

## Carefree 561

### Chapter 561: Arrestment

"Jie is a Shang citizen and if he falls in with them, it will be detrimental to my cause!"

Young Master Wu had calmed down and he spoke coldly.

"Ge Mo, I want you to bribe the personal guards of the King. Tell them to turn the arrest warrant into a death warrant. Turn the King and Jie against each other."

"It shall be done, Young Master!"

There was a glint in Mo Ge's eyes as he retreated.

Mo Ge could not help but laugh inwardly.

"Jie...so what if you are a gifted swordsman? You have offended our Young Master and will suffer a terrible death. Your death will contribute to Western Zhou's grand ambitions!"

As long as the Shang King fell for the calumny about Jie and fell out with him, Western Zhou would benefit no matter who won.

"This is how our Young Master conducts his affairs!"

Mo Ge walked out of the hall and wiped the sweat off his brows.

Young Master Wu was bright and ambitious, not to mention that he also had a vicious streak. Mo Ge was finding it increasingly difficult to serve him.

Nevertheless, working under such a lord was the way to survive in these chaotic times and to accomplish the enterprise of overthrowing the Shang Dynasty!

"Young Master Wu will become our future King! No one will stand in his path...much less a lowly swordsman..."

Mo Ge muttered to himself.

"Sir Zou!"

Young Master Wu stood alone in the great hall with his arms placed behind his back. He suddenly posed a question to the air.

"Having met this person, what are your thoughts?"

"There are so many kinds of people in the world and I can never be sure about someone. One thing is for sure though. He is definitely not a simple man!"

A white-haired old man emerged from behind the walls. He wore a large robe and had a long beard that touched the ground. He looked very sprightly for his age and wore a foot-long hat on his head. He was definitely a man with special talents.

"A man who can defeat Sir Cao is obviously not a simple man!"

Young Master Wu waved a hand dismissively.

“What else?”

“Also...this person has achieved a high level of cultivation. He is not a common swordsman, nor is he a realm energy practitioner. On the contrary, he looks like he is from the witch race...”

The old man stroked his white beard.

“Witch?”

Young Master Wu looked perplexed.

“Have you heard about the Jiuli Disturbance? The people of Jiuli were witches...the God of War, Chi, that they worshipped was also a witch...”

Sir Zou let out a sigh.

“Unfortunately, the world underwent a major upheaval 500 years ago and the witch race disappeared off the face of the earth. It is wholly unexpected that we were able to meet a member of the witch race today...besides, seeing how he had glanced directly at my hiding spot, he must have discovered my spying on him.”

“Really?”

Young Master Wu did not know what to feel about that.

...

“There was probably a fourth person present in the talent house!”

As Fang Yuan left Juxian Hall, he turned his head around and caught sight of a touch of purple energy. He could not help but smile.

When he had first arrived in Shangyi, he had felt the presences of three difficult people. The Sword Sage Sir Cao was one of them. The second person was right here.

“I’m guessing that the third person is in the imperial palace. After all, a legacy of 500 years would probably result in a formidable Shang royal...”

Fang Yuan was walking back to his lodgings when he suddenly frowned.

A group of Shang soldiers had surrounded the building. They were obviously targetting Hei Zhong, Ge Nie and company!

“They’ve made their move in so short a time?”

Fang Yuan grumbled but he did not back down.

“Jie...as a Shang citizen, you have committed treason by disrespecting the King. Surrender now!”

An army commander stepped forward and railed at Fang Yuan. It was Gentleman Jiu. At his side were Meng Kuo and the other soldiers who had partaken in the operation against Dongyi.

It was clear that Young Master Wu's camp had gotten to them first.

Of course, it was probably thanks to Meng Kuo and a few others that the soldiers had not yet rushed into the building to make their arrests.

"Jie...sigh..."

Meng Kuo stepped forward and bowed.

"Do have a care for the general situation and follow me back to the palace to meet with the King. I will run the risk of getting punished and defend you...besides, now that you have the reputation of emerging victorious over Sir Cao, the King won't make things difficult for you."

Meng Kuo was unwilling to see Fang Yuan resist arrest for it was a path of no return.

However, someone did not share his sentiments.

"Men, make them put down their weapons and take them down!"

Gentleman Jiu pointed at Fang Yuan and unsheathed his sword.

Dozens of soldiers rushed forward menacingly with their spears.

'Resist!'

Gentleman Jiu stared at Fang Yuan morbidly. To him, if Jie did not resist arrest, he would teach him a lesson that he would never forget. He would then kill Hei Zhong in revenge for having suffered humiliation at his hands.

If Jie resisted, he would be a dead man!

In the Shang capital, resisting the civil force was a capital crime. Even if it was Sir Cao and all his disciples, the state would see to their deaths.

"Really...you have no idea what you're in for!"

Fang Yuan flicked his sword and a metallic sound rang through the air.

"Buzz!"

As the sound rang out, Fang Yuan smashed his way through the surrounding Shang soldiers like a tornado, leaving them lying about like broken ragdolls.

"Shield!"

Gentleman Jie let out a roar and a dozen shield-bearing soldiers spread out in front of him. Another dozen bowmen emerged from behind the shield bearers.

"Shields on!"

The shield bearers slammed their shields on the ground firmly, forming an impenetrable iron wall.

An iron wall with arrows at the ready. In war, any later and this formation would have been surrounded.

Gentleman Jiu was confident that if Sir Cao had been here, he would have ended up like a porcupine with arrows sticking out from his body! Jie was more formidable but there had to be a limit to what he was capable of.

“Ignorant!”

However, in the next moment, he had seen the look in Fang Yuan’s eyes. It was a look of condescension and pity.

“I have travelled nearly a thousand miles worth of battlefields and have mowed down thousands with my sword!”

Fang Yuan bellowed out extendedly and appeared before the shield formation with his sword in hand.

“Kaboom!”

In the next moment, a storm raged!

Fang Yuan had managed to channel the power of the winds and thunder into his sword thrust.

The seemingly impregnable shield formation was ripped apart, revealing the frightened bowmen who were standing behind.

“Loose the arrows! Loose the arrows!”

Gentleman Jiu gripped tightly onto his sword but it brought no comfort to him.

“Swish!”

The arrows rained upon Fang Yuan with metallic clangs before they fell harmlessly to the ground.

“Since you all want to die, I will fulfil your death wishes!”

Fang Yuan strolled up to the bowmen leisurely and slashed his sword about, leaving all of the bowmen incapacitated.

Fang Yuan then walked over to Gentleman Jiu, his sword dripping with blood.

“No...”

As Gentleman Jiu looked on despairingly, Fang Yuan slapped aside Gentleman Jiu’s sword with his own sword and plunged it into his throat.

“Poof!”

A red mist exploded from Gentleman Jiu’s wound as he collapsed lifelessly onto the ground.

Meng Kuo was horrified. By massacring Gentleman Jiu and his men, he had definitely made an enemy of the Shang regime.

The King had not only lost an important aide but he had also gained a powerful enemy!

‘Sigh...it’s all Gentleman Jiu’s fault. The slanderous remarks made by the traitorous court officials are also to blame. The King himself is too much...’

Meng Kuo tried to suppress what he considered to be treasonous thoughts and eyed Fang Yuan with a newfound hatred.

Meng Kuo was sworn to the Shang King and since Fang Yuan had decided to fall out with the imperial court, he would take Fang Yuan down at all costs and stem the rise of this perceived evil.

Fang Yuan was aware of what Meng Kuo was feeling at that moment.

“What a pity...that this loyal official isn’t allegiant to me.”

Fang Yuan sighed.

A man like Meng Kuo would have made a wonderful right-hand man. However, he could also become a most troublesome enemy.

However, he was only human.

‘If he dares to make any more trouble for me, I’ll kill him!’

Fang Yuan had made his decision and exhaled deeply.

“Whoosh!”

The winds howled and whipped up the sands and stones. The skies darkened as a hurricane began to form on the spot.

The Shang soldiers ran amok and screamed in panic.

When the crazy occurrences finally died down and normality was resumed, Fang Yuan, Hei Zhong and company were long gone...

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The news arrived at the imperial palace an hour later.

“Gentleman Jiu has passed away in an attempt to arrest to Jie?”

The Shang King was named Xin. He was a large man and looked every inch a king. Back when he had been younger, he could lift cauldrons heavier than 1000 pounds and was known for his immense strength.

Not only did he have a Herculean build, but he was also well versed in the art of war. He had scored military victories over the tribes of Dongyi, Jiumiao and more. Under his rule, the Shang empire had reached its greatest territorial extent. He was one of the brightest rulers in the history of the Shang Dynasty.

However, in his middle age, he had become more inclined towards merrymaking and had developed a mercurial temper.

When he heard that Fang Yuan had resisted arrest, King Xin flipped over the table in front of him in a fit of rage.

“How dare he act like this in Shangyi. Does this capital city still belong to me?”

The two servants at his side shared a quiet laugh with each other.

They had taken bribes from Western Zhou and was prepared to slander Jie in front of the King, which would sabotage chances of reconciliation even if Jie had been willing to meet with the King peacefully.

What they had not expected was that Jie was a maniac. They did not even have to sow discord.

“Pass down my orders to lock up all the gates of the city and issue a national arrest warrant for him!”

King Xin bellowed on.

“When I get my hands on Jie, I will make sure that he experiences excruciating torture!”

The wrath of the Shang King had left all the servants in the imperial court trembling.

No one had noticed a figure glide away from the outside of the imperial palace to a princely palace. He then went on to relate what he had seen to a young man.

“Jie?”

This young man had piercing eyes and gave off an exalted aura. He had a more impressive countenance than Young Master Wu.

After all, how could the upbringing of the Young Master of a feudal state compare to that of an imperial Prince?

The appearance and fortune of people in the world were expressions of their strength and potential. These things did not happen by chance.

“It is a great pity that we have fallen out with a master that has inflicted defeat upon the Sword Sage!”

The young man drew his sword determinedly.

“I will leave the palace and personally arrest Jie for Father’s sake...Mm, this is what you will tell the King if he asks, is that clear?”

“Yes, my Prince!”

His aides bowed deeply in reply. At that moment, they all shared a sense of helplessness.

Chapter 562: The Creator

Just as the entire Shangyi was in a state of confusion after Fang Yuan’s actions, none of them would expect him to stroll casually in the capital instead of fleeing for his life.

"Is this the Creator’s Temple?"

Fang Yuan looked up towards the towering architecture. It was built around the mountainous terrain and had an ancient look to it. There was a solemn vibe coming from the temple.

There was religion in the Shang Dynasty. However, there were only two main religions: The Tai God from the Heavens and the Creator from the Earth!

Rumour had it that the Tai God was the one who created the realm, while the Creator was the god of the people.

'According to religion, the Tai God represents the Heavenly Will! It represents the rules of the realm! The dao! It does not take any form. However, it is useless if any humans were to worship it...'

The Heavenly Will would be able to affect the large scale of things, but it helping individuals was unheard of. It was too high up and seemed almost irrelevant to most.

However, it was different for The Creator.

"If I were to do this, a God might just appear out of nowhere..."

Fang Yuan stepped into the temple and arrived at the main hall. A statue greeted him.

The statue of the female god had lifelike expressions and was a dainty looking god. It seemed compassionate, but the surprising thing was the fact that it had the body of a snake!

"Has it finally become a god..."

Fang Yuan's eyes glittered as he immediately felt a connection between the statue. He felt connected to it in another realm.

The actual body of The Creator was not in the Shang Capital. Rather, it was in another half plane.

After all, this god was the guardian of mankind and not just the god of the Shang Empire. Obviously, she would not be here.

"Religion creates higher beings... This is interesting..."

Fang Yuan immersed himself in the atmosphere and was lost in his thoughts.

The Tai God represented the Heavenly Will and was an enormous entity. It could not reincarnate into humans even if humans were to worship it.

Furthermore, it would not be able to detect anything even if humans were to worship it. If an entire capital were to worship it, there might just be a slight chance for the Tai God to sense it.

However, this was different for The Creator. It was more suited to humans and was widely worshipped everywhere. It also did not have the burden of the entire realm as it had the ability to take up human forms, becoming a true divine being!

"It is harder to become a deity than to follow the god dao... It has already been 500 years, but realm energy practitioners would only undergo a few breakthroughs during this period of time. However, religions could be easily strengthened in such a short period of time... Could Army Leader Chi have reincarnated into another form as well?"

Gazing at the half-human half-snake statue of The Creator, Fang Yuan could almost feel as though he was in contact with the purest and most powerful form of energy of the Ancient Realm.

"Master!"

Ge Nie's uneasy voice was heard. "There's a commotion outside. I'm afraid that the soldiers are here once again!"

"Mmm..."

