

Disciples 1181

Chapter 1181: Traces of Venerable Master Lu

Lu Zhou raised his hand in front of him; a Reversal Card appeared in his hand.

Through cultivation, cultivators could break the limit of their lifespans, increasing the years of their lives. Although there were all kinds of ways to make them return to their old age, it was not the essence of reversal. It was more like borrowing time. It was just like today going back to yesterday. In a certain sense, it was like traveling back in time.

“Could the so-called Dao be the power to control time?” After pondering on it for a while, Lu Zhou shook his head. It was too exaggerated and unlikely.

He no longer dwelled on the matter and manifested his blue avatar instead.

“Ding! Eight Methods Connected avatar. 3,500 years are required to advance to the next stage.”

Lu Zhou had more than 8,000 years of life so he could advance to the next stage now without any worries.

“In the past, meditating on the Heavenly Writing was the only way for me to increase my strength. All I need now is to solve the problem of my lifespan, and I’ll be able to evolve my blue avatar. However, I should still continue to meditate on the Heavenly Writing after entering a certain realm...”

“Advance.”

With that, Lu Zhou saw the years from his life decreasing swiftly on the system interface.

...

At the same time, vitality energy began to gather and surge above the Evil Sky Pavilion.

The disciples and members of the Evil Sky Pavilion only took a glance before they continued on with their businesses.

...

The vitality continued to gather and surge until the next morning.

Lu Zhou could feel the limit of his supreme mystic power had increased slightly. Although it was not much of an increase, it was still an improvement. Moreover, the current blue avatar was still relatively weak.

“Ding! Nine Transformation Yin Yang avatar. 5,000 years are needed to advance to the next stage.”

“...”

He had 5,200 years left. Even with the Reversal Cards, he still did not have too many years. It was better to wait before advancing to the next stage.

After Lu Zhou put his blue avatar away, he looked at the system interface. It was time for lucky draws!

“Draw!”

“Ding! Used 50 merit points. Thank you for your participation. Luck point +1.”

After drawing 100 times and being thanked for his participation 100 times, Lu Zhou was very annoyed. The probability of getting a reward from the draw was getting lower and lower. In the past, he could still obtain a reward after drawing an entire day.

“Draw.”

“Ding! Used 50 merit points. Used 210 luck points. Obtained: Concealment Card x5.”

“Ding! Concealment Card: Can hide the aura and color of the blue avatar. Reminder: each use only lasts for five days.”

“???”

Even without the Concealment Card, Lu Zhou had other ways to hide his aura. There was no need to worry about the color of his avatar or energy as well. Moreover, he still could not use his blue avatar since it was too weak, and he could hide the supreme mystic power in his golden energy. Well, in any case, something was better than nothing. However, he still felt slightly distressed about the luck points that were wasted.

“Draw!”

“Ding! Used 50 merit points. Obtained: Reversal Card x5.”

Following that, Lu Zhou was thanked for his participation continuously.

After he was done, he used the power of sight to observe Duanmu Sheng and was relieved when he discovered Duanmu Sheng and Lu Wu had returned to the Moonlight Woodland.

After he cut off the power of sight, he suddenly recalled the first Open Heavenly Writing Scroll he obtained at the bottom of the cliff in the Moonlight Woodland. Where was the second Open Heavenly Writing Scroll then?

...

When it was close to noon, Lu Zhou led Ye Tianxin, Zhu Honggong, Little Yuan’er, and Conch back to the capital in the red lotus domain through the runic passage.

After that, Lu Zhou did not continue to draw the lottery. He used the power of supreme mystery to observe Duanmu Sheng, and the effects of the divine ability of the tomes of arcane returned to normal. Duanmu Sheng and Lu Wu had already returned to the Moonlight Forest, so they were relieved.

Ye Tianxin left to see Si Wuya since she wanted to discuss bringing Cheng Huang over.

Little Yuan’er and Conch were inseparable and left together to play soon after.

In the end, only Zhu Honggong was left following Lu Zhou.

“Why are you following me?” Lu Zhou asked, puzzled.

Zhu Honggong averted his eyes and chuckled. “I-it’s n-nothing... I was just thinking that you must be very busy so I want to help... That’s right! I... Master must be lacking a helper!”

"No. You may leave." Lu Zhou flicked his sleeve and entered the Preservation Hall.

"..."

Zhu Honggong wore an aggrieved expression on his face when he turned over and saw Meng Changdong walking over.

Before Zhu Honggong could speak, Meng Changdong hurriedly said, "Mr. Eighth, there's something I need to tell you..."

Zhu Honggong was ecstatic when he heard these words. "What is it? Hurry up and tell me! I have nothing better to do anyway!"

"Mr. Second and Mr. Fourth have been waiting for you in the training arena over the past few days. They've told me to inform you of this if I see you," Meng Changdong said.

Zhu Honggong: ㄋ(͡ _ ͡)ㄎ

"Mr. Eighth, what's wrong?"

"Ridiculous..." Zhu Honggong's shoulders dropped, his back was bent, and his eyes were lifeless as he walked toward the training arena listlessly. There was no way for him to avoid the calamity.

Following that, Meng Changdong immediately entered the Preservation Hall to report to Lu Zhou about the affairs in the capital while Lu Zhou was gone.

Lu Zhou felt his head ache when he listened to the report. Since the matters were not too important, he interjected, "In the future, let Si Wuya and Li Yunzheng deal with these matters. There's no need to report to me."

"Understood."

"Is there news from Xiao Yunhe?" Lu Zhou asked.

Meng Changdong bowed and replied, "Yes. Tower Master Xia has been focused on preparing for his fight with Xia Zhengrong. There should be news of the result of the battle in a few days. I'll report immediately once I receive news."

Lu Zhou nodded before he said, "Summon Lu Qianshan here."

"Understood."

...

After the Black Emperor dropped all pretenses, Liu Qianshan had brought his family with him and fled to Great Tang. Even after the Black Emperor's death, he did not return since the situation in Great Yuan was very unstable. Regardless of whoever became the next emperor of Great Yuan, it would not be good news for Lu Qianshan. The best and smartest move was to cling onto the Evil Sky Pavilion!

When Lu Qianshan heard Lu Zhou had summoned him, he did not waste time and rushed to the Preservation Hall immediately.

"Greetings, Senior Lu."

“Sit.” Lu Zhou casually pointed to the spot across from him.

“I... I better stand...” Lu Qianshan had always felt rather flustered and awkward when he saw his ‘ancestor’.

Lu Zhou said without beating around the bush, “I summoned you here to talk about Lu Tiantong.”

“My ancestor?” Lu Qianshan was confused.

“Lu Tiantong was born 30,000 years ago. He was a Venerable Master, which means he passed three Birth Trials. He managed to dominate the land with his shocking strength. Under his lead, the land was peaceful. Did he leave anything behind?” Lu Zhou asked.

Lu Qianshan said sheepishly, “I’m ashamed to say our ancestor followed Venerable Lu without any questions. After Venerable Master Lu left, we changed our surname to Lu and built the ancestral hall to worship Venerable Master Lu. I’m afraid he didn’t leave anything behind...”

“Notes, cultivation methods, weapons, nothing?” Lu Zhou asked.

Lu Qianshan shook his head helplessly. If Lu Tiantong had left something behind, the Lu clan would not have been cornered by the royal court previously.

Lu Zhou paced back and forth with his hands on his back. It seemed strange and unlikely that Lu Tiantong did not leave anything behind at all.

“It’s been a long time. Those who once followed Venerable Master Lu have long passed away. The only thing the Lu clan has is the portrait of Venerable Master Lu that was painted by one of our predecessors,” Lu Qianshan said, “However... Although Venerable Master Lu didn’t leave anything for the Lu clan, there’s a formation in Cold Breeze Valley that’s rumored to be left behind by Venerable Master Lu...”

Lu Qianshan’s ‘however...’ made Lu Zhou feel like beating him up. Nevertheless, his expression did not change as he asked, “A formation that Lu Tiantong left behind?”

“Senior Lu, don’t get your hopes up. Countless cultivators have visited this formation since a long time ago. It’s not a secret. Moreover, there’s no one guarding the place. Instead, it has become a place for cultivators to visit and test themselves...” Lu Qianshan said.

“Why would he leave a formation behind for no reason?” Lu Zhou furrowed his brows.

“This...” Lu Qianshan struggled to explain. In the end, he only said, “Pavilion Master Lu, why don’t you go and have a look?”

Chapter 1182: The Strange Formation

Indeed, it was better to go and have a look than to blindly speculate. Since the formation had something to do with Lu Tiantong, Lu Zhou could not just leave it alone. Perhaps, he could find some clues regarding the heaven and earth shackles there.

“Alright, come with me.”

“Understood.”

Following that, Lu Zhou and Lu Qianshan traveled went to the Hall of Runes and traveled to the black lotus domain through a runic passage.

...

Meanwhile, in the green lotus domain.

At the Clear Sky Mountain.

At the foot of the mountain, many disciples dressed in long robes could be seen raising their heads to look at the sky.

Two figures could be vaguely seen in the clouds.

The disciples could only see the two vague figures but could not hear any sound.

In the clouds.

"Brother Ye, I heard you went to the Unknown Land?" Venerable Master Qin calmly asked.

Ye Zheng looked at the clouds in the distance as he said, "As a dignified Venerable Master, you sure have a lot of spies everywhere. Aren't you afraid of being laughed at?"

"I don't feel it's a despicable thing nor do I think it's beneath me to do such a thing," Venerable Master Qin replied.

Ye Zheng said expressionlessly, "Let's talk about the Dao. There's no need to talk about other things."

"Just talking about the Dao is a bit boring. I heard that the forty members of the monster hunting squad were killed by that beast, Lu Wu?" Venerable Master Qin asked.

Venerable Masters were humans as well, and they were inclined to gossip as well. Perhaps, only in front of their disciples, they seemed high and mighty.

Ye Zheng said, "Their deaths have nothing to do with me. The monster hunting squad risked their lives all year round, it's not surprising they finally died."

Venerable Master Qin grew even more curious. "Is there a need for Brother Ye to personally make a move for a mere beast emperor?"

