

Disciples 341

Chapter 341 Mental Attitude Determines the Height of Your Sword

However, Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng merely hesitated for a second. They knew their places. Both of them were like brothers in the same boat. They gave each other a motivating glance and walked over.

When they walked up to Yu Shangrong, Pan Zhong said, "I'm sorry, Mister Second."

To a cultivator who pursued the path of the sword to its extremes, his sword was nothing less than his own life. Yu Shangrong would never agree to this. "Master, please! Anything but my sword!" Yu Shangrong fell to his knees again. He stabbed the Longevity Sword to the ground. The others gasped. They did not expect the proud Yu Shangrong would act so humbly because of his sword. However, they recalled the person who had taught Yu Shangrong everything was his master after all. Lu Zhou was more than deserving of this humble display. Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng did not dare to wrestle the sword from Yu Shangrong. They only looked at him helplessly, at a loss over what to do. They turned to look at Lu Zhou and waited for further instructions. If push came to shove, they would... they would take it by force.

Indeed, a sword was important, but it did not warrant such a huge reaction.

Lu Zhou looked at the kneeling Yu Shangrong and said, "You rely on your Longevity Sword too much, so much so that your progress with the sword has stagnated."

Yu Shangrong looked at the ground as he said, "My sword path isn't limited by my weapon but by my Golden Lotus! Master, please! Anything but my sword." Based on his voice, it was clear that his emotions were agitated.

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Shangrong and said, "I'll give you another chance. If you can best me, you can keep the sword."

The others shook their heads. How was Yu Shangrong supposed to best Lu Zhou? The gap between them was like an uncrossable chasm. This was not a chance at all. It was just another way to reject Yu Shangrong.

Yu Shangrong looked at his Longevity Sword. He wielded it. His current feelings were no different from what Duanmu Sheng felt a moment ago. He knew he would fail, but he had to try anyway. He charged with his sword in hand. He used the simplest and most precise moves as he charged forward at lightning speed.

Without the use of Primal Qi, it was a competition of techniques.

Yu Shangrong stabbed the sword forward.

Lu Zhou struck the flat of the blade with his palm.

Stab, strike.

Stab, hit, point, lift, hack.

Yu Shangrong unleashed all the possible moves that he could think of. His movements were a blur. With just his movements alone, he stirred up a gentle breeze. He appeared confident and graceful. The Guiyuan Sword Technique's sutra surfaced in his mind at this moment.

At first, the sword was like a shadow. Then, it was like the wind. In the end, it was like a tempest.

Lu Zhou remained calm as he struck with his palm. It was as if he had personally experienced the 1,000 years of cultivation in his memories. Since he was the one who taught Yu Shangrong the Guiyuan Sword Technique, he was, naturally, not inferior to Yu Shangrong in this regard. On top of that, he knew about the advantages of the various cultivation methods. He knew which properties to keep and to discard. Although he was old, he moved much nimbly compared to people his age. Yu Shangrong was quick, but Lu Zhou was quicker. When Yu Shangrong slowed down, Lu Zhou slowed down as well.

Every strike of Lu Zhou's palm hit the blade of the Longevity Sword.

The fight caused a loud commotion.

The others shook their heads. They could not help but sigh.

"The pavilion master knows the Guiyuan Sword Technique too well. Mister Second's every move is under the pavilion master's control."

The others nodded in agreement.

Clearly, Lu Zhou's understanding of the Guiyuan Sword Technique was not inferior to Yu Shangrong. Although Lu Zhou did not counterattack, he managed to nullify all of Yu Shangrong's advances. "Mister Second lost the moment he attacked..." Hua Wudao said with a sigh, "He's no match for the pavilion master's skills to begin with. Now, his aura, confidence, and attitude are all suppressed. He's not as sharp as he's supposed to be."

Bam!

Lu Zhou steeled himself this time. He exerted more force and landed a heavy blow on the blade.

Yu Shangrong lost his grip and the sword fell out of his hand. It dropped onto the ground with a loud clang.

The battle ended.

Lu Zhou retracted his palm. He placed his hands on his back and looked at the Longevity Sword indifferently.

The Cave of Reflection was silent.

Although this was only a battle without Primal Qi, Lu Zhou had won with his technique. Even if he was given the use of his Primal Qi, Yu Shangrong did not stand a chance if this had been a battle to the death. The pavilion master could even seal his cultivation base. What other methods could Yu Shangrong use against him?

Yu Shangrong's pride was further crushed.

"Master, the Enter and Return Three Soul... Did you hold back?" Yu Shangrong asked.

"You still have a long way to go... from being accomplished in your sword path," Lu Zhou stroked his beard and waved his sleeve as he said, "It's the same for Yu Zhenghai as well."

Yu Shangrong. "... The loser would have to submit to the victor. There were no excuses for losing. Everything a victor said was right. However, Lu Zhou could tell Yu Shangrong was unwilling to accept this. Therefore, he said, "The Return and Enter Three Soul. It has the origin radiance, majestic spirit, and the nether essence. The origin radiance is in the power of the body; the majestic spirit resides in the will and soul while the nether essence is neither dead nor alive. On the path of Wuji, the soul is Yin while the body is Yang." At this juncture, Yu Shangrong said, "I know that by heart." He was still proud. He took pride in remembering all of these things.

Nobody doubted Yu Shangrong. After all, not many were capable of reaching the heights he did on the sword path. "Since you're unwilling to accept this, I'll show you what the real sword path is like." Lu Zhou suddenly remembered everything he had learned before he transmigrated. Both of his memories have reached harmony before he even realized it. This merge... gave him new insights on cultivation. Yu Shangrong was too proud. If he could not reduce that pride, he would surely pay for it in the future.

After muttering to himself for some time, Lu Zhou stroked his beard and calmly said, "The highest point of the sword path is besting a sword with none."

'Besting a sword with none?'

Let alone the others who were present, even Yu Shangrong was puzzled by these words.

Duanmu Sheng, on the other hand, suddenly remembered what he saw when the barrier shattered. His master had personally demonstrated the Imperfect Divine Intervention's sword path to him. Back then, he did not completely understand what his master was trying to show him. Hence, he listened to this more seriously than the others.

There were also the three elders of the Old Age Pavilion. They were instantly invigorated. They wanted to listen to what the pavilion master had to say.

The others did not dare to breathe loudly. They hoped they would be able to gain some insight from this.

Lu Zhou said, "There are three levels of the sword. The first level is the commoner's sword that everyone, from the average cutlass to the princes, can use. It's nothing but a competition of cruelty and flashiness. The second level is the saint's sword. Bravery serves as its edge, loyalty as its core, and the sword path as its tip. The third level is the king's sword. Nations serve as its edge, the seas and mountains as its sharpness. It activates the Five Elements, opens with Yin and Yang, wields spring and summer, moves with autumn and winter. It's peerless, and the world bends its knee to it. This is the same for the saber..."

Everyone was silent as they listened attentively.

Lu Zhou's voice was the only sound in the area.

"This is the Daoist view of things... You're using the sword path as your tip. That's the second level, at most."

A complicated expression appeared on Yu Shangrong's face. Based on these words, since his Eldest Senior Brother, Yu Zhenghai, wanted to reign over the lands, did this mean his senior brother's saber was on the third level?

Lu Zhou saw the change in Yu Shangrong's expression. He knew what was in Yu Shangrong's mind. He said, "Yu Zhenghai wishes to use the nation as his edge and make the lands bow before him. However... he does not possess the ability yet. At most, he's on the second level."

Yu Shangrong's curiosity was immediately piqued. He asked, "Who's on the third level, then?"

Chapter 342 Instructing Yu Shangrong

"It can be said that the sword path genius from the northern capital, Gong Yuandu, wielded the king's sword..." Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "The ever-living Emperor, Liu Ge, wielded the king's sword as well..."

When the members of the Old Age Pavilion heard this, they were puzzled. They had personally seen Gong Yuandu's sword skill. Indeed, Gong Yuandu was shockingly impressive, and there was no doubt he was an elite among elites. Even so, they did not think Gong Yuandu would be able to defeat Yu Shangrong. There was no doubt that he was a top elite. Why would the pavilion master list Gong Yuandu as a person of the third level? The ever-living Emperor Liu Ge ruled over the lands with his sword. Indeed, he wielded a king's sword. However, these two people were dead. Was it not too harsh to compare the living to the dead? There had been countless heroic figures in the past. Who among the living would dare claim that they were superior?

Before Yu Shangrong could reply, Hua Wudao could no longer suppress his curiosity and blurted, "Pavilion Master, if that's the case, does this mean the current emperor, the evergreen Emperor, wields a king's sword as well?"

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and shook his head. "Not quite."

"Kindly enlighten us, Pavilion Master." Hua Wudao bowed.

"The ever-living Emperor had conquered nations and founded Great Yan. The evergreen Emperor merely inherited the throne. He can't be regarded as wielding the king's sword yet."

"I see." Hua Wudao stepped back.

Leng Luo could not help but say, "It's true that Gong Yuandu from the northern capital was an elite, but he was only a rogue cultivator and had never conquered nations or founded a country. For the entire century or so before his demise, he had been hiding inside a coffin. Why would he be regarded as wielding a king's sword?"

Everyone else had the same question in their minds. They stared at Lu Zhou eagerly, anticipating his answer.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard gently and replied in a light tone, "Fighting for your own life against the heavens and the earth and being fearless of death." His tone turned pointed as he looked at the others indifferently. Why did none of them enter the Nine-leaf stage up until now? If they did, they would have been enlightened and deemed worthy of wielding a king's sword. However, Gong Yuandu was not the

only person who fell on this path. Over the millennia, many magnificent cultivators had died on this path as well. Pan Litian asked, "There are many who fought for their lives against the heavens. Are they all deemed worthy of wielding a king's sword?" Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded ambiguously.

