Jia Jin Sheng Murder Case

Reverend Insanity

Doc by: Rain, Herald, Kylizz

INTRODUCTION:

This doc covers Jia Jin Sheng's murder case as well as its trial (Chapter 39 to 59).

Through this doc we hope to explain how Fang Yuan killed Jia Jin Sheng and then not only skillfully covered his tracks but also escaped being caught by proving himself innocent.

For any questions, feel free to reach out to us on Discord: solosyourfavourite ; divinerain5956 ; alexanderwinslow

Red - FSIQ, Intelligence, Adaptability

Brown - Overall EQ, Overall SQ, Overall AQ

Blue - Foresight, Insight, Sensory, Thinking

Orange - Reasoning, Psychology, Analysis

Green - Manipulation, Deception, Coercion

Purple - Planning, Strategy, Tactics, Methods

Yellow - Miscellaneous

KEY INFORMATION:

Before getting into the details of the murder and Fang Yuan's calculated strategy, it's essential to first cover some key background information. Understanding these aspects is crucial, as they provide the necessary context for the events that are explained in this doc. Without a clear understanding of them, it would be difficult to fully comprehend the intricacies of Fang Yuan's plan and his approach to the trial. Therefore, everything explained here is crucial to understand the entire murder case.

Black Coffin Luck:

As mentioned in our Corpse Box Strategy doc, Fang Yuan got cursed by something known as Black Coffin Luck right from Chapter 1 itself, after he uses the Spring Autumn Cicada to rebirth. This curse is a variant of bad luck tied to the Luck Path, and it significantly impacts Fang Yuan's every move.

The main effect of Black Coffin Luck is that it drastically reduces Fang Yuan's success rate, making his goals harder to achieve. Also, it acts as a **contextual adversity** that diminishes his luck, which is already lower than his natural luck. For example, if Fang Yuan's natural success rate for an action is 7 out of 10, Black Coffin Luck might reduce it to 5 out of 10 or even 3 out of 10. This means Fang Yuan needs to exert more effort and be extra cautious with his plans to counterbalance this reduced luck.

Do note that Black Coffin Luck is not just a temporary drawback. It's something that's with Fang Yuan for 24/7 from Chapter 1 itself, creating harder challenges and attracting more problems to him. To counter this, Fang Yuan must be extra careful and has to find ways to not only mitigate its effects but also to exploit it for his benefit.

Gu Yue Clan:

Gu Yue Clan is the clan to which Fang Yuan belongs, situated in Qing Mao Mountain alongside the Bai Clan and Xiong Clan. It is considered a middle-low tier clan in terms of power and influence within the Southern Border.

Gu Yue Clan has ongoing conflicts with both the Bai Clan and Xiong Clan, though it maintains a more cordial relationship with the Jia Clan, which provides some stability and support.

The clan is led by the clan leader, Gu Yue Bo, who oversees its operations alongside other elders of the clan who help manage its affairs.

Jia Clan:

Jia Clan is a relatively young but powerful clan in the Southern Border. While it may not be as old as the Gu Yue Clan, it is significantly stronger than it due to it being a large size clan and having more resources.

The Jia Clan operates merchant caravans that travel throughout the Southern Border, facilitating trade by buying and selling goods across the region. These caravans are crucial to the clan's wealth and influence.

One of these caravans is supervised by the Jia Clan Leader's eldest son, Jia Fu, and his third son, Jia Jin Sheng. This particular caravan passes through Qing Mao Mountain, home to the Gu Yue Clan, once a year, creating an alliance connection between the two clans.

Flower Wine Monk:

Flower Wine Monk, a powerful demonic cultivator, was a Rank 5 Poison Path Master, known for his perverse and dangerous nature. He approached the Gu Yue Clan under mysterious circumstances, initially pretending to be interested in purchasing the rare Orchid Moon. However, his true intentions were far more sinister because he later attacked the Gu Yue Clan, leading to the death of many.

At that time, the leader of Gu Yue Clan, known as Fourth Gen Gu Yue and the clan's elders, confronted him in battle. In a self-sacrificial act, the Fourth Generation Gu Yue gave his life to defeat the Flower Wine Monk, managing to strike a fatal blow. Though mortally wounded, the Flower Wine Monk survived and escaped, but his injuries were so severe that his death became inevitable.

Because of his hatred towards Gu Yue Clan, the Flower Wine Monk left behind an inheritance for a future successor. This legacy was meant to ensure that someone would avenge his death and take down the Gu Yue Clan in his place. One of the most significant items in his inheritance was the Liquor Worm, a vital Gu worm for low-rank cultivators.

Fang Yuan found Flower Wine Monk Inheritance and obtained the Liquor Worm as part of the Flower Wine Monk's inheritance after searching for it over several nights. Along with the Liquor Worm, Fang Yuan also acquired several other valuable Gu, including the Jade Skin Gu, White Boar Gu, and Earth Communication Ear Grass, etc.

Liquor Worm:

The Liquor Worm is a Rank 1 Gu with a distinctive, worm-like appearance. It resembles a silkworm and emits a soft, pearl-white glow from its body. The Liquor Worm, despite being just Rank 1, is highly sought after for its practical uses in cultivation.

This Gu is particularly valuable to Rank 1 Gu Masters, as it helps them refine their primeval essence and provides a slight boost to their cultivation realm, enabling them to advance by one small realm. What makes the Liquor Worm especially sought after is its safe and effective nurturing method: when used to nurture an aperture, it leaves no harmful repercussions or risks, making it far superior to other methods. However, its effects are limited to Rank 1 cultivators, offering no benefits to those at Rank 2 cultivators.

Although it is classified as a Rank 1 Gu, its value is often compared to that of a Rank 2 Gu due to the significant advantages it provides to Rank 1 cultivators.

Footprint Gu:

Footprint Gu is a unique and visually distinct Gu. It is shaped like a human foot and is about the size of a person's palm. Its material resembles translucent yogurt, giving it a smooth and soft appearance. The surface of the Footprint Gu glows with a yellow-green luster, making it easily recognizable.

To activate the Footprint Gu, a Gu Master has to pour their Primeval Essence into it. Once infused, the Gu grows brighter before bursting into a cloud of yellow-green powder. This powder envelopes the target, revealing the last 30,000 footprints they have left behind.

Footprint Gu is an incredibly useful tool for tracking and investigation, providing precise details of the target's movements over a period of time. Therefore, it is often used while investigating crimes.

Bamboo Gentleman Gu:

Bamboo Gentleman Gu has a long, slim body resembling a bamboo tube. Its color is a rich jade green, and its surface emits a soft white glow. While phasmids of this kind are typically longer than a palm, this particular Bamboo Gentleman Gu is notably smaller, being only the size of a fingernail.

This Gu feeds on honesty, using it as its primary sustenance. When placed inside a Gu Master's aperture, the Bamboo Gentleman Gu interacts with the primeval sea, infusing it with a gentle green glow. However, its most unique characteristic is its ability to detect lies. If the Gu Master who carries the Bamboo Gentleman Gu utters even a single lie, the Gu detects the deception and changes its body color from green to another shade, signaling dishonesty.

Due to this ability, the Bamboo Gentleman Gu is often used in investigation and interrogation, serving as an effective lie detector.

Rock Gambling Den:

In Gu World, many Gu worms exist, each with unique shapes, sizes, and effects. Every Gu worm requires specific food to survive, and without it, they can only last for a short time before dying. However, when faced with starvation, Gu worms have a survival mechanism, in which they can enter a state of hibernation by undergoing self-sealing.

For instance, the Liquor Worm, when self-sealed, forms a white cocoon around its body, curling up and falling into a sleeping state. This self-sealing allows Gu worms to preserve themselves for extended periods.

Sometimes, Gu Masters stumble upon these sealed Gu worms in the form of rocks or cocoons.

When they cut the rocks, they often find themselves in possession of highly valuable and rare Gu. Stories of such chance discoveries gave rise to the idea of the Rock Gambling Den.

These businesses capitalize on the allure of chance and fortune. Owners fill their Rock Gambling Dens with a variety of rocks sold at different price points. Most of these rocks are empty, but few contain Gu worms. Gu Masters, who want to test their luck and possibly uncover a rare Gu, purchase these rocks.

ANALYSIS:

Context:

The Jia Clan is a wealthy and influential clan in the Southern Border, known as a traveling merchant powerhouse. They operate like a moving market, journeying across the region to trade with various clans.

One of their regular stops is at the Qing Mao Mountain, where they conduct business with Gu Yue Clan every year. Therefore their relationship is of mutual benefit and respect.

This particular merchant group traveling through Qing Mao Mountain this time is led by Jia Fu, a Rank 4 Gu Master and the eldest son of the Jia Clan Leader. Along with him is his half-brother Jia Jin Sheng.

Once the Jia Clan caravans arrived at Qing Mao Mountain, Fang Yuan took to the streets, his sharp eyes scanning the nameplates on the large tents and dens. Fang Yuan had a specific goal in mind, that is, finding a gambling den.

As he wandered, his gaze caught a sign that read, “Luck changes with time.” The phrase immediately clicked with him, and he understood this was a gambling den. Without hesitation, Fang Yuan stepped inside, ready to carry out his plan.

Fang Yuan recalled that in his previous life, someone had once acquired a Mudskin Toad Gu in the Jia Clan's gambling den at exactly this year. The Mudskin Toad Gu was a Gu of intermediate-high value, making it a rare and worthwhile find. However, the challenge was in the fact that Fang Yuan didn't know which rock it was in, and there were more than a thousand rocks in the gambling den. Basically, this was no different from blindly gambling, relying entirely on luck, something Fang Yuan is not good with because of Black Coffin Luck curse.

Also, it is important to note that Fang Yuan’s decision to visit the gambling den wasn’t purely for obtaining the Mudskin Toad Gu. He had two additional problems that he intended to solve with this plan.

[Crystallized Intelligence, Knowledge, Long-term Memory, Situational Awareness, Risk Assessment, Experience, Knowledge Application, Critical Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Application Thinking, Observation, Social Intuition, Mental Fortitude, Planning Aim, Preparation Process, Planning Formulation, Planning Intricacies**]**

Debunk Attempt:

Some might argue that Fang Yuan’s previous life experience with gambling and the fact that he owned and operated a large-scale gambling den in his previous life would give him a significant edge here. After all, someone with that level of expertise could supposedly increase their chances of finding the Mudskin Toad Gu, right?

Counter:

Not exactly. While it’s true that Fang Yuan’s past experience boosts his gambling skills, it doesn’t magically change the odds of the situation. The Mudskin Toad Gu is still just one Gu hidden among thousands of rocks. No amount of skill can alter the sheer statistical reality of the gamble. It’s still a game of luck at the end of the day.

What his experience helps in is giving him a sharper eye and a better understanding of the psychology and strategies behind gambling dens. This allows him to approach the situation

with more caution and creativity, turning what would otherwise be a blind gamble into something slightly more calculated. But at the end of the day, the odds remain stacked against him.

Fang Yuan's Calculated Gamble:

Rock den gambling is a risky game of chance where gamblers pick one rock out of thousands, hoping to find a living Gu inside. The odds are stacked heavily against the player as there's roughly a 1 in 10 chance of finding a Gu. Even then, most of the time, it ends up being a dead Gu, making the gamble worthless.

But Fang Yuan wasn't gambling blindly. Using his memories from his previous life and piecing together subtle clues, he managed to find the exact counter where the person in his previous life found the rock that had Mudskin Toad Gu. He remembered that in his past life, the person who obtained this Gu found it inside golden-purple lustrous rock.

This narrowed his options significantly, but not completely. Now, Fang Yuan had to choose from a smaller pool of 20 purple-golden rocks. While this was a big improvement from thousands of rocks, it still left him with only a 1 in 20 chance of picking the correct one. Despite the reduced odds, it doesn't change the fact that it's still a gamble.

Fang Yuan began carefully analyzing each rock, relying on his sharp instincts and knowledge to narrow down the choices. Using his hands, he assessed their weight, size, and shape, methodically eliminating options one by one.

The first rock he rejected was flat and too small to feasibly contain a Gu. It's because its size didn't align with the space needed to hold the Mudskin Toad Gu.

The second rock he discarded was exceptionally lustrous, almost too good to ignore. However, its size was off, being about 30% smaller than what Fang Yuan remembered the correct rock to be in his previous life. This discrepancy was enough for him to rule it out.

The third rock he removed had the perfect size, but there was another issue. Given that the Mudskin Toad Gu is a frog, its fossil would likely leave an uneven shape. This rock, being too perfectly round, didn't match the characteristics he was looking for.

Fang Yuan, in his previous life, had come across rumors about a Gu that was able to scan fossils and detect which ones contained living Gu worms inside them. However, after investigating and experimenting with these claims, Fang Yuan discovered they were nothing but baseless rumors. Even if a Gu with such a power did exist, it would likely be a closely guarded secret, known only to a select few individuals. Its existence would definitely not be common knowledge or available to the public.

Fang Yuan also understood that the terrain of Qing Mao Mountain, along with the nearby ranges, wasn't ideal for the development of a proper gambling den. The environment and economy of the region lacked the foundation required to sustain large-scale operations.

Fang Yuan recalled from his past life that in the eastern region, gambling dens were a common sight. There, every small village had its own gambling den, and in some places, the practice had evolved even further. Large, fortified regions were established purely for the purpose of gambling.

With his sharp memory, Fang Yuan even recall specific villages that were famous for their expertise in this field. Villages like Pan Shi, Gu Mu, and Cang Jing were specialized in Rock Gambling. Fang Yuan also reasoned that, in this current time, the gambling dens in the eastern region were still operating at full capacity, drawing in an enormous number of gamblers.

Fang Yuan turned his focus back to the 20 remaining rocks. Using his deduction skills and keen intuition, he eliminated 14 of the rocks, narrowing his options even further. Now he had 6 rocks left. So, his chance of finding Mudskin Toad Gu among them was 1 in 6.

He was sure that the Mudskin Toad Gu was hibernating in one of these rocks. His assessment was based on both the structure of the rocks and the likelihood of a Gu being inside, and he was confident that there was an 80% chance of finding the Gu among them. This wasn't just luck but rather calculated risk and careful reasoning.

[Crystallized Intelligence, Fluid Intelligence, FRI, Knowledge, Emotional Engagement, Mental Fortitude, Observation, Prediction, Critical Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Application Thinking, Insight, Analysis, Deductive Reasoning, Inductive Reasoning, Logical Reasoning, Memory, Information Gathering, Attention Span, Knowledge Application, Risk Management, Experience, Calculation, Intuition, Decision Making**]**

Scans:

"Young master, do you want to open the rocks on the spot? Our gambling den provides free service to open the rocks." The female Gu Master gently advised, sending seductive glances with her eyes.

Fang Yuan used the corner of his eye to take a look at the crowd, his lips curling into a mysterious smile. He waved his hand, rejecting the female Gu Master. "Purple gold is my lucky color, and this is my first time betting, it is very meaningful. I'll open the rocks myself!"

Fang Yuan's Strategy:

Fang Yuan carefully adopted an upright yet seemingly reckless demeanor as he prepared to gamble, ensuring that his actions attracted attention from nearby Gu Masters.

When the female Gu Master who was selling the rocks suggested opening the rocks for him, Fang Yuan declined without hesitation. He knew there was a hidden scheme behind her offer, and also Fang Yuan is a person who preferred to rely on his own abilities while minimizing external involvement.

To further conceal his plan, Fang Yuan casually remarked, **"Purple gold is my lucky color,"** implying that his selection process was based purely on superstition. This statement reinforced the perception that he was a newbie and inexperienced in rock gambling.

This strategy served two purpose:

Witness: By acting in a way that attracted attention, Fang Yuan intentionally created a group of onlookers. These witnesses were crucial to his plan, as their presence would serve as an alibi and provide accountability for his actions. If later anyone questioned the legitimacy of his choices or accused him of wrongdoing, the crowd could attest to what they saw, that is a seemingly inexperienced gambler testing his luck. This not only added a layer of protection but also strengthened the narrative that this entire event was just a stroke of luck.

Deception: By pretending to rely on luck and superstition, he successfully downplayed his expertise. This misdirection served to protect him from suspicion and potential schemes. If people believed his choices were random, they would be less likely to target him or investigate him. Moreover, concealing his prowess ensured that no one could guess the depth of his planning and preparation.

[VCI, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Self Regulation, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Insight, Strategic Thinking, Critical Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Observation, Analysis, Psychology, Misdirection, Persuasion, Acting Skills, Concealment, Fabrication, Verbal Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Verbal Deception, Intuition, See Through People, Situational Awareness, Risk Management, Strategy Building, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Execution, Strategy Shielding, Tactics**]**

Fang Yuan used his Moonlight Gu to open the rocks, employing its corroding power with remarkable precision and control. This was no simple feat since it required extraordinary dexterity and practice to execute such fine work. His choice to use the Moonlight Gu was on purpose; as it was the signature Gu of the Gu Yue Clan, it subtly attracted the attention of other Gu Yue clan members to take note of his actions. This precaution served as a safeguard, ensuring that he had witnesses if the gambling den tries to scam him.

In the process, Fang Yuan also gained the attention of other Gu Masters in the den. By intentionally losing the first four rocks, he appeared as a clumsy, unlucky gambler. This tactic not only deflected suspicion about his true abilities but also entertained the onlookers, drawing more people to watch him in amusement.

