

Daily life 751

Chapter 751 Surviving legacy of Past enemies?

?Yang Qing remained unmoving as his eyes fell on the words he had written. He had only strung the sentences together to see if something would jump at him. Reading the history of the Bi Xie Empire, the scholar Long Wan said the Wang Patriarch had never forgotten what the crown prince said as he was trying to tempt him, a ticket to true ascendancy. For it to have stuck with the founder of the Bi Xie Empire for all that while, there may have been something there, but whether it had any relevance to the present era, Yang Qing had no idea and was just grasping at straws.

How did the Bi Xie empire meet its demise? He wouldn't have wondered too much about it had he not read their history. Even though they didn't have the real Pi Xiu beasts with them, Long Wan proclaimed the two statues more than likely had relations with one, them changing the fate of the Wang Patriarch was already proof that they were special.

A place so rich in resources and abilities, to the point that even someone from the Jade Leaf Empire admitted to being inferior to them in certain aspects. An area recorded to have been filled with the densest auspicious aura of golden dragon luck.

How did such a place end up facing destruction to the point that little of what it was remained to date? If it wasn't for Gu Xing mentioning it, he would have remained oblivious to the Empire, and if he didn't have his library clearance temporarily raised, much of its history would have escaped him until he gained the qualifications to read what was stored in the low tier orange grade floor.

"Long Wan said they had made a lot of connections, so even if what they faced had been beyond their abilities, surely their connections would have come to their aid or provided a way out for them.." muttered Yang Qing before he shook his head with a bitter smile.

"Or were they the ones that had a hand in their fall?" he added.

The cultivator world even the mundane world was filled with stories of the depths of treachery, more so for the former. Tales surrounding cultivators always portrayed them as ascetic beings who were indifferent to fame and fortune, other than deciphering the mysteries of the heavens and the earth, they cared for little else to free their hearts and minds from being tied down by the bounds of the mortal world.

However, it was all nonsense. Cultivators were the most greedy, if they weren't there would be no need for the Order to be founded or continually exist. There were no lengths they would not go to to satisfy it including betrayal. No matter how close the relationship, there was always a likelihood of betrayal happening provided the subject matter was tempting enough.

Over the years, Yang Qing had presided over countless cases supporting the notion. Disciples who plotted the death of their master because they coveted their master's legacy, a father who butchered his child because the child's internal organs had been tempered by their special physique and the father hoped to use the internal organs to improve his cultivation base, kings that betrayed the families of their loyal retainers despite there being an oath in place that spanned thousands of years, in which the king's predecessors promised to protect a particular liege's family because of a meritorious sacrifice they made, only for said promise to be dishonored by one of their descendants.

Yang Qing had seen countless such cases enough to last him a lifetime. He didn't think his suspicions about the Bi Xie Empire were too farfetched, after all, with how rich Long Wan purported it was, surely countless organizations had thought of seizing it for themselves. Leaving the flooded areas with resources aside, just the ability to increase the chances of surviving a tribulation is enough to tempt the greed and envy of countless cultivators.

Out of curiosity, Yang Qing willed his mind, calling out information about particular topics.

"Information on the fall of the Bi Xie Empire.."

"All information surrounding organizations that had a good relationship with the Bi Xie Empire.."

"Any and all information about the Sky Rendering Sword Sect.."

Yang Qing waited for a few seconds before he smiled wryly as he said,

"Figures.."

None of what he asked for came, which he had expected, though, he would be lying if he said some part wasn't hoping for it to succeed. f(r)eeweb(n)ovel

"I am better off trying my luck at the cultivation market.." he added as he remembered the strange tablet he got from the place that ended up being something that was tied to the blue fairy race, a race that he knew next to nothing, but said race held the same esteem as the phoenix or the dragon race in that they were direct descendants to the ancients.

For one reason or another, he couldn't access certain information which could either be because the information was missing or it was being deliberately restricted by the Order, and if his guess was right, he could only access said information when he reached a particular level, as to what level, Yang Qing felt it was likely when he became a domain expert, because it was at that level that he would meet one of the requirements of having access of the gold floors, which he felt likely held such information, or maybe it was held in the infamous purple floor and if it was, he could forget accessing the information any time soon.

If he wanted to find out anything within the realms of his humble strength and abilities then his best bet was to try his luck at the cultivation market and hopefully stumble onto some object, a diamond buried in the rough that hid some mystery and information within it. He couldn't help but feel giddy about his next visit.

What mysterious object would he stumble onto? He couldn't wait, however, all that would have to wait.

Yang Qing forcibly calmed himself as he gazed back at the map, specifically the territory of the Deer Mountain Kingdom, and the sacred graveyard of torches.

After alternating his gaze between the two places, Yang Qing took out the urn he had been given by Gu Xing which contained the voice of the lunar fury heron that they both suspected had interacted with the figure that had once filled Gu Xing with dread when they lingered outside the sacred graveyard torch.

Yang Qing became very attentive as he listened to the description the heron made, slowly visualizing it in his mind. He replayed the urn almost over a dozen times before he was satisfied.

With the luminescent charcoal still in his hands, he started jotting down a few things on one of the blank parts on the map that housed the territory of the Deer Mountain Kingdom.

"Eyes swirling with dread that can break the mind of even a lunar fury heron, a spirit beast known for having a powerful soul suggests the perpetrator's ability to befuddle the mind is high. If it was done via a

cultivation art, for it to have such an effect on the heron at the very least it needs to be at the blue grade and the perpetrator's mastery of it needs to have reached perfection.

Points of focus:

- *cultivation art that targets the soul and mind that are at the blue grade and above

- * Inherited and acquired physiques known to create an ocean filled with endless wails and dread. Spirit beasts and spiritual plants can also be included in this.

- *Sects, clans, and other organizations known for such characteristics in their attacks, be it through cultivation art, special physique, a combination of both, or through an artifact..."

Yang Qing put the charcoal down as he looked down at the list to see if he had missed anything. As the gears in his head constantly turned with countless ideas and possibilities flooding his mind, his gaze inadvertently fell to the middle of the parchment where the name of the Bi Xie empire lay in bold.

"Could there have been remnants of that battle back then that survived..." he muttered as he tapped on the charcoal with his index finger which he then picked and wrote something on the part that was close to the sacred graveyard torch.

Hua Clan, Xin Clan, Flowing fist sect, Moon essence cauldron sect..

"If things went as planned and they ended up joining the Deer Mountain Kingdom, a battle would have soaked the entire kingdom which is what I suspect the mastermind was after in the first place.

All those corpses would be ripe for the purgatory flames of damnation that the purgatory black tiger cult used back then. Could the mastermind be a survivor of that cult? But from what Long Wan said everybody of importance died in the kingdom, and I doubt the Wang Patriarch after coming to power would have spared any remnants of that cult.

If I was in his shoes, I would not ..."

Yang Qing furrowed his brows as he pressed his lips together.

"Maybe a few survived and went underground and spread their legacy which somehow survived, and they continued covertly passing it down their inheritance and it has survived to this date.

If that is true .." Yang Qing paused as his gaze fell on the Deer Mountain Kingdom, specifically the capital.

