

Disciples 181

Chapter 181: A Fine Line

Xu Jing said with a sigh, "It was to preserve our lives." He made a gesture.

A few young disciples ran out of the Hall of Great Strength. They soon returned with several stretchers which carried the bodies of the dead. Judging from their outfits, they must have been core disciples of the Heaven Choice Temple. They might even be elders.

Xu Jing pointed at the corpses and said, "The Heaven Choice Temple's Discipline Hall's First Seat, Kong Liao, and the Scripture Hall's First Seat, Kong Jian. Eight Attendants of the Supervision Court and the Twelve Temple Seats. They were all killed by the Temple of Great Emptiness' Four Divine Monks."

There were not many corpses that were brought into the hall, and yet, Xu Jing listed so many names. When he spoke, his expression was calm as though he was already used to dealing with deaths.

"The Temple of Great Emptiness and the Heaven Choice Temple are of the same line. Why would the Temple of Great Emptiness kill members of its own?" Lu Zhou asked.

"It's a long story..." Xu Jing slowly said, "Ever since Grandmaster Kong Xuan of the Temple of Great Emptiness emerged from his cultivation in seclusion, the Temple of Great Emptiness has changed their attitude in regard to the world's affairs. They prided themselves on converting the masses and bringing salvation to all. The Heaven Choice Temple and the Temple of Great Emptiness have never intervened in each other's affairs, but..." He paused for a moment before continuing, "The Temple of Great Emptiness is convinced that I was the one who killed Kong Xuan."

Lu Zhou listened to his story while he stroked his beard. The memories of the incident at Runan's holy altar was still fresh in his mind. However, he did not expect it would spark conflict between the Temple of Great Emptiness and the Heaven Choice Temple.

"They wouldn't believe me no matter what I said... On top of that, there were many Noble Path cultivators at the holy altar who witnessed it. The Temple of Great Emptiness is using this as an excuse to go against us... This Heaven Choice Temple is no longer what it once was. How can we go up against the Four Divine Monks?" Xu Jing said.

"That's why you thought of the Evil Sky Pavilion," Lu Zhou said.

"Precisely." Xu Jing bowed slightly. "I heard the Temple of Great Emptiness is on bad terms with the Evil Sky Pavilion... I truly have no choice. There are more than 1,000 lives in this temple so I had to resort to this. If the Evil Sky Pavilion removes the Four Divine Monks, I'll not only surrender the sable magnolia and the zen tunic, the Heaven Choice Temple will also submit to the Evil Sky Pavilion!"

Mingshi Yin and the others were taken aback.

Just how much courage did Xu Jing muster to make this decision?

Under Great Yan's skies, the Noble and Fiend Paths did not tolerate each other. The Buddhist societies had always been neutral, if the Heaven Choice Temple truly joined the Evil Sky Pavilion, they would be condemned by those on the Noble Path.

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "You're the Heaven Choice Temple's abbot and have always been closer to the Noble Path. If you choose to submit to the Evil Sky Pavilion, aren't you worried that you'll become the laughingstock of the world?"

Xu Jing scoffed and said in a slightly contemptuous tone, "There's a fine line between becoming a Buddha and becoming a devil." He remembered the scene of him being accused by the people of the Noble Path, including those from the Clarity Sect and Righteous Sect. He remembered the scene of the Temple of Great Emptiness's Four Divine Monks mercilessly killing the Heaven Choice Temple's disciples. He remembered the banners hung up everywhere in the city of Jing Province that called for the destruction of the Heaven Choice Temple.

On the contrary, the Evil Sky Pavilion had never done anything bad to the Heaven Choice Temple.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "Zhu Honggong has stolen the zen tunic from the Heaven Choice Temple. You're not going to hold it against him?"

"If the zen tunic had remained in the Heaven Choice Temple, it would have been taken away by the Temple of Great Emptiness a long time ago... It's fortunate that it's in the benefactor's hands," Xu Jing said.

Zhu Honggong was delighted to hear this. "And I was wondering why I wasn't disrobed..."

Mingshi Yin and Duanmu Sheng were speechless.

Lu Zhou glanced at Zhu Honggong and said, "There's more to the Noble Path than the Clarity and Righteous Sects... Why didn't you ask for their help instead?"

"There are many in the Noble Path, but there are very few who can compare to the Temple of Great Emptiness. Moreover, it's better to avoid unnecessary troubles. Who would side with the Heaven Choice Temple and offend the Temple of Great Emptiness?" Xu Jing replied.

"Why are you so certain the Evil Sky Pavilion will intervene in this matter?" Lu Zhou asked.

Silence descended on the Hall of Great Strength.

The disciples of the Heaven Choice Temple stood stock still. Nobody made a sound.

Xu Jing replied, "I have three reasons. First, the sable magnolia. Second, I know that Kong Xuan was killed by the Evil Sky Pavilion. Third, the zen tunic..." The abbot was not stupid. His mind was clear and logical.

Mingshi Yin resisted the urge to applaud him.

"Well said," Lu Zhou commented.

After a slight pause, he said, "What would you do if the Evil Sky Pavilion chooses to stand on the Temple of Great Emptiness's side?"

Xu Jing was dumbstruck.

The disciples of the temple were shocked. Their eyes widened as they glared at the people from the Evil Sky Pavilion. It was unclear if they were afraid or angry.

Xu Jing fell silent for a moment before heaving a long sigh. He shook his head and said, "If that's the case, I'll become the condemned abbot of the Heaven Choice Temple. I'll repent before Buddha!"

"Master!"

"Abbot!"

The Heaven Choice Temple's disciples in the hall exclaimed in unison.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. "Calm down..." he said slowly.

"Old benefactor." Xu Jing was so nervous that his hands were shaking. How could he calm down? He was genuinely afraid that Lu Zhou would side with the Temple of Great Emptiness.

"I like tactful people."

The Heaven Choice Temple was willing to surrender the sable magnolia, the zen tunic, and was even willing to submit to the Evil Sky Pavilion. Lu Zhou definitely would not let such a good opportunity slip through his fingers.

"Benefactor?" Xu Jing, naturally, felt uneasy since he still did not receive a clear answer.

"Where's the Temple of Great Emptiness?" Lu Zhou asked.

Upon hearing this, Xu Jing was overjoyed. He said, "The Temple of Great Emptiness has given us three days, and today's the last of the three days. Their Four Divine Monks will arrive early tomorrow morning."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Mingshi Yin."

"Yes, master."

"Hide the flying chariot."

"Yes, master!" Mingshi Yin was his usual, flashy self. He swaggered and glanced at the monks as he walked. With a swift movement, he unleashed his grand technique.

Duanmu Sheng felt speechless when he saw it. 'Did he have to use his grand technique?'

Xu Jing hastily said, "Prepare the lodgings!"

"Understood!"

Lu Zhou was calm. He stayed the night in the Heaven Choice Temple.

...

The people left the Hall of Great Strength, and it was now completely dark.

Xu Jing stood alone in the hall. He sighed as he murmured, "There's a fine line between becoming a Buddha and becoming a devil..."

...

Early the next morning.

Dong! Dong! Dong!

The morning bell was rung.

The tolling of the bell resounded throughout Clear Source Mountain and reverberated throughout the Heaven Choice Temple.

The Heaven Choice Temple's disciples swiftly gathered around and got ready in full battle array.

"Report to me once the Temple of Great Emptiness' flying chariot appears."

"Understood!"

The Brahman Sea realm monks of the Heaven Choice Temple scattered in all directions in the air.

The disciples whose cultivation bases were in the Sense Condensing realm and below were gathered before the Hall of Great Strength.

Xu Jing wore his kasaya, held his staff, prayer beads, and wore his skull cap. He was more dressed up than usual. "Benefactor Ji, this way, please."

Lu Zhou and the Evil Sky Pavilion's disciples took up the offer and entered the Hall of Great Strength.

When the sun was high up in the sky, a flying chariot appeared in the horizons and advanced toward them at an even speed.

"Abbot! The Temple of Great Emptiness' flying chariot is here." One of his disciples hurried into the Hall of Great Strength.

When Mingshi Yin heard this, he smiled faintly. He was the first to leave the Hall of Great Strength. He stood at the top of the stairs and looked up. "Ha, the Temple of Great Emptiness is clearly richer than the Heaven Choice Temple... Not bad, but it's slightly on the small side."

The flying chariot was not huge. It was ivory, and there were about 30 monks flanking it.

Before it even reached the Heaven Choice Temple, a domineering voice rang from it. "Xu Jing, aren't you coming out to welcome us?!"

Chapter 182: I'll Grant Your Wish

The soundwave rolled toward them from the horizons.

The trees before the Hall of Great Strength rustled noisily from the force of the voice.

Xu Jing and his core disciples rushed out of the hall and looked up at the sky. "All of the Four Divine Monks are here?"

"Are the Four Divine Monks so powerful?" Lu Zhou sauntered over with his hands clasped on his back.

Zhao Yue, Duanmu Sheng, and Little Yuan'er followed closely behind him.

Xu Jing said, "Kong Jue, Kong Wen, Kong Zhi, and Kong Zhang... They're all First Seats, only second to Abbot Kong Yuan. If I'm not mistaken, they've entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm since a long time ago."

'Four Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm elites? Not bad.' Entering the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm was akin to stepping into the most dangerous territory in Great Yan.

In the Heaven Choice Temple, Xu Jing was the only one who had entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. The others were too insignificant to mention. There were not even that many Divine Court realm monks. There were about 1,000 disciples, and yet, there was not a single Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm monk among them.

However, the Temple of Great Emptiness had easily sent out four Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm elites. The disparity between the two temples was too obvious! It was no wonder the Heaven Choice Temple had to resort to such a decision to deal with the Temple of Great Emptiness. After all, death was preferable to dishonor.

As they spoke, the forceful soundwave rang from the sky again.

The disciples before the Hall of Great Strength had a strained expression on their faces as they tried to resist the soundwave with their weak cultivation bases.

"Kong Zhi and Kong Zhang?" Lu Zhou repeated the names. 'Look, they're retards.' The person who had given these names must be a genius.

Mingshi Yin said in a dismissive tone, "There are powerful ones and weaklings in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. Are you telling me they're all Eight-leaf experts?"

Xu Jing shook his head and said, "The Four Divine Monks aren't too powerful on their own. The most powerful one is a Five-leaf expert while the weakest one is a Two-leaf expert. Kong Ye is a Three-leaf expert, and Kong Zhang is a Four-leaf expert..."

