

## Disciples 161

### Chapter 161: I Know Your Schemes

Little Yuan'er also clearly distrusted him. "I think that there's something fishy about him as well."

Lu Zhou stopped walking. He paused halfway on the staircase and said, "How so?"

Mingshi Yin bowed at Lu Zhou before walking up to Wei Zhuoyan. He said, "Wei Zhuoyan, you've got guts."

Wei Zhuoyan said in a puzzled tone, "I'm not sure I understand your meaning, Mister Fourth."

"Alright... That's enough. I know about your scheme... Your scheme is too boring and predictable." Mingshi Yin shook his head.

"I truly don't understand what you're trying to say, Mister Fourth." Wei Zhuoyan's bearing was clearly different from when he had just arrived at the Evil Sky Pavilion's great hall.

"Would a grand commander-in-chief of the three armies, a man who holds vast military power, come here and atone for his sins on his own accord?" Mingshi Yin laughed.

Wei Zhuoyan shook his head and said with a sigh, "I've had difficulty sleeping and eating these days. I've been constantly thinking about it and was torn between various options. This has kept me up countless nights... I can't do something against my good nature... The incident of the Fish Dragon Village is my doing, and mine alone. I'll bear the consequences of my actions. The Evil Sky Pavilion is free to kill or torture me as they see fit."

"..." Mingshi Yin was taken aback. 'He's good with his words. Is he trying to bully me for being less eloquent? Moreover, it's truly strange that his resolve is so firm.'

"Aren't you going to beg for mercy?"

"I have no right to beg for mercy. Since I came here, I didn't think about leaving alive. However, I have one request."

"And what's that?"

"I wish to take my own life."

Silence descended on the great hall.

This was the first time any of them had heard of such a request.

Ever since they drove away the ten great elites, the Fiend Temple's Zuo Xinchuan, the Black Knights' Fan Xiuwen, or Hua Wudao with his obsession, they had not met someone like Wei Zhuoyan.

Wei Zhuoyan's intention truly confused the others. The more humble he was, the more suspicious Mingshi Yin became.

Mingshi Yin walked up to Wei Zhuoyan and said in a low voice, "You're a Seven-leaf elite..."

“Why do you doubt me so, Mister Fourth? The Evil Sky Pavilion has asked me to own up to my sins, and here I am! Could it be... that you want me to return, amass my forces, and fight with the Evil Sky Pavilion?” Wei Zhuoyan could not understand what Mingshi Yin wanted as well. ‘You don’t like it when I’m going against you. Now that I’m doing as you requested, you question my motive. What do I have to do to satisfy you?’ His thoughts were clearly written on his face.

Wei Zhuoyan seemed to have a point. Mingshi Yin scratched his head. For a time, he could not figure out what was wrong.

Duanmu Sheng and Little Yuan’er could not figure it out as well.

In fact, it was wishful thinking to expect them to figure out what was wrong. After all, this was the first time they were faced with such a situation.

Little Yuan’er finally said, “Fourth Senior Brother, perhaps, he sincerely intends to repent by coming to the Evil Sky Pavilion since he has been troubled by this matter for a long time?”

“...”

“Little Junior Sister, you’re too naïve. I won’t believe anything that comes out of this man’s mouth...” Mingshi Yin said.

Little Yuan’er protested weakly, “But... he’s willing to die.”

Well, yes, there was that. Wei Zhuoyan seemed ready to die without any qualms. How could Mingshi Yin find fault with this? However, he said disdainfully, “Perhaps, he’s hiding some terrifying witchcraft trap on him. Maybe he’s waiting for master to approach him before he pulls the same stunt as the Ten Shamans to take all of us down! Such methods are too crude.” He continued to add, “Yes, yes, that’s highly possible. Everyone! Move back! We can’t let him achieve his goal!”

“...”

Mingshi Yin sounded slightly paranoid, but he had a point.

From the moment Wei Zhuoyan entered and kneeled to offer his apology, everyone had already found it strange. He seemed determined to humble himself and apologize. This was not the way the commander-in-chief of the three armies would act.

Moreover, not too long ago, when Jiang Aijian passed on the Evil Sky Pavilion’s message to Wei Zhuoyan, Jiang Aijian had mentioned Wen Zhuoyan did not think much of it. This happened recently. Why did his behavior take a 180-degree change?

Everyone looked at Wei Zhuoyan again.

Wei Zhuoyan spoke with a straight face and a fearless tone, “Even if I’m trying to trick you, you’re all guarded against me. You can think of me as a despicable person who’s trying to plot against you, but please let me die...”

“...”

This was awkward.

Mingshi Yin prided himself on his intelligence, but he truly could not put his fingers on what was wrong.

Duanmu Sheng sighed as he shook his head and said, "Perhaps, Little Junior Sister is right. He might be sincere."

Wei Zhuoyan said solemnly, "Indeed. I have thoroughly repented."

That sounded awkward. It was one thing for another person to say this, but it was different coming out from his own mouth.

"Enough," Lu Zhou said.

The great hall fell silent.

Mingshi Yin retreated with a sheepish expression on his face. He was too embarrassed to say anything else.

Lu Zhou sauntered toward Wei Zhuoyan.

Wei Zhuoyan who was still kneeling looked up and met Lu Zhou's gaze when he saw Lu Zhou walking over.

It was said that the eyes were windows to a person's soul. Based on the look in Wei Zhuoyan's eyes, it was clear that he was not afraid.

Lu Zhou looked down at Wei Zhuoyan and said indifferently, "You're really unafraid?"

"I don't even fear death... What's there to be afraid of?"

"What if you're not the only one I intend to kill?"

"..." Wei Zhuoyan was stunned.

At this moment, the great hall fell silent again. If a needle had fallen to the ground at this moment, they would have heard it.

Mingshi Yin, Duanmu Sheng, and Little Yuan'er turned to look at their master. They really had to applaud their master for being so ruthless. Only their master could deal with a person like this.

"Why do you have to do this, Pavilion Master?"

"Because you're not being honest..."

Wei Zhuoyan was taken aback again. He felt as though his thoughts had been laid bare. A sense of apprehension rose in his heart. However, he said, "That's not important... Everything's not important. Didn't the Evil Sky Pavilion want me dead? It's meaningless to discuss other matters."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "No, it does have meanings."

His disciples were puzzled by this.

Lu Zhou stared at Wei Zhuoyan and said with a sigh, "Since you want to die, I'll fulfill your wish."

"... Okay..." Wei Zhuoyan's 'okay' sounded a lot less confident compared to before.

Lu Zhou raised his hand without any warning and struck Wei Zhuoyan with his palm! His Brahman Eight Meridians' Primal Qi condensed into energy and landed squarely on Wei Zhuoyan's chest.

Bam!

Wei Zhuoyan reeled from the impact!

"General!"

"General!"

The soldiers exclaimed with shock.

Thud!

Wei Zhuoyan fell to the floor and continued sliding backward. He slid all the way into the midst of the soldiers.

The others looked at this scene with a dumbfounded expression.

They all knew how terrifying their master could be. He was even capable of killing an elite like Ren Buping with a single palm strike. On top of that, the technique he had used was the Nine Cuts Hand Seals. This technique could shock heaven and earth and make the deities cry. Why was it that their master only sent Wei Zhuoyan flying? Wei Zhuoyan was not even hurt.

'Isn't this palm strike... too weak?' The disciples were baffled by this. They looked at Wei Zhuoyan who had sat back up as he pressed a hand to his chest.

Lu Zhou said, "Is this the same Wei Zhuoyan with a Seven-leaf avatar?"

Wei Zhuoyan endured the pain and said, "I've already owned up to my sins... If you want to kill me, please make it quick."

"Fool," Lu Zhou cursed.

"Hm?" Wei Zhuoyan was stunned.

Lu Zhou's voice was stern as he said, "Come clean, and I won't punish you for impersonating Wei Zhuoyan!"

## **Chapter 162: The Incredible Bai People**

Impersonation?

Mingshi Yin was stunned when he heard his master's words.

Up until now, Wei Zhuoyan had managed to counter all the accusations leveled against him, but this accusation seemed to make him shudder. His eyes widened in disbelief as he looked at Lu Zhou. "O-old senior... I don't understand what you mean."

Lu Zhou said, "Wei Zhuoyan is renowned on the battlefield... He commands three armies. When he led his men on the campaign against Rongbei, they fought an intense battle against the Other Tribes, and he even sprouted his seventh leaf mid-battle..."

Wei Zhuoyan did not understand where Lu Zhou was going with these talks.

Lu Zhou's disciples felt the same way as well. However, for their master to say such words, there must be a reason for it. They stood respectfully with their arms at their sides as they obediently listened to their master's words.

"His cultivation base is profound, and his status high... He's truly a general who rose to his rank by crawling up a pile of bodies," Lu Zhou said.

Upon hearing this, Wei Zhuoyan slumped to the floor. His face turned ghastly pale.

Little Yuan'er and Duanmu Sheng were still puzzled, but realization had already dawned on the intelligent Mingshi Yin.

Mingshi Yin pointed at Wei Zhuoyan and said, "I get it now! You're just an impostor. This explains everything!"

Upon hearing Mingshi Yin's words, the others finally understood what was going on.

Wei Zhuoyan's mind turned blank.

Mingshi Yin stepped forward and pointed at Wei Zhuoyan as he said, "I finally understand what master is trying to say... You've been acting all this while... I thought that you were strange. You want to be a scapegoat? I must say I'm impressed by your resolve. Alas... Your cultivation base isn't right, your mannerism, words, and actions are too unnatural. Although you tried your best to act as if death is your old friend, you lack the decisiveness and killing intent of a soldier! Hm... I'm right, aren't I?"

In the beginning, everyone thought Wei Zhuoyan was concealing his cultivation base. As it turned out, he really was not concealing his cultivation base.

"..." Duanmu Sheng and Little Yuan'er looked at Mingshi Yin as if he was a madman.

'Isn't he ashamed of being the insufferable know-it-all after the truth is revealed?'

