

Disciples 741

Chapter 741: The Nine First Seats

Xia Changqiu hastily said, "That's not what I meant... If we know ourselves and our enemies, we can avoid losing battles. I know you have an unfathomable cultivation base, old senior, and that it far surpasses the two sirs, but... we mustn't underestimate the Ninth Temple as well."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. He looked at Xia Changqiu and said, "Let's hear it."

Xia Changqiu nodded and said, "The Ninth Temple is in Jiannan Circuit. It's the only major sect that has dominion over one location. The minor sects in Jiannan Circuit submit to the Ninth Temple. There are nine main halls, and each main hall spans 1,000 feet. They're the Skyward Hall, the Crape Myrtle Hall, the Eastern Plain Hall, the Supreme Harmony Hall, the Peace Hall, the Truce Hall, the Unending Hall, the Prisoner Dragon Hall, and the Mystery Hall... When the Ninth Temple was at its peak, all nine of its First Seats were an elite in their own right. Then, when it waned, the first four First Seats passed away, leaving four vacant spots. Even so... the remaining five First Seats kept the Ninth Temple standing to this day."

Little Yuan'er counted her fingers and said, "That's amazing. We only have four pavilions in the Evil Sky Pavilion... That's too few."

"..."

Xia Changqiu nodded and said, "They're indeed amazing. The Thousand Willow Monastery is like a mantis compared to the tree that is the Ninth Temple."

Lu Zhou asked in confusion, "They passed away? People in the red lotus domain die from old age as well?"

Xia Changqiu replied awkwardly, "This is normal in the course of life. In the red lotus domain, even the greatest cultivator could not overcome the great limit of 3,000 years."

Something stirred in Lu Zhou. 'Is this the same great limit the golden lotus domain has? If that's the case, will the golden lotus domain face the same great limit in the future as well? Even so, the red lotus domain is far too advanced compared to the golden lotus domain.' In the end, he said honestly, "I thought the red lotus cultivators have long lives..."

Xia Changqiu was shocked. He wondered inwardly, 'The old senior doesn't even think much of 3,000 years. Looks like the cultivation advancement in the golden lotus domain far surpasses that of the red lotus domain. Even his two disciples are so powerful. Is the old mister beyond the Ten-leaf stage? The madmen at the Sky Martial Court are known to lie. They said the golden lotus wants to invade, but it's clear that it's the red lotus domain that's doing the invading. Now that the men they sent had been defeated, the golden lotus domain has come for a reckoning.' With this thought in mind, he was determined to cling on to this powerful potential backer.

"Continue." Lu Zhou gestured for Xia Changqiu to carry on.

"Apart from the five First Seats, there are also 18 elders. Every three years, a First Seat will be selected among the elders to take charge of one hall. Zhu Xuan broke through to the Nine-leaf stage mid-battle

the other day. My guess is he's planning to capture your capable disciple to claim merit and secure his bid for the position of a First Seat. As for the cooperation..." Xia Changqiu shook his head and did not finish his sentence.

"Master... We must force our way in! Things don't look good for Eldest Senior Brother!" Little Yuan'er exclaimed anxiously.

Conch chimed in as she nodded like a chick pecking grains from the ground, "Ninth Senior Sister is right. We must force our way in!"

The elders looked at the two young ladies helplessly.

Lu Zhou ignored Little Yuan'er and Conch as he asked, "Who's the Master of the Ninth Temple?"

"The King of Jiannan, Sikong Beichen..."

Little Yuan'er sounded curious as she said, "He sounds strong. How many leaves does he have?"

"Sikong Beichen has never shown his strength for many years now. 1,500 years ago, he fought the eight First Seats and won, successfully becoming the new hall master. At that time, he was already a Ten-leaf cultivator. 1,000 years ago was the last time he showed his strength. He repelled an army of 300,000 foreign tribesmen. His name became renowned in Great Tang after that," Xia Changqiu said.

Little Yuan'er. "..."

The elders behind Xia Changqiu sighed. They were all elders, but the other side's elders were elephants while they were just ants. They could not be compared at all.

Yu Shangrong frowned slightly. If things were like Xia Changqiu had said, it meant that his Eldest Senior Brother had entered the lion's den. His Eldest Senior Brother was in danger!

Lu Zhou was inwardly shocked by this as well. 'So, there really is a Ten-leaf cultivator in the Ninth Temple! Is he a Mysterious Heaven elite?'

Beyond the Ten-leaf stage, the cultivator would have to form a Thousand Realms Whirling avatar before entering the Mysterious Heaven realm. The Thousand Realms Whirling avatar was unique to a Mysterious Heaven elite.

"Since the Ninth Temple is so strong, why do they need my disciple for? Isn't it better to kill them immediately?" Lu Zhou wondered out loud.

Xia Changqiu was slightly stunned. He said, "Over the past 500 years, the Ninth Temple has been declining. Four of the nine First Seats passed away, leaving five who are also in their golden years... Moreover, the Sky Martial Court and the Flying Star House are like the sun at high noon. They're on a meteoric rise; this especially true for the Sky Martial Court. The improvement in their strength over the past 300 years was a sight to behold."

"The Sky Martial Court..." Lu Zhou muttered under his breath, "The Sky Martial Court invented the Sky Shuttle. Indeed, they're not to be taken lightly."

Tian Buji added, "We must begin from that lunatic 300 years ago..."

“Lunatic?”

“More than three centuries ago, there was a lunatic in the Sky Martial Court. His name’s Luo Xuan. This person first came up with the idea of foreign worlds, which was a mad topic at that time. He was shunned and hidden by the Sky Martial Court. Eventually, he went missing. The Sky Shuttle was one of his creations.”

Lu Zhou thought about Luo Shiyin and the notes she left behind. From the handwriting, she did not seem to be someone who had lost her mind. Instead, she was a genius researcher with an adventurous spirit. However, the line between a lunatic and a genius had always been blurry. Nicolaus Copernicus who came up with heliocentrism was a good example. When his student, Giordano Bruno, published his findings, he was burned at the stake.

“Therefore, I implore you to not be reckless, old senior. I don’t think your capable disciple’s life is in danger at this moment.” Xia Changqiu looked at Yu Shangrong. “If they wanted to do something, they would’ve sent their men to look for this disciple of yours as well.”

The others nodded.

Little Yuan’er pouted before she said, “Master, are we going to save Eldest Senior Brother or not?”

Yu Shangrong frowned again. Before his master could answer, he calmly said, “Of course we must save Eldest Senior Brother... If the Ninth Temple dares to touch a single strand of hair on his head, I’ll drench the place in blood. I’ve always spoken my mind without beating around the bush. Please forgive my bluntness.”

The Thousand Willow Monastery elders shook their heads.

Something stirred in Xia Changqiu. He looked at Lu Zhou as he asked tentatively, “Old senior, are... are you confident?” He did not know how powerful the old man was. However, based on the old man’s disciples’ attitude, could the old man be... a Ten-leaf cultivator? This was also another burning question that was in the minds of the Thousand Willow Monastery members. After all, if the old man’s disciples were so powerful, how could the master be weak?

Lu Zhou stroked his beard calmly. He did not answer the question. Instead, he said, “I’m tired.”

“...” Xia Changqiu who had begun to feel excited deflated as soon as he heard Lu Zhou’s words. Naturally, he did not let his disappointment show on his face. He ordered, “Prepare the rooms for our guests.”

“Understood.” Tian Buji led the people from the Evil Sky Pavilion out of Fair Hall.

Lu Zhou stood up slowly with a straight back. His long robes fell to his feet, and his white hair rested on his shoulders. With his hands on his back, he said in a neutral tone, “I’ll visit the Ninth Temple in five days. You’ll lead the way.” After saying this, he turned around and left.

Xia Changqiu was as stunned as a wooden chicken.

The elders were similarly stunned as they watched Lu Zhou leave.

At this moment, Ji Fengxing recalled Yu Shangrong and Yu Zhenghai's words again. He mumbled to himself, "Is he truly... unparalleled?"

Chapter 742: Yu Zhenghai's Treatment

Ji Fengxing continued muttering to himself in the Fair Hall. He was oblivious to the emotional roller coaster ride that the monastery master, Xia Changqiu, had gone through.

Xia Changqiu turned to look at Ji Fengxing who was still mumbling and cleared his throat before he called out, "Fengxing."

"Monastery Master!" Ji Fengxing started when he snapped back to his senses.

"What did you say?"

"I was saying the old senior might be... truly unparalleled," Ji Fengxing answered honestly.

Xia Changqiu retorted, "Watch your tongue. There are many experts in this world. Who can be truly unparalleled? You're too young and know too little. You must remember there's bound to be someone greater and more powerful than we are."

"I will remember that." Ji Fengxing could not say anything to defend himself. After all, he was not very popular in the past. No one really trained him for many years. He was only accepted into the monastery because of Wuwu, who was from the same village as him. After entering the monastery, he became an outer disciple. He had dreamt about roaming the land with his sword and becoming an elite swordsman. He had no parents so he counted himself lucky for being accepted into the Thousand Willow Monastery. If the monastery master, Xia Changqiu, was willing to teach him, he was willing to listen.

Xia Changqiu looked at Ji Fengxing and said, "How's your relationship with that old mister's disciples?"

"We're friends... I guess." After saying this, Ji Fengxing's face flushed slightly red when recalled the difference between their cultivation bases. It seemed like he was being rather... shameless.

"That will be all. Work hard in cultivating. If you have any questions, you can come to me," Xia Changqiu said.

"Understood!"

Shortly after Ji Fengxing left, Tian Buji who had led Lu Zhou and the others to their rooms finally returned to Fair Hall. He saw Xia Changqiu pacing around with a deep frown on his face. He stepped forward and asked, "Monastery Master, you're unwilling to go to the Ninth Temple?"

Xia Changqiu sat down and hit the chair's armrest before he said, "Do I have a choice?"

"In my humble opinion, there should be no problem with this trip" Tian Buji glanced outside as he said, "The old senior must be a Nine-leaf cultivator... The kind that isn't ordinary."

Xia Changqiu looked at Tian Buji in confusion.

Tian Buji said, "Monastery Master, indeed, the Ninth Temple is a powerful force, but it's obvious the old mister isn't easy to deal with as well. Since Zhu Xuan invited Yu Zhenghai to the Ninth Temple, this means the Ninth Temple has no intention of making more enemies. Moreover, it has been a millennium

since Sikong Beichen last made an appearance. If I may be blunt, there's a chance Sikong Beichen might have gone on to the afterlife. Even if he's alive, how many years does he have left? If they had any brains, they wouldn't make more enemies. Instead... they'll try to entice people to their side."

Xia Changqiu grinned as he said, "You're right, Elder Tian. Five days from now, let's make a huge ceremony out of our visit to the Ninth Temple. We can use this opportunity to keep the Flying Star House in check as well... Send someone to clear the Flying Star House's flying chariot away."

"Understood."

...

Inside the room.

Lu Zhou was prepared to meditate on the Heavenly Writing scrolls. He had exhausted some of his power during his fight with Fa Hua. He would need some time to recuperate. Perhaps, it was due to improvement in his cultivation base, the impact of his extraordinary power did not seem as great as it was before. Or perhaps, it was because his opponents had gotten stronger.

He thought about the armor. The starting point of the extraordinary power seemed to be the Nine-leaf stage. It could activate the armor. Now that his opponent was already at the Nine-leaf stage, would his extraordinary power rise again?

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

The Heavenly Writing scroll's power of listening.

His extraordinary power flowed out and shrouded his surroundings.

After his cultivation base improved, the power of listening's range had increased as well. Voices began to ring in his ears.