The others were stunned at first. Then, they finally understood Lu Zhou's words.

When he heard this, Yu Shangrong lowered his head. The sword path that he prided himself on was not even at the third level in his master's eyes. He had no retort for this. His master was right. At the end of the day, his sword was but a tool for him to flaunt his sword skills. He was no different from a martial artist.

Lu Zhou glanced at Yu Shangrong. 'You're a young man, after all. If I can't even handle you, I would've spent the past millennium in vain.' He continued to say, "Regardless if it's the Daoist Sect or the Confucian school, they're not the greatest realm."

The others looked at Lu Zhou in confusion. The sword path was already categorized into three levels, and yet, they were not the greatest in the pavilion master's view.

"Having no sword is better than having a sword. Anything the mind can think of can be turned into a sword. Water benefits all things, and yet, it's not unyielding. It adapts to everything around itself."

Lu Zhou stared at Yu Shangrong. Then, he raised his right hand. An energy blade formed between his index and middle finger. Suddenly, the energy blade split into two and multiplied. The tree before the Cave of Reflection shook as well as the leaves shot out.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The tree leaves stabbed into the ground.

This was not the end.

Everyone felt a gust of wind dislodged the leaves. Even the wind felt like a blade, stinging their faces as it blew at them. Fortunately, they were all cultivators who had undergone Body Tempering. They were capable of resisting this weak power. Even so, the pavilion master's demonstration made them understand what he meant by having no sword was better than having one. Although they understood the theory behind it, how many could actually pull it off?

Not only did it require extremely precise control over Primal Qi, one would have to be capable of stirring up the leaves and wind while condensing Primal Qi. It was an almost impossible feat without cultivating or training for 100 years.

Yu Shangrong usually relied on the Longevity Sword so he had never trained in this manner. Therefore, he accepted his defeat.

A person's attitude would determine the height of one's sword. The strength of a person's sword path was determined by one's understanding of the sword. Lu Zhou's current lesson had completely destroyed Yu Shangrong's views. Well, it was only natural since Lu Zhou was his master.

"Can you accept this?" Lu Zhou stared at him.

"I've been enlightened." Yu Shangrong had mixed feelings in his heart. He wondered what his master was thinking. He remembered that his master had never taught them so patiently when they had just joined the pavilion. Who else could tell him these things apart from his master?

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

"Ding! Taught Duanmu Sheng. Reward: 200 merit points."

Lu Zhou noticed the different words used by the system. One was disciplined while the other one was taught.

Lu Zhou suddenly recalled one of his forgotten memories. It had something to do with Yu Shangrong's question and worries about how he might kill Yu Shangrong. It was as though Yu Shangrong was afraid of the past repeating itself and was unwilling to mention the past as a result. He knew there was no forcing this. He lost himself in thought for a moment before he finally said, "Reflect on your actions inside the Cave of Reflection."

After Lu Zhou finished speaking, he turned around with his hands on his back and walked toward the Evil Sy Pavilion. However, he did not take Yu Shangrong's Longevity Sword with him.

"Elder Leng, Elder Hua, Elder Pan..."

Leng Luo, Pan Litian, and Hua Wudao cupped their fists and followed.

The moment the four members of the Old Age Pavilion left, the stifling atmosphere eased.

The others exhaled with relief.

Yu Shangrong looked at his master's retreating back. At some point, he did not even know when, his palms were moist with cold sweat.

Zhu Honggong kept his head lowered.

When Zhu Honggong was about to leave, Yu Shangrong said tonelessly, "Old Eighth."

"Huh?" Zhu Honggong stopped in his tracks and shuddered. "Come here."

"Second Senior Brother... I... I... live in the southern pavilion now."

Yu Shangrong was in no hurry to enter the Cave of Reflection. Instead, he walked up to Zhu Honggong and said, "There's no need to feel nervous." He sounded as gentle and humble as usual. He recalled the sight he saw in Radiant Cloud Forest when his master unleashed the Enter and Return Three Souls on Whizard's back. He asked, "Tell me honestly, is Master at the Nine-leaf stage now?"

"Huh?" Zhu Honggong was stunned. 'Nine-leaf?'

Yu Shangrong did not ask this without due reason. He knew that he had his own unique understanding and mastery of the sword path. Although he knew he would not be a match for his master, he should not have lost by such a huge margin. There was only one possibility left; his master must have already entered the Nine-leaf stage. "That can't be... Second Senior Brother, there's no such thing as the Nine-leaf stage... I don't know anything. Don't give me that look, I truly have no idea..." Zhu Honggong kept waving his hands.

Yu Shangrong pondered this silently. Fighting for one's life against the heavens was part of wielding a king's sword. However, without losing one's life, how was one supposed to enter the third level? He recalled Si Wuya's words. Perhaps, his master had found a way to overcome the great limit. That must be why his master had such enlightening remarks.

In the Evil Sky Pavilion's great hall.

Lu Zhou, Leng Luo, Pan Litian, and Hua Wudao were the only ones present. Lu Zhou walked into the hall and sat down slowly. He said, "Sit."

The other three took a seat.

"I believe that all of you are knowledgeable elders... Do you know about the melilot?"

Leng Luo said, "I've heard of it. It's said that the melilot grows on Brackish Mountain. No other plants can grow there as it's covered in snow throughout the year."

Chapter 343 The Melilot's Lifespan

Lu Zhou looked at Pan Litian who was seated at the side. Pan Litian had traveled far and wide. Surely, Pan Litian's knowledge was comparable to Leng Luo's. Pan Litian said, "I've heard about it as well. The melilot blooms in the morning and withers at dusk. Every flower lasts but for a day. It blossoms in the day and wilts by night. New flowers will replace the dead ones, and it has a long blooming period. It's also known as the longevity flower... The melilot is extremely short-lived. Hence, it was given many other names. The longevity flower means that it blooms forever and never wilts."

Hua Wudao cupped his fists. "I've learned something new today."

"..." Lu Zhou had been hoping that Hua Wudao would give him some information. With that response, it seemed hopeless.

Leng Luo continued, "The melilot is special. Not many would want to cultivate them. It's now rare to see them in Great Yan. What's the reason for the question, Pavilion Master?"

Lu Zhou did not answer the question immediately. The information provided by Leng Luo and Pan Litian were about the same as what he knew. He connected this to what Yu Shangrong said about the melilot was a plant in his hometown and that it was a plant with a fleeting life. It seemed like the plant was native to the Noblemen's Nation.

Yu Shangrong was from the Nobleman Nation. The system had also given him the mission, 'Lifespan of the Melilot'.

Did Yu Shangrong's identity have something to do with his missing memories? Was that why Yu Shangrong said what he said when he was caught?

This was a logical inference. With these thoughts in mind, Lu Zhou no longer beat around the bush. He said, "Elders, do you know about Nobleman Country?"

When Pan Litian heard this, he nodded and said, "That reminds me, Pavilion Master. The books did record that the melilot grows all year in Nobleman Country... Alas, that place no longer exists."

“Why did it disappear?” Lu Zhou asked.

“It’s said that the Noblemen are short-lived just like the melilot. That’s why they like it very much and take good care of the plant. However... they were short-lived, and cultivators live longer than most. Hence, Nobleman Country gradually ceased to exist.”

Leng Luo continued, “It’s funny when you think about it. Nobleman Country is the same as the fairfolks. All lands under the heavens belong to the crown. Brackish Mountain has long since become a part of Great Yan. However, it’s covered in snow all year-round. It’s currently uninhabited.”

“Where’s Brackish Mountain?” Lu Zhou asked.

At this moment, Pan Litian cupped his fists and said, “Northwest of Yong Province...” He sighed before he continued to say, “What a shame... I was at the borders back then. We were chasing the Other Tribes away from the southwest to the north. Yet, I was heavily injured and was made captive. We were driven all the way to Rongbei by the Other Tribes, and we passed by Brackish Mountain along the way. It’s not big although we didn’t get a close look. Then, one of the Other Tribesmen threw me into the Black Forest. I’ve had several grueling experiences, and I survived out of sheer luck...”

“Why are you asking about this, Pavilion Master?” Hua Wudao asked.

Lu Zhou looked at Hua Wudao with mixed feelings. He did not answer Hua Wudao, deciding to ignore him. “This old fart isn’t giving me much information, and yet, he’s asking so many questions.”

Yu Shangrong was from Nobleman Country, but he had been in the pavilion for 275 years. How did Yu Shangrong manage to survive the years? When he thought about this, Lu Zhou stood up slowly and said, “If there’s nothing else, everyone’s dismissed.”

“I’ll take my leave.”

“Elder Leng, a word.” After Pan Litian and Hua Wudao left, Lu Zhou stood up, walked down the steps before he asked, “How are things after the incident in Obedient Villa?”

Leng Luo replied, “After Mo Li’s death, Jiang Aijian killed the Second Prince, Liu Huan. Zhao Yue is Princess Yun Zhao’s orphan child, and she has the Empress Dowager’s support so there’s no need to worry about her. Currently, the most person most likely to be in trouble is Jiang Aijian.” “Jiang Aijian killed Liu Huan?” Lu Zhou was surprised. After all, Jiang Aijian valued his life greatly all this while and was unlikely to cause any trouble.

“I think they should be returning soon,” Leng Luo said.

“Very well.” Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded.

Leng Luo cupped his fists and said, “You’ll have to ask Mingshi Yin about the other matters, I’m afraid. I’ll take my leave now.”

Lu Zhou merely waved his hand.