"That's nothing... I can take on two of them." Mingshi Yin could hardly contain his urge to show off.

"What's your cultivation base, benefactor?" Abbot Xu Jing asked.

"Two-leaf."

"Indeed, the Four Divine Monks aren't powerful when separated... They're only terrifying when they work together. Together, their strength is on par with a Seven-leaf cultivator," Xu Jing said.

"They're that strong?" Mingshi Yin was shocked.

Xu Jing began to explain with a hint of anxiety, "When four of them join forces, they can unleash a powerful Buddhist hand seal... I fought with four of them once when they joined forces, and I was injured."

At this juncture, it was pointless to care about dignity or modesty. Xu Jing pulled his kasaya to the side, revealing an angry palm print on his chest.

Mingshi Yin and Duanmu Sheng were inwardly shocked by this.

Put aside Xu Jing's strength and cultivation base, he had shown tremendous willpower by not showing any signs of pain from the wound on his chest all this while.

“You’re cool.” Mingshi Yin gave the abbot a thumbs-up. “I hate monks the most, but you’re the first one I find tolerable.”

“Are you confident in taking them on, Benefactor Ji?” Xu Jing asked. After all, the lives of more than 1,000 disciples were at stake. If he lost, he would be condemned for generations to come.

Although Xu Jing had heard that the Evil Sky Pavilion’s Ji Tiandao was still the greatest and peerless villain in the world, the problem was his life limit was almost upon him. As he aged, his cultivation base would deteriorate as well. He was not certain if this old villain still possessed his former strength.

Without waiting for Lu Zhou to respond, Mingshi Yin said, “My master’s cultivation base is unfathomable, you can rest assured... Perhaps, my master doesn’t even need to do anything. I bet Third Senior Brother and I can handle this.”

Xu Jing said, “In that case, I’m relieved... I hope that none of us will underestimate our enemies.”

At this moment, the soundwave from the horizons intensified.

“Xu Jing... Three days have passed. Do you have an answer?”

Whizz!

The flying chariot hovered in the air.

Four monks in kasayas stood in front with their palms straightened before themselves. They descended slowly in the air. Several monks landed behind them as well. Only a handful of monks were left to maintain the flying chariot in the sky.

The disciples before the Hall of Great Strength retreated. They kept moving backward until they were at the edges of the compound.

The Four Divine Monks landed with 20 other monks on the center of the plaza before the incense cauldron. The four of them positioned themselves so that they formed the corners of a square. With just a glance, the four of them looked somewhat identical. Their statures and facial features were similar so it was difficult to tell them apart.

However, the Four Divine Monks were not young. Their brows were almost touching their beards, and their faces were wizened.

Kong Wen who stood at the lead said, “Xu Jing.”

Lu Zhou stood beside Xu Jing. He looked down and shook his head.

The four of them were in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. Clearly, the Temple of Great Emptiness was wary of the Heaven Choice Temple for sending out the Four Divine Monks.

“Xu Liao, Xu Fan, Xu Hai,” Xu Jing called.

“Senior Brother Abbot!” The three of them bowed at the same time.

“I’ll leave the safety of the Heaven Choice Temple’s disciples to the three of you,” Xu Jing said solemnly.

“Don’t worry, Senior Brother Abbot... Although we’re only in the Divine Court realm, we’ll do everything in our power to keep them safe.”

“I’ll be able to die in peace knowing the three of you are around.”

The Four Divine Monks standing before the incense cauldron smiled scornfully.

Kong Wen sneered and said, “Xu Jing, surrender the sable magnolia and the zen tunic. From this day on, you’ll be part of the Temple of Great Emptiness... Why’re you being so stubborn?”

“You evil creature!” Xu Jing cursed.

“Are you insulting me?”

“You’re less than an evil creature for bullying your senior!” Xu Jing had long lost the patience to reason with them. He began attacking them with words.

At the end of the day, the generational name, ‘Kong’, was below the generational name, ‘Xu’.

However, it was clear none of the Four Divine Monks cared about seniority in generational names.

Kong Wen chuckled and said, “I thought that you’d be able to think things through during these three days and obediently surrender. I’m surprised that not only did you not think things through, but you remain extremely obstinate!”

Kong Jue said bluntly, “If that’s the case, let’s send them on their way. All we have to do is put in slightly more effort.”

Xu Jing was about to retort when he saw Lu Zhou moving forward.

“You want the sable magnolia as well?” Lu Zhou asked.

Kong Wen shifted his gaze to Lu Zhou, finally noticing Lu Zhou and the others.

Xu Jing stood at the side and said in a hushed tone, “They want to use the sable magnolia to deal with the Evil Sky Pavilion... They knew that Kong Xuan was killed by the Evil Sky Pavilion. However, they intentionally shift the blame onto Heaven Choice Temple.”

Kong Wen looked at Lu Zhou and said, “Xu Jing, did you find yourself some help?”

“Indeed, I have...” said Xu Jing. “Kong Wen, the four of you won’t be able to leave this place alive!”

The Four Divine Monks took a step forward as the 20 monks behind them stood in a neat row. They joined their palms together, and their robes began to flutter in the air.

Primal Qi surged.

“Show me, then,” Kong Wen said, “What kind of people you have gotten to help you...”

Kong Wen had already appraised them. There was an old, decrepit man, two dolts, a fat fool, a young girl, and a group of weak female cultivators. Upon seeing this, he really wanted to roll on the floor and laugh.

Xu Jing had done well to endure his injuries up until now. Currently, the wound was bothering him, and he could no longer endure it. He took a step backward and said, "Benefactor Ji, I'll have to trouble you."

Xu Liao, Xu Fan, and Xu Hai were stunned.

"I'll grant you your wish!" Lu Zhou said as he stroked his beard. It was a double entendre. He meant for it to be heard by Xu Jing and the Four Divine Monks.

Chapter 183: The Four Divine Monks, Wen Jue Zhi Zhang

The Heaven Choice Temple's disciples retreated again.

Xu Liao, Xu Fan, and Xu Hai moved backward as well.

Mingshi Yin understood what his master meant. He cupped his fists and said, "I'll be the vanguard and test their strength..." With a light tap of his feet, he leaped from the top of the stairs to the base, jumping over dozens of steps. His Primal Qi surged and condensed into energy!

'Hm?' The Four Divine Monks could sense that Mingshi Yin's aura was different. They did not dare to let their guards down. At the same time, they retreated while moving further away from each other.

A huge square energy appeared with the four of them at the corners. They pushed their palms forward with synchronized movements!

Bzzt!

The square energy blocked Mingshi Yin's advance.

Mingshi Yin frowned. He raised his palms and relied on the momentum to do a backflip before landing on his feet. "I didn't expect that."

This was the first time Mingshi Yin had encountered this energy technique that the four monks joined forces to cast.

Techniques that required collaborations were unlike the Brahman Lullaby, which could be amplified with more cultivators. A high degree of synchronicity was required for close-quarter combat and the formation of energy and hand seals. For the four of them to be able to conjure up such a technique with a simple hand movement was surprising.

Kong Wen raised his palm and said, "Excellent, excellent... Your cultivation base isn't weak, benefactor. Why are you taking the side of the villains?"

They had sensed Mingshi Yin's cultivation base and wanted to convince him to stand down.

"The thing I hate the most about you bald donkeys is how you go on and on about your grand teachings!" Mingshi Yin stomped his foot on the ground.

Boom!

A perfectly-shaped footprint was left in his place. He leaped toward the Four Divine Monks and engaged them in a fierce battle.

The other monks in the vicinity moved back.

However, the 20 monks from the Temple of Great Emptiness did not budge. They remained rooted to their spots, waiting for their orders.

“Condescension!” Kong Jue moved from his corner and launched a palm strike at Mingshi Yin.

The other three worked together in perfect harmony. They pressured Mingshi Yin enough to keep him occupied. After all, Mingshi Yin only had a pair of hands while he was up against four pairs of hands. The palm strike landed on his shoulder, causing him to stumble back and fall on the edge of the steps. They had breached his protective energy!

Mingshi Yin frowned from the pain. Fortunately, the palm strike was not too powerful. His Body Tempering muscles and bones absorbed most of the impact.

Duanmu Sheng wielded his Overlord Spear, looking visibly eager to join in the fray. He said, “These four monks are something else.”

“Amitabha Buddha. Why do you obstinately persist in going about things the wrong way, benefactor?” Kong Wen asked with a straightened palm.

“You’re the obstinate one.” Mingshi Yin pushed away from the floor and left afterimages in his wake.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Separation Hook and Scabbard had materialized in his hands out of thin air. He stabbed at Kong Wen with tempestuous strikes.

The onlookers could only see vague shadows moving in the air and hear the sharp noises from the collision between the blade and the energy.

Kong Wen did not expect Mingshi Yin’s attacks to be this aggressive. He was caught off guard and slid backward. After sliding for some distance, he flew in the air and flipped before he landed on his feet.

Mingshi Yin could have followed up with more attacks, but the palm prints from the other three Divine Monks were already shooting toward him. He had to retreat.

“Too late.” Kong Jue’s palm print that wrapped in energy grew in intensity. “Hollow Echo!”

The three of them pushed their palms forward in unison.

Bam!

Mingshi Yin blocked it with his Separation Hook.

Dong!

A peculiar sound sent a jolt of pain through Mingshi Yin’s head, causing him to stagger backward.

The Four Divine Monks were back in their formation again. Each of them stood at their own corner. It was as though they had never moved at all.

“Benefactor, I was kind enough to persuade you, but you refused to listen. You’re not a match for us,” Kong Wen said as he looked at Mingshi Yin.

Mingshi Yin did not expect that he was still not a match for the Four Divine Monks even with his heaven-grade weapon, the Separation Hook and Scabbard.

On their own, they were neither strong nor powerful. However, there was something strange about them.

Mingshi Yin could see many openings, but he felt that they were traps.

Kong Wen ignored Mingshi Yin. He shifted his gaze toward Xu Jing and Lu Zhou who stood before the Hall of Great Strength.

When he saw Xu Jing’s weak appearance, Kong Wen said with a smile, “Xu Jing, I thought you managed to block that hit. It seems like we managed to injure you. It must not have been easy for you to hold out until now.”

At this moment, Xu Jing was supported by a young disciple. He was not in good shape.

