

## Disciples 331

### Chapter 331 Who Will Be His Match?

As soon as the two avatars appeared, Duan Xing turned around and left without a word. It was better for them to stay away.

The Fiend Temple disciples were slightly stunned before they hastily followed Duan Xing to another mountain.

“Sect master, about the old senior...”

“You should look after yourself. Do you really have the time to worry about the old senior? Did you hit your head on the rock this morning?” Duan Xing retorted.

Duan Xing was right. The old senior was the master of these two opponents. Was there a need to worry about him?

Duan Xing led the other disciples off Cloud Shine Peak.

At this moment, Lu Zhou was staring at the two huge avatars as well. He nodded slightly. All the rumors he had heard were verified at this moment. Their strength and cultivation bases were, indeed, as powerful as Ji Tiandao. When Ji Tiandao’s great limit was upon him, his cultivation base had deteriorated. It was only natural that Ji Tiandao could no longer restrict these two disciples at that time.

Lu Zhou suddenly realized a problem. ‘How should I defend myself?’ His Divine Court realm cultivation base was not completely restored, and he only recovered two-fifth of the Heavenly Writing’s extraordinary power. Moreover, the extraordinary power was precious. It would be a waste to use it to fend off the spillover energy from his disciples’ battle.

‘I should probably find shelter.’ Lu Zhou was about to leave when the two 100-foot avatars shot toward Lilac Mountain.

Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong attacked at the same time with their Hundred Tribulations Insight avatars.

“Cloud Shine Peak is a nice place. It can’t be ruined.”

“Agreed.”

The saber and sword collided. Rocks split open, and the heavens trembled.

The Eight-leaf Golden Lotus gathered power like whirlpools.

Yu Zhenghai joined his palms together and placed them before himself. His Jasper Saber hovered above him. Under the avatar’s enhancement, the Jasper Saber that was wrapped in energy was now 1,000 times larger. “Slash!”

Yu Shangrong’s avatar dispersed. He shot upward and raised his Longevity Sword. Thousands of energy blades merged with it, and he brought it down on the Jasper Saber’s energy blades. His avatar reappeared.

Boom!

The huge energy blade struck Lilac Mountain, causing a deep gorge on the mountain. If one looked up from the base of the mountain, the cut would resemble a slot canyon. The slot canyon did not last long before the sounds of cracking reverberated in the air. Rocks began to fall off Lilac Mountain's face. With its support gone, Lilac Mountain began to crumble. Huge boulders rolled down the mountain, crushing trees along their way. The beasts on land ran for their lives.

Hua Chongyang looked down from above. He watched as Lilac Mountain crumbled.

"Keep up!"

"Understood!" The flying chariot flew toward Radiant Cloud Forest.

Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong fought fiercely along the way. Wherever they went, the trees would fall. The two of them continued flying into the depth of Radiant Cloud Forest.

"The Hundred Tribulations Insight puts great strain on one's Primal Qi. Just how long can they keep this up?" Hua Chongyang had difficulty believing what he was seeing.

"Brother Chongyang, you have a Seven-leaf cultivation base. If you can't figure it out, how do you expect the three of us to figure it out?"

Hua Chongyang gulped. He looked at the huge energy blades that flew back and forth between the two avatars. The energy blades seemed several times larger compared to when they had just started out.

After a series of exchanges, Yu Shangrong moved to the forehead of his avatar at lightning speed. He raised his right hand, and the Longevity Sword flew into his grasp. He closed his fingers around the hilt, and energy blades shot out from between his fingers. "Senior brother... take this."

Yu Zhenghai frowned slightly. He withdrew his avatar and shot toward the horizons. He unleashed his avatar again and raised his saber horizontally. He said drily, "Alright."

Hua Chongyang and the others held their breaths.

Yu Shangrong flipped his right hand and left a series of afterimages in his wake.

What shocked the others was that his Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar left afterimages as well.

"Grand technique!?"

"Guiyuan Sword Technique. The Untraceable Sword." It was called the Untraceable Sword because it left no trace behind as it moved. The sword could no longer be seen by naked eyes due to how fast it was moving. Yu Shangrong studied Yu Zhenghai for a moment. Then, tens of thousands of energy blades converged and shot toward his opponent. With his avatar, he made a beeline for Yu Zhenghai as he wielded his Longevity Sword.

"Great Dark Heaven Seal!" Yu Zhenghai seemed to anticipate this move from Yu Shangrong. His energy blades converged. With the Jasper Saber in the center, he was now wrapped in an extremely tough defensive shield.

Bam!

The two forces collided. The excess energy rippled horizontally over a distance of 1,000 meters.

The trees on land were also affected by the ripples. If one looked down from above, it would seem as though someone had dug pits all over the place.

The two avatars dispersed at the same time after the great collision.

Yu Zhenghai retreated.

Yu Shangrong retreated as well.

They hovered in the air as they looked at each other from a distance.

Yu Zhenghai's hand was tightly wrapped around the Jasper Saber. He flexed each of his fingers in succession. Veins popped along his arm.

Yu Shangrong's little finger shook slightly. He quickly suppressed it.

Yu Zhenghai spoke in a bright and clear voice, "You're much stronger than I imagined."

"You flatter me, senior brother. You're not doing too bad yourself." Yu Shangrong smiled.

"Junior brother... You're the first person who made me unleash all my strength," Yu Zhenghai said solemnly.

"I hope I satisfied you, senior brother."

Yu Zhenghai spread his hands. His Jasper Saber spun in the air. At the same time, his avatar appeared again.

Whizz!

Yu Shangrong did not want to be left behind as well. His avatar appeared.

The chaotic flow of energy in the skies at the moment had caused a storm. Who would be a match for whom in this battle?

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou was still seated beside the windowsill. He would occasionally glance in the direction of the avatars. He silently praised the two rascals for being tactful enough to avoid this place.

Lu Zhou peacefully closed his eyes and entered his meditation state again. He could hear the clashes of the avatars every once in a while. The entire Cloud Shine Peak seemed to reverberate with it as well.

"Si Wuya..." Lu Zhou suddenly remembered another rascal. 'Where is he?'

Due to the distance, Lu Zhou could not possibly see Si Wuya. However, he was certain that Si Wuya came here with Yu Shangrong. In that case, where would he be watching the battle from? He had three more improved Binding Cage Cards. Everything was ready. All he needed now was time.

Time passed by in a blink of an eye. It was a new day. When the sun slowly rose from the horizon, Lu Zhou heard thunderous clashes. He opened his eyes and looked in the direction of Hundred Leaves Lake. It was a complete disaster. His disciples were nowhere to be seen.

Lu Zhou looked at the cooldown timer for his item cards. Five hours...

“Old Senior...” Duan Xing called out at this moment.

Lu Zhou emerged from the room with his hands on his back. He saw Duan Xing standing respectfully in the center of the courtyard. The battle, which had gone on for three days and three nights, did not make Duan Xing lose his enthusiasm. In fact, he seemed more invigorated than ever. He said, filled with praise, “My horizons have greatly been widened! Truly!”

“What’s the outcome?” Lu Zhou asked. ‘Although their cultivation bases are equally matched, in a dragged-out battle, the factors that determine the victor and the loser are determination and experience.’ Based on this, Yu Zhenghai would most probably win. However, it had been many years since he had spent any time with them. Perhaps, Yu Shangrong had matured after so many years. It might be too presumptuous of him to say that Yu Zhenghai would win.

“It’s hard to tell... However, in terms of intensity, the battle isn’t as exciting as it was two days ago,” Duan Xing said.

They were progressing into the late stage of their battle.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard. ‘They should be getting tired by now.’ It was just like running. The longer one was in the race, the more tired one would feel.

After considering it for a moment, Lu Zhou said, “Let’s take a look.”

“Alright.” Duan Xing wanted to watch up-close as well. Alas, they were not brave enough.

Now that the battle was not as intense, it was difficult for them to watch from a distance. However, if they were too close, they were worried they would be discovered by the Nether Sect’s Four Great Protectors. With the old senior backing them, they, naturally, had nothing to fear.

“Kindly board the flying chariot, old senior.” Duan Xing extended his arm at once.

How else would they travel together if not on the flying chariot?

The others boarded the flying chariot as well. Although it was damaged, it played a role at the crucial moment.

As soon as Duan Xing boarded the flying chariot, he gave the disciple at the helm a kick and said, “With the old senior riding with us, I must personally man the helm.”

Lu Zhou glanced at Duan Xing. He said nothing. He reckoned that Duan Xing was only fit to be a small-time leader with that kind of attitude. In any case, it had nothing to do with him.

The flying chariot departed from the base of Cloud Shine Peak. It moved toward Hundred Leaves Lake.

“Old senior, kindly bear with this speed,” Duan Xing said.

Lu Zhou looked at the cooldown time. He stroked his beard and nodded. This speed was acceptable, considering they had to navigate around the trees.

As the flying chariot drew closer to the battle, the sounds of the clashing energies grew louder.

When the flying chariot was at Hundred Leaves Lake, their field of vision widened.

The nearby trees had all fallen.

Duan Xing smiled and said, "I'm going to speed up."

"There's no need for that." Lu Zhou raised a hand and stroked his beard.

"Why?"

'Why does he have so many questions? What a troublesome fellow!'

Lu Zhou asked, "Duan Xing, how did you find out that their battle would take place on Cloud Shine Peak?"

Duan Xing pondered over Lu Zhou's question for a moment as he steered the flying chariot. Then, he said with a sigh, "I went through much trouble to find out about this when I went to Pingdu Mountain." "If you're able to find out about it, then, anyone can find out about it," Lu Zhou said drily.

"Old senior, are you saying that there might be other people here?" Duan Xing hastily slowed down the flying chariot as he steered it toward the periphery of the forest. Lu Zhou remained silent. Although it was only a guess, the possibility was high.

Duan Xing looked to the left and the right. After the flying chariot entered the forest, their surroundings were unusually quiet. A wave of regret rose in his heart. "You're right, old senior. I'm too hasty and obtuse... The rats would all be gone by now with our flashy movements."

However, Lu Zhou remained calm, he did not seem angered. Duan Xing sighed inwardly with relief. When the flying chariot moved past Lilac Mountain, Duan Xing and the others were in awe. The huge chasm and the destruction wreaked by the energy blades shocked them. It was a complete mess down there.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The clashing of energies sounded closer now. Duan Xing said, "Radiant Cloud Forest is up ahead..."

The flying chariot deliberately avoided the clearings formed from the battle and moved closer to the Nether Sect's flying chariot.

They saw the two avatars vanish just in time.