When Fang Yuan opened the fifth rock, it revealed a mudball layer that likely concealed a Gu worm inside. However, just as he prepared to open the mudball, Jia Jin Sheng, the owner of

the gambling den, intervened, attempting to stop him. This confirmed Fang Yuan's suspicion that the den was operating under a hidden scheme.

Scans:

The yellow mudball gradually decreased in size due to the friction, and when it was palm-sized, someone barged into the tent. "Young lad, hold up. I, Jia Jin Sheng, will be buying it!"

Fang Yuan's movement came to a halt, at once , the Gu Masters in the tent all focused their attention on this person.

He looked young on the outside, his appearance around twenty to twenty-five years old. He wore a golden-coloured robe with a lace belt on his waist, and on the belt there was a square shaped jade piece. There was a word across the piece of jade, showing the letter "One".

Evidently, this was a Rank one Gu Master.

To still be a Rank one Gu Master at twenty years old, it seems that his talent isn't good.

Fang Yuan's Reasoning:

From the moment he entered the den, Fang Yuan suspected that he was being surveilled. This suspicion stemmed from his memories of his previous life. Back then, the fortunate individual who stumbled upon the Mudskin Toad Gu was quickly approached by someone who persuaded him to sell the Gu. Fang Yuan inferred that this wasn't mere coincidence; rather, it suggested a coordinated effort by the gambling den's clerks and Jia Jin Sheng.

The pattern seemed clear: whenever a valuable Gu was uncovered, the clerks alerted their leader, Jia Jin Sheng. Jia Jin Sheng would then intervene, purchasing the Gu at a low price, thus ensuring his own profit while cheating the unsuspecting customer.

Jia Jin Sheng's actions in this moment only confirmed Fang Yuan's theory. By observing him, Fang Yuan noted his young age, likely around 24 or 25, and his Rank 1 cultivation belt. Low cultivation rank at such age, indicated that Jia Jin Sheng had minimal cultivation potential, likely at the bottom of D-grade, a mediocre talent at best. His reliance on deceit and manipulation to grow his fortune was clear, further exposing the scamming practices of the gambling den.

[Social Awareness, Emotional Understanding, Cognitive Discipline, Holistic Thinking, Critical Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Anticipation, Insight, Observation, Perception, Kinesthetic Control, Analysis, Psychology, Inductive Reasoning, Abductive Reasoning, Direct Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Misdirection, Acting Skills, Tactics, Strategy Shielding, Strategic Foresight, Planning Coverage, Intuition, Risk Assessment, Risk Management, Creativity, Multi-tasking, Attention Span, Memory, Knowledge Application, Information Gathering, Trap Evasion, Situational Awareness**]**

When Fang Yuan was about to open the Gu, Jia Jin Sheng interfered, attempting to persuade Fang Yuan to purchase the Gu for 40 stones. However, Fang Yuan quickly saw through Jia Jin Sheng's behavior and refused the offer. Instead, he proceeded to open the Gu successfully.

[Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Self Regulation, Holistic Thinking, Psychology, Deductive Reasoning, Inductive Reasoning, Tactics, Decision Making, Trap Evasion, Situational Awareness, See Through People**]**

Scans:

“That’s right, I am this shop’s shopkeeper. Little brother, coming out to gamble at such a young age, aren’t you afraid of your family’s scolding? I will offer forty primeval stones now to buy that mudball in your hand. What do you think? Forty primeval stones is a lot already and there may not be a Gu inside, but today I am in a good mood. Thus seeing that this is your first time gambling, I don’t want you to lose everything, so I’ll give you a portion of your capital back.” Jia Jin Sheng quickly walked in front of Fang Yuan and said.

“Forty primeval stones?” Fang Yuan raised his eyebrows slightly and took a look at Jia Jin Sheng with the corner of his eye, coldly laughing, “It seems you want to forcefully buy the mudball fossil in my possession? Forceful purchase is spoiling the gambling den’s rules. Furthermore you’re now on Qing Mao Mountain, you want to bully a Gu Yue clansman like me in front of everyone?”

“Oh?” On hearing Fang Yuan’s last sentence, all the other Gu Masters could not take it and animosity grew uncontrollably in them as they looked towards Fang Yuan’s direction. Their expression towards Jia Jin Sheng also became unfriendly.

Jia Jin Sheng tried to probe Fang Yuan further, showing some force in an attempt to make him sell the Gu at a cheaper price. In response, Fang Yuan calmly countered, saying, "Furthermore you’re now on Qing Mao Mountain, you want to bully a Gu Yue clansman like me in front of everyone?”

Upon hearing this, the Gu Yue clansmen present in the gambling den subtly found themselves drawn into the situation, beginning to support Fang Yuan. Since this area was under the influence of the Gu Yue clan, Jia Jin Sheng’s attempt to pressure Fang Yuan was no longer just a business transaction but rather a risky move. Forcing the issue in front of the Gu Yue clansmen was not a wise choice for Jia Jin Sheng.

[VCI, FRI, Adaptability, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Management, Social Awareness, Social Understanding, Social Management, Mental Fortitude, Insight, Strategic Thinking, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Psychology, Sophistry, Indirect Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Verbal Manipulation, Verbal Deception, Scapegoating, Smearing, Threats, Coercion, Demoralization, Situational Awareness, Cunningness, Trap Evasion**,** See Through

People, Setting Traps, Caution, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Shielding, Planning Coverage, Planning Invincibility]

Fang Yuan ignored Jia Jin Sheng's words and proceeded to fully open the rock. As the rock split apart, it revealed a Mudskin Toad Gu, and to everyone's surprise, it was alive. Because of Fang Yuan's actions and words throughout all this, people believed that this was all just a stroke of luck. Fang Yuan had perfectly deceived them into believing that he was just a newbie who somehow got insanely lucky.

Scans:

"It's actually the Mudskin Toad! This is a rare Rank two Gu worm, its value worth five hundred primeval stones. Damn it, damn. Someone actually managed to open such a Gu worm in my shop. I've lost big time, big time!" Jia Jin Sheng's face was pale as he stared daggers at the toad, his heart having a strong urge to just snatch the Gu away.

But he knew he couldn't, for if he really did that, it would be asking for trouble.

This was not his family's village, but the Gu Yue clan's territory.

"Maybe I should've paid a bit more primeval stones, maybe he might have given it to me. That's right, he's just a student. If I offered a hundred primeval stones, there's no way he'd not be moved. Why didn't I do that?" Jia Jin Sheng was full of regret.

"No, maybe this young lad does not know his stuff. Even though he opened a Mudskin Toad, I should be able to suppress the price and buy it!" Jia Jin Sheng's heart had renewed hope.

But at the next moment, this hint of hope was mercilessly smashed by Fang Yuan's words.

Fang Yuan plainly looked at the Mudskin Toad in his hands, ignoring the surrounding people's praises and shock.

He used an extremely calm tone and said to Jia Jin Sheng, "Mudskin Toad, Rank two Gu worm, requires five hundred grams of yellow soil every meal, the more fertile the soil the better. Its species is few in number and it is the necessary main Gu in refining the Treasure Brass Toad. The market price is five hundred primeval stones. Jia Jin Sheng, do you want to buy this?"

"You actually know so clearly……" Jia Jin Sheng mumbled. After such a shock, he could not say a word.

Fang Yuan laughed lightly and continued, "If you're unwilling, that's fine. I'll sell it to someone else, I'm sure someone will be interested."

"Hold it, wait, I'll buy it, I'll buy it. But can't this price be cheaper?" Jia Jin Sheng's smile turned bitter.

Fang Yuan turned around and walked away.

Jia Jin Sheng hurriedly chased after him. “Don’t! Don’t go! I’ll buy, I’ll buy it!”

Fang Yuan had no plans to nurture this Mudskin Toad.

It was a Rank two Gu, but Fang Yuan was still a Rank one initial stage. Although it ate yellow soil, Qing Mao Mountain was full of green soil, hence finding food for it would be troublesome.

Moreover, if he does not sell this Gu worm, Fang Yuan would have to feed three Gu worms himself. Putting aside the increased primeval stone expenditure, even the current amount of primeval stones in his possession would not be enough to feed them.

Thus, Fang Yuan’s plan was to immediately sell away the Mudskin Toad, get the five hundred primeval stones and earn a fortune.

To a Rank one initial stage like Fang Yuan, five hundred primeval stones was considered a large amount already.

The transaction was quickly completed and Fang Yuan transferred the Mudskin Toad to Jia Jin Sheng in front of the crowd, at the same time accepting five heavy money bags. Each bag had a hundred primeval stones.

Fang Yuan originally had ninety-eight primeval stones, and after spending sixty on gambling rocks, he had thirty-eight left. Now, his fortune multiplied many times, and he owned five hundred and thirty-eight primeval stones.

Fang Yuan’s Strategy:

When Jia Jin Sheng attempted to scam Fang Yuan by offering a mere 100 primeval stones for the Mudskin Toad Gu. Before Jia Jin Sheng could say much, Fang Yuan calmly explained the Mudskin Toad Gu’s significance and directly stated its actual value, that is, 500 primeval stones.

Despite Jia Jin Sheng’s attempts to persuade him otherwise, Fang Yuan cleverly shifted the dynamic by acting as if he can just sell the Gu to another buyer. This tactic instilled fear in Jia Jin Sheng, forcing him to reconsider and ultimately take a step back and agree to purchase the Gu at a much higher price.

The reason for selling Mudskin Toad even after strategizing so much to get it was because Fang Yuan knew he needed to sell the Gu quickly. The Mudskin Toad Gu required care and feeding that Fang Yuan couldn’t provide, and it held no real value or utility for his plans. By presenting an indirect but calculated threat, Fang Yuan successfully pressured Jia Jin Sheng into purchasing the Gu, securing his profit and moving forward with his strategy. Also, acquiring Mudskin Toad Gu was not Fang Yuan's main aim. Rather, it was one of the step of his intricate plan of achieving a larger aim.

[Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Social Awareness, Social Management, Self Regulation, Critical Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Application Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Foresight, Anticipation, Psychology, Negotiation, Persuasion, Direct Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Verbal Manipulation, Fear Inducement,

Demoralization, Strategy Logistics, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Flexibility, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Execution, Planning Aim, Planning Intricacies, Planning Applicability, Tactics, Methods, Risk Management, Situational Awareness, Cunningness, Trap Evasion, Resource Management]

After opening 5 out of the 6 rocks, Fang Yuan deliberately chose not to open the final rock in the gambling den and simply left. This decision was a calculated move to create an alibi. He planned to use this unopened stone as an excuse to conceal the true source of the Liquor Worm he obtained from the Flower Wine Monk's inheritance.

Instead, later on, when needed, he can fabricate a story that he acquired the Liquor Worm from the last rock, thus successfully masking his true actions and preserving the secrecy of his connection to Flower Wine Monk Inheritance. This was one of the primary objectives of his entire plan.

Fang Yuan immediately returned to the academy, understanding that carrying a large amount of money while roaming around could invite unnecessary trouble. Additionally, he needed the security of his room to plan his next steps carefully.

Once back in his room, he opened the 6th rock. The rock was empty. But it only served to help Fang Yuan more.

Scans:

Although the final purple gold fossil did not have a Gu worm, Fang Yuan was not disappointed. In fact he looked at the pile of rock powder and gradually broke into a smile.

Indeed, his ultimate motive in entering the gambling den was all for this pile of rock powder. That Mudskin Toad was only something he had gotten out of convenience.

He privately opened the fossil, and other than him, nobody knew the truth of this result.

From that day forth, he could claim that the Liquor worm was awakened and subdued from the purple gold fossil.

This idea was fabulous.

Firstly, nobody could confirm what Gu worm really exists in the fossils. Who would dare say that the Liquor worm could not hibernate within the purple gold fossil? That's completely possible!

Secondly, he had several eyewitnesses. He opened the Mudskin Toad, which would've left a strong impression on the Gu Masters in the gambling den.

Thirdly, even if someone relentlessly questioned him, he could push everything onto his luck. Luck was something unfathomable. Even if someone suspected that this was the Flower Wine Monk's Liquor worm, against an excuse like 'luck' they'd have no idea how to argue against Fang Yuan.

[Fluid Intelligence, Adaptability, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Non-Linear Thinking, Foresight, Psychology, Logical Reasoning, Strategy Building, Strategy Logistics, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Shielding, Planning Aim, Planning Application, Planning Coverage, Contingencies, Planning Intricacies, Planning Incentives, Methods, Caution, Risk Management, Resource Management, Concealment, Fabrication, Information Control, Misdirection, Logical Manipulation, Mass Manipulation]

Exposing Liquor Worm:

Since the Liquor Worm could potentially become a significant issue for Fang Yuan, he decided to take the initiative and reveal the Gu himself. By doing so, he could avoid attracting unnecessary suspicion or scrutiny later. Furthermore, since it was only a Rank 1 Gu worm, the political implications would likely be minimal. Even though it was a rare and valuable Gu, Fang Yuan could easily justify its acquisition as part of the rock gambling incident, effectively concealing its true origins.

Fang Yuan's extensive experience granted him an acute ability to analyze people with a realistic and almost intuitive precision. He was skilled at understanding their intentions, motivations, and weaknesses, which gave him an edge in managing complex situations like this.

Fang Yuan also reflected on his rebirth, noting that the only major advantages he had within the Gu Yue Village were the Liquor Worm and the Mudskin Toad Gu. Now that he had obtained both, he recognized the need to rely solely on his own efforts moving forward. This realization fueled his determination to accelerate his progress and move closer to achieving his ultimate goal.

[Crystallized Intelligence, Knowledge, Adaptability, Emotional Facilitation, Self Awareness, Mental Fortitude, Insight, Reflective Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Critical Thinking, Psychology, Tactics, Memory, Situational Awareness, Caution, Metacognition, Decision Making, Memory]

Scans:

The Gu Master placed the bamboo wine cup which was filled with monkey wine on the counter. The shop assistant who had already been waiting for a while quickly held up the cup meticulously and walked a few steps to deliver it to Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan only took a tiny sip, the monkey wine was indeed a fruit liquor, being sweet and refreshing and delicate on the palate.

He stopped drinking, but instead with a thought, Fang Yuan summoned the Liquor worm.

The white and fat liquor worm turned into a flash of white light and curved an arc in the air. With a ‘plop’, it landed in the wine cup.

The wine splattered everywhere, sprinkling onto the mushroom table.

The Liquor worm joyfully beat about in the wine cup, and the monkey wine could be seen decreasing with the naked eye. In a few breaths time, the cup had dried out, with not a single drop left.

“It’s the Liquor worm!” The Gu Master at the counter shouted, his eyes sparkling. He was a Rank one Gu Master with Grade D talent, only able to follow the merchant caravan and work in this wine shop. His objective was to sightsee while finding his chances.

The Liquor worm can refine primeval essence and raise it by an entire realm. To a Rank one Gu Master, it can be said to be an extremely precious Gu worm. Isn’t this the chance he’s been painstakingly searching for?

“This young master, do you have any plans to sell this Liquor worm?” He excitedly approached, a look of sincerity in his eyes.

Fang Yuan shook his head, rejecting him with a determined attitude, getting up to leave after that.

His motive this time was to reveal the Liquor worm in his possession; he had never thought of selling it.

“Young master, young master, please hold on. I am really sincere about this, maybe we can sit down and have a discussion.” The Gu master reluctantly followed Fang Yuan to the tentage entrance but Fang Yuan did not show any response to him.

In the end he could only stand on the spot, his expression extremely regretful as he watched Fang Yuan’s rear view turn around a corner and disappear into the midst of the horizon.

Fang Yuan purposely revealed his Liquor Worm to a Jia Clan wine merchant, positioning him as a witness for the “newly awakened Liquor Worm” that Fang Yuan can later claim to have obtained from the rock gambling den. This move was a calculated step in his larger plans.

To solidify the narrative and manipulate the wine merchant’s perception, Fang Yuan acted coldly towards him for no reason. By doing so, he ensured that the merchant would remember him in a more negative light, which is a contingency that Fang Yuan is planting.

However, Fang Yuan also recognized the importance of not overdoing this act. Pushing it too far could attract unwanted attention and create suspicion, which might complicate his plans later on. He chose to keep things subtle, ensuring his actions wouldn't attract more attention than needed.

[Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Understanding, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Gaslighting, Fabrication, Misdirection, Individual Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Psychology, Logical Reasoning, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Building, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Execution, Planning Aim, Contingencies, Planning Coverage, Planning Intricacies, Methods, Holistic Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Strategic Thinking**]**

Manipulating Jia Jin Sheng:

After the incident, Fang Yuan observed a heated argument between Jia Jin Sheng and a Gu Yue clansman. The clansman accused Jia Jin Sheng of selling him an ordinary insect disguised as a Gu worm, which means Jia Jin Sheng basically scammed him. This heated argument eventually drew the attention of Jia Fu, who intervened, handling the situation with a formal and composed attitude to resolve it peacefully. Fang Yuan carefully analyzed Jia Fu's demeanor and discerned his personality with precision.

Fang Yuan noted that, while Jia Jin Sheng's scam was unethical, it was also the greed and lack of caution on the part of the Gu Yue clansman that allowed him to fall victim. This revealed not only Jia Jin Sheng's cunning but also the inherent flaws in the clansman's character. Fang Yuan also realized that if Jia Fu chose to back his brother's wrongdoings, it would be difficult for anyone, including the Gu Yue Clan leader, to challenge him. This was due to both Jia Fu having Rank 4 cultivation, which gave him significant leverage. However, Jia Fu's approach of acting like a benevolent figure was a calculated move to maintain his reputation and leverage his social skills.

