

Disciples 111

Chapter 111: Bestowing You the Separation Hook

Everyone witnessed Zhang Qiuchi's Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivation base.

The disciples on the Green Jade Altar were excited when they saw this.

Mingshi Yin frowned. When he saw the Daoist Mudras' increasing number, he shook his head and said, "I told you that I don't want to fight, and yet, you're forcing me to fight you."

Zhang Qiuchi scoffed and charged at Mingshi Yin, "You don't have a say in this!"

Primal Qi surged from Mingshi Yin's body, and his protective energy parried the Mudras. Then, he said, "It's been a few years. Have your Mudras gotten weaker?"

"You're a loser who can only rely on your glib tongue." Zhang Qiuchi attacked at lightning speed.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Both of them were instantly engaged in a battle, leaving afterimages in the air.

Energy waves intertwined and collided!

Mingshi Yin retreated as he fought. He conjured up energy waves to parry Zhang Qiuchi's attacks

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Many of the disciples' cultivation bases were lower than the Brahman Sea realm. It was rare for them to witness a battle between Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivators. They looked suitably impressed.

"The elder's Mudras are excellent. I'm sure the villain will lose very soon."

"To be honest, I'm quite confused. It's said that Ji Tiandao intentionally suppresses his remaining disciples. Even then, they're a match for Elder Zhang who's at the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm."

"It's nothing strange. Elder Zhang isn't using his full strength yet. Let's watch for a while longer..."

"Even without Elder Zhang, we still have the grandmaster. There's no need to worry."

The crowd was satisfied with the discourse. They calmed down and continued watching the battle.

Daoist Mudras were similar to Zen Mudras. Mingshi Yin knew how to deal with these Mudras. He kept using his energy to parry the incoming Mudras. This way, Zhang Qiuchi became the attacker while Mingshi Yin became the passive defender.

"Old geezer, don't make me do this!" Mingshi Yin waved his arms. He kept conjuring waves of energy to block the attacks.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Mingshi Yin continued to retreat as he defended himself.

Zhang Qiuchi bellowed, "Too weak!" He did not think highly of Mingshi Yin at all. The energy around him erupted again.

Mingshi Yin felt that something was amiss as the look in his eyes changed. 'This old geezer seems to be stronger than before...' He looked at his surroundings, feeling wary about this place. After all, this place was not too far from the Green Jade Altar. If Zhang Yuanshan and the other elders appeared, he would be in a disadvantageous position.

At this moment, Mingshi Yin saw Zhang Qiuchi spread his palms before dozens of Mudras were launched at him. A burst of Primal Qi surged out of his body as he quickly retreated.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Mingshi Yin was continuously forced to retreat!

Zhang Yi was delighted that he gained the upper hand. He crowed, "As expected, you're as weak as before!"

Mingshi Yin turned around and fled.

"He did it on purpose?" Zhang Qiuchi was taken aback.

Mingshi Yin was several meters away in an instant. Indeed, he had relied on the impact of Zhang Qiuchi's attacks to flee.

"Come catch me if you dare... My Third Senior Brother and master will be coming soon!"

Zhang Qiuchi thought nothing of this. He called out coldly, "Running away? You're too late!" He quickly unleashed his Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar. "Hundred Tribulations Insight! Grand Technique!"

With the two active ultimate skills, Zhang Qiuchi moved at breakneck speed. In just a blink of an eye, he appeared next to Mingshi Yin and struck with his palm.

Boom!

"I knew you'd do this, you old geezer!" Mingshi Yin instantly activated his Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar as well and parried Zhang Qiuchi's powerful strike.

However, Zhang Qiuchi had a Two-leaf Golden Lotus avatar. Mingshi Yin's leafless avatar was much smaller compared to a Two-leaf avatar. It was like a child facing off against an adult. When their avatars' energies collided, Mingshi Yin fell to the ground with a loud rumble.

The disciples from the Green Jade Altar had rushed over at this moment and witnessed this majestic scene.

"With Elder Zhang's Two-leaf Avatar, this Mingshi Yin will surely lose!"

"However, we shouldn't underestimate Mingshi Yin as well. I didn't expect him to have an avatar. He's already a Nascent divinity Tribulation realm cultivator."

"He has rotten luck. Elder Zhang's the only one here, and he ran into him. Elder Zhang is destined to be the bane of Mingshi Yin's life!"

The disciples from the Green Jade Altar were excited and proud when they saw this scene.

...

Meanwhile, Bi An hovered in the horizons. Lu Zhou sat on its back as he stroked his beard and calmly watched on.

“Master, aren’t we going to help Fourth Senior Brother?” Little Yuan’er asked.

“Mingshi Yin has been in the Divine Court realm for a long time. He’s not any less talented than Duanmu Sheng. If I help him, how’s he supposed to train himself in actual battle?” Lu Zhou said.

“You’re really wise, master. I want to fight as well... with them.” Little Yuan’er pointed at the disciples on the Green Jade Altar.

“Just watch. Don’t butt in,” Lu Zhou chided.

“Oh.”

The disciples on the Green Jade Altar disciples were low-ranked cultivators. It was meaningless to fight them.

...

When Zhang Qiuchi’s attack landed true, he stared at the ground smugly. ‘With this, Mingshi Yin will surely be injured, if not dead.’

Mingshi Yin stirred up clouds of dust when he crashed onto the ground. He was temporarily obscured from everyone’s sights.

When the dust dissipated, creaking sounds could be heard.

Creak! Creak! Creak!

Vines started growing out of the ground. They resembled tentacles as they reached for Zhang Qiuchi.

“Bluewood Heart Technique?” As Mingshi Yin’s former opponent, Zhang Qiuchi immediately recognized this technique. This was the essence of the Bluewood Heart Technique, utilizing Primal Qi to promote plant growth. In the forest, Mingshi Yin’s cultivation base and strength would improve tremendously. ‘Did he do that on purpose as well?’

“You sly fox! Do you think that I haven’t thought of a way to deal with your Bluewood Heart Technique after all these years?” Zhang Qiuchi bellowed as he suddenly recalled his Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar. Instead of retreating, he flew toward the dense growth of vines!

“Elder!” The disciples of the Green Jade Altar were shocked.

At this moment, energy began to surge from the vines.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A fire was ignited, and the vines shrunk backward immediately.

“You old geezer! Forget it! I won’t fight you today!” Mingshi Yin coughed a few times before he turned around to flee.

“...” Upon seeing this, there were no changes in Lu Zhou’s expression. However, he felt extremely speechless inwardly. His disciple Mingshi Yin’s will to survive was much stronger than he had expected. His disciple only thought about escaping with his life intact all the time that he had forgotten about facing and defeating his enemies.

Mingshi Yin continued to run.

Zhang Qiuchi called out, “So, this is all there is to the villains in the Evil Sky Pavilion...” His voice resounded in the entire area.

Upon hearing this, the disciples on the Green Jade Altar laughed. It seemed like the villains of the Evil Sky Pavilion were not as terrifying as they had imagined. To think that a villain would flee out of fear!

Zhang Qiuchi spoke in a deep voice, “With my Two-leaf avatar, I would be embarrassed to no end if I let you and your leafless avatar escape.”

Hundred Tribulations Insight!

Grand technique!

Zhang Qiuchi unleashed his powers again. He moved swiftly. He seemed to have recreated the scene from before as he appeared next to Mingshi Yin again. A wave of powerful energy spread outward with Zhang Qiuchi’s avatar in the center.

Boom!

This time, Mingshi Yin could not activate his avatar in time to defend himself. He was like a lonely boat in the middle of the sea during a storm as he flew out. All of a sudden, he flipped in the air before he landed on the ground. He tried his best to suppress his boiling Qi and blood as he said tauntingly, “Come on! You can’t kill me, your grandfather, with this!”

Zhang Qiuchi spoke haughtily in the air, “Do you think you can provoke me into continuously unleashing my grand technique? You’re thinking too much! Your death is near!” As soon as he finished speaking, he raised his right hand. A gray weapon materialized and hovered above his palm. It spun for a moment before dropping into his hand. It was a saber that was half gray and half dark crimson.

The disciples on the Green Jade Altar were abuzz when they saw this.

“Life Cutter! It’s Elder Zhang’s Life Cutter!”

“Three years ago, Elder Zhang brought this heaven-grade weapon back from Rongbei!”

“So this is why Elder Zhang is so confident that he unleashed his ultimate skills four times in a row. He has a heaven-grade weapon with him...”

“Mingshi Yin is dead meat! Every time this saber appears, a life will surely be taken away!”

Bzzt! Bzzt! Bzzt!

Life Cutter began to vibrate. Wave after wave of pure energy appeared and shrouded the saber.

“Mingshi Yin, die!”

Mingshi Yin did not expect Zhang Qiuchi would possess a heaven-grade weapon. Zhang Qiuchi was not the Four Dark Knights. He knew the Bluewood Heart Technique’s weakness. On top of that, he had Life Cutter as well. There was no way he could beat him!

Zhang Qiuchi raised his Life Cutter! Before he slashed the saber down, a voice rang from afar.

“Catch!”

Whoosh!

The Separation Hook and Scabbard sailed through the air toward Mingshi Yin.

Chapter 112: You’re Not Afraid of Me?

Everyone’s attention was focused on the object sailing through the air before they turned to look at the person who had spoken.

‘The grandmaster?’

‘Why is he helping the villain?’

Lu Zhou who had spoken stood next to Bi An. He continued stroking his beard with one hand while he rested the other on his back.

The disciples from Green Jade Altar who were watching the battle were dumbfounded.

“Grandmaster?”

“What’s happening?”

“Did the grandmaster intend to kill the villain? Did the weapon slip from his hand and ended up in the villain’s hands instead?”

At this moment, the Separation Hook and Scabbard had already reached the spot before Zhang Qiuchi.

“A desperate struggle!” Zhang Qiuchi had already raised his Life Cutter. He decided to deal with this latest development after he killed his opponent.

Bam!

Zhang Qiuchi’s saber landed on the Separation Hook and Scabbard.

