

## Disciples 771

### Chapter 771: Fallen For Ye Zhen's Tricks?

Lu Zhou felt as though he had just woken up from a deep nap. There was a sense of disorientation as though his surroundings had changed. The unfamiliarity of the Thousand Willow Monastery and the night skies intensified this feeling. After a moment, he gradually recovered, and the feeling faded away.

When everything returned to normal, he raised his hand.

The half chunk of crystal was instantly reduced to dust.

“Ding! Found the remaining memory crystal. Reward: 5,000 merit points.”

Lu Zhou sighed as he placed his hands on his back, recalling the newly-restored memories that came with many questions.

“The unknown land... Pills that alter one's bodily constitution... Luo Xuan...” Lu Zhou muttered to himself.

After sifting through the memories, he discovered there was a reason why Ji Tiandao managed to become the greatest villain in Great Yan. He was also shocked by the memory of the black lotus; Ji Tiandao had been shocked as well. At that time, Ji Tiandao did not know much about the Fiend Zen. Whether it was the Fiend Zen or the Buddhist Zen, the fruit of cultivation was supposed to be a black Golden Body, not the avatar. The lotus was black. Why did it appear in the unknown land? Was it a coincidence? No matter how hard he thought about it, he could not come up with an answer. Similarly, Ji Tiandao did not have the answer as well.

‘Forget it. I should raise my cultivation base. The truth will be revealed sooner or later.’

Lu Zhou crossed his legs and sat down. He was about to enter his meditative state when he heard footsteps approaching. “Who's there?”

“Xia Changqiu.”

“What is it?”

“I saw candlelight in your courtyard, Senior Lu, so I came over to have a look. The Ninth Temple's Sikong Beichen has sent a letter. He intended to visit the Thousand Willow Monastery, but you weren't in. Hence, I sent a reply and told him to visit another day. Would you like to reject the request?” Xia Changqiu asked.

“Tell him to come tomorrow,” Lu Zhou said.

“Alright. Rest well, Senior Lu,” Xia Changqiu said before he turned and left.

Lu Zhou checked the system dashboard.

Merit points: 25,940.

Remaining life: 219,455 days.

Item: Deadly Strike Card x1, Critical Block Card x138 (passive), Binding Cage Card x5, Whizard (rushing to the red lotus domain), Bi An, Ji Liang (rushing to the red lotus domain), Qiong Qi, Disguise Card, Golden Taixu Mirror, Appearance Alteration Card x3, Shining Stone x3, Thunderblast x1, Impeccable Card x1.

Weapon: Unnamed, Jade Horsetail Whisk, Magistrate Brush, Nine String Zither, Square Box.

If it were not for the Nascent Divinity cultivators who pursued him, his trip to Flying Star House would have been a loss. Fortunately, he managed to retrieve his memory crystal.

“Perhaps, Ye Zhen concealed his cultivation base...” Lu Zhou thought about Ye Zhen again. He could not help feeling that something was amiss due to how smooth everything went.

Lu Zhou flipped his palm. The Golden Taixu Mirror materialized in his hand. This item was capable of reflecting the true form of all creations. He made a note to use it if he were to encounter similar situations in the future.

Then, he brought a Shining Stone out. When he tossed it out, flames surged out from it. Then, he threw the Golden Taixu Mirror into the tongues of flames.

Subsequently, he entered his meditative state.

...

Dawn was breaking.

A flying chariot flew away from the Ninth Temple.

On the flying chariot.

Two First Seats manned the helm.

Yao Qingquan pointed in the direction of the Thousand Willow Monastery and said, “Monastery Master, what’s that?”

Sikong Beichen who was onboard the flying chariot looked at the horizons.

A beam of light shot up into the clouds from the Thousand Willow Monastery.

Zhao Jianghe said, “I think it’s some kind of weapon. I don’t understand why they would use a weapon for no reason. What a waste of Primal Qi.”

Sikong Beichen coughed softly. He waved his hand and said, “Perhaps, it’s Senior Lu’s treasure. We’ll know when we arrive.”

“Understood.”

The Ninth Temple received Xia Changqiu’s flying letter last night. With Sikong Beichen’s temperament, he would not delay the visit. He ordered for the flying chariot to be prepared, and they departed at first light. He even had two First Seats power the flying chariot together so that they would arrive at the Thousand Willow Monastery as soon as possible.

...

Thousand Willow Monastery.

Inside the courtyard.

A loud clang rang in Lu Zhou's room when the Golden Taixu Mirror fell on the floor.

He opened his eyes and looked at the mirror. He waved his hand, and the Golden Taixu Mirror flew into his hand.

He circulated his Primal Qi. As expected, the edges of the mirror shone with light. This meant that the Golden Taixu Mirror was now upgraded to the desolate grade.

"Ding! Obtained the desolate-grade Golden Taixu Mirror. Reward: 1,000 merit points."

Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction as he put the mirror away.

'Would there be other functions now that it has been upgraded? Can I see other people's bones as well?'

At this moment, Xia Changqiu's voice rang from the courtyard. "Senior Lu, Temple Master Sikong requests an audience."

"Alright."

Lu Zhou left the courtyard.

When they were outside, he saw Little Yuan'er flying above the courtyard. He beckoned to her and said, "Come down."

"Oh." Little Yuan'er landed obediently before her master. She thought that she was going to get a scolding. However, to her surprise, Lu Zhou produced the Golden Taixu Mirror and shone it at her.

The golden light was like the sunlight when it shone on Little Yuan'er's body.

A Seven-leaf golden lotus avatar appeared in the mirror.

"There's no difference?" Lu Zhou was puzzled. He put the Golden Taixu Mirror away. 'If there's no difference, isn't it a waste to upgrade it? What a scam!'

"Master... I'm trying my best. I'm not slacking off!" Little Yuan'er mumbled.

"Cultivate well, and don't fly around recklessly. This is the Thousand Willow Monastery, not the Evil Sky Pavilion," Lu Zhou said.

"Understood." Little Yuan'er nodded.

Lu Zhou looked at Xia Changqiu who was standing next to him with a dazed expression. He waved his hand and said, "Lead the way."

"Oh... Uh... Senior Lu, please follow me..." Xia Changqiu was overwhelmed with emotions. 'His young disciple's cultivation base is rather profound for her age, but he's still so strict. Does... does this mean his other disciples are much stronger than this one?' At this moment, the feeling of certainty that he made the right choice to flatter this old man grew even stronger.

Shortly after, they arrived in the Fair Hall.

When Sikong Beichen, Yao Qingquan, and Zhao Jianghe saw Lu Zhou walking toward them with his hands on his back, they greeted him in unison.

“Brother Lu.”

“Greetings, Senior Lu.”

After that, Sikong Beichen began to cough. He did not seem to be in good health. Without waiting for Lu Zhou’s response, he stepped backward and sat down. Then, he said, “I’m sorry. I mean no offense, Brother Lu.”

Lu Zhou looked at him and asked, “No matter. Are you hurt?”

Sikong Beichen said with a sigh, “I accidentally fell into Ye Zhen’s trap.”

“Ye Zhen’s capable of hurting you?” Lu Zhou walked over and sat down across Sikong Beichen.

Sikong Beichen recounted the events of Chen Tiandu and Ye Zhen’s visit to the Ninth Temple.

When Sikong Beichen mentioned their clash of swords, Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. “Using all creation as swords. With precise control, everything in the world can be turned into a sword. I’d say that your mastery of the sword path is satisfactory.”

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji nodded.

The few elders waiting outside the hall were dumbfounded. They had hurried over when they heard Sikong Beichen was coming over for a visit. After all, when would they get a chance to see Sikong Beichen before this? They wanted to see the renowned glorious elite. After considering their statuses, they dared not enter the hall and waited outside respectfully. They thought Senior Lu was probably the only person under the heavens who could comment on Sikong Beichen’s sword path in this manner.

“Ye Zhen is only a Nine-leaf cultivator. Even if you spar with Chen Tiandu, Chen Tiandu probably wouldn’t be able to hurt you. How did you fall for his trap with your cultivation base?” Lu Zhou asked as he stroked his beard.

### **Chapter 772: The Blue Lotus Extinguished The Fire**

A complicated expression appeared on Sikong Beichen’s wizened face. “In the beginning, that’s what I thought as well. Ye Zhen is only a Nine-leaf cultivator so I didn’t think much of him. All my attention was focused on Chen Tiandu. Moreover, although Ye Zhen has mastered the karmic fire, I have my five First Seats to fend him off. I didn’t think that...” He paused for a moment when he recalled the scene when they sparred. A hint of incredulity could be seen in his eyes as he said, “He’s definitely not an ordinary Nine-leaf cultivator... When I pushed Chen Tiandu back, Ye Zhen could not restrain himself from launching a sneak attack. What I didn’t expect was that he easily nullified my sword technique and attacked me with his karmic fire.”

“Even if he used karmic fire, how could he harm you, a Ten-leaf cultivator?” Lu Zhou was puzzled.

“When he attacked... There was a fleeting feeling as though I was being attacked by several Nine-leaf cultivators at the same time. I was careless and was hit by his karmic fire,” Sikong Beichen said.

“How many Nine-leaf cultivators?” Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he thought about this.

Sikong Beichen cupped his fists and said, “Currently, the world thinks that the Ninth Temple killed Chen Beizheng. The palace will surely hold me accountable for this... The Ninth Temple and the Thousand Willow Monastery have to depend on each other for survival. Please, you must help me, Brother Lu.”

At the same time, the two First Seats, Yao Qingquan and Zhao Jianghe, bowed in unison. “Please help us, Senior Lu.”

After all, Chen Beizheng was one of the palace’s favorites. With his death, there certainly would be a reckoning, and the Ninth Temple was undoubtedly the largest target.

As for the golden lotus cultivators, indeed, there were rumors about them among the people. The Flying Star House failed in its attempt to annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery. They were of the opinion that the Ninth Temple, the Thousand Willow Monastery, and the golden lotus cultivators were working together.

Sikong Beichen was right; their survival depended on each other.

Lu Zhou and his two disciples were only Nine-leaf cultivators. They were a far cry from being a force that could oppose Great Tang. The Sky Martial Court, the Flying Star House, and the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain, none of them could be underestimated.

Xia Changqiu, Tian Buji, and the elders outside the hall looked at Lu Zhou, waiting for his response.

After a brief pause, Lu Zhou looked at Sikong Beichen. He asked, “In your opinion, how many Ten-leaf cultivators are there in Great Tang?”

Upon hearing this question, the others exchanged a look.

