

Disciples 81

Chapter 81: A Powerful Helper

Lu Zhou's expression remained unchanged, but he felt pleased inwardly. His disciple, Duanmu Sheng, was not as calculative as Mingshi Yin even though he was opinionated. Ever since the siege by the ten great elites, Duanmu Sheng's loyalty remained stable and unwavering. Compared to rascals like Mingshi Yin and Zhao Yue, he preferred Duanmu Sheng more.

If Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin were in the same realm, Duanmu Sheng could easily win in a fight against Mingshi Yin. However, Mingshi Yin had benefited from the battle on Golden Court Mountain previously. Mingshi Yin had a breakthrough in his Bluewood Heart Technique. Although Duanmu Sheng's progress was slower, it was no surprise that he had a breakthrough in his realm.

"That's great!" Little Yuan'er clapped her hands excitedly.

Lu Zhou looked at Little Yuan'er and reprimanded her in a low voice, "You're the laziest and most carefree one here. You should work hard to catch up to your senior brother."

Little Yuan'er stuck her tongue out and said, "I know."

In truth, Lu Zhou was not worried about Little Yuan'er. She might be the last to join him, but her cultivation base had improved the quickest. Even Zhou Jifeng, the great disciple of Heavenly Sword Sect, admitted that he could not compare to her.

After a short while, Duanmu Sheng walked into the hall, looking very spirited. The chains that were still on his body clinked as he walked in.

Zhou Jifeng trailed behind Duanmu Sheng, his expression was one of admiration and envy.

Pan Zhong wore a similar expression on his face as well.

Ever since the two of them entered Golden Court Mountain, apart from being picked on by some disciples, they were, generally, pleased with their current states. At the very least, they could focus on cultivating and were not involved in the affairs of the world. After all, the reason they walked on the path of cultivation was to get stronger.

As soon as Duanmu Sheng entered the Evil Sky Pavilion's great hall, he kneeled on the ground and said respectfully, "I had a stroke of luck and managed to break through to the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. I've successfully formed the Hundred Tribulation Insight avatar!"

Lu Zhou had a pleased expression on his face as he stroked his beard. He nodded and said, "It's good that you had a breakthrough. The path of cultivation is long so remember not to be too proud or impatient. Keep up the good work." He spoke with the air of a teacher and elder.

Lu Zhou's behavior contradicted the impression that Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng had of the greatest villain under the heavens.

"Thank you for your teachings, master. I'll remember them." Duanmu Sheng kowtowed sincerely. His loyalty had gone up by 1%.

It was obvious that the higher the percentage, the harder it would be to increase.

Lu Zhou suddenly remembered the Overlord Spear. It seemed like the spear's designated owner was Duanmu Sheng. He found it logical. After all, Duanmu Sheng cultivated the Divine One Technique that included sword and spear play. Duanmu Sheng's character was frank and fierce, which made a spear more suitable for him compared to a sword. The spear and the sword were two different weapons, but they would lead to the same result. It would be beneficial for him as well if Duanmu Sheng grew stronger. After thinking about this, he rose to his feet before he said, "Wait here. I'll be back soon."

"Understood."

...

Lu Zhou returned to the hidden chamber. He raised his arm, and the Overlord Spear flew into his hand.

The dragon that was twined around the Overlord Spear's shaft gave it a majestic air.

After Lu Zhou obtained the Overlord Spear, he returned to the great hall. As soon as he arrived, he tossed the Overlord Spear over to Duanmu Sheng.

Whoosh!

The others were shocked. They thought that Lu Zhou was going to punish his disciple so they did not try to stop the spear.

Duanmu Sheng was startled and instinctively lifted his hands and crossed the chains before him to defend himself.

Clang!

Sparks flew when the Overlord Spear collided with Duanmu Sheng's chains before it shot up. Upon seeing this, he quickly grabbed the Overlord Spear's shaft. With just a glance, he was already impressed by the spear. 'This is a good weapon!'

"I'm giving the Overlord Spear to you... Use it well, and don't let me down!" Lu Zhou said.

Duanmu Sheng was overjoyed when he heard Lu Zhou's words. He quickly put the Overlord Spear aside before he kowtowed reverently at Lu Zhou. "Thank you for the weapon, master!"

At this moment, Little Yuan'er, Zhou Jifeng, and Pan Zhong finally regained their senses and realized Lu Zhou's intention. They felt jealous and envious!

"Ding! Overlord Spear has successfully gained an owner. Activated grade: Heaven-grade. Reward: 1,000 merit points."

Lu Zhou managed to figure some things out. It seemed like the grades of the weapons would only be completely activated when they were given to the most suitable owners. If it were casually given to someone else who was not suited to it, it would not be able to unleash its full potential. If he was not mistaken, Duanmu Sheng would be able to break the cold iron chains with a heaven-grade weapon. What a handsome reward! He wondered how many weapons were left behind after Ji Tiandao's death. After all, Ji Tiandao had slighted too many disciples so Lu Zhou had to be fair to everyone now.

When Duanmu Sheng obtained his weapon, his loyalty increased by 1% again.

“Master, I want one as well!” Little Yuan’er said as she ran up to Lu Zhou.

Fortunately, Lu Zhou had already thought about what to say. “Your cultivation base is still too low. You shouldn’t be messing around.”

As the saying went, ‘A common man’s only crime is to carry a jade’. How could a Divine Court realm cultivator protect his or her weapon? Although it was extremely difficult to cultivate a heaven-grade weapon, powerful cultivators with bad intentions would still covet it. This was a very common occurrence.

“Very well...” Little Yuan’er nodded unwillingly.

Duanmu Sheng would not let go of his newly-obtained weapon. The more he looked at it, the more he liked it. He looked around, wanting to look for someone to spar with. Obviously, his master was out of the question. This meant only Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were left.

“Both of you...”

“Mister Third, do you have orders for us?”

“Spar with me.”

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were stunned by Duanmu Sheng’s words.

Duanmu Sheng did not wait for them to reply as he said, “I’ll be waiting behind the mountain.” Before he left, he cupped his hands at Lu Zhou and respectfully said, “Master, I’m going to train with my weapon. I’ll take my leave.”

“Go ahead.” Lu Zhou waved his hand.

Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng wore bitter expressions on their faces. They shuffled out of the Evil Sky Pavilion reluctantly.

...

After the three people left, a messenger bird flew in.

Little Yuan’er who knew her job very well quickly received the letter from the messenger bird. “Master, it’s a letter from Fourth Senior Brother. I’ll read it out for you...” She quickly unfolded the letter and read out loud, “Master, I’ve conveyed your message to the Black Knights... They’ll be arriving in Evil Sky Pavilion in a few days’ time. I’ll be keeping an eye on them along the way.”

After Little Yuan’er read the letter, she exclaimed in shock, “Fan Xiuwen is really bold. To think he easily agreed to come here. Master! Don’t show him any mercy. Kill him with a single slap!”

“...”

‘If I kill him, who’s going to unravel the truth behind the Fish Dragon Village’s annihilation?’ The expression on Lu Zhou’s wizened face remained calm. However, inwardly, he could not help but feel suspicious. Fan Xiuwen, or Leng Luo, had always been cunning and valued his life very much. He was

similar to Jiang Aijian in this regard. However, Jiang Aijian was a lively character, but Fan Xiuwen was a man filled with schemes.

‘There’s no way that such a person would be easily provoked to come to the Evil Sky Pavilion. Fan Xiuwen should’ve heard the news of me defeating the ten great elites. Since he’s unafraid, I wonder where his confidence comes from?’

Even when Lu Zhou attained his Nine-leaf avatar by means of the Peak Form Card, nobody believed the rumor when it spread.

“Yuan’er.”

“Yes, master?”

“How’s Ye Tianxin doing these few days?”

“Apart from her shocking complexion, she’s doing fine,” Little Yuan’er replied.

Lu Zhou nodded. He stood up slowly before entering the hidden chamber again.

“Have a safe trip, master.”

Lu Zhou knew he needed to prepare for Fan Xiuwen’s arrival. He needed to find ways to suppress Fan Xiuwen. Moreover, it seems like Fan Xiuwen was related to the truth behind the destruction of Fish Dragon Village that had something to do with his lost memories.

Lu Zhou opened the system dashboard once he entered the hidden chamber. He had 1,310 merit points. He had lost interest in Reversal Cards. His current condition was undoubtedly more suitable for him to cultivate. This meant his only option was to select the lucky draw.

“Ding! Your disciple, Mingshi Yin, killed two black knights on his way back. Earned 200 merit points.”

“Ding! Killed two black knights. Earned 200 merit points.”

Chapter 82: The Master has Spoken

Lu Zhou’s heart stirred slightly. ‘This Mingshi Yin! He won’t stop making me worry. Since you’ve already conveyed the message, you can just peacefully return. You just had to get in conflict with Fan Xiuwen’s men. If you provoked Fan Xiuwen and get yourself killed, you’ll only have yourself to blame!’

Mingshi Yin was still quite a distance away from the Evil Sky Pavilion. Although Lu Zhou could rescue him with a Peak Form Card, it would still take some time for Lu Zhou to reach him even if he unleashed all his techniques to rush over. If Mingshi Yin managed to escape unscathed from the Black Knights, he was certain Mingshi Yin would be able to protect himself better in Great Yan in the future.

The path of cultivation was fraught with dangers. Lu Zhou did not wish for anything to happen to Mingshi Yin. Although this disciple of his was unruly, he was certain Mingshi Yin had the potential to be someone great with the right education. Moreover, he also hoped to earn merit points through Mingshi Yin. Currently, the system dashboard showed he had 1,710 merit points.

Lu Zhou thought to himself, 'I have two Deadly Strike Cards left. They should be enough. Binding Cage's hit rate is too low. I should buy two more.' When he opened the item cards tab, he saw Binding Cage had been unlocked. It cost 200 merit points each, and he bought three in a go.

'I have six Binding Cage Cards now, this should be enough, right? I'll go for the lucky draw next time. It'll be worth it if I manage to get an avatar. I'll only make two draws.'

...

Two days later.