"Then it stands to reason they would know about where the Bi Xie empire, formerly the White Mulberry Kingdom was located. Could the mastermind be from one of the founding families of the Deer Mountain Kingdom and their coming there wasn't due to some stroke of luck but rather deliberate?"

Chapter 752 Twelve Beasts Of Calamity (1)

Yang Qing flicked his luminescent charcoal stick a few times as countless thoughts and ideas flooded his mind.

"If one of them has something to do with the Purgatory black tiger cult, what would they gain from coming here?.." muttered Yang Qing with his gaze trained on the royal capital of the Deer Mountain Kingdom.

"I don't think there would be anything of value for them here. The Wang patriarch had already purged every trace of the cult in the White Mulberry Kingdom both before and after the battle ended.

I doubt there would be anything to find not unless the patriarch looted something from the corpse of the cult leader and kept it with him, but considering the heights he reached and the two statues, would anything the cult leader had even appeal to him not unless...."

Yang Qing paused as he narrowed his focus on the two statues.

"They could know about the statues that propelled the Wang Patriarch to the heights he reached and the entirety of the Bi Xie Empire after, maybe they are trying to replicate what the cult leader had wanted to do with the White Mulberry Tree in refining it with the help of the purgatory flames of damnation array into a form that would help him breakthrough to the domain realm.

Could that person want to do the same?" murmured Yang Qing as he held his chin in deep contemplation.

"But the statue isn't the same as the White mulberry tree. If it contains the true nature of the Pi Xiu, I doubt it would be corruptible no matter how damaged its current state...

The grade of the art wasn't mentioned. I wonder if the Order has any information related to them. It should help me with getting a clear picture of them.."

When his thoughts reached this point, Yang Qing instantly called for all information related to the Purgatory black tiger cult. He breathed a sigh of relief when he saw three lights flying his way. He had half-expected it to fail like it did before when he was searching for information related to the fall of the Bi Xie Empire or the Sky rendering sword sect.

He spent the next twenty minutes reading the pieces of information about the cult which left him surprised not because of what was contained in it, but because of how in-depth it was. He was expecting it to be scattered because of how back the cult existed or for it to be censored because his temporary clearance didn't cover it.

But it was the opposite, he managed to learn more than he expected about the cult, and in some sense in that twenty-minute read he felt he knew more about the cult than he did the Bi Xie Empire.

"Terrifying doesn't begin to cover that period.." muttered Yang Qing with a slight sigh of apprehension as he put away a scroll that seemed like it had seen better days.

Long Wan had glossed out on the activities of the cult. The cult had slaughtered countless cities in their heyday. Despite the chaos and mayhem they caused, their background was what kept them alive, and it was their background that made Yang Qing shiver. It turned out that the cult had been subordinate to a division that Yang Qing still found hard to believe existed back then, though it was more of him hoping it never existed.

The time period, and much of the information were unclear, but the scrolls he had read did mention that the Purgatory black tiger cult was rumored to have been one of the subordinate organizations belonging to the Taowu division of the twelve beasts of calamity.

The Twelve Beasts Of Calamity was considered an alliance of twelve different organizations banding together to form the Twelve Beasts Of Calamity. Those twelve organizations became twelve divisions of the organization and the scroll Yang Qing read that information from only had nine divisions named.

Each of the divisions was named after a terrifying beast and the author didn't expound on whether they were truly backed by those beasts or they just borrowed the name because if they were backed by those beasts, Yang Qing shuddered to imagine how the continent had even remained intact.

The nine named divisions were; Hun Dun Division, Qiong Qi Division, Taowu Division, Taotie Division, Tiangou Division, the Primordial Water Demon Ape Division, the Yong Division, and lastly the Zhuya Division.

Every single one of these divisions was named after terrifying mythical creatures that stood on the same pedestal as dragons, phoenixes, and white tigers and they were all famous for the ability to cause wild wide chaos and destruction.

The Hun Dun, Qiong Qi, Taowu, and the Taotie were collectively called the four perils.

The hundun was a mythical creature with six wings, six legs, and no face whose primary ability was to shapeshift into any creature it consumed. It not only gained the ability to transform into them, but their abilities and accumulations too. It also caused disorder and chaos everywhere it went because of just its inherent presence alone, tainted and contaminated an area with decay and dark energies that could even swallow the sun. An area contaminated by its presence would never harbor life except for another hundun and it would need the purifying flames of the phoenix or the cleansing power of the primordial parasol tree to restore the area.

Because of its corruptive nature, a saying was developed, better to face the wrath of the heavens than to have a hundun as a guest in your place for even a second.

The Qiong qi was just as notorious as the hundun. It too was a mythical creature whose entire body was cloaked in purple-

black flames. It looked like a hybrid of a wolf, tiger, and dragon with spiked bones that went from its head down to its tail, with deep yellow eyes that hid bloodthirsty mayhem and chaos within it. It was massive in frame but despite its stature, it had great agility that accompanied its fearsome strength.

The Qiongqi existed for nothing else other than brutal savagery. Every living thing that entered its sight would be torn apart, even space itself was not spared from its destruction. It knew no fear, it never got tired, and every feature of its body made it the worst predator one would ever face, as it used its horns, claws, and teeth to tear apart any defense, its eyes broke the mind and will of anyone who wavered before it and it could deduce countless daos with it, while its purple flames burned through everything and anything laying waste to anything it came across.

If a Qiongqi sets its sight on you even hiding at the ends of the earth, and in the sturdiest of defenses would not keep you safe from it, even if you escaped to the sun, it would still follow you there, destroying everything in between.

Chapter 753 Twelve Beast Of Calamity (2)

Just seeing those two names already set Yang Qing on edge much less the remaining of the four perils. The taowu looked like a mix between a tiger and a leopard. They possessed immense strength, but even with great strength, they cunning to the extreme, always choosing to place layers of traps before striking at an opponent. When a taowu targeted you, you would never know. They were expert manipulators and knew how to hide well, with one of their innate abilities granting them natural immunity towards all derivative techniques that relied on karma.

Yang Qing had once read about an infamous fiend cultivator who did everything deplorable under the sun from decimating cities to kidnapping and massacring victims from all over the continent regardless of their backgrounds. They could be a commoner or a prized disciple from a prominent sect, he never had any qualms in choosing his victims, though as his notoriety grew, he started to specifically target those from well-off backgrounds and tortured and brutalized them in the most agonizing and humiliating way possible.

Eventually, the parent organizations of his victims started targeting him using all manner of means, one of which was the derivation of karma, however, no matter which means they used, they could never find him. Years went by and his list of victims grew along with those who held grievances against him, till eventually from amongst his victims was a seed clan member who had been selectively nurtured to take over their clan which housed several soul formation experts. The seed clan member before her death had used a secret art that was tied to her clan's saint-grade artifact. Using the art, as long as the fiend cultivator was alive and remained on the continent, the artifact would be able to sense his general location within a hundred-kilometer radius of him.