Sikong Beichen was the perfect person to answer this question. He had lived for two millennia, after all. He had witnessed the changes that came with time and the rise and fall of countless elites. He might not pay attention to Nine-leaf cultivators, but Ten-leaf cultivators who were like treasures were different.

Sikong Beichen did not ask for the reason behind Lu Zhou’s question. He lowered his head as he mulled over the question. Finally, he said, “The Sky Martial Court Master’s Yu Chenshu, the Flying Star House Master, Chen Tiandu, The Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain’s Master, Nie Qingyun, and the Thousand Blades Temple’s Abbot, Jian Zhen... As for the palace, rumor has it that they have three. With Chen Beizheng’s death, there should be two left.”

“So there are five in total...” Lu Zhou stroked his beard and thought to himself, ‘I’ll need five cards to be safe.’

“I’ve been cultivating in seclusion for many years. It’s been two millennia, and the cultivation world has always been in turmoil. Perhaps, there are other new Ten-leaf cultivators who conceal their strength...” Sikong Beichen said.

At this moment, the Peace Hall's First Seat, Yao Qingquan, cupped his fists and said, "Out of the five Ten-leaf cultivators the temple master mentioned, only the Sky Martial Court Master, Yu Chenshu, has mastered the karmic fire. The Sky Martial Court had recruited many talents throughout the years. They worked hard to nurture Nine-leaf cultivators and have the highest possibilities of producing new Ten-leaf cultivators. Three centuries ago, there was a lunatic from Sky Martial Court whose name was Luo Xuan. She reached the Ten-leaf stage in an extremely short time. However, her powers are unstable. After that, the Sky Martial Court hid her away from the public. Her whereabouts are unknown to this day."

A bell rang in Lu Zhou's mind when Yao Qingquan mentioned Luo Xuan. He speculated Luo Xuan must have taken the Great Void Seed and rose to the Nine-leaf stage. After a while, he asked, "How many Nine-leaf cultivators are there?"

Instead of Sikong Beichen, Yao Qingquan answered, "There are many sects under the heavens. The true major sects are only slightly more than ten. I think each of them has at least a few Nine-leaf cultivators. Some might have more than others, I can't say for sure. Without Nine-leaf cultivators, they won't be able to become major sects."

"So, the Ninth Temple can be considered as a major sect as well... How did you fall into this state?"

Sikong Beichen and the two First Seats were embarrassed by this question.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou thought to himself, 'In Great Tang, there are five Ten-leaf cultivators and only a few Nine-leaf cultivators.'

At this moment, Sikong Beichen launched into a violent coughing fit before he spat out a mouthful of blood.

The others were shocked by this.

"Temple Master!"

They were shocked that Ye Zhen, a Nine-leaf cultivator, managed to injure Sikong Beichen, a Ten-leaf cultivator.

"I won't die from this." Sikong Beichen shook his head.

At this moment, Lu Zhou looked at Sikong Beichen intently and said, "Don't move."

Sikong Beichen was slightly taken aback.

The others did not know what Lu Zhou planned to do.

Lu Zhou brought out the Golden Taixu Mirror and circulated his Primal Qi.

A golden beam of light shone on Sikong Beichen, revealing a miniature red lotus avatar with ten dazzling leaves. Apart from that, the mirror showed a karmic fire as well. A faint mark of seal could be seen on the karmic fire.

"He concealed a seal in his karmic fire when he attacked?" The others exclaimed in shock.

"How cunning! I didn't expect Ye Zhen to be so cunning," Yao Qingquan cursed.

Sikong Beichen frowned slightly. "It's no wonder that I wasn't able to get rid of the karmic fire no matter how much I adjusted my breath..."

Lu Zhou put the golden mirror away. 'Looks like the golden mirror can also reveal hidden techniques apart from revealing cultivation bases and avatars.'

The others did not seem repulsed by the light from the golden mirror.

Yao Qingquan asked, "Is this treasure the source of the beam of golden light that shot up toward the heavens from the Thousand Willow Monastery earlier, Senior Lu?"

Lu Zhou did not deny that. He said, "Fortunately, your cultivation base is profound enough. Not anyone would be able to withstand the injury from this karmic fire."

"If you run into Ye Zhen in the future, Senior Lu, you must be careful," Sikong Beichen said.

Lu Zhou nodded as he stroked his beard. He wondered if the golden lotus domain or the red lotus domain was weaker? Currently, the red lotus domain was undoubtedly stronger. The Nine-leaf cultivators here were as numerous as Eight-leaf cultivators in the golden lotus domain. However, cultivation was no longer restricted to the Eight-leaf stage in the golden lotus domain. It was only a matter of time before the golden lotus domain caught up with the red lotus domain. If a golden lotus cultivator and a red lotus cultivator had the same cultivation base, which lotus was stronger? Apart from that, there was the blue lotus that the Heavenly Writing scrolls gave him as well.

After a moment, Lu Zhou said, "This is only karmic fire. It's nothing to me." He slowly raised his hand. Soon after, a blue lotus appeared on his palm.

The others exclaimed in shock.

"A blue lotus?!"

The red lotus domain was not as clueless as the golden lotus domain. The cultivators here were aware of the existence of foreign worlds. Even so, they were shocked when they saw the blue lotus.

A perplexed expression appeared on Sikong Beichen's wizened face. He had personally witnessed Lu Zhou manifesting a red lotus avatar and launching a 200-foot red palm seal. How did Lu Zhou manifest a blue lotus as well?

Various expressions could be seen on the faces of the people around Lu Zhou as the blue lotus descended. Its vitality and power fell on Sikong Beichen, and he quickly absorbed it.

In just an instant, Sikong Beichen felt the red lotus karmic fire within him dying out, extinguished by the blue lotus. The uncomfortable scorching sensation that he had to bear with was replaced with a chilling sensation. A few breaths later, he felt the red lotus karmic fire and the seal being dispersed by the chilling sensation.

At this moment, everyone was looking at Sikong Beichen intently.

Lu Zhou brought the Golden Taixu Mirror out again and circulated his Primal Qi, causing it to buzz.

**Chapter 773: Any Single One of Them Can Easily Smash Your Heads**

A beam of golden light shone out from the Golden Taixu Mirror. It was as though sunlight was shining on Sikong Beichen.

This time, no one was taken aback since they had seen it once. Since they now know the function of the mirror, they quickly turned to look. They saw a Ten-leaf red lotus avatar, but the karmic fire with the seal on Sikong Beichen's Extraordinary Eight Meridians had disappeared.

"Your technique is truly eye-opening, Senior Lu!" Yao Qingquan and Zhao Jianghe bowed at the same time.

Sikong Beichen slowly rose to his feet. He stretched his limbs and tried to circulate his Primal Qi. Although he would need time to heal his burnt meridians, with the karmic fire and the seal gone, this was just a minor problem. Moreover, his meridians were no longer blocked. He cupped his fists at Lu Zhou and said, "Brother Lu, I won't say much. If there's anything the Ninth Temple can do for you in the future, all you have to do is ask."

Lu Zhou put the mirror away. He stroked his beard and said, "I've always admired those who know to adapt."

"Ye Zhen is extremely cunning... The Thousand Willow Monastery's barrier is weak. You must be careful, Senior Lu," Sikong Beichen said.

Lu Zhou could have told Sikong Beichen that he had killed Ye Zhen, but something held him back.

Sure enough...

An elder hurried into the hall at this moment. He bowed before he said, "Flying Star House's Ye Zhen has publicly announced that Meng Changdong has betrayed the Flying Star House. Anyone who manages to capture Meng Changdong, dead or alive, will be rewarded with a heaven-grade weapon!"

The others frowned.

The elder presented a piece of paper. "This is the notice from the Flying Star House."

Lu Zhou did not look at it. "Ye Zhen's alive?"

"Senior Lu, Ye Zhen has always been fine. Why do you say that? This morning, he was just showing his karmic fire to his disciples on Lofty Steep Mountain. With this, I'm sure there'll be a huge influx of cultivators trying to join the Flying Star House again."

Lu Zhou scowled. 'Fortunately, I didn't brag about killing him. Otherwise, it would've been awkward. that. This Ye Zhen is truly cunning. I'll have to look for an opportunity to use the golden mirror on him and reveal him as the demon he is.'

Xia Changqiu said, "Bring Meng Changdong here."

"Understood."

Soon after, Meng Changdong was escorted by two disciples into the great hall.

Sikong Beichen and the two First Seats, naturally, recognized Meng Changdong.

“Meng Changdong?”

Meng Changdong looked at the people gathered in the hall. When he saw Sikong Beichen, he appeared shocked. ‘So, the Thousand Willow Monastery and the Ninth Temple are really working together.’

Xia Changqiu tossed the Flying Star House’s notice to Meng Changdong at this moment.

After reading it, Meng Changdong launched into a fit of rage. He tore the notice to shreds and cursed, “That sneaky Ye Zhen!”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard calmly. “Meng Changdong, you have nowhere else to go. You’ll only be rushing to your death if you leave. Your life is only worth a heaven-grade weapon.

Although this statement was hurtful, it was the truth.

“I can give you a place to belong.”

The others wondered what Lu Zhou was planning.

Lu Zhou said expressionlessly, “The Thousand Willow Monastery is in need of manpower. If you wish to live, joining the Thousand Willow Monastery is your only option.”

Meng Changdong widened his eyes, clearly hesitating.

Yao Qingquan chimed in. “Senior Lu is right. You have nowhere to go. Don’t even think about hiding in a place where you think nobody will be able to find you. With Ye Zhen’s abilities, it won’t be difficult for him to find you. Also, this notice has been made public. Do you think you can still maintain your good name? You should live up to the accusations. What do you say, Meng Changdong?”

Yao Qingquan’s words hit the mark.

At this moment, Lu Zhou waved his arm and restored Mengchangdong’s cultivation base.

Meng Changdong was puzzled.

Lu Zhou said indifferently, “I promised you that I’ll spare your life. You may leave now...”

“...” Where could Meng Changdong go? If he returned to the Flying Star House, he would surely be flayed alive. If he hid, he would have to live as a fugitive. His life stone was still at the Flying Star House. Did he have to take his own life? When he recalled his time in the Flying Star House, he felt upset. After what seemed like hours, he finally bowed and said, “Senior Lu, I have but one request.”

“What is it?”

“The Thousand Willow Monastery is small. There aren’t many disciples here. Moreover, it has trouble looking for successors. It’s difficult to achieve great things here...” Meng Changdong said.

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji. “...”

The truth was often hurtful.

Yao Qingquan hastily said, “In that case, you may join the Ninth Temple.”

Regardless if he was weak, Meng Changdong was still a Nine-leaf cultivator, after all. Most forces would still try to recruit him.