Leng Luo left the great hall. Lu Zhou noticed that Leng Luo’s loyalty was much higher compared to before. It was a good thing that such an untamable character was willing to remain in the Evil Sky Pavilion. He had thought that it would be difficult to handle such a person. After all, a mountain was too

small for two tigers. However, things went much smoother than he had expected them to. He stroked his beard, lost in thoughts.

Meanwhile, in one of the Nether Sect's branches. In a huge hall that was dimly lit by some weak light source from above.

A layer of mist could be seen swirling around the throne in the hall. After a few moments, the mist dissipated.

Yu Zhenghai laid his palms flat and slowly opened his eyes after he was done recovering. "Second Junior Brother, I've underestimated you." Now that his Qi and blood were flowing smoothly, he looked much better.

At this moment, Hua Chongyang, the Azure Dragon Hall's First Seat, walked in. When he saw Yu Zhenghai looking better now, he cupped his fists immediately and said, "Congratulations on your recovery, sect master."

Yu Zhenghai merely glanced at Hua Chongyang and did not respond. 'What a tactless fellow. When have I ever been injured when sparring with others? How could he bring it up?'

Hua Chongyang lowered his hands awkwardly.

Yu Zhenghai was not overly bothered by this. He asked, "What happened?"

"Mister Seventh arrived at the branch yesterday and requested an audience. When I saw that you..." The words 'were hurt' were stuck in Hua Chongyang's throat. He forced them back down.

"Seventh Junior Brother is here?" Yu Zhenghai beamed. He was immediately invigorated. "Bring him here!"

"At once!"

A short while later, Hua Chongyang led Si Wuya into the hall. Si Wuya did not look well, he seemed to be injured. However, his steps were swift. There were clear fluctuations of Primal Qi about him.

When he saw this, Yu Zhenghai exclaimed in surprise, "Seventh Junior Brother, you've recovered your cultivation base!"

Si Wuya nodded. "It was a stroke of luck... I..."

"That's good! That's great!" Yu Zhenghai walked up to him and interrupted Si Wuya. He gave Si Wuya's shoulder a heavy pat. "Ever since you took the binding mantra for me, I couldn't eat nor sleep. I was constantly thinking of a way to undo the mantra for you. Looks like the heavens have finally answered my prayers."

Si Wuya was puzzled. 'Oh, well. You're right no matter what you say.'

"Seventh Junior Brother, I was in too much of a hurry back then and left you behind. I hope you won't blame senior brother for that."

Yu Zhenghai's tone suddenly turned amiable that it gave Si Wuya goosebumps when he heard Yu Zhenghai referred to himself in the third person. Si Wuya waved his hand and said, "You make it sound

too serious, Eldest Senior Brother... I've come today to tell you something." "What is it?" Yu Zhenghai asked, "You've just regained your cultivation base. You could've sent a letter. Why did you have to come personally?"

Si Wuya began in a slightly anxious tone, "Second Senior Brother has been taken away by master!"

"..." The air seemed to have frozen as the hall was plunged into silence. Yu Zhenghai was thoroughly stunned. As the Sect Master of Nether Sect, with thousands upon thousands of subordinates, he had seen a fair share of life and death and had grown numb to them. His heart had grown to become as still as a calm lake. Matters as trivial as the death of a person to matters as serious as the fall of a city would not cause his emotions to fluctuate at all. However, the news Si Wuya brought him truly shocked him.

Chapter 344 Teaching the Traitor a Lesson

After a long pause, Yu Zhenghai asked, "When did this happen?"

"After you left Radiant Cloud Forest, master arrived," Si Wuya replied. Yu Zhenghai frowned. He remembered seeing a battered flying chariot near Lilac Mountain when he was in his flying chariot. He had seen their master on that flying chariot as well. However, he was annoyed by the fact that his duel with Yu Shangrong had ended in a draw so he had only asked his subordinate to quickly leave and did not investigate the matter. He did not expect Yu Shangrong to be captured by their master. In the end, he shook his head and said, "Master is old. With Second Junior Brother's abilities, he should've been able to leave despite being injured."

Si Wuya recounted the things that happened.

When he heard that their master killed the Yun Sect's Luo Changqing, one of the three Sword Freaks, with a single strike, Yu Zhenghai shook his head again. He said, "Seventh Junior Brother, are you sure?" He found this difficult to believe. No matter how weak Luo Changqing was, he would not have been killed with a single strike. Even he would find this feat difficult to achieve.

"I saw it with my own eyes," Si Wuya replied. Yu Zhenghai frowned slightly. "You said that master has absorbed the barrier's power to maintain his condition. Master should've used up all the barrier's power on the Lotus Dais. How could he kill Luo Changqing?"

Si Wuya said, "That's why I suspect... that master might've actually found a way to overcome the great limit or at least postpone it."

Upon hearing this, Yu Zhenghai instantly waved his arm dismissively. "The life limit is inevitable in the cultivation world since the beginning of time... Ever since humans cultivated thousands of years ago, how many have actually managed to overcome this?"

"Uh..."

"It's not my intention to belittle master... However, based on our predecessors, it's just impossible," Yu Zhenghai said.

“Don’t forget that it’s natural for the successors to surpass the predecessors,” Si Wuya retorted. His thoughts were different from Yu Zhenghai. Just because there had been no precedence in the past, it did not mean that it was impossible.

“Then, why did master capture Second Junior Brother?” Yu Zhenghai pointed out.

Si Wuya was confused as well. “Perhaps, master intends to rebuild the Evil Sky Pavilion?” “Since he has overcome the great limit, he can attain a Nine-leaf cultivation base... With a power like that, why would he need another person’s help?” Yu Zhenghai said.

Si Wuya frowned and remained silent. When he took down the Clarity Sect back then, Yu Zhenghai did not believe in him as well. He knew Yu Zhenghai would not believe him this time as well. A stubborn person’s thoughts were so deeply rooted that it would not be swayed by a few words. It was better for him to say nothing rather than argue.

At this moment, Bai Yuqing walked in. He cupped his fists at the three of them. “Greetings, sect master, Mister Seventh.”

“What is it?” Yu Zhenghai waved his hand.

Bai Yuqing did not beat around the bush. “We’ve investigated the flying chariot’s remains. We can confirm that it belonged to the Fiend Temple.”

Hua Chongyang said in confusion, “Ren Buping is dead. Most of the Fiend Temple’s territories have been taken over by the Nether Sect. Duan Xing, as the new sect master, did not attempt to expand his forces. Why would he be with the old senior?”

Without waiting for a reply from Bai Yuqing, Yu Zhenghai said irritably, “How dare the little Fiend Temple stir up trouble behind the scenes.”

“Sect master, I’m willing to lead a party and obliterate the Fiend Temple. The Fiend Temple doesn’t know its place and con... continues to struggle with its last breath. They’re nothing.” Hua Chongyang nearly said the wrong thing.

Si Wuya shook his head and said, “It’s too late.”

Yu Zhenghai was now intrigued. He looked at Si Wuya and said, “What are your thoughts, Seventh Junior Brother. Tell us.”

Si Wuya was slightly stunned. He somehow felt that his Eldest Senior Brother was overly passionate today.

“Ren Buping is dead. The Fiend Temple is no longer a force to be feared. There’s no need to waste resources to deal with them since the benefits do not outweigh the effort. Moreover, Duan Xing has our master supporting him,” Si Wuya explained.

Yu Zhenghai laughed and said, “I can count on you to be logical, Seventh Junior Brother... Now that the Clarity and Righteous Sects have been destroyed by me, what do you think my next step should be?”

Si Wuya suddenly understood why his Eldest Senior Brother was being so passionate. It seemed like his senior brother wanted to ask him this question. In the end, he said, “The Nether Sect has grown rapidly.

I think it has already caught the Imperial family's attention. The Fourth Prince, Liu Bing, has returned to the court with military achievements. Wei Zhuoyan has gone to the borders in his stead... Eldest Senior Brother, you must be careful."

Yu Zhenghai snorted and said, "They want to deal with me?"

"I'm merely guessing... However, another important person has appeared as of late. He can divert the Imperial family's attention," Si Wuya said.

"Who's that?"

"The Third Prince of Great Yan's Imperial family, Jiang Aijian!" Si Wuya replied.

At the foot of Golden Court Mountain.

Mingshi Yin ushered everyone else onto the mountain. He turned back to look at Jiang Aijian and said, "Stop standing there. This isn't your first time here."

Jiang Aijian rolled his eyes. He walked to Mingshi Yin's side and said in a hushed tone, "Brother, I think we can be considered as comrades surviving a close-call together... What do you say to putting in a good word or two for me before the old senior later?"

"No." Mingshi Yin sped forward. He said contemptuously, "Stay away from me, and who's your comrade?"

Zhao Yue and Little Yuan'er were rendered speechless by this display.

Jiang Aijian walked up to Zhao Yue and said, "Zhao Yue, in terms of seniority in the family... I'm your older brother."

"Get lost," Zhao Yue said in a soft but contemptuous tone as well.

Jiang Aijian pouted as though he had been wronged. He scratched his head. 'What did I do?'

Mingshi Yin stopped walking and said, "Come on. Stop talking nonsense." "You're the best, Brother Ming!" Jiang Aijian said with a grin. He had come to the Evil Sky Pavilion precisely because he had caused some troubles. Currently, everyone in the Divine Capital knew that the Second Prince, Liu Huan, had died in Obedient Villa.

When they arrived on the mountain and in front of the Evil Sky Pavilion's doors, two female disciples came up to greet them.

"Welcome, Mister Fourth, Miss Fifth, Miss Ninth..."

