

Carefree 141

[Carefree Path of Dreams](#)

Chapter 141: Twist

In the beginning of the new year, Liu Yan from the Secluded Mountain Prefecture attacked Summer Sun Prefecture. In just half a month, he had managed to take down 15 cities and had caused 8 cities to be burning in fire. The casualties rate was very high and the whole of Xia Country was horrified by this!

The Summer Sun Prefecture Armed Forces had lost the battle and the Prefecture master had no choice but to abandon the Prefecture City. He then went to ask for help from the Clear Spring Prefecture, the royal family of the Xia Country or anyone who had the ability to do so.

On the 15th day of the 4th month, the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Armed Forces had surrounded the whole of Summer Sun Prefecture City and a big battle started.

It was dawn.

Above the city wall of the Summer Sun Prefecture, there were many cultivators getting up onto the city building to observe the movement of the enemy.

"Zhe! Zhe!"

A scholar who was dressed in green then sighed and said, "Every order will be executed. The soldiers train daily and there is even a special way for them to set up the tents.....They are a group of powerful soldiers indeed!"

"Humph, my Summer Sun Elite Forces is not any inferior to the Secluded Mountain Prefecture. That Old Liu Yan is very experienced in martial arts and there are Mu Li and Xiang Zilong assisting him!"

The Summer Sun Prefecture Master who was beside the scribe was pulling a long face.

The scribe, who had made that comment previously, was the Clear Spring Prefecture Master. Even though both positions were of the same level, the Clear Spring Prefecture Master didn't say anything that was hurting as he had travelled all the way here to help the Summer Sun Prefecture.

"Well said!"

The scribe laughed and didn't refute. "Even though the strength of my armed forces has increased, I only have about 50,000 soldiers and another 20,000 soldiers as reserves. With your ability, Summer Prefecture Master, we will have a chance!"

"I'm not afraid of wars, but Liu Yan doesn't play this war the proper way. He is a spiritual knight and went off many times. What can we do?"

The Summer Sun Prefecture Master sighed.

"If that is the case, why do you still need my help?"

The scribe dressed in green then laughed and continued, "Liu Yan is overboard this time!"

From the way they looked, Liu Yan had actually broken the rules of the protocol between Wu Zong and spiritual knights.

Nevermind if he was insatiable and felt like attacking others. He actually used his role as a spiritual knight to sabotage others and caused others to lose their faces. Hence, there would be a loss of interests. If one would provoke a spiritual knight and that spiritual knight had found ways to attack one's sovereign even though he cannot defeat that one, the actions of the spiritual knight would be considered evil.

Liu Yan was the initiator of this war and hence he deserved a beating.

"The royal family has stated that they fully support our Prefecture in this attack, but they haven't sent any actual help....."

The Summer Sun Prefecture Master gave a cold laugh and said, "Looks like after this war, we will not only have to change the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Master, the royal family will also have to be...Hehe..."

"Indeed....there are many movements from the royal family recently!"

As the scribe heard this, his eyebrows moved as well.

Even though there was chaos in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, the royal family had reached out too much and this was also a problem for those few prefectures. Also, there were a few traces left behind.....

If not for the pressing issue of Liu Yan, the Clear Spring Prefecture Master would have to ask for an explanation from the royal family with another ally already.

In the past, the 3 prefectures had got together to create troubles for the royal family for a few times.

The final outcome was that the royal family could only incur the losses without saying anything and the royal family even lost a king. Hence, the royal family was back into its original position and had to take care of the losses it had incurred.

Even though the situation was different this time, the outcome would still be the same.

The Clear Spring Prefecture Master was very confident of this.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

At that moment, there was a long chirp and a black shadow came from the enemy's side. There was a person on top and the person looked violent and tough. Who else could the person be other than Liu Yan himself?

"Xiao Yunqing, Lan Xiaosheng!"

Seeing that the two prefecture masters were here, Liu Yan felt even more excited and said, "You both are here? Very good! I can just remove you two at one go and there will be no need for the extra effort to remove separately!"

"Old Liu, your words are aggressive!"

Lan Xiaosheng focused on Liu Yan. Even though his mouth was not wide open, his voice was able to travel through the clouds.

"Roar! Roar!"

There was a furious roar coming from the city and a giant black shadow flew above the city wall. It spread its wings and flew into the sky.

The black shadow felt like a dragon and a tiger at the same time!

It had the look of a big tiger, but it had wings and was very energetic.

It is a special tiger with wings!

The tiger was the White Winged Tiger! It was a tamed spiritual beast from the Clear Spring Prefecture. It not only was able to fly, its body was tough like metal and it could fight against a [Martial Artist (11th Gate)]!

"Let's go!"

Xia Yunqing and Lan Xiaosheng leapt lightly onto the back of the White Tiger. Lan Xiaosheng looked at the lonely Liu Yan and laughed. "I'm impressed that you dare to fight against us even though you are alone. Where are your 3 leaders, the spiritual knight and the young sect master?"

"I alone am sufficient enough to defeat you two!"

Even though the two prefecture masters right in front of Liu Yan were also great spiritual knights, Liu Yan was very confident and treated the two of them as though they were dead already!

Such attitude made the two prefecture masters even more furious.

"Good! Very good! Looks like you are powerful enough to defeat the two of us on your own. How can we reject this?"

Xia Yunqing gave a long laugh and was feeling excited.

From the way he looked, it would be hard for Liu Yan to defeat the two of them on his own if he had not reached the Elemental Opening Realm!

This was the best time to end the war as Liu Yan was on his own.

He turned his head and saw that Lan Xiaosheng also had the same look as him. Both couldn't wait to defeat Liu Yan.

Both of them looked at each other and as the White Winged Tiger gave a loud roar, it pounced in the direction of where Liu Yan was...

.....

Just when the 3 prefecture masters were fighting.

Back in the capital of the Xia Country.

The Xia Country was split into 3 prefectures. Most of the land was controlled by the respective prefectures and there was a small portion of land that was still controlled by the royal family. At least it showed that the royal family still had some sort of power in this country.

The capital laid at the intersection of the 3 prefectures and there were no walls built around the capital city!

It was said that it was decided to be like this when the 3 prefecture masters were chosen. However, this clearly showed that the royal family of the Xia Country had to be a puppet forever and couldn't go against anyone who had great power.

Since there was no wall surrounding the capital city, there were enemies in all directions and the city was prone to many threats. The royal family had also become weak.

If not for the survival of the king's heritage and the restraint of the 3 Prefecture masters, the whole of Xia Country would have probably been exterminated.

"So how is it, Princess?"

Back in a tall building in the royal palace, tea was served to Xie Lingyun who had just returned from her trip as an ambassador. Her expression was confused and she was facing a white-haired energetic old daoist.

"Even though Liu Yan is frenzied and has created trouble for the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, the matter is still related to Xia Country. The two prefecture masters of the Summer Sun and Clear Spring are both loyal ministers and how can we let Gui Country handle this matter for us?"

Plus.....I'm just a lady and you, the ambassador from the Gui Country has looked for the wrong person!"

Xie Lingyun said confidently, "I should look for Father to discuss this matter!"

"Hehe....Miss Xie, why do you have to hide from me? Miss Xie, your power is considered to be great in this country! In fact, the king from my home country is also impressed with your methods of handling the matter!"

The old daoist shook his head and seemed to have known some secrets.

"What are you talking about?"

Xie Lingyun's expression changed.

"I'm not speaking nonsense. Your methods are special. In just a short period of time, you are able to rapport the support of a spiritual knight and a Wu Zong. This is incredible!"

The old daoist laughed and said.

As he spoke, Xie Lingyun's energy was being shocked a little and she couldn't regulate her energy, which caused her face's colour to be changing.

"Wu Zong is here. You don't need me to point out where the spiritual knight is, do you?"

The old daoist looked into Xie Lingyun's eyes intensely as if he wanted to know what she was thinking.

"Just tell me, what are you going to do now?"

Xie Lingyun took a deep breath and her expression changed.

If Fang Yuan was here, he would be surprised by her change in expressions.

Xie Lingyun was standing straight with much confidence and she looked like a commander who had no miscalculations.

"I have said before. The king from my home country is willing to help you. However, after everything is settled, please give a portion of the Secluded Mountains as a reward to the king.....and you two can get married. The king has been admiring you for a long time already....."

The old daoist shook his head when he said that to Xie Lingyun.

As she heard this, she laughed and suddenly gave a cold look. "The king of the Gui Country is indeed asking for a lot from me, I will have to reject his offer!"

"You don't have to reject this offer straight away!"

The old daoist continued with much confidence, "Your plan of interlocking the attacks is indeed great and you even placed a mole by Liu Yan's side. However, you have overlooked something!"

"Lu Renjia?!"

Xie Lingyun was able to what was it on the spot and she was surprised. "I was already guessing that Lu Renjia had something to do with the foreign power. So it was you people!"

"We only put a little trick there and we didn't expect to reap anything from it!"

The old daoist stroked his beard and continued arrogantly, "I see that you have known quite a lot of things from Lu Renjia and that include one secret method....."

"Is it regarding the method of using high-quality spiritual objects to break through the bottleneck?"

Xie Lingyun interrupted him and gave him a mocking look.

"So princess, you also know that. You are indeed special....."

The old daoist was a little surprised but was still full of confidence. "What I want to mention is the other manual. The manual is dedicated to Blood Demon and one could use a normal person's blood to recover one's elemental force! This method is called the Blood Refining Technique. This technique could cause a lot of damage as it requires the blood of thousands of people to produce its effect. Also, one could be affected mentally if one executes this technique!"

"Blood Refining? Blood Refining!"

Xie Lingyun was shocked and her nails were gripping onto something unknowingly. "The Huangshi City is being burnt?"

"Correct, we have sent our men to have a look and indeed, there is a possibility that many people are already the victims of this technique.....However, Liu Yan was smart and he burnt the whole city straight away to remove any traces and evidence."

The old daoist gave a weird smile and continued, "I guess you will know whether it is real or fake very soon!"

"Princess!"

At that moment, there were a few rapid knocks on the door. Then, a servant rushed in and was looking very anxious. "Breaking news from the Summer Sun Prefecture! Liu Yan has managed to defeat the other two prefecture masters. He has killed Xia Yunqing while Lan Xiaosheng, who was seriously injured, has escaped. The Summer Sun Prefecture.....has been taken down!"

"What!?"

Xie Lingyun's expression instantly changed.

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Chapter 142: Shi Yutong's Dream

End of the fifth month.

Accompanying the Summer Sun Prefecture Master's death, and the escape of the Clear Spring Prefecture Master's death, the Secluded Mountain Prefecture's soldiers occupied the entire Summer Sun Prefecture and seemed to be targeting the Imperial City next.

In a short while, Liu Yan's influence grew exponentially and was known as the number one spiritual knight, his infamous name spreading throughout the country.

"Xia Yunqing is dead? Lan Xiaosheng has escaped with injuries?"

As he returned to Qinghe County, Fang Yuan received this news and was in disbelief.

"Impossible! This would only be possible if Liu Yan is in the Elemental Opening Realm! If he was still in the Elemental Gathering Realm, he would be no match against two opponents the same level as him... Unless..."

Fang Yuan sighed and looked at Zhou Wenwu. "Any other details?"

"Reporting!"

Zhou Wenwu bowed. "From our sources, the three Prefecture Masters fought with extreme intensity, especially when Liu Yan struck, the fire burnt the clouds in the sky, making the entire sky a crimson red like it was on fire..."

"After that, Prefecture Master Liu took over Summer Sun Prefecture and gathered the Wu Zongs and spiritual knights within the prefecture to swear their loyalty to him. If they did not do so, they would be severely dealt with!"

At this point, he looked stressed out. "Sir, what should I do?"

"A cloud burnt by fire?"

Fang Yuan twitched his eyebrows. "This is a little weird..."

Based on his knowledge, Liu Yan's spiritual fire was green.

Of course, this was a small detail. The important thing was that Liu Yan had a resounding victory. Why did he not continue and take over the Imperial City and become king, but gather the heroes and martial artists in Summer Sun Prefecture?