Kong Wen turned toward Lu Zhou and said, “Old benefactor, what did he offer you in exchange for your help?”

“Well, Abbot Xu Jing has promised me the sable magnolia and the zen tunic with such sincerity, how can I refuse him?” Lu Zhou replied.

“Sable magnolia?” Kong Wen’s eyes widened as he looked at Xu Jing. “Xu Jing, are you mad? You’d rather give away such a precious item to an outsider than giving it to me?”

Xu Jing cursed with a weak voice, “Evil creature!” Cursing was the most he could manage now.

Kong Wen looked at Lu Zhou and said, “Old benefactor, an innocent man will get into trouble for possessing a precious item. The Temple of Great Emptiness is also set on obtaining this item. Why don’t you help us fulfill our wish, old benefactor?”

“What does the Temple of Great Emptiness want the sable magnolia?” Lu Zhou asked.

“Have you heard of the Evil Sky Pavilion, old benefactor?” Kong Wen inquired arrogantly.

“I’ve heard of it.”

“The Yun Sect has let slip that the Evil Sky Pavilion is searching for sable magnolias. The Evil Sky Pavilion belongs to the Fiend Path. The people of the Noble Path must take them down if they encounter them. The Great Temple of Emptiness will never let the Evil Sky Pavilion get what it wants!” Kong Wen said.

“The Temple of Great Emptiness has always held back from intervening in worldly affairs, and yet, you’re going to make an enemy out of the Evil Sky Pavilion?” Lu Zhou asked indifferently.

The Four Divine Monks had used Kong Xuan’s death as a pretext to lead a punitive expedition against the Heaven Choice Temple. They would never publicly admit that Kong Xuan was killed by the Evil Sky Pavilion.

“The Buddha is merciful. It’s only right to punish the Evil Sky Pavilion that has committed countless crimes,” Kong Wen said righteously.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said with a nod, “Alas, I really want the sable magnolia as well.”

Kong Wen’s expression froze as he said, “Old benefactor, I’ve given you a chance... Since you refuse to cherish it, you’ll share the same fate as the others.” He waved his hand.

The 20 disciples from the Temple of Great Emptiness joined their palms before themselves.

A buzzing noise like that of a mosquito rang in the air.

“The Temple of Great Emptiness’s Brahman Lullaby?” This scene was reminiscent of the one on Runan’s holy altar.

However, the Brahman Lullaby unleashed by these 20 monks was clearly more powerful than the one unleashed by the disciples Kong Xuan had brought with him that time.

With a force that seemed capable of creating hurricanes and disturbing the clouds, the deafening buzz of the Brahman Lullaby filled the area before the Hall of Great Strength.

The cultivation bases of the Heaven Choice Temple’s disciples were not profound to begin with. Many of them were not even in the Sense Condensing realm. They, naturally, could not withstand the Brahman Lullaby.

Lu Zhou stood still, completely unaffected. The Heavenly Writing’s extraordinary power had shown itself at this moment.

Zhao Yue and the female cultivators retreated into the Hall of Great Strength. With a wave of her arm, a wall of energy was erected before the female cultivators.

Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin were both in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm so they were not overly affected.

The Heaven Choice Temple’s disciples held their heads and fell to the ground!

Xu Liao, Xu Fan, and Xu Hai were barely holding on. The expressions on their faces were bitter.

Duanmu Sheng was annoyed by the sound. He could not stand it anymore. He brandished his Overlord Spear and shouted, “What a bunch of noisy bald donkeys!” He mobilized some of his energy and wrapped them around his spear shadows before releasing them. He kept his body straight as he held his spear with one hand and stabbed toward the heart of the Temple of Great Emptiness’s Brahman Lullaby.

“Block it!” The Four Divine Monks switched positions. They raised their hands and a huge square energy square blocked the Overlord Spear’s attack. “It’s futile!”

Bam!

The Overlord Spear split into ten and breached the square energy.

“Hm?”

‘What’s wrong?’

'Why can't we block it?'

Duanmu Sheng's countless sparring sessions with Hua Wudao seemed to have bore fruit. This skill of his was not powerful enough to break through the Six Compatible Seal, but it had no problems breaching this energy wall.

Mingshi Yin was filled with indignance after being suppressed earlier. When he saw that Duanmu Sheng had gained the upper hand, he grinned and said, "Don't forget about me..."

Chapter 184: Four Season Vanities, Arhats Combined!

The Overlord Spear was a heaven-grade weapon after all. It was only natural that it granted its user with a greater ability to pierce through energy.

Duanmu Sheng's performance had boosted Mingshi Yi's confidence and motivated him. Like a fired arrow, he shot toward Kong Zhi and Kong Zhang as he cried out, "I'll take on the retards!"

Duanmu Sheng understood what he meant. Divide and conquer! Since the Four Divine Monks worked together, all they had to do was separate them. He moved his arm and conjured an energy barrier with a wave of the Overlord Spear, pushing Kong Wen and Kong Jue back.

At the same time, a palm print appeared as well. Kong Wen and Kong Jue kept sending out dozens of palm prints that seemed to dance in the air.

It was a fierce battle.

Kong Zhi and Kong Zhang retreated as they parried the threatening blows from the heaven-grade weapon.

Bzzt! Bzzt! Bzzt!

The grating hums from the Brahman Lullaby could still be heard loud and clear.

The battle was reaching its climax.

The Heaven Choice Temple's disciples were all lying on the ground now. Some of them were even sent flying by the sound technique. Those with weak cultivation bases fainted as they frothed at their mouths.

A powerful sound technique was no different from a physical attack.

The incense cauldron was sent flying by dozens of palm prints. It shattered before it could even fall onto the ground. The ground was damaged beyond recognition. Not a single square of land was spared.

It was not easy for Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin to pull this off. After all, they were each fighting against two opponents.

The Four Divine Monks were different from the Four Dark Knights. The Four Dark Knights were solo fighters. Even if they worked together, they were unable to release any collaborative techniques.

Although the Four Divine Monks were separated by Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin, they were still able to unleash larger hand seals occasionally to push Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin back.

Duanmu Sheng's ferocious nature was displayed to its fullest during battle. The stronger his opponent was, the stronger he became. Although he took a few hits from the hand seals, he merely grunted and continued with his attacks. The blows that landed on him did not affect the rhythm and force of his attack.

Mingshi Yin's nature was inclined to the cunning side. He dodged the incoming blows with nimble movements and looked for openings to attack.

The four of them seemed to be tossing flashing hidden weapons and shooting hand seals that ricocheted everywhere.

The area ten meters within the Hall of Great Strength was filled with dazzling golden hand seals.

As the battle progressed, despite themselves, the Four Divine Monks were amazed by the combat strength that Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin displayed. They could tell Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin were not ordinary Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivators. After all, they even wielded heaven-grade weapons.

Usually, the Four Divine Monks would not have spent this much time and effort in dealing with ordinary Two and Three-leaf opponents.

Kong Wen did not want to drag the battle out any longer. He spoke in a deep voice, "Ward Mudra!"

The four monks moved back together and swiveled on their feet as Mudras appeared.

They resembled four translucent cocoons spinning on their respective axes. Some of the mudras appeared alongside energy wind as well.

Duanmu Sheng shouted, "I've been waiting for this tortoise technique!" His spear shadows lashed out again. He did not care about any kind of defenses. He stabbed with his spear shadows.

Bam!

Kong Jue stomped on the ground, and the ground cracked.

The Ward Mudra clanged loudly. It was known for being unmovable like a mountain. Hence, it could be used to withstand powerful attacks.

Kong Jue thought this skill would end everything. He did not expect Duanmu Sheng would keep stabbing at the Ward Mudra.

One stab, two stabs, three stabs...

The Overlord Spear was like a barely visible shadow as it moved with terrifying swiftness in the air.

Bam!

The spear shadows converged and stabbed at the Ward Mudra.

Kong Jue reeled back from this as he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, drawing an arc in the sky.

'Duanmu Sheng broke through the Ward Mudra?' Those who were witnessing the scene had difficulty believing what had just happened. After all, the Ward Mudra was an extremely powerful defensive skill of the Zen Sect. Alas, no Ward Mudras could compare to Hua Wudao's Six Compatible Seal.

Duanmu Sheng would become a laughingstock if he did not show any improvements after sparring with Hua Wudao for such a long time.

Mingshi Yin turned to look before he leaped back.

Although Xu Jing was weak, he still had enough energy to keep his eyes open. He said with a shaky voice, "Look out..."

'Look out?' Lu Zhou was not affected by the Brahman Lullaby. He could see everything clearly. Judging from the current situation, everything was under the Evil Sky Pavilion's control. With his two disciples holding the fort, he felt he did not even have to waste his item cards.

Kong Wen, Kong Zhi, and Kong Zhang frowned.

Kong Jue landed on his feet. With one hand on his chest, he waved his left hand to conjure up energy to shield his body before he levitated. He wiped the trail of blood from the edge of his lips. He stared ahead and said, "Let's do it..."

"Understood," Kong Wen replied.

Kong Zhi and Kong Zhang nodded.

Mingshi Yin was puzzled. 'Do what?'

The 20 disciples from the Temple of Great Emptiness suddenly sat down.

Boom!

An oval energy wave spread out in all directions directly.

"Taien Mantra?"

The Brahman Lullaby faded with the wind as chants of the Taien Mantra spread in the surroundings.

They were going in for the kill!

Lu Zhou did not expect the people from the Temple of Great Emptiness to master the Taien Mantra as well. There were many types of Buddhist sound techniques. Whether it was the Great Meditation Dharani or the Brahman Lullaby, they were both suppressive sound techniques that had a wide reach and effects.

The Taien Mantra was different. It could be fatal!

"Eliminate all evils, discard insincerities. The smallest doubts will result in failure."

The Four Divine Monks seemed to be strengthened by the Taien Mantra!

Mingshi Yin's and Duanmu Sheng's aura weakened greatly.

None of the Heaven Choice Temple's disciples were standing now. If this goes on, they would all die.

At this moment, a glimmer could be seen in Lu Zhou's palm.

The sound technique, the Taien Mantra, was like a much stronger and fatal version of the Brahman Lullaby. It attacked a person's seven orifices directly.

Lu Zhou felt a chilly sensation in his mind. He understood now why Xu Jing had told them to look out.

If the Four Divine Monks truly joined forces, Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin would surely be gravely injured. Lu Zhou would never let that happen!