Fang Yuan casually dismissed him and continued to gaze at the statue. Indeed, he could feel the lifelike emotions from it. It was as though the entire statue was carved from the purest white jade.

'Could they have carved it in such a way on purpose? King Shang might just compose a new poem after looking at this statue. Could this be the interplanar force? Could this be a side-effect of radiation from that source realm?'

He felt lost as he thought deeper about it.

Suddenly, a random thought came to his mind. 'What if... I am the one composing the poem? What would happen then?'

"Rumble!"

Outside, the peaceful sky suddenly turned dark and streaks of lightning crackled across the sky.

"Kill!"

A swarm of Shang soldiers rushed in and started to mindlessly slice everything they saw, dying the floor of the temple blood-red.

'Forget it... I have returned to this realm in an attempt to chase after The Ancient One. There is absolutely no need for me to go against the will of the realm...'

Fang Yuan casually sliced his sword in the air and the oncoming soldiers fell to the ground in a pile of bloodied mess. He started to shake his head as he observed the whizzing arrows and the casualties around. There was even a with lying among the pool of blood. 'This is uncalled for... The Creator is a compassionate god. Now that blood has stained her temple and her followers are killed, the Shang soldiers have put themselves against her... Is this an act of defiance against the heavens?'

Fang Yuan held his sword and made an escape path for himself. Suddenly, he picked up a green bronze sword and flung it outwards. One of the leading soldiers was struck and fell to the ground.

"Gentleman is dead!"

The soldiers were disorganised and Fang Yuan and company managed to escape from the mess.

"Stop it!"

At this point in time, a group of people rode horses and arrived at the temple. The one leading the group was a promising young man had his face was flushed with anger. "This is The Creator's Temple. How dare all of you disrespect it?"

He was filled with extreme anger as he directed his horse toward Fang Yuan.

"I am Prince Pan! Jie, you better surrender!"



Pan roared as he made his way towards Fang Yuan. Unfortunately, his horse stumbled and he fell to the ground. Effortlessly, Fang Yuan picked him up and placed his sword on Pan's neck.

'Mister Jie, quickly make your escape. Take me as your hostage and you can order for the city gates to be opened!'

Pan whispered softly in Fang Yuan's ears.

"Interesting!"

Fang Yuan smiled and shouted towards the soldiers. "If you want your prince to live, get out of my way!"

"Prince Pan?"

Once the Shang soldiers realised that Prince Pan was being held hostage, they looked at each other in despair and retreated to form a path for Fang Yuan and company to arrive at the city gates with no obstruction.

The guards at the gate did not dare to disrespect Prince Pan and Fang Yuan as well and promptly, albeit unwillingly, open the gates for them. They even provided them with a carriage for Fang Yuan and company.

...

In the grasslands.

As soon as Fang Yuan and company took over the carriage, they quickly fled from the city and not long after, they were miles away from Shangyi before taking a break at a nearby river.

"Prince Pan, why did you rescue me?"

Fang Yuan ordered Ge Nie and Hei Zhong to feed the horse before sitting down. He looked at Prince Pan with interest.

'The purple energy rays filled the sky above, and there are no signs of a weakened empire. It's a pity that the fate of the people is interconnected with the fate of the empire... If the empire were to fall, the people will fall with it too.'

"You are a talented person and I am unwilling to see you oppose the Shang Empire!"

Prince Pan paid his greetings. "However, by the time I've heard the news about you, it was already too late. I can only help you leave Shangyi first. When I return, I will then try to convince my father to change his mind towards you."

"Prince Pan, you are a worthy and virtuous son!"

Fang Yuan smiled. "However, your father is arrogant and full of himself. He will have to go through this ordeal one way or another!"

On first sight, Fang Yuan felt a sense of familiarity towards this prince. It was as though he was someone familiar.

The vibe he was giving off was similar to those who belonged to the division which Fang Yuan had single-handedly created previously, which made him a little fond of this prince.

"Ordeal?"

The prince's expression changed and he bowed once more. "Please enlighten me!"

"It's difficult! Difficult, difficult, I say! It had already begun and there is nothing we can do about it!"

Fang Yuan shook his head.

He had only just thought about it.

Since this realm had already been infected with the radiation of energy from a higher realm, it would have to undergo a certain calamity. Something had to happen. It could very well not be the lustful poem which King Shang would compose. For instance, it could also be... the killings which happened earlier today!

"It had begun?"

Prince Pan shook and was in disbelief.

"The Creator was a god of compassion. You led a group of soldiers to kill people in her temple, tainting it with blood. Your soldiers have also killed her followers. What do you think about this?"

Fang Yuan spoke calmly.

"Is it about The Creator? I shall return now and order people to sacrifice livestock in an attempt to apologise!"

Prince Pan gritted his teeth.

"It's too late!"

Fang Yuan shook his head. It was as though he had completely seen through Prince Pan.

Suddenly, he burst out in laughter. "Forget it... Since we are fated to meet today, there must be an underlying reason to it... I will give you this incense. If you encounter any trouble in the future, you can light it and I shall arrive personally to help you!"

Fang Yuan could not interfere with the country affairs for no reason.

Therefore, he made use of this opportunity by disguising it as a repayment to Prince Pan for his kindness. As such, everything would be logical.

'This is great... If everything happens as how I have predicted it, the great war in Shangyi will still happen, and it will affect all 3 regions! The Ancient One will not miss this opportunity!'

Fang Yuan thought to himself silently.

As soon as The Ancient One were to show up, he would undoubtedly be met with lightning tribulation!

...

This was a void.

Incense filled the void and turned into golden streaks of religious force. Like a huge river, the streaks of religious force swirled around. It was a spectacular sight.

In the middle of the void stood a temple. The path at the entrance of the temple was paved with gold and resembled a golden dragon. Thick streaks of religious force gathered above the temple, making the temple look even more majestic than it already was.

In the middle of the main hall of the temple, on an altar, a seemingly sleeping god was awakened.

The top half of her body was human, and the bottom half was that of a snake. Her face was elegant and compassionate. "My temple has been intruded... My followers are killed!"

Before her, a streak of green fog rose up, forming a screen which showed the events that happened on that fateful day.

As she watched on, her expression started to turn into a strict one. "What audacity! How dare the Shang people think so highly of themselves! They deserve retribution!"

As she became enraged, the heavens and earth responded.

The entire plane rumbled and revealed the mountains of the Da Qian world.

Suddenly, it turned into the 800 feudal states and the Shang Empire in the centre, with black fog circling the top of the Shang Empire. At the Northwestern side, a streak of red light appeared.

"Is this... the heavenly will?!"

The Creator scoffed. "With just a simple thought, I have managed to create all these troubles..."

She was only intending to give the Shang Empire a small warning and was ready to forgive them as soon as they repent.

However, now, the heavenly will made use of her in an attempt to eradicate the Shang Empire!

How much power was involved in this, and how many people would die because of this?

"This is regretful... Although I am a god with godly powers, I do not have much control over his..."

She sighed as though she was looking at the doomsday of the realm.

Although she was god herself, she was still bounded by the laws of the realm. With a single thought, her actions would go out of control and it was too late!

Instead of blaming her for creating the calamity, it was more accurate to say that the heavens had made use of her to do so.

"Is the heavenly will active now?"

After a long while, as everything settled down, a piece of information appeared before her and The Creator remained silent.

Chapter 563: Recreating the Dao

"The Creator is half-human and half-snake... In reality, this means that she belongs to - the demons!"

Fang Yuan rode on his horse and started to think about the statue he saw in the temple. A wide grin appeared on his face. "This also means... In this generation, The Creator is not only the god of the humans but the leader of all demons!"

The influence of such a god would be too scary to imagine.

In fact, she could possibly be the strongest being in this realm!

"The Shang Empire is destined to fall, but its 500-year foundation is still nevertheless strong. Unless The Creator personally interferes, it is almost impossible to destroy the empire in such a short time..."

"This is the heavenly will!"

Fang Yuan was too clear about the limitations of the gods.

Since gods gain their powers from their followers, they had to conform to the rules of the realm. They would still be under the control of the heavens.

As soon as the heavens decide on the fate of the Shang Empire, The Creator would not hold back. Instead, she would be the one causing it, as seen from how the heavens could make use of her.

"Unless she becomes an ancient god, she would never stand a chance in opposing the heavens... Therefore, she will likely be the one to cause the downfall of the Shang Empire."

Thinking about Prince Pan who had just left, Fang Yuan sighed.

The prince's demeanour, humility and wisdom made him the perfect candidate to be king. If he were to be successful in taking the throne, the Shang Empire might stand a chance to survive.

Unfortunately for him, the heavens were strict!

"If I had persuaded him just now and decided to help him to become king, I'm afraid I will put myself at a risk. This is the heavenly will, his fate, and the trend of this realm..."

Fang Yuan sighed.

"Master, where are we going now?"

Hei Zhong rode a tall horse and the foxes curled up on his shoulders, making him seem as though he was wearing a silver scarf. Ge Nie was struggling to maintain his balance on his own horse as he gripped the horse's fur tightly, afraid that he would fall.

"The western countries, naturally!"

Fang Yuan had planned to journey towards the Northwest all along. "The strong powers are at Shang and the West. Of course, we'll have to go there to take a look!"

As a dream traverser, he had a huge advantage for having knowledge of all worlds he had visited before.

Even a sage such as The Ancient One could only vaguely sense the changes in the realm and predict the downfall of the Shang Empire. However, he could not possibly have any idea as to what would cause it.

However, Fang Yuan was different!

With the memories of Jie and the understanding of this realm, Fang Yuan could easily deduce the cause of everything.

"It's a pity... I don't have enough power! If I have a vast intelligence network, I will be able to transmit information quickly to find the likes of Jiang Ziya and Shen Gongbao..."

"Also... This realm does not seem to discriminate against dream elemental force. I can attempt to try out the new dream master technique and restore my cultivation..."

Fang Yuan whipped his horse and rode towards the horizon as his mind raced.

After a day, the sun finally set and the moon rose over the horizon.

Hei Zhong and Ge Nie pitched a tent near a river, caught a few sparrows and rabbits and prepared dinner for the 5 of them.

The two foxes hugged their drumstick and ate it to the bones. After dinner, they faced the moon, released their Yin spirits and started to cultivate the essence of the moon.

"The two of them are more hardworking than you!"

Heng Zhong lashed out at Ge Nie. "Nie, Master has told me that if your progress is not satisfactory, he will kick you out!"

"Yes senior!"

Ge Nie crossed his leg and sat on a rock. He started to absorb the essence of the moon and shivered coldly. A layer of frost settled on his hair.

However, he was a hardworking person. Even as his teeth chattered and his lips bled, he managed to attain the skill of absorption and entered a trance, his mind at peace.

"Master... look! I've been strict on him and he has finally made it!"

Hei Zhong reported to Fang Yuan, hoping to gain some credit for it.

"You even dare to tell me about it? He is just a newcomer but his progress is almost catching up to yours..." Fang Yuan glared at him. "If he overtakes you, you will get it from me..."

"Master, don't worry!"

Hei Zhong shuddered in fear and quickly located an empty plot of land to begin his cultivation.

To him, the pain of cultivation was nothing compared to the torture which Fang Yuan could possibly give him.

With this threat, he obediently followed Fang Yuan's instructions.

"Hmmm... The which I have created is considered complete!"

Looking at Hei Zhong and Ge Nie in their states of cultivation, Fang Yuan silently observed the flow of Yin Energy in their meridians and nodded his head.

This technique was indeed created for demons. After his adaptation, Fang Yuan managed to make it suitable for humans. Of course, it was still not perfect yet, but good enough.

Even for such a basic technique, Hei Zhong had to try many times before being able to use it to its full potential.

"Now, my will allow me to cultivate to a level equivalent to a 9th Tier spiritual knight... That's the most it can do unless I am able to refer to the books the realm energy practitioners from this realm!"

To speak the truth, in Shangyi, Fang Yuan had gathered information regarding realm energy practitioners.

Unfortunately, these group of people were too mysterious. Furthermore, 500 years was too long for the average human but was merely a few generations for these realm energy practitioners. Therefore, the different cultivation levels of these realm energy practitioners were not well documented by humans. The most humans were able to gather were levels like the 3 Peak Flowers, the 5 Elemental Energy etcetera.

After all, reality was not a game. Records of these realm levels differ from each other. For instance, the most factual Yin Spirit could be casually explained in many different ways.

Fang Yuan could not be bothered to care about these minor details and named it as how he would usually refer to it as.

'In this realm, there are many branches of people skilled in many different ways. The majority of powerful beings are as powerful as 9th Tier spiritual knights and 9th Meridian Wu Zongs. There might be one or two Grandmasters who are able to peer into the realm of the sages! The demons would surely know about this. That is why in the god dao, there is a powerful being, The Creator. The Creator is already more powerful than True Divines and True Elementals...'