“No... I wish to serve Senior Lu,” Meng Changdong said with a bow.

The others were shocked.

Yao Qingquan immediately gave up. He sighed softly.

Lu Zhou considered it briefly before nodding and said, “Quality over quantity. I have no need for elders as all the positions are filled. Since you’re a Nine-leaf cultivator, I’ll grant you the position of Guardian in my pavilion. You may stay or leave; it’s your choice.”

How infuriating and arrogant! Even a Nine-leaf cultivator was not qualified to become an elder! Just how powerful was this old man’s sect?

Xia Changqiu felt extremely awkward. In comparison, the Thousand Willow Monastery hardly looked presentable.

“I’m willing to offer what meager service I can.”

“Ding! Gained a subordinate. Reward: 1,000 merit points.” (Note: There will no longer be any rewards for recruiting Eight-leaf cultivators or below)

“Congratulations, Guardian Meng.”

“Congratulations, Senior Lu.”

The others cupped their fists.

Meng Changdong sighed softly. Although he was demoted to a smaller sect, at the very least, he would be able to preserve his life.

Lu Zhou looked at Meng Changdong and said, “You know the Flying Star House very well. In your opinion, how should we deal with this current situation?”

Meng Changdong said, “Flying Star House’s Ye Zhen alone is difficult to deal with. Ye Zhen is a man of many schemes. He has many tricks up his sleeves. Even the house master, Chen Tiandu, couldn’t do anything about him. He’s also supported by the Sky Marital Court, among others. The Thousand Willow Monastery and the Ninth Temple alone won’t be a match for them. However, I do have a proposal.”

“Let’s hear it.” Lu Zhou waved his arm.

Sikong Beichen and the two First Seats listened silently as well.

Meng Changdong spoke forthrightly and said, “The Sky Martial Court has investigated the golden lotus domain before. The greatest organization there is known as the Evil Sky Pavilion. The Evil Sky Pavilion’s Master is a great villain who was hunted down by everyone at one point. However, after fighting back the tides of evil on his own several times and supporting the people... Hm? Monastery Master Xia, Elder Tian, why are you looking at me with these weird expressions?”

Xia Changqiu waved his hand and said, "It's nothing... I just feel like I've heard of the Evil Sky Pavilion before, but I can't quite say when. Carry on."

Meng Changdong continued, "From what I know, the Sky Martial Court has already developed the Sky Chariot. We can send someone over to contact the golden lotus domain's Evil Sky Pavilion."

Lu Zhou's expression remained unchanged as he said, "You're from the red lotus domain. Aren't you worried about inviting the wolf into the sheep's pen?"

Meng Changdong shook his head and said, "From what I know, the golden lotus domain's cultivators are limited to the Nine-leaf stage. Overall, they're not powerful. It's impractical for them to invade the red lotus domain. However, this Evil Sky Pavilion can't be underestimated... The Blood Sun Temple's Nine-leaf red lotus karmic fire elite is most likely killed by that great villain."

At this moment, Xia Changqiu suddenly exclaimed, "I remember now!"

"..."

The others were startled. They looked at him curiously.

"What do you remember?"

"I... I think the Master of the Evil Sky Pavilion is Senior Lu..."

"..."

Silence descended in the Fair Hall.

Lu Zhou's expression remained unchanged. He neither admitted nor denied it. Instead, he stood up and said, "Carry on with the discussion. I'm tired."

'I have to return and replenish my extraordinary power.' Lu Zhou left with his hands on his back.

Xia Changqiu immediately summoned Ji Fengxing over and asked, "Fengxing, when Senior Lu wanted to recruit you, which sect did he say it was?"

Ji Fengxing scratched his head and said, "I think it was the Evil... the Evil Sky Pavilion or something..."

Meng Changdong. "..."

How awkward.

Wuwu, who had followed Ji Fengxing here, said with a pout, "It is the Evil Sky Pavilion. Sister Yuan'er always talks about it with me."

The others were intrigued.

Even the Ten-leaf Sikong Beichen was curious.

"What else did she say?"

Wuwu did her best to imitate Little Yuan'er as she said, "I have eight seniors and one junior sister. Any one of them can easily smash your head..."

“...”

## **Chapter 774: The Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain's Wrath**

'Really? Are they so powerful?'

When Wuwu saw the expressions on everyone's faces, she said timidly, "I'm only telling you what she said."

Among these people, the person with the most knowledge of the Evil Sky Pavilion was undoubtedly Meng Changdong. After all, most of the news the Sky Martial Court received would be relayed to the Flying Star House. The two sects had been working closely together since 300 years ago. Meng Changdong was there when the first group of cultivators, including Jiang Wenxu, traveled to the golden lotus domain.

Meng Changdong looked at Wuwu and asked, "Are you sure that's true? The Evil Sky Pavilion is famous in the golden lotus domain. Many will impersonate them."

Xia Changqiu was rendered speechless by Meng Changdong's words. He said incredulously, "Are you saying that Senior Lu is impersonating the Evil Sky Pavilion's Master?"

"No, no, no..." Meng Changdong suddenly realized that he had misspoken and quickly waved his hands.

Based on Lu Zhou's strength and cultivation base, coupled with his two Nine-leaf disciples, was there a need for him to impersonate another person?

Ji Fengxing said knowingly, "It's called keeping a low profile. This is the red lotus domain after all. Ordinary golden lotus cultivators would consider themselves lucky if they weren't hunted down."

The others felt chills running up their spines. They were all red lotus cultivators, but they were going to work with the greatest villain in the golden lotus domain? Was this not akin to asking a tiger for its hide? They were not sure if they had made the right choice. However, faced with death, they could only grit their teeth and take things one step at a time.

Sikong Beichen calmly said, "I've seen Brother Lu's red lotus avatar. How do you explain that?"

Ji Fengxing was stunned. He had no answer to that as well.

Xia Changqiu said softly, "Didn't Senior Lu... manifest a blue lotus earlier?"

Everyone fell deep into their thoughts.

In the end, Xia Changqiu smiled and said, "I think there's no need for us to think too deeply about this... If Senior Lu is someone who doesn't hesitate to commit heinous crimes, there's wouldn't have bothered with the Thousand Willow Monastery." When he saw the others looking at him, he said loudly, "Truth be told, I know many of you here look down on me and the Thousand Willow Monastery... I know that I'm not powerful and my cultivation base is weak, but I'll do anything to guarantee the survival of the Thousand Willow Monastery... Every person should know what they want in life."

Xia Changqiu continued to say, "Knowledge lies in the details. I remember when Senior Lu first came to the Thousand Willow Monastery, Ji Fengxing was willing to risk his life to protect Yu Shangrong, who's

Senior Lu's second disciple. At that time, Senior Lu took a liking to Ji Fengxing and wanted to recruit him. Everyone, I know I'm not the most knowledgeable, but with Ji Fengxing's talent and foundation, why do you think Senior Lu wanted to recruit him?"

"Why?"

The great hall was as silent as a graveyard.

Even the Ten-leaf elite, Sikong Beichen, whose name shocked the lands, was nodding his head. He looked at the floor, seemingly lost in his thoughts.

Meng Changdong recalled Lu Zhou's words and felt awkward. If such a person was truly a heinous criminal without an ounce of conscience or charisma, these elites would not be so willing to follow him.

Xia Changqiu continued saying, "Now that the situation is clear, I'm sure everyone has made up their minds. Since the direction is decided, we shouldn't hesitate any longer... There's no remedy for regrets in this world. If Senior Lu is willing to accept all of us, I would disband the Thousand Willow Monastery and let everyone join the Evil Sky Pavilion. Senior Lu is our only hope."

In fact, Xia Changqiu's words were in line with the thoughts of the people from the Ninth Temple.

The others nodded.

Meng Changdong suddenly recalled something. He looked at Ji Fengxing and asked, "Are those two Nine-leaf cultivators Senior Lu's disciples?"

Ji Fengxing nodded and said, "The Evil Sky Pavilion has ten disciples. Yu Zhenghai wields the desolate-grade Jasper Saber and has recently reached the Nine-leaf stage. He's skilled with the saber, and his attacks are as majestic as the raging waves of the sea. According to Miss Yuan'er, he has more than 100,000 members in his sect, and he has conquered nine provinces in the golden lotus domain."

Yan Qingquan cupped his hands together and said somewhat awkwardly, "Temple Master, he's the man who dealt a great damage to Kong Lu."

Kong Lu was a Ninth Temple elder, after all. When Yu Zhenghai arrived in the red lotus domain, they had some sort of a quarrel and fought each other. However, Sikong Beichen had sentenced Kong Lu to death by beating, hence, he was seldom mentioned. However, this was a testament to Yu Zhenghai's strength.

"The Evil Sky Pavilion's second disciple, Yu Shangrong, wields the heaven-grade Longevity Sword. He's a Nine-leaf cultivator, is skilled with the sword, and his attacks are like the rain, unending and unyielding. I heard there's no one he can't kill."

Sikong Beichen and Yao Qingquan had personally witnessed Yu Shangrong's sword path before.

"Indeed, his sword path can be deemed as unparalleled."

Who would think lowly of Yu Shangrong now that he had Sikong Beichen's praise?

Meng Changdong gulped before he said, "No wonder those two's cultivation bases are so terrifying! When we came on our mission to annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery, the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain's elite, Xie Xuan, was no match for them at all."

Zhao Jianghe said, "Those who achieve mastery first will be hailed greater in the path of cultivation. As a sign of respect, we should address him as 'Mister' from now on."

"Apart from Senior Sikong, all of us should probably adhere to this."

They had to accept the differences between them and be clear about their identities.

The others nodded in agreement.

Sikong Beichen suddenly felt his burden lighten. Although he was no longer bothered by the karmic fire, he still needed to return to rest. Hence, he rose to his feet and said, "Convey my gratitude to Brother Lu. I'll be taking my leave now."

"Rest well, senior Sikong."

The others cupped their fists.

Yao Qingquan and Zhao Jianghe left the Fair Hall, trailing behind Sikong Beichen. The trio then left on the flying chariot.

...

In the dojo at the middle peak of Lofty Steep Mountain, it was peaceful and quiet.

Ye Zhen flipped his palms up before resting them on his legs. His eyes were closed as he cultivated.

The 'ru' character on the wall would glow red every now and then in tandem with his breathing.

Soon enough, script seals appeared and revolved around him

...

Outside, in the sky 20 miles south of Lofty Steep Mountain, roughly 30 green-clad cultivators flew past the towering trees toward Lofty Steep Mountain.

...

At this moment, Jiang Xiaosheng arrived outside the dojo. He prostrated himself and said, "Master, Nie Chi of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain requests an audience."