Lu Zhou finally decided to stop comprehending the Heavenly Writing for now. After continuously studying it, he discovered he had made some headway. The more he comprehended it, the more his mental state improved. The improvement seemed to show itself when something unexpected happened. A good example of this was when he encountered the Buddhist Brahman Lullaby and when his fourth disciple, Mingshi Yin, approached the hidden chamber. He managed to remain unaffected by the Brahman Lullaby and repel Mingshi Yin. He muttered to himself, "Could it be that the process of comprehension allows me to gain extraordinary power?" This seemed to be the only logical explanation, for now.

Lu Zhou closed Heavenly Writing's interface. He felt that he had been a little too immersed in comprehending and studying it during the past two days.

At this moment, Little Yuan'er voice rang from outside, "Master, Fourth Senior Brother is back!"

"Alright." Lu Zhou left the hidden chamber and walked toward the pavilion. He saw Mingshi Yin kneeling in the hall.

Mingshi Yin's face was covered in grime, and he looked extremely battered.

To Lu Zhou's relief, Mingshi Yin's loyalty did not decrease. In fact, it seemed to be much better than before.

Mingshi Yin said, intentionally speaking loudly, "Greetings, master!"

Lu Zhou walked over with his hands on his back, "Stand up and talk. Where are the Black Knights now?"

"The Black Knights departed earlier... They're less than 10 miles away from Golden Court Mountain. They should arrive at any minute," Mingshi Yin replied.

Little Yuan'er exclaimed in surprise, "So soon?!"

At this moment, an unnatural smile appeared on Mingshi Yin's face.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and walked over. He stood before Mingshi Yin and looked at him appraisingly before saying, "Daredevil! Impudent!"

Upon hearing this, Mingshi Yin instinctively fell to his knees. 'I'm dead. Master is going to lose his temper!'

"We're not clear about Fan Xiuwen's strength. You've just entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, and yet, you're bold enough to provoke him? I think you're sick of living, is that right?" Lu Zhou's tone contained a hint of rebuke when he spoke.

"I dare not! I was worried he wouldn't come so I... harassed some of his men! I didn't plan on killing them, but they didn't want to let me go. I had no choice but to hide in the forest and took care of them there," Mingshi Yin explained.

"Fool." Lu Zhou evaluated Mingshi Yin's actions calmly. "If Fan Xiuwen really meant you harm, he would be able to easily deal with you. There's no need for him to give you a chance."

Mingshi Yin was frightened when he heard this. He asked in a small voice, "Fan Xiuwen is so strong?"

At this moment, Little Yuan'er chimed in, "His real name is Leng Luo. Didn't you read the letter master sent you?"

"..." Mingshi Yin sat on the floor with a dumbfounded expression on his face. He had never heard of Fan Xiuwen, but he was not unfamiliar with the name, Leng Luo. Back then, Leng Luo's reputation was unrivaled. If his master did not amaze the world by raising nine disciples, Leng Luo's reputation would linger even longer.

Leng Luo was a scheming expert with a profound cultivation base. How could Mingshi Yin not feel frightened after killing the Black Knights under such an expert's nose?

All of them wondered why Fan Xiuwen did not make a move...

At this moment, a female cultivator from Derived Moon Palace entered the hall. After bowing, she said, "Pavilion Master, Fan Xiuwen requests an audience with you. He's outside."

'Here he comes.' Lu Zhou looked outside the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Mingshi Yin rose to his feet, looking very obedient now. He asked tentatively, "Master, should I drive him away for now? You can meet him another time?" His master was old, after all. Even if his master could suppress Fan Xiuwen easily with his cultivation base and strength, he might not wish to fight such an elite.

Lu Zhou waved his hand dismissively and said calmly, "Bring him in."

"I'll fetch him" Mingshi Yin did not even have time to clean himself before he walked out of the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Little Yuan'er giggled and said, "Master... I'm going as well!"

Lu Zhou did not stop her. After all, Fan Xiuwen was already at the foot of the mountain. Fan Xiuwen was an intelligent man. He would not be so rash as to attack his disciples.

...

Beyond the barrier, Golden Court Mountain.

More than 10 Black Knights waited in a row, looking imposing. Only one knight stood at the lead, and he was none other than Fan Xiuwen. His most trusted subordinates, the Four Dark Knights, stood in the middle.

Fan Xiuwen looked at Golden Court Mountain's barrier that shone with a gold brilliance as he said in a hoarse voice, "I didn't expect Golden Court Mountain to have a Formation in such a perfect place..."

A Black Knight standing behind Fan Xiuwen said, "Rumor has it that even the ten great Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm elites could not break Golden Court Mountain's barrier after they joined forces. Such a Formation is truly amazing."

Fan Xiuwen nodded lightly and said indifferently, "Four of you will accompany me up the mountain while the rest will stay here and wait."

"Understood."

At this moment, a figure shot toward them from the top of the stairs at lightning speed. It was none other than Mingshi Yin. He came to halt a short distance away from the barrier. He looked at the people beyond the barrier to confirm they were the Black Knights he had seen in the forest. The person standing in the lead who wore black armor and a black tiger mask with a tall and muscular body had to be the infamous Leng Luo. He felt chills running up his spine when he looked at him. He did not dare to act recklessly. He cupped his hands together and said, "The master invites you up the mountain."

Fan Xiuwen glanced at Mingshi Yin and said in a deceptively soft voice, "The Evil Sky Pavilion's fourth disciple, Mingshi Yin... You killed four of my knights. However, on account of your master, I won't hold it against you."

"Senior, you're truly magnanimous. However, I was only defending myself since they persisted on hunting me down..." Mingshi Yin said.

A Black Knight standing behind Fan Xiuwen retorted coldly, "Weren't you the one who infiltrated the Black Knights Headquarters first?"

"I was just worried you won't convey the message to your leader. I won't be able to bear the consequences if I fail my task. All of you know what kind of person my master is, right?" Mingshi Yin effectively stopped the Black Knights from retorting by bringing his master up.

Fan Xiuwen raised a hand to signal his subordinates to not interrupt. Then, he said indifferently, "I will never decline an invitation from your master. Lead the way." Based on his words, he was clearly confident in his strength.

Compared to Fan Xiuwen, Mingshi Yin preferred Zuo Xinchuan better. At the very least, Zuo Xinchuan had addressed him as Mister Fourth. He liked the sound of that. Alas, it was unfortunate that Zuo Xinchuan was dead.

Mingshi Yin walked up to the barrier before waving his arm, and an opening appeared in the barrier. "Master asks you to go up on your own."

"Interesting." Fan Xiuwen nodded. He walked up as the Four Dark Knights trailed after him.

The last Dark Knight to cross the barrier paused for a moment to look at Mingshi Yin before he said, "Fourth disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion, if we have the opportunity in the future, let's exchange some moves."

Without batting an eyelid, Mingshi Yi calmly said, "Master has said that I'm not to fight without a reason..."

Chapter 83: Fan Xiuwen

The Dark Knight did not reply and caught up to the others. Since five of them were wearing masks, none of their expressions could be seen. They left the remaining Black Knights at the foot of the mountain as they walked up the stairs that led to the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Halfway up the stairs, Fan Xiuwen suddenly came to a stop and asked nonchalantly, "Who's hiding in the shadows?"

A flash of black clothes flitted between the trees on the right before it leaped from one tree to another. Little Yuan'er stood on a branch. She frowned and said, "Ugly." She had described them as ugly, not terrifying.

One of the Dark Knights spoke up irritably, "My Lord, the Evil Sky Pavilion doesn't seem to be showing us much respect!"

Fan Xiuwen raised a hand to cut him short. Then, they continued up the mountain. If he could accept Mingshi Yin killing four of his knights but could not tolerate this insult, how would he be able to command respect as the leader of the Black Knights? When he was at the top of the blacklist, there was no shortage of insults being thrown at him. Regardless of how terrible the insults were, he did not take them to heart. His long years of training made it easy for him to disregard such matters.

Little Yuan'er pulled a face at Mingshi Yin before she flew back up the mountain. Perhaps, she was the only one who could go up and down the mountain freely since she was loved by her master.

Mingshi Yin shook his head helplessly and said, "My Little Junior Sister has always been this way. Please don't take her seriously."

Fan Xiuwen said nonchalantly, "It doesn't matter."

A moment later, they arrived at the Evil Sky Pavilion and slowly walked into the great hall.

Mingshi Yin swept his gaze across the hall. He discovered Zhao Yue and Ye Tianxin were present as well. They were sitting on chairs, looking exhausted. Meanwhile, Duanmu Sheng, Zhou Jifeng, Pan Zhong stood on the left.

Fan Xiuwen placed one hand on his back that was as straight as a rod. His four subordinates stood in pairs behind him.

The great hall was deathly silent at this moment. Everyone's eyes were trained on the five visitors.

Fan Xiu Wen looked at Lu Zhou, the old man who sat at the highest place in the hall. He was stunned when their eyes met. Rumor had it that Ji Tiandao's days were numbered. Ji Tiandao's 1,000 years of cultivation would return to nature once his time was up.

Fan Xiuwen had always had a talent for gauging a person's life aura. Indeed, this old man only had about fifteen years left in him. However, he could not gauge the old man's cultivation base. If he had forcefully tried to probe the old man's cultivation base, it would be equivalent to a blatant provocation. This would not be the most rational course of action, naturally. After a while, he said in a neither servile nor domineering manner, "Fan Xiuwen pays respect to Old Senior Ji."

At the same time, Fan Xiuwen's four subordinates cupped their hands together in greeting as well.

Lu Zhou could not see their faces. His expression was calm. One would find it difficult to read his mind based on his expressions. He said condescendingly, "Sit down." His tone was similar to the tone one with a higher status would use when speaking to those with a lower status.

Fan Xiuwen cupped his hands together before taking a seat. "I heard you wanted to see me, Old Senior Ji... I did not dare to delay so I led the Black Knights here without making any stops. I wonder what matters you wanted to discuss with me, Old Senior Ji?"

Lu Zhou stroked his beard. He pointed at Ye Tianxin and casually said, "I'm sure you recognize this person..."

Fan Xiuwen shifted his gaze from under his mask. He saw Ye Tianxin sitting on the chair opposite him. She was unusually pale. He shook his head and said, "I'm afraid I don't." He sounded honest.

Little Yuan'er suddenly giggled and said, "This is my master's sixth disciple. She's my senior sister, Ye Tianxin...!" She made a spitting sound before saying, "Traitor!"

