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## *Chapter 4: Gu Yue Fang Yuan*

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The sun rises in the sky, the sun ray brilliant. The mountain fog is not very thick; the sharp rays easily pass through.

Over a hundred 15 year-old youths gathered in front of the clan pavilion. The clan pavilion was in the middle of the village, reaching 5 storeys and having sharp tilted roofs; it was heavily guarded. Before the pavilion was the square, and in the pavilion was the shrine of the Gu Yue ancestor memorial tablets. Every generation of clan head had lived in the pavilion. With every major ceremony or big incident, the clan elders would gather and discuss meetings here as well. This was the entire village's authority central.

"Good, all of you are punctual. Today is the Awakening Ceremony; it is your life's great turning point. I won't say much, just come with me." The one responsible at the moment was the elder of the academy. His beard and hair were white and he was in high spirits as he led the young teenagers into the pavilion. However they did not go up, but were led downstairs after going through the entrance of a great hall. Following down a constructed stone ladder, they went into an underground cave.

The group of youths made surprised and amazed noises. The underground cave was beautiful, stalactites sparkling with the colors of the rainbow. This light shone on the youth's faces, the neon hues gorgeous.

Fang Yuan was mixed into the crowd, quietly observing everything that was happening. In his heart, he thought: Hundreds of years ago, the Gu Yue clan came to Qing Mao Mountain and settled down after migrating from the central lands to the South Border. It was when they found a spirit spring in this underground cave. This spirit spring produces a large number of

primeval stones – It could be said that this was the foundation of the Gu Yue village.

They walked several hundred steps. It got darker and the sounds of water were faintly heard. After turning around a corner, a 3 zhang – wide(1) underground river greeted them. By now the colorful lights of the stalactites had disappeared completely, yet in the darkness the river emitted faint blue light. It was like a star river of the night sky.

The river flowed from the dark depths of the cave. Inside the crystal clear waters, one could see fish, aquatic plants and even the sand beneath the river. Opposite the river was a sea of flowers.

This was the Gu Yue Clan's closely cultivated moon orchids. The beautiful blue and pink colored petals were like shaped like a crescent moon; the flower stems were like jade, the center of the flower shining like the sort of warm brilliance that radiates from pearls under the light. At first glance, in the dark background the flower sea looks like a huge piece of land covered in bluish green carpet dotted with countless pearls.

The moon orchid is food for a lot of Gu. This flower sea could be said as the clan's biggest cultivation medium, Fang Yuan thought knowingly to himself.

"Wow, so pretty!"

"It really is beautiful!"

The new sight opened the young teenagers' eyes. Each one of them had a light radiating from their gaze with excited and anxious feelings.

"Alright, listen as I call your names. Those who are called must walk through this river to the opposite bank. Walk as far as you can, of course the further you go the better it is. Are you all clear?" The elder said.

"All clear," the youths replied. Actually before they came here, they had all heard their family members or seniors talk about it. It is known that the further you can walk, the better your talent is. Your future will also become brighter.

"Gu Yue Chen Bo." The elder held the name list and called out the first person.

The river was wide but not deep – it covered up to a youth's kneecaps. Chen Bo's face was full of seriousness as he stepped into the flower sea ashore. As he did so, he could feel an invisible pressure as if there was a wall in front of him that he could not see, blocking him from walking forward. During this moment, the flowers at his feet suddenly gave off a weak white light. The light gathered around Chen Bo and entered his body. For a moment Chen Bo felt the pressure drop; the invisible wall blocking him suddenly felt softer. With this, Chen Bo gritted his teeth and mustered his strength, walking forward. He tried to force his way in stiffly, yet after three steps the wall in front of him hardened again back to the state before. Thus he could not walk any further.

As he watched this the elder sighed. While recording what happened, he said, "Gu Yue Chen Bo, 3 steps, no talent to become a Gu Master. Next, Gu Yue Zao Xie!"

Chen Bo was deathly pale as he walked pass the river back to the youths, clenching his teeth. Without the endowed talent he could live as a normal human, holding the lowest position in the clan.

His stature was shaky; it was a huge blow to him, as if reality had killed all his hopes. Many people threw him pitiful gazes, while even more had fixated stares at the second person crossing the river.

It was a pity that this youth could only walk four steps forward – he did not have talent either.

Not everyone has the natural talent to be a Gu Master. Generally speaking, it is not bad if five out of ten people have talent. In the Gu Clan, this ratio is higher, reaching six people. This is because the Gu Yue clan's ancestor – The first generation clan leader was a famous, legendary and powerful man. Due to cultivation reasons his bloodline carried powerful genes, thus the average quality of talent in the Gu Yue clan was generally higher as they carried his blood in their veins.

With two consecutive failures, the other elders observing the scene in the dark started making ugly expressions. Even the clan head was frowning slightly. The next moment, the academy elder called out the third name: Gu Yue Mo Bei.