Ye Zhen opened his eyes slowly and calmly said, "Let them in."

"Understood."

He closed his eyes again.

The 30 green-clad cultivators flew up Lofty Steep Mountain and entered the dojo at the middle peak.

Jiang Xiaosheng opened the door and said, "This way."

The 30 cultivators entered the dojo.

They saw Ye Zhen sitting before the 'ru' character with his eyes closed as he cultivated. They felt annoyed by this.

“Ye Zhen! How can you still remain calm and cultivate at a time like this?” Nie Chi, who was standing at the lead, said indignantly.

Ye Zhen did not open his eyes. He said calmly, “I’m nurturing Expansive Qi that comes from the heart. The heart needs to be calm. If I’m not calm, how can I nurture my Qi?”

One of the green-clad cultivators said, “I don’t think I can talk to you. Where’s House Master Chen? We’ll talk to him instead.”

Ye Zhen opened his eyes slowly and stopped nurturing his Qi. He raised his hands and cupped his fists slightly with a faint smile as he said, “The house master isn’t feeling well. He’s not in a state to receive visitors. I’m taking over the affairs of the Flying Star House for the time being, be it internally or externally.”

“You can’t! You can’t shirk the responsibility of the death of Elder Xie Xuan from the Twelve Sects... How are you going to deal with this?” another green-clad cultivator said.

“A storm may arise from a clear sky; man’s fate is as unpredictable as the weather. I deeply regret Elder Xie Xuan’s death. About this matter, I will give a satisfactory explanation to the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain,” Ye Zhen said.

Nie Chi was much calmer compared to the other green-clad cultivators. He said, “Ye Zhen, Elder Xie is a rare talent in our Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain. The Flying Star House’s Meng Changdong betrayed his sect at the last moment and plotted against Xie Xuan. That’s how the foreign tribesmen managed to achieve their goals. How are you going to explain that?”

Ye Zhen smiled and said, “For every debt, there’s a debtor. You’re all here to solve the problem, not to create more problems. If outbursts of rage can calm you down, please continue.” After he finished speaking, he closed his eyes and placed his hands on his legs again.

Script seals shot out from between Ye Zhen’s fingers and revolved around him again.

The already-irritated green-clad cultivators were further enraged upon seeing Ye Zhen’s attitude.

A young green-clad empty could not suppress his anger and stomped his foot on the floor.

Bam!

The wooden floor could not withstand the force behind the stomp, and the cultivator’s foot easily broke through the floor. “Ye Zhen, you owe us an explanation. Don’t think you can look down on everyone just because you killed a flying turkey. You’re not all that great.”

It was clear that the purpose of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain’s visit was to seek justice for Xie Xuan.

Ye Zhen remained as unmoving as a mountain.

The script seals continued to revolve around him as faint int Primal Qi swirled around him.

He continued cultivating in the presence of so many cultivators.

Nie Chi frowned slightly as he said, “Ye Zhen, what are you trying to prove?”

Ye Zhen opened his eyes. He looked at the damaged floor before shifting his gaze up. His eyes did not betray his thoughts at all. Then, he said in a low voice, "My explanation is simple; you can join Xie Xuan."

Thud!

The wooden doors of the dojo instantly slid shut. The scenic drawings around them were like the ocean. Apart from the script seals revolving around Ye Zhen's body, red lines appeared as well.

"Ye Zhen! You dare!"

Whizz! Whizz! Whizz!

The 30 green-clad cultivators immediately manifested their avatars.

There were three Eight-leaf cultivators, 10 Six-leaf cultivators, and the remaining were below the Five-leaf stage. They were all Nascent Divinity elites.

Several cultivators charged at Ye Zhen. While the others charged toward the scenic drawings.

Ye Zhen's eyes were as calm as still water as he extended his hands. He unleashed the Absolute Heaven Formation without holding back.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Dozens of palm seals landed on Ye Zhen, but it seemed as though they had hit water. The attacks were ineffective.

The cultivators standing at the back wanted to smash their way out of the dojo, but they discovered that their strength was greatly weakened. There was nothing they could do. Their avatars were shackled in the dojo.

It was silent outside the dojo as though a battle was not raging inside.

Nie Chi's frown deepened. He joined his palm together and unleashed all his strength as he cried out, "Kill Ye Zhen!"

"Understood!"

The green-clad cultivators charged out immediately.

At this moment, Ye Zhen manifested his avatar...

### **Chapter 775: Ye Tianxin's Tribulation**

When the avatar appeared, Nie Chi and the green-clad cultivators widened their eyes in shock.

"This is..."

The avatar had nine heads. The heads looked fierce like red dragons and serpents that were brandishing their claws and baring their fangs.

"Nine Infants?" Nie Chi flipped backward. A hint of fear could be seen in his eyes.

That was an avatar with nine serpent heads. Five of the heads bared their fangs and lunged at the cultivators.

The miniature avatars in the dojo were like red delicious meals that entered the Nine Infants' mouth.

"Ahh!"

The cultivators' miserable cry rang in the air.

Inside the Absolute Heaven Formation, the strength of the 30 cultivators from the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain was reduced to that of a child. Every one of them became prey. How difficult could it be for the Nine Infants to devour 30 buns? It was as difficult as lifting one's arm.

Nie Chi was still in shock.

The Absolute Heaven Formation was no ordinary Formation. Apart from weakening opponents and strengthening its user, it also blocked sounds and sight.

Ye Zhen had never liked people approaching or entering the dojo. In recent years, he merely recruited one disciple to attend to his meals and living.

Jiang Xiaosheng had a good understanding of his master's temper, and he lived up to his master's expectations. Although he performed well under his master's strict requirements, he would still be punished. At this moment, he was waiting outside the dojo, unable to hear and see what was going on inside.

The disciples on Lofty Steep Mountain knew the rules of the five-story courtyard at the middle peak. Therefore, no one would visit at a time like this. Regardless, Jiang Xiaosheng was standing guard outside, on a lookout for clueless visitors.

Inside the dojo, the battle seemed to be winding down after the initial chaos and commotion.

Nie Chi's eyeballs looked as though they were going to pop out of their sockets as he stared at the Nine Infants avatar baring their fangs. He was petrified; he fell to his knees and shook uncontrollably.

"Y-you... You're a foreign tribesman?"

Ye Zhen's expression remained unchanged. He sat cross-legged before the 'ru' character.

The others, apart from Nie Chi, were dead.

Ye Zhen sighed softly before he said, "Unfortunately, you chose the wrong path."

The largest head, the one in the middle, lunged at Nie Chi.

Crack!

Ye Zhen waved his hand.

The Nine Infants avatar retreated to his side immediately.

He looked at the Nine Infants avatar's five heads as he muttered to himself, "Although they aren't as delicious as Nine-leaf cultivators, 30 Nascent Divinity realm cultivators are enough."

He waved his arm again. A ring of script energy seals appeared and descended on the Nine Infants avatar. In just a moment, one of the drooping heads slowly lifted. A red light shrouded it, and just like that, there were six upright heads.

The Nine Infants avatar slowly spun before it reverted to its humanoid forms.

The nine leaves on the red lotus shone brightly; the broken leaf was no longer wilted as well.

“Three more heads...” Ye Zhen clenched his fist.

The avatar disappeared.

He wore a regretful expression on his face as he muttered, “Oh, Meng Changdong. Perhaps, I’ve been too merciful.”

...

Meanwhile, in the golden lotus domain.

The golden lotus domain was being harassed by beasts. This was the case for Yi Province as well.

At a relay station.

“Ever since human cultivators in Great Yan began to attempt the Nine-leaf stage, the beasts are getting more and more aggressive. The Sect Master of the Tian Sect, Nan Gongwei, has been going around supporting as many people as he can after he became a Nine-leaf cultivator. The Evil Sky Pavilion’s Mister Fourth wielded a desolate-grade weapon and threw caution to the wind as he lured the huge beasts away. How impressive!” a cultivator said loudly.

“We’ll just have to endure these tough times. When there are more Nine-leaf cultivators, the beasts will no longer be such a big problem,” someone chimed in.

“That’s right. The Evil Sky Pavilion has sent Miss Sixth to look after Yi Province... Great Yan will surely survive this.”

At this moment, someone shouted outside of the relay station, “The beasts are here again!”

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The cultivators at the relay station took flight and headed toward the city walls.

Meanwhile, in front of the main city, a figure clad in white robes who seemed detached from worldly attachments descended on the city wall as he looked at the beasts in the sky. This person had been guarding this place for days.

Ever since the beasts began to harass human cities, Si Wuya had put several measures in place. For example, Nine-leaf cultivators would be mobile reinforcements to make full use of their combat powers. Meanwhile, Eight-leaf cultivators were tasked to look after the cities and protect the barriers without engaging the beasts. This measure worked extremely well.

Ye Tianxin was one such Eight-leaf cultivator who was tasked with protecting the city and its barrier.

As Ye Tianxin looked at the flying beasts in the skies, many cultivators gathered behind her.

“Greetings, Miss Sixth.”

Ye Tianxin’s eyes flashed for a moment before she nodded and lightly said, “Hello.”

“Miss Sixth, that looks like a huge beast!” someone said worriedly.

“Don’t worry. Act according to the plan. All we have to do is stall for time and prevent it from damaging the barrier while we wait for Nine-leaf cultivators to arrive,” Ye Tianxin said as she looked at the horizon.

Indeed, an eye-catching huge beast could be seen in the distance, flying among the smaller beasts toward the barrier.

“Kill them.”

The garrison cultivators took flight and killed the beasts.

The smaller beasts were nothing to be afraid of.

Since the information of beasts dropping life hearts became public, cultivators were rather enthusiastic about killing beasts. After all, even a small life heart was extremely precious.

At this moment, a flying beast with a wingspan of dozens of meters charged toward the city.

Ye Tianxin was puzzled. ‘Is there a Nine-leaf cultivator in Yi Province?’

Bam!

The huge beast’s attacks were not something ordinary cultivators could withstand. They retreated as ripples appeared in the sky.

Sheng Yu’s body was completely red. It resembled a mountain chicken and had the cry of a deer.

Despite the temperature, the cultivators shivered as they looked at it.

“Stay inside the barrier. I’ll deal with it.” Ye Tianxin leaped out, drawing a white arc in the sky. She wielded the Amorous Hoop, leaving ripples in her wake.

Boom!

She cast the Blue Wave Technique, and a tidal wave of energy struck Sheng Yu.

Sheng Yu screeched as several of its feathers fell.

“As expected of the Evil Sky Pavilion’s Miss Sixth!”

“It’s unbelievable that an Eight-leaf cultivator possesses such strength.”