Fang Yuan then recalled that in the future, Jia Fu and his other brother, Jia Gui, would enter into a fierce competition for the Clan Head position. This rivalry would escalate into a large-scale contest involving the acquisition and monopolization of Gu worms. Fang Yuan recognized this as an opportunity he could exploit to his advantage in the coming years.

[Knowledge, Crystallized Intelligence, Emotional Understanding, Social Awareness, Observation, Perception, Insight, Holistic Thinking, Foresight, Psychology, Cold Reading, Logical Reasoning, Planning Formulation, Formulation Speed, Planning Coverage, Planning Length, Planning Foresight, Planning Applicability, Memory, Situational Awareness]

Fang Yuan, accurately understanding Jia Jin Sheng's emotional state, approached him at the wine merchant's shop where the latter was drinking to drown his sorrows. This was the same wine shop where Fang Yuan intentionally revealed his Liquor Worm.

Jia Jin Sheng, despite being one of the three successors of the Jia Clan, faced a big disadvantage compared to his brothers. Both of his brothers possessed exceptional cultivation talent, reaching Rank 4 and securing many of their father's assets in preparation for the future competition over the clan leadership. Compared to them, Jia Jin Sheng, with his meager Rank 1 cultivation, was nothing more than an insignificant figure in the family. His lack of power and talent left him unable to claim even the smallest portion of his father's assets, this reduced him to nothing but a pawn in comparison to his brothers.

This disparity fueled Jia Jin Sheng's deep-seated feelings of rage, jealousy and sorrow. The fact that he was overshadowed by his brothers and the lack of any chance in surpassing them created a sense of fear in his mind. His desperation made him yearn for any opportunity that could help him outscale his brothers and stand out.

Fang Yuan, with his sharp perception, effortlessly read Jia Jin Sheng's state. By observing his demeanor and understanding the dynamics of the Jia Clan, Fang Yuan deduced the depth of Jia Jin Sheng's inferiority complex and emotional turmoil. Using this understanding, Fang Yuan decided to subtly assist Jia Jin Sheng, this was obviously to manipulate him further for his own goals. Recognizing Jia Jin Sheng's vulnerability, Fang Yuan aimed to turn him into a pawn for his own schemes, to use him for his own benefit.

[Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Social Awareness, Foresight, Insight, Psychology, Cold Reading, Holistic Thinking, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Building, Seeing Through People**]**

Important Context:

Fang Yuan's knowledge of the Flower Wine Monk Inheritance in his previous life was extremely limited, just barely scratching the surface.

He only knew two things for sure: it existed, and it contained the Liquor Worm.

Everything else was either vague or completely unknown to him. Even the location of the inheritance was a mystery, forcing him to piece various minute details from his previous life to even make a guess about its location.

The story surrounding the Flower Wine Monk and his conflict with the Gu Yue Clan was also something Fang Yuan believed to be straightforward at first. According to Gu Yue Clan's official records, Flower Wine Monk was a Rank 5 Gu Master who attacked the clan with malicious intent. According to the records, in a noble act of self-sacrifice, Fourth Gen Gu Yue sacrificed his life to kill the Flower Wine Monk, ensuring the safety of the clan.

However, as Fang Yuan found the inheritance, he discovered that the truth was far more complex. The real story was one of humiliation of the Gu Yue Clan. The Flower Wine Monk attacked the Gu Yue Clan not out of random malice but to take their spirit spring, which was for refining the Heavenly Essence Treasure Lotus. The Gu Yue Clan's elders and Fourth Gen Gu Yue fought back, but they were completely defeated. Even though both Fourth Gen Gu Yue and Flower Wine Monk were Rank 5 Gu Masters, Flower Wine Monk completely overpowered him.

In a last-ditch effort to survive, Fourth Gen Gu Yue groveled before Flower Wine Monk, begging for his life. When Flower Wine Monk let his guard down, Fourth Gen Gu Yue struck him with Moonshadow Gu, a Gu worm with the ability to poison the victim. Enraged by the betrayal, Flower Wine Monk killed Fourth Gen Gu Yue and the other elders before retreating, but the poison had already spread to his body, limiting his life.

To hide the humiliation and cowardice of Fourth Gen Gu Yue, the remaining Gu Yue elders fabricated a heroic story, turning the Fourth Gen into a martyr who died saving the clan. They erased all traces of their defeat, leaving behind only a fabricated version of the events.

Unbeknownst to them, Flower Wine Monk had left behind a final act of vengeance out of spite and hatred: a Photo-Audio Gu in his inheritance. This Gu has the ability to record events and store them to view later. It revealed the true story, preserving it for anyone who found the inheritance. Fang Yuan discovered this recording when he found the Liquor Worm.

But there was another layer to Flower Wine Monk's arrangement that Fang Yuan was unaware of. If someone let the recorded video play for 100 consecutive days, they would unlock the full inheritance. This included multiple additional Gu worms and, more importantly, the recipe for the Heavenly Essence Treasure Lotus, which is a priceless resource for any Gu Master. This was a contingency left by Flower Wine Monk to find a successor who would take revenge for him and destroy Gu Yue Clan.

Scans:

Fang Yuan did not speak immediately. He surveyed the surroundings. This was the same wine cellar he came into in the afternoon. The shopkeeper operated independently, and at night, the shop was bustling with business.

Discussing here was a far safer place than a quiet environment, as it could avoid the eavesdropping of certain Gu worms.

He hooked his fingers at Jia Jin Sheng. “Lend me your ear.”

Jia Jin Sheng unhappily snorted, but still slanted his head forward.

After hearing Fang Yuan’s description, he frowned and looked at Fang Yuan coldly. “This business involves the three families on Qing Mao Mountain, and we merchants detest getting involved in other people’s disputes. Hmph, you were sent here by Jia Fu to harm me right?”

Fang Yuan had long expected for him to be suspicious. He did not bother to explain, but got up and left. “Hehe, in that case, I’ll go talk to your brother.”

Jia Jin Sheng squinted his eyes, staring at Fang Yuan. Only until Fang Yuan had left the wine shop did he lose his patience. He chased out of the tent and caught up to Fang Yuan, “Don’t go, we can have a talk.”

Fang Yuan placed both hands behind his back, staring at him from the side, coldly saying, “I know you are suspicious of me, but now that your brother has you firmly caught, you’re almost close to finished. If you choose to believe in me, there’s still hope, if not you’re doomed. Are you daring enough to take this bet?”

Jia Jin Sheng’s expression changed as he corrected and said, “Jia Fu is but only a little older, I have never acknowledged him as my brother! But you’re right, I’m taking this bet.”

Fang Yuan said solemnly, “Two thousand primeval stones, no haggling.”

Jia Jin Sheng laughed bitterly, “Too expensive, this trade involves high risk.”

“The greater the risk, the greater the rewards.” Fang Yuan shook his head, his attitude firm, “If you sell it to those two families, you will only earn much more.”

Jia Jin Sheng nodded, showing a hint of seriousness, “This I believe, for these years the Bai family has been growing fast, and an A grade talent called Bai Ning Bing has appeared recently, he has a great future ahead. Qing Mao Mountain’s situation is

gradually changing. Your Gu Yue family's dominance is wavering, and if I sell this to the Bai family, I can at least earn twice as much!"

Hearing Jia Jin Sheng's understanding of the Qing Mao Mountain's situation, Fang Yuan could not help but evaluate him again, thinking: "This Jia Jin Sheng, he is still a merchant family member after all, not those useless second generations."

Jia Jin Sheng sighed, "Regardless of whether this is a trap, I'm jumping in. I promise you, two thousand primeval stones it is! However, I want to see the merchandise first."

"Of course, come with me." Fang Yuan laughed as he led the way. Jia Jin Sheng was already trapped in the urn, and the situation was fully in Fang Yuan's grasp.

Fang Yuan's Manipulation Explanation:

Fang Yuan saw an opportunity to trap Jia Jin Sheng by exploiting his emotional state. Jia Jin Sheng had just experienced failure, both within his family and in his own ambitions. Fang Yuan knew this was the perfect moment to speak to him about the "image wall," the visual recording of the humiliating defeat that Fourth Gen Gu Yue had suffered by Flower Wine Monk. This image wall, if made public, would completely ruin the reputation of the Gu Yue Clan. It would be even worse if it were sold to neighboring clans like the Bai Clan or the Xiong Clan, as it would expose the Gu Yue Clan's darkest secret.

He carefully observed the wine shop and concluded that there was no scouting or tracking type Gu, which could eavesdrop or record their conversation.

Fang Yuan carefully framed the situation, explaining that if he tried to sell the image wall by himself, it would be a death sentence. The Gu Yue Clan would undoubtedly see him as a traitor, and even if the neighboring clans didn't kill him outright, they would hand him over to the Gu Yue Clan as a gesture of goodwill. Selling the image wall could only lead to his own destruction, and he knew this. But he also knew that Jia Jin Sheng, desperate to climb out of his own position of weakness, might get convinced to take action for his own gain.

Fang Yuan further manipulated the conversation by suggesting that Jia Jin Sheng had the opportunity to take advantage of this situation by selling the image wall.

However, Jia Jin Sheng wasn't easily swayed. At first, he rejected the offer, stating that it involved too much political risk and would involve him in the power struggles of the entire mountain region. But Fang Yuan knew how to persuade him. He laughed and turned around, making it seem as if he was ready to walk away and said he'll take the image wall to his brother, Jia Fu, who would likely appreciate the opportunity.

Jia Jin Sheng, because of his current state, couldn't ignore the potential benefits. Fang Yuan's manipulations were working, and as the conversation shifted, Jia Jin Sheng stopped Fang Yuan and agreed to negotiate. After negotiation, Jia Jin Sheng agreed to help him for 2,000 primeval stones.

[VCI**,** Adaptability, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Social Awareness, Observation, Perception, Holistic Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Critical Thinking, Insight, Foresight, Psychology, Psychology Profiling, Logical Reasoning, Direct

Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Individual Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Verbal Manipulation, Negotiation, Persuasion, Demoralization, Abusing Insecurities, Emotional Inducement, Concealment, Misdirection, Verbal Deception, Tactics, Strategy Alignment, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Logistics, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Execution, Planning Coverage, Planning Intricacies, Contingencies, Planning Versatility, Planning Applicability, Planning Invincibility, Risk Assessment, Situational Awareness, Caution, Setting Traps, Cunningness]

Amidst the market crowd, Fang Yuan skillfully guided Jia Jin Sheng through the market while maintaining a low profile, ensuring they moved in a way that concealed their tracks and avoided drawing any attention. The chaos of the market served as the perfect cover, leaving no witnesses who could tie Fang Yuan to Jia Jin Sheng or their dealings later on.

Scans:

Following his memories, Fang Yuan brought Jia Jin Sheng to the cavern in the mountain.

The two entered the crack in the stone, and the path became more narrow as their vision was dyed in darkness. Jia Jin Sheng grew more vigilant as he was in an unfamiliar environment.

Finally, he could not hold it in any further, "I have a question, Jia Fu always treats people with honesty and is amicable with a good reputation. On the other hand, I lied and cheated, forcing transactions through coercion. Why did you choose to deal with me and not him?"

Fang Yuan's voice travelled through the stone crack. "Because his cultivation is too high, so if he sees the image wall, he can choose to deal with me, or abandon the deal and just give the image wall to the Gu Yue clan head. I do not like giving the decision-making to others, furthermore I do not believe in integrity. The so-called prestigious reputation is just because the profits are small and are unable to incur his greed."

More importantly, it was because Jia Jin Sheng's position was special, for his cultivation was weak and he was easy to manipulate. Fang Yuan was naturally not going to mention this, of course.

"Hehe." Jia Jin Sheng laughed dryly, his suspicions mostly gone immediately. "That last sentence really resonated within me."

Here, Fang Yuan not only perfectly answered Jia Jin Sheng's question, but he also subtly manipulated him to trust him even more.

Since Fang Yuan had already psychoanalyzed Jia Jin Sheng, he knew what words to say to him to induce what type of response. By saying those words about "reputation" and "greed," Fang Yuan gave an illusion of camaraderie between them.

[VCI, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Realization, Social Awareness, Insight, Critical Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Psychology, Indirect Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Emotional Inducement, Verbal Manipulation, Verbal Deception, Strategy Shielding, Tactics, Risk Management, Metacognition]

In the Inheritance Cave:

Fang Yuan's decision to bring Jia Jin Sheng to the secret cave starts paying off as Jia Jin Sheng's greed takes over him. Upon seeing the image wall, Jia Jin Sheng is overjoyed. Since he has a petty personality, he mocks Fang Yuan, pointing out the fabricated heroism of Fourth Gen Gu Yue. Fang Yuan never cared about it, therefore Jia Jin Sheng's words didn't hurt him one bit, so, he simply brushes it off with a philosophical reply, dismissing labels like "hero" or "scum" as mere public opinion. However, Jia Jin Sheng's greed keeps increasing. Spotting the Flower Wine Monk's corpse, he starts probing Fang Yuan about what other treasures he got from a Rank 5 Gu Master's Inheritance. Fang Yuan, expecting this, denies any significant gains beyond the Liquor Worm. This was actually the truth cause, as of now, Fang Yuan didn't know about the true inheritance of Flower Wine Monk.

But, Jia Jin Sheng wasn't convinced and brings up the legendary Thousand Li Earthwolf Spider, a Rank 5 steed-type Gu that once belonged to the Flower Wine Monk. He deduces that this cave must have been dug by the spider, given the cave's size and the impossibility of natural formation of such a cave in Qing Mao Mountain's dense soil. He adds that the spider must have been crucial to the monk's mobility and theorizes that it might still be in the cave as part of Flower Wine Monk's Inheritance. Even if Fang Yuan had a lot of knowledge from his previous life, he still didn't know everything. This new information catches Fang Yuan off-guard. While Fang Yuan initially suspects Jia Jin Sheng is trying to verbally deceive him to gain more details, Fang Yuan also starts becoming suspicious of the absence of Thousand Li Earthwolf Spider. Fang Yuan starts to feel a sense of uncertainty, realizing there might be more to the Flower Wine Monk's inheritance than he knew.

[VCI, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Contrasting, Foresight, Critical Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Psychological Profiling, Sophistry, Verbal Manipulation, Verbal Deception, Strategic Foresight, Caution, See Through People, Manipulation Resistance]

Scans:

He could not help but fall into deep thoughts.

Jia Jin Sheng was thinking too, the image wall was no longer enough for him. Once he confirmed that the situation was real, he wanted to dig out the Flower Wine Monk's inheritance from Fang Yuan.

But at this time, something unexpected to the two of them happened!

The image wall which was playing endlessly, suddenly changed its image.

A gravely injured, pale bald Gu Master replaced the original video and appeared on the wall.

He weakly sprawled on the ground, his back facing the wall. His chest and limbs were deeply cut, but the strange thing was that his wounds did not bleed, as if his entire body's blood had been drained out.

"I am the Flower Wine Monk." The bald Gu Master laughed, his expression distorted with madness, "Future person, no matter who you are, to endure this video and let it play for nearly one hundred days, it proves that you have no good will towards the Gu Yue family. Very well, you shall be my successor! My entire inheritance is yours, but I have a condition. You must exterminate the Gu Yue clan for me. Murder the entire clan and leave no one alive!"

Jia Jin Sheng was stunned on the spot, his face frozen with shock.

"A Rank five powerhouse, the Flower Wine Monk's inheritance!"

He was stunned, and for a moment his brains were churning and thinking.

"My god! A Rank five powerhouse, what does that mean? Rank three is a family elder, Rank four is a village lord, and a Rank five is a mountain lord, able to rule over a mountain and do as he pleases! To think that in this tiny place, there is a Rank five Gu Master's power inheritance."

"Wait, Flower Wine Monk is a demonic cultivator, so if I inherit his powers, is it inappropriate? No, strength has nothing to do with good or evil. The Flower Wine Monk wants his successor to destroy the Gu Yue clan, but do I really have to? He's already dead, I just have to take his inheritance and ignore those issues."

"This is a godsend opportunity. Even with my D grade talent, if I inherit the Flower Wine Monk's inheritance, I might be able to improve my talent. Those rare talent-raising Gu worms, they might be part of the inheritance. If I inherit this fortune and become a Rank four or five Gu Master, I'd be able to contest with Jia Fu!"

"Wait! I almost forgot, there's an outsider, what should I do?"

"Should I split the inheritance with him? No, kill him! Only by killing him can I protect this secret. Yes, I should calm him down first, and lie that we're going to split the treasure. Getting rid of his guard, then assaulting him and killing him here. This place is so hidden, it's great. Even if I kill him, nobody would know."

Although he thought of all these, it was merely a moment in real life.

Having a plan, he squinted and revealed a fake smile.

He slowly turned around and faced Fang Yuan but just as he was about to speak, he saw two blue moonblades flying towards him.

His pupils dilated into the size of a pin; the distance was too small, he could not respond in time!

"You……" His voice came to a halt.

The moonblade aimed accurately for his neck, and in an instant, his skull flew into the air, fresh blood pouring out like a fountain.

After two seconds, his corpse plopped on the ground.

The scalding blood poured on the mountain walls, dyeing the withering vines red.

