

## Disciples 681

### Chapter 681: The Patriarch Preaches

"This is Gu Ming's armor. It's completely destroyed."

The two of them are greatly shocked.

One of them hovered in the air and looked down at the center area where the battle had taken place.

There was a perfect circle on the ground. There seemed to be leaf-like shapes in the periphery. Further on, there was a circle of damage. The extent of the damage lessened the further they checked. The destruction affected several thousand meters of land.

"What a powerful destructive force! To think that there was such an elite in the golden lotus world."

"Could it be a Nine-leaf cultivator?"

"Gu Ming's armor should've been able to block a Nine-leaf attack for some time. That should give him an opportunity to flee. However, this armor is already destroyed. Look at this destruction. It might very well be a Ten-leaf elite or maybe a Mystic Sky elite."

The Mystic Sky meant that the opponent's strength was based on the Ten-leaf stage where the opponent had formed the Thousand Realms Whirling. The Thousand Realms Whirling. Those below the Ten-leaf stage were ants.

In the Divine Court realm and below, three to four avatars could be formed at every realm.

In the Nascent Divinity realm, there was only a single avatar, the Hundred Tribulations Insight. The avatar's strength was determined by the number of leaves.

Similarly, there was only one avatar in the Mystic Sky realm and that was the Thousand Realms Whirling.

"The appearance of this huge beast meant that there are Nine-leaf cultivators in the golden lotus domain."

"We haven't seen many beasts throughout this month..."

"Hence, it's possible that there's a Mystic Sky elite here. We can't stay in this place any longer. We must make contact with the inhabitants here and confirm our suspicions. Also, we must send the information back."

"Mhm... The Flying Star House's Jiang Wenxu sent the information when he was on the brink of death. We'll have to confirm if he's really dead as well."

"It's been more than 300 years... Looks like Luo Xuan wasn't the nut job. We are."

...

In Mo City.

The Evil Sky Pavilion's four elders and Si Wuya were having a discussion in the meeting hall.

Chu Nan and the others stood there respectfully. They did not dare to act recklessly.

"The beasts had already been cleared away. We're now trying to mend the Formation... We're just worried the beasts might show up again," Ke Qinghao, a Nether Sect branch master in charge of Mo City, said.

Si Wuya placed his hands on his back and said, "So the Formation has to be mended... I've had someone replicate the Divine Capital's Ten Terminal Formation a month ago."

"You're brilliant, Mister Seventh, to have thought of that. We'll have to set it up quickly." Ke Qinghao was delighted.

"No..." Si Wuya said, "This Formation is left behind by Jiang Wenxu. There are many restrictions. It is powerful, but there are downsides as well. It needs to be modified. Mo Li made four copies when she was in the palace. Only the Ten Terminal Formation in the Obedient Villa worked. It's clear that the replicated Formations contained too many uncertainties."

Zuo Yushu bowed and said, "I think that we should leave this to the Big Dipper and Sky Conduct Academies."

"I've tasked them with this about a month ago... I hope they can come up with improvements as quickly as possible..."

The others nodded. The Evil Sky Pavilion's Mister Seventh truly lived up to his name; he was always a step ahead of others.

Zuo Yushu said, "The two academies might not be enough. The Taixu Academy is more skilled in Formations."

"After the Taixu Academy suffered the great blow, I'm afraid they won't cooperate," Leng Luo said.

"I'll persuade them," said Zuo Yushu.

At this moment, an imposing voice rang from outside. "In that case, Elder Zhuo will head to the Taixu Academy."

The others instinctively turned to look. They saw Lu Zhou sauntering into the hall with his hands on his back.

Everyone who was sitting rose to their feet immediately. They greeted Lu Zhou respectfully.

"Pavilion Master."

"Master."

"Senior Ji."

"That's enough." Lu Zhou walked to the main seat and sat down. "I've killed the manmans. They won't harass Mo City anymore."

The others were frightened and shocked upon hearing this.

Chu Nan was the first to bow and said, "Senior Ji, your cultivation base is unfathomable. This is a blessing for Mo City!"

Lu Zhou glanced at him and said, "Ever since Yun Tianluo passed away, the Three Sects have been working hard to cultivate. As Luo Sect's Grand Elder, what are you doing here in Mo City?"

Chu Nan sighed and said, "I had no choice. Many among the Three Sects have chosen to recultivate. I'm the first person to reach the Eight-leaf stage after recultivating. I was traveling the lands in search of a way to reach the Nine-leaf stage. However, I have yet to find it until now."

"You can't reach the Nine-leaf stage even after recultivating?" Lu Zhou frowned.

This problem was serious. It was related to Great Yan's future, after all.

"It's not that I can't... but I don't have any prior experience to rely on. The process of sprouting leaves with and without a lotus is different. I might be able to refer to my own experiences from the One-leaf to the Eight-leaf stage, but it's different to reach the Nine-leaf stage."

The four elders fell deep into their thoughts when they heard these words. They were all experienced individuals with great knowledge. However, they did not know how to reach the Nine-leaf stage from the Eight-leaf stage.

The purpose of pushing the energy rings down was to promote the growth of leaves on the golden lotus. Now that the golden lotuses had been severed, what was the point of the energy rings?

"There's still plenty of room for learning in regard to the Nine-leaf stage," Pan Litian said.

Chu Nan said, "That's why the speed of attaining the Nine-leaf stage is incredibly slow."

It was only natural for them to progress rapidly if they had prior experiences to draw from. They were blindly exploring in the later stages; it was only natural that their progress was slow.

"Senior Ji, you're the greatest Nine-leaf cultivator in the world... If you're willing to share the method of reaching the Nine-leaf stage with the world..."

"Shut up!" Hua Wudao reprimanded Chu Nan. "How dare you ask about such a thing!"

Chu Nan shuddered as he fell to one knee and said, "It was a slip of tongue... Please forgive me, senior Ji!"

Indeed, such matters were taboo.

At this moment, Lu Zhou raised a hand and said, "It's not entirely impossible."

The others were shocked. All of them stared at Lu Zhou, at this moment.

Lu Zhou asked, "How many times have the beasts attacked humans?"

Ke Qinghao bowed and said, "It happened thrice in Mo City. The first time, it was the smaller manmans, and we didn't pay much attention to it. The second and third times are the huge manmans. I heard there are beasts in Yi Province as well, but they're just groups of weak beasts."

"Someone saw them south of Yu Province."

"A large number of land beasts appeared near Measure Heaven River."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. "Si Wuya."

"Your orders, master?"

"Hasten the development of the Formation. Also, tell everyone that I'll preach about the method of reaching the Nine-leaf stage soon."

Upon hearing this, Si Wuya was shocked. "Master, are you going to preach to the whole world?"

The others widened their eyes with an incredulous expression on their faces.

If it were just the beasts, Lu Zhou would not consider doing this. However, the appearance of the envoys from the red lotus domain had changed his mind. Up until now, there was no true Nine-leaf cultivator in Great Yan. If the red lotus domain decided to invade, how were they supposed to defend themselves?

Pan Litian bowed and said, "Pavilion Master, please think about this carefully!"

"Please think carefully about this, Pavilion Master!" the other elders chimed in as well.

This was no trivial matter.

However, Lu Zhou's expression remained unchanged. "I've made up my mind!"

Currently, he was not a true Nine-leaf cultivator. He would achieve a breakthrough sooner or later. Judging by his current progress, he believed that he was not far from reaching the Nine-leaf stage. He would alert the others when that time came. Instead of doing that, he decided that he could also hide that in the name of demonstrating the method of sprouting leaves. He could kill two birds with one stone with this.

'Am I too cunning?'

The cultivators of the Evil Sky Pavilion kneeled and said, "Your magnanimity is something we should learn from you, Patriarch!"

"Your magnanimity is something we should learn from you, Patriarch!"

"Ding! Worshipped by 10 individuals. Reward: 10 merit points."

"After the Eight-leaf stage, the reward for every worshipping individual would be 1 merit point. The reward would not be repeated."

Lu Zhou frowned. 'The system is such a troll.'

'Forget it. I've earned quite a lot from killing the manmans and Gu Ming. It's time for me to get ready for the Nine-leaf stage.'

Lu Zhou stood up.

At this moment, a Nether Sect disciple came running in. He panted as he said, "Patriarch! Outside... outside..."

The branch master, Ke Qinghao, frowned and asked, "What is it? More beasts?"

"No, no, no... The people... the people..."

Lu Zhou glanced at the disciple. With his hands on his back, he said, "Let's have a look."

The others bowed and followed him.

Xiao Yun, who was standing beside Chu Nan, wanted to say something, but Chu Nan said in a hushed voice, "Senior Ji dislikes fickle-minded people the most. Are you still thinking of joining the Evil Sky Pavilion?"

Xiao Yun immediately withered.

...

Outside the mansion.

There was a commotion on the streets.

The doors were opened, and the civilians were kneeling at the doors.

"Thank you, Patriarch!"

"Thank you, Patriarch!"

"Ding! Worshipped by 520 individuals. Reward: 520 merit points."

Lu Zhou walked out.

"Ding! Worshipped by 1,100 individuals. Reward: 1,100 merit points."

He stood at the end of the street and looked around himself. He remembered a phrase from earth: those who win the hearts of the people will win the world.

It did not matter if he was of the Fiend Path.

Lu Zhou stepped into the air and looked down. The nearby streets were full of people.

He sent a soundwave that traveled that resounded through the streets. "With me here, the sky won't fall."

He heard notifications of being worshipped again. With that, he earned another 20,000 merit points.

### **Chapter 682: Old Eight's Departure**

As far as the eye could see, there were people kneeling and worshipping Lu Zhou. Nobody seemed to care that he was from the Fiend Path.

Lu Zhou laced his voice with Primal Qi that spread out into the surroundings. His words reached everyone's ears. His words were like a boost of confidence to the people.

The Evil Sky Pavilion's cloud-splitting chariot was in the skies. When they saw the flying chariot, the cultivators who did not belong to the Evil Sky Pavilion had an expression of admiration and respect on their faces.

Chu Nan was no exception.

Only an individual, Xiao Yun, clutched his chest and staggered backward. He was in agony; his heart was in pain. He was so close to joining the Evil Sky Pavilion!

Lu Zhou stepped into the air with his hands on his back and boarded the flying chariot.

Si Wuya and the three elders boarded the flying chariot as well.

Zuo Yushu was the only one who cupped her fists at the flying chariot and said, "You should go ahead, big brother. I'll head to the Divine Capital right away. Leave the Taixu Academy to me."

"Alright," Lu Zhou replied tonelessly.

The flying chariot adjusted its direction slowly. Without dallying, it departed for Liang Province.

During the journey, Si Wuya was still thinking about his master's decision; he could not understand it. Hence, he bowed and asked, "Master, there's something that I don't understand."

"I know what's on your mind," Lu Zhou replied calmly, "The reason I wish to preach to the people is so that there will be more Nine-leaf cultivators in Great Yan as soon as possible. The manmans are just the beginning. How are the people of Great Yan supposed to fight back if they don't have the means?"

"However, the Other Tribes have the upper hand after their lotuses are severed... After they learn about the way to attain the Nine-leaf stage..." Si Wuya was never at ease when it came to the Other Tribes.

"After the 12 allied nations ended, most of the best Other Tribe cultivators have been gravely injured. They don't even have time to look after themselves now. They won't be making a move any time soon. Besides, the invasion of the beasts is a reality. The Other Tribes are experiencing a shortage of elites. They can't possibly be eyeing Great Yan like prey. In fact, they'd have to submit themselves to preserve themselves," Lu Zhou said.

"If they reach the Nine-leaf stage..."