Neither one of them could clearly see each other due to being hidden by the thick clouds; they could only hear each other.

Even Venerable Masters could not shed the vulgar human habits. They could have the discussion in the pavilion, but to seem more otherworldly, they had to hover high in the sky to have a discussion. It was in fact a very meaningless act.

"When did the 40,000-year-old Lu Wu become so insignificant?"

"Is that why it escaped from you?"

"You really like meddling in other people's affairs," Ye Zheng said, annoyed.

Instead of being angry, Venerable Master Qin chuckled. "Then, shall we spar first?"

As soon as these words fell, swords, sabers, and all kinds of weapons in the hands of the disciples on the left flew up to the sky.

Not to be outdone, the weapons in the hands of the disciples on the right flew up as well.

They clashed noisily back and forth in the sky. There were so many of them that it was difficult to tell who had the upper hand. After a few dozen rounds, the weapons that filled the sky returned to the hands of the disciples following their original trajectory.

"100 years have passed, but you haven't improved at all," Venerable Master Qin said with a smile.

"I can say the same about you."

"So you want Lu Wu's life hearts?" Venerable Master Qin asked.

"It's unfortunate that beast is fast." Ye Zheng did not deny it.

Zhenren Qin said, "Aren't you afraid of being punished by the heavens?"

Ye Zheng knew the meaning behind Venerable Master Qin's words. However, he only said, "There's no need for you to worry about me."

"I have a suggestion," Venerable Master Qin said, unfazed.

"Just talk about the Dao. There's no need to talk about anything else."

"Then let's exchange a few more moves."

This time, an astrolabe appeared in the clouds on both sides.

Beams of light shot back and forth, and after a full fifteen minutes, the beams of light disappeared.

The disciples below were dazzled and sighed in awe.

Venerable Master Qin bluntly said, "I know you have clues about the Great Void Seeds..."

Ye Zheng frowned and said, "Old Fox... Don't think I don't know your Qin clan left so many runic passages on the other side to wait for the appearance of the Great Void Seeds."

"Do you really think that I'm as despicable as you? I'm strict on myself and abide by the Balance. I won't go over to the other side for no reason."

Ye Zheng scoffed. "If you don't want others to know of your dirty deeds, it's better not to do them at all. Do you think others are unaware that Qin Moshang's Birth Chart was destroyed by someone?"

"That kid is just mischievous. I've already punished him. Since it's a junior of the Qin clan that made a mistake, don't tell me you, as an outsider, intend to discipline him?"

Fortunately, the two Venerable Masters were communicating through Voice Transmissions. Otherwise, if the disciples below could hear their conversations, their lofty image would be ruined. They did not sound like Venerable Masters at all; they sounded more like two shrews arguing.

Ye Zheng continued to say, "You're not the only one waiting for the Great Void Seeds. The Sacred Hall is waiting as well..."

The Great Void Seeds were lost 300 years ago. Since they could not be found, the others could only wait for them to appear. Everyone was waiting for them. After all, cultivators who possessed the Great Void Seeds were destined to be extraordinary.

"I'm afraid that some people are getting impatient. The fruits have yet to ripen, but they already can't wait to enter the orchard to harvest the fruits..." Venerable Master Qin said.

"Cut the crap. Let's get serious."

As soon as these words fell, two enormous avatars of unknown height appeared in the sky, towering over the land.

...

In the black lotus domain's Cold Breeze Valley.

When Lu Zhou and Lu Qianshan, who had flown here, arrived at the entrance of the valley, they saw many people flying back and forth. It looked rather lively.

"The formation is strange but harmless. Legend has it that Venerable Master Lu left the formation here when he was resting," Lu Qianshan said, "It's called the Nine Twist and Turn Formation. Once you step into the formation, the path will twist and turn, causing you to lose your way. Only cultivators at or above the Thousand Realms Whirling stage can reach the center of the formation."

"Cultivators at or above the Thousand Realms Whirling stage can reach the center of the formation?" Lu Zhou was puzzled. Since the difficulty was so low, it must not be some kind of heaven-shaking formation. He had thought he would need to make a move and shock the world again. After thinking about it briefly, he thought this was a good thing. After all, he did not like to show off and preferred keeping a low profile.

Lu Qianshan replied, "That's right. That's why I said there's nothing special about this formation. All the major sects have long studied it."

'Isn't this very boring then? Such a formation poses no challenge to me at all...'

The slopes of the valley were filled with dark green grass. Dark green grass stretched as far as the eyes could see.

At this time, many cultivators were climbing up and down the slope. Some of the weaker ones did climb too high up before they were swept down by an invisible force.

Someone shouted angrily, "Again! Let's try again!"

Lu Qianshan pointed at the cultivators and said, "These are all disciples from major sects who came here to train..."

Lu Zhou nodded. After a moment, he asked, "What's that?"

At the end of the valley stood a stone pillar that was 30 meters tall. It looked like a thicker and stronger electric pole in the modern world.

"The finish line," Lu Qianshan said, "Those who are able to reach the finish line will be able to enter the Thousand Realms Whirling stage."

"Is that so?"

"That's what they say. I don't know if it's true. In front of Senior Lu, this formation is just child's play; it's not worth mentioning at all," Lu Qianshan said.

Lu Zhou sighed inwardly. Even if Lu Tiantong really left behind this broken formation, he was unlikely to find any clues in the formation.

"Senior Lu, why don't you give it a try?" Lu Qianshan stretched out his hand and made a gesture of invitation.

"Such a simple formation is boring. There's no need for me to try." Lu Zhou shook his head. It was akin to giving a math genius questions of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. It was boring and meaningless.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

At this moment, many young cultivators who were halfway through their journey were suddenly knocked back and fell to the ground.

"Hey, what's going on?"

"Again!"

Several more cultivators rushed in again.

Just like before, halfway through their journey, a gust of wind swept out like the waves from the sea and sent those few people flying back again.

Chapter 1183: Why Is He Fine?

Lu Zhou had long lost interest after looking at the Nine Twist and Turn Formation. He could see the end of it with just a glance; it was not challenging at all. He guessed it was just a small ordinary formation that Lu Tiantong left behind. However, just as he was about to leave, he felt something was amiss when he saw the young cultivators being sent flying.

Just a moment ago, the cultivators were still very relaxed. However, the fluctuation of the formation was slightly abnormal just for a brief second, which was unlike an ordinary formation.

Lu Zhou was quite familiar with formations. Based on his experience and intuition, he decided to take a look.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The force of the formation increased. Many cultivators were flung out before they were even halfway in. The invisible force had undoubtedly grown stronger. Even some of the cultivators who made it to the finish line earlier were sent flying out before they were even halfway in.

A young cultivator got up from the ground and said, "Huh? This is really strange. It isn't usually like that..."

"You're right. It's really strange; it seems to have become stronger..."

The young cultivators grew wary.

"What's your cultivation bases?"

"I have nine leaves."

"I have eight leaves."

"Six leaves."

"Ten leaves."

The strange part of this formation is that it did not judge one's current cultivation base, but it judged one's innate talent and cultivation aptitude. Over the years, after the major sects had studied the formation for a long time, they gradually discovered a bit of clue. The formation seemed to be selecting those who were capable of becoming Thousand Realms Whirling cultivators. Due to the formation's strangeness, this place had become a place for people to test themselves. There was no lack of cultivators who had suffered repeated defeats.

"I'm at the Thousand Realms Whirling stage," a middle-aged man said with a frown as he looked at the heart of the Nine Twist and Turn Formation with a puzzled expression on his face.

"Greetings, senior."

Several young men hurriedly bowed to the middle-aged man.

"Were you ejected from the formation as well?"

The middle-aged man nodded and said, "The difficulty of the formation should have increased... I'll try again."

Everyone made way for the middle-aged man.

The middle-aged man leaped and flew toward the center of the formation.

Halfway through the flight, the middle-aged man felt a huge force pressing against him, and he quickly brought his astrolabe out to block the force.

"Senior, hold on!" someone shouted.

The middle-aged held the astrolabe and continued to move forward. The astrolabe buzzed as he pushed it forward for hundreds of meters. His speed was getting faster as well; he was fast approaching the finish line.

"It seems like he'll succeed!"

Everyone was overjoyed.

The middle-aged man's speed grew faster and faster as he used his astrolabe to block the invisible force. When he arrived at the finish line in front of the stone pillar, he landed and stomped his feet on the ground to stabilize his body.

"It's a success!"

"Senior, you're amazing!"

The young cultivators looked at the middle-aged man in admiration.

The middle-aged man said, "It seems like the difficulty has increased slightly. There's just a little more force halfway in, but everything remains the same..."

The young cultivators nodded.

Lu Zhou continued to look at the formation. He found the sudden change a little strange so he said, "Lu Qianshan, this is your ancestor's formation. Aren't you going to give it a try?"

Lu Qianshan nodded. "Alright. It is just as Senior Lu had said, this formation is too simple and boring. However, since it's left by my ancestor, I'm willing to give it a try..."

When Lu Qianshan approached the formation, several young cultivators gathered around him.

"Are you also here to challenge the Nine Twist and Turn Formation?"

Lu Qianshan nodded and said, "However, it's just a mere Nine Twist and Turn Formation. There's no need to use the word challenge..."

Hearing these words, the young cultivator knew the person before them must be an expert.

"Alright, then you go first..."

The young cultivators parted and made way for Lu Qianshan.

Lu Qianshan said, "The Nine Twist and Turn Formation has nine twists to confuse and mislead..."

Lu Qianshan extended his arm and manifested his astrolabe.

"Thousand Realms Whirling expert!" everyone exclaimed.

The middle-aged man standing in front of the stone pillar looked at Lu Qianshan in shock as well.

The Cold Breeze Valley was especially lively today; there were even two Thousand Realms Whirling experts!

Meanwhile, Lu Qianshan easily reached the halfway point of the formation. He stopped and turned around to say, "From here on out, the more talented you are and the higher your cultivation aptitude, the easier it'll be for you to advance..."

As expected, Lu Qianshan easily crossed the most difficult part of the formation and rushed to the stone pillar. The invisible force did not seem to affect him at all.

