

Disciples 641

Chapter 641: Chi Yao's Heart

Boom!

The blue palm seal shattered Jiang Wenxu's almost-translucent palm seal and continued sailing forth.

To Lu Zhou's shock, the blue palm seal passed through Jiang Wenxu as though Jiang Wenxu was made of air.

"No wonder... No wonder..." Jiang Wenxu murmured to himself.

"No wonder, what?"

"We'll meet again... If you wish to recover your memories, come to Lou Lan... Since you claim that you've attained the Nine-leaf stage, I have no choice but to kill you again." After saying these words, Jiang Wenxu's body flickered a few times like a projected image from the modern world before disappearing completely.

Realization dawned on Lu Zhou. No wonder Jiang Wenxu had seemed unreal, and his palm seal was not red.

Lu Zhou walked over. He lifted his hand and summoned an energy orb to illuminate the cave.

A round rune engraved in the center of the cave. It was filled with peculiar runes.

Jiang Wenxu must have created a projection of himself with some witchcraft spell.

There were clearly red runes around the cave as well. However, perhaps, due to the passage of time, the red runes were already faded.

It seemed like Jiang Wenxu had been guarding this place for a long time now. Was he trying to prevent people from looking for Chi Yao in the abyss?

No. When Lu Zhou thought about it further, he thought he did not make sense.

The 100,000-foot-deep abyss could not be explored by just anyone. Even if an Eight-leaf cultivator made it down there safely, they would not have been a match for Chi Yao. They might even end up as Chi Yao's meal. In that case, what was Jiang Wenxu doing here?

Lu Zhou remembered the environment in the abyss. It was dark; there was no sun nor moon. Endless black water stretched as far the eyes could see.

That was certainly not the red lotus domain.

Jiang Wenxu's goal was clearly to prevent the appearance of a Nine-leaf cultivator. In that case, the abyss might be a passage leading to the red lotus world!

Lu Zhou raised his wizened hand and smacked his forehead. His realization came too late! He was drifting southward along Heaven's Moat. In that case... the red lotus world was most probably situated north of Heaven's Moat.

“Yu Shangrong...” If Yu Shangrong ended up in the red lotus world, things would not bode well for him.

Lu Zhou turned around and left the cave. He had no intention of remaining here.

He stepped away from Heaven’s Moat and dove.

“Whitzard.”

...

Two days later, next to the 100,000-foot-deep abyss.

Si Wuya looked at the abyss he drew on the paper in confusion. He said, “Fourth Senior Brother, don’t you think there’s something strange about this narrow abyss?”

“Strange?” Mingshi Yin shook his head.

“It’s normal for there to be cracks in mountain ranges. To the south, it’s connected to the peak of Heaven’s Moat. To the north, I’ve sent my men to investigate... but it isn’t connected to Cloud Rage River. Instead, it seems to have vanished halfway,” Si Wuya said.

“That’s normal. It’s a cliff,” Mingshi Yin said.

“No... Fourth Senior Brother, look closely.” Si Wuya insisted.

Mingshi Yin studied Si Wuya’s map.

Si Wuya explained, “When I was an official in the palace, I saw such a diagram. At that time, I thought someone had casually sketched it. Now that I think about it, that drawing inside the palace is this abyssal rift.”

“Rift?”

“That’s right, this is more like a rift. Cloud Rage River is downstream while the peak of Heaven’s Moat is upstream... When the water from upstream flows downstream, there should be a plain... Why would there suddenly be a cliff?” Si Wuya asked.

Si Wuya was knowledgeable. He knew about astronomy and geography. It was not surprising for him to know these things.

Mingshi Yin understood it now. He said, “You’re saying that there’s something fishy with this rift?”

“That’s right.” Si Wuya nodded. “With Second Senior Brother’s ability, he couldn’t have fallen to his death. It’s unlikely for him to be incapable of flight as well... Based on my speculation, there must’ve been some force that prevented him from rising, and maybe, it pulled him down.”

“Makes sense.” Mingshi Yin nodded.

“The person who drew the abyss inside the palace is most probably the Imperial tutor...” Si Wuya said.

At this juncture, Mingshi Yin smiled and said, “Now that you’ve mentioned it, I heard from Ninth Junior Sister that master received a letter from the Imperial tutor from the palace. He also received some notes from a Luo woman.”

Si Wuya beamed. He seemed happy. "Where are they?"

"You'll have to ask master about that. I have no idea."

Si Wuya seemed disappointed.

At this moment, young Yu Zhenghai appeared outside the tent and said, "J-ju... Junior Brother Mingshi Yin... Are you there?"

"I'm coming, Eldest Senior Brother!" Mingshi Yin ran out. "Do you want to spar again, Eldest Senior Brother?"

Young Yu Zhenghai seemed to be perplexed as he said, "I'm confused. When I was sparring with you, my blade seemed capable of defeating you at every turn. Why isn't it the same with Junior Brother Duanmu Sheng when I sparred with him?"

Mingshi Yin. "???"

"I've spoken to Junior Sister Yuan'er, and she said that you're a Seven-leaf elite. With my current strength, there's no way I could've defeated you... Were you going easy on me?"

Mingshi Yin said, "Eldest Senior Brother, you've wrongly accused me! We didn't use any Primal Qi during our sparring sessions!"

Mingshi Yin thought to himself in exasperation, 'A lousy teammate was more fearful than a godly opponent. Third Senior Brother, you've really done it this time!'

At this moment, Duanmu Sheng came over with his Overlord Spear in hand. When he saw Mingshi Yin and his Eldest Senior Brother, he said, "Old Fourth, let's go... We'll spar together."

"Huh?"

"Come on. Don't drag your heels. You can't even beat Eldest Senior Brother. How are you going to become stronger without hard work and practice?"

Dong!

He struck the ground with his Overlord Spear.

Mingshi Yin said in an aggrieved tone, "Al... alright..."

"I'll come as well," young Yu Zhenghai said.

After the trio left, Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng arrived outside the tent. "Mister Seventh."

"Come in."

Pan Zhong went inside and said, "Mister Seventh, the informant you told me to contact has sent a letter. The 12 allied nations are now formally established."

"It was bound to happen." Si Wuya sighed and shook his head.

Zhou Jifeng said, "Are the barbarians so confident?"

"It's been a long time since the lotus-severing era began. Even Liu Gu made it to the Eight-leaf-and-a-half stage. The Other Tribes thrive after their lotuses were severed. It's normal that they're confident... Moreover, I suspect that someone else is pulling the strings behind the scene." Si Wuya replied.

The two of them nodded.

"What do we do now?"

"We'll wait for my master's return," Si Wuya replied, "There's nothing we can do at the moment."

Without a Nine-leaf cultivator, the current Great Yan might not even withstand an attack from five allied nations, let alone 12.

...

Meanwhile.

Young Yu Zhenghai was watching Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin spar. After a while, he could not refrain himself and seemed like he wanted to speak. "Urm..."

Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin halted their movements. They bowed at the same time. "Kindly give us pointers, Eldest Senior Brother."

"I won't be so bold as to give you pointers." Young Yu Zhenghai was not used to his status as the Eldest Senior Brother at all. "I wish to spar with Junior Brother Duanmu Sheng."

Duanmu Sheng did not mind. "Kindly enlighten me, Eldest Senior Brother."

Mingshi Yin rejoiced in this opportunity to be freed from trouble. He took several steps back.

Yu Zhenghai and Duanmu Sheng got into position.

"Eldest Senior Brother, you haven't recovered your Primal Qi yet. So let this be a contest of saber and spear techniques."

"Alright."

"This technique of mine is called Scorching Field Hundred Strikes. I can launch 100 strikes in an instant. Take a close look, Eldest Senior Brother." Duanmu Sheng brandished his Overlord Spear.

Yu Zhenghai wielded the Jasper Saber and said, "Bring it on."

Duanmu Sheng sped forward. Spear shadows overlapped. Soon enough, there were 100 of them.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Several spear shadows hit the blade.

Yu Zhenghai was pushed back from the impact.

Duanmu Sheng launched 100 spear shadows again.

Young Yu Zhenghai was powerless to fight back. He could only defend himself.

Mingshi Yin covered his eyes. 'Damn. No wonder Eldest Senior Brother came to question me. Third Senior Brother, you're not holding back at all!'

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The few final spear shadows shook Yu Zhenghai so much that he fell backward.

Young Yu Zhenghai spat out blood.

Duanmu Sheng paled. "Eldest Senior Brother!" He tossed his Overlord Spear aside and rushed forward.

"Eldest Senior Brother!" Mingshi started. This time, he disregarded Duanmu Sheng's status as his senior brother and immediately rebuked him, "Third Senior Brother, you... you know that Eldest Senior Brother hasn't recovered yet. Can't you go easy on him?"

"I..." Duanmu Sheng was hit with a sudden realization. He was beside himself with guilt. "Eldest Senior Brother!"

"With Eldest Senior Brother's strength, killing a Brahman Sea realm cultivator is already the most he can do. You're a Four-leaf Nascent Divinity realm cultivator who re-cultivated without a lotus! You must be so proud of yourself for defeating Eldest Senior Brother!" As Mingshi Yin continued on his tirade, he walked behind young Yu Zhenghai and channeled his Primal Qi into him.

Duanmu Sheng sighed before he slapped his face. "I've lost my mind in the heat of the fight! I was only thinking of defeating Eldest Senior Brother!"

With this, Mingshi Yin did not think it was appropriate to continue berating Duanmu Sheng.

The others were attracted by the commotion as well.

Two of the elders, Si Wuya, Little Yuan'er, and Conch came running over, looking worried.

"Eldest Senior Brother!"

After channeling his Primal Qi into young Yu Zhenghai, Mingshi Yin said with a grim expression, "I think Eldest Senior Brother is out of vitality."

Chapter 642: Live On

Si Wuya stepped forward and placed two fingers on Yu Zhenghai's wrist. He channeled some Primal Qi into Yu Zhenghai's Extraordinary Eight Meridians that eventually flowed into his sea of Qi. He seemed reluctant to accept this reality. His fingers trembled as he removed them from Yu Zhenghai's wrist.