Lu Zhou stood at the top of the steps. He looked down at the 20 monks from the Temple of Great Emptiness who were chanting the Taien Mantra before saying in a deep voice, "Thunderblast!"

Five Thunderblast Cards disappeared in Lu Zhou's hand. Five vortexes swirled in an anticlockwise direction and shot out as they grew in size and force.

"Master has made a move!" Mingshi Yin and Duanmu Sheng retreated and looked up.

Five bolts of lightning struck down from the heavens.

Boom!

At seemingly the same instant, the voices intensified for a moment.

Lu Zhou's attacks landed on five of the monks. Two of them were blasted into the ground while the other three reeled back. The remaining 15 monks had frightened expressions on their faces. They stopped chanting the Taien Mantra abruptly.

Lu Zhou shook his head. 'That's some bad luck. The 1% sure-kill rate wasn't triggered.' At the same time, he glanced at the price of the Thunderblast Card. He was relieved to find that it did not increase.

The Four Divine Monks exchanged a look. Without the enhancement from the Taien Mantra, the Four Divine Monks were suddenly at a loss.

Lu Zhou walked down the steps slowly with his hands on his back.

It was so quiet now that not a single sound could be heard.

Kong Wen was suddenly overcome with the feeling that the old man approaching them was not as weak as his aura suggested. He cried out, "Take down the leader to take down the lackeys!"

"Four Season Vanities! Ward Mudra!"

Whoosh!

The four old Divine Monks' auras suddenly surged out. Their eyes darkened and glowed with a dark blue radiance.

Primal Qi was condensed into energy.

A supersized Ward Mudra appeared from their joint effort!

Unlike the mudra from before, this mudra's color was as dark as ink.

“Fiend Zen,” Mingshi Yin said in shock, “They really hid themselves well!”

“Depraved Zen...”

All this while, the world had only known Zuo Xinchuan to be the sole cultivator who managed to cultivate the Fiend Zen to the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. It seemed that the world was greatly mistaken. There were all kinds of strange phenomena in the vast world.

Meanwhile, four figures wrapped in the Ward Mudra charged at Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin.

They advanced toward them from four sides.

“Four Golden Arhat Bodies!”

“Look out!” Xu Jing cried out with his final ounce of strength.

When the four Golden Arhat Bodies appeared, Duanmu Sheng raised his Overlord Spear before himself.

At the same time, countless vines grew around Mingshi Yin and formed a cocoon around himself.

However, what shocked the others was the four Golden Arhat Bodies merged into one. The Golden Lotus under its feet blossomed. One leaf, two leaves, three leaves, four leaves...

Chapter 185: Every Family Has Its Own Problems

Lu Zhou had already thought of a countermeasure before this. He was even prepared to use four Critical Strike Cards. Alternatively, he could just kill one of them first. The remaining three monks' strength would be greatly weakened as soon as one of them died. He was quite certain Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin would be able to take on three of them. However, unexpectedly, the four Arhat Golden Bodies had merged!

The Golden Lotus under its feet was still blooming. Five leaves... Six leaves...

At this moment, Lu Zhou was in no hurry to make a move. He wanted to see how many leaves the combined Golden Bodies would sprout.

When the Golden Lotus finally stopped blooming at the sixth leaf, the Four Divine Monks shot past Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Duanmu Sheng's cultivation base was only at the Two-leaf level after all. Kong Jue and Kong Wen attacked him with the Ward Mudra and sent him flying.

Mingshi Yin blocked the first wave of attacks with his Bluewood that he fortified with Primal Qi. However, the Bluewood crumbled soon after. Naturally, he was not as straightforward as Duanmu Sheng. When the Bluewood crumbled, he was nowhere to be seen.

The Four Divine Monks' target was no longer Duanmu Sheng nor Mingshi Yin. Their deaths were meaningless. Instead, they shifted their focus to Lu Zhou who was standing with his hands on his back at the bottom of the Hall of Great Strength's steps.

As the saying went, 'Kill the horse to get to the rider'.

“Seal of Fearlessness.”

Kong Wen, Kong Jue, Kong Zhi, and Kong Zhang clapped in unison. Four Seal of Fearlessness merged into one like the Golden Arhat Bodies. After merging, the Seal of Fearlessness was half the height of an adult. Alas, it still could not compare to a Great Seal of Fearlessness. Nonetheless, even without the support of the Taien Mantra, this attack could still claim the lives of many.

The disciples of the Heaven Choice Temple seemed resigned to their fates.

The shining and golden Seal of Fearlessness shot toward the greatest villain in the world. To be more precise, the strike was aimed at Lu Zhou’s head.

The Evil Sky Pavilion’s disciples did not seem worried at all at this moment.

Lu Zhou had intended to land a hit on the Golden Arhat Body. However, when the Seal of Fearlessness was shooting toward him...

“Xu Liao, what are you waiting for?”

Without anyone else noticing, Xu Liao, Xu Fan, and Xu Hai charged toward Lu Zhou. A greenish glow appeared in Xu Liao’s hand.

“A sneak attack?” Lu Zhou did not expect the three people by Xu Jing’s side would launch a sneak attack at this moment. It was obvious now that Xu Liao, Xu Fan, and Xu Hai had already betrayed the Heaven Choice Temple. He did not have the time to think and instantly shattered an item card in his hand.

A Golden Buddha Body that was 100 feet tall appeared!

Impeccable Card!

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!

The Seal of Fearlessness landed on the 100-foot Golden Buddha Body harmlessly.

Next, Xu Liao, Xu Fan, and Xu Hai’s weapons landed on the Golden Buddha Body with a loud clang. Two of the weapons shattered while the green light in Xu Liao’s hands shot inside the Golden Buddha Body and disappeared.

“Ding! Recovered a Sky Fragment. Reward: 100 merit points.”

Lu Zhou did not even have the time to inspect the Sky Fragment.

“Get lost!” Lu Zhou snarled. “Thunderblast”.

Three heavenly bolts of lightning struck, sending Xu Liao, Xu Fan, and Xu Hai flying back. Two of them spat out blood that arced in the sky while the other died immediately.

Lu Zhou shifted his gaze to the Four Divine Monks.

The Four Divine Monks stared at the colossal Golden Buddha Body with eyes brimming with shock.

“A Buddhist grandmaster?” Kong Wen felt his throat dry up. His eyelids were twitching uncontrollably.

The Impeccable Card could only last for ten seconds. Lu Zhou had to cherish every second he was given. He quickly raised his hand as another item card appeared. "How dare this puny Temple of Great Emptiness provoke me?"

A vortex appeared in Lu Zhou's palm. A grand-sized Great Seal of Fearlessness that was much larger compared to the Four Divine Monks' shot toward them.

Boom!

The four-in-one Golden Arhat Body shattered upon contact with the Great Seal of Fearlessness, causing Primal Qi to spill out into the surroundings.

As soon as the grand-sized Great Seal of Fearlessness destroyed the Golden Arhat Body, Kong Wen, Kong Jue, Kong Zhi, and Kong Zhang spat out blood and were sent flying back.

Lu Zhou wondered, 'Can I take them down with a single strike?' If he could, it would be a great win for him. He stared at the direction where the Great Seal of Fearlessness was heading.

Kong Wen, Kong Jue, Kong Zhi, and Kong Zhang were reeling in different directions...

Suddenly, the Great Seal of Fearlessness shot toward Kong Wen. The giant palm print resembled the hand of Buddha that had caught a monkey.

Dong!

There was a loud toll in the air that disappeared as soon as it appeared.

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

Kong Jue, Kong Zhi, and Kong Zhang fell to the ground with a thud.

Lu Zhou shook his head. He did not seem to be satisfied with the Deadly Strike Card's performance. It was clear that the Deadly Strike Card could only take down a single target. Although it would destroy any energy that stood in its way, it did not have a killing effect on anything that was not its target. The Deadly Strike Card was an apt name for it. There was a reason it was called Deadly Strike and not Deadly Strikes Card.

The monks from the Temple of Great Emptiness were dumbstruck. They stared at the Four Divine Monks who were sent flying. No, wait... It seemed like Kong Wen had died...

From the beginning to the end, Lu Zhou had merely unleashed two skills. He used one defensive skill, the Golden Buddha Body, and one offensive skill, the Great Seal of Fearlessness.

The disciples of the Heaven Choice Temple stared at Lu Zhou with their mouths agape.

Little Yuan'er was used to this and did not seem surprised.

Zhao Yue and the female cultivators could only see flashes of golden light from inside the Hall of Great Strength. They were not able to see the actual battle.

Zhu Honggong, Old Eighth, had never witnessed such a scene before. He stood riveted to the ground, in awe. He could not believe what he had just seen.

“Duanmu Sheng, Mingshi Yin...” Lu Zhou said in a deep voice.

“Yes, master.”

Duanmu Sheng leaped over from the side with the Overlord Spear in his hand.

Bam!

Mingshi Yin emerged from the ground where he had disappeared into earlier. He said respectfully, “Yes, master.”

Lu Zhou glanced at Mingshi Yin. As far as he knew, there was no tunneling technique in the Bluewood Heart Technique. ‘When did this rascal learn it?’ However, this was not the time to be thinking about this matter. He said, “I’ll leave these three to you.”

“Yes, master!”

At this moment, Kong Jue, Kong Zhi, and Kong Zhang were frowning. The three of them were only injured by backlash from the shattered Golden Arhat Body. The Great Seal of Fearlessness did not affect them. The three of them slammed their palms on the ground and stood up straight.

Kong Jue coughed as he bowed and said, “Wait!”

“We won’t!” Mingshi Yin who had been suppressed a moment ago was burning with fury and resentment. He exchanged a glance with Duanmu Sheng before both of them pounced forward like famished wolves.

The flying chariot in the skies saw it had become disadvantageous and did not hesitate to turn tail and leave! In just a moment, it vanished into the horizons!

The 20 monks on the ground were ghastly pale. They were like a plate of loose sand.

When Kong Wen was still around, Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin could still somewhat stand their ground. Now that Kong Wen was dead, they could surely do better!

Both sides fought fiercely again.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou shifted his focus from the battlefield and called out, “Little Yuan’er, Zhao Yue.”

“Yes, master.” The two disciples stepped forward.

“Clean this up.”

“Yes, master!” Zhao Yue bowed.

At this moment, Zhu Honggong, Old Eighth, finally regained his senses. He hastily made a big show out of his loyalty. “Master, master... What about me? I’m sure that I, Old Eighth, will be able to unleash my amazing strength and help lighten your burden!”

