

Insanity 41

Chapter 41: Dissecting Rocks

"I want to purchase some rocks." Having picked his targets, Fang Yuan said to the female Gu Master.

"Newbie!" The female Gu Master immediately thought.

Even the shittiest gamblers would pay very close observation when they wanted to buy the rocks. First they would look carefully, then place the stones in their palms and rub to feel the surface and its weight. Even after such actions, if they find that the feeling is off, they would give up. No one would say 'purchase' at the start.

And for such a type like Fang Yuan, who said 'purchase' upfront, he is undeniably a newbie who is having his first rock gambling experience.

Although the female Gu Master thought this, she did not show any difference in her expression, but continued to smile like a flower, saying softly to Fang Yuan, "Then which piece are you choosing?"

Fang Yuan pointed and said, "This piece."

She immediately retrieved it.

Fang Yuan pointed again and said, "This piece."

She felt perplexed, not expecting this youngster to buy two pieces.

"It seems like this youngster is the type to gamble heavily," she evaluated mentally.

But next, Fang Yuan pointed yet again, "And this piece, that piece, I'm buying them all."

The female Gu Master was stunned, feeling extremely surprised, she could not help but assess Fang Yuan again.

"It seems like this ordinary looking youngster has a really good family background. Otherwise, how would any ordinary Gu Master have the spare cash to spend like this?" Thinking of it, the female Gu Master's smile became more gentle and friendly. To think that the youngster in front of her was a real customer.

This was an unexpected joy!

However, Fang Yuan surprised her once again as he pointed to the furthest purple gold rock, "Oh yeah, and those two pieces as well."

The female Gu Master could not help but feel shocked internally, "Which young master is this from the Gu Yue Village? It looks like he's the main family branch's inheritor. If I can hook up with him, I may not need to stay here and slog as a shop clerk anymore."

With this thought, the female Gu Master's smile became even more gentle and she even looked towards Fang Yuan seductively.

Six rocks were placed in front of Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan took out sixty primeval stones and passed it to the female Gu Master.

His act of payment attracted the attention of all the other Gu Masters in the tent.

"Oh? Someone is going to rock gamble."

"We've been watching for over an hour, but we haven't acted yet. Now that someone is giving it a try, we might as well watch."

"It's a student, he actually took out sixty primeval rocks at once, his family must be affluent. He looks like a greenhorn, hmph, gambling rocks isn't so easy. He's gonna get hurt real bad."

The Gu Masters stood on the spot, discussing softly, all directing their gaze towards Fang Yuan.

"Young master, do you want to open the rocks on the spot? Our gambling den provides free service to open the rocks." The female Gu Master gently advised, sending seductive glances with her eyes.

Fang Yuan used the corner of his eye to take a look at the crowd, his lips curling into a mysterious smile. He waved his hand, rejecting the female Gu Master. "Purple gold is my lucky color, and this is my first time betting, it is very meaningful. I'll open the rocks myself!"

The female Gu Master's eyes shone brighter, thinking, this heroic demeanour, as expected of a rich young master.

Never in her dreams would she be able to imagine that Fang Yuan could be said to be kinless in Gu Yue village, a drifter with no backing, having to rely on himself for everything.

"Tsk, so what if you have money."

"I wonder which rich kid this is, coming here to waste his parent's hard earned money!"

"Ignorant young lad, how can one choose the rocks based on lucky color, sigh, this act is simply akin to throw primeval stones into the water, and waiting to see the ripples for fun."

The Gu Masters in the tent lost their excitement at once. After thinking that Fang Yuan was a prodigal son, their already low expectations vanished into thin air.

Some Gu Masters even retracted their gaze and turn around to continue inspecting the fossils on the counter.

The changes to his surroundings did not affect Fang Yuan's state of mind at all. He expressionlessly activated the primeval essence within his primeval sea, pouring it into the Moonlight Gu.

The next moment, the crescent mark on his right palm emitted a faint water-like blue light.

Fang Yuan used this right hand to grab a purple gold rock, holding it in his palm. Next he closed his fingers and slowly rubbed against the surface of the fossil.

The blue light continued to shine, the waves of light rippling like water as the purple gold rock shrunk in size, large amounts of powder from rock shavings falling out from the gaps of Fang Yuan's fingers, landing on the carpet of the tent.

"Young master has good handiwork!" The female Gu Master took the chance and immediately praised.

"This youngster, he isn't a good-for-nothing. What great skills." Seeing this sight, the Gu Masters' eyes shone across with a complicated glint. They had started to see Fang Yuan in a new light.

Fang Yuan used the blue light to rub against the surface of the rock; this was a form of meticulous usage of the Moonlight Gu. Normally, one would have to use the Moonlight Gu for two to three years to be able to reach this level.

With Fang Yuan's age and student identity, being able to do this is really remarkable.

"See, he's using our Gu Yue clan's specialty, the Moonlight Gu." Some of the Gu Masters found this and instantly felt proud, gaining affection for Fang Yuan.

"But opening the rocks with this method, it's still too rough." Some of the older and more experienced Gu Masters shook their heads.

The purple gold rock got smaller and smaller, from being slightly larger than a palm into the size of a fist, being gripped tightly by Fang Yuan's fingers.

The blue light intensified as the fossil became pearl-sized. Until finally, what was left was a pile of rock powder, falling on the carpet to form a small hill.

This was a solid rock, there was no Gu worm inside.

"As expected, he's unreliable." The Gu Masters shook their heads.

"Young master, there's still five pieces left," the female Gu Master encouraged.

Fang Yuan's expression was calm, being completely unaffected. He grabbed the second piece of purple gold rock and continued to grind. But the result of this piece was still a solid rock; there was no Gu worm inside.

The third piece was still the same.

The Gu Masters grew impatient. "Stop looking. By relying on color to pick the rocks, there's no point in this gamble."

"If he can get a good Gu from this, I'll eat the pile of rock powder on the floor!" Someone laughed insultingly.

"Don't lose heart young master, isn't there 3 pieces left, you're only halfway through," the female Gu Master continued to edge Fang Yuan on.

Fang Yuan grabbed the fourth piece, and when he got it to palm size, he suddenly stopped all action.

"Oh? There's something!"

"The rock composition changed, it's not purple gold sediments, but a kind of ink-black colour."

"Don't tell me he really got super lucky from blinding guessing?"

The surrounding Gu Masters exclaimed lightly.

"Young master, you have to be careful from here onwards. Don't make sudden movements, hibernating Gu worms are very fragile. If you use too much strength, you'll kill the Gu worm inside." The female Gu Master did not expect such a situation to occur. After getting stunned for a moment, she immediately advised carefully.

Fang Yuan's movements slowed, his fingers slowly rubbing as small powder slowly fell. Continuously repeating the action with many intervals, he was no longer as fluid as earlier.

The black coloured rock powder slowly fell off, and as the rock got smaller, Fang Yuan's movements became slower and gentler.

On the carpet, the rock powder continued to gather as Fang Yuan's black colored rock was finally scrapped clean.

"Sigh, what a pity, it's a rock in a rock."

"What a waste of my emotions, I really thought there was a Gu worm inside."

"You are all too easy to fool, is rock betting so easy? Nine out of ten are all empty, how else is the shop going to make money?"

"Young master, your luck is already not bad. Getting a rock in rock the first time, normal people cannot do it." The female Gu Master tried another way to console Fang Yuan, similarly it was to pave way for the result that awaited him.

Getting nothing out of gambling rocks was very common, a nine out of ten occurrence. In her opinion, Fang Yuan was choosing at random, the chance of getting a Gu fossil was close to zero.

Fang Yuan smiled but did not reply, and he continued to take out the fifth rock.

He carefully grinded, and in ten breath's time, the surface of purple gold coloured rock were all rubbed away, revealing a rough-surfaced yellow mud ball.

Chapter 42: It really is a Gu?!

"Eh?"

"Don't tell me it's another rock in the rock."

"By the looks of it, probably. But it's a little strange, this mudball is enclosed by a purple gold rock surface. The mudball surface should be compressed smoothly, so why is the surface still uneven?" The surrounding Gu Masters were perplexed.

Looking at the mudball in his hands, Fang Yuan's expression did not change, but in his heart he was slightly moved.

He continued to grind. Under the blue watery light, the powdery sand fell off. Among the powder, there were some soil crumbs mixed in it, falling onto the pile of rock powder beside his leg.

“Don’t tell me there’s really something?!” Upon seeing this, some of the Gu Masters stared with their eyes wide-opened.

“It’s hard to say,” someone spoke with an uncertain tone.

“I feel like there is, there’s really something.” Another spoke softly.

The yellow mudball gradually decreased in size due to the friction, and when it was palm-sized, someone barged into the tent. “Young lad, hold up. I, Jia Jin Sheng, will be buying it!”

Fang Yuan’s movement came to a halt, at once, the Gu Masters in the tent all focused their attention on this person.

He looked young on the outside, his appearance around twenty to twenty-five years old. He wore a golden-coloured robe with a lace belt on his waist, and on the belt there was a square shaped jade piece. There was a word across the piece of jade, showing the letter “One”.

Evidently, this was a Rank one Gu Master.

To still be a Rank one Gu Master at twenty years old, it seems that his talent isn’t good.

But the status of this person was rather unique. Seeing him, the Gu Masters in the tent all bowed and greeted him, saying together, “Your subordinate greets you, second young master.”

“Second young master?”

“He called himself Jia Jin Sheng earlier, is he the half-brother of the Merchant Caravan Leader, Jia Fu.....”

“This means to say, this rock gambling den is opened by him. But now that he appeared to interfere, it seems that he’s breaking the gambling den’s rules,” the Gu Masters softly conversed.

"That’s right, I am this shop’s shopkeeper. Little brother(1), coming out to gamble at such a young age, aren’t you afraid of your family’s scolding? I will offer forty primeval stones now to buy that mudball in your hand. What do you think? Forty primeval stones is a lot already and there may not be a Gu inside, but today I am in a good mood. Thus seeing that this is your first time gambling, I don’t want you to lose everything, so I’ll give you a portion of your capital back." Jia Jin Sheng quickly walked in front of Fang Yuan and said.

“Forty primeval stones?” Fang Yuan raised his eyebrows slightly and took a look at Jia Jin Sheng with the corner of his eye, coldly laughing, “It seems you want to forcefully buy the mudball fossil in my possession? Forceful purchase is spoiling the gambling den’s rules. Furthermore you’re now on Qing Mao Mountain, you want to bully a Gu Yue clansman like me in front of everyone? “

“Oh?” On hearing Fang Yuan’s last sentence, all the other Gu Masters could not take it and animosity grew uncontrollably in them as they looked towards Fang Yuan’s direction. Their expression towards Jia Jin Sheng also became unfriendly.

Jia Jin Sheng had thought a fifteen year old like Fang Yuan would be easy to deal with, easily persuaded with a few words. But to think this Fang Yuan had such capabilities, and with a single sentence, he caused Jia Jin Sheng to be in such a predicament.

Seeing the Gu Masters getting ready to interfere, Jia Jin Sheng's expression changed immediately as he changed his tone, quickly waving his hands, "Little brother, you're mistaken! I am the shopkeeper of this gambling den, how could I ruin my own reputation by breaking my own rules? How would I be able to conduct business in the future? Hehehe. I just found your mudball a little interesting, thus I wanted to buy it. If you do not wish to sell it, that's fine. But if there's nothing inside later, don't blame me for not reminding you."

Fang Yuan paid no more attention to him. He turned around and continued to focus on grinding the mudball in his hands.

His movements were very slow and very meticulous. Often, there was only a hint of dry soil powder falling off after a moment or so. Following his movement, a hibernating Gu worm gradually appeared in front of everyone's eyes.

"My god, there really is a Gu worm!"

"He really opened a Gu!"

"What the hell, this sort of method of gambling can also work?"

"This young man's luck is off the charts, he actually managed to forcefully luck out on getting a Gu."

Immediately, the Gu Masters' exasperation filled the tent.

The female Gu Master subconsciously covered her mouth, being unable to believe the scene before her.

