

## Insanity 51

Chapter 51: Let's see how you are going to explain this

"Fang Yuan didn't come to class today. Look guys, his seat is empty."

"He's so bold! Today's lesson is taught by the academy elder, yet he dared to not show up."

"This is bad, the elder's expression is ugly, it seems that Fang Yuan is in trouble. Hehehe."

In the academy, the youngsters discussed softly. A few glanced towards Fang Yuan's empty seat, as well as the academy elder's darkening expression. Ever since he started the extortion, Fang Yuan stood against everyone in the class. Seeing him in trouble, all the students were excited for what was to come.

The academy elder's expression was stiff as he explained the crux of nurturing the aperture while secretly staring at Fang Yuan's seat.

He laughed coldly in his heart, "Fang Yuan, oh Fang Yuan. I was still worried about not being able to catch your weak point yesterday, and here you give it to me today. You are after all a fifteen year old teenager, I have overestimated you."

His ugly expression was mostly fake. His motive was to use this opportunity to find trouble with Fang Yuan and punish him, eliminating his increasing dominance in class. Undeniably, as time passed, Fang Yuan's dominating presence was getting stronger, causing the other students to be barely catching their breaths.

A one-sided dominance was not what the academy elder wanted to see. He wanted to see the entire class shining.

"Men!" The academy elder raised a finger and knocked lightly on the table.

"Elder, your subjects are here." The two guards standing outside at the door entered.

The academy elder snorted in public, "This Fang Yuan is getting out of hand, being so lazy and skipping classes right under my nose. Go to the hostel and bring him here for me."

"Yes, elder." The guards went on their way. Seeing the guards disappear outside the door, the academy burst into discussion noises.

Numerous students joined in the conversation.

"Fang Yuan is in deep shit now," someone said with his eyes shining brightly.

"Hehe, we have a show to watch later." Another laughed in pleasure towards Fang Yuan's misery.

"Big brother, you are too arrogant. This is challenging the elder's authority. No matter what punishment it is, you had it coming." Gu Yue Fang Zheng looked at the empty seat, sighing internally.

Bam, bam, bam!

The academy elder with a strict expression, slammed the desk thrice, "Silence, no talking in class!"

His aura at this moment was like a volcano about to erupt, causing fear in others.

Immediately, the academy fell into pin-drop silence. The students fearfully shut up, quickly getting into position. Except, although their expression was so, their thoughts were already deep into this matter.

The class continued, the youngsters not concentrating at all.

A few students by the window looked out constantly.

As time passed, after a while, footsteps could be heard at the door. Instantly the students' ears twitched, tens of eyes showing bright expressions.

"Arriving..." The academy elder heard the footsteps too and narrowed his eyes as a result.

He had already thought of how to deal with Fang Yuan. He'll punish him to stand outside for three hours.

Although the punishment was not heavy, it was enough for him to be humiliated.

Throughout lessons, students entering and leaving would see Fang Yuan standing there.

This way, it would ruin Fang Yuan's image of invincibility. When the students realize that Fang Yuan was nothing special, the impact he has on them would be greatly reduced. This would result in them gaining courage and stir their competitive spirit.

The great part was, since Fang Yuan's punishment came from the academy, this would improve the academy's reputation.

Only with reverence will they obey.

Thus, while the method is simple, it has deep intentions underneath.

The footsteps got closer, and finally someone stood outside the door.

Knock, knock, knock.

Knocking sounds could be heard.

"Hehe, I will open it!" The student near the door volunteered and enthusiastically went to open the door.

The academy quietened down, numerous eyes staring at the door.

Crack.

The door was easily opened by the student, exposing a gap.

Sunlight infiltrated from the gap. The student opening the door suddenly froze, shuddering suddenly.

"AHH!!!" He was stunned for a second before suddenly screaming, subconsciously taking a large step backwards. His body knocked onto the desk and he instantly lost his balance, falling with the table onto the ground.

The boy's face was pale, his expression horrified, limbs trembling and unable to exert strength. Lying on the floor, he frantically tried to get up, but fell back down again and again.

"What's wrong?!" In a moment everyone was astonished, all of them frowning deeply.

Numerous gazes curiously looked towards the door.

The door was slowly pushed opened by the person outside.

The academy elder stopped his lecture out of reflex.

What everyone saw first, was a hand on the door.

A teenager's left hand.

A left hand with dripping blood.

A bloody hand!

Seeing this bloody hand, many of the female students covered their mouths and screamed in terror.

The door slowly opened fully.

The brightness of the sunlight pricked everyone's eyes, causing them to squint. With the bright sunlight as his background, a dark shadow attached to a thin teenager appeared before everyone.

He didn't know why, but the academy elder felt a strong feeling of unease in his heart.

"It's Fang Yuan!" Someone screamed out loudly.

Everyone who had gotten used to the sunlight could clearly see who the person was.

What met their eyes was Fang Yuan, bathed in blood, standing outside the door as if he had gone through an intense battle.

His left hand slowly retracted, his right hand grabbing onto some hair, dragging along a person. The person's left arm was entirely detached from the base. He was lying there motionless, evidently unconscious. Blood on his left shoulder gushed out.

"It's one of the guards who went to look for Fang Yuan!" Someone recognised the person's identity.

"What exactly happened?" Someone was going berserk.

"He murdered again, this time he killed the guards!" Someone pointed at Fang Yuan, screaming in horror, getting louder and louder, as if it would purge the terror and fear in his heart.

At once, the academy was rowdy.

Many students forgot the rules at this time, and stood up from their seats. They looked towards Fang Yuan with fear, shock, and nervous expressions.

In their imaginations, Fang Yuan would be dragged here by the guards left and right.

But the truth was — Fang Yuan bathed in blood, his expression cool like a devil approaching. The two guards, one missing while the other lying motionless, blood oozing from his body quickly forming a puddle.

A thick scent of blood permeated the academy.

The academy elder was stunned, he did not anticipate such a scene!

After his shock, came intense rage.

The two guards were merely external martial artists. So what if they died? The academy elder did not really care.

But the crucial point was their identity. They were the academy's guards, representing the academy's prestige. Representing the academy elder's face.

This Fang Yuan was simply too bold. Not only did he kill Gao Wan, now he even went and murdered the academy's guards!

No, this isn't just being bold. He was practically provoking, challenging the clan academy's prestige.

The academy elder flew into a rage, pointing at Fang Yuan, screaming, "Fang Yuan! What is this? You have to give me an explanation, a good reason to spare you. If not, with the crime of murdering the guards, you will be thrown in jail, awaiting the clan verdict!"

The students all shuddered.

Even the windows trembled, the entire academy reverberating with the academy elder's screams.

Only Fang Yuan was calm-looking, his eyes dyed a deep miasma, behaving like usual, unable to see any change in his emotions.

After looking around, Fang Yuan let go of his right arm, and with a plop, the guard's head fell into the puddle of blood, splashing onto Fang Yuan's pants.

He cupped his fists towards the academy elder, his calm voice echoing throughout the silent academy, "Academy Elder, I truly have something to report."

"Speak." The academy elder spoke with both arms behind his back, arching his head as he looked at Fang Yuan, his expression ice cold.

Laughing coldly in his heart, he thought, "Fang Yuan, you're making more and more mistakes, increasing the severity. I'll see how you're going to explain yourself!"

Chapter 52: You have no choice but to accept my explanation

Inside the academy, everyone's attention was on Fang Yuan.

Their expressions showed shock, fear, mockery and callousness.

Fang Yuan paid no attention to these people. He looked at the academy elder with a stern expression, with his finger pointing towards the fainted guard.

"Reporting to elder, these two guards had impure motives, devious intentions! They broke into my room when I was at the crucial moment of breaking through into the middle stage. As everyone knows, a Gu Master cultivating cannot be interrupted. Especially so when one is trying to break through into higher realms. A moment of distraction would not only cause the breakthrough to fail, but their aperture would also get damaged. Thankfully my luck was good, because at the moment where they barged in, I had already stepped into the middle stage."

"However!" Before the masses had reacted, Fang Yuan continued, "These two did not admit their mistakes earlier. To my surprise, they boasted shamelessly about wanting to get rough with me, even scolding our clan's ancestors, lying that the act of disturbing my cultivation was the esteemed elder's decision. Your student did not believe so, and resisted furiously. These two had strong martial arts, and I had to fight for life before finally defeating these two people."

"But seeing as they were the academy guards, your student did not kill them immediately. I merely cut off one of his arms, and the leg of the other person. Although there was quite some blood loss, they are still alive. That is my report for this matter, please uphold justice for me, esteemed elder!" Having said so, he cupped his fists towards the academy elder.

His tone was urgent, saying a ton of information, and leaving no room for others to interrupt.

After he had finished, the surrounding people slowly started to react.

"What did Fang Yuan say earlier, I did not catch it."

"I think he said he advanced to the middle stage!"

"How is that possible, he is just a C grade trash, to think that he actually advanced to the middle stage first."

"He definitely lied, he is afraid of the academy's punishment, thus he lied!"

The students discussed loudly.

When compared to Fang Yuan's advancement to the middle stage, the two guards' lives no longer mattered.

They were not Gu Yue clan members, who cares if they're dead or alive?

"You said you advanced to Rank one middle stage?" The academy elder's voice was ice cold, his expression unforgiving. "Fang Yuan, this is not a laughing matter. If you admit your wrongdoing now, I can still take into account that this is your first mistake and deal with you leniently. If you want to continue lying and attempting to cover up your mistakes, then I can tell you now, lies are easily seen through."

Fang Yuan did not explain himself further, he laughed lightly and said to the academy elder, "Please inspect, elder."

Even without his words, the academy elder had already moved forward.

He placed his hand on Fang Yuan's abdomen, placing a trace of his spirit into it. Immediately he saw the inside of Fang Yuan's aperture.

Within the aperture, there was no Gu.

The Spring Autumn Cicada had already hidden itself. A Rank six Gu is way superior than a Rank three academy elder, so if it wanted to hide, it would not be found easily.

As for the Liquor worm, Fang Yuan had placed it into the dormitory's wine reserves, and did not bring it along.

The academy elder with his eyes shut, could see a green copper primeval sea, calm as still water.

Drops of primeval essence inside were all emerald green colours of middle stage primeval essence.

Seeing the aperture walls, the white coloured aperture walls were glowing with reflected light as if they were all made of water. Gushes of water flow rapidly moved along the wall.

Water wall!

"He really advanced to the middle stage, how is this possible?!" The academy elder shouted in his heart, a sign of shock under his calm expression. But he tried to hide it to the best of his ability, his face still expressionless.

A moment later, after he had digested this fact, he drew back his hand, speaking in a solemn voice, "It is indeed middle stage."

The students had been holding their breaths, awaiting the results.

The academy elder's verdict caused a huge commotion in the academy.

The students were full of bewilderment and shock, each of their faces showing immense disbelief.

Fang Yuan was only a C grade, but yet he was the first to breakthrough into the middle stage, this was against common sense!

For a Gu Master's cultivation and breaking through realms, the most important aspect should be talent. How is this possible, a C grade was the first to advance? How would this make those A grade, B grades feel!

"This!" Gu Yue Fang Zheng's face was pale. He was still confident last night, but now that reality sat in front of him, he was unable to accept such a fact and fell to the ground.

Gu Yue Mo Bei clenched his fists, and Gu Yue Chi Chen hatefully gritted his teeth.

The academy elder could not be easily fooled, so how did Fang Yuan manage to do it?

At once, all the youngsters stared at Fang Yuan, having one question in their hearts — with that C grade talent, how did he advance?

The academy elder's heart was similarly full of doubt.

Under such great empuzzlement, he ignored the idea of suppressing Fang Yuan and asked directly, "Fang Yuan, I hope you can explain this, how did you manage to advance to middle stage."

Fang Yuan laughed silently, "Heaven rewards the hard-working, and as a result of student's persistent training, I managed to advance smoothly."

"Lies!"

"Tsk, if heaven rewarded the hard-working, I'd be first long ago!"

"Diligently studying and training? Some time ago, I still saw him strolling around the shop district."

The students were evidently not satisfied with such an answer.