"There's no need to worry. Do you think the ten disciples of Evil Sky Pavilion are no match for them?" Lu Zhou asked.

Upon hearing these words, Si Wuya felt slightly emotional. "Since you have so much faith in us, we'll certainly do our best not to let you down, master."

"You're always confident in everything you do... You should be confident in this as well," Lu Zhou said.

"I understand... Thank you for enlightening me, master."

"Ding! Disciplined Si Wuya. Reward: 200 merit points."

Si Wuya asked, "Master, when are you planning on preaching? I'd like to prepare myself beforehand."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and pondered. He had earned a round of merit points. He believed that he was not far from reaching the peak of the Eight-leaf stage. What he should do now was to amass enough Reversal Cards.

'Half a year? Is that too long? The dishes might turn cold by then.'

After pondering on it for some time, Lu Zhou said, "For now, let's set it for three months later."

“Understood.”

The three elders nodded as well.

Lu Zhou looked at the scenery outside the flying chariot and said, “Return to the Evil Sky Pavilion.”

“Understood.”

...

Meanwhile, news of the Evil Sky Pavilion dealing with the manmans spread like wildfire in the cultivation world.

The Evil Sky Pavilion’s Patriarch had fought back the tides of darkness on his own and killed the manmans.

At the same time, to aid the Great Yan cultivators to fight against the invasion of the beasts, the Evil Sky Pavilion’s Patriarch would preach about the method to reach the Nine-leaf stage in three months.

It became a hot topic in the relay stations.

“I heard that the Evil Sky Pavilion’s Patriarch is going to preach three months from now.”

“How magnanimous... It’s hard to imagine that they were once hated by everyone.”

“That’s because of the lies spread by the old Emperor. Even Liu Gu was an impostor.”

A young man with a red bandana who was sitting in the corner placed his cup on the table and asked, “Dear comrade, who’s this patriarch?”

Everyone turned to look at the man who had spoken instantly. They looked at him as though he was an idiot.

Nobody answered him.

The atmosphere was awkward.

The young cultivator with the bandana asked again, “I’m sorry. I’m new here. Is there anything... inappropriate about my question?”

Still, nobody answered him.

He felt that his efforts were futile. He raised his teacup and drank from it. ‘The people from the golden lotus domain are hostile. Their eyes are filled with killing intent, and they seem to love fighting. I should be more careful. I can’t make enemies out of them, and I can’t expose myself.’

At this moment, a person who was sipping wine across the young cultivator with the red bandana said, “Hey, what’s with you? Don’t you even know who the patriarch is?”

“I’ve been living in the mountains all this time, and I haven’t paid any attention to worldly affairs. Hence, I have no idea...” the young man replied.

“No wonder... There’s not a single person who doesn’t know who the Evil Sky Pavilion’s Patriarch is. Care to listen?”

“Gladly. Please fill me in on the details, comrade... Your drinks are on me.”

The person sitting opposite him nodded in satisfaction and said, “We’ll have to begin from when the ten great sects attacked the Evil Sky Pavilion’s Patriarch in the past...”

...

After returning to the Evil Sky Pavilion.

The disciples in Liang Province returned to Evil Sky Pavilion as well.

In the eastern pavilion.

Lu Zhou’s gaze was trained on the parchment drawing. He was surprised to find changes in the drawing. To the right of the maps of Great Yan and the Other Tribes’ lands, there was an outline of a land that resembled Great Yan even though it was still blurry.

“The red lotus domain?”

This resembled the map Si Wuya drew the other day, but it seemed different at the same time. The difference was that the two maps overlapped; Great Yan was on top while the red lotus domain was below.

“Tectonic plate movements?” Lu Zhou did not know how to explain this.

He killed the red lotus envoy, Gu Ming, near Mo City. However, Gu Ming claimed he came from the Endless Ocean beyond the northern borders.

In other words, were the tectonic plates pressing against each other while the other locations were separated by the Endless Ocean?

“Columbus discovering a new continent?” Common knowledge only possessed by a transmigrator kept appearing in Lu Zhou’s mind.

For now, this was the only explanation he could come up with.

It had been a long time since he obtained more Open Heavenly Writing Scrolls. Of the Three Scrolls of Heavenly Writing, he merely obtained the Earth Scroll. Moreover, he was only beginning to understand the Earth Scroll.

In that case, where was the Heaven Scroll?

‘Forget it. I’ll leave it at that for now.’

Lu Zhou called up the system dashboard and looked at the remaining merit points.

Merit points: 42,893.

‘Not bad. If I purchase Reversal Cards that are sold at 500 merit points each, I can only get about 85 of them. That’s far from enough. Currently, I have 63 Reversal Cards. Let’s try the lucky draws.’

“Lucky draw.”

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points. Obtained Shining Stone x1.”



'I think I'm getting the hang of this. This is better than the Reversal Cards.'

"Lucky draw."

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

He was intent on trying again when he heard a voice from outside the eastern pavilion.

"Greetings, master," Zhu Honggong said as he prostrated himself on the ground.

"Enter."

Zhu Honggong opened the doors and went in.

Zhu Tianyuan followed closely behind him.

Lu Zhou turned to look at the duo. Then, he closed his eyes to rest his mind as he said, "What is it?"

Before Zhu Honggong could say anything, Zhu Tianyuan said, "Brother Ji, I've been away from the Ancient Saint Cult for a long time. If I don't return soon, it'll be taken away by someone else. I've helped out during the incidents in the Divine Capital and the Liang Province. Do you think... you can return my son to me?"

"The Ancient Saint Cult is no longer what it once was. Zhu Honggong has great talent and will surely achieve great things in the future. Are you sure you want him to return and inherit the Ancient Saint Cult?"

"It's only natural for a son to continue his father's legacy... However, since he's your disciple, you call the shots," Zhu Tianyuan said after he mustered up his courage. Beads of sweat could be seen on his face at this moment.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes and said, "Indeed, Zhu Honggong is my disciple. However, if he chooses to leave, I'll respect his choice... Zhu Tianyuan, what do you think?"

"You have a point, Brother Ji. In that case, we should let him decide for himself." Zhu Tianyuan had a good feeling about this. He had been having a great time with his son lately. He was sure his son would not hesitate to agree to return with him!

### **Chapter 683: Unavoidable**

Zhu Honggong felt awkward. 'Shouldn't both of you decide? Why do I suddenly have to decide?'

"Old Eighth, how's your cultivation base?" Lu Zhou asked.

"Three-leaf..." Zhu Honggong replied sheepishly.

"That's not worth a mention in the Evil Sky Pavilion, but for the people outside, being able to recultivate to the Three-leaf stage is a commendable feat. If you leave, I'm afraid that you'll be missing out on a bright future. If you stay in the Evil Sky Pavilion, your future achievements won't be inferior to mine," Lu Zhou slowly said, "Think carefully about this. I won't stop you."

Zhu Tianyuan. "???" Why did this statement sound a little wrong? Were they not going to let his son decide for himself?

Upon hearing this, Zhu Honggong said, "Master, I don't have a big ambition. All I want is to live a stable and uneventful life."

"Now that the beasts are invading, and the humans racing to sever their lotuses, it's going to a survival of the fittest. I can understand your wish of wanting to lead a stable life, but do you have the ability to do that?" Lu Zhou asked.

"..." Zhu Honggong had no way to refute his master's words. Even when he left the Evil Sky Pavilion in the past, he had relied on Si Wuya and Yu Zhenghai to live a peaceful life. How could he manage on his own?

When Lu Zhou saw Zhu Honggong keeping quiet, he said, "That's all I have to say. You can make your choice."

There was a heavy meaning behind Lu Zhou's words that was not lost on Zhu Honggong. His master meaning was if he chose to leave, he would no longer be a disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Lu Zhou closed his eyes again as if nothing had happened. His expression was calm.

Zhu Tianyuan felt that something was amiss after listening to Lu Zhou's words. It felt as though his son was being led astray.

Zhu Tianyuan was about to speak up when Zhu Honggong suddenly prostrated himself in front of Lu Zhou and said, "Master, I've never thought about leaving the Evil Sky Pavilion."

Zhu Tianyuan. "???"

Was this person really his son? How could his son forget everything they discussed beforehand?

Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction. He opened his eyes to look at the duo and said, "Naturally, I'm happy that you chose to stay. As for the Ancient Saint Cult, it's meaningless whether you inherit it or not."

"Brother Ji... Indeed, the Ancient Saint Cult can't compare to the Evil Sky Pavilion, but... but..."

"No buts. Zhu Honggong has made his decision. Although you're his biological father, you should still respect his choice," Lu Zhou said.

"Ah..."

'Who says that I'm not respecting his choice? This...' Zhu Tianyuan felt like crying.

"I respect my son's choice, but what will happen to my Ancient Saint Cult from now on? Should I hand it over to someone else?" Zhu Tianyuan was reluctant.

Zhu Honggong kowtowed at Zhu Tianyuan and said, "I'm sorry, father. I'm an unfilial son."

"You can't be blamed for this. I can only blame myself." Zhu Tianyuan shook his head and sighed.

Lu Zhou looked at Zhu Tianyuan and said, "Why are the others looking to take over your Ancient Saint Cult?"

"They're trying to seize the opportunity!"

“No... The reason is you’re too weak.”

“...”

Being weak was the original cause. Those who fell behind would naturally be picked on. This was a truth that did not change since time immemorial.

“If Zhu Honggong returned with you, can he change the Ancient Saint Cult’s situation?” Lu Zhou asked.

If an Eight-leaf cultivator could not do anything, what could a Three-leaf cultivator do?

As though hit by a sudden realization, Zhu Tianyuan said, “Thank you for the reminder, Brother Ji... My sights have been too narrow.” He could just spread the news that his son was a disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion. That way, nobody would look down on the Ancient Saint Cult!

Zhu Tianyuan smacked his thigh and exclaimed inwardly, ‘Why didn’t I think of this earlier?’

“Thank you, Brother Ji. You’ve enlightened me.”

“That’ll be all.”

The two of them left respectfully and closed the door behind them.

Lu Zhou continued trying the lucky draws.

“Lucky draw.”

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points and 1 luck point. Obtained: Reversal Card x5.”

...

Throughout the next month, Lu Zhou spent his waking hours cultivating and trying his luck at the lucky draws.

...

During the second month, Rongxi and Rongbei were attacked by beasts. The Other Tribes of Rongbei were powerless to fight back. They migrated elsewhere. The five nations of Rongxi formed another alliance to repel the beasts.

There were more locations in Great Yan’s nine provinces that were attacked by the beasts as well. Fortunately, the barriers in the human cities blocked most of the calamities.

At the same time, this pushed the efforts to improve the Formations in the Divine Capital. The human cultivators were working together as well.

Many cultivators of various sects voluntarily applied to join the two academies. Some of the sects requested to join the Evil Sky Pavilion as well in search of security. Yet, they were all turned away by the Evil Sky Pavilion.

...

In the eastern pavilion of the Evil Sky Pavilion.

“Master, that’s the fifth sect today requesting to join the Evil Sky Pavilion. That sect has never joined the ten great sects in the past. Do you think...” Mingshi Yin started to say.

Lu Zhou shook his head. “The quality of the troops is more important than the quantity.”

“The Three Sects have sent emissaries as well. They wish to forge a good relationship with us. They’re major sects.”

“The Three Sects have many restrictions and an abundance of elites. They’re in no short supply of allied forces, but the method to attain the Nine-leaf stage,” Lu Zhou said.

Mingshi Yin nodded. “Understood.”

“Tell the others that I’m not to be disturbed tomorrow... I feel dizzy,” Lu Zhou said.

“Understood...” Mingshi Yin was puzzled. How could his Nine-leaf master feel dizzy? However, he did dare to press and retreated obediently.

