

Disciples 91

Chapter 91: You're Not My Disciple

Shortly after, the sounds from a one-sided fight could be heard from behind the mountain. After all, Duanmu Sheng was already capable of suppressing Mingshi Yin before he possessed the Overlord Spear. Now that he possessed the Overlord Spear, there was no question about the outcome of the fight.

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Meanwhile, Lu Zhou was about to study the Heavenly Writing again when Little Yuan'er came running into the great hall.

"Master, Jiang Aijian has sent a letter."

"Read it."

Little Yuan'er retrieved the letter from her pocket and read out loud, "It's the palace's intention to weaken the Black Knights. There's no need to fear retaliation from the palace, old senior."

Lu Zhou felt suspicious. The emperor had direct command of the special troop. Why would he want to weaken them?

Little Yuan'er continued reading, "You wanted to investigate the truth behind the Fish Dragon Village's incident, but I'm sorry to say that I, the know-it-all, know nothing about this as well. However, the emperor is certainly not the mastermind." She gritted her teeth when she read the letter. "It's said that the Fish Dragon Village of Measure Heaven River holds many secrets. Officers can still be seen patrolling the area every now and then. This is a top-secret archive, and it can't be accessed. By the way, I'm throwing in two pieces of information for free. One, the Sword Freak, Chen Wenjie, has been killed by Yu Shangrong. Didn't I tell you he would die soon for being ambiguous with his stance? Second, Ren Buping, the Master of Fiend Temple, has come out of isolated cultivation. He has gone to the Green Jade Altar to meet the Righteous Sect. Also, please don't forget about the sword you promised me. Hahaha!"

Lu Zhou was only interested in the Fish Dragon Village for now. He did not care about other matters. He was suspicious of the information he heard. 'There are officers patrolling the Measure Heaven River's Fish Dragon Village even now? If Jiang Aijian called such a minor detail a top-secret, things are clearly more complicated than they seem.'

"Officers patrolling the area?" Little Yuan'er saw her master deep in thoughts. She wanted to speak but did not dare to.

Lu Zhou looked up and saw Little Yuan'er swallowing her words so he asked, "Is there something else?"

"Master, if I tell you, you mustn't blame me..." Little Yuan'er hugged Lu Zhou's arm, trying to act like a spoiled child. If it were in the past, she would not have dared to do this.

This was a clear sign that Lu Zhou had changed Little Yuan'er and had influence over her. 'I'll slowly teach her. I just hope that she doesn't wander down the wrong path in the future.' Lu Zhou shook his head. 'What am I thinking about?'

When Little Yuan'er saw her master shaking his head, she said excitedly, "I knew you won't blame me, master! I want a heaven-grade weapon as well! Something like the Overlord Spear! I want a big and majestic weapon!"

Lu Zhou knocked Little Yuan'er head before he chided, "How many times do I have to tell you that your cultivation base is too weak to handle a heaven-grade weapon? We'll talk about this when you're in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm."

"Really?"

"I always keep my words."

Little Yuan'er giggled and said, "Mhm! I'll break through to the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm soon!"

Compared to Lu Zou's other disciples, Little Yuan'er's loyalty was the highest. She was also frequently by his side. Naturally, he wished for her cultivation base to be higher. Before his cultivation base was restored, Little Yuan'er was his greatest strength. She was inexperienced in worldly affairs and naïve. Compared to the other disciples, she was much easier to educate.

When Lu Zhou thought about his disciples, he willed the mission board to appear. His main mission was still to discipline these villains. Duanmu Sheng, Mingshi Yin, and Zhao Yue's loyalty points were not too bad. He could still handle the difficulty of disciplining them. The problem lay with those who had left the Evil Sky Pavilion. The difficulty seemed insurmountable for those who had left.

Old Eighth's cultivation base was the lowest so there was no need to worry too much. He was only relying on his moniker, the Evil King, to intimidate people on the streets. His intimidation worked very well since he was a disciple from the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Old First, Yu Zhenghai, Old Second, Yu Shangrong, and Old Seventh, Si Wuya, these three were the ones giving Lu Zhou a headache. Not only did they possess terrifying heaven-grade weapons, but their cultivation bases were profound as well. Moreover, they were not alone. They had helpers who were as strong as the Black Knights. Thinking about this, he found himself missing Ji Tiandao's Peak Form Card. 'If I have countless Peak Form Cards, I can fearlessly roam the lands.'