"Seventh Senior Brother, what's wrong with Eldest Senior Brother?" Little Yuan'er asked anxiously.

"Let me take a look." Pan Litian waded through the crowd and examined Yu Zhenghai's pulse as well. He was initially optimistic... After all, the Evil Sky Pavilion was powerful. It had endured many tribulations throughout the years. With the pavilion master's shocking methods, it was not surprising for him to be able to save someone's life. After he examined his pulse, the expression on his wizened face turned as grim as the one on Mingshi Yin's face. His brows were tightly knitted together.

"How did this happen?" Pan Litian said incredulously. "Back off!"

The others retreated.

Pan Litian raised a hand. His Golden Gourd Bottle flew out.

The Golden Gourd Bottle hovered above Yu Zhenghai's head for some time. A faint radiance from the gourd shone onto Yu Zhenghai's body.

"Stay calm. I brought this gourd bottle back from the Blackwood Forest. It has amazing vitality. I've always been reluctant to use the final sliver of vitality inside the gourd bottle. Looks like I have no choice now."

The others looked at the Golden Gourd Bottle. They did not expect Pan Litian to be willing to give this up.

The golden radiance continued to shine on Yu Zhenghai.

Pan Litian stooped down and examined Yu Zhenghai's pulse again. At this moment, his face was already glistening with sweat. He did not expect this seemingly simple method of releasing the vitality from the Golden Gourd Bottle would take such a huge toll on him.

"Old Pan!" Pan Zhong stepped forward and supported Pan Litian.

"I'm alright. I'm just slightly tired." After examining Yi Zhenghai's pulse, Pan Litian added, "I can only help him last longer... I've tried my best."

The others seemed worried and regretful.

Duanmu Sheng was fiddle with self-blame. He stood up and said, "I'll head down and look for master. You guys look after Eldest Senior Brother."

"Third Senior Brother, don't be reckless... Don't you think you've caused enough trouble as it is with that temperament of yours?" Si Wuya frowned.

"I... ah!" Duanmu Sheng sighed heavily.

"This isn't your fault... Eldest Senior Brother doesn't have much vitality, to begin with. It was out of pure luck that he was reborn this time. Your sparring session with Eldest Senior Brother merely hastened the problem. This might not be a bad thing entirely," Si Wuya said.

Although Si Wuya's words made sense, Duanmu Sheng would not have any of it. He felt incredibly guilty, but there was nothing he could do.

At this moment, Conch pointed at Heaven's Moat and asked, "What's that?"

The others turned to look. They saw auspicious Qi heading toward them.

Little Yuan'er who had keen eyes cried out excitedly, "Master!"

In the air, Lu Zhou stood on Whizard's back. It gradually descended as it flew toward the crowd.

Their expressions differed as they looked at Whizard that was wrapped in auspicious Qi. After that, they turned to look at the 100,000-foot-deep abyss nearby. They were shocked, intrigued, and surprised. Why did the pavilion master not return from the abyss but from Heaven's Moat?

Si Wuya looked up. After a brief moment of shock, he looked in the direction of the peak of Heaven's Moat.

"Welcome back, master!"

"Welcome back, pavilion Master!"

The others bowed.

When Lu Zhou descended lower, he saw Yu Zhenghai lying on the ground. He sighed inwardly. "Can't I have even a moment of rest? They can't let me be at peace.'

Whitzard slowly landed.

Little Yuan'er ran up to Lu Zhou. "Master, quick, take a look at Eldest Senior Brother!"

Lu Zhou removed the items he had been carrying in his makeshift sack.

The other disciples were stunned to see him like this.

Lu Zhou walked up to Yu Zhenghai and began to examine his pulse. Without a second thought, he raised his hand, and a blue lotus appeared in his hand. The lotus landed on Yu Zhenghai. 'Fortunately, I have half of my extraordinary power left.'

The Heaven Writing's healing power stabilized Yu Zhenghai's life aura.

Thud!

At this moment, Duanmu Sheng fell to his knees. He said, "It's all my fault. Please punish me heavily, master."

Lu Zhou did not have the time to entertain Duanmu Sheng. He opened his sack...

The others looked over.

The glowing Red Fish Heart, the red fish, and the fist-sized Chi Yao's Heart were revealed.

Everyone was shocked by these things.

"What are these?" Little Yuan'er wondered curiously.

Conch pointed and said, "Red fish, red fish... Chi Yao, Chi Yao..."

Lu Zhou glanced at Conch. He did not expect her to recognize them. It was clear that Conch was from the red lotus domain. Chi Yao and red fish must have appeared in the red lotus domain before. He was certain of his speculation now.

"Chi Yao? Red fish?"

Even the two knowledgeable elders did not know what they were.

Lu Zhou said, "This is the Red Fish Heart. It grants a person 100 years of life."

He flipped his palm. The Red Fish Heart floated.

The heart of the red fish provided a person with life. This was a rare treasure.

In the cultivation world, methods of extending a life were few and far between. The Longevity Pill was one of them, but it could do nothing against the great limit.

“Can the Red Fish Heart surpass the great limit?” Si Wuya wondered.

“I’m not sure,” Lu Zhou replied.

According to the records in the notebook, the cultivators in the red lotus domain cultivated with a red lotus. The red lotus would not shorten their lives. In that case, they did not have the great limit of 1,000 years.

Mingshi Yin propped Yu Zhenghai up.

Lu Zhou pushed forward with his palm.

The Red Fish Heart sailed into Yu Zhenghai’s mouth.

Then, Lu Zhou channeled Primal Qi into Yu Zhenghai’s body.

A while later, Lu Zhou said, “Return to Liang Province. Keep a close eye on his condition.”

“Understood!”

...

The General’s Mansion in Liang Province City.

After freshening up, Lu Zhou summoned Si Wuya for a discussion.

Si Wuya was curious about his master’s experience in the abyss. He stopped everything he was doing and went to meet his master.

“Master.” Si Wuya entered the room.

Lu Zhou pointed at the notes and the letter left behind by the Imperial tutor on the table on the side.

“Take a look at these two items when you have the time.”

“Understood.” Si Wuya collected the notebook and letter. Then, he said, “Master, what did you see in the abyss?”

Lu Zhou gave Si Wuya a general account of what he had seen.

After listening to it, Si Wuya trembled. An expression of disbelief could be seen on his face.

“Although I’ve guessed that there must be something behind all this, I never expected there to be an alternate world!” Si Wuya said.

“It’s all just speculation for now... Do you know who I met at the peak of Heaven’s Moat?”

“Kindly enlighten me, master.”

“Great Yan’s Imperial tutor, Jiang Wenxu,” Lu Zhou said.

"The imperial tutor?" Si Wuya was shocked.

"That letter in your hand was written by him..." Lu Zhou said.

Si Wuya immediately opened the letter and read it. His brows knitted together. "The appearance of a Nine-leaf cultivator will bring forth disaster... But, master, you're already at the Nine-leaf stage since a long time ago. Where's this so-called disaster?"

Uh... Lu Zhou felt helpless as well.

He passed these items to Si Wuya in the hopes that Si Wuya would put his intelligence and abilities to work and find more information about the red lotus domain. 'I didn't give him those items so that he can probe my secrets.'

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and said, "There are always exceptions... I'll leave the investigation of the red lotus to you."

"I'll do my best."

"If there's nothing else, you may leave."

Si Wuya was about to turn around and leave. Then, he suddenly remembered the issue of the 12 allied nations. "Master, the alliance of the 12 nations has been established. I'm afraid they'll be invading Great Yan in the future."

Lu Zhou remembered what Jiang Wenxu said. This might just be him pulling the strings behind the scene. "I see."

"I'll take my leave, master."

...

Early next morning.

Lu Zhou had just finished meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls when Mingshi Yin bowed outside and said, "Master, Eldest Senior Brother is awake."

Chapter 643: Red Lotus

Lu Zhou opened his eyes and exited the room. He saw Mingshi Yin standing respectfully outside. He said, "Lead the way."

"Understood."

The two of them went to the courtyard where Yu Zhenghai was resting in.

On their way there, Mingshi Yin asked curiously, "Master, that red fish is really tough. I only managed to cut it after several attempts."

"The red fish is from the abyss. Don't be reckless... Also, Chi Yao's Heart can grant one 1,000 years of life. It must be guarded well," Lu Zhou said.

When he heard this, Mingshi Yin was shocked. He nodded vehemently at once and said, "Yes, master!"

Shortly after, the two of them were by Yu Zhenghai's bed.

When Yu Zhenghai saw Lu Zhou, he tried to get up, but Lu Zhou said, "Dispense with the formality."

"I..."

Lu Zhou extended his hand. Primal Qi swirled around Yu Zhenghai.

He gauged the vitality inside Yu Zhenghai's body. As he expected, it had recovered quite substantially. Indeed, he seemed to have about 100 years of life in him.

Mingshi Yin had already examined Yu Zhenghai before this. Hence, he was not surprised.

"Eldest Senior Brother, you're alright."

"Thank you."

"Uh... Eldest Senior Brother, I feel awkward when you're so polite to me."

After examining him, Lu Zhou said, "You're alright now... Sometime later, you'll come with me to Lou Lan."

"Lou Lan?"

"I'm going to deal with your obsession. Once that's dealt with, your memories will naturally return," Lu Zhou said.

Young Yu Zhenghai did not understand these words.

However, Mingshi Yin understood what his master meant. He could not help but sigh.

Lou Lan was the land of sufferings for Yu Zhenghai. It was also where his obsession lay...

After examining Yu Zhenghai, Lu Zhou turned around and left.

Mingshi Yin sat on the bed and said, "Fortunately, master came back just in time. Otherwise, who knows what would've happened to you?"

Yu Zhenghai was grateful. However, he was still at a loss. He asked, "Am I... really master's first disciple?"

"There's no doubt about it."