The Separation Hook and Scabbard spun wildly from the impact of a heaven-grade weapon and continued falling downward.

Zhang Qiuchi was shocked when he saw this. ‘This object is capable of withstanding a slash from Life Cutter?’ He frowned as he stared intently at the peculiar weapon.

The weapon that was sent flying by Zhang Qiuchi continued on its trajectory toward Mingshi Yin’s hands as though it was searching for its owner.

“Ding! Separation Hook and Scabbard has successfully acknowledged its master. Activated grade: Heaven-grade. Reward: 1,000 merit points.”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. If Mingshi Yin did not have the Separation Hook, he would not stand a chance of defeating Zhang Qiuchi who wielded Life Cutter. Initially, he intended to temper Mingshi Yin’s personality first before giving the Separation Hook and Scabbard. After all, Mingshi Yin was too reckless and stood out too much. However, this seemed like a good opportunity as well.

The moment the weapon acknowledged its master, Mingshi Yin’s eyes lit up in excitement. Before he thanked his master, he leaped into the air at lightning speed. In the next moment, he unsheathed the Separation Hook. He seemed like a tiger who had sprouted wings as he charged at Zhang Qiuchi.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A wave of energy that was much more majestic compared to before surged out of Mingshi Yin’s body. His speed and movements were at their fastest. When he wielded the Separation Hook and Scabbard, it seemed like fireworks in the sky as it flashed with light. It seemed as though the sky was his playground at this moment.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Mingshi Yin struck with a hook using his backhand while he used his forehand to strike with the saber. He kept switching between the two modes of attacks, and all his blows landed on Zhang Qiuchi’s Life Cutter. At this moment, his voice resounded in the sky. “Zhang Qiuchi, you’ve unleashed your grand technique four times in a row. If it weren’t for Life Cutter, you won’t stand a chance against me.”

Realization dawned on Zhang Qiuchi at this moment. The so-called grandmaster was the master of the Evil Sky Pavilion. The revelation put immense pressure on him. His power continued to wane while Mingshi Yin’s power grew. It did not take long before Mingshi Yin gained the upper hand.

Zhang Qiuchi, naturally, had no intentions of throwing his life away. In just a split second, he decided to retreat until he was within the Green Jade Altar’s Grand Formation! He quickly raised Life Cutter, intending to copy Mingshi Yin.

However, at this moment, Mingshi Yin solemnly said, “Hundred Tribulations Insight.” His 20-foot avatar appeared, causing his speed to increase. The Separation Hook and Scabbard continued to rain down blows on Zhang Qiuchi like a tempest.

“Damn it!” Zhang Qiuchi kept retreating.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The collision between the two heaven-grade weapons sent sparks flying through the air.

However, Mingshi Yin’s confidence in his Separation Hook and Scabbard far exceeded that of Zhang Qiuchi in Life Cutter.

Mingshi Yin suddenly said, “Farewell!”

“Hm?” Zhang Qiuchi barely registered what Mingshi Yin had said when countless vines began to grow around him, cutting off his path of retreat.

“Hundred Tribulations Insight,” Mingshi Yin said coldly. This time, his avatar was no longer 20 feet. It was now 30 feet. Moreover, a leaf could be seen on the Golden Lotus under the avatar.

“What... When did you sprout a leaf?” Zhang Qiuchi’s eyes widened in disbelief.

Puh!

Mingshi Yin pierced Zhang Qiuchi’s chest with the Separation Hook and Scabbard. From the moment he obtained the heaven-grade weapon, he had been constantly pushing Zhang Qiuchi back. He did not stop for a single second to rest! “I’m sorry... I’ve always had a leaf.”

The battle ended just like that.

Zhang Qiuchi’s remaining Primal Qi kept his body in midair.

Mingshi Yin straightened his back as he hovered in the air. He wiped the Separation Hook with his sleeve and returned it to its scabbard.

Thud!

Zhang Qiuchi finally dropped to the ground.

“Ding! Killed a Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm target. Reward: 1,000 merit points.”

“Ding! Recovered the heaven-grade weapon, Life Cutter. Re-refining is needed before use.”

When Lu Zhou raised his hand, Life Cutter shot into his sleeve in just a blink of an eye.

Mingshi Yin hastily descended and rushed over to Bi An.

Since the vines were obstructing their view, the disciples from the Green Jade Altar disciples were unaware of what had happened. However, they were still able to see Bi An that was hovering high in the sky. When the vine finally disappeared, they were greeted by the sight of Mingshi Yin kneeling and cupping his hands together.

“Thank you, master! I’m glad I didn’t let you down!”

Loyalty +2.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard calmly. He merely glanced at Mingshi Yin and nodded in reply. He did not expect Mingshi Yin to have concealed his strength. It seemed like Mingshi Yin had sprouted a leaf during his battle with one of the Four Dark Knights as well.

Mingshi Yin stood up and said to Little Yuan’er, “Little Junior Sister, did I look like Second Senior Brother when I took out Zhang Qiuchi with a single strike earlier?”

Little Yuan’er rolled her eyes at him and said, “How would I know?”

If there were people who were still confused, the conversation between these people confirmed the old man’s identity.

“He’s the old villain?!”

“Ji Tiandao?”

“Impossible! The grandmaster whom Duan Xing introduced to us is the master of Evil Sky Pavilion?”

“Run!”

The disciples with weak cultivation bases did not dare to linger. Their lives were more important than watching a battle. In just a blink of an eye, only one disciple from the Green Jade Altar was left on the scene.

Little Yuan'er turned to look and said, “Eh, there's someone who isn't afraid of you, master.”

Lu Zhou looked at the person and discovered it was Zhang Chu, the Righteous Sect's fifth elder. He asked calmly, “You're not afraid of me?”

Zhang Chu remained silent.

Lu Zhou nodded slightly and praised Zhang Chu. “I thought the Righteous Sect is only filled with cowardly mice.”

“Master, I haven't had enough yet. Can I kill this man, too?” Mingshi Yin asked excitedly. “I promise it would not cause too big of a ruckus! He'll die even faster than Zhang Qiuchi.”

Lu Zhou shook his head. He glanced at Zhang Chu and said, “There's no need for that.”

Killing Zhang Chu was meaningless. He was only a small fry. His death would be of no consequence to the Righteous Sect.

Lu Zhou waved his sleeve as he said, “I like people with guts... I'll spare your life.” Then, he said to his disciples, “Let's return to the Evil Sky Pavilion.”

Bi An flew toward the clouds.

“Have a safe journey, master. I'll go look for Third Senior Brother,” Mingshi Yin said.

Lu Zhou ignored him. He rose into the skies on Bi An's back.

Mingshi Yin shot into the forest at lightning speed. “Why is Senior Brother taking so long for a trip to the toilet?” Soon after, he vanished, disappearing from the area.

....

After a long while, Zhang Chu slumped to the ground. A hot stream of liquid trailed down his legs at this moment.

‘That was f*cking scary! It's too terrifying! The old villain was standing in front of me!’ Zhang Chu was nearly in tears.

...

In the quiet forest.

A man in green robes walked out unobtrusively. He looked in the direction where Bi An had flown off and muttered to himself, “Master, you seemed to have changed a lot...”

He walked slowly toward Zhang Chu who was sitting limply on the ground.

“Hello.”

“H-h-hello.” Zhang Chu nodded with a lingering fear.

“I don’t think it’s their intention to frighten you.”

Chapter 113: he Five Energies Universe! Guard the Tree Stump and Wait for Hua Wudao!

“It’s not intentional?” Zhang Chu almost cried. “This is ridiculous! The Fiend Temple is trying to ruin my Righteous Sect!”

The green-clad swordsman said with a smile, “I don’t think the old man did this on purpose.”

“Really?” When Zhang Chu realized the shameful position he was in, he quickly tidied his robes and rose to his feet.

“Mhm...” The green-clad swordsman nodded. “If you’re offended, I’ll apologize to you on his behalf.”

A frown appeared on Zhang Chu’s face. He said irritably, “Who are you to apologize on his behalf? Just who do you think you are?”

Zhang Chu’s voice had barely faded when the sword on the green-clad swordsman’s back vibrated. It flew out and returned to its sheath in just a blink of an eye.

Not even its shadow could be seen, but Zhang Chu’s thumb had already been severed from his hand. It happened so quickly that he did not even feel the pain.

“My name’s Yu Shangrong,” the green-clad swordsman said with an affable smile, “There’s no need to be afraid. I never kill without a reason.”

“...”

“I’m sorry for intruding upon your hospitality. Farewell.” Yu Shangrong turned around and left. He disappeared into the forest in just a blink of an eye.

Zhang Chu hissed in pain when he pressed the stump where his thumb once was. At the same time, another hot stream of liquid trailed down his legs again!

...

Four hours later.

In the Evil Sky Pavilion’s great hall.

Ding Fanqiu shivered as he kneeled on the floor. He kept glancing around his surroundings. The great hall was not very impressive, but this was the real Evil Sky Pavilion after all. He was so frightened that he did not even dare to breathe loudly.

Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin stood respectfully at the side.

Lu Zhou looked at Ding Fanqiu. Although this man had impersonated him, he was a Five-leaf Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivator from Yun Sect. If Hua Wudao acted just as Duan Xing had predicted,

this meant that Hua Wudao would be here soon to resolve the knot in his heart. Therefore, as a person from Yun Sect, Ding Fanqiu still had his use. He waved his hand. "Lock him up."

"Understood." Duanmu Sheng picked Ding Fanqiu up and left the great hall.

"Also, if you see Hua Wudao, tell him to come meet me at once."

"Yes, master."

Lu Zhou glanced at the Derived Moon Palace's female cultivator who was standing at the side. He stroked his beard and asked, "How's Ye Tianxin doing these days?"

The female cultivator immediately fell to her knees with a thud. She was so frightened that she could barely speak coherently.

When Pan Zhong saw this, he cupped his hands together and said, "In reply to your question, Pavilion Master, apart from being weak, she seems fine."

