

Insanity 91

Chapter 91: Fang Yuan, we're very worried about you

It was a night without sleep, and once day came, Fang Yuan stepped out of the room and started to purchase stuff wantonly.

The room was poorly furnished and the blankets were torn. If he lived there for long, the chill would enter his body and cause him to get sick.

Fang Yuan's primeval stones were already half-used up, but he still had to purchase the necessary equipment. He could not scrimp on these things.

Firstly was a blanket, he had to get a large blanket stuffed with cotton, or at least two. He also needed bed sheets and a mattress.

He needed another oil lamp so that it could illuminate the room, and he needed at least two pots of lamp oil.

Thinking about it, although the room was small, it could still hold a table and a chair, thus he bought those as well.

Most importantly, it was a stove.

In the winter, if he did not have a stove to warm himself when sleeping in the room, he would still get shocked awake by the cold.

Other than these, he also bought some dry rations and some water to last around seven days' worth.

The winter sun slowly rose, giving out languid rays of light.

Gu Yue Jiao San and the other Gu Masters stood at the North door of the village, waiting anxiously.

"Something's not right. Last night we agreed to meet at this time and place. But it has already been fifteen minutes, and this Fang Yuan still hasn't shown up?" A female Gu Master asked.

"Calm down and just wait. It is inevitable that a newcomer is late," Jiao Sao laughed. He had been fretting over not having any reasons to fault Fang Yuan with, but to think he faltered on the second day.

"Never mind that we are waiting. Even the group leader has to wait for him, this lad thinks too much of himself!" Gu Yue Kong Jing complained, his tone indignant.

Half an hour later, Fang Yuan was still nowhere to be found.

Jiao San's face was darker than night.

"This scumbag, did he remember the wrong location? We said clearly that we are meeting at the northern door," Kong Jing said suspiciously.

"I'll wait here, you guys go look around the different doors," Jiao San instructed, and the three obliged.

Fifteen minutes later, they returned with no fruit.

"Did this Fang Yuan see through our ploy and left the group directly?" A female Gu Master asked.

"You think too highly of him. Even if he is the first place in the year end exam, he is still a young newbie. His age is apparent." Kong Jing said.

Jiao San's face was grim, "It is secondary to whether he has seen through us. The crucial thing is to find him now. I am afraid that he has left us behind and is trying to breakthrough to Rank two on his own. Once he reaches Rank two, he can abandon this mission and apply for the splitting of assets from the internal affairs hall. Find him, go and find him! The village is only so big and there are only that many rental houses, we must find him and not give him the time to breakthrough to Rank two!"

"Yes!"

.....

In the room, Fang Yuan sat on the bed.

In front of him were a few money bags, and inside them was all primeval stones.

"Not enough primeval stones," Fang Yuan sighed, his expression grim.

Primeval stones are the driving force behind a Gu Master's advancement, and if they are lacking, the Gu Masters would need to rely on their own recovery speed for primeval essence, which would greatly reduce their cultivation speed. At the same time, without sufficient food, the Gu worms would die of hunger.

Fang Yuan's primeval stones, during his time at the academy, it had reached the peak of being slightly above a thousand. But it could not stand up to the expenditure over time.

A same stage Gu Master up till now, only has three Gu worms.

But Fang Yuan, after getting number one in the year end exam, entered the Gu hall and chose another Little Light Gu for free.

He must choose, for if he gave up, it would invite suspicion.

Like this, he had seven Gu worms on hand!

Undeniably, this was a huge financial burden.

"If this continues, I can only hold out for two months. I must get back my family assets, that is the greatest financial support. But to get them back, the first step is to advance to Rank two." Fang Yuan's gaze was dark.

To Fang Yuan, advancing to Rank two was not easy.

For a Gu Master's cultivation, first was resources, second was talent. Without talent, the path of cultivation would be difficult and their accomplishments in the future would be lower.

Talent is split according to D, C, B and A grade.

But this is only a rough distribution.

In fact, every grade has another specific differentiation.

Taking a C grade for example — the primeval essence storage in the aperture would be around 40-59%.

Fang Yuan's primeval essence was 44%, so in the C grade range, he was only middle-lower class.

Rushing to Rank two, he needed at least 55% black green primeval essence. To an A and B grade Gu Master, this was not difficult, and to the 55-59% C grade Gu Masters, they could pass as well.

Thus, for C grade Gu Masters, once they reach a certain accumulation, most of them would advance to Rank two. Only very few can attain Rank three.

Thus, the talent could determine most people's achievements in their lives. Fang Yuan being given the cold shoulder, he could not blame the people for being biased.

"Although my C grade talent is only 44%, if I want to break the wall and reach a new height, attaining Rank two, it is still not impossible. The easiest way is to find a talent raising Gu worm. Secondary, I can get a support-type Gu like the Liquor worm, and that can help to break the barrier as well. Lastly, I can attain the help of a higher-ranking Gu Master, but using external primeval essence has a huge backlash, unless I can get the Cleansing Gu in future to eliminate the external presence."

Fang Yuan thought about it while using both hands to take out a primeval stone, using his fingers to rub the smooth surface of the stone.

"But the above methods are not recommended for me. I do not have any friendly Gu Master to help, and even if I do I will not let my aperture be at their mercy. Gu worms like the Liquor worm are too rare, even getting the Liquor worm was my extreme luck. As for talent raising Gu worm, I got it in my previous life and attained Rank six cultivation, and I also know where to find them, but I cannot go to those places now with my current cultivation. Even if I get them, I cannot keep them, or even use them."

"But other than these methods, there is a final most stupid method. Using primeval stones to force it!" Thinking so, Fang Yuan's eyes flashed as he gripped the primeval stone tightly.

Gu Master cultivation, first was resources, second was talent.

Without sufficient talent, one can compensate using resources to a degree.

"My primeval essence is only 44%, I do not have enough to break the aperture walls. But if I absorb primeval essence while attacking the walls, I can hold on much longer, and in about four to five days, I would be able to smash the walls!"

Making up his mind, Fang Yuan opened his eyes, his heart sinking into his aperture.

Green copper primeval sea raged on as the waves crashed into the aperture walls.

But this time, to prevent his primeval essence from drying up and becoming insufficient to maintain the cracks and causing the aperture to recover, Fang Yuan purposely slowed the attacking speed.

This way, the green bronze primeval essence expenditure would be greatly reduced, but the crack formation would also slow down. Despite so, Fang Yuan continued to absorb the natural essence of the primeval stones.

Primeval essence recovery has to be slightly above the crack recovery speed. This way, even if it is slow, showing less than 1% progress, there would be hope as time passes.

The only thing about this method would be that other than eating and shitting, Fang Yuan had to cultivate non-stop. The more time he wasted, the more primeval stones would go down the drain and the more his hard work would squander.

He could stop for a maximum of fifteen minutes, and after that if there isn't any primeval essence to continue attacking, the aperture would fully recover.

Thus, once the attack began, he had to persevere until he succeeded, and cannot be disturbed. Once he stopped for too long, he would have to restart the process.

Fang Yuan did not have so many primeval stones on hand to do it multiple times.

Time flies when cultivating, and in the blink of an eye, the sun set.

Under the setting sun, Jiao San with a cold expression said, "After finding for a day, you still haven't found him?"

"No, group leader." Kong Jing wiped the sweat off his forehead and said, "That lad, he did not go to any of the houses we recommended, we have no idea where he is hiding."

"Hmph! Continue searching tomorrow, we have to find him. Remember to search the inn as well, I do not believe that we cannot find him. The village is only so big, no matter where he is hiding, there has to be a trace!" Jiao San walked away in fury.

Until the afternoon of the second day, their search finally bore fruit.

A female Gu Master walked to Jiao San excitedly, reporting, "Found him, found him! Fang Yuan is at a worn-out bamboo building, and has rented the second floor. According to the owner's description, it should be him."

"Hmph, as I expected, he really hid himself and is trying to breakthrough to Rank two." Jiao San laughed sinisterly, "Let's go and make ourselves guests in his room and show him some concern. He is a newcomer after all."

"Hehehe....." The others also started smirking.

The four immediately came to Fang Yuan's residence.

There was a paper on the door.

Jiao San took it down and read it. It was Fang Yuan's handwriting, saying that he needed to go into closed door cultivation for a few days and will not leave, as he would be attempting to breakthrough to Rank two. If others saw it, they should not disturb him. If Jiao San saw it, it was a 'request of absence' application.

Jiao San snorted, throwing the paper away.

How can I let you advance to Rank two so successfully?

He laughed coldly, knocking on the door.

Knock knock knock.

"Little brother Fang Yuan, are you here?" He purposely said loudly, "We are here to see you, how could you not tell us about your closed door cultivation, seriously."

There was no reply.

Knock knock knock.

Jiao San knocked loudly.

"Little brother Fang Yuan, it's not that I want to nag at you. But you are making decisions on your own. Now that you are our group member, you should listen to instructions and obey orders, moving together. We have already accepted the wild deer hunting mission, this is specifically for you to train, so why don't you stop first and complete the mission with us, then cultivate," Jiao San's eyes squinted as he said in a gentle tone, although his expression was dark.

There was still no reply.

Jiao San suddenly raised his voice, "Little brother Fang Yuan, why are you not replying, did something happen to you? It is not so easy breaking through to Rank two, you can ask us for experience. Fang Yuan! Did you hear me, oh no, could it be that you fainted?"

Jiao San talked to himself, smirking coldly but his voice was full of concern and anxiety.

The other three members observed the show.

Kong Jing interrupted at an appropriate timing, "Leader, you might be right, Fang Yuan hasn't responded after so long, let's go in and save him!"

"Fang Yuan! Fang Yuan, quickly open the door. We're really worried if you keep silent. If you don't open the door, we will break in. You are our newest member, we cannot let you be in danger!" Jiao San shouted loudly.

Still, there was no reply.

Jiao San's mouth curled, indicating to Kong Jing.

Kong Jing acknowledged and raised his foot.

With a loud BAM sound, the entire door was sent flying, crashing onto the bed!

Chapter 92: The future is in sight

"Hang in there Fang Yuan, we're coming to help you!" Jiao San shouted with a concerned expression, taking huge steps into the room.

But the next moment, he was dumbfounded.

The room was empty, Fang Yuan was not inside.

The four became silent.

"How can this be, where is he?" Jiao Sao broke the silence, saying frustratingly.

He 'performed' outside the room for such a long time, but it turned out to be a one man performance as Fang Yuan was never inside.

The three looked at each other, not expecting such a result.

"This is weird, if Fang Yuan isn't here, why would he paste that paper on the door?" Kong Jing said carefully.

"Get the landlord here now!" Jiao Sao raised his foot and sent the door flying.

"You looking for me? Hmph, I was just about to find you. Coming to my house and raising a huge ruckus, even breaking down my door. Young man, you sure are capable." The landlord was an old man, but his tone was very firm.

Being able to own additional houses in the Gu Yue village and renting it out, he was obviously a Gu Master.

A Gu Master's strength and status supersedes a mortal. Mortals do not dare to operate such a business. In fact, they do not own property.

The entire village's property is owned by the Gu Yue clan. The mortals who live here are the farmers and servants of the clan.

"Senior, we are here to find a young man, he is our group member." Facing the landlord, Jiao San controlled his temper.

An old Gu Master like the landlord, even if he is old and no longer striving for his career, he still has strong relationships and connections. Even if he is retired his ability is still not to be underestimated.

Those without human relationships and trump cards, how would they dare to do business?

This is not a peaceful era, it is full of violence and plunder.

The landlord shook his head, his tone rigid, "I do not care about my tenant's whereabouts, but I do know that you broke my door. You need to compensate me."

"Hehe, this is our fault, it is only right that we compensate you," Jiao Sao laughed dryly. Although he was furious inside, he still forced himself to compensate some primeval stones and even gave some extra.