"That old man sure can put on a show. He does seem quite powerful. Even the monastery master has to show him respect."

"Tell me something I don't know. His disciple is a top-tier sword elite. He was capable of fighting Zhu Xuan on equal footing. The old man can't be weak."

He increased the extraordinary power, widening the range as well.

"That old mister has no eye for talent. To think he wanted to recruit that idiot Ji Fengxing. It's the first time someone overlooked Miss Wuwu."

"It's not that simple. Didn't you see the two young girls by his side? Those two girls followed him all the way here to the red lotus domain... Do you think they're useless? Wuwu is talented, but she's probably worth nothing compared to those two girls."

"You have a point."

The blue radiance on Lu Zhou's ears glowed brighter as he used up his remaining extraordinary power.

Whizz!

The range of the power of hearing instantly covered the entire Thousand Willow Monastery and spread for dozens of miles out. From some corner dozens of miles away from Thousand Willow Mountain, he heard a sneaky voice saying, "Don't spread this out. Go back and report this."

He stopped using his power and opened his eyes. He walked to the window with his hands on his back and looked at the mountains at the back.

The mountains were quiet. Apart from the flying beasts circling in the air, there was nothing else. A light breeze parted the clouds and the fog lingering around the forest.

Lu Zhou did not see anyone. He stroked his beard as he began to pace in the room. "Someone's keeping an eye on the Thousand Willow Monastery?"

Compared to the Ninth Temple, the Sky Martial Court, and the Flying Star House, the Thousand Willow Monastery was extremely weak. Who would pay attention to a weak sect?

"Are they coming for me?"

Lu Zhou had many trump cards he could use. He had two Deadly Strike Cards, which meant that he could confidently face two Ten-leaf cultivators. However, the five First Seats of the Ninth Temple were not weaklings. They were also veterans. Since he decided to go to the Ninth Temple, he had to prepare for the worst. Worst case scenario was if all the elites came at him at once. If his identity as a golden lotus cultivator was exposed, it was highly possible that the worst-case scenario would happen.

He opened the dashboard.

Merit points: 16,540.

'Should I buy another one? I should be more prudent. It's not easy to earn merit points right now.'

The people here would not worship him if they saw a golden lotus.

"Lucky draw."

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

'Nice. Now I have 101 luck points. I have a feeling that I'm going to create a new record. For a former European emperor, this is an insult.'

"Lucky draw."

"Ding! Spent 50 merit points and 102 luck points. Obtained Impeccable Card x2, Calm Disturbance."

Lu Zhou felt this was a worthwhile draw with just the two Impeccable Cards alone. If he had purchased them, it would have cost him 15,000 merit points each. It was as despicable as a blood-sucking vampire.

Lu Zhou muttered, "Why does this lousy system need that many merit points?"

After complaining, he focused on the new item card, Calm Disturbance.

"Calm Disturbance?"

"Calm Disturbance: Contains a possibility of gaining a new sword path."

Lu Zhou looked at the description. Without much thought, he said, "Use."

The Calm Disturbance item card shattered. It dissolved into specks of starlight and swirled around him. When they subsided, he flexed his limbs. There were no changes; he did not feel different.

'Well, it says there's only a possibility of gaining a new sword path... So does this mean I failed? Fortunately, I got the Impeccable Cards. Otherwise, this would've been a loss.'

Shortly after, Lu Zhou returned to his position and resumed meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls.

If there were no accidents, he would be able to completely replenish his extraordinary power in five days.

...

Meanwhile, in Jiannan Circuit where the Ninth Temple was located.

On a balcony.

Zhu Xuan pointed at the main hall that overlooked the city and asked, "Sir, is everything to your liking here?"

Yu Zhenghai had been treated well since his arrival. His meals and accommodation were taken care of. Apart from being escorted when he went out, he lived like everyone else here.

Yu Zhenghai walked up to Zhu Xuan. With his hands on his back, he looked down and said, "If you're sincere in seeking a collaboration, you should also invite the other First Seats to meet me. Otherwise, I'd feel ashamed of myself for living off you without giving anything in return."

Ever since he arrived at the Ninth Temple, Yu Zhenghai had never met any one of the rumored five First Seats.

Zhu Xuan smiled and said, "The Ninth Temple isn't lacking in funds. You can spend it however you like... Since I invited you here, it's only natural that I'm sincere about working with you, sir. The First Seats of the Ninth Temple are of high standing, and they aren't individuals whom you can meet on a whim. The Mystery Hall's First Seat has just recently emerged from his cultivation in seclusion. I've already reported this to the higher-ups. First Seat Zhang said we can collaborate, but it has to be sincere."

Yu Zhenghai repeated the word, "Sincere?"

"You're from the golden lotus domain, after all. If the Sky Martial Court and the palace find out about this, the Ninth Temple would be caught in a difficult situation. Hence, the Ninth Temple wants to understand more about you and your sect. We need to know more about the golden lotus domain," Zhu Xuan said.

Yu Zhenghai was not surprised that the Ninth Temple wanted to find out more information. After being in charge of the Nether Sect for so many years, how could he not see this coming? "What if I refuse?"

"You will tell me, sir... It's getting late. You should get some rest. I'll visit you again in a month." Zhu Xuan turned around and left.

'One month...' Yu Zhenghai did not turn around. Instead, he remained on the balcony and looked down at the Ninth Temple.

Chapter 743: A Mere Elder Has No Right To Speak To Me

Five days passed in just a blink of an eye.

In the Thousand Willow Monastery.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes. He had finally completely recovered the Heavenly Writing's extraordinary power. He raised his hand and looked at his palms. He felt as though he had aged further. He flipped his palm around and shattered a Reversal Card.

...

Near Thousand Willow Mountain, the vitality energy in the forest gathered as though it was being pulled into a whirlpool in the ocean.

The unique surge of power caught the attention of the Thousand Willow Monastery disciples.

...

In the Fair Hall.

Xia Changqiu, the Monastery Master of the Thousand Willow Monastery, hurried out of the hall. When he was outside, he looked up and saw the vitality energy above Lu Zhou's courtyard.

At this moment, Tian Buji had also hurried over, clearly shocked. "Monastery Master, this is..."

Xia Changqiu frowned. He shook his head as he said, "The old senior is capable of mobilizing such powerful vitality energy?"

Tian Buji said, "I've never seen anything like this before as well. Could this be a special ability that golden lotus cultivators possess?"

As the two conversed, Little Yuan'er and Conch arrived outside the hall, holding hands.

Xia Changqiu disregarded his own status as he hurried over to the two young girls. He asked with a smile, "May I know what your master is doing?"

Little Yuan'er turned to look at the sky above her master's courtyard. She found it boring so she said, "You're making a big fuss out of nothing. My master does this all the time."

"..." Xia Changqiu had no retort.

...

Lu Zhou looked at the system dashboard.

Remaining life: 219,470 days.

"I managed to reverse 600 days..." His expression remained unchanged despite being satisfied with the 600 days.

Lu Zhou could feel the changes in his new surroundings. The Primal Qi and the vitality energy in the red lotus domain seemed richer and more powerful.

Nonetheless, he felt slightly suffocated. It seemed like the people in the red lotus domain really liked the color red. Everyone was a red lotus cultivator. The flowers, totems, and ornaments were red. All he could see was the color red. He found it disturbing.

When Lu Zhou finally emerged from the room, the Thousand Willow Monastery elders were already waiting for him in the courtyard.

“Old senior, the monastery master has prepared the flying chariot and is waiting for you.”

“Alright.” Lu Zhou descended the steps and exited the courtyard.

Soon enough, he arrived in front of the Fair Hall.

Little Yuan'er and Conch ran over to him immediately. “Master.”

“Old senior.” Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji bowed at the same time.

The disciples from the Thousand Willow Monastery were almost all here. They lined up at the sides. Ji Fengxing and Wuwu stood at the lead.

Lu Zhou walked to the side of the flying chariot parked on the plaza. It was slightly too crude for his taste, and it was not very spacious. However, it was better than nothing. He did not know when his mounts were going to arrive anyway. Who knew if they had lost their way?

“Master... Can we go now? I can't wait!” Little Yuan'er said excitedly as she and Conch boarded the chariot.

“Old senior, after you... I'll personally man the helm today,” Xia Changqiu said respectfully as he walked toward the flying chariot.

Lu Zhou looked at the crowd as he boarded the flying chariot. After he entered the chariot, he said, “It's enough for both of you to lead the way. The others won't be of any use even if they come with us.”

The elder looked awkward. What hurtful words!

“As you wish, old senior.” Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji boarded the chariot.

Yu Shangrong leaped onto the deck at the back of the flying chariot.

Little Yuan'er said to Yu Shangrong, “Since Eldest Senior Brother isn't around, shouldn't you man the helm?”

“...” Lu Zhou knocked Little Yuan'er's head. “Watch your manners. Your Eldest Senior Brother is the master of a sect, you know? He has 100,000 members under his command.”

Little Yuan'er rubbed her head and said, “I've spoken wrongly... but... it's the truth though.”

Xia Changqiu. “...” Initially, he thought he was showing a grand gesture by offering to man the helm for the old man. After all, he was the Monastery Master of the Thousand Willow Monastery. However,

when he heard the little girl's words, he was taken aback. If the old man's disciple had such a high status, what kind of person was the old man in the golden lotus domain?

...

The flying chariot slowly rose into the air and flew in the southwestern direction toward Jiannan Circuit.

Lu Zhou looked at the lofty mountains and dense forests along the way. Indeed, the appearance of the terrain was similar to Great Yan. The vegetation was lush as well. They encountered several beasts along the way, but they were swiftly dealt with by Tian Buji and Xia Changqiu.

...

Half a day later.

Xia Changqiu saw the familiar round area from his position at the helm. From this altitude, it seemed like a black round disc. In truth, it was formed by buildings. Nine buildings were built around a central structure, forming a unique defensive array.

"Old senior, the Ninth Temple is up ahead..." Although Xia Changqiu was a monastery master, he could not help but feel nervous now that he had arrived in such a huge sect.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes. He walked to the helm and looked down with his hands on his back. "Daoist Eight Gates Formation?"

"You're truly knowledgeable, old senior. Indeed, this is the Eight Gates Formation. It has been modified into the Nine Gates Formation. The nine main halls are also called the nine gates." Xia Changqiu was filled with awe as he looked around.

The flying chariot drew closer and closer.

Lu Zhou saw the city gates. Many sects preferred to base themselves near mountains. The Ninth Temple was one of the rare ones that built its base on a plain.

At this moment, two disciples flew over on their swords from the city's gate. They barred the flying chariot's path and asked, "Who goes there?"

Xia Changqiu said loudly, "Xia Changqiu, the Monastery Master of the Thousand Willow Monastery, requests to meet Elder Zhu."

"The Thousand Willow Monastery?" the disciple said, "Elder Zhu is cultivating in seclusion. Please turn back and return after a month."

Xia Changqiu was a monastery master, after all. He, naturally, knew how to deal with small fries who guarded the door. He said, "Please notify him. This is an urgent matter. Elder Zhu will surely meet me. You won't lose anything by notifying him, but if you didn't, Elder Zhu will blame you for it." As he spoke, he tossed something out.

The object glittered as it landed in the disciple's hand. He looked at the object in his hand and smiled in satisfaction. He pocketed it and said, "A moment please."

However, as the disciple was about to turn around, Lu Zhou called out tonelessly, "Wait."

“What else?” The disciple on the sword was puzzled.

“A mere elder has no right to talk to me. Tell Zhu Xuan... to send Sikong Beichen out to meet me,” Lu Zhou said flatly.

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji. “...”