Little Yuan’er bared her canine teeth as she pointed at the monks who were chanting the Great Compassion Mantra moments ago and said, “I’ve had enough of the lot of you! I’ll give you the beating of a lifetime!”

Little Yuan'er and Zhao Yue had no problems dealing with these monks.

Lu Zhou looked at the injured Xu Liao and Xu Fan. He asked indifferently, "Why did you attack me?"

The two of them were trembling at his moment.

Meanwhile, Xu Jing was in shock. He did not expect the three remaining monks with the Xu generational name in the Heaven Choice Temple would launch a sneak attack on the world's greatest villain. He coughed violently and spat out blood, unable to accept this. "Why?"

"You can stop pretending to be so righteous! Xu Jing, you'd rather give the sable magnolia to the villain than to give to us... And you have the audacity to ask us why?" Xu Liao said with a sneer. Although he was afraid, there was no point pretending at this moment.

Xu Jing said exasperatedly, "You evil creatures! How can you fall for the Temple of Great Emptiness' lies?" If he had not hidden his injuries from everyone, these two would have acted against him long ago. They would not have waited until this moment.

Chapter 186: Sky Fragment

"The Fiend Path is the Fiend Path... Xu Jing, you've gone mad! If you have an ounce of goodness left in you, you would've ended your own life and repent your before Buddha," Xu Liao said.

Xu Jing continued to cough due to the agitation in his emotions. He was already injured to begin with, these continuous blows made it even harder for him to endure.

Lu Zhou shook his head. 'Every family has its own problems.' In the end, he said, "Xu Liao, since you have a Sky Fragment, why didn't you attack Xu Jing instead of attacking me?"

As soon as Lu Zhou mentioned the Sky Fragment, Xu Liao faltered as his expression changed slightly.

Xu Jing glared at Xu Liao and said, "You evil creature! The Temple of Great Emptiness gave you a Sky Fragment to kill me?"

At this point, Xu Liao had nothing left to hide. He said, "So what if they did? The three of us have contributed and sacrificed many things for the Heaven Choice Temple, and yet, you're willing to submit to the Evil Sky Pavilion! I'll spit on you..."

Xu Jing raised his hand and conjured up a gust of energy that struck Xu Liao's cheek.

Bam!

"There are more than 1,000 disciples in the Heaven Choice Temple. Aren't their lives just as precious?" Xu Jing questioned.

"If the Heaven Choice Temple merges with the Temple of Great Emptiness, there's no need for any of us to worry about our lives!" Xu Liao retorted.

Smack!

This time, Xu Jing did not use his energy. Instead, he physically slapped Xu Liao with his hand.

Xu Liao's expression darkened from these hits. Half of his face had turned red and swollen.

“Do you really think the Temple of Great Emptiness only has good intentions?” Xu Jing questioned, “Their abbot, Kong Yuan, has cultivated the Fiend Zen and has descended into depravity a long time ago... All these years, he acts sanctimoniously, but there are no evil deeds he would not do in the dark. He’s been going around feeding on other people’s Primal Qi and cultivation bases!”

When Xu Liao heard this, his jaws dropped, clearly dumbfounded.

“That’s a lie! I saw Grandmaster Kong Yuan’s Golden Body with my own eyes! It’s overwhelmingly pure! There’s no way that it’s fake!”

“You obstinate mule!” Xu Jing kicked Xu Liao without holding back.

Bam!

Xu Liao was sent flying to the side before he slid across the damaged floor.

Although Xu Jing was injured, he could still circulate his Primal Qi.

Xu Liao who had been hit by Thunderblast was greatly weakened. He would not be able to withstand another kick from Xu Jing. He sat limply on the ground.

The three of them had been waiting for their opportunity throughout these three days to strike with the Sky Fragment. Unfortunately, they never found the opportunity to do so. At the critical juncture, they thought they would be able to gain control of the situation and help the Four Divine Monks and get rid of Xu Jing’s helpers. They really did not expect their opponent to be so... powerful!

Xu Jing’s face contorted with pain as he said to Lu Zhou, “I’m sorry for this humiliating display, old benefactor... My temple’s dirty laundry has been exposed. After this incident is dealt with, I’ll personally deal with two of them and give you a satisfactory explanation, old benefactor.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

Xu Jing was, perhaps, the only person in the Heaven Choice Temple who was tactful and reasonable.

Lu Zhou shifted his gaze to Xu Liao and said, “The Temple of Great Emptiness gave you the Sky Fragment?”

“Yes.” Xu Liao was sore all over. He was cowering in fear at this moment.

Lu Zhou asked again, “Do you know where the other fragments are?”

“I... I don’t know.” Xu Liao shook his head.

“Really?”

Xu Liao nodded his head vehemently.

‘That makes sense. He’s only a small fry. There’s no way that he’d know where the other Sky Fragments are.’ Lu Zhou no longer asked about the Sky Fragments. Instead, he looked in the direction of the Hall of Great Strength.

Little Yuan'er and Zhao Yue's battles were easier. They were almost done cleaning up their opponents. The monks who chanted the Taien Mantra were just small fries with weak cultivation bases after all. They were only minor characters who were not worth much merit points.

Meanwhile, Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin had completely gained the upper hand.

With one of its members missing, the Four, now Three, Monks' strength and cultivation bases were greatly weakened. Although they were doing their best to parry the attacks, it was only a matter of time before they were defeated.

Little Yuan'er applauded gleefully. Then, she ran back and declared proudly, "Master, these monks are wimps... I didn't even use my full strength, and they're already knocked out."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "They're only in the Brahman Sea realm..." He wanted to say something scathing, but upon remembering that he, himself, was also in the Brahman Sea Eight Meridians realm, he held his tongue.

"Ding! Killed a Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm target. Reward: 1,000 merit points." Three similar notifications rang one after another.

Lu Zhou moved his gaze forward and saw that Kong Jue, Kong Zhi, and Kong Zhang had fallen.

Mingshi Yin's eyes seemed to gleam as he nodded in satisfaction and held the Separation Hook in his hands.

Meanwhile, Duanmu Sheng was wiping the dust away from his Overlord Spear...

Apart from their slightly ruffled clothing, they seemed unharmed.

After Mingshi Yin returned to Lu Zhou's side, he said, "I'm pleased to say I didn't let you down, master! I've killed the targets!"

"Very good," Lu Zhou glanced at Mingshi Yin and said, "However..."

Mingshi Yin's heart felt his heart leap. He thought his master would compliment him. Who knew there would be a 'however' at the end of the sentence?

Lu Zhou made a sharp turn with his words as he said, "However, it's thoroughly forbidden to cultivate another technique while cultivating the Bluewood Heart Technique."

"Master... I was only curious, and I couldn't help myself. That's why I learned the tunneling art. I swear I have no other motives for learning it!" Mingshi Yin said.

Lu Zhou said, "You will focus on cultivating the Bluewood Heart Technique from now on. Don't feel divided about it."

"Yes, master!" Mingshi Yin was overjoyed. Not only was he not punished, but his master had even advised him.

At this moment, all was quiet in front of the Hall of Great Strength.

The Heaven Choice Temple's disciples who had been tormented by the Taien Mantra were recovering after a moment of respite. They rose to their feet and looked at the damaged floor in front of the Hall of Great Strength before shifting their eyes to the incense cauldron... They took in the sight of the Temple of Great Emptiness' monks who had been defeated by the Evil Sky Pavilion's disciples!

This was the strength of the Evil Sky Pavilion.

The disciples from the Heaven Choice Temple gulped. Although they felt fearful, they felt at ease as well. After all, they had seen Lu Zhou's Golden Buddha Body with their own eyes!

'Who said devils couldn't become Buddhas?'

'Who said that all devils are evil?'

Naturally, Lu Zhou did not want to become a Buddha...

At this moment, the disciples from the Heaven Choice Temple gathered before the incense cauldron like they did before the battle began. Soon after, the area before the Hall of Great Strength seemed to be filled with them. They were battered, exhausted, and weak, some could not even stand without their comrades' support, and yet, they did not look like it when 1,000 of them stood together resolutely. They straightened their palms at the same time before themselves.

Xu Jing suddenly seemed invigorated. He looked at the disciples of the Heaven Choice Temple and said, "The Heaven Choice Temple is now safe." He turned around slowly to face Lu Zhou. He started coughing again. Then, he said, "Thank you for your help, Benefactor Ji."

At this moment, the 1,000 or so disciples before the Hall of Great Strength said in unison, "Thank you for your help, Benefactor Ji."

Although some of their voices were weak or incomprehensible, their collective voice rang loud and clear when it reached Lu Zhou's ears. It had an aura that was indescribable, it was as though they were given a new lease on life.

"Ding! Received pious worship from 982 individuals. Reward: 9,820 merit points."

Lu Zhou was pleased. In hindsight, it seemed that his initial choice was the right choice. "I'll have the sable magnolia now."

Chapter 187: Seven Star Soul

Lu Zhou walked up the steps and entered the Hall of Great Strength.

After Zhu Honggong, Old Eighth, witnessed his master's formidable strength, he hastily ran ahead of his master and cleared the debris on the steps with his feet. With an ingratiating smile on his face, he said, "Master, your Golden Buddha Body has truly opened my eyes. Moreover, there's the Great Seal of Fearlessness that's peerless in heaven and earth! Let me get this debris out of the way for you..."

The other disciples from the Evil Sky Pavilion were speechless when they saw Zhu Honggong's antics. Although they would flatter their master sometimes, they were never as shameless as Zhu Honggong. They had to admit their skin was not as thick compared to Zhu Honggong.

Lu Zhou ignored Zhu Honggong and sat down slowly.

Apart from a few core disciples who waited within the hall, the other Heaven Choice Temple's disciples began clearing the area.

The injured Xu Jing returned to the hall while being supported by two disciples. He was holding a brocade box in his hand as he walked slowly into the hall.

"Aren't you afraid of death?" Lu Zhou asked as he stroked his beard.

Xu Jing said, "There's nothing to fear about death... When the Four Divine Monks came before this, I had suspected that Xu Liao and the other two were up to no good. However, I really didn't expect them to be so bold!"

"Is that why you concealed your injury from them?"

"Precisely." Xu Jing presented the brocade box with both hands and said, "This is the sable magnolia."

Lu Zhou received the brocade box. When he opened it, a rich medicinal aroma filled his nostrils. The smell was quite strong.