Mingshi Yin stood up, adjusted his posture, corrected his attitude, and bowed to Yu Zhenghai respectfully. He said solemnly, "Eldest Senior Brother."

From the day Mingshi Yin called him Eldest Senior Brother, Yu Zhenghai had become Mingshi Yin's Eldest Senior Brother for life.

This familiar form of address brought many fleeting voices and scenes to Yu Zhenghai's mind. Perhaps, his obsession had melted away slightly... In his mind, he could hear others calling him Eldest Senior Brother. A warmth filled his heart. His fingers shook.

"F-fourth Junior Brother..."

At this moment, a voice reached them from the other side of the door. "Fourth Senior Brother!"

Mingshi Yin turned, recognizing the voice immediately. "Eighth Junior Brother? Why are you here? Shouldn't you be at the Divine Capital?"

The one who came was none other than Old Eighth, Zhu Honggong.

Zhu Honggong said, "The Divine Capital is fine for now. I came because I miss master. Where's the old man?"

"You're out of luck. He just went back. You shouldn't disturb him now," Mingshi Yin said.

Zhu Honggong eyed young Yu Zhenghai on the bed and asked, "Who's this?"

"Well? Aren't you going to greet your Eldest Senior Brother?" Mingshi Yin asked.

Zhu Honggong shook his head and said, "Fourth Senior Brother, cut it out. I may not be as smart as the rest, but I'm not a retard." He walked over to them and rested an arm on Yu Zhenghai's shoulder. He greeted him casually, "Hello, there."

Young Yu Zhenghai responded stiffly, "H-hello."

Mingshi Yin. "... There was nothing he could do to stop this.

Zhu Honggong studied young Yu Zhenghai's face. "I say, you do resemble Eldest Senior Brother slightly..." Then, he reached out and pinched Yu Zhenghai's face.

Mingshi Yin. "???"

Mingshi Yin cleared his throat and said, "Erm, Old Eighth... This is truly Eldest Senior Brother."

"Stop pulling my leg! I rushed here from the Divine Capital. It was an exhausting journey. Don't worry, comrade. This is just how my Fourth Senior Brother is. He loves a good laugh. Don't mind him," Zhu Honggong said as he turned to look at young Yu Zhenghai.

"..." Yu Zhenghai flashed a stiff but polite smile. "No, not at all."

Although Yu Zhenghai knew these people were his fellow disciples, due to his lost memories, his manner was rather stiff.

When the others heard young Yu Zhenghai had regained consciousness, they came to visit one after another.

Little Yuan'er and Conch were the first to arrive.

"Eldest Senior Brother."

"Eldest Senior Brother," Conch greeted with a smile.

Zhu Honggong. "???"

Soon after, Si Wuya, Pan Zhong, and Zhou Jifeng arrived.

"Eldest Senior Brother."

“Mister First.”

Zhu Honggong turned to look at his arm that was still resting on Yu Zhenghai’s shoulder. His expression was stiff and unnatural. ‘Are they colluding to trick me?’

Duanmu Sheng was the last one to arrive. His expression was solemn and he kneeled before the bed and said, “Please forgive me, Eldest Senior Brother.”

“...”

When young Yu Zhenghai saw this, he pushed Zhu Honggong’s arm away and got off the bed. “Third Senior Brother, quickly stand up!”

Thud!

Zhu Honggong fell to his knees immediately as tears streaked down his face. “E-eldest Senior Brother... I’ve made a mistake... Can you please forgive me?!”

Yu Zhenghai turned around. “Please get up.”

“I won’t. This is a trick... I won’t fall for it again!” Zhu Honggong pulled a face.

Mingshi Yin walked to Yu Zhenghai’s side and whispered something into his ear.

Yu Zhenghai was first taken aback. Then, he mumbled his agreement. He cleared his throat, placed his hands behind his back, and sternly said, “Get up!”

Duanmu Sheng and Zhu Honggong stood up immediately.

Then, Yu Zhenghai said, “Get lost, everyone.”

“Right away!”

The others went away.

“Fine, we’ll go. Hmph!” Little Yuan’er held Conch’s hand and led her out of the room.

Mingshi Yin scratched his head awkwardly. He smiled and said, “Eldest Senior Brother, the final statement was slightly overboard... That little ancestor can’t be crossed.”

“Is that so?” Yu Zhenghai looked up and stared at Mingshi Yin.

Mingshi Yin lowered his head, stowed his smile away, and said, “Eldest Senior Brother, you should rest well. I’ll take my leave as well.”

Everyone finally left.

Yu Zhenghai sighed in relief as he sat on the bed. He wondered out loud, “Was I... really so scary in the past?”

...

Meanwhile, inside the abyss.

A glowing scarlet sword hovered above the boundless black water.

Yu Zhenghai was standing on the scarlet sword. His expression and mind were blank, and his senses were numb. He had lost all sense of time; he had forgotten how long he had been flying above the water. However, he did not give up. He kept flying forward.

Splash!

He could occasionally hear splashing sounds.

Yu Shangrong turned around and saw a red fish leaping into the air like a ball of flame in the dark. It drew an arc in the air before it plunged into the pitch-black water again.

“What a powerful monster.”

This was the third ‘monster’ he saw.

He had been shocked in the beginning. Now, he was already used to their presence.

“I’m in luck.”

He had only been picked on by the monster once. Feeling helpless, Yu Shangrong could only desperately fly out of the monster’s range.

He was now lost in the boundless dark space. He did not know where he was at. He was aimlessly flying about.

Perhaps, one day, he would fill the monster’s belly. Perhaps, his mind would finally crumble one day, and he would plunge to his death.

Swoosh!

A cold breeze blew in the air.

Yu Shangrong was slightly taken aback. “Wind?”

If there was wind, it meant that there was passage.

Sparks of hope and motivation were rekindled in Yu Shangrong’s heart. He circulated his Primal Qi and sped forward. At the same time, he raised a palm and illuminated his path with an energy seal.

In the dark space, Yu Shangrong dragged a meteor-like tail behind himself as he zoomed toward the incoming wind.

A moment passed, Yu Shangrong saw a ray of light. There was a semi-oval exit that resembled a cave!

He was overjoyed. He flew on his sword in the dark and flew out of the cave.

Swoosh!

Immediately, his vision widened. There were no clouds in sight. The sun was bright in the skies. He saw a dense forest and felt the surge of Primal Qi.

He turned to look at the entrance to the abyss. It was like a black eye that was moving further and further away.

“Where is this?” Yu Shangrong was shocked.

...

In the faraway skyline.

A huge Luan, a mythical bird, soared in the skies. Its appearance resembled a colorful long-tailed pheasant. Its wings were like long rivers and brightly-colored waterfalls. It was emitting red energy from its body!

Yu Shangrong’s instincts told him he was in a dangerous situation. He had heard about the legends of Great Yan’s Four Great Forests.

“Have I... wandered into the deepest part of the forest by mistake?” Yu Shangrong lowered his altitude and sped away. He decided that it was best to avoid a beast like this and flew in the other direction.

Chapter 644: Destroying a Red Avatar

Yu Shangrong flew forward over a small mountain range and rivers. When he turned back, he saw the luan crying out.

Its cries resounded thunderously in the air, causing the birds in the forest to take flight. The beasts on the ground were also startled by its cries and scurried away.

Yu Shangrong increased his speed. He rode on the wind and kept flying. When he looked down, he was amazed by what he saw. He saw a large number of beasts stampeding across the ground. The ground rumbled and thundered as the beasts ran.

Yu Shangrong felt his Primal Qi depleting and quickly landed on a towering tree. After flying for such a long time in the dark, he nearly lost his balance when he landed on the branch. Fortunately, he regained his footing in time. After that, he lay down a huge branch and closed his eyes to rest. Naturally, he did not let his guard down. There were dangerous beasts around him, after all.

...

After what seemed like a few hours, Yu Shangrong finally opened his eyes. He felt well-rested and energized after his nap. Although he had tried to stay awake, he had fallen asleep due to exhaustion.

At this moment, the sun was setting, dyeing the sky orange. For some reason, he felt the sun was much higher in the sky in this place.

Dusk was coming. The dimming sunlight shone on the forest, making him feel relaxed.

Yu Shangrong examined his Primal Qi. To his delight, he had almost recovered all his Primal Qi. He picked up his Longevity Sword and looked at it with a smile. “You’ve had it rough, old friend.”

Without the scabbard, he could not help but feel that something was missing. Hence, he removed his outer robe and tore it before he wrapped it around the sword and carried it on his back.

He continued flying.

Soon after, night fell.

Yu Shangrong was perplexed. "Why haven't I encountered anyone yet?"

Even if this was the territory of the Other Tribes, he should have encountered human settlements by now.

The 100,000-foot-deep abyss was close to Heaven's Moat. In that case, where did Heaven's Moat lead to? How was he supposed to return to Great Yan if he could not locate Heaven's Moat?

Deep into the night...

Yu Shangrong rested on a branch again. At the same time, he adjusted his breathing to replenish his Primal Qi. He was about to shut his eyes when he saw something shocking.

He saw a huge group of cultivators flying toward him. The leader of the group had summoned a 150-foot avatar.

"Master?" Yu Shangrong was surprised. He felt rather emotional. He had been stubborn and had acted willfully. He did not expect his master to come for him. However, he soon realized something was amiss about the group.

The 150-foot avatar was red. Nine red leaves spun around the red life-like lotus under its feet.

Why was it red? He remembered what Old Fourth had said. Was his master trying something new?

'That can't be it.'

He looked at the skies ahead. There were many Ten Worlds, Nine Transformations Yin Yang, and a couple of Three and Four-leaf avatars flying toward him. They were all red.

It was possible that his master was trying some new technique. However, for all the others to have red avatars as well? It was impossible!

Still puzzled, Yu Shangrong shrunk back and concealed his presence. He stayed in this position until the 150-foot Nine-leaf red avatar shot past below him to his left.

It illuminated the forest and mountain range like a red-hot sun. It was glaring and dazzling...