Lu Zhou checked the dashboard again.

Merit points: 22,893.

Throughout the past month, he did 400 lucky draws. How could he not feel dizzy?

However, he was satisfied with the results. He obtained 125 Reversal Cards, one Shining Stone, and three Refining Talismans.

He had 190 Reversal Cards now, but that was far from enough.

Generally, obtaining Reversal Cards through lucky draws was better than purchasing them directly.

He was in no hurry to earn the merit points... He decided to attempt them before anything else. If he was lucky, he might get some grand prize.

...

Meanwhile.

In the Thousand Willow Monastery in the red lotus domain.

Like always, Yu Shangrong leaned against the railing and looked out at the forest.

“Big brother, these are the most powerful sects of Great Tang. However, the most popular ones lately are the Flying Star House and the Sky Martial Court. They’re recruiting many disciples and have produced many talented cultivators,” Ji Fengxing said.

“Did anything special happen lately?” Yu Shangrong asked.

“Not really. However... It’s said that a mysterious saber user has appeared in Wangyue City. He’s elusive, and an elite of Ninth Temple has been gravely injured by this saber user. I don’t think that he’ll last long. I suspect... that it’s the Flying Star House’s doing,” Ji Fengxing said.

“A mysterious saber user?”

It was common knowledge that the Flying Star House and the Ninth Temple were on bad terms. The Flying Star House had been losing many of its numbers lately. It was only natural for them to shift and vent their anger on the Ninth Temple.

“The Flying Star House has sleeping dragons and crouching tigers. It’s not surprising for them to have a saber user or two, but this saber user has a special characteristic...” Ji Fengxing said with a smile, “He’s a saber user, but he carries a sword scabbard with him. Isn’t that strange? Big brother, do all elites have some eccentric preference or something? Take you, for example, you like to use a rag to... wrap your...” He trailed off before he hastily added, “Brother, don’t give me that look... I was wrong!”

At this moment, a disciple came flying down the mountain. He stood outside the gazebo and said in a clear voice, “Ji Fengxing, Miss Wuwu, the elder has invited the two of you up the mountain for a talk.”

Ji Fengxing was slightly taken aback. He hastily looked up and asked, “Why did he summon me? I’m an external disciple!”

“Elder Tian has told you to bring the guest up the mountain. He won’t accept a refusal.”

Ji Fengxing was shocked. However, he knew they could not avoid this. He remembered Yu Shangrong’s feat of cutting down four Flying Star House disciples in the past. With a slightly worried tone, he said, “Big brother, you should run for your life now. The Flying Star House will come and investigate the Thousand Willow Monastery sooner or later. I don’t think we’ll be able to escape this calamity.”

Yu Shangrong seemed surprised. With a small hint of admiration, he asked, “Aren’t you afraid?”

“I am... but what good would that do? I’m not like you, big brother. I can’t roam about unfettered with a sword,” Ji Fengxing said with a sigh.

“It’s just as you said, we won’t be able to escape if it’s a reckoning. There’s no need to worry. I’m right here.” Yu Shangrong stepped out of the gazebo.

#### **Chapter 684: The Saber User**

“Big brother... We can’t afford to offend the Flying Star House!” Ji Fengxing said with a bitter expression on his face.

Yu Shangrong stood outside the gazebo. He turned around and smiled faintly as he asked, “Why can’t we?”

“The Flying Star House has two Nine-leaf cultivators. Also, the house master is mysterious and unfathomable. He doesn’t show himself often. Ye Zhen is injured from killing the luan. Even so, nobody is bold enough to strike him!” Ji Fengxing said.

At this moment, Wuwu came flying back from a nearby rock. She landed near the gazebo and said, “Big brother, you mustn’t go!”

“You think so too?”

“The people from the Flying Star House are here to investigate Lu Song’s death. If they find out anything about this, you won’t be able to escape... Big brother, I’ll bring you down the mountain.” Wuwu said as she made her way to Yu Shangrong’s side.

Yu Shangrong flashed a faint smile and said, "The little Flying Star House isn't enough to frighten me. If my master is here, even Ye Zhen will have to avoid him."

Ji Fengxing was shocked to hear this. He recalled Yu Shangrong's words. There were four types of swords. The commoner's swords, the lord's sword, the king's sword, and the swordless state of using everything as a sword. If the big brother was only using the lord's sword... How powerful was his master then? It was no wonder that big brother was this calm and composed. It seemed like he was never surprised by anything. He did not even think much of the Flying Star House. It seemed like he had a truly powerful supporter.

"Good! I'll go with you, big brother!" Ji Fengxing patted his chest.

Wuwu. "..."

In the end, the trio flew up the Thousand Willow Mountain. When they were halfway up the mountain, where the sect buildings were, they descended slowly.

Two disciples were already waiting for them.

"This way."

Under the guidance of the Thousand Willow Monastery disciples, they passed through several side courts and arrived at the attendant hall of the sect.

When they entered the hall, Ji Fengxing hurried ahead and fell to one knee as he said, "Greetings, Elder Tian. The disciple, Ji Fengxing, greets you."

Tian Buji was one of the managing elders of the Thousand Willow Monastery. He oversaw many affairs and had a high status.

Wuwu did not kneel. Instead, she cupped her fists.

Yu Shangrong was the only one standing with his arms crossed with his back straight as he looked at Tian Buji.

To Tian Buji's left, there was a middle-aged man in Daoist robes. There were two Daoist apprentices standing behind him. One of them carried a horsetail whisk while the other carried a sword. The scabbard was adorned with the Taiji Eight Trigrams.

Tian Buji waved his hands and said, "This is the Flying Star House's Daoist Master Xuan Ming. Aren't you going to greet him?"

"Greetings, Daoist Master Xuan Ming," Ji Fengxing and Wuwu said in unison.

Yu Shangrong remained silent. He shifted his gaze from Tian Buji to the Flying Star House's Xuan Ming. After some probing, he confirmed the person was a Nascent Divinity realm elite.

Tian Buji looked at Yu Shangrong. He was puzzled when he saw Yu Shangrong made no move to kneel or greet him.

Although the Thousand Willow Monastery was not as glorious as it was in the past, Tian Buji had a pair of discerning eyes when it came to recognizing talents. He could tell that this man's temperament was

not cultivated overnight. Hence, he did not insist on the elaborate etiquette. Instead, he turned to Daoist Master Xuan Ming and said, "Wuwu is here. Daoist Master Xuan Ming, you can speak to her. If she's willing to go with you, I won't stop her."

Daoist Master Xuan Ming stole a glance at Yu Shangrong. He was not concerned about his attitude. Instead, he looked at Wuwu and smiled.

"Miss Wuwu, Elder Lu Song has made his intentions clear before this. The Flying Star House is recruiting talents. If you're willing to join the Flying Star House, I'll certainly recommend you to the house master to become his direct disciple. I wonder if..."

Before he could finish, Wuwu interrupted him and said, "I'm not going... I've told you many times before. You guys are so annoying."

Daoist Master Xuan Ming frowned at the direct refusal.

Tian Buji smiled brightly and said, "I'm sorry... Wuwu has made her stance clear. You should leave now, Daoist Master Xuan Ming."

Daoist Master Xuan Ming shook his head and said, "We'll leave Miss Wuwu's matters aside for now... I have another objective for coming here. I hope you can give me an explanation, Elder Tian."

"What's this about?"

"Elder Lu Song's life stone has shattered. Something happened to him. His three disciples were killed as well. It just so happens... that we found their bodies near the Thousand Willow Mountain." A hint of hostility crept into Daoist Master Xuan Ming's voice now.

Ji Fengxing's eyes widened. He lowered his head, feeling uneasy. "They found them?"

"The disciples of the Flying Star House have runes inscribed on their bodies. Unless they're completely shattered, we can find them even if they're hidden at the ends of the world."

Tian Buji frowned and said, "Daoist Master Xuan Ming, are you suspecting us?"

Xuan Ming said, "The bodies are proof. With Elder Lu Song's cultivation base, how can you not notice such a huge commotion..."

"I deeply regret Elder Lu's passing, but this has nothing to do with the Thousand Willow Monastery. I hope you'll investigate this properly, Daoist Master," Tian Buji said as he tried to suppress the anger welling up in his heart.

"Tian Buji... I suspect you're the culprit..." Xuan Ming raised his voice and said.

Although the Thousand Willow Monastery was not as glorious as it once was, Tian Buji was not someone who would let another person humiliate him. He retorted, "That's a vicious lie!"

"The Flying Star House has always abided by the rules! Three of ours have died at your doorstep. How are you going to explain this?" Daoist Master Xuan Ming went on the offensive.

Both of them rose to their feet and glared at each other.

At this moment, Yu Shangrong, who had been silent all this while, said, "If I may have a word?"

Tian Buji and Daoist Master Xuan Ming looked at Yu Shangrong at the same time.

Daoist Master Xuan Ming said, "Who are you?"

Yu Shangrong said tonelessly, "My identity isn't important. It's true that the deaths of the three disciples of the Flying Star House have nothing to do with Thousand Willow Monastery."

"How do you know?"

"I witnessed it myself," Yu Shangrong replied.

"And I'm supposed to take your word for it? Who's the culprit? Where is he now?" Daoist Master Xuan Ming demanded.

"It's just as you said... You'll have to take my word for it."

"..."

Yu Shangrong's attitude, tone, and mannerism, all of them crushed Daoist Master Xuan Ming's momentum.

"Since you know the culprit, I must ask you to come with me, sir." Daoist Master Xuan Ming stepped forward.

"My apologies." Yu Shangrong's tone flattened. However, it was still polite and humble. "I have no obligation to do that."

"That wasn't a request!" Daoist Master Xuan Ming turned around and drew his sword. The sword buzzed as it left the Taiji scabbard.

Alas, before he Xuan Ming could extend his hand out, Yu Shangrong had already drawn his sword at a far greater speed. From his left shoulder, he swung the sword to his right.

Bam!

The swords clashed.

Yu Shangrong remained where he stood. His sword was sheathed again.

Daoist Master Xuan Ming did not expect Yu Shangrong to suddenly attack. He was caught off guard and staggered backward. When he finally regained his footing, he heard a crack... The sword in his hand snapped and fell to the floor.

Yu Shangrong crossed his arms as though he did not move at all. He only looked at Xuan Ming indifferently. "If this happened in the past, I would've taken your life. However, I know it's not easy for you to attain your current cultivation base. I hope that you'll take care of yourself."

"You." Xuan Ming glared at Yu Shangrong. His sword arm was numb. He knew that he was up against an elite. He guessed that this was a helper invited by the Thousand Willow Monastery.



As the saying went, 'Revenge is a dish best served cold'. The Flying Star House could wait; they were not in a hurry to see revenge, and they would bide their time.

With these thoughts in mind, Xuan Ming swallowed in indignance and said, "Elder Tian, the Thousand Willow Monastery is truly something. We're leaving."

A disciple picked up the broken blade.

Daoist Master Xuan Ming waved his sleeve and left.

"Farewell." Tian Buji cupped his fists.

When they left, Tian Buji slammed the table, "They're insufferable bullies!"

Ji Fengxing seemed worried. "What do we do now? Big brother... The Flying Star House won't let this matter go!"

It was only now that Tian Buji studied Yu Shangrong. At the end of the day, the conflict between the Flying Star House and the Thousand Willow Monastery had nothing to do with this man. Even if Lu Song was not dead, this would still happen.

Tian Buji was about to thank Yu Shangrong when Yu Shangrong said, "There's no need to worry."

"Big brother? How can we not worry?" Ji Fengxing was stunned speechless.

"He won't be going back."

