

## Disciples 461

### Chapter 461: Where Did She Come From?

If Zuo Yushu had any doubts and questions before this, they had completely been dispelled by the Nine-leaf avatar. In truth, she was already convinced by Lu Zhou when she stepped onto the flying chariot. The attitude of the disciples from the Three Sects had confirmed the fact that the seven great sects had attacked Golden Court Mountain. However, when she saw the Nine-leaf Golden Lotus with her own eyes, she was still amazed.

The disciples of the Three Sects stared at the Golden Lotus with its nine leaves. Before this, the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivators were hesitating and wondering if they should try severing their Golden Lotuses. If they acted fast enough, they would be ahead of their peers. Nonetheless, faced with uncertainties, the danger was much greater as well.

"Leaves can be formed after severing the Golden Lotus. The Golden Lotus can be formed again as well!"

"So that's what a Nine-leaf Golden Lotus looks like!"

"How did the Evil Sky Pavilion achieve this so soon? The others haven't even started severing their Golden Lotuses yet!"

They could hardly remain calm. This was the equivalent to finding out that a player had already cleared all the stages before the game went into beta testing. Everyone, naturally, had a tough time coming to terms with it.

Ten quiet seconds passed by in just a blink of an eye. It was too short a time for the people present to admire the unique avatar. They felt as though they were looking at the finest sculpture in the world. Before they could have their fill looking at it, it had disappeared.

After the avatar vanished, Lu Zhou stood with his hands on his back and looked at Yun Tianluo who was sitting in the wooden chair.

Yun Tianluo's exhaustion seemed to have vanished. He looked spry at this moment, and his eyes were brimming with excitement. Even his wizened face was flushed with a healthy color. It seemed like he had regressed ten years younger just from looking at the Nine-leaf avatar.

After a long moment of silence, Lu Zhou finally said, "What do you think?"

Lu Zhou's words pulled everyone back to their senses.

Yun Tianluo said, "It's worth it."

"Truly?"

"If I can see it once more, I'll be able to die in peace," Yun Tianluo praised.

'This old thing. Give him an inch, and he asks for a foot! I'm already doing you a great service by showing it to you once. Do you think that merit points fall from the skies?' Despite Lu Zhou's inner thoughts, he stroked his beard and said with a neutral expression, "Don't be greedy."

Yun Tianluo sighed. He raised his hands slightly and said, "In any case, thank you, Brother Ji."

“Don’t mention it.”

“May I ask you something? It’s about the method to attain the Nine-leaf stage...” Yun Tianluo was about to return to dust anyway. With one leg in the coffin, he only wanted this information for his disciples. Therefore, he mustered his courage to ask this question. After all, if he did not ask, nobody would dare to ask this question.

Upon hearing Yun Tianluo’s question, an eager and excited expression appeared on Nan Gongwei and Feng Yizhi’s faces.

Similarly, the core disciples of the Three Sects looked at Lu Zhou expectantly as well.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. “The method of severing the Golden Lotus is not a lie.”

Upon hearing this, the others grew emotional. As expected, the method is real. However, the mortality rate of severing one’s Golden Lotus was too high. Due to this, many were discouraged and did not dare to try it. However, as more and more people experimented, the survival rates rose as well. Apart from the, without the Golden Lotus, sprouting leaves might be a problem. Moreover, they did not know if they could form another Golden Lotus as well. However, with Lu Zhou’s affirmation, it had given them a boost of courage.

Apart from that, Lu Zhou seemed to have set a new standard in the cultivation world. Who would be willing to share their method of reaching the Nine-leaf stage with others? Ordinary individuals would not be so magnanimous to do such a thing.

“Nan Gongwei, Feng Yizhi,” Yun Tianluo said in a deep voice.

“Yes!” Both of them responded in unison.

“Why aren’t you thanking the senior?”

Upon hearing Yun Tianluo’s words, Nan Gongwei and Feng Yizhi realized their transgression in the midst of their excitement.

Nan Gongwei did not bow at once. Instead, he took a few steps backward, circulated his Primal Qi, and projected his voice so it resounded through the ten holy lands. “Thank you, Old Senior Ji.”

Feng Yizhi did the same.

The disciples of the Three Sects who left Heaven’s Virtue were not too far away. When they heard their sect masters’ words, they knew what it meant. They hovered around the 20 peaks, formed several square formations, and followed their sect masters’ cue in thanking Lu Zhou.

“Thank you, Old Senior Ji!”

The soundwaves overlapped as everyone expressed their gratitude to Lu Zhou.

Upon seeing this, Mingshi Yin felt pride swell in his chest.

“Ding! Worshipped by 3,500 individuals and 1,500 pious individuals. Reward: 18,500 merit points.”

(Note: Deliberate and contrived worshipping will not be rewarded.)

‘Hm?’ When Lu Zhou heard this notification, he was initially surprised. Then, he made some quick calculations in his heart. There were many disciples in the Three Sects. However, those who could freely enter and leave the holy land merely numbered around 5,000. This meant the ratio of those who were piously worshipping him was even lower. Although this was a quicker way of earning merit points, there was still the risk of having his merit points deducted if he was not careful about the way he went about things. He would be in great trouble if that were to happen. The negative 100,000 merit points he received when he had just transmigrated here were still fresh in his mind.

At this moment, Yun Tianluo said, “What do you plan to do now that you’ve attained the Nine-leaf stage, Brother Ji?”

“Move on to the Ten-leaf stage, of course,” Lu Zhou replied casually.

“...”

Yun Tianluo seemed to have remembered something. He said, “Brother Ji... have you really come to...”

“That’s right. There are two reasons why I came to see you. Indeed, I wanted to pay you a final visit before your passing. Nobody in this world can escape from that shackle. Your passing will mean that I’ve lost yet another acquaintance.”

The others sighed in despair upon hearing these words. Although their expressions were appropriate, it felt insincere.

Yun Tianluo was unlike the disciples of the Three Sects. He said in a deep voice, “Hearing your words, I feel that my time in this world has been worthwhile.”

Mingshi Yin wanted to make a vomiting gesture again, but he resisted that urge when he saw Yun Tianluo’s changes. Yun Tianluo’s breathing had become shallow, and he was losing vitality.

“There’s no need to tell me the second reason, Brother Ji... I... I know it. Hah, you finally believe me, Brother Ji.” Yun Tianluo remembered something in the past.

“Yes.”

“It’s been 300 years... If she didn’t leave behind that cultivation method, I wouldn’t have been able to conquer the Three Sects. The world thinks that I’m some genius, but I’m only an average man,” Yun Tianluo said as he shook his head before laughing in a self-deprecating manner.

The others were shocked and perplexed when they heard Yun Tianluo’s words. Who was the ‘she’ that Yun Tianluo mentioned? What was their patriarch hiding? Did someone support the Three Sects until it reached its height today?

This was the main reason Lu Zhou came to Heaven’s Virtue today.

Back then, Yun Tianluo’s cultivation talent was nothing out of the ordinary, but he suddenly improved by leaps and bounds. He and Ji Tiandao were old acquaintances. Although the paths they took were different, there was no conflict of interest. The world wanted to know why Yun Tianluo’s cultivation base improved drastically. Yun Tianluo said that he met an elite who told him the Eight-leaf stage was not the end. The Nine-leaf and Ten-leaf stages were attainable. However, nobody believed him then. They took him as a joke.

Lu Zhou nodded, stroked his beard, and said, "Back then, I thought you were bluffing."

"Time will tell. The Nine-leaf stage is the greatest proof." Yun Tianluo seemed content and triumphant. When he recalled everything that he had done, he felt no remorse. When he saw the hard truth of the cultivation world crumble with his own eyes, he felt that he had lived a good life.

Yun Tianluo's thoughts wandered back to 300 years ago. Unfortunately, things have changed, and the people were long gone.

"She left the cultivation method behind, and you cultivated it. Your cultivation base improved greatly, and you became the chief of the Three Sects. Back then, nobody would've thought this was possible," Lu Zhou said.

"Yes." Yun Tianluo nodded in agreement.

"What's her name?" Lu Zhou asked.

Yun Tianluo looked remorseful. He shook his head and said, "A person like her can hardly be tracked down. I don't know her name. Perhaps, she has already attained the Ten-leaf stage a long time ago and is now living in seclusion."

"Ten-leaf stage?"

The others were thoroughly shocked and frightened when they heard this.

The Nine-leaf stage was enough to cause one to feel amazed. To think that there was someone at the Ten-leaf stage. Was their patriarch spouting nonsense before his death?

"That's what I gather from her words. I don't know if she's actually at the Ten-leaf stage... Perhaps not..." Yun Tianluo seemed tired and launched into a coughing fit after he spoke.

"What does she look like?"

"She's young..." Yun Tianluo answered weakly.

At this moment, Zuo Yushu, who stood beside Lu Zhou, shook her head and said, "I'm afraid she must be a bag of old bones now, like me."

Yun Tianluo glanced at Zuo Yushu. He managed a chuckle but did not say anything.

Mingshi Yin said, "No matter how old she is, she helped Senior Yun rise to prominence from the dust. There's no doubt she's extraordinary."

This was the truth. Zuo Yushu could not refute these words. She had always prided herself on being a genius. From the moment she stepped into the Confucian sect, the Confucian sect disciples called her a rare cultivation genius who would only show up once every few hundred years. Unfortunately, she was born female. If she was allowed to climb her way up to the highest position in the Confucian sect back then, perhaps, she could also peek into the world of the Nine-leaf stage. Perhaps, she could be a Nine-leaf cultivator now, or perhaps, she could have died trying.

In any case, there was no point dwelling on it. Humans were faced with countless choices in life. No matter which path they chose, they would still wonder about the path not taken. Regrets could never change the outcome. They could only briefly entertain their fantasies.

At this moment, everyone wondered who was the person who helped Yun Tianluo defy his fate? Where did she come from?

Yun Tianluo was old. His mind was not as keen as before. He found it difficult to recall many things. Disordered fragments filled his mind. His mind seemed like the vast ocean while the scenes were like schools of fish swimming in it. They went about in no particular order. He wanted to catch the fish he needed the most but was powerless to do so. His consciousness was slipping away.

“Patriarch!”

When Nan Gongwei and Feng Yizhi saw Yun Tianluo looking lifeless, they cried out in unison, appearing worried.

Nan Gongwei stood up at once. He directed a palm at Yun Tianluo and channeled Primal Qi into him. A surge of intense Primal Qi was continuously channeled into Yun Tianluo’s body.

Perhaps, Nan Gongwei’s effort worked.

Yun Tianluo opened his eyes again, and a thought flashed in his mind. “Hah, her surname’s Luo.”

“Luo?”

Luo... what?

The others were puzzled. Was there a cultivating genius or sect in Great Yan with the surname Luo?

Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he contemplated this. He suddenly remembered what Si Wuya said; if heaven and earth formed the cage, and the Golden Lotus was the lock, who was the entity pulling the strings behind the scenes? He felt shocked when this thought appeared in his mind. He shook his head, dismissing it. It was impossible. Humans were humans. Who could turn heaven and earth into a cage? What was the answer?

“What’s her name?” Lu Zhou asked again. Perhaps, he would get an answer once he found this person.

“I... I can’t remember...”

The core disciples gathered around them on Heaven’s Virtue. Some of them were tearing up. Sobs grew louder and louder. Some of them fell to their knees.

Leng Luo and Hua Wudao shook their heads.

Hua Wudao cupped his fists and bowed at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou knew what he meant. He waved his sleeve lightly.

Like some on the holy land, Hua Wudao fell to his knees. After all, he had been in this sect before.

“Brother Ji... do you think... that we’ll meet again, in death?” Yun Tianluo raised his hand as though he saw something and was reaching out to grasp it. Alas, his big wizened hand was only grasping at air. He

did not stop his movement even as it grew slower and slower before he finally stiffened and stopped moving. His arm remained raised. The light in his eyes was snuffed out and turned lifeless.

“Patriarch!” A voice laden with grief resounded across Heaven’s Virtue.

The barriers of the ten holy lands lit up at this moment.

The thousands of disciples of the Three Sects who could fly approached the barriers and channeled their Primal Qi into them. The tidal wave of Primal Qi illuminated the dozens of barriers.

On Heaven’s Virtue, the top of the cultivation tower dimmed...

The life of a legend of the times had run its course.

Lu Zhou raised his hand. A surge of energy lifted Yun Tianluo up.

Feng Yizhi was still in pain. He was shocked when he saw this. He was about to stand up when Nan Gongwei pressed on his shoulder.

The other disciples looked up.

Lu Zhou stepped into the air. He brought Yun Tianluo up into the air above Heaven’s Virtue. He pushed with his palm.

To gain the power of immaterial existence so that we may visit many places without having to move, reaping many benefits.

A faint blue lotus emerged from his palm.

A powerful surge of vitality wrapped around Yun Tianluo like a tidal wave.

The Blue Lotus blossomed!

Everyone else held their breaths.

“What a powerful life force!”

“Healing?”

“What healing technique is this?”

Nan Gongwei and Feng Yizhi were stunned by this sight. They realized Lu Zhou was trying to save their patriarch.

The thousands of disciples stared at the blossoming blue lotus. It spread out from the center of Heaven’s Virtue. The withered and shriveled plants on the holy land began to bloom once again. They felt a power surge from this blue lotus. They thought that this was the power of the Nine-leaf stage that was shrouding Yun Tianluo’s body.

The blue lotus was now in full bloom...

Boom!

After it blossomed, everything fell silent once more.

After the dazzling blue radiance faded away, Yun Tianluo was no longer anywhere to be seen in the sky.

The glittering starlight descended upon the holy land.

Lu Zhou frowned. He hovered above the holy land, shook his head, and said with a sigh, "It's not easy to pull someone back from death." In other words, he had failed.

Even the fourth Heavenly Writing power coupled with half of the Heavenly Writing's extraordinary power could not turn back the clock of a person's life or bring a person back to life. This was how life was supposed to be.

Lu Zhou had no intention of doing this initially. He had acted on a whim. Even if he was successful in saving Yun Tianluo, he would only be able to add a few more years to Yun Tianluo's life. Alas, he could not defy the heavens.

The barrier of Heaven's Virtue resonated loudly.

The disciples were prostrated on the ground.

The dead were to be respected.

Even Mingshi Yin and Little Yuan'er, who were usually rather playful, were solemn.

Just when Lu Zhou was about to descend, Nan Gongwei fought back his sadness and called out, "Please guide the Three Sects, Old Senior Ji!"

"Please guide the Three Sects, Old Senior Ji!"

### **Chapter 463: Witnessing History**

The content of the letter was simple and direct. The content was, indeed, important.

After reading it, Yu Shangrong smiled. He passed the letter back to Zhao Yue.

"Second Senior Brother, why aren't you worried?" Zhao Yue was puzzled.

"We can afford to be," Yu Shangrong replied.

"We... we can't afford it? Even for this?" For a time, Zhao Yue was speechless.

Yu Shangrong seemed to have remembered something as he said, "Fifth Junior Sister, have you sprouted any leaves?"

"I've just recently entered the Nascent Divinity realm and formed my Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar," Zhao Yue replied.

"Sever your Golden Lotus as quickly as you can. Don't wait."

"Huh?"

Yu Shangrong turned around and left after saying this.

As Zhao Yue looked at Yu Shangrong's retreating back, she said, "Second Senior Brother, people die from severing their Golden Lotuses, you know..."

"I know."

"Yet, you're telling me to sever mine."

Yu Shangrong was no longer in sight.

Zhao Yue spread her arms in a helpless gesture.

Pan Zhong said tentatively, "Miss Fifth, Brother Zhou and I have something we'd like to ask you. We were wondering if..."

"Bah." Zhao Yue did not seem to have heard him. She acted as if she did not see Zhou Jifeng and Pan Zhong when she turned around and made her way to the Evil Sky Pavilion's great hall.

The two of them felt awkward. Yet, they dared not say anything.

"What is it?" A gentle voice rang from the Cave of Reflection.

Si Wuya tossed the paper on the table to the side. He rubbed his temples. He decided to solve some simple problems before continuing his research.

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were overjoyed to hear this. The two of them hastily ran toward the Cave of Reflection. Both of them bowed and said in unison, "Greetings, Mister Seventh."

"That's alright. Just get right into it." Si Wuya did not like to waste time on such trivial and unnecessary etiquette.

Pan Zhong scratched his head and said, "Lately, we feel that we're already at the peak of the Divine Court realm. We can vaguely feel that we're on the cusp of a breakthrough... There are more and more rumors of cultivators surviving after severing their Golden Lotuses. Even the pavilion master himself has personally approved of this method. The pavilion master has also said that the other method is to not form a Golden Lotus... We're... we're worried that it won't work."

"How do you know it won't work if you haven't tried it yet? There's no risk to that method while you'll have to gamble with your life if you sever your Golden Lotuses. If we think about it in a different way... if it's not possible to sprout leaves directly, shouldn't it be widely spread by now?" Si Wuya said.

Pan Zhong smacked his head and said, "You've got a point... This means that someone in the cultivation world is already using this method? Yet, they're deliberately concealing it and secretly improving their strength?"

"That sounds about right," Si Wuya replied.

"You're brilliant, Mister Seventh! We've never thought about it this way!" Pan Zhong said.

Si Wuya said, "Don't mention it. Ordinary people should be able to realize this."

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were taken aback. Did Si Wuya just take an indirect jab at them?

"In any case, don't get your hopes up yet. A cultivator who hasn't sprouted any leaves are still lacking in experience, after all."

"You're right, Mister Seventh."



Regardless of the era, experience would always be precious.

Just when the two of them were about to leave, several female disciples ran toward the Evil Sky Pavilion's great hall.

"The pavilion master is back."

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng looked at the skies at the same time.

The cloud-splitting chariot sailed forth from the horizons, past the barrier, and slowly landed.

The two of them hastily ran toward the great hall.

...

Shortly after.

Inside the Evil Sky Pavilion's great hall.

Lu Zhou sat on his high seat. He looked at Yu Shangrong who was standing in the great hall, slightly surprised.

The others who came back on the flying chariot with him stood at the sides. They were also looking at Yu Shangrong in shock.

"Greetings, master." Yu Shangrong bowed. He appeared nonchalant as though nothing of significance had happened.

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "It's good that you're back."

Yu Shangrong caught a glimpse of Zuo Yushu from the corners of his eyes. Since he was not familiar with her, he asked with a smile, "This is?"

Mingshi Yin said, "Second Senior Brother, this is the Evil Sky Pavilion's new elder, Senior Zuo Yushu. She's a cultivation genius from the Confucian sect 500 years ago."

Yu Shangrong did not seem surprised. Perhaps, he was already used to facing elites in the past and had grown numb to it. He said perfunctorily, "Well met."

Zuo Yushu studied Yu Shangrong. Whether it was his mannerism or attitude, she felt that he was much more powerful than some of her previous disciples. In the end, she replied, "Same here."

Leng Luo frowned. "What happened, Mister Second? I trust that you've been well since our last meeting?"

'See? This is how you make a proper greeting.'

Leng Luo knew how to behave in such situations. He bowed respectfully with his hands in front of him.

"I have," Yu Shangrong replied.

Zuo Yushu disapproved of this. She was confused as to why Leng Luo was behaving so humbly. After all, Leng Luo was also a legendary figure in the past.

Leng Luo walked to Zuo Yushu's side and said in a hushed tone, "The Evil Sky Pavilion's Mister Second is a peak Eight-leaf cultivator..."

Zuo Yushu's heart thumped in her chest. Her turbid eyes widened in shock. Then, she quickly greeted Yu Shangrong again. "It's not my intention to be rude."

Yu Shangrong did not seem to mind it at all. He waved his hand and said, "There's no need to trouble yourself, elder. It's only proper for me to greet you."

"There's no need, no need for that..." Zuo Yushu gripped her walking stick tightly. She nearly lost her footing. She was new here. She made up her mind to avoid this Mister Second if they met in the future.

Lu Zhou stood up and descended the steps with his hands on his back.

The others stood to attention immediately.

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Shangrong and said, "Show me your avatar." Before this, he was worried about Yu Shangrong's safety after he severed his Golden Lotus. Now that Yu Shangrong had safely returned, it was only natural for him to want to see what an avatar without a Golden Lotus would look like.

The others were puzzled. They did not know what Lu Zhou intends to do. Was he trying to intimidate the newcomer?

"Alright." Yu Shangrong did not try to hide. He raised his palm with a faint smile on his face. A miniature shining golden avatar hovered above his palm.

Everyone's attention was focused on the miniature golden avatar above Yu Shangrong's palm. There was nothing under its feet, there was no Golden Lotus. Only three leaves could be seen slowly spinning around the avatar.

"There's no Golden Lotus!"

"Three-leaf... with no Golden Lotus!"

Zuo Yushu's turbid eyes were widened when she saw the leaves. She frowned. 'Didn't Leng Luo say he's a peak Eight-leaf cultivator? Why does he only have three leaves?' She was slightly annoyed. However, she was taken aback when she saw there was no Golden Lotus under the avatar. She was confused. What was happening? She could only blame herself for living in seclusion for too long. She knew nothing about the current affairs in the outside world. She did not know about Yu Shangrong, the nine disciples, or how severing one's Golden Lotus was all the hype in the cultivation world at this moment.

