

Disciples 811

Chapter 811: The Sixth Power

Every single energy sword precisely blocked the energy lines.

Countless energy swords froze in the air as though they were stuck in a spiderweb.

Yu Shangrong looked up.

The energy lines connecting the rocks were still there and did not vanish.

“Not enough.” He had no choice but to pour more Primal Qi into the energy swords and improve his control over them.

A Mystic Enlightening cultivator could only control one or two energy swords. With every subsequent increase in realm, the number of energy swords one could control would increase as well. At the Nascent Divinity realm, he would be able to create up to 1,000 energy swords while relying on a weapon. Alas, humans had their limitations.

An energy line would connect every two of the 361 rock pillars.

Yu Shangrong had to form more than 60,000 energy swords to block all the energy lines.

Buzz!

The energy swords dispersed.

Yu Shangrong knew he needed more power.

When he landed on the ground, the rock slab at the center of the Formation glowed with faint light. Under the sunlight, the glow from the Formation veins was not obvious. If one stood outside the rock forest, it would be almost impossible to see it.

Soon after, the 361 rock pillars started to shake. They buzzed in synchrony with the rock slab that had the Formation veins. It seemed to generate a pulling force as well.

“Vitality?” Yu Shangrong looked around himself. He saw a flying beast that accidentally entered the Formation briefly struggling before it fell to the floor, dead.

“It’s devouring vitality?” With this discovery, he tapped his meridian point and gathered his vitality into his sea of Qi and Extraordinary Eight Meridians. He was someone with a short lifespan. Although he had reached the Nine-leaf stage, his life was still limited. Without the golden lotus, his lifespan did not increase.

As he looked at the peculiar Formation in the rock forest, he recalled what Jiang Xiaosheng had said. ‘So, this Formation can really devour a person’s life!’

The bird was now dried and shriveled. No trace of vitality was left in it.

Yu Shangrong stopped cultivating. Instead, he tried his best to fight against this pulling force. Even so, the vitality inside his body was drawn out like wisps of smoke.

“Ji Liang, get out,” Yu Shangrong ordered.

Ji Liang did not listen to his order. Instead, it made a shocking move. It circled around Yu Shangrong.

Ji Liang made for a majestic sight with its white coat, red mane, and golden eyes. Those who rode on it would gain 1,000 years of life.

Ji Liang’s golden eyes shone faintly as wisps of vitality surged out of its body into Yu Shangrong’s body.

Yu Shangrong was shocked. He suddenly recalled his master’s other mount, Whitzard. Its power was like an auspicious rain. All those who were bathed in its power would have their injuries healed and the Primal Qi replenished. Was Ji Liang’s ability to restore life?!

He could not help but feel like he was fated with Ji Liang.

The short-lived melilot blossomed in the day and wilted at night.

After a time, Yu Shangrong no longer felt like his vitality was being sucked away. Instead, under Ji Liang’s constant protection and replenishment of life, the vitality in his body had clearly increased! Even if had only increased for 100 years, it was still surprising!

The glow of the Formation veins disappeared, and the rock pillars stopped shaking. It was silent again in the rock forest.

Yu Shangrong stood up and looked at Ji Liang.

Neigh!

Before Yu Shangrong could react, Ji Liang leaped into the air and flew into the air.

Bam!

The heavenly net blocked Ji Liang.

“You want to return?”

Neigh!

Ji Liang moved its head up and down.

Yu Shangrong patted Ji Liang’s rump. He said with a faint smile, “Give me some time. If I can’t break this Formation, I won’t use the sword again.”

He looked at the rock forest again. Before everything else, he had to regain all his power.

Time was of the essence.

He sat down cross-legged again. He placed his palms on his lap as the Longevity Sword flew around him as though it was standing guard.

Ji Liang followed the flying sword and flew into the air as well.

Yu Shangrong wondered if it was merely bored or if it truly wanted to get out.

...

Cloud Mountain.

Lu Zhou was cultivating with his eyes closed.

His surroundings were extremely quiet at this moment.

The scripts of the Heavenly Writing scrolls kept spinning in his mind.

The golden scripts and runes grew clearer and cleared.

He could clearly feel the changes in his extraordinary power.

Lu Zhou stirred. 'Is the last Open Heavenly Writing scroll finally taking effect?'

Ever since he used the last Open Heavenly Writing scroll and meditated on them, he had not been able to activate its power until now. The sudden change bewildered him.

The runes of the Heavenly Writing scrolls started off as indecipherable scripts before they slowly morphed into recognizable words and formed a sentence.

"For everything in the universe, their lives, deaths, kindness, evil, merits, and sins can be clearly seen..."

This mantra was the same mantra he encountered when he meditated on the Human Scroll back then. As he expected, it appeared again in his subsequent meditation. There were also a plethora of scripts surrounding this mantra. He could not understand them at all.

Lu Zhou's extraordinary power was now at its fullest. Hence, he started to recite the mantra. "For everything in the universe..."

At this moment, his eyes suddenly glowed blue. With this, he could see whatever he wanted.

With his eyes closed, he saw Yu Zhenghai seated on the cloud platform with his palms on his lap as the Jasper Saber hovered in front of him.

In just a single breath, Lu Zhou discovered half of his extraordinary power was gone! He quickly stopped using the Heavenly Writing power!

"Uh..." He did not know if he should feel shocked or happy.

'Doesn't this mean that I'll be able to peek at everything at my own convenience with this power? But, if I accidentally peeked at someone taking a bath, wouldn't that be awkward?'

He shook his head. 'Why am I always letting my mind wander?'

He had lost half of his extraordinary power in one breath. This consumption rate was giving him a headache. It was a great loss to waste the power that could be used to fight a Ten-leaf cultivator on something like peeping. In this regard, the power seemed quite useless.

Lu Zhou checked the system dashboard.

Merit points: 117,440

Remaining life: 219,740 days

Mount: Whizard, Bi An, Ji Liang (resting), Qiong Qi, Dang Kang.

“Ji Liang? Resting?” Lu Zhou found this strange. Whizard would only enter a resting state after using its ability. Did Ji Liang use its ability as well?

Lu Zhou sighed softly. Although the power was useless, there were still uses for it if he was not planning on fighting. Moreover, with the Violet Glazed Ceramic, he would be able to replenish his power quickly.

Then, Lu Zhou recited the mantra again, and his eyes glowed blue.

Extraordinary power began to ripple out.

Soon enough, he saw a rock forest.

Ji Liang was tackling energy lines as it chased after a broken sword.

Soon after, he saw Yu Shangrong sitting cross-legged on the ground.

When he saw the broken sword, something in him. He cried out instinctively, “Ji Liang, protect him.”

Ji Liang, who was chasing after the weapon, stopped moving immediately as though it could hear Lu Zhou’s command. It raised its front hooves and looked up at the sky before it neighed loudly. Then, it obediently trotted to Yu Shangrong’s side and lay on the ground, obeying Lu Zhou’s order.

Yu Shangrong opened his eyes and looked at Ji Liang curiously. It was flying around wildly just a moment ago, but it was staying still now.

Ji Liang who was lying on the ground quickly fell asleep.

When Lu Zhou opened his eyes, he called out, “Anyone there?”

A Cloud Mountain disciple appeared and said, “Your orders, Senior Lu.”

“Call Yu Zhenghai over.”

“Understood.”

Shortly after, Yu Zhenghai arrived. “You called for me, master?”

“Your Second Junior Brother is in a difficult situation. He should be nearby, but I don’t know exactly where. Go and help him. However, remember not to spend too much time fighting powerful opponents. Your mission is to find and help your Second Junior Brother,” Lu Zhou said.

A surprised expression flitted across Yu Zhenghai’s face when he heard his master’s words. However, he did not question his master. He said immediately, “Understood, I’ll look for him immediately.”

Chapter 812: Collapse

Yu Zhenghai sensed the gravity of the situation based on his master’s tone. When he thought about his Second Junior Brother’s disappearance over the past two days, he felt slightly worried. Over the years, Yu Shangrong had never gotten into serious trouble no matter how difficult the situation was. However, from his master’s words, it seemed like this time was different.

When Yu Zhenghai flew away from Cloud Mountain, a slight frown appeared on his face as he suddenly came to halt. He turned to look at Cloud Mountain as he muttered to himself, "How does master know Second Junior Brother is in trouble?"

'Does master have some special technique?' Yu Zhenghai recalled how Meng Changdong and Si Wuya communicated and quickly searched his own body. He looked through his hair, waist, legs but did not find any Formations or marks. He thought to himself, slightly disappointed, 'It seems like master is just worried about Second Junior Brother. As expected, master favors him more.'

...

After using the power twice in a row, Lu Zhou's extraordinary power was completely drained.

"This power is good, but it uses too much extraordinary power." He sighed as he brought the Violet Glazed Ceramic out.

The Violet Glazed Ceramic had greatly boosted his recovery speed. With its help, he managed to completely recover his extraordinary power in a little more than three days. However, three days were still too slow for him.

He brought a Shining Stone out and wondered out loud, "Can it be upgraded again?"

He decided to try and use the Shining Stone.

"Ding! The Shining Stone cannot be used on a desolate-grade item."

"..."

'Forget it.'

He stowed the Violet Glazed Ceramic and Shining Stone away. Then, he resumed his meditation on the Heavenly Writing scrolls.

...

Over the next three days, Yu Zhenghai searched in the vicinity of Cloud Mountain for Yu Shangrong. Initially, he thought about asking for help. However, when he recalled all of them were natives of the red lotus domain, he decided against it since he could not trust them. Little Yuan'er and Conch's cultivation bases were weaker so it would be safer for them to stay near their master.

However, his power alone was too limited. Searching for one person was like looking for a needle at the bottom of the ocean.

...

Three days passed in just a blink of an eye.

Yu Shangrong opened his eyes again. Currently, his wounds and cultivation base were almost completely recovered. He turned to look at Ji Lian sleeping next to him.

Fortunately, the Formation veins in the rock forest no longer absorbed his life as they did before. Although Ji Liang did not give him many years, it seemed capable of healing itself.

Yu Shangrong drew his Longevity Sword. Although it was broken, he was still confident.

“The son of heaven’s sword...” he muttered to himself as he threw the sword out.

Under his precise control, the broken sword flew around the 361 rock pillars. After it flew one round around the rock pillars, several thousand energy swords suddenly appeared.

Yu Shangrong pushed lightly away from the ground and leaped into the air. Due to his experience, he no longer triggered the heavenly net in the rock forest as soon as he made a move. He continued to fly until he reached the top of the rock forest. At this spot, he had the best view, and he could ensure there was an energy sword between each rock pillar.

