

## Disciples 551

### Chapter 551: A Dream

The effects of the Strengthened Critical Heal Card were extremely shocking.

Ye Tianxin's Extraordinary Eight Meridians that had been destroyed by the script seal's golden dragon were being restored at a shocking rate. The entire process lasted for 15 minutes. However, the Critical Heal Card would only heal 60% of one's injury. Lu Zhou would need to do more to fully heal her internal injuries.

Lu Zhou slowly raised his hand and inwardly recited the chant for the Heavenly Writing's healing power. A blue lotus materialized in his hand, and he pushed it to Ye Tianxin.

The blue lotus landed on Ye Tianxin, emitting rich vitality. It spread from the southern pavilion into the great hall and the eastern and northern pavilions.

The other Evil Sky Pavilion disciples nearby were intrigued by the shocking vitality. They looked in the direction of the southern pavilion.

Little Yuan'er and Conch looked over as they sat on a beam in the southern pavilion.

Little Yuan'er said confidently, "Master is healing Sixth Senior Sister."

"Sixth Senior Sister... seems powerful," Conch said.

Little Yuan'er nodded. "Mhm. The female cultivators on the mountain were once Sixth Senior Sister's subordinates. Although Sixth Senior Sister is powerful, she has a tough life."

"Oh."

The four Elders of the Evil Sky Pavilion looked in the direction where the vitality came from as well.

Zuo Yushu was amazed by the powerful vitality. She remembered when four of them maintained the blue lotus with their avatars back then. The vitality then could not be compared to the vitality around them now.

"Looks like the pavilion master's cultivation base has improved again."

The four elders exchanged a look.

"The Lotus-severing era has dawned. With the existence of one Nine-leaf cultivator, I believe soon more and more Nine-leaf cultivators would pop p... Us old bones will have to work harder."

"Come to think of it, do you think the Ten-leaf stage exists?" Hua Wudao wondered out loud.

The other three elders were taken aback.

Zuo Yushu said, "I've read some books about this back in the Confucian school's book pavilion. It says that from the beginning of human cultivation, the process is as follows: the Body Tempering realm, the Mystic Enlightening realm, the Sense Condensing realm, the Brahman Sea realm, the Divine Court realm, and the Nascent Divinity realm. An avatar is formed in the Mystic Enlightening realm. In order, there are Basic Taiji, Two Transformation Powers, Three Condensing Flowers, Mighty Four Quadrants, Five

Energies Universe, Six Recombinant Trigram Lines, Seven Stars Soul, Eight Methods Connected, Nine Transformations Yin Yang, Ten Worlds, and the Hundred Tribulations Insight...”

Zuo Yushu paused briefly before she continued to say, “After forming a Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar, a Golden Lotus and golden leaves would appear.” She frowned as she said, “Ten-leaf Thousand Boundary Swirl; the leaves and lotus will blossom... I can’t really remember the rest.”

Many major cultivation sects possessed old tomes about cultivation realms. Most of them held information of the categories after the Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar such as the Myriad Supreme.

With a certain concept widely regarded as the truth by society, any other record that deviated from the so-called truth would be deemed as nonsense or a myth. Moreover, there were storytellers who liked to exaggerate their tales. As such, the Thousand Boundary Swirl and the Myriad Supreme had only existed as myths.

Hua Wudao nodded. “Based on what we’ve seen so far, we can say for sure that a Nine-leaf avatar is 50 feet taller than an Eight-leaf avatar... If Ten-leaf avatars, the Thousand Boundary Swirl, exist, one can only imagine how terrifying it would be.”

“Old Hua, it’s too early to talk about the Thousand Boundary Swirl now... It can’t be that easy to attain that stage, right? The pavilion master has just recently reached the Nine-leaf stage as well. I bet he went to cultivation in seclusion before this to stabilize his foundation at the Nine-leaf stage,” Pan Litian said.

The others agreed with Pan Litian.

Leng Luo looked up at Ye Tianxin’s quarters in the southern pavilion until the vitality vanished. Then, he said, “Severing the lotus isn’t the only way.”

“Hm?”

“The pavilion master has said that severing the lotus is only one of the ways. The difficulty of improving without severing the lotus is too high. Has anyone succeeded since the beginning of the cultivation world?” Pan Litian mused out loud.

“How can you say that nobody has succeeded when you don’t know that for sure? Just because we’ve never heard of these Nine-leaf elites, it doesn’t mean that they didn’t exist...” Leng Luo retorted.

With these words, the others shuddered, and their hair stood on end.

...

At this time, Lu Zhou retracted his palm and looked at Ye Tianxin. With this, he had completely exhausted his extraordinary power.

Before the Earth Scroll was opened, one-third of the extraordinary power he had saved from meditating on the Human Scroll could easily kill a Six or Seven-leaf expert. He would need to use more than half of his extraordinary power to deal with an Eight-leaf cultivator.

While cultivating in seclusion, he had been meditating on the Earth Scroll before finally obtaining the Earth Scroll’s extraordinary power.

Dealing with Liu Ge had completely used up the Human Scroll's extraordinary power.

After the Human and Earth Scrolls were merged, his power source had clearly grown. He could also keenly feel that the Heavenly Writing's powers had gotten stronger as well.

At this moment, Lu Zhou saw that Ye Tianxin's internal organs were practically healed. However, he could do nothing about her white hair. He did not know how much life she had lost. Fortunately, she cultivated the Blue Waves Technique that made her look young.

"The Heavenly Writing's powers can't restore life, after all."

Longevity... seemed like a taboo strictly imposed by the heavens. Even the Heavenly Writing powers could not violate the taboo.

At this moment, Ye Tianxin opened her eyes and coughed. Her mind was in a fuzz, and it took a while for the fog to clear. It was as though she had been dreaming for a long time. She looked up in disbelief. "Master?"

"It's good that you're awake." Lu Zhou was not too pleased with his healing power. However, he was satisfied that he managed to preserve her life.

Ye Tianxin seemed afraid as she struggled to get off the bed.

Lu Zhou waved his hand and pushed her back with a wave of gentle energy. "Although you're alive, you're still weak."

Ye Tianxin knew that her master must have saved her life. She lowered her head at once and said emotionally, "Thank you, master."

When Lu Zhou saw that her turbulent emotions, he did not speak. After a moment, he said, "You were struck by Su Sheng's script seal' golden dragon and was heavily wounded. If you want to regain your previous condition, I'm afraid..." He trailed off.

Ye Tianxin said, "I'm already fortunate enough to be alive. I daren't ask for more."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. He turned around slowly with his hands on his back. With his back facing Ye Tianxin, he said, "I've banished you from the pavilion... Why do you want to return?"

"I've made a huge mistake. I only want to atone for my sins."

"You've died once, and I've punished you. The ties of master and disciple between us have been severed. Why did you throw your life away?" Lu Zhou asked.

Upon hearing this, Ye Tianxin looked up and said, "All I want is to atone for my sins. I didn't give it too much thought."

"I'll ask you again: Do you really want to return to the Evil Sky Pavilion?" Lu Zhou asked.

"Yes!" Ye Tianxin answered without any hesitation.

"My temper is eccentric and fiery. I like to hit other people and punish my disciples. Even so, do you still want to return to the Evil Sky Pavilion?"

“Yes!”

“The Evil Sky Pavilion is on the Fiend Path, after all. There are many who want me gone. If you return to the Evil Sky Pavilion, you might have to go against the world.”

“I can even throw away my life. This is nothing!” Ye Tianxin replied resolutely.

“Very well.” Lu Zhou turned around suddenly and looked at Ye Tianxin. “In that case, I’ll restore your identity as the Evil Sky Pavilion’s sixth disciple. Are you willing to accept this?”

Ye Tianxin was overjoyed. She bowed emotionally. “Yes, I am!”

Ye Tianxin was about to kowtow when Lu Zhou waved his hand. “That won’t be necessary. You did it when you were little.”

“Thank you, master.” Ye Tianxin was so moved that she was close to tears.

Lu Zhou read the information on the system.

Name: Ye Tianxin

Identity: Fairfolk (human)

Realm: Nascent Divinity realm

Ye Tianxin’s loyalty was at 85%

It was a rather high number!

This greatly exceeded Lu Zhou’s expectations. Her loyalty was this high when she had just rejoined the Evil Sky Pavilion. She was already at the same level as Little Yuan’er.

At this moment, Little Yuan’er and Conch rang from the other side of the door in unison.

“Congratulations, Sixth Senior Sister!”

## **Chapter 552: Yu Zhenghai’s Dilemma**

Lu Zhou beckoned Conch over.

Ye Tianxin looked at Conch curiously since she had not met Conch before.

Conch walked up to Ye Tianxin and greeted her. “Greetings, Sixth Senior Sister.”

Little Yuan’er chimed in, “Sixth Senior Sister, this is our Little Junior Sister. Master recently recruited her. I’m no longer Little Junior Sister...”

Ye Tianxin nodded and said, “I see, so you’re our new Little Junior Sister.” As she spoke, she studied Conch intently. She knew her master had strict requirements when recruiting a disciple. Since Conch was accepted by her master, there was no doubt that Conch was outstanding.

“That’s all for now. Your Sixth Senior Sister and I have something to talk about.”

“Oh, okay”

“Let’s play together tomorrow, Sixth Senior Sister.”

The two young girls, Little Yuan'er and Conch, held hands and skipped out of the room.

'It'll take some time to tell her about Conch. I'll leave it for another time.' Then, Lu Zhou asked, "When did you attain the Eight-leaf stage?"

Ye Tianxin did not conceal anything and honestly recounted everything to Lu Zhou; from when she left the Evil Sky Pavilion, how she recovered from her wounds and traveled to the north, meeting her Second Senior Brother, Yu Shangrong, then making her way west and south before she reached the Moonlight Woodland, fell into the abyss, encountered Cheng Huang, and focusing on her cultivation. Although she was calm when she spoke, based on her experience, one could tell she did not have an easy time.

Lu Zhou was shocked when he heard about Cheng Huang. He asked, "So Cheng Huang really exists?"

"Yes! I traveled southwest deep into the Moonlight Woodland. I thought that I wouldn't make it out alive. It's a good thing that I ran into Cheng Huang!" Ye Tianxin was usually taciturn. However, when she recounted her experience, she was rather animated. It was as though she had forgotten the pain from her wounds.

Ye Tianxin described Cheng Huang's size and appearance in detail. She told Lu Zhou about the various beasts she had encountered in the abyss, the hardships she faced while cultivating, and the delight she felt when sprouting new leaves.