"Ding! Obtained a sable magnolia."

"Completed the mission of obtaining a sable magnolia. Reward: 1,500 merit points." The notification was brief. Not even the item's effects were mentioned.

Lu Zhou gave the sable magnolia to Little Yuan'er who stood behind him.

Little Yuan'er held the sable magnolia carefully as though she had just been given a rare treasure. Nobody cared more about this item than her. Her master had obtained this sable magnolia without caring about the troubles it would bring him just so she could open her sea of Qi.

Soon after, Xu Jing joined his palms together and bowed at Lu Zhou before he said, "On behalf of the Heaven Choice Temple, I hereby declare that we're now a subsidiary of the Evil Sky Pavilion."

The other disciples from the Heaven Choice Temple bowed as well.

However, Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "A devil can never be a Buddha... There's no need for this."

The current Heaven Choice Temple consisted of a group of old and weak men. Xu Jing would need considerable time to recover from his injury. The young disciples were too weak to shoulder any important responsibilities while Xu Liao, Xu Fan, and Xu Hai had betrayed the temple. This was certainly adding hail to snow on the Heaven Choice Temple's roof. Most importantly, these men were of no use to the Evil Sky Pavilion!

Xu Jing said with a sigh, "Benefactor Ji, the current Heaven Choice Temple can hardly compete with the other temples. The Temple of Great Emptiness has returned after suffering a loss, but they'll surely return in the future. At that time..." He trailed off as he shook his head. He was worried the Temple of Great Emptiness would target them again.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "The Four Divine Monks of the Temple of Great Emptiness are no more. They have only one expert left, and that's Kong Yuan... That man is extremely cautious. At the very least, they won't be coming back in the near future."

Moreover, Lu Zhou had displayed his strength. The people on the flying chariot had definitely seen his Golden Buddha Body as well.

Xu Jing nodded, agreeing with Lu Zhou's words. So long as their enemies did not come at them in the near future, he would be able to think of many ways to steer clear of trouble. He finally said, "Thank you for your enlightenment, Benefactor Ji."

Lu Zhou waved his arm and stood up as he said, "Let's go."

"Back to the pavilion!" Zhu Honggong said enthusiastically.

"Old Eighth... Can you give your flattery a rest? You don't behave like an Evil Sky Pavilion's disciple at all... I'm ashamed of you, I truly am. Hm? Master... Just a moment, I'll get the flying chariot ready. I guarantee that it'll be extremely steady!" Mingshi Yin ran out of the Hall of Great Strength.

Mingshi Yin moved quickly and the cloud-splitting chariot landed before the Hall of Great Strength in no time...

Lu Zhou looked around himself and said, "Even if the Heaven Choice Temple doesn't need to bend its knees today... After today's incident, the outside world will surely talk about this. The Heaven Choice Temple will never be able to stand proudly in the cultivation world. Have you thought about the consequences?"

Xu Jing said, "After this incident, I finally realized these things are no longer important. After today, the Heaven Choice Temple will close its door and go into cultivation."

The body followed what the heart wanted.

Lu Zhou nodded and said no more. He leaped onto the cloud-splitting chariot with nimble movements. It was not difficult for a Brahman Sea Eight Meridians cultivator to accomplish that feat after all.

When Xu Jing saw this, he joined his palms and said, "Amitabha Buddha."

The almost 1,000 disciples joined their palms and began chanting.

This was not an attack, a befuddling skill or a defensive one, they were purely chanting mantras.

The mantras resounded clearly through the Hall of Great Strength. It rose and fell in tone and spread throughout Clear Source Mountain.

This was the highest rite they could perform for a guest. It was also a sign of their gratitude and respect toward the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Mingshi Yin, Duanmu Sheng, and the others felt awkward. This was the first time that they had been treated this way. They had a peculiar feeling that they could not shake off.

The cloud-splitting chariot rose into the skies.

Lu Zhou did not hear the notification ringtone. He discovered repeated worshipping would not give him merit points.

After the cloud-splitting chariot rose into the sky, Mingshi Yin sighed and shook his head. His voice was full of emotion as he said, "Although these bald donkeys are too useless, they're much better than the Clarity and Righteous Sects in some ways."

Duanmu Sheng nodded. "At least, they keep their words."

The cloud-splitting chariot dragged its tail behind like a meteor as it sped toward the Evil Sky Pavilion.

...

Two hours later.

In the hidden chamber of Evil Sky Pavilion.

Lu Zhou opened the system dashboard.

Name: Lu Zhou

Race: Human

Cultivation base: Brahman Sea Eight Meridians

Merit points: 29,320

Avatar: Six Recombinant Trigram Lines

Remaining life: 5,955 days

Items: Deadly Strike Card x1, Impeccable Card x2, Critical Block Card x7 (passive), Binding Cage Card x4, Refining Talisman x2, Ji Tiandao's Peak Trial Card x1, Whizard (completed resting), Bi An, Sky Fragment x1.

Weapons: Unnamed, Amorous Hoop (Owner: Ye Tianxin, would have to be refined before use), Life Cutter, Nirvana Sash, Tear Stain Box.

Cultivation method: Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing.

Lu Zhou looked at the numbers, feeling extremely pleased. "29,320 merit points."

He did not expect to gain more merit points from the worshipping of the Heaven Choice Temple's disciples than killing the Four Divine Monks.

Naturally, Lu Zhou knew that these merit points were far from enough for him to restore himself to his peak condition. However, compared to the time when he had barely enough to make ends meet, he was now very rich.

'How should I spend them?' Initially, he intended to buy an avatar. 'The Seven Star Soul is sold at 15,000 merit points. I'll have 14,000 points left after the purchase. Or I can choose to do a series of lucky draws.'

"Lucky draw."

“...” A short while later, Lu Zhou shook his head helplessly and said, “Perhaps, this is what they mean by one’s sure to lose after a huge gain.”

He did 60 draws and wasted 3,000 merit points. He did not even win anything. He kept being thanked throughout the lucky draws. Fortunately, there were the merit points he obtained from the worshipping of the monks. Otherwise, he would have been depressed by this outcome.

Perhaps, Lu Zhou was used to his rotten luck. He felt somewhat numb. He remembered that he had once accumulated 66 luck points when his luck was at its lowest. This time, he gained 79 luck points. It was worse than the last time.

‘Stay calm.’ He had been awarded a Reversal Card for 66 luck points. ‘This time, it should be better, right?’ Perhaps, he would even be gifted with 1,000 Reversal Cards.

Lu Zhou calmed down. He no longer tried the lucky draws. Instead, he opened the mall tab and purchased the avatar, the Seven Star Soul.

“Ding! Obtained the avatar, the Seven Star Soul. Will you equip it now?”

“Equip.”

With the Seven Star Soul, Lu Zhou could officially step into the Divine Court realm.

Chapter 188: Another Junk?

Lu Zhou saw the Six Recombinant Trigram Lines avatar being replaced by the Seven Star Soul. At the same time, he felt his Extraordinary Eight Meridians being filled with a formidable power.

For cultivators in the Brahman Sea Eight Meridians or lower, the tempering and improvements were only on their bodies and consciousness. However, after that, a cultivator would officially step into the Divine Court realm.

Usually, there would only be one Divine Court realm cultivator out of several hundred cultivators in a single sect. A Divine Court realm cultivator would be able to control the method he or she cultivated. At the same time, they would be taken more seriously in the cultivation world. They surpassed the Brahman Sea realm cultivators in terms of cultivation base and power after all.

Meanwhile, the energy around the Evil Sky Pavilion surged. Some of the energy flowed into the Evil Sky Pavilion through the opened doors and windows.

The disciples who felt the fluctuation of energy turned to look in the pavilion’s direction.

Zhu Honggong asked curiously, “Senior brother, has someone stepped into the Divine Court realm?”

Mingshi Yin was used to this so he said, “There’s no need to be alarmed. Master does this all the time.”

Zhu Honggong scratched his head, baffled. He recalled the scene he witnessed back in the Heaven Choice Temple. He would never dare to doubt his master’s cultivation base and abilities. His master was able to conjure a Golden Buddha Body, unleash the Great Seal of Fearlessness, and defeat the Four Divine Monks. Based on these points alone, he no longer dared to comment on the matter.

“Fourth Senior Brother, when did master give you the weapon?” Zhu Honggong asked curiously.

Mingshi Yin raised his right arm. The Separation Hook and Scabbard appeared above his hand and began to spin.

Zhu Honggong was practically drooling in envy as he said, "I wonder when I'll get a nice weapon of my own.

"You have the zen tunic, don't you? By the way, let's go, Eighth Junior Brother." Mingshi Yin pulled Zhu Honggong and made his way toward the back of the mountain.

"What is it?"

"Spar with me."

"Huh? Fourth Senior Brother, there's no need to joke like this. I'm only in the Divine Court realm. I won't ever be a match for you who's in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. Ow, Senior Brother... Ow, ow, ow..."

...

In the hidden chamber.

Lu Zhou heaved a sigh of relief after entering the Divine Court realm. He sensed the changes in the energy inside his body. He was at the Dao-shaping stage in various aspects. Unfortunately, his longevity was already at its limit when Ji Tiandao was still in this body. Hence, he was merely recovering his cultivation base right now instead of increasing his lifespan.

"5,955 days?" Lu Zhou opened the item mall and purchased a Reversal Card. "Use."

As his life energy reversed, the numbers on the dashboard changed to 6,255 days, which was equivalent to more than 17 years.

Lu Zhou stood up and stretched his limbs. He did not feel any obvious changes. After all, he merely gained less than one year's worth of time. For a being that could live for a millennium, 17 years was nothing.

He finally understood. This system was kind to newbies in lucky draws or special gift bags. As time went by and as one's cultivation base improved, it would get more difficult to obtain anything good from the system.

'Sky Fragment? Isn't this the junk Ji Tiandao tossed away before this?' He recalled the moment when Xu Liao tried to attack him using the Sky Fragment.

The Sky Fragments were fragments of a certain weapon that was extremely sharp. Even just one fragment was terrifying since it could pierce through protective energies. It was a good weapon to kill someone. Lu Zhou just recovered this knowledge from his memories.

His memories were fuzzy. Anything related to the system was blank. Ji Tiandao had obtained eight fragments through some unknown method. Then, when he found no use for the fragments, he had tossed them away, treating them like trash.

