

## Disciples 781

### Chapter 781: Opening the Treasure Box in the Red Lotus Domain

Li Yunzheng looked at his kneeling guard. He sighed and shook his head. "With his cultivation base, if he wanted to harm me, he would've done so long ago. There's no need for him to wait at all..."

The guard bit back the intense pain from his internal organs and said, "I was anxious..."

Li Yunzheng raised his hand and cut him short. He stood up straight and looked up at the bright moon. He placed his hands on his back and cleared his mind of unhappy emotions. He smiled. "Get up, Ye Xiao."

The guard, Ye Xiao, stood up. "I saw Your Majesty in the harem with the pure gold hairpin. Something as precious as that..."

Li Yunzheng looked at the moon and said, "It's a fake."

"..."

"My instincts have always been accurate. I'll surely meet that old mister again."

Ye Xiao was stunned.

Li Yunzheng maintained his smile. "Tell me, can I do as the old mister said?"

Ye Xiao scratched his head, clearly confused.

Li Yunzheng waved his hand. "I'm tired. You should return. Also, don't let anyone near Ganlu Hall."

Ye Xiao bowed. "Understood."

...

Lu Zhou returned using the path from which he came to reduce the possibilities of running into conflicts. Shortly after, he was above the walls of the royal palace. He bent forward and looked at the Daoist veins on the city walls curiously.

The detailed and precise control over the Formation, its engravings, and the maintenance of Primal Qi absorption were far greater than the golden lotus domain.

Lu Zhou no longer wasted time and leaped off the city walls. Then, he got on Whizard's back and left.

Everything went exceptionally smooth. 'Is this fate?'

...

Inside the Saint Hall in the Sky Martial Court.

Elder Mo Buyan strolled in and looked at the sandalwood censer in the middle of the hall.

A person sat cross-legged in the hall. He was the only Ten-leaf karmic fire cultivator in the world, Yu Chenshu. His face was expressionless, and he had a dignified and stern air about him.

"Court Master, we've made a discovery," Mo Buyan said.

Yu Chenshu opened his eyes. "Let's hear it."

"Li Yunzheng met an old man. According to the palace, the emperor's emotions are unstable at the moment. He was slightly opposed to this so we didn't stop him," Mo Buyan said.

Yu Chenshu nodded and said, "When the former emperor was still in power, he often praised Li Yunzheng. That child has the potential to achieve great things. However, he dislikes cultivation. Do we know anything about the person he met?"

"That old man had the erudite air of an immortal and an unfathomable cultivation base. The palace allowed His Majesty to have his way... However, this old man is no ordinary man. He could always sense incoming cultivators. Court Master, do you think we should investigate him?" Mo Buyan asked.

"The Sky Martial Court should continue to focus on the golden lotus domain. Let the palace deal with their men. How's the monarch supposed to govern the land if his mind is unstable?" Chen Yushu said.

"Do we notify Flying Star House about this?" Mo Buyan asked.

"No need." Yu Chenshu shook his head. "Perhaps, the Flying Star House is already aware of this."

...

Dawn was breaking when Lu Zhou returned to his courtyard in the Thousand Willow Monastery. He patted Whitzard and said, "Go get some rest. Don't stray too far."

Whitzard let out a cry and disappeared into the forest at the back of the mountain.

Lu Zhou entered the room and brought the brocade box out. Then, he looked at the treasure chest on the table.

He waved his arm, opening the brocade box.

Lu Zhou looked at the pure gold hairpin before bringing it out. Then, he did not hesitate as he inserted it into the keyhole on the treasure chest.

Bzzzt!

The sound of vibration when the golden hairpin was inserted into the keyhole was rather unique.

He pushed it all the way in and turned slightly.

Click!

Four winding slits spread out from the keyhole along the treasure chest's surface until the treasure chest eventually fell open.

Clang!

"Ding! You've opened the treasure chest. Obtained: Ji Tiandao's Peak Trial Card x1, Reversal Card x50, Thunderblast x10, Water Dragon Song, Pilgrim Song, Refining Talisman x3, Open Heavenly Writing scroll."

"Water Dragon Song. You'll have a certain chance of obtaining a new blade technique."

“Pilgrim Song: A perfect tune.”

When he heard these notifications, Lu Zhou nodded in satisfaction. ‘This is great! Is this sudden increase in luck associated with the red color of the red lotus domain?’

In theory, Ji Tiandao’s peak was weaker than Lu Zhou’s current state. However, the main function of this card was not to raise his cultivation base; it was the endless supply of Primal Qi it provided. This was the item card with the highest value that he obtained from the treasure chest.

“Water Dragon Song?”

It was always good to have more skills. Lu Zhou decided to use it.

Water Dragon Song dissolved into specks of starlight and descended on Lu Zhou. He had no idea if he managed to grasp the new technique. This was how he felt with Calm Disturbance as well.

‘Perhaps, it has a trigger. As for Pilgrim Song, I don’t think it’ll be of much use to me. I’ll give it to Conch.’

Lu Zhou focused on the Open Heavenly Writing scroll. It had been a long time since he obtained an item like this. He did not expect this when he opened the treasure chest. Currently, he had gained five Heavenly Writing powers. He wondered if this Open Heavenly Writing scroll would grant him a new power or prolonged his life.

Lu Zhou used the Open Heavenly Writing scroll, eager. The firefly-like radiance circled around him before disappearing.

He waved his hand.

The treasure chest disappeared and returned to the system dashboard.

Then, Lu Zhou entered his meditative state.

...

Lu Zhou returned early in the morning, therefore, even when the sun was at its highest, he was still immersed in his meditation.

At this moment, Xia Changqiu arrived at the courtyard and called out tentatively, “Senior Lu?” He was not sure if Lu Zhou had returned from his trip last night. As expected, there was no reply.

Little Yuan’er who was flying past the courtyard at this moment asked, “Monastery Master Xia, are you looking for my master?”

“Uh... yes.” Xia Changqiu nodded.

“This is how my master is. Sometimes, he’ll just ignore everyone,” Little Yuan’er said.

“Thank you for telling me that.” Little Yuan’er joined her palms together in a pleading manner and asked with an apologetic expression on her face, “Monastery Master Xia, can I make a request?”

“What is it?”

“May I train in the Fair Hall?” Little Yuan’er blinked her huge eyes.

“Of course, you can. Teach those disciples a lesson while you’re at it, will you?”

Xia Changqiu wanted nothing more than an elite to give his disciples some pointers.

“Thank you. Don’t worry, I often restrain my strength when hitting the others...” Little Yuan’er flew toward the Fair Hall on her Nirvana Sash.

Xia Changqiu was slightly taken aback. ‘Her words sound strange. Hitting others?’

At this moment, Lu Zhou opened his door and emerged with his hands on his back. He looked up at the sun and asked, “What is it?”

“Senior Lu, you’ve returned! The Flying Star House’s Ye Zhen has sent a letter.” Xia Changqiu produced the letter from his sleeve and presented it to Lu Zhou with both hands.

“Read it,” Lu Zhou said.

Xia Changqiu unfolded the letter and read, “To Old Mister Lu. Since we parted, I regret...” Inwardly, he was puzzled. ‘Since we parted?’ He did not dwell on it and continued to read, “I wonder if you’re satisfied with the gift from the palace?”

## **Chapter 782: Asking for the Way on Cloud Mountain**

‘Gift? What gift?’ Xia Changqiu was once again baffled.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou frowned slightly. Ye Zhen was clearly aware of his visit to the palace. This meant there was a spy in the Thousand Willow Monastery or the palace.

‘Is the young man in Ganlu Hall one of Ye Zhen’s cronies?’

Xia Changqiu continued reading, “When you came to me in disguise the other day, I mistook you for the person who fought Zhu Xuan. However, someone who manages to injure me has to be an elite at Sikong Beichen’s level. I won’t hold this against you, old senior. Instead, with great sincerity, I hope to be your friend.”

Xia Changqiu was shocked as he continued to read the letter. Ye Zhen was truly a scheming person. “The pure gold hairpin must be important to you. The reason your entry to the palace was so smooth is partly to show you my abilities and to show you my sincerity. I’d like you to reconsider, old senior. I’d like to invite you to Cloud Mountain for a discussion in three days. Whether we become friends or enemies, it all depends on you, Old Mister Lu.”

After reading the letter, Xia Changqiu presented the letter to Lu Zhou with both hands. He asked incredulously, “Senior Lu, you injured Ye Zhen before this?”

Lu Zhou nodded. He looked at the letter in his hand briefly before he reduced it to ashes. He wondered out loud, puzzled, “What kind of monster is Ye Zhen?”

“That man is indeed difficult to deal with,” Xia Changqiu said as he nodded, “His invitation to Cloud Mountain has to be a trap.”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and considered it. He had no doubt Si Wuya would be able to come up with a brilliant plan to deal with Ye Zhen if Si Wuya were here. At the very least, even Jiang Ajian would be able

to come up with a plan. Perhaps it was due to his 2,000 years of experience that he understood someone like Ye Zhen. Moreover, his disciples shared a quality with Ye Zhen; they were all arrogant. He knew those who were overconfident were conceited. In his opinion, Ye Zhen would not have expected the golden hairpin that he had easily surrendered to him would be his nightmare.

With these thoughts in mind, Lu Zhou calmly said, "Send a letter to Sikong Beichen. Tell him to meet me at Cloud Mountain in three days."

"Understood." Despite his words, Xia Changqiu appeared perplexed.

...

On the same day, in the afternoon.

On Flying Star House's middle peak.

Ye Zhen was cultivating with his legs crossed as script seals circled around him.

Jiang Xiaosheng opened the wooden door and entered the dojo. Then, he prostrated himself before he said, "Master, the Thousand Willow Monastery has responded. They'll meet you on Cloud Mountain in three days."

Ye Zhen opened his eyes. He seemed slightly taken. "It's unexpected but reasonable."

"Master, why didn't you let the elites in the palace kill him? That was a great opportunity!" Jiang Xiaosheng asked in confusion.

"Ten-leaf cultivators are usually prideful; how could they listen to me? Moreover, the palace is complicated. Each faction has its sources and is wrestling for dominance in the shadows. I'm just weaving a net of doubts and suspicion to intimidate him," Ye Zhen said.

Jiang Xiaosheng mustered up his courage and continued to ask, "Why did you invite him here?"

"If he doesn't come, I'll take down the Twelve Sects. If he agrees to come, it means he's willing to cooperate," Ye Zhen replied.

"What if he doesn't want to cooperate?"

The questions of the young were always direct.

Ye Zhen looked at Jiang Xiaosheng, wondering if he needed to answer such a stupid question.

Jiang Xiaosheng shuddered, frightened by his master's gaze. He no longer dared to ask any question. It was obvious the old man would be seeking death if he came to Cloud Mountain with no intention to cooperate.

...

Three days passed in just a blink of an eye.

A huge flying chariot departed from the Thousand Willow Monastery for Cloud Mountain.

Inside the flying chariot.

Lu Zhou looked at Sikong Beichen and asked, "Are you worried that I might not show up?"