Lu Zhou listened as he stroked his beard. He nodded, occasionally shocked by her words.

With that, half a day passed in just a blink of an eye...

After listening to Ye Tianxin's story, Lu Zhou said, "I didn't think Cheng Huang actually existed. Looks like the records aren't fake."

Ye Tianxin nodded and said, "It's a shame that Cheng Huang doesn't want to leave the Moonlight Woodland."

"Indeed, with its size, it isn't suitable to leave. If that humongous beast were to appear before men, I'm afraid that the people will only band together and attack it," Lu Zhou said.

"You're right, master."

"The books say that riding Cheng Huang will grant you 2,000 years of life... What's your opinion?" Lu Zhou asked.

"I don't feel any different. I've ridden Cheng Huang many times... Apart from its large size, it didn't feel any different from riding other mounts," Ye Tianxin replied.

As expected, Cheng Huang was not as simple as Lu Zhou had imagined. He found it peculiar that the beast was recorded in the books. This meant that the author of the books knew about Cheng Huang. Why did everyone doubt its existence? It seemed like the Moonlight Woodland was not a place where humans could easily venture deep in.

When Lu Zhou saw that it was getting late, he rose to his feet and said, "You haven't recovered yet. Rest well."

“Master... The Imperial family has challenged the Evil Sky Pavilion...”

Before she could finish, Lu Zhou raised a hand and interjected, “I’ll remember what the Imperial family did.” After he said this, he turned around and left.

Ye Tianxin bowed as she looked at her master’s retreating back. “Rest well, master.”

...

At the foot of Golden Court Mountain.

Yu Zhenghai observed the signs of the previous battle. He was in shock and disbelief. He did not enter the barrier. “Was I too late?”

The ground was in a mess. Blood splattered everywhere and pits in the shape of a palm could be seen.

Yu Zhenghai frowned deeply as he continued to survey his surroundings. After a moment, he walked toward the foot of the mountain as he followed the blood splatters. Anger rose in his heart as time passed.

At this moment, a voice rang from nearby. “Eldest Senior Brother?”

“Eldest Senior Brother, I knew you won’t abandon the Evil Sky Pavilion...” Mingshi Yin dragged a corpse behind himself as he ran toward Yu Zhenghai.

Yu Zhenghai cleared his throat as he straightened his back. He glanced at the corpse. His expression was stern as he placed his hands on his back and asked, “Old Fourth? What are you doing here?”

Mingshi Yin said, “This? This is the body of Liu Ge’s Imperial bodyguard. I grew annoyed while thinking of something, and I killed him.”

“...” Yu Zhenghai’s eyelid twitched. He did not know what to say.

“Eldest Senior Brother, let’s go... Come and see master on the mountain,” Mingshi Yin said.

“I’m only passing by. I won’t go up,” Yu Zhenghai replied.

‘Passing by? That’s quite the detour you took...’ Mingshi Yin looked to his left and right before he furtively said, “Eldest Senior Brother, you’re late. Master has come out of his cultivation in seclusion with great success. That old man, Liu Ge, has already been blown to smithereens!”

“...”

“Also, there’s this guy, Su Sheng. There! That’s his corpse. How tragic! He was stabbed with a sword. Eh, Eldest Senior Brother, why are you sweating?” Mingshi Yin asked.

“Is that so? It’s getting warm.”

“Is it? About the Brahman Sea Eight Meridians...”

“It’s warm because I say so...” Yu Zhenghai raised his voice.

Mingshi Yin scratched his head and fanned himself with his hand. “You know what? It does seem to be getting warmer.”

Yu Zhenghai asked, "Old Fourth, is Second Junior Brother in the Evil Sky Pavilion?"

With Yu Shangrong's strength, if he was in the Evil Sky Pavilion, even with Su Sheng around, Liu Ge would not have been much of a threat. Moreover, Huang Shijie was here as well.

Mingshi Yin said, "Isn't he in Yu Province?"

"Yu Province?" Something stirred within Yu Zhenghai.

"Eldest Senior Brother, why don't you come and see master on the mountain and speak with him? It won't do for you to stay away from the mountain," Mingshi Yin said.

"Let me think about it."

"Mhm. Eldest Senior Brother, I'll leave you to your thoughts, then. I'll get back to my business."

Yu Zhenghai remained silent as he looked up at the Evil Sky Pavilion. He stood still, not leaving. When he saw Huang Shijie flying toward him from afar, he maintained his silence. Instead, he gestured with his hand to tell Huang Shijie that he could go up the mountain.

Huang Shijie was also stunned by the signs of battle before him. He wanted to say something, but when he noticed the unnatural expression on Yu Zhenghai's face, he kept quiet and made his way up to the Evil Sky Pavilion.

...

The sun was setting...

Inside the eastern pavilion of the Evil Sky Pavilion...

Lu Zhou looked at the system's dashboard.

Name: Lu Zhou

Race: Human

Cultivation base: Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, the Chaotic Primal

Merit points: 112,233

Avatar: Hundred Tribulations Insight

Remaining life: 20,596 days

Item: Deadly Strike Card x1, Critical Block Card x62 (passive), Binding Cage Card x4, Whizard, Bi An, Ji Liang, Critical Heal Card x2, Strengthened Critical Heal Card x1, Thunderblast x1, Disguise Card x2, Golden Taixu Mirror, Appearance Alteration Card x4, Reversal Card x49

Weapon: Unnamed, Life Cutter, Jade Horsetail Whisk

Cultivation method: Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing

The greatest reward he received from his recent meditation was the activation of the Earth Scroll of the Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing. The other rewards were nothing to brag about.

Lu Zhou checked the prices of the item cards. As he expected, they had increased again.

The Deadly Strike Card and Impeccable Card were now sold at 10,000 merit points. However, when he considered the Heavenly Writing's extraordinary powers, he thought he did not need to use the two cards frequently. With this thought in mind, he felt much better. Moreover, if it was a matter of life and death, he would not be considering their cost-performance ratio, anyway.

'In that case... where's the improvement of the system's permission?' Lu Zhou was still thinking about this when a voice reached him from outside the pavilion.

"Greetings, master."

"What is it?"

"Island Master Huang has returned safely. Fortunately, Eldest Senior Brother made it in time and killed Gu Yiran," Mingshi Yin said.

"I see. Where is he now?"

"I've arranged for Island Master Huang to rest in the southern pavilion. As for Eldest Senior Brother... he's at the foot of the mountain. He dare... won't come up," Mingshi Yin replied.

### **Chapter 553: Late Night Conversation Between Master and Disciple**

"He won't come up?" Lu Zhou frowned slightly and scoffed. "I've waited for him for six months. Instead of managing the Nether Sect, did he come here to laugh at me?"

"Master, you've misunderstood Eldest Senior Brother. When I saw that you were still cultivating in seclusion, I sent letters to Eldest Senior Brother and Huang Shijie for help," Mingshi Yi replied honestly.

Lu Zhou did not reply. Indeed, the time he spent meditating on the Open Earth Scroll had exceeded his expectations.

The four Elders had already severed their lotuses and were recultivating. Although five months had passed, how could they return to the Eight-leaf stage in that time frame? Moreover, nobody knew how an Eight-leaf cultivator without a Golden Lotus would fare against an Eight-leaf cultivator with a Golden Lotus. There was no precedence of this, after all.

Apart from that, although his disciples were improving quickly, they were no match for Eight-leaf cultivators, after all. Indeed, Mingshi Yin could not be blamed for this.

However, it was a fact that Yu Zhenghai did not know how to respect his master and his master's teachings. In the end, Lu Zhou said indifferently, "Tell him to scram."

"Master? Eldest Senior Brother has traveled far to be here. I think that he's sincere. If we tell him to scram now, isn't it..." Mingshi Yin said.

Lu Zhou interjected, "If you sympathize with him, you can stay at the foot of the mountain with him."

"I... That's not what I meant... I just feel... Mhm, Eldest Senior Brother should get lost." After saying this, Mingshi Yin bowed and went down the mountain.



As expected, Yu Zhenghai was still standing in the same spot. His hands were placed on his back. He was neither domineering nor servile. He looked lost in thought as he stared up at the Evil Sky Pavilion. When he saw Mingshi Yin coming down, he smiled and nodded as he said, "I always knew you're considerate... Old Fourth... Come, let's have a talk."

Mingshi Yin, "???"

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing... Eldest Senior Brother, what are you standing there for?" Mingshi Yin asked.

"This scenery brings back memories. I can't help but feel sad..." Yu Zhenghai said with a sigh.

Mingshi Yin was speechless; he wondered what was there to be melancholic about?

Yu Zhenghai said, "I was more mischievous than all of you when I first joined. I've explored every corner of Golden Court Mountain. I like this mountain. I can look at the trees here forever."

"..."

'Why does this sound awkward?' Mingshi Yin, naturally, did not dare to verbalize his thoughts. He asked tentatively, "Eldest Senior Brother, aren't you coming up the mountain to meet master?"

"No," Yu Zhenghai said with his hands on his back, "He's old. We have nothing in common to talk about."

"How do you know that when you haven't tried talking to him?" Mingshi Yin mumbled.

Yu Zhenghai chuckled and said, "How long have you been in the pavilion?"

"60 years."

"I was in the pavilion for nearly three centuries..." Yu Zhenghai said with the air of a senior, "Nobody in the world knows him better than I do."

Mingshi Yin considered Yu Zhenghai's words before he said, "If you know him that well, then all the more you should talk to him."

"Old Fourth, you aren't sent by master, are you?" Yu Zhenghai turned to look at him.

Mingshi Yin put away his frivolous air, cupped his fists, and said, "Eldest Senior Brother, master has told me to tell you to get lost... to go as far away as you can. If there's no other way, you should kill yourself where you stand, and he won't save you."

"Is this what he said? Or is there more?" Yu Zhenghai glared.

"I'm worried that you'd clobber me if I told you..." Mingshi Yin chuckled.

"Just tell me. I won't blame you."

"He said that of the ten disciples he's recruited in his life, you're the worst... Ow, you said that you won't hit me, Eldest Senior Brother! Stop! Stop! Stop! I'm not finished yet..." Mingshi Yin retreated hastily and tidied his clothes. "He said that you're useless and as cowardly as a mouse."

Yu Zhenghai clenched his fist. He steeled himself and said, "Old Fourth, hold my saber... I'm going up." He flipped his palm and his Jasper Saber spun out, landing in Mingshi Yin's hand.