Yu Shangrong was shocked. 'That's not, master! Is there a new Nine-leaf expert in Great Yan?'

He held his breath as he looked at the Nine-leaf red lotus cultivator's retreating back. He continued doing so until the red lotus cultivators vanished in the distance.

"Why is the lotus red?" Despite being the great Sword Devil of Great Yan, he could not wrap his mind around this.

In the end, he gave up on thinking about this and decided to focus on returning to Great Yan.

He left his perch on the tree. He flew for only a few meters when a person called out to him from below.

"My friend."

Yu Shangrong was slightly taken aback. He stopped in the air and looked down. He did not sense anyone else's presence when he concealed his presence earlier.

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly. "You have business with me, sir?"

"Are you from the Sky Martial Court?"

'Sky Martial Court?' Yu Shangrong had heard of many sects after traveling the world for so long, but he had never heard of the Sky Martial Court before. Perhaps, it was a minor sect?

"I'm not," Yu Shangrong replied.

"If you're not, then what are you doing here?"

At this moment, Yu Shangrong suddenly discovered this person's accent was strange. He said, "My apologies. If you suspect me, I'm afraid that I'd have to disappoint you." He felt awkward being questioned in this manner.

"I'm sorry as well. However, this concerns the Flying Star House so you'll have to answer me."

"The Flying Star House?"

Yu Shangrong's reaction did not escape the person's notice. "You don't know what the Flying Star House is? That isn't funny at all."

Boom!

He pushed away from the ground and shot into the air before he drew level with Yu Shangrong.

Their eyes met.

Killing intent crackled in the night air.

Yu Shangrong was the Sword Devil of his generation. Naturally, he could acutely sense the other party's killing intent. He asked with a smile, "You intend to kill me?"

"I'd rather kill 1,000 innocent men than letting my suspect get away. I pray you'd be reincarnated to a better life." He raised a hand and launched a red palm seal.

Yu Shangrong sidestepped it as he looked at the red palm seal in confusion. It was red as well!

The person launched several palm seals again...

Yu Shangrong unleashed an energy sword from two of his fingers as he pushed forward.

The energy sword shot forth!

Bam!

It destroyed the red palm seal.

A frightened expression appeared on that person's face immediately. "Golden energy? Who are you?"

"I'm Yu Shangrong," Yu Shangrong replied indifferently.

"Yu Shangrong? Which sect do you belong to?"

Yu Shangrong was slightly stunned. Those who heard his name would tremble with fear. Why was this man not cowering in fear?

Yu Shangrong looked at the skies. 'Am I in hell?'

When he saw Yu Shangrong did not reply to him, he joined his palms and said coldly, "Die."

Whizz!

A Five-leaf Golden Lotus avatar appeared in front of Yu Shangrong. Then, the person attacked swiftly with a thunderous blow. He tried to charge at Yu Shangrong with his avatar.

Yu Shangrong remained motionless in the air. His arms were crossed, and he was lost in his thoughts.

At the final moment, Yu Shangrong's Longevity Sword broke free of its wrappings and burst forth with radiance! The scarlet sword released several energy swords.

Swoosh!

The Longevity Sword glanced across the person's avatar! Then, it flew in a circle and returned to Yu Shangrong's back.

Boom!

The person's avatar was cleaved into two, injuring him. He fell and crashed to the ground. His expression was one of fright at this moment.

Yu Shangrong landed slowly. He looked at the person. He asked calmly, "Where is this place?"

The person's eyes were filled with trepidation. He shuddered and said, "The people of Sky Martial Court... aren't mad. You, you..." Before he could finish his sentence, his head lolled to the side, and he stopped breathing.

Yu Shangrong sighed and shook his head. He looked at the stars, preoccupied with his thoughts. After a moment's silence, he said tonelessly, "Interesting."

...

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

"After the system's authority upgrade, its range has been increased. There's an additional reward of 1,000 merit points for the domain."

When Lu Zhou heard the first notification, he did not think too much of it. However, he was slightly surprised by the second notification.

"Additional reward for the domain?" He remembered when he killed Chi Yao at the bottom of the abyss back then, he was rewarded with 5,000 merit points. However, there was no domain reward.

Where did this reward come from?

"Yu Shangrong..."

Chapter 645: Peak Form Card

Lu Zhou fell deep into his thoughts as he stroked his beard.

Since Yu Shangrong was already in the red lotus domain, it would be even more difficult to find him. He was worried about his disciple's stubborn and unyielding character...

He sighed as he thought to himself, 'If only Old Fourth was the one who went missing.' After that, he chided himself, 'How can I even think of that?'

Lu Zhou opened the system dashboard and checked his remaining merit points...

Merit points: 5,603.

He had 12 luck points.

He did not think that he could purchase any good item cards with these merit points.

'In that case, let's try the lucky draw.'

"Ding! Spent 50 merit points. Spent 12 luck points. Obtained Reversal Card x12."

'Not bad. Continue.'

"Lucky draw."

"Ding! Spent 50 merit points. Obtained Reversal Card x5."

'I had a losing streak before this. Now, I'm on a roll.'

This felt great.

"Lucky draw."

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

"..."

After trying another ten consecutive draws, he was thanked a similar number of times.

Lu Zhou frowned. 'Why is my luck running out so fast? Again!'

...

Meanwhile.

Inside the meeting hall in Liang Province.

Si Wuya was greatly shocked when he finished reading Luo Shiyin's notes. He looked at the torn parts before he shook his head and sighed. If he had access to the missing information, it would have helped when he made his inferences.

He picked up a brush and started drawing. In no time at all, a simple outline of a map appeared.

At this moment, Jiang Aijian entered the hall. He crossed his arms and asked, "What are you drawing?"

"A map."

Jiang Aijian moved closer. When he saw the map, he was slightly stunned. "Two Great Yan maps?"

"One," Si Wuya replied.

"The one on the left is Great Yan, I recognize it... but the complementary one on the right, isn't that Great Yan as well?" Jiang Aijian asked.

Si Wuya pointed at the notes at the side and said, "Take a look at that if you have the time... These records are from the Luo woman, the mysterious individual whom we have been searching for all this time. The notes clearly state that her homeland largely resembles Great Yan."

Jiang Aijian stroked his chin as he studied the map and said, "What's with the overlapping part?"

"The abyss."

Si Wuya said, "Master had reached the bottom of the 100,000-foot-deep abyss and obtained Chi Yao's Heart there. I've gone through the ancient records. Chi Yaos are high-ranking beasts that disappeared long ago. Eight-leaf cultivators would flee at the sight of them. At the bottom of the abyss, southward, is probably where the world of the red lotus lies!"

"..." Jiang Aijian frowned. The more he looked at the map, the more he found it familiar. "I think I've seen this before!"

"You're not mistaken... The palace's internal archives contain works left behind by the Imperial tutor. This is how one of the sketches looks like! Liu Gu, your father, knew the secrets of the Imperial tutor. That's why he devoted himself to researching the Nine-leaf stage," Si Wuya said.

"Don't mention him. He's not my father... My father is long dead," Jiang Aijian said with a sigh.

Si Wuya knew that he should not have brought up the names of the dead. After a while, he asked curiously, "An empire can't do without its monarch... Eldest Senior Brother doesn't bear the surname Liu, after all. Are you really unwilling to take the throne?"

"Don't try to trick me into ascending the throne..." Jiang Aijian shook his head. "I have no interest in that position at all. I don't care about being the Fifth Prince or whatever. I think Zhao Yue is doing a great job as an empress. I have high hopes in her."

"It's not easy for a woman to claim the throne."

"Hold it right there... I've already said that I won't become the emperor. When Mister First has fully recovered, I'd rather the Imperial family changed its surname to Yu than becoming the emperor myself." Jiang Aijian kept waving his hands.

Si Wuya sighed helplessly.

Jiang Aijian's past life in the palace had instilled a natural avoidance in him. The fire that devoured Jinghe Palace made him give up on any thoughts of returning. If he went back, how was he supposed to face the wronged souls that roamed the Imperial city or his own conscience?

Jiang Aijian pointed at the map. "Let's get back to the topic. If what you say is true, that the imperial tutor is someone from the other side and that the people there are more powerful than we are, why didn't those people invade Great Yan?"

Si Wuya smiled and said, "Because of selfishness."

"Selfishness?"

"Everyone is selfish to a certain degree. I've studied the Imperial tutor's activities in the past. Coincidentally, Great Yan's Imperial city wasn't the only place he had been to. He also visited the 12 allied nations of Rongxi and Rongbei. Wherever he went, he was always in a position of power. Although he was Great Yan's Imperial tutor, Emperor Yong Shou had been obedient to him. He even went as far as to duel with my master using with High Void."

Si Wuya said, "He's the most powerful person here..."

Jiang Aijian's brows knitted together upon hearing this. "Now that you mentioned it, this man is even more disgusting than I am... He's too despicable."

"The Imperial tutor, Jiang Wenxu, might actually be a Nine-leaf expert who's currently living in Lou Lan," Si Wuya said.

"Nine-leaf? Why isn't there a disaster, then?"

"There are two possibilities. One, the disaster is a complete hoax. However, that doesn't seem likely. The appearances of Chi Yao and Cheng Huang have changed my mind. A Nine-leaf cultivator might attract the attention of the beasts. Second, the Imperial tutor has suppressed the Nine-leaf stage through some method."

"What about Old Senior Ji?" Jiang Aijian asked.

Si Wuya was deep in thought. After a moment's silence, he said, "I don't know."

"Are you reluctant to tell me what you know or do you really not know?" Jiang Aijian asked with a smile.

"It's too early to say anything for now. We'll find out after my master returns from Lou Lan," Si Wuya replied.

"You're right."

...

Meanwhile, inside a room.

"Lucky draw."

"Ding! Spent 50 merit points. Luck +1. Thank you for your participation."

"Oh, come one." Lu Zhou stroked his beard helplessly.

He looked at his merit points. He was left with 553 points. He had 99 luck points now. He wondered if something amazing awaited him once his luck points hit three digits.