The clan had relied on that art and artifact to track a peak domain expert who had killed one of their clan members for a treasure. No matter what means the peak domain expert tried to hide himself from the clan's pursuits, they still managed to find him and exert their revenge. However, despite the fiend

cultivator being at the early stages of the domain realm, that clan was unable to track him. The clan only knew the secret art had been triggered based on the reaction of the saint-grade artifact that registered when the art was used, who used it, and where it was used. It was there that they found the peeled body of their clan member and a note written in blood which was basically the fiend cultivator mocking them and taunting them to find him if they could.

Years passed by and they never could. No matter what they tried, it was like the fiend cultivator existed outside the bounds of reality. Every year that went by without him being captured, the fiend cultivator would make a showing of it by mocking them with the whole continent as his audience as the clan was pretty well known more so the abilities of the saint-grade artifact they owned.

Tens of thousands of years passed by without that clan ever finding him or the other enemies he had made and they could never figure out how he had managed to evade them. Some hypothesized it had something to do with his physique, others said it was a cultivation art, with others believing it to be the workings of a powerful artifact. Regardless of what it was, they all agreed that it was powerful to the point of making the fiend cultivator untraceable to soul formation experts and saint-grade artifacts.

The populace only came to know what it was when he died, which was one of the most ironic deaths Yang Qing had ever read about. The fiend cultivator blundered with one of his targets. He was always known for targeting those weaker than him, so as a domain expert, almost all his victims were in the palace realm.

One day he targeted a youth whom he found displeasing only because the youth looked too handsome. From what he had gathered about the fiend cultivator, almost all his victims had all been lookers, which led Yang Qing to think the fiend cultivator may have not been blessed in that particular area, sadly the scroll did not have an accompanying drawing of the fiend cultivator.

The fiend cultivator on seeing the youth instantly targeted him. The youth in question had the cultivation base of a middle-

stage core formation expert. The fiend cultivator ended up being burned to ashes by that youth who turned out to be a sect master of a renowned sect and was a soul formation expert who was just roaming about the continent. The fiend cultivator had chosen the worst target as the sect master in question not only was a soul formation expert but was one with a bloodline of the vermilion bird.

How horrible must one luck be to stumble onto such a figure?

Without suspense, the fiendish cultivator was burned to ash, with the only things surviving the flames being five crystalline objects that turned out to have been the claws of a Taowu, which explained how the fiendish cultivator had been able to hide so well throughout of his life, as to where he even managed to find such a thing, it died with him when his soul and body were reduced to smithereens.

As for the taotie, its abilities amongst the four perils were well known. A creature of pure gluttony, known to eat anything under the sun, including even the sun itself. Just like the Qiong Qi which could not control its malevolence, the taotie could never control its urges to eat.

One of Yang Qing's close acquaintances, Fan Tao, the department head of the beast hall had a thin bloodline of the taotie, which gave her an incredibly sturdy physique that granted her brutalizing strength and immunity to all manner of poisons, curses, and miasma. Even a poison flood dragon at the domain realm would find it hard to incapacitate her with its poison.

However, no matter how much power it gave her, despite its thinness, the taotie bloodline gave her a voracious appetite, which in its extremes made her no different than a berserker beast that had lost all its senses except for one, devouring, attacking anyone and anything in sight. As a domain expert, she had better control of her urges, but when she was younger, from her admission, she had caused no small amount of trouble for her eldest sister, Fan Ru, the valley master of the Medical Valley.

Luckily for her, her sister was a prodigious monster who pounded her back to sanity whenever her episodes and then nursed her back to health with her profound alchemy skills. Out of fear, and a huge sense of self-preservation, Fan Tao worked hard to gain control over the urges which made it easier to control the stronger she became, and luckily for her, the purity of her bloodline didn't grow with her, and remained just as thin as she was born with, a deliberate move on her part because if she wished it, the Order had ways of strengthen.

But even as a late-stage domain expert with a firm grasp over the urges, now and then she needed to visit the bestial churning sea to hunt. She still needed to consume something to calm those urges.

Yang Qing could only imagine how troubling it would have been for her if she had a dense bloodline, which was why he could hardly close his mouth and eyes as he read about an organization named after a taotie.

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Chapter 754 Traces Of Fortune In Misfortune

A single taotie was troublesome enough by itself, let alone the other three perils who were also handfuls and it wasn't just them as the other beasts listed were just as terrifying. The Tiangou division was named after the tiangou which was also known as the celestial swallowing dog known to devour the sun, the moon, and the stars, damning all to eternal darkness;

The primordial water demon ape, just like the Xuanwu, was an expert in the dao of water, however, when it came to the primordial water demon ape, its specialty was the destruction and chaos it could cause with it. There was a saying that every time a storm appeared know a primordial water demon ape was picking its teeth somewhere. Every natural calamity associated with water, they were always portrayed as the primary culprit...

The Yong of which the Yong division was named, was a creature with the body of an owl with a human face and four eyes. The Yong was known as the harbinger of drought. It sucked the life out of everything similar to the Hundun except unlike the latter which did so through decay and corruption, the Yong drained the vitality out of everything just by being in the vicinity.

And finally, the Zhuya, the Zhuya was a white ape with red feet which was said to be the red blood of its victims. The Zhuya was known as the harbinger of war. Just like the Qiong Qi, it existed only for pure carnage, and it was built for it, a sturdy body that proved invulnerable to countless attacks, and they needed to reach a particular threshold for it to feel them and it was dubbed a master of ten thousand Daos, making it one of the most terrifying opponent to face alone, as it was no different than facing ten thousand masters of the Dao.

Just any one of the nine beasts mentioned was enough to cause mayhem and pandemonium wherever they went, let alone all nine of them together. Yang Qing struggled to believe that the mentioned organizations were comprised of the true beasts they were named after. Because of their inherent natures, he struggled to believe how they could ally together. He felt it was more likely those organizations had borrowed their names, of course, some part of him couldn't help but wonder..

What if, what if those beasts really had allied together?

"What are the odds of that happening?" Yang Qing muttered with a smile appearing on his face as he shook his head.

"From what I read the qiong qi hunts even one of its kind, how could it stand to ally with others, and the taotie and the celestial swallowing dog always try to devour each other..there's no way the twelve beasts of calamities were made of the actual beasts.." added Yang Qing, embarrassed that he even considered it a possibility.

However, his gaze soon turned solemn as he looked at the scroll that mentioned those organizations. The history behind their names aside, the purgatory black tiger was only fit to be considered a lackey of that organization despite them having a peak stage palace realm expert at the helm and about a dozen palace realm experts. Even with such an impressive lineup, from the texts he had read, the cult was only considered an errand boy to that organization. Yang Qing could only imagine how utterly terrifying it was, regardless of whether those beasts were part of it or not, which he didn't feel like they were.

"Who were the remaining three?" wondered Yang Qing as he put away the scroll containing the scant information related to the twelve beasts of calamity. The list only contained nine with three missing. Yang Qing couldn't help but wonder what monstrosities they were named after and their goal.

As he was about to send the scroll back, a thought hit him which prompted him to unfurl the scroll again as he went through the list.

"Come to think of it the characteristics that lunar fury heron described do match with the attributes of several of them. The Hundun, Qiongqi, Taowu, the primordial water demon ape, and the Zhuya are all known for having the ability to destroy the mind of anyone weak-willed with just their eyes... but no, that's too farfetched.." Yang Qing said as he shook his head dismissively.