"So, she's the Evil Sky Pavilion's sixth disciple. I apologize for my rudeness," Fan Xiuwen said softly.

Lu Zhou nodded and calmly said, "Do you know about the Fish Dragon Village?"

Fan Xiuwen's body stilled immediately. However, his thick and heavy armor and mask hid his expression. Nobody knew what he was thinking about. After a while, he shook his head, indicating he did not know about the Fish Dragon Village. After all, the village was too insignificant. As the leader of the Black Knights, why would he remember a minor village? He asked, "Why do you ask about the Fish Dragon Village, old senior?"

"Ye Tianxin," Lu Zhou said imposingly.

Ye Tianxin shuddered slightly. She supported herself and spoke with no inflection in her tone, "The Fish Dragon Village has a population of about 354 villagers. About 150 years ago, it was completely destroyed..." She did not continue to speak after that.

Ye Tianxin had investigated this incident after she left Golden Court Mountain... She went through many troubles only to discover all the signs pointed to her master, Ji Tiandao, whose name alone would shock the lands.

Fan Xiuwen nodded and said, "I see. I'm truly sorry to hear the Fish Dragon Village has been destroyed. However..." He turned to Lu Zhou and asked, "Is this the reason you summoned me here, old senior?"

"That's right," Lu Zhou said nonchalantly.

"What does this have to do with me?"

"The records of the palace and local archives stated that I was the one who destroyed the Fish Dragon Village." Although Lu Zhou could not see Fan Xiuwen's expression, it did not escape his eyes that Fan Xiuwen's body had moved slightly as soon as he finished speaking. He wondered if this indicated Fan Xiuwen's surprise or nervousness.

"Is that so?" Fan Xiuwen asked, a hint of shock could be heard in his voice.

When Lu Zhou spoke about himself being the alleged culprit, everyone could see the unnatural expression on Ye Tianxin's face.

"The Black Knights is the special force of Great Yan's Imperial Family. They only operate in the shadows. It's only natural the palace archives won't mention the force," Lu Zhou calmly said.

Fan Xiuwen cupped his hands and said, "Every cultivator knows that the Black Knights is the special force of the Imperial Family."

"The Black Knights has never been to Measure Heaven River?" Lu Zhou asked.

When Fan Xiuwen heard the question, he acted as though he had expected it. He was an intelligent person after all. As soon as Lu Zhou pointed at Ye Tianxin, he had known Lu Zhou would ask about this matter.

Fan Xiuwen laughed hoarsely, his laughter resounded in the pavilion. "Well, let's put the incident at the Fish Dragon Village aside for now. In fact, I came here today to discuss a certain matter with you, old senior."

"Speak," Lu Zhou said curtly.

"The palace has a message for you." Fan Xiuwen's attitude suddenly turned respectful. "The palace will not hold the Evil Sky Pavilion accountable for its various deeds in the past. This includes Mingshi Yin's killing of four Black Knights. The palace is willing to let bygones be bygones, but there's one condition..." He paused for a moment before he continued to say, "The Evil Sky Pavilion must not interfere with the business of the Great Yan's Imperial Family for the next ten years."

Silence descended on the great hall.

A few disciples exchanged looks among themselves.

Even Fan Xiuwen's four trusted subordinates did not know about this. However, they were relieved that the mission from the palace was just this. This request was simple. There were many cultivators in Great Yan. Some of the experts were wary about the forces within the palace and would not meddle in the palace's various affairs. Some of them were offered amnesty by enlistment and became a part of some influential person's faction.

After a slight pause, Fan Xiuwen added, "The Black Knights do not wish to be enemies with the Evil Sky Pavilion nor do we have the right or strength... I'm saying this on the Black Knights' behalf. I hope you can grant us this wish, old senior." After that, he no longer spoke. After all, he had already stated his reason for being here.

Everyone looked at Lu Zhou, waiting for his reply.

However, Mingshi Yin broke the silence first with a chuckle. He said, "The last person in this hall who rambled on in such a self-righteous manner had... flown on a crane to the Western Paradise. Are you trying to follow in his footsteps?"

Fan Xiuwen cupped his hands together. "I dare not."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and finally said, "Leng Luo."

Fan Xiuwen's heart skipped a bit when he heard this. His body involuntarily stiffened for a moment.

Lu Zhou looked at Fan Xiuwen with a piercing gaze and said, "Are you trying to threaten me?"

Chapter 84: Don't Even Think About Leaving

Regardless of how humble Fan Xiuwen's tone was or how respectful his manner was, anyone with half a brain would be able to hear the underlying threat hidden in his words.

The Evil Sky Pavilion's might struck fear into people's hearts. Whether it was due to Lu Zhou or his nine disciples, even if they discounted Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong, no forces would dare to take the Evil Sky Pavilion lightly. What gave Fan Xiuwen the confidence to speak such words or stop the Evil Sky Pavilion from meddling in the Imperial Family's affairs if they so wished? What was that supposed to mean?

Fan Xiuwen rose to his feet and cupped his hands together again. "Since you're privy to my identity, old senior, why would you put me in a difficult position? Leng Luo has disappeared 300 years ago along with the grace and grudges of the past. You're older than me so I should address you as older brother. To be honest, being on the blacklist is not something I'm proud of. In fact, it has become an unremovable stain in my life." He spoke passionately with such self-righteousness that it made people cringe when they heard his words.

This person who was once on the top of the blacklist and had committed every evil act imaginable and unimaginable under the heavens said that he was ashamed of his past and had turned to the path of righteousness? Was that not funny?

Fan Xiuwen continued to say, "As for threatening you, the Black Knights won't dare to do such a thing. We're merely conveying the palace's message. There's nothing I can do even if you choose to reject this request."

Silence descended on the great hall again.

Mingshi Yin snorted, breaking the silence again, and said, "If you know your request will be rejected, aren't you just wasting your breath by saying it in the first place?"

Duanmu Sheng spoke frankly, "You're asking the Evil Sky Pavilion to not meddle in the palace's affairs... According to your logic, if we agree to your request, even if a person from the palace were to cut me open, I'd have to bear with it and endure it?"

"..."

"Fifth Junior Sister Zhao Yue's cultivation base was sealed by someone from the palace before she was sent to the holy altar for a marriage alliance. Who's going to answer for that? Who's going to answer for the destruction of the Fish Dragon Village?" Duanmu Sheng asked.

Everyone was surprised by Duanmu Sheng's eloquence. After all, he was a man of few words.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "Leng Luo, did you hear that?" It seemed like he agreed with Duanmu Sheng's words.

This gave Lu Zhou's disciples a burst of confidence. After all, such a situation was unlikely to happen in the past. If they had spoken out of turn, they would bring disaster upon themselves.

Fan Xiuwen cupped his hands and said, "I can't defy the palace's orders. Old senior, there's no need for you to lower yourself to the palace's level."

"No, you don't understand." Lu Zhou rose to his feet and began to descend the stairs with his hands on his back.

This simple action caused Fan Xiuwen to stand up as well, clearly wary.

At this moment, Fan Xiuwen's four subordinates felt slightly worried as well.

Ji Tiandao was a villain known for his fiery temper and unpredictable mood swings. It would not surprise anyone if Ji Tiandao lost his temper at the slightest disagreement.

Lu Zhou asked again, "Is the Black Knights responsible for the destruction of Fish Dragon Village?" His knowing eyes were trained on Fan Xiuwen. He held a Deadly Strike Card in his hand as he waited silently for the answer.

His question resounded across the hall.

When the weak and dazed Ye Tianxin heard this question, her eyes widened. She looked at her master incredulously before looking at Fan Xiuwen who was standing opposite her master. She felt her heart racing as she thought to herself, 'Is there really another side to the Fish Dragon Village's story?'

The atmosphere turned tense and heavy.

Fan Xiuwen did not answer Lu Zhou's question directly. Instead, he said, "Other Tribes will never be allowed to exist in Great Yan's lands. There were too many of them at Measure Heaven River." As he spoke, he casually glanced at Ye Tianxin. This was as good as a direct admission.

Fan Xiuwen was intelligent. He knew that arguing about the matter or denying the truth were meaningless in this situation. The Evil Sky Pavilion would not have summoned him here if they did not have sufficient reason and proof.

Upon hearing Fan Xiuwen's words, everyone exchanged a look.

"Did you tamper with the records in the palace and local archives?"

"I did." Fan Xiuwen did not deny the allegation. Instead, he said, "There aren't many who have access to the palace's archives... Old senior, do you have an informant in the palace?"

Lu Zhou turned around suddenly, ignoring Fan Xiuwen's question. "So, you were the one who slandered me?"

Ji Tiandao had done many bad things. However, even the evil deeds of his nine disciples would be placed on him by the people in the cultivation world. As time passed, he became more and more infamous, and many people would push their crimes on him. After all, he had already committed so many wicked deeds, what was a few more? When his crimes, whether he committed them or not, grew, he did not explain himself. After all, it would take too much of his time to clear his name.

However, Lu Zhou could not tolerate something like this.

Fan Xiuwen quickly said, "The Black Knights were only following orders! We aren't the mastermind behind this... Moreover, from what I know, the sixth disciple of Evil Sky Pavilion is a traitor. Why would you pit yourself against the palace for a mere traitor, old senior?"

Upon hearing this, Ye Tianxin forced herself to stand. With her mortal body, she grabbed the sword that one of the female cultivators from Derived Moon Palace carried.

Zing!

The blade gleamed coldly as Ye Tianxin thrust the sword toward Fan Xiuwen.

Bang!

Fan Xiuwen did not move. His hands remained on his back. He was like a statue made from rock. The sword cracked and shattered when it landed on him.

Everyone was shocked.

Ye Tianxin's eyes were red. She said belligerently, "Who's the mastermind? Who is it?"

Whoosh!

Fan Xiuwen released a wave of energy that pushed Ye Tianxin away. "Old Senior Ji, the Black Knights do not wish to become enemies with the Evil Sky Pavilion. I've answered all your questions. As for the mastermind, forgive me for not being able to answer you. Since I've already conveyed the palace's message to you, it's up to you what you decide to do, old senior..." As soon as he finished speaking, he turned around and strode toward the door.

Upon seeing this, Fan Xiuwen's four subordinates stood up and cupped their hands together before leaving with their leader.

