partners, when their time comes, they would entrust it to their friends or living kin, than come here.."

"Precisely.."said Gu Xing in support.

"You must have brought up the voices for a reason? Does it have anything to do with the eerie figure you mentioned earlier.."

"Yes, yes, it does..." Gu Xing said as her voice turned solemn.

"While many voices from 100,000 years ago have long disappeared, there are some faint ones from 40,000 years ago going forward still faintly active. Though, they're now incoherent whispers..If you focus slightly, you can hear them.." Gu Xing said as she motioned for Yang Qing to try.

Yang Qing obliged as he closed his eyes to sense them. He erased the clear ones and the mildly clear ones, as his focus was spread on those that didn't touch on the two groups, soon he caught traces of inaudible whispers that sounded like gibberish cracks, like the voice of someone suffering from dehydration and starvation and were on their last legs.

Yang Qing activated the dao glyphs related to his yin yang jade bones, as his hair turned pure white, to try and sense more within those voices.

Gu Xing's eyes shone with surprise and interest when she detected the changes in Yang Qing, especially the dao markings that were shining through his robes. They were releasing a grand power that made her body tremble.

"Lion...grasp..... tyrant.... live fly...."

With his dao markings activated, the incoherent mutterings became audible, though they were still scattered. After a few seconds of not getting anything other than scattered words here and there that made no sense even when strung together, Yang Qing dispelled his technique, to meet a marveled Gu Xing, who was staring wide-eyed at him.

Without meaning to, Yang Qing found himself blushing slightly from the intense gaze of the celestial sacred swan standing a few steps away from him.

"You're quite unique, Yang Qing.." Gu Xing softly said with a smile as she regained her composure.

His weak habit rearing its head, Yang Qing on reflex, smugly replied,

"It's to be expected..."

He hurriedly covered his mouth, secretly admonishing himself for the weak control of his mouth that kept blabbing things out without his control.

Luckily for him, Gu Xing didn't jump at the opportunity to tease him for it.

With her look turning to a grave seriousness, she said,

"One of those voices is from 38,000 years ago. It was from a lunar fury crane that had reached the palace realm. His voice is no longer present...back then he faced off against something, someone actually, a human cultivator.

The lunar fury crane, despite being stronger and having the advantage from the major parts of the fight, lost suddenly from a move from that human. The way he described that attack, it matched the sensation I felt from the figure.

His last words were a warning to anyone who would listen about being wary of that human. While I may not know the identity of that human, I have a few guesses on their identity.

38,000 years ago was roughly the time the founders of that kingdom came here, the Deer Mountain Kingdom.."

Chapter 687 Foreboding

"Deer Mountain Kingdom?" asked Yang Qing with a flabbergasted expression.

"You're sure?" he added.

Gu Xing paused slightly to gather her thoughts together before she said,

"I am not completely certain but the timeline warrants them to be considered a suspect at the very least.

They have been the only humans known to have created a foothold in this place. Because of the bounty of this place, they were not the only ones who tried to conquer this area over the years or tried to create a little place for themselves here.

But in all this time, only they have been able to create a kingdom in this place. Of course, various factors went into play, such as not many spirit beasts cared much about the territory they chose except for those that had settled close to that area.

The area experienced infrequent spatial storms and a tidal change in the quality of the spiritual qi, which made it an inconvenient place for spirit beasts to live. It was left unoccupied because of that reason.."

Yang Qing frowned as he interjected,

"Really? I've been there and the whole territory from the border to the capital is rich in resources and the quality of spiritual qi. I also didn't detect any signs of a spatial storm ever happening in the area, nor are there any records that say so.

Are you sure it's the same place or maybe some territory they held before they moved to where they are today?"

"No, it's the same place.." succinctly said Gu Xing.

"I was told by one of the senior leaders of this place, that the transformation of the area had something to do with some treasures they found. The place was rumored to harbor the ruins of some powerful organization.

