

Daily life 361

Chapter 361 First Case As A Palace Court Judge (4)

Immediately behind Yu Gen was an elderly man who looked to be in his sixties. He had white hair that looked to have just been combed roughly. He had on a black robe with white ribbons on the collar and sleeves.

His skin was lustrous and young looking despite his old look, and his eyes were brimming with life and had a blade-like sharpness to them. However, he reigned it when he saw both Yang Qing and Yu Gen look at him.

"Sorry, I do that when I'm afraid and in an unfamiliar place..." the elderly man sheepishly answered at being stared down by the two.

His fists could be seen trembling as he cupped his fists in apology to the duo.

"It's okay.." Yang Qing said as he dryly laughed at his nervous display.

If one looked at the elderly man, one wouldn't think he was a palace stage expert.

From the descriptions Yu Gen gave him, he inferred that the elderly man was Tang Qi an itinerant cultivator at the early stage of the palace realm.

Per Yang Qing's judgment, he seemed to have only recently broken through and hadn't completely accustomed himself to his abilities which was why his saber intent almost leaked out from nervousness.

Behind him, the next seven people all wore the same type of robes. The robes were red in color and had a blade embroidered on the chest.

The lead of the group was a middle-aged man who had a bronze complexion and a handsome face with hair tied up in a Daoist top knot that was held together at the top with a hair ornament that was

fashioned in the shape of a hilt. His hair was completely black with hints of grey that added a mature charm to him.

His cultivation base was at the eighth stage of the core formation realm and Yang Qing detected a hint of sharpness from his qi. Yang Qing surmised the middle-aged man in the red robes had mastered saber qi.

His name was Shao Rong and he was the sect master of the Silver blade sect which was a rank 4 sect that was known for its skills with the saber.

Despite being a leading figure of a moderately average sect, his current demeanor was one fraught with fear and anxiety as he lowered his gaze afraid to look up.

He wasn't the only one. The six other members from his sect all wore the same looks of trepidation with their bodies visibly trembling beneath their robes.

The six members were all young and looked to be in their early thirties to late twenties. All six of them were in the late stages of the foundation stage with one of them being at the peak.

It was four males and two females. The one with the highest cultivation base was a female who had black hair smoothly flowing downwards and a narrow oval face.

Yang Qing was surprised to find that just like her sect master she too had mastered saber qi. I think you should take a look at

Yang Qing couldn't help but laugh inwardly as he saw their reactions. Flinching at everything. Considering how things were described by Yu Gen, their reactions were understandable.

Yang Qing had decided that his very first case as an outer palace court judge would be the theft case of the Silver Blade Sect and the itinerant cultivator Tang Qi.

After the seven cultivators of the Silver Blade Sect, there were two more people. They wore blue and white robes that had a black mountain emblem on them that had an array carved onto them.

The two members were from the Mountain Guarding Array manor which was a rank 3 merchant organization whose specialties lay in formation arrays.

Their niche was in laying down defensive arrays, and they had a blue-grade formation master as their founder, which was why the organization had a considerable reputation.

They lent their services to kingdoms, empires, clans, and other organizations, down to itinerant cultivators.

One of their founders was the blue-grade formation master by the name of Su Ye and he was at the third stage of the palace realm. Behind him was one of his workers by the name of Meng Bai who was one of the leading figures of the manor. He was at the ninth stage of the core formation realm.

However, unlike his boss who was calm looking and upright, he was cowering and shaking with clear nervousness written on his face.

The reason the Mountain Guarding Array manor was brought into the courtroom was because they had an involvement with the case. They were the ones who had laid the formation in the cultivation abode belonging to Tang Qi, and Meng Bai had been the one to personally handle it.

Yang Qing waited for the three groups to be arranged in their respective positions by Yu Gen before he finally began his introductions.

"My name is Yang Qing and I will be the judge in charge of the case. In the case before us, the Silver Blade Sect stand accused of violating the articles pertaining to the guidelines of ruin exploration, and as such they ended up ransacking the cultivation abode of senior Tang Qi when he was in closed-door cultivation.

You are accused of stealing his 24 cultivation arts from him, one of which is his legacy art the Rising Tide Saber art. 23 of the arts are mid-tier orange-grade arts while Rising Tide Saber art as per Tang Qi's statement is a low-tier blue-grade art.

Other than that you are also accused of stealing 21 sky-rank herbs of which 8 were top tier with the remaining 13 being mid-tier.

You are also accused of stealing 113 earth rank herbs with 98 of them being in the top tier and 15 being in the mid tier.

You are also accused of stealing 4 sky-rank artifacts and materials namely; the snow plume saber, thunderhead marble, violet rain cauldron, and robe made from the cocoon of the sunset grey butterfly.

And finally, you are accused of destroying the formation arrays in the herb garden and the training room of the abode...." said Yang Qing

Chapter 362 Case Begins

The seven members of the Silver Blade sect lowered their heads, with their shoulders trembling as they had Yang Qing recount the charges against him.

Their sect master, Shao Rong, was the one hit the hardest. He grew increasingly pale and he had sweat all over with every word Yang Qing uttered.

With how affected he was, Yang Qing was even worried he would collapse before the case began. He used a small art that transmitted a bit of his qi to sect master Shao Rong to help calm his nerves.

The sect master nodded gratefully to Yang Qing with a pitiful smile when he detected the sudden changes to his body.

Even though he was still pale, his state seemed a little bit better.

"The Mountain Guarding Array Manor stands accused of being derelict in its duty and incompetent in its services.

Those are the charges filed against you by Senior Tang Qi. The protection array he had commissioned your organization failed to work as intended, otherwise, his cultivation abode would not have been exposed and ransacked there after.

I have with me a copy of the agreement, and I believe you have one too, Senior Su Ye?" asked Yang Qing as he directed his question to the slender, stern-faced middle-aged man with blue robes and black hair tied in a ponytail.

"We do," answered Su Ye as he took out a yellow scroll from his sleeves.

"Could I have it please, so I can confirm if the details on these two scrolls match?" asked Yang Qing.

The founder of the Mountain Guarding Array Manor agreed to his request as he handed the scroll over.

Yang Qing placed the two scrolls side by side as he examined both of them. From the details written, down to even the seal used and the material of the scroll, to confirm they were indeed from the same source.

The scroll was the written agreement between the Mountain Guarding Array Manor and Tang Qi.

He had requisitioned them to create six top-tier orange-grade formations in his cultivation abode.

As per the agreement Tang Qi would provide the materials, while the manor would provide labor and the array which was why the cost of the whole thing was 670 high-grade spirit stones which if converted to middle-grade spirit stones would have been 670,000 middle-grade spirit stones, which was a pretty hefty sum, especially for an itinerant cultivator.