'Could it be... that he had not entered the Elemental Opening Realm and only won because he used other improper means... By now he should have run out of energy...'

Fang Yuan was deep in thought, and as he glanced at his worried subordinates, he chuckled. "If anything happens, we'll react to it accordingly. Since Prefecture Master has invited me, I will go..."

After all, the takeover of Summer Sun Prefecture would mean that Liu Yan had gotten his hands on their valuables and treasures. He did not know if he could forcefully achieve a breakthrough, and was rather curious about this.

'Of course, before all this, I should focus on my own cultivation!'

After dismissing his subordinates, Fang Yuan arrived at the meditation room, crossed his legs and sat down. With a flip of his palm, an Elemental Gaining Pill looted from Lu Renjia's secret mansion appeared.

"The medicinal properties of a spiritual pill is extremely strong, and cannot be compared to spiritual rice, which can be consumed daily. However, I still can use it to increase my cultivation once in a while!"

Fang Yuan mulled. "I have already tested these few bottles of spiritual pills on others, and their effects are indeed remarkable, with no side effects, and it should be safe for me to try it... Who would have thought that I will end up taking spiritual pills to aid in my cultivation?"

Without hesitation, his eyes flashed as he popped an Elemental Gaining Pill into his mouth. He shut his eyes as he allowed the pill to take its effect.

Fang Yuan was extremely experienced in taking spiritual objects, but this was his first attempt at taking a spiritual pill.

As the pill entered his stomach, it was a different feeling altogether.

A strong and steady spiritual force was felt, like an awakening dragon swirling within him. His muscles expanded and he felt like his skin was being stretched.

'This spiritual pill is still much stronger than spiritual rice in terms of medicinal properties!'

This spiritual pill was made from the essence of spiritual objects, and therefore should not be compared to a normal spiritual plant.

Based on Fang Yuan's estimation, the spiritual force from one of these pills would be akin to eating 66 pounds of spiritual rice! This was the speciality of an alchemy master.

After a long while, Fang Yuan opened his eyes.

"The Wu Zong elemental force within my Dantian is indeed stronger, what a pity it cannot go any further..."

Feeling the progress in his cultivation, he twitched his eyebrows. "However, there is still little growth in my dream elemental force. It is still stagnant as before, and it seems that it can only be cultivated through dream accessing and dream building!"

As he thought to this point, he used his magical energy to scan through his entire body, and his expression changed again. "Although the spiritual pill is remarkable, there is still the fear of pill poisoning and the problem of increasing dependence on it... However, I still don't have the luxury of having one spiritual pill each day, and that a high-levelled alchemy master made used of nature to produce this spiritual pill, which means that it should not be poisonous..."

...

There was no higher attainment for a Wu Zong, and therefore it did not matter how much more the elemental force was being developed.

Fang Yuan stopped taking the Elemental Gaining Pill as he turned his focus on the Calming Pill.

He first targeted Ling Yin.

This girl was a spiritual disciple and was equivalent to a [Martial Artist (11th Gate)]. However, as of now, she was exhausted by Fang Yuan and was almost on the verge of mentally breaking down.

If Fang Yuan was interested, he could change the mindset of this lady and could make her a loyal servant.

Ultimately, he was not an evil person and did not have the ill intention to change her memory drastically. He only wanted to correct the hostility towards him in her subconscious mind. For instance, he could retarget her hatred onto Liu Yan, before slowly making her loyal to himself.

In the cell, within the Ecstasy Fog, Ling Yin was sleeping soundly and appeared naive.

"A good dream!"

After he made a slight amendment to her memory, Fang Yuan stood up and left the cell.

Changing someone else's memory was a huge process. Even though it was just a minute change, the process could still take up to a day or two.

However, once the process was completed, her loyalty could be assured and she could be part of them now.

"If we're talking about this..."

Walking past a few other cells, Fang Yuan looked at a few familiar faces and thought to himself. "We could try this method on the Lin Family, especially Lin Leiyue and Lin Benchu, and that would save Zhou Wenwu all the trouble as well..."

Regarding the Lin Family's future, although Fang Yuan had left the decision to Zhou Wenwu, it only made him more conflicted.

He could not release them, but could not kill them as well, and could only hold them in the cells.

The hardships that the Lin Family had gone through were enough. If they promised not to create trouble outside in the future, they could actually be released.

As for Lin Leiyue, since Master Wenxin could see her potential, then she should not be as simple as having spiritual abilities?

"Go!"

After leaving the jail, Fang Yuan called for the Iron-tailed Black Eagle and flew to where he captured Shi Yutong.

"You're here again!"

Within the cave, Shi Yutong crossed her legs and was seated, emotionless.

Since the moment she knew that she could not entice Fang Yuan with anything, and could not convince Fang Yuan to release her, she had been like this the whole while.

However, Shi Yutong felt a sense of danger today and tensed up.

'To improve my cultivation and my dream elemental force, I have to access many dreams and build many dreams. Even a spiritual disciple cannot guard against my dream-building abilities anymore, and the next I shall try is a Wu Zong...'

Fang Yuan had a look of determination and waved his hands, as a white fog appeared.

"What do you want?"

Shi Yutong was shocked.

The unknown was the most feared. Her elemental force was already sealed by Fang Yuan, and he could do anything to her. Yet, he was still rather serious, and must, therefore, have an ulterior motive - From the looks of it, her gut feeling was correct, but there was nothing she could do.

She was completely helpless as Fang Yuan had all the control over the situation!

As the Ecstasy Fog flowed, Shi Yutong fought hard but to no avail. Her eyes shut as she fainted

Fang Yuan maintained his seriousness.

If he failed to access a Wu Zong's dream world, the consequences would be dire.

"Hopefully, the Calming Pill would be as effective as it was described, and hopefully it would be able to clear my mind!"

Fang Yuan knew that at his current stage of cultivation, it would still be insufficient to access a Wu Zong's dream, unless he had the help of a spiritual pill.

Therefore, he swallowed the spiritual pill and pointed at Shi Yutong's forehead. "Dream Accessing!"

...

Qinghe County, Spirit Returning Sect.

The doors were tall and majestic.

A group of young children wore martial arts robes and queued up to enter the Spirit Returning Sect.

"Listen up. Spirit Returning Sect is the number one Sect in Qinghe County. It is your honour to enter the Sect. From today onwards, you need to swear your loyalty and promise not to break any Sect rules, otherwise..."

There was a martial artist coach in front lecturing the group. As he approached the end, his tone became stern.

"Now, we will begin to assign you to your coaches. Please come up if your name is called!"

The deacon's voice was heard. "Zhaohu, Wanger, Qiansun... You are under Coach Gui! Come out now!"

"Master!"

Three kids came to the front and kowtowed to a man in brown robes, as he called himself their master.

"Mm, follow me!"

The man in the brown robe looked serious and albeit unwilling, brought the three kids with him.

"The next group, Zhou Luoqiu, Bao Hongyan, Yu Bicheng... You are under Coach Zhang!"

Three other mischievous kids came up and greeted a middle-aged lady.

Their clothing revealed that they were all rather well to do. The lady coach seemed kind and a little more skilled than the previous coach in brown robes, and as she nodded her head she brought the children with her.

"Next group..."

Accompanying this voice, the number of children was getting lesser and lesser, and finally, only a few of them remained.

"This is weird... Why am I here?"

A kid in torn clothes like a little beggar had a doubtful look on his face.

It was as though an Ecstasy Fog was swirling in his head, giving him a headache.

"Who... am I?"

"Fang Yuan! Are you alright?"

At this point, a little girl approached him and asked him nervously.

"Fang Yuan? Fang Yuan! I am Fang Yuan!!"

The little beggar mumbled to himself and smirked. "Thank you, little sister!"

After being lucid, Fang Yuan felt his energy grow like animal instincts and scanned his surroundings.

"Mm... This is indeed Spirit Returning Sect. All thanks to the spiritual pill, otherwise I would have been lost in this dream world..."

At his side, the little girl stared at him, clueless.

"Forget about it!"

Fang Yuan was feeling rather disturbed and pinched the little girl's cheek. It felt slightly different from Lanruo, and he asked, "What is your name?"

"Shi Yutong!"

The little girl smiled and passed to him a white handkerchief, "Come, wipe your face!"

"Mm?!"

Fang Yuan shockingly received the handkerchief and was confused.

Were the heavens playing tricks with him?

...

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Chapter 143: Blood Demon

"There is no difference between the real world and the dream world?"

Back in the Green Peak, Fang Yuan made himself a pot of Questioning Heart Tea and he looked dazed.

His expectations were exceeded when he went into the dream world this time.

If the Calming Pills didn't produce its effect to keep Fang Yuan alert, he would probably not have been able to wake up on his own.

Even though he managed to wake himself up in the dream world this time, Fang Yuan was still a little confused.

"This is another effect of the dream world!"

The fragrance of the spiritual tea went into his nose and Fang Yuan touched in between his eyebrows. "I have been rushing through my cultivation recently, hence it is inevitable that I'm feeling mentally unstable!"

Even though this experience was shocking and it didn't hurt him, it gave him a reminder.

Ever since he had become the dream master, his cultivation level had improved tremendously, but he still thought it was not enough and decided to use spiritual pills to push himself further. Hence, there was a setback.

If he hadn't realised it early and wasn't able to wake himself up to recover himself with the spiritual tea and fruit, he would probably end up lost in the dream world and it would be very difficult for him to find his way back!

As he was making tea, Fang Yuan recalled Master Wenxin's Meditative Tea Ceremony. He then focused on clearing his mind to become innocent and pure.

"I have managed to learn something from this experience!"

Fang Yuan took a sip of the tea and looked at his stats window.

"Name: Fang Yuan

Essence: 11.2

Spirit: 11.5

Magic: 10

Profession: Dream Master

Cultivation: [Dream-Building Master (Complete)], Wu Zong

Technique: [Eagle Claw Iron Skin Technique (Grade 13) (???)], Ecstasy Spell, Shadowstep

Skill: [Medicine (Level 3)], [Botany (Level 5)]"

"Not only there is an improvement in my essence, spirit and magic, I have completed the realm for dream-building from the previous dream access as a Wu Zong!"

In other words, when he had completed the realm for dream building, it was equivalent to a spiritual knight who was already at the peak of the Elemental Gathering Realm and had reached the threshold for the Elemental Breaking Realm!

This was also the evidence to show that Liu Yan, Xia Yunqing and Lan Xiaosheng were capable enough to become the prefecture masters!

"Of course.....even though elemental breaking is hard, the holy realm is even harder! To have something from a dream world and display it in the real world, even if it was just a grass, a flower, a sand particle or a small rock, it is still difficult to achieve that!"

The stage which involved a dream master to enter a dream world to build the dream was similar to a spiritual knight who was at the Elemental Gathering Realm. Fang Yuan guessed that the Holy Realm was equivalent to the Elemental Breaking Realm!

Fang Yuan didn't know what kind of magical power a spiritual knight who was at the Elemental Breaking Realm had, but for a dream master who was at the holy realm, the dream master could convert his accumulations to battle strength and this was not a trivial matter!

"If I was at the Holy Realm, even if Liu Yan was at the Elemental Breaking Realm and he had brought a few more spiritual knights who were of the same level as him to fight against me, I would not be afraid! Unfortunately....."

Fang Yuan shook his head and sighed.

"Holy Realm only has one requirement; one has to be able to display something from the dream world into the real world! It can be even just a sand particle and it will be sufficient!"

As he thought about the requirement for this breakthrough, he gave a wry grin.

One's mind could affect a matter and one's consciousness can affect the reality. How could this be so easily achieved?

The Holy Realm!

This was the realm that every dream master had wished to go for. One could say that most of the dream masters who had managed to break through successfully would be stuck in that realm.

The mountains, the vegetation, the rivers, the lakes and all living things.....All these had to be displayed which in the end, would form a small real world. How was this easy to achieve?

"Unfortunately.....Xia Country and the nearby countries like Yuan Country and Wu Country are quite ignorant. These countries don't have any inheritance of Wu Zongs and also dream masters. Or else, I will have a group of people to consult with and I will not be struggling to explore on my own....."

Fang Yuan was feeling regretful. He got up and went to patrol the garden.