Yu Shangrong looked at Tian Buji meaningfully before he vanished out of sight and appeared outside the hall. In another flash, he disappeared again.

Tian Buji immediately felt a chill run up his spine. His eyes widened as realization dawned on him. He hastily said, "Ji Fengxing, go and stop your big brother now!"

"..."

...

Meanwhile.

The Flying Star House's Daoist Master Xuan Ming led his two disciples back.

After they passed the mountain. Daoist Master Xuan Ming could no longer hold it back. He was furious. "Preposterous! How dare Tian Buji humiliate me with outside help. I'll have him on his knees and begging for mercy next time!"

"Daoist Master, Tian Buji was rude. Clearly, he doesn't think much of the Flying Star House... Making him kneel is too light of a punishment."

"That swordsman is incredible... We should retreat for now. We'll have our revenge some other day." Xuan Ming was filled with lingering fear when he remembered that sword.

"That sword is at least heaven-grade. There are exquisite red runes inscribed on it. Indeed, he's an elite."

Xuan Ming's voice had barely faded when a figure appeared and blocked the trio's path.

The person had a saber on the left side of his waist and a sword scabbard on the right. His hands were placed on his back. He looked at Daoist Master Xuan Ming and asked, "You met an elite swordsman?"

### **Chapter 685: Returning the Scabbard**

Daoist Master Xuan Ming hovered in the air. He was puzzled by the tall and muscular man's sudden appearance. He asked with a frown on his face, "You are?"

"I'm looking for him."

"Who's he to you?" Daoist Xuan Ming asked warily.

"An acquaintance and sometimes an opponent."

As the saying went, 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend'.

One of the disciples standing behind Xuan Ming said, "I don't think he'll be able to live for long."

"Is that so?"

"The Flying Star House always gets its revenge... Let's leave." Xuan Ming waved his sleeve. He did not want to waste time here.

The two disciples nodded.

The three of them were about to fly away when the tall and muscular flew in front of them again. He said frostily, "Wait."

"Why are you standing in our way, sir?"

"You may leave, but you'll have to leave your heads behind."

Xuan Ming was not in a good mood. When this man challenged him, he immediately drew his broken sword and coldly said, "You asked for this so don't blame me for this!" He moved like a fired arrow. He lunged and thrust with his broken sword.

The red energy sword was like the tongue of a serpent.

Bam!

Xuan Ming's energy sword stopped short a foot before the man's face. It was as though it was blocked by a sturdy wall.

'Hm?' Daoist Master Xuan Ming felt his arm go numb. He nearly lost his grip. He looked up and exclaimed hoarsely, "Golden energy?"

Yu Zhenghai stood with his hands on his back. The energies around him were locked on Xuan Ming.

Xuan Ming suppressed the shock he felt as he tried his best to free his energy sword. However, he could not pull it free no matter how hard he tried. It was as though it was being firmly held in place.

"Weak," Yu Zhenghai said softly.

Realization suddenly dawned on the two disciples that they were in a dangerous situation. They did not hesitate and turned around to flee.

Yu Zhenghai flipped his palm and pushed it forward.

The Jasper Saber spun away from him as countless energy sabers shot out from it.

The two disciples barely had time to cry out before they disappeared.

Xuan Ming was thoroughly shocked by this. The golden energy was terrifying!

Yu Zhenghai stared at the person hovering horizontally in front of him and asked, "Where is he?"

Instead of answering the question, Xuan Ming said, "I'm the Flying Star House's Daoist Master Xuan Ming!" He could sense how powerful the man before him was. Revealing the force he was from was a last resort to save his life. He hoped the Flying Star House's name would be able to deter the man from killing him.

Alas, Yu Zhenghai could not care less about the Flying Star House. He pushed his palm out.

A golden palm seal struck the broken sword with a crushing momentum.

Yu Zhenghai advanced.

The broken sword shattered in just an instant, and the palm seal continued on its trajectory toward Xuan Ming.

The Great Dark Heaven Palm!

Bam!

Daoist Master Xuan Ming spat out a mouthful of blood in the air as he reeled back.

Yu Zhenghai launched another palm seal with a flurry of movements.

Xuan Ming glared at Yu Zhenghai. He gritted his teeth and bit back the pain as he summoned his avatar.

Whizz!

A Seven-leaf red lotus avatar appeared in the sky. It charged forth with its red lotus and blocked the palm seal.

Yu Zhenghai did not retreat. He continued to strike with his palm seals. The Primal Qi on his palm was instantly condensed into energy. A richer and swifter golden palm seal appeared.

Bam!

This palm strike hit the red lotus, denting it.

Xuan Ming spat out blood again. He dropped lower and hastily retracted his avatar.

Xuan Ming was gravely injured after suffering two hits. He would surely die if he took another hit. He was extremely frightened now. He looked at Yu Zhenghai and hastily pleaded, "Senior! Please have mercy!"

Yu Zhenghai looked down at Xuan Ming and asked, "Any last words?"

"I have no quarrel with you, senior. Why must you kill me?" Xuan Ming asked, perplexed.

"Is that all?"

"Senior... If I've offended you, please let me know. I'll atone for it. However, if you're going to kill me without saying anything, I..." Xuan Ming trailed off for a moment, his heart trembling, before he continued to say, "If I die, my life stone in the Flying Star house will shatter. At that time, the Flying Star House will come investigating! Senior..."

Yu Zhenghai interjected frostily, "If you're finished, die!" He could not care less about what Xuan Ming had to say.

Yu Zhenghai flicked his fingers lightly.

The Jasper Saber spun out.

When Xuan Ming saw the golden Jasper Saber, his eyes turned red. Energy surged from his body, and he summoned his avatar again!

Whizz!

Xuan Ming directed his red lotus upward, blocking the Jasper Saber.

The Jasper Saber was wrapped in the energy saber as it descended from the heavens with crushing force and slashed at the red lotus.

The lotus split open!

"A desolate-grade weapon?!"

Xuan Ming quickly joined his palms together.

The Jasper Saber cleaved Xuan Ming's avatar into two.

There was no doubt about the outcome of the fight.

The Jasper Saber returned to Yu Zhenghai.

The energy in the air dispersed, and the surroundings fell silent again.

Yu Zhenghai glanced at the two halves of the falling corpse as he shook his head. "My wise brother has exaggerated slightly. The red lotus domain isn't all that terrifying." It did not cross his mind that he had grown stronger as well.

Just when Yu Zhenghai was about to leave, a figure shot toward the corpse that had been cleaved into two.

Light glinted off a sword.

One slash, two slashes, three slashes.

The corpse was picked up.

Yu Zhenghai frowned. "An elite!"

It was not difficult to recognize an elite once they made a move.

After the corpse flew up in the air again, the figure kept slashing at the corpse.

The shadows of a red sword made a dazzling display in the air.

The corpse was diced into shreds before the pieces fell to the ground.

Then, the figure flew toward Yu Zhenghai.

Yu Zhenghai said, "Finally, a worthy opponent!"

He drew his saber and fought!

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The energy sword and energy saber clashed.

The energy sword was fierce. Its attacks were like a tempest. Yu Zhenghai had to retreat as he parried.

"Nice!" Yu Zhenghai was surprised by the elite swordsman. He shot backward. He spread his hands.

Great Dark Heaven Memorial!

Countless golden energy sabers rained down.

The newcomer did not relent. He shot past the energy sabers. He immediately faded out of sight. Then, it split into three before they charged toward Yu Zhenghai!

"Second Junior Brother?" Yu Zhenghai, naturally, recognized this kill. He was delighted.

"Eldest Senior Brother, focus! Don't you lose to my sword!"

Return and Enter Three Souls.

Three energy swords attacked at the same time.

Yu Zhenghai smiled in delight. An energy saber burst forth from his Jasper Saber.

Sovereign Descent!

A tidal wave of energy sabers rose and fell.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The three energy swords were devoured by the energy sabers.

The remaining energy sabers clashed with the Longevity Sword.

Both opponents reeled back.

Yu Shangrong retreated 100 meters back while Yu Zhenghai retreated 10 meters back.

With this, the battle ended.

Both of them looked at each other from a distance.

Their surroundings fell silent again.

There was a hint of surprise and unwillingness in Yu Shangrong's eyes. It was as though he was slightly unwilling to accept the outcome. After all, he was forced to retreat roughly 100 meters back. This was unforgivable. He continued looking at Yu Zhenghai.

Time passed. Blue seas turned into mulberry fields. The mountains, rivers, sun, and moon changed, but the individuals remained the same.

The Eldest Senior Brother Yu Shangrong knew had returned. After what seemed like hours, he said, "I've lost."

Yu Zhenghai shook his head and said, "No, you haven't."

"Hm?"

"The Jasper Saber is now a desolate-grade weapon. I have an unfair advantage," Yu Zhenghai said.

"I see." Yu Shangrong felt better upon hearing these words. "The red lotus domain is extremely vast. It's comparable to the golden lotus domain. Why did you come here, Eldest Senior Brother?"

"Master ordered me to come to your rescue," Yu Zhenghai said.

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly. "The Sword Devil has never lost a battle. Why would I need rescuing?"

"This is different... Second Junior Brother, are you going to go against master's order?" Yu Zhenghai used their master's name against Yu Shangrong for once.

Yu Shangrong sighed and shook his head. "Although Master is a Nine-leaf cultivator, he likes to do unnecessary things."

Yu Zhenghai laughed. "You should tell him that when you see him in person."

"There's no need for that..."

"Here, your scabbard." Yu Zhenghai tossed the Longevity Sword's scabbard to Yu Shangrong.

Something stirred within Yu Shangrong when his Longevity Sword returned to its scabbard.

### **Chapter 686: Eldest Big Brother**

When the Longevity Sword returned to its scabbard, it gave a low buzz before it quieted down.

The runes on the scabbard were dazzling.

Yu Zhenghai said, "Seventh Junior Brother had inscribed the runes on the scabbard. I used the scabbard as a guide to the red lotus domain as I traveled through the abyss' dark space and black water."

Yu Shangrong was slightly shocked, but his expression remained the same. He did not show emotions on his face.

Yu Zhenghai continued to say, "It was a long and tedious journey although there were dangers and excitement as well. Although I overcame the hurdles and escaped the hunting of the beasts of the water, I have no wish of returning to the dark space. It's a pain, and it was slightly scary." He tried his best to describe how difficult the journey was in the simplest terms. In other words, he was saying it was not easy coming to rescue Yu Shangrong.

Yu Shangrong replied, "It was acceptable for me... I traveled past the black water as well. I flew on my sword without rest or sleep. However, it was an easy trip for me."

Yu Zhenghai. "..."

Yu Shangrong added, "When you were killed by Liu Gu, I went westward on master's orders. I braved blizzards, crossed Heaven's Moat, traveled for a fortnight, navigated through the forest, the Land of Buried Bones, arrived at Lou Lan, stood guard for 49 days, and killed the grand shaman Bazir. Compared to what you've been through, that was much more difficult and terrifying."

Yu Zhenghai said, "Your cultivation base is unfathomable, Second Junior Brother. Killing them is as easy as picking a pocket... Flying for a fortnight doesn't sound so hard."

Yu Shangrong. "..."

A breeze blew gently in the air.

After a while, the duo finally stopped bickering. At the same time, their minds finally cleared. They suddenly realized the gravity of killing three members from the Flying Star House.

Yu Shangrong said, "You've just arrived, Eldest Senior Brother. You don't know much about the cultivators here. Xuan Ming is a Nascent Divinity realm cultivator. Now that you killed him, you should get rid of the evidence."

"To prevent the corpse from being controlled by witchcraft?" Yu Zhenghai looked down despite himself.

