

## Disciples 311

### Chapter 311 Ye Tianxin's Secret

Ye Zhixing was shocked.

Si Wuya had always been careful. Even when some things were obvious, he would always demand evidence. However, this matter regarding Jiang Aijian was different. At this point, even without concrete evidence, he was rather certain Jiang Aijian was the Third Prince.

"During one of the feuds in the palace, the Second Prince torched Jinghe Palace to get rid of those who opposed him. Thousands of lives were burned to cinders, but Liu Chen's body was never found. He must have managed to escape at that time," Si Wuya said with his hands on his back.

"Perhaps, he was burned into ashes?" Ye Zhixing wondered.

Si Wuya remained silent. It was possible but improbable.

Jinghe Palace's Liu Chen was a cultivator, after all. If there had not been a puppet master behind the scene, this would not have been the result.

"Continue the investigation."

"Understood." Ye Zhixing bowed. "Sect master, Miss Fifth is still looking after the Empress Dowager in the palace and has yet to return to the Evil Sky Pavilion. I'm worried that Mo Li will act against her."

"Think of a way to persuade her to return."

"But..."

"Don't swallow your words." Si Wuya frowned. When information was lacking, his judgment would not be as accurate.

Ye Zhixing bowed and said, "The Fourth Prince, Liu Bing, had triumphantly returned to the palace. The Second Prince invited him on a hunt at the enclosure in Rongbei as a welcoming gesture. I'm worried that the Empress Dowager and Miss Fifth will head to Rongbei as well. The Emperor has given approval for the Empress Dowager to go out and get some fresh air."

"Rongbei is a good place." Si Wuya turned to look in Rongbei's direction. He looked at the sun in the sky and continued to say, "The Second Prince is ambitious. His desire is to rule. Liu Bing has military achievements under his belt, and he's attracting support. Naturally, the Second Prince is guarded against him."

Ye Zhixing remained silent.

Si Wuya said, "Miss Fifth is also a member of the Imperial family..."

"That's what I'm worried about." "When's the hunt?"

"When autumn and winter switch. About three months from now."

The Fourth Prince, the Third Prince, the Second Prince... and the princess who suddenly reappeared. Everyone was accounted for.

When autumn and winter were mentioned, Si Wuya was slightly filled with emotions. In the Brahman Sea Eight Meridians or above, a cultivator would be almost immune to cold and heat in their surroundings. They would not feel anything during the change of the seasons. However, he had lost his cultivation base. Now that the end of autumn was drawing near, he was beginning to feel the drop in temperature. Si Wuya sighed and said, "If Jiang Aijian is really the Third Prince, he would look out for Fifth Senior Sister. Just to be safe, the Darknet will help." "Understood." Ye Zhixing cupped his fists and bowed. He respectfully retreated to the side.

At this moment, another gray-robed cultivator flew over.

He fell to one knee and said, "Sect master, Miss Sixth is here..."

Si Wuya appeared to be delighted. He walked out of the secluded hut. He stood outside and looked at the entrance. Perhaps, it was due to the building being located deep in the mountains, a thin layer of fog shrouded the entrance, slightly obscuring his vision.

White clothes, white hair, white shoes, white cape. She held a white umbrella aloft with her jade-like fingers as she walked over. Her steps were neither fast nor slow. She seemed like she was taking a leisurely stroll through the mist and across the field. The dew and impurities seemed unable to touch or taint her. This was Si Wuya's Sixth Senior Sister, Ye Tianxin. She was also the Evil Sky Pavilion's sixth disciple. "Si Wuya greets Sixth Senior Sister." Si Wuya cupped his fists.

Ye Tianxin looked at Si Wuya. She studied him for a moment before saying, "Seventh Junior Brother, what happened to your cultivation base?"

All this while, Ye Tianxin had been looking for a way to heal her wounds and recover her cultivation base. She had secretly kept an eye on the Evil Sky Pavilion and seldom paid attention to anything else.

Si Wuya smiled helplessly and said, "This is the work of our master's Binding Mantra."

"Hm?" Ye Tianxin frowned slightly.

"It's a misunderstanding. Eldest Senior Brother and I wanted to destroy the Clarity Sect, but we didn't expect master to interfere. Out of helplessness, I could only lure master away. And... that's how I accidentally got hit by master's mantra."

Ye Tianxin's face remained expressionless. She looked away from the handsome and scholarly Si Wuya and said, "It shouldn't be difficult for you to undo the mantra with your abilities."

"There's something you don't know, Sixth Senior Sister... Master has absorbed the barrier's power. His methods are shocking. Even a Daoist from the Celestial Masters Sect couldn't undo this mantra." Si Wuya shook his head helplessly. Ye Tianxin was slightly stunned. She remembered when she last faced her master. Whether it was due to some Primal Fiend medicine or the barrier's power, she had personally seen nine leaves under her master's feet, 'Did I imagine it?'

When Si Wuya saw Ye Tianxin lost in her thoughts, he called out, "Sixth Senior Sister?"

Ye Tianxin cleared her thoughts and said, "I'm alright."

"Since you left the Evil Sky Pavilion, have you recovered your cultivation base?" Si Wuya asked.

"Almost..." Ye Tianxin replied indifferently.

"What are your plans now, senior sister?" Si Wuya asked. Although he had asked it casually, it was a loaded question, and he was keenly interested in her answer. He wanted to know what Ye Tianxin's relationship with the Evil Sky Pavilion was, especially after the incident with the Five Mice.

Ye Tianxin said, "I'm looking for something that might not even exist..."

Si Wuya smiled and said, "What are you looking for, senior sister? Perhaps, I can help you."

"You?"

"That's right. The Darknet's information network is spread throughout the lands. There's no information that I cannot get," Si Wuya said confidently.

Ye Tianxin studied Si Wuya again. She had not been in close contact with Si Wuya throughout the years since she left the Evil Sky Pavilion. She had heard about the Darknet's information network as well. She finally said tonelessly, "The thing I'm looking for is called Cheng Huang."

"Cheng Huang?" Si Wuya frowned.

Ye Tianxin shook her head and smiled bitterly before she said, "Forget it. I'll look for it on my own. There's no need to trouble yourself over it."

"Senior sister..." When Si Wuya saw Ye Tianxin was leaving, he quickly walked over and barred her way. He cupped his fists and said, "It's no trouble at all..."

"Hm?"

"The nation of the Fairfolk, people with white skin and hair, is north of the Dragon Fish. Cheng Huang is shaped like a fox with horns on its back. The person who's able to ride it is said to be able to live for 2,000 years," Si Wuya said as though he was reciting from a text he had memorized.

Ye Tianxin regarded Si Wuya with a complicated look in her eyes, "You know about Cheng Huang?" "After Wei Zhuoyan's death, I ordered my men to investigate the incident at Measure Heaven River. During the investigation, we stumbled upon information on Cheng Huang," Si Wuya sighed and said, "Apart from that, we found nothing else." His meaning was clear. If the Darknet could not find it, how would a single person be able to find it?

"Seventh Junior Brother, do you believe in the existence of the beasts?" Ye Tianxin asked.

"Well..."

The life limit had always been the main stumbling block for human cultivators. There had never been an exception to the life limit.

'Ride it and live for 2,000 years. Isn't that equivalent to overcoming the 1,000-year limit? Is that possible?' Si Wuya asked, "Do you believe in them, Sixth Senior Sister?"

"I do." Ye Tianxin's tone was firm.

This surprised Si Wuya slightly. He did not know where Ye Tianxin's confidence came from, but her tone and determined gaze showed that she truly believed in it. Perhaps, she believed in it more than most people.

### **Chapter 312 Yu Shangrong's Identity**

Si Wuya suddenly recalled Ye Tianxin mentioning that her cultivation base was almost fully recovered. He knew that her cultivation had been destroyed after she colluded with the Noble Path to attack their master. 'How did she recover most of her cultivation base in such a short time after being banished from the pavilion? Is this the innate talent of the Fairfolk?' After he dismissed his thoughts, he said, "I'll help you look for it, senior sister."

Ye Tianxin turned around slowly and looked at her surroundings. She looked at the secluded hut and the crude living quarters at the side before she said, "The great Darknet's master lives here?"

"I have no choice. Now that I've lost my cultivation base, I can only stay put with my tail between my legs," Si Wuya said.

"You've always had a glib tongue. You're able to make a petty man who stirs up troubles from behind the scene sounds like a dignified person," Ye Tianxin said as she stifled her laughter.

Si Wuya chuckled awkwardly and asked, "Where are you staying now, senior sister?"

"The four seas are my home." "If you're willing, you're more than welcome to join the Darknet..." Si Wuya said.

Ye Tianxin chuckled. She glanced at the gray-robe cultivator standing at the side and said, "They say you're very cunning. Are you trying to rope your senior sister into your schemes as well?"

"I would never!" Si Wuya hastily waved his hands.

"Come to think of it, you had quite a reputation as well back when you're still in the Evil Sky Pavilion. Master had a short fuse, and yet, he seldom reprimanded you. Tell me honestly, why did you leave the Evil Sky Pavilion?" Ye Tianxin asked solemnly as she looked at Si Wuya. Her departure was different from the others. She had left due to the Fish Dragon Village. In hindsight, that had been a terrible mistake. She did not expect the others to leave as well.

Si Wuya sighed heavily and said, "What else if not for Eldest Senior Brother and Second Senior Brother?" "Eldest and Second Senior Brothers?" Ye Tianxin was puzzled. "What does your departure from the Evil Sky Pavilion have to do with them?"

"The two of them had always been loggerheads while they were in the Evil Sky Pavilion. If it weren't for the iron rule of the Evil Sky Pavilion, they would've fought to their hearts' content years ago. They've had quite a few conflicts this year as well. I don't wish to see them rip each other's throats out," Si Wuya replied.