Mingshi Yin continued, "Also, it's said that Wei Zhuoyan's deputies were powerful as well. Even if they didn't have seven leaves, they have at least three or four leaves. However, you only brought a ragtag group of soldiers with you. Why don't you come clean and tell us your name? Are you Wei Zhuoyan's twin brother?"

Mingshi Yin's questions at the end were the same questions Lu Zhou had in his mind.

In truth, the moment 'Wei Zhuoyan' entered the great hall, Lu Zhou had already known he was an impostor. His Eye of Truth had revealed the impostor's cultivation base to him.

Mingshi Yin glanced at his master and understood what he meant. He turned back to Wei Zhuoyan and said with a deep voice, "I'm telling you... We know you're an impostor. I don't care what your reasons are for taking the fall for Wei Zhuoyan, but the Evil Sky Pavilion won't let Wei Zhuoyan off the hook even after your death! You'll only die in vain!"

"..." The impostor gulped nervously. Sweat was trickling down his face. His expression had also turned slightly sour.

“Tell us, what’s your name?”

At this juncture, it was clearly futile to keep up pretenses. He knew the Evil Sky Pavilion would not let this rest. If he remained stubborn, he would only die here in vain. In the end, he said, defeated, “Wei Zhuoran...”

“His twin brother?”

“Wei Zhuoyan is my older cousin...” Wei Zhuoran said.

“That’s no different from a brother... He’s quite vicious to send you to die in his place! What a cheap trick,” Mingshi Yin said scornfully.

Wei Zhuoran shook his head. He seemed relieved now. “If I don’t die... my entire family, 100 of them, will die.”

Mingshi Yin clapped his hands and said, “Truly vicious! It seems like Wei Zhuoyan truly has what it takes to be the commander-in-chief of the three armies.”

“I have no choice!”

“It’s true that you didn’t have a choice... You must’ve practiced a lot back home just to put up this show. When I first saw you, I thought you’re a great general. After all, nobody in the Evil Sky Pavilion has ever seen Wei Zhuoyan. Your hard work is commendable. Alas, you couldn’t fool my master’s eyes,” Mingshi Yin said, not forgetting to flatter his master at the end.

‘Old Fourth really is a master of flattery.’

Duanmu Sheng cupped his fists and said, “Master, regardless of his identity, we should kill all of them here. Then, we’ll send word to Wei Zhuoyan and demand that he surrenders.”

Lu Zhou ignored Duanmu Sheng. He looked at Wei Zhuoran appraisingly before he looked at soldiers standing behind Wei Zhuoran.

The soldiers were long past their breaking point. Their limbs were limp, and their faces white with shock.

Lu Zhou shook his head. He looked at Wei Zhuoran and said, “I’ll give you a chance to live... This includes your family as well.”

Wei Zhuoran was stunned! He had trouble processing Lu Zhou’s words.

Lu Zhou continued, “From this day on, you’ll be the real Wei Zhuoyan!”

“...”

His disciples were stunned as well.

Wei Zhuoran asked, “What do you mean?”

Mingshi Yin said with a smile, “That’s brilliant, master! Wei Zhuoyan commands the three armies after all. If he dies, there’s sure to be chaos... Just as well. You can take his place and continue to play the part of Wei Zhuoyan. This is called beating someone at their own game.

Everyone else understood Lu Zhou's plan now.

Wei Zhuoran swallowed. He regarded the villains around him warily.

"What? You're unwilling?" Mingshi Yin asked. "In that case, you can die... Your family, and your cousin, Wei Zhuoyan, will still have to die! That's the golden rule for my master. There's no room for exception."

"I... I..." It was clear that Wei Zhuoran was lacking in confidence. However, even if the people of the palace found out that he was an impostor, would they dare to expose him? For as long as Great Yan stood, the people with power would naturally understand that it was more important to prioritize the bigger picture.

Lu Zhou waved his arm and said, "Lock them up... Don't let them leave before Wei Zhuoyan's dead."

"Yes, master."

Just when Duanmu Sheng was about to bring Wei Zhuoran away, Zhao Yue rushed into the great hall. A female disciple from the Derived Moon Palace female cultivator was next to her. "Master, Junior Sister Tianxin is showing some changes!"

Mingshi Yin, Little Yuan'er, and Duanmu Sheng were shocked.

Lu Zhou appeared calm.

Zhao Yue continued, "I don't understand. Her dantian's sea of Qi has clearly been disabled, but she's absorbing Primal Qi! I find this confusing and would like to ask for your opinion, master."

Lu Zhou said nothing. Instead, he walked out of the great hall with his hands on his back.

Little Yuan'er and Mingshi Yin hastily followed him.

Duanmu Sheng waved his Overlord Spear at Wei Zhuoran and shouted, "Let's go, future Great General Wei!"

In no time at all, Lu Zhou and the others arrived at the south pavilion and outside of the room where Ye Tianxin was kept. They were still some steps away when they felt the faint waves of Primal Qi from the room.

It was not strong. However, this should have been impossible for a cultivator whose dantian's sea of Qi had been disabled.

Lu Zhou waved his hand. The door was opened. He was greeted by a shocking scene.

Ye Tianxin was levitating above the bed. Her body was gleaming with a faint radiance, the color of white jade. She was absorbing the Primal Qi in the surroundings. Her skin tone was slowly recovering, and her white hair was slowly darkening...

Incredible!

Lu Zhou remained calm as he observed Ye Tianxin's changes.

## **Chapter 163: Breaking the Cocoon or Binding Oneself**

Mingshi Yin and Little Yuan'er came to the side to have a look. Both of them were shocked.

The transparent Primal Qi wrapped itself around Ye Tianxin as more and more Primal Qi was pulled in from the surroundings. Her hair was turning blacker and blacker by the minute, and her skin tone was gradually changing to that of a normal person's. Her Bai characteristics were slowly disappearing.

"Master, the Primal Qi is still gathering!" Little Yuan'er reminded him.

Lu Zhou remained silent. With his current cultivation base, it was not difficult for him to sense Primal Qi.

Golden Court Mountain was one of the 72 Blessed Lands. It had a natural advantage and was rich in Primal Qi. It was also protected by a barrier and was practically untouchable. This made Golden Court Mountain a place well-suited for cultivation.

Lu Zhou could sense the Primal Qi that was being gathered around them. Moreover, it seemed to be gaining speed.

Creak! Creak! Creak!

"Master, what's happening?" Little Yuan'er asked, slightly worried.

Mingshi Yin was surprised by the sight. He said, "This might be one of the Bai people's characteristics."

"Will Senior Sister Tianxin die..." Little Yuan'er was not very experienced with the affairs of the world. Her opinions and hostility against Ye Tianxin were much lower after this incident.

"I don't think so."

Creak!

The Primal Qi formed a special energy that wrapped around Ye Tianxin.

Mingshi Yin cupped his fists and said, "Master, did you know about this special characteristic of the Bais?"

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. "If she's not a Bai... How could she be more talented than you in cultivation?"

Upon hearing Lu Zhou's words, Mingshi Yin was hit with a pang of realization. He had joined the Evil Sky Pavilion much earlier than Ye Tianxin. He had also cultivated painstakingly. However, after Ye Tianxin had joined the Evil Sky Pavilion, her cultivation base surpassed his in no time. For this reason, their master had happily given her the Amorous Hoop. With a heaven-grade weapon in her possession, she became even stronger. He, who prided himself on being a genius, suffered a blow from this. By the time his Little Junior Sister had joined the pavilion, he had already gotten used to it.

At this moment, Ye Tianxin slowly descended on the bed. With a soft grunt, she slowly opened her eyes before taking in her surroundings. When she saw that Lu Zhou was standing beside her, she became emotional and struggled to get up, causing the energy around her to disperse.

Ye Tianxin hurriedly got up and knelt on the bed. "Since I know the true culprit behind that incident, I wish you'll allow me to kill that bastard with my own hands, master! After my wish is fulfilled, I'll atone for my sins with my life!"



“Atone for your sins with your life?”

Mingshi Yin hastily went up to her and said, “This Wei Zhuoyan is a fake! Don’t you go killing the wrong person!”

“A fake?” Ye Tianxin was stunned.

Mingshi Yin filled her in on the latest developments.

When she heard this, Ye Tianxin visibly withered. Her expression was dark, and she appeared to be listless. If it were not for her anger, she might have remained unconscious for a longer period of time.

“Your dantian’s sea of Qi has just recovered. You shouldn’t pull a stunt like that,” Mingshi Yin advised her.

“Just recovered?” Ye Tianxin appeared lost. She hastily lowered her head and looked at the skin of her wrist. Then, she grabbed her own hair. For a moment, she was dumbfounded.

Mingshi Yin said, “You’re a Bai...”

“A Bai?”

“Humans are the most intelligent of all creatures, and yet, many variations exist. Some are tall while some are short; some are fat while some are slim; some are dumb while some are smart... In cultivation, some are more gifted than the others...” Mingshi Yin said cautiously but frankly.

Ye Tianxin was taken aback.

Mingshi Yin was ready to explain things to her slowly.

Lu Zhou raised a hand and interrupted him. He said, “Ye Tianxin, I have a question for you.”

Ye Tianxin immediately trembled. She regained her composure and looked at Lu Zhou subserviently.

“Do you know about Cheng Huang?”

“Cheng Huang?” Ye Tianxin appeared puzzled. Then, she appeared to mull over Lu Zhou’s words. No matter how she racked her brains, she did not know anything about it. She shook her head and said, “I don’t know what Cheng Huang is.”

Lu Zhou’s gaze fell on Ye Tianxin again.

Name: Ye Tianxin

Race: Bai (Human)

Cultivation base: Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm (recovering...)

Lu Zhou noticed that an extra ‘Human’ was added behind the word ‘Bai’ as an added explanation. Also, her cultivation base seemed to be recovering. However, her loyalty had not been triggered. He thought about it for a moment. There was no doubt her hatred had been cleared. Perhaps, she needed to be re-initiated into the pavilion for her loyalty to appear? Did she break the cocoon and morphed into a butterfly, or did she break it only to bind herself?