Fang Yuan had a good grasp of the martial arts in The Ancient Realm.

"Based on my current cultivation level, I can do whatever I want... If I can restore my cultivation level to the point before the war at the Jade capital, I would almost be the most powerful being in the realm."

Fang Yuan crossed his legs and appeared dazed as he connected with his actualised dream world.

His actualised dream world was rebuilt from the purest dream elemental force from the Demonic Heart Realm. Although it was merely a sea of purple, it was already as strong as a 3rd or 4th Tier Illusionary Divine stage dream master.

"The dream dao was initially dependant on a weak foundation as it absorbs dream elemental force. Now, my foundation is strengthened, but..."

After witnessing the source of original energy, Fang Yuan was no longer interested in the normal dream elemental force.

Unfortunately, at his current cultivation level, it was impossible for him to absorb and harness original energy.

Long periods of cultivation could only compress the original dream elemental force in his actualised dream world, resulting in a thick and viscous silver liquid which seemed as though it was on the brink of solidifying.

"Can I name this physical state as dream elemental crystal?"

Fang Yuan gazed at his own actualised dream world. It was a world made up of dream elemental crystals.

"It's a pity... Such thick and concentrated dream elemental force is still nothing compared to original energy!"

A single drop of original energy would be enough to create an entire realm!

Even the purest form of dream elemental crystal would not be able to do it. These two entities were on completely different levels!

'Original energy seems like a concept, an everlasting one that is able to continuously radiate lower forms of energy... I can never fully understand this as a dream master!'

Since he knew that he would not be able to fully understand it, Fang Yuan did not dare to remove the restriction he had on his Body Seal.

Otherwise, if the source energy were to explode, his true physical form and even his true soul would be disintegrated.

"The current plan is to continue on the purified dream dao before even attempting to harness original energy... However, even after that, original energy will still remain as a mystery..."

Fang Yuan was still unaware of the characteristics and traits of the purified dream dao simply by looking at its foundations.

He was equally clueless as to when he would be qualified enough to harness original energy.

However, he would never go wrong if he were to continue on his current cultivation.

With a single thought, numerous dream elemental crystals gathered together within his actualised dream world, forming the shape of a divine sword!

It was the Leaving Fire Sword!

As soon as the sword appeared, the actualised dream world shook and an illusionary shadow of a sword descended from above. The entire sword quickly formed and was a brilliant red.

"The imprint of the 8 Gates Sword Array is still in here. This makes it extremely simple to restore my cultivation..."

Fang Yuan heaved a sigh of relief as he sensed the familiarity of the Leaving Fire Sword. It was as though the sword had become more divine through the previous ordeal, and this even gave Fang Yuan some inspiration about the path after the 8 swords were completed.

"It's a pity that I am no longer interested in this secret technique. Be it a dream soldier master, dream spells master or dream array master, the different professions only differ in how they make use of dream elemental force. Why should there be a distinction? The forming of these swords is a mere representation of my cultivation..."

Until now, Fang Yuan had already understood how the professions of dream masters did not matter.

Although he might be a dream soldier master on the surface, beneath him, he could still create countless spells with a single thought, or create arrays with a single thought.

"The dream dao consists of only one path... creation! Now, I shall change the name of the 8 Gates Sword Array. It is a physical entity created by my knowledge on sword arrays. I shall rename it as 'Creation Sword Array!'"

Fang Yuan's eyes glistened.

With a single thought, his stats window started to change:

"Name: Fang Yuan

Essence: 50 (100)

Spirit: 50 (100)

Magic: 50 (100)

Profession: Dream Master

Cultivation: Illusionary Divine Stage (1st Tier)

Technique: Ultimate Witch Body (90%), [Creation Sword Array (1st Sword (100%))]

Skill: [Medicine (Level 3)], [Botany (Level 6)(Peak)], [Fiery Golden Eyes (Level 1)], [Body Seal (Ultimate form)]"

Chapter 564: Royal Mandate

The state of Western Zhou.

This was one of the 800 feudal states and sat in the northwest of Shangyi. The lands of Western Zhou were vast and shared borders with the lands of Xiyi and Quanrong.

Generations of Western Zhou Marquises had been ambitious and worked on expanding their lands towards the West. They encouraged population growth and built up the state's military forces. The combined efforts of these Marquises had turned Western Zhou into the most powerful Shang feudal state.



The current Marquis of Western Zhou was said to be a sage descended from the heavens. According to a legend, his birth was marked by the appearance of colourful clouds that took the forms of tortoise shells and yarrow stalks, sacred items that were used in divination.

The previous Marquis of Western Zhou was said to have been afraid of censure by the Shang and threw his newborn into the river. A large number of golden carps had surrounded the wooden basin that the infant had been placed in, in the formation of a golden lotus.

Upon witnessing this miraculous sight, the old Marquis changed his mind. He named his son Li and saw to it that he was well brought up.

When Li grew up, his genius became apparent. He had the gift of fortune-telling and was extremely accurate in his predictions. He conducted deep research into ancient texts and devised a new art of divination known as the Yi Dao. This had led to the creation of the School of Yi and Li was henceforth known as Sir Yi!

Fang Yuan was impressed with these achievements and had even thought that Li was a son of destiny, a person destined to lead the way out of the chaos.

"Master...once we make it past the mountain ahead of us, we will arrive in Western Zhou!"

Hei Zhong shouted from atop his horse.

"I've scouted the road ahead and found that not only have the roads been paved, but the inns are also larger than those found in Shang. It seems like this is a place where the people live and work in peace!"

"Hehe..."

Fang Yuan chuckled coldly upon hearing Hei Zhong's words.

Western Zhou was a mere feudal state with a land area smaller than that of Shang. How did it manage to spur on development to such an extent?

Also, by enjoying a high standard of living in Western Zhou and attributing it to the Marquis's greatness, where would that leave King Shang?

To a unified empire like the Shang Dynasty, the superseding of regional loyalties over national loyalties was a portent of calamity.

"I've heard that the Western Zhou state has moved against the Quanrong and Xiyi states several times in recent years...once powerful, these two barbarian states have fallen into crises after Western Zhou had taken a great deal of food, metal, women from them. Meanwhile, the people of Western Zhou lived in comfort. The Marquis even devised policies such as the criminalisation of infanticide, compulsory marriage at 15 years of age as well as the material incentivisation of childbirths...."

It was Ge Nie who had a good knowledge regarding the affairs of Western Zhou.

"Even within Shangyi, there are people who actively spread the word about the virtuousness and accomplishments of the Marquis!"

War usually began with the spreading of words.

This was a lesson from later history that the people of this era had not yet grasped.

"The Sage Sir Yi?"

As Fang Yuan passed through the border of Western Zhou, his eyes flashed with a new light.

"Alright, let me take a look at what you have achieved!"

...

The capital city of Western Zhou.

Colourful clouds converged high up in the heavens. The goddess Nuwa<sup>[1]</sup> stood among the clouds and looked down at the bustling city.

"The heavenly mandate...is with Zhou! There are two obstacles that stand in the way of its ascension!"

Nuwa looked towards the western lands of Western Zhou and saw a violent battle taking place.

"The Quanrong and Xiyi states are the largest threats to Western Zhou's development. They will have to be destroyed in order for Western Zhou to move on!"

Nuwa pondered for a moment before waving her fair hand and sending some colourful clouds over to bless the Western Zhou troops.

After she was done, she shifted her gaze to the southeast.

'The military strength of Western Zhou is barely half that of Shang. In order to fulfil Zhou's destiny of overthrowing the Shang, the Dongyi and Jiumiao states will have to occupy the majority of the Shang army such that the imperial capital will be left undefended. In this way, Western Zhou would have a valuable opportunity!'

Having made sense of the heavenly mandate, Nuwa disappeared into the clouds.

A rock bathed in colourful lights fell out of the skies and descended upon Western Zhou.

In the royal palace.

The Marquis Li of Western Zhou had the look of a gentle old man and was occupied with his tortoise shells and hexagrams at that moment.

He lifted the charred tortoise shells excitedly.

"The frontlines have managed to break the Quanrong army? In such a short time?"

Adrenaline rushed through his veins as he stood up and left the palace.

"Kaboom!"

The skies shook as a strange occurrence took place. With a blinding flash, an object surrounded by colourful lights fell to the earth.

Soldiers standing all around had their mouths agape as they witnessed the sight. The servants fell to their knees in a fearful reverence.

"Isn't that the direction of...Qi Mountain?!"

The Marquis of Western Zhou stared in the direction of which the rock was heading and passed down an order.

"Get the horse carriages ready...we are going to Qi Mountain now!"

...

"Master..."

Fang Yuan and company had witnessed the fall of the colourful object as well.

"Could it be that Western Zhou is favoured by the heavens?"

Ge Nie may be knowledgeable but he was still a product of the ancient era. The occurrence of this strange event had dazed him.

Fang Yuan gave him a hard whack with the hilt of his sword.

"What are you waiting for? Go check it out!"

Fang Yuan had arrived at a silent conclusion.

'My senses can't be wrong. It must have been Nuwa's doing. It seems like she has been working hard to propel the rise of the Marquis...'

'Also...I'm sure that such a sensational event would have caught the attention of the Ancient One!'

A phenomenon of such a scale would definitely lead to repercussions all over the world!

Not only would people around the world see it as an omen, but there would also be a large impact on the Cultivation World. Scholars and sages, hidden cultivators and higher beings, monsters and demons, as well as other authorities, would have noticed Western Zhou as a result. The Western Zhou state would no longer be able to remain out of sight.

There was no escaping the wheels of history.

"After it!"

The three men immediately spurred their horses on and sped towards the landing point of the colourful rock.

"That is the direction of...Qi Mountain?"

"You are too slow. Find somewhere to wait for me at!"

Fang Yuan aimed straight at the direction in which the colourful rock had fallen and stepped into the void. Flames erupted around his body as he flew towards the rock like a comet.

The agglomerated Leaving Fire Sword was not only more stable than before but it also carried with it several special abilities.

It was rather similar to the Sword Flying Technique but of a more basic form.

"Kaboom!"

The colourful rock smashed onto the ground and a deafening sound reverberated in the air.

Fang Yuan had reached there just in time.

When he arrived at Qi Mountain, he saw that the people living around the mountain had prostrated themselves in the direction of the mountain. Additionally, soldiers had encircled the mountain.

A large crater had appeared in the side of the mountain. Colourful lights emanated from it and illuminated the surrounding air.

"A treasure!"

"A treasure from the heavens for the chosen ones!"

"Take it! There is hope for the Great Dao now!"

Dark energies were converging upon the mountain, carrying with it the figures of monsters and demon. The Western Zhou army, as well as Western Zhou's more remarkable citizens, kept them from coming closer.

"Hmm?"

Fang Yuan rose up higher into the air where he got a clearer view.

"It is fortunate that the first arrivals were only made up of petty cultivators or Western Zhou would be in big trouble...this treasure though...is it a Penta-coloured Rock?"

The incredible view allowed him to view the crater in its entirety. Lying right in the middle of it was a crystalline rock that shone in five colours.

A well-dressed old man approached the crater gingerly.

"The Marquis of Western Zhou?! Was this treasure meant for him? Something fishy is going on..."

Fang Yuan was so used to seeing things like this that he could no longer be bothered to complain.

Of course, a Penta-coloured rock was not enough to pique his interest. Fang Yuan found a good hiding spot among the dark clouds and peeled out contentedly.

"Great...I wonder which unlucky unorthodox cultivator will be the one to trigger the explosion!"

The Marquis looked dazed as he stretched out his right hand towards the Penta-coloured rock. He was only a few inches away.

"Roar! Roar!"

A bone-chilling roar split the air. It was coming from the foot of the mountain.

"Whoosh!"

A strong gale swept across the ground and blocked out the skies.

A large shadow was moving at an incredible speed along with the dark wind. It let out another roar and revealed itself: a huge black bear!

This bear had stretch marks on its face and wings on its back. It was of a strange and wild species found in the ancient era. The bear moved at the speed of lightning and smashed through the human wall in its quest to ascend the mountain.

"Roar! Roar!"

Upon seeing the Penta-coloured rock, the bear's eyes became bloodshot. It used its paws to slap the soldiers who attempted to confront it into the ground. Following which, the bear tried to pounce on the Marquis.

'It will be interesting if the Marquis really dies, but...'

Fan Yuan shook his head lazily. He knew that the Marquis would not die before fulfilling his destiny.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

Indeed, help had arrived.

A clear shriek filled the skies. The figure that emerged flapped its mighty purple wings, which sent the bear rolling until a phoenix claw pressed into its body and halted its tumble.

"This is the...Purple Phoenix! Is it heaven's will that a phoenix is flying around Qi Mountain?"