The two people from the Thousand Willow Monastery could not help but shudder. This was the worst outcome! They knew Sikong Beichen would easily meet guests. They could have settled the matters quietly, but now... they felt like crying.

The disciple on the sword frowned. He said, “Even if the Flying Star House’s Master is here, he doesn’t even have the right to meet the temple master, let alone the Monastery Master of the Thousand Willow Monastery. Please leave...”

Lu Zhou had expected as much. He waved his arm.

From behind Lu Zhou, Yu Shangrong who saw his master’s gesture knew his master’s meaning. With blurry movements, he appeared in the air and said tonelessly, “If you knew who my master is, you’d know how foolish you sounded.”

Bzzt! Bzzt Bzzt!

The Longevity Sword vibrated.

At this moment, the sound of the flute rang in the air.

Conch blew on her Lantian Jade Flute. Nobody knew what suddenly spurred her on, but her melodious notes spread into the surroundings. The Primal Qi flowing in the air were like wisps of vivid red smoke that formed energy.

The others turned back to look.

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji were shocked. From the beginning, they did not pay much attention to this little girl.

Conch played the flute calmly. It was a light and pleasant tune. The red energy surged out to the horizon like a gentle stream. Since she had begun to cultivate, she was now capable of controlling her tune. She condensed her Qi into energy that blended together harmoniously and triggered the beasts in the vicinity.

The beasts swarmed out of their hiding places and flew over in a majestic manner. There were so many beasts that it seemed they were capable of covering the sky.

From Ninth Temple’s main gates, a person flew over. He was shocked when he saw the red energy in the air. “The elder has approved. Follow me...”

Chapter 744: Who’s Causing a Scene in the Ninth Temple?

There were only a handful of cultivators with such talents in the world.

The chilly breeze seemed to soften the tune as they carried it to the clouds...

Even after the mellow tune stopped, it still seemed to linger in the air before it seemed to drift off to the horizon.

The flying beasts in the clouds cried out along with the flute's tone. When the tune stopped and the red energy dispersed, they scattered as well.

There were only a few beasts that tried to get closer to the Ninth Temple. They were fallen by the ballistae on the platform.

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji had forgotten that they were supposed to lead the way. They were shocked and puzzled. Were they not cultivators from the golden lotus domain? Why was there a red lotus cultivator in their midst? Moreover, she was a genius in music!

Yu Shangrong turned to look at Conch and said with a faint smile, "That was amazing, Little Junior Sister."

"Thank you for the praise, Second Senior Brother," Conch said, clearly happy that she was praised.

Yu Shangrong returned to the flying chariot. He glanced at Xia Changqiu and said, "Monastery Master Xia?"

Xia Changqiu snapped back to his senses and regarded Conch with a complicated gaze. He said awkwardly, "I'm sorry I was out of it." Then, he steered the flying chariot forward. In the end, he could not hold back his curiosity so he asked, "Old senior, are all of them you're disciples?" Although he knew the answer, he still wanted to confirm.

Little Yuan'er giggled before she said, "This is my Little Junior Sister!"

"Little Junior Sister?"

"Yes, my Tenth Junior Sister."

Xia Changqiu. "..."

'Tenth... Junior Sister. Does this mean this old senior has ten shocking disciples?' Xia Changqiu had already met four disciples. Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong were on par with a Nine-leaf cultivator. The youngest disciple could control beasts. In that case, the other disciples...

The flying chariot rocked at this moment.

Lu Zhou glanced at Xia Changqiu and said as he stroked his beard, "If you're afraid, you may leave now."

"I'm not afraid as long as you're here, old senior... My piloting skills are just rusty from lack of practice. Please forgive me," Xia Changqiu said.

Little Yuan'er felt it was necessary to say, "My Eldest Senior Brother doesn't have this problem."

"..."

'This little girl seems to have a knack for raining on someone's parade.' Xia Changqiu opted to remain silent.

When the flying chariot entered the Ninth Temple's boundaries, it had to lower its altitude.

When those on the flying chariot looked down, they were in awe. This place was big enough to be its own city. The area it occupied surpassed their imagination. Before this, they were looking down from high above and merely felt the scale and the Formation were shocking. Now that they were inside, the magnificence of the buildings amazed them.

The buildings formed a ring around the main building. The plaza extended for 1,000 meters while the nine main halls towered around it.

“Land!” A high-pitch voice like that of a palace eunuch rang in the air.

The flying chariot slowly descended.

Two cultivators approached the flying chariot on swords. They cupped their fists together and said in unison, “Elder Kong welcomes you.”

“Elder Kong?” Xia Changqiu leaped out of the flying chariot. “The old senior wants to meet Elder Zhu, not Elder Kong.”

Yu Shangrong said, “My apologies, I have a correction to make. My master wants to meet Sikong Beichen, not Elder Zhu...”

The disciples of Ninth Temple. “...”

The troubled Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji. “...”

“Who gave you the guts to call the temple master by his name?” The disciples who came on their swords gripped their weapons.

They were about to make a move when a voice from somewhere behind them rang in the air. “Stop!”

The others looked in the direction of the voice. A middle-aged man seated on a wooden wheelchair that was being pushed by someone else appeared in their sight. Clearly, he was gravely injured and had yet to recover.

The two disciples bowed and saluted him. “Elder Kong.”

Kong Lu looked up and saw the people on the flying chariot. He said, “Xia Changqiu, the Monastery Master of the Thousand Willow Monastery?”

“Yes.”

“Was the one who played the flute one of your disciples?” Kong Lu asked.

Xia Changqiu stepped aside and said, “It was this young lady who laced the tune with Qi and controlled the beasts. She’s the capable disciple of this old senior.”

On the wheelchair, Kong Lu looked at the obedient Conch and smiled in satisfaction. Then, he turned to look at the old man who had an erudite air about him. After appraising the old man for a moment, he said, “Old mister, I can see this young girl has great talents. Why don’t you give her to me? Just tell me your conditions.”

Little Yuan’er was about to lose her temper when Lu Zhou raised his hand to stop her.

Lu Zhou initially wanted to ignore Kong Lu, but since Kong Lu had spoken, he felt he needed to respond. "You wish to be my disciple's master?"

"I hope that you'll approve," Kong Lu said seriously, "I granted you entry because I like her talent."

Lu Zhou raised his hand slowly and pushed forward. Then, he fisted his hand and gathered Primal Qi. There was no need to condense them into energy for him to generate a pulling force.

Kong Lu was shocked; he could not react in time before he was pulled over.

The Ninth Temple disciples present on the scene drew their swords immediately.

Lu Zhou pulled Kong Lu and struck with his palm.

Bam!

Kong Lu was sent flying back. He cried out in alarm as he crashed back into his wooden wheelchair, spitting out blood.

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji were shocked. They did not expect Lu Zhou would suddenly attack without any warning.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said apathetically, "You can't even withstand a single palm strike from me. How are you going to become someone else's master?"

"You..." Kong Lu pressed his hand against his chest as he coughed. He spat out more blood.

"Elder Kong!"

Lu Zhou shook his head. 'I'll have to do something if I want to meet Sikong Beichen today. This is the problem with major sects.'

Kong Lu's face flushed from the palm strike.

More than ten disciples drew their swords.

Energy swords buzzed.

The commotion was too great; it naturally caught many people's attention.

Many Ninth Temple disciples hurried over to the scene.

"Kong Lu, you're already injured to begin with. Why are you trying to act tough?"

The Square Box floated over from behind.

The disciples bowed at once. "Grand Elder!"

The Square Box grew several meters wide in just a blink of an eye as it sailed toward the flying chariot.

Xia Changqiu immediately cried out, "Elder Zhu, have mercy!"

"I can't spare you! How dare you?!" Zhu Xuan could not possibly allow anyone to cause a scene in the Ninth Temple's domain. Although he disliked Kong Lu, it did not matter.

When the Square Box flew over, Yu Shangrong pushed away from the ground. With a flurry of movements, he appeared above the Square Box and stomped his foot on it.

Bam!

Due to his prior experience, Yu Shangrong easily dealt with the Square Box and pushed it down with his foot.

Boom!

The Square Box crashed onto the marble floor like a sturdy box.

Yu Shangrong's arms were still crossed as he looked ahead. He said, "Zhu Xuan, we meet again."

"You?" Zhu Xuan finally saw Yu Shangrong. Half of his anger seemed to have dissipated as he said, "Have you thought things through, sir?"

He thought Yu Shangrong was the same as Yu Zhenghai.

Yu Shangrong shook his head. "My apologies, I didn't think about it at all."

"In that case, what brings you to the Ninth Temple?" Zhu Xuan asked.

"Two things. The first is to retrieve my Eldest Senior Brother. Secondly, my master has come, and he wants to meet Sikong Beichen. Sikong Beichen should show his face." Yu Shangrong called the Temple Master of the Ninth Temple by name again.

Kong Lu fought back the pain and said, "You? Yu Zhenghai is a foreign tribesman, and he snuck up on me in the first place. Now that he's in the Ninth Temple's hands, you think you can rescue him?"

When Yu Zhenghai first arrived in the red lotus domain, the person he had heavily injured was Kong Lu.

Since Yu Zhenghai's arrival, Kong Lu had been racking his brain in search of a way to exact revenge. However, Kong Lu was stopped by Zhu Xuan. After all, Zhu Xuan had to keep Yu Zhenghai safe if he wanted to become the leader of the nine First Seats. Kong Lu was an obstacle in his path. He glared at Kong Lu. "Shut up!"

Kong Lu retreated fearfully.

Zhu Xuan forced a smile on his face. He looked at Yu Shangrong and said, "Sir, have you forgotten about our promise the other day? Your Eldest Senior Brother has agreed to stay. I won't hold this against all of you on his account. Please return."

Yu Shangrong was not surprised by this. There was a burst of movement before he appeared before Zhu Xuan. He joined his palms together, and energy swords appeared around him. His first skill was the most powerful move from the Guiyuan Sword Technique, Primal Restoration.

Zhu Xuan did not seem to think much about it. "I'm already a Nine-leaf cultivator. Do you think I'm still the same as I was before?"

The Square Box suddenly shot up toward Yu Shangrong's back.

Then, there was a burst of golden energy!

The disciples of Ninth Temple in the vicinity who saw this flew over immediately. In just a short moment, there were almost 100 cultivators who came to watch the show.

The energy swords gathered and swirled around Yu Shangrong.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The Square Box hit the energy swords, but the energy swords shot up into the sky before they shot toward Zhu Xuan who flew backward. The Square Box shrank, and he used it as a shield.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The energy swords from Primal Restoration hit the Square Box. The final few energy swords seemed bigger and brighter. They continued to strike the Square Box.

Zhu Xuan and the Square Box did not move. He said, "This is the difference between an Eight-leaf cultivator and a Nine-leaf cultivator... Hm?"

'It's not finished?'

The final few energy swords struck the Square Box. They were clearly stronger than the previous energy swords.

Bam!

The Square Box retreated suddenly.

Zhu Xuan defended with his arms. With a boom, he was pushed back dozens of meters.

"How can this be?" When he was an Eight-and-a-half-leaf cultivator, he fought the two fellow disciples on equal ground. Now that he was a Nine-leaf cultivator, why did he fall into a disadvantageous position when he was just facing Yu Shangrong alone?

"Are you Zhu Xuan whose strength is comparable to my disciples?" Lu Zhou was intrigued by the Square Box.

Yu Shangrong stopped and lowered himself before he walked to the side.

Zhu Xuan looked at Lu Zhou and turned to Yu Shangrong. "Your master?"

"My master is going to make his move. You better look after yourself," Yu Shangrong said.

Zhu Xuan was shocked. The master of these two elites was surely a Nine-leaf cultivator. Without a second thought, he hastily extended his hand.