Yu Zhenghai placed his hands behind his back. He stepped into the barrier as though it was no man's land.

Mingshi Yin shuddered as he looked at Yu Zhenghai's back. 'This is f\*cking exciting...'

...

The sun set in the west as it always did. Dusk had finally fallen...

Mingshi Yin and Yu Zhenghai sped up to the Evil Sky Pavilion. They moved at blinding speed as though they were worried that they would run into someone. They even used grand techniques, twice.

"E-Eldest Senior Brother, wait for me..."

Yu Zhenghai was now outside the Evil Sky Pavilion's eastern pavilion. As he stood before the eastern pavilion, contrary to his expectation, he did not feel melancholic. Instead, for some reason, he felt slightly nervous.

'Forget it. I'll come back another time.' Yu Zhenghai turned around and prepared to leave. However, he halted his steps when he recalled Mingshi Yin's words. He could not help but feel agitated. 'What does he mean that I'm as cowardly as a mouse?' He turned around again.

Mingshi Yin finally arrived by Yu Zhenghai's side at this moment. He asked, "Eh, Eldest Senior Brother, why aren't you going in?"

Yu Zhenghai coughed to mask the awkwardness as he dismissed his thoughts and said, "Old Fourth... It's late now. I'll come back another day."

Mingshi Yin looked at the skies and wondered. 'Didn't the sun just set moments ago?'

"Eldest Senior Brother, aren't you mad that master said those things about you?"

"It's perfectly normal for a master to berate his disciple. How can we, as disciples, hold this against master?" Yu Zhenghai patted Mingshi Yin's shoulder. "You're too full of youthful vigor. You should let it go, like me."

"Uh..."

"See you next time."

Yu Zhenghai was about to turn around and leave when a gruff voice rang from the eastern pavilion.

"Since you're here, why don't you come in?"

Yu Zhenghai. "???"

Yu Zhenghai's heart skipped a beat.

Even Mingshi Yin was shocked. 'Since when did master's hearing become this sharp?'

Bam!

The door of the eastern pavilion was blasted open by a gust of wind.

Lu Zhou floated out from the pavilion with one hand behind his back and another extended before himself. With his gray hair and Daoist robes, he had the righteous air of an immortal. The moment he flew above the steps, he unleashed his grand technique.

Whizz!

Lu Zhou appeared outside of the eastern pavilion.

Yu Zhenghai's eyes widened, and he shuddered despite himself.

"Ding! Disciplined Yu Zhenghai. Reward: 200 merit points."

Mingshi Yin bowed and said, "Master, I'll be taking my leave." He thought it was best if he stayed out of this.

Lu Zhou ignored Mingshi Yin; his eyes were trained on Yu Zhenghai. However, he merely glanced at him briefly before he walked toward the back of the mountain.

Yu Zhenghai understood what his master meant. Although he felt nervous, he had no choice but to follow master at this juncture. He walked behind his master.

Their pace was neither rushed nor slow.

At this moment, Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were diligently cultivating behind the mountain. Although it was twilight, they could still see their surroundings.

"Brother Zhou, quick, quick... A newcomer." Pan Zhong pointed at Lu Zhou and Yu Zhenghai who were walking slowly toward them.

"If I'm not mistaken, this must be the pavilion master's friend..."

"F\*ck your guesses. Let's just get out of here." Pan Zhong swiftly flew away.

Zhou Jifeng nodded. "You've got a point." He left swiftly as well as though he did not see anyone.

Yu Zhenghai followed Lu Zhou all the way to the highest point at the back of the mountain. This was also the quietest place of the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Lu Zhou turned around. He stroked his beard and asked indifferently, "You killed Gu Yiran?"

Yu Zhenghai walked up to his master's side and looked at the mountains and the rivers before he replied, "Yes."

"Where were you... when the ten great elites laid siege on the Evil Sky Pavilion all those years ago?" Lu Zhou asked.

Something stirred in Yu Zhenghai's heart. As he expected, his master had taken that to heart. He replied, "I sent one of the three Sword Freaks, Chen Wenjie, as reinforcements... However, he was a double-crossing fiend."

Lu Zhou shook his head. What could someone like Chen Wenjie do? Sending a Seven-leaf Chen Wenjie over when the ten great elites were attacking was akin to giving him a suicide mission.

"Before the ten great elites attacked me, how did they find out about my movements?"

#### **Chapter 554: I Will Climb Up No Matter What**

"The one who leaked information about your movements has been killed by you." Yu Zhenghai refuted the insinuation immediately.

"Yong Shou?" Lu Zhou could guess that it was Liu Ge. During his fight with Liu Ge, Liu Ge had revealed many pieces of information before he died.

Liu Ge was certain that Ji Tiandao had attained the Nine-leaf stage before his death. He had also said that if he could have dissuaded Lu Zhou with words again, he would have done so. However, if Lu Zhou remained stubborn, he had no qualms about killing Lu Zhou.

Yu Zhenghai said, "I admit... that I have my own agenda. I won't argue with you on that."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and asked, "Do you really want to rule the world so badly?"

"Yes!"

"Then what?" Lu Zhou asked.

Yu Zhenghai fell silent for a moment when he heard the question.

The night sky was dotted with countless stars, and their surroundings were silent.

"I haven't thought about that yet..." Yu Zhenghai said, "Conquering it comes first."

Lu Zhou turned around slowly and faced Yu Zhenghai. He said sincerely, "I remember you were a teenager when I recruited you. However, you were different from the others. You've experienced countless tribulations and understood the hardships of the world. You could bear what others could not... I remember when you entered the Mystic Condensing realm, you were delighted and proud. You even vowed to stand at the highest point."

Something stirred within Yu Zhenghai when he heard these words. Even he himself did not remember many things in the past. He was surprised that his master did. Perhaps, he had experienced too many trials; his mind remained as calm as a pool of stagnant water.

Lu Zhou continued to say, "It's my mistake that you aren't properly educated..."

Yu Zhenghai was taken aback by this remark. His master was not someone who would easily admit to his mistakes. He fell to one knee and placed a fist on the ground. "I dare not!"

"Although you call yourself my disciple, I daren't call myself your master..." Lu Zhou said with a sigh.

"Ding! Disciplined Yu Zhenghai. Reward: 200 merit points."

Yu Zhenghai lowered his head and dared not say anything.

Lu Zhou placed his hands on his back and said, "Perhaps, you'll become the ruler of Great Yan in the near future. When that time comes... I'll have to kneel before you."

Yu Zhenghai shuddered. He lowered his other knee to the ground. "Why would you say that, master?!"

Lu Zhou stared at Yu Zhenghai and raised his voice as he said, "Am I wrong?" Then, he continued to say, "I have a source; his name's Jiang Aijian. He's the Third Prince of Great Yan. It isn't difficult for him to take the throne with his abilities. Do you know why he's distancing himself from the palace?"

Yu Zhenghai shook his head.

Lu Zhou said, "Because he personally witnessed 1,000 people burned to their deaths in Jinghe Palace. His mother was one of the victims." He paused for a moment before he continued to say, "He could become the Emperor and wield the power to kill. He could've avenged the 1,000 victims of Jinghe Palace. And yet... he did not. He chose the smarter option."

There was no need to elaborate on his words. Lu Zhou believed Yu Zhenghai must have heard about Jiang Aijian from Si Wuya. He also believed that the happenings in the Obedient Villa had reached Yu Zhenghai's ears.

Yu Zhenghai's voice shook as he said, "I'm different from him. Master, if I may be so bold to ask you a question..."

"What is it?"

Yu Zhenghai looked up and met Lu Zhou's gaze. He remembered the things he experienced when he was sold to Lou Lan. He remembered how he tried to fight for a steamed bun in a crowd and failed. "Do you know what it feels like to have nothing to eat but dirt for a month?"

Yu Zhenghai's question was, indeed, bold. His palm was sweaty, and his back was cold as he posed this question. However, when Mingshi Yin's earlier words rang in his mind, he mustered up his courage and continued to ask, "Do you know how it feels to have somebody stepping on your face while you can't move?" Since he had already asked one question, there was no point in holding back now. He inhaled and continued. "Do you know the pain of having the person you trust the most stab you in the heart?"

Lu Zhou could tolerate the first two questions, but the final question was akin to rubbing salt on his wound. He scoffed as he raised his hand and swung it. "B\*stard!"

Smack!

Lu Zhou slapped Yu Zhenghai's face.

"Ding! Disciplined Yu Zhenghai. Reward: 200 merit points."

Yu Zhenghai did not dodge. However, he persisted. "Master... You're a person with a high position, the master of the Evil Sky Pavilion... You're the greatest Eight-leaf cultivator in the world; who would dare say no to you? However, I'm not... I'm not..." His voice was shaking, but it was powerful. "I'm a good-for-nothing, an honest-to-God good-for-nothing. Anyone can step on me, spit on me... the lives of those in power are valuable, but are the lives of the Wuqian commoners disposable? When pigs and dogs are tied to the chopping board, and the butcher inserts a silver knife into their bodies, even they would

struggle! Am I... am I lesser than pigs and dogs? Can't... can't I even struggle? I want to climb up... all the way to the highest point!"

Yu Zhenghai suddenly pivoted on his knees and pointed at the mountains, rivers, and forest. "The others will only look up at you if you're standing on the highest point!"

"Enough!"

Yu Zhenghai was taken aback. He looked at his master who wore a stern expression on his face, clearly angered. He was flustered.

Lu Zhou said, clearly resenting Yu Zhenghai for failing to meet his expectations, "You're possessed... Do you think you're the only one who had to endure hardships under the heavens? Do you think I wasn't abandoned when I was young? I rose to the peak of the Eight-leaf stage 300 years ago. Which part of my 700 years of hardship is any easier than yours? Do you think I had easily reached the Eight-leaf stage? You don't know how much I've been through. Must I act like you and whine about how difficult my life was? How much effort did I spend to raise an Eight-leaf cultivator like you? The world has always been unfair! You're shallow and ignorant. Why do I have a disciple like you?"

Yu Zhenghai's mind went blank. For a time, he was at a loss for words. Realization dawned on him that he had truly been too self-centered. "M-master..."

That was right. Which Eight-leaf cultivator in this world had it easy? Which of them did not experience countless trials and hardships?

With a stern expression, Lu Zhou said, "Don't call me master..."

Yu Zhenghai bowed and kowtowed with a loud thud.

The air seemed to still at this moment. The surroundings were silent.

Lu Zhou turned around with his hands on his back; his back facing Yu Zhenghai. He no longer said anything.