"Is that so?" The academy elder replied neutrally, his gaze staring at Fang Yuan, emitting pressure.

Fang Yuan's expression was candid, making eye contact with the elder without fear.

His body was bathed in blood, his linen shirt messy, as if he had gone through an intense battle.

A pair of black abyss-like eyes, showing a kind of peacefulness, indifference, and even hiding a hint of amusement.

Seeing such a gaze, the academy elder's heart wavered.

"This Fang Yuan, he is not afraid, not fearful, not threatened, and not shocked, how can he be interrogated by me right here? With his C grade talent, being the first to advance to middle stage, there has to be a secret. But since he does not want to say it, as the academy elder, I cannot forcefully interrogate him. It seems I can only investigate this privately."

Thinking of this, the academy elder retracted his gaze and his cold expression became milder.

Fang Yuan however did not let the matter go, "Your student is frightened, esteemed elder. How are you going to deal with these two guards? They have lost a lot of blood, if they are not treated soon, they might die."

"Frightened? You?" The academy elder retorted in his mind. His brows frowned deeply.

At this point, as the person in charge of the academy, he had to step forward and settle this.

"But how should I resolve this?" The academy elder could not help but feel troubled.

He silently began to think.

Fang Yuan took all of the academy elder's change in expressions into consideration. He laughed internally; the academy elder must be really troubled now.

These two guards, they were merely outsiders, their lives cheap as grass. In normal times, no one would care if they died.

But now the situation was different, they were sent out by the academy elder. If they really died, the academy elder would lose his reputation!

Thus, the guards could not die, the academy elder is going to save them.

The part that truly troubles the academy elder is Fang Yuan's verdict.

In his original plan, Fang Yuan first played truant, and then killed the guards. This could be said to be defying his teachers, being arrogant and self-centered. According to the clan rules, he'd be thrown into the clan jail, reflecting upon his mistakes inside.

But when adding in the matter of Fang Yuan's advancement to middle stage, these wrongdoings became very different.

Fang Yuan played truant and killed the guards because he was cultivating. This was reasonable.

The crucial part was, he was successful in advancing to the middle stage, and became the first in this class. This allowed him to be on the side of reason.

Just what did Fang Yuan rely on to advance to middle stage, this secret would be discussed later.

Winners win all, losers lose all, the world only cares about result. No one would reprimand such an outstanding junior.

The academy elder could not execute any punishments on him.

What is the academy for? It is to nurture outstanding Gu Masters, and inject fresh blood into the clan.

Now that we have such an aspiring young man, you as the academy elder still wants to find trouble with him? That would be neglecting your role!

Just like a student who got good results, as a teacher he should be encouraging and praising him, instead of punishing and criticizing. A teacher who punishes and scolds a student for his good results is not one that would ever be recognised.

Perhaps the other elders would secretly cause problems for Fang Yuan because they fear Fang Yuan's future prospects, or because of grudges and past grievances. But him alone, the esteemed academy elder, cannot do such a thing!

Because he is in charge of the academy, he has to be impartial, at least on the surface.

These are the rules!

"Do I just let him go like this? It was not easy finding a weakness of his." The academy elder was indignant. He knew in his heart that all the youngsters in the academy were merely spectators of this matter.

They can only look at the matter as entertainment, but are unable to see the crucial point in this, they are unable to experience the excitement in this battle!

The truth is, this is the one time where he as the academy elder, was battling against Fang Yuan the student.

First he grabbed hold of the rules, and was bent on punishing Fang Yuan, removing his strong image in front of the other students.



Next, Fang Yuan retaliated! His actions may seem rash, but it hit the matter on the point, and with the excuse of advancing to the middle stage, he got back his argument.

As for those two unlucky guards, they were merely sacrificial pawns who were implicated by the two's battle of wits.

"This Fang Yuan, he is too cunning! If he had really killed the two guards, I can still retaliate against him with this reason. Although his talent is lackluster, with such a meticulous and experienced method, it is hard to believe that he is just a fifteen year old. The worst part is, I cannot retaliate. No wonder back in those days, the clan had rumors about his early awakened intelligence!" The academy elder suddenly realised, he had lost.

His loss was due to his status, he was the elder in charge of the academy.

This was both his strength and weakness.

One's strength is also one's weakness.

Fang Yuan had understood this logic long ago!

The academy elder was both helpless and frustrated.

He had asked Fang Yuan to explain, and in actuality Fang Yuan's explanation was full of loopholes and easily exposable.

These guards were chosen by the academy elder himself, they would not be so rash and retarded to scold the Gu Yue ancestors.

Fang Yuan's words were on purpose, it was blatant accusation, framing and laying a trap in front of the other party!

The academy elder was clear of this, but he knew that he could not pursue the matter.

This was a trap.

Once he looked into it, the truth would be revealed, and how would he handle this matter?

If he did not punish Fang Yuan, the two guards would be pitifully framed, and as the academy elder, if he does not handle things impartially, how can anyone trust him?

If he punished Fang Yuan, that would be suppressing and displaying jealousy of the talented! To suppress a junior of the clan for two servants who were not part of the clan, this matter would trigger the unhappiness of the clansmen.

Thus, the best way to resolve this was to pretend to not see anything, and treat these two guards as discarded pieces. Admitting that they had performed a huge mistake, as well as praising Fang Yuan.

This way, the clansmen would be satisfied, and the deceived guards, without additional information, would think of this as being impartial.

If he handled the matter like this, it would give the academy elder the largest benefit.

Logic told the academy elder that this is the way to handle it. But emotionally, he could not take it lying down.

This Fang Yuan was too devious!

The academy elder not only failed to suppress Fang Yuan, but he himself became the stepping stone for Fang Yuan, getting humiliated in public!

Fang Yuan did not show the slightest respect for him and dared to oppose him like this in public, causing this esteemed academy elder to suffer such humiliation and frustration.

The point was, in future if these two guards felt indignant and wanted to reveal the truth, as the academy elder, if he wanted to maintain his image and position, he would have to be the first to step up and suppress them.

But this was all caused by Fang Yuan!

What sort of feeling is this?

For example, it would be like Fang Yuan pooping on the academy elder's face, but the elder himself still has to praise him and at the same time, clean his butt for him. If anyone wanted to point out that there was poop on his face, he has to be the first to shut that person up.

This feeling of grievance, it was almost unbearable for the academy elder.

There was a growing urge in his heart to give Fang Yuan a few tight slaps!

But finally, the academy elder stretched out his arm and patted Fang Yuan's shoulder.

"Good lad." The academy elder's face was dim like stillwater, forcing the words out of his mouth.

"It is all thanks to the academy's nurturing," Fang Yuan replied plainly.

The corner of the academy elder's eye twitched.

Chapter 53: Fang Yuan, you are appointed as class chairman

Everything was going according to Fang Yuan's calculations.

Thereafter, the academy elder ordered the healing Gu Master to save the two guards.

The guards were saved, but they had suffered heavy injuries and were almost crippled, ending up getting fired from the academy by the elder.

Fang Yuan did not receive any punishments, on the contrary he received compliments thoroughly.

This result caused much fear in the other youngsters.

But this issue was far from over. As time flowed, the commotion spread to the rest of the clan.

Fang Yuan being the first to advance to the middle stage with his C grade talent became the after-meal gossip of the entire clan.

After meals and tea breaks, everyone was discussing this matter.

Subsequent to the initial peculiarity, everyone started to guess the secret behind Fang Yuan's quick advancement.

"Actually, with a C grade talent, surpassing A grade and B grade to advance first into middle stage is not something that strange."

"True, there are many methods in this world that can achieve such a thing."

"Take the Relic Gu for example. Once this Gu is used, the aperture walls would be enhanced and it will assist the cultivation to rise by a small realm, being the easiest method of breaking through."

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At once, the crowd's discussion evolved into all sorts of possible answers and methods.

As for theories about Liquor worms and external sources of primeval essence, these ideas were also naturally brought up by many people.

If Fang Yuan revealed the existence of the Liquor worm at the start, there would not have been such a commotion. But because he hid it, this resulted in the curiosity of many people being raised.

Although it appeared peaceful, Gu Yue village had an undercurrent brewing.

Numerous eyes were watching the academy elder, all waiting for his explanation.

As the academy elder, if he did not know how a student that he had taught himself had advanced, that would be negligence of his role.

Thus, the academy elder had to give an explanation.

Days passed by.

The second youngster to breakthrough the initial stage and advance to middle stage appeared.

It was Gu Yue Mo Bei.

Soon after, with just a three hour difference, Gu Yue Fang Zheng advanced too.

He was after all, dragged down by the lack of primeval stones. Of course, there was also the reason of him being traumatised by Fang Yuan.

The third was Gu Yue Chi Chen.

Even if he had Gu Yue Chi Lian's infused primeval essence, the method's effectiveness was not very high and could only be performed once every three days, adding to the fact that it was very risky. But with his C grade talent, getting third position was already a success.

On the fifth day, the academy elder once again handed out subsidies.

"Gu Yue Fang Yuan." He stood at the front, calling out Fang Yuan's name first.

Fang Yuan stood up and walked towards him with a plain expression.

The youngsters' attention was on him as he moved, revealing all sorts of envy, jealousy, inspection, and hatred, not one was the same.

"Today, the elder is not only handing out resources, he is also appointing the chairman and vice chairman positions!"

"As expected, the first to be called up was Fang Yuan."

"He is the first to advance, the title of chairman belongs to him."

"It is hard to imagine that this would be the result. Before this, I thought it would be Fang Zheng who would come first."

"He was the first to advance to middle stage, it is so peculiar, there has to be a huge secret, but he refuses to tell us!"

"Hehe, if it was me I wouldn't tell anyone either. Keep quiet and prosper."

As the students conversed, Fang Yuan arrived in front of the academy elder.

"Gu Yue Fang Yuan, you are the first Gu Master to reach Rank one middle stage in this class, so this is your reward." Saying so, he handed him a white and blue money bag.

Fang Yuan received the money bag and opened it in public, peeking inside.

"Be rest assured, there's a total of thirty primeval stones inside, the academy would not shortchange you." The academy elder smiled.

Frankly speaking, he would never have expected that the first youngster to advance to middle stage would be Fang Yuan.

However, Fang Yuan did not listen to the academy elder. He rarely trusted others, and only believed in himself. He checked carefully and found that it was indeed thirty primeval stones, not one less. He then placed the money bag into his bosom pocket.

The academy elder upon seeing this action, thought that his finances were tight, and could not help but smile even more brightly.

"I guessed so, he is after all a C grade talent. Rushing to the middle stage, his primeval stone expenditure had to be huge. He has no funding from anyone as well, thus he has to be tight on primeval stones. As long as he has a need for primeval stones, we'll not be afraid of him leaving the control of the clan. Once he enters the clan's system, he would not be able to keep that secret, so even if we can't investigate it, one day, he will tell us." Towards this, the academy elder was full of confidence.

The truth is, after that day, he had sent people to investigate Fang Yuan in secret. Almost everyday there would be progress in the search.

But evidently, those people had not found out that Fang Yuan has a few hundred primeval stones in his possession, and was actually rather rich.

The academy elder continued and said, "Fang Yuan, you are the first to step into Rank one middle stage, and according to the academy rules, you not only will receive thirty primeval stones as reward, but you

will also gain priority in choosing your second Gu soon after. Right now, I shall appoint you as class chairman!"

"Fang Yuan was appointed as chairman after all!" Upon hearing this, a few students sighed.

"Damn it." Gu Yue Mo Bei gritted his teeth, feeling indignant.

"Hmph!" Gu Yue Chi Chen crossed his limbs, staring at the scene coldly.

The one that was affected the most was Fang Yuan's brother, Gu Yue Fang Zheng.

His face was pale, and his expression looked uncertain, a dark cloud looming over his head. "Ordinary students, upon seeing the chairman and vice chairmen, have to bow and pay respects. With my results, I will definitely be a vice chairman. But from now on when I see big brother, I'll have to pay my respects to him."

"Hold on."

But at this moment, Fang Yuan spoke.