Yu Shangrong’s mathematical skills were nowhere close to Si Wuya’s level, and he was not in the mood to do detailed calculations. He could deal with this problem with primal methods.

Energy swords filled his field of vision...

“I still need more energy swords.” Yu Shangrong did not expect this. It was already an amazing feat for him to form 10,000 energy swords in just an instant with his Nine-leaf cultivation base, but they were still not enough. He could still see an area that was not covered by his energy swords.

As he joined his palm together, he murmured to himself, “Oh, well. If it’s too easy, it would be boring.”

Swoosh!

A burst of energy surged out from between his palms.

The energy swords hovering between the rock pillars buzzed in unison.

His Longevity Sword hovered in the center, acting as the core as he controlled the energy swords.

“Split.”

The thousands of energy swords split into two.

Swoosh!

In just an instant, there were now 20,000 energy swords.

Yu Shangrong’s fingers trembled as he felt the pressure on him, his will, his sea of Qi, and his control over his Primal Qi increased by several folds.

The sun shone down on the energy swords.

Before he tried this, he did not know how terrible he was. The amazing and invincible Sword Devil could only control 20,000 energy swords. However, similar to Yu Zhenghai, he was not one to admit defeat and was incredibly competitive.

He was the elite swordsman of Great Yan. His name, Sword Devil, struck fear in those who heard it.

His confident expression gradually turned solemn as he steeled his heart. He moved his hands, unleashing all his power.

As soon as 40,000 energy swords appeared, they shattered like glass and disappeared.

At the same time, the Longevity Sword fell down and stabbed into the ground.

Yu Shangrong landed and staggered back.

“Not enough.”

Yu Shangrong did not give up. He wiped the sweat off his face before he sat down with his leg crossed. He adjusted his breathing and calmed himself down, restoring his Primal Qi. At the same time, he thought of ways he could control more energy swords.

He could only control 40,000 energy swords for a brief moment before they shattered; it was not nearly enough.

After summing up the reasons for his failure, he murmured, “I should make them smaller to conserve Primal Qi.”

Since he only needed the energy swords to block the energy swords, they did not have to be big.

With this thought in mind, he prepared for the next round.

...

Another day passed in the blink of an eye.

Yu Shangrong had made ten attempts and failed at each attempt.

At his best, he only managed to form 60,000 energy swords, but his control over them did not last long.

After a few more attempts, he was exhausted.

The moon hung high in the sky at this moment.

Yu Shangrong was deep in his thoughts.

“What is the son of heaven’s sword? It starts with Yin and Yang, lasts through spring and summer, works through autumn and winter, splits the clouds when lifted, and cuts an era when lowered... The height of thoughts decides the height of my sword?”

He looked at his Longevity Sword. “I’ve fought fiercely against experts... But in the end, I failed.”

Yu Shangrong slowly rose to his feet. He held his breath and protected his dantian. After he widened his stance, a glowing Eight Trigrams appeared along with Yin and Yang symbols. Primal Qi began to rise.

He pushed away from the ground and launched himself into the air with White Crane Showing Its Wings movement. When he was high in the sky, energy swords materialized around him.

Whizz!

The Longevity Sword shot to the center.

The golden energy seal illuminated the forest.

After countless failures, Yu Shangrong was more experienced. He was now forming energy swords at a faster speed.

In just a blink of an eye, 10,000 energy swords appeared,

Then, he easily split the 10,000 energy swords into 20,000 energy swords.

“Again!”

Whizz!

There were now 40,000 energy swords.

Then, Yu Shangrong flattened his palms and stood straight.

“Avatar!”

His 150-foot avatar towered in the air.

The area within 1,000 meters was illuminated by the 150-foot avatar.

...

At this moment, Yu Zhenghai who was still searching for Yu Shangrong suddenly turned around. “Golden avatar?”

It was very far away. From Yu Zhenghai’s position, the avatar was only a small spot of light.

He did not hesitate and immediately flew in the direction of the avatar. He did not think it was far away since he was flying at top speed.

...

Yu Shangrong surveyed his surroundings. He currently had 40,000 swords. He did not have to split all 40,000 energy swords; he only needed to split half of them.

His palms were trembling as he maintained his output of Primal Qi.

“Split!”

20,000 energy swords split. There were now 60,000 energy swords. However, a few dozen energy swords disintegrated because they were too far away from them.

Then, he moved the energy swords between the energy lines.

At this moment, his forehead was drenched in sweat.

“Just a little more...” He looked at his surroundings again. He had never felt as nervous as he did at this moment.

The Formation veins below shone again. If they absorbed his life again, he could only attempt to break out of this place after a few days.

Yu Shangrong was originally calm and composed. His nervousness and the pressure from the situation only served to boost his fighting spirit. This was the kind of elite swordsman he was. The more powerful his opponent was, the stronger he would grow. The more difficult the situation was, the more it would spur him to grow stronger.

As he continued to think of a solution, he looked at the 361 rock pillars again.

“Using all creation as swords?”

361 rock pillars... Was this not a chessboard?

Life was like a game of chess, and he could not afford to make the wrong move.

A faint smile appeared on his face as he poured all the Primal Qi in his sea of Qi out.

As he shot up into the air, the energy swords moved into their positions.

When he was at the top of the rock forest, the rock pillars moved to connect, but the energy lines were blocked by his energy swords.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The energy lines struck the energy swords!

Chapter 813: Understanding the Sword Path

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The energy lines between the rock pillars were interrupted by the energy swords. They were blocked by the almost 60,000 energy swords as soon as they appeared. It was a grand sight.

This was, perhaps, the highest number of swords Yu Shangrong could control now. He was at his limits.

Although it was a majestic sight, the Formation remained unaffected.

Yu Shangrong was puzzled. “It’s not working?”

As soon as he finished speaking, the energy lines between the 361 rock pillars disappeared. At the same time, the Formation veins on the rock slab in the center had not completely lit up when they dimmed again.

The rock pillars in the surroundings vibrated slightly. The Formation veins inscribed on it seemed like an ancient layer of dust that was being blown away; they peeled away and scattered.

‘They’re broken!’ Yu Shangrong nodded, pleased. A sense of achievement he rarely felt welled up in his heart.

He managed to overcome the Grand Formation left behind by the predecessors, and he understood the son of heaven’s swords and how to use all creations as swords. A broken sword would not hinder him.

The joy he felt and the scene of him severing his lotus in the Melilot Graveyard replayed in his mind. His sword was still with him, and he was still alive. This was the day when the broken sword was reforged, and the day the Sword Devil returned.

At this moment, his avatar dispersed. He immediately felt a sense of vertigo...

Swoosh!

Yu Shangrong was shocked to discover he had completely emptied his sea of Qi.

“Ji Liang!”

Boom!

“...”

‘I must remain graceful and calm. The Sword Devil can’t be flustered.’

Cultivators had gone through the Body Tempering realm. Therefore, a fall from such a height would not injure him. The only thing that would be injured was, perhaps, his reputation.

Ji Liang looked up before it put his head down again.

Yu Shangrong surveyed his surroundings again before he calmed himself down and sat with his legs crossed. He patted the dust off his body and tidied his hair. Then, he smiled at the moon and asked. “Ji Liang, what do you think of the broken Formation?”

Clap! Clap! Clap!

“That was great!” A dark figure appeared from behind.

The moon illuminated the figure’s face.

Yu Shangrong turned to look. “Jiang Xiaosheng?”

“I’ve been watching you all this time, trying to make sure you die. I didn’t expect you to be capable of breaking this Formation,” Jiang Xiaosheng said.

Yu Shangrong shook his head and said, “This is only a minor Formation; it’s nothing.”

“You can drop the act... Look at the state you’re in. I’ll take your life today and avenge my master. Any last words?” Jiang Xiaosheng asked.

“You?” Yu Shangrong looked at the Longevity Sword. Unfortunately, the Longevity Swords was broken and out of power. The runes had faded as well. He could not kill a Nascent Divinity cultivator like he did before.

“Yes, me,” Jiang Xiaosheng said meaningfully, “Trust me...”

Yu Shangrong frowned slightly upon sensing the unknown implications behind Jiang Xiaosheng’s words.

Jiang Xiaosheng raised his hand. “If you have no last words, then, die!” He pushed his palm forward, launching a palm seal out.

Yu Shangrong instinctively stomped his feet, but he did not fly. He could only dodge.

The palm seal struck the rock pillar with a loud boom.

Jiang Xiaosheng shook his head. “I won’t give you a chance to recuperate. Some people die because they speak too much...” After he finished speaking, he struck with both palms.

Several palm seals shot toward Yu Shangrong.

With his Body Tempering's strength and instincts honed from many years of battle, Yu Shangrong dodged. At the same time, his Primal Qi was being swiftly replenished. Unfortunately, due to his current state, the amount of Primal Qi was pitiful. All he needed was enough Primal Qi for one palm strike. Despite the precarious situation he was in, he remained calm.

Jiang Xiaosheng had seen Yu Shangrong's skill. Therefore, he did not hesitate and manifested his avatar.

A Five-leaf red lotus avatar lunged at Yu Shangrong.

"Five-leaf?" Yu Shangrong did not expect Ye Zhen's disciple to be a grand cultivator now. If Jiang Xiaosheng was below the Five-leaf stage, he could have killed him with a single strike. However, it was not so easy to take down a Five-leaf cultivator.

Jiang Xiaosheng's combat strength was inspired by Ye Zhen. He had quickly manifested his avatar so he could end the battle in his most powerful state.

Swoosh!

As Jiang Xiaosheng swept out with his avatar, Yu Shangrong retreated swiftly.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!

At this moment, Ji Liang shot past the red lotus avatar and stomped its hooves. Every strike of its hooves struck the red lotus avatar.

Jiang Xiaosheng retreated with his avatar. He looked up and cursed, "You livestock! I'll kill him first and tame you!" He could tell that Ji Liang was almost out of energy so he ignored Ji Liang and continued moving toward Yu Shangrong.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

After the rock forest's Formation was destroyed, it was reduced to useless rocks.

The red lotus avatars struck down more than 10 rock pillars.

At the same time, Jiang Xiaosheng raised his hand and struck!

With whatever Primal Qi he had left, Yu Shangrong moved and leaped backward for dozens of meters with movements as light as a swallow.

Jiang Xiaosheng frowned. The difference between their battle experience was clear.

Yu Shangrong stood in the wind. The moonlight made him look taller and more slender. He smiled and said, "Little friend, believe me. Your ability is far from enough to kill me."