Fan Xiuwen took two steps forward before suddenly coming to a halt. "However, as a junior, I have two pieces of advice for you, old senior. First, It's best not to go against the palace. After all, 10 years will pass in just a blink of an eye. Second, although the Black Knights can't compare with the Evil Sky Pavilion, we aren't pushovers as well. We'll take our leave now."

Since they had arrived at the Evil Sky Pavilion until now, they had been constantly disregarded and disrespected. They had never been treated in this manner before. They had to forfeit their pride and dignity here. Even Fan Xiuwen had acted humbly. However, after listening to Fan Xiuwen's parting

words, they felt extremely refreshed. The knots in their hearts seemed to have vanished with his words. They found his statement appropriate. After all, it was true that the Black Knights was no pushover.

Before the five visitors could leave the pavilion, Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said in a deceptively calm voice, "Did I allow you to leave?"

"Hm?" Fan Xiuwen stopped in his tracks. His heart skipped a beat.

"When I summoned you here, I had no intention of letting you leave." Lu Zhou waved his hand.

Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin had been itching for action. They thought their master would avoid conflict. After all, the Black Knights was sent by the palace. Duanmu Sheng and Mingshi Yin were not individuals who did not know the immensity of the heavens like Zuo Xinchuan. They really did not expect the old man to be so unyielding!

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Mingshi Yin and Duanmu Sheng shot out immediately.

Fan Xiuwen turned around slowly and said, "Do you really want to do this for the sake of a traitor?"

Lu Zhou replied flippantly, "I'll punish the traitor in due time. This is no place for you to order me around. Tell me the mastermind behind the incident, and I'll leave your corpse intact."

Realization dawned on Fan Xiuwen. He returned to his seat. He cupped his hands and called out, "Four Dark Knights..."

"Yes, my lord," the Four Dark Knights answered in unison.

"Since the Evil Sky Pavilion wants to witness the strength of the Black Knights, we'll grant them their wish."

Bzzt! Bzzt! Bzzt! Bzzt!

Four buzzes rang in the air before two Three-leaf and two Two-leaf Golden Lotus avatars appeared. The avatars, each 30 to 40 feet tall, towered above the others, shrouded in an intimidating aura.

Chapter 85: The Disciple Is Fierce

The others looked at the four avatars in shock. However, Lu Zhou was not surprised.

The great leader of the Black Knights who was once on the top of the blacklist, naturally, had some tricks up his sleeves. Since he was bold enough to come, it meant he was confident of his and his men's strength. The Four Dark Knights were all Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm experts.

Fan Xiuwen placed his hands on his back as he said, "I stand by my words. I don't wish to become enemies with the Evil Sky Pavilion." His words grated on the ears of the listeners. This was a great example of moving forward by taking a step backward. He kept on saying he did not want to oppose the Evil Sky Pavilion, but his actions were contrary to his words.

Even the Evil Sky Pavilion's traitor Ye Tianxin was angered when she heard Fan Xiuwen's words.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou was considering his options. Little Yuan'er could do nothing against the four Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm experts. Mingshi Yin and Duanmu Sheng could handle a knight each. That left him with two knights and Fan Xiuwen, the leader of the Black Knights, whose cultivation base was profound. Naturally, he could use a Deadly Strike Card and get rid of Fan Xiuwen immediately, but he had yet to discover the true mastermind Fish Dragon Village incident. Moreover, if he killed Fan Xiuwen, his remaining item cards were not enough to deal with the remaining four knights. Although he had merit points to spare to get more Deadly Strike Cards, he wanted to save as many merit points as he could. After all, merit points were hard to come by.

While Lu Zhou was deep in thoughts, one of the four Black Knights began to provoke Mingshi Yin, "Since you killed our men, I've been itching to spar with you!"

Mingshi Yin had just recently broken through to the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, after all. He was slightly flustered by this and took several steps backward. He tapped the ground with the tips of his feet before he leaped backward at an angle.

This Black Knight was extremely confident. He intended on defeating Mingshi Yin on his own. "Stand back... We, Black Knights, do not have to resort to strength in numbers!"

The Dark Knights were pleased with this development.

And thus, the duo fought fiercely, leaving the hall and carrying the fight to the distance.

Lu Zhou thought it was just as well. Although Mingshi Yin's avatar had no leaves yet, he had been suppressed for an extended period of time before he broke through to the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. Similar to Duanmu Sheng, Mingshi Yin could be considered as being prepared. Moreover, battles like this would help with their growth. With Mingshi Yin's craftiness, he would definitely flee if he could not defeat his opponent. There was no need for him to worry about Mingshi Yin's safety.

On the other hand. Duanmu Sheng reacted differently. He said in a deep voice, "One isn't enough. Two of you can come at me at once!" He brandished his Overlord Spear, his chains clanking loudly in the process.

Fan Xiuwen turned slightly to look at Duanmu Sheng. "A heaven-grade weapon?"

The heaven-grade weapon, the Overlord Spear, seemed exceptionally majestic in Duanmu Sheng's hands. The dragon coiled itself from the end of the spear's shaft to its tip. Duanmu Sheng grabbed the dragon's tail and head simultaneously and shook the spear. Powerful and terrifying Primal Qi surged out of the Overlord Spear immediately. He did not give his opponents time to think as he charged, without warning, toward one of the Dark Knights.

The Dark Knight moved his avatar and parried Duanmu Sheng's blows.

However, the gap between someone who possessed a heaven-grade weapon and someone who did not possess a heaven-grade weapon was quite wide. This was common knowledge in the cultivation world. The energy from the heaven-grade weapon increased Duanmu Sheng's strength greatly.

A skilled weapon user could also achieve a breakthrough in his avatar with a heaven-grade weapon. However, without the avatar, the advantage from the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm would be gone.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Duanmu Sheng thrust the Overlord Spear out mercilessly. At this moment, the spear looked like a dragon. It seemed like he was overwhelming his opponent. He fought more valiantly as the battle dragged on. It did not take long before he and his opponent brought their fight out of the great hall as well.

“I’ll go!” The third Dark Knight felt something was amiss so he quickly decided to join in the fray, making the fight two against one.

With a heaven-grade weapon, Duanmu Sheng could face off against a two-leaf avatar and a three-leaf avatar at once. He had been fiercely suppressing his opponent earlier. However, when another opponent joined in, the pressure on him, naturally, increased.

The two Dark Knights worked together and sent powerful waves of energy at Duanmu Sheng.

Duanmu Sheng raised the Overlord Spear before himself and wrapped it in his chains.

Bang!

Duanmu Sheng retreated swiftly and slid across the ground on his feet. Shrouded by his energy, he created two long and narrow ditches as he slid across the ground.

The others watched with their mouths agape.

After all, Duanmu Sheng did not seem like someone who had just recently broken through to the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. He seemed more like someone who had been in this realm for a long time. He wielded his spear skillfully as well. Every time he unleashed the Scorching Field Hundred Strikes and Thousand Layers of Waves, he would leave 100 afterimages of his spear in his wake.

One could see how terrifying a heaven-grade weapon was. This was the reason why many cultivators coveted heaven-grade weapons.

Fan Xiuwen could not help but clap before he praised, “If I didn’t witness this with my own eyes, I wouldn’t have believed a disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion who did not have any leaves could hold his own against two opponents!”

At this moment, the remaining Dark Knight at his side said softly, “Leader, I wish to join the battle as well.”

Fan Xiuwen raised a hand but did not reply. Instead, he turned and looked at Lu Zhou who was standing with a calm expression on his face.

“The Four Dark Knights are in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. They rarely display their strength... The one who’s sparring with Mingshi Yin is Old First, Cheng Zhonghe. The ones sparring with Duanmu Sheng are Old Second, Yue Zhong, and Old Fourth, Duan Yanhong. This remaining knight is Old Third, Li Qing. He’s an archer with great precision.” Fan Xiuwen had deliberately mentioned Li Qing’s precision with the arrows. In other words, Li Qing was not a melee combatant. He could join the battle at any given moment.

Fan Xiuwen continued to say, "It's extremely rare to encounter a heaven-grade weapon... Li Qing isn't as fortunate. All he has is the earth-grade Master Bow. However, with this bow, he can hit everything in his range of vision with 100% precision."

At this moment, Li Qing's Master Bow resonated with his avatar and flew into his hand.

Fan Xiuwen cupped his hands at Lu Zhou again and said, "I'll say it again..." However, before he could finish his sentence, he was interrupted by a loud buzz outside the great hall.

Everyone turned to look at the source of the sound as well.

Zhou Jifeng exclaimed in surprise, "An avatar is sprouting leaves!"

When an avatar sprouted leaves, it would immediately grow. Its height, the distance it covered, the radiation coverage, aura, and Primal Qi intake would increase as well.

"Mister Third is truly talented. He sprouted a leaf in the midst of a battle!" Sprouting a leaf meant his cultivation base would improve dramatically.

At the same moment, they heard Duanmu Sheng's cry.

The Overlord Spear was thrust upward. Duanmu Sheng's clothes were torn to shreds, revealing his tall, sturdy, and muscular body. He extended his arm, his chains were pulled taut. His energy surged out to the surroundings, this was the power of a cultivator who had sprouted a leaf.

The Dark Knights, Old Second and Old Fourth, had to move back slightly.

The Overlord Spear moved down at lightning speed, its tip slicing through the chains.

Clang! Clang!

The chains were broken!

At this moment, Duanmu Sheng seemed like an extremely dangerous beast as he held the Overlord Spear with his big hands. "Have a taste of my power!"

The trio was once again locked in battle. The battle was more ferocious than before.

Lu Zhou did not expect Duanmu Sheng to have a breakthrough at this moment. He nodded in satisfaction.

Fan Xiuwen waved his hand. His meaning was clear.

"Roger!" The skilled archer, Li Qing, raised his hand and wielded the Master Bow. His Primal Qi and energy surged.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said coldly, "I really despise those who sneak up on others the most..." He raised his right hand before aiming it forward. Fragments of a miniature card seemed to form a cyclone in his palm.

Whoosh!

The Primal Qi in the surroundings was instantly absorbed by the cyclone.

Lu Zhou tossed the thing in his hand out gently.

Target: Skilled archer, Li Qing.

