

Disciples 561

Chapter 561: I'm Only Passing by

"If the Big Dipper Academy and the Sky Conduct Academy were to make their moves at the same time... I'm afraid that Eldest Senior Brother might not be able to conquer Yan Province. Eldest Senior Brother only has Hua Chongyang and Seventh Junior Brother by his side. The Big Dipper Academy is not an easy opponent to deal with. Moreover, they have Wei Zhuoyan," Mingshi Yin said with a bow. "Master, please help Eldest Senior Brother."

"Your Eldest Senior Brother is obstinate. He won't allow anyone else to interfere," Lu Zhou said.

Mingshi Yin nodded. "In that case, we can send Old Huang to help... Island Master Huang and Eldest Senior Brother are close. I think that he has rested enough. We shouldn't keep him here forever."

At this precise moment, a coughing sound rang from behind Mingshi Yin.

"Brother Ji!" Huang Shijie's expression was neutral when he entered the eastern pavilion.

How awkward. The ancients had the wisdom of saying that a loose tongue could cause a lot of trouble.

Mingshi Yin greeted Huang Shijie as though he had not spoken those words earlier. "Greetings, Island Master Huang."

"Hello."

Lu Zhou looked at Huang Shijie and asked, "Did you manage to rest, Island Master Huang?"

"Thank you for your hospitality, Brother Ji," Huang Shijie replied, "I heard that Sect Master Yu is marching on Yan Province at the moment. If you don't mind, Brother Ji, I'd like to go have a look..."

Naturally, it was helpful if Huang Shijie was willing to go there. However, sending him there on his own might not be enough. Eight-leaf cultivators were not required to conquer the nine provinces. However, the current situation was that the Divine Capital was surrounded; the Imperial family would not turn a blind eye to it.

After muttering to himself for a moment, Lu Zhou said, "There's no need for that."

"Why do you say so, Brother Ji?"

"I believe in Yu Zhenghai's abilities," Lu Zhou replied.

"I'm not doubting Sect Master Yu's abilities... It's just that..."

Before Huang Shijie could finish his sentence, Lu Zhou turned around and walked away after he said, "We'll discuss this another day."

...

Two days later.

Lu Zhou could sense that half of his extraordinary power had been replenished. It was the same volume as his full capacity before he obtained the Earth Scroll.

After that, he did some breathing exercises.

Throughout the past five months, he had basically been exploring the Earth Scroll and meditating. His own cultivation base did not improve much. Fortunately, he had 100,000 merit points, which was equivalent to two Golden Lotus Leaves. He was satisfied with this pace.

Lu Zhou got up and flexed his limbs.

He went behind the screen and looked at the old parchment drawing. No new parts of the map had appeared. Then, he turned around and left the room.

He stood before the eastern pavilion's hall and flexed his limbs.

At this moment, Mingshi Yin entered the pavilion. He bowed and said, "Master, Seventh Junior Brother sent another letter saying that the Big Dipper Academy and Sky Conduct Academy had left."

Lu Zhou frowned and said, "Where does Liu Gu get the confidence to disregard me? Underestimating Yu Zhenghai is underestimating the Evil Sky Pavilion."

"Master... Since Liu Ge possessed a sword like High Void, the Nine-leaf elite might actually be in the palace," Mingshi Yin said offhandedly.

Something stirred in Lu Zhou. "What did you say?"

Mingshi Yin kneeled with a thud and said, "You're the first Nine-leaf elite, master. There's no one else. Regardless of the elite, you can take them out with a single palm strike."

Lu Zhou raised his hand and said slowly, "Repeat what you just said."

"You're the first Nine-leaf elite..."

"Before that." Lu Zhou frowned. "You're usually smart. Why are you acting daft today?"

"Since... Liu Ge possessed a sword like High Void, the Nine-leaf elite might actually be in the palace?"

Lu Zhou felt this was a possibility. The armor, the diary, the red coffin, High Void, the red talismans inside the box; everything came from the palace!

Liu Ge had said that the Nine-leaf elite had once come to the Great Yan's Divine Capital.

Apart from that, Lu Zhou had overlooked a fact. It had been quite some time since the Lotus-severing era began. Who could say that there were no geniuses who had cultivated to the Eight or Nine-leaf stage?

It was just like the games he had played in his previous life. No matter how hard he trained, there would always be some f*cker who would reach the maximum level in a matter of days. As the lotus-severing era progressed, the possibility of that happening increased by the day.

"Tell Huang Shijie to accompany me," Lu Zhou said.

Mingshi Yin was shocked upon hearing this. "Are you going to help Eldest Senior Brother to attack Yan Province?"

“No.” Lu Zhou waved his hand. “I’m only passing by.”

“Understood.” Mingshi Yin turned around obediently and left.

Lu Zhou would not allow the two great academies and some other secret actor to plot against his disciple.

...

When the sun was high in the skies, the Evil Sky Pavilion’s cloud-splitting chariot left the barrier slowly and flew to the western side of Yan Province.

This time, apart from the three prisoners from the Taixu Academy, only Lu Zhou, Mingshi Yin, and Huang Shijie were onboard the flying chariot.

This way, the others could work harder in cultivating. It was also safer for them to stay in the Evil Sky Pavilion. Moreover, they would not have been much of a help.

On the flying chariot, Lu Zhou stood with his hands on his back as he looked at the three people from the Taixu Academy who were kneeling on the wooden floorboard.

Zhou Wenliang, Wang Jianrang, and Zhang Gong shuddered as they kneeled on the floor. They did not dare to move at all.

They had been imprisoned in the Evil Sky Pavilion all this time. They lived in constant fear and could hardly eat or rest. The villains would take turns using them as punching bags for their training. It had been a harrowing experience.

Mingshi Yin who was manning the helm turned to look at them as he asked, “Master, why are we bringing these pieces of trash?”

Before Lu Zhou could answer, Huang Shijie smiled and said, “The Taixu Academy has always been on friendly terms with the Imperial family and the two academies.”

Lu Zhou looked at the three of them and asked indifferently, “Do you want to live?”

Zhou Wenliang immediately prostrated himself and stammered, “Y-y... Y-yes...”

Only a fool would throw his life away!

“In that case, I’ll give you a chance,” Lu Zhou said airily, “The two great academies are already on their way to Yan Province. I want to meet their presidents... If the three of you complete this task, I’ll spare your lives.”

Zhou Wenliang responded immediately, “Don’t worry, Pavilion Master. We’ll certainly make it happen. I’ll write to them right away!”

...

Half a day later, the cloud-splitting chariot appeared on a mountain peak several miles west of Yan Province.

The flying chariot descended.

It did not head toward Yan Province.

Lu Zhou sat with his back straight on the flying chariot, looking down at Yan Province City in the distance. Only a vague outline of the city could be seen.

Zhou Wenliang said softly, "Elder Ji, I-I have contacted the Big Dipper Academy."

"I see." Lu Zhou did not look at Zhou Wenliang.

Huang Shijie said, "Knowing Sect Master Yu's temper, Yan Province should've long been conquered. Yet, Yan Province is quiet at the moment. Seems like something worrying him."

With the two academies and Wei Zhuoyan making their moves, it was only natural for Yu Zhenghai to be cautious. He was not a fool, after all.

A moment later, from the direction of the Divine Capital, white-clad cultivators flew through several peaks. They moved at a fast speed and had impressive auras. They formed a long dragon with their formation. There were roughly 1,000 cultivators.

"Master, here they come!" Mingshi Yin leaped off the flying chariot. He stood on top of the mountain and seemed exceptionally excited. "Master, use your Nine-leaf power now and kill them! That way, Eldest Senior Brother can rest easy."

"..." Lu Zhou frowned. "Stop spouting nonsense... I'm not a person who kills without reason."

"It was a slip of the tongue! Please forgive me, master..." Mingshi Yin hurriedly said, "You're a man of reason and morals, master."

Huang Shijie cupped his fists as well. "I don't know about anything else, but I know that you're a highly tolerant person. The people you killed deserved it. If this is what it means to be a fiend, then Penglai Island is willing to follow the Evil Sky Pavilion."

Upon hearing this, Zhou Wenliang and the others shuddered.

Even the Penglai Sect was supporting the Evil Sky Pavilion. The Evil Sky Pavilion's charm was evident. The Evil Sky Pavilion was like the sun at high noon. It was not surprising for it to have a huge following.

At this moment, the thousand white-clad cultivators were drawing closer.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The cultivators stopped near the mountain's peak. They arranged themselves in square formations and lowered their altitude.

Zhou Wenliang looked at them. He said in a hushed voice, "Senior Ji, I... I'll go greet them."

"Go." Lu Zhou waved his sleeve. He was not worried about Zhou Wenliang defecting at the final moment. He had countless ways to kill Zhou Wenliang. If Zhou Wenliang was bright enough, he would not dare do something as brainless as that.

Zhou Wenliang tapped the ground with his feet and flew away. "Zhou Wenliang of the Taixu Academy extends his greetings."

,000 Big Dipper Academy disciples flew toward him. They were well-trained, and their movements were neat.

The one who stood at the lead was the Big Dipper Academy's president, Zhou Youcai.

"Zhou Wenliang... You're actually here. The Taixu Academy's Patriarch, Lin Xin, had always been on good terms with my academy. Now that the Evil Sky Pavilion's first disciple, Yu Zhenghai, is stirring up a storm, you and I should work together with the Divine Capital to take down the Evil Sky Pavilion," Zhou Youcai said.

"Uh..." Zhou Wenliang was filled with the urge to cry. The current Taixu Academy had no master, patriarch, barrier, and core disciples. What were they supposed to use to fight against the Evil Sky Pavilion? They were in no position to be discussing a collaboration. Although he was the Second Elder, he was powerless and helpless. In the end, he shook his head and said, diving into the heart of the matter, "Senior, look over there..."

Zhou Youcai looked in the direction where Zhou Wenliang pointed. On the mountain's peak, half of the cloud-splitting chariot could be seen. He frowned immediately. Shortly after, he saw a man standing on a huge rock waving at him, "Hello, President Zhou. We meet again!"

Zhou Youcai frowned and said, "Who are you?"

"The Evil Sky Pavilion's Mister Fourth, Mingshi Yin," Zhou Wenliang said.

Zhou Youcai glared at him. "So, it's the fourth villain of the Evil Sky Pavilion... Men!"

"Here!"

"Take him down swiftly... I want him alive. With him, we can negotiate with Yu Zhenghai! Zhou Wenliang, good job! Although the Taixu Academy isn't what it once was, as long as I'm here, nobody will be allowed to bully the Taixu Academy."

Zhou Wenliang. "..."

'How did he become the president with that brain?'

Chapter 562: Strategy Planning and Watching Tigers Fight from Another Mountain

Zhou Wenliang was filled with the urge to cry again. He hastily flew to Zhou Youcai's side and said in a hushed tone, "Pre... P-president Zhou, S-senior Ji... i-is here as well." The last few words of his sentence sounded like the buzzing of a mosquito. It was barely audible.

