

Disciples 571

Chapter 571: I Believe that You're Not a Petty Person

Lu Zhou's question stumped President Zhou. His research after the dawn of the Lotus-severing era had always been classified. The academy's core disciples and the Imperial family were the only ones privy to this matter. It had never been revealed to outsiders.

As Zhou Youcai hemmed and hawed, Lu Zhou said with a sigh, "I remember there was a time where the Big Dipper Academy was righteous and magnanimous. What a glorious period that was. Back then, the scholars under the heavens longed to join the Big Dipper Academy. A few centuries have passed since then... and this is what the academy has become. It's now isolated, egoistic, unconventional, overly subjective, and disregards the world... It's no wonder the academy has been reduced to this."

Zhou Youcai was ashamed when he heard these words.

Huang Shijie said, "President Zhou... what's there to be afraid of when speaking in Brother Ji's presence? Brother Ji is already at the Nine-leaf stage, would he even covet the results of your research? In fact, if you receive pointers from Brother Ji, it'll be even more valuable than ten years of research."

That was not a lie. Many young juniors have been stuck. It was the same as reading. There were thousands upon thousands of books in the world about everything under the heavens. If a person could understand everything just by reading, what need would there be for teachers?

Moreover, even the Evil Sky Pavilion's Yu Shangrong had recultivated to the Six-leaf stage after he severed his lotus. Why was Zhou Youcai guarding his research?

Zhou Youcai was hit with a sudden realization. He said with a sigh, "You have a point, Island Master Huang. I have been narrow-minded... The academy's objective is to educate the world. That's also the foundation of the academy." Then, he continued to say, "I've been researching lotus-severing for the past six months... I have only made minor progress."

"Let's hear it." Lu Zhou tried his best to make himself seem less fierce. He tried to appear nonchalant as though he was just having small talks over afternoon tea.

Zhou Youcai said, "From what we know at the moment, cultivating after the lotus has been severed is more complicated than we had imagined. After the lotus is severed, not only would the cultivation speed be affected, but the avatar would be affected as well. As we all know, avatars can't move; they're like statues. It only serves as a defense after the caster enters the avatar. However, after the lotus is severed... the caster can, through his own powerful will, control the avatar so that it can make certain moves, thereby unleashing more powerful techniques. The number of leaves before the lotus is severed will affect the cultivation speed after they're severed... The more leaves there were, the quicker their cultivation would progress... It'll become unbelievably fast. I've discussed this with the Sky Conduct Academy's President Meng Nanfei before. We agree that the post-severing state is like a... restorative state."

Huang Shijie exclaimed in shock. "Is severing the lotus that beneficial?"

"Not quite so," Zhou Youcai continued to say, "The secret of the Golden Lotus still needs more research. Why do Golden Lotuses absorb the cultivator's longevity and energy? These are unsolved mysteries at

the moment. There's something missing in the research. Avatars can attack or retreat with a shocking defensive strength. The Golden Lotus can also be used as a heaven-grade weapon. Without it, the avatar is one-third weaker. Also, up until now, there's no way to find out if it's possible to form another Golden Lotus after it's severed, if there's a limit at the Nine-leaf stage, or if there's a Ten-leaf stage beyond the Nine-leaf stage..."

When Zhou Youcai finished speaking, he, along with Huang Shijie, turned to look at Lu Zhou. They were, naturally, interested in what Lu Zhou had to say since Lu Zhou was a Nine-leaf cultivator who had a Nine-leaf avatar with a Golden Lotus. If there were anyone who knew the secrets, it had to be Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou said, "Before the Nine-leaf stage is stabilized, the Ten-leaf stage is still too advanced."

The two of them nodded.

Now that the lotus-severing era was in full swing, there was no avoiding the tides of change. Nobody knew what the future would be like.

Lu Zhou added, "The Big Dipper Academy has always been close with the Imperial family. Do you know if there's any Nine-leaf elite in the palace?"

Zhou Youcai shook his head and said, "I've never heard of anything like that. The mountain is too small for two tigers. If there's truly a Nine-leaf cultivator there, His Majesty won't be able to rest easy. However... when the former Emperor was still on the throne, there had been rumors." He paused briefly before he continued to say, "The former Emperor was on good terms with you, Senior Ji. His talent for cultivation was inferior to yours, but after he received instructions from a capable teacher, he improved by leaps and bounds. It was also because of that the former Emperor managed to ascend the throne successfully."

Something stirred in Lu Zhou. "Do you know where this capable teacher is?"

Zhou Youcai sighed and said, "He passed away a long time ago. The former Emperor cried for three days and three nights. He was buried with the same rites as a member of the Imperial family. The former Emperor even guarded his tomb for three years."

"Did you witness that yourself?"

"That happened a long time ago, I couldn't have seen it myself. All I've heard are rumors," Zhou Youcai replied.

"Where is that tomb?"

Zhou Youcai said, "This was kept a strict secret. When the former Emperor ordered for the tomb to be built, the workers involved were all killed to keep its location a secret. The scribes were prohibited from putting it into writing. I'm afraid nobody knows to this day where the tomb is."

At this point, Lu Zhou was able to confirm that the former Emperor's teacher was the mysterious elite who came on the coffin. No wonder Liu Ge trusted that elite so much. Was the elite dead or alive? Nobody could be sure about something that they had never seen.

At this moment, Mingshi Yin butted in and asked, "How many leaves does the Emperor have now?"

Zhou Youcai started when he heard Mingshi Yin's question. Sweat began to drip down his face immediately. He hesitated as he looked at the 1,000 academy disciples who were waiting for him some distance away. He knew that a wrong answer could cost him the lives of these 1,000 disciples. In the end, he said, "To tell you the truth, all of the leaf-sprouting pills refined by the academy have been delivered to the palace. For the past six months, the two great academies and the Core Yang Sect have refined 108 leaf-sprouting pills in total."

Mingshi Yin's eyes widened. "Who's the binge-eater? Is he a 108-leaf elite now?"

"..."

Zhou Youcai coughed before he shook his head and said, "Consuming a leaf-sprouting pill doesn't guarantee the addition of another leaf. The theory behind the leaf-sprouting pills is that it aids in the absorption of Primal Qi to boost one's cultivation base. At the Five or Six-leaf stage, the cultivator would have to consume ten to dozens of pills, at least, to sprout a leaf."

Like a dog refusing to let go of a bone, Mingshi Yin asked, "So... how many leaves does the Emperor have?"

"..."

It was annoying to hear Zhou Youcai go on and on, beating around the bush. If his master was not here, Mingshi Yin would have punched him.

"We honestly don't know how many leaves His Majesty has sprouted... Please forgive us, Senior Ji!" said Zhou Youcai anxiously.

"Heh, not telling, huh?" Mingshi Yin was on the verge of losing his temper.

Lu Zhou raised a hand to stop Mingshi Yin. "Alright, I believe you." He did not even know how many leaves his own disciple, Mingshi Yin had, how could he expect Zhou Youcai to know how many leaves the Emperor had sprouted?

"Thank you for your trust, Senior Ji." Zhou Youcai sighed in relief.

"President Zhou..." Lu Zhou suddenly looked at Zhou Youcai with a probing look. "What are your plans from now?"

"Well..." Zhou Youcai cupped his fists at once and said, "I will conduct myself with magnanimity and righteousness to restore the academy to its former glory."

"The Big Dipper Academy has great potential. You're not a narrow-minded person, Zhou Youcai... I'd advise you to go back and think carefully about the academy's future. What is it that the academy should or shouldn't do, how is it going to survive in the long run... Don't make any hasty decisions or be confused by blind loyalty. Think long and hard on these things..." He sounded earnest when he spoke. After he finished speaking, he waved his hand and called out, "Old Fourth."

"Kindly board the chariot, master."

Lu Zhou leaped back onto the flying chariot.

Zhou Wenliang, Wang Jianrang, and Zhang Gong instinctively followed Lu Zhou.

Mingshi Yin turned to glare at the trio. "What are you doing? Get lost!"

"Huh?"

"Thinking of leeching off the Evil Sky Pavilion again? Fat chance!" Mingshi Yin gave them a kick each.

Zhou Wenliang, Wang Jianrang, and Zhang Gong fell to their knees at the same time and said, "Thank you for sparing us, Senior Ji. Thank you for being merciful!"

Huang Shijie stood up as well. He looked at Zhou Youcai and said, "President Zhou, a wise man submits to circumstances, and a fine bird chooses a good tree to nest in. Take care."

"Take care, take care..." Zhou Youcai suppressed the fear he felt. He looked on as Huang Shijie boarded the flying chariot.

Whizz! Whizz! Whizz!

The flying chariot rose into the air.

Lu Zhou looked down from up high and said indifferently, "Tell Meng Nanfei the same thing."

Zhou Youcai bowed deeply. "I will pass the message in its entirety to him!"

Chapter 572: Turn Back Time for 100 Years

Under Mingshi Yin's control, the cloud-splitting chariot instantly disappeared among the sea of clouds.

When Zhou Youcai looked up again, he could no longer see the flying chariot. At this time, he staggered and sat limply on the ground, panting heavily. It took him a while before he recovered.

Once the Big Dipper Academy disciples saw the flying chariot had vanished from sight, they hastily flew up to their president. They were shocked to find him sitting on the ground. A few of them landed and helped Zhou Youcai to his feet.

A few disciples stepped forward, concerned.

"President, are you alright?"

"President, where did Old Villain Ji hit you? Is it bad?"

Zhou Youcai who had risen to his feet suddenly slapped the disciple who had referred to Ji Tiandao as Old Villain Ji. "Shut up!" After slapping the disciple, he said, "Remember the saying, 'Loose lips sink ships'."

The disciple held his hand against his cheek and replied, "Yes."

"President, are we still going to Yan Province City?"

"Why would we?" Zhou Youcai did not even look in the direction of Yan Province City. At this juncture, unless they were seeking death, who would dare visit the city now? Did they not see how quickly the Sky Conduct Academy disciples had fled?

'Did I raise a group of f*cking dimwits?'

"Return to the academy," Zhou Youcai ordered. He stepped into the air before the others.

"Understood." The 1,000 disciples obediently took flight.

Soon after, Zhou Youcai said, "Let's visit the Sky Conduct Academy first."

"Understood!"

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The Sky Conduct Academy in the Divine Capital.

Meng Nanfei, the President of the Sky Conduct Academy, lifted his teacup to his mouth and finished the tea in a gulp to calm his nerves.

It had been a while since Meng Nanfei returned. He could not help muse out loud, "Was it an illusion?"