Upon seeing this, Fang Xiuwen panicked. He cried out, "Dodge it!" He did not expect Lu Zhou to make a move at this moment. He assumed Lu Zhou would only continue to observe the battles.

At this moment, a massive hand seal appeared in the air.

"Great Seal of Fearlessness!"

The Great Seal of Fearlessness made everyone from the Evil Sky Pavilion feel safe and fearless.

Fan Xiuwen could sense the danger from this seal. He quickly sent Li Qing flying away with a palm strike.

Li Qing tightened his grip on his bow as he flew out of the great hall.

The Great Seal of Fearlessness continued to shoot forward, picking up speed.

Fan Xiuwen attempted to forcefully block it with his vast energy.

Bang!

"It's futile." Lu Zhou shook his head.

Everyone was tongue-tied. They watched as the Great Seal of Fearlessness sailed toward Li Qing.

This was somewhat similar to when Kong Xuan was killed with a single strike on the holy altar. The difference was Kong Xuan was killed by the Great Vajra Wheel Hand Seal.

The Great Seal of Fearlessness was not only big, but it was fast as well!

Chapter 86: The Disciple Continues to be Fierce

Li Qing froze in midair. He held the Master Bow in his left hand as he pulled on the bowstring with his right hand before he formed an arrow with his energy. His actions showed how skilled he was. His movements were natural and precise.

It was unfortunate that there was no way to stop the Great Seal of Fearlessness.

Li Qing's arrow only left minor ripples on the seal before it disappeared. His arrow seemed to have been absorbed by the seal.

"How's that possible?" Li Qing's eyes widened. His eyes that were initially filled with confidence had been replaced with fear and despair.

The powerful energy of the seal that was dense and scorching like magma landed on Li Qing's body.

Nobody could clearly see how Li Qing was defeated. The Great Seal of Fearlessness had blocked their sights. They only saw the Great Seal of Fearlessness appearing before it shot out and disappeared.

The spot in the air where Li Qing once stood was currently empty. He was nowhere to be seen.

The air seemed to have stilled at this moment.

Fan Xiuwen did not even have time to activate his avatar to rescue his subordinate. Li Qing was one of his most loyal and helpful subordinates. How did he lose his subordinate just like this? His attempt to block and stop the seal with his energy had no effect at all. He could only watch helplessly as the seal flew toward his subordinate. He was greatly shaken by this feeling of powerlessness and helplessness. It seemed like the master of Evil Sky Pavilion, Ji Tiandao, his former opponent, had gotten stronger. He was stunned and found this difficult to accept.

At this moment, the sounds from Duanmu Sheng and the two Dark Knights' battle reached everyone's ears.

'Is this the true strength of the Evil Sky Pavilion? However, the approaching limit of his lifespan, the deterioration of his cultivation base...' Fan Xiuwen was perplexed. 'He killed Li Qing, a skilled archer in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, with just a strike. It seems like Ji Tiandao's strength is still at its peak!'

"Master, your strength is peerless and amazing!" Little Yuan'er exclaimed in surprise as she clapped her hands, shattering the silence in the great hall. She pointed at Fan Xiuwen and said, "Master, there's someone else you missed!"

Zhou Jifeng and Pan Zhong were awestruck. They were not as shocked as Fan Xiuwen since they had witnessed even more unbelievable scenes before this. Whether it was the Nine-leaf avatar, Ji Tiandao's seemingly endless ultimate techniques that could kill his opponent with just a strike or his strength that seemed to be still at its peak, they were more terrifying and shocking compared to the Great Seal of Fearlessness.

Ye Tianxin, on the other hand, took one step back. Her frail body made it difficult for her to stand so she took a seat on the chair. If her subordinates did not support her, nobody else would have helped her since they did not want to go near her.

Fan Xiuwen's expression was indiscernible under his black mask. However, his silence and straight back seemed to show he was furious and unresigned. After a while, he said through gritted teeth, "I won't hold you accountable for killing the other Black Knights. However, anyone who touches the Four Dark Knights is my enemy."

Everyone could clearly see the 180 degrees change in Fan Xiuwen's mannerism. He was no longer respectful when he spoke. He did not address Lu Zhou with a respectful term like he did before and began to call Lu Zhou 'you'. This clearly showed how angry he was.

Lu Zhou continued to look at the battles taking place outside the great hall.

Duanmu Sheng fought valiantly as the battle dragged on. Moreover, his affinity with the Overlord Spear had increased as well. A moment ago, the two Dark Knights had the upper hand, but they were gradually being beaten back. At this moment, it seemed like they were evenly matched. It was clear that Duanmu Sheng would emerge victorious in the end.

As for Mingshi Yin, Lu Zhou was not worried in the least. Among the four Dark Knights, the one who had gotten the shorter end of the stick had to be Chen Zhonghe, or Old First.

Golden Court Mountain was the Evil Sky Pavilion's territory, after all. The barrier was usually up. With their master restricting them, the disciples dared not wander out of its bound. Hence, they spent their days exploring the mountain and knew every nook and cranny like the back of their hands.

Lu Zhou knew Mingshi Yin intended to toy with his opponent by using his familiarity with the terrain to his advantage.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and looked at Fan Xiuwen. "Leng Luo, in the end, you've overestimated yourself..."

Fan Xiuwen balled his hands together. His Primal Qi had grown agitated at this moment.

The others took a step back. They knew Fan Xiuwen was going to make a move soon.

"If the Evil Sky Pavilion doesn't take responsibility for Li Qing's death and give us an explanation, my brothers in the Black Knights and the palace will never let this matter go!" Fan Xiuwen's energy spiked with every word he spoke. His energy continued to grow stronger and denser.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou remained calm as usual. He did not attack Fan Xiuwen immediately. He wanted to see what his former opponent, who was once on the top of the blacklist, had up his sleeves. He wanted to know why Fan Xiuwen was so confident about coming here.

At this moment, Fan Xiuwen's Primal Qi surged out in all directions before a colossal avatar appeared.

If the Evil Sky Pavilion's structure was not stable or was not protected with special Formations, the appearance of the avatar would have made the pavilion collapse.

"E-eight-leaf..." Zhou Jifeng frowned slightly. He was slightly appalled by this.

If they had not personally seen Lu Zhou's Nine-leaf Avatar, they would have been more afraid.

Even among Eight-leaf Avatars, there was a difference in their strength.

Ji Tiandao had already possessed an Eight-leaf avatar 300 years ago when he was at the top of the blacklist. Currently, he had a Nine-leaf avatar.

Lu Zhou continued stroking his beard, he did not think Fan Xiuwen was a threat at all. He said flippantly, "Leng Luo, is this all you've got?"

Fan Xiuwen spoke in a deep voice, "A few centuries ago, we were evenly matched... I don't think I'll be able to defeat you now, but it'll still end in a draw!" As soon as he finished speaking, he began to move, filling up the room with his afterimages.

Everyone stumbled backward.

Fan Xiuwen's target, Lu Zhou, the master of Evil Sky Pavilion, stood in his spot. He flicked his sleeve. A great net weaved from energy seals shot out from his sleeves, shielding him. He thought to himself as he stroked his beard, 'Dao Invisibility Technique?' He thought he would have to waste an Impeccable Card, but it seemed the Binding Cage Card would suffice. 'The success rate is 30%. Will it hit him? Well, even if it doesn't hit him, it's still enough to distract and repel him, right?'

The net glittered with golden radiance and increased in size!

“What’s this technique?” Everyone was shocked by this never-seen-before sight. There was no technique in Great Yan that was similar to this.

Fan Xiuwen shouted, “Aren’t you overestimating yourself? You think this is enough to stop an Eight-leaf avatar’s Dao Invisibility Technique?”

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Fan Xiuwen moved at lightning speed toward the net.

Ten meters, three meters, one meter...

Clang!

Before Fan Xiuwen reached Lu Zhou, the net suddenly moved to the floor, and a large cage that was also shining with gold brilliance suddenly appeared, occupying most of the space in the great hall.

Bam!

Fan Xiuwen who was using the Dao Invisibility Technique charged into the cage, unable to stop his momentum.

“Ding! Captured an Eight-leaf Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm expert. Rewarded with 200 merit points.”

The Binding Cage had landed!

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. ‘Well, there’s the word cage in its name after all. It can’t possibly only be a net. This item is more useful than I had expected.’ He wondered how many merit points would he be rewarded with if he killed an Eight-leaf target. Capturing the target had earned him fewer points compared to capturing a disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion. If the Binding Cage Card did not capture Fan Xiuwen, he would have incurred a loss.

Fan Xiuwen rammed against the thin bars of the cage that was formed by special energy, trying to free himself.

Lu Zhou stood with his hands on his back as he asked, “Leng Luo, I’ll ask you again. Who’s the mastermind behind the Fish Dragon Village’s incident?”

At the same time, the cage began shrinking. Before this, it had taken up almost the entire space of the great hall. It began shrinking toward the center.

Fan Xiuwen retreated, but he did not answer Lu Zhou’s question. He looked around the cage before saying in a deep voice, “You think you can keep me here?”

Chapter 87: The Disciple Is Being Fierce Again

“You think you can keep me here?” Fan Xiuwen’s words were filled with confidence. After all, all Eight-leaf Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivators were confident of their own strength.

The four-walled cage formed a square matrix and continued to shrink.

Fan Xiuwen took three steps back. He raised his arms before himself and began making hand seals.

Lu Zhou nodded lightly and praised him. "The Dao Invisibility Grand Technique?" This was a good opportunity for him to test Binding Cage's ability. Would the cage be able to withstand the grand technique?

In just a blink of an eye, Fan Xiuwen completed the hand seals. As soon as he was done, a wave of energy surged out from him again.

Bang!

The cage continued to shrink.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Countless afterimages ricocheted off the cage's inner wall. It was as though a frenzied beast was rampaging the cage at this moment.

The eyes of the average person would not be able to catch the movements of Fan Xiuwen's afterimages. His speed was too fast after all. However, cultivators would still be able to catch glimpses of his movements even if it was not very clear. This showed that Fan Xiuwen's strength was extraordinary.

The banging noise continued to resonate in the great hall. However, even with the grand technique, Fan Xiuwen failed to free himself from the Binding Cage.

