

Disciples 601

Chapter 601: Cut Them Down

Around noon. At Dazheng Palace.

Hua Chongyang explained the situation in the Divine Capital to the Big Dipper Academy.

Dazheng palace was quiet.

Lu Zhou asked, "Zhou Youcai, any bright ideas?"

Zhou Youcai bowed and said, "The Other Tribesmen spies causing trouble in the Divine Capital is, indeed, a difficult problem. Previously, anyone entering the Divine Capital will be subjected to examinations. The recent coup gave them an opportunity to enter the capital. If we want to solve this, we can only search every household by mobilizing every resource and drag them out from their hiding places."

Hua Chongyang said, "Although that's possible, it's too slow... The Other Tribesmen spies declared that they would kill five civilians every day. I'm afraid this method will take at least three to five days with the size of the Divine Capital."

Zhou Youcai nodded. "Or... we can drive them out of the city and guard the four gates. Everyone will be questioned to verify their identities when they enter the city."

"That won't do. It's extremely complicated to verify their identities. This needs the cooperation from the court officials... Now that the Nether Sect has taken over the Divine Capital, they're doing all they can to keep their distance from us," Hua Chongyang said.

Upon hearing this, Duanmu Sheng struck the floor with his Overlord Spear and cursed, "Those good-for-nothings from the Imperial court. What are we keeping them around for if they're not doing anything? Let me end them with my spear right now!"

"It's easy to kill but difficult to make them submit." Hua Chongyang shook his head and sighed.

"We'll leave their submission for another day."

Lu Zhou looked at Zhou Youcai and said, "Zhou Youcai."

"Yes, Senior Ji?"

"Do you have anyone from your academy to activate the Ten Terminal Formation?"

When he heard this, Zhou Youcai said confidently, "Only Divine Court realm cultivators are needed to guide the Ten Terminal Formation. That can easily be done."

"Activate nine of them and keep everyone inside the city. Is that possible?" Lu Zhou asked.

"Naturally," Zhou Youcai replied.

"Good." Lu Zhou stood up. "Hua Chongyang, how many Nether Sect members are there in the Divine Capital?"

"We have 8,000 members here. They're evenly divided between the four directions," Hua Chongyang replied.

"What about the imperial guards?"

"The imperial guards can mobilize 6,000 men."

Compared to the defenses of the Divine Capital before this, it was indeed much weaker now. It was no wonder the Other Tribesmen were so arrogant.

Lu Zhou's mind began to turn. Although they were, collectively, weaker, the Ten Terminal Formation could last for two hours. With the help of his disciples, it should not be a problem for them to clear these rats out.

Lu Zhou said coldly, "We'll flush the spies out this afternoon. Make preparations."

"Understood!"

The others bowed.

Lu Zhou called out, "Hua Chongyang."

"Your orders, Senior Ji?"

Lu Zhou suddenly raised a palm. A Critical Heal Card appeared in his palm. He clenched his fist, invoking the card's power. He pushed his hand forward, and a Buddhist Merciful Ark of Salvation descended on Hua Chongyang like a ray of light.

Hua Chongyang immediately felt warm inside. His internal injuries were being swiftly healed. He was delighted. He did not waste time and fell to his knees and expressed his gratitude. "Thank you, Senior Ji!"

"Get to work."

...

In the afternoon.

The people inside the Divine Capital were anxious.

"I say we move out. The sooner the better. The Nether Sect is from the Fiend Path, after all. They wouldn't care about the lives of common folks."

Someone sighed. "When the Nether Sect attacked Yan Province, they did all they could to protect the people. How could they change after they've conquered the empire?"

"That's what they mean by a leopard can't change its spots overnight. I bet that the city will be empty in a few days. Are we going to stay here and become livestock for the Other Tribes to slaughter?"

Similar conversations could be heard everywhere in the Divine Capital. Everyone wondered if the Evil Sky Pavilion would do something or release the Deep-eye Tribesman, Lu Li.

The cultivators shook their heads helplessly.

“Although the Nether Sect is powerful, the Other Tribes are still running rampant. If they aren’t dealt with, it’ll only lead to chaos. When that time comes... we’ll all be subjugated.”

Was that not the objective of the Other Tribes?

The people were still caught in a heated discussion when someone pointed at the Imperial city.

“He’s out! The Evil Sky Pavilion’s Patriarch has come out!”

“He’s out?”

“Let’s go have a look!”

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At this moment, many cultivators and civilians were gathered in front of the Imperial city. More and more cultivators flew toward them from a distance. Without the Imperial guards, the flying restriction in the Divine Capital was no longer in effect.

Lu Zhou stood on the city wall with his hands on his back as he looked down at the others.

Duanmu Sheng, Ye Tianxin, Zhao Yue, Zhu Honggong, Little Yuan’er, and Conch stood behind him.

Lu Zhou spotted a few spies among the people, but he was not in a hurry. When he was satisfied with the size of the crowd, he waved his hand.

With this signal, Hua Chongyang stepped forward. He released a soundwave as she said, “Spies are wreaking havoc inside the Divine Capital. They go against moral conduct and rob innocent lives. The merciful Senior Ji is giving you a chance to surrender yourselves now. Anyone who does so will be left with an intact corpse.”

Some of the civilians knelt and kowtowed as they said, “Please do something, patriarch!”

“Please do something, patriarch!”

Hua Chongyang scanned the faces of the cultivators hovering in the air. “At a time like this... I hope we can all set aside our differences for once and purge the city of spies.”

One of the cultivators hovering in the distance said, “Easy for you to say... Those spies are among us, how are we going to tell them apart? I want to kill them more than you do!”

Spies were not allowed to live under Great Yan’s skies. Moreover, they had treated the lives of others like hay.

“Senior Ji... We’ve always been fearful and respectful of the Evil Sky Pavilion. We have always admired you. We fully support you and agree with your decision to take out the spies”

A voice came from below. “Senior Ji, please think about the bigger picture. Release the five spies and ensure our safety. We can flush the spies out slowly!”

Lu Zhou looked down at the person. He was a Deep-eye Tribesman. He did not rush to action. The others did not know that he was a Deep-eye Tribesman so it was not appropriate for him to act now.

At this moment, an academy disciple flew over. He bowed and said, "Senior Ji, the preparations are complete."

Lu Zhou looked at the cultivators before him and calmly said, "I've given you a chance... Activate the Formation."

The academy disciple shouted, "Activate the Formation!" His voice resounded through the Imperial City.

The expressions of the spies from Roulians, the Deep-eye Tribesmen, and Lou Lan grew fiercer.

Whizz! Whizz! Whizz!

The sound of thrumming energy resonated through the entire city.

Soon enough, a curtain-like barrier appeared in the sky! The four city gates in the Divine Capital and the city walls were instantly covered by the barrier as well.

The civilians and cultivators inside the Divine Capital who knew nothing about this came out and looked up at the skies in confusion.

At the peak of the imperial city, Zhou Youcai led ten Big Dipper Academy disciples to complete the Ten Terminal Formation.

Lu Zhou ordered, "Bring Lu Li and the others here."

"Understood!"

Shortly after, Lu Li and his four companions were brought before the imperial city and placed near the civilians.

Lu Zhou said indifferently, "I hate being threatened the most. Cut them down!"

The executioner did not hesitate and brought his blade down.

The heads were lopped off, and they rolled toward the people.

The civilians and cultivators widened their eyes.

"Senior Ji... You... Won't you anger the spies? What... what should the people do?"

"Isn't this... too rash?" someone muttered.

Lu Zhou said in a clear voice, "The Other Tribesmen spies have caused trouble and trampled on the lives of the people. How can I boost their morale by diminishing my courage?" When he saw the people keeping quiet, he added, "If I let them live, how am I supposed to face the people who died?"

He was right! The spies were acting too arrogant!

Lu Zhou knew that even without the meager reward of merit points, he had to cut the spies down in front of the people. If he did not do this, how was he supposed to intimidate the Other Tribes?

Chapter 602: The World Shines Upon All Life as the Nine Provinces Tremble (Part One)

Nobody expected the Evil Sky Pavilion Patriarch to go against the spies who were hiding among the citizens.

The spies, the citizens, and the cultivators hovering in the air looked at Lu Zhou who was in the Imperial city. They were staring at the greatest villain who could turn the world upside down with a single command to his disciples. They suddenly remembered that he was a villain. To think that the childish spies would threaten a villain with the lives of ordinary people. Was that not the greatest joke under the heavens?

Some of them had bloodshot eyes, some were afraid, and some were worried.

The executioner continued bringing his blade down; killing the final two spies they caught in the palace. Their heads rolled on the ground, leaving trails of blood in their wake. The blood resembled a winding stream and creeping vines at the same time. They were terrifying to look at.

At this moment, many of the spies were thinking about how they were going to go wild as they sought revenge tonight. They would no longer only kill five civilians a day. They would turn the Divine Capital into hell by making the civilians of this city pay the price.

Indeed, the Evil Sky Pavilion was very powerful. It was so powerful that nobody dared to go against it. However, it did not mean they could not hide from it.

If the Evil Sky Pavilion had the guts, they should just kill everyone in the city. That way, they would not miss a single spy even if it would be at the expense of the people's lives. Would the old villain dare to do this? Did the Nether Sect not famously plead on behalf of Yan Province's people before? The Fiend Path could never be righteous! The plans of revenge in their minds would be the civilians' nightmares.

The civilians present retreated slightly out of nervousness and fear. Some of them could not withstand the sight of the decapitated heads and turned around to vomit.

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At the peak of the imperial city.

Having received the approval, Zhou Youcai said in a clear voice, "I'm the president of the Big Dipper Academy, the guide for the Divine Capital's Ten Terminal Formation... I know you're all wary of the Evil Sky Pavilion, and you must be curious why I'm aligning myself with the Evil Sky Pavilion... When the king treats his servant with respect, the servant will repay the king with loyalty... Yet, since the Emperor ascended the throne, he never once appeared in court or governed the empire. The Big Dipper Academy hereby lists out his ten sins!"

Many Big Dipper Academy disciples appeared outside the city gates, handing out lists of the Emperor's crimes. Some of the lists were pinned on notice boards.

