

## The Fall 285

### Chapter 285: Profound Yin and Everlasting Yang

It seemed like a straightforward enough task, but Zac groaned inwardly when he saw it. The burst of information he had received included all the information he needed regarding the two treasures, and Zac knew this quest would be a pain in the ass.

Neither of the treasures were readily available. The Profound Yin Orchid was a top tier E-Grade flower that gave an enormous boost to the Ice-attributed cultivation manual that the Disciples of the Profound Yin Sect in the area used. It was so integral to them that they even named their Sect after it, and the gardens containing the flowers were strictly guarded deep inside the core of their sect.

The Profound Yin sect was nothing special in the multiverse, but its ancestor was a high-level E-Grade cultivator. All its elders were between the Low and Mid-grade E-Rank as well, and their force was not something Zac could handle even if he went all out.

Interestingly enough the Profound Yin sect was exclusively a female sect, and any association with males was strictly prohibited. There was no way for Zac to simply walk up to the sect in order to trade with them as he would be attacked on sight. Not that they would ever sell their core resource anyway.

The situation with the Rubies of Everlasting Yang was pretty much the same. They only slowly grew inside a volcano sitting atop a Nexus Vein, and it was strictly controlled by Everlasting Yang Sect. The sect was the exact opposite of the Profound Yin, and only fire-attributed males could join the sect.

The two sects were actually located quite close to each other, and not surprisingly there was non-stop contention between the two forces. Since both the sects were of roughly the same strength neither was able to root out the other, and it seemed like the elders of both the sects used the conflict as a whetstone to hone their disciples.

The mission was a replication of a feat that the Lord of Cycles accomplished when he was roughly the same level as Zac himself. In fact, Yrial was a lot weaker in terms of total attributes and power when he stole the two treasures in short succession.

The memories that Zac received while he fell into the dreamscape even went so far as to give him a few partial memories of how Yrial managed to snatch the two treasures, and the method Yrial used was the reason Zac was so vexed. A test of beauty and brawn was an apt description.

He had actually openly infiltrated the Profound Yin sect. He had utilized his ambiguous looks by ambushing a Profound Yin Disciple who was out hunting beasts in the woods, and then stolen her disciple's uniform. With that in hand, he simply waltzed into the gates looking like a woman. He even used an early version of his beatification field to gain access to the garden from the presiding elder.

Getting the ruby was a lot simpler. Yrial had walked up to the Everlasting Yang sect, proclaiming that he had beaten a core disciple of the Profound Yin sect in a duel, showing the orchid as proof. From there he taunted the disciples of the Profound Yang sect until one of their own core disciples stepped forward, putting a ruby as the wager.

The core disciple was stronger than Yrial in reality, but the Lord of Cycles once again used his beatification field to confuse the poor disciple, and then Yrial ruthlessly attacked him while his emotions were in turmoil.

It was not much later that his trickery had been exposed, and he was summarily hunted by both the sects for a good while. Zac's imparted memories stopped there though, and he didn't know how the story ended. However, since Yrial had become a C-Grade powerhouse in the end he had clearly gotten away.

Zac understood why Yrial had taken the risk. He had already started walking on the path of fire and ice, the two concepts that would allow him to reach the peak C Grade in the end. But he was a poor rogue cultivator, and getting his hands on those two treasures was his idea to push both his Daos forward.

Both of them helped a cultivator foster a constitution that was especially suited for the cultivation of their respective element. Zac guessed that Yrial later combined the two to create the foundation of a real fire-and-ice constitution.

The problem for Zac was that there was no way for him to replicate Yrial's feat. At least not in the same way. There was no way he would be able to pass as a woman, even with the help of [Thousand Faces]. There were limits to the skill, and not possible to change enough to pass off as a woman, except perhaps from a great distance.

He believed he could replicate the second half of the mission though, though he would be able to defeat the core disciple without the use of trickery. He had accompanied Brazla enough to know how to enrage a few cultivators, but he knew that they wouldn't offer up a Ruby for the wager unless he could put up one of the orchids.

A large part of the reason they were ready to duel Yrial was that they desperately wanted to succeed where the Profound Yin failed in a game of one-upmanship. If they could show the world that they had one of the prized possessions of their rival sects it would no doubt make their enemies lose a lot of face.

Finding another treasure to wager instead was out of the question as well. The time limit was pretty restrictive, and he would only have time to visit the sects one by one with little room for leeway. Since time was of the essence Zac would simply take it step by step.

That in of itself was a problem to Zac, who was already running late for his real-life obligations. He was supposed to go to Westfort today, but he might be stuck inside this place for another few days. However, Zac suddenly had an idea as he sat down and started to ponder upon his Daos.

But no matter what he did or which Dao he pondered upon, everything was just a haze in his mind. It was like he had lost one of his senses, where the truths of the world were completely blocked to him or even missing. Zac wasn't worried though, but quite satisfied with the results.