Before the Deer Mountain Kingdom settled there, there had been several spirit beasts that ventured into the area to explore the ruins. That senior had been one of them. Though her exploration didn't reveal too much, she did find a few trinkets here and there, that suggested the area once housed some organization,

The few objects she had gathered suggested that the organization was an empire, the Bi Xie Empire..."

"Bi Xie Empire.." absentmindedly muttered Yang Qing as he tried to recall if he had ever heard of an Empire by that name. He soon shook his head, when he realized he didn't know it.

"The senior you're talking about is it Lady Gild?" curiously asked Yang Qing.

Gu Xing's pupils flickered slightly as she asked,

"You know her?"

"No, not really. I know someone with a close relationship with her.." Yang Qing said as he shook his head sideways.

"Adler?.. but no, Adler doesn't like humans that much. I doubt he would talk to them about his master. With the same breadth he liked annoying her, he idolized her just as much. No way he'd speak to a human about her..."

Is it the badger?" she asked after some thought.

"No, it was Meifeng.." answered Yang Qing before he added,

"The parasitic purple flower spore sycamore tree.."when he saw the confusion on Gu Xing's face.

"Her?" she said with surprise.

"How is she? Gild raved about her constantly, especially when she unlocked her spirituality. She treated her like her daughter..." Gu Xing said with a nostalgic smile on her face.

"How did she reveal Gild to you? Her devotion to Gild is as high as the bear's and she has a wary personality, especially around unfamiliar people...Though it has been a few thousand years since I saw her.."

"We are good friends.." answered Yang Qing with a smile as he went on to describe his interaction with Meifeng from how they met to their interactions after.

Gu Xing's eyes flashed with sympathy and slight guilt as she said,

"I've grown accustomed to solitude so much that I assumed others were the same. I didn't know she was struggling this much with it.."

"As much as we enjoy our company, we do need interactions with others here and there, no matter the form it takes. Isn't that why, you revealed yourself? Curiosity may have played a part, but it wasn't just that.." said Yang Qing.

"It is.." Gu Xing said with a tone of introspection.

"But she's okay now, i left with a few friends of mine to keep her company.." said Yang Qing in an effort to cheer Gu Xing up, whose look suggested she felt a little guilty for Meifeng's circumstances.

"Thank you, Yang Qing. She may not even remember me, since it's been so long since I saw her, but she mattered a lot to Gild, to whom I owe so much. I should have watched out for her in Gild's stead.." Gu Xing said in reproach.

Yang Qing unsure of how to comfort her decided to change the subject bringing the focus back to what they were discussing before.

"So I take it Lady Gild guessed that the Deer Mountain Kingdom found something that helped them stabilize the area and transform it into what it is today?"

"Mmmh, that was her guess. She warned other spirit beasts from going to that area because of it. She had explored that area for quite some time but never found anything, but the founders of the kingdom were able to do so. It showed that their abilities were not simple. In addition, those few trinkets she found lying around, even though they had long stopped functioning, the design and the materials showed that the Bi Xie Empire was pretty powerful in its heyday.

If those founders really did manage to find the core legacies of that Empire, then whatever they found was sure to be powerful enough to threaten their lives. She therefore advocated caution.

Gild had many admirable qualities, and her tolerance and accommodation of others is one of them, but I can't help but feel that her warning indirectly contributed to the war that happened back then.

She was well respected all around by most of the spirit beasts, especially the powerful ones. Of course, when she asked them to avoid the Kingdom, they did exactly just that and kept to themselves.

That tolerance had likely emboldened the Kingdom giving them the misconception that they were feared and could therefore try their hand at dominating this entire range.

I can't help but think had she not warned them and let them attack the kingdom in its infancy stage as they had planned, maybe the bloodshed that had overrun this place would not have happened..." she said with a sigh.

"This place seems to be turning more and more into the Bestial Churning Sea. One of the reasons I chose to settle in this place was because of this torch and the tranquility of the range. But now, it's constant battles, thievery and I don't know why, but from the moment I came back, I keep feeling this dread, as if something terrifying is about to befall this place.." Gu Xing said with worry in her tone.