The landlord's expression turned slightly better, "If the young man who rented this room is who you are finding, then I must tell you that he has not turned in for a day. After paying a month's rent, he bought a huge amount of things yesterday and asked me which place sold coal cheaply. I told him that there was no need to buy coal, as there is a valley outside the village towards the north. A mine is situated there where he can excavate the coal. After thanking me, he left and never returned."

"So that's it." Jiao San looked at the decorations in the room.

Indeed, the mattress and bedding was new. The table and chairs were old goods bought by Fang Yuan that were seemingly firm.

The stove was empty, it indeed did not have coal.

Jiao San breathed out slowly, being at ease.

"It seems Fang Yuan was delayed by excavating coal. Nevermind, let's come again tomorrow." He walked out of the room first.

But on the third day, Fang Yuan still did not show up.

Jiao San and the others stood outside the room, hesitant.

"Digging for coal, it does not need so much time. Fang Yuan wants to do closed door cultivation so maybe he dug more. But it's been so long, could something have had happened to him while he was excavating?" Kong Jing conjured.

Jiao San nodded unnoticably, pointing towards the bed and stove, "This lad is very stingy. He paid a month's rent all of a sudden and even bought so many things, and especially pasting that paper on the wall, he probably wanted to cultivate here. Too bad he was unlucky. These days the wolf hordes have gotten bigger, and the wild beasts around the village have gotten more active. He might have encountered some wild beasts."

"Leader is wise!" The two female Gu Masters said at the same time, flattering him.

Jiao San laughed while raising his head, "Hahaha, I was still fretting over how to deal with him. Though we have that deer catching mission, let's not rush out to do it. If we meet him in the wilds, we are forced to save him, right?"

"Hehehe." The other three members started laughing.

Day four.

In the aperture, waves of black green primeval essence hit against the crystal walls relentlessly.

The translucent white crystal wall was already full of cracks, crisscrossing each other.

This is Fang Yuan's result after working hard non-stop for three days and three nights. At most, when he really could not take it anymore, he would quickly take a meal and settle his bowels.

These days, Fang Yuan had purposely slowed the wave crashing process, and at the same time he drew more primeval essence from his primeval stones. Thus, after such a long time, the green copper primeval sea had only dropped from the 44% limit to around 20%.

As time passed, when there was only about 13% primeval essence left, the wall could no longer hold up, and had reached its limit.

Crack crack...

The originally sturdy crystal wall broke into pieces, and the fragments fell into the primeval sea, causing ripples and waves. After that, it turned into white dots and vanished into thin air.

What replaced the crystal wall, was a brand new white light wall.

This was the Rank two light wall. Although there was not much difference and it still emitted white light, it was much more glimmering than the Rank one light wall.

At the same time, traces of red primeval essence were produced in the sea and it mixed around with the black green primeval sea in the aperture.

This was the Rank two initial stage red steel primeval essence!

"Finally I did it, I broke through to Rank two!" Fang Yuan opened his eyes abruptly, the room immediately brightening up.

But a second later, a strong wave of nausea hit him.

"I went through four days and three nights of non-stop cultivating, it is too intense and my body is going to collapse soon." Fang Yuan laughed bitterly, slowly lying down. "My cultivation was not disturbed at all, it seems that my set up at the rental house had worked. It was worth spending this sum, next I shall rest well for the night and return to the village tomorrow."

Thinking of this, intense sleepiness assaulted him.

Fang Yuan forced his eyes to stay open and used his intense will to cover himself with the blanket.

After closing his eyes, in a few seconds, he fell soundly asleep.

The cultivation earlier had used up most of his spirit.

He slept until the afternoon of the second day.

Fang Yuan opened his eyes, feeling his spirit recovering to around half, but he was still feeling weakness in his body.

He opened the door, walking out of the room for the first time in five days.

This attracted a person.

This person had slim long eyes with a thin body — it was Jiang Ya's brother Jiang He.

Seeing Fang Yuan, he exhaled in relief, saying, "You're finally out! Hmph, I would have broken into the room if you still did not come out after the next few days. After all if you die here, I'd be held responsible."

Fang Yuan laughed but did not say anything.

The winter sunlight broke through the window, shining onto his face, amplifying the trace of pale white weakness on his features.

Five days ago, he purposely asked the landlord and gave Jiao San the clues of his coal story. After that he left the Gu Yue village and went to the hamlet at the mountain foot.

Because of old man Wang previously, Jiang He was half an alliance mate of his. Using this relationship, Fang Yuan stayed a few days in the village and advanced to Rank two without any interruption.

Of course, the rock crack secret cave was much more elusive than Jiang He's place, but it was not completely safe. Fang Yuan had to consider the possibility of Jiao San and the others relentlessly finding him, and might find the rock crack secret cave.

Although chances were slim, if the Flower Wine Monk's inheritance was found out, Fang Yuan's life would be in danger.

Fang Yuan was a very cautious person, and he naturally would not take such risks.

At the same time, it was safer at Jiang He's place. Even if they had a shared secret, Jiang He would not kill him to silence him.

The risks and troubles of killing a Gu Master was too great. Without sufficient benefits, Jiang He had no motivation to do it. In fact, to preserve the secret, Jiang He would even have to worry about Fang Yuan's safety.

After all, if the clan's punishment hall investigates Fang Yuan's death, they might find out about old man Wang's secret.

Seeing Fang Yuan safe, Jiang He was really relieved.

But quickly, he felt the aura of Fang Yuan and his expression changed, "To think that you really succeeded, reaching Rank two in one go!"

He was shocked in his heart. Five days ago when Fang Yuan approached him and stated his intentions, he was actually feeling disdainful in his heart.

Absorbing the primeval essence from the primeval stones and breaking through to Rank two, this kind of multitasking method was very draining on the spirit. Normally speaking, Gu Masters needed a very strong will, patience and years of cultivating experience.

Only with the experience, a Gu Master could treat the extraction of primeval essence from the stones as an instinct. At the same time, manipulating the primeval sea skillfully and causing the impact to be controlled at a degree, and it had to be perfectly calculated, just enough to match the recovery rate of the primeval essence so that the process could be sustained.

In Jiang He's opinion, Fang Yuan had no chance of success. But to think, he did it in one go.

Fang Yuan laughed indifferently, "I was lucky. I plan to return to the village today, but before that, it would be nice if I can have a meal."

"Hehehe, little brother Fang Yuan, since you're here, of course I'm taking care of your meals." Jiang He patted his chest, his attitude even more friendly than before.

Although he did not think well of Fang Yuan's future, but now that he has advanced to Rank two, it meant that he had gone through a difficult hurdle and has the qualifications to be on par with him now.

After a scrumptious meal, Jiang He brought Fang Yuan to the entrance of the small village personally.

"Little brother Fang Yuan, be careful this time. Recently the wolf nest area has gotten slightly fiercer, causing the wild beasts to become more active. Eh, it is snowing." Jiang He paused, then continued, "My opinion is, don't go now. How about you stay here for another night?"

After Fang Yuan reached Rank two, he became really friendly.

But Fang Yuan was insistent on leaving, thus saying goodbye to Jiang He.

The snowflakes fell calmly, just like pure white fur that was floating down slowly.

The light of the setting sun turned the snow into a golden yellow.

Flake by flake, the snow drifted onto Fang Yuan's head and shoulders.

In the far distance, the Gu Yue village stood upright over the mountain waist, watching over quietly.

Chapter 93: Small beast horde

"Run faster, don't fall behind!"

"The clansmen in front are fighting a bloody battle, they are waiting for our backup."

"Follow closely, or you will easily lose your direction in the midst of battle at night. Newcomers better pay special attention!"

On the way back to the village, there would be a five-man group from time to time running hurriedly past Fang Yuan's side.

"Did something happen?" He had not walked for more than five hundred meters when Fang Yuan saw the thirteenth group.

He could not help but contemplate, but to be quite honest, with five hundred years' worth of memories it was just too superfluous and messy. Mentioning this, although Fang Yuan was reborn, he had never given up any of his old memories.

Yet, much of his memories were enshrouded in a layer of thick fog, and if he tried to retrieve them by force, he would only get lost in the fog, getting more losses than benefits.

Only a few deep and powerful memories that were like sparkling and translucent pearls ran through his previous life's five hundred years like a connected thread.

It was evident that what was happening right now, was in fact not in any of these pearls.

The life of his in the Gu Yue Village was just the beginning of the preceding period, it was just way too long ago. Besides...

"There's a possibility that this never happened in my previous life, but because of my change, a butterfly effect happened and caused changes to the surroundings."

Just like that, he walked while pondering. Subconsciously, Fang Yuan reached the Northern gate of the village.

By chance, there was another group about to set off.

"Eh?" On seeing Fang Yuan, only one person from this group stopped in his tracks. "Fang Yuan, why are you still here?"

"What's wrong?" Fang Yuan raised his eyes and looked at this person. It was no other than his fellow schoolmate, Gu Yue Chi Cheng.

Chi Cheng immediately frowned and said, "Oh geez, you still don't know yet? There's been a small scale beast tide that formed near the village. If we let it be, it will slowly become a big scale beast tide. When that happens the villages at the foot of the mountain will be crushed. Without those lowly mortals and slaves, we'd also be in a difficult position sometimes."

"Oh, so it's like this?" Fang Yuan's gaze flashed.

Being reminded like this, he was able to remember that such a thing did happen in his memories.

In this world, it was hard for humanity to survive. Every few years a beast tide would happen. Humans need resources and living space. This is no different from wild beasts and insects, they also needed such things!

To explain the beast tide as a war between wild beasts and humanity, perhaps this will be easier to understand.

Taking Qing Mao Mountain for example, every three years there would be a large scale wolf tide that attacks each of the big mountain villages.

"According to my calculations, the real outburst of the wolf tide will happen next year. However, this small scale beast tide, is a subsidiary of that. The wolf group will continue growing stronger and bigger, and this will cause the other beast groups around the area to lose their living space. As this effect accumulates, when it reaches the maximum limit, it will cause the migration of beast groups. Migrating beast groups will naturally influence other beast groups."

"Under such an intertwined influence, there is a chance that the influence would be expanded and cause all sorts of beast groups to relocate, causing the beast tide to be formed from this matter. If this problem is not controlled in time, the tide would only get bigger. Although it is still unable to endanger the existence of the Gu Yue village, if we leave it alone, the village's power would be greatly reduced."

"Wait! If this is the case... Heh heh heh heh." There was a sudden flash in his eyes, but Fang Yuan promptly cast his gaze down, hiding away the change in his eyes.

Seeing that Fang Yuan had not said anything, Chi Cheng continued to speak. "At the present time, the internal affairs hall and external affairs hall have both already given out the order to mobilize, they proclaimed this as an urgent mission. Fang Yuan, don't you think of goofing off. Your group has already left in the morning, you must also go. But..."

As he spoke up to this point, Chi Cheng purposely dragged out his intonation, "Danger lurks everywhere during a beast wave. All kinds of wild beasts roam about, and most of all a battle in the night is way more dangerous than the day. You're just a small little Rank one Gu Master, unlike a Rank two like me, you should be careful. Heh heh heh!"

As he said this, he purposely held his head high and puffed his chest out, stroking his own belt, his expression joyfully satisfied and proud.

His belt was no longer the green coloured Rank one belt, but a Rank two Gu Master's red coloured belt. At the same time on top of the metal plate on the belt, there was a '2' word.

It was thanks to his grandfather Gu Yue Chi Lian's help that he ascended to Rank two not long ago.

"I just heard about this news, but since this is the case." Fang Yuan suddenly smiled and said, "Then I'll follow you guys and set out together. Once on the front lines I'll leave the team and return to mine."

"What? Urgh, who wants to bring you!" Chi Cheng folded his arms, his mouth twitching disdainfully.

Fang Yuan's tone was distant. "The clan rule states: Gu Masters that are left behind must merge into the closest group to their location, they have an obligation to continue fighting. Chi Cheng, you don't even know this point?"