In the skies, Yu Shangrong and Yu Zhenghai reeled back at the same time. They somersaulted a few times before they finally stabilized their bodies.

After fighting for three days and three nights while maintaining their Hundred Tribulations Insight avatars, it was clear just how terrifying their cultivation bases were.

An excited expression appeared on Duan Xing's face. "Old senior, I think they're reaching their limits."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he looked at the two opponents facing each other from a distance. "There's no need to rush."

Duan Xing did not dare to question Lu Zhou. If the old senior said that there was no rush, there was certainly something amiss.

## Chapter 332 Outcome

In the skies, even Yu Shangrong who always remained calm despite the situation he was in found his forehead wet with sweat. His breath was becoming unsteady unlike before.

Yu Zhenghai was in a similar state. Sweat dripped down his arms. The rising sun cast its rays on the beads of moisture, causing them to glisten.

The Four Great Protectors were deeply impressed by what they had seen so far.

The two opponents seemed to have used up everything in their arsenals, and yet, there was no clear winner.

“Your Guiyuan Sword Technique is truly powerful!” Yu Zhenghai was not stingy with his praise. “I can say the same for the Great Dark Heaven Memorial.” Yu Shangrong managed a smile.

Hua Chongyang looked at this speechlessly. The two of them never relented on these perfunctory praises throughout their battle that lasted for three days and three nights. He was used to it by now. After the two of them finished praising each other, they resumed their fight. However, both of them looked exhausted compared to before. Even so, the battle between them was not something other cultivators could hope to match.

Hua Chongyang swept his gaze across Hundred Leaves Lake. The lake, which occupied an area of several miles, was completely destroyed. Lilac Mountain, which was nearly 100 feet tall, had crumbled. Ten mountains in the vicinity of Radiant Cloud Forest had been flattened. Wherever the energy blades swept past as their battle shifted, trees fell. There were also countless beasts on land and in the air that were indiscriminately killed by the energy blades.

The place resembled a forest after a great fire or a battlefield after a war. No place was left intact as far as the eyes could see.

Meanwhile, Si Wuya did not watch the battle in the air. Instead, he waited for it to end as he sat in the forest. He did not wish for his senior brothers to fight. However, at this point, he found himself slightly anticipating the outcome. As Eight-leaf experts, who was more superior? Would it be Eldest Senior Brother or Second Senior Brother?

In just a blink of an eye, four hours had passed...

Si Wuya did not continue to wait in the forest. He felt that the battle was decreasing in intensity. He knew it was nearing its end so he flew toward the direction of the battle.

Meanwhile, below the Nether Sect's huge chariot, the Jasper Saber spun skyward. A supersized energy windmill crashed through the towering trees in the area, effectively breaking them.

Yu Shangrong moved at top speed. Left, middle, right.

Three figures flitted here and there. When the onlookers saw this, they felt as though they were in a dream. They could not see clearly.

Yu Zhenghai knew this was one of the sword skills Yu Shangrong was known for, the Return and Enter Three Souls. He shouted, “Break!” A circle of energy radiated from him.

Although this burst of energy looked simple, it was the greatest and most domineering skill of the Great Dark Heaven Memorial. As the energy rippled out into the surroundings, it merged with the Dark Heaven Starlight. The energy blade instantly enlarged and moved outward. With all his power inside his dantian's sea of Qi, he controlled the Primal Qi of heaven and earth. With that, a tidal wave suddenly appeared!

Sovereign Descent?

Hua Chongyang shouted, "Activate!"

His Seven-leaf avatar appeared.

The other three knew what Hua Chongyang, and they followed suit, activating their avatars.

Four avatars shielded the huge chariot from below.

Boom!

The tidal wave rose up before falling again.

The energy wave was blocked by the four avatars.

Even so, the backlash caused the flying chariot to move up as though it was lifted by the wind.

The four great protectors' faces turned red from the effort they exerted. Apart from awe, they were filled with respect and fear as well.

Si Wuya was halfway toward the battle when he felt the incoming wave of power. He frowned. "Drat!"

Bam!

Si Wuya crossed his arms before himself and conjured up his energy to shield himself.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Si Wuya reeled back, crashing through more than ten trees before he fell. Blood trickled out from the corner of his mouth. He had no time to worry about this. He was glad this was just the aftermath of their attacks. He had used all his strength to defend against it. The injury he received was within a reasonable range. He wiped the blood away and continued on his way.

On the other hand, Duan Xing also saw the tidal wave of energy rolling toward them. He thought to himself excitedly, 'The time to shine has come!' He activated his avatar and formed a black barrier.

Boom!

Lu Zhou initially intended to block the impact with the Heavenly Writing's extraordinary power. He did not expect Duan Xing to act so quickly.

With a loud boom, the flying chariot flew back... It resembled a ship that was being pushed back by the waves of the ocean.

Lu Zhou frowned. The cooldown period was almost over. He prayed that Duan Xing would not fall short of expectations at this crucial moment.

At this time, Yu Shangrong's three figures vanished as the Sovereign Descent and the Dark Heaven Starlight attacked. Only a figure could be seen as he reeled back. As soon as he reeled back, he tossed his Longevity Sword.

Whoosh!

Yu Zhenghai, who was currently letting out a burst of energy, could not spare any of his power to defend himself. He could only widen his eyes and try his best to turn to the other side.

Whoosh!

The Longevity Sword slashed past Yu Zhenghai's shoulder before it dove and stabbed into the ground.

At the same time, the Jasper Saber plunged into the soil with a thud as well.

Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong landed.

The entire place fell silent.

The battle had ended abruptly.

After an unknown span of time, both of them rose to their feet and faced each other from a distance. They no longer launched any attacks. The pride that was deeply etched into their bones would never allow them to be in a battered state.

There were hints of blood at the edge of Yu Shangrong's lips. There was an angry red line on Yu Zhenghai's shoulder.

Silence loomed over them as they smiled. Yu Zhenghai was the first to break the silence. He grinned and said, "The Enter and Return Three Souls isn't what I expected it to be, to be honest."

Yu Shangrong responded with a smile, "The Sovereign Descent lacks the confidence of a king."

"You have no Primal Qi left."

"You have no Primal Qi left as well."

This was the issue. Who won and who lost? It was an awkward situation. None of them could say they were the victor.

The four great protectors were from the Nether Sect. They did not have the right to be the judges of this battle. There was only one person cut out for the job.

Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong both thought of the same person; Si Wuya. Speak of the devil. Si Wuya appeared in their sights. "Seventh Junior Brother, what great timing..." Yu Zhenghai said excitedly.

"Greetings, Eldest Senior Brother."

"Seventh Junior Brother, it's good that you're here."

"Greetings, Second Senior Brother." Yu Zhenghai said, "Now... Who do you think won this battle? Is it Second Junior Brother or me?"



Si Wuya was at loss for words. 'What does this have to do with me? Can't you guys just fight and decide for yourselves? I'm only here to see the outcome.'

Yu Shangrong said, "Seventh Junior Brother, you can be honest... Who do you think is more skilled, Eldest Senior Brother or me?"

Uh... I think I'm going to have a breakdown.'

Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong were both eagerly awaiting his answer.

Si Wuya was an intelligent person. He quickly observed his surroundings and the conditions of his two senior brothers. Then, he said with a bow, "It's a draw."

"A draw?" Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong frowned at the same time

"Your Sovereign Descent has injured Second Senior Brother, Eldest Senior Brother. On the other hand, Second Senior Brother's Return has injured you... Mhm, it's a draw!" Si Wuya said with a straight face. He was inwardly proud of his own wit.

Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong looked at Si Wuya at the same time. They did not seem happy with the answer. Si Wuya frowned. He cursed silently in his heart. He might become the victim of his own ingenuity. He felt that he had offended them both!

Yu Zhenghai spoke with a slightly annoyed tone, "In that case, we'll fight again another day."

Yu Shangrong said, "I look forward to it. There must be an outcome between us, Eldest Senior Brother."

Si Wuya was speechless.

Yu Zhenghai raised a hand. His Jasper Saber emerged from the ground and returned to his grasp. The Longevity Sword returned to its scabbard on Yu Shangrong's back as well.

None of them would back down.

Yu Zhenghai looked at Yu Shangrong coldly before he flew into the sky back to his flying chariot.

Si Wuya felt that something was amiss, but he could not do anything. He could only look on as his Eldest Senior Brother left. After a while, he discovered there was something wrong with his Second Senior Brother as well. "Second Senior Brother, are you alright?"

### **Chapter 333 The Mantis Stalks the Cicada, Unaware of the Oriole Behind**

"I'm fine." Yu Shangrong did not move. He smiled faintly and looked at the Nether Sect's flying chariot in the sky as he said, "Look..."

Si Wuya looked at it and did not see anything out of the ordinary. An expression of confusion could be seen on his face as he mulled over what Yu Shangrong's words meant.

Yu Shangrong continued to say, "Eldest Senior Brother has been injured by me. He's only pretending he's unaffected... Well, I'm his junior brother after all. I should let him save face."

Upon hearing this, Si Wuya finally understood what Yu Shangrong meant. Although he did not know if Yu Shangrong truly injured Yu Zhenghai, he cupped his fists and said, "This means you're more skilled, Second Senior Brother."

"There's no need to mention it," Yu Shangrong said lightly.

Meanwhile, Yu Zhenghai returned to his flying chariot.

Hua Chongyang, Bai Yuqing, Yang Yan, and Di Qing bowed at the same time. "Welcome back, sect master!"

Yu Zhenghai remained silent. He walked into the interior of the flying chariot with a stoic expression. He sat on his seat in a stern and regal manner. Then, he grunted before a trail of blood trickled out from the edge of his lips.

It was not much, but it was enough to prove that the master of the greatest Fiend Sect, Yu Zhenghai, who took down countless opponents before this, was injured.

The four great protectors had a frightened expression on their faces.

Yu Zhenghai growled. "Nobody is to know about this." After saying that, he swung his arm and spoke as if nothing happened, "Let's go."

The flying chariot adjusted itself and flew toward It flew toward Lilac Mountain.

Creak! Creak! Creak!

The flying chariot made odd noises.

The Nether Sect's disciples looked at their surroundings.

Hua Chongyang bowed and said, "Sect master, the flying chariot was caught up in the aftermath earlier. However, we can still fly."

Yu Zhenghai nodded.

The flying chariot began picking up speed.

Yu Zhenghai looked at the passing scenery. The sun was high up in the skies now. The morning rays that penetrated a thin layer of fog made it seem as though they were in the land of the immortals.

Hua Chongyang suddenly said, "Sect Master, we're picking up something."

"Hm?"