Two of them remained there; one standing and one kneeling.

Both of them no longer spoke.

After an hour, when the moon was high in the starry skies, Lu Zhou suddenly sighed, breaking the silence.

Yu Zhenghai shuddered.

"I'm saying all this... to tell you that it's alright to seek revenge... However, you shouldn't let your quest for revenge blind you. It's fine if you want to take down the Divine Capital, but you can't lose yourself because of the power."

Yu Zhenghai was hit with a sudden realization. He did not know what to feel.

Lu Zhou turned around.

Thud!

Upon seeing this, Yu Zhenghai kowtowed again.

### **Chapter 555: Going Up the Tall Building Alone**

Yu Zhenghai was prepared to be punished. After all, he had summoned his courage to say what was on his mind. Even if his master had hit him, he would not complain. Based on the years he had spent with his master, he knew very well how unreasonable his master could be. Let alone speaking boldly, his master viewed something as trivial as his disciples' differing opinions and defiance as disrespectful. He had kowtowed out of fear and respect toward his master and also in hopes that master would listen to the words he had to say.

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Zhenghai who was still on the ground. He shook his head and said, "Get up and talk."

"I dare not."

"I've already said what needed to be said. If you want to continue kneeling then be my guest," Lu Zhou said.

Upon hearing Lu Zhou's words, Yu Zhenghai looked up before he rose to his feet.

'He'll only do the exact opposite of what he's told. His stubbornness hasn't changed since he was a child.'

Lu Zhou was aware that Ji Tiandao never liked to reason with others. Ji Tiandao preferred to persuade others with his fists. Indeed, using the fist could solve many problems. However, there were things that could not be solved by using fists.

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Zhenghai.

Although Yu Zhenghai tried his best to maintain his composure, he found it difficult to breathe after he rose to his feet. This conversation brought with it immense pressure. To think the Sect Master of the Nether Sect was feeling nervous at this moment.

"Enough." Lu Zhou waved his sleeve and walked in another direction. "A man should bleed. Those who aren't garrulous aren't fit to be a disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion. How are you going to take down the Divine Capital like this?"

Yu Zhenghai trembled when he heard Lu Zhou's words. He hurried after Lu Zhou and asked tentatively, "Master... you... you agree?"

Lu Zhou walked as he said, "I've always kept my word. Six months. You have less than one month left... I'll punish you when the time comes."

Yu Zhenghai was delighted. He bowed and said, "In that case, I have one request, master."

"What is it?"

"Now that the nine provinces are under the Nether Sect's control, if it's possible, I hope that nobody from the Evil Sky Pavilion will meddle in this matter," Yu Zhenghai said.

Lu Zhou stopped walking. He turned to look at Yu Zhenghai and asked, "Are you confident?"

"Naturally... I have Seventh Junior Brother," Yu Zhenghai said, "Nothing is for sure in the world. I hope you'll agree to this, master."

Lu Zhou did not reply immediately. Instead, he continued walking forward. Shortly after, he arrived in front of a huge boulder. The character 'hai' was etched on it. He pointed at the 'hai' and asked, "You carved this all those years ago. Do you remember it?"

The character was messy and slanted to the side. It had been eroded by time and weather, and yet, it was still clearly visible.

Yu Zhenghai replied with a smile, "I remember."

Lu Zhou stood still as he faced Yu Zhenghai and slowly said, "You're the eldest, and it's only natural for you to shoulder everything. I hope the iron rule of the Evil Sky Pavilion will be forever engraved in your heart just like this word."

Yu Zhenghai fell to one knee again. "Fellow disciples shall not fight amongst each other... I would never dare to forget this."

The character on the huge rock reminded Yu Zhenghai of the time he cultivated here. How fast time flew! In just a blink of an eye, 300 years had passed.

The trees and plants were lush and verdant now. Everything had changed.

Wind caressed Lu Zhou's beard. Although the Reversal Cards had made him much younger, his appearance was still that of an old man.

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Zhenghai and said, "Yu Zhenghai..."

"Yes, master."

"I was you, and you would become me someday. If yesterday were to happen again, what would you do?"

When Yu Zhenghai heard the question, he was stunned.

Lu Zhou did not wait for an answer. He waved his sleeve and left.

The back of the mountain fell silent. Before he knew it, it was deep into the night.

After a long pause, Yu Zhenghai murmured, "If I were given a chance to start over, I'd do it all over again."

...

At the midpoint of the Evil Sky Pavilion's mountain.

Mingshi Yin was sending Yu Zhenghai down the mountain at this moment. He asked, "Eldest Senior Brother... How was the chat? What did I tell you? Master is much gentler compared to the past, right?"



Yu Zhenghai did not reply to Mingshi Yin's questions. Instead, he kept walking down the mountain as he took in his surroundings.

Mingshi Yin felt bored. He usually sped down the mountain and had never taken the time to admire the boring scenery. Walking down the mountain at this pace truly annoyed him

the scenery around himself. Mingshi Yin felt flustered as he walked.

"Old Fourth, I heard master recruited a new little Junior Sister, is that right?"

Mingshi Yin nodded and said, "Yes... That little girl directly entered the Mystic Enlightening realm. Five months later, she's already in the late-stage of the Sense Condensing realm. She's even more baffling than Ninth Junior Sister."

"Oh? No wonder master accepted her as a disciple," Yu Zhenghai said.

"Even if master didn't accept her, the other sects would've fought to recruit her."

Yu Zhenghai asked skeptically, "This little girl has no relationship with master?"

"What do you mean, Eldest Senior Brother?"

"Why do you ask when you know what I mean?"

"I don't!"

"Forget it."

A moment later, Yu Zhenghai and Mingshi Yin finally arrived at the foot of the mountain. They passed through the barrier.

Yu Zhenghai said, "Old Fourth, look after master for me."

"Wow, I never thought you'd be concerned over another person, Eldest Senior Brother."

"What?"

"Oh, I mean... I'll certainly look after him. Don't worry, Eldest Senior Brother!" Mingshi Yin said.

Yu Zhenghai pushed away from the ground and left through the air. He vanished in the night sky in an instant.

After Yu Zhenghai left, Mingshi Yin hastily patted his chest and said, "Whew... that was close, so close. Fortunately, I wasn't exposed."

As soon as Mingshi Yin finished speaking, a disapproving voice rang from behind a nearby tree. It's nothing but a hypocritical show of affection."

Mingshi Yin shuddered. He looked in the direction of the voice and said, "S-Second Senior Brother? Why are you here?"

"Old Fourth, why didn't you contact me when something so serious happened in the Evil Sky Pavilion?" Yu Shangrong asked.

“Uh...” Mingshi Yin cursed silently in his heart. He immediately felt that life was hard and fraught with hardships. He would be beaten to death if he said his Second Senior Brother was now weak, right?

“Second Senior Brother, your movements have always been unpredictable. I couldn’t get a hold of you. Master once complained that you never wrote back. That’s why I contacted Eldest Senior Brother.”

When Yu Shangrong heard this, his frown faded. He nodded and said, “I’ve blamed you wrongly.”

“That’s alright.”

“If anything like this ever happens again, you must tell me right away,” Yu Shangrong said.

“Of course!” When Mingshi Yin saw that Yu Shangrong was leaving, he hastily called out, “Second Senior Brother, aren’t you going to reset in the Evil Sky Pavilion?”

“No. I have something else to attend to.” Yu Shangrong left in the air as soon as he finished speaking.

“Safe journey, Second Senior Brother.” Mingshi Yin who had learned from his previous experience ran back into the barrier and returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion after seeing Yu Shangrong off.

...

Early the next morning.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes. He gauged the state of meditation of his extraordinary power. He could clearly feel that the pace of his meditation for the extraordinary power had increased. Similarly, his capacity to store extraordinary power had also increased. However, it still took him five to seven days to completely replenish his extraordinary power.

Lu Zhou did not continue meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls. Instead, he got up and looked at the old parchment drawing. When he saw that there were no new areas, he returned to the rush cushion.

He studied the system. After its upgrade, his extraordinary power had improved, and he had obtained a new power. He did not have any extraordinary power to test the power before this. Now that he had accumulated some, he decided to give it a try...

He recited the chant for the first Heavenly Writing inwardly, ‘To gain the power to hear everything so that we can hear voices in all realms at will.’

As expected, soft voices entered his ears...

“Master has emerged from his cultivation in seclusion. He’ll be examining his disciples’ progress soon. This isn’t something to be taken lightly. In the past, anyone who didn’t pass was first beaten until he was half-dead before being tossed into a room to reflect,” Zhu Honggong said.

“What? But the pavilion master doesn’t seem like a violent person!” a few of the female cultivators said in shock.

“Heh, this is why you shouldn’t judge a book by its cover. Do you think I’m a fool?” Zhu Honggong sighed helplessly. “Well, I guess I am. I can’t help it. I’m born with this brain, after all.”

The female cultivators laughed. "Listening to you trumps reading for ten years, Mister Eighth."

### **Chapter 556: Examining the Disciples' Cultivation Bases**

As expected, Lu Zhou discovered the first power of the Earth Scroll had something to do with hearing.

'Let's see if I can hear something else.'

At the moment, Lu Zhou was not using much extraordinary power. Moreover, he did not expand the range of the technique as well. With just a thought, he increased the range of his hearing, effectively using more Heavenly Power compared to before.

A voice entered his ears again...

"Super heaven-grade? High Void? Let's look for an opportunity to cultivate with it. Or maybe, I can use it to strengthen my Separation Hook. It's too difficult to cultivate... I wonder if master has an idea. No, wait, I think master has forgotten about this sword. I must keep it hidden. If master asks, I'll just say that it's lost. I'm a f\*cking genius."

'You bastard. However, I really forgot about High Void.'

Lu Zhou decided to deal with his disciple later. He used more extraordinary power, and the range of his hearing increased again.

This time, he heard the sounds of things being flung in the air against the roar of a waterfall. He decided that it must be Duanmu Sheng who was practicing with his spear. 'I can always count on Old Third to work diligently.'

Just when Lu Zhou was about to expand the range again, he felt lethargy coursing through his body and into his mind.

"Hm?" Lu Zhou stopped using the power. "It consumes so much power?"

Although it only took up one-sixth of his current capacity of extraordinary power, that was enough to instantly kill a Seven-leaf elite. He did not expect his extraordinary power to be depleted so soon. This was a useful power, but it used up too much of the extraordinary power. He would have to be careful with its usage in the future.

Lu Zhou called out, "Anyone there?"