In terms of pricing, it was fair since laying down top-tier orange-grade arrays could cost 300 high-grade spirit stones per formation. Tang Qi had gotten a rather good deal on it for only paying a third of it.

All six of the arrays Tang Qi had set up were all non-lethal and were mostly illusory and befuddling arrays along with an isolation and shield array.

Yang Qing could understand why Tang Qi went for non-lethal arrays. One the cost would be cheaper in comparison to killing arrays. One killing array usually went for the same price as three non-lethal arrays combined, and also the other reason, which was the most important one, it was because he was going into seclusion.

A killing array would easily disrupt his seclusion if triggered, in comparison to non-lethal arrays. I think you should take a look at

The scroll not only listed the arrays laid down but also included the materials Tang Qi offered to be used for the arrays. Next to his ingredients was the list Mountain Guarding Array Manor would have used had they been the ones to provide the materials.

As far as Yang Qing could tell, when it came to secondary materials, what Tang Qi offered was a bit low in quality in comparison to what the Mountain Manor had suggested, however, the quality didn't differ by much.

When it came to the core materials, which were the main anchors of the arrays, what Tang Qi provided was even better than what the Mountain Manor had suggested. Therefore when it came to malfunctioning of the arrays, the materials had nothing to do with it.

As long as one had a good core material to support the entire formation, they could get away with skimping down on the secondary materials with no degradations in the power of the formation.

Included within the scroll, was an agreement by both parties, that the formation was functioning as it should have, and lastly there were the names of Meng Bai and Tang Qi at the bottom.

"You can check to confirm the authenticity of the scroll Tang Qi provided as evidence, and compare it with yours.." Yang Qing said as he passed both scrolls over to Su Ye.

Su Ye at first seemed hesitant to compare them since in his mind, if the scroll Tang Qi provided was a fake, there would have been no need for them to be called over for the case.

The fact that they were summoned, meant the scroll was real. However, Yang Qing's next words stopped him from refusing.

"Please confirm it Owner Su Ye as it is part of the regulations governing these proceedings.." Yang Qing said with an austere expression leaving no room for refusal.

Su Ye went through both scrolls with apt attention before he handed it to Yang Qing admitting that the scroll was indeed theirs, and the terms indeed matched.

"Good, now we can begin...I'm sure Yu Gen has already informed you beforehand but I will reiterate it once more.

Once you stepped through those doors, you have all wholly subjected yourselves to the ruling of the Order whichever outcome it may be, and should you refuse, you are subject to the penalties attached to the refusal.

I hope you have all prepared yourselves..." Yang Qing said as he eyed the three parties, who all nodded in affirmation.

"Okay, now that we are all in agreement, I will take turns hearing accounts from all of you. For purposes of expediency, we will start with you Senior Tang Qi, and then we will move on to you, sect master Shao Rong before we finally finish with you, owner Su Ye and Meng Bai.

Senior Tang Qi would you please?" Yang Qing said as he motioned for the itinerant cultivator Tang Qi to begin.

"Thank you for the opportunity Judge Yang Qing.."

Tang Qi stammered a bit as he began his introductions. It was mostly out of nervousness but also his lack of skills in communicating with people especially considering how for the past 230 years he had been in closed-door seclusion and most of his life he has mostly lived alone.

Chapter 363 Tang Qi

As an itinerant cultivator, he had long grown to be wary of people.

Tang Qi however was quick to recompose himself. Despite everything else, he was a palace realm expert and had managed to make that leap while being an itinerant cultivator which was no easy feat.

"About 233 years ago, I got a lucky encounter that finally gave me an opportunity to step into the doors of the palace realm after being stuck in the peak of the core formation realm for 567 years.

I thought with my talent, that was where I would stop at. In fact, if I was to go by the judgments of the sect I used to belong to, reaching the early stages of qi refinement realm was the best I could hope for.." Tang Qi said with a rueful smile.

Before he decided to be an itinerant cultivator, when he was younger he belonged to a rural village that didn't know much about cultivation until one day a random cultivator belonging to a sect called the Iron Shattering palm sect passed by and out of a sense of karma decided to check the aptitudes of the children in the village to see if they had a talent for it.

Tang Qi was one of only four who were found to have a talent for it. The cultivator offered to bring him back to the sect. He was hesitant at first but the cultivator sold him on the abilities of a cultivator, how he could change his parent's lives, and so many things he could do once he was a cultivator.

Tang Qi was nine at the time and was easily tricked. By the time the cultivator was done with him, Tang Qi had already thought himself an immortal with grand techniques, and his parents, cows, chickens, pigs and the girl he happened to like would all be brought by him to such heights.

Sadly things didn't go as he imagined. He ended up being a servant for the sect and was later demoted to be a pill slave where they experimented different potions on him due to his physique that had proven to be sturdier than the other three children who came from the same village as him.

The three children from the same village as him died within three years, and only he was left. Over the next nine years, it was nothing but hellish torture. If he was not being used as an alchemy experiment, he was being used as an exercise dummy by the real disciples of the sect.

His only means of defense at the time was a white-grade body refining technique that was no different than him not knowing any cultivation art.

The beatings and the alchemy experiments ended up being a blessing in disguise as somehow he managed to form a silver body in five years which he was quick to hide.

Lucky for him it was easy to do so since the Iron Shattering sect despite its domineering name was a mediocre sect at best with the sect master being at the late stages of qi refinement.

However, despite their poor standards, they still had qi refinement cultivators who would easily kill him even with his silver body, so he decided to bide his time.

13 more years passed by before it came when the sect got slaughtered when one of the rival sects finally got someone who broke through to the foundation establishment realm, and when he did, the first thing they did was attack the Iron Shattering Palm sect.

Tang Qi was lucky to escape with his life in the midst of that chaos while looting a few techniques here and there.

With nothing but the bloody robes he had on, a body pumped with defective potions, and three low-tier red grade techniques he began his journey as a rogue cultivator.

With his experience with the Iron Shattering Palm sect, he wrote off ever joining any sect again. He would rather depend on himself and die trying than risk it with sects who saw him as nothing more than a tool to be used. I think you should take a look at

After trial and error he managed to reach the qi refinement realm in a few years after escaping from the sect, and 30 years after that he managed to retrace his steps back to his village and see his parents.

His experience with the Iron Shattering Palm sect had left him with a jaded mentality and personality. With what he had seen and experienced, he knew how terrifying the world was, and as he was going back to his village, all he could think of was the brutal state he would find the village in, and his parents dead.

His guess was proved wrong as he found the village the same way as he had left it. It was a farming village, so the villagers were usually hard at work on the farms, and as for his parents, they were alive but were well on in their years.

They were in their late eighties which was understandable since he was about sixty-four years himself by the time he came back and at the late stage of qi refinement realm at the time.