As he had reached Level 5 for his botany skills, he could shorten the time taken for the plants to grow. Hence, Fang Yuan planted all the spiritual seeds he had.

The effect was the biggest on the Flame Jade Rice. The crops were heading and could be harvested soon.

This applied to the other spiritual seeds as well, even for the seed of the Vermillion Fruit which would take a long time to grow and there were only slight changes to the seed every day previously. This had caused Fang Yuan to be in despair previously.

"It is hard to get Vermillion Fruit, but I have lots of bamboo fruits...."

Fang Yuan had managed to get a good supply of bamboo fruits from the spiritual bamboo for rainy days and let out a long whistle.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

In the sky, the cloud was separated and a Red-eyed White King Bird came flying down. It landed right in front of Fang Yuan and rubbed its head against him. It showed a close relationship with Fang Yuan.

"Little White, I will need your help this time!"

Fang Yuan touched the feathers of the Red-eyed White King Bird and gave it a smile.

This bird was definitely better than the Iron-tailed Black Eagle in terms of ability. This bird was as powerful as a [Martial Artist (12th Gate)]. Plus it could get mad and fly, and hence it could fight against a Wu Zong!

Since he was heading to the Summer Sun Prefecture, it would be a dangerous trip and hence Fang Yuan would want to bring another who could fight.

"Iron-tailed Black Eagle, Flower Fox Ferret, please help to take care of the spiritual medicine when I'm not around!"

It has already been decided and Fang Yuan couldn't care what the other two spiritual beasts had thought of it. He immediately got onto the back of the bird and flew up into the sky.

...

"It was rumoured that ever since Liu Yan entered the Summer Sun Prefecture, he didn't attack Huangshi City. Instead, he ordered to have the whole city on fire and the number of people who were either injured or killed was at least 10,000. From that day onwards, whenever he met a city which had resistance, he would order the city to be burnt and the whole Summer Sun Prefecture was like a living hell....."

"Hoo! Hoo!"

In the sky, the wind was very strong.

Fang Yuan passed by Huangshi City and saw a black contour line along the city wall and it looked as if like a scar. He then gave a light sigh.

"Even though he has killed a lot of people, I will still have to admit that his method is a good one to display his might!"

"Also, as the Summer Sun Prefecture Master is killed, the whole Summer Sun Prefecture will have to listen to Liu Yan's orders in fear and no one will dare to disobey him. Liu Yan is on his way to dominating this prefecture....."

Fang Yuan was speechless with regards to Liu Yan's actions.

Liu Yan had admitted that he was not going to live any longer and he would die if he didn't make a breakthrough. It was expected of him to become so frenzy right before his death.

"The sky is turning dark. I should find somewhere to rest and continue tomorrow!"

He looked at the head of the bird and patted it lightly.

The Red-eyed White King Bird let out a long chirp and started to descend.

"Eh?"

However, at that moment, Fang Yuan saw a bright light from the corner of his eye. The light was coming from Huangshi City and it was flirtatious.

.....

"Demon! A demon!"

A troop of soldiers from the Summer Sun Prefecture cried out loud and were running in all directions.

Behind them, there was a bright red light blinking and it formed a shape of a Blood Python. The python chose its target and started biting the target!

In fact, it had already done that.

"Ssss..."

The huge python looked real and the scales on its body were very clear. Its rolled its red tongue out and one of the soldiers who ran away the slowest was being swallowed. The blood of the soldier was absorbed and it spat back out a dry corpse.

It seemed like it was playing with its prey. It didn't kill the soldiers all at once and instead, it caused the soldiers to spread out and run away. Then, it would catch them one by one and drink their blood, like a legendary demon.

"Jie jie.....The Yang in the blood of the soldiers is just nice and the blood tastes good. This is benefitting me!"

There was a person on top of the Blood Python. The person was wearing a blood red coloured robe and was demonic.

"How dare you, demon!"

A lieutenant from the Summer Sun Prefecture shouted at the demon and he was also a 4 Heavenly Gates martial artist. He then projected his voice to a distance away. "Since you are also a spiritual knight, how can you not know the protocol in Xia Country? A martial artist who has elemental force cannot attack any normal people randomly! Or do you want to be wanted by the 3 prefecture masters?"

"Hehe.....the 3 prefecture masters?"

The person gave a demonic smile.

"Sssss!"

The Blood Python roared and the next moment, the lieutenant didn't have time to defend himself and was trapped by the tongue of the Blood Python like a dumpling.

"Liu Yan from the Secluded Mountain Prefecture had broken the rules. He was killing people by setting the whole city on fire. Also, Summer Sun Prefecture Master Xia Yunqing was killed and the Clear Spring Prefecture Master Lan Xiaosheng had escaped with serious injuries.....Now, who else in the whole of Xia Country would dare to go against me?"

That spiritual knight was laughing crazily and was feeling regretful.

"Such opportunity to obtain blood openly in public was rare. Unfortunately, all the prefecture masters were taken away by Liu Yan and I pity them.....Hehe, their blood contained the grudges of tens of thousands of people. If their blood was given to me, I'm afraid I would be able to reach the peak of the Elemental Gathering Realm instantly and I could try for the Elemental Breaking Realm....."

"Evil thief!"

A 4 Heavenly Gates martial artist could not handle a spiritual knight.

That lieutenant had no choice but could only see his own blood being taken away and he would soon become a dry corpse.

"You will be punished.....for your sins!"

Before he died, the lieutenant's voice became hoarse and he cursed.

"Jie jie.....I will be punished?"

The spiritual knight waved his hand and the dry corpse flew out. The corpse was split into a few portions as it landed on the ground. "I will still have to be fearful of punishments for my sins? In this country, who has the capability to punish me? Haha.....Haha....."

He laughed loudly and was full of arrogance.

However, the laughter suddenly stopped, as if a duck had been grabbed by its neck.

The remaining soldiers who had managed to survive looked up and saw a giant white shadow flying down quickly like a lightning. Within seconds, it was already at the head of the Blood Python.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

The white shadow moved and it revealed the Red-eyed White King Bird. It revealed its claws and landed on the Blood Python with much force.

"Sssss!"

The Blood Python let out a sorrowful cry and was pushed by about 35 yards away. A blood red fog started to spread and there was a foul smell.

"Blood Demon, long time no see!"

On the back of the bird, there was a young master whom as if was sent from heaven and laughed.

"Are you.....Fang Yuan?!"

The Blood Demon could recognise that the person was Fang Yuan.

When Lu Renjia was surrounded, he was the last to reach the battlefield and had met Fang Yuan that time. He was so frightened the previous time and hence he escaped.

"I was finding a place to rest but I didn't expect to meet my enemy. Don't even think of escaping today!"

Fang Yuan looked at the dry corpses that were lying on the ground and sighed.

"Humph! Stop bragging!"

The Blood Demon's face got serious.

He had decided on the spot to retreat that day as there was suppression from Liu Yan and he was not confident in dealing with 2 spiritual knights and 3 Wu Zongs at the same time!

However, he was only dealing with one person currently!

"Even if your power is doubled of a Wu Zong, you are still too arrogant!"

The Blood Demon looked in all directions to make sure Fang Yuan was really alone. Then, his eyes were filled with anger. "I will gladly accept your blood then!"

[Carefree Path of Dreams](#)

Chapter 144: Decapitation

"The world shall burn and drown in blood!"

Facing the country's most gifted martial artist thus far, Blood Demon did not dare to hold back his abilities. His opening move was the highest level of the Blood Magic Technique.

"Voom voom!"

Streaks of blood appeared in a shield surrounding him, making it look like he was engulfed in flames. It was quickly expanding as Blood Demon charged towards Fang Yuan.

Even though this was not the blistering Yang fire, it was the more lethal and virulent Yin fire. Once it contacts the skin, it would cause the flesh and bone to disintegrate instantly.

"This is indeed the Blood Magic Technique!"

Looking at this, Fang Yuan's eye lid jumped.

The spiritual spell used by Blood Demon were similar to those in Fang Yuan's Blood Magic Manual. They were after all from the same source. Of course, in comparison, it was evident that Blood Demon had already mastered the skills to the highest levels while Blood Killer and company were not even worthy of being his disciples.

However, to use this technique against him might seem very surprising.

After all, the Blood Magic Manual was with him!

"Rains of heaven!"

In response, Fang Yuan steadily made a hand gesture and a layer of rain and cloud appeared.

"Haha...Did you think my flames were normal fire?"

Looking at this, Blood Demon broke into a mocking smirk. It was as though he was disdainful of Fang Yuan for underestimating him. However, his smirk widened into a shocked look of disbelief.

This was because under Fang Yuan's manipulations, relentless drops of rain poured out of the clouds into the centre of the blood-coloured flames.

"Splash!"

After a few huge loud explosions, the toxic flames that could engulf the entire world were extinguished. What was left were the white fumes that were beginning to disperse.

"How is this possible?"

Blood Demon was panic-stricken.

Not only was Fang Yuan just a novice at spiritual spells. More significantly, he only used a simple spiritual disciple technique to successfully counter the Blood Magic Technique. This was extremely intolerable to Blood Demon.

Bead of cold sweat were beginning to form on his forehead.

Based on what he felt, the drops of rain were incredibly compact and tough. Yet the rainfall was also as flexible and nimble as a fish. It went straight for the weak point of his spell and completely caused it to fall apart. It was like hot knife cutting through butter.

If he had heard of the classic tale about the chef carving the cow's carcass, it would definitely be more surprised and shocked than he already was.

This was because Fang Yuan only used a very common technique which he had practised and mastered to perfection. Furthermore, he did not expend a significant portion of his energy and powers to do so.

"This spiritual spell..."

Huge beads of cold perspiration flowed from Blood Demon's forehead. He felt as though Fang Yuan had seen through him already.

"You have killed many innocents for no reason and committed several other heinous crimes. Today I will serve you the justice you deserve...Of course, these are not the main reasons. Who asked you to provoke me first!"

Fang Yuan smiled, and a wavering streak of green light flew out from his palm.

"Crap!"

Blood Demon retreated instantly, and a dark red light appeared from his body, "Heavenly Blood Shield!"

After setting up this defence, he turned on his heels and sped off without turning back.

How could he fight against such an opponent? He would not dare to fight against Fang Yuan ever again in his life.

After all, to fight against an opponent who could see through him was enough of a hellish experience.

After experiencing it once, Blood Demon did not wish to go through it a second time.

However, it was a pity as Fang Yuan was not going to let him off so easily.

"Go!"

With his command, the streak of green light became extremely vibrant and flexible. It skirted along the sides of the red shield and caused it to vibrate violently. Then, the green light cut through the shield with ease.

"Snap!"

Blood Demon was taken aback. He saw his shield break open like an egg shell to reveal the green light. It looked like a weirdly shaped green dagger.

"Ancient Green Serpent Dagger?"

Of course, he was familiar with this weapon which was used by Lu Renjia formerly.

"Pooh!"

The Ancient Green Serpent Dagger flew towards him from extremely tight angles.

Amidst all these, Blood Demon turned and bent over his waist into a painful angle as he attempted to dodge the weapon.

Even so, the dagger pierced through his shoulder and sent blood splattering into the air.

Fang Yuan panted violently like a hopeless beast. He was trying desperately to find a way to survive and was at the same time extremely dumbfounded by Fang Yuan's abilities.

"You have already reached the peak of the Elemental Gathering Realm?"

Glaring at Fang Yuan, these words came out of his mouth with great difficulty as he refused to acknowledge the facts.

Fang Yuan breaking his spiritual spell earlier could be due to his carelessness and Fang Yuan's good fortune. However, with the dagger penetrating through his defences, it showed that Fang Yuan was indeed capable and there were no excuses this time.

Without waiting for Fang Yuan to reply, several wounds on his body opened up and blood flowed from them. It was almost as though he was dipped into blood.

"Hehe, I will remember you! Blood Escape Technique!"

With this shout, Blood Demon transformed into a ray of red light and shot away with amazing speed.

Previously, he also used a similar technique while escaping from Liu Yan and Taoist Mu Li. Even though Taoist Mu Li had a spiritual bird, he was also unable to catch him.