As shop clerk, along the way she had been to many mountain villages, seen all sorts of people and all kinds of customers, but she had never seen such a comedic scene.

"There is really a Gu!" Cold light flashed across Jia Jin Sheng's eyes as he hated and regretted in his heart. The thing he hated most, was to be taken advantage of.

This gambling den that he opened, he had placed many surveillance methods. Once a customer was about to open a Gu, he'd receive the news and would normally forcefully buy it.

But now Fang Yuan was inside his gambling den, getting a Gu under his very eyes. Jia Jin Sheng could feel his heart bleeding.

What he obtained, was a toad Gu.

Its entire body was yellow from head to foot. The belly was light yellow, and its back was brownish yellow, covered with many pimply boils, full of nodules and warts which were a distinctive characteristic of the toad species. At one glance, it looked slightly horrifying.

It was not big, being only palm-sized. Holding it in the palm was akin to holding two to three eggs.

Fang Yuan's expression was calm under all sorts of admiration, envy and exasperation, carefully deploying his primeval essence and injecting it into the toad's body.

At this moment, the Gu was being refined by Fang Yuan.

Gu worms obtained from within fossils are normally extremely weak. Not only do they have little to no strength left, their consciousness is also lazy, leaving them defenseless and unable to resist. Thus, they can be easily refined by the Gu masters.

Upon being awakened by Fang Yuan, the toad Gu opened its eyes slowly, and its belly slightly vibrated, softly calling out.

Croak.

Its voice was soft but it made everyone's expression very interesting.

The difference in value between a Gu that was alive against one that was dead was huge.

"It's a live Gu, he really opened a live Gu!!" Someone rubbed his eyes, unable to believe this.

"This is the Mudskin Toad, damn it, it really is the Mudskin Toad!" Someone recognised the toad Gu's identity and screamed agitatedly.

"This young man really has got luck, why don't I have such luck on my side!" Someone sighed, filled with complicated emotions such as envy, jealousy and hatred.

"Young master, congratulations! This, this, this is to date, my first time seeing such a precious Gu worm!" The female Gu Master was shocked beyond words, her eyes glistening with life.

"It's actually the Mudskin Toad! This is a rare Rank two Gu worm, its value worth five hundred primeval stones. Damn it, damn. Someone actually managed to open such a Gu worm in my shop. I've lost big time, big time!" Jia Jin Sheng's face was pale as he stared daggers at the toad, his heart having a strong urge to just snatch the Gu away.

But he knew he couldn't, for if he really did that, it would be asking for trouble.

This was not his family's village, but the Gu Yue clan's territory.

"Maybe I should've paid a bit more primeval stones, maybe he might have given it to me. That's right, he's just a student. If I offered a hundred primeval stones, there's no way he'd not be moved. Why didn't I do that?" Jia Jin Sheng was full of regret.

"No, maybe this young lad does not know his stuff. Even though he opened a Mudskin Toad, I should be able to suppress the price and buy it!" Jia Jin Sheng's heart had renewed hope.

But at the next moment, this hint of hope was mercilessly smashed by Fang Yuan's words.

Fang Yuan plainly looked at the Mudskin Toad in his hands, ignoring the surrounding people's praises and shock.

He used an extremely calm tone and said to Jia Jin Sheng, "Mudskin Toad, Rank two Gu worm, requires five hundred grams of yellow soil every meal, the more fertile the soil the better. Its species is few in number and it is the necessary main Gu in refining the Treasure Brass Toad. The market price is five hundred primeval stones. Jia Jin Sheng, do you want to buy this?"

"You, actually know so clearly....." Jia Jin Sheng mumbled. After such a shock, he could not say a word.

Fang Yuan laughed lightly and continued, "If you're unwilling, that's fine. I'll sell it to someone else, I'm sure someone will be interested."

"Hold it, wait, I'll buy it, I'll buy it. But can't this price be cheaper?" Jia Jin Sheng's smile turned bitter.

Fang Yuan turned around and walked away.

Jia Jin Sheng hurriedly chased after him. "Don't! Don't go! I'll buy, I'll buy it!"

Fang Yuan had no plans to nurture this Mudskin Toad.

It was a Rank two Gu, but Fang Yuan was still a Rank one initial stage. Although it ate yellow soil, Qing Mao Mountain was full of green soil, hence finding food for it would be troublesome.

Moreover, if he does not sell this Gu worm, Fang Yuan would have to feed three Gu worms himself. Putting aside the increased primeval stone expenditure, even the current amount of primeval stones in his possession would not be enough to feed them.

Thus, Fang Yuan's plan was to immediately sell away the Mudskin Toad, get the five hundred primeval stones and earn a fortune.

To a Rank one initial stage like Fang Yuan, five hundred primeval stones was considered a large amount already.

The transaction was quickly completed and Fang Yuan transferred the Mudskin Toad to Jia Jin Sheng in front of the crowd, at the same time accepting five heavy money bags. Each bag had a hundred primeval stones.

Fang Yuan originally had ninety-eight primeval stones, and after spending sixty on gambling rocks, he had thirty-eight left. Now, his fortune multiplied many times, and he owned five hundred and thirty-eight primeval stones.

Upon seeing this, many Gu masters turned green with envy.

Fang Yuan put the five bags in his bosom before taking the last piece of purple gold fossil and walked out of the tent.

"Young master, you're not opening that fossil?" The female Gu Master blinked rapidly and stared at Fang Yuan's back, loudly reminding him.

Fang Yuan paid no heed and left the gambling den without turning back.

He left behind a gang of stunned Gu Masters, staring at each other silently.

Jin Jia Sheng calling Fang Yuan little brother is a way of greeting; they are not related in any way.

Chapter 43: The final sixth purple gold rock

The green copper primeval sea had tides rising and falling, ebbing and flowing.

Above the sea level, the Liquor worm curled into a ball, emitting the wine vapour that gradually developed into white mist.

A surge of primeval essence with a “swoosh”, rushed up against the tide and into the wine mist. When the tide receded, there was already half left, and the colour was even darker. From initial stage jade green(1), it had converted into middle stage pale green.

Middle stage primeval essence fell into the sea, but it did not mix with the initial stage primeval essence. As if it was denser, it sank to the bottom.

Thus, the situation became that the upper layer of the primeval sea was filled with initial stage primeval essence, while the lower half was middle stage primeval essence.

As time flowed, the wine mist circulated within the aperture. Under the refinement of the Liquor worm, eventually, the initial stage primeval essence continued to decrease, while the middle stage primeval essence gradually increased.

It could be seen with the naked eye where the lower layer middle stage primeval essence gradually rose, while the upper layer initial stage primeval essence continued to decrease, but also rose in sea level.

As Fang Yuan refined his primeval essence, he extracted the natural essence from the primeval stones at the same time, quickly replenishing the dwindling primeval essence in his aperture.

Finally, the 45% primeval sea in his aperture was fully refined into middle stage primeval essence.

“Much thanks to the middle stage primeval essence, or else I would not have been able to open the rocks five times in the gambling den.” Sitting in a lotus position on his bed, Fang Yuan gradually opened his eyes.

It was currently late at night.

After he walked out of the gambling den, he did not tour around any of the other shops, but instead headed back to the academy.

Although it was at the fringe of the Gu Yue Mountain Village, as a Rank one initial stage Gu master, owning five hundred and thirty eight primeval stones is still too much.

This is not only because the primeval stones were heavy and a hassle to bring around. It also attracts other people’s coveting; in another sense, it would endanger his life.

If there was a Rank one upper stage, or even a Rank two who coveted his assets, with Fang Yuan’s current ability he would not be able to contend.

“Wealth comes and goes, but humans die because of wealth, it’s pathetic. What’s laughable is that many people in this world cannot comprehend that. The boat of benefits carries many people, but has also sunk many others.” Fang Yuan’s lips curled into a cold smirk as he looked at the grey white primeval stones in his hands.

A complete primeval stone was around the size of a duck egg. But the stone in his hand, as it had been extracted of half of its essence, was an entire circle smaller.

Fang Yuan did not regret it.

Everything has its gains and losses. Fang Yuan was only a C grade talent, yet he was using the Liquor Gu to refine his primeval essence, and his primeval stones expenditure was multiple times of the people of his age. Yet it was because of this that he was able to overcome the lack of his talent. If the real cultivation pace could be counted, he would be able to rank first three.

Fang Yuan put the primeval stones back into his money bag and took out that final purple gold fossil.

He bought a total of six fossils at the gambling den and opened five on the spot, bringing the last one back with him.

His eyes shone as he activated the Moonlight Gu, grinding with five fingers, slowly dissecting the rock.

The purple gold fossil gradually shrunk under the blue ripples, and finally was grinded to nothingness, leaving behind a pile of powder on the ground.

Fang Yuan was not surprised, because in rock gambling, you lose nine out of ten times.

Even with his five hundred years of experience, he could only manage eight losses out of ten times. And in the remaining two times, it depended on whether it was a live Gu or a dead Gu.

Dead Gu had basically no value. As for live Gu, they might not be a rare type of Gu worm, and even if it was a tremendously precious Gu, one might attract a life-threatening crisis because of it.

Fang Yuan's current cultivation level was still very low, it was at the bottom tier of the Gu Masters. The Mudskin Toad that he obtained earlier, if it weren't for the fact that this was the Gu Yue Mountain Village, it might have been forcefully snatched away by that Jia Jin Sheng.

Gambling was never the way for developing family wealth, and in fact it was a bigger cause of bankruptcy and debt. This was not the development path that Fang Yuan wanted to take.

Although the final purple gold fossil did not have a Gu worm, Fang Yuan was not disappointed. In fact he looked at the pile of rock powder and gradually broke into a smile.

Indeed, his ultimate motive in entering the gambling den was all for this pile of rock powder. That Mudskin Toad was only something he had gotten out of convenience.

He privately opened the fossil, and other than him, nobody knew the truth of this result.

From that day forth, he could claim that the Liquor worm was awakened and subdued from the purple gold fossil.

This idea was fabulous.

Firstly, nobody could confirm what Gu worm really exists in the fossils. Who would dare say that the Liquor worm could not hibernate within the purple gold fossil? That's completely possible!

Secondly, he had several eyewitnesses. He opened the Mudskin Toad, which would've left a strong impression on the Gu Masters in the gambling den.

Thirdly, even if someone relentlessly questioned him, he could push everything onto his luck. Luck was something unfathomable. Even if someone suspected that this was the Flower Wine Monk's Liquor worm, against an excuse like 'luck' they'd have no idea how to argue against Fang Yuan.

Within the dark room, Fang Yuan's expression was ominous.

One-sided covering up was akin to covering fire with paper. There would be a day where he would be exposed.

To get rid of a hidden threat like the Liquor worm, he'd have to strike first. This is Fang Yuan's style.

Moreover, he had thought about it carefully, and in the cultivation process that was to follow, he would need to expose the Liquor worm.

"For a Rank one Gu like the Liquor worm, it is extremely precious to Rank one Gu Masters. But for Rank two Gu Masters, it is no longer compatible for them. Thus even if this was exposed, all I would get is some attention, but it would not affect the overall situation, thus becoming nothing to be concerned over. It is not like the Spring and Autumn Cicada. If the Spring and Autumn Cicada is exposed, I might die a horrible death at the very next moment."

Five hundred years of experience in handling problems had already made Fang Yuan extremely familiar with human mentality, with their every thought clear as day to him.

"The Flower Wine Traveler's legacy and the Mudskin Toad, among my memories these are the only two treasures here, and now that they have been obtained by me, what I can do next is only gradual and steadfast cultivation."

Fang Yuan sighed a deep breath and relaxed his body, feeling a strong sense of fatigue engulfing him.

A Gu Master's primeval sea cultivation could not replace sleep.

Fang Yuan pulled his blanket and lay down on his bed, his eyes still half open.

Although there were five hundred primeval stones hidden under the bed, as well as many pots of Green Bamboo Wine, he still felt a sense of urgency and danger.

These five hundred over primeval stones were already a form of limit. From flourish to decline, Fang Yuan was clear that henceforth his primeval stone expenditure would only get bigger.

