

## Disciples 751

### Chapter 751: You'll Get Used to It

Sikong Beichen asked, "Is it because of the heaven and earth shackle?"

"The Sky Martial Court has researched the heaven and earth shackle for a long time, but they've yet to find an answer. The Sky Martial Court's intention to invade the golden lotus realm... Is it born out of selfishness or are they trying to find a way to break the heaven and earth shackle?" Lu Zhou said with a blank expression.

"Humans are greedy. The Ninth Temple's ideals are different from the Sky Martial Court and the Flying Star House. Throughout these years, the Sky Marital Court and the Flying Star House are experiencing a meteoric rise. Moreover, they have the support of the palace. There's nothing the Ninth Temple could do about them," Sikong Beichen said with a sigh.

In truth, the Ninth Temple had been working hard just to maintain itself. They did not have the leisure to think about the Sky Martial Court or the Flying Star House.

At this moment, Sikong Beichen fisted his hand, and his avatar vanished from sight. He said without beating around the bush, "If it's possible, the Ninth Temple wishes to work with you, Brother Lu."

It was difficult to find someone who would willingly talk to him about Birth Charts since they were so important. Therefore, Sikong Beichen gave up on that thought. However, he did not think it would be too difficult to strike a deal and work together.

The five First Seats simultaneously turned to look at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou's disciples shifted to him as well.

Lu Zhou's expression remained unchanged as he said, "Work together?"

"I understand with your cultivation base, there's no need for you to work with anyone. However, your talented disciples are slightly weak. Moreover, golden lotus cultivators are foreign tribesmen, and as such, they would be treated as hostiles. If they remain here, the Ninth Temple can guarantee their safety," Sikong Beichen said.

Little Yuan'er and Conch did not feel anything about Sikong Beichen calling them slightly weak. However, Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong were slightly displeased.

Yu Shangrong said, "I've always preferred to be alone. I've met countless strong enemies in the past, but I never needed anybody's help."

Yu Zhenhai chimed in as well, "I'm the master of a sect with 100,000 members. Why would I need protection from someone else?"

At this moment, the meaning of Sikong Beichen's words finally dawned on Little Yuan'er. She hurriedly said, "Junior Sister Conch and I will always follow master..."

"..."

At this moment, the Mystery Hall's First Seat, Zhang Shaoqing, said, "I heard from Zhu Xuan that this friend is highly skilled with the sword. I'd like to have a sparring session with him." He looked at Yu Shangrong as he spoke.

Lu Zhou understood Zhang Shaoqing's intention. Zhang Shaoqing wanted to display the Ninth Temple's strength.

In truth, the Ninth Temple was powerful enough with Sikong Beichen alone. However, one person was far from enough for the high-ranking members of the sect. A major sect's most important strength was its core.

Yu Shangrong had been itching for some action so he agreed readily, "Sure."

Sikong Beichen made an inviting gesture. "The young shouldn't overexert themselves when they're sparring. Brother Lu, do you want to watch?"

Lu Zhou was slightly puzzled. Yu Shangrong was only an Eight-leaf cultivator. How was he going to stand up against this early-stage Nine-leaf cultivator?

When Yu Shangrong was at the door of the Holy Palace, he bowed at Lu Zhou and said, "Don't worry, master."

Upon seeing how calm and confident Yu Shangrong was, Lu Zhou said, "Very well."

...

After a while, everyone gathered outside the Holy Palace. It was a very spacious spot in the building. At this moment, they seemed to have forgotten that Chen Beizheng had been killed here earlier.

Yu Shangrong and Zhang Shaoqing were hovering in the air, a distance away from each other, as they cupped their fists together at each other.

Zhang Shaoqing said, "Since you're an Eight-leaf cultivator, sir, I'll fight using strength at the Eight-leaf stage."

"There's no need for that. You might lose even if you use your Nine-leaf strength..."

"..."

Yu Shangrong was as confident as always.

"After you."

After these words fell, both opponents drew their swords and moved with a flurry of movements. Their blades crossed when they met in the middle.

Bam!

There were no extravagant and ostentatious energy swords or techniques during their first collision.

Both of their backs were turned toward each other at this moment.

The insider knew the ropes while the outsider just came along for the ride.

"They're testing each other," Yu Zhenghai commented.

Sikong Beichen wondered out loud, "You're skilled with the sword as well?"

"I don't know much about the sword, but I'm skilled with the saber... The way I see it, the sword is for little men. It's not as majestic as the saber. Men should be more imposing," Yu Zhenghai said.

"..."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he looked ahead and said, "This disciple of mine has always been proud. You'll get used to it."

Sikong Beichen merely felt that the young ones were filled with hot blood and did not think too much of it. However, he wondered what kind of disciples were they, to the extent that their master had gotten used to their behavior?

Meanwhile, the two opponents turned around and struck again.

There was a flash of light as golden energy and red energy collided.

Lu Zhou noticed that Yu Shangrong's Longevity Sword was no longer glowing red.

Bam! Bam! Bam.

Several hundred energy swords collided as the two opponents retreated.

"That's the Traceless Sword," Yu Zhenghai remarked, "If I'm up against this technique of my junior brother, I'd push him back using thunderous saber blows with the force of the ocean."

Little Yuan'er and Conch looked at Yu Zhenghai strangely. Their expressions seemed to say: Eldest Senior Brother, are you a spy sent by the enemy?"

"Uh... I couldn't help myself." Yu Zhenghai understood Yu Shangrong's sword techniques very well. If he claimed second place, nobody would dare to claim the first place.

Sikong Beichen said, "The sword consciousness is difficult to grasp. Indeed, it's a good idea to counter it with a tidal wave of energy sabers to catch."

The four First Seats were shocked that their temple master agreed with Yu Zhenghai.

Zhu Xuan looked up with an incredulous expression on his face. He was surprised that Zhang Shangqing, a Nine-leaf cultivator, had not won yet despite fighting against an Eight-leaf cultivator. He could tell Yu Shangrong was much stronger than before.

Zhang Shaoqing shared the same thoughts as Zhu Xuan. A Nine-leaf cultivator should be able to defeat an Eight-leaf cultivator in a short time. If the battle dragged out for a long time, even if he won, it would not be a dignified victory. Hence, he said loudly, "Sir, be careful. The victor would be determined with the next strike."

After Zhang Shaoqing finished speaking, he wielded his sword with both hands and rose high up into the sky. His Primal Qi turned to energy before a dazzling red energy sword more than 10 meters long

appeared in his hand. At the same time, a red lotus appeared and bloomed under his feet. Nine inconspicuous leaves spun around it. It was clear he was no longer holding back.

Yu Shangrong looked up. He did not move as he wielded his Longevity Sword in a reverse grip. He did not move.

Meanwhile, Yu Zhenghai looked at his Second Junior Brother with a puzzled expression. He remembered their intense battle with Ma Luping in Yu Province. After a moment, he said confidently, "Second Junior Brother has won." Although he did not know the specifics, based on the victorious expression on Yu Shangrong's face, he had no doubt about Yu Shangrong's victory.

Sikong Beichen was a Ten-leaf elite, and yet, he did not see anything that indicated Yu Shangrong's victory. How could a junior be so confident about the result? "Are you sure, little friend?"

"That's how Second Junior Brother's sword path has always been... The path of the sword turns the impossible into something possible. It can turn the rotten into a legend," Yu Zhenghai said. After a beat, as though he could not help himself, he added, "Naturally... it's still weaker than my saber."

The First Seats. "..."

Yu Zhenghai's words were rather irritating.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and placed one hand on his back as he said with a straight face, "You'll get used to it."

Sikong Beichen. "..."

'Is he truly an elite who has activated his Birth Chart?'

Meanwhile, Zhang Shaoqing who was hovering in the sky was not affected by Yu Zhenghai's words. In his opinion, Yu Zhenghai's words were meant to affect him mentally. He wielded his swords with both hands and said, "Mysteries within mysteries; the gates of all wonders. You won't be able to dodge this."

The energy sword descended.

As the Nine-leaf Zhang Shaoqing brought his sword down, Yu Shangrong felt danger locking onto him. If he was an Eight-leaf cultivator, there was no doubt he would lose. He smiled as he loosened his right hand's grip. After the Longevity Sword flew out of his hand, he summoned his avatar.

Whizz!

An avatar without a golden lotus with its palms facing the heavens joined its palms together.

Bam!

It caught the energy sword between its palms.

Yu Shangrong leaped out as his Longevity Sword flew back into his hand. His other golden leaves spun around him before shooting toward his opponent at lightning speed.

"No!" Zhang Shaoqing's expression changed drastically as he forcibly withdrew his energy sword. He raised it up before himself to block Yu Shangrong's strike.

In just a blink of an eye, Yu Shangrong was upon Zhang Shaoqing with his energy sword. "You lose."

The remaining eight golden leaves shot past Zhang Shaoqing and returned to Yu Shangrong.

The final golden leaf split into two before they disappeared.

### **Chapter 752: The Highest Sword Path**

The battle was not as intense as everyone had imagined. The outcome was decided after just a few rounds.

The energy swords that resembled lotus leaves shot past Zhang Shaoqing's body. If they had been half an inch closer, he would have been injured. He could hardly accept this outcome. He was annoyed that he, a Nine-leaf cultivator, lost to an Eight-leaf cultivator. Apart from that, he did not understand why his opponent lacked a golden lotus. Regardless, this was a great insult to him. If anyone else were in his shoes, they would not be able to accept this outcome as well. Therefore, he said gruffly in a booming voice, "Again!"

The Longevity Sword returned to its scabbard.

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly. "I'm not used to sparring. If this were an actual battle, you would've lost your life to my blade. Why is there a need for a rematch?"

"You! I don't care! I want a rematch!" Zhang Shaoqing's sword buzzed.

Yu Shangrong ignored Zhang Shaoqing and returned to the others. Since the outcome was obvious, it would be boring and meaningless to continue sparring.

Yu Shangrong's indifferent attitude naturally angered Zhang Shao Qing. In just a blink of an eye, thousands upon thousands of energy swords appeared around him, and he launched them at Yu Shangrong's back.

"Impudent!" Sikong Beichen waved his arm. A gust of wind blew out, dispersing the energy swords and sending Zhang Shaoqing flying.

Zhang Shaoqing flipped in the air a few times before he finally managed to stabilize his footing. At this moment, a frightened expression could be seen on his face. This move from his temple master was akin to being drenched by a bucket of cold water. He finally regained his senses. As a Nine-leaf cultivator, how could he have made such a stupid mistake? He hastily said, "Forgive me, Temple Master! I... I... I..." His face flushed as he struggled to find the words to explain his actions.

The five First Seats were not young. It was unbecoming that one of them would act like a child upon losing. It would not have been a big deal if Zhang Shaoqing had just gracefully admitted defeat. With his action, not only did he lose the battle, but he had lost his dignity as well.

Saying that, regardless of their age, in front of Lu Zhou and Sikong Beichen, they were not different from youths.