"You!" Chi Cheng glared, just about to flare up.

"Indeed, this is the case," Chi Shan who had been watching quietly finally spoke.

His body stature was close to two meters tall, and his figure was powerful and strong. His upper body was bare, the muscles hard and tough like metal. His entire body was covered in fiery red skin that seemed to faintly emit hot air.

Undoubtedly, he was the leader of this group.

Seeing him speak, even Chi Cheng who was the Chi faction's inheritor, kept his mouth shut.

Chi Shan expressionlessly looked at Fang Yuan, continuing, "Let us depart, you keep up."

His voice was low and deep, his words short and simple. There was an aura of him that caused people to hardly question him.

Fang Yuan shrugged nonchalantly, taking it as agreeing.

Chi Cheng laughed coldly, his gaze harboring malicious intentions as he looked at Fang Yuan, speaking in an emphasized, peculiar tone, "Then you had better keep up!"

Fang Yuan did not reply to him.

"Hmph, why do we have to drag him around. Just a Rank one Gu Master." Chi Cheng mumbled to himself angrily, but since he was hindered by Chi Shan's authority, he did not dare act impudent.

At once, a group of six people set out from the entrance, following the mountain road and running down the slope.

Gu Yue Chi Shan took the lead. He may be big-sized, but his speed was also not slow. Besides him and Chi Cheng, there were also two men and one female, their facial expressions indifferent.

As they ran, Chi Shan's group started to display the graceful bearing of being one of the three strongest groups.

Each of them had rhythmic breathing, their footsteps fast and easy. Only Chi Cheng seemed to be in a difficult situation, but he would use his Scarlet Pill Cricket Gu from time to time, catching up reluctantly. Yet it could also be seen that he had received good teaching, for although he often staggered along the way, at least he never fell down.

When they reached the mountain foot, with one hand gesture from Chi Shan, the group swiftly stopped in their tracks.

Huff huff...

Chi Cheng had fallen behind by three hundred meters, and he was the last to catch up. His face was pale and he panted heavily, his gaze inconceivable as he looked at Fang Yuan.

During the journey Fang Yuan had always been following tightly behind, and up till now his breathing was only slightly heavy. He did not look the least bit like a newcomer who just graduated.

"Chi Cheng, remember, regulate your physical strength," Chi Shan looked back and advised Chi Cheng. Then he swept his gaze past Fang Yuan, his eyes showing a hint of praise.

The looks that the other few group members gave towards Fang Yuan had also softened a little.

"We will be nearing the beast tide down there. Chi Cheng and Fang Yuan, come towards the middle of the team." Chi Shan looked at the pitch-black mountain forest before him as he spoke.

This sentence let Fang Yuan reevaluate Chi Shan.

This huge boulder of a man sure had tolerance. The middle of a group is often the safest spot. Although Fang Yuan was not a person of the Mo bloodline, Chi Shan still maintained the manner of protecting a newcomer. To compare him to the sickly snake Jiao San, the latter would immediately pale in comparison.

The sky had already become completely dark, and the black clouds were in layers, causing the accumulated snow to also become dark and gloomy.

Chi Shan's group had already changed their group formation. Their speed dropped greatly as they ran slowly through the complicated terrain of the mountain forest.

Fang Yuan and Chi Cheng were in the middle part of the group, where on the left side was the huge Chi Shan, while the right side was an old man. Behind them was a young woman with a head of watery blue-coloured long hair.

And in front of them was a male Gu Master called Chi She.

He was the reconnaissance Gu Master of this group, and he gave out hissing noises. From time to time he would stick his tongue out into the air.

Right now his tongue had a small divide in between, becoming the bright red forked tongue of a snake. As they entered deeper into the mountain forest, their surroundings started to show wild beasts violently running about wildly.

Suddenly Chi She opened his mouth and spoke, "Before us, three medium-sized animals have appeared. Suspected to be wild deer."

"Drive it away." Chi Shan's expression was unchanging as he immediately gave the order.

The six-manned group did not change their direction; they continued pursuing forward. Three wild deer appeared before them, quickly changing their direction and dispersing.

Not long after, Chi She's expression changed. "A group of medium-sized creatures. Suspected to be turtleback apes."

"Shift," Chi Shan said.

The small group immediately broke to the left side, bypassing this group of troublesome apes.

This was the benefit of having a reconnaissance Gu Master, he was able to anticipate and inform earlier, letting them make accurate decisions from it.

"Chi She is probably using the Snake Tongue Gu. This Rank two Gu worm can sense heat temperatures. But it has three very obvious flaws — firstly, the perception radius is small, secondly it is easily interfered with. Thirdly it cannot detect cold-blooded creatures. Yet no matter what, it is better than not having any detection. I have reached Rank two now, and in future to survive in the wild, I will also need a detection-type of Gu," Fang Yuan thought.

Suddenly Chi She urgently spoke, "A middle-sized creature, suspected to be a white tiger. It's found us and is quickly approaching!"

"Engage." Chi Shang's tone was calm and collected.

Roar!

A fierce tiger jumped out from the thicket in front of them, and the group met it head-on. Without Chi She's warning in advance, perhaps they would be caught unprepared.

But right now, the group had long anticipated.

Firstly, the old Gu Master on the right suddenly drummed up his cheeks and then spit out a white coloured, viscous substance.

The substance abruptly expanded in mid-air, becoming a huge spider net. It used its strong viscosity and trapped the white tiger full in the face.

The white tiger struggled fiercely in the net, and Chi Shan immediately stepped forward and brandished his fist, pounding onto the tiger's head.

His fist had a golden luster flashing through, and with a bang, the tiger's head was smashed into pieces. The white tiger died in one breath.

The group did not stop to stay behind, but instead walked over the tiger's body and continued forward. Chi She took Chi Shan's place again and ran in front, taking the lead.

Through the entire process it was like moving clouds and flowing water. All the group members displayed mutual understanding.

"That entire process did not take more than three seconds. If it was me right now who was taking on that tiger alone, I would need at least five minutes to contend with." Fang Yuan's gaze was flashing.

These Gu Masters were also Rank two like him, but the main disparity was still Gu worms.

They all used Rank two Gu worms, and this enabled them to bring out the best in each other. However, all the Gu in Fang Yuan's hands were still Rank one.

Gu Master, Gu Master, the word Gu is before the word Master, signifying that Gu worms have a huge impact on a Gu Master's fighting power. (1)

"Although I have advanced to Rank two, I still need to have Rank two Gu to be able to display the fighting power of a Rank two Gu Master. However right now I do not have many primeval stones on me, I have used up a huge portion from breaking into Rank two. Refining two Gu worms together will also use up a considerable amount of primeval stones."

As Fang Yuan thought of this, Chi She who was in front of him suddenly said, "I found the sickly snake's group."

(1) The Chinese like to repeat things sometimes when emphasizing something. Gu Master, Gu Master... Gu and Master! Gu is before Master, Gu is so important.

Chapter 94: Suddenly withdrawing strength

"Found the sickly snake group in front, they are currently contesting with a large-sized wild beast." Only half a second later, Chi She said again, this time more specific.

"What's the situation?" Chi Shan frowned.

"There's no mistake," Chi She's snake tongue continued to stretch and shrink, "Jiao San's red lava python is the only one in the entire village, and now they are fighting against... wild boar king!"

Everyone's expression changed.

"Wild boar king... If I want to combine Gu worms, I require the wild boar's tusks. Undoubtedly, the wild boar king's tusks are the most suitable." Fang Yuan's heart stirred, and in actuality he had the intention to kill the wild boar king from the start.

"That wild boar king?" Watery blue hair female Gu Master raised her brows.

"Other than that one, there is no other in the vicinity. But relying on just the strength of the sickly snake group to reap the wild boar king, their appetite is too big." The old Gu Master sneered in disdain.

If Old man Wang could grasp the terrain of the mountain himself, these Rank two Gu Masters who were always roaming around on Qing Mao mountain would obviously be more familiar with it. Not eliminating the wild boar king before this, they had their reasons.

Chi Shan pondered, then said, "Go support them."

"Hehe, I'm afraid they might not reciprocate." The old Gu Master laughed coldly.

"Even if we do not go and support them, we still have to send someone over, right!" Chi Cheng looked at Fang Yuan, saying in an unhappy tone.

The team's direction steered towards the left.

Although Chi Shan and the rest always looked down and did not like Gu Yue Jiao San, but as clansmen, towards outside foes, even if they had amnesty normally, they would group up and work together.

This is the cohesiveness of a clan in this world.

And especially relying on this cohesiveness could a hundred year old clan sustain itself without dying out, even becoming a thousand year old clan.

Everyone moved through the jungle in the darkness, heading towards a low-lying land.

Sickly snake group's four Gu Masters were surrounding the wild boar king, engaging in fierce combat.

In the center, the elephant-like wild boar king was fighting with a thin and long red-coloured python.

This red giant python had dark red rock pieces all over its body, the temperature very high. It was like a thick chain coiling around the wild boar king.

The wild boar king cried out angrily, constantly rolling on the ground, its snow white tusks piercing the darkness and drawing cold light in the air.

Its body was full of big and small injuries, its tail already broken. While flipping around, it revealed its fresh red injuries, stuck to the red lava python's body and scalded by the high temperature.

The Chi Shan group did not get closer, but observed from a distance.

Taking a few looks, the old Gu Master was enlightened, "I say, how did the sickly snake have this courage. Looks like the wild boar king was actually injured already, tsk, he sure picked up the cheap goods, this scoundrel got lucky.

"Do you guys think that this wild boar king's body would have the Black Boar Gu?" Chi Cheng excitedly said with glowing eyes.

Fang Yuan's expression was unchanged as he watched silently.

At this time, Jiao San and his gang also realised the situation of being watched, and immediately the support Gu Master Gu Yue Kong Jing who was the furthest away from the wild boar king left the battlefield and ran over.

"Oh, it is Lord Chi Shan. There's no problems here now, we can handle it. There are many wild beast groups in front, they need your support." Kong Jing said to the people.

"Hmph, what do you mean you can handle it? You're clearly lying through your teeth, I can see that this python isn't going to hang in there much longer." The old Gu Master's experienced gaze revealed the situation at once.

"You're just afraid of us wanting to split the rewards after helping," the watery blue long-haired female Gu Master immediately pointed out Jiao San and his gang's intention.

"This wild boar king is yours," Chi Shan said, looking at the old Gu Master.

The old Gu Master snorted, but he still bent down, vomiting out a piece of white sticky spider web.

The spider web expanded in the air and spread out, enveloping the wild boar king.

The wild boar king struggled intensely in the web, breaking threads after threads, but it could not get free quickly.

During this period, sickly snake Jiao San quickly got the red lava python to retreat. After that, together with the healing female Gu Master in the group, they underwent emergency battle healing on the python.

In the fierce battle earlier, the red lava python's rock body already had some cracks. Through the healing, the cracks mended, shrinking until they disappeared.

"Fang Yuan, you should go back. You still want to depend on our group?" Chi Cheng said in annoyance.

Fang Yuan took a step out and walked out from behind Chi Shan.

Gu Yue Kong Jing was blocked by Chi Shan's huge body earlier and did not see him. At the moment when he saw Fang Yuan, his expression turned weird.

Jiao San turned his head around and upon seeing Fang Yuan, was overjoyed at once, "Fang Yuan, you're finally here! Quick, the spider web is not going to hold, you have huge strength, go and restrain the wild boar king and buy us time. We need time to heal the red lava python."

Without a defensive Gu and only with Rank one cultivation, getting close to the wild boar king was nothing but risky.

Chi Shan took a look at Fang Yuan and said, "Go."

Saying so, he took a huge step and left the place.

He kept his word; although the wild boar king had much value, he turned around and left without hesitation.

Seeing Chi Shan's group leaving, Jiao San and the gang breathed a sigh of relief. From start to finish, they did not say a word of thanks.