Even the Marquis, who was well acquainted with the supernatural, had become agitated upon seeing the majestic bird.

The Phoenix before him had purplish-black feathers and had very long tail feathers that were of five colours: black, white, red, yellow and green. Bright tassels hung from them and enhanced the grandness of the bird.

The Marquis had immediately recognised the bird upon first sight. It was definitely a phoenix!

The classics told of five types of Phoenix. The most common species was red in colour but there were the yellow, green, purple and white species as well.

In the presence of the Purple Phoenix, the Marquis no longer hesitated and touched the Penta-coloured rock.

"Whoosh!"

Light burst forth from the pentagon-coloured rock and flowed over the Marquis's body, eventually solidifying into a colourful armour and a sword!

The Marquis now radiated a mysterious power and the surrounding soldiers fell to their knees in reverence.

"The heavenly mandate!"

The Marquis of Western Zhou raised his sword, accompanied by the fearsome shriek of the Phoenix. The unorthodox presences promptly retreated.

At the moment, a soldier rushed to the Marquis's side and offered the latest news on his knees.

"Greetings my lord, I have urgent news from the front lines. We have achieved a great victory over the Quanrong and Xiyi armies. The Quanrong King has perished in battle while the Xiyi royals have agreed to become our vassals!"

The combination of these events silenced even the most fervent doubters.

Was the royal mandate really with Western Zhou?

[1]: Henceforth, The Creator shall be referred to by its name, Nuwa.

Chapter 565: Confirmation

"Impressive methods! Impressive calculations! The sword and armour, together with the publicity, will serve as solid proof of the royal mandate!"

Fang Yuan watched on silently. He had no intention of making a move.

The person who had orchestrated the whole thing must still be watching behind the scenes. Would they choose to appear now?

"This Five Elements Purple Phoenix, however..."

Fang Yuan examined the beast. His eyes gleamed.

"Not only is it a divine beast with magical talents, but it has also mastered the five elements. Its power is only superseded by that of the True Divine. Perhaps we can call it a Secondary Divine. Could it be Kong Xuan[1]?"

Of course, although the peacocks were descended from the phoenixes, they were distinct from each other. Fang Yuan could tell them apart easily.

"The Five Elements Phoenix is a rare species. Not sure if it is a representative of a higher being, or is it here of its own accord in support of the Marquis ..."

Fang Yuan's stared at the Five Elements Purple Phoenix and frowned.

For some reason, the Phoenix invoked in him a sense of familiarity.

It looked like someone he was pursuing!

"The Ancient One?! It may or may not be..."

This person had abandoned his original body and had undergone reincarnation. It was only to be expected that his divine soul had changed. Besides, he was once a Sage and would have no lack of concealment methods.

In truth, Fang Yuan did not recognise him on first sight.

Even upon closer inspection, Fang Yuan had not managed to find any proof that the Phoenix was the Ancient One. It was only his spiritual sense that was doing the talking.

'Could it be that the Ancient One has become a Phoenix through reincarnation?'

Fang Yuan was stumped for a moment.

Under normal circumstances, Fang Yuan would have killed the Phoenix regardless of whether it was the Ancient One in disguise or not. It was better to be wrong than to have the Ancient One slip through his fingers again.

However, there was a problem.

The Five Elements Purple Phoenix had the power of a Secondary Divine. Fang Yuan's Ultimate Witch Body was not fully developed and he would not be able to overwhelm the Phoenix yet.

It would become much harder to get to the Phoenix when Nuwa arrived!

Fang Yuan did not want to put himself at more risk than he had to.

"I'll continue to wait and see!"

Fang Yuan kept his eyes trained on the Five Elements Purple Phoenix.

At the same time, the Marquis seemed to have come to a decision and announced it loudly.

"From today onwards, Western Zhou will adopt the Phoenix as a national symbol! The era name shall be changed to Auspicious Phoenix in commemoration of this event!"

"Yes, my lord!"

All the soldiers and peasants present broke out into loud cheers.

Fang Yuan could see that puffs of tribal energy were gathering to form a dense mass.

The energy of destiny surrounding the Marquis had stabilised completely and was rushing up into the sky like a pillar to the heavens.

Another purplish-black Phoenix had appeared within the pillar. It bore a great resemblance to the Five Element Purple Phoenix.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

The Five Element Purple Phoenix let out a shriek and flew into the pillar of energy where it became one with the other Phoenix.

"Has...has this Phoenix become the divine protector of the state?"

Fang Yuan's eyelid twitched.

The Five Elements Purple Phoenix had intertwined itself with the fate of Western Zhou.

This way, the Phoenix would perish if Western Zhou fell. On the other hand, the Phoenix would prosper if Western Zhou managed to overthrow the Shang Dynasty.

This was a life-and-death gamble for the Phoenix and even Nuwa did not interfere.

'These methods...are pretty familiar...'

Fang Yuan let out a sigh.

At the very moment where the Five Elements Purple Phoenix had fused with the energy of destiny, a small bit of its true aura had escaped into the air and subsequently, into Fang Yuan's grasp.

Fang Yuan had been unsure previously. Now, he was dead sure that the Five Elements Purple Phoenix was the Ancient One!

"Chirp! Chirp!"

The Purple Phoenix let out an extended shriek. Colourful lights shone from its body as it displayed its majesty.

Fang Yuan turned around to leave without hesitation.

The Purple Phoenix had secured a breakthrough for itself when it chose to fuse its own fate with the tribal energy of Western Zhou. It was as powerful as a True Divine now!

Besides, as long as Western Zhou remained strong, the Phoenix would thrive as well. It would even be able to come back to life in the event of its destruction!

"What a pity...I was too late!"

Fang Yuan sighed inwardly and quickly retreated.

...

"Master?!"

Hei Zhong and Ge Nie were just about to rest when they saw Fang Yuan appear in the burst of fire. They greeted him heartily.

"Are we heading to Western Zhou's capital city now?"

"We're leaving now!"

Fang Yuan waved a hand gloomily.

There was nothing more he could do in Western Zhou.

'The Five Elements Purple Phoenix, now the sacred beast of Western Zhou, is the Ancient One! He has regained his level of cultivation as a True Divine spiritual knight and is being backed up by Western Zhou's tribal energy. Dealing with him will be very difficult...'

'However, the Ancient One is very ambitious. He wants to take this chance to regain his Sage status as well as to attain Dao using the five elements. He even covets Nuwa's power. There must be an opportunity here somewhere for me to make my move!'

Fang Yuan sat down with his legs crossed. The more he thought about it, the more he felt that the times were not favourable to him.

'I had wanted to give Western Zhou my blessings, but now...'



'What I can do is now is to rush back to Shang and help them to defeat Western Zhou. This is the only way to kill the Ancient One!'

'It's a pity that I had never thought about this beforehand and only have a mild relationship with the Shang...it feels like I have been tricked by the Ancient World...'

Fang Yuan sighed. He had understood what was going on.

Although the Ancient World had accepted him, he and the Ancient One were receiving equal treatment.

He would have chosen to fall in with the Shang if he had arrived during Shang's golden age.

However, at present, the tribal energy of the Shang was unstable. Things would inevitably go against him because he was the founder of the Shang Dynasty and wielded too much power.

The many problems experienced by the Shang Dynasty so far were just the beginning. More would definitely follow if Fang Yuan chose to go to their aid.

'Well, I could vow to cut off all ties with the Shang Dynasty and never help them again. However, the Ancient One would become even more difficult to handle when Western Zhou emerges victorious over the Shang Dynasty...'

Fang Yuan let out a long sigh.

'I'll be boarding a sinking ship and trying my best to keep it afloat. I wonder how the legendary Grandmaster of Heaven[2] had once felt?'

Hei Zhong and Ge Nie watched the expressions shift on Fang Yuan's face. They did not dare to speak.

The fox sisters lay quietly at the side as well. They did not even dare to move.

'Forget it. The heavens might have made their decision but I will try my best to resist their will...'

Fang Yuan had made up his mind and broke out into a smile.

"A huge mess is going on all around us..."

At this point, the Shang state was still the most powerful state in the world with the largest army at its disposal. If Fang Yuan took over the Shang throne, he would make sure that Western Zhou never became a threat even after they had absorbed the Quanrong and Xiyi states.

"I'll have to make sure that...the heavenly will of this world has no way of directly turning the tides in their favour!"

Fang Yuan considered the strengths of the parties involved and got a better idea of his chances.

Not being able to directly turn the tides in their favour meaning that if Shang emerged victorious over Western Zhou, the Shang King would not be struck down by lightning, nor would the Shang army be destroyed by earthquakes or floods.

If the heavenly will of this world was capable of doing all of that, Fang Yuan would leave without a second word.

After all, the Ancient One had been forced out of the Da Qian World. Fang Yuan was fine with leaving this world empty-handed.

Besides, Fang Yuan would have much more to work with if he could only make sure that the heavenly will of this world only provided marginal support to the heavenly mandate.

'To change the general trend or to assassinate the Marquis would be suicide...what I can do is to tweak the little details and watch the combined effect of these alterations destroy Western Zhou's heavenly mandate!'

After Fang Yuan was done with his calculations, he no longer felt inclined to tour Western Zhou and started back to where he and his companions had come from.

...

The Shang capital.

Prince Pan sheathed the iron sword he had been holding as one of his servants entered the room hurriedly. He frowned.

"What has happened? Why are you in such a rush?"

The messenger fell to his knees and delivered his message in a shaky voice.

"The Dongyi army has launched an invasion on our lands!"

"The Dongyi again?"

Although Prince Pan considered the Dongyi to be troublesome opponents, they were loosely organised and had a primitive culture. They were easily driven back and only required the occasional invasion to be kept in check.

However, they had been severely defeated in battle only recently and yet they were attacking again. It was unbelievable.

"How many of them are there?"

Prince Pan had identified the source of the messenger's distress with his question.

"Eight...eighty thousand!"

The messenger replied in a trembling voice. Prince Pan widened his eyes.

"Impossible!"

"My Prince, it's true! The Dongyi tribes have united as one and the leader of this alliance is the largest tribe among them all, the Jiuxiong Division. They have managed to raise an army of 80,000 and have crossed our borders..."

The messenger was crying as he spoke. Prince Pan dropped his sword into the ground.

"...This battle concerns the survival of the Shang Dynasty. The King has ordered a national drafting exercise and will lead the troops to battle personally!"

The messenger continued to speak as Prince Pan experienced inner turmoil.

'How did the various Dongyi tribes manage to achieve unity in so short a time?'

Thoughts swirled about in Prince Pan's head and made him dizzy.

'Something is wrong!'

Prince Pan shuddered.

'The most pressing issue right now is to dissuade Father from leading the troops himself!'

Prince Pan knew very well that if the Shang King appeared on the battlefield, it would be akin to telling the world that the imperial capital was lightly defended.

Besides, there was an inner voice telling him to take this opportunity and volunteer himself.

After all, he was not the crown prince. However, if he managed to achieve glory on the battlefield, he would be a few steps closer to the throne.

'If I were King, the Shang Dynasty would achieve greater heights!'

A fire began to burn in Prince Pan's heart.

No matter his destiny, he would take a gamble on it.

If Fang Yuan had been present, he would have seen dark energy gather around Prince Pan's body and forming the crooked shape of a bird. Even as the colourful lights of the void attempted to suppress its movements, the dark energy continued to resist them obstinately.

[1]: A peacock spirit who became King Zhou's (last king of Shang), general in Chinese mythology

[2]: an evil deity who sided with Shang King Zhou in the losing war against the Zhou

Chapter 566: Divine Power

Beyond the lands of Shangyi, peasants and slaves toiled on fields that had been partitioned in a disorderly but interesting manner.

"The Ancient One has fallen in with Western Zhou and I can't get rid of him. This is going to be tricky...I'll have to go against the heavenly will if I am to counter Western Zhou's tribal energy!"

Fang Yuan was prepared to test the limits of the heavenly will.

If Western Zhou managed to overthrow the Shang Dynasty, then so be it. Fang Yuan would accept the result and leave.

However, if there were loopholes for Fang Yuan to exploit, then he would try his best to kill the Ancient One!

If Fang Yuan did not manage to eliminate the Ancient One, there was no saying if he would come back to hurt Fang Yuan in the future. After all, the Ancient One used to be a powerful Sage.

"It would be nearly impossible to go against the general trend but we can tweak the details...the Tai God was the agglomeration of the will of all lifeforms in the world. He was the lofty personification of the heavenly dao and it would probably be far beneath him to interfere in mortal affairs. Nevertheless, it is better to make sure!"

Fang Yuan thought for a moment before instructing Hei Zhong and Ge Nie to sneak into the city and acquire the latest news. Fang Yuan then retreated to a quiet spot where he began to prepare for the looming battle through cultivation!