Mingshi Yin nodded and asked, "Where's master?"

"The pavilion master is resting."

The other female disciple said, "Mister Second has returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion."

Upon hearing this, Mingshi Yin, Zhao Yue, and Little Yuan'er were startled.

"Come again?"

The female disciple was shocked by Mingshi Yin's reaction. She repeated her words, "Mister Second has returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion."

"That traitor, he has the gall to show his face here? Where is he now?" Mingshi Yin asked.

"He's repenting in the Cave of Reflection."

"I'll go and teach that traitor a lesson later!" Mingshi Yin said fiercely.

At this moment, a black figure appeared and said from afar, "You might not know this, Mister Fourth, but the pavilion master gave chase for thousands of miles to Radiant Cloud Forest, killed Sword Freak Luo Changqing, and captured Mister Second."

Mingshi Yin looked at the black figure and asked, "Who are you?" "Duan Xing of the Fiend Temple. I offer you my greetings... About the happenings in Radiant Cloud Forest, I personally witnessed everything. That was truly a phenomenal battle. I won't forget it until the day I die," Duan Xing said.

Chapter 345 Birds of a Feather

"This is especially true about Mister First and Mister Second's battle!" Duan Xing exclaimed.

Upon hearing this, Mingshi Yin's interest was piqued. He knew more about Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong than anyone here. He knew their cultivation bases were terrifyingly profound. How could he not be curious about their fight? He asked, "Just how great was it? Come on, tell us."

Duan Xing had been itching to share what he saw with someone throughout the two days he had spent in the Evil Sky Pavilion. He could barely hold it in. He walked up to Mingshi Yin immediately and began to recount what happened. "Mister Fourth... Do you know the Hundred Leaves Lake? It's the lake near Radiant Cloud Forest, it covers 1,000 miles... Mister First and Mister Second began fighting near Hundred Leaves Lake... That isn't something that can be done by humans... Mister First split Hundred Leaves Lake in half with a single swing of his saber."

The others were stunned.

Duan Xing gave an animated account of the battle. He would exaggerate some details, slide in a "'1,000 miles area' or '10,000 feet high' every now and then.

It was confusing to listen to him.

However, Mingshi Yin was intrigued. He nodded frequently as though he had made some great discovery. He would interject with a 'really?' or 'that's awesome!' at intervals.

Just like that, both of them had a lengthy conversation. When they reached the climax of the story, their voices grew louder as well.

"At the climax of the battle, Mister Second unleashed his Enter and Return Three Souls. What do you think happened?"

"What happened? Don't leave me hanging. Spill it!" Mingshi Yin urged.

"The heavens and earth darkened. Even the clouds and the winds changed colors! I found it difficult to breathe back then, and I was standing more than ten miles away! I have a Four-leaf Golden Lotus, and I couldn't even stand it!" Duan Xing said solemnly.

"Radiant Cloud Forest is surrounded by towering trees, and you were standing ten miles away? How did you manage to see anything?" Mingshi Yin scratched his head. "That's not important... The point is, guess how Mister First dealt with the Enter Three Souls?" Duan Xing asked solemnly.

Mingshi Yin asked, affected by Duan Xing's enthusiasm, "Eldest Senior Brother used his Great Dark Heaven Memorial?"

"You're right, Mister Fourth! Indeed, it's the Great Dark Heaven Memorial... Mister First unleashed Sovereign Descent, then, the Primal Qi in the surroundings raged and the mountains and rivers were destroyed!" Duan Xing paused for a moment before he continued to say, "When the old senior made his grand entrance, he negated the Sovereign Descent and the Enter and Return Three Souls with each wave of his sword!"

Mingshi Yin gulped. "Alas, Mister First was taken away by the four great protectors in their flying chariot. The old senior only managed to capture Mister Second."

Mingshi Yin seemed to be in a daze as he said, "Master was preoccupied with killing Mo Li's ten great generals in the Obedient Villa that day. If it weren't for that incident, Eldest Senior Brother wouldn't have been able to escape!"

Duan Xing nodded in agreement. "Indeed, I was there as well... It was truly..."

"Hold up. I witnessed that with my own eyes so there's no need for you to spew drive," Mingshi Yin interjected.

Duan Xing scratched his head. He wondered, 'Who's spewing drivels? If I were spewing drivels, then, who has been listening intently?'

Mingshi Yin turned to look at Jiang Aijian and said, "Let's meet master later. I'd like to head over to the Cave of Reflection for a minute."

"Fourth Senior Brother, I want to go as well..." Little Yuan'er chimed in.

"Stay here. There's no place for a woman in the grudge between men." Mingshi Yin left with his hands on his back.

They looked at Mingshi Yin's retreating back as he made his way to the Cave of Reflection.

Duan Xing cupped his fists and said, "Mister Fourth sure is a person who draws a clear line between the things he likes and dislikes... He's the kind of person I've always respected."

The others glanced at him as they thought to themselves, 'Are you sure that you're not merely trying to flatter him?'

Little Yuan'er, however, disagreed. "I'm afraid Fourth Senior Brother will be at a disadvantage this time... With Second Senior Brother's cultivation base, he can take on ten Fourth Senior Brothers, erm, no, twenty, 100..." She counted with her finger.

Duan Xing said with a smile, "That's not entirely correct, Miss Ninth."

"Hm?"

"Mister Second's cultivation base has been sealed by your master," Duan Xing replied.

The others looked in the direction of the Cave of Reflection.

Mingshi Yin racked his brains for insults that he could hurl against the traitor as he walked to the Cave of Reflection.

Perhaps, it was due to the unique rhythm of Mingshi Yin's footsteps, before he even entered the Cave of reflection, he heard Yu Shangrong's gentle voice. "Fourth Junior Brother, you're here." Mingshi Yin was slightly stunned. 'He can tell?' "Eldest Senior Brother's footsteps are heavy and steady. Third Junior Brother's footsteps are irregularly paced. Your footsteps, Fourth Junior Brother, are light with a sense of urgency." Yu Shangrong carried his Longevity Sword in his arms and walked out of the Cave of Reflection as though there was no barrier. He looked at Mingshi Yin with a genial smile.

Mingshi Yin smiled and said, "Second Senior Brother, I came right away when I heard that you're back. I'm here to offer you my greetings."

"There's no need for such courtesies among fellow disciples," Yu Shangrong said lightly. "Second Senior Brother, I heard from Duan Xing that you fought with Eldest Senior Brother?"

"That's right," Yu Shangrong calmly replied. "Who won?" Duan Xing had embellished so much that Mingshi Yin did not know what was true.

Yu Zhengrong smiled faintly. "I won."

"I knew that your sword skills are amazing, Second Senior Brother!" Mingshi Yin said.

"No." Yu Shangrong shook his head.

"Huh?"

"Initially, I thought that my sword path was peerless, and master is the only person who can best me. Alas, that isn't so..." Yu Shangrong said slowly, "I've reflected on it for a long time inside the Cave of Reflection, and I know now that that's not all there is to the sword path. In the end, I still have a long way to go."

Mingshi Yin was puzzled. 'If you have a long way to go, who else under the heavens don't?' Then, he said, "It's for the best that you've returned, Second Senior Brother. Don't oppose master all the time... He has changed a lot and isn't as short-tempered as before."

Yu Shangrong knew this from all the information he had gathered. He seemed to have something else on his mind as he suddenly asked, "Fourth Junior Brother, what kind of person do you think I am?"

Mingshi Yin regarded his Second Senior Brother with a puzzled expression. He wondered where the sudden question came from. Nevertheless, he replied, "You're humble and polite, Second Senior Brother. Everyone can see that. Do you even have to ask? Also, you've always acted with a sense of

propriety. You're a gentleman, through and through." He gave a thumbs-up as he continued to say, "I say all this from the bottom of my heart."

Yu Shangrong frowned slightly. The final sentence sounded familiar. "Tell me, then. Is Master at the Nine-leaf stage right now?" Yu Shangrong asked. "Nine-leaf?" Mingshi Yin was momentarily stunned by the question. When he regained his senses, he said with a smile. "Second Senior Brother, you must be making fun of me. There's no such thing as the Nine-leaf stage."

When Yu Shangrong saw that Mingshi Yin did not seem to be lying, he fell deep into thought.

At this moment, a female disciple appeared and said with a bow, "Mister Fourth, the pavilion master awaits."

"Master's waiting?" Mingshi Yin waved his hand, cleared his throat, and straightened his back. "I'll head over right away." Then, he turned to look at Yu Shangrong.

Before Mingshi Yin could say anything, Yu Shangrong said, "Go on." "Second Senior Brother, please have a good rest. Call me if you need anything." Mingshi Yin left the Cave of Reflection. He went to the great hall. He found Jiang Aijian, Zhao Yue, Little Yuan'er, and Duan Xing waiting there.

Little Yuan'er was the first to walk up to him and asked, "Fourth Senior Brother, how's Second Senior Brother doing?"

Mingshi Yin straightened his back, placed his hands on his back, and said, "Not too well. Perhaps, he's not happy being captured by master. However, he doesn't have anything to complain about. As the Evil Sky Pavilion's traitor, he must adhere to the rules. I've given him a good talking to. I believe that he'll behave himself after this."

A voice rang from the great hall at this moment. "Come in."

They went into the great hall in an orderly manner.

"Greetings, old senior!" "Greetings, master." "Greetings, Pavilion Master." Lu Zhou sat regally on his chair and looked at their faces. He saw the ingratiating expression on Jiang Aijian's face and asked, "Jiang Aijian, what are you doing in the Evil Sky Pavilion instead of staying put in Runan and Rubei?"