"I'll give it a try!" Jiang Xiaosheng unleashed his grand technique and shot forward.

This was the technique Yu Shangrong wished to see the least. It would close the distance between them after all.

Just when Jiang Xiaosheng's red lotus avatar was almost upon Yu Shangrong, a voice laden with ridicule rang from above.

“Hey.”

Then, an energy saber dropped down as golden light lit up the sky.

The Great Dark Heaven Memorial, the Dark Heaven Starlight, Sovereign Descent, Graceful Glance, and Three Feet Freeze... The ultimate moves were unleashed one after another.

The Five-leaf red lotus avatar was first struck open by Dark Heaven Starlight, and then, it was further damaged by Sovereign Descent before it was frozen by Three Feet Freeze. In the end, its neck was cut by Graceful Glance.

Bam!

The Jasper Saber stabbed into the ground under the moon.

Yu Zhenghai landed. He said in a slightly arrogant tone, “What do you think?”

Yu Shangrong made a sound of disapproval before he said, “He’s only a Five-leaf cultivator, but you had to use four techniques on him.”

“No.” Yu Zhenghai shook his head. “A few days ago, I learned much from master. Master’s words have made me think.”

“Oh?”

“Is a Five-leaf cultivator weak? No. He might just be as capable as you. Perhaps, just like how a Three-leaf cultivator can kill a Six-leaf cultivator, a five-leaf cultivator might just be able to kill an Eight-leaf cultivator,” Yu Zhenghai said confidently, “Don’t underestimate your opponents, not even if they’re Five-leaf cultivators.”

“Did master really say that?” Yu Shangrong asked skeptically.

“In the end, it all boils down to one thing...” Yu Zhenghai looked at Yu Shangrong. “Remember to deal an additional blow.”

“...”

Neigh! Neigh! Neigh!

Ji Liang galloped over.

Yu Shangrong was in a good mood; he did not want to quarrel with Yu Zhenghai right now. He patted Ji Liang and said, “You have a point, Eldest Senior Brother. I won’t argue with you today... Master has said there are three levels of the sword. If all you do is try to win a fight, you’ll only be at the second level. Now, I’ve mastered the son of heaven’s sword, which is also the swordless path. I have no intentions of competing anymore.”

When Yu Zhenghai heard that, he asked, “Is that true?”

“We can compete again when you master using all creations as sabers, Eldest Senior Brother.”

“Alright.”

Yu Shangrong turned to look at Jiang Xiaosheng's corpse. He returned to the rock forest and picked up his broken sword.

"How did you know that I was here, Eldest Senior Brother?"

"Master was worried about your safety and ordered me to look for you," Yu Zhenghai said with a smile, "You don't seem to be in the best of conditions so I won't make fun of you. We'll call it even."

Yu Shangrong shook his head and said, "Even if you didn't make a move, he wouldn't have been able to hurt me."

"What happened to not competing?"

"That's a different matter. I can take a step back in fights but not in matters of reason." Yu Shangrong leaped onto Ji Liang and rose into the air after he finished speaking.

Yu Zhenghai, naturally, disagreed with Yu Shangrong's words. He followed Yu Shangrong up into the sky as he asked, "You're out of Primal Qi, how were you going to kill him?"

"I have my methods. You don't have to worry about that, senior brother..."

"I don't think you have any methods to deal with him."

"..."

The two of them continued to bicker and soon vanished into the horizon.

After the duo from the Evil Sky Pavilion left, under the moonlight, Jiang Xiaosheng suddenly opened his eyes. His forehead was wet with sweat as he panted heavily. He looked at the blood on his chest and felt flames of fury rise in his heart. "I will have my revenge someday. How dare you kill me!"

After Jiang Xiaosheng rose to his feet with great difficulty, his eyes gleamed with determination as he muttered under his breath, "I must retrieve my master's Violet Glazed Ceramic."

As soon as he finished speaking, he spat out a mouthful of blood. Then, he dragged his battered body toward the forest.

Chapter 814: Your Majesty

While Yu Zhenghai searched for Yu Shangrong, Lu Zhou had replenished his Heavenly Writing's extraordinary power.

At this moment, he heard the notification for 1,000 merit points.

"1,000 merit points..."

'Based on the number of merit points, this person shouldn't have been a threat to Yu Shangrong. Why was he stuck there? Of course, this might be Yu Zhenghai's doing as well. It's normal for him to run into some fool. However, I know nothing about Yu Shangrong's current state.'

When he recalled what he had seen earlier, he could not help but wonder to himself. Surely the person capable of stopping Yu Shangrong.

Lu Zhou opened his eyes and looked at the mission list.

The mission of disciplining his nine disciples was still there. This was a long-term mission now, and Lu Zhou no longer paid much attention to it.

“Broken sword...” Although he only had a brief look, he was sure the broken sword was the Longevity Sword. Yu Shangrong would not have broken his sword; he valued the sword as much as he valued his life. Moreover, Yu Shangrong was at the Nine-leaf stage. An opponent capable of breaking the Longevity Sword had to possess a desolate-grade weapon. If he knew this was going to happen, he would have upgraded the Longevity Sword to the desolate grade.

However, Yu Shangrong relied too much on his sword. That was why he could hardly make any progress on his sword path.

Lu Zhou sighed. ‘With these disciples, I don’t think that I will be able to ever rest in peace.’

“Let’s try it again.” Lu Zhou decided to use his newly obtained power again.

He flattened his palms and was about to recite the mantra when a voice rang from outside.

“Greetings, master.”

It was Yu Zhenghai.

“Greetings, master.”

This was Yu Shangrong.

He felt relieved upon hearing his disciples’ voices. Fortunately, they had spoken just in time. Otherwise, he would have wasted half his extraordinary power for nothing.

“Come in.”

His two eldest disciples entered the room. They passed the screen and bowed to their master.

Lu Zhou raised his hand and said, “Rise.”

Yu Zhenghai glanced at Yu Shangrong before saying, “Master, I’m proud to announce that I didn’t fail you. I’ve brought Second Junior Brother back, safe and sound.”

“Safe and sound?” Lu Zhou studied Yu Shangrong.

Yu Shangrong was holding the Longevity Sword’s scabbard in his right hand. His back was straight as he stood respectfully.

When Yu Shangrong discovered his master’s probing gaze, he bowed again and said, “I ran into some trouble, but it wasn’t anything I couldn’t handle. Thank you for worrying about me, master. Thank you, Eldest Senior Brother, for coming to my rescue.”

Lu Zhou shifted his gaze away from the Longevity Sword to Yu Shangrong and said, “It’s understandable that you’re competitive, but it’s not good to lie.”

Yu Shangrong bowed and said, “I’ve spoken the truth. I don’t dare to deceive you, master.”

"Show me your sword," Lu Zhou said.

"..." Yu Shangrong was slightly taken aback. However, when he saw his master's gaze, he had no choice but to bring out the Longevity Sword. Then, he fell to one knee and presented the sword to his master with both hands. "I've done wrong and accidentally broke the Longevity Sword."

Lu Zhou remained calm.

On the other hand, Yu Zhenghai was slightly surprised. He knew his Second Junior Brother, and he knew how important the sword was to his Second Junior Brother. During the journey back, he did not see any hints of sadness on his junior brother's face. He sighed.

Lu Zhou said, "Let's hear it."

Yu Shangrong nodded before he recounted everything that had happened to his master. When he mentioned the partially-blind man, Lu Zhou and Yu Shangrong frowned slightly. They would not be surprised to run into golden cultivators in the red lotus domain since a route had already been established between the two domains and the creations of the flying chariot, Water Shuttle, and other modes of transportation. However, the appearance of the dark purple energy made them feel wary.

"The partially-blind man's cultivation base was average, but his attacks were incredibly peculiar. When we fought, I was careless, and he used his desolate-grade weapon to break my Longevity Sword."

"A desolate-grade weapon?"

Instead of replying, Yu Shangrong brought out a small object from his pocket.

During that battle, it was too dark so Yu Shangrong could not see clearly. Now that he looked at the small item again, he saw that it resembled a rock and was not eye-catching at all.

However, the faint light it radiated caught Lu Zhou's attention. He waved his hand, and the item flew into his palm.

"Ding! Obtained the item, Fire Spirit Stone. Can be used to upgrade desolate-grade weapons." (Note: Three Fire Spirit Stones are needed to upgrade a desolate-grade weapon.)

'The Fire Spirit Stone?' Lu Zhou circulated his Primal Qi.

The Fire Spirit Stone shone brighter.

The Fire Spirit Stones could be used as a weapon, and they could also be used to upgrade desolate-grade weapons.

Yu Shangrong was rather lucky.

"Do you know what this is, master?" Yu Zhenghai asked curiously.

Lu Zhou nodded lightly. He stroked his beard and said, "I've heard about it. This can be used to improve desolate-grade items. Desolate-grade items are rare, and this Fire Spirit Stone can be used to upgrade them. This stone is a great treasure."

Yu Zhenghai was shocked. He moved to pat Yu Shangrong's shoulder as he loudly said, "Second Junior Brother, you're quite lucky. Although your sword is broken, the heavens weren't unfair to you. Heaven-grade weapons are nothing. With the Fire Spirit Stone, you'll soon own the only flood-grade weapon in the Evil Sky Pavilion!"

However, as Yu Shangrong put his Longevity Sword away, he said, "Since this Fire Spirit Stone is a great treasure, I'm willing to give it to you, master. Please accept it."

Upon hearing this, Yu Zhenghai quickly regained his senses and hastily said, "Yes, yes, yes... The Fire Spirit Stone is a great treasure. It's best to give it to master."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and shook his head as he said, "I appreciate the sentiment. You won this by risking your life so you should keep it. As for the Longevity Sword, you don't have to worry about it being broken. What's important is keeping your heart instant. We'll find a way to reforge it in the future." Then, he tossed the Fire Spirit Stone back to Yu Shangrong.

Yu Shangrong caught the Fire Spirit Stone. He was moved by his master's words. He quickly said, "Thank you, master."

"The rock forest you mentioned sounds suspicious. If you have the time, you should try to sketch it and let your Seventh Junior Brother study it. Apart from that, you should be grateful that you were able to master a new sword path in the rock forest. Do you know why I didn't turn your Longevity Sword into a desolate-grade weapon?"

Yu Shangrong looked at his master. Realization dawned on him immediately before he said, "I'll remember your kind intention, master."

"You were relying too much on the Longevity Sword. It had become a hindrance on your sword path. Although you've understood and mastered the son of heaven's sword, there's still the swordless path and Calm Disturbance. The path of cultivation is long. You mustn't be too proud of yourself," Lu Zhou said.