Lu Zhou nodded. With the constitution of the Bais, this ailment was nothing. Before the truth of the Fish Dragon Village incident was revealed, he had no plans of doing anything to Ye Tianxin. Finally, he said curtly, "I'm tired."

"Have a good rest, master."

Lu Zhou rose to his feet and went into the hidden chamber. He had no time to read the Heavenly Writing during the past two days. His mental state was slightly worse compared to before.

Name: Lu Zhou

Race: Human

Cultivation base: Brahman Sea Eight Meridians

Merit points: 6,212

Avatar: Mighty Four Quadrants

Remaining life: 5,800 days

Item: Deadly Strike Card x1, Impeccable Card x2, Critical Block Card x7 (passive), Binding Cage Card x4, Whizard, Bi An.

Weapon: Unnamed, Amorous Hoop (Owner: Ye Tianxin. Requires re-refining to use), Life Cutter (Owner: Zhang Qiuchi. Requires re-refining to use)

Cultivation Method: Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing

"6,000... I'm still about 1,000 short." Lu Zhou frowned. He could not afford an avatar yet. They were too expensive. 'Looks like I'll have to think of a way to earn more merit points after this.'

Since he had not completed the investigation of the Fish Dragon Village incident, he, naturally, did not receive his handsome reward yet.

"Lucky draw."

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points on a lucky draw. Thanks for participating. Luck +1.”

“I wonder if I’ll still miss if I choose a lucky draw again.” Lu Zhou decisively spent his merit points on another lucky draw.

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points on a lucky draw. Luck: 8. Obtained avatar: Five Energies Universe.”

“...”“Really?”

The actual avatar would have cost him more than 8,000 merit points, and yet, he had somehow obtained it for 50 merit points?

However, just like the logic of, ‘If only I had known, I would have gone for the seventh jar’, he knew he would not have this stroke of good luck if he did not experience the setbacks from before.

“Use.” The Four Mighty Quadrants avatar was immediately replaced by the Five Energies Universe avatar. This was a state of having one’s five energies return to the dantian’s sea of Qi after connecting the Ren and Du Meridians. However, Lu Zhou had connected the meridians a long time ago. Hence, when he obtained the Five Energies Universe avatar, Primal Qi surged and flowed into his body like an incoming tide. It felt extremely comfortable.

After that, Lu Zhou spent some time getting used to his new avatar. He felt that there was a profound improvement in his cultivation base. He sighed as he stretched his limbs. “I need some Reversal Cards.”

It was true that he got more, ‘Thanks for participating’, than an actual item from his past lucky draws. However, he could tell that he made a profit in general.

“Lucky draw.”

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points on a lucky draw. Thanks for participating. Luck +1.”

He did five consecutive draws, and the outcomes were the same.

After obtaining the Five Energies Universe avatar, Lu Zhou was not affected by the five failures. He could increase his luck points anyway. He could accept anything so long as it was not some useless item.

Lu Zhou made no further attempts at the lucky draw. Instead, he opened the items column. He wanted to see if there were any newly available item cards.

“What’s this?” At the bottom of the list, Lu Zhou noticed a purple box where he had expected to see an item card.

There was a note that read, ‘A mysterious box’.

‘Mysterious box?’

“Price: 2,000 merit points. Available for one day.”

“A limited-time offer?” Lu Zhou frowned. This reminded him of certain games back on earth. This was a classic tactic of unethical merchants! However, was the system this senseless?

Lu Zhou’s gut told him there was something valuable inside the mysterious box.

“Purchase.”

There was a flash of light before a box appeared in the center of the hidden chamber. The purple box was an exact replica of the one displayed on the system dashboard.

After observing it for some time, Lu Zhou realized there was no way to open this box. It was completely sealed!

Bam!

Lu Zhou waved his arm casually. An energy wave hit the box. Nothing happened.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Lu Zhou continued waving his arm, launching a barrage of attacks on the mysterious box.

...

Outside the hidden chamber.

Little Yuan'er and Mingshi Yin heard the commotion from the hidden chamber.

“Don't go. Master isn't satisfied with the events at the Fish Dragon Village. He's at the peak of his rage now.” Mingshi Yin quickly stopped Little Yuan'er who was about to enter the hidden chamber.

“Oh.”

“Little Junior Sister, are you free?”

“Why?”

“Spar with me! Look at my Separation Hook and Scabbard! Master gave it to me... Eh, Little Junior Sister, why are you crying?!” Mingshi Yin raised his hand and the Separation Hook and Scabbard materialized in the air before slowly dropping into his hand.

Before Mingshi Yin could inquire further, he heard Duanmu Sheng's voice ringing from outside the great hall.

“Old Fourth, I heard the good news. Master has given you a weapon, right? Come, come now... I can barely wait. Now that you have such a great weapon, I'm sure you'll last longer than before! Quickly...” Duanmu Sheng carried his Overlord Spear in his left hand as he dragged Mingshi Yin out of the hall with his right hand.

Mingshi Yin was speechless.

Little Yuan'er scoffed. “Serves you right for picking on me!”

Chapter 114: I'm Not the Same Person Anymore

Inside the hidden chamber.

Lu Zhou continued bombarding the mysterious box with his energy blasts. The box remained unaffected, not even a scratch could be seen on it.

'A box that can't be opened... What's the meaning of this? I spent 2,000 merit points for nothing?' Lu Zhou bent down and studied the box carefully. Other than the grooves on the box, there was nothing special about it.

Lu Zhou remembered his weapon, Unnamed. 'What will happen to this sturdy box if I use Unnamed on it?' He raised his right hand slightly. The exquisite and refined sword, Unnamed, materialized in his hand. He waved it casually.

Bang!

Unnamed collided with the mysterious box.

Sparks flew everywhere!

Lu Zhou's first reaction was to inspect Unnamed. There were no scratches on it. Then, he looked at the box. Just like Unnamed, it was untouched. The only change was a fine scratch on its surface. When Lu Zhou blinked, the scratch mark was gone. It was as though it had melted away. It was apparent that Unnamed was superior. However, this box's material was extremely peculiar. It was capable of restoring itself.

Unnamed could even break the Dark Knight's peak earth-grade weapon. This meant the material of this box was tougher than a heaven-grade material.

Lu Zhou stood up. He decided to give up on studying the box. Since the system sold him this box, it would certainly have its use. It was meaningless to be too anxious about this. When the boat reaches the head of the pier, it would straighten itself. He was certain he would eventually find a way.

"Heavenly Writing." Lu Zhou sat with his legs crossed and began to comprehend the Heavenly Writing. During this time, he discovered it was extremely easy to immerse himself in comprehending the Heavenly Writing. Apart from that, he noticed that he no longer had to call up the scrolls. Once he calmed down, the words of the Heavenly Writing would appear in his mind. The scripts and symbols would move along and repeat where necessary as though he was watching a movie.

...

Meanwhile, in a meeting hall on the Green Jade Altar in the Righteous Sect.

The fifth elder, Zhang Chu, recounted with great detail everything that had happened to Zhang Yuanshan, the Sect Master of Righteous Sect. His face was wet with tears and snot as he recounted the events. The other elders could not help but shake their heads as they listened to him.

"Sect master, the Fiend Temple's Ren Buping deliberately brought you away. This is clearly a plot of luring the tiger away from its mountain. Ji Tiandao seized the opportunity and killed Elder Zhang! I've said before that the people from the Fiend Path are not to be trusted!"

"Zhang Chu, are you sure it was the Evil Sky Pavilion's Ji Tiandao and Sword Devil Yu Shangrong?" Zhang Yuanshan asked with his hands resting on his back.

"I'm absolutely sure... Even if I'm lying, there were many disciples on the Green Jade Altar at that time. They can all bear witness to this!" Zhang Chu raised his hand. "Look! My thumb was severed by the Sword Devil!"

The others were shocked.

“How did you survive an encounter with the Sword Devil?”

“I... I...”

“Enough.” Zhang Yuanshan snapped. The meeting hall fell silent.

The others did not dare to speak, they could only look at their sect master.

Zhang Yuanshan frowned as he said loudly, “There are many flaws in this matter. We shouldn’t jump to conclusions before we gain a better understanding of this matter. We’ll put Zhang Qiuchi’s death aside for now...”

“Did Elder Zhang die in vain?”

“Why? Are you going to avenge him?” Zhang Yuanshan retorted.

The meeting hall fell silent again.

Who would dare to provoke the Evil Sky Pavilion? Even the fates of the Divine Capital’s special forces, the Four Dark Knights, remained unknown ever since they entered the Evil Sky Pavilion.

The Fiend Temple’s Zuo Xinchuan, the only elite in the world who entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm through the Fiend Zen died in the Evil Sky Pavilion. Who would dare to go there now? The only thing they could do was wait. They could only wait for Ji Tiandao’s life to run out! When that day arrived, the Evil Sky Pavilion would crumble.

...

Tangzi Town, dozens of miles away from Golden Court Mountain.

An old man and a middle-aged man were resting at a table with a pot of tea.

The middle-aged man hesitated for a moment before saying, “Master, are we really going to the Evil Sky Pavilion? I heard that they’re all villains who are wicked and crazy. If anything were to happen to you...”

The old man sighed softly and shook his head. “I’ve hesitated many times over the past 20 years. Sometimes, I’m afraid; sometimes, I’m worried that I might disgrace the name of the Yun Sect. However, there are also times when I’m worried that Ji Tiandao will become too old to fight. At that time, I’ll have to carry this knot in my heart to the grave. If that happens, even if I die, I won’t be able to die in peace.”

“But the Noble and Fiend Paths do not tolerate each other.”

“If it weren’t for my status as a Yun Sect elder, why would I delay the matter until this day?” the old man said. When he saw the middle-aged man had nothing more to say, the old man sighed and said, “You’re still young. There’s no need for you to dwell on complicated matters... When you’re at my age, you’ll come to understand everything.”

“I truly don’t understand any of this, and I don’t think I want to.”

“Evil creature! I’ve made up my mind. Don’t bring this up ever again,” the old man said as he lowered his cup on the table.