He smiled faintly to the academy elder and said slowly, "Esteemed elder, your student here is not gifted and does not have high wisdom, hence being unable to properly take on the role of chairman. This role, should be given to talented people."

"What? You mean you do not want to be chairman? As the chairman, you'll get ten primeval stones every time. Are you sure you want to reject it?" The academy elder frowned deeply as he spoke. For the last tens of years of teaching, he had not seen anyone reject this position!

Actually he had already given much thought about this matter, and letting Fang Yuan be class chairman had its merits.

Once he was the chairman, he would be inside the clan system. Fang Yuan will have to carry out his duties at the same time while enjoying his treatment.

No matter what the chairman's role was, the least he had to do was to stop extorting his classmates.

This was definitely not something a class chairman can do.

This is like before, even though the academy elder was humiliated by Fang Yuan, he still had to praise him for his excellent cultivation results.

As someone bound by the system, he would not be able to do as he pleases when handling matters, and many times he'd be left with no choice.

Of course, this was not because the academy elder was displeased with Fang Yuan extorting so many primeval stones every time.

He was thinking for the entire board of students. Once Fang Yuan becomes chairman and stops extorting, this would allow the other teenagers to have a breather under Fang Yuan's pressure.

Next, with some push of a hand, it would result in a multiway competition among the families. As long as he can nurture the clan's hopeful seeds - Fang Zheng, Mo Bei and Chi Chen, what is the cost of sacrificing a small role of a chairman?

And yet, although he had a good plan, the truth was very different from what he expected.

Fang Yuan rejected it!

He actually rejected it!!

Although this position is small, it is the first representation of honor among these hot-blooded youngsters.

Besides honor, as the chairman, they get ten primeval stones as resources each time!

This temptation, no youngster has ever resisted it before.

But Fang Yuan actually rejected.

Fang Yuan looked at the stunned elder, and asked him back, "Did the academy rules state that the first has to be chairman? The position of chairman, is it irrefusable?"

The academy elder replied with a cold expression, "Of course there are no such heartless rules."

Fang Yuan laughed, "Thank you elder for your understanding."

Saying so, he cupped his fists and walked back to his seat.

The students who saw this scene with their own eyes all flew into a commotion.

At once, the academy was lively!

"Fang Yuan actually rejected it? Are you kidding me?!"

"Is he sick in the head?"

"Not sure why he's acting crazy, but hehe, he's gonna regret this later."

...

"Fang Yuan gave up on being chairman, this means I am the chairman?!" Happiness came too quickly, and the second place Mo Bei could not react in time.

Chi Chen showed a look of disbelief, he was unable to comprehend that someone actually gave up the spot of chairman, he has to be beyond stupid!

"Big brother..." Fang Zheng stared with huge eyes as he looked at Fang Yuan disappointedly.

According to his results, Fang Zheng was assured to be vice chairman.

But when Fang Yuan gave up the position, Fang Zheng felt that this position no longer had any meaning.

The academy elder's face was dark this time, really really dark.

The last time when Fang Yuan skipped class, although he looked angry, it was just an act for the others to see.

But this time, he was in a bad mood, worse than before.

Fang Yuan gave up the position of chairman. This means he is rejecting the clan system. The elder had governed the academy for tens of years, but this was the first time he saw such a student, rejecting this huge temptation!

He wanted to invite Fang Yuan into the trap, but since he wouldn't enter, the academy elder was helpless.

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The giving out of subsidies ended.

Mo Bei claimed the position of chairman with his result of being second. Fang Zheng and Chi Chen each became vice chairman.

The class chairman was given ten primeval stones. The vice chairmen got five.

A few students who were not from well-to-do families were so envious that they almost drooled when seeing the three students' primeval stones.

Chapter 54: But I am the class chairman!

The wheel of red fire, the sun slowly sank down on the west side of the mountain range.

Its light was not eye-piercing, but it was a sort of bright and gentle ray.

The west sky was dyed a shade of blushful red, the sunset glow continuously spreading out. It was just like an imperial concubine who had just been rewarded, happily crowding around the emperor, wanting to sleep together with him. (1)

Qing Mao Mountain was engulfed entirely in a sea of rose red colour. Each of the tall-pillared buildings and houses were also draped over with a layer of golden yarn.

The surrounding forest planted around the academy seemed like it was wiped with a faint stratum of oil. The wind blew slowly, and as the students walked out of the classroom with their bosoms carrying the primeval stones that were just passed out, they were in a relaxed and calm state of mind.

"I really don't know what Fang Yuan is thinking, to actually give up on the role of class chairman!"

"Heh heh heh, his brain is fried. I bet he thinks of killing people all day, let's not concern ourselves with this kind of crazy guy."

"Come to think of it, that day when he burst into the academy I was really freaked out. It was just so terrifying, I had a nightmare on the day itself after I went home."

The students were in groups of twos and threes as they walked.

"Good day class chairman."

"Mmm."

"Greetings class chairman."

"Mhmm."

Gu Yue Mo Bei swaggered around as he walked, and wherever he went the students would bow and greet him without exception.

His face was unable to stifle the expressions of excitement and infatuation.

This was the fascination of authority itself.

Even if it was just a tiny bit of difference in status, it could also make a person even more confident in his own self worth.

Right now as the dying sun looked as red as blood, Mo Bei watched it while his heart sang, "How is it that I have never realised before, this sunset's rosiness sure is adorable..."

"Hmph, going head over heels just because of becoming a chairman, as if it's so amazing." Gu Yue Chi Cheng purposely walked behind, since he just didn't want to greet Gu Yue Mo Bei at all.

"I really have no idea what Fang Yuan is thinking about, to think he actually let go of the position of chairman. However it's also a good thing, or else me as the third, how could I have been able to obtain the role of vice chairman?" Gu Yue Chi Cheng was confused in his heart, but he also felt happiness and relief.

"Good day vice chairman." At this moment a normal student walked past him and immediately bowed to greet him.

"Heh heh, good day to you too." Gu Yue Chi Cheng instantly nodded, his face full of smiles.

Once the student was gone, Chi Cheng naturally thought, "The taste of vice chairman is rather pleasant. I'm sure the feeling of being the class chairman is even better. If only I was not the vice chairman, but the chairman himself, how good that would be!"

The Chi Cheng who had just been rejoicing earlier was now already filled with insatiable greed, starting to amass expectations for the role of class chairman.

Under the system of the clan, each rank that was higher than the last was just like a carrot getting bigger than the previous one, deeply enticing him.

"Although I am only a C grade talent, but I believe that everything will get better and better." Gu Yue Chi Cheng was full of hope for his future.

However right now, the other vice chairman Gu Yue Fang Zheng was feeling very much terrible in his heart, his face expression also quite unsightly.

"Big brother, you!" He looked wide-eyed with disbelief at the academy's gate entrance, where a lone figure stood.



"Old rules as usual, every person one piece of primeval stone." Fang Yuan stood while hugging his arms, his tone dull.

Fang Zheng's mouth opened and closed a few times, then after some moments of effort he finally said, "Big brother, but I am the vice chairman now!"

"That's true." Fang Yuan was expressionless as he nodded, giving Fang Zheng an indifferent look, "The vice chairman receives an allowance of five pieces each time. So you should give up three pieces instead."

Fang Zheng was flabbergasted, and for a moment he was unable to say a word.

A group of teenagers were crowding around Gu Yue Mo Bei as they walked over.

When they saw Fang Yuan blocking the school gate entrance, Gu Yue Mo Bei flew into a rage, his finger pointing towards Fang Yuan. "Fang Yuan! You sure have the guts to actually still dare hold us back?! Right now I am the chairman, and as a normal student when you see me, you should first bow and greet me!"

What answered him next was Fang Yuan's fist.

Gu Yue Mo Bei was caught unexpected. After being hit by the fist, he could not refrain from retreating a few big steps backwards, his face full of disbelief. "You hit me, you actually dared to hit me? I am but the chairman!"

What answered him again was still Fang Yuan's fists.

Bang, bang, bang.

After a few rounds of exchanging offensive and defensive blows, Gu Yue Mo Bei was knocked down to the floor by Fang Yuan, and he fell unconscious.

The surrounding youths were all wide-eyed as they watched, all of them unsure of how to react for a moment.

This was totally different from their imaginations!

The guards at the gate entrance had also been watching everything that happened under their eyelids. They could not help but whisper among themselves.

"Fang Yuan just knocked down the new class chairman, what do we do?"

"Salad dressing!" (2)

"What do you mean?"

"It means just watch them, then call some other guys and tidy up the place."

"But..."

"Hey hey, you want to provoke a person like Fang Yuan? I hope you remember what happened to Wang Da and Wu Er!"

The questioning guard immediately quivered and stopped saying anymore.

The two guards at the huge gate entrance stood perfectly straight and upright. To let an incident happen right beside them, it was as if they were deaf and blind, unable to hear or see anything.

After Fang Yuan sorted out Gu Yue Mo Bei, he also dealt with Fang Zheng and Chi Cheng.

It was then that the other teenagers realised that nothing had changed. Fang Yuan was still the same old Fang Yuan, and the extortion would still continue as always.

"Each of you hand over one piece of primeval stone, vice chairmen three pieces, class chairman eight pieces." Fang Yuan announced the new rules.

The youths could only sigh and obediently fish out their primeval stones.

When they walked out of the school gates, suddenly someone slapped his head and exclaimed loudly, "I've thought of it, no wonder Fang Yuan did not want the position of class chairman. He wanted to continue extorting us!"

"That's right. Everytime he does it he would get about fifty-nine piece of primeval stones, and right now it's gone up to about sixty-eight pieces. If he was the class chairman, he'd only get ten pieces." Quite a few of them were enlightened.

"He's too treacherous, too cunning, too savage!" Some of them were slapping their thighs, full of hatred and resentment.

"Sigh, this way it means that there's nothing extraordinary about the position of class and vice chairman. They'll also be extorted and be left with two pieces, just like the rest of us."

It was unknown who just spoke, but when the youngsters heard it, they all could not help but turn silent.

Bang!

The academy elder slapped the table fiercely, feeling extremely furious.

"This Fang Yuan is just too absurd, what is he trying to do? To go as far as to continue extorting, taking eight pieces from the class chairman and three pieces from the vice chairman. With this, what is the difference of being a class and vice chairman in comparison with the other normal students?!" The academy elder tried his best to suppress his voice, but his tone was filled with fury.

When Fang Yuan rejected the position of class chairman, it meant rejecting his own integration into the clan's system. In strict terms, this was a sort of betrayal towards the clan itself. This was enough to make the academy elder very angry.

Immediately after that Fang Yuan had gone to extort his fellow classmates. His handreach was getting further, and this had already gone beyond the academy elder's bottom line. After the extortion this time, the influence of class chairman and vice chairman would be completely weakened.

Over time, the normal students would lose their respect and interest for these two positions.

While Fang Yuan's actions this time seemed small, the meaning behind it was rather heavy.

It was pretty much using oneself's own strength to challenge the clan's system!

This was something the academy elder totally did not wish to see. He was raising the clan's fresh new hopes, not the clan's traitors. Yet despite knowing Fang Yuan had gone and challenge his baseline, he knew that he was unable to do anything to handle the matter.

If he really did, the first one who would not let him go would be the clan head. The second and third person to have opinions against him would be Gu Yue Chi Lian and Gu Yue Mo Chen.

The clan head put in all his hopes onto Gu Yue Fang Zheng, for Fang Zheng was the only A grade talent in three years. The clan leader needed a tenacious and independent genius, not a fragile and delicate flower who was cared for.

At the same time for Chi Lian and Mo Chen, they also had placed their hopes onto their own respective grandsons, hoping that their grandchildren would grow in the midst of setbacks and frustrations.

If the academy elder acted and replaced the students in punishing Fang Yuan, once word got out then there would be the sayings of "Mo and Chi family's future successors could not beat Fang Yuan and could only let the elders help them out."

How unpleasant that would be.

This would inevitably be a huge blow towards the fame and honor of the Mo and Chi family.

Of course the academy elder was not afraid of a small little Fang Yuan, but he was instead worried that his intervention would attract pressure from the three sides - the clan head, Mo and Chi bloodline. They pretty much made up of almost the entire Gu Yue high authorities. As a lowly elder, how could he possibly endure?