Before long, Ge Nie had found out about the mass conscription of male citizens and related the news to Fang Yuan.

"The Dongyi tribes, led by the Jiuxiong Division, have launched an invasion on the Shang Dynasty with an 80,000-strong army? The Shang King himself will be leading the Shang army to war?"

Fang Yuan stared into the distance with his eyes gleaming.

The shape of the Black Bird that was looming over the city had become smaller and more misshapen.

'It is obvious that even if the Shang won, it would be a pyrrhic victory!'

If the Shang Dynasty were to incur huge losses in the southern lands, Western Zhou would take the opportunity to advance into the Shang heartlands and take Shangyi, where they could then declare total victory over the Shang.

"This is the general trend! The heavenly will! Although it seems very crude and simplistic, it would be extremely difficult to alter its course!"

"If the battle between the Shang and Dongyi states is the general trend, would the generals involved as well as the casualty rate be considered the minor details?"

Fang Yuan turned his gaze towards the imperial palace.

The coming battle against the Dongyi would be a chance for him to test his hypotheses and obtain a better understanding of how the heavenly will in this world works. He would then be able to work within its limits.

"Anyway, it seems that there is one more person in Shangyi that warrants attention!"

...

Meanwhile.

In a large house within the grounds of Juxian Hall.

Young Master Wu read the news from Western Zhou with a look of contentment on his face.

"The Quanrong and Xiyi states have been defeated. The Western Zhou state has been strengthened as a result. This calls for a celebration...additionally, Father has received the heavenly mandate as represented by the Penta-coloured rock, which subsequently transformed into a suit of armour and a sword. A divine beast had appeared as well?"

"Yes, Young Master. The appearance of the Phoenix in Qi Mountain can only mean that the heavens favour Western Zhou and that the Marquis now holds the royal mandate!"

Sir Zou looked slightly dazed.

If it were not for his present commitments, he would already have returned to Western Zhou.

"Western Zhou has received the heavenly mandate while the Shang has to deal with the Dongyi invasion..."

Young Master Wu paced up and down. The light in his eyes was becoming brighter.

"A pity...but I cannot leave now!"

As the hegemon, the Shang Dynasty had its methods to limit the powers of its vassal states. These included the tributary system where the feudal lords had to offer annual gifts, swear their allegiance and even live in Shangyi for a period of time. In other words, the feudal lords were being exploited and held hostage.

The Marquis of Western Zhou was already pushing the limits by only sending his heir to Shangyi. If even Young Master Wu left Shangyi, Western Zhou's intent to rebel would be clear.

If that happened, there was no saying if the Shang King Xin would react by attacking Western Zhou before dealing with the Dongyi tribes.

"Sir Zou, return to Western Zhou and inform Father that I need to stay in Shangyi so as to gain the trust of the Shang King! In this way, I will be able to keep Father updated about the goings-on within Shang!"

Young Master Wu gritted his teeth. There was a look of determination on his face.

"Alright! The Marquis would be happy to hear that!"

Sir Zou stroked his beard.

"Nevertheless, when the Shang army leaves to engage the Dongyi army, Young Master, you will have to leave then!"

This was a reminder to Young Master Wu, telling him that he had to escape when the Shang King let down his guard.

"These contributions will strengthen your status as the heir upon your return to Western Zhou!"

Suddenly, a voice came in from outside.

"Young Master, your servant Mo Ge requests an audience!"

A frown creased Young Master Wu's brow for a moment before it disappeared.

"Come in!"

"Greetings, Young Master. Through bribing the palace guards, I've learnt that although the Shang King had intended to lead the troops to battle himself, he was dissuaded by Prince Pan and has postponed making his decision!"

Mo Ge delivered his news hastily.

"Activate our men and make sure that they persuade King Xin to leave for battle at all costs!"

Young Master Wu made his decision without hesitation.

"Also, it would be best if Prince Pan accompanied the King!"

Among the sons of King Xin, Prince Pan was the oldest and most outstanding. Young Master Wu considered him to be a fierce rival.

Moreover, it would not benefit Western Zhou to have a Prince Regent running the Shang Empire in the place of King Xin.

The best case scenario was to have both King Xin and Prince Pan set off for the battlefield, and die in battle!

As the future lord of Western Zhou, Young Master Wu did not lack in shrewdness.

He was like a young dragon waiting for his chance to rush up into the heavens and fulfil his destiny. That is, to become a true dragon!

...

In the Shang imperial palace, Fang Yuan walked among the servants undetected. It was as if they were blind.

"Bad omens precede the fall of a state! As the Shang empire weakens, its energy becomes weaker as well, resulting in the protective spells around the palace becoming less effective, or at least not effective enough to expose me!"

A layer of dream elemental energy enveloped Fang Yuan as he roamed the palace freely.

"Of course...even if the Shang empire was at its peak, its tribal energy wouldn't be able to keep me out all the same..."

Fang Yuan walked on until he came to the ancestral temple of the Shang Dynasty.

According to the rules, the royal family was allowed to build nine ancestral temples, the feudal lord families seven temples, the other noble-ranked families five temples and so on. This was a testament to the importance of rites and hierarchy in the Shang era.

As the hegemon, the Shang royal family was the only family allowed to build nine ancestral temples.

Fang Yuan could feel the tribal energy of the Shang ebbing away, which was similar to the dying of the light at sunset.

Of course, Fang Yuan only noticed because he had been looking out for it. It was also thanks to his Fiery Golden Eyes.

If it had been other energy readers, they would only see the strictness of the law and the calling of the Black Bird[1]. To them, the Shang would still be as unshakeable as before.

"In truth...a 500-year reign is more than respectable. The empire that I will establish in the future probably would not even last half as long as the Shang Dynasty..."

Fang Yuan let out a faint sigh. He was thinking about Fang Mountain, the tribes and more.

He extended a hand.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

A dark energy emerged and revolved around his palm. It took the form of a Black Bird and was strangely endearing.

A large amount of information assailed Fang Yuan's senses and he understood everything in a flash.

"I see!"

When Fang Yuan had founded the tribes and worshipped heaven and earth, he had ended up worshipping the future Tai God and Lady Nuwa. Thus, his accumulated merit had allowed him to be favoured by destiny and create the tribal energy!

The tribal energy of the Shang Dynasty was represented by the Black Bird. The Black Bird had delivered the heavenly mandate to the Shang a long time ago and had led the people of the Shang Dynasty towards prosperity.

Strictly speaking, the tribal energy as represented by the Black Bird had been created by Fang Yuan and his mastery of it exceeded that of the Shang Kings!

"The fate of the Shang Dynasty has a seventy per cent reliance on heavenly will and twenty per cent on human actions. Does the final ten per cent lie with me?"

Fang Yuan did not know what to feel about this.

"Who goes there? How dare you trespass on the ancestral temple?"

A figure emerged from the temple and examined Fang Yuan tentatively.

His hair was sparse and his face was heavily wrinkled. He wore a black robe that did not cover his chest fully, revealing his skinny torso. Strings of bone beads and feathers hung all over his body and his face was covered in greenish-purple patterns.

"Are you...a witch?"

Fang Yuan revealed himself and looked at the Black Bird perched on his arm.

He would not have been discovered if the tribal energy had not gathered around him.

For this person to be able to detect changes in the tribal energy, he had to be the head priest of the Shang Dynasty, also known as the Great Witch. This person had also detected the presence of the purple energy from the beginning.

"Ah!"

The Great Witch fell to his knees in terror upon seeing the Black Bird on Fang Yuan's arm.

"Which of the old Shang Kings are you? Your Majesty!"

The Black Bird was synonymous with the dragon aura. It was the definitive mark of the Shang King.

Needless to say, Fang Yuan had control over the true source of the energy, pure and dense. Upon seeing this, the witch had thought that the spirit of one of the dead Shang Kings had descended upon the world once more.

Fang Yuan was the founder of the Shang Dynasty and the Great Witch was not wrong in calling him a King.

"My King, you are powerful and resourceful. You have managed to break through the barriers and return to the mortal realm...there is hope for the Shang Dynasty after all!"

The Great Witch began to tear up.

The Great Witch was keenly aware of the crisis the Shang Dynasty had fallen into. Now that Fang Yuan had appeared, the Great Witch had taken him to be one of the dead Shang Kings who had returned to save the day.

Nevertheless, the Great Witch found it strange that Fang Yuan's appearance did not match any of the past Shang Kings.

There was no issue, however, thanks to the presence of the Black Bird and tribal energy. Even Shang King Xin himself would have to address Fang Yuan respectfully.

"I..."

Fang Yuan had barely opened his mouth when he suddenly sensed danger.

'Did more limitations come with the mastery of the Shang tribal energy?'

Fang Yuan was silent for a moment before uttering a few words quickly.

"The King cannot lead the army to war personally!"

The heavenly trend dictated that the Shang Dynasty had to go to war with the Dongyi state and there was no escaping it! However, the commander of the Shang army remained subject to change.

Whether King Xin was virtuous or foolish, his fate was sealed when he had ascended the throne. Going to the south would not change anything for him.

It was the princes who had fighting chances!

Fang Yuan had found the critical point when he sensed danger and did what he could to change the course of events.

"Yes!"

The Great Witch bowed deeply.

"The ancestor has decreed...that the King must not lead the army into battle personally! Be rest assured that I will inform the King!"



'It is done!'

Fang Yuan concealed himself again and quickly left.

His mastery of the tribal energy, as well as everything he said or did, gave him immense pressure.

Still, it was enough.

The only thing that could override royal power was divine power as well as the decrees of an ancestor! Fang Yuan was certain that the Great Witch would be able to convince the Shang King successfully.

[1]: A mythical beast said to be the ancestor of the Shang

Chapter 567: A Chance of Survival

"The Shang King intends to stay in Shangyi and let Prince Pan lead the army to war instead?"

A savage look came over Young Master Wu's face upon hearing this piece of news.

"How did things turn out this way?"

Mo Ge broke out into a cold sweat.

He had never seen Young Master Wu fly into a rage before and fell to his knees.

"Please have mercy on me, Young Master. I have followed your instructions and bribed the personal attendants of the King to convince him to lead the Shang army into battle himself. The Shang King was rather determined to do so until he met with the Great Witch..."

"The Great Witch?"

Young Master Wu looked apprehensive.

"So, it seems that...they had received a warning from the ancestral temple?"

"My sentiments exactly, Young Master. It is a pity that the Great Witch occupies a position of prestige and a mere common attendant would never be able to meet him..."

Mo Ge talked on.

Little did he know the full extent of Young Master Wu's worries.

'Father has great ambitions and now that he has received the heavenly mandate, his powers grow by the day. However, Father is not ready yet. If the Shang King decides to launch an attack on Western Zhou, we would be ruined. We'll have to hope that they won't deviate from their plans to invade the Dongyi state....the wise and brilliant Prince Pan is a great rival of mine. Neither is the Shang King a simple man. Leaving him in charge at Shangyi will definitely lead to a whole host of problems later on!'

'Of course, Prince Pan poses a greater threat!'

Young Master Wu made up his mind.

"Take my personal token with you and request an audience with Sir Cao!"

"The Sword Sage Sir Cao?"

Mo Ge was taken aback. He had not expected his Young Master to be acquainted with Cao Qiu and wondered just how much did he actually know about his Young Master.

"The imperial palace is under the protection of the Great Witch and even Cao Qiu won't be able to break through its defences. Nevertheless, Prince Pan, as the commander of the Shang army, will have to leave the palace...Follow the Shang army to Dongyi together with Cao Qiu and bring me Prince Pan's head!"

Young Master Wu waved his hands as he spoke. He had a malevolent look on his face.

"Yes, Young Master!"

Mo Ge shuddered involuntarily. He could imagine the bloody scenes of the Shang army falling apart following the death of their commander-in-chief.

The Western Zhou army could then march on to Shangyi and try to secure a bloodless victory.

For now, however, Mo Ge kept his mouth shut and retreated meekly out of the room.

...

"King Xin has appointed Prince Pan as the commander of a 10000-strong army and tasked him to do battle with the Dongyi?"

Fang Yuan was reassured upon hearing this piece of news.

"Good...it seems like altering the details bit by bit is working pretty well!"

Fang Yuan was more than aware of what he could and could not do within the limits of the heavenly will.

Acts like imposing direct control on the Shang King or killing the Marquis of Western Zhou would result in divine retribution!

On the other hand, giving the Shang Dynasty cheat codes and helping them to fly up the technology tree through things like introducing gunpowder to the regime, would result in retaliatory responses from the goddess Nuwa!

"These trump cards should only be used as last resorts. As of now, it would still be better to go with the flow!"

Fang Yuan turned to look his two disciples.

"If there are too many implications resulting from my direct involvement in these affairs, I run the risk of having my plans backfire on myself. I should send my disciples to act on my behalf instead!"