The middle-aged man kept his thoughts to himself.

...

Two days passed in just a blink of an eye.

During this time, Lu Zhou continued to comprehend the Heavenly Writing in the Evil Sky Pavilion. The familiar and comfortable mental state was restored.

He opened his eyes slowly and looked at his remaining merit points on the system dashboard. He had 3,862 points left.

'Relying on missions to earn merit points seems to be too slow.' Lu Zhou suddenly recalled he could earn merit points if someone devoutly worshiped him! He thought it was high time for him to give his disciples something to do.

Lu Zhou was about to get up when he heard Little Yuan'er's voice.

"Master, someone's at the foot of the mountain, asking to see you."

"Who is it?"

"Hua Wudao."

Lu Zhou was slightly surprised. He did not expect Hua Wudao to show up so soon. 'If he's here at the Evil Sky Pavilion despite being afraid of people stronger than him, he's quite brave.'

Creak!

Lu Zhou pushed the hidden chamber's door open and emerged with his hands on his back.

"Master, you've become younger again," Little Yuan'er said with a smile.

Lu Zhou chided her, "If you have the time to flatter me, you should be spending them cultivating. You should follow your Fourth Senior Brother's example."

"Oh, alright." Little Yuan'er nodded obediently.

The duo entered the Evil Sky Pavilion's great hall.

Zhou Jifeng, Pan Zhong, and the Derived Moon Palace's female cultivators were present in the great hall.

Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin were standing at the side.

"Pavilion Master, Hua Wudao will be here soon," a female cultivator said with a bow.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard calmly. He suddenly remembered that Zhao Yue was still inside the Cave of Reflection. He asked, "How's Zhao Yue's repentance coming along?"

Mingshi Yin bowed and said, "Fifth Junior Sister has been reflecting on her past conducts daily."

"Did the witchcraft spell worsen?" Lu Zhou was more interested in this.

"Not for now."

Lu Zhou nodded. The power of witchcraft was peculiar. For the time being, it only seemed to be suppressing Zhao Yue's cultivation base. However, the elite from the palace might have planted something else. "Keep a close eye on her."

"Understood."

At this moment, a female cultivator led an old cultivator and a middle-aged cultivator inside the great hall, catching everyone's attention immediately.

The old man who looked to be in his 70s had a slight hunch. His appearance was extremely ordinary. The man who stood next to him was only slightly younger than him and carried a huge blade with him.

The middle-aged man was clearly nervous. He kept glancing around his surroundings as soon as he entered the great hall.

The old man, on the other hand, was unperturbed. His expression was solemn as he moved at a neither slow nor rushed speed.

'Is this Hua Wudao who fought the Evil Sky Pavilion's patriarch many years ago?'

As they walked to the center of the great hall, the old man did not kneel. Instead, he cupped his hands together and said, "We meet again."

The other disciples frowned at this.

Lu Zhou looked at the old man. "You may sit."

Hua Wudao took him up on his offer. He sat down and said, "I should've paid you a visit earlier. However, I was tied up by other matters and delayed my visit to this day."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard. He was in no hurry as he spoke indifferently, "Hua Wudao, you're from the Yun Sect. The Noble and Fiend Paths have never tolerated each other since ancient times. Aren't you afraid that I might kill you for coming to the Evil Sky Pavilion at a time like this?"

Hua Wudao replied calmly, "I might be afraid if this had been in the past... However, I'm not the same person anymore. I've been through life and death... If I were afraid, I wouldn't be here today."

Chapter 115: There Were No Different Paths in Great Yan In The Past

Little Yuan'er said with a smile, "You're a brave one." After she finished speaking, she snorted at the middle-aged man next to Hua Wudao, causing him to stumble back in fright.

When Hua Wudao saw this, he looked at the middle-aged man from the corners of his eyes and reprimanded him, "Good-for-nothing. You've utterly disgraced me."

The middle-aged man turned red from embarrassment.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "I commend you for your bravery."

Hua Wudao cupped his hands together and said, "I've been obsessed with cultivation in my pursuit of Dao. The quarrels between the Fiend and Noble Paths have nothing to do with me."

Mingshi Yin said with a smile, "That's nice, but since you're an elder of Yun Sect..."

Hua Wudao waved his hand and said, "Before I traveled north, I've resigned from my post as an elder."

Everyone was taken aback by this. Humans usually placed great importance on fame and power. The Yun Sect was one of the powerful Yun, Tian, and Luo Sects. Many coveted the position of an elder, and yet, this old man claimed he had given it up.

When Hua Wudao spoke, his expression was earnest. "I'm advanced in age, and I'll return to dust soon. I came to the Evil Sky Pavilion today only to resolve the knot in my heart."

"The knot in your heart?" Little Yuan'er asked as she played with a few strands of her hair.

Hua Wudao said slowly, "20 years ago, I was defeated by Brother Ji. Since then, my cultivation base hasn't improved. This has made me a laughingstock in the Yun, Tian, and Luo Sects. Even ordinary cultivators would ridicule me for this. This led to a knot forming in my heart."

"What does the knot in your heart have to do with my master?" Mingshi Yin asked after he rolled his eyes.

"Since the knot had formed due to Brother Ji, it's only natural that only Brother Ji can remove it. Over the past 20 years, I've been mulling over the few skills that Brother Ji used to defeat me..." Hua Wudao said.

"Bullsh*t!" Mingshi Yin cursed. "Who are you to call my master Brother Ji? Besides, your cultivation base didn't improve in the past 20 years? Are you here to ask for a beating?"

Hua Wudao was taken aback. This was the Evil Sky Pavilion, a place where cultivators were afraid of. At this moment, he was facing the greatest villain the world had ever known. Indeed. It was slightly inappropriate for him to refer to the great villain as Brother Ji.

"I have been rude," Hua Wudao said sincerely.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "This disciple of mine has always been uncouth, but he has spoken my mind."

When Mingshi Yin heard this, he rejoiced inwardly. He even wore a threatening expression because of his master's words.

Hua Wudao was unfazed by Mingshi Yin's attitude. Instead, he said, "I've come to the Evil Sky Pavilion with a single goal in mind; to undo the knot in my heart. I wasn't your opponent 20 years ago, and I admit that I won't be a match for you today."

"You've lost, and that's all there is to it... Your cultivation base has stagnated ever since, and you have a knot in your heart. What does that have to do with me? Do you think the Evil Sky Pavilion is full of merciful Buddhas?" Lu Zhou asked in a deep voice as he stroked his beard.

Hua Wudao was rendered speechless by these words.

Mingshi Yin spoke again, "You can't blame anyone else for your lackluster skills. Resenting the Evil Sky Pavilion won't change anything."

At this point, the middle-aged man who had remained silent from the beginning interjected with a slight hint of defiance, "My master came here with sincerity in his heart, and yet, you've been humiliating him non-stop. You're all insufferable bullies."

"Speaking the truth counts as bullying?" Mingshi Yin said with a chuckle as he rolled his eyes.

"You..."

"Stop it!" Hua Wudao chided the middle-aged man, "I'm completely disgraced by you! Stand down!"

The middle-aged man was unwilling, but when Hua Wudao reprimanded him, he retreated to the back obediently and kept quiet.

Hua Wudao cupped his fists and said, "My obstinate disciple has behaved rudely. Please forgive him."

"Enough with this meaningless chatter. Get to the point," Mingshi Yin urged.

Hua Wudao spoke, "I'll repeat myself. I have only one objective coming to the Evil Sky Pavilion today; it's to undo the knot in my heart. Three moves. Three moves are all I ask for."

Realization dawned on Lu Zhou. He nodded and stroked his beard before he said, "The three skills I used 20 years ago?" To be honest, even if he had not lost this part of his memories, he still would not remember it. He had defeated countless opponents throughout the years. He had given Hua Wudao enough consideration for even remembering his name. There was no way he could remember the skills he had used during their battle 20 years ago.

"Back then, I had the greatest defense and protective energy in the Daoist Societies, and yet, I couldn't defend against your attack... Over these two decades, I've studied this matter meticulously while tempering and improving myself constantly. Brother Ji, you may use any skills you like. I'll only defend and not attack! If I can withstand them, the knot in my heart will be resolved. If I can't, I'll personally cripple my cultivation base and live out my days in seclusion!" Hua Wudao said boldly.

Upon hearing this, Mingshi Yin began to laugh uproariously. When he stopped laughing, he said, "What a shameless man! You've only been studying your tortoiseshell technique for 20 years, and you dare come here to ask my master to beat you up! You even went so far as to say that the heart in your knot will be undone if you manage to withstand the attacks! Honestly, you're the most shameless man I've ever met!"

"..."

The middle-aged man was enraged by this. He was about to speak up again when Hua Wudao stopped him.

It could not be denied that Mingshi Yin had a point. Hua Wudao knew that his way of doing things was complete nonsense. There was no one who studied defensive cultivation methods for 20 years, showed up before their opponent, and asked to be hit.

"Hua Wudao, you're indeed shameless... Why don't you give me 10 years, and I'll study your defensive technique. If I can't stab you to death 10 years later, I'll live with my name pronounced backward," Duanmu Sheng said as he brandished his Overlord Spear. The Overlord Spear buzzed and vibrated under the surge of Primal Qi. It showcased its might as a heaven-grade weapon.

Hua Wudao frowned. He felt a lump in his throat when he heard this.

Duanmu Sheng continued to say, "You've studied for 20 years, and I'm only asking for 10 years. No, five will do."

"..."

The middle-aged man said to Hua Wudao, "Master, let's leave... There's no need for you to do this! I've told you the Evil Sky Pavilion won't take you seriously."

"Silence!" Hua Wudao glared at his disciple. He took a step forward and fell to one knee. He cupped his fists respectfully and said, "I ask for nothing else... I know I'm no match for you. However, if this knot in my heart remains unresolved, I'll live with regret for the rest of my life. Please help me undo this knot, Brother Ji!" His voice was bright, resounding, and forceful.