"Could it?" he added with an unsure expression on his face before finally he decided to send back the scroll as he requested for all information related to the Deer Mountain Kingdom specifically the founders, which he then compared against the jade slip he had received from the Judicial Review Committee before he came to the library.

While the information contained within the library was extensive, the one contained within the slip was even more so. Yang Qing had a feeling it had been the handiwork of someone from the Shadow Hawks division. It was in-depth, containing all the relevant information that Yang Qing might think of and even some that he didn't.

It was pretty detailed without missing gaps when it came to the timeline. Everything from the moment the founding families of the kingdom stepped into the Deer Mountain Range, up to the current timeline was recorded. The exploits of every king they ever had, the skirmishes both big and small they ever had

since their founding, the defining talents they ever had in the 38,000 years since their founding, the attributes of all the aristocratic families from the large ones down to the small ones, their strengths were all recorded in the slip with some even their trump cards recorded such as core cultivation arts and or artifacts.

If Yang Qing didn't know better he would have thought the report had been prepared by the family leaders of those families.

As he was reading the slip, Yang Qing couldn't help but sigh when he read about their golden era. The number of talents they had back then would have stood out even in rank 1 organizations and holy lands, as a few had special physiques that granted them powerful abilities. For example, one of them, who belonged to the Shi family had the terraflora earthplain physique that gave her terrifying accumulations in the earth and wood element. At 15 she was already a blue grade alchemist.

There were about seven more listed in the report who were just as dazzling as her, exhibiting talent that could be seen once every tens of thousands of years, and weirdly enough they had all appeared at the same time.

Yang Qing couldn't help but scratch his chin as his gaze wandered off to the drawing he had made of the two Pi Xiu statues.

Sadly no matter how dazzling their talents, they all died when calamity struck the kingdom after they had foolishly attempted to seize the entire range into their control drawing the ire and retaliation of the countless spirit beasts that called the range, home.

"Despite their misfortune back then, with what I know now, I can't help but feel they were astronomically lucky to have survived it.." muttered Yang Qing with his gaze shining with a strange light as it drifted back to the statues once more.

Chapter 755 From Retainer To A Founding Family

Yang Qing shook his head as he regained control of his wandering thoughts to focus back on the information surrounding the Deer Mountain Kingdom, more specifically their founders.

As he read about it, Yang Qing couldn't help but raise his brows in surprise when he read about them. The Zhou family had roots extending back over 100,000 years though they were not exactly powerful

with their most powerful member being the clan leader who appeared about 50,000 years ago and later became the first king of the Deer Mountain Kingdom.

What surprised Yang Qing wasn't that the Zhou family existed so far back, but it was more about the background of the Zhang family. Unlike the Zhou family, it wasn't large, comprising only of one person, Zhang Wei. Zhang Wei had been a retainer of the Zhou family for countless years and followed the Zhou family when they made their expedition into the Deer Mountain Range.

Zhang Wei had been a gifted genius of the sword whom the father of the first king of the Deer Mountain Kingdom presumably took in. The clan did everything to nurture him including sending him to the Jade Leaf Dao Academy, and the One Thousand Battle Hall Pavilion, which helped extract all his latent potential, that he became one of the youngest palace realm experts at the time, boosting the overall strength of the Zhou clan.

When it came to the Shi clan, Yang Qing paid extra attention to them. It wasn't that they had done anything to warrant suspicion over all the rest, but when it came to influence, he felt the Shi family had a greater influence outside of the Deer Mountain Kingdom even more so than the ruling Zhou family itself, owing to their alchemy and herbology background.

They had countless connections built both within and outside of the kingdom because of it. The jade slip he had been given was mindful enough to list all the organizations that they had some relationship with, with the list reaching almost 300 names, with 18 of those names belonging to prominent rank 3 organizations. Inside the kingdom, they were also held in high esteem by a lot of the small aristocratic families that owed them a favor for services rendered.

They had relationships all over, and when dating back to the founders of the kingdom, the Shi family leader from back then had a deep friendship with the clan leader of the Zhou family, though their relationship was more transactional as the land which the Zhou family sat on was lush with all manner of spiritual plants. Through it, they managed to strike a long-standing relationship with the Shi Clan that spanned almost 20,000 years.

The Shi family didn't only just have a relationship with the Zhou family, amongst the six founding families they had a relationship with the Chu family also. The Chu family had been small but was well-established because of their inherited physique the gold fire salamander physique which gave them great aptitude and control of the fire element which they used to build themselves up as a smithing family.

Just like the Zhou family, the Shi family had a deep working relationship with the Chu family that spanned thousands and thousands of years. The Shi family had provided financial support and connections to the Chu family as they were starting up which eased their growth and development. Because of the help provided, when the Shi family decided to venture into the Deer Mountain Range, the Chu family joined them.

Though the relationship between the two families seemed more transactional, similar to the one the Shi family had with the Zhou family, the information provided suggested there was a difference in the relationship.

Thanks to the thorough work done, the jade slip contained even information on the marriages that happened within the six ruling families, and from it, Yang Qing noticed that between the Shi family and the Chu family, there were a lot of intermarriages, but when it came to the Shi family and the Zhou family, in the 38,000 years worth of history between the two, the number of intermarriages between the two had not numbered more than five in that period, whereas between them and the Chu family, it easily reached over 100.

"Could be the royal family and the Shi family have always been wary of each other... or... Chu family is more of a subordinate to the Shi family hence the interrelationship or they have a deep bond of trust that extends beyond just transactional cooperation..."

"Mmh, but they didn't seem that way when I visited them..." murmured Yang Qing as he recalled his interaction with the five family heads.

Though they seemed cordial, Yang Qing could feel there was a distance and wariness among them. Then again it could all have been a farce meant to mislead both him and each other. Mind games was the common staple food of most noble families, especially when their foundations and strengths were similar to one another.

After learning about the Zhang family and their founder being a retainer of the Zhou family, out of curiosity Yang Qing decided to look at their marriage history expecting them to have several intermarriages with the Zhou clan, only to find there was only one which was Zhang Quifen who was married to the present king. Before that, the Zhang family had never married anyone from the royal family, or any of the other families.

"That is strange... Considering their relationship, I would have expected there to be more, or do they still see themselves as retainers of the Zhou family which might make it inappropriate for them to marry anyone from there, but then again if that's the case, why did they agree to it?"

Was it to show their stance because of the pressure mounting on the royal family, or could it have been for another reason?"

Yang Qing mulled over it for a few seconds before he decided to read through the rest of the report. Getting into the mindset of factions was something that he wasn't good at, hence why he joined the Order in the first place.

Chapter 756 Deepest background

Yang Qing cleared his mind and continued to read about the Shi family. As he read further he discovered that the Shi family had been stagnating in their alchemy skills and were slowly being pushed away from the scene by a rival clan, the Luo clan which though had a shorter history in comparison to the Shi family, had already caught up to them and exceeded them to the point they had even garnered the cooperative deals with a few prominent organizations with one of them even being the rank 2, Maple leaf manor.