Jiao San continue shouting, "Fang Yuan, hurry, the wild boar king's strength is huge, the spider web is not going to hold out. If you perform well this time, I will not pursue the matter of you leaving the team on your own."

"Okay." Fang Yuan agreed, quickly getting to the wild boar king and grabbing its two huge tusks.

He used all his strength and pulled, causing the wild boar king to be suppressed, its struggling suddenly diminished.

"Good job!" Jiao San praised, but his eyes shone with cold light.

This Fang Yuan came at a good time, the small beast horde was the perfect chance!

Jiao San had never thought of killing Fang Yuan. Fang Yuan was his member, and if he died, the clan's evaluation of him would drop. This did not suit his interests.

He only promised his uncle Gu Yue Dong Tu to slow Fang Yuan's growth. If he could drag it beyond sixteen years old, he would obtain a fortune promised by Gu Yue Dong Tu.

The truth is, even with his scheming and intolerant nature, he did not think of killing Fang Yuan before. This is not just because after a Gu Master dies, the punishment hall would hold a thorough investigation, thus being risky, but also because of the clan's belief — Blood is thicker than water, family comes first. This notion is ingrained into the people's hearts. Unless there is a feud of killing one's parents or stealing one's wife, there is no such phenomenon of disputes.

Like how the Gu Yue clan leader once taught the academy elder, not only does the system and rules hold the clan together, there is also the thick family relationships.

Any organisation would need to have a system and values as their basic core.

"Using this opportunity, I'll let Fang Yuan get injured and return to the village to nurse his injuries. Let's see if he can cultivate to Rank two like that! Of course, I cannot strike personally, if I get discovered that would be bad. Since there are so many beasts in the horde anyway, I'll borrow from their strength."

Gu Yue Jiao San laughed coldly in his heart, but he asked, "Fang Yuan, how long can you hold out?"

"A while more, don't worry group leader." Fang Yuan replied with much strength.

"Very good, Hua Xing, go and plant the corrosion blood grass Gu," Jiao San instructed while healing the red lava python.

"Yes!" A female Gu Master walked up.

She came to the side of the wild boar king and stretched out both hands, giving a thumbs up on both hands. The nails on her thumbs had a purple vine insignia coiling around.

Light red coloured red steel primeval essence gushed out and surrounded her white thumb, and entered the insignia.

The vines were brought alive immediately, extending a delicate tentacle from her nails.

The tentacles moved like snakes, extending to the wild boar king's mouth, and then along its teeth, going deep into its stomach.

"Hehehe...." Fang Yuan covered his mouth in the darkness as it curled into a devious angle.

Others would think about kinship and not have killing intent on their clansmen, this was going against the traditional moral values of the clan. But he did not put these values into his heart.

The strength he placed on the wild boar king's tusks suddenly vanished.

The wild boar king furiously growled and summoned all its strength. Its tusks swung in the air as Fang Yuan who was holding onto both tusks was brought along with the force and was thrown away.

The wild boar king once again turned its head, and the tusks swept through. The female Gu Master was beside it and could not react quickly enough to such a change. She was hit by the tusks and screamed in agony.

Then her slim body, after getting hit by the tusks, broke into two with a snap.

The female Gu Master flew away like a broken bag; she was swept high into the sky, and then plopped down again.

She landed on the ground, her eyes wide open. She was dead on the spot.

Chapter 95: Garbage teammate

The female Gu Master's body was like a ragdoll. From the waist and across it was broken, and her upper body laid on the ground, displayed at an odd angle against her lower body, the arms parallel to the ground while her legs were pointing towards the sky.

From afar, Fang Yuan also started to descend.

First, he hit the tree canopy and broke many branches before landing on the snowy ground.

He turned his body nimbly and stood up on the snowy ground. Because he had utilized the Jade Skin Gu earlier, other than some pain in his back, he was unscathed.

On the battlefield, after a momentary silence, Jiao San's angry howl could be heard, "Fang Yuan, didn't you say you could hold on!"

Fang Yuan laughed coldly in the dark, but suddenly his body twisted and he almost fell down. He used his hand to hold onto the tree trunk as support and was able to maintain his body balance.

He pretended to limp as if he could not walk, but his gaze swept across the surroundings to see if there was any other Gu Masters.

Against the beast horde, the Gu Masters were fighting with all they had, and could not be free enough or even have the mood to observe Fang Yuan. Even though he had been observing in secret and found no Gu Masters nearby, Fang Yuan still discreetly chose to hide himself.

From the other side, intense battle noises could be heard again.

Evidently, the wild boar king had escaped its entrapment and was fighting once again with the red lava python.

Fang Yuan shifted step by step towards them with a face of anxiety, almost falling onto the ground a few times. Dirt, soil, grass and snow were all over his body, making him appear battered and exhausted.

He finally got back to the fringe of the battlefield.

On the battlefield, three people and a pig were fighting.

The red lava python coiled around the body of the wild boar king and its two hind legs.

The wild boar king's two front legs could only thrash around randomly, causing it to roll on the ground, sometimes struggling. With the movement of its two front legs, it knocked and crashed into things randomly.

There were even more injuries on its body now, the boiling pig blood had dyed the floor red.

Seeing Fang Yuan, the outermost positioned Gu Yue Kong Jing said, "Fang Yuan, you scum, you caused Hua Xin to die!"

"I... I didn't mean it. But I really couldn't hold it." Fang Yuan shouted.

"Fuck, then why did you promise so confidently if you couldn't. No means no, giving false promises like this will kill us all!" Gu Yue Kong Jing furiously screamed. If he was not in combat at the moment, he would go up and give Fang Yuan two tight slaps.

"S-Sorry, I won't do it again." Fang Yuan quickly yelled back.

"Fang Yuan, we'll talk about this later!" Sickly snake Jiao San roared, feeling his pressure intensify. The almost dead wild boar king had flown into madness, and the red lava python had injuries and cracks all over its body.

"Kong Jing, don't bother with Fang Yuan. Quickly take out the knife scale web!" When Jiao San saw that the red lava python was almost at its breaking point, he shouted in panic with cold sweat all over.

"Yes!" Kong Jing quickly retrieved the big belly frog and used his primeval essence, vomiting a piece of steel web.

On this steel web, there were sharp spikes and apparent blades.

"Fang Yuan, grab the other end and rush up with me, we'll entangle the wild boar king." Kong Jing said.

"But my leg is injured, I cannot walk!" Fang Yuan said with an anxious expression, crippling his way there.

"Useless thing!" Kong Jing with no other choice, had to do it himself, his hands dragging the knife scales web and throwing it at the wild boar king.

The wild boar king was covered by the knife scale web, causing it to cry out as fresh blood splattered.

It had predicted that its death was impending, and struggled even more fiercely. As its struggle intensified, the knife scale web's entanglement got tighter, and its injuries worsened.

As for the red lava python, because of its rock body, it did not take much damage from this knife scale web.

"What a waste of this fur!" Jiao San said in pity.

"Finally settled." Kong Jing breathed out in relief.

At this time, Fang Yuan shouted, "Let me help you guys!"

Swoosh swoosh swoosh.

Numerous moonblades flew out and hit the knife scale web, causing the steel threads to be torn apart. With the wild boar king's intense struggle, the hole got even bigger and the knife scale web was torn into pieces, allowing the wild boar king to escape.

At once!

Kong Jing stared with bulging eyes, lost for words.

"What... what the fuck..." Another female Gu Master could no longer care about her feminine image and swore loudly.

"I... it seems I messed up. I wanted to help!" Fang Yuan said, sounding very sincere and innocent.

Jiao San dodged the wild boar king's charge, rolling on the floor. Before he even got up, he shouted, "Fang Yuan—! You dumb piece of shit, see what you did! You're simply garbage for a teammate!!!"

"Leader, you must trust me, I didn't mean it," Fang Yuan defended himself.

"Shut the fuck up, from now on, do nothing, wait at the corner!" Jiao San shouted, rolling again and dodging the wild boar king's trample.

Fang Yuan snickered, but still obediently took tens of steps back.

"All of you get back!" Jiao San shouted, finally showing his true trump card as two strands of poisonous yellow air came out from his nostrils.

The poisonous air continued to come out from his nose, growing more and more until they gathered into a lump of yellow poisonous cloud.

The wild boar king and Jiao San's shadow could be seen outside the poisonous cloud.

Kong Jing, Fang Yuan and the others observed outside the yellow cloud.

Fang Yuan said to the remaining female Gu Master, "Heal my leg, it's injured!"

The female Gu Master flew into a rage, "My good sister is dead, and your leg is only stumped! Why don't you go and die?!"

Fang Yuan said in grievance, "I didn't want this to happen either."

But his eyes shone with a trace of sharpness.

Should I act, and eliminate these people?

It is a chance to act now. In their subconscious minds, they would not expect me to have killing intention.

If the sickly snake group is exterminated, there would be fewer restrictions on me.

But...

If any Gu Master saw this process, I would fall into the abyss. The crime of killing a clansman is the most unforgivable in this world. Not only will I be executed, I would also have to face all sorts of torture for seven days and seven nights.

Death is not scary, but for such a small group, it is not worth the risk.

A pity the wild boar king is dying. After this battle the sickly snake group would be greatly weakened and their battle strength would be at the lowest, they would definitely leave the battlefield. What a pity, this was a godsend opportunity.....

Fang Yuan felt regret and pity in his heart.

But he had done it to the greatest limit, and if he exceeded this, the feeling of "sabotage" would thicken. The others were not stupid, they would notice and if other Gu Masters saw this, the risk would intensify.

Five minutes later, the wild boar king plopped onto the ground.

The yellow cloud dissipated, and Jiao San breathed loudly with a pale face. He had used his final trump card, and now he had little to no primeval essence left.

"All of you come here and dissect the corpse quickly, we will retreat after taking the spoils of the battle!" Jiao San shouted.

Fang Yuan surrounded the wild boar king and quickly began to dissect the corpse.

The wild boar king's blood was still hot, and the smell of blood was thick. Throughout the surrounding forest that was enshrouded in darkness, there were continuous howls from wild beasts and intense battle noises.

But there were no wild beasts in this tiny battlefield.

This was the authority of the beast king.

There were rules among the wild beasts.

The thick aura of the wild boar king caused other wild beasts to shrink in fear, and if the beast horde came here, they would find their way around this region. Of course, if it was another stronger beast horde or another beast king, they would not care about the wild boar king's aura.

At this time, pairs of blue eyes glowed in the surrounding darkness.

From other places, blood-curdling screeches and alarmed cries of Gu Masters could be heard.

"It's the wolves, the wolf pack!"

"The lightning wolf pack actually appeared!"

"Damn it, why is there a wolf pack here, it is still not the time for the outburst of the wolf tide right?!"

"Retreat, forget the wild boar king, we have to retreat quickly!" Jiao San shouted, and the faces of the surrounding people also turned white.

One lightning wolf was not scary. But a pack of lightning wolves, even the wild boar king would have to run.

Most importantly, the lightning wolves' durability and endurance were high. They also had great speed, being most proficient at chasing.

At such a critical moment, Jiao San could no longer care about the others, abandoning the three and running for his life.

"Group leader, wait for me," Kong Jing shouted in panic, catching up to him.

"I do not have a Gu worm that enhances my speed, I can't escape. Jiao San and the others have no primeval essence left, so even if they have a speed-type Gu, they can't escape the chase of the lightning wolves!" Under the danger of death, Fang Yuan evaluated calmly.

He quickly hit the neck of the female Gu Master near him who was in a daze, causing her to faint.

Next, by dragging her, he burrowed into the wild boar king's stomach that was cut open.

The wild boar king's stomach was already cut open with a huge wound.

Fang Yuan squeezed his way into the bloody wild boar's body, at the same time using the female Gu Master's body to block away the entrance and cover up his body.

The wolf pack quickly descended, mostly chasing after Jiao San and Kong Jing, while a portion of them surrounded the wild boar king and feasted.