Zhou Youcai widened his eyes, and he shivered involuntarily. "You..."

The source of the Divine Capital's confidence was the Ten Terminal Formation and the Imperial family. Zhou Youcai might be able to fight the Nether Sect outside the capital, but he was far from worthy of being Old Villain Ji's opponent!

At this moment, a gruff voice reached them. "President Zhou, won't you come and have a chat with me?"

Zhou Youcai's heart sank. He felt as though he was facing a terrifying monster.

The hot-blooded young Big Dipper Academy disciples initially intended to go and capture Mingshi Yin. However, at this moment, they had retreated.

“It’s really Old Villain Ji!”

“Get ready to retreat!”

“I’m scared... I-I-I can’t do it! I’m done...” One of the Big Dipper Academy disciples who was especially scared fell from the skies when he lost control of his Primal Qi.

Zhou Youcai turned and glanced at that disciple. He said disdainfully, “I’m ashamed on behalf of the Big Dipper Academy for having such weak members.”

Mingshi Yin stood on the huge rock and continued to say, “President Zhou, come on! My master is waiting for you...”

“...”

The Big Dipper Academy disciples dared not move.

Zhou Wenliang said in a low voice, “I’m sorry, President Zhou. On the surface, it might seem like I’ve pulled you into the inferno, but if you think about it, Senior Ji would be watching two tigers fight from another mountain if you provide help to Yan Province now. The mantis stalks the cicada, unaware of the oriole behind. Do you think you’ll be able to defend yourself against a Nine-leaf cultivator at that time?”

Zhou Youcai’s heart shuddered. Although he was not too happy to hear that, Zhou Wenliang had spoken the truth. He flew out after he turned around and said, “Big Dipper Academy disciples, here’s my order.”

“Yes, president.”

“Everyone is to wait here. Nobody is to move without my order.”

“Yes, president!”

Zhou Youcai stepped forward in the air toward Mingshi Yin.

Zhou Wenliang followed behind him.

Soon after, the duo arrived in front of the peak where Mingshi Yin was standing.

The scenery and environment of the peak were pleasant. There were even trees that provided shade from the sun. Leaves fell slowly from the trees. Under a huge tree, two elders sat on chairs and chatted away merrily.

When Zhou Youcai stepped past the huge rock and saw the two old men, he could not help but widen his eyes. He gulped before he instantly turned on his heels...

“If you dare to leave, the Big Dipper Academy will certainly be annihilated in the future.” Lu Zhou’s voice was gruff and forceful.

Zhou Youcai shuddered. He stopped in his tracks. The situation of the Divine Capital was not clear yet. The emperor had been using the Big Dipper Academy to develop the leaf-sprouting pills. He was not interested in governance as well. The Evil Sky Pavilion was like the sun at high noon, and the Nether Sect

was the greatest Fiend sect. If the Divine Capital fell, how would the Big Dipper Academy continue to exist?

“Don’t worry, President Zhou. My master doesn’t kill innocent people. Why would you be killed if you’re obedient? However, if you try anything funny, you can’t blame anyone else if you die,” Mingshi Yin said airily.

Zhou Youcai sighed helplessly and walked up to the duo.

Lu Zhou waved his sleeve and said, “Have a seat.”

Mingshi Yin leaped onto the flying chariot and fetched a chair.

Huang Shijie cupped his fists together and said, “Huang Shijie of Penglai Island extends his greetings. President Zhou, I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“Hello, Island Master Huang.” Zhou Youcai sat down rigidly.

Lu Zhou looked at the 1,000 disciples hovering outside and said, “I’ve always been reasonable and never kill the innocent. Naturally... I won’t hold back against my enemies.”

This statement made Zhou Youcai’s heart shudder. He mustered up his courage and asked, “Are you going to interfere in Yan Province’s matter, Senior Ji?”

“I don’t have time for that. I’m merely passing by. Although Yu Zhenghai has betrayed me, he’s still my disciple. I’d like to see if he’s capable of conquering Yan Province as well.”

Zhou Youcai. “???”

‘He’s only here to have a look?’

At this very moment...

Dong!

A thunderous noise rang from Yan Province City.

A firework-like energy saber burst forth in the air.

Zhou Youcai rose to his feet immediately. His eyes were wide open as he looked at Yan Province City in the distance.

The Big Dipper Academy disciples turned around as well as looked at Yan Province City.

Lu Zhou looked at Zhou Youcai and said indifferently, “Sit.”

Zhou Youcai instantly felt as though 1,000 catties stones were tied to his feet. He could not move at all.

When Lu Zhou saw Zhou Youcai remained standing, he said with a sigh, “If you want to leave... I won’t stop you. Go ahead.”

Mingshi Yin nodded. ‘Master’s move of making concessions in order to gain advantages is great.’

Would Zhou Youcai be bold enough to move when there was an implied threat?

Huang Shijie smiled brightly and said, “What’s the hurry, Brother Zhou? Isn’t it wonderful to sit down, chat about the past and current events while admiring the scenery?”

Zhou Youcai had no choice but to sit down. At this moment, his face was flushed red.

“Big Dipper Academy is the most magnanimous academy in Great Yan. Regardless of gender, age, or condition, the Big Dipper Academy deals with everyone the same. Hence, the academy became famous for that. Even if a relative of the Imperial family joins the academy, they’ll have the same standing as the other disciples. President Zhou, have you ever thought about when the academy’s common practice had changed?”

Zhou Youcai was taken aback when he heard this.

Many years ago, the Big Dipper Academy was known as the greatest academy in Great Yan’s Divine Capital. They had numerous elites and looked down at the others from above. The Sword of the Emperor, Emperor Yong Shou, Liu Ge, and Zhu Tianyuan of the Ancient Saint Cult from Mobei were students of the Big Dipper Academy. Unfortunately, the academy was short of manpower in recent centuries, and the quality of the disciples had deteriorated with each generation. It was slowly becoming an Imperial academy and a subsidiary of the Imperial family.

Boom!

Yan Province City’s Formation flashed again.

From the mountain’s peak, the city looked as though it was covered by a huge transparent bowl.

Many cultivators rose from Yan Province City and charged toward the city walls and the skies.

Yan Province City was clearly in chaos at this moment.

Zhou Youcai clenched his fists until his knuckles turned white.

The Big Dipper Academy should be loyal to the Imperial family. Yet, at this moment, Zhou Youcai could only stay on this mountain while he looked at the Nether Sect attacking Yan Province City, unbridled. He was powerless.

When Lu Zhou saw the turmoil brewing in Zhou Youcai’s heart, he said, “The garrison general, Ma Luping, one of the eight great generals, is cunning and sinister. He’ll do anything to reach his goals. He used the civilians as hostages to threaten Yu Zhenghai. Although that rascal of mine is of the Fiend Path, he’s not a person without morals. The Big Dipper Academy educates people with books. Do you think that it’s right to gamble with the lives of the people?”

Zhou Youcai frowned. “Is that so?”

Mingshi Yin said, “You don’t believe us? Aren’t you guys part of the cause why the Nether Sect is able to recruit several hundred thousand members in a short amount of time?”

Zhou Youcai was dumbfounded. If they had a choice, who would willingly pick this path? He clenched his hands together and said, “That’s a different matter. I’ll submit a memorial to the Emperor about Ma Luping’s misconduct. However, with the Nether Sect being this insolent and plunging the empire into chaos, aren’t you going to do anything about it as Yu Zhenghai’s master, Senior Ji?”

When Zhou Youcai was at the Big Dipper Academy, he heard that Yu Zhenghai was the greatest traitor to come out of Evil Sky Pavilion. There was a conflict between the master and the disciple. Up until today, the Evil Sky Pavilion had never openly supported the Nether Sect. That was why he was bold enough to ask this question.

Lu Zhou said, "It's just like you said, that's another matter. Naturally, I'll deal with Yu Zhenghai for betraying me. You don't have to worry about that. But... It's Yu Zhenghai's personal conviction and ambition to rule the world. President Zhou, we are both teachers so you should understand that... Otherwise, why did the Big Dipper Academy allow the Sword Emperor, Emperor Yong Shou, to sow disturbance in the world?"

In other words, he should not have double standards.

Chapter 563: An Insult to Brother Ji

If the students of the Big Dipper Academy were allowed to correct the world, why would his own disciple be denied that same right?

Zhou Youcai was at a loss for words. "The Nether Sect is of the Fiend Path, after all... Everything the Fiend Path does go against the heavens. Aren't you worried that the people might reject a change in government?"

"Oh, so now you're thinking about the people?"

As the saying went, 'Water may keep the boat afloat, but it may also sink it'. This was a truth that had never changed since time immemorial.

Although cultivators wielded the power to destroy mortals, the new blood that the cultivation world needed was forever dependent on mortals. If the oppression continued, as time passed, mortals who became cultivators would lash back cultivators who trampled on them once they gained enough power. Even the animals in the forests understood this basic law of survival, let alone humans. This was the lesson humans learned after paying with generations of bloodshed.

"How can you guarantee that Yu Zhenghai won't harm the civilians, Senior Ji?" Zhou Youcai asked.

In truth, nobody could guarantee that. Where there was war, there would always be casualties. However, the entire act should be justified, at least.

Before Lu Zhou could answer, Mingshi Yin said, "You're shameless. Ma Luping has already done something that incurs the wrath of humans and gods, and yet, you're turning a blind eye to it. My Eldest Senior Brother hasn't done anything of that sort, and you're already assuming that he will. What distorted reasoning is this?"

"..." Zhou Youcai had no retort for that.

"Besides... The Imperial family has provoked the Evil Sky Pavilion time and time again. My master is already very merciful for not killing all of you here and clearing the path for my Eldest Senior Brother. Don't you go thinking that you're worthy to sit here and debate with my master just because you're the Big Dipper Academy's president. If my master wasn't a reasonable man with morals, you would've been killed with a single palm strike long ago."

“...”

Zhou Wenliang, Wang Jianrang, and Zhang Gong who were standing nearby shuddered. The statement seemed awkward. What a joke! It was delivered by a villain talking about reason and morals! Nevertheless, it still made them shiver despite the temperature. However, he had a point. If the old villain wanted to solve the problem, killing Zhou Youcai with a single palm strike was a more efficient method, right?

Boom!

A thunderous noise rang in the air again before Yan Province City's barrier finally shattered like glass. There was no longer anything protecting Yan Province City.

Tens of thousands of Nether Sect members swarmed into the city. The cultivators who hovered in the air immediately began their slaughter.

Smoke rose from the city. People were being killed everywhere.

Wars had always been cruel.

Zhou Youcai sighed helplessly and shook his head.

At this moment, Lu Zhou turned to look at Zhou Wenliang and asked, "When will the Sky Conduct Academy be here?"