The other three great protectors looked in the direction where Hua Chongyang pointed.

It was a small, dark flying chariot that hung on the branches of two huge trees.

"There's people around?" Bai Yuqing was puzzled.

"Sect master, this group of people is audaciously brave! I request permission to kill them," Di Qing said.

Yu Zhenghai was feeling furious himself so he said, "Go ahead."

“Eh? What’s that?” Bai Yuqing saw a cluster of auspicious Qi shooting toward the fallen flying chariot.

Yu Zhenghai glanced at it before he shifted his attention to the stern of the flying chariot.

Usually, the more profound a cultivator’s cultivation base was, the sharper their eyes would be. With that single glance, Yu Zhenghai saw a familiar old figure. His regal posture immediately withered as he burst into a coughing fit.

The four great protectors did not even have a good look at the auspicious Qi. They hastily turned around with a worried expression on their faces as they cried out in unison, “Sect master!”

“I’m fine... Go!”

“Huh?”

“Return at full speed.”

Hua Chongyang saw the grave expression on their sect master’s face as he coughed. He thought their sect master had suffered serious injuries from the fight. He hastily gave an order, “As you command, sect master. Return at full speed!”

The flying chariot immediately fired up as it moved creakily toward the horizon.

At the periphery of Radiant Cloud Forest. The Fiend Temple’s flying chariot reeled for several miles after being hit by the energy from the collision between Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong. It took a huge damage so it eventually fell.

“Please forgive me for being useless, old senior!” Duan Xing’s face fell as he hastily bowed and apologized.

Lu Zhou looked at the cooldown time of his item cards. 15 minutes...

A quarter of an hour.

Time was passing excruciatingly slowly. Every second felt like a year!

Just when Duan Xing was apologizing, one of his subordinates pointed at the huge flying chariot shooting past and said, “Old senior, the Nether Sect’s flying chariot!”

Lu Zhou had been preoccupied with the system’s dashboard. When he heard that, he turned to look at once.

The huge flying chariot was already speeding into the distance. There were more than 10 minutes left. In that case, he could only act against the other rascals. There were Yu Shangrong and Si Wuya. They did not have the four great protectors. They should not have any means of escape.

After such an intense battle, Lu Zhou expected both of them to be greatly injured. He was certain Si Wuya would be affected as well. When the cooldown ended, it would be a great opportunity for him to take care of the rascals.

Yu Shangrong looked at Si Wuya and said, “After this battle, I’ll live in seclusion... Junior Brother Wuya, you should go.”

Si Wuya had trouble understanding this. He asked, "Have you thought things through?" Yu Shangrong sighed and said, "Under the heavens, if even you can't understand my thoughts, Seventh Junior Brother, who can? My mind is set. You should understand."

After the battle, Yu Shangrong seemed to have gained some insight. He no longer had any ties to the world. "What should I tell Eldest Senior Brother?" Si Wuya asked.

"He's injured, and the victor has been decided. He won't spar with me again." Yu Shangrong's tone was cold.

Si Wuya saw the lack of expression on Yu Shangrong's face and said, "Second Senior Brother, I support your decision to live in seclusion, but there's no need to sever all ties... Perhaps..."

Before he could finish, Yu Shangrong said coldly, "Get lost."

Si Wuya was stunned. He did not expect the gentle Yu Shangrong to utter such words. He swallowed the words that hung on the tip of his tongue. His Second Senior Brother had always been gentle, humble, and polite. He never saw his Second Senior Brother using words such as, 'Get lost', before.

In any case, it was just as Yu Shangrong had said. Was there anyone else who understood Yu Shangrong more than he did? No. He knew he could not persuade Yu Shangrong. He cupped his fists before he walked toward the forest. "Take care."

The surroundings were deathly still.

Yu Shangrong did not leave. When he was sure that he was alone, he staggered backward, spitting out a mouthful of blood. Although he had tried his best to keep it down, he could not stop his Qi and blood from surging. He was also clearly injured by the battle.

Yu Shangrong sat with his legs crossed and with one hand over the other. He circulated his Primal Qi. He had to adjust his breathing and meditate to calm his chaotic Qi and blood. It gradually stabilized after a few breaths.

At this moment.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

A person emerged from the forest. He had long hair and wore long robes. There was a sword in his hand as he approached Yu Shangrong.

Yu Shangrong opened his eyes and turned to look in the direction of the sound.

The dense leaves covered the newcomer's face. However, Yu Shangrong could tell from the skinny figure that he was a sword path elite.

"Senior Sword Devil." The person stepped forward. He was now in the clearing that was caused by the battle.

Yu Shangrong's gaze on the newcomer. He had a thin beard and wore embroidered robes. It was a middle-aged man with a weathered face. After a glance, he ignored the newcomer.

The middle-aged man was neither delighted nor annoyed. Instead, he calmly cupped his fists and bowed at Yu Shangrong. "Yun Sect's Luo Changqing offers his greetings to Senior Sword Devil."

The newcomer was Sword Saint Luo Shisan's junior brother. He was one of the three Sword Freaks, Luo Changqing of the Yun Sect. He was also a rare sword path genius. Yu Shangrong continued to ignore him. He flicked the dust off his clothes and prepared to leave.

Luo Changqing said, "Ever since my senior brother, Sword Saint Luo Shisan, fought you, he could never forget about it. I have come today with the intention of sparring with you, Senior Sword Devil."

Yu Shangrong stopped in his tracks. "I'm sorry, you're very weak." He seemed to feel that it was insufficient so he added, "Boringly so." He had said the same words to Sword Saint Luo Shisan. It made no difference to say it again to Luo Changqing. He was no fool. For the newcomer to show himself at this moment, he did not have true intention to spar. The newcomer was nothing but a petty and shameless man who wanted to take advantage of the situation.

Luo Changqing said self-righteously, "If a weakling dares to challenge an expert, the weakling is no longer a weakling. An expert who does nothing but run away is the real weakling." Yu Shangrong said, "Forget it." He turned around slowly to face Luo Changqing and said, "A month from now, Yen Sect, sword altar. I'll be coming for your head."

"I'm sorry... There's no need to wait for a month."

Zing!

Luo Changqing unsheathed his sword and wielded it with both hands.

It split into two, four, eight...

Hundreds of energy blades filled the air.

"Now, in Radiant Cloud Forest, I, Luo Changqing, will end your life." Luo Changqing stomped his feet and leaped into the air.

The energy blades converged and flew toward Yu Shangrong's head.

If this was before, Yu Shangrong would have had thousands upon thousands of ways to deal with it. However, at this moment, he only drew his Longevity Sword with a single hand and mustered all the Primal Qi he had left. The blade was slightly red as it hummed and vibrated. He made a decisive and clean sideways sweep.

Bam!

The instant their energies clashed, Luo Changqing's energy blade was shattered.

Their weapons collided and Yu Shangrong took three steps backward! Luo Changqing did a somersault and dropped to the ground. Although Luo Changqing did not gain the upper hand from this exchange, he saw hope... He saw Yu Shangrong taking three steps backward. This had been something unthinkable in the past. Yet, he managed to do it now. He was overjoyed! If he could successfully take Yu Shangrong's life, his name would shake Great Yan! "Senior Sword Devil... Who do you think is weaker now?"

Yu Shangrong gripped his Longevity Sword tightly. He gauged the remaining Primal Qi inside his body.

“Why aren’t you saying anything? Show me your Return and Enter Three Souls...” Luo Changqing was starting to lose it. The elation of imminent victory was giving him a rush of excitement. His sword vibrated as it gathered its power.

The edge of Yu Shangrong’s lips curved up in a faint smile.

At this moment, Auspicious Qi appeared in the skies. Whitzard was flying toward them at a low altitude.

### **Chapter 334 How Did I Teach You in the Past?**

In truth, Lu Zhou had been in the vicinity since a while ago. There were ten minutes left of the cooldown so it would be meaningless for him to reveal himself too early. Lu Zhou had strolled around the area, looking for Si Wuya. However, he could not find Si Wuya. He was cursing that rascal inwardly when he saw Luo Changqing attacking Yu Shangrong. He had witnessed the entire scene so he knew what had transpired.

Yu Shangrong and Luo Changqing were stunned.

Luo Changqing looked up with a frown on his face when he saw Whitzard that was shrouded in Auspicious Qi. ‘Which elite is it this time?’

Yu Shangrong turned around slowly and looked up. His body trembled involuntarily, and his mind turned blank. Although he was the Sword Devil, whose name struck fear into those who heard it, had challenged countless elites in the past, and was fearless, his heart felt as though it was going to jump out of his ribcage when he saw the old man. His lips trembled slightly. “Ma... master?”

Luo Changqing had been cultivating in seclusion for many years in the Yun Sect. He had been to the Evil Sky Pavilion once and had a chance to see Ji Tiandao face to face, albeit at a distance. Moreover, that had been many years ago. Apart from that, this old man had one hand placed on his back as the other hand stroked his beard. The old man looked like an erudite man, he did not look like he was from the Fiend Path. Therefore, when he heard Yu Shangrong’s words, he was thoroughly shocked. More importantly, an ominous feeling rose in his heart. ‘He’s the Evil Sky Pavilion’s master? The greatest villain under the heavens?’

Lu Zhou glanced at the remaining time on the system dashboard, feeling satisfied. There were only a few seconds left of the cooldown. He looked down at Luo Changqing from his high vantage point. “You’re striking a man when he’s down, and yet, you speak so righteously... How can I let someone like you go?”

Lu Zhou tapped Whitzard’s back with the tips of his feet and shot into the air. He lifted his hand, and Unnamed materialized in his grasp. The sunlight glinted off Unnamed’s blade.

Luo Changqing and Yu Shangrong held their breaths. For a moment, they seemed to have forgotten they were in the midst of a battle. Both of their eyes were locked on Lu Zhou who was diving down.

Lu Zhou waved Unnamed. Although he only recovered two-fifth of his extraordinary power, it was enough for him to unleash this skill. He referred to the Guiyuan Sword Technique in his memories as he chanted to release the Heavenly Writing’s power...

'Originating from nothing and everything. Living in samsara and learning from it. This is the power of past lives.' Spectral figures appeared. Left, middle, and right.

This was Yu Shangrong's famous move, the Guiyuan Sword Technique, the Return and Enter Three Souls.

Luo Changqing was completely flustered as he retreated in haste. The sword in his hand gathered power. The thousands of energy blades turned to stab at the incoming Lu Zhou.

Luo Changqing felt his vision blur as though he was in a dream.

Zing!

The three figures merged into one.

Everything ended abruptly.