Chapter 346 A Wronged Soul Cries in Lonely Moonlit City

Jiang Aijian chuckled and said, "I've missed you, old senior. I've brought you some goodies." He slid the sack off his back and placed its contents on the table as he continued to say, "These are high-grade tea leaves presented to the empire as tributes before this. Many people of power and position don't even have the opportunity to taste them. They're for you, old senior."

"One who is unaccountably solicitous is hiding evil intentions," Lu Zhou said wryly.

"I would never." Jiang Aijian waved his hands. "In terms of relationship, your fifth disciple is my younger sister... I'm a relative of the Evil Sky Pavilion. I don't think it's strange for relatives to give each other gifts."

The others were speechless.

Zhao Yue sighed and softly said, "I guess nobody can surpass him in terms of shamelessness."

The others nodded as their eyes instinctively shifted to Mingshi Yin.

Mingshi Yin was aggrieved. He wondered to himself, 'Why's everyone looking at me? I didn't say or do anything. This has nothing to do with me.'

Lu Zhou looked at the items on the table. He did not seem to be interested. At his age, material possessions no longer excited him. "So, why did you come?"

"Well, I... accidentally stabbed the Second Prince to death... The Imperial family won't forgive me for this. So, can I trouble you, old senior, with the burden of killing me?" Jiang Aijian asked.

Mingshi Yin grinned and said excitedly, "I can do that!" His Separation Hook that glowed with a nefarious light and energy materialized in his hands.

Zhao Yue's eyes twinkled with envy.

Jiang Aijian speechless. Then, he said, "I don't mean it literally... Great Yan's Imperial family is searching for me all over the empire right now. I've already cut ties with my comrades, and we're no longer in contact. There's no place for me to go. After thinking about it for a long time, I feel that the Evil Sky Pavilion's the safest."

"So... you want to stay here for a period of time?" Lu Zhou asked.

"You're intelligent, old senior."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. "You're my source of information. Naturally, I will help you."

Jiang Aijian was greatly moved by this. He bowed and cupped his fists. "Thank you, old senior!"

Lu Zhou looked at him grinning. He frowned and said, "So, aren't you going to say anything?"

"About what?" Jiang Aijian was puzzled.

"You're the Third Prince, and you killed the Second Prince... The crime of killing one's brother is spat upon, no matter where you go."

The others nodded. Their master had a good point. Throughout their journey here, Jiang Aijian had been smiling and grinning as though nothing had happened. An ordinary person would not react that way. Not only was the person he killed Great Yan's Second Prince, but it was his elder brother!

When Jiang Aijian saw Lu Zhou's serious and stern expression, the smile on his own face gradually vanished. He sighed softly. "The dead are dead. There's nothing I have to say."

"So... It's true that Liu Huan was the one who burned down Jing He Palace?" Lu Zhou asked.

"You know about that?"

"The Prince of Qi, Qin Jun, is on my side," Lu Zhou replied.

‘Very well. I’ve almost forgotten about him.’ Jiang Aijian nodded. He turned to look at Zhao Yue and Mingshi Yin and said, “A wronged soul cries in Lonely Moonlit City. There’s a natural cycle in the world. Anyone who commits sin shall be dealt with by another. Truth be told, many have tried to persuade me to let go of my grudge and the past, to never bother myself with the Imperial family, and stay away from the court. How good will it be to live a free life as the Sword Freak? However, every time I fall asleep, I will remember the flames, how fiery-red they were as they seared my eyes. I couldn’t sleep. Whenever night falls, I can hear their cries for help and their wails of pain, and yet, I remain powerless...”

The others looked at Jiang Aijian.

Lu Zhou looked at him as well. Jiang Aijian said with a sigh, “In the end, I took it all upon myself... Oh, how lucky I am to have met all of you. If you’re moved by my story, please be nicer to me. I’ll be plenty grateful.”

The earlier parts of his tale sounded genuine, but as his story went on, it felt fake.

Zhao Yue rolled her eyes at him and no longer bothered with him. She stepped forward, bowed at Lu Zhou, and said, “Master, I have another matter to report.”

“Speak.”

“The Empress Dowager, my grandmother, has a frail constitution. The incident at Obedient Villa has taken quite a toll on her. She’s been bedridden ever since.” Zhao fell to her knees. “Please forgive me for spending so much time in the Divine Capital before returning.”

Lu Zhou waved his hand and said, “It’s good to have filial piety.”

“Thank you, master.” Zhao Yue turned and shot Jiang Aijian a meaningful look.

Jiang Aijian scratched his head awkwardly. He said shamelessly, “Old senior, to tell you the truth, the Empress Dowager is in a critical condition. I’m afraid... I’m afraid that she won’t survive the winter.”

Lu Zhou understood now. He said, “There are many elites inside the palace, and the Imperial physicians are all highly-skilled. You’re dreaming if you want me to intervene.”

Zhao Yue said, “Master, it’s witchcraft.” “Witchcraft?” This surprised Lu Zhou. He recalled the events at Obedient Villa. There was no Grand Witchcraft Formation there nor were there any witchcraft traps. ‘How did the Empress Dowager get afflicted by witchcraft?’

Jiang Aijian said, “It was done by Ba Ma, the genius shaman from Lou Lan.”

“Ba Ma?” Lu Zhou had no recollection of this name.

“Allow me to explain in detail, senior... Firstly, this Ba Ma is Mo Li’s senior brother. He’s from Lou Lan. Secondly, you fought against Ba Ma once. On the Lotus Dais, you injured his mount, Ba Wu, heavily. Thirdly, during the battle in Obedient Villa, Ba Ma had been lying in wait outside. Ba Ma has opposed you several times. When Mo Li died, his grudge deepened, and he took it on the Empress Dowager by casting a spell on her. He’ll surely act against the Evil Sky Pavilion sooner or later.”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and considered this.

Jiang Aijian said again, "Old senior, I won't ask for a favor from you without proper compensation... I'll help you capture the Evil Sky Pavilion's traitor, your seventh disciple, Si Wuya."

Lu Zhou looked at Jiang Aijian. He said skeptically, "You're confident about capturing Si Wuya?"

"Nope," Jiang Aijian replied with a straight face.

The others were rendered speechless. 'If you're not confident, why would you even say it in the first place?'

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and stood up. He looked at Zhao Yue and Jiang Aijian and said, "Since you have a favor to ask of me, you should've been the one to come to me."

Disregarding one's standing in the situation and maintaining a slightly arrogant attitude while asking for a favor. This was not how things were done.

When Jiang Aijian heard this, he was overjoyed. He bowed at once and said, "That's only natural... With these words of yours, old senior, I can rest assured."

Zhao Yue chimed in, "Thank you, master."

At this moment, a voice rang from outside. "Greetings, master." The others turned to look.

Zhu Honggong fell to his knees at the door. Then, he shuffled into the hall. He bowed and kowtowed continuously as he entered the hall. "Greetings, master."

Mingshi Yin covered his eyes with his right hand. 'Oh, alright. You win.'

Zhu Honggong stood up, kowtowed, and fell to his knees again. He said loudly, "Greetings, master!"

Chapter 347 Tear Stain Boxing Gloves

His antics left the others dumbfounded. They had to give it to him.

Lu Zhou, on the other hand, frowned.

They waited until Zhu Honggong was at the center of the great hall.

He kowtowed again. "Greetings, master."

Mingshi Yin glanced at Zhu Honggong and said, "Old Eighth, what's with all this fanfare? You're a disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion, for crying out loud. Aren't you afraid you'll shame the Evil Sky Pavilion's name with this display?"

"I genuinely want to bow and salute my master... Ever since I returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion, I've never given Master a proper bowing to. It's only natural for me to kneel three times and kowtow nine times," Zhu Honggong replied.

He had a point.

Lu Zhou looked at Zhu Honggong again.

Name: Zhu Honggong

Identity: Human of Great Yan

Realm: Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm

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Although he had just recently obtained his Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar, he was considered to be in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. It was not something a Divine Court realm cultivator could compare to.

“Stand up and speak,” Lu Zhou said.

Zhu Honggong stood up. He grinned and said, “Thank you, master.”

“Show me your avatar.”

This was a crucial moment. The ability to manifest a Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar was the difference between average cultivators and grand cultivators. Countless cultivators had failed at this stage. With the Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar, the avatar’s completeness and strength would determine the future of the cultivator.

Little Yuan’er’s avatar was extremely complete. It was full of spiritual energy and vigor. They had high hopes for it in the future.

Some cultivators would have deformed Hundred Tribulations Insight avatars. These avatars would be hard-pressed to even sprout leaves.

“Yes, master.” Zhu Honggong conjured up his Primal Qi and activated his avatar.

An avatar that was half a man’s height and resembled a fat toddler appeared.

When the others saw this, they could hardly suppress their urge to laugh.

The avatar took after its owner.

Fat.

However, the avatar’s completeness was satisfying. It was also full of Primal Qi.

Duan Xing was secretly shocked. The Evil Sky Pavilion’s eighth disciple was so talented. Just how terrifying would he be in the future?

There was no need to mention the ninth disciple. It was rumored that the ninth disciple, Ci Yuan’er, had even more terrifying talents. She entered the Divine Court realm in just five years. Nobody had ever achieved that nor would anybody achieve that in the future.

Zhu Honggong looked at his own avatar proudly. He could not help but straighten his back.

Zhao Yue was not envious, but she felt slightly ashamed. After all, she had joined the pavilion earlier than him. She was quite accomplished in her Brilliant Jade Technique, and yet, she had no breakthrough. When she saw Zhu Honggong’s avatar, she could not help but feel a slight discomfort in her heart.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. He waved his hand.

Swoosh!