Leng Luo was again the first to cup his fists and bow. "I'm impressed... Extremely so!" How could he not be impressed? When the method of severing the Golden Lotus was first proposed, those brave enough to attempt it were few and far between. There were even fewer who were willing to give up on their peak Eight-leaf status and begin again. For those who survived, they numbered even less. Most shockingly was Yu Shangrong had already sprouted three leaves! Who would dare say that Yu Shangrong was weak?

Hua Wudao bowed. "A Three-leaf cultivator without a Golden Lotus. There's no doubt about it, Mister Second, you're the first in the cultivation world."

Mingshi Yin gave a thumbs-up. He could not help but offer his praise. "You're amazing, Second Senior Brother."

Yu Shangrong smiled and said, "This is nothing. With master here, I don't dare claim that I'm the first."

The others seemed to recall something at this moment; Lu Zhou had already attained the Nine-leaf stage.

Lu Zhou's expression remained unchanged. He stroked his beard as he fell deep into thought. 'I'd like to be at the Nine-leaf stage as well. Alas, my strength doesn't permit me to do that.' In any case, when he learned of his second disciple's feat, his great sorrow turned into joy. He knew that he was witnessing history unfolding.

At this moment, Zhao Yue hurried into the great hall. She bowed at everyone and presented the letter in her hand. "Master, a letter from Jiang Aijian. Second Senior Brother has read one of them. There's a new one."

Lu Zhou received the letter and read it. Something stirred in his heart. The speed of improvement of the cultivation world had exceeded his expectations.

"The lotus-severing survival pill and the leaf-sprouting pill?" Lu Zhou was puzzled.

"Master, when this news spread out, the Big Dipper Academy and Core Yang Sect have become the core of the cultivation world. The Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivators of the major sects are now severing their Golden Lotuses and cultivating without them."

The others in the great hall understood Zhai Yue's meaning.

Mingshi Yin hastily said, "Master, if that's the case, we can't be left behind. We'll have to move quickly."

Lu Zhou glanced at Mingshi Yin and said, "We'll start with the elders, then."

Leng Luo and Hua Wudao bowed. "We'll follow your arrangements, Pavilion Master."

Zuo Yushu seemed to be in a daze. It took her a while before she bowed and said, "I'll follow your arrangements, big brother."

Mingshi Yin said, "In that case, I'll head over to the Core Yang Sect and snatch... I mean, request for some survival pills."

However, Yu Shangrong said, "Leave this to me."

"Second Senior Brother, you've just severed your lotus. This is... dangerous."

Although Yu Shangrong was ahead of the others for having sprouted three leaves after severing his lotus, the Three-leaf stage was still too weak.

Yu Shangrong smiled and said, "There's no need to worry. I've met the Sect Master of the Core Yang Sect several times before."

"Several times? What if you run into a conflict?"

Yu Shangrong turned around and patted Mingshi Yin on the shoulder. "With my sword in hand, it's enough." After saying this, he bowed at Lu Zhou.

In truth, Lu Zhou was worried about Yu Shangrong's current condition as well. There was no guarantee that Yu Shangrong would not run into some elite in the outside world. Yu Shangrong was used to being an Eight-leaf cultivator and had not adjusted to his new state yet.

"Kindly give the order, master," Yu Shangrong said softly.

"Are you confident?"

"I, Yu Shangrong, have never done anything that I'm not confident about."

"Alright." Lu Zhou waved his hand and called out softly, "Bi An."

A deep growl rang from outside the great hall.

Without having to look, the others knew that Bi An had landed obediently outside the great hall.

"Bring Bi An with you for this mission. If there's a threat to your life, it'll be able to help you." Lu Zhou knew if he had sent another person to help Yu Shangrong, Yu Shangrong would have refused.

"Thank you, master," Yu Shangrong said.

"Go, then."

Yu Shangrong turned around and left. Although he was only a Three-leaf Sword Devil at the moment, his Eight-leaf experience and skills were more than enough for him to deal with a Five-leaf cultivator. Moreover, who would dare touch him when he had the support of the Evil Sky Pavilion? Moreover, it was well known he could kill a Nascent Divinity cultivator with his bare hands.

However, Lu Zhou knew nothing was for certain in the world.

They saw Yu Shangrong off.

At this moment, Lu Zhou glanced at the mission menu on the system dashboard. As he expected, Yu Shangrong's mission of obtaining the survival pill appeared. The reward was 10,000 merit points.

'10,000 merit points? Looks like this isn't an easy mission.'

Mingshi Yin bowed and said, "Master, I'm still worried about Second Senior Brother."

"To be safe, go help him from the shadows," Lu Zhou calmly, "However, knowing your Second Senior Brother, it's best that you don't let him discover your presence. Go..."

"Understood! I'll protect Second Senior Brother!"

If it were not for the 10,000 merit points, Lu Zhou would not have sent Mingshi Yin as reinforcement. It was much safer to have Mingshi Yin help Yu Shangrong.

Zuo Yushu could not stand this any longer. She asked, "Big brother... this survival pill and whatnot, and the lack of a Golden Lotus... What does all of these mean?"

Leng Luo waved his hand and said, "Elder Zuo, I'll tell you about it outside. You've been away from the world for too long."

"Thank you, Elder Leng. I feel ashamed." Zuo Yushu followed Leng Luo out of the great hall.

Zuo Yushu's pride seemed to have vanished now. A newcomer should have to act like a newcomer.

"Zhao Yue," Lu Zhou said.

"Yes, master."

"Send word to Jiang Aijian and the Prince of Qi, Qin Jun. Tell them to use their resources to find a woman with the surname Luo. This woman appeared 300 years ago, and she helped Yun Tianluo to become the chief of the Three Sects," Lu Zhou said.

Zhao Yue went to work at once after she replied. "Yes, master."

After Zhao Yue left, Si Wuya's figure appeared in Lu Zhou's mind. Searching for a person in that manner was like finding a needle in a haystack. If he had the help of that rascal's Darknet, perhaps, he would have a better chance of finding that person.

...

Meanwhile, the survival created by the Big Dipper Academy and Core Yang Sect shook the cultivation world.

Hordes of cultivators swarmed toward the two sects. They were willing to trade the survival pills for a handsome amount of gold and treasures.

The pill was only just recently created, and it did not have a proper name yet. However, with the word 'survival' tagged to it, news of it spread like a wildfire.

There were many lotus-severing survival pills, but it was difficult to get one's hands on the leaf-sprouting pills.

...

Inside Evergreen Palace in the Imperial city, Divine Capital.

The new attendant walked in tentatively with something in his hands. "Your Majesty, here is a survival pill and five leaf-sprouting pills sent by the Big Dipper Academy. The president of the Big Dipper Academy says that the leaf-sprouting pills are extremely precious. The combined efforts of their two sects produced 1,200 survival pills and eight leaf-sprouting pills. Five of them are here."

Liu Gu grunted and said, "If it weren't for the lotus-severing experiment in the Imperial city, they would never be able to produce the survival pill. They should be thankful that I only took five pills from them."

"As expected of your brilliance, Your Majesty," the attendant said, "President Zhou said... that the leaf-sprouting pills have potent efficacy, but it can guarantee that one will sprout leaves."

Liu Gu remained expressionless. He eyed the platter in the attendant's hand coldly and said, "Pills are external aids, after all... The survival pill is more. The world is changing. There are internal troubles and external aggression. The Imperial guards must not sever their Golden Lotuses without my decree."

"Understood."

"Also, pass this message on. Order General Ping Qian, commander of the imperial guard in the northern imperial city, to guard the Big Dipper Academy with his soldiers. The pills are precious, and I hope that President Zhou will understand what I'm trying to do," said Liu Gu.

"Understood." The attendant lowered the platter on the table and retreated from the palace respectfully

On the surface, it seemed that Liu Gu wanted to protect the Big Dipper Academy. However, in truth, he was trying to prevent the pills from being widely spread in the cultivation world. The second Nine-leaf cultivator had to come from the Divine Capital, at the very least!

Liu Gu picked up a survival pill from the platter and mumbled, "Nine-leaf, Ji Tiandao... How did he do it? How can I be inferior to him?"

Ever since Liu Gu heard about the Evil Sky Pavilion's Ji Tiandao attaining the Nine-leaf stage, he could hardly eat or sleep well. He had pressured the Big Dipper Academy to develop the pills as quickly as possible. Now that the pills were completed, he saw hope again.

"So long as I remain within the Ten Terminal Formation, Old Villain Ji and Yu Zhenghai can do nothing against me." Without hesitation, Liu Gu tossed the pill into his mouth.

The pill melted.

He immediately felt as though his dantian's sea of Qi was set aflame.

Liu Gu raised his right hand and said in a deep voice, "Magistrate Brush, come!"

A brush hanging above the study table in the distance burst shone with golden radiance and flew into his hand with a buzz. He placed his left hand before his dantian's sea of Qi.

Whizz!

A miniature Eight-leaf avatar appeared before his eyes.

The eight dazzling and succulent leaves kept spinning around.

However, Liu Gu did not seem to hesitate. He steeled his heart and swung his arm. A fan-shaped energy shot out from his Magistrate Brush.

#### **Chapter 464: The Real Yu Shangrong**

The Magistrate Brush that shone with golden radiance dimmed at once.

Liu Gu let go, and the Magistrate Brush returned to the inkstone.

The shining Golden Lotus fell to the floor after it was severed. Then, it vanished. Only the avatar remained. Just like the experiments, the eight leaves began to fade away. Seven-leaf, Six-leaf... His Primal Qi scattered. Everything had returned to square one.

Liu Gu felt a scorching sensation in his dantian's sea of Qi. The power urged his dantian's sea of Qi to withdraw the remaining avatar. The avatar returned to his body.

Liu Gu's face broke out in sweat. He sat down with his legs crossed. The pill was taking effect, and this comforted him. At long last, the years of tireless attempts had finally borne fruit.

His chaotic Primal Qi was gradually stabilizing. A faint smile appeared on his face as he said, "Men."

Another attendant entered. "Your Majesty."

"I'll be cultivating in seclusion from this day onward."

"Understood."

This meant Liu Gu would not be stepped forward unless it was something extremely important.

The attendant who served the emperor was not surprised. The emperor had rarely shown an interest in governance to begin with. Usually, it was delegated to the prime minister or the civil and military officials.

In Liu Gu's opinion, all he needed was to maintain a hold on the Imperial guards and the commander-in-chief of the three armies to defend the Divine Capital. With this, he would never be defeated.

Now that a Nine-leaf cultivator had emerged in the world, he had to attain the Nine-leaf stage as quickly as possible. Otherwise, the entire Divine Capital would fall into another person's hand sooner or later.

Even if there were no Nine-leaf cultivators from the Evil Sky Pavilion, the method of severing the Golden Lotus would certainly enable the other sects to improve their strength.

As the monarch of an empire, he had to stand at the peak, no matter what.

...

Inside the eastern pavilion of the Evil Sky Pavilion.