In the eyes of outsiders, Eight-leaf cultivators from the Evil Sky Pavilion were always more powerful than their peers.

Ye Tianxin withdrew her Amorous Hoop and looked at Sheng Yu.

After feeling the pain from the attack, Sheng Yu flew higher and higher up in the sky.

“Miss Sixth, duck!”

Although Ye Tianxin was an extraordinary Eight-leaf cultivator, it was almost impossible for her to win against a huge beast.

Ye Tianxin retreated as a wave of energy surged.

The Amorous Hoop spun above the wave of energy.

Sheng Yu suddenly stopped and let out a deafening screech that resounded in the entire city.

Many cultivators could not withstand the impact and plummeted from the sky. Meanwhile, the low-rank cultivators on the ground were bleeding profusely from their eyes.

“Fall back!”

Ye Tianxin understood the situation they were in; it was dire. She looked up and said, “I’ll stall it. The rest of you, kill the smaller beasts.”

“Understood.”

Ye Tianxin was skilled and bold. She flew out of the barrier.

Meanwhile, Sheng Yu’s attention seemed to be focused on Ye Tianxin. Perhaps, it was because she hurt it earlier. It flapped its wings wildly as it flew toward Ye Tianxin. Its sharp beak and claws glowed with a red light. It screeched again.

The cultivators in the vicinity felt their scalps tingle and their blood essence boil.

Someone shouted, “Call for help! Miss Sixth won’t be able to hold out for long!”

“Nine-leaf cultivators would need, at least, an hour to arrive in this place on the flying chariot. We have to do something to stall for time until then!”

The Nascent Divinity cultivators in Yi Province City flew over.

Humans were unprecedentedly united in dealing with the beasts.

Soon after, there were 100 cultivators gathered on the city walls.

The cultivators with cultivation bases at or below the Divine Court realm were tasked with dealing with the smaller beasts.

On the other hand, the Nascent Divinity cultivators arranged themselves in a huge phalanx as they shot toward Yu Sheng.

“Miss Sixth, we’re coming!”

The cultivators unleashed their power as they charged toward Sheng Yu.

Energy sabers, palm seals, and energy swords swept toward the huge beast like a tidal wave.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Ye Tianxin had no time to catch her breath as she flew up again.

Sheng Yu screeched again.

The phalanx of Nascent Divinity realm cultivators activated their protective energies and blocked the sound wave.

Ye Tianxin activated her avatar.

A slender female Eight-leaf golden lotus avatar stood proudly in the air.

She projected her voice and said, "We're too close to the city. I'll lure it away."

Sheng Yu stared at Ye Tianxin intently as though it was looking at a delicious meal before it frantically chased after her.

"This is bad! It's going after Miss Sixth!"

"Look at Miss Sixth's golden lotus."

The eight golden lotus leaves were full and dazzling. They spun as though the ninth leaf was sprouting.

Since Sheng Yu was a flying beast, its speed in the air was naturally shocking. Every time it flapped its wings, it would stir up a gale.

Ye Tianxin flew away from the city. In just a blink of an eye, she was already more than 10 miles away from the city.

The 100 Nascent Divinity cultivators dared not scatter. They maintained their formation as they gave chase.

Sheng Yu was too fast. It did not take long before it caught up to Ye Tianxin. It swiped at her Eight-leaf avatar with its claws.

The 100-foot avatar was only half the size of Sheng Yu.

Boom!

Ye Tianxin grunted as she fell. She nearly spat out a mouthful of blood.

The others exclaimed in shock.

"Protect Miss Sixth!"

"Go!"

The 100 cultivators approached the beast. All of them manifested their avatars at this moment. Avatars with one leaf to seven leaves formed a wall in the sky. It was an impressive sight.

When Ye Tianxin descended, she felt her heart stir slightly when she saw the wall of avatars.

There were many things in the world that required immediate actions, leaving no time for people to be cautious.

Boom!

Sheng Yu's feathers were ruffled as it flapped its wings and screeched.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The avatars were sent flying, and the cultivators spat out blood from the backlash. These 100 cultivators were no match for Sheng Yu at all.

Ye Tianxin's frown deepened. She fought back the pain as she looked at the others. After a beat, she manifested her avatar again after she flew up into the sky.

Strangely, after she manifested her avatar, Sheng Yu seemed to ignore her. Instead, it continued charging toward the other cultivators' avatars.

More cultivators were injured when their avatars were attacked by Sheng Yu.

Ye Tianxin's heart sank. She gritted her teeth and channeled more power into her golden lotus. The golden lotus spun along with its eight leaves as its aura leaked out.

As expected, Sheng Yu turned around.

"Fall back! Don't follow me! I'll lure it away!" Ye Tianxin cried out as she flew to the side.

Realization dawned on the others at this moment. With this realization, complicated feelings arose in their hearts.

"She's going to sprout a leaf now? Is she crazy?"

"Miss Sixth is trying to lure the huge beast away with the aura of a Nine-leaf cultivator..."

"She'll certainly die!"

The cultivators gathered again. They felt conflicted.

"Are you afraid of dying?"

"Not at all! If I was, I would be hiding in the city right now."

"In that case, let's carry on!"

"Let's go!"

Although they were injured, they did not retreat. They fell into formation and gave chase.

...

Ye Tianxin flew at top speed as she tried to lure Sheng Yu away. When she judged that they were far enough from the city, she prepared to retract her avatar. Alas, things were not as simple as she had imagined. Her heart sank when she discovered she could not retract her avatar, and the golden lotus was picking up speed as it spun.

### **Chapter 776: Another Nine-leaf Cultivator from the Evil Sky Pavilion**

Ye Tianxin hovered high in the air. She remained motionless.

Her white hair fluttered in the wind. Her snow-white robes made her look like a budding jade tree covered in snow. She looked ethereal and pure, and her bearing was dignified.

Sheng Yu flapped its wings and charged toward her with glowing claws.

Ye Tianxin was never someone to submit to fate. She used her golden lotus and channeled energy into the Amorous Hoop. Instead of retreating, she advanced.

Boom!

The human and the beast collided.

The Amorous Hoop unleashed a powerful energy at this moment.

Sheng Yu screeched in pain.

Within the area of 10 miles, the trees and ground shook, and there were landslides.

The weaker beasts shuddered in fear and prostrated themselves on the ground.

Ye Tianxin did not escape unscathed from the powerful collision as well. She grunted before blood trickled down the edge of her lips. It was a stark contrast against her white robes.

Her 100-foot Eight-leaf golden lotus avatar moved back.

At this moment, she discovered her golden lotus was spinning at a higher speed now.

“Why is it so fast?” Ye Tianxin was there when her master demonstrated the way to reach the Nine-leaf stage, therefore, she was not completely clueless about the process. Under normal circumstances, the golden lotus should not be spinning so quickly at this time. This is the stage where the golden lotus would absorb her lifespan, which she did not have much of. Ever since she had been hit by the golden dragon script seal, her lifespan had shortened considerably. It was an understatement to say she did not have many years at her disposal.

1,200 years.

Even if Sheng Yu did not kill her, the golden lotus would kill her.

She prepared to cast the Blue Waves Technique again when she saw the phalanx of 100 Nascent Divinity cultivators flying toward her.

“Miss Sixth, run!”

Energy sabers, energy swords, palm seals, script seals, and rune seals sailed toward Sheng Yu at this moment as it was reeling back.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!

Sheng Yu was already injured by Ye Tianxin; it became agitated by these attacks. It began to flap its wings in a frenzy; parrying the attacks, Primal Qi, and energy blasts. The wind it stirred up was like a tornado as it spun out and swept through the Nascent Divinity cultivators.

The cultivators cried out as they were sent flying back. More than half of them spat out blood. Meanwhile, those at or below the Five-leaf stage felt numb in their dantian’s sea of Qi.

Sheng Yu was too powerful; it was comparable to the manmans in Mo City. Even an Eight-leaf cultivator was no match for it, let alone these cultivators below the Seven-leaf stage.

Sheng Yu dove and broke the cultivators' formation. Its eyes seemed to burn with flames, and it grew excited when it saw Ye Tianxin's golden lotus avatar. It flapped its wings again, stirring up violent gusts of wind, as it flew toward Ye Tianxin.

At this moment, Ye Tianxin no longer had the strength to fend off Sheng Yu. Under such circumstances, only Yu Shangrong who constantly walked on a knife's edge would be able to face it calmly. Moreover, things were even more difficult for her since her golden lotus was in the process of sprouting the ninth leaf. Even someone as powerful as Mingshi Yin needed a powerful protector like their master to guard him when he was attempting the Nine-leaf stage, let alone her. She did not know how she was going to survive this. She only watched with widened eyes as Sheng Yu charged toward her.

Ye Tianxin was sent flying again. The impact made her blood essence boil, and her avatar looked as though it was going to shatter at any moment. Meanwhile, the golden lotus had already begun to absorb her lifespan. Wrinkles appeared on her face; her peerless appearance was swiftly aging.

She watched as Sheng Yu prepared to charge again. She was suddenly filled with the certainty that her life was going to end. However, she did not feel regretful. After all, she should have died a long time ago. She was fortunate enough to have lived until now. She would not ask for more.

The strong wind rustled her silver hair as her consciousness gradually faded. At this moment of passing, she understood what life was about. She spread her arms out and sighed deeply, completely calm. She had given up on resisting.

Sheng Yu charged at her with great momentum, intent on devouring the delicacy before its eyes.

When it seemed like hope was lost, a strange cry rang in the air.

A body so huge that it seemed like a floating city appeared in the sky.

"What's that?"

The cultivators were stunned. They had never seen a beast of this size before. When they looked up, they only saw its massive underbelly and head.

The beast's fur was white with yellow streaks at the side. The sunlight made it look even more imposing like an overlord.

Sheng Yu came to an abrupt halt. Its feathers seemed to be standing on its hand. Even with its size, it still had to look up at the colossal beast. At this moment, it looked insignificant before the colossal beast. Its excited, hungry, and predatory gaze was replaced with one of terror. After a beat, it flapped its wing frantically, trying to flee.

Whoosh!

At this time, the colossal beast swiped with its claw at Sheng Yu that was only one-third of its size.

Boom!

A loud explosion thundered in the air when the claws struck.

Trees fell as clouds of dust rose.

In just a moment, Sheng Yu was pinned to the ground by the gigantic beast.

The smaller beasts in the area looked like flies in comparison. They were killed from the impact alone.

When the humongous beast swept its tail out it sent the weaker beasts flying, killing them in the process.

This crushing momentum could only be generated by absolute strength.

The cultivators present on the scene watched in awe and stunned silence. Dread crept into their hearts when they regained their senses.