Lu Zhou shook his head. 'You can only blame yourself for being unlucky. The capture rate is only 30%, and yet, you still got caught.' After a while, he found that the banging noise grated on his ears. He called out, "Shrink." With the simple command, the Binding Cage shrank at an amazing speed.

Crack!

Fan Xiuwen's armor and mask were shattered, revealing his face. The cage had now shrunk itself to the point where it was binding his body.

Lu Zhou only glanced at Fan Xiuwen indifferently before he averted his eyes into the distance.

Fan Xiuwen's face was disfigured, making him look terrifying. Well, as the saying went, 'It would be difficult to keep one's shoes dry if one were to frequently travel along the river'. Fan Xiuwen had committed all sorts of evil deeds 300 years ago, it was not surprising that he would bear the scars for that. After that, he had taken a completely different path from Ji Tiandao. It was ironic to see him in this state.

Lu Zhou said, "From the very beginning until the end, you're the one who had overestimated yourself."

At this point, Fan Xiuwen had given up on struggling. He could sense that the cage was not only locking him in place, but it was also affecting his cultivation base. He tried to circulate the Primal Qi in his dantian's sea of Qi but to no avail. He did not even entertain the thought of breaking free using his physical strength. He looked at Lu Zhou, clearly unwilling to accept his defeat.

Lu Zhou seemed unbothered by the events as though everything had gone according to his plan, which it did.

"O-old senior... what is it that you want?" Fan Xiuwen was puzzled. The Evil Sky Pavilion's strength had truly exceeded his expectations. Everything that happened today was out of his expectations.

Lu Zhou asked coldly, "Who's the mastermind behind the Fish Dragon Village incident?"

Fan Xiuwen could not believe that this all-powerful old villain would offend the Black Knights and the important people in the palace for a traitor. He coughed and turned away.

Lu Zhou did not mind. He said, "I have time on my hands..."

"Time?" Fan Xiuwen chuckled. "15 years... I'll give you 15 years, at most. After that, who will remember you?"

Little Yuan'er raised her hand and retorted, "I will."

"..." Fan Xiuwen looked at the girl speechlessly.

Lu Zhou only said, "That's not important."

"Old senior, it's pointless to kill me. All those who joined the Black Knights are prepared to lose their lives. Even if you kill all of us, you won't get anything out of us."

"Obstinate!" Lu Zhou shook his head lightly. After that, he no longer bothered with Fan Xiuwen. After all, Fan Xiuwen had spent 300 years in the Black Knights. It was more than enough time for him to grow resilient and keep his mouth shut. Someone like Fan Xiuwen could not be threatened with death.

In any case, Lu Zhou was not in a hurry. Since the people in this land thought he only had another decade or so to live, he would do his best to live a good and long life to spite them.

...

Outside the great hall.

Duanmu Sheng seemed to have transformed into another person after sprouting a leaf. His Primal Qi was overbearing and his movements were violent and harsh. Despite that, his mind was keen. He always managed to evade the two Dark Knights' attacks before they landed on him.

The trio's battle was truly intense. Even the limestone flooring of the plaza outside the great hall was completely ruined. However, this was not the time to be concerned about such things.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and calmly observed the battle. The trio was firmly locked in battle. After a while, he said in a deep voice, "Too slow." His voice that had been suffused with Primal Qi traveled to Duanmu Sheng's ears.

Duanmu Sheng understood his master's meaning. As he moved, his speed greatly increased suddenly. At this moment, the Overlord Spear he was wielding could no longer be seen. Afterimages could be seen everywhere.

The two Dark Knights were slightly taken aback. After the drawn-out battle, it would be difficult for them to maintain their speed and strength. However, not only did Duanmu Sheng maintain his speed and strength, but it seemed as though they had increased as well!

‘What a monster!’

Lu Zhou pointed at the ongoing fight and said, “Leng Luo, not only did you overestimate yourself, but you truly underestimated the Evil Sky Pavilion as well.”

It was obvious that Duanmu Sheng was fast gaining the upper hand.

The two Dark Knights suddenly felt the pressure on them increasing dramatically as thousands of afterimages from the spear shot toward them. The attacks seemed to be unaffected by their energies and the protection from their avatars.

If the Overlord Spear’s full potential was unleashed, it could even break avatars.

The two Dark Knights began to buckle under the pressure as they retreated with their avatars.

“Impossible!” How could a Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivator who had just sprouted a leaf pressure a Two-leaf and Three-leaf Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivator at the same time!

When Duanmu Sheng leaped up, Lu Zhou said to him, “When are you going to use your strongest technique if not now?”

The strongest technique of a cultivation method was called a grand technique. A grand technique would drain much of one’s Primal Qi. Therefore, cultivators would not recklessly cast their grand techniques.

However, Duanmu Sheng seemed like a machine that was filled with unlimited Primal Qi. He did not show any signs of slowing down at all. After listening to his master’s words, he was filled with confidence. He brandished his Overlord Spear as he remembered Lu Zhou’s demonstration of a grand technique. The spear and the sword were just a means to the same end. He cried out, “Imperfect Divine Intervention!”

In just an instant, countless spear shadows appeared and descended.

“Retreat!” The two Dark Knights fell back swiftly. Unfortunately, it was too late.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The two Dark Knights’ protective energies were breached by the Overlord Spear. At the same time, the spear’s shadows thrust at them from left and right. With two quick jabs, they were sent flying!

Crash!

The two Dark Knights landed on the damaged limestone floor with a crash. Blood flowed out of the wounds on their shoulders. As they pressed their hands to their shoulders to staunch the bleeding, they looked at Duanmu Sheng in fear. They had been overwhelmingly defeated. There was no backhanded scheme or sneak attack. Duanmu Sheng had defeated them fairly.

Lu Zhou’s expression was calm. He stroked his beard and nodded.

With the victory, Duanmu Sheng’s confidence rose to the sky. He was ecstatic! He fell to one knee and cupped his hands together before he said, “Thank you for the instructions, master! I’m glad I didn’t fail you and managed to defeat these two!” He pointed at Yue Chong and Duan Yanhong with his Overlord Spear, worried they would escape under his nose.

Fan Xiuwen gripped the bars of the cage. His eyes were filled with incredulity.

“There’s one more...” Lu Zhou said coldly.

Fan Xiuwen gulped. His initial confidence and bravado had been whittled away by the continuous blows.

“This subordinate is useless!”

“This subordinate is useless!”

Yue Zhong and Duan Yanhong cried out in unison, looking ashamed.

Upon hearing this, Little Yuan’er spoke up, “There’s no need to call yourself useless. Since you’re defeated by my master, you can brag about it in the future!”

Duanmu Sheng scratched his head. ‘Wasn’t I the one who defeated them?’

Chapter 88: Not on Purpose

Little Yuan’er giggled and moved to Lu Zhou’s side. She said, “Third Senior Brother, you should thank master for giving you the Overlord Spear since it helped your avatar to sprout a leaf!”

When Little Yuan’er mentioned the Overlord Spear, the others were filled with envy. The highlight of the battle was the Overlord Spear after all.

The two Dark Knights, Yue Chong and Duan Yanhong, accepted their defeat gracefully. After all, they had been beaten up by a monster like Duanmu Sheng. Moreover, he was armed with a heaven-grade weapon!

Duanmu Sheng nodded. “You’re right, Little Junior Sister. My Imperfect Divine Intervention is a far cry from master’s strength. If it weren’t for the Overlord Spear, I wouldn’t have been able to defeat those two.”

Yue Chong and Duan Yanhong looked up with great difficulty. When they saw the bound Fan Xiuwen, they looked frightened. Why was the leader of the Black Knights, a person with an Eight-leaf avatar, powerless to fight back? At the very least, they had fought fiercely with their Two and Three-leaf avatars even though they were defeated in the end. With their leader’s cultivation base, he should have been able to fight with Ji Tiandao for three days and three nights before the results were clear. They could not be blamed for being unaware of what had happened in the hall of Evil Sky Pavilion since they were engrossed in their battle.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou was still standing inside the great hall as though it was just another normal day. He looked at Yue Chong and Duan Yanhong before he said coldly, “Seal their cultivation bases.”

“Understood.” Duanmu Sheng cupped his hands together.

At this moment, Pan Zhong stepped forward and said, “Leave this to me. I’m an expert in this... A cultivator’s cultivation base essentially circulates Primal Qi from their dantian’s sea of Qi through their Eight Extraordinary Meridians. The conventional method of sealing the eight meridians isn’t as easy as it looks. Many cunning characters like to tweak their dantians so they can unblock their sealed meridians.”

Lu Zhou stood with his hands on his back as he nodded and said, "Indeed, the Clarity Sect's meridian sealing technique has its unique strong points."

Pan Zhong felt even more motivated when he heard Lu Zhou's praise.

Yue Chong glared at Pan Zhong and said, "The Clarity Sect is a prestigious sect of the Noble Path. How can the sect have a traitor like you?"

These words pricked Pan Zhong's sore point. "Shut up, loser!" He moved quickly and cast his meridian sealing technique.

Duanmu Sheng stood at the side as he held the Overlord Spear upside down. He kept a close eye on the two Dark Knights. If they made any sudden movements, he would instantly turn them into two dead souls.

It did not take long before Pan Zhong sealed Yue Chong and Duan Yanhong's cultivation bases. He was only a Divine Court realm cultivator so he nearly spent all his energy sealing two Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm elites' cultivation bases. He did not have any Primal Qi left at this moment. After he wiped the sweat off his forehead, he cupped his hands together and said, "Pavilion Master, I've sealed their eight meridians. Nobody can unblock them except for me."

Lu Zhou merely waved his hand, and Pan Zhong returned to his spot.

Then, Lu Zhou said, "Lock them up. Keep them under constant supervision." Even with their cultivation bases sealed, he wanted someone to keep an eye on them at all times. It was good for Pan Zhong to feel confident but being overconfident could lead to being conceited.

"Understood." Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng stepped forward to bring the two away. Without their cultivation bases, they were like a piece of meat on a chopping board.

Lu Zhou returned to his throne in the great hall. He sat down slowly and called out, "Ye Tianxin."

Ye Tianxin shuddered. Perhaps, it was due to her weakened state, but she seemed to be in great pain. When Lu Zhou called her name, she got off the chair and fell on her knees. She said emotionally, "Master..."