They all teared up when they saw each other, especially Tang Qi who was sure he would never see them. For the next decade till their death, he stayed with them living the life of a simple farmer's son.

Despite not actively cultivating, in that decade he managed to reach the peak of qi refinement and was just a tiny step away from breaking through to the foundation establishment realm.

Those 10 years had helped him greatly, especially when it came to calming his heart and adjusting his mental state. The tranquility and the improvement in his state of mind became a blessing for him.

After his parents died, he left and in less than a year he broke through to the foundation establishment realm.

Tang Qi couldn't help but feel emotional when he thought of his parents, and the blissful smile they had to their death. He ended up toiling for close to a thousand years before he finally reached the peak of the core formation realm, and those years were far from easy and he had so many brushes with death that were too many to count.

But his parents' smile and that decade he had with them was like the tether that kept him afloat and pushed him forward till finally here he was, a palace realm expert that would look below millions.

There were days he felt all this was an illusion and he would wake up to find himself tied down and being pumped with potions that were not qualified to be called that.

"Senior..Senior..."

Tang Qi's eyes regained focus when he regained he heard Yang Qing's voice.

"Sorry about that judge..." he said with an apologetic smile.

"Maybe after this is done, I can go settle there permanently.."

Chapter 364 Version Of Events (1)

Tang Qi knew his talent well. He had a top-tier orange core when he was in the core formation realm but originally when he broke through to the core formation realm it was a low-tier orange grade core.

The change only happened when he stumbled on an amber frost orchid sap in some ruins he was investigating. It improved his core by a small grade which was a huge boon that helped him reach the peak of the core formation realm.

Tang Qi was self-aware that given his talent, even reaching the peak of the core formation realm was purely by luck, so he was stuck in that realm for over 500 years. He had resigned himself to that fact, but he decided to risk it one last time and went diving at the shores of the Millionsfold treasure ocean, despite the infamy it had of cultivators easily dying to the mysteries within or to other cultivators.

It was unknown why, but the Millionsfold treasure ocean was home to countless treasures, but with it came countless dangers, which was why despite the allure of getting something good from it, few people including even those at the domain realm, would risk going there not unless they were at the end of their tether or had something that made them want to risk it.

Tang Qi wasn't overly ambitious and he was already at peace with where he had reached in life. He was content with being a core formation expert. However, the torment he went through still had part of its claws in him no matter how many years had passed and him being countless times stronger than even the sect master of the Iron Shattering Palm sect.

Despite that, occasionally he constantly worried he wasn't strong enough and what happened then could happen to him even as a core formation realm.

When he reached the peak of the core formation realm he tried to cultivate by himself and reach the palace realm but his talent fell short, and when he searched for alternative means they were all too

dangerous, while the safer options involved him joining a large organization, which he wasn't willing to do.

Finally, his search led him to the Millionsfold treasure ocean. He decided he would risk it just once, and whether he got anything or not, he would move back to his village and spend the rest of his days there.

His risk paid off because he managed to snag an amber glow poinsettia. In those five hundred years as a peak core formation expert, other than bitterly cultivating, with no results, to reach the palace realm, he had also spent a bulk of his fortune searching for natural treasures that could help one reach it, and one of them was the amber glow poinsettia.

The amber glow poinsettia was a low-tier monarch rank spiritual herb, however, when it came to price it matched a top tier monarch grade herb.

At the time, when Tang Qi was researching other things besides cultivation that could help him reach the palace realm, the amber glow poinsettia had been written in the scroll he had as a cheeky afterthought by the writer, sort of mocking the reader.

If all the above methods fail, then the only option for you is the amber glow poinsettia. Only luck can help you reach the palace realm, Good luck.

Also if by chance you find it, can you spare a few petals for me? I owe White Rose Pavilions a few million high-grade spirit stones and writing books isn't as lucrative as I thought.

At this rate maybe treasure gambling may be the only way...

The author rambled on and on about his debts and how he had attached a curse to the book that would affect the reader if they didn't help him with his debts.

Tang Qi assumed he had gotten conned by the merchant who sold him the booklet that mocked him for having horrible luck and got cursed and cosigned to a debt.

But all that changed when he got his hands on the amber glow poinsettia. He realized what the reader meant with his last words.

The flower had no uses at all except two, which granted good luck or bad luck to a user or sometimes both. It was usually a gamble that Tang Qi didn't know at the time and only found out after he had broken through to the palace realm.

Thanks to the amber glow poinsettia it triggered a version of events that ended up with him getting a tornado wave turtle amulet that helped him gain insights and his art the rising tide saber art which helped give rise to saber intent and the final push he needed to breakthrough to the palace realm.

The amulet also helped him survive his tribulation at the critical moment. The poinsettia granted him the best luck because without it he would have likely not even survived the tribulation did he not have the amulet with him.

However, he also managed to trigger its bad luck when his abode and his remaining wealth got ransacked.

He couldn't help but gnash his teeth when he thought about it, as he stared hatefully at the members of the Silver Blade sect and Meng Bai from the Mountain Guarding Array Manor.

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"When I realized I was about to break through to the palace realm, I consulted a few friends of mine to find the best organization to commission to strengthen my cultivation abode with formation arrays. I think you should take a look at

As a rogue cultivator one of the many risks we suffer is being robbed or interrupted when we are in secluded meditation or preparing for a breakthrough. It's one of the periods where we are most vulnerable, so we have to take many measures to guard against it.

I'm not particularly skilled in laying down formation arrays therefore commissioning an organization to do it for me was my best option.."

Yang Qing nodded in understanding. Tang Qi's experience was a common occurrence among the itinerant community.

It was why Wen Yingjie didn't hesitate to pay 50 high-grade spirit stones a month to rent the abodes at the Order for his soul-binding ritual with his saber.

In terms of cost, should Wen Yingjie use the abode for a long period, he would end up spending more than Tang Qi who spent a one-off fee of 670 high-grade spirit stones to have the arrays laid down, but in terms of safety as per present circumstances, Wen Yingjie was much safer.

The Order wasn't the only organization known to rent out abodes, but because of how long seclusions could last, most itinerant cultivators opted to hire formation masters to lay down formations in their own abode rather than get charged astronomical fees for renting an abode.

The Order was cheaper in comparison to organizations out there that charged 100 high-grade spirit stones a month. Tang Qi was in seclusion for 230 years and if he decided to go for the rental abode route, he would have ended up spending 276,000 high-grade spirit stones.

At such a cost he could afford to lay down two low-tier blue grade formations and even have money for the core materials.

Despite the high fees, the abodes did get customers because they guaranteed the safety of all their customers, and most who took them up were those coming in for short periods of time.

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"After consulting and my own research, I finally settled on the Mountain Guarding Array Manor. They had a decent reputation, especially among itinerant cultivators and their charges were within the range I could comfortably afford.."