Ye Tianxin shook her head. "Is that all?" If the reason was merely trying to stop a fight, it was far from enough.

"As for the rest, you'll have to ask Eldest Senior Brother and Second Senior Brother," Si Wuya said.

"Why do I have to ask them?" Ye Tianxin was puzzled. Si Wuya did not answer her question. Instead, he responded with another question. "Sixth Senior Sister, what do you think of Second Senior Brother?"

"He's polite and gentle... A thousand times better than those sanctimonious hypocrites from the Noble Path," Ye Tianxin replied.

Si Wuya nodded. He said, "Yan is in the north. The people there are immaculately dressed and carried swords. They're usually accompanied by two tigers at their sides, and yet, they remain gentle and avoid conflicts. There's a flower known as melilot that blooms at dawn and withers at dusk. The people are of equal standing, and they conduct themselves politely and know no envy."

Although Ye Tianxin did not completely understand Si Wuya's words, she was shocked by the words he used to elaborate on their Second Senior Brother. She did not question him further. The answer was clear.

Si Wuya continued to say, "Believe me, the circumstances are complicated, and I have to get to the bottom of it."

Ye Tianxin's thoughts were in a mess. When she found out she was a Fairfolk, otherwise, known as the Bai people, her thoughts were in chaos for a long time. When she thought about this, she felt she had no reason to doubt Si Wuya's words. A nobleman. Why did she not think of this sooner?

"What about Eldest Senior Brother?"

"To be honest, I don't know," Si Wuya replied, "Initially, I plan to return to the Evil Sky Pavilion after master's time is up to thoroughly investigate the matter. However, until now, master isn't showing any signs of succumbing to his life limit. I think you've personally witnessed that, Sixth Senior Sister."

Ye Tianxin did not reply to him. Not only was their master not succumbing to his life limit, but he seemed no different from when he was at his peak. When she recalled the Nine-leaf Golden Lotus, she said, "Perhaps, master has attained the Nine-leaf stage."

"Impossible!" Si Wuya said confidently.

"I saw it with my own eyes."

Si Wuya had no reply to this. He wanted to remind her that some words should not be spoken lightly.

Before Si Wuya could reply, Ye Tianxin shook her head and said, "Perhaps, it was just a trick of my eyes..." "..." Si Wuya felt relieved upon hearing this. It was difficult to deal with such a serious conversation. Moreover, the more he thought about it, the more impossible he thought it was. If their master had truly attained the Nine-leaf stage, their master would not have allowed them to roam freely and do as they pleased. Their master would have also dealt with the Noble Path with his avatar.

"Although I don't agree with your methods, there's no doubt you're the smartest among us. I believe you... Send my regards to Eldest Senior Brother and Second Senior Brother." After she finished speaking, she made her way to the entrance.

"Won't you consider joining the Darknet, senior sister?" Si Wuya asked again.

"No... You'd do well to take care of yourself considering your current state." As soon as she finished speaking, Ye Tianxin's figure seemed to vanish in the mist.

Ye Zhixing immediately bowed. He felt relieved inwardly. "Safe journey, Miss Sixth."

Si Wuya smiled and said, "Come to think of it, your surname is Ye as well... Do you fear my Sixth Senior Sister that much?"

Ye Zhixing waved his hands immediately. He would never dare to claim that they were from the same clan.

Si Wuya did not pursue the matter. Instead, he asked, "How's Eldest Senior Brother doing lately?"

"The Nether Sect is taking a rest after defeating the Righteous Sect. There are now tens of thousands of cultivators from the Fiend Path under the Nether Sect's banner. In my opinion, it won't be long before the Nether Sect makes its move against its next target," said Ye Zhixing.

"In that case, Eldest Senior Brother won't have time to deal with the palace." Si Wuya shook his head and sighed.

"Sect master, what do you mean?"

"I'll have to personally visit the hunting enclosure," Si Wuya replied.

"Sect master, you've lost your cultivation base. You shouldn't go."

"With you by my side, I can be at ease," Si Wuya said.

"I swear to protect you with my life, sect master."

The Divine Capital's Imperial city. Inside Jingyang Palace.

Mo Li applied yellow powder on her face as she looked into the mirror. She seemed to be in a good mood. After she was done, she rose to her feet and spoke to the big and tall man standing on the other side of the screen, "Senior brother, thank you for treating my wounds."

"We're fellow disciples. There's no need to thank me."

"His Highness has said that you'll be the lord of many and the subordinate of one if everything goes well," Mo Li said with a smile.

Ba Ma shook his head and placed his hands on his back as he said, "I'm afraid that things aren't as simple as you think."

"Senior brother, you've always been indecisive... Don't worry, we've had it all planned out this time. The Evil Sky Pavilion's fifth disciple, Zhao Yue, is already in the palace. The fourth disciple is here as well. The Empress Dowager will head to Rubei in due time. With so many casualties... I won't let them get away."

Ba Ma recalled the scene on the Lotus Dais, and he shook his head. "It's not that I don't believe you... However, there's more to the old villain than meets the eye." "I'm only worried he won't show up..." Mo Li smiled and said, "Senior brother, to tell you the truth, the Second Prince has handed the blueprints of the Ten Terminal Formation to me a long time ago,"

Ba Ma's eyes widened.

Mo Li continued to say, "Under the Second Prince's orders, I've laid down the Ten Terminal Formation at the four capitals of Great Yan..." She smiled sinisterly, looking pleased with herself. "One of them is at the Upper Prime... Another one is in Rubei. Only His Highness, the Second Prince, and I know about this! Senior brother, you're the third person to know about this..." She smiled as she walked up to Ba Ma.

Ba Ma sighed and said, "Be careful not to burn yourself when you play with fire."

"With you here, senior brother, this junior sister feels at ease." Mo Li flashed a charming smile.

Ba Ma frowned at the sight. He no longer wanted to look at her so he turned and walked to the window. "Oh, well. For Lou Lan."

"That's right... Nobody apart from me knows how many hardships I had to endure to infiltrate the palace and climb to where I am now. Your cultivation base and wisdom are far superior to mine, senior brother... If we work together and combine our strengths, there won't be a problem."

### **Chapter 313 Guiding By The Hand**

Ba Ma took in Jing Yang Palace's scenery. He remembered several things about Lou Lan and sighed before he said, "His Highness, the Second Prince, can he do it?"

Mo Li smiled and said, "Among the five princes, His Second Highness is surely the most heartless and vicious. Back then, when the Third Prince was highly favored by His Majesty, and the palace nearly changed the heir to the throne, the Second Prince hatched a plan and burned down everyone and everything that were related to the Third Prince... Since he was successful in acting against the Third Prince, it would be easy for him to deal with the Fourth Prince who's like a paper tiger." Ba Ma nodded. "Junior brother..."

"Junior sister." Mo Li corrected him.

"..." Ba Ma suppressed the goosebumps that were threatening to break out all over his skin and said in a deep voice, "I don't care about anyone else, but Liu Bing must die!" Mo Li sneered and said, "Don't worry, senior brother. I want him dead more than you do."

The Fourth Prince, Liu Bing, had been at the borders for many years. He had led many expeditions against Lou Lan. Corpses were strewn everywhere, and there were many casualties. The most humiliating event was when Liu Bing led the Ten Great Generals of Great Yan and captured their king. In that battle, cultivators from both sides fought for three days and three nights. Nobody could keep up with the number of casualties. When it was recorded in the palace's archives, it was written that there were no birds in the skies nor beasts on the ground. The only thing, as far as the eye could see, was dead men and bones.

A month later.

Lu Zhou finally regained his extraordinary power after meditating on the Heavenly Writing. He had also been instructing his disciples in their cultivation. Duanmu Sheng and Little Yuan'er had greatly improved their strength and cultivation bases during this time.

He walked up to the waterfall. He saw Duanmu Sheng training under the waterfall, letting the weight of the water rain upon his body. He stroked his beard and nodded at this sight.

Upon seeing Lu Zhou, Duanmu Sheng bowed under the waterfall. "Master..."

Lu Zhou saw Duanmu Sheng resisting the falling water with his energy alone without using any cultivation method. He said, "The waterfall can train the endurance of your Primal Qi and temper your spear skills."

"I understand." Duanmu Sheng raised a hand, and the Overlord Spear that was stabbed into the ground nearby dislodged itself from the ground and flew into his hand with a whistle. He began brandishing the Overlord Spear and swiping the water away. Lu Zhou frowned slightly. Duanmu Sheng was hardworking enough, and he was obedient. However, he was slightly dumb. If the Divine One Technique had not been suitable for Duanmu Sheng, it would have been difficult for Duanmu Sheng to reach this stage. In the end, he projected his voice and said, "If you can keep yourself dry without relying on your energy, it can be considered as a minor achievement."

"Understood." The waterfall was like a heavy downpour of rain. How was it possible for him to remain dry with his spear skills alone? Perhaps, he had to move his spears so quickly that it would form a barrier. He groaned inwardly, but he still did as he was told. Although his foundation was solid, they were still lacking. He needed good training.

"Ding! Instructed Duanmu Sheng. Reward: 300 merit points."

Lu Zhou glanced at the interface. Recently, he had earned 3,200 merit points just by instructing his disciples. Apart from earning merit points, he truly wanted his disciples' cultivation bases to improve as well.

At this moment, Little Yuan'er flew over. "Master..." She flitted to the left and right. A sparrow flitted here and there as she chased after it. It looked exhausted. When she finally caught the sparrow, she released it again. Then, she landed near Lu Zhou and said expectantly, "I'm now very familiar with the Seven Stars Cloud Treading Steps." It was clear that she was waiting to be praised. Lu Zhou knocked her head. "Indeed, your Seven Stars Cloud Treading Steps has improved, but a sparrow isn't a person. It won't do you much good practicing with it."

"Oh."