While Fang Yuan was inside the wild boar's body, he could hear the wolves' chewing and swallowing, as well as their biting, causing vibrations in the corpse.

"To think that the first beast horde had lightning wolves, this is a surprise, the clan would definitely send reinforcements. The wild boar king's body is huge, so if the lightning wolves want to eat it completely, they would still need some time. As long as I can hold out, I would be spared from them."

Fang Yuan pondered deeply.

Without accident, Jiao San and Kong Jing should be dead meat. They had little primeval essence and were not speed oriented, so with such a small distance, they would definitely get slaughtered by the wolves.

When people panic, they would make dumb decisions. Under the pressure of death, there are little who can remain as calm as Fang Yuan and make the most appropriate decisions.

Even if the wild boar king's flesh was all eaten, exposing Fang Yuan who was hiding, the amount of lightning wolves that Fang Yuan would have to deal with is definitely lesser than the others. According to his experience, at most five would appear, which would be his limit. He had much greater chance of surviving.

The lightning wolves continued to chew and bite, the sound indicating that they were getting closer. The wild boar king's flesh had mostly gone into the lightning wolves' stomach.

If a normal person was in such a predicament, they would feel as if the seconds that were passing by were like an eternity. But instead Fang Yuan closed his eyes and took out his primeval stones, fighting against time to recover his primeval essence.

Chapter 96: For the sake of those who died

The primeval essence that Fang Yuan recovered while in the boar's stomach went unused ultimately.

The beast horde this time was under the supervision of the Gu Yue higher-ups, and the lightning wolf gang was just a small accident. Quickly, the Gu Yue higher-ups gave their response.

Three clan elders led their respective teams and swiftly grasped the situation.

Merely ten minutes later, Fang Yuan could hear fighting sounds from outside the boar's stomach, as well as the cries of the lightning wolves.

He quickly kicked the female Gu Master out, and crawled out with blood stains all over him.

Fang Yuan was naturally not afraid of the lightning wolves, but he was afraid of getting caught in the battle. If a Gu Master accidentally attacked the corpse, wouldn't he be too unlucky, by then who can he hold responsibility for?

With a big living person suddenly crawling out from the boar's stomach, this caused the few Gu Masters fighting the lightning wolves to be taken aback.

Fang Yuan's entire body was a bloody mess, and his leg was still entangled in the wild boar king's intestines. His entire body emitted a nose-piercing bloody smell, and the few Gu Masters frowned in response.

But Fang Yuan paid no heed to that, he breathed deeply in enjoyment, extending his limbs and observing the battlefield.

As he had predicted, there were five lightning wolves.

But these lightning wolves were either old or injured. They were the bottom of the pack's hierarchy. As the wolf pack got stronger and bigger, in order to protect the young and healthy lightning wolves, the wolf king would expel all these old and sickly wolves in order to allocate resources efficiently.

These lightning wolves gathered together and rushed towards the surrounding beast groups, and under each other's influence, eventually formed this small beast horde.

The five lightning wolves quickly had casualties under the Gu Masters' attacks.

They were too full from eating, and their stomachs expanded, affecting their battle strength. At the same time, new arriving Gu Masters had sufficient primeval essence in their aperture and had their peak battle strength, unlike Jiao San and the rest.

Primeval essence was especially important to Gu Masters. A weakened phoenix is inferior to a chicken, with less primeval essence, a Gu Master's battle strength would fall rapidly. And without primeval essence, they were even inferior to mortals.

Why do you think for example, the Liquor worm, Black and White Boar Gu, these Gu were so precious?

It had to do with this fact.

Firstly, with the Liquor worm, it can refine primeval essence and allow Gu Masters to store much more primeval essence. (Remember that higher tier essence is essentially double of the previous tier 88% Mid tier = 44% Upper tier)

And the Black and White Boar Gu worms gave Gu Masters strength. Without requiring primeval essence, they can unleash their worth. And for the Black and White Boar Gu, once one person has used them, they can be given to another person to use, showing great collective value in a group.

The battle continued for a while and stopped.

The five lightning wolves continued to fall, and the new reinforcement group did not venture further. Their primeval essence had been used up nearly, and their battle strength had been greatly reduced. To be safe, they stopped on the spot. As they recovered, they awaited further reinforcements.

A group of five, with the reconnaissance Gu Master keeping alert while the other three used primeval stones to recover their primeval essence, the healing Gu Master bent down and observed the female Gu Master's corpse.

"She's dead..." Healing Gu Master sighed deeply. Seeing his sad expression, it seemed like he knew the female Gu Master.

Fang Yuan watched coldly.

This female Gu Master which he had knocked unconscious was blocking in front of him. Now she had lost her right chest, and a leg. Her arm was also greatly injured by the wolves, eaten until the bones could be seen.

But these injuries and the massive loss of blood was not the true cause of her death.

What caused her demise, was cardiac arrest.

The lightning wolves' bites carried electric currents with them. The currents flowed into the female Gu Master's body while she was unconscious, and caused her to have a heart attack.

The originally beautiful and sexy body was now lying on the ground, still and unmoving. Her previous glamour was nowhere to be found, being just an ugly dead corpse now.

"She's dead, and it is all your fault! As a man, why did you hide behind a woman? You're a disgrace to men!" The healing Gu Master looked up, staring at Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan shrugged emotionlessly, his expression calm, "The truth is, she competed with me over the spot, but eventually I won, so I'm very glad about the results."

"Scumbag!!" The healing Gu Master rushed up.

Bam.

Fang Yuan raised his feet and sent him flying.

Healing Gu Masters were normally weak at combat, and because of the clan rules, he did not dare to use his Gu worms. Just competing with physical strength, how can he be Fang Yuan's match?

"This detestable guy!" Healing Gu Master crawled up with a dusty face and wanted to rush up again, but was stopped by the reconnaissance Gu Master.

"If you think I committed a crime and caused her to die, you can report it to the punishment hall, I'll take it," Fang Yuan said lightly as he stared at the healing Gu Master, and left.

"Damn! Damn it!" The healing Gu Master's eyes were blowing fire as he stared at Fang Yuan's backview, urging to rush up but was restrained by his teammates.

"Calm the hell down!"

"Even if you report it to the punishment hall, the clan won't punish him!"

"We know you liked her, but although the clan cannot punish him, we can spread this matter out..."

Under the urging of his teammates, the healing Gu Master calmed down and lowered his head, crying.

"A boat encountered trouble, a man grabbed onto a wooden plank and was temporarily saved. At this time, another man swam up and wanted to grab the plank as well, but this plank can only hold the weight of one man, so the first man pushed the second man away so that he could be safe, causing the other person to drown in the sea. The rescued man was later tried in court but declared not guilty. This is the wooden plank incident on earth."

"Meaning, to save oneself under forced circumstances, endangering another person's life is no crime. On Earth, it is the Necessity Law. In this world, there are similar clan rules. This means, even if the healing Gu Master reports it to the punishment hall, I will not be punished. But..."

Fang Yuan continued to walk as he pondered. He moved in a steady pace without any rush.

Along the path that had been cleared, Fang Yuan would discover corpses, the majority of these being wild beasts of all kinds of varieties, and in the mix were some Gu Master corpses.

At the same time, there were small rescue groups rushing to the front lines. When they met Fang Yuan on the way, they would look at this bloody young man with curious and confused gazes.

Fang Yuan paid no attention to them. His eyes were a dark abyss, continuing his train of thought.

"But....." If the fact that I knocked the female Gu Master unconscious was found out, I would be tried for 'harming a clansman'. Yet at that time, nobody should have seen it, Jiao San and Kong Jing were all looking at a different direction and rushing for their lives. Eh?"

Fang Yuan's footsteps came to a halt.

He saw the corpses of Kong Jing and Jiao San.

The former's body had already been eaten until it was unrecognisable, while the latter's corpse was still well preserved.

The red lava python was already a pile of lava rocks, completely dead. And beside the sickly snake, there were a few lightning wolves' corpses. Evidently Jiao San's final struggle caused a huge battle.

"Good, that means that other than me, everyone else is dead." Fang Yuan evaluated internally, feeling joy.

"This means I would have fewer restrictions around me.... Eh?" Fang Yuan stopped, he saw Jiao San's finger twitch softly.

"Not dead, what a stubborn life..." Fang Yuan snickered, killing intent rising again.

At this point, there was tens of healing Gu Masters coming from the front.

"Quick, save the injured!"

"They are our clansmen, we have to save what we can!"

"If they are confirmed dead, retrieved their Gu worms."

Fang Yuan's gaze concentrated.

What to do?

They were so close, he would have to take a huge risk to kill Jiao San. Whether using strangulation or a moonblade, there will be traces.

In front of these Gu Masters, he had no time to clear the traces.

So... let him live?

Even if Jiao San is treated now, he might not survive.

NO!

"If I can exterminate Jiao San, there would be a lot lesser opposition in my way. Such an opportunity, if lost, I would have a hard time finding another one."

Thinking of this, Fang Yuan had an inspiration.

He gradually half-kneeled beside Jiao San, removing his upper shirt and covering Jiao San's face and upper body.

He was inside the boar's stomach for a long time, so the pig's blood had soaked his shirt, causing it to be heavy and wet.

He put the upperwear on Jiao San's nose and mouth, preventing him from breathing.

Fang Yuan half-kneeled, silently watching, his expression solemn and pained.

At this point, a Gu Master came over, "Little lad, I am the medicine hall's Gu Master, let me take a look..."

"Scram!" Fang Yuan growled angrily, pushing him away.

The Gu Master fell on the ground, but he was not angry, instead consoling him, "Little brother, my condolences! I know how you feel right now and I know how it feels to see the clansmen that you live with die in front of you. But you are covered in blood now, you must be heavily injured. For the sake of these sacrificed clansmen, you have to live properly. Come, let me heal you."

Fang Yuan did not open his mouth. He remained silent, the lower half of his face covered in a dark shadow. He allowed this Gu Master to check his body.

The result was rather surprising. Although Fang Yuan was bathed in blood, appearing terrifying to everyone, he actually had no injuries at all!

But the Gu Master quickly collected his spirits, concentrating on Jiao San.

"I'm very sorry, the clan needs to take back the Gu worms." The Gu Master sincerely looked at Fang Yuan, then he lifted the bloody shirt slowly off Jiao San.

Jiao San's eyes were half open without any life in them.

The Gu Master professionally used his finger to prop open Jiao San's eyelids, looking at his iris and then touching his neck. But he felt no pulse.

Dead.

Completely dead.

The Gu Master did not suspect anything. He sighed and placed his hand on Jiao San's stomach.

His stomach still had some warmth and the aperture was slowly disappearing; there were no Gu worms inside.

The Gu Master looked at Fang Yuan, whether intentionally or unintentionally, "Every Gu Master's Gu worm is stated in writing, and after a Gu Master dies, his Gu worms will be treated as an inheritance for his inheritor. Taking it for oneself is against the clan rules."

Fang Yuan was fearless, staring right at the Gu Master, "Of course I know that. You suspect that I took the group leader's Gu worms?"

Taking these Gu worms involved risks and trouble. If his secrets were dragged out, they would bring more loss than gain. Fang Yuan knew this, even if with the Spring Autumn Cicada he could instantly refine any Gu, it was difficult to do in the clan. It was not worth inviting such troubles for these minute gains.

Apart from than this, there was another point — with his financial status now, even if he got them, he might not be able to feed them.

To Fang Yuan's question, the Gu Master laughed quickly, "I did not mean that! People cannot come back to life after dying, so please restrain your grief, little brother. For the sake of the deceased, you have to live even better!"

Fang Yuan gradually stood up.

He used an extremely sad and pained expression, staring at sickly snake's corpse with rapt attention.

The night wind howled in his ears.

"You are right." After a while, Fang Yuan broke the silence, his gaze determined, saying with an intentional meaning, "For the sake of those who died, I have to live even better than before."