"I might not be able to directly assist Prince Pan in coming up with plans and strategies, but I can supply talent to him!"

Fang Yuan knew that this world treated aliens like himself differently from its natives. If it was the native men who acted, the heavenly will and the goddess Nuwa would not have any excuses to interfere in their affairs.

"What I can do now is to observe the proceedings and strengthen my powers!"

Fang Yuan waved a hand. A sword of fire and a sword of water materialised.

By focusing on his own recovery for the past few days, Fang Yuan had managed to create another divine sword. He was also beginning to realise that the Creation Sword Array was many times more powerful than the 9 Gates Sword Array!

Besides, the divine swords were sentient and could attack of their own free will!

"This is how it feels like to have gone past the 4th Tier of the Illusionary Divine Stage...I had not expected an Illusionary Divine dream master to become more powerful after having his foundations recast!"

Fang Yuan reflected on what he had learnt.

Now, by purely using dream elemental energy for his recuperation, Fang Yuan realised that the two swords had already attained a level of power that was at the 4th Tier of the Illusionary Divine stage!

"What kind of power would I be looking at if I went on to the 7th Tier of the Illusionary Divine stage?"

Fang Yuan felt a fire burning in his heart. He called his two disciples over.

"Hei Zhong, Ge Nie!"

"Yes, master!"

The two men bowed and gazed at Fang Yuan's handiwork with admiration.

Fang Yuan manipulated the swords through the air. It was magical.

"The both of you have become rather proficient in the Great Yin Technique. I will impart a chant to each of you, which will allow you to control these divine swords. Prince Pan is leading the Shang army eastwards. Go join his ranks!"

Fang Yuan muttered a few words that he made up on the spot and passed them off as the chants that would control the swords. In truth, he had only needed to change the user permissions for the swords. He passed the sword of fire to Hei Zhong and the sword of water to Ge Nie.

"Your mission will be to assist the Shang Dynasty in its endeavours and accumulate good karma. This will be very useful to your cultivation!"

"Yes, master!"

Ge Nie and Hei Zhong received their swords. They were slightly confused but bowed in acknowledgement to Fang Yuan's words all the same.

"Swish!"

The light shining from the swords dimmed when they fell into Ge Nie's and Hei Zhong's hands. Nevertheless, a cold aura emanating from them. They were indeed divine in nature.

The art of the Illusionary Divine was based on creating real objects from illusions. The swords of fire and water that Fang Yuan had created were very real and would last for hundreds of thousands of years.

Of course, it did not matter even if the swords got damaged. The core of their being remained within Fang Yuan's dream world and they could always be recast.

Fang Yuan's mind shared a mental link with the consciousness of the swords. This made it easy for him to manipulate his two disciples and allowed him to constantly adapt his plans to the changing circumstances.

Nonetheless, there was no need to tell his two disciples these things.

"...Hei Zhong and Ge Nie are skilled and brave warriors, but they are not exceptional thinkers...they know how to fight but what I need now is someone who can plan and come up with strategies!"

After Fang Yuan had sent his two disciples away, he went on an aimless stroll around Shangyi with his foxes.

Ever since he had regained part of his dream master abilities, the arrest warrant placed on his head had become something of a joke.

"Prince Pan may have replaced the King in leading the army, but the danger remains. I need a backup plan!"

Fang Yuan muttered under his breath.

"The energy in the form of the Black Bird may have become misshapen, but it still has a chance of survival...this corresponds with my memories of civilisation in the previous world that I was in!"

Although the Ancient One was a sly fellow and had fused his own destiny with that of Western Zhou, Fang Yuan still had the upper hand.

This was because the Ancient One did retain the memories of the previous world that they were in and would have no idea about the progression of the general trend!

"From what I remember about this history of the previous world, King Wu of Zhou took the opportunity to invade the Shang capital. The Shang King, taken by surprise, was eventually defeated and committed suicide. Thus, Western Zhou officially received the heavenly mandate and lorded over the world!"

"This world had obviously been affected by the radiation from a high-dimensional civilisation, which explains the many similarities in its history! Even with the interference of the dream masters and the butterfly effects, the course of events would remain largely unchanged!"

Perhaps it was because the extent radiation was different, which might account for the difference in the historical timelines of the two worlds. This would give Fang Yuan the chance to reflect and revise.

"However, this war between Shang and Western Zhou did not result in an eternal victory for the Ji family[1]...in the history of the previous world, Zhou eventually declined, giving way to the Spring and Autumn era. Later, the Qin King Ying Zheng, a descendant of the Black Bird and a scion of the Shang, achieved reunification and became Emperor. The ancestor of the Qin monarchs is...Fei Lian?"

Prince Pan was destined to fail and there was no way to avoid it. However, the bloodline of the Black Bird remained unbroken and even managed to establish a regime that achieved the reunification of the world! The descendants of the Black Bird were the final victors!

After that, the glory of these semi-legendary clans disintegrated and gave way to the rise of mortal men.

"The last chance of survival of the Shang lies here!"

Fang Yuan was quiet for a moment.

Fang Yuan planned to use the destiny of the Qin to boost the destiny of the Shang. This would shake the foundations of the general trend and yet not break any the rules.

Fang Yuan arrived before a house and dropped his disguise.

"The aura of the Black Bird is failing and the Shang families are suffering. This house might be in a poor state but upon closer inspection, I sense its budding potential! This must be it!"

Fang Yuan entered the yard and saw that two strapping men were packing up some armour and weapons. There were slaves arming themselves as well. They were obviously preparing to follow Prince Pan into war.

They were all startled when they saw Fang Yuan enter through the door.

"Who are you?"

The strapping young man roared and raised the bronze hammer that he was holding. The hammer looked like it weighed more than a hundred pounds and yet he waved it about like it was a toy.

Fang Yuan had read about a certain Lian and his son, Er[2] from the classics in the previous world. These names suddenly came to his mind.

Fang Yuan stared at him. A light flashed across his eyes.

"Who are you?"

"I am the son of Gentleman Lian, Er!

Er brandished his hammer.

"You are...Jie?" The swordsman who had defeated Sir Cao and is now wanted by the King? Why are you here?"

'Indeed, it is the two of you!'

Fang Yuan was relieved. He knew that father and son were both generals of the Shang Dynasty and were about to set off for war.

It was a pity that both of them would lose their lives in the Battle of Muye[3], according to Fang Yuan's knowledge of the previous world's history.

After all, the Shang Dynasty was destined to fall.

The next few generations of this family would lead difficult lives as horse breeders in the employment of the Zhou Kings. However, one of these horse breeders would finally be awarded the small fief of Qin, which would one day blossom into the Qin empire.

"That's right!"

Fang Yuan nodded with a smile.

"So what...are you going to haul me to the King and claim your reward?"

"Er, wait!"

A large middle-aged man stepped out.

"You may leave...I, Lian, hold heroes in high regard. You are a Shang citizen like me. I hope that you will never antagonise the Shang again!"

"Hehe..."

Fang Yuan shook his head and looked towards the houses. A few little faces peeked out from the windows but quickly withdrew following admonishment from a woman.

"I have brought a little gift for you all!"

Fang Yuan nodded as he stretched out his hand and invoked the tribal energy of the Black Bird. The energy drifted and shifted before it diffused into the heads of Lian and his family members.

'I have no use for the tribal energy of the Shang and might as well give it away! Besides, if this doesn't work, I could preserve my elemental energy and bide my time.'

---

[1]: Royal surname of the Zhou Dynasty

[2]: The correct pinyin for this character's name is supposed to be 'E' but we changed it to 'Er' to make it less strange

{3}: The Final battle between the Shang and Zhou, which led to the Shang being replaced by the Zhou

Chapter 568: Breakthrough

After giving away the tribal energy of the Black Bird, Fang Yuan felt as light as a feather. It was as if he had removed an entire layer of chains from his body. He had a vague feeling that he had experienced another breakthrough in his cultivation.

"Does this feeling have anything to do with my bloodline?"

Fang Yuan suddenly understood.

"What did you...do to us?"

Er and Lian were both shocked. Although they were mortal and could not see the tribal energy of the Shang, it was obvious that this Fang Yuan had done something to them.

"Er...would you be willing to become my disciple?"

Fang Yuan's eyes shone with a strange light and asked his question suddenly.

"Kaboom!"

As Fang Yuan was speaking, his body began to sizzle. The wind blew his shirt up to reveal his toned physique.

This was a sign that his Ultimate Witch Body was fully developed! If Fang Yuan had not deliberately suppressed its development, who knew how far ahead he could have been.

Nevertheless, the aura that he gave off was extremely potent.

Er was astounded. He felt like he was dealing with a huge beast and could not help but fall to his knees.

"I would!"

"Good!"

Fang Yuan nodded and squeezed out a drop of blood from his fingernail. With a flick of his fingers, the drop of blood entered Er's body.

"Ah!"

Er screamed and dropped to the ground. His whole body was now covered in blood.

"Jie...you..."

Gentleman Jiu was horrified and rushed forward but he faced unexpected resistance from a strong force.

"Father... don't worry about me. I'm fine!"

After a short time, Er got to his feet and examined his hands with an incredulous look on his face.

He had been a large man to begin with but now, he had grown taller by an entire head. His muscles bulged and had a golden sheen.

"You were born with an uncommon strength and are suited for the cultivation of witch dao. I have given you a drop of witch blood, which has altered your physical form. From today onwards, your body will be impervious to weapons and the elements. You will also unlock several divine techniques..."

Fang Yuan said matter-of-factly.

"Thank you, Teacher!"

Er bowed down to Fang Yuan immediately. Even Lian looked delighted. After all, the battlefield was an extremely dangerous place to be! There was no saying if he would survive the war with the Dongyi but he was comforted to know that Er would.

"I'm leaving. Don't tell anyone about what you have seen today...you will get through the war with the Dongyi safely but a tribulation awaits you in the future. I will look for you when the time comes..."

Fang Yuan walked away after saying his piece, leaving Er and Lian behind with their unanswered questions.

...

"I've fulfilled the requirements for the divine body?"

After leaving the yard, Fang Yuan fled from Shangyi into the wilderness.

"Kaboom!"

Fang Yuan could no longer conceal the suppressed witch aura and let it shoot up into the skies. The clouds disintegrated and vaguely revealed the outlines of 12 savage and huge figures.

"Name: Fang Yuan

Essence: 100 (100)

Spirit: 100 (100)

Magic: 60 (100)

Profession: Dream Master

Cultivation: Illusionary Divine (2nd Tier), True Divine

Technique: Ultimate Witch Body (100%), Creation Sword Array [Second Sword (100%)]

Skill: [Medicine (Level 3)], [Botany (Level 6)(Peak)], [Fiery Golden Eyes (Level 3)], [Body Seal (Ultimate form)]"

"I've regained my True Divine abilities!?"

Fang Yuan glanced at his stats board.

"Also...my mastery of the Fiery Golden Eyes divine technique has increased by one level?"

This meant that his observational skills had become more powerful. These skills, when fully developed, would give him insight into the past and future as well as allow him to see the three worlds: the heavens, the human world and the netherworld.

Fang Yuan had not yet attained these abilities but through the Fiery Golden Eyes, he sensed that something was watching him.

It was prying at his bloodline and Fang Yuan traced its source to a deity.

"The War God...Chi?"

Although the two gods of heaven and earth made up the orthodox faith, the barbarian peoples prayed to lesser deities and devils as well, including Chi.

Fang Yuan had sensed a supernatural force that was weirder in nature than Nuwa's power.

"Such a fast reaction...it must have detected the witch blood flowing through my veins. A pity... that the Chi of today is entirely different from the Chi of his newly ascendant days."

Fang Guan was not afraid of Chi at all.

Chi's powers were also limited by god dao and were much weaker than Nuwu in terms of strength. Fang Yuan had nothing to fear.



The presence was merely spying and left immediately upon Fang Yuan's detection of it. It was very decisive.

Through the Fiery Golden Eyes, Fang Yuan had discovered that there was something more powerful looking at him. Its gaze penetrated the clouds and fell strongly on Fang Yuan. Fang Yuan quickly flew away.

'Strictly speaking, although it was through the killing of Xing that I acquired the blood of the witches, I am the only one who can inherit the legacy of the witches. Even the War God Chi would not allow me to die unless he wants to witness the extinction of the witch race!'

The deities of the god dao, like those of the heavenly dao, had rules to follow.

Take the Ancient One for example. Before the Tai God undergoes anthropomorphisation, the Ancient One would not be despised or ostracised by virtue of the abandonment of his own body in order to enter the Ancient World. He had even taken a gamble on Western Zhou's destiny and fused his own destiny to the state's.

It was because he had seen the limits of the heavenly will!