"The red runes also serve as a tracking device. All of them have similar runes on their bodies," Yu Shangrong explained.

"No wonder you attacked and dismembered the corpse, Second Junior Brother."

The two of them looked away. They knew what was in each other's minds as they flew to a nearby mountain.

Before Yu Shangrong landed, he cupped his fists and respectfully said to Yu Zhenghai, "Please forgive me for being rude in the past, Eldest Senior Brother."

"What are you talking about? You're the Eldest Senior Brother," Yu Zhenghai replied with his hands on his back.

"Everyone says the Sect Master of the Nether Sect who leads 100,000 members is magnanimous. I'm sure he won't put something as trivial as this in his heart," Yu Shangrong said.

"Of course."

Since Yu Shangrong went so far as to say that, Yu Zhenghai, naturally, could not hold it against him.

Yu Zhenghai looked at the distant mountain and asked, "Once we expose our golden avatar in the red lotus domain, we'll instantly be labeled as foreigners. How did you hide your identity, Second Junior Brother?"

"My sword is enough," Yu Shangrong replied. His Longevity Sword had a red glow to begin with. Moreover, with the red runes, as long as he refrained from using energy and killed with his sword alone, it was enough to deal with ordinary elites. Even without his cultivation base, he was still capable of killing Nascent Divinity realm elites with his hands. This was how confident he was.

"You, on the other hand, Eldest Senior Brother... Although the Jasper Saber is a desolate-grade weapon, how are you going to fight the enemies without using energy?" Yu Shangrong asked.

"I'll just kill anyone who goes against me," Yu Zhenghai said.

"..." After a beat, Yu Shangrong changed the topic and said, "Xuan Ming is a member of the Flying Star House. His death must be kept a secret."

Yu Zhenghai nodded. With a sigh, he said, "If we're in Great Yan, there'd be no need for this. Who cares about Flying Star House? I'll just wipe them out. A leader can submit or stand tall as required. I'll do as you say, Second Junior Brother."

"..."

As the duo was discussing among themselves, Ji Fengxing hurried over. The speed of his flight could hardly be praised. When he saw Yu Shangrong and Yu Zhenghai on the mountain, he was overjoyed. He hastily walked out to them as he said, "Big brother, big brother... This is?"

"My Eldest Senior Brother," Yu Shangrong answered.

"Eldest Senior Brother? In that case, you're eldest big brother? Allow me to salute you!" Ji Fengxing saluted Yu Zhenghai.

"There's no need for that." Yu Zhenghai frowned slightly. Knowing his Second Junior Brother's solitary character, he knew his Second Junior Brother disliked making friends. Even if his Second Junior Brother did acquaint himself with someone, it would not be with such a person.

Ji Fengxing looked around him and wondered out loud, "Where's Daoist Master Xuan Ming?"

"We killed him," Yu Shangrong replied.

Yu Zhenghai was rendered speechless. 'What happened to keeping his death a secret?'

When Ji Fengxing heard this, he slapped his thigh and said, "Oh, no! This is bad! Elder Tian sent me to stop you. With this, we've thoroughly offended the Flying Star House. I'm afraid... I'm afraid..."

Yu Zhenghai said arrogantly, "We'll deal with them as they come. Why do you have to be so terrified... Second Junior Brother, your taste..." There was no need for him to finish his sentence for Yu Shangrong to figure out that he was judging his selection of friends.

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly. "Eldest Senior Brother, this is the Thousand Willow Monastery's external disciple, Ji Fengxing."



“The Thousand Willow Monastery?”

“Let’s return for now.”

The trio exchanged a glance before they returned to the Thousand Willow Monastery.

...

“Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 1,500 merit points. Domain extra: 1,000 merit points.”

“Ding! Killed two targets. Reward: 20 merit points. Domain extra: 20 merit points.”

Lu Zhou opened his eyes.

Yu Zhenghai should have already arrived in the red lotus domain. With his cultivation base and the desolate-grade Jasper Saber, there should not be a problem as long as he could avoid running into a Nine-leaf cultivator.

He checked the dashboard.

Merit points: 15,333.

He spent 10,000 merit points in lucky draws over the past couple of days.

His luck was on the rotten side. All he got were 50 Reversal Cards.

He now had 240 Reversal Cards. He needed more.

“I should rest and refine my weapons.” He had three Refining Talismans.

Lu Zhou placed the Magistrate Brush, High Void, and Spotless Dagger before himself. These were all super heaven-grade weapons.

Unnamed was enough for him. He thought it would be a good idea to refine the weapons and improve the strength of those from the Old Age Pavilion.

With this thought in mind, Lu Zhou produced the talismans and refined the three weapons.

The Magistrate Court and Spotless Dagger were easier to refine. The two weapons were undamaged; they were complete weapons. All he needed to do was to erase all the traces of their former owners.

On the other hand, High Void was broken. It took more time before its refinement was complete.

After refining the three weapons, Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction.

He had a good feeling so he decided to try the lucky draws.

“Lucky draw.”

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points. Thank you for your participation. Luck point: +1.”

...

Inside the Thousand Willow Monastery in the red lotus domain.

Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong sat in a stately manner next to each other.

An extremely awkward expression could be seen on Tian Buji's face as he said, "I appreciate both of you for helping out... However, with the death of Xuan Ming, the Flying Star House definitely won't let the matter slide. The Thousand Willow Monastery has no intention of dragging outsiders into this matter. Kindly leave while you can. Ji Fengxing, show them out."

Ji Fengxing looked like he was in a dilemma. Although he was a Thousand Willow Monastery disciple, he would not act recklessly in front of Yu Shangrong.

Yu Zhenghai said, "Your greatest mistake is being weak. Do you think the Flying Star House won't come looking for trouble even if Xuan Ming didn't die? Even if you present this little girl as a gift to the Flying Star House, they would still look down on you. They'll trample the Thousand Willow Monastery under their feet sooner or later. You're not young. Surely you know this much?" Nobody in the world understood the sin of being weak better than him. Before he started cultivating, even the beggars on the streets could trample on him. However, when he became the Sect Master of the Nether Sect, even Eight-leaf elites had to avoid him. Truth sided with those who had a larger fist.

Naturally, Tian Buji understood this. He sighed heavily and asked, "Where do you come from?" Up until now, he knew nothing of the mysterious duo. He did not believe they were Ji Fengxing's 'big brothers'.

Yu Zhenghai said, "That's not important. All you need to know is that if my master were here, even the Flying Star House's Ye Zhen would have to behave himself."

Upon hearing this, Tian Buji shuddered inwardly. The duo in front of him had mysterious origins. If they were not confident, how could they have challenged the Flying Star House so recklessly?

"Come with me." Tian Buji made an inviting gesture. "Perhaps, you should meet the monastery master."

Yu Shangrong and Yu Zhenghai exchanged a look.

"That'd be great."

Tian Buji turned around and left.

Ji Fengxing was so envious that his eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. He had joined the sect for so long, and yet, he did not even have the right to enter the area where the inner disciples lived. His big brother had barely spoken more than a sentence, but he was already on his way to meet the monastery master. As expected, being weak was a sin!

"Big brother, eldest big brother, can I... come with?" Ji Fengxing stood between them and asked with a bow. 'I must hold on to their thighs tightly!'

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly. "Let's go together, then."

"I'm going as well!" Wuwu leaped off her chair and followed them.

## **Chapter 687: A Battle between Elites**

If this were in the past, a disciple like Ji Fengxing would not have the opportunity to enter the doors inside. Times were different now. After all, with elites by his side, Tian Buji would not rigidly stick to the

rules for such a trivial matter. This was an important matter. If he was not careful, the Thousand Willow Monastery might be dragged down.

...

In front of the Thousand Willow Monastery's Fair Hall.

Hundreds of inner disciples were training on the plaza.

"Elder Tian!"

"Elder Tian!"

The disciples greeted Tian Buji when they saw him.

Tian Buji nodded slightly before he continued walking his hands on his back.

Many of the inner disciples were shocked when they saw Ji Fengxing trailing behind Tian Buji. They wondered what circumstances would allow an outer disciple to come to the Fair Hall. They had their misgivings, but with Tian Buji leading the way, nobody dared stand in the way.

When Ji Fengxing felt the probing and judgmental gazes on him, he suddenly felt self-conscious and hastened his pace.

Wuwu who was walking at the very back was stopped by one of the inner disciples. "Wuwu, who's that?"

Wuwu pointed at Yu Shangrong's back and said, "Big brother? He's an elite swordsman."

"Is he the outsider who has a conflict with the Flying Star House?"

"What do you mean by outsider?" Wuwu asked, puzzled.

"Wuwu, how can you be so clueless? It's because of him that the Flying Star House is looking for trouble with the Thousand Willow Monastery. I heard Daoist Xuan Ming was here earlier, and he left in anger!"

"Well, he deserves it!" Wuwu no longer wasted time talking to the inner disciple and hurried over to the others.

The inner disciples shook their heads.

"We must notify the other elders of this."

...

Fair Hall faced the southeast direction. It looked imposing but serene at the same time.

Even inner disciples were not allowed to approach without proper reason.

The surroundings were quiet as the sun shone down on it.

This was the best spot in the Thousand Willow Monastery.

When they entered the hall, they saw it was rather stately.

A white-haired old man sat cross-legged in the hall. A horsetail whisk rested on his arm. He was only elevated by two steps, but he seemed to be above everyone.

"They're here?" the old man said without even opening his eyes.

"Monastery master, the guests are here." Tian Buji announced their arrival and retreated to the side.

The Monastery Master, Xia Changqiu, opened his eyes and looked at the duo.

On the left, Yu Zhenghai stood with a straight back and his hands on his back. He looked as though he was the strongest person in the room.

On the right, Yu Shangrong stood with his arms crossed. He stood tall with a faint smile hanging on his face.

The duo had a similarity in that both of them had confidence and pride that seemed to be etched on their bones.

The hall was quiet.

A while later, the monastery master, Xia Changqiu, said, "What business do you have, traveling all the way here?"

Yu Shangrong replied, "My Eldest Senior Brother and I would like to stay for a few nights here. Kindly forgive our intrusion if there is any."

"It's only natural for us to accommodate our honored guests when they visit."

"Thank you." Yu Shangrong nodded slightly.

"Why did you kill Daoist Master Xuan Ming, sir?" Xia Changqiu stared at Yu Shangrong.

Yu Shangrong could sense the subtle change in Xia Changqiu's emotions, and he asked, "Are you afraid?"

If the Thousand Willow Monastery was not afraid of Flying Star House, would Xia Changqiu say these words that sounded as though he was washing his hands off this matter?

Ji Fengxing and Wuwu were startled. They hastily rushed in. They did not expect Yu Shangrong to be so frank with the monastery master.

"Monastery Master, please forgive us. My big brother is new here, and he's not aware of the Thousand Willow Monastery's rules. Please have mercy!" Ji Fengxing trembled as he prostrated himself on the ground.

Wuwu fell to her knees as well even though she did not prostrate herself. She looked at Xia Changqiu and said, "Big brother is a good person!"

Xia Changqiu ignored the siblings and continued to look at Yu Shangrong. After a long time, he heaved a long sigh. "You're still young..." A hint of weariness appeared on his face as he candidly said, "Indeed, it's natural to be arrogant and reckless when you're young. However, things aren't simple."

Yu Zhenghai wondered out loud, "What's so complicated?"

Xia Changqiu did not answer Yu Shangrong. Instead, he asked, "Are you from the Ninth Temple?"

As the saying went, 'One wouldn't rise early in the morning if there is no profit to be gained', and 'There would be no breeze in an empty cave'.

Everything happened for a reason.