But his income was mostly from extorting his classmates.

He had been increasingly feeling the growth and improvement of his classmates. Especially in the recent few extortions, Gu Yue Mo Chen, Chi Chen, and his brother Gu Yue Fang Zheng, had greatly improved in their kicks and punches. Previously he only needed one or two strikes to take them down, but now he needed five or six.

"Another three to four plunders, and their punches and kicks would've been polished fully. If they challenge me one by one, with my current stamina, I cannot endure that kind of round robin battle. Five hundred primeval stones might seem a lot, but with my current expenditure of four stones a day, it is actually not that much."

“Qing Mao Mountain already has no treasures left, but nearby on the Bai Gu(2) Mountain, there is a secretly built strength inheritance of a Rank four Gu Master of the righteous path.

“Sigh, it still boils down to the Flower Wine Monk’s treasure being too little, only giving me a Liquor worm. Hmm... there is still that film image wall, maybe I can sell it to a certain merchant in the caravan...”

Fang Yuan thought as his eyelids grew heavier until he finally fell asleep.

Chapter 44: Monkey Wine, not yielding the opportunity of the Liquor worm

On the second day in the afternoon during lunch break, Fang Yuan went to the shopping district outside the mountain village again.

As many of them had to work in the day, there was not many villagers at the tentage area.

Fang Yuan walked to the area where the vendor was selling Intimate Grass last night, according to his memory. He reached only to see an empty cart, still on the spot. An ostrich was dragging the cart along.

It stood on the spot proudly, its body size as large as an ostrich while having the appearance of a chicken, the back of the creature bulged into a curved angle. A pair of wide wings were collected on the side of its body, the feathers splendidly bright in seven colours. The chicken head was raised tall, its huge red cockscomb like an agate crown, flashing with the luster of a gem under the sunlight.

“It seems I was still too late, the Intimate Grass was sold out. What a pity, if I were able to buy a few catty of Intimate Grass, I’d be able to save quite a bit of primeval stones.” Fang Yuan’s footsteps came to a halt as he walked away and continued to venture deeper into the area.

“Come, have a taste of the delicious wine from all the different villages. There are more than a hundred types of wine here, like the Lantern Grass Wine, the Nine Tune Wine with a strong aftertaste, the light and elegant Ancient Dragon Well, the sweet and sour Flower Rock Tune, the mouth-watering Hundred Spring Old Cellar, the rich and heavy fragrant Intoxication of Three Autumns.....” In front of a blue round bucket before the tent, a shop assistant was hawking with gusto.

A light flashed through Fang Yuan’s gaze as he immediately grew interested. With a turn, he entered the wine shop.

The decor in the wine shop was very unique.

At the most inner part of the tent, there was a long counter. A Gu Master was stationed there, with tens of crystal ladybugs around the size of wicker-baskets behind him, sticking onto the tent’s cloth walls.

On the floor there was no carpet, but rather the uncovered mountain rocks and soil. Among the soil, vibrant coloured mushrooms grew.

These mushrooms had all sorts of colours, looking round and slightly cute. Some were as large as tables, while others were short like benches. They were often distributed where a large table mushroom was surrounded by a few shorter bench mushrooms.

“This is the Innocent Mushroom, purposely grown by a Gu Master. It has the ability to absorb dust and particles in the air to purify it, and it’s a type of grass Gu.” Fang Yuan could recognise the mushroom’s origins immediately upon seeing them.

He chose one of the short mushrooms and sat down. The mushroom’s surface immediately sank down a little, making Fang Yuan feel like he was sitting on a sofa like those on Earth.

“Young master, this is the wine catalogue, would you like to take a look?” A shop assistant walked over.

Fang Yuan glanced at the wine catalogue and realised that the wine here was more expensive than the green bamboo wine.

“I’ll have a cup of monkey wine.” Fang Yuan put down the catalogue.

“A cup of monkey wine!” The shop assistant turned around and shouted.

At the counter, the Rank one Gu Master heard and immediately bent down to take out a bamboo wine cup.

Next he took the wine cup and turned around, facing the tentage. On the blue tent walls were the tens of crystal ladybugs, head facing downwards and tail facing upwards, quietly latched onto the walls as if they were merely decorations for the tent.

These crystal ladybugs were also a type of Gu. Its stomach was empty, as they were often used by Gu Masters to carry precious liquids.

Their bodies were transparent, as if they were made of crystals. From the outside, one could see that within the ladybug’s stomach, different kinds of liquor could be found.

The Gu Master quickly found the crystal ladybug that contained the monkey wine among them.

He placed the bamboo wine cup at the mouthpiece of the ladybug, and gently stroked the exoskeleton of the ladybug with his other hand.

A small amount of primeval essence entered the crystal ladybug’s body, and afterwards it opened its mouth and a gush of liquor flowed into the bamboo wine cup.

The liquor splattered around in the cup until it was full.

The Gu Master placed the bamboo wine cup which was filled with monkey wine on the counter. The shop assistant who had already been waiting for a while quickly held up the cup meticulously and walked a few steps to deliver it to Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan only took a tiny sip, the monkey wine was indeed a fruit liquor, being sweet and refreshing and delicate on the palate.

He stopped drinking, but instead with a thought, Fang Yuan summoned the Liquor worm.

The white and fat liquor worm turned into a flash of white light and curved an arc in the air. With a ‘plop’, it landed in the wine cup.

The wine splattered everywhere, sprinkling onto the mushroom table.

The Liquor worm joyfully beat about in the wine cup, and the monkey wine could be seen decreasing with the naked eye. In a few breaths time, the cup had dried out, with not a single drop left.

“It’s the Liquor worm!” The Gu Master at the counter shouted, his eyes sparkling. He was a Rank one Gu Master with Grade D talent, only able to follow the merchant caravan and work in this wine shop. His objective was to sightsee while finding his chances.

The Liquor worm can refine primeval essence and raise it by an entire realm. To a Rank one Gu Master, it can be said to be an extremely precious Gu worm. Isn’t this the chance he’s been painstakingly searching for?

“This young master, do you have any plans to sell this Liquor worm?” He excitedly approached, a look of sincerity in his eyes.

Fang Yuan shook his head, rejecting him with a determined attitude, getting up to leave after that.

His motive this time was to reveal the Liquor worm in his possession; he had never thought of selling it.

“Young master, young master, please hold on. I am really sincere about this, maybe we can sit down and have a discussion.” The Gu master reluctantly followed Fang Yuan to the tentage entrance but Fang Yuan did not show any response to him.

In the end he could only stand on the spot, his expression extremely regretful as he watched Fang Yuan’s rear view turn around a corner and disappear into the midst of the horizon.

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Unconsciously, the sun gradually set as the crescent moon took its place.

In the night, the moonlight shone brightly but was overpowered by the numerous street lights in the merchant shops.

The merchant shop tonight was swarming with business. Fang Yuan was squeezed left and right as he entered, hearing all sorts of conversations inadvertently.

“The stores normally open for three days and three nights. Tonight is already the second night, by the morning of the day after, the merchant caravan would have left on their journey already. Thus, we have to hurry if we want to buy anything.”

“I saw a Golden Bell Gu yesterday, sigh, too bad it was too expensive. After haggling with the shopkeeper for a long time, it did not get any cheaper. I’ll go and take a look tonight.”

“Did you guys hear? Last night, a young man opened a Mudskin Toad and earned a profit of five hundred primeval stones!”

.....

Fang Yuan listened attentively, feeling disappointment in his heart as he did not hear anything about the Liquor worm.

“The Liquor worm is only a Rank one Gu worm but it is extremely meaningful to a rank 1 Gu Master, yet it’s useless to a Rank two or Rank three Gu Master as they are unable to refine their primeval essence

any further with it. Thus it is normal that no one paid attention to this. However taking the initiative to expose the matter of the Liquor worm cannot be rushed for a period of time. If I overdo it, it might end up letting the cat out of the bag." As Fang Yuan walked, he pondered silently in his heart.

At this point, there was a hustle in front of him.

Next, Fang Yuan heard someone shout, "Quickly come and see, there's a dishonest merchant here selling fake Gu to our clansmen!"

Anger stirred among the crowd.

"Oh? There's something like that happening."

"Go and see quickly, which shop dares to cheat our clansmen!"

Fang Yuan followed the crowd and moved towards the commotion as well.

What met his eyes were a group of people surrounding the mouth of a large red tent, the massive crowd swarming it. Some were curiously watching while others stared coldly, but most of the people were enshrouded with a sense of anger.

Outside the tent stood two people.

One of them was a young Rank two Gu Master, whose attire showed that he was obviously from the Gu Yue clan.

The other person had a familiar face - it was the owner of the gambling den, Jia Jin Sheng.

The young Gu Master held a black Gu worm in his hands, raising it up and shouting to the crowd, "My clansmen, this person in front of me sold me a fake Gu yesterday. Lying to me that it was a Black Boar Gu, and sold it to me for two hundred and fifty primeval stones. To think that when I got home to refine it, I realized that it was not a Black Boar Gu but simply an ordinary stinky fat worm!"

Jia Jin Sheng laughed coldly, "Don't accuse me falsely. Since when did I tell you it was a Black Boar Gu? What proof do you have?"

The young Gu Master on seeing Jia Jin Sheng's denial, fell into a rage and grabbed Jia Jin Sheng's wrist, "You cunning merchant, you dare to deny it! You actually dare to lie to me of the Gu Yue clan on Qing Mao Mountain itself, are you trying to look for death?!"

"Let go of me!" Jia Jin Sheng was also furious as he flicked his wrist, slapping away the young Gu Master's hand, "If you want to find trouble and extort money, you should find a better target. I am not afraid of you! My brother is Jia Fu, a Rank four Gu Master, what can you do to me?"

"You!" The young Gu Master stared with his eyes wide, but did not dare to take action. The name of a Rank four Gu Master was enough to intimidate him.

"Bah!" Jia Jin Sheng spat on the ground, raising his head and looked at the young Gu Master, laughing in disdain, "It was you who wanted to take advantage of the cheap Gu. Didn't you use your brain to think, why a Black Boar Gu which can raise a Gu master's strength, being such a rare Gu worm, was sold even

more cheaply than a Liquor worm? It is normally sold at six hundred primeval stones. Did you think that you could buy one for just two hundred and fifty primeval stones? Dream on!”

“Bastard……” The young Gu Master gritted his teeth, his face flushing red as he trembled out of anger, his chest burning with the rage of humiliation.

There were chatters among the people as they got restless, discussing furiously. But no one dared to step up, for the Rank four Gu Master status of Jia Fu was like a giant hill in front of them, stabilizing the crowd.

“This lad is too vicious, what a cunning merchant!”

“No wonder he dared to be so arrogant on Qing Mao Mountain, he is actually Jia Fu’s little brother.”

“I heard that they are just half-brothers, but even with that Rank one cultivation, he is able to use this relationship to act unrestrained in the caravan.”

“What happened here exactly?” At this moment, a loud voice spoke out.

“Jia Fu is here!”

“The leader is here to settle the dispute, everyone give way.”

The discussion came to a halt as everyone separated and formed a narrow path between them.

A middle-aged Gu Master having a muscular short body coupled with a giant belly, walked in. He wore a long-sleeved yellow robe, being the leader of the merchant caravan, Jia Fu.

“Sir Jia Fu, my regards.” The young Gu Master was furious but did not dare to say anything. He forced himself to endure the anger and paid respects to Jia Fu.

Jia Jin Sheng was frozen on the spot, not expecting his brother to arrive, his face suddenly pale as anger flashed across his eyes.

This peculiar expression was captured by Fang Yuan who was observing from afar as he pondered about the situation.

Chapter 45: Clear of the schemes, unknowingly trapped in the urn

“Hello, young Gu Master, what is the problem here?” Jia Fu walked to the middle of the crowd and asked amicably.

The young Gu Master was flattered and he cupped his fists again. Looking at the surrounding clansmen, he bucked up his courage and explained the entire situation.

“So that’s what happened!” Jia Fu nodded while listening. Next, he asked Jia Jin Sheng, “Little brother, is this true?”