"You're grounded for one month. Face the wall and reflect on your mistake." Although Sikong Beichen had spoken calmly, it was not any less stern.

Lu Zhou said, "It's part of a soldier's life to win and lose. It's good that the young are competitive since this will help them improve. However, you shouldn't be blinded by your desire to win"

Sikong Beichen nodded. "Well? Aren't you going to thank Brother Lu?"

"Thank you, old senior, for your magnanimity. I... I'm ashamed of myself..." Zhang Shaoqing felt thoroughly embarrassed. He trembled slightly from the overwhelming emotion as he descended.

Yu Shangrong's gaze remained indifferent. He looked at the sky as he said, "There are four levels of the sword path. The commoner's sword can be used by anyone. The lord's sword is branded by bravery. The son of heaven's sword rectifies the vassals and makes the lands submit. The final level, the sword of creation, is a swordless path. Although your sword strike was powerful, you underestimated your opponent. If I'm not mistaken, you must not have experienced many life-or-death situations." Without waiting for Zhang Shaoqing's reply, he continued to say, "Your sword strikes lack the understanding of life and death. It lacks killing intent."

Only the elites who lived on the sword's edge would understand the gravity of each sword strike.

Upon hearing these words, realization dawned on Zhang Shaoqing. He cupped his fists together at Yu Shangrong and said, "I'm enlightened." Indeed, he did not have much experience with life-or-death situations. As the current First Seat of the Ninth Temple, he was only in charge of the Mystery Hall after all. He rarely went out.

Yu Shangrong said no more.

Meanwhile, Sikong Beichen found the explanation interesting. He said, "This is my first time hearing that the sword is divided into four levels. Young man, what level is your sword path?"

Yu Shangrong replied, "My sword path is only at the second level. I like competitions and bravery. I'm shackled by myself. I'm afraid I won't be able to have a breakthrough..."

Lu Zhou looked at Yu Shangrong with no changes in his expression. He was as steady as an old dog as he thought to himself, 'I came up with that spontaneously... It seems like I have no choice but to go along with it...'

Sikong Beichen nodded as he asked, "Your sword path is superior to Zhang Shaoqing's, but it's only at the second level?"

Yu Shangrong nodded. "There's no end to the path of the sword."

At this moment, the sun was setting, and the night breeze began to stir.

The Peace Hall's First Seat, Yao Qingquan, bowed and said, "Temple Master, I'll prepare the Daoist veins and tidy up."

"No." Sikong Beichen raised a hand.

"Temple Master?"

Sikong Beichen pushed away from the ground and rose into the air as though he was light as a willow. Then, a lotus with ten leaves bloomed as an avatar appeared before disappearing again.

The beasts in the sky were in a frenzy as though they had just seen a delicious meal. All of them charged forward.

The members of Ninth Temple were not worried about Sikong Beichen's safety at all. After all, their temple master had intentionally attracted the beasts' attention.

Nevertheless, the beasts' number had exceeded their expectations. There were so many of them that it seemed like they had covered the sky.

To the beasts, a Ten-leaf cultivator was even more delicious than a Nine-leaf cultivator. Sikong Beichen was undoubtedly an attractive and mouth-watering prey.

When the beasts were almost upon Sikong Beichen, he raised two fingers. An energy sword materialized between his fingers as he swung his arm. In just a blink of an eye, countless energy swords descended like snow and pierced the beasts' bodies.

The speed at which they fell was neither fast nor slow.

Lu Zhou suddenly felt that Sikong Beichen's energy swords had been intentionally slowed down. The speed at which the beasts flew and the timing of the swords' descent seemed rehearsed due to the precision of the swords.

The others were shocked by this sight.

Even Yu Shangrong could not help but exclaim, "Is this the sword path of a Ten-leaf cultivator?"

Sikong Beichen asked, "In your opinion, what level is my sword path?"

Yu Shangrong was not stingy with his praise as he said, "The son of heaven's sword."

There were not many in the world who could earn Yu Shangrong's praise.

Sikong Beichen condensed the Primal Qi in his surroundings into energy without any weapons, but with his two fingers. This feat alone was enough to make the world submit. He raised his right and said in confusion, "Shouldn't it be the sword of creation?"

Sikong Beichen was the Temple Master of the Ninth Temple, after all. He had always been praised as peerless. It was only natural that he expected his sword path to be at the highest level. How could he not be confused when Yu Shangrong said his sword path was only at the third level?

The wind blew harder now, and its roar grew louder as well. Nevertheless, it did not impede their conversation.

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly. "Everything can be used as a sword in the swordless path. Even one's finger can be used."

It was difficult enough to form energy swords without a weapon. If one was not allowed to use anything at all, it would be even more difficult.

Sikong Beichen nodded. He found this reasonable. "The path of cultivation begins by channeling Primal Qi into one's body and condensing energy from it. Primal Qi is also a thing. In that case, nobody in the world can reach the swordless path. Brother Lu..."

When Sikong Beichen shifted his eyes to Lu Zhou, he saw Lu Zhou staring ahead at an empty space with a sparkle in his eyes.

The five First Seats, Xia Changqiu, and Tian Buji followed Sikong Beichen's gaze and looked at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou was no longer stroking his beard. One of his hands was on his back while the other hand was before himself. He seemed to have frozen over.

"Master?" Little Yuan'er noticed that something was amiss so she approached her master and tugged at his robe lightly.

However, Lu Zhou did not respond to Little Yuan'er.

It had to be said that Little Yuan'er was the only one who was bold enough to tug on Lu Zhou's robe. She stood in front of him and jumped a little since she was shorter as she called out, "Master?"

The beasts in the skies were cawing.

Yao Qingquan said again, "I'll go and activate the Daoist veins."

Sikong Beichen looked at the beasts in the air with a fierce gaze as he nodded. After that, he slowly descended.

"Brother Lu?" Sikong Beichen nodded slightly.

"Ding! You've comprehended a new sword path, Calm Disturbance."

### **Chapter 753: The Nine-leaf Yu Zhenghai**

What good would come from learning from books or training with the sword? One could never compare with the brave warriors at the borders. If smokes of war suddenly rose at the borders, who among the scholars would dare to go and quell the disturbance?

When the beasts of the sky drew close, they saw wind morphing into swords next to the Holy Palace. In just a moment, the icy blades tore their flesh and pierced their bones.

The others were shocked when they saw this.

"What happened?" Yao Qingyuan, who had yet to leave, exclaimed in shock when he saw the beasts being killed by the wind swords.

The beasts fell from the sky one after another.

The strong wind continued to blow as the wind swords raged on. They were like a tidal wave that pushed the beasts back.

The others might not understand what was going on, but how could Sikong Beichen not know what was going on? His eyebrows were knitted together as he stared at Lu Zhou. He could see a faint energy around Lu Zhou that stirred up the strong wind and controlled the Primal Qi. Only an expert would know what a difficult feat this was. He immediately cupped his fists at Lu Zhou and said, "All creations can be used as a sword. The swordless path... I'm enlightened..."



With these words, realization finally dawned on the five First Seats. "I see, it's the old senior making a move."

Yu Shangrong knew that his master was highly skilled with the sword. However, this feat had shocked him as well.

Even Yu Zhenghai, who did not know much about the sword, knew this was an amazing feat. "Wonderful! Truly wonderful!"

The beasts in the sky finally seemed frightened as they fled swiftly from the Ninth Temple.

As the sky regained its silence, everyone was still in shock.

At this moment, Lu Zhou finally regained his senses. 'Is this the new sword path, Calm Disturbance?'

Lu Zhou did not know he suddenly fell into a trance. When he was in a trance, he had swiftly comprehended the wonders of the sword path. When his mind was in haze, he felt as though all creations had become one. The wind itself was Primal Qi and a weapon.

Sikong Beichen said, "Brother Lu, you've mastered the swordless path... Looks like there won't be a second person under the heavens who will be able to comprehend to such a wonderful stage like you."

Lu Zhou made a note to himself. 'Before I fall into a trance again in the future, I'll have to ensure my own safety first.' After that, he replied to Sikong Beichen, "It's nothing."

Sikong Beichen said, "Brother Lu, since we appreciate each other's talents, why don't you stay in the Holy Palace? Won't it be wonderful to spend our days drinking wine and discussing the sword?"

"I have other matters to attend to. Let's leave discussions of the sword for another time."

Sikong Beichen seemed disappointed as he said, "In that case, I won't force you to stay... However, it's getting late now. There are many beasts in the wild. It's best if you leave tomorrow. What do you say about talking through the night with me?"

"..."

'Is this old geezer a pervert?' Lu Zhou shook his head again. "The Ninth Temple is fine, but I like the Thousand Willow Monastery better. The beasts can't threaten me."

Sikong Beichen was further disappointed when he heard these words. Even if a huge beast were to show up, a cultivator who had activated his Birth Chart would be able to deal with it, let alone these ordinary beasts. "What a shame..."

Lu Zhou waved his arm and said, "I'll be staying in the Thousand Willow Monastery. Farewell."

Sikong Beichen cupped his fists. "If there's anything you need, Brother Lu, just send me a letter. I'll personally receive any correspondence from you."

Lu Zhou did not dally and left the Holy Palace.

The others cupped their fists as well before they followed Lu Zhou and flew toward where they had parked the flying chariot.

The five First Seats flew out as well to see them off.

After they left, Zhu Xuan staggered before he sat limply on the ground. His back was drenched in cold sweat.

Sikong Beichen knew Zhu Xuan was extremely terrified, and that was why Zhu Xuan did not follow the others. He waved his hand and looked at Zhu Xuan resentfully as he said, "Your life was saved by the Square Box. I won't blame you for today's matter. If this happened to someone else, the outcome would've been different."

Upon hearing this, Zhu Xuan hastily kowtowed as he said, "Thank you, Temple Master. Thank you for your mercy!"

"Go and pick another weapon for yourself."

"Understood." Zhu Xuan respectfully left the Holy Palace.

Sikong Beichen looked at the leaving Zhu Xuan as he sighed inwardly. The Ninth Temple was having trouble with finding successors. He felt helpless. He returned to the hall and sat with a straight back, seemingly lost in his thoughts. For what seemed like hours, he kept muttering to himself, "Can I activate my Birth Chart?"

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In the Blood Sun Temple on Blood Sun Mountain.

At this moment, the Blood Sun Temple's abbot, Fa Hua, was knocking on the wooden fish. All of sudden, he stopped moving when he saw a pebble-sized gem on the table shatter.

"Amitabha..." Fa Hua sighed before he continued knocking on the wooden fish.

...

Meanwhile, in the Political Announcement Hall in Great Tang Palace.

"Your Majesty, the Great General of the North, Chen Beizheng, has passed away during his mission," a eunuch said respectfully from the other side of the screen.

After a long pause, a voice rang from the other side. "Leave this matter to the Sky Martial Court. I'm tired."

"Understood."

...

The flying chariot left Ninth Temple.

The five First Seats bowed at the same time. "Safe journey, old senior."