"Red-eyed White Bird King! Rage!"

At this point, it was evident that Blood Demon might not be that lucky again.

With a shout, Fang Yuan leapt onto the Red-eyed White Bird King.

The bird cawed continuously. The tips of its feathers turned into a bright red bloody colour. Its originally blistering speed increased by five times! With a flash of white light, it easily caught up with Blood Demon.

"How is this possible?"

Blood Demon was completely at loss of what to do.

This technique was his last resort. Whenever he executed it, it would take up a huge portion of elemental force. It even had negative side effects such as causing him to sustain serious injuries or decreasing his powers.

Of course, with such risks involved, the results were outstanding. It enabled him to travel at a speed so fast that even a normal spiritual bird could not keep up with him.

Ever since Blood Demon trained and mastered the Blood Magic Technique, he had always relied on this technique as a trump card and reassurance to do whatever he wanted.

However, how was it possible that the spiritual bird Fang Yuan was riding could keep up with him?

Blood Demon was shocked to the core.

Not only was Fang Yuan able to reach the peak of the Elemental Gathering Realm at such a young age, how was it also possible for him to get a spiritual bird as powerful and ruthless?

'Something is wrong, this spiritual bird is obviously a large eagle. Its speed cannot be this fast!'

Blood Demon tried to spur himself on "Even though this bird might be faster than me, it might be because of some secret elemental energy. As long as I can outlast it, I still might escape!"

Thinking about this, he drummed up his courage and bit off the tip of his tongue. He then spat out a mouthful of vital blood.

"Splash!"

Riding atop Red-eyed White Bird King, Fang Yuan saw the traces of blood on the ground grew thicker with shades of purple. Blood Demon's speed increased by 3 times.

"Hehe...you are now gambling your life on this?"

Calmly, he took a few bamboo fruits and fed them to Red-eyed White Bird King and ordered, "Continue to chase after him, let's see how much more blood can he afford to spit!"

"Kaw kaw!"

Red-eyed White Bird let out a loud shrill and the feathers on it became even redder. With the enhancements of the bamboo fruits, the duration of its rage was extended.

After some time.

"What the...what creature is that? It has endless energy? This is not normal!"

The rays from the Blood Escaping Technique grew weaker. Blood Demon was ghostly pale, and the black colour of his hair faded to resemble a sickly and withering tree. He was unsteadily falling to the ground.

Hearing the caws from the bird behind him, he opened his mouth with much difficulty, but he no longer had enough vital blood.

"Haha... it seems like my proud life will have to end in such a pathetic manner. This is retribution!"

Blood Demon's coarse vocal chords made his laughter sound as horrendous as a crow. His vision went black and he fell to the ground.

"Hmm?"

Red-eyed White Bird King landed majestically as Fang Yuan leapt off. He was slightly suspicious as he wondered, "Is he dead?"

As the rays of light of the Escape Technique vanished, he saw Blood Demon.

Blood Demon's corpse was in state way worse than those preserved by Fang Yuan. All the vital blood in him was expanded.

"He exhausted himself by continuously using the Blood Escaping Technique"

Fang Yuan then looked at the utterly exhausted Red-eyed White Bird King next to him and immediately fed it a few bamboo fruits, "Eat them slowly, do not worry, I still have many more for you..."

If Blood Demon came to live and saw this, he would definitely die of anger again.

"Green Serpent! Go!"

Looking at the breathless Blood Demon, Fang Yuan still refused to leave anything to chance. Waving his hand, a green ray of light appeared and shot towards Blood Demon, slicing off his head.

Only then did Fang Yuan truly believe he was dead.

"You are indeed a special fellow, even though you died such a pathetic death..."

Fang Yuan then unhesitatingly stepped up to search his body.

He was very interested to find what a spiritual knight had in his possessions.

Sadly, Blood Demon was a poor devil. He had nothing else on him except for a jade scroll.

Fang Yuan then used his magical will to look through Blood Demon's corpse. He found the lower portion of the Blood Magic Manual. It seemed like Blood Demon had some form of relation to Blood Killer.

It was a pity that the two of them were killed by Fang Yuan, but Fang Yuan could not be bothered to find out more.

"These types of unscrupulous issues are not worth my time. But the Blood Escaping Technique does seem promising!"

Fang Yuan was not interested in the Blood Magic Technique at all, but he was pleased to find the Blood Escaping Technique in the lower portion of the Blood Magic Manual.

Undoubtedly, even though the Blood Escaping Technique used up a lot of energy, it was more of a benefit than a loss to someone who mastered it.

"However, is this all a spiritual knight possessed?"

Fang Yuan could not believe this. Thinking of how Blood Killer behaved, he waved his hand. The robes on Blood Demon were torn open instantly to reveal the naked corpse of Blood Demon.

"Eh?"

At this time, something caught the attention of Fang Yuan.

A patch of skin on Blood Demon's chest looked different from the skin on the rest of his body. Evidently, something was done to it.

Fang Yuan waved his hand. With a flash of green light, the piece of skin flew into Fang Yuan's palm.

"What a brilliant way to hide this!"

This piece of skin was treated before. It was extremely similar to human skin. As it covered Blood Demon's flesh for some time, it was not immediately obvious that it was not human skin.

It was only because the way in which Blood Demon died caused his muscles to shrink, exposing the difference to Fang Yuan.

"Could this be a special technique too?"

In the extremely thin piece of leather, it could only store at most a sheet of paper. When Fang Yuan opened it, his eyes widened, "This is..."

In his hands was a piece of old map. The lines and colours on it were extremely familiar to Fang Yuan because he already had two other similar pieces!

"The third piece of the treasure map!"

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Chapter 145: Plot

"This is heaven's will!"

In front of Fang Yuan, the three damaged treasure maps combined into one and transformed into a complete map which outlined an area with a red dot at its centre. It was only when the three maps were combined before the information was revealed. Even if an outsider possessed a copy of the map, it was worthless as the true copy was required.

"The first map was a gift from Han Shou, the second map was obtained from the Five Ghosts Sect from Lieyang County...and this third map was with the Blood Demon..."

Fang Yuan rubbed his eyebrows as he pondered.

"Wait...According to the findings of the Five Ghosts Sect, the third map was with the third disciple of 'that master'[1] who had left the country...and this Blood Demon was coincidentally a spiritual knight who travelled the 4 seas...Could he be the descendant of the third disciple?"

His eyes brightened, "If that is really true, a lot of things would make sense!"

From the Blood Magic Technique, the Blood Demon and the Blood Killer were somehow linked, and if the Blood Demon was the descendant of the 'that master', he would surely know the secret of the treasure map. If that was the case, it was no coincidence that the Blood Killer and the Five Ghosts Sect Master knew each other and were likely to be influenced by the Blood Demon to act as a spy to locate the other 2 maps.

Even the Blood Killer's action of swallowing the treasure map would make sense.

Although this was just a speculation, Fang Yuan felt that the guess was not far off from the truth.

"I seem to have an affinity with treasures recently. I have just obtained Lu Renjia's secret mansion and another bigger treasure awaits me..."

Fang Yuan carefully examined the map.

There were a few mountain ranges and water bodies on the map that appeared foreign to Fang Yuan. However, he was certain that he would be able to track down the location of the treasure if he compared the map with the maps of Xia Country and the neighbouring countries.

“The treasure must be really important. From the methods of ‘that master’, there might even be risks. Now is not the time to be impatient!”

Fang Yuan leapt onto the Red-eyed White Bird, “Time to go to Liu Yan’s banquet...just that...”

He looked at his surroundings and appeared to be perplexed, “Where is this place?”

...

Just as Fang Yuan chased too far and left the borders of the Summer Sun Prefecture, and had to hurry back.

Summer Sun Prefecture City.

The prefecture city had undergone many changes. After the fire, the city walls still remained. However, the original flags had now been replaced by the flags of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Armed Force. There were few pedestrians on the streets and they hurried with their head down. They would occasionally glance up at the flags and the soldiers, their eyes full of hatred.

The Prefecture Master’s Residence was bustling with activities.

Ever since Liu Yan displayed his unparalleled military might, the Sects within Summer Sun Prefecture had started to come forward to surrender.

Furthermore, Liu Yan had gathered the Wu Zongs and the spiritual knights and consolidated his power to with an air of unifying Xia Country. Banquets were hosted in the Prefecture Master’s Residence for days and nights and the residence was extraordinarily lively.

Rare and precious spiritual items, especially fire-type items were confiscated by his troops and delivered to his residence.

“Adding oil to a blazing inferno, what good luck!”

Outside the residence, an old man who was previously secretly conversing with Xie Lingyun gazed in front of him, his eyes appeared to flash.

He turned, and looked at Xie Lingyun, “Princess, are you ready?”

Xie Lingyun bit her lips and appeared to be helpless, “Even you said that that man possessed good luck, why are we even fighting so hard against fate?”

The Taoist Elder was not only of high cultivation level, in the spiritual knight world, he possessed all kinds of abilities. Xie Lingyun had previously experienced his powers and did not dare neglect it.

“That is incorrect!”

The Taoist Elder shook his head, “While Liu Yan possessed good luck, his fate is like a bonfire which requires an endless supply of firewood to keep it burning. However, his energy is starting to diminish and he does not have much time left. He had spent much of his energy in defeating the two prefecture masters previously. If we act now, he would have no chance to live.”

Xie Lingyun was hesitant and did not speak.

“Hehe...unless you want to see him unify the prefectures and eventually enter the capital and usurp the throne?”

The Elder Xuan Sheng sneered.

“Of course not. It is just that your conditions are too harsh...for the two families to become in-laws and divide the counties. The Secluded Mountain Prefecture have 6 counties which belong to the country.....our ancestors fought countless of wars to create this. How can we easily give this up?”

Xie Lingyun replied slowly.

“Since the passing of the King of Xia, the three Prefecture Masters have coexisted side by side. These lands only belong to the royal family nominally...”

Elder Xuan waved his hand, “Furthermore...you have already agreed to be with the king and even sign the documents. Are you trying to go back on your promise now?”

“Of course not!”

Xie Lingyun glared at the elder, “Lingyun just wanted to remind Elder Xuan that we hope that Wu Country would abide by the agreement. While Xia Country might not be as strong, we still have an army!”

“Of course!”

Elder Xuan turned red, “When you are married to our king, Xia Country and Wu Country would be united. The king of Xia would be the father-in-law of our king. Of course, we would come to your aid. Once we have gotten rid of Liu Yan, Xia Country would be able to reclaim the Summer Sun and the Clear Spring Prefectures. That would be a cause for celebration!”

“I certainly hope so!”

Xie Lingyun sighed deeply, “I have already brought the Wuzong from my country. The spy within the City Master Prefecture would assist you too. When are you going to act?”

“Liu Yan had already been exposed to the Elemental Opening Bottleneck. Ordinary traps would not work on him. Only by pressuring with an ambush by an army would work on him!”

Xuan Sheng laughed, “I brought the imperial advisor of Wu Country, the Blood Demon and the elders as backup especially for today. With the Wuzong and the spy in the residence, Liu Yan has no chance of surviving.”

“Imperial advisor of Wu?”

Xie Lingyun appeared to be afraid upon hearing the title.

“Haha...if he did not offer his help, who would dare to take on Liu Yan? Now princess, do you believe in our sincerity?”

Taoist Elder Xuan Sheng laughed loudly. He took out a string of firecrackers and tossed it into the air, causing it to explode mid-air.

“Honghong!”

In the deafening blast, an overpowering aura could be felt. A man flew forward on a Qingye spiritual weapon and boomed, “I am Wu Wudao! Where is Liu Yan?”

“Imperial Advisor of Wu?”

Liu Yan and Taoist Mu Li flew out of the residence on the back of the Wind Chasing Falcon, their expressions solemn.

This was especially true for Liu Yan.

With just a look, he could tell that the person in front of him was no less powerful than him. They were both at the peak of the Elemental Gathering Realm and were stuck at the bottleneck.

“Wu Country and Xia Country had never interfered with each other’s state affair. Why is the imperial advisor here?”

Liu Yan asked loudly.

“The devoted took to the task when the victims begged for help!”