When Lu Qianshan reached the finish line, the middle-aged man cupped his fists together and said, "I didn't expect to meet an expert here. I've made a fool out of myself."

Lu Qianshan waved his hand and said, "There's no need for that. It's not worth mentioning at all."

Truly, in front of Lu Zhou, Lu Qianshan did not dare to show off at all.

Meanwhile, the young cultivators' confidence was greatly boosted now that they saw two people reaching the finish line.

Suddenly...

Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!

The stone pillar suddenly started to spin, making a buzzing sound.

Lu Qianshan and the middle-aged man were stunned; they looked at the huge stone pillar in confusion.

The stone pillar spun faster and faster. It was spinning so fast that it created a vortex above the stone pillar. The stone pillar was aimed at the center of the vortex.

An even more powerful elastic force suddenly erupted and swept toward Lu Qianshan and the middle-aged man.

The duo paled in fright and hastily brought out their astrolabes to resist the force.

"Something's wrong!"

"Retreat! Retreat!"

The young cultivators looked at the stone pillar with fear and trepidation.

Only Lu Zhou remained standing in his spot. The feeling that something was wrong grew stronger and stronger.

At this time, a young man bravely stood in front of Lu Zhou to block the invisible force and said, "Brother, retreat! It's best to be careful!"

"You called me brother?" Lu Zhou glanced at the young man.

The young man said, "Those who come here are all friends! Hurry up, retreat!"

The stone pillar continued to spin at an astonishing speed.

Lu Qianshan and the middle-aged man were still standing by the stone pillar, but they did not last long before they were thrown out by the strange force.

"This... I feel like I've seen a ghost today..." Lu Qianshan said as he staggered back. He looked at the pillar at the center of the valley in surprise. "The difficulty has increased again!?"

Some of the cultivators near the entrance of the valley could not even hold on and lost their balance.

The middle-aged man said, "The power of the formation has only gotten weaker with time. This is the first time I've seen it becoming stronger..."

The young cultivators wore dejected expressions on their faces and sighed.

“Even Thousand Realms Whirling expert were swept out. It’d be impossible for us to make it to the finish line...”

“Let’s try again.”

The young cultivators continued to charge into the formation, but they were sent flying out every single time. They tried over and over again, and their attempts all ended in failures. At most, they could only advance a few dozen meters in.

The middle-aged man at the Thousand Realms Whirling stage only went in one-third of the way before he was sent out this time.

Lu Qianshan turned around and said to Lu Zhou, “Senior Lu, the Nine Twist and Turn Formation has never been like this before. Why don’t you try it out?”

Everyone was puzzled.

“?”

“You... called him senior?”

Realization dawned on the young cultivators quickly. It seemed like the young cultivator in front of them was the real expert. All of them bowed at Lu Zhou.

The young man who stood in front of Lu Zhou to shield Lu Zhou looked embarrassed. He hurriedly stepped back and stammered, “I... I...”

Lu Zhou’s attention was focused on the Nine Twist and Turn Formation; he did not pay attention to Lu Qianshan and the others.

“Excuse us. Senior, please give us a demonstration.”

“Yes... Please widen our horizons.”

In their opinion, some who could make a Thousand Realms Whirling expert like Lu Qianshan so respectful was definitely not an ordinary person. It was not surprising that everyone was curious.

Lu Zhou walked toward the formation. Since this matter was related to a Venerable Master, it was better to keep a low profile. Therefore, he used a Concealment Card.

Following that, Lu Zhou walked into the formation.

“Hmm?”

Lu Zhou continued walking in. He did not feel anything at all.

Meanwhile, everyone looked at Lu Zhou in confusion.

“Has the formation returned to normal?”

“It’s so easy now?”

Lu Zhou felt as though he was walking on flat ground, and he did not feel any resistance at all.

At this moment, the middle-aged man leaped into the air and said, "Let me try again."

The middle-aged man had just flown a few meters in before the stone pillar suddenly stirred up a wave of energy seals.

"Be careful! Energy seals!"

Bang!

The middle-aged man was caught off guard and was hit by the energy seal. He grunted and flew back in the air. He quickly manifested his astrolabe to block the remaining energy seals.

At this moment, everyone wore shocked expressions on their faces.

"Since when can the Nine Twist and Turn Formation condense energy seals?!"

This meant that the formation was not as harmless as they had thought.

On the other hand, Lu Qianshan frowned, and his heart was filled with doubt.

"Why is he fine?" Someone pointed at Lu Zhou who was slowly advancing in the formation.

The energy seals that were flying in the air did not affect Lu Zhou at all.

"That's right! How come he's not affected?"

Chapter 1184: The Ancestor Has Come Back to Life

Lu Zhou did not pay attention to the crowd's discussion and continued forward. When he was one-third of his way in, he raised his head to look at the energy seals around him.

"The energy seals are very pure... This must be due to the exquisiteness of the formation..."

Cultivators could condense their Primal Qi into energy by controlling their Dantians' seas of Qi, and thus, forming energy swords, energy sabers, and so on.

It was very difficult for formations to form energy since this required the formation to be like a human's Dantian's sea of Qi. With this, one could imagine how difficult it was to inscribe such a formation.

'This formation left behind by Venerable Master Lu is indeed extraordinary. I've underestimated this formation...'

Lu Zhou looked at the stone pillar in the center of the valley. It was still spinning, stirring up the Primal Qi in the surroundings. It was as though it was a huge stick stirring up the water in a huge water tank, causing a vortex to form in the water.

Based on the formation's name, there should be nine waves of energy. However, as the force of the energy grew stronger, it would be lethal.

Meanwhile, outside of the formation, Lu Qianshan said, "It's not surprising that Senior Lu is fine..."

The young cultivators were confused.

"It's strange, right? He's completely unaffected."

On the other hand, the middle-aged man, who had yet to believe his defeat, leaped up again. This time, he manifested his avatar that was 350 feet tall. Based on this, one could tell he had two Birth Charts.

Everyone raised their heads and looked up.

The middle-aged man looked as though he had made his mind and charged in decisively and confidently!

Boom!

The middle-aged man reached the one-third point in the formation in just a blink of an eye.

Everyone was overwhelmed with emotions as they watched.

“Amazing.”

“Indeed, using speed is a brilliant idea...”

If one could break through the formation with strength, it was not a bad idea to use speed to charge into the formation before the force became too strong.

Soon after, the middle-aged man arrived in front of Lu Zhou. He turned around and said with a smile, “Although the difficulty has increased, it’s not impossible to reach the finish line.”

Lu Zhou nodded. “Not bad.”

“Thank you for your praise, senior. Shall we go together?” The middle-aged who was feeling competitive rushed toward the stone pillar without waiting for Lu Zhou’s reply.

Lu Zhou did not stop the middle-aged man. He only said, “Young man, it’s good to have a competitive spirit.”

The middle-aged man felt a little awkward; it was his first time being lectured by someone who looked younger than him. However, seeing how the other party was walking in the formation with so much ease, he could not refute the words. After a moment, he controlled his avatar and flew toward the heart of the formation. With his avatar’s help, his speed was very fast. It did not take long for him to leave Lu Zhou behind.

Meanwhile, the young cultivators outside of the formation began to discuss among themselves again.

“The middle-aged man seems stronger...”

“Yeah, he’s so far ahead now...”

Upon hearing these words, Lu Qianshan raised his hand and made a shushing gesture before he said, “Young people, you should watch and learn...”

The implication was they spoke too much nonsense.

Since a Thousand Realms Whirling expert like Lu Qianshan had spoken, they naturally no longer dared to say anything and shifted their eyes toward Lu Zhou and the middle-aged man.

When the middle-aged man arrived at the halfway point, he turned around and asked, "Do you need help?"

Lu Zhou continued to move forward step by step at a neither fast nor slow speed. However, compared to flying, his speed was naturally slow. He said, "No need."

Lu Zhou did not want to compete with the middle-aged man at all. Instead, his attention was focused on the formation.

The middle-aged man smiled and said, "Alright, work hard! I'll wait for you at the finish line."

The middle-aged man continued to move forward. He pushed his astrolabe forward while his avatar was at his back as he blocked wave after wave of energy seals. His speed was much faster than Lu Zhou's, and it did not take long before he was two-thirds into the formation. He thought that if he worked hard enough, he would definitely reach the finish line. After all, the energy seals in the surroundings were blocked by his astrolabe and avatar; they could not harm him.

Boom!

At this moment, the huge stone pillar suddenly trembled and stirred up a fierce invisible force.

The middle-aged man grunted. "Block."

The astrolabe expanded and shielded him.

At this moment, the inscriptions that looked like strange patterns on the stone pillar suddenly lit up one after another. Subsequently, its spinning speed increased by several times.

A strong invisible force accompanied by energy seals swept out toward Lu Zhou and the middle-aged man.

Bang!

The energy seals landed on the middle-aged man's astrolabe. The powerful impact caught him off guard, causing him to lose balance and flip backward in the air.

Lu Zhou raised his head to take a look. He mobilized a little Primal Qi and stomped his foot on the ground. Just like that, the incoming energy seals were all neutralized. Then, he said, "Put away your avatar."

"Oh." The middle-aged man nodded upon hearing these words and hurriedly put his avatar away and continued to retreat.

"Lower your altitude."

The middle-aged man was already panicking so he did as he was told without asking questions. He lowered his altitude and retreated.

The middle-aged man was about to collide with Lu Zhou when Lu Zhou raised his hand and pushed it out.

A palm seal floated out and dragged the middle-aged man backward.

“This...”

The young cultivators outside of the formation gulped. This was a true expert!

Fear still lingered in the middle-aged man’s heart as he said, “Thank you... senior...”

Lu Zhou said indifferently, “It’s not bad for young people to suffer some setbacks.”

A sheepish expression appeared on the middle-aged man’s face.

Lu Zhou retracted his hand before he said, “The higher you fly, the more miserable the fall.”

At this moment, the middle-aged man noticed a layer of energy covering Lu Zhou. With the layer of energy, the energy seals slid over Lu Zhou without affecting Lu Zhou at all. His heart was stirred by this sight, and he bowed immediately, “I’ve learned my lesson!”