Lu Zhou stood before the helm and looked ahead.

Xia Changqiu manned the helm and said, "I didn't expect that you're able to kill Chen Beizheng with a single palm strike, old senior!"

Lu Zhou was already immune to such brainless flattery so he remained unaffected.

"Allow me." Yu Zhenghai said as he walked to the helm.

"Uh..." Xia Changqiu was slightly hesitant.

"When will we reach Thousand Willow Monastery if you pilot the flying chariot? My master fought a Ten-leaf cultivator and had to deal with Sikong Beichen for such a long time; he's tired. We don't have time for you to waste here." Yu Zhenghai did not mince his words.

"..." Xia Changqiu stepped aside.

After Yu Zhenghai took over, the speed increased several times immediately.

Little Yuan'er covered her mouth and giggled. "See? I told you! Didn't I say if my Eldest Senior Brother is around, you won't have a chance to man the helm? Moreover, my Eldest Senior Brother is a professional at manning the helm."

Yu Zhenghai turned to look at Little Yuan'er. If anyone else had said that about him, he would have been angry. However, he only smiled as he said, "Little Junior Sister, I know many more things. Manning the helm is only one of them. Keep your eyes peeled, I can make this thing go faster..."

Whizz!

He unleashed his Primal Qi unreservedly. It wrapped around the entire flying chariot as it turned into energy. In just a moment, it looked as though a shiny oval glass was containing the flying chariot. After that, the flying chariot sped forward like a bullet.

Xua Changqiu and Tian Buji. "..."

Lu Zhou glanced at Yu Zhenghai and said, "Your cultivation base has improved a lot while you were in the Ninth Temple."

Yu Zhenghai nodded and said, "It was boring in the Ninth Temple; I had nothing to do but cultivate. I could've reached the Nine-leaf stage a long time ago, but I was afraid it would be interrupted by those people. Therefore, I stopped after sprouting half a leaf."

Xia Changqiu was speechless.

"Eight-and-a-half-leaf?" Lu Zhou asked.

"I'm sorry for this embarrassing progress, master."

"You did well," Lu Zhou said, "Although the Ninth Temple wants to work with me, it's merely a relationship built on benefits. Before I appeared, Sikong Beichen and the people from the Ninth Temple were unaware of my strength. Indeed, if you've attempted the Nine-leaf stage there, they might sabotage or even kill you."

The others nodded.

"You're right, master."

“Attempt the Nine-leaf stage when we return. It’s difficult to reach the Nine-leaf stage with a golden lotus. You should prepare yourself,” Lu Zhou said.

“As you wish, master.”

#### **Chapter 754: Reaching the Nine-leaf Stage**

Yu Shangrong remained calm upon hearing these words. In fact, he felt a sense of superiority. Only weaklings would need help. He, on the other hand, reached the Nine-leaf stage without anyone’s help. The masses should be able to clearly see this.

Yu Shangrong stood with his arms crossed as he stared ahead indifferently. He was, naturally, not admiring the scenery. He was in fact thinking about his master’s move earlier, creating swords out of anything, and the swordless path. With his mastery of the sword, he should have been able to understand his master’s move even if he could not recreate it. His master’s move had made him doubt himself greatly.

He could not understand his master’s technique at all. He understood using creation to form swords. Whether it was the Longevity Sword, a wooden sword, a branch, or a leaf, all of them could be used to kill with enough skills. The second level of the sword path could be achieved as long as one had precise control over Primal Qi. The third level of the sword path needed someone with broad knowledge and perspective, an imposing aura, a desire to find out the truth of the world, and the ability to rule the lands. The only level he could not understand was the fourth level. Like seawater, Primal Qi was the source of power. When cultivators used Primal Qi, it was as though they were swimming in the sea while using the water around themselves. ‘How am I supposed to control Primal Qi from a distance?’

The flying chariot was quick. The wind roared outside of Yu Zhenghai’s cocoon of energy.

Yu Shangrong could not help but close his eyes. He tried to circulate the Primal Qi outside the energy cocoon. However, there were no movements at all. It was as though the energy supply had been cut off from him. He tried again. Apart from the Primal Qi around him, he could not feel anything further away. He failed again.

Lu Zhou looked over at this moment. He stroked his beard and said, “Your sword path is only the lords’ sword. Are you trying to reach the heavens at one go? Are you trying to skip the son of heaven’s sword?”

Yu Shangrong regained his senses; an awkward expression could be seen on his face. He was too obsessed with the sword path and forgot that he was still on the flying chariot.

Yu Zhenghai said, “I understand that you’re fascinated with the sword path, Second Junior Brother.”

Lu Zhou said tonelessly, “If I’m not mistaken, you’re already at the Nine-leaf stage.”

Yu Shangrong did not deny Lu Zhou’s words.

The others were not particularly shocked when they heard these words.

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji nodded. Perhaps, they had been shocked by Lu Zhou too many times today that they remained calm when they heard this revelation. After all, Yu Shangrong had defeated Zhang

Shaoqing earlier. It would be nothing but a dream for an Eight-leaf cultivator to defeat a Nine-leaf cultivator. For this reason, Lu Zhou's revelation did not shock them.

On the other hand, Yu Zhenghai was slightly surprised. In the end, he said, "If I didn't go to the Ninth Temple, I would've become a Nine-leaf cultivator as well."

Nobody entertained Yu Zhenghai.

Lu Zhou continued to say, "You're limited by your Longevity Sword. That shackle is too heavy. If you wish to reach a higher sword path, you'll have to break free of that shackle. You're still far away from the swordless path. You shouldn't bite off more than you can chew. Cultivate the son of heaven's sword. Nothing is above the son of heaven's sword, and nothing can stop it from striking. Nothing can stand in its way. Swing upward, it cuts through the clouds. Swing downward, it slices through the ground. This sword can redress the lords and make the lands submit."

Yu Shangrong looked at his Longevity Sword. Indeed, the sword was the only thing he relied on. It was all thanks to the sword that he had lived this long. The people of the Noblemen Nation were short-lived by nature. How was he supposed to overcome this hurdle? He muttered to himself, "The son of heaven's sword..."

Lu Zhou initially planned to use a Shining Stone on the Longevity Sword. However, after he saw Yu Shangrong's reliance on it, he gave up on that thought. Perhaps, he should temporarily confiscate the Longevity Sword and let Yu Shangrong wield a wooden sword.

At this moment, Yu Zhenghai pointed at the Thousand Willow Mountain and said, "Master, we're here."

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji remained silent the entire trip. When they regained their senses, they were surprised when they saw the Thousand Willow Mountain up ahead.

"To think that your mastery of manning the helm has reached such heights, Brother Yu. I'm truly impressed." Xia Changqiu changed the way he addressed Yu Zhenghai.

Yu Zhenghai glanced at Xia Changqiu and said, "It's nothing..."

The flying chariot flew into the range of the Formation veins in just a blink of an eye.

Lu Zhou could clearly sense that the Thousand Willow Monastery's Formation veins were much weaker than the Ninth Temple's.

The disciples of the Thousand Willow Monastery came out to welcome them.

After the flying chariot landed, Xia Changqiu ordered his disciples to be hospitable to the guests. They were not to neglect the guests.

The disciples tidied up the best quarters in the Thousand Willow Monastery for them.

Tian Buji understood that they were giving them plenty of consideration for refusing the Ninth Temple's offer and choosing to stay here instead.

Wuwu and Ji Fengxing greeted Yu Shangrong when they saw him. They could tell that he was troubled so they did not bother him and left after they had greeted him.

...

Night fell.

Lu Zhou looked at the system dashboard.

Merit points: 23,440.

“Chen Beizheng only gave me 7,000 merit points...”

‘What a loss.’

The Deadly Strike Card and Disguise Card alone cost 25,000 merit points. Fortunately, he had the Heavenly Writing’s extraordinary power. Otherwise, he would have to make great efforts to defeat the five First Seats with his Nine-leaf karmic fire alone. Apart from Conch’s surprising performance, everything else had fallen within his expectations.

Lu Zhou looked at the item column again. As he expected, although Thousand Realms Whirling was priced at 500,000 merit points, it was dim.

“I can’t purchase it?” Lu Zhou frowned. ‘How annoying! I know I’m poor, but can’t I even check it out?’

After a while, he recalled the Birth Chart that Sikong Beichen mentioned. ‘Perhaps, I’ll have to reach the Ten-leaf stage first.’

According to the ordinary cultivating progress, after reaching the Ten-leaf stage and forming the Thousand Realms Whirling avatar, he would be in the Mysterious Heaven realm.

‘I don’t think Xia Changqiu knows anything about Birth Charts. Even someone like Sikong Beichen doesn’t know much about it... According to Sikong Beichen, there’s almost no one who truly understands Birth Charts in the red lotus domain,’ Lu Zhou thought to himself as he shook his head. The path of cultivation was long. The hasty would not be able to eat hot tofu.

In the end, Lu Zhou entered his meditative state.

...

The second morning.

Lu Zhou did not stop meditating. It seemed like his meditation speed had increased.

At midday, he had already replenished one-third of his extraordinary power. In addition to the extraordinary power he did not use, he currently had about half of his extraordinary power.

He finally stopped meditating at this time and left the courtyard.

The disciples from the Thousand Willow Monastery were busying themselves in the courtyard at this moment. When they saw him, they greeted in unison, “Greetings, old senior.”

“Carry on.” Lu Zhou looked at the sun before he asked about Yu Zhenghai’s whereabouts.

The disciple immediately said, “I’ll bring you there, old senior... Please follow me.”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded.

When they were in the corridor, the disciple asked tentatively, "O-old senior... a-are you still accepting disciples?"

"Hm?"

Ever since Ji Fengxing became an inner disciple, he was very popular. When the other disciples saw him, they would flatter him. The incident where Ji Fengxing had rejected the old senior was often mentioned. For this reason, many disciples praised him.

Nevertheless, Ji Fengxing might have turned the old senior down, but there were many disciples who wanted to join the old senior.

"I... I want to join the Evil Sky Pavilion," the disciple said timidly.

Lu Zhou glanced at the disciple and said, "You're far from adequate with your qualities."

"..." The disciple could not help but feel disappointed. He scratched his head as he led Lu Zhou to Yu Zhenghai. He thought about Ji Fengxing and could not figure out how he was any worse than Ji Fengxing.

...

At Yu Zhenghai's courtyard.

Little Yuan'er and Conch were in the courtyard as well.

Upon seeing Lu Zhou, Little Yuan'er said, "Master, you came just in time. Eldest Senior Brother is trying to sprout the leaf now. He keeps saying he doesn't need any help, and he can't do it on his own."

At this moment, Xia Changqiu, Tian Buji, and the other elders flew over from the Fair Hall as well.

Primal Qi was surging above the courtyard.

Lu Zhou looked up and said, "Prepare to defend against the beasts."

Xia Changqiu nodded. "Elders of Thousand Willow Monastery, follow me."

"Understood."