Wu Wudao wore a golden helmet. His face looked boorish and he sported many battle scars. His cape flowed with the wind and he gave out an overbearing presence. He was a highly skilled spiritual knight.

“Victims begged for help?”

Liu Yan’s eyebrows appeared to be smoking, “Those traitors in the capital! I should have disposed of the royal family first when I had the chance!”

“It is too late to say all these. Come!”

Wu Wudao beckoned.

“Come!”

Liu Yan’s expression was grave. He spoke to Mu Li, “You go first and rally the troops and guard against any raid!”

“Understood!”

Mu Li retreated before his expression changed. He aimed for Liu Yan’s back and struck him.

“You...”

Liu Yan could not react to this betrayal in time and was struck by Mu Li. His face turned red and he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood.

“How dare you!”

He ground his teeth and his surroundings were set ablaze. The Wind Chasing Falcon below him caught fire and turned into a massive blaze in the sky.

“Please forgive me! I have my reasons to do so!”

Taoist Mu Li stood behind Wu Wudao and said, “I originally worked for the Xia royal family. My previous interactions with you were all a facade!”

“Haha, well done!”

Xuan Sheng witnessed the scene and raised his eyebrows, “I did not expect that the princess would insert a spiritual knight as a spy next to Liu Yan. This level of deception makes me feel so inferior now.”

“This is insignificant. Act now. I do not want the Secluded Mountain Prefecture to be given the opportunity to rise again!”

Xie Lingyun’s words were cold. It was time to remove the problem at its roots now that she had already acted!

“Very well! With our underhand methods and the reputation of the princess, we will accomplish great things within the Summer Sun Prefecture!”

Taoist Elder Xuan Sheng gave the signal and not long after, the whole Summer Sun Prefecture was in a state of unrest.

“Prefecture Master!”

Leader Niu and his man rushed forward towards the area where the Wind Chasing Falcon fell upon seeing Liu Yan being ambushed.

“Hong!”

Spiritual strength spurted out and shredded the corpse of the Wind Chasing Falcon. Liu Yan walked out slowly, “I am fine!”

The corner of his mouth was dripping with fresh blood that contained a tinge of green.

“Master Liu, there is no need to use the Wind Chasing Falcon to instigate me...”

Taoist Mu Li spoke coldly, “You are heavily wounded at your core and poisoned badly. How much more spiritual energy do you think you can harness?”

“Taoist Mu Li, you would dare to do such a thing?”

Leader Niu bellowed.

“When two armies go to war, unscrupulous methods would naturally be utilized!”

Wu Wudao laughed, “Don’t tell me you don’t know this?”

“Haha...good!”

Liu Yan appeared to be breathing weakly. However, his eyes were bright, “There will only be one survivor in today’s battle!”

[1] ‘That master’ refers to an individual that has not been unveiled as of this chapter.

[Carefree Path of Dreams](#)

Chapter 146: Death

"Hmmm? That is..."

Fang Yuan rode on the Red-eyed White Bird and soared above the nine heavens at an astonishing speed.

As he reached the borders of the Summer Sun Prefecture City, his expression grew serious.

Immerse spiritual pressure could be felt in the direction of the prefecture city. The city was ablaze and was covered in thick black smoke. The scene looked apocalyptic.

"Could it be that Liu Yan felt that burning the eight cities was not enough and wanted to burn down even the Summer Sun Prefecture?"

Fang Yuan spat, his face solemn.

In the prefecture city, a plot was being carried out against Liu Yan who was surrounded by assassins!

"Given Liu Yan's current prowess, only those who are extremely skilled and hold high appointments in the country would be able to force him to this stage...could it be that the wheel of fate has turned? He had not even gotten the Wu Zongs and the spiritual knights in the two prefectures to swear their loyalty to him and it appears that he is going to be disposed of first..."

Fang Yuan smiled.

He did not know if Liu Yan would be a blessing or a bane in the future. At least now, he would not be forced to take sides.

"Little White, fly higher!"

Fang Yuan gave the orders to the Red-eyed White Bird after he thought through it.

It would be safer for him not to take sides and instead observe when the two sides clashed.

....

As compared to Fang Yuan, the countless people in the prefecture city were not as calm.

"Houhou!"

In the sky above the residence, 9 scarlet fire dragons with their tails intertwined together were spitting flames. This caused the whole sky to be painted crimson red.

"Heavenly Fire Dragon?"

Xie Lingyun's emotion was a mix of fear and regret as she witnessed this scene, "Liu Yan had truly reached the Elemental Breaking Bottleneck!"

"It is precisely so that will seal his fate!"

Xuan Sheng spoke without a moment's hesitation, "In the neighbouring Wu Country, Yuan Country...and even Xia Country do not have a spiritual knight who has reached the Elemental Breaking Bottleneck take on a command position. Who would wish to have a superior if they are powerful leaders themselves?"

Xie Lingyun laughed bitterly. She did not know why but a silhouette of a youth appeared in her mind.

She knew that he was an exceptional genius who had the potential to surpass Liu Yan given enough time.

"Wu Wudao! I will bring you down along with me if I die today!"

Liu Yan stood on top of the fire dragon's head, his eyes fixed on the Imperial Advisor.

His hair was in a mess and his chest was riddled with holes. He looked sinister and let out a laugh. He bit his tongue and spat out a mouthful of purple-red blood. His pores opened and beads of blood started to flow out to form a figure of a man from the blood.

"Flaming Blood Secret Technique! Scarlet Dragon Fire Pill...explode!!!"

"Houhou!"

The nine fire dragons let out a cry before they each spat out an illusionary pill the size of a fist. The pills combined to become the size of a human head, raging with flames and flew towards Wu Wudao.

"Chhh!"

Wu Wudao did not dare to be complacent and hurriedly dodged the attack. However, layers and layers of the Five Elements Light appeared on his body and surrounded him.

In that instant.

The fire pill pursued Wu Wudao and clashed with his defence.

"Honglong!"

The heavens and earth turned dark.

The wind howled and tore at the ground.

"Cough cough..."

Taoist Elder Xuan Sheng looked at the sky amidst the dust, "Shit... If the Blood Demon was here, Liu Yan would have fallen into the trap with his previous technique and would be subdued by the Blood Demon!"

"Why is he not here?"

Xie Lingyun asked coldly.

"This.....how would I know?"

Xuan Sheng looked around and saw something. He immediately leapt forward, "Imperial Advisor sir, are you okay?"

"Cough Cough.....I am fine!"

Xie Lingyun followed closely behind and arrived at a badly damaged stone wall. She could see a person with torn clothing and badly burnt skin. His abdomen was pierced by a metal spear and he was nailed upon the wall, fresh blood trickled from his wound.

Upon seeing the arrival of Xuan Sheng, his eyes brightened, "I may have been struck by Liu Yan's flying spear, but he had been struck by my God Searching Palm. Not even the deities can save him! The final victory is mine! Cough cough..."

He appeared to be proud and spat out mouth after mouth of fresh blood.

"Don't mind me, go and collect Liu Yan's corpse! Also, get rid of all the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Armed Forces, especially the three Wu Zongs!"

Wu Wudao waved them away and grasped the metal spear. With a yank, he pulled out the spear which resulted in his blood gushing out from his body.

"Understood!"

Xuan Sheng respected the Imperial Advisor. He stood up and gave the orders to his people.

Behind him, Xie Lingyun witnessed the scene.

After this incident, the prefecture city was badly damaged. In addition to the destruction of the cities, the Summer Sun Prefecture was greatly weakened.

After Liu Yan's death, Wu Country would gain the Secluded Mountain Prefecture according to the agreement which would further enhance their power.

The strong ones would become stronger while the weak ones would become even weaker. Would Xia Country be able to fend off Wu Country's conquest after tens or hundreds of years?

Lingyun was afraid that not even a small village would be left!

Her view was bleak when she thought about it.

...

"Cough Cough..."

After Liu Yan used the Flaming Blood Secret Technique, he was sure that he was going to die. He was immediately surrounded after he beat Wu Wudao.

He was groggy and could not remember what happened next.

It was then when a small blaze that went down his throat and spread through his body caused him to wake up and open his eyes.

He could see that he was in a cave. The floor was wet. It was dark and silent. The moss that grew at the sides were covered in dew drops.

"I...I..."

He opened his mouth and realized that his voice was coarse like sandpaper. He could not help but smile bitterly.

Just the act of smiling caused him to feel like his body was being torn apart.

After being struck by Wu Wudao's God Searching Palm, he had completely lost his Elemental Force that he had painstakingly trained and was now useless.

It was a miracle that he was still alive after sustaining such grave injuries.

'I must have been saved by a master or unknowingly swallowed some treasure for me to be still hanging on to my life.'

Liu Yan's eyes lit up with hope as he realized that there was someone there.

"Master Liu, are you awake?"

The voice was familiar. The other person took out a Bright Moon Pearl which lit up the whole cave. Liu Yan was astonished. "It's you! Fang Yuan!"

"Of course it's me!"

Fang Yuan laughed and sat beside Liu Yan, "Who else would be able to save your life other than me? What happened in the Summer Sun Prefecture City?"

From his question, Liu Yan was convinced that Fang Yuan was not a member of Wu Country.

Liu Yan remembered his defeat and his expression grew dark, "The Imperial Advisor of Wu challenged me to a fight, Taoist Mu Li was a spy and betrayed my troops and I..."

He did not have to use his brain to guess that the troops and even the three Wu Zongs in the prefecture met their ends.

"Imperial Advisor of Wu?"

Fang Yuan nodded his head and looked at Liu Yan, "You are gravely wounded and your magical energy is diminishing. There is no doubt that you will die! I can only prolong your life for a while longer. If you have any regrets, do say now!"

"You would help me seek revenge?"

Liu Yan's eyes were burning.

"No..."

Fang Yuan smiled, "If you request something that is not too difficult and my mood is good, I will help you. If the task is too difficult, dream on. I will just bury you and we will be even!"

Liu Yan flushed. He could not speak out any more requests.

After a while, he sighed, "I regret not being able to break through the Elemental Breaking stage..."

"I am afraid that you would still be involved even if you wanted to stay out of it, Brother Fang!"

"Oh? Why is that so?"

While Fang Yuan could deduce as much, his heart sank when he heard what Liu Yan said.

"Haha... why did Wu Country agree to help out this time? This is because the Xia Country Royal Family gave them sufficient incentives! Hmm! Those stupid worms, other than the state, what is there to sell? I am not sure of the other conditions, but I am sure one of them would be dividing the land in return!"

"Dividing of land?"

Fang Yuan stroked his chin, "The Secluded Mountain Prefecture would be affected by the drawing of the countries' boundaries!"

"That Wu Country...cough cough..."

Liu Yan coughed, his whole face red. It was obvious that his time had arrived, "...had coveted the Secluded Mountain Prefecture for a very long time. It was previously prevented by me. Now, it is up to you. Brother Fang, I still had a favour to ask of you and I hope that you would not decline!"

"Speak first!"

Fang Yuan's face was distorted.

"I hope that you would take over the position as the Prefecture Master of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture!"

Liu Yan said solemnly.

"Me?"

Fang Yuan pointed at himself. He was speechless.

The position of Prefecture Master had always been held by the most powerful. As of now, there was no one more suitable than him.

"That's right, this is my way of revenge and is definitely beneficial for you too!"

Liu Yan struggled before he managed to take out a black seal and passed to Fang Yuan.

"This seal enables you to take command of the troops in the 6 counties within the Prefecture...I still have some treasure in the residence. They are now yours! Remember that the Wu Country is very greedy and ambitious. They will not let any outsiders break through to the Elemental Breaking Realm. They come for me this time and they will not let you go next time!"

Liu Yan used his remaining energy to tightly grasp Fang Yuan's hand.

Not long after, the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Master who had astonished numerous countries took his last breath and passed away.

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 147: To Seize

"Secluded Mountains Prefecture Master?"

Within the cave, Fang Yuan looked at the body of Liu Yan and the black Secluded Mountain Seal in his hand. He pondered without speaking for half a day before he shook his head. "He has really given me a tough problem!"

There was no doubt that Liu Yan was selfish and wanted Fang Yuan to avenge him before he passed away.