Early in the morning, Sikong Beichen had brought two First Seats to the Thousand Willow Monastery. Clearly, he did not want to go to Cloud Mountain alone.

"You misunderstand me, Brother Lu... It's just we haven't seen each other in a while, and I wanted to talk to you a little longer," Sikong Beichen said.

"I guess I'll have to believe you."

"Why did you agree to Ye Zhen's proposal, Brother Lu? The Flying Star House has a close relationship with the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain lately, and Xie Xuan died on the Thousand Willow Monastery's grounds. Surely, the Twelve Sects hate you," Sikong Beichen asked curiously.

Lu Zhou nodded. "You have a point."

Sikong Beichen, feeling like he understood the words behind Lu Zhou's words, called out, "Yao Qingquan."

"Your orders, Temple Master?"

"Turn around and return."

"Understood."

"..." Lu Zhou waved his arm to stop Yao Qingquan. "I didn't say I want to return."

Sikong Beichen felt awkward.

At this moment, Yu Zhenghai said to Yao Qingquan, "Allow me. You're excruciatingly slow in flying the chariot. Even my Eighth Junior Brother is faster than this."

"..."

Yu Zhenghai took Yao Qingquan's place, and the flying chariot's speed increased immediately.

Yao Qingquan looked at Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong. "Aren't both of you worried that something might happen? The Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain and Ye Zhen... What if the members of the Sky Martial Court are there as well? At that time, it'd be like us presenting ourselves to them on a silver platter..."

Yu Shangrong smiled faintly. "If you're afraid, you may leave. The Evil Sky Pavilion will only go forward and never turn back." When he saw the unnatural expression on Yao Qingquan's face, he added, "My apologies. I didn't mean to hurt your self-esteem."

Yao Qingquan. "..."

The latter half of Yu Shangrong's words were better left unsaid.

Even Sikong Beichen felt slightly embarrassed. The grand Ninth Temple suddenly seemed as cowardly as mice. In the end, he said, "In that case, I'll follow the person of noble character to the bitter end."

"I'm not a person with a noble character. I have three objectives for this trip," Lu Zhou said as he stroked his beard, "First, I want to kill Ye Zhen. Second, I want to intimidate the Twelve Sects. Third, I'd hope the Sky Martial Court is there as well so I can kill a few of them to deter the others."

'Uh... Is he serious?'

Sikong Beichen said, "Ye Zhen is extremely cunning. If he's luring the tiger away from its mountain, won't the Thousand Willow Monastery be in trouble?"

Sikong Beichen had left the three First Seats in the Ninth Temple to guard the Formation and defend against any possible sneaky plots of Ye Zhen.

Before Lu Zhou could answer, Yu Zhenghai said, "That's why the core members of the Thousand Willow Monastery are here as well."

"..."

Sikong Beichen was the last to board the chariot at the Thousand Willow Monastery. He had been chatting with Lu Zhou on the deck and did not pay attention to the other passengers in the chariot. He looked behind himself and opened the door. He saw Little Yuan'er, Conch, Xia Changqiu, Tian Buji, Ji Fengxing, and Wuwu smiling at him.

They greeted Sikong Beichen.

"Greetings, Senior Sikong."

Yao Qingquan and Zhao Jianghe seemed amazed by this,

As the saying went, 'Would an empty house be afraid of robbers?'

The flying chariot continued to pick up speed.

Lu Zhou looked at Sikong Beichen. "Sikong Beichen, you're knowledgeable. Do you know any methods to return to life after dying?"

Sikong Beichen said, "Under normal circumstances, humans shouldn't be able to come back to life after dying. However, there are many cultivators who used Fated Bonds to tie their lives to that of a beast. However, the requirements of the beasts are strict. Moreover, it's difficult to pull something like this off."

This reminded Lu Zhou of Lanni and Tiangou of the Bonnar Family in Great Yan. He did not expect the same method to exist in the red lotus domain. "Is there any other way apart from that?"

Sikong Beichen shook his head. "I've never heard of another way to come back to life. Why are you asking about this, Brother Lu?"

"I suspect that Ye Zhen has mastered a way to come back to life," Lu Zhou said.

Everyone looked at Lu Zhou in shock when they heard his words.

### **Chapter 783: Payback**

Sikong Beichen was confused. He did not understand why Lu Zhou suddenly asked about this matter.

Lu Zhou no longer held this piece of information back from them. He said honestly, "I've been to the Flying Star House before and fought Ye Zhen in his dojo."

Meng Changdong exclaimed in surprise, "You fought him in his dojo, Senior Lu?"

"The Absolute Heaven Formation can't do anything to me," Lu Zhou said indifferently.

Sikong Beichen was slightly surprised as well. "This Absolute Heaven Formation is extremely difficult to inscribe and set up. It has a high requirement for the surroundings. The enemies inside the Formation would be greatly weakened while the Formation's user will be greatly strengthened. Although Ye Zhen is a Nine-leaf cultivator, the strength he displayed when he was in the Ninth Temple was close to a Ten-leaf cultivator. Moreover, he has the karmic fire! I'm truly impressed you're able to shrug off his Absolute Heaven Formation and best him, Brother Lu."

Meng Changdong frowned as he said, "No wonder there's a rumor about me fighting on the middle peak. Someone even saw Ye Zhen being struck down with the Nine Cuts Hand Seals. So, the rumors are true."

"The Daoist Nine Cuts Hand Seal?" Sikong Beichen was startled. "The Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist sects each have their own advantages, and they're further divided into different cultivation methods. Brother Lu, which one are you skilled in?" He once witnessed Lu Zhou using all creation as a sword from the swordless path so he had assumed Lu Zhou specialized in the sword.

"Aside from music, my master is skilled in everything," Little Yuan'er said, "However, striking with the palm is easiest and most convenient."

"..."

Little Yuan'er words seemed... flawless.

Sikong Beichen asked in a mix of surprise and curiosity, "You've mastered the Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist techniques?"

At this juncture, Lu Zhou felt it was a good time for him to talk about this matter. He said, "It's not easy to master all three. However... have you ever wondered why the concept of cultivation in the golden lotus domain is the same as the one in the red lotus domain?"

"The same?" Sikong Beichen was slightly stunned; his expression stiffened. "I've never been to the golden lotus domain. I've only heard about it recently."

At this moment, Meng Changdong chimed in from the side, "The Sky Martial Court has been studying this matter as well. There was a theory that the two domains were originally connected."

Lu Zhou and Sikong Beichen turned to look at Meng Changdong in unison.

Sikong Beichen nodded and said, "Indeed, that's possible."

As a transmigrator, Lu Zhou had more knowledge compared to them. He had a basic understanding of tectonic shifts. However, this was only a guess with no evidence. After a moment, he asked, "Have you been to the Endless Ocean?"



The others stayed silent and humbly listened as the elites conversed. The conversation between elites was different and interesting after all.

Sikong Beichen nodded and said, "When I first attained the Nine-leaf stage, I went to the Endless Ocean. I can never forget that experience. I rode on the mount and flew as far as I could over the Endless Ocean. The few oceanic beasts I encountered at first were no threat to me. However, on the fifth day, I encountered hordes of oceanic beasts. As a result, I got injured and lost my mount. Fortunately, I managed to return."

"These oceanic beasts separate the two shores... When I crossed the Endless Ocean, I encountered a massive beast that was 100,000 feet long. Just its fin was humongous," Lu Zhou said.

As soon as Lu Zhou finished speaking, Little Yuan'er and Conch chimed in, "We saw it as well!"

Sikong Beichen exclaimed in shock, "Even you can't do anything against it, Brother Lu?"

Lu Zhou shook his head. "In my opinion, even if every cultivator in the red lotus domain joined forces, they still won't stand a chance against the beast."

"..."

The flying chariot flew against the wind. It looked like a golden meteor, enveloped in Yu Zhenghai's golden energy.

"After listening to your words, Brother Lu, I really want to see this colossal beast of the Endless Ocean with my own eyes," Sikong Beichen said.

Meng Changdong and the others nodded somewhat emotionally as well. They felt as though their horizons had been widened.

The flying chariot continued flying for the entire day.

During the journey, Lu Zhou and Sikong Beichen discussed the cultivation paths of the Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist sects. They talked about the path of blades as well.

Everyone on the flying chariot felt that they had learned a lot.

When the sun was finally high in the sky and its rays refracted into a rainbow through the thin layer of mist, Cloud Mountain appeared before their eyes.

"We've arrived."

The others walked out onto the deck and saw the 12 main peaks of Cloud Mountain that towered into the clouds.

Meng Changdong said, "Cloud Mountain is known for its height. The 12 peaks are arranged in a connected array of seven stars. It's one of the largest sects in Great Tang."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. He looked at the 12 peaks as he stood under the sun. He asked, "How do the Twelve Sects compare to the Flying Star House?"

“Uh... That’s not an easy comparison to make,” Meng Changdong replied, “In terms of strength, it seems like the Twelve Sects are more powerful. However... the Flying Star House has Ye Zhen.”

Little Yuan’er said with a scoff, “Who cares if he’s Ye Zhen or Li Zhen? When we get there, my master will kill him like a fly!”

“...”

...

On Cloud Mountain.

The disciples of the Twelve Sects gathered inside a hall on the main peak.

A disciple stood respectfully in the hall as he asked, “Sect Master, the Ninth Temple’s flying chariot is here. They don’t seem friendly. Should we notify the Sky Martial Court’s Master and take them down with this opportunity?”

Seated upright in the hall was the Master of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain, Nie Qingyun. He slowly rose to his feet before he walked down the steps. “Where does the Ninth Temple’s confidence come from?”

“The Flying Star House’s elder, Ye Zhen, initially intended to meet you, but he changed his mind at the last minute. He said the Ninth Temple has the support of an elite and advises you to be careful,” the disciple replied.

At this moment, one of the elders at the side bowed and said, “Ye Zhen is a hypocrite, and he can’t be trusted. 30 disciples from our sect who went to the Flying Star House are still missing to this day... Ye Zhen is supposed to give us an explanation, but the Ninth Temple has come instead. There’s a high possibility this is part of Ye Zhen’s scheme.”

Nie Qingyun turned to look at the elder. He nodded and said, “Our meeting on Cloud Mountain today is supposed to resolve the conflict between us and the Flying Star House. I won’t meet anyone else.”

“Understood.”

Dong! Dong! Dong!

The bell tolled.

On the platform on the towering peaks of the Twelve Sects, several Nascent Divinity realm disciples flew into the air toward the Ninth Temple’s flying chariot.

The huge chariot slowed down and hovered before the Twelve Sects.

“The sect master has said that he won’t meet any guests today. Kindly turn back.”

The others on board the flying chariot were puzzled.

Yao Qingquan stepped out. He looked at the disciples from the Twelve Sects and said, “Senior Lu and the temple master were invited by Ye Zhen to come here. How can we leave just because you ask us to?”

Since Lu Zhou was bold enough to come, it was certain he was confident he would be able to deal with it. This fight had to be fought.