Xia Changqiu and the elders flew toward the periphery of the Thousand Willow Monastery and stood guard.

Lu Zhou stepped into the room and saw Yu Zhenghai sitting in the center of the room. There was a golden avatar slowly spinning in front of Yu Zhenghai.

Yu Zhenghai did not watch his master demonstrating the way to reach the Nine-leaf stage. Would he be able to smoothly reach the Nine-leaf stage?

## **Chapter 755: Replenishing Longevity**

"Master, why don't you let Junior Sister Conch chase the beasts away?" Little Yuan'er asked.

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Although Conch can easily control countless beasts, those beasts are different from those that want a taste of human flesh. These beasts are more difficult to control."

Conch's cultivation base isn't profound enough to deal with them yet. Even if she can block those flying beasts, she would need to be a Nine-leaf cultivator if she wants to deal with huge beasts."

Whether it was manman, Qiong Qi, or Chi Yao, they were not targets that cultivators below the Eight-leaf stage could deal with.

"Oh." Little Yuan'er turned and said to Conch, "Junior Sister Conch, you'll have to work harder."

Conch nodded and said, "Mhm... Ninth Senior Sister, I think I reached the Three-leaf stage last night."

"..." Lu Zhou was slightly taken aback. He turned to look at Conch for a moment before returning his attention back to Yu Zhenghai. A slight frown could be seen on his face; he had just remembered an important problem.

Yu Zhenghai once consumed half of Chi Yao's Heart and a red fish heart. This meant he had 700 years of life. With the remaining half of Chi Yao's Heart, he would have 1,300 years in total. If he was the same as Lu Zhou, would he not die if the golden lotus absorbed more life than he had?

"Chi Yao's Heart," Lu Zhou reminded.

Yu Zhenghai nodded. He took Chi Yao's Heart and consumed it.

The golden lotus spun at a terrifying speed.

"Xia Changqiu," Lu Zhou said gruffly.

Xia Changqiu immediately hurried over. Upon seeing the situation, he knew it was an emergency. "What is it, old senior?"

"Do you have a life heart?"

"Uh..." Xia Changqiu hesitated briefly.

"I won't mistreat you." Lu Zhou raised his hand and extended it in front of Xia Changqiu.

Xia Changqiu gave it some thought. Then, he gritted his teeth and said, "Alright... One moment, old senior."

In truth, the number of years a golden lotus absorbed was not fixed. Lu Zhou only wanted the life heart in case of an emergency. They could not afford to be reckless about reaching the Nine-leaf stage.

Shortly after, Xia Changqiu returned and presented a brocade box respectfully. "This is Ao Yu's Heart. 100 years ago, we obtained it by a stroke of luck when we followed the Flying Star House and the Sky Martial Court into the Black Water Mystic Cave."

"Black Water Mystic Cave?"

"It's a long story. In any case, strange noises had been coming from the cave for months. However, no one dared to get close due to the manmans. At that time, I was only an inner disciple of the Thousand Willow Monastery whom nobody cared about. I put my life on the line and ventured into the Black Water Mystic Cave on my own, but I didn't dare to go far. After that, my master obtained this item in the black water and gave it to me."



"You're truly fortunate." Many Eight and Nine-leaf cultivators did not receive such treatments.

After Lu Zhou received Ao Yu's Heart, he observed Yu Zhenghai for any abnormal changes as he waited.

...

Meanwhile, in the southern pavilion of the Evil Sky Pavilion in the golden lotus domain.

Si Wuya sat in front of a stack of books and paper. He had been so engrossed with drawing that he looked like a caveman now.

Mingshi Yin played with the Separation Hook as he said confidently, "You're worried for nothing. There's nothing to fear; I'm here..."

"I'm just preparing for the worst. You have outstanding strength, Fourth Senior Brother, and there won't be any problem with facing the beasts. However, what if a beast such as Qiong Qi were to appear or a karmic fire cultivator like Fa Kong?" Si Wuya asked.

"Master has gone to the red lotus domain. Everything would be fine once he demonstrates his strength to deter those from the red lotus domain from having any unwanted thoughts toward the golden lotus domain."

"If the red lotus domain is so easily dealt with, master would've been back by now." Si Wuya grabbed a scroll of calligraphy and a map at the side. He turned 180 degrees as he said, "I discovered something new."

Mingshi Yin did not like these things. However, due to his ego, he had to take a look at it. He read aloud, "The bright moon shines over the sea; from far away, we share this moment together?"

"The first nine words are characters taken from all our names," Si Wuya said.

Mingshi Yin stroked his chin and looked at it again. He nodded before he said, "I say, I didn't know master has such taste. He sure knows how to pick his disciples. In that case, all that's left is this 'shi'. However, Junior Sister Conch's name doesn't have the word 'shi'."

Si Wuya picked the paper up again and wrote: Luo Shiyin.

Mingshi Yin was shocked. He asked, "Is this a coincidence? Are you saying Junior Sister Conch is Luo Shiyin?"

Si Wuya said, "I'm not sure yet. However, based on the notes Luo Shiyin left behind, Luo Shiyin and Luo Xuan might not be the same person. The notes were written by a single person. Her research, explorations, and discoveries could hardly be faked. Three centuries have passed. If Conch is Luo Shiyin, according to her cultivation base, she should be an old woman. Junior Sister Conch is skilled in music, the tongue of beasts, and entered the Nascent Divinity realm in such a short time. Moreover, she's only 16."

"Is she a Wuqian like Eldest Senior Brother?" Mingshi Yin asked.

"I don't think so. I've been with Eldest Senior Brother for many years. I know what the attributes of the Wuqi tribe are like." Si Wuya shook his head.

“A monster?”

“There are three possibilities. First, Conch is indeed a rare genius. Second, Luo Shiyin is Luo Xuan’s descendant and inherited Luo Xuan’s research. There’s an important point in the notes: Luo Xuan returned to the red lotus domain more than a decade ago. However, the records of the final decade or so were written in Luo Xuan’s name. Third, Conch is a spy sent from the red lotus domain.”

“...” Mingshi Yin felt slightly light-headed with these revelations. He had difficulty believing this. “I can believe the second possibility, but the third one is clearly...”

“It’s difficult to tell what’s on a person’s mind,” Si Wuya said as he lifted his head to meet Mingshi Yin’s gaze.

“Save it. You’re smart, I’ll give you that... but you’re too full of yourself sometimes. I’m going out to get some fresh air.” Mingshi Yin turned around and left, closing the door behind him.

After Mingshi Yin left, Si Wuya sighed and shook his head. He looked at the diagram under the poem for a long time before he murmured, “Actually, there’s another possibility... Junior Sister Conch might’ve come from somewhere more terrifying. Perhaps... Luo Shiyin never existed in the first place.”

The golden lotus domain and the red lotus were not the only ones in the diagram. There were other diagrams that aroused his suspicions, but they were all smudged by ink and could not be seen.

...

In the Thousand Willow Monastery in the red lotus domain.

A horde of beasts appeared in the sky.

In the courtyard, Yu Zhenghai’s progress was at a turning point.

Little Yuan’er pointed at Yu Zhenghai as she cried out, “Master, Eldest Senior Brother’s hair is turning white!”

“Chi Yao’s Heart,” Lu Zhou reminded him.

Yu Zhenghai nodded and consumed the remaining Chi Yao’s Heart.

Lu Zhou opened the brocade box in his hand. He saw Ao Yu’s Heart that resembled Chi Yao’s Heart. He tossed it over to Yu Zhenghai. “Eat this.”

“Understood.” The golden lotus ate away at Yu Zhenghai’s years at a faster speed. With the two life hearts, his white hair darkened again.

At this moment, Tian Buji’s voice rang in the air. “Old senior, Monastery Master, the beast, Zhong Diao, is here.”

Amidst the throng of beasts, a distinctive beast could be seen.

Xia Changqiu said, “I’ll deal with it.” He leaped out, followed by the elders from the Thousand Willow Monastery.

Zhong Diao was a beast that resembled half a bird and ate humans. It was like a bird of prey with horns on its head. Its cries sounded like that of a newborn; it was rather annoying.

“Sound technique?”

Zhong Diao’s cry that was similar to a baby’s cry resounded through Thousand Willow Mountain. It was highly distracting.

Yu Zhenghai frowned slightly.

Xia Changqiu and the elders of the Thousand Willow Monastery had no problem dealing with the beast. However, the noises created by this huge beast were truly irritating.

Xia Changqiu waved his horsetail whisk. A blast of energy disrupted the formation of the beasts as it shot toward Zhong Diao.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Zhong Diao flapped its wings and adjusted its bearing. It flew in another direction and continued crying out.

“Cursed livestock!” Xia Changqiu unleashed his grand technique and launched several Daoist seals.

Daoist palm seals spun outward.

The baby-like cries grew louder.

If the huge beast was not dealt with, the other beasts would not leave.

At this moment, Yu Shangrong looked up from his position on the roof and said indifferently, “Leave this to me.”

After Xia Changqiu unleashed his grand technique, Zhong Diao seemed to understand his intentions and adjusted its flight.

“No! This livestock is tamed!” Xia Changqiu said as he observed Zhong Diao.

Yu Shangrong, who was now hovering in the air, asked, “Tamed?”

“After a beast is tamed, it will follow its owner’s orders and know when to retreat. This livestock will be difficult to deal with,” Xia Changqiu said.

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly and said, “Interesting.” If his target was too simple, he would have found it boring.

Zing!

His Longevity Sword left its scabbard.

Yu Shangrong seemed to vanish into thin air as he cast Return and Enter Three Souls. Then, he summoned his avatar.

His 150-foot golden lotus avatar flew forward. Its golden hands seemed as though they were imbued with divine powers as it grabbed Zhong Diao.

When Yu Shangrong's three figures merged into one, he appeared in front of Zhong Diao with a burst of movement.

A cold light glinted in the air as the Longevity Sword pierced Zhong Diao's body.

Xia Changqiu. "..."

...

Meanwhile, on a mountain peak nearby.

A hooded man's fingers trembled as he separated his palms.

"Nine-leaf?" When he lifted his head, one could see he had a mustache on his face. His eyes flashed with killing intent as he said, "You'll pay with your life for killing my Zhong Diao."

As soon as he finished speaking, he leaped off the mountain. Strange radiant rings appeared around him. Their colors were a purple so dark that it seemed almost black.

### **Chapter 756: The Other Half of the Crystal**

After the man leaped off the mountain peak, he looked at Thousand Willow Monastery. Then, he no longer lingered and disappeared from sight.

Since its connection was severed by Yu Shangrong's sword, Zhong Diao wailed. Its heart-wrenching cry resounded in the Thousand Willow Monastery.

To get rid of Zhong Diao as quickly as possible, Yu Shangrong did not hold back as he unleashed the powerful Traceless Sword.

Yu Shangrong's golden avatar brandished an energy sword and coordinated its movements with Yu Shangrong's movements. The avatar wielded the energy sword and took advantage of the brief pause as it stabbed forward mercilessly.