After confirming that there was no change in the old parchment drawing, Lu Zhou returned to the rush cushion and sat down with his legs crossed. At the same time, he glanced at the system dashboard.

Name: Lu Zhou

Race: Human

Cultivation Base: Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, Dao Primal

Merit points: 21,000

Avatar: One-leaf Hundred Tribulations Insight

Remaining life: 12,750 days

Item: Deadly Strike Card x2, Critical Block Card x62 (passive), Binding Cage Card x4, Whitzard, Critical Heal Card x2, Strengthened Binding Cage Card x2, Strengthened Critical Heal Card x2, Thunderblast x1, Disguise Card x4, Reversal Card x 53

Weapon: Unnamed, Life Cutter, Jade Horsetail Whisk, Peacock Plume

Cultivation method: Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing

The trip to the Three Sects gave him more than 20,000 merit points. This surprised Lu Zhou.

Naturally, most of the merit points came from the worshipping of the Three Sects' disciples. Unfortunately, there were conditions to earning merit points from being worshipped. Otherwise, he would have gone around and threatened the other major sects to kowtow to himself.

Lu Zhou cleared his mind. Without holding back, he did ten consecutive lucky draws and was thanked ten times. Then, he meditated on the Heavenly Writing scrolls.

Although the lack of reward from the lucky draws stung, he had already gotten used to it.

He noticed that he now had 53 Reversal Cards.

According to the outside world's understanding of the Nine-leaf stage, there should be no issues if he were to prolong his life slightly. He did not hesitate and used 10 Reversal Cards.

The vitality in the surroundings gathered around him.

Swoosh!

A strong gale appeared, and the vitality surged.

Lu Zhou felt that there were more effects this time around.

'Eh?' It felt more chaotic compared to his previous experiences.

When the vitality entered his wizened body, there was some slight agitation and resistance, but it melted into his body soon enough. He looked at his remaining life on the menu.

Remaining life: 16,750 days

"Every card added 400 days?"

Was that the reason for the agitation and resistance?

The number of added days exceeded Lu Zhou's expectations.

If this was the pattern, he would do well to stock up on the Reversal Cards in the future! Stocking up on cards could change his life. Their values appreciated over time! However, he did not dwell on this for too long before closing his eyes and meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls.

...

On the plaza in front of the southern pavilion.

Leng Luo recounted the main events that occurred recently in the cultivation world to Zuo Yushu.



Zuo Yushu was suitably shocked.

“That man who seems like a humble gentleman is the current sword path elite, the Sword Devil?”

“Yes.”

“...”

“There’s no need to be overly worried. Mister Second is an honest and easygoing man. He’s not a narrow-minded character,” Leng Luo said.

“When I was still living in seclusion in the valley, I learned some bits of information from the mouths of the Zhencang Branch disciples. I’ve heard about the Sword Devil before. The very mention of his name shocks the heavens. The hit list of the cultivation world was made by him. He’s the reason why the cultivation world was restless.” Zuo Yushu turned to face Leng Luo and said, “Thank you for telling me this, Elder Leng.”

“You’re welcome.”

At this moment, the intense surge of Primal Qi outside the eastern pavilion drew their attention.

“Pay no heed to it. Whatever you do, do not go to the eastern pavilion,” Leng Luo said at once. After saying this, he turned and left.

Zuo Yushu nodded as she looked in the direction of the eastern pavilion. ‘Curiosity kills the cat. This must be something cultivated by Nine-leaf cultivators. It’s best to avoid that place for now.’

...

At noon, the next day.

The Core Yang Sect on Core Yang Mountain.

Clouds of smoke rose from the heaven memorial plaza.

A faint blue barrier enveloped the entire Core Yang Mountain.

Dozens of disciples formed a square formation on the plaza as they practiced their swordplay.

At this moment, a black dot appeared in the faraway skies. It was moving toward them.

“Enemy incoming! Prepare for battle!”

The Core Yang Sect disciples drew their swords and looked toward the skies.

Usually, anyone who came without warning and from another direction aside from the base of the mountain bore ill intentions.

The Core Yang Sect knew this was a tense and chaotic time as well. Hence, the entire Core Yang Mountain was guarded on all sides.

After the survival pill was made public, they had more visiting cultivators than they could count. If they had not employed the help of the elites from the Penglai Sect, the Core Yang Sect would have been

plundered a long time ago. Just because they were skilled in refining pills, it did not mean that they possessed profound cultivation bases.

“Summon the seniors from the Penglai Sect here.”

“Understood.”

As they spoke, the black spot was already outside Core Yang Sect’s barrier.

From this distance, the Core Yang Sect disciples could not see the face of the newcomer. However, anyone who could come to Core Yang Mountain should not be underestimated.

“Who goes there?” one of the disciples asked domineeringly as he pointed his sword at the newcomer.

“I’m Yu Shangrong,” Yu Shangrong answered honestly.

As soon as Yu Shangrong revealed his name, the disciples on Core Yang Mountain were shocked speechless.

“How many times have someone impersonated an Evil Sky Pavilion disciple?” someone mumbled.

“Let’s deal with him politely, just in case. So long as we refuse to give him our pills, he won’t be able to get what he wants.”

The others nodded.

Yu Shangrong observed the barrier. If he had his Eight-leaf cultivation base, he could have forced his way through a barrier like this with the power of his Longevity Sword and the runes. The problem was, he was only at the Three-leaf stage now.

“Comrade, how are you going to prove your identity?” The disciple in the lead was smart. With this, the conversation could go either way.

“Wu Dayong, the Sect Master of the Core Yang Sect, can verify my identity. If I didn’t witness his dedication to refining pills years ago, his name would’ve been on my hit list as well.” Yu Shangrong dismounted from Bi An and hovered in the air. He said in a casual tone, “I bear no ill will. Everything that I said is meant in kindness.”

“...”

## **Chapter 465:**

### **The Sword Devil Should Not Be Crossed**

Yu Shangrong was trying his best to get what he wanted without having to resort to force. After all, it was unlikely for him to be able to upend the Core Yang Sect with his Three-leaf Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm.

“You don’t look like him,” one of the disciples said.

“Is that so?”

Zing!

The Longevity Sword was unsheathed. The scarlet sword danced in the air.

Bam!

The Longevity Sword collided with the barrier. A huge ripple spread across the barrier.

The disciples were startled into jumping, shaken.

“A scarlet sword!”

At this moment, a man dressed in a robe came running from the distance. “Impudent fools! How dare you behave rudely toward Mister Second? Do you have a death wish?”

The disciples turned around and saw the man bowing and running at the same time.

“Elder Shen?”

When the other disciples saw him, they bowed.

“Elder Shen.”

Elder Shen waved his hand. He waded through the crowd and ran to the edge of the barrier. When he was at the spot closest to Yu Shangrong, he looked up carefully before his eyes widened. Then, he said reverently, “It’s the Evil Sky Pavilion’s Mister Second! Welcome! Welcome!”

Upon hearing these words, the disciples shuddered. All of them threw their swords aside and fell to their knees without a word. “Greetings, Mister Second!”

Yu Shangrong was puzzled. He looked at the man. He had no recollection of him. Moreover, he preferred to act alone and challenge elites wherever he went. It was impossible for him to make friends. How could someone recognize him? Nevertheless, he decided to go with the flow. It was a good thing for someone else to recognize him. This saved him some trouble. He descended slowly.

Elder Shen opened a path through the barrier and made an inviting gesture.

Yu Shangrong glanced at him before stepping through the barrier. He asked, “How should I address you, my friend?”

Elder Shen kept his back bent as he said, “I’m Shen Liangshou... I’ve met Old Senior Ji once during the battle of Liang Province.”

This man was none other than the person on top of the white list, Shen Liangshou. After the incident, he stopped dabbling in human trafficking. After recovering his cultivation base with sable magnolias, he came to the Core Yang Sect and was appointed as an elder. He was now wiser from his experience.

Ji Tiandao was the person Shen Liangshou worshipped the most. Having made the mistake of looking down on Ji Tiandao before, he did everything in his power to learn about the characteristics of the Evil Sky Pavilion’s nine disciples. As he expected, it came in handy now. This was especially true for Ji Tiandao. Shen Liangshou was confident that he would be able to recognize him immediately should they meet again. He would not make the same mistake twice.

“That’s good.” Yu Shangrong nodded.

When the others heard this, they stepped backward with a shocked expression on their faces. It was as though they were facing a great enemy.

Shen Liangshou swept his gaze past the disciples. He cleared his throat and reprimanded them, "I'll teach all of you a lesson later for disrespecting Mister Second."

The disciples remained kneeling. They dared not move.

Shen Liangshou felt awkward as he said, "My apologies. These disciples don't know how to behave. I feel ashamed on their behalf."

"It's alright."

"What brings you here, Mister Second?" Shen Liangshou asked. In truth, he could already guess Yu Shangrong's purpose for coming here. However, the Evil Sky Pavilion was known to act unconventionally.

"I heard that the Core Yang Sect has lotus-severing survival pills," Yu Shangrong said.

Shen Liangshou expected as much. He immediately flashed a smile and said, "Men."

"Y-yes, Elder Shen," one of the Core Yang Sect disciples said in a trembling voice.

"Bring ten survival pills over and give them to Mister Second," Shen Liangshou said.

"Yes... Yes..."

The disciple was about to turn and leave when Yu Shangrong waved his hand and said, "It's best if you can give me 100."

Shen Liangshou. "...". Currently, the supply of survival pills could not meet the demand. 100 pills were not a small number. He winced as he said, "Mister Second, why don't we have a cup of tea and talk about this?"

"I decline... I'm in a hurry." Yu Shangrong's expression remained calm.

"In that case, kindly wait here as I fetch the survival pills for you." Shen Liangshou did not dare to dally. He turned around and went to the pill-refining room.

Yu Shangrong looked up at Bi An who was hovering nearby. He nodded.

Bi An landed beside him.

The disciples had never seen a mount like it before. They retreated further out of fright.

Shortly after, Sheng Liangshou hurried back with 100 survival pills. He presented them reverently with both hands to Yu Shangrong. "Mister Second, 100 survival pills, as requested."

"I heard that the Core Yang Sect has leaf-sprouting pills as well," Yu Shangrong said with a straight face.

Shen Liangshou was already feeling the pinch from the previous request. When he heard Yu Shangrong mentioning the leaf-sprouting pills, he pulled a long face and said, "Mister Second, the survival pill is all

we have. The leaf-sprouting pills are more precious and are extremely difficult to refine. Only the Big Dipper Academy is capable of refining them.”

Yu Shangrong nodded when he heard this. He received the 100 survival pills and brought them to his nose before he took a whiff. A unique medicinal scent wafted into his nose.

“Mister Second, are you going to sever your lotus?” Shen Liangshou asked in a hushed voice after making sure the others were out of earshot.

“Hm?”

Shen Liangshou said furtively, “Mister Second, take the pill before severing your lotus, and when you do so, you must be quick, decisive, and precise...”