Zhou Wenliang answered, "I've contacted the Sky Conduct Academy... but its president holds himself in high regard. I'm afraid that he won't meet me since I'm only the Taixu Academy's Second Elder."

Lu Zhou looked at Zhou Youcai and said, "The Sky Conduct Academy has a greater ego compared to the Big Dipper Academy."

Zhou Youcai said, "Indeed, Meng Nanfei is proud. The battle at Yan Province City has already started. I don't think he'll be coming... If I'm not mistaken, he'll be rushing to Yan Province City to aid Ma Luping."

The others looked at the fierce battle in Yan Province City. Without its barrier, avatars, energy blades, and energy swords could be seen everywhere in the city.

Meanwhile, the Nether Sect's flying chariot advanced slowly, taking out dozens of people as it moved.

"The Sky Conduct Academy disciples are nowhere to be seen," Mingshi Yin said as he looked at Yan Province City, "Looks like Eldest Senior Brother is winning!"

Zhou Youcai's expression was unreadable. He dared not move. Even the 1,000 disciples waiting for him outside dared not move as well. Who would be bold enough to rush to their deaths in front of a Nine-leaf cultivator?

At this very moment, a blue-clad cultivator flew toward them between mountains on the left.

"It's someone from the Sky Conduct Academy," Mingshi Yin said.

"I'll go meet him." Zhou Wenliang volunteered. He flew and greeted the newcomer in the air. "I'm Zhou Wenliang, the Second Elder of the Taixu Academy. May I know who you are, sir?"

The blue-clad cultivator responded with a question, "So, you're Zhou Wenliang?"

"Yes, I am."

"You cur!"

Zhou Wenliang frowned when he heard the insult. It was common etiquette to not hit a person's face during a fight. The Taixu Academy was in a sorry state as it was. How could Zhou Wenliang not be angered by this insult? Alas, there was nothing he could do. Even a tiger outside its territory would be bullied by dogs. Moreover, this was someone from the Sky Conduct Academy. In the end, he gritted his teeth and asked, "Where's President Meng?"

The blue-clad cultivator said scornfully, "That's none of your business. Do you think a stray dog has the right to speak to President Meng?"

Zhou Wenliang fought back his anger and said, "If you're here to mock me, then I'll ask you to leave."

Swoosh!

A figure flew toward the duo from behind and called out, "Hey, don't go!"

The blue-clad cultivator asked, "And you are?"

Zhou Wenliang introduced the newcomer. "This is the Evil Sky Pavilion's Mister Fourth."

The blue-clad cultivator frowned deeply and shouted, "Zhou Wenliang, are you colluding with the Fiend Path now?!"

"Watch your words! What do you mean by colluding?" Mingshi Yin was not pleased with the blue-clad cultivator's choice of words.

"Isn't he?"

"My master's on the twin rock peak. He has invited the two presidents to enjoy the scenery and discuss the affairs of the world. How's that colluding? I'm not too happy with that term. In fact, I'm angry," Mingshi Yi said.

"Are you nuts?" The blue-clad cultivator looked at Mingshi Yin, perplexed.

Zhou Wenliang shook his head.

At this moment, a majestic voice rang from the mountain's peak. "Old Fourth."

Mingshi Yin immediately bowed. "Yes, master."

"If you can't reason with him, kill him."

"..." When the blue-clad cultivator heard the majestic voice, he was about to lash out in anger when he saw Mingshi Yin moving toward him at lightning speed. Mingshi Yin's speed sent chills running up his spine.

A cold light glinted in Mingshi Yin's hand.

Swish!

The blue-clad cultivator felt a chill; he quickly summoned his avatar.

“Too late!” Mingshi Yin cried out as he shot past the blue-clad cultivator. He did not even spare the cultivator a glance.

The battle had ended before it even began.

Zhou Wenliang gulped. The blue-clad cultivator did not seem weak, but he had been killed in just an instant? Just how powerful was the Evil Sky Pavilion’s Mister Fourth?

The blue-clad cultivator felt his chest being slashed open. He saw the blood gushing out from the wound. His eyes wide open as he looked at Zhou Wenliang. He pointed at Zhou Wenliang. “Y-you... you...”

“Don’t blame me. You brought this upon yourself.”

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

On the peak, the atmosphere was slightly tense.

The Big Dipper Academy disciples were silent.

President Zhou Youcai lifted his sleeve to his face to wipe his sweat away.

Lu Zhou said, “There’s no need to feel nervous, President Zhou... I’ve always been reasonable. However, trying to reason with an unreasonable person is a waste of time and effort, don’t you agree?”

“Y... Y-yes...” President Zhou was slightly nervous despite Lu Zhou’s words.

Huang Shijie applauded and said, “I never knew Mister Fourth is this skilled.”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “... It’s not that he’s powerful, it’s just that the Sky Conduct Academy disciple was too weak.” His tone was airy despite its heavy meaning.

Everyone’s heart thumped wildly in their chests when they heard Lu Zhou’s words. It... It seemed like Lu Zhou was saying the blue-clad cultivator could not blame anyone for his death but his weakness.

“In terms of cultivation base, Mingshi Yin still has much room for improvement. Look at that.” Lu Zhou pointed at Yan Province City.

A saber flew out of the Nether Sect’s huge chariot. Energy sabers filled the air. There was a rain of blood. Anyone who got close to the flying chariot was minced by the energy blades. Dismembered limbs rained down from the sky.

Huang Shijie nodded and said, “Sect Master Yu’s Great Dark Heaven Memorial has reached great heights. Even I have to admit defeat.”

Zhou Youcai looked at Huang Shijie. He sounded less confident now. “Island Master Huang, you’re Penglai’s most powerful Eight-leaf umbrella cultivator. You have the black umbrella, a peak earth-grade weapon. And yet, you don’t think you’re a match for Sect Master Yu?” In front of Lu Zhou, he, naturally, did not dare to use the offensive word ‘villain’ when he spoke about Yu Zhenghai.

Huang Shijie replied, "President Zhou, you flatter me. Your comparison of me and Sect Master Yu is akin to comparing the students of Big Dipper Academy and yourself. This is an insult to Sect Master Yu."

"..."

"It's also an insult against Brother Ji."

"..."

Chapter 564: Brothers Striving Again

Although Zhou Youcai was the Big Dipper Academy's president, due to the Big Dipper Academy's gradual decline because of its lack of manpower, it was now just a shadow of its former self. He rose to the position of president in the Big Dipper Academy 100 years ago. In terms of cultivation base, he knew he was not a match for Huang Shijie. However, since an Eight-leaf elite such as Huang Shijie regarded Yu Zhenghai so highly, where did this leave him?

Huang Shijie smiled when he saw the stunned expression on Zhou Youcai's face. "There's no need to doubt me, President Zhou. Have a look for yourself."

...

Inside Yan Province City.

The Nether Sect disciples swarmed into the city. The entire eastern wall was occupied by them.

Yu Zhenghai had been continuously unleashing his energy sabers in the air. Anyone bold enough to fly up would be sliced by his Jasper Saber.

...

Meanwhile, inside the General's Mansion in Yan Province.

Ma Luping led his four deputy generals outside.

"General Ma, things aren't looking good. Should we move the remaining civilians to stop the Nether Sect?"

"Do it now... The Fiend Path is the Fiend Path, after all. If we sacrifice these civilians, it'd be easy for us to join forces with the cultivators under the heavens," Ma Luping said, "See it through."

"Understood!"

One of the deputies left the General's Mansion.

Ma Luping ordered, "Welcome the Crown Prince outside the southern city..."

"Roger!"

"You, meet Wei Zhuoyan at the eastern gate."

"Roger!"

"And you, meet the Big Dipper Academy and the Sky Conduct Academy. Be quick. The Nether Sect has already been drawn in. We must take them out in one fell swoop today!"

"Roger!"

The three deputy generals swiftly left the General's Mansion after receiving their orders.

Ma Luping walked to the courtyard with his hands on his back. When he saw the corpses on the ground, his eyes flashed. "I'll have the Nether Sect members accompany you to the afterlife."

As soon as Ma Luping finished speaking, a green-robed swordsman appeared on the courtyard's wall. His arms were crossed as he looked down at Ma Luping with a faint smile on his face. His expression was one of confidence and calmness.

Ma Luping shuddered as he stared at the green-robed swordsman. He was surprised he did notice the newcomer's presence until now. 'How long has he been standing there?'

Ma Luping forced himself to remain calm and asked, "Who are you, sir?"

"My apologies. I killed your brother, Ma Qing, by mistake. He wasn't on the hit list, but I had no choice," the green-robed swordsman said. His tone was gentle despite his words.

"It's you?"

"My condolences. May you find peace and closure." Yu Shangrong lowered his head as a sign of respect for the dead.

However, Yu Shangrong's words sounded like mockery to Ma Luping's ears. Furious, he raised his hand and struck with his palm.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Yu Shangrong pushed away from the wall. He flipped in midair before he dove!

Ma Luping ran and unleashed a blast of energy.

Boom!

The walls of the General's Mansion crumbled.

The two of them flew toward a nearby lake along the promenade and gazebos.

Palm seals flew in the air!

"Unsheath!" Yu Shangrong said softly.

A faint scarlet sword flew out.

Meanwhile, Ma Luping's palms were shining with golden light!

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Both of them returned to the courtyard.

The sword slashed out, launching an energy sword!

The entire gazebo was cut in half.

Ma Luping's fighting style was fierce and formidable. Every single palm and fist strike contained tremendous power!

"Sword Devil? Is that all you've got?" Ma Luping shouted and folded his palms together.

Dozens of palm seals spun in the air.

Yu Shangrong's expression remained unchanged. He brandished his sword, leaving afterimages.

The sword sliced each of the incoming palm seals precisely.

This was why heaven-grade weapons were formidable. The sword could cut through energy. It cleaved through the energy fists and palm seals like running a knife through tofu.

...

On the other side, in the skies above the eastern part of the city. Onboard the Nether Sect's flying chariot.

Yu Zhenghai had unleashed Sovereign's Descent numerous times. He had exhausted about half of his Primal Qi. He withdrew his hand, and the Jasper Saber flew back into his grasp.

"Eldest Senior Brother, please conserve your strength. Allow me and Brother Chongyang to take care of the rest." Si Wuya stepped forward. He was about to use his Peacock Plume when Yu Zhenghai raised a hand to stop him.

Yu Zhenghai said, "Wise brother, you should remain on the chariot and plan our strategy. I won't forgive myself if anything were to happen to you."

"..."

Hua Chongyang blasted the nearest ballista away and returned to the chariot. He said, "There's no need to trouble yourself, Mister Seventh. The Nether Sect's brethren aren't too shabby. Look there..."

The Azure Dragon Hall's Second Seat, Yu Hong, led a team of men toward the other parts of the city. He summoned his Six-leaf Golden Lotus avatar. He dove, effectively taking out a group of low-rank cultivators.