Jia Jin Sheng turned his head away and snorted coldly, not looking at his brother.

Jia Fu pondered solemnly.

The surrounding people were silent, not daring to interrupt his thoughts. All awaited in anticipation of his verdict.

This matter was in fact, due to Jia Jin Sheng's scam, but the young Gu Master was also at fault for being greedy and not being vigilant himself, otherwise he would not have gotten cheated.

If Jia Fu wanted to defend his brother, with his Rank four cultivation, even the Gu Yue clan leader could not do anything.

Jia Fu thought for a while before finally speaking. "I've understood the situation, my brother is at fault for this matter, causing this young man to suffer a loss and buy fake products, I am really sorry!" Saying so, he cupped his fists towards the young Gu Master.

"Sir Jia Fu!" The young Gu Master was largely surprised, and quickly said modestly, "You are a Rank four Gu Master, I am merely a Rank two, this is too much for me, too much!"

Jia Fu waved his hand: "Hehe, this has nothing to do with cultivation levels, I act impartially regardless of ability. A wrong is a wrong, I apologise to you on behalf of the merchant caravan. As for compensation, how about this, you lost two hundred and fifty primeval stones, so I will compensate double that amount to you on behalf of the Jia family."

He executed his promise immediately, as a follower took out five money bags and handed it to the young Gu Master in public.

Every money bag was filled to the brim, each containing a hundred primeval stones.

The young Gu Master took over the money bag, so overwhelmed that he could not say anything.

"However, I have a word of advice to you." Jia Fu continued and reminded, "A Black Boar Gu is very rare, for it is able to raise a Gu Master's strength permanently. Although it is only Rank one, it is very hard to find on the market. Every time one appears in the market, it would be bought immediately. The pricing is around six hundred primeval stones. Trying to get one with two hundred and fifty primeval stones is impractical."

"Junior has learnt his lesson!" The young Gu Master bowed deeply to Jia Fu in gratitude.

Cheers erupted from the crowd.

"Sir Jia Fu is brilliant!"

"Magnificent, as expected of Sir Jia Fu!"

"As a Rank four Gu Master, he did not make use of his status to bully the weaker party, Sir Jia Fu really is the role model of the righteous path."

"No, no." Jia Fu smiled, cupping his fists towards the crowd, modestly saying, "Our Jia family business bases our principles on trust and honesty. Everyone, my brother is young and foolish, liking to play pranks on others. He is actually very kind, I hope everyone can be more bearing of him, don't take it to heart."

The crowd's cheers became even louder.

“Hmph!” Jia Jin Sheng’s expression was ugly as he stomped on the ground and walked into the tent. Next he walked out from the back of the tent.

Fang Yuan looked at this silently, thinking in his heart, “It seems that the image wall at the Flower Wine Monk’s place can be sold.”

The Flower Wine Monk had used a Photo-audio Gu to record the ugly acts of the 4th generation Gu Yue clan leader. Before he died, with indignance in his heart, used the Photo-audio Gu and slapped it on the wall, creating an image wall. The image wall’s images continued to loop, showing the truth to the people.

With the intention of maximizing his profits, Fang Yuan had wanted to sell this image wall long ago. He believed that the other two clan families on Qing Mao Mountain, the Bai family and Xiong family would be very interested in this image wall.

But to sell this personally would be very inappropriate. His cultivation was too weak and if he brought this image wall to the other villages, he could easily be silenced.

Even if the transaction was successful and he managed to return safely, there was no secret that would stay a secret forever, and once it was revealed to the Gu Yue’s higher-ups, he would be kicked out of the clan family at best.

In accordance to Fang Yuan’s plans, he still needed to make use of the Gu Yue clan. Thus, the safest way was to sell it to a certain merchant in the caravan. All of them were outsiders, and were not involved in the disputes among the villages, thus it was the best choice for him.

In just one day, this caravan would leave the Gu Yue mountain village and lead towards either the Xiong family or the Bai family.

Fang Yuan could reduce his risks to the minimum by selling to them; it was the safest method.

.....

“One more cup!”

“Wine, where’s the wine?”

“Quickly get me the wine, are you afraid that I’m unable to pay?”

Jia Jin Sheng slammed the mushroom table as he howled.

“Young master Jia, here’s your wine!” The clerk quickly brought him his wine.

Jia Jin Sheng grabbed the bamboo cup and tilted his head and gulped the liquor.

“Good wine!” He laughed loudly, sounding coarse and bleak.

With a bang, he placed the cup on the table and howled again. “Get me another glass, I want as many as you can supply!”

The clerks did not dare to offend him and could only do as he said.

Luckily, this wine house was already full of people. Not only were the mushroom tables packed with people, even the surrounding streets were packed with people. Jia Jin Sheng's drunkard temperament was not very peculiar in this bustling street.

Jia Jin Sheng drank cup by cup, wanting to drown his sorrows. With his back facing the crowd, no one observed that as he drank, two clear lines of tears flowed down his cheeks.

Who would know of his pain, his sorrow?

A hateful person has to have his pitiful side, conversely. Everybody had their own stories.

Amongst his brothers, he was the youngest, being the most handsome and resembling his father the most, thus being the most doted by his father. But heaven made fun of him by giving him only D grade talent.

As he grew up, he lived under the pressure of his brothers. He was indignant and wanted to resist, but with that talent, there was nothing he could do.

His father felt death approaching and wanted to split his assets. Two people were to lead a merchant caravan. They pledged to break up the family property in accordance to the results.

Jia Jin Sheng wanted to rely on his own method to acquire the family assets and the recognition of his clan. But to think that he became his brother's stepping stone once again.

When Jia Fu appeared, he knew he fell into a trap. This was a scheme right from the beginning. But what could he do? Once he entered this caravan, he was doomed to be Jia Fu's fodder. Rank four and Rank one was such a huge gap that he was powerless to fight again.

"Jia Fu!" He forced this name out of his mouth, his eyes burning with the flames of hatred, he was unable to take it lying down!

"Do you wish to deal with your brother? I can help you." At this time, he heard a voice.

Jia Jin Sheng was stunned but when he turned around, he saw that for quite a while, there was someone sitting beside him.

He shook his head and blinked a few times, finally seeing who it was.

Who else if not for Fang Yuan?

"It's you!" He stared at Fang Yuan, slightly angry, "I remember you! Lucky lad, getting a Mudskin Toad from my gambling den! You're here to mock me?"

Fang Yuan looked at Jia Jin Sheng, his eyes cold as water. "I have a huge business, so if you wish to acquire better results and get more assets, why not listen to me?"

Jia Jin Sheng was suspicious. His back straightened and he sat up, "How do you know about the matter of the assets?"

This secret was not easily known to outsiders, but Fang Yuan was easily able to guess it.

“The Jia family’s business is not top secret, how can it evade people who wish to know?” Fang Yuan laughed coldly and thought of a memory from his previous life.

The Jia family head was a legendary figure who started from scratch. He made his fortune through the merchant caravans and revived the Jia family’s village. He gradually got old, and when he could feel that his time was up, he got his children to form a caravan in twos and according to their results, split the assets. The better they did, the more family assets they get.

But his eldest son Jia Fu and second son Jia Gui were extremely talented. After competing for six to seven years, they still could not come to a conclusion, and even after the family head died, there was no clear victor.

After the Jia family head died, there was an enormous amount of assets. While competing for the assets, the two brothers’ conflict escalated and both called in external help, causing a large scale Gu competition. Finally, the both of them died. The Jia family that had prospered quickly also failed quickly, causing people to talk about it in amazement.

Jia Jin Sheng squinted his eyes, for Fang Yuan’s explanation was irrefutable. He thought, from the time his father declared the asset distribution, it had already been two years. There are no impenetrable walls in the world, so even if someone found out about it, it’s nothing strange.

His real worry was whether this was another trap by Jia Fu. But no matter what, there was no harm listening.

Fang Yuan did not speak immediately. He surveyed the surroundings. This was the same wine cellar he came into in the afternoon. The shopkeeper operated independently, and at night, the shop was bustling with business.

Discussing here was a far safer place than a quiet environment, as it could avoid the eavesdropping of certain Gu worms.

He hooked his fingers at Jia Jin Sheng. “Lend me your ear.”

Jia Jin Sheng unhappily snorted, but still slanted his head forward.

After hearing Fang Yuan’s description, he frowned and looked at Fang Yuan coldly. “This business involves the three families on Qing Mao Mountain, and we merchants detest getting involved in other people’s disputes. Hmph, you were sent here by Jia Fu to harm me right?”

Fang Yuan had long expected for him to be suspicious. He did not bother to explain, but got up and left. “Hehe, in that case, I’ll go talk to your brother.”

Jia Jin Sheng squinted his eyes, staring at Fang Yuan. Only until Fang Yuan had left the wine shop did he lose his patience. He chased out of the tent and caught up to Fang Yuan, “Don’t go, we can have a talk.”

Fang Yuan placed both hands behind his back, staring at him from the side, coldly saying, “I know you are suspicious of me, but now that your brother has you firmly caught, you’re almost close to finished. If you choose to believe in me, there’s still hope, if not you’re doomed. Are you daring enough to take this bet?”

Jia Jin Sheng's expression changed as he corrected and said, "Jia Fu is but only a little older, I have never acknowledged him as my brother! But you're right, I'm taking this bet."

Fang Yuan said solemnly, "Two thousand primeval stones, no haggling."

Jia Jin Sheng laughed bitterly, "Too expensive, this trade involves high risk."

"The greater the risk, the greater the rewards." Fang Yuan shook his head, his attitude firm, "If you sell it to those two families, you will only earn much more."

Jia Jin Sheng nodded, showing a hint of seriousness, "This I believe, for these years the Bai family has been growing fast, and an A grade talent called Bai Ning Bing has appeared recently, he has a great future ahead. Qing Mao Mountain's situation is gradually changing. Your Gu Yue family's dominance is wavering, and if I sell this to the Bai family, I can at least earn twice as much!"

Hearing Jia Jin Sheng's understanding of the Qing Mao Mountain's situation, Fang Yuan could not help but evaluate him again, thinking: 'This Jia Jin Sheng, he is still a merchant family member after all, not those useless second generations.'

Jia Jin Sheng sighed, "Regardless of whether this is a trap, I'm jumping in. I promise you, two thousand primeval stones it is! However, I want to see the merchandise first."

"Of course, come with me." Fang Yuan laughed as he led the way. Jia Jin Sheng was already trapped in the urn, and the situation was fully in Fang Yuan's grasp.

Chapter 46: Don't think too much when killing people

Following his memories, Fang Yuan brought Jia Jin Sheng to the cavern in the mountain.

The two entered the crack in the stone, and the path became more narrow as their vision was dyed in darkness. Jia Jin Sheng grew more vigilant as he was in an unfamiliar environment.

Finally, he could not hold it in any further, "I have a question, Jia Fu always treats people with honesty and is amicable with a good reputation. On the other hand, I lied and cheated, forcing transactions through coercion. Why did you choose to deal with me and not him?"

Fang Yuan's voice travelled through the stone crack. "Because his cultivation is too high, so if he sees the image wall, he can choose to deal with me, or abandon the deal and just give the image wall to the Gu Yue clan head. I do not like giving the decision-making to others, furthermore I do not believe in integrity. The so-called prestigious reputation is just because the profits are small and are unable to incur his greed."

More importantly, it was because Jia Jin Sheng's position was special, for his cultivation was weak and he was easy to manipulate. Fang Yuan was naturally not going to mention this, of course.

"Hehe." Jia Jin Sheng laughed dryly, his suspicions mostly gone immediately. "That last sentence really resonated within me."

The two finally got into the secret cave.

Jia Jin Sheng saw the image wall at once, and could not help but laugh loudly, "Haha, I guessed right, you didn't lie to me!"

Fang Yuan stood behind him, laughing lightly, not saying anything.

Jia Jin Sheng looked at the wall, seeing the changing images and the animosity between the Flower Wine Monk and the 4th generation clan leader.