Lu Zhou shook his head with an indifferent expression on his face, ignoring Ye Tianxin. Instead, he looked at Fan Xiuwen. He said, "Leng Luo, I've given you many chances. Since you don't cherish them, don't blame me for being cruel."

Fan Xiuwen forced himself to stand up. The Binding Cage kept him restrained like a Band-tightening Spell. He said, "Old senior, there's no need to waste your breath. Since I've been defeated, I deserve to die."

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "A person with an Eight-leaf avatar is willing to keep a secret for someone in the palace. Is this person worth throwing your life away?" At this point, he did not think he would be able to discover the mastermind's identity. It must be one hell of a secret for an elite with an Eight-leaf avatar to guard this secret with his life. He would have to find another way to investigate this matter.

Fan Xiuwen said, "At this point, it's meaningless to exchange any words."

Lu Zhou shook his head. His manner was as cold as ever.

At this moment, a system notification suddenly popped up.

“Ding! Mingshi Yin has killed a target in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. Rewarded 1,000 merit points.”

Lu Zhou did not show any emotion when he heard this. He only shook his head as he said, “The Dark Knight, Chen Zhonghe, do you think he’s still alive?”

Fan Xiuwen thought Lu Zhou was trying to attack him psychologically. He turned away with a scoff. “Chen Zhonghe is highly skilled. Although Mingshi Yin is very powerful, he shouldn’t have left the great hall... The wider the space, the more advantageous it is for Chen Zhonghe. You’ve killed Li Qing, and Chen Zhonghe will kill Mingshi Yin. I guess we’re even now.”

Little Yuan’er could not stand to hear these words and cursed instantly, “Bullsh*t! Anyone can brag...”

“Brag?” Fan Xiuwen chuckled before he said with his hoarse voice, “Little girl, the Evil Sky Pavilion is indeed very powerful, but it has turned you into a frog in the well. When I traveled under the heavens unfettered many years ago, even your master couldn’t stop me. Hm? Why are you glaring at me?”

Little Yuan’er turned away huffily and suddenly looked outside the great hall.

Although Fan Xiuwen was restrained by the Binding Cage, it did not stop him from turning his head when he discovered Duanmu Sheng, Ye Tianxin, and the female cultivators from the Derived Moon Palace were looking outside the great hall as well.

Mingshi Yin had appeared at the entrance, and the light shone on him as he slowly walked in. It was clear that he was in a battered state, his robes were stained red with blood. He held a short knife in his right hand that was still dripping with blood.

Upon seeing this, Fan Xiuwen frowned, and his heart began to race. He wanted to make a move, but the Overlord Spear’s tip suddenly appeared in his line of sight.

“If you want to die, one thrust from the spear is all it takes to kill you,” Duanmu Sheng said threateningly.

At this moment, Mingshi Yin had walked into the great hall, looking slightly exhausted. However, a hint of glee could be seen on his face. He was clearly pleased by his victory. He placed the knife on the floor and said, “I didn’t kill Chen Zhonghe on purpose... He was hiding a top earth-grade weapon. I had no choice but to kill him out of self-defense.”

Fan Xiuwen’s eye twitched uncontrollably. He had thought Chen Zhonghe’s victory was certain. After all, Mingshi Yin had no weapon, and he had not sprouted any leaves on his avatar yet. On the other hand, Chen Zhonghe was the Dark Knight with the most profound cultivation base. Chen Zhonghe had a peak Three-leaf avatar, and he possessed an earth-grade weapon! He began to cough violently, unable to accept this outcome. His surging Qi and blood brought him unbearable pain.

The female cultivators from the Derived Moon Palace were greatly shocked. They did not know the Evil Sky Pavilion was this powerful! The Derived Moon Palace was too insignificant in comparison.

After listening to Mingshi Yin's report, Lu Zhou merely offered a small praise. "Not bad."

Mingshi Yin was delighted to hear this. His expression brightened as he said, "Master, this earth-grade weapon is extremely precious. I'd like to refine it."

Fan Xiuwen roared, "You dare?!"

Little Yuan'er quickly retorted, "Really? You're trying to intimidate us at this stage?"

Chen Zhonghe who had died would turn in his grave if he knew his weapon was going to be refined!

However, Mingshi Yin could not have cared less about these things. "I ask for your permission, master!"

Chapter 89: Implications

How could Fan Xiuwen not feel furious? These people wanted to refine his dead subordinate's weapon after all! However, as the loser, he had no say in this. If he had been defeated by those from the Noble Path, he could still mock them. However, this was the Evil Sky Pavilion. Even if Mingshi Yin ripped out Chen Zhonghe's tendons and bones, there was nothing he could say about it. He could only glare at these people helplessly. He tried to circulate his Primal Qi again, but he discovered his dantian was still empty.

Fan Xiuwen was a knowledgeable man. He had traveled far and wide and had seen all kinds of cultivation methods and techniques from different sects. However, this was his first time encountering the Binding Cage Technique. The more unfamiliar he was with something, the more difficult it would be for him to defend against it.

Lu Zhou sat with his back straight on his throne as he looked at the knife. Finally, he said emotionlessly, "Bring it to me."

"Yes, master." Mingshi Yin was inwardly delighted. He picked up the precious knife with both his hands and presented it to Lu Zhou reverently before obediently retreating to the side.

Heaven-grade weapons were extremely rare. Many cultivators would not even encounter one in their entire lives. Moreover, even if they possessed a heaven-grade weapon, if their cultivation bases were not, at least, in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, they would not dare to simply disclose it. After all, it would be difficult for them to guard against stronger cultivators who coveted the heaven-grade weapons. Therefore, many cultivators were content with possessing a top earth-grade weapon. It could be tempered and refined into a heaven-grade weapon in the future. However, it was extremely difficult to refine a weapon. It was impossible to refine weapons without spending several decades on the process. Even then, many cultivators were willing to try it since the lure of a heaven-grade weapon was too strong.

Lu Zhou picked up the knife and appraised it. The knife's design was not the best. In fact, it was slightly on the uglier side. He raised his right hand and Unnamed appeared out of thin air in his hand. He used Unnamed to slash across the knife.

Everyone else was stunned and baffled by Lu Zhou's action. From their perspective, it only seemed like Lu Zhou had drawn his finger across the knife. The knife was a top earth-grade weapon after all, they

thought it was preposterous that Lu Zhou was trying to break the knife with his bare hands. Although all of them shared the same thought, naturally, none of them dared to verbalize their thoughts.

Fan Xiuwen said in his deep voice, "As expected of a villain, coveting the possession of a dead man... How do you sleep at night?"

Mingshi Yin rolled his eyes and said, "If we live by your standards, those who fight over weapons in the cultivation world won't be able to sleep at night."

Fan Xiuwen could not retort. It was indeed common for people to fight over weapons.

Lu Zhou shook his head after inspecting the weapon. Previously, when he had used Unnamed against the Male and Female Twin Swords, the twin swords were unscathed. Currently, this peak earth-grade weapon was also unaffected by Unnamed. Did this mean Unnamed was not even at the earth-grade level?

Lu Zhou tossed the knife away, and Mingshi Yin caught it immediately. Mingshi Yin was positively delighted. However, as soon as he caught the knife, he heard a soft crack before he saw a fine crack appearing on the knife. It did not take long before it snapped into two and fell to the ground.

Mingshi Yin was as motionless as a wooden chicken as he stared at the broken knife with a stunned expression. The knife was cleanly cut like tofu.

Fan Xiuwen frowned.

Although Lu Zhou's expression was calm, he was inwardly shocked. It seemed like Unnamed was stronger than a peak earth-grade weapon. It was highly likely that Unnamed was a heaven-grade weapon. A heaven-grade weapon that could transform into different forms was definitely a priceless treasure.

Mingshi Yin's stunned expression quickly turned bitter. He had gone through great pains to obtain this weapon, but his master had broken it with his bare hands! He lamented inwardly, 'Master, didn't I work hard enough?'

Finally, Lu Zhou said, "A mere earth-grade weapon isn't fit to enter my Evil Sky Pavilion."

"..." Mingshi Yin was stunned speechless. 'A mere earth-grade weapon...' Then, did this mean there were better weapons in the Evil Sky Pavilion?

Little Yuan'er giggled and said, "Fourth Senior Brother, look at the weapon in Third Senior Brother's hands. That's the Overlord Spear! Isn't it cool? Third Senior Brother fought against two opponents with that weapon!"

Mingshi Yin turned to look at the Overlord Spear in Duanmu Sheng's hands.

The Overlord Spear's length and the dragon carving that was wrapped around the shaft gave it a sophisticated air. He recalled when the ten elites laid siege to Golden Court Mountain, he had urged Duanmu Sheng to leave, but Duanmu Sheng would not leave because the Overlord Spear was here. He did not expect his master to give such a precious weapon to Duanmu Sheng! His heart felt heavy as he thought about how unfair it was! Compared to a heaven-grade weapon, a peak earth-grade weapon was truly similar to trash.

“Master, your majestic power knows no bounds. This garbage can’t even take one hit from you. It’s clearly a crude weapon!” Mingshi Yin finally said before he kicked the broken knife away. After kicking the knife away, he smiled ingratiatingly before he asked, “Master, when will I be able to possess a weapon suitable for me?”

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, “Carry out your duties well.”

Mingshi Yin was greatly delighted by these words. They were equivalent to a promise that he would be given a heaven-grade weapon. Although his master did not specify when he would be given the weapon, his master was a man of his word. He did not hesitate as he fell to his knees and kowtow sincerely. “Thank you, master! I’ll continue to work hard, and I won’t let you down!”

Loyalty +2%.

Lu Zhou nodded lightly. This was much better compared to when he had just transmigrated here. Mingshi Yin’s loyalty was much more stable compared to before. As expected, it was difficult to just rely on intimidation and brute strength to obtain someone’s loyalty.

At this moment, two female cultivators from Derived Moon Palace cried out in unison.

“Palace Master!”

“Palace Master, are you alright?”

Two female cultivators from the Derived Moon Palace helped Ye Tianxin, who had fainted, up.

Little Yuan’er quickly ran over and briefly examined Ye Tianxin. She said, “She’s fine. You’ll scare my master by making a fuss like this!”