Tang Qi having no dependants, never hoarded treasures he accumulated. He used it all in the efforts of cultivation. Whether it was in improving his cultivation base, or in helping him gain skills in secondary occupations such as alchemy, weapon refinement, formation arrays, talisman refinement, and other studies.

As an itinerant cultivator and only having himself to depend on, he thought it wise to know a bit about everything so as to be self-sufficient, and with the long life spans of cultivators, he could afford to do so.

He poured everything he had into researching and trying these different subjects which was not cheap and always left him with little to no money or resources, half the time.

In all these years he came to realize it wasn't only cultivation that he had no mind for. It was a humbling experience, to say the least, but there was one thing he accidentally discovered he had a good hand for, which funny enough was farming.

He thus decided to focus on spiritual herb propagation.

"After negotiating back and forth, we finally came to a deal with the manor. I would pay them 670 high-grade spirit stones, along with giving them a few booklets that contained my own personal insights on the growth and maintenance of moon-dew felonwood.

In exchange for that, they would build 6 top-tier orange grade arrays for me which were supposed to be run autonomously for at least 500 years.

With everything in place, they laid down the formation and in two years everything was complete, and we even tested it out.

However, the assurances they gave me seemed to have failed because 230 years later after i broke through to the palace realm, I found my abode had been ransacked and none of the six arrays they laid down was functional.

I was lucky that in the chamber I had decided to seclude myself was guarded by my amulet which isolated it from the rest of the abode, otherwise my seclusion and breakthrough would have likely been interrupted..." Tang Qi coldly said.

His tone was gentle and low, but one could detect the powerful undercurrents hidden beneath. He even did a good job of maintaining his expression. Other than the coldness in his eyes, his facial expressions were utterly calm.

Chapter 365 Version Of Events (2)

"I waited for six months to stabilize a bit of my cultivation base before I went to search for them for compensation and an explanation.

Most of what I owned had been taken. For fear of losing them to the tribulation, I had them stored in the abode, and because I had some faith in their arrays, I thought nothing would happen and they would be safe.

The arrays I had them install should have been able to stop someone at the seventh stage of the core formation realm, and among those arrays, one of them was even a cloaking array meant to hide my abode from the public.

None of them seemed to have worked because 217 years later some children in the foundation establishment realm managed to get into my abode and abscond with all my items.

They took everything including my legacy art, insights into saber arts, my own collection of different cultivation arts, ingredients and even destroyed the herb garden that I went to great lengths to create..."

Killing intent flashed for a brief second when he said this before Tang Qi hurriedly snuffed it out.

The members of the Silver Blade sect including their sect master trembled when that killing intent flashed.

"At the time, I had no idea who had stolen from me, so my first stop was automatically the Mountain Guarding Array Manor.

While I don't know much about arrays, but thanks to the palace sense I can at least tell if the array was forcibly broken, which it didn't show any signs of.

What it did show, was signs of an array that had degraded with time, which made no sense to me since I was 270 years early to the time we had set, which was 500 years.

So I went there and confronted them about it. But they denied it, claiming my tribulation was the one that destroyed it. It made no sense since those arrays had failed long before I faced my tribulations which happened two and a half years ago.

The disciples of the Silver Blade sect had already broken into the abode and stolen almost everything, eleven and a half years prior.

Words were exchanged and when they brought out two palace realm experts, I decided to accept my losses and leave..." Tang Qi said with a bitter smile.

When he broke through, he was ecstatic and over the moon, and when he felt the immense power that came with being a palace realm expert and how he could defeat 20 of his peak core formation stage, he was maddened with joy.

He could feel it intrinsically, being in the palace realm had some quality to it that was different to the experience he had when he broke through to the foundation establishment realm and later when he broke through to the core formation realm. I think you should take a look at

While those two stages came with absurd leaps in strength, he still felt 'normal' like it was within the bounds of what the world found acceptable, within reason, like he was grounded in something, but when he broke through to the palace realm, he felt it. He was different, and he couldn't put his finger on why, but he could feel like he had stepped onto a different stage.

He finally understood why only those who had reached the palace realm were considered true cultivators.

Riding that high, he wanted to do something that complemented his cheerful mood, which to no surprise was going to his garden and doing some farming based on certain insights he had gotten as he was breaking through. But all he got was an abode that was no different than a ruin, and he had been taken for all he had, even the flooring of some rooms had been dug out.

He couldn't believe what he saw. Everything he held of value, taken, well except for his saber which was on him as he was going through his tribulation. But everything else, even random dragon statues he thought would look cool in his abode were taken.

He was livid and with his palace realm strength, he was determined to settle accounts with all responsible and the first stop was the Mountain Guarding Array Manor who sold him faulty arrays.

He thought he could overturn the skies with his strength after all he was a palace realm expert now and a saber user with saber intent to boot.

He imagined it, how things would go. Him crippling a few of their members before slapping the teeth of their founder with the hilt of his saber and getting what he was owed and then some.

But finding his abode cleaned out wasn't the only horrible surprise he got. When he blew his top at the headquarters of the Mountain Guarding Array Manor, he finally realized why formation masters were to be feared.

In thirty minutes whatever self-respect he had as a palace realm expert was beaten out of him. Two killing arrays were enough to destroy him and bring some perspective and clarity to his life, the kind that someone gets when they are nearing death.

Am I about to die because of some slabs and stolen soil? I haven't even enjoyed the flight of a palace realm expert. This isn't how things are supposed to go...Right, I'm still at the Iron Shattering Palm sect and the potion's hallucination effects are about to wear off..Damn it!!

His life was spared at the behest of the owner of the manor Su Ye. Tang Qi high-tailed out of there as fast as he could, afraid that they would attack.

With a dose of humility and caution, he went back to his abode and slowly investigated who robbed him. He was still unreconciled, and some part of him wanted to vent that shame he had just endured on someone and he very much hoped the thieves were weaker than him, had no powerful background, and had no relation with formation masters.

Lucky for him, the Silver Blade Sect fit the requirements to a tee.

Chapter 366 Tang Qi's Shamelessness

Tang Qi was very tactful and avoided giving the details of the beating he was given when he knocked on the doors of the Mountain Guarding Array Manor.

The moment he was done giving a brief overview of what happened at the end and downplaying the conclusion of events at the headquarters of the manor, he quickly moved on to the next phase which was his interaction with the Silver Blade Sect.

"After a few months of leaving the Mountain Guarding Array Manor, i went on with my investigations to find who broke into my abode.

While I didn't care about most of the things they stole, I did care about my legacy art the Rising tide saber art, and the booklets that had my insights recorded on them.

I was unwilling to accept that someone had stolen them just like that. Those two items are just as valuable as my own life.

