

Everyone fell into silence.

They had listened to Luo Qi, made a charge for Qingshan Sect and demanded the latter to hand Jiang Ning over.

They had been such idiots. Luo Qi had played them like puppets.

“Why would Luo Qi do something like this?” asked Geng Jianba, the chief of the Bajian Sect. “He told us that he wanted to find a way out, that he only wanted the best for his disciples. Why would he... didn’t he say that the way out lies outside the mountain and that there are more resources to be found outside?”

Elder Ting Feng smiled mirthlessly and shook his head. “We’ve all been duped. The world beyond the mountain isn’t a place for us. Have you ever thought about where all that gray matter came from? What’s their purpose?”

Everyone fell into silence once again.

A long moment passed before Li Xuan frowned. “Are you saying that someone created the gray matter intentionally so that we would be forced to leave the mountain?”

As soon as those words left his lips, revelation struck everyone like a flash of lightning.

Everything would make so much more sense if that were truly the case.

Who was the one who had created the gray

matter though?

“Is it Mr Lang?” Li Xuan looked at Elder Ting Feng.  
“Is Mr Lang the one who killed Master Ting?”

Elder Ting Feng snorted and didn't say a word. The rage on his face told everyone what they needed to know though.

No one had expected Mr Lang to be the central figure and the cause of everything that had happened. Despite knowing that such a person did exist, no one could remember what he looked like at all.

Dread and horror filled them gradually as they tried desperately to recall his features. As their fear of Mr Lang grew, their reason returned to them as well.

“That scoundrel!”

“Luo Qi, that bastard! Does he know what he's doing?”

“He probably doesn't know that he's being manipulated by someone,” sighed Yun Zhongke. “I've felt something was amiss but I couldn't pin down what was wrong. It seems like we've all fallen for Mr Lang's tricks. Even though we've been poisoned, our minds have regained some measure of clarity.”

“This is terrifying.” Geng Jianba shook his head.  
“Who exactly is this Mr Lang?”

No one knew.

Mr Lang was a complete mystery. He had an ability that allowed him to easily gain the trust of everyone around him. He was seen as an old and trusted friend by everyone. Everyone believed what he said.

But as soon as they turned away, they forgot that he had existed in the first place.

“Our priority now should be to find a way out of this place,” said Li Xuan. “We have to leave this place. We can’t let our sects surrender to Tianlian Sect and Luo Qi’s rule. That will bring nothing but trouble.”

No one wanted their sects to become Luo Qi’s puppets and become mere tools for his exploitation.

“But we’ve all been poisoned.” Elder Ting Feng looked at everyone. “Do you know what poison it is and where the antidote is being kept?”

“It’s Tranquilizing Dust,” Yun Zhongke sighed with some guilt and frustration. “It used to be our sect’s secret concoction.”

“Do you have the antidote?” Elder Ting Feng wasn’t interested in the poison’s history, only in knowing what it was.

“There’s no antidote,” Yun Zhongke said with a wry smile. “It can only be neutralized through activating your inner energy. Judging by the severity of our condition, it’ll take us at least five years to fully neutralize the poison.”

He knew that Luo Qi wouldn't go easy on them. He would continue to drug them every day so that they would never regain the power to fight back.

He would be able to gain complete and lasting control over the six sects then.

Alarm flashed across Elder Ting Feng's eyes when he heard Yun Zhongke's words. "There's no antidote?"


What was he going to do?


They could barely stand. How were they going to leave without an antidote?

Jiang Ning wouldn't be able to lead them out of this place even if he were to free them from their cells.

That explained Luo Qi's confidence. The poison had the terrifying ability to trap them here forever, eliminating all chances of their escape.

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“There must be an antidote,” scoffed Li Xuan.  
“Why are you still lying to us?”

There was an antidote to every poison. Who would dare use a poison that had no antidote?

“It’s time for your meal!”

Before they could say another word, a voice rang outside their cell and silenced them.

They watched as a dozen men walked in with some food. Imprisoned inside a cave with no chance of ever seeing the sun again, they were of no use to anyone.

Waves of sorrow surged within them.

“Come on, eat!”

“Hurry up and eat!”

A few Tianlian Sect disciples sneered and threw the food onto the ground as if they were leftovers for stray dogs. “Esteemed sect leaders, we’ve prepared a special meal for you today to celebrate the capture of Elder Ting Feng of Buddha Sect. You should be happy.”

“You’re about to reunite with a few old friends. You should be happy. Hahahaha!”

“I’m going to kill you!” spat Yun Zhongke furiously.

PAK!

A disciple lifted his hand and sent it flying across

Yun Zhongke's cheek. "You? You're nothing but useless pieces of trash now. Do you really think you can kill me?"

"You..."

Yun Zhongke was livid. He struggled to stand but to no avail. His legs were like jelly and he could scarcely feel them at all. There was no way he could stand.

The other sects felt the humiliation churning inside Yun Zhongke as they witnessed his mistreatment. They were filled with rage but they were powerless.

"Hurry up and eat! You won't like what we're going to do to you if you keep yammering!" the disciples from Tianlian Sect said mockingly. Trampling on the pride of these high and mighty sect leaders felt great.

Jiang Ning paid them no head as he distributed the food to the captives. When he got to Elder Ting Feng, he leaned in and whispered, "What did you find?"

"There's no antidote," said Elder Ting Feng in exasperation.

Jiang Ning froze. "How can there be no antidote?"

Elder Ting Feng shook his head. "The poison is a sedative that was originally created by the Longkongshan Sect. Yun Zhongke said that there's no antidote for this poison. An antidote might exist but he's not aware of it."

As Jiang Ning handed Elder Ting Feng his food, he asked, "Where's the poison being kept?"

The elder froze, then looked up and stared Jiang Ning in the eye. He had a feeling that he knew what Jiang Ning was going to do.

"Are we done here?" The man in charge of the disciples yelled in the distance. "Are you going to eat? I don't care either way!"

Upon hearing that, Jiang Ning's foot shot out and struck Elder Ting Feng, sending him sprawling to the ground. He whispered, "It's alright. I'll think of something. Get ready."

The other disciples from Tianlian Sect burst into laughter at the scene.

Humiliating these sect leaders and elders had become their chief pleasure every day.

"Let's go!"

The disciples left after delivering the meal, leaving behind them sect leaders and elders who looked utterly defeated and livid.

They had not expected something like this to befall them. An ordinary disciple, tasked with the mundane chore of delivering meals, had dared to push them around, humiliate them and mock them to their faces. These disciples would have them kiss the dirt if they could.

Elder Ting Feng eyed them before saying in a voice dripping with mockery, "How's the food?"

Does it taste good?"

He did not tell anyone that Jiang Ning had been amongst the disciples. These people should suffer a little humiliation. That was the only way they would learn whom the real villain was.

Li Xuan and the others didn't say a word. They stared at the food scattered on the ground and tightened their fists. Their faces were colored with murderous rage.

Yun Zhongke smashed his fist into a bun and thundered. "Luo Qi, I'm going to kill you. I swear, I'll kill you!"

When would these hellish days come to an end?

They growled with rage.

"Soon."

Elder Ting Feng ate his food calmly. He knew that Jiang Ning had a plan.

They might not know of any antidote, but Luo Qi might.

He was convinced that Luo Qi would reveal where the antidote was if he were to get poisoned himself.



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