"President, it wasn't an illusion... W-we saw it as well. There's no mistake that it was a Nine-leaf Golden Lotus avatar."

"I saw it as well! It was most certainly a Nine-leaf Golden Lotus. President, your call to retreat was made in a timely manner!"

Meng Nanfei looked at the two disciples. He was not in the mood to entertain these two Meng Nanfei swept his gaze at the two of them. He was not in the mood to entertain these two people with glib tongues.

At this moment, a disciple came running in and hastily said, "President, the Big Dipper Academy's President Zhou is here!"

"Show him in!"

Shortly after, Zhou Youcai hastened his way toward the Sky Conduct Academy's meeting hall with two disciples in tow.

Meng Nanfei emerged from the hall to meet him. With a smile, he said, "Please forgive our lack of hospitality, President Zhou. You've traveled far."

"I don't have much time to waste with you... The Evil Sky Pavilion's Patriarch wants me to convey a message to you," Zhou Youcai said with a tiny hint of impatience.

"A message?"

"I saw how you ran away..."

"Ran away? Who? Who's the coward?" Meng Nanfei asked with a straight face.

"Drop the act... I'm not mocking you. After all, I was there," Zhou Youcai said.

Meng Nanfei. "???"

The disciples. "???"

Then, Zhou Youcai recounted what he had seen and heard on the twin rocks peak before he conveyed Lu Zhou's message to Meng Nanfei.

Upon hearing Zhou Youcai's words, Meng Nanfei staggered backward. His knees were shaking as he thought to himself, 'That was close!'

When Zhou Youcai saw Meng Nanfei's pale face, he said, "You didn't take Zhou Wenliang seriously when he sent you the letter? He's the Taixu Academy's Second Elder, for crying out loud."

"Brother Zhou, that's enough. I'm scared out of my wits now." Meng Nanfei kept waving his hands. He felt fortunate that he did not personally show up. Otherwise, based on his initial attitude, he would have been the one who was killed with a single palm strike.

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After the fall of Yan Province City, most people were divided into two opinions in the cultivation world.

There were those who supported the Nether Sect because it was backed by the Evil Sky Pavilion that housed the first Nine-leaf cultivator in the world.

Then, there were those who continued to support the Divine Capital because the capital was impregnable. Moreover, those who had severed their lotuses found their cultivation speed had increased. With that, they were confident new Nine-leaf cultivators would appear soon.

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The next morning in the Evil Sky Pavilion's eastern pavilion.

After meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls for some time, Lu Zhou reassessed his extraordinary power. Although he was meditating at a faster pace now, his capacity had grown as well. Hence, he needed about five days to completely replenish his extraordinary power.

"I have more than 100,000 merit points. It's time to raise my own cultivation base." Lu Zhou assessed his cultivation base in his dantian's sea of Qi.

He nodded. It seemed his cultivation base was close to a breakthrough. He did not expect this. Perhaps, it was the result of combining the Human Scroll and the Earth Scroll. In any case, this was good news for him.

"Let's reverse my lifespan, for starters."

His current remaining life was 20,593 days.

Lu Zhou used one Reversal Card.

There was a great surge of life energy. With this, his days were increased by 500.

Before this, every Reversal Card only gave him 300 days. Now, it was increased to 500 days per card.

"57 years..." He was satisfied with his lifespan. For a cultivator, the downhill road was always the final 100 years. In other words, as long as he was younger than 900 years, his cultivation base would not be affected by his lifespan. Currently, he had more than 40 years to go.

With this thought in mind, Lu Zhou no longer hesitated. He said again, "Use the Reversal Card again."

The entire eastern pavilion was surrounded with vitality.

In the past, it had merely been a slight disturbance, and the others in the Evil Sky Pavilion were already used to it. They no longer found it strange.

At this moment, the Evil Sky Pavilion's four elders looked at the eastern pavilion at the same time.

"I say, is the pavilion master cultivating some arcane method?" Hua Wudao looked at the eastern pavilion, puzzled.

"Arcane method?"

"Look there, above the eastern pavilion. Powerful life energy is converging. The pavilion master is clearly at the Nine-leaf stage. Why is he still absorbing vitality now?" Hua Wudao wondered out loud.

Zuo Yushu shook her head and said, "If it's an arcane method, isn't it more convenient to absorb the lives of other humans? Why would he have to go through this much trouble?"

Pan Litian said, "Don't make a mountain out of a molehill. There's bound to be some disturbance when a cultivator experiences a breakthrough. The pavilion master, regardless of how extraordinary he is, is a cultivator as well. Get used to it. It'll die down in a second."

"You have a point, Elder Pan."

Bzzt!

Another buzz of resonance rang from above the eastern pavilion.

The four elders looked up in unison again.

"Didn't you say that it'll die down soon? It doesn't look like it's stopping?"

Pan Litian said, "Perhaps, the breakthrough isn't complete yet... I've experienced this myself. There were two consecutive commotions..."

"This is a rare occurrence. It seems like the pavilion master would benefit more than usual."

A moment later, the eastern pavilion finally quietened down. However, the peace only lasted for a brief moment before another commotion broke out.

Bzzt!

It was the same disturbance as before as vitality converged.

"This..." Pan Litian looked perplexed.

"Old Pan, go on..." Leng Luo turned to look at Pan Litian.

"How can this be?"

The four of them looked at the eastern pavilion at a loss.

After the disturbance died down, another one started just as they expected.

This went on for several cycles...

From the first disturbance to the tenth life energy commotion, the Evil Sky Pavilion's four elders sat in stunned silence, looking like statues.

After the umpteenth commotion, they finally regained their senses.

Zuo Yushu suddenly said, "Why don't we make use of the vitality. Isn't it a waste to let it fade away like that?"

The other three elders glanced at Zuo Yushu.

When such a vast amount of life energy converged, there was bound to be some leakage and wastage. To put it bluntly, since the pavilion master was eating meat, the four elders were trying to see if they could have a taste of the broth.

"You have a point..."

The Evil Sky Pavilion's four elders walked toward the eastern pavilion. The vitality that could not be absorbed would be wasted if it leaked out into the surroundings. If that was the case, would it not be better for them to use it to their benefit?

The four elders stood outside the eastern pavilion, looking up at the life energy that was still gathering above the eastern pavilion.

They looked up at the vitality gathering above the eastern pavilion. After exchanging a look, they walked in. Once they were in the hall, they sat with their legs crossed and began their breathing exercises.

The vitality in the surroundings flowed past them and into the room.

Chapter 573: Sprouting Three Leaves Consecutively

At this moment, Lu Zhou was oblivious to the confusion his actions brought to the four elders. In any case, he was not worried about them disturbing his cultivation due to their personal experiences. After all, whenever he went to cultivate in seclusion, his disciples knew to actively avoid him.

However, the life energy that had gathered this time was too dense. It might not be of much use to young people, but it was a treasure to these elderly people.

So far, Lu Zhou had used ten Reversal Cards. He looked at the system dashboard and saw the addition of days.

Remaining life: 25,593 days.

There were no other changes. Each Reversal Card added 500 days to his life.

If he were not in a hurry to improve his strength, he would have continued to save more Reversal Cards.

"Continue." Lu Zhou produced another Reversal Card.

The Evil Sky Pavilion's four elders were getting used to their surroundings. They kept absorbing the life energy that lingered in the air and did not enter the room. It was just like the saying, 'When a man achieves the Dao, even his dogs and poultry would ascend to the heavens'.

Soon enough, Lu Zhou had already used up another ten Reversal Cards. His remaining life was now 30,593 days.

“82 years.”

He sighed emotionally. He was 18 years away from regaining 100 years of his life. For a mortal, how many 18-year periods would they have in a lifetime? Even an Eight-leaf cultivator would find these 18 years extremely precious when their lifespan was running out. 100 years would pass by in just a blink of an eye.

Lu Zhou hurriedly dismissed his emotional thoughts and continued to use his Reversal Cards.

After the ten consecutive commotions from the life energy ended, Lu Zhou glanced at the system dashboard again...

Remaining life: 235,593 days.

“About 97 years.” Lu Zhou counted. “Three more years. Use three Reversal Cards.”

Remaining life: 37,093 days.

With this, he had roughly 101 years left.

He sighed in relief as he looked at his remaining life on the system dashboard.

Shortly after, the effects of the Reversal Cards began to show.

He tilted his head and looked at the strand of hair on his shoulder. A considerable portion of it was gray now. When he had first transmigrated here, his hair was completely white. Now, it was salt and pepper. He looked at the folds of wrinkles on his arms and discovered there were fewer of them now. His skin seemed more youthful compared to before.

Lu Zhou wanted to see how he looked. Unfortunately, there were no mirrors in the Evil Sky Pavilion. There was also nothing inside the room that he could use to see his reflection. He could not possibly pee inside the room and use it as a mirror.

‘Forget it. I must be a handsome old man.’

Lu Zhou stood up and stretched his limbs. He felt great.

If his remaining 16 Reversal Cards did not increase in value with time, he would have used all of them.

“Next, it’s time to raise my cultivation base.”

Lu Zhou flipped his palm.

Whizz!

A miniature avatar materialized above his palm. Two shining golden leaves spun around the Golden Lotus.

Lu Zhou focused his attention and began gathering energy. In a blink of an eye, rings of golden energy dropped down from the avatar’s waist.

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Meanwhile, the four elders who were seated at the periphery of the eastern pavilion's hall continued to absorb the lingering life energy. After a long while, the life energy finally faded away.

The four of them opened their eyes in unison.

Zuo Yushu said, "I didn't expect big brother to gather so much life energy... Looks like this is the limit."

Leng Luo said, "Perhaps, the pavilion master is researching some healing technique such as the Buddhist Clear Mirror or Merciful Ark of Salvation. When the Merciful Ark of Salvation is cast, there would be a surge of life energy as well."

"Indeed, that's possible... However, casting for more than 30 times in a row... Isn't that slightly..."

"Outrageous?"

Zuo Yushu frowned. "Badmouthing big brother behind his back? I'm going to tell on you."

"No, no, no... Forgive me, Senior Zuo. I was j-just joking." Hua Wudao hastily waved his hands.

"How do you guys feel?" Leng Luo asked.

"Not bad," Pan Litian replied, "The life energy was dense and beneficial to our Extraordinary Eight Meridians... It can extend our lives as well. The only downside is that... it's not enough!"

"Old Pan, you shouldn't be too greedy."

As the four elders were lost in their discussion, suddenly a burst of bright light shone from the room in the eastern pavilion!

Whizz!

A beam of golden light shone from the room, stirring up a gust of powerful energy.

The four elders were stunned and simultaneously turned to look at the room.