He looked at it once and retracted his gaze, looking at Fang Yuan, mocking, "Your 4th generation ancestor doesn't look that strong huh."

Fang Yuan replied, "This is nothing. The Gu Yue clan needed a hero, thus the 4th generation became a hero. Not long after, the Bai family needs a despicable scum, so the 4th generation will become a degenerate. Hero, scum, all these are just people's opinions."

"Well said!" Jia Jin Sheng laughed as he surveyed the cave.

His sight was set on the corpse of the Flower Wine Monk, and he stopped for a while before saying, "What a pity, a Rank five powerhouse. You've gotten much benefits from him huh?"

A Rank five Gu Master's inheritance was significant. Jia Jin Sheng's heart beat faster upon thinking of this, and he could not help but ask.

Fang Yuan shook his head. "It's been so long, most of the Gu are dead, I only got a Liquor worm."

Jia Jin Sheng did not believe him. "Don't lie to me brother, as long as this deal goes through, we are accomplices, I won't reveal any information. Tell me honestly, what did you gain from this?"

Fang Yuan laughed coldly and did not bother replying him.

Jia Jin Sheng's response was anticipated, and this was also why Fang Yuan chose him over Jia Fu.

Jia Jin Sheng continued to say: "At the very least, I know the Flower Wine Monk has a Thousand Li Earthwolf spider(1). That is a Rank five steed-type Gu, with a large body and is proficient in burrowing underground. The Flower Wine Monk was a demonic cultivator, and his ability to get about freely was mostly due to this Thousand Li Earthwolf spider, allowing him to escape from the righteous cultivators."

"Oh, there's something like that?" Fang Yuan frowned. Regarding the Flower Wine Monk, he did not have much information.

Jia Jin Sheng smugly said, "I came to your village last year and heard this legend, and I found it interesting so I went home and researched about it. The Thousand Li Earthwolf spider and Flower Wine Monk were inseparable, and in my opinion, this cave should have been dug out by the spider. Otherwise, with the Qing Mao Mountain's rich and heavy soil, how can a cave like this form? Brother, you don't have to conceal it anymore. The Flower Wine Monk died here so there's definitely his Thousand Li Earthwolf spider here!"

Fang Yuan frowned even more deeply, feeling a sense of discomfort, his gaze grim, "Yes, there are no other exits here. The Thousand Li Earthwolf spider is massive, he would not have been able to squeeze out from the crack we just walked through. However, there is a possibility that the Thousand Li

Earthwolf was plotted against and killed by the 4th generation. Seeing that image wall, even when the Flower Wine Monk was fighting he did not summon the Thousand Li Earthwolf spider.”

“That makes the situation even more peculiar. This cave is not formed naturally, thus it has to be created by the Flower Wine Monk. Without the Thousand Li Earthwolf spider, could there be any other methods?” Jia Jin Sheng looked at Fang Yuan suspiciously.

Fang Yuan’s frown swelled into a knot as he felt more and more uncertain. From Jia Jin Sheng’s information, he found out something: it appears as if there was a crucial point that he had missed out.

He could not help but fall into deep thoughts.

Jia Jin Sheng was thinking too, the image wall was no longer enough for him. Once he confirmed that the situation was real, he wanted to dig out the Flower Wine Monk’s inheritance from Fang Yuan.

But at this time, something unexpected to the two of them happened!

The image wall which was playing endlessly, suddenly changed its image.

A gravely injured, pale bald Gu Master replaced the original video and appeared on the wall.

He weakly sprawled on the ground, his back facing the wall. His chest and limbs were deeply cut, but the strange thing was that his wounds did not bleed, as if his entire body’s blood had been drained out.

“I am the Flower Wine Monk.” The bald Gu Master laughed, his expression distorted with madness, “Future person, no matter who you are, to endure this video and let it play for nearly one hundred days, it proves that you have no good will towards the Gu Yue family. Very well, you shall be my successor! My entire inheritance is yours, but I have a condition. You must exterminate the Gu Yue clan for me. Murder the entire clan and leave no one alive!”

Jia Jin Sheng was stunned on the spot, his face frozen with shock.

“A Rank five powerhouse, the Flower Wine Monk’s inheritance!”

He was stunned, and for a moment his brains were churning and thinking.

“My god! A Rank five powerhouse, what does that mean? Rank three is a family elder, Rank four is a village lord, and a Rank five is a mountain lord, able to rule over a mountain and do as he pleases! To think that in this tiny place, there is a Rank five Gu Master’s power inheritance.”

“Wait, Flower Wine Monk is a demonic cultivator, so if I inherit his powers, is it inappropriate? No, strength has nothing to do with good or evil. The Flower Wine Monk wants his successor to destroy the Gu Yue clan, but do I really have to? He’s already dead, I just have to take his inheritance and ignore those issues.”

“This is a godsend opportunity. Even with my D grade talent, if I inherit the Flower Wine Monk’s inheritance, I might be able to improve my talent. Those rare talent-raising Gu worms, they might be part of the inheritance. If I inherit this fortune and become a Rank four or five Gu Master, I’d be able to contest with Jia Fu!”

“Wait! I almost forgot, there’s an outsider, what should I do?”

“Should I split the inheritance with him? No, kill him! Only by killing him can I protect this secret. Yes, I should calm him down first, and lie that we’re going to split the treasure. Getting rid of his guard, then assaulting him and killing him here. This place is so hidden, it’s great. Even if I kill him, nobody would know.”

Although he thought of all these, it was merely a moment in real life.

Having a plan, he squinted and revealed a fake smile.

He slowly turned around and faced Fang Yuan but just as he was about to speak, he saw two blue moonblades flying towards him.

His pupils dilated into the size of a pin; the distance was too small, he could not respond in time!

“You.....” His voice came to a halt.

The moonblade aimed accurately for his neck, and in an instant, his skull flew into the air, fresh blood pouring out like a fountain.

After two seconds, his corpse plopped on the ground.

The scalding blood poured on the mountain walls, dyeing the withering vines red.

“Don’t think so much when killing people.” Fang Yuan looked at the corpse plainly and then shifted his gaze towards the image wall.

“To think there was such a twist here. How interesting,” He muttered as his eyes emitted an eerie glow.

Chapter 47: Jia Jin Sheng, I actually did not want to kill you

The rain crashed down heavily.

Grey clouds covered the sky, and the continuous mountains far away blended into a mass of black ink.

The rain curtain interwove the heavens and earth together.

Crack!

The sky flashed bright abruptly, and a bolt of lightning cut across the sky like a silver snake, then in an instant it was gone.

Summer was approaching, and the end of spring’s heavy rain seemed to bring about a trace of the warmth of summer.

On Qing Mao Mountain, huge expanses of jade green spear bamboo stood tall and straight, resisting the winds and rain, the bodies of the bamboo straight like a spear as ever, the tips of the bamboo pointing towards the blue sky dome.

In the Gu Yue village, row upon row of innumerable tall-pillared houses endured against the great rain’s washing. Outside the village, the caravan had already set out on their journey once again.

“The rain is heavy, take note of the pavement.”

“Don’t fall behind, Gu Masters better pull your Gu properly, especially the fat beetle, don’t block the mountain road anymore!”

“You bunch of mortal martial fighters, better open your eyes wide and pay careful attention. Lose a single thing and you’ll be paying for that!”

There was an endless stream of shouts rising and falling in succession from the merchant caravans.

After stopping over at the Gu Yue village for three days, it was time for this merchant caravan to leave the place and follow the mountain path through Qing Mao Mountain and head for their next destination.

The heavy rain cleansed the heaven and earth, and the roads surrounding the village were paved with cobblestone, this was still alright. However after around five hundred meters the roads would turn into a muddy and narrow mountain path.

The head of the proud ostrich chicken was drooping, its colourful rainbow feathers soaking wet under the rain, sticking into clumps, becoming the example of a drenched and bedraggled chicken.

The fat beetle worm moved its fat huge body, walking extremely slow forward. The rainwater beat upon its black armor, forming streams of water flow, sliding down both sides of its body onto the earth.

The shaggy mountain spider was also drenched, and its green-black coloured fur were adhered together.

On the contrary, the toad Gu were happily calling out, carrying out the load and Gu Masters, hopping forward on the mountain. And the winged snake had already put away its wings, the thick snake’s body cheerfully travelling on the muddy water.

To protect the goods and prevent them from getting drenched wet by the rainwater, the Gu Masters were showing their magical abilities at the moment.

On a few enormous fat beetles stood Gu Masters in the middle. Their two hands were raised high, each of them having a One-stretch Golden Light Worm floating in midair one inch away from their palms.

The green copper primeval essence was like steam evaporating as it concentrated into the One-stretch Golden Light Worm’s bodies. The entire Gu flashed like a golden bean, acting as the heart, supporting a tremendous faint gold coloured bubble dome.

The hemisphere-shaped bubble dome had a rather huge scope. It was able to completely cover one fat beetle worm and still have some leftover space.

As the rain smashed upon the bubble dome, it would bounce away, just like hitting on an umbrella. However this sort of One-stretch Golden Light Worm continuously consumed primeval essence, and in the long run the Rank one Gu Masters would not be able to take it anymore.

As expected, after a while, a Gu Master shouted: “No more, my primeval essence is almost exhausted, who can take over?”

“I can!” Almost simultaneously, a Gu Master rushed forward and replaced his position.

A few Gu Masters pulling the carriages or riding the mountain spiders activated the Green Silk Gu in their bodies.

Under its influence, their hair started to grow furiously.

A normal person's hair had at least one hundred thousand strands. A hundred thousand strands of hair, each being five to six metres, intertwining and covering the Gu Master's body along with the steed, formed an impenetrable hair raincoat.

The Green Silk Gu was a Rank one Gu worm, often used for defense. It uses 30% of green copper primeval essence to activate, and was not a continuous expenditure type like the One-stretch Golden Light Worm.

This Green Silk Gu can be combined with the Rank one Black Boar Gu to become the Rank two Black Mane Gu.

The Black Mane Gu when activated would not only involve hair on the head, but also hair on all the pores. Within a few seconds, the Gu Master's body would gain a black mane protective armor.

The Black Mane Gu's advancement path was the Rank three famous Gu, Steel Mane Gu.

Other than the One-stretch Golden Light Worm and Green Silk Gu, many of the caravan Gu Masters also chose the Water Spider Gu. It can be seen that there was a thin layer of blue raincoat on their bodies.

On the raincoat's surface, the water circulated randomly. As the raindrops hit onto the raincoat, it would immediately become part of the raincoat.

Since the Gu Masters were continuously soaking under the rain, the raincoat on their bodies would grow thicker. Every now and then the Gu Masters would have to urge the Water Spider Gu and discharge away the excess water. At this moment the thick raincoats would be reduced to the original thin layer.

As for those mortal warriors, they were constantly on the move, watching over the goods on the muddy road. Most of them wore raincoats made of straw, but in their rush and confusion the straw raincoats had limited effect from avoiding the rain, so they were already drenched wet by the rainwater.

"This accursed weather!" The warriors cursed in their hearts.

In the rainy weather, the mountain trail becomes even harder to walk on.

Under this weather, martial artists might be strong physically but they are still mortals. Once their bodies are drenched by rain and coupled with intensive labour, they would easily catch a cold. Getting a serious illness was the lightest consequence, perhaps they might catch repercussions, and if they catch a certain tough disease, it might cause them to get gravely ill and abandoned on the trip itself.

If they encounter slippery roads on the mountain trails, or encounter wild beasts and Gu worms' attacks, they might lose their lives.

The caravan may be big, and have many Gu Masters. But every time they went on a journey, there would always be a great decrease in numbers. Mortal martial artists die the most, while Gu Masters also have injuries and casualties.

If the caravan was unlucky enough to encounter large-scale migrating beasts, they might even get wiped out completely.

Other than natural disasters, there were also human-caused problems. Among the villages, there might be those who do not welcome the caravan. Some villages like to rob the outsiders.

“We’re leaving, see you next year!” Some of the Gu Masters sat on the Gu worms and turned their bodies to bid farewell.