Si Wuya nodded. "With the Nether Sect at your command, it's only a matter of time before the Divine Capital is conquered, Eldest Senior Brother."

Yu Zhenghai felt as though he was on cloud nine from the praise. He said, "But I can't be too arrogant. The time limit master has set is rather short."

"Don't worry, Eldest Senior Brother. We have enough time. What we need to guard against now is the two great academies and Wei Zhuoyan," Si Wuya said.

"Alas, Bai Yuqing, Yang Yan, and Di Qing aren't here."

At this moment, Hua Chongyang saw throngs of civilians swarming the streets. They looked terrified. Some of them were injured with bruises and swollen faces. They were running toward the Nether Sect members' onslaught of attacks.

"Sect master, look at that."

Yu Zhenghai and Si Wuya saw the civilians and frowned at the same time.

"What do we do?" Hua Chongyang frowned as well.

Those with a grand ambition would not fret about minor details. Indeed, the most appropriate action at the moment was to kill them right now. However... could they do it? If they were allowed to enter the war zone, they would surely hinder the Nether Sect's advances. If there were enemies among them, it would be an even bigger problem.

Yu Zhenghai clenched his fists as he observed the situation. He was furious as he said, "Ma Luping. I must kill that man myself!"

Hua Chongyang fell on one knee and said, "Kindly give your order, sect master. I'll follow it unconditionally."

"..."

Si Wuya grew tense as he looked at Hua Chongyang.

Yu Zhenghai did not respond. He continued to look at the civilians on the streets in silence.

Many garrison soldiers were watching behind the civilians.

A child was crying loudly, and the child's mother covered his mouth to muffle his cries.

Everyone was terrified. There was no time to feel sorry for others.

Hua Chongyang continued to wait for his orders. He clenched his fists expressionlessly.

"Retreat." Yu Zhenghai raised his hand.

Although Si Wuya could have spoken up, he felt relieved when he heard this.

Hua Chongyang did object. He said gruffly, "Yes, sect master!" Then, he leaped out and maintained flight under the flying chariot before projecting his voice. "Retreat to the city walls!"

The Nether Sect disciples looked up in confusion at the flying chariot. They were in an advantageous position now, why were they told to retreat?

The civilians sighed with relief when they saw the Nether Sect members retreating. Some of them fell to the ground limply as though they had just had a close brush with death.

At this moment, in the western part of the city, several miles away, an Eight-leaf avatar rose into the air!

The 100-foot avatar shone with golden light as an eight-leaf golden lotus spun under its feet.

Boom!

Amidst the energy blast released by the avatar, a green-robed swordsman could be seen flying backward as he held a sword in front of him. He seemed calm and confident as he dodged the Eight-leaf avatar.

Yu Shangrong stabilized himself by stepping on the buildings before he dove! He looked at Ma Luping. Despite him suppressing his surging blood essence, a confident smile could be seen on his face as he said, "If I didn't sever my lotus and were still at the Eight-leaf stage, you would've already died by my sword. However, I can deny it's much more interesting to fight a stronger opponent."

Ma Luping who had summoned his avatar looked at Yu Shangrong with a fierce expression on his face. "You really are the Sword Devil, Yu Shangrong." He did not expect that even with his Eight-leaf cultivation base, he still could not force Yu Shangrong to summon his avatar!

...

On the flying chariot in the distance.

Yu Zhenghai was not blind; he had, naturally, seen the 100-foot avatar. He scoffed before he said, "Wise brother, I'll leave the command to you! I'm going to take Ma Luping's head myself!" Then, he leaped out of the flying chariot without waiting for Si Wuya's reply.

Si Wuya was much more observant compared to Yu Zhenghai; he had already seen the green-robed swordsman in the air who was illuminated by the avatar's golden light. "The mysterious elite is Second Senior Brother?"

Chapter 565: Primal Restoration

Yu Zhenghai only had eyes for Ma Luping. He was familiar with the 100-foot avatar and its huge fist and energy, after all. These things had betrayed Ma Luping's identity. He flew horizontally toward the avatar in the sky at light speed. His Jasper Saber on his waist buzzed as though in anticipation for the battle to come.

When Yu Zhenghai recalled the civilians who were held hostage, his heart was overwhelmed by a wave of fury. Due to his anger, his Primal Qi was agitated, affecting the Jasper Saber. The killing intent his body exuded was terrifying!

...

At this moment, Yu Shangrong realized that Ma Luping's avatar had revealed their location.

Ma Luping did not notice Yu Zhenghai was rushing toward them. His attention was completely focused on the Sword Devil, Yu Shangrong, the man who killed his younger brother. He wanted to get rid of Yu Shangrong right away, more than anyone else. He looked down and retracted his avatar before flipping upside down. He hurled his right fist out, unleashing a meteor-like energy fist. Killing intent surged from his body as he glared at Yu Shangrong with bloodshot eyes and cried out, "Sword Devil... Die!"

With Ma Luping's cultivation base, he could be considered superior among his peers.

Yu Shangrong looked up at Ma Luping who was diving toward him with an outstretched hand. He raised his Longevity Sword at once.

Whizz!

Yu Shangrong's avatar finally appeared! His avatar made for a rather shocking sight. Most avatars had their palms folded like Buddha or a Daoist cultivating zen. However, his avatar's palms were joined together; the ten fingers then seemed to move in a grabbing motion.

"Mhm?" Ma Luping was shocked. He had never seen an avatar like this before. However, he had already unleashed his technique. There was no turning back. He held his breath as he focused his mind and attention. He pushed down with his energy fist. When he finally saw the avatar's height, he said contemptuously, "A Six-leaf avatar? You're dead!"

It was undisputed that an Eight-leaf avatar's energy fist was powerful enough to destroy the lands and shatter a Six-leaf avatar. That was what Ma Luping thought as well.

The nearby cultivators watched this shocking scene,

In the air, Ma Luping dove and continued to launch energy fists.

Boom!

It was an unexpected development! Yu Shangrong's Six-leaf avatar had grabbed Ma Luping's shoulders! Meanwhile, Ma Luping's energy fist was about to connect with his avatar's right arm.

Yu Shangrong frowned slightly. He felt that his right arm was in a precarious situation. He immediately swung his right arm, moving Ma Luping to the left.

Boom!

The energy fist collided with Yu Shangrong's avatar, causing it to ripple the avatar.

"I've been waiting for this..." Yu Shangrong stomped his foot and shot into the air. His Longevity Sword shone with a scarlet light again. The Golden Lotus leaves spun around his Longevity Sword as three Yu Shangrongs appeared. This was the skill he was famous for, the Return and Enter Three Souls.

Ma Luping laughed maniacally. "You've been tricked!" He seemed as though he had been plated in gold and shone like burning flames.

"Energy Body Mahayana?!"

Energy Body Mahayana was the highest realm of body cultivation. The cultivator could use his Primal Qi in layers to protect his meridian vessels and skin. He could even shrink his avatar to the size of his body. When the three were simultaneously done, the Energy Body would be formed. Only a handful of body cultivators in the world were capable of cultivating the Energy Body. With the Energy Body and the avatar, it was akin to having a Golden Buddha Body! Its defense was shocking.

Ma Luping pushed forward instead of retreating even though his vision was blurring. He chose to press on and hurled his fist out again.

With the sword out of its scabbard, there was no turning back!

The Sword Devil swung his sword forcefully as always. His eyes shone with determination as he swung his arm.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Yu Shangrong's three silhouettes merged into one and flipped backward! The instant he landed, he stabbed the sword he held in his right hand into the ground to stabilize himself!

Ma Luping reeled back as well.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Ma Luping crashed through three buildings before coming to a stop, stirring up a cloud of dust that obscured his vision.

Everything was silent at this moment.

A battle of this level had always been destructive and dangerous.

The cultivators nearby could only watch. They dared not venture close. It was a shocking sight to see a Seven or Eight-leaf cultivation battle in this city. Moving closer was akin to seeking death.

Yu Shangrong looked in the direction where Ma Luping fell in confusion. His heart thumped heavily when he saw a huge emerald sword embedded on the ground after the dust settled. The sword glinted from the sunlight. It seemed like he could not avoid this in the end. No wonder that Ma Luping had been defeated so easily. He had even heard two noises.

He was finally here.

"Eldest Senior Brother?" Yu Shangrong looked up and searched the skies.

On a building on the opposite side, Yu Zhenghai stood with his hands on his back. He stared at Yu Shangrong intently; he did not even deign to spare a glance for Ma Luping who was lying on the ground. He said in disbelief, "It's really you."

Yu Shangrong straightened up and said with a smile, "Yes, it's me."

"Why did you help me?" Yu Zhenghai asked.

"I'm not helping you... I'm only helping myself."

"Helping yourself?"

"Of course," Yu Shangrong replied nonchalantly.

Yu Zhenghai said, "Second Junior Brother, as the Eldest Senior Brother, I've tolerated you, tried to understand you, and accommodate you... I won't hold what happened in the past against you, but..." At this point, his voice turned grave as he said, "In the face of our grand objective and hundreds of thousands of Nether Sect members, I won't and I can't stand back. I will kill Ma Luping on your behalf, junior brother!"

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly and said, "You're the Eldest Senior Brother. I've respected you, honored you, and even tried to avoid you. A junior brother shouldn't be disrespectful to his senior brother, after all. Your grand objective might be important, but he doesn't stand in the way of your cause at all. Since he's on my hit list, I'll be the one to kill him."

Ma Luping coughed violently as he bit back the intense pain. He struck the ground with a single palm and rose into the air. He looked to his sides.

To think that one of the eight great generals was reduced to a lamb waiting to be slaughtered or a fish on the chopping board. Those two were just standing in the air and casually discussing who should kill him! How could he not be furious? He shouted, "Enough! Yu Shangrong, you merely possess a Six-leaf avatar, how exactly are you going to kill me?!"

Six-leaf avatar?

Yu Zhenghai's eyelid twitched. A sense of contempt rose in his heart. He could have cultivated as well. Alas, he was busy with his grand cause.

Ma Luping turned to Yu Zhenghai and said, "Yu Zhenghai, my reinforcements are coming soon... You're now a turtle in a jar. What right do you have to hoot in my face?"

Yu Zhenghai did not look at Ma Luping. His eyes were trained on Yu Shangrong as he said, "Second Junior Brother, you're only at the Six-leaf stage. I don't think you're capable of killing Ma Luping... There's no need for you to meddle in the issue regarding the Divine Capital any longer."

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly and said, "Eldest Senior Brother... forgive me for not agreeing with you." His Longevity Sword vibrated.

Bzzt!

A faint scarlet light shone from the sword.

Zing!

The Longevity Sword hovered before Yu Shangrong. He joined his palms together with a calm expression on his face. The Primal Qi around him surged, stirring up a gust of wind.

The tiles from the rooftops of the buildings around Yu Shangrong were lifted in the air, and everything around him shook.