"Your orders, Pavilion Master?" A voice rang from the other side of the door.

"Summon the Evil Sky Pavilion disciples to the eastern pavilion."

"Understood."

Soon after, Duanmu Sheng, Mingshi Yin, Zhao Yue, Zhu Honggong, Ci Yuan'er, and Conch entered the eastern pavilion and stood in a neat line.

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were not Lu Zhou's disciples so they could only stand outside and watch on with envy. They would learn whatever they could from this position.

Ye Tianxin who was still recuperating from her injuries were excluded from the test.

Creak!

The door swung open slowly.

Lu Zhou crossed the threshold with his hands on his back and swept his eyes past all the disciples gathered there.

"Greetings, master." His disciples bowed.

Lu Zhou's gaze fell on Mingshi Yin first. "Old Fourth."

"Yes, master." Mingshi Yin stepped forward with an ingratiating and excited expression on his face.

"Bring me High Void."

"Huh?" Mingshi Yin shuddered.

"I'll only say it once. I won't repeat myself," Lu Zhou said in a low voice, but his expression remained calm.

Despite Lu Zhou's seemingly calm expression, Mingshi Yin shuddered. He was on the verge of tears. It seemed like he could not keep that matter hidden at all.

"I'll go get it right away..." Mingshi Yin returned to the southern pavilion and brought High Void over. He carried it respectfully and presented it to his master.

Everyone looked at High Void in awe.

A heaven-grade weapon was already something that cultivators longed to possess, let alone a super heaven-grade weapon.

Lu Zhou picked High Void up and examined it. The red veins did not seem like it was engraved on the sword. They seemed to have been forged at the same time as the swords. The veins could even withstand his extraordinary power. It was clearly special.

Lu Zhou placed two fingers on it. Primal Qi surged into the broken sword, and it buzzed. Unfortunately, because of the damage on the Formation veins, it did not glow red. Without the support of the red veins, the grade of this sword dropped as well.

Lu Zhou joined the two sides of the broken blade together and circulated his Primal Qi again.

Bzzt!

The red veins shone. However, it was only a faint glow.

"Master, we should try to mend the super heaven-grade weapon since it's a treasure," Zhu Honggong said.

"Old Eighth's right. Master... isn't the Luo Sect's Lu Ping skilled in forging? We can just let him mend it," Duanmu Sheng chimed in.

"I don't think Lu Ping can do it. These Formation veins aren't made by a normal person. He's only a Six-leaf cultivator. He won't be able to do it," Mingshi Yin refuted Duanmu Sheng's suggestion.

At this moment, Lu Zhou looked at Mingshi Yin and asked, "Do you have a way?"

"No," Mingshi Yin said with a bow.

"Place it in the pavilion," Lu Zhou said.

"Understood."

If they did not have a way now, it did not mean that they would not have a way in the future.

Mingshi Yin brought High Void into the eastern pavilion, feeling a slight heartache from having to part with it. Then, he obediently returned to his position with the others.

The others looked at him.

"Old Eighth," Lu Zhou said.

"Yes, master," Zhu Honggong replied.

"How's your cultivation base?"

"I'm proud to say that I didn't let you down, master. After five months of painstaking cultivation, I'm now in the Two-leaf Nascent Divinity realm. I've sprouted another leaf. I didn't have any experience with sprouting leaves before," Zhu Honggong said, clearly proud of himself, "Master, look!"

Zhu Honggong flipped his palm, and a Two-leaf Golden Lotus avatar appeared above his palm.

The others nodded.

If a cultivator above the Two-leaf stage severed his lotus and recultivated, sprouting one leaf over the span of five months was slightly slow. However, Zhu Honggong's speed was rather fast.

Zhu Honggong recalled his avatar and awaited his master's praise.

Alas, Lu Zhou merely stroked his beard and said, "20 strokes and three days of reflection in the Cave of Reflection."

Zhu Honggong. "???"

The others were stunned. They felt chills running up their spines immediately. The old master was back! He was strict and merciless! If Zhu Honggong, with his fast cultivation speed, was punished, then what hope did the rest of them have?

'This is bad!'

"What are you waiting for?" Lu Zhou asked.

Zhu Honggong replied at once, "I'll remember your teachings, master. I'll work harder next time! I'll accept my punishment right away!"

"Ding! Instructed Zhu Honggong. Reward: 200 merit points."

Lu Zhou's gaze fell on Zhao Yue and asked, "What about you?"

Zhao Yue's heart skipped a beat. She replied nervously, "I... I'm dumb, and I'm only almost at the Two-leaf stage..."

"Not bad. Keep up the good work."

Thud!

Zhu Honggong fell on his face before he stepped out of the door.

"Mister Eighth, are you alright?"

"I'm... I'm fine... the floor is uneven..." Zhu Honggong stifled his sobs and left the eastern pavilion with a miserable expression on his face.

The others sighed inwardly.

At this moment, Duanmu Sheng stepped forward and said, "Master, I've cultivated painstakingly for five months and my cultivation base is now at the Three-leaf stage! Please have a look, Master!"

Whizz!

Duanmu Sheng had recultivated to the Three-leaf stage after he severed his lotus!

The others looked at Duanmu Sheng's avatar in shock. Indeed, there was no lotus under the avatar's feet. There were only three leaves spinning around it.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. He said, "Not bad. You can take it easy with your spear techniques for now. Focus on sprouting leaves."

"Yes, master."

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

Lu Zhou returned his gaze to Mingshi Yin.

Mingshi Yin wore an awkward expression on his face as he scratched his head. Then, he fell to his knees without any prompting and said, "Master... Just punish me..."

"You didn't sever your lotus?" Lu Zhou asked.

"I think it's enough to be an Eight-leaf cultivator... Why must we attempt the Nine-leaf stage, anyway? I don't have such ambitions. Living as an Eight-leaf cultivator for 1,000 years and spend my life keeping you company are good enough for me."

The others rolled their eyes.

Mingshi Yin's flattering words were not inferior to Zhu Honggong.

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "To each his own. I won't force you."

"Thank you, master. You're perceptive even of the finest detail. You're the light on my path..."

"Enough." Lu Zhou waved his hand.

The others were puzzled.

'Isn't he going to be punished for being shameless?'

'Why was Old Eighth punished, then?'

"Yuan'er." Lu Zhou looked at Little Yuan'er.

Before Conch joined the pavilion, the world was of the opinion that the youngest disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion had the most monstrous talent for cultivation. How much did she improve in these five months?

Everyone else looked at her expectantly.

### **Chapter 557: A Killing Melody**

Little Yuan'er stepped forward. She said, "Master... Don't scold me, please. I've worked hard."

She did not say how many leaves she had before she summoned her avatar. The familiar sound of energy resonance rang in the air. Above her palm, an exquisite and delicate miniature avatar appeared.

Everyone shifted their gaze to the avatar's feet. There was a Golden Lotus, which meant that she had not severed it yet. She had... five leaves. Everyone was slightly speechless. She was worried she would be berated? If that was the case, then everyone would be beaten to a pulp. These five leaves seemed to stab at everyone else's hearts. It hurt!

Little Yuan'er looked up at her master and waited for his verdict.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and glanced at her. He asked, "You're not going to sever your lotus?"

"It hurts."

"..."

The others were speechless. Most cultivators would cite low cultivation base, low talent, or fear of death as their reason for not severing their lotuses. However, Little Yuan'er said she was afraid of pain!

At this moment, Mingshi Yin said, "Ninth Senior Sister, I can make it painless..."

"Hm?"

"After you summon your avatar, I'll knock you out. Then, I'll strike and sever your lotus before your avatar vanishes..." Mingshi Yin gestured animatedly as he spoke, making slashing motions with his hands. "That way, you won't feel any pain."

"..." Upon hearing this, Little Yuan'er quickly took a step back and hid behind Conch. Then, she shook her head and said, "No."

"Ninth Junior Sister, trust me... There won't be a problem."

"..."

When Lu Zhou saw the little girl was scared out of her wits, he said, "Enough."

Mingshi Yin shut up immediately.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "Five-leaf... That's an amazing speed. Work on getting to the Eight-leaf stage for now. It's not too late to sever your lotus when you're at the Eight-leaf stage."

"..." Upon hearing Lu Zhou's words, a shocking thought appeared in Little Yuan'er's mind. She considered never attempting the Eight-leaf stage. Although her Fourth Senior Brother was annoying as a person, his earlier words made perfect sense to her. Even if she did not sever her lotus, her cultivation base was still sufficient to impress others.

With that Little Yuan'er's appraisal ended.

Then, everyone turned to look at the final disciple, the tenth and recently-recruited disciple. All of them looked forward to her appraisal. In the Evil Sky Pavilion, everyone knew that she had directly entered the Mystic Enlightening realm and progressed into the Sense Condensing realm in three months. Now that five months had passed, they wondered if she had any new breakthrough.

"Conch, did you manage to form an avatar?" Lu Zhou asked. In the book of basic cultivation he gave her, there were detailed instructions on forming an avatar. A cultivator could form an avatar after entering the Mystic Enlightening realm.

Conch nodded and said, "I did."

The others were not surprised. It was impossible for a talented cultivator to not be able to form an avatar. Even those with much lesser talent only needed several tries to form their avatars.

"Show it to me."

Just mentioning one's realm was not convincing enough. It would only be convincing if one showed one's avatar.

"Mhm." Conch lifted her hand and summoned her avatar. Her Primal Qi surged and exuded the aura of the Five Energies Universe. Following that, a little golden avatar appeared.

For cultivators, it was second nature for them to discern the grade of an avatar with a single look.

When they saw the little golden avatar, they exclaimed in shock, "Five Energies Universe?!"

The corresponding realm for the Five Energies Universe was the Brahman Sea realm. There were eight thresholds in the Brahman Sea realm. Every connected meridian vessel meant that one threshold had been surpassed. The Five Energies Universe avatar meant that Conch had connected, at least, five meridian vessels!

"..."

Whether it was the female cultivators from the Derived Moon Palace, Pan Zhong, Zhou Jifeng, all of them were shocked speechless when they saw this sight. Little Yuan'er's talent was already beyond their comprehension, but now there was Conch who had entered the Brahman Sea realm and connected five meridian vessels in just five months. What would the genius cultivators in the major sects, who spent decades to enter the Divine Court realm, think?