"Pavilion Master..." Zhou Jifeng came in at this moment. He cupped his hands together and said, "Mister Sixth, I mean, Ye Tianxin is awake. She wants to see you."

Ye Tianxin was imprisoned in the south pavilion. Without Lu Zhou's order, no one dared to let her out. Even the female cultivators from the Derived Moon Palace did not dare to do such a thing. Golden Court Mountain was short on hands recently, and they were used as general workers. The female cultivators did these tasks willingly as well. It was a much better option than being confined in the cold Cave of Reflection.

"I refuse," Lu Zhou said coldly.

"Understood." Zhou Jifeng cupped his hands together and left.

With her master's promise, Little Yuan'er was suddenly motivated to work hard so she left to cultivate as well.

When Lu Zhou saw that he was finally alone, he focused on comprehending the Heavenly Writing.

It was almost dusk when Zhou Jifeng walked into the great hall again. "Pavilion Master, Ye Tianxin says that she'll continue to kneel until you come and see her. She's kneeling at the exit of the south pavilion."

"Let her kneel then."

"Understood." Zhou Jifeng left.

Lu Zhou did not remain in the great hall. He went into the hidden chamber and continued to focus on studying. 'Dispose of your distracting thoughts. Empty your heart and mind.'

When morning came, Lu Zhou finally stopped studying. He felt refreshed. The freshness he was experiencing was much better than having a good night's rest. He stood up and moved his limbs, but everything seemed normal. 'Maybe the extraordinary power has taken effect, but I've yet to discover it. In any case, it's becoming clearer and clearer that comprehending the Heavenly Writing is truly beneficial to me.'

At this moment, a soft voice rang from the other side of the door. "Pavilion Master."

"What's the matter?" Lu Zhou responded as he clicked the button to open the hidden chamber's door.

"Ye Tianxin has been kneeling for the entire night..."

Lu Zhou waved his arm and said, "Let her be. There's no need to report this to me."

"Understood." Zhou Jifeng left again.

"Ding! Punishing the evil disciple, Ye Tianxin. Rewarded with 100 merit points."

Lu Zhou noticed the system notification had used the word 'punish' and not 'discipline'. Although the hatred points had vanished, the loyalty points were not satisfactory. If he was not thorough in meting out punishments, he would not be fit to bear the title of the Patriarch of Evil Sky Pavilion.

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When Lu Zhou finally entered the great hall, Mingshi Yin was already there. He saw Mingshi Yin's face was swollen and bruised. He decided it was too much of a hassle to ask Mingshi Yin what had happened so he only asked, "How did the interrogation go?"

Mingshi Yin bowed and said, "Fan Xiuwen is truly stubborn. If I didn't recall your words, master, I would've resorted to torture!"

"The Black Knights are also experts in torture. It's expected that we can't get anything out of him by interrogating him." Lu Zhou was not surprised by the outcome.

"Should we just kill him then? He's no use to us alive anyway," Mingshi Yin said.

Lu Zhou waved his hand and said, "There's use for him yet."

An Eight-leaf Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm expert would certainly give him many merit points. However, if he had to choose between finding out about the incident's mastermind and the secret behind the Fish Dragon Village, Lu Zhou felt that the latter was much more valuable.

"Mingshi Yin."

“Yes, master.”

“I hereby order you to investigate the Fish Dragon Village at Measure Heaven River. Remember, don’t act rashly,” Lu Zhou said this imposingly.

Compared to before, Mingshi Yi was not as delighted. He only responded respectfully, “Yes, master.”

Initially, Lu Zhou wanted to lend him a mount, but he thought it would be too flashy and attract too much attention. For this reason, he dismissed the idea.

Mingshi Yin was a Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivator after all. Eight hours were all he needed to reach the Fish Dragon Village from Golden Court Mountain by flying.