At the entrance of the village, many people gathered as they sent the caravan off with their gazes.

“You must come again next year!” Reluctant to see them depart, the children shouted loudly.

The adults had more complicated expressions.

“The road ahead is unforeseen. In these hard times, for those who are able to come to the village next year, how many would still be familiar faces?”

“Be it at the merchant caravan or in the village, it is not easy to earn a living.”

As the caravan left further and further, as the crowd dispersed.

The cheerful and lighthearted market atmosphere had also subsequently disappeared. The original spot that had erected tents and shops was left now with a huge mess. The grass turf had been walked upon continuously by the crowd, grassroots and mud soil trampled out. The rainwater hit on its surface, immediately forming mud and numerous little pot-holes that collected muddy water. In addition to that, there was a lot of garbage left over.

Fang Yuan stood on a secluded hillside, watching the merchant caravan from far away alone. The merchant caravan was like a fat and colourful flower python, snaking through the narrow mountain road under the grey heavy rain, slowly entering the dense mountain forest.

“Ah, the heavens are sending their blessings...” Fang Yuan sighed lightly.

He held a butter yellow paper umbrella, quietly standing in the rain.

Fang Yuan wore the most plain flax cloth garment, his body slim, his skin bringing about the pale whiteness of a fifteen year old teenager, a settled clump of clean and short black hair atop his head. The ends of his hair trembled slightly in the wind under his umbrella.

While others curse the weather, he was lamenting the timely appearance of the rain.

He killed Jia Jin Sheng last night and cleaned up the scene, but because it happened so unexpectedly, there was bound to be areas of neglect. Especially with the bloody smell, because the cave is not ventilated, the smell could not disperse easily.

With this rain, it cleaned up the air and environment, greatly reducing the chances of getting exposed by smell tracking methods. The crack was bound to have a small cascade of water flowing down, and once the fresh water vapour diluted the air, he would not be exposed for the short time being.

Of course, once time passes, the chance of getting exposed increases.

In this world there were all sorts of Gu worms, and investigative methods were abundant, even Fang Yuan only knew a portion of them.

The rain produced pitter patter sounds as it hit on the yellow umbrella. Then following the shape of the umbrella, streams of water flowed down onto the limestones beneath Fang Yuan's feet, hitting and creating splashes.

Seeing the caravan curve into a corner, completely disappearing into the forests, Fang Yuan did not show a sign of relief, but instead looked grim.

"Although Jia Jin Sheng's cultivation was weak and had little talent, he had a special status. The caravan's people are all busy with business, thus no one found out that he's missing. But once some time passes, it'd definitely be found out. By then, Jia Fu would return to investigate, and the real challenge would be then."

"The Jia family head intentionally arranged Jia Jin Sheng and Jia Fu to be on the same caravan, he had deep intentions. In terms of cultivation, they are worlds apart. In terms of cunningness, they're also incomparable. Such an arrangement is to inflict a blow to Jia Jin Sheng and let him be clear of reality, and live life peacefully. At the same time he is testing Jia Fu's nature, for if he is too overbearing on Jia Jin Sheng, how can he hand the position of clan head to him?"

"Jia Jin Sheng never truly understood his father's intentions. Although he had some intelligence, he only managed to scratch the surface of a merchant's wits, what a pity. A pity of such a good pawn piece."

Fang Yuan felt regrettable in his heart. With five hundred years of experience, he could easily see past the surface and understand the true nature of the situation.

When he saw the dispute between the two that night, he could tell the complicated relationship between Jia Jin Sheng and Jia Fu, and thus he had a vague plan formed in his heart from then on.

In his plan, Jia Jin Sheng was a very suitable pawn. His cultivation was weak but he held a high position in the caravan, and although he had some wits, he had little experience, thus Fang Yuan could easily manipulate him.

Once controlled, this pawn would be extremely useful.

For one, he could build a strong network of smuggling through his relationship, preparing up for usurping treasures from future killings.

Secondly, Fang Yuan could hide in the background and use the image wall to stir up conflict among the Qing Mao mountain's three families, causing a civil war and enabling him to be able to reap the rewards.

Thirdly, Fang Yuan could rely on him to make his way into the Jia family interior. The future Jia family dispute caused a large scale Gu fighting competition, it will be a huge affair with lots of benefits to gain. Fang Yuan could make use of this to acquire the greatest reward for himself.

"My cultivation is still too low, restraining me greatly in doing things. If there was a pawn for me to use, I can do some things that I cannot attempt myself, it is not only convenient but also lowers the risk of doing so. If I get exposed, I can simply discard the pawn and stay safe myself."

“The surrounding people know the situation well and are loyal to the family, thus they aren’t good to manipulate. Only an outsider like Jia Jin Sheng can be used more efficiently to execute my plans. Unfortunately, I did not expect the Flower Wine Monk to leave behind his power inheritance.”

The Flower Wine Monk is a Rank five Gu Master, his inheritance is definitely more valuable than this pawn.

Of course, it’d be good if he could get the best of both worlds, but in face of such treasure, Jia Jin Sheng could not longer be controlled, thus he had to be discarded.

“Nothing will go smoothly forever in this world.” Fang Yuan sighed and shook his head.

The Flower Wine Monk’s inheritance appeared and disrupted Fang Yuan’s original plans. In addition, after the changes to the image wall, the videos and images were all gone, only showing a line written in blood, telling Fang Yuan to destroy the image wall and reveal a cavern entrance. Following the trail, he would be able to get the inheritance.

The blood writing only appeared for a few breaths before vanishing, and the image wall also turned back into the most ordinary mountain wall.

Fang Yuan spent the entire night cleaning up the murder scene, and had no time to break the wall.

“Killing Jia Jin Sheng in a hurry, this would leave many problems for me in the future, and I am but only temporarily safe. Although I succeeded in getting rid of the evidence, there is bound to be trouble coming for me in the future. In this case, I would have to change my way of exposing the Liquor worm. I cannot go to the secret cave behind the wall crack either. I have to stay in the mountain village for some time to anticipate investigation in the near future.”

Fang Yuan turned around and held his umbrella, walking in the rain towards the village.

“But this is fine too. I can spend a large amount of primeval stones during this period to refine to middle stage primeval essence. Using it, I can nurture my aperture and break through into the middle stage. Once I reached the middle stage, my power will double, allowing me to get the inheritance more easily and with greater confidence.”

A demonic cultivator’s inheritance was not as mild and gentle as a righteous cultivator’s, for there was often dangerous tests and tasks, and if one cannot get through, they’d have to pay the price with their life.

“The world is hard to predict, but it is precisely this that makes it interesting.” Fang Yuan smiled coldly.

The green mountain beneath the heavy rain extended continuously and unending, its green mixed with grey, appearing stifling and heavy.

A gust of wind blew, and the raindrops inclined a little, hitting onto Fang Yuan’s shoulder and attacking him with a burst of chilliness.

He thought about Jia Jin Sheng again.

Sighing in his heart, he thought, “Jia Jin Sheng, actually I... did not want to kill you.”

What a waste of a good pawn.

Chapter 48: A little cute

It rained for four days before stopping.

The sun rose high into the sky, tearing away the rain curtain, seemingly like it was unveiling summer itself.

The breath of summer had faintly started to come around.

The weather became increasingly sunny and cloudless, sweeping away the sentimental breath of spring, and the temperatures slowly rose.

In the night of spring, the lively Dragonpill crickets had retreated, cowering away into the deep ground to lay eggs. The green spear bamboo specially found on Qing Mao Mountain had started to grow wildly, and nearly everyday it would show an obvious increase in height.

The grass and the trees began to change from emerald green into a dark green colour. The neverending green mountains started to look even more verdant and lush.

The weather was clear for thousands of miles, blue like a crystal.

Bang, bang, bang.

At the training grounds in the academy, sounds of punches and kicks could be heard.

After exchanging over ten blows, Gu Yue Mo Bei was kicked in the abdomen by Fang Yuan, taking five to six steps backwards, leaving the designated circle drawn in the arena.

The martial arts instructor stood before the stage and evaluated the situation. Seeing this, he immediately declared, "Gu Yue Mo Bei has exited the stage, Gu Yue Fang Yuan wins for the 33rd consecutive time!"

"Hmph, I lost to you again." Gu Yue Mo Bei gritted his teeth, his eyes staring right at Fang Yuan, "But don't be arrogant. One day, I will defeat you. I can already feel it, that day is nearing!"

Fang Yuan looked at him expressionlessly, and then his eyelids drooped downwards. "That kick earlier caused you to have internal bleeding. I'd advise you to treat that injury first."

"This small injury is nothing!" Gu Yue Mo Bei was retorting halfway, when suddenly his expression changed and his throat gulped, vomiting a mouthful of blood.

His face was pale, this was the first time he suffered this level of injury! His eyes could not help but show signs of fear.

The martial arts instructor hurried over and pacified him. "Don't worry about this level of injury, you just need to rest for a few days. Just stop practising your punches and do not do vigorous exercises during this period."

The moment he finished saying so, two healing Gu Masters who were waiting outside rushed over and meticulously helped Gu Yue Mo Bei out.

Gu Yue Mo Bei did not dare to say anything else, but he looked at Fang Yuan deeply in his eyes, filled with anger, hatred, regret and indignance.

"Mo Bei has good martial techniques, but he couldn't beat Fang Yuan."

"Fang Yuan is too good, basically no one can beat him!"

"Mo Bei actually vomited blood, how scary. I don't want to fight a guy like this."

"Sigh, but the instructor said today is practice combat, up on the arena! Each of us needs to go up and fight once."

The students stood outside the arena, some looking towards Fang Yuan in fear, some sighing non-stop, some were pale while others felt trepidation.

Among them, some were injured. A few held their bruised faces, some held their limbs, gasping for breath. Others laid on the ground, rubbing their thigh.

"Next!" Seeing that there were no challengers coming up, the instructor yelled.

However, no one answered. Usually those who were courageous to challenge Fang Yuan were only Gu Yue Mo Bei, Gu Yue Chi Chen and Gu Yue Fang Zheng. But these three were already beaten.

Silence swept across the students as others even retracted their steps slightly. The instructor frowned on seeing their fearful expression.

He could not help but think of the academy elder's words: "These days, Fang Yuan has gotten too dominant, we have to suppress him. The other students cannot even raise their heads under his pressure, and if this goes on, the courage in their hearts will be simmered. Our academy nurtures courageous tigers and wolves to fight enemies, not fearful sheep and lambs."

"What's wrong with all of you? No matter how strong he is, Fang Yuan is only fifteen years old, he's one of your peers! He has the same age as you, eats the same food as you and drinks the same water. He does not have three heads or six arms, he's not a monster! Pluck up your courage and show me the pride of the Gu Yue clan within you!" The instructor yelled, trying his best to motivate the students.

"But he is too strong, we cannot beat him."

"The classmates who fought him are in such a pitiful state. Mo Bei got beaten until he vomited blood."

"Fang Yuan is getting more ruthless with his strikes, instructor, we do not dare to fight him."

The students spoke softly, weakly retorting.

The instructor was stomping with anger. These ignorant youngsters!

He was clear as a bystander. Fang Yuan had gone through thirty-three consecutive fights without any rest in the middle. Although he was constantly adjusting his breathing, his stamina had already depleted.

Fang Yuan's attacks getting merciless proves this fact even further: He could no longer take it easy like before, he is losing control of his strength and the situation.

If someone tries harder, his fatigue will be revealed. With just a few more people, he could be defeated on the stage!

Once Fang Yuan is beaten, his dominating presence will be reduced sharply, the students courage ignited and the motive to suppress Fang Yuan achieved.

But now, the students were deterred by Fang Yuan's tough front.

At times, what defeats a person is not a strong enemy but one's own heart.

The instructor was anxious in his thoughts, and continued to motivate them.

But he was not good with his words. In the beginning he said these same words to ignite the hot-bloodedness in the youngsters and stirred up some challengers. But now that he had said this so many times, the youngsters are all numb already.

Fang Yuan folded his arms and stared at this coldly. Although he was standing in the center of the stage, he was acting like a complete bystander.