Lu Zhou was in no hurry to attempt another lucky draw. Instead, he waited for a moment. After all, his luck did not seem too good today.

A moment later...

"Lucky draw."

"Ding! Spent 50 merit points and 99 luck points. Obtained Ji Tiandao's Peak Form Trial Card x1."

"Ji Tiandao's Peak Form Trial Card. Grants Ji Tiandao's peak form for 30 minutes. This item card is rare. Use it wisely."

Lu Zhou's old eyes widened in surprise!

Peak Form Card?!

'I knew I'd get something great!'

Although he had expected a treasure, the Peak Form Card still surprised Lu Zhou. He was the only one who knew how important this treasure was. He was the only one who knew how great of a power this item card held! With this card, he would be afraid even if the 12 allied nations came at him at once!

Lu Zhou looked at the item card in admiration before stowing it away.

Chapter 646: Ye Zhen the Nine-leaf Elite

After obtaining a Peak Form Trial Card, Lu Zhou was determined not to use it unless it was the end of the world. It was too rare of an item for him to use it recklessly.

Ever since the seven great sects laid siege on the Evil Sky Pavilion, he did not obtain another Peak Form Trial Card. Now that he finally obtained one, he wanted to be extremely cautious regarding its use.

After putting it away, he looked at the system dashboard and fell into despair. 503. The number of merit points he had was a sore sight. With the current prices of the item cards, 503 merit points could only be used for lucky draws and nothing else. Being poor was too miserable.

Lu Zhou felt there was no point in saving the merit points. The value of merit points lay in their usage.

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 1,500 merit points. Additional domain reward: 1,000 merit points."

"Uh..."

He suddenly felt reluctant to use the 3,003 merit points now. However, he could not buy anything with 3,000 merit points as well.

Lu Zhou hesitated. It was not practical for him to save up to 50,000 merit points in one go to purchase another Golden Lotus Leaf.

'Since I'm on a roll, I should continue with the lucky draws. Wouldn't it be great if I can obtain another Peak Form Trial Card?'

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 1,000 merit points. Additional domain reward: 1,000 merit points."

"..."

The additional domain reward increased his merit points by a lot.

‘Forget it.’

He knew Yu Shangrong was in a difficult situation. He had just arrived in the red lotus domain. If he was safe, he would not have killed others without thinking. He had killed two Nascent Divinity elites in one go. He seemed to be in a considerably troublesome situation.

‘My disciple is in danger, how can I happily do lucky draws? It seems inappropriate.’

Lu Zhou closed the system dashboard. He shifted his gaze down and saw the item card.

“Strengthened Reversal Card.” He had never used this before. He wondered how many days of life it would give him. With the Reversal Cards at his disposal, it seemed pointless to keep Chi Yao’s Heart for himself.

An ordinary Reversal Card would give him 500 days of life. How many days of life would the strengthened version give him?

Lu Zhou opened his palm. A Strengthened Reversal Card appeared in his hand.

He clenched his fist, shattering the Strengthened Reversal Card shattered...

In the beginning, he felt nothing. After a short wait, he felt as though he had been placed in a steam oven. He felt as though he was sitting above a fire pit as steam rose around him. As time passed, the sensation intensified.

“This feels completely different from before.” The Reversal Cards he had used absorbed energy from his surroundings and collected vitality from the world. However, the strengthened version was generating its own vitality. He felt that the vitality was richer, and he did not feel uncomfortable.

There was another advantage. This process did not cause any change in the environment that usually attracted the attention of the others. This allowed him to stay inconspicuous.

Lu Zhou adjusted his breathing and focused his mind as he slowly absorbed the vitality. Soon after, the feeling of sitting in a steam oven vanished.

Lu Zhou looked at the system dashboard.

Remaining life: 36,531 days.

“An addition of 1,000 days?”

This was the equivalent of two Reversal Cards. He seemed to have overestimated it.

Lu Zhou was slightly disappointed. He thought a single card could reverse his life for eight or ten years.

Shortly after, Lu Zhou used four of his remaining Strengthened Reversal Cards.

Remaining life: 40,531 days.

He now had more than 40,000 days of life. This was the same as 111 years.

Lu Zhou had 33 Reversal Cards left, but he did not continue to reverse his life. Who knew if the price of the card would increase in the future?

Since reaching the Nine-leaf stage required 1,200 years of life, Lu Zhou would at least need 876 Reversal Cards to ensure he reached the Nine-leaf stage with his current condition.

He sighed. The road to youth was fraught with difficulties.

...

Ten days passed.

Lu Zhou's extraordinary power was already replenished. He spent five days testing the power of hearing. When he felt like he was in peak condition, he left the room and made his way to the meeting hall in the General's Mansion.

...

Inside the meeting hall.

Si Wuya, Huang Shijie, and two Evil Sky Pavilion elders were deep in discussion.

When he came in, Lu Zhou saw the map on the table.

"Greetings, master."

"Pavilion master."

"Brother Ji."

After greeting him, the others studied Lu Zhou. He appeared more lively and energetic now.

When the two elders remembered the surging vitality energy from the Evil Sky Pavilion in the past, they could roughly guess the pavilion master had mastered some skill that was greater than healing...

Lu Zhou asked, "What's this?"

"It's a map of the red lotus domain based on my conjectures..." Si Wuya replied.

Lu Zhou looked at it and nodded. This reminded him of the old parchment drawing in the Evil Sky Pavilion. He wondered if it had changed at all.

"All of you know about this?" Lu Zhou looked at everyone present in the hall.

The others nodded.

Lu Zhou said, "Don't announce the information about the red lotus domain to the public. We don't want a mass hysteria."

"Understood."

"Si Wuya." Lu Zhou looked at Si Wuya.

"Yes, master?"

“Inform Lou Lan that I’ll be going there in three days.”

Everyone looked at Lu Zhou in shock. They did not expect this day to arrive so soon.

Lu Zhou, on the other hand, felt well-prepared. There was no need to put this off any longer.

The lotus-severing era was in full bloom. The 12 allied nations were eyeing Great Yan like a predator eyeing its prey. They would march against Great Yan sooner or later. It might be a good idea to bring the fight to them.

It was ordinary for envoys to travel between two nations. Lou Lan would still have to receive him hospitably. After all, their two nations have not fallen out completely.

Since the others were also here, Lu Zhou added, “Who do you think I should bring with me to Lou Lan?”

The others exchanged a look before they shifted their eyes to finally Si Wuya.

Si Wuya said, “I’m willing to go with you, master.”

Lu Zhou glanced at Si Wuya before he said, “You’ll stay here and look after Liang Province.”

If Si Wuya left Liang Province, it would be terrible if the Other Tribes snuck in and started a war.

Si Wuya nodded and said, “Yes, master. I’m not worried that Lou Lan would pull something unexpected during your visit. Currently, Lou Lan has suffered heavy damages. It is the weakest among the 12 allied nations. You can go there and intimidate Lou Lan. However, we should pay attention to the Imperial tutor, Jiang Wenxu. He’s always kept a low profile. He says he’s in Lou Lan, but he might actually be elsewhere. We must guard against him.”

The others nodded.

Si Wuya had a point. If there were no Nine-leaf cultivator, Lou Lan could not do anything against the pavilion master even if he went there alone.

However, Jiang Wenxu was a hidden and unknown variable.

Lu Zhou was only concerned about Jiang Wenxu as well.

Si Wuya said, “Why don’t you visit Lou Lan as an envoy, Master? We don’t have to send too many there. It’s easy to attack and retreat.”

“Alright.”

If there were too many of them, Lu Zhou would have to expend much more energy to protect them. The more people he had by his side on the trip, the more restricted he would be.

Quality was more important than quantity.

...

Two days later.

Lou Lan sent a reply in the name of the royal family.

Si Wuya brought the official document to his master's room.

"Master, Lou Lan has replied saying the kingdom welcomes you. They're willing to receive you at any time to discuss any upcoming cooperation and exchanges between our nations," Si Wuya said.

"I see."

"I'll take my leave."

The nature of the reply made it seem as though Lu Zhou was the emperor. It was only natural, since in Lou Lan's eyes, the only Nine-leaf cultivator in Great Yan would represent Great Yan.

After a moment's silence. Lu Zhou muttered to himself, "Jiang Wenxu... I'm just worried you don't show yourself..."

...

Early the next morning.

The cloud-splitting chariot departed from Liang Province and headed for the western regions past Heaven's Moat.

...

Meanwhile, in the land of the red lotus.

Yu Shangrong's expression remained indifferent even after killing two Nascent Divinity realm elites.

By now, he was certain he was no longer in Great Yan that he was familiar with.

In this place, everyone cultivated the red lotus. His Golden Lotus was an abnormality here. His scarlet Longevity Sword was the best item for him to conceal his identity and kill his enemies.

At this time, he finally encountered a human settlement. It was one that he had never seen before.

The relay stations were always the best place to obtain information and news.

Yu Shangrong sat in the corner as he observed cultivators with various appearances. Although they were humans, he felt a natural sense of estrangement toward them.

When the people here unleashed their power, it was always in the form of red energy.

"Did you hear? Three days ago, the Flying Star House gravely injured the luan!"

"The luan isn't a beast that should be taken lightly. Half of the men from the Flying Star have died. Even the Nine-leaf elite, Ye Zhen, was injured."

Chapter 647: Entering Lou Lan

"Ye Zhen is one of the best elites from the Flying Star House. I didn't expect him to be injured by a luan. Those beasts are too scary."

"It's impressive enough that he managed to injure the luan. At the very least, we'll be safe for now."

"You have a point."

Yu Shangrong appeared calm. However, he was shocked by how terrifying the luan was, considering how powerful the Flying Star House was.

In Great Yan, a Nine-leaf cultivator was peerless. However, in this place, such a cultivator was not even a match for a luan.

“Big brother, you’re hurt.”

Yu Shangrong was pulled back to the present. A young hooded girl sat opposite him. Perhaps, he found her familiar, he looked at her a second time.