The position to be the Prefecture Master was a bait!

However, Fang Yuan had to admit that Liu Yan said was true.

In the struggle for power, those spiritual knights who were close to surpassing the Elemental Opening Realm would become a thorn in the flesh of the countries.

Then what about him, the genius who was just barely over 20 and had already surpassed the Elemental Force Realm in both martial arts and magical prowess?

He was able to enjoy peace previously as the Secluded Mountains Prefecture already had Liu Yan who was targeted.

Furthermore, they did not realise that his rate of improvement would be so frightening.

If Wu Country had found out that Fang Yuan had already reached the peak of the Elemental Gathering Realm, he would suffer the same fate as Liu Yan.

When he had taken over the position as the Prefecture Master, he would draw attention and trouble from all sides and would not be able to hide away from them even if he were to hide in the deep mountains!

"This is the dilemma! Both sides would not be able to feel at ease with each other, especially after the death of Liu Yan..."

Fang Yuan sighed, "Only when one side is destroyed, or when absolute dominance is achieved would there be peace, if not, there will be war and lives lost!"

His name had already reached the ears of Wu Country. Furthermore, Liu Yan was no longer there to protect him.

Once Xia Country had divided the Secluded Mountains Prefecture, he would be under the jurisdiction of Wu Country. His fate would no longer be under his own control.

"It appears that I should take on this position!"

He could either choose to escape far away or go against Wu Country.

As he was pressured by both sides that were on the verge of war, it was naturally better for him to take on the position and consolidate his power in the Secluded Mountains Prefecture.

"I will play with all of you!"

Fang Yuan laughed.

The greatest difference between Liu Yan and him was that he was still young and had a lot of resources. If things did not go his way, he could easily escape on his eagle. There will always be another opportunity for him to come back.

Only when he was willing to lose would he gain.

After all, Fang Yuan was not a dead man hanging from a tree.

...

He would do what he thought of.

Fang Yuan's speed was unmatched due to the Red-eyed White King Bird.

He reached the Secluded Mountains Prefecture City even before the news of what happened in the Summer Sun Prefecture reached.

"In terms of speed, my Red-eyed White King Bird is unmatched...however, the news are not just spread by men. If Wu Country was coming, they would have mobilized their troops by now..."

Fang Yuan circled the city another round before patting the Red-eyed White King Bird. Together, they descended in front of the City Master's Residence.

"Who are you?"

In an instant, a group of soldiers surrounded him. Upon seeing that it was Fang Yuan, they immediately shrank back.

They could remember that Fang Yuan did not even give the Prefecture Master any face. What about them? They saluted Fang Yuan, "Welcome Master Fang!"

"Hmm, where is the City Guardian? Bring me to him!"

Fang Yuan nodded his head and asked.

"The City Guardian is sick and would not be entertaining any guest, we are really sorry!"

An officer of the army turned pale and immediately said upon hearing Fang Yuan's request.

"Oh? Sick? All the more I should pay him a visit!"

Fang Yuan smiled and arrived next to him, "Have you forgotten that I am the famous doctor within the prefecture? What illness does the City Guardian have? Let me go and have a look!"

"This..."

It was obvious that the officer was hiding something. His eyes were shifty and just as he was about to speak, Fang Yuan grabbed him and his body went limp.

"Lead the way!"

Fang Yuan appeared to be smiling but his words were laced with threat.

He possessed immense martial arts and could easily act before the bystanders were able to react.

"Okay..."

The officer knew that he would die if he were to challenge Fang Yuan.

From an outsider's point of view, Fang Yuan was amiable and was bantering with the officer. However, the officer knew better and could only lead Fang Yuan towards the residence with a bitter face.

“Shualala!”

Upon reaching the courtyard, Fang Yuan could hear the sound of armour dragging against the floor in the surroundings.

The troops of soldiers stepped forward, their swords unsheathed and their arrows aimed at Fang Yuan.

A black-faced officer raised up an emblem, “The City Guardian ordered that he would not entertain any visitors today. Please leave!”

“Hmmm? What courage!”

Fang Yuan laughed and boomed, “Even if Liu Yan was here, he would not dare to use this tone to talk to me! Could it be that you are giving false orders and conspire against me?”

The atmosphere in the prefecture city had been weird these few days.

Even the vice city guardian claimed to be ill and would not see any guests.

A few soldiers wavered and shrank back.

While the black-faced officer was their superior and even carried the emblem, they should not be expected to fight with a person that was both a Wuzong and a spiritual knight!

How many brothers-in-arm would be wounded or killed if they were to take part in the fight without the support of a martial artist who had reached the Elemental Force Realm?

“Not obeying the orders would make you a traitor! Kill!”

It was impossible for the black-faced officer to back down. He commanded, “Those who retreat will be killed!”

The soldiers were well trained and upon hearing the command of their superior, they fired their arrows towards Fang Yuan without hesitation. This caused the captive in Fang Yuan’s hand to cursed, “You dare hurt me?!”

“Xiuxiu!”

The arrows rained down.

The unfortunate officer had just scolded a sentence before he was riddled with holes from the arrows, much like the hives of bees.

Fang Yuan wore a smile as the arrows passed through him as if the arrows were passing through the surface of the water in the lake, causing no harm except for a few ripples.

“Illusion? That’s not good!”

The black-faced officer immediately retreated. The spiritual talisman on his body lit up and a wall of water rose behind him.

“Shadowstep!”

In the blink of an eye, Fang Yuan appeared before the officer and reached out to grab him.

“You want to stop me with just a spiritual talisman?”

“Kacha!”

Under the surprised gaze of the black-faced officer, the wall of water shattered like an eggshell. It did not even manage to delay Fang Yuan for a while.

Fang Yuan grabbed him by the throat and lifted him up.

“You are a spiritual disciple and yet, you are working as an officer in the army. What a waste of talent!”

He teased before looking around. Countless of soldiers did not dare look him in the eyes and instead hung their heads down.

“I am an outsider and an enemy of the City Guardian. The Prefecture Master begged me to create chaos and set things right. You, bring me to the City Guardian!”

He randomly pointed to a soldier at the side, “Don’t dare?”

“Well...”

The soldier hesitated and was struck down by Fang Yuan. “This person is a traitor!”

He turned to another soldier. “You, bring me there fast, if not you will meet the same fate as him!”

Wu Country had already infiltrated the Secluded Mountains Prefecture Armed Forces and even controlled the City Guardian. However, Fang Yuan was sure that there were still some who were loyal.

Fang Yuan was in no rush and could slowly ask one by one.

After killing 3 or 4 people, a soldier could no longer bear it and knelt down to beg, “Sir, please spare us. We were forced by the officer. I will bring you to see the City Guardian immediately!”

“Let’s go!”

As more and more soldiers and officers gathered around looking suspicious, Fang Yuan smiled and asked the soldier to lead the way.

Not long after, they arrived at a small courtyard. Fang Yuan immediately kicked the door of the room open and saw a few people surrounding the bed as if to shift a patient. Upon seeing Fang Yuan breaking in, they instinctively thought to silence him.

Fang Yuan was caught off-guard.

“How dare you seize the City Guardian?”

Fang Yuan shut his eyes and a spiritual light glowed in his hand. A green thread flew out and circled the interior of the room.

The few people were inner power experts and there were 2 martial artists who had reached the 4 Heavenly Gates. However, Fang Yuan was too fast and before they understood what was happening, had turned into souls under the blade of the Ancient Green Serpent Dagger.

“The City Guardian was really seized?”

Outside, countless of officers rushed forward and were stumped when they saw the patient on the bed, "Hei San [1], how can you do this?"

"Enough, all of you get out, after everything is settled, I will let you see your City Guardian!"

Fang Yuan tossed Hei San aside as if he was trash and said.

Fang Yuan had already established his position amongst the soldiers. A few officers looked on in dismay before balling up their fists and left. Not long after, shouting could be heard before it turned peaceful once again.

Fang Yuan came to the side of the bed and looked at the unfortunate City Guardian.

The City Guardian was at the 4 Heavenly Gates before he fell into the trap set by Wu Country. His fate was no longer up to him to decide.

"Poisoned? Simple!"

Given his medical abilities, he had no trouble curing this man. After analyzing his conditions, Fang Yuan gave him a Yama's Order and waited.

After a while, the City Guardian sat up and spat out a mouthful of black blood. The colour returned to his face and he saluted, "Zhang Qingfeng is grateful for your aid!"

"Hmmm, was this done by Wu Country?"

Fang Yuan put his hands behind his back and asked.

Zhang Qingfeng replied, "I have a close confidante who was bought over by them. They could not buy me over and instead poison me. I am afraid that if they did not have any use for me..."

Cold sweat started to form on his forehead as he thought about what could happen.

"Good, do you recognize this?"

Fang Yuan nodded his head and took out the Secluded Mountains Seal.

"Ahhhh? This is..."

Zhang Qingfeng was momentarily shocked. After he carefully looked at it, he kowtowed, "The humble servant meets the Prefecture Master!"

"Do you not question this?"

Fang Yuan was surprised.

"Before the Prefecture Master left, he told me that whoever holds the Secluded Mountains Seal would be the Prefecture Master!"

Zhang Qingfeng teared, "Furthermore, before they suppressed me, they revealed information which I thought was fake and that it was just to confuse me. I did not know that it was true...Master, you must avenge the previous Prefecture Master!"

[1] Hei San is the name of the black-faced officer.

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 148: Reform

'Revenge? If not for Wu Country's ill intentions, I wouldn't get myself involved in this mess!'

Fang Yuan rolled his eyes but displayed a face of sincerity. He supported Zhang Qingfeng from his bed.

"Don't worry. Since I've accepted the appointment as Prefecture Master, those who plot against the old Prefecture Master will be our enemies!"

"Prefecture Master!"

Zhang Qingfeng continuously paid his respects. "You have saved my life, and are determined to take revenge for the old Prefecture Master. From today onwards, my life is yours, and I will obey your every command!"

"Very well!"

Fang Yuan nodded his head and had the exhilaration of playing a video game. "It is of utmost importance to gain control of Secluded Mountain Prefecture! The Secluded Mountain Prefecture City is the core of the entire prefecture! How confident are you in controlling the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Armed Forces?"

"Quite confident!"

Zhang Qingfeng replied without hesitation. "Although my martial arts is not that good, I can still train soldiers out. Most of the new soldiers out there were trained personally by myself! And as for the platoon leaders, there were all recommended by me as well!"

This was his saving grace, to convince Fang Yuan of his usefulness.

"Very well. Later on, go outside and convince the soldiers to close up the four doors. Use the group of traitors as leads to find out who are the other spies, and clean up the city!"

Fang Yuan ordered decisively.

"Understood!"

Zhang Qingsheng replied loudly and draped an armour over himself.

He was, after all, a martial artist of the 4 Heavenly Gates and had Fang Yuan's aid. He recovered quite a bit already and regained his might after equipping his armour. As he opened the door, he could hear the cheers from the Secluded Mountain Prefecture soldiers.

"Good!"

Fang Yuan witnessed this scene and nodded his head. He knew that the Secluded Mountain Prefecture was finally under his control.

...

The Secluded Mountain Prefecture City was especially crowded today.

Previously, a large white bird intruded the city, followed by the chaos in the Prefecture Master's Mansion.

While the crowd was unsettled, groups of soldiers went out to the streets and sealed the four doors. They enforced their patrolling as well.

Even the dullest would have guessed that something big happened.

All the residents were afraid of the unknown and closed their shops and houses. They hid in underground caves and shivered in fear, afraid of the violence that would ensue.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

With the sealing of the 4 doors and the lookout from above by the red-eyed white kind bird, the next step was to locate the spy families based on the sources and eliminate them.

It was a fearful scene to behold.

Even the most influential of families were among the list of families, and the entire family had to be removed.

There were a few cases of retaliation, which could not be taken down by the normal soldiers. The highly skilled martial artists within the Prefecture Master's Mansion would then personally see to it.

In a short while, the entire Secluded Mountain Prefecture was covered in blood.

"Who would've known that the Wu Country did not send a spiritual knight here, not even a Wu Zong... Otherwise, I'll have to personally see it!"