Lu Zhou was in no hurry anyway so he said, "Never mind..." If even the Bai did not know about Cheng Huang, perhaps, it did not exist in the first place.

Moreover, Lu Zhou had practically no interest in Cheng Huang. With the Reversal Card, he could live on forever as long as he stayed out of harm's way. Why would he need Cheng Huang?

Lu Zhou's objective was not Cheng Huang's life-extending ability. He had a vague feeling that he would be able to regain his lost memories if he could find Cheng Huang. With this thought in mind, he turned around and left.

"Rest well, master."

"Rest well, master."

Little Yuan'er followed Lu Zhou when he left while Mingshi Yi stayed to explain what had happened to Ye Tianxin. He began from the Bai people, Cheng Huang, their master's investigation of the Fish Dragon Village incident, to him being afflicted by the witchcraft trap, and manning the cloud-splitting chariot... He recounted everything to her.

Ye Tianxin was, naturally, stunned by his words. After a moment, she said earnestly, "In any case, I'll remember your favor, Fourth Senior Brother."

"Don't thank me... You should thank master..."

"I've committed a grave mistake. I don't think master will let me return to the Evil Sky Pavilion that easily..." Ye Tianxin said.

"Don't worry about it. It's true that it might be difficult if this had happened in the past... but master's behavior and temper have changed quite a bit lately. If you show some effort and sincerity, I don't think it'll be a problem for you to return to the Evil Sky Pavilion," Mingshi Yin said, "Besides, we're short of hands." Whenever he thought about how a person of his status had to man the flying chariot's helm, he felt slightly embarrassed.

"Fourth Senior Brother, are... a-are you serious?" Ye Tianxin asked tentatively.

"Of course. Humans are reciprocal in nature... Master has given me the Separation Hook and Scabbard. For that alone, I won't say anything bad about him ever again! Don't give me that look, I'm perfectly normal..." Mingshi Yin said.

When she heard Mingshi Yin's words, Ye Tianxin sighed with relief.

...

After Lu Zhou left the south pavilion, he did not return to the Evil Sky Pavilion. He checked the list of missions on the system dashboard.

Apart from the missions of instructing his disciples, the mission of making Wei Zhuoyan admit his guilt was still ongoing. The fake Wei Zhuoyan admitting his guilt, naturally, did not count.

Lu Zhou gave it some thought as he made his way to the north pavilion.

Little Yuan'er asked curiously, "Master, what are you going to do in the north pavilion?"

Lu Zhou glanced at Little Yuan'er. He could tell there was something on her mind. He asked casually, "What's the matter?"

"I've been cultivating the Supreme Purity Jade Slip, but I can't help but feel that there's something wrong with it."

It was a good sign that Little Yuan'er was willing to ask for advice.

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Let me interrogate Fan Xiuwen first."

"Thank you, master."

The two of them reached the north pavilion.

The charred Fan Xiuwen was lying on the floor. He seemed barely conscious. His breathing was extremely shallow as though he was going to die at any given time.

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Leng Luo... Do you want to witness Mo Li's death so badly?"

Creak!

Fan Xiuwen could not move, but he managed to clench his fist. The sound of him cracking his knuckles rang in the air.

"I can help you kill Mo Li..." Lu Zhou said slowly.

Fan Xiuwen struggled to open his eyes that could still be seen on his blackened face.

Lu Zhou continued, "However, there's a condition..."

#### **Chapter 164: The Most Powerful Subordinate**

Lu Zhou could clearly see that Fan Xiuwen was shaking. "The condition is simple... From this day onward, you'll have to be loyal to the Evil Sky Pavilion."

The room fell silent.

Fan Xiuwen stopped shaking and seemed to have regained his composure. He did not speak, but a self-mocking expression could be seen on his face as though he wondered what use he would be in his current state. He was aware of his situation. The leader of the Black Knights, the first on the blacklist... all those were meaningless now.

Little Yuan'er kept her distance since she was frightened by Fan Xiuwen's appearance.

Fan Xiuwen was as dark as charcoal. He looked more like a monster than a human at this moment. Apart from being gravely injured, it was highly likely that his cultivation base had been crippled. He was useless now. Was there a need for the grand Evil Sky Pavilion to accept someone like him?

Little Yuan'er had difficulty understanding her master's decision as well. Naturally, she did not dare to question it. 'Master must have his own reason for doing this.'

"If you agree, I have ways to save you..."

Upon hearing Lu Zhou's words, Fan Xiuwen trembled. He mustered all his strength and lifted his head. He wanted to look at Lu Zhou. Alas, his injuries were too severe and he ended up slumping to the ground again. As he fell back on the ground, a wisp of a voice escaped from his mouth, "Sure." A single syllable was all he was capable of speaking at this moment.

"Ding! Obtained an Eight-leaf Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm subordinate. Reward: 2,000 merit points. Special suggestion: The difficulty of controlling this subordinate is higher than usual. Please increase his loyalty."

Lu Zhou glanced at Fan Xiuwen when he heard the notification.

Name: Leng Luo

Race: Human

Cultivation base: Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm (highly damaged)

Loyalty: 2%

The low loyalty clearly showed it would be difficult to use him.

In any case, Fan Xiuwen was once on the top of the blacklist. Moreover, he was also the leader of the Black Knights who held much authority. On top of that, he had a terrifying Eight-leaf cultivation base. It was not surprising for someone like that to be prideful. Even Wei Zhuoyan, the commander of the three armies was not like him. In any case, his addition to the pavilion would still be a good thing.

"Very well." Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction. "Since you've joined the Evil Sky Pavilion, you're not allowed to serve another master..."

Fan Xiuwen tried to speak, but the only sound that came out from his throat was a gurgling noise.

Lu Zhou raised his hand slowly. A faint azure light appeared in his palm. When he waved his hand, the azure light descended.

Upon seeing the ball of energy, Fan Xiuwen's eyes widened.

This was the Critical Heal Card.

It was worth it to exchange a 300 point card for a formidable subordinate. Moreover, the system had rewarded Lu Zhou with 2,000 points.

Lu Zhou began to think about how to control Fan Xiuwen. Indeed it would be difficult to control someone of Fan Xiuwen's caliber. In the end, he decided he would slowly deal with this matter.

Fan Xiuwen was heavily wounded. The Critical Heal Card could only heal 30% of his injuries. In his current state, he would not be able to play any tricks.

The azure light shrouded Fan Xiuwen's charred body, entering his body until it reached his Extraordinary Eight Meridians. The gentle energy instantly coursed through his body.

Lu Zhou appeared calm as he studied Fan Xiuwen's change.

The effects of the Critical Heal Card reminded him of a Buddhist healing technique, the Merciful Ark of Salvation. The Merciful Ark of Salvation was a technique that only Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm experts could cast. Moreover, it was highly taxing to cast such a technique. It was the equivalent to transferring the healer's energy into the target's Extraordinary Eight Meridians. The energy would be used to expand the meridians again. The target's wounds would then be healed by Merciful Ark of Salvation's special effect.

Fan Xiuwen, loyalty +2%.

It was impossible for Fan Xiuwen not to be shocked and moved by Fan Xiuwen's seemingly selfless act. He was, naturally, unaware that Lu Zhou had nothing to do with it, and it was all thanks to the Critical Heal Card.

When Lu Zhou saw Fan Xiuwen's loyalty rise by 2%, he appeared calm.

'It's difficult enough to raise his loyalty now, I can't imagine how difficult it'd be in the future. Also... two of his subordinates had died in the Evil Sky Pavilion. This will definitely be an obstacle to gaining his loyalty. It'll take more than a day or two to raise his loyalty to 70% or 80%.'

The Critical Heal Card's effect lasted for half an hour.

Lu Zhou calmly observed Fan Xiuwen the entire time. He was not worried with the Critical Card Heal at work.

After half an hour, the azure light began to fade.

The entire time, Little Yuan'er had looked on in shock. She stood at the side obediently, not daring to disturb her master.

Finally, the azure light disappeared completely.

The dried blood and crust fell off Fan Xiuwen. He tried to move. He placed his palms on the ground and pushed himself up. It seemed like he had regained some of his strength. However, his injuries were far from healed.

Fan Xiuwen retreated into a corner and leaned on the wall. This was a better vantage point than the earlier one. He panted heavily as he said in a hoarse voice, "From this day on... Fan Xiuwen no longer... exists... There's only... Leng Luo now..." As soon as he finished speaking, he broke into a violent coughing fit. After all, only 30% of his injuries were healed.

Lu Zhou nodded slightly. He stroked his beard and said, "Leng Luo, I won't bore you with the rules in Evil Sky Pavilion..."

Leng Luo nodded. His expression was stiff. Even when he nodded his neck seemed stiff. Perhaps, he was not used to being a subordinate.

"Pa-pavilion Master?"

"Whatever you wish to call me."

"I... have always... taken promises seriously. However, I'd like to ask... why?" Leng Luo could not figure it out. His current cultivation base was no different from trash. Even if the Evil Sky Pavilion were to kill him, he would not be surprised.

Lu Zhou said indifferently, "Because you're Leng Luo..."

He was Leng Luo, an expert with an Eight-leaf avatar. How could someone like that be worthless?

Leng Luo nodded.

Lu Zhou spoke again, "You want to kill Mo Li?"

"Yes."

"When did you meet him?"

"I can't remember... The only thing I remember is that she seems to be close with the Clarity Sect," Leng Luo said.

Clarity Sect?

Lu Zhou continued, "Mo Li was from the Clarity Sect?"

"That's right."

Pan Zhong had studied witchcraft before this. He had said that many elders and seniors in the sect would adamantly refuse to discuss or mention witchcraft.

"Mo Li, Mo Qi..." Lu Zhou placed his hands on his back as he uttered the two names.

It would have been fine if Lu Zhou did not mention those names.

Upon hearing the names, Leng Luo's expression turned sour. It was clear that he was disgusted.

Lu Zhou glanced at him and asked, "You've led the Black Knights for so long, do you know what her cultivation base is like?"