"The root of this matter still goes back to Fang Yuan's secret. What in the world did he rely on to break through to the middle stage?" The academy elder restrained the fire in his heart and shot his gaze at the three investigation reports on his table.

The first report showed extensive info about Fang Yuan's family background.

Fang Yuan was born into a good family; there was nothing strange about his identity and his life experience was perfectly clean and spotless. Both his parents had passed away and he was taken in by his uncle and aunt. However they did not get along, and ever since he attended the academy Fang Yuan had always stayed in the academy hostel.

The second report was about Fang Yuan's life records.

He had showed early intelligence during junior age, and was seen optimistically by the clansmen, predicted to be a possible A grade talent. Yet after the Awakening Ceremony, he was tested to be a C grade, greatly disappointing the clan.

The third report was on Fang Yuan's recent trail.

His everyday life patterns were very simple, and he had a rigid schedule. During the day he would always be attending lessons in the academy, and in the night he would always sleep in the dormitories. He was extremely hardworking in his cultivation, and would always enter a Gu Master's cultivation every night,

nurturing his aperture. There were times he would go out to the village's only inn to have better meals and buy wine to drink.

He had a special affection towards wine, and loved to drink the green bamboo wine. Under his hostel bed, he kept tens of pots of green bamboo wine.

The academy elder looked carefully again at the three reports, his heart forming a deeper impression of Fang Yuan again.

"Both his parents died early, and he was unable to get along with his uncle and aunt... No wonder this brat Fang Yuan does not have a sense of belonging towards the clan. He was personally crowned as a genius among all by the clansmen, yet they also personally plucked him out of the sky and threw him down to the earth... No wonder he is so wild and unruly, and so peculiarly cold and detached. His life is so simple and he is assiduous towards cultivation. This is him holding back his breath, unwilling to concede, he wants to prove his ability to the clan! Thus that is why when I suppressed him, he retaliated so fiercely..."

Once the academy elder carefully thought until this point, he could not help but heave a sigh.

The more he learnt about Fang Yuan, the more he understood Fang Yuan.

Of course, understanding does not mean forgiving. Fang Yuan went against him, offending his dignity, rejecting to be class chairman, and even extorting his classmates. These were things he could not tolerate.

Shaking the information in his hands, the academy elder frowned again. "Although these reports are detailed, they have nothing to do with Fang Yuan's advancement secret. It has already been a few days, these people are atrocious!"

Boom, boom, boom.

At this time, knocking sounds were heard on the door.

"Come inside," the academy elder said.

The door opened.

It was the clan head, Gu Yue Bo's personal guard. "The clan leader has orders, esteemed elder, please hurry to the main family pavilion, there is a matter to discuss."

"Oh, what's the matter?" The academy elder stood up from his seat, he had felt the severity of the issue from the guard's tone and expression.

"The Rank four Gu Master Sir Jia Fu has come back, his brother Jia Jin Sheng has gone missing!" The guard answered.

"Hiss..." The academy elder instantly drew a mouthful of cold air.

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(1) This analogy is unique to the author. I translated as closely as possible, yeah... Something about how basically two colors in the sky blend together like an emperor 'sleeping' with his concubine.

(2) Salad dressing is a chinese wordplay that is very hard to contextualise. (怎么办 Zen Me Ban and 凉拌 Liang Ban, are homophones with the character 'Ban' so it is a phrase commonly used when people don't know how to reply to the "How?" question.)

Chapter 55: Exactly the words I wanted to hear!

The moon, round like a wheel, was faintly discernable among the floating clouds.

The academy elder hurriedly walked on the road, his face barely visible under the flickering moonlight.

It was hard to survive in this world, and Gu Masters going missing was a common thing. With his extensive life experience, the academy elder knew that under normal circumstances, these sort of sudden disappearances often spelled death.

Anyone can die, but Jia Jin Sheng cannot! Especially not dying in the Gu Yue Village.

His identity was special, his father being the Jia family head, his brother being the Rank four Gu Master Jia Fu.

A Rank four Gu Master has yellow gold primeval essence, and they have absurd fighting power. Within the Gu Yue clan, only the clan leader is Rank four and can match up to him, while the other clan elders were all Rank three.

The Jia family head was at an even higher cultivation level. He was a Rank five, and under his lead the Jia family rose to prosperity, becoming a large sized clan and possessing the resources of an entire mountain, with a large number of clansmen. Compared to them, Gu Yue clan was just a middle sized one.

If the two clans fought, Gu Yue village would definitely have the disadvantage.

The most crucial part was, if this matter was spread, the Gu Yue clan's reputation would be tarnished. Many merchants are vigilant in choosing their routes. Without the interaction with merchants, the Gu Yue clan's surplus local resources would not have an avenue to sell, and the external resources they required would not be purchasable. As time passes, they would definitely weaken.

"This matter is severe, if we do not handle it well, it would be a disaster!" The academy elder worriedly rushed towards the clan head's pavilion.

Once he stepped into the conference hall in the clan head's pavilion, the academy elder felt the solemn and serious atmosphere.

The main seat was occupied by the current clan leader Gu Yue Bo. The fat and short Jia Fu brought along five to six followers with him and stood at the center of the hall, adopting an accusative stance.

Under the bright light of the lamp, the solemn faces of the elders who were standing at side of their chairs were evident.

Jia Fu was a Rank four Gu Master, and since he was not sitting, these Rank three clan elders naturally did not dare to sit.

This was the deterrent force of a Rank four Gu Master.

It was also a form of respect for power.

"Greetings...." The clan elders were about to pay their respects, but they were stopped by the clan leader Gu Yue Bo's hands.

Gu Yue Bo who had grizzled white hair was using his finger to rub his temple, a look of distress on his face, "I'm not going to say more about the matter, the clan academy is always under your supervision. Let me ask you, where is Gu Yue Fang Yuan?"

The academy elder was shocked. Internally he thought, how does this have to do with that brat Fang Yuan?

He answered politely, "At this timing, he should be cultivating in the academy hostel."

The clan leader sighed, "Brother Jia is very suspicious now, he thinks that his brother Jia Jin Sheng's disappearance has something to do with Fang Yuan. I order you to go and bring him here immediately."

The academy elder shuddered in his heart. "Yes!"

He understood the severity of this issue, and hurriedly paid his respects before he turned around and left.

"Brother Jia, that Fang Yuan will be brought here immediately, have a seat." Gu Yue Bo pointed at a seat near him and said to Jia Fu.

Jia Fu laughed bitterly, cupping his fists at Gu Yue Bo. "I apologise to Brother Gu Yue! I was really anxious then, it has already been days since I've seen my brother, I fear for the worst. I really cannot afford to wait."

There are some things that, only after losing them can they be understood.

Jia Fu only realised it in these few days, the reason why his father paired him up with the burden Jia Jin Sheng for the caravan.

It was to test his nature. Seeing if he could, while suppressing his brother, remember their kinship, and at the same time take care of this little brother.

If Jia Jin Sheng was dead now, how would his father view him?

When he realized this point, he immediately held investigations in the caravan, and quickly set his target on the Gu Yue village.

He rushed back without a single break.

Now that he was standing, reluctant to sit, it was to create the impression that he was determined to get the culprit. This was both emitting pressure on the Gu Yue clan as well as giving his father a form of assurance when he return to the Jia family.

"Reporting to clan leader sir, Fang Yuan has been brought here." Quickly, the academy elder brought Fang Yuan to the hall.

"Gu Yue Fang Yuan pays his respects to clan elder, Sir Jia Fu, and the various clan elders," Fang Yuan said with an expressionless face.

"It's him?" Jia Fu coldly observed Fang Yuan, at the same time, asked a female Gu Master.

This female Gu Master was the one who Fang Yuan bought the purple gold rock from at the gambling den.

"Yes, it's him! There is no mistake," The female Gu Master stared at Fang Yuan, saying confidently.

Jia Fu nodded. Immediately his gaze was like two steel blades, slashing at Fang Yuan. But he did not interrogate openly, for this was the Gu Yue village, thus he had to give the Gu Yue clan leader some respect.

Thus he looked towards the Gu Yue clan leader.

The Gu Yue clan leader had a serious expression. He knew that Jia Fu purposely conversed with the female Gu Master loudly; it was not only to confirm Fang Yuan's identity, but also to assert his motive.

He was implying to the Gu Yue clan head that he had the evidence in his hands, "I have sufficient confidence, so you better not overly defend your own clansman."

This caused some displeasure in the Gu Yue clan leader's heart, thinking, "You Jia Fu lost your brother, it was your mistake to begin with. Now you come here to our Gu Yue village with an accusative stance, do you think my Gu Yue clan can be easily bullied? My Gu Yue clan is impartial and works around based on logic, but don't be mistaken that this is a weakness!"

Thinking of this, he did not interrogate Fang Yuan immediately, but fiercely said to the female Gu Master, "Did you see clearly? I'm not afraid to tell you this, but Fang Yuan has a twin brother who looks extremely identical to him, are you really sure it's him?"

The female Gu Master was just a Rank one, and under Gu Yue Bo's pressure, she instantly showed a hesitant and nervous expression.

Jia Fu frowned and took a step forward, blocking her from Gu Yue Bo's sight. Cupping his fists, he said, "Brother Gu Yue, I've always respected the Gu Yue clan. Especially the Gu Yue clan's first and fourth clan leader, these two were Rank five powerhouses. One built the clan from scratch, where he went through tough times and created the Gu Yue family's hundred year foundation. Another was a benevolent hero, for to protect his clan he sacrificed himself, and is worth respecting. Brother Gu Yue, as the clan leader, I believe you will act impartial, please interrogate this Fang Yuan."

Hearing that his tone had softened, Gu Yue Bo nodded, but his heart had already decided.

If this Fang Yuan was the culprit, then he would hand him over. After all he was just a C grade, there is no loss in losing him. As long as it is able to settle this dispute.

If Fang Zheng was the one who did it, Fang Yuan also has to take the blame. Fang Zheng is an A grade genius, the only one in three years. The clan higher-ups still expect to nurture him greatly to go against that Bai Ning Bing from the Bai clan village.

"Fang Yuan, don't be nervous." Gu Yue clan leader smiled benevolently, using a gentle tone towards Fang Yuan, "Let me ask you, do you know any information about that Jia Jin Sheng?"

"Who is Jia Jin Sheng?" Fang Yuan looked up and said calmly.

"He's lying!" The female Gu Master from the gambling den shrieked right as Fang Yuan finished his question.

The people in the discussion hall, upon hearing this shrieking, frowned and all looked towards her.

The female Gu Master pointed at Fang Yuan, showing an agitated expression, "It's him, it's him! At our gambling den, he bought six purple gold rocks, and the fifth was a mudskin toad. Young master Jia saw it and tried to use five hundred primeval stones to purchase it. This left a huge impression on me, even if a year or two passes I will not forget. Not only me, but the other Gu Masters at the gambling den saw it too."

"Is that so..." The Gu Yue clan leader's smile disappeared, showing a stiff expression and dragging his question towards Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan only nodded now, showing a hint of nervousness, and pretended to suddenly realize, "Oh it's him. Alright, if he's Jia Jin Sheng, then I do know him. But after the gambling den incident, I did not see him ever again."

"He's lying again!" This time, it was not the female Gu Master, but a male Gu Master who called out in public.

Fang Yuan looked towards him, and as if he had recognised him, showed an expression of shock, but quickly tried to hide it.

His expression changes were reflected in everyone's eyes.

Everyone started to ponder.

"Esteemed sirs, I am an employee at the wine shop." The male Gu Master first cupped his fists to everyone, and then vigorously pointed at Fang Yuan, "That night, I saw clearly at the wine shop, he was sitting with young master Jia Jin Sheng, and the two secretly conversed for a long time!"

Once he said so, the hall erupted into a clamor of soft discussions.

The academy elder used a cold gaze and looked at Fang Yuan.

The Gu Yue clan master moved backwards slightly, slowly leaning on the large chair.