Chapter 97: Devils run amuck

Internal affairs hall, interrogation room.

The light of the winter sun shone on the ground through the only window.

Fine dust particles slowly floated on the light pillar.

The light pillar enshrouded a chair.

Fang Yuan was sitting on that chair, bathing in the sunshine.

In the darkness ahead of him was a long table where three elders were seated.

The interrogation had already continued for an hour.

"Fang Yuan, are you sure there are no mistakes in your narration?" An elder asked.

"Yes." Fang Yuan's eyes were down, looking at his toes. The sunshine shone on his fair face, making him look like a white sculpture.

He had already expected this situation.

After all, all his group members had died except him.

In fact, every Gu Master would go through a certain degree of interrogation which conveniently helped the clan to gather battle statistics. But, Fang Yuan was continuously interrogated for an hour; clearly, someone was making it difficult for him from behind the scenes.

This was completely understandable.

As long as one was human and had social relations, there would be series of people involved.

"Then narrate your account on the battle situation at that time again." The elder continued to ask.

"Okay. I used several days to breakthrough to Rank two. Upon returning to the village gate, I met Chi Shan group... and reunited with Jiao San group after finding them. At that time, they were having a fierce fight with the wild boar king..." Fang Yuan calmly narrated.

He took the initiative to reveal his breakthrough to Rank two. With no concealing Gu worm, he wouldn't be able to conceal his Rank two aura.

Now the sickly snake and the team were dead, so he naturally fabricated the events. But, he could only conceal some main details and narrate the majority of the events as they were.

This was already the fifth time Fang Yuan narrated the events. The three elders frowned as they listened.

They couldn't find any holes, but they knew - if it was fabricated, then there would be unnecessary details. After one kept on talking about it several times, there would naturally be holes. But after five times, although there were some differences in how Fang Yuan narrated the events, the contents were the same.

"It should be true." The three elders communicated with each other using eye signals.

But one elder was not satisfied.

Her daughter was the sickly snake group's healing Gu Master whom she loved dearly but ended up dying a cruel death in the wolves' mouths. Thus she was very angry and her gaze carried coldness as she looked at Fang Yuan.

"Fang Yuan, you cut the knife scales net with your moonblades, why did you do it?" This middle-aged female elder spoke sternly.

"Because I wanted to have some contributions, but it ended up being a bad move." Fang Yuan replied.

"Then let me ask you, did you intentionally use your teammate - the female Gu Master - as a shield when you hid in the boar's stomach?" The elder asked again.

"I don't know. I was very scared at that time and hurriedly tried to hide inside the boar king, but she also entered inside and fought me for the inside position. She couldn't defeat me and was bitten to death by the lightning wolves. I am ashamed." Fang Yuan answered.

The middle-aged female elder grinded her teeth. Fang Yuan's answer was cunning, he only stated the fact but didn't mention his subjective intentions at all. This made the elders who wanted to suppress him, not find any handle on him; their hearts were filled with anger but they couldn't do anything.

Under such situation, they couldn't judge Fang Yuan guilty.

It had already been three days since the small beast tide.

The statistics of the casualties made all the higher ups have ugly expressions.

There were losses in the past small beast tides too but they were definitely not as grave as this. The cause was the lightning wolves pack. Before, these lightning wolves packs would only appear after at least three waves of small beast tide.

The environment was dangerous in this world; survival, difficult.

From a human standpoint, to survive, apart from fighting with other humans for resources, they still had to struggle against fierce beasts and nasty weathers.

And these struggles were often very difficult.

The small beast tide was still only a prelude. The real terror would be the large wolf tide, a year after. Tens of thousands of lightning wolves would charge towards the village with the terrifyingly powerful lightning wolf king.

The female elder continued to ask several questions but she had to finally give up under Fang Yuan's invulnerable answers.

"Then Fang Yuan, what do you plan to do from now on?" Another elder asked with deep intention.

"I plan to apply for the family assets, inheriting and continuing my family's heritage." Fang Yuan spoke openly, there was no need to conceal it.

Sickly snake group was destroyed and now only Fang Yuan was left. Because of this, he didn't have to use Rank two Gu Master's right to give up a mission and could accept the family assets mission.

The elder nodded his head then shook his head, "You didn't understand my meaning. Apart from you, your group is no more. I can give you a suggestion: Join another group. Internal affairs hall's missions difficulty is designed for groups, it is very difficult for a lone person to complete them. Whether it is your family inheritance mission or the compulsory monthly missions, they are both like this."

Fang Yuan was silent.

This elder continued, "Of course, there is another option. You are already a Rank two Gu Master. You have the qualifications to become a group captain. You just need to pass the examination mission and you can build your own group. Which do you want to choose?"

Fang Yuan blinked his eyes: "I don't know yet, I need some time to consider."

"Then you can leave. Think it over as soon as possible. After a few days pass, it will be difficult for you to join a group," the elder said concernedly.

Fang Yuan sneered inwardly, he wouldn't choose any of these two paths.

He had a lot of secrets. Only by himself could he be safe and do things properly. Otherwise, wouldn't he be annoyed to death if there were others with him all the time?

Leaving this interrogation room, Fang Yuan didn't immediately leave the internal affairs hall but instead applied for the family inheritance mission. However, he was informed that he could only take it after three days due to the busy events recently.

Coming out of the internal affairs hall, he gazed at the sky.

It was just an ordinary winter afternoon.

The winter was bleak along with biting wind. The sky seemed to be pervaded with deep grief.

"Today is group memorial assembly. Gu Yue Jin Zhu is dead, did you know, Fang Yuan?" Mo Bei, along with a group of youths, were walking through the path.

Other than Mo Bei, there were Fang Zheng, Chi Cheng and others.

Mo Bei and Chi Cheng normally hated each other very much, but today, they seemed to forget this grievance and walked together.

"Big brother, Jin Zhu studied with us for a year. Come with us." Fang Zheng said.

Gu Yue Jin Zhu...

A girl's image immediately appeared in Fang Yuan's mind.

Previously, she had been evenly matched with Mo Bei on the arena but lost because of her lacking stamina. She was a hardworking girl.

But, death didn't discriminate between beauty and ugly.

Most people would feel pity, but Fang Yuan was indifferent as usual.

"Ah, she is dead? But dying of old or sickness, they are both normal events. After seeing it many times you'll be indifferent to it. You guys go, I am busy." Fang Yuan brushed past the group.

"This guy!" At once, many among the group were angered.

"He is really cold-blooded and heartless..."

"He simply doesn't have a feeling of friendship!"

"Hehe, there is a rumor going around recently. You should have all heard it, right? The reason Fang Yuan survived was because he hid inside a boar's stomach and used his female Gu Master teammate as a shield."

"He is really a disgrace with no worth. He doesn't even have the manners of a man." Chi Cheng folded his arms and laughed coldly.

"Big brother..." Fang Zheng lowered his head and grinded his teeth.

Hearing these discussions, as Fang Yuan's little brother, he felt shame.

Fang Yuan left and as he walked farther, the mockeries behind him gradually couldn't be heard anymore.

His heart was calm.

"Why would insults matter to me?"

Insults were insults, what could they do?

A superficial person would be angry due to curses and would be happy due to praises.

These were just bystanders' way of looking at you. Those who lived according to other's point of view were really pitiful.

In fact, some people had deliberately spread the rumors to degrade Fang Yuan's name.

Sacrificing a female teammate to protect oneself wouldn't be subjected to punishment, but would be criticized by moral consensus.

But, this was the exact situation Fang Yuan wanted.

Once one enters the system, one would be a pawn with no freedom and must follow the system's rules. To Fang Yuan, it was a huge obstacle, he needed resources and even more needed to be solitary.

So, he wanted to be a loner.

What if you were rejected by the crowd? Haha, only weak-hearted people would be afraid of being rejected.

If this happened on Earth, no matter who, they would end up dead. After all, two fists can't beat four hands, social connections were the way to survival.

But in this world, if the cultivation was strong, one person could beat ten, hundreds and thousands of enemies. So what if you were rejected, just kill the ones who block your path. If you don't have resources, snatch them.

Every world had different rules and regulations, the society structure was also bound to be different, causing the difference in human behaviours.

And in a world of martial arts, group thoughts were rather weak.

So in this world —

Devils run amuck.

Chapter 98: Difficulty of refining Gu

"What? That lad, he's a Rank two Gu Master now, and even applied for the asset-splitting mission from the internal affairs hall!" Uncle Gu Yue Dong Tu's furious and shocked voice reverbed throughout the main hall.

"That is indeed so. Although I accepted your primeval stones, I cannot do much to stop him, I only managed to tell him to collect the mission in three days. I can only stall that long for you, that is my limit." The middle-aged Gu Master beside him said.

Gu Yue Dong Tu snorted in his heart, he could sense the hidden meaning in the internal affairs hall's Gu Master's words.

'Stall for three days, it is the limit', such words were merely an excuse to extort even more money.

"But, top priority now is still to do all I can to retain the assets. This rascal is really too troubling!" Gu Yue Dong Tu's sweat poured from his forehead as Fang Yuan's growth was so rapid it gave him the feeling of a heart attack.

"I came here especially to tell you this, so I'll take my leave now." The middle-aged man stood up to depart.

"Don't be in such a rush, brother. There are some things I still need for you to assist me a little with." Gu Yue Dong Tu hurriedly stood up, retrieving a money bag and stuffing it into the middle-aged Gu Master's hand.

The male Gu Master took the entire bag of primeval stones and stuffed it into his chest pocket, his tone quickly changing, laughing loudly. "Brother Dong Tu, you are too polite. We have such a great relationship, we've known each other for over ten years. Don't worry, I will prepare the toughest mission for Fang Yuan, but he might employ other Gu Masters to help him. You have to watch out for this."

"Hehehe, you can be rest assured. Although I have retired, I still have my relationships, I've sent people to observe him. If that lad employs outsiders, that is against the clan rules, and I am still waiting to get a hold of his weakness. Hehe..."

"Then I am at ease, goodbye."

"Let me send you out."

"It is okay, please stay."

Gu Yue Dong Tu stared at the leaving Gu Master, his smile slowly collapsing.

"This Fang Yuan, he is only C grade, how can he advance to Rank two so soon?! Dammit, what were Jiao San and the others doing! Can't even guard against a newbie."

"Sigh, now Jiao San and the team were all killed by the beast horde, what incompetent fools. Fang Yuan also advanced to Rank two, this way he can definitely receive the family asset mission. My previous methods to block him will no longer work. But he is now working alone, and aiming to complete the asset inheritance mission alone is really difficult."

"No! This lad's luck is absurd, first I got Jiao San and the rest to suppress him, and immediately the beast horde came. If he relies on this luck again and completes the mission, what then? I have to prepare for the worst!"

An old sly fox, Gu Yue Dong Tu being able to enter and leave the fighting life peacefully and live up until now, it represented success already.

Compared to the newly independent Fang Yuan, his interpersonal relationships were much stronger.

"Collecting honey wine?" When Fang Yuan received the asset mission, his eyes shone with cold glimmer.

This mission was very troublesome, it was to collect five Liang(1) of golden bee's honey wine. Golden bees were all fist-sized with gold and black stripes, and they had a sharp stinger packed with a strong attack.

That was not all. Among normal small hives, there was only honey. Only those large or medium hives had the precious honey wine made from a large accumulation of honey.

"This mission, even for a five-man group, is very difficult. Because the number of people no longer matter, the Gu Master collecting honey wine has to have a defensive-type Gu to withstand the stings. It seems that uncle's relationship has struck and is bullying my lack of a defensive Gu worm. Unfortunately for him... " Fang Yuan laughed coldly in his heart.

At this point, it showed the inherent benefits of the Flower Wine Monk's inheritance.

Easy to do things secretly, difficult to do things openly.