The energy wind was not extremely strong. However, the four old individuals who were rich in experience were very familiar with this situation.

"Leaf-sprouting? The pavilion master is sprouting leaves?" Pan Litian wondered, shocked and baffled.

"T-the pavilion master is already at the Nine-leaf stage... Is he attempting the Ten-leaf stage?" Hua Wudao's eyes widened.

"How's that possible?" Leng Luo hastily rose to his feet and looked at the room with a solemn expression on his face.

Zuo Yushu shook her head and said, "No, the energy wind isn't that powerful. It's only at the level of a Three or Four-leaf stage."

"Let's not make wild guesses." Pan Litian turned around and raised his wine gourd bottle. "Once bitten, twice shy. I won't be surprised at the pavilion master's feats anymore. It's better to not be overly curious."

"You have a point." Hua Wudao turned around as well and walked out of the eastern pavilion.

The remaining elders left in a haste as well.

"Big brother's performance today is slightly different from usual. I think I'll stay out here and protect big brother..."

"I'll stay as well." Pan Litian stood under a horizontal beam outside of the eastern pavilion.

...

The golden energy that burst forth was an indication that a leaf had sprouted.

Lu Zhou looked at the three leaves before himself and nodded in satisfaction.

Based on his original expectation, Lu Zhou had intended to save more merit points and leave sprouting leaves at the end. However, at this moment, his cultivation seemed to be improving at a snail's speed.

He could always continue saving merit points. At this moment, it was better for him to earn merit points and raise his cultivation base at the same time. After all, now that he had reached the Three-leaf stage, he would not be able to raise his cultivation base through his own effort as quickly as he did before.

"Purchase Golden Lotus Leaf."

"Ding! Spent 50,000 merit points. Obtained Golden Lotus Leaf x1."

"Use."

Unlike when he had sprouted a leaf with his own effort, Lu Zhou felt a surge of mystical energy as soon as he used the item. Rich Primal Qi surrounded him and quickly turned into energy before entering his avatar. Then, energy rings appeared on the avatar and descended.

Swoosh!

A shining golden leaf sprouted from the side of the Golden Lotus.

Lu Zhou's cultivation base was now in the Four-leaf Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm!

He could clearly sense that his dantian's sea of Qi had increased several times due to his avatar's influence. His store of Primal Qi, similarly, had increased several times.

Lu Zhou was overjoyed. He was in no short supply of skills, experience, or knowledge. This... this was what he was lacking in.

"Purchase Golden Lotus Leaf!" Lu Zhou commanded.

"Ding! Spent 50,000 merit points. Obtained Golden Lotus Leaf x1."

"Use!"

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The four Elders had a glazed look in their eyes as they stood under the eastern pavilion's horizontal beam.

“Were my eyes playing tricks on me earlier?” Hua Wudao rubbed his eyes.

“I saw it, too. That was a sensation unique to the leaf-sprouting process. It’s the second time!” Leng Luo said confidently.

“Sprouting two leaves consecutively?” Zuo Yushu wondered in confusion.

“Old Pan, why aren’t you saying anything?”

“I wanted to say that it’s rare but not impossible for a cultivator to sprout two leaves at once. However, three consecutive times are impossible. Be that as it may, I’m worried the pavilion master will do exactly that as soon as I make that statement. Won’t that be too humiliating for me then?”

Pan Litian’s voice had barely faded when another burst of familiar energy surged out from the room in the eastern pavilion’s room.

Sprouting three leaves consecutively!

Pan Litian. “!!!”

The others looked at Pan Litian as though he was a foolish old man.

Chapter 574: Old Villain Ji, the Grand Cultivator

They were mildly impressed that the old Pan Litian was capable of coming up with such a logic. He was once the greatest elite in the Clarity Sect, after all, and was now an elder of the Evil Sky Pavilion. How could he not understand such a simple reason? The pavilion master was already at the Nine-leaf stage; why would he be sprouting new leaves now? The pavilion master was clearly not sprouting leaves, despite the familiar aura. It was likely that the pavilion master was attempting some novel technique!

The three elders finally averted their eyes away from the foolish Pan Litian and looked at the eastern pavilion where Lu Zhou was in.

Zuo Yushu said, “500 years ago, everyone feared and respected me for being a genius cultivator of the Confucian school. At that time, big brother’s cultivation base wasn’t very profound yet. However, even then, I could tell that big brother isn’t someone destined for mediocrity. Then, 300 years ago, big brother climbed to the peak of the cultivation world as an Eight-leaf cultivator. As you can see, I have an eye for talent. The only regret I have is that I was young and dumb, and I missed the...”

“Hold it right there...” Pan Litian raised a hand. “We’ll leave reminiscing for another day.”

“Can’t this old woman recall the glorious days of her distant past?” Zuo Yushu said indignantly.

Pan Litian said, “Sure, sure, sure... Carry on.”

Leng Luo kept quiet. He merely looked at them pointedly. ‘It’s no wonder that you’re still a bachelor.’

With Pan Litian’s remarks, Zuo Yushu lost the mood to say what she wanted to say.

The four elders looked at the eastern pavilion again.

Everything was silent, and there were no other movements from the eastern pavilion for now.

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Inside the room.

Lu Zhou looked at the Five-leaf Golden Lotus on his palm in satisfaction.

In the cultivation world, only those in the Nascent Divinity tribulation realm were considered fully initiated into the cultivation world. One-leaf to Four-leaf cultivators were all considered small-time cultivators.

From the Five-leaf stage onward, they were considered grand cultivators. In other words, from this moment on, Lu Zhou who had successfully entered the Five-leaf Nascent Divinity Golden Lotus realm was now a grand cultivator.

He clenched his fist and the avatar disappeared. He stood up, feeling rather pleased with himself. He looked at his surroundings for a moment before he finally went behind the screen to look at the parchment drawing on the table.

The map still showed all of Great Yan, like before. The lines were clearer even though the range was still the same.

"If what's displayed on the parchment drawing has something to do with the Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing, the next clue to find the other scrolls should still be in Great Yan."

Lu Zhou sighed softly. He was still clueless when it came to his memory crystal. Similarly, his progress of searching for the Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing, which were scattered all over the place, was at a standstill as well.

"You're just a map that's not even helpful in searching for the scrolls. What good would you do me?"

Lu Zhou walked away from the parchment drawing and left the room.

Creak!

Lu Zhou opened the door and crossed the threshold with his hands on his back. He stood in the eastern pavilion and looked down.

The four elders looked up at the same time and saw Lu Zhou standing at the top of the stairs in the eastern pavilion. They were stunned. They looked at him with wide eyes and a baffled expression on their faces.

Although Lu Zhou's clothes, posture, and aura remained unchanged, his hair, the look in his eyes, and even his skin looked as though they had gone through a 180-degree change.

"Is that... the pavilion master's younger brother?" Hua Wudao asked.

"I've never heard anything about big brother having a younger brother..."

"I suspect... someone's impersonating him."

“Impossible! Unless it’s a Ten-leaf cultivator, nobody would be able to slip past the pavilion master and four of us at the same time. And if he or she is a Ten-leaf cultivator, is there a need to impersonate the pavilion master?”

The four of them exchanged a glance. The final analysis made sense.

Zuo Yushu walked over with her Coiling Dragon Staff. Then, she bowed and said, “Big brother, you look... you look 500 years younger.”

Lu Zhou knew his younger appearance would certainly raise some questions in their heads. However... weren’t 500 years too much of an exaggeration? Although his cultivation base was only at the Five-leaf stage, he was not worried about the four elders causing trouble here. Even if the four elders joined forces and plotted against him, he could easily take them down with his extraordinary power and item cards. In any case, he was quite certain it would not come to that with the four elders.

Pan Litian cupped his fists and said, “You look spry, Pavilion Master. Surely, you must’ve had a breakthrough in your cultivation base.”

Hua Wudao chimed in, “Congratulations, Pavilion Master.”

Lu Zhou descended the steps with his hands on his back. He glanced at the four elders as he said, “The addition of a single leaf increases your lifespan by 50 years. I don’t even know how many years these nine leaves have added to my life.”

When the four elders heard this, they were moved. As expected, the Nine-leaf stage would be able to prolong their lives. Moreover, based on the pavilion master’s appearance, it was definitely not as simple as 50 years. Although they did not sense any particular intimidating aura from Lu Zhou, they dared not act recklessly.

Leng Luo cupped his fists and said, “Looks like the foundation of your Nine-leaf avatar is officially stabilized, Pavilion Master. I’m duly humbled. I’ll return to my cultivation now.”

“It’s about time for me to return as well.”

Hua Wudao and Zuo Yushu were not so shameless as to continue staying in the eastern pavilion as well.

Lu Zhou waved his arm and said, “Go.”

Leng Luo’s conclusion of him stabilizing his foundation was not unreasonable. There were three sub-realms in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm: the Dao Primal, the Chaotic Primal, and the Whole Primal.

At the Two-leaf stage, Lu Zhou was in the Dao Primal sub-realm.

Now that he was in the Five-leaf Nascent Divinity realm, he was at the most stable Chaotic Primal sub-realm.

Lu Zhou was about to return to continue meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls when Mingshi Yin appeared outside the eastern pavilion.

“Greetings, master.”

“What is it?”

Mingshi Yin bowed and said, “Master, Princess Yong Ning’s recovery is nearly complete. I intended to let her stay here, but she insists on returning. Should we keep her here or send her away?”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he considered this. When he battled Emperor Yong Shou, Liu Ge, back then, Princess Yong Ning and Zhao Yue did not appear. After all, the two of them were from the Imperial family. It was best they avoided such an awkward situation. Since Liu Ge died, it was not unreasonable if they harbor some resentment in their hearts.

“We’ll respect her choice. Also, notify Si Wuya about this,” Lu Zhou finally said.

“Understood.”

Then, Mingshi Yin began to stammer as he said, “T-the second thing is E-eldest Senior Brother has... has sent a letter... he said... he said...”

“Hm?” Lu Zhou frowned.

Mingshi Yin started when he saw Lu Zhou frowning. He hastily said, “Eldest Senior Brother said he’s grateful for your help in intimidating the other forces outside Yan Province City. However, he asks that you refrain from meddling in his affairs in the future.”

“B*stard!” Lu Zhou cursed.

Mingshi Yin hurriedly chimed in, “Y-yes... T-that b-b*stard! How dare he talk to master in that manner! Master, you can do whatever you want. He’s only a disciple, and yet, he has the gall to complain. Ignore him. I’ll send a reply to reprimand him. I’ll teach him what it means to respect his master!”

