

# The Sacred Ruins

## Chapter 7: Mutation

The fatty really liked to talk; his chatter never, even once, stopped along the way. He recounted the odd stories and anecdotes from when he attended school in Western China, all of which contained hints of mystery and the occult.

Tibet was home to many legends, some of which were quite widely known in the area. Some records could even be traced back to their origins. Fatty's narration was indeed quite captivating; many people from the nearby seats were all listening attentively.

"You guys shouldn't treat these as mere folklore. Some of these things had indeed happened in the past." Fatty was rather serious.

The others urged him to speak on after being left in suspense.

"I once saw, within a run-down temple, a young Tibetan mastiff guarding an old whimpering dog on the verge of death and this little dog was crying golden tears," said Zhou Quan.

"Hiss!"

The group of people began to hiss in disbelief. It was simply too ridiculous and difficult to believe.

"I swear it's the truth. I saw it with my very own eyes." Fatty Zhou was somewhat angry as he slapped his chest and swore that it was the truth.

"After pondering on it afterwards, I think it could be that the brilliance within its golden pupils was being reflected on the tears, rendering them golden yellow," the fatty explained.

"If you really found such an extraordinary Tibetan mastiff pup, why didn't you rush in and grab him? You could keep it as a pet and train it. Where is it now?" Someone else asked.

"Sigh, I really wanted to take him away but there was an elderly llama within the dilapidated temple and I simply couldn't convince him to let me take the dog away."

According to Zhou Quan, this ruined and almost collapsed temple was situated in a remote corner of the highlands. No more than a handful of people would visit such a place each year.

The llama was quite old and somewhat hard of hearing. It was quite difficult to communicate with him.

Only much later did Zhou Quan understand what the elderly llama wanted to say. The little mastiff didn't belong to anyone. It was meant to one day return to the Sacred Mountain and grow into a being capable of subduing demons.

"But that little mastiff's strength was quite shocking. It was so oddly strong that it could throw me to the ground after biting my leg." A strange expression surfaced on Zhou Quan's face as he recounted his past experience.

The others refused to believe his story.

"How long ago was this?" Chu Feng asked.

Because Chu Feng had come across a mastiff of great divine might back at Mount Kunlun. This extraordinary canine was far more powerful than its peers and was able to kill ferocious beasts with relative ease.

"About three years ago," Zhou Quan replied.

The train whistled loudly as the scenery outside the window flew past rapidly. They were traveled due east and finally left the highlands.

"You bought so much food?" Zhou Quan didn't regard himself as an outsider at all and took it upon himself to help Chu Feng share the "burden". He even asked which ones were tastier.

"These spiritual seeds taste pretty good," Chu Feng replied.

"What?" Zhou Quan was puzzled.

"Didn't you say some mythological characters were planted? I feel that this is a divine species." Chu Feng pointed at the fava beans and nuts.

Fatty Zhou was rendered speechless and proceeded to stuff himself before speaking indistinctly, "The divine seeds do taste pretty good."

The surrounding people were all laughing.

"Ah!" Suddenly Zhou Quan grimaced and began to howl in pain as he retrieved a bean from his mouth.

“I say, brother, where did you buy these fava beans? Are they even edible? My teeth are almost broken.” He grimaced as if he was in great pain.

He threw the seed on the table with a clang.

“God, it’s so hard. Do you hear that sound? The problem of food safety still hasn’t been solved up to this day and age!” Zhou Quan rubbed his cheeks in anger.

Chu Feng was shocked because that wasn’t a fava bean. It was the relatively plump and dried yellow seed from within the stone box.

He took it out and wanted to let Zhou Quan check what it was but had forgotten it while chatting along the way. He’d then accidentally put it alongside the snacks.

“Goddammit, do they even have a conscience? This isn’t a bean at all! Just what is this?!” Zhou Quan immediately became furious after seeing the appearance. He noted the manufacturing company and was planning to lodge a complaint as soon as he got back.

Chu Feng felt somewhat guilty but admitted to the case anyway. He told fatty that the item wasn’t from within the food package but was instead a seed he had brought back from the highlands.

Fatty Zhou seemed to have suddenly misfired. His face became increasingly red as if he was in great discomfort.

The people in the vicinity first became silent but then everyone broke into laughter.

Fatty Zhou choked for a long time before saying, “Brother you’re truly careless! How can you put such a thing so randomly? It’s more like a piece of metal than a seed!”

Chu Feng also laughed and selected some nuts for the fatty as an apology.