"How can that be!" Fang Yuan showed an obviously frantic expression, hurriedly saying, "The wine shop had so many people, how can you recognise me just like that? You might be mistaken yourself!"

"Haha, I am definitely not wrong." The male Gu Master smiled, his gaze staring at Fang Yuan, at this moment he felt extremely confident.

"Not to mention it was young master Jia Jin Sheng who coming to our wine shop, we have to take care of him carefully. Even if it was not him, I would still have had recognised you, as you had given me a strong impression!"



Saying so, he raised his eyebrows, saying smugly, "Do you still remember? That day you came to our shop, wanting a cup of monkey wine. But you only drank a mouthful. After that you released the Liquor worm and fed the remaining monkey wine to it. I saw the Liquor worm and was very agitated, wanting to purchase it from you but you refused to sell it and walked away immediately!"

"Good, exactly what I wanted to hear." Fang Yuan laughed coldly in his heart, but showed an expression of shock on his face, subconsciously taking a step backwards.

"Liquor worm!" The eyes of the academy elder behind Fang Yuan shone.

But quickly he frowned again, and could not help but ask, "Fang Yuan, where did you get that Liquor worm?"

Fang Yuan clenched his fists, gritting his teeth, but refusing to answer.

The surrounding clan elders flew into a rage, starting to scowl.

"Fang Yuan, do you know the trouble you've caused!"

"Talk, exactly what happened?"

"Tell us of what you know, own up. This Liquor worm, is it Jia Jin Sheng's?"

"How can it be his? The Liquor worm is obviously obtained by myself! I opened it!" Fang Yuan raised his head suddenly, his expression worked up, as if he could not stand such a slander, and shouted loudly with an indignant emotion.

Chapter 56: Dispelling suspicion

"You opened it?" Gu Yue Bo frowned deeply.

"That's right, at this point, I shall not hide it any further!" Fang Yuan acted as if he was risking everything, speaking urgently, "I bought six pieces of purple gold rock at the gambling den, but because I did not have enough primeval essence, I only opened five on the spot. The last one, I brought back to the hostel and after opening it, I found a Liquor worm inside. I was overjoyed as I had searched up information on it before, and knew that the Liquor worm is a rare Gu worm that could supplement my lack of talent, thus I refined it on the spot."

"Wait, you said that you bought six gambling rocks and opened a mudskin toad as well as another Liquor worm?" The clan elders upon hearing this, could not help but ask in an unbelievable tone.

"So what?" Fang Yuan answered as a matter of fact, then pointed at the female Gu Master, shouting, "She can be my witness!"

Everyone on the scene were momentarily stunned before turning to look at the female Gu Master.

The female Gu Master felt the pressure from all the gaze and did not dare to lie, so she honestly said, "It is indeed true, Fang Yuan bought six rocks and opened the mudskin toad on the fifth. He brought the sixth piece away, but I do not know what he opened inside."

"Buying six purple gold rocks and getting two Gu worms consecutively, isn't this luck way too good?"  
The clan elders mumbled.

"What's so hard to understand? It's luck, who knows, heh, back in the days when I gambled rocks I also..."

"Wait, Gu worms are hard to refine, why did it sound like Fang Yuan easily refined it?" Some of the family elders asked suspiciously.

"You're muddled. Don't you know that when a Gu is extracted from a fossil, they're extremely weak, tittering on the brink of death? Even refining them from a lower Rank is possible. What's so peculiar about him refining the Liquor worm?" Someone immediately answered.

Fang Yuan continued, "I refined the Liquor worm and went to the stores on the second day, I indeed went to a wine shop in the afternoon and bought a cup of monkey wine. At night, I went again and witnessed a scamming scene, Jia Jin Sheng was selling a smelly fart fat worm as a Black Boar Gu to someone in my clan. Next, Sir Jia Fu appeared and resolved the dispute."

"I went to the wine shop again, but I did not expect to see Jia Jin Sheng drinking wine in a poor mood. I had just obtained the Liquor worm and was extremely happy, so I asked him how many primeval stones I could sell it for. Who knew that Jia Jin Sheng upon hearing my Liquor worm, wanted to forcefully buy it. I obviously rejected him, I had no intentions to sell it, only wanting to know its value. Even if I wanted to sell it, that would have to be after I am Rank two, thus I left on the spot."

Fang Yuan's words had brought out the matter of Jia Jin Sheng and Jia Fu's conflict, causing the clan elders to see Jia Fu in a different light.

Under these pressuring gazes, Jia Fu coughed and asked Fang Yuan with shining eyes, "Then did my brother chase after you?"

Fang Yuan nodded, half lying, "He not only chased me, but also added an extra fifty primeval stones. But I did not want to sell it, so he was furious, claiming that the Gu Yue clan was no big deal, asking me to watch out. After saying that, he walked away. I never saw him again."

Jia Fu nodded internally. With his understanding of Jia Jin Sheng, he definitely would have chased after Fang Yuan and gave threats as that was his style.

If Fang Yuan said he did not chase after him, that would be a lie.

But since Fang Yuan said so, this led Jia Fu to a predicament. His investigations led up only to this clue. Did Jia Jin Sheng really not search for Fang Yuan after that? Maybe he found Fang Yuan again afterwards, and as the two could not agree on the matter, he was killed by Fang Yuan ----- This is entirely possible.

'Speak, was Jia Jin Sheng killed by you!' Thinking of this, Jia Fu interrogated fiercely, attempting to pressurize Fang Yuan with his aura.

Fang Yuan denied once again, claiming that he did not see Jia Jin Sheng anymore.

Jia Fu had no other evidence, and while one side questioned intensely, the other denied. At this point, it had become a stalemate.

As Gu Yue Bo listened to their conversation, he turned displeased. That Jia Jin Sheng actually dared to threaten the Gu Yue clan on Qing Mao mountain, this was not giving the Gu Yue clan any respect! Now this Jia Fu dared to interrogate a Gu Yue clan member so intensely in front of all the Gu Yue clan higher-ups. Nevermind if he had evidence, but now that he has no evidence or proof, if this matter spread out, what would happen to the Gu Yue clan's honour?

"Brother Jia, it's not that I want to speak out of turn." The clan leader interrupted his interrogation and continued, "Jia Jin Sheng has gone missing for so many days, hope is bleak. The culprit who caused this crime definitely left behind some traces. Did brother find anything yet?"

Jia Fu stared fiercely at Fang Yuan before raising his head and sighed, "I understand brother's words! If there were any traces, I would not have come here to find the culprit. That criminal is obviously experienced with vile methods and meticulous handling. To speak the truth, all the clues are at a dead end, and on the day we left, there was a huge rain that could have washed away all the possible blood traces."

Gu Yue Bo smiled faintly. "Brother Jia, I heard that your Jia family has a tracing Gu worm called the Underworld Path Butterfly. It can emit soul fragrance and be implanted on Gu worms. The scent is colourless and odourless, and never fades. Your Jia family member's Gu worms all have this scent. As long as you use the Underworld Path Butterfly, following the fragrance, you'll be able to find the Gu worms and thus your brother."

Jia Fu solemnly said, "I used the Underworld Path Butterfly long ago, but there was no effect. I'm sure you've heard that once the Gu worm dies, the fragrance dissipates. Evidently the murderer killed all of the Gu worms in my brother's possession."

Gu Yue Bo's words turned, "That's strange. The murderer harmed your brother, but he did not go for the Gu worms, or for extortion to get primeval stones. The murderer killed this tiny Rank one Gu Master, what was the motive?"

Indeed, what was the motive?

Regardless of whether Jia Jin Sheng was dead, there had to be a motive, right?

If not for Gu worms nor primeval stones, then was it for love?

But if it was a crime of passion, it had to be a long term process, and Jia Fu would not have come to the Gu Yue clan. The caravan members and clansmen would fall under greater suspicion as they have a long relationship with him.

At once, the hall fell into silence.

Fang Yuan followed everyone's gazes, and suddenly said to Jia Fu, "Maybe Jia Jin Sheng was killed by you. I heard before that your family is splitting assets, now that one brother is dead, wouldn't you get more inheritance?"

"Shut up!"

"Baseless accusation, do not slander Sir Jia Fu."

Immediately the family elders erupted.

Fang Yuan kept quiet immediately, his gaze shining obscurely, but his objective had been reached.

His earlier words were like a pebble that was thrown into the elders' sea of thoughts, causing waves of ripples.

The clan elders followed this train of thought, and started to think, "Jia Fu cannot kill Jia Jin Sheng, this causes more harm to him than reward. Wait, even if he won't do it, that does not mean others won't..."

"The Jia family's internal dispute!" A certain elder had a flash of inspiration and lightly muttered.

His volume was not high, but in the silent hall it could be heard clearly.

At once, the elders' gaze shone.

"Finally, they have thought of this." Fang Yuan's mouth twitched, his eyelids drooping, hiding away his cold gaze.

The Jia family's clan leader wants to split the assets and impart the role of clan leader, and because of this his children underwent intense competition, especially Jia Fu and Jia Gui, both being Rank four Gu Masters and having their own supporters.

In these few years, the Jia family situation is somewhat known by many of the mountain villages.

Jia Jin Sheng's misfortune was too strange. Currently there was no evidence showing that Fang Yuan was the killer. It was obvious that the motivation for murder was not enough just based on the theory of killing just because of a Liquor worm. At the same time, the murderer's actions and methods would not be so meticulous and secretive.

But if Jia Gui was the one acting in the shadows, then it could be explained.

Everyone present was a higher-up, and as someone in a position of power, there had to be something capable about them. At least for political schemes, they had great intuition and perception.

The Jia family dispute, this gave everyone's imaginations a pair of wings.

The Jia family clan leader had arranged Jia Jin Sheng to join the caravan. One reason was to test Jia Fu's nature, to see if he was a good brother, and only suppressed but not bully his brother.

Now that Jia Jin Sheng was in trouble, Jia Fu would be implicated, and who is the true winner?

Obviously Jia Fu's greatest competitor --- Jia Gui!

The criminal's actions were so fluid, causing all clues to come to a dead end, this showed how experienced the criminal was. How could this be done by a fifteen year old like Fang Yuan?

All the answers were revealed at once!

The discussion hall was still silent, but the elders exchanged gazes full of meaning.

"To make someone believe in something wholeheartedly, it is not through convincing, but directing." Fang Yuan's keen observation allowed him to see these glances, and he laughed coldly in his heart, but his face still showed an expression of indignance and stubbornness.

Jia Fu's face was so dark and gloomy it could drip water.

The matter of the Jia family internal dispute caused him to think of Jia Gui.

At that moment, his soul shook!

Who else had a greater motivation than Jia Gui?

No one!

"I understand now, I understand everything." The academy elder stood behind Fang Yuan, looking at him. His eyes shone, "Fang Yuan is both lucky and unfortunate, meeting Jia Jin Sheng at the last moment. With his age of just starting to attend school, how can he get rid of all the evidence? If he had such scheming abilities, how can he show this expression of indomitability. He denied it earlier just to hide the existence of the Liquor worm."

At this point, everyone had dispelled their suspicions towards Fang Yuan!

"Getting rid of the suspicions on me is just the first step, what happens next is crucial." Fang Yuan was in grasp of the situation, and at this point, everything was going according to plan. He sighed internally and looked at Jia Fu.

Jia Fu looked at him too, the unfriendliness in his eyes growing obviously more intense.

Chapter 57: A gentleman's lie

Jia Fu was conflicted.

He had dispelled his suspicions of Fang Yuan and was certain that Jia Gui was the mastermind.

"But yet, so what if I know the truth?" Jia Fu felt anger and sadness surging, "I have no evidence at hand, so if I accused Jia Gui in front of father without any proof, father might even think I am trying to frame him!"

Jia Fu was smart, and he looked at Fang Yuan, a light flashing in his eyes.

Jia Jin Sheng had journeyed with him together, and now that he was missing, it was Jia Fu's fault for not taking care of him! Since he could not accuse Jia Gui, he had to give his father some answer.

And this answer was in front of him!

"That's right, if Fang Yuan is the scapegoat, it would at least help me get through this crisis. Once I get over it, I can get back at Jia Gui with twice the payback." Jia Fu thought deviously.