Unnamed swept past the thousands of energy blades and slashed past Luo Changqing's hand and sword before it slashed at his chest.

Lu Zhou's movements were as smooth as flowing water. There were no flashy moves nor violent bursts of Primal Qi. All it took was a single stroke from a sword.

It was over.

Lu Zhou appeared behind Luo Changqing.

Luo Changqing's eyes widened. When his energy blades vanished, his eyes and expression turned blank. He lowered his head to look at the sword in his hand before his sword broke and he fell to the ground. He looked at his chest. A huge cut could be seen on his chest as blood gushed out. His life was slipping away at a terrifying pace. He did his best to keep his eyes open. He turned to look at Yu Shangrong who was standing a few meters away from him.

Yu Shangrong's brows were tightly knitted together. His eyes were filled with suppressed fear.

Luo Changqing raised his left hand and pointed at Yu Shangrong. "Save..."

Thud!

Luo Changqing's hand fell to his side. "Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 1,500 merit points."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and turned around. He looked at Yu Shangrong again. He had used up all of the Heavenly Writing's extraordinary power. However, his item cards were no longer on cooldown. His cards shone with a hint of golden light. This was a sign that they were ready to be used. "Ma-master?" An incredulous expression appeared on his face. He did not understand how or why his master was in Radiant Cloud Forest.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and looked at Yu Shangrong sternly. He cursed in a low voice, "Rascal."

"Wh... what?" Yu Shangrong registered some fluctuations in his emotions.

"What did I teach you in the past? Do you still remember?" Lu Zhou said as he walked toward Yu Shangrong.

The sound of the rhythmic steps flustered Yu Shangrong. He took a step back before he took several steps back again.

"You defected from the Evil Sky Pavilion. Fought your brother..." Lu Zhou said through gritted teeth.

Zing!

Yu Shangrong's Longevity Sword flew out from his back. He asked, "Master... are you trying to kill me again?"

'Again?' Lu Zhou stopped in his tracks. He looked at Yu Shangrong and said, "Shouldn't I kill you?"

Yu Shangrong gauged the severity of his injuries. A forlorn smile appeared on his face. He straightened his back so that he would not cut a sorry figure. "In my hometown, there's a kind of plant called the Beckoning Fragrance. It blooms during the day and dies at night. You can smell it in the morning, but by dusk, it would wither... Sometimes, I wonder, since we know that it will surely die, why do we still take care of the plants?" Birth, life, sickness, and death were parts of the natural cycle of life.

When Lu Zhou heard this, he shook his head slightly. A rascal was a rascal, after all. Everyone in the world would die eventually. If everyone followed his second disciple's logic, would they not have ended their lives the moment they were born? Where did his second disciple learn such nonsense reasoning?

Lu Zhou stepped forward and said, "Living is the reason."

"Everyone wants to live a long life... but none can escape the shackles of mortality." Yu Shangrong's gaze was complicated. Lu Zhou frowned slightly. "Nonsense! Are you going to surrender and admit that you're wrong?" Yu Shangrong shook his head. "Master... You'll always be like a father to me, but forgive this disciple for not being able to follow you back." This time, he addressed himself as a disciple.

"You think you can get away?"

"You underestimate me... Even if you did nothing, that Luo Changqing wouldn't have been my match." Yu Shangrong leaped onto his Longevity Sword with light movements. He flew on his sword. Relying on his high affinity with the Longevity Sword, he could greatly reduce the use of his Primal Qi while he increased the speed of his flight.

Unfortunately, not many could manage this. After all, heaven-grade weapons were rare and precious to begin with. On top of that, they would have to be in perfect harmony with it.

Lu Zhou's expression was indifferent. He raised a hand and shouted, "Running away, rascal?"

An improved Cage Binding Card shattered in his palm with a burst of golden light. A vortex that was spinning anti-clockwise appeared immediately.

Yu Shangrong flew on his sword toward the deeper parts of Radiant Cloud Forest at top speed.

Whoosh!

The shining golden energy formed a huge 'Bind' character. Like a meteor streaking across the sky, it landed on Yu Shangrong squarely.

Bam!



Yu Shangrong gave a muffled grunt. His Primal Qi was instantly restricted. He staggered and fell. The Longevity Sword plunged to the ground. He exclaimed in surprise, "Hm? A binding mantra?" His dantian's sea of Qi was empty so he could no longer maintain flight. He fell to the ground immediately.

From the shadows of the trees, Duan Xing led the Fiend Temple's disciples and slowly surrounded Yu Shangrong.

"Don't get too close! This is the Sword Devil... Wait for the old senior!" Duan Xing raised a hand and ordered the others to stop.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

With his hands on his back, Lu Zhou walked over.

### **Chapter 335 There was a Bright Moon**

"Ding! Captured the rascal, Yu Shangrong. Reward: 1,000 merit points."

At this point, there was no longer any need for Lu Zhou to rush.

Under the influence of the binding mantra, Yu Shangrong was now without his cultivation base. Where could he run?

A starved camel was larger than a horse. Lu Zhou understood why Duan Xing and the others kept their distance. After all, the person before them was the Sword Devil. He was known to challenge elite swordsmen of the world at the slightest, or no, provocation. Compared to him, the Fiend Temple disciples were nothing but small fry.

Duan Xing gulped before he cupped his hands and said, "Greetings, Senior Sword Devil!"

The others bowed and did not dare not move.

After Yu Shangrong fell to the ground, he saw the people from the Fiend Temple. He was surprised by the peculiarity of the binding mantra. He sat up and grabbed his Longevity Sword. He stabbed it into the ground and pushed himself up to his feet. His expression remained unchanged.

Yu Shangrong did not look at Duan Xing and the others. Individuals of their level were not fit to converse with him just yet. He took a few deep breaths as he looked at his master who was walking toward him. The old man was the only one in the world who could evoke a sense of powerlessness in him.

Lu Zhou paused in his steps when he was finally a few meters away from Yu Shangrong.

Radiant Cloud Forest was deathly silent at this moment.

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Shangrong quietly and calmly.

Dong! Dong! Dong!

The Cloud Shine Nunnery's bell tolled and broke the silence.

Lu Zhou was surprised. Throughout the days he stayed in Cloud Shine Nunnery, he was getting used to the sound of the bell and drums which signaled daybreak and dusk. However, the forest was untrodden

for a long time now and the nunnery was a distance away... Where did the sound of a tolling bell come from? He finally asked, "Where's the rascal, Si Wuya?"

Yu Shangrong shook his head. "He has left."

Lu Zhou saw the unwillingness in Yu Shangrong's eyes. He said, "I've given you your cultivation base... and this is all you've got?"

Yu Shangrong was puzzled. He wondered what his master meant. However, he said nothing.

The victor was the king, and the loser could only submit. This was the hard truth since time immemorial.

"Take him away." Lu Zhou waved his sleeve.

Duan Xing bowed at once. "Understood!"

Yu Shangrong glanced at Duan Xing and the others. He put some strength in his arms and stood up. He said, "I can walk on my own."

Duan Xing and the others retreated. They lowered their heads and did not dare to

Duan Xing felt useless. Although Yu Shangrong was a prisoner now, he was not someone Duan Xing could handle. However, he felt fortunate he was able to witness a peerless individual like Yu Shangrong being captured by his master. Perhaps, when he became an old man, he could boast about witnessing this. At the same time, he could reminisce about how amazing and majestic the ultimate battle between the Evil Sky Pavilion's first and second disciple was. He would never forget it.

Yu Shangrong carried his Longevity Sword in one hand as though nothing had happened.

Lu Zhou swept his gaze across the others and said, "Return to the Cloud Shine Nunnery for now"

Yu Shangrong felt speechless. Did this mean that his master had been waiting inside Cloud Shine Nunnery all this while? If that was the case, why did his master hide himself and reap the benefits of the third party? Unfortunately, it was now meaningless to dwell on it now. He had no choice but to follow Lu Zhou back to Cloud Shine Nunnery.

After the others left the area. In the depths of Cloud Radiant Forest, Si Wuya sighed in relief. If he had not noticed it sooner, he would have been captured as well. He calmed himself down. After his breathing stabilized, he muttered under his breath, "Poor Second Senior Brother... What should I do now?"

Si Wuya hastily shook his head. When he remembered that binding mantra, he frowned. The same method was repeated. This reminded him of his earlier speculation; his master had found a way to overcome the great life limit.

When he thought about this, Si Wuya smiled wryly and shook his head. "You'll only put yourself through hell by trying to keep up appearances... He insisted on acting tough when he was actually injured. Where has that gotten him?"

If his Second Senior Brother had not placed such importance on his pride, he would have been able to escape capture. Perhaps, this was fate.

In Cloud Shine Nunnery. On Cloud Shine Peak.

In the room that faced the Hundred Leaves Lake, Lu Zhou walked up to the windowsill with his hands on his back. He looked at the damaged Hundred Leaves Lake.

Yu Shangrong stood behind him expressionlessly.

After a moment's silence, Lu Zhou said, "Sit."

Clang!

The Longevity Sword fell to the floor. At this juncture, Yu Shangrong no longer had the luxury of caring about his appearance. He picked the sword up at once. If this had been any other time, the Longevity Sword would never have fallen. His affinity with the Longevity Sword was already perfect. His Primal Qi would withdraw without his prompt.

Lu Zhou glanced at the Longevity Sword in Yu Shangrong's arms. He seemed to have remembered something as he said, "You've been with the pavilion for 275 years... Do you remember the very first rule I told you about?"

Yu Shangrong looked at the Hundred Leaves Lake through the window as well. He was slightly stunned by his master's question. Then, he answered, "No infighting."

"Yet, you violated it." "Eldest Senior Brother and I were only sparring..." Yu Shangrong replied.

"Sparring?" Lu Zhou turned around slowly. He sat down on a chair at the side. He stared at Yu Shangrong's Longevity Sword and said, "Since I can grant you your cultivation base and weapon, I can take them back as well." When Yu Shangrong heard this, his heart sank. He instinctively tightened his grip on the Longevity Sword. He had never been restrained and fearful of anyone apart from his master. His pride and strength seemed like a joke in front of his master. He remained silent like a child who had misbehaved.

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Shangrong and asked, "Why did you leave the Evil Sky Pavilion?"

Yu Shangrong frowned slightly. He looked up and said, "You really don't remember?"

Lu Zhou recalled his lost memories. He had thought of a reply long ago. He answered truthfully, "I've forgotten." It was the truth. He had lost some of his memories.

Yu Shangrong regarded this old man before himself with a complicated gaze. "Seventh Junior Brother said that you've changed... and I didn't believe him in the beginning."

