

Disciples 61

Chapter 61: Great Meditation Dharani

The young man said with a smile, "Why are you running away?"

Little Yuan'er was about to reply, but when she suddenly remembered that she could not expose herself, she swallowed the words that were hanging on the tip of her tongue.

When the young man saw Little Yuan'er hesitating, he continued to say with a smile, "I've observed you for the entire night, you can't fool me. Little girl, you're from the Divine Court realm. The old man's body is healthy. His cultivation base is at the middle stage of the Sense Condensation realm." He gestured with his hand as he said, "But that's not the point. Back to our topic, the second person who cultivated the sword to the penultimate stage is Yu Shangrong, the second head devil of Evil Sky Pavilion."

"Who's the third one?"

"The third person seems far away but is actually very close."

"You're the sword freak, Chen Wenjie?" Lu Zhou asked, puzzled.

"No, no... Chen Wenjie is obsessed with swordplay, but he doesn't love the sword. I'm different. I like the sword, and I like swordplay as well... A person like Chen Wenjie is ambiguous with his stance. Someone like him will die a gruesome death sooner or later," the young man said.

As soon as Lu Zhou heard this, he knew who the young man was. He stroked his beard as he said, "The one who loves swords to the bones, Jiang Aijian!"

Jiang Aijian had changed his name to reflect his deep love for the sword. He must be the only person in the cultivation world to do so. His pursuit of the sword was almost an obsession. He was also a genuine rogue cultivator. He was adapted to survive on the treacherous path of the cultivation world. His skills were clearly high based on how he managed to escape from the elite who killed Zhuo Ping. He had two obsessions; one was his love for the sword, and second, was to stay out of trouble. His second obsession played a huge role in keeping him, someone who stayed neutral, alive for so many years.

"You're exaggerating," Jiang Aijian said with a smile.

Lu Zhou lifted his head slightly as Unnamed materialized in his hand. It was short and exquisite.

Jiang Aijian was visibly stunned. His eyes were widened as he stared at it. It was truly beautiful. The length and the design of the blade were just what he liked. His voice contained hints of excitement as he said, "O-old Mister..."

Lu Zhou waved his hand, and Unnamed disappeared. He said emotionlessly, "If you wish to live, you'd do well not to covet this blade."

Dong! Dong! Dong!

At this moment, the tolling of the bell could be heard from the holy altar.

Lu Zhou frowned slightly.

The holy altar was where the grand ceremony of the Righteous and Fiendish Paths was celebrated. Why would there be a Buddhist bell there?

Jiang Aijian exclaimed in surprise, "Old Mister, the holy altar is filled with strange people! The cultivators from the Noble and Fiendish Paths are gathered there so it's an awfully dangerous place to be. I suggest you refrain from going there. I heard the Holy Daughter they had selected this time is the fifth villain of Golden Court Mountain's Evil Sky Pavilion." He laughed as he continued to say, "How ironic! A fiend is chosen as the Holy Daughter."

Lu Zhou ignored him.

Jiang Aijian spoke again, "However, if you really plan on going and getting yourself killed, I'll be able to obtain your sword, Old Mister. At that time, I'll collect your corpse and bury you in a treasured land where the elements are in harmony."

As soon as Jiang Aijian finished speaking, Little Yuan'er lost her temper. "Let me deal with him!" Her body was as light as a swallow, and her majesty could rival the heavens. Her ferocious Primal Qi rippled out immediately.

Jiang Aijian parried the incoming energy waves as he retreated. He was rendered speechless for a moment. "What a feisty young girl... You don't seem like an ordinary Divine Court Realm cultivator."

Little Yuan'er scoffed. "I'll hit you so hard that you'll be picking up your teeth from the ground..."

"Little girl, don't make me use my sword." Jiang Aijian retreated again.

Dong! Dong!

The bell tolled again from the holy altar. It was tolling with increasing urgency.

Lu Zhou glanced at Jiang Aijian dismissively. 'He's only a rogue cultivator who loves swords... There's no need to waste an item card on him.' He motioned to Little Yuan'er as he said, "Yuan'er, we're leaving!"

Suddenly, a roar sounded from the nearby forest.

The colossal mount, Bi An, dashed toward them. Its roar frightened the beasts in the forest into scampering. The King of the Beasts' aura sent chills running up one's spine.

Jiang Aijian was startled by the sight of the legendary mount. He quickly pulled his arms back and did a flip before he landed on the tips of his toes. He moved backward at lightning speed, evading Little Yuan'er's attack. "So, you're an elite..."

Those who possessed legendary mounts were undoubtedly elites whose names alone would shock the masses. The Old Mister might have a weak cultivation base, but it was clear his background was not as simple as it seemed.

Although Jiang Aijian loved swords, he loved his life more. He cupped his fists as he hovered in the air. "Old Mister... The holy altar is a dangerous place... Why don't you go somewhere else instead?"

"I can take care of myself." Lu Zhou leaped onto Bi An with light movements.

Bi An bared its fangs.

Little Yuan'er glanced at Jiang Aijian and scoffed before she leaped onto Bi An as well.

Jiang Aijian could only look as the duo sped toward the holy altar. He stroked his chin, lost in thought. 'Should I give chase? What if I run into that old villain?' He was in a dilemma. He mulled over the matter for some time before he finally made a decision. "I'm not going to involve myself in their quarrel. Right. That's what I'll do. I'll just collect his corpse when he dies." Then, he followed the duo from afar.

...

Dong! Dong! Dong!

On the holy altar.

The huge flying chariot of the Temple of Great Emptiness hovered in the air as dozens of monks chanted sutras with their palms joined together. The sound of their chantings resounded in the air.

Lu Zhou and Little Yuan'er were still a distance away, and the chantings sounded like the buzzing of mosquitoes to their ears. They did not make their way to the monks, instead, they landed someone near the holy altar.

The buildings on the holy altar took up a vast space. The patio at the base formed a ring around the area with 48 doors. The plaza extended for several miles in all directions. Ordinary people were not allowed to be in the vicinity without a valid reason.

When Lu Zhou stepped foot on the holy altar, the tolling of the bells became agitated.

It was annoying.

Lu Zhou raised his hand slightly. "The Buddhists' Great Meditation Dharani."

"What's a bunch of monks doing here?" Little Yuan'er muttered under her breath.

The Great Meditation Dharani had a powerful and intimidating effect on enemies. This was achieved by the communal chanting of sutras. Only the bald donkeys of the Temple of Great Emptiness could pull this off.

"Stay calm and wait. The Great Meditation Dharani can only be recited five times in a row..." Lu Zhou stood still as he looked at the flying chariot in the air. This might prove to be a good thing.

The Great Meditation Dharani could intimidate most cultivators. This solved Lu Zhou's worry about his Deadly Strike Card being unable to hit multiple targets at once. However, he was truly curious why the Temple of Great Emptiness would appear here when they usually did not concern themselves with the secular world's affairs?

The bell tolled once more.

The Great Meditation Dharani sounded as though a colony of flies was having a party.

Lu Zhou shook his head helplessly. He wondered if there was anyone who would enjoy listening to the Great Meditation Dharani?

After a few moments, the buzzing of the Great Meditation Dharani finally faded.

The holy altar was plunged into deadly silence.

“Let’s go,” Lu Zhou said as he and Little Yuan’er made their way to the center of the holy altar.

Even when they approached the plaza, nobody seemed to take notice of them. They successfully blended in with the crowd.

Little Yuan’er pointed at a nearby flying chariot and said, “There’s the flying chariot from the Fiend Temple!”

Apart from the Fiend Temple, there were also the flags from the Righteous Sect and the Clarity Sect around the holy altar’s plaza.

Just as expected, the cultivators from the Noble Path and Fiendish Path around the duo had a sour expression on their faces. They were practically huffing and puffing as they looked up.

Lu Zhou swept his eyes across the holy altar. With the Eye of Truth, everyone seemed like an enemy. He did not dare to think about what would happen to him if his identity was exposed. Three Impeccable Cards and Three Deadly Strike Cards were more than enough for him to escape with his life intact, but it would be difficult for him to take Zhao Yue away.

At this moment, a monk emerged from the flying chariot above the holy altar and descended slowly. His palms were joined together, and his kasaya glittered with gold.

Someone cried out in surprise, “Kong Xuan from the Temple of Great Emptiness?”

As Kong Xuan slowly descended, he projected his voice, “The abbot has decreed that the Holy Daughter of the current grand ceremony, Zhao Yue, will be taken away by the Temple of Great Emptiness. I ask for your understanding and forgiveness, my dear benefactors.”

A man in long robes pointed at Kong Xuan as he said indignantly, “Bald donkey! How can we let you take the Holy Daughter away just because you want to? What do you take our Righteous Sect for?”

Chapter 62: Strength of the Temple of Great Emptiness

It was clear that the grand ceremony had reached an important stage before the Temple of Great Emptiness came.

Lu Zhou looked around his surroundings but could not see Zhao Yue. However, he was certain Zhao Yue was on the holy altar since the monks of the Temple of Great Emptiness, the Righteous Sect, Clarity Sect, and the Fiend Temple were here.

A hint of excitement could be seen on Little Yuan’er’s face at this moment. She liked the clamor. She looked around fearlessly.

When Lu Zhou was still surveying his surroundings, a person walked up to him. “Old Mister, you should take a few steps back.”

“Jiang Aijian?” Lu Zhou was rendered speechless. It seemed like the rumor about this person’s pathological obsession with swords was true. However, for some who loved his life equally as much, it was unexpected that he would come to the holy altar.

Jiang Aijian glanced at the cultivators on the holy altar plaza who had a sour expression on their faces before he said, "Old Mister, if it weren't for your sword, I wouldn't come to this nonsensical place."

Lu Zhou's expression was calm, and he did not deign to reply to Jiang Aijian. He looked at Kong Xuan, the monk, who had descended on the center of the plaza.

Jiang Aijian said in a hushed tone, "You should leave now while you still have a chance to do so..."

"Hm?" Lu Zhou felt suspicious about Jiang Aijian's warning. He felt that Jiang Aijian was not telling him everything he knew.

Jiang Aijian looked around before he said softly, "In a few moments, these monks will seal the holy altar. Old Mister, the holy altar is only a pretense, and the Holy Daughter is a bait..."

Lu Zhou felt skeptical. He asked with a straight face, "How do you know this is a trap?"

"If you sell me your sword, I'll tell you... You're only at the middle stage of the Sense Condensing Realm, nobody will be able to save you if you don't leave now." He looked at the setting sun as he continued to say, "This is your last chance to survive."

Lu Zhou found Jiang Aijian's words amusing. He stroked his beard and asked, "I thought you wanted me dead?"