"You should learn from your senior brother." Lu Zhou pointed at Duanmu Sheng.

"Oh." Little Yuan'er looked at the unending stream of waterfalls. She felt a chill run up her spine. She shuddered at the thought of standing under the cold water. She averted her eyes and said, "Master, can you teach me something else?"

Lu Zhou was surprised. Little Yuan'er rarely made such requests. Usually, she was quite passive. Hence, he asked, "What do you want to learn?"

"What about calligraphy? Your works have always been nice to look at! I want to learn that!" Little Yuan'er said.



“Don’t fool around,” Lu Zhou said with a stern expression on his face, “It’s true that calligraphy can nurture a person’s temperament, but you’re cultivating the Daoist Supreme Purity Jade Slip. Calligraphy is more suited to cultivators of the Expansive Heavenly Energy from the Confucian branch.”

“Oh.” Little Yuan’er seemed dejected.

Lu Zhou looked up at the sun. It was still early. He stroked his beard and said, “Demonstrate your fist techniques. I’d like to see your progress.”

“Mhm.” Little Yuan’er nodded. Then, she began her demonstration under a huge tree at the side.

After a month of training, Little Yuan’er did not make much progress in her fist techniques, but her temperament was much better than before. Her movements were not rushed nor slow. It was a definite improvement. After a while, she finished her demonstration.

Lu Zhou nodded. It was a good demonstration even though it had some flaws. “Not bad.”

“Thank you for the compliment, master.” Little Yuan’er grinned widely when Lu Zhou complimented her.

‘This little girl’s heart needs some work. It can’t be rushed. Looks like I’ll have to guide her by hand in the future.’

At this moment, Zhou Jifeng ran over, bowed, and said, “Pavilion Master, a letter from Jiang Aijian.”

“Read it.”

Zhou Jifeng opened the letter and read aloud, “Thank you for stopping Si Wuya, old senior... Not only did he not interfere with my investigations, but he gave me a few pieces of information as well.”

Upon hearing this, Lu Zhou was baffled. When did he do anything to that rascal?

Zhou Jifeng continued reading, “The Empress Dowager will travel to Rubei to rest. Your disciple, Zhao Yue, will most likely follow her. Coincidentally, the Second Prince, Liu Huan, has invited Liu Bing to a hunt at the enclosure in Rubei in two months. Mo Li is aided by an elite, and I suspect that they’re on the move... I’ll send more letters once I have new information.”

This time, there was no ‘hahaha’ in Jiang Aijian’s letter.

Lu Zhou frowned. Zhao Yue was not a fool. Why would she proceed when she clearly knew that it was a trap? Also, Jiang Aijian did not mention Mingshi Yin in his letter. What was Mingshi Yin doing then? When he recalled the grand witchcraft spell on the Lotus Dais, he felt slightly angered. “How dare you touch my disciple.”

Since Zhao Yue was an orphan of Princess Yun Zhao, she could be considered as a member of the Imperial family. To think that Mo Li was so audacious. Fortunately, they were in the Imperial city, and Mo Li had to refrain from openly making a move...

“Bring Qin Jun here.”

“Understood.”

Shortly after, Zhou Jifeng brought Qin Jun over.

Lu Zhou looked at Qin Jun and said, "I'm giving you a mission."

Qin Jun was overjoyed. He bowed and said, "Anything, old mister!"

"Return to the Divine Capital and be my source of information..."

"Huh?"

"You're not willing?"

"Of course, I am... I'm glad to be of service to you, old mister!" Qin Jun stammered, "It's just that... Mister First..."

Little Yuan'er glared at him and said, "Are you stupid? Who do you think you're talking to?"

Qin Jun shuddered and hastily said, "You're right, Miss Ninth! I'm a fool!"

"How much do you know about the Empress Dowager?"

"All I know is that she has an illness and has always been recuperating. I'd have to ask Li Yunzhao about the others," Qin Yun replied honestly.

"Very well..." Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. "Tell Li Yunzhao to look after my disciples, Zhao Yue and Mingshi Yin. I'll hold him accountable should anything happen to them. Also, if he sees that rascal, Yu Zhenghai, tell him to inform me at once." "If I see him, I'll send the swiftest messenger bird to the Evil Sky Pavilion's way." Qin Jun bowed.

### **Chapter 314 Completing Old Eighth's Cultivation Method**

Li Yunzhao was the one who wanted to bring Zhao Yue back to the palace to meet the Empress Dowager. Moreover, he had guaranteed with his head to keep Zhao Yue safe. It was only natural for Lu Zhou to hold him accountable. However, the Imperial city was the Imperial City, after all. There should not be a huge problem with Li Yunzhao and the Empress Dowager there.

"Mo Li is from the Second Prince's faction. What kind of person is the Second Prince, Liu Huan, like?" Lu Zhou asked.

Qin Jun replied honestly, "The Second Prince is long-sighted and has forbearance. He's not one to give up until he has achieved his goals."

Lu Zhou looked at Qin Zhou and asked, "Is that your personal appraisal of the Second Prince?"

Qin Jun was an official after all. It seemed out of turn for him to be commenting about a member of the Imperial family in such a manner.

Qin Jun sighed and said, "In the beginning, His Majesty had ten heirs. Due to several reasons, he's left with five. The First Prince, Liu Zhi, who's also the current Crown Prince, will be the one to inherit the throne if nothing untoward happens to him." Then, he continued to say, "However, the Crown Prince is obsessed with the customs of Rubei and can't control himself. He even built a tent and had dancers performed dances from the Other Tribes in the palace. When the Emperor found out about this, he was in a fit of rage. For that reason, he's nothing but a nominal Crown Prince. The Second Prince, Liu Huan, has exceptional abilities and is decisive. However, he's vicious and has many schemes. The Third Prince,

Liu Chen, was highly favored by the Emperor and was deemed as the most probable to become the Crown Prince. Alas, ill fate befell him. There was a fire in Jing He Palace one night. 1,000 men were burned to death, and the Third Prince went missing. I once investigated the incident and discovered that the mastermind behind the fire was the Second Prince.” After he finished speaking, he bowed as a show of respect. He was speaking about the secrets of the palace after all. If someone else discovered he had spoken these words, the consequences that awaited ranged from being fired to being beheaded.

Lu Zhou did not expect the Second Prince to be so ruthless. Well, since Mo Li was willing to follow him, there was no doubt they were birds of the same feather. He asked, “Do you think the Second Prince will make a move against the Fourth Prince at the enclosure?”

Qin Jun hastily said, “I don’t dare to speak with certainty. However, based on his past actions, I would say it’s possible. The hunt in the enclosure is organized by the Second Prince so I don’t think he’ll make a move in the enclosure. However, the same can’t be said about other places in Rubai. The Second Prince can easily find himself an alibi after all. Even if the others know that he’s the culprit, there’s nothing they can do about it.”

“I have no interest in the palace’s power struggles. The lives and deaths of the princes have nothing to do with me.” Lu Zhou stroked his beard, waved his arm, and said, “Send him down the mountain.”

“Understood.” Zhou Jifeng brought Qin Jun down Golden Court Mountain.

After that, Lu Zhou glanced at Duanmu Sheng who was still under the waterfall. He was still painstakingly. He turned to look at Little Yuan’er and said, “Yuan’er, keep working on your cultivation. Don’t slack off.”

“Oh.” Little Yuan’er continued punching with her fists as she watched her master leave.

At this moment, the only disciples left on the mountain were Duanmu Sheng and Little Yuan’er. With the other disciples gone, Lu Zhou did not even have the chance to be a good teacher. Halfway through his walk, he made a turn and walked toward the Cave of Reflection.

Upon seeing Lu Zhou, Zhu Honggong was overjoyed. He was so moved that tears began to brim in his eyes. He bowed and kowtowed before he said, “Greetings, master! I’m so happy about your visit that I won’t be able to sleep for three days and three nights.”

Lu Zhou had already grown immune to these low-level flatteries. He walked into the Cave of Reflection and said, “Tell me what you’ve done wrong.”

Zhu Honggong nodded and began listing out his wrongdoings. “First, I shouldn’t have been fooled by Seventh Senior Brother into leaving the mountain. Second, I shouldn’t have helped Seventh Senior Brother. Third, I shouldn’t have sent him news about the Evil Sky Pavilion. Fourth, I shouldn’t have modified the Nine Tribulations Thunderblast.” “Aren’t you going to justify your actions?” Lu Zhou asked.

“I don’t dare!” Zhu Honggong fell to his knees as his body trembled.

Lu Zhou noticed Zhu Honggong’s back was riddled with injuries. They were scars from the beating he had been subjected to. Apart from that, he had also suffered from the backlash of the Nine Tribulations Thunderblast. Coupled with the cold wind in the Cave of Reflection, which was a sort of punishment, Zhu Honggong looked exhausted and haggard. However, Zhu Honggong’s loyalty seemed to have gone

up. It seemed like the zen tunic was much more important to Zhu Honggong than he had expected. Finally, he said, "Rise and speak."

"Thank you, master." Lu Zhou asked, "How long have you been with the pavilion?" "It's been 20 years."

Lu Zhou remained silent. After a brief moment, he walked out of the Cave of Reflection with his hands on his back.

"Safe journey, master." Although Zhu Honggong was puzzled, he did not dare to ask any questions. When Lu Zhou stepped out of the Cave of Reflection, he stopped in his tracks and said, "The Nine Tribulations Thunderblast originated from Thunderblast. The eighth layer is samsara. If it's used well, you'll gain an unending supply of power from the circulation of Yin and Yang, and you won't fall into samsara. The ninth layer is the twin sal tree, which is half-withered and half-flourishing. When the sal tree blooms, the one who flourishes shall perish. Rid yourself of the backlash' effects in three months. If you fail, you'll spend the next three years inside the Cave of Reflection. If you succeed, you'll move into the south pavilion." After he finished speaking, he did not wait for Zhu Honggong's reply and made his way to the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Zhu Honggong seemed to have fallen into a daze when he heard Lu Zhou's words. He was startled for a moment before a wave of joy welled up in his heart. He kneeled and sincerely kowtowed. "Thank you, master... Thank you, master... Thank you..." The professional ass-kisser, Zhu Honggong, was at a loss for words that he could only repeat these words. His face was wet from tears.