Leng Luo shook his head and said, "I've never seen her make a move... However, I don't think she's any weaker than Wu Xian when he was within the Grand Predecessor Formation..."

Within the Grand Predecessor Formation, Wu Xian merely possessed 70 to 80% of his strength. With this, Lu Zhou deduced Mo Li's cultivation base was likely comparable to a Seven or Eight-leaf avatar.

It seemed like the Clarity Sect was a place where there were crouching tigers and hidden dragons. Compared to them, the Righteous Sect paled greatly. The two sects were of the same Path, but their strength was starkly different.

At this moment, Duanmu Sheng's voice suddenly rang from afar. "Master, I've locked Wei Zhuoran up... His true cultivation base is only in the Divine Court realm. Even if we give him wings, it would be difficult for him to escape."

Lu Zhou nodded.

Duanmu Sheng continued, "Also, Old Seventh sent a letter."

“What did he say?”

For Si Wuya to send them a letter at this juncture...

“The Righteous Sect’s Zhang Chunlai led a group of people to attack Old Eighth. Their effort ended in failure...”

Lu Zhou was puzzled as he said, “With Old Eighth’s strength... how could he have possibly withstood the onslaught?”

“Old Seventh didn’t mention anything about this in his letter... He also said that Zhang Yuanshan has already gone to the Clarity Sect. They originated from the same sect after all. The Clarity Sect has sworn to bathe Old Eighth’s Tiger Ridge in blood and avenge Zhang Chunlai,” Duanmu Sheng said.

Lu Zhou listened indifferently as though it was some insignificant news. He seemed amused as he said, “He brought this unto himself. He can’t blame anyone for this.”

### **Chapter 165: Your Ten-year Limit**

Duanmu Sheng did not continue. He did not understand his master’s temper nor did he know how his master felt about Old Eighth. He had already done his part by faithfully conveying Old Seventh’s message to his master.

Little Yuan’er said, “Master, Eighth Senior Brother’s cultivation base is similar to mine... If the Clarity Sect makes a move, I think he’ll be chopped to death!”

Little Yuan’er’s choice of words made Lu Zhou feel slightly speechless.

Duanmu Sheng said, “He won’t die that easily.”

Zhu Honggong was an Evil Sky Pavilion’s disciple. With his cultivation base, he would have died a long time ago if he was so easily killed. He would not have stayed alive until this day.

There was also a possibility that Si Wuya sent this letter to try and get rid of his opponent by using the Evil Sky Pavilion. Regardless of his motives, if Lu Zhou was not bothered, there was nothing Si Wuya could do.

Duanmu Sheng and Little Yuan’er remained tactful when they saw their master’s attitude toward the matter. They no longer spoke about the matter and stood obediently and respectfully at the side.

Lu Zhou shifted his gaze back to Leng Luo who was resting against the wall in the corner. He said, “Leng Luo, Mo Li’s cunning and scheming... She’s hiding deep in the palace. Since you hate her, you should kill her with your own hands.” After he finished speaking, he left the north pavilion.

When they were halfway between the north pavilion and the great hall, Duanmu Sheng said, “Master, Leng Luo was once under Mo Li’s command. Also, we’ve killed two of his subordinates. Aren’t you nurturing the tiger and inviting calamity by doing this?”

Leng Luo was an Eight-leaf expert after all. They would have to be prepared for the day if he recovered his strength in the future.

Lu Zhou stopped in his tracks. He shook his head and said, "Leng Luo is still gravely injured. He won't be able to create much trouble. If he truly recovered his Eight-leaf cultivation base... His first target won't be the Evil Sky Pavilion."

When Duanmu Sheng heard this, he was hit with a sudden realization. He smacked his own head and said, "I understand now."

The person whom Leng Luo hated the most right now was Mo Li who was dwelling deep within the palace. Mo Li had controlled Leng Luo for many years. It could be said that Mo Li had single-handedly caused this situation.

"Have Pan Zhong keep an eye on him."

"Yes, master."

They returned to the great hall.

Lu Zhou glanced at the system dashboard.

Merit points: 12,112.

Perhaps, it was due to the adrenaline rush he felt from subduing Leng Luo, Lu Zhou decided to do six lucky draws in a row. Based on previous results, after considering the cost and the results, he would still be earning overall.

Alas, Lu Zhou was greeted with six 'Thank you' messages. Currently, he had 14 luck points. He shook his head and dismissed the dashboard, giving up on the lucky draw for now.

Then, Lu Zhou looked at Little Yuan'er who was standing obediently in the great hall and said, "Come here."

"Mhm..." Little Yuan'er went to Lu Zhou's side like a chick pecking for grain.

"Is there a problem with your cultivation?"

Little Yuan'er nodded and said, "I've been cultivating the Supreme Purity Jade Slip recently, and I have this feeling that my cultivation base isn't making any progress... I'm making no headway."

"Making no headway?" Lu Zhou was puzzled. The completed Supreme Purity Jade Slip should not have many problems. With Little Yuan'er's talent, which far surpassed his other eight disciples, it was impossible that she did not have any headway.

"Give me your hand."

"Oh."

Lu Zhou infused his Primal Qi into Little Yuan'er's Extraordinary Eight Meridians. His Primal Qi circulated within her. After making a complete cycle, it entered her dantian's sea of Qi.

Lu Zhou frowned, "There's only a dantian?"

A cultivator would usually go through Body Tempering to Mystic Enlightening, and from the Sense Condensing to Brahman Sea. If a Brahman Sea cultivator connected all eight meridians, the cultivator



would be able to open up a sea of Qi in their dantian. That was where the name 'Brahman Sea' came from.

The dantian's sea of Qi was the mold of the Golden Lotus under an avatar's feet. The dantian was the Golden Lotus whereas the sea of Qi was the leaves of the lotus and the light that spread in all directions.

Without a sea of Qi, it would be difficult for Little Yuan'er to improve her cultivation base. She would be limited by her dantian.

"Master... what's wrong?"

Lu Zhou raised his hand. He was inwardly shocked.

Little Yuan'er was capable of cultivating up to the Divine Court realm without a sea of Qi. This was a remarkable feat! Fortunately, he had discovered this in time. Otherwise, if she had continued to cultivate in this state, her dantian would have burst from the pressure of the Primal Qi power, and she would die.

"Let's put the Supreme Purity Jade Slip aside for now."

"Oh."

"You've yet to open up your sea of Qi. You'd only be doing more harm than good if you forcibly cultivate."

Upon hearing this, Little Yuan'er cried out in shock, "I've yet to open my sea of Qi?"

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "It's a small issue. There's no need to worry." Although he said that it was a minor issue, it was not something that could be solved easily. What puzzled Lu Zhou was that Little Yuan'er's sea of Qi was closed. There was no way Ji Tiandao did not notice this with his capabilities. For this reason, he surmised Ji Tiandao was most likely the culprit.

Lu Zhou shook his head helplessly.

"Master, a letter..." Little Yuan'er suddenly pointed at a messenger bird circling outside the great hall before she leaped toward it. With movements as quick as lightning, she caught the bird.

When she returned to the great hall, she opened the letter. She said with a pout, "It's that shameless man again!"

"Jiang Aijian?" To be more precise, Liu Chen, the Third Prince of Great Yan?

Little Yuan'er read the letter out loud, "Thank you for the gift of the sword, Old Senior Ji. It truly is a peerless sword. I'm satisfied with it. To show my respect and gratitude to you, old senior, here are some pieces of information..."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded.

With Jiang Aijian's status and brains, it was not surprising for him to be able to open the warehouse and obtain the sword.

"Continue."

“First, be wary of your seventh disciple. He has a knack for troublemaking. Is he trying to plunge the world into chaos? Second, the Wei Zhuoyan who went to the Evil Sky Pavilion is an impostor. The real Wei Zhuoyan has already gone to Bluesun Lake. He’s prepared to hide for eight to ten years since it’s said that your ten-year limit is upon you. That Wei Zhuoyan is truly cunning... Also, isn’t it prudent for us to set a timeline for this partnership of ours? I can’t help but think that I’m getting the short end of the stick by exchanging my entire life for a good sword...”

Ten-year limit...

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and shook his head. “Everyone’s waiting for me to die...”

“Master, I don’t dare to have such thoughts,” Little Yuan’er said.

“Send word to Jiang Aijian. Tell him, since there’s a ten-year limit, this partnership will be dissolved once I die!”

“Mhm, I’ll write to him right away.”

Little Yuan’er sent Lu Zhou’s message out in no time at all.

However, to their surprise, early the next morning, Jiang Aijian had replied to them.

“Nice one, Old Senior Ji. I don’t think it’ll only last for ten years... However, even if it goes on for 15 years, I still think it’s a worthy exchange for this good sword.

After reading the letter, Little Yuan’er cursed at his shamelessness again.

However, Lu Zhou seemed unperturbed. He stroked his beard and said, “Tell him that I’ve always taken promises very seriously and that I hate those who don’t the most.”

“Yes, master.”

After Little Yuan’er sent the letter, Lu Zhou mulled over the content of Jiang Aijian’s letter.

“Notify your Third and Fourth Senior Brothers. Tell them to take Wei Zhuoran with them...”

“What’re you planning to do this time, master?” Little Yuan’er was intrigued.

“Someone’s in a hurry to reincarnate. Naturally, I’m more than willing to fulfill his wish...”

Although Little Yuan’er did not understand this, she nodded anyway. She immediately ran out.

...

Meanwhile, in a cottage at the center of Bluesun Lake.

The cottage was clean and elegant. Apart from a wooden bridge that led to the center of the lake, it was surrounded by water.

A graceful lady next to Wei Zhuoyan asked, “General, can Wei Zhuoran... fool that old villain?”

Wei Zhuoyan was reclining on a wooden armchair, rocking it back and forth. He enjoyed the sunlight as he said, “Since Wei Zhuoran has a death wish, and you’ve trained him well, there won’t be a huge problem... I have nothing to lose even if Wei Zhuoran fails to fool the old villain.”