The young cultivators were dumbfounded. They would understand if the middle-aged man thanked Lu Zhou since Lu Zhou had saved his life. However, what did he mean by ‘I’ve learned my lesson’?

Lu Zhou continued walking forward with his hands resting on his back while the middle-aged man followed behind him.

Lu Zhou stopped and said, “Sometimes it’s much easier to follow the flow than to go against the flow.” Then, he turned around and followed the flow of the energy.

The middle-aged man slapped his forehead. That was right! He just had to go with the flow! It was undoubtedly easier to move forward at the right time, following the flow.

The stone pillar spun crazily along with the vortex. At this time, another violent force swept out again, accompanied by energy seals. It was much stronger and fiercer than before.

Even the young cultivators standing outside of the formation were pushed back and had a difficult time keeping their eyes open.

Although the middle-aged man listened to Lu Zhou’s advice, he still had a hard time controlling his body. In just a second, he was blown up. His expression changed drastically. When he was a few meters up in the air...

Boom!

A loud expression rang in the air before the wind, the invisible force, and energy seals suddenly vanished.

Everyone looked over and saw Lu Zhou had slapped down on the stone pillar with one hand while the other was still resting on his back. His hand that was pressing down on the stone pillar emitted a faint light.

“Is that all?” Lu Zhou muttered to himself. The difficulty was still too low.

“...”

At this moment, the strange patterns on the stone pillar suddenly flew up into the sky one after another. As though they were forming a picture, soon after, a huge image appeared before everyone’s eyes.

Lu Qianshan was the first to react. He hurriedly prostrated himself on the ground. “The ancestor has shown himself. Lu Qianshan pays respect to Venerable Master Lu.”

The young cultivators were dumbfounded. However, since a Thousand Realms Whirling cultivator had humbled himself so, they could only follow suit.

“Greetings, Venerable Master Lu.”

The glowing image looked exactly like Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou frowned slightly. They really resembled each other.

Meanwhile, the middle-aged man’s eyes darted between the glowing image and Lu Zhou a few times before he cried out in disbelief, “No way! T-the Venerable Master has come back to life?!”

Chapter 1185: The Venerable Master Has Come Back to Life

The middle-aged man and the young cultivators naturally did not know what Lu Tiantong looked like in the beginning. However, with someone taking the lead, it was instinctive for humans to follow the crowd. Not to mention the person taking the lead to kneel was a Thousand Realms Whirling expert.

Moreover, they were not blind. They could tell the image formed by the strange patterns on the stone pillar resembled the living person standing in front of it. Now that Lu Zhou had reached the finish line, it was even easier for them to make the comparison. The result was the two really resembled each other.

In the cultivation world, it was indisputable that the dead could not be resurrected. No one could live forever.

At this time, the middle-aged retreated as he muttered to himself, “Impossible... I-Impossible...”

Lu Zhou was rather vexed. Why did they look so alike? He had come here, hoping to investigate the matter in a low-profile manner. What was with the sudden appearance of this image?

In fact, the people present were not idiots. Whether the person in front of them was truly Venerable Master Lu or not, they knew he was not a weakling. How could a weakling easily reach the finish line after the strength of the formation had increased? In any case, there would be no losses flattering the person in front of them.

“It’s our honor to meet senior here!”

“That’s right! It’s our honor!”

Everyone began to sing his praises.

When everyone was still in awe, the huge image moved toward the stone pillar like a sand painting. Following that, the image of the figure pushed its hand out toward the stone pillar.

Ding!

Then, as a ding was heard as though a mechanism had been triggered.

The huge stone pillar burst forth with light as the vortex appeared above it again.

Everyone looked up. Their expressions were one of curiosity, shock, and confusion. Following that, an energy seal began to shoot out toward the young cultivators.

“Block them!”

Bang!

A young cultivator was hit and flew backward in the air.

Following that, three huge energy seals flew out.

“Avatar!”

Their strongest defenses were their avatars.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The three energy seals struck the avatars, sending them flying.

The strange thing was that the energy seals did not hit the same person twice. Instead, they would move on to their next targets.

Lu Qianshan, who had noticed this, hurriedly manifested his astrolabe and held it up in front of himself.

Bang!

Lu Qianshan was pushed backward. His feet slid backward, creating two ditches. His arms were numb. He looked at the shining stone pillar skeptically and muttered to himself, “Is this really the Nine Twist and Turn Formation?”

This seemed more like the Eight Desolate and Six Harmony Flags. Once the flags were inserted into the ground, they would release energy seals to attack the enemy.

At this time, the middle-aged man leaped up and flipped in the air. He brought his astrolabe out and held it in front of himself. With a bang, the energy seal pushed him out of Cold Breeze Valley.

Several young cultivators rushed toward the middle-aged man and supported him.

“Senior, are you okay?”

“I’m fine.” The middle-aged man looked at the huge stone pillar with a hint of unwillingness as he said, “It’s up to him now.”

Everyone’s attention returned to Lu Zhou again.

Lu Zhou did not manifest his avatar. When an energy seal flew toward him, he would strike back with his palm.

Bang!

Lu Zhou thought that would be the end of it. Who knew the stone pillar released another three energy seals aimed at Lu Zhou’s upper, middle, and lower body.

“Senior, look out!”

Everyone cried out in alarm.

Lu Zhou remained calm as he retreated. With a flick of his sleeve, he sent out three palm seals that perfectly blocked the three energy seals.

As though it had gone mad, the huge stone pillar released another ten energy seals.

Lu Zhou struck with another ten palm seals as well, blocking the ten energy seals.

Everyone was still in awe of Lu Zhou’s precise control over his palm seals when the huge stone pillar released a sky full of energy seals in all directions. This move was like a supercharged version of the Buddhist’s Butterfly Love Flower.

“A mere Nine Twist and Turn Formation can’t do anything to me.” Lu Zhou stomped on the ground and flew up to the top of the stone pillar. Then, he sent firework-like palm seals one after another. Their number was not too small nor was it too big.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Just like that, Lu Zhou destroyed the energy seals. The number of palm seals he released was exactly the same as the energy seals, and all of them landed accurately on their targets. His control was at the pinnacle of perfection.

Lu Zhou did not give the huge stone pillar a chance to attack. He raised his hand and struck it with the supreme mystic power.

Bang!

The huge stone pillar remained unshaken.

‘Hmm?’

Lu Zhou was about to withdraw his hand when he felt a suction force from the huge stone pillar. He silently recited the mantra for the Heavenly Writing Power, causing the huge stone pillar to tremble. At the same time, the blue avatar in his Dantian’s sea of Qi became active as well.

‘Is this formation selecting... its targets?’

Earlier, the huge stone pillar had released energy seals directed at the others, but they were mostly directed at him.

“Avatar.”

Lu Zhou manifested his Nine Transformation Yin Yang avatar. Due to the effect of the Concealment Card, his avatar was black.

“Am I seeing things?”

“It’s... a Nine Transformation Yin Yang avatar...”

“Don’t speculate blindly. It’s obvious that the senior is deliberately suppressing his cultivation.”

Everyone nodded. Those words made sense. Lu Zhou's actions earlier had proven his strength. How could an ordinary cultivator repel so many energy seals with such precision?

Bang!

An energy seal landed on the Nine Transformation Yin Yang avatar.

Just as Lu Zhou expected, the huge stone pillar stopped releasing energy seals. Instead, it began to tremble violently.

Following that, Cold Breeze Valley began to tremble as well as though there was an earthquake.

Ten circles on the ground lit up becoming rings of light before they surrounded the huge stone pillar. Then, one after another azure pillars of light began to rise from the ground.

At this time, the inscriptions on the huge stone pillar moved and formed the four words, which flew toward the sky: Nine Twist Illusionary Formation.

"The Nine Twist Illusionary Formation?" Lu Qianshan's eyelids kept twitching when he saw these words.

"It's said that 30,000 years ago, Venerable Master Lu passed by this place and left the Nine Twist and Turn Formation and the Nine Twist Illusionary Formation here. However, the later generations searched for nearly 10,000 years, but they only found the Nine Twist and Turn Formation. I didn't expect that the two formations are one and the same... It explains the changes in the formation today," the middle-aged man said.

A young man asked in confusion, "Then, why did it suddenly change today?"

"That's right. So many people came to this place but no one has ever triggered the illusory formation."

Lu Qianshan remained silent.

At this moment, the middle-aged man cried out, "The Venerable Master!"

"..."

The person in front of them resembled the figure formed by the huge stone pillar in front of them.

"Is... Is he really Venerable Master Lu?"

The cultivators fell to their knees again to show their respect. After all, Venerable Master Lu was someone that commanded everyone's respect. 30,000 years ago. Lu Tiantong, the powerful figure who shook the black lotus domain 30,000 years ago, had returned!

Lu Zhou looked at the pillars of light, perplexed.

The clouds were rolling in the sky, and the surroundings looked like they had changed.

The azure pillars of light shot into the sky at this moment.

Rumble!

Thunder began to ring and lightning began to flash.

“Something’s wrong.”

If this continued, it would definitely attract attention.

Lu Zhou hurriedly flew up into the sky.

Under everyone’s watchful eyes, he held up his astrolabe against the sky.

“A golden astrolabe!”

Everyone held their breath. Although they were shocked, they did not blindly speculate when they recalled the black Nine Transformation Yin Yang avatar.

Lu Zhou increased the size of the astrolabe until it covered a radius of 1,000 meters.

Lu Zhou expanded the astrolabe and covered a radius of one thousand meters.

A sizzling sound rang in the air as the blue pillars were blocked by the astrolabe.

The blue light pillars were blocked by the astrolabe with sizzling sounds!

“Down!” Lu Zhou said in a deep voice.

Then, the golden astrolabe pressed down, looking as though the sky was falling. It blocked and suppressed all the blue pillars of light.

Boom!

More than ten pillars of light vanished immediately.

At the same time, the ground around the huge stone pillar turned translucent.

“An illusion! It’s an illusion!”

Everyone hurriedly retreated. As it turned out, the Cold Breeze Valley that they often frequented was just an illusion!

When the ground completely vanished, a cliff shrouded by dense fog appeared before everyone’s eyes.

“...”