In the Prefecture Master's Mansion, Fang Yuan wore a new set of grand robes and wore a crown on his head. He looked much more cultured than before, and became more gentlemanly, as he shook his head in disappointment.

"It is rare to find martial artists that are able to harness elemental force, even in Wu Country, and they had to take charge of the various counties. To deploy manpower in the Summer Sun Prefecture and trouble the Secluded Mountain Prefecture is not an easy thing to do!"

Zhang Qingfeng reported.

He held a name list in his hand, with bloodstains on it. As he went through the name list, he was utterly shocked.

"If I use my soldiers against all these people, I might have to lose thirty percent of them!"

"Thirty percent is good enough already!"

As Fang Yuan heard him, he snickered and looked at Zhang Qingfeng. "Now that the Prefecture City is under our control, what's next?"

"If your predictions are right, that the Wu Country and the Xia Country's royal family came to an agreement, their next step would be to enter the Secluded Mountain Prefecture. Now that we do not have a footing, we might be plotted against by Summer Sun, Clear Spring Prefectures and the Royal

Family! The most important thing to do now is to gather the forces of all 6 counties to witness your appointment, and announce to the world that you are in charge!"

Although Zhang Qingfeng had yet to break through to Wu Zong, he had the looks of it and added, "Take this opportunity to command Qinghe, Cangshui, Lieyang, Cangyi counties... Send their leaders to congratulate you, and deal with those who are absent!"

Fang Yuan nodded his head. In reality, this was how politicians show off.

Those who were willing to witness his appointment as Prefecture Master were those who would willingly follow him and could be treated as their own people.

Those who were not willing to even show their faces would be traitors, and there would be no qualms killing them.

"However, there is something to be discussed..."

Zhang Qingfeng continued, "The previous Prefecture Master brought his strongest allies to war with him, and from the numerous deployments of soldiers, we only have an army of 5,000, and including all those from the other counties, it would still not exceed 10,000. Furthermore, the majority of them are new and inexperienced soldiers, and are unlikely to be able to defend against the Wu Country's attack!"

"The only solution is to force conscription for all families, and to investigate within Summer Sun Prefecture..."

Fang Yuan was lost in his thoughts. "10,000 of our troops were destroyed in one day. There must be a few survivors, and the few capital leaders are Wu Zongs as well. Although they might have been trapped, they might still have a chance at survival. Sending people to Summer Sun Prefecture to investigate might have its returns."

"Yes, Prefecture Master!"

Zhang Qingfeng dismissed himself, with excitement written all over his face.

Fang Yuan remained disappointed as he shook his head.

Regardless, the Secluded Mountain Prefecture was still badly damaged. Even if he immediately recruited new soldiers and was able to instill loyalty in every one of them, it would still be akin to using a praying mantis's arm to block a car against an infuriated Wu Country.

Since he agreed to take up this appointment as Prefecture Master, he had confidence in achieving his objective. He could not reveal this secret, not even to Zhang Qingfeng, who had only just displayed loyalty to him a few days ago.

"One of you!"

As he walked out, he called for one of the soldiers to come towards him.

"Prefecture Master, what instructions do you have for me?"

This soldier knelt on one knee and was rather respectful.

"Rush to Qinghe County, Qingye City, and pass this letter to Zhou Wenwu!"

Fang Yuan passed a letter to the soldier.

Calling his own subordinate here was only normal. Since he was removing the spies, there would be vacancies for him to insert his own trusted subordinates.

...

Many days had gone by.

News of the change of command among the soldiers in Summer Sun Prefecture and the death of Liu Yan only reached Secluded Mountain Prefecture now, which shocked many.

With Fang Yuan in charge of the Prefecture City, everyone was calm and composed since the spies were already wiped out.

He walked to the centre and made an announcement with the Secluded Mountain Seal. He ordered for all families to mourn for the old Prefecture Master for three days, before preparing for his appointment ceremony.

Outside the Prefecture City.

Carriages passed by, as they could see the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City, like a large black beast.

"This is unthinkable... Who would've guessed that I could come to the Prefecture City in this status..."

Yu Xinlou peeled the curtains and mumbled to himself after seeing the city.

He was plotted against by other people and had to unwillingly give up his ancestor's business here before following Fang Yuan to Qingye City.

However, there were so many changes in such a short period of time.

The death of the Prefecture Master, and the appointment of Fang Yuan as the next Prefecture Master, who would have the power over thirty percent of the entire Xia Country!

"This is very different now!"

Yu Xinlou sighed and clenched his fist. "I must help Master to gain total control over the 6 counties!"

"Dada!"

"Dada!"

Suddenly, a group of calvaries arrived outside the city gates.

The carriage became tensed up. The people from Qingye City had the escort of the soldiers from Qinghe County and therefore went up to confront the calvaries. "Who are you people?"

"I am the City Guard Zhang Qingfeng. I am under orders from the Prefecture Master to welcome all of you!"

Zhang Qingsheng stopped his horse and examined the people in the carriage.

"Sorry to have troubled you!"

Yu Xinlou hurriedly returned a greeting. "Let's not waste time, shall we enter the city!"

As they entered the Prefecture City, the solemn atmosphere was overwhelming. Yu Xinlou's heart was heavy as he looked at one of the guards.

As they entered the main hall, he sighed in relief on seeing Fang Yuan sitting calmly in the seat of the Prefecture Master. He greeted him without ado. "Greetings, Sir, and congratulations on being appointed as the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Master!"

"Congratulations Sir! Congratulations!"

Behind him, other than Zhou Wenwu who had to remain in Qingye City to take charge, the rest were here. Huang Fu Renhe, Zhang Sheng, and even Lanruo and Chen Ziyang, his two disciples, were here as well to congratulate him.

"Mm, all of you are here just in time."

Fang Yuan nodded his head and started to assign them their respective roles:

"Yu Xinlou, you are the Nine Gates Administrator. Your job is to manage the trading in Nine Gates Trading Market, and let it function as normal!"

"Zhang Sheng, you are the Prefecture City's Secret Guards Leader!"

...

These were all originally his subordinates, but now they were given extremely high-status appointments.

"Yes Sir, we will lay down our lives for you!"

After being appointed to their ministerial roles, these subordinates paid their respects once more, knowing that their fate was all intertwined with Fang Yuan. If he prospered, they would all prosper, but if he died, they would all die.

"The most important thing now is my appointment ceremony. Work together to get it planned, and don't leave out any important guests and presents!"

Fang Yuan casually instructed them, but as he was doing so, an excited voice interrupted him.

"Prefecture Master, good news! Good news!"

"Mm? Come in!"

Fang Yuan waved his hands and saw Zhang Qingsheng waving a letter, full of excitement. "The latest news from Summer Sun Prefecture is that the general that we have sent encountered a large Secluded Mountain Prefecture army of around 9,000 soldiers, and they were led by Leder Niu and Leader Xiang!"

"Mm?"

Fang Yuan stood up and was rather surprised. "Is this true? Both the capital leaders are all right?"

"Leader Niu is alright, but Leader Xiang has mild injuries, but only superficial!"

Zhang Qingsheng was overjoyed.

"Haha... Good!"

Fang Yuan was suspicious about the news, but all he displayed was a face of happiness. "Send someone to assist them!"

"Congratulations, Prefecture Master! This calls for a celebration!"

Yu Xinlou and the rest were all filled with excitement.

Just as he started out on his appointment as a Prefecture Master, such good news already came his way. Indeed, it was blessing from the heavens.

Most importantly, with this additional help, he could be much more confident.

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 149: The Ceremony

It was the fifteenth day of the seventh month in the Xia Calendar. The day was marked as an auspicious one, and was a suitable day for those who wanted to start a business or travel.

The weather was pleasant and there was a gentle breeze.

Within the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, families took down the white cloths that were put up to mourn for Liu Yan, and changed to red cloths, in celebration of the appointment of the new Prefecture Master.

Fang Yuan chose this date to hold his appointment ceremony.

A few days ago, martial artists and sect masters from all over came to the Prefecture City, making it livelier than before.

As the gates of the Prefecture City opened, guests and visitors flowed in.

"The Governor of Lieyang County is here!"

"The Five Ghosts Sect Master is here!"

"The Governor of Cangyi County is here!"

"The gang leader of Giant Whale Gang is here!"

...

As they reported their names, those who held high appointments within the Secluded Mountain Prefecture gathered in the main hall.

Yu Xinlou and company put in a lot of effort for the entire ceremony. From the rituals to the details on welcoming every guest, everything was settled very well, and had the vibe of an extremely important ceremony.

"Master taking over as Prefecture Master is what everyone wants!"

From afar, Fang Yuan watched silently, and behind him was Zhang Qingfeng, who exclaimed.

"That's right, what everyone wants!"

Fang Yuan wore a grand silk robe and a crown. He looked like a fine gentleman and had a domineering vibe.

At his appointment ceremony, everyone was congratulatory; no one had any opposing intent.

Firstly, it was because there were all aware of the impending invasion from the Wu Country. No matter how capable this young man would be, he would still lose.

Secondly was that Fang Yuan's appointment was official.

There was an agreement stating that the strongest among the Prefecture would be the Prefecture Master.

Based on skill, who could match up against the martial artist cum spiritual knight Fang Yuan?

In terms of influence, he already had the loyalty of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Armed Forces, and his own base at Qinghe County, Qingye City. With Niu Dingtian's and Xiang Zilong's support when they return, there was no one else who could fight with him for this appointment.

He had the skill and the means and therefore was only natural for him to be the Prefecture Master.

Of course, with this appointment responsibilities would come.

"The auspicious time is here!"

Accompanying the firecrackers, the ceremony master's voice became louder.

"Let's go!"

Fang Yuan took the golden cloak over and draped it over himself. With the airs of a master, he walked into the main hall.

"Greetings to Prefecture Master!"

Every guest greeted him with a smile as he walked past.

If not for his dream master cultivation and his shocking magical energy, he would not have known the true feelings of these guests.

'Suspicious... afraid... fearful... There are only a few true loyal ones!'

His mind was cold but he kept his joyful appearance.

His footsteps were silent as he walked up to the stage. At one side, Zhang Qingfeng looked serious as he held a tray with a black seal on it. It was the Secluded Mountain Seal.

In reality, all the loose ends were tied up; this was just a ceremony.

"Prefecture Master, will you please have the Secluded Mountain Seal!"

As drum beats were heard, Zhang Qingfeng kneeled down and presented the seal.

"Mmm!"

Fang Yuan held the seal in his hands and walked up to the Prefecture Master's seat. He sat down and appeared composed.

"As Prefecture Master takes his seat, subordinates shall pay our greetings!"

As the ceremony master exclaimed, even the most scheming subordinate had to follow the flow, kneel down and bow three times in respect.

'This is a gentleman's pleasure!'

Seeing the masses kneeling before him, Fang Yuan felt that he harnessed a huge power, which could make him go over his head easily.

Fang Yuan being Fang Yuan, he was able to be awakened from the trance easily after countless training from dreams.

It only took a simple thought for him to regain clarity.

Regardless if he was taking over Qingye City or taking control of Secluded Mountain Prefecture, it was simply just dealing with others.

When it was time to give up, he could do so easily with little to no attachment to the power.

"Life is like a game of chess, and the other people are like the chess pieces. As a Prefecture Master, I shall engage in a good game of chess with the surrounding countries!"

Within a thought, Fang Yuan felt enlightened as the cultivation of his mind became deepened.

The experiences in his dream world were ultimately fake. However, they were of a great assistance as training opportunities to cultivate his mind in the real world.

As he regained his composure, a clear voice travelled through the entire hall. "Everyone, please rise... As the new Prefecture Master takes his place, we have a lot of unfinished business to settle, and I hope everyone will cooperate!"

Everyone got up to their feet and looked at each other, and saw the majestic and young Prefecture Master, as everyone flinched in their hearts.

"The messenger from Wu Country is here!"

At this point in time, the door outside shook, and the ceremony master's voice of hesitation was heard.

"Prefecture Master?"

Niu Dingtian stood out.

He was a boor and displayed his loyalty to Fang Yuan after knowing of Liu Yan's plans while he was alive.