Her dimpled face was not even as large as his palm. Her eyes were like crystal. She reminded Yu Shangrong of his Little Junior Sister.

Yu Shangrong did not reply to her and only responded with a smile.

The little girl said, “I’m Wuwu, a cultivator skilled in healing. I’m from the Thousand Willow Monastery... Should I heal you? I’ll do it for free!” As she spoke, she showed him her palm that was glowing with a faint red light.

Yu Shangrong said, “My apologies.”

“Huh?”

“I don’t need healing.” Yu Shangrong turned her down.

“Oh... Alright, then...” Wuwu, the little girl seemed disappointed.

Wuwu leaped off her seat when she saw two injured cultivators leaning against each other appearing outside the relay station. She seemed happy to see them as she ran out and cried out, “You’re both hurt. That’s great! I’ll heal you...”

“...”

A smile appeared on Yu Shangrong’s face. Her speech resembled his Ninth Junior Sister as well.

Unfortunately, due to the passage of time, many things had changed, and the people he knew were no longer with him. He wondered how they were faring. ‘I wonder how’s master is faring? He must be facing more troubles now that I’m not by his side...’

Whizz!

The resonance of power pulled Yu Shangrong back to the present. He turned and looked outside the relay station.

Wuwu had released a red energy on her palms before she channeled her energy into the two injured cultivators.

The unique vitality energy made the two injured cultivators look at Wuwu in awe.

Yu Shangrong did not expect the girl to actually be skilled in healing.

The people at the relay station gave her a thumbs-up.

“She’s Wuwu from the Thousand Willow Monastery! No wonder, no wonder...”

“It’s amazing for her to be so skilled at her age.”

Yu Shangrong looked at the man on the left and asked, “If I may ask, what’s the name of this place?”

The man turned and looked at Yu Shangrong probingly as he asked, “Comrade, you don’t even know where this is?”

“I’ve been on the battlefield for a long time. It’s been a long time since I returned,” Yu Shangrong replied.

“I see... This is the land of Great Tang. Judging by your accent, you’re not from around here, are you?”

‘Great Tang?’

“Oh, right.” The man smacked his forehead. “I’ve been observing you... Your sword seems unique. May I?”

“My apologies. I’m afraid I’ll have to disappoint you.” Yu Shangrong rejected his request. To a swordsman, his sword was more important than his life. At times, the sword even seemed like a swordsman’s wife. How could he hand it over to a stranger to inspect?

At this moment, someone exclaimed in surprise, “Look outside!”

Yu Shangrong instinctively looked over.

From the southwestern direction, many cultivators with their red lotus avatars were flying with a luan in tow.

Many people were amazed as they looked at a few towering red lotus avatars.

“The Flying Star House won!”

Everyone was in awe and shock as they stared at the colorful and huge luan in the sky.

At this moment, Yu Shangrong looked away. At the same time, he controlled his sword with two fingers. “My apologies.”

The Longevity Sword left its scabbard. It briefly flashed red before it slashed the man’s neck and returned to the scabbard.

The dead man’s hand rested on the cloth that was wrapped around the Longevity Sword. A hint of terror lingered in his lifeless eyes.

Yu Shangrong picked up his sword and left the relay station like nothing had happened. When he walked out, he looked at the luan’s corpse that was being transported east by various red lotus cultivators.

Yu Shangrong sighed softly. He crossed his arms and headed east.

The sun was setting, casting a slender shadow behind himself.

Wuwu followed him.

...

In a deserted alley.

Yu Shangrong walked as though he was an ordinary person.

The moment the sun set, the entire city turned silent and solemn.

There was no one on the streets inside the city; everyone remained indoors.

He stopped and looked behind him. "Why are you following me?"

Wuwu replied from the other end of the alley, "You killed someone!"

"He deserves it for trying to take a swordsman's sword..." Yu Shangrong said.

"Oh. You're the cultivator with the greatest sword skills that I've ever met..."

"Thank you for your praise"

"Aren't you going home?"

Home? It would have been easy for him to answer this question if he was still in Great Yan. He could say he was going back to Brackish Mountain, the land of the melilot, or the Evil Sky Pavilion's Golden Court Mountain. He had no home in this foreign land.

Yu Shangrong answered honestly, "I have no home."

"Oh... I'm sorry," Wuwu said apologetically, "I merely wanted to remind you that it's not safe to be out and about at night. The beasts in the night sky will swoop down and catch you. Be careful."

Yu Shangrong looked at the skies above the city. Intelligent flying beasts were beginning to appear at the edges of the sky that was lit by the remnants of the setting sun. The claws and the eyes of the beasts glowed red.

"Thank you for the reminder." After Yu Shangrong finished speaking, he flickered out of sight.

Wuwu looked around her surrounding. She sighed as she muttered to herself, 'I haven't healed you yet!'

...

Great Yan. Three days later.

The cloud-splitting chariot flew past the mountains and the lands. It crossed Heaven's Moat, the deserted desert, and the land of buried bones. It appeared in the sky three miles away from Lou Lan's ancient city.

Onboard the flying chariot.

Mingshi Yin was looking at the towering Lou Lan ancient city as he said, "We're almost there."

The others stepped out and looked down at the mountains and the ancient city.

Pan Litian looked at the main city of Lou Lan and exclaimed emotionally, "This is my second time in Lou Lan. I didn't expect this place to flourish now."

Leng Luo said, "This is only true of a handful of its cities."

Mingshi Yin had the best view so he saw the strange symbols on the city walls. He asked, "What are those things?"

"Lou Lan governs its kingdom with witchcraft. Naturally, that's a Grand Witchcraft Formation," Pan Litian said, "This Grand Witchcraft Formation is on par with the Ten Terminal Formation. However, Lou Lan's grand shamans are either dead or too old now. It must be near impossible for them to activate this Grand Formation."

At this moment, a huge and square purple carpet sailed toward them from Lou Lan's royal city. The four edges were being held by several cultivators who were moving in sync. They finally came to a cloud-splitting chariot.

"By orders of the king, we're here to receive our esteemed guests from Great Yan!"

The huge purple carpet moved forward slightly, and the flying chariot came to a halt.

One of the cultivators flew up to the chariot. He placed a right hand on his shoulder and said in a gentlemanly manner, "Kindly ride this flying carpet... This is the highest form of welcome in Lou Lan."

Pan Litian said in a hushed voice, "Indeed. The witchcraft god they worship is embroidered at the center of the carpet. The crown has the highest status in Lou Lan. The four corners are manned by seven shamans each. There are 49 escorts in total. This treatment is usually reserved for royalty."

Chapter 648: Without Destruction, There Can be No Return

As he looked at the luxurious huge purple carpet, Mingshi Yin clicked his tongue in wonder. "I've never ridden a flying carpet before!"

It was carried on the shoulders of the escorts as it flew in the air. This was more impressive than a palanquin.

"If you'd please." The Lou Lan escort bowed again and made an inviting gesture.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and stepped into the air, leaving the flying chariot.

Pan Litian, Leng Luo, and Yu Zhenghai followed closely behind him.

When it was Mingshi Yin's turn, the Lou Lan envoy boarded the chariot tactfully and said, "Allow me."

"That's more like it..."

Mingshi Yin passed the helm to him.

The Lou Lan envoy took over.

Mingshi Yin was about to leave when he said, "Hold on, where are you going to park the flying chariot?"

"It'll be parked in the royal plaza outside the royal city... There's a vast space there that's guarded around the clock. It's large enough for this chariot."

Mingshi Yin nodded and leaped off the flying chariot.

When Lu Zhou heard this, he found some parallels between the so-called royal plaza and the airports in the modern world. Regardless of the worlds, so long as humans existed, their basic needs would still be the same. The only difference would be the appearances.

The 49 Lou Lan escorts carried the flying carpet and sped toward Lou Lan's ancient city.

...

Lou Lan's ancient city was starkly different from Great Yan's Divine Capital.

Great Yan's Divine Capital was built on a plain. The huge city was built before powerful cultivators settled there. It was accessible from all sides without much obstruction.

Lou Lan's ancient city, on the other hand, was built on steep terrain. It had a natural geographical advantage. Even so, they built city walls on such difficult terrain.

The city wall was one of the greatest inventions of men... Whether it was mortals or cultivators, their settlements were always established within city walls to keep dangers outside.

The flying carpet slowly landed on the welcoming plaza in front of a long and arching walkway.

Two rows of soldiers were waiting for them with their backs straight.

The Lou Lan royals and high-ranking officials were also present.

Adorned with a crown and lavish garments, the Lou Lan King, Angui, looked stately and poised as he stood there. He was slightly taken aback when he saw there was only a small party of people on the flying carpet. Nevertheless, he stepped forward to welcome them hospitably. He placed a hand on his chest as he said, "I'm honored to welcome our esteemed guests from Great Yan!"

The people from Lou Lan followed his example and greeted the visitors.

When Lu Zhou and the others landed, they looked at the monarch.

"Angui?"

The members of the royal family and the high-ranking officials behind the King of Lou Lan, Angui, looked up. They could only smile. There was nothing they could do when Great Yan's Nine-leaf cultivator addressed their king by his name.

"I've prepared a banquet for all of you. This way please..."

...

During the banquet.

Angui raised his cup and wanted to exchange pleasantries.

Alas, Lu Zhou only waved his hand and said, "I'm not Great Yan's emperor. We can skip these convoluted ceremonies."

Angui was taken aback. He nodded immediately. "As you say."

"Do you know why I'm here?" Lu Zhou asked.

Angui shook his head.

Lu Zhou waved his hand.

Mingshi Yin, who had been feasting at the side, had no choice but to stop eating. He said, "My master is here for three reasons. First, he wants Lou Lan to leave the 12 allied nations and submit to Great Yan. Second, my master wants to meet the head of the Bonar Family, and we won't compromise on this. Third, Eldest Senior Brother..."

Mingshi Yin looked at Yu Zhenghai beside him.

Yu Zhenghai said, "Daluo."

They were forthright with their three demands.

"I can agree to the first request." Angui was straightforward as well. He seemed to have expected this.