“This is bad! The transition to the Nine-leaf stage has attracted a more powerful beast! We’re done!”

“I don’t think even Mister Fourth can defeat this beast.”

Ye Tianxin’s 100-foot Eight-leaf avatar was right in front of the gigantic beast at this moment.

Meanwhile, Ye Tianxin’s height was only the length of the beast’s nostril.

When Ye Tianxin saw the colossal beast, she could not help but feel slightly excited. At the same time, her hope was rekindled. However, her current situation was too optimistic. She had aged to the point where she struggled to even speak. “Ch... Cheng Huang...”

Cheng Huang cried out. Then, it glanced at the struggling Sheng Yu under its claws.

Sheng Yu continued to trash and struggle, but it was futile. It could not break free of Cheng Huang’s hold at all.

Cheng Huang then looked at Ye Tianxin’s avatar and golden lotus.

At this moment, dozens of cultivators at and above the Five-leaf stage flew toward Ye Tianxin, clearly determined to make a last-ditch effort to save her.

Ye Tianxin turned around and said as loudly as she could, “Stand back!”

The cultivators stopped and looked at Cheng Huang, stunned. Soon after, realization dawned on them; it seemed like Cheng Huang was not hostile.

As soon as Cheng Huang appeared, all the beasts within ten miles had fled. Apart from Sheng Yu’s cries, no other noises could be heard.

Cheng Huang lowered its head and brought its nose closer to Ye Tianxin before it sniffed her. Then, it cried out; its cry was solemn and stirring.

Boom!

All of a sudden, Cheng Huang raised its paws and brought it down on Sheng Yu.

Just like that, Cheng Yu was cleaved into two.

The cultivators felt chills run up their spines. Sheng Yu, a beast that even a peak Eight-leaf cultivator could not deal with, was as fragile as a piece of paper in front of Cheng Huang.

After Sheng Yu died, a glowing red and translucent gemstone hovered in the air. The sun shone on it, making it look even more dazzling.

### **Chapter 777: Special Karmic Fire**

“Sheng Yu’s life heart...”

The cultivators looked at the heart of Sheng Yu with bright eyes. They knew how precious the life heart was. In the cultivation world, those who wanted to become Nine-leaf cultivators coveted life hearts.

At this moment, Ye Tianxin undoubtedly needed this life heart the most.

“The fairfolk’s Cheng Huang. The legend is real! No wonder it’s not hostile!”

“Miss Sixth is saved! Great Yan is saved!”

The others looked at Cheng Huang excitedly. Soon enough, their excitement was replaced by shock, horror, and confusion.

Cheng Huang lowered its head and opened its mouth.

Crack!

Just like that, Sheng Yu’s life heart was in Cheng Huang’s mouth.

Crunch! Crunch! Crunch!

Cheng Huang chomped on the life heart.

“...”

The cultivators were stunned speechless. They did not expect this at all.

Ye Tianxin’s fingers trembled slightly. Although she did not understand Cheng Huang’s action, she was accepting of it. A beast was a beast, after all. It had helped her a lot; how could she ask for more? She sighed. “Perhaps, this is fate.”

The golden lotus continued to pick up speed as it spun.

At this moment, Cheng Huang groaned. Its stomach seemed to be convulsing as it heaved. It seemed as though something was struggling to break free from inside its body. All of sudden, its mouth parted slightly.

A life heart that was more dazzling than Sheng Yu’s life heart appeared.

The others exclaimed in shock.

“That’s Cheng Huang’s Heart?”

It was undoubtedly the most beautiful life heart they had ever seen. It glowed with a vibrant light and resembled emeralds. It seemed to radiate faith, eternity, and luck.

The cultivators recalled the legend of Cheng Huang; Cheng Huang that resembled a white fox would grant its rider 2,000 years of life. Did it... have something to do with Cheng Huang’s Heart instead?

Ye Tianxin asked in confusion, "What are you doing?"

Cheng Huang lowered its head and pushed the gemstone toward Ye Tianxin with its snout before it cried out.

"I don't need this!" Ye Tianxin turned her head to the side stubbornly. If she had to sacrifice Cheng Huang in order to become a Nine-leaf cultivator, she would rather die.

Cheng Huang lowered its head again and nudged the life heart over.

Ye Tianxin was startled. The life heart suddenly split open before spots of light flew into her mouth. In just an instant, she felt a great surge of vitality flowing into her Extraordinary Eight Meridians. Her nearly dried up dantian's sea of Qi was quickly filled by this vitality. With this, her lifespan increased. Her skin began to turn supple as her wrinkles faded. Her eyes were as clear as water, and her delicate features were apparent again. She was healing at a visible rate.

The others were greatly shocked. They were in awe as they watched the scene before their eyes. Their attention was focused on the golden lotus at this moment.

The golden lotus suddenly slowed down.

Ye Tianxin was focused on her golden lotus. A radiant ring rebounded from the base of the Eight-leaf golden lotus.

The others watched unblinkingly. Upon seeing this, they knew the leaf was about to sprout.

Ye Tianxin could tell this was the most crucial step in the leaf-sprouting process.

At this time, Cheng Huang made another shocking move. All of a sudden, it stomped on the ground, shooting up into the sky.

The others looked up.

Swoosh!

It opened its mouth and blew out a stream of Primal Qi after it inhaled deeply.

In just a blink of an eye, the area within 100 meters was filled with rich Primal Qi and energy.

The golden ring continued to rebound.

The 100-foot avatar grew larger until it reached 150 feet. The lotus grew larger as well; the ninth leaf could be seen on it.

Upon seeing this, the cultivators present on the scene were so overwhelmed with emotions that they began to tear up. It seemed as though they were even happier than if they were breaking through.

"Congratulations, Miss Sixth!"

Ye Tianxin looked at the others and smiled as she said, "Thank you for your help, everyone."

The cultivators thought this was the end of it. However, Cheng Huang continued to blow out Primal Qi.

The Primal Qi filled the golden lotus avatar as vitality began to leak from the lotus.

Ye Tianxin felt the great surge of vitality and recalled her master's demonstration.

"A replenishment of vitality?"

The other cultivators were shocked.

"Miss Sixth, you can focus on regulating your breathing. We'll guard you!"

The cultivators took up positions around Ye Tianxin.

Meanwhile, Cheng Huang was looking at her as well.

After an hour, Ye Tianxin could feel that not only her life was restored, but it seemed to have increased as well.

At this moment, Cheng Huang spat out a ball of green light that descended on the golden lotus. Soon enough, golden flames surged out from the nine lotus leaves. A hint of green could be seen in the golden flames as well.

Ye Tianxin glanced at Cheng Huang. It seemed as though it had a satisfied expression on its face, as though it was pleased with a job well done. 'Did Cheng Huang know that the karmic fire would rise from my golden lotus from the beginning?'

"Karmic fire!"

The cultivators were envious.

When the golden flames were stabilized, Ye Tianxin waved her arm and withdrew her avatar. Then, she cupped her fists at the others. "Thank you, everyone."

"There's no need to thank us, Miss Sixth. You've guarded Yi Province for so long while we didn't do much. In fact, we almost dragged you down with us," one of the cultivators said as he scratched his head.

The injured cultivators flew here at this time.

Ye Tianxin said, "That might be true, but without your help, I would've been killed by Sheng Huang before Cheng Huang arrived."

The others were moved when they heard her words.

Ye Tianxin looked at the injured cultivators and said, "I'll write referrals. The injured may recuperate in the Evil Sky Pavilion."

"Thank you, Miss Sixth."

The cultivators bowed.

At this moment, Cheng Huang let out a jubilant cry. Then, its body began to contort.

The others looked at Cheng Huang in confusion.

After a moment, someone said, "I get it now! The golden lotus needs 1,200 years of life, and Sheng Yu's life heart only granted 1,000 years of life. Cheng Huang consumed Sheng Yu's life heart and offered up its own heart! The fairfolk's Cheng Huang is an intelligent guardian beast!"

"It's shrinking."

Cheng Huang was shrinking swiftly. In just an instant, it was two times smaller than its original size.

"Sheng Yu's life heart must be insufficient. Moreover, it offered up a lot of Primal Qi as well. However, it should be fine. It'd be able to grow larger as it gained more years."

Cheng Huang stopped shrinking. Although it was now half of its original size, it was still huge compared to humans. Its current size was twice Sheng Yu's size.

Ye Tianxin flew in front of Cheng Huang and petted it. "It's all thanks to you."

Cheng Huang let out a cry.

Ye Tianxin turned around and said, "Let's return to the city for now. It's safer there."

"Yes, Miss Sixth."

"Since Cheng Huang is here, I'll clear up the beasts in the eight cities of Yi Province with it. Return without me," Ye Tianxin said.

"Yi Province is safe with you around, Miss Sixth!"

"Take care!"

The others bowed. After bidding farewell to her, they returned to the city.

Ye Tianxin flew on Cheng Huang's back and stroked its mane. Although Cheng Huang was smaller, its back was still dozens of meters long.

"It's your time to shine today."

Cheng Huang pushed away from the ground.

The sudden flight caught Ye Tianxin off guard. A gust of wind blew against her face, causing her to laugh. She activated her protective energy and said, "You do this all the time."

...

In the afternoon.

The cultivators in Yi Province's eight cities witnessed a shocking scene.

The news was quickly sent to relay stations.

The 10,000-year Cheng Huang swept the beasts away with a crushing momentum and stunned the entire Yi Province.

...

At this moment, Lu Zhou, who was in the red lotus domain, received a series of notifications.

“Ding! Worshipped by 1,500 individuals. Reward: 1,500 merit points.”

“Ding! Worshipped by 20,500 individuals. Reward: 20,500 merit points.”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and contemplated the sudden barrage of notifications.

He nodded in satisfaction. Although he did not know which disciple of his was being worshipped, he knew he or she must have pulled off an incredible feat. ‘I should reward this disciple when I return. Since I’m in a good mood, I should try my hand at the lucky draw now.’

Lu Zhou opened the item column and scrolled down. He saw something that he had not seen for a long time, and excitement brewed in his heart.

“A limited treasure chest?!”

### **Chapter 778: Red Hand Treasure Chest**

Lu Zhou had not seen the appearance of the limited treasure chest for a long time now. The last time it appeared, it contained many treasures so he expected the same of this treasure chest. He hoped this time the key open this treasure chest would not be his disciples’ weapons again. He could not bear thinking about how long it would take him to travel back and forth if that was the case.

Lu Zhou checked the price. It cost 10,000 merit points. How was he going to carry on living if the prices of the items continued to increase while his income remained the same? Fortunately, he had gained many merit points earlier.