The others were slightly taken aback by this.

There were those who came taunting, those who laid siege to this mountain, and those who tried to mount sneak attacks. However, this was the first time someone had come here, kneeled down, and asked to be beaten up! This was indeed a very strange sight.

A silence hung over the Evil Sky Pavilion's great hall.

After all, it was a rare sight for a stately elder of the Yun Sect to kneel. Who would have expected things to turn out this way?

"Please grant me this wish, Pavilion Master!" Hua Wudao said loudly.

"He won't. Now, get lost!" Little Yuan'er leaped down from the steps.

At this moment, Lu Zhou spoke, "Hua Wudao, do you really want to undo that knot in your heart?"

"Of course... It's my life's wish. I wish you won't hold back your strength, Pavilion Master," Hua Wudao said earnestly.

"The Noble and Fiend Paths don't tolerate each other, and yet, you're pleading with me. Aren't you afraid people would ridicule you for this?" Lu Zhou asked indifferently.

"In the past, there was no distinction between the Noble and Fiend Paths in Great Yan... The different paths are only formed because there were those who intended to ostracize others based on their ideologies," Hua Wudao calmly replied.

Lu Zhou nodded lightly. He stroked his beard and said, "In that case, I'll grant you your wish."

When Hua Wudao heard this, he was overjoyed. He cupped his hands respectfully and said, "Thank you for your help."

"But..." Lu Zhou suddenly said in a deep voice, "There's something I must make clear to you beforehand."

Chapter 116: The Six Compatible Daoist Seal

"Please speak, Pavilion Master," Hua Wudao said respectfully.

The middle-aged man was pained to see this. His master had to bow and kneel just for a chance to fight his opponent. Years ago, Hua Wudao held awe-inspiring authority in the Yun Sect and commanded the respect of many. However, today, his master was humiliated in the Evil Sky Pavilion. Worst of all, he, as a disciple, was helpless. What could he do against so many elites and the crushing situation? He could only lower his head at this moment.

Lu Zhou rose to his feet slowly. He placed one hand on his back and the other stroked his beard. He said, "First, you have no right to fight me. Mingshi Yin and Duanmu Sheng will fight in my stead. You can try and block their attacks. Second, my time is precious. If you lose, you'll have to agree to one condition of mine."

The middle-aged man's face turned red, his temper was clearly about to erupt.

Lu Zhou's voice rang in the air again. "Naturally, you can choose to decline."

"You..." The middle-aged man gritted his teeth, a furious expression etched on his face. He was clearly a middle-aged man, but he's the perfect example of the saying, 'The young are fearless'. He appeared defiant.

Bam!

Hua Wudao suddenly gave the middle-aged man a kick so hard that the middle-aged man fell to his knees. He berated him, "I brought you here to widen your horizons. Now, look at you. Are you trying to meddle in my business?"

"I dare not!"

"If you butt in again, I'll sever our ties as master and disciple."

The middle-aged man was stunned by his master's words. He could only nod. "Yes... Yes, master."

Hua Wudao strode forward with his hands on his back. He seemed very confident as well. He looked at Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin and said, "I can agree to any one of your conditions as long as it doesn't involve the Yun Sect."

"Very well." Lu Zhou stroked his beard calmly.

Mingshi Yin came forward. He appraised Hua Wudao with interest. "On my master's behalf, I'll see just how great this tortoise technique of yours is." He was speaking truthfully when he said that a defensive technique that had been studied for 20 years was a tortoise technique.

Hua Wudao was not offended. Instead, he raised his right hand slowly and said, "My pleasure." When he said this, Daoist seals appeared on his body.

Heaven, earth, life, death, water, and fire. Six seal scripts appeared in sequence. They revolved around Hua Wudao at a uniform speed.

"Six Compatible Seal!"

The Six Compatible Seal was an extremely complicated Daoist Seal. Cultivators capable of cultivating this Daoist seal to its peak were rare. The term 'Six Compatible' was a cultivation method jargon. It consisted

of three inner compatibilities of the essence, Qi, and spirit, and the three outer compatibilities of hands, eyes, and body.

Hua Wudao's Six Compatible Seal was even more unique. A circle that was roughly two meters in diameter had appeared under his feet. It resembled the Taiji diagram that was overflowing with life. If he was capable of cultivating his energy to this state, he did not spend the past 20 years in vain. His obsession with cultivation was apparent.

When Mingshi Yin saw the Six Compatible Seal, he stopped looking down on Hua Wudao. He adjusted his stance and condensed his Qi into energy. Energy seals filled the air around him. There were so many of them that they could almost cover the sky.

When Hua Wudao saw this, he said, "If this is all you've got, I suggest that both of you come at me at once!"

"Hm?" Mingshi Yin frowned. He leaped and launched his energy seals at Hua Wudao. He shouted, "Arrogant!" Thousands upon thousands of energy seals rained down on his target.

In just a blink of an eye, the six scripts suddenly enlarged. The circle of light under Hua Wudao's light grew to twice its size as well.

Bzzt!

Hua Wudao's Primal Qi and the Daoist seal resonated loudly.

Bang!

Mingshi Yin's energy seals bombarded the Six Compatible Seal. However, contrary to expectations, not only did Mingshi Yin fail to break the Six Compatible Seal, but his attacks were also reflected back.

Everyone else was shocked.

Mingshi Yin flipped around in the air. He stumbled back three steps before he finally steadied his steps. His arms felt slightly numb. It was no wonder Hua Wudao had confidently agreed to Lu Zhou's conditions. He did not even regard Mingshi Yin and Duanmu Sheng as worthy opponents.

In this round, the defense was successful. Hua Wudao had won!

"Again!" Mingshi Yin was used to defeating his opponent through scare tactics and catching them off-guard. This method had served him well. However, his usual method of fighting could not be applied in the current situation.

"Separation Hook and Scabbard!" Mingshi Yin summoned his heaven-grade weapon.

Under everyone's shocked gaze, the Separation Hook and Scabbard flickered in the air.

Hua Wudao frowned slightly, but his tone was calm. "A heaven-grade weapon."

One of the reasons why heaven-grade weapons were so valuable was due to the fact that they could be used to break through energy. Since they could break through energy, it was only natural for them to be able to pierce through protective energy and avatars!

The Separation Hook and Scabbard left many afterimages in the air as Mingshi Yin waved them around.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Mingshi Yin focused his attacks on a single point!

The Six Compatible Seal seemed prepared against the attacks of a heaven-grade weapon.

The six scripts suddenly shone with a brilliant light before they merged into one and defended the spot that Mingshi Yin targeted!

Bang!

The energy reflected the attacks again.

The more ferociously Mingshi Yin attacked, the more powerful the rebound was. With this strike, he reeled back and nearly crashed into a pillar in the Evil Sky Pavilion's great hall. Before his feet even touched the floor, he said in a deep voice, "Again!"

Mingshi Yin was truly unwilling to accept this outcome. He flipped in the air as he readied himself to attack. However, Duanmu Sheng's voice rang in the air at this moment.

"Stand down! I'll have a go this time!" The Overlord Spear was raised before Mingshi Yin, blocking his way.

Mingshi Yin was not the berserker-type, after all. He was skilled in speed and agility. If his opponent hid behind the Six Compatible Seal, Mingshi Yin would be at a serious disadvantage.

Duanmu Sheng brandished his Overlord Spear.

Bzzt!

Hundred Tribulations Insight!

Duanmu Sheng's 30-foot avatar towered above the others in the great hall. He kept his avatar in its energy form so the great hall was not affected.

Duanmu Sheng was clearly more powerful.

"Thousand Waves!"

The Overlord Spear immediately left thousands of clones in the air.

When he saw this, Hua Wudao exclaimed approvingly, "As expected of the impressive Evil Sky Pavilion. It seems that everyone has a heaven-grade weapon here." As he spoke, the six scripts around him converged into one again. They formed an energy shield as large as the scripts themselves.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The thousands of clones of the spear stabbed at the shield.

The Six Compatible Seal rippled and dimmed for an instant. However, it quickly regained its shine.

“Daoist Six Compatible Seal has all the blessings of nature! I’ve never seen someone use the Six Compatible Seal like this,” Zhou Jifeng praised.

“Me too. I’m from the Clarity Sect, and I’ve heard about the Six Compatible Seal. We were only focused on methods of attacks, but we’ve neglected our defenses! This battle has truly widened my horizons!” Pan Zhong said.

Duanmu Sheng snorted at this moment. “Doing nothing but defend will get you nowhere! Again!” He swung the Overlord Spear again. Clones from the spear that were clearly more powerful than before appeared.

Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction. He spoke with his hands on his back, “Since you know enough to focus on a single point, you should implement it in earnest...”

Aerial attacks were not too effective against the best defense.

Duanmu Sheng nodded, “Thank you for the instructions, master!”

With the support of the Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar, the spear’s clones were moving so quickly that they looked like a blur.

“Imperfect Divine Intervention!” The ultimate skill of the Divine One Technique was unleashed!

Hua Wudao exclaimed in surprise. “I didn’t expect an Evil Sky Pavilion disciple to be this powerful... Alas, this isn’t enough!” He lunged forward, and the circle morphed. The exterior of the Taiji diagram expanded. The eight trigrams surrounded the circle now. Eight trigrams combined with the Six Compatible Seal!

Chapter 117: Thunderblast

Lu Zhou was surprised.

Hua Wudao had incorporated the eight trigrams with his Six Compatible Seal. Regardless of how powerful it was, the fact that he had even attempted this was more than commendable. It was only natural since he would not have come to the Evil Sky Pavilion without testing the might of his Six Compatible Seal beforehand.

The Imperfect Divine Intervention was the Divine One Technique’s ultimate skill. Duanmu Sheng planned to cast the ultimate skill along with his heaven-grade weapon and Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar.

For this reason, everyone was confident with Duanmu Sheng’s move.

Countless spear clones converged and attacked a single point on the Six Compatible Seal.

The Six Compatible Seal that had been combined with the eight trigrams formed a peculiar energy barrier.