At this moment, Yu Zhenghai stepped forward and met Xia Changqiu's gaze. "Our origins aren't important... You're the Thousand Willow's Monastery Master so you must know this: the enemy of your enemy is your friend."

Upon hearing this, Xia Changqiu's legs moved. He lunged at Yu Zhenghai as he extended his hand in front of himself.

"Monastery master!"

"Eldest big brother!"

Yu Zhenghai pushed away from the floor lightly; his hands were still resting on his back as he flew back. The pillars on both sides shot past him.

Xia Changqiu pushed forward with his right palm.

They flew out of Fair Hall in just a blink of an eye; they were now on the plaza.

Yu Zhenghai moved like a swallow. He landed on the huge cauldron at the center of the plaza.

Xia Changqiu extended his fingers. "The Ideal is to be like Water."

Xia Changqiu's fingers glowed red and displayed changes from the five elements.

The inner disciples and the elders gathered hastily and looked up.

Yu Zhenghai extended his palm as his Primal Qi surged.

Bam!

Their palms collided!

Yu Zhenghai did not launch a palm seal. He met Xia Changqiu's palm with his bare palm. A vertical plane of air surged and struck the cauldron.

The others were shocked.

"It's the monastery master!"

"Who has the audacity to challenge the monastery master?!"

The elders swarmed forward and saw a tall and muscular man on the cauldron. One hand rested on his back as he held his other hand out. It... it seemed like he was suppressing the monastery master! Who was this man?

Xia Changqiu was shocked. He looked up and said, "Why aren't you using a palm seal?"

Yu Zhenghai smiled faintly and said, "There's no need for that."

“Young man. You’re too green.” Xia Chengqiu fisted his hands.

‘Hm?’

Bam!

The force in Xia Changqiu’s fists grew stronger before it surged out.

Yu Zhenghai raised his foot and kicked.

Dong!

The cauldron spun up and blocked the palm strike.

Bam!

The palm seal left its mark on the cauldron.

Then, Xia Changqiu made a flurry of movements. He swung the horsetail whisk in his left hand.

A red force shot toward Yu Zhenghai like a gust of wind.

Upon seeing this, Yu Shangrong smiled faintly and said, “If you can’t deal with this, allow me...”

Yu Zhenghai exclaimed, “Who says I can’t deal with this? Look closely...” He pushed with his palm out again!

Xia Changqiu’s body burst forth with red energy. He intended to repel Yu Zhenghai.

However, Yu Zhenghai’s palm strike was ferocious. He forcibly suppressed the red energy that tried to overwhelm him.

Xia Changqiu struck again!

Boom!

Their palms collided, and both opponents reeled back.

Yu Zhenghai landed on the ground and retreated five steps back. He felt his arm go numb.

Xia Changqiu landed on the ground, retreating three steps back. His arm was numb as well. He frowned as he looked at Yu Zhenghai. ‘Since when did the Ninth Temple have an elite like this?’

The disciples and elders hurried over to have a better look.

“How dare you cause a scene in the Thousand Willow Monastery?! Take him down!” The elders were filled with righteous indignation.

Zing! Zing! Zing! Zing! Zing!

The disciples drew their swords.

However, Xia Changqiu raised his hand at this moment. “Stand down.”

The others were stunned by the order. They reluctantly put their swords away.

At this moment, Yu Shangrong stepped between the two opponents. He glanced at Yu Zhenghai and said, "Eldest Senior Brother, you've taken two more steps backward compared to him."

Yu Zhenghai's ears flushed slightly red as he said, "That doesn't count! I wasn't giving it my all! I want a rematch!"

At this moment, Xia Changqiu took half a step back from his lack of confidence. 'This man is ruthless.'

Indeed. Yu Zhenghai did not use his full strength. He did not use his energy nor did he use his weapon. However, he had to admit he had underestimated Xia Changqiu as well.

At this time, Yu Shangrong turned around to face Xia Changqiu. He extended his right hand and said with a smile, "Go ahead."

Xia Changqiu shook his head slightly and said, "I was only trying to find out who your master is when I attacked. I have no ill will. There's no need for another battle."

### **Chapter 688: The Right to be Arrogant**

"What did you find out?" Yu Shangrong asked with a smile.

Xia Changqiu shook his head and said, "Although I don't know who your master is, I can confirm that you're not from the Ninth Temple."

"Oh?"

At this moment, Tian Buji, who was standing at the back, cupped his fists together and said, "The Ninth Temple's style is swift and suited for assassinations or sinister schemes. This friend's moves were grand like a raging sea. This isn't the style of the Ninth Temple."

After Tian Buji finished speaking, Yu Shangrong vanished out of sight suddenly. He unleashed his Return and Enter Three Souls.

Xia Changqiu felt his vision blur. An alarm sounded in his heart. He shot into the skies and extended his arms as he waved his horsetail whisk. "The Path has No Name!"

As soon as Xia Changqiu called out the name of his technique, a red energy like a snowstorm burst forth. The boundaries between illusion and reality seemed to be blurred.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Three figures appeared before Xia Changqiu. A sword struck the horsetail whisk, another sword slashed at air while the other stabbed toward Xia Changqiu's chest.

Xia Changqiu attempted to catch the Longevity Sword with two fingers.

Bam!

Unfortunately, Yu Shangrong had many battle experiences. He shifted his body, and the blade spun.

The Longevity Sword was no ordinary weapon, after all.

Xia Changqiu could only strike with his palm.

Bam!

Xia Changqiu flew back.

Yu Shangrong flipped backward and swung his sword. Red radiance like falling snow was cut by the sword shadows.

When the sword stopped, the red energy dispersed.

The two of them looked at each other from a distance. They were evenly matched.

Yu Shangrong was lost in his thoughts at this moment. He found that the cultivation system here was similar to Great Yan. There were also the Confucian, the Buddhist, and the Daoist Societies here. Unfortunately, he did not like to think about such troubling problems. Hence, he did not dwell on it for too long even if it was a matter worth pondering on.

The Ideal is to be like Water and The Path has No Name were actual Daoist schools of thoughts.

The elders of the Thousand Willow Monastery were silent. They had been shocked by Yu Zhenghai's strength earlier. Now, there was another elite swordsman. The two of them were capable of pushing the monastery master back. Who would dare to offend these elites?

Even the elders did not dare to speak, how could the disciples dare to say anything? They could only hold their breaths as they watched on.

After a long pause, Yu Shangrong said, "The outcome isn't clear. Should we have a rematch?"

Upon hearing this, Yu Zhenghai sneered. "Second Junior Brother, you can't even win with your weapon. Allow me."

"..."

Although Xia Changqiu was not at a disadvantage, he felt slightly offended. He watched in silence as the two of them bickered. In the end, he said, "Since both of you aren't from the Ninth Temple, there's no need to fight anymore. This way, please."

When Yu Shangrong saw Xia Changqiu had no more intention to fight, he seemed slightly dissatisfied. He could not help but say, "We'll continue our fight next time."

"..."

Naturally, Yu Shangrong and Yu Zhenghai were unhappy. After all, it was difficult to use his strength if he could not unleash his energy. The duo could only return to the hall.

"Your unfathomable cultivation bases have truly widened my horizons," Xia Changqiu praised once he took his seat.

"It's nothing," Yu Shangrong replied.

"It's hard to imagine that both of you are from the same sect. Is... Is your master a Nine-leaf cultivator?" Xia Changqiu asked in a probing manner.



One of them used a saber while the other used a sword. Yet, their way of fighting and using Qi were starkly different.

Seeing that Xia Changqiu was persistent in getting to the bottom of this, Yu Zhenghai shook his head solemnly. "If you want to know, you'll have to defeat me."

Xia Changqiu. "..."

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly. "I agree."

The duo only sat for a moment before they rose to their feet. At the same time, they walked out of the hall.

When they were nearly out, Yu Zhenghai, with his hands on his back, said without turning back, "If someone from the Flying Star House comes, I'll kill them for you."

When he saw that they were about to leave, Xia Changqiu hastily asked, "What are your names?"

'It's alright if you don't want to tell me your master's name. But, surely there's no issue in telling me yours, right?'

"Yu Zhenghai."

"Yu Shangrong."

The two of them walked out of the hall.

Ji Fengxing and Wuwu followed them.

In no time at all, they left the inner area.

Xia Changqiu sat down. He kept repeating their names before he asked, "Elder Tian, what do you think about them?"

"That swordsman has been staying outside all this while. Monastery master, if these two are enemies of Thousand Willow Monastery, why would they beat around the bush?" Tian Buji asked.

"Elder Tian... I know what you mean. I'm only..." Xia Changqiu did not continue. Instead, he sighed heavily.

"I understand your concern, monastery master. If you surrender these two, we might be able to temporarily hold off a disaster. However, you know the Flying Star House better than anyone else," Tian Buji said.

"What do you think we should do then?"

"These two have unfathomable cultivation bases. Even if you go all out, monastery master, it won't be easy to defeat them. I've spoken with Ji Fengxing before this. Their master certainly isn't a simple person. Perhaps, he's not weaker than the Flying Star House's Ye Zhen," Tian Buji said.

Xia Changqiu frowned and remained silent.

Tian Buji continued to say, "That's why I think rather than walking down the path of sure death, why don't we be brave for once? The enemy of our enemy... is our friend."

After mulling over it for a long time, Xia Changqiu nodded slightly and said, "Promote Ji Fengxing to an inner disciple under the Attendant Hall, and you'll be his instructor... Also, clear out the villa on the southern peak. Since they're our friends, we should be hospitable."

Tian Buji bowed deeply and cupped his fists together. "Understood."

...

Meanwhile.

In front of the eastern pavilion of the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Lu Zhou did some simple exercises.

Zuo Yushu was done with her mission at the Divine Capital. She had returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion early and came to report at the eastern pavilion. When she saw the pavilion master doing a set of strange movements in front of the hall, she could not help but feel intrigued. She stopped and stared.

His movements were slow and gentle, and he looked a little stiff. However, the movements were smooth and fluid at the same time. His postures were also pleasing to the eyes.

After a while, Zuo Yushu walked over. "Zuo Yushu is here to greet brother."

Lu Zhou stopped moving. He glanced at Zuo Yushu and asked, "Is the matter with the Formation settled?"

"It was taken care of swiftly since I was there. Up to 100 people skilled in Formations from the Taixu Academy have gone over to the Big Dipper Academy. I believe there will be great improvements in Formations in no time," Zuo Yushu replied.

Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction.

Up until now, huge beasts had not appeared yet. The human cultivators could still fend off the smaller beasts. However, if beasts such as the two huge manmans were to appear again, they would be hard-pressed to push them back.

The appearance of the beasts also showed that human cultivators were progressing toward the Nine-leaf stage.

"Brother, what was that cultivation method you were practicing earlier?" Zuo Yushu asked curiously.

"You mean, Taiji?"

"Tai-Taiji? I wonder if I can cultivate Taiji as well?" Zuo Yushu asked.

"It's only a way to strengthen your body. It's not much use to you," Lu Zhou replied.

Zuo Yushu appeared disappointed. She had never seen Lu Zhou practicing this mysterious cultivation method. 'Is this the true reason behind big brother's profound strength?'

Lu Zhou returned to his room after stretching. Naturally, Zuo Yushu would not stay any longer.

Once he entered the room, Lu Zhou continued to try his luck at the lucky draws.

Currently, he had 10,333 merit points left.

He did 100 draws and only obtained 30 Reversal Cards.

His luck was slightly better than before.

He now had 270 Reversal Cards.

...

Early next morning.

Lu Zhou was slightly taken aback to see only 33 merit points remaining.

His luck was not exactly bad. He felt that it was good enough that he had obtained 80 Reversal Cards. However, he was slightly disappointed that he did not obtain anything else.