Zhong Diao was impaled in midair.

Yu Shangrong continued his attacks. It was truly a sight to behold.

Although Zhong Diao was huge, it was much smaller compared to the manman or Tian Gou.

Yu Shangrong did not hold back as he unleashed his sword path. He moved like the wind and struck like a relentless storm. His afterimages seemed to fill the sky.

When Yu Shangrong was still an Eight-and-a-half-leaf cultivator, Xia Changqiu had experienced Yu Shangrong's skills firsthand. He could not defeat Yu Shangrong at all at that time. Now that Yu Shangrong was at the Nine-leaf stage, it would be impossible for him to defeat Yu Shangrong.

After raising his power, an outstanding sword path elite would be able to familiarize himself with the sword path in a short time. His skills with the sword would improve greatly. Currently, Yu Shangrong seemed like a Nine-leaf cultivator; he did not look like he had just broken through the Nine-leaf stage recently.

Yu Shangrong's energy swords struck precisely at several of Zhong Diao's vital spots.

Return and Enter Three Souls.

Yu Shangrong understood the essence of this technique. Rather than destroying the body, it was more effective to destroy the heart. Even a huge beast such as Zhong Diao was fearful faced with such a powerful human. It tried to escape, but alas, it was too used to relying on its master's orders that it had lost some of its survival instincts.

After Zhong Diao's cries subsided, the Thousand Willow Monastery was quiet once again.

Meanwhile, the ordinary flying beasts above the Thousand Willow Monastery were chased away by the elders as well. After they were done, they returned and hovered behind Xia Changqiu. When they saw the energy swords in the sky, they were shocked and could not look away.

One of the elders spread his hands and said, "He's amazing!"

"You're making a fuss over nothing." Tian Buji turned and shot them a glare.

"Elder Tian, aren't you shocked?"

Tian Buji said tonelessly, "You're shocked because you didn't go to the Ninth Temple with me."

The others were puzzled; they did not understand Tian Buji's words.

Tian Buji did not have any nefarious motive when he said those words. It was just that once one had gotten used to seeing great wind and waves, one would no longer be impressed by small wind and waves.

When the energy swords faded away, Zhong Diao fell from the sky.

"Ding! Killed Zhong Diao. Reward: 3,000 merit points."

Lu Zhou turned to look at Yu Shangrong. He merely stroked his beard and nodded in acknowledgment. His second disciple was proud and aloof, causing him to worry. However, it had to be said that his second disciple had never failed a task that had been given to him up until now.

Xia Changqiu and the others landed.

The disciples of Thousand Willow Monastery gathered around Zhong Diao.

Yu Shangrong retracted his avatar and looked down at Zhong Diao. He said, "Does this beast have a life heart?"

Xia Changqiu shook his head and said, "Huge beasts like this one don't have life hearts."

"How can you tell?" Yu Shangrong was curious.

"The beasts that can crystallize vitality into a core are usually those who can absorb Primal Qi. When they attack, they'll show signs of using Primal Qi. Although some livestock have intelligence, they're a far cry from humans. Most of the beasts don't know how to hide," Xia Changqiu said.

Yu Shangrong nodded before he asked, "What are you planning to do with it?"

Since this beast did not have a life heart, what good would it do?

Xia Changqiu said, "The bones and fur of the beasts can be traded for money..." All of a sudden, he recalled the beast was killed by Yu Shangrong. Hence, he hastily added, "You won't mind, right?"

"Help yourselves." Yu Shangrong was not interested in material things.

The Thousand Willow Monastery was unlike the Evil Sky Pavilion. If they did not have any income, they would not be able to sustain the monastery and feed its members.

Meanwhile, Yu Zhenghai's golden lotus began to lower its spinning speed.

Xia Changqiu and the others were intrigued.

"Take care of Zhong Diao." Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji flew over after giving the order.

When they saw Yu Zhenghai's golden lotus that was spinning slowly now and felt the powerful vitality, they were shocked. "Is it that difficult to reach the Nine-leaf stage for a golden lotus cultivator?"

If it had been a red lotus cultivator, they would have sprouted several leaves by now.

"Shh." Little Yuan'er turned to shush them.

The others no longer dared to speak.

After the beasts were dealt with, it was quiet now. Yu Zhenghai could finally focus on his golden lotus.

"Force the golden lotus's power back," Lu Zhou said.

At the same time, Yu Shangrong moved as though he was as light as a feather in the air. He smiled as though he had expected this.

Yu Zhenghai trusted his master unconditionally. Therefore, he immediately forced the energy back into the golden lotus.

The radiant ring changed its course.

A lotus leaf sprouted and grew one size larger. It was shining with a dazzling golden light.

Upon seeing this, Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Don't let your guard down. The golden lotus will leak out vitality soon."

Yu Zhenghai nodded.

Xia Changqiu was stunned by this. Usually, the leaf-sprouting process was done by the cultivator gathering power into the lotus. The lotus would sprout a leaf when the energy was enough. Why was it the opposite for the golden lotus? Was this a new way of cultivation? They were somehow convinced that it was and vowed to try it in the future.

"Congratulations, Brother Yu!"

"Congratulations, senior."

"Congratulations, Eldest Senior Brother."

Yu Zhenghai nodded happily. He could feel the surging power in his dantian. Feeling slightly proud of himself, he looked at Yu Shangrong who was hovering in the sky and said, "So?"

Yu Shangrong seemed slightly disapproving, but he smiled faintly. He flipped his right palm and pushed down.

Nine leaves shining with golden light stabbed into the ground immediately.

Then, he flipped his right hand again.

The nine leaves returned to him and disappeared. After that, without saying anything, he left with movements as light as a willow.

The others were speechless.

On the other hand, Conch, who was rather innocent, applauded and said, "That's amazing, Second Senior Brother!"

Little Yuan'er was much more tactful than before. She hastily added, "Eldest Senior Brother is amazing as well."

Xia Changqiu were older than them. If he could not read the situation, he might as well be blind. Therefore, he chimed in, "You're both amazing."

Now that Yu Zhenghai was a Nine-leaf cultivator, he no longer needed someone to watch over him for the remaining process. Therefore, Lu Zhou did not linger. He returned to his room and continued to meditate on the Heavenly Writing scrolls.

As for the karmic fire, that was up to Yu Zhenghai's luck. Lu Zhou was not sure if Yu Zhenghai could master the karmic fire as well.

Now that he had found Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong, he wondered inwardly, 'Should we return to the golden lotus domain on the Sky Chariot?' He was still worried about the golden lotus domain's current state.

They did not have means of long-range communication such as the modern times. Moreover, with the distance between them, such tools might not even work. The Sky Chariot had flown rather quickly, therefore, he did not have an accurate guess of how vast the Endless Ocean was.

He felt it was a shame to return just like that as well. There were still many things that had not been dealt with.

been flying quickly. Hence, the distance over the Endless Ocean which they crossed was something that was beyond his imaginations. He had yet to locate the remaining half of the memory crystal. He was somehow certain that it was with the Flying Star House. A major sect that the Ninth Temple was wary of could not possibly be weak.

"Ye Zhen..." Lu Zhou uttered the name in his memory. 'Could the crystal be with him?'

...

The Flying Star House on Lofty Steep Mountain in Jiangdong Circuit.

The mountain towered into the clouds. Its sides were straight and steep. There were no mountain paths.

It was deemed the highest place in Great Tang. Therefore, weaklings had no right to set foot on the Flying Star House grounds. They could only cultivate painstakingly at the foot of Lofty Steep Mountain.

Every year, there would be new Brahman Eight Meridians cultivators who would try to fly up to the sect and fall to their deaths in the process.

At this moment, an elder, Meng Changdong, bowed. "Congratulations on your full recovery, Elder Ye, and for obtaining the luan's heart."

The person standing in front of Meng Changdong was the Nine-leaf expert, Ye Zhen, who was currently like the sun in high noon. He looked graceful, and he was dressed simply in scholarly clothes. All in all, he looked elegant and dignified.

Ye Zhen had a slender build. His robes hung loosely on his boy. He was born with the looks of a scholar as well. He was not as old or as aloof as rumored. Instead, he seemed courteous and amiable.

"Elder Meng, there's no need for such formalities. Please take a seat," Ye Zhen said as he sat down with his legs crossed. After that, he added, "Elder Meng, you're not one to visit a temple without a cause. Moreover, you look happy. Let me guess... The matter of the crystal has been dealt with?"

Meng Changdong said with a sigh, "The half crystal that Jiang Wenxu sent to us is strange. Astronomy, geography, divination, physiognomy, I've tried it all, and yet, I couldn't decipher it!"

Ye Zhen waved his hand slightly.

The teapot on the table flew up and poured tea into the cup.

After that, Ye Zhen said, "I believe in your skills, Elder Meng. You'll be able to solve it someday."

"Elder Ye, there's something that I don't understand."

"What is it?"

"Jiang Wenxu is a traitor of the Flying Star House. He stayed in the golden lotus domain for several centuries and hid its existence from us. From what the Sky Martial Court discovered, the golden lotus domain isn't powerful. Why are you so interested in this crystal?"

## **Chapter 757: The Promise with the Flying Star House Master**

Ye Zheng smiled genially. He waved his hand again and said, "Are you testing me, Elder Meng?"

"I wouldn't dare. I'm genuinely asking for enlightenment. Everyone in the Flying Star House knows that you're an elite, Elder Ye. You killed the luan with your Expansive Heavenly Energy and script seals."

Ye Zheng said, "Killing the luan is the joint effort of everyone in the Flying Star House."

Meng Changdong nodded.

Ye Zhen lowered the teacup in his hand and asked, "Who do you think is powerful enough to kill Jiang Wenxu? He was capable of building a personal fiefdom in the golden lotus domain and maintained it for three centuries. Do you think he didn't have ways to defend himself? This crystal must contain a secret



about the person who killed him. This person will also become one of the red lotus domain's greatest enemies."

"Indeed, but, why would this person seal his memories inside a crystal?" Meng Changdong wondered out loud.

"Everyone has a weakness. One would be more inclined to seal away something that they don't want to face."

If the expert from the golden lotus domain's weakness was contained in the crystal, their priority should be to decipher it.

Meng Changdong's expression remained neutral; he merely nodded in agreement.

Ye Zhen looked at him and said, "Elder Meng, do you have any other questions?"

"The people sent by the Sky Martial Court have all been killed. The plan of invading with the Sky Chariots will have to be put aside for now. Fa Kong of the Blood Sun Temple, who mastered the karmic fire, is also dead. The golden lotus domain isn't as weak as we imagined it to be," Meng Changdong said.

Ye Zhen said nothing. Instead, he waved his hand again. The teapot poured another cup of tea.

After the cup was filled, Ye Zhen said, "The Sky Martial Court will keep an eye on the golden lotus domain. There's no need to trouble yourself over it, Elder Meng. You should focus your efforts on deciphering the crystal's secrets."