He raised his pitch, interrogating Fang Yuan, "Fang Yuan, how do you prove that you did not harm Jia Jin Sheng?"

The clan elders were stunned. This is obviously your internal dispute, why are you still grabbing onto my clansman?

Only the Gu Yue clan leader looked grim, his expression turning sharp as he stared at Jia Fu.

"Fang Yuan, what proof do you have to show that you were not present at the time and did not harm Jia Jin Sheng? If you can't prove it, you are the murderer!" Jia Fu pointed at Fang Yuan, his gaze furious as he threatened with his aura.

"He's trying to push our clan's Fang Yuan into being the scapegoat. How atrocious!" At this point, the clan elders had reacted and their expressions all turned unkind.

They had been fighting and scheming against each other for a long time, so if they thought about it, they would know easily about Jia Fu's standpoint and intentions.

"Witness? Of course I do! I prepared it long ago." Fang Yuan smiled internally, but showed an expression of shock, as if he wanted to speak but couldn't.

"No need for others, just tell me if you do or not!" Jia Fu raised his voice again, forcing Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan showed an indignant expression, but finally gritted his teeth and said helplessly, "No."

"Haha. Then you are —"" Jia Fu was about to declare his verdict but at that point.

"Halt!" The academy elder took a step forward and stood in front of Fang Yuan with a solemn expression, "Of course he has a witness, that would be me!"

"You?" Jia Fu asked in shock.

"That's right, me." The academy elder, facing Rank four Jia Fu, was slightly overpowered. But seeing Gu Yue Bo's encouraging gaze, he gathered his courage and raised his head, "These days when Fang Yuan unexpectedly became the first to break through the middle stage, I sent my men to investigate him. His everyday activities and actions are recorded down, there was no time for him to harm Jia Jin Sheng."

"Yes, this is it..." Fang Yuan hid behind the academy elder's back, where no one could see his curled lips, revealing a smile.

Jia Fu's expression was dim, he did not expect the academy elder to stand out and protect Fang Yuan.

The crucial point was, the Gu Yue clan leader did not object. This had a great meaning, for it meant the Gu Yue clan was going to protect Fang Yuan.

"I get it! I wanted to get Fang Yuan to become the scapegoat, but that was from my perspective, and I did not consider their perspective. Indeed, once Fang Yuan is criminalized, the Gu Yue clan has to bear the evil name of harming a Jia family member. From then on they will have to face the Jia family's retribution as well as losing their own reputation. Furthermore, future caravans would not dare to come here and trade anymore, the loss is too great!"

Thinking of this, Jia Fu was anguished and wanted to slap his own head.

The Gu Yue higher-ups did have such considerations.

Fang Yuan was a C grade, so if he really harmed Jia Jin Sheng, handing him over was nothing. But the point was, now that his suspicion had been cleared, if he was handed over, wouldn't the Gu Yue clan suffer a great injustice and lose out greatly?

Knowing that this conflict could not be resolved, Jia Fu gritted his teeth, determined to get his way. He said, "If so, why don't you let me use the Footprint Gu. Once this Gu is used, it will show us his last 30,000 footprints on the floor."

The academy elder scoffed in displeasure.

Jia Fu's words meant he did not trust them. But he has no reason to stop him, thus he let Jia Fu through.

"Come and test!" Fang Yuan laughed coldly at Jia Fu, walking towards him with his head lowered.

He was confident, having predicted this. Thus, these few days he kept his activities within the village and did not go to the secret cave.

Under the Gu Yue higher-ups supervision, Jia Fu did not play any tricks.

The Footprint Gu was very peculiar, it was shaped like a person's foot. Its material was like a translucent yogurt, giving others a feeling of smoothness, and the surface had a yellow-green luster.

Its size was small, being only palm size.

Jia Fu held it in his hands, sending primeval essence into the Footprint Gu.

The Footprint Gu became brighter, and then suddenly with a "bam" sound, exploded into a cloud of yellow green powder.

The powdery cloud enveloped Fang Yuan and spun around him before flying out of the discussion hall.

Where the powder cloud passed through, the floor would show a series of footprints.

These footprints glowed in a yellow green light around the same size as Fang Yuan's foot. They were Fang Yuan's footprints when he entered the discussion hall.

The footprints extended from the family head pavilion into the academy hostel and then to the academy and circulated. Other than that, it reached the mountain village's inn.

The powder cloud became smaller as it flew, and finally at the 30,000th step, it vanished.

The results were clear, everyone had checked and knew that Fang Yuan was innocent, there were no suspicious points.

Jia Fu sighed, taking out a small jade box.

He opened the jade box, where there was only a jade piece inside.

The jade piece was a translucent emerald colour, and there was a Gu sealed inside.

This was a phasmids(1), its body long and slim, with the colour of jade, its entire body looking like a bamboo tube.

The phasmids was normally longer than a palm, but this one wasn't, being only the size of a fingernail. On its surface, it emitted a white glow.

"Green jade as its body, white light enveloping its form, this is the Bamboo Gentleman!" At once, some of the elders recognised this Gu worm and exclaimed.

Even Gu Yue Bo was moved. He could not refrain from advising, "Brother Jia, this Bamboo Gentleman is a Rank four Gu, it is not easily refined. Why waste it here?"

Jia Fu shook his head, looking at Fang Yuan: "This Bamboo Gentleman was obtained through gambling rocks when I was young. The rock was only opened halfway before it could no longer be extracted. As everyone knows, this Gu worm is fed honesty as food, being able to detect lies from birth. Only an honest gentleman who has never lied can refine and feed this Gu."

"Fang Yuan, you just have to open this rock and keep the Bamboo Gentleman in your aperture. Whatever I ask you, you will answer. Next, we will take out this Gu and let everyone see if it changed colour. If the Gu changes colour, you're lying!"

"No problem." Fang Yuan did not hesitate. He immediately opened the jade piece and did as Jia Fu instructed.

The Bamboo Gentleman appeared in his aperture and emitted a faint green glow, covering the primeval sea.

Fang Yuan felt that if he said a single lie, the Bamboo Gentleman could detect it and turn its body from green into another color.

But he only accepted it because he had his trump card.

"Spring Autumn Cicada!" With a thought, the Spring Autumn Cicada awakened and let out a trace of its aura.

This aura was overpowering, and it immediately suppressed the Bamboo Gentleman.

The Bamboo Gentleman emitted a green glow and immediately shrunk its body. Its entire body was curled up, trembling in fear. How could it have the excessive spirit to detect lies?

Jia Fu began interrogating, with his first question hitting home, "Fang Yuan, did you harm my brother Jia Jin Sheng?"

"No!" Fang Yuan affirmed.

Jia Fu asked, "Do you have any other information about him?"

Fang Yuan shook his head, "No idea."

Jia Fu asked again, "Did you say anything dishonest to us earlier?"

Fang Yuan shook his head again, "No."

"Alright, you can take out the Bamboo Gentleman now." After finishing with three questions, Jia Fu instructed Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan took out the Bamboo Gentleman, and everyone saw that it was still an emerald green colour with no changes.

The clan elders heaved a sigh of relief.



Jia Fu's expression became milder as he kept the Bamboo Gentleman, cupping his fists towards Gu Yue Bo, "Much offense this time, brother Gu Yue."

"No matter, the truth is what we wanted to see as well." Gu Yue Bo waved his hand, then sighed, "But what a pity for this Bamboo Gentleman."

The Bamboo Gentleman had the ability to detect lies and was a Rank four Gu, thus it was very valuable. But feeding and refining it was not easy. It had to be refined by an honest gentleman. If any other Gu Master had said a single lie, the refinement would fail and the Bamboo Gentleman would die on the spot.

Its food was honesty. It would reside in the aperture of an honest gentleman and consuming the gentleman's honesty as food to survive.

Now that the Bamboo Gentleman had been opened, it was extremely weak, but it had no food to restore its strength. After being treated so harshly by Fang Yuan, its death was set in stone.

Jia Fu shook his head, looking at the Bamboo Gentleman in his head, not feeling any pity.

He said solemnly, "I have already done my best to investigate, but I received no results. This time, when I get back to the family, I will employ the divine investigator Tie Xue Leng(2), it would definitely get this matter cleared up! Goodbye."

Saying so, he cupped his fists towards Gu Yue Bo and left, crisp and quick, with a certain elegance to it.

Seeing Jia Fu and the rest leaving, Gu Yue Bo heaved a sigh of relief and said, "You can all leave now."

He waved at the clan elders, but suddenly thought of something and said, "Academy elder please stay back."

Without losing a single drop of sweat, Fang Yuan walked out of the family head's pavilion safe and sound.

(1) Phasmids: Stick-bugs. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phasmatodea>

(2) 铁血冷 - Tie Xue Leng, Tie means Metal and is the name of the Tie clan. Xue Leng means cold blood. This name will be important.

Chapter 58: The clan does not only have rules and regulations

"Clan leader, what is the matter?" The academy elder respectfully stood at a corner.

"It's nothing much, take a seat, I have a story to share with you." Gu Yue Bo squinted his eyes and said slowly.

"Your subordinate shall listen with full attention!" Academy elder chose to sit at the seat closest to the clan leader.

Clan leader Gu Yue Bo began his story on Ren Zu.

Some say —

Ever since Ren Zu was able to get their names and subdued the Rules and Regulation Gu, his first order was for them to capture a longevity Gu.

Rules and Regulation Gu, one round and other other square, worked together and could capture all the Gu in the world, a longevity Gu was nothing difficult.

Ren Zu used the longevity Gu and got back his youth, becoming 20 years old again.

But now the rules Gu said, "Human, although you subdued us, every time you command us, it will add a rule and regulation."

Regulation Gu continued, "We can catch the longevity Gu for you, this is the first order. Our new rule and regulation is, we will not repeatedly catch the same Gu for you."

That means, if Ren Zu wanted to catch a longevity Gu again, the two Rules and Regulation Gu would not help.

Ren Zu nodded, having no choice but to accept.

He gave his second command, "Then, other than the longevity Gu, please capture all the other ten thousand Gu in the world for me."

Rules and regulation Gu got this command and Rules Gu turned into a giant circle, encompassing the universe. Regulation Gu turned into a giant square, covering the large world.

One square and one round formed a giant net together, enveloping the entire world.

When they shrunk again and returned to Ren Zu, all the Gu in the world other than longevity Gu were captured.

Ren Zu was overjoyed, with this all the Gu belonged to him, from now on he was the ruler of the world!

But once he opened the net, with a swoosh, a large number of worms flew outside and the Gu that Rules and Regulation Gu worked hard to catch, all escaped fervently.

When Ren Zu closed the net, only five Gu were left.

"Why is this?" Ren Zu was astonished.

Rules and Regulation answered him, "Human, the world has over ten thousand Gu with all sorts of abilities. You have no strength or knowledge, how can you subdue them? We can only capture Gu for you, to subdue them, you have to rely on yourself to get them to work for you."

Next they added, "This is your second order, so we'll add a second rule and regulation --- From now on, we can only catch one Gu for you at a time."

Ren Zu could only nod, and carefully opened the net, only showing a small gap.

The remaining five Gu contained the Strength and Wisdom Gu. Seeing this, Ren Zu was overjoyed.

He said to Strength Gu, "Strength Gu, you left me back then, do you have any regrets? If you succumb to me now, I will return you your freedom."

Strength Gu said, "Human, you are wrong. I didn't leave not because I couldn't, but because I wanted to stay. You want to subdue me but that's impossible. I only succumb to those stronger than me, but you are out of the question. However we can deal again, give me your youth and I will temporarily obey you."

Ren Zu was reluctant upon hearing this, he had just gotten back his youth, was he about to lose it again?

But he desired strength, he knew that with strength, he would get stronger and life would get easier.

Moreover, with strength, he could subdue more Gu.

Thus, Ren Zu accepted, and formed a second deal with it.

Ren Zu became middle-aged at once, and the strength Gu flew out of the web and landed on Ren Zu's shoulder.

Ren Zu had strength, and was full of confidence.

He said to Wisdom Gu: "Wisdom Gu, you left me back then, do you have any regrets? If you succumb to me now, I will return you your freedom."