The then clan leader, afraid that his clan would lose out to the Luo clan, accepted the Zhou Clan's offer to venture into the Deer Mountain Range. The range was already known for its rich resources, it was just that the spirit beasts that called the place home deterred most from venturing into the place. There were even rumors back then about a domain expert dying within it which made most human cultivators wary of visiting the place.

The Shi clan leader out of a deep sense of crisis and determination to help his family move forward, journeyed to the Deer Mountain Range without hesitation.

As for the remaining two families, while he had been more curious about the Shi family because they seemed to have more resources and a huge web of connections, his judgment had been off as it turned out that amongst the six families, the Song family was the one with the deepest background.

Within the information, the author surmised that the other families likely did not know about the true background of the Song family, and after reading through their story, Yang Qing supported that guess too.

The Song family had been part of the now-known Deng Dynasty, but 200,000 years ago, it went by a different name, the Song Dynasty, a rank 2 empire in its heyday, which it presently was still, but under a different name. The Song family presently resided in the Deer Mountain Range as one of the large noble clans within the Deer Mountain Kingdom but it had once been the ruling family of the Song Empire. However, their position had been usurped, not by the Deng family who currently ruled the Empire they called theirs once upon a time, but by one of their own, a branch of their family.

When tragedy strikes, it comes in waves. The Deer Mountain Kingdom Song family was the main branch of the Song family in the Song dynasty, however, they had their position as the main branch taken away when they were at their weakest. The Song dynasty had feuded with two other empires because of a precious grotto that had appeared at the boundary between the three Empires. freeweb(n)ovel

The grotto in question had the same spiritual density as a mature dragon vein, and above all, it had a purple pith profound stone mine. Purple pith profound stone was over a thousand times better than even the purest spirit stone, as it contained pure energy that was even purer than the natal qi one was born with. A single drop of its energy is enough to push a body refinement cultivator to the peak stage of the foundation establishment realm in a single-bound and with firm foundations to boost, with even those with the poorest talents ending up with blue-grade foundation pillars.

Purple pith profound stone was capable of turning that which was rotten into a precious gem. It not only improved one's cultivation, but it also had a way of unearthing hidden physiques in one's body and improving the purity of one's bloodline, there was even a rumor of a cultivator who upon refining 20 purple pit profound stones he was able to completely awaken his azure roc bloodline transforming into a true roc.

The reason it had such profound effects was because it contained traces of the chaos aura which was rumored to be the aura present when the planet was formed. The purple pith profound stone contained countless mysteries and profundities that would serve a cultivator well for their entire cultivation journey. The mysteries of the stone served as an illuminating light on their path, which was why when news broke out of the grotto having a purple pith profound stone, the three empires that bordered it, immediately shed all pretense of cordiality, attacked each other without reservation.

Whoever controlled that grotto would ascend to glory in one fell swoop. The war was violent and devastating on all sides, with no one leaving it unscathed. The main branch of the Song family committed almost all of its manpower to the efforts, which ended up in the death of three of their five domain experts, with the remaining two gravely injured in the process.

The other two empires did not leave unscathed either, with them facing similar levels of causality. A ceasefire was forcibly called when it became evident that outside forces had been eyeing that grotto, and were just waiting for the three empires to damage one another enough for them to swoop in and seize it all for themselves.

By the time the ceasefire was called, the blood feud ran deep among the three empires, and not one wanted to give in to the other, making cooperation very difficult even with countless powerful vultures lurking, waiting for the opportune moment. The three empires only managed to agree because of the involvement of the Sixteen Heavenly Stars Treasure Pavilion which was a rank 1 merchant organization at the same level as the White Rose Pavilion.

With them standing as a witness, the three empires agreed on how to share the grotto and its resources, with no doubt the Sixteen Heavenly Stars Treasure Pavilion having some shares in it not only for its services as the witness but also as a protective cover for the three empires that lacked a soul formation expert. To protect themselves against rank 1 organizations, allying with one was the only way, and it came at a cost that they gladly paid.

But even with the war ending, its effects still lived, more so to the ruling families of these empires who committed all they could as they stood to gain much more if things went their way. After the war, one of the remaining two domain experts from the Song main branch succumbed to his injuries and died, leaving only one. The main branch had thought even with the losses they had suffered they had nothing to worry about because they had more domain experts in their branches, only for years later for the branches to turn on them and seize the throne.

The last surviving domain expert sacrificed his life and created an escape path for the main branch, even then not many escaped as it wasn't only the side branches that turned on them but the other noble families within the Song dynasty did so too.

Luckily for them, the side branches were too busy trying to stabilize the situation in the Empire to go after them. The Empire was fragmented for a while as the Song side branches and the other major noble families all tried to get their hands on the throne and by default, access to the grotto.

However, in the end, it was a dark horse in the name of the Deng family that stood over the rest when a one-in-a-million genius appeared among their descendants who tore through all opposition in just a decade with the Song family being the biggest step stone to his rise as he eviscerated them root and stem, which turned out to be a blessing for the main branch who were in hiding, always afraid of being pursued by the branch family.

Eventually, the members of the main branch split into different groups with one of the groups making its way to the barren hinterlands that were at the border of the Deer Mountain Range.

Chapter 757 Strain in relationship

?Even having fallen far from grace and already split into different groups, the Song family etching its survival on the hinterlands bordering the Deer Mountain Range to the north still had the reserves that one would expect of a former ruling clan of a rank 2 empire. They had two palace realm experts in their midst, and a few treasures and trump cards that gave them enough bargaining power against the four families i.e. the Zhou family, the Chu Family, the Meng Family, and the Shi family.

The four families each had at least one palace realm expert with the Zhou family having three, counting the Zhang clan's founder, who was their retainer at the time. Despite having more cultivators than the Song family, the four chose to ally with them rather than try and dominate them, owing to the family's capabilities.

While the report didn't have the exact details of their cooperation and vaguely pointed toward it, other than the abilities the Song family showed, the reason the other families chose to ally with them likely had to do with them neighboring the Deer Mountain Range. The Song family likely knew more about the area than they did, and having someone familiar with it would prove beneficial when venturing into it.

When it came to the agreement from the Song family's side, Yang Qing felt that they may still harbor thoughts of having a resurgence and reclaiming that which they lost, either by going back to the now Deng dynasty and taking the empire back or by building from scratch, using the Deer Mountain Range as their foundation.

There was no better place than it as its riches matched those of rank 2 territories. If the Song family hoped to establish another Song dynasty then there was no better place.

Yang Qing's eyes glittered as a thought struck his mind.

"The plan to conquer the range back then, was it the king's design or did someone fuel that desire in him?" muttered Yang Qing, as he scanned the jade slip to locate the information during that time.

"Mmh, it could have been them.." said Yang Qing as he finished through the information.

The king back then had also been one of the talents of the golden era, being a well-established spear user, whose spear intent was rumored to puncture through even the sturdiest of defenses below the domain realm, like a hot knife through butter.

From the slip, it described him as someone gifted with both the pen and the spear. The kingdom grew by leaps and bounds under his care, and it wasn't solely because numerous talents had appeared at the same time. He inspired all. The deep sense of togetherness, and patriotism that Yang Qing noticed when he was there had been forged by him as he bridged the gap between the commoners and the aristocrats of the kingdom making all sides feel integral to the kingdom.