Merit points: 51,440.

“Purchase.” Lu Zhou, naturally, did not hesitate to purchase the limited-time treasure box. 10,000 merit points were instantly deducted from his account. He did not feel pained by this.

A flash of light appeared. After it subsided, a dark box could be seen on the table.

At the same time, the system dashboard started its countdown. He had seven days.

Lu Zhou walked over and studied the outer appearance of the box. ‘I hope I don’t need anything special to open the box. Si Wuya’s not here with me, and I don’t want to strain my brain over this matter. It’s not worth it to spend too much time on this.’

After studying it for a long time, he confirmed there were no patterns on the box. This meant he did not need his disciples’ weapons to act as keys. ‘What a relief! However, how am I supposed to open it?’

Apart from a small opening on top of the box, the other five sides were completely smooth.

Lu Zhou frowned slightly. ‘The opening has to be the keyhole...’

Lu Zhou brought Unnamed out. He channeled Primal Qi into it and drew it across the box.

Boom!

Sparks flew.

The treasure chest was as tough as the previous one. This meant that it could be used as a weapon as well. It was comparable to a desolate-grade weapon.

He wondered if it could be turned into a pair of boxing gloves as well. Otherwise, he could only attach a chain to it and flail it around. He would give it to whichever disciple who wanted it.

Lu Zhou no longer wasted time and entered his meditative state. He knew it would not be easy to unlock the treasure chest, and it would probably need some sort of collective effort to open it.

...

Time continued to pass.

Early the next morning.

Lu Zhou summoned his four disciples, Meng Changdong, Xia Changqiu, Tian Buji, Ji Fengxing, and Wuwu to his courtyard. He tossed the treasure chest on the ground.

The others gathered around the dark box and looked at it intently. They had no idea what it was.

Meng Changdong cupped his fists and asked, "Senior Lu, what's this?"

"A treasure chest. I'll need all of you to think of a way to unlock it."

"That's easy! Master, allow me!" Little Yuan'er raised her foot and shrouded it with energy before she stomped on the box.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Little Yuan'er stomped on it three times in a row.

"..."

The others were speechless as they watched her.

The box sank into the ground. Otherwise, it was completely undamaged.

Little Yuan'er grunted and said, "We should ask Eldest Senior Brother and Second Senior Brother to cut it open..."

"..."

'This little girl is still violent even after all this time. She's too spirited!'

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "This item is too tough. It's almost like a desolate-grade weapon. It's futile to use force."

Yu Zhenghai nodded and said, "It's just like that box we were shown the last time. Master, where did you get this?"

"Don't ask about things that you're not supposed to," Lu Zhou replied without any inflection in his tone.

Yu Zhenghai laughed awkwardly. It was not surprising that his master had treasures. It was due to this that many eyed the Evil Sky Pavilion covetously in the past. The ten great sects attacked the Evil Sky

Pavilion under the pretext of ridding the world of evil when what they really wanted was the treasures in the Evil Sky Pavilion.

“We should leave brain puzzles to Seventh Junior Brother.” Yu Zhenghai stepped away.

Yu Shangrong crossed his arms. He looked at Yu Zhenghai and nonchalantly said, “I’m skilled at killing. I’m afraid this is something only Seventh Junior Brother can solve.”

Lu Zhou had expected this. He did not think they would be able to come up with any ground-breaking ideas anyway. He shifted his attention to Xia Changqiu, Tian Buji, and Meng Changdong before he asked, “What do you think?”

Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji shook their heads, indicating they were clueless as well.

Meng Changdong exclaimed, filled with praise, “This is my first time seeing such a sturdy desolate-grade weapon. The opening should be the keyhole.”

Little Yuan’er rolled her eyes. “Aren’t you stating the obvious? Even I can tell that much.”

Yu Shangrong said as soon as Little Yuan’er finished speaking, “Elder Meng, don’t take this to heart. This is how my Ninth Junior Sister always behaves. Over time, you’ll discover that she respects the old and loves the young.”

Upon being praised, Little Yuan’er giggled in delight. “Thank you for the compliment, Second Senior Brother. You’re the one who knows me best.”

Meng Changdong. “...”

Lu Zhou shook his head. ‘Looks like it’ll take a while before I can open this treasure chest.’

When Lu Zhou was about to retrieve the box, Conch frowned and pointed at it with an unnatural expression on her face. “T-this... I’ve seen this before!”

The others turned to look at Conch in shock.

Lu Zhou was inwardly shocked as well. How could Conch recognize something from the system? Was the system deliberately guiding him down a certain path? Fate worked in strange ways. When he noticed her strange expression, he slowly said, “There’s no rush. Think about it carefully and study it.”

He waved his hand. The treasure chest flew up and hovered in front of Conch.

Conch shook her head and said, “I don’t remember anything...”

“...”

Lu Zhou sighed. The box landed on the ground.

Conch said vaguely, “The key... I remember the key.”

“Where is it?” Lu Zhou asked.

“The palace.”

‘The palace?’ Lu Zhou was shocked. ‘Am I supposed to enter Great Tang’s palace?’

Meng Changdong regarded Conch with a complicated gaze as he said, "Senior Lu, your tenth disciple, I mean, Miss Tenth, has she been to the palace before?"

"She's from the red lotus domain. I took pity on her and accepted her as my disciple. I taught her cultivation so that she could protect herself and live a peaceful life," Lu Zhou replied.

"Conch is gifted in the tongue of beasts and music. Elder Meng, you're knowledgeable. Have you heard anything about this before?" Lu Zhou thought he might find out something about Conch or her family.

"The gifts of music and the beasts' tongue are rare. To my knowledge, there's only one person with such gifts. She's called Luo Xuan; she's a true genius."

Ji Fengxing immediately chimed in, "Yes, yes, yes. I remember it now! The genius of the Sky Martial Court. Everyone called her a lunatic back then. The Sky Shuttle, the red transporter, and the Daoist veins, she was the one who created them."

Yu Zhenghai recalled his traits as a Wuqian. There were some similarities with Conch, especially the ability to come back to life. When he was just resurrected, his memories were blurry and his cultivation base had returned to the initial stage. Then, he posited, "Is Conch Luo Xuan's reincarnation?"

The others were shocked by Yu Zhenghai's theory.

Little Yuan'er had never considered this. She started in shock.

Meanwhile, Conch looked at everyone in confusion. She felt slightly aggrieved; she did not want the theory to be true.

Meng Changdong laughed. He shook his head and said, "That's impossible."

"How so?" Ji Fengxing wondered.

"Luo Xuan isn't dead!"

### **Chapter 779: Luo Xuan Isn't Dead**

Ji Fengxing exclaimed in shock, "She's not dead? H-how's that possible? What is the Sky Martial Court searching for all these years, then?"

Meng Changdong said, "Many of the Sky Martial Court's explorations had great impacts on the original cultivation systems. This was especially true after the speculation that foreign worlds appeared. The Sky Martial Court was condemned in word and shunned by the major sects. Everyone was of the opinion that the red lotus was the only lotus there is. Luo Xuan was labeled as a lunatic by the masses. Then, she went missing for a long time. Slightly more than 10 years ago, my friend in the Sky Martial Court told me that Luo Xuan has been found. The Sky Martial Court had imprisoned her."

Lu Zhou looked at Meng Changdong appreciatively. He felt that he had recruited quite a useful guardian. He asked, "Are you sure?"

"Since I've decided to follow you, Senior Lu, I'll naturally tell you everything I know. To answer your question, I'm not sure. The information needs to be verified," Meng Changdong answered honestly.

"I'll leave the investigation to you."

“Understood.” Meng Changdong was an elder of the Flying Star House, after all. He had connections in the Sky Martial Court and was more knowledgeable compared to the others.

Lu Zhou turned to look at Conch. If Meng Changdong’s words were true, it was impossible for Conch to be Luo Xuan.

Xia Changqiu sighed and said, “Conch’s talents are similar to Luo Xuan’s... Could she be Luo Xuan’s descendant?”

The others nodded. This was a plausible theory.

Yu Zhenghai said, “If she’s only a descendant, her abilities and memories shouldn’t be in this awakening state. There are many wonders in the world. Perhaps, Little Junior Sister is just a genius. It’s not impossible for two people to possess the same abilities.”

“There’s no need to guess... I’ll get to the bottom of Conch’s background myself.” Lu Zhou glanced at Conch.

‘Since Conch remembers the palace, this means she had been to the palace before. There should be someone there who knows her. We should be able to find the key to the box there.’

“Conch, you remember the key, right?”

Conch nodded and answered, “Pure gold.”

“Pure gold?”

Meng Changdong joined in and said, “Pure gold is the truest gold. Indeed, it can only be found in the palace. The keyhole is extremely small. It looks like a... hairpin.”

“Guardian Meng is right.” Xia Changqiu nodded in agreement.

“Pure gold has always been the preferred ornament to showcase one’s status. Moreover, it’s suitable to be made into ornaments.”

Conch nodded. “Mhm!”

A vague idea appeared in Lu Zhou’s mind. However, the palace was huge, and its defenses could not be investigated. Was he supposed to sneak into the palace and the harem? ‘I don’t think that this course of action suits my style.’

After mulling over it for a moment, Lu Zhou came up with a rough plan. “If there’s nothing else, that will be all.”

“Understood.”

The others bowed and left.

...

At dusk.

Baa!

A long bleat resounded through the Thousand Willow Monastery; a beast had appeared above the Thousand Willow Monastery.

The Thousand Willow Monastery disciples and elders who were cultivating in front of the Fair Hall were shocked when they looked up and saw the beast.

“It’s a beast! Look out!”

The Thousand Willow Monastery’s Formation could not compare to those in the major sects. It was always disastrous when a beast decided to come knocking.

They were slightly relieved that the beast was not too big.

One elder said hastily, “Look for Mister First and Mister Second. Tell them to catch this beast! Its Qi is incredibly auspicious, and it’s suitable to be used as a mount,” Xia Changqiu said when he saw the beast that was radiating auspicious Qi.

At this moment, Lu Zhou’s stern voice rang from his courtyard. “Come here.”

Baa!

Whitzard flew down obediently and landed in front of Lu Zhou.

The members of the Thousand Willow Monastery were shocked. Was this not a beast? Why was it as obedient as a little lamb?

Lu Zhou raised his hand and petted Whitzard. He could not help but scowl when he saw a few wounds on its body. However, the wounds were not fresh. It was clear it had sustained these wounds during the early parts of its journey. Indeed, it was not an easy feat to cross the Endless Ocean. He continued petting Whitzard as he said, “You’ve done well.”

Whitzard gave a low cry. It did not seem to mind.