"I understand. Thank you for your teachings, master."

"Ding! Taught Yu Shangrong. Obtained 200 merit points. Mentor extra: 300 merit points."

Yu Zhenghai smiled and said, "Second Junior Brother, master has certainly given a lot of thought to you."

Lu Zhou shifted his gaze to Yu Zhenghai. "This applies to you as well..."

That gaze, that aura, that attitude... It seemed as though his master was asking him if he had mastered the Water Dragon Song after the demonstration. Clearly, his master was calling him out for calling the kettle black. Yu Zhenghai hastily fell to one knee. "I will remember your teachings, master. I'll certainly master Water Dragon Song as quickly as possible."

"Ding! Taught Yu Zhenghai and earned 200 merit points. Mentor extra: 300 merit points. Eternal Paragon extra: 300 merit points."

When Lu Zhou heard the system's notification, he wondered about the difference between his two disciples' notifications. Yu Zhenghai's reward had the additional Eternal Paragon, but Yu Shangrong's reward did not. After a while, he realized he had only bought the item card recently and demonstrated

Water Dragon Song to Yu Zhenghai. He wondered, 'Should I demonstrate Calm Disturbance to Old Second?'

At this moment, Yu Shangrong said, pulling Lu Zhou back to the present, "Master, Ji Liang is waiting outside. I discovered that it seems to possess the ability to replenish life."

"Replenish life?" Lu Zhou wondered out loud.

"That's right. However, I think it needs to rest every time it uses the ability."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. "I'll let it recuperate in the forest behind the hall."

"Understood."

Based on what Lu Zhou knew, every mount had its own special ability. Whizard could summon auspicious rain. He had activated the ability when he encountered the grand shaman. Bi An's sense of smell was incredibly sharp, and it was fierce as well. Its ability was clearly demonstrated when they were looking for Yu Zhenghai in the past. Ji Liang's ability to replenish life was activated when Yu Shangrong was in danger. What about Qiong Qi and Da Kang. Qiong Qi was currently with Mingshi Yi, and it seemed to have a bond with Mingshi Yi as well. Was Qiong Qi's ability its terrifying combat strength? As for Da Kang, it had not arrived yet so he had no opinion about it.

At this moment, a voice rang from outside his room.

"Senior Lu, the people from Sky Martial Court are here."

Yu Zhenghai and Yu Shangrong looked outside in unison.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. 'They're finally here.'

"Let's go"

His two disciples bowed.

...

On the cloud platform. 1,000 meters before the 12 Cloud Mountain peaks.

An extremely huge, majestic, and imposing chariot was slowly flying toward them outside the barrier. It was 1,000 feet long, 100 feet tall, and more than 100 feet wide. It resembled a skiff. A flag was flown on the chariot, and armed soldiers with poleaxes were assembled on the deck. Their momentum was rather imposing.

The huge chariot slowly entered the area of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain, and when it was above the cloud platform, a voice rang in the air.

"Nie Qingyun of Cloud Mountain, aren't you going to come out and welcome His Majesty?!"

Chapter 815: Senior Lu Has Spoken

The voice was piercing and loud; it resounded through the 12 peaks with unusual clarity. Only an elite from the inner palace would be able to pull off such a powerful sound technique.

The elders and disciples of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain assembled swiftly.

Nie Qingyun hurried out from the hall and scanned his surroundings before he said, "Go and fetch Senior Lu, quick!"

"Senior Lu has already been notified. He'll arrive shortly."

"Good." Nie Qingyun tidied his clothes and said sternly, "Come with me to welcome the emperor."

The elders and the core disciples bowed in unison. "Understood."

They flew toward the cloud platform. After they descended on the platform, they spread out.

The huge chariot was still hovering above the cloud platform.

At this moment, Nie Qingyun led the others and greeted loudly, "Nie Qingyun welcomes His Majesty."

Nie Qingyun did not expect the emperor to personally visit. In truth, he did not like to deal with the palace. Over the years, the palace had tried to extend its hand to Cloud Mountain through the Flying Star House. Recently, they had almost annihilated Cloud Mountain.

In the chariot, the young emperor dressed in dragon robes sauntered to the edge of the flying chariot with his hands on his back and looked down on Cloud Mountain.

"Is this Cloud Mountain?"

A middle-aged man behind the young emperor said with a smile, "Your Majesty, this is Cloud Mountain."

The young emperor, Li Yunzheng, nodded and said, "If you didn't tell me, I wouldn't have dared to believe that this is a part of my land."

The person who accompanied Li Yunzheng was Wang Shizhong from the Wang Family, one of Great Tang's Great Families.

Wang Shizhong held a high position and had many cronies in the royal court. He also possessed an unfathomable cultivation base. Over the past millennium, the Wang Family became one of the Great Families in Great Tang. Even the former emperor did not dare to act rashly against the Wang Family, let alone Li Yunzheng who had no supporters. For someone like him, how could he miss the implications of Li Yunzheng's words? He waved his hand said, "Every land under the heavens belongs to you, Your Majesty. There is no need to be modest... Your Majesty, Nie Qingyun awaits."

Several men appeared. They were capable subordinates of the Wang Family.

The several thousand cultivators at the sides of the huge chariot. Half of them were from the Sky Martial Court and the other half were from the palace.

It was a grand lineup.

Li Yunzheng glanced at Nie Qingyun who was bowing on the cloud platform and said, "Rise."

Nie Qingyun and the others straightened their backs and looked at the sky.

At this moment, Eunuch Gao who was next to Li Yunzheng said, "Your Majesty, I'll escort you." He supported Li Yunzheng's arms and brought him down in a slow descent.

Wang Shizhong turned to look back.

A girl poked her head out. "Father, this is fun!"

"Shu'er, behave yourself." The girl who was dressed up as a man was Wang Shu, Wang Shizong's daughter.

"I get it. It's just Cloud Mountain anyway. You'll be able to deal with everything easily," Wang Shu said dismissively.

"These are some extraordinary circumstances. That old fiend, Yu Chenshu, doesn't want to come and wants me to deal with this. In my opinion, nothing good is going to come out of this. When we're down there, you better not cause any trouble for me!" Wang Shizhong sternly said.

"Don't worry, don't worry... I won't..."

Neigh!

At this moment, a horse's neigh rang from the distance.

Wang Shu who was standing in the flying chariot turned to look in the direction of the sound and immediately saw a handsome horse flying here from one of the peaks. The horse was too eye-catching with its white coat, red mane, and golden eyes. She said excitedly, "Father... My horse! That's my horse!"

The huge chariot provided a wonderful vantage point. They could see the entirety of the 12 mountain peaks.

Wang Shizhong had a profound cultivation base so it was easy for him to see the unique horse. He said in confusion, "Your horse?"

Wang Shu said, "Father, you don't know this, but Wang Tuo and the others went to the beach and found a wild horse. They went through many troubles before they finally captured it and gave it to me..."

"Why is it here then?" Wang Shizhong frowned.

Wang Shu lowered her head and said sheepishly, "I wanted to bring it out for a ride... but, who knew that this livestock... this livestock wasn't completely tamed, and it ran away!"

"You!" Wang Shizhong tapped her head lightly.

"Father, it's a rare breed! You must help me get it back! Father..." Wang Shu stepped forward and pulled on Wang Shizhong's arm as she spoke coquettishly.

"I've spoiled you too much. Behave yourself. We're in His Majesty's presence today. Otherwise, I'll ground you for three months."

"I know, I know."

Then, Wang Shizhong brought his daughter, whom he trusted the most in the Wang Family, to the cloud platform. They landed behind Li Yunzheng.

Soon after, roughly 300 cultivators descended on the cloud platform as well.

Li Yunzheng looked at Nie Qingyun and politely asked, "Are you the Sect Master of Cloud Mountain, Nie Qingyun?"

Nie Qingyun replied, "Yes, I'm Nie Qingyun, the master of the Twelve Sects of Cloud Mountain."

Next to Li Yunzheng, Eunuch Gai chuckled and said, "Nie Qingyun, are you the only one who's here to welcome His Majesty?"

Nie Qingyun turned to look and discovered the members of the Ninth Temple were not here. Meanwhile, the members of the Thousand Willow Monastery were late and had just arrived.

When Xia Changqiu and Tian Buji arrived on the cloud platform, they did not greet the emperor. Instead, they looked at the peak where Lu Zhou was at.

Eunuch Gao said sternly in a tone laden with criticism, "Well? Aren't you going to greet His Majesty?"

Xia Changqiu, Tian Buji, Wuwu, and Ji Fengxing were taken aback.

However, Li Yunzheng frowned and said, "You don't have to get so worked up about such a trivial matter." He had always hated how Eunuch Gao took matters into his own hands, especially on an occasion such as this. Eunuch Gao had gradually become a thorn in his flesh over the years. However, he was powerless to free himself from the fate of being a puppet.

Wang Shizhong stepped forward and said loudly, "I disagree, Your Majesty. The rulers and the common folk have their own places. We can't do away with etiquette."

Li Yunzheng looked at Wang Shizhong and remained silent.

Upon hearing these words, Nie Qingyun said, "Senior Lu will be here soon. Monastery Master Xia is waiting for Senior Lu. They'll offer their greetings later. Please forgive us, Your Majesty."

Li Yunzheng nodded. "There's no need to make mountains out of molehills. I'm not that petty."

Wang Shizhong looked at Xia Changqiu and the others as he said, "Aren't you going to thank His Majesty?"

Li Yunzheng. "..."

Nie Qingyun understood the emperor's predicament. He hastily changed the subject. "What brings you here, Your Majesty?"

However, before Li Yunzheng could reply, Wang Shizhong said, "You know why, Sect Master Nie. Why would you ask when you already know the answer to the question?"

Nie Qingyun did not beat around the bush. He said, "For the Sky Martial Court disciples?"

"Precisely."

Eunuch Gao narrowed his eyes and said, "Sect Master Nie, I heard that the Sky Martial Court's Mo Buyan visited you, but he was chased away. What are you trying to do? Are you trying to revolt?"

Nie Qingyun knew that it would come to this. He hastily said, "Kindly have a seat. Since everyone's here, let's make things clear on the cloud platform. Although I'm the master of Cloud Mountain, I don't call the shots."

"You don't call the shots here?" Eunuch Gao frowned.

Nie Qingyun would have loved to call the shots. The funny thing was even a Ten-leaf cultivator had to bend their knees to Ye Zhen. If this were in the past, he would be flexible and adjust his attitude according to the people he spoke to. However, recent events had changed his mind. There were too many uncertainties in the world.