Yu Shangrong glanced at Shen Liangshou and asked, “What else?”

Shen Liangshou glanced at the disciples behind him again, and he pointed at the edge of the barrier.

Yu Shangrong understood Shen Liangshou’s meaning and followed Shen Liangshou.

Shen Liangshou lowered his voice as though he was a thief and said, “If you have the leaf-sprouting pills, you may consume them during the earlier stages and improve your strength as soon as possible. The leaf-sprouting pills aren’t much use in the later stages. The effects will also be diminished when the user’s cultivation base has improved. Also, if the improvement is too quick, the foundation will be unstable.”

Yu Shangrong nodded. “That sounds logical.”

“Mister Second, when you return, can you put in a good word or two for me in front of Old Senior Ji? I’ll be eternally grateful.” Shen Liangshou bowed.

“That can be arranged.” Yu Shangrong put the survival pills away. Then, he tapped the ground with the tips of his feet and flew toward Bi An.

“Safe journey, Mister Second.”

Yu Shangrong sat atop Bi An and flew down Core Yang Mountain.

Shen Liangshou turned around at once and ran toward Core Yang Sect’s meeting hall. He reached his destination soon enough. He opened the doors and entered the hall. “Sect Master Wu, he has left.”

From a corner, Wu Dayong walked out with a slight tremble. He wiped the sweat from his face and stole a glance at the skies. After making sure that Yu Shangrong was not there, he finally spoke, “Thank the heavens that you showed up just in time. I was scared out of my wits...”

“Don’t fret, sect master. Mister Second wasn’t hostile,” Shen Liangshou replied.

“In any case... the Core Yang Sect can’t afford to cross the Sword Devil, let alone the Evil Sky Pavilion,” Wu Dayong said.

...

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou opened his eyes after meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls for a night. He gauged his extraordinary power. He had one-fifth of his full capacity. As expected, if he proceeded at this pace, all he needed was five days to completely replenish his extraordinary power. Indeed, his meditating speed had increased.

“What would the fifth Heavenly Writing power be like?” Lu Zhou muttered to himself. He stood up and looked at the old parchment drawing. Apart from Great Yan’s lands, the other parts of the drawing were still a blur. There was nothing there.

Lu Zhou decided to attempt the lucky draws to change the pace of things. He sat down. “Lucky draw.”

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points. Spent 54 luck points. Obtained Appearance Alteration Card x5.”

“Appearance Alteration Card. Enables you to change your appearance. Lasts for five days per use.”

“Appearance Alteration Card?” Lu Zhou was puzzled when he saw the new item card. Was the system on a mission to troll him right now? Why would it give out a useless card such as this one? What use would he have for the Appearance Alteration Card? Lu Zhou’s current appearance was much different compared to when he just recently transmigrated here. This latest card was more useless than the last!

At this moment, Zhao Yue’s voice rang from outside the pavilion. “Master, Si Wuya requests an audience.”

“What is it?”

“He says that he remembers something about the memory crystal.”

“Bring him here.”

“Yes, master.”

#### **Chapter 466: Yu Zhenghai’s Secret**

Soon after, Zhao Yue brought Si Wuya to the eastern pavilion.

Si Wuya’s mental state was visibly better than it was a few days ago. He opened the doors carefully and walked in while Zhao Yue waited outside. When he entered the study, he saw Lu Zhou sitting on a rush cushion with his eyes closed. He called out softly, “Master.”

Lu Zhou slowly opened his eyes before he looked at Si Wuya and said, “Sit.”

“I dare not, master.”

“Speak, then,” Lu Zhou said.

Si Wuya nodded and said, “I’ve been reflecting inside the Cave of Reflection over the past few days. I’ve been thinking about the memory crystals as well. I have a feeling the crystal is in Rongxi instead of Rongbei.”

“Why would you say that?” Lu Zhou asked.

“After you sealed your memories, master, you went to Rongxi... There are five nations in Rongxi: Qigong Nation, Wuxian Nation, Sushen Nation, Changgu Nation, and Lou Lan. Many Other Tribesmen dwelled in

the five nations. They believe and worship evil monsters. After you returned from sealing your memories, we were attacked by the elites from the ten great sects... For them to plan the siege, they must know about your movements in detail. In my opinion, Lou Lan is the only one with the motives and strength to pull it off."

"Lou Lan?" Lu Zhou was puzzled. When he first transmigrated here, he had always thought the troubles were caused by the rascals, especially Yu Zhenghai. Now that he heard Si Wuya's words, he thought it was believable.

Si Wuya continued to say, "Second Senior Brother once killed a royal consort in the western regions. Do you know why, master?"

Lu Zhou glanced at him with a slight frown on his face. His expression clearly said, "Are you trying to be funny, you rascal?"

Si Wuya was so startled that he hastily said, "The royal consort was a grand shaman. She had her eyes on Second Senior Brother and wanted to control him. Second Senior Brother was not fooled. After killing the royal consort, the Imperial family had to accept Consort Yu into the palace to establish an alliance by marriage. Consort Yu is a mortal, but she brought Mo Li, who had wanted to plunge Great Yan into chaos. Alas, the Evil Sky Pavilion stood in her way."

Lu Zhou nodded. "What you're saying is that Lou Lan is the one that's plotting against me."

"Most likely so," Si Wuya replied.

"What does this have to do with the memory crystals?"

Si Wuya said, "Since the people of Lou Lan know about your movements so well... I'm sure they know where you've been in Rongxi. If we can retrace your steps back then, perhaps, we can find the memory crystal."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and pondered on Si Wuya's words. This rascal had a point. However, how were they supposed to go about doing this?

Si Wuya seemed to have foreseen this. He said, "Master, I've also planted some of my own men in the Other Tribes, especially in Lou Lan."

Lu Zhou looked at Si Wuya again. He noticed that Si Wuya's loyalty was higher than before. However, it was still not very high.

"Master, I'm the only one who can do this. Although Jiang Aijian is the Third Prince and has many sources, he doesn't understand the Other Tribes well enough. Moreover, Jiang Aijian is unfettered and indolent in nature. He won't pay attention to much information. In the past, I've notified the Evil Sky Pavilion of many pieces of information under the Darknet's name. Jiang Aijian could have done that if he only..."

"Jiang Aijian can be trusted..."

At this juncture, Si Wuya fell silent immediately. He noticed his master's intent gaze, and he shuddered inwardly. He fell to one knee and hastily said, "It's not my intention to slander Jiang Aijian! Please forgive me, master!"

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. "Do you know why I wanted you to reflect on your actions in the Cave of Reflection?"

"I know that my act of treason can never be forgiven. I have no complaints, no matter the punishment," Si Wuya replied.

"You're wrong."

It was clearly unreasonable to punish Si Wuya this severely just because he had defected in the past. After all, he had kneeled outside the Heaven Choice Temple for three days and three nights to save Zhu Honggong. Moreover, to save Yu Shangrong, he scoured Great Yan in search of runes. In his personal diary, it was clearly documented how he had saved Yu Zhenghai. If Lu Zhou continued to blame him after all discovering these things, it would be clear that Lu Zhou was intentionally being obtuse.

Lu Zhou continued to say, "You're just like Yu Shangrong. You have much-unneeded pride."

"Pride?"

"You can be confident, but being overconfident makes you conceited. Pride will often cloud your eyes," Lu Zhou said.

Si Wuya was stunned. He remembered the pile of paper inside the Cave of Reflection. He felt his cheeks burn. He prided himself in being intelligent and being able to come up with strategic plans. However, he could not solve a single one of those questions. In the end, he said, "You're right, master. I understand now."

Lu Zhou walked to the nearest chair and sat down. He said, "Up until now... You still won't reveal what happened to Yu Zhenghai?"

Si Wuya shuddered. "I've made a promise to Eldest Senior Brother."

Lu Zhou frowned slightly when he saw Si Wuya's determination. Si Wuya claimed that he had been reflecting, and yet, he still remained stubborn.

Lu Zhou's expression was stern as he said in a deep voice, "Fine. If you insist on not revealing the truth to me, you're now banished from the pavilion. From this day on, you no longer have any ties with the Evil Sky Pavilion. I'll return the Peacock Plume to you."

Lu Zhou flipped his right hand, and the Peacock Plume appeared above his palm. He did not hesitate as he tossed it over to Si Wuya.

Si Wuya was as still as a wooden chicken.

Lu Zhou looked at Si Wuya with his keen eyes, waiting for Si Wuya's answer. "You can leave whenever you want. If we meet again as enemies, don't expect me to show any mercy."

"..."

Lu Zhou would never believe in Si Wuya's determination to keep his promises. 'If you can betray your own master, wouldn't I be foolish to believe that you'll keep your promise to Yu Zhenghai? What a joke!'



Si Wuya looked at the Peacock Plume with a stunned expression. His mind was completely blank at this moment.

“Ding! Instructed Si Wuya. Reward: 500 merit points.”

This time, both of Si Wuya’s knees were on the ground. He prostrated himself and said, “I’ll tell you what I know, but you must promise me one thing, master.”

“You’re trying to negotiate with me?”

Si Wuya hastily said, “... I have no intention of being disobedient, master, nor am I bold enough to negotiate with you.”

“Aren’t you trying to negotiate now?” Lu Zhou stared at Si Wuya with blazing eyes.

“Uh...” Si Wuya felt extremely awkward. All his confidence and composure seemed to vanish under his master’s eyes. He was extremely flustered. For a time, he was at a loss for words.

Lu Zhou produced Si Wuya’s diary from his sleeve. After reading it, he placed it on the table.

The room was extremely quiet now.

The master and disciple, one seated, the other kneeling.

After a long pause, Lu Zhou said, “Do you think there’s no way I’d find out about it just because you refuse to tell me?”

Si Wuya looked up at Lu Zhou and said in shock, “You knew?”

“The people of Wuqi, upon their deaths, provided that their hearts remain intact, can be resurrected if they’re buried and watered.”

“...” Si Wuya’s eyes widened. He looked at his diary on the table. The records were too obvious. It was difficult to not notice them. In the end, his master had found out about it. He prostrated himself again. He said in a hoarse voice, “Eldest Senior Brother has had a tough life!”

“Him?” Lu Zhou appeared skeptical. Yu Zhenghai had founded the Nether Sect and assimilated other factions to his sect everywhere he went. His Four Great Protectors were valiant warriors. Now that the Fiend Path was practically under his control, he traveled in his flying chariot to establish his dominance daily. He attacked cities and conquered lands. How was this a tough life?

#### **Chapter 467: Poor Eldest Senior Brother**

The appearance of Si Wuya’s diary shattered his defenses and arguments.