Perhaps, it was because this was the first time he was facing his master after such a long time, Yu Shangrong suddenly recalled many things from the past. When he had just joined the pavilion, he was but a young boy. Before he knew it, three centuries had passed. He was now the Sword Devil whose name struck fear in those who heard it. On the other hand, his master... was almost at the end of his life. He could not help but be filled with emotion. "That's not important," Lu Zhou said tonelessly.

Yu Shangrong said, "It's a good thing if you've forgotten about it as well."

"You bastard!" Lu Zhou frowned. His voice rang loud and clear. He rose to his feet with hands on his back.

Yu Shangrong fell to his knees immediately. However, he still remained silent.

After the outburst, Lu Zhou stared at Yu Shangrong and said, "You won't talk?"

Yu Shangrong kept his eyes fixed on the floor and said, "It's for your own good, master. It's best you forget about it!"

Lu Zhou raised his hand. A blast of energy shot out. It was not light nor strong.

Smack!

Yu Shangrong did not dodge. His head turned to the side rigidly. The slap stung.

"Ding! Punished Yu Shangrong. Reward: 300 merit points."

"I have all the time in the world..." Lu Zhou barked, "Men."

### **Chapter 336 Like Meeting an Old Friend**

Duan Xing seemed like he had expected this. He replied immediately, "You called, old senior? I'm here. I will climb a mountain of blades or dive into a sea of flames. All you need to do is say the word."

"Take him away."

Clang!

Lu Zhou waved his sleeve. A blast of wind opened the door. He walked out with his hands on his back. He called out to his mount softly, "Whitzard."

Whitzard arrived on the clouds and slowly landed in the courtyard.

Lu Zhou glanced at the sun. It was high noon. It was almost time as well.

At this time, Duan Xing suddenly asked, stammering, "Old... O-old senior, who should I take away?" Yu Shangrong walked out of the room. His posture and bearing made it clear that he would not be touched. He emitted an air that kept everyone at arm's length.

Duan Xing, naturally, did not dare to get close to Yu Shangrong.

Lu Zhou turned around and asked, "Are you afraid?"

Duan Xing was stunned. Then, he tried to motivate himself by saying, "I'm not! With your support, old senior, I have nothing to fear!"

"That's good."

Duan Xing walked up to Yu Shangrong.

Yu Shangrong merely glanced at Duan Xing before he shifted his cold gaze somewhere else.

Duan Xing felt close to tears. Could he not be afraid? Impossible!

Lu Zhou rode on Whizard's back. They lingered in the sky above Cloud Shine Nunnery for a moment. Initially, he wanted to stay for a few more days to reminisce. When he looked at the nunnery, he saw the past and regrets. Alas, there were still many things he had to attend to. He had no choice but to return.

The sound of a bell tolling rang in the air again. How far up the mountain was Cloud Shine Nunnery? The forest path was left untrodden.

Lu Zhou was preparing to leave when Cloud Shine Nunnery's abbess, Buddhist Master Xuan Jing, appeared. She straightened a palm at Lu Zhou. "Amitabha. Take care, Benefactor Ji."

Lu Zhou sighed. He could see traces of Jing Yan in Xuan Jing. Stubborn, independent, and determined. It would have been a pity and a big regret if this beautiful place was laid to waste.

This place was isolated from the masses. It was a natural and great place to escape the heat and to recuperate. If someone were to establish a sect and recruit disciples, this would also be an ideal place for cultivation. If he had nothing to do in the future and wanted to rest, this would be one of the places he would think of.

With these thoughts in mind, Lu Zhou said loudly, "I've left a Buddhist cultivation method in my portrait in the study. I hope that you'd cultivate it well and not give up halfway. Cloud Shine Nunnery is a nice place."

When Xuan Jing heard this, her dim eyes brightened. She knelt at once and said, "Thank you, Benefactor Ji. I thank you on behalf of my master."

"Take care of yourself." Lu Zhou rode on Whizard's back and flew toward the sea of clouds.

Duan Xing emboldened himself, carried Yu Shangrong with his energy, and followed Lu Zhou. "Safe travel, sect master! We'll await your return in Fiend Temple!"

The Evil Sky Pavilion.

It was close to dusk, Zhou Jifeng and Pan Zhong were sparring in the plaza. They looked up and saw Whizard among the sea of clouds.

"The pavilion master is back!"

Pan Zhong saw Duan Xing bringing Yu Shangrong behind Whizard. He was puzzled. "Who are those two people?"

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were from the Clarity Sect and Heavenly Sword Sect, respectively. They were young juniors. At most, they had only heard about Yu Shangrong's stories. It was natural that they did not recognize him.

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were not the only ones. Many renowned individuals did not recognize Yu Shangrong as well.

Pan Zhong speculated, "Looks like he's a newcomer."

SU

"Mhm... You're probably right." Both of them had learned from their past mistakes. They assumed a respectful and humble attitude. Regardless of who the individual was, they decided that it was better to keep a low profile. After all, the pavilion master would never be interested in average and ordinary individuals.

After a short while, Whizard descended slowly.

"Greetings, Pavilion Master!" "Greetings, Pavilion Master!"

Lu Zhou leaped off Whizard's back and waved his sleeve as he said, "Lock him up in the Cave of Reflection!"

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were slightly stunned. 'Isn't he a newcomer?' Pan Zhong suddenly felt a sense of déjà vu. He remembered Zhu Honggong was given the same treatment when he was first brought back to the Evil Sky Pavilion. His heart skipped a beat. Was this cultured and refined man another one of the pavilion master's disciples? 'I wonder if he's Mister First or Mister Second?' Regardless, they were not individuals whom he could afford to cross.

Pan Zhong quickly nudged Zhou Jifeng with his elbow. He did not fear a godly opponent but a useless teammate. He hoped that Zhou Jifeng would not act out of turn.

Both of them seemed to have a tacit agreement as they said in unison, "Understood!"

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng walked up to Yu Shangrong and Duan Xing before they said, "This way, please."

Their attitude was respectful, and they made sure they had the correct posture. Even their tones and expressions were on-point. They felt quite pleased with themselves.

Lu Zhou turned to look at Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng suspiciously. He said indifferently, "What are you two doing?"

"Huh?"

Duan Xing hastily waved his hand and said, "I'm a guest. I'm not..." He pointed at Yu Shangrong. Yu Shangrong found their antics comical. He smiled faintly and said, "I can walk on my own. There's no need to trouble you two." He was humble and polite as he walked to the back of the mountain.

There was a barrier at the entrance of the Cave of Reflection at the back of the mountain. One could enter but not exit.

Yu Shangrong had lost access to his cultivation base. Once he passed through the barrier, it would be nigh impossible to get out.

Zhou Jifeng hastily walked up and escorted Yu Shangrong to the Cave of Reflection.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou looked at Pan Zhong and asked, "Old Fourth's not in?"

"Mister Fourth and Miss Ninth haven't returned, Pavilion Master. However, Mister Fourth did send a letter saying he'll be back tomorrow," Pan Zhong replied.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. He returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Duan Xing felt lost.

Pan Zhong looked at Duan Xing meaningfully and asked, "How should I address you, sir?"

"Duan Xing of Fiend Temple." Duan Xing cupped his fist

"Who's that humble and polite man?" Pan Zhong asked.

"Mister Second, Yu Shangrong," Duan Xing replied.

Pan Zhong inhaled sharply. That was close. I'm a f\*cking genius!

Zhou Jifeng followed Yu Shangrong to the Cave of Reflection. He chuckled and said with a bow, "This way, this way..."

Yu Shangrong could not help but shake his head. He turned to look at Zhou Jifeng and said, "I don't mean to sound condescending... but master's standards seem to have fallen quite a lot."

In other words, since Lu Zhou allowed a person who was filled with flattery and did not know who Yu Shangrong was, it seemed like Lu Zhou did not have much of a standard to speak of.

Zhou Jifeng continued to nod and bow. "You're right!"

Shortly after, Zhou Jifeng cupped his fists when they arrived at the Cave of Reflection and said, "Mister Eighth."

"Say what you must and make it quick! Your Grandfather Zhu is trying to cultivate here. Don't disturb me if it's not something urgent!" Zhu Honggong's voice rang from the cave.

"The pavilion master has ordered me to send someone into the Cave of Reflection. I hope you don't mind, Mister Eighth."

Zhou Jifeng's voice had barely faded when Zhu Hongong replied with an annoyed tone, "Get lost. Tell him to sleep outside! Also... tell him to fetch me water and wash my feet from now on!"

Zhou Jifeng. "...". His heart pounded against his chest. Although he did not know who this cultured and refined man was, he knew the man was not someone he could afford to offend. However, the person inside the cave was not someone he could afford to offend either. 'What should I do?'

Just as Zhou Jifeng opened his mouth to say something, Yu Shangrong waved his hand to indicate that he did not mind.

"This way."

### **Chapter 337 Gain**

Yu Shangrong looked at him and said, "Thank you for your trouble."

Zhou Jifeng hastily waved his hands and said, "It's nothing."

Zhou Jifeng was touched to see Yu Shangrong's kindness. He had never been thanked for his efforts during his time in the Evil Sky Pavilion. For this reason, he decided to give Yu Shangrong a reminder. "Dear comrade."

"Hm?"

"The person inside the cave is the Evil Sky Pavilion's Mister Eighth. Please pardon his attitude."

Yu Shangrong nodded slightly. Then, he walked past the Cave of Reflection's barrier calmly.

When he heard the approaching footsteps. Zhu Honggong, who was cultivating painstakingly against the wall, leaped into a fit of rage and cursed, "Hey, didn't you hear what I said?" He rose to his feet and raised his voice as he said, "I..." His body froze mid-turn, and his eyes widened. He was stupefied when he saw the newcomer.

Yu Shangrong looked at Zhu Honggong with a smile. He did not say anything.

It took Zhu Honggong a while to react. When he regained his senses, he quickly changed the topic. "Second Senior Brother, have you washed your feet? I'll go fetch some water for you." After he finished speaking, he bowed with an ingratiating expression on his face before he shuffled to the cave's entrance.

When Zhu Honggong was at the cave's entrance, Yu Shangrong's voice rang out. "Come back here."

Thud!

Zhu Honggong turned around and fell to his knees immediately. His face was covered in tears as he said, "Second Senior Brother, I was wrong!"

"There's no need to be nervous. I don't blame you. Besides, my cultivation base is sealed. What are you afraid of?" Yu Shangrong walked up to the stone bench and slowly sat down. His mind was not such matters. He could not help but feel slightly dejected after being brought back to the Evil Sky Pavilion by his master. Moreover, he was the senior brother. He would not hold this against Zhu Honggong.