A silver box dropped before Zhu Honggong.

When Zhu Honggong saw it, he was confused, "Master, what's this?"

Lu Zhou waved his hand again.

The box split in half. It was oddly shaped.

"I'm giving you the Tear Stain Boxing Gloves. I hope you'll put them to good use," Lu Zhou said.

Ever since the box was opened, Lu Zhou had been keeping it. After much thought, he felt that it was suited for Zhu Honggong's Nine Tribulations Thunderblast. Moreover, he needed to improve his disciples' cultivation bases as quickly as he could.

When Zhu Honggong heard this, he was so filled with emotions that he cried and fell to his knees, thanking Lu Zhou profusely. "Thank you, master! Thank you, master!"

Duan Xing salivated at this sight.

Zhao Yue was now genuinely envious. She was the only one without a weapon now. It was only natural that she felt envious.

Perhaps, the weapon had a naturally high affinity with Zhu Honggong. He barely placed his hands on them when a click was heard. He put on the boxing gloves with much ease.

"Ding! Activated Tear Stain Box. Target owner: Zhu Honggong. Reward: 1,000 merit points."

"Congratulations, Mister Eighth." Duan Xing cupped his fists.

"Congratulations, Old Eighth," Mingshi Yin smiled as he walked up to Zhu Honggong's side and said, "This seems sturdy. Even Eldest Senior Brother's Jasper Saber can't cut this. You've hit the jackpot!"

"Have I?" Zhu Honggong was stunned. He did not expect the item to be so amazing.

"Of course. Why would I lie to you? Besides, do you think a weapon given by master would be shabby?" However, inwardly, Mingshi Yin thought to himself, 'The weapon is, indeed, sturdy, but it's too hideous. I'll have to compliment it some more.'

Zhu Honggong was overjoyed. "I won't let you down, master."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. He noticed that Zhu Honggong's loyalty had skyrocketed. It was now stable. This was also within his expectations.

Zhu Honggong retreated to the side and toyed with his boxing gloves.

Lu Zhou no longer bothered with Zhu Honggong. Instead, he shifted his gaze to Zhao Yue. "Zhao Yue..."

"Yes, master." "Your cultivation base has deteriorated while you were in the palace," Lu Zhou said.

Zhao Yue's face reddened, she felt ashamed. "I'll work hard and not let you down, master."

Duan Xing smiled and said, "I'm impressed that you're putting so much effort into your disciples, old senior..."

"Duan Xing, you've done well in Cloud Shine Forest. Naturally, I won't mistreat you... How about this, you can make a request, and I'll do my best to fulfill it," Lu Zhou said.

Duan Xing was delighted to hear this. He hastily bowed and said, "I dare not! All the efforts I expended was sincere. I don't dare to take credit."

"Very well." Lu Zhou nodded.

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Hold up. This isn't right. Aren't we supposed to exchange more pleasantries? What about my request? This... Will I have to bring it to my grave?' Duan Xing was stunned.

Lu Zhou looked at Duan Xing and said, "If the Nether Sect is tactful, they won't raise a hand against the Fiend Temple after this." "Thank you, old senior." With this, at least the Fiend Temple's safety was guaranteed. As for his other requests, well, he did not dare to push his luck.

"Send our guest away."

After Duan Xing left the Evil Sky Pavilion, Lu Zhou waved his arm and said, "If there's nothing else, that'll be all for today."

"I'll take my leave, master."

"Safe journey, old senior."

Lu Zhou stood up and returned to the eastern pavilion.

Shouning Palace, Imperial city of the Divine Capital.

"Imperial grandmother, Zhao Yue belongs to the Evil Sky Pavilion. You must be wary of her words." The prince who stood in the bed-chamber was the heir apparent, Liu Zhi.

The Empress Dowager closed her eyes and did not look at Liu Zhi. With a stern tone, she said, "Do you wish to see me die as well?"

Liu Zhi's face fell. He kneeled at once and said, "I dare not. I'm only worried that something bad might happen to you!"

"If something were to happen to me, it would've happened in Obedient Villa! Is there a need to wait until now?" the Empress Dowager slowly asked. Ever since the incident in Obedient Villa, she had a newfound dislike for all the princes.

Liu Zhi continued to kneel as he said, "Imperial grandmother, I will surely give you a satisfactory explanation regarding second brother. Please don't let this bother you."

At this moment, Li Yunzhao, who had been standing at the side for a long time without saying anything, finally spoke up, "Your Highness, I have something in my mind, but I wonder if it's appropriate to say it." "Speak."

Li Yunzhao was a famous person by the Empress Dowager's side, after all. Liu Zhi had to take him seriously.

“The Empress Dowager’s sickness can’t be allowed to fester... Moreover, His Majesty has given his agreement. If you wish to fulfill your filial duty, Your Highness, you should be considerate of the Empress Dowager. Also...” Li Yunzhao glanced around him before saying in a hushed tone, “The Empress Dowager is still pained by the death of His Second Highness. Please don’t bring this topic up.” “You have a point, Eunuch Li.” Liu Zhi stood up. He bowed and said, “Imperial grandmother, I have a close guard with a profound cultivation base. Since you’re going, I’ll leave him with you.”

“That’ll be all.” The Empress Dowager’s eyes were still closed as she waved her hand.

“Goodbye, grandmother.” Liu Zhi retreated out of Shouning Palace. He barely took a step outside the palace when his guard came up to him.

With his hands on his back, Liu Zhi walked, and said, “Tell Jiang Liang to escort my grandmother to the Evil Sky Pavilion. I will take care of his family. If he brings back Jiang Aijian’s head, he’ll be handsomely rewarded.”

“Understood!”

Chapter 348 Yu Shangrong’s Secret

Over the past week, Lu Zhou had been meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls in the eastern pavilion until his extraordinary power was completely replenished. After his extraordinary power was replenished, the only benefit from continuing to meditate upon was that he could increase the number of times he meditated upon them. However, Lu Zhou chose to stop

He opened his eyes. He called up the system dashboard and looked at his remaining life.

,574 days.

“Breaking through to the Nine-leaf stage would damage one’s life... If I have enough Reversal Cards, can I overcome that?” Lu Zhou wondered out loud. He had 22 Reversal Cards left.

Lu Zhou casually used one. Like before, the life energy around the eastern pavilion gathered around him. Shortly after, it was done. As he expected, his remaining life was now 6,874 days.

The Nine-leaf stage was related to his longevity... In that case, the Reversal Card would be much more important.

Lu Zhou looked at the price of the Reversal Cards again... Fortunately, it remained the same.

After that, he looked at the two missions related to Yu Shangrong. The first one was Life of the Melilot, and the second was the New Open Heavenly Writing Scroll.

Both missions were labeled as incomplete.

What he could be sure of was that the melilot was very much related to Yu Shangrong.

“Longevity Sword.” Lu Zhou thought about the sword.

Meanwhile, inside the Cave of Reflection.

Yu Shangrong sat with his legs crossed. The peculiar thing was the Longevity Sword glowed with a red radiance as if it sensed something. Faint red energy would appear from it and enter his body.

Bzzt! Bzz! Bzzt!

The Longevity Sword vibrated slightly.

Night had fallen. The moon was bright.

The Longevity Sword quietened down and remained motionless after that.

Suddenly, Yu Shangrong gave a muffled grunt. A trail of blood appeared at the edge of his lips. He opened his eyes and sighed. He did not seem surprised by this. Like Si Wuya, he attempted to break the mantra after his cultivation base was restricted. Alas... it ended in failure.

Si Wuya could not even find someone to break it for him even though he was resourceful, let alone someone else.

However, this was the common fault of men. They would never turn back before hitting the southern wall.

Yu Shangrong looked at the Longevity Sword by his side. He shook his head and said, "I won't die yet."

He closed his eyes again, focusing on his injury.

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

"Trying to break the mantra, are we?"

Yu Shangrong was startled by the voice. "Master?"

Lu Zhou walked through the barrier with his hands on his back. He saw Yu Shangrong sitting cross-legged with blood trailing down the side of his lips.

When Lu Zhou heard the notification from the system, he knew that Yu Shangrong had tried to break the Binding Mantra. "It's futile," Lu Zhou said tonelessly.

"It's better than sitting here and doing nothing," Yu Shangrong replied.

Lu Zhou sat down slowly on the stone bench. He pointed at the opposite stone bench and said, "Sit."

Yu Shangrong was slightly taken aback. He was never treated this way throughout his time in the Evil Sky Pavilion before this. He looked at his master, who seemed calm and spoke in a largely different manner from before. He had trouble believing this. Finally, he rose to his feet before he sat on the stone bench opposite his master.

The moonlight shone on the stone table.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "Since you address me as master, you'll answer my question honestly."

Yu Shangrong frowned slightly. He did not know what his master would ask. He was instinctively fearful. "Apart from the memories, I'll answer everything else."

Lu Zhou had expected this. In truth, even if Yu Shangrong did not tell him about the memories, he could make his own inferences. Therefore, there was no need to force him.

“Have you tried to enter the Nine-leaf stage?” Lu Zhou asked. “I have,” Yu Shangrong replied honestly, “As a cultivator... a peak Eight-leaf cultivator, I’m standing before the doors of the Nine-leaf stage. Nobody would be able to fight the curiosity to open the doors and sneak a peek... Alas, there’s nothing but an endless night behind that door. I saw no future nor hope.”

Lu Zhou nodded. “You’re from Nobleman Nation. Your life is as fickle as the melilot.”

When Yu Shangrong heard this, his heart skipped a beat. However, he quickly regained his composure. This was not some secret that he should be ashamed of.