However strangely enough as inclusive as he was, the slip suggested he had distanced himself from the Zhang family. It wasn't overly overt, but it was enough for those with keenness for such things to notice the difference in treatment he afforded them. The report didn't contain the specifics of why they were treated that way, but it did mention that the king was in turn shown to be close with the Song family at the time who also had a genius in their midst skilled with formation arrays.

He was born with stellar pathway physique that gave him a natural aptitude for the balance of energy which became a huge advantage for him as a formation master and by association the repair of the twilight sanctuary array that borrowed the force of the cosmos to sustain itself. The physique was especially effective when sensing the movement of the stars, which had been one of the guiding forces of the twilight sanctuary array.

On paper, it seemed like the king had been close with the Song family because of the abilities of that formation master, but knowing what he knew now about the Song family, he wondered if the Song family had baited the relationship to further their agendas, like let's say a full-scale subjugation war at the range.

"They really hid themselves well, but at least I have one less suspect to focus on.." muttered Yang Qing.

The Song family was clearly ambitious and they hid their ambitions very well. That ambition was what made Yang Qing feel like they were less likely to be the culprits he was looking for. They were less likely to collude with an infamous organization like the Blue Soul Flame Crow Syndicate and were even more unlikely to submit the kingdom to another all-out war with the rest of the range, not when the kingdom was in a weakened state.

Even though they may not hold much sentiment for the Kingdom as a whole and was nothing more than a tool to them, it was still an important tool to them, one that affected whether they reclaimed that which they lost or not. Yang very much had doubts if they would risk its decimation, or use some risky method like using the sacred graveyard torch as a lure. It was too risky, not unless they had a surefire way of handling the trouble that would come from such an act, but if they did, they would have long used it to dominate the entire range and bring it under their control.

Having drawn his conclusions, Yang Qing went back to read about the remaining family, the Meng family. Their leader at the time was sworn brothers with the then clan leader of the Zhou family. The two had bonded while exploring some ruin and ended up saving each other's lives in the process, and later even betrothed their grandchildren to one another.

Though the two clan leaders were close, the Meng family seemed to have joined the procession after the Zhou clan made some promises to them along with parting with a few worthwhile treasures.

As Yang Qing continued to read through the report he had his guesses on what some of the promises may have touched on. The Meng family seemed like the ambitious sort, though cautiously ambitious, similar to the Song family. However, unlike the Song family, the Meng family didn't have a deep background to support their ambitions, and could only use other means if they wanted to realize them, and Yang Qing guessed leveraging their help for a few promises from the Zhou family that had three palace realm experts was the best bet.

"It seems like none of these families were from the same place, bar the Zhang family.." muttered Yang Qing as he finished up on the report of the six families.

The Shi family though they had businesses all over, their main grounds were in the territory of the Blue Sapphire Empire, which was a rank 2 empire rich in spirit gems and mines, along with natural spirit fire viens that lured countless alchemy-

based organizations to lay their foundation there.

The Chu family on the other hand was located in the territory of the Diamond Body Sect, which bordered the Blue Sapphire Empire. The Shi family made a connection with them through the many dealings they had with the organizations located there.

As for the Meng family, it belonged to an uncharted zone called the Palace Valley. It was formerly a place that housed a rank 2 clan, which ended up offending someone they shouldn't have, and had all their members slaughtered to the last woman, man, and child as a consequence of it. It wasn't only the clan members that were destroyed in the process, as their entire clan ground was destroyed to smithereens, turning it into a desolate place.

However, the rest of its territories were left untouched much to the joy of the countless organizations that paid tribute or were once surbordinate to that clan. With no one to lord over them, they sought independence, and domination over each other, giving rise to the Palace Valley, a place stacked with countless rank 3 organizations all trying to dominate the other of which the Meng family had been one of them, but decided to move when they created one too many enemies, and their survival at the area hanging on a thread.

And lastly, the Zhou family, who were prominent in the Plum Blossom kingdom, however, they ended up supporting the wrong prince for the throne which left them in a difficult position when the Emperor announced a different prince as his successor. Realizing the predicament they had been in, they decided to plan their exit fast, while they were still able to.

They had sufficient foundation to deter the crowned prince from acting against them, with the Emperor still there to keep him in check, but who knew when things would take a turn for the worse? Rather than wait for the inevitable blade that was hanging above their heads to fall, they decided to cut their losses, leave the kingdom, and start over somewhere where they didn't run the risk of being besieged and slaughtered overnight, as a lesson to others.

That was how they set their sights on the Deer Mountain Range, though Yang Qing still wondered if they had already decided on the Deer Mountain Range, or was that something they decided after they had left the Plum Blossom Kingdom.

His working theory on the mysterious figure lurking within the kingdom may have known about the true picture of the range, hence their reason to reside there, which was why he suspected the mysterious figure to be from one of the founding families, being one of the earliest people to have stepped foot in that place.

Yang Qing read through all the information on the Zhou family before he shook his head in doubt.

"It doesn't seem likely that it was one of them. Maybe the king's grandfather might know about how they came to decide on the Deer Mountain Kingdom. He was also alive during that battle back then, maybe he knows why the king from that time threw a cold shoulder to the Zhang family.

From what I've read about them, even after their founder was released from his service and allowed to start a family of his own, along with receiving a lot of support from the Zhou family, no matter how much their reputation grew, the Zhang family never stepped out of bounds, never showed any ambitions for the throne, through it all even if they were one of the most powerful families, I can't help but feel like they still acted like the retainers to the Zhou family, which explains why they have so many martyrs if compared against the other families.

Something may have happened back then..."

Chapter 758 Three Days Quickly Pass By (1)

"All that will have to wait until after I've left this place..." Yang Qing muttered as he poured his concentration back on the slip.

Even though the founding families were his primary suspects, the small aristocratic families still had to be given due consideration. Who knows the mastermind might have come from there, keeping a low profile, hiding in plain sight.

For the next few hours, Yang Qing learned everything and anything he could about them. He supplemented the information on the jade slip from what the Library had in stock which turned out to be pretty extensive.

By the time he was done, he knew as much about those families as a rival spy would. But no matter how much information he had gathered about them, he still wasn't any closer to unmasking the identity of the culprit, which he had half expected from the start. Considering the mastermind was gutsy enough to remain even after the Order built their branch in the area, and still continue scheming with what they suggested to the Hua clan and the rest, it showed the mastermind was confident they would not be found out.

All Yang Qing was hoping for was to luck out on a needle, but if he missed the needle the information provided would at least help him know about the haystack he was investigating.

The small aristocratic families that joined later came as an invite of the six families, with some only choosing to come after they had made a solid footing, while others were settlers in different parts of the range. With the founding families establishing a foothold in the range, those families gravitated toward them. Their rationale was fairly understandable. In a place filled with spirit beasts, humans would naturally converge towards those of their kind even if they knew next to little about one another.