What kind of formation could deceive so many cultivators for so many years?

After putting away his astrolabe, Lu Zhou descended.

The ground had now turned into the air.

Lu Zhou turned around and faced the crowd.

Everyone knelt in unison.

“Greetings, Venerable Master Lu!”

Lu Zhou frowned. “I’m not Venerable Master Lu!”

“Uh...”

It was difficult for them to accept these words. After all, the formation was so easily broken after 30,000 years, and most importantly, the image was too similar to the person before them.

At this moment, a butterfly-like seal flew out.

Lu Zhou immediately brought this avatar out.

Buzz!

An 800-foot golden avatar rose up from the ground and pierced through the clouds, blocking the energy seal.

Everyone raised their heads and saw an avatar that resembled an old and sprightly old man. Its golden robe gave it a sage-like appearance. They knew the avatar was a reflection of one's appearance so everyone exclaimed in admiration.

"It's a disguise!"

Seeing Lu Zhou was seemingly trying to establish his identity, Lu Qianshan said, "This is the Pavilion Master of the Evil Sky Pavilion!"

"The Pavilion Master of the Evil Sky Pavilion?"

"The person responsible for the collective demotion of the Black Tower Council?"

"Senior... He's Senior Lu who killed the two elders of the White Tower Council and the Black Tower Council in the red lotus domain's southern Land of Chaos?"

"It's him!? The one who killed the Black Emperor and fought Lu Wu off in Jianbei Circuit's Northern Sword Canyon?"

Without another word, all of them fell to their knees again.

"Greetings, Senior Lu!"

Chapter 1186: The Power of the Dao

Lu Zhou. "..."

In fact, Lu Zhou had two purposes for revealing his identity as the Pavilion Master of the Evil Sky Pavilion. First, he did not want to be mistaken for Lu Tiantong. If word spread out, it might attract the attention of the green lotus cultivators or the Equalizers. After all, he had not figured out why Lu Tiantong vanished. Second, the situation had escalated to such an extent that there was no way to remain low profile so it would be so counterproductive to do so.

The commotion from below had yet to cease, but Lu Zhou could not be bothered with these people. Hence, he said, "This place is dangerous. Hurry up and leave."

Everyone hurriedly stood up.

"With Senior Lu's presence, we feel at ease now."

"Senior Lu, don't hesitate to tell us if you need anything. We'll retreat first, but we won't go too far..."

After the cultivators bowed again, they rushed into the distance, including the middle-aged Thousand Realms Whirling cultivator.

When everyone had left, Lu Qianshan suppressed the excitement in his heart and flew toward Lu Zhou. Then, he said solemnly and respectfully, "Greetings, Venerable Master Lu."

"Hm?"

When Lu Qianshan raised his head again, his eyes were red and shone with unconcealable excitement. He said, "Only Venerable Master Lu can break the Nine Twist and Turn Formation and the Nine Twist Illusionary Formation."

"..."

In fact, Lu Zhou had found it strange as well. When he had touched the huge stone pillar earlier, the blue avatar in his Dantian's sea of Qi seemed to change. Moreover, the huge stone pillar seemed like it was choosing its target... as though it was looking for or waiting for its master's return.

In the end, Lu Zhou said, "Let's go down and have a look first."

"Understood."

The duo flew down the cliff.

Many inscriptions were floating in the air at this moment.

Lu Zhou stopped to study the inscriptions.

'Heavenly Writing?'

At this moment, it suddenly clicked in his mind that the inscriptions and patterns on the huge stone pillar and in the air resembled the ones in the Heavenly Writing.

"..."

Lu Zhou remained expressionless as he continued his descent.

Lu Qianshan, who was unaware of what was going on, followed Lu Zhou obediently to the bottom of the cliff.

The bottom of the cliff resembled the Cold Breeze Valley.

"The Nine Twist Illusionary Formation reflects the environment below... What an exquisite formation. The person who created this formation is really a peerless genius."

"Uh..." The corners of Lu Qianshan's twitched upon hearing these words.

"What's wrong with you?"

"N-nothing. Your humble servant is very surprised by how exquisite the formation is as well..."

"Your humble servant?" Lu Zhou frowned.

“Under our ancestors’ orders, the Lu clan has been honoring Venerable Master Lu for generations. Now that you’ve returned, I’ll continue to follow you, and I’m willing to be your slave. In fact, the Lu family’s surname isn’t Lu. From now on, we’ll revert to our original surname, Dongri.”

“Your surname is Dongri?” Lu Zhou asked.

Lu Qianshan nodded.

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “There’s no need for that. Let’s put the matter of Venerable Master Lu aside for now. I don’t have a habit of depriving others of their names or surnames...”

Since Lu Qianshan was already used to his name, he did not refuse. “Thank you, Venerable Master Lu.”

“Hm?”

“Right, right. I mean, thank you.” Lu Qianshan straightened his back. Whether Lu Zhou admitted it or not, he knew the truth in his heart.

Lu Zhou flew toward the center of the valley. It was a place that was obviously different from the illusion earlier.

There was a stone plate in the middle of a huge circle; a brocade box was placed on top of the stone plate.

Lu Zhou finally found it; it should have been left behind by Lu Tiantong. He said, “Since it’s left by a Venerable Master, there should be a powerful restriction to keep others away. Stand back.”

“Understood.” Lu Qianshan obeyed without any questions.

As soon as Lu Zhou stepped into the huge circle, the stone plate shone faintly before the brocade box clicked open.

“...”

With this, even if he jumped into the sea, he would not be able to clear his name. Who would believe he was not Lu Tiantong?

At the same time, Lu Qianshan nodded to himself. This was as it should be. Since its master had returned, the box would naturally open up for its master.

Lu Zhou walked over, and he saw a book in the brocade box. Under the book was a blank Heavenly Writing Scroll.

“Heavenly Writing Scroll?” Lu Zhou was shocked. Then, he brought the blank scroll out of the box.

At the same time, the inscriptions flying in the air seemed to have sensed something and gathered from all directions. One by one, they flew into the blank scroll.

“Ding! You’ve obtained the second half of the Open Heavenly Writing Scroll.”

“Ding! Would you like to merge it?”

‘Merge.’

With that, the Heavenly Writing Scroll dissolved into specks of starlight before merging with the first half of the Heavenly Writing Scroll in his system. Then, it appeared in the Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing.

“Ding! You’ve successfully merged the scrolls and obtained a Heavenly Writing Scroll. Bonus reward: Upgrade Card.”

“Ding! The Upgrade Card allows you to increase the system and the Heavenly Writing’s power. Reminder: Upgrading will take a long time. Please choose wisely.”

Lu Zhou nodded. Then, he opened the book in his hand. The introduction read:

“The ancient Venerable Masters didn’t sleep or dream. They lived a carefree life, ate without feelings, and breathed deeply. They were born to the heavens and were known as Venerable Masters. Venerable Masters are one with the heavens. Those who cultivate their inner selves were known as sages. In ancient times, there were Venerable Masters who seized the heavens and earth, grasped the Yin and Yang, breathed the essence, and guarded the spirit. With these, they lived forever until the end of time. Venerable Masters do not die, do not live, and do not exist.”

Lu Zhou did not understand the words at all. He flipped to the next page. It read:

“I obtained a Great Void Seed. After cultivating, I became the world’s first Venerable Master in Great Yuan. I turned the tide, killed hundreds of thousands of barbarians, slaughtered millions of fierce beasts, and brought peace and prosperity to the world.”

“...”

After the book’s introduction, it was nothing more than Lu Tiantong bragging about how he defeated his opponents, how he shocked the world, and how brilliant he was.

Lu Zhou felt his hair standing on end reading these words of self-praise. Lu Tiantong was really good at bragging. Nevertheless, he continued reading. The following page read:

“I once defeated a Venerable Master in the northern territory at the foot of a snow-capped mountain with just a palm strike. With that, I single-handedly submitted the northern territory. I once killed over 10,000 cultivators in a kingdom to the south with a single sword strike. Rivers of blood flowed...”

Lu Zhou flipped to the next page. It read:

“In the entire world, the only one who’s worthy to exchange blows with me is Venerable Master Duanmu.”

“...”

“The path of cultivation is endless. I have pursued the path of cultivation all my life, seeking the path of supremacy until I comprehended the power of the Dao.”

“...”

“A Venerable Master’s physique allows me to see through the void and merge with the Dao. It’s one with nature. What is the Dao? All things in the world should follow the Dao. The great Dao has no name and sustains all things.”

Lu Zhou's frown deepened when he read this. He really did not understand what he read at all, apart from Lu Tiantong's bragging. He could read the words, but it did not make sense to him at all. What did they mean?

Swoosh!

Lu Qianshan said, "Someone's here!"

Lu Zhou put the book away and waved his hand. "Follow me closely."

The duo flew away toward the nearest jungle at a high speed.

At this moment, a voice rang in the air.

"Please wait."

Lu Zhou descended. He stopped and turned around; he could tell the person was nearby. Then, he shifted his eyes to the entrance of the valley. As expected, he saw a person dressed in a gray robe hovering in the air.

Chapter 1187: The Free Man

Lu Zhou sized up the gray-clad cultivator. For the person in front of him to arrive at Cold Breeze Valley in such a short time, his cultivation must not be low.

The gray-clad cultivator sized Lu Zhou and Lu Qianshan up with a faint smile on his face.

Lu Qianshan broke the silence first and calmly asked, "Is something the matter?"

With a Venerable Master at his back, Lu Qianshan was not afraid at all. He even had the urge to rush over and beat the other party up. After all, the other party was hovering in the air with a somewhat arrogant attitude. Was this not rude to his family's Venerable Master?

The gray-clad cultivator said, "I'm Naihe..."

"Naihe?"

"Can both of you leave the thing you found at the bottom of the cliff?" Naihe said with a smile on his face. His words made people inexplicably angry.

Lu Qianshan said indignantly, "Who do you think you are? How dare you behave so atrociously in front of Senior Lu?"

Naihe was not angry. He only said, "I advise both of you to leave things you found here..."

Lu Qianshan's eyes turned cold, and his voice was stern as he said, "Do you know who's standing in front of you?"