"Here!" A horse-faced youth dressed in linen robes lightly called as he came forth. He was tall in build, looking much sturdier than his peers. There was a brave aura about him. He crossed the river in a few steps and reached the opposite bank. 10 steps, 20 steps, 30 steps; one after another small lights entered his body. He walked until he reached 36 steps before he could finally go no further.

The youths at the riverbank watched with wide opened eyes, shocked. The academy elder happily exclaimed, "Good, Gu Yue Mo Bei, B grade talent! Come here, let me see your Primeval sea."

Gu Yue Mo Bei walked back to the academy elder's side. The latter stretched out his hand and put it on the juvenile's shoulder, closing his eyes as he

checked with focus. Then he retracted his hand and nodded, recording down on the paper: Gu Yue Mo Bei, primeval sea measuring six by six, can be vigorously trained.

This special talent can be measured by four grades – A grade to D grade. A D grade talent youth who is raised for 3 years would be able to become a rank one senior Gu Master, become the foundation of the family. A C grade talent youth after two years of cultivation will usually be able to become a rank two senior Gu Master, becoming the clan's backbone. A B grade talent must be cared for. Often becoming a future clan elder, with 6-7 years of training they will become rank three Gu Masters.

And when it comes to A grade, even if it was just one, would bring great luck to the entire clan. Great care must be given; with this talent in about 10 years they can become a rank four Gu Master. At that moment they would be able to compete for the position of the head of the clan!

In other words, as long as this Gu Yue Mo Bei grows up, eventually he will become one of the elders of the Gu Yue clan. That is why the academy elder laughed happily; the elders watching in the darkness also sighed in relief, then they all turned to look at one of the elders amongst them with jealousy.

This elder was also horse-faced, known as Gu Yue Mo Bei's grandfather, Gu Yue Mo Chen. His face was already smiling. He provokingly looked at his old nemesis and said, "What do you think? My grandson isn't bad huh, Gu Yue Chi Lian."

Gu Yue Chi Lian had a head full of red hair. He made an annoyed 'hmpf', not replying to other. It was apparent that his face expression was really dark.

One hour later, half of the youths had already walked through the flower sea. There were quite a number of C and D grade talents among them, while half of those youths had no talent at all.

"Sigh, the bloodline is getting thinner. These few years the clan hasn't had any rank four masters to strengthen the bloodline. The fourth generation clan head was the only rank five master, but in the end he perished together with the Flower Wine monk and did not leave behind any descendants. The Gu Yue clan's later generation talents are getting weaker and weaker," the clan head said with a deep sigh.

At this moment, the academy elder shouted, "Gu Yue Chi Chen!"

On hearing this name all the elders looked at Gu Yue Chi Lian; this was Gu Yue Chi Lian's grandson.

Gu Yue Chi Lian had a small and short build with a face full of pockmarks. He was clenching his fist, his entire face sweating. It was evident that he was incredibly nervous.

As he walked onto the opposite bank, the little lights entered his body; after walking straight for 36 steps he stopped.

"Another B grade!" The academy elder yelled.

The youths started a commotion, sending Gu Yue Chi Chen envious stares.

"Hahaha, 36 steps, 36 steps!" Gu Yue Chi Lian shouted, proudly staring at Gu Yue Mo Bei. This time it was Gu Yue Mo Chen's turn to have a sour face.

"Gu Yue Chi Chen, huh..." In the midst of the crowd, Fang Yuan stroked his chin thoughtfully. In his memories, the clan heavily punished Gu Yue Chi Chen because he cheated during the Awakening Ceremony. In reality Chi

Chen only had a C grade talent, but because his grandfather Gu Yue Chi Lian helped him fake the results, that's why he appeared to have B grade talent.

To be honest if he wanted to cheat, Fang Yuan had a countless number of ways to do so, some ways even more perfect than Gu Yue Chi Chen's method. If a B grade or A grade talent appeared, they would receive the clan's huge care.

But firstly, Fang Yuan had only just been reborn. It was hard to prepare the cheating method by this condition. Secondly, even if he managed to cheat, he would not be able to fake his cultivation speed. He would be exposed by then. However Gu Yue Chi Chen was different; his grandfather was Gu Yue Chi Lian – One of the two elders with the most authority within the clan. With this Chi Lian would be able to cover up for his grandson.

"Gu Yue Chi Lian was always hostile towards Gu Yue Mo Chen, these two elders are the clan's two biggest influential authorities. To suppress his opponent he would need his own grandson to have an outstanding talent. It is also because he was helping from behind, Gu Yue Chi Chen was able to conceal the truth for a time. In my memories, if it were not for that incident, the truth would never have been exposed."

Fang Yuan's eyes shone with light, his mind thinking up ways to use this knowledge to his advantage.

If he exposed the matter on the spot, he would receive a bit of reward from the clan, but then he would offend the highly powerful Gu Yue Chi Lian. This was not advisable.

Within such a short time he also could not blackmail them. Due to having low status, it would just backfire on him.

As he pondered, he suddenly heard the academy elder call out his own name: "Gu Yue Fang Yuan!"

(1) 3 Zhang(丈) – This is an old measurement unit in ancient China. 1 Zhang is 3.3 meters.