When the Flying Star House's Ye Zhen tried to annihilate Cloud Mountain, the path Nie Qingyun had already been set. At this point, he no longer had a choice but to continue on the path that had been set before him.

With this thought in mind, Nie Qingyun said, "Forgive me for being blunt, but I'm not from the royal court. I won't assume another person's responsibilities. This isn't about etiquette or revolting. Senior Lu has said that Yu Chenshu should personally visit if he wants to free the Sky Martial Court disciples."

Chapter 816: Offending the Superiors

Eunuch Gao who was standing next to Li Yun Zheng was displeased when he heard this. He was about to reprimand Nie Qing Yun for being discourteous when Li Yuzheng raised his hand.

Smack!

A loud and crisp sound when Li Yunzheng's hand struck Eunuch Gao's face.

Everyone was taken aback.

Eunuch Gao was clearly stunned by the slap. The flames of fury in his heart were instantly swept away by Li Yunzheng's slap. It felt as though someone had just poured a bucket of ice-cold water on him. Nevertheless, in just a brief moment, the flames of fury that had just been put out in his heart roared back to life.

Li Yunzheng asked, "Am I the emperor, or are you the emperor?"

Eunuch Gao bowed immediately. "Of course, it's you, Your Majesty."

"I came here with the intention to have a peaceful discussion, not to look for trouble. Are you trying to stir up trouble for me with your attitude?" Li Yunzheng said sternly.

Although Li Yunzheng was only a puppet emperor, he was well-read and understood profound theories. He was not a fool. Even Wang Shizhong and Eunuch Gao together were not a match for him in regard to eloquence.

Meanwhile, Wang Shizhong only felt that the emperor was slightly too full of youthful vigor. 'What good would acting on a whim do?'

After a moment, Wang Shizhong finally said, "Your Majesty is right. Eunuch Gao, as an official, you should keep quiet once His Majesty has spoken. You'd be in trouble if His Majesty decides to charge you with revolting."

Eunuch Gao nodded. "You're right, Lord Wang... I'll keep that in mind. Forgive me, Your Majesty."

Li Yunzheng scoffed. He was in a much better mood since he managed to vent his dissatisfaction with that slap.

There was nothing wrong with a master hitting his servants.

Despite being a puppet emperor, Li Yunzheng knew Eunuch Gao would not dare to disregard the hierarchy in public. Eunuch Gao had no choice but to swallow his resentment.

Li Yunzheng looked at Nie Qingyun and said, "It's my first time on Cloud Mountain. The scenery looks wonderful. Would you care to show me around, Sect Master Nie?"

Nie Qingyun was unaware that Lu Zhou was late because Lu Zhou was currently observing Ji Liang. Despite how much he wanted to wait for Lu Zhou's arrival, he knew he could not possibly refuse the emperor. Hence, he said, "Of course."

As they walked east, Nie Qingyun explained, "Your Majesty, from the east to the west, there are 12 peaks along the mountain range..."

Wang Shizhong wore an expression of disapproval on his face as Nie Qingyun spoke. He did not seem to be paying attention to Nie Qingyun. Instead, he was looking at the peak where Ji Liang had appeared. He could not help but feel puzzled. It was difficult to tame a wild horse. Although his daughter's cultivation base was only average, he had many elites in his mansion. He even had elite horse tamers in his mansion. What was so special about this horse? Why was it so difficult to tame?

Time continued to pass as Li Yunzheng and Nie Qingyun continued chatting.

When Wang Shizhong felt it was nearly time, he stepped forward and said, "Your Majesty, we should get down to business."

Li Yun Zheng and Nie Qingyun turned to look at Wang Shizhong.

A complicated expression appeared on Li Yunzheng's face as he said, "I know what I'm doing."

Nevertheless, everyone began to take their seats in the center of the cloud platform.

After everyone was seated, Wang Shizhong was the first to speak, "Sect Master Nie, His Majesty has shown great sincerity by personally visiting Cloud Mountain. Please release the Sky Martial Court disciples right now."

Nie Qingyun completely disregarded Wang Shizhong. Instead, he looked at Li Yunzheng and said, "Your Majesty, it's not that I'm unwilling to release the Sky Martial Court disciples, but they colluded with the Flying Star House to annihilate Cloud Mountain. This is a conflict between the sects in the cultivation world and has nothing to do with the royal palace. Most importantly, I don't have the authority to make the decisions regarding this matter."

“So, Senior Lu has the authority?” Wang Shizhong asked.

“That’s right,” Nie Qingyun answered honestly.

“I’ve heard rumors about Senior Lu. He killed Ye Zhen and Chen Tiandu. Indeed, he’s a remarkable person. However, it’s difficult to make peace once someone has turned into your enemy. His Majesty decided to visit because he wishes to solve this problem. Moreover, Yu Chenshu is merely the Master of the Sky Martial Court Master, after all. He’s been ill lately and couldn’t come. Nevertheless, in terms of status and prestige, His Majesty is superior to Yu Chenshu... Isn’t this show of sincerity enough?” Wang Shizhong said.

Nie Qingyun nodded slightly.

Wang Shizhong had a point. It did not matter if Li Yunzheng was only a puppet emperor.

‘Why isn’t Senior Lu here yet?’ Nie Qingyun could not help but wonder again as he looked at Xie Changqiu and the others who were still waiting for Lu Zhou’s arrival.

Li Yunzheng only sighed; he did not say anything.

Nie Qingyun asked, “Why are you sighing, Your Majesty?”

Li Yunzheng said lightly, “I’m just lamenting to myself... Cloud Mountain has such majestic sceneries; it made me wonder how many more majestic places there are in Great Tang. Yet, as the emperor, I don’t even have the chance to see all these places. It’s just a lie when everyone says the land under the heavens belongs to me.”

Naturally, Wang Shizhong heard the implications in Li Yunzheng’s words. He said with a smile, “Your Majesty, you’re still young. Moreover, there are many things in life that are out of our control.” There was a slight edge to his voice when he spoke. Based on the hidden barbs in his words, he was clearly not as easily bullied like Eunuch Gao.

Li Yunzheng sighed before he replied, “I understand. However, the adults you spoke about were once young as well. How many of them are like me? Was my father like me when he was young as well?”

“You have a point, Your Majesty,” Wang Shizhong said expressionlessly. Then, he bowed and cupped his fists together before he said, “Please do something for the 2,000 Sky Martial Court disciples, Your Majesty.”

Li Yunzheng sighed.

At this moment...

Neigh!

Ji Liang’s neigh rang in everyone’s ears.

Wang Shizhong leaped up in excitement. “Father, my horse! I see it! My horse!”

Wang Shizhong glared at Wang Shu to silence her.

Upon seeing the look on her father’s face, Wang Shu fell silent.

"Sect Master Nie, how did this horse come to Cloud Mountain?" Wang Shizhong asked.

Nie Qingyun heard Ji Liang as well. He replied with a smile, "To tell you the truth, Senior Lu lives on that peak. As for the horse, I've never seen it before. If you're interested, you can ask Senior Lu when he arrives."

"Thank you." Wang Shizhong cupped his fists.

At this moment, Xia Changqiu finally saw Lu Zhou, Yu Zhenghai, Yu Shangrong, Little Yuan'er, and Conch flying toward them.

In a show of respect, Nie Qingyun had vacated the east-facing peak, which was also the first peak. He and his three disciples took up one peak. Cloud Mountain was huge, and space was aplenty. They did not mind.

When Lu Zhou and his disciples were slowly descending on the cloud platform, the few thousand Cloud Mountain disciples bowed in unison.

"Senior Lu."

When Li Yunzheng looked over, he frowned slightly. 'Why does the old man look so familiar?' The more he looked at the old man, the more familiar the old man became.

Once Lu Zhou landed, Xia Changqiu and the others bowed. "Senior Lu."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded in response. He looked at the royal chariot in the air before he walked to the center of the cloud platform.

The crowd parted and made way for Lu Zhou. Whether it was the people from the palace or the Sky Martial Court, no one stopped him.

At this moment, realization finally dawned on Li Yunzheng. He was shocked. If it were not for his identity and his habit of hiding his emotions, he would have leaped to his feet to greet Lu Zhou. As he forced himself to remain calm, he wondered inwardly, 'Is this what they call fate?'

When Lu Zhou arrived in front of everyone, he said, "Li Yunzheng, I knew you'd come."

"..."

Wang Shizhong, Wang Shu, the soldiers of the palace, and the Sky Martial Court disciples frowned.

'Is this the way to speak to the emperor? Is he trying to offend the emperor?'

Wang Shu was about to lose her temper, but her father was quick to hold back.

Wang Shizhong glared at his daughter again before she sat down.

Eunuch Gao and Wang Shizhong had more experience than the young Wang Shu, after all, They knew how to hide their emotions. Moreover, at the end of the day, it was the emperor who should feel offended, not them.

Wang Shizhong even thought this was a good opportunity to teach and show the young emperor how sinister men could be.

Li Yunzheng cupped his fists awkwardly before he said, "Old mister."

Everyone was rendered speechless by Li Yunzheng's tone, bearing, and expression.

'Was the young emperor not filled with youthful vigor earlier? Didn't he have a quick temper? Why is he so meek in front of this old man?'

Chapter 817: What I Say Goes

Eunuch Gao who had a good grasp of Li Yunzheng's personality was baffled by this situation as well.

When the inner attendants waited on the young emperor, he would vent his anger on them. As his subordinates, they had no choice but to accept this treatment without any complaints. Was the young emperor suppressing his anger?

Lu Zhou walked to the main seat and lifted his robes slightly before he sat down.

Yu Shangrong, Yu Zhenghai, and the others then took their seats behind Lu Zhou.

Li Zhou stroked his beard as he scanned the crowd before he called out, "Li Yunzheng."

Li Yunzheng felt even more awkward now. He thought, 'I'm the monarch, after all. Can you give me some face? Although we've met twice, have been honest with each other, and I think we're on good terms, can you please not address me by my name in front of so many people?'

In the end, Li Yunzheng said, "What is it, old mister?"

"The breeze is strong there. The spot next to me is better. Come. I'd like to have a nice chat with you," Lu Zhou said as he pointed at the seat next to him.

"..."

At this moment, Eunuch Gao looked at a minor eunuch next to him meaningfully.

The minor eunuch shuddered. It seemed like he was not bold enough to do whatever Eunuch Gao had signaled him to do. However, when he saw the expression on Eunuch Gao's face again, he had no choice but to slam his hands down on the table as he rose to his feet.