'Besides, even when the heavenly will of the Ancient World becomes personified, it probably would not do anything to the Ancient One. Although the Ancient One had stolen some energy from its source, he had more than repaid this debt by giving himself up to the Ancient World...even if he ever becomes a Sage again, he would be a Sage of the Ancient World, subject to regulation by the heavenly dao!'

The Sages of the Da Qian World and the Ancient World were different deals.

The Ancient One was now a child of the Ancient World and would be treated well. He had been forgiven for his past transgressions.

"What a pity. Although I am a True Divine, the Ancient One has attained the status of True Elemental and is about as powerful as I am. He is also under the protection of the Ancient World and even if I become a higher being, I still wouldn't be able to deal with him!"

Fang Yuan's mood darkened whenever he thought about the Ancient One.

Fang Yuan had only been a higher being at his peak. The goddess Nuwa was a Sage! Similar to the five great Sages of the dream masters, who had never fallen off the altar before! Fang Yuan was no match for her!

Thus, Fang Yuan chose to retreat when he sensed Nuwa's presence.

"Nuwa seems to be on the side of Western Zhou and can be considered an ally of the Ancient One...I cannot challenge her directly!"

Fang Yuan had not broken through to the Sage state yet. Challenging Nuwa would be suicide.

Nevertheless, the more powerful the deity, the more they were bound by the rules of the heavenly dao. Thus, Fang Yuan still had quite a lot to work with and was free to test the limits of the heavenly will.

At that point, Fang Yuan would attempt to replace the commander-in-chief of the Shang army and support the line of the Qin monarchs for the sake of the future.

"Dongyi...Jiuxiong..."

Fang Yuan gathered his spiritual aura about him and disappeared beyond the horizon with his eyes twinkling.

"Perhaps...it is time that I meet with the War God..."

...

"Buzz!"

The mountain winds blew on for a long time. Suddenly, there was a moment of turbulence in the void, followed by the materialisation of a beautiful woman with the tail of a snake.

"A higher being has achieved a breakthrough over here ..."

Nuwa said with certainty.

"Also...I sense Chi's spiritual aura! Are you still unable to let go of the glorious memories of the witches?"

Nuwa sighed and stared into the void.

As a god, she had to detach herself from worldly affairs. Beings like her and Chi had no physical form to speak of and were the manifestation of the faith of humans. As a result, they faced restrictions on their behaviour.

Nevertheless, Nuwa was worshipped all over the world and was the national religion. She had powers that were at the level of the Sage state.

Chi, on the contrary, was doing badly. He was only being worshipped by a few tribes in the wilderness and was barely able to maintain his powers at the 7th Tier of the Illusionary Divine stage.

Fang Yuan did not see Chi as a threat at all.

"I know that you were very indignant about the destruction of the Jiuli tribe...however, there was nothing that anyone could have done if the heavenly will favoured the rise of the Shang."

Nuwa thought she had heard a reply and went on with a sweet and serene voice.

"Was that one of your descendants? I thought I smelt witch blood...a pity that the heavenly will has decreed that the Zhou will replace the Shang. Even if you are a god, you are powerless to alter this course!"

Nuwa spoke solemnly.

"I don't want...to see the fall of my own kind again!"

"Swish!"

As if in reply to her words, dark red flames flared up in the void and died down just as quickly.

Nuwa could feel Chi's spiritual aura leaving into the distance until it disappeared entirely.

"He's gone..."

Nuwa closed her eyes and interacted with the information in the void until she received a confirmation.

Later, she stared up at the iridescence of the clouds with a helpless look on her face.

"A descendant of the witches has managed to achieve a breakthrough at this time. Is the world going to be plunged into chaos?"

Nuwa did not have a good feeling about the emergence of this person with the bloodline of the witches.

However, this person was moving about carefully and covertly. He had managed to remain mostly undetected and there were barely any traces of his activities. Nuwa did not know what to make of this.

Even if she had found him, she would not be able to act against him explicitly, like how she was not able to do anything about the annoying Purple Phoenix!

Although she was well aware that the Purple Phoenix was a troublesome creature, it had fused its fate with that of Western Zhou. This greatly worried Nuwa.

"Although it was heaven's will that the Phoenix appeared over Qi Mountain, the Five Elements Purple Phoenix was supposed to play only a minor role!"

Nuwa looked in the direction of Western Zhou.

"Judging from the gamble that the Phoenix took, I'm sure that it has a big secret... it's a pity that I can't do anything about it!"

"Hoot! Hoot!"

The gates of Shangyi opened and an army of men in black uniforms streamed out. The host numbered in the thousands and looked vast and mighty.

"The Shang army is setting off?"

Nuwa flew up into the clouds to get a better view of the Shang army.

"The Shang King isn't at the head of the army. It's Prince Pan instead. Also..."

Nuwa could see that the Shang army had a stable aura. It was also being protected by the aura of two swords and two star-like presences.

"According to the heavenly will, this will be one of the last battles that the Shang can win...still, why do I feel so uneasy about this!"

As Nuwa watched the procession, she could not help but frown slightly.

Chapter 569: Negotiation

Hei Zhong and Ge Nie carried their swords and observed the commanders' meeting in progress coldly.

They had both undergone Fang Yuan's training programme and had become formidable warriors. Prince Pan had received them into his camp unhesitatingly and held them in high regard. They were even allowed to attend meetings at the highest level.

Although they only had observer status in these meetings, many of the other officials envied them greatly.

"The Dongyi alliance is being led by the Jiuli Division. Their fighters have unruly shocks of hair and painted faces. They are armed with bronze and are extremely ferocious in battle...the Jiuxiong is the largest among the Dongyi tribes and has contributed 30000 men to their war effort. Their leader has declared himself the King of Dongyi and Lord of the Tribes..."

"The Dongyi army, numbering 80000, has crossed into Shang lands and has taken the two cities of Hui and Ye, where they have conducted massacres."

"Our army has reached Huaishui. We will face the enemy in 3 days!"

...

Prince Pan looked magnificent in his role as commander-in-chief.

"Good! The Shang army is powerful and organised. The enemy soldiers must have become ill-disciplined after all the plundering and pillaging. All we need to do is to stick to our battle plan and we will defeat them in a head-to-head clash!"

Many of the nobles nodded in agreement with Prince Pan's words.

The Shang Dynasty was definitely more powerful than the Dongyi alliance and there was no way that they would lose as long as they avoided risky manoeuvres.

Even Hei Zhong and Ge Nie were impressed with the Shang's orthodox battle strategy. It was simple and straightforward, yet effective and efficient.

"While setting up camp, we have to make sure that the basics are covered and that the men are spread out...also, arrange for guard duty to be done throughout the night so that we can prevent ourselves from being caught unawares by the enemy!"

Prince Pan had obviously done his homework beforehand and was explaining his ideas in detail. With assistance from the other officials, a comprehensive plan was drawn out in no time.

"With Prince Pan in charge, a victory for the Shang army is more or less guaranteed...what was Master even worried about?"

Ge Nie pondered as the discussion went on. Suddenly, he furrowed his brows.

"Ding Ring Ring!"

The blue sword in his arms let out a ring and startled everyone present.

"There is someone here!"

Ge Nie threw out his sword immediately.

"Swish!"

The chilling aura of the sword drilled into the ground and unleashed a fountain of blood.

"Bump!"

A human head flew out from beneath the ground and landed on the floor. Prince Pan and the other officials were shocked.

"An assassin!"

"Mister Ge Nie is unparalleled in swordplay. There is no one who can rival your skill in the immediate vicinity!"

The faces of the officials had all turned pale. When they had all calmed down, they lavished Ge Nie with praise and were intent on naming him the best swordsman in the whole of the Shang empire.

They did not know that Ge Nie was confused himself as he sheathed his sword.

Ge Nie was very sure that he had not thrust out the sword of his own volition. The sword seemed to have a will of its own and had discovered the assassin by itself!

'Is this what Master means by the difference between 'the man wielding the sword' and 'the sword wielding the man'?"

Ge Nie reflected silently.

"This must have been a Dongyi assassin!"

One of the officials examined the black tattoos on the decapitated head and came to a conclusion.

Hei Zhong and Ge Nie shared a solemn look.

Although the dead man had been from Dongyi, this burrowing technique was extremely rare and seemed to have been deliberately utilised.

...

Although Prince Pan was unharmed by the assassination attempt, the security of the entire army camp was on high alert.

On the next day, the frontlines of the Shang army finally clashed with the Dongyi army.

Plumes of black smoke rose from the small city lying in front of them. The air was thick with the smell of blood and fire. Screams and crying sounds were coming from the direction of the city.

"Damn it! We were too late!"

Gentleman Lian was now the commander of over a thousand men. He gritted his teeth as he saw the burning city lying ahead of them.

"We will continue to advance and slaughter every Dongyi man in our path!"

"Yes, sir!"

The Shang host moved forward slowly and before long, an entire company of Dongyi soldiers rushed out from the city gates. They wore animals skins and had savage looks on their faces. They had tattoos all over their bodies and wielded a multitude of weapons. They were bloodthirsty wild beasts.

"How dare you barbarians invade our country and massacre our people! We will butcher you for this!"

Lian roared as hundreds of Dongyi soldiers rushed towards them.

"Attack!"

Lian was more rational than the Dongyi soldiers and did not let his rage get the better of him. For starters, he ordered his archers to fire a wave of arrows.

"Swoosh! Swoosh!"

Blood spilt everywhere among the ranks of the Dongyi soldiers as they fell to the ground with arrows sticking out of their bodies. The attack sobered them up as they realised that the Shang soldiers were different from the peasants they were so used to slaughtering.

"Foot soldiers, forward!"

Er led the charge and brandished his bronze hammer menacingly after the order was given.

He could feel the divine power surging through his veins as he brought the wrath of the bronze hammer upon the Dongyi soldiers in a whirlwind, leaving broken bodies in his wake.

"Haha!"

Er let out a booming laugh as the Dongyi slashed his body with their bronze swords. He did not bother to defend himself as the blows ricocheted off his body harmlessly.

"This is the kind of fight that I was looking for!"

Er cackled as he ground the Dongyi soldier in front of him into a meat paste with his hammer.

This unfortunate fellow seemed to have been the leader of this Dongyi unit, for the surviving Dongyi soldiers ran screaming back to the city upon his death.

"This city is newly taken and the Dongyi units probably wouldn't have had the time to resemble yet...I smell a great opportunity!"

Lian's eyes shone.

"Chase them into the city and exterminate the Dongyi men!"

"Kill! Kill! Kill!"

Er understood his father's intention. He was virtually invincible and could easily pass off as a demon lord. He chased the Dongyi soldiers all the way into the city and destroyed the collective composure that they had tried so hard to maintain.

"Although the Dongyi soldiers beat our frontline soldiers in terms of numbers, they are motivated only by weapons, treasure and women. Just how powerful could they be?"

Lian rushed into the city after these soldiers and put them to the sword!

Lian was right. The Dongyi army was ill-disciplined to begin with and had become ungovernable after taking the city. There were Dongyi soldiers dressed in silk and others were carrying women and valuables. They crumbled in the face of the organised Shang army.

By dusk, a flag embossed with a picture of the Black Bird hung from the city walls. The fires had been put out as well.

"Father!"

Er waved his arms excitedly.

"Each of us here can fight ten Dongyi soldiers and together, we can destroy a 10000-strong unit! When we finally defeat the Dongyi army and reclaim our cities, you will be greatly rewarded for your efforts, Father!"

"Hehe...my son, the commander-in-chief will decide who he wants to reward. It isn't up to you!"

Lian laughed in reply. He was in good spirits. Still, he noticed the torn and tattered appearance of Er's clothes, caused by the swords and axes of the Dongyi soldiers, and frowned.

"My son, you must be careful!"

"Don't worry, I have the powers imparted to me by Teacher and am untouchable. No one will be able to kill me in the whole wide world!"

Er laughed madly, He was a reckless fellow alright.

"Sigh..."

Lian exhaled helplessly.

...

"The Dongyi army has lost in the head on clash with the Shang army?"

The news had spread and reached Mo Ge's ears. He squatted in a cave with a severe look on his face.

"No way! I can't let the Shang army continue to enjoy success!"

Mo Ge knew what his Young Master wanted.

The Shang army was allowed to win, but it had to come at a great cost. It would be even better if the Shang army suffered serious losses, including the death of Prince Pan.

However, it seemed like the Shang army had achieved this victory with barely any difficulty. This made Mo Ge extremely worried.

"The assassin we sent had gotten killed before he had even achieved anything at all. Sneaking him into the Shang camp was a waste of my efforts!"

Mo Ge got to his feet and exited the cave. He surveyed the Shang camp from afar.

The layout of the Shang army camp was well organised and it looked as unassailable as the mountains. Mo Ge felt a chill in his heart and bowed to the man standing beside him.