"Don't think so much when killing people." Fang Yuan looked at the corpse plainly and then shifted his gaze towards the image wall.

"To think there was such a twist here. How interesting," He muttered as his eyes emitted an eerie glow.

Explanation:

As Jia Jin Sheng and Fang Yuan stand in the cave, because of Fang Yuan's **bad luck**, the image wall suddenly changes, revealing a wounded Flower Wine Monk. He declares that anyone who watches the video for 100 days will become his successor, but only if they destroy the Gu Yue clan. Jia Jin Sheng, stunned by it and his greed for inheriting the power of a Rank 5 Gu Master's abilities, begins to think about how this could drastically improve his weak talent. He considers killing Fang Yuan to keep the inheritance for himself by manipulating Fang Yuan, but before he can act, Fang Yuan quickly kills him with moonblades. Interesting thing to note is that Fang Yuan has already thought of this situation. That's why he had prepared contingencies for it. As already noted before, Fang Yuan made sure no one saw him and Jia Jin Sheng together in the market. This shows Fang Yuan's foresight and his cautious personality.

[PSI, Adaptability, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management, Mental Fortitude, Stress Tolerance, Foresight, Perception, Kinesthetic Control, Anticipation, Prediction, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Faster Thinking, Logical Reasoning, Psychology, Tactics, Tactical Responsiveness, Methods, Strategy Flexibility, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Complexity, Strategic Foresight, Planning Formulation, Formulation Speed, Planning Intricacies, Planning Coverage, Contingencies, Planning Versatility, Unpredictability, Caution, Ruthlessness, Decision Making, Situational Awareness, Cunningness, Trap Evasion, Risk Management, Improvising]

The Jia clan's merchant group left earlier than expected due to the torrential rainfall, moving quickly to reach their next destination. They had been waiting for Jia Jin Sheng, but the weather and time constraints forced them to leave without him, obviously they didn't know that he had already been killed by Fang Yuan. This situation played right into Fang Yuan's

hands. Fang Yuan had carefully cleaned the murder scene and disposed of Jia Jin Sheng's body, and the rain helped to wash away any traces, such as the scent of blood, which could've been picked up by any smell-tracking Gu.

The rain might seem like a stroke of luck for Fang Yuan, but Fang Yuan knew it was just an illusion and temporary, basically a false sense of security. Eventually, the truth would come to light, and Jia Fu would start an investigation. So, Fang Yuan understood he couldn't relax and had to keep improvising his plans.

Scans:

The rain produced pitter patter sounds as it hit on the yellow umbrella. Then following the shape of the umbrella, streams of water flowed down onto the limestones beneath Fang Yuan's feet, hitting and creating splashes.

Seeing the caravan curve into a corner, completely disappearing into the forests, Fang Yuan did not show a sign of relief, but instead looked grim.

"Although Jia Jin Sheng's cultivation was weak and had little talent, he had a special status. The caravan's people are all busy with business, thus no one found out that he's missing. But once some time passes, it'd definitely be found out. By then, Jia Fu would return to investigate, and the real challenge would be then."

"The Jia family head intentionally arranged Jia Jin Sheng and Jia Fu to be on the same caravan, he had deep intentions. In terms of cultivation, they are worlds apart. In terms of cunningness, they're also incomparable. Such an arrangement is to inflict a blow to Jia Jin Sheng and let him be clear of reality, and live life peacefully. At the same time he is testing Jia Fu's nature, for if he is too overbearing on Jia Jin Sheng, how can he hand the position of clan head to him?"

"Jia Jin Sheng never truly understood his father's intentions. Although he had some intelligence, he only managed to scratch the surface of a merchant's wits, what a pity. A pity of such a good pawn piece."

Fang Yuan felt regrettable in his heart. With five hundred years of experience, he could easily see past the surface and understand the true nature of the situation.

When he saw the dispute between the two that night, he could tell the complicated relationship between Jia Jin Sheng and Jia Fu, and thus he had a vague plan formed in his heart from then on.

In his plan, Jia Jin Sheng was a very suitable pawn. His cultivation was weak but he held a high position in the caravan, and although he had some wits, he had little experience, thus Fang Yuan could easily manipulate him.

Once controlled, this pawn would be extremely useful.

For one, he could build a strong network of smuggling through his relationship, preparing up for usurping treasures from future killings.

Secondly, Fang Yuan could hide in the background and use the image wall to stir up conflict among the Qing Mao mountain's three families, causing a civil war and enabling him to be able to reap the rewards.

Thirdly, Fang Yuan could rely on him to make his way into the Jia family interior. The future Jia family dispute caused a large scale Gu fighting competition, it will be a huge affair with lots of benefits to gain. Fang Yuan could make use of this to acquire the greatest reward for himself.

Extra Scans:

Fang Yuan spent the entire night cleaning up the murder scene, and had no time to break the wall.

"Killing Jia Jin Sheng in a hurry, this would leave many problems for me in the future, and I am but only temporarily safe. Although I succeeded in getting rid of the evidence, there is bound to be trouble coming for me in the future. In this case, I would have to change my way of exposing the Liquor worm. I cannot go to the secret cave behind the wall crack either. I have to stay in the mountain village for some time to anticipate investigation in the near future."

Fang Yuan turned around and held his umbrella, walking in the rain towards the village.

"But this is fine too. I can spend a large amount of primeval stones during this period to refine to middle stage primeval essence. Using it, I can nurture my aperture and break through into the middle stage. Once I reached the middle stage, my power will double, allowing me to get the inheritance more easily and with greater confidence."

A demonic cultivator's inheritance was not as mild and gentle as a righteous cultivator's, for there was often dangerous tests and tasks, and if one cannot get through, they'd have to pay the price with their life.

Explanation:

Fang Yuan was highly perceptive about the relationship dynamics within the Jia clan, and the most impressive part of all this was that he reasoned it from his psychoanalysis of Jia Jin Sheng and Jia Fu. Not only did he analyze Jia Jin Sheng's character, but he also understood the deeper motivations behind Jia Fu's actions and their father's intentions. His ability to see through the family's internal politics and his strategic thinking helped him adjust his plans, despite things not going exactly as he had hoped with Jia Jin Sheng. Even after killing Jia Jin Sheng, Fang Yuan didn't panic or get frustrated. Instead, he worked efficiently to cover his tracks, showing how meticulous and careful he is. Moreover, instead of abandoning his original plan, he adapted to the situation, trying to take full advantage of the situation.

[Adaptability, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management, Emotional Engagement, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Social Understanding, Self Regulation, Mental Fortitude, Perseverance, Cognitive Discipline, Insight, Foresight, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking,

Systematic Thinking, Analogical Thinking, Associative Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Divergent Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Psychoanalysis, Psychological Profiling, Hot Reading, Cold Reading, Deductive Reasoning, Abductive Reasoning, Logical Reasoning, Concealment, Information Control, Strategy Building, Strategy Flexibility, Strategy Alignment, Planning Process, Planning Formulation, Planning Length, Planning Coverage, Planning Intricacies, Long-term Planning, Methods, Situational Awareness, Caution, Risk Management, Improvising]

Summary of Fang Yuan's Entire Plan:

This will be a short summary of the entire plan of Fang Yuan discussed above. It will include the key points of the objectives, strategy, manipulation, deception and methods used by Fang Yuan in each major part of the plan. The explanation of each will be very short and only include keypoints.

→Finding Mudskin Toad Gu

Objective:

• Obtain Mudskin Toad Gu.

• Establish an alibi to conceal the Liquor Worm's origin by making a false narrative of acquiring it in the gambling den.

• Gain primeval stones by selling the acquired Mudskin Toad Gu.

Strategy:

• Narrowed his choices using memories from his previous life and by using logical deduction.

• Focused on golden-purple rocks and used his gambling experience to eliminate unsuitable options.

• Attracted a crowd by purposely acting as an inexperienced gambler.

Manipulation:

• Created a scenario where onlookers could verify his "luck," ensuring he had witnesses to use later.

Deception:

• Acted as a superstitious person to appear as a novice gambler to downplay his skills and divert any suspicion.

Method:

• Relied on his previous life knowledge of gambling dens to devise this plan.

• Used his extensive social understanding and understanding of human emotions and nature to manipulate and deceive the crowd.

→Scamming Jia Jin Sheng

Objective:

• Sell the Mudskin Toad Gu for its full value (500 primeval stones).

• Make the event seem like a random win to keep his true intentions hidden.

• Highlight his interaction with Jia Jin Sheng to the crown.

Strategy:

• Lured out Jia Jin Sheng into interfering with the gamble, forcing him to react impulsively.

• Created demand for the Mudskin Toad Gu by asserting its high value and unique properties.

• Threatened Jia Jin Sheng indirectly by using Gu Yue Clan's influence.

Manipulation:

• Used Jia Jin Sheng's greed and manipulated him by pretending to sell Mudskin Toad Gu to another buyer.

• Used the Gu Yue crowd to force Jia Jin Sheng to comply with his conditions.

Deception:

• Pretended to be ready to walk away, forcing Jia Jin Sheng to pay him more.

Method:

• Exploited Jia Jin Sheng's lower cultivation rank and his inability to risk upsetting the Gu Yue Clan.

→Revealing Liquor Worm

Objective:

• Claim the Liquor Worm came from the gambling den.

• Conceal any information about Flower Wine Monk's inheritance.

Strategy:

• Publicly showed the Liquor Worm to a Jia Clan wine merchant, ensuring a witness.

• Carefully chose when and where to show the Gu, avoiding overly crowded or suspicious locations.

Manipulation:

• Ensured the wine merchant would remember him as the owner of the Liquor Worm by being rude to him for no reason.

Deception:

• Tied the Liquor Worm to the gambling den and successfully destroyed any hint of Flower Wine Monk Inheritance.

Method:

• Used the extra rock to make the false narrative of how he obtained Liquor Worm.

→Manipulating Jia Jin Sheng

Objective:

• Use him as a pawn to sell Flower Wine Monk's info to gain benefit.

• Convince Jia Jin Sheng to act in Fang Yuan's interests.

• Present the image wall and make Jia Jin Sheng sell it for him.

Strategy:

• Approached Jia Jin Sheng when he was at a low point.

• Used words to build a false sense of camaraderie between them.

• Acted as if he can use Jia Fu if Jia Jin Sheng doesn't want to cooperate.

Manipulation:

• Exaggerated the image wall as a powerful asset while subtly threatening to offer it to Jia Fu.

Deception:

• Presented the image wall as a way for Jia Jin Sheng to rise above his brothers. All the while hiding his true intentions of using Jia Jin Sheng as a pawn.

• Avoided the crowd while bringing Jia Jin Sheng to the crowd to make sure no one notices them together.

Method:

• Psychoanalyzed Jia Jin Sheng's and approached him based on that.

→Killing Jia Jin Sheng

Objective:

• Present the image wall and make Jia Jin Sheng sell it for him.

• Leave no evidence tying the murder to himself.

Strategy:

• Killed Jia Jin Sheng immediately upon sensing betrayal.

• Cleaned the scene and relied on natural factors (rain) to erase traces.

Deception:

• Ensured no witnesses were present to connect him to the murder.

• Cleaned the crime scene twice.

Method:

• Struck Jia Jin Sheng before he could even say anything.

• Used the heavy rainfall to his advantage.

→Further Planning

Objective:

• Use the Liquor Worm and primeval stones to strengthen cultivation.

• Adapt plans to be ready when Jia Fu comes to investigate Jia Jin Sheng's death.

Method:

• Psychoanalyzed Jia Jin Sheng, Jia Fu, and their father to figure out the intricacies of Jia Clan.

• Knew Jia Fu would investigate and prepared contingencies.

[VCI, PSI, FRI, Crystallized Intelligence, Fluid Intelligence, Adaptability, Knowledge, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Engagement, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Self Regulation, Social Management, Social Understanding, Mental Fortitude, Perseverance, Cognitive Discipline, Observation, Perception, Kinesthetic Control, Insight, Foresight, Anticipation, Prediction, Critical Thinking, Linear Thinking, Non-Linear Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Analogical Thinking, Associative Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Divergent Thinking, Abstract Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Faster Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Application Thinking, Systematic Thinking, Analysis, Deductive Reasoning, Inductive Reasoning, Abductive Reasoning, Logical Reasoning, Psychoanalysis, Psychological Profiling, Cold Reading, Hot Reading, Persuasion, Negotiation, Scapegoating, Smearing, Direct Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Individual Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Verbal Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Sophistry, Misdirection, Fabrication, Concealment, Acting Skills, Information Control, Verbal Deception, Fear Inducement, Emotion Inducement, Abusing Insecurities, Demoralization, Threats, Coercion, Strategy Building, Strategy Logistics, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Shielding, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Execution, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Flexibility, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Short-term Strategy, Long-term Strategy, Planning Aim, Preparation Process, Planning Formulation, Formulation Speed, Planning Intricacies, Contingencies, Planning Versatility, Planning Coverage, Planning Applicability, Planning Invincibility, Planning Length, Short-term Planning, Long-term Planning, Tactics, Methods, Memory, Long-term Memory, Situational Awareness, Caution, Risk Management, Decision Making, Trap Evasion, Setting Traps, Information Gathering, Attention Span, Experience, Risk Assessment, Knowledge Application, Intuition, See Through People, Multi-tasking, Creativity, Manipulation Resistance, Cunningness, Ruthlessness, Resource Management, Metacognition, Improvising, Unpredictability**]**

Four Days Later:

Four days later, in the academy's training grounds, the students were sparring as usual. Fang Yuan had defeated 33 of his classmates in a row without suffering a single loss, showing his overwhelming strength. But this served two purpose. for Fang Yuan. First of all, he won. Secondly, he was purposely injuring his opponents to intimidate his classmates, so that they'd think twice before challenging him again.

When the martial arts instructor called for the next opponent, because of fear, no one dared to step forward. Frustrated, the instructor tried to shift the blame onto Fang Yuan in an attempt to make him continue fighting and lose through fatigue, started accusing him of being too ruthless, but Fang Yuan having deduced the reason for his actions, shut him down with cold logic, leaving the instructor humiliated. Then, without waiting for a response, Fang Yuan walked away, humiliating the instructor more.

Martial Arts Instructor's Trap:

The martial arts instructor, frustrated by Fang Yuan's dominance, attempted to exploit the situation. His plan was simple, exhaust Fang Yuan by having him face the remaining students. This would eventually lead to Fang Yuan's defeat, destroying his **undefeated** reputation, restoring the students' confidence in themselves, and minimizing Fang Yuan's dominance in the academy.

Fang Yuan's Response:

Fang Yuan saw through the instructor's intentions. He cleverly deflected the instructor's accusations with twisted logic and chose to walk away, avoiding the trap altogether. He purposely displayed a rash and short-tempered demeanor to hide his true cold and methodical nature.

Scans:

"Next!" Seeing that there were no challengers coming up, the instructor yelled.

However, no one answered. Usually those who were courageous to challenge Fang Yuan were only Gu Yue Mo Bei, Gu Yue Chi Chen and Gu Yue Fang Zheng. But these three were already beaten.

Silence swept across the students as others even retracted their steps slightly. The instructor frowned on seeing their fearful expression.

He could not help but think of the academy elder's words: "These days, Fang Yuan has gotten too dominant, we have to suppress him. The other students cannot even raise their heads under his pressure, and if this goes on, the courage in their hearts will be simmered. Our academy nurtures courageous tigers and wolves to fight enemies, not fearful sheeps and lambs."

"What's wrong with all of you? No matter how strong he is, Fang Yuan is only fifteen years old, he's one of your peers! He has the same age as you, eats the same food as you

and drinks the same water. He does not have three heads or six arms, he's not a monster! Pluck up your courage and show me the pride of the Gu Yue clan within you!" The instructor yelled, trying his best to motivate the students.

"But he is too strong, we cannot beat him."

"The classmates who fought him are in such a pitiful state. Mo Bei got beaten until he vomited blood."

"Fang Yuan is getting more ruthless with his strikes, instructor, we do not dare to fight him."

The students spoke softly, weakly retorting.

The instructor was stomping with anger. These ignorant youngsters!

He was clear as a bystander. Fang Yuan had gone through thirty-three consecutive fights without any rest in the middle. Although he was constantly adjusting his breathing, his stamina had already depleted.

Fang Yuan's attacks getting merciless proves this fact even further: He could no longer take it easy like before, he is losing control of his strength and the situation.

If someone tries harder, his fatigue will be revealed. With just a few more people, he could be defeated on the stage!

Once Fang Yuan is beaten, his dominating presence will be reduced sharply, the students courage ignited and the motive to suppress Fang Yuan achieved.

But now, the students were deterred by Fang Yuan's tough front.

At times, what defeats a person is not a strong enemy but one's own heart.

The instructor was anxious in his thoughts, and continued to motivate them.

But he was not good with his words. In the beginning he said these same words to ignite the hot-bloodedness in the youngsters and stirred up some challengers. But now that he had said this so many times, the youngsters are all numb already.

Fang Yuan folded his arms and stared at this coldly. Although he was standing in the center of the stage, he was acting like a complete bystander.

The instructor encouraged for ages but the students were still looking at each others, not one had moved.

The martial instructor could not help but be angry and helpless. He turned to Fang Yuan, unhappily chiding, "Fang Yuan, you're also at fault. Your blows are getting more vicious among classmates, you should be more gentle and friendly, how can you deal such vicious blows? Be careful from now on and attack carefully. If you cause another classmate to vomit blood, I will declare your loss and evict you from the stage!"