Zhou Jifeng prided himself on being a genius. In the beginning, he was of the opinion that he was completely qualified to be a disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion. He was the first disciple of the Heavenly



Sword Sect and had some accomplishments in the sword path. Those who entered the Nascent Divinity realm at his age were considered excellent. He remembered Lu Zhou once said that he had visited the Jiang Family and was interested in recruiting him since he had good foundations. However, now, he felt he was no better than a pile of sh\*t!

Lu Zhou was inwardly shocked as well. Conch's speed of improvement was quite impressive. Even with his thousand years' worth of experience, he had never seen anyone with a speed like hers. He walked over and stood in front of Conch before he said in a low voice, "Show me your hand."

Conch seemed to have expected this. She made a sound of assent and extended her hand after rolling up her sleeves.

Lu Zhou placed two fingers on her arm. A moment later, he withdrew his hand.

Conch asked, "Master, am... I alright?"

"Brahman Sea realm and eight connected meridians."

"..."

The eastern pavilion was as silent as a graveyard.

What was a genius?

There was a saying in the chapter called 'Study Hard' in an ancient book that said a genius was an outstanding person. Perhaps, what Conch had was not talent but some quality that surpassed the capacities of their understanding. Just as Mingshi Yin had said, she was just awakening. This meant that she had already knowledge of everything but perhaps, she had forgotten it. Now, she was awakening her hidden knowledge and ability. When Lu Zhou thought about it, something stirred in his heart. The more he understood Conch, the more he was convinced of that theory.

After all, it was impossible for someone to be gifted in tune or directly enter the Mystic Enlightening realm as soon as they were born. If they did not have knowledge at all, how could they string notes into tunes?

In the end, Lu Zhou said, "You mustn't be too proud of yourself or rush things. Keep up the good work."

"Thank you, master." Conch nodded happily.

"Congratulations, Little Junior Sister." The others congratulated her as well.

Lu Zhou's disciples had truly improved a lot over the past five months.

Lu Zhou looked at the sky as Liu Ge's words suddenly appeared in his mind. If the Nine-leaf stage could truly cause a great disaster, how was the cultivation world supposed to withstand it?

Where was the mysterious Nine-leaf cultivator inside the red coffin now? He rode on the coffin and came here three hundred years ago from the northern borders. He traveled through the lands of the Other Tribes, stayed in Great Yan, and left the sword, High Void, the runes, and the coffin behind. If that person was truly a Nine-leaf cultivator, could he still be alive since he had the lifespan of a Nine-leaf elite?

“Conch, bring the Lantian Jade Flute,” Lu Zhou suddenly said as he turned to look at Conch.

“Oh.”

“Play the tune that you’re most familiar with.”

Conch nodded and brought the jade flute to her lips.

The melody began to fill the hall

Nobody knew what Lu Zhou’s intention was. They only looked at him curiously. However, as they listened to the melody, they shifted their gazes outside the eastern pavilion.

“Concentrate. Move the notes with your Qi.”

Playing the flute required the performer to blow into it. For mortals, that was all they did, but cultivators could use their Primal Qi to move the notes.

Conch circulated her Primal Qi. As it passed through the Lantian Jade Flute, the sound changed. It became clearer and more melodious. The range increased several-fold as well.

The birds in the forest took flight.

Neigh!

“It’s Ji Liang.”

At the midpoint of the mountain, the horse, Ji Liang, took flight and circled around the clouds. It seemed to be responding to the jolly tune.

“The other beasts are too afraid to appear with Ji Liang around.” Lu Zhou saw Ji Liang as well. He was still clueless as to what ability Ji Liang might possess as of now. At the moment, its only advantage, compared to ordinary horses, was the ability to fly. He no longer paid any attention to Ji Liang. Instead, he kept his eyes on Conch. She seemed to have mastered the technique quickly. “Condense your Qi into energy. Only when the note is formed can the energy seal materialize.”

For ordinary cultivators, their Primal Qi would be condensed into energy once it left their bodies. However, for a music cultivator, another layer of conversion that involved sound was needed. Through the combination of their Primal Qi, sound, and energy seal, their attacks were known as the killing melody.

Conch nodded when she heard Lu Zhou’s words. She attempted to merge her Qi with sound before turning them into energy.

## **Chapter 558: Archenemy for Life**

Conch focused her attention.

Everyone looked at her, hoping she would successfully condense her energy.

The flute’s song sounded agitated now, no longer in harmony like it was earlier.

The others thought Conch was going to fail when they heard a buzz in the air.

Soon enough, energy seals appeared in the air. Conch had successfully converted her Primal Qi into energy!

“That’s amazing, Little Junior Sister!” Mingshi Yin said as he looked at the energy seals in the air.

Sound, or music in this instance, was different from the Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist sects. There were no special runes, script seals, and Formation veins. Hence, the shape of the energy seal formed by sound was like the wind. If the rhythm was slow, it would be like the seed of the willow tree. If it was fast, it would become a storm.

Everyone else exclaimed in shock. They were amazed by Conch’s extraordinary talent and ability to understand things. She managed to improve just by exploring on her own every day. Under their master’s guidance, she had easily and quickly converted her Qi into energy.

The energy flowing in the air spread into the surroundings like seeds of a willow. Although it was fast, it was not very effective as wind blades. Nevertheless, it was shocking enough that she could pull this off.

“Just kill me, please.”

“I’m impressed. I think Miss Tenth is the most talented one in the Evil Sky Pavilion.”

Even Little Yuan’er, who had been acknowledged as being highly talented, was shocked when she witnessed this. However, she did not seem jealous. On the contrary, she clapped her hands in delight and said, “Keep up the good work, Little Junior Sister! You can do it!”

Conch was clearly motivated by Little Yuan’er’s encouragement. Not only did she continue trying, but she increased the input of Primal Qi as well. She was in the Brahman Sea realm with five connected meridian vessels. When her Primal Qi surged, it seemed as though eight screens were erected around her. Her melody rose to a higher pitch and sounded more rapid.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The others were shocked. They immediately activated their protective energies and blocked the energy sounds from their surroundings.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Everyone else was shocked.

Lu Zhou was the only one who frowned. This was because he was the only one who caught a glimpse of red energy among the surging energy. In other words... what Conch condensed was red energy.

Red energy was rare in the cultivation world... It was commonly perceived that the color of one’s energy would only change when one cultivated certain arcane arts or if there was some mutation in one’s cultivation method. For example, Fiend zen made energy seals turn black, barriers made from air were blue, and healing powers from nature were green. Apart from these colors, no other colors were heard of in Great Yan’s cultivation world.

This was Lu Zhou’s first time seeing red energy. He placed his hand on the Lantian Jade Flute and pressed on it lightly. “Stop.”

The music stopped abruptly.

Before the energy could take its full form, Lu Zhou did not want too many people to know about the existence of red energy.

The eastern pavilion fell silent.

Ji Liang returned to the forests of Golden Court Mountain and vanished from sight.

“Master?” Conch looked up.

The others wanted to see how much potential Conch had. The sudden interruption left them puzzled.

Why was Conch’s appraisal suddenly interrupted?

Lu Zhou said, “Let’s call it a day... Nobody is to breathe a word about Conch to anyone. If anyone goes against this order, I won’t forgive them.”

The others immediately realized the gravity of the situation. They bowed immediately.

“Yes, Pavilion Master.”

“Yes, master.”

What did a genius fear the most? It was being killed in the cradle before their wings had fully sprouted.

As expected of the pavilion master. They were impressed by his foresight. Naturally, they were unaware that Lu Zhou only did that because he did not want anyone to know about Conch’s red energy.

Now that the appraisal ended, everyone left.

Lu Zhou returned to the eastern pavilion and thought about Conch.

...

At dusk.

Lu Zhou looked at High Void and felt slightly troubled.

The person inside the coffin, a red lotus, the diary, and a woman with the surname Luo. They were all related to the Nine-leaf stage. All these clues pointed in the same direction, and that was to not attempt the Nine-leaf stage.

He could employ the help of others to investigate these matters, but who could investigate Conch’s red energy?

“Red lotus, red energy... Could it be that there are people cultivating red energy and forming red lotuses in the world? Did Conch come from the same place as the coffin’s owner?”

...

Inside the Evergreen Palace in the Imperial City, the Divine Capital.

The study was heavily guarded.

The internal attendant came to the study as always.

"Your Majesty, the results are out." The internal attendant did not sound confident.

"Come in."

When the door was opened, the internal attendant felt a peculiar surge of heatwave. He nearly choked from it.

Liu Gu sat on the floor with his legs crossed. Hot air was surging out of his body at this moment.

The internal attendant dared not look at the emperor. He lowered his head at once and respectfully kneeled on the floor.

"The Retired Emperor brought Su Sheng and Gu Yiran to the Evil Sky Pavilion. It's been confirmed that they have all fallen in battle." After the internal attendant finished speaking, he prostrated himself on the ground, not daring to move.

A moment later, Liu Gu opened his eyes. Contrary to expectations, he did not lash out furiously. He merely said tonelessly, "I see."

The internal attendant was confused. Were they not father and son? How could the emperor remain unaffected by the Retired Emperor's demise in battle? He could only entertain these thoughts in his mind. He would not be so bold as to give voice to them. Seeing that the emperor was not angry, he said tentatively, "Your Majesty, the officials have presented a collective memorial. Currently, only Yan Province and Ji Province haven't been conquered by the Nether Sect. It seems likely that the Nether Sect's forces will surround the Divine Capital soon. The officials wish to invite Your Majesty to the Imperial court and discuss countermeasures."

Upon hearing this, Liu Gu said indifferently, "What do I have to discuss with a bunch of trash about the things I want to do? This is my decree. The Crown Prince will lead an army. He may pick anyone from the eight great generals. Tell Wei Zhuoyan to give up on the border's garrison and attack Liang Province. Tell the Divine Capital's Imperial guard to strengthen their defenses. Nobody else is to be allowed into the Imperial city. If there are uninvited guests, they are to be killed without exception."

The internal attendant shuddered and dared not ask any more questions. He hastily said, "Understood." Then, he rose to his feet and respectfully left the study.

At this moment, Liu Gu opened his eyes again. He flipped his palm.

Whizz!

An avatar materialized above his palm. There was no Golden Lotus. Only seven blades of leaves could be seen spinning around it. The seven leaves were bright and lush. He clenched his fist.

Liu Gu nodded in satisfaction. "I'm almost back at the Eight-leaf stage, and the Nine-leaf stage is almost at hand... Why would I need to fear the Nether Sect or the Evil Sky Pavilion?"