The melilot was a plant unique to the Nobleman Nation to begin with. It had been mentioned several times lately. There was bound to be someone in the Evil Sky Pavilion who knew about it.

“At most, the Eight-leaf stage can give you 500 years of life...” Lu Zhou added.

Suddenly, Yu Shangrong picked up his Longevity Sword. He was about to stand up, but he realized that his master was still seated on the stone bench with no intention of snatching the Longevity Sword from him.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard. He had an expression that said that he had expected this much. “Who can stop me if I want to take your weapon?”

He raised a palm. A gust of energy wind entered the cave.

Yu Shangrong tightened his grip around the Longevity Sword. His cultivation base was sealed. How could he resist his master?

Although Lu Zhou’s cultivation base was only in the Dao Transforming Divine Court realm, it was enough to deal with Yu Shangrong whose cultivation base was sealed.

Whoosh!

The Longevity Sword flew into Lu Zhou’s hand.

Yu Shangrong lunged as he tried to take the sword back.

Lu Zhou waved his hand.

An energy wall kept Yu Shangrong at bay. Zing!

Lu Zhou drew the Longevity Sword.

The blade had a faint reddish glow.

Shortly after, Lu Zhou felt the life energy on the Longevity Sword... “The immortal ties my hair and wishes me a long life.” Lu Zhou appraised the Longevity Sword.

It was said that the Longevity Sword would absorb some life energy every time it took a life.

Lu Zhou was now certain that it was true. It was no wonder that Yu Shangrong valued the Longevity Sword this much. He was depending on this sword to live... This sword was his life.

"Master!" Yu Shangrong fell to his knees.

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Is this your secret to a long life?" When he gave Yu Shangrong the Longevity Sword, he did not know that it was capable of this. Throughout the years, Yu Shangrong was, perhaps, the only person who knew how much time and effort he had put into this sword.

"The melilot blooms in the morning and wilts at night. I had no choice!" Yu Shangrong said.

"Do you really think that you can live a long life with the sword?"

"The Longevity Sword can't do that... All it can do is grant me the same lifespan as any other cultivator!" Yu Shangrong replied honestly.

To think that living for a millennium was also wishful thinking for an Eight-leaf cultivator.

Zing!

The Longevity Sword was returned to its scabbard.

Lu Zhou waved his arm.

The energy wall vanished.

Lu Zhou tossed the sword back to Yu Shangrong. He said with a sigh, "The Longevity Sword can't overcome the millennium limit as well."

Yu Shangrong caught the Longevity Sword and regarded his master with surprise. He did not expect his master to return the sword to him. He remained silent. Lu Zhou turned to look at Yu Shangrong and said, "Do you despise me?"

"I dare not!" Yu Shangrong responded.

"Yu Shangrong." Lu Zhou suddenly called out his name.

Yu Shangrong's heart skipped a beat. He tightened his grip around the Longevity Sword again.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said indifferently, "I can tell you now... that I'm going to kick the doors to the Nine-leaf stage open."

Yu Shangrong was stunned. Lu Zhou waved his sleeve and left the Cave of Reflection.

At this moment... the Longevity Sword and vibrated before its power rippled into the surroundings.

Yu Shangrong's brows were tightly knitted together.

Chapter 349 Visitors from the Divine Capital

Yu Shangrong pressed the Longevity Sword down. He murmured to himself, "I've said... that I would live in seclusion after the battle with Eldest Senior Brother. Why must I be forced to do this?" He looked in the direction his master had left and sighed softly.

"The remaining life energy... I can do without. You'll be buried with me when I die." Yu Shangrong raised the Longevity Sword and gauged the remaining life energy. The blade had a red glow, but unfortunately, it was much fainter than before. Yu Shangrong returned to the depths of the Cave of Reflection. He sat with his legs crossed and no longer tried to break the mantra.

Three days later.

A flying chariot departed from the Divine Capital. It avoided places where humans dwelled. It was headed for the Evil Sky Pavilion.

On the flying chariot.

Lu Yunzhao who was standing next to the Empress Dowager said, "Empress Dowager, don't worry... I've been in contact with the Evil Sky Pavilion's master before this. He isn't a villain who kills without rhyme or reason. Moreover, Princess Zhao Yue is his disciple. If he had been as evil as rumored, Princess Zhao Yue would never return to the Evil Sky Pavilion so easily."

The Divine Capital was protected by the Ten Terminal Formation. Cultivators who wanted to cause trouble would not simply enter the Divine Capital.

The Empress Dowager reclined in her seat and said, "I feel relieved hearing that."

At this moment, Jiang Liang appeared at the flying chariot's helm. With his arms crossed, he said, "Empress Dowager, a villain will always be a villain. We should still be careful."

Li Yunzhao said disapprovingly, "Jiang Liang, you've been with His Highness, the Crown Prince, for many years so there's so much that you don't know."

"Do enlighten me, Eunuch Li."

"During the battle on Lotus Dais... the Evil Sky Pavilion's patriarch fought against malicious forces and saved many cultivators who were present. News of this has long been circulating in the cultivation world. One more thing, apart from the Evil Sky Pavilion's first disciple, Yu Zhenghai, the names of the other disciples have already vanished from the black roll," Lu Yunzhao said.

"I hope that's true." Jiang Liang nodded.

"I am aware of your profound cultivation base... but let me warn you, when we're at the Evil Sky Pavilion, do not do anything rash... If you do, not even I or the Empress Dowager can save you." Li Yunzhao wanted to dissuade him from doing anything reckless.

"Eunuch Li, you're overthinking... My mission is only to ensure the Empress Dowager's safety," Jiang Liang replied.

"That would be best."

At this moment, the Empress Dowager, who was reclining on her chair, spoke with an extremely tranquil tone, "Jiang Liang."

Jiang Liang bowed at once and said, "Empress Dowager." "I heard that you have a profound cultivation base."

“They’re all compliments that I don’t deserve.” “What do you think Eunuch Li’s cultivation base is like?” The Empress Dowager’s tone was gentle as though there was nothing odd about her question.

“Well...” Jiang Liang gave it some thought before answering, “If we were to fight with our full strength, I won’t be a match for Eunuch Li. If we were to fight with other methods... I think I stand a chance.” Li Yunzhao laughed and said, “Empress Dowager, you might not be informed, but Bodyguard Jiang once infiltrated the Li Nation in Rongbei and assassinated its monarch all on his own. That’s a phenomenal achievement. Nobody whom Bodyguard Jiang has marked would survive.”

The Empress Dowager laughed and said, “In that case, you’re a precious talent for Great Yan. I hope that you’ll serve the Imperial court well.”

Jiang Liang bowed and said, “I give my heart to the Imperial court.”

“Eunuch Li has served me for many years, and I trust in his judgment. You should heed his advice as well,” the Empress Dowager said.

“As you command.”

The flying chariot continued to fly toward the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Eunuch Li looked around himself. He walked up to Jiang Liang and he beckoned him over. “Bodyguard Jiang...”

Jiang Liang was slightly stunned. He wondered what was the need for Eunuch Li’s secrecy. He followed him.

There were two imperial physicians onboard the flying chariot. They were considered cultivators as well. There was nothing much to worry about with them looking after the Empress Dowager. They went to the other side of the flying chariot.

Li Yunzhao said, “I have something sincere I’d like to talk to you about, Bodyguard Jiang.” “Let’s hear it, Eunuch Li.”

Li Yunzhao did not beat around the bush. “Bodyguard Jiang, what kind of mission has the Crown Prince given you in the Evil Sky Pavilion?”

Jiang Liang was taken aback by Li Yunzhao’s candidness. He asked, “Why would you say that, Eunuch Li?”

“You’re skilled in assassination. If the Crown Prince truly intends to protect the Empress Dowager, why does he have to send you?”

Jiang Liang was at a loss for words.

Li Yunzhao smiled and said, “Do you know why His Majesty isn’t worried that the Empress Dowager is going to the Evil Sky Pavilion?”

Jiang Liang shook his head. He was also puzzled by that.

The Empress Dowager was an important and venerated person of the empire. Yet, she was now venturing toward the dangerous Evil Sky Pavilion. He was surprised to learn that His Majesty had

approved this. It had been bugging Jiang Liang for a long time. Li Yunzhao said, "That's because... the Evil Sky Pavilion Master, Ji Tiandao, is an acquaintance of the late emperor." Jiang Liang's eyes widened upon hearing this. He did not expect the great villain, who was despised by the general public, would have such a relationship with the late emperor. He asked, "If they're acquaintances, why does the Evil Sky Pavilion act like the Imperial family's enemy? I was told that there were several such incidents."

"You're wrong," Li Yunzhao said solemnly.

"I'm wrong?"

"The Evil Sky Pavilion has never treated the Imperial family as its enemy... The ones creating conflict are its first and seventh disciple, Yu Zhenghai and Si Wuya," Li Yunzhao answered. Jiang Liang was confused. "Eunuch Li, just be straight with me. I'm but a crude martial man. My brain isn't trained for this."

Li Yunzhao nodded. "It's as I said earlier. I advise you to show restraint when you're in the Evil Sky Pavilion. If things go wrong, even His Highness, the Crown Prince, can't help you, let alone the Empress Dowager. You should weigh the pros and cons." He left with a flick of his sleeves after he finished speaking.

Stunned, Jiang Liang furrowed his brows, rooted to the spot.

Near dusk. The Evil Sky Pavilion.

Lu Zhou was studying the great longevity limit in the eastern pavilion. The desk before him was covered in books.

The female disciples would make periodic trips to the eastern pavilion as well, carrying books in their arms. "Pavilion Master, we've carried all the books related to life here."

Lu Zhou did not look at them as he said, "Alright."