"First, he's a muddle-headed tyrant. Second, he killed the innocent. Third, he was unfilial. Fourth, he was planning a rebellion. Fifth, he was unjust. Sixth, he was immoral. Seventh, he killed the loyal. Eighth, his research about the Golden Lotus brutally oppressed cultivators. Ninth, he deceived the monarch. Tenth, he killed the monarch. (The details of his crimes are listed below. 10,000 words are omitted)."

After the lists of charges were distributed, those who could read had difficulty believing their eyes. All of them began to discuss among themselves.

“A fake emperor? He was a fake emperor? An impostor? How... how’s that possible?”

The letter of charges emphasized the crimes of killing and deceiving a monarch. This announcement was as shocking as a clap of thunder.

There had been many similar rumors about Liu Gu before these charges were leveled against him. Now that they were announced Imperial city, the charges, naturally, gained credibility. Moreover, it was announced by the Big Dipper Academy.

When a certain person was suspected by many, irrefutable truths no longer mattered! Nobody could stop the mouths of the masses. The people discussed heatedly among themselves.

A moment later, someone said loudly, “Senior Ji... although I must admit that it felt great to see you kill those five spies, how are you going to ensure our safety? Are you really going to sit back and do nothing?”

“How will you flush the spies out? Are you going to interrogate everyone?”

Another person said, “The only thing I’m sure about now is that they will go on a revenge spree. I implore the Imperial city to deactivate the Ten Terminal Formation and let us go!”

The people were too afraid to stay in the Divine Capital.

“We must leave the Divine Capital quickly!”

Some of them had been hoping that the Evil Sky Pavilion would do something about this. They were clearly shaken now.

“Are you sure that they won’t go after you once you leave the Divine Capital? It’d be easier to kill you outside. Where are you going to run to? Are you going to hope that the cultivators follow you around and protect you?”

Upon hearing these words, the civilians grew even more afraid. Before this, the human city was where they settled down and got on with their lives. It was their refuge. However, it seemed now like there was no place for them?

Bang!

Duanmu Sheng flew down and struck the ground with his Overlord Spear. “Calm down!” He looked valiant, and his gaze was sharp.

The crowd in front of him took several steps back.

At this moment, only nine layers of the Ten Terminal Formation were activated. The final unactivated layer meant that some Primal Qi could still surge in, allowing the cultivators in the Divine Capital access to a little Primal Qi.

“My master has already said he will flush all the rats out today!”

“Dear sir, how will your master do that? Are you going to point at a random person and declare that he’s a spy?”

The people continued to discuss among themselves.

At this moment, Lu Zhou flipped his hand, and the Golden Taixu Mirror appeared.

The mirror buzzed.

He turned the mirror out, and it shone like a torch. The beam of light fell on the person who was mocking Duanmu Sheng. In just a moment, a wolf king avatar appeared before everyone else.

“A wolf king avatar! He’s a Roulian!”

“What did I see? Good heavens, he’s a Roulian spy!”

The crowd backed away as they looked at the wolf king avatar in shock.

When the Big Dipper Academy’s President, Zhou Youcai, saw the mirror, he exclaimed in shock, “The Golden Taixu Mirror?”

The Golden Taixu Mirror could reveal a person’s identity and cultivation base. This was a treasure of the Taixu Academy.

The others were still in shock when Duanmu Sheng raised his Overlord Spear and shouted angrily, “Die!” He brandished his Overlord Spear, and thousands of spear shadows shot toward the Roulian spy’s face.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The spy’s expression was one of shock. He was at a complete loss, flustered that his identity had been revealed. He wanted to activate his protective energy, but he discovered only a piteous amount of Primal Qi could be found in the Nine Terminal Formation.

Duanmu Sheng’s attacks were extremely fierce and domineering. He did not allow his opponent an opportunity to rest. “Imperfect Divine Intervention!” He suddenly leaped into the air and brought his Overlord Spear down.

When the four Evil Sky Pavilion elders saw this, they suddenly recalled a scene they saw on Golden Court Mountain’s training grounds. At that time, Duanmu Sheng’s skills had not matured yet. It was flashy but held no substance. However, at this moment, his technique was polished and refined. When the spear shadows bore down on his opponent, a shining golden energy appeared at the tip of the spear.

Bam!

The Roulian was hit by the Overlord Spear, and his feet sank into the ground.

The Overlord Spear did not relent. It continued to press down!

Bam!

The spy was on his knees now. The stone slabs on the ground cracked!

Just like that, the battle ended!

Duanmu Sheng withdrew his Overlord Spear.

“That was amazing, Third Senior Brother!”

“Your spear techniques are getting more and more domineering, Third Senior Brother!”

After enjoying the praises, Duanmu Sheng stepped forward proudly and ignored the others.

The kneeling Roulian’s eyes were filled with fear as he faced the peak of the Imperial city.

“My master has said... that the rats will be flushed out today!”

Those who saw the Golden Taixu Mirror in Lu Zhou’s hands understood its use after witnessing the scene earlier.

Realization finally dawned on the civilians, and they quickly prostrated themselves.

“Please do something, Evil Sky Pavilion!”

“Please do something, Evil Sky Pavilion!”

As the people shouted, the Other Tribesmen spies among the crowd grew fearful. They looked at the curtain-like barrier in the sky. Two hours... They had to survive these two hours. The Divine Capital was huge; there would surely be places for them to hide.

At this moment, Lu Zhou said in a clear voice, “Cultivators can’t hide in front of the golden mirror... Since I’m in charge of the Divine Capital, how can I allow spies to harm the people?” The Five-leaf Lu Zhou circulated his Primal Qi and projected his voice.

Hundreds of civilians fell to their knees and thanked him.

“Thank you, patriarch!”

“Thank you, patriarch!”

“Ding! Received sincere kowtows from 350 individuals. Reward: 3,500 merit points.”

Zhou Youcai immediately bowed and said, “Senior Ji, I didn’t know the golden mirror is in your possession. Since that’s the case, we shouldn’t put this off any longer. Let’s look for the spies as quickly as possible!”

Pan Litian said, “I’m afraid that it’s slightly difficult to locate every single one of the spies in two hours!”

However, they had no choice but to flush all of them out. Otherwise, the spies would definitely go on a revenge spree.

Lu Zhou nodded and stroked his beard as he glanced at the curtain-like barrier in the sky.

Zhou Youcai looked at the crowd and said, “The Other Tribes are causing trouble. Great Yan cultivators should work together to rid the city of the enemy!” He knew that some cultivators would still view the Evil Sky Pavilion in a biased light no matter what.

Duanmu Sheng gripped his Overlord Spear tightly. He stepped forward. “Master, let’s begin.”

The four Evil Sky Pavilion elders leaped down as well.

Lu Zhou replied calmly, "Sure."

Under everyone's watchful eyes, Lu Zhou pushed away lightly from the ground and flew up.

Chapter 603: The World Shines Upon All Life as the Nine Provinces Tremble (Part Two)

Lu Zhou put the golden mirror away and flew forward.

"Pavilion Master?" The four Evil Sky Pavilion elders did not understand what Lu Zhou was doing.

"Master?" Lu Zhou's disciples were similarly confused. Were they not supposed to shine the Golden Taixu Mirror on the people inside the city to expose and catch all the spies? Why did their master suddenly put the Golden Taixu Mirror away?

The cultivators flew behind Lu Zhou.

The four elders followed suit as well.

Shortly after, Lu Zhou was at the center of the Divine Capital. He stopped and looked up at the curtain-like barrier in the sky.

"What's the pavilion master trying to do?"

"No idea..."

"We can't afford to wait any longer. Time waits for no man."

If Lu Zhou did not use the golden mirror, the others would have no way of telling the Other Tribesmen apart from the citizens.

The others could only look at each other as they waited.

The others were still confused when Lu Zhou suddenly shot up to the curtain-like barrier in the sky. When he was halfway up, he aimed his palm skyward as the golden mirror materialized in his hand. A dazzling light shone from between his fingers at once.

The civilians and cultivators who witnessed this retreated immediately.

As Lu Zhou rose higher and higher, the area the light from the golden mirror shone on grew wider and wider, spreading into the surroundings.

In just an instant, many wolf king avatars appeared. Apart from that, there were also leopard king avatars and golden snake avatars. Just like these, the Other Tribesmen's various avatars were exposed under the golden mirror's light.

Realization dawned on Zhou Youcai immediately. He hurriedly ordered, "Academy disciples, heed my order! Take down the spies!"

The academy disciples at the peak of the Imperial city sprang into action.

The Great Yan cultivators looked to their sides. They suddenly realized that the people next to them whom they got along with were Other Tribesmen. They instantly paled from the shock. Then, they raised their blades and cut them down!

At this moment, the Four Elders and disciples finally understood Lu Zhou's intention. They did hesitate and leaped into action.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou was still flying upward. When his figure was the size of a person's palm, a loud bang rang from the curtain-like barrier in the sky. Then, a light circle rippled out into the surroundings.

Lu Zhou had slammed the golden mirror against the curtain-like barrier in the sky. The barrier's power gathered, and the golden mirror now shone with a blue light that instantly illuminated the entire Divine Capital.

The heavens lie above the earth; the sun and moon shone on the world since time immemorial.

When the golden mirror was activated, it shone on all lives inside the Divine Capital.

"Impossible!"

"Good heavens! There are so many spies!"

"Kill them! F*ck! You! Kill those who trespass on Great Yan's lands!"

"Kill!"

The Great Yan cultivators were stunned by what they were seeing. They drew their blades and swung them at the Other Tribesmen spies.

For a time, blood rained down everywhere, and the scent of death hung in the air. There was no organized movement, no discipline, and no plan. They killed the spies, running on basic instincts.

The spies' faces were ashen.

Whizz!

A unique energy resonance resounded across the Divine Capital.

Lu Zhou released his grip. He hovered in the air and looked down.

The golden mirror was like another sun. It absorbed the power from the curtain-like barrier in the sky and shone on the city.

Meanwhile, the civilians in the city prostrated themselves and continued to kowtow at Lu Zhou.

"Ding! Received sincere kowtows from 105 individuals. Reward: 1,050 merit points."

"Ding! Received sincere kowtows from 203 individuals. Reward: 2,030 merit points."

"Ding! Received sincere kowtows from 390 individuals. Reward: 3,900 merit points."

The series of notifications surprised Lu Zhou. He honestly did not expect to receive so many points from this issue. If he was trying to obtain points from this, he would not have let the others deal with the five spies.