Wisdom Gu said, "Human, you are wrong. I did not leave not because I couldn't, but because I wanted to stay. You want to subdue me but that's impossible. I only succumb to those smarter than me, yet you are not smarter than me. But we can deal again, give me your middle age and I will temporarily obey you."

Ren Zu upon hearing this, refused to do the same deal again.

He treasured his life more, and he also knew that once he sold his middle age, he would be left with old age. Before long, the Strength and Wisdom Gu would leave him again, just like last time.

Ren Zu refused to deal, but did not want to let go of the Wisdom Gu.

Wisdom Gu was anxious, reluctantly giving in, "Alright, Human, you win. I lost to you this time. As long as you tell me what method you used to capture me, I will admit defeat and not take anything from you, being at your disposal."

Upon hearing this, Ren Zu was overjoyed and before the Rules and Regulation Gu could stop him, he said, "I used the Rules and Regulation Gu to capture you."

Wisdom Gu laughed upon hearing, "I remembered it, so these Gu are called Rules and Regulation. Haha, now that I know your names, you can no longer capture me."

Saying so, it turned into a flash of light and flew away, vanishing into thin air.

Rules and Regulation Gu begin to complain, "Human, we told u long ago that our name should be known by you alone, and not others. Otherwise, we would be used by others. Look what happened, now that Wisdom Gu knows our names, it spells trouble."

Only then did Ren Zu realise that he was tricked by Wisdom Gu. He was anguished, for he knew he lost the only chance he had of capturing the Wisdom Gu using Rules and Regulation.

Saying so, Gu Yue Bo's story came to an end. He looked at the academy elder with a meaningful gaze.

Academy elder jumped from his seat. He had heard of Ren Zu's story long ago, but from Gu Yue Bo's mouth, it had a greater meaning.

His gaze shone and his heart understood. He bowed slightly at Gu Yue Bo, respectfully saying, "Clan leader, you are using this story as an analogy? Fang Yuan as the Wisdom Gu and the clan as Ren Zu. Although Ren Zu used the Rules and Regulation Gu to capture Wisdom Gu and managed to trap it, the Wisdom Gu eventually escaped."

Saying so, the academy elder paused and thought about it for a while, before looking at Gu Yue Bo. "Sir clan leader, you want me to let go of Fang Yuan and stop pressuring him? But he's getting more and more overboard..."

Gu Yue Bo stopped the academy elder's words, holding out his hand, indicating for him to sit and speak.

The academy elder sat and heard Gu Yue Bo sigh, "You, your comprehension is still superb, being an intelligent person, easily getting my point. Unfortunately your grasp of the situation is still too small, you can only see that tiny plot of land in front of you. Let me tell you, the academy is a small matter, and the clan is really the important one."

"I know what you are worried about, afraid that the other students are heavily suppressed by Fang Yuan, eventually losing the fire in their heart. Hehehe." Gu Yue Bo shook his head, pointing at academy elder, "You're overthinking it."

"What do you think the clan is doing? Just relying on your academy to nurture new people? Of course not, behind every student, there's their parents, elders, and friends. Only with these people's support, encouragement, expectations, our Gu Yue clan's new generation can have the confidence and motivation in their hearts."

"Fang Yuan has indeed repeatedly exceeded my expectations, he has a hint of outstanding excellence. I have been observing Fang Zheng secretly and I have long known about Fang Yuan's extortions, just let him continue. Use him to train Fang Zheng, Mo Bei and Chi Cheng, these rough jades. There are many advantages in this matter, at the very least this round of students have the best fighting skills among all the previous seasons."

Academy elder was worried, "But clan leader, excessive hurdles isn't a good thing either, it will crush the jade. Especially that Fang Yuan has the Liquor worm now, this worm provides great help to a Rank one Gu Master. I'm worried that at the Rank one stage, under Fang Yuan's suppression, no one can overturn the situation."

"Then let them be unable to turn over the situation!" Gu Yue Bo snorted, showing the grace and callousness of a person in power, "This tiny setback, what does it matter? Is it scarier than death? With their family elder's support, if they still lacked motivation, then they are not even jade to begin with and have no value to nurture. The clan has tons of new students into the academy each year, so if this

season doesn't succeed, there's always the next. As for Gu Yue Fang Zheng, starting tomorrow night, I will teach him in secret."

"With the clan leader's personal teaching, that is really Gu Yue Fang Zheng's fortune." Academy elder licked his boots at the appropriate timing(1).

Gu Yue Bo's expression softened as he looked at academy elder, instructing, "Do you know the reason why after so many decades, you are still the academy elder? Have greater tolerance, I know Fang Yuan infringed your dignity and made you humiliated, but do you really have to be so calculative with a junior from a younger generation?"

"I know that Fang Yuan has some earlier wisdom, but he is still a youngster and tends to be rash. If not, he would not have hurt the guards in public and caused you to be in a predicament. He was furious internally back then and that is understandable. From being hailed as genius to a commoner, it is normal to be angry at the clan."

"He is actually very childish, you can tell from him trying to hide the Liquor worm. How can the Liquor worm be hid? He is not mature yet and is still innocent, don't think of him as a scary being. Comparing him to the Wisdom Gu, I am thinking too highly of him. At most, he has some small intelligence, but lacks true wisdom and knowledge. If he hid the fact that he rose to middle stage silently, or accepted the class chairman position without any displeasure, that would truly be deep scheming."

"Clan leader, your meaning is?" Academy elder raised his eyebrows.

"What I'm trying to say is, Fang Yuan is discontented with the clan, thus let him go vent his anger. An ant spitting at an elephant, will the elephant care? Emotions are meant to be let out and not bottled inside, so once he's done venting, he will naturally fuse into the clan. Our Gu Yue clan has been around for nearly a thousand years ever since the first generation founded it. There has been countless of people who were discontented with the clan, but eventually did any of them manage to overturn the clan?"

"A clan is not just about rules and regulations, there's also blood relation and kinship. Ren Zu wanted to use the rules and regulations to capture wisdom. Yet not only did he lose, but he also informed wisdom of the rules and regulations. There is profound meaning in this story - the rules are dead, but people are alive, and relationships are deep. If you only know how to use rules and regulations to catch people, it will only increase resentment and cause Fang Yuan to be more dissociated with the clan. Fang Yuan is only a C grade, if he's lucky, after tens of years he'd still be a low-ranking clan elder. But he is still Gu Yue Fang Zheng's twin brother, do you understand now?"

"Understood!" Hearing Gu Yue Bo's final sentence, the academy elder realized at once.

"Mmm, if a family only has rules and regulations, then the family is a pile of dead objects. But if you add in blood relationship, it'll be alive." Gu Yue Bo nodded, "and one more sentence, I want you to remember."

"Please admonish me, sir clan elder."

Gu Yue Bo, with a distant gaze, looked out of the window towards the moon, "The sea can hold the water from thousands of rivers, it's big because of its capacity. A person is great when he can be tolerant and forgiving to many other people. Remember this, and leave."

"Yes clan leader sir, your subordinate takes his leave," said the academy elder as he left the hall.

(1) Boot-licking basically.

Chapter 59: Regardless of Rank Three or Four, you're all monkeys

Tonight's moon was especially round.

The moonlight shone splendid and like muslin, draping over the Qing Mao Mountain.

The Treasure Brass Toad would travel a hundred meters with every hop. Due to its leaping method to move forward, the precipitous and narrow mountain path was unable to serve as a limitation or hindrance to it.

Jia Fu and his crew sat on the back of the Treasure Brass Toad. After exiting the Gu Yue Village, they once again headed towards the merchant caravan's direction.

The wind blew past their ears, and their view followed the Treasure Brass Toad as it moved up and down.

The moonlight shone on everyone's faces and they all looked solemn, while Jia Fu's face was cold as ice.

After a while, a close subordinate could not stand this atmosphere and asked Jia Fu, "Master, what are we going to do now? Jia Jin Sheng's death, once master returns, how will you answer to old master? Should we find a scapegoat first..."

Jia Fu shook his head, but avoided the question, "Do you know the story of Ren Zu?"

The subordinate was stunned, not expecting this answer. At once he did not know how to reply.

Jia Fu continued, "Ren Zu had the Rules and Regulation Gu, and could capture all the ten thousand Gu in the world, obtaining strength but losing wisdom. At that point his net still contained three Gu. He opened and saw that they were the Attitude Gu, Belief Gu and Suspicion Gu respectively. Ren Zu was unwilling to let them go, thus the three Gu could only bet with him. Once Ren Zu opens the net, they would run out in three different directions, and whoever is captured by Ren Zu would be subdued. Guess, who did Ren Zu capture in the end?"

The trusted aide thought, and answered, "It's the Attitude Gu!"

"Do you know why?" Jia Fu asked. The loyal subordinate shook his head.

Jia Fu laughed, "Because attitude means everything. No matter if father 'believes' or 'suspects', I have already displayed my 'attitude'. Jia Jin Sheng went missing, and I immediately conducted investigations in the caravan. Once I had a clue, I rushed towards the Gu Yue clan without stop. At the village, I risked the danger of being attacked by them and interrogated them on the spot. I did not even sit down, and to prove Fang Yuan's words, I went as far as to use the Rank four Bamboo Gentleman."

"Once I get back, I will even spend a ton of money to employ the divine investigator, inviting Tie Leng Xue to investigate this matter. Regardless of whether Jia Jin Sheng is dead or alive, as his brother I have already done all that I should, my attitude shows everything! I have thought it through earlier, we do not

need a scapegoat. We shall go back in this honest state, because I was not at fault for this matter! Finding a scapegoat, that might just be a trap by Jia Gui. If I can find a scapegoat, he can also find someone to overturn the case."

His subordinate was shocked and said, "Master, you really suspect that young master Jia Gui was behind this?"

"Hmph, who else but him can do something so perfectly?" Saying so, Jia Fu's face distorted, anger bursting from his eyes, "Before this, I was thinking about our blood relationship and did not do such a thing to him. But since he is so devious, I will have to pay him back an eye for an eye, don't blame me for being unscrupulous!"

He did not know that far away in a distant place, there were a pair of eyes sending him off.

Fang Yuan stood on the hillside as he silently watched.

The view tonight was truly spectacular.

The golden yellow, round moon was high up in the night sky, shining so brightly that the entire earth was lit bright.

The nearby green mountains were verdant and lush, all kinds of flora growing about. The Man Mountain's pine and cypress trees, as well as the Qing Mao Mountain's distinctive green spear bamboo grew in continuous clumps, cluster after cluster. A wide expanse of dark green colour poured down in torrents from the mountaintop and flowed down to the foot of the mountain.

Faraway mountains ranged endlessly, forming a muddled heavy black shadow under the moonlight.

The tortuous and entwined mountain road resembled goat intestines as it meandered into the distance, occasionally sheltered away by the forest, stretching out all the way.

Jia Fu and his group sat atop the Treasure Brass Toad, following the mountain road as they moved forward. As they continued on the leaping toad, their figures were finally covered away by the trees.

Although the mountain terrain could not affect the Treasure Brass Toad's speed, Jia Fu did not dare to recklessly cut through Qing Mao mountain, for if he barges into a monster horde, even with his Rank four cultivation he would still not come out unscathed. Hence following the mountain trail and moving forward is the best path.

Not long ago, Fang Yuan was standing on the hill holding an umbrella, sending the caravan off. But now he was here again, watching Jia Fu leave.

"The trouble from killing Jia Jin Sheng is finally settled." He eyes were dark and remote while his heart was calm, a bout of peacefulness.

Even since he killed Jia Jin Sheng that night, he had been considering how to tie the loose ends.

He was clear that without base or support, if the truth was revealed, the Gu Yue clan would definitely sacrifice him. But if he just hid it blindly, the truth was bound to get exposed one day.

A smart way to lie, is to have truth and lies, some truth in his lies, and some lies in his truth.

He had to direct the trouble elsewhere!

This incident was like a chess game with two sides against each other. One side is Jia Fu's caravan, while the other is the Gu Yue clan. In this incident, be it Gu Yue Bo, the academy elder or Jia fu, they were all pawns, heck even Fang Yuan himself was just a pawn.