Lu Zhou had thought long and hard after obtaining the diary. Sometimes, his mind would wander to it while he meditated on the Heavenly Writing scrolls. What kind of person could return from the dead? Even a person such as Yun Tianluo could not come back to life even with the help of the mysterious Luo woman. How did Yu Zhenghai manage that? In truth, even if he could not find the answer from his memories, he could still find it in the books. ‘Watering them to bring them back to life’. This sentence was too obvious of a clue.

Si Wuya remained kneeling as he slowly said, "Several hundred years ago, the Wuqians once lived inside Great Yan. When the war broke out, the Wuqians had to migrate elsewhere. They traveled from Yang Province in the easternmost region to Liang Province in the westernmost region. All was well, in the beginning."

Si Wuya continued to say, "The Wuqians were caught in the crossfire of the war between Great Yan and Lou Lan. They were nearly wiped out. Only three tribesmen survived. Eldest Senior Brother was one of them. They were still young back then. They had to beg for a living and sleep on the streets. They were beaten, cursed at, and scorned. Eldest Senior Brother often stole food for his fellow comrades. Eldest Senior Brother is unyielding and stubborn in nature. Sometimes, he wouldn't even bow his head after a beating..."

Lu Zhou had experienced this firsthand. Yu Zhenghai's temperament could simply be described as being stubborn. It was nearly impossible to change Yu Zhenghai's mind once he had made up his mind.

"Then, two of out of the three were beaten to death. Eldest Senior Brother was sold off by some traffickers to Lou Lan." Si Wuya paused at this moment. He looked up slightly, trying to gauge Lu Zhou's expression. He discovered Lu Zhou's expression was the usual. He could not figure out what Lu Zhou was thinking.

When Si Wuya paused, Lu Zhou asked, "Why didn't the Wuqians come back to life after their deaths?"

"It's difficult for ordinary Wuqians to achieve that. The conditions for it to happen are strict. Wuqians who started cultivating would also need to be looked after by someone else. Besides... Wuqians can only be resurrected thrice. Every time they die, they would lose 300 years of their lives. Now that Eldest Senior Brother is a peak Eight-leaf cultivator, he's supposed to have 1,000 years of life. Unfortunately..." Si Wuya trailed off.

Lu Zhou was deep in thought. He understood the situation. If the Wuqians could be resurrected without limits, they would be immortal. Was there not a single person in the vast cultivation world who broke free from these shackles?

"Continue," Lu Zhou said.

"Eldest Senior Brother thought that life would be easier once he was in Lou Lan. However, not only did it become worse, but he did not even get a good night's rest. An aristocrat in Lou Lan loathed Great Yan. In search of pleasure, he bound Eldest Senior Brother, gouge, and cut him with a knife every day. Every cut caused Eldest Senior Brother excruciating pain. This went on for seven days before he eventually bled to death..." At this point, Si Wuya clenched his fists, and his knuckles whitened. His emotions were clearly agitated as he continued to say, "Perhaps, the heavens pitied Eldest Senior Brother and didn't think his time was up. Coincidentally, he was dumped into a muddy pool and remained there for 49 days. After he came back to life, he followed a caravan from Lou Lan and headed east, back to Lou Lan. Then, he officially became your disciple, master."

When Si Wuya finished speaking, he remained on his knees. However, his back was ramrod straight. Then, he said, "I'm willing to help Eldest Senior Brother conquer the world. I've never regretted this nor will I ever regret it."

After hearing what Si Wuya had to say, Lu Zhou's thoughts were complicated. His mind was filled with thoughts about Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong's past. Whether it was the fairfolk, the Noblemen Nation, or the Wuqians, they were all related to the longevity of life.

According to what his disciples had said, if Ji Tiandao truly wanted to use his disciples to attain the Nine-leaf stage or obtain longevity, why did he not do it? His nine disciples should have ended up becoming sacrifices, after all. What happened in between?

Lu Zhou glanced at the diary. He asked, "How do you explain this diary?"

"That's why I'm begging you, master, Please spare Eldest Senior Brother this once... What's recorded in the diary happened when Eldest Senior Brother had just entered the Eight-leaf stage. It was his second death," Si Wuya said.

"Second death?"

Since Yu Zhenghai had joined the Evil Sky Pavilion, he had begun cultivating. With his cultivation base and strength, how could he have died so easily?

"I'm afraid you're the only one who knows the reason for that, master," Si Wuya said.

Lu Zhou frowned. He stood up, placed his hands behind his back, and began pacing. If he knew the reason, there would not be so much trouble now. After carefully searching through his memories, he found nothing. 'Oh, Ji Tiandao. Did you really seal your memories of you killing your disciples?'

Although Lu Zhou was only a transmigrator, and these things had nothing to do with him, he was now playing the role of Ji Tiandao. He was destined to be unable to break free from this.

"You suspect that I killed Yu Zhenghai?" Lu Zhou asked. If this had been brought up when he had just transmigrated here, Lu Zhou would have suspected that Ji Tiandao had killed Yu Zhenghai as well. However, it seemed to him now that there was more than meets the eye. Ji Tiandao's fiery temper aside, from the fragments of memories he had, he did not think Ji Tiandao was a cruel and heartless person.

The term 'Fiend Path' was nothing more than an umbrella term given by individuals from the opposing faction.

"I dare not..." Si Wuya continued, "I'm willing to look for the memory crystal."

Previously, Si Wuya would never agree to search for the memory crystal. Now that his master was at the Nine-leaf stage, those worries no longer existed.

"Listen here, Si Wuya." Lu Zhou raised his voice.

"Yes, master!"

"I'm giving you two missions. The first one is to search for the memory crystal. The second one is to persuade Yu Zhenghai to return," Lu Zhou said imposingly.

Si Wuya kowtowed and said, "Yes, master... However..."

"However what?"

"I have no questions about the first mission, but Eldest Senior Brother can be stubborn. I'm afraid..." Si Wuya wore a helpless expression on his face.

Si Wuya had expected Lu Zhou to insist on him completing the mission, but Lu Zhou only said, "I'll leave it to you... That will be all."

'You'll leave it to me?' Si Wuya was stunned. However, when he saw his master walking toward the rush cushion, he no longer dared to stay any longer. He rose to his feet and said, "I'll take my leave now, master."

"Look for Pan Zhong to restore your cultivation base. Take the Peacock Plume with you."

"Thank you, master!" Si Wuya was overjoyed. He picked up his Peacock Plume and retreated reverently from the room.

Lu Zhou turned around and was about to meditate on the Heavenly Writing scrolls when he looked up and saw the words on his wall.

'Is there such a coincidence under the heavens? If it's true, does this mean I have another disciple? Someone with the name Shi?'

...

Meanwhile, in a certain restaurant in Runan City.

Jiang Aijian scratched his head and wondered, "A woman with the surname Luo? This must be a joke!"

"Old Villain Ji really thinks that I can do anything..." Jiang Aijian stroked his chin. "Although there's nothing I can't do, this isn't how I'm supposed to be treated!"

He grabbed a waiter who was passing by and asked, "Excuse me, do you know where I can find a woman with the surname Luo?"

The waiter was taken aback by this treatment. "Dear customer... Y-you should look for her yourself." Inwardly, he muttered to himself, 'This man has a few screws loose!'

Jiang Aijian pushed him away and said, "The surname Luo... A person who helped Yun Tianluo reached the highest level with a single step. Why doesn't any of this feel real to me? Forget it, I'll just start searching randomly then."

Jiang Aijian leaped out of the restaurant and vanished with a flurry of movements.

...

Dozens of miles north from the Core Yang Sect.

Yu Shangrong rode on Bi An. It was flying slowly. He was enjoying the scenery; it put him in a good mood.

Aurr!

Bi An suddenly cried out.

Yu Shangrong was puzzled. "Hm?"

Aurr!

"Up ahead?"

Yu Shangrong saw a forest. Black smoke was rising as though something had caught fire.

"Let's avoid it."

Bi An adjusted its direction and skirted the forest. The skies above them were shrouded with smoke.

"Poison?" Yu Shangrong frowned slightly. His instincts told him that the black smoke was not as simple as it seemed. He steered Bi An and flew low.

At this moment, a peculiar voice rang from the forest. "Why don't you come down and have a talk, my friend?"

### **Chapter 468: Three Deadly Souls**

Yu Shangrong appeared calm. He had expected that someone would stand in his way. The black cloud of smoke was clearly meant to stop him.

Just as well.

Yu Shangrong brought Bi An to a slow descent.

Three people walked out of the forest.

One of them was lavishly dressed with a sparse mustache. He stood in the lead as he said, "My friend, I'd like to buy something off you."

"What is it?"

"The lotus-severing survival pills." At this moment, the lavishly-dressed man waved his hand.

The other two brought out their riches and packed them before they handed the bundle of riches to him.

Cultivators were never attracted by materialistic items.

"Are you certain that you want to buy them?" Yu Shangrong smiled faintly.

"Naturally... You can think of this as a robbery as well," the lavishly-dressed man said as he returned Yu Shangrong's smile, "The Core Yang Sect is protected by a barrier. We've caught quite a number of their customers. However, this is our first time seeing one on a mount."

Yu Shangrong nodded. "You can use witchcraft. Are you from Lou Lan or Rouli?"

The lavishly-dressed man was slightly taken aback by Yu Shangrong's words. He said, "You have a keen eye, my friend... Since Great Yan has entered the Lotus Severing era, we, Roulians, naturally, can't lag behind."

'So, they're from Rouli.' After thinking about it, Yu Shangrong found this normal. Great Yan's cultivators were now severing their lotuses. When there were enough Nine-leaf cultivators, that would be the day where the Other Tribes were going to be exterminated. Rongxi and Rongbei would not let this opportunity slip through their fingers. It was only natural for them to send scouts here.

"Roulians." Yu Shangrong maintained his smile. "My sword never kills those without a name."

"You're proud, alas, it's ill-placed." The lavishly-dressed man waved his hand.

The two others removed their clothes, revealing their sculpted bodies. Their skin was covered in densely packed runes. They seemed strange and ostentatious. Well, they were Other Tribesmen, after all.

Whizz! Whizz!

Two wolf king avatars appeared.

Yu Shangrong glanced at them. They were both Two-leaf Golden Lotus avatars.

The Golden Lotus could be used as a means to attack and defend. If the lotus, which possessed considerable defensive strength, was used well, a Two-leaf Golden Lotus avatar was, theoretically, much superior to a Two-leaf avatar without a Golden Lotus. Alas, Yu Shangrong was not one who could be defined by theory alone.

Yu Shangrong did not expect to run into Other Tribesmen here.

The two Roulians charged at him. With their wolf king avatars, their strength and agility were rather shocking.

Whoosh!

The two wolf king avatars leaped and lunged at Yu Shangrong in unison.

Yu Shangrong remained unruffled as he patted Bi An's body and said, "Move to the side. I'm worried that I might hurt you."

Auurrr!

A seemingly unwilling and disdainful expression appeared on Bi An's face, but it did as it was told. With great reluctance, it took several steps back.