It took countless years of blood, sweat, and tears to research and gain insight into the art along with thee numerous insights I continuously derived from it.

It was hard for me to accept that someone could get away with thousands of years of MY EFFORT just like that..." said Tang Qi.

His statement made the group from the Silver Blade Sect wish the floor below them would just cave in and swallow them whole which would spare them from the situation they were in.

Before their interaction with Tang Qi, they were a sect on the rise and had millions fawning over them within their territory with their sect master having swarms of cultivators from different organizations coming to form a partnership with them because of how much radiance they had been showing in the past decade.

However, all that changed the moment Tang Qi stepped through their doors. It was a downhill from that moment on and now here they were, accused of robbery.

"With a little investigation, I finally found traces of the thieves, which led me to the doors of the Silver Blade Sect.

It wasn't that hard really.."

When he reached this point Tang Qi threw a cold smile in the direction of sect master Shao Rong.

"The sect over the past decade made a name for themselves using my saber art and insights, along with using whatever resources they stole from me to boost the reputation of their sect and grow its strength.

In just a decade they went from an average tier rank 4 sect to an above average one with fearsome saber skills to boot.

When I heard about them, I wasn't sure it was them who stole from me. I don't know if it was out of caution or hubris but when they started using my saber art the name they gave to the outside world wasn't the Rising Saber art but they called it the Galaxy Wave Silver Blade art which they claimed was created by their grand elder when he had a sudden inspiration from seeing shooting stars.

However, as someone who has studied that art for thousands of years, how could I not know its intricacies and qualities?

Even if they plastered a different name on it, the moves and the intrinsic qualities were the same as the Rising Saber Art. I think you should take a look at

When I was completely certain it was my art, I went and confronted their sect about it and sought recompense along with them returning all my items.

However, they had the gall to deny it and said it was their grand elder who created the art by improving on their already existing cultivation art that they have had for over ten thousand years, which was how long they said their sect has existed.

I'm usually a patient person, judge Yang Qing..." Tang Qi said as he looked at Yang Qing with a solemn expression.

Patient, how? And from what Yu Gen told me when you went to the Mountain Guarding Array Manor you didn't even bother with words. You immediately went on to slap the guards at the entrance as you made your way in, bringing chaos and mocking words.

You even had the gall to demand all the treasures of the Mountain Guarding Array Manor for compensation and then redesign your abode with blue-grade formation arrays at their expense.

You were lucky, they only gave you a beating. How could someone be this thick-skinned?

Yang Qing however didn't call Tang Qi on his pretense since he was indeed the wronged party in this instance, so he nodded along in a perfunctory manner.

Tang Qi who was nervous at first as he made that statement since he knew clearly how things really went and that the Order knew it too, felt an enormous weight of potential embarrassment drop from his shoulder when he saw Yang Qing go along.

With the judge giving me face, I can't be shameless about the last part and overdo it. I should keep it brief, Thought Tang Qi as he looked to finish his version of events.

"Humans have their bottom line and dragons have their reverse scales. I could tolerate a lot of things but I could not tolerate being called a thief by people who actually stole from me.

So I acted. The best way to prove the art they practiced was really mine was to show it to them, which I did.

I used the Rising Saber Art and attacked when I saw words were not getting anywhere. I'm ashamed to say I let anger get the best of me in that moment and bullied juniors who are young to be my great-grandchildren, but if one steals they should be prepared to accept the consequences of that act.

A few of their elders and grand elders attacked, along with deploying their sect guarding array. I injured about 11 of their elders and destroyed half of their array and a couple of buildings.

However, I can assure you judge, I did not kill any member of their sect.." said Tang Qi.

Tang Qi has always been rather tolerant of others, especially as a rogue cultivator, where they were all on their own and could not afford to draw in enemies left right, and center. His experience at the Iron Shattering Palm sect had an impact too, which made him a little averse to brutalizing those weaker than him.

He was even surprised at the destruction he caused at the Silver Blade Sect which was out of character for him. On a normal occasion, he would have just opted to settle it with the Sect master and used a bit of force to bring him to reason, but on this instance after their first denial, he became irate and immediately attacked.

He couldn't help but feel the beating he got from the Mountain Guarding Array Manor had some part to do with his reaction.

Chapter 367 Manor Master Su Ye's Decision

"Before the situation turned worse, I stopped and gave the sect a month to return everything they had stolen, along with 4,740 high-grade spirit stones which was the value of everything they had stolen and I tacked on 10,000 high-grade stones above it, which was the cost i charged for them using my legacy art and i added 5,000 more for my insights and short notes.

While the art itself is a top-tier orange grade art, it was only when I felt the threshold of the doors of the palace realm opening up, did I realize the art itself is intricacies that put it above the normal top-tier orange grade art. It's just that I was too incompetent to understand it at the time.

I think it may be an evolving art.." said Tang Qi.

Evolving art was a special type of cultivation art that required a special skill to create. One could think of it as a growing cultivation art where what you saw was limited by your level of comprehension.

A single cultivation art could seem different to someone in the qi refinement, foundation establishment, core formation, palace realm, domain realm, or soul formation realm.

Every time the level of understanding of the cultivator grew so did what they perceived from the cultivation art.

Most long-established and powerful organizations passed down their legacy arts this way. They also used it to sieve out their recruits to find those who were talented and fit to bear the mantle of their organizations.

Creating an evolving art was something that only someone who had an enormous understanding of the dao related to the art could do, and more often than not such people were at the minimum in the late stages of the domain realm, where they have polished their Dao to the tip and had already started gazing on the universal truths.

This was why every evolving art went for the same price as a top-tier gold-grade art, regardless of whether the art would stop at the core formation realm, palace realm, or domain realm.

Every evolving art was the handiwork of a cultivator who were at the peak of their craft and having one of their evolving arts was like receiving one-on-one guidance from them which made the art very invaluable especially to young cultivators just starting out. It would help them lay better and firmer foundations since the knowledge within those arts had little to no gaps.

Sect master Shao Rong had his eyes widen when he heard that the art may be an evolution art. If it was then paying 10,000 high-grade spirit stones would not be enough.

Just a top-tier blue grade art went for 1,000,000 high-grade spirit stones, what about a top-tier gold grade one?

He felt that even liquidating his whole sect would not be enough to cover the cost.

"Why did this happen?!!" he cried internally.

...

"After setting my conditions, I gave them two months to pay it. About three weeks ago, they informed me the matter had been sent to the Order, and here we are.

All I want is to be paid by both the Silver Blade Sect and the Mountain Guarding Array Manor. The former stole from me, and the price I gave them is more than fair but I'm willing to accept whatever pricing the Order decided is fair in account of the items they took.