Naihe shifted his gaze away from Lu Qianshan to Lu Zhou. After staring at Lu Zhou for a moment, he shook his head and said, "No."

"..." Lu Qianshan was speechless. He thought to himself that the gray-clad cultivator really did not know what was good for him.

At this moment, Lu Zhou calmly asked, "Where are you from?"

Upon hearing this, Naihe smiled at Lu Zhou and said, "You're much smarter than many people I've met since you know to ask this question. I'm in a good mood today so there's no harm in telling you. I'm from the green lotus domain, and I'm a Free Man."

'A Free Man?' Lu Zhou was puzzled. It was his first time hearing this term.

Naihe said, "Many people in this world are bound by the heaven and earth's shackles. They're forced to abide by the rules set by the heavens. Cultivation itself is defying the heavens and changing one's fate. Alas, there are, ultimately, limits. After cultivators reach a certain realm, they'll attract attention. At that time, they'll be punished by The Balance. A Free Man is someone who manipulates the rules to come and go freely."

When Naihe saw the puzzled expressions on Lu Zhou and Lu Qianshan's faces, he said with a smile, "I've said these words to many people. Unfortunately, most of them couldn't understand..."

Lu Zhou asked, "What's your purpose for coming here?"

Naihe said, "Both of you... There are many things I can't explain and many questions I can't answer. This is all I can say..."

It was obvious Naihe was not going to change his mind.

Lu Zhou frowned. He said indifferently, "Before I change my mind, it's best if you vanish from sight now."

"?"

The smile vanished from Naihe's face instantly. His expression was slightly solemn as he sized Lu Zhou up again.

At this time, the cultivators who were waiting not too far away from Cold Breeze Valley rushed over one after another. Their leader was none other than the middle-aged Thousand Realms Whirling cultivator.

"Who's so bold as to disrespect Senior Lu?" the middle-aged man said before he manifested his astrolabe.

Following that, dozens of cultivators manifested their avatars one after another. From five leaves to ten leaves, they had everything.

When Naihe saw these people, he raised his voice and said, "Those who aren't involved should stay out of this..."

Then, he lifted his right hand and launched a palm seal toward the cultivators who were rushing over.

The palm seal's size increased swiftly, and in just a blink of an eye, it was several hundred feet tall.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The middle-aged man's astrolabe creaked before it caved in, and he was sent flying back.

Even a Thousand Realms Whirling cultivator ended up like that, there was no need to mention the others.

Naihe remained expressionless. He did not even spare a glance at the others. Instead, he looked at Lu Zhou and said, "This is my duty. Please forgive me."

After the cultivators who were sent flying landed on the ground, they looked at the gray-clad cultivator in shock. The younger cultivators rarely paid attention to matters related to the World Beyond the Heavens so they did not think much of it.

The Thousand Realms Whirling cultivator only had very basic knowledge about the World Beyond Heaven. He found it difficult to accept that the gray-clad cultivator had sent all of them flying with just a palm strike.

Buzz!

Naihe raised his hand. Following that, a huge astrolabe appeared in his hand.

16 Birth Charts lit up consecutively on the astrolabe. It shone with a dark green light and emitted a strong aura.

Following that, Naihe clenched his hand, and the astrolabe disappeared.

"Green lotus cultivator?! He's a green lotus cultivator!"

Naihe said with a smile, "This should be enough, right? Everyone says that strength is authority, but I'd always disagreed. However, ever since I became a Free Man, I gradually discovered that a show of strength indeed saves me a lot of time..."

Lu Qianshan shook his head and said, "I thought you're a Venerable Master. As it turns out, you're just a brat with 16 Birth Charts."

"Huh?" Naihe was puzzled.

"Venerable Master Lu, he's an intruder from the green lotus domain. Please kill him, Venerable Master Lu," Lu Qianshan said.

Naihe's eyes widened as he looked at Lu Zhou. "You're a Venerable Master?!"

Lu Zhou said indifferently, "Why? Don't I look like a Venerable Master?"

Naihe's expression grew a little unnatural, and his aura seemed to drop slightly as well. Then, he said, "Over the past 30,000 years, I've never heard of a Venerable Master in this place. If you're a Venerable Master, then I'm willing to apologize for my previous attitude. However, if you're not a Venerable Master, I'll have to take whatever you took from the bottom of the cliff today."

Naihe was very direct, unlike those villains who liked playing tricks.

Upon hearing this, Lu Qianshan smiled a little smugly before he said, "Then, you better hurry up and apologize..."

"..."

Lu Zhou thought to himself that the more he went with the flow, the more difficult it was for him to dissociate himself from that identity. He could tell the Free Man was waiting for him to reveal his astrolabe.

After a moment, Lu Zhou said in a dark voice, “You’re young so you don’t know the immensity of heaven and earth. Today, I’ll teach you a lesson on behalf of your elders...”

Following that, Lu Zhou flashed forward and pushed his palm, which was glowing with the supreme mystic power, out.

A palm seal the size of an adult shot out immediately. With the Concealment card, the supreme mystic power was golden.

Naihe was shocked when he felt the intense pressure from the palm seal. Nevertheless, he did not dodge. Instead, he raised his hand and launched a palm seal in return.

Boom!

The golden and green palm seals collided. The impact unleashed a wave of vertical energy that rippled out in the air.

However, this was not the end.

Lu Zhou had used the full power of the supreme mystic power after all. With his remaining strength, he moved forward and pressed the green palm seal back.

Naihe’s expression changed to one of shock. He could sense the infinite and unfathomable power from the golden palm seal. The golden palm seal continued pushing him back until they flew toward the distant mountain range.

At this time, Lu Zhou finally came to a stop.

Under the enormous force of the palm seal, Naihe continued to fly backward until he crashed into a mountain.

Boom!

Alas, it was still not over!

The remaining power from the golden palm seal pushed Naihe into the mountain wall, creating a human-shaped hole.

Faced with absolute strength, techniques, rules, and tricks were rendered useless.

Meanwhile, everyone watched with dumbfounded expressions on their faces.

“Is this the power of a Venerable Master?”

Lu Qianshan was in high spirits. He did not care if it was a golden palm seal or a black palm seal. Such a powerful palm seal was a good palm seal, regardless of its color! The palm seal had easily sent a Sixteen Chart cultivator flying and even pushed said cultivator into the mountain wall! Who cared what color it was?

Similarly, the others were also excited watching a Venerable Master in action.

At the same time, Lu Zhou hovered in the air as he looked at the human-shaped hole indifferently. He saw a faint light glinting in the hole and waited for a moment.

After a moment, Naihe flew back from the other side of the mountain wall through the hole he created. He held his arm as he bowed deeply to Lu Zhou and said, "I'm willing to... apologize."

Chapter 1188: The Rule

All the cultivators were overjoyed. As expected, the moment the Venerable Master made a move, that person found out the truth the hard way! All of them wanted to see if that person still dared to show off. Even if they had gotten smacked for no reason, they were extremely happy at this moment.

Lu Qianshan continued to play the character of a villain's lackey and said, "If it was going to be like this, why would you behave in that manner earlier?"

Naihe ignored Lu Qianshan; he only had eyes for Lu Zhou at this moment.

Lu Zhou could see the wariness and the solemnity in Naihe's eyes. His palm strike had only defeated Naihe, it did not do much damage, let alone destroy a Birth Chart. Naihe was a Sixteen Chart cultivator; would it not be terrible if he had to face a Venerable Master?

A Thunderblast Card appeared in Lu Zhou's hand. Life or death depended on fate and luck.

Naihe said, "I didn't expect an expert close to becoming a Venerable Master would be born here..."

Lu Qianshan said again, "Young man, your cultivation base is not bad. You shouldn't be stupid to be able to reach such a level, right? That palm strike is just a small lesson. Just you alone aren't worthy of my Venerable Master's full strike."

Naihe. "..."

After a while, Naihe said, "I can only blame my bad luck for today's incident. I have apologized for my attitude earlier. I'll take my leave now."

"Wait," Lu Zhou said.

"Huh?" Naihe frowned. He turned to look at Lu Zhou and asked, "Senior, what's the matter?"

Lu Zhou did not expect the other party to surrender so quickly. He thought he would have to waste a Thunderblast Card, a Reduction Card, and perhaps, an enhanced Impeccable Card. With a few cards, it should not be a problem to kill the other party.

Lu Zhou said in a deep voice, "Who do you take me for? Do you think you can come and go as you please at my place?"

"..."

'Isn't this place in the wild? How did it become your place?' Naihe naturally did not dare to verbalize this thought. Instead, he asked, puzzled, "What do you want, senior?"

"You can leave after you answer my questions," Lu Zhou said.

Naihe did not refuse. He said, "Ask away, senior."

"Which force do you belong to in the green lotus domain?" Lu Zhou asked.

"I'm Qin Naihe, a Free Man of the Qin clan," Qin Naihe replied. His answer was very detailed.

"Who's Qin Moshang to you?"

Qin Nainai was clearly taken aback. "Senior, you know Qin Moshang?" He chuckled before he continued to say, "Although he's the Young Master of the Qin clan, I have to say he has a very bad character. We're from the same clan, that's all."

Based on what Lu Zhou had learned so far, it seemed like Qin Moshang did not have a good relationship with his clansmen.

Lu Zhou nodded. "How long have you been here?"

Qin Naihe said, "Every three years, I'll patrol this place once. This is my 100th mission. Each time I come, I don't stay more than a month."

"Why?"

"The rule..." Although Qin Naihe was puzzled by Lu Zhou's question, he still maintained a smile on his face. "Since senior is a Venerable Master, senior should know that the world is divided into nine realms and two sides. Venerable Masters can't easily cross the boundaries..."

Lu Qianshan was surprised by this. "That's why cultivators who are close to becoming Venerable Masters are appointed as Free Men to bend the rules..."

"That's right," Qin Naihe said, "Moreover, staying too long will also attract attention."

This was a good explanation of why only a ghost servant came with Qin Moshang at the peak of the snow mountain. Logically speaking, the green lotus domain was so powerful that it could easily subdue the black lotus domain, the red lotus domain, and the other domains. However, they did not do so. As it turned out, they were bound by some heaven and earth rules.