“...” Mingshi Yin was speechless. ‘Little Junior Sister mentions master at every opportunity. I certainly can’t compare to her.’

Lu Zhou waved his arm and said, “Lock her in the south pavilion so she can continue reflecting on her actions.”

“Yes, master!” Little Yuan’er brought Ye Tianxin and the two female cultivators from Derived Moon Palace out of the Evil Sky Pavilion’s great hall.

At the same time, Lu Zhou discovered that Ye Tianxin’s hatred was decreasing rapidly. It seemed like her hatred that stemmed from the incident in Fish Dragon Village was disappearing. Initially, he only wanted Fan Xiuwen to explain the reason behind the incident. However, Fang Xiuwen’s stubborn manner of concealing the incident only piqued his interest. Moreover, this matter was also highly likely to be related to his missing memories. After mulling over it for a moment, he said indifferently, “Seal his cultivation base and lock him up.”

“Yes, master!” Duanmu Sheng grabbed Fan Xiuwen’s shoulder.

Fan Xiuwen was like a chick after being bound by the Binding Cage Technique. He was carried out of the great hall by Duanmu Sheng with a single arm.

Since Lu Zhou was not certain the Binding Cage card would last, he quickly ordered his disciple to seal Fan Xiuwen's cultivation base. He had time on his hands so he'll use the various tricks in his arsenal to make Fan Xiuwen talk.

Lu Zhou was still lost in his thoughts when a female cultivator walked into the great hall. "P-pavilion Master, the Black Knights at the foot of the mountain are making a ruckus, refusing to leave."

It was only natural that the Black Knights refused to leave since Fan Xiuwen, their leader, had been captured. When Lu Zhou considered the palace's connection to them, he said nonchalantly, "Fan Xiuwen is staying in the Evil Sky Pavilion. Tell those who have no business here to leave." He had used the word, 'staying', to tell those people that Fan Xiuwen was still alive.

The female cultivator looked at Lu Zhou timidly as she asked, "B-but what if they still refuse to leave?"

"Leave it to Mingshi Yin."

"Understood. I'll inform Mister Fourth about this."

...

At the foot of Golden Court Mountain, several hundred meters beyond the barrier.

Dozens of black knights were looking up at the Evil Sky Pavilion. Due to the barrier, they could only stomp their feet helplessly in frustration.

Meanwhile, hidden nearby in the forest, an elegant man dressed in green robes was silently observing this.

A person dressed in all black stood behind the green-clad man. The black-clad man asked respectfully, "Senior, are we going to attack these people?"

Chapter 90: Be Gentle, Senior Brother

The green-clad swordsman did not look at the black-clad man who stood behind him. A smile bloomed on his face before he said, "Tell your sect master that I have no intention of taking lives today. Tell him that I'm sorry."

For some reason, when the black-clad man heard the word, 'sorry', he took a step back in spite of himself. He said awkwardly, "Senior, you killed the Sword Freak, Chen Wenjie, previously. Who's your next target?"

The green-clad swordsman gave the black-clad man a sideways glance, causing the black-clad man to retreat further. He was quite frightened, worried that the green-clad swordsman would say he was the next target.

"Don't worry, I've always been a gentle and polite person. Your sect master knows that well," the green-clad swordsman said indifferently.

"Uh... I'm just feeling pressured from your powerful aura, senior. I hope you're not offended by this." The black-clad man's knees were knocking against each other at this moment.

"It's fine," the green-clad swordsman said gently, "Thank you for passing on information for me these days."

The black-clad man wiped the sweat off his face as he sighed in relief.

The green-clad swordsman continued to say, "If I ever plan to kill you, I'll let you know beforehand, my friend." He had clearly paused for a moment before he added the words, 'my friend'.

"..." The black-clad man felt like crying. 'You plan to tell your target you're going to kill them before you kill them?' He no longer dared to say anything, he only stood silently at the back.

The green-clad swordsman continued observing the Black Knights. He shook his head and sighed before he said, "Fan Xiuwen, the leader of the Black Knights has been in there for half a day. I doubt he'll be coming back out."

"S-senior, won't you wait a little longer?"

"It's boring." The green-clad swordsman turned around and left. After walking about 100 meters away into the forest, he disappeared into thin air.

The black-clad man stumbled, nearly losing his footing. He heaved a long sigh. 'This mission will be the end of me!' After he calmed down, he continued to observe the Black Knights. At this moment, he saw a person flying out of the barrier. The person circled above the Black Knights before he came to a halt.

"Evil Sky Pavilion's Mingshi Yin?"

No matter how well-trained the Black Knights were, they could not help but take several steps back under Mingshi Yin's intimidating aura. In the end, they could only helplessly leave the Golden Court Mountain.

The black-clad man nodded to himself as he muttered under his breath, "No wonder Senior Sword Devil left. Even Fan Xiuwen who has an Eight-leaf avatar is helpless against the Evil Sky Pavilion... The old villain is truly impressive!" It did not take long before he left the forest as well.

...

Evil Sky Pavilion.

Lu Zhou looked at his merit points on the system dashboard. He had 2,210 merit points left. The reward for capturing Fan Xiuwen was much less compared to killing a Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm elite.

'I have 5 luck points... I did two draws previously, and all I got was a 'thank you' and 'too bad' message.' Lu Zhou considered it for a moment. 'Perhaps, I should try again. After all, third time's the charm...'

"Lucky draw. Ding! Spent 50 merit points on a lucky draw. Thank you for participating. Luck +1."

Lu Zhou shook his head. He resisted the urge to make another draw. 'This is the same as refining a weapon. I have to be patient and wait for an opportunity. I can't let it get to my head.'

Name: Lu Zhou

Race: Human

Cultivation base: Brahman Sea Eight Meridians

Merit points: 2,160

Avatar: Mighty Four Quadrants

Remaining life: 5,801 days

Item: Deadly Strike Card x 1, Impeccable Card x 2, Critical Block Card x 7 (passive), Cage Bind x 5, Whitzard, Bi An.

Weapon: Unnamed, Amorous Hoop (Owner: Ye Tianxin. Requires re-refining before use.)

Cultivation method: Thee Scrolls of Heavenly Writing

“Five Energy Universe costs 8,000 merit points...” Lu Zhou muttered to himself with a frown. He did not think he would have enough points even if he killed Fan Xiuwen and the others. He sighed, ‘And this is only the Five Energy Universe. I’m certain the Six Recombinant Trigram Lines, Seven Star Soul, and Eight Methods Connected aren’t any cheaper than the Five Energy Universe.’

Lu Zhou waved his arm, and the dashboard disappeared. There was no need to feel embarrassed about this. He was just starting out compared to Ji Tiandao who had lived to almost a millennium. ‘Hasty men don’t get to eat hot tofu.’

At this moment, Mingshi Yin ran into the great hall and said, “Master, I’ve locked our captives up. There won’t be any problem, master.” When he saw Lu Zhou was deep in thought, he quickly bowed, obviously trying to flatter Lu Zhou.

Perhaps, Lu Zhou was used to it, he did not feel particularly special. For all he cared, Mingshi Yin could flatter him forever. ‘This fellow, I think he’s possessed by Heshen.’

“What’s the matter?” Lu Zhou asked indifferently.

“Master, Fan Xiuwen is stubbornly refusing to reveal the mastermind behind the Fish Dragon Village’s incident. However, I have a suggestion...” With a smile on his face, Mingshi Yin made a hammering motion.

Lu Zhou said, “Fan Xiuwen is the leader of the Black Knights. If he’s capable of reaching that position, do you think your torture is enough to make him talk?”

“Well, what if he refuses to talk?” Mingshi Yin asked in confusion.

“There’s no hurry.” Lu Zhou stood up slowly. He walked down the stairs with his hands on his back as he continued saying, “The mastermind must be holding something over Fan Xiuwen’s head.”

Mingshi Yin asked tentatively, “Are... Are you planning to deal with the palace, master?”

Lu Zhou’s expression was calm. He did not answer the question. Currently, the only person capable of obtaining information from the palace was Jiang Aijian since he had access to the palace’s archives. However, that was before Jiang Aijian left the palace. Now that he had left, it was unlikely that he would be able to access the palace’s archives. Moreover, this matter was a tightly-guarded secret.

A thought suddenly appeared unbidden in Lu Zhou's mind. 'What if the palace leaked the archive on purpose to use the Evil Sky Pavilion and the Black Knights as pawns?' After thinking about it, he called out, "Mingshi Yin!"

"Yes, master."

"I'll leave interrogating Fan Xiuwen to you," Lu Zhou said with a wave of his hand.

Mingshi Yin replied respectfully, "Yes, master. I'll interrogate this person thoroughly and find out the mastermind behind the incident as soon as I can!" After saying that, he paused for a moment before he continued to say, "Master, Fan Xiuwen is such a powerful person. The two Dark Knights we imprisoned are also elites. I've just entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation recently, and I don't even have a suitable weapon. Would you..."

"Get lost."

"Yes, master!" Mingshi Yin immediately swallowed the words on the tip of his tongue and ran out of the pavilion. A bitter expression appeared on his face. 'It seems like my achievements have to be befitting of the type of weapon I want.' He felt his heart wrench when he recalled the broken knife.

"Old Fourth?"

"Who's that?" Mingshi Yin asked irritably. He was not in a good mood at this moment.

Duanmu Sheng appeared, brandishing the Overlord Spear. "Old Fourth, come spar with me! Look at my Overlord Spear!"

"T-third Senior Brother? I have something I need to attend to..."

"That won't do. You're the only person in the entire Evil Sky Pavilion who can spar with me. Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng aren't enough. I can't even get a good exercise out of them." Duanmu Sheng walked over and patted Mingshi Yin's shoulder.

Mingshi Yin's eyes darted around as he said, "Master has ordered me to interrogate Fan Xiuwen today... it's related to the Fish Dragon Village incident. Senior Brother, why don't you spar with Little Junior Sister?"

Speak of the she-devil. Little Yuan'er sailed through the air and landed on a branch above their heads. "I'll tell master two of you are bullying me!" As soon as she finished speaking, she left.

"..." Duanmu Sheng frowned. He said with a sigh, "You can interrogate Fan Xiuwen later. It'll only take a moment..." He patted Mingshi Yin's shoulder again.

"S-senior Brother, b-be gentle..."