"No, no, no... I value life above all else. I would love to get my hands on that sword, but a righteous man should obtain the sword in a righteous way. Look around you..." Jiang Aijian motioned to the left and right. He clicked his tongue as he shook his head and said, "All of them look like they have a short lifespan. You're a good person, Old Mister. Good people should live long lives..."

"I'm a good person?" Lu Zhou was slightly taken aback by this compliment.

Jiang Aijian said with a smile, "That sword is a treasure. As its owner, I'm sure you won't have a bad character."

What kind of logic was this?

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "There are so many elites here... Can the Temple of Great Emptiness deal with them?"

Jiang Aijian shook his head. He pointed toward the Righteous Sect and Clarity Sect. He said, "Old Mister, look closely... the elders from the Righteous and Clarity Sects aren't here. Only the Third Seat of the Fiend Temple is here... They won't be able to do anything."

When Lu Zhou looked at the two flags, he discovered, indeed, that many of the seats were empty.

Jiang Aijian said with a frown, "They're being held back by the elites. They'll be lucky to keep their heads, let alone coming to the holy altar."

Lu Zhou looked at Jiang Aijian drily. 'This fellow seems to have a knack for getting information. No wonder he's able to make a name for himself in the cultivation world.'

Meanwhile, in the center of the holy altar, Kong Xuan bowed at the disciples from the Righteous Sect who were rioting before he raised his hand and said, "Zhao Yue is a villain from the Evil Sky Pavilion..."

She bears many sins. Several years ago, Master Kong Ming had lost his life in her hands. The Temple of Great Emptiness shall take her to let Buddha purge her of her sins so that she'll be able to reincarnate as a human."

The Righteous Sect's disciple rose to his feet and retorted angrily, "The she-fiend is the public enemy of the Noble Path. The Temple of Great Emptiness has never bothered about these things, and yet, you suddenly show up and fill our ears with your intended acts of mercy? Here's what I think of all this!" He spat on the ground as soon as he finished speaking.

Seeing this, the cultivators from the Righteous Sect laughed uproariously. However, the people from the Fiend Temple remained silent.

Lu Zhuo looked around. The Fiend Temple's Second Seat, Zuo Xinchuan, was killed by him. For this reason, they hated the Evil Sky Pavilion. It was logical for them to shift the blame to Zhao Yue. He was surprised the Fiend Temple had sent their Third Seat here this time. He did not know this person and had never seen this person in his memories as well. Perhaps, this person was too insignificant for Ji Tiandao to take note of.

Meanwhile, Kong Xuan, the monk, did not seem angry. He only looked around his surroundings before he said indifferently, "This old monk didn't come here to ask for your approval, dear benefactors. I'm only here to inform you of this decision. The Temple of Great Emptiness must take the Villain of Evil Sky Pavilion, Zhao Yue, away."

A figure suddenly leaped forward from the ranks of the Noble Path. "Well, you'll have to take her by force then." A long sword gleamed in his hand as he unleashed his Sword Qi in his surroundings.

The crowd gasped in surprise at this sudden attack.

Jiang Aijian glanced at the figure and shook his head before he said, "Just a cannon fodder throwing his life away. The Great Meditation Dharani weakens and intimidates its targets. With the chaotic Blood Qi of these people, I'd applaud them if they're able to even unleash 30% of their strength."

Lu Zhou watched the proceedings calmly. If this did not involve Zhao Yue, it would have nothing to do with him.

On the other hand, Little Yuan'er was further excited by this new development. She clapped along with the Righteous Sect's disciples. It seemed as though she was a cultivator from the Noble Path as well.

At this moment, the cultivator who leaped forward sent a wave of Sword Qi toward Xuan Kong.

There was a buzz in the air as Xuan Kong's kasaya glittered with gold. He seemed to have grown taller by 10 feet!

"Arhat Golden Body?"

Bang!

A loud explosion rang in the air as the cultivator was swatted away by the Arhat Golden Body. The cultivator flipped in the air and nearly lost his footing when he landed. The sword in his hand was still buzzing from the impact, and his arm was numb!

Kong Xuan extended one hand, standing still, as he said emotionlessly, "Dear benefactor, why's there a need for anger? The Villain is from the Evil Sky Pavilion. You have all fought and lost against the old villain along with 10 great Nascent Divinity Tribulation Realm's elites. Even the Heavenly Sword Sect Master Luo Changfeng died a gruesome death. Only by handing this she-fiend over to the Temple of Great Emptiness will everyone remain safe."

In other words, Kong Xuan meant that if Ji Tiandao were to come, how many of them were capable of stopping Ji Tian Dao?

"You have a nasty mouth, you bald donkey. If the Noble Path can't hold him back, what makes you think the Temple of Great Emptiness can?"

Kong Xuan's expression remained calm as he said slowly, "The abbot has been cultivating in seclusion for a century and has raised his cultivation base tremendously. We can deal with that old villain."

Kong Xuan's words were akin to a rock being thrown into a still lake, causing everyone present on the holy altar's plaza to break into an uproar. Many of them even had a frightened expression on their faces. They knew that the Temple of Great Emptiness' Kong Yuan was a Six-leaf Golden Body divine monk a century ago. They did not expect him to be cultivating in seclusion all this time.

Someone from the Clarity Sect stood up and bowed as he cupped his hands together at Kong Xuan. "If Master Kong Yuan can deal with the old villain from the Evil Sky Pavilion, the Clarity Sect agrees to hand over the she-fiend, Zhao Yue, to the Temple of Great Emptiness."

The people from the Noble Path were stunned.

The Clarity Sect and the Righteous Sect were of the same lineage. However, the people in charge were not present currently. If they agreed to this, how would they explain themselves to the dead disciples? They could not call the shots.

Kong Xuan nodded. "This old monk thanks the benefactors from Clarity Sect. The Temple of Great Emptiness definitely won't let you down. We'll certainly reform the villain."

At this moment, a deep voice sounded from behind Kong Xuan. "You'll have to ask for my permission if you want to take Zhao Yue away."

Kong Xuan turned around to face the Fiend Temple. "This old monk has said this visit isn't intended as a negotiation. I'm merely here to notify you of this decision." He spoke gently, but it grated on the nerves of the listeners.

The Third Seat of the Fiend Temple raised an eyebrow as he said coldly, "What a sanctimonious bald donkey! The Temple of Great Emptiness clearly planned this and cast the Great Meditation Dharani around the holy altar. You dare act as if you're worthy of administering justice when you play tricks like these?" He paused before continuing, "The Temple of Grand Emptiness has always claimed that it views all life equally without differentiating the righteous from the wicked. It has also never meddled in worldly affairs... Don't you have anything better to do today?"

Kong Xuan straightened his right arm. "Benefactor Duan, are you going to stop this old monk?"

“Wretched monk! You’re refusing a toast only to be forced to drink a forfeit!” The Third Seat of the Fiend Temple waved his arms, and several black-robed cultivators leaped out from behind him onto the plaza.

Kong Xuan stood calmly with his right hand outstretched when faced with the hostile newcomers. He did not seem anxious, and his manner was neither servile nor overbearing.

“Arhat Golden Body.” His 20-foot Golden Body emitted a vast energy as his kasaya fluttered in the air.

Jiang Aijian was shocked when he saw this. “Arhat Golden Body is on par with a Nascent Divinity Tribulation Realm’s two-leaf avatar. This bald donkey isn’t your average monk... Old Mister, quickly move to the back! The Fiend Temple has clearly come prepared. If that bald donkey uses a zen mark, you’ll certainly be affected since you’re only at the Sense Condensing Realm!” As he spoke, he tugged on Lu Zhou’s arm to pull Lu Zhou to the back.

Chapter 63: Brahman Lullaby

Jiang Aijian did not even have the time to turn around when he saw the few black-robed cultivators being repelled by the golden light. They did not even have the chance to land a blow.

The expressions of the Righteous Path’s cultivators changed slightly.

The people from the Fiend Temple looked up. The five people they sent had cultivation bases at the Divine Court Realm. They were also the Fiend Temple’s main force on this occasion. They did not expect Kong Xuan to repel all of them with a single move.

The Fiend Temple’s Third Seat, Duan Xing, was the only one who remained unfazed. He sat on his seat calmly as he stared at Kong Xuan in the plaza. A flash of killing intent could be seen in his eyes.

A cultivator from the Clarity Sect said, “To think that Kong Xuan possesses such a high cultivation base... I can’t even imagine what would happen if Abbot Kong Yuan were here.”

Based on Lu Zhou’s memories, it was true that the Temple of Great Emptiness stayed away from the affairs of the world. During the past happenings in the cultivation world, the Temple of Great Emptiness had almost always kept themselves out of it. Rumor had it that the abbot of the Temple of Great Emptiness was a cultivation genius of the Buddhist Zen Sect. He was so passionate about the Zen Sect that it was said that he became a Buddhist monk immediately. However, rumors were just rumors after all. Back then, Zhao Yue had encountered the Temple of Great Emptiness’ Kong Ming. They had a fight, and Zhao Yue had killed Kong Ming. If he truly had been a cultivator of the Mysterious Heaven Saint Realm, Zhao Yue would not have bested him. Since the Temple of Great Emptiness had chosen to interrupt the grand ceremony this time, they were clearly declaring the Evil Sky Pavilion as their enemy!

Meanwhile, the Fiend Temple’s Third Seat, Duan Xing, glanced at his defeated subordinates before he said indifferently, “Kong Xuan, an honest person doesn’t have to resort to schemes. You’re the one who kept the elders of Clarity Sect and Righteous Sect away, right?”

Kong Xuan shook his head. “The Great Temple of Emptiness is an open and upright institution. Why would we need to resort to such methods?”

“Open and upright? Weren’t you the one who stationed the stick monks outside the holy altar?” Duan Xing said with a sneer.

“It seems like you greatly misunderstand the Temple of Great Emptiness, dear benefactor... If you insist on stopping me, Benefactor Duan, I’ll play the game with you.”

Both sides were waiting with swords drawn and bows nocked.

At the same time, Jiang Aijian chuckled softly as he said, “Old Mister, didn’t I tell you? That sword freak, Chen Wenjie, has always held an ambiguous stance. He has killed many elites from the Clarity and Righteous Sects. If he steps forward now, the two sects would definitely love to turn him into ashes.”

Lu Zhou was puzzled. “Chen Wenjie is ambiguous with his stance?”

“Old Mister, think about it. If you sell the sword to me, I’ll tell you everything you want to know,” Jiang Aijian used his hand to cover his mouth as he said in a hushed tone, “I even know who the Righteous Sect’s Master Zhang Yuanshan’s wife is seeing...” He winked at Lu Zhou as he spoke, his expression seemed to say there was nothing under the heavens that he did not know about.