## Chapter 166: Nobody Can Do Anything About Me

"Judging by the old villain's temper, he'll surely kill Wei Zhuoran without any hesitation... However, it'll be wise for us to prepare for all eventualities," the woman said.

Wei Zhuoyan smiled and said drily, "There's no need to worry. I'm the commander-in-chief of the three armies. If I die, I'll drag everyone down with me!" Based on his words, it was clear he did not mind having injustice done to others but not the other way around.

Wei Zhuoyan turned to look at the woman next to him and said, "Jingyi, you've been with me for many years. I know that you're a cautious person, but you have a tendency to overthink things as well..."

"You're right, General."

"Have you forgotten about the previous lesson? The relationship between the Second Prince and Mo Li isn't ordinary," Wei Zhuoyan said with a mysterious and knowing smile.

"I have been overthinking things."

Wei Zhuoyan rose to his feet, he surveyed the lake and said, "How many years does the Evil Sky Pavilion's old villain has left? I can spend this time cultivating in seclusion at the center of Bluesun Lake. Ten years will pass by in just a blink of an eye. Moreover, the old villain will probably be busy with his personal affairs during these ten years, he probably doesn't even have the time to bother with me."

Rumor had it that the old villain only had ten more years to live. Moreover, a cultivator's cultivation base would deteriorate as they age. There was no doubt someone from the cultivation world would strike first to get their hands on the Evil Sky Pavilion's treasures. At that time, the Evil Sky Pavilion would cease to exist in this world

Wei Zhuoyan said with vigor in his tone, "It's just ten years! I can wait it out! Nobody will be able to do anything to me!" Since his voice was laced with Primal Qi, it spread in the surroundings of the lake, causing ripples on the lake's calm surface.

"That's a brilliant plan, General." Li Jingyi bowed slightly.

Wei Zhuoyan glanced at Li Jingyi with a pleased look and said, "Are there any updates about the Second Prince?"

"His Highness was saddened to hear you went to the Evil Sky Pavilion to admit to your sin, General. His Highness wanted to personally lead an army to march against the Evil Sky Pavilion, but he was dissuaded by Mo Li."

"He certainly put on a good show," Wei Zhuoyan said with a smile, "Did anyone else learn about my whereabouts?" This was the thing that worried him the most.

Li Jingyi replied, "Don't worry, General. Aside from your four deputies and myself, no one is privy to your whereabouts!"

"Very good." Wei Zhuoyan nodded and continued to say, "Even if someone were to come for me in Bluesun Lake, it doesn't matter. I'm like a tiger that has been given wings..." He was a Seven-leaf avatar elite, after all. Regardless of who came, they might not be able to do anything to him.

Wei Zhuoyan was extremely pleased with his plans. He pointed at the azure sky in the distance and said, "Jingyi, don't you think the scenery here is very captivating?"

"Yes, General."

"Look, even the meteor is falling for me..."

In the distant skies, a meteor was moving toward them.

Li Jingyi looked up. She was a woman after all and was prone to girlish thoughts. She wanted to see a meteor as well. However, when she looked at it, she could not help but frown.

The meteor with a long tail behind it grew larger and larger. It seemed strange as it was not as short-lived as ordinary meteors. After all, meteors would disappear in a flash.

Li Jingyi said with a frown, "General, something's not right."

"Hm?"

"That looks like a flying chariot..."

"A flying chariot?" Wei Zhuoyan's eyes widened when he turned to look. Now that the meteor had gotten considerably closer, he discovered it was a huge flying chariot all along! There were only a select few who owned such a flying chariot under the heavens.

At this moment, one of his deputies rushed into the cottage. He bowed and said, "General, we've detected the Evil Sky Pavilion's flying chariot... Please execute our evacuation plan, General!"

Wei Zhuoyan shook his head and said, "No need for that."

"General?"

"How could the Evil Sky Pavilion know of my whereabouts? They must be passing by Bluesun on their way to the Divine Capital..." Wei Zhuoyan said confidently.

Li Jingyi bowed and said, "I think something is amiss. It's not a bad idea to hide so you won't be seen, General..."

"Do you think that I'm afraid of the puny Evil Sky Pavilion?!"

From where they stood, the flying chariot was still quite far away. No matter how good one's eyesight was, it was impossible for them to see Wei Zhuoyan from that distance.

Moreover, Wei Zhuoyan had a Seven-leaf avatar. The old villain might not even be in the flying chariot. If he ran away at the mere sight of the Evil Sky Pavilion's flying chariot, how would he be able to command the three armies in the future? For this reason, he stood at his spot proudly as he looked at the cloud-splitting chariot in the sky.

The cloud-splitting chariot did not slow down.

Wei Zhuoyan pointed at it and said, "Just as I expected."

"You're wise, General!"

“You’re wise, General.”

Wei Zhuoyan’s two subordinates said in unison as they bowed.

Indeed. The cloud-splitting flying chariot did not slow down nor did it lower its altitude.

At the moment they heaved a sigh of relief, a faint golden cluster of light dropped from the cloud-splitting chariot.

One of his subordinates with keen eyes asked, “What’s that?”

The golden radiance seemed like a leaf as it fell toward Bluesun Lake. At the same time, another leaf shrouded in golden light fell again.

“This is bad! It’s a Daoist seal!”

The first golden light had already grown to the height of a tree at this moment, finally revealing what it was to everyone.

A Sole Diamond Seal surrounded with the shining golden scripts of ‘Power’ was shooting toward them. It was clear that it was targeted at Wei Zhuoyan.

Wei Zhuoyan was thoroughly shocked. This meant that all his seemingly meticulous plans had failed. He quickly raised his hand to defend against the descending Sole Diamond Seal.

Bam!

The Sole Diamond Seal sent Wei Zhuoyan flying back.

Boom!

Wei Zhuoyan crashed into the building in the middle of the lake. The building collapsed into rubble immediately.

At the same time, Wei Zhuoyan’s two subordinates were sent flying as well.

Meanwhile, a Great Blitz Treasure Seal surrounded by shining golden ‘Energy’ scripts followed the previous seal and flew toward Wei Zhuoyan as well.

Bam!

Wei Zhuoyan retreated further. A murderous expression appeared on his face as he mobilized his energy.

Hundred Tribulations Insight!

As soon as Wei Zhuoyan’s Seven-leaf avatar appeared, it gathered more energy toward him.

“General!”

“General!”

Wei Zhuo Yan’s four deputies and Ling Jing Yi who saw Wei Zhuoyan being sent flying by the seals had frightened expressions on their faces. All of them were in disbelief.

“There’s more!” Someone cried out.

More Daoist seals began to descend like leaves. The scene was reminiscent of a flock of cranes flying in a neat formation during their migration to the south.

The ‘leaves’ kept falling. Including the initial two ‘leaves’, there were a total of nine ‘leaves’. They were the Outer Circle Mystic Seal, the Inner Eight Words Seal, the Fetterless Seal, the Pantheon Seal, the Eight Trigrams Seal, the Magic Gourd Seal, and the Sun Moon Seal.

The seven Daoist seals seemed to have eyes of their own. They completely ignored the four deputies and Li Jingyi. They bypassed the crumbling building and shot toward Wei Zhuoyan.

Boom!

Boom!

Every script unleashed a loud explosion as they made contact and formed a wall of energy!

“Nine Cuts Hand Seals! A Buddhist grandmaster?” The four deputies were horrified. Although they were elites, when they saw the Nine Cuts Hand Seals, they gave up all notions of putting up a fight. Who would dare to block such a high-level skill?

“After him! We can’t let the general die!” Li Jingyi was the first to react. She rushed toward where the Nine Cuts Hand Seals had landed.

Bluesun Lake was surrounded by dense forests. Wei Zhuoyan was sent flying into the forest, leaving a path in his wake that seemed as though it had been created by humans.

None of them would believe this if they did not witness this with their own eyes.

## **Chapter 167: Such Is His Fate**

The four deputies and Li Jingyi sped toward Wei Zhouyan. The lake was too wide. It felt as though they were running for a long time before they finally reached the long path that was cleared by the Nine Cuts Hand Seals.

They knew the situation bode ill for the Great General, Wei Zhuoyan. However, they did not dare to charge recklessly into the path. They moved slowly when they entered the dense forest, worried that the villains would leap off the cloud-splitting chariot and take all of them out in a fell swoop. The Evil Sky Pavilion was so powerful that they were almost paralyzed with fear. Any Six, Seven, or Eight-leaf cultivator would be destroyed with the flick of their fingers.

Li Jingyi frowned deepened as she looked ahead. She placed a finger on her lips and hushed everyone. Her ears moved. It seemed like she had picked up some movements on the path ahead of them. The movements came from deep within the dense forest. Her heart quickened its beat, this meant Wei Zhuoyan was probably still alive.

The four deputies trailed behind Li Jingyi, clearly trusting her. They would do anything she told them to.

The further they entered the forest, the darker it became. At some point, it was so dark that they could barely see anything.

The leaves from the trees were too dense. They blocked most of the light.

Whizz...

A low drone from some flying object rang from above their heads.

Li Jingyi and the four deputies looked up...

Due to the obstructions, they could only see a flash of light passing them by.

"It's the flying chariot!"

"It's the Evil Sky Pavilion's flying chariot! The sounds and lights are the same..."

"They went back."

"Went back?"

Lu Jingyi frowned again. She turned to look behind her with a suspicious gaze. 'Was the Evil Sky Pavilion's flying chariot merely passing by? That's not likely.'

There were sounds from deep within the forest again.

"Someone's here."

Li Jingyi and the four deputies prepared themselves for combat.

The four deputies had even drawn their swords to guard against any enemy.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

A figure appeared.

The figure alone made the five of them feel uneasy. They took a step backward despite themselves.

The figure was well-built. Eventually, the figure walked into their range of sight. They were stunned when they saw the person's face.

"General?"

Li Jingyi looked up and saw Wei Zhuoyan, the person whom she was familiar with.

The Nine Cuts Hand Seals was an extremely powerful technique, and yet, General Wei seemed to only sustain a few scratches? The faint trace of blood could be seen on Wei Zhuoyan's lips as well. He appeared calm and unharmed despite his unkempt hair.