He looked at the sky. Dawn was breaking.

Lu Zhou's mind was in a good state.

He used one Reversal Card.

After his cultivation base reached the Eight-leaf stage, he had never used the cards yet. Perhaps, it was enough now that their values had increased.

Soon after he used the Reversal Card, vitality energy began to converge again. His longevity was extended by 500 days.

There were no obvious changes on him.

With the sun high up in the skies and no lucky draws to do, Lu Zhou entered his cultivation state.

It was only a matter of time before he became a full-fledged Eight-leaf cultivator.

A short while later, Si Wuya came to the eastern pavilion and said, "Master, a huge beast has been sighted at Yu Province. The cultivators guarding the city aren't a match for it. The Nether Sect's branch requests for your help."

"A huge beast?" Lu Zhou emerged from the room. How convenient. He had just been thinking about earning more merit points. He hoped killing the beast with a single palm strike would reward him with 5,000 merit points just like Chi Yao did.

'I don't think I made the best decisions this time around. If I'd known, I wouldn't have purchased that Deadly Strike Card.'

He was going to earn merit points by using a Deadly Strike Card. That was a loss of 50%.

"Do you know what kind of beast it is?" Lu Zhou asked.

"There's a drawing of it in the letter. The beast's name is Qiong Qi."

Qiong Qi?

"The manmians appeared due to the red leaf envoy's instigation... Why did Qiong Qi appear? Is there a Nine-leaf cultivator in Yu Province?" Lu Zhou was puzzled.

"I wondered about that as well. This beast is only recorded in the books. It has never attacked humans before. However, the situation is dire. We'll find out when we get there."

Lu Zhou nodded. With a wave of his arm, he summoned Bi An.

If it was not due to a Nine-leaf cultivator, it was highly possible that the beast was lured there.

Si Wuya said, "The number of beasts has been increasing lately. Judging by the size of the nine provinces, even with the protection from Formations, we'll need at least four Nine-leaf cultivators, with each of them defending two cities. It's not easy for you to cover the entire area on your own, master."

Lu Zhou knew that as well. The human cultivators were progressing too slowly.

"I'll go take a look." He hopped onto Bi An and sped off.

"Safe journey, master."

...

In the air, Lu Zhou glanced at Bi An and said, "Although it's a rocky ride, you're more obedient than Ji Liang."

Bi An howled as if responding to its master's words.

"Faster."

...

Meanwhile.

In the ruins at the western part of Yu Province City, two red lotus cultivators nodded as they looked at the Formation veins on the ground.

"I've basically sent everything we know about Great Yan to the Sky Martial Court. I believe they'll send more men over in no time... There's only a single Nine-leaf cultivator in Great Yan! They're far weaker than I expected!"

"The heavens are on our side. I didn't expect us to be able to lure the high-rank Qiong Qi out this time..."

Boom!

The city wall crumbled.

The two of them glanced in Yu Province City's direction with an excited expression.

"The 1,000 talismans we used are worth it!"

Behind then, the pile of talismans in the Formation circle were burnt to a crisp.

“The Flying Star House’s Ye Zhen used this method to attract the luan when he led an expedition to take it down. There’s only one Nine-leaf cultivator in Great Yan. Let’s see how he is going to deal with Qiong Qi.”

## **Chapter 689: Qiong Qi**

The two red lotus cultivators rose into the air. They flew toward the nearby forest and landed on a branch as they observed Qiong Qi from the shadows.

Qiong Qi had the appearance of a tiger. It was 100 meters long and had two wings. Its massive body hinted at its power.

Even the red lotus envoys would not underestimate its strength.

The instant the city wall crumbled, the barrier was activated.

Qiong Qi took flight and kept charging at the barrier.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

After several attempts, the barrier showed signs of shattering.

“The people from the golden lotus domain are weak... From the looks of things, I think Qiong Qi alone will be enough to deal with them.”

“You know, I’m starting to regret sending the information to the Sky Martial Court now. If we work together and kill that Nine-leaf cultivator and keep an eye on the Black Water Mystic Cave and the Endless Sea, we’ll be the greatest beings in this world with the talismans.”

“That’s impossible now. The people here have come up with a new cultivation theory where they sever their lotuses and recultivate. Even if we don’t lure the beasts out with the talismans, they’ll reach the Nine-leaf stage sooner or later.”

“You have a point. Even the Nine-leaf couldn’t do it, let alone us.”

The two of them looked at the city again.

Qiong Qi flapped its wings. To it, the cultivators in the city were its meal. It lunged again.

Bam!

A ripple spread across the barrier.

The cultivators in the city exclaimed in shock and fear.

Several Nascent Divinity realm cultivators took flight, looking as though they were facing a formidable enemy.

“Let’s head to the eastern gate. Qiong Qi has gone over there.”

“Mhm.”

The two of them exchanged a glance and nodded. They flew toward a huge tree outside the eastern gate. In no time at all, they were in the forest. They landed on a branch and continued to observe their surroundings.

“Come one! Break the barrier and kill them all. Avenge Gu Ming.”

The two of them looked at the city. They were like members of the audience in a coliseum of ancient Rome. They liked carnage and killings.

Every time Qiong Qi charged, a satisfied smile would bloom on their faces.

Qiong Qi would send any cultivators who drew close flying.

Qiong Qi seemed exceptionally fierce. Even a Nine-leaf cultivator would not underestimate this beast.

Bam!

As Qiong Qi rammed against the barrier for the final time, it shattered.

The cultivators in the city could only run.

Qiong Qi was like a wolf that made its way into a herd of sheep. It lunged at a cultivator excitedly! With a quick swipe of its claws, several cultivators were hit. Their protective energy layers could not withstand the impact. They immediately reeled and crashed down with heavy injuries.

As Qiong Qi moved, the buildings crumbled in its wake. It rampaged through Yu Province City.

“Kill it! Kill it now!”

“Poor insects. It’s already a miracle for the golden lotus domain to have survived for this long. They’re unimaginably weak!”

“I bet Qiong Qi will wipe them out in four hours! What about you?”

“Four hours is too long. From the looks of things, I think two hours are all Qiong Qi needs to annihilate them.”

Their lips curled into a sneer. They were very satisfied with Qiong Qi’s performance.

Just when the two of them were watching the show and mocking the victims, they suddenly sensed someone above them. They looked up instinctively.

“Who’s that?”

They saw an old man standing on a fierce mount.

“Shh, must be some Great Yan cultivator who’s here to throw his life away!”

“I bet he’d die in two rounds.”

“I bet four.”

“Deal.”

After they made their bets, the mount stopped in the sky.

The duo did not know why the mount suddenly came to a halt. They saw its nose twitching before it suddenly dove.

“We’re going to be exposed... It’s a mount with a keen sense of smell. Let’s go!”

The two of them immediately lowered themselves off the branch.

Unfortunately, it was not possible for them to outrun Bi An.

Lu Zhou who was on Bi An’s back was also wondering why Bi An suddenly stopped moving earlier. Then, when he saw two suspicious cultivators hiding on a branch, he immediately ordered Bi An to dive.

Boom!

Bi An landed among the trees and barred the duo’s way.

The duo was shocked as they looked at the cultivator on Bi An’s back.

One of them hid his shock and asked, “Old mister, what are you trying to do?”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he looked at the duo and asked, “Why are both of you staying idle when a beast is attacking the city?”

“Old mister, that beast is called Qiong Qi. It’s extremely vicious. Ordinary cultivators such as ourselves can’t hope to do anything against it.”

“There’s no need to fear for I am here. Come with me and tame that beast.”

“Huh?” The two of them were shocked.

“Let’s go.”

Lu Zhou rode on Bi An and departed for Yu Province.

With Bi An here, the two of them would not be able to escape even if they wanted to. With this, they had no choice but to follow Lu Zhou into the city.

The duo looked at each other meaningfully. They tacitly agreed it was a good opportunity for them to survey the city as well. Moreover, they wanted to see how the old geezer was going to defeat Qiong Qi!

They entered Yu Province City.

In the sky above the city, Qiong Qi was battling two Eight-leaf elites.

The energies in the sky were turbulent. The flying golden palm seals were a dazzling sight to see.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he looked up and asked, “How long has it been since Qiong Qi appeared?”

“We’ve barely arrived ourselves, Old Mister.”

“What are the casualties in the city?”

“The barrier has just been shattered recently. There aren’t many casualties.”

Lu Zhou nodded. He came just in time.

At this moment, the two Eight-leaf cultivators were sent flying by a hit from Qiong Qi's wings. They plummeted to the ground.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Buildings crashed down.

The two red lotus cultivators looked excited.

At this moment, cultivators around them rose into the air. Hundreds of them circled Qiong Qi.

"Why would they rush to their deaths?"

"Why aren't they running for their lives?"

The two of them could hardly understand the cultivators' actions.

Lu Zhou turned to look at them again.

Bi An nodded. It bared its fangs and roared.

The duo fell silent.

Qiong Qi fought more violently as time went by. It was exceptionally excited when it saw these many cultivators. Its hairs stood on end as it lunged at the cultivators around itself.

The cultivators released energy swords and sabers in a frenzy!

Qiong Qi charged and sent dozens of cultivators reeling!

The other cultivators were greatly shocked. It was much more powerful than the manmans!

"Get ready! Let's try again!"

With the order, the cultivators attacked again.

When Qiong Qi saw the leader giving the order, it opened its jaws and charged toward the leader.

Two Eight-leaf cultivators rose into the air.

Avatars appeared and charged toward Qiong Qi.

Boom!

They struck Qiong Qi's body at seemingly the same time.

Qiong Qi reeled for several meters. It winced in pain before it swept its tail out furiously. It struck the two Eight-leaf avatars. The two of them recoiled as well. The difference in their strength was too huge.

Upon seeing this, Lu Zhou no longer waited. "Livestock!"

He stood on Bi An's back and struck his palm at the sky. His fingers glowed with a faint blue light.

The Great Seal of Fearlessness sailed up into the sky at lightning speed and struck Qiong Qi!

Bam!



Qiong Qi reeled ten meters back!

The Yu Province cultivators who rose into the air were attracted by this palm seal. They looked in the direction of its origin.

Meanwhile, when Lu Zhou launched the palm strike, the two red lotus cultivators behind him exclaimed hoarsely, "A blue palm?"

Lu Zhou turned around. He frowned slightly. He had a sneaking suspicion about these two. Nonetheless, he turned to look at the sky again.

At this moment, the cultivators in the air saw the old man on Bi An's back.

"Welcome, Senior Ji!"

With a stroke of his beard, Lu Zhou said, "Tian Sect's Nan Gongwei and Luo Sect's Feng Yizhi."

"Your orders, Senior Ji?"

The two Eight-leaf cultivators were from the Three Sects. They were the Sect Masters of Tian Sect and Luo Sect respectively.

"Keep an eye on these two people. If they get away, I'll hold you responsible," Lu Zhou said.

"Understood!" Nan Gongwei and Feng Yizhi looked at the duo. They scoffed slightly and landed on the duo's sides. Surely, they could keep these people from escaping even if they could do nothing to Qiong Qi.

The duo feigned a confused and innocent expression.

"Seniors, there must be a mistake! We should be working together to deal with Qiong Qi!"

"Senior Ji has given the order. Shut up!" Nan Gongwei barked.

They were shocked by the form of address.

Was this old man... the Evil Sky Pavilion's Patriarch?

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou flew into the air. Then, he hovered in the air with his hands on his back. "Stand back. Just defend the city. Leave the rest to me."

"Understood!" The cultivators responded in unison.

Lu Zhou stared at Qiong Qi intently. He wondered if he should just use a Deadly Strike Card to simplify matters.