The golden mirror's light shone on every mortal and cultivator in the Divine Capital. There was no exception. Their true forms were exposed.

The avatars revealed by the golden mirror were miniature size, not true-to-size.

Meanwhile, the avatars of varying sizes summoned by cultivators unleashed huge blasts of energy.

For a time, the entire Divine Capital was in chaos.

The Other Tribesmen spies bared their fangs and pounced on anyone in their vicinity.

When Zuo Yushu saw this, she summoned her avatar and stabbed her Coiling Dragon Staff into the ground. Densely packed scripts and runes shot out in all directions from the staff.

At the same time, the Golden Gourd Bottle flew along the streets of the city. It struck every Other Tribesman it encountered.

Leng Luo was not as flashy as the others. He moved swiftly among the people. Every time he moved, he would take down an Other Tribesman.

Lu Zhou shook his head helplessly. His disciples were too young, after all. They were not as decisive and experienced as the four elders.

The Other Tribesmen running about the city in an attempt to counterattack were walking merit points.

Duanmu Sheng and Little Yuan'er were faster than the other disciples. They would swoop down from the air and take out the Other Tribesmen.

Conch did not know how to kill so she remained on the peak of the Imperial city.

"Prioritize protecting the civilians! Two hours are enough for us!" Zhou Youcai said.

Lu Zhou looked at the people moving on the streets. He felt helpless. Their worship of him was forced to stop. Many of them had chosen to save their own lives.

As the golden mirror shone on the Divine Capital, the Other Tribesmen and Great Yan cultivators fought fiercely.

Lu Zhou saw wolf king avatars and leopard king avatars clustered in groups. He was slightly surprised at their numbers. He continued to look down at the Divine Capital, observing the situation as far as his eyes allowed him to.

There were no grand cultivators among the spies. Most of them were in the Divine Court realm and the Brahman Sea realm. They were not worthy of him personally making a move.

The blue light was capable of penetrating the buildings. It was unfortunate for the Other Tribesmen spies who thought they could avoid being exposed by hiding in the buildings. The avatars were indiscriminately exposed.

Lu Zhou looked up at the Golden Taixu Mirror and mumbled, "I knew it."

Lu Zhou observed the situation for a while longer. His disciples' performances were worthy of praise.

Zhu Honggong was the only one who seemed slightly dumb. He had a cultivation base close to a Three-leaf cultivator, but he was still sneaking up on Divine Court realm cultivators from the Other Tribes. He was slightly concerned by this.

Bam!

Zhu Honggong knocked one of them down with a punch. He guffawed. "Brat, you're far too green to play hide and seek with your grandfather. Your avatar's aura is too dense!"

After killing one of them, Zhu Honggong saw a female wolf king avatar trying to hide. He chuckled as he rushed over.

At this moment, an Eight-leaf avatar flew in the sky. Its presence was rather domineering. A white-clad Ye Tianxin launched a palm strike, and the female wolf king avatar was instantly destroyed.

When Zhu Honggong looked up, Ye Tianxin was already gone. He complained loudly, "Sixth Senior Sister, don't steal my kill!"

Ye Tianxin replied, "Eighth Junior Brother, are you blaming me for your slow speed?"

"I would never..." Zhu Honggong turned around and continued to seek a new target. He grinned and knocked his fists together.

At this moment, a cultivator came running toward him from behind. He shouted, "M-mister Eighth?"

"You're calling me?"

"T-there's an Other Tribesman! S-s-save me..."

"Don't worry, I'm here. I'll protect you!" Zhu Honggong waved his fists.

"... There. A One-leaf wolf king avatar! Hurry!" The cultivator pointed at one of the corners. When he turned around again, he was stunned. "M-mister Eighth? Where did he go?"

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Lu Zhou no longer paid attention to the battles around him. He shifted his eyes to Conch who was at the peak of the Imperial city scene.

'Red lotus?' Lu Zhou saw Conch's vivid red lotus under the golden mirror's light. The red lotus avatar had the appearance of a peak Ten Worlds avatar.

Lu Zhou lowered his altitude and flew toward the peak of the Imperial city. He approached Conch swiftly. "Give me your hand."

"Oh." Conch looked at her master and said timidly, "Master, why is my avatar red while everyone else's is golden?"

Lu Zhou gave her a contemplative look. He did not know how he was supposed to answer her. It was just like he had guessed; perhaps, Conch was in the process of awakening. In the end, he only said, "Leave your questions for later. Before you have the strength to protect yourself, you must not summon your avatar, understand?"

“Oh.”

“I’ll help you hide it.” Lu Zhou placed his large hand on Conch’s small hand and gripped it lightly.

A blue light swirled around Conch immediately. The red lotus was easily concealed by the Heavenly Writing’s extraordinary power.

Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction.

The cultivators in the world could conjure up Primal Qi and produce unique powers through their cultivation. However, his extraordinary power seemed to exceed the power of Primal Qi.

After Lu Zhou suppressed Conch’s red lotus avatar, a gruff voice from the entrance of the steps leading to the imperial city’s peak. “You’re only a Five-leaf cultivator...” The speaker was clearly shocked.

Lu Zhou and Conch looked over. A masked and black-clad cultivator sauntered over. His eyes were brimming with shock and confusion.

Conch turned to look at the miniature avatar behind her master. She said, “Master, you’re really a Five-leaf cultivator.”

Lu Zhou glanced out of the corners of his eyes. He sighed helplessly. He had been careless, and as a result, exposed himself. The golden mirror would reveal everything, after all. He turned back to look at the black-clad cultivator and his Six-leaf Golden Lotus. He was clearly a cultivator from Great Yan.

Chapter 604: It’s Not About the Number of Leaves

Lu Zhou was slightly surprised to see a Great Yan cultivator at the peak of the Imperial city. Although the cultivator was masked and dressed in all black to hide his identity, he was completely exposed under Lu Zhou’s gaze.

Name: Wei Zhuoran

Identity: Great Yan Human

Realm: Nascent Divinity

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Under the golden mirror’s light, Wei Zhuoran’s Six-leaf avatar was exceptionally bright and dazzling. It seemed like he had been working hard all this time to raise his cultivation base to the Six-leaf stage. Moreover, the once stiff and awkward Wei Zhuoran now held the air of someone in high office.

Conch retreated slightly.

Lu Zhou stood before her and said, “There’s no need to be afraid.”

Wei Zhuoyan regarded Lu Zhou with a complicated gaze. He looked at Lu Zhou intently as he said, “Although I don’t know how you fooled the others, the golden mirror has shown me the truth.”

“Truth?” Lu Zhou said apathetically, “What do you think is the truth?”

Wei Zhuoyan glanced at the chaotic city out of the corners of his eyes. The spies were being singled out and executed on the spot. However, these spies had nothing to do with him. He smiled and said, "There is a guardian deity in Xiufan Temple. Neither doves nor birds can enter or nest there. Bodhidharma said, 'I have seen the truth. Regardless of the time, there's only one truth.'"

"Eloquently spoken," Lu Zhou said as he stroked his beard, "However, how can you be certain that what you see is the truth?"

Wei Zhuoran pointed at his own head, eyes, and the skies before he said, "Some are smart while some are stupid. Some are born to be enslaved... just like them..." He pointed at the civilians in the city and the cultivators who were trying their best to take down the spies. Then, he stepped forward and continued to say, "Some are born with the tendency to deceive. They will act as though they're knowledgeable, as though they have everything under their control, and spout nonsense to trick those who don't know any better..."

Clearly, in Wei Zhuoran's eyes, the old man and young girl before him were prey to be hunted.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and called out indifferently, "Wei Zhuoran."

"Hm?" Wei Zhuoran's eyes widened in shock. He instinctively took a step back as he looked at Lu Zhou. 'How did he recognize me?'

"Do you think your wings are strong now? I put you in that position to replace Wei Zhuoyan. You should be thanking me..."

Wei Zhuoran calmed down and said, "That was a different time! Senior Ji, since you discovered my identity, don't blame me for this!"

Wei Zuoran looked down at the city; he knew he did not have much time. With swift movements, he charged toward Lu Zhou. He extended his hands and turned them before pushing his palms out. He was certain his palm strike would heavily injure Lu Zhou, if not kill him.

Like a Buddha, Lu Zhou raised his hand and pushed a palm forward. A golden palm seal with a tint of blue from the extraordinary power flew out.

Bam!

Wei Zhuoran was too close. There was no time for him to dodge. The palm seal that was as tall as an adult man sent him flying. The black cloth around his face was torn, revealing his nose and forehead that seemed concave.

Boom!

Wei Zhuoran crashed into a tower at the peak of the Imperial city. Cracks spread along the tower, threatening to fall.

"If I can save your life, I can take it from you as well!" Lu Zhou stepped forward with his hands on his back.

Wei Zhuoyan widened his eyes in shock and confusion. His speech was impeded from fear. “N-no, no, no...” He pressed a hand against his wound and prepared to summon his avatar to flee when he felt a strong force pulling him back.

The Fiend Monk’s Hand Seal!

Wei Zhuoran was firmly held in its grasp and was forcibly pulled back. His heart sank. Impossible. He could believe this.

Alas, nothing in this world was impossible.

‘Against me, anyone below the Eight-leaf stage is the same to me. Even those who are more powerful can still be dealt with by a palm strike or two.’

Lu Zhou looked at Wei Zhuoran and asked, “Who are you working for?”

Wei Zhuoran’s eyes widened, but he remained silent.

Lu Zhou pulled Wei Zhuoran toward him and tossed him on the ground.

Wei Zhuoyan released a breath and said, “Is your Five-leaf stage fake?” After that, his head lolled to the side, and he breathed his last breath.

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

Lu Zhou noticed even in death, Wei Zhuoran’s eyes were widened in shock and the fearful expression on his face did not disappear.

The Fiend Monk’s Hand Seal had not closed yet. The palm strike before this should not be fatal for him. Why did Wei Zhuoran suddenly die? Did he die from shock?

Meanwhile, Ye Tianxin continued to move swiftly. Her flowing white robes fluttered under the golden mirror’s light. The Eight-leaf Golden Lotus avatar beside her made for an awe-inspiring sight.

“Eight-leaf!”

“The Evil Sky Pavilion’s Miss Sixth!”

As Ye Tianxin moved toward her master, the cultivator finally noticed that the white-clad woman with white hair who looked like a goddess was an Eight-leaf cultivator!