Initially, Wei Zhuoyan did not say anything. He merely appraised the five individuals standing before him. After a while, he finally said, "I'm tired."

"General!"

Wei Zhuoyan's four deputies fell to their knees simultaneously.

Li Jingyi was the only one left standing. She said worriedly, "General, this place isn't safe anymore."

“General, I’d rather die than let anything happen to you! Please return to the Divine Capital!”

“Please return to the Divine Capital, General!”

“Please return to the Divine Capital, General!”

Wei Zhuoyan’s subordinates chimed in one after another.

Wei Zhuoyan looked at his four subordinates before his eyes finally landed on Li Jingyi. He said, “Return to the capital.”

A peculiar gleam could be seen in Li Jingyi’s eyes at this moment. It seemed as though she wanted to say something but thought the better of it. In the end, she cupped her fists together and said, “Understood!”

Wei Zhuoyan walked past the fallen and trampled trees around Bluesun Lake.

At the same time, Li Jingyi stared at Wei Zhuoyan’s receding back with a complicated look in her eyes. She reminded sternly, “Remember, nothing happened here today.”

“Understood!” The four subordinates replied in unison.

...

Meanwhile, the cloud-splitting chariot flew past Bluesun Mountain and Bluesun Town as it sped toward the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Lu Zhou stood atop the flying chariot with his arms on his back.

Mingshi Yi bowed and said enthusiastically, “That was amazing, master! You’ve truly widened my horizons!” He found it difficult to calm down after witnessing the Nine Cuts Hand Seals. After all, he knew how powerful the Nine Cuts Hand Seals after witnessing the battle with the Ten Shamans. Regardless, when he saw his master taking down Wei Zhuoyan from such a distance on the flying chariot, he was genuinely awed by the feat.

“Such is his fate...” Lu Zhou said monotonously.

“It’s true that he has rotten fate... If he had remained in the Divine Capital, he might’ve been able to live longer.” Mingshi Yin seemed to realize he had misspoken again so he quickly corrected himself, “However, even if he’s in the Divine Capital, I’m sure you’ll still be able to take him down easily, master.”

Duanmu Sheng who was manning the cloud-splitting chariot by himself said, “Master... what if those people kill Wei Zhuoran after we let him go?”

Without waiting for Lu Zhou to reply, Mingshi Yin said with a smile, “They won’t. Even if they discover Wei Zhuoran is only an impostor, they won’t dare to expose him. They’ll probably continue with the farce. If it were made known that Wei Zhuoyan had died, the armies would no longer have a leader. Many people would definitely covet that position. Even before this, Wei Zhuoyan’s achievements had already become a threat to the monarchy... Wei Zhuoran will definitely be more reserved after he takes over Wei Zhuoyan’s palace. Great Yan’s Imperial family would be happier if someone like Wei Zhuoran is in charge. From today onward, Wei Zhuoran will be Wei Zhuoyan.”



Little Yuan'er who was sitting at the edge of the flying chariot with her legs dangling off the side of the flying chariot said, "Jiang Aijian says there's always a battle of mutual deception in the palace. The way you put it is quite boring, Fourth Senior Brother."

"There are those who lust for power and authority, there's no helping that. It's a shame for a grand Seven-leaf elite to go out like that." Mingshi Yin shook his head and sighed.

Lu Zhou said, "He's only a Five-leaf, not a Seven-leaf..."

"Five-leaf?" Mingshi Yin, Duanmu Sheng, and Little Yuan'er were stunned.

Regardless of the rumors flying everywhere, Lu Zhou only believed his own eyes. He had used a Deadly Strike Card to kill Wei Zhuoyan earlier. The reward was 1,000 points, and he merely gained 400 points after deducting the cost of the card. The reward for killing a Seven-leaf elite should be much more than this.

"What a sly man! Did we kill another impostor?" Mingshi Yin frowned and was about to lose his temper again. After all, they were too far away earlier so Mingshi Yin and Duanmu Shen could not clearly see the target.

Mingshi Yin wondered if his master's eyesight had deteriorated in his old age. Did his master get the wrong person? Naturally, he did not dare to verbalize his thoughts. Instead, he only said that it might be an impostor.

"There's no doubt he's the real Wei Zhuoyan..." Lu Zhou said.

"I think I understand what you mean now, master. In the end, he's only all bark but not bite. However, since he's only a Five-leaf cultivator, how did he rise to the position of commander-in-chief of the three armies?" Mingshi Yin could not figure this out no matter how he racked his brains. "Did someone secretly help him?"

Duanmu Sheng said, "Regardless, as long as they leave the Evil Sky Pavilion alone, we won't look for trouble with them."

Mingshi Yin nodded and said, "I guess this is the end of the Fish Dragon Village incident... Junior Sister Tianxin should feel at ease now." When he saw the cloud-splitting chariot flying past the mountains, a thought suddenly appeared in his mind, and he asked, "Master, since we're out of Evil Sky Pavilion now, why don't we use this opportunity to capture Old Eighth?"

With the cloud-splitting chariot, they would be able to reach the Tiger Ridge in no time at all.

Lu Zhou remained silent as he stroked his beard and pondered over Mingshi Yin's words. Initially, he planned to leave those disciples of his alone. However, whenever he looked at the system dashboard, the mission to discipline his disciples was always on top. He had made some headway in disciplining Mingshi Yin, Duanmu Sheng, and Little Yuan'er, but it was clear they were no longer earning him as many merit points as before.

Old Seventh should have enough strength to rescue Old Eighth. Why did he inform the Evil Sky Pavilion about this? He recalled the content of Jiang Aijian's letter. 'Is Old Seventh really trying to cause chaos?'

Lu Zhou hesitated over whether he should capture Old Eighth or not...

## Chapter 168: This is for Your Own Good, Eighth Junior Brother

Zhu Honggong, Old Eighth, would be valuable to Lu Zhou. He would be able to gain merit points from Old Eighth before he disciplined him as well. Apart from that, Old Eighth rarely committed crimes on his own accord. Usually, it was Si Wuya, Old Seventh, who instigated Old Eighth into acting. It was rumored that Old Seventh's Darknet was located at the Crouching Dragon, and yet, nobody had ever found it. All they knew was the Darknet was everywhere and their network of information was very wide. It would be difficult to catch Old Seventh.

Moreover, Lu Zhou had more pressing needs. He needed to improve his strength first and foremost. Rumor was rife that he was going to meet his end in ten years. Everyone was just waiting for him to die.

In fact, with humans' greed, there would be people who would not even wait ten years. It was possible that someone would come and attempt to get their hands on the Evil Sky Pavilion's treasures in five, seven, or eight years. After all, most people thought Lu Zhou's cultivation base was deteriorating as well.

Therefore, it was of utmost importance for Lu Zhou to improve his strength. There was no doubt an endless stream of cultivators would be coming for him. At that time, just relying on the item cards would not be enough for him to deal with so many cultivators.

After a while, Lu Zhou glanced at Mingshi Yin and said, "He got lucky and escaped when we were at Green Jade Altar. I think Old Seventh is planning something by sending this letter. I want you to investigate this."

When Mingshi Yin heard this, he beamed and said, "Yes, master! I'll carry out this task perfectly."

"Old Fourth, I think it's better if I go with you. Old Eighth might seem stupid, but he's really sly."

"There's no need to kill the chicken with a butcher's knife. I'll try and investigate Old Seventh's plot for now... When the time is ripe, we'll capture the two of them together," Mingshi Yin said.

Duanmu Sheng seemed dejected as he said, "When you're gone, I won't have any sparring partners..." Elder Hua was wounded and still recuperating. He was in no condition to spar. Little Junior Sister was not in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm yet, and she did not possess a heaven-grade weapon so she was not a match for him. Similarly, Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were also in the Divine Court realm. They were no match for him as well. The only person left was the latest addition to the Evil Sky Pavilion, Leng Luo, the former leader of the Black Knights. Alas, he was gravely injured at the moment.

Mingshi Yin rolled his eyes and said, "No one is as mad as you. All you know how to do is train! You should use your brain more often."

It did not take long before the cloud-splitting chariot finally returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Mingshi Yin left Golden Court Mountain on his master's orders and made his way to the Tiger Ridge.

...

Inside the Tiger Ridge Gang's stronghold.

Zhu Honggong was sound asleep on his chair.

Mingshi Yin was familiar with the area now after his previous visits. He appeared outside the stronghold and bellowed, "Old Eighth! I'm back!" His voice resounded through the mountain forest.

Zhu Honggong, who had been sound asleep, started awake, frightened. He almost fell off the chair.

"Who... Who is it? Is it my master? Is he here?" Zhu Honggong hurriedly rose to his feet as he looked around his surroundings.

His gang members stationed outside the stronghold swarmed in.

"Gang Leader!"

"Run, Gang Leader!"

The cultivation bases of Tiger Ridge Gang's members were shallow. They were undoubtedly not a match for Mingshi Yin. However, those who recognized Mingshi Yin did not run away.

Mingshi Yin moved swiftly and appeared before everyone else. "Step aside."

The small fries immediately gave way.

"Fourth Senior Brother?" Zhu Honggong rubbed his eyes. After regaining his senses, he said charmingly, "What brings you here?"

Mingshi Yin sauntered over.

Zhu Honggong hastily vacated the chair.

Mingshi Yin said, "Didn't you say that you'll welcome me as a guest at any time?"

"Those were just words of formalities..." Zhu Honggong muttered under his breath before he said with a smile, "I mean, yes, yes, of course, you're welcome to visit whenever you want!"

Mingshi Yin was in no hurry. He surveyed his surroundings and said, "Your stronghold was nearly flattened by someone else previously. It seems like you've completely restored it."

"Of course! My gang members are skilled in this regard," Zhu Honggong said.

"Old Seventh sent a letter to master. He said the Clarity Sect is coming to look for trouble with you. Aren't you afraid at all?"

Zhu Honggong was startled. He said, "No way! They're coming for me?"