Fang Yuan only used those that he trusted as his subordinates, as he gave them important roles.

It was the same for Xiang Zilong, except that he was still recuperating from his injuries.

Niu Dingtian felt that the messenger was hostile. "Do you want me to chase him away?"

"Today is an auspicious day, and all who come are guests. Do invite him in!"

Fang Yuan shook his head and passed his order down.

Not long after, a skinny man in brown robes adopting a daoist priest appearance entered as he stared at Fang Yuan intensely.

"I am Xuan Sheng, and I'm here to congratulate Prefecture Master's appointment on behalf of the Wu Country!"

Daoist Elder Xuan Sheng cupped his hands, and without much respect, continued. "Presenting a hundred taels of gold, a pair of Ruyi, and an Imperial Letter!"

"Imperial Letter?"

Fang Yuan sighed. "What is it written?"

Xuan Sheng stroked his beard and chuckled, as though he did not care that he was in enemy's territory, brimming with confidence. "This Imperial Letter is signed by the Xia Country's advisor, stating that the land of the entire Secluded Mountain Prefecture is now under the jurisdiction of the Wu Country!"

"What?"

With the news, the entire hall was in shock.

Even though he had heard of the news of Xia Country giving up land to Wu Country, he did not expect them to be crazy to the extent of giving up an entire prefecture to the neighbouring country!

There was a commotion in the entire hall.

"Silence!"

Fang Yuan appeared calm as he struck his right palm out.

"Weng!"

A large energy was felt throughout the entire hall, as though everyone's neck was held and the commotion stopped.

A few people witnessed this scene and broke out in cold sweat.

The fear from this new Prefecture Master was no less intense as compared to Liu Yan, which was an unbelievable thing.

"... Based on the Imperial Letter, the Secluded Mountain Prefecture is now the property of the Qu Country. Your appointment as Prefecture Master will have to be approved by our country and written in our records before it is official!"

Xuan Sheng continued to blabber on. "My country's king loves talents. If you prepare a huge gift for him and follow me to see my country advisor, who else could snatch this appointment from you?"

He tried to incite Fang Yuan, and even Niu Dingtian could not come to a decision.

Xuan Sheng was waiting patiently with anticipation.

'Once Fang Yuan agrees, he would be officiated and the Secluded Mountain Prefecture would fall even without an invasion... Even if he is undecided, if he is willing to join the Wu Country, he would fall into our trap, and is still a good outcome!'

As he was thinking of the possibilities, Xuan Sheng looked at Fang Yuan and his eyes shone brightly.

'Eh? This old daoist has ill intentions, and is still trying to confuse my divine spirit?'

As he came into eye contact with Xuan Sheng, he felt his consciousness collapsing, as he almost unknowingly agreed.

But who is he?

As his dream elemental force moved, he recovered from the trance and was infuriated. "Hehe... Who cares about the Xia Country's Imperial Letter?"

"What?"

Xuan Sheng's expression changed. "This man is young and possesses high magical energy. How could he escape from my Six Soul Eyes... Strong adversary! If he continues to develop, he would be a big threat to the Wu Country!"

Only at this moment did he realise that his neck stiffened. He could not move away from Fang Yuan's glare, as though he became a puppet, unable to move. "Backlash!"

Although his Six Soul Eyes were impressive, if his target was much stronger than him, it would result in a backlash, and this backlash might even kill him.

Fang Yuan did not give him any regard. "Wu Country is a crazy country! The Wu Country's Imperial Advisor is greedy and cruel. The previous Prefecture Master died in your hands and now you want to convince me?"

"My Secluded Mountain Prefecture can survive on its own, why bother about outsiders trying to seal us up? As for the Xia Country king, losing his land is such a disgrace and an ungentlemanly act. I will question him personally next time!"

"Ah!"

As he finished his words, Elder Daoist Xuan Sheng spat out a mouthful of blood.

That was not all.

As he covered his eyes, he wailed. As he got up to his feet, a pair of eyeballs fell out, leaving two bloody eye sockets, striking fear in anyone who saw him.

"Good... Good..."

Elder Taoist Xuan Sheng was pale, as he laughed. "I have no foresight, and deserved this! But, Prefecture Master, don't get too cocky... My Wu Country's Imperial Advisor has already prepared an army of

100,000 soldiers at the boundaries of your Prefecture, waiting for the command to invade. Once the go-ahead is given, your tiny prefecture will be reduced to ashes!"

This was a huge threat, and many who heard it were shocked to their wits.

"Prefecture Master... Who would've known..."

Inside, Niu Dingtian was shocked beyond words, and could not say a single thing as he looked at Fang Yuan.

He knew that this old daoist was highly skilled, and was equivalent to the level of a spiritual knight. He was still initially worried that Fang Yuan might be at a disadvantage.

But look, by just staring at him, even his eyeballs could fall off?

This scary move could even be stronger than Liu Yan's spiritual spells.

"Very well, then bring my work to your Imperial Advisor!"

Facing a threat, Fang Yuan chuckled. "Tell him, I am waiting for him to come here and die!"

The sky was dark.

There was supposed to be a banquet after the ceremony.

However, the Secluded Mountains Prefecture was facing an imminent crisis. Those in power were not in the mood to be frivolous. They had either left the ceremony or were waiting for Fang Yuan to give his orders.

"Prefecture Master!"

Fang Yuan stood majestically on a high platform.

Zhang Qingfeng arrived behind him and bowed deeply before reporting, "The names of those families and sects which have left the prefecture city have been taken down!"

"Very well, once I have assumed my position, I will order leader Niu to bring his troops and use those people as examples to warn the rest!"

Fang Yuan stroked his chin, his eyes flashed coldly.

How would Wu Country react to his display of strength?

'Even Wu Country has to pay for murdering Liu Yan. I would be able to buy some time if I display my strength and confuse them further.'

'There is no time to retrain the troops. However, there is sufficient time to flush out those traitorous families and sect!'

Grand Hall.

The candles burned brightly and lit up the surrounding.

The surrounding four bronze pillars contained blocks of ice with pipelines to emit cold air but the people in the room still felt hot and uneasy.

No matter what, no one would be at ease facing Wu Country.

“The Prefecture Master ascend to his throne!”

Following the music, the entire hall was silent.

Fang Yuan sat upon the golden Nine Dragons Throne and looked down at the masses.

Below him, Leader Niu, Zhang Qingfeng, Yu Xinlou, Zhang Sheng and a few other trusted aides were present.

Upon seeing his arrival, the people who were feeling uneasy appeared to have found their pillar of support. They quietened down and waited for his instructions.

“Zhang Qingfeng, explain the situation!”

Fang Yuan waved his hand as he maintained a poker face.

“Yes, sir!”

Zhang Qingfeng stepped forward, bowed at Fang Yuan before facing the crowd, “according to my reports, the troops of Wu are gathering at the borders of the country. Their numbers are no less than 10,000! Furthermore, although the Summer Sun Prefecture is in shambles, there are troops being deployed in the Clear Spring Prefecture and the Xia Country capital. We cannot discount the possibility of an attack on multiple fronts! The army that we are facing in total might be more than 20,000!”

The people in the hall shivered.

“What about our side?”

Fang Yuan was unconcerned and probed on.

“We have gathered the troops in the 6 counties. In addition to the factions in the Summer Sun Prefecture, we have around 30,000 soldiers. Furthermore....most are new soldiers who did not have sufficient training!”

Zhang Qingfeng said bitterly.

The Secluded Mountains Prefecture was sorely lacking highly-skilled warriors in the beginning. Now, even the common military might was lacking as compared to other prefectures or countries.

It was no longer as simple as a defeat but rather an irrevocable loss!

“Very well! In my position as the Prefecture Master, I will now give the first order!”

Fang Yuan’s face remained unchanged upon hearing all kinds of bad news, “Those sects and families that are loyal to the Secluded Mountains Prefecture, fortify the defenses and gather at the prefecture city!”

“At the same time, Leader Niu, bring the troops and purged the prefecture of those whose names appeared in the list!”

“I want to make sure no enemy would get a single grain of rice or sway a single person in my land!”

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The faces of the masses changed when they heard those words.

“Sir...”

Zhang Qingfeng said, “The enemy is too powerful. This plan would only buy us some time but in the end, it would not be of any use... the Secluded Mountains Prefecture would be reduced to a swamp!”

“Your loyalty is commendable!”

Fang Yuan said, “I have my own plans and am making preparations. You do not have to say anything more and may go now!”

Zhang Qingfeng retired. He was gloomy before he had a sudden realization.

This Prefecture Master was barely over 20 years old and had already achieved so much in martial and spiritual arts. Could it be that he was also a genius in other fields?

He was worried as he had seen many martial arts geniuses who created a mess when they tried their hands on other things.

“Yes, sir!”

Leader Niu answered loudly and was full of energy. “I had long wanted to teach those people a lesson! Now, they will know the power of the whip!”

It was obvious that he wanted to punish the traitorous families who betrayed those in the Summer Sun Prefecture and would not go easy on them.

“As for Leader Niu, you will recuperate your wounds to prepare for the oncoming battle!”

Fang Yuan further comforted Xiang Zilong.

The two people were the most highly-skilled martial artists he had.

“I am willing to serve the Prefecture Master and avenge the previous Prefecture Master!”

Xiang Zilong used his remaining arm which could move to salute, “Xiang Zilong will follow all your orders!”

“Very good, with the two of you working together, what can I not achieve?”

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“Yes, Sir!”

“Understood!”

Yu Xinlou and Zhang Sheng carried out their orders while Xiang Zilong pondered for a while before asking, “Prefecture Master, do you mean to cut ties with Xia Country?”

He butted in, which resulted in Zhang Qingfeng feeling momentarily annoyed and Yu Xinlou to glare at him.

“That is naturally the case. After all, the Secluded Mountains Prefecture is given to Wu Country. Liu Yan is already dead. What other reasons do they have to remain as enemies?”

Fang Yuan shook his head, “Even if they send troops to help Wu Country, it will just be a front and cause the neighbouring counties to strengthen their defense. This will buy us some time and allow us to battle Wu Country to decide the victor!”

“The Prefecture Master is indeed wise!”

Xiang Zilong was satisfied with the explanation and retired.

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By the end of July, Niu Dingtian had purged countless traitorous families and disciples of the sects.

Wu Country was unable to help those traitors. Niu Dingtian was backed by a Wu Zong and supported by a large army. No one was a match for him.

Except for those who felt something was amiss and fled the prefecture long ago, the others were not so lucky.

The relocation of the masses also started just like that.

The two moves were unpopular with the masses and Fang Yuan received backlashes from the two moves as the newly appointed Prefecture Master.

Wu Country army camp.

The soldiers of Wu set up camp with their military banners flying high. Each sector was filled with trenches and was heavily guarded. Every soldier was going about doing their own things and it was not feasible to harass or poison the troops.

All of them were fit and muscular. Their face looked as if they were ready to kill.

The Country of Wu placed a strong emphasis on the military where the king had absolute authority over it. The army had over 20 ranks and the soldiers were rewarded heavily for their effort, be it gold, silver, women, land and even martial arts manuals. As such, the troops took pleasure in going to war and the military might of Wu Country was far greater than that of other neighbouring countries. Only the cavalry of Yuan Country was ahead of them when battling in the grassland.

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In a huge tent, the floor was covered in golden fleece which was unceremoniously stepped on. Incense was lit in the four corners, emitting green smoke.

Wu Wudao sat cross-legged. He suddenly opened both his eyes to look at Taoist Xuan Sheng.

“Your Six Soul Eyes is considered to be the best amongst the Wu Country’s 3 great miracle techniques. To think it would be destroyed?”

Wu Wudao’s heart skipped a beat as he looked at the gaping hole.

“That new Secluded Mountains Prefecture Master is no ordinary man. He is a threat to Wu Country!”

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The Imperial Advisor was a spiritual knight who had reached the peak of the Elemental Gathering Realm. He was exceptionally good at imparting skills and had 300 disciples under him, of which two of them had broken through the Elemental Force Realm.

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With such military might, the Secluded Mountains Prefecture who had only three people in the Elemental Force Realm was doomed without a doubt!

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Chapter 150: Preparation

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