Outsiders regarded the Evil Sky Pavilion as a treasure trove. There were many who secretly collected the treasures from the pavilion. The Sky Fragments were one of them.

Lu Zhou raised his hand slightly. A green Sky Fragment appeared in his palm. It was long, thin, and irregularly-shaped along the edges. It resembled a shard from a broken vase.

Lu Zhou used his Primal Qi to gauge the Sky Fragment's quality.

"It's barely an earth-grade material..." Based on this alone, Lu Zhou would not bother himself with it. It was no wonder Ji Tiandao tossed them away all those years ago.

Soon after, Lu Zhou noticed a new mission in the system's mission list. Collecting Sky Fragments (1/8).

A stiff expression appeared on Lu Zhou's face. Searching for the Sky Fragments in this world was no different from fishing for a needle in the ocean.

'How am I going to complete this?' Lu Zhou shook his head. He cursed inwardly at the system as he closed the dashboard.

When he left the hidden chamber and entered the great hall, he saw Zhao Yue hurrying over.

Zhao Yue bowed and said, "Master... Little Junior Sister! She..."

"Is she making trouble again?" Lu Zhou asked with his hands on his back. He honestly could not think of anyone who could bully her in the Evil Sky Pavilion.

"No. Little Junior Sister consumed both of the sable magnolias in one go! Her condition doesn't seem too stable now," Zhao Yue said.

"..."

"Junior Sister Tianxin has gone over. Her Blue Waves Technique should be able to stabilize the herbs' effects," Zhao Yue said.

Lu Zhou frowned and said, "That little girl will never let me rest." He had underestimated Little Yuan'er's eagerness to improve her cultivation base.

After Little Yuan'er received the sable magnolias, she rushed back to the south pavilion and ate both of them at the same time. The problem was the sable magnolias were incredibly potent. It should have been consumed in smaller portions over several servings. It was the same as drinking wine. It had to be enjoyed slowly. The quicker one drank, the quicker one would get drunk. Things might even go awry!

...

Meanwhile, in the south pavilion.

Duanmu Sheng, Mingshi Yin, Zhu Honggong, and the others were waiting anxiously.

Even Zhou Jifeng, Pan Zhong, and Hua Wudao were at the courtyard.

Hua Wudao said, "The sable magnolias' effects are terrifying... However, this young girl's talent isn't to be underestimated as well. I believe that she'll pull through."

“Elder Hua, you do have a point... However, there’s always the off-chance that things might go wrong. We should think of a way to suppress the herbs’ effects on Little Junior Sister. She has never experienced much hardships in her life. I’m worried that she won’t survive this with her weak willpower,” Mingshi Yin said.

“How are we supposed to do that?” Duanmu Sheng grabbed Mingshi Yin’s shoulder.

“Senior brother... There’s no need to grip me like that. How should I know?” Mingshi Yin looked innocent.

“I’ll do it...” Under the support of two female cultivators, Ye Tianxin walked up to Little Yuan’er’s doors.

“You have a way?” Mingshi Yin asked, puzzled.

“My Blue Waves Technique can lessen the herb’s effects...” Ye Tianxian said.

As the name suggested, the Blue Waves Technique utilized the power of water. Water was the source of life.

“But your cultivation base is still recovering... Won’t you damage your Daoist Bone if you do that? How are you going to recover your cultivation base at that time?” Mingshi Yin asked.

Ye Tianxin asked, “Do you have any other ideas then?”

They did not.

The others made way for Ye Tianxin. She opened the door with an indifferent expression. She turned to the others and said before entering the room, “Don’t forget, she’s my little junior sister as well.”

Ye Tianxin went in and closed the door.

The others sighed and shook their heads. They paced the corridor like ants on a hot pan.

“What’s taking master so long?” Mingshi Yin wondered as he looked outside.

Zhu Honggong said, “Don’t worry, Fifth Senior Sister had already gone to inform him about this. Master is old and his legs are weak. It’s normal.”

Chapter 189: Nascent Divinity Tribulation Realm

Mingshi Yin crossed his arms and said, “Old Eighth, you’re really courageous to insult master behind his back.”

Zhu Honggong shuddered and said, “Fourth Senior Brother, I wouldn’t dare. Master is still in his prime. Although he’s old, he’s still filled with vigor.”

At this moment, Hua Wudao, Zhou Jifeng, and Pan Zhong cupped their fists and bowed. “Pavilion Master.”

Mingshi Yin, Duanmu Zheng, and Zhu Honggong hastily turned around and saw Lu Zhou sauntering toward them.

Zhao Yue was following closely behind him.

After entering the courtyard, Lu Zhou saw that everyone was here. He asked, "What's the situation?"

"Junior Sister Tianxin has gone in. Her Blue Waves Technique can be used to lessen the medicine's effects. With junior sister helping out, there won't be a huge problem," Mingshi Yin said.

Lu Zhou nodded and looked at everyone who was gathered here. In the end, his eyes landed on Zhu Honggong and asked, "Old Eighth, why do you look so afraid?" He had seen Zhu Honggong's knees shaking.

Zhu Honggong wiped the sweat from his face and said, "No, no, I... I'm just worried about little junior sister." Inwardly, he felt like crying. 'I'm dead.' With his master's strength and cultivation base in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, it was impossible for his master to miss his words.

"Ye Tianxin cultivates the Blue Waves Technique. It's capable of reaching the Extraordinary Eight Meridians easily... There's no need to worry."

Zhu Honggong was surprised by his master's reply.

Meanwhile, Mingshi Yin coughed softly and took a step back, afraid he would get dragged into this matter.

Lu Zhou was puzzled by their actions, but he paid them no mind.

Hua Wudao walked over at this moment. He bowed before he said, "Indeed, Ye Tianxin can stabilize the herb's effects, but her cultivation base is weak. I'm worried she might not be able to handle it."

"Do you have any suggestions?"

"To be safe... You should try stabilizing the medicine's effect instead, Pavilion Master."

Everyone shifted their attention to Lu Zhou.

'You're Ye Tianxin's master. Since Tianxin knows the Blue Waves Technique, it stands to reason that you know it as well. Moreover, you're stronger than her. You're definitely the most suitable candidate.'

'Ye Tianxin is still a recovering patient after all. There's no way she'll be able to outdo her old master.'

Hua Wudao's suggestion seemed reasonable. Everyone clearly agreed with his words.

However, Lu Zhou stroked his beard and shook his head. "Ye Tianxin is enough." He had just recently stepped into the Divine Court realm and was only at the early Dao-shaping stage. He had not even stabilized his own cultivation base, how was he going to stabilize the herb's effects?

Boom!

Everyone was anxiously waiting outside when a ripple of energy spread from the room and rippled in all directions. They could clearly sense some Dao Primal Energy in the energy. The Dao Primal Energy was a sign of the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. It was also the foundation for cultivating the Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar. The golden strands of energy were the Dao Primal Energy.

The Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm was divided into three sub-realms; the Primal Dao, the Primal Chaos, and the Combined Dao. The Primal Dao was the first sub-realm of the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm.

Based on this, it seemed like someone had stepped into the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. It was quite clear that Little Yuan'er had successfully broken through!

While the energy spilled into the surroundings, the sky above the south pavilion was disturbed by the intense surge of power.

Everyone appeared delighted.

"Little Junior Sister has achieved a breakthrough!"

"We have another great fighter among our ranks now!"

"Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm... When will I be able to achieve that?"

Naturally, some felt sad as well.

Zhou Jifeng who prided himself on being a genius was slightly stunned as he looked at the energy spilling into the surroundings. Compared to Little Yuan'er, he was just garbage.

Little Yuan'er had entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm after only joining the Evil Sky Pavilion for five years. She had to be a peerless genius to be able to achieve this.

The door did not open. The energy seemed to be spilling continuously.

Bang!

All of a sudden, Ye Tianxin crashed through the door as she was sent flying back.

There was another strong surge of energy...

Lu Zhou merely glanced at Ye Tianxian indifferently before he strode into the room. As soon as he entered, he saw Little Yuan'er shining with golden radiance. Apart from that, she was also bathed in a peculiar energy. The remnants of the Blue Waves Technique could be seen under her feet. The two energies seemed to be in harmony as well.

Little Yuan'er who was seated on the bed with her legs crossed gradually calmed down. The aura she emitted was much formidable compared to before. After a while, she finally opened her eyes.

"Master?" Little Yuan'er appeared puzzled as though she had just awoken from a dream. The Primal Qi around her dissipated.

"Congratulations, little junior sister."

"Congratulations, little junior sister, for entering the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm."

"Congratulations, little junior sister."

The congratulatory messages from her seniors entered her ears. Little Yuan'er looked at her own hands and tried to circulate some Primal Qi. She raised her right hand and circulated some Primal Qi again. A

Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar that was nearly her height appeared. There was no Golden Lotus under the avatar, and it resembled a golden person. She clenched her fist, and the avatar disappeared.

Little Yuan'er leaped off the bed and said, "Master! I've achieved a breakthrough! I'm now in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm as well!"

"On your knees." Lu Zhou's voice was light, soft, and stern.

Little Yuan'er was stunned. With an 'oh', she kneeled obediently.

"Do you know what your mistake was?"

"I do," Little Yuan'er answered honestly.

"What is it?"

"I... I don't know."

"..." Lu Zhou was speechless.

Mingshi Yin spoke from outside, "Little junior sister, you were impatient and consumed the sable magnolias without consulting anyone! If Junior Sister Tianxin didn't risk her life to stabilize and lessen the herbs' effect, you wouldn't have been able to successfully break through!"

"Senior Sister Tianxin?"

"She's injured, but it's nothing serious... She'll be fine after a few days of recuperation," Mingshi Yin said.

When she heard this, Little Yuan'er regretted her actions. She lowered her head and said, "I know I've done wrong. Please punish me heavily, master."

"The most important thing is that you know you've done wrong and that you're willing to repent... Rise to your feet and talk," Lu Zhou said as he stroked his beard.

Thud!

Zhu Honggong sat on the floor.

Mingshi Yin frowned and said, "Old Eighth, what're you doing?"

"It's nothing... I... I just need some time to get used to this..." Zhu Honggong had never heard his master say something like that.

"I'm warning you... You'd better stay away from me." Mingshi Yin quickly moved away from Zhu Honggong, afraid that the fool would drag him down.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and looked at Little Yuan'er as he said, "You've just entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm so you should stabilize it first. Also... cultivate the Supreme Purity Jade Slip from the beginning according to the completed cultivation method I gave you."