As for the Mountain Guarding Array Manor, I hope they can at least refund me the 670 high-grade spirit stones I spent on the arrays that didn't even work. I think you should take a look at

But if they don't want to, I'm willing to concede. Senior Su was kind enough to spare my life and if I had a choice I'd easily forget the debt, but as it stands I have nothing to my name.

I hope for your judgment in this matter, Judge Yang Qing, and whatever the Order decides, I am willing to abide by it." Tang Qi solemnly said as he cupped his fists.

"Thank you very much for your trust, Senior Tang Qi. We will do our utmost to bring this matter to a fair ending.." said Yang Qing as he nodded towards Tang Qi.

"Now then who would like to go next?" Yang Qing said as he looked at the remaining two parties.

"Judge Yang Qing, if I may?" Su Ye, the founder of the Mountain Guarding Array Manor suddenly interjected.

"You can, Owner Su Ye.."

"To save the court on time, Mountain Guarding Array Manor admits guilt of being negligent in our works. After our unfortunate interaction with fellow Daoist Tang Qi, I did go and investigate the arrays in his abode.

The array really did fail and that failure was on our part. My colleague overlapped some of the arrays together to try and amplify the effects of those arrays while also trying to reduce the consumption of the energy of the resources required to fuel those arrays.

While his desire was well-meaning, it ended up jeopardizing the stability of the formations. From the energy left behind, and the clues I could dig up, the arrays seemed like they failed about 130 years ago.

One of the arrays triggered a chain reaction that increased the amount of energy it should normally consume which threw all the other five arrays at an imbalance since they were interconnected and a few of the core materials got destroyed in the process. Without the core materials, the secondary materials could only hold on for a short while before all six of them collapsed.

I would like to offer an apology on behalf of my disciple for the slight we cost you and the damages you incurred because of it.."

"Master, please!!!" Meng Bai who was at the back hurriedly moved forward to prevent his master, Su Ye from bowing.

"It was my own carelessness and overestimation of my abilities that led to this, I should be the one to apologize.." he added in desperation when he saw Su Ye showing no signs of stopping.

"Meng'er we made a mistake and betrayed a contract. The Mountain Guarding Array Manor is not one to shrink back and avoid responsibilities.

Fellow Daoist Tang Qi paid for our services because he trusted our Manor but we betrayed that trust. It doesn't matter if it was your fault or not. As the head, offering an apology is the least I can do considering the risk he was in.

What if the arrays ended up costing him his breakthrough to the palace realm, Meng'er? That failure is no different than crippling him!!!" Su Ye firmly said as he performed a deep bow.

Chapter 368 Conclusion Of The First Case (1)

Meng Bai on seeing his master's actions and the words he had said made him realize the gravity of his actions and what implications it may have had, had things gone very wrong.

Following his master's actions, he also followed suite and gave a deeper bow as an apology.

"On behalf of the Mountain Guarding Array Manor, I would like to offer our sincerest apologies for our neglect that put you at enormous risk.

We are willing to refund you the 670 high-grade spirit stones and raise it to 10,000 high-grade spirit stones as an apology.

In addition, I promise to personally help you lay down three low-tier blue-grade formations of your choosing and provide the core material for one of them.

I would have liked to provide for all, but I have a lot of people to pay and it would put the Manor in a difficult spot. But, if in 10 years you will not have found the core materials, I will provide the materials myself

I sincerely hope this is enough.." said Su Ye.

Everyone in the courtroom was shocked at the statement of Su Ye, especially Tang Qi. He was wide-eyed and in disbelief at what he had just heard.

His asking for the 670 high-grade spirit stones was him just venting for the beating he got. He wasn't expecting anything in return, especially after the ruckus he had caused at their headquarters.

When the owner let him leave with his life, he already considered them even. It was just that he couldn't let go of the humiliation he had suffered and had a belly full of petty vengeance, so when Yu Gen came to inform him of the case, he decided to drag the Mountain Guarding Array Manor in and cause problems for them.

It was his way of getting back at them, but now that he had time to cool off, he felt he was rather silly.

"Manor master Su Ye, there is no need for this. I can't accept the payment. I already owe you for sparing my life after what I did.." Tang Qi hurriedly said.

"No, we failed in our duties as such, this is the bare minimum we should do.." Su Ye firmly said.

"You should accept senior Tang Qi. You doing so gives face to Senior Su Ye and eases his conscience.

As a palace realm cultivator, I'm sure you have realized the mental state affects a great deal in our realm.." Yang Qing said when he saw Tang Qi was about to refuse Su Ye.

Tang Qi's pupils suddenly constricted and then hurriedly cupped his fists to Yang Qing in gratitude.

"Thank you, Judge Yang Qing.."

"I accept your offer fellow Daoist Su Ye, but on the materials kindly let me source them myself. It's the least I should do also.." said Tang Qi.

"Okay.." answered Su Ye when he saw the firmness in Tang Qi's eyes.

"By the way do you do arrays that help in herb farming?" Tang Qi suddenly asked.

"We don't but if it's what you want, I would be willing to give it a try.."

"No, No, I was just curious.."

"If you want agricultural-based arrays, I could have someone from the Summerfield kingdom assist Senior Su Ye on the matter.

While he may not be a blue-grade formation master yet, his talents in the area are worthy of recognition even by our standards.

I'm sure he would be happy to help, in exchange for help from two palace realm masters.." Yang Qing suddenly said to the two.

The Summerfield Kingdom was the best when it came to combining formation arrays and spiritual herb growth. While Mountain Guarding Array Manor were experienced in arrays that provided protection which happened to be what Summerfield Kingdom needed at the moment, especially with a member of the Dark Helminth Ghost sect already showing up within their territory, the services of the Mountain Guarding Array Manor would be highly welcomed by them, along with registering good karma with two palace realm experts.

Su Ye and Tang Qi were both seasoned foxes, so they didn't miss reading between the lines of Yang Qing's statement. They gladly agreed with his suggestion as it was no loss for them.

"Now then, we are only left with the Silver Blade Sect. Sect master Shao Rong would you please?" Yang Qing said.

Sect Master Shao Rong gulped like he was preparing himself for an execution. While they didn't mean it, they were the main perpetrators in this.

"Master let me, we were the ones who caused it all," pleadingly said the black-haired lady with a pretty oval face who among the young group had formed saber qi and was at the peak stage of the foundation establishment.

"Thanks for the concern Fan'er but let your master do this, and despite everything that happened, the sect doesn't blame you. We were the ones who made things reach this far with our own stubbornness.

The other elders think so too.." Sect master Shao Rong said as he gently smiled to placate the worrying black-haired lady.

"Sorry about that, Judge Yang Qing. The Silver Blade Sect accepts its fault in this matter. About sixteen years ago, my disciple along with the core disciple of our sect were out during a mission when they stumbled onto Senior Tang Qi's abode.