The more one worked openly, the more their trump cards get revealed, and they become easier to trap. Conversely, working secretly helps to hide trump cards and lets others be unable to assess your situation, thus not being able to nip the problem in the bud.

"But, if I want to collect honey wine, the Jade Skin Gu isn't enough. Jade Skin Gu is only a Rank one Gu, but if it can advance to the Rank two White Jade Gu, I would be able to do it easily."

Without the need to attempt to take risks, his rich life experience allowed him to take less pointless steps.

Speaking of which, Fang Yuan is already a Rank two initial stage Gu Master, but the Gu worms on him, other than the Spring Autumn Cicada, were all Rank one Gu worms.

This situation is like a grown man who is able to wield a halberd only holding a small dagger. The dagger is unable to display the full extent of the man's strength, and only with a halberd is it the most suitable.

Fang Yuan had seven Gu worms in his possession.

The vital Gu Spring Autumn Cicada, Moonlight Gu, Liquor worm, White Boar Gu, Jade Skin Gu and two Little Light Gu.

In this mix, the Moonlight Gu can fuse with the two Little Light Gu to form the Moonglow Gu. The White Boar Gu and Jade Skin Gu can fuse into White Jade Gu.

Moonglow Gu represents a surge in attack power, while White Jade Gu is an increase in defense.

If Fang Yuan had enough primeval stones, he would choose to refine them both. But not long ago, in order to push his cultivation to Rank two, he expended most of his primeval stones. Now, with the primeval stones on hand, it was only enough for one use.

"Undoubtedly, choosing to refine the White Jade Gu is a better choice. With the White Jade Gu, I can retrieve the honey wine. And with the White Jade Gu, I can advance better in the Flower Wine Monk's inheritance. But if this fusion fails, the results will be dire. My finances are on the brink of collapse, so without the White Jade Gu, I cannot get my parent's assets. Stuck at this point, it will greatly slow my growth."

Fang Yuan felt a subtle pressure.

He knew that he was at a crossroad, and if this fusion succeeds, the future is bright. If he fails, then he would fall into the abyss. To get back to the current point, he would need even more effort in management and spend a longer time.

.....

"Gu Masters use their primeval sea as the base, and Gu worms as the method. Gu is a Gu Master's necessity, without Gu they are not Gu Masters. Other than their own cultivation, Gu Masters also have to refine, nurture and use Gu."

In the room, clan leader Gu Yue Bo meticulously explained to Fang Zheng.

"Refine, nurture, and use. These three aspects, whichever one is also a huge knowledge trove. Even if you spend an entire lifetime, you cannot completely finish it. On the aspect of refining Gu, you already know how to refine a Gu and make it yours. But this is only a single refinement. There is also the more important aspect of fusion.

"Through fusion, you can fuse multiple Gu worms into one with a higher rank. This is the evolution of life. Fang Zheng, you are already a Rank two Gu Master, but your Gu worms are all Rank one. It is time you refine a Rank two Gu worm."

Fang Zheng asked, "Clan leader, how do I do fusion?"

Gu Yue Bo said, "To fuse, you have to know the recipe. Some Gu worms cannot be fused together. Through many eons of trial and error, and endless failures, our ancestors have come up with several recipes. Our Gu Yue clan has the most in-depth research with the Moonlight Gu, and we now have two Rank five recipes on hand."

"What is a Rank five recipe?"

"In accordance to this recipe, through multiple fusions, one can finally refine up to a Rank five Gu worm. Fang Zheng, you have one Jade Skin Gu and a Moonlight Gu on hand, it satisfies the condition for one of the Rank five recipes. If you follow this recipe, you will get the Rank five Gu eventually — Moonlight Treasure King Gu!"

"Moonlight Treasure King Gu?" Fang Zheng's face was full of desire.

"Hehehe, telling you about a Rank five Gu now is still too early. Come, take out your Jade Skin and Moonlight Gu, I'll teach you how to fuse these two Gu into the Rank two Moon Raiment!"

Saying so, Gu Yue Bo's expression turned solemn, "The most important thing about fusing Gu is parallel thinking, fusing your consciousness. The Moonlight Gu and Jade Skin Gu in your hands now have no wild consciousness anymore, overwritten by your own consciousness. What you have to do now is to fuse these two thoughts together."

"Fuse together?" Fang Zheng blinked, confused.

Gu Yue Bo smiled, "No worries, practise more, you will be able to grab hold of this feeling. Let's begin."

"Mm." Fang Zheng nodded, and under Gu Yue Bo's guidance, his light red-coloured red steel primeval essence rose like smoke, enveloping the Jade Skin Gu and the Moonlight Gu in midair.

Fang Zheng shut his eyes, feeling and manipulating the two Gu worm's consciousness.

Gu Yue Bo was outside watching, and saw the Jade Skin Gu and Moonlight Gu circling each other like two planets.

As the consciousness fused, the distance between the two Gu worms shortened.

After three hours of continuous tries, their consciousness was finally controlled by Fang Zheng, and fused together perfectly.

At once, the Jade Skin Gu and Moonlight Gu both erupted in a bright white light.

The two lights linked together, forming a lump as big as a face.

"Maintain this condition, and throw primeval stones into the light." Gu Yue Bo advised.

Fang Zheng took out a primeval stone and threw it into the light.

Strangely, after throwing the primeval stones in, the stones turned into a surge of pure natural essence, completely fusing with the lump of light. Only rock powder remained, scattering on the bed.

"Continue throwing until the Rank two Gu is complete." Gu Yue Bo said.

Fang Zheng was about to throw a second piece, but at this point, the light disappeared, and the two Gu flew in two opposite directions like they were pushed away ruthlessly by each other.

The fusion failed.

"Damn, I forgot to maintain the fusion of the consciousness earlier." Fang Zheng immediately realized his mistake.

"No worries, failing at the start is normal." Gu Yue Bo consoled, but reminded, "But be careful, you cannot fail too many times, if not both the Moonlight and Jade Skin Gu will perish."

Fang Zheng recalled back the Jade Skin Gu and Moonlight Gu, and found cracks on the Moonlight Gu's surface, while the Jade Skin Gu looked like it was weakened.

His heart sank, feeling the difficulty of refining Gu.

Chapter 99: Human, not God

Crash...

Great waves tumbled in the primeval sea, rising up and down.

The sea was light-red in color. This was not the green copper sea of a Rank one, but a red steel sea.

The aperture was covered with a layer of light coating; this was the appearance of Rank two initial stage.

The whole red steel primeval essence sea occupied 44% of the aperture. Above the sea, the Spring Autumn Cicada appeared.

After going through a year of recuperation, it had already somewhat recovered.

Previously, there was no shine from its body, it looked rough and dim like withered wood. Now, it had some gloss to it.

Its two wings had been like the yellowed and withered leaves of autumn and the tips had been damaged. Now, there was some green to it and there were black leaf lines on its tips, making a complete arc without any previous defect.

"Spring Autumn Cicada, spring and autumn... I see now, it needs to experience the changes of spring and autumn to recover. Since rebirth, a year has passed by, which means a turn of spring and autumn, and so it has recovered."

Fang Yuan looked at the Spring Autumn Cicada and this thought rose within him, increasing his understanding of the Spring Autumn Cicada by another stage.

A Gu Master needs to refine, nurture and use Gu. Among them 'use' was further classified and contained myriads of variations. Fang Yuan had been in contact with the Spring Autumn Cicada all the time; his comprehension of the Spring Autumn Cicada was slowly accumulating and deepening.

"But the Spring Autumn Cicada is still weak, it has only moved a few steps away from nearing death. I can only use its aura to suppress Gu worms and increase the efficiency of single refining. As for fusing, it won't be of any help."

There were mystical Gu worms that raised the success rate of fusion. Everything had their own specialties; the Spring Autumn Cicada possessed the ability of rebirth.

Other than the Spring Autumn Cicada, there was the fat Liquor worm which was curled up in a round ball, floating and playing around in the sea.

The ladybug-like White Boar Gu and the Jade Skin Gu which had green jade color were revolving around each other.

Fang Yuan opened his eyes and slowly unfolded his right palm. In it were the imprints of a crescent moon and two five-sided stars.

They were precisely the residence of the Moonlight Gu and the two Little Light Gu.

Fang Yuan sat cross-legged on the bed, his line of sight falling on the bed sheet.

There were three money bags on the bed sheet; two were bulging and one was mostly thinned out. Apart from this, there was also a snow-white tusk from the wild boar king. It looked like an elephant's tusk, lying close to Fang Yuan's leg on the bed sheet.

Sickly snake group had used all their strength to kill the wild boar king, but they met with the lightning wolf pack's attacks and the majority of the skin and flesh of the wild boar king had been eaten away by the lightning wolves. The two snow white tusks were thus the most valuable spoils of war.

According to the clan's rules and regulations, Fang Yuan - being one of the members in killing the wild boar king - received one of the wild boar king's tusks.

Fang Yuan looked at these items, his expression was heavy. "I don't have much primeval stones left and it is only enough for one fusion. After this fusion, no matter success or failure, my financial condition will drop. But if I don't fuse it now, my primeval stones will only last for twelve or so days and I will even lose the chance to fuse."

Fang Yuan was raising seven Gu worms so he had a large financial burden. And because of his C grade aptitude, he had to repeatedly use the Liquor worm to quickly improve his cultivation. Thus, his primeval stone consumption was more than an ordinary Gu Master's.

Recently, he no longer used primeval stones to recover the primeval essence in his aperture. The red steel sea in his body now was all recovered by its natural self-recovery rate.

Fang Yuan was already beginning to cut the primeval stones consumption; he couldn't misuse them after calculating his expenditures.

The current situation was like he was about to fall off a cliff. He could only grab on to the wild grass at the side of the cliff to stabilize his body without falling.

But as time passed, these lifelines would be continuously used up. If he didn't take any risks, it wouldn't take long for him to fall off the cliff.

What he had to do now was to use these lifelines and climb up the cliff with all his strength.

If he succeeded, he could seize the opportunity to obtain the family inheritance and ascend to another level and it would be a whole new scene in front of him.

If he lost, he would drop down and in trying to climb up to this stage again, he would need to spend large amount of time and energy.

"No matter what happens, let's begin." Fang Yuan took in a deep breath and focused his gaze.

White Boar Gu, Jade Skin Gu!

The two Gu worms followed his will, drilling out of his aperture and floating in front of Fang Yuan.

"Fuse!" Fang Yuan shouted inwardly. White Boar Gu and Jade Skin Gu suddenly emitted dazzling lights and directly bumped into each other.

This was a silent bump, but it created a ball of light.

The white light was more dazzling than before.

This showed that Fang Yuan's two consciousness were fusing.

Fang Yuan used his consciousness to maintain the white ball of light while taking out primeval stones from the bag and throwing them into the ball of light.

The primeval stones were engulfed by the ball of light and only rock powders remained, scattering on the bed. Each time the ball of light swallowed a primeval stone, its edges would expand a little.

The ball of light absorbed the natural primeval essence and became bigger and bigger.

Gradually, it changed from the size of a washbowl to a grindstone size.

"Almost there." Fang Yuan narrowed his eyes; he decisively threw the wild boar king's snow-white tusk into the ball of light.

If anyone were to witness this scene, they would be astonished. The secret recipe of fusing White Boar Gu and Jade Skin Gu to form White Jade Gu was well known and circulated for over thousand years, but no one had ever heard of adding in a wild boar king's snowy tusk.

However, not being used in the past doesn't mean that it won't be in the future.

One hundred and fifty years from now, a Gu Master would improvise this recipe; he discovered that adding a wild boar's tusk would greatly increase the fusion success rate.

Fang Yuan had five hundred years of experience, he naturally knew of this trick.

The snowy tusk was thrown into the ball of light and a fantastic transformation happened immediately.

The previously dazzling light turned softer. The light that was blindly shooting off everywhere now had a movement pattern to it, naturally changing between light and dark.

Under Fang Yuan's gaze, the ball of light slowly shrunk and finally dissipated into the air.