Meng Changdong was shocked when he heard these words. He no longer dared to continue this topic. Ever since he voiced his extremely conservative opinions, the Flying Star House's Master ordered him to stay out of it.

The Flying Star House's Master was in secluded cultivation most of the time. Therefore, Ye Zhen held the highest authority. Although Meng Changdong was an elder, his status was incomparable to Ye Zhen. Moreover, he was much weaker as well. He thought about it for a moment before he brought a piece of paper out from his sleeve and placed it on the table. "Elder Ye, kindly take a look at this."

Ye Zhen picked it up and read it. There were random symbols scribbled all over the place. He did not recognize any of them. He read extensively so he was knowledgeable about matters from the stars in the sky to the ground. However, he frowned when he saw these symbols.

"I've analyzed the obstacles within memory crystals in the world for several months and couldn't decipher it. I couldn't understand what these symbols mean at all. Like I said, I've tried everything, but I couldn't unlock it," Meng Changdong said.

Ye Zhen stared at the symbols, falling deep into thoughts for a long time. If he could not decipher the key to unlocking the crystal, nobody in the Flying Star House had any hope of doing so. After what seemed like hours, he still could not make heads or tails out of the symbols on the paper.

Meng Changdong said, "Since this is only half of the crystal, The symbols we have are only half the entire thing as well."

Ye Zhen put the paper down and said in a slightly disappointed tone, "If Luo Xuan was still around, she might be able to decipher the secret of this crystal. The person who sealed the crystal must've used a method that only he knows. We have no choice but to find him."

Meng Changdong nodded and said, "Alas, Luo Xuan was exiled from the Sky Martial Court long ago. I think she lost her life in the Endless Ocean."

Ye Zheng sighed. "There's only a thin line between a lunatic and a genius. Alas, the Sky Martial Court couldn't see her potential. Enough about her... How are things with the Thousand Willow Monastery?"

"Lu Song and Daoist Master Xuan Ming have died. Initially, I planned to go to the Thousand Willow Monastery to demand an explanation, but..."

"But what?" Ye Zhen asked.

"There seem to be golden lotus cultivators in the Thousand Willow Monastery. To protect themselves, the Thousand Willow Monastery and the golden lotus cultivators have aligned themselves with the Ninth Temple," Meng Changdong said. Then, he looked around before he lowered his voice and said, "I've also obtained secret information..."

"This is my place. You don't have to worry about being overheard. Say what you must," Ye Zhen said as he straightened his back.

"The Great General of the North, Chen Beizheng, is dead," Meng Changdong said.

Upon hearing these words, The ever-calm Ye Zhen, who was raising the teacup to his mouth, froze. His right hand shook slightly, causing the tea to spill. However, as soon as the droplets of tea fell, a surge of Primal Qi swept out bringing the droplets of tea back into the teacup. "Is the information accurate?"

"It's accurate. The palace tried to keep a lid on this, but they pushed the matter to the Sky Martial Court. We're on good terms with the Sky Martial Court so they told me about it," Meng Changdong said.

Ye Zhen was puzzled. After he calmed down, he said, "Is Sikong Beichen so bold now as to stand against the palace?"

"With Sikong Beichen's abilities, it won't be easy for him to kill Chen Beizheng. However, it happened in the Ninth Temple. It's not entirely impossible for the Ninth Temple to kill Chen Beizheng in their territory."

"I'll report this matter to the house master."

"Alright." After saying this, Meng Changdong rose to his feet and cupped his fists at Ye Zhen. "I'll continue to study the crystal. Farewell."

"See our guest out."

A Confucian scholar came over and led Meng Changdong toward the other peak.

...

Seven days later, in the golden lotus domain.

In front of the Evil Sky Pavilion's Great Hall.

Si Wuya was pacing back and forth.

"The Yun Sect's Nan Gongwei has successfully reached the Nine-leaf stage. The Three Sects managed to kill the beasts while the huge beast fled after sustaining heavy injuries."

"There's an unknown Eight-leaf cultivator in Yi Province who has successfully reached the Nine-leaf stage as well. Alas, nobody was looking out for him so he was grievously wounded by the beasts and is still missing."

"In the Divine Capital, the Big Dipper Academy's president, Zhou Youcai, failed to reach the Nine-leaf stage. Apart from that, Fifth Senior Sister has commanded the cultivators to chase beasts away."

"The Nether Sect's Azure Dragon Hall's Second Seat, Yu Hong, tried to reach the Nine-leaf stage on his own after reaching the Eight-leaf stage. He lost 300 years of life. Bai Yuqing has issued a strict ban on unsupervised attempts of reaching the Nine-leaf stage."

"The Ten Thousand Poison Sect's Lu Liang failed in his attempt to reach the Nine-leaf stage."

"The Blossom Faction's Madam Zhang failed in her attempt to reach the Nine-leaf stage."

After reading the reports, Mingshi Yin spread his hands and asked, "The other cultivators who attempted the Nine-leaf stage did not notify us beforehand. From what our men saw, they're not in good condition. Seventh Junior Brother, I don't think they can manage without me. Should I go and support them?"

Si Wuya said, "So long as the Formation remains intact, the beasts are not much of a threat. Fifth Senior Sister has the Empress Dowager's support so there's not much of a problem at the Divine Capital. All they have to do is to defend it properly. Those who failed have no one to blame but themselves. Fourth Senior Brother, you shouldn't leave this place if it's not necessary."

"Life is boring. I'm a Nine-leaf cultivator, but there's no chance for me to put my strength to use. Seventh Junior Brother, stop drawing diagrams at night. Why don't you spar with me?" Mingshi Yin said.

As soon as Mingshi Yin finished speaking, a pleading voice rang from outside. "M-mister Fourth, please... Please help."

Zhu Tianyun appeared, panting.

"Help? What is it? I'll deal with it in just a blink of an eye." Mingshi Yin patted his chest before he extended his hand. The Separation Hook appeared in his hand.

Zhu Tianyuan said, "Please... spar... train with Mister Third."

Whoosh!

A gust of wind blew in the great hall.

Zhu Tianyun looked around, baffled. "Eh? Where did Mister Fourth go?"

Si Wuya was speechless. He thought that Mingshi Yin was being childish. He returned to his room with his hands on his back and continued poring over the diagrams.

...

Meanwhile, in the red lotus domain.

The sun was setting.

Finally, Lu Zhou's extraordinary power was fully replenished.

Apart from meditating on the Heavenly Writing scrolls, Lu Zhou would do breathing exercises as well to improve his cultivation base. He had to prepare for the Ten-leaf stage.

Perhaps, it was due to the richer Primal Qi in the red lotus domain, his cultivation base was improving faster compared to when he was in the golden lotus domain.

At this moment, a voice rang from the other side of the door. "Xia Changqiu requests an audience."

"What is it?"

"The Ninth Temple has sent a flying letter. Three days from now, the Flying Star House's Master is going to visit the Ninth Temple. Temple Master Sikong wishes to invite you over as well."

#### **Chapter 758: I Don't Have Time For This**

If it was any other matter, Lu Zhou could have ordered Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong to take care of it. Now that they were both Nine-leaf cultivators, even in the red lotus domain, they were considered outstanding cultivators. However, they seemed to lack the ability to stand on the same stage as Sikong Beichen. Moreover, the strength of the Flying Star House's Master was still unknown. Ye Zhen's cultivation base should be similar to Fa Kong.

If it were a one-on-one battle, Lu Zhou was confident enough to take on the Flying Star House. The problem was... they might not agree to a one-on-one fight. At moments like this, the disadvantage of the Deadly Strike Card was particularly glaring.

The extraordinary power from the Heavenly Writing scrolls granted him enough power to defeat his peers. However, he did not think it would be easy to defeat a Ten-leaf cultivator. This was not a small-scale battle. The difference of one leaf could hardly be made up for with other methods. He had to consider possible outcomes after his extraordinary power was depleted.

'How many Nine-leaf or Ten-leaf cultivators are there in the red lotus domain?'

The most important factor was the Ninth Temple's stance. The hearts of men were difficult to predict. The Evil Sky Pavilion had experienced several sieges. It was not entirely impossible for such a scenario to happen in the red lotus domain.

"Sikong Beichen sure knows how to put on airs," Lu Zhou said tonelessly.

Xia Changqiu was slightly puzzled. However, it did not take long for realization to dawn on him. He hastily said, "You're right, Senior Lu. They should come here to meet you instead."

Hierarchy mattered, after all. There was no reason for a high-ranking person to go out of his way to meet a low-ranking person. Sikong Beichen was used to being in his high office and being revered by others that he had forgotten this minor detail.

Lu Zhou suddenly remembered something. He stood up and walked out the door. He saw Xia Changqiu standing respectfully in the courtyard and asked, "What's the Flying Star House's strength like?"

'If they're weak, I can use this opportunity to defeat them and retrieve the memory crystal. Relying on my Nine-leaf cultivation base might not be enough so I'll have to accumulate more merit points. If I use item cards alone, it'd be nothing but a loss...'

Xia Changqiu replied, "Currently, Ye Zhen and the house master, Chen Tiandu, are the strongest cultivators. at least on paper. Chen Tiandu seldom troubles himself with the affairs of the Flying Star House. Usually, a Ten-leaf cultivator wouldn't simply make a move if it's not necessary."

Unfortunately, it seemed like ordinary situations were a rarity.

"In that case, the Flying Star House's overall strength isn't comparable to the Ninth Temple. What gives them the confidence to visit the Ninth Temple?" Lu Zhou was puzzled.

"Temple Master Sikong is old, and his body isn't what it once was. Many things are handled by the nine First Seats. Then, four of them passed away. The Ninth Temple's strength is just a shadow of its former self. On the surface, it seems as though the Ninth Temple is stronger, but in truth, the Ninth Temple won't be able to gain the upper hand against the Flying Star House. Ye Zhen is deemed as a rare talent in the red lotus domain. He reached the Nine-leaf stage in less than 800 years and mastered the karmic fire. He's also said to be the cultivator who would most probably become a Ten-leaf cultivator. Moreover, he reads extensively and is very knowledgeable. He's even capable of governing the new world," Xia Changqiu said.

Lu Zhou could accept the first half of the words, but he was troubled by the second half. Before he returned to his room, he said, "I see. Send a reply to Sikong Beichen. Tell him that I don't have time for this. That will be all."

Xia Changqiu bowed and retreated.

...

In the Flying Star House on Lofty Steep Mountain.

Ye Zhen stood outside the Flying Star House and looked down at the mountains and rivers as the sun hung high in the sky.

Meng Changdong, who was standing next to Ye Zhen, asked, "The house master is planning to visit the Ninth Temple. Is that your idea, Elder Ye Zhen?"

Ye Zhen did not look at Meng Changdong. His expression remained neutral as he asked in return, "Do you have a problem with that?"

Meng Changdong said, "I have no objections to visiting the Ninth Temple, but isn't it slightly inhumane to annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery?"