“It’s been tamed?” Ji Fengxing, who had hurried over, rubbed his eyes.

“If I didn’t witness this with my own eyes, I would never believe someone is capable of subduing a beast with just two words.”

The others looked at Whitzard’s submissive behavior incredulously.

Lu Zhou unleashed the Heavenly Writing’s extraordinary power and healed Whitzard’s wounds. After that, he leaped on Whitzard’s back and announced, “I’m going on a short trip.”

“Safe journey, Senior Lu.”

The Thousand Willow Monastery disciples looked at Lu Zhou with eyes shining with admiration.

Lu Zhou and Whitzard instantly disappeared in the horizon.

At this moment, Little Yuan’er flew over to Fair Hall. She scratched her head and said, “I thought I heard our Whitzard’s cry earlier. Has anyone seen it?”

“...”

...

In the sky.

Lu Zhou rode on Whizard's back and flew toward Guannei Circuit. He wondered inwardly, 'Since Whizard is here, where's Ji Liang? They're both legendary mounts so their speed should be the same...'

Lu Zhou opened the system dashboard and checked again. Whizard's status reflected its arrival. However, Ji Liang's status still remained as 'rushing toward the red lotus domain'.

'I hope it's not devoured by some oceanic beasts. In any case, Whizard arrived just in time. I'd be exhausted if I had to fly everywhere on my own.'

Lu Zhou arrived in Guannei Circuit at sundown.

During his time in the red lotus domain, he had learned about Great Tang's geography.

He knew where the palace was located. Hence, he flew directly to the palace.

When he entered the capital, he dismounted from Whizard and waited in the city. He concealed his aura and leaped into the Royal City when it was time.

'Daoist veins? The palace's defenses are certainly superior to the other sects. I have to be cautious...'

Fortunately, he had the Heavenly Writing's power of hearing. With this power, no sounds could escape his ears.

Lu Zhou did not travel along the city wall. Instead, he kept himself airborne at a low altitude. He had Deadly Strike Cards and Impeccable Cards. Even if he was exposed, he could still leave. Naturally, he knew the palace had many crouching tigers and hidden dragons; it was best not to cause a commotion if it was possible.

Lu Zhou easily avoided the eunuchs and palace girls going about the place.

Occasionally, he could hear the low-frequency sounds of energy being generated above the Royal City. This indicated the presence of Godly Archers.

In no time at all, he found himself before the Ganlu Hall.

'Ganlu Hall... Is this where the emperor studies? Why isn't such an important place guarded?'

Lu Zhou unleashed his power of hearing. He concealed the blue light glowing around his ears. It was completely silent in the vicinity except for some faint noise and heartbeat from above. "Someone's up there."

Lu Zhou usually frowned upon sneaky tactics but desperate times called for desperate measures. 'You can only blame yourself for being unlucky.'

He shot into the air and landed on top of the hall with movements as light as a feather.

Under the moonlight, a handsome young man dressed in lavish clothes and his hair tied in a bun above his head could be seen. He rested his chin on his hands as he admired the moon. He was, naturally, oblivious to the fact that the greatest villain in Great Yan was slowly creeping toward him from the back.

He was about to rise to his feet when a big and wizened landed on his shoulder and pushed him. He stiffened immediately.

“Don’t be nervous. If I wanted to take your life, you’d be dead by now.”

### **Chapter 780: The Emperor and Pure Gold**

Apart from the slight stiffening of his body, the young man remained calm.

This exceeded Lu Zhou’s expectations.

The young man turned and appraised Lu Zhou. Then, he chuckled softly before he said, “Old man, are you trying to kidnap me?”

Lu Zhou did not deny this. He nodded. “Aren’t you afraid?”

“What’s there to be afraid of? If you can avoid the patrolling internal elites and arrive at the Ganlu Hall, you must have shocking strength. It’s meaningless to be afraid,” the young man said, “Old Mister, I won’t shout, I’m not foolish. Let’s sit.”

It was clear the young man was incredibly intelligent.

Lu Zhou waved his hand and sat down. His robes hung loosely on his body, and the wind rustled his white hair. The moon cast its light on him, making him look like a mysterious elite.

“Old Mister... what brings you here to the palace?” the young man asked.

“I’ve always admired those who can adapt according to situations. You’re much more intelligent than many others.” Lu Zhou’s expression remained calm. He looked at the moon as he stroked his beard and said, “Where’s the harem?”

“The harem?” The young man was clearly surprised. “But, your age...” He trailed off as he looked at Lu Zhou intently from head to toe.

Lu Zhou’s expression darkened. He said solemnly, “The young are fearless. I’ll have you know you’re speaking to the most dangerous person in the world.”

The young man did not seem frightened. He said with a sigh, “But, I think you’re quite friendly.”

“Hm?” Lu Zhou cast a deep look at the young man. He stared at the young man silently for a long time.

The young man shuddered. He said, “What are you going to do in the harem?”

“I’m looking for something.”

“I can help you. I know this palace like the back of my hand.” The young man patted his chest.

Lu Zhou frowned. This young man seemed different. He was on top of Ganlu Hall, but there was not a single cultivator standing guard. “You’ll help me?”

The young man sighed. He stood up, flexed his arms, and pointed with an imposing aura. “Old Mister... Look at the city walls... Don’t you think this place resembles a huge prison? I’m only allowed to wander around in this cage. I can’t go out; I can’t go anywhere. I have no friends, let alone close friends...”

Lu Zhou laughed hoarsely. "So, you think I'm amusing?"

"Uh..." The young man scratched his head, looking like a deer caught in headlights.

"I'm looking for a pure gold hairpin," Lu Zhou said as he stroked his beard.

The young man was shocked by Lu Zhou's words. For a moment, he was speechless.

"What? Didn't you say you're very capable?" Lu Zhou raised an eyebrow.

"Uh..." The young man lowered his head before looking up again. He placed his hands on his back instinctively. "Old Mister, name another task. I'm afraid that I can't give you that."

"You've got no choice." Lu Zhou raised his fingers. Primal Qi in his surroundings surged. As long as he willed it, the Primal Qi would form energy blades and tear the young man to shreds.

The young man seemed exceptionally calm. He shook his head and said, "Old Mister, if you can answer a few of my questions, I'll present the pure gold hairpin to you with my hands."

"Let's hear it."

The young man continued looking at the moon and pondered for a moment before saying, "Old Mister, you're capable of avoiding the internal elites, and you have an unfathomable cultivation base. If you're forced to cut down strangers by the people around you, would you be willing?"

"Nobody can force me to do anything." Lu Zhou's reply was curt.

The young man was taken aback. After a moment, he said, "But, I don't have a cultivation base like yours."

"In that case, you'll just have to grow stronger." Lu Zhou looked at the young man and said, "Your cultivation base isn't too bad... You might end up becoming an expert if you cultivate well."

These words caused the young man to fall silent. He asked again, "What if somebody blocked that path?"

"Then, just think of a way to get rid of the person who obstructs your path..." He seemed to have thought of something before he added, "... no matter who that person is."

"..." The young man shuddered. This thought had occurred to him in the past. Perhaps, he had the answer all along. However, he was always surrounded by people who flattered him and fawned over him. Nobody was truthful. This stranger's words seemed to cause his hesitation to vanish. After a moment, he bowed and said, "I'm enlightened."

Lu Zhou did not hold back. He extended his hand. "Pure gold."

"Please wait, old mister." The young man turned around, preparing to leave.

"Wait." Lu Zhou raised his hand.

"There's no need to worry, old mister. I've always kept my word."

Lu Zhou waved his hand. A Daoist seal flew toward the young man. "If you remove the seal or if you leave the palace, I'll kill you."

The young man said nothing. He leaped off the roof and was gone.

Lu Zhou activated his power of hearing again and extended its range to cover his surroundings.

After a quarter of an hour, the young man returned as promised. He held a brocade box in his hands as he leaped into the hall. After he presented the box with both hands, he said curiously, "Old mister. Pure gold is only secular items. With your profound cultivation base, why do you want this? If you're short on silver taels, I can give you one chest of them."

"No need." Lu Zhou waved his arm and withdrew the seal. At the same time, the brocade box flew into his hand. He looked into the box and saw a pure gold hairpin made even more exquisite by the moonlight. It was delicate and as thick as a needle. Indeed, its size seemed to match the opening of the treasure chest.

Lu Zhou put it away. He looked at the young man, curious about the young man's identity. Surely, the young man was not an ordinary person if he could admire the moon on the roof of the emperor's study without being harassed by the guards or cultivators. He speculated that the young man was a prince.

"What's your name?" Lu Zhou asked.

The young man smiled. He cupped his fists and said, "Li Yunzheng."

"I'll remember that."

"You're not shocked?"

"Why would I be?" Lu Zhou asked, puzzled.

Li Yunzheng nodded and said in relief, "You're right, old mister. Surely, you don't care about such matters when you have the strength to evade so many elites."

Lu Zhou did not expect to obtain the key so easily. He had thought he would have to resort to using some grand tactics and torture a few people to get the truth out of them.

Plans could not keep up with changes.

"I admire intelligent people the most. You're smart. I'll spare your life today."

Lu Zhou turned around, preparing to leave, when a black figure shot out from behind Li Yunzheng. The figure attacked Lu Zhou at lightning speed.

Lu Zhou sensed a cultivator behind him and instinctively turned around and raised his hand.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The black figure stabbed like the wind with his dagger.

"Stand down. You can't be disrespectful to the old mister!"

"I swore to protect you with my life!" the black figure said.

The dagger gleamed coldly as the black figure directed it to Lu Zhou's throat.

Lu Zhou was puzzled. He wondered why the duo did not cause a huge commotion. However, to be safe, he used his extraordinary power. He advanced with two of his fingers. He caught the blade between his fingers.

Bam!

Lu Zhou moved his fingers. The instant the dagger broke, he raised his hand and struck.

The black figure flipped backward and grunted before spitting out a mouthful of blood.

"Old mister, have mercy!"

"Is he your guard?" Lu Zhou looked at the young man indifferently.

"Yes..." Li Yunzheng replied awkwardly. "Thank you, old mister."

"Since you're tactful, I'll spare him. Before we part, I have another piece of advice for you."

"Let's hear it, old mister."

"Don't bite off more than you can chew." Lu Zhou glanced at the black figure. "Otherwise... you'd only be rushing to your death."

"..."

After he said this, Lu Zhou stepped into the air.

"Old mister, will we meet again?" Li Yunzheng ran after him.

Lu Zhou did not reply to him. With a burst of movement, he vanished from sight.

The guard launched into a violent coughing fit. After spitting out blood again, he said, "I couldn't take down the assassin... I deserve to die!"