Lu Zhou only received the notification from the system when he had returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion... "Completed the Nine Tribulations Thunderblast cultivation method. Reward: 1,000 merit points."

"Instructed Zhu Honggong. Reward: 300 merit points."

Lu Zhou had only given Zhu Honggong some pointers to improve his cultivation base, he had forgotten that he would also receive merit points from completing his disciples' cultivation methods.

He searched his memories again. Among his nine disciples, it seemed like Zhu Honggong was the last one to have a completed cultivation method. The cultivation methods cultivated by Yu Zhenghai, Yu Shangrong, Si Wuya, and Ye Tianxin were complete. The four of them also possessed cultivation bases that were clearly superior to the others.

Lu Zhou glanced at the system's dashboard.

Merit points: 4,500.

Then, he looked at the price of the Nine Transformations Yin Yang and shook his head. In the end, he closed his eyes and continued to meditate on the Heavenly Writing.

In the following three months, Lu Zhou spent a lot of time instructing Duanmu Sheng and Little Yuan'er. He would occasionally visit the Cave of Reflection to see Zhu Honggong's progress and to make sure there were no mishaps.

Unfortunately, he did not receive any news from Mingshi Yin and Zhao Yue. If they had been on the mountain, he could have instructed them as well.

Early in the morning.

Lu Zhou had just finished with a meditation session when he saw Zhou Jifeng stepping into the great hall with a letter in his hand.

It was about time for him to receive information from the Divine Capital.

“Pavilion Master, a letter from Qin Jun.”

“Read it.”

“Old mister, Zhao Yue is by the Empress Dowager’s side. Li Yunzhao said that the Empress Dowager is not doing so well. Also, Mingshi Yin isn’t in the Imperial City. Li Yunzhao guarantees that’ll protect Zhao Yue with his life again and wants you to be assured. Lastly, the Second and Fourth Princes have departed for the enclosure in Rubei for the hunt. If there are no surprises, the Empress Dowager should be departing in these few days.”

“Pavilion Master, I’m willing to head to Rubei to investigate the matter,” Zhou Jifeng said after he read the letter.

“It’s pointless.” If Jiang Aijian and Qin Jun, both of whom were in the Divine Capital, could not discover anything, what could Zhou Jifeng, an outsider, find out?

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and thought about how he should deal with Mo Li. As the master of his disciples, he could not allow her to roam free. At this moment, he noticed that there was a new mission on the dashboard; Kill Mo Li. He found it reasonable but also thought that it made no difference. Mission or no mission, Mo Li’s fate was sealed.

### **Chapter 315 Unique Cards Increasing the Difficulty**

“That’ll be all.” Lu Zhou waved his arm.

“I’ll take my leave then.”

After Zhou Jifeng left, Lu Zhou gauged his extraordinary power. Currently, he could use the Heavenly Writing’s extraordinary power twice. There was no increase in the upper limit. If he continued to meditate on the Heavenly Writing scrolls, all he could do was increase the pace of his meditation. He would not be able to store more extraordinary power. Lu Zhou looked at his merit points again. 7,500 points.

He gained a lot from instructing his disciples throughout the past three months.

Luck points: 41.

‘I haven’t tried my hands on lucky draws for a long time now...’ After ruminating over it for a moment, he finally did ten consecutive draws.

As he expected, he was greeted with ten appreciative messages.

There was no rhyme or reason to the lucky draws.

‘Let’s leave the rest to fate. Continue!’

“Lucky draw.”

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points and 5 luck points. Obtained special treasure box x 1.”

When Lu Zhou heard this notification, he was invigorated. Either the system suddenly decided to be kind or he had gotten luckier. He had difficulty believing that he obtained a special treasure box after earning only 51 luck points.

Regardless, he was beginning to transition from an ‘African Chieftain’ to a ‘European Royal’.

In no time at all, a special treasure box appeared on the table before him. The box was not big. It was only the size of a drawer. It seemed like the item in the box was not too

big.

“Time limit: 3 days. Will vanish if unopened within the time limit.”

Lu Zhou bent down and wondered if the treasure box would be similar to the last box he obtained where it had to be opened by his disciples’ weapons. If that were the case, three days would be a tight schedule.

He looked to the left and right before he began to study the box. There were no special veins or patterns on all six sides of the box. However, there was a button on the side of the box that faced him.

He chuckled. ‘If it can be opened so easily, what’s the point of putting a time limit on opening it? It seems like the system has its dumb moments as well.’

Lu Zhou raised his wizened hand and ran it along the bronze box. He wondered what treasure was contained in it before he finally pressed the button. Click!

“Ding! You will obtain the avatar, the Nine Transformations Yin Yang, Special Cooldown x 1 (activated once the box is unlocked), Reversal Card x 20, Critical Block Card x 50. Will you proceed with unlocking the box?”

Lu Zhou was stunned when he saw the notification from the system. The rewards are unexpectedly handsome!’

The Nine Transformation Yin Yang alone cost 30,000 merit points. With the 2 Reversal Cards in his possession, he would now have 22 Reversal Cards.

‘What is this Special Cooldown?’

Lu Zhou did not press again. As a person who had transmigrated, he knew what ‘cooldown’ meant. Perhaps, this special card was a restriction that would be activated the moment he obtained the rewards? If that were the case, he would have to think carefully before opening the box.

Lu Zhou slowly rose to his feet. The Nine Transformation Yin Yang and 20 Reversal Cards! He would be lying if he said he was not moved.

He frowned as he muttered to himself, “A three-day limit?”

‘The hunt in the enclosure is about to start, and you’re trying to increase the difficulty for me?’ Lu Zhou snorted inwardly.

Just as he was about to unlock the box, he heard a voice from outside the great hall...

"Pavilion Master."

Lu Zhou turned around and saw Leng Luo walking in with a straight back. His eyes looked much livelier now under the silver mask. When he had accepted Leng Luo into the Evil Sky Pavilion back then, he was prepared to deal with a stubborn and difficult-to-deal-with person. However, things seemed to have worked out just fine. He waved his arm and said, "You can dispense with the courtesy."

Leng Luo bowed at Lu Zhou and said, "I heard that you're going to intervene in the hunt at the enclosure, Pavilion Master."

"That's correct." Lu Zhou nodded.

"Mo Li is the mastermind behind this incident. Hence, I request to travel to Rubei with you," Leng Luo bluntly said.

Lu Zhou did make Leng Luo a promise. Mo Li was Leng Luo's only target. If Leng Luo did not see Mo Li die, he thought Leng Luo would probably be unable to live in peace. He asked, "Your wounds haven't healed, and your cultivation base isn't recovered. Are you sure you want to come along?"

Leng Luo straightened up and said, "Mo Li has always stayed deep within the palace. Since she's venturing out, it's like a chance bestowed by the heavens."

"It's not too late for a gentleman to have his revenge even after ten years have passed." "I'm not a gentleman."

"..." Lu Zhou did not expect Leng Luo to be so stubborn. He stroked his beard and said, "In that case, I'll keep my promise... How much of your cultivation base has been recovered?"

"40%," Leng Luo replied honestly.

Lu Zhou nodded. Leng Luo's situation was different from Pan Litian's. Pan Litian's cultivation base was only destroyed. With the help from the sable magnolia, Pan Litian would recover more quickly. Leng Luo, on the other hand, imploded his own sea of Qi during the battle with the Ten Shamans. It was quite a commendable feat for Leng Luo to recover 40% of his cultivation base. He asked, "40%... If you don't use an avatar, you can probably fight against an early-stage Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivator... Are you confident you can kill Mo Li?"

Thud!

Leng Luo fell to one knee and cupped his fists. He said every word clearly and loudly, "Please fulfill my wish, Pavilion Master!"

The great hall was exceptionally silent.

Lu Zhou did not look at Leng Luo. Instead, he paced with his hands on his back, circling Leng Luo.

Zhao Yue was in the Divine Capital. Mingshi Yin must be keeping a low profile.

Lu Zhou had given it some thoughts. As long as Mo Li showed her face, all he had to do was get on his mount and send a Deadly Strike Card her way. The problem was there were many elites by Mo Li's side.

There was also the grand shaman who made an appearance on the Lotus Dais. It was impossible for him to take out so many elites with his cultivation base. Moreover, Mo Li was much more intelligent and cunning compared to the original Wei Zhuoyan. For this reason, he thought it was not a bad idea to bring Leng Luo along.

“Don’t move.” Lu Zhou suddenly lifted his hand. A Strengthened Critical Heal Card appeared in his palm, and he shattered it. The mysterious power condensed in his palm, the power was like a wave from the ocean.

“What’s this...” Leng Luo was shocked. He did not move. After all, he knew it would be easy for Lu Zhou to kill him if Lu Zhou so wished. There was no need for Lu Zhou to wait until this day.

Before Leng Luo could make sense of the situation, a strong whirlpool stirred up by the power wrapped around his body. Power seeped into his eight extraordinary meridians. A healing power several times stronger than the Merciful Ark of Salvation spread through his body.

“Lotus position.” Lu Zhou retracted his hand.

Leng Luo finally understood that Lu Zhou was healing his wounds. He immediately sat with his legs crossed after he bowed deeply at Lu Zhou. He flattened his palms and sat in the lotus position. He could feel the power swirling around him.

Lu Zhou looked at Leng Luo in satisfaction. He was not worried about Leng Luo pulling any tricks. Moreover, the Strengthened Critical Heal Card would only heal Leng Luo’s wounds. Leng Luo would have to depend on himself to recover his cultivation base.