Lu Zhou glanced at Mingshi Yin and said, “Since he likes to put on a tough act, let him be... I have no time to waste on him.”

“Please calm down, master.”

After doing some calculations, Lu Zhou discovered Yu Zhenghai had less than a month left. It would not be easy for him to conquer the Divine Capital.

Lu Zhou no longer troubled himself with Yu Zhenghai. Instead, he asked, “How’s Ye Tianxin?”

“She’s stable enough, but I feel that Sixth Junior Sister has lost many years of her life... I wonder if she can recover from this. However, it’s good enough that she’s still alive. I think that her mind is in a great place. She’ll be fine once she gets more rest. Should I summon her over?”

“No need.”

“In that case, I’ll write a reply to Eldest Senior Brother... I’ll make sure to properly lecture him in the letter. Leave it to me, master!” Mingshi Yin left the eastern pavilion respectfully after he finished speaking.

...

Nighttime in Yan Province City.

Yu Zhenghai stood with hands on his back, and his back was facing Hua Chongyang.

Hua Chongyang read a letter out loud, "Mister Fourth also says that you shouldn't hold things against Senior Ji. He's old, after all. Also, conquering the Divine Capital won't be an easy task, and you should think things through before making a decision."

Si Wuya smiled and said, "Fourth Senior Brother is an interesting character."

Yu Zhenghai nodded. "Master must be angered by the content of my letter. However, I can afford to care about that now. Not with what lies ahead..."

"Eldest Senior Brother, isn't it nice to have master helping us? Why..." Si Wuya could not understand Yu Zhenghai's stubbornness. He knew that his Eldest Senior Brother wanted to conquer the world and that he had made many preparations as he worked toward this goal. Before this, his Eldest Senior Brother had been avoiding their master at every turn. It was good news for them that their master had given them six months and intimidated the two academies. Why was his Eldest Senior Brother?

Yu Zhenghai sighed. He waved his hand. "Stay here, wise brother. The others, leave."

"Understood."

They could tell Yu Zhenghai wished to keep the following conversation a secret.

The hall was silent and a gloomy atmosphere hung in the air when only Yu Zhenghai and Si Wuya were left.

Si Wuya did not say anything. He waited for Yu Zhenghai to speak.

After a long pause, Yu Zhenghai finally said, "I... I might not have long to live."

Chapter 575: Yu Zhenghai's Lifespan Limit

Si Wuya frowned; he had expected as much. He sat, motionless, on the chair as he stroked the patterns on the Peacock Plume, which he held in his left hand, with his thumb.

Yu Zhenghai glanced at Si Wuya and said, "You've already guessed it?"

"Yes." Si Wuya's reply was curt. He knew that this day would come from the day he began to keep the diary. This was why he had kept it hidden. He did not know if the others had managed to guess it, but there was no denying it was the truth.

Yu Zhenghai had been sold off to Lou Lan when he was a child. He went through countless hardships and bled to death at the hands of some aristocrats. His first death took 300 years from his life. His second death came after his battle with their master. Similarly, it took 300 years from his life. He cultivated in the Evil Sky Pavilion for 300 years. Based on his current age, even if he was a peak Eight-leaf elite, there was nothing he could do to defy the 1,000-year limit of one's lifespan. It was just as he had said, he did not have much time left.

Yu Zhenghai shrugged slightly before he said, "It's not a big deal... I'm satisfied with the way my life turned out."

“Eldest Senior Brother, I’ve always been curious... You don’t have much time left, but why are you so intent on taking down the Divine Capital?” Si Wuya looked up and said, “Don’t give me those old heroic and valiant excuses. I wouldn’t have asked you this in the past. However, are you still going to keep it from me even at this juncture?” Si Wuya could not rationalize Yu Zhenghai’s action. Since Yu Zhenghai did not have long to live, was there any meaning in conquering the Divine Capital? Was it so he could hand it over to someone on a silver platter?

Yu Zhenghai took a seat before he said in a grave tone, “Indeed, I have other reasons, but I’ve never lied to you. Seventh Junior Brother, let’s not dwell on this anymore. I know what I’m doing.”

Si Wuya noticed Yu Zhenghai’s change in the way he addressed him. This indicated that Yu Zhenghai’s emotions were stirred. He chuckled lightly before he asked with a sigh, “Eldest Senior Brother, do you know why I’m helping you?”

“As a fellow disciple?”

“That’s partially true...” Si Wuya slowly said, “When I left the Evil Sky Pavilion, I was young and full of mettle. I wanted to accomplish many great feats to prove that I wasn’t weak. Hence, I entered the Divine Capital and became the Grand Tutor. Then... I realized those things couldn’t satisfy me. I started studying the Ten Terminal Formations, the source of the Imperial family’s confidence, the shackles of heaven and earth... Humans are insignificant. A person’s knowledge is like a circle. The larger the circle gets, the more it comes into contact with. The more knowledgeable one is, the more the fear of the unknown would only grow... I once thought that there was nothing in the world that I couldn’t solve. I know all about Great Yan’s nine provinces and how their cities work. I know about the rising and setting of the sun, the patterns of the transition between the warmer and colder periods... Yet, I don’t know what the shackle of heaven and earth is.”

Yu Zhenghai was slightly taken aback by Si Wuya’s outburst of emotions. “It’s good that you have something to strive for...”

“Eldest Senior Brother... We both have things that we’d work hard for... Is the Divine Capital all you want?” Si Wuya directed the conversation back to the previous topic.

Yu Zhenghai frowned. “You’ll find out soon enough. In any case, nobody can stop me from conquering the Divine Capital. When I die... return to the Evil Sky Pavilion and receive master’s punishment on my behalf,” Yu Zhenghai said.

“...” When Si Wuya saw Yu Zhenghai’s determination, he no longer pushed Yu Zhenghai.

At this moment, Hua Chongyang appeared outside the hall. “Sect master, an urgent report from Liang Province.”

“Come in.”

Hua Chongyang hurried into the hall.

Before Hua Chongyang could greet Yu Zhenghai and Si Wuya, Si Wuya noticed that his expression was off. He asked, “What is it?”

“Liang Province is in trouble,” Hua Chongyang took a deep breath before he said “Wei Zhuoyan has colluded with the Other Tribesmen from Rouli and has attacked Liang Province City by surprise. Yang Yan, Di Qing, and Bai Yuqing defended the city with all their might. Currently, all of them are grievously injured!”

The discussion hall fell silent.

Nonetheless, Si Wuya and Hua Chongyang could palpably feel Yu Zhenghai’s anger.

Yu Zhenghai’s expression changed slightly. He did not lose his temper despite his anger. “How serious are their injuries?”

“Bai Yuqing fares the best. His cultivation base is the most profound among them. He’ll need to recuperate for six months. As for Yang Yan and Di Qing...” Hua Chongyang shook his head. “I’m afraid that they’ll have a hard time trying to stand on their own feet in the future. It’s unknown if they could recover their cultivation bases.”

Yu Zhenghai clenched his fists tightly until his joints complained. “Bring them back.”

“Our men are already on their way. Although the three of them defended Liang Province to the bitter end, a more powerful follow-up attack will certainly ensue. What do we do?” Hua Chongyang appeared worried. “I request to be stationed at Liang Province to defend the city.”

Yu Zhenghai did not agree to this immediately. Even three of his Great Protectors were heavily wounded. Sending Hua Chongyang there alone would be tantamount to sending him to his death.

However, if Liang Province was not defended, the Other Tribesmen would only seize the opportunity and invade it. When that time comes, he would be condemned in history.

“Wise brother... do you have any wonderful plans?” Yu Zhenghai looked at Si Wuya.

Si Wuya did not answer immediately. Instead, he looked at Hua Chongyang and asked, “What’s the situation at Ji Province?”

“It’s been conquered... Only the Divine Capital is left.”

The battle of the Divine Capital was close at hand. The Nether Sect’s troops were preparing to storm the Divine Capital.

The invasion of the Other Tribesmen at this moment was no coincidence as well.

This could also be considered as a test for the Nether Sect.

“Contact the Penglai Sect, the Fiend Temple, the Blossom Faction, and the Ten Thousand Poison Sect... Request for their assistance. Mobilize half of our troops from Jing Province, Yu Province, and Yan Province to defend Liang Province and Yi Province,” Si Wuya ordered decisively. He turned to look at Yu Zhenghai. “I’ll mobilize some brethren from the Darknet as well...”

Hua Chongyang wondered out loud, “There’s no issue with mobilizing the Nether Sect members, and Penglai Sect’s brother Huang should have no qualms in helping us as well. However, will the Fiend Temple, the Blossom Faction, and the Ten Thousand Poison Sect help us?”

“Don’t worry... These organizations have been torn between the Imperial family and the Nether Sect all this while. They have always vacillated between the two. Now that Eldest Senior Brother is extending a hand to them, they definitely won’t let this chance slip past them.”

Those who were destined to do great things would certainly be capable of enduring what others could not.

“What if they decide to defect at the last moment?”

“Against the Other Tribes, I’m sure that even the Fiend Path is righteous!”

“Alright! Let’s do it, then!” Yu Zhenghai agreed right away.

...

Three days later.

A flying chariot traveled from Liang Province to Yan Province City.

Three stretchers were carried into a courtyard.

Yu Zhenghai, Hua Chongyang, and Si Wuya received them personally.

The three of them were ghastly pale. There did not seem to be any blood in their faces. Bai Yuqing was conscious while Yang Yan and Di Qing were out cold.

Yu Zhenghai frowned. As the master of the sect, when he saw his good comrades who had fought alongside him for many years in such a state, he could not help but feel flustered and helpless.

“S-Sect Master... W-we’re useless!” Bai Yuqing struggled and failed to get up. He was too heavily wounded. He only managed to raise his shoulder before he fell back down.

Yu Zhenghai stepped forward and lightly pressed Bai Yuqing’s shoulder. He dismissed the sense of helplessness he felt. He had to be as dependable as a rock. He waved his hand and said, “You’ve done a great job, all of you.”

Such was war. There was never a battle in which no blood was shed or nobody was hurt.

“Sect master... The Roulian General, Ka... Karol has re-cultivated... to the Seven-leaf stage! With the combined attacks of witchcraft... We were no match for him! Sect master, be careful of that man!” Bai Yuqing said haltingly.

Chapter 576: Leave it to Me

Recultivated to the Seven-leaf stage?!

Yu Zhenghai, Si Wuya, and Hua Chongyang were shocked.