The collision between their energies released waves of Primal Qi in the air that spread through the Evil Sky Pavilion.

“The Six Compatible Seal is so powerful! Mister Third has unleashed several ultimate skills, and yet, it seems unaffected!”

“Hua Wudao is quite amazing!”

Pan Zhong was from the Clarity Sect. The Clarity Sect shared the same root as the Yun Sect. Therefore, he knew a thing or two about Daoist seals. However, Hua Wudao’s Six Compatible Seal had overturned his previous understanding of it. It was only natural since Hua Wudao had spent 20 years studying and perfecting this move alone.

Hua Wudao had come prepared. His objective was to have the Evil Sky Pavilion attack him. If they were fighting to the death, Hua Wudao might not be able to defeat Duanmu Sheng.

“It’s not over yet!” Duanmu Sheng yelled suddenly. When the Overlord Spear was repelled by the Six Compatible Seal and rebounded, he spun around and launched another attack. The tip of the spear flashed with fiery red radiance.

Hua Wudao said in a deep voice, “It’s still not enough!” The six huge script symbols overlapped. At the same time, the eight trigrams rose and merged with the six scripts again. It was clear that he had anticipated his opponent would focus their attack on one point to break his defenses.

Bzzt!

A buzzing noise rang in the air when the Overlord Spear landed on the Six Compatible Seal.

Everyone frowned. This was like a clash between Primal Qi.

When Duanmu Sheng and Hua Wudao’s powers collided, the chaotic flow of Primal Qi made a huge noise as they spread outward. The sound was peculiar, making it seem like a hybrid sound technique.

Everyone quickly circulated their Primal Qi to defend themselves against these peculiar soundwaves.

Lu Zhou was the only one who remained calm and indifferent. His heart was void and untainted. It seemed like he was not affected by the soundwaves at all as he watched the battle, looking at ease.

Bang!

The peculiar soundwaves disappeared after a few seconds.

With a stab from the Overlord Spear, the six scripts of the Six Compatible Seal suddenly dispersed!

Hua Wudao staggered backward as the circle of light under his feet faded.

Duanmu Sheng was, similarly, affected by the recoil of the collision. He did a backflip in the air and stumbled three steps backward before he finally managed to regain his footing. He looked at Hua Wudao with an incredulous expression on his face. He did not expect Hua Wudao would be able to withstand that hit. Hua Wudao only staggered a few steps backward. Based on this, it seemed like Duanmu Sheng was on the losing end of the battle.

However, Hua Wudao was much more surprised compared to Duanmu Sheng. He did not think anybody was capable of breaking through his defenses. Before he came to the Evil Sky Pavilion, he had tested his technique against more than one Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivator. None of them succeeded

had succeeded in breaching his defenses. He did not expect to be beaten back by Duanmu Sheng. If Duanmu Sheng had been slightly stronger, he would have broken the Six Compatible Seal in one go with that technique. He said sincerely, "Nice moves."

Duanmu Sheng, however, was in no mood to hear praises from his opponent. He raised his Overlord Spear and said, "Three more moves!"

"..."

Duanmu Sheng was the type of person who would fight more valiantly as the battle dragged on.

Hua Wudao placed his hands on his back and said, "I admit that you're powerful, but you've used up three moves. According to our previous agreement, the Pavilion Master should be next."

Everyone turned to look at Lu Zhou at this moment. After all, he was the one who laid out the conditions.

Duanmu Sheng shook his head and said, "I didn't use my full strength. Allow me one more move, and I'm sure I'll break your Six Compatible Seal."

Hua Wudao looked at Duanmu Sheng indifferently and said, "If I hadn't been careless earlier, I don't think you would've been able to push me back. I've only used half of my strength on the Six Compatible Seal."

Everyone was shocked when they heard this. They could not help but wonder if he was bluffing or mocking Duanmu Sheng. In any case, he sounded arrogant.

"Half? The Six Compatible Seal can block Mister Third's ultimate skill, and yet, it's only at half strength!" Pan Zhong was shocked.

"I've never seen such a defensive Daoist seal."

Hua Wudao kept his eyes trained on Lu Zhou. He was waiting for Lu Zhou's reply.

Eventually, Lu Zhou descended the steps slowly. "Is this the Daoist seal you've been painstakingly cultivating for the past 20 years? The Six Compatible Seal?"

"That's right."

"If I attack, you'll most probably die," Lu Zhou said in an even-keeled voice.

Hua Wudao was stunned by Lu Zhou's claims since Lu Zhou had witnessed the might of his Six Compatible Seal. Just how confident was he?

Life was precious. There were not many who would take life and death lightly. After muttering to himself for some time, Hua Wudao cupped his fists and said, "Please show me your guidance, Pavilion Master. In the unfortunate event that I lose my life... Then, so be it."

"Very well." Lu Zhou continued walking toward the most spacious part of the great hall. At the same time, an item card appeared in his hand.

Hua Wudao did not sense any aura fluctuations or movements of Primal Qi from Lu Zhou. However, he did not let his guard down. He moved forward and slowly raised his hand.

The eight trigrams and the six script symbols of heaven, earth, life, death, water, and fire shone with golden radiance. They circled him. They were much more powerful and impressive than before. That was not all. Words appeared on Hua Wudao's palms; they were 'being' and 'non-being'. There were eight shining scripts, in total. When his Primal Qi surged, the Daoist seals orbited around these eight scripts.

Nobody expected Hua Wudao would be able to conceal his strength when he faced Duanmu Sheng earlier. He had transformed the Six Compatible Seal into an Eight Compatible Seal, on top of the eight trigrams. He was not bluffing! Indeed, he had only used half of his powers earlier!

Hua Wudao stared at Lu Zhou with a keen gaze. He made an inviting gesture. "I'm ready!"

The eight scripts hovered in the air, shining with a dazzling brightness.

Everyone's attention shifted to Lu Zhou. They wondered if the old man would be able to break through Hua Wudao's seal. Hua Wudao was not Zuo Xinchuan after all. He was much more powerful than Zuo Xinchuan. Judging by this technique alone, Hua Wudao's Six Compatible Seal was 1,000 times more powerful than Zuo Xinchuan's Dhyana Mudra! Could Lu Zhou break through this skill? Everyone waited with bated breath.

Lu Zhou raised his right hand. The light blue card shattered in his palm. This time, there was no vortex. Instead, there was a symbol of a lightning bolt. He condensed his Qi into energy, and suddenly, a bolt of lightning shrouded with energy struck from the sky!

"Thunderblast?! How's this possible?!" Zhou Jifeng and Pan Zhong stared with their mouths agape.

Duanmu Sheng, Mingshi Yin, and Little Yuan'er were also shocked by this unfamiliar technique. Throughout their years of being Lu Zhou's disciples, they had never seen their master unleashing this skill! Moreover, this skill was Thunderblast!

Boom!

Under everyone's watchful eyes, the bolt of lightning wrapped in energy struck the Six Compatible Seal.

Sparks flew everywhere and clouds of smoke filled the air.

Whoosh!

Hua Wudao was rapidly pushed back from the powerful impact.

Chapter 118: You Will Have to Make A Choice Eventually

The Six Compatible Seal, eight trigrams, eight scripts, they were all helpless. In just an instant, they were dispersed, vanishing without a trace! What was even more terrifying was Hua Wudao's great tortoise technique was completely useless. The Thunderblast hit him square on the chest, and he was sent flying back. His widened eyes were red at this moment as he forcibly planted his feet on the ground to stabilize his footing. He spat out a mouthful of fresh blood just as he steadied himself.

The battle had ended. The outcome was as clear as day.

Lu Zhou shook his head. 'The item card, Thunderblast, has a 10% damage rate. I'm not sure if you're lucky or what. In any case, you're definitely lucky you escaped the 1% sure-kill rate. Being hit and seriously injured is better than dying!'

A blanket of silence fell over the great hall. One would be able to hear the sound of a needle falling on the ground at this moment.

Duanmu Sheng's grip tightened around the Overlord Spear's shaft. He did not feel relieved or relaxed. Instead, he grew sullen despite feeling awed at the same time. The powerful Six Compatible Seal could not even withstand a single blow from his master, and yet, he could not even damage it earlier.

Mingshi Yin's thoughts were simple. He was of the opinion that his master had been concealing his strength throughout the years. Ever since his master had chased off the ten great elites back then, he knew his master had many aces up his sleeves. However, nobody knew the extent of his strength.

Little Yuan'er's expression was one of adulation.

Meanwhile, Zhou Jifeng and Pan Zhong felt as though they were frogs living the well. They gulped as they stared in disbelief at Hua Wudao who had been pushed back. They were not shocked by Hua Wudao's defeat, they were shocked by Lu Zhou's Thunderblast.

Thunderblast was a move unleashed by condensing Qi into a cluster of energy so dense that it could release a force as powerful as a lightning strike. It was an extremely rare and terrifying skill. Thunderblast had been considered a lost skill for a long time and only existed in history books. Nobody had seen the technique before, let alone mastered it.

"T-th... Thunderblast!" Hua Wudao could not endure it anymore. He fell to one knee and had to support his weight with his hands. He spoke with great reluctance, clearly not able to accept his defeat. Who knew he would be defeated by Thunderblast? If he had known Ji Tiandao had mastered such a technique, he would not have come to the Evil Sky Pavilion and humiliate himself. 'The irony!'

"Master!" Hua Wudao's disciples rushed to him, intending to support him.

However, Hua Wudao waved his hand, signaling his disciple not to come. A person like him was not afraid of losing but of losing without dignity.

One would have to pay to gamble.

Lu Zhou shook his head helplessly. 'If you want to call that Thunderblast, then, so be it...'

Since nothing much was known about Thunderblast and no one had seen it before, perhaps, that was why everyone was convinced Lu Zhou had unleashed Thunderblast.

Hua Wudao began to cough as he rose to his feet with great difficulty. He cupped his fists together and shook his head before he said, "I thought I'd be able to withstand three moves from you after painstakingly cultivating this skill for 20 years! Alas, I was mistaken. I was greatly mistaken!" He laughed. It was a kind of self-mocking laugh.