About an hour later.

Leng Luo slowly opened his eyes. He surveyed his surroundings as he took a deep breath. He withdrew his hands and slowly rose to his feet.

Lu Zhou noticed that Leng Luo’s loyalty had increased. He asked, “How are your wounds?”

Leng Luo cupped his fists respectfully and said, “90 percent of my injuries are healed. As for my cultivation base, I’m certain that it’ll be fully recovered within three months if there are no surprises.”

“Good.” Lu Zhou nodded.

“If I’m given the chance, I’m confident that I’ll be able to deal a grave blow on Mo Li,” Leng Luo said confidently. He was an Eight-leaf elite, after all. Even an emaciated camel was larger than a horse.

Naturally, Lu Zhou did not doubt Leng Luo’s words. “Do you have any plans that you care to share?”

### **Chapter 316 Cooldown and the Nine Transformation Yin Yang**

Leng Luo spoke frankly and confidently, “When I was with the Black Knights, I’d met the Emperor several times. No matter how great the quarrel is between the Fourth Prince and the Second Prince, they are still princes. The only person who can manage them is the Emperor.”

Lu Zhou looked up. Leng Luo had a point. He had been thinking of a way to deal with the Second Prince’s subordinate, Mo Li. Perhaps, he could work on the Emperor instead. “The Black Knights answer to the



Emperor. You were the leader of the Black Knights back then, and yet, you've only met the Emperor several times?" Lu Zhou found this strange. Leng Luo replied, "Usually, his attendants would convey his message for him."

The monarch of a nation would not easily show himself after all. Moreover, the Black Knights operated in the shadows and were not in the Divine Capital. The Emperor could not venture outside without due cause.

"The attendants usually possess unfathomable cultivation bases. The Emperor trusts them highly. There had been many assassination attempts over the years, and the assassins were usually incapable of getting past the attendants, let alone kill the Emperor," Leng Luo said with a sigh.

Lu Zhou nodded. "Continue." Leng Luo said, "Since Zhao Yue is Princess Yun Zhao's orphan, she would have the opportunity to meet the Emperor. Moreover, Zhao Yue remains by the Empress Dowager's side and has the Empress Dowager's support. It's most appropriate to have her relay the message before the Empress Dowager departs from the capital. However, the Emperor is the Emperor after all. He's no stranger to schemes and plots. It will be difficult to deal with him."

"You have a point." Lu Zhou was about to call for someone when Zhou Jifeng came rushing into the great hall anxiously.

"Pavilion Master, Jiang Aijian sent word to inform you that the Empress Dowager has departed from the capital."

"This is our chance," Leng Luo said. "Chance?" Zhou Jifeng was puzzled. "It's alright even if we don't make contact with the Emperor. I'm willing to infiltrate the Black Knight's camp," Leng Luo said. He was the former leader of the Black Knights after all. Now that he had mostly recovered his cultivation base, it would not be difficult for him to make use of his previous resources.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded as he said, "Will it be a problem for you to act on your own in the Black Knights' camp?"

Leng Luo was slightly taken aback. He had thought to head over there with Lu Zhou. It was much safer with Lu Zhou by his side. However, at this juncture, he did not dare to voice his apprehension. Moreover, he was certain Lu Zhou had his own plans as well. Apart from that, he did not dare to ask for too much. He was already grateful that Lu Zhou allowed him to come along. In the end, he replied, "No problem."

"Good." Lu Zhou waved his hand. Without another word, Leng Luo cupped his fists and left the great hall.

"You can return to what you were doing," Lu Zhou said.

"I'll take my leave." Zhou Jifeng left the great hall. He was impressed. In his opinion, Lu Zhou was like a general devising strategies in his secluded tent while determining the outcome of a battle far away. Lu Zhou did not seem nervous in the least. As soon as he left the great hall, he ran into a drenched Duanmu Sheng

Duanmu Sheng held the Overlord Spear in his hand as he called out, "Zhou Jifeng."

“Greetings, Mister Third.”

“Let’s go. I suddenly thought of a way to hone my basic spear techniques,” Duanmu Sheng said excitedly.

“Don’t worry, I’ve been reckless in the past, and I apologize for that. This is also a good opportunity for you to hone your sword skills...” Duanmu Sheng apologized as he pulled Zhou Jifeng toward the back of the mountain.

Lu Zhou returned to the east pavilion and glanced at the parchment drawing on the table.

The parchment drawing remained unchanged. All it showed was the Divine Capital and the Mausoleum of Swords.

“Looks like there won’t be any information about the fourth Open Heavenly Writing Scroll for the time being.”

Lu Zhou waved his hand. The special treasure box landed on the floor.

He sat with his legs crossed. With bated breath, he focused his mind. He looked at the bronze treasure box with a three-day time limit.

‘Should I open it? I might lose the huge reward inside though. Moreover, I might remain an African Chieftain forever. Will I be alright living life as an African Chieftain? The problem is... if I unlock the treasure box, I’d have to let Mo Li go while I hide on this mountain and keep a low profile.’

Lu Zhou had no qualms about not completing the system’s missions. After all, he did not know what ‘Cooldown’ meant. It was risky.

In the end, he sneered. “Do you think that I’d be restricted by you just because you’ve increased the difficulty?” He raised his hand and smacked the box.

Click!

As soon as the button was pressed, the same message popped up again. Lu Zhou did not seem to hesitate as he chose to unlock it.

“Ding! Obtained the avatar, the Nine Transformation Yin Yang, Special Cooldown x 1, Reversal Card x 20, Critical Block Card x 50.”

“Ding! Activated Special Cooldown. All item cards will be placed under cooldown for seven days. Countdown begins...”

Lu Zhou expected as much. He called up the system dashboard and looked at the items column. The remaining time was displayed there; 6 days 23 hours. However, his mounts and weapons were not placed under cooldown.

“At least it has a conscience.”

With just a thought, Lu Zhou equipped the avatar. His Eight Methods Connected avatar disappeared and was replaced by the Nine Transformation Yin Yang. At the same time, a huge surge of power coursed through his meridians.

Early the next morning.

When Lu Zhou opened his eyes, he felt refreshed. It seemed like his cultivation base had progressed into the Dao Transforming stage. He believed it would not take long before he entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. He could only consider himself established in the cultivation world once he entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm.

Lu Zhou checked his remaining life span.

Remaining life: 6,582 days. If he did not have the Reversal Cards, he would not have been able to endure the sight of these numbers every day. He prepared to use his Reversal Card. Then, he remembered that his item cards were all on cooldown. He had no choice but to give up on using the Reversal Cards.

‘Seven days isn’t that long. I can wait.’

At this moment, Zhou Jifeng’s voice rang from outside. “Pavilion Master, Senior Leng has departed.” When Lu Zhou emerged from the pavilion, he saw Pan Zhong and Pan Litian as well. He frowned as he asked, “What’s the matter?” Pan Litian said, “I’m just thinking that I’ll feel bad if something were to happen to Leng Luo. Hence, I wish to travel to Rubei with him.”

“I would like to go as well.”

“Me too,” Zhou Jifeng chimed in.

With his hands on his back, Lu Zhou replied, “Golden Court Mountain’s barrier is now gone. There will be people with malicious intent trying to sneak into Golden Court Mountain. If everyone’s gone, who’s going to guard Golden Court Mountain?”

The three of them were stunned. They could not come up with a reply.

“Look after Golden Court Mountain. The time for you to showcase your abilities will come.”

“Understood.” The three of them bowed.

Lu Zhou had no intention of sending too many of his men out. It would be meaningless. Moreover, the more people he sent out, the more attention they would attract. Moreover, if they were in danger, he would not be able to protect all of them. He decided to leave Mo Li to Leng Luo. With Leng Luo’s abilities, it should not be a problem for him to look for an opportunity to launch a deadly blow.

There was not much that Lu Zhou had to do. All he needed to do was observe from the shadows and try to fool as many people as he could. He was not Ji Tiandao. Walking right into the trap in a fit of rage was not a show of strength, it was pure stupidity. After that, Lu Zhou summoned Little Yuan’er. Then, they left Golden Court Mountain on Whizard’s back.

Meanwhile, in a certain pavilion in Rubei City.

The pavilion was high enough to be a great vantage point. As soon as one looked out, one would be able to see the streets of Rubei.

"Sect master, the Empress Dowager has departed. She should be staying in the Obedient Summer Villa when she arrives." "Very well," Si Wuya replied casually before asking, "Has Jiang Aijian relayed the information?"

"He should have."

"Should have?" Si Wuya did not like that word. It meant that there was uncertainty. He did not like uncertainties.

Ye Zhixing bowed and said, "Although our men discovered that Jiang Aijian is the Evil Sky Pavilion's informant, he's extremely cunning. We couldn't keep track of him all the time."

As soon as Ye Zhixing finished speaking, a figure shot past the pavilion. Soon after, a mocking voice rang in the air. "Trying to monitor me? You guys are far from capable of doing that..."

"After him." Si Wuya stood up and looked out the window.

"Understood." Ye Zhixing gave chase at lightning speed, vanishing from sight in just a blink of an eye.

"That can't be right." Si Wuya suddenly turned around.

A figure appeared at the entrance. The man stood there with his hands on his back.

### **Chapter 317 A Person who Regularly Walks by the River Cannot Avoid Getting Their Shoes Wet**

The instant Ye Zhixing leaped out the window, Si Wuya realized what was wrong. There had been a problem from the moment he left the secluded hut! In the end, he looked at the person and said, "Luring the tiger away from its mountain?"

"Si Wuya?" The person turned around slowly. There was a black eyepatch covering his left eye. Si Wuya wondered if he was truly blind. He had a thick beard and a weathered face. There was a saber at his waist, and his posture was straight. The one-eyed man said in a clean and crisp voice, "Hello."