That thought and the subsequent reaction was what became the foundation of the Deer Mountain Kingdom, with many of the human inhabitants of the range moving there when they heard of a place that had powerful cultivators with a foothold already established and was welcoming of those willing to join them.

In a few short years, the embryonic form of the Deer Mountain Kingdom was established. Yang Qing read through the jade slips along with every other information regarding the kingdom but none of them mentioned how it is they came to choose their current location.

His suspicious side kept looking for anything that seemed to suggest they already knew about the place beforehand, and not that they chose to settle in the area because it was one of the few areas in the range that powerful spirit beasts had not completely claimed. When he interacted with Gu Xing she had mentioned that Lady Gild avoided that location after discovering it contained the ruins of the Bi Xie Empire.

Yang Qing's gaze inadvertently moved over to the two statues in the midst of mulling over his suspicions.

"If it wasn't deliberate, and was just because it was the area with the least spirit beast presence, could those spirit beasts have avoided the area because of the presence of those statues?" murmured Yang Qing.

Though the statues were not the real thing, they still contained the aura and essence of a Tian Lu and Bi Xie. He had read accounts and even seen it first hand at the Blood charcuterie market town, how strong bloodline suppression was among spirit beasts. Even after a powerful spirit beast had left an area for years, as long as its aura lingered in the area, those weaker than it would be too petrified to come close to the area.

Yang Qing couldn't help but think that maybe the same thing was happening with the statues.

"But none of that matters.." said Yang Qing as he shook his head in disappointment.

"None of the information I have seems to connect any one of them to that mysterious black figure.."

The jade slip had a detailed record of the well-known cultivation arts of the noble families of the kingdom, it even went beyond just the noble families, as any notable figure known to have appeared in the kingdom whether they were associated with the noble families or not, their information was recorded in the information.

There had been a few talents that had appeared outside of the noble families who rose to prominence, which the slip highlighted, but none of them, or the noble families seemed to have any mentioned technique, special physique, or treasure that had the effects of breaking the mind and spirit of a cultivator by subjecting them to a harrowing torment of a stygian ocean filled with the wails of the dead like the lunar fury heron had described.

Yang Qing spent a few minutes trying to see if there was anything he had missed, and when he didn't, he ultimately shelved the matter as he proceeded to another line of deductions which was to confirm that indeed the Deer Mountain Range and the kingdom were in the former territory of the Bi Xie Empire. What he was specifically interested in was the capital of the Bi Xie Empire, the capital of Deer Mountain Kingdom, and lastly the capital of the White Mulberry Kingdom.

From the background done by Long Wan, he had mentioned that the Wang Patriarch established the capital of the Bi Xie empire in the first purification zone where he found the two statues.

Via the Xuanwu token on his shoulder, he asked for all maps associated with the three nations. He had not been too sure he would get one of the White Mulberry Kingdom considering it predated the existence of the Bi Xie Empire. Still, luckily, the Library seemed to have four maps, though they seemed to differ from one another in terms of scale and details. Still, the core details such as the capital was similar among the four along with some semblance of similarity in the outline of the entire territory of the White Mulberry Kingdom which was all Yang Qing wanted.

The BiXie Empire had about a dozen maps, which had little variation from one another. Yang Qing eventually settled on using just one after he compared them against each other. As for the map of the Deer Mountain Range, Yang Qing chose two variations, he chose the oldest copy and the newest, with both having the territory of the Deer Mountain Kingdom outlined.

After he had finished his selection he poured his qi into all the maps which turned them translucent and then he went for the map of the White Mulberry Kingdom and placed it at the bottom followed by the map of Bi Xie Empire, and finally at the top was the old version of the Deer Mountain Range.

Once the three maps overlapped each other, Yang Qing produced a small light that looked like a miniaturized gentle moon glow from the bottom of the pile which triggered a chain reaction from the map as it created well-defined features within the three maps, making it look like one, yet distinctively three at the same time.

Yang Qing moved the maps slightly till finally he found what he was looking for.

"They were one and the same.." he muttered with a shining glow in his eyes as he looked at the regional boundaries outlined on the maps that made it seem like the three maps were the same, with the one from the Deer Mountain Range looking like it had been chipped off from the other two.

Chapter 759 Three Days Quickly Pass By (2)

The map of the White Mulberry Kingdom and the Bi Xie Empire overlapped with one another perfectly, while the one from the Deer Mountain Range, though it still bore a connecting resemblance to the two maps below it, looked more like a partial map of the other two with a few deformities here and there, but one could still see that its core framework was one and the same with the other two.

With his eyes fully trained on the map, Yang Qing soon located what he was looking for, which was where the three capitals were. A moment later, after he found them, and with that, his suspicions were confirmed.

Both the capital of the Bi Xie Empire and the Deer Mountain Kingdom were in the same spot, while the one from the White Mulberry Kingdom was further west from the two capitals.

Yang Qing's eyes flickered with astonishment when he saw the location which prompted him to swap out the old version of the Deer Mountain Range with the newer one. After he did, he carefully aligned it with the two maps below it until the overlap was perfect.

Once it did, he froze on the spot with a deep look in his eyes before he let out a sigh with his index finger resting on the area where the capital of the White Mulberry Kingdom was located. The place it overlapped with, with the current map of the Deer Mountain Range was a place he was all too familiar with.

With another sigh, he took the drawing he had made earlier of the range and placed it on top of the three maps.

"The sacred graveyard torch.." he said as he drummed his finger across the drawing he had made of the area, which overlapped with the capital of the White Mulberry Kingdom.

"For them to go there, the chances are high that they are linked with someone from that period...

But what could they want with the place? I didn't sense any abnormality in the area, and I doubt if there was it could have escaped the senses of Gu Xing. Sacred flame swans are much more sensitive to evil energies than most. She would not have settled there if there was anything remotely off with the location and neither would it have supported the formation of a sacred graveyard.

What could they want?" murmured Yang Qing as he bit his nails with furrowed brows.

A second later his brows smoothened as his gaze relaxed from the tense state it had been a few seconds before.

"Who would have expected the sacred graveyard to have been the capital of the White Mulberry Kingdom...It's almost poetic.. the last vestige of the White Mulberry Kingdom, which also sounded the formation of the Bi Xie Empire after its collapse ended up being the resting ground of the Spirit beasts of the Deer Mountain Range who wished to entrust their inheritance to the next generation.

I wonder if the sacred graveyard ended up appearing here because of what happened then? The white mulberry tree gave its life to save the Wang patriarch in the end, without its intervention there may not have been a Bi Xie Empire. The world is a strange place full of unexpected coincidences.." said Yang Qing before a soft smile appeared on his face.

"Mao Mao would be over the moon for a story like this.." he said with a light chuckle as he pictured her big limpid black eyes glittering with excitement at the story whose effects had spanned countless millennia. Stories like this were just her cup of tea.

Yang Qing had a feeling if he told her about the sacred graveyard, she would likely rush to the place without hesitation to hear the accounts of all the vestige spirits of the spirit beasts that had been entombed there. The place was home to countless spirits from different periods each with a story tell. The gossip monger that was Mao Yunru would be like a fish in water in that place.