"Instructor, you are wrong."

Fang Yuan snorted, his gaze not showing any weakness, looking right at the instructor, "Practising and fighting, we naturally have to give it our all, otherwise how can it

achieve the aim of training? Don't tell me that when we are in battle, we also have to request our enemies to be more gentle and friendly?"

The instructor flew into a rage, "Hmph, your attacks are vicious, you are harming your classmates and you dare to use twisted logic!"

"Instructor, you're wrong again."

Fang Yuan laughed coldly, "You arranged this practice match and raised the winning prize to twenty primeval stones. Without your encouragement, would these people have gotten hurt?"

"Bastard!" The martial arts instructor was not good with words, and he pointed at Fang Yuan and scowled, "Do you still want the prize or not? If you argue any further, even if you get first place, I will declare you a loser! You are so uncooperative and antisocial, and you dare to argue with your teachers, you have no rights to claim the twenty primeval stones as reward!"

Fang Yuan laughed heartily. "It is but a competition that merely gives twenty primeval stones, do you think I give a damn?"

Saying so, he turned around and left. Under the class' distraught gaze, he walked out of the center of arena.

[VCI, FRI, Crystallized Intelligence, Fluid Intelligence, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Self Awareness, Social Awareness, Social Management, Mental Fortitude, Perseverance, Kinesthetic Control, Insight, Foresight, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Abstract Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Psychology, Deductive Reasoning, Logical Reasoning, Acting Skills, Sophistry, Gaslighting, Smearing, Guilt Tripping, Verbal Deception, Verbal Manipulation, Direct Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Fear Inducement, Emotion Inducement, Threats, Demoralization, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Tactics, Methods, Trap Evasion, Risk Assessment, Risk Management, Situational Awareness, See Through People, Aura, Ruthlessness, Cunningness, Caution, Battle IQ**]**

As of now, this incident might seem unrelated to Jia Jin Sheng's murder, but every step Fang Yuan takes is part of his larger, long-term strategy. This moment, especially Fang Yuan's display of rash behavior, will help Fang Yuan later on.

Fang Yuan and the Academy Elder:

The Academy Elder wants to punish Fang Yuan and reduce his influence. So he tries to find any reason he can to tarnish Fang Yuan's reputation. But, Fang Yuan's meticulous nature makes it difficult for the elder to find a solid case against him. Fang Yuan always operates within the rules, exploiting the loopholes rather than causing chaos for fun like other troublesome students.

In the past, the Academy Elder had even made such students into control because even though they were rash, they were still teenagers and inexperienced. But obviously, he didn't know that Fang Yuan was different. That despite his 15 year old appearance, he was actually 500+ years old.

On top of that, Fang Yuan hides his actual nature. He carefully presents the image of a "talented student who lacks the blessings of heaven," presenting himself as a smart but not particularly cunning teenager. This facade has allowed him to fool everyone around him, including those in his village, leading everyone into underestimating him. His ability to keep his true temperament concealed makes it difficult for anyone to pin down his true intentions or actions.

[Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Engagement, Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Perseverance, Cognitive Discipline, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Abstract Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Psychology, Gaslighting, Acting Skills, Misdirection, Fabrication, Mass Manipulation, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Resilience, Planning Coverage, Planning Invincibility, Contingencies, Risk Management, Caution, Cunningness**]**

The Academy Elder, unable to find fault in Fang Yuan's actions or behavior, resorts to exploiting Fang Yuan's only visible weakness, i.e., his cultivation. Since Mo Bei, Chi Cheng, and Fang Zheng all have higher aptitudes, they can cultivate faster, and as their cultivation increases, so does their battle strength. This means Fang Yuan's superior fighting skills will eventually be overshadowed by raw power of others since his cultivation will lag behind.

To further ensure discipline and integrate students into the clan system from a young age, the Academy Elder implements a structure of class leadership roles, such as chairman and vice-chairman. These roles are decided through competition, with the first student to reach Rank 1 middle stage earning the position. This approach mirrors the hierarchy and values of the Gu Yue Clan itself, instilling loyalty and structure from an early age into the students, so it'll be easier to make them conform to the clan rules later.

Fang Yuan, with his vast experience from his previous life, has already observed and analyzed his clan's social system down to its most minute details. He understands every nuance of how power, influence, and hierarchy work within the village and society in general. This deep understanding gives him a significant edge in controlling and exploiting the very system designed to control him.

[Crystallized Intelligence, Knowledge, Social Understanding, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Observation, Perception, Insight, Holistic Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Application Thinking, Psychology, Analysis, Memory, Risk Assessment, Risk Management, Information Gathering, Situational Awareness, Caution**]**

Advancing to Rank 1 Middle Stage:

At night, Fang Yuan only focused on advancing to Rank 1 middle stage, spending the entire night multitasking within his aperture. This process demanded exceptional focus and

multitasking skills, as he needed to simultaneously control various aspects of his cultivation with precision over an extended period.

[VSI, WMI, PSI, FRI, Mental Fortitude, Stress Tolerance, Perseverance, Cognitive Discipline, Multi-tasking, Attention Span]

Shitting On The Face Strategy:

By morning, classes at the academy had already started, but Fang Yuan was absent. He was in the middle of breaking through his cultivation rank, and since it was a process that demanded his complete focus, he couldn't just abandon it and go to class.

Fang Yuan's absence didn't go unnoticed by the other students and the Academy Elder. The Academy Elder, seeing an opportunity, decided to use this to punish him. The elder sent guards to fetch Fang Yuan from his room, planning to humiliate him in front of the entire class by scolding him. This would tarnish Fang Yuan's reputation and authority among the other students.

After some time, the sound of footsteps echoed through the class corridor. The students anticipated the guards dragging Fang Yuan into the room. One student, eager to see Fang Yuan getting scolded, went to open the door himself.

To everyone's shock, Fang Yuan was standing there, covered in blood, holding the unconscious, lethally injured body of one of the guards sent to retrieve him. In addition, he carried mutilated body parts of the other guard also. The scene left the class speechless, completely changing the entire situation.

Scans:

The door was easily opened by the student, exposing a gap.

Sunlight infiltrated from the gap. The student opening the door suddenly froze, shuddering suddenly.

"AHH!!!" He was stunned for a second before suddenly screaming, subconsciously taking a large step backwards. His body knocked onto the desk and he instantly lost his balance, falling with the table onto the ground.

The boy's face was pale, his expression horrified, limbs trembling and unable to exert strength. Lying on the floor, he frantically tried to get up, but fell back down again and again.

"What's wrong?!" In a moment everyone was astonished, all of them frowning deeply.

Numerous gazes curiously looked towards the door.

The door was slowly pushed opened by the person outside.

The academy elder stopped his lecture out of reflex.

What everyone saw first, was a hand on the door.

A teenager's left hand.

A left hand with dripping blood.

A bloody hand!

Seeing this bloody hand, many of the female students covered their mouths and screamed in terror.

The door slowly opened fully.

The brightness of the sunlight pricked everyone's eyes, causing them to squint. With the bright sunlight as his background, a dark shadow attached to a thin teenager appeared before everyone.

He didn't know why, but the academy elder felt a strong feeling of unease in his heart.

"It's Fang Yuan!" Someone screamed out loudly.

Everyone who had gotten used to the sunlight could clearly see who the person was.

What met their eyes was Fang Yuan, bathed in blood, standing outside the door as if he had gone through an intense battle.

His left hand slowly retracted, his right hand grabbing onto some hair, dragging along a person. The person's left arm was entirely detached from the base. He was lying there motionless, evidently unconscious. Blood on his left shoulder gushed out.

"It's one of the guards who went to look for Fang Yuan!" Someone recognised the person's identity.

"What exactly happened?" Someone was going berserk.

"He murdered again, this time he killed the guards!" Someone pointed at Fang Yuan, screaming in horror, getting louder and louder, as if it would purge the terror and fear in his heart.

At once, the academy was rowdy.

Many students forgot the rules at this time, and stood up from their seats. They looked towards Fang Yuan with fear, shock, and nervous expressions.

In their imaginations, Fang Yuan would be dragged here by the guards left and right.

But the truth was —— Fang Yuan bathed in blood, his expression cool like a devil approaching. The two guards, one missing while the other lying motionless, blood oozing from his body quickly forming a puddle.

A thick scent of blood permeated the academy.

The elder's initial reaction is of shock and then of pure rage, not because the guards are injured because they're just expendable martial artists, but because their death is an indirect attack on the academy's prestige as well as the Academy Elder's authority. The elder attempts to punish him by publicly accusing Fang Yuan of murder.

But, Fang Yuan delivers a carefully fabricated narrative, claiming the guards interrupted his cultivation and tried to stop his breakthrough into Rank 1 Middle Stage. He accuses the guards of impure motives, even saying that they insulted his clan ancestors. This shifts the focus from his actions to the misconduct of the guards, painting himself as the victim who had to act in self-defense.

Fang Yuan's breakthrough to Rank 1 middle stage catches everyone off guard. Because as a C-grade talent, Fang Yuan should not have been the first to break through. This completely messes up the plan of the Academy Elder. Fang Yuan's advancement gives him a good enough reason for his absence from class.

The elder checks Fang Yuan's aperture and finds that Fang Yuan indeed is Rank 1 Middle Stage now. This forces him to publicly acknowledge Fang Yuan's achievement, further strengthening Fang Yuan's position and reputation.

Fang Yuan's Trap:

The Academy Elder now finds himself in a no-win situation. He now has two choices:

Punishing Fang Yuan: If the Academy Elder chooses to punish Fang Yuan for his actions, then he risks appearing petty, tyrannical, and unjust. Fang Yuan's actions, although violent, are presented as self-defense in response to an interruption during a critical breakthrough. Moreover, Fang Yuan's successful advancement to the middle stage now holds significant weight. To punish him for his actions would be to punish a talented individual who is now, by all accounts, the academy's brightest student. If the Academy Elder punished him, that would only tarnish his own reputation as it would look like he punished Fang Yuan out of spite.

Letting Fang Yuan go unpunished: If the academy elder chooses to let Fang Yuan off the hook, it will make the academy's rules and his own authority look bad. It would appear as though the academy's punishment system is not reliable and that they couldn't control a single unruly student. This would make the Academy Elder look spineless.

Scans:

This was a trap.

Once he looked into it, the truth would be revealed, and how would he handle this matter?

If he did not punish Fang Yuan, the two guards would be pitifully framed, and as the academy elder, if he does not handle things impartially, how can anyone trust him?

If he punished Fang Yuan, that would be suppressing and displaying jealousy of the talented! To suppress a junior of the clan for two servants who were not part of the clan, this matter would trigger the unhappiness of the clansmen.

Thus, the best way to resolve this was to pretend to not see anything, and treat these two guards as discarded pieces. Admitting that they had performed a huge mistake, as well as praising Fang Yuan.

This way, the clansmen would be satisfied, and the deceived guards, without additional information, would think of this as being impartial.

If he handled the matter like this, it would give the academy elder the largest benefit.

Logic told the academy elder that this is the way to handle it. But emotionally, he could not take it lying down.

This Fang Yuan was too devious!

The academy elder not only failed to suppress Fang Yuan, but he himself became the stepping stone for Fang Yuan, getting humiliated in public!

Fang Yuan did not show the slightest respect for him and dared to oppose him like this in public, causing this esteemed academy elder to suffer such humiliation and frustration.

The point was, in future if these two guards felt indignant and wanted to reveal the truth, as the academy elder, if he wanted to maintain his image and position, he would have to be the first to step up and suppress them.

But this was all caused by Fang Yuan!

What sort of feeling is this?

For example, it would be like Fang Yuan pooping on the academy elder's face, but the elder himself still has to praise him and at the same time, clean his butt for him. If anyone wanted to point out that there was poop on his face, he has to be the first to shut that person up.

This feeling of grievance, it was almost unbearable for the academy elder.

There was a growing urge in his heart to give Fang Yuan a few tight slaps!

But finally, the academy elder stretched out his arm and patted Fang Yuan's shoulder.

"Good lad." The academy elder's face was dim like stillwater, forcing the words out of his mouth.

"It is all thanks to the academy's nurturing," Fang Yuan replied plainly.

The corner of the academy elder's eye twitched.

Fang Yuan's Strategy Explanation:

This entire situation is a carefully orchestrated trap on Fang Yuan's part. He knew exactly how to exploit the academy elder's weaknesses and the political structure within the clan. The elder, despite his rank and experience, can't use his authority.

Fang Yuan's breakthrough into the middle stage serves multiple purposes. By advancing at such a critical moment, he instantly solidifies his position and gains credibility, making it much harder for the elder to punish him. His violent actions of killing the guards are framed as self-defense to an unjust intrusion, and because of the breakthrough, the elder is forced to believe that Fang Yuan is in the right. The act of killing the guards is now backed by a defense that the elder can not easily dismiss. The guard's lives are now secondary to the question of Fang Yuan's newfound power, which eclipses any other concerns.

Fang Yuan has skillfully exploited this moment to flip the power dynamics. By presenting the guards' deaths as a necessary evil—"They disturbed my cultivation!"—he places the blame entirely on them. And by framing his breakthrough as the result of "heaven rewarding the hard-working," he not only justifies his actions but also takes the moral high ground. The elder, who originally sought to use Fang Yuan's mistakes to humiliate him, now finds himself in a situation where the best course of action is to praise Fang Yuan, despite his personal feelings.

The Poop Analogy:

Fang Yuan's victory is not just intellectual or tactical, but rather, it is deeply personal for the academy elder. The elder is left feeling like he has been humiliated in front of everyone, forced to acknowledge Fang Yuan's superiority. This battle was not about rules or morality but rather it was about who controlled whom, and Fang Yuan won.

The Academy Elder imagines the situation as if Fang Yuan had "pooped on his face," a vivid metaphor of humiliation. In the elder's mind, Fang Yuan is in control, dictating the terms of the battle. The elder, who once held the reins of power, is now forced to cover up the mess that Fang Yuan has made. He can't let anyone see the "poop on his face," If he wants to maintain his position and authority, he has to act as though nothing has happened. This analogy reflects the elder's deep frustration. He is publicly forced to respect Fang Yuan, even though he internally wants to beat him.

Moreover, the elder has to shut down anyone who mentions the "poop on his face," for if he acknowledges the "poop" openly, it would only tarnish his reputation further. He must suppress the truth and act as though everything is perfectly fine, just as if he were cleaning the mess without acknowledging its existence. If anyone points out the obvious discrepancy in his behavior, he must be the first to silence them.

The elder knows he cannot act against Fang Yuan without worsening the entire institution. Despite his internal rage and humiliation, he recognizes Fang Yuan's talent. The best he can do now is to pretend that this entire affair is of no consequence and hope that it fades from memory.

In the end, the academy elder's final gesture is one of reluctant praise. Fang Yuan, on the other hand, remains unphased, continuing to play the role of the grateful student.

[VCI, FRI, Fluid Intelligence, Adaptability, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management, Emotional Facilitation, Self Awareness, Social Awareness, Social Understanding, Social Intuition, Social Management, Mental Fortitude, Cognitive Discipline, Insight, Foresight, Anticipation, Prediction, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Strategic

Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Abstract Thinking, Analogical Thinking, Associative Thinking, Systematic Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Psychology, Logical Reasoning, Abstract Reasoning, Negotiation, Persuasion, Gaslighting, Scapegoating, Smearing, Sophistry, Acting Skills, Fabrication, Misdirection, Concealment, Abusing Insecurities, Demoralization, Threats, Verbal Deception, Verbal Manipulation, Direct Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Individual Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Tactic, Methods, Strategy Building, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Logistics, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Complexity, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Execution, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Short-term Strategy, Planning Aim, Planning Formulation, Formulation Speed, Planning Coverage, Planning Intricacies, Planning Versatility, Planning Applicability, Planning Invincibility, Short-term Planning, Long-term Planning, Trap Evasion, Setting Traps, Risk Management, Manipulation Resistance, Cunningness, Ruthlessness, Caution, Creativity, Aura, See Through People, Situational Awareness, Unpredictability**]**

The Class Chairman:

The Academy Elder had set up competition among the students, i.e., whoever reached Rank 1 Middle Stage cultivation first would be appointed as the Class Chairman, while the next two to achieve it would be Vice-Chairmans. They would also be given perks like came extra primeval stones granted by the academy and, of course, the reputation that came with such a high status. It was a tempting offer, especially for the students, since they were teenagers and wanted to have such status.

Since Fang Yuan had been the first to achieve Rank 1 Middle Stage, it was expected for him to become the Class Chairman. But as the Academy Elder told him that he has become the Class Chairman, Fang Yuan directly refused to become one. Fang Yuan gave reasons for it, such as he's not fit for the role and that others might do a better job than him.

The reason for Fang Yuan's refusal was simple. Fang Yuan understood that becoming the Class Chairman would put him in a position where he would have to act with a certain decorum and responsibility. He would be expected to follow the academy's rules and, more importantly, behave in a way that was according to his superiors. This would mean he'll have to stop extorting primeval stones from his classmates.

Moreover, the Class Chairman position would tie him to the Academy Elder’s whims, directly making him a servant to the academy’s rules and, by extension, a slave to the Clan from a young age. Fang Yuan knew that accepting the role would take away his autonomy, placing him under the Elder’s control. His fearsome reputation would be replaced by one of respect, which, for someone like Fang Yuan, was not a worthy trade-off.