Chapter 687 Foreboding

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Chapter 689 Trade

"You shouldn't have.. the earlier one would have been okay even if it only lasted a few months. That would have been enough.." Yang Qing said with a bitter smile.

Blood essence was precious to a spirit beast, it was like him slicing up a bit of his soul essence from his body. Though it wouldn't affect him greatly, it would take time to replace and restore the missing soul essence.

The same applied to Gu Xing. Sacrificing that drop of her blood essence, was like sacrificing a few months of her cultivation.

"It's okay, though if you feel guilty about it, you can repay it with something similar and use it on the scarlet grove tree. I feel it would benefit from your intervention which will more than repay what I've spent.

I've made improvements over the years thanks to it.." Gu Xing said with a soft smile.

Yang Qing stared at her for a short moment before nodding his head and moving toward the tree.

Spring of resplendence

He circulated his cultivation to its fullest and combined its force with his yin-yang jade physique to create the purest drop of spring of resplendence he could create.

A gentle flood of life aura was produced from his fingertip as the vital essence of nature itself was interwoven within the droplet. It took two minutes before the drop was fully formed. A green-blue drop with multitudinous lights actively swirling within it covered with a slight purple smoke.

Gu Xing's eyes widened as she felt the energy within that drop. She had only asked for a trade-in jest. The blood essence she used wasn't much of a loss for her as she could replenish in it in a week and her helping Yang Qing was also a way of helping herself. If it could help trace the eerie figure the better it was for her, the more at peace it would be.

But the droplet in Yang Qing's hands, she could feel the energy and profundity within it was much more than the energy contained in the cosmic energy of the stars. It could replenish her blood essence instantly if she was to consume it and leave room for more.

"I hope you're not looking for me to be your dao companion. Not that I would mind, you are not bad, by human standards at least, but I would be unable to give you offspring. Our kind is unable to have children, like some natural order that prevents it.." Gu Xing hesitantly said with a low voice.

The drop in Yang Qing's hands almost collapsed with his sudden lapse in concentration and the agitation brought forth by Gu Xing's statement.

"What are you saying?! I don't want you to be my dao companion.." Yang Qing hurriedly said as he warily turned around as if afraid someone had overheard them.

On seeing the look Gu Xing was giving him like she didn't buy it, Yang Qing said,

"It doesn't cost me much to produce this drop, if I wanted to I could produce 500 of them matching in quality and purity without breaking a sweat.

I am doing this not only to repay you but also to make up for what they did. I know you were not serious when you asked for the repayment but I intended to do this before I left. The reason you revealed yourself wasn't it because of the tree, or more specifically the crystals?" asked Yang Qing with a knowing smile which made Gu Xing look away.

"Sensing my nature, you must have guessed I could prolong their longevity, right?" he asked.

"Mmh.." Gu Xing said with a slight nod.

"I did think that and thought I could trade something with you, but your abilities went beyond what I could imagine. I realized I would have nothing of equal to trade...I don't want to take advantage..." she softly said.

"The urn is more than enough payment, trust me on that. It has enormous value to me," Yang Qing solemnly said with clear eyes.

Gu Xing stared at Yang Qing for a while trying to see any sense of falsehood and when she couldn't, she had no choice but to nod her head.

Yang Qing smiled in return as he poured the drop onto the scarlet crystal grove tree whose leaves shook in excitement the closer the drop was to its body.

Once the drop made contact, a green-blue membrane flashed on every part of its body, disappearing just as fast. The grove tree stood at 10 meters but the moment the drop entered its body, it instantly

burst to a height of 50 meters with countless branches and leaves appearing over its body that it looked like 10 trees had been combined into one.

The height continued to increase until it reached 200 meters before it started shrinking back till it was finally back to the 10-

meter height it was before.