When the two avatars were descending on Yu Shangrong...

Zing!

Yu Shangrong unsheathed his Longevity Sword! It glowed brilliantly with a scarlet light! With his sword in hand, he moved swiftly. Instead of retreating, he advanced. With a tap of his feet, he leaped nimbly into the air and forcefully swung his sword. There was a blur of movements. Not even the shadow of the sword could be clearly seen. "Traceless Sword."

The Longevity Sword slid across the two wolf king avatars. The two avatars shattered immediately. Concurrently, two miserable cries resonated in the air.

Yu Shangrong landed behind the two Roulians. He did not even turn back to look at them to know the outcome.

The Longevity Sword returned to its scabbard.

Pa! Pa! Pa!

The lavishly-dressed man clapped his hands and said, "You're quite skilled with the sword, my friend..."

"You flatter me."

The lavishly-dressed man continued to say, "There are many with outstanding sword skills in Great Yan... I've heard about many sword path elites. Sword Freak Chen Wenjie, Sword Devil Yu Shangrong, Sword Slave Wang Haichao... Alas, compared to them, you still have a long way to go."

"Indeed." Yu Shangrong did not contradict the man's words. His current cultivation base was only at the Three-leaf stage. He was a far cry from his former self.

"Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Karran, younger brother of Rouli's great General Karol." Karran smiled confidently.

"Never heard of you."

"..."

"Karol, on the other hand, sounds familiar..."

"Hm?"

Yu Shangrong wielded his sword with his right hand. He held it at an angle as he stepped forward. He was smiling; he clearly did not think much about Karran. A slight breeze ruffled his robes.

Karran was filled with a sense of foreboding when he sensed Yu Shangrong's aura.

Whizz!

Karran spread his arms, and a huge wolf king avatar appeared behind him.

It was a Six-leaf wolf king avatar!

"A witchcraft Formation has been laid here... Inside this Formation, my strength can be temporarily boosted to the Seven-leaf stage," Karran said.

Yu Shangrong continued advancing with a smile on his face.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Whizz!

When Yu Shangrong was ten meters away from the wolf king avatar, his 30-foot avatar appeared next to him. The avatar was in a horizontal position as though it was flying.

"Three-leaf?" When Karran saw Yu Shangrong's avatar, he frowned slightly. Soon after, a sneer appeared on his face. "I've overestimated you."

The black smoke from the forest gathered around the wolf king avatar.

At this moment, Yu Shangrong ran toward Karran. In just a blink of an eye, he vanished from sight.

Karran was stunned. The world before his eyes seemed to distort and turned blurry.

Three shadows appeared to the left, right, and center.

At the same time, Karran saw the leaves of the Three-leaf avatar spinning around a sword in a clockwise direction!

Karran was shocked. There was no Golden Lotus! This was an avatar with only leaves! He wasted no time in releasing a burst of Primal Qi. "Erupt!"

The Primal Qi from Karran's avatar spilled into the surroundings.

"I'm sorry, but you're too slow."

A sharp sword struck. The Three Souls were gathered.

The sword seemed to have penetrated Karran's soul as it pierced his avatar before it pierced his chest.

The battle was over.

The entire place was silent.

Yu Shangrong stood behind Karran, his back was straight, and his posture was poised. He was unbelievably graceful. His sword was still pointed ahead.

Yu Shangrong did not care about Karran's life or death. Instead, he looked at the scarlet Longevity Sword. The three shining golden leaves spun around the Longevity Sword and vanished. This proved his hypothesis. Although the Golden Lotus's defense was formidable, the sharpness of the leaves was also remarkable.

Karran pressed a hand to his chest as he fell to one knee, coughing violently. An incredulous expression could be seen on his face. Before the witchcraft had even completely boosted him, he was already killed. How did this happen? Why was this random Great Yan cultivator so powerful?

"You... You..." Karran said with great difficulty, "Can you... tell me y-your name? S-so that I can rest in peace..." Blood trickled out of the edges of his lips when he spoke, dyeing his robes red.

Yu Shangrong turned around slowly. He did not even spare Karran a glance. He looked at the bundle lying between the two corpses as he raised his hand. The bundle flew up, its scent reminding him of a certain medicine. 'Survival pills?' He smiled as he finally replied to Karran, "Yu Shangrong."

After revealing his name, Yu Shangrong flew up, mounted Bi An, and shot toward the horizons.

Karran sat on the ground and chuckled to himself. "Sword Devil... No wonder... No wonder. Alright... curse my rotten luck, then!" He spat out another mouthful of blood. There was almost no chance that he could survive that sword strike. Nevertheless, his strong survival instinct kept him upright.



"I can't die... I can't die... Sword Devil, there's too much... too much that you don't understand about Rouli!" Karran muttered to himself feverishly as he removed his clothes and drew several peculiar symbols on his body with his blood. It did not take long before he was completely covered in his blood.

Pa! Pa! Pa!

A figure walked out, clapping his hands. He looked at the Bi An's shrinking figure in the horizons with an expression of reverence and awe. "No way, he did this? A Three-leaf cultivator killing a Six-leaf cultivator?!"

Karran's head swiveled to look at the newcomer.

The newcomer was peculiarly dressed. It seemed as though he did not notice Karran as praises flowed out of his mouth. "How did he do that? A Three-leaf killing a Six-leaf? Did my eyes deceive me? Or is your Six-leaf cultivation base fake? No way, that's impossible! It can't be!"

Karran was puzzled.

"Hey, I'm talking to you!" The peculiarly-dressed man kicked Karran.

"Ahh!"

#### **Chapter 469: I'm No Longer a Weakling**

Karran was already on the brink of death. When he was kicked, he felt as though his internal organs had split apart. A few moments ago, he still had hopes that he could save his own life, but his hopes vanished without a trace at this moment. His eyes were bloodshot as he said, "You... who are you?! You vermin who strikes a man when he's down!"

The peculiarly-dressed man scratched his head. Yu Shangrong's image surfaced in his mind. He cleared his throat and said nonchalantly, "My apologies."

"Huh?"

"I'm Yu Shangrong."

"..." Karran's mind turned blank. Was he hallucinating after being stabbed by a sword? The person he had fought earlier had said he was Yu Shangrong. How could there be another Yu Shangrong? He coughed violently as he thought to himself, 'Illusion, this is an illusion!'

Karran closed his eyes to stabilize his breathing. He rubbed his eyes and opened them again. "Sword... Sword Devil?"

The peculiarly dressed man nodded lightly and said, "It's only a title. It's too insignificant to mention."

"... Fight me fairly if you dare," Karran said, seething with anger.

"I'm sorry. I'm the kind of person who likes to seize the opportunity when my opponent is down." The strange man raised his hand. A hook-like weapon appeared in his hand.

"You shameless... Ahh!"

The Separation Hook slashed across Karran's neck. Then, a few energy seals landed on his chest.

A moment later, Mingshi Yin raised his palms, raining down a barrage of blows on Karran before he finally nodded in satisfaction. "Second Senior Brother, you truly know too little about the Other Tribes. I'm better suited to deal with these Other Tribesmen." He stretched his limbs and looked at the sun in the sky. "How nice... It's still early. I'll go to the Big Dipper Academy and get myself some leaf-sprouting pills."

...

Inside the eastern pavilion of the Evil Sky Pavilion.

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 1,000 merit points."

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 1,000 merit points."

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 1,500 merit points."

When Lu Zhou heard these notifications, he opened his eyes, temporarily pulled out of his meditative state.

"Yu Shangrong?"

With Yu Shangrong's current Three-leaf cultivation base, it should be slightly difficult for him to kill a grand cultivator. Mingshi Yin must have helped him.

"It's good that they're helping each other out."

Lu Zhou closed his eyes and continued to meditate.

...

The next morning.

Yu Shangrong had already returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion. He did not delay and made his way to the eastern pavilion. He said with a bow, "I am honored that I didn't let you down, master. I've brought back 223 survival pills."

"Good." Lu Zhou asked, "Did everything go smoothly?"

"Everything went smoothly. There were no troubles," Yu Shangrong replied.

There was a moment of silence, before Lu Zhou said, "You never used to lie."

Yu Shangrong was taken aback. Then, he bowed and said, "I've made a mistake. I did run into three individuals on my way back. They're petty thieves and aren't worthy of mentioning."

"It's good to see that you've returned. Rest well," Lu Zhou said.

Yu Shangrong was about to turn around and leave when he recalled Si Wuya's words. "I have a request, master."

"Let's hear it."

"I'd like to read Seventh Junior Brother's diary."

'Diary?' Lu Zhou opened his eyes and looked at the table next to him. He waved his hand. An energy picked the diary up and brought it out of the room.

Bam!

The door closed.

Yu Shangrong caught the diary. He bowed and said, "I'll take my leave."

"Ding! Yu Shangrong accomplished the survival pill mission. Reward: 10,000 merit points."

Lu Zhou closed his eyes and continued to meditate on the Heavenly Writing scrolls. He did not leave the eastern pavilion over the next four days.

...

On the fifth morning, Lu Zhou sensed that his extraordinary power was completely replenished. His mental state and bodily functions were much better than before.

"My cultivation base seems to have improved as well," Lu Zhou mumbled to himself, "It seems like making breakthroughs at quite a rapid pace."

In that case, he should save his merit points to purchase the Golden Lotus Leaf. If he could save his merit points and use them when things get difficult in the later stages, he should be able to rank up quicker.

Lu Zhou stretched his body before he opened the door and went out.

Little Yuan'er was hopping about as she practiced with her Nirvana Sash. When she saw Lu Zhou, she said, "Master... Seventh Senior Brother left for Qing Province yesterday. He saw that you were resting and told me to convey the message to you."

"I see." Lu Zhou descended the steps with his hands on his back.

With Si Wuya's cultivation base, it would be difficult for him to drag Yu Zhenghai back here. The reason Lu Zhou had sent him on the mission was partly due to him being able to easily meet Yu Zhenghai. Even if he could not bring Yu Zhenghai back here by force, at the very least, he could be of help to Yu Zhenghai in confronting the Imperial family.

When Lu Zhou recalled Si Wuya's words, he sighed. Indeed, that rascal had it rough.

Before he could retrieve his memory crystal, he would not be so bold as to confirm whether Ji Tiandao did try to kill Yu Zhenghai or not. 'I'm a reasonable person, after all.'

Then, he looked at Little Yuan'er and asked, "Yuan'er, how's your cultivation coming along recently?"

Little Yuan'er appeared aggrieved as she replied, "Master, it's so difficult to sprout leaves! I can't seem to make the third one appear!"

"The third leaf? Since when did you sprout a second leaf?" Lu Zhou remembered that the little girl had just recently sprouted her first leaf. Most cultivators would experience a drop in their cultivating speed once they entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. However, this little girl was progressing more and more quickly! It was almost illogical!