Alas, Zhu Honggong did not seem to understand Yu Shangrong's thoughts. He continued to say with a pitiful expression on his face, "Senior brother, it's truly my fault..."

Smack!

Zhu Honggong slapped himself mercilessly.

Smack!

Zhu Honggong felt that it was not enough so he slapped himself again.

Upon hearing the strange noises, Zhou Jifeng walked closer to have a look. The scene that greeted his eyes stunned him. Coupled with the conversation of the duo in the cave, he would have been a fool if he still could not understand the situation. He was shocked that his knees gave way. After he clambered to his feet, he quickly ran toward the Evil Sky Pavilion.



Yu Shangrong frowned slightly. He looked at Zhu Honggong, shook his head, and said, "That's enough." Zhu Honggong was overjoyed. "Thank you for your magnanimity, Second Senior Brother." After he said that, he chuckled. "I'll give myself another slap, for good measure."

Smack!

After punishing himself, Zhu Honggong rose to his feet. Then, he walked reverently up to Yu Shangrong's side and stood next to Yu Shangrong as though he was a servant.

Yu Shangrong said in a gentle tone, "Eighth Junior Brother, come to think of it, it's been a long time since we met."

"Second Senior Brother, your movements and whereabouts have always been elusive. How could I have the chance to meet you?"

Yu Shangrong smiled. He pointed to the spot opposite himself and said, "Sit."

"I'm comfortable standing here." "You've been in the Cave of Reflection this whole time?" Yu Shangrong asked.

"Yeah... I'm being punished," Zhu Honggong replied.

Yu Shangrong looked at Zhu Honggong. He could sense the difference in Zhu Honggong's aura. A hint of surprise could be heard in his voice as he said, "Close to the Divine Court realm?" He knew that Zhu Honggong's cultivation method only had seven layers. The most important sutras, the two final layers, were missing. It was almost impossible for Zhu Honggong to enter the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm when his cultivation method was defective.

Zhu Honggong scratched his head and said, "Master taught me the two final sutras! He also said that I could move into the southern pavilion if I can successfully break through."

Yu Shangrong was astonished. "Master taught you your cultivation method?"

Zhu Honggong nodded repeatedly.

Yu Shangrong frowned. He did not quite believe this.

When he saw his Second Senior Brother's expression, Zhu Honggong asked, "Second Senior Brother, what brings you here to the Evil Sky Pavilion?"

Yu Shangrong did not answer him. Instead, he looked up and glanced at Zhu Honggong. Zhu Honggong reached out and decisively slapped himself again. "My mistake." He had touched his senior brother's sore spot, it seemed. However, Yu Shangrong did not mind. Instead, he said, "I ran out of luck."

"Oh." Zhu Honggong scratched his head. He was puzzled. What did his senior brother's return to the Evil Sky Pavilion have to do with his luck?

Inside the eastern pavilion.

Lu Zhou walked up to the table again. He looked at the parchment drawing.

"Hm?"

The drawing finally showed some changes. Apart from the clear outlines of the Divine Capital and the Mausoleum of Swords, the area that appeared this time was the northwestern corner of Yong Province. There was also the symbol of a blade of grass on the map. The outline of the northwestern corner of Yong Province was not clear, but he could approximate where it was. As a transmigrator, reading a map was a basic skill.

“A melilot?” Lu Zhou regarded the little symbol suspiciously. He suddenly remembered a notification from the system a long time ago. Any of his actions could trigger a mission. In other words, the capture of Yu Shangrong triggered the melilot mission.

Lu Zhou no longer looked at the map. Instead, he turned around and sat with his legs crossed. He opened the mission menu. Then, he looked at the main mission; disciplining Yu Shangrong. There were two sub-missions. The first was The Melilot’s Life’. The second was “New Open Heavenly Writing Scroll”. Lu Zhou silently affirmed his thoughts. However, from his recent communication with Yu Shangrong, they did not seem to be in conflict at all.

“Ji Tiandao wanted to kill Yu Shangrong?” Lu Zhou pondered about this while stroking his beard. It was the duty of a teacher to solve his students’ problems. Why did Ji Tiandao want to kill his disciples?

“Ding! Punished Zhu Honggong. Reward: 50 merit points.” ‘Hm?’ Lu Zhou was slightly speechless. He did not expect to earn more merit points at this time. However, the merit points he gained from disciplining Zhu Honggong were clearly fewer compared to before.

Lu Zhou decided not to trouble himself over the questions that did not have immediate answers. Instead, he looked at the number of his items.

Name: Lu Zhou

Race: Human

Cultivation base: Dao Transforming Divine Court realm

Merit points: 20,750 Avatar: Nine Transformation Yin Yang

Remaining life: 6,575 days

Items: Deadly Strike Card x 2, Impeccable Card x 2, Critical Block Card x 62 (passive), Binding Cage Card x 4, Refining Talisman x 1, Ji Tiandao’s Peak Form Trial Card x 1, Whitzard, Bi An, Critical Heal Card, Strengthened Binding Cage Card x 2, Strengthened Critical Heal Card X2, Thunderblast x2, Reversal Card x 22

Weapons: Unnamed, Life Cutter, Tear Stain Box, Jade Horsetail Whisk, Buddhist Prayer Beads.

Cultivation method: Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing

From the unlocking of the treasure box and the killing of the ten great generals who were under Mo Li’s influence at the Obedient Villa, he gained a lot.

His avatar was still the Nine Transformation Yin Yang. If he wanted to enter the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, he would have to obtain the Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar.

Lu Zhou opened the item cards menu.

Deadly Strike: 3,000

Impeccable: 2,500

Cage Bind: 1,500

Critical Heal: 1,500

Thunderblast: 1,200

Lu Zhou frowned. The system was clearly forcing him to be frugal with his card usage.

‘The reward of killing a grand cultivator is merely 1,500 points, and yet, I need 3,000 points to buy one card... Is there anyone who can continue living with this losing deal?’

However, this was also a good thing. Now, Lu Zhou had reason to improve his strength.

It was getting late.

Lu Zhou looked at the two missions. Then, he closed his eyes and entered his Heavenly Writing’s meditation state.

According to his previous experience, a full tank of extraordinary power would give him two charges of grand techniques. He could also choose to use it all in one great burst, which would greatly increase the might of his attack. If he used his weapon, a sliver of the extraordinary power would enable him to kill his opponent. Also, he could control his extraordinary power so that it merely trickled out. If he ever found himself inside a Ten Terminal Formation again, the extraordinary power was his greatest reliance. His item cards would be pretty much useless.

Time passed by quickly.

Early the next morning.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes. He had lost the passage of time while he was meditating.

“Ding! Meditated on the Human Scroll of the three Heavenly Writing Scrolls 200 times. Obtained Open Heavenly Writing (Part One).”

### **Chapter 338 Yu Shangrong’s Sword Path**

Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction. According to this pattern, every time he meditated on the Heavenly Writing 100 times, he would obtain one Open Heavenly Writing Scroll.

However, the system seemed stingy this time. He was only rewarded with ‘Part One’. The 100 repetitions were not short... Well, to be honest, he could easily reach 100 repetitions now that he thought about it.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A loud commotion reverberated outside.

Before Lu Zhou could even ask what was going on, a voice rang out. "Pavilion Master, I think Mister Eighth has achieved a breakthrough."

"Alright." Lu Zhou stood up slowly and walked out of the eastern pavilion with his hands on his back. Inwardly, he felt speechless.

Was it possible that his disciples who were able to roam freely outside had an easier time breaking through? Zhao Yue stayed on the mountain most of the time. He had also spent many sessions teaching her after he returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion. He even purged the cold poison from her body. Logically, with the master personally teaching the disciple, she should have had a breakthrough. However, Zhu Honggong, Old Eight, beat her to it.

Meanwhile, inside the Cave of Reflection.

Zhu Honggong, Old Eighth, was excited. An ecstatic expression could be seen on his face as he looked at the Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar that he had gone through much trouble to form. Although the avatar had no leaves yet and was shorter than him, it was still a Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar. He found the bald Golden Lotus pleasing to the eye.

"Thank you for the pointers, Second Senior Brother!" Zhu Honggong bowed deeply at Yu Shangrong

Yu Shangrong sat on the stone bench. His left hand was on his Longevity Sword that was laid on the table. He smiled faintly and said, "You're talented to begin with. Although your previous cultivation method was wrong, it helped you amass much Primal Qi. The zen tunic has helped you a great deal as well."

"You're right, Second Senior Brother... In my heart, you're the strongest!" Zhu Honggong instantly went into his flattery mode.

Yu Shangrong glanced at him and said drily, "Is that so?"

Zhu Honggong hastily said, "I'm not lying. Everything I said comes from my heart... Second Senior Brother, please don't make fun of me. I can't possibly fool you with this brain of mine..."

Zhu Honggong was still flattering Yu Shangrong when a voice rang in the air. "Greetings, Second Senior Brother." It was none other than Duanmu Sheng. He was standing outside the Cave of Reflection with the Overlord Spear in his hands.

At the same time, Leng Luo, Hua Wudao, Hua Yuexing, Pan Litian, and the others appeared near the Cave of Reflection as well. They were curious after hearing the commotion caused by Pan Zhong. They had arrived when Duanmu Shenglt was almost impossible for them not to be curious about the genius swordsman whose talent shocked the world.

As a guest, Duan Xing maintained his distance and watched from the sidelines.

It was nearly impossible for them to not be curious about such a genius swordsman who shocked the world.

"Third Junior Brother... You didn't change at all." Yu Shangrong appeared near the entrance of the Cave of Reflection. He crossed his arms and returned the greetings.

Duanmu Sheng cupped his fists at Yu Shangrong again and said, "I heard from Pan Zhong that you were captured by master and locked up in the Cave of Reflection. As your junior brother, it's only appropriate for me to visit you." His words were loaded with implications. On the surface, he was respectful and polite enough. However, one could not help but feel there was a hint of mockery as well after listening to his words.

Pan Zhong who was standing nearby shuddered slightly when he heard this. 'Why me? I notified everyone out of kindness. Why did Mister Third make it sound like I have some ulterior motive?'

Pan Litian grabbed Pan Zhong's arm. He asked irritably, "What are you afraid of?"

"I'm not... O-old Pan. This... this is Mister Second we're talking about," Pan Zhong said, completely void of confidence.

"I know." Pan Litian turned to look at him.

"Aren't you afraid?"

"Not exactly... However, who isn't respectfully fearful of an expert?" Pan Litian asked.