He raised his hand. The Magistrate Brush hovered in the air. The hair of the brush was white, but the tips were red. The red looked extremely glaring under the illumination from his Primal Qi. Soon enough, the hairs of the brush sank into the ink and turned black.

...

The General's Mansion in Yu Province.

Hua Chongyang carried sheets of information and entered.

"Sect Master, Mister Seventh, the results of the investigation are out... Yan Province's main city is guarded by General Ma Luping. He's one of the eight great generals of the Imperial guard, the general of the southeastern gate..."

Yu Zhenghai laughed when he heard this. "Indeed, the Imperial family is out of options. Your plan of surrounding the Divine Capital is splendid, wise brother!"

Si Wuya said, "The Imperial family has no other choice. If they didn't send anyone to defend the city, it would only expedite their demise. Even if they did, without its eight great generals, the Divine Capital doesn't amount to much."

Hua Chongyang said, "You're right, Mister Seventh. Of the eight great generals, Han Yuyuan, Xiang Lie, Gu Yiran, Wen Shu, and Su Sheng have died in battle. Ji Qingqing, who was Han Yuyuan's replacement, has disappeared. As of now, only Wang Yue, Xuan Jingyun, and Ma Luping are left."

"She fled?" Si Wuya frowned. He had always thought about things differently than Yu Zhenghai. He viewed these seemingly insignificant details with more importance.

"Ji Qingqing is the only female general of the eight great generals. It's rumored that she was on the mysterious elite's hitlist and fled overnight out of fear."

Yu Zhenghai and Si Wuya remembered the sight they saw when they attacked Yu Province on the flying chariot.

"The mysterious elite is only at the Five-leaf stage... How could he do anything to Ji Qingqing?" Yu Zhenghai wondered out loud.

"I don't know."

"Wise brother, could this mysterious elite come from the Imperial family?"

"Unlikely. This elite is elusive... He doesn't behave like a Five-leaf cultivator. Perhaps, he lowered his avatar's strength on purpose the other day," Si Wuya replied.

Yu Zhenghai frowned slightly. He remembered what Mingshi Yin had said; Yu Shangrong was in Yu Province. 'If that's true... Why is he helping me? Old Second, oh, Old Second. My archenemy for life is giving me a hand? Impossible!'

At this moment, the Nether Sect disciples rushed into the palace and said, "Sect Master, Mister Seventh, things are not looking good! Yan Province's main city has activated its main Formation and closed itself off!"

"What's the reason for this?" Si Wuya asked.

"To capture someone! It's said that... they've found the mysterious elite!"

## Chapter 559: Battle in the City

Yu Zhenghai, Si Wuya, and Hua Chongyang exchanged a look.

"Your shoes will certainly get wet when you frequently walk by the river... This comrade of ours is in a pickle," Yu Zhenghai said with a sigh.

Si Wuya asked, "Where is this elite now?"

"According to our sources inside Yan Province city, the mysterious elite was last seen at Fenglai Street. However, the elite is elusive. His current whereabouts are unknown at the moment."

Si Wuya nodded. He turned and said, "Eldest Senior Brother, shall we rescue him?"

Yu Zhenghai was sitting, his back straight. He drummed his fingers lightly as he pondered on it before saying, "Of course, we must rescue him. Why do you think I managed to bring the Nether Sect to such great heights? If we leave him to his demise, how would our brethren in the Nether Sect be willing to work for us in the future?"

"That's brilliant, Sect Master." Hua Chongyang bowed.

"That's sound judgment, Eldest Senior Brother." Si Wuya bowed.

....

At the same time.

Inside a certain inn in Yan Province city that was surrounded by soldiers and cultivators.

The nearby streets and buildings were filled with cultivators hovering in the air as well.

There was not a single commoner in the area.

The entire Yan Province city was silent.

In the skies, the huge barrier enveloped the entire city.

"Senior Sword Devil, give up... From the moment you set foot in Yan Province, my men already had their eyes on you. Everything you see here today was prepared for you," the skinny Ma Qing said calmly as he looked at the green-robed swordsman sitting across him.

Cultivators filled the inside of the inn as well.

"I'm certain that you've already severed your lotus. Your cultivation base must've deteriorated greatly after you severed your lotus. You're no longer an Eight-leaf elite. You're confident, but it's this confidence that led you to your doom," Ma Qing continued to say.

However, the green-robed swordsman sipped his tea in a carefree manner, enjoying the scenery outside the window.

Ma Qing could not help but feel that he was being looked down upon. He frowned slightly and said, "Aren't you afraid?"

The green-robed swordsman smiled. "Why should I be?"

“You don’t I’ll kill you?”

“If you can kill me, what good does being afraid do? If you can’t kill me, then there’s even more reason for me to be unafraid,” Yu Shangrong replied in a gentle voice.

Ma Qing was rendered temporarily speechless. “Senior Sword Devil, I don’t think you understand me.” He waved his arm.

Zing! Zing! Zing!

The cultivators inside the inn drew their swords.

The cultivators outside the inn moved closer as well and tightened their enclosure.

This was a checkmate. There was practically no route of escape.

Yu Shangrong said, “If Ma Luping were here, perhaps, it would be slightly difficult. Alas, you’re the one who came.”

Ma Qing had cultivated with his elder brother, Ma Luping, since he was young. They were of similar age. Yet, Ma Luping’s talent was on another level, and he had a profound cultivation base. Everyone knew about Ma Luping, one of the eight great generals, but nobody knew about Ma Qing. He had always lived under the protection of his elder brother, Ma Luping. As time went by, Ma Qing wanted to prove himself as well. Today, trapping and killing the legendary Sword Devil, Yu Shangrong, was going to be a great chance for him to prove himself.

“I, alone, am enough.”

“I admire your bravery,” Yu Shangrong said lightly.

“We all have our own masters to serve... The Nether Sect is in an advantageous position right now. Moreover, it’s supported by the Nine-leaf Old Senior Ji. It’s only a matter of time before Yan Province falls,” Ma Qing said.

“If you know how it’ll turn out, why aren’t you running away?”

Ma Qing chuckled and said, “I will... but only after I kill you... That way, I’ll be rewarded by the Imperial family, and my name will be renowned. What does Yan Province or the empire have to do with me?”

At this moment, one of Ma Qing’s subordinates ran up the stairs, cupped his fists, and hurriedly said, “General Ma, the Nether Sect is launching its main attack.”

When Ma Qing heard this, his eyes widened immediately. Then, he heard a crisp sound ringing in the air. He saw the Sword Devil, Yu Shangrong, forcefully swinging his sword.

“General!”

“General!”

The others exclaimed in shock.

Ma Qing wasted no time in summoning his avatar.



Whizz!

His Six-leaf avatar stood before him.

Boom!

The second floor of the inn was blasted away by the avatar. Shrapnel and miscellaneous objects ricocheted everywhere!

The golden avatar planted itself before the Longevity Sword. There was a blast of energy as Ma Qing retreated. He distanced himself from the building and hovered in midair.

The others swarmed forward.

Ma Qing was still assured of his victory, certain that Yu Shangrong's attack would miss, when his vision began to swim...

When his men ran up the inn, they blocked his view, causing his already blurry sight to lose focus. He hastily focused his gaze and forced himself to be more clear-headed. When his sight finally focused, he saw three figures were coming at him from the left, the center, and the right.

The green-robed swordsman wore a faint smile on his face as he wielded the Longevity Sword in his right hand. A faint red light swirled around the blade as it was held at a 45-degree angle. Grand technique! Return and Enter Three Souls!

Yu Shangrong swung his Longevity Sword with a calm expression on his face.

A crisp and familiar sound rang in the air.

An obvious and neat cut appeared on Ma Qing's avatar...

"This..." Ma Qing's eyes widened in fear. His instinct spurred him to grit his teeth and flee.

Yu Shangrong remained composed as usual. He sheathed his sword.

The Longevity Sword slashed at the cut on the avatar again as it returned to its scabbard at lightning speed!

Yu Shangrong did not even deign to look at Ma Qing as he rose into the sky.

At the same time, the cultivators who swarmed into the inn discovered their target was nowhere to be found.

They turned around at once and saw Ma Qing standing outside.

"General!"

"General!"

"Kill him!"

Dozens of cultivators charged out like flies.

Yu Shangrong moved swiftly in the air. Leaf-like energy seals spun around him.

“What are those things?”

Yu Shangrong adjusted his direction.

Boom!

Like a gale, he charged at the others as the leaf-like energy seals spun behind him.

The golden leaves slashed and stabbed at the cultivators who obstructed Yu Shangrong's path. Then, corpses began to fall from the air one after another. They did not stand a chance at all and had died immediately.

The others were sent flying backward by a blast of air like scattered petals.

“Lotus leaves!”

“Lotus leaves from the Golden Lotus!”

“Look out for the lotus leaves!”

The cultivators gave up on their chase.

Ma Qing hovered in midair and lifted his hand to press it against the wound on his chest. However, it seemed to be futile. He saw countless leaf-shaped energy seals behind Yu Shangrong. They gradually faded and scattered in the wind. Eventually, only six leaves were left before they merged with Yu Shangrong's body.

Ma Qing opened his dried mouth. He said incredulously, “S-six-Leaf? After the lotus is severed, the leaves... can be used in this manner?”

Alas, realization dawned on Ma Qing too late. He dropped from the sky headfirst. Blood gushed out from the wound on his chest onto the stone slab, forming a red river.

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

Naturally, Yu Shangrong could not hear the system notification. He continued unleashing his grand technique as he sped toward the city's gates.

Killing Ma Qing was nothing to brag about. His elder brother, Ma Luping, was the difficult opponent.

Since Yu Shangrong had exposed his whereabouts, he would have to leave Yan Province as quickly as possible. The Formation had been activated, and a barrier surrounded the main city. Could he get out before Ma Luping arrived?

Yu Shangrong shot past the buildings. He kept going until he saw the city walls. At this moment, he looked up and saw a huge black flying chariot hovering above the city walls. The Nether Sect? Resounding cries signaling a charge against the city walls reached him from the other side of the wall. The barrier beyond the gate boomed as though it was being hammered.

“Attacking the city at this time? Utter foolishness,” Yu Shangrong remarked indifferently. In his opinion, the Formation was at its strongest at the moment. It was slightly foolish to attack the city now.

Yu Shangrong stopped flying. He landed and looked at the distant city walls that were so tall that he could not see the top. He waited for the barrier to be weakened.

At this moment, a massive energy saber dropped down from the flying chariot.

The Jasper Saber shone with a blinding golden radiance as it dropped down toward the barrier.