At this moment, Little Yuan'er's voice reached him from the outside. "Master, the flying chariot from the Divine Capital is here. Fifth Senior Sister has gone over to greet them... Eh? Master, your reading!"

Little Yuan'er walked into the eastern pavilion and saw books piled up on the table.

Lu Zhou merely picked a few and flipped through them. He did not have the energy to go through the other books. He looked up and glanced at Little Yuan'er. Then, he said, "Yuan'er."

"Yes, Master?"

"Keep an eye on the Cave of Reflection... Report to me immediately if there's anything amiss," Lu Zhou said.

"Yes, master." Little Yuan'er left the eastern pavilion after receiving her mission.

Lu Zhou shifted his gaze to the books before himself. He mumbled, "The people of Noblemen Nation have short lives. Hence, they cultivated to prolong their existence. The longest-living of them all is only about 500 years old."

In other words, although Yu Shangrong had the Longevity Sword, he would only live half as long as ordinary cultivators? While Lu Zhou was deep in thoughts, Mingshi Yin stopped outside the eastern pavilion, bowed, and said, "The visitors from the Divine Capital are waiting in the great hall."

"Alright." Lu Zhou waved his sleeve and exited the eastern pavilion.

Inside the great hall.

Lu Zhou swept his gaze across the people gathered there.

Almost everyone was present.

Li Yunzhao and the others stood in the middle.

Behind Li Yunzhao, Zhao Yue and one of the Imperial physicians were supporting a poised and noble old woman.

Jiang Aijian's eyes were trained on the old woman.

"Have a seat."

Lu Zhou was not being considerate of the Imperial family, but of Jiang Aijian and Zhao Yue. He did not assume his seat on the throne but sat opposite the Empress Dowager.

Li Yunzhao knew this was the Evil Sky Pavilion and not the palace or anywhere else. The protocols of the palace did not apply here.

The Empress Dowager was old enough to overlook these matters. When she looked at Lu Zhou, her eyebrows moved slightly. Her tired eyes seemed to have discovered something as she straightened up. She said gently, "Old mister, you resemble an old acquaintance of mine."

Chapter 350 Those Who Sought Longevity

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and remained silent. Many years ago, Ji Tiandao had met the ever-living Emperor and the Empress Dowager. They were all in their prime back. Things and people had changed with the passage of time. He did not expect the Empress Dowager to recognize him. Who said she was visually impaired and senile? However, that was not important.

Lu Zhou waved his hand and said, "Those who have no business here should leave."

Many of the others wanted to watch the proceedings, but they had no choice but to leave the great hall for the time being.

Li Yunzhao, the Imperial physicians, and Jiang Liang did not leave. Jiang Aijian and Zhao Yue remained within the great hall as well.

Lu Zhou looked at the Empress Dowager. Perhaps, it was due to the extraordinary power, he felt that his mental state and optical strength were much better compared to before. He could see the faint purple gas the Empress Dowager's body emitted. Indeed, it was witchcraft. It was not a life-threatening spell, but it would cause worry and unrest, making it difficult to sleep. It seemed that Ba Ma and Mo Li did not dare to take it out on the Empress Dowager. This was nothing but a trick of theirs.

When Li Yunzhao saw Lu Zhou keeping quiet, he said, "Well? Tell the old mister what the situation is!"

The Imperial physician standing on the left shuddered. All his years in the palace, he had never encountered such a situation. How could he not be afraid of the old man before him? Nevertheless, he replied in a trembling voice, "O... O-old mister... the Empress Dowager, since she returned from Obedient Villa, has trouble falling asleep..."

Lu Zhou raised a hand and interjected, "There's no need for an explanation. I know what's going on with the Empress Dowager."

Upon hearing this, the two Imperial physicians exchanged a look. They were the cream of the crop among the Imperial family's healers. Although their cultivation base could be considered weak, they were quite skilled in medicine. They had been researching for years, but the Evil Sky Pavilion did not even need an explanation? This was too much a blow to them.

Li Yunzhao bowed and asked, "Old mister, do you have any remedies for this?" Lu Zhou stood up with his hands on his back and replied, "Naturally, I have a way to get rid of this ailment."

Li Yunzhao bowed as soon as he heard Lu Zhou's words. "Please do whatever you can, old mister!"

Zhao Yue bowed. "Master..."

Jiang Aijian said, "Old senior." Lu Zhou said, "I have something that I must tell you, Empress Dowager." When the Empress Dowager heard this, she was slightly taken aback. She looked at Lu Zhou, who was standing with his hands on his back, with her old eyes. "Let's hear it, old mister."

Lu Zhou said, "I can free you of the ailment, but... your great limit is approaching. You should prepare yourself for it."

The great hall was plunged into silence. If they were in the palace, the statement would have been considered as a serious offense that warranted immediate beheading.

The two Imperial physicians, however, lowered their heads simultaneously. It was impossible for them to not be aware of this.

Zhao Yue and Jiang Aijian's expressions changed slightly. They looked at the Empress Dowager, reluctant to believe what they had just heard.

Contrary to expectations, the Empress Dowager laughed heartily. She waved her hand and said, "That's it? This is all part of the natural cycle of life. It's natural to die one day. It's nothing."

Lu Zhou turned to look at the Empress Dowager. It seemed like he had wanted to say something but changed his mind in the end. He only shook his head and said, "Forget it. I'll respect your decision." Then, he waved his arm.

The two Imperial physicians retreated to the side hastily.

At this moment, Lu Zhou raised his palm and struck at the air.

The others watched unblinkingly, their hearts were hanging by a thread.

A surge of faint blue power emerged from Lu Zhou's palm.

Whoosh!

Meanwhile, in an unknown dark and gloomy room.

Ba Ma's eyes snapped open. He frowned. "The spell has been broken?" A surprised expression could be seen on his face.

"Indeed, the Imperial family can't be underestimated... Mo Li, oh, Mo Li. You spent all those years in the palace in vain. To think you weren't even aware of what the Imperial family is capable of." Ba Ma shook his head and sighed. "However, you can rest assured... I'll certainly send them over to where you are."

A shocked expression appeared on everyone's faces. Lu Zhou had broken the spell from a distance.

The Empress Dowager gave a muffled grunt, frowning slightly.

The purplish gas was instantly dispersed by the blue energy.

Lu Zhou was not surprised at all. The Heavenly Writing's extraordinary power was a natural bane for witchcraft spells. He had confirmed this a long time ago.

Li Yunzhao quickly supported the Empress Dowager and asked, "Empress Dowager, how are you feeling?"

"I... I'm alright." The Empress Dowager's eyes were closed. She was sweating slightly, and her voice sounded hollow.

The two Imperial physicians went over at once. They bowed before they checked the Empress Dowager's pulse and examined her.

After a round of examination.

One of the Imperial physicians fell to his knees and said, "Many congratulations, Empress Dowager! The spell has been broken!"

Lu Zhou stroked his beard with an apathetic expression on his face. 'If I can't even break this minor spell, I should be ashamed of myself.' He did not even look at Li Yunzhao as he called out, "Li Yunzhao."

Li Yunzhao's respect for Lu Zhou had risen another level at this moment. He immediately responded, "Yes, old mister?"

"The Empress Dowager has just recovered from her ailment. She should rest in the southern pavilion for now and return tomorrow," Lu Zhou said.

"That's great, that's great! Thank you, old mister..." Li Yunzhao, who was kneeling, began to kowtow.

Jiang Liang and the two Imperial physicians were shocked by this display of obeisance.

Although Li Yunzhao was only an attendant eunuch, he enjoyed a high status. He did not even show the Crown Prince such courtesy.

Lu Zhou merely glanced at Li Yunzhao and waved his hand, dismissing him.

Li Yunzhao and the Imperial physicians supported the Empress Dowager as they left the great hall. Zhao Yue made the arrangements, and they were lodged in the southern pavilion.

It was almost dusk.

Inside the southern pavilion.

Li Yunzhao stood respectfully by the bed. He looked at the Empress Dowager, who seemed healthier now, and said, "Empress Dowager, you look much better compared to this morning."

The Empress Dowager leaned on the headboard and said, "It's all thanks to Zhao Yue..."

"Princess Zhao Yue has already returned to the Imperial family. There's no need to blame yourself for this, Empress Dowager," Li Yunzhao said.

"Little Li." The Empress Dowager paused slightly before she said again, "Bring me my belongings."

Li Yunzhao was slightly stunned. He shook his head helplessly. He fetched a brocade box from the luggage they brought with them. He presented it to the Empress Dowager and said, "Empress Dowager, these are your longevity pills... are you really going to do this?" The Empress Dowager said with a sigh, "There are many in this world who seek to live a long life. The evergreen... even the ever-living Emperor... Yet, I think it's a form of happiness as well to live out one's life naturally."

"I understand." Li Yunzhao bowed.

"When my time comes, bury me with the ever-living Emperor... hold a funeral for me, and I'll be content," the Empress Dowager said.

Li Yunzhao shook his head and said nothing.

The Empress Dowager passed the brocade box to Li Yunzhao and said, "Give this to the old mister. This will be a token of our gratitude."

"Alright."

"After you leave, call Zhao Yue over. I'd like to talk to her."

"Alright." Li Yunzhao left the room.

Inside the eastern pavilion.

Li Yunzhao entered the pavilion with Mingshi Yin in tow.

"Under the decree of the Empress Dowager, I'm here to thank you, old mister. The Empress Dowager has ordered me to present this to the Evil Sky Pavilion. Kindly accept this, old mister," Li Yunzhao said. He bowed before he presented the brocade box with both hands.

Mingshi Yin said, "Master, they're longevity pills."