Lu Zhou was once again rendered speechless by Jiang Aijian, but he kept a straight face. ‘That ignorant man, Zhang Yuanshan, has cursed me so many times. Is his wife having an affair a punishment?’ He coughed before he dismissed this preposterous thought and focused his attention on the plaza.

At this moment, the Fiend Temple’s Third Seat, Duan Xing, rose to his feet slowly. He raised both arms and a subordinate standing behind him caught his black robes respectfully.

The onlookers had a clear look at Duan Xing’s appearance at this time. He was a sour-faced young man with thin lips and cold eyes.

“Bald monkey... I will not agree to you taking Zhao Yue away,” Duan Xing said before he vanished from his spot. When he reappeared, he stood in front of Kong Xuan.

“Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm!” It only took the onlookers one glance to see that Duan Xing was an elite. Their expressions changed drastically. They did not expect to see a Nascent Divinity Tribulation Realm’s expert in this small-time grand ceremony on the holy altar.

It was clear that the Fiend Temple placed a lot of weight on Zhao Yue since Zhuo Xinchuan was dead. It was no wonder that Duan Xing refused to give in! Zuo Xinchuan was the only Nascent Divinity Tribulation Realm’s expert who managed to cultivate the Fiend Zen to the Four-leaf Golden Lotus’ stage. However, he died inside the Evil Sky Pavilion. How could they not be furious about this?

“Arhat Golden Body!” Kong Xuan activated his Golden Body again. His kasaya fluttered in the wind caused by his surging energy.

In the next moment, Duan Xing’s body seemed to have split into 10, 100, 1,000... They surrounded Kong Xuan and attacked at the same time.

The onlookers were stunned. What technique was this? Why had they never seen this before?

Even the subordinates from the Fiend Temple shook their heads and exclaimed in wonder. They had never seen such a dazzling technique before.

Cultivators from the Righteous or Fiend Paths rarely cultivated agility techniques. These afterimages were created by moving at an incredibly fast speed.

“Daoist technique, Dao Invisibility,” Lu Zhou said as he stroked his beard.

Jiang Aijian was slightly surprised. “Old Mister, you know this technique?”

“This technique originated from the Daoist Societies. It was spread to Fuyu before it eventually became a lost art,” Lu Zhou said,

“Fuyu? The Other Tribes...” Jiang Aijian’s eyes widened. He looked at the Fiend Temple’s Third Seat and the dazzling silhouettes he left all across the plaza.

In a world where Great Yan held dominance, there was no place for the Other Tribes.

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Thousands upon thousands of silhouettes landed blows on the Arhat Golden Body.

Kong Xuan felt immensely pressured, causing him to frown. “As expected of the Fiend Temple’s Third Seat... This old monk has indeed underestimated the Nascent Divinity Tribulation Realm cultivation base.”

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shadow punches hit the Golden Body with blasts of air as energy formed crisscrossed networks in the air above the plaza.

Those who were nearer took a few steps backward to avoid being caught in the crossfire.

Kong Xuan moved his hands as he said, “In that case, this old monk won’t hold back.” Primal Qi surrounded him as he joined his palms together. “Seeing One’s Nature.” His heart was clear and bright. He was as steady as Mount Tai.

Zen Sect’s Dhyana Mudra!

The thousands upon thousands of silhouettes were immediately dispersed by the Dhyana Mudra.

Duan Xing paused in midair as if he had been frozen in place.

During this short moment, Kong Xuan moved his arms again. The Dhyana Mudra disappeared as he aimed a hand seal toward Duan Xing.

Great Vajra Wheel Hand Sign?

Bzzt!

Duan Xing frowned slightly. He raised his arms, blocking the powerful attack. Four-leaf Golden Lotus Avatar!

It was as if the vajra had hit a tough wall as it bounced back.

The cultivators scattered to dodge the attack.

The hand sign hit the holy altar's portico, and the 48 doors shook violently. The shockwave from the energy blasted the doors open like a raging wind.

The main door in the middle was the most sacred. It was also the tallest and biggest door. With a loud bang, Zhao Yue was exposed.

The cultivators from the Righteous and Fiend Paths looked over.

"Holy Daughter!"

A small round dais could be seen inside the door. Zhao Yue was tied to a pole on the dais. She had a furious expression on her face, but she did not struggle. A bright red lotus could be seen between her brows.

"Zhao Yue, the she-villain!" The crowd cried out in shock.

Lu Zhou looked up and saw Zhao Yue. He could not sense any aura around Zhao Yue. Just as he had expected, her cultivation base had been sealed.

Kong Xuan maintained his Arhat Golden Body and said haughtily, "Benefactor, why must you go out of your way to make things difficult for me?"

"Wretched monk... If this is all you got, I advise you to bring your band of bald donkeys away with you before you run for your life!" Duan Xing bellowed angrily. Under the effects of his Four-leaf Golden Lotus Avatar, his aura was much more domineering compared to before.

Kong Xuan joined his palms together. "Since you insist on standing in my way, this old monk won't hold back anymore."

Boom!

The Arhat Golden Body disappeared, and Kong Xuan supported his chin with one hand as he sat on the ground. An Arhat Golden Body's projection could be seen at this moment.

Bzzt.

The monks around the holy altar discarded their rods and joined their palms together. Apart from that, the monks around the flying chariot in the air had also moved into a new formation. Once again, the buzzing chants resounded in the holy altar.

Although Lu Zhou's expression was calm, he was inwardly surprised. 'Brahman Lullaby? This is bad! How am I supposed to withstand this with my cultivation base at the middle stage of the Sense Condensing Realm?'

Chapter 64: There will Always be Someone Better

The Brahman Lullaby. It was a type of Buddhist sound technique that was similar to the Meditation Dharani.

When the Brahman Lullaby was recited, their own party would benefit from it while the enemies would suffer losses by having their minds rattled.

Those with weaker cultivation bases would be intimidated by the sound technique and bleed from their seven orifices until they die. However, Buddha was merciful to all. They would never use the word 'die', hence, it was called a lullaby, as though those who were afflicted were only going to sleep. Those with stronger cultivation bases would be confused into a stupor by the lullaby, rendering them powerless to react against any incoming attacks.

Currently, this sound technique was chanted by so many monks. Its power was beyond one's imagination.

Lu Zhou was only at the middle stage of the Sense Condensing realm. It was impossible for him to withstand this.

Bzzt! Bzzt! Bzzt!

It sounded as though flies were having a party around the holy altar.

Lu Zhou lifted an arm. A technique had instinctively come to him, and he quickly tried to activate it. At the same time, he turned to look at Little Yuan'er and Jiang Aijian. 'Where did Jiang Aijian go?'

Lu Zhou's instincts told him that Jiang Aijian was skilled. Alas, he had been focusing on the plaza and did not pay attention to Jiang Aijian.

Little Yuan'er was frowning slightly. She pouted and stomped her foot in anger! However, she did not seem to be affected in any other way. Her pure heart and character that was devoid of distracting thoughts were an advantage in a situation like this. Moreover, her cultivation base was at the Divine Court realm. The beginning of the Brahman Lullaby almost did not affect her at all.

Bzzt! Bzzt! Bzzt!

The Brahman Lullaby became louder and louder as though waves were crashing on the people on the holy altar.

Lu Zhou raised a wizened hand. He knew this was as far as his cultivation base at the middle stage of the Sense Condensing realm could take him. He flipped his hand and took an item card out. If he could kill the Temple of Great Emptiness' Kong Xuan with a single strike, the monks would lose their leader, and the chant would automatically stop. However, there was a problem. By doing that, he would certainly draw everyone's attention. This would be disadvantageous to him if he planned to bring Zhao Yue away under everyone's noses. After mulling over it for a while, he flipped his hand again, and the item card disappeared. He decided to dodge the worst of the attack by using the Impeccable Card at the right moment. His old face remained calm.

The loud buzzing continued to disturb the minds of the people.

"Ouch! Ouch! These bald donkeys are giving me a headache!" A young cultivator standing next to Lu Zhou cursed as he held his head in his hands before dropping and rolling on the ground.

"Eh... O-old man, w-why are you not affected?"

'That's right! Why am I unaffected?' Lu Zhou looked around him. Everyone's faces seemed to contort in pain and shine with sweat.

The buzzing sound intensified. It was several times louder than before.

Lu Zhou suddenly felt a wave of impact surging toward him. This was Brahman Lullaby's greatest effect. He saw many people with a weak cultivation base spit out blood. Needless to say, they were also bleeding from their seven orifices.

A burning sensation spread from Lu Zhou's sea of Qi in his dantian.

Bzzt! Bzzt!

"To get the mental intelligence of others, we should know that there is no difference in the hearts of the people in the three thousand worlds. They are like one world."

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

"To gain enlightenment and the power of speech that can change the world with words and free the common people from sufferings."

Lu Zhong was stunned. He was not hearing the droning chants of the Brahman Lullaby, but the contents of the Scrolls of Heavenly Writing! It was the Human Scroll of Heavenly Writing. When the burning sensation from his dantian subsided, it was replaced by a faint coolness. It spread from his dantian to his belly, chest, heart, and brain. He became wary at this moment.

Meanwhile, the sound of the Brahman Lullaby reached his ears again. He looked around him. Most of the cultivators were already sprawled on the ground. It was clear that they were in so much pain that death seemed to be the better option. The remaining cultivators who managed to stay on their feet could not move at all.

On the other hand, the monks around the holy altar joined their palms together and their eyes were closed. They were chanting with increasing fervor and urgency.

At this moment, only the Four-leaf Golden Lotus Avatar was arrogantly hovering in the center of the plaza.

Little Yuan'er was sitting on the ground now. She was not terribly affected, she only seemed annoyed.

On the contrary, Zhao Yue was unconscious.

Meanwhile, the Fiend Temple's Third Seat, an elite of the Four-leaf Golden Lotus Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, was looking at the kasaya worn by the monk, Kong Xuan. The kasaya was shining with radiant golden light.

When Kong Xuan saw that Duan Xing was still standing, he increased the strength of his Golden Body. "Arhat Golden Body!"

Double Arhat Golden Body!

"Bald donkey, is this what you mean by showing mercy to the masses? What a colossal joke!" Duan Xing laughed as he extended his Four-leaf avatar and charged toward the Arhat Golden Body.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

When they collided, the violent vibration shook the holy altar's plaza as well. It felt as though space itself had warped.

Duan Xing activated his Dao Invisibility. His avatars left afterimages around him.

The cultivators who were still conscious looked at the Four-leaf avatars with a frightened expression on their faces. Moreover, they also saw four Arhat Golden Bodies.

Under the enhancement of the four sources of golden light, the Brahman Lullaby sound technique was enhanced to the limit! The lullaby sounded thunderous from the monks' rehearsed chantings.