Ye Zhen said calmly, "The annihilation is approved by the Sky Martial Court. If we don't annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery, the reputation that the Flying Star House has built over the years would be destroyed overnight. If we don't wipe them out, Lu Song, Xuan Ming, Liang Zidao, and the other disciples would've died in vain. How are we going to recruit disciples in the future then?"

"Are you going to lead the men there, Elder Ye?" Meng Changdong wondered out loud.

Ye Zhen shook his head and said, "I'll head to the Ninth Temple with the house master."

"Rumor has it that they are golden lotus experts hiding in the Thousand Willow Monastery. Now, they're also colluding with the Ninth Temple. How are we supposed to annihilate them if you or the house master don't lead our members there?"

"You'll lead the mission."

"..." Meng Changdong was shocked.

"You're not willing?" Ye Zhen turned and stared at Meng Changdong with a judgmental gaze.

"Since I'm an elder of the Flying Star House, I'll lead the mission. Don't worry, Elder Ye."

"Good."

Ye Zhen looked ahead again. He said indifferently, "The house master and I will hold the Ninth Temple back. You can rest easy about that matter. Also, the Sky Martial Court has formed an alliance with the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain. They'll send 1,000 cultivators in the Divine Court realm and above. Moreover, the elite of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain, Xie Xuan, will lend you a helping hand as well."

"Thank you, Elder Ye." Despite his words, a hint of worry could be seen on his face. 'What good would Divine Court realm cultivators be? Xie Xuan sounds more like it.'

Ye Zhen turned around slowly. He walked toward the dojo and said, "Elder Meng, don't forget... Three days."

"I'll go and make preparations at once," Meng Changdong left.

After Meng Changdong left, a Confucian scholar entered Ye Zhen's dojo. He bowed and said, "Should I continue keeping an eye on him?"

Ye Zhen smiled faintly. "There's no need."

"You know Meng Changdong has always been passive. Why is he leading the mission to annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery?"

"There's only two outcomes to this mission: success or failure. If it's a success, it'll benefit the Flying Star House. If it's a failure, the house master definitely won't forgive him."

"That's brilliant, Elder Ye."

Ye Zhen pointed at the paper before him and said, "Send this paper to the Sky Martial Court. Have them study it as well."

“Understood.” The Confucian scholar bowed. Then, he raised his head and said, “The Sky Martial Court’s Sky Chariot research is a success. They can now cross the Endless Ocean, and the duration of the journey has been reduced to half. Should we send our men over?”

“The golden lotus domain has already invaded the red lotus domain. There’s no need to meddle in the matters of the golden lotus domain,” Ye Zhen said.

“Alright. I’ll take care of it right away.” The Confucian scholar picked the paper up and looked at the random symbols. He could not understand it. After he shoved it in his pocket, he left.

...

Three days later, during the day...

A small flying chariot pulled by red flying beasts left Lofty Steep Mountain before disappearing among the clouds.

Meanwhile, on another peak that was much shorter than Lofty Steep Mountain, Meng Changdong and 1,000 cultivators left and flew toward the Thousand Willow Mountain.

...

Half a day later.

In the Ninth Temple.

“Grand Elder, the Flying Star House’s Ye Zhen is here,” a disciple said with a bow.

Zhu Xuan frowned slightly and said, “Ye Zhen? What’s he doing here? The Ninth Temple and the Flying Star House have never seen eye to eye. Just tell him that the five First Seats are in secluded cultivation and will meet him some other day.”

“But... The Flying Star House’s Master seems to be here as well.”

“Chen Tiandu?” Zhu Xuan was shocked. “Notify the five First Seats. Quick!”

“Understood.”

The disciple had just stepped out of the room when a gruff voice rang from the distant horizon. “Flying Star House’s Ye Zhen requests an audience with Senior Sikong.”

The voice was resounding and deep. The powerful sound technique spread across the mountains and forests.

The Mystery Hall’s Zhang Shaoqing did not go out because he was grounded.

In the Peace Hall, Yao Qingquan heard it most clearly.

The other areas were covered by powerful Formation veins.

Yao Qingquan opened his eyes and flew out of the hall. He rose into the air and looked ahead. He saw red birds and a flying chariot. Although the red birds were not huge, he knew only the Flying Star

House's Master had a chariot that was pulled by red birds. He frowned. "The chariot of the Flying Star House's Chen Tiandu?"

There were still ways to deal with Chen Beizheng since officials would play by the rules. However, the Flying Star House did not have many rules. This was especially true when they annihilated many smaller sects over the years. After killing the luan in the Black Water Mystic Cave, their popularity rose as well.

Yao Qingquan found this strange. "There are only a handful of Ten-leaf cultivators under the heavens. They usually stay out of worldly affairs. What's he doing here?"

The people who had reached the Ten-leaf stage in the red lotus domain were old.

At this moment, the other three First Seats flew over.

"The Flying Star House's Ye Zhen requests an audience with senior Sikong." The voice rang again. This time, it was more penetrative.

The Truce Hall's Zhao Jianghe said irritably, "Ye Zhen is truly here to show off his strength."

"How dare he? Let's ignore him for now. Why isn't Old Senior Lu here yet?"

Challenging another party with sound technique was disrespectful, after all.

"A female attendant sent Senior Lu's flying letter straight to the Holy Palace. I wonder what it said."

"I sure hope Senior Lu comes here sooner so the Flying Star House won't be able to stay arrogant."

The four of them exchanged a look and nodded.

## **Chapter 759: Rising Reputation**

In Lu Zhou's courtyard in the Thousand Willow Monastery.

Lu Zhou was cultivating.

At this moment, Xia Changqiu's voice rang from outside. "Senior Lu, the Ninth Temple's Temple Master Sikong has replied. He says that he'll visit another day."

"I see." Lu Zhou's reply was curt.

Xia Changqiu was thoroughly impressed. In his opinion, Lu Zhou was the only person who dared to treat Sikong Beichen in such a manner. With someone like Lu Zhou looking out for the Thousand Willow Monastery, who would dare challenge the monastery?

"Senior Lu, the Flying Star House's Ye Zhen has gone to the Ninth Temple as well. I think he must have gone there prepared. Are you really not going?" Xia Changqiu asked. After all, Lu Zhou had reached an agreement to work with the Ninth Temple. Would they still be allies if Lu Zhou did not go?

"If Sikong Beichen can't even deal with the Flying Star House, he's not worthy to be mentioned in the same breath as me," Lu Zhou replied in his usual indifferent tone.

Xia Changqiu nodded. "Understood."

When Xia Changqiu left the courtyard, the disciples from the Thousand Willow Monastery sighed.



An elder walked over and said, "Monastery Master, let me send the flying letter. As the monastery master, you're..."

"Nonsense!" Xia Changqiu immediately cut him short. "Do you think it's as trivial as sending a flying letter? This concerns the survival of the Thousand Willow Monastery. We can't be careless about this. Who do you think Senior Lu is sending the letter to? If something were to happen to the flying letter, can you bear the consequences?"

The others had no retort.

Xia Changqiu returned with his hands on his back.

...

In Lu Zhou's room.

Lu Zhou folded his palms and closed his eyes. At the same time, he was thinking of ways to retrieve his memory crystal from the Flying Star House. 'Should I go to the Ninth Temple again and take down Ye Zhen or Chen Tiandu? Indeed, this is a great opportunity.'

Lu Zhou slowly rose to his feet, preparing to head to the Ninth Temple.

At this moment, Xia Changqiu hurried back into the courtyard, clearly flustered. He bowed and said, "Senior Lu, this is bad."

"What is it? Why are you making such a fuss?" Lu Zhou was puzzled.

"Meng Changdong is leading 1,000 cultivators toward the Thousand Willow Mountain. They'll arrive in four hours." Xia Changqiu did all he could to survive over the years. It was only natural that such ostentatious movements from a huge group of cultivators did not escape his notice.

Lu Zhou frowned slightly. 'It seems like I've underestimated the Flying Star House. Are they going to attack on both fronts? Are they bullying me because I can't split myself into two?'

Sikong Beichen was at the Ninth Temple, and he had his five First Seats. On top of that, the Ninth Temple was protected by powerful Formations. There should not be much of a problem there.

On the other hand, the Thousand Willow Monastery's situation was on the other end of the spectrum.

Clearly, the Flying Star House was trying to pressure both parties at the same time or they came to annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery.

'Ye Zhen is truly something.'

"Senior Lu, what do we do now?"

"There's no need to worry. Just leave this to my two disciples," Lu Zhou said.

"As you command, Senior Lu." Xia Changqiu turned around and left.

Lu Zhou sat with his legs crossed. He thought to himself with barely any changes in his expression, 'In that case, let's face them head-on.'

...

The Ninth Temple.

The red bird pulled the chariot to a stop in front of the Ninth Temple.

After projecting his voice twice, Ye Zhen turned around and bowed at the chariot when nobody came to greet him. "As I expect, none of the five can be relied on."

An old and deep voice rang from the chariot. "Call out again."

"Understood." Ye Zhen turned around and faced the Ninth Temple. He said loudly, "The Flying Star House's Ye Zhen requests an audience with Senior Sikong." His voice was thunderously loud; it was much louder than before.

The Daoist veins above the Ninth Temple began to thrum.

Eventually, Yao Qingquan appeared at the entrance of the Ninth Temple. He glared at Ye Zhen before he said, "Ye Zhen, do you think the Ninth Temple is a place where you can act as you please?"

Ye Zhen cupped his fists. "Kindly forgive our intrusion."

Nobody knew what Ye Zhen was thinking about.

Yao Qingquan was currently the leader of the First Seats. When he saw Ye Zhen, he was shocked. He would rather have a verbal quarrel since it would help him learn about Ye Zhen's character. However, it seemed like Ye Zhen was rather flexible. This meant Ye Zhen would not be easy to deal with.

"The temple master extends his invitation." They had made a promise three days ago so Yao Qingquan could not keep them waiting for too long.

An old man dressed in white robes with his face hidden flew out of the chariot. He did not even deign to look at Yao Qingquan. He entered the Ninth Temple at lightning speed.

All the disciples on the ground looked up.

This was Flying Star House's Master, Chen Tiandu.

Shortly after, Chen Tiandu and Ye Zhen landed in front of the Holy Palace.

Two female attendants at the side bowed.

Chen Tiandu walked into the hall.

Swoosh!

A cup of wine flew toward Chen Tiandu.

"Allow me." Ye Zhen stepped forward and raised his hand. His slender fingers were like a palm-leaf fan as he pushed them forward.

The cup of wine froze in the air.

Splash!

Wine spilled from the cup. The droplets instantly solidified into nails that shot forward.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The nails seemed to strike an invisible wall before they evaporated into thin air.

“Are you the Flying Star House’s Ye Zhen? The one whom people say is a great talent in recent years?”  
The voice was stable and imposing.

Ye Zhen bowed. “Greetings, Senior Sikong.”

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The nails appeared and spun around to face Ye Zhen before they shot out.