Shortly after, the vertical Longevity Sword flew out horizontally. Energy swords appeared in a fan formation.

Yu Zhenghai was slightly shocked. "Primal Restoration?"

Chapter 566: A Frog in a Well

The origin of all things. The unrivaled path. This skill was one of the most difficult grand techniques in the Guiyuan Sword Technique. It was not inferior to Enter Three Souls at all.

The Longevity Sword that was in a horizontal position turned in a circle, and the circle transformed into an energy sword.

Upon seeing this, Yu Zhenghai flipped his palm. His Jasper Saber, which was embedded on the ground, flew toward him with a zing. Then, he threw it out again.

“The Sovereign’s Descent.” Now that Yu Zhenghai had made his move, he would use his most powerful technique.

If you were facing this duo at the same time, what would you do? Would you choose to face the peak Eight-leaf Yu Zhenghai or Yu Shangrong who seemed to have a new Six-leaf avatar?

Ma Luping stood in the air, stunned, as he bit back the pain and unleashed his Energy Body again. He was immediately wrapped in a flame-like energy. He stomped his feet.

Boom!

Ma Luping flew out toward... Yu Shangrong.

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly. He pushed his palms forward.

The Primal Restoration.

The energy swords merged with the Longevity Sword and sailed toward Ma Luping.

Ma Luping said in a harsh voice, “Even if I die, I’ll take you with me, Sword Devil!” His eyes shone with determination and confidence.

Ma Luping’s confidence made Yu Shangrong fight with all his might.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The energy swords stabbed Ma Luping’s body.

At the same time, Sovereign’s Descent shot out countless energy sabers toward Ma Luping from behind.

Yu Zhenghai extended his arms like a falcon ready to take flight. Below him, the wave of energy sabers flew toward Ma Luping.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Yu Zhenghai focused his gaze.

Several bloodied lines appeared on Ma Luping’s fist. It could be said that his death was certain. He was pincered by his enemies. On one side, it was the Primal Restoration. On the other side, it was Sovereign’s Descent.

However, Yu Zhenghai suddenly retracted his arms and joined his palms together. The Sovereign’s Descent disappeared abruptly, and his Jasper Saber flew back between his palms. Then, he attacked with his saber!

Bam!

A golden energy saber that was a few meters long swept toward Ma Luping. It was out of the range of the Primal Restoration.

Yu Shangrong leaped back again. His movements were delicate and graceful. However, despite his seemingly light movements, cracks appeared whenever his feet touched the ground though.

Ma Luping flew to the side and spat out a mouthful of blood, rolling on the ground.

The energy saber and energy sword vanished in an instant.

Meanwhile, Yu Zhenghai was still looking at Yu Shangrong from the distance. From the beginning until now, he did not look at Ma Luping who was severely injured.

“Do you know... that his punch might cost you your life?” Yu Zhenghai asked.

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly and said, “Eldest Senior Brother, are you afraid that my Primal Restoration might kill him first?”

“If I didn’t do that, you would’ve been injured.”

“I don’t think so.”

“It’s not a good thing to be conceited. You’ve already severed your lotus and are recultivating. Why must you compete with an Eight-leaf cultivator?” Yu Zhenghai asked.

“Wen Shu, Ji Qingqing’s four deputy generals, Mouse King Li Cangshi, the officials of Yan Province City’s southern gate, I killed them all...” Yu Shangrong replied.

Yu Zhenghai’s brows knitted together when he heard this. However, his frown soon eased as he said disapprovingly, “Is this why you’re so conceited? However, Ma Luping is Yan Province City’s General, one of the eight great generals of the Divine Capital’s Imperial guard.”

“Mhm,” Yu Shangrong replied lightly.

“...” Ma Luping was infuriated by the duo’s bickering. He swept away the debris on himself and sat up. He glanced at the saber wound on his waist and the sword wound on his torso. The saber and sword both left deep wounds on his body. His blood was gushing out of the wounds. If it were not for Energy Body Mahayana, he would have been dead even if Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong did not use powerful moves. After all, even with his Energy Body Mahayana, it was still difficult for him to withstand the blows from the Sovereign’s Descent and the Primal Restoration. Yu Zhenghai’s sudden change of technique had saved his life.

“Eldest Senior Brother, it’s meaningless for us to bicker over this. Why don’t we respect our opponent and have him choose?” Yu Shangrong looked at Ma Luping.

Yu Zhenghai scoffed and said disdainfully, “There are those in the world who are born to be humiliated, not respected. Ma Luping is one of them.” He raised his left hand and aimed his Jasper Saber at Ma Luping.

Yu Shangrong raised his sword as well and said, “In that case, it’s a contest of speed, then.”

“...”

When faced with two of the most powerful individuals in the world, anyone with a sound mind would only choose one course of action: Run!

Without a second thought, Ma Luping caught his breath and sprinted away! Energy surged around him as he ran; his legs stirring up the wind. At this moment, he discovered there was no one in his vicinity.

He did not dare to fly so he scurried through the alleys. Still, there was no one. Nobody! Not a single soul! It was empty!

At this moment, Ma Luping finally remembered that the civilians had been brought by his deputy general to the eastern city gate to threaten the Nether Sect!

Ma Luping had no choice but to continue running along the alleys.

“Why isn’t anyone chasing after me?” He turned to look at the alley’s entrance, puzzled.

Above the alley, Yu Zhenghai waved before he said, “Think that you can escape?”

Ma Luping activated his Energy Body and rammed into a wall on his left. A humanoid hole was left on the wall. He sprinted in the other direction madly... Before he could get far, he saw Yu Shangrong smiling at him on the rooftop at the side.

“Why are you struggling?” Yu Shangrong asked.

Ma Luping was going crazy! He panicked; he could no longer endure this cat-and-mouse game. He immediately launched himself into the air.

As expected, Yu Shangrong and Yu Zhenghai appeared by his sides.

“Madmen! You’re both madmen!” Ma Luping felt that the duo was deranged; they did not take him seriously at all. It was as though he was nothing but a tool for them to compete against each other.

At this moment, a troop of men fully dressed in armor charged toward them from the skies.

The sounds of hooves could be heard in the distance.

Mounted soldiers and cultivators were entering the city!

Ma Luping was overjoyed. He guffawed before he said, “My reinforcements are here!” He activated his Energy Body and shot into the air, looking like a golden flame, as he summoned his avatar again.

The 100-foot avatar vibrated. Naturally, it attracted the attention of Ma Luping’s reinforcement. However, it also exposed his location to his enemies.

When Ma Luping swept his gaze to his sides, he saw a saber and a sword shooting energy blades toward him with a terrifyingly destructive force.

‘I’m dead!’ Ma Luping’s heart sank as he continued flying higher.

Countless energy swords and energy sabers tailed him.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

The attacks landed on Ma Luping.

The sword and the saber continued rising in the air. They slashed at each other several hundred times before pulling back at the same time.

Yu Shangrong stepped forward and grabbed his Longevity Sword.

Yu Zhenghai stepped forward and grabbed his Jasper Saber.

...

On the twin rocks peak, Huang Shijie, Mingshi Yin, and the Big Dipper Academy's Zhou Youcai witnessed all of this. They were riveted as they watched the battle; they could hardly believe their eyes.

The Eight-leaf Yu Zhenghai's saber strikes were domineering and ferocious. His energy sabers could destroy the lands.

The Six-leaf Yu Shangrong's sword skills were outstanding. His sword moved like a swimming dragon. His performance was on par with the Eight-leaf Yu Zhenghai. If they had not seen his avatar, they would not have doubted that he was a peak Eight-leaf cultivator.

Huang Shijie praised, "See, that's what I was talking about. You shouldn't compare the likes of me to Sect Master Yu."

Zhou Youcai was impressed.

Huang Shijie continued to say, "The Sword Devil's combat strength isn't inferior to an Eight-leaf cultivator even though he's only at the Six-leaf stage now. He could even make his avatar move... He's reached such great height despite recultivating recently. state. In my opinion, he has to be the strongest person among all those who have severed their lotuses." His praises were sincere. Naturally, he did not include Lu Zhou among those who had severed their lotuses. After all, he was not certain what method Lu Zhou had employed to reach the Nine-leaf stage.

Zhou Youcai nodded. "I'm ashamed to call myself the president of the Big Dipper Academy. I'm a frog in a well!"

"Why do you say that?" Huang Shijie asked.

"I'm not surprised that Yu Zhenghai, the Sect Master of the Nether Sect, is capable of defeating Ma Luping... but the Sword Devil, Yu Shangrong, has the confidence of an Eight-leaf cultivator after recultivating. That's shocking."

Huang Shijie smiled and said, "Alas, we're too far away and don't get a clear view... The Evil Sky Pavilion's disciples can't be measured by conventional logic. Since you know about the Evil Sky Pavilion... Do you know about its ninth disciple?"

"I've heard of her."

Chapter 567: Who Would Dare Act Rashly?

Huang Shijie continued to say, "I've been to the Evil Sky Pavilion in the past, and I've met the little girl before... After six years, the little girl has already entered the Five-leaf Nascent Divinity realm."

Zhou Youcai looked up; his fingers were visibly shaking now, and his throat was dry. "Five-leaf Nascent Divinity realm... in six years?" He was certain this cultivation speed was unprecedented among the current generation of cultivators. Just the Body Tempering realm would take several years. He found it difficult to believe someone had only taken six years to enter the Nascent Divinity realm. His understanding of the Evil Sky Pavilion was being renewed.

Mingshi Yin rolled his eyes. 'Are you going to keel over from shock if I tell you about Conch?'

Lu Zhou, who had remained silent throughout all this, stroked his beard and said, "Rascals." His word was clearly directed at Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong.

Huang Shijie and Zhou Youcai were taken aback.

"He could've taken care of Ma Luping sooner, but there he is, wasting time." Lu Zhou continued with his criticism. "Yu Zhenghai's Sovereign Descent is an attack with a wide range. A wave of energy sabers should've appeared when it's unleashed... It's such a waste to use it against someone like Ma Luping. Yu Shangrong's Primal Restoration needs time to gather his Primal Energy and condense it into energy swords. It's powerful enough but not cleanly executed. He's still thinking of concealing his strength at a crucial moment like this... They were working together, but they couldn't kill Ma Luping in a short time. They used too many methods that it's confusing, and they weren't decisive enough. It seems like they're still too young."

Lu Zhou's criticism rendered Huang Shijie and Zhou Youcai speechless. What else could they say?

'If I have talented disciples such as those two, I'd be smiling in my sleep! Yet, he's complaining about them?'

Huang Shijie coughed twice to ease the awkwardness.

At this moment, Mingshi Yin pointed at Yan Province City and said, "Master, there are reinforcements."

Zhou Youcai glanced in the direction and frowned. "They're not disciples of the Sky Conduct Academy. Wei Zhuoyan is supposed to be in Liang Province!"