Boom!

An explosion sounded in the air as Duan Xing's Four-leaf avatars disappeared. He was sent flying and landed among the Fiend Temple's ranks.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Duan Xing tapped his meridian points to stop his wounds caused by the sound technique from worsening. He looked at Kong Xuan who was unleashing his mighty power in the plaza with a cold glint in his eyes.

"The bald donkey is so powerful?!" Duan Xian pushed himself off the ground with one hand. A fierce expression appeared on his face. He wanted to move but discovered that he had been rendered immobile.

The Brahman Lullaby's intimidating effect covered every inch of the holy altar.

Kong Xuan's eyes were clear and bright. He had risen into the air as he shone with a radiant golden light.

'What's he doing? Why isn't he stopping? He has already won!' Lu Zhou thought to himself.

"That's enough!" A deep voice, clearly unaffected by the Brahman Lullaby, sounded from behind the monk, Kong Xuan.

Kong Xuan was stunned. Who was it? He turned his Golden Body around slowly and saw an old man walking toward the holy altar with ease. The old man's speed was neither rushed nor slow, and his manner was neither servile nor domineering.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said drily, "The Buddhist Sect has always prided itself in not taking any lives, and yet, you've broken that rule today. Is this the will of the Great Temple of Emptiness' abbot, Kong Yuan, or is it your will?"

"Benefactor, why are you unaffected?" Although the monk, Kong Xuan, was filled with confidence and knowledge, he was still taken aback by the old man's leisurely manner.

The Brahman Lullaby was chanted by dozens of monks and himself, a Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm monk. The old man should have been affected in some way at the very least.

Lu Zhou said indifferently, "Answer my question."

“Old benefactor, are you trying to stop this old monk?” Kong Xuan widened his eyes. His instinct told him this old man would not be easy to deal with.

Lu Zhou shook his head. That was not the reply he wanted to hear. He sighed softly. “You pigheaded monk.” He raised an arm slowly.

At the same time, Kong Xuan’s Arhat Golden Body burst with a blinding golden light again, and it increased from four to eight bodies. The Arhat Golden Bodies instantly attacked.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A Buddha Golden Body that was 100 feet tall and 10 feet wide appeared by Lu Zhou’s side, keeping the eight Arhat Golden Bodies at bay! It looked like a grandfather stopping his grandchildren.

At this moment, those who still managed to retain their consciousness were filled with disbelief. The Arhat Golden Bodies that they thought were so powerful had suddenly become so weak. This Golden Body was too f*cking big! They had to strain their necks to just look at it. Most of them cried out in surprise at the sight of this.

“A senior Buddhist monk!”

“He’s a senior Buddhist monk!”

Lu Zhou swung his sleeve lightly before a small hand seal shot out from the Golden Body toward Kong Xuan.

Kong Xuan stared with his mouth agape at the incoming hand seal before he quickly abandoned his Arhat Golden Bodies and retreated! He descended on the ground immediately.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A series of explosions reverberated in the air as rubble flew everywhere when Kong Xuan retreated at lightning speed.

‘Deadly Strike Card is a sure-kill move. Can you really run from it?’

Chapter 65: Enlightened Senior Monk?

Lu Zhou thought to himself that the monk, Kong Xuan, was no pushover. As Kong Xuan retreated, he launched countless palm strikes that hit Lu Zhou’s massive Golden Body before they disappeared. He was not harmed nor was he affected. This was all the doing of the Impeccable Card! However, why did it manifest with a Buddhist Sect’s technique?

The monk, Kong Xuan, was in disbelief over what was happening. The small palm strike seemed to possess eyes as it pursued him. He had no choice but to move backward and retreat. His instincts told him that this small palm strike was dangerous.

The holy altar was wide; it spanned dozens of miles. Just when Kong Xuan thought he had succeeded in evading the palm strike, the palm strike suddenly grew in size in just a blink of an eye. As he retreated further, he could not shake off the feeling that something was amiss. As time went on, he noticed the

palm strike grew bigger and bigger. At this time, the size of the palm was taller than a man. A hint of desperation grew in his heart as he continued to retreat, his survival instinct kicking in.

When the palm strike was just a hairbreadth away from Kong Xuan's face, it enlarged by several times again. Due to this, he had difficulty dodging the attack. The palm strike closed in on him as though it knew he was going to unleash some technique.

Currently, the size of the palm strike was extremely huge. Its size was indescribable. It was like an extra-large version of the Great Vajra Wheel Hand Sign!

Meanwhile, back at the holy altar's portico, Zhao Yue finally managed to open her eyes now that the Brahman Lullaby had somewhat died down. When she saw the shocking scene before her eyes, she mumbled before fainting again, "Ma...master?"

Boom!

The extra-large Great Vajra Wheel Hand Sign landed on Kong Xuan as though he was a fly that was being swatted. Soon after, the hand seal vanished, and Kong Xuan had been reduced to dust!

As soon as the monk, Kong Xuan, disappeared, the chanting of the Brahman Lullaby ended abruptly, and the monks around the holy altar fell. At the same time, the Temple of Great Emptiness' flying chariot that was hovering in the air tottered perilously. The monks strained themselves to support it and slow its descent.

Silence descended on the holy altar.

Lu Zhou's Buddha Golden Body that was 100 feet tall disappeared at this moment.

Everything happened in ten seconds. It was neither too long nor too short. However, for the cultivators of the Noble and Fiend Paths, every single second seemed as long as a year.

Currently, every cultivator's attention was focused on Lu Zhou. This old man managed to defeat Kong Xuan with just a single strike. The old man stroked his beard in a leisurely manner as though it was a lovely day to be taking a walk. A question appeared in everyone's minds at this moment. 'Who's this cultivator who unleashed such a powerful Great Vajra Wheel Hand Sign? Is he another enlightened senior monk from some Buddhist Sect?!

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou was lost in thought, calculating the results. He decided to pursue the matter of merit points and rewards later. After that, he surveyed his surroundings. Most of the cultivators were currently unable to fight.

The plans of the heavens superseded that of man. Nobody expected Kong Xuan would use the Brahman Lullaby on everyone.

However, this was inconsequential to Lu Zhou now. The Deadly Strike Card and Impeccable Card he had used had a powerful intimidating effect. At this moment, nobody would risk attacking him. He did not expect this as well. He continued to survey his surroundings as he stroked his beard. His eyes took in the expressions of shock and reverence on everyone's faces. In the end, he settled his gaze on the Fiend Temple's Third Seat, Duan Xing. He paid more attention to Duan Xing since if there were anyone who

was still capable of fighting, it would be Duan Xing. He wondered if Duan Xing would take the risk and attack him?

A hint of reverence and respect for the strong could be seen in Duan Xing's eyes at this moment. After a long silence, he slowly rose to his feet before cupping his hands together at Lu Zhou. "This junior from Fiend Temple, Duan Xing, thanks the master for his aid!"

The expression on Lu Zhou's old face was calm. He had expected this reaction. The two techniques he had unleashed were a Buddhist Sect's techniques. Individuals who did not cultivate in the Zen Sect would find it difficult to attain such a cultivation base. Even the elite cultivators, Zuo Xinchuan, cultivated the Fiend Zen for a long time and endured countless hardships before attaining the Four-leaf avatar. Zuo Xinchuan was also the only person to have achieved that in a century. Even he did not expect that he would be able to unleash that zen mark.

The cultivators from the Righteous Sect cupped their fists together and said in unison, "Thank you, master!"

The people of the Clarity Sect followed suit. "Thank you, master!"

In their eyes, Lu Sheng was an enlightened senior monk who had withdrawn from the secular world and did not interfere with worldly affairs.

Lu Zhou decided to play along with everyone's misunderstanding of his identity. He raised his hand and said loudly, "The Buddhist Sects value mercy above all else. I'm greatly distressed to have killed one of my own kin today, but I had no choice."

Upon hearing this, the cultivators from the Noble Path gave him a thumbs-up. In their opinion, Lu Zhou's behavior was befitting of a senior monk.

"There's no need to concern yourself about this, master. Kong Xuan was despicable and shameless. He intended to kill all of us with the Brahman Lullaby and take the Holy Daughter away! This outcome is to everyone's satisfaction!"

"A person like Kong Xuan doesn't deserve to be a disciple of a Buddhist Sect. Master, you're doing all Buddhist Sects justice by killing that man. You're truly an enlightened senior monk! Compared to those sanctimonious bald... Well, you're 10,000 times better than them!" A Righteous Sect's cultivator who had spoken up suddenly made a sharp turn halfway through his speech. It did not seem appropriate to refer to monks as bald donkeys in front of this master. His heart raced in his chest when he thought about his transgression.

However, Lu Zhou remained indifferent. It seemed he did not mind the others referring to monks as bald monkeys.

At this moment, a Clarity Sect's cultivator cupped his hands together and said, "If it weren't for you, master, all of us would've died! Master, you have such a profound cultivation base, I wonder what brings you to the holy altar today?"

Lu Zhou gave that person a glance and replied, "I was just passing by."

"I see. I heard that senior monks who cultivated with their hair like to travel the world and regard the four corners of the world as their home. I'm truly blessed for three lifetimes to have met you today, master!"

Each cultivator was better at flattery than the last one.

Many of the cultivators slowly got on their feet with labored movements.

On the other hand, the monks had been under immense pressure before this. The sudden disruption of the incantation did not do them any good as well. They were panting heavily as they sat on the ground. With a Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm's cultivator such as Duan Xing here, there was no need to fear the remaining monks. These monks did not even dare to take a single step toward him.

Lu Zhou knew that he could not stay any longer. He cast a glance in Little Yuan'er's direction. It seemed like Little Yuan'er was... sound asleep? 'This little girl! How carefree is she? How can she fall asleep with all the commotion around her? This won't do, I'll have to re-educate her!'

However, this was not the time to be disciplining Little Yuan'er so he had no choice but to let it slide for now. He called out softly, "Yuan'er!"

Little Yuan'er's body trembled for a moment before she finally woke up. She rose to her feet immediately. "Ma...master?"

"Impudent!" Lu Zhou glared at her.

Little Yuan'er quickly moved to Lu Zhou's side. An aggrieved expression appeared on her face after she was reproached.

Upon seeing this, someone asked, "Master, I see you have a female disciple... Is your Buddhist Sect so liberal that it's even accepting female disciples now?"

"..." Lu Zhou was worried more and more questions he had no answers to would come if he stayed any longer. Who knew if he had to use another item card at that time? It would be a great loss to him if that were to happen. The others were still in a daze as he looked at the unconscious Zhao Yue. He said clearly, "Go get her."

"Mhm." Little Yuan'er leaped toward Zhao Yue immediately.

Upon seeing this, a shocked expression appeared on the cultivators' faces.