Lu Zhou could not decide if this was a good or bad thing. The Balance protected them, but the shackles restricted them.

"What's your true purpose in coming here?" Lu Zhou asked.

"To find the Great Void Seed," Qin Naihe answered truthfully.

"The Great Void Seed?" Lu Qianshan exclaimed, "The Great Void Seed that matures every 30,000 years?"

Qin Naihe nodded. This was not a secret so he continued to say, "I'm not the only one looking for it. The Ye clan's Venerable Master is also looking for it. There's also the Sacred Hall. All of them have Free Men. You're lucky to have met me..."

"A defeated opponent still dared to be arrogant?" Lu Qianshan sneered.

Qin Naihe. "..."

In the end, Qin Naihe shook his head and said, "I'm not being arrogant. What I mean is most Free Men like to do things secretly. They like to kill people to silence them. They don't want people knowing about the green lotus domain."

"Then why do you do the opposite?"

"I hate the secrecy," Qin Naihe said with a smile, "Why must we alienate each other? Isn't it good if we can all play together?"

"..."

Qin Naihe's thinking was not strange; it made a lot of sense.

The world was divided into nine domains; why did they have to alienate each other? Who could answer this question? Lu Zhou thought it would be a loss if Qin Naihe did not become a philosopher.

Lu Zhou continued to ask, "How did you find this place?"

Qin Naihe said, "The pillars of light soared into the sky earlier, and I could sense their extraordinary power. I suspected some treasure had been unearthed so I came to have a look."

"Is that all?"

"It's up to you to believe me or not," Qin Naihe said, "Are you not used to your opponent being so frank? That's normal. I stayed in the golden lotus domain for a time, and I met quite a few people there. There was only one person who believed me; his name is Jiang Wenxu. The others were like you..."

"..."

Lu Zhou said, "You've been to the golden lotus domain and met Jiang Wenxu?"

Qin Naihe smiled before he recounted the past. "That was more than 300 years ago. The higher-ups sensed something strange in the golden lotus domain so they sent me there. That was my first mission as a Free Man. I don't know if you've ever felt this way before... When you meet frogs living at the bottom of the well, you want to tell them about the vast world outside. Jiang Wenxu was rather interesting. He chose to be the Grand Tutor of many countries and enjoyed the wealth of the world..."

Lu Zhou said with a straight face, "I killed Jiang Wenxu."

Although Qin Naihe was slightly taken aback, he continued to say, "It's fine that he's dead... Senior, you seem to be from the golden lotus domain?"

Lu Zhou did not deny it.

Qin Naihe was slightly surprised. Following that, he sighed emotionally and said, "I didn't expect such a great change in the golden lotus domain after 300 years. Back then, the strongest person in the golden lotus domain was just an old man who was about to reach the end of his life..."

Lu Zhou. "..."

"I forgot what he was called..."

At this moment, Lu Zhou crushed a Disguise Card. Then, he said tonelessly, "Open your eyes and see clearly..."

In the span of one breath, Lu Zhou turned into a sage-like old man with graying temples, deep eyes, and a wrinkled face.

Qin Naihe was shocked into taking a step back. "This is..."

Lu Zhou said with a straight face, "The old man you said who was about to die is... me."

"..."

Qin Naihe's heart shook. He took another step back.

Lu Zhou hovered in the air with the Thunderblast Card ready in his hand. He said, "Now you've seen me..."

"How's this possible?!" Qin Naihe shook his head. How could an old man who was about to die become a Venerable Master in only 300 years?

Chapter 1189: Continue to Bluff

Qin Naihe had been observing the changes in the golden lotus domain for quite some time. He had always been very careful not to interfere or reveal too much. As time passed, he found that being weak did not mean one was not living well. For example, the frogs living at the bottom of the well were happy and comfortable. There was no need to force the frogs to leave the well and bask in the sun if they were happy.

It had been too long since Qin Naihe left the golden lotus domain so he had forgotten Ji Tiandao's appearance and name. Moreover, who would remember a tiny ant? However, now, the ant had transformed into a towering tree and stood in front of him. It was not surprising that he found this difficult to accept. How was it possible for one to become a Venerable Master in 300 years?

Qin Naihe shook his head vehemently and said, "This is impossible!"

"I'm tired of hearing these words," Lu Zhou said.

Qin Naihe said, "If a Venerable Master were to appear in the golden lotus domain, the balance would be broken. It's impossible for the Great Void to ignore it."

"Balance?" Lu Zhou said disapprovingly, "There are so many Venerable Masters in the green lotus domain, but there's not even one Venerable Master from the golden lotus domain, red lotus domain, black lotus domain, or the white lotus domain. Do you think this is balanced?"

Qin Naihe replied, "No. Senior, you've neglected the fierce beasts. Human cultivators in the domains you mentioned are weak, but the fierce beasts in these domains are generally stronger. One beast emperor is equivalent to a Venerable Master. Moreover, in the vast Unknown Land, there are divine beasts that are far superior to Venerable Masters..."

Lu Zhou scoffed. "What a ridiculous balance!"

"..."

Lu Qianshan saw the duo debating and did not dare to interrupt. Once the duo fell silent, he quickly asked, "If this is considered balanced, why doesn't the Great Void allow you to cross the boundaries?"

Qin Naihe had no answer for this question.

It was not that no one had raised this question. On the contrary, the cultivators from the green lotus domain had often thought about this question. There was no answer, and there was no one they could ask.

Lu Qianshan continued to say, "Is it possible that the green lotus domain is also like an ant in the eyes of those from the Great Void? What if everything is just their plaything?"

Qin Naihe could not refute these words. After a while, he looked at Lu Zhou and said, "It's impossible unless... you have the Great Void Seed."

Lu Qianshan. "..."

'This guy is stating the obvious. Isn't it obvious?'

Lu Zhou frowned; he felt like he was going to get a headache again. Nevertheless, he could see why Qin Naihe came to this conclusion.

In the book Lu Tiantong had left behind, he had said that he had obtained a Great Void Seed 30,000 years ago. Lu Zhou wondered if Lu Tiantong was captured by the Great Void after he became a Venerable Master.

Everyone was waiting for the appearance of the Great Void Seeds. As his and his disciples' cultivation continued to improve, they would inevitably attract everyone's attention. The only way to avoid attention was to live in seclusion.

Finally, Lu Zhou asked, "If I say that I don't have it, will you believe me?"

Qin Naihe. "..."

'The hell would I believe you?! This Old Geezer is really evil!'

Qin Naihe was no longer interested in staying. He said, "No matter what, the balance has been broken. I believe that it won't be long before the people from the Great Void show up. I've said all I can. Gentlemen, can I leave now?"

There was no gain from today's mission, and Qin Naihe did not know how he should explain it when he returned.

Lu Zhou asked, "Why don't we make a bet?"

"No." Qin Naihe did not hesitate and flew up into the air.

"The Equalizers won't show up."

"They will," Qin Naihe retorted.

"How long do you think it'll take before they show up?"

“Within three months.”

“Why do you say that?” Lu Zhou asked.

Qin Naihe shrugged. “I don’t know. It’s just a feeling.”

“Meet me at Cold Breeze Valley in three months. Of course, if you’re afraid, you don’t have to come.”

After saying these words, Lu Zhou turned around with a flick of his sleeve and flew following the direction of the wind.

Lu Qianshan followed closely behind Lu Zhou.

As Qin Naihe watched the duo leave, he muttered to himself, “Did I agree to the bet? Meet three months later? You can enjoy the breeze here yourself at that time...”

Then, Qin Naihe disappeared in just a flash.

...

When Lu Zhou arrived at the periphery of the jungle, he looked at the place where Qin Naihe was standing from the corners of his eyes and discovered it was already empty.

Lu Qianshan asked in confusion, “Venerable Master Lu, why didn’t you kill him?”

“He still has uses...”

“What if he doesn’t show up?” Lu Qianshan asked.

Lu Zhou furrowed his brows as he looked at Lu Qianshan before he said tonelessly, “You talk a little too much.”

“...” Lu Qianshan shut his mouth immediately.

At the same time, the cultivators retreated as they looked at the sage-like Lu Zhou and Lu Qianshan in shock and confusion.

“What’s going on?”

Lu Zhou glanced at the cultivators. He could not let them return and gossip about him. Otherwise, it would only attract unnecessary attention. Hence, he said, “Remember this: I’m not Venerable Master Lu. Today, I used a disguising technique to break the Nine Twist Illusionary Formation. That’s all”

Everyone bowed and agreed.

“So he’s really the Pavilion Master of the Evil Sky Pavilion?”

Lu Zhou swept his gaze across the young cultivators as he raised his hand to stroke his beard. As expected, it felt good to stroke his beard. After a moment, he nodded and revealed an amiable smile on his face as he said, “The younger generation is really promising.”

Everyone bowed again.

“Thank you for your praise, Senior Lu!”

“Today, we’re fortunate enough to receive guidance from the Pavilion Master. We will definitely not disappoint your expectations of us.”

“That’s right. We won’t disappoint you.”

The young cultivators bowed again.

Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction before he flew into the distance.

Lu Qianshan did not say anything and hurried after Lu Zhou.

After the duo left, the young cultivators flew toward the human-shaped hole on the mountain wall. They looked at the hole and admired it for a long time before they finally left.

...

In the evening.

Qin Naihe appeared near the human-shaped hole on the mountain wall. He looked at it for a long time before he shook his head and sighed. “I couldn’t dodge it at all... That palm strike isn’t that of a Venerable Master, but it feels even more powerful... Why?”

Qin Naihe knew what the power of a Venerable Master was like so he was filled with doubts.

As he looked at the hole, he could feel the pain all over his body again when he recalled what had happened.

In the end, he quickly flew away.

...

In a white palace.

Two orbs of light, one day and one month, flew in front of the palace.

At this time, a female attendant appeared at the entrance of the palace. She bowed and said, “Master, there’s news from the Sacred Hall. They said there were strange fluctuations in the black lotus domain. However, there’s no reaction from the Scales of Justice.”

“Alright. Maintain contact with the Sacred Hall.”

“Understood.”