The Square Box flew up and suddenly grew dozens of meters in size. It loomed above Lu Zhou's head.

Lu Zhou was interested in the Square Box. He looked at the spinning box as he stroked his beard and said, "A desolate-grade treasure?"

"Indeed. It's a desolate-grade weapon. It's called the Square Box. Be careful, old senior," Xia Changqiu said anxiously.

The Square Box had been powerful when wielded by an Eight-and-a-half-leaf cultivator. How powerful was it now that Zhu Xuan was a Nine-leaf cultivator?

From below, the Square Box seemed like a huge square carpet that was falling down.

“Elder Zhu is getting serious!”

The Square Box descended.

Zhu Xuan circulated his Primal Qi. With a burst of movement, he appeared above the Square Box before stomping on it.

Boom!

The Square Box fell.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard with one hand as he casually raised his other hand. The box fell on his hand.

Fiend Monk Hand Seal.

It contained extraordinary power.

Whizz!

Square Box could not suppress Lu Zhou. In fact, it was being carried by him.

“Hm?” Zhu Xuan stomped again.

Another buzzing sound rang in the air.

‘A quarter of my extraordinary power. Collect!’

The Square Box suddenly shrank and fell into Lu Zhou’s hand.

Zhu Xuan stomped his foot, but he felt as though he was stomping on thin air. He... he seemed to be descending. “Huh?” Zhu Xuan was shocked. ‘How can there be karmic fire?’

Lu Zhou’s palm was still aimed upward. A burst of karmic fire shot out.

Bam!

Zhu Xuan was sent flying. His feet were burned. He cried out.

Lu Zhou unleashed both techniques at the same instant. His opponent barely had time to react.

Fortunately for Zhu Xuan, he caught sight of the karmic fire at the final moment.

The others were shocked.

Was a Nine-leaf cultivator so fragile?

Xia Changqiu suddenly recalled Ji Fengxing’s words. ‘Is he really unparalleled?’

...

Meanwhile, the five First Seats in the Peace Hall, the Truce Hall, the Unending Hall, the Prisoner Dragon Hall, and the Mystery Hall felt a wave of danger. Their eyes snapped open immediately.

The five old men unleashed their grand techniques at the same time and appeared.

“Who’s causing a scene in the Ninth Temple?!”

Chapter 745: The Ten-leaf Great General of the North

Xia Changqiu took a step backward instinctively as he said in a hoarse voice, “The five First Seats are all coming.”

Zhu Xuan reeled back and crashed on the ground after he was burned. Several disciples rushed over to support him.

Lu Zhou ignored the five First Seats who were hurrying over. Apart from Sikong Beichen, no one could do anything to him. He did not have to use the Deadly Strike Cards against them as well.

Lu Zhou looked at the Square Box in his palm.

“Square Box. Desolate-grade. Master: Zhu Xuan. Can be used after refining.”

Lu Zhou pocketed it.

Zhu Xuan seemed frightened when he saw this. The pain from the burn on his left leg seemed to finally register as he asked, “It’s... It’s really karmic fire?!”

The disciples of the Ninth Temple were in an uproar.

Karmic fire?

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji heard their discussions and were shocked. The exchange merely lasted for an instant! The old senior had raised his palm, collected the Square Box, and sent Zhu Xuan flying! Everything happened too quickly; they did not see any karmic fire at all!

Lu Zhou stroked his beard while he looked at the figures flying toward him.

Shortly after, the five First Seats hovered in the air and looked down at Lu Zhou.

Zhu Xuan bit back the pain from the burn on his left leg and said, “Greetings, First Seats.”

“Are you alright?”

“I...” Zhu Xuan seemed to be in pain. However, he could not admit that he was not fine. He was a Nine-leaf cultivator, and he was aiming to become a First Seat. He could not bear the shame. “I’m alright.”

The five old men descended.

Lu Zhou glanced at the five hall masters. He wondered if fighting five opponents at the same time would be too much for him. However, if he used his Deadly Strike Cards, he could take two of them out. With his extraordinary power and karmic fire, he was confident of subduing three of them. There was no reason to worry.

The five old men had lived very long lives. Their judgment was good. They could tell the old man was not easy to deal with. Moreover, he easily defeated Zhu Xuan who possessed a great treasure. How could he be a weakling?

“Peace Hall’s Yao Qingquan.”

“Truce Hall’s Zhao Jianghe.”

“Unending Hall’s Sun Wenchang.”

“Prisoner Dragon Hall’s Wang Youdao.”

“Mystery Hall’s Zhao Shaoqing.”

The five old men announced their names.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. ‘These five old men are smarter than Zhu Xuan and Kong Lu.’

Indeed, dealing with dumb men was not as comfortable as dealing with intelligent people.

Although these five old men were powerful enough, Lu Zhou would not abandon his plan. He was determined to deal with their king.

“Where’s Sikong Beichen?” Lu Zhou placed one hand on his back and stroked his beard with the other.

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji. “...”

In the beginning, the duo from the Thousand Willow Monastery had thought Lu Zhou was trying to act cool. They had also bragged about their strength in private before. It was just that they did not dare to repeat those words in public. They really did not expect Lu Zhou to mention Sikong Beichen in front of the five First Seats of the Ninth Temple!

‘Uh... Is he truly unparalleled?’

The Mystery Hall’s First Seat, Zhang Shaoqing, said, “Old Mister, you have a wonderful cultivation base. If you’re a friend, the Ninth Temple welcomes you with open arms. The temple master isn’t feeling well and spends most of his time recuperating. I’m afraid that he won’t be able to meet you.”

Lu Zhou continued stroking his beard. He said with a hint of disappointment, “I thought five of you are smart...”

“Old mister... What business do you have in the Ninth Temple?”

Ninth Temple had been waning in recent times. They had to be extra careful about any attempts by the Sky Martial Court and the palace to chip at their strength.

At this moment, Zhu Xuan bowed and said, “First Seat Zhang, that Yu Zhenghai is this senior’s first disciple.”

Upon hearing these words, the five First Seats frowned slightly. They had heard about Yu Zhenghai. However, they had entrusted that matter to Zhu Xuan and did not care to ask for details. All they knew was Yu Zhenghai came from the golden lotus domain, and this matter now was important.

“Are you from the golden lotus domain, old mister?” Zhang Shaoqing asked.

They had to be clear about this. This was a crucial question.

Lu Zhou did not answer Zhang Shaoqing. He merely shook his head and said, “The Ninth Temple is so vast... Is there no one with brains here?”

‘I’m the Evil Sky Pavilion’s Master, the first Nine-leaf cultivator in Great Yan. Why should I answer you? Don’t you think my pride matters as well?’

“Hm?”

The five of them felt that Lu Zhou’s imposing air was rather difficult to describe.

At this moment, Lu Zhou made a shocking move. He stomped his foot on the ground and flew toward the five First Seats.

Xia Changqiu. “...”

Tian Buji. “...”

Zhu Xuan and Kong Lu’s expressions were similar. They looked at the flying Lu Zhou in shock. ‘He’s out of his mind! He must be crazy!’

The five First Seats spread out and raised their right hands in unison. Instead of retreating, they advanced.

Yao Qingquan, Zhao Jianghe, and Sun Wenchang summoned their avatars.

Three 150-foot avatars illuminated the entire place. The bright red lotuses were like three dazzling suns that hung high in the sky.

On the other hand, Wang Youdao and Zhang Shaoqing unleashed their grand techniques.

Five of them surrounded Lu Zhou.

This was what both parties wanted.

Lu Zhou seemed to have expected this. He used one of his trump cards.

To gain the power to silence everything, to maintain and manifest samadhi. Like light and shadow, permeating everywhere while staying still in samadhi.

This was the power to silence everything.

This was the second power Lu Zhou obtained after meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls.

A blue lotus bloomed under his feet as his body shone with a blue light.

Lu Zhou was bold and decisive as he used half of his extraordinary power.

“A blue lotus!” Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji exclaimed in hoarse voices.

The disciples of the Ninth Temple widened their eyes as they looked at the blossoming blue lotus. They had expected a golden lotus, but they were treated to the sight of a blue lotus instead. This was a color they had never heard of or seen before.

Before Yu Shangrong came to the red lotus domain, he was like the other Great Yan cultivators who thought his master's blue lotus was from the barrier's power. Everyone had assumed the color of the barrier changed the color of his master's lotus just like how the Fiend Zen would taint one's avatar black.

At this moment, the blue lotus was beyond everyone's comprehension.

Realization suddenly dawned on Yu Shangrong. This must be the reason why his master was so powerful. From the beginning, his master was a cultivator who was much stronger than those from the golden lotus domain and the red lotus domain!

Conch hugged Little Yuan'er's arm as she looked up and said, "Senior sister, that's beautiful! I've never seen it before."

Little Yuan'er said, "I'm almost sick of it. However, it's only natural that it's beautiful since it's from master!"

When the blue lotus was fully bloomed, a wave of energy shot downward.

Zhu Xuan's knees buckled, and he fell to his knees. Sweat was dripping down his face. 'Blue lotus and karmic fire?'

The five First Seats were also shocked by the blue lotus. They had never seen such a lotus or such a battle style before.

Their red energies and avatars were pushed back by the blue lotus.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!

All five First Seats reeled back. They grunted in pain as their blood essences boiled. They stopped short of spitting out blood; the blood was caught in their throat. Alas, the weakest among them, the Nine-leaf Zhang Shaoqing, could not endure it and spat out a mouthful of blood.

The blue lotus faded away.

Lu Zhou hovered in the center and looked at the five First Seats in satisfaction. 'It has been a long time since I used this power... Its impact is still something to be feared. Usually, I can kill an Eight-leaf cultivator instantly with half of my extraordinary power. It's natural that these five are only injured with half of my extraordinary power.'

Lu Zhou seemed nonchalant and as steady as Mount Tai.

The others fell silent.

The five old men wore a grim expression on their faces as they looked at the old men in confusion.

After a long pause, the Mystery Hall's First Seat, Zhang Shaoqing, called out, "Men!"

"Yes, Hall Master."

“Invite the temple master here. Quickly!”

“Understood.” The disciple flew toward the central part of the Ninth Temple on his sword.

The five of them were completely subdued.

At this moment, something unexpected happened.

A guard flew over and announced in the air, “This is bad. The Great General of the North is here.”

The five First Seats were already in a tight spot after being subdued by Lu Zhou. The appearance of the Great General of the North changed their expressions drastically.

“Great General of the North?” Lu Zhou turned around. This sounded like a title someone from the palace would have. He recalled what he had heard when he used the power of hearing back at the Thousand Willow Monastery.

A majestic voice rang from the tallest building in the center. “Get in, everyone.”

The five First Seats turned submissive immediately. They bowed at the central building. “Understood.”

The owner of the voice was none other than the Ten-leaf Sikong Beichen.

Xia Changqiu was the first one to lose control. He staggered and nearly lost his footing. Fortunately, Tian Buji caught him in time.

“E-elder Tian... I... am I dreaming? T-two Ten-leaf cultivators... We’re doomed.”

Chapter 746: Sikong Beichen

When Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji were still in the Thousand Willow Monastery, they were convinced that Sikong Beichen would not meet them. The five First Seats would only have a brief sparring session with the old senior, at most, to understand more about him. With the Ninth Temple’s current situation, there was a high possibility they were trying to gain allies. At the very least, the Ninth Temple would prefer to coexist in peace than make new enemies without due cause.

However...

This was awkward.

Two Ten-leaf cultivators had appeared in succession. This exceeded Xia Changqiu’s expectations. It seemed to have exceeded the expectations of the other members of the Ninth Temple as well. Why was the Great General of the North here?