"Master... what're you doing?"

"Master, you can't take her away!"

'Are they trying to stop me?' Lu Zhou's eyes swept across the cultivators, and they fell silent immediately.

"Did you think Kong Xuan was acting alone when he boldly attacked this venue?"

Everyone was stunned when they heard Lu Zhou's words. That was right. Although the monk, Kong Xuan, had a profound cultivation base, he would not have acted this way on his own. The Temple of Great Emptiness's abbot, Kong Yuan, must have approved of Kong Xuan's actions.

“Such scum is an embarrassment to Buddhist Sects!”

“Abbot Kong Yuan has cultivated for a century, and yet, he has ventured down the wrong path!” A cultivator said. After a while, he added, “If Kong Yuan comes, we ask you to defend us, master.”

Everyone quickly bowed at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou shook his head and stroked his beard, remaining silent. His expression was indifferent as well. However, he thought to himself, ‘What does it have to do with me if Kong Yuan comes looking for trouble with all of you? What a joke! If I weren’t here today, all of you would’ve died!’

Chapter 66: Taking Zhao Yue Away

Lu Zhou’s impression of the Clarity Sect and Righteous Sect was not good to begin with. He was already showing them great mercy by not holding them accountable for bringing Zhao Yue here. How dare they ask him to defend them? He thought these people deserved it if Kong Yuan came looking for them.

At this moment, Little Yuan’er who was carrying Zhao Yue returned to Lu Zhou’s side.

Upon seeing this, the cultivators began to speak up one after another.

“Master, please don’t do this!”

“Zhao Yue is the fifth disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion’s old villain. She has committed many crimes. If she’s not dealt with, she’ll bring calamity to the world!”

“Please reconsider your decision, master!”

Lu Zhou sneered inwardly. A few moments ago, they were asking him to defend them, and now, they were asking him to reconsider his action. ‘They should weigh their own worth on the scale. It’s indeed true that the Noble Path is filled with sanctimonious pricks.’ After a while, he said coldly, “Is there anyone who has a problem with me taking her away?”

The cultivators seemed to have been put between a rock and a hard place. “Err...”

Lu Zhou turned around after he said, “Let’s go.”

Duan Xing, the Fiend Temple’s Third Seat, appeared before Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou was not surprised. Duan Xing was the only one among this band of cultivators who was skilled. He did not have to trouble himself with the others. It was within his expectation for Duan Xing to stop him. ‘Just as well. Dealing with Duan Xing will serve as another warning for these Noble Path’s cultivators.’

However, something unexpected happened.

Duan Xing bowed slightly and said with a smile, “It’s most appropriate for master to bring the she-villain, Zhao Yue, away. The Fiend Temple fully agrees with this!”

As soon as Duan Xing finished speaking, the cultivators from Clarity Sect and Righteous Sect exchanged a look among themselves.

'Although the Noble and Fiend Paths are at odds with each other, today's grand ceremony was held to use Zhao Yue in a marriage alliance to soften the tension between the two sides. Your Second Seat was also killed by the Evil Sky Pavilion's old villain. Why would you let Zhao Yue go now?'

"Duan Xing, have you forgotten how Zuo Xinchuan lost his life?"

Duan Xing replied with a smile, "The Second Seat went up the mountain to challenge the Evil Sky Pavilion. He was outmatched and lost his life. That's all there is to it."

"Can you speak for the entire Fiend Temple?"

Duan Xing looked at everyone, his eyes flashing coldly.

Fuh!

Duan Xing moved quickly and raised a palm. The Clarity Sect's cultivator who was hit reeled back and spat out a mouthful of blood before he crashed onto the portico! He was dead!

Upon seeing this, a shocked expression could be seen on everyone's faces as they took a step backward.

"The Noble and Fiend Paths are at odds... I'm not that bald donkey, Kong Xuan. If you're here to preach, you'd do well to go home and preach to your own mother! I'm sick of hearing all this..."

"..."

The holy altar was deathly silent.

Who would dare to oppose Duan Xing at this moment? They were daring enough to argue about reason with an enlightened senior monk, but they did not dare to do the same to someone from the Fiend Path. Those from the Fiend Path were unreasonable after all. It was no wonder those who were on the Fiend Path in Great Yan were despised by those on the Noble Path!

Duan Xing walked up to Lu Zhou. He bowed again and cupped his hands together again before he said, "You are merciful, master, to be willing to reform this she-villain. This is a blessing for everyone under the heavens."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. This person was much more tactful than the people from the Clarity Sect and Righteous Sect. However, he still remained wary. If there were a need, he would use another item card.

Duan Xing said, "Since you're taking the she-villain away, the Fiend Temple will consider the Second Seat, Zuo Xinchuan, avenged."

Lu Zhou nodded and said indifferently, "You did a good job cultivating your Dao Invisibility."

Duan Xing was taken aback when he heard this. He quickly lowered his head.

Lu Zhou waved his arm lightly.

It did not take long before Bi An charged over from beyond the holy altar. It roared like a tiger and bared its fangs.

The monks from the Temple of Great Emptiness had been manning the perimeter, but Bi An did not seem troubled by them. It ignored them completely and charged toward Lu Zhou.

Bang! Bang!

Two Brahma Sea realm monks with eight connected meridians reeled from the impact.

The crowd was shocked again.

'This mount...'

'What a feisty beast!'

'To think that an enlightened senior monk with this cultivation base would have such a violent mount like this.'

'I didn't expect this!'

Lu Zhou leaped onto Bi An.

Little Yuan'er carried Zhao Yue and easily leaped onto Bi An's back as well.

Bi An roared again. It pushed back with its four hooves and dashed away from the holy altar through the air.

The others would need some grand technique to catch up to a legendary mount once it left the boundaries of the holy altar. However, grand techniques would require a huge amount of energy. A cultivator would not be able to use them at will unless they had a profound cultivation base.

The others looked on enviously as Bi An flew away from the holy altar's plaza like the wind.

At this moment, the pressure on the holy altar plaza was lifted.

The cultivators from the Righteous Sect and Clarity Sect shook their heads and sighed. They were powerless to do anything. After a while, they spoke up again.

"We can't forgive this band of bald donkeys!"

"Lock them up!"

However, the Fiend Temple's Third Seat said coldly, "Aren't you being too lenient by just locking them up?"

"Then, what would you have us do?"

Duan Xing said, "Remove the weed by pulling up its roots to prevent any mishaps in the future."

The cultivators from the Clarity Sect and Righteous Sect looked at Duan Xing in shock. Since they took pride in being on the Noble Path, they, naturally, would not do such a thing.

However, the Fiend Temple did not have such qualms.

The Noble Path's cultivators did not say anything as though by remaining silent they were giving their tacit approval.

The fury of the Fiend Temple, inspired by the ordeal they went through that was caused by the Brahman Lullaby, would find its outlet in these monks.

...

Lu Zhou steered Bi An and navigated through the clusters of buildings on the holy altar. Unbeknownst to him, a figure had stepped out from behind a random building.

The figure belonged to none other than Jiang Aijian. A conflicted expression could be seen on his face as he looked at Bi An's retreating back. He muttered under his breath, "That's impossible... His cultivation base is clearly at the middle stage of the Sense Condensing realm! How can he be a great master of the Buddhist Sect?!"

Jiang Aijian stroked his chin as he fell into another dilemma. "Should I go after him? Will I be reduced to dush? However, he's a senior monk so he probably won't kill me on a whim, right? Hmmm, the Old Mister seems like a nice person, I'm sure there won't be any problem."

When Jiang Aijian looked up, Bi An had already vanished from his sight. He did not even know which direction the beast was headed. He was stunned. He turned around in a circle. 'Who am I? Where the f*ck am I? What was I going to do again?'

...

Lu Zhou did not head toward Golden Court Mountain. Instead, he flew toward Runan City. Although he had found Zhao Yue, there were still many questions that needed answering.

Lu Zhou dismounted from Bi An before dismissing Bi An when they were near Runan City. After all, Bi An would attract too much attention.

Lu Zhou and Little Yuan'er brought Zhao Yue with them back to the inn. When they entered, the innkeeper was even more excited to see them compared to his own parents. He ran up to Lu Zhou before kneeling and kowtowing.

"My lord, you've finally returned! If you arrive any later, I would've lost my head!"

Lu Zhou said suspiciously, "What do you mean?"

"The officer has told me that you're from the palace... I've acted impertinently toward you, and that's a great crime!"

"No matter." Lu Zhou waved his hand. He motioned for Little Yuan'er to bring Zhao Yue into the room. He had no need to argue with an innkeeper.

Lu Zhou took a few steps up the stairs before turning around. He asked coldly, "Did you find the culprit?"

The innkeeper shook his head and said, "The officer would never reveal such information to me. I truly don't know."

Lu Zhou nodded. He stroked his beard as he went up the stairs.

After the incident at the holy altar, Lu Zhou could rule out Jiang Aijian. That sword freak, Chen Wenjie, was fighting against a Clarity Sect's elite so he could not have been the culprit as well. That left him two

other possibilities. It was either his second disciple, Sword Devil Yu Shangrong, or the Luo Sect's Luo Changqing.

Luo Changqing was currently in the northern regions of Great Yan. It would take him some time to get here. The possibility of him being the culprit was not high.

Lu Zhou stopped and looked at the corner where Zhuo Ping had been killed. 'Yesterday... my second disciple, Sword Devil Yu Shangrong, was merely dozens of meters away from me?'

"Master," Little Yuan'er called out.

"What's the matter?"

"Senior Sister has woken up..."

Lu Zhou nodded. He walked up the stairs with a stern expression. "That evil disciple! I've truly outdone myself this time!"

Chapter 67: You Dare Tell a Lie?

Lu Zhou walked into the room with a stern expression on his face.

Zhao Yue was, indeed, awake, but she seemed weak as she lay on the bed. Moving seemed to be too great of an ordeal for her at this moment. Her cultivation base had been sealed, and she was subjected to the torment of the Brahman Lullaby. It was good enough that she managed to hold onto her life. She was able to stay alive due to her firm foundation.

Lu Zhou walked up to the table and slowly sat down. He looked at Zhao Yue.

Loyalty: 10%.

'Just as expected,' Lu Zhou thought to himself.

When Zhao Yue saw her master next to her, her face paled immediately. She quickly scrambled off the bed without minding her appearance or condition, causing her to nearly fall on the floor due to her weak limbs. Fortunately, Little Yuan'er caught her just in time.

"Master! This disciple knows that she has done wrong! I know that I have done wrong!" Zhao Yue did not even bother coming up with an excuse as she began to kowtow.

Zhao Yue continued for some time before Lu Zhou waved his arm and said indifferently, "That's enough."

