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## *Chapter 8: Things will always be things, but humans will change*

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Beside the academy was a Gu room. The Gu room was not big; it was only 60 meters<sup>2</sup> in size.

In a Gu Master's road to cultivation, a Gu is the key to strength.

At the end of class, the excited teenagers rushed towards the Gu room.

"Form a line, enter one by one," some voices suddenly yelled; it was natural that there were guards outside the Gu room. The youths went in one at a time and came out. Finally it was Fang Yuan's turn to enter the Gu room.

This room was a mysterious room. The four walls all had holes; in each one of these embedded square holes were another square hole. Each of the holes differed in size, some big and some small. The bigger ones were no bigger than a an earthenware cooking pot, the smaller holes no smaller than a fist.

In the many square holes were all kinds of containers – there were grey stone basins, verdant jade dishes, exquisite grass cages, earthen stoves etc. These containers kept in all kinds of variety of Gu.

Some Gu were silent, while some Gu made a lot of noises, creating chirping, clucking, rustling sounds and so on. All these noises combined together to create a sort of life symphony.

"Gu are also divided into 9 big levels, following the same concept of the 9 rank realms of Gu Masters. All the Gu in this room are Rank one Gu." Fang Yuan glanced around, immediately aware of this.

Generally speaking, Rank one Gu Masters can only use Rank one Gu. If they used higher level Gu, these masters would need to pay an extremely heavy price. In addition, Gu need to be fed. The high cost of feeding higher level Gu was often not something lower ranked Gu Masters could afford. Thus to Gu Masters who were newcomers, they would always pick a Rank one Gu worm as their first refined Gu unless under a special situation.

There is great significance to the first Gu that a Gu Master refines – It will become their vital Gu, interconnecting their lives together. If it dies, the Gu master will suffer a huge blow.

"Alas, my original wish was to get my hands on the Flower Wine Monk's Liquor worm and refine it as my vital Gu. But right now there are still no leads on my search for the Flower Wine Monk's skeleton. I don't even know when will I be able to find it, or when someone else does. Just to be safe I'll pick a Moonlight Gu first." Fang Yuan sighed inwardly as he walked straight along the wall on his left.

One of the top layers of the holes in this wall had a row of silver plates. In every plate was a Gu.

These Gu were crystalline and shaped like a crescent; it was like a piece of blue quartz. Against the backdrop of the silver dish, the Gu gave off a quiet and beautiful feeling.

Known as the Moonlight Gu, this variety of Gu was the local Gu of the Gu Yue clan and many of the clansmen would choose the Moonlight Gu as their vital Gu. The Moonlight Gu was not a Gu of nature; it was a breed that was cultivated with a secret method by the Gu Yue clan. The Moonlight Gu could

not be found anywhere else; it could be said that this Gu was a symbol of the Gu Yue clan.

Since it was all Rank one Moonlight Gu, there was very little difference among one another. Fang Yuan casually chose one and took it. The Moonlight Gu was very light, comparable to the weight of a piece of paper. The insect occupied a small area of his palm; it was roughly the size of a common jade pendant. As Fang Yuan put it on his hand, he could see through it and gaze at the lines on his palm.

With one last look and finding nothing wrong with it, Fang Yuan put the Moonlight Gu into his pocket and walked out of the Gu room. Outside the Gu room, the queue was still quite long. As soon as the next person in line saw Fang Yuan leave, he went into the room hurriedly with excitement.

If it were others, when they got their Gu the first thing they would do, would be to take it home and quickly refine it. But Fang Yuan was not in a hurry to do so, for his mind was still thinking about the Liquor worm.

The Liquor Worm was more precious compared to the Moonlight Gu, although the Moonlight Gu was a specialty of the Gu Yue village, it did not help a Gu Master as much as a Liquor Worm.

After he left the Gu room, Fang Yuan headed straight for the tavern.

“Shopkeeper, two jars of aged wine!” Fang Yuan fished around his pockets and drew out the remaining primeval stone pieces, putting them onto the counter.

These few days he would come here and buy wine, then go around the village border and scout, intending to attract the Liquor worm so it would

appear. The shopkeeper was a short and fat middle-aged man, his face oily. After these few days he had already remembered Fang Yuan.

"Sir, you've come." While he greeted Fang Yuan, he stretched out a thick and short chubby hand and skillfully swiped away the primeval stone pieces. As he put them onto his palm he shifted his hand up and down and felt that the weight was correct. With this the shopkeeper's smile deepened.

Primeval stones were the currency used in this world, used to measure the value of all commodities. At the same time it was also a condensed matter of the world's essence, usable on oneself, and is important in helping a GuMaster in his cultivation.

As it has monetary attributes as well as usable properties, it was similar to the gold on Earth. Earth has a gold currency standard system, and in this world it was replaced with primeval stones. Compared to gold, the purchasing power of primeval stones is even more astonishing. However with Fang Yuan's continued spending like this, no matter how many primeval stones he had it would not be enough.

"Two jars of wine everyday, and it has been 7 full days already. The initial savings I had are already almost all spent," Fang Yuan frowned slightly as he walked out of the tavern with two jars of wine.

Once someone becomes a Gu Master, he would be able to extract primeval essence straight from a primeval stone to replenish the primeval sea in his aperture. Thus to Gu Masters, primeval stones were not just a form of currency, but also a supplement in their cultivation. With sufficient primeval stones, the rate of cultivation will increase greatly; this can make up for the disadvantages of those with lower talent grade.