"Why are you surprised? You killed Zhang Chunlai, the Righteous Sect's elder. Do you think they'll let the matter go?"

"Didn't you kill the Righteous Sect's elder, Zhang Qiuchi, as well?"

"You and your glib tongue!" Mingshi Yin kicked Zhu Honggong.

Zhu Honggong did not avoid the kick neither did he retaliate. He fell to his knees obediently.

...

Meanwhile, in the Evil Sky Pavilion.

“Ding! Disciplining the eighth disciple, Zhu Honggong. Reward: 100 merit points.”

Lu Zhou nodded with a pleased expression on his face when he heard the notification.

...

Back in the Tiger Ridge.

“They can’t do anything to me even if I annihilate the entire Righteous Sect... Who are you going to count on to protect you? Eldest Senior Brother? Second Senior Brother? Or is it Old Seventh who spends his days hiding away in some part of the world?” Mingshi Yin unleashed a barrage of questions at Zhu Honggong.

Zhu Honggong’s face fell. When he thought about this, he was filled with sadness. He wanted a backer as well. The problem was everyone regarded him with scorn.

Mingshi Yin shook his head and said, “Old Eighth, tell me the truth... What are you and Old Seventh planning this time?”

“Nothing! Absolutely nothing! I swear to the heavens,” Zhu Honggong said hastily.

Why did this scene seem familiar?

‘This is exactly how he swore the last time.’

“Eighth Junior Brother, this is for your own good. Your current situation is extremely perilous... Old Seventh could help you deal with the small fries before this. However, this time, we’re talking about the Clarity Sect. Apart from the Evil Sky Pavilion, nobody will be able to help you. Listen to my advice, disband your gang and obediently return to the Evil Sky Pavilion with me and repent,” Mingshi Yin said.

“Repent?” Zhu Honggong shuddered. His expression was one of incredulity as he said, “With master’s temper, wouldn’t he flay my skin and pull out my tendons?”

Mingshi Yin placed his hands on his back and said, “That’s possible. Who knows what goes through master’s mind these days. It depends on your luck. If master’s not in a good mood when you return, there’s nothing you can do about it...”

Mingshi Yin recalled the scene where Zuo Xinchuan and Li Qing, one of the Three Godly Archers who was also a member of the Black Knights, were killed with just a single palm strike.

“Uh... Knowing that, you’re still trying to convince me to return to the Evil Sky Pavilion and repent?”

“You don’t have a say in this!” Mingshi Yin said with a smile. “You shouldn’t wait for master to personally make a move... Ren Buping, the Master of Fiend Temple Master, was killed by master with just a single palm strike.”

“What?!” Zhu Honggong was even more frightened when he heard this. If he returned, would he not be turned into a meat pie?

Mingshi Yin continued to study Zhu Honggong. He did not expect Old Eighth would be so stubborn. It seemed like Old Seventh had successfully brainwashed him.

"It's fine if you don't want to return with me. Tell me where the Crouching Dragon where the Darknet is located..."

"Yi Province."

"You dumb pig, be more specific! You might as well say it's in Great Yan," Mingshi Yin said irritably as he gave Zhu Honggong another kick.

"How would I know? Seventh Senior Brother has always been secretive with his movements. If I can easily find him, would I need to fear the Clarity Sect?" Zhu Honggong said with an aggrieved expression.

"Dream on. Do you think that Old Seventh is omnipotent?"

Mingshi Yin's voice had barely faded when a figure slowly entered the stronghold.

The small fries instantly made way for him.

At this moment, silence descended on the stronghold.

Mingshi Yin and Zhu Honggong looked at the newcomer.

"Old Seventh?"

"Seventh Senior Brother?"

Speak of the devil.

Si Wuya was smiling as he walked. He wore long robes and a brocade crown on his head. It seemed like he was dressed for an official ceremony. He cupped his fists at Mingshi Yin and said, "Greetings, Fourth Senior Brother..."

Mingshi Yin did not like Si Wuya very much. He looked away and sat down without paying much attention to Si Wuya. He said, "You dare show your face here?"

"If master had come here, I wouldn't show myself. Since it's you, it's fine if I show myself..."

## **Chapter 169: The Rascal Has Nowhere to Run**

"You're a sly one," Mingshi Yin said as he leaned to the side.

Si Wuya strode forward and went up the stairs. He sat down slowly on the seat beside Mingshi Yin and said with a smile, "I heard that Wei Zhuoyan has gone to the Evil Sky Pavilion."

"Old Seventh, save your breath. You won't get anything out of me," Mingshi Yin said.

"Fourth Senior Brother... We're from the same pavilion after all. There's no need for us to act like strangers. I'm asking this for the Evil Sky Pavilion's sake as well."

"My ass\*!" Mingshi Yin spat on the floor. "If you truly have the Evil Sky Pavilion in your heart, you'll return and accept your punishment immediately. The heavens will decide your life and death!"

Zhu Honggong felt a fresh surge of fear in his heart. His Fourth Senior Brother was talking about life and death now. He was convinced that nothing good would be waiting for him if he returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Si Wuya smiled and said drily, "There's no need to be so hostile toward me, Fourth Senior Brother... It's meaningless to lose your temper. I have so many things I have yet accomplished, how can I return to the Evil Sky Pavilion?"

"Well then, what's your purpose of sending the letter to the Evil Sky Pavilion?" Mingshi Yin asked, confused.

"It's simple..." Si Wuya pointed at Zhu Honggong, Old Eighth, who was next to him. "The Clarity Sect wants to attack the Tiger Ridge Gang. Old Eighth would not be able to survive without the Evil Sky Pavilion's protection."

"That's it? There's nothing else?" Mingshi Yin asked skeptically.

Si Wuya shook his head. "Why do you think of me as a sinister and filthy person, Fourth Senior Brother... That's my only intention..."

"Why didn't you seek help from Second Senior Brother or Eldest Senior Brother instead?"

Among the three of them, it was clearly the most difficult to ask their master for help.

Eldest Senior Brother and Second Senior Brother were capable enough to deal with the Clarity Sect.

"Eldest Senior Brother is occupied with various tasks every day. He doesn't have time for Old Eighth. Second Senior Brother travels all over the place, and his movements are often unknown. He doesn't have a place he calls home. The Evil Sky Pavilion is the most suitable candidate, under these circumstances."

"After hearing all this, I don't think I want to bring Old Eighth back with me right now." Mingshi Yin merely wanted to oppose Si Wuya.

Si Wuya said, "Old Eighth will die."

"Let him die then."

Zhu Honggong was baffled. 'What did I do? Enough is enough!' He straightened his back and said loudly, "My dear senior brothers... I'm not going anywhere. Besides, this is my problem. What has it got to do with either of you?"

"Shut up!" Si Wuya and Mingshi Yin snapped in unison.

"..." Zhu Honggong sat back down. He did not like this.

Si Wuya's expression was calm as he looked at Mingshi Yin and said, "Are you going to sit back and do nothing while Old Eighth dies, Fourth Senior Brother?"

Zhu Honggong gave up trying to interject. He seemed to have grown numb to the word 'die'.

Mingshi Yin said, "Old Eighth is considered dead the moment he betrayed master. If he dies, it's because he deserves it."

Si Wuya's expression showed no changes as he continued to say, "In that case, we'll let him die then."

It was meaningless to bicker with Mingshi Yin. Si Wuya rose to his feet and walked out of the stronghold with his hands on his back.

Upon seeing Si Wuya leaving, Mingshi Yin said in a deceptively gentle tone, "Old Seventh, heed my advice. You should stop this..."

Si Wuya stopped in his tracks and said drily, "Master has 15 years left to live... Ten years, eight years, maybe even sooner. The Evil Sky Pavilion will surely experience a tribulation."

Mingshi Yin knew that as well so he remained silent.

Si Wuya said, "Fourth Senior Brother, what would you do then?"

"Let's leave tomorrow's worries for tomorrow."

"Forget it... Forget that I was even here today." Si Wuya left the stronghold with blinding speed.

Mingshi Yin did not stop him. With his current strength and cultivation base, it would be slightly difficult for him to catch Si Wuya. He remained silent for a while before he finally said, "Disband the gang! Come with me!"

"Huh?"

"Don't you 'huh' me... Master has ordered me to bring you back to the Evil Sky Pavilion," Mingshi Yin said.

Zhu Honggong was on the verge of tears. He felt terrified whenever he thought about his master's various methods. He shook his head frantically. "Forget it... Fourth Senior Brother, why do you have to put me in a difficult position when we're on the same side?" As he spoke, he took two steps back.

"Old Eighth... What're you trying to do?"

"I'm sorry, senior brother... I really don't want to return! Farewell!" Zhu Honggong turned tail and ran! His speed made the others' hairs stand on end.

A faint smile spread across Mingshi Yin's face. "Let's see where you can run to." With swift movements, Mingshi Yin chased after him.

Zhu Honggong was a Divine Court realm cultivator, after all. In terms of speed, he was no match for Mingshi Yin who was in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm.

In just a blink of an eye, Mingshi Yin was right behind Zhu Honggong. He did not hesitate as he raised his hand and struck with his palm.

Bam!

Mingshi Yin's palm landed on Zhu Honggong's back, causing Zhu Honggong to stumble forward from the impact.

"Hm?" Mingshi Yin felt that his palm strike had been blocked by some special object.

Zhu Honggong was sprawled on the ground at this moment. He quickly rose to his feet and began to run again.

“Block him! Quick... Now!”

“Gang Leader, this way!”

Mingshi Yin was rendered speechless by this. Although his combat style depended on his whim as well, he would never turn tail and run like this. For an Evil Sky Pavilion’s disciple to behave in this manner was truly a humiliation to the Evil Sky Pavilion.

“There’s nowhere to run.” Mingshi Yin’s voice resounded throughout the stronghold.

Zhu Honggong sprinted toward the back of the mountain.

Alas, Mingshi Yin moved swiftly and appeared before Zhu Honggong again. At the same time, vines sprouted around him and began to grow rapidly. The path that led to the back of the mountain was swiftly blocked by the vines in no time at all.