Bai Yuqing bit back the pain and said amidst fits of coughing, “Throughout the past six months, aside from defending... aside from defending Liang Province City, we sent some of our men to contact the Other Tribes. The Roulians worship the Wolf King... Their survival rates and cultivation speed after severing their lotuses... are peculiar. They improved very quickly.”

Yu Zhenghai rested his palm on Bai Yuqing. A weak surge of Primal Qi entered Bai Yuqing's body and stabilized his breathing. "Let them rest. Have the best doctors look after them."

"Understood!"

After his three subordinates were carried away, Yu Zhenghai frowned. Although Bai Yuqing had a hard time stringing sentences together, he understood the message.

Si Wuya said, "That's unexpected. If that's the case, this might be the best chance for the Other Tribes to invade Great Yan."

"The Roulians have always eyed Great Yan like a predator eyeing its prey. After Emperor Yong Shou ascended the throne, the Roulians have trespassed on our borders several times. Although Lou Lan is allied with Great Yan through marriage, they have the ambition of wolves. Rongbei, Rongxi, and the other ten nations might follow suit as well," Hua Chongyang said.

Si Wuya nodded. "It's still too early to worry about the alliance of the 12 nations, including Rongbei and Rongxi, but that's an inevitability that would soon happen. Once they synchronized their paces and reached an agreement of benefits, it would be the most dangerous time for Great Yan."

Yu Zhenghai cursed, "If the Imperial family isn't so useless, these wolves would never have the chance."

Hua Chongyang and Si Wuya knew that Yu Zhenghai loathed Lou Lan. He would leap at the opportunity to annihilate the nation.

"If that's the case, Island Master Huang as the sole Eight-leaf cultivator won't be enough..."

The others nodded.

The Nether Sect's strength was indeed one of the best in Great Yan. However, most of its members are now concentrated in the provincial cities around the Divine Capital as they prepared themselves for a siege. If they sent more of their forces to Liang Province, it would be increasingly difficult for them to conquer the Divine Capital. Even without the disturbances from the Other Tribes, it would still be difficult for the Nether Sect to take down the Divine Capital, let alone with half of its forces.

"Wise brother, think of something else. We can't give the Other Tribes this chance at this juncture," Yu Zhenghai said, "Don't you have moles planted among the Other Tribes as well? Are there any conflicts among them that we could use to our advantage? You're good at sowing discord..."

"..." That might be true, but it did not sound like praise. In fact, Si Wuya would have sworn that it was sarcasm. "Eldest Senior Brother... I'll need time to investigate, and more time to instigate a quarrel. However, the battle of the Divine Capital is close at hand... Unless..." He continued to say in a lowered voice, "Unless master helps us defend Liang Province."

When Si Wuya said these words, he had braced himself to be reprimanded by Yu Zhenghai. Knowing Yu Zhenghai's temper, Yu Zhenghai would probably mobilize all his troops there than let their master leave the mountain.

Even Hua Chongyang instinctively took a step backward. He knew it was best to stay out of this matter.

However, contrary to Si Wuya and Hua Chongyang's expectations, Yu Zhenghai asked, "Would master agree to it?"

Si Wuya. "???"

'This is awkward. It seems like I've spoken without thinking things through. Moreover, your recent letter has angered master. Aren't you asking for a beating if you ask master to leave the mountain now? You should be grateful that he didn't come here to give you a beating.'

"Wise brother... why aren't you saying anything?"

"..."

Hua Chongyang retreated further. He had a strong premonition that if his sect master truly intended to ask Senior Ji to descend the mountain, he would be sent to make the request.

At this moment, an indifferent but gentle voice rang from outside the hall. The voice was light and clear. "Leave it to me."

The surge of Primal Qi was smooth as well. All the signs showed that this person was an elite.

"Who's there?"

The three of them looked at the source of the voice. They saw a figure descending from the sky before sauntering into the hall from the corridor outside with his arms crossed.

The sun shone behind him. The hilt of a sword poked out from his left shoulder while the tip of the scabbard could be seen at his lower right.

Although the trip could not see the figure's face clearly, Si Wuya recognized him immediately. He smiled as he cupped his fists together and said, "Greetings, Second Senior Brother."

Upon hearing this, Hua Chongyang bowed. "Greetings, Mister Second."

Yu Zhenghai was puzzled. "Second Junior Brother?"

Yu Zhenghai greeted Yu Zhenghai calmly, "How have you been, Eldest Senior Brother?"

The duo had just seen each other a few days ago. There was no need to catch up. Yu Zhenghai said, "Second Junior Brother... I'm currently busy with my grand undertaking. I don't have the leisure to entertain you."

"I'm not here to spar with you." Yu Shangrong shook his head and sat down.

"Hm?"

"Liang Province's location is important. I don't think Huang Shijie and some third-rate sects can hold such an important place... Victory might not even come easy with you there, Eldest Senior Brother. I'm the only one who can solve this. I'm the only one who can defend Liang Province. I'm the only one who can cut down the Wolf King." An expression of absolute confidence appeared on Yu Shangrong's face when he spoke. He smiled when he saw the unnatural expression on Yu Zhenghai's face. "My apologies.

I've always been frank. If I made you uncomfortable with my words, Eldest Senior Brother, I'm willing to make up for it."

Yu Zhenghai, Si Wuya, and Hua Chongyang were speechless.

Yu Shangrong smiled when he saw the trio keeping quiet. "What do you say?"

Yu Zhenghai was about to speak, but Si Wuya beat him to it. "Second Senior Brother, it's not easy to defend Liang Province. Are you confident that you can do it?"

"It's precisely because it's difficult that I find it interesting."

"That's not the point. The point is, what do you have at your disposal?"

In other words, how was Yu Shangrong, a Six-leaf cultivator, supposed to defend Liang Province?

Yu Zhenghai shared this thought as well. He had always been at odds with Yu Shangrong. Moreover, Yu Shangrong was only at the Six-leaf stage.

"I have confidence," Yu Shangrong replied with a straight face.

"Uh... what's the source of your confidence?" Si Wuya asked.

"The sword in my hands."

Zing!

The sword flew out of its scabbard and hovered in front of Yu Shangrong as it glowed with a faint scarlet light.

Si Wuya, "... He found it exhausting to speak to Yu Shangrong. Yu Shangrong did not seem to get the point at all.

Yu Zhenghai asked, raising an eyebrow, "Second Junior Brother... you want to help me?"

"Of course not... I have two reasons. First, I've been rather bored recently and need something to kill time. Second, the Nether Sect is pincered by enemies on both ends. The battle of the Divine Capital will surely be one of life and death. If something were to happen to you, I'd no longer have an opponent. Such a life is too boring."

Yu Zhenghai's expression did not betray his thoughts. He said, "I'd be bored if something were to happen to you as well... Are you really going to Liang Province?"

"I've made up my mind." Yu Shangrong stood up and turned around calmly.

Zing!

His Longevity Sword returned to its scabbard on its own accord.

"Defending Liang Province won't be easy. On top of that, you're only a Six-leaf cultivator... Hua Chongyang, you'll go with him," Yu Zhenghai said.

Hua Chongyang bowed. "Yes, sect master."

Yu Shangrong came to a halt. He gave Hua Chongyang a sidelong glance. With a gentle smile, he appraised Hua Chongyang and said, "If you can keep up, I'll show you something incredible."

Something stirred in Hua Chongyang. When he looked up, there was a gust of wind.

Grand technique!

A lingering afterimage was left in Yu Shangrong's wake.

Hua Chongyang wasted no time and unleashed his grand technique as well to catch up to Yu Shangrong. When he rose above Yan Province City, he saw an avatar heading west. In just a blink of an eye, it vanished from his sight. He muttered to himself, "Is... Is he really a Six-leaf cultivator?"

...

Si Wuya smiled faintly. He looked at Yu Zhenghai who was walking out of the hall with his hands on his back and said nothing.

Yu Zhenghai walked into the courtyard. He looked up at the sky for a while before he looked away.

Shortly after, Hua Chongyang returned to the courtyard and fell to his knees. "I'm useless! M-Mister Second has escaped... I mean, Mister Second's cultivation base is too profound, and I couldn't keep up with him!"

Yu Zhenghai did not blame Hua Chongyang. He merely sighed. "Let him be."

"You're not mad at Second Senior Brother, are you, Eldest Senior Brother?" Si Wuya asked with a smile.

Yu Zhenghai said, "I hope that his confidence won't make him conceited."

"I believe in Second Senior Brother," Si Wuya said.

...

Two days later.

Inside the meeting hall in Yan Province City.

"Eldest Senior Brother, the Blossom Faction, the Fiend Temple, and the Ten Thousand Poison Sect have all replied. They will send all of their forces to defend Liang Province," Si Wuya said.

"The Penglai Sect hasn't replied?" Yu Zhenghai asked.

"Island Master Huang departed yesterday... I didn't know that Jiang Aijian is Island Master Huang's first disciple. He's heading to Liang Province with Li Jingyi."

When Yu Zhenghai heard this, he nodded. "Good."

"For the battle of the Divine Capital, everything will go according to plan."

"Three days from now, we'll mobilize the force of our entire sect to lay siege on the Divine Capital!"

Chapter 577: It's Time to Settle Old Scores

The eastern pavilion in the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes as he emerged from his meditative state. He had replenished half of his extraordinary power. He remembered the first Earth Scroll power he gained. Feeling curious, he recited the chant in his head.

To gain the power to hear everything so that we can hear voices in all realms at will.

Faint blue extraordinary power appeared by his ears, and he could hear the roars of the waterfall at the back of the mountain. Then, he used more extraordinary power before he heard Duanmu Sheng practicing with his spear. He added more extraordinary power again, and he could hear the mixed chirps and growls from various beasts and the sound of the wind blowing.

When he felt his extraordinary power swiftly depleting, he stopped. With this, he confirmed the range of this power was dependent on how much extraordinary power he used. The wider the range, the more extraordinary power was needed.

Lu Zhou shook his head. He felt that this power was slightly useless. What practical use did it have apart from being able to eavesdrop?

At this moment, Mingshi Yin's voice rang from outside. "Master, Seventh Junior Brother sent a letter saying that Eldest Senior Brother is preparing to siege the Divine Capital two days from now... Also, the Penglai Sect, the Ten Thousand Poison Sect, the Blossom Faction, and the Fiend Temple are heading toward Liang Province to repel the Other Tribes. Bai Yuqing, Yang Yan, and Di Qing are grievously wounded and have been sent back to Yan Province. Oh, Second Senior Brother is going to Liang Province as well."

Creak!

Lu Zhou opened the door. He placed his hands on his back and looked at Mingshi Yin who was standing at the bottom of the stairs. He said, "The Other Tribes couldn't hold themselves back anymore, it seems."