"I won't have primeval stones to buy wine anymore tomorrow, yet the Liquor worm just doesn't want to appear. Do I really have to take the Moonlight Gu and refine it as my vital Gu?" Fang Yuan felt rather unsatisfied.

As he walked with the two jars of wine in his hand, he started to wonder. "Academy elder said, the first person who manages to refine his vital Gu will get a reward of 20 primeval stones. Right now I guess a lot of them are at home trying their best to refine their Gu and compete for the first position. A pity, refining the vital Gu is more of a test of one's talent. Those with better primeval talent will have better advantage. With my C grade talent, without any special means I have totally no chance of winning."

It was at this moment, the voice of Gu Yue Fang Zheng called out to him from behind. "Big brother, you really did go to the tavern and buy alcohol! Follow me, aunt and uncle want to see you."

Fang Yuan stopped in his tracks and turned around. He found his younger brother was no longer like before, always lowering his head as he spoke. Right now the two brothers gazed at each other face to face.

A gust of wind blew, lifting up the older brother's messy short hair, the lower hem of the younger brother's robes swishing around.

Just a short period of one month has gone by, yet humans change.

A week after the Awakening Ceremony, a huge change came upon the older brother and the younger brother. The older brother Fang Yuan fell from the clouds, the title of genius mercilessly destroyed. And the younger brother began to bloom with radiance, slowly rising up like a new star.

To the younger brother Fang Zheng, this sort of change was earthshaking to his world. He finally tasted the feelings that his older brother used to have –

the feelings of people pinning their hopes on him, the feelings when people use envious and jealous looks to gaze at him. He felt like he was suddenly dragged out from a dark corner and placed into a heaven filled with light. Everyday when he woke up, he felt like he was having a very sweet dream. The difference of how he was being treated from before and now was like day and night, making him somewhat unable to believe his reality even until now, but at the same time also strongly unaccustomed to it.

It was hard to adapt.

In a short while from being unknown to someone who was closely watched, people pointing at him all the time. Sometimes when Fang Zheng walked on the road, he would hear people around him talking about himself, voices praising him. His face would heat up and he would feel completely at a loss of what to do, his eyes trying to avoid gazes, he even almost forgot how to walk properly!

The first ten days or so, Gu Yue Fang Zheng became thinner yet his energy became more vigorous. From the inner depths of his heart, something called 'self-confidence' began to manifest.

"This is what big brother had always been feeling before, how beautiful and painful at the same time!"

He could not stop thinking about his older brother Gu Yue Fang Yuan; facing such attention and discussion, how did his older brother deal with it?

He subconsciously started to imitate Fang Yuan, pretending to look expressionless all the time, but quickly found that he was not fit for this kind of style. Sometimes during class, a girl's shout could easily send him red-faced. On the roads, all the flirting from older women even caused him to flee in a hurry many times.

He was like a toddler learning how to walk, stumbling and falling as he tried to get used to his new life. During this entire process, he was unable to avoid hearing about his older brother – falling into depression, becoming a drunkard, not going home at night, sleeping soundly in class.

He felt very shocked at this. His own older brother, once a strong entity and hailed as a being of great genius, suddenly becoming like this?!

But slowly he started to sort of understand. His big brother was also a normal man after all. Encountering this kind of setback and huge blow would send anyone into depression. Along with this understanding, Fang Zheng secretly felt an indescribable happiness inside. This feeling was something he was terribly unwilling to admit, but yet it definitely existed.

His older brother who was hailed as a genius and always covering him in shadow, acting so depressed and dispirited right now. From a reverse angle, it was a testimony to his own growth, wasn't it?

He was the outstanding one, this was the real truth!

Hence when he saw Fang Yuan holding the wine jars, his hair messy and clothes untidy, Gu Yue Fang Zheng felt relieved, his breathing also becoming a lot easier. But yet he said, "Big brother, you have to stop drinking, you cannot go on like this! You have no idea how worried the people who care about you are, you need to wake up!"

Fang Yuan was emotionless; he did not say anything. The two brothers gazed at each other.

Younger brother Gu Yue Fang Zheng's eyes were shining, giving off a sharp and keen feel. And the older brother Gu Yue Fang Yuan's two orbs were a deep black, faintly resembling a deep ancient pool. These eyes could not

help but make Fang Zheng feel a strange oppression. Not long after he subconsciously turned away his gaze and looked somewhere else.

But when he realized it, he felt a sudden rise of anger. It was an anger that was directed at himself.

What's wrong with you? Can't even muster the courage to look directly at your big brother?

I've changed, I've completely changed!

With these thoughts his eyes shifted back their sharpness and he shot his gaze at his brother again. But Fang Yuan was already not looking at him. Holding a jar of wine in each hand, he walked past Fang Zheng and said in a dull voice, "What else are you gawking at? Let's go."

Fang Zheng's breathing became disoriented, the strength that had accumulated inside his heart no longer able to be released. This made him experience a depression that was hard to describe.

Seeing that his older brother had walked far ahead, he could only quicken his pace to catch up. But this time his head was no longer lowered, but rose to meet the sun. His gaze was fixed on his own feet that was stepping on his older brother Fang Yuan's shadow.