Since the Fish Dragon Village was heavily guarded, how did Ye Tianxin investigate this matter when she left Golden Court Mountain back then?

‘I’ll have to ask the rascal about this!’ Lu Zhou shook his head. He walked down the stairs and went to the south pavilion. When he arrived, he saw Ye Tianxin kneeling on the ground from afar, looking extremely weak.

Ye Tianxin opened her eyes. When she saw Lu Zhou, strength seemed to surge through her body. She adjusted her posture and greeted him, “M-master...”

Lu Zhou glanced at her indifferently before shaking his head. “You’re not my disciple.”

Chapter 92: Mingshi Yin Is In Trouble

Lu Zhou could see the remorse in Ye Tianxin’s eyes. Unfortunately, it was too late.

Ye Tianxin thought Lu Zhou had finally relented and came to see her so she was happy when she saw him.

However, Lu Zhou remained cold as he said, “I have questions for you. You only need to answer them.”

“Yes, mas... Understood.” Ye Tianxin was about to address Lu Zhou as master but she quickly swallowed the word.

“When did you investigate the Fish Dragon Village?”

Ye Tianxin was taken aback by this question. She thought that her master would give her a thorough scolding. She did not expect her master to be more interested in the Fish Dragon Village. Many emotions surged in her heart at this moment. After giving it some thought, she decided to answer honestly, “The 10th year after I left the Evil Sky Pavilion.”

“How did you access the local and palace’s archives?”

“Some of the sisters in the Derived Moon Palace were female guards in the palace. They’re familiar with the rules of the palace and the internal layout. They helped me get my hands on the archives, but it took five years,” Ye Tianxin said. She spoke lightly as though it was insignificant.

Lu Zhou was surprised that Ye Tianxin had spent five years just to access the records in the archives. Based on this, he could see how determined she was.

Ye Tianxin continued to say, "Perhaps, the annihilation of the Fish Dragon Village is only a small matter in the eyes of the nobles in the palace... However, the few hundred villagers..." She choked up with emotions at this point.

Lu Zhou asked nonchalantly, "Is that why you hate me?"

When Ye Tianxin heard this, her mind went blank. She had been slightly invigorated earlier, but she seemed to wither when she heard Lu Zhou's question.

Lu Zhou did not wait for her to reply and continued to ask, "Did the Derived Moon Palace go to the Measure Heaven River before?"

Ye Tianxin replied, "The Derived Moon Palace did visit Measure Heaven River several times. The palace had said that there were many Other Tribes in the area, but the Derived Moon Palace found no members from the Other Tribes throughout their years of investigations.

It seemed like Ye Tianxin was unaware that she was a Bai. However, in Lu Zhou's memories, the Bais did not seem to be a genuine Other Tribe. They were a unique ethnicity among Great Yan's human race. Otherwise, the Bais would not dare to live around Measure Heaven River. Clearly, the palace was using the Other Tribes as a pretext and excuse.

When Ye Tianxin saw her master stroking his beard, deep in thoughts, she suddenly kowtowed. "I'm willing to accept any punishment, no matter how severe it is. Please punish me, master!"

"There's no need to be impatient," Lu Zhou shook his head as he spoke in a deep voice, "I'll naturally punish you for deceiving and denouncing me. The truth behind the Fish Dragon Village incident remains unsolved. Fan Xiuwen might just be a pawn in this. If the culprit is me at the end of the investigation, what will you do?"

"..." Ye Tianxin was stunned. A sense of helplessness rose in her heart. At this point, she no longer knew who she could trust.

"Lock her up in the south pavilion. She's not allowed to leave." Lu Zhou waved his hand dismissively.

The two female cultivators from the Derived Moon Palace could only nod helplessly and bring Ye Tianxin back.

After that, Lu Zhou returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion.

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On the second day, Lu Zhou attempted to comprehend Heavenly Writing as usual. As he spent more time trying to comprehend the scrolls, he noticed that the Human Scroll's contents had increased. However, it was still difficult to understand the Human Scroll of the Heavenly Writing. After trying to comprehend it for some time, Lu Zhou thought to himself, 'I'm feeling good today. Maybe I'll have more luck with the lucky draw.'