“How many Eight-leaf cultivators are there in the Evil Sky Pavilion?”

“With this... that makes it three, I think.”

For most sects, Eight-leaf cultivators would be the undisputed candidate for the position of a sect master. Some sects did not even have Seven-leaf cultivators, let alone Eight-leaf cultivators. And yet, the Evil Sky Pavilion had three Eight-leaf cultivators! What kind of monstrous strength was this?

Ye Tianxin ignored the shocked cries in the surroundings as she quickly flew to the peak of the Imperial city.

Lu Zhou noticed that Ye Tianxin was sweating. Clearly, she was not at the stage where she could handle intense battles with ease yet.

After Ye Tianxin landed at the peak of the Imperial city, she bowed and said, "Master."

"Sixth Senior Sister!" Conch ran up to Ye Tianxin.

"Protect Conch," Lu Zhou said.

"Yes, master." Ye Tianxin walked to Conch's side.

Lu Zhou glanced at the golden mirror. Then, he observed the situation in the Divine Capital.

Due to the absence of powerful enemies, the entire process was rather smooth. There was not as much bloodshed compared to when the Nether Sect was attacking the city.

Every spy was exposed and captured.

Although the Divine Capital was huge, with so many Nascent Divinity realm elites thoroughly searching the capital, it would not take long to find all the spies.

In the sky, the Golden Taixu Mirror was still absorbing the power from the curtain-like barrier in the sky.

At this moment, Lu Zhou saw a huge northern goshawk circling above it. "Hm?"

Usually, wild beasts would not easily approach human settlements.

Some cultivators had observed that wild beasts that mutated without absorbing Primal Qi would not easily approach human settlements. They seem to have a natural inclination to avoid places with a high human population. Naturally, this did not mean the wild beasts would not attack humans. On the contrary, some weaker villages or cities were frequently attacked by wild beasts. However, humans began cultivating and grew stronger. In addition to the protection of barriers, it deterred the wild beasts even more.

Strangely, this northern goshawk was so bold. Usually, it would have already been shot down by the ballistae.

Lu Zhou studied the northern goshawk.

At this moment, the northern goshawk lowered its altitude and closed in on the Golden Taixu Mirror.

"Cursed livestock!"

Lu Zhou turned around and said, "Conch."

"Master?"

"Chase that northern goshawk away," Lu Zhou said. There was no need for him to use his extraordinary power on a little wild beast.

"Mhm." Conch raised her Lantian Jade Flute to her lips.

A sharp and grating tune rang in the air. The tune sounded like a spinning drill. The notes rose very high before they glided down again.

Chapter 605: Writing Down the Names of Everyone in Lou Lan

The sound was sharp and piercing like a sword cry as it spread from the peak of the Imperial city.

The cultivators inside the Divine Capital heard this sharp tune and turned to look.

The tune controlled Qi and condensed it into energy blades in the air that shot toward the curtain-like barrier in the sky.

Swoosh!

The northern goshawk suddenly circled upward, dodging the soundwave.

“Master, there’s something strange about that northern goshawk.” Ye Tianxin could tell something was amiss with the northern goshawk. “Should I kill it for you?”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “Conch, I didn’t tell you to attack it. Try to communicate with it.”

“Oh.” Conch understood. Air flowed naturally from between her lips. The sound of the flute that rolled out in the surroundings was mellifluous. It was much better compared to the grating sound from earlier.

At this moment, many civilians came out from their houses and gathered on the streets to look in the direction of the Imperial city.

With the academy disciples and Evil Sky Pavilion on the move, only the people of Great Yan dared to show their faces in public.

Before the Imperial city, more than half of the Divine Capital was purged of spies.

Golden figures with Golden Lotuses could be seen near the cultivators.

When the civilians saw these avatars, the fear in their hearts gradually subsided. Then densely packed civilians walked toward the Imperial city. Shortly after, some of the civilians fell to their knees.

“Thank you, the Patriarch of the Evil Sky Pavilion”

“Thank you for helping us, patriarch!”

“Ding! Received sincere kowtows from 502 individuals. Reward: 5,020 merit points.”

“Ding! Received sincere kowtows from 1,300 individuals. Reward: 13,000 merit points.”

“Ding! Received sincere kowtows from 2,030 individuals. Reward: 20,300 merit points.”

Lu Zhou was pleased to hear the notifications.

Unfortunately, after the battle in the Divine Capital, many civilians moved out of the city and did not return. There were fewer people now. On top of that, the spies that were causing trouble made many fear to return or come out from their houses.

The area before the imperial city was not very wide. It was an incredible sight, seeing so many people kowtow to him

The melodious flute song reached the curtain-like buried in the sky.

The northern goshawk did not retreat. Instead, it became more excited and brutal. It charged toward the Golden Taixu Mirror.

Bam!

The curtain-like barrier rippled.

Conch stopped playing and said, "Master, I told it to go away, but it wouldn't listen."

The cultivators in the city were attracted by the commotion. When they saw the northern goshawk attacking the barrier, they were shocked.

The golden mirror's task was not complete yet. If it was interrupted now, they would not be able to flush out the remaining spies. That would be a nightmare for the people.

Conch added, "It's taunting us!"

Lu Zhou raised a palm and shouted, "Cursed livestock!"

It refused a toast only to be forced to drink a forfeit! Unnamed, which was in the form of a bow now, materialized in his hand.

Ye Tianxin had just recently returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion. She did not know how powerful her master was nor did she recognize the weapon in her master's hand. She was slightly shocked to see Unnamed.

Lu Zhou gripped it, and blue light shone from between his fingers.

Whizz!

The bow that Unnamed had transformed into was shrouded by an energy as tall as Lu Zhou. Then, an energy arrow appeared as he pulled the bowstring with his right hand.

Swoosh!

The arrow was shot, the unique sound of the arrow sailing in the air attracted the attention of the cultivators and civilians alike. All of them instinctively looked up. They saw a blue energy arrow shooting toward the sky-like barrier at a blinding speed.

The northern goshawk flapped its wings and moved upward in an attempt to dodge the arrow.

Alas, the energy arrow never missed!

Bam!

It hit the northern goshawk!

The northern goshawk fell from the skies onto the side of the curtain-like barrier and slid down.

"Master, isn't that too much for a beast?" Zhu Honggong looked at the sky.

A Great Yan cultivator whom Zhu Honggong was not familiar with said in an admiring tone, "M-mister Eighth... The patriarch is so cool!"

"Naturally."

“Mister Eighth... Your boxing gloves are cooler!”

Zhu Honggong nearly cried when he heard this. ‘Someone’s finally praising my f*cking boxing gloves! This shows that there are those with good taste in this world!’

“I like what you’re saying. Say some more,” Zhu Honggong said, clearly enjoying the praise.

“Mister Eighth, your boxing gloves are by far the flashiest, most impressive, majestic, dazzling, and eye-catching weapon I have ever seen...”

“You’ve got great taste, comrade,” Zhu Honggong replied, pleased.

At this moment, a loud clang sounded in the air.

The Overlord Spear stabbed into the ground, and the ground cracked.

The two of them jumped in shock.

Duanmu Sheng descended from the skies and landed between them.

Clearly, the spies were completely annihilated.

The cultivator’s eyes widened. He hastily said, “Mister Third... It’s you! I was almost blinded from the magnificence of your Overlord Spear.”

Zhu Honggong. “???”

Duanmu Sheng glanced at the man. He retrieved his Overlord Spear, gave it a gentle stroke, and said, “But, of course. I clean this spear thrice a day. I won’t let it be tainted by anything. In my eyes, no weapon under the heavens is a match for my Overlord Spear.”

“...”

Bam!

The huge northern goshawk landed on the city walls.

...

Meanwhile, in the Roulian campground.

Karol’s eyes snapped open.

“He’s skilled in archery as well?!” A shaman dressed in long robes with a tattooed face who stood before him grunted and spat out blood.

“Bazir, are you alright?”

Bazir waved his hand. He wiped the blood away from the edge of his lips and said, “Fortunately, this spell merely gave me the northern goshawk’s sight. If we had a Fated Bond, I would’ve died.”

Karol’s expression was grim as he said, “I didn’t expect that old villain to possess such a treasure. I don’t think our scouts will survive this.”

Bazir said, "He shone on everyone inside the Divine Capital using the curtain-like barrier in the sky as a mirror... Just how powerful is a Nine-leaf cultivator? General Karol, why don't we negotiate for peace and co-exist harmoniously?"

Bam!

Karol slammed his hands on the table and said, "Bazir, I respect you as a grand shaman, but please mind your words! Great Yan has been oppressing Lou Lan for years, don't you know that? Your nation has been paying tithes and sending women to Great Yan every year. How can you live with that?"

"..." Bazir was at a loss for words.

"The lotus-severing era is beneficial for Rouli and Lou Lan... Although our operation has failed, it bought us some time. As of now, there hasn't been a second Nine-leaf cultivator in Great Yan. We'll be able to conquer it soon!"

Bazir nodded. He was recovering from his wounds and slowly regained his clarity of mind.

At this moment, a Roulian hurried into the campground.

"General! The Lou Lan army on the west of Heaven's Moat sent us a report. They lost the Sword Devil Yu Shangrong who left Liang Province."

Karol rose to his feet immediately.

Before he could curse, the Roulian fell on one knee. "Please forgive me, General! Yu Shangrong has a profound cultivation base. On top of that, he has a mount that's as fast as lightning!"

Karol was still angered by Bazir's earlier statement. When he received this news, he mercilessly mocked, "Mister Bazir, it's no wonder Lou Lan frequently sends its women to appease Great Yan. There's a reason you're weak!"

"You..."

"My lords, please stay your anger!"

Bazir said, "What about you Roulians? If I remember correctly, your younger brother Karran died in Great Yan with his mount as well, right?"

Karol raised his hand and struck!

Bam!

The table cracked open.

Bazir took a step back. However, he remained fearless. "What are you trying to do?"

Karol desperately suppressed the flames of anger burning in him. He waved his hand, still seething with anger, and said, "Scram."

Bazir cupped his fists together perfunctorily. He scoffed as turned around and left.

The subordinate who brought the report ran up to him. "Mister Bazir, please calm down... The general is known for his honesty..."

"Hm?" Bazir snorted. With a wave of his sleeve, he left the campground.