Si Wuya looked to the left and right. There were slightly more than ten individuals in ordinary clothes hiding around him. He replied, "I don't believe that we've met."

"That's alright. I'll make sure that you remember me..." Han Yuyuan clapped his hands before more than ten people charged over.

Si Wuya did not resist. He allowed himself to be bound. He said with a faint smile on his face, "Aren't you going to kill me?"

"There's no need to rush. Take him away." Han Yuyuan and two of his subordinates boarded a carriage after exiting the pavilion. The horse carriage sped toward Rubei City.

An hour later, the carriage halted.

"This way." Han Yuyuan made an inviting gesture.

Si Wuya leaped off the carriage. He surveyed his surroundings and said, "The Obedient Summer Villa? You're from the Imperial family."

Han Yuyuan did not deny it. He waved his hand. Two of his subordinates brought Si Wuya to the second floor of one of the side courts.

Han Yuyuan smiled and said, "The environment here is much better than that pavilion you were in. The view is nice as well."

Si Wuya made himself at home. He walked up to the large arched window and calmly took a seat. Although his hands were bound, it did not impede his movements.

"My surname's Han. My name is Han Yuyuan."

"One of the Eight Great Generals of the Imperial guards, Han Yuyuan... General Han with the ten great deputies?" Si Wuya recited the information he had on Han Yuyan.

"As expected of the Darknet's Master. You know so much about me. However..." Han Yuyuan suddenly changed the topic. "Do you know I have a hopeless little brother, Sect Master Si?"

"Little brother?"

Si Wuya frowned slightly. Wave after wave of information appeared in his mind. "Han Yufang?"

Han Yuyuan nodded slightly, an ambiguous expression could be seen on his face.

Realization dawned on Si Wuya before he said, "As expected, he's your younger brother. Are you going to avenge him?" It seemed like he had long suspected the connection between Han Yuyuan and Han Yufang. However, he did not think Han Yuyuan would avenge his younger brother just because of their blood relation.

"Perhaps, but it'd be only an excuse," Han Yuyuan replied.

Si Wuya nodded. "The person who impersonated Jiang Aijian is one of your men?" "That's right."

"Did you deliberately leak the information to lure me out?"

"Smart," Han Yuyuan said with a smile, "Smart people like you often believe that they're infallible. You like to use the weaknesses of others against them. Hence, I decided to give you a taste of your own medicine."

"Looks like I've underestimated the Imperial guard," Si Wuya calmly said. "A person who regularly walks by the river can't avoid getting their shoes wet... To tell you the truth, I've made more than ten attempts against you, Sect Master Si, and this is the only time that I've succeeded. There's no need to go over the failed attempts. The number of failures isn't important. One instance of success is all I need," Han Yuyuan said.

"Indeed, I have been careless in regard to the information about Jiang Aijian," Si Wuya said.

Han Yuyuan continued to say, "Whatever His Highness, the Second Prince, wants to do, as officials, we can only play along. Does he think that I'm unaware of the moles he planted around me? However, if you didn't take an interest in Jiang Aijian, Sect Master Si, I would never have the opportunity to find you." Si Wuya asked with a smile on his face, "Who's trying to get rid of me?"

Han Yuyuan shook his head. He spoke as though he was chatting with a friend. "After you die, I'll have someone burn the answer on a paper for you."

"Why aren't you getting it over with then?" Si Wuya asked.

"Why, of course it's so that you can enjoy the show, Sect Master Si," "The show?"

"You're from the Evil Sky Pavilion... What do you think of this villa? How's the scenery here? In a place as beautiful as this... It's such a shame not to shed blood here." Han Yuyuan took a seat across Si Wuya.

His subordinates were in the vicinity. Although they had been following the general for a long time now, they still shuddered in fear when they heard those words.

Han Yuyan continued to say, "I had someone impersonate Jiang Aijian and sent a letter to the Evil Sky Pavilion... I hope that your master will come and watch the show as well."

"Hm?" Si Wuya said honestly, "Even my Eldest Senior Brother isn't bold enough to provoke the Evil Sky Pavilion. You're digging your own grave."

Han Yuyuan laughed confidently. "Like I said, smart people think that they're infallible, and it's true... Oh well, you won't get to live much longer anyway."

Si Wuya laughed as well. "Are you certain that you're going to succeed this time?"

Han Yuyuan spread his arms and said, "You've lost your cultivation base. My ten deputies will be guarding you here. Any sudden move, and your head will fall to the ground. Do I need to elaborate on such a clear outcome?"

"I'm impressed," Si Wuya said.

"Wine."

Two of his subordinates brought some good wine.

Han Yuyuan filled a cup with wine. His movements were neither rushed nor slow.

The others thought Han Yuyuan planned to have a chat with Si Wuya over wine when Han Yuyuan suddenly raised the cup and flicked it forward.

Splash!

The wine splattered on Si Wuya's face.

Han Yuyuan said to his subordinates, "This is the Darknet's master whose information network is spread across the lands. This is the Evil Sky Pavilion's seventh disciple."

'Aren't you very capable? Aren't you certain I won't succeed? Fight back if you can...'

"General, why don't we give him a thorough beating? I can't help but feel annoyed by his face," one of Han Yuyuan's subordinates said from the side.

Han Yuyuan waved his hand. "I'm under orders that not one of his hair shall be touched, and so it shall be... However, no one said I can splash wine on him."

Si Wuya smiled and said, "If this is all you've got, I'm afraid that you'll be disappointed." He had gleaned some information off of Han Yuyuan's words. It seemed like Han Yuyuan was following someone's orders.

The Imperial guards had always been under the Emperor's command. Was someone acting behind the Emperor's back? Perhaps, someone had colluded with Han Yuyuan and dragged him into this?

Han Yuyuan said, "Of course this isn't all. You'll have to watch a show you'll never forget before you die..."

Meanwhile.

An old man and a young girl appeared in Rubei City.

"Master, why didn't we directly go to the enclosure?" Little Yuan'er asked.

"There's no need for that," Lu Zhou replied. Zhao Yue and Mingshi Yin would not be going to the enclosure anyway. No matter how dumb the Second Prince was, he would not make a move there.

"Where are we going then?" "We'll look for a place to stay for now," Lu Zhou replied. "I'm good at that!"

"Yuan'er..." Lu Zhou called out just as Little Yuan'er was about to dash away.

"What's the matter, master?"

"Don't go too far... The hearts of men are sinister," Lu Zhou said.

"Mhm." Little Yuan'er nodded. She was touched that her master was worried about her.

It did not take long before they found an inn to lodge in.

When night fell, Lu Zhou was looking at the remaining cooldown time for the item cards. There were slightly more than five days left. It seemed like he would have to rely on Leng Luo, Mingshi Yin, and Jiang Aijian this time around. If there was a need, he would unleash his grand technique and flee on Whitzard's back.

'Wait, that's not right.' He was having silly thoughts again. He was the greatest villain under the heavens. He had the techniques from the extraordinary power and his disciple to protect him. Why would he need to run away?

### **Chapter 318 Seeing Through Jiang Aijian's Plan**

Lu Zhou stayed in the inn in Rubei City. While the sun had not completely set, he said to Little Yuan'er, "Send a letter to Jiang Aijian. Tell him to meet me here."

"Will he come, master?"

"Go to a nearby information station and have a mortal send the letter," Lu Zhou replied.

"Huh?" Little Yuan'er found this strange. Surely, a messenger bird would have been quicker. Why would they choose to use the methods of the mortals?

"Go."

"Oh." Little Yuan'er left the inn.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and walked up to the window. He looked at Rubei City.

Rubei and Runan were originally the same city. There was not much of a distance between them. Knowing Jiang Aijian, he would not stay in the Divine Capital all the time.

Little Yuan'er returned to the inn after running her errand. She said, "Master, it's done."

"Mhm... You can go and rest now."

The stars shone brightly in the sky, but Lu Zhou did not sleep. Instead, he spent the entire night meditating on the Heavenly Writing scroll.

Early the next morning.

Thump! Thump! Thump! Someone was knocking on Lu Zhou's door.

"Old senior... It's me..."

Lu Zhou opened his eyes and said, "Come in."

Creak!

Jiang Aijian opened the door and hopped in like a monkey. Then, he poked his head outside, looking up and down the hallway. When he was certain no one was around, he carefully closed the door. He leaned on the door and patted his chest. He heaved a long sigh before he said, "That scared the hell out of me... Thank goodness no one's following me. I'm a f\*cking genius!" "Jiang Aijian!" Lu Zhou raised his voice slightly. "Old... old senior." Jiang Aijian immediately bowed before he scurried over to the table. He chuckled before he said, "Stay your anger..." "Tell me, what is the meaning of all this?"

"What else? The Second Prince wants to move against the Fourth Prince. This is all a setup. It has nothing to do with the Evil Sky Pavilion, and Zhao Yue's very safe," Jiang Aijian said with a smile.

"Hm?" Lu Zhou frowned slightly. "As expected."

"As expected?" Jiang Aijian looked at Lu Zhou, puzzled and unsure of himself. He wondered what Lu Zhou's words meant.

Lu Zhou said, "Someone impersonated you and sent a message to the Evil Sky Pavilion..."

"Huh?" Jiang Aijian shuddered. He scratched his head. "So that's what happened. I was wondering why you suddenly used the mortal's mail service, old senior. It's true that the dumbest way is the safest way... Uh, no, no, that's not what I meant. What I'm trying to say is, you suspect that someone knows about my existence, old senior?"

Lu Zhou merely glanced at Jiang Aijian before he rose to his feet and walked to the window.

The sun was rising from the east.

"Could it be your seventh disciple, Si Wuya?" Jiang Aijian continued to speculate. "He found out about me long ago... He even killed many of my informants. I've yet to get even with him, how dare he lure you here. Is he trying to kill his own master? The audacity!"