'My shield was shattered with just a strike. To think I thought I would be able to withstand three strikes!' Hua Wudao chuckled bitterly before he spat out another mouthful of blood.

"Master!"

"I'm alright..." However, Hua Wudao was clearly not alright. His expressions clearly told the others that the knot in his heart had only grown more complicated. After a while, he cupped his fists together and said, "I accept defeat."

Lu Zhou nodded. He climbed the stairs again and sat down slowly.

Hua Wudao continued to say, "So long as it doesn't involve Yun Sect, I'll agree to any request."

"I see that you're a frank person," Lu Zhou said, "I have a question for you, and all you have to do is answer honestly."

"I'm all ears."

"Who's the mastermind behind the Fish Dragon Village incident?" Lu Zhou asked directly without beating around the bush.

When Huawudao heard the question, his heart skipped a beat and his eyes widened. "Uh..." He stammered, seemingly reluctant to reply.

"What? You're unwilling to answer my question?"

Hua Wudao looked troubled. He said, "It's not that I'm unwilling. It's just that the answer will implicate numerous parties."

"What's wrong with you? Since you've lost, you should just obediently pay up!" Little Yuan'er said indignantly as she pointed at Hua Wudao.

"Hua Wudao, you're a Yun Sect elder. Even if your words aren't the golden rule, every single one of them should be worth nine sacred tripods, right? You're trying to go back on your own words, and yet, you claim to be a member of the Noble Path!" Mingshi Yin said contemptuously.

Zhou Jifeng took the gentler approach. He cupped his fists and said, "Senior Hua, I have a proposal... I can tell the answer to this question is very important to you. In that case, you only need to give the answer to the pavilion master alone."

"He's right. Or are you trying to tell me that the world will be plunged into chaos if the pavilion master learns about this? You know about this so why isn't the world in chaos right now?" Little Yuan'er said heatedly.

"Uh..." Hua Wudao felt as though he was caught between a rock and a hard place.

"Stop being a f*cking coward, and say what you must! If you're not willing to say it, you can leave your life right here!" Duanmu Sheng raised his Overlord Spear and a cold aura instantly surged out of his body. His dissatisfaction over his defeat earlier made him sullen and fueled his anger.

Everyone in the great hall seemed to be looking down on Hua Wudao at this moment.

Hua Wudao took a step back and sincerely said, "I made a promise to keep this a secret and not breathe a word about this to anyone. If it's possible, I implore you to make another request, Pavilion Master."

Everyone else exchanged a look.

Mingshi Yin spat. "Bullsh*t! You can't even honor your agreement with my master, and you have the audacity to ask for this?"

"..." Mingshi Yin made a valid point. If he could disregard a promise he made with the greatest villain under the heavens, he had no right to use this as an excuse. His expression turned unsightly.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "It doesn't matter."

The others were taken aback. They looked at Lu Zhou with surprised expressions.

"I'll give you two choices. First, you can tell me who the mastermind behind the Fish Dragon Village is. Second, join the Evil Sky Pavilion as an elder." Lu Zhou said as he thought to himself at the same time, 'He's able to withstand Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin's attacks. His level of mastery of the Six Compatible Seal is clearly high. Although it's a tortoise technique, if it's used well, it can be used as an offense and defense.'

From the beginning until the end, Hua Wudao did not use his Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar. He wanted to conserve some of his strength to face Lu Zhou's second and third strikes. However, he had lost after the first strike and got himself injured. More importantly, this man did not seem to distinguish between the Noble and Fiend Paths in his heart.

When he heard these two choices, Hua Wudao's eyes widened. His body trembled. He was from the Yun Sect. If he joined the Fiend Path, he did not care if it would ruin his reputation, but he was worried it would turn the Yun Sect into a laughingstock. On the other hand, he could not bring himself to divulge the secret. He was truly tormented by this dilemma.

"This is the greatest compromise I can make," Lu Zhuo said calmly.

"..." Hua Wudao's expression soured.

"You've already left the Yun Sect. What's there to be apprehensive about?" Mingshi Yin asked.

"I..." Hua Wudao stammered. He was in a tight bind. This was worse than taking his life.

Lu Zhou was in no hurry. He waited silently for Hua Wudao to make a decision. Regardless of the choice Hua Wudao made, it would be beneficial to the Evil Sky Pavilion anyway.

Chapter 119: The Most Powerful Elder! Huawu? Wuhua?

Although Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin disdained this tortoise technique, they would not dispute their master's words. Moreover, the Evil Sky Pavilion was waning. With the injection of new blood, it might be restored to its former glory.

Mingshi Yin turned and looked at his master furtively. 'He doesn't look like his life is nearing its limit at all. In fact, he looks livelier day by day and is filled with vitality.'

Hua Wudao pondered about this but still could not make up his mind.

Lu Zhou said in a deep voice, "You have two choices, and you can only pick one. You're the first person under the heavens to be given such a treatment by the Evil Sky Pavilion. My patience is limited. I want an answer after a count of ten."

"And if I don't have an answer?" Hua Wudao's heart raced.

Before Lu Zhou could reply, Mingshi Yin said, "Then you'll suffer the same fate as Fan Xiuwen. You'll be imprisoned in the Evil Sky Pavilion until you've thought things through. However, since you've seen through life and death, I'm sure this won't matter to you."

"..."

"Also, the Evil Sky Pavilion doesn't have much, but we have a lot of rooms for lodging. We have the north, south, east, and west pavilions. We have many dilapidated residences halfway up the mountain. We have the Cave of Reflection behind the mountain as well, it's cold there. Also, don't think you'll be able to escape. Even if the ten great elites show up together, they won't be able to break the Golden Court Mountain's barrier!" Mingshi Yin prattled on with a smile on his face.

His words made Zhou Jifeng and Pan Zhong's hearts race.

'Mister Fourth's words are truly devastating. This is even more terrifying than killing a person!'

Hua Wudao was a distinguished and accomplished person, and he would never cling abjectly to life. Otherwise, he would not have shown up here. However, someone like him would care about his pride and dignity.

"At that time, I'll make sure every cultivator under the heavens knows that Yun Sect's Hua Wudao is an untrustworthy person. He came to the Evil Sky Pavilion and lost a wager but would not pay up!"

"..." Hua Wudao felt even more speechless. There were many who knew about his visit to the Evil Sky Pavilion. Otherwise, he would not have had to resign from his position as Yun Sect's elder. Everything started and ended with this knot in his heart. He would not have any regrets.

Little Yuan'er giggled and said, "I'll start counting, then." She was worried that Hua Wudao did not hear her so she repeated, "I'll start counting... Ten. Nine. Eight. Seven. Six. Five. Four. Three. Two. One. Time's up! What's your decision?"

"..."

'Who counts this fast?'

Before Hua Wudao even had time to think, the countdown had ended.

Everyone's eyes in the Evil Sky Pavilion's great hall, including Lu Zhou, were trained on Hua Wudao.

Silence descended on the great hall again.

Finally, Hua Wudao shook his head and heaved a long sigh. "Forget it!"

Upon seeing this, Hua Wudao's disciples fell to his knees immediately. "Master, you shouldn't..."

Hua Wudao looked at his disciples, but he did not chide him like before. Instead, he said, "You should return to Yun Sect."

"Huh?"

"From this day onward, you're no longer my disciple. There are many elders in the Yun Sect. I'm sure one of them will be willing to teach you. When you return, tell them that Hua Wudao is dead."

"Master!"

"Get lost!"

The middle-aged man wanted to say something, but Hua Wudao raised his leg and kicked him. He reprimanded him, "I said, get lost!" His shout created a soundwave that pushed the middle-aged man away.

Helpless, the middle-aged man could only get to his feet and respectfully salute Hua Wudao.

Mingshi Yin said with a smile, "I'll see you down the mountain... However, if you want to stay, I'm sure my master won't object to it. After all, the Golden Court Mountain is huge. We don't mind having another person here."

The middle-aged man shuddered. "I want to leave the mountain. I want to leave now."

Mingshi Yin clicked his tongue at the middle-aged man and motioned him over before leaving the great hall.

The two of them left the great hall.

Hua Wudao cupped his fists. "My disciple is slightly foolish, I hope you won't hold it against him, Pavilion Master, and spare his life."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he sat down and said, "We choose to walk on different paths. Please sit."

Lu Zhou said 'Please'! This had never happened in the Evil Sky Pavilion. It could be seen that he valued Hua Wudao.

Hua Wudao took a seat.

Lu Zhou regarded him with a curious look before he said calmly, "You rather join the Evil Sky Pavilion than tell me who the mastermind behind the Fish Dragon Village incident is..."

"Please forgive me, Pavilion Master."

"Aren't you afraid that I'll use torture to interrogate you in the future?" Lu Zhou asked calmly.

This was the Evil Sky Pavilion, after all. They were all great villains. No matter how evil an act was, it would not be surprising to see it here.

Hua Wudao shook his head and sighed. "If it comes to that, I can only ask for death."

"You're different from Fan Xiuwen. He was controlled and doesn't fear death. You're much luckier than him," Lu Zhou said.

Hua Wudao remained silent.

At this point, Hua Wudao's choice was clear.

"Ding! Recruited a subordinate. Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivator, Hua Wudao. Loyalty: 5%"

Zhou Jifeng and Pan Zhong were courteous. They cupped their fists toward Hua Wudao and said, "Greetings, Elder Hua."

Hua Wudao's old face flushed red. He did not know if he should respond to the greeting or not. He felt awkward.

At this moment, Mingshi Yin had returned from the foot of the mountain. When he saw the extremely awkward Hua Wudao, he said, "You're just worried about the ridicule from the world. That's an easy problem to solve. You should change your name. The old Hua Wudao has died in the Evil Sky Pavilion."

"..."

The others nodded.

Mingshi Yin had a point.

"How about the name Huawu or Wuhua?" Mingshi Yin said teasingly.

"..."