With Fang Yuan eloquently declining the offer, the Academy Elder was left with no choice but to appoint Mo Bei, as the new Class Chairman and Fang Zheng and Chi Cheng were selected as Vice-Chairmen.

But Fang Yuan, instead of recognizing the newly appointed leaders, started bullying them even more by extorting additional primeval stones from them. Thus earning more benefits by declining the position rather than accepting it.

[VCI, FRI, Adaptability, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Self Awareness, Social Awareness, Social Understanding, Insight, Foresight, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Abstract Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Psychology, Abductive Reasoning, Logical Reasoning, Negotiation, Persuasion, Sophistry, Extortion, Coercion, Verbal Deception, Verbal Manipulation, Direct Manipulation, Tactics, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Shielding, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Planning Aim, Planning Intricacies, Long-term Planning, Trap Evasion, Setting Traps, Risk Management, Risk Assessment, See Through People, Caution, Cunningness, Situational Awareness, Manipulation Resistance, Unpredictability]

Jia Jin Sheng Murder Trial:

Jia Fu returned to Qing Mao Mountain to find Jia Jin Sheng. As soon as he arrived in Gu Yue village, he immediately informed Gu Yue Bo, the leader of the Gu Yue Clan, and the other elders about his brother's disappearance. Jia Fu told them that he believes that Fang Yuan is somehow involved in the incident and demanded that Fang Yuan be brought before them so that he can investigate him.

Fang Yuan was brought into the hall before the clan elders. He stood with an expressionless face and respectfully greeted the Gu Yue Clan leader, Jia Fu, and the other clan elders. Fang Yuan showed a formal attitude, unlike his normal informal one.

Jia Fu then turned to a female Gu Master and asked if Fang Yuan was the person she saw. She was the same Gu Master who was the clerk of the Rock Gambling Den where Fang Yuan opened the Mudskin Toad Gu. She quickly confirmed Fang Yuan's identity without hesitation.

Jia Fu made sure to ask all this loudly, to indirectly tell and threaten Gu Yue clan leader and elders that he was serious about this situation and that they should not be partial just because Fang Yuan is of Gu Yue Clan.

Gu Yue Bo asked the female Gu Master if she was absolutely certain it was Fang Yuan, saying that he has an identical twin brother,so she could've made a mistake. The female Gu Master was now under pressure because of Gu Yue Bo's superior cultivation rank and higher hierarchical status.

Gu Yue Bo did this on purpose. It was an indirect answer to Jia Fu's threat. But in fact, this was orchestrated by Fang Yuan. Gu Yue Bo's behavior was because of the subtle manipulation done by Fang Yuan, as just his presence was enough for Gu Yue Bo to take his side, since they were of the same clan.

[Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Social Awareness, Social Management, Holistic Thinking, Foresight, Psychology, Persuasion, Indirect Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Puppetry, Mind Control, Emotion Inducement, Acting Skills, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Execution, Risk Management, Situational Awareness]

Jia Fu, understanding the indirect reply of Gu Yu Bo, asked him to conduct a formal investigation against Fang Yuan to check whether he's the culprit or not.

Gu Yue Bo then asked Fang Yuan if he knew Jia Jin Sheng, to which Fang Yuan calmly answered no.

Scans:

"Fang Yuan, don't be nervous." Gu Yue clan leader smiled benevolently, using a gentle tone towards Fang Yuan, "Let me ask you, do you know any information about that Jia Jin Sheng?"

"Who is Jia Jin Sheng?" Fang Yuan looked up and said calmly.

"He's lying!" The female Gu Master from the gambling den shrieked right as Fang Yuan finished his question.

The people in the discussion hall, upon hearing this shrieking, frowned and all looked towards her.

The female Gu Master pointed at Fang Yuan, showing an agitated expression, "It's him, it's him! At our gambling den, he bought six purple gold rocks, and the fifth was a mudskin toad. Young master Jia saw it and tried to use five hundred primeval stones to purchase it. This left a huge impression on me, even if a year or two passes I will not forget. Not only me, but the other Gu Masters at the gambling den saw it too."

"Is that so…" The Gu Yue clan leader's smiled disappeared, showing a stiff expression and dragging his question towards Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan only nodded now, showing a hint of nervousness, and pretended to suddenly realize, "Oh it's him. Alright, if he's Jia Jin Sheng, then I do know him. But after the gambling den incident, I did not see him ever again."

"He's lying again!" This time, it was not the female Gu Master, but a male Gu Master who called out in public.

Fang Yuan looked towards him, and as if he had recognised him, showed an expression of shock, but quickly tried to hide it.

His expression changes were reflected in everyone's eyes.

Everyone started to ponder.

The female cultivator instantly corrected Fang Yuan and said Fang Yuan is lying. She explained the details to everyone. This was all within Fang Yuan's calculation. Fang Yuan showed a nervous attitude and again lied. This time, he was corrected by a male Gu Master.

This guy was the owner of the wine shop where Fang Yuan revealed his Liquor Worm. This guy not only had seen the Liquor Worm but also saw Fang Yuan together with Jia Jin Sheng at the wine shop.

Fang Yuan acted shocked and nervous to make everyone believe he is scared and is hiding something.

[Emotional Management, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Engagement, Social Awareness, Social Understanding, Social Management, Self Regulation, Foresight, Holistic Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Psychology, Acting Skills, Fabrication, Mass Manipulation, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Complexity, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Execution, Tactics, Methods, Setting Traps, Situational Awareness, Cunningness]

Scans:

“Esteemed sirs, I am an employee at the wine shop.” The male Gu Master first cupped his fists to everyone, and then vigorously pointed at Fang Yuan, “That night, I saw clearly at the wine shop, he was sitting with young master Jia Jin Sheng, and the two secretly conversed for a long time!”

Once he said so, the hall erupted into a clammer of soft discussions.

The academy elder used a cold gaze and looked at Fang Yuan.

The Gu Yue clan master moved backwards slightly, slowly leaning on the large chair.

“How can that be!” Fang Yuan showed an obviously frantic expression, hurriedly saying, “The wine shop had so many people, how can you recognise me just like that? You might be mistaken yourself!”

“Haha, I am definitely not wrong.” The male Gu Master smiled, his gaze staring at Fang Yuan, at this moment he felt extremely confident.

“Not to mention it was young master Jia Jin Sheng who coming to our wine shop, we have to take care of him carefully. Even if it was not him, I would still have had recognised you, as you had given me a strong impression!”

Saying so, he raised his eyebrows, saying smugly, “Do you still remember? That day you came to our shop, wanting a cup of monkey wine. But you only drank a mouthful. After that you released the Liquor worm and fed the remaining monkey wine to it. I saw the Liquor worm and was very agitated, wanting to purchase it from you but you refused to sell it and walked away immediately!”

“Good, exactly what I wanted to hear.” Fang Yuan laughed coldly in his heart, but showed an expression of shock on his face, subconsciously taking a step backwards.

Fang Yuan's Strategic Foresight:

The scan above is important to understand Fang Yuan’s long-term strategy. Way back when the Jia Clan was conducting business in Qing Mao Mountain, Fang Yuan deliberately exposed the existence of his Liquor Worm. He knew that he couldn’t keep the Liquor Worm hidden forever. However, revealing its existence was a significant challenge, as it would raise many questions, especially regarding its origins.

The most pressing question would be, **“Where did he get it?”**

Since Fang Yuan can't reveal the existence of Flower Wine Monk Inheritance, it becomes near impossible to explain the origins of Liquor Worm since Liquor Worm is one of the most rare Gu Worms and is not easy to get.

Therefore, Fang Yuan chose to reveal it to the wine shop owner back then, knowing that this would provide him with a later opportunity to leverage the shopkeeper’s testimony to provide a plausible explanation about how he acquired it.

Obviously, the mere mention of the Liquor Worm immediately raised suspicions about Fang Yuan. However, Fang Yuan quickly turned the situation to his advantage by fabricating a clever explanation. He linked the existence of the Liquor Worm to his gamble in the Rock Den Gambling.

When he was gambling and discovered the Mudskin Toad Gu, he had purchased 6 purple gold lustrous rocks but only opened 5 rocks in public. This fact could be verified by the female Gu Master as well. Nobody knew what happened to the 6th rock.

Fang Yuan cleverly used this gap in knowledge to explain how he had obtained the Liquor Worm, and since nobody had seen him open the final rock, there was no way to prove otherwise. Moreover, Fang Yuan had already built a reputation for his exceptional luck after opening the rare Mudskin Toad Gu on his very first gamble, making his story more believable.

To further solidify his innocence and manipulate the perception of those around him, Fang Yuan put on an act, showing desperation and nervousness. He screamed and acted as if he was being unjustly accused, making everyone believe in his fabricated story even more

Scans:

“That’s right, at this point, I shall not hide it any further!” Fang Yuan acted as if he was risking everything, speaking urgently, “I bought six pieces of purple gold rock at the gambling den, but because I did not have enough primeval essence, I only opened five on the spot. The last one, I brought back to the hostel and after opening it, I found a Liquor worm inside. I was overjoyed as I had searched up information on it before, and knew that the Liquor worm is a rare Gu worm that could supplement my lack of talent, thus I refined it on the spot.”

“Wait, you said that you bought six gambling rocks and opened a mudskin toad as well as another Liquor worm?” The clan elders upon hearing this, could not help but ask in an unbelievable tone.

“So what?” Fang Yuan answered as a matter of fact, then pointed at the female Gu Master, shouting, “She can be my witness!”

Everyone on the scene were momentarily stunned before turning to look at the female Gu Master.

The female Gu Master felt the pressure from all the gaze and did not dare to lie, so she honestly said, "It is indeed true, Fang Yuan bought six rocks and opened the mudskin toad on the fifth. He brought the sixth piece away, but I do not know what he opened inside."

"Buying six purple gold rocks and getting two Gu worms consecutively, isn't this luck way too good?" The clan elders mumbled.

"What's so hard to understand? It's luck, who knows, heh, back in the days when I gambled rocks I also…"

"Wait, Gu worms are hard to refine, why did it sound like Fang Yuan easily refined it?" Some of the family elders asked suspiciously.

"You're muddled. Don't you know that when a Gu is extracted from a fossil, they're extremely weak, tittering on the brink of death? Even refining then from a lower Rank is possible. What's so peculiar about him refining the Liquor worm?" Someone immediately answered.

[VCI, FRI, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Engagement, Social Intuition, Social Management, Foresight, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Non-Linear Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Psychology, Logical Reasoning, Persuasion, Gaslighting, Brainwashing, Triangulation, Sophistry, Fabrication, Acting Skills, Concealment, Information Control, Misdirection, Verbal Deception, Verbal Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Strategy Logistics, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Success Rate, Long-term Strategy, Planning Aim, Planning Coverage, Planning Intricacies, Long-term Planning, Contingencies, Planning Invincibility, Planning Length, Methods, Tactics, Risk Management, Creativity, Caution, Cunningness, Resource Management**]**

Scans:

Fang Yuan continued, "I refined the Liquor worm and went to the stores on the second day, I indeed went to a wine shop in the afternoon and bought a cup of monkey wine. At night, I went again and witnessed a scamming scene, Jia Jin Sheng was selling a smelly fart fat worm as a Black Boar Gu to someone in my clan. Next, Sir Jia Fu appeared and resolved the dispute."

"I went to the wine shop again, but I did not expect to see Jia Jin Sheng drinking wine in a poor mood. I had just obtained the Liquor worm and was extremely happy, so I asked him how many primeval stones I could sell it for. Who knew that Jia Jin Sheng upon hearing my Liquor worm, wanted to forcefully buy it. I obviously rejected him, I had no intentions to sell it, only wanting to know its value. Even if I wanted to sell it, that would have to be after I am Rank two, thus I left on the spot."

Fang Yuan's words had brought out the matter of Jia Jin Sheng and Jia Fu's conflict, causing the clan elders to see Jia Fu in a different light.

Under these pressuring gazes, Jia Fu coughed and asked Fang Yuan with shining eyes, "Then did my brother chase after you?"

Fang Yuan nodded, half lying, "He not only chased me, but also added an extra fifty primeval stones. But I did not want to sell it, so he was furious, claiming that the Gu Yue clan was no big deal, asking me to watch out. After saying that, he walked away. I never saw him again."

Jia Fu nodded internally. With his understanding of Jia Jin Sheng, he definitely would have chased after Fang Yuan and gave threats as that was his style.

If Fang Yuan said he did not chase after him, that would be a lie.

But since Fang Yuan said so, this led Jia Fu to a predicament. His investigations led up only to this clue. Did Jia Jin Sheng really not search for Fang Yuan after that? Maybe he found Fang Yuan again afterwards, and as the two could not agree on the matter, he was killed by Fang Yuan —— This is entirely possible.

'Speak, was Jia Jin Sheng killed by you!" Thinking of this, Jia Fu interrogated fiercely, attempting to pressurize Fang Yuan with his aura.

Fang Yuan denied once again, claiming that he did not see Jia Jin Sheng anymore.

Jia Fu had no other evidence, and while one side questioned intensely, the other denied. At this point, it had become a stalemate.

Explanation:

Fang Yuan fabricated a convincing narrative to explain his involvement with Jia Jin Sheng. He began with the truth. He recounted how he had seen Jia Jin Sheng scamming someone at the wine shop the next day and how Jia Fu intervened to resolve the situation. This was an accurate account and helped establish credibility.

The fabricated part of Fang Yuan's story began after this. Fang Yuan claimed that he had approached Jia Jin Sheng out of goodwill, hoping to inquire about the value of his Liquor Worm. According to Fang Yuan, after learning about the Liquor Worm, Jia Jin Sheng attempted to forcefully buy it from him. Fang Yuan told the elders that he refused the offer, as he had no intention of selling it at the time.

Jia Fu, trying to probe for inconsistencies, cross-examined Fang Yuan by asking if Jia Jin Sheng had pursued him further. Fang Yuan said yes, even adding that Jia Jin Sheng insulted the Gu Yue Clan and threatened him when his offer was declined. This fabricated portrayal of Jia Jin Sheng was believable, as it aligned well with Jia Jin Sheng's known personality. Unable to disprove Fang Yuan's account, Jia Fu found himself out of options.

Frustrated, Jia Fu attempted to intimidate Fang Yuan by unleashing his aura, pressuring him to confess if he had killed Jia Jin Sheng. However, Fang Yuan maintained his composure and firmly denied the accusation.

With no solid evidence, witnesses, or contradictions to support his claims, Jia Fu was left with no choice but to let the matter drop. The interrogation ended in a stalemate, leaving Fang Yuan free of any blame.

[VCI, FRI, Fluid Intelligence, Adaptability, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Engagement, Social Understanding, Social Management, Mental Fortitude, Stress Tolerance, Perseverance, Cognitive Discipline, Insight, Critical Thinking, Linear Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Psychoanalysis, Psychology, Logical Reasoning, Persuasion, Acting Skills, Sophistry, Fabrication, Concealment, Scapegoating, Smearing, Verbal Deception, Verbal Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Planning Length, Planning Invincibility, Planning Intricacies, Contingencies, Long-term Planning, Risk Management, Manipulation Resistance, Trap Evasion, Situational Awareness, Cunningness, Caution, See Through People]

Scans:

“Brother Jia, it’s not that I want to speak out of turn.” The clan leader interrupted his interrogation and continued, ” Jia Jin Sheng has gone missing for so many days, hope is bleak. The culprit who caused this crime definitely left behind some traces. Did brother find anything yet?”

Jia Fu stared fiercely at Fang Yuan before raising his head and sighed, “I understand brother’s words! If there were any traces, I would not have come here to find the culprit. That criminal is obviously experienced with vile methods and meticulous handling. To speak the truth, all the clues are at a dead end, and on the day we left, there was a huge rain that could have washed away all the possible blood traces.”

Gu Yue Bo smiled faintly. “Brother Jia, I heard that your Jia family has a tracing Gu worm called the Underworld Path Butterfly. It can emit soul fragrance and be implanted on Gu worms. The scent is colourless and odourless, and never fades. Your Jia family member’s Gu worms all have this scent. As long as you use the Underworld Path Butterfly, following the fragrance, you’ll be able to find the Gu worms and thus your brother.”

Jia Fu solemnly said, “I used the Underworld Path Butterfly long ago, but there was no effect. I’m sure you’ve heard that once the Gu worm dies, the fragrance dissipates. Evidently the murderer killed all of the Gu worms in my brother’s possession.

Explanation:

Fang Yuan had meticulously erased all traces of his involvement in Jia Jin Sheng's death. Not a single piece of evidence remained that could link him to the murder.

Fang Yuan even destroyed the Gu Worms of Jia Jin Sheng. This was because of Fang Yuan's foresight. If Fang Yuan had decided to keep the Gu Worms for himself, he'd have been caught by Jia Fu because of the Underworld Path Butterfly.

Had Fang Yuan kept the Gu worms, Jia Fu could have easily used the Underworld Path Butterfly to trace Fang Yuan. By eliminating the Gu worms entirely, Fang Yuan ensured that no such connection could be made.

[Foresight, Strategic Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Logical Reasoning, Concealment, Strategy Shielding, Strategic Foresight, Planning Coverage, Planning Invincibility, Planning Applicability, Trap Evasion, Risk Management, Situational Awareness, Caution, Cunningness]

Fang Yuan's Misdirection:

Fang Yuan then attempted to misdirect suspicion from himself to Jia Fu, claiming that Jia Fu killed Jia Jin Sheng to monopolize the family assets. At first glance, this might seem like a reckless and baseless accusation, but it was actually a calculated move by Fang Yuan.