Lu Zhou remained silent. He did not rule out that possibility. However, if Si Wuya was on Yu Zhenghai's side, they would never help the Imperial family to work against the Evil Sky Pavilion. It did not make sense. They had no motives and reason to do such a thing. Hence, it was highly improbable for the culprit to be Si Wuya.

"Are you certain that your people can be trusted?" Lu Zhou looked at Jiang Aijian.

Jiang Aijian was stunned. Usually, they would never suspect anyone they employed and would not employ anyone they suspected. However, nobody could be absolutely sure that their agents were completely loyal.

Jiang Aijian regarded Lu Zhou with a curious expression before he said, "If it isn't Si Wuya, it must've been someone else. Heh... Who's the brave fool who dares to impersonate me. However, since you've seen through that, old senior, what are you doing here in Rubei?" Without waiting for Lu Zhou's reply, he guessed. "Trying to kill Mo Li?"

Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he looked at the scenery outside the window. "Someone else will kill Mo Li."

"Wow. Shall we go and witness it, old senior?" Jiang Aijian said with a grin. "Hm?"

"The Empress Dowager is resting in the Obedient Villa. The Second Prince and the Fourth Prince have already departed for the enclosure... I'm betting that the Second Prince will win. How about you, old senior?" Jiang Aijian said.

Lu Zhou stared at him. His expression did not change. He merely fixed his eyes on Jiang Aijian.

Jiang Aijian was unnerved by this silent stare. He hastily waved his hands and said, "It was a joke, a joke..."

At the end of the day, Jiang Aijian was their brother. Was he truly alright making a bet about them?

"Are you going to take me there?" Lu Zhou did not expect this. His original plan was to stay put in the inn. He planned to wait for Leng Luo's report. After all, Leng Luo was an Eight-leaf elite. If Leng Luo were to go on a rampage, not many people would be able to stop him.

"I heard that there's a Formation under Rubei City... However, I can sneak in and out of it. I've studied Mo Li's tricks thoroughly," Jiang Aijian said, "Don't worry, old senior... There are many secret passages connected to the villa. Not even Liu Huan knows about them. At that place, so long as I want to escape, I can do so at any time. Oh, wait... With your cultivation base, old senior, there's no need to run." Lu Zhou remained unmoved. He recalled Qin Jun's words. Someone had set fire to Jing He Palace. Clearly, Jiang Aijian had done many things to oppose Mo Li. In that case, everything made sense now.

Lu Zhou had been suspicious before this. Since Jiang Aijian had left the palace, why was he still interested in the palace's affair? It seemed like Jiang Aijian intended to avenge the 1,000 lives that were lost.

Lu Zhou regarded Jiang Aijian carefully. This fellow always had a smile on his face. Who knew he had such a dark past? As the saying went, 'Hit a man but not his face'. He would not bring the incident in Jing He Palace up. In the end, he said apathetically, "Lead the way."

In the afternoon. At the entrance to Rubei City.

Two troops of soldiers entered the city majestically.

The civilians parted and made way for them.

Liu Huan, the Second Prince, sat on horseback and said with a smile, "Fourth brother, I think I've spent too much time in the palace. I'm no match for a seasoned veteran like you."

"You're exaggerating, brother. Those are just ordinary skills... All I did was kill some beasts," Liu Bing, the Fourth Prince, replied with a smile.

In other words, the real battlefield was much more vicious than wild beasts.

Liu Huan nodded. "You're right, fourth brother... It's just for fun anyway. Grandmother wishes to rest in the villa for a few days. This is the only way for us brothers to have some fun."

"Yes, let's not speak about trivial matters... Brother, I heard you prepared something from grandmother?"

"There's no need to rush, fourth brother. You'll see when we get to the villa."

"Alright!"

The two brothers spurred their steeds to the Obedient Summer Villa.

The second floor of the Obedient Summer Villa.

"Sect Master Si, did you have a good rest last night?" Han Yuyuan walked over and sat down with an indifferent expression on his face.

Si Wuya looked out at the peaceful villa through the window and said, "It wasn't a bad night... I'm just curious when this show of yours will begin?" "Are you feeling anxious?" Han Yuyuan said jokingly.

"Maybe I am..." Si Wuya turned around and raised his hands toward Han Yuyuan. "General Han, with your magnanimity, I'm sure you can, at least, untie me, right?"

When the subordinates at the side heard this, one of them cursed, "Refuse a toast only to be forced to drink a forfeit! General... let's not waste words with this one. We should end his miserable life with a saber right now!"

Han Yuyuan glared at him. "Mind your manners!" After he said that, a smile bloomed on his face, replacing the darkened expression on his face. He waved his hand and said, "Untie him."

### **Chapter 319 Beat Them at Their Own Game**

"General!"

Smack!

Han Yuyuan suddenly turned around and slapped his subordinate.

The subordinate reeled back from the slap, and his face swelled immediately. After spinning two circles, he felt dizzy and fell to the ground.

"Get lost," Han Yuyuan barked.

"I'm sorry for speaking out of turn! I'll take my leave now!"

Han Yuyuan no longer bothered with that subordinate. Instead, he smiled as he looked at Si Wuya and said, "That's just the way he is. He has a fiery temper and draws a clear line between those that he loves and hates. However, he's extremely loyal and is one of my most capable subordinates. We shouldn't judge a book by its cover. He may seem rash and impatient, but he's thorough with his work. He never dallies." He raised a hand, and a huge energy blade emerged. It slashed the rope that bound Si Wuya's hands, and the rope fell immediately. Si Wuya stretched his arms. He heaved a long sigh and said, "I'm impressed by the way you handle your subordinates, General Han. I'd like to know who is it that wants me captured. Can you tell me?"

"It's meaningless to learn about those things... What I can guarantee you is that nobody will touch you before your death," said Han Yuyuan.

"You're not telling me?"

Han Yuyuan cupped his fists to the left and said, "It's what was asked of me."

"Interesting." Si Wuya smiled.

Han Yuyuan sighed and said, "You killed my hopeless little brother. Usually, I would've cut you in half and sent you on your way immediately. However, the bigger picture is much more important than my personal grudges."

"Han Yufang was the leader of the Five Mice. The rebellion at Upper Prime City was also their doing. You're one of the Eight Great Generals of the Imperial guards, you should've disregarded your personal ties and carried out your duties," Si Wuya said. If this was a contest of words, he did not fear Han Yuyuan. At the end of the day, Han Yuyuan was a martial person.

Han Yuyuan smiled and said, "Since I'm paid by the Imperial court, it's only natural that I serve it. Those are two separate matters. If I were the one who captured Han Yufang, I would, naturally, execute him."

Si Wuya nodded and said, "I'm curious... With Han Yufang's ability, how did he roam the Divine Capital unhindered? In the beginning, I thought he was exceptionally skilled. However, now, I don't think it was that simple."

Smack!

Han Yuyuan shattered the table before him with a strike of his hand. He said, "Sect Master Si, don't think I won't lay my hands on you just because someone is protecting you... There's a limit to my patience."

As soon as Han Yuyuan finished speaking, a subordinate approached him and whispered into his ear. The embers of fury were cleanly swept away, and a smile bloomed on his face.

"Sect Master Si, the show has begun." Han Yuyuan pointed at the Obedient Summer Villa. Across the river stood the entrance to the villa. Everything could be seen from the pavilion's window. This was a good vantage point, indeed.

Clip! Clop!

Clip! Clop!

At the end of the villa, a large troop made its way in. The troop was led by a huge carriage covered in red floral draperies that fluttered in the wind. There were several palace girls walking next to the carriage as well.

The person who walked ahead of the carriage was the elite by the Empress Dowager's side, Li Yunzhao. He looked straight ahead with killing intent in his eyes. The entire group proceeded slowly.

This was the Empress Dowager's carriage.

"Halt." Li Yunzhao's sharp voice resounded in the entire villa. He launched himself up into the air and surveyed the surroundings before he slowly landed next to the carriage. Then, he softly said, "Empress Dowager, Princess, we've arrived."

At this very moment, two troops of soldiers emerged from the other side of the villa. Li Yunzhao did not seem to be bothered. He knew who they were.

The two troops stopped before the carriage.

"Grandmother!" "Grandmother!"

At this moment, a graceful and noble-looking old woman appeared in everyone's sight. She rose to her feet after the curtains were parted and stepped out of the carriage. She looked slightly pale, but no trace of exhaustion could be seen in her eyes.

Zhao Yue hastily left the carriage and supported her. "Granny."

The Empress Dowager turned and placed a hand on Zhao Yue's hands as she said, "My sweet grandchild."

Zhao Yue was dressed in palace clothing as well. If one was unaware, it would be difficult to imagine she was the fifth villain from the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Inside the pavilion, Si Wuya was slightly taken aback when he saw Zhao Yue. Although he knew Zhao Yue was Princess Yun Zhao's orphan, he still could not help but feel shocked when he finally saw her.

Han Yuyuan smiled and said, "Zhao Yue, the fifth disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion and Princess Yun Zhao's orphan. The Empress Dowager has already instructed His Majesty to crown her as Princess Zhao Yue. What a shame, a few days as a princess is all she will have."

"She's the one you want to kill?" Si Wuya asked, puzzled.

"She's not the only one... There's you as well." Han Yuyuan looked at Si Wuya and smiled. He liked the feeling of having the power to decide the fate of people who thought they were smart. He felt more pleased than when he was lopping the heads of his enemies on the battlefield.

The Empress Dowager glanced at the Second and Fourth Prince before she gently said, "You may rise. This isn't the palace."

“Grandmother, I knew you were coming to the villa to recuperate so we went to hunt some game for you. We’ve also employed the best cook in Rubei City,” Liu Bing said.