“Also, keep an eye on the White Tower Council. If necessary, dispatch the divine beasts.”

“Understood.” The female attendant bowed before she left.

At this moment, a shadow appeared in the southeast corner of the white palace. It belonged to a person with white hair and looked to be over sixty years old.

“Since you’re returned to the Great Void, you should only focus on the Great Void and not interfere with anything else. The Balance will be handled by the Equalizers. I hope you’ll focus on your cultivation.”

“Understood.” The figure flashed away.

Chapter 1190: The Appearance of Mysterious Men

After Lu Zhou and Lu Qianshan returned from the black lotus domain to the Hall of Runes in Great Tang's royal palace in the red lotus domain, Lu Zhou returned to the Preservation Hall.

As soon as he settled down, he opened the book he obtained from the Nine Twist Illusionary Formation and continued to read.

"I saw the power of the Dao and focused on seeking the path of Supremacy. However, I was restrained by the heaven and earth shackles. Rumor has it that the secret to breaking the shackles is hidden in the Unknown Land. Hence, I went to the Unknown Land. After spending 30 years there, I killed two beast emperors, ten beast kings, and countless others..."

Lu Zhou. "..."

"All living things in heaven and earth should be protected. I obtained a part of the Heavenly Writing on Longevity Mountain and comprehended the Heavenly Dao. I'm only a step away from becoming a sage."

"The heavenly axiom is to maintain the balance. The Great Void will eliminate living beings in the nine domains."

"I'm leaving this book behind for the future generation."

After flipping to the last page, the book dissolved into specks of starlight before they formed the dazzling inscriptions of the Heavenly Writing.

Lu Zhou was surprised. "It's actually part of the Heavenly Writing?"

It seemed like he had hit a jackpot with the Nine Twist Illusionary Formation.

"Ding! Obtained an Open Heavenly Writing Scroll. Do you want to use it?"

Lu Zhou noticed the words 'Open Heavenly Writing Scroll' flashing on the system interface. Then, he shifted his gaze to the Upgrade Card.

Since he had upgraded the system once, he had a little experience regarding this matter. During the upgrading process, he would lose his five senses. He had to make sure he was at a completely safe place before he used the Upgrade Card.

Previously, when he was upgrading the system, he was a little lax, resulting in Liu Ge coming to find and almost killing his disciple. This time, he had to be more cautious.

After a moment, he dismissed those thoughts and focused on the Heavenly Writing.

"Use."

Lu Zhou discovered the words of the Heavenly Writing were no longer as alien to him as before. It was similar to when he was comprehending the Human Scroll of the Heavenly Writing. In the beginning, he could not understand anything at all. However, as time passed, he gradually grew familiar with it until he was able to understand it.

"I wonder what ability I'll get this time?"

With this, he hurriedly closed his eyes and meditated on the newly obtained Heavenly Writing Scroll.

Coincidentally, he needed to replenish his supreme mystic power as well. He had exhausted it with that one palm strike earlier.

Everything was difficult in the beginning; it was the same when comprehending the new Heavenly Writing Scroll. However, as time passed, it got better, and Lu Zhou fell into his meditative state.

Specks of starlight appeared around his body as he meditated on the Heavenly Writing.

...

The next morning.

Mingshi Yin and Zhu Honggong sat on top of the palace wall as they watched the battle in the training arena.

Zhu Honggong massaged Mingshi Yin's shoulders and said ingratiatingly, "As expected of Fourth Senior Brother. You managed to bring Eldest Senior Brother here..."

At this moment, Yu Shangrong and Yu Zhenghai were locked in a stalemate in the training arena. Due to the differences in their realms, it was difficult for them to test their strength against each other. Therefore, they suppressed their cultivation to that of a Ten Worlds cultivator to fight. However, after fighting for two days and two nights, there were no conclusive results.

Mingshi Yin said with a smile. "What do you know? In fact, even if I didn't look for Eldest Senior Brother, he would eventually come..."

Zhu Honggong smiled ingratiatingly and said, "Fourth Senior Brother, you've truly widened my horizons. If I'm half as smart as you, I wouldn't be beaten up every day. Ouch! It still hurts!" He winced in pain when he touched his bruised and swollen face.

Mingshi Yin shook his head and said, "Although you've already sprouted the eleventh leaf, you should continue to cultivate diligently. Otherwise, you'd only continue to embarrass yourself..."

Zhu Honggong scratched his head and thought to himself, 'Isn't it because all of you are abnormally strong that I'm in such an embarrassing state?'

After a beat, Zhu Honggong said tentatively, "Why don't I look for the four elders to spar?"

As soon as the words fell, the sound of coughing rang from the bottom of the palace wall.

Zuo Yushu staggered slightly as she walked. "Ouch, my head hurts today..."

"My legs have been aching over the past few days as well... I'm really getting old. Old Leng, do you think the Evil Sky Pavilion's disciple will look for me to spar?"

Leng Luo replied, "I don't think so. The disciples are all kind. They're not the type to bully the weak and the elderly. Moreover, if your old bones are broken, it'd be shameful if words spread out..."

"You have a point. However, we're pursuing the path of cultivation, after all. Why don't we ask for the disciples' opinion?"

The four elders continued to chat as they walked away.

Zhu Honggong. “?”

Mingshi Yin nudged Zhu Honggong before he said, “Look for someone else to spar with. Obviously, they’re not suitable sparring partners...”

However, Zhu Honggong chuckled before he said, “Fourth Senior Brother, you’re wrong this time.”

“Hm?”

Swoosh!

Without another word, Zhu Honggong leaped down from the palace wall and chased after the four elders.

Ming Shiyin. “...”

Ming Shiyin stumbled and almost lost his footing. He really had to give it to Zhu Honggong. He continued to bask in the sun until he saw a black avatar appearing near the forest north of the capital.

He straightened his back and revealed a sly smile on his face. “You have quite the guts to show up here...”

It had been a long time since unwanted cultivators had come to the capital of Great Tang. The capital had its rules after all.

“Doggy, let’s go!”

Woof!

Qiong Qi barked and flew over.

Then, the duo made their way toward the forest at the north of the capital.

...

In the forest north of the capital.

“It doesn’t matter if you won or lost the battle at Black Wind Cliff. No matter what, you have to die today.”

“We’ve been looking for you for a very long time.”

“You’re very good at hiding.”

At this moment, several black figures hovered in the air, surrounding Xiao Yunhe.

Traces of blood could be seen on the corner of Xiao Yunhe’s mouth as he sneered. “Xia Zhengrong must be behind this...”

“Who’s Xia Zhengrong?”

Xiao Yunhe scoffed. “When I was the Tower Master of the Black Tower Council, all of you were still playing with mud. Tell me, who sent you?”

During the battle at the Black Wind Cliff, Xiao Yunhe and Xia Zhengrong fought for three days and three nights. Both sides had exhausted their energy, and in the end, Xiao Yunhe had won. As they were making their way back, they were ambushed by this group of mysterious people. At that time, Wu Chao had led them to a runic passage to the red lotus domain. However, the group of people seemed to have expected that as well; they had seen through Wu Chao's witchcraft techniques. Along the way, several of his brothers were killed, and Wu Chao's current whereabouts were unknown. He was the only one left who had escaped to the red lotus domain.

Xiao Yunhe did not recognize these people. They disguised themselves as black lotus cultivators, but their energy seals indicated they were not pure black lotus cultivators.

Upon hearing Xiao Yunhe's words, the five cultivators spoke up one after another.

"You stole something from us, and you forgot about it just like that?"

"He's pretending!"

"Why don't we kill him first before extracting a confession from him?"

"How are we going to extract a confession from him if we kill him?"

"By whipping his corpse?"

"..."

"..."

Xiao Yunhe chuckled and said, "I'm afraid only your corpses will be whipped..."

"You still refuse to admit defeat even though death is at hand?"

"This place is less than five kilometers away from Great Tang's royal palace. Don't tell me you're unaware of this? If you dare to make a move, my friends will rush over immediately."

The five black-clad cultivators exchanged a look before they began to speak one after another again. It was as though they were robots.

"He said he has friends here!"

"They sound like experts..."

"Maybe he's just bluffing?"

"It's possible he's telling the truth as well. We have to end this quickly."

"Alright!"

Following that, one of them waved his hand.

Then, the five of them drew a circle with their fingers.

Five rings of light that glowed green and black appeared immediately.

Woof!

The five black-clad cultivators looked up in unison.

“Who is it?”

Soon enough, Mingshi Yin appeared on Qiong Qi’s back before everyone’s eyes. “It’s really lively here.”

The five black-clad cultivators exchanged a look before they looked at Qiong Qi. Then, just like before, they spoke up mechanically one after another

“You have no business here.”

“It’s best not to interfere with other people’s affairs.”

“Meddlers often have miserable ends.”

“You’re not even as strong as Xiao Yunhe.”

“That’s right. Leave.”

The five of them spoke a sentence each.

“No, no, no, how can you say I have no business being here? Isn’t that Tower Master Xiao?” Mingshi Yin said,

Upon seeing Mingshi Yin, Xiao Yunhe was overjoyed. “Mr. Fourth? How’s your master?”

“He’s doing well. How did you get injured??” Mingshi Yin asked.

“They’re just minor injuries. It’s not a big deal.”

Seeing the duo chatting enthusiastically, the five black-clad cultivators frowned.

Mingshi Yin said, “That’s right. My master mentioned something a few days ago. He wants to know who won between you and Xia Zhengrong?”

Xiao Yunhe sighed. “Although I won, I ran into five rats on the way back.”

Mingshi Yin shifted his gaze to the five people before he said with a smile, “Why don’t you forget about this matter for my sake? I’ll treat all of you to a cup of tea later.”

The five black-clad cultivators discussed among themselves in a low voice for a moment.

The five greenish-black rings of light flew out following that.

Xiao Yunhe cried out, “Hurry up and leave!”

“Leave this to me!” Mingshi Yin flipped in the air. Bluewood began to grow rapidly before the vines shielded him.

The five black-clad cultivators flashed. Three of them rushed into the forest while the other two looked at Xiao Yunhe.

“Keep an eye on him. We’ll deal with the other one first!”

“Alright.”