The subordinate looked around himself. A faint smile spread across his face. He mumbled, "Mister Seventh's plan is amazing."

...

The Land of Buried Bones in Lou Lan.

Ji Liang shot past the dark forest.

After a few days of speedy flight, even Yu Shangrong felt the need to alleviate his dry throat. He patted the horse's back to tell it to land.

After landing, Yu Shangrong surveyed his surroundings. He could not see the end of the forest. The environment was dark and damp. Only dim light filtered through the canopy illuminated the surroundings.

"We'll reach our destination after we get past the Land of Buried Bones." Yu Shangrong looked at Yu Zhenghai on Ji Liang's back with a faint smile. "I hope this journey goes smoothly. If you die, I'll put the names of everyone from Lou Lan on my hitlist."

Chapter 606: Land of Buried Bones

Neigh!

Ji Liang turned and blew on Yu Zhenghai, seemingly trying to wake him up.

Alas, Yu Zhenghai's eyes remained close. He showed no signs of waking up.

"You agree with me, don't you?" Yu Shangrong smiled.

Neigh!

"Naturally... I'll do what I can." Yu Shangrong turned to look at the dim forest. "Saving someone is much more difficult than killing someone."

After a moment of rest, Yu Shangrong stood up and leaped onto Ji Liang's back. They continued their journey westward and left the dim and damp forest.

They maintained a low altitude as they flew west. They pass through a deserted valley and a vast, boundless plain.

As they flew, Yu Shangrong looked around at his surroundings. The flatlands meant that he would have a great view, but at the same time, it meant that it was easy for others to spot him as well. In the past, he would not have cared about this. However, since someone's life was on the line, he would rather avoid as much trouble as he could.

Ji Liang continued flying at a low altitude under the moonlight.

At this moment, Yu Shangrong saw a damp spot. "We're at the swamps. Ji Liang, fly higher."

Neigh!

Yu Shangrong had been here many years ago. However, back then, he was here to challenge elites. He was rather emotional now that he had returned.

Ji Liang crossed the swamps just as Yu Shangrong had instructed.

Lou Lan's royal city was in view now that they arrived at the land beyond the swamp.

From a distance, Lou Lan's royal city seemed mysterious and strange under the hazy moonlight.

"The Land of Buried Bones," Yu Shangrong murmured when he saw the bones sticking out of the ground.

Ji Liang's speed was incredible. After 15 minutes, they were drawing very close to the Land of Buried Bones. A quagmire lay before them.

"Let's stop here." Yu Shangrong stopped advancing. Dozens of miles ahead of him were the settlements of Lou Lan's citizens.

He looked at the quagmire in front of himself and softly sighed. "We're here. This is the place where you crawled out of death's grip for the first time..."

Behind him was the Land of Bones, where bones could be seen sticking out from the ground. It was a gloomy and stifling place.

With Ji Liang's legendary speed, they had only flown for 15 minutes. Back then, Yu Zhenghai had not started cultivating yet. How long did he spend traversing the Land of Bones? Even the experiences of every Evil Sky Pavilion disciple combined was difficult to compare to the pain Yu Zhenghai had endured.

Yu Shangrong was in no hurry to do what he came here to do. Instead, he flew above the quagmire for a while and surveyed his surroundings. When he was convinced that there would be no disturbances, he brought Yu Zhenghai down.

The moon shone on them and the quagmire. Without the Land of Buried Bones behind them, the quagmire alone would have made for a scenic view.

Yu Shangrong sensed the Primal Qi and the vitality in the surroundings. Indeed, he found them denser compared to other places.

The forest was to his right and the Land of Buried Bones was behind him. The river flowed before him. Further upstream was where Lou Lan's royal city was. They seemed to form a natural closed-ring Formation that could gather dense Primal Qi in the area.

Yu Shangrong looked at the quagmire. He hesitated slightly before he made up his mind. "This is your life and death tribulation. You'll have to face it sooner or later."

He spread his hands, and his Primal Qi surged. The energy propped Yu Zhenghai up.

Yu Shangrong waved his hand.

Swoosh!

Splash!

Yu Zhenghai flew toward the center of the quagmire before he dropped down.

Yu Shangrong straightened his hand.

Bam!

With a palm seal, he made sure Yu Zhenghai was buried in the quagmire. Then, he no longer paid any attention to the quagmire. Instead, he shifted his gaze toward Ji Liang and said, "Ji Liang... I'll be staying here for the next 49 days."

Neigh!

Ji Liang trotted up to Yu Shangrong, seemingly reluctant to part with him.

Yu Shangrong smiled and said, "You want to stay?"

Neigh!

Ji Liang trotted in a circle around him.

"Alright." Yu Shangrong patted Ji Liang. "You and I get along well. After I obtain master's permission when we return to the Evil Sky Pavilion, you'll be mine."

...

Meanwhile, it was silent in the Divine Capital after the spies were annihilated with the help of the Golden Taixu Mirror.

Hua Chongyang sent the Nether Sect disciples to guard the four city gates. All those who enter would be thoroughly investigated.

After this incident, the Divine Capital's residents lived the lives that they wanted.

The impressive feat of flushing out the spies were also spread among the people. The Evil Sky Pavilion was even referred to as the Holy Sky Pavilion by some people.

...

Inside Dazheng Palace.

Hua Chongyang completed his report of the incident in the Divine Capital.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. "You can decide on the Divine Capital's matters."

Lu Zhou was not an expert in governing an empire. He decided that it was better to leave this matter to someone else.

Hua Chongyang scratched his head. "Senior Ji, I'm not skilled in this as well!"

At this moment, the Big Dipper Academy's Zhou Youcai said, "Senior Ji, there are a few things on my mind."

“Let’s hear it.”

‘A wise man submits to circumstances. Anyone useful to me must be treated kindly.’

Zhou Youcai said, “We’ll need the court officials to govern the empire... What they need is just an opportunity and an excuse. From what I know, the Evil Sky Pavilion’s Miss Fifth, Zhao Yue, is Princess Yun Zhao’s orphan. She can present herself as the Imperial family’s orphan while the Nether Sect keeps the provinces in check and the court officials manage the empire’s governance. When everything is back to normal, it won’t be too late to pick a new monarch.”

The others beamed when they heard Zhou Youcai’s words.

“Can you persuade the court officials?” Lu Zhou asked.

“Don’t worry, Senior Ji. Leave this to me. I’ll take care of it.”

Under normal circumstances, they would be difficult to persuade. On second thought, it had always been difficult to persuade others to take part in a grand scheme.

Hua Chongyang said, “Things will proceed much more smoothly with the help of the court officials. The nine provinces will stabilize soon.”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. “I’ll leave the matters in the Divine Capital to you. I won’t meddle unless necessary.”

Everyone present knew that the old man was more interested in cultivating. A person like him would not want to waste time on such matters.

After Lu Zhou finished speaking, he rose to his feet, intending to leave...

At this moment, a voice rang from outside Dazheng Palace. “Greetings, master.”

Zhu Honggong deliberately clapped his hands together to catch everyone’s attention. Then, he kneeled three times and kowtowed nine times.

The others were stunned by this.

Clang!

Duanmu Sheng struck the floor with his Overlord Spear.

Old Eighth was frightened to his feet. His extremely sincere acts of kneeling and kowtowing had been interrupted.

“Old Eighth, what are you doing?” Duanmu Sheng asked.

“Huh? No-no-nothing... I was just thinking about how shiny the floor of the palace is. I think it’s a shame if I don’t greet master with great fanfare...”

The others. “???”

Lu Zhou looked at Zhu Honggong and asked, “What’s it?”

“Master, there’s a letter from Fourth Senior Brother. Kindly have a look.”

“Bring it here.”

Zhu Honggong presented the letter respectfully.

Lu Zhou opened the letter and read it. After reading it, he said, “Yu Shangrong went to Lou Lan?”

When Ye Tianxin heard this, she was slightly shocked, “Master, Second Senior Brother has severed his lotus and is re-cultivating. His cultivation base is far from its peak. I’m afraid he might be in danger, going so deep into Lou Lan’s territory at this moment. Should I go and have a look?”

Zhu Honggong commented, “Second Senior Brother is too reckless. He’s also very stubborn. I have a bad feeling about this. Master... I feel that Senior Sister Tianxin is right. At the very least, Senior Sister Tianxin is at the Eight-leaf stage...”

Duanmu Sheng said, “Sixth Junior Sister’s condition is not too good as well.”

Zhu Honggong said, “Master, why don’t you go there? The Divine Capital is doing fine now.”

The others looked at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou did not answer immediately. Instead, he asked, “Since he has departed, and he has help from Ji Liang, we’ll let him be.”

“Master, Second Senior Brother...”

“I believe in him.”

The others bowed and no longer commented on the matter.

...

In the afternoon. In one of Dazheng Palace’s side halls.

Lu Zhou opened the system dashboard.

Merit points: 62,053

Remaining life: 35,584 days

Lu Zhou looked at his merit points that had exceeded 60,000 and nodded in satisfaction. After completing the mission of dealing with the spies, he gained about 50,000 merit points.

“Let’s try some lucky draws.”

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points. Thank you for your participation.”

Then, he did ten consecutive draws, and he was thanked ten times.

Lu Zhou was slightly bewildered. “Are you going to troll me again?”

“Lucky draw.”

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points and 11 luck points. Obtained Strengthened Reversal Card x5, Shining Stone x1.”

“Strengthened Reversal Card. Every use would reverse 1,000 days of life.”

“Shining Stone has a chance of raising a weapon’s quality during the refining process.”

Chapter 607: To Teach

Lu Zhou beamed. ‘That was some good luck!’

He was familiar with the Strengthened Reversal Card. He had no complaints about reversing 1,000 days of life with every card.

‘What’s this Shining Stone?’ Based on his current knowledge, super heaven-grade was a grade above the heaven-grade. What could be better than the super heaven-grade?

Lu Zhou recalled his battle with Liu Ge. He had broken Liu Ge’s super heaven-grade weapon, High Void, with Unnamed. In that case, what was Unnamed’s grade?

He flipped his palm around, and Unnamed appeared in his hand. “Use Shining Stone.”

“Ding! Unnamed’s grade will improve according to its host. It cannot be refined. Unable to use Shining Stone.”

“...”

‘F*ck you! Why did you give me a Shining Stone, then?’