The disciples hovering in the air said, "Temple Master Sikong, Sect Master Nie has said that he doesn't wish to meet you today. Ye Zhen isn't a member of the Twelve Sects. He can't make decisions on our behalf."

A thought appeared in Sikong Beichen's mind. He projected his voice to Lu Zhou, "Brother Lu, as we expected, Ye Zhen is truly cunning."

No matter how this situation turned out, it would be beneficial to Ye Zhen.

If the Ninth Temple and the Twelve Sects fought, Ye Zhen only needed to wait to reap the benefits at the end. If they did not fight, Cloud Mountain would be forced to be friendly with the Flying Star House, considering the pressure from Ninth Temple.

Lu Zhou said loudly, "Notify Nie Qingyun that I'd like to meet him."

The disciples asked, "What business do you have with our sect master?"

"Xie Xuan has led many Cloud Mountain disciples to annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery. Have you forgotten about this matter?" Tian Buji flew out at this moment.

"You killed Elder Xie, we're the ones who should demand payback, right?" The disciple was slightly baffled.

"It's the same either way," Tian Buji said.

"..."

These words clearly confused the Twelve Sects disciples.

#### **Chapter 784: The Evil Sky Pavilion's Style**

"So, you're here to look for trouble?" The disciple was shocked.

Tian Buji and Yao Qingquan turned to look at Sikong Beichen and Lu Zhou who were still on board the flying chariot.

The two of them did not answer.

At this moment, Yu Shangrong smiled faintly and said, "My apologies, that's indeed why we're here."

"..."

Nobody expected such a direct answer.

Not even the Ninth Temple, who was feared by everyone in the cultivation world, was as forthright as this when they carried out their business.

However, this was rather thrilling; there was no beating around the bush.

The disciple's expression changed as he waved to the others behind him. "Kindly wait here. I'll notify the sect master of this."

“Wait.”

The disciple was taken aback.

Yu Shangrong turned around and cupped his fists at his master. “Master, shall I deal with these trivial matters?”

“Go.”

Yu Shangrong nodded slightly and flew out.

Sikong Beichen asked, “Brother Lu, you have so much trust and confidence in your disciples? Aren’t you worried they might go overboard?”

“This is the Evil Sky Pavilion’s style,” Lu Zhou said as he stroked his beard, “They are my disciples after all...” After a brief pause, he looked at his other disciples and loudly said, “Go on. I’ll hold the sky up if it falls.”

“...”

It seemed like these words were the source of the Evil Sky Pavilion disciples’ confidence.

...

Yu Shangrong flew in front of Tian Buji and Yao Qingquan. He looked at the disciples of Cloud Mountain and said, “Since we’re here to look for trouble, why do you need to notify the others? Lead the way.”

“You...”

Zing!

Yu Shangrong’s Longevity Sword left its scabbard.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

He controlled the Longevity Sword with pure Primal Qi.

The sword glinted coldly under the sunlight as it flew around the group of Cloud Mountain disciples before it returned to its scabbard. With this, those disciples’ hair was chopped off.

“Lead the way.”

The disciples of the Twelve Sects were so frightened that they immediately did as they were told.

The flying chariot followed the disciples toward the main peak.

Meanwhile, the disciples on the cloud platform were puzzled when they saw the huge chariot enter the Twelve Sects’ barrier. They instantly flew up and surrounded the flying chariot.

Yu Shangrong, Tian Buji, and Yao Qingquan returned to the flying chariot.

The others were filled with awe when they saw this.

This was especially true for Tian Buji and Yao Qingquan. They wondered how long they could enjoy this feeling of power and bullying others.

Yao Qingquan was one of Ninth Temple's First Seats, and he was seldom bullied in the past. However, Tian Buji was different. The Thousand Willow Monastery had always been belittled by others and was often the target of bullying and ridicule. Indeed, they had wished they could behave as domineeringly as the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Many disciples flew toward the cloud platform near the main peak's hall.

One elder hurried into the hall and said, "Sect Master, the Ninth Temple's flying chariot entered our barrier."

Nie Qingyun frowned deeply. He got up and hurried out of the hall. "Outrageous!" With a blur of movements, he appeared 10 meters in the air in front of the hall.

12 grey-robed elders gathered behind Nie Qingyun. They looked at the flying chariot that was slowly landing.

Nie Qingyun projected his voice and said, "Sikong Beichen, you're really bold."

"Nie Qingyun, I came to your territory, and yet, you're acting like a tortoise hiding in its own shell?" A voice rang from the flying chariot.

These words, naturally, angered the disciples of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain.

Nie Qingyun waved his arm. The 12 Elders behind him took flight at once and made their way to the flying chariot.

...

Meanwhile, on the other side of Cloud Mountain.

Ye Zhen was seated in a small flying chariot.

Jiang Xiaosheng bowed and said, "Master, they're going to start fighting soon."

"Very good."

"Your tactic has truly widened my horizons, master. No matter how the three parties move next, you'll still reap the benefits," Jiang Xiaosheng said.

"It's nothing to be proud of. Weakening your opponent's forces without a battle has always been a good strategy. However, I didn't expect this Old Man Lu to actually show up..." Ye Zhen said.

"Should we seize the chance and send our man to annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery?"

"No need," Ye Zhen said slowly, "First, the ones left in the Thousand Willow Monastery are small fries. Second, I'd still like to work with this elite with the surname Lu. Third, since they're bold enough to come, I'd like to reap the benefits of the fisherman if I can. This way I can also annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery..."

"That's brilliant, master! I'm enlightened."

...

The elders of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain flew up with their palm seals at the ready.

“Scram.” A thunderous sound technique rang in the air when the elders drew close. It rippled out and down from the flying chariot.

The 12 elders felt as though they had been struck by lightning. They plummeted as their blood essence surged, causing colors to drain from their faces.

Nie Qingyun scowled. He looked at the flying chariot in confusion. ‘Since when did Sikong Beichen master such a powerful sound technique?’ Although it was not difficult for a Ten-leaf cultivator to repel his elders, it should not be so easy.

Sikong Beichen’s voice rang in the air at this moment. “Nie Qingyun, although you’ve taunted me with your words, I won’t hold it against you. However, do you think you can bear the consequences of offending Brother Lu?”

“Brother Lu?” Nie Qingyun was further confused. At this moment, he saw an old man with the aura of an immortal flying out of the flying chariot with Sikong Beichen. He saw a saber user, a swordsman, and two young girls behind the two old men. Soon after, the others from the flying chariot followed suit as well.

They drew level with Nie Qingyun.

Nie Qingyun had a long history with Sikong Beichen. Therefore, he was familiar with all nine First Seats. When he saw the group before him, he discovered, apart from Yao Qingquan and Zhao Jianghe, the others were strangers to him. As a Ten-leaf cultivator, he immediately sensed the extraordinary aura of the old man next to Sikong Beichen. He immediately cupped his fists and asked, “You are, sir?”

Lu Zhou did not answer Nie Qingyun. Instead, he asked, “Where’s Ye Zhen?”

“Ye Zhen isn’t here yet. If you’re looking for him, Old Mister, you should visit the Flying Star House.” Nie Qingyun could sense hostility from the old man. Surely the old man was not simple if Sikong Beichen accompanied him here.

“You’ll do.” Lu Zhou placed one hand on his back. He stroked his beard and said, “I don’t like beating around the bush. Do you understand me?”

“...”

This tone, this mannerism, this bearing...

The elders and disciples of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain were angered by Lu Zhou who seemed to be reprimanding their sect master.

The elders of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain took flight again. They were about to speak when Nie Qingyun raised a hand and said gruffly, “Stand down.”

“Sect Master!”

“I said stand down. Are my orders meaningless now?” There was a reason Nie Qingyun was the sect master.

The 12 elders retreated, still wary.

Nie Qingyun saw the smile in Sikong Beichen's eyes. He kept his calm as he cupped his hands and asked, "Old Mister, are you here for Ye Zhen?"

"Ye Zhen has invited me here for a conversation. Are you unaware of that?" Lu Zhou asked.

Nie Qingyun scowled and said, "I really am unaware of this matter."

Xia Changqiu said, "Xie Xuan led many disciples in an attempt to annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery. How do you explain that?"

Nie Qingyun frowned upon hearing these words. He asked gruffly, "Who are you?"

"Master of the Thousand Willow Monastery, Xia Changqiu," Xia Changqiu said with a hint of pride. It felt good to be supported by a powerful person.

One of the elders at the side sneered and said, "So, you're that weak monastery master... You have no place to interrupt while the sect master is speaking."

The Thousand Willow Monastery was too weak; anyone could make fun of it.

In a world where it was the survival of the fittest, how could anyone be free of this concept that had been around since time immemorial?

#### **Chapter 785: Establishing Dominance**

"Slap him." Lu Zhou did not look at the elder of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain when he spoke in a calm and indifferent voice.

Then, there was a blur of movement as someone advanced toward the elder, leaving afterimages in his wake.

The elder did not think much of this. He tried to push the attacker away with a blast of energy. However, the figure seemed to mysteriously bypass his attack. It avoided the energy and was now in front of him.

Smack!

The elder was firmly slapped across the face, causing him to wince. His cheek was already swollen.

The figure moved back to its original position, leaving afterimages in the air again.

The one who dealt the punishment was Yu Zhenghai.

"..."

This was the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain, a major sect whose name shocked the heavens. All of its 12 elders were revered individuals.

As the saying went, 'Before hitting a dog, it's best to consider its owner.' However, it seemed like the guests did not take that into consideration at all when they hit the elder.

Nie Qingyun did not stop this from happening; he was focused on Lu Zhou and Sikong Beichen who were standing in front of him. Moreover, he did not expect these guests to make a move against his own people.

"Sect Master!" The elder cradled his face with one hand as his heart burned with flames of fury.

"Silence," Nie Qingyun said as he stood with one hand on his back. He tried to suppress the displeasure that rose in his heart.

The 12 elders seemed disgruntled as they stepped backward.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "Xia Changqiu is on my side. If you mock Xia Changqiu, you're mocking me... Do you have any complaints about the punishment I've given you?"

The elder held his cheek and remained silent. The old man had a point.

Nie Qingyun cupped his fists together and said, "I apologize on his behalf, old mister. Shall we adjourn to the cloud platform? Ready the wine." He turned and made an inviting gesture toward the cloud platform.

Most of the disciples did not understand their sect master's actions. However, they had no choice but to obey.

Lu Zhou glanced at the cloud platform. He placed his hands on his back and flew toward the cloud platform.

The others followed closely behind him.

Xia Changqiu was the last one in the group. He straightened his back and scoffed at the Cloud Mountain elder. 'That felt great!'

Tian Buji shook his head speechlessly. He hastily reminded him, "Your Thousand Willow Monastery is small, but you're still the monastery master. You're someone our 1,000 disciples look up to. Can you not behave like a ruffian in the city?"

...

On the cloud platform that was surrounded by towering mountains and precipitous ridges.

The forests were filled with bamboo plants. The scenic view and roofless platform were indeed a wonderful place to have a feast with friends.