Zhu Honggong staggered and retreated. ‘This is bad.’

“The Octagon Formation!” Zhu Honggong’s expression changed. “Fourth Senior Brother, don’t make me do this!”

“Don’t think you can scare me with that Formation of yours... Please don’t think that I’m heartless. When I was here previously, I’ve made some changes to it.” Mingshi Yin walked toward him with half a smile.

Zhu Honggong wanted to cry. The gang members behind him shuddered with fear as well.

“Gang Leader... Why don’t... Why don’t you surrender yourself?”

Zhu Honggong was speechless.

Mingshi Yin nodded and said, “You have sensible and understanding subordinates.”

Creak! Creak! Creak!

Zhu Honggong’s retreat was also blocked by the vines.

Mingshi Yin’s Bluewood Heart Technique had been cultivated to the point of perfection. His Primal Qi spilled into his surroundings like an incoming tide. Wherever it touched, vines would sprout and grow.

This technique, Spring Upon a Thousand Vines, could even be used to fight against a Four-leaf Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivator, let alone Zhu Honggong who was in the Divine Court realm.

Zhu Honggong’s zen tunic could only reduce the damage he received to a certain degree. It did nothing to increase his combat strength. He could only look on helplessly as Mingshi Yin walked up to him. Without the Octagon Formation, the disparity between them was too great. It was as different as heaven and earth.

Zhu Honggong really felt like crying, all his paths of retreat seemed to have been cut off. “Se... Senior Brother...”



Mingshi Yin patted his shoulder. He sighed softly. "Just do as you're told." After saying this, he turned to the Tiger Ridge Gang's members and declared loudly, "All of you should look for other ways to make a living!"

"Gang Leader!"

"Gang Leader!"

Mingshi Yin was inwardly shocked when he saw these cowardly gang members fall to their knees in unison.

Zhu Honggong swept his gaze across them and said, "Divide the valuables in the stronghold among yourselves... Then, get lost."

### **Chapter 170: Sable Magnolia**

Zhu Honggong said this with a sense of righteousness that inspired reverence. He truly behaved like a Gang Leader now.

His gang members who were kneeling exchanged glances. Then, they kowtowed at Zhu Honggong and said without any hesitation, "Thank you, Gang Leader!"

Zhu Honggong was taken aback. 'Shouldn't they be covered in snot and tears and feel reluctant to leave after listening to my touching words?'

"Get lost! You bunch of heartless fiends!"

The gang members hastily got up and dispersed.

Mingshi Yin waved his hand. The vines that blocked the paths vanished immediately. He had no reason to fight these small fries. Moreover, they were Zhu Honggong's subordinates. It was a good thing to let them go.

"Forget about this shoddy stronghold! You have a place in the Evil Sky Pavilion," Mingshi Yin said when he saw Zhu Honggong's crestfallen and reluctant expression.

"Senior brother... I've worked hard for everything here. I feel that I have a connection with every single plant here."

"Oh, shut up!" Mingshi Yin rolled his eyes. 'I can't believe he's being pretentious even at this moment!'

Zhu Honggong said reluctantly, "Let's go then..."

The two of them proceeded to leave Tiger Ridge.

While they were walking, Mingshi Yin recalled the sensation he felt when he struck Zhu Honggong's back with his palm. "Old Eighth... what are you wearing?"

Zhu Honggong hastily pulled his robes over his tunic and said, "Senior brother... don't you dare have any covetous thoughts."

Mingshi Yin shook his head and said, "That's enough. You can stop trying to hide it. I didn't expect Old Seventh would procure a zen tunic for you, that's all."

“...”

“I’m impressed that you weren’t beaten to death by that pack of bald mules!” Mingshi Yin gave him a thumbs-up.

Zhu Honggong chuckled. “It’s all in a day’s work.”

The two of them stepped into the air.

...

Meanwhile...

“Ding! Captured the rascal, Zhu Honggong. Reward: 1,000 merit points.”

This surprised Lu Zhou. Initially, he only intended to have Mingshi Yin find out about Old Seventh’s plan. Who knew Mingshi Yin would manage to capture Old Eighth? It was definitely a good thing that Old Eighth was captured. This way he would not be able to make trouble.

Lu Zhou looked at the system dashboard.

Name: Lu Zhou

Race: Human

Cultivation base: Brahman Sea Eight Meridians

Merit points: 13,312

Avatar: Six Recombinant Trigram Lines

Remaining life: 5,988 days

Item: Deadly Strike Card x1, Impeccable Card x2, Critical Block Card x7 (passive), Binding Cage x4, Refining Talisman x2, Ji Tiandao’s Peak Trial Card x1, Whitzard (resting), Bi An.

Weapon: Unnamed, Amorous Hoop (Owner: Ye Tianxin. Requires refining before use), Life Cutter, Nirvana Sash, Tear Stain Box.

Cultivation method: Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing.

It had been two days, and Whitzard was still resting.

Lu Zhou shook his head. Perhaps, it had spent too much energy while battling the Ten Shamans. He wondered how long it needed to completely recuperate.

Lu Zhou glanced at the system’s mall again.

There was no time-limited box.

Lu Zhou gave it some thought before he finally decided to try his luck with the lucky draws. After five consecutive draws, his luck was raised to 19 points. His current merit points allowed him some margin for error on the lucky draw. Naturally, the above point was an exception.

“Elder Hua requests an audience.” A voice rang from outside.

Hua Wudao walked in, clearly exhausted. His battle with Sword Saint Luo Shisan seemed to have drained him of all his energy. When he walked into the great hall, he bowed reverently at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou asked in confusion, "What's the matter, Elder Hua?"

Hua Wudao cupped his fists together and said, "I've been thinking over these past few days, and there's something that I can't get off my mind..." Hua Wudao continued, "What this bag of old bones wishes to request has something to do with Ding Fanqiu."

"Oh?"

"Ding Fanqiu is from the Yun Sect and had acted under my instructions. At the end of the day, I'm the true perpetrator. This has nothing to do with him..." Hua Wudao said.

Lu Zhou did not have time to reply before Duanmu Sheng's voice that was laden with fury rang from outside the great hall. "Elder Hua, forgive me for being unable to agree with you on this!"

Hua Wudao turned to look at a furious Duanmu Sheng who was walking in with his Overlord Spear in his hand. He looked majestic and formidable.

"Ding Fanqiu has impersonated the Evil Sky Pavilion. According to our rules, he should be cut into eight chunks and fed to the dogs! You're a member of the Evil Sky Pavilion, and yet, you're siding with an outsider?" Duanmu Sheng asked furiously.

Hua Wudao's wizened face flushed.

Duanmu Sheng continued on his tirade, "I don't care who won between you and Luo Shisan, but I don't agree to Ding Fanqiu's release!"

Thunk!

Duanmu Sheng hit the floor with his Overlord Spear.

Hua Wudao said remorsefully, "Since I've left the Yun Sect, I should sever all ties with it. Ding Fanqiu is the final tie..."

"That's great! Elder Hua, you should kill him as a way to sever your ties to the Yun Sect!" Duanmu Sheng said.

"..." Hua Wudao was rendered speechless. Duanmu Sheng was destined to be the bane of his life. For some reason, Hua Wudao felt flustered every time he met him.

The sparring sessions did nothing to alleviate this. Ever since he became Duanmu Sheng's training partner, Duanmu Sheng would seek him out to spar at every opportunity he got. He would keep on fighting despite continual setbacks! Sometimes, Hua Wudao wondered if Duanmu Sheng was annoyed by him because he had lost too many times?

"Forget it..." Hua Wudao cupped his fists together at Lu Zhou. "I'm willing to be punished."

Lu Zhou slowly rose to his feet. He descended the stairs with his hand on his back. He looked at Hua Wudao with a level gaze and said gently, "I can release Ding Fanqiu."

Upon hearing this, Duanmu Sheng's eyes widened.

Hua Wudao was stunned.

"Pavilion Master..."

Before any of them could continue to speak, Lu Zhou said with his hands on his back, "On one condition..."

"Do enlighten me, Pavilion Master... Although I left the Yun Sect, my words still hold some weight to them. I'm sure some of the elders will do me a favor." Hua Wudao thought that Lu Zhou wanted something from the Yun Sect.

"All I want is the sable magnolia." Hua Wudao was dumbfounded.

Duanmu Sheng was taken aback as well.

Hua Wudao's old eyes widened as he said, "Pavilion Master, sable magnolias are extremely precious. The Yun Sect will never exchange a sable magnolia for Ding Fanqiu! This..."

Lu Zhou waved his hand and said, "There's no need to turn down my offer right away. Think about it when you get back."

No matter how thick Hua Wudao's face was, he was too embarrassed to say anything else. He cupped his fists and left the hall respectfully.

Duanmu Sheng cupped his fists and said, "Master, this old geezer isn't loyal. Why don't we..."

"There's no need for that." Lu Zhou waved his hand, "Just give him more time."

Duanmu Sheng, naturally, did not dare to protest. Instead, he asked, "Master, why do you want the sable magnolia?"

"Your Little Junior Sister's sea of Qi isn't opened yet... The sable magnolia is a Heaven and Earth Treasure which is most suited to activate one's sea of Qi."

"Your cultivation base is profound, master, why would you need to rely on the sable magnolia?"

"Forcibly opening up her sea of Qi won't be as ideal as using a sable magnolia," Lu Zhou explained.

"I understand now."

At this moment, Little Yuan'er rushed into the great hall. She giggled as she said, "Master, Fourth Senior Brother is back!"

Outside the great hall.

Mingshi Yin and Zhu Honggong, Old Eighth, walked at an unbelievably slow pace.

The way Zhu Honggong shuffled into the great hall made him look even more bashful than a bride on her wedding day.

Mingshi Yin glared at him and said, "Since we're already here, quit dragging your feet. Would you rather I break them and carry you over?"

“No, no, no... I... I need to pee.” Zhu Honggong surveyed the familiar surroundings. He saw the buildings... and the Evil Sky Pavilion that he feared most.