"I'll have to trouble you to help us, Sword Sage!"

This man had eyes that were bright like the stars and he carried an ancient sword in his hand. It was indeed the Sword Sage Cao Qiu!

A light flashed across his eyes as he listened to Mo Ge.

"I owe the Marquis of Western Zhou a great deal and will help him...but this will be the last time!"

A man like him would never allow himself to be controlled like a puppet in the long term.

"Of course...according to Young Master Wu, as long as you fetch him Prince Pan's head, he will write off all of your debts!"

"Fine!"

Cao Qiu was silent for a long while before he spoke again.

"However...you must come along with me!"

"Of course!"

Mo Ge gritted his teeth and agreed.

Although he was well-versed in the Five Elements Escape Technique, breaking into the Shang army camp was no easy feat.

Nevertheless, he had to say yes so as to increase the chances of success and to put Cao Qiu's mind at ease.

'Considering how highly-skilled the Sword Sage is, as long as I manage to sneak him into the commander's tent, Prince Pan will be dead meat.'

Mo Ge gave himself some encouragement.

As for how Cao Qiu was going to escape after he had killed the Prince, and how his disciples would have to deal with retaliation from the Shang Dynasty, Mo Ge did not care.

...

It was not going to be a peaceful night.

Just as when Mo Ge and Cao Qiu were preparing to strike, Fang Yuan had arrived at the frontlines to meet with someone.

Not a person, but...a god!

Although this was a normal forest that Fang Yuan was in, everything around him changed when the god descended.



Fang Yuan found himself standing in the middle of a battlefield where he could hear the clanging of weapons and the screams of horses. The smell of blood filled the air.

A large and formidable-looking warrior let out a roar as he clashed with enemy soldiers.

"This is...a flashback of the war between the witches and the Xia people!"

Fang Yuan seemed to understand as he saw how witch blood was being spilt on the battlefield and let out a cold laugh.

"Are you still unable to let this go, my lord?"

"Buzz! Buzz!"

In a split second, flower petals fell from the skies and golden lotuses erupted from the ground.

The battlefield had disappeared around Fang Yuan. All that was left was the materialisation of a human figure from the falling light.

Fang Yuan had seen the true form of the War God Chi, but never his human form.

A middle-aged man wearing golden armour stood in the distance. He had strong features on his face and a charismatic air about him. His eyes shone brightly as he looked over at Fang Yuan.

Chapter 570: Assassination

"You are not from this world!"

This was the first thing that the War God Chi said to Fang Yuan upon seeing him.

"So what? This world has accepted me all the same! Just like how it had accepted the Five Elements Purple Phoenix!"

In fact, this world probably held the Ancient One in higher regard. After all, the world would want to invest its efforts in someone that it expected to become a future Sage!

"It is true that you are the founding ancestor of the Shang Dynasty. If it had been hundreds of years ago, the prestige of your status might have exceeded mine!"

Chi replied in a calm voice.

"Hmm?"

His attitude made Fang Yuan speechless

"You are not the real War God!"

"I am the War God, but at the same time I am not the War God!"

Chi smiled. It was incredible.

After all, Chi was the manifestation of the collective resentment of the witch race! He was the agglomeration of all the hatred in the world!

Nevertheless, Fang Yuan had understood immediately!

The real Chi had been defeated and perished during the ascendancy of the Xia Dynasty. The entity that had been summoned during the final battle of the Xia Dynasty was but a remnant of his soul, and even that had been destroyed.

The War God Chi standing before Fang Yuan right now was not the original Chi. He was a new god that had been created by the power of faith!

Although he looked similar to Chi and even possessed some of Chi's memories and personality traits, it would be more accurate to refer to him as simply the War God.

This was the horror of god dao!

It was subtly everchanging!

The current War God Chi might possess some of the original Chi's memories, but he was definitely not the former leader of the witch race!

"This isn't right..."

Fang Yuan's eyes flashed with a golden light as he steadied his gaze on the War God Chi's body, where terrible dark red flames burned on.

"Although most of your body is condensed from the faith of humans, it still contains traces of the witch race's resentment. These traces must be dispelled!"

Fang Yuan smirked confidently

"This is probably why you had been paying attention to me and promptly appeared when I summoned you, am I right?"

"Exactly!"

Chi nodded and the dark red flames that had previously been obscured by the golden light instantly spread all over his body, giving him the appearance of a ferocious demon. Fang Yuan thought he could hear the angry screams of the witches.

The witch race was the indigenous people of the Ancient World and saw themselves as the most important entity in the world. However, they constantly faced suppression from the dream masters and eventually had their legacy die out. This was the reason for their eternal hatred.

These were the chains that bound Chi! He had to break free from them before he could ascend to a higher plane!

"At our level, we shall dispense with the falsities ...the witch race has already bowed out from the stage of history and will never rise again! However, I can ensure that the bloodline lives on!"

Fang Yuan waved his hand and a strange light appeared. Lying within it was Er's image.

"This person has received the blood of the witches from me and is now a member of the witch race. If he manages to start a family, the blood of the witches will be passed down through the generations. What do you think about this?"

"It's a pity that this person won't live for long. Also, he will probably die childless!"

Fortune-telling was one of Chi's divine abilities.

'Of course, if I get you a virile fellow destined for a good life, where would that leave me? '

Fang Yuan rolled his eyes internally.

"If nothing goes wrong, heaven's will dictates that this man must die!"

Chi looked at Fang Yuan unhappily.

"With your abilities, along with my assistance, we would definitely be able to alter the fate of a mere mortal!"

Fang Yuan smiled and spared no effort in trying to convince Chi

"Besides...can you feel it too? The descendants of this person will one day receive the heavenly mandate and establish a dynasty of their own! If his descendants managed to achieve that, wouldn't it fulfil your wishes?"

At that point, the War God Chi's two greatest desires were for the witch race to rule the world as well as revenge on his enemies!

Once the descendants of Er mounted the throne, it would be half the battle won for Chi.

"Going against the heavenly will would be hard! Hard! Hard!"

The War God Chi thought for a moment and sighed while shaking his head.

"Only Western Zhou stands in our way... also, don't you recognise who the Five Elements Purple Phoenix truly is?"

The first time the Ancient One harvested the world, he rose to power by defeating the witch race. At that time, the War God Chi was still in power!

"Or... could it be that you don't mind this person regaining his Sage status and become as powerful as the goddess Nuwa? As long as we join forces, we won't even have to resist the heavenly will too much. All we have to do is to prevent Western Zhou from taking over the lordship of the world, and you will get the chance to take revenge!"

Fang Yuan chuckled.

"Whether we become enemies or allies depends on your decision!"

"Whoosh!"

The dark red flames on Chi's body rose higher. "I did not dare to hope for this but it has always been my wish!"

In other words, Chi was agreeable to joining forces with Fang Yuan. In fact, he had no reason to refuse this alliance.

"Good!"

Fang Yuan was overjoyed. He knew that although Chi did not have many devotees in the Central Plains, the barbarian tribes worshipped him with a zeal. This included the Dongyi tribes!

With Chi's involvement, the Shang Dynasty's chances of victory would increase by 30 per cent.

"While my priest and shaman enjoy some prestige among the Dongyi tribes, there is someone that we need to kill in order to fulfil your ambitions!"

Chi spoke as though it was an ant they had to kill.

"Is it the self-declared King of Dongyi, the leader of the Jiuxiong Division?"

Fang Yuan immediately knew who Chi was talking about.

"That's right! This person is under the protection of the goddess Nuwa and I will incur her wrath if I touch him. The clash of kings must be self-determined by these kings!"

Chi revealed something else.

"If both divine parties do not interfere in these mortal affairs...the Shang Dynasty would definitely win!"

Fang Yuan was very confident about this and he had found out another secret.

The War God Chi was Fang Yuan's natural ally. Not only was he the only one who could ensure the propagation of pure witch blood, but he was also very interested in taking revenge on the Ancient One.

The source of enmity between the War God Chi and the goddess Nuwa lay in Nuwa's involvement in Dongyi affairs.

Any deity would have been offended if another deity encroached on their area of influence.

Although the goddess Nuwa was extremely powerful, her intervention in Dongyi affairs was making Chi wary of her.

"Alright!"

The red fire on the War God Chi's body was suddenly extinguished and he assumed the appearance of a heroic middle-aged man once more. With a wave of his hand, he sent a brilliant golden ray of light towards the Shang army camp.

"Prince Pan will be going through a tribulation any moment now. Whether he can overcome it will depend on what you can do!"

Chi stared hard at Fang Yuan for a moment before disappearing into thin air.

The battlefield surrounding Fang Yuan suddenly fell apart and was replaced by the silent forest from before. It was like everything that had transpired was merely an illusion.

Still, Fang Yuan was more than aware that it had all been real.

The creation of the third divine sword in the real dream world was a key indicator.

Through the mental connection that he shared with the swords of fire and water, he could see the drama taking place in the Shang camp at that very moment.

...

"Great, Gentleman Lian has done very well in crushing the front lines of the Dongyi army! Er, who led the charge, has done well too!"

The tent had become a lively place.

Prince Pan raised his wine vessel and offered a toast.

"Gentleman Lian, I will recommend a promotion for you to the King when we return!"

"Thank you, my Prince!"

Lian drained his wine vessel with a look of elation on his face.

He was already a gentleman-bureaucrat of the first class. A promotion of one grade would make him a gentleman-minister, a member of the upper nobility.

A feudal lordship was just above the rank of gentleman-minister. They no longer just owned townships and farmlands, but feudal states. "Gentleman Lian, drink up!"

The revelry in the atmosphere had reached its peak. Hei Zhong and Ge Nie stood by in a corner and watched on coldly.

Suddenly, the two swords of water and fire let out a reverberating sound and flew out of their arms. The two men were alarmed.

"Sizzle!"

The two swords of water and fire released auras that interacted with each other like Yin and Yang before they shot out of the tent.

"Bang!"

The tent had been torn apart. As the tattered pieces of cloth floated about in the air, a figure holding a sword slowly approached.

"Who intends to kill me?"

Prince Pan held his wine vessel with a steady hand and looked at the approaching man with interest.

Prince Pan had been used to becoming master over life and death and commanding thousands of soldiers. Thus, he exuded an effortless majesty.

Still, his pupils constricted when he saw who it was.

"It's you! The Sword Sage Cao Qiu!"

"Greetings to you, my Prince!"

Cao Qiu walked into what was left of the tent slowly and brandished his ancient sword. The surrounding warriors immediately screamed and flew backwards. Their suits of armour cracked and burst open, discharging torrents of blood from their bodies.

"Crack!"

The faces of the nobles remaining in the tent had turned pale and they dropped their wine vessels to the floor.

The power of this person and his sword was enough to take down an entire army!

"Sword Sage Cao Qiu...you actually dared to barge into this camp and make an attempt on our Prince's life?"

A courageous gentleman-bureaucrat stood up and spoke.

"Are you not afraid of the Shang Dynasty destroying your school of swordsmanship? Spare a thought for your disciples in Shangyi..."

"Swish!"

Cao Qiu barely glanced at the speaker and thrust out his sword.

The gentleman-bureaucrat shuddered as the wound on his forehead pooled with blood and fell face-down onto the floor.

"Boom!"

The whole banquet descended into chaos as the officials gazed fearfully at this demon-like figure.

"I don't think the Dongyi tribes have anything to offer you. Do you serve someone from Western Zhou?"

Prince Pan adjusted his clothing and spoke in a calm voice.

"Well... as the saying goes, a gentleman meets his doom with nonchalance. Prince Pan, you are an extraordinary person indeed!"

Cao Qiu nodded.

"Unfortunately...do forgive me for not being able to reveal who my employer is!"

"How dare you!"

Er roared as he lifted the wine table and hurled it towards Cao Qiu.

Cao Qiu waved his sword casually and cut the table into pieces. A metallic sound rang out as Er flew backwards and his clothes split open.

"Huh?"

Cao Qiu looked at the reckless Er with surprise. Nevertheless, he strode towards Prince Pan purposefully.

"Halt!"

Hei Zhong and Ge Nie stepped forward with their swords of water and fire in hand.

"Are you two going to stop me?"

Cao Qiu glared at them and shook his head.

"If your Master was here, I would probably leave immediately. However, with the likes of you two..."

"All talk!"

Ge Nie and Hei Zhong brandished their swords of water and fire furiously.

"Swoosh!"

The swords danced about and utilised the combined strength of fire and water to form a sword array that enveloped them.

"Hmm?"

Cao Qiu's face changed.

"The Thunder Sword!"

"Kaboom!"

The thrust of Cao Qiu's sword carried with it the powers of the wind and thunder. There was an ear-splitting screech as these powers came into contact with the sword auras of fire and water.

In the next moment, a crisp sound rang out from the battle's epicentre!