The scarlet crystal grove underwent a profound transformation as its back turned pure white, with the leaves transforming into a shade of green and blue. The leaves released a soothing and rejuvenating essence that pervaded the entire area, while the tree itself seemed to be shrouded with a harmonious aura that carried the source of nature itself which in turn affected the vegetation around it, and the crystals that were within it.

All the crystals now shone with a radiant red color that seemed to pulse with the rhythm of life.

The voices that sounded like faint whispers from before were now full of life and the qualities all matched. Each and every voice was clear, and rich in life and character.

"Thank you, Yang Qing.." Gu Xing said in a soft tone that was almost like a whisper but contained intense emotions within. The intense emotions were of gratitude.

"You're welcome.." Yang Qing said as he felt his heart lighten when he saw the radiant light within which the scarlet crystals shone.

Even though it wasn't his debt to pay, doing so made him feel like a knot in his heart and mind had been released.

Chapter 690 Key To The Soul Formation Realm?

Yang Qing could feel something stir within him. He could feel everything within him from his soul to his body to his internal palace realm, slowly transform as some grand formless power continuously cleansed him from the inside out. He could feel his thoughts clear up, and a great elevation in his sense of self.

Yang Qing could instantly tell what was the source of the transformation, it was his Dao. Something within it had been activated with his act. Some of the profound truths and power contained within it had been triggered by his actions and were now baptizing and transforming his body.

Yang Qing closed out all his senses as he focused his entirety on the presence of his Dao. For one to break through to the palace realm they needed to grasp a form of Dao which they would then use as the key to open the doors of the palace realm. Once inside, the amount of Dao they have grasped would be used as the material and foundation to build their internal realm.

From that moment forth, the improvement of their cultivation base would be dependent on them digging deeper and deeper into the profundities of their own Dao. The more profound truths and mysterious secrets of their Dao they grasp and absorb, the more their cultivation improves. It was the only way to grow their cultivation base.

Though Yang Qing's cultivation didn't improve, he felt he had a finer control of his abilities, and everything from his soul, to his qi, to his body and internal palace world seemed to have been made more compact and purer. The power contained within his body seemed to have experienced a slight increase as the level of the mysteries and profundities contained within the vitality dao had increased within him.

Countless ideas and thoughts came rushing into his mind from the increase. Some were new ideas and concepts that he had not yet thought of, while others were scattered thoughts that he had over the years and could not make sense of.

Just as Yang Qing was wondering where to start, he felt a gentle power flood his body. The power seemed to soften the energy contained within those ideas and concepts that continuously flooded his mind into a form that was easily absorbable to Yang Qing. Though Yang Qing would have still been able to harvest something from those concepts and ideas and use it to transform himself and grow his strength, the gentle force hastened that process by aiding his ability to quickly grasp and digest the insights contained within those ideas and mysterious truths.

"Thank you.." Yang Qing gently said with a soft smile.

From the moment that gentle force covered his body, he could already tell its source. It had come from the scarlet crystal grove tree, more specifically the crystals themselves. He could feel the ethereal power being released from those crystals which then slowly covered his body like he was surrounded by warm sunlight.

The interaction between the ethereal power, himself, and the vitality dao growing within him made him feel like he was in a lecture room discussing dao with countless seniors.

Within the ethereal power, he could feel the individuality contained within it. That individuality made the power split into different directions heading to the countless ideas and truths Yang Qing had in his mind.

Yang Qing could tell the split wasn't random. The ethereal power was the amalgamation of the spiritual intent and vestigial presence of the spirit beasts that left those crystals within the scarlet crystal grove tree. Those intents each split as they went to the ideas and truths within Yang Qing that they had some understanding of.

They shared their understandings with Yang Qing which hastened Yang Qing's ability to gain insight into the truths and ideas that had come flooding into his mind. It was like he was having a dao discussion with them and in the process of doing so, he was deepening his understanding of the vitality dao.