Xia Changqiu gulped. He forced himself to calm down as he looked at the old senior whose expression remained calm. This was the old man who sent the five First Seats reeling back on his own and with a single strike. He wondered if the old senior would suddenly turn around and flee. If that happened, those who were left behind would not live to see another day.

Lu Zhou looked ahead calmly.

Xia Changqiu was shocked by Lu Zhou’s composure, but at the same time, he was relieved as well. ‘Perhaps, the old senior still has some tricks up his sleeve?’

Lu Zhou hovered in midair and waited for the appearance of the so-called Great General of the North. Who would not want to have a glimpse of such an elite?

Little Yuan'er and Conch ran up to Yu Shangrong as they looked at their master and Second Senior Brother curiously.

Yu Shangrong maintained his attitude as a senior. He looked at them and smiled at them warmly and gently as he said, "There's no need to be afraid. I'll protect both of you."

Lu Zhou was relieved that Yu Shangrong was willing to protect his junior sisters. This way, he would not be distracted, trying to keep them safe.

The five First Seats of the Ninth Temple rose higher in the air.

In the distant northern sky, a winged warhorse pulled a flying chariot as it trotted over. Two armored knights flanked the flying chariot. It was a majestic entrance.

"Here they come." The Mystery Hall's First Seat, Zhang Shaoqing, was slightly shocked.

Kong Lu was heavily injured. He was still shaking as he tried to rise to his feet. He said, "I'll... go and meet them."

The disciples of the Ninth Temple glanced at Kong Lu. 'What can he do in this state?'

The Peace Hall's First Seat, Yao Qingquan, said, "The temple master has invited you over. Four of you, go. I'll deal with the general."

The other four First Seats nodded.

Yao Qingquan flew north.

Then, 100 disciples rose on their swords and followed him to make it look grander.

Zhao Shaoqing turned to look at Lu Zhou. Fear still lingered in his heart from their exchange earlier. He cupped his fists together and said, "You wanted to meet the temple master. Follow me..."

The other three First Seats moved to the side and made an inviting gesture.

Lu Zhou kept his eyes trained in the north direction. He was in no hurry to meet this Great General of the North. He was sure they would meet soon enough. Hence, he waved at Yu Shangrong and the others. "Follow me."

"Understood..."

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji were slightly nervous as they followed the others.

Yu Shangrong looked at Little Yuan'er and Conch before flying over as well.

...

The central structure in the Ninth Temple was a platform and the main hall. However, Sikong Beichen was not in the main hall. He lived deep in the Ninth Holy Palace in the east. It was an area of its own. It was also the only building in the entire place that had nine stories.

The other halls occupied by the First Seats were lower.

On the ninth floor of the Holy Palace.

Zhao Jianghe, Sun Wenchang, Wang Youdao, and Zhang Shaoqing flew in and landed in front of the Holy Palace.

“Senior, this way.” Zhao Jianghe made an inviting gesture.

Lu Zhou walked on air. He stroked his beard as he surveyed his surroundings. He was inwardly in awe when he saw the majestic place and the nine-story Holy Palace.

The others hurried over.

At this moment, a veiled woman sauntered out of the Holy Palace. She stood before them and bowed. “The temple master is inside. Follow me.”

Yao Qingquan did not move. Instead, he maintained his inviting gesture and allowed Lu Zhou to go before himself.

Lu Zhou entered the Holy Palace followed by the four First Seats.

When Yu Shangrong and the others wanted to follow them in, the veiled woman raised a hand and said, “Unrelated people are not allowed to enter. I’m sorry.”

Yu Shangrong lowered his head slightly and looked at the woman from the corners of his eyes. “Unrelated people?”

“Let them all enter.” A stern and gruff voice rang from the Holy Palace.

“Understood.”

They walked down a long corridor with two rows of pillars. It hardly seemed like the ninth floor of a building. Even the palace was not built as majestically as the Holy Palace.

Eventually, Lu Zhou saw a haggard old man, whose hair was as white as his own, seated on a chair.

The old man’s appearance was ordinary. He looked tired as he supported his forehead with one hand that was resting on the table.

Lu Zhou stopped moving. Since he had transmigrated, this was the first person he met who was truly older than him. ‘I won’t deceive him if he’s honest with me. Birds of a feather flock together. Am I destined to meet old men wherever I go?’

At this moment, a rich voice rang from beyond the hall. “Make way for the Great General of the North.”

The others looked outside.

At this moment, Sikong Beichen finally lowered his hand and looked up. However, he did not look at Lu Zhou. Instead, he looked past him.

A stocky armored man with a black cape slowly walked in. His eyes were spirited, and his face was wide. He carried a superior air about him.

Chen Beizheng guarded the northern borders and had great military achievements. Then, the palace summoned him back. Now, he was a great figure inside the palace whom no one dared to take lightly.

The Peace Hall's First Seat, Yao Qingquan, entered the Holy Palace with Chen Beizheng.

The other First Seats greeted Chen Beizheng at the same time. "Great General."

Chen Beizheng looked at the four First Seats but did not respond. He looked at Sikong Beichen before he stood unmoving, silently surveying his surroundings. After a while, he said, "Brother Beichen, it's been a while."

Sikong Beichen shook his head and said, "What is the great general doing in the Ninth Temple instead of guarding the sky?"

"I'm here on orders." Chen Beizheng made his way to the seat on the left and sat down unceremoniously. "I'm here on orders to capture the foreign tribesmen."

"Foreign tribesmen?"

The five First Seats' expressions changed slightly.

Sikong Beichen had not been involved with the Ninth Temple's affairs for a long time now so he did not know what this meant. He said with a sigh, "I have guests today. You should come another day."

In the entire Ninth Temple, Sikong Beichen was the only one who could speak to Chen Beizheng in this manner.

"Guests?"

At this moment, the others finally noticed the old man who was silently and calmly stroking his beard.

Sikong Beichen nodded slightly. He waved his right arm and said, "Have a seat, my friend."

Lu Zhou did not move. Instead, he regarded Sikong Beichen with a neutral expression. 'You finally noticed me?'

"There's no need for that. I'm merely here to take my disciple away." Lu Zhou stood unmoving like a mountain as he faced these two Ten-leaf cultivators.

The five First Seats were shocked. 'This old man... is so fierce and imposing?'

They were shocked by Lu Zhou's composure when faced with their temple master and Chen Beizheng. This was not something that could be cultivated overnight. At this moment, they finally noticed the old man's air was somewhat similar to their temple master. However, the old man was more mysterious.

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji's knowledge and perception were frequently being refreshed and renewed in Lu Zhou's company. In the Thousand Willow Monastery, they could still give orders with a high and mighty air, but here, the two of them were nothing but ants. They shuddered.

It was exceptionally quiet inside the Holy Palace.

Sikong Beichen stared at Lu Zhou with a deep gaze, trying to gauge Lu Zhou's true strength. When their eyes met, he felt as though he was looking at the vortex in the deepest part of the Endless Ocean. He

was slightly shocked by this. In all his years of living, he had never met someone like the old man in front of him.

Meanwhile, Chen Beizheng enjoyed the refreshments brought by the female attendants as though everything was within his control. He was not in a hurry at all.

Sikong Beichen calmly said, "My friend, did you subdue the five First Seats on your own?"

Lu Zhou did not answer the question. Instead, he said in a slightly demanding tone, "I don't like to beat around the bush. Bring Yu Zhenghai to me."

The others exchanged a look.

"Yu Zhenghai?" Sikong Beichen was puzzled.

The Mystery Hall's First Seat, Zhang Shaoqing, hastily walked over and whispered into Sikong Beichen's ear.

Thud!

Chen Beizheng placed his teacup on the table. He said, "That Yu Zhenghai is also one of the people whom I'm here to capture."

Sikong Beichen had his own thoughts. He said, "General Chen, these friends are honored guests of the Ninth Temple and not foreign tribesmen as you claimed. Please leave."

The five First Seats were shocked. They instantly understood the temple master's intention.

As expected of the person with the highest authority in the Ninth Temple. His vision, thoughts, choices, and decisions were made in a flash.

Lu Zhou understood what was happening now. Before he knew it, he was caught in between the hammer and the anvil. The relationship between the palace and the Ninth Temple seemed complicated.

Chen Beizheng smiled and coldly said, "Zhu Xuan battled two golden lotus cultivators at the Thousand Willow Monastery. There are many eyewitnesses. Brother Beichen, are you siding with the foreign tribesmen?"

Sikong Beichen calmly replied, "I didn't see it."

Chen Beizheng looked at Lu Zhou and said, "I can understand if you didn't see it, Brother Beichen, but the five First Seats have just recently fought with that person. They should be very well aware..."

The First Seats bowed and said in unison. "We've not seen any foreign tribesmen."

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji. "..."

'Are they all blatantly lying? Has the contest between the two factions escalated to this stage?'

Chen Beizheng looked at the First Seats. He was slightly taken aback, but he was not entirely surprised. He said, "Alright, alright. Rumors can't be trusted, and one has seen anything with their eyes. Show us your avatar to settle this matter."

Lu Zhou continued stroking his beard and did not deign to look at Chen Beizheng. 'Why should I show you my avatar just because you told me to?'

The Peace Hall's First Seat, Yao Qingquan, shook his head and said, "General Chen, this is the Ninth Temple's Holy Palace, not the royal palace or the northern borders. Nobody is allowed to act as they please here. If you want to see an avatar, you should go outside."

Chen Beizheng smiled brightly. He raised the wine cup and downed it in one go. He slammed it down the table, shattering it into fine pieces. He slammed his palm on the table and said, "Bring him in."

Chen Beizheng's two knights carried a person on a stretcher into the Holy Palace.

Zhang Shaoqing was puzzled. "The Blood Sun Temple's Hui Neng?"

Lu Zhou glanced at Hui Neng and shook his head slightly. 'Fa Hua is too soft.'

Hui Neng was heavily injured, but he could still speak. He struggled to get off the stretcher before he kneeled and said, "I can testify that this old man is a cultivator from the golden lotus domain. He killed Hui Jue and Hui Sheng, and he also injured the abbot. He's a Nine-leaf golden lotus cultivator! General Chen, I ask that you take this man down and do the Blood Sun Temple justice!"

Chen Beizheng nodded in satisfaction. He looked at Sikong Beichen and said, "Brother Beichen, don't stop me from taking my prisoner. Otherwise, not even you can protect the Ninth Temple. The palace won't show any mercy when it comes to capturing the foreign tribesmen."

Chapter 747: The Young Do Not Know Their Place

Those who were merciful should not command an army. That was the way it was since ancient times. Every great general stood on mountains of bones. If they had the chance, they would flatten the Ninth Temple without a second thought.

Sikong Beichen frowned.

The five First Seats remained silent.

When the strong fought, others were only used as pretexts and pawns.

Lu Zhou had never been used as a pawn before.

At this moment, Kong Lu suddenly fell to his knees and said, "I've seen his golden lotus avatar with my own eyes. That Yu Zhenghai is from the golden lotus domain! Temple Master, don't let yourself be fooled by this old geezer."

The others were shocked.

Chen Beizheng chuckled and said, "Hui Neng is from the Blood Sun Temple, and his words might not be trustworthy enough. However, Kong Lu is from your Ninth Temple... Don't you believe him?"

Sikong Beichen scowled.

The five First Seats glared at Kong Lu.

Although Zhu Xuan was anxious to rake in benefits, he would never stab one of his own. He immediately kicked Kong Lu and cursed. "What nonsense are you spouting?"