By making this claim, Fang Yuan subtly planted the seeds of doubt not only in the minds of Gu Yue Bo and the elders but also in Jia Fu himself. While Jia Fu was confident of his own innocence, Fang Yuan's insinuation forced him to consider the possibility of betrayal within his own family.

Even if Jia Fu didn't kill Jia Jin Sheng, Fang Yuan's remark cast a shadow of suspicion on Jia Gui, Jia Fu's other brother and rival. This tactic effectively introduced another potential suspect who had even more motive to kill Jia Jin Sheng than Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan's reckless statement was, in reality, a form of manipulation, further complicating the situation and steering attention away from himself

Scans:

Fang Yuan followed everyone's gazes, and suddenly said to Jia Fu, "Maybe Jia Jin Sheng was killed by you. I heard before that your family is splitting assets, now that one brother is dead, wouldn't you get more inheritance?"

"Shut up!"

"Baseless accusation, do not slander Sir Jia Fu."

Immediately the family elders erupted.

Fang Yuan kept quiet immediately, his gaze shining obscurely, but his objective had been reached.

His earlier words were like a pebble that was thrown into the elders' sea of thoughts, causing waves of ripples.

The clan elders followed this train of thought, and started to think, "Jia Fu cannot kill Jia Jin Sheng, this causes more harm to him than reward. Wait, even if he won't do it, that does not mean others won't…"

“The Jia family’s internal dispute!” A certain elder had a flash of inspiration and lightly muttered.

His volume was not high, but in the silent hall it could be heard clearly.

At once, the elders’ gaze shone.

“Finally, they have thought of this.” Fang Yuan’s mouth twitched, his eyelids drooping, hiding away his cold gaze.

The Jia family’s clan leader wants to split the assets and impart the role of clan leader, and because of this his children underwent intense competition, especially Jia Fu and Jia Gui, both being Rank four Gu Masters and having their own supporters.

In these few years, the Jia family situation is somewhat known by many of the mountain villages.

Jia Jin Sheng’s misfortune was too strange. Currently there was no evidence showing that Fang Yuan was the killer. It was obvious that the motivation for murder was not enough just based on the theory of killing just because of a Liquor worm. At the same time, the murderer’s actions and methods would not be so meticulous and secretive.

But if Jia Gui was the one acting in the shadows, then it could be explained.

Everyone present was a higher-up, and as someone in a position of power, there had to be something capable about them. At least for political schemes, they had great intuition and perception.

The Jia family dispute, this gave everyone’s imaginations a pair of wings.

The Jia family clan leader had arranged Jia Jin Sheng to join the caravan. One reason was to test Jia Fu’s nature, to see if he was a good brother, and only suppressed but not bully his brother.

Now that Jia Jin Sheng was in trouble, Jia Fu would be implicated, and who is the true winner?

Obviously Jia Fu’s greatest competitor — Jia Gui!

The criminal’s actions were so fluid, causing all clues to come to a dead end, this showed how experienced the criminal was. How could this be done by a fifteen year old like Fang Yuan?

All the answers were revealed at once!

The discussion hall was still silent, but the elders exchanged gazes full of meaning.

“To make someone believe in something wholeheartedly, it is not through convincing, but directing.” Fang Yuan’s keen observation allowed him to see these glances, and he laughed coldly in his heart, but his face still showed an expression of indignance and stubbornness.

Jia Fu’s face was so dark and gloomy it could drip water.

The matter of the Jia family internal dispute caused him to think of Jia Gui.

At that moment, his soul shook!

Who else had a greater motivation than Jia Gui?

No one!

“I understand now, I understand everything.” The academy elder stood behind Fang Yuan, looking at him. His eyes shone, “Fang Yuan is both lucky and unfortunate, meeting Jia Jin Sheng at the last moment. With his age of just starting to attend school, how can he get rid of all the evidence? If he had such scheming abilities, how can he show this expression of indomitability. He denied it earlier just to hide the existence of the Liquor worm.”

At this point, everyone had dispelled their suspicious towards Fang Yuan!

[Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Engagement, Social Awareness, Social Understanding, Social Intuition, Social Management, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Foresight, Psychology, Logical Reasoning, Persuasion, Acting Skills, Gaslighting, Brainwashing, Smearing, Fabrication, Misdirection, Scapegoating, Direct Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Strategy Alignment, Planning Aim, Planning Intricacies, Planning Coverage, Planning Invincibility, Tactics, Methods, Setting Traps, Cunningness, Unpredictability, Creativity, Risk Management**]**

Fang Yuan’s Alibi:

Even though Jia Fu ultimately arrived at the conclusion that Jia Gui might have been the real culprit, he was still left without any concrete proof to back his suspicion. This left him in a difficult position, as he needed to present a clear resolution to his family, especially his father, who would not accept vague assumptions.

Thus, Jia Fu remained determined to pin the blame on Fang Yuan. Fang Yuan, being an outsider, was an easy target for scapegoating. By accusing Fang Yuan, Jia Fu could provide his father with a culprit, hence preserving his own credibility and avoiding punishment for not being able to find Jia Jin Sheng's murderer.

Scans:

Jia Fu was conflicted.

He had dispelled his suspicions of Fang Yuan and was certain that Jia Gui was the mastermind.

“But yet, so what if I know the truth?” Jia Fu felt anger and sadness surging, “I have no evidence at hand, so if I accused Jia Gui in front of father without any proof, father might even think I am trying to frame him!”

Jia Fu was smart, and he looked at Fang Yuan, a light flashing in his eyes.

Jia Jin Sheng had journeyed with him together, and now that he was missing, it was Jia Fu's fault for not taking care of him! Since he could not accuse Jia Gui, he had to give his father some answer.

And this answer was in front of him!

"That's right, if Fang Yuan is the scapegoat, it would at least help me get through this crisis. Once I get over it, I can get back at Jia Gui with twice the payback." Jia Fu thought deviously.

He raised his pitch, interrogating Fang Yuan, "Fang Yuan, how do you prove that you did not harm Jia Jin Sheng?"

The clan elders were stunned. This is obviously your internal dispute, why are you still grabbing onto my clansman?

Only the Gu Yue clan leader looked grim, his expression turning sharp as he stared at Jia Fu.

"Fang Yuan, what proof do you have to show that you were not present at the time and did not harm Jia Jin Sheng? If you can't prove it, you are the murderer!" Jia Fu pointed at Fang Yuan, his gaze furious as he threatened with his aura.

"He's trying to push our clan's Fang Yuan into being the scapegoat. How atrocious!" At this point, the clan elders had reacted and their expressions all turned unkind.

They had been fighting and scheming against each other for a long time, so if they thought about it, they would know easily about Jia Fu's standpoint and intentions.

Since Jia Fu was being unreasonable in his accusations and relentlessly trying to pin the blame on Fang Yuan, Gu Yue Bo and the other clan elders felt compelled to intervene. They understood that if Fang Yuan were falsely accused, it would be his problem but also bring disgrace to the entire Gu Yue Clan. This was something they could not afford, as it would damage the clan's standing and weaken their position in the entire Southern Border.

It was the Academy Elder who stepped forward to defend Fang Yuan. He claimed that he had been closely monitoring Fang Yuan's actions through his subordinates since Fang Yuan had unexpectedly had a breakthrough in his cultivation. The Academy Elder asserted that Fang Yuan's every movement had been recorded, leaving no possibility for him to commit a crime like murdering Jia Jin Sheng without it being noticed.

By presenting this argument, the Academy Elder effectively cleared Jia Fu's accusations. If Fang Yuan had indeed killed Jia Jin Sheng, there would have been clear evidence or at least a suspicious gap in his monitored activities. Since no such evidence existed, the Academy Elder's testimony served as a powerful statement in Fang Yuan's favor.

Scans:

“Witness? Of course I do! I prepared it long ago.” Fang Yuan smiled internally, but showed an expression of shock, as if he wanted to speak but couldn’t.

“No need for others, just tell me if you do or not!” Jia Fu raised his voice again, forcing Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan showed an indignant expression, but finally gritted his teeth and said helplessly, “No.”

“Haha. Then you are —”” Jia Fu was about to declare his verdict but at that point.

“Halt!” The academy elder took a step forward and stood in front of Fang Yuan with a solemn expression, “Of course he has a witness, that would be me!”

“You?” Jia Fu asked in shock.

“That’s right, me.” The academy elder, facing Rank four Jia Fu, was slightly overpowered. But seeing Gu Yue Bo’s encouraging gaze, he gathered his courage and raised his head, “These days when Fang Yuan unexpectedly became the first to break through the middle stage, I sent my men to investigate him. His everyday activities and actions are recorded down, there was no time for him to harm Jia Jin Sheng.”

“Yes, this is it…” Fang Yuan hid behind the academy elder’s back, where no one could see his curled lips, revealing a smile.

Jia Fu’s expression was dim, he did not expect the academy elder to stand out and protect Fang Yuan.

The crucial point was, the Gu Yue clan leader did not object. This had a great meaning, for it meant the Gu Yue clan was going to protect Fang Yuan.

“I get it! I wanted to get Fang Yuan to become the scapegoat, but that was from my perspective, and I did not consider their perspective. Indeed, once Fang Yuan is criminalized, the Gu Yue clan has to bear the evil name of harming a Jia family member. From then on they will have to face the Jia family’s retribution as well as losing their own reputation. Furthermore, future caravans would not dare to come here and trade anymore, the loss is too great!”

Thinking of this, Jia Fu was anguished and wanted to slap his own head.

The Gu Yue higher-ups did have such considerations.

Fang Yuan was a C grade, so if he really harmed Jia Jin Sheng, handing him over was nothing. But the point was, now that his suspicion had been cleared, if he was handed over, wouldn’t the Gu Yue clan suffer a great injustice and lose out greatly?

The true brilliance of Fang Yuan's manipulation lies in how he made Academy Elder his defense without lifting a finger. The Academy Elder, the very person Fang Yuan had publicly humiliated just a day before, ended up stepping in to save him.

By controlling the entire situation so carefully, Fang Yuan subtly forced the Academy Elder into a position where defending him was in the clan's best interest. Despite their personal

animosity, the Academy Elder could not allow Jia Fu's accusations to harm Fang Yuan. If Fang Yuan were wrongfully condemned, it would not only ruin a talented clan member's future but also disgrace the Gu Yue Clan's reputation. The Academy Elder's intervention was less about saving Fang Yuan and more about preserving the clan's dignity. But it only served to aid Fang Yuan.

[Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Social Management, Social Understanding, Foresight, Holistic Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Psychology, Persuasion, Puppetry, Mind Control, Emotion Inducement, Triangulation, Indirect Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Individual Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Strategy Logistics, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Complexity, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Efficiency, Planning Aim, Contingencies, Planning Invincibility, Methods, Cunningness, Trap Evasion, Setting Traps, Creativity, Influence]

Evading Footprint Gu:

Out of options and desperate to prove Fang Yuan's guilt, Jia Fu resorted to using Footprint Gu. This Gu had the unique ability to reveal a person's last 30,000 steps, potentially exposing any clandestine activity.

Jia Fu believed this was his best shot at finding evidence tying Fang Yuan to the murder. However, Fang Yuan, with his usual foresight, had already accounted for this possibility. In the days leading up to the investigation, Fang Yuan had meticulously controlled his movements, ensuring he stayed within the village and never ventured to the secret cave where he had killed Jia Jin Sheng.

Confident in himself, Fang Yuan did not object to the test. As expected, Footprint Gu revealed nothing special. His steps traced mundane activities within the village, providing no connection to Jia Jin Sheng's disappearance.

[Self Regulation, Impulse Management, Foresight, Strategic Thinking, Fabrication, Misdirection, Concealment, Information Control, Logical Manipulation, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Shielding, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Execution, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Planning Aim, Preparation Process, Planning Applicability, Planning Coverage, Contingencies, Planning Invincibility, Risk Management, Caution, Trap Evasion, Intuition]

Evading Bamboo Gentleman Gu:

Since Footprint Gu failed to yield any results, Jia Fu resorted to another Gu. This time, the Bamboo Gentleman Gu. This Gu had a unique ability. It could detect lies by feeding on honesty. If a person told a lie, the Bamboo Gentleman would change color, exposing the deception.

Confident in this approach, Jia Fu prepared to question Fang Yuan. However, Fang Yuan remained confident and did not object to being tested. The reason for his confidence was his trump card, the Spring Autumn Cicada.

The Bamboo Gentleman Gu was a Rank 4 Mortal Gu, while the Spring Autumn Cicada was a Rank 6 Immortal Gu. The immense difference in power between the two was insurmountable. Even without directly activating the Spring Autumn Cicada, its aura was enough to suppress the Bamboo Gentleman completely.

As Jia Fu questioned Fang Yuan, the Bamboo Gentleman showed no reaction. Whether Fang Yuan spoke the truth or lied, the Gu remained unchanged, unable to function under the overwhelming aura of the Spring Autumn Cicada.

Once again, Fang Yuan masterfully navigated the interrogation, effectively **"proving"** his innocence and rendering Jia Fu's efforts fruitless. This completely proved Fang Yuan's innocence, and there was no more need to interrogate him further.

Scans:

"Fang Yuan, you just have to open this rock and keep the Bamboo Gentleman in your aperture. Whatever I ask you, you will answer. Next, we will take out this Gu and let everyone see if it changed colour. If the Gu changes colour, you're lying!"

"No problem." Fang Yuan did not hesitate. He immediately opened the jade piece and did as Jia Fu instructed.

The Bamboo Gentleman appeared in his aperture and emitted a faint green glow, covering the primeval sea.

Fang Yuan felt that if he said a single lie, the Bamboo Gentleman could detect it and turn its body from green into another color.

But he only accepted it because he had his trump card.

"Spring Autumn Cicada!" With a thought, the Spring Autumn Cicada awakened and let out a trace of its aura.

This aura was overpowering, and it immediately suppressed the Bamboo Gentleman.

The Bamboo Gentleman emitted a green glow and immediately shrunk its body. Its entire body was curled up, trembling in fear. How could it have the excessive spirit to detect lies?

Jia Fu begin interrogating, with his first question hitting home, "Fang Yuan, did you harm my brother Jia Jin Sheng?"

"No!" Fang Yuan affirmed.

Jia Fu asked, "Do you have any other information about him?"

Fang Yuan shook his head, "No idea."

Jia Fu asked again, "Did you say anything dishonest to us earlier?"

Fang Yuan shook his head again, "No."

“Alright, you can take out the Bamboo Gentleman now.” After finishing with three questions, Jia Fu instructed Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan took out the Bamboo Gentleman, and everyone saw that it was still an emerald green colour with no changes.

The clan elders heaved a sigh of relief.

[Adaptability, Foresight, Insight, Holistic Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Application Thinking, Fabrication, Concealment, Triangulation, Mass Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Execution, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Tactics, Methods, Contingencies, Trap Evasion, Risk Management, Cunningness, Resource Management**]**

Summary of entire trial:

This will be a short summary of the entire trial discussed above. It will include the key points of the objectives, strategy, manipulation, deception and methods used by Fang Yuan in each major part of the trial. The explanation of each will be very short and only include keypoints.

→Start of the trial

Objective:

• Shift Gu Yue Clan’s perception in his favor.

Strategy:

• Subtly influence Gu Yue Bo to protect him as a fellow clan member.

Manipulation:

• Orchestrate Gu Yue Bo's defensive response to Jia Fu’s initial threats.

Deception:

• Act as if he doesn't know who Jia Jin Sheng is.

Method:

• Deny knowing Jia Jin Sheng initially to control the narrative.

→Exploiting Witnesses

Objective:

• Discredit direct accusations from witnesses.

• Fabricate a false story as his proof.

• Reveal Liquor Worm to Clan Leader and Clan Elders.

Strategy:

• Allow witnesses to contradict him while feigning nervousness to appear genuine.

• Use the six purple gold rocks story as a foundation for explaining the Liquor Worm's origin.

Manipulation:

• Subtly guide testimonies to align with his pre-planned narrative.

• Exploit gaps in knowledge about the unopened sixth rock to support his claims.

Deception:

• Pretend to "realize" Jia Jin Sheng's identity only after being confronted by witnesses.

• Fabricate a story about Jia Jin Sheng pursuing him to purchase the Liquor Worm.

Method:

• Act shocked and nervous to divert suspicion and appear anxious.

• Use his luck-based reputation to make the story about the Liquor Worm more believable.

→Redirecting Suspicion to Jia Gui

Objective:

• Shift the focus from himself to Jia Gui.

Strategy:

• Indirectly suggest that Jia Jin Sheng's death could benefit Jia Gui in family inheritance disputes.

Manipulation:

• Plant subtle accusations of betrayal within the Jia family hierarchy.

Deception:

• Pretend to say a stupid remark of Jia Fu being the killer.

Method:

• Use subtle cues and plausible scenarios to frame Jia Gui as the culprit.

→Making Alibis

Objective:

• Neutralize Jia Fu's attempts to use detection methods.

Strategy:

• Erase all traces of Jia Jin Sheng’s Gu worms to counter the Underworld Path Butterfly.

• Control his movements to ensure the Footprint Gu would reveal nothing.