Gu Xing stood dazed as she saw Yang Qing surrounded by radiant lights of different colors. They flew around him like colorful miniaturized swallows. Even though she couldn't quite tell what was happening to Yang Qing she could feel the changes happening to him as his natural essence got more and more distinctive and profound.

It increased to the point that even if Yang Qing was standing right in front of her she was struggling to tell him apart from the graveyard's environment. It was like he and the graveyard had melded into one existence.

She could feel the graveyard's environment and essence elevating because of that symmetry. It felt more complete and balanced out than before.

Before, the graveyard part of the graveyard torch was more dominant than the torch. Having stayed here for close to 10,000 years, Gu Xing grew intimately familiar with every inch of the place and had therefore been able to notice a few things here and there such as though the spirit beasts had been able to form the inheritance blood crystals, those crystals were always incomplete.

They were unable to capture the full essence of the spirit beast that left them there, which in turn impacted their longevity and the benefits other spirit beasts may gain from refining it. Hence the torch aspect was always lagging behind but now, she could feel the essence within the area and the crystals themselves grow.

With Yang Qing acting as the catalyst, the graveyard torch experienced a transformation and elevation. Forming of the blood crystals will now be easier, they will last longer, and the successors will be able to harvest more from the crystals.

Gu Xing even felt that the graveyard now had a chance to form the crystalized eight-dao petal flower, which was considered the ultimate gift of the graveyard torch. Despite the Deer Mountain Range's graveyard torch being here for over 100,000 years, it has never formed one.

The requirements for forming the crystalized eight-dao petal flower were highly stringent as it needed quality inheritance blood crystals, with a bare minimum of crystals formed from spirit beasts that had reached the palace realm and had a deep understanding of the dao, other than that, there were other factors required to work in tandem such as the area's ability to support the formation of those crystals and actually contain them. Yang Qing's presence had done just that.

Gu Xing couldn't help but sigh. Earlier she had only revealed herself out of whim because she found Yang Qing's nature fascinating and did indeed have the intention to ask him to help the scarlet crystal grove tree as she felt his essence could improve it, but she quickly realized how she had grossly underestimated how unique Yang Qing was, or powerful he was. It was surprise after surprise after surprise.

His actions would affect the spirit beasts of the Deer Mountain Range for thousands and thousands of years to come. With the graveyard torch improved, she had no doubt there would be more palace realm spirit beasts as a result of it.

When her thoughts reached here, she couldn't help but worry. Even though the spirit beasts of the Deer Mountain Range weren't the most volatile, their history with the Deer Mountain Kingdom had left them all with a distaste and intolerance for humans. She couldn't help but fear them acting impetuously against Yang Qing because he was a human despite him being the greatest reason for their improvement.

"But with his strength, I doubt he would have anything to worry about, but still, it would be disgraceful if they attacked him."

Gu Xing decided she would have to enlighten every spirit beast that came to the graveyard torch and inform them that the benefits they enjoyed were because of Yang Qing. That was of course after getting Yang Qing's approval.

Almost an hour passed by before Yang Qing opened his eyes with a satisfied smile on his face. Even though he was still at the third stage of the palace realm, his harvests this time were greater than the epiphany he had by the river at the branch. By gaining a deeper understanding of his dao, all his abilities were elevated, and he could feel, he had just taken a step toward understanding the question green cocoon asked him.

What was vitality to him?

Though the question had seemed casual, right now, he felt like there was some guiding profound mystery within it that he had not noticed before. He could now feel an inkling as to what Green Cocoon was hinting at. Even though his understanding was raw at the moment, he at the very least could now feel the breadth of the question, and slowly by slowly as he kept improving, the concept of the question would no longer be as abstract as it was, and soon he would understand and eventually work toward finding an answer to it.

Yang Qing couldn't help but be excited at what awaited him when he found that answer. Just grasping the ephemeral presence of the question had brought him so many advantages, he couldn't help but wonder what it would be like when he completely grasped it and answered it.

"Maybe it's the key to the soul formation realm.."