Kong Lu said with bloodshot eyes, "I'm not talking nonsense. They're foreign tribesmen. If the golden lotus cultivator isn't a coward, he should show us his avatar! I'm not a shameless person; I won't lie through my teeth. As Buddhists, we shouldn't lie. If the Ninth Temple can't give me justice, I'll turn to General Chen!"

All this time, Kong Lu had been trying to come up with a way to kill Yu Zhenghai. However, he was stopped by Zhu Xuan. He was filled with indignation and dissatisfaction. The five First Seats did not care about his feelings as well, and they were going to help Zhu Xuan harbor Yu Zhenghai. He could not stomach this.

Chen Beizheng looked at Kong Lu with a satisfied expression and said, "You have nothing to fear with me here."

"Thank you, General Chen." Kong Lu beamed and shuffled toward Chen Beizheng.

Sikong Beichen glanced at Kong Lu and said coldly, "Beat him to death outside the temple."

Kong Lu was shocked; he began to tremble.

Chen Beizheng raised a hand and said, "Are you trying to shut him up, Brother Beichen? Kong Lu is someone from your temple, and I have no right to meddle in his life-or-death affair, but can you silence the Blood Sun Temple even if you silenced him? Even if there are no witnesses, can you guarantee that they won't manifest their avatars at all?" He turned and looked at Lu Zhou from the corners of his eyes.

Lu Zhou seemed unperturbed.

Chen Beizheng continued to say, "Brother Beichen, aren't you worried that you might be inviting the wolf into your house?" Based on his words, it was clear he knew the Ninth Temple was trying to make allies out of these people.

Although Sikong Beichen was the Temple Master of the Ninth Temple Master who was renowned in the world, he would have to carefully consider his temple's relationship with the palace.

The five First Seats waited for their temple master's decision.

Sikong Beichen was deep in thought, weighing his options. He placed his right hand on the table; his fingers were trembling slightly. His fingers were slightly shaking. Naturally, he did not consider Lu Zhou's feelings and thoughts at all. He was hesitating between his options.

However, at this moment, Lu Zhou had already made his decision. He only had two Deadly Strike Cards. If he used them on those two people in front of him at once, he would surely offend the Ninth Temple and the palace. Moreover, the five First Seats and the two knights would also fight to the bitter end. His identity as a foreign tribesman would also cause people to band together against him. Therefore, he concluded the Deadly Strike Cards were not the best option.

Fortunately, Lu Zhou was left with an option he was satisfied with. He turned around slowly and looked at Chen Beizheng coldly. He said, "You're planning on capturing me?"

Indeed, Chen Beizheng did not think much about Lu Zhou. However, when he saw Lu Zhou's eyes, his interest was piqued. He said, "I'm here on orders. In consideration of Brother Beichen, I won't put you in too difficult of a situation."

Lu Zhou did not bother with the rules of the Holy Palace. He raised his left hand slowly. The Disguise Card had already shattered when he raised his hand.

A miniature avatar appeared on his palm. To be precise, a red miniature avatar appeared above his palm. The nine leaves burned and shone with a lively radiance.

The five First Seats widened their eyes in shock. 'Wasn't it a blue lotus? Why is it a red lotus now?'

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji were shocked by this as well. They could not comprehend what they were seeing. The sudden appearance of the blue lotus earlier and the red lotus now confused them. They rubbed their eyes before they looked again, wondering if their eyes were playing tricks on them. Even after taking a second look, it was still a red lotus!

Hui Neng struggled to his feet. His eyes were bloodshot as he cried out, "Impossible! No! I saw a golden lotus! This is a fake. It's fake!" He remembered what happened in the Blood Sun Temple better than anyone else.

Chen Beizheng rose to his feet as he stared at the avatar incredulously. He had brought Hui Neng here as a witness so Sikong Beichen would not have any room to refute him. He wanted to use this opportunity to strike at the Ninth Temple. His information and sources told him the old man was a golden lotus cultivator from the Thousand Willow Monastery.

'How can this be?' A hint of shock flashed past Chen Beizheng's eyes. However, he calmed down almost immediately. At the same time, he confirmed something. The old man was a Nine-leaf karmic fire cultivator. He had some thoughts regarding this now.

Sikong Beichen's gaze fell on the Nine-leaf red lotus. He nodded in satisfaction. Since the old man was a red lotus cultivator, the Ninth Temple would do everything to recruit him. On top of that, the old man was a talented person who mastered the karmic fire. The truth was what the eyes saw. Everything the five First Seats told him about this old man being a golden lotus cultivator was pushed out of his mind.

"General Chen, the truth is in front of your eyes. Do you have anything else?" Sikong Beichen spoke calmly, but his tone was clearly pointed. Someone in his position placed a lot of importance on his pride, but it was not the most important thing.

Chen Beizheng raised two fingers. A red energy sword materialized between his fingers like an icicle before it shot forward.

Bam!

The energy sword was extremely sharp. It stabbed through Hui Neng's chest.

Hui Neng was shocked and helpless to resist. He pointed at Chen Beizheng, then at Lu Zhou, and finally at Sikong Beichen. His blood drenched his chest in just an instant as his life slipped away. "Monks do not kill and lie." He fell back, eyes wide open. He inhaled one last time as his chest fell.

With just a flick of a finger, a life was lost. Was this the way Ten-leaf cultivators did things?

Ten seconds later, Lu Zhou's avatar disappeared. He had thought about the consequences of killing Chen Beizheng. Chen Beizheng could not cause as much of a commotion as he wanted to. To Lu Zhou, Sikong Beichen's stance was the most important. After he showed his red lotus, he could clearly feel that Sikong Beichen was planning to oppose Chen Beizheng.

Chen Beizheng, who killed a person with just a flick of his finger, snorted. Then, he cupped his fists together and said, "Hui Neng lied and misled me. Brother Beichen, I hope you're not angered by this."

"It's understandable. Things like this happen when the wicked are in influential positions," Sikong Beichen said.

"I've committed many offenses today. I'll return another day to apologize." Chen Beichen cupped his fists at Sikong Beichen. "I'll take my leave now." His expression was dark and unsightly.

Chen Beizheng had barely taken a few steps when Lu Zhou said, "Wait."

Chen Beizheng stopped. He turned around, puzzled. "Is something the matter?"

If it had been any other Nine-leaf cultivator, he would not have thought much about him. However, this was a Nine-leaf cultivator with karmic fire. This person might very well become a great opponent in the future. He decided to let this person go today, but he would have to think of some way to kill him in the future.

"Did I give you permission to leave?" Lu Zhou turned around and stroked his beard. His gaze was calm.

"..."

The atmosphere in the Holy Palace grew heavier.

Even Sikong Beichen did not dare to challenge Chen Beizheng like this. He frowned deeply.

Chen Beizheng's eyes turned frosty in an instant. He said, "Even Brother Beichen isn't saying anything, and yet, you're trying to stop me?"

Lu Zhou said with his usual indifference, "I've faced countless powerful enemies in my life. Nobody has ever been this unrestrained in front of me. You're arrogant and bossy, acting like you're above everyone."

"Am I supposed to care about your feelings when I'm going about my business?" Chen Beizheng was prepared to kill.

"Young man, you don't know your place. I'll show you just how high the heavens are today." Lu Zhou raised his right hand. An item card shattered in his palm.

In a blink of an eye, a vortex, churning in the anti-clockwise direction, formed in his hand. It churned faster and faster.

Lu Zhou seemed as stable as Mount Tai as he pushed his palm forward.

The others widened their eyes when they saw this.

'What is this old senior trying to do?!'

The five First Seats, Xia Changqiu, Tian Buji, Little Yuan'er, Conch, and Yu Shangrong, were confused as well.

'Is a Nine-leaf cultivator going to attack a Ten-leaf cultivator?'

Lu Zhou pushed his palm forward and sent the palm seal out.

Lu Zhou's palm seal manifested according to his imagination.

The Seal of Fearlessness calmed the masses.

The red radiance illuminated the entire Holy Palace as it sailed forward.

Chen Beizheng smirked as he said, "You're only a Nine-leaf ant, do you think you can move a tree?" He calmly and confidently raised a hand to parry the blow.

Smack!

Chen Beizheng struck the Seal of Fearlessness. He thought he would destroy the palm seal instantly. To his shock and disbelief, not only did it not disappear, but it was pushing him back as well.

"Hm?" Chen Beizheng increased his force. 'This won't do! Even if I increase my force, it's not enough! This can't be right!' He swiftly retreated.

The red palm seal grew larger and was soon the height of a person.

The scarlet palm seal struck fear into Chen Beizheng's heart.

'A Nine-leaf cultivator is pushing a Ten-leaf cultivator back?'

The people in the Holy Palace were shocked.

However, this was not the end.

The palm seal continued to push Chen Beizheng back. At this moment, a sense of terrible danger washed over him.

Whizz!

Chen Beizheng activated his avatar.

A 200-foot avatar appeared.

Chen Beizheng did not hold back. The avatar instantly crashed through the Holy Palace's door.

Rocks and rubble scattered everywhere.

The palm seal did not stop. Chen Beizheng could not stop retreating. He was now outside the building and continued to retreat in the air. His 200-foot avatar appeared in front of everyone's eyes.

Everyone ran over to have a look at this scene.

Sikong Beichen faded out of focus and shot toward the others. He stood before the Holy Palace. The renowned Ten-leaf cultivator of Great Tang was also shocked by this sight.

Ten red leaves spun swiftly around the red lotus. Chen Beizheng's face was flushed red from the effort.

Bam!

Chen Beizheng's arm broke.

The Great Seal of Fearlessness instantly grew 200 feet in height! It grew larger as its target grew larger. It adjusted its energy and size according to its target.

Boom!

The 200-foot red lotus avatar was hit by the Great Seal of Fearlessness. It creaked, looking as though it was about to shatter.

Fear washed over Chen Beizheng as he watched this with widened eyes. He thought to himself in disbelief, 'He's just a Nine-leaf cultivator. Why does he possess enough power to destroy the world?'

The Great Seal of Fearlessness continued to push forward like the waterfall from the nine skies.

Boom!

The 200-foot red lotus avatar exploded like red fireworks. Red fragments shone in the air before fading away.

"..."

The others felt their chills run up their spines, and their hair stood on end.

That palm seal seemed insignificant in the beginning. He was only a Nine-leaf cultivator, but he was capable of pushing a Ten-leaf cultivator back?!

Indeed. A tiny mantis should be laughed at for trying to shake a tree since it did not know its place.

'The old senior is right. The young don't know their place!'

Chapter 748: What's a Deterring Power?

When the 200-foot red lotus appeared in the sky, the disciples of the Ninth Temple looked up. In every corner of every building, everyone stopped what they were doing to look. Many of them would never have the chance to see what a Ten-leaf avatar looked like. It was a great pleasure in life to admire one of the greatest works of art with their own eyes. For cultivators, this was what they had worked toward. This was their goal.

Unfortunately, this short-lived radiance did not last long before it dissipated in the air like fireworks.

...

In a pavilion near the northern section, Yu Zhenghai was trying to suppress his excitement when he saw the 200-foot avatar. He could not calm down for quite a while. He had seen everything. He knew the Ninth Temple was powerful, but it was completely out of his expectations that they were this powerful.

He did not remain standing there with his hands on his back. When he witnessed this, he sat down.

A young disciple was coincidentally cleaning Yu Zhenghai's room at this moment. He was also shocked.

“Is that a Ten-leaf avatar?” Yu Zhenghai asked.

“Yes... Yes, senior.”

“Do you recognize whose avatar is that?”

The young disciple gulped before he replied, “I... All I know is a general seems to be visiting. He... he went to see the temple master.”