Being unable to improve one's Dao could be indicative of time dilation. Since the Dao of Time was a thing, creating spaces that had a different flow of time was quite possible. However, no matter whether you sped up time or slowed it down it was essentially impossible to improve inside those time chambers.

The different passage of time somehow messed up the connection with the Dao, and it all became a mess. Similarly it was apparently impossible to properly use cultivation manuals since they somehow were connected to the Dao as well.

You could advance, but it was extremely arduous and left your foundation unstable, so you would only hurt yourself in the long run if you tried to take a shortcut and cultivate inside a place with a different time-flow. That's why such spaces were never used to improve.

They did have some uses though. The current situation was one use, where one could perform a trial without wasting time in real life. Another example was whether you needed to slow down your aging to be able to protect your clan for longer or just stay young enough to be able to enter a Mystic Realm that only opened in set intervals.

Of course, time dilation chambers cost a fortune to build and run, and it was only something Ogras had mentioned that supreme forces might utilize. D or even C-Graded forces were very unlikely to own such an extravagant thing.

Zac was happy that he might not waste as much time as he feared, but he still immediately set out for the Profound Yin Sect. For one he didn't know how much time was passing in the real world, and he wanted to get back to Yrial. He had been whisked away before he could get all the answers he was looking for.

Yrial was the key to so many things that were currently stumping Zac. He obviously knew a lot about Specialty Cores, and he no doubt knew the means to evolve them. How to combine two opposing concepts was also the specialty of Yrial, clearly displayed through the two balls that he summoned to play around with.

Zac felt that the orchid part of the quest was the key. If he managed to figure out a way to get it, he was most likely set. If not he would simply sit out the five days and miss out on the opportunity of becoming the disciple of the Lord of Cycles. He simply wasn't ready to risk it all for this quest since there were too many people depending on him.

It was only ten hours later that he was hiding along a cliff wall, overlooking the female-dominated sect. His memories had unerringly led him to the Profound Yin sect, and his travels had once more proven he was in a dreamscape. The forests were full of beasts between the levels 50 and 75, but when Zac killed them he received no Cosmic Energy, meaning the animals weren't real.

The sect was placed in a large basin, and Zac noted that the whole area was far colder than the surroundings. It was winter in the rest of the forest as well, but the valley seemed to be permanently in this state, and frigid winds rose from the valley floor.

The problem Zac faced as he looked down was how to even get close to the outer walls. There was barely any cover in the valley, making it extremely hard to sneak up on the sect. Apart from some boulders, there were only some odd trees that seemed to be almost made out of rocks, but they were extremely thin and sparsely placed.

Zac decided on the same course of action as Yrial in the end, though not as brazen. He roamed outside the valley for a few hours until he finally spotted disciple on her own, and she even had roughly the

same hair color as himself. Zac wasted no time and flashed over with [Loamwalker], and the next moment an unconscious girl lay in front of him.

Zac silenced the inner voice calling him a creep as he lifted the girl and took her away. He repeatedly reminded himself that this was all a dreamscape as he took her outer coat and placed it over himself. After some hesitation he also bound and gagged her, but he believed that a cultivator should be able to extricate herself in an hour or so after waking up.

He didn't choose to kill her, even though she wasn't real. He felt it would impact his personality if he heedlessly killed like that. If he started wholesale slaughter of innocent people in a dreamscape now, then before you know it he might feel it was okay to do it in real life.

Besides, it might backfire if someone found a murdered disciple. It might even alert the sect leader. A knocked out one should elicit a much more restrained response if it was discovered. Perhaps the disciple would even be so embarrassed that she wouldn't report it if she came to early.

Next, he activated [Thousand Faces] for the first time in a long time, and he grimaced when he was reminded of how extremely painful it was to utilize due to the mismatch with his pathways. But only a few moments later he had a face that bore a passing resemblance to the girl in front of him, but if he was properly looked at one would immediately notice he was a man.

No matter what he tried he wasn't able to change his features to those of a woman, the level or quality of the skill was simply not high enough. But after he had grown out his hair and covered his face slightly he felt it was good enough for his purposes.

He also took her disciple token and used [Inquisitive Eye] on her to find out her name before he left. Just a few minutes later he was trekking down the valley, his heart rapidly beating as he neared the sect. His eyes scoured the walls in the distance for any response to his approach.

He did not immediately walk toward the main gate since it was continuously guarded, but he rather chose to meander a bit so that he approached the sect from the side. He wasn't too worried about this since he saw steps in the snow everywhere. It seemed taking a walk outside the walls within the safety of the valley was nothing uncommon.

Zac strolled for twenty minutes until he could confirm there weren't any guards along the wall. An array covered the whole sect, and it would be a waste of manpower to continuously guard the walls as well. The only guards were the squad that was placed at the gate.

The disciple token should be all that was needed to pass through the array, but he didn't know whether something else would trigger if he jumped over the wall instead of passing through the array through the wall. There was no answer in his new memories, so there was only one way to find out.

When he noticed the vision of the guards was blocked by a boulder he suddenly flashed forward with [Loamwalker], and the next moment he was above the walls.