Thump!

The minor eunuch mustered up his courage and said indignantly, "How dare you speak so rudely to the emperor?!"

Lu Zhou continued to stroke his beard with a calm expression on his face as he waited for Li Yunzheng to sit next to him.

Li Yunzheng frowned. He turned around and said, "Don't be rude to the old mister!"

The minor eunuch hurriedly bowed and said, "Your Majesty, this is the etiquette between a ruler and his subjects. No one is exempt from it! How is Your Majesty going to rule the lands if you let this transgression go?"

The minor eunuch's words that were filled with righteous indignation were clearly meant for Lu Zhou's ears. These words were, naturally, in line with Wang Shizhong and Eunuch Gao's thoughts. Both of them looked slightly pleased at this moment.

Lu Zhou remained silent as he continued to point at the seat next to him.

At this moment, Li Yunzheng turned around and barked, "Impudent!"

Eunuch Gao was stunned again. 'Is this young emperor confused about his position?'

The soldiers standing at the back were confused as well.

The minor eunuch no longer dared to speak as he bowed.

Li Yunzheng turned to address Eunuch Gao. "Did you train this person? Eunuch Gao, how should someone who disobeyed the monarch be punished?"

Eunuch Gao stood up with a frown on his face. Although he did not understand the young emperor's sudden change in behavior, he could only bow and say, "Your Majesty, I'll personally punish him."

Then, Eunuch Gao raised his right hand that was glowing red.

"You!" The minor eunuch was shocked. He was about to squeal in fear when the red palm struck his chest. He was helpless to fight back. With just a palm strike, his internal organs were heavily damaged, causing him to die.

The people behind Eunuch Gao retreated, stunned.

The people from the palace and the Sky Martial Court were stunned. Did they not come here for a peaceful discussion? They were not even here for long, and yet, one of their own had died. Moreover, it was by the hands of another one of their own.

After Eunuch Gao withdrew his hand, he looked at Li Yunzheng and said, "Your Majesty, forgive me for not disciplining him strictly. I've already executed this impudent fool. This will serve as a warning to the others."

Li Yunzheng. "..."

Eunuch Gao had overstepped his boundaries more than one time. This was one of the reasons Li Yunzheng disliked him. However, he did not expect that Eunuch Gao would kill someone in public. 'Is this his way of asserting dominance for me?'

Lu Zhou finally said, "That was impressive."

Eunuch Gao cupped his fists at Lu Zhou. "It was nothing."

"This is Cloud Mountain, not the palace. If you killed that person as a show of power to me, I'm sorry to tell you that you're sorely mistaken. You were still playing with dirt when I started killing people." After Lu Zhou said those words, he waved his hand and added, "Li Yunzheng, are you going to make me wait forever?"

Compared to Eunuch Gao and the others who tried to pressure him with subtle means, Li Yunzheng preferred Lu Zhou's bluntness. He rose to his feet and walked over to Lu Zhou.

Since Eunuch Gao's plan had been foiled, he could only sit down with a sour expression on his face. He said harshly to the people behind him, "Why are you standing there? Clean this up!"

"Understood."

Two soldiers hurried forward and carried the minor eunuch's corpse onto the flying chariot.

Li Yunzheng sat next to Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou shook his head as he said, "As a monarch, you should also look the part. Do you still remember what I told you?"

Li Yunzheng forced a smile on his face.

Wang Shizhong and Eunuch Gao were stunned.

'They've met?'

'What did they speak about?'

Lu Zhou remained silent.

Initially, Li Yunzheng felt uncomfortable. No matter what, he was still the emperor. It was out of place for someone to call him over. However, after thinking about it for a moment, he thought there was no reason for him to feel embarrassed. After all, Wang Shizhong, Eunuch Gao, the soldiers, attendants, and the others had always mocked him behind his back. Even the palace girls dared to speak ill of him. Monarch? No, he was nothing more than the subject of ridicule for the inhabitants of the palace. Since things were like this, why should he feel embarrassed by the old mister's treatment? At least, the old mister was worthy compared to those despicable people. With his, his expression gradually returned to normal when he turned around to face the others.

After a beat, Li Yunzheng said to Lu Zhou without beating around the bush, "Old mister, I'm sure that you're aware of my reason for being here."

"Yes," Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he said, "However, I've already spoken to the Sky Martial Court's Mo Buyan. Considering your identity as the emperor, I'll repeat my words again. If you want me to free the Sky Martial Court disciples, tell Yu Chenshu to come here."

"I..."

"You're the ruler of an empire; you should know your priorities," Lu Zhou said as he swept his gaze across the others. His tone and behavior were similar to that of a teacher.

To Eunuch Gao and Wang Shizhong's ears, Lu Zhou's words sounded grating.

However, to Li Yunzheng, he found Lu Zhou's words reasonable. 'That's right. I'm the emperor. Why do I have to stoop so low and personally demand the release of some sect's disciples?'

At this moment, Wang Shizhong shook his head and said, "Senior Lu..."

“Who are you?” Lu Zhou interjected before Wang Shizhong finished speaking.

“Head of the secretariat, Wang Shizhong.” Wang Shizhong was more than happy to announce his name and office.

‘Head of the secretariat... This means he’s the prime minister. No wonder he’s so composed and is able to talk so calmly.’

Wang Shizhong said, “The Sky Martial Court is affiliated with the royal court. Moreover, they’re loyal to the palace. The court master, Yu Chenshu, is His Majesty’s trusted servant. Since His Majesty has personally come. Senior Lu, if you’d just consider this sincerity...”

Lu Zhou raised his hand to stop Wang Shizhong from speaking. “Did you not understand what I just said?”

“...” Wang Shizhong frowned. He did not expect the old man to be so stubborn.

“What I said is what will be,” Lu Zhou said.

At this moment, Nie Qing Yun steeled himself and chimed in confidently, “Senior Lu has already made himself clear. Prime Minister Wang, there’s no need for me to speak.”

The more Wang Shizhong listened to this, the more he found the situation strange. However, he dared not let his guard down. He continued to say, “I can guarantee that whatever Court Master Yu had promised for the release of his disciples, His Majesty and I will match it.” After he finished speaking, he waved his hand.

Then, the soldiers behind Wang Shizhong carried several boxes onto the cloud platform.

The number of boxes was three times greater than before.

Li Yunzheng asked in confusion, “Old mister, why must Court Master Yu personally come?”

Before Lu Zhou replied, Yu Zhenghai scoffed and said, Before Lu Zhou could say anything, Yu Zhenghai scoffed and said, “He’s not dead so why isn’t he here? Isn’t he being arrogant?”

Chapter 818: Do What You Can

Wang Shizhong said, “Senior Lu, if I may?”

Lu Zhou looked at the boxes. He expected them to be filled with full talismans. Hence, he said, “What is it?”

“Court Master Yu holds an important post. Lately, we’ve discovered the presence of hidden elites with unclear origins. Those elites killed many of the capital’s elites. Court Master Yu has to look after the Sky Martial Court and can’t just leave on a whim. That’s why he requested His Majesty to personally negotiate,” Wang Shizhong explained.

“I thought the Sky Martial Court is filled with elites. So there are times that they’re afraid as well?” Yu Zhenghai asked.

Wang Shizhong said, "Many of the Sky Martial Court's elites are sent to the ten circuits of Great Tang. It's rather difficult to gather all of them in a place. To be honest, we're not only here for the release of the Sky Martial Court disciples. There's another matter as well..."

"What is it?" Lu Zhou could tell the person before him held more power than it seemed. There might be better benefits behind this person. He could guess some matters based on how silent Li Yunzheng was.

Lu Zhou preferred to deal with someone who would keep his word. Unfortunately, Li Yunzheng was just a puppet emperor with no authority to speak of.

Wang Shizhong said, "Senior Lu... you're from the golden lotus domain, am I right?"

The others looked up.

Eunuch Gao looked slightly taken aback as he looked at Wang Shizhong.

Lu Zhou did not admit nor deny it. He only kept his eyes on Wang Shizhong.

Wang Shizhong continued to say, "The two domains are now connected... I believe that you didn't come all the way here across the Endless Ocean to invade and conquer Great Tang. Ever since the Sky Martial Court started researching the other worlds, they built the Water Shuttle, the Sky Shuttle, the flying chariot, the red ship, and other transporters... We can enter and leave the golden lotus domain as we please. The red lotus domain has already obtained basic information about the golden lotus domain 300 years ago. Within three centuries, the growth of the golden lotus domain is truly incredible. However, from what I know, there was a limit to the cultivation in the golden lotus domain. Nobody could reach the Nine-leaf stage. Then, a new cultivation theory emerged, and people began to sever the lotuses. Since the emergence of this method, the golden lotus domain progressed swiftly and produced more Nine-leaf cultivators. Even so, the overall strength of the golden lotus domain is still a far cry from the red lotus domain." Then, he paused for a moment as he looked at Lu Zhou and asked, "Am I right, Senior Lu?"

Lu Zhou did not pay attention to Wang Shizhong. Instead, he looked at Li Yunzheng and asked, "You're the emperor. What do you think?"

Li Yunzheng pointed at himself. "You're asking... me?"

When Li Yunzheng saw everyone looking at him, he suddenly felt like a true emperor governing the lands. He said confidently, "In my opinion, although the two domains are connected, we shouldn't interfere in each other's affairs. We shouldn't kill or invade... Whether it's the red lotus domain or the golden lotus domain, we're all humans. From the old books, I've read that humans have been plagued by beasts in the past. The books clearly said that even the most powerful experts aren't a match for the beasts. The people won't be able to live peacefully, and people's cultivation base would suffer. The books have also said..."

At this moment, Eunuch Gao interjected with his sharp voice, "Your Majesty, these matters have nothing to do with the negotiations today. Please keep your words direct and simple."

Li Yunzheng did not continue speaking. Not only did he not lose his temper like before, but he grew even calmer. He was not sure what came over him. He recalled Lu Zhou's words and rose to his feet before he said evenly, "Bring me a saber."

“Your Majesty, your hands don’t even have the strength to kill a chicken, what are you going to do with a saber?”

Li Yunzheng said solemnly “Do I need your opinion if I want my saber?”

Meanwhile, Wang Shizhong was intrigued. He wanted to see what the young emperor would do so he waved his hand and said, “Give His Majesty a saber.”

“Understood.”

Soon after, a soldier respectfully presented his own saber to the emperor.

When Li Yunzheng picked up the saber, he nearly lost his footing.

Upon seeing this, some of the minor eunuchs covered their mouths and snickered.