The instructor encouraged for ages but the students were still looking at each others, not one had moved.

The martial instructor could not help but be angry and helpless. He turned to Fang Yuan, unhappily chiding, "Fang Yuan, you're also at fault. Your blows are getting more vicious among classmates, you should be more gentle and friendly, how can you deal such vicious blows? Be careful from now on and attack carefully. If you cause another classmate to vomit blood, I will declare your loss and evict you from the stage!"

"Instructor, you are wrong."

Fang Yuan snorted, his gaze not showing any weakness, looking right at the instructor, "Practising and fighting, we naturally have to give it our all, otherwise how can it achieve the aim of training? Don't tell me that when we are in battle, we also have to request our enemies to be more gentle and friendly?"

The instructor flew into a rage, "Hmph, your attacks are vicious, you are harming your classmates and you dare to use twisted logic!"

"Instructor, you're wrong again."

Fang Yuan laughed coldly, "You arranged this practice match and raised the winning prize to twenty primeval stones. Without your encouragement, would these people have gotten hurt?"

"Bastard!" The martial arts instructor was not good with words, and he pointed at Fang Yuan and scowled, "Do you still want the prize or not? If you argue any further, even if you get first place, I will declare you a loser! You are so uncooperative and antisocial, and you dare to argue with your teachers, you have no rights to claim the twenty primeval stones as reward!"

Fang Yuan laughed heartily. "It is but a competition that merely gives twenty primeval stones, do you think I give a damn?"

Saying so, he turned around and left. Under the class' distraught gaze, he walked out of the center of arena.

Although he did not manage to sell the image wall, Fang Yuan still had several hundreds of primeval stones in his possession. Furthermore, his aim this time was not primeval stones.

"You!" Seeing Fang Yuan really walking down the stage, the instructor was stunned without words, showing an expression of shock and confusion.

A fifteen year old teenager, shouldn't he be competitive and full of vigor?

Fang Yuan having such fighting talents, shouldn't his character be even more so? How could he just back out of the competition like this?

Furthermore, Fang Yuan has no background, he should be tight on primeval stones. Why was the twenty primeval stones unable to attract him?

At this point, the martial arts instructor stood on the spot, unsure of what to do.

Fang Yuan did not step into the trap, but left the stage immediately.

The instructor suddenly realized: There was nothing he could do to Fang Yuan. With his status, he could not find problems with Fang Yuan directly, and force him onto the stage right?

The surrounding students retreated, maintaining a distance away from Fang Yuan. Fang Yuan stood on the grounds, with no one around him. With him as the center, the radius of five steps around him became a vacuum.

What a pity.

If they were beside Fang Yuan, they would hear Fang Yuan's panting sound.

"My stamina is depleted," Fang Yuan sighed. Although he showed an energetic outward appearance, under his clothes, his body was slightly shivering.

After all, he was only fifteen years old and had no relevant Gu worm as support. After thirty-three matches, he was close to his limits.

Although he had his rich fighting experience from his past life, during this time, the other youngsters' combat abilities had improved significantly. From them, Fang Yuan could already feel a strengthening sense of pressure.

This kind of pressure reflected in Fang Yuan's attacks. His attacks got tougher as he gradually lost control of his strength. Compared to the past, when they were still too weak and he could defeat them easily, the youngsters would only end up in minor injuries. But now, his control over the arena was getting weaker, thus he had to strike harder to maintain his image.

"Experience is, after all, not omnipotent. Any thoughts or technique require a body with sufficient foundation before the value can be apparent." Fang Yuan narrowed his eyes. In actuality he had long seen through the martial instructor's thoughts.

Fang Yuan was not surprised, as if he had expected this from the start, the academy elder's pressure on him.

After he killed Gao Wan, the people who dared to challenge him diminished. When he extorted them, even more people oppressed by Fang Yuan's dominance did not dare resist, and they obediently handed over their primeval stones.

After a long period, Fang Yuan's unbeatable image would be formed. This would leave some psychological trauma in the youngsters and make them unconfident in their martial arts techniques. This was what the academy elder did not want to see. He needed Fang Yuan to motivate and force the students to improve, not to completely extinguish their passion for battle.

He wanted to see Fang Yuan's defeat.

Once Fang Yuan was defeated, the image of invincibility that he had erected would be instantly destroyed.

At the same time, it would awaken the students' fighting spirit. After some setbacks, it would mould their wills to be indomitable.

But to Fang Yuan, he needed this form of pressure so that he could extort primeval stones with greater ease.

If he was defeated, the youngsters would realize his weakness and attack together at once. Although Fang Yuan had ample of primeval stones in his hands, extortion was his main source of income. Without this source, he would be digging into his reserves.

Thus, Fang Yuan's appearance in the arena and thirty-three consecutive victories was merely to maintain his deterrence towards the students, and not for the twenty primeval stones reward.

If he avoided combat from the start, it would show his weakness, and if it raged on, he would expose his weakness.

"What are you all waiting for, why is nobody getting up on the stage, go on! The first prize is twenty primeval stones, you all don't want it anymore?" The instructor yelled after snapping out of his thoughts.

The rest of the students began to get motivated.

Fang Yuan had already left the stage, and to them, it was a huge rock off their minds.

"I'll go!"

"I'll come!"

Two youngsters squeezed their way up the stage and began to spar.

"Sigh, if I had known this, I would have waited and not rushed up the stage. Then I would not have been throw off the stage by Fang Yuan."

"What a pity, to think Fang Yuan left."

"He's really daring, see even the instructor is at a lost for what to do with him."

Hearing their whispers, the instructor felt his reputation crumbling. He was extremely agitated in his heart and wanted to punish Fang Yuan thoroughly. However, Fang Yuan had done nothing wrong, and leaving the stage on his own accord was allowed.

The instructor was both helpless and moody. Finally he looked at Fang Yuan and stared angrily at the latter.

Fang Yuan's lips slightly curled up into an angle as he thought, "Such boorish methods, this instructor is a little cute."

Chapter 49: Not afraid of Fang Yuan breaking out of their grasp

A pair of solemn eyes were staring at the faraway training grounds.

The academy elder stood at the window of the third storey, looking at everything that had transpired at the arena.

He frowned deeply.

The instant Fang Yuan left the stage, he felt a sense of peculiarity in his heart, not expecting Fang Yuan to do this.

"This lad, he is rather hard to catch. He is proficient in the academy's rules, and normally will not commit any wrongdoings. Although he sleeps in class, once he is asked a question he can answer properly, leaving others with no flaws to pick on. Trying to get ahold of a weakness of his to suppress his dominance is going to be difficult."

The academy elder could not help but develop a faint sense of loathing towards Fang Yuan.

As a teacher, he naturally liked obedient and smart students, and hated those naughty students who did not obey the rules.

But being the academy elder for so many years, his experience was extremely rich, he had seen many different types of students. Among them he had seen extremely obedient ones who followed orders without question. There were also those who caused problems day and night, constantly breaking the rules.

His heart had already become still as water, impartial to all. At the same time, he carved the phrase "as a teacher, one must treat all students fairly" onto the right corner of his desk, treating it as his motto.

He had never felt such disgust for a student.

Feeling that sense of detest in his heart, the academy elder was also slightly shocked.

In previous years, even towards the most naughty students, he was able to handle it with a big heart, tolerating their actions. But when it came to Fang Yuan, why did he lose this sense of impartialness?

He thought about it again and again, and finally realized the reason.

This lad called Fang Yuan, he had a form of arrogance in his blood!

It seemed from the fundamentals that Fang Yuan did not respect his teachers for their status. Towards the martial arts instructor earlier, he not only disobeyed him, but even rebuked him in public.

Actually, such cases of retorting against teachers were commonly seen in previous years. However, those kids always had an agitated state of mind. They were either rebellious, furious or stubborn, etc.

The academy elder was clear that the more agitated the youngsters were, the more it implied that they were fearful in their hearts.

But Fang Yuan was not.

He had no fear in his heart at all, as if he had seen through the tricks of the academy.

His expression was aloof, and even after he left the stage, his expression showed no signs of changing, as if he had done something insignificant.

Yes, he treated the matter of disobeying his teachers as a trivial matter that was insignificant!

In simple terms -----

He was not afraid.

It was just this point that caused the academy elder to already feel unhappy, developing a sense of disgust for him.

The academy elder could endure a student more rebellious than Fang Yuan, or a teenager ten times naughtier than him. That was because these students knew fear and were moving based on their agitated emotions.

As long as they were fearful, as long as they were impulsive, they would be easily manipulated and will not go out of control.

But Fang Yuan was not.

He was calm and uncaring, not treating his teachers with reverence.

He was not respectful!

Someone who has no reverence for the clan, even if they are nurtured, how can they be useful for the clan?

"Once they appear, this sort of person, they have to be suppressed, they must be suppressed! Otherwise, his existence will create a sense of irresistibility in the students. In the long run, it will affect the others, causing them to lose their reverence for their teachers, and as the academy, how else are we going to manage the students?"

The academy elder squinted his eyes, making up the decision in his mind.

But then, his face showed a troubled expression very quickly.

How was he going to suppress Fang Yuan?

Fang Yuan had done nothing wrong, there was no weakness that he could exploit.

Fang Yuan's cunning demeanour gave him a sense of helplessness. He had never met a student like this, one who was so familiar with the academy's rules and regulations.

As the academy elder, he was always impartial to all students. He could not be like a slum gangster and purposely find trouble with a youngster like Fang Yuan.

He had placed his hopes on the martial arts instructor, but now he was deeply disappointed.

"It seems that to suppress Fang Yuan's domination, we can only wait until all the other students advance to Rank one middle stage."

A Gu Master's advancement is mostly influenced by their talents.

With his rich experience as the academy elder, he had calculated before in his heart: the ones who had the greatest chance to advance first are Gu Yue Fang Zheng, Chi Chen and Mo Bei.

They were an A rank and two B grades respectively, and with their elders' help behind them, they had no lack of primeval stones. No matter which one of the three, they were mostly likely to be the first to advance to Rank one middle stage cultivation.

"Gu Yue Fang Zheng, Chi Chen and Mo Bei, these three are our hopeful seeds this season." The academy elder looked at the arena and sighed.

With his experienced gaze, he could tell: in the arena, although the students seem to be standing casually, they had subtly already split into three factions.

In one circle was Gu Yue Chi Chen and a bunch of similarly-aged clansmen, all crowding around him.

The second circle's core was Gu Yue Fang Zheng, and the clan leader's faction's younger generation were subtly supporting this A grade talent genius.

The third circle was led by Gu Yue Mo Bei. He had already been treated of his internal injury and stood on the arena with a pale face. The classmates beside him were asking him about his condition.

"This is the meaning of letting them compete with each other." Seeing the three factions, the academy elder was overjoyed and laughed.

Allowing the students free reign to compete, this was not just to nurture their battle senses, but also to prematurely choose the leader-type characters.

In past seasons, they had to wait until the end of the year to have the capacity to develop their own circles. But in this year, because of Fang Yuan's appearance, his extortion had brought forth the divergence much faster.

Against Fang Yuan, the only ones who dared to compete against him were Fang Zheng, Mo Bei and Chi Chen.

After a long time under imperceptible influence, the other youngsters would automatically regard these three as the leaders.

As long as there were no mishaps, these three social circles would be the layout of the future family's higher-ups.

"But these factions are still not stable. Within them, there are still students moving around. Once the three take the lead and advance to the middle stage first, I will give them the positions of class chairman and vice chairman. With that differentiation, they would gain authority, and this will strengthen their social circles," the academy elder thought.

Of course, there was someone not within either factions.

Just one person, and that was Fang Yuan.

Getting close to stronger people is human nature. In fact, although Fang Yuan extorted the students and acted against the students, there were a number of youngsters who wanted to attach themselves to him.

However, they were rejected by Fang Yuan. To him, only those who were useful were pawns, and these youngsters had too little value.

This was also another reason the academy elder hated Fang Yuan. He was too antisocial, not willing to integrate into the team. To such people like him, the clan's control over them was not as much as the other youngsters.