Little Yuan'er scratched her head. "I think it was half a month ago. I can't really remember."

'Half a month ago?' Lu Zhou was at loss for words. Was she not asking for the moon, thinking she could sprout the third leaf overnight?

"I'm going out. You stay here and cultivate well."

"Master, I want to go with you!" Little Yuan'er said excitedly.

Lu Zhou scowled as he reprimanded her, "Don't make me repeat my words."

"Oh."

Lu Zhou waved his sleeve and headed to the back of the mountain.

Little Yuan'er felt aggrieved as she looked at her master's retreating back. Previously, her master would bring her everywhere he went. Now, he was leaving her behind. How could she not feel wronged? She muttered to herself, "Master must think my cultivation base is too weak. Otherwise, why would he ask about my cultivation base?"

...

At the back of the mountain.

Lu Zhou flipped his palm. An Appearance Alteration Card appeared in his hand.

In the past, Lu Zhou did not have much means to protect himself. He had to bring Little Yuan'er with him everywhere he went. However, it was different now. He was already a Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivator. He also had the Heavenly Writing powers and his item cards. He would have no problems defending himself. If he brought Little Yuan'er along, it would be easier for someone else to see through his disguise.

In the cultivation world, only those in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm were considered as properly initiated. Only Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivators could unleash grand techniques. There was no concrete definition of a grand technique. Most cultivators used it as an umbrella term for the mightiest techniques of the Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist Societies. For example, the Sword Devil's Destiny of the sword path and the Dark Heaven Starlight of the saber path. The second reason was only Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivators could form a Golden Lotus and sprout leaves.

Since he was now in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, he was no longer a weakling.

"Qing Province?" Lu Zhou looked in the direction of Qing Province. "I'd like to see what this rascal is up to."

With the Appearance Alteration Card, it would be much easier to catch the rascal, Yu Zhenghai.

Even if he were to leave the Evil Sky Pavilion, nobody would question him. Yu Shangrong and the others could look after Golden Court Mountain. The barrier had been restored; it was now an impregnable fortress.

"Whitzard."

With the command, Whizard came on the clouds.

Lu Zhou leaped onto the beast's back and flew out the back of the mountain.

Lu Zhou shattered the Appearance Alteration Card when he was up in the skies. A faint energy swirled around him. A unique sensation made his senses tingle.

He did not know what appearance he had now so he landed near a lake near the back of the mountain. Then, he peered into the lake to look at his reflection on its surface.

He saw another old man looking back at him. This old man seemed more spirited. Half of his hair was black, and his facial features were sharper. He was pleased with what he saw.

Lu Zhou did not stay for long. He mounted Whizard and made his way to Qing Province.

#### **Chapter 470: A Person Gifted in Tune**

Two days later, in the Heaven Room on the second floor of Clouds Inn in Jing Province City.

Lu Zhou looked at the city through the window. He instinctively stroked his beard as he fell deep in his thoughts. When he reached for his beard, he noticed it was much shorter than it used to be. This... Well, he had not gotten used to his new appearance.

Lu Zhou had arrived in the city the day before. He was surprised to find that the Nether Sect had yet to extend its reach to Jing Province City. The citizens did not seem to be affected as well.

The Nether Sect was no fool. They had promised early on that they would not lay a hand on the civilians. After all, they wanted to achieve world dominion. The civilians were the roots of the world, not their enemies. Their enemies were Great Yan's Imperial family and the opposing factions.

Jing Province was located in the area innermost of Great Yan. It was not a place that remote places like Liang Province could compare to.

Alas, Lu Zhou had not seen Yu Zhenghai.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

As he entertained his thoughts, a knock rang from outside.

"Who's there?" Lu Zhou turned around slowly as he sighed. Perhaps, he had gotten accustomed to the character of an eccentric old man in this world. He was not Ji Tiandao and not the original Lu Zhou, but a new character. Without waiting for a reply, he said, "Come in."

A waiter entered the room after closing the door. He said tentatively, "Dear customer, I have information regarding the matter you asked me about. The great general guarding Jing Province City is one of the Divine Capital's eight great generals. He's General Wen Shu, commander of the southwest and a Confucian Society elite. The Formation of Jing Province City was laid by the Confucian Society."

"What's the Nether Sect up to now?" Lu Zhou asked.

"You don't have to worry about that. It's said that even the Sect Master of the Nether Sect can only look at the city even if he were here. Jing Province City is as secure as a city protected by a wall of metal and a moat of boiling water," the waiter replied.

"You're very confident with Jing Province City's security?"

"I'm not the only one. Everyone feels the same way... The people of Jing Province City aren't affected at all," the waiter said with a smile, "Dear customer... since you're asking about this, you can't be..." He wanted to say the word 'spy', but he quickly swallowed the word when he saw the killing intent brewing in the depths of Lu Zhou's eyes. "Please rest well!" He shuddered and quickly retreated from the room in fright.

Lu Zhou turned around to face the window. As he expected, the Nether Sect was much weaker without Si Wuya. It could not even conquer Jing Province City.

...

At dusk, in a certain Nether Sect's branch.

A flag that was raised in the center of the campground danced in the wind.

Yu Zhenghai was cultivating with his eyes closed as he sat on his throne. A cloud of mist was swirling before him. All of a sudden, he flipped his hand. The Jasper Saber appeared out of thin air above his palm. His forehead was drenched in sweat as his eyes suddenly snapped open. He raised his sleeve to wipe the sweat off his forehead as he murmured, "Master, please don't make me... It's... it's just a dream..."

At this moment, Hua Chongyang walked in excitedly. "Sect master."

"What is it?"

"Mister Seventh is back!"

Upon hearing this, Yu Zhenghai rose to his feet immediately. A strange light gleamed in his eyes as he said, "Hurry, where is he?"

Yu Zhenghai's voice had barely faded when Si Wuya sauntered into the hall. He wore a long Confucian scholar robe and held the Peacock Plume in his hand. His expression was calm, but his eyes were lively. After he walked to the center of the hall, he cupped his fists and said, "We meet again, Eldest Senior Brother."

Yu Zhenghai hastened down the steps, visibly excited. He walked up to Si Wuya, at a loss for words. The exhaustion that had plagued him lately seemed to have vanished at this moment. Finally, he raised his hands and placed them on Si Wuya's shoulders as he said excitedly, "My dear brother... how I miss you so!"

Si Wuya. "???"

Hua Chongyang. "???"

Yu Zhenghai's expression was rather telling even though they could understand his feelings.

Hua Chongyang had spent a fair portion of his time listening to Yu Zhenghai's ramblings. The phrases he often heard were 'This would've turned out much better if Junior Brother did it', 'If only Junior Brother were here', and the likes.

The Four Great Protectors had a headache from all the ramblings. How could Hua Chongyang not be delighted about Si Wuya's return as well?

Si Wuya endured the pain on his shoulders and said, "Eldest Senior Brother, let's not celebrate just yet."  
"Hm?"

"Master sent me here."

Upon hearing this, Yu Zhenghai instinctively took a step back. He frowned. "Master?"

Si Wuya said, "Master is already at the Nine-leaf stage."

"..." Yu Zhenghai waved his hand and said, "If you're trying to persuade me, you can save your breath!"

"That's not what I mean."

"Then what do you mean?" Yu Zhenghai's tone grew stern and grim. "Master's growing senile, have you grown senile as well? The one I'm opposing has always been Great Yan's Imperial family and never the Evil Sky Pavilion!"

"I know," Si Wuya responded calmly.

"Then, why are you helping master?" Yu Zhenghai questioned.

The entire great hall was as silent as a graveyard.

Si Wuya only stared at Yu Zhenghai silently, waiting for Yu Zhenghai's anger to abate.

It was just as Si Wuya had expected, after a while, Yu Zhenghai gradually calmed down.

Finally, Si Wuya said, "Master isn't senile."

An expression of confusion appeared on Yu Zhenghai's face.

Si Wuya said, "Perhaps... we're both wrong." He paused before continuing, "Master has ordered me to come here and bring you back to the Evil Sky Pavilion! However, master knows that... with my cultivation base, it's impossible for me to make you do anything you refuse to. Knowing that, why did he still send me here?"

"Master wants to go against Great Yan as well?" Yu Zhenghai asked.

Si Wuya did not respond directly. Instead, he said, "Master left the choice to me... and think that I've made up my mind a long time ago."

Yu Zhenghai appeared stunned, unable to understand Si Wuya's words.

Si Wuya shook his head and changed the topic. "Why aren't you severing your Golden Lotus and attempting to attain the Nine-leaf stage, Eldest Senior Brother?"

Yu Zhenghai said disapprovingly, "Severing my lotus means that I'll have to cultivate from the beginning again. What I aim to do is to take over the world while everyone severs their lotuses!"

Si Wuya nodded. "In that case... the sooner the better."

Upon hearing this, something stirred in Yu Zhenghai's heart. He appeared overjoyed as he waved his hand and said, "Hua Chongyang, quickly bring the map over!"

"Yes, sect master!"

Shortly after, Hua Chongyang placed the map of Jing Province City on the big table. He briefed Si Wuya in detail about the current situation in Jing Province City as well.

Yu Zhenghai pointed at the area around Jing Province City and said, "The person guarding Jing Province City is Wen Shu, one of the eight commanders of the Divine Capital. This man is from the Confucian Societies. He's skilled in Formations, and that's giving me a headache..."

At the side, Hua Chongyang cupped his fists and said, "If it weren't for this Formation, sect master could've taken down Wen Shu on his own. Jing Province would've fallen a long time ago."

"My wise brother... Do you have any good plans? Do you have any of your men planted around Wen Shu?" Yu Zhenghai looked at Si Wuya expectantly as though he was looking at a beautiful lady.

Goosebumps rose on Si Wuya's skin from being stared at so intently. He felt helpless about the change in the way his Eldest Senior Brother addressed him as well. He shook his head and said, "The eight commanders aren't your run-of-the-mill officials. The people around them can't be taken down that easily. Besides, we've used this tactic in Liang Province before. We can't use it again."

Yu Zhenghai sighed in disappointment.

Si Wuya said, "But... I do have another idea."

"My wise brother... Tell me, quick!" Yu Zhenghai kept addressing him as 'his wise brother'. It felt like he no longer cared about appearing imposing.

"Jing Province's geography is treacherous, it's also a place where wild beasts are gathered... There are many mountains and forests around it. We can use the beasts to whittle away at the Formation," Si Wuya said.

Yu Zhenghai frowned and said, "I'm not the king of beasts, how am I supposed to order them around?"

Si Wuya said, "What a coincidence... In the three days' time, north of Jing Province, there will be a live sacrifice on the heaven worship platform."

"A live sacrifice?"

"It's only a mindless act of sacrificing a person to the heavens. That's unimportant... What's important is the sacrificial person is born with the innate ability to understand the tongue of beasts. He's a person gifted in tune."