Ye Zhen was slightly annoyed. He was about to raise his hand when Chen Tiandu said tonelessly,  
“Enough.”

A warm and moist wave of air rolled out and caused the nails to evaporate.

“You old geezer. Your cultivation base has improved again after all these years.”

Chen Tiandu sauntered in.

There was a table, two rush cushions, and four female attendants. It was simple and elegant.

Sikong Beichen sat cross-legged on the other side of the table. He made an inviting gesture.

Chen Tiandu faded out of focus and appeared opposite Sikong Beichen. He raised his arms, and his white cloak slid off.

When Ye Zhen saw this, he hastily stepped forward and picked it up.

Both Sikong Beichen and Chen Tiandu had white hair and wizened faces.

Chen Tiandu raised the teacup and took a sip. He looked up and said, “I heard you killed Chen Beizheng. How could I not visit after hearing that?”

Sikong Beichen was not surprised by this. Instead, he smiled and shook his head lightly. “You flatter me.”

“Oh?”

“Chen Beizheng is only 1,000 years old... Both of us are in our old age now, how could I have killed him?”  
Sikong Beichen said.

Chen Tiandu’s eyes gleamed. He said, “Why are you in such a hurry to shirk off the responsibilities? Are you worried that I’ll hold you accountable for that?”

Sikong Beichen shook his head and said, “Chen Tiandu, if I truly killed him, I would be happy that you came all the way here to throw your life away...”

Ye Zhen took a step forward.

Chen Tiandu raised a hand.

At this moment, the five First Seats appeared at the door. If Sikong Beichen gave the order, a huge battle would commence immediately.

The atmosphere grew tense.

Ye Zhen smiled and said, "Since the house master is here, it's only natural that we're well-prepared."

Sikong Beichen only glanced at Ye Zhen before he returned his attention to Chen Tiandu.

Chen Tiandu smiled and calmly asked, "If you didn't kill Chen Beizheng, who did?"

Sikong Beichen had been waiting for this question. He feigned an extremely obvious expression of fear and respect as he said, "It's a senior with the surname Lu."

"Lu?"

Chen Tiandu and Ye Zhen searched their brains for a cultivator with the surname Lu but did not find anything. Among the elites they knew, there was no one with the surname Lu.

Then, Sikong Beichen continued to say, shocking the duo from the Flying Star House, "Senior Lu has initiated his Birth Chart..."

#### **Chapter 760: An Exchange Between Elites**

Chen Tiandu had made all necessary preparations. His trusted subordinate, Ye Zhen, had already planned it all. When he heard the words 'Birth Chart', his expression grew stiff. He was perplexed and skeptical.

"We've fought for many years, you and I, and yet, I've never seen you lie like this, Sikong Beichen. I don't have the time to entertain you and your delusions." Chen Tiandu took a sip from his teacup.

Sikong Beichen said indifferently, "It's just as you said. We've known each other for many years now, and I have never lied. In that case, what makes you think that I'm lying to you now?"

Chen Tiandu was slightly taken aback.

Ye Zhen spoke up at this moment. "If I may?"

"Let's hear it."

"Do we have any witnesses who have seen this Senior Lu who has initiated his Birth Chart?" Ye Zhen asked.

"My disciples can bear witness to that."

The four First Seats bowed in unison. There was no need for them to speak; their attitude made their answers very clear.

Naturally, the Ninth Temple's members would side with their own.

Chen Tiandu raised his wizened hand and placed it on the table.

Whizz!

Primal Qi surged, and the teacup rose slowly into the air.

“We both know how difficult it is to initiate the Birth Chart. Why must you deceive others and yourself?” Chen Tiandu’s cup flew toward Sikong Beichen.

Sikong Beichen placed his hand on the table as well. “You can choose not to believe me, Chen Tiandu. If the goal of your visit today is to verify this, I’m afraid it will be meaningless.”

The teacup flew back to Chen Tiandu. It stopped half an inch away from his nose.

Chen Tiandu widened his eyes.

The buzzing noise from the vibration grew stronger.

“Let’s say you’re telling the truth... Even then, there’s no doubt the Ninth Temple isn’t blameless in regard to Chen Beizheng’s death.”

The tea inside the cup spilled out and solidified into needles. They were as fine as miniature energy swords.

Ye Zhen was slightly shocked. However, he quickly focused his attention. A talented genius cultivator did not need his teacher to teach him. All he needed to do was observe to understand.

The hair-like needles were now in front of Sikong Beichen. He frowned as he spread his fingers apart before putting his hands on the table again.

“For every grievance, someone is responsible; for every debt, there is a debtor. If you intend to search for the culprit, you can look for Senior Lu. Why is the Flying Star House so obsessed about this matter when the palace has not even said anything?”

Bam!

The needles turned into droplets of water again and fell from the air. When they were about to land on the table, they solidified again.

Chen Tiandu’s expression remained unchanged. He spread his fingers and placed them firmly on the table.

“This is how the Flying Star House has always done things. Since the culprit is another person, the Ninth Temple should be the one to bring him to us.”

Primal Qi surged above the Holy Palace. A surge of red energy traveled back and forth in the sky. Soon enough, Primal Qi was turned into energy swords.

Sikong Beichen exerted some force in his four fingers.

Above the Holy Palace, energy swords collided.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

“The Ninth Temple isn’t capable of dealing with someone like Senior Lu. If you’re so anxious, why don’t you head to the Thousand Willow Monastery to capture him?” Sikong Beichen asked.

The needles in the air moved forward seeming as though they would impale Chen Tiandu's hand.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The clashing energy swords in the sky seemed to be evenly matched. They formed Formations as they continued to clash. It looked as though there was a firework display in the sky at this moment.

More than 10,000 disciples from the Ninth Temple were gathered. It was not a minor force. They looked at the sky.

Chen Tiandu sensed the presence of the large group of cultivators. He pressed his fingers down with so much force that his hand sank into the wooden table, leaving a palm-shaped dent behind.

"Sikong Beichen, I'm afraid that your plan will fail. Elder Meng has already gone to the Thousand Willow Monastery. In less than two hours, there will be nothing left of the Thousand Willow Monastery."

The needles were now aimed at Sikong Beichen's hands.

Sikong Beichen pressed his fingers into the table as well as he said with a mocking smile on his face, "Trying to kill Senior Lu?"

Chen Tiandu frowned slightly. "Why are you smiling?"

"I'm amused that the grand Flying Star House's Master would do something so foolish. You've lived in seclusion for far too long. Why don't we have a wager?" Sikong Beichen seemed excited. He seemed energetic for someone his age. Was he having his dying flash?

"On what?" Chen Tiandu said.

"On whether Meng Changdong will be able to return alive," Sikong Beichen said.

Ye Zhen cupped his fists. "I'm afraid that you'll be disappointed. Elder Meng is accompanied by Xie Xuan, an elite from the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain, and the disciples of the Sky Martial Court and the Flying Star House. There are 1,000 cultivators in total. I'm sorry, Senior Sikong. The Thousand Willow Monastery has killed our disciples far too many times. It's time to put an end to this."

Whizz!

Bam! Bam! Bam.

The energy swords in the skies grew in numbers by the minute. At the same time, their altitude seemed to have gotten much lower as well. If they were lower any further, they would slice the top of the Holy Palace off.

"You will pay for your foolishness then." Sikong Beichen pressed his hand down again. He made a palm seal with his right hand before he retracted it.

Chen Tiandu did the same. "I agree with the wager. The loser has to destroy his cultivation base."

"Sure." Sikong Beichen was invigorated upon hearing Chen Tiandu's words.

When they both retracted their palms, the energy swords to the left above the Holy Palace faded away. However, those on the right grew stronger.

The needles that hovered above the table suddenly shot forward.

Chen Tiandu frowned. He said hoarsely, "Impossible!" When he raised his hand again, it was already too late. The nails stabbed his chest.

As soon as Chen Tiandu's energy burst forth, Sikong Beichen released a blast of energy as well.

Bam!

Chen Tiandu recoiled, but he maintained his posture of sitting cross-legged. Then, he spat out a mouthful of blood.

Before gravity could bring the blood to the ground, the blood seemed to freeze in the air.

At this moment, Ye Zhen's palm flashed red as he circulated his blood essence and struck forward.

The four First Seats of Ninth Temple exclaimed in shock, "Temple Master!" They acted once.

When Chen Tiandu landed, he slammed his palms on the floor. He pulled the four First Seats back with his energy.

Ye Zhen was like a wolf or a tiger as he pounced with arms outstretched.

Sikong Beichen looked up calmly. "What an impudent Nine-leaf cultivator!"

Dozens of feet behind Ye Zhen, energy shots toward him.

Ye Zhen smiled. "Go." His palms ignited. The blood essence spat out by Chen Tiandu formed a fireball with the karmic fire and shot forth.

Bam!

The fireball hit Sikong Beichen's chest. He slid backward before he slammed against the wall with his rush cushion. He spat out blood as well.

Ye Zhen landed with a smile and said, "Senior Sikong, your skillful sword path is truly shocking..."

Sikong Beichen stared at Ye Zhen. "Is this your flawless plan?"

"The house master and I are merely protecting ourselves." Ye Zhen cupped his fists.

Sikong Beichen waved his hand as a signal for the four First Seats to stand down.

The four of them exchanged a look. They did not know what the temple master was planning.

Chen Tiandu retracted his energy and brought his palm toward his dantian, gradually calming himself down.

"Sikong Beichen, I've underestimated you. I wouldn't have believed it if I didn't see it with my own eyes. You've found a new sword path." Chen Tiandu wiped away the blood from the edge of his lips.

"My understanding is only superficial. Compared to Senior Lu, I'm nothing. Using all creation as a sword, the swordless path. I can only manage the first part of it," Sikong Beichen said with a sigh.

Upon hearing this, Chen Tiandu frowned.

Ye Zhen cupped his fists decisively and said, "I apologize for our intrusion today." He returned to Chen Tiandu's side and helped him up before they flew out of the Holy Palace.

Yao Qingquan, Zhao Jianghe, Sun Wenchang, and Wang Youdao were about to give chase when they heard Sikong Beichen say, "Don't go after a cornered enemy."

"Temple Master, why aren't we going after them? They're insufferable bullies. They're trampling all over us!" Yao Qingquan asked indignantly.

Sikong Beichen said, "Chen Tiandu seems well, but he has been grievously wounded by me."

"All the more reason we should seize this opportunity to chase after them and kill them!" Yao Qingquan was puzzled.

Sikong Beichen looked outside. He coughed before solemnly said, "Ye Zhen is cunning."

After Ye Zhen flew away from the Ninth Temple with Chen Tiandu, Chen Tiandu placed a hand on his chest as he asked, "Why didn't you kill him when you had the chance?"

"I sensed the presence of an elite."

The two of them landed on the chariot.

Ye Zhen waved his arm. The red bird adjusted its bearing. He looked down at the forest below. "Head for the Thousand Willow Monastery. Quickly! Tell Elder Meng to retreat as quickly as he can."

"Understood!"