The officials and members of the royal family did not oppose it.

"However, what business do you have with Mister Lanhai, the head of the Bonar Family, and General Daluo?" Angui asked, puzzled.

"Just summon them here. That's how I've always gone about my business." In other words, Lu Zhou had no intention of explaining himself to Angui.

Angui could only wave his hand.

Shortly after, a middle-aged man dressed in luxurious clothes appeared outside the great hall of the royal city. He bowed after he entered the hall and said, "Hail, Your Majesty! Daluo, at your service."

"Rise." Angui pointed at the table near him. "Prepare a seat for General Daluo."

Lu Zhou raised an arm. "There's no need for that."

"What do you mean, old mister?"

Lu Zhou ignored Angui and looked at his disciple.

At this moment, Yu Zhenghai was staring at General Daluo with flames of fury burning in his eyes. Although many years had passed, and the young noble Daluo had become a general, Yu Zhenghai could still recognize him. This man... was the very aristocrat who pierced his heart until he died!

"A dead man doesn't need to sit."

After Lu Zhou finished speaking, silence descended on the great hall.

The royals and officials seated at the banquet stopped moving their hands. They looked at Daluo, Lu Zhou, and their king, Angui.

Daluo fell to one knee. He raised his hands before himself and said, "Indeed, there have been unfortunate events between Lou Lan and Great Yan in the past. However, why must you put me in such a difficult situation, old mister?"

"Daluo!" Yu Zhenghai rose to his feet.

Daluo looked at Yu Zhenghai. Young Yu Zhenghai's appearance was difficult to forget, triggering some old memories in his mind. His eyes widened in shock as he exclaimed, "You... H-how are you alive?"

Yu Zhenghai said, "You must be so disappointed that I'm still alive."

When Angui heard their exchange, he frowned and asked, "Daluo, you're one of the most reputable generals in Lou Lan. What's the meaning of this? Explain yourself!"

Daluo bowed and said, "Your Majesty, it's all a misunderstanding. I met this young man before. I accidentally wounded him in the past and thought he was dead. I didn't know that he's still alive. I'm relieved to learn about this!"

Mingshi Yin made a great show of clearing his throat and spitting on the ground.

His actions drew everyone's attention.

He pointed at a fat piece of meat on the table and said, "What's this? It tastes awful!"

A Lou Lan official at the side explained, "My friend, this is made from tofu. It's not real meat..."

"No wonder... Do you think I can't tell that it's fake? It's unpalatable"

Daluo. "..."

After a short moment's silence, the others looked at Angui and Lu Zhou again.

What happened next depended on these two people.

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Zhenghai and said, "Yu Zhenghai, tell me your request. Today... I'll act for your cause."

Thud!

Yu Zhenghai fell to his knees. Perhaps, he was agitated by seeing Daluo again. He kowtowed loudly and respectfully as he said, "Master, I can't behave magnanimously... I have but one request. I want Daluo's entire family to pay for his sin!"

The great hall fell as silent as a graveyard again.

Daluo widened his eyes as he looked at the kneeling young Yu Zhenghai and said, "Are you out of your mind?"

"I am not!" Yu Zhenghai stood up.

Daluo chuckled. "Indeed, Great Yan had some conflicts with Lou Lan in the past, but that never stood in the way of the relationship between our two nations. Lou Lan's Consort Yu and Lady Mo Li married to Great Yan, and our nations have always been on good terms. That won't change because of you... Sometimes, thinking too highly of oneself is a foolish thing to do."

Lu Zhou raised his cup and took a sip as though nothing was wrong. Then, he toasted Anqui before draining his cup.

They seemed to be in harmony.

After placing his cup on the table, Lu Zhou looked at Yu Zhenghai and calmly said, "In that case, I'll execute Daluo's entire family for you!"

Everyone looked up in shock! They instinctively looked at Daluo.

Even the King of Lou Lan, Angui, was shocked. A few drops of wine spilled out from the cup in his hand as he trembled.

Daluo felt his heart tremble.

Chapter 649: The Might of the Nine-leaf Stage

Angui forced a smile on his face and said, "Old mister, that might not be the best thing to do. After all, Daluo is one of the most reputable generals in Lou Lan. If he dies, I'm afraid that Lou Lan will fall into chaos. If Daluo has done anything wrong, I'll order him to atone for it. This young man may state his conditions."

Daluo disapproved of this. However, he said, "Just state your conditions. I'll agree to anything."

Smack!

Mingshi Yin slammed his palm on the table, causing his wine to spill. He rose to his feet. "Daluo, is it?"

The others looked at him.

Daluo frowned and asked, "You are?"

"I admire your bravery... Who gave you the courage to talk to my Eldest Senior Brother like that?"

"Eldest Senior Brother?" Daluo was puzzled.

Mingshi Yin spread his hands and said helplessly, "I can see there isn't any sincerity in your hospitality. Didn't anyone learn anything about the Evil Sky Pavilion before we came? The young man whom you're talking to is the master of the greatest Fiend Path's sect under the heavens, Yu Zhenghai!"

"..."

The great hall was even more silent now. Even the sound of a falling needle could be heard.

Naturally, everyone knew the master of the greatest Fiend Path's sect under the heavens was Yu Zhenghai. They knew Yu Zhenghai was the first disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion as well. However, they could not reconcile the sect master whose name shocked the lands and flattened the Divine Capital with this young man in front of them.

Daluo staggered backward in shock and disbelief.

The King of Lou Lan, Angui, was similarly shocked.

Mingshi Yin nodded in satisfaction. This was the attitude and expressions they were supposed to have.

Daluo gulped before he said, "You're Yu Zhenghai?"

Mingshi Yin said, "In the flesh!" His voice was crisp and powerful as it resounded in the great hall.

At this moment, Lu Zhou raised his wine cup and toasted the King of Lou Lan again.

Perhaps, he was too nervous, Angui's cup slipped out of his hand.

Crash!

The wine cup fell to the floor and shattered, and the wine flowed like a stream from the main table to the floor of the great hall like a dragon snaking toward Daluo.

It was Daluo's fate and time.

King Angui said hoarsely, "I hereby decree that Daluo and his whole family will be sentenced to death!"

Thud!

Daluo fell to his knees and pleaded, "Your Majesty! You mustn't be led astray! The 12 nations have an alliance. If you give the order, the royal city's Grand Formation can be activated, and we'll surely be able to kill them all in one fell swoop..."

Angui shook his head and waved his sleeve.

One fell swoop? Who would go against a Nine-leaf cultivator?

A hooded shaman standing at Angui's left understood Angui's intention. He joined his palms together and began to chant.

The wine flowing on the floor turned into a purple dragon.

Before Daluo could react, the huge purple dragon brandished its claws and fangs as it twined around him.

Crack!

Daluo's neck was broken just like that.

The high-ranking officials of Lou Lan sighed. In front of the strong, the weak did not even have the power to struggle. It was the survival of the fittest. If they had a choice, would they hurt one of their own? Some of them began to cry.

Angui poured himself another cup of wine. He raised it with both hands and said, "Old mister... Are you satisfied with that?"

Lu Zhou pointed at Yu Zhenghai who was standing. His meaning was clear: ask him.

Angui looked at young Yu Zhenghai and said in a clear voice, "Young... Mister First, are you satisfied with this?" He swallowed the words 'young man'.

Yu Zhenghai looked at Daluo on the floor. Then, he made a shocking move. He removed his Jasper Saber from his waist as he walked to Daluo and brought it down on Daluo's corpse.

Bam!

An energy saber cleaved Daluo into two.

The others covered their faces, unwilling to watch.

Yu Zhenghai said, "Lou Lan rules its kingdom with witchcraft. With this, he's truly dead."

Angui. "..."

The other people of Lou Lan. "..."

The great hall fell silent again for the umpteenth time.

Yu Zhenghai sheathed his Jasper Saber and returned to his seat as though nothing had happened.

Mingshi Yin smacked his thigh. "Heh, I almost forgot. He could've been revived with witchcraft! That's too sneaky. How dare you play games?"

Angui started. He immediately put his cup down and said, "Men!"

Soldiers rushed into the hall.

"Your Majesty!"

"I hereby decree that Daluo's family be executed instantly! Hang their heads for all shamans to see as a warning!"

"As you command!"

The Lou Lan soldiers departed from the hall.

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

Angui dared not play tricks nor could he.

Yu Zhenghai's slash was killing the chicken to scare the monkey, and he was also making a deliberate show of his strength.

Angui raised his wine cup again. "Old mister?"

Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction. "We'll leave this matter at that."

Angui was relieved. He said, "As for the 12 allied nations, Lou Lan has never considered joining them. There's no need to worry about this, old mister."

"Alright." Lu Zhou raised his wine cup. "A wise man submits to circumstances. I admire tactful men the most."

"Men," Angui said again.

Several soldiers entered.

King Angui ordered, "Summon the head of the Bonar Family, Lanhai."

"As you command."

While they waited for Lanhai, Mingshi Yin said in a carefree manner, "Well? Let's eat! Elder Leng, Elder Pan, Eldest Senior Brother..."

The others moved their chopsticks.

There were many people present at the banquet.

The dishes were sumptuous, and yet, to the high-ranking officials of Lou Lan, they tasted like ashes in their mouths. During the entire time, they were either distracted or fearing for their lives. It was truly difficult to endure.

After some time, Lanhai, the head of the Bonar Family, entered the great hall, escorted by several shamans. He fell to one knee and placed his right hand on his chest before he said, "Hail, Your Majesty."

Angui ignored Lanhai. He was afraid to associate with Lanhai since Lanhai might end up like Daluo. He turned to Lu Zhou and said, "Old Mister, Lanhai is here."

Lu Zhou placed his wine cup on the table and looked at the person rumored to be in control of the Bonar Family, Lanhai.

Lanhai looked to be over 70 years old and had a peculiar aura. This was a bona fide witchcraft cultivator with a profound cultivation base.

Lu Zhou did not beat around the bush. "Do you know why I wanted to meet you?"