The Great Dark Heaven Memorial, the Dark Heaven Starlight!

The huge spinning energy saber descended.

Boom!

The sound of the impact resounded through the main city.

A huge ripple appeared on the barrier.

### **Chapter 560: A Path for Villains**

The sound of the impact when the Jasper Saber's Great Dark Heaven Memorial hit the barrier resounded in the skies. The noise alerted the remaining civilians in the city. Many of the civilians had been evacuated, but there were a few who remained.

Yu Shangrong swept the streets of the city with his eyes, and he saw the civilians running toward the western city gates in groups.

At this moment, a large number of soldiers appeared near the western gates. There were also cultivators flying into the city at a low altitude.

"Hold it!"

"Nobody moves!"

"Anyone who leaves the city without permission. Be it men, women, the elderly, children, cultivators or not; execute them on the spot if they try to leave!"

The cultivators' voices were gruff and powerful. They immediately pushed the civilians who were trying to take shelter at the western part of the city back.

With this, the civilians of the city could only run eastward...

The cultivators in the air kept an eye on the civilians that wanted to run away.

Boom!

Another loud noise rang in the air.

The Jasper Saber's Great Dark Heaven Memorial unleashed the Dark Heaven Starlight. It was dazzlingly bright, like fireworks during the day. The starlight energy hit the barrier over and over again.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Soon enough, the energy saber faded away, and the ripples on the barrier faded away as well.

Yu Zhenghai stood proudly on the flying chariot and looked down on the entire city. This barrier was much more powerful than the one in Yu Province. He had cast the Great Dark Heaven Memorial twice, and yet, all he managed to do was create ripples on the barrier. It did not show any signs of breaking.

Si Wuya said, "Ma Luping will certainly be drawn to the huge commotion here. That mysterious elite who mimics Second Senior Brother must be skilled. I think he'll be able to escape."

"I hope that he's not that stupid."

"Elites are usually confident. Since he's mimicking Second Senior Brother, I'm sure he's a confident person as well. I'm just worried he'll be stubborn and continue to fight," Si Wuya replied.

"Now that you mentioned it, wise brother, I have a feeling he's a stubborn character." Yu Zhenghai frowned. "He's as much of a pain as your Second Senior Brother is..."

"..."

Yu Zhenghai pushed his palm forward.

The Jasper Saber spun again for the third time.

Unlike before, Yu Zhenghai extended his arms and flew up. The Jasper Saber hovered in front of the flying chariot and shot out countless energy sabers.

"Sovereign's Descent."

The energy saber, which resembled the Jasper Saber greatly, stabbed downward.

The garrison soldiers hurrying over stopped in their tracks and looked up at the dense array of energy sabers.

Even experts were respectfully fearful when they saw this.

The only person under the heavens capable of unleashing this skill was the master of the greatest Fiend sect, Yu Zhenghai.

The Great Dark Heaven Memorial, the Sovereign's Descent.

If Yu Zhenghai had been lacking a kingly aura during the battle in Radiant Cloud Forest, he had enough of it now.

Inside Yan Province's main city, anyone who saw this stopped in their tracks and looked up at the horizons.

The storm of energy sabers continued raining down.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The barrier shook.

The collision between the energy sabers and the barrier resulted in a turbulent flow of energy.

The civilians inside the city thought that the barrier was broken.

The spot where the Sovereign Descent attacked caused ripples that traveled across the entire barrier.

The Sovereign's Descent lasted for quite some time. Under its fierce attacks, the barrier dimmed slightly.

The cultivators who were initially enthusiastic about helping to defend the city threw all their valiant thoughts out of their minds when they saw this.

Why was the Nether Sect the greatest Fiend sect under the heavens?

How did the Nether Sect conquer the nine provinces of Great Yan?

Everyone had their answers at this moment.

In the flying chariot, Hua Chongyang gulped. "Your saber techniques are truly first-rate, sect master. You're the role model of my generation!"

Yu Zhenghai landed and lowered his arms. His Jasper Saber returned to his hand. He looked down at the barrier arrogantly.

"The barrier is slightly weakened. I'm sure Ma Luping is greatly shaken by this move of yours, Eldest Senior Brother," Si Wuya said.

Yu Zhenghai was also pleased with his technique. "It's only a barrier. It'll break after three more strikes."

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The ballistae above the city walls fired countless projectiles toward them.

The sound of the arrows sailing through the air resounded across the skies.

The garrison was fighting back.

When Hua Chongyang saw this, he said, "Sect master, leave this trivial matter to me."

"Go."

Hua Chongyang leaped down and summoned his Seven-leaf Golden Lotus avatar.

Whizz!

It swiftly increased in size.

The arrows were repelled.

Yu Zhenghai nodded. He ignored the ballistae and looked down at the garrison soldiers on the city walls. "After three strikes, if Ma Luping still doesn't show up, I'll break the barrier and have your heads." His voice descended as a forceful soundwave. It was so loud that even the deaf could have heard him.

At this moment, a gruff and imposing voice rang from the western part of the city.

"How grand, Sect Master Yu."

Everyone looked over.

The garrison soldiers bowed.

“Greetings, General Ma!”

The people hovering in the air and standing on the city walls bowed as well.

General Ma was skinny and did not have a big build. Yet, his presence was imposing enough. He was none other than Ma Luping, one of the Imperial guard’s eight great generals.

Ma Luping rose into the air with his hands behind his back, looking as majestic as a king.

Yu Zhenghai looked at Ma Luping disapprovingly. “Ma Luping, if you’re a man, come out and fight me.”

Yu Zhenghai and Si Wuya were relieved when they saw Ma Luping. This meant that the elite who was secretly helping the Nether Sect was now safe.

Ma Luping said, “Sect Master Yu, if you’re man enough, break this barrier and fight me.”

Both opponents faced each other.

Yu Zhenghai was about to say something when Si Wuya pulled his arm and said, “I think Ma Luping has reinforcements. We need to take a more cautious approach to conquer Yan Province.”

“Reinforcements?” Yu Zhenghai was puzzled.

Si Wuya said, “Xuang Jingyun and Wang Yue must be guarding the Divine Capital at the moment. Those two and the ten elders of the Big Dipper Academy have knowledge about the Divine Capital’s Ten Terminal Formation. They won’t leave so easily. Liu Gu doesn’t seem to have left the Ten Terminal Formation at all. The presidents of the two great academies and Wei Zhuoyan, the commander-in-chief of the three armies are more likely to come.”

“Didn’t you say Wei Zhuoyan is an impostor?”

“It doesn’t matter right now. It doesn’t change the fact that he has the power to mobilize the three armies... He’s not a particularly skilled man, but his greed has gotten the better of him,” Si Wuya said.

“That b\*stard. Where would he be today if it weren’t for master?”

“It’s difficult to fathom a person’s mind,” Si Wuya said.

“Which reminds me, wise brother...” Yu Zhenghai had already used much of his Primal Qi. It would take him some time to break the barrier. At that time, he would no longer be in his peak condition. He walked to the edge of the flying chariot and looked down haughtily before he said, “Ma Luping, I won’t break the barrier today, out of consideration for the civilians in the city...”

He did not give Ma Luping the chance to retort as he released a soundwave and said, “Since I founded the Nether Sect, I’ve always had a firm rule in place. Civilians mustn’t be harmed. Alas, today, the garrison army is using the people as hostages. This is despicable! Although I’m of the Fiend Path, it’s not a path for villains. I will never do something as revolting as this.” He paused before continuing, “I’ll tell the world about this so that the people can see you for who you truly are, all of you.”

“Retreat.”

The Nether Sect’s flying chariot turned around and flew away slowly.

The Nether Sect members outside the city walls gave up attacking as well.

The throng of people retreated.

Ma Luping was as stunned as a wooden chicken. He was dumbfounded by this maneuver.

The cultivation world had never dragged civilians into their fights. This was because cultivators understood the most basic principle; they were all human once.

It was easy to kill a single, 100, or 1,000 people. However, annihilating everyone in a province or nation was as difficult as ascending to the heavens.

Ma Luping was still stunned.

People in the streets broke out in an uproar, screaming and shouting.

“The Imperial family doesn’t treat us commoners like humans! This is outrageous!”

“Even a Fiend sect like the Nether Sect knows that civilians shouldn’t be dragged into this... Yet, the garrison general took us hostage! What an abomination!”

“How audacious! Are the lives of the officials more valuable than the lives of commoners?! What logic is this?!”

More and more began to join in. Soon enough, their voices rose to a crescendo.

Ma Luping’s eyelid twitched. Although he was strong enough to kill all of them, his rational mind told him it was not a wise move.

At this moment, a voice entered Ma Luping’s ears. “General... Deputy General Ma is dead!”

Ma Luping’s eyes widened when he heard this. Then, he glared at the civilians and said contemptuously, “I’ll cut down anyone who keeps making a ruckus!”

The soundwave rolled out.

The shouting stopped immediately.

The civilians looked at Ma Luping in shock, too afraid to make a sound now.

Some of the commoners even wished for the Nether Sect to conquer their city sooner.

Ma Luping said expressionlessly, “Keep an eye on them. Kill those who try to leave without permission.”

“Understood!”

...

Meanwhile, in a nearby alley, Yu Shangrong looked up at the flying chariot that leaving. He started walking in the other direction with his arms crossed.

...

Inside the Evil Sky Pavilion’s eastern pavilion.

Lu Zhou had been meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls for an entire day. At this moment, he finally opened his eyes.

A voice rang from outside. "Master... A letter from Seventh Junior Brother."

Creak!

Lu Zhou emerged from the room and saw Mingshi Yin standing respectfully at the door. He waved his arm, and the letter flew into his hand.

After reading it, Lu Zhou said disapprovingly, "Does he take me for a fool?"

Mingshi Yin had already read the letter so he knew the situation. He said, "Master, with your cultivation base, why don't you march into the Divine Capital and bring Liu Gu away? That way, Eldest Senior Brother won't have to go through so much trouble."

"..." Lu Zhou was speechless. 'I'd love to do that, but my strength won't allow it.'

"The Divine Capital is defended by the Ten Terminal Formation. It's not that easy."

Mingshi Yin smacked his forehead. "You're right, master. I forgot about that. We'll need the Nether Sect's support to destroy the Ten Terminal Formation."

After all these years, the Imperial family had remained undefeated. Apart from the numerous elites in the palace, the Ten Terminal Formation played a great role as well. It was not an exaggeration to say that more than half of the elites in Great Yan were in the Divine Capital.