Mingshi Yin was puzzled. "Liang Province?"

Zhou Youcai realized that he had said the wrong thing. He immediately covered his mouth.

Mingshi Yin said, "Indeed, it's a good plan for Wei Zhuoyan to attack Liang Province from the borders. However, it might be difficult for him to take down Liang Province... Three of the Nether Sect's Four Great Protectors are guarding it. Unless... Wei Zhuoyan is cooperating with the Other Tribes."

Zhou Youcai. "..."

Huang Shijie. "..."

Since time immemorial, colluding with the Other Tribes was an unforgivable offense. If a person was proven to have committed such a crime, his or her name would be tarnished in history.

...

Inside Yan Province City.

An army of armored soldiers and cavalry headed toward the eastern wall.

A flying chariot appeared in the air. It was not huge, but from its appearance, it was clear that its owner was someone from a notable background.

There were cultivators in three square formations behind the flying chariot. They were all wearing black armor and masks.

...

“The Black Knights?”

“Master, it’s the Black Knights from the Divine Capital.”

Huang Shijie said, “After the Black Knight’s leader, Leng Luo, left, the Black Knights are no longer what they used to be. However... I’m curious... Who’s the new leader of the Black Knights?”

Zhou Youcai shook his head and said, “To tell you the truth, based on my information, there’s no such person.”

Lu Zhou looked over.

...

Inside Yan Province City.

Yu Shangrong and Yu Zhenghai were facing each other from a distance.

Ma Luping looked at the duo nervously after he landed.

Yu Zhenghai said, “Second Junior Brother, the reinforcements are here. Let me kill Ma Luping. The situation of the war is dire and can’t be delayed. Why don’t we leave our competition for another time?”

Yu Shangrong turned his Longevity Sword around and said with a smile, “Since you’ve said it, Eldest Senior Brother, how can I say no? The situation is dire. Let’s leave it at this!”

“Alright!”

“Fine!”

The two of them had been bickering about who would kill Ma Luping all this time, and yet, they were suddenly compromising?

An ominous feeling rose in Ma Luping’s heart at this moment. He knew this was his only chance to make a run for it. He stomped both feet strongly, and his body shone with a golden light as he activated his Energy Body. Then, he charged at a nearby wall.

Bam!

Yu Shangrong did not even look at Ma Luping as his Longevity Sword suddenly flew.

The Jasper Saber shot out at this moment as well.

This time, the saber and sword did not collide. Instead, they were moving in a parallel line. As they sailed forth, countless energy sabers and energy swords materialized between the two weapons.

The energy sabers were like a tidal wave with the potential to destroy heaven and earth whereas the energy swords were like a meteor shower that seemed capable of cleaving heavens and earth in half.

The sabers and swords attacked at the same time!

Bam! Bam!

The energy sabers and energy swords merged and pierced Ma Luping's back.

Yu Shangrong withdrew his hand, and the Longevity Sword returned to its scabbard.

The Jasper Saber spun into the air and slashed Ma Luping's neck. It brought a bloodied head with wide eyes back to Yu Zhenghai.

Yu Zhenghai stepped into the air and said to Yu Shangrong, "Second Junior Brother, you're only a Six-leaf cultivator, after all. What do you say we spar again once you're returned to the Eight-leaf stage?"

"You took the words right out of my mouth," Yu Shangrong replied.

Yu Zhenghai no longer replied and flew in the other direction with the head in hand.

Yu Shangrong descended and shot in another direction at lightning speed.

Meanwhile, the Imperial guard's reinforcement troops marched toward the eastern wall in a dense formation.

The Black Knights and the armored soldiers approached their destination.

"Where's Ma Luping?" A gruff voice rang from the lying chariot.

At the same time, Yu Zhenghai flew toward them.

The Black Knights and the armored soldiers looked up with grim expressions on their faces.

Yu Zhenghai stood on his Jasper Saber. He turned around before coming to a halt.

A head sailed toward them.

Bam!

The head fell to the ground and rolled until it was several meters before the flying chariot. Blood dripped from the head as it moved.

The others exclaimed in shock.

"General!"

"General!"

Yu Zhenghai placed his hands on his back as he looked at the flying chariot below him fiercely. Then, he looked at the civilians and said, "This is what happens to someone who threatens the common folk... I've said that the Nether Sect won't harm civilians. I will personally demand an explanation from the emperor for today's incident." His rich voice rolled out, invigorating the hearts and minds of the commoners.

For the common folk, it did not matter who was on the throne. The most important thing to them was the person governing the country could ensure that they lived good lives. Who among these people

would not be moved by Yu Zhenghai's words? His words seemed to have boosted their morale. As they spoke among themselves, they could be heard blaming the Imperial family and Ma Luping.

The gruff voice rang from the small flying chariot again. "Ma Luping deserves 10,000 deaths for holding the civilians hostage. As the Crown Prince of Great Yan, I'll surely sentence his entire family to death. However, that's a separate matter. I won't let the Nether Sect go because of this?"

The Crown Prince?

Many were surprised and confused by the Crown Prince's presence.

At this moment, a person emerged from the small flying chariot. He wore a magnificent embroidered robe and a brocade cap. His expression was determined, confident, and composed. He looked at Yu Zhenghai with killing intent flashing in his eyes as he hovered in the air. This person was none other than Liu Zhi, the Crown Prince of Great Yan's Imperial family.

Liu Zhi's appearance immediately boosted the morale of the Imperial guard.

"I'm here to eradicate the rebel army."

Yu Zhenghai did not expect the Crown Prince, Liu Zhi, to be here. "With this army?"

Although Crown Prince Liu Zhi was a genius cultivator, there was no way he had an Eight-leaf cultivation base. Moreover, Ma Luping was dead, and Wei Zhuoyan had gone to Liang Province. What gave him the confidence to face the Nether Sect?

Liu Zhi rose higher in the air and drew level with Yu Zhenghai.

Four Black Knights and the remaining Black Knights rose into the air in a square formation as well.

Liu Zhi looked at Yu Zhenghai and said, "Of course, not... Behold." He waved his right hand.

In the faraway skies, countless white-clad cultivators flew toward them.

The white-clad cultivators appeared among the mist between the mountains. Then, they flew toward the west. Clearly, they knew about the current situation in Yan Province City.

When the several thousand white-clad cultivators appeared within their sights, the Imperial guards' confidence was boosted.

Meanwhile, Si Wuya who was on the Nether Sect's flying chariot saw this and frowned. "So, they've come..."

...

The Sky Conduct Academy's President, Meng Nanfei, flew southward for quite some time before shifting eastward.

"President, we're approaching Yan Province soon!"

"Alright, listen to my order once we're at Yan Province City!"

"Yes, president!"

When the several thousand white-clad cultivators were flying eastward and were about to enter Yan Province City, one of them pointed at the mountain peak before them. "President, what's that?"

At first, Meng Nanfei did not bother with the disciple's words; he continued flying forward at full speed. However, when he finally looked up, he saw a huge avatar slowly rising above the twin rocks peak. From the height of ten feet, it swiftly grew to the height of 150 feet. Soon enough, a nine-leaf golden lotus appeared.

Brilliant rays of light illuminated the eastern region immediately!

The Several thousand disciples felt as though the air was electrified. Their hairs stood on end as a terrifying aura blew against their faces!

When Meng Nanfei saw this, his eyes widened as he shouted, "Stop!"

The several thousand disciples came to a halt immediately.

The ten seconds that passed felt like a century. Every second seemed to have lasted a year.

None of the Sky Conduct Academy disciples dared to move or make a sound.

Shortly after, Meng Nanfei said decisively, "Retreat!"

Chapter 568: I'm Honestly Just Passing By

The Sky Conduct Academy's President, Meng Nanfei, decisively ordered his disciples.

The disciples of the academy had seen the Nine-leaf avatar as well, and they moved back instinctively.

Why did the Sky Conduct Academy come here? Naturally, it was to help the Crown Prince and Ma Luping defeat the Nether Sect.

Who was the owner of the Nine-leaf avatar on the twin rocks peak? There was no need for them to think about it. It had to be Ji Tiandao, the Evil Sky Pavilion's Master and the master of the Sect Master of Nether Sect.

Who would dare to move recklessly under such circumstances? The smartest thing to do was to retreat at this moment! There was no need to think about anything else. Run!

They had come here ostentatiously and in a grand manner. And yet, they were now fleeing with their tails between their legs.

...

Inside Yan Province City.

Crown Prince Liu Zhi hovered before the small flying chariot with a smug expression on his face as he waited for his reinforcement to arrive. So long as the disciples of the two academies were here and the Formation was reactivated, the Nether Sect would become a turtle trapped in a cage. At that time, they could take down the Nether Sect and Yu Zhenghai in one fell swoop.

Yet...

One of Liu Zhi's subordinates bowed and anxiously said, "Your Highness, the Sky Conduct Academy's people are... a-are gone!"

Crown Prince Liu Zhi was taken aback. He frowned and said, "They're gone?"

He had difficulty believing this. He rose higher and looked in the direction where he had seen the people from the Sky Conduct Academy earlier. He was just in time to see the white-clad cultivators vanishing in the horizons at top speed, looking like fleeing rabbits. He was thoroughly shocked!

'What's happening? Are they rebelling?'

The visibility in the city was not great. The buildings easily obstructed their view.

Yu Zhenghai's altitude was lower than the city wall. He did not see anything beyond the western wall. He seemed puzzled as well.

However, Si Wuya saw everything from the Nether Sect's flying chariot. He saw the Nine-leaf avatar that appeared for a fleeting ten seconds. It was not a long time, but it was enough.

"Master?" He did not think there was another Nine-leaf cultivator at the moment. Who else could it be on the twin rocks peak apart from his master?

At this moment, Si Wuya seemed to have noticed something. He quickly said, "Brother Chongyang, sound the drums. Advance!"

"Understood." Hua Chongyang leaped onto the highest point of the flying chariot and sounded the war drums.

Dong! Dong! Dong!

The Nether Sect members on the eastern city wall were roused to action. They dove at once.

Another round of assault had begun!

Yu Zhenghai turned to glance at the flying chariot at the other side of the city and nodded. "How can I lag behind when my wise brother is helping me?"

Yu Zhenghai advanced instead of retreating; he charged forward. His Jasper Saber flew out of his hand at the same time

Liu Zhi's eyes widened as he hastily shouted, "Retreat! Fall back! Use the formation!"

"Y-Your Highness... U-using a formation... w-will only cut off our e-escape... route," Liu Zhi's subordinate could barely string his sentence together. Regardless, he knew using a formation at this moment would only serve to trap themselves here.

Liu Zhi descended on the flying chariot. Then, the flying chariot turned around and flew away.

Energy sabers shot out in the air.

Dozens of Black Knights were instantly killed by the energy sabers. Their head fell to the ground as a shower of blood rained down.