To them at the time, they thought it was a ruin, and thus decided to try their luck and explore it to see if they could find anything in there.

As young cultivators, we have all experienced that hot-blooded thrill of an adventure and exploring different places.."

As he made this statement, Tang Qi, Su Ye, and Meng Bai all nodded in agreement. Only Yang Qing was there with a deadpan expression wondering,

Just how old do they think I am? And what's with the nostalgic looks of missing something dangerous like ruin exploration?

Even if the Order paid me, I wouldn't go explore one.....well if they gave me more time off and more pay, thenno, no, no, I Yang Qing have a bottom line!! But...

Chapter 369 Conclusion Of The First Case (2)

"So with great enthusiasm, they went into Senior Tang Qi's abode thinking it was an abandoned ruin of a long-dead cultivator.

They didn't detect Senior Tang Qi's presence, otherwise, they would not have intruded, and with no functional array in place, they assumed the area had long been abandoned. It was why they willfully grabbed everything in place and brought them to the sect.

Upon realizing the value of the items they brought back, I sent a few elders to Senior Tang Qi's abode, to confirm it was really abandoned, and they came back with the same report as them, that they detected no presence, and it didn't seem like anybody had been there for a while.

We thought it was our lucky break. With the Rising Tides Saber Art and the insights of Senior Tang Qi, we were able to rapidly increase our strengths in a short time span that even one of our grand elders broke through to the quasi-palace stage within that decade.

With our increasing reputation, we decided as a sect it was safer to say the reason for our increase in strength was because our grand elder gained insights into our core art, which helped him break through to the quasi-palace stage.

This way we wouldn't attract greedy eyes or rumors that we may have some treasure. Other sects have been destroyed for less.

Then a few months ago, Senior Tang Qi showed up. We didn't believe him at first, well it was more like we did not want to, even if he was telling the truth.

We had already grown so much in power and prestige and we didn't want to lose it, and we were also a little bit arrogant in our dealing with him.

On behalf of the sect, I would like to apologize to Senior Tang Qi for our conduct and I am willing to accept any punishment the Order deems suitable. My only plea is this, please spare my sect and disciples.." Sect Master Shao Rong humbly said as he bowed towards Yang Qing and then Tang Qi.

"I only want my items returned and compensation for the ones you have already used, that is all.." Tang Qi said as he sighed.

"Is that really okay?" asked sect master Shao Rong in disbelief. When he heard the Rising Tide Saber Art was potentially an evolved art, he had already prepared himself to put up three-quarters of their territory up for sale to be able to get a loan that would be enough to pay for the cost of the art, of which he wasn't sure if it would even be enough.

But hearing Tang Qi only wanted the original amount which was 10,000 high-grade stones for the art, plus 5,000 high-grade stones for his insights, and 4,740 high-grade stones for the other items they had taken, even though it was still a little bit expensive for them, he felt they were getting off cheap.

"Yes, the amount I requested is okay.." said Tang Qi.

"Many thanks, senior Tang Qi," said sect master Shao Rong with clear agitation in his voice. With his trembling shoulders as he bowed it seemed like he was in tears.

The rest of the disciples from the sect all followed suit as they bowed in gratitude and apology toward Tang Qi, who accepted.

"Good, it's good that you have all come to an agreement, it makes my job easier. However, there is one thing I would like to add.." said Yang Qing as his gaze fell on both Tang Qi and the group from the Silver Blade Sect.

"Leaving everything aside, it is undeniable that your sect has benefited greatly from Senior Tang Qi's cultivation art and his insights.."

"Yes... Yes, we have.." said sect master Shao Rong.

"Regardless of whether he allows you to continue using his art or not, you still owe him for what you have today, and as such on behalf of the Order, I would like to declare that 40% of the profits of your sect will go to him for as long as your sect exists.

What you gained is the same as receiving the personal tutelage of a palace realm expert. Your sect has to pay up for it.

While your disciples may have not known, it doesn't change the fact that you benefited immensely from it and the person in question is very much breathing. It's the least you owe him.." said Yang Qing.

"We agree to the ruling!!" Sect master Shao Rong immediately said with no hesitation.

Tang Qi was even taken aback by how fast the sect master agreed to it. A complicated look flashed in his eyes before he said,

"You can continue using my cultivation art, Sect Master Shao Rong, but in exchange, I'd like your sect to occasionally accept disciples who don't seem to have much aptitude.

I'm not asking for any special treatment for them, just give them a chance. Also if you can send a few disciples to help me with my farm occasionally I wouldn't mind, if it's not too much trouble.." said Tang Qi.

"We are willing, senior Tang Qi.." Sect master Shao Rong said as he cupped his fists.

"Okay, thanks."

To Tang Qi, since he didn't have disciples or a family or have any desires for one, he didn't mind the Silver Blade sect training in his legacy art which wasn't his in the first place. Rather than let the art die with him, better to let their sect use it and maybe help it reach greater heights, and in exchange, he can get free labor while also preventing another tragedy like his with the Iron Shattering Palm sect from happening to another person.

"Thank you all for your cooperation and with my authority as a judge of the Order in charge of this case, I would like to declare the case of Tang Qi against the Silver Blade Sect and the Mountain Guarding Array Manor, closed," Yang Qing said as he brought his gavel down.

Chapter 370 Ruin Exploration Article

"Seems like you're easing into your new role rather well..." Yu Gen teased at the side.

"It's only because those involved were upstanding and the details you dug up were sufficient to reach a conclusion quickly.

Thank you for your help..."

Yang Qing was grateful to the two inquisitors for their in-depth investigations but the character of the three parties in the case also helped.

Had the Mountain Guarding Array Manor insisted that they had been slandered by Tang Qi, Yang Qing would have had to bring in three independent formation array masters of good repute to give their own opinions on the arrays at Tang Qi's abode.

Each master giving their own explanation would have taken at least half an hour each. Who knows, maybe he may have ended up with a rather talkative formation master who would veer off-topic and even delve into the history of those arrays like some instructors he had met at the Institute. Something that should have taken a few minutes to explain would turn into a full-day lecture.

The Manor Master Su Ye accepting their fault in the matter, removed the need to involve those formation array masters. Though Yang Qing felt pained since he would still have to pay them regardless of whether they testified or not since they had already investigated the Tang Qi's abode and the results were more or less the same as what Manor Master Su Ye had said.

Handling the Silver Blade sect was the easiest part since the evidence that put them in the wrong was already as clear as day and for them, there was already more than one evidence that nailed them to the coffin.

There was the saber qi present in the sect master Shao Rong and his disciple. The saber qi had the same quality as Tang Qi which proved their cultivation arts had the same origins.

The next piece of evidence was the contract between Tang Qi and the Mountain Guarding Array Manor that had the date the contract was established, written on it.