Everyone took their seats without considering the order of seniority.

After Nie Qing Yun took a seat, the 12 elders moved to stand behind him.

"How shall I address you, old mister?" Nie Qingyun asked.

Sikong Beichen took it upon himself to make the introductions. "Nie Qingyun, listen well. This man standing before you is the only person under the heavens who has initiated his Birth Chart. He's Senior Lu."



Nie Qingyun was about to pour them some wine. When he heard these words, his arm froze in midair. A shocked expression could be seen on his face when he looked up at Lu Zhou.

Birth Chart was a great limitation that all Ten-leaf cultivators were interested in. Nobody had been able to initiate their Birth Charts for over 2,000 years now. For those who wanted to form the Thousand Realms Whirling avatar and become a Mysterious Heaven elite, they had to activate their Birth Charts.

Nie Qing Yun understood the implication behind Sikong Beichen's words. The way he regarded Lu Zhou changed immediately; his expression was now one of fearful respect.

The 12 elders standing at the back were shocked as well.

Cloud Mountain was not afraid of Ten-leaf experts; there was no need for them to bow to other sects. However, an expert who had activated his Birth Chart was a different story.

Splash!

The wine overflowed onto the table.

Nie Qingyun instantly regained his senses. He quickly lowered the pitcher. Then, he turned his head to the side slightly as he asked in a hushed tone, "Who was it that mocked Monastery Master Xia earlier?"

The 11 elders turned to look at someone standing at the end on the right side. That elder's name was Xu Chang

Xu Chang shuddered slightly as an ominous feeling rose in his heart. He said timidly, "It... it was me."

"Take him away and give him 30 hits with the plank. Seal his cultivation base and lock him up behind the mountain. Nobody's allowed to free him unless I say so." Nie Qingyun's expression was stern.

The disciples were utterly confused. They hesitated, unsure of what to do.

When Nie Qingyun saw this, he sighed softly. "Is this a mutiny?"

The 12 Elders prostrated themselves immediately upon hearing these words.

Xu Chang gritted his teeth and said, "I'm willing to accept the punishment!" He knelt on the ground and kowtowed before he obediently walked away.

Xia Changqiu sat up straighter upon seeing this. Perhaps, this was the most glorious moment in his entire life. It was possible that the Thousand Willow Monastery no longer needed to resign itself to disdain and bullying.

At this moment, Nie Qingyun raised his hand slightly. The wine cup levitated before him as he said respectfully, "Brother Lu, as the Sect Master of Cloud Mountain, I apologize to you on Xu Chang's behalf."

Lu Zhou glanced at the wine. He did not seem interested at all; he was not used to drinking wine.

Instead, Yu Zhenghai picked up the cup of wine and said, "I'll drink with you."

After the toast, Yu Zhenghai tossed the cup to the ground. "The cup is too small. It's not refreshing enough."

The cup shattered loudly.

Nobody reprimanded Yu Zhenghai for his behavior.

Then, Yu Zhenghai picked up the wine jar and drank from it. In just a moment, he finished it.

When Nie Qingyun saw that Lu Zhou did not move, he had no choice but to take an awkward sip. It was a common understanding that if the other party refused one's toast, it meant that the other party did not think much of one.

At this moment, an elder could no longer endure this treatment. He rose to his feet and said indignantly, "Senior Sikong, why should we trust your words? Do you take us for gullible children?"

The Cloud Mountain disciples looked at the elder.

Sikong Beichen only said, "Is there a need for me to lie?"

"This is nothing but a psychological tactic... I respect you as a senior, but you should know how difficult it is to initiate one's Birth Chart." The Elder, Cao Zhi, turned to face the sect master, Nie Qingyun, and said, "Sect Master, forgive my rudeness, but for Cloud Mountain's sake, I have to question this."

Nie Qingyun did not stop Cao Zhi. After all, he had similar doubts as well. It was true that there was no need for Sikong Beichen to lie. However, the possibility of it being just a psychological tactic was high as well.

At this moment, Lu Zhou looked up. He did not spare a glance at Cao Zhi and looked at Nie Qingyun instead. He said calmly, "I'm here for Ye Zhen and to obtain an explanation from you... I'm not here not to discuss the Birth Chart with you."

Little Yuan'er chimed in, "That's right!"

Cao Zhi said, "We've already told you Ye Zhen isn't here... What explanation do you want?"

Lu Zhou looked at Cao Zhi. "Before I came, I've already made it clear that I don't like to beat around the bush.

"In that case, I'll be frank... Please show us your strength that's befitting of someone who has activated his Birth Chart," Cao Zhi said.

The other elders nodded. It was only natural that they were skeptical of Sikong Beichen's claims.

Sikong Beichen shook his head. "Nie Qingyun, you've raised a bunch of fools. Why would I come here, lie, and make myself look bad?"

Nie Qingyun felt slightly hesitant now. Sikong Beichen had a point.

However, at this moment, Cao Zhi suddenly shot forward. He said gruffly, "Forgive me."

At this moment, Yu Zhenghai raised his palm. "I'll take care of this." He sped forward as well.

The duo's palms collided.

Bam!

There was a blast of energy.

Both of them flipped backward at the same time and stared at each other from a distance. Both were equally shocked at their opponent's strength.

Cao Zhi frowned and said, "Golden energy seal... So, you're a foreign tribesman."

The disciples of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain sped over from all directions.

Tens of thousands of cultivators landed on the cloud platform. Many of them were hovering in the air and looking at Yu Zhenghai.

Nie Qingyun did not expect this. However, he dared act recklessly. He waved his arm and said, "Mind your manners."

The disciples landed and stood at the sides.

Nie Qingyun said, "Cao Zhi, come back."

However, Cao Zhi said, "Sect Master, we mustn't fall for their tricks... I'm willing to take a hit from Senior Lu. If I'm wrong, I'm willing to be punished."

"You're not fit to be my master's opponent," Yu Zhenghai said.

At this moment, Lu Zhou said, "Stand down."

Yu Zhenghai nodded. He returned to his position and continued drinking.

Lu Zhou looked at Cao Zhi. "What's your cultivation base?"

"It's insignificant. I'm one of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain's elders. I'm Cao Zhi, a Nine-leaf cultivator." Cao Zhi cupped his fists.

"What are you skilled in?"

"I've cultivated Daoist seals since I was young. Once, I faced eight Eight-leaf cultivators north of Cloud Mountain and won with a stroke of luck," Cao Zhi said somewhat emotionally.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. "I commend you for your bravery." Then, he raised his hand before he swung it.

An energy seal sailed toward Cao Zhi.

Cao Zhi looked at the sudden appearance of the energy seal. The Eight Trigrams spread under his feet as he unleashed numerous Daoist seals. He wrapped himself in red energy as he levitated. Yet, before the energy seal reached him, there seemed to be a bolt of lightning that descended from the ninth heavens.

Bam!

Cao Zhi was struck.

The Daoist seals around him were instantly shattered like glass as he recoiled from the impact. He spat out a mouthful of blood.

Cao Zhi had triggered the 10% heavy-damage rate, not the 1% sure-kill rate.

Thud!

Cao Zhi landed on the ground.

The others were shocked.

Apart from those who had witnessed Lu Zhou in action, everyone was shocked. They looked at the scene before them with their mouths agape.

‘Cao Zhi is so fragile!’

Lu Zhou stroked his beard indifferently as though nothing had happened.

A suffocating pressure that was difficult to describe seemed to descend on the cloud platform.

No one dared to make a sound.

Nie Qingyun fisted his hands. ‘He dealt heavy damage to a Nine-leaf cultivator with a swing of his arm... Even I am not capable of this... Did he really initiate his Birth Chart?’

It was as silent as a graveyard.

After what seemed like hours, applause rang from the sky north of the cloud platform. “Nice move, Senior Lu.”

The Cloud Mountain disciples looked over in unison.

“The Flying Star House’s Ye Zhen?!”

### **Chapter 786: Ye Zhen’s Real Body**

Ye Zhen was finally here.

Lu Zhou remained indifferent. He did not even spare the heavily-injured Cao Zhi. Perhaps, he was so used to striking people that hitting such a target did not even stir up any emotion in him. There was no challenge at all so how could he have any feeling about it. He was numbed to this.

Nie Qingyun suddenly turned and said with a scowl, “Ye Zhen, how dare you show your face here?”

Ye Zhen brought Jiang Xiaosheng with him as they landed slowly. After that, he took his time tidying his robes before sitting down. Then, he cupped his fists in greeting. He was all smiles as he said, “I do apologize. I invited Senior Lu here via letter, but I forgot to inform you about it, Sect Master Nie. Will you forgive me?”

Inwardly, Nie Qingyun hurled a barrage of insults at Ye Zhen. ‘He really knows how to sow dissension.’

Nie Qingyun glanced at Cao Zhi. Then, he gave an unexpected order. “Cao Zhi, on account of your public defiance of my order, you’re sentenced to death.”

‘Death?’

The disciples and elders of Cloud Mountain were shocked.

Indeed, Cao Zhi openly went against the sect master's orders, but surely, this did not warrant a death sentence?

There was a brief look of shock in Ye Zhen's eyes, but he recovered quickly and maintained his smile.

Cao Zhi pressed his chest and wiped away the blood from his mouth. He said meekly, "You, you... You... You... save, save me..." He tried to raise his hand, trying to point at Nie Qingyun and Ye Zhen.

Nie Qingyun said gruffly, "Take him away."

"Understood."

Two disciples obeyed his order.

Ye Zhen said loudly, "Why are you so angry, Sect Master Nie? Killing him won't do you any good."

"You know very well why I'm killing him," Nie Qingyun said. Ever since he emerged from his cultivation in seclusion, he was in constant contact with the 12 Elders. He could clearly sense that he was gradually losing his grip on Cloud Mountain. For example, who gave Xie Xuan the permission to annihilate the Thousand Willow Monastery? Apart from that, the 30 Nascent Divinity realm cultivators who went to the Flying Star House were still missing. These signs all pointed to the fact that someone was extending their clutches toward Cloud Mountain. This person could not be anyone else but Ye Zhen. Therefore, he had killed Cao Zhi to serve as a reminder to the others.

Ye Zhen said indifferently, "As long as you're happy."

Nie Qingyun scoffed and no longer paid attention to Ye Zhen. Instead, he cupped his fists at Lu Zhou and said, "Old Mister Lu, those were some amazing techniques. I'm impressed. Cao Zhi has offended you, and I've punished him. I hope this will appease you, Old Mister Lu."

Ye Zhen cupped his fists at Lu Zhou and said, "Senior Lu, we meet again."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and looked at Ye Zhen. He was filled with the urge to bring the Deadly Strike Card out to kill Ye Zhen. However, he knew it would be foolish to use the Deadly Strike Card before he figured out what kind of monster Ye Zhen was.

Ye Zhen had hoped to see a shocked expression on Lu Zhou's face. However, he was destined to be disappointed.

Lu Zhou said calmly, "I thought you wouldn't come."