Yu Zhenghai glanced at the civilians in his vicinity as he hovered in the air. He said, "Those who believe in my sect shall live! The Nether Sect will keep all of you safe!"

He was determined. If he wanted to rule the world, he had to win the hearts of the people. His voice sounded thunderous to the common people. His words brought hope to them, making them kneel and kowtow at once.

At this moment, the Azure Dragon Hall's Second Seat, Yu Hong, flew past below Yu Zhenghai. He called out, "Yu Hong."

Yu Hong bowed at once. "Sect master!"

"I'm putting you in charge of protecting the civilians. Protect them with your life. If any harm comes to them, I'll have your head!"

"Yes, Sect master!" Yu Hong accepted his mission.

Yu Zhenghai's orders that were given in the civilians' presence earned their trust. After all, Ma Luping's actions have made them lose their faith.

The civilians began to run toward Yu Hong.

Yu Hong guarded the civilians as they went toward the eastern gate.

When Yu Zhenghai saw that the matter was nearly settled, he chased after the Black Knights.

...

On twin rocks peak.

The appearance of a Nine-leaf avatar shocked everyone.

Zhou Youcai felt as though his soul had left his body, and his mind was blank. He remained in that state for half a day.

The 1,000 Big Dipper Academy disciples stared at the now-empty sky in stunned silence.

Was that a golden Nine-leaf avatar? Nine leaves?

How could it be possible that all of them had seen wrongly? It was impossible for an entire group of people to be mistaken!

Mingshi Yin called out when he saw Zhou Youcai in a daze, "President Zhou?"

Zhou Youcai did not respond. Who knew what was going on in his mind at this moment?

"President Zhou!" Mingshi Yin called out again.

Zhou Youcai shuddered and rose to his feet at once. He turned around and said to Zhou Wenliang, "Thank you for the reminder, President Zhou!"

Mingshi Yin. "???"

Zhou Wenliang, Wang Jianrang, and Zhang Gong. "???"

What was this?

Then, with a sheepish expression on his face, Zhou Youcai said, "I'm sorry. I haven't been getting much sleep recently. That was embarrassing."

Zhou Wenliang thought to himself, 'Yes, you should thank me...'

This was not Huang Shijie's first time seeing the Nine-leaf avatar, therefore, he was much more composed compared to the others. He knew Lu Zhou had summoned his Nine-leaf avatar to intimidate and scare the disciples from the Sky Conduct Academy and the Big Dipper Academy away. In the end, he praised Lu Zhou, "Brother Ji, that's a surprising move. I'm impressed!"

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "I... came to Yan Province because I was passing by... What about you, President Zhou?"

Zhou Youcai looked like a deer caught in headlights at this moment. Then, he hastily replied, "I, I... Naturally, I was also passing by..."

Huang Shijie nodded. "That's settled, then... Since we're all just passing by, there's no need to be in such a hurry. Isn't it nice to stay here and chat? If only we have booze with us."

Mingshi Yin smiled and said, "I'm afraid not. We left in a hurry, and I forgot to prepare some."

...

Meanwhile, it was chaotic in Yan Province City.

Yu Zhenghai displayed his might as an Eight-leaf cultivator. He unleashed his Sovereign's Descent three consecutive times and cleared away the Black Knights. He spent much of his Primal Qi due to that.

When he looked up ahead, he saw Liu Zhi steered the flying chariot and speeding forward. When the flying chariot was about to leave the city, he saw someone with a pair of shining golden wings charging toward it from behind.

"Eldest Senior Brother, leave the rest to me." Si Wuya said as he flapped his wings.

"Alright! Be careful, wise brother!" Yu Zhenghai said valiantly.

"Don't worry. I'm also an Evil Sky Pavilion disciple, after all!" Si Wuya sped toward the flying chariot as soon as he finished speaking. Whenever he flapped his wings, tens of thousands of energy needles shot out. He easily took down the low-rank cultivators with that.

Liu Zhi saw Si Wuya's wings and frowned. "He can do that? Faster! Step on it!"

"Don't worry, Your Highness. I'll surely make sure that Your Highness gets away safely!"

Swoosh!

The flying chariot rose in the air and passed the towering city wall, flying southward.

Si Wuya pushed his wings to the limits. He went after the flying chariot like a meteor.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

He fired his energy needles in rapid succession.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

They struck the flying chariot.

Crack!

The lower half of the flying chariot was sliced away by the energy needles. The Formation veins disintegrated instantly.

"Your Highness, we're abandoning the chariot!" A black figure caught Liu Zhi and descended from the sky.

Chapter 569: Nothing a Palm Strike Couldn't Solve

The black figure wore a mask. He grabbed Crown Prince Liu Zhi before he landed on the ground. He looked up at Si Wuya who was speeding toward them and said in a gruff voice, "Your Highness, retreat!"

"Stop him no matter what!" Liu Zhi said in a hoarse voice.

"Understood!" A peculiar energy surged out of the masked man immediately. He pushed away from the ground and launched deadly palm seals into the air.

Si Wuya frowned. He did not expect there to be such an elite by Crown Prince Liu Zhi's side. He immediately flapped his wings and flew at a lower altitude.

"Hm?" The masked man did not expect Si Wuya would have no interest in fighting him. He saw Si Wuya continue to speed toward Liu Zhi. Si Wuya's speed was too fast!

With his wings, Si Wuya's speed was on par with the small chariot. Liu Zhi who was without a chariot did not stand a chance at all.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Energy needles shot out everywhere.

The masked man moved swiftly to the back. He cast his grand technique.

"Is that all you've got?"

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The masked man hurled punches after punches at Si Wuya's wings.

Si Wuya ignored the masked man completely. He rode on the momentum and dove. "Thanks!"

The wings suddenly detached from Si Wuya's back before they merged into one. The light from the wings faded immediately. The Peacock Plume appeared and shot out a beam of light that was packed with energy needles toward Liu Zhi.

A frightened expression appeared on Liu Zhi's face as he unleashed a blast of energy to block the attack.

Bam!

The Peacock Plume easily penetrated Liu Zhi's protective energy and landed on his chest.

Liu Zhi reeled back and crashed into a tree, gravely injured.

Bam! Bam! Bam.

Three huge towering trees fell from the impact.

Si Wuya did not relent. Instead, he sprinted forward.

The masked man cursed under his breath, "Sh*t!" Although he could sense that Si Wuya's strength and cultivation base were nothing to be afraid of, Si Wuya's unconventional actions annoyed him to no end. He immediately unleashed his grand technique and appeared in front of Si Wuya before he struck with his palm.

Bam!

Si Wuya blocked the blow with his arms. He flipped backward and stabilized himself on the ground.

The two opponents faced each other in silence.

"Since the fate of Yan Province City is sealed, what's the use of struggling, sir?" Si Wuya asked.

"We're merely serving our respective masters. His Highness, the Crown Prince, has given up on Yan Province. Why are you still chasing after us, sir?"

"I'm just killing my enemy."

"I'm just protecting my master."

Si Wuya said disdainfully, "Crown Prince Liu Zhi has been obsessed with the culture of the Other Tribes since his youth. He performed a dance from the Other Tribes in the eastern palace once. He'd even shown the wolf into his house just to pursue his interests. Is it worth it to protect such a master?"

"Everyone has their role to play in this world, whether it's as a master or a servant. It's just how the world is. Rebels like you only know how to spout nonsense," the masked man gruffly said.

"It saddens me to see someone as blindly loyal as you."

"Die!" The masked man struck with energy fists and moved at lightning speed.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Si Wuya struck with both palms.

The two of them engaged in battle.

The masked man displayed shocking combat strength. Every single strike of his hit Si Wuya. The energy fists landed on Si Wuya's protective energy. For a time, Si Wuya was overwhelmed. He could not fight back and could only retreat.

Bam!

The masked man struck with both fists, landing on Si Wuya's arms.

Si Wuya retreated again.

The masked man chuckled and said, "Looks like not everyone from the Evil Sky Pavilion is powerful." If it had been Yu Zhenghai, he would have escaped without a second thought.

"It's too early for you to rejoice!" Si Wuya flipped his palm. His Peacock Plume spun above his palm, shooting out energy needles. There were only a few of them, but they were powerful enough.

The masked man continued hurling punches to parry the energy needles. When the last and thickest needle was upon him, it suddenly split into many finer energy needles. One of the energy needles skimmed past his mask.

Crack!

A crisp sound rang in the air.

The mask was broken!

As the energy needles faded away, the mask fell to the ground with a thud.

"Lu Hong, it's you?!" Si Wuya recognized the masked man immediately.

"It's me... Si Wuya, the Evil Sky Pavilion has destroyed the Hengqu Branch and killed my disciples. As the branch master, how can I stay idle?"

Si Wuya shook his head and said, "The Hengqu Branch had provoked the Evil Sky Pavilion over and over again. If my master learns about your defiance... I'm afraid..." In other words, the entire Hengqu Branch would be wiped out.

Lu Hong smiled and said, "That's why... nobody will know if I kill you today!"

There was an explosion of energy fists as Lu Hong charged forward.

Si Wuya retreated. He raised both palms and parried Lu Hong's energy fists.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The two of them moved as they fought.

Si Wuya kept retreating.

Bam!

Si Wuya reeled again to avoid Lu Hong's powerful strike.

Lu Hong smiled and asked, "Is this all you've got?"

Si Wuya was not affected by Lu Hong's taunting words. Instead, he looked at Crown Prince Liu Zhi who was lying on the ground and said, "Liu Zhi must die."

Si Wuya tapped the ground lightly with his feet and flew into the air. Then, he threw the Peacock Plume into the air. The Peacock Plume formed a shining golden peacock instead of landing on his back. The peacock spun, and energy needles rained down. "The Great Compassion Poem."

It was rumored that the cultivators of Great Compassion Poem could bring about a rain of blood and make ghosts cry at night. With the Peacock Plume, this cultivation method could be unleashed to its full potential.

Si Wuya rarely attacked. He rarely displayed his techniques or spread his Peacock Plume. This time, he had to do this to kill Liu Zhi! His eyes shone with determination as he wielded his Peacock Plume.

A shrill cry rang from the huge Peacock Plume gave a wail. Energy needles rained down wherever the peacock could reach.

Lu Hong's eyes widened. He summoned his avatar and flew up to avoid the attack. "Darn it!"

Lu Hong had a Seven-leaf avatar! The 90-foot avatar stood before the rain of needles from the Great Compassion Poem.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The needles rained down on the avatar. Even so, Lu Hong could not block all the needles. Several needles landed on their target.

"Withdraw!" Si Wuya pulled his Peacock Plume back. The Great Compassion Poem ended abruptly. When the Peacock Plume returned to him, he retreated swiftly without any hesitation.

"Running away?!" Lu Hong did not expect Si Wuya to flee after unleashing the Great Compassion Poem. He chased after Si Wuya at once!