There was a universal guideline established when it came to the exploration of ruins which was unanimously agreed by three-quarters of the organizations that supported the founding of the Order.

The guideline was an Article called the Ruin Exploration article which was established as a preventive measure for the exact same thing that happened to Tang Qi.

Cultivators would go into seclusion for long periods of time and sometimes it may go beyond the planned timeline.

For example, a palace realm cultivator in the middle stages had a lifespan of 20,000 years. When such a cultivator went into seclusion, it could go from a few hundred years to a few thousand years, and within that timeframe, a lot could change one of which was the withering of their arrays or guarding treasures suddenly malfunctioning within such a period of time. And if the cultivator is in deep seclusion they may not realize their abode is exposed and with the withering of time, the abode may end up being mistaken for the ruins of a lost organization.

Therefore a stipulation was placed. There was a 5,000-year time limit placed in ruin exploration. A party could rightfully keep the gains of a place if the place in question looks to have been abandoned for more than five thousand years.

However if before five thousand years, the rightful owner is proven to be alive and well, or their descendant or legacy inheritor, they are to be compensated everything that was taken along with additional charges depending on how what they took altered their growth. The more monumental the change, the larger the charges imposed.

Other than cultivators going into seclusion, there were those who would go to explore mysterious realms or other places and would not be around for years, only to find their abodes or establishments have been ransacked and treated as ruins that were free for all to explore.

A lot of small-scale and large-scale battles appeared because of it which prompted the article to be established.

Among the major cases that prompted the establishment of the article was where an elder of a rank 3 sect who was in the palace realm ended up stumbling across an abode of a domain expert who was a high elder of a rank 2 clan.

That domain expert liked exploring the continent and would constantly move from place to place which left her little time to return to her clan headquarters, so she had the habit of building abodes that were spread about all around the continent.

As a result, she has over a thousand abodes spread about the continent, and each of those abodes is filled with various treasures she collects in her travels.

It just so happened that one of her abodes, by some twist of fate had its defenses weakened when a few cultivators fought a few thousand kilometers from where her abode was.

For the shockwaves to reach that far, it is assumed the cultivators were at the very least in the domain realm, but many who studied the events that happened after felt the cultivators were at least in the peak stages of the domain realm because the after-effects of their fight were sufficient to cause cracks in a top tier blue grade formation at the abode just from fighting over a thousand kilometers away.

Over a thousand years later the formation guarding her abode had weakened greatly, and since she was always moving about and had thousands of abodes spread about, that flaw in her formation was never fixed and the palace realm sect elder was drawn to her abode due to the leaking energy of some of her treasures.

When he arrived at the site and saw the degrading blue-grade formation, he instantly assumed that the place was likely some abandoned abode of a long-forgotten organization.

It had all the telltale signs of one. There was no one in there, and it didn't look like anyone had lived there for years. It had a degraded top-tier blue grade formation which he assumed had degraded due to time, and the owner was likely dead since there was no way they would leave the place unattended especially not with the top-tier monarch grade treasures he had felt from within it.

With a heavy sense of responsibility to not leave the treasures without an owner, he decided to do the selfless thing and take them under his care.

So with great effort he broke through the degraded top tier blue grade formation array guarding the place and made away with all the items in there.

He left with a lot of valuable items from the abode. There were monarch-grade herbs, and other natural treasures, a few necklaces and artworks in the monarch grade that the domain clan elder had made along with several blue-grade cultivation arts and maps and journals that detailed the domain expert's experience within certain mysterious realms that were in the area.

That elder did the sensible thing he could do after getting the items which was to use them to make himself stronger first. Before he explored the 'ruin' he had been at the third stage of the palace realm but after he used a few of the treasures from the abode his strength experienced a massive jump.

In fifteen years, his strength leaped to the sixth stage of the palace realm, and was just inches away from breaking through to the seventh stage and becoming a late-stage palace realm expert.

With his newfound strength, he made his way back to his sect and reasonably asked the sect master who was at the fourth stage of the palace realm to retire, which resulted in the sect master getting crippled after the discussion and a few of his supporters mysteriously disappearing over the next few years.

That elder became the next sect master. With his power as sect master, he mobilized the strength of the sect and explored the few ruins listed in the journal of the domain expert. Even though they didn't find extremely valuable resources, they still found enough to catapult their sect into a major hegemon in their area, and in thirty years the number of palace realm experts within their ranks had increased from 11 to 34 and the sect master was already a ninth stage palace realm expert.

However all that changed a few years later when that domain expert realized one of her abodes had been robbed and with the skills of a domain realm cultivator, it wasn't hard for her to track those items to the doors of that sect.

The domain expert on reaching that sect was pretty reasonable with her demands and didn't kill them outright. She just casually destroyed their sect guarding array and casually displayed the prestige of a domain expert by crippling the cultivation base of a few(14) palace realm experts of the sect before she gave her demands, which was compensation on the items taken and she would forget the matter.

She seemed to have a merchant's background because she tabulated the owed amount to the last spirit stone whose amount would have left the sect in the hole for 10,000 years but at least they'd get to exist.

She gave them half an year to come up with the amount, in addition, she had also put forth a special arrangement in the deal where they'd get to be her assistants in the exploration of various mysterious realms and grottos she had information on.

On the surface, that sect seemed to agree with her demands, but there was no way a sect that had just tasted the heights of power and with a sect master who had murdered another sect master for that position just agree like that. So they did what they thought was the best solution which was to hire assassins to hunt that domain expert and pay them a third of the amount she asked for.

In addition, they also leaked that the expert had a few treasure maps that led to ancient legacies for good measure, so that the organization would be sufficiently motivated, and gave up copies of some of the journals they had stolen from her abode as proof.

What they didn't know was that they had kicked a hornet's nest. The domain expert was a member of a long-established rank 1 clan, and even without them, the woman herself was powerful by her lonesome as a sword domain user, and she also had numerous connections, especially with the merchant and auction houses due to her reputation as a treasure hunter, so it wasn't hard for her to find out what that sect had done using their information network.

That sect along with the assassin organizations they hired disappeared overnight.

Other than them, numerous other organizations have fallen due to the exact same reason minus a few details. They end up stumbling in some area they assume to be abandoned or sometimes they

conveniently ignore clues that it may not be abandoned due to cultivators' greed, and they end up inviting calamity upon themselves.

To deal with this issue, the ruin exploration article was established, which was meant to deter exploration without due diligence but also to avoid total annihilation by having the Order step in and act as a mediator between the two parties just like what the Silver Blade Sect had done.

They knew they were in the wrong and were the weaker party, so their only path of survival was to involve the Order in the process. Even if they may end up paying through the arm in reparations, at least the sect would be intact in the end.