Ye Zhen said, "Of course I'll come. I'm the one who invited you here, after all, Senior Lu. I was caught up with something else on the way here. That's why I'm late. I hope everyone can forgive me for this."

Sikong Beichen said disapprovingly, "Ye Zhen, what's your motive for doing all this?"

Ye Zhen said, "Naturally, I'm here to serve justice."

"Serve justice?"

The others were confused by Ye Zhen's words.

Ye Zhen said, "Cloud Mountain's Xie Xuan led a group of disciples on a punitive campaign against the Thousand Willow Monastery on his own accord. An explanation should be given to Senior Lu and Monastery Master Xia."

Nie Qingyun felt rage bubble up in his heart. He looked at Ye Zhen and said, "Weren't you the one pulling the strings behind the scene?"

"Sect Master Nie, no matter how hard you try to talk your way out of this, the truth is that Xie Xuan led a punitive campaign against the Thousand Willow Monastery. What do you say, Elder Meng?" Ye Zhen looked at Meng Changdong who sat opposite him.

Meng Changdong remained silent.

Crash!

Nie Qingyun raised his wine cup and threw it on the floor. He shouted, "Ye Zhen, even if Chen Tiandu were here, he would never dare accuse me of such a crime. How dare you!"

"If that solves the problem, then, carry on smashing cups, Sect Master Nie..."

Nie Qingyun's face turned ghastly pale. He was about to strike when he saw the faint outline of a huge group of cultivators in the sky to the north. 'Ye Zhen!'

Ye Zhen ignored Nie Qingyun's fury and cupped his fists at Lu Zhou. "Old Mister Lu, I hope we can bury the hatchet between us."

Lu Zhou kept his eyes on Ye Zhen as he stroked his beard and said, "Bury the hatchet?"

Ye Zhen realized that he had misspoken. He said, "Old Mister Lu, you've initiated your Birth Chart. I was too full of myself; I humbly accept defeat."

Ye Zhen was capable of swallowing his indignation even after being killed once. He clearly knew when to advance and when to retreat. There was no doubt he was a very shrewd person.

"Is that the only reason why you invited me here?" Lu Zhou asked evenly.

Ye Zhen reiterated his earlier words, "First, I'm here so that the Thousand Willow Monastery will have justice. Although Xie Xuan is dead, Cloud Mountain has to give you an explanation. Second, the Flying Star House is willing to work with you, old mister. Regarding Meng Changdong, we can let bygones be bygones."

When Nie Qingyun heard these words, he said decisively, "Disciples, heed my order! Activate the Formation!"

Only four out of the ten elders behind Nie Qingyun took flight.

Of the 10,000 disciples, only half of them flew up to the Eyes of the Formation to activate it.

Ye Zhen poured himself a cup of wine as though everything was within his calculations. He said, "Nie Qingyun, I advise you to calm down."

Nie Qingyun was not foolish. He had expected as much. More than half of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain was under Ye Zhen's influence.

"Ye Zhen, do you really think I don't understand you?" Nie Qingyun suddenly raised his voice. "Cloud Mountain Mirror."

"Understood."

Dozens of disciples activated the Eyes of the Formation on the cloud platform. Pillars of light emerged from them before they shot toward a rock tower.

Sikong Beichen shook his head and said, "Ye Zhen is truly a cunning man... Brother Lu, if you weren't here today, the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain would've been devoured. Look..."

Lu Zhou glanced at the hiding cultivators at the 12 peaks.

Sikong Beichen added, "A man who is never content like Ye Zhen is like a snake trying to swallow an elephant. We must be careful that we aren't taken out by Ye Zhen as well."

"Are you afraid?" Lu Zhou was as stable as Mount Tai.

"I, Sikong Beichen, will be here until the very end."

At this moment, the Cloud Mountain Mirror on the cloud platform shone on the entire cloud platform.

Nie Qingyun addressed the elders and disciples of Cloud Mountain who had defected. "Open your eyes and take a good look at Ye Zhen for the monster he is!"

"The Cloud Mountain Mirror of the Cloud Mountain Formation parts the fog and reveals the moon..." someone said.

When Lu Zhou and Sikong Beichen heard this, something stirred within them. They looked at Ye Zhen at the same time.

'This is great. I won't have to use the Golden Taixu Mirror.'

When the light shone on Ye Zhen, a miniature avatar appeared. It was red with a red lotus, nine leaves, and it had a humanoid form.

"Hm?" Nie Qingyun's brows were tightly knitted. "What's the meaning of this?"

Ye Zhen was still smiling. His slender body that was dressed in Confucian robes made him seem like someone with no attachment to the world.

"What are you doing, Sect Master Nie?"

The light shone on everyone as well, revealing their avatars.

Among the Cloud Mountain's ten elders, there were four Nine-leaf cultivators and six Eight-leaf cultivators.

The Cloud Mountain Sect's Master, Nie Qingyun, was a Ten-leaf cultivator.

The ray of light continued moving and shone on Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong.

“Nine-leaf golden lotuses?! They’re really foreign tribesmen. I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me!”

The radiance shone on Sikong Beichen. Ten-leaf red lotus.

When the Cloud Mountain Mirror shone on Lu Zhou, everyone looked on with an expectant expression on their faces. Everyone wanted to see what the avatar of someone who had initiated the Birth Chart looked like.

Nine-leaf... golden lotus?

Upon seeing this, Ye Zhen’s hand that was holding onto the cup froze in midair. He frowned, taken aback.

### **Chapter 787: Treasure**

When the Cloud Mountain Mirror shone on Lu Zhou, those who knew him were not shocked. They had seen him with a golden lotus, a red lotus, and even a blue lotus. However, they were not revealed by the mirror at all. Therefore, the expressions of Sikong Beichen and those from the Thousand Willow Monastery remained unchanged.

Moreover, Sikong Beichen had also seen Lu Zhou’s Nine-leaf red lotus back at the Holy Palace. How could someone who could kill the Great General of the North with a single strike be a mere Nine-leaf cultivator? He thought to himself confidently, ‘Brother Lu must have some method of concealing his avatar.’

On the other hand, those from Cloud Mountain were slightly surprised by this. This old man claimed to have initiated his Birth Chart, but he was not even a Ten-leaf cultivator. Was he an impostor after all?!

Nie Qingyun was more experienced. If the old man was truly just a Nine-leaf cultivator, how could he defeat the Nine-leaf Xu Chang with a single strike?

Similarly, Ye Zhen did not underestimate Lu Zhou. The Formation in his dojo had also shown Lu Zhou with a Nine-leaf golden lotus. He could understand if his dojo’s Formations were incapable of revealing Lu Zhou completely. However, he was puzzled by the fact that the Cloud Mountain Mirror had the same results. Was this old man not the same person who impersonated Elder Meng at his dojo? Perhaps, this old man had a treasure that concealed his avatar as well? Or could it be that he was truly just a Nine-leaf golden lotus cultivator? These were all possibilities. He did not recklessly make a move.

However, at this moment, an elder stepped forward and demanded loudly, “Sect Master, what’s the meaning of this? Elder Ye Zhen is here with good intentions to resolve the conflicts between us, why are you doing this? Also, the Ninth Temple has brought two foreign tribesmen from the golden lotus domain here and openly challenged us. We can’t possibly let this slide!”

“That’s right. We should work with the Flying Star House and wipe out the foreign tribesmen! Elder Ye Zhen, you’re a magnanimous man. Surely, you won’t mind our sect master’s attitude?”

The elders of Cloud Mountain were actually bowing at Ye Zhen.

Ye Zhen ignored them. His mind was still on the Cloud Mountain Mirror.



Nie Qingyun could not accept this. "Impossible! Again!"

The pillar of light shone on the rock tower, and the Cloud Mountain Mirror on the rock tower reflected it.

It shone on Ye Zhen. Red lotus, nine leaves, humanoid.

The radiance faded away.

The disciples of Cloud Mountain regarded their sect master with confusion. They did not know what he was trying to do.

At this moment, Nie Qingyun clearly felt his disciples were being slowly swayed by Ye Zhen. He quickly organized his thoughts. After taking a few quick steps back, he asked, "Old Mister Lu, will you believe me?"

"What is it?" Lu Zhou was as calm as always.

"Ye Zhen is a citizen of the Cherry Blossom Nation. They worship the monster called Nine Infants, and his avatar is in the form of that monster, a Nine Infants," Nie Qingyun.

Ye Zhen tilted his head up slightly and looked at Nie Qingyun from the corners of his eyes. A brief flash of killing intent flashed in his eyes. Then, he said with a smile, "Sect Master Nie, you're getting better at lying through your teeth. The Cloud Mountain Mirror is the treasure of your Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain. How are your disciples supposed to believe you?"

The disciples exchanged glances.

"I believe you." Lu Zhou's expression remained calm as he sat in a stately manner.

"What good would your belief do? You're only a Nine-leaf cultivator... In the presence of a Ten-leaf cultivator, you have no place to speak," an Eight-leaf cultivator snapped.

Lu Zhou glanced at the person lightly but remained silent.

At this moment, Sikong Beichen raised his hand. He pointed two fingers before an energy sword materialized above his head. The energy sword was as colorful as a rainbow. With a whistle, it stabbed through the elder's chest.

"You..." The elder's eyes widened. Fresh blood gushed out from the hole in his chest. Very quickly, he stopped breathing and fell backward.

The others were shocked.

"You old fiend!" Sikong Beichen shook his head and said coldly, "He's only an Eight-leaf cultivator. How dare he behave so impudently here? Brother Lu, there's no need for you to dirty your hands; I've dealt with him."

"..."

What useless drive! How could an Eight-leaf cultivator be a match for a Ten-leaf cultivator?

The disciples and elders of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain were infuriated by Sikong Beichen.

Ye Zhen remained silent. Things were going according to his plan.

Nie Qingyun said, "He deserves to die!"

"Sect Master!"

The members of Cloud Mountain were stunned. Why was their sect master siding with an outsider?

Nie Qingyun swept his eyes across the disciples and elders. "Don't you dare forget I'm your sect master! Whoever dares to act on their own volition again, I'll kill him myself!" When he said the word 'kill', killing intent surged from his body. With this, the effect of his statement was amazing.

The Cloud Mountain disciples no longer dared to act or speak recklessly. Moreover, they had also seen Sikong Beichen killing an Eight-leaf elder.

"Ye Zhen has worshiped that monster all his life. He kills the cultivators he captured and strips them of their cultivation bases and lives to feed the Nine Infants," Nie Qingyun said.

Most people wore an incredulous expression on their faces.

Ye Zhen clapped his hands as he said with a smile, "That's a wonderful speech."

"I thought you'd know where to draw the line, but I didn't expect you to use Xie Xuan to pull the elders of Cloud Mountain to your side. After that, you killed 30 of my Nascent Divinity realm disciples... Ye Zhen, enough is enough." Nie Qingyun raised his hand slowly.

Whizz!

Nie Qingyun's 200-foot avatar towered above the cloud platform, showing his might as the Sect Master of Cloud Sect. He knew he could not do this alone so he said, "Old Fiend Sikong, it's true that we have our quarrels... If you believe me, join hands with me, and purge Ye Zhen from this world."