Little Yuan'er nodded vigorously and said, "I won't let you down, master." She giggled before she said, "Master, you're the best!"

Lu Zhou frowned and chided her, "There's never a serious moment with you."

Little Yuan'er sat with her legs crossed and began stabilizing her cultivation base.

Lu Zhou walked out of the room with his hands on his back.

When the others saw him coming, they retreated.

Lu Zhou walked toward Ye Tianxin who had a trail of blood at the edge of her lips...

Ye Tianxin was supported by two female cultivators at this moment. She did not seem to be in a good shape. She seemed extremely exhausted. Her aura was weak and faltering.

Ye Tianxin hastily kneeled and said, "I know that I've done wrong. I shouldn't have acted on my own accord."

"Master, Junior Sister Tianxin was only trying to help little junior sister. That's why she acted without asking." Mingshi Yin suddenly fell to his knees to plead for Ye Tianxin.

Zhu Honggong who was standing nearby instantly fell to his knees as well.

Duanmu Sheng cupped his fists and said, "Fourth Junior Brother has a point. Please consider it, master."

Zhao Yue said nothing. She merely kneeled on the ground.

All of Lu Zhou's disciples were kneeling at this moment.

Ye Tianxin's heart stirred slightly. She was unfamiliar with the emotions that welled up in her heart. She mustered her courage and said, "Master, I... I want to return to the Evil Sky Pavilion! Please grant me this wish, master!"

The courtyard fell silent.

Lu Zhou's gaze was trained on Ye Tianxin.

Chapter 190: Taking Leave

Lu Zhou looked around his surroundings. He remained quiet even when he saw all his disciples kneeling on the ground. His gaze shifted from Ye Tianxin to Pan Zhong before he called out, "Pan Zhong."

"I'm here."

"If you want to return to the Clarity Sect, will the Clarity Sect agree to it?" Lu Zhou asked indifferently.

Pan Zhong fell to his knees immediately and declared his allegiance. "Pavilion Master, since I've joined the Evil Sky Pavilion, I've never thought about leaving. If you didn't give me the Six Yang Technique, I'll still be afflicted by the bitter cold. As long as I live, I'll be a person of the Evil Sky Pavilion; if I die, I'll be its ghost."

"I was saying, what if," Lu Zhou said.

"What if?" Pan Zhong scratched his head and said, "If I return, I think I would be cut into eight chunks before I could even reach the main entrance..."

Mingshi Yin rolled his eyes and said, "What did you do that you're not even deserving of a second chance to make amends?"

"It's not about making amends. This is the Clarity Sect's rules. The elders stick to the rules rigidly," Pan Zhong said.

Lu Zhou looked toward Zhou Jifeng and asked, "Zhou Jifeng, what about you?"

Zhou Jifeng knew the reason Lu Zhou was asking these questions. He replied, "Although the Heavenly Sword Sect has been good to me, we're no longer able to share the same sky. Even if I want to return, they would never take me in."

Lu Zhou turned to look at Hua Wudao and asked, "Elder Hua, what about you?"

Hua Wudao seemed to have foreseen that he would be asked the same question. He cupped his fists and said, "Would you like to hear the truth, Pavilion Master?"

"Naturally."

"If I didn't join the Evil Sky Pavilion and am willing to return to the Yun Sect, I think the Yun Sect will accept me." Hua Wudao was a Six-leaf elite after all. After his recent breakthrough, he was now a Seven-leaf elite. A talent such as himself would have been accepted anywhere he went. However, he had joined the Evil Sky Pavilion. It was practically impossible for him to return to the Yun Sect.

The trio's answers reached everyone's ears.

At this moment, all of Lu Zhou's disciples did not dare to say anything. They did not want to interrupt Lu Zhou's thoughts, whatever they were. Their kneeling alone was the utmost they could do to plead for Ye Tianxin.

Ye Tianxin clearly knew what the questions meant. She felt worse when she heard Zhou Jifeng and Pan Zhong's replies. She kneeled without moving as she linked her fingers together. She had betrayed her master, denounced her ancestors, and left... She was no different from Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng. She was not Hua Wudao after all.

"The Fish Dragon Village incident has been solved. Wei Zhuoyan, who framed me, has died... Do you have anything to say about it?" Lu Zhou asked calmly.

Ye Tianxin's body trembled. She did not dare to look at Lu Zhou. She kept her head lowered as she said, "I know that my sins are grave and unforgivable..."

Lu Zhou's expression was calm. He waved his arm dismissively and said with nary a ripple in his tone, "Our ties have been severed... Leave."

Ye Tianxin's heart sank when she heard this.

The others only looked up and sighed. They wanted to help but were powerless to do anything else.

Ye Tianxin rose to her feet with great difficulty.

"Palace Master." Her former subordinates were pained to see her like this. The only thing they could do was support her.

Ye Tianxin bowed deeply toward Li Zhou and said, "I joined the pavilion when I was ten and have been cultivating 20 years. I will never forget how you've nurtured me, instructed me, and gave me the Amorous Hoop. I have committed a grave sin and returning to the Evil Sky Pavilion was only my wishful thinking. However, you responded to my hostility with kindness by getting to the bottom of the Fish Dragon Village incident and killing Wei Zhuoyan. This favor amounts to a new lease on life for me..." Then, she kneeled on the ground again. "Please accept my final kowtow, master." She kowtowed loudly three times to Lu Zhou.

Nobody stopped her. They only watched in silence.

Mingshi Yin wanted to plead at first, but Duanmu Sheng stopped him. Judging by the hour and the situation, it was not wise to oppose their master right now. Mingshi Yin understood that as well and only shook his head helplessly.

Lu Zhou seemed calm.

Ye Tianxin rose to her feet after she finished kowtowing.

"Since you saved Little Yuan'er... I'll give you the Amorous Hoop. You're on your own now..." When Lu Zhou flipped his palm, the glittering Amorous Hoop materialized in the air while spinning slowly. He swung his arm and the Amorous Hoop floated toward Ye Tianxin.

Ye Tianxin was surprised. This was the weapon she had spent much time with. She had long forged an exceptional bond with it. She would not have said anything even if her master destroyed her weapon. She truly did not expect her master would give the Amorous Hoop to her.

Ye Tianxin conjured up some weak Primal Qi to wrap around the Amorous Hoop. When she got the weapon, she could feel that her spirit, Qi, and essence had undergone some noticeable changes.

"The Amorous Hoop was made for Junior Sister Tianxin." Duanmu Sheng was all praise when he saw this. However, when he thought about it, he felt the Overlord Spear was alright as well. He felt much better with that thought in mind. He turned to look at Mingshi Yin and sighed inwardly. 'Poor Fourth Junior Brother. He was given some junk, and yet, he's beside himself with happiness.'

Ye Tianxin bowed deeply toward Lu Zhou again. All the words she wanted to say were conveyed with this bow.

Lu Zhou said nothing. He looked on as she turned around and left the south pavilion.

Hua Wudao sighed. "I can see that the child is genuinely sorry for her sins... However, I agree with your decision, Pavilion Master. Deceiving one's master and denouncing one's ancestors are crimes that incite the fury of gods and men alike!"

Mingshi Yin was about to offer a few more words of plea, but Hua Wudao's statement made him swallow his words. 'Forget it... She's gone. There's no need to waste any more words on this.'

Mingshi Yin bowed at Lu Zhou and said, "Master, may I send her off, seeing that we've spent many years as fellow disciples?"

Lu Zhou nodded slightly. 'He can do whatever he wants.'

Mingshi Yin exited the south pavilion and saw the Derived Moon Palace's female cultivators gathered outside. He frowned involuntarily.

"What are you guys doing?"

The Derived Moon Palace's female cultivators stopped in their tracks.

"Mister Fourth." The female cultivators saluted him.

One of the female cultivators bowed at Mingshi Yin and said, "We're grateful for your help back then, Mister Fourth, and we're grateful for all the care you've showered upon us all this time... We, sisters, have followed the palace master for many years. Where the palace master goes, we shall follow..."

Mingshi Yin felt speechless. "How touching. Alas, you're too dumb..."

"Uh..."

Mingshi Yin ran down the mountain and caught up to Ye Tianxin.

"Fourth Senior Brother?" Ye Tianxin turned around, puzzled.

"Junior sister... Don't hold this against master. You saw how it was earlier. I tried to plead for you but..." When Mingshi Yin said this, he turned to look at the female cultivators before saying, "You aren't going to rebuild the Derived Moon Palace, are you?"

"What do you mean, Fourth Senior Brother?"

"Your cultivation base isn't restored yet... You'll attract too much attention if you bring them along with you, and you'll easily be a target," Mingshi Yin said.

Ye Tianxin nodded. She was now a clay Buddha that was trying to cross the river. She could hardly fend for herself. She could not act as though she was her former self.

Mingshi Yin smiled faintly. "Don't be upset. Master didn't kill you, and he has taken out Wei Zhuoyan. This is a wonderful show of grace... Moreover, master merely told you to leave. He didn't say anything about banishing you from the pavilion. This shows that he isn't that heartless after all."

Ever since Ye Tianxin was captured and brought back to the Evil Sky Pavilion, she rarely had contact with her master. She did not know that her master had changed. With a befuddled expression, she said, "Fourth Senior Brother, are you telling me that I still have a chance?"

"Of course," Mingshi Yin said with a nod, "I'll try and slowly persuade master. Perhaps, his anger will fade in the future."

"I certainly hope so." Ye Tianxin's expression brightened up immediately.

"Moreover, you saved little junior sister. Master is most fond of her. I'll try my best to trick... uh, persuade little junior sister to put in a good word for you in front of master," Mingshi Yin said.

When Ye Tianxin heard this, she bowed at Mingshi Yin and said, "Thank you, Fourth Senior Brother."

“We’re both fellow disciples, there’s no need to thank me,” Mingshi Yin looked beyond the barrier and said, “Forget the main road, take the inconspicuous roads instead... Also, before your cultivation base is restored, you shouldn’t show your face in public.”

Ye Tianxin nodded. Then, she faced the female cultivators. At this moment, she seemed to have turned into a cold noble lady, “Although we’re sisters, you’ll only be in danger if you follow me... You’ll remain here in the Evil Sky Pavilion and look after my master on my behalf.”

“Palace Master!” All the female cultivators fell their knees in unison.