After Lu Zhou's first attack on Qiong Qi, it immediately shifted its attention to him.

Lu Zhou thought the livestock seemed to prefer opponents with high combat strength.

Qiong Qi no longer cared about the other cultivators as it pounced at Lu Zhou!

Lu Zhou raised his palm again! The golden palm seal shone with a faint blue light from its edges as it flew forward.

Bam!

Qiong Qi merely paused slightly. It avoided the palm strike and continued to charge forward.

“Hm?” Lu Zhou frowned slightly.

On the ground, when Nan Gongwei and Feng Yizhi saw this, they exclaimed in shock, “Senior!”

The two red lotus cultivators beamed. Their hands were fisted in excitement.

When Qiong Qi was upon Lu Zhou...

To maintain and manifest samadhi. Like light and shadow, permeating everywhere while staying still in samadhi.

The power to silence everything.

The blue lotus bloomed!

The closer one was, the greater the damage would be.

A blue lotus as huge as the curtain-like barrier in Yu Province City’s skies appeared.

An uproar broke out immediately.

“As expected of the greatest Nine-leaf cultivator!”

“Nice! Yu Province is saved!”

However, the red lotus cultivator beside Nan Gongwei was not optimistic. He murmured, “It’s too early to rejoice. Qiong Qi isn’t a pushover.”

Indeed. After being sent flying by the blue lotus, it merely cried out before it stabilized its footing. Then, it looked at Lu Zhou murderously.

Lu Zhou frowned slightly. He had used a quarter of his extraordinary power in that attack earlier, but he had only inflicted superficial injuries on the beast.

‘Forget it.’ He flipped his palm. A Deadly Strike Card appeared.

A notification rang in his ear.

“Ding! The target, Qiong Qi, is injured. The target may be tamed as a mount.”

“It can be tamed as a mount?”

‘Uh...’

Lu Zhou glanced at the Deadly Strike Card in his palm.

‘Aren’t you just giving me more trouble? That’s a hideous and ferocious mount!’

**Chapter 690: If All Else Fails, I’ll Just Kill It**

Indeed, the blossoming of the blue lotus was beautiful. Its movement was graceful, and its momentum was crushing. Alas, the extraordinary power was not infinite.

Since Qiong Qi had experienced how powerful the blue lotus was, it was now wary. It lowered its head and moved from side to side. Clearly, it was intelligent.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou was thinking of a way to tame the beast in front of him.

Bi An was powerful, but its size was small in comparison. If it were to fight Qiong Qi, it would not be enough to fill the gap between Qiong Qi's fangs.

'I have enough mounts as it is. Why would I need Qiong Qi? Should I just kill it?'

Lu Zhou flipped his palm. He could shatter the Deadly Strike Card at any moment. He had three-quarters of his extraordinary power left. 'Well... Whether it can be tamed or not, I should at least give it a try. If I can't tame it, I can always just kill it.'

He retracted the Deadly Strike Card. With a stroke of his beard, Lu Zhou said, "Livestock, do you know you've just brushed shoulders with death?"

The cultivators below shuddered when they heard these words. Lu Zhou looked extremely cool in their eyes. His confidence was awe-inspiring.

However, in the two red lotus cultivators' eyes, Lu Zhou was insane.

Qiong Qi bared its fangs and lowered its head. It was ready to pounce at any given moment.

The 100-meter tall Qiong Qi could reach Lu Zhou with just a single leap.

Grrr!

Qiong Qi growled.

Lu Zhou frowned. Was it not a savage beast that could not even be tamed by Eight-leaf cultivators. Why did it sound like a dog? He had expected a ferocious roar not a growl like a dog. Nevertheless, based on its growl, he could tell it was furious.

Qiong Qi suddenly leaped. It behaved like a wild beast in the forest. The sheer distance it covered with a single leap was truly shocking. Its claws shone, and its eyes shone fiercely as well.

Lu Zhou did not use the power to silence everything again. The range of the attack was not precise, and the impact was not powerful enough.

In the end, he raised a hand and chose to use the power of past lives.

Originating from nothing, from it comes everything. Living in samsara and learning from it.

A rich blue radiance surged out of his palm, and he launched a Daoist palm seal...

When the first palm seal shot out, Lu Zhou followed after it. With a flurry of movements, he summoned his avatar.

His Eight-leaf golden lotus avatar shone in the air!

“Eight-leaf?”

“The patriarch is skilled and brave! He’s going to defeat Qiong Qi with his Eight-leaf cultivation base! How impressive!”

Nobody questioned Lu Zhou’s strength nor did they feel suspicious. To them, Lu Zhou was using a low-rank avatar to deal with Qiong Qi.

Nan Gongwei exclaimed in wonder, “Senior Ji is fighting against Qiong Qi with his Eight-leaf cultivation base. This is truly amazing.”

Although they, too, were at the Eight-leaf stage, they were beaten by Qiong Qi. Meanwhile, Lu Zhou was beating Qiong Qi up. The difference in their strength was barely imaginable.

Lu Zhou did not care about what the others thought.

Grand technique!

With a burst of movements, he appeared behind the palm seal and launched five consecutive shots of Abandon Wisdom!

The scripts for Abandon Wisdom hung between his fingers. They shone with golden radiance as they traveled behind the blue palm seal.

Bam!

The first blue palm seal struck Qiong Qi.

It immediately froze in midair. The blue palm seal stopped pushing forward as the Eight-leaf golden palm sailed forth silently.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!

Four consecutive strikes landed precisely.

Qiong Qi roared as it was sent flying back.

With another burst of movement, Lu Zhou appeared above Qiong Qi. He launched a blue palm down. He unleashed the same skill. When the blue palm seal was launched, he shot five more strikes in rapid succession! He kept bombarding Qiong Qi with palm seals.

The series of attacks amazed the others.

What was the Nine-leaf stage? This was the Nine-leaf stage!

Although the pavilion master was only using an Eight-leaf avatar, his shocking power was on par with a Nine-leaf cultivator.

Qiong Qi was being suppressed!

After three consecutive strikes from the blue palm, Qiong Qi cried out!

Lu Zhou gauged his remaining extraordinary power. He was only left with half, but Qiong Qi was merely injured. It was still some ways away from losing its ability to battle.

‘This might be difficult.’

“Livestock, aren’t you going to give up yet?”

Grrrr!

Qiong Qi was enraged. Its hairs stood on end as it launched itself through the air.

Lu Zhou did not use his extraordinary power. Instead, he advanced with his Eight-leaf cultivation base. When they collided, he shot up and threw a punch!

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Lu Zhou’s three punches landed one after another on Qiong Qi’s back.

Qiong Qi flipped and swept out with its tail.

Lu Zhou let out a burst of energy and defended himself with it.

Bam!

He was sent flying!

The others exclaimed in shock!

The greatest Nine-leaf cultivator was sent flying?

The cultivators looked at the battle in the air uneasily; they were growing nervous now.

‘Patriarch, you must hold your ground! Why don’t you use your Nine-leaf powers?’

Lu Zhou was oblivious to their thoughts. Even if he wanted to use Nine-leaf powers, he could not!

Qiong Qi’s stubbornness had exceeded his imagination.

Lu Zhou was fine from the tail swipe. All he did was retreat slightly.

Whizz!

He summoned his avatar again!

His 100-foot golden lotus avatar could fight Qiong Qi. It flew toward the beast.

“He’s in trouble!” the red lotus cultivator next to Nan Gongwei said.

“What did you say?”

“Qiong Qi isn’t a pushover. It’s a beast that’s out of this world. Even a Nine-leaf cultivator might not be enough to kill it.”

“You sure know a lot about it.” Nan Gongwei was starting to pay attention to the two red lotus cultivators.

They were certainly not ordinary since Senior Ji had ordered two Eight-leaf cultivators to keep an eye on them.

Nan Gongwei looked at Feng Yizhi meaningfully.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou suddenly joined his palms together and merged with his avatar. “Golden Buddha Body!”

His avatar suddenly transformed into the form of a Buddha that shone with a dazzling golden light.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Qiong Qi lunged at the golden body with its claws.

The avatar opened its mouth. “Livestock!”

The power of speech!

The voice was like shocking thunder that was fired at the beast.

Qiong Qi was startled. It lowered its ears. Alas, this was the Heavenly Writing power and not an ordinary sound technique.

The energy soundwave shot forward like a sharp blade!

Bam!

Qiong Qi was pushed back by the power of speech. It did a backflip in midair and spun for more than ten circles before slowing to a stop.

Nan Gongwei, Feng Yizhi, and the other cultivators accepted this outcome without any surprise.

On the other hand, the two red lotus cultivators were shaken to their cores.

“Is he really an Eight-leaf cultivator? Why are his palm strikes blue?”

When they thought about their earlier wager, they found themselves laughable and foolish.

In the sky, Lu Zhou retracted his avatar. He only had a sliver of his extraordinary power left. If he could not intimidate Qiong Qi with this technique, the only option left was to kill it.

Qiong Qi stood still and looked at Lu Zhou. Suddenly, its ferocity seemed to vanish, and it shrank backward, cowering/

“It’s afraid!”

“Qiong Qi is scared!”

“You’re amazing, patriarch!”

“Senior Ji is peerless!”

The cultivators’ shouts shocked the heavens.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and looked at Qiong Qi expressionlessly. “I’ll give you another chance. Submit... or die.”

The cultivators were suddenly hit with a realization.

“Senior Ji is trying to tame Qiong Qi! No wonder he refrained from killing it!”

“I see! In order to tame Qiong Qi, one would have to beat it to submission. When the major sects went to the Four Forests to capture beasts in the past, the elites were always the ones who went in first to deal serious injuries to the beasts!”

Since Lu Zhou had many mounts, they thought his actions made sense.

Grrrr!

Qiong Qi bared its fangs, clearly reluctant. Then, it charged forward again.

After the strike from the power of speech, its hair had flattened, making it look like a wet dog. It no longer looked as savage and fierce as before.

Lu Zhou snorted and said, “I’ll show you my true strength today.” He was once a peak Eight-leaf cultivator. Even when both Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong fought together against him, they were no match for him. How could he lose to Qiong Qi?

Indeed, he had not used his true strength.

He flew forward. “Hundred Tribulations Insight!”

A 100-foot avatar appeared and pushed forward with its palms.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The man and beast fought bravely. They moved at top speed, causing their figures to look blurry.

Nan Gongwei gulped. “Is this still the power of an Eight-leaf cultivator?”

Feng Yizhi shook his head helplessly. “When the ten great sects laid siege on Senior Ji back then, Senior Ji fought against ten Eight-leaf cultivators! I thought the cultivation world had exaggerated, but now, I don’t doubt the veracity of that matter.”

The red lotus cultivator beside him said incredulously, “He fought against ten opponents when he was at the Eight-leaf stage?”

“Are you surprised?”

“Uh... No, no, no. Just like you, I think it’s an exaggeration.” After saying this, a thought appeared in his mind and he asked, “May I ask if Senior Ji is the one who killed Jiang Wenxu?”

Nan Gongwei scoffed before he said, “The nine-leaf Jiang Wenxu duped the 12 allied nations to invade Great Yan. Senior Ji single-handedly defeated Jiang Wenxu in Lou Lan and the five allied nations. Then, he traveled eastward and reached the eastern side of Heaven’s Moat in 15 minutes where he defeated the seven allied nations! To think you’re asking about such a well-known fact. So... you’re not from around here, are you?”

“...” The man’s heart sank.

Nan Gongwei grabbed the man’s arm.

Feng Yizhi looked at the other person and unleashed an energy seal.

How could they dare to move with Eight-leaf cultivators keeping an eye on them?