“Who’s the owner of that palm seal then?” Although Yu Zhenghai was shocked, his control over his emotions was, naturally, better than these juniors.

“I... I think it’s... Temple Master Sikong’s...” All the young disciple knew was that the person with the highest authority in the Ninth Temple was Sikong Beichen. He had never seen Sikong Beichen before so how could he know whose palm seal it was,

Yu Zhenghai frowned. He wondered if it would be difficult for him to escape from here in the future. He clenched his hands. He kept recalling the huge palm seal and mumbled to himself, “Stronger than master...”

...

“Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 5,500 merit points. Domain extra: 1,500 merit points.”

For what seemed like hours, the Holy Palace was a quiet as a graveyard.

Everyone was staring at the sky blankly as though they had lost their souls. Nothing was left. The sky was as clear as far as the eyes could see. They could not even see any clouds. There were no signs on the grounds of the red lotus that once blossomed so brilliantly.

Chen Beizheng was nowhere to be seen as well.

Everyone was breathing silently. They felt as though they could hear each other’s heartbeats.

The atmosphere was extremely heavy. They felt as stifled as though they were being held underwater.

Even Sikong Beichen who was feared by all felt the same way as the others.

The five First Seats blinked to relieve their dry eyes. Their tears made their visions blur. With this, they suddenly realized the difference between them and the old senior. They recalled the scene earlier when they tried to attack the old senior. Now they realized how laughable and childish they had been.

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji’s expressions were rather interesting. They finally understood why the old senior was so confident. Ji Fengxing might have been right... The old senior might actually be unparalleled!

Everyone stood witness to the status and strength of the Great General of the North. He once defeated the foreign tribesmen cultivators at the northern border and charged right into the heart of the foreign tribes. He was renowned as a killing god.

Although Sikong Beichen was confident he could defeat Chen Beizheng, he could not guarantee he could do it so cleanly with just a strike.

As for Lu Zhou's three disciples, their knowledge of their master was renewed again. He was much more powerful than before.

At this moment, a strange and pungent odor pulled Yao Qingquan back to his senses. His nose twitched. He turned to look and saw Kong Lu sitting limply on the floor. The carpet beneath Kong Lu was wet. An elder from the Ninth Temple had wet himself from the shock.

Sikong Beichen said, "Drag him out and beat him to death." He did not even look as he waved his arm.

"Understood."

"Mercy, mercy, mercy..." Kong Lu could barely string a sentence together. He was shaking uncontrollably.

Zhu Xuan's forehead was drenched in sweat. His back was wet as well. He lowered his head and remained silent.

Shortly after Kong Lu was dragged out of the building, a cry of despair rang in the air.

...

Chen Beizheng's two subordinates were stunned witless. They suddenly regained their senses and glared at everyone.

Sikong Beichen was not an ordinary person. He naturally had his own way of dealing with such an unexpected incident. He was calm as he said indifferently, "Kill them."

"Understood." The four First Seats attacked at the same time; they dragged the duo out.

There were no more naysayers in the Holy Palace.

Sikong Beichen turned around slowly. He faced the old man whose hair was also white. He raised his hands solemnly and cupped them together. How could he not take someone like the old man seriously?

Lu Zhou merely glanced at Sikong Beichen. Then, he walked over to the chair at the side and slowly sat down. 'At least I showed him.'

Sikong Beichen knew... When Lu Zhou entered the Holy Palace, he did not pay any attention to Lu Zhou and did not treat Lu Zhou seriously. Hence, he had been quite rude to his guest. It was understandable for his guest to have this attitude now. He did not walk up the stairs. Instead, he sat across Lu Zhou.

The female attendants busied themselves with tidying the Holy Palace with cautious movements. They soon cleared the debris away. The damages would have to be repaired some other day.

In the past, who would dare treat Sikong Beichen like this?

The remaining members looked around and dared not say anything.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and looked at Sikong Beichen. He asked, "Are you the Temple Master of the Ninth Temple?"

Sikong Beichen nodded and said, "Your shocking techniques have truly widened my horizon, old mister."

“That’s nothing.”

Sikong Beichen sighed softly and said, “I’m afraid the palace won’t let this matter go now that you’ve killed him, old mister.”

“That’s the Ninth Temple’s problem. That man was hostile. Don’t you want to get rid of him?”

“What I want is one thing. Actually getting rid of him is another. The Ninth Temple is no longer what it once was. We don’t want to make too many enemies for ourselves if it’s not necessary,” Sikong Beichen said.

“However, you were bold enough to act against me?” Lu Zhou asked as he stared at Sikong Beichen.

Sikong Beichen frowned. Chen Beizheng’s death would surely spell more trouble, but since when did the Ninth Temple offend this expert?

At this moment, Zhu Xuan fell to his knees with a thud. He kowtowed and said, “Temple Master, please forgive me... I didn’t know that Brother Yu is the old senior’s disciple. I truly had no idea. When I fought the other day, we came to an understanding, and I invited him here as a guest. I’ve made sure he has been well attended during his stay here. Please forgive me, Temple Master! Please have mercy, old senior!”

Bam!

Zhu Xuan knocked his forehead loudly on the ground. He was a Nine-leaf cultivator who commanded fearful respect from the others. Yet, in the face of an expert, he could only wag his tail and beg for mercy.

What was a deterring power? Killing the chicken to intimidate the monkey. This was how things were done.

Sikong Beichen understood the gist of the story. He said gruffly, “Well? Release the old mister’s disciple immediately!”

“Yes, yes, yes, right away...” Zhu Xuan trembled.

After Zhu Xuan left, Sikong Beichen cupped his fists together at Lu Zhou and said, “Please forgive us for our lack of hospitality before this.”

After witnessing Sikong Beichen’s change in attitude, Lu Zhou was rather satisfied with the deterrent effect he had on these people. Hence, he said, “I’m not a petty man.”

Sikong Beichen managed a smile on his weathered face. He nodded and recalled Lu Zhou’s earlier. He asked, “Old mister, you’re powerful enough to defeat Chen Beizheng with your shocking moves... May I know if you’ve initiated your Birth Chart?”

Chapter 749: Birth Chart

When encountering an alien term, Lu Zhou’s expression remained unchanged. It was so that he would not expose his thoughts. With some brainwork, it was clear that Sikong Beichen now viewed him as an

elite that far surpassed himself. The Birth Chart must be some kind of power of the Ten-leaf stage just like the karmic fire of the Nine-leaf stage.

Lu Zhou neither nodded nor shook his head.

When Sikong Beichen saw Lu Zhou remaining silent. He said quietly, "To think that I'm able to meet someone with an initiated Birth Chart while I'm still alive. 2,000 years have passed, and nobody has ever succeeded."

Lu Zhou was puzzled.

Sikong Beichen continued to say, "The Ninth Temple has been feared by others for many years. The palace and the Sky Martial Court have tried on several occasions to crush the Ninth Temple. If it weren't for you, old mister, Chen Beizheng would've found another reason."

The reason Chen Beizheng had used this time was the golden lotus.

The Ninth Temple could still challenge the palace and the Sky Martial Court, but they were far from being capable of standing against the entire world.

The golden lotus was undeniably the best excuse to crush the Ninth Temple.

Lu Zhou said calmly, "With your cultivation base, I don't think you'd have any problem defeating Chen Beizheng. Why didn't you do anything?"

"There are two reasons. My age doesn't allow me to battle for too long. Chen Beizheng isn't even 1,000 years old. He's young and energetic. Next, this is the Ninth Temple. If we truly fight without restraints, my disciples will surely be caught in the crossfire."

"I see that you've thought of everything." Lu Zhou dared not underestimate this person. Surely, Sikong Beichen was not the average person since he was the Temple Master of the Ninth Temple. If he did not have the 1,000 years of memories from Ji Tiandao, he was certain he would have problems navigating this situation.

For a very long time, it had always been others who were afraid of Sikong Beichen. Finally, there was one person who did not lose to him in terms of bearing and strength. "Old Mister, how should I address you?" He was clearly already trying to get Lu Zhou to be their ally.

Lu Zhou looked up and considered it for a moment. He stroked his beard and replied, "My surname is Lu."

Yu Shangrong, Little Yuan'er, and Conch were not stupid. They immediately understood their master's intention. They were in foreign lands, and he was using an alias!

'As expected of master, he has thought of everything!'

Sikong Beichen racked his brain, searching for a Ten-leaf cultivator with the surname Lu. Alas, he found nothing. However, he did not think it was strange. It was only natural that there were elites who kept a low profile. He had lived for many years and was not a frog in a well. "Brother Lu, you showed us a Nine-leaf red lotus. Did you intentionally hide your realm?" After asking this question, he felt that he was

asking the obvious. This man was capable of killing Chen Beizheng with a single strike. It was only natural that he had hidden his tenth leaf.

Lu Zhou did not answer the question. Was the answer not obvious? "Are you satisfied after asking me so many questions?"

Sikong Beichen was slightly taken aback. He suddenly realized that he was being rude. It was impolite to bombard another person, especially a guest, with so many questions.

"Forgive me, Brother Lu. I'm sorry."

Perhaps, Lu Zhou had been living in seclusion for too long. He did not feel awkward when someone who was clearly much older than him addressed him as such. 'If he has no problem calling me that, I'll accept it. There's nothing wrong with this.'

"The people said that you, Sikong Beichen, are a rare and talented cultivator, a Ten-leaf elite. 1,000 years ago, you fought against a 300,000-strong foreign tribesmen army. You're renowned all over the world. Since you asked me so many questions, you should show me your avatar as well. Let me see it," Lu Zhou said.

Sikong Beichen understood Lu Zhou's meaning. Since they were supposed to work together, it was only natural for them to be on equal ground. A faint smile appeared on his face instantly. He nodded and said, "Those are just praises by the masses. They're merely exaggerating. If you want to see my avatar, Brother Lu, that can be arranged."

The others looked at Sikong Beicheng. Who would have the opportunity to look at it during ordinary times? Who would dare to make that request? He was about to manifest his avatar when Zhu Xuan brought Yu Zhenghai into the hall.

"Temple Master, I've brought him here." After Zhu Xuan finished speaking, he kneeled on the ground.

Yu Zhenghai was in a daze during the journey here. He merely saw Zhu Xuan coming to him with an anxious expression as he brought him here. He entered the hall and looked up. If that was not his master whom he feared and respected the most, who else could it be? He immediately shivered as his eyes widened. He hurried over before he kneeled and kowtowed. "Greetings, master!"

The master and disciples were finally reunited, and it felt as though the world had turned upside down. If they were still in Great Yan, they would not have been filled with so many emotions. When he descended into the abyss, he was already prepared to die. When he saw the 200-foot avatar, he thought he would not be able to meet his master again or return to the Evil Sky Pavilion. He did not expect his master was here as well.

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Zhenghai. As always, he said calmly, "As long as you're alive. Get up."

"Eldest Senior Brother," Little Yuan'er and Conch greeted Yu Zhenghai.

Yu Zhenghai stood up and said excitedly, "Hello, Little Junior Sisters."

Sikong Beichen who was interrupted just as he was about to manifest his avatar said, "So, Zhu Xuan has truly treated your disciple well, Brother Lu."

Yu Zhenghai was stunned. 'Brother Lu? Why is this old man so polite? Why would someone like Zhu Xuan bow and bend his knees?'

Sikong Beichen said, "Well? Aren't you going to apologize to Brother Lu?"

Zhu Xuan crawled all the way over from the door and stopped in front of Lu Zhou before he kowtowed.

Sikong Beichen nodded. He looked at Lu Zhou and said, "Brother Lu, Zhu Xuan is still young. He doesn't know how to show restraint. Can you spare him on my account?"