'Here's a man who makes being afraid sounds poetic.' Pan Zhong rolled his eyes but did not say anything else. Pan Litian had roamed the lands and had many close calls with death. He even went into Black Forest. It would be believable if Pan Litian said he was not afraid. He had been spending quite some time with Pan Litian so he had heard Pan Litian bragging about his past many times now

Meanwhile, Yu Shangrong wore a faint smile on his face as he said, "You're much stronger than before, Third Junior Brother."

"Thanks to master's teachings, I managed to improve," Duanmu Sheng replied. "Your leaf count?" "I sprouted the third leaf recently."

"Congratulations."

Duanmu Sheng said, "Pan Zhong told me that your cultivation base has been sealed... Although I'm talentless, I'd like to spar with you, Second Senior Brother." Recently, he had strictly followed his master's instructions and trained under the waterfall without using his Primal Qi. The only thing he needed was a training partner. It was hopeless to look for the old men in the Old Age Pavilion. Without their Primal Qi, they would be knocked out with a single punch. No matter how hard he trained, he did not feel satisfied since he did not have an opponent to test his skills against. When he heard that his Second Senior Brother had returned with his cultivation base sealed, he had rushed over immediately. Even if he would likely fail, he still wanted to try.

Hua Wudao said with a sigh, "Duanmu Sheng remains tenacious in challenging people even though he has suffered numerous defeats... I really don't know what to say."

Hua Yuexing mumbled, "It seems like Mister Third hasn't looked for you to spar for quite some time now."

Upon hearing this, Hua Wudao's expression turned stiff as he burst into a coughing fit.

"Are you alright?"

"I'm fine."

Meanwhile, Yu Shangrong sized Duanmu Sheng up and gently said, "Allow me to impart this word of advice; you're still too weak."

"How do you know if you haven't even sparred with me?" Duanmu Sheng raised his Overlord Spear and struck the ground. "I won't take advantage of you. During the sparring session, I won't use any Primal Qi."

At this moment, Zhu Honggong walked to the entrance as well. He waved his hands. "My dear senior brothers, what's happening?"

"Move aside, Old Eighth." Duanmu Sheng did not even look at Zhu Honggong.

Yu Shangrong shook his head and said with a sigh, "As you wish." He raised his Longevity Sword in his hands.

Zing!

Yu Shangrong unsheathed the Longevity Sword. He held it in his left hand and tapped the barrier. The barrier parted immediately. He walked out as though nothing had happened.

Upon seeing this, Pan Litian nodded and offered his praise. "Just as I thought."

"What do you mean?"

"When the affinity between a weapon and its owner is perfect, the owner will have extremely high and precise control over it. If he's knowledgeable about Formations, he can easily find the opening of a barrier and pass through it," Pan Litian explained. He had spoken about this with Little Yuan'er before.

The moment Yu Shangrong walked out of the cave, he made his way to Duanmu Sheng. They were only half a foot apart when he stopped in his tracks.

In terms of height, Yu Shangrong was slightly taller. He had a more slender build while Duanmu Sheng was stockier. Standing so close together, the difference was more pronounced. Those who were skilled were brave. That was the kind of person Yu Shangrong was. Although he did not have any Primal Qi now, he was still bold enough to stand so close to Duanmu Sheng.

As expected, Duanmu Sheng took a step back. He cupped his fists together. "I humbly ask for your instructions, Second Senior Brother."

"There's no need for such pleasantries in a sparring session between fellow disciples." Yu Shangrong stabbed his sword into the ground as he calmly looked at Duanmu Sheng, looking completely unbothered.

Upon seeing this, Duanmu Sheng was somehow annoyed. Without wasting his breath, he raised his spear and thrust forward.

Spear techniques and sword techniques were similar in nature. The Divine One Technique was a cultivation technique meant for the sword and the spear. Indeed, it was uncommon for a person to unleash such strength with the Overlord Spear using pure muscle alone.

Yu Shangrong did not move.

Whoosh!

The spear's tip gleamed coldly as it headed straight for Yu Shangrong. He turned slightly to the side and raised his hand.

Bam!

Yu Shangrong caught the Overlord Spear with his bare hand!

The others were shocked. 'You can actually do that?'

Then, Yu Shangrong pulled.

Duanmu Sheng lurched forward while Yu Shangrong moved forward with a palm strike.

Bam!

Duanmu Sheng's expression changed as he retreated from the impact.

At the same time, Yu Shangrong spoke slowly, "Your strength is greater than your skills, and you lack experience in actual combat... Junior brother, you still have a long way to go."

### **Chapter 339 Unneeded Pride**

Duanmu Sheng was competitive by nature. His desire to win was much greater than Yu Zhenghai or Yu Shangrong. Yu Shangrong's words, naturally, provoked him. He bellowed angrily as he gripped the Overlord Spear with both hands, pushed away from the ground, and leaped into the air. His Overlord Spear seemed alive as he swung it around. It was an impressive sight to behold.

Yu Shangrong dodged and retreated. Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The spear's tip consistently fell short of half an inch before it reached Yu Shangrong.

Duanmu Sheng swung the Overlord Spear ferociously. Spear shadows began to appear.

The others exclaimed in surprise.

Duanmu Sheng was capable of wielding the Overlord Spear at such a speed with just his strength alone. He had improved greatly from his training under the water.

The others were filled with nothing but praise for him.

The Overlord Spear moved even faster. Its afterimages began to overlap. Hua Wudao nodded. "This is the Scorching Field Hundred Strikes of the Overlord Spear's Divine One Technique. 100 spear shadows can be conjured up in one go. If he were to use it with his Primal Qi, he could pierce a Four Script Six Compatible Seal."

"As expected of Elder Hua. You're truly knowledgeable. I've been enlightened."

Hua Wudao was discomfited by these words. How could he not be knowledgeable in regard to this? He had lost count of the times he had witnessed the Scorching Field Hundred Strikes in action. For a time, he even dreamed about the thrusting shadows of the Overlord Spear while he was sleeping. In the end,

he said, "The next move after the Scorching Field Hundred Strikes is the Thousand Waves... It seems like Duanmu Sheng's opponent is slightly underestimating him."

"The Thousand Waves?"

As soon as Hua Wudao's voice faded, the Overlord Spear's 100 spear shadows vanished. Duanmu Sheng leaped up and conjured the spear shadows in the air.

The others were still under the assumption that Yu Shangrong would pay for underestimating his opponent when he smiled and swung his Longevity Sword.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

With a faster speed, more extreme movements, and more outrageous sword shadows, Yu Shangrong responded in kind. Boom! Boom! Boom!

A thunderous noise reverberated in the air as the two heaven-grade weapons collided. Sparks flew everywhere! Every swing of the sword parried the Overlord Spear! Every strike of the sword was precise and flawless!

Bam!

The final sword stroke was from the bottom. It met the Overlord Spear's tip in a slashing motion.

The Thousand Waves was repelled before it was completed.

Duanmu Sheng did a somersault in midair. When his feet touched the ground, he slid back from the momentum. After taking dozens of steps backward, he crashed against the stone wall with a bang. Rubble fell from the natural formation.

Both opponents stopped attacking.

These were two of Duanmu Sheng's most powerful moves. However, they were unimaginably fragile before Shangrong.

Duanmu Sheng found this difficult to accept.

Those who witnessed this scene were silent. They were shocked by Yu Shangrong's seemingly simple move. This was especially true for Pan Litian, Leng Luo, and Hua Wudao.

The common folk would focus on fanfare while the professionals would notice the skill. They could tell how skilled with the sword Yu Shangrong.

Duanmu Sheng gripped his Overlord Spear, unwilling to give up. He looked at Yu Shangrong who wore an indifferent expression on the face and was filled with the urge to charge at him again. Yu Shangrong said, "Give up." He turned around and returned his Longevity Sword to its scabbard. Then, he added, "This is meaningless."

"How is this meaningless?" Duanmu Sheng was puzzled. If he had to yield every time he met an expert, how was he supposed to improve? Yu Shangrong smiled faintly without explaining himself. Instead, he looked at the audience. Was there not even a single person who could see what was going on here? Was there no one who would step forward to dissuade this blockhead?



Finally, Hua Wudao said, "Duanmu Sheng, that's enough." "You think that I can't beat Second Senior Brother as well, Elder Hua?" Duanmu Sheng asked unhappily.

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Hua Wudao coughed twice before he replied, "Whether it's sword or spear skills, all of Mister Second's skills were meant to kill. They had been tempered through battles of life and death... Without sufficient tempering and experience, you won't be able to defeat Mister Second no matter how long you train under the waterfall."

The experience of brushing shoulders with death was not something that could be obtained from classes or debates.

Leng Luo nodded and said, "That's true."

Pan Litian chimed in as well, "I agree."

The others looked at the old men from the Old Age Pavilion skeptically. Usually, these old men would address the disciples by their names. However, they addressed Yu Shangrong as Mister Second. Was this not discrimination?

Duanmu Sheng scoffed and said, "I wouldn't bet on it!" He suddenly raised his spear domineeringly and launched an even more intense attack.

The others exclaimed with surprise. They did not expect Duanmu Sheng to attack so suddenly.

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly. He turned to the side slightly and softly said, "Too slow."

The spear's thrusts were dizzyingly fast.

The others felt lightheaded as they tried to follow the spear's movements.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The Overlord Spear stirred up a cloud of dust.

"Lift." Yu Shangrong raised his arm. He did not retreat. Instead, he suddenly lunged forward.

Duanmu Sheng had no choice but to retreat. Otherwise, the Overlord Spear would be too long for it to have any use.

The moment Duanmu Sheng moved back, Yu Shangrong moved closer at a much faster speed compared to Duanmu Sheng.

Duanmu Sheng retreated again. Swoosh!

Duanmu Sheng lifted his spear and pointed it in the air as he swung his arm.

"Not bad. Alas, you're too slow." Yu Shangrong was already by Duanmu Sheng's side.

The others shook their heads and sighed helplessly. This was the difference between the heavens and the earth.

Just when the others thought that Duanmu Sheng was about to be defeated, he erupted with Primal Qi!

Boom!

The Primal Qi rippled into the surroundings.

Yu Shangrong's cultivation base had been sealed. The impact landed on him squarely causing him to reel back like a fired projectile.

Whoosh!

Yu Shangrong appeared calm, but his Qi and blood were surging. Pure skill was what made him seem less battered than he actually was. In fact, he seemed confident and at ease even when he was sent flying back.

"Ding! Punished Yu Shangrong. Reward: 300 merit points."

The entire scene had fallen silent.

Clearly, Duanmu Sheng had broken the rules. He had used Primal Qi.