"Many Other Tribesmen in Rongxi and Rongbei believe in wild beasts. That's why they've grown more barbaric after severing their lotuses. They no longer fear death. Their cultivation speed has increased after they severed their lotuses as well. The Other Tribesmen will surely seize this opportunity while Eldest Senior Brother is occupied with attacking the Divine Capital," Mingshi Yin said.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. "I've been to the lands of the Other Tribes before. Indeed, they worship many beasts. However, I didn't expect that severing their lotuses would benefit them so much."

"They're dumb, if you ask me. If severing their lotuses is beneficial to them, they should just focus on cultivation to overtake Great Yan as a whole before they invade Great Yan. Wouldn't that be a better course of action?" Mingshi Yin said disapprovingly.

"Hm?"

Smack!

Mingshi Yin slapped himself before he said, "They're not dumb. They can see this is a great opportunity for them so they seized it. How despicable. Master... what should we do now?"

Lu Zhou was lost in thought. He stroked his beard as he descended the steps. A moment later, he looked at Mingshi Yin and said, "Old Fourth."

"Yes, master."

"Go to Liang Province."

"Huh?"

"You don't want to?" Lu Zhou frowned slightly.

Mingshi Yin hastily waved his hands and said, "It's not that I'm unwilling, I'm just surprised. Eldest Senior Brother told us to stay out of his business. I'm just worried that he'll get mad if I go over there."

"That's Liang Province, not the Divine Capital," Lu Zhou said with a sigh, "Among all of you, you're the one I'm least worried about... Your Second Senior Brother has always been proud and conceited. He's obstinate and loves to show off."

Something stirred in Mingshi Yin. He looked up and appraised the old man. The frivolous smile disappeared from his face. At this moment, he finally discovered the solemn expression on Lu Zhou's face. Lu Zhou's words and actions all revolved around his disciples. In the beginning, he thought this was some new trick of his master. However, it seemed like his master had truly changed.

Loyalty: +1%

Lu Zhou saw the change in Mingshi Yin's loyalty. He stopped in his tracks and asked, "Are you willing to go?"

Mingshi Yin fell to one knee. He cupped his fists and said, "I'm willing."

"Good." Lu Zhou looked up and called out, "Ji Liang."

Halfway up Golden Court Mountain, Ji Liang looked up and neighed joyously. It leaped into the air and flew toward the Evil Sky Pavilion's eastern pavilion. It slowly landed in the courtyard.

"Ji Liang is a wonderful steed. Ride it there."

Neigh!

Ji Liang seemed to understand Lu Zhou's words.

Mingshi Yin looked at Ji Liang excitedly. When he imagined how grand it must be to appear before the others on a legendary mount, he was beside himself with anticipation.

Alas, Ji Liang trotted up to Mingshi Yin and lowered its head to take a whiff. Then, it shook its head and neighed.

"Hey, are you rejecting me?" Mingshi Yin was speechless.

Lu Zhou did not expect Ji Liang to be so picky.

"Bi An!"

Bi An came on the clouds and landed in the courtyard.

Compared to Ji Liang, Bi An looked more ferocious. However, it was more obedient and not as picky about its riders.

Mingshi Yin smiled and said, "Bi An will do as well. Although it's ugly, it'll be able to scare others off!"

As soon as Mingshi Yin finished speaking, Bi An became clearly reluctant to carry him. After being insulted and praised in the same sentence, it retreated three steps before it lay on the ground.

"..." Mingshi Yin was speechless. He looked at his master pleadingly.

Lu Zhou shook his head. He wanted to summon Whitzard, but when he thought about his own old bones, he decided to leave a mount for himself that could provide him with a smooth ride. After mulling over it for a moment, he called out, "Ji Liang!"

Neigh!

After it shook its head, it reluctantly took a few steps forward.

Mingshi Yin nodded. "That's more like it."

Ji Liang listened to Lu Zhou's orders. "Go."

Mingshi Yin leaped onto Ji Liang's back. With a solemn tone, he said, "Don't worry, master. With me around, nothing will happen to Second Senior Brother! I swear it... on your horse..."

Neigh!

Ji Liang lifted its front hooves and flew into the sky as soon as Mingshi Yin finished speaking. In just a second, it vanished into thin air.

Perhaps, the disturbance Ji Liang caused was too big, the other disciples gathered outside the eastern pavilion as well. Soon enough, Zhao Yue, Zhu Honggong, Little Yuan'er, Conch, and Duanmu Sheng entered.

"Master, I'm willing to go to Liang Province as well."

Lu Zhou glanced at them before he said, "If you want to help, work hard on your cultivation."

His disciples were rendered speechless.

"Old Third."

"Yes, master."

"You're in charge of overseeing their progress. Everyone will be cultivating for twice the amount of time they're cultivating now."

"Yes, master!"

...

In the Evergreen Palace in the Divine Capital, the Imperial city.

Liu Gu opened his eyes. "Men."

An internal attendant walked in timidly.

Before he could kneel, Liu Gu said, "Why hasn't the Big Dipper Academy send ten leaf-sprouting pills today?"

"Y-Y-Your Majesty... The Big Dipper Academy's President Zhou said that they ran out of ingredients and are in the process of gathering them. They think it's unlikely for them to produce new leaf-sprouting pills this month," the internal attendant said fearfully.

"Hm?" Liu Gu's brows knitted together. "I treated him well. Is he harboring some ulterior motive?" The ingredients were supplied by the palace. He was no fool. He knew how many ingredients were needed to refine a certain number of leaf-sprouting pills. He said, "Bring me the Big Dipper Academy's ten elders."

"Understood."

"Also, what's the situation with the Nether Sect?" Liu Gu asked.

The internal attendant shivered as he said, "Your Majesty, the Nether Sect has gained control over the nine provinces. I'm afraid the Nether Sect will attack the Divine Capital with all their might soon."

Upon hearing this, Liu Gu rose to his feet and placed his hands on his back as he looked out the window. "It seems like I've underestimated you. Just as well... It's time to settle old scores."

Chapter 578: The Divine Capital

A tense atmosphere loomed the Imperial city. The nine provinces had fallen under the Nether Sect's control.

Many eunuchs and palace girls in the palace had fled. The internal attendant did not know where the Emperor's confidence came from. However, when he recalled the two academies had been supplying the palace with leaf-sprouting pills for the past six months, a thought appeared in his mind. 'Could it be that His Majesty has a game plan?'

The internal attendant dared not dally and left the room respectfully at once. He exited the Imperial city and made his way to the Big Dipper Academy. Then, he went to the Sky Conduct Academy to pass on Liu Gu's decree.

The academies were located near the Imperial city, after all. How could they ignore a summon from the Emperor?

...

In the afternoon.

20 elders from the Big Dipper Academy and the Sky Conduct Academy, escorted by guards, entered the Imperial city. Then, a few eunuchs led them past several places to the Evergreen Palace.

One of the eunuchs said, "Everyone here is a core member of their respective academies. I'm sure His Majesty has something important to discuss with all of you. I humbly implore that you refrain from

going against His Majesty's wishes, dear elders. These are exceptional times and circumstances. That's all I can say."

"Thank you for the reminder, Eunuch Chen."

The 20 elders followed the eunuch into the Evergreen Palace. Ten elders of the Big Dipper Academy entered from the left while ten elders from the Sky Conduct Academy entered from the right. As soon as they entered the palace, they saw Liu Gu, the Emperor, seated on the throne as though he had been waiting for them.

The 20 Elders kneeled in unison.

"All hail Your Majesty!"

Perhaps, Liu Gu had been cultivating in seclusion for a long time, he was no longer as strict about etiquette. He rose to his feet and descended the stairs. "Rise."

"Thank you, Your Majesty!"

The 20 men rose their feet.

Liu Gu walked to the other end of the two rows of elders before he turned around and walked to the other end. He stared at them intently before he nodded and lightly asked, "Do you know why I summoned you here?"

The 20 elders shook their heads.

Liu Gu said in a clear voice, "Under the vast heavens, there isn't a single cultivator who isn't fearful of the Divine Capital. This is because the entire Divine Capital is under the protection of the Ten Terminal Formation. The rebellious armies of the Fiend Path are wreaking havoc across the lands. You shoulder the responsibility of activating and keeping the Ten Terminal Formation up and running. Without all of you, the Ten Terminal Formation is meaningless. I want to guarantee your safety."

"Your Majesty... This matter should be discussed in the Imperial court. There are many elites in the Divine Capital that's defended by the Imperial guards. Under normal circumstances, there's no need for the Ten Terminal Formation to be activated," the first elder on the left said.

Liu Gu's eyes fell on the elder immediately. "You think there's no need to activate the Formation?"

"I merely believe in the Imperial guard's abilities."

"If the Imperial guards are useful, why is it that only two of the eight great generals are alive?" Liu Gu asked.

"Uh..."

Liu Gu spread his arms and said, "I've summoned you here... not to ask for your advice."

Swoosh!

The Magistrate Brush on the table shone with a red light and flew out, slashing the first elder's neck. He did not stand a chance to fight back at all.

As the dead elder fell, the expressions of the other elders changed drastically. They shuddered inwardly as they looked at their fallen comrade.

“Anyone else has any questions?” Liu Gu’s gaze shifted back and forth between the remaining 19 elders.

The Evergreen Palace was as silent as a graveyard. The atmosphere was so heavy that it was difficult to breathe.

“You’re my officials, but you’re inclined toward the rebels?” Liu Gu said coldly.

This accusation was so severe that the others were frightened until they fell to their knees.

“We dare not!”

Liu Gu looked at the kneeling elders and took several steps forward. He said, “Just because there’s a Nine-leaf cultivator in the Evil Sky Pavilion?”

The others shivered. They dared not say anything.

Liu Gu flipped his palm. There was a resonance of some unique power. A miniature avatar appeared before him. Eight shining golden leaves could be seen spinning under the avatar.

The 19 elders’ eyes widened in shock and an expression of incredulity appeared on their faces when they saw Liu Gu’s avatar. The numbers of leaves were clear despite the glaring light.

The Emperor, the master of the Imperial City and the person with the highest authority in Great Yan, had successfully recultivated to the Eight-leaf stage after severing his lotus!

What an amazing speed!

Liu Gu pulled his palm back. His avatar vanished as well. He was pleased with the intimidating effect he had. He looked at the shaking elders who were too afraid to speak and said in a gruff voice, “Soon... I’ll be at the Nine-leaf stage as well...”

The elders said in unison, “All hail Your Majesty! Long live the Emperor!”

“All Hail Your Majesty! Long live the Emperor!”