Manipulation:

• Indirectly compel the Gu Yue Clan elders to support him to protect their reputation.

• Rely on Academy Elder's intervention to block baseless accusations.

Deception:

• Act cooperative when tested by the Footprint Gu to show confidence.

Method:

• Used his meticulous foresight to remove evidence before the trial.

→Overpowering the Bamboo Gentleman Gu

Objective:

• Defeat Jia Fu's final attempt to prove his guilt through Bamboo Gentleman Gu.

• Solidify his innocence beyond doubt.

Strategy:

• Use the Spring Autumn Cicada to suppress the Bamboo Gentleman Gu.

Deception:

• Suppress the Bamboo Gentleman Gu's ability to detect lies using superior Gu power.

Method:

• Activate the Spring Autumn Cicada's aura subtly to counter the Bamboo Gentleman.

• Maintain confident demeanor to reinforce his innocence.

[VCI, FRI, Crystallized Intelligence, Fluid Intelligence, Adaptability, Knowledge, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Engagement, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Self Regulation, Social Management, Social Understanding, Mental Fortitude, Stress Tolerance, Impulse Management, Perseverance, Cognitive Discipline, Insight, Foresight, Anticipation, Prediction, Critical Thinking, Linear Thinking, Non-Linear Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Analogical Thinking, Associative Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Divergent Thinking, Abstract Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Faster Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Application Thinking, Systematic Thinking, Logical Reasoning, Psychoanalysis, Psychological Profiling, Cold Reading, Hot Reading, Persuasion, Negotiation, Scapegoating, Triangulation, Brainwashing, Puppetry, Mind Control, Gaslighting, Smearing, Direct Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Individual Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Verbal Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Sophistry, Misdirection, Fabrication, Concealment, Acting Skills, Information Control, Verbal Deception, Emotion Inducement, Threats, Coercion, Strategy Logistics, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Shielding, Strategic Foresight, Strategy Execution, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Flexibility, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Short-term Strategy, Long-term Strategy, Planning Aim, Preparation Process, Planning Formulation, Formulation Speed, Planning Intricacies, Contingencies, Planning Versatility, Planning Coverage, Planning Applicability, Planning Invincibility, Long-term Planning, Tactics, Methods, Situational Awareness, Caution, Risk Management, Decision Making, Trap Evasion, Setting Traps, Risk Assessment, Knowledge Application, Intuition, See Through People, Creativity, Manipulation Resistance, Cunningness, Resource Management, Improvising, Unpredictability**]**

Fang Yuan and Ren Zu:

This entire situation was later explained by both Gu Yue Bo and Jia Fu using <<**The Legends of Ren Zu**>>.

Gu Yue Bo's Explanation:

Clan leader Gu Yue Bo began his story on Ren Zu.

Some say ——

Ever since Ren Zu was able to get their names and subdued the Rules and Regulation Gu, his first order was for them to capture a longevity Gu.

Rules and Regulation Gu, one round and other other square, worked together and could capture all the Gu in the world, a longevity Gu was nothing difficult.

Ren Zu used the longevity Gu and got back his youth, becoming 20 years old again.

But now the rules Gu said, "Human, although you subdued us, every time you command us, it will add a rule and regulation."

Regulation Gu continued, "We can catch the longevity Gu for you, this is the first order. Our new rule and regulation is, we will not repeatedly catch the same Gu for you."

That means, if Ren Zu wanted to catch a longevity Gu again, the two Rules and Regulation Gu would not help.

Ren Zu nodded, having no choice but to accept.

He gave his second command, "Then, other than the longevity Gu, please capture all the other ten thousand Gu in the world for me."

Rules and regulation Gu got this command and Rules Gu turned into a giant circle, encompassing the universe. Regulation Gu turned into a giant square, covering the large world.

One square and one round formed a giant net together, enveloping the entire world.

When they shrunk again and returned to Ren Zu, all the Gu in the world other than longevity Gu were captured.

Ren Zu was overjoyed, with this all the Gu belonged to him, from now on he was the ruler of the world!

But once he opened the net, with a swoosh, a large number of worms flew outside and the Gu that Rules and Regulation Gu worked hard to catch, all escaped fervently.

When Ren Zu closed the net, only five Gu were left.

"Why is this?" Ren Zu was astonished.

Rules and Regulation answered him, "Human, the world has over ten thousand Gu with all sorts of abilities. You have no strength or knowledge, how can you subdue them? We can only capture Gu for you, to subdue them, you have to rely on yourself to get them to work for you."

Next they added, "This is your second order, so we'll add a second rule and regulation — From now on, we can only catch one Gu for you at a time."

Ren Zu could only nod, and carefully opened the net, only showing a small gap.

The remaining five Gu contained the Strength and Wisdom Gu. Seeing this, Ren Zu was overjoyed.

He said to Strength Gu, "Strength Gu, you left me back then, do you have any regrets? If you succumb to me now, I will return you your freedom."

Strength Gu said, "Human, you are wrong. I didn't leave not because I couldn't, but because I wanted to stay. You want to subdue me but that's impossible. I only succumb to those stronger than me, but you are out of the question. However we can deal again, give me your youth and I will temporarily obey you."

Ren Zu was reluctant upon hearing this, he had just gotten back his youth, was he about to lose it again?

But he desired strength, he knew that with strength, he would get stronger and life would get easier.

Moreover, with strength, he could subdue more Gu.

Thus, Ren Zu accepted, and formed a second deal with it.

Ren Zu became middle-aged at once, and the strength Gu flew out of the web and landed on Ren Zu's shoulder.

Ren Zu had strength, and was full of confidence.

He said to Wisdom Gu: "Wisdom Gu, you left me back then, do you have any regrets? If you succumb to me now, I will return you your freedom."

Wisdom Gu said, "Human, you are wrong. I did not leave not because I couldn't, but because I wanted to stay. You want to subdue me but that's impossible. I only succumb to those smarter than me, yet you are not smarter than me. But we can deal again, give me your middle age and I will temporarily obey you."

Ren Zu upon hearing this, refused to do the same deal again.

He treasured his life more, and he also knew that once he sold his middle age, he would be left with old age. Before long, the Strength and Wisdom Gu would leave him again, just like last time.

Ren Zu refused to deal, but did not want to let go of the Wisdom Gu.

Wisdom Gu was anxious, reluctantly giving in, “Alright, Human, you win. I lost to you this time. As long as you tell me what method you used to capture me, I will admit defeat and not take anything from you, being at your disposal.”

Upon hearing this, Ren Zu was overjoyed and before the Rules and Regulation Gu could stop him, he said, “I used the Rules and Regulation Gu to capture you.”

Wisdom Gu laughed upon hearing, “I remembered it, so these Gu are called Rules and Regulation. Haha, now that I know your names, you can no longer capture me.”

Saying so, it turned into a flash of light and flew away, vanishing into thin air.

Rules and Regulation Gu begin to complain, “Human, we told u long ago that our name should be known by you alone, and not others. Otherwise, we would be used by others. Look what happened, now that Wisdom Gu knows our names, it spells trouble.”

Only then did Ren Zu realise that he was tricked by Wisdom Gu. He was anguished, for he knew he lost the only chance he had of capturing the Wisdom Gu using Rules and Regulation.

Saying so, Gu Yue Bo’s story came to an end.

The clan leader, Gu Yue Bo, uses the story of Ren Zu as an analogy for the situation within the clan. He sees Fang Yuan as a troublemaker like "Wisdom Gu", who is clever but ultimately harmless. The elders believe Fang Yuan is driven by youthful rebellion and bitterness toward the clan's system, and that his actions stem from immaturity rather than calculated intent. Fang Yuan exploits this perception they have of him.

In the story, Ren Zu relied on the Rules and Regulation Gu to trap Wisdom Gu. However, Wisdom Gu escaped by tricking Ren Zu into revealing his methods. Similarly, Fang Yuan played into the clan's overreliance on rules and their belief that he lacked "true wisdom."

Fang Yuan subtly encouraged their view of him as a rash, discontented junior who would eventually calm down and conform to the clan's structure.

Fang Yuan’s knowledge of the Legends of Ren Zu allowed him to manipulate the elders' interpretation of the story. By behaving in ways that mirrored Ren Zu’s perceived mistakes, he made them think they understood him.

Like Ren Zu revealing the names of the Rules and Regulation Gu, Fang Yuan made intentional "errors," such as openly displaying his Liquor worm and causing public conflicts. These actions were calculated to seem impulsive, thus reinforcing the elders' belief in his immaturity.

He carefully avoided showing deeper scheming, such as hiding his cultivation progress or acting strategically. This misdirection lulled the elders into a false sense of security.

Gu Yue Bo's interpretation of Ren Zu’s story emphasized relationships over rules. He viewed Fang Yuan as an emotional but ultimately controllable individual, whose rebelliousness could be controlled through tolerance and kinship.

Gu Yue Bo prioritized the long-term health of the clan, believing Fang Yuan's actions were inconsequential. Fang Yuan exploited this belief by causing just enough disruption to test the limits of their tolerance without crossing boundaries that would provoke severe retaliation.

Gu Yue Bo dismissed Fang Yuan's potential, citing his C-grade talent as a natural ceiling for his growth. Fang Yuan encouraged this view by acting like someone who had no ambition beyond minor schemes.

Fang Yuan's actions mirrored themes in The Legends of Ren Zu.

Ren Zu traded his youth for strength, a move Fang Yuan mimicked by appearing to sacrifice immediate benefits for greater gains. In reality, Fang Yuan never intended to sacrifice anything; he only pretended to lose control to not raise suspicion.

Wisdom Gu tricked Ren Zu by exploiting his lack of foresight. Fang Yuan mirrored this dynamic by making the elders think he lacked long-term planning, when in fact he was always several steps ahead.

Fang Yuan understood that the clan relied on rigid rules to maintain control. He used this knowledge to bend those rules without breaking them, knowing that the elders would hesitate to act decisively against him.

The clan elders were overly reliant on their "rules and regulations" to manage Fang Yuan, just as Ren Zu relied on the Rules and Regulation Gu. This rigidity blinded them to Fang Yuan's ability to navigate around their systems.

Fang Yuan mirrored Wisdom Gu's strategy of manipulating perception, outsmarting those in power by leveraging their own biases against them.

The elders, especially Gu Yue Bo, misinterpreted Fang Yuan's actions as emotional rather than strategic. This assumption caused them to underestimate his ability to act with cold, calculated intent.

[Crystallized Intelligence, Knowledge, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Realization, Emotional Engagement, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Social Understanding, Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Mental Fortitude, Perseverance, Cognitive Discipline, Insight, Foresight, Perception, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Application Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Divergent Thinking, Associative Thinking, Analogical Thinking, Abstract Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Psychology Psychoanalysis Psychological Profiling Logical Reasoning, Abstract Reasoning Analysis, Acting Skills, Fabrication, Misdirection, Sophistry, Brainwashing, Mind Control, Indirect Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Execution, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Long-term Strategy, Planning Aim, Planning Coverage, Planning Intricacies, Planning Versatility, Planning Applicability, Planning Invincibility, Long-term Planning, Tactics, Methods, Setting Traps, Risk Management, Cunningness, Situational Awareness, Knowledge Application**]**

Jia Fu's Explanation:

After a while, a close subordinate could not stand this atmosphere and asked Jia Fu, "Master, what are we going to do now? Jia Jin Sheng's death, once master returns, how will you answer to old master? Should we find a scapegoat first…"

Jia Fu shook his head, but avoided the question, "Do you know the story of Ren Zu?"

The subordinate was stunned, not expecting this answer. At once he did not know how to reply.

Jia Fu continued, "Ren Zu had the Rules and Regulation Gu, and could capture all the ten thousand Gu in the world, obtaining strength but losing wisdom. At that point his net still contained three Gu. He opened and saw that they were the Attitude Gu, Belief Gu and Suspicion Gu respectively. Ren Zu was unwilling to let them go, thus the three Gu could only bet with him. Once Ren Zu opens the net, they would run out in three different directions, and whoever is captured by Ren Zu would be subdued. Guess, who did Ren Zu capture in the end?"

The trusted aide thought, and answered, "It's the Attitude Gu!"

"Do you know why?" Jia Fu asked. The loyal subordinate shook his head.

Jia Fu laughed, "Because attitude means everything. No matter if father 'believes' or 'suspects', I have already displayed my 'attitude'. Jia Jin Sheng went missing, and I immediately conducted investigations in the caravan. Once I had a clue, I rushed towards the Gu Yue clan without stop. At the village, I risked the danger of being attacked by them and interrogated them on the spot. I did not even sit down, and to prove Fang Yuan's words, I went as far as to use the Rank four Bamboo Gentleman."

"Once I get back, I will even spend a ton of money to employ the divine investigator, inviting Tie Leng Xue to investigate this matter. Regardless of whether Jia Jin Sheng is dead or alive, as his brother I have already done all that I should, my attitude shows everything! I have thought it through earlier, we do not need a scapegoat. We shall go back in this honest state, because I was not at fault for this matter! Finding a scapegoat, that might just be a trap by Jia Gui. If I can find a scapegoat, he can also find someone to overturn the case."

His subordinate was shocked and said, "Master, you really suspect that young master Jia Gui was behind this?"

"Hmph, who else but him can do something so perfectly?" Saying so, Jia Fu's face distorted, anger bursting from his eyes, "Before this, I was thinking about our blood relationship and did not do such a thing to him. But since he is so devious, I will have to pay him back an eye for an eye, don't blame me for being unscrupulous!"

Fang Yuan understands that Jia Fu is deeply concerned with maintaining his reputation and standing within his family, particularly in light of Jia Jin Sheng's disappearance. By carefully crafting his statements and actions, Fang Yuan plays into Jia Fu's need to appear blameless and proactive.

Jia Fu identifies with Ren Zu's choice to prioritize "Attitude Gu," understanding that projecting the right demeanor is key to maintaining credibility. Fang Yuan anticipated this mindset and ensured that Jia Fu would interpret his interrogation and immediate investigation as acts of responsibility, not suspicion.

Fang Yuan allowed Jia Fu to "discover" clues about Jia Jin Sheng's fate, framing himself as a minor figure who merely provided information by saying stupid and reckless remarks. This reinforced the idea that Jia Fu's actions were his own initiative, increasing his sense of self-righteousness.

Jia Fu's subordinate raises the idea of finding a scapegoat, but Jia Fu dismisses it, influenced by his distrust of Jia Gui. As Fang Yuan had expertly played on this internal family rivalry, subtly shifting suspicion toward Jia Gui without directly mentioning him.

Fang Yuan mirrors the dynamic in the story of Ren Zu, where Belief Gu and Suspicion Gu represent conflicting emotions. By ensuring Jia Fu would lean toward suspicion of Jia Gui, Fang Yuan sows discord within the brothers. Fang Yuan had anticipated Jia Fu's willingness to believe that Jia Gui was behind the murder of Jia Jin Sheng. This belief not only absolves Fang Yuan of blame but also disrupts Jia Fu's focus, redirecting his anger toward his family instead of at Fang Yuan.

By providing Jia Fu with just enough clues and leaving the rest to interpretation, Fang Yuan ensured that Jia Fu would draw the conclusions Fang Yuan wanted. Jia Fu prides himself on his decisiveness and ability to project authority. Fang Yuan skillfully manipulated these traits to ensure that Jia Fu's actions aligned with Fang Yuan's goals.

Fang Yuan allowed Jia Fu to believe he was in control of the investigation, even as Fang Yuan subtly controlled his actions. This illusion of control ensured that Jia Fu would act according to Fang Yuan's plan.

Ultimately, Jia Fu's focus on displaying the right "attitude" prevented him from critically analyzing the situation.

Through this manipulation, Fang Yuan makes Jia Fu convinced that Jia Gui is the real culprit, removing suspicion from Fang Yuan.

[Crystallized Intelligence, Knowledge, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Realization, Emotional Engagement, Social Awareness, Social Intuition, Social Understanding, Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Mental Fortitude, Perseverance, Cognitive Discipline, Insight, Foresight, Perception, Critical Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Application Thinking, Strategic Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Divergent Thinking, Associative Thinking, Analogical Thinking, Abstract Thinking, Reflective Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Psychological Profiling, Logical Reasoning, Abstract Reasoning, Analysis, Acting Skills, Fabrication, Misdirection, Sophistry, Brainwashing, Mind Control, Puppetry, Indirect Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Execution, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy Success Rate, Planning Coverage, Planning Intricacies, Planning Versatility, Planning Applicability, Planning

Invincibility, Tactics, Methods, Setting Traps, Risk Management, Cunningness, Situational Awareness, Knowledge Application]

CLOSING REMARKS:

With this doc, we've tried to explain the intricacies of Fang Yuan's actions in the Jia Jin Sheng murder case, analyzing his planning, strategies, manipulations, and his other remarkable exploits. By breaking down his every move, we aimed to not only explain what happened but also to highlight the calculated brilliance that normally goes unnoticed.

Creating this doc has been an intense yet rewarding process, and we hope it has brought clarity and a deeper understanding of Fang Yuan's feats.

From uncovering the layers of deception to dissecting Fang Yuan's psychology and even understanding the correlation of The Legends of Ren Zu to the entire situation, our goal was to ensure that every detail is accounted for and every question answered.

Thank you for taking the time to read through our work. We hope this doc provided deeper insight into Fang Yuan's feats and will help you accurately scale him.

Fang Yuan: "The trouble from killing Jia Jin Sheng is finally settled."