Lanhai looked up with a solemn expression and shook his head. "Kindly enlighten me, old mister."

"My memory crystal is in your possession."

Lanhai's expression did not change as he said, "I've never heard of such a thing."

Lu Zhou was in no hurry. Instead, he raised a palm. The wine jar beside him floated and poured wine into his cup.

The wine fell into the cup in a straight line. When the jar was lifted, the stream of wine stopped flowing.

"What do you think is the name of this wine?" Lu Zhou asked in a leisurely manner.

Lanhai seemed at a loss. He shook his head and said, "I swear in the name of the Bonar Family. I've never heard of a memory crystal before!"

Lu Zhou placed his palm on the table.

The wine from the cup floated in the air. It picked up speed and spun in the air as a golden energy shrouded it. Soon after, energy shot out from it.

Swoosh!

The energy shot toward Lanhai's forehead at lightning speed. Then, it came to an abrupt halt.

The others exclaimed in shock, amazed by the precise control. So this was what a Nine-leaf cultivator was like?

Even Pan Litian and Leng Luo were stunned.

Lanhai who was still on one knee on the ground instantly broke out in cold sweat when he saw this.

Chapter 650: Fighting Jiang Wenxu

If a cultivator could condense liquid into energy, wrap it with energy while exerting precise control over it to the point that it could kill, he was most certainly an elite among elites. Usually, cultivators would use a weapon as the core so that they could condense energy swiftly and pack the greatest power into it. With a weapon, they could create more energy seals.

For something without shape, such as wine, it was difficult to form energy. Moreover, it might even reduce the force of the energy. The only advantage it had was to raise one's competence in condensing energy. Usually, this skill was only used to show off.

If the conical energy had moved a little closer, the outcome would have been deadly.

Although Lanhai had a high status as the most powerful person in the Bonar Family, he could not help but consider his options at this moment.

"Refusing a toast only to be forced to drink a forfeit. Do you really think that I won't kill you?" Lu Zhou placed his hands on his back as he rose to his feet and descended the stairs.

Upon seeing this, those from Lou Lan rose to their feet as well and bowed.

Lanhai shuddered as he said, "Old mister, I'm not refusing to give you your crystal, but the royal tutor has said that the Bonar Family will pay a heavy price if I give the crystal up."

"Royal tutor?"

When the royal tutor was mentioned, King Angui said, "Lord Royal Tutor is Lou Lan's benefactor. He's held in high esteem here. Even I would have to be polite to him."

Lu Zhou understood now. He knew who this royal tutor was. Jiang Wenxu must have been living the life everywhere he went. He wanted to become the greatest being in this world.

Lu Zhou looked at the kneeling Lanhai and said, "You're afraid of his threat, but you're not afraid of mine?"

"I am... but what can I do?" Lanhai replied after he gulped.

"Where is the royal tutor now?" Lu Zhou asked. The fourth reason for his visit was Jiang Wenxu. Jiang Wenxu wanted to kill him, a Nine-leaf cultivator. How was he going to do that without showing up?

Lanhai said, "I don't know."

Bam!

The energy seal formed by the wine morphed into a palm that struck Lanhai's chest.

Lanhai reeled from the impact. He flew out of the hall and crashed onto the floor.

Lu Zhou stepped forward with his hands on his back and said, "The Bonar Family has taunted the Evil Sky Pavilion time and time again. I've yet to hold you accountable for your transgressions, but you have the audacity to seek death? In that case, I'll fulfill your wish and treat this as your reckoning."

The four shamans ran out and helped Lanhai to his feet.

At this moment, the witchcraft cultivator at the left side of the hall stood up and said, "Old mister, His Majesty has killed his greatest helper, General Daluo, for you. This is already a show of the utmost sincerity. Do you... will you only believe in our sincerity after killing everyone in Lou Lan?"

Lu Zhou glanced at him out of the corners of his eye. He said lightly, "Even if I massacre everyone in Lou Lan, what's it to you?" His confidence was apparent to everyone.

The Lou Lan cultivators present trembled in fear. None of them dared to speak up.

The atmosphere was incredibly suffocating now

King Angui said, "Lanhai, please surrender the crystal for Lou Lan's sake!"

Lanhai seemed to be in a dilemma. He said, "Your Majesty, the Bonar Family has sworn fealty to the royal city for generations. Could it be... that you're thinking of sacrificing the entire Bonar Family as well, Your Majesty?"

Angui knew he was being ruthless. However, faced with a Nine-leaf cultivator, he had no other choice. He could not afford to gamble. His expression was resolute as he said, "I order you to surrender the crystal! Return it to the old mister!"

Pu the great Nine-leaf cultivator of Great Yan aside, Lou Lan, in its current state, was no match for Great Yan. Angui had no choice but to sacrifice an individual for the greater good. As long as green hills remain, there would be no need to worry about firewood. However, if the green hills were gone, Lou Lan would truly be done for.

Lanhai's heart sank. He looked at his king and said, "Your Majesty, Lanni, Xien, and Bazir are dead. When has the Bonar Family ever wronged Lou Lan?"

The other four shamans looked at King Angui as well. Lanhai was right. When did the Bonar Family ever wrong Lou Lan?

"Bazir has guarded the borders for a century for Lou Lan. Everyone fearfully respected General Bazir... The people of Lou Lan know how great the Bonar Family is! Are you really going to disregard the people? How are you going to explain this to them?" Lanhai's emotions were clearly surging.

Mingshi Yin felt speechless. After a while, he said, "What a bunch of nonsense."

The others turned to look at Mingshi Yin who emerged from the hall. Based on what happened earlier, they knew this man was adept at stirring up trouble and finding faults. He was not an easy character to deal with. Their instincts told them that he would certainly bring trouble with him again.

"Lanni Bonar brought Tian Gou and the red coffin to the Evil Sky Pavilion, taunted my master, and ordered Tian Gou to attack my Little Junior Sister who didn't know how to cultivate. Let me ask you, should he die?"

Lanhai could not refute these words.

"Xien Bonar and Bazir Bonar wanted to kill my Second Senior Brother when they themselves were incompetent. Is it wrong for my Second Senior Brother to defend himself? Do those two deserve to die?"

Lanhai. "..."

"Lou Lan has always been on good terms with Great Yan. The families of our monarchs are even related by marriage. Yet, your Bonar Family has invaded Great Yan several times when we were experiencing internal turmoil, and you colluded with Rouli. You're the one who brought this upon Lou Lan. You're the greatest sinner in Lou Lan who should be cursed for 10,000 years!"

Lanhai Bonar's eyes widened as he took several steps backward.

The high-ranking officials present could not help but shake their heads. They continued to retreat.

Mingshi Yin said gruffly, "You won't even listen to orders from your king. Are you trying to rebel?"

Lanhai shuddered. Shortly after, he looked to the side and smiled forlornly. "Your Majesty, you made me do this... The Bonar Family will never yield! Activate the Formation!"

Whizz!

Outside the palace hall, purple witchcraft circles flew up into the curtain-like barrier in the sky.

The other officials appeared shocked before they began to rebuke him.

"Lanhai, are you out of your mind?! Stop it at once!"

Angui frowned and said, "Are you rebelling?"

Lanhai said agitatedly, "The royal tutor has instructed the Bonar Family to defend it with our lives!"

Royal tutor?

The others exchanged a look. They were shocked. The royal tutor had been missing for many years. How was he going to support them?

Whizz!

Another purple radiant circle shot toward the sky.

The others walked out of the great hall and looked at the sky.

The Grand Witchcraft Formation, which had never been activated before, was going to be activated today.

"On this day... even a Nine-leaf cultivator will die here!" Lanhai was getting more agitated as time passed.

The sky was completely lit up at the moment.

Witchcraft permeated the royal city.

Lu Zhou stepped forward with his hands on his back.

The crowd parted for him.

Mingshi Yin took one step back.

When Lu Zhou emerged from the great hall, he raised his right arm and struck with his palm!

Buddhist Great Seal of Fearlessness!

The shining golden palm shot out.

When the five witchcraft cultivators saw this, they formed a barricade and pushed their palms out.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

One of them reeled back, bringing the remaining three down with him. They spat out blood.

The final shaman could not stop the attack. His back rammed into Lanhai's chest, and the two of them reeled together!

Thud!

They crashed to the ground.

Lu Zhou was not pleased with the palm strike. Perhaps, he had gotten used to taking out his opponent with a single strike from his extraordinary power. Now that he was using the power from his cultivation base, he found it somewhat lacking in power.

In truth, hitting five individuals with a single palm strike and injuring all of them was already a terrifying feat.

Everyone looked at the five defeated men. They were shocked. Indeed, the legendary Nine-leaf cultivator was, indeed, terrifying!

Men were like that, often misled by appearance. Even if Lu Zhou unleashed a Two-leaf palm seal, due to his identity as a Nine-leaf cultivator, they would surely think his palm seal is terrifying.

The five men were shocked. They stared at Lu Zhou as though he was a great enemy.

Lu Zhou placed his hands on his back and said indifferently, "Since the Bonar Family has made a choice, I'll fulfill your wishes."

He raised his right hand again.

At this moment, several witchcraft cultivators appeared in the skies, maintaining the purple curtain in the sky.

More and more cultivators gathered.

King Angui looked up and hastily explained, "Who mobilized the royal guards?!"

At the center of the sky curtain, a figure moved swiftly into the Grand Witchcraft Formation. He was glowing with a purple aura, and his body was concealed by a purple cloak and hood. His eyes glowed faintly red, and his facial expressions were obscured by a mist.

The mysterious shaman looked down from the sky and slowly said, "The great Nine-leaf cultivator of Great Yan... How impressive."

When the mysterious shaman spoke, the high-ranking officials of Lou Lan, Lanhai, and his four subordinates fell to one knee. With a sincere tone, they said, “Hail, Lord Royal Tutor!”

Lu Zhou looked up and studied the figure in the sky. He said tonelessly, “Jiang Wenxu, you finally showed up.”