“All Hail Your Majesty! Long live the Emperor!”

They chanted thrice.

Liu Gu chuckled, sounding slightly terrifying to the ears. It... it seemed like his prolonged cultivation in seclusion had caused some changes in his personality as well.

“Men!”

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The Imperial guards gathered outside the Evergreen Palace.

Liu Gu ordered, “Take these elders away. Make sure they’re safe. They’re not allowed to leave.”

“Understood!”

...

Three days later.

The sun rose in the east. A thick mist hung over the river. When the sunlight pierced the mist, the human settlement seemed to be covered by gauze.

Outside the settlement, huge trees covered in snow extended for miles.

On a certain beaten path in the forest, rows of chariots traveled toward the Divine Capital.

Above the forest, a huge black flying chariot could be seen flying slowly. The deck of the flying chariot was full of cultivators. There were 1,000 thousand cultivators flanking the flying chariot as it advanced.

On the flying chariot, Yu Zhenghai was seated in front as he surveyed the land below.

As the sun higher, the mist receded.

Soon enough, the Divine Capital appeared before Yu Zhenghai's eyes.

At this moment, Hua Chongyang reported the Nether Sect's situation to Yu Zhenghai. "Sect master, there are 200,000 men at the western side of the Divine Capital. They're led by the branch masters Ning Jinshui, Qian Hu, Meng Jueshan, and Gong Feng. On the southern side, there are also 200,000 men led by the branch masters Ran Zhe, Lu Yun, Tian Quan, and Feng Wenzhe. On the northern side, 15,000 men are led by the branch masters Shi Haicheng, Tang Jijun, Tao Ruo, and Ke Qinghao. On the eastern side, there are 15,000 men led by you and Mister Seventh."

After listening to the report, Yu Zhenghai nodded. "Very well."

"Sect master, we're about to attack the Divine Capital. What should we do with the neutral cultivators?" Hua Chongyang asked.

There were many elite cultivators in the Divine Capital. There were crouching tigers and hidden dragons here. Talented cultivators from all over the land were gathered here. Nobody could say for sure how these neutral cultivators would choose... Who knew if they would stab the Nether Sect in the back without warning, maintain their neutral position, or fight the Divine Capital with the Nether Sect?

Yu Zhenghai said, "Tell them that they are to run for their lives. They have two hours. Anyone who remains in the Divine Capital will be treated as an enemy. Everyone in the Imperial city will also be treated as our enemies."

"Yes, sect master."

Whizz! Whizz! Whizz!

The Nether Sect members advanced majestically.

...

The Divine Capital.

On the city walls.

The soldiers defending the Divine Capital saw the horde of Nether Sect members marching toward them so they immediately sounded the horns.

As the alarms blared, clouds of smoke that indicated the presence of hostile forces rose from the city walls as well.

The cultivators inside the tea shops, taverns, and brothels in the Divine Capital stopped what they were doing when they heard the sound of the horns that were laced with Primal Qi in the distance.

The sound of the horns rolled forth in soundwaves, alerting everyone in the Divine Capital of the Nether Sect's impending arrival.

Chaos descended on the Divine Capital immediately.

Many elite cultivators disregarded the no-flying rule in the Divine Capital and flew on their swords to leave the city.

...

The Nether Sect's flying chariot hovered outside the Divine Capital's gates. It remained 1,000 meters in the air.

Everything was quiet at this moment. The area ten miles around the Divine Capital was shrouded in a rich killing intent.

The Nether Sect's flag flapped in the air.

Two hours later.

,000 meters away from the eastern gate of the Divine Capital, a Seven-leaf avatar appeared from the Nether Sect's flying chariot. The avatar that had a Seven-leaf Golden Lotus under its feet was 90 feet tall...

Boom!

Several palm seals struck the city wall.

This signaled the start of the battle of the Divine Capital.

Chapter 579: This is the Price

Meanwhile, the Nether Sect forces at the southern, northern, and western gates of the Divine Capital began their assault as well.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

In the skies above the eastern gate.

Hua Chongyang hovered in the air and studied the city walls. All of a sudden, he saw hundreds of huge projectiles shooting toward him

"Break!" Hua Chongyang summoned his avatar and made it spin. It released a strong blast of energy, repelling the projectiles.

The projectiles were instantly destroyed, and the shrapnels fell to the ground.

The Nether Sect members on the ground attacked the city swiftly.

All of a sudden, five bow-wielding cultivators flew up from the eastern city wall. They pulled on their bowstrings and shot at the Nether Sect disciples on the ground.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Every fired arrow would take out one Nether Sect disciple.

The five archers continued to fire their shots. In no time at all, they claimed the lives of dozens of Nether Sect disciples.

...

On the flying chariot, Yu Zhenghai frowned slightly when he saw this.

“Godly Archers?”

The advantages of Godly Archers in a defensive battle were greater.

Si Wuya smiled and said, “They’re sending their Godly Archers out now. Looks like the Divine Capital isn’t too well-equipped with defense mechanisms.”

“You have a point, wise brother.”

Yu Zhenghai frowned slightly as he glanced at his fallen brethren on the ground. Such was war. It was impossible for there to be no casualties. This was the price they had to pay. If he stopped now to mourn the dead instead of attacking, it would be the greatest insult to the fallen. What he needed to do now was to take down the Divine Capital... to achieve the goal everyone was working for.

“I’ll deal with them.” Si Wuya leaped out. The Peacock Plume spun out from his hand with a dazzling light.

“Plume Spreading!” When the Peacock Plume was attached to his back, Si Wuya spread his hands out. A pair of golden wings unfurled from his back at the same time. He dove down and flew past the city wall.

“Be careful, Mister Seventh!” Hua Chongyang looked up and cautioned.

“Don’t worry!”

When the five Golden Archers saw the pair of huge wings diving toward them, their eyes widened. They hastily put their bows away and descended.

“Retreat!”

Dozens of garrison soldiers covered the Godly Archers as they retreated.

Si Wuya smiled coldly. “Avatar!” His Six-leaf avatar expanded swiftly. His Peacock Plume disintegrated into energy arrows at this moment and shot at his five targets.

“Block it!”

Every energy needle was extremely sharp.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The energy needles were like golden icicles during winter. They penetrated the chests of the soldiers.

All of a sudden, a loud explosion rang in the air!

The energy needles hit the Godly Archers.

The Godly Archers stared at their bloodied chests incredulously. Soon after, they fell to the ground. Their eyes were brimming with shock as they looked at the city wall. The energy needles had cleanly pierced through their chest and were embedded on the city wall before slowly fading away into thin air.

Thud!

When they fell, they saw that their other comrades had fallen prey to the same fatal technique.

...

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 100 merit points."

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 100 merit points."

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 100 merit points."

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 100 merit points."

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 100 merit points."

"..."

Lu Zhou opened his eyes. He stopped meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls and walked out of the eastern pavilion.

He called out softly, "Hua Yuexing."

Hua Yuexing was cultivating in the western pavilion. When she heard Lu Zhou calling out to her, she stopped cultivating immediately and swiftly flew to the eastern pavilion.

"Greetings, Pavilion Master," Hua Yuexing said with a bow.

"What's your cultivation base now?"

A remorseful expression appeared on Hua Yuexing's face as she said, "I've recultivated to the Two-leaf stage."

Lu Zhou flipped his palm. The Golden Taixu Mirror materialized in his palm. There was a surge of Primal Qi before the Golden Taixu Mirror glowed. Then, he pointed it at Hua Yuexing. A projection of her avatar appeared immediately. It was just as she had said, it had two leaves.

"Not bad." Lu Zhou nodded, pleased.

"What do you mean, Pavilion Master?"

“Head to the Divine Capital. Remember to prioritize your safety,” Lu Zhou calmly said.

“Yes, Pavilion Master!” Hua Yuexing responded.

Before Hua Yuexing could leave, Hua Wudao walked into the eastern pavilion, bowed, and said, “Pavilion Master, I’m willing to go to the Divine Capital with Yuexing.”

Lu Zhou did not immediately agree to Hua Wudao’s request. Instead, he pointed the Golden Taixu Mirror at him. Hua Wudao’s avatar was revealed in the Golden Taixu Mirror: Four-leaf. After considering for a brief moment, he said, “Hua Wudao.”

“Your orders, Pavilion Master?”

“You’ll protect Hua Yuexing. Remember to prioritize your lives in the battle of the Divine Capital.”

“Yes, Pavilion Master!” Hua Wudao and Hua Yuexing bowed in unison before they turned around to descend the mountain

Lu Zhou shook his head and cursed under his breath, “Rascal.”

Soon enough, the other elders appeared outside the eastern pavilion.

Lu Zhou turned to look at the three elders and asked, “You wish to go as well?”

Zuo Yushu bowed and said, “If you need me to, big brother, I’ll go.”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “The Divine Capital has the Ten Terminal Formation. Even I am not confident I’ll be able to break it. You’ll only be rushing to your deaths if you go. Hua Yuexing is a Godly Archer, and she has the Falling Moon Bow. Outside the Divine Capital, she’ll be a great help. Hua Wudao is skilled in defense, and he can protect Hua Yuexing. If the two of them work together, they can fight against a 1,000-man army.”

The three elders nodded. They were bags of old bones. Well, they could have displayed their might if there were no Ten Terminal Formation. With the Ten Terminal Formation in place, the three of them might not even be capable of defeating young people in the Body Tempering realm inside the Divine Capital. They could not possibly linger around the perimeter of the Divine Capital with their avatars, after all. Indeed, it was rather pointless for them to go there.

At the end of the day, it all depended on the Nether Sect to conquer the Divine Capital.

At this moment, Conch and Little Yuan’er walked in while holding hands. They greeted Lu Zhou in unison, “Greetings, master.”

Lu Zhou looked at the two young girls and asked, “What is it?”

Little Yuan’er mumbled, “Master, I heard about Eldest Senior Brother from Fourth Senior Brother. I feel sorry for Eldest Senior Brother. Should I go and help him out?”

“Behave yourself.”

“I know what you mean, master. The Divine Capital has the Ten Terminal Formation... but Conch can do something about it!” Little Yuan’er turned to look at Conch. “Isn’t that right, Conch?”

Little Conch nodded. "Mhm. Master, I can ask the beasts to help!"

The three elders brightened up. Indeed, this was a great weapon.

Lu Zhou raised his hand and pointed the Golden Taixu Mirror at Conch. A miniature avatar appeared before the Golden Taixu Mirror.

"Six Recombinant Trigram Lines."

When they saw this avatar, the three elders were shocked.

"This little girl is a rare talent!"