Zhao Yue looked at him with a hint of remorse. There was also a slight hint of fear mixed in.

Before Zhao Yue could explain herself again, Lu Zhou asked bluntly, "Who abducted you?"

Zhao Yue shook her head like a child who knew she had made a blunder. Not even a shred of dignity as the villain of the Golden Court Mountain could be seen in her at this moment. She said softly, "I only know the person is an elite from Clarity Sect. His cultivation base... is profound... He's almost on the same level, no, no, he's slightly weaker compared to you, master."

There were three true elites in the Clarity Sect. The first one was the sect master, Mo Qi. Rumor had it that his cultivation base was at the Seven-leaf Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. The second elite was their grand elder, Pan Litian. This man had vanished without a trace long ago, nobody knew where he went. It was said that Pan Litian's cultivation base surpassed that of his sect master. However, this rumor was never verified. The third one was the second elder, You Hongyi, the most powerful female cultivator in the Clarity Sect.

"Zhao Yue... I've said that I won't deal with traitors of the sect lightly. Do you remember that?"

When Zhao Yue heard this, she trembled and shook her head. "Master, you must listen to my explanation! I have no intention of betraying you. I wanted to return to my hometown to pay homage to my parents after completing my mission the other day, and I was intercepted by the Clarity Sect's elite along the way."

Pak!

Lu Zhou raised a hand and slammed it down on the table.

Zhao Yue's heart raced from the shock.

"You dare lie to me?" Lu Zhou turned to look at Zhao Yue with a piercing gaze.

Zhao Yue withered under Lu Zhou's gaze. She began to recount what happened systematically and in detail, "I went to the Derived Moon Palace... Junior Sister Tianxin wanted to harm you, but I... I didn't plan to cooperate..."

Lu Zhou remained silent, waiting for more of Zhao Yue's confession.

Zhao Yue continued, "It's true that I returned to my hometown... but..."

"You wavered?" Lu Zhou raised his voice.

Zhao Yue did not dare to retort. She could only swallow her frustrations. Although she felt her master was different compared to before, she did not dare to push her luck.

"This disciple knows that she's done wrong! I shouldn't have listened to Ye Tianxin's slanderous words..."

"If you didn't think about leaving, things would not have escalated to this stage," Lu Zhou said calmly.

Zhao Yue seemed to have remembered something as she hurriedly said, "Ye Tianxin has laid a Formation near Bluesun Mountain. I had falsely promised her that I'd activate it... You're good to me, master, so I would never think about harming you. I would rather not go than bear the sin of killing my master! I'm telling the truth. If my words contain even the slightest lie, I'm willing to be punished in whatever way!"

Lu Zhou recalled the scene where Ye Tianxin led the cultivators into battle. With his Nine-leaf avatar, it was true that he did not sense Zhao Yue's presence.

Zhao Yue stayed on the floor, she did not even dare to breathe loudly.

In the end, Lu Zhou decided to deal with Zhao Yue's punishment once they were back in Golden Court Mountain. When he recalled the events of the past two days, he asked, "Who sealed your cultivation base?"

"The only thing I know is that he's from the palace... I didn't see his face," Zhao Yue said.

"The palace?" These incidents were somehow related to the palace. Since Lu Zhou had descended from the mountain to investigate the kidnapping in the Ci Family, the impersonation of the Ci Mansion's butler, Wang Fugui, to the palace elite who sealed Zhao Yue's cultivation base, all signs pointed to the palace taking a keen interest in the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Zhao Yue looked at Lu Zhou with an aggrieved expression on her face. "I was kept in the holy altar by the Clarity Sect after I was kidnapped..."

"Lift your head." Lu Zhou's tone was still stern.

Zhao Yue did not dare to disobey Lu Zhou. She mustered up her courage before she lifted her head. She thought her master was going to punish her, but she did not expect him to study her glabella.

The peculiar golden lotus usually looked enchanting and eye-catching under the sun. but it appeared dull and washed-out in the room.

"Witchcraft."

Upon hearing this, Zhao Yue and Little Yuan'er were taken aback.

There were a plethora of cultivation methods under the skies of Great Yan. The Daoist Societies were the largest, followed by the Buddhist Societies. The Confucian School could not regain its former glory, and the remaining cultivation methods could hardly be regarded as refined and presentable. Witchcraft was one of those cultivation methods.

Most witchcraft methods were extremely evil in nature. A cultivator would gain far less from practicing witchcraft compared to cultivating the Daoist methods. As time went by, witchcraft was rejected by the people from the Noble Path. It gradually waned, and the people who cultivated it dwindled as well.

Who would have expected there was a witchcraft elite in the palace?

Zhao Yue hastily kowtowed and said, "Master, please free me from the Restriction!"

Lu Zhou looked at Zhao Yue indifferently. It seemed like her loyalty was increasing.

"Zhao Yue."

Zhao Yue hastily lowered her head in fear. She kept her eyes trained on the floor and did not dare to make a sound.

Lu Zhou said, "I've already said I won't deal lightly with those who betray me."

When Zhao Yue heard this, she did not resent Lu Zhou. On the contrary, she began to feel hopeful. She remembered the incident on the holy altar and hastily kowtowed. "This disciple willingly accepts any punishment!"

“That will come in due time.” After Lu Zhou finished speaking, he slowly rose to his feet.

Zhao Yue quickly said, “I’ll respectfully see you off, master!”

Lu Zhou glanced at Zhao Yue as he said to Little Yuan’er, “Yuan’er, write to your Senior Brother... Tell him to take Zhao Yue back and punish her.”

“Oh.” Little Yuan’er was trembling slightly from fear and trepidation.

When Lu Zhou left the room, Little Yuan’er helped Zhao Yue up. She said with a smile, “I knew that you’re not like Ye Tianxin, Senior Sister...”

Zhao Yue shook her head and said with a sigh, “In any case... I’ve made a mistake this time. If master didn’t bring me away from the holy altar, I would’ve been...”

Little Yuan’er said, “It’s alright. You don’t know this, but master displayed his majestic strength when we’re on the holy altar. Those self-righteous Noble Path’s sects and the Fiend Temple were all defeated!”

“Little Junior Sister... you were there?”

“Of course! There were many bald donkeys there as well. They kept buzzing like flies. I was irritated to no end...” Little Yuan’er conveniently left out the part where she had fallen asleep.

Zhao Yue sighed again. “You’re the only one who cares for me, Little Junior Sister.”

...

Lu Zhou had barely left Zhao Yue’s room when he saw the officers who investigated Zhuo Ping’s death. The few of them ran up the stairs toward him.

“My lord! I’ve finally found you.”

“You were looking for me?” Lu Zhou was puzzled. He had nothing to do with Zhuo Ping’s case. What would these officers want with him?

“We’re tasked with escorting you to the General’s residence in Runan City to make a statement,” an officer said as he went down on one knee.

“I’m busy.” Lu Zhou spat out two words coldly before he returned to his own and slammed the door shut.

The officer seemed to understand the situation at once. ‘How can I let the Lord run over to meet the General? Isn’t this just like taking his rank lightly?’ He quickly apologized, “My lord, I’ve spoken wrongly. It’s not my intention to make you travel there!”

Lu Zhou ignored him. Clearly, the royal token had found its way to the General’s residence in Runan City. The palace would be notified about this in half a day’s time as well. Would the elite who harmed Zhao Yue be bold enough to show up?

Chapter 68: The Elite from the Palace

After the incident at the holy altar, Lu Zhou was exhausted. However, his mind was still working overtime. He called up the system console.

Name: Lu Zhou

Race: Human

Cultivation Base: Sense Condensing realm, Qi Refining and Soul Forming stage

Merit Points: 4,490

Avatar: Three Condensing Flowers

Remaining Life: 5,804 days

Item: Deadly Strike Card x2, Impeccable Card x2, Critical Block Card x7 (passive), Whizard, Bi An

Weapon: Unnamed, Amorous Hoop (Owner: Ye Tianxin. Requires re-refining before use.)

Cultivation Method: Three Scrolls of Heaven Writing

Lu Zhou was surprised to see his merit points had exceeded 4,000. He had been too preoccupied with the battles before this so he had ignored the system notifications. For this reason, he did not notice which mission contributed to his current merit points.

Lu Zhou went through the list of missions. His completed missions were listed on the mission board.

Lu Zhou discovered that bringing Zhao Yue back had earned him 1,000 merit points. He earned another 1,000 merit points from killing the monk, Kong Xuan. Disciplining Zhao Yue also gave him 200 merit points. The remaining points were earned from Bi An charging through the cultivators who blocked its path.

Lu Zhou was surprised to discover that Bi An could help him earn merit points as well. Saying that, it was still not easy to accumulate merit points. He was still 500 merit points short of being able to purchase the avatar, the Mighty Four Quadrants.

He had used one Impeccable Card and one Deadly Strike Card to defeat the monk, Kong Xuan. If he did not include the missions in his calculations, he had merely broken even. Fortunately, he did not use too many of his item cards. If he had used the item cards to kill some unworthy opponents, he would be eating a loss. The item cards were mighty, but he could not use them on a whim. He only had two Deadly Strike Cards and two Impeccable Cards left. 'I should use them sparingly.'

Suddenly Lu Zhou recalled the Heavenly Writing had activated when he was attacked by the Brahman Lullaby. It had negated all of the Brahman Lullaby's effects. He was truly surprised by this. 'Is this the so-called extraordinary power mentioned in the scrolls?'

Upon thinking about this, Lu Zhou attempted to activate it. Alas, all he managed to do was circulate his own Primal Qi. This was a technique that was widely used by cultivators. It seemed like he had no means of finding out how to utilize that extraordinary power. That extraordinary power must have been exceptionally potent to be able to completely negate the Brahman Lullaby that was chanted by so many monks.

After a while, Lu Zhou looked at the system's dashboard. 'Merit points or Heaven Writing? Which one should I choose? Should I go for another lucky draw? However, my luck has never been good... I don't think I should risk going with the lucky draw.'

Lu Zhou decided not to try for another item card. His current cultivation base was too low. His body's function should be able to withstand a more profound cultivation base. He had to increase his avatar's level as quickly as possible and improve his cultivation base. No matter how powerful the item cards were, they were still external tools. He did not like the feeling of treading on thin ice at all times.

Lu Zhou opened the Heavenly Writing's interface and began reading.

'Just as expected...' Lu Zhou noticed the contents of the scroll had increased. There were fewer indecipherable symbols now. 'There seems to be a meaning to the words of the Heavenly Writing... I'll just memorize it for now and comprehend it later.'

It was similar to when he was young. He would memorize Tang poems without worrying about understanding it. He was certain he would understand it one day.

After the incident at the holy altar, Lu Zhou decided to spend more time and energy to read the Heavenly Writing.