Thinking that it was better than nothing, Lu Zhou stored it away. Then, He looked at the list of item cards.

After the system was upgraded, he had yet to look at the new item cards. After the system’s authority was unlocked, what were the new additions?

Lu Zhou scrolled down. Apart from the Disguise Cards and the Appearance Alteration Cards that were on sale, there were not many varieties of cards being sold.

‘You’ve got to be kidding me! Does the increased system authority only affect the Heavenly Writing scrolls?’

Lu Zhou closed the system dashboard. He did not purchase a Golden Lotus Leaf right away. He was in Dazheng Palace. If he sprouted a leaf here, he would easily attract trouble.

Then, Lu Zhou closed his eyes to meditate on the Heavenly Writing scrolls.

At this time, the sounds of faint footsteps reached his ears.

‘Someone’s coming?’

Lu Zhou continued using his Heaven Writing’s extraordinary power.

The footsteps were pacing on the steps outside the side hall. It did not sound like a spy or an Other Tribesman.

Lu Zhou expanded the range of the hearing power. Wisps of extraordinary power swirled around his ears. The range of his power expanded from Dazheng Palace to the nearby Evergreen Palace and did not show signs of stopping.

Soon after, he heard a buzz before all sounds were abruptly cut off.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes and muttered, "There's a limit to the hearing power?"

Its range merely covered the palace. Naturally, it was still much superior to what ordinary cultivators were capable of. However, this was the Heavenly Writing power. Should it not be more powerful?

"Can I only use it to its full potential by increasing the system's authority?"

Apart from that, he also noticed this power exhausted much of his extraordinary power.

"Forget it. I'll just meditate." Lu Zhou did not plan on using this power anymore.

At this moment, a voice rang from outside the hall.

"Greetings, master."

Lu Zhou was familiar with the voice. "Come in."

Ye Tianxin who was clad in all white strode into the hall.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes and looked at her expressionlessly. "What's it?"

Ye Tianxin bowed and said, "I have a question, master."

"Let's hear it."

"Although my injuries have been healing, there are times I feel weaker than I'd like," Ye Tianxin said.

"Your vitality has been removed by the golden dragon talisman seal. It's only natural you feel this way." Lu Zhou was rather tactful with his answer. If he were to speak bluntly, he would say she had grown old.

Ye Tianxin asked, "According to the current cultivation theory, shouldn't my lifespan extend whenever I sprout a leaf?"

"Indeed." Lu Zhou nodded.

"Can I prolong my life if I cultivate to the Nine-leaf stage?" Ye Tianxin looked up at her master. She knew her question was bold. It was regarding the Nine-leaf stage, after all. It was not something that would be taught just because she asked about it.

Lu Zhou looked at her. After a moment's silence, he said, "Your life can be extended. You're searching for a way to reach the Nine-leaf stage?"

Ye Tianxin knelt and nervously said, "I daren't make such a presumptuous request."

"Since you return to the pavilion, as your master, I'll teach you and guide you well. As a disciple, it's your role to ask. As your master, it's my duty to answer you. There's no need for this. Get up," Lu Zhou said.

Loyalty: +1%

“Ding! Guided and disciplined Ye Tianxin. Reward: 500 merit points.”

Ye Tianxin looked up, visibly touched.

“I’ve been in a dilemma lately,” Ye Tianxin said.

“Let’s hear it.”

“I’m thinking of severing my lotus,” Ye Tianxin said, shockingly.

Lu Zhou was not surprised. It was almost inevitable for Eight-leaf cultivators to think about the Nine-leaf stage.

“You’ll be re-cultivating from the One-leaf stage. Are you willing to do that?” Lu Zhou asked.

“With Second Senior Brother as an example, and you lighting the way, master, I have nothing to fear,” Ye Tianxin replied.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, “There’s no need for that.”

Ye Tianxin said with puzzlement, “What do you mean, master?”

“Cheng Huang is a mythical beast. The ancient books say that anyone who rides it can live for another 2,000 years... Perhaps, that’s your ticket to the Nine-leaf stage.”

Ye Tianxin recalled everything that happened in the abyss. Indeed, her experience was nothing short of legendary and magical. There were many things that she could not comprehend with logic. Before she met Cheng Huang, she could not even imagine such things.

Lu Zhou continued to say, “The Golden Lotus absorbs life; this has been acknowledged by the cultivation world. If you can satiate the Golden Lotus, you’ll be able to overcome the great limit of the Eight-leaf stage. However, the longest a human can live is 1,000 years. Hence, nobody has overcome the limit yet.”

“I see. As the first Nine-leaf cultivator, you’ve already proven this, master,” Ye Tianxin said.

Lu Zhou coughed, He pretended as though he was knowledgeable about this, but he was helpless as well. He did not know how much life the Golden Lotus needed. Fortunately, the cultivation world did not wander down a strange path just because they were under the impression he was a Nine-leaf cultivator. Most of them walked down the path of severing their lotuses.

“However, Cheng Huang dwells in Moonlight Woodland. There are too many beasts in the abyss. Even Eight-leaf cultivators would have a hard time surviving there,” Ye Tianxin said with a sigh.

“Cheng Huang belongs to the fairfolks, to begin with. You’ll have to discover its mysteries yourself,” Lu Zhou replied.

“I see!”

“Ding! Taught Ye Tianxin. Reward: 500 merit points.”

Lu Zhou nodded and asked, “How’s your Blue Waves Technique coming along?”

Ye Tianxin said, “If I may be so bold, I’d like you to teach me something, master.”

“...”

‘Me and my big mouth...’ Lu Zhou did not think he would be able to replenish his extraordinary power any time soon.

At this moment, Zhu Honggong ran into the hall and cried out, “Master, a letter from Seventh Senior Brother!”

“Read it.”

Zhu Honggong read the letter aloud, “Master, I’m sure everything’s going smoothly in the Divine Capital. I know without a doubt you’ll have a firm grip on the Divine Capital. Hence, I drove a wedge between the Roulians. There’s no need to worry about Liang Province since I’m looking after things here. Also... I received an important piece of information. It’s highly possible that Great Yan’s Imperial tutor is still alive and that he’s now living among the Other Tribesmen.”

Lu Zhou was not surprised by this information. He had the same thought before this. If that person was still alive, it meant that they still had clues and a lead on the red lotus and the Luo woman. Hence, he said, “Tell him to continue his investigations.”

“Yes, master.” Zhu Honggong bowed. He glanced at Ye Tianxin and said with a chuckle, “Master, I have a question for you as well.”

“It’s good that you’re thinking of learning...” Lu Zhou was invested in this. After all, if he taught his disciples well, he could earn merit points faster compared to cultivation on his own.

“I don’t know why... but I have a feeling that someone’s been following me...”

Chapter 608: Zhu Honggong’s Secret

The Divine Capital had stabilized, and peace had been restored to the Imperial city. Who would dare follow Zhu Honggong around?

Lu Zhou said, “Are you sure that someone’s following you?”

Thud!

Zhu Honggong fell to his knees. Then, he shuffled on his knees. He looked at Ye Tianxin and muttered, “Senior Sister, can you move over slightly? I need some room to kowtow.”

Ye Tianxin. “???”

Zhu Honggong lifted his fingers and said, “Master, you might not know this, but when I was still on Tiger Ridge, I was known for my vigilance.”

Ye Tianxin asked, “Vigilance?”

“Well, you can consider it as my instincts... These few days, I had a feeling that someone’s following me. Then, I noticed that something was off. My stalker always kept an eye on me from a distance. Master, I heard fanatic worshippers will do all sorts of strange things. How am I supposed to deal with this, Master?”

Lu Zhou and Ye Tianxin were speechless.

Ye Tianxin felt that the atmosphere was awkward so she quickly bowed and said, "Master, I'll be taking my leave."

"Alright." After Ye Tianxin left, Lu Zhou looked at the kneeling Zhu Honggong and asked, "Did this happen in the Imperial city or the Divine Capital?"

"Sometimes, it's in the Divine Capital, and sometimes it's in the palace," Zhu Honggong replied.

"You'll be staying with me tonight," Lu Zhou said.

"Huh?" Zhu Honggong was taken aback. He had expected his master to praise him for his charm and warn him to not get arrogant and to continue working hard.

"You have a problem with that?" Lu Zhou looked at Zhu Honggong pointedly.

"No, no, no... Thank you, master!" Zhu Honggong was crying inwardly.

Lu Zhou pointed at the rush cushion at the side and said, "Here. You'll cultivate with me."

"..." Zhu Honggong felt like crying. He could only steel himself and walked to the rush cushion next to his master before sitting with his legs crossed.

Lu Zhou glanced at Zhu Honggong out of the corners of his eye. He reprimanded him, "Straighten your back. Calm your breathing and focus your mind."

"Oh." Zhu Honggong straightened his back, looking as though a plank was tied to his back. After a moment, he said, "Umm, master... I suddenly feel there's nothing to worry about regarding the stalker. I think I can handle him on my own."

Lu Zhou did not open his eyes. He said sternly, "Impudent!"

"..." Zhu Honggong shuddered and no longer dared to speak or move.

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

...

Night fell.

Lu Zhou did not move at all; he was in his meditative state.

Zhu Honggong kept squirming about as he sat on the rush cushion. He felt rather uncomfortable. As the night grew deeper, he finally fell asleep.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes slightly and briefly looked at Zhu Honggong. He shook his head and no longer paid any attention to Zhu Honggong. Then, he entered his meditative state again.

After an entire night had passed, Lu Zhou did not sense anyone approaching or stalking Zhu Honggong.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes when morning arrived. He had more extraordinary power now. He looked to the side.

Zhu Honggong sleeping like a dead log. His snores were deafening, and he was drooling.

Lu Zhou felt annoyed on many levels. 'Is this how an Evil Sky Pavilion disciple should conduct himself?'

"You bastard."

"Huh?!" Zhu Honggong jolted awake. He hastily wiped the drool off his mouth and prostrated himself.

"Master! Good morning!"

"Since you're not interested in cultivating, go stroll around the Divine Capital. If you run into the Other Tribesmen spies, kill them without questions."

Zhu Honggong was overjoyed. "That's a brilliant suggestion, master! I'll surely accomplish this mission."

After saying this, Lu Zhou waved his sleeve and walked out of the hall with Zhu Honggong trailing after him. He had seen the mark on the back of Zhu Honggong's collar.