Instead of the Jade Skin Gu and White Boar Gu, there was now a completely new Gu worm calmly hovering in front of Fang Yuan.

It was like an oval pebble, its whole body was completely white; this white was not pale like Xuan paper and was not milky white like milk, but was a kind of moist white like that of the luster of jade.

This was — Rank two White Jade Gu!

Only now did Fang Yuan let out a mouthful of turbid air, his heart relieved.

You might think that this process looks simple. It is not.

First, the consciousness merging needed multitasking.

Drawing a circle with one hand and a square with another is called dual tasking. A lot of people cannot even do this, let alone the highly difficult multi-tasking.

One can only achieve multi-tasking after years of hard cultivation, suffering through countless defeats and setbacks, and even then one would still need some talent.

Fang Yuan could do this so proficiently because of his five hundred years of deep experience; not a hint of his experience was fake or forged.

Second, was understanding and knowledge of Gu worms.

The deeper the Gu Master's understanding of Gu worms, the higher the success rate of fusing.

This point, in about three hundred years from now, would be a widely recognized knowledge.

Thus, the longer you use Gu worms, the greater the probability of success in Gu fusion.

Third, was the correct and original recipe.

For example, this time, adding the snowy tusk was like the finishing touch, increasing the success rate by 20%. Its efficiency was extraordinary.

Some recipes were widely spread in this world, but there were many recipes which people would collect and weren't circulated.

Such as in the Gu Yue village, the recipe of refining Moonlight Gu was held by a small number of elders and successive generations of clan leaders.

Especially those rank five and above recipes. They would be hidden and treasured like their lives. Many Gu Masters would not spread these recipes until death.

But even with these three points, there was no absolute guarantee of success. Even a person like Fang Yuan who had five hundred years of memories, plentiful experiences, deep understanding of Gu worms, could multitask and knew a lot of recipes, had a possibility of failure when fusing Gu worms.

One can only say that his failure rate is lower.

Fusing Gu worms was an evolution of life, a type of creation. It condensed time to the extreme, making the long evolution process bear fruit in an instant.

On earth, only gods could do this.

This was no doubt a miracle of life. Gu Masters making divine intervention with a mortal body, how could it succeed every time?

If it succeeded every time, that would not be human, but god.

Chapter 100: White Jade Gu

In the blink of an eye, ten more days passed.

Deep in the mountain, in the underground rock forest.

Squeakkkkk!

Tens of jade eye stone monkeys jumped in the air with blurred silhouettes.

They continued to leap and attacked Fang Yuan aggressively.

If it was like before, Fang Yuan would retreat without a doubt. But now, he stood on the spot with a cold expression, still like a rock.

The stone monkeys slammed, scratched, and bit Fang Yuan's body, but a crisp 'ding ding' sound could be heard, as if they were not attacking a person, but a sturdy jade pillar.

A bright white jade light covered the area as it attached itself to Fang Yuan's body. This light, although it was thinner than the Jade Skin Gu's jade green glow, it had more than twice of the defensive power.

Jade Skin Gu's defense can only handle up to sixteen monkeys' simultaneous attack, but now Fang Yuan could face off against more than thirty monkeys alone.

"On the arena, I could break Fang Zheng's Jade Skin Gu's defense with my bare fists, but if Fang Zheng used this White Jade Gu, even if I broke my wrist bone, I would not be able to penetrate his defenses."

Fang Yuan pondered while diverting a part of his thoughts towards his aperture sea.

In the red steel primeval sea, the White Jade Gu sank to the bottom of the sea, constantly absorbing primeval essence. Its surface also emitted a faint white jade glow, like a lightbulb.

Every time the stone monkeys attack Fang Yuan, the White Jade Gu's surface which resembled an oval pebble would flash faintly.

At the same time, Fang Yuan could feel a trace of his primeval essence being expended.

"White Jade Gu's defense is the same type as the Jade Skin Gu, they both require a continuous source of primeval essence. At the same time, the greater the intensity of the attack, the more primeval essence is expended." Fang Yuan concluded in his heart.

At the same time, he counterattacked.

Punches and kicks kicked up a sandstorm. His strikes were simple, yet brutal and effective with an imposing aura.

Although the White Boar Gu was gone, the strength it gave to Fang Yuan still remained in his body.

Endless monkeys were hit by Fang Yuan. Some were kicked away, knocking on the stone pillar; some were killed in midair, turning into stone and breaking into fragments when they landed on the ground.

At the same time, with a flick of his wrist, Fang Yuan sent moonblades flying around, like the scythe of the reaper, harvesting the lives of the stone monkeys.

With the supply of red steel primeval essence, the Rank one Moonlight Gu could cause the greatest attack damage to the monkeys with every hit.

Squeak squeak...

The stone monkeys screamed in fright, retreating.

Fang Yuan had exterminated the stone monkeys in a short moment of counterattack, with only five or six remaining.

Fang Yuan killed another, and the remaining stone monkeys broke down, frantically running around and escaping deep into the stone forest.

Fang Yuan did not chase these escapees, but continued forwards deeper into the stone forest.

These days, he had been working hard to find the next clue for the inheritance. With continuous exploring, he had stepped foot on most of the areas around the stone forest, but did not find anything.

He had a hunch, vaguely guessing the Flower Wine Monk's idea. He felt that the next step of the inheritance was likely linked to the most central area of the stone forest.

The deeper he got into the forest, the larger the stone pillars were, and the more stone monkeys lived inside them.

Fang Yuan walked as he observed — at the center of the stone forest, there was a large stone pillar. Its circumference was wider than tens of men surrounding it and attempting to hug it.

This stone pillar was his objective.

But, the deeper he got, the larger the monkey gangs, and the higher the difficulty.

Fang Yuan took a crucial step out and entered the alert zone of a group of monkeys.

Squeak squeak squeak!

The black caves in the stone pillar had emerging furious jade eye stone monkeys, and up to a hundred jumped in Fang Yuan's direction.

Fang Yuan ran for his life.

Against so many monkeys, even with the White Jade Gu, he could not massacre them.

The stone monkeys chased Fang Yuan for a while, then some started to abandon the chase and turned around, going back to their caves. Eventually, only thirty or so monkeys trailed after Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan seeing the time was right, turned around and fought.

After a round of fighting, the last few monkeys ran and escaped, not even daring to return to their original caves.

After a few rounds, Fang Yuan killed over a hundred stone monkeys. On the road there were traces of broken stones from the corpses of the stone monkeys.

"Insufficient primeval essence." Fang Yuan inspected his primeval sea and sighed, forced to stop in his tracks.

If it was before, he would use his primeval stones to recover swiftly, but now, after fusing the White Jade Gu, he had a severe lack of primeval stones, or rather his entire finance was on the brink of collapsing.

Fang Yuan picked up the jade rock eyeballs and stuffed them into his bag.

"It should be at the bottom of the center of that rock pillar. But to reach there, I have to open a path." This feeling was getting more intense, Fang Yuan gave it one last look before opening the stone door and returning to the second secret room.

At the corner of the hidden room, there were some items.

A small bag with hundreds of eyeball jades. Fang Yuan opened the bag and poured his loot in from today.

The jade pearls collided with one another, emitting a crisp sound.

There was another bag, and wild boar tusks were inside. But now Fang Yuan no longer needed to slaughter wild boars.

He used the White Boar Gu and the Jade Skin Gu to refine the White Jade Gu. The White Boar Gu had disappeared, and reduced his necessity for pork to 0.

The new White Jade Gu was more like the Jade Skin Gu, it consumed jade rocks.

Jade Skin Gu needed two liang of jade rocks every ten days. While the White Jade Gu needed eight liang of jade rocks every twenty days.

Normally speaking, the higher the rank, the longer interval there is for each meal. Rank two Gu usually feed every half a month, while Rank three Gu feed every month, or longer.

Of course, higher ranking Gu also consume more food. On average, the White Jade Gu consumed more in cost than the Jade Skin Gu and the White Boar Gu combined.

But to Fang Yuan, he had this rock forest and did not lack jade rocks. At the same time he did not need pork, so he did not need to kill wild boars, thus this saved him a lot of trouble and a lot of time.

Tying the little bag up, Fang Yuan picked up a bullskin water sack.

Inside the water sack, there was golden honey wine inside. A few days ago, Fang Yuan had relied on the Jade Skin Gu and endured the bees' attacks, and gathered enough honey wine.

"I only have two and a half primeval stones left, it is time to go to the internal affairs hall and turn in the mission."

Fang Yuan kept the water sack well and returned to the tunnel, squeezing out of the rock crack and returning to the outside world.

It was sunset now.

The golden sunset of winter was in fact not cold, the weather bright and fair. The setting sun emerged with comfortable rays of a red-orange colour, the exquisite sunlight passing through the crown of pine trees and shining onto the mountain floor.

Walking alone, he headed towards the village.

Yet Fang Yuan did not go directly, but took a few reroutes to prevent the rock crack from being found out.

Winter wind blew on his face, this was the smell of freedom.

Back in the academy, he could only sneak out at night. Now that he was Rank two, he could move about freely in the day without any suspicion.

More importantly, the death of sickly snake and the others allowed Fang Yuan to move alone with fewer restraints.

The only thing is, Fang Yuan was now alone without any supporting group members. The following clan mission which occurs monthly, he had to complete one at least, and that would be difficult.

Now, after the small beast horde, all the groups had regrouped. Fang Yuan had missed the chance.

Because of his reputation, Fang Yuan was also ostracized by the Gu Masters. Joining other small groups was not going to be easy.

"So what if I'm left out, the more I float around at the brink, the less attention is on me, and the more advantageous it is for me. As for the clan mission, it is mandatory so I have to take it. But...."

Thinking of this, Fang Yuan's eyes shone with cold light, he had plans already.

The clan mandates that every Gu Master had to accept a mission every month, but did not force them to complete it.

Being unable to complete the mission will result in falling evaluation. This was something no Gu Master wanted to see, thus they did their all to complete the missions.

But to Fang Yuan, this evaluation was crap!

Walking into the village, there was an endless stream of people walking along the limestone paths of the streets.

At this time, it is normally the peak period.

Many Gu Masters complete their missions with injuries and whatnot, returning to the village. After working for a day, farmers drag their muddy feet and tired bodies, quietly moving along.

In this world, living was not easy, it was full of pain and suffering.

The setting sun slowly dropped below the mountain top, giving out the last ray of warm light. This light would be diminished by the unevenly criss-crossed branches of the withering trees, becoming the fragments of time scattered upon the green jade walls of bamboo houses.

"Oh no, my toy," a girl cried out, chasing her spinning top among the crowd.

The spinning top rolled to Fang Yuan's feet, and the girl also hit Fang Yuan's leg, falling on the ground.

"Sorry, sorry! For offending lord Gu Master, please pardon us!" The little girl's father hurried over. When he saw Fang Yuan's clothing, his expression was white as paper, bringing the little girl and kneeling down, kowtowing to Fang Yuan.

The girl cried out of shock, pearls of tears trailing down her white and rosy face.

The walking mortals upon seeing this scene, turned away and avoided them like the plague.

Some Gu Masters stared coldly, before turning away and leaving.

"Stop crying, you troublemaker!" The father was frightened, angry and afraid, moving his hand to give her a slap, but Fang Yuan grabbed his hand, not allowing any movement.

"Just a small matter, no worries." Fang Yuan laughed lightly, touching the little girl's head, softly consoling, "Don't be afraid, it is okay."

The girl stopped crying, using her teary eyes to look at Fang Yuan, thinking this big brother was really gentle.

"Thank you lord, thank you lord for your kindness!" The girl's father was overjoyed, kowtowing to Fang Yuan without a break.

Fang Yuan continued forward.

His rented house was not far away.

And on the ground floor of that bamboo house, his uncle Gu Yue Dong Tu stood, staring at Fang Yuan who was still a distance away, evidently waiting for him.