Time continued to pass. Lu Zhou was pulled out of his concentration by the sound of hurried footsteps when it was almost dusk.

Soon after, a voice rang from outside the door. "My Lord, General Zhao has requested an audience with you."

Lu Zhou closed the Heavenly Writing's interface. He did not open the door. Instead, he said indifferently, "What's the matter?"

This time, General Zhao was the one who replied. His voice was deep and resounding as he said, "Zhao Shuo of Runan City wishes to have a conversation with the Old Mister. I wonder if he has the time?"

Before Lu Zhou could reply, Little Yuan'er appeared and shouted down the corridor, "No, he doesn't!"

General Zhao cupped his hands together in greeting and asked, "And you are?"

Little Yuan'er's hands were on her waist as she said, "My grandfather is tired. Who do you think you are to demand to meet him at a moment's notice?"

"..."

The innkeeper knew this young girl was a Divine Court realm expert. He did not dare to criticize her. He only said, "Miss, this is Runan City's General Zhao..."

"I don't care which General Zhao he is... Even if General Li or General Wang is here, I won't agree to this," Little Yuan'er said domineeringly.

Zhao Shuo was stunned. 'This little girl has quite a temper. She doesn't know the immensity of the heavens and the earth. Well, they do say that the young are fearless.'

At this moment, Lu Zhou finally replied, "Let him in." Initially, he did not plan to meet this person. However, when he considered the royal token and the palace's possible involvement in all the events that had happened, he decided to try and extract some information from this man.

"Oh." The door opened, and Little Yuan'er moved toward Lu Zhou and planted herself next to him in an obedient manner.

Zhao Shuo was taken aback when he saw Lu Zhou's appearance. However, he maintained the smile on his face as he bowed and said, "Greetings, Old Mister. I'm Zhao Shuo of Runan City."

Lu Zhou's expression remained indifferent as he ignored the general.

Zhao Shuo felt awkward seeing Lu Zhou's response. However, he powered through and said, "Old Mister, I hope you'll forgive me for my rudeness earlier."

"State your business," Lu Zhou said curtly.

"..." Zhao Shuo had prepared a complete introduction, but it seemed like it was rendered completely useless by Lu Zhou's three words.

"I heard that the royal token is in your hands, Old Mister?" Zhao Shuo asked.

Lu Zhou did not deign to reply to the question. This question was meaningless.

Zhao Shuo continued to say, "Many years ago, the token was in His Majesty's possession, and he could mobilize the capital's Imperial Guards. The token is the representation of His Majesty. Then, at some point, the token was lost..."

"I'll say this again, state your business." Lu Zhou said. In other words, these were all meaningless chatter.

Zhao Shuo could not have felt more awkward. He cupped his fists together and said, "In that case, I'll cut to the chase..." He paused for a moment before he said, "Please surrender the token, Old Mister."

After Zhao Shuo finished speaking, he glanced at Lu Zhou furtively. He was worried Lu Zhou would be displeased.

Lu Zhou asked, "You want the token?"

"I don't dare to demand it from you. I'm sure you're not an ordinary person to have the royal token in your possession for so many years. I'm just here under orders," Zhao Shuo said.

"Whose orders?" Lu Zhou asked curtly.

"Well..." Zhao Shuo hesitated for a moment before he said, "I'm not too sure about that. However, that person is an elite from the palace with a profound cultivation base. He came with a decree so I have no choice but to obey."

Lu Zhou had a clear grasp of the situation now. He said coldly, "If he wants the royal token, tell him to come here himself."

“Old Mister, why must there be a need for that? I know you must have an extraordinary cultivation base but to offend a high-ranking person from the palace is...”

Lu Zhou did not let Zhao Shuo finish his sentence. He rose to his feet slowly as he placed one hand on his back while he stroked his beard.

Upon seeing this, Zhao Shuo assumed Lu Zhou agreed with his words. A pleased expression could be seen on his face at this moment.

Lu Zhou waved his hand dismissively and said, “Send them away.”

“...” Zhao Shuo wanted to say something to persuade Lu Zhou.

However, Little Yuan’er who was standing at the side waved her small fist and said menacingly, “Beat it!”

‘This young girl... is really feisty! Why is she so different from her grandfather? This is no way for a young girl to behave! No, wait, the Old Mister is an eccentric person as well.’ Zhao Shuo shook his head helplessly. He could only retreat from the room.

Zhao Shuo had barely stepped out of the room when Lu Zhou suddenly asked him a question. “Who sent Zhuo Ping?”

Zhao Shuo was shocked. He turned to look at the innkeeper, who was waiting outside, but did not answer.

At this moment, a man with a long sword standing downstairs said with a smile, “Naturally, it’s someone from the palace... Old Mister, we meet again!”

Although Lu Zhou could not see the person who had spoken, he recognized the person’s voice. It was none other than the person who loved swords to the bones and valued swords as much as his life, Jiang Aijian.

Chapter 69: The Villainous Disciple Is Causing Trouble Again

This was within Lu Zhou’s expectations.

Jiang Aijian appeared before everyone with his long sword, a smile was etched on his face.

Lu Zhou wondered how Jiang Aijian escaped from the Brahman Lullaby’s area of effect. He was also curious about how Jiang Aijian had found this place. Although Jiang Aijian was annoyingly persistent, he found him interesting. He was certain there was more than meets the eye with Jiang Aijian.

Jiang Aijian glanced at General Zhao Shuo and greeted him politely, “General Zhao, greetings!”

Zhao Shuo merely nodded in response. He was still choking with frustrations, therefore, he was in no mood to be friendly to strangers.

Jiang Aijian’s expression turned solemn as he approached Lu Zhou. “Aijian pays respect to master.”

Little Yuan’er rolled her eyes and said, “How shameless!”

Jiang Aijian said with a chuckle, “You won’t survive if you’re not shameless.”

Suddenly, Zhao Shuo made a move to grab Jiang Aijian. Before he could tighten his grip, Jiang Aijian had already evaded his hands.

Jiang Aijian said, "General Zhao, it's inappropriate for you to try and grab me like that."

Zhao Shuo's expression darkened as he asked, "My friend, what did you call the Old Mister earlier?"

"Master. What about it?" Jiang Aijian replied flippantly.

"Master?"

Jiang Aijian gave Zhao Shuo an appraising look. He clicked his tongue and said, "Judging by your outfit, you must be a person from an officer's house... You were talking to the master for such a long time, but you didn't know he's a senior Buddhist monk?" He spoke calmly, and there were no traces of mockery in his words. Although he found this military officer stupid, there was no need to offend him. He decided to be honest with Zhao Shuo.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "Jiang Aijian... It's just as well that you came. I have some questions for you."

Jiang Aijian replied with a smile, "Ask away, master. I'll tell you anything and everything I know."

At this moment, an Imperial Bodyguard walked up to Zhao Shuo and whispered into his ear. Despite his effort to control his expressions, he failed when he heard the Imperial Bodyguard's words. His attitude toward Lu Zhou softened even more as he bowed at Lu Zhou and said, "I was blind to the fact that you're a senior Buddhist monk! Please forgive my ignorance, master."

'Great. It seems like the misunderstanding about my identity is getting slightly out of hand.' Lu Zhou did not want to be a senior Buddhist monk. However, since being a senior Buddhist monk did not negatively affect him in any way, he did not bother to explain himself.

"This master has defused the crisis at the holy altar on his own and dealt with Kong Xuan from the Temple of Great Emptiness! For this, you have my utmost gratitude, master." After all, Runan City was under Zhao Shuo's jurisdiction. He would have to bear the consequences if something untoward happened here. Previously, he had heard about the incident at the holy altar. He thought it was just a ceremony to settle the conflict between the two sides so he did not spare any thought on it. He could not help but shudder when he thought about it. Who knew there would be so many elites at the little grand ceremony?

Lu Zhou did not deign to reply to Zhao Shuo. He looked at Jiang Aijian and said, "You're a sly one..."

Jiang Aijian said with a chuckle, "I'm only trying to survive. Please don't mock me for that, master..." He did not dare to bring up the topic of the precious sword.

Lu Zhou asked, "Zhuo Ping was from the palace as well?"

Jiang Aijian winked at Zhao Shuo before replying, "That's right. We have General Zhao here. With his rank, I'm sure he has met a few people from the palace. Am I right, general?"

Zhao Shuo was rendered speechless. 'You're the one giving the information, and yet, you want me to verify them for you?' Finally, he said, "To be more precise, Zhuo Ping was the subordinate of a high-ranking person in the palace."

Lu Zhou nodded. All these were no longer important. He was certain someone in the palace was trying to oppose the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Lady Jade from the Western Region was the most suspicious of all. However, it was also possible that someone was using her to sow dissension between them.

Lu Zhou decided to leave this matter for a later date. There were plenty of elites in the palace. He would not risk himself just because of a witchcraft Restriction. For now, he was satisfied with the information he had gained. Before he acted, it would be more pragmatic for him to accumulate merit points and improve his cultivation base. After a while, he asked, "Jiang Aijian... Are you cultivating the Escape Technique?"

Jiang Aijian's expression froze. He smiled awkwardly as though his secret had been exposed. "I'm impressed by your vast knowledge, master."

At this moment, an urgent report came from downstairs.

"General Zhao, there's a report from the east. Evil Sky Pavilion's fourth villain has left the Golden Court Mountain and is making his way to Yu Province..."

Zhao Shuo frowned when he heard this. "You good-for-nothing! Do you want everyone in the vicinity to know about this?"

"..."

Jiang Aijian nodded and said, "I've expected as much... Evil Sky Pavilion's fourth villain, Mingshi Yin. He's cunning and mischievous. A petty man who changes his stance on a whim. Hypocrisy is second nature to him..."

When Little Yuan'er heard this, she asked, "He's evil? What about Evil Sky Pavilion's ninth disciple? What's he or she like?"

Jiang Aijian stroked his chin. He seemed to know a lot about the Evil Sky Pavilion. "The ninth disciple is amazing... She's the last to join the pavilion, and yet, her cultivation base improved the fastest. She's a diabolical cultivation genius. Alas, she's..."

"Alas, what? Tell me..." Little Yuan'er urged him.

Jiang Aijian replied, "The little villain lacks experience in the real world. It's a shame she's eccentric and has no sense of propriety, joining the Evil Sky Pavilion. She'll surely become the greatest villain who would bring calamity to the world! Eh, little girl, why are you glaring at me like that?"

When Lu Zhou saw that Little Yuan'er was on the verge losing her temper, he said indifferently, "Let's call it a day." He was genuinely exhausted after a whole day of work.

Little Yuan'er scoffed. She had no choice but to obey her master's wish.