The mark flashed for a moment, but it quickly dimmed. Ordinary marks were directly put on the person. It was easy to notice and get rid off. Higher grade marks such as those used by the Celestial Masters Sect would usually be used on talismans, which were then hidden on the target. Naturally, it was highly possible that it would be exposed. However, placing the mark on the target's clothes using engraving techniques required remarkable skill. At the very least, the caster had to get close to the target and draw it. Ordinary cultivators could not have done this. This was unlike the marks mastered by ordinary Great Yan cultivators.

"Master, I'll be taking my leave." Zhu Honggong bowed.

"Wait." Lu Zhou stood in front of Zhu Honggong and patted Zhu Honggong's shoulder. Another faint mark appeared.

"Go," Lu Zhou said.

Zhu Honggong. Loyalty: +2%

'Wow! Master is much more considerate than before!'

"I'll be taking my leave, master!"

After Zhu Honggong left the Imperial city, Lu Zhou waited a while longer before he began to tail Zhu Honggong. The Imperial guards and elites of the palace did not stop him.

When he found a deserted spot outside the Imperial city, Lu Zhou flipped his palm. An Appearance Alteration Card appeared in his palm, and he used it immediately. He instantly felt a crawling sensation all over his skin. After a while, the sensation finally disappeared.

Lu Zhou raised his hand and touched his old face. It was smoother now. It was like a complete makeover. His hair turned much darker even though he was still old.

'Are the Appearance Alteration Cards changing my looks based on the days of life I've reversed?'

Before Lu Zhou had transmigrated, he had been a young man. He would be lying if he said that he did not long for youth. He could live with the fact that he did not have enough Reversal Cards right now.

Given time, he would one day be youthful again. There was no need to rush. However, he found it slightly unacceptable that the Appearance Alteration Cards would not even give him a chance to temporarily look youthful. Alas, it was not the time to dwell on such matters.

Lu Zhou leisurely walked on the Divine Capital's streets. He sensed that the mark on Zhu Honggong was still in effect.

The Divine Capital was being rebuilt at a swift pace. In just a few days, the ruins had been reconstructed.

There were many cultivators hurrying about, clearly busy.

Perhaps, Hua Chongyang's directive that allowed cultivators to fly in the city while it was being rebuilt made the Divine Capital seem livelier than before.

This reminded Lu Zhou of his hometown. The people there were so hardworking and intelligent that his hometown was labeled as an infrastructure giant.

Shortly after, Lu Zhou sensed that his mark was nearby, and he picked up speed. Finally, he could see Zhu Honggong loitering around the streets, looking listless and bored.

Lu Zhou understood Old Eighth's temperament. He did not mind it. He looked around at his surroundings, wondering where the mysterious stalker was. He continued following Zhu Honggong.

Technically speaking, the Divine Capital was as huge as a county in the Nine Provinces. After walking for a long time, he was halfway walking through a deserted area of the Divine Capital, but there was still no sign of the stalker.

'Was I overthinking? But the mark...'

Lu Zhou was still lost in his thoughts when a stooping middle-aged man barred Zhu Honggong's way.

Zhu Honggong frowned and said, "Get out of my way."

The middle-aged man said, "I'd like you to follow me."

Zhu Honggong leaped backward. "Oh... I know, you're the one who has been stalking me!"

"I had no choice... There are too many people in the Divine Capital. I had to resort to such measures."

"You've been stalking me for many days now. You should know who I am, right?" Zhu Honggong puffed his chest. "If you don't know, you'll be frightened to death once I tell you!"

"..."

"I'm the Evil Sky Pavilion's Mister Eighth, Zhu Honggong. Are you scared now? Kneel and kowtow to beg for forgiveness. I might feel merciful enough to forgive you. After all, I can understand worshippers like you," Zhu Honggong said.

The middle-aged man cast Zhu Honggong a complicated look. He shook his head. It seemed like this man was slightly dumb. "I'm sorry, I'd like you to come with me. You'll understand when you meet the master."

"Heh? You're not afraid?"

The middle-aged man suddenly moved at blinding speed and attacked. A hint of energy could be seen wrapping around two of his fingers. He was clearly an elite. Zhu Honggong was not a match for him.

Lu Zhou held his breath and concealed his aura.

The middle-aged was certain his attack would land when Zhu Honggong suddenly cast his Nine Tribulations Thunderblast!

Boom!

The middle-aged man staggered three steps back from the impact. A slight frown appeared on his face after he found his footing.

“Hm?” The Nine Tribulations Thunderblast had been instinctively released. Its force was just nice. Lu Zhou did not expect this lazy fellow to have such skills.

Zhu Honggong glared at the middle-aged man. “You dare launch a sneak attack on me?”

The middle-aged man did not make another move. If the battle was escalated, they would certainly attract people’s attention. He lowered his hand and said, “I meant no harm... I just wish for you to meet my master.”

“I’m sorry, but I’m busy.”

“Mister Eighth, won’t you come with me??”

“I’ll shout for help if you keep this up!”

Swoosh!

At this moment, Lu Zhou shot forward at lightning speed.

Chapter 609: The Mysterious Man Intends To Kill Zhu Honggong

In just a blink of an eye, Lu Zhou came between Zhu Honggong and the middle-aged man. He struck with his palm that glowed with a blue light. His palm was, shockingly, not aimed at the middle-aged man but Zhu Honggong.

Bam!

Zhu Honggong instantly felt as though his world had been turned upside down. He pointed at Lu Zhou, who was in disguise, and said, “S-sneak attack... I... You... You’re dead. My master... isn’t a... pushover.”

“...” Lu Zhou suddenly felt that he should have hit Zhu Honggong with more force.

After saying those words, Zhu Honggong’s eyes rolled to the back of his head and fell to the ground.

Lu Zhou stood next to Zhu Honggong. He surveyed the streets’ surroundings before he said, “Now that no one’s here, bring me to your master.” This was the reason Lu Zhou had hit Zhu Honggong.

If Zhu Honggong was truly concealing his strength, this middle-aged man might not be able to take him down. However, judging from the middle-aged man’s words, he had someone else’s support. If Lu Zhou

had made a move on the middle-aged man, he would only alarm him. At that time, the middle-aged man would likely not reveal the person behind him.

Moreover, Lu Zhou could feel the middle-aged man did not intend to kill Zhu Honggong.

The middle-aged man took a step back and asked, "You are?"

"My surname's Lu," Lu Zhou answered honestly, 'Is there anyone who's more honest than me?'

"Thank you for helping me, Old Mister Lu. Please leave him to me, Old Mister Lu," the middle-aged man said.

"I can leave him to you, but I have a few questions," Lu Zhou said without beating around the bush.

"Let's hear it, Old Mister Lu."

"What's your name?"

"Jiang Pu."

"Why do you want to take him away?" Lu Zhou asked.

"Old Mister Lu, you must've misunderstood me. We're old friends who met after a long time. That's all," Jiang Pu said.

"If that's your answer, I'm afraid I can't let you take him... Why don't we kill him and make a name for ourselves?"

"..."

At this moment, Zhu Honggong flipped around and pointed at the sky. He said groggily, "Who... W-whomever... lays a finger on me... My master... My master isn't a push... a pushover..."

Bam!

Lu Zhou kicked Zhu Honggong. 'You bastard. Is that how you talk behind my back?'

"Don't..." Jiang Pu cried out. He quickly spread his arms out. "Don't kill him! We can talk things through!"

"..."

"Old Mister Lu, why must you put him through this? Aren't you worried the Evil Sky Pavilion will come looking for you? Moreover, this is the Divine Capital. Any commotion will certainly catch the Nether Sect's attention," Jiang Pu continued to say.

"You're afraid of the Evil Sky Pavilion?" Lu Zhou asked.

"Not exactly afraid, but just fearfully respectful..." Jiang Pu said, "Let's do this. You can bring him with you. You'll know everything once you meet my master."

'That's exactly what I intend to do.' Lu Zhou calmly replied, "Alright. Lead the way."

...

In front of a remote courtyard in the Divine Capital.

"This way." Jiang Pu led Lu Zhou and the unconscious Zhu Honggong into the courtyard.

Once they entered the courtyard, a few lively young men appeared and looked at them curiously.

Lu Zhou scanned them and tossed Zhu Honggong on the floor.

Jiang Pu bowed at his master's room. "Holy Master, I've brought him here."

"Very good." A clearly exhausted wizened and gruff voice rang from the room.

Creak!

The door opened.

Lu Zhou stood with his hands on his back. Who was this person who stalked Zhu Honggong? Was it Great Yan's Imperial tutor or was it someone like those from the ten great sects who were waiting for a chance to strike at the Evil Sky Pavilion? Perhaps, it was just as Zhu Honggong had said. The stalker is just an overzealous fan.

The person who emerged from the room was a slightly hunch-backed old man with gray hair.

When Lu Zhou saw that man, his eyes brightened. 'So, it's you! Come to think of it, Ji Tiandao's relationship with him runs quite deep.'

The old man was Zhu Tianyuan, the Ancient Saint Cult's Holy Master who had retired long ago.

However, this was no time to reminisce. Lu Zhou had to act as though he did not recognize Zhu Tianyuan to see what this old man was after.

"All hail, Holy Master!"

The people outside the room bowed.

Jiang Pu made the introductions. "Holy Master, this is Old Mister Lu. With his help, the young master was knocked out and brought back."

There was nothing wrong with his form of address.

Lu Zhou nodded.

Zhu Tianyuan, the Holy Master, looked at Zhu Honggong who was lying on the floor like a dead boar. He frowned and said, "I knew nothing good can come from having a master like him! Look at him, he's unpresentable! He looks nothing like the Master of the Ancient Saint Cult!" After criticizing Zhu Honggong, he looked at Lu Zhou and asked in confusion, "Aren't you shocked or afraid?"

"Why should I be shocked or afraid?" Lu Zhou retorted.

Zhu Tianyuan appraised Lu Zhou. He nodded. "Interesting."

Jiang Pu said, "Old Mister Lu, to tell you the truth, the Evil Sky Pavilion's Mister Eight is the Holy Master's son."

'Tell me something I don't know. I knew this the moment I met him.' Despite his thoughts, Lu Zhou replied, "I see."

"That's why you can't kill him," Jiang Pu added.

"No wonder you stopped me earlier."