Yang Qing shook his head as he smiled as he decided once he left the library, he would do the right thing and sponsor her habit by informing her of the location. It was the least he could do, as a considerate friend who cared deeply about her, and her poor finances, what better way to help her than to give her an alternative fix for her gossip that was free of charge to boot? The only thing he needed was to get Gu Xing's approval first.

"Gu Xing?!" Yang Qing muttered with a wide look on his face that made it seem like he had just seen a ghost.

"What if she tells her she wanted to be my dao companion? No, I can't risk it... Mao Mao, I'm sorry you'll have to remain in debt to the information brokers for now, at best I'll just help you clear some of those debts.."

Exhaling like he had just escaped a ferocious killing array, Yang Qing moved on to the next part of his investigation which was on the physiques, techniques, cultivation arts, and organizations that had aspects that matched the characteristics described by the lunar fury heron.

After what he had read about the background of the Purgatory black tiger cult, his primary suspects were the twelve beasts of calamity. He had tried to access more information on them, but the brief information he got from the worn-out scroll was all the information he had access to about them. He did not know if the lack was because his clearance was still too low, or because genuinely the Order didn't have any more information about them.

But he felt if such an infamous organization had existed, surely there would be some record, but then again, he had never heard of Bi Xie Empire, or the Sky Rendering Sword Sect which he felt more than likely had reached the ranks of a holy land or was close to one, but even with such achievements, Yang Qing had never heard about them, and he felt it wasn't just them.

His cultivation art, the universal myriad worlds resonant light, if it wasn't for the auspicious wood grove tree, he would have never known who created it, and when he did, it was a sect he had never heard of even a little. That art was a purple-grade art, and as its creators, they should have been in the history

books in some form but they weren't. It felt like a chunk of history from a certain period was missing completely, which was strange in and of itself.

The more he knew, the more Yang Qing felt it wasn't accidental but deliberate, and the strong supporter of that idea was the library itself. Why put restrictions on its access, in which you needed to reach a certain realm or achievements to gain access to a particular floor, instead of allowing universal access to all?

He may call the Order stingy, but even he had to admit the Order was never stingy with cultivation resources, which was why even as qi refinement cultivators they had access to all graded techniques from orange all through to purple grade, as long as you had the mettle to cultivate it, they would let you have it, but when it came to the library, they were extremely strict about it, almost as if there was something there they couldn't allow just anyone to know.

The judicial review committee despite their abilities and connections, only managed to get him three days, but his access was severely limited, and by their admission, that was the best case, and it only went through because the assistant director of the special inquisitors, along with the assistant director of the gold eagle guard had spoken up for him.

Yang Qing continuously felt like there was a veil around his eyes, hiding aspects of the world from him.

Yang Qing exhaled as he relaxed his body while muttering,

"I can only take it a day at a time.."

Chapter 760 Three Days Quickly Pass By (3)

Clearing his mind off the countless doubts he had in his mind, Yang Qing decided to focus on the things he could, which at the present was to go through as much information as he could on the physiques, cultivation arts, artifacts, and natural treasures along with organizations that were well known for their abilities to subjugate and torment one's mind and spirit, along with corrupting them.

Considering the subject matter, he knew he had his work cut out for him and two and a half days would likely not be enough for him to go through all of it, but he would try to get through as much as he could. Luckily the environment of the gold-grade floor would help with that with the countless treasures and arrays it was filled with to improve clarity and concentration whilst also reducing mental fatigue.

With the effects he was feeling, if he wanted to, he could spend half a year comprehending the most complex of cultivation techniques without fear of overexerting himself mentally.

Taking advantage of all the benefits afforded to him, Yang Qing poured himself into the investigation that he didn't even realize how his allotted time quickly flew by. He only realized the two-and-a-half days were up when he sensed acute changes in his surroundings and by association his body too, as he could feel the speed with which he processed information, the spring-like breeze that enveloped his mind to keep him focused had dimmed significantly.

Sensing the changes, Yang Qing with a distracted and slightly confused look, finally looked up after two and a half days. He was startled at first when he noticed the scenery had changed. No overarching hills and mountains were filling the horizon or the dazzling auspicious energy that surrounded them, nor did the skies have the mythical creatures he had grown to revere.

What greeted him was the familiar scenery of countless rows of shelves filled with all manner of scrolls, books, and ball-shaped wards filled with colorful lights.

It took a few seconds before clarity entered his eyes which was followed by a sigh as he said,

"Seems my time is up.."

With another sigh of regret, he looked up with a longing look in his eyes. Above him was a blue sky filled with countless shining stars. It looked no more different than the sky outside but in Yang Qing's gaze, it was as if he could see through it, even if he couldn't. Past that sky dome lay the brilliance of the gold-grade floor.

"I can't help but feel I've been banished to the mortal world after experiencing the delights of the immortal realm. How long till I can go back there?" he said with another sigh of exasperation as he took another glance around him.

He was on the low-tier blue grade floor which by all accounts deserved its fame as a blue grade floor. The spiritual qi was as dense as that of a lesser dragon spirit vein, the arrays were all in the top tier of the blue grade, and the treasures were all phenomenal and would incite even greed from an early-stage domain expert.

It was a good place to cultivate and comprehend the dao easily, it was even better than the judge's chambers, or the cultivation abodes of those in the palace realm. Even with the impressive attributes that could be found in the nest of the celestial nesting weaver, it still fell short of the environment provided on this floor and it was understandable why when one looked at the materials that were used to build the library. The shelves were made of sage sandstone, the floor was made of heaven-

blossoming jade stones with pieces of azure serenity crystals and mindless pathway alabaster.

Except for the sage sandstone, all the others were at the absolute peak of monarch-grade materials. In contrast, the sage sandstone was an ascendant-grade material that was meant to preserve the origin essence of the things stored within the shelves. And those were just the base materials, without taking into account all the other things the Order had done to the place.

Yang Qing would get ecstatic and overwhelmed every time he stepped onto the floor, and during his leave, half of his allotted time he would spend here. It was the one place that he could genuinely say could make him forego eating, and he would not regret it, but now, after experiencing the grandeur of the low-

tier gold floor, the place had dimmed a bit losing the enchanting hold it had over him, which left him feeling out of sorts.

Yang Qing stewed in silence, with a little bit of sorrow welling up inside of him.

"Well played.." he said with a defeated smile as he looked over the scrolls, jade slips, and other pieces of information that were left over after he had been evicted from the low-tier gold-

grade floor.

The information that remained behind were those his current privilege covered and allowed him access to.

"I might as well.." Yang Qing said with a look that lacked excitement and just seemed he was going with the motions. After half an hour, he was done with the materials returning to their respective places after he willed it via his library token which no longer bore the look of a xuanwu but had switched to its

original form, which was just a black scale. Another reminder that he was no longer on the gold-tier floors.

However, he didn't have too long to brood over his loss as his look turned serious as he recalled the things he had read over those two days. Ever since he became a judge, he had seen the darkness of the world and in some sense, he had thought he had seen and heard it all, but now, he couldn't help but feel what he saw and knew was nothing but the tip of an otherwise monstrously dark iceberg, and his read for the past few days, illuminated him slightly of how truly terrifying the continent he called home, was.