No matter how Nie Qingyun looked at it, the situation seemed like one where the Ninth Temple and the Flying Star House would divide Cloud Mountain between them. He could only hope the Ninth Temple would not strike while he was down.

Sikong Beichen said, "It all depends on Brother Lu."

Nie Qingyun looked at Lu Zhou. 'Even at a time like this, Sikong Beichen is still so respectful to this old man. Why?'

At this moment, Lu Zhou slowly rose to his feet.

Upon seeing this, the members of the Thousand Willow Monastery and the Ninth Temple stood up as well.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard calmly as he looked at Ye Zhen and said, "I'm curious to know if Nie Qingyun is telling the truth as well."

"Hm?" Ye Zhen frowned slightly as he looked up.

Lu Zhou flipped his palm. The Golden Taixu Mirror materialized in his hand. His Primal Qi surged, and the mirror thrummed in his hand.

Soon enough, golden light emerged from the Golden Taixu Mirror and shone on Ye Zhen.

‘This desolate-grade weapon should do the trick.’

Buzz!

Ye Zhen’s avatar appeared.

The Cloud Mountain elders and disciples who were standing close to Ye Zhen widened their eyes in horror as they instinctively retreated!

“What’s this?!”

The thing that appeared before the others was the Nine Infants avatar with nine thick necks and eight heads.

Everyone was frightened by this sight and retreated.

“So, it is the Nine Infants... Rumor has it that the Nine Infants monster has nine lives. Cultivators who wish to cultivate such an avatar must drink the blood of the Nine Infants, absorb its essence, and worship it for life. Every raised head represents one life. One can increase the number of raised heads by devouring cultivators of the same rank... Since one of his heads is severed, it means that he has died once. However, since two of them are lowered, it means he currently has six lives!”

There was no shortage of knowledgeable people in the world.

A terrified expression could be seen on Meng Changdong’s face. Realization finally dawned on him why Ye Zhen did not kill all this while. As it turned out, Ye Zhen was just waiting for the right time!

“S-six lives?”

The others shivered despite the temperature.

Ye Zhen’s expression was as cold as ice. His brows were tightly knitted together. He did not foresee this in his plans. He looked at Lu Zhou who was holding the Golden Taixu Mirror and said, “You’re rather untactful, aren’t you?”

Lu Zhou withdrew the Golden Taixu Mirror and said calmly, “I told you... I find you loathsome.”

### **Chapter 788: Power of Birth Chart**

From the beginning, Ye Zhen had never paid attention to Nie Qingyun. Perhaps, it was more apt to say he did not think much of Nie Qing Yun. He shook his head and said, “You’re nothing but a fool who’s blindly led by personal desires. I’ve overestimated you...”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, “You’re too young, after all.”

In the next second, Lu Zhou disappeared from sight.

As a Ten-leaf cultivator, Sikong Beichen stood before the others and said gruffly, “Stay close to me, everyone.”

Without another word, Ye Zhen sped backward. “Now!”

With that order, the cultivators hiding in the horizon swarmed over in hordes.

In the next second, Lu Zhou appeared before Ye Zhen. He raised his wizened palm calmly. "I'd like to see how many lives you have..." His fingers shone blue. The words of Abandon Wisdom hung between his fingers.

The scripts were dazzling.

"A blue seal? Ye Zhen was frightened. He quickly raised his arms to defend himself.

Bam!

The palm seal landed heavily on Ye Zhen's arms. He felt as though he had been hit with a sledgehammer as he flipped backward in the air.

The others exclaimed in shock.

Similarly, a shocked expression could be seen on Nie Qingyun's face as well.

"Uh..."

The Cloud Mountain Mirror had clearly revealed the old man to be a Nine-leaf golden lotus cultivator. How could he easily defeat his enemies over and over again?

At this moment, the four elders flew toward the cloud platform.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Pandemonium descended on the place immediately.

It seemed like the internal conflict on Cloud Mountain was at its peak as well.

The disciples of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain did not know who was friend or foe. All they saw was their own people fighting each other.

Sikong Beichen said, "Yu Zhenghai, Yu Shangrong, the back."

"Alright." Lu Zhou's first and second disciple swiftly moved to the rear and manifested their avatars.

Whizz!

Whizz!

Two Nine-leaf avatars attempted to send the Cloud Mountain disciples flying.

"Yao Qingquan, Zhao Jianghe, the sides."

"Understood!" The two First Seats swiftly moved into their positions as well and manifested their avatars.

Whizz!

Whizz!

Two Nine-leaf red lotus avatars guarded the flanks.

Sikong Beichen stood alone in front. He looked at Nie Qingyun and said, "Nie Qingyun, I won't strike when you're down, but you better play clean as well. If you have time, you should deal with this mess."

Although Nie Qingyun had asked for Sikong Beichen's support earlier, the conflicts between their two sects were not created overnight. It was not something that could be resolved with just a few words. If Nie Qingyun suddenly turned on them and used the Grand Cloud Mountain Formation, the situation would not be good. It was important to be on guard.

Nie Qingyun cupped his fists at Sikong Beichen. "You have my thanks. I'll repay you with gratitude." For him, not striking while he was troubled was the best help there was.

Meanwhile, Ye Zhen was thoroughly shocked when Lu Zhou sent him flying with just a palm strike. He stabilized his body and lowered his altitude. He asked with a frown, "You're not a Nine-leaf cultivator?"

"That's not important. The important thing is, on this day next year, it will be the anniversary of your death. Young man, you're too green." Lu Zhou moved swiftly again. He raised his hand that was glowing blue, unleashing another Abandon Wisdom.

Ye Zhen said coldly, "You old geezer. We still don't know who will have the last laugh!"

Whizz!

Ye Zhen's avatar appeared. The Nine Infants glowed red. The avatar with six raised heads advanced toward Lu Zhou.

Seeing One's Nature.

Buddhist Dhyana Mudra.

Radiant rings appeared around Lu Zhou. Golden flames surged around the shining golden dhyana mudras.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Ye Zhen's avatar collided with Lu Zhou's Dhyana Mudra, creating ripples on its surface.

"Karmic power! Buddhist Dhyana Mudra?" Sikong Beichen felt emotional when he witnessed this scene. "So it's true that Brother Lu has mastered the techniques from all sects."

At this moment, many cultivators were flying in from all sides.

"The cultivators from the Flying Star House and the Sky Martial Court are here!" Nie Qingyun said angrily, "Cloud Mountain disciples, gather above the rock tower. Those who refuse to follow the orders will be treated as enemies." His voice rang throughout the cloud platform.

About 6,000 disciples took flight at the same time toward the rock tower.

Only five elders flew over.

Nie Qingyun knew it was imperative he remained calm.

The remaining elders and disciples were clearly staunch supporters of Ye Zhen.

Nie Qingyun found this acceptable. At the very least, many had come to their senses after seeing the Nine Infants.

“Sect Master!”

The others landed behind Nie Qingyun.

Without saying another word, Nie Qingyun raised his hand toward the sky.

A radiant circle covered everyone as numerous seals dropped down.

“Nobody will leave this place!”

On the cloud platform’s plaza, many cultivators soon lost their targets.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou only had one target: Ye Zhen.

The Dhyana Mudras faded away.

Lu Zhou was in no hurry as he stepped forward.

Nie Qingyun had done well. The people were now clearly divided into friend and foe. The place was no longer as chaotic.

At this moment, Lu Zhou was the only one who was deep within the enemies’ ranks.

“The Sky Martial Court is here. All those who resist shall die!” An armored cultivator who wielded a trident looked down at the cloud platform from above.

“The Flying Star House is here. Those who follow us will prosper while those who stand against us will perish!”

All in all, there were about 5,000 cultivators from both sides.

In any case, Lu Zhou behaved as though he did not hear anything. He continued advancing, and his eyes were firmly trained on Ye Zhen.

Ye Zhen retreated as he fought. He could see the killing intent in Lu Zhou’s eyes. Moreover, it was clear the old man was confident about killing him. As he tossed out dozens of script seals, he said, “Old geezer, why are you trying to resist now that you’re surrounded?”

The red Confucian script seals unleashed a shocking blast of Expansive Heavenly Energy.

Lu Zhou remained calm. He stroked his beard while his other hand was extended outward. He pushed his palm forward...

Abandon Wisdom!

The palm seal that was much larger than the one before sailed toward Ye Zhen.

“Do you think that the same trick will work on me twice? You’re too naïve.” Ye Zhen suddenly withdrew his avatar. He pushed his palms forward. Binding seals appeared on his palms, trying to bind Abandon Wisdom. However, when Abandon Wisdom was upon him, it suddenly grew to the height of a man.

Bam!

Ye Zhen spat out blood and slid backward. Two trenches could be seen under his feet.

Lu Zhou stepped forward. "Young man, I've crossed more bridges than the grains of rice you've eaten..."

Fear tightened its grip around Ye Zhen's heart. 'How is this possible? Not even Ten-leaf cultivators can easily repel my Nine Infants avatar!'

"Enough!"

Several individuals flew over from the Sky Martial Court's phalanx. One of them dove with a trident in hand. "I'm the Sky Martial Court's chief instructor, Chen Fangluo!"

When the Sky Martial Court's members flew in the air, their formation clearly changed.

The tips of Chen Fangluo's trident shone with black runes.

"Brother Lu, look out! That's a desolate-grade weapon!"

Lu Zhou's eyes were still trained on Ye Zhen. He did not even blink. When he sensed the incoming trident, he waved his left arm. He activated the Thunderblast Card.

In just an instant, it seemed like a bolt of lightning from the ninth heaven struck down.

Rumble!

It struck Cheng Fangluo with deadly precision.

Cheng Fangluo's forceful attack was easily repelled by Lu Zhou.

When he recoiled, he bumped into his comrades, effectively breaking their formation.

Sikong Beichen, Nie Qingyun, and the others. "..."

'That's it?'

Lu Zhou did not even look at the thousands of cultivators who were flying toward him from the sides. He said, "Who else dares meddle in my business?"

The cultivators were stunned.

Ye Zhen's heart sank, and his fingers trembled. 'Is this the power of a Birth Chart? No, this isn't how Birth Charts work. It can't be!'

Ye Zheng joined his palms together. Numerous paper talismans flew out and swiftly wrapped around him.

This reminded Lu Zhou of Liu Ge. Liu Ge's method of immortality originated from the red lotus domain. He was not surprised to see a similar technique here.

Ye Zhen suddenly planted his feet on the ground. The talismans between his palms were ignited as he shot toward Lu Zhou.

The talismans circled and coiled around him like a long dragon.

“Forget it. It’s time to let you see my true strength,” Ye Zhen said gruffly.

### **Chapter 789: Do You Understand Me?**

Ye Zhen sailed through the air. He was engulfed in flames. Under the enhancement of the talismans, his palms were like red hot blades.

‘The talismans mimic karmic fire?! Ye Zhen’s aura has suddenly intensified! He can reach the Ten-leaf stage at any moment!’ Sikong Beichen was slightly stunned. He pushed away from the ground and shot into the sky. He increased the size of his Ten-leaf lotus.