At the same time, he also put the three seeds onto the table and consulted the surrounding people to see if anyone knew what kind of plant it belonged to. Naturally, he didn’t tell them about the origin of these seeds.

“This round one looks like a bean but it actually isn’t.”

“How come one of it is flat? Did you squash it?”

“This one is so black and shriveled up. What a rare sight!”

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Everyone broke into a discussion but none of them was able to name the seeds. Some of them guessed they might be seeds of certain mountain vines.

“I want to smash them!” Zhou Quan rubbed his chin lightly and glared at one of the seeds.

“Don’t! They’re rare treasures! I’m going to plant them and perhaps grow a goddess from it.” Chu Feng laughed.

“That might really be the case according to Zhou Quan’s theory.” The others chimed in to make fun of the fatty.

“You want to grow a goddess? You’re more likely to grow three old llamas or Daoists instead,” Zhou Quan spoke, covering his mouth with one hand. Apparently, the pain hadn’t subsided as yet.

Time flew by quickly on the road.

But the train suddenly stopped moving after a certain stop.

“What’s the matter?”

People began to get up after noticing the train hadn’t moved for some time.

Very soon, the attendants informed them that an accident had occurred on the railway ahead and that they should be on their way soon.

Only then did the people return to their seats to wait in patience.

“Look, there’s more news... big news! There are not only grasses floating in the sky but also trees. This photo gives a clear view.” Zhou Quan cried out and poked Chu Feng, indicating him to look at the news on his communicator.

Apparently, many other people had also noticed this news.

Chu Feng looked closely at the digital photo which seemed to have been taken from outer space and saw several trees floating adrift, full of vitality.

On closer inspection, some of the trees were densely green, some violet brown and others a sanguineous red. The whole scene was extremely odd.

How did these trees appear in the air? Everyone was puzzled.

Voices rang out continuously throughout the train as people began to discuss this matter with great enthusiasm. The matter was simply too odd and couldn’t be taken lightly as it could lead to a mass panic.

Only when the train started moving once again did the voices die down. The sound of the train whistling loudly as it sped into the distance drew some of the people's' attention.

"I'm very familiar with this road—I'd passed by here many times when I attended school in Western China." Zhou Quan introduced everyone to almost every city they passed by.

After roughly an hour later, the train stopped at a certain station.

At that point, Zhou Quan was staring out of the window, "Something's not right. There shouldn't be a huge mountain at this station."

"Yeah, we frequently pass through this route. There shouldn't be any large mountains nearby." Some other people voiced their concerns.

"Wait, look closely. That's... not a mountain. It's a gigantic tree!" someone screamed.

Many people pushed toward the window to get a closer look.

Chu Feng was greatly astonished. He clearly saw the enormous tree. It was colossal and was rightly comparable to a mountain. It stood tall in the distance, almost piercing into the clouds.

"Did anyone board the train at this station? Let's ask them about the situation!" Someone suggested.

Some people came aboard after a while. Their description of the situation stunned everyone.

It was a well-known maidenhair tree which had existed in this region for over a hundred years. But for some unknown reason, it began to grow madly in the recent days.

This created quite a stir in the area and many people were shocked.

The immediate area was currently under lockdown and none were allowed to approach.

"So it is true! Someone posted a photo a few days ago but was mysteriously deleted. So this tree really does exist!" Someone from within the car exclaimed.

These bizarre developments were truly baffling.

Even if it was a hundred-year-old ancient tree, there was no reason for it to grow at such an explosive rate within a few days. It was simply unimaginable.

Almost an hour had passed but the train hadn't moved at all from the station.

The attendants explained that the delay was due to an emergency situation up ahead which should be resolved soon, allowing them to continue the journey.

The passengers could hardly stay calm. They discussed the matter of the ancient maidenhair tree, the vegetation in outer space and the possible relationship between them.

Later on, some people couldn't wait any longer and decided to go out for a walk.

Zhou Quan also alighted but soon returned with an odd expression, "Look at what kind of plant I just dug up?"

He held a plant in his mudstained hands. Its features were similar to that of common weeds but it was obviously special—it was lush, green and overflowing with an aura of vitality. The fist-sized red fruit growing on top of it was emitting a noticeable fragrance. [1]

"This is a great find! A roadside grass had actually formed such a colorful and fragrant fruit!" Zhou Quan's voice was trembling with excitement.

Chu Feng felt a shiver run down his back. What was happening to this world? An upheaval was imminent!

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