At this moment, Duanmu Sheng seemed to have withered. He had lost the will to continue fighting. He was utterly ashamed of himself. Even when he used his Primal Qi, he still could not defeat Yu Shangrong... All he managed to do was to send Yu Shangrong flying back. What more could he say? The weak would only find excuses for themselves.

The atmosphere was slightly tense. No one knew how this would end.

After a moment's silence, Duanmu Sheng walked up to Yu Shangrong and bowed respectfully. "Second Senior Brother, I've been rude..."

"It's a trivial matter," Yu Shangrong said. He did not hold this against Duanmu Sheng.

The others felt helpless. If Duanmu Sheng could not defeat Yu Shangrong, then, the others definitely did not stand a chance.

At this moment, a voice laced with skepticism rang from behind the crowd. "Is that your so-called sword path?"

The crowd parted. They retreated and bowed.

"Pavilion Master." "Old senior." Lu Zhou walked over with his hands on his back as he swept his gaze across everyone. Then, he walked up to his two disciples.

Duanmu Sheng's face fell. He fell to his knees immediately and said, "Master, I've made a mistake! I was only trying to spar with Second Senior Brother."

Yu Shangrong wore an arrogant expression on his face and remained silent.

In the Cave of Reflection, Zhu Honggong knelt and greeted Lu Zhou. "Greetings, master! Thanks to your instructions, I had a stroke of luck and entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. I now have a Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar!"

Lu Zhou glanced at Zhu Honggong. That news surprised him. Within three months, not only did Zhu Honggong manage to quell the rampaging energy in his body, but he had also entered the Nascent

Divinity Tribulation realm. That was no small feat. He casually waved his hand, and the barrier vanished, indicating Zhu Honggong was free to leave the Cave of Reflection.

Zhu Honggong was overjoyed. He kowtowed and said, "Thank you, master! You're truly magnanimous, and your might knows no bounds! May you live forever and ever!"

What a blatant attempt at flattery! Those who heard it felt their scalps tingle. Just how shameless was Zhu Honggong that he was able to utter such words without a change in his expression?

Lu Zhou was pleased when he saw Zhu Honggong's loyalty rising. Zhu Honggong left the Cave of Reflection and walked to the other side.

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Shangrong.

Name: Yu Shangrong Identity: Nobleman (human) Realm: Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm (restricted)

These were the information he gleaned when he first met Yu Shangrong. He was neither intrigued nor shocked by this.

Yu Shangrong was weirded out by Lu Zhou's gaze. He lowered his head and said, "Master." Lu Zhou faced Yu Shangrong and did something shocking. He cupped his fists at Yu Shangrong and said, "I'm not worthy."

Yu Shangrong was astonished.

#### **Chapter 340 Why Aren't You a Nine-leaf?**

Yu Shangrong had never seen his master bow to anyone, ever. All these years, his master had been an existence that was lofty and looked down on all other lifeforms from above...Why was his master saying such words? His master's words genuinely startled him. He immediately fell to one knee and rested his fists on the ground. His eyes were fixed on the ground as well. Although he felt much pride having his master salute him, he did not think he could take it.

Lu Zhou did not move. He looked at Yu Shangrong, who had fallen to one knee, as he stroked his beard and said, "Sometimes, unneeded pride will only hurt you."

"It's in a sword's nature to be cold and arrogant," Yu Shangrong replied. His eyes were still trained on the ground.

"Overconfidence is no different from being conceited, and conceit will blind you. Do you really think your sword skills are peerless?" Lu Zhou asked tonelessly.

"I don't dare claim that," Yu Shangrong replied in a low voice.

"No, you do." Lu Zhou raised his voice.

When Lu Zhou raised his voice, they felt their hearts tightened. They did not even dare to breathe heavily. They were wondering how this great villain would discipline this disciple. They were curious about how he was going to discipline this genius swordsman.

"I dare not," Yu Shangrong said in a low voice again.

“Stand up and speak.”

Yu Shangrong was slightly stunned. Based on his master’s previous temper, he should have been heavily punished. Why did his master suddenly change? He suddenly remembered what his Seventh Junior Brother said. There were 100 questions in his mind at this moment. He slowly rose to his feet.

Lu Zhou said, “Bring your sword here.” He did not wish to use Unnamed. He kept his right hand raised and waited for the sword.

The others exchanged glances. Zhou Jifeng was the only elite here who used a sword. If he did not even have a small amount of tact, he would have spent his time here in vain. He quickly drew his sword and placed it in Lu Zhou’s hand.

Lu Zhou raised the sword. The sunlight glinted off the blade.

“Since you call me your master, I want to see how much my disciple has improved.”

Yu Shangrong had a frightened expression on his face. He did not dare to unsheathe his Longevity Sword.

When Lu Zhou saw Yu Shangrong remained motionless, he cried out before he thrust the sword forward. He did not use his Primal Qi. His sword moved nimbly like a dancing dragon. Perhaps, it was due to the sword’s poor material, it seemed a bit brittle when Lu Zhou wielded it. However, it did not detract one from seeing how complicated and unpredictable his movements were.

Yu Shangrong’s expression grew darker. He could underestimate everyone but not his master. He had instantly recognized his master’s move. It was a skill from the Guiyuan Sword Technique, the technique he was most skilled in.

Retreat! Quickly retreat!

He reached for his Longevity Sword and swung it.

There was only one possible outcome from the clash between a heaven-grade weapon and a lesser weapon.

Swoosh!

Lu Zhou’s sword vibrated vertically and dodged the Longevity Sword at a peculiar angle. He loosened his grip. “Charge!” He sent the sword flying

Bam!

It was pinned onto the wall behind Yu Shangrong, barely half an inch from his neck. One move. His master had only used one move to defeat him.

The entire process took no longer than a few breaths. The magnitude of the difference between them was unimaginable.

Yu Shangrong had difficulty accepting this. His fingers tightened around the Longevity sword. His knuckles whitened.

Defeating Yu Shangrong with the sword meant crushing Yu Shangrong's pride. There was nothing more effective than this. This was Lu Zhou's objective all along.

Hua Wudao nodded as he said, "In terms of experience, the pavilion master is clearly superior. In terms of technique, it seems like the pavilion master is more powerful as well. Mister Second relies too much on his Longevity Sword. He thought that he could break the weapon, but he was wrong..."

Leng Luo said, "That's not all. One has to be able to defy conventions with one's weapon. A sword isn't only a sword... At appropriate times, it can be a saber or a hidden weapon."

Lu Zhou had used the sword as a hidden weapon by tossing it out. The problem was most cultivators controlled their weapons with Primal Qi. Hence, there was practically no chance for them to encounter such a situation. Indeed, Yu Shangrong had many combat experiences. He was no stranger to life-or-death battles. The only experience he lacked was fights of this kind. It was only normal that he was defeated.

After defeating Yu Shangrong, Lu Zhou placed his hands on his back and asked, "Is this your sword path?"

Yu Shangrong could not speak. He felt the attack earlier was full of openings. He had hundreds, even thousands of ways, to parry it, and yet, he chose the dumbest way. He knew that he would lose, but he never thought that he would lose in such a simple manner. His master was old and was using a crude weapon. However, his master had easily bested him even though he was in prime and was wielding the Longevity Sword. His master's skills were clearly superior to his. Zhu Honggong exclaimed excitedly, "Your might knows no bounds, master! Your sword skills are unmatched! The... years..." Before he could finish his sentence, he felt the peculiar stares from the crowd. They looked at him as though he was a fool.

Yu Shangrong cupped his fists and said, "You're right, master."

"Ding! Disciplined Yu Shangrong. Reward 500 merit points."

The reward was clearly higher than what Lu Zhou received from the other disciples.

Lu Zhou could not be blamed. Yu Shangrong was, indeed, too proud. He looked at the Longevity Sword and asked, "When did you attain the Eight-leaf stage?"

"I don't remember." Yu Shangrong gave it some thought before he said, "Almost a century, I think."

The others were shocked upon hearing this. Yu Shangrong looked so young. The others were beside themselves with envy and admiration. Then, they looked at the members of the Old Age Pavilion.

Sigh!

Constantly comparing oneself to others would only make one angry. Hua Wudao felt most ashamed. In terms of appearance, he looked much older than Leng Luo and Pan Litian. However, he was only at the Seven-leaf stage. The Eight-leaf stage seemed like an unattainable goal to him at the present.

The others in the outside world said that the nine disciples of the Evil Sky Pavilion were amazingly talented. It seemed like it was true. They were reminded of the eccentric Miss Ninth, Little Yuan'er. She had only joined the pavilion less than six years ago. However, based on her progress, she would

probably surpass her seniors in no time at all and become the strongest among them. Lu Zhou stroked his beard. He looked at Yu Shangrong. "Why aren't you at the Nine-leaf stage?" He had asked this question after giving it considerable thought.

With Yu Shangrong's talent, given 100 years, he should have attained the Nine-leaf stage.

Yu Shangrong replied, "I want to live."

Lu Zhou remembered Gong Yuandu's words. He mused, 'Yu Shangrong and Yu Zhenghai are both Eight-leaf experts. Perhaps, they made the same decision.'

The death of Jing Yan from Cloud Shine Nunnery was a testament to how treacherous the Nine-leaf stage was.

"The Nine-leaf stage drains a person's life... Are you deliberately suppressing your cultivation base like Yu Zhenghai?" Lu Zhou stared at Yu Shangrong. When Yu Shangrong heard this, he shook his head helplessly and said, "There's no one in this world that can overcome the great limit. The Nine-leaf stage is nothing but a taboo set by the firmaments. Anyone who tries to break the taboo will have to pay with their lives. I knew this from the day I joined the pavilion... Master, why do you insist on stubbornly pursuing it?"

The others were shocked.

Lu Zhou was the only one who knew that he was only in the Dao-transforming Divine Court realm. However, in the eyes of the others, Lu Zhou was a bona fide Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm expert with an Eight-leaf Golden Lotus. It was only natural for him to pursue the Nine-leaf stage after all! These words... It sounded like the disciple was trying to dissuade his master from doing something futile. Why would anyone challenge the truth?

Lu Zhou frowned. "Have I ever asked for your feedback regarding my actions?"

"This disciple dares not!" Yu Shangrong addressed himself as a disciple again.

"Men," Lu Zhou said.

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng stepped forward.

"Take the Longevity Sword away!" Lu Zhou said.

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were speechless. Of the people gathered there, the two of them did not have high statuses, and they were young. Hence, it was only natural for them to carry out menial tasks. However, asking them to offend Yu Shangrong... Was this not akin to asking them to forfeit their lives?