The academy elder's gaze once again shot towards Fang Yuan in the arena.

Fang Yuan stood alone at one corner with his hands behind his back, his eyelids slightly closed, allowing the students to fight for their prize. Even with the heated competition, his expression did not change the slightest.

His surrounding was vacant, no youngster was willing to stand with him.

Very evidently, he also did not wish for these people to be near him.

Fang Yuan stood there alone, enshrouded in loneliness.

He floated outside the factions.

"But I don't have to be too worried. This Fang Yuan is still young and can be changed slowly." The academy elder's gaze shone and he thought deeply.

"Next up will be the establishment of the class chairman and vice chairman. A year later, we will split into groups, creating team leaders and assistant leaders. Every academic year also has all sorts of honor and rewards, like the Small Redflower Award, Blue Neckcloth Prize and Five Outstanding Student Prize. He wants to cultivate so he needs resources, thus he has to compete for these positions and prizes. As

time passes, with interaction among the students, he is bound to have kinship, friendship and love as his restraints. I don't have to worry about him going beyond the clan's control."

These years, the academy elder had gradually understood something.

When a new clan member is born, they would be brainwashed by the clan.

First, they would be taught the clan's utmost value system. Next they would go into moral education and learn about the beauty and importance of kinship, friendship, love.

After that, they would be taught honor, and in the process of growing up, many resources such as prizes would be used to attract them. Using the family's assigned roles, they would choose and recruit the most loyal clansmen into their factions.

Do not look down on the small roles like chairman or vice chairman, for once they become one of these roles, they would be part of the clan's administration.

Under such a system with constant influence, on one hand it brings about the benefits of having authority and the sweetness of power, while on the other hand, it brings the problem of detaching from the system. A carrot in hand and a stick in the other, who can break away from this system?

Even the wildest of people or the most lonesome ones would gradually become a part of the family. One without loyalty would also be nurtured into one with loyalty. Without kinship, friendship or love, they would still be developed.

This is the power of the system.

This is the power of rules.

This is the clan's way of survival!

Chapter 50: Middle Stage!

Nightfall arrived. The moon was like a silver plate, appearing among the clouds. The thinly spread stars decorated the surroundings.

Gu Yue Mo Bei stood in the courtyard, raising his head up, his eyes glistening under the reflection of the moon.

"Little brother, I heard you got injured today." Behind him, his sister Gu Yue Mo Yan's voice resounded.

"Sister, you are worried that after being beaten till I vomited blood today, I would have long lasting trauma?" Mo bei turned around and curled his lips.

Seeing her brother laughing, Mo Yan's heart felt at ease. Although she had truly worried, she said instead, "No way, big sis here understands you best. Good brother, you have an indomitable will, the future head of our Mo family. How can you be frightened off by such a small injury?"

"Hehehe, I knew sister doted on me the most," Mo Bei scratched the back of his head as he laughed sheepishly.

"You know what, sister?" Under the glow of the moonlight, this fifteen year old teenager's eyes radiated brightly. "Although I failed this time, I heard Fang Yuan panting during the match. Back then he easily beaten me in two or three strikes with an calm and composed manner. But his gasping already revealed his weakness. He is definitely not as strong as everyone else thinks. One day, I will defeat him fair and square."

"Good, as expected of a good man from my Mo bloodline!" Mo Yan laughed, patting her brother's head, showing concern on her face, "However, you suffered internal injuries, so please don't practise your martial arts these few days."

"Don't touch my head sister, I am already old enough." Mo Bei shrugged his head, using an unhappy tone, "I understand what you are saying, I have a plan. These few days, I'm going to nurture my aperture walls. To completely breakthrough from initial stage to middle stage and obtain the position of class chairman, and suppress Fang Yuan's dominance. I'll let him know that, what truly matters to a Gu Master's cultivation is still talent!"

"I'm glad you can think this way. I was only a vice chairman last time. If you manage to become chairman, it will fulfill my regrets too."

"Don't worry sister. The position of chairman, I certainly must obtain it!"

At the same time, in the Chi family.

Inside the secret room, there was only one torch, attached to an opening in the limestone walls.

The flame burned on, illuminating this small room.

One of the two elders in power, Gu Yue Chi Lian, was sitting facing his grandson, Gu Yue Chi Cheng. The two sat on a praying mat with their shadows projected on the ground, wavering with the flickering of the flame.

Gu Yue Chi Lian stretched out his hand, using his palm to touch Chi Cheng's abdomen area.

Gu Yue Chi Chen's face was full of anxiety, his mind entering his aperture, suppressing the ripples in his primeval sea with all his concentration.

In this world, there are no two identical tree leaves. Similarly to Gu Masters, there is no identical primeval essence as well.

Once primeval essence from an external source enters the aperture, it will result in the natural resistance of the original primeval essence in the aperture.

If Gu Yue Chi Cheng does not suppress it, and instead allows the his primeval essence to resist, it will result in a clash between the essences. Such intensive reaction can cause great damage to the aperture.

The aperture's primeval sea is the foundation and roots of a Gu Master's cultivation, and is of utmost importance.

Once the aperture is damaged, at the very least one's cultivation may lower, but if it is severe, their latent talent may be lowered as well. Once the aperture is completely shattered, the Gu Master would die immediately.

After a while, Gu Yue Chi Lian gradually stopped transmitting his primeval essence, slowly taking back his hand.

Gu Yue Chi Cheng took a deep breath of relief, his tense body relaxing. "Thank you Grandfather, for nurturing my aperture and transfusing primeval essence to me every three days. It has been hard on you!"

Gu Yue Chi Lian's forehead was full of sweat, and he sighed and said, "This is inevitable. Your talent is only C grade, so if we rely on your ability alone to rise to middle stage, it'll take a long time. The time will usually be twice of a B grade, and four times of an A grade. In such a situation, your talent will be exposed. Thus, even if this method is dangerous, we have to use it."

"Grandson understands grandfather's intentions."

"As long as you understand." The old man sighed, "This method also has another sequela. After your aperture has been nurtured by my silver primeval essence, although the silver primeval essence has a greater effect, it is still an external source of primeval essence to you. Henceforth, even if your aperture walls change from a light wall to a water wall, it would still be mixed with my energy. The more external energy there is, the more impure your aperture will be, and this will stifle your talent, limiting your development in the future."

Gu Yue Chi Cheng bit his lips, "Grandfather, for the future of the Chi family, I am willing to sacrifice my future prospects!"

Gu Yue Chi Lian was pleased, stroking his beard. "It is good that you have such thoughts. But the heavens always leave a glimmer of hope for you, for you are not hopeless yet. If we can find the Cleansing Water Gu, it will be able to cleanse your aperture walls and flush out all the external energies in your aperture sea, removing this sequela."

"In addition, I have also used my relationships to search for a Liquor worm for you. This worm is able to help a Rank one Gu Master refine their primeval essence and raise it by one small realm. In this way the primeval essence that is refined will be your body's own primeval essence and not an external one. Using this way to nurture your aperture leaves no repercussions and risks, it is a much better nurturing effect!"

Gu Yue Chi Lian was overjoyed. "Thank you grandfather!"

"However, the Liquor worm is hard to find. Among the Rank one Gu worms, the Liquor worm, boar Gu, and Bookworm etc, are all extremely rare Gu. Once they appear in the market they would be snatched up immediately. Of course, there are also some Gu in this world that are rumored to change a Gu Master's talent. But at this age, grandfather has never seen one, only hearing occasional rumors about them." The old man explained.

The night winds blew in gently from the windows and into the room.

Gu Yue Fang Zheng sat on his bed with his eyes shut, holding a primeval stone in both hands.

The green copper primeval sea was raging without any winds, the waves crashing towards the white aperture walls.

He has A grade rank talent, and his primeval essence occupied 80% of the aperture. His natural rate of recovery was twice of Fang Yuan!

With such godblessed advantage, he is already close to Rank one middle stage.

Phew.

A while later, Gu Yue Fang Zheng puffed out a breath of air and opened his eyes.

The moon was bright and stars sparse outside the window, the bluish green bamboo houses arranged in a line.

A scene of peace and harmony.

"Time always flies when cultivating. In the blink of an eye, it is already late into the night," Fang Zheng muttered softly. He slowly opened his hands, and two piles of rock powder fell onto the floor in front of his bed.

After a primeval stone's essence had been fully retrieved, it would turn into a pile of powder.

Looking at the powder pile, Fang Zheng frowned.

He took out his money bag; it was already close to empty.

Opening it, he saw three primeval stones left inside.

Fang Zheng would retrieve three pieces every seven days from the academy as resources, but since Fang Yuan would snatch a piece from him, he only had two left every week.

Uncle and Aunt would also give him living expenses, but it was also three stones every seven days.

Just with these primeval stones, how is it enough?

Fang Zheng was determined to surpass his brother Fang Yuan, thus he took the initiative to approach his uncle and aunt multiple times to beg for some primeval stones.

After many times, his aunt would look for him to have a heart-to-heart chat, telling him about how poor the family was, and how they had cash flow difficulties, having no spare money left. Since then, Fang Zheng did not have the desire to continue asking.

"Father and mother are already doing all they can to support my cultivation. I cannot make things difficult for them and ask for more primeval stones. I only have three left. I can only be more thrifty. If I use one piece a day, I'll have enough for three days."

"I have a feeling that in three or four days, I will definitely advance to middle stage! The only thing is, what is big brother's progress now?" Thinking so, Fang Zheng subconsciously looked towards to academy living quarters.

"I have A grade talent, while big brother only has C grade talent. His speed is definitely slower than me. Big brother is not my match this time! Big brother, I will let you know the true power of an A grade talent!"

Thinking of this, Fang Zheng clenched his fists.

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Academy dormitory.

Fang Yuan's door was shut tight.

In the darkness, he was not asleep, but sitting on his bed.

A Gu Master's cultivation cannot replace sleep. Normally at this time, Fang Yuan would already have fallen asleep.

But in cultivating earlier today, he already felt that he was just one step away from middle stage.

"I might as well not sleep tonight, I'll rush straight for middle stage!" His eyes shone with determination.

Soon after, he shut his eyes and his mind went into the aperture.

44% of green copper primeval sea. Just a moment ago, they were all refined into pale green coloured middle stage primeval essence by the liquor worm.

"Rise." With a thought, the peaceful green copper primeval sea began to stir.

The commotion got larger and larger, until waves were formed.

Splash, splash, splash...

The tides raced against each other, rushing towards the surrounding aperture walls.

Like crashing on a reef, most of the primeval essence would break into emerald ripples and fuse back into the sea.

A small amount of primeval essence was expended, turning into a small hint of invisible energy, penetrating into the white coloured light aperture wall.

"Rise again," Fang Yuan thought as the emerald ripples became larger in scale. The waves earlier were like rabbits and dogs, but now they were like troops of horses, marching towards the aperture walls.

A horse-like dragon, the waves like the heavens!

The primeval essence was expended quickly, and the water level fell sharply.

Splash, splash, splash...

The waves struck relentlessly, finally resulting in a change. The white coloured wall shook suddenly, the originally mild white colour radiating an eye-piercing brilliance.

Seeing this scene, Fang Yuan was overjoyed as he knew that the crucial part had arrived, and he quickly activated all of his primeval essence to rush at the walls.

The white light grew brighter, the light rays distorted and tangling together, giving people a feeling of thickness. After more than ten breaths, white strips of light bands appeared on the light wall, and the strips collided with each other like water flowing nonstop. In the process of collision, they continued to combine and merge, forming a white flowing light.

Finally, the flowing light gathered into one piece and completely covered the light wall.

The white light dimmed, and the original white light wall of the aperture was gone, replaced by a layer of spherical shaped white water wall. The light wall's surface was smooth with no impurities. The water wall however, was thicker than the light wall, the ripples of light flowing and flickering on it.

The primeval sea regained its peace, the aperture still having 20% primeval essence left.

"I advanced to middle stage!" Fang Yuan laughed heartily, opening his eyes.

The bright sunlight crept in through the openings in the curtains.

Unknowingly, the night had passed, and it was already morning.