Hua Wudao's name slightly conflicted with Ji Tiandao's name, after all.

"It's but a name. I won't mind being called anything..." Hua Wudao's mind was a mess right now. All he wanted now was to be left alone in a corner. He was not in the mood to fret upon such matters at the moment.

Little Yuan'er walked over and said, "Master, a letter from Jiang Aijian."

"Bring it here." Lu Zhou had a feeling that this letter contained important messages that should not be read out loud.

Little Yuan'er passed him the letter respectfully.

Lu Zhou opened it casually. He read the letter.

"The mastermind behind the Fish Dragon Village incident is the Second Prince. The main culprit of the battle at Measure Heaven River is General Wei Zhuoyan of Changning. His accomplice is the leader of the Black Knights, Fan Xiuwen. Old senior, I've paid a huge price to obtain this piece of information... To be honest, if you don't compensate me with a nice sword, I'll be very sad."

With this information, everything was clear now. However, nary a ripple could be seen on Lu Zhou's face. In truth, he had his guesses about the matters which Fan Xiuwen and Hua Wudao would not talk about. Jiang Aijian's letter merely confirmed his suspicions. He waved his hand. The letter was reduced to dust immediately.

"Master, what did it say?" Little Yuan'er inquired.

“The mastermind behind the battle at Measure Heaven River...” Lu Zhou answered honestly.

When he heard this, Hua Wudao fell from his seat. His face was ghastly pale, and his eyes were wide open.

Lu Zhou said indifferently, “Bring Elder Hua away, and let him rest.”

“Understood.”

Little Yuan'er was puzzled. “It's only the mastermind, why are you so nervous? Aren't you being too dramatic?”

Lu Zhou nodded. If it had been a mortal or a great cultivator, things would have been simple. He could just deal with it according to the cultivation world's rules. However, he did not expect that a prince was involved in this. The prince's disputes should not have involved the civilians.

Lu Zhou would not underestimate the Imperial Family's power. After all, the Imperial Family was what kept Great Yan stable all these years. The soldiers and officers who guarded the corners of the empire and the great cultivators who operated in the open and in the dark formed the foundation of Great Yan's stability. It was no wonder Hua Wudao was reluctant to divulge that information.

Lu Zhou finally said, “Tell Jiang Aijian that I've prepared a nice sword for him. He's to come here and collect it.”

Chapter 120: He Who Follows His Heart Is Not Ordinary

When the nice sword was mentioned, Little Yuan'er felt wronged. She mumbled, “Master, you're giving him a good weapon just because he gave you two pieces of worthless information, and I, your disciple, have nothing.”

“Impudent!” Lu Zhou deliberately raised his voice. This was not the first time he had said this.

“This disciple knows that she's wrong.” Little Yuan'er immediately lowered her head.

“That weapon belongs to the Imperial Family in the first place. There's no use for me in keeping it,” Lu Zhou said.

“Oh.” Little Yuan'er nodded.

Lu Zhou stood up slowly and headed to the hidden chamber.

“Rest well, master.”

After Lu Zhou disappeared from sight, Mingshi Yin said, “Little Junior Sister, why are you so anxious about this? You know master loves you the most. Even I was given a weapon, so there's no way that he'll forget about you. My Separation Hook and Scabbard is a fine weapon so I'm sure that he'll give you a nice weapon as well.”

“Old Fourth has a point. Moreover, with your talent, entering the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm is only a matter of time. When that time comes, master will surely give you a weapon that's even better than my Overlord Spear!”

“Hmph! Goodbye!” Little Yuan’er turned around and left in a huff.

Mingshi Yin and Duanmu Sheng exchanged glances.

Pan Zhong cupped his fists and said, “I think Miss Ninth is angered by the sight of the Separation Hook and Scabbard and the Overlord Spear... Uh, Mister Third, Mister Fourth, I suddenly remember that my Six Yang Technique isn’t initiated yet. I’ll be taking my leave now. When he sensed the unusual looks Mingshi Yin and Duanmu Sheng were giving him, he simply came up with an excuse and left the great hall in a hurry.

Zhou Jifeng who had brought Hua Wudao to his lodge to rest was saved from this situation.

“Old Fourth, let’s go.”

“...”

...

Lu Zhou went into the hidden chamber and looked at the mysterious box. Then, he shook his head. ‘This thing can even withstand a blow from Unnamed. Clearly, heaven-grade weapons are useless against it. I think this box can only be opened with a special key.’ He nodded calmly, ‘Old Fourth has many ideas. Maybe I should leave this box to him.’

Since Lu Zhou had purchased this box from the system’s shop, he was not worried about others coveting it. After a while, his attention drifted to his remaining merit points on the system dashboard.

,762 points.

Lu Zhou had obtained the Five Energies Universe avatar through the lucky draw. The Six Recombinant Trigram Lines was sold at 12,000. He could not afford it now. If he earned merit points through conventional means, he did not think he would be able to afford it anytime soon.

Several ideas appeared in Lu Zhou’s mind and he nodded in satisfaction. Then, he called up the Heavenly Writing’s interface and began to comprehend it.

Six hours later.

Lu Zhou finally stopped comprehending the Heavenly Writing. Compared to his previous sessions, currently, it felt as though he had entered a state of immersive emptiness. The unfamiliar scripts were now embedded in his mind. With a simple thought, the scripts would appear.

‘It’s alright for me to not understand them so long as the feeling’s right.’

At this moment, Little Yuan’er’s voice rang from outside the hidden chamber. “Master, there’s a reply from Jiang Aijian.”

“What did he say?”

“He said he won’t be coming. He said the Evil Sky Pavilion is too dangerous of a place to visit, and it would be great if the nice sword could be delivered to him,” Little Yuan’er replied.

Lu Zhou nodded calmly. He had expected this.

Little Yuan'er grumbled, "He doesn't know how to appreciate favors. Should I go to Runan and drag him here?"

"There's no need for that." Lu Zhou walked out of the hidden chamber with his hands on his back. "He loves his life very much. It's only natural that he doesn't want to come here."

"He thinks too highly of himself." Little Yuan'er scoffed.

"Jiang Aijian isn't an ordinary person."

When Little Yuan'er heard this, a curious expression appeared on her face as she asked, "Not an ordinary person?"

"Since he's capable of accessing the palace archives, he can't be an ordinary person," Lu Zhou said in an even-keeled tone.

"Who is he then?"

"One who follows his heart is not an ordinary person." Lu Zhou smiled faintly. With a wave of sleeves, he left the great and made his way to the north pavilion where the prisoners were held.

Little Yuan'er, naturally, followed her master when she saw him leaving.

In no time at all, Lu Zhou arrived outside the room where Fan Xiuwen was being imprisoned.

Two female cultivators were guarding the door. Although their cultivation bases were nothing to boast of, they managed to look intimidating.

"Pavilion Master." The two female cultivators bowed.

"Open the door."

"Understood."

The door opened. Lu Zhou walked into the gloomy room. There were miscellaneous objects strewn everywhere he looked. This room had been the Evil Sky Pavilion's storeroom before this. It had been hastily converted into a lockup, and it suited the purpose quite well.

Fan Xiuwen was bound in the center of the room. His hair was disheveled, he no longer looked like the majestic leader of the Black Knights. When the door was opened, the faint light from outside shone on his face so he could only see Lu Zhou's silhouette. He chuckled weakly and struggled to get words out of his mouth. "I-is this.. all there is to the Evil Sky Pavilion? I'm afraid it's not enough to make... me talk."

Lu Zhou stood with his hands on his back as he nodded. "I know the truth."

Fan Xiuwen was visibly shocked. All his listlessness seemed to have disappeared at this moment. His eyes widened as he exclaimed, "Impossible!"

"Great General of Changning," Lu Zhou said. He did not mention the Second Prince.

Fan Xiuwen shuddered when he heard these words. These words proved that this mighty old man had discovered the truth. After a moment of silence, he said calmly, "I'm impressed."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Wei Zhuoyan isn't enough to make you bow. Apart from that, there's no way the Second Prince is capable of receiving your unwavering loyalty. There must be someone else who's strong enough to manipulate the grand leader of the Black Knights."

"You..." Fan Xiuwen who had calmed down began to shake again. He was so agitated that his face and ears were red. His voice was subdued as he asked, "How did you manage this?" Even as the leader of the Black Knights, he had no choice but to lower his pride.

"Do I need to tell my prisoner how I managed to accomplish such a feat?"

"..."

Lu Zhou placed his hands on his back as he stared at Fan Xiuwen. "I'd like to know whose orders you are following."

"I don't know," Fan Xiuwen replied.

"Do you think I won't be able to find out just because you refuse to tell me?" Lu Zhou stroked his beard calmly and continued, "Regardless of who it is, they must be a trusted aid of the Second Prince."

Fan Xiuwen's eyes widened.

Lu Zhou continued slowly, "It's a woman, isn't it?"

"..."

"A woman who's skilled in witchcraft," Lu Zhou added.

"Enough!" Fan Xiuwen's mental defenses crumbled completely. A furious and stubborn expression flitted across his face for a moment. However, in the next moment, it seemed as though he had wilted as he pleaded, "Please spare her, I beg you..."

Lu Zhou regarded Fan Xiuwen with a complicated expression on his face. Who would have thought that the former number one person on the blacklist, the current watchdog of the Imperial Family, who did not fear death nor torture was doing this all for the sake of a woman?

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Fan Xiuwen... Tell me, who is she?"

Fan Xiuwen shook his head desperately. He had a fierce and determined expression on his face. "I can't tell you, I won't tell you... I won't say anything even if I have to die."

Lu Zhou found this strange. In truth, the target's identity was clear now. It would not make much of a difference even if Fan Xiuwen revealed her name. Why was Fan Xiuwen doggedly protecting this secret with his life? It did not escape his notice that Fan Xiuwen's eyes suddenly shone with faint blue light for a moment before it quickly returned to normal.

Suddenly, the voice of the Derived Moon Palace's female cultivators could be heard from outside. Pavilion Master, something's happening to Miss Fifth!"