Liu Huan, naturally, would not let Liu Bing steal the limelight. He said immediately, “I’ve also prepared some entertainment for you, grandmother. It might be boring in the palace, but here in Rubei, I can prepare any songs that you like to hear, grandmother!”

When Li Yunzhao heard this, he bowed and said, “Your Highnesses, I’d like to make sure the Empress Dowager is safe... It’s better to refrain from inviting unknown personnel into the villa.”

“Eunuch Li, it’s only natural that the people I bring can be trusted,” Liu Huan, the Second Prince, said.

Li Yunzhao frowned. ‘You trust them, but I don’t.’

The Empress Dowager waved her hand and said, “I finally have the chance to come out and have a breath of fresh air. Stop bickering at once.”

“Understood.”

The others bowed.

Zhao Yue supported the Empress Dowager as she alighted from the carriage and entered the villa.

The entire villa was surrounded and tightly guarded. No one was allowed to enter.

Li Yunzhao observed the surroundings for a moment before entering the villa.

Meanwhile, several carriages slowly proceeded toward a spot near the villa.

Inside one of the carriages, Lu Zhou and Little Yuan’er were looking at Jiang Aijian who was dressed in exotic clothes.

Jiang Aijian said awkwardly, “Don’t give me that look... I’m going on stage for a performance later...”

“For your grandmother?” If Lu Zhou could not even see through this, he would have spent his thousand years of living in vain. “Just presenting the Buddha with borrowed flowers...” Jiang Aijian scratched his head awkwardly. It had been a long time since he had seen his grandmother. He might hold a grudge against everyone, but those people did not include his grandmother.

“I’ve underestimated you,” Lu Zhou said as he stroked his beard.

“This is nothing... I’m a far cry compared to your seventh disciple... You might not know this, but when he wanted to wipe out the Clarity Sect, he planted more than 200 moles in their ranks. I’m truly impressed...” Jiang Aijian said.

“So, how many of your men did you plant around Liu Huan?” Lu Zhou asked.

### **Chapter 320 Playing Along**

Jiang Aijian said sheepishly, “A few.”

Lu Zhou kept his eyes trained on Jiang Aijian.

Jiang Aijian said helplessly, "Liu Huan is extremely cunning. I've planted some of my men around him before, but they were turned... It's likely that they'd been controlled by Mo Li. In any case, there aren't many of them whom I can trust."

With this explanation, Lu Zhou finally understood how those people were able to forge a letter. He said, "You should personally write the letters to Evil Sky Pavilion from now on."

"That's not a problem," Jiang Aijian replied. After all, any hole that had been discovered would have to be patched up.

Creak! Creak! Creak!

The carriage entered the Obedient Summer Villa.

Little Yuan'er poked her head out of the carriage to have a look. Then, she looked inside and said, "We're not the only ones."

Jiang Aijian said, "That's normal... The Second Prince knows what the Empress Dowager likes so he employed several troupes."

Lu Zhou did not look out the window. At this moment, a few soldiers walked up to their carriage.

Jiang Aijian said in a low voice, "They'll be verifying our identities. Let me do the talking."

Lu Zhou was not worried about that at all. He was wondering what the next course of action he should take if Leng Luo failed his mission. Perhaps, he would really have to unleash a grand technique and flee on Whizard's back. If that were to happen, it would certainly be an

moment for the great villain. In the end, Lu Zhou stroked his beard and asked, "Do you have an escape plan?"

Jiang Aijian said with a smile, "Naturally. A crafty rabbit has three burrows after all. However, I don't think that you'll need them, old senior."

Lu Zhou did not press him with more questions.

At this moment, voices could be heard from outside...

"My lord... I'm invited by His Highness, the Second Prince, himself. There's no need for such formalities. My surname is Ri, you can just call me Troupe Leader Ri. I've been preparing my troupe for a long time for this. We will do our best."

"Thank you, my lord. Watch your steps."

After the identities of the travelers on the first carriage were verified, they were granted entry into the villa.

Little Yuan'er covered her mouth and giggled as she said, "Master... That person's strange."

Lu Zhou was not as curious as Little Yuan'er nor did he look outside. However, he had also heard the weird accent of the man who had just spoken. There were all kinds of strange things in the great wide world.

It was soon Lu Zhou's carriage's turn to be inspected.

When the soldiers came to check their identities, Jiang Aijian leaped out and said, "My lord... I'm part of the family. Here's the Second Prince's Paiza."

The soldiers did not give him a hard time, and the carriage was granted entry into the villas as well.

Jiang Aijian returned to the carriage and said, "I say, that Ri fellow sure knows how to work his way around here. That's just how it is in society, that's how you survive."

Little Yuan'er rolled her eyes at him and said, "Humph! You and that Ri fellow are the same. You're not good people!"

"I never said that I was!"

Creak! Creak!

The carriage came to a halt and three of them leaped down from the carriage. The others alighted from the carriage as well. They were in a private little courtyard. Every troupe was separated. The environment was nice, albeit slightly confined. Large numbers of soldiers stood guard outside the courtyards. There were many cultivators as well.

The officer who let them pass spoke to Jiang Aijian, "Prepare yourselves. I'll notify you when the act before yours is done."

"Don't worry, my lord!" Jiang Aijian guaranteed as he thumped his chest.

The others began preparing the props needed for the performance.

After the officers left, Jiang Aijian walked up to Lu Zhou and said, "Old senior, all you have to do is to play along later during the performance... I'm guessing that Mo Li won't show herself. We'll move along the secret passage later." "Play along?"

"It's a joke. You can just be a member of the audience," Jiang Aijian said.

'That's more like it. How can you expect me to hop around like the youngsters when I'm this old?'

Meanwhile, The Empress Dowager rested in a side courtyard.

The Second Prince, Liu Huan, waited for her outside. He said, "Grandmother, the preparations are done. They're all troupes that you liked in the past."

"That's nice."

Zhao Yue glanced at Liu Huan. Then, she helped the Empress Dowager to her feet and said, "Granny, you like listening to songs even before this?"

The Empress Dowager displayed a gentle smile and said, "The palace is deserted and boring. This is the only pastime I have. Zhao Yue, why don't you remain in the palace and keep me company?" Zhao Yue replied, "Granny, you have many grandchildren... I'm sure there are better candidates."

"They're ungrateful brats... The one I like the most is your third brother. Alas, he died young!" the Empress Dowager said with a sigh.

"Third brother?"

"Let's not talk about that. Come, listen to some songs with me." The Empress took a few steps before slowing down. "Little Yun."

Li Yunzhao walked over immediately.

The Empress Dowager said, "Look after things." "Understood."

After that, they made their way to the Obedient Manor.

The stage and props were already set up at the center of the wide space. The musicians were respectfully waiting on the stage.

The Empress Dowager entered the manor. With Li Yunzhao escorting her, she sat in the seat of honor. The seat had the best view of the stage. There were seats next to her seat as well. She said, "We're all family. Sit wherever you like."

Although she told them to sit wherever they liked, nobody actually did so. The Second and Fourth Prince entered the manor.

The Empress Dowager pulled Zhao Yue to sit on the seat next to her.

Then, the musicians bowed and began playing their piece.

To those who knew nothing about music, this was truly a bore. For example, the Second and Fourth Prince would often find their minds wandering as they listened to the songs. The music merely entered one ear and exited from the other.

After a long while, the Empress Dowager exclaimed in delight, "Bravo!"

The others applauded as well, following her cue.

"Since grandmother says it's good, it must be really good. They'll be greatly rewarded!" Liu Huan waved his hand as he looked at the Fourth Prince, Liu Bing. "What do you say, fourth brother?"

"Of course," Liu Bing replied.

The next two performances paled in comparison to the opening act. The Empress Dowager did not find them interesting.

The Second and Fourth Prince shook their heads when they saw this.

When it was time for the third troupe to perform, Zhao Yue's eyes suddenly brightened when she saw a man dressed in peculiar clothes and a tall hat with a fake mustache pasted to his face stepped onto the stage. She rendered speechless by this sight. 'Fourth Senior Brother? What's he doing here?'

There was no need to describe how badly the play went.



Halfway through, the Second Prince, Liu Huan, hit the table and said, "This is a complete mess! Men!"

The Empress Dowager was perplexed by the performance as well. It seemed to be a jumble of magic tricks and acrobatics. It was meaningless.

"Take them away!" Liu Huan said.

At this moment, Zhao Yue hastily said, "I think it was a good performance." "Hm?" Liu Huan looked at Zhao Yue.

The Empress Dowager nodded slightly. "If Zhao Yue says that it's good, it means that it's good... I like it."

The man in the peculiar clothes bowed at the Empress Dowager. "Thank you, Empress Dowager!"

"Bravo!" the Empress Dowager said tonelessly.

Feeling helpless, Liu Huan could only wave his hand. "Reward them."

Thud! Thud! Thud!

The sound of footsteps resounded in the air. More people made their way into Obedient Villa. This was not a public place. Why were there so many visitors? The Empress Dowager said, "Little Li."

Li Yunzhao hastily lowered his body and moved his ear closer to the Empress Dowager.

"What's all the commotion about?"

Li Yunzhao nodded and said, "I'll take a look." He pushed away from the ground and launched himself into the air. From above, he surveyed the entire villa.

'Hm?' He saw that the entire villa was now surrounded. Li Yunzhao landed and fell to one knee as he said, "Empress Dowager, I'm afraid we'll have to ask His Highnesses about this."

The Empress Dowager looked at Liu Huan and Liu Bing

Liu Huan waved his arms before cupping his fists and said, "Grandmother, songs and acrobatics are minor performances. I've prepared something big for you." "Something big?"

Liu Bing chuckled and said, "So soon, brother?"

"Naturally." Liu Huan clapped his hands.

A poised and charming woman in lavish makeup entered the Obedient Villa while she was escorted by several other women.