Li Yunzheng remained calm. He looked at Lu Zhou and said, “Old mister, you said... you said that I should remove everyone who stands in my way, right?”

“That’s right,” Lu Zhou said.

“For someone like me... Someone who can’t even hold a saber straight... How am I supposed to remove them?” Li Yunzheng asked the same question he had asked in Ganlu Hall that night.

This time, there was a hint of urgency to Li Yunzheng’s question. He needed answers. However, vague answers would not help him get out of his current predicament.

The sky above Cloud Mountain was clear, and the air was fresh. However, it felt difficult to breathe.

At this moment, Eunuch Gao raised a pot on the table with a disapproving expression on his face as he poured himself a drink.

Drip!

Soon enough, tea filled the wine cup.

Eunuch Gao raised the cup to his lips and finished the tea in a gulp. He placed the cup back on the table with a loud thud. Just like that, the wine cup sank half an inch into the table.

Nobody knew what was going through the young emperor’s mind at this moment, and nobody cared as well. After all, they were used to situations like this.

However, sometimes the most mundane things, when repeated too often, would become the straw that broke the camel’s back.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. “I stand by my words. Do what you can.”

Li Yunzheng. “...”

Eunuch Gao smiled with a hint of smugness.

The palace girls and the eunuchs standing behind Eunuch Gao watched with bright eyes, clearly eager to watch the show.

Eunuch Gao said, "Please stay your anger, Your Majesty. We must prioritize the greater picture."

Li Yunzheng raised the saber and walked to Eunuch Gao. He said in a voice seething in anger, "Gao Shiyuan, you've overstepped your bounds too many times and deceived your monarch. I'll cut you down today!" Then, he raised the saber with both hands and brought it down toward Eunuch Gao.

Eunuch Gao's expression was dismissive and disapproving as he raised his hand and caught the saber with two fingers.

'As expected...' Li Yunzheng expected as much. He felt his heart sink.

Eunuch Gao smiled and apologized. "Please stay your anger, Your Majesty. I'll atone for this when we return to the palace. We're now outside. Why must we make a fool of ourselves?"

At this moment, Li Yunzheng felt that he could not be humiliated any further. He had been so cowardly in the palace for so many years. Would there be a difference if he acted cowardly now? He tried to pick a saber up and brought it down on another person, but it made no difference.

At this moment, Lu Zhou finally said, "Did you try your best?"

Li Yunzheng put some strength into his arms and tightened his grip around the hilt of the saber. Compared to a cultivator, his strength was negligible.

"Your Majesty!" Eunuch Gao raised his voice. If this dragged on, their plan for this trip would go down the drain.

'What's gotten into this young emperor today?'

At this moment, Lu Zhou said tonelessly, "Impudent!" He raised his palm; his fingers glowed blue.

A blue palm seal faintly brushed past Li Yun Zheng's shoulder.

Bam!

The palm seal struck the back of the saber, pushing the saber out.

Just like that, the saber severed three of Eunuch Gao's fingers.

Li Yunzheng was stunned. His hands that were holding the saber shook.

Clang!

The saber dropped to the ground.

Chapter 819: Master and Servant

Dazzlingly red fresh blood spurted out from the bases of the severed middle finger, ring finger, and little finger.

The emperor, Li Yunzheng, had never wielded a real blade before. Everything in the palace was under someone's control, after all. Throughout his life, for more than a decade, he was no different from a puppet. If it were not for Wang Shizhong, he would not even have the opportunity to touch one. He did

not even have the chance to kill himself, let alone having access to these killing tools. Moreover, it had always been peaceful in the palace.

At this moment, Li Yunzheng's body was trembling. A hint of terror could be seen in his eyes as terror rose in his heart. He had thought about this countless times in his mind, often with much more tragic outcomes. He had fantasized about beheading Eunuch Gao and kicking his severed head like a ball. He could almost feel the satisfaction from it. However, now that he managed to hurt Eunuch Gao, he was flustered. At the same time, several consequences appeared in his head.

'What should I do?!' Li Yunzheng took a step back absentmindedly.

Gao Shiyuan merely cried out briefly when his fingers were severed before he quickly pressed down on his wounds. Hatred and killing intent flashed in his eyes as he pursed his lips. He really wanted to smash Li Yunzheng's head with a palm strike. Alas, he knew that was impossible. Even if Li Yunzheng was just a puppet emperor, there were many powerful supporters behind this puppet.

Wang Shizhong was aware of this fact as well. Apart from a slight hint of shock in the eyes, his expressions did not betray his emotions.

At the end of the day, Gao Shiyuan was only a eunuch. Apart from being able to control some people in the palace, he did not have much value. Moreover, even if he died, it would not be difficult to find a replacement.

Gao Shiyuan was aware that he was not irreplaceable as well. Since he could retaliate, he could only... endure! He had to endure. After a brief moment, he wiped away the sweat on his face before he fell to his knees and said through gritted teeth, "I have committed a mistake! Please stay your anger, Your Majesty!"

Li Yunzheng. "..."

Li Yunzheng did not expect Gao Shiyuan would be able to endure this even after losing three fingers.

On the other hand, Wang Shizhong and the others were not surprised.

When Wang Shizhong turned to look at Lu Zhou, he discovered Lu Zhou was calm. He could not help but wonder what was the source of the old man's confidence. The old man was even bold enough to challenge the Great Tang's royal court.

When Li Yunzheng finally snapped out of his stupor, he suddenly realized he was not as weak as he had imagined. The saber, the blood, the severed fingers... He no longer found them repulsive. Instead, he felt as though a weight had been removed from his chest.

Meanwhile, the eunuchs and palace girls fell to their knees when they regained their senses.

"Please stay your anger, Your Majesty!"

This was the first time Li Yunzheng felt as though he was being accorded the respect befitting an emperor.

'Is this what the ancient teachers meant in the books?' For Li Yunzheng, who never thought much about martial strength before, it was as though realization had just dawned on him.

Lu Zhou nodded, pleased. "Did you do your best?"

Li Yunzheng shoved his complicated thoughts aside for the moment and said, "I-I did..."

"No, you didn't." Lu Zhou slowly rose to his feet before he placed his hands on his back. Then, he looked at Li Yunzheng and said in a firm and forceful tone, "Think about my question again. There's no need to rush. Take your time."

Li Yunzheng felt slightly nervous and scared when he was asked the same question. He looked at kneeling Gao Shiyuan and discovered he had no sympathy for the eunuch. This was the very eunuch who made his life in the palace miserable, after all. Then, he shifted his gaze to the palace girls and other eunuchs who seemed meek and helpless at this moment. To outsiders, these servants truly seemed pitiful. However, he alone knew how fake and treacherous they were. If the circumstances allowed it, he had no doubt they would rise to their feet and continue to mock him.

While Li Yunzheng was lost in his thoughts, Wang Shizhong said tonelessly, "Your Majesty, the sun and moon can stand witness to Eunuch Gao's loyalty. Since he has lost three fingers, and considering his many years of service to you, won't you pity him and forgive him? At the very least, he deserves credit for all his efforts..."

Li Yunzheng turned to look at Wang Shizhong and asked, "Who will pity me then?"

"Your Majesty, are you saying there are other sins that Eunuch Gao has committed that we don't know about?" Wang Shizhong wondered.

"You know what I'm talking about."

"I thought... that we should give Eunuch Gao a chance to defend himself," Wang Shizhong said.

Gao Shiyuan hastily said, "I have no complaint if His Majesty intends to punish me for my sins, but as a monarch, the punishment must fit the crime!"

When Li Yunzheng heard Wang Shizhong's words that seemed to side with Gao Shiyuan, flames of fury that burned away his fear and uncertainties rose in his heart. He inhaled deeply. As the ruler of an empire, he had to conduct himself in a suitable manner. Then, he asked with a cold gaze and a calm heart, "Gao Shiyuan, you're well-versed in the laws of Great Tang. Tell me, what should your punishment be?"

Gao Shiyuan. "..."

"Disrespect is one of the Ten Abominations. How should you be punished? For lusting over silver, abusing the law, and unlawful killing of palace girls and eunuchs... What do you think the punishment should be like? You seem to think you have the right to do what you did earlier... The empire has its laws, and you have no right to kill people of the palace as you please. Answer me," Li Yunzheng asked three questions consecutively, clearly confident.

Gao Shiyuan frowned. He blurted, "You..."

"You?" Li Yunzheng mustered up his courage and moved to stand in front of Gao Shiyuan. "You dare to address your emperor in such a manner? Do you want to kill your emperor?"

“ ... ”

Wang Shizhong, Wang Shu, the soldiers, the Sky Martial Court disciples, the eunuchs, and the palace girls seemed baffled by Li Yunzheng.

‘The young emperor has lost it today!’

Even if Gao Shiyuan was given all the courage in the world, he would not dare kill the emperor, at least not openly.

Li Yunzheng stepped forward and looked down at Gao Shiyuan, forcing Gao Shiyuan back.

Colors drained from Gao Shiyuan’s face as he fell to the ground.

At this moment, Li Yunzheng realized he was much more powerful than he had imagined. This bolstered his confidence more. He said in a low voice, “I shall sentence you to death. Will you accept this?”

“Enough!” Gao Shiyuan snapped suddenly in his sharp voice as he narrowed his voice. His voice was brimming with contempt and fury. “Are you going to kill me, Your Majesty?”

“Are you going to revolt?” Li Yunzheng did not back down.

“I have no such intentions, but I can’t accept this!” Gao Shiyuan raised his hand that only had two fingers left after he tore a strip of cloth off his shirt and bound his hand. Then, he slowly rose to his feet before he said, “Your Majesty, I’m not afraid of death. However, if I die, I’m afraid chaos will descend on the palace. At that time, I’m sure there will be casualties as well.”

Lu Zhou clapped his hands when Gao Shiyuan finished speaking. He interjected, “It seems like Great Tang, servants are bold enough to threaten their emperor. My horizons have widened today...”

Gao Shiyuan retorted, “This is a matter of the palace. It has nothing to do with you.”

“The master and the servant each have their own place. As the servant, you can’t even fulfill your own duty, and you even dare to behave audaciously?” Lu Zhou asked.

“Even so, I won’t allow myself to be questioned by outsiders,” Gao Shiyuan said.

Lu Zhou stepped forward and moved to Li Yunzheng’s side. He said in a calm and stern tone, “How am I an outsider when this matter concerns my grand disciple?”

“Grand disciple?”

Gao Shiyuan and the others were shocked.

Even Li Yunzheng seemed confused.

Wang Shizhong scowled. He reacted quickly and slammed the table.

Smack!