To protect the pawn that represents himself, he had to use the two opposing sides and find a chance in between.

Few days ago, Fang Yuan had already started plotting.

He first made use of those two guards to come up with a good show with the academy elder at the academy. Next he hid the existence of the Liquor worm and stirred the curiosity of the clansman, gaining great attention, attracting the higher-ups. Simultaneously, he allowed the academy elder to hold private investigations.

Next, he extorted his classmates and expressed his rashness, wildness and displeasure towards the clan, "showing weakness" to the Gu Yue higher-ups.

Then he counted the days and waited for Jia Fu.

During the interrogation he displayed his immaturity and fear, which allowed him to lead the other's thoughts by the nose. Letting them find out the "truth".

Lastly he made use of the Gu Yue clan and Jia Fu's opposing interests, and turned the academy elder who was suspicious of him and held investigations, into his eye witness.

The Bamboo Gentleman was a small unexpected accident, but it was still a Rank four Gu and under the Spring Autumn Cicada's aura, the Bamboo Gentleman ironically became Fang Yuan's greatest evidence.

Finally, Fang Yuan not only explained perfectly where he got the Liquor worm, but also pushed the blame to the innocent Jia Gui, while he himself got out of this incident without losing a hair.

"Academy elder was asked to stay behind, it seems that Gu Yue Bo is going to interfere in the academy's matters and get rid of the plan to pressurize me. With his nature, he does have this tolerance. But his real motive isn't me, it should probably be Fang Zheng. One of my motives for blowing up the matter was to stir a commotion and make the higher-ups notice. If Gu Yue Bo doesn't show up, there will still be Gu Yue Mo Chen and Chi Lian who would come out to defend their reputation."

"As for Jia Fu, he should be certain that Jia Gui is the culprit now. With the flames of revenge burning in his chest, hehe, I am looking forward to it. With my interference, their sibling conflict would be elevated. I wonder if that Gu Master competition would be brought forward?"

"Oh yes, there is still that divine investigator Tie Leng Xue. Tie Leng Xue... hmph." Fang Yuan repeated this name, and after half a beat, lightly smiled, "Among the righteous path, this is indeed a character. Unfortunately he is riddled with official business and has a tight schedule. For this matter, it is not easy to get him to come. Jia Fu wants to show his attitude thus he has to invite him, but the time is hard to gauge, at the very least it should be arranged in two to three year's time."

In two to three years, he would have Rank two or three cultivation. By then, life would be in a completely different sight.



The night wind blew over with the fresh cool air of the mountains, penetrating with a kind of fragrance.

Fang Yuan breathed in, feeling more refreshed.

He looked into the distance, his field of view wide. The unrestrained mountains were picturesque, looking tranquil and auspicious under the moon.

"The bright moon illuminates among pines, the clear spring flows upon stone." Fang Yuan lightly recited, he could not help but think of a verse from a fable from Earth.

There were a group of monkeys that pursued the moon. They saw the moon in the well, and they wanted to fish it up. The monkey from behind grabbed hold of the tail of the monkey before it, and the monkey before it grabbed ahold of the monkey in front of him. Thus this went on repeatedly until the first monkey was able to touch the water surface of the well.

Once it stretched out its hand, the water rippled and the moon disappeared.

People in this world were like this. They would see the reflection of the moon, and think that it is the real thing.

Not knowing it was just the moon in the well, the moon in their eyes, or simply the moon in their hearts.

"In this life I hope to become the real moon, rising above the mountains and heavens, toying with the clouds and seas, following the ancient times and walk in the darkness above the various heavens." Fang Yuan's eyes were crystal clear, and the beautiful green mountains were reflected on his pupils.

On the hill, the thin body of a teenager stood silently.

A golden moon wheel shaped like a disk suspended high in the night sky.

It has existed since ancient times, travelling through the night sky, casting the small shadow of the teenager faintly onto the limestones.

Chapter 60: Passage behind the broken wall, how can the legacy be easily obtained?

The night sky of early summer is beautiful.

There was not a single cloud floating in the sky, and the stars flickered like crystals, shining with emotionally moving radiance.

Sandalwood crickets appeared on stage to take over the place of the dragonpill crickets, and they sang their emotional songs in the grassy bushes, creeks and tree branches.

The Gu Yue Village was radiantly lit, as if it was reflecting the bright starry sky.

One by one the dark green bamboo houses stood in the night wind, and beneath the star dome it had a tranquil and peaceful ambience.

Fang Yuan was not in the village now, but he had snuck into the secret cave among the rock cracks.

He half-kneeled on the ground, his hand caressing the image wall, his palm emitting a lump of blue-coloured moonlight.

On the image wall, the original scene was already gone, and it was now no different from the other surrounding stone walls. If Fang Yuan did not remember this position, who else would know that hidden under this image wall was Flower Wine Monk's strength inheritance?

On a night over a month ago, the image wall transformed and the Flower Wine Monk's secret hideout appeared. The image wall first showed a video of Flower Wine Monk bathed in blood, but proclaimed he was leaving his inheritance. Next was a line of bloody words, hinting for the discoverer to break the image wall and the cave opening would appear. Then the words vanished, and the image wall's Photo-audio Gu's strength was depleted, and the image wall went back to being an ordinary wall.

Although he knew about the Flower Wine Monk's inheritance, Fang Yuan did not have the time to explore it.

As it was an unexpected occurrence, he had to kill Jia Jin Sheng on the spot and was busy that night getting rid of the evidence. Towards the impending interrogation, he had to plot carefully and had restricted his activities inside the village.

Until when Jia Fu left and after the academy elder stopped his investigations, about ten days later, the attention had waded and Fang Yuan could finally sneak back into the cave.

In the aperture, the green copper sea was reducing as Fang Yuan deployed his primeval essence into the Moonlight Gu on his right palm.

The Moonlight Gu emitted a gentle moonlight and flickered continuously. Under its effect, the rock wall was shaved off slowly, and large amounts of rock powder fell on the ground.

This was Fang Yuan's extensive control of the Moonlight Gu, the same method he used to open the gambling rocks.

Compared to opening rocks, this method was more coarse, but in breaking this thick rock wall, this method seemed a little too gentle.

This was the sixth day that Fang Yuan was using the Moonlight Gu to shave the rock wall.

On the floor was a thick pile of dark red coloured rock powder.

Logically speaking, Qing Mao Mountain's soil was all green-coloured. But here, the soil were strangely bright red and emitted a dark glow.

But fortunately so, because of this source of light, Fang Yuan did not need to prepare a torch.

In order to avoid being suspected, Fang Yuan did not use any tools. Steel hammers and pickaxe were undoubtedly better for breaking the rock wall, but if he did, the sound of the wall breaking would reverberate all over the area.

Regardless of whether the outside world would hear a faint or loud noise, Fang Yuan wanted to eliminate all such possible suspicious points.

Fine details often decided in one's victory or defeat.

To Fang Yuan, being cautious is not just his good point, it was more like a habit to him.

In his past life he had been careless and carefree, but he quickly paid a hefty price. There is a saying that goes, 'people get more cowardly when they age'. Yet actually this is not cowardness, but patient cautiousness. 500 years of experience ingrained the word caution into his soul.

"Puff..." Taking in a deep breath, Fang Yuan slowly stopped the transmission of his primeval essence.

He plopped onto the ground, extremely exhausted.

He had dug around three inches of thickness out of the entire slab of image wall that was the height of half a man.

Fang Yuan wiped the sweat off his forehead while exercising his shoulders and stretching his legs. Due to long hours of squatting, a sense of numbness was felt from his legs.

'Knock, knock, knock'.

Fang Yuan bent his fingers and knocked on the rock wall.

Hearing the sound, he was slightly happy in his heart, as he could tell the wall was getting thinner.

Closing his eyes to meditate, he checked the situation inside his aperture once again.

The green copper primeval essence had less than 20% left.

"Continue working hard!" Fang Yuan grit his teeth and stretched out his right hand again on the rock wall.

The water-blue coloured moonlight sustained a glow for around fifteen minutes, then Fang Yuan suddenly halted his actions. He took out his right arm and found out that the rock wall had a small hole in it already.

He immediately stood up and kicked.

With a thunderous noise, the hole expanded and became as big as a bamboo basket.

Fang Yuan cautiously took a few steps backwards. He felt a sense of staleness emitting from the hole and permeating into this secret cave.

The secret cave's ventilation was not good. Fang Yuan thought about it for a moment and decided to leave the rock crack, returning to the outside world.

Only after a while did he return.

The stale feeling in the cave was slightly better than earlier, and Fang Yuan continued to expand the size of the hole, sometimes using the Moonlight Gu, and at other times using his hands to dig, or his legs to kick. After a while, he finally expanded the hole into a size that he could fit into.

Looking from the hole, there was a diagonal path downwards.

The path was initially narrow, but the deeper it was, the wider it got. A person must lower their head when entering at first, but towards the latter half of the path, they are able to take large strides with straightened backs.

The cave's walls were a weird red soil colour, emitting a faint red glow. This caused the passage's interior to be visible.

But the path was very long and extended beyond what the eye could see. Due to the angle, Fang Yuan could not see what was at the end of the path.

He stood at the cave entrance and did not immediately step in, instead squinting and standing on the spot.

A strength inheritance was not like a legacy inheritance.

Legacy was when a Gu Master died and left behind his belongings. Those who find this legacy can find the items on the corpse.

A strength inheritance is when a Gu Master who is on the verge of death and reluctant to let his legacy go extinct, or to benefit the future generations, or wants to leave behind his last trace of existence in the world, purposely set hurdles to test the people who arrive.

Taking the Flower Wine Monk for example, he set up this inheritance with a clear objective - it is to nurture an avenger, to take revenge on the Gu Yue clan!

If the person who comes along is able to pass these trials he/she would obtain all sorts of benefits. The person who gets through the final test would obtain the entire strength inheritance.

According to the two factions, strength inheritance is split into the righteous inheritance and the demonic inheritance.

Righteous inheritances often had exquisite design, to test the nature and character of the person. Those who fail midway, would not be in any mortal danger.

Demonic inheritance was more complex.

Those demonic cultivators were often insane and persistent, cold-blooded, or a mass murderer, unable to be assessed by normal standards.

Some demonic inheritances had trials that tested the mind. With lots of mind-boggling decisions to make, a lot of people would fall into deep and painful thoughts without getting a single result.

Some demonic inheritances were extremely simple, being a secret room with Gu worms and primeval stones inside.

Some demonic inheritances were extremely cruel, and failure midway often spelled death.

Some were more extreme - a few demonic cultivator's inheritances were a huge lie, being a giant trap itself. They followed the rules of 'bringing someone down with them', and even right before dying, they would set up this trial and trick others.

"Which type does Flower Wine Monk's inheritance belong to?" Fang Yuan thought deeply.

With his previous life's memories, he was clear of any future famous demonic inheritances. But this one in particular, no one discovered it in his lifetime, and Fang Yuan was left unaware of the details.

"By right, the chances of a trap isn't high. Otherwise the Flower Wine Monk would not design this image wall. But is there a hidden mechanism?"

Fang Yuan picked up a rock and threw it into the cave.

The rock rolled in the path and quickly rolled out of Fang Yuan's sight; he could hear a series of colliding sounds echoing in the cave.

Fang Yuan fell into deep thought. The rock testing results showed that it was safe.

But he did not enter the path yet, and instead took out some rock powder and spread it around the entrance of the secret cave. At the same time, he spread a layer on the rock crack entrance.

Next, he squeezed out of the narrow rock crack and left the place.

Around a few hundred meters from the river in a hidden bush, he found the green bamboo wine that he had brought along this time. Opening the seal, he drank a huge mouthful and purposely spilled some of the liquor, getting it on his clothes and making him smell of alcohol.

Carrying the wine, he went back to the village, and upon reaching the school hostel, it was exactly midnight.

If he did not return at night often, people would get suspicious. This was better, going out early at night and returning late at night.

When finding the Liquor worm, Fang Yuan already did this, and with that background, such behaviour was not peculiar.

The stars fade and the sun appears, a night of silence.