"Lucky draw."

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points on the lucky draw. Thank you for participating. Luck +1.”

“Lucky draw.”

“Ding! Spent 50 merit points on the lucky draw. Thank you for participating. Luck +1.”

Lu Zhou shook his head. Perhaps, he had used up his luck trying to comprehend the Heavenly Writing. He decided to try again at another time. He could not recklessly spend his remaining merit points after all. He only had one Deadly Strike Card left. He wanted to be able to buy one when the occasion arose.

“Ding! Mingshi Yin has completed the Measure Heaven River’s investigation. Rewarded with 100 merit points.” Lu Zhou was not at all surprised by this notification. After all, compared to the others, Mingshi Yin was the most reliable in carrying out missions. He speculated that he would be receiving a letter from Mingshi Yin soon about his investigation.

Strangely, after waiting for six hours, Lu Zhou did not receive any letter. The Evil Sky Pavilion had always employed messenger birds to relay their messages. Messenger birds moved as swiftly as legendary mounts. There was no way the letter would not arrive after six hours.

“Yuan’er.”

“Yes, master.”

“Send word to Jiang Aijian. Tell him to assist in the investigation of the truth behind the Fish Dragon Village from within the palace. Tell him that he’ll be rewarded with a nice sword if he discovers the truth,” Lu Zhou said.

Lu Zhou had a feeling that Mingshi Yin was in big trouble.

A short while later, Little Yuan’er returned and said with a smile, “I’ve sent word to him, master.”

Coincidentally, Zhou Jifeng hurried into the great hall. “M-mister Fourth is hurt!”

Little Yuan’er exclaimed in surprise. “What happened to Fourth Senior Brother?”

Lu Zhou had his suspicions. Mingshi Yin was not hurt when he went to relay the message to the Black Knights. If Mingshi Yin was hurt while investigating the Fish Dragon Village incident, things were clearly more complicated than they seemed. He remained calm as he stroked his beard and said, “Where is he now?”

“He’s at the base of the mountain. Pan Zhong is bringing him here now.”

Soon after, Pan Zhong brought Mingshi Yin into the great hall.

Mingshi Yin’s current condition was similar to when he fought fiercely against the Dark Knight, Chen Zhonghe. He fell to his knees and said, “I’m glad I didn’t let you down, master. I found some clues in the Measure Heaven River.”

“Continue.”

“There are officers patrolling around the Measure Heaven River’s Fish Dragon Village. This has been the case in the past decade. I snooped around the area during the night and made a huge discovery,” Mingshi Yin gulped before he said, “They seem to be fishing out corpses from the river!”

“...”

Everyone present in the great hall was shocked by these words. Put the matter of the Other Tribes being around Measure Heaven River aside, there was no need for those people to fish out their corpses from the river. Moreover, they had been doing this for a decade.

“What’s the reason for fishing out the corpses?” Lu Zhou asked.

“I wanted to investigate further, but I accidentally triggered a strange trap and had to hurry back overnight!” Mingshi Yin seemed slightly out of breath at this point.

Lu Zhou stood up slowly. He descended the stairs to where Mingshi Yin was.

Mingshi Yin prostrated himself. “This disciple is useless!”

“Lift your head.” Lu Zhou’s voice was stern and commanding.

Mingshi Yin slowly did as he was told.

As expected, Lu Zhou saw a black lotus between his glabella!

“Witchcraft...”

Pan Zhong was the nearest. He did not notice the mark when he brought Mingshi Yin up the mountain. Fear filled his heart when he saw the sign of witchcraft on Mingshi Yin’s glabella.

“No wonder Mister Fourth was affected. It’s a witchcraft trap. There aren’t many witchcraft cultivators under Great Yan’s skies! Who did this to Mister Fourth?” Pan Zhong exclaimed in surprise.

Lu Zhou did not answer Pan Zhong’s question. He looked at Mingshi Yin and asked, “It’s near the Measure Heaven River?”

“There might be traps all along the river bank... Master, I’m alright. I’m just feeling a little tired. This witchcraft has only restricted 60 percent of my cultivation base. It’s not that serious...” He managed to