"Senior, Zhu Xuan knows that he's wrong! Please spare me!" Zhu Xuan shook.

Yu Zhenghai was shocked by this.

Lu Zhou looked at Zhu Xuan and said, "On account of Sikong Beichen, I'll spare your life. However, I'll keep your Square Box as a punishment. Will you accept this?"

Zhu Xuan. "...". His mind went blank. The Square Box was an object he valued as much as his life. It had kept his company and helped him defeat numerous opponents. He successfully reached the Nine-leaf stage because of the Square Box. In the future, he might become one of the respected First Seats of the Ninth Temple. His future and potential would be unlimited. This was also the reason Sikong Beichen was trying so hard to preserve his life. How was he going to go on without his Square Box?

"Although Square Box is a desolate-grade treasure with a shocking defense, it doesn't have any offensive power. If you like it, Brother Lu, you can have it," Sikong Beichen said. Inwardly, he was puzzled. 'Why does Brother Lu need a useless weapon such as the Square Box with his cultivation base? Perhaps, he really intends to use it to punish Zhu Xuan.'

Zhu Xuan. "...".

Lu Zhou kept a straight face as he thought to himself, 'I don't like an item that can only take hits...'

Sikong Beichen added, "Aren't you going to thank Brother Lu?"

"Thank you, senior. Thank you, Brother Lu..."

"Hm?"

"Thank you, senior! Me and my useless tongue!" Zhu Xuan slapped himself. He was extremely frightened and nervous that he could not even talk properly.

The others were stunned.

"You're dismissed," Sikong Beichen snapped.

"Yes, yes, yes..." Zhu Xuan retreated respectfully. He no longer had the air of a Nine-leaf elite. This image was a shock to Yu Zhenghai as well. Throughout the time he spent in the Ninth Temple, Zhu Xuan had always acted like a lofty figure. His eyes were always looking up. At this moment, Zhu Xuan's image was completely destroyed.

Whether it was in Great Yan or the red lotus domain, they were but humans with flesh and bone. Nobody could overcome the weakness of humanity.

Yu Zhenghai was shocked. He remembered the shocking scene he saw earlier and hastily said, "Master... I saw a 200-foot palm seal earlier. That was..."

"Eldest Senior Brother, who else in the world would have such power apart from master?" Little Yuan'er said with a giggle.

'As expected, it was master.'

Sikong Beichen nodded and said, "Brother Lu has mastered the Birth Chart. It's not shocking for him to have such power."

Yu Zhenghai asked, puzzled, "What's a Birth Chart?"

Lu Zhou had been troubled about this, but he could not bring himself to ask about it. His disciple's question helped him solve the problem. His trip here was not a waste.

Chapter 750: The Path to a Long Life

Humans were curious creatures; Lu Zhou was not an exception to this. When he heard Sikong Beichen mentioning the Birth Chart earlier, he had been wondering what it was. Initially, he planned to ask Xia Changqiu after they left this place. However, Yu Zhenghai had voiced his thoughts out for him. 'Will you refuse to answer my disciple, Sikong Beichen?'

Naturally, Sikong Beichen would not refuse such a trivial question. In fact, he was rather invigorated. He now had the chance to draw attention to himself and talk about the Birth Chart in the presence of a Birth Chart elite. He was more than happy to answer Yu Zhenghai's question.

"Since humans began to cultivate, they've gone against the will of heavens. We've overcome hardships, obtained powers, and prolonged our lives. It's part of the cycle to be born, fall sick, and eventually, die. However, powerful cultivators are able to keep illnesses at bay and slow the aging process. Therefore, the path of cultivation is also known as the path of longevity," Sikong Beichen said. Then, he paused for a moment and cupped his fists together at Lu Zhou as he said, "Kindly correct me if I make any mistakes."

Lu Zhou nodded before he raised his hand and motioned for Sikong Beichen to continue.

Sikong Beichen continued to speak. "From the Body Tempering realm to the Divine Court realm, a cultivator could gain 500 years of life. In the Nascent Divinity realm, each leaf would grant the cultivator 100 years of life. From the Eight-leaf to the Nine-leaf stage, the cultivator would gain 200 years..."

All the realms before the Nascent Divinity realm were similar to the golden lotus domain. In the golden lotus domain, after the Nascent Divinity realm, every leaf would grant a cultivator 50 years of life. When the ninth leaf sprouted, those with a golden lotus would be granted 50 years for every leaf. Hence, every leaf would give those in the golden lotus domain 100 years as well.

"From the Nine-leaf to the Ten-leaf stage, the cultivator would gain 500 years."

Yu Zhenghai was puzzled. He asked, "Why did Zhu Xuan say that cultivators could live up to 3,000 years?" After careful calculations, he found Ten-leaf cultivators would only gain 2,000 years of life, not 3,000 years.

Sikong Beichen looked at Yu Zhenghai and said, "Perhaps, the taboo set by the gods is unique. The remaining 1,000 years of life can be gained from life hearts. Therefore, 3,000 years is the limit of a cultivator's life."

"What does this have to do with the Birth Chart?"

"Young man, have you ever thought about why the limit is 3,000 years. After all, cultivating is already going against the heavens' will since it prolongs our lives?"

Yu Zhenghai shook his head.

Sikong Beichen said, "By initiating the Birth Chart, one could overcome the limits of life. Two millennia ago, there was a predecessor who successfully activated his Birth Chart. However, he went missing after that. Ever since then, no one has managed to activate their Birth Charts." He paused for a beat before adding, "Birth Chart is the foundation for forming the Thousand Realms Whirling."

Apart from Lu Zhou, those who were unaware nodded when they heard this.

"If you think I missed anything, please feel free to add in, Brother Lu."

Lu Zhou's expression remained unchanged; he did not answer the question. 'Who knows if this 1,000-year-old fox lay a trap for me in his words? I won't make any mistake as long as I keep my mouth shut.'

Yu Zhenghai said, "It's no wonder there are no Thousand Realms Whirling here."

Sikong Beichen asked curiously, "Why did you recruit two golden lotus cultivators as your disciples, Brother Lu?" He did not suspect Lu Zhou's identity as well. After all, he had seen Lu Zhou's red lotus avatar with his own eyes. Regardless of all the evidence that was presented to him by the others, his judgment would not be swayed. Most grand cultivators, especially one like Sikong Beichen, were like dictators.

Lu Zhou replied, "These two have been with me since they were young. They're incredibly talented so I accepted them as my disciples. Initially, I cultivated the Buddhist Zen. There's a Buddhist saying that all life is equal and should be treated as such. There's no difference between golden lotuses and red lotuses. Not only do I have golden lotus cultivators as disciples, but I have a red lotus cultivator as a disciple as well." He paused for a moment and beckoned Conch over. "Conch, come here..."

Conch skipped over.

From the beginning until now, Sikong Beichen did not pay any attention to Lu Zhou's disciples at all. For him, Lu Zhou's attitude was the most important. When Conch appeared in front of him, his eyes lit up. He saw her dark shining eyes that were as clear as water. They complemented her delicate features. Most importantly, there was fluidity in her aura that was similar to water. He could tell she was a rare genius cultivator.

"Manifest your avatar," Lu Zhou said.

"Oh." Conch felt slightly awkward. Nevertheless, she obediently circulated her Primal Qi before manifesting her avatar.

Soon enough, a Two-leaf Hundred Tribulations Insight avatar appeared in front of everyone's eyes.

At this moment, the five First Seats had just entered the hall after completing their tasks. They were about to say their greetings when they saw Conch's avatar.

In the spacious and silent Holy Palace, that avatar's buzzing noise was not grating to the ears. Instead, it sounded rather pleasant. It was just like when Conch played the Lantian Jade Flute. Just like her smiles and frowns; they were all pleasant. She was destined to be gifted in the tune.

Sikong Beichen looked at the avatar and said in shock, "She's still young, but she's already a Two-leaf cultivator! She's bound to be a great cultivator in the future."

However, Conch disagreed with his words and replied, "Compared to Ninth Senior Sister, I'm nothing. Ninth Senior Sister is almost at the Eight-leaf stage..."

"..."

The others quickly shifted their gaze from Conch toward the other little girl, Little Yuan'er.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "These four are my disciples."

Yu Zhenghai, Yu Shangrong, Little Yuan'er, and Conch.

Zhu Xuan had always been curious about the kind of person who was the master of the two elites, Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong. After meeting the old man in front of him, the answer was clear.

Lu Zhou added, "You said that the people of the world can't form their Thousand Realms Whirling. Have you tried?"

Sikong Beichen nodded and said, "I've tried it countless times, but I've never succeeded... If I can see a Thousand Realms Whirling while I'm still alive, I won't have any regrets even if I die."

The First Seats fell on one knee upon hearing these words and said in unison, "Temple Master, you will live as long as the heavens!"

"Nobody in this world can live forever... Nobody knows where the path of longevity ends," Sikong Beichen said.

Lu Zhou was reminded of Jiang Wenxu's words: nobody can live forever.

After Sikong Beichen finished speaking, he cupped his fists together at Lu Zhou again before he flipped his palm up. A miniature appeared above his palm in just an instant. "Kindly give me your opinion."

Their avatars were similar. Apart from the Other Tribes, the cultivators in Great Yan and Great Tang had humanoid avatars.

The five First Seats looked at their temple master. They had never seen their temple master manifest his avatar for no good reason. Such a powerful person like their temple master was behaving like a student in front of the old man, waiting to be taught or corrected. However, when they recalled the shocking palm strike they had seen earlier, they felt it was not too shocking.

Everyone had skills they were good at. Those who were stronger were naturally superior. They had already verified Lu Zhou's profound cultivation base. There was no need for the weak to speak at this point.

This was Lu Zhou's first time seeing a Ten-leaf avatar up close. A red lotus bloomed under the red avatar's feet. Ten leaves could clearly be seen as they spun around the red lotus. The center of the lotus was as bright as blood while the outer layers were slightly more faded like red skies. Then ten blade-like lotus leaves that were as slender as swords were a sight to behold.

The Holy Palace remained silent.

Everyone watched respectfully as the two great cultivators discussed the path of cultivation. Those with working brains would not speak up for no good reason at this moment. Moreover, who knew if they would be enlightened from the conversation?

After a while, Yu Zhenghai broke the silence first. He looked at the red lotus and asked, "Can cultivators live longer than 3,000 years after activating their Birth Charts?"

Sikong Beichen nodded and said, "It's said that just by activating one Birth Chart will give the cultivator 500 years of life."

"There are more than one Birth Charts?" Yu Zhenghai was stunned by this revelation.

"You'll have to ask your master about this. I've cultivated for many years, but I haven't understood Birth Charts yet. I dare not display my meager knowledge in your master's presence," Sikong Beichen solemnly said. He was more than happy to answer Yu Zhenghai's question earlier because he had hoped the answer would lead to this point. He hoped to gain some insight about Birth Charts from Lu Zhou. Up until now, Lu Zhou had remained tightlipped about Birth Charts. However, he was not surprised. After all, Birth Charts were important; it was not something that could be casually taught to others.

Yu Zhenghai turned to look at his master and asked, "Master, how many Birth Charts are there?"

"..."

'First, let's give a general and vague answer using fine words...'

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and looked at Yu Zhenghai as he said, "Every cultivator has different talents. There are those who couldn't activate their Birth Charts even if they tried their entire lives, and then, there are also those who successfully activated their Birth Charts without meaning to. It's the same as sprouting leaves. Some tried their best but could only reach the Three-leaf or Five-leaf stage. Some could easily reach the Nine-leaf stage." After he finished answering the question, he turned to look at Sikong Beichen and asked, "Do you know why no one has managed to activate their Birth Charts over the last 2,000 years?"