The disciples of the Sky Martial Court and the Flying Star House and the defected Cloud Mountain disciples were stunned.

“Brother Lu, I’ll clear the stage for you!” Sikong Beichen spread his arms like a giant crane extending its wings.

The Cloud Mountain’s pillar of light morphed into energy swords that rained down at this moment.

Those from the Sky Martial Court and the Flying Star House had to defend themselves from the raining energy swords. They had no time to launch a sneak attack on Lu Zhou at all and could only activate their protective energy shields.

At this moment, Ye Zhen’s attacks were almost upon Lu Zhou. When the red-hot palm blades were a hairbreadth away, he raised his bare hand. There was no flashy technique at all.

Bam!

As soon as the fire palms struck Lu Zhou’s palm, golden flames burst forth.

It became a contest of karmic power.

The Sky Martial Court’s chief instructor who was lying limply on the ground pressed a hand to his chest and held the trident with his other hand. His eyes were filled with contempt as he watched the scene.

Ye Zhen’s attack landed true. He smiled. “I’m certain you’re just a Nine-leaf cultivator.”

“Oh?” Lu Zhou’s other hand was still on his back. His expression remained calm.

Ye Zhen hovered in the air and joined his palms together. The karmic fire wrapped around the fire palms and pushed against Lu Zhou’s palm.

“I could’ve reached the Ten-leaf stage 200 years ago... Do you know why I’ve been painstakingly suppressing my realm?” Ye Zhen said contemptuously.

“What does it have to do with me?” Lu Zhou was also boosting his karmic fire. Ever since he cultivated the karmic fire, he had never put it to full use before. This was a good chance for him to put it to the test.

The golden flames and red flames burned each other. They were evenly matched.

The red flames showed the potential to burn brighter; it must be due to the talismans. Every time a talisman flew out, the red lotus karmic fire would intensify slightly.



Ye Zhen maintained his karmic fire and said, "It's because, at the Ten-leaf stage, there won't be many who could replenish my Nine Infants."

"You gain one life with every cultivator you devour, and yet, you merely have six lives. Looks like your Nine Infants avatar isn't without its limitations," Lu Zhou said.

"Indeed... However..." The flames around Ye Zhen's body intensified. He said in a dark tone, "It doesn't matter!"

Ye Zhen's Nine Infants avatar appeared again. The Primal Qi and karmic fire suddenly grew stronger. His cultivation base improved. The red lotus under the Nine Infants avatar began to spin quickly.

"Leaf sprouting?"

Sikong Beichen, Yu Zhenghai, Yu Shangrong, and Nie Qingyun were stunned. They were all outstanding cultivators, but they finally realized there was someone more powerful than themselves when they saw Ye Zhen.

Ye Zhen was going to sprout his leaf in front of Lu Zhou. Who would dare do this in the golden lotus domain?

Lu Zhou glanced at his golden lotus and said indifferently, "Young man, do you understand me?"

"I don't have to. I'm certain you're only a Nine-leaf cultivator based on this palm strike."

The karmic fire and talismans barred Lu Zhou's way.

The members of the Sky Martial Court and the Flying Star House hovered at the sides. They looked at this scene incredulously.

Sikong Beichen was extremely terrified... He knew Lu Zhou's strength well. He could kill the Ten-leaf Chen Beizheng with a single palm strike. However, the Nine-leaf Ye Zhen was capable of standing up against Lu Zhou for so long.

"Brother Lu, I'll help you!" Sikong Beichen retracted the energy swords in the sky and looked behind himself. "I'll leave this to the four of you."

Yu Zhenghai, Yu Shangrong, Yao Qingquan, and Zhao Jianghe formed four walls. This was Cloud Mountain with numerous cultivators present. They had to be on their guards against any possible attackers.

"No need." Lu Zhou projected his voice.

Little Yuan'er looked up and said, "Just sit back and enjoy the show. My master is just toying with him..." Then, she lifted her hands and began counting her fingers. "Six lives... This means that six palm strikes are needed..."

"..."

Ye Zhen's red lotus spun more quickly than before.

This leaf-sprouting method was similar to the golden lotus cultivators when they were approaching the Nine-leaf stage.

Lu Zhou looked at it for a few moments.

The red lotus's leaves enlarged and covered the ground.

Ye Zhen said gruffly, "Back."

The strength behind his joined fire palms increased several folds.

Lu Zhou pushed away from the ground and flew backward.

Ye Zhen advanced with his avatar. "Back again!"

The force of his palms pushed Lu Zhou backward again.

The others exclaimed in shock as they witnessed this.

Nie Qingyun looked on and shook his head. He said, "Old fiend Sikong, is this what you call a Birth Chart?"

Sikong Beichen said, "Be patient."

Nie Qingyun did not see Lu Zhou kill Chen Beizheng with a single palm strike like he did. Nie Qingyun's understanding of Lu Zhou was close to nothing.

At this moment, Lu Zhou was being pushed back to the edges of the cloud platform by the red lotus karmic fire. If he retreated any further, he would be out of the Grand Cloud Mountain Formation. At this moment, Lu Zhou stomped his feet, cracking the ground.

Bam!

With a single palm, he pushed back against Ye Zhen.

Ye Zhen increased his input of Primal Qi. His karmic fire rose to the height of 10 feet. "Move back!"

Lu Zhou did not budge. He was keeping an eye on the method of leaf-sprouting in the red lotus domain.

At this moment, Ye Zhen felt that something was amiss. He increased the amount of energy in his palms.

Buzz!

Ye Zhen's karmic fire was beginning to suppress the golden flames.

With a buzz, Ye Zhen's avatar grew taller by 10 feet. The six heads bared their bloodied fangs at Lu Zhou.

The others were shocked to see this. A moving avatar was already out of the ordinary, and yet, Ye Zhen was using the avatar to devour another living person. He suddenly had six other ways to attack!

The Cloud Mountain disciples covered their eyes. They could not bear to witness this gory scene.

Ye Zhen asked disdainfully, "Is that all?"

Swoosh!

The six heads were about to move in when Lu Zhou spread his fingers. A round golden shield was erected before himself. The energy seal bore the pattern of the Taiji diagram.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!

The attacks from the six heads were kept at bay.

“You’ve done all you can, while I haven’t done anything yet,” Lu Zhou said expressionlessly.

“Hm?” Ye Zheng’s heart sank.

In truth, Lu Zhou felt that he could fight against Ye Zhen for a while if he relied solely on his Nine-leaf karmic flame powers. The problem was, Ye Zhen was becoming more valiant as he fought. If Ye Zhen was allowed to sprout the leaf, it would be difficult to deal with him. He could not exactly afford more Deadly Strike Cards.

Therefore, Lu Zhou’s fingers shone with blue light again.

The power of past lives.

Bam!

Ye Zhen flipped in the air and recoiled. His Nine Infants avatar reeled back as well.

Lu Zhou shot into the air. He looked down at Ye Zhen as he dove. He launched another blue palm seal.

Daoist Nine Cuts Hand Seal!

The scene atop the Flying Star House was reenacted.

Ye Zhen was greatly shaken. ‘What’s happening?’ He looked at his red lotus and forced himself to stabilize. He was now at the crucial stage of the leaf-sprouting process. He had to endure this. He quickly joined his palms together again, and karmic fire burst forth.

At the same time, talismans flew in the air.

Lu Zhou’s Daoist Nine Cuts Hand Seals sailed over.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Lu Zhou destroyed the talismans with his first three palm strikes, the next three palm strikes extinguished Ye Zhen’s karmic fire, and the final three palm strikes hit Ye Zhen!

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Ye Zhen’s eyes were bloodshot. He spat out blood as he slid backward. He shouted, “What are you waiting for?!”

The chief instructor, Chen Fangluo, hurriedly led three others from the Sky Martial Court and the four remaining Flying Star House elders before they dove toward Lu Zhou. All of them unleashed their most powerful techniques.

‘Desolate-grade weapon?’ Lu Zhou glanced at the trident and the black runes on its tip. ‘Should I use the Peak Trial Card now?’

In the end, Lu Zhou dismissed that idea. He descended before he tossed out seven Thunderblast Cards.

The Thunderblast Cards shot out like poker cards.

Shocking lightning bolts appeared again.

Chen Fangluo frowned. "Again?" He raised his trident to deflect the lightning bolt.

Boom!

The lightning bolt struck Chen Fangluo.

The other six were unlucky and were struck to the ground. Three of them were heavily injured while the other three were only superficially injured.

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 4,000 merit points. Domain extra: 1,000 merit points."

"Ding! Will you retrieve the desolate-grade weapon, Cold Wind Trident?"

"Retrieve."

'How lucky!' Lu Zhou thought himself

"Chief instructor Chen!" The others exclaimed in shock.

Chen Fangluo's cultivation base was more profound than the others. Why was he killed while the others were only injured?

Ye Zhen was confused. They were both Nine-leaf cultivators, and yet, the difference between them was huge.

Ye Zhen did not unleash any shocking techniques.

'Chief instructor Chen isn't weaker than Ye Zhen, but why is he killed with a single strike?'

Lu Zhou shook his head. 'He's merely unlucky.'

Lu Zhou landed and said calmly, "Fragile."

"..."

The others shivered despite the temperature.

Nobody in the Sky Martial Court dared to make a move now. Who would dare provoke him now?

Ye Zhen widened his eyes in disbelief. His rational mind spurred him to flee, and he hastily fled toward the 12 main peaks.

Lu Zhou had two more Thunderblast Cards. He calmly pushed his palm out.

A Thunderblast Card hit Ye Zhen.

Boom!

Ye Zhen was struck down. He spat out blood again.

Sikong Beichen nodded. "Old man Nie, are you satisfied now?"

"If he's truly a Ten-leaf cultivator, it's not surprising for him to be capable of pulling this off."

"Why didn't you kill Ye Zhen, then? How come you didn't do it?" Sikong Beichen jibed.

"..."

Whizz!

The avatar grew taller by another 10 feet.

Lu Zhou could feel he had already used one-third of his extraordinary power. If this went on, he would need to use the Peak Trial Card. After unleashing his grand technique, he closed in Ye Zhen. "Your leaf-sprouting process should stop now."

Ye Zhen suddenly shouted, "You fell for it! Self-destruct!"

One of the avatar's heads suddenly lowered. The other heads shrunk backward and clumped together.

Primal Qi gathered.

The cultivators in the area retreated immediately.

Lu Zhou was the only person before the Nine Infants avatar; he stood unflinchingly before the great blast of destructive energy. Not even a Ten-leaf cultivator would dare take the blow from a Nine-leaf karmic fire user's self-destruct energy.

Lu Zhou flipped his palm and shattered an Impeccable Card.

A 150-foot Golden Buddha Body emerged before him.

Boom!

The energy was kept at bay by Lu Zhou.

"Golden Buddha Body! That's only a Nine-leaf stage... How can he still remain standing?" someone exclaimed. His eyes looked as though they were going to pop out of their sockets.