“Gao Shiyuan, for your impudent acts of revolting, His Majesty has sentenced you to death, and yet, you dare quibble?” Wang Shizhong said loudly, shocking the others.

“Lord Wang, what are you...” Gao Shiyuan was perplexed.

“The ruler and the subjects have their own places. How dare you threaten His Majesty when you can’t even fulfill your duties?” Wang Shizhong bowed. “I request for Gao Shiyuan to be executed to serve as an example to the others.”

“How dare you?!” Gao Shiyuan widened his eyes as he staggered back. At the same time, he erected his protective energy around himself.

At this moment, Li Yunzheng said expressionlessly, “Cut him down.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

Wang Shizhong moved swiftly with his grand technique and appeared before Gao Shiyuan. His palm struck Gao Shiyuan’s chest like a blast of lightning.

Bam!

Gao Shiyuan reeled back and grunted before he spat out a mouthful of blood.

Wang Shizhong pushed away from the ground and appeared at lightning speed above Gao Shiyuan. Energy formed under his feet before he stomped on Gao Shiyuan’s chest.

Boom!

Gao Shiyuan crashed onto the cloud platform, causing the floor to crack. From the beginning until now, he did not even have a chance to manifest his avatar. He was utterly suppressed by Wang Shizhong’s speed. Just like that, he stopped breathing. His eyes were still open in death, and his chest had caved in.

Everyone was shocked by the sudden turn of events that they temporarily forgot the matter about Li Yunzheng being Lu Zhou’s grand disciple.

After Wang Shizhong moved away from Gao Shiyuan’s corpse, he bowed again and said, “Your Majesty, these eunuchs and palace girls should be executed as well. Revolting against the monarch is a grave crime. We can’t let them off so lightly.”

“Execute them,” Li Yunzheng coldly said before he turned away.

“Bring them up to the flying chariot and execute them,” Wang Shizhong ordered.

“Understood.”

The soldiers carried the eunuchs and palace girls back to the flying chariot.

“Have mercy, Your Majesty!”

Mercy? Some people were not worthy of mercy, especially when they were weak but still dared to act audaciously.

Wang Shizhong faced Li Yunzheng and said, “Your Majesty, I have carried out your orders and executed them.”

“Well done.” Li Yunzheng felt much better now.

Wang Shizhong returned to his seat.

Neigh!

At this moment, a neigh rang from one of the distant mountains.

Yu Shangrong looked in the direction of the noise before he said to his master, "I think Ji Liang is exhausted. Moreover, it seems to be behaving abnormally today. I should go and check on it."

Before Lu Zhou could respond to Yu Shangrong, Wang Shu, who was seated next to Wang Shizhong, said, "Father, it's my horse! It is my horse!"

'Hm?' Yu Shangrong who had already risen to his feet abruptly came to a stop when he heard these words. He turned to look at Wang Shu and said, "Your horse?"

Chapter 820: The True Owner of the Horse

Wang Shizhong was worried that his daughter would misspeak so he quickly raised his hand and glared at her. When he turned to face the others, a smile appeared on his face as he cupped his fists together and said, "Please don't misunderstand, sir... Wild horses are difficult to tame. It must've escaped here from somewhere else. Since Cloud Mountain has tamed it, consider it a gift."

"A gift?"

The words were rather unpleasant to listen to.

Lu Zhou could not care less about Wang Shizhong's words; he only took it as a joke.

However, Yu Shangrong was greatly displeased by these words. Put aside the fact that his master was Ji Liang's true owner, Ji Liang had helped him tremendously since their first encounter. Moreover, it was not an exaggeration to say Ji Liang had given him a new lease on life. He viewed Ji Liang as his comrade, a friend in life and in death! How could he not feel displeased when someone else insinuated they owned Ji Liang? How could he allow this?

Yu Shangrong turned around slowly to face Wang Shizhong. The usually polite expression on his face had vanished as he said, "Can you repeat your words?"

Wang Shizhong could, naturally, hear Yu Shangrong's words that were rife with hostility. He said, "If I'd misspoken, I'd like to ask for your forgiveness, sir."

Lu Zhou raised his hand. He looked at Wang Shu, who was seated next to Wang Shizhong, with a piercing gaze as he asked, "The horse's name is Ji Liang. It's my mount. Since when did it become your horse?"

"It's my horse first! I went through great trouble to tame it, but this cursed livestock escaped," Wang Shu said indignantly, "Forget it. I don't care anymore. You can have it."

Wang Shizhong cupped his fists together and said, "This is a misunderstanding. It's only a horse. Why don't we consider this matter resolved?"

"So, you're the one who harmed my horse..." Lu Zhou had been looking for the culprits who inflicted those injuries on Ji Liang. He did not expect the culprit to show up at his doorstep.

Yu Zhenghai said, "This horse is my master's mount. There's no need for you to give it to us. Ji Liang is a wonderful steed among a million steeds. It's blessed with intelligence. It only answers to my master. I'm guessing you wanted to claim it for your own and captured it when it was distracted and attempted to tame it, am I right?"

Wang Shu was shocked.

Meanwhile, Wang Shizhong's expression changed slightly. However, he did not say anything.

Little Yuan'er placed her hands on her hips and said, "You're shameless! Ji Liang has been with my master for a long time. How dare you say it's a gift? Don't you feel embarrassed? You're a man, but why do you apply rouge and powder on your face? I'm going to vomit just from looking at your face!"

Wang Shu. "..."

It seems like the saying about women being nemeses of women was true.

Wang Shu swiftly removed her cap, allowing her long hair to cascade down her back. As her long hair fluttered in the wind, she said with slight contempt, "I'm Wang Shu? Who's a man?"

"This is even more revolting! You're a woman, but you dressed up as a man. I'm really going to throw up..." Little Yuan'er gestured as though she was going to vomit.

"You!"

Wang Shizhong turned around and said, "Shu'er, shut up."

Wang Shu sat back down with an extremely aggrieved and discontented expression on her face. Perhaps, the children of the officials were all spoiled and lacking in discipline. They usually relied on their fathers, which certainly did not help with developing their intelligence. Most of them assumed their fathers would be able to solve all their problems.

Naturally, Wang Shizhong wanted to protect and stand up for his daughter. However, the times were different. In any case, she should have known when to behave. Hence, he hastily cupped his fists together and said, "It's all a misunderstanding. My daughter is young and immature. She had no idea the horse belonged to Senior Lu. I hope you'll forgive her if she had unknowingly offended you."

Lu Zhou called out in an even tone, "Ji Liang..." His voice that was laced with Primal Qi quickly spread out.

As soon as Ji Liang heard Lu Zhou summoning it, it flew and sped toward the cloud platform.

Nie Qingyun, Xia Changqiu, and the others were shocked as they looked at the handsome steed speeding in their direction.

"It's truly a one in a million horse."

"This horse is extremely rare. It can only be found in the legends! I didn't expect Senior Lu to have a mount like this."

Little Yuan'er said haughtily, "This is nothing. My master has many more mounts."

Xia Changqiu remembered Whizard and nodded in agreement.

Little Yuan'e's words naturally sounded grating in Wang Shu's ears. She was always used to being the one who bragged in the past, but now, she had to listen to someone else brag. How could she not feel displeased?

Neigh!

Ji Liang landed on the cloud platform before he trotted over to Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou pointed at the center of the platform and said, "Turn around."

Ji Liang stood before the others and turned twice.

Nie Qingyun pointed at Ji Liang and said, "The rear and the feet show signs of injuries. Someone must've healed it. It healed quite well."

Those who had been on the battlefield could easily recognize a good horse when they saw one.

The soldiers standing behind Wang Shizhong looked at Ji Liang with eyes shining with admiration.

"Ji Liang, who else injured you?" Lu Zhou asked.

"..."

'Is he talking to the horse?'

Ji Liang seemed to understand Lu Zhou's words and neighed twice.

Naturally, no one else understood it.

Wang Shizhong said, "This is a misunderstanding. Shu'er is young, and she's a girl. How can she tame a horse like this? This is all a misunderstanding!"

At this moment, Conch who was seated beside Lu Zhou said, "Master, Ji Liang said that her men were the ones who hurt it."

Everyone turned to look at Conch.

Wang Shizhong regarded Conch with a complicated gaze. "Uh..." He wanted to protest. After all, he did not think it was fair to point fingers based on one neigh from a horse.

Lu Zhou, naturally, knew what was going through Wang Shizhong's mind. He said, "Conch is my disciple. She understands the tongue of beasts."

"The tongue of beasts?!"

The others were shocked by the revelation.

Xia Changqiu was filled with praise. "The ability to understand the tongue of beasts is a rare talent. I remember that in the red lotus domain, there was only one other person who possessed this talent over several millennia. Alas, that person died young and disappeared. The foreign tribesmen seem like they understand the tongue of beasts as well, but what they actually know are the methods to tame the beasts."

Little Yuan'er said proudly, "Junior Sister Conch, show them your ability."

"Mhm." Conch raised the Lantian Jade Flute to her lips.

A mellifluous melody filled the air in just an instant. The tune danced on the cloud platform and spread out to the surroundings.

From the 12 peaks, the forests, the rivers, the skies, and the land, winged beasts and grounded beasts alike began to gather.

Conch's Primal Qi surged as red energy flowed like water.

When the winged beasts heard the sound, they flew over from afar. Their bodies blocked the skies as they arrived in groups.

The Cloud Mountain disciples were shocked. How powerful would this ability be if it was used to attack a city? Although the beasts the young lady had summoned were weak, they could already see the bright future ahead of her. When she became a powerful cultivator, the beasts would be her most powerful helpers.

Li Yunzheng was also stunned by this display. Having read many old books, he knew how powerful beasts could be. He knew how great a price humans had to pay to fend off the beasts.

Soon after, the pleasant melody came to a stop after Conch ended the tune with a few rapid notes.

The beasts scattered, and the sky was clear again.

Unlike the sky, the atmosphere on the cloud platform was heavy.

Lu Zhou looked at Wang Shizhong and said, "It's the father's sin for not disciplining the child."

Wang Shizhong said, "Senior Lu, it's only a horse... I can gather all the good steed in Guannei Circuit and present them to you to atone for this matter!"

Yu Shangrong said disapprovingly, "You underestimate Ji Liang..."

"Hm?"

"Forgive me for being blunt, but to me, your life isn't even worth Ji Liang's life," Yu Shangrong said.

"You..." Wang Shizhong had never been insulted in such a manner before. "Why must you force me into a corner?!"

"I have always been reasonable," Lu Zhou said tonelessly, "You or her. Pick one."