Zhao Shuo cupped his fists at Lu Zhou and said, "Since the Evil Sky Pavilion's villain has descended from the mountain, he'll surely be up to no good... I'll go and inform the cultivators from the Noble Path about this."

Zhao Shuo had just finished speaking when a soldier downstairs cried out, "G-general! The villain... When the villain passed through Qing Province, he had abducted many girls!"

"..." Zhao Shuo's lips twitched. "That scum! I'll be taking my leave!" He was secretly relieved that it happened in the Qing Province and not Runan City. However, what was he going to do when that villain arrived in Runan City?

Lu Zhou's brows were tightly knitted together. He was puzzled. Mingshi Yin had always conformed to the norms of society all this while. Was he truly behind this act of villainy?

"Ding! Killed a mounted brigand. Earned 10 merit points."

"Ding! Killed a mounted brigand. Earned 10 merit points."

'Mounted brigands? Not girls?'

...

Jiang Aijian smiled and said, "General Zhao, wait up."

"What business do you have with me?" Zhao Shuo asked, puzzled.

"The Evil Sky Pavilion's fourth villain is clearly coming to Yu Province. It's highly possible that his destination is Runan City!"

Zhao Shuo widened his eyes and said, "How do you know that?"

Jiang Aijian pointed at his own head and said with a smile, "The Holy Daughter at the holy altar's grand ceremony is the Evil Sky Pavilion's fifth disciple. A member of the Evil Sky Pavilion has been taken away, surely the old villain would send someone to get her. It's not difficult to figure this out."

"Er..."

"General Zhao, the fourth villain has a profound cultivation base. When he left the mountain previously, he already had one foot in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. That was a long time ago. I'm sure he must possess the Hundred Tribulations Insight by now. Who'd be able to stop him?" Jiang Aijian said with a smile as he held onto his sword.

Zhao Shuo's brows furrowed again. How troublesome! Why were troubles coming one after another, and each was more troublesome than the last?

Jiang Aijian continued, "Since a Buddhist master is here, why don't you ask him politely for his help instead of taking a long trip to the palace just to request for reinforcement?"

Zhao Shuo's eyes brightened when he heard Jiang Aijian's words. "Dear brother, these are truly some wise words!" He quickly turned to look at Lu Zhou before cupping his fists together. He said with reverence and sincerity, "Master, I beg you to help Runan City to capture this villain and bring peace to the citizens of Runan City!"

Little Yuan'er was truly speechless when she heard this.

Chapter 70: In the Bag

Although Little Yuan'er would really love to laugh at this moment, she stifled her laughter as she stole glances at her master.

Lu Zhou's expression was as calm as a still water lake. Nobody could figure out what he was thinking. He kept stroking his beard.

Little Yuan'er looked at her master, askance. She thought to herself, 'Master never used to stroke his beard so much. Why did he suddenly have this habit?'

When Zhao Shuo saw Lu Zhou did not reply to him, he said, "Master, please help us!"

In the end, Lu Zhou only said indifferently, "I have my own plans. Yuan'er, see them out."

Little Yuan'er nodded. She hopped toward Zhao Shuo and gestured for them to leave.

Zhao Shuo felt helpless. He had no choice but to leave.

Lu Zhou was speechless. As the master, did he have to raise the banner of justice to deal with his own disciple? Moreover, Mingshi Yin was only killing mounted brigands, not abducting young girls. It was obvious that the general public had a biased opinion of the Evil Sky Pavilion. No matter what the Evil Sky Pavilion did, they would be seen as causing trouble.

Jiang Aijian did not leave. "Master... Master?"

Lu Zhou who was still sitting looked at Jiang Aijian and said, "Jiang Aijian."

Jiang Aijian quickly jogged up to Lu Zhou and said with a grin, "I knew you won't keep me at arm's length, master."

Lu Zhou's wizened face lost a little of its indifference as he said, "I spend my days holed up on the mountain, and I'm disconnected from the outside world. If you're willing to be my eyes and ears, I won't treat you unfairly." He wanted to make himself seem as friendly as possible. 'Let's not scare this fellow away.' After all, it was natural for a timid person to be cowardly.

Jiang Aijian said in a self-abasing manner, "M-master? Please don't joke! You're a Buddhist master, surely you have no need for someone like me to become your eyes and ears."

"You're not willing?" Lu Zhou asked.

Lu Zhou's behavior stunned Jiang Aijian. It seemed like if he did not agree to this request, Lu Zhou would no longer have any interaction with him. He stroked his chin as he considered this. Finally, he said, "Master, with your position and standing, you'll give me some sort of compensation, right? I can't be doing this for nothing."

Lu Zhou remembered that there were many precious swords back in Evil Sky Pavilion's hidden chamber. He had never appraised their grade before, but he did not think they were low. 'At the very least, that saber is quite good. It's evenly matched with Unnamed. It might very well be a heaven-grade weapon.' Finally, he asked, "Do you like sabers?"

“Huh?” Jiang Aijian was confused by the non sequitur.

“Forget it...” Lu Zhou rose to his feet and stood with his hands on his back. He said slowly, “My sword has already recognized me as its owner, but if you become my eyes and ears, I can give you a good sword or two.”

Jiang Aijian grinned widely as soon as good swords were mentioned, it seemed like he had lost some of his quick wit as soon as swords were mentioned. He asked with bright eyes, “How good is it?”

“No weaker than the male and female double swords!”

Jiang Aijian slapped his thigh and cried out without any hesitation, “Deal!”

“...” Lu Zhou was rendered speechless by Jiang Aijian’s behavior, but he maintained the calm expression on his face.

Jiang Aijian was overjoyed at this moment. He had collected many good swords in his life. There were swords with strange designs and patterns from a variety of grades in his collection. However, heaven-grade weapons were always the most precious. After all, heaven-grade weapons could only be discovered, not sought. He had always possessed an innate talent for gathering information, this job would not be difficult for him. After a while, he looked around the room before asking, “Master, where did you put the she-villain?”

Lu Zhou barked, “Get lost!”

“Getting lost now.” Before Jiang Aijian left the inn, he left Lu Zhou with a way to contact him. When he left the inn, he felt refreshed. He stretched his limb and smiled. However, a thought suddenly appeared in his mind. ‘How long would I have to do this? It seems like we didn’t discuss the timeframe! Wouldn’t it be bad if I have to do this for a lifetime? This is bad, have I been duped? Will I be beaten up if I return to negotiate with him now?’

...

Inside the room.

Little Yuan’er said contemptuously, “What a shameless man!”

Lu Zhou said calmly, “He’s useful.”

Little Yuan’er could tell that her master was tired. She half-rose from her chair and said, “I’ll be taking my leave.”

After Little Yuan’er left, he did not go to bed immediately. He brought out the system dashboard and scrolled through the mall. Under the avatar column, there were no changes. The only avatar he unlocked was the Mighty Four Quadrants. In the cultivation base realm, there was only comprehending the Heavenly Writing. He could only slowly improve it, there was no shortcut for this. He checked again to see if he had unlocked any weapons or cultivation methods. He willed the interface to change and discovered the weapons and cultivation methods column was still red.

Lu Zhou wondered if this was due to his cultivation base being too low to unlock the weapons and techniques. He sighed in understanding, after all, Ji Tiandao was still in his prime when he accepted his disciples. He would have to take care not to follow in Ji Tiandao's footsteps.

Lu Zhou wondered if Ji Tiandao had died because his life had reached its end and his cultivation base had regressed. However, since Lu Zhou had the Reversal Cards, he did not think he would have Ji Tiandao's problems. He would not repeat Ji Tiandao's mistakes. Saying that, he was left with one problem. He thought with a frown on his face, 'What would happen if I keep using the Reversal Cards? Will I have to crawl back into my mother's womb? That's no different from committing suicide!'

However, Lu Zhou's mood took a turn for the better. If he used the Reversal Cards every year as he aged, did it not mean he would gain eternal life? He thought to himself, 'This logic is flawless!'

After that, Lu Zhou pulled up the Heavenly Writing's interface and continued his quest to comprehend it. Time ticked by as he immersed himself in the text, and dawn came without him realizing it.

Lu Zhou had fallen asleep halfway through reading. When he woke up, he felt as though he had returned to his student days. Just as he was about to get off the bed, he heard hurried footsteps outside his door.

The pitch of Zhao Shuo's voice seemed higher as he said urgently, "M-master! Please help us! The Evil Sky Pavilion's villain has already arrived in Runan City. He's raining down disasters on the public!"

Lu Zhou said nonchalantly through the door, "Let him be. He won't do anything evil." Since he had entrusted Mingshi Yin with a mission, Mingshi Yin would be extremely bold if he dared to commit evil acts at this juncture.

"Master... The villain is evil in nature, and he's notorious for his wicked acts. The villain had entered the city early this morning and hung two heads at the city gates. The citizens are too terrified to step out of their houses! The villain has a profound cultivation base. His speed and movements aren't something that ordinary people can compare to. I'm afraid you're the only person in Runan City who's capable of defeating the villain, master!"

Lu Zhou shook his head and got off his bed. After doing some simple stretches, he felt much better. Finally, he opened the door.

When Zhao Shuo saw Lu Zhou emerging from the room, he was overcome with emotions that he had difficulty stringing sentences together. After a while, he finally said, "Master, please do something! I'm begging you on behalf of Runan City's citizens!"

Lu Zhou remained silent as he stared at Zhao Shuo.

At this moment, Little Yuan'er and Zhao Yue appeared. "Master!"

Zhao Yue was dressed in plain white robes, different from the one she wore on the holy altar.

"Let's go." Lu Zhou waved his hand.

Zhao Shuo called out tentatively, "Ma-master?"

"Come along." Lu Zhou placed his hands behind his back and descended the stairs.

When Zhao Shuo heard this, he was overjoyed. He hastily caught up to Lu Zhou. He was certain this was a sign of Lu Zhou's agreement to help.

After Zhao Shuo had returned to his residence yesterday, he had listened to his subordinates' detailed account of the incident on the holy altar. When he heard about how Lu Zhou was unaffected by the Temple of Great Emptiness' Brahman Lullaby, defeated the monk, Kong Xuan, and subdued the she-villain, he was filled with respect toward Lu Zhou. He did not want to offend Lu Zhou at all. Hence, he sent a message to the palace and informed them that the royal token was in the possession of a senior Buddhist monk. He also told the palace that he was powerless to retrieve the token.

As they left the inn, Zhao Shuo turned to look at Little Yuan'er and Zhao Yue as he thought to himself, 'This girl with the golden lotus between her brows must be the Evil Sky Pavilion's she-villain.' He nodded to himself as he continued his train of thoughts, 'The master's cultivation base is profound. With him on our side, there's no need to fear the Evil Sky Pavilion's fourth villain. Victory is in the bag!'