Sikong Beichen was thoroughly impressed. He said, "See that? Brother Lu has been suppressing his cultivation base on purpose. He's crushing Ye Zhen with his Nine-leaf stage."

"..."

"You won't understand even if I explained it to you... I wonder if you ever observed a cat that caught a mouse. Usually, the cat won't kill its prize immediately. Instead, it would toy with it for a bit," Sikong Beichen said.

"..."

Sikong Beichen's words were rather convincing. The others were beginning to view this fight in that light.

After Ye Zhen self-destructed, the energy gradually subsided.

Ten seconds later, Lu Zhou's Golden Buddha Body faded away as well.

"Only five heads are left. He's lost one life," someone said.

When his vision cleared, Ye Zhen saw Lu Zhou standing there calmly, stroking his beard as he advanced toward him as though nothing had happened. At this moment, he finally felt flustered. "You..."

After all these years in the red lotus domain, this was the first time Ye Zhen felt flustered. He sacrificed a life, but he did not even manage to injure Lu Zhou!

Ye Zhen grunted and spat out a mouthful of blood. This was the price he had to pay for self-destructing.

Lu Zhou said calmly, "You can self-destruct again... You have five more lives."

"Who are you?"

"Isn't it too late for that now?" Lu Zhou stepped closer.

The cultivators around them, including the disciples of Cloud Mountain, the Sky Martial Court, and the Flying Star House looked on silently as the old man slowly advanced to his opponent.

There was no wave of Primal Qi, and yet his movements seemed to tug on their heartstrings.

'He's too powerful!'

Ye Zhen's self-confidence was completely destroyed by Lu Zhou's shocking performance.

Ye Zhen recalled Lu Zhou's calm question directed to himself before the fight began. "Do you understand me?"

The answer was clear. He did not.

### **Chapter 790: One Shall Stand, One Shall Fall**

Ye Zhen forced himself to stay calm, knowing well he was on the verge of a mental breakdown. It was at a time like this that he should remain calm. He raised a hand, spitting out blood, as hundreds of talismans flew before him.

Karmic fire with dark flames burned through the talismans.

Ye Zhen pushed the talismans forward before he turned around and fled.

Lu Zhou flew up and pursued Ye Zhen. When he saw the talismans burning with reddish-black flames flying toward him, he raised his hand that was shining with blue light and launched Abandon Wisdom.

Boom!

Just like that, Lu Zhou destroyed the hundreds of talismans. He continued giving chase with his grand technique. He flew above Ye Zhen's head and said, "I'd like to see where you can run to now!"

Since Ye Zhen did not retract his avatar, he was too big of a target. He maintained the leaf-sprouting process; it was impossible for him to suppress it like what he did when he was at the Eight-leaf stage.

Ye Zhen continued to speed toward one of the peaks, leaving the cloud platform.

'It's time to take a gamble,' Lu Zhou thought to himself as he pushed a hand forward.

Binding Cage Card!

Lu Zhou flew after the golden frame.

Meanwhile, Sikong Beichen frowned deeply when he saw this, perplexed. "What technique is this?"

"I'm surprised to learn that there are things that even you don't understand, Old Fiend Sikong," Nie Qingyung said. He had grown rather tired of Sikong Beichen bragging all this time.

"Oh, put a sock in it," Sikong Beichen said before taking flight.

Yu Zhenghai, Yu Shangrong, and the others followed suit.

Meanwhile, several thousand disciples from the Sky Martial Court and the Flying Star House flew toward another peak. They formed groups in the air as they left the cloud platform.

Many disciples who could not fly could only sit limply on the floor as they looked at the shocking scenes. It was likely they would not be able to witness such shocking scenes for the rest of their lives after this.

At this moment, Ye Zhen was now above a ring-shaped platform at the third peak. He quickly descended in the center. He looked up in surprise at the cage that was flying toward him. 'What's that?'

The cage grew larger. It formed a golden lattice network that seemed like a net as it descended on Ye Zhen.

Boom!

The cage disappeared.

Lu Zhou shook his head. 'My luck isn't good.'

Ye Zhen did not know what was going through Lu Zhou's mind at the moment. After he landed, he slammed his palms on the platform.

The ring-shaped platform shone immediately; purple radiant circles rose into the air.

Ye Zhen taunted, "Do you dare to come here? I'm going to sprout my leaf in this Formation now, and there's nothing you can do about it!"

"Why won't I dare?" Lu Zhou flew to the ring-shaped platform.

Meanwhile, the other cultivators watched from the sky. There were nearly 10,000 cultivators waiting for the outcome of this battle. It was as though they had forgotten about their enemies.

"We're too late." Nie Qingyun sighed helplessly. "As expected, Ye Zhen knows the 12 peaks like the back of his hand! Old Fiend Sikong, this friend of yours is going to run into some bad luck."

"What do you mean?"

"This is a Witch God Blood Formation. Every quarter of an hour, this Formation will strip you of 100 years of life. Your friend is old while Ye Zhen has five lives..." Nie Qingyun said.

“Why aren’t you working to deactivate the Formation then?”

“So long as there’s life in the Formation, it’ll keep running,” Nie Qingyun said with a sigh.

The faint purple light soon shrouded the Formation like a barrier that separated it from the rest of the world.

Ye Zhen smiled as he wiped the blood away from the edge of his lips. He looked at the calm Lu Zhou before he infused his blood essence into the Formation veins.

The Daoist veins in Ye Zhen’s surroundings began to devour the vitality in the Formation.

Lu Zhou stepped forward and raised his hand to attack.

A palm seal burning with golden karmic fire sailed toward Ye Zhen again.

Ye Zhen planted his feet on the ground steadily. His Confucian robes fluttered in the wind as the Daoist veins flowed like water.

Red karmic fire collided with the golden flames and canceled each other out.

The Formation continued to devour vitality in the Formation.

“I have a long life ahead of me. What about you?” Ye Zhen asked mockingly.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard calmly as he looked at Ye Zhen.

Remaining life: 219,445 days.

-10 days.

-20 days.

“My life is longer than yours,” Lu Zhou finally said, still stroking his beard.

“In that case, let’s see who’ll last to the very end. One of us will die today.”

Lu Zhou’s life continued to decrease. The Nine Infants was, indeed, a pain to deal with. There was no doubt Ye Zhen was the most difficult opponent he had encountered after he transmigrated.

Lu Zhou shattered a Reversal Card.

+600!

The vitality in the surroundings surged into the Formation toward Lu Zhou and entered his body.

“What? You can replenish your life?!” Ye Zhen’s eyes widened as he instinctively took a step back.

Lu Zhou saw that the value of the Reversal Card had been raised to 600 days and nodded in satisfaction. He repeated Ye Zhen’s words from earlier, “You’re not tactful at all.”

With the new supply of life, Lu Zhou’s heart was as calm as a still lake as his life continued to dwindle.

Ye Zhen’s face was ashen. One of the heads on his avatar was already drooping down due to the Formation’s effect.



“Who are you?!” Ye Zhen’s voice spread out of the Formation and reached the ears of the thousands of cultivators in the sky.

At this point, Lu Zhou sped forward with Unnamed in his hand. His Nine-leaf golden flames avatar rose as he stared at Ye Zhen’s avatar with five heads. ‘These are all merit points!’

The Formation would last as long as there was life in it.

Ye Zhen’s heart sank. He felt as though he had dropped a rock on his foot.

The Nine Infants avatar released red energy in an attempt to fight back.

The red lotus karmic fire and the golden karmic fire collided again.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Lu Zhou shot upward and switched targets. He advanced toward Ye Zhen’s avatar.

Ye Zhen was shocked. He planted his feet on the ground. His palms burned with karmic fire as he tried to parry the attack.

Lu Zhou aimed at the thick and swaying necks of the Nine Infants and brought Unnamed down. Although the red lotus karmic fire and palm seals stood in his way, he did not stop and followed through with his movement.

The red lotus karmic fire and palm seals were cleaved into two as Unnamed slashed across a thick neck.

“No!” An excruciating pain besieged Ye Zhen immediately. He spat out a mouthful of blood.

“Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 4,500 merit points.”

The 10,000 cultivators were stunned. Was the battle not too one-sided?

Nie Qing Yun, the Sect Master of the Cloud Mountain, felt his eyelids twitch as he watched the battle in the Formation. He had just been bragging about the Witch God Blood Formation, but he was instantly proven wrong.

Sikong Beichen laughed. “I feel embarrassed on your behalf”

In the distance, a Flying Star House cultivator looked down and said, “Get ready to make a move.”

Sikong Beichen heard these words and said in a low voice, “You dare?”

This was perhaps Sikong Beichen’s greatest importance for being here. With his presence, the other cultivators did not dare to jump in recklessly.

“Sikong Beichen, is the Ninth Temple going to meddle in the Flying Star House’s affairs now?” one of the Flying Star House disciples asked.

“Do you have a death wish?!” Sikong Beichen asked in return.

“You!” the cultivator said resentfully, “The cultivators from the palace are on their way here as well! Let’s see how long you’ll be able to remain arrogant!”

As the cultivator spoke, Sikong Beichen formed an energy sword with two fingers.

As soon as the energy sword appeared, Nie Qingyun raised his hand. The air seemed to freeze in an instant. "Old Fiend Sikong, this is my turf... All I ask is for you to not go on a killing spree here!"

"Nie Qingyun, I did you a favor just moments ago. Is this how you repay my kindness?" Sikong Beichen asked.

"I'll repay your kindness someday, but not today!" Nie Qingyun replied.

"Very well. If any one of you dares to make a move, don't blame me for going on a killing spree!" Sikong Beichen said.

When there were many factions involved, there would always be a need to balance out their roles. Many considerations would have to be taken into account.

Nie Qingyun's expression was grim. He sighed inwardly, wondering what was the right thing to do.

Meanwhile, after Lu Zhou decapitated one of the Nine Infants' heads with Unnamed, the head fell and vanished, returning to nature.

Ye Zhen retreated swiftly.

Lu Zhou leaped as Unnamed morphed into a bow. He straightened his back and his expression grew solemn as he nocked an energy arrow.

"A desolate-grade bow!" The others were shocked again.

Bam!

The thick energy arrow glowed blue as it shot out. One-third of Lu Zhou's extraordinary power was contained in it. Moreover, it was fired by a desolate-grade weapon!

Ye Zhen fled desperately.

In just a blink of an eye, the energy arrow landed true, hitting another head.

"Ding! Killed a target. Reward: 4,500 merit points."

"Master, after him! He's left with three heads! See? I told you that my master will smash his heads!" Little Yuan'er cried out excitedly, cheering and leaping.

Lu Zhou did not use his remaining extraordinary power. Instead, he saved his energy. He put Unnamed away as he tossed a Binding Cage Card out again.

A square cage appeared again and flew toward Ye Zhen.

Lu Zhou continued in his pursuit.

"..."

The atmosphere above the Witch God Blood Formation was heavy and suffocating. Even breathing felt laborious.

“Let’s keep up,” Sikong Beichen said calmly as he followed the two opponents.