The Holy Master, Zhu Tianyuan, said, "No matter... You merely wanted to help. We don't owe each other anything. See the Old Mister off."

"Wait," Lu Zhou said.

"Is there something else?"

"I'm curious... Since he's the Evil Sky Pavilion's disciple, why don't you visit him directly instead of sending someone to stalk him?" Lu Zhou asked. He would not leave until he figured out what was going on. Moreover, it was clear the old man did not want to reveal anything to him.

"Old Mister Lu, I think you're overstepping your bounds."

"I was the one who brought him here, after all. It's only natural for me to want to know more about this," Lu Zhou replied.

Zhu Tianyuan frowned. "Who are you to mind the Ancient Saint Cult's business?"

"That's not the answer I wanted."

This reply puzzled Zhu Tianyuan. He studied Lu Zhou again before he said, "You have a wonderful cultivation base. That explains your confidence... I heard Jiang Pu mention you wanted to kill my son?"

Lu Zhou deliberately said, "Shouldn't villains be killed?"

"The times are different now... Although I don't like Old Villain Ji very much, he's the first Nine-leaf cultivator in the world. The powerful has the final say in everything in this world. He used the golden mirror to expose the Other Tribesmen and kill them. Regarding this, I'm impressed... His first disciple, Yu Zhenghai, supported the empire and protected the people's lives at the expense of his own. Aren't these feats worthy of your respect?" Zhu Tianyuan asked.

At this moment, Zhu Honggong regained consciousness. He shuddered before he rose to his feet.

Jiang Pu had been ready for this. He tapped Zhu Honggong's meridian points with two fingers and said, "Young master!"

Zhu Honggong looked at his surroundings before he asked indignantly, "Who's your young master? Where's this place? Who hit me earlier? That shameless fiend! Be a man and fight me directly!"

Lu Zhou. "..."

'Indeed, I was too gentle when I hit this rascal earlier.'

"Calm down, young master! The Holy Master has been waiting for you for a long time!" Jiang Pu said.

Zhu Honggong looked past Lu Zhou at Zhu Tianyuan who was standing in the corridor before the door.

The young men in the surroundings fell to one knee. "Greetings, young master!"

Zhu Honggong was clearly baffled.

Zhu Tianyuan stepped forward, slightly excited. He said, "My son... You've endured many hardships under Old Villain Ji! You've lost weight!"

Chapter 610: That Old Villain Ji is a Despicable and Shameless Man

Lu Zhou. "..."

Among Lu Zhou's ten disciples, Zhu Honggong was the biggest in size. He ate and slept very well. How could Zhu Tianyuan say something like that?

Zhu Tianyuan's comment startled Zhu Honggong into jumping two steps back. With slight contempt, he said, "Don't touch me! Who are you?"

"I'm your father." Zhu Tianyuan raised his voice and spoke in a stern tone.

Zhu Honggong retreated further. He looked at the others and said, "Are you taking advantage of me?"

"Do you think you have anything to be taken advantage of?" Zhu Tianyuan retorted as he rolled his eyes.

Zhu Honggong observed the situation in front of him. It did not seem good. Then, he glanced at the old man who knocked him out. The old man had to be powerful to be able to knock him out with a single strike. He was certain the other uglies were not too powerful, especially the old geezer who was trying to take advantage of him. As the saying went, 'A wise man could wait ten years before exacting revenge. There was no need for him to entangle with these people now. He chuckled before he said, "Uh... I think you've mistaken me for someone else. I'm... Actually, I'm just an ordinary citizen."

Pooh!

As soon as Zhu Honggong finished speaking, he farted loudly.

Who could stand the stench?

Jiang Pu and Zhu Tianyuan retreated immediately.

'There's my chance!' Zhu Honggong stomped his feet and shouted, "Farewell, suckers!"

Bam!

"Ow!" Zhu Honggong turned around and slammed into the frame of the door face-first. His nose bruised, and his face swelled immediately. He discovered he could not fly nor could he summon his avatar.

Jiang Pu was flustered. He fell on one knee and said, "I'm sorry, young master! When you came in, I sealed your Extraordinary Eight Meridians."

Zhu Tianyuan ran up to Zhu Honggong and helped him up. He asked, "Are you alright, son? Jiang Pu's meridian-sealing technique is one of Ancient Saint Cult's skills. It's normal that you didn't notice it."

Zhu Honggong turned around with a helpless expression on his face. Since being diplomatic was out of the question, he decided to use force. He began to threaten, "I can't believe this! I'll remember this! I'll tell you the truth. My master, the Evil Sky Pavilion's Master, is known for taking his disciples' sides even if they were in the wrong. He's petty and will certainly have his revenge. If my master learns about what happened today, there'll be hell to pay! Don't even think about killing me to prevent him from learning about this. My master left a mark on me. If anything happens to me, you'll all have to pay for it!"

Lu Zhou was surprised that Zhu Honggong was aware of the mark he had put on him. Indeed, it seemed like he had underestimated his eighth disciple.

Zhu Tianyuan said with a sigh, "I know... It's only natural for me to know about his character. My son, you've suffered much. You must've endured a fair share of beating from him, right?" He seemed to brim with sadness as he looked at Zhu Honggong.

Alas, the father and son were on completely different frequencies.

Zhu Honggong removed Zhu Tianyuan's hands and said, "Hey! You seem to like taking liberties..."

Zhu Tianyuan frowned and said seriously, "I'm really your father!"

"..."

"Young master!" The young men behind him, Jiang Pu included, cried out.

This scene...

Zhu Tianyuan said, "My son, I know you must be confused right now... That's normal. There's a butterfly-shaped birthmark on your buttocks. Your mother branded it on you when you were still a child. If you don't believe me, you can take off your pants and have a look... Moreover, you're the spitting image of me when I was young. You're as handsome and confident as your old man. There's no way I'm mistaken!"

"..."

'Am I supposed to take off my pants just because you said so? Moreover, even if I take off my pants, how am I going to look at it? Am I supposed to remove my head'

When he saw that Zhu Honggong was still skeptical and even slightly revolted, Zhu Tianyuan waved his arm.

Jiang Pu nodded. He entered the room and returned with a bronze mirror. He said, "Young master, forgive me!"

With a wave of his arm, two disciples grabbed Zhu Honggong by the arms.

Zhu Honggong struggled. "I knew you're all perverts trying to take liberties with me! Unhand me..."

As he struggled, he felt a chilly wind. When he turned to look, he saw a butterfly-shaped mark on his buttocks reflected in the bronze mirror. He was stunned. 'For real?'

Lu Zhou looked away, minding his own business. As Zhu Honggong's master, he, naturally, knew about this. However, there was no need to tell Zhu Honggong about this.

Zhu Tianyuan said, "You were taken away by Old Villain Ji when you were four years old. That Old Villain Ji is despicable and shameless. He tricked me!"

Zhu Honggong's expression was rigid. He had difficulty believing this.

Jiang Pu hastily waved his hand. The two disciples lifted his trousers at once and retreated to the sides respectfully.

Zhu Honggong asked, "How can this be?"

"Forget it... Let's not dwell on this for now. My son, how has your life been under Old Villain Ji's roof?" Zhu Tianyuan asked.

"Uh..." Zhu Honggong was still stunned.

At this moment, Lu Zhou turned around and faced Zhu Tianyuan. He said, "So... all you wanted was to tell him you're his father?"

Zhu Tianyuan suppressed his surging emotions and looked at Lu Zhou. He was so moved when he met his son that he nearly forgot about the presence of another person. He said, "Old Mister Lu, I think you've overstepped your boundaries. Jiang Pu, see the old mister out."

Jiang Pu walked up to Lu Zhou and motioned him to leave. "Old Mister Lu, if you'd please..."

Lu Zhou maintained his calm expression as he lifted his hand. A barely discernible blue light shone from between his fingers.

Jiang Pu frowned slightly, sensing the danger. He immediately raised his arms before himself to defend himself.

Lu Zhou did not seem to notice that. He was looking at Zhu Tianyuan as he placed his palm on Jiang Pu's arms.

Bam!

Jiang Pu felt as though he was hit by a strong force. The protective energy around his arms was instantly destroyed. The forceful palm strike pushed him backward.

Boom!

A pillar fell.

Boom!

Jiang Pu crashed through the wooden windows,

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Jiang Pu crashed onto the ground, knocking down an assortment of objects in the process that hid him from view.

The others were shocked.

Jiang Pu was a capable assistant to the Holy Master, a grand cultivator. And yet, he was sent flying this easily?

The courtyard was quiet.

The current Divine Capital was peaceful and calm. The city was finally enjoying some stability, However, heavy killing intent hung in the air, at this moment.

The warm wind caressed their faces, reminding them that the old man before them was not to be crossed!

This seemingly weak old man was capable of unleashing a burst of power without warning!

Zhu Tianyuan no longer underestimated this old man.

Zhu Honggong was slightly shocked.

Zhu Tianyuan managed a faint smile and said, "Old Mister Lu, that was an impressive move. Truly, I'm impressed... Let's talk this through." At the same time, he was weighing his options in his heart. He did not expect there to be such an expert in the Divine Capital who did not fear Old Villain Ji or the Nether Sect. What were his objectives? What did he want?

Lu Zhou asked, "Did you come to the Divine Capital to take Zhu Honggong away?"

"That's right," Zhu Tianyuan placed his hands on his back and bluntly said, "He's my son... It's only natural that I want to take him with me." Then, he looked at Zhu Honggong before he continued to say with a sigh, "You may not know this, Old Mister Lu. My son was terribly untalented when he was young, and he couldn't cultivate. However, Old Villain Ji took an interest in him. Hence, I made a wager with him. If my son manages to enter the Nascent Divinity realm, I'll never meet my son again."

"You're worried that he wouldn't agree to this, that's why you're trying to take him away with your own methods?" Lu Zhou asked.

"Indeed..." Zhu Tianyuan said, "I lost the wager, but how could I easily part with my own flesh and blood? Naturally, my relationship with Old Villain Ji will remain friendly. He's my son's master, after all. He's the great Nine-leaf cultivator and the Evil Sky Pavilion's Patriarch. Old Mister Lu, are you satisfied with this answer?"

In other words, Zhu Tianyuan meant to say, 'Indeed, you possess an amazing cultivation base, but are you bold enough to stand against a Nine-leaf cultivator?'