Si Wuya had achieved his objective. It was only natural for him to leave. Continuing a fight zealously was not his style. A Seven-leaf avatar was not easy to deal with.

Just when Lu Hong was about to touch Si Wuya, a voice rang from Yan Province City. "Wise brother, where are you?!"

Yu Zhenghai!

Yu Zhenghai had been worried about Si Wuya's prolonged absence. He had rushed here after a moment's rest.

Lu Hong who had been advancing with a mighty aura moments ago immediately became a stunned monkey. He withdrew his avatar and turned around decisively, speeding toward Liu Zhi!

"Wise brother!" Another sound technique.

Lu Hong's hair stood on end. Goosebumps rose on his skin.

Run!

'I can't... afford to fight him!'

Si Wuya shook his head. He spread his arms helplessly. 'That's it?'

Yu Zhenghai moved toward Si Wuya swiftly. When he saw Si Wuya hovering in the air, he cried out in delight, "Wise brother!"

"I'm fine. Hengqu Branch's Lu Hong... We can't let him get away!" Si Wuya pointed at Lu Hong who was now in the faraway forest.

Yu Zhenghai saw that Si Wuya's clothes were slightly disheveled. He frowned and said, "Leave this to me, wise brother..."

Swoosh!

Lu Hong activated his grand technique again. He did not dare bring Liu Zhi with him. He was occupied with thoughts of self-preservation. He did not hesitate to abandon Liu Zhi as he ran for his life. He flitted past the trees without choosing a clear path. When a person was being pursued under a panicked state, they would instinctively choose to zigzag as they ran in an attempt to shake off their pursuer. He did not fly away from the forest. Instead, he flitted in and out among the trees! He shot to his left and right at lightning speed. He had no idea where he was; he had lost all sense of direction. However, that was not important. So long as he could shake off Yu Zhenghai, he would be able to find his way sooner or later. His palms were clammy, and his fingers were shaking at this moment. He turned around, wide-eyed, to look behind him occasionally. He sighed in relief. Perhaps, his trick worked. He felt that he had lost his pursuer.

Alas, to Lu Hong's despair, a hearty laughter rang in the forest.

In the sky, a spinning energy, the Dark Heaven Starlight, that was released by the Jasper Saber swept through the forest.

Lu Hong's heart shuddered. He stomped his feet and launched himself forward toward the edge of the trees. He was out of the forest in just an instant!

Eh? A mountain with twin rocks? Aren't those the Big Dipper Academy disciples? Why are they here?

Soon enough, a voice rang in the air. "Hengqu Branch's Lu Hong?!"

Lu Hong was overjoyed. He shouted, "Help me! Kill the disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion's Old Villain Ji!"

Everything would have been fine if Lu Hong did not say those words. Alas, as soon as he had spoken, the expressions of the 1,000 disciples of the Big Dipper Academy changed drastically.

At the same time, a palm seal flew out from behind them.

The palm seal was clenched into a fist and was blue in color! It was the Buddhist's Great Seal of Fearlessness. Once it was launched, the people would know no fear and find peace.

At this moment, Lu Hong was charging right into the Great Seal of Fearlessness! He showed the others the consequences of getting hit by the palm seal.

Boom!

Lu Hong was instantly reduced to ashes.

"..."

Silence reigned supreme on the twin rocks peak.

Zhou Youcai felt parched. He felt his strength leaving his legs as his knees knocked against each other. He wanted to get up, but he could not muster up enough energy to do so.

Lu Hong, the Hengqu Branch's master and a Seven-leaf elite, was killed by a single palm strike?

Chapter 570: Stay Calm

Zhou Youcai suddenly remembered that when he first arrived, Zhou Wenliang came to greet him, and then, he met Mingshi Yin before finally coming up to the peak. If there had been any mistakes in any of those steps, he would have ended up the same way as the Hengqu Branch Master, Lu Hong. He shivered in fear and decided not to dwell on it any longer.

Lu Zhou remained indifferent to Lu Hong's death. He had warned the Hengqu Branch before he went to cultivation in seclusion that he would wipe them out if they persisted in going against him. To ensure that his palm strike was powerful enough to kill, he did not hold back when using his extraordinary power. He had used one-third of his Heavenly Writing power to attack. Based on his analysis, one-sixth or one-fifth of his extraordinary power was enough to kill a Six or Seven-leaf elite. To be safe, he used one-third. He was satisfied with the outcome; one palm strike was enough to turn Lu Hong into ashes.

Even Huang Shijie was stunned for quite some time when he saw this.

After a brief moment of silence, Lu Zhou said, "Calm down."

"I am, I am..." Zhou Youcai waved his hands at once. He tried his best not to look nervous despite the panicked state he was in.

The others looked at the huge energy saber above the forest.

Huang Shijie smiled and said, "Sect Master Yu is as grand as ever."

The Dark Heaven Starlight released through the Great Dark Heaven Memorial covered a wide range. There was only one objective and that was to clear the entire forest to look for Lu Hong.

This resembled the scene where Lu Zhou captured Yu Zhenghai on the Clarity Sect's main peak back then.

The difference was Yu Zhenghai's attack seemed hasty and impatient.

When the entire forest disappeared, Yu Zhenghai remained hovering in the air. His sharp senses made him shift his gaze toward the twin rocks peak.

,000 white-clad cultivators came into view.

At the same time, Yu Zhenghai saw a huge palm seal crushing Lu Hong like a fly. Despite his Eight-leaf Golden Lotus cultivation base, he was shocked when he saw the huge blue palm seal. Was it a friend or a foe? Who was the person who launched this attack from the twin rocks peak? Why was the palm seal blue? The series of questions made him hesitate to make a move. He wondered if it was Zhou Youcai when he looked at the 1,000 Big Dipper Academy disciples again. However, after thinking about it for a moment, he dismissed that thought. With Zhou Youcai's cultivation base, it was impossible for him to launch such an attack that seemed capable of making shocking the heavens and making deities and ghosts cry.

Yu Zhenghai was about to move closer to have a look when a voice rang out. "Eldest Senior Brother."

"What is it?" Yu Zhenghai turned around and saw Si Wuya flying toward him.

"Let's prioritize the bigger picture. Yan Province comes first."

"There's someone up on the twin rocks peak... I'm worried that an enemy army might be lying in wait there. I only want to check it out," Yu Zhenghai said.

The twin rocks peak was partly hidden by two huge rocks. It was difficult to see who was on the peak since it was high and far away as well.

However, Si Wuya had seen the 150-foot avatar earlier. He smiled and said, "Don't worry... If they wanted to attack, they would've done so long ago. Why would they stand here until the Crown Prince is killed?"

Yu Zhenghai pointed at the twin rocks peak and said, "Wise brother, you might not have seen it, but I saw an enormous palm seal... Mhm, it was blue and about this huge..." He tried to indicate the size with his hands but stopped abruptly. He coughed awkwardly. He was gesturing like a foolish person. How unbecoming of the Sect Master of Nether Sect! He said, "Anyway, Lu Hong was killed with a single strike."

"That's great. With Lu Hong dead, the Hengqu Branch will be without a leader. They're now a platter of loose sand. That's one less source of resistance against your plan to unify the world, Eldest Senior Brother," Si Wuya said.

Yu Zhenghai nodded. "So, the people on twin rocks peak aren't our enemies? But wait, those seem to be the academy disciples."

Si Wuya understood Yu Zhenghai's temperament. If Yu Zhenghai knew their master had helped them, Yu Zhenghai would not be happy. Hence, he hastily said, "That's not important. The battle in Yan Province is at its most crucial point. We should head back at once, Eldest Senior Brother!"

Yu Zhenghai sighed helplessly. "Might as well."

The bigger picture was more important, after all. Si Wuya knew this and used it against Yu Zhenghai. Naturally, he knew he was not the only one who had seen the Nine-leaf avatar. However, there was no need to seek trouble at this moment.

With that, Si Wuya and Yu Zhenghai returned to Yan Province City

...

On the twin rocks peak.

Lu Zhou and the others were observing the battle in Yan Province City.

The Nether Sect's forces were swarming into the city with a crushing momentum.

Lu Zhou was in no hurry to leave. He recalled Mingshi Yin's words. What if the Nine-leaf elite was in the palace?

“Brother Ji, looks like the outcome is certain. I thought I’ll have to enter Yan Province City. From the looks of things, I don’t think I’ll be needed there,” Huang Shijie said.

“Hm?” Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows slightly.

“Oh, right... We’re just passing by.” Huang Shijie corrected himself at once. He really felt useless here. Was there a need for him when there was a Nine-leaf cultivator here? At most, he was just like a cheerleader, cheering from the sideline.

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “It’s not as if there’s nothing you can do.”

“Just give the order, Brother Ji. Penglai Island will give you our full support!” Huang Shijie said.

“Tell your first disciple... to work harder. I’ve asked him to investigate the Luo woman, and I still haven’t heard anything definitive from him since,” Lu Zhou said.

“Uh...” Huang Shijie smiled sheepishly. Then, he said with a sigh, “That rascal of mine is born a loafer and a cunning one at that. However, he does have a knack for investigating things. I’ll keep a closer eye on him when I return.”

Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction. When he saw that the battle at Yan Province City was becoming one-sided, he lost interest. He asked, “How’s the floating island?”

“Ever since you propped it up, Brother Ji, the Formation is mended, and the five islands of Penglai are stabilizing. You single-handedly fought back the tides of malice, Brother Ji. As the Master of Penglai Island, it’s only natural for me to repay your kindness,” Huang Shijie replied.

Zhou Youcai was shocked upon hearing Huang Shijie’s words. “Senior Ji, it is true that you single-handedly propped up the island?”

Mingshi Yin rolled his eyes. He felt this man was truly stupid. ‘Just how did he become the Big Dipper Academy’s President with that brain of his? I should’ve taken all of his leaf-sprouting pills the other day.’

Huang Shijie said, “President Zhou, if Brother Ji isn’t here, I would’ve shed all friendliness with you due to your remark.”

Zhou Youcai. “???”

“Penglai owes Brother Ji a debt of gratitude. It’s one thing for the others to doubt Brother Ji, but as the President of the Big Dipper Academy, shouldn’t you be able to tell between truths and lies?” Huang Shijie asked.

Indeed, it was mind-blowing to imagine someone holding up an island with a single hand. However, the truth would be revealed after some investigations. Why was there a need to doubt this? He was clearly trying to drive a wedge between Penglai Island and the Evil Sky Pavilion. Huang Shijie would not have this.

Zhou Youcai apologized at once. “I’m sorry. I’ve been focused on refining pills and our research on the Golden Lotus. I didn’t think that the incident of propping up the floating island with a palm is real...” After apologizing, he cupped his fists toward Lu Zhou. “I didn’t know that your cultivation base has progressed to this stage. I’m impressed, truly...”

Lu Zhou was used to this level of flattery. He only asked, “What are the results of your research on pill-refining and the Golden Lotus?”