"To think that her avatar is already at the Six Recombinant Trigram Lines... Come to think of it, the little girl's cultivation base is already in the Divine Court realm."

"She directly entered the Mystic Enlightening realm before taking five months to enter the Brahman Sea realm, and finally entering the Divine Court realm after a month! I'm starting to think she's not human," Zuo Yushu said.

Upon hearing this, Conch took two steps backward. She was slightly afraid of Zuo Yushu's gaze.

Lu Zhou remembered the red avatar. There were still great secrets regarding Conch's identity. Hence, he said, "Enough."

The others bowed.

"Since Conch is my disciple, I'll naturally protect her. From this day on, nothing about her is to be known beyond this mountain. I'll only say this once." His voice was not forceful, but it carried with it an absolute air.

The three elders bowed at the same time. "Yes, Pavilion Master."

Something stirred in Pan Litan. He could not help but cough as a thought appeared in his mind. 'Could it be... that this little girl is truly the pavilion master's daughter born out of wedlock?'

"You have a question, Elder Pan?" Lu Zhou looked at Pan Litan.

Chapter 580: One of the Eight Great Generals

Pan Litan was slightly taken aback. He hastily said, "I have no questions! I'm just shocked by this little girl's talent. If Pan Zhong is so talented, I'd die a happy man."

"Old Pan, you're too greedy. Pan Zhong is talented enough. He has mastered his Three Yin Technique and Six Yang Technique. Moreover, he has already reached the Two-leaf stage over the last six months. I'm sure he'll be able to inherit your legacy soon enough," Leng Luo said with a smile.

Pan Litan cleared his throat and asked, "Are you jealous?"

"Get lost." Leng Luo turned around coldly.

Zuo Yushu looked at Pan Litan, but her words were clearly addressed to Lu Zhou. "You're comparing her talent to Pan Zhong when I think it's better than mine?"

Pan Litian shook his head at once. "Fine, fine, fine, I've misspoken. Everyone, please accept my humble apology." He could endure the veiled insults from the two elders anymore.

At this moment, a female cultivator pushed a wooden wheelchair that carried Ye Tianxin to the eastern pavilion. Soon enough, the white-haired Ye Tianxin appeared before everyone's eyes.

"Sixth Senior Sister!"

Aside from her weak life aura, Ye Tianxin's breathing and condition were stable. When she saw Lu Zhou in front of the eastern pavilion, she rose to her feet immediately and bowed. "Greetings, master."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. He studied Ye Tianxin. Her life aura was weak, but the flow of her aura was normal. This was not something he saw every day. "What is it?"

Ye Tianxin said, "I'm willing to head to the Divine Capital and help Eldest Senior Brother..."

"Behave yourself." Lu Zhou waved his sleeve and went up the stairs. When he arrived at the entrance of the eastern pavilion, he stopped in his tracks and said, "Nobody else is allowed to go without my permission. All communication with the outside world shall be done by letters."

"Yes, master."

Lu Zhou turned around and entered the room.

...

Three days later.

Above the eastern side of the Divine Capital.

The Nether Sect's huge chariot hovered in the air.

After three days of assaults, the entire eastern wall was riddled with holes. Corpses were strewn all over the city walls. Many of them were still bleeding.

The metallic scent of blood permeated the air.

The Nether Sect disciples had occupied the city walls.

The flying chariot moved slowly.

The Nether Sect disciples followed the flying chariot as they marched on.

Yu Zhenghai who was looking down at the Divine Capital could see the overall situation of the battle.

"Wise brother, when is the Divine Capital activating the Ten Terminal Formation?"

Si Wuya was the Grand Tutor in the palace for a period of time. He studied the Ten Terminal Formation before as well. He was slightly knowledgeable about this. "There's no need to worry, Eldest Senior Brother... Even if Liu Gu activates the Ten Terminal Formation, we have nothing to fear. The Ten Terminal Formation will block all incoming Primal Qi. Everyone inside the Formation can only fight with their own physical strength and techniques. We have several hundred thousand members. We're at least on par with the Divine Capital."

“With you here, wise brother, we can hold off an entire army!” Yu Zhenghai said with a sincere smile.

At this moment, Hua Chongyang flew back toward them. He landed on the flying chariot. With a bow, he said, “Sect master, we’ve gained control of the eastern wall.”

“Very good.” Yu Zhenghai glanced at the situation below and said, “Hua Chongyang, reinforce the northern gate. Report to me at once should anything occur.”

“Yes, sect master.”

“Wait.”

“Your orders, sect master?”

“Ride my Kui Niu there...” Yu Zhenghai said.

Hua Chongyang started. He immediately fell to one knee. “How can I?!”

“You can!” Yu Zhenghai stepped forward and held Hua Chongyang’s arm. He said, “You’ve fought alongside me for many years without complaining about the hardships. That’s how we’re able to arrive here today. Now that success is only one step away, I won’t be able to rest easy if something were to happen to you!”

Hua Chongyang was greatly moved. He said, “Don’t worry, sect master!”

“Go.” Yu Zhenghai patted Hua Chongyang’s shoulder.

Yu Zhenghai unleashed a sound technique.

Behind the Nether Sect’s forces, Kui Niu rose into the air and flew toward Hua Chongyang.

Hua Chongyang leaped onto Kui Niu’s back and flew toward the northern city gate.

...

Currently, apart from a handful of bold characters, the Divine Capital was practically deserted.

The Divine Capital’s garrison soldiers were the only ones hurrying along the streets.

“The Imperial guards are moving out!”

“It’s the Imperial guards!”

“Look out!”

The Imperial guard flew out in formations from the Imperial City at a low altitude. All of them wore black armor.

It was said that 30,000 Imperial guards defended the Imperial city all year-round. These 30,000 men were the strongest force of the Imperial city. Their leaders, the eight great generals, were elites among those in the cultivation world. Although only two of the generals were left, the Imperial guards were not to be taken lightly.

At this moment, a group of them moving in a neat square formation summoned their Ten Worlds avatars as they sped toward the northern gate.

...

At the northern gate, the four branch masters of the Nether Sect hovered in the air.

“Keep at it, brothers... The city gate is falling!”

At the base of the city gates, the Nether Sect disciples attacked in an orderly fashion.

At this moment, Kui Niu’s cry reached them.

Moo!

The four branch masters looked in the direction of the sound. An expression of joy appeared on their faces. They bowed and said, “Welcome, Protector!”

Hua Chongyang stood on Kui Niu’s back. He looked at the teetering city gate and at the top of the city wall. The towering man-made wall was a manifestation of man’s greatest wisdom. “Continue with the attack.”

“Understood!”

Hua Chongyang rose higher as he looked at the south of the city. He saw several hundred cultivators speeding here with their Ten Worlds avatars. “Incoming!”

“Understood!”

At this moment, hundreds of Imperial guards flew up the city wall. They leaped off the wall and dove toward the Nether Sect disciples.

Hua Chongyang shouted coldly, “Kill!”

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

The four branch masters summoned their avatars in the air. Four Hundred Tribulations Insight avatars with Two-leaf Golden Lotuses appeared in the air.

The avatars swept through the Imperial guard, causing a shower of blood to rain down.

Half of the Imperial guard’s forces were gone.

Hua Chongyang no longer paid attention to the Imperial guard soldiers. He returned his gaze to the city. Although the Nether Sect had a huge advantage now, he did not let his guard down. After all, up until now, the elites of the Imperial guards had yet to show themselves.

Boom!

A thunderous noise rang in the air as the northern city gate opened!

The Nether Sect disciples swarmed into the Divine Capital and began killing the Imperial guards.

Hua Chongyang flew forward. Just when he was about to cross the city wall, a gray figure suddenly appeared. He cried out coldly, "I've been waiting for you!"

There was a blur of movement as the figure struck with his palm!

"The Daoist Cuts Hand Seal! Great Blitz Treasure Seal!"

Swoosh!

A shining golden palm seal sailed in the air.

Hua Chongyang's expression darkened as he blocked with his arms.

Bam!

Hua Chongyang reeled back with Kui Niu.

Kui Niu cried out as it flew backward and landed on Hua Chongyang.

Hua Chongyang grunted. He struck at the air to stabilize himself. Then, he looked at the elite who had suddenly appeared above the city wall. He released a soundwave. "Stop!"

The Nether Sect disciples at the northern gate stopped and looked up.

Hua Chongyang stood atop Kui Niu. He suppressed his boiling blood essence as he faced his opponent from a distance. "You are?"

"One of the eight great generals of the Imperial guards, Xuan Jingyun."

"Oh, it's Senior Xuan, a Daoist elite. Your reputation precedes you."

"I didn't expect you to only be superficially wounded after taking a hit from me." Xuan Jingyun hovered in the air with his hands on his back. He looked at the Nether Sect disciples on the ground.

"Senior Xuan... The Divine Capital's time is up, why must you go against the will of the heavens? My sect master is meting out justice on behalf of the heavens. He wishes to remedy the evils and help the people. If you're willing to surrender, you'll enjoy endless glory!" Hua Chongyang said.

"I'm sorry. I have that already."

Whizz!

An Eight-leaf avatar towered in the air.

The Nether Sect members dared not advance.

"By decree of the Emperor, everyone from the Nether Sect is to be killed without exception!"

There was a flurry of movements as Xuan Jingyun flew toward Hua Chongyang. He launched another huge palm seal!

"No!" Hua Chongyang did not expect this Eight-leaf elite to be in such a hurry to fight. He immediately launched dozens of palm seals in retaliation. However, the difference between the Eight-leaf and Seven-

leaf stage were too huge. His palm seals merely managed to slow down the incoming attack. It was not long before he was overwhelmed by Xuan Jingyun's palm seal.

Swoosh!

"Fall back! Fall back!"

The Nether Sect disciples retreated from the city gate.

Bam!

Hua Chongyang reeled from the Eight-leaf elite's attack.

With his hands on his back, Xuan Jingyun sped forward. "The Nether Sect's Four Great Protectors? Is that all you've got?" He dove forward slightly. A hint of killing intent glinted in his eyes as he flipped his palm. "I'll be taking your life!"

Whoosh!

Xuan Jingyun disappeared into thin air! In the next second, he appeared next to Hua Chongyang and struck with his palm!

"First Seat!"

"First Seat!"

The Azure Dragon Hall's Hua Chongyang was in trouble!

When the four branch masters saw this, they summoned their avatars at the same time. They shot toward Xuan Jingyun like fired arrows.

Bam!

Xuan Jingyun sent Hua Chongyang flying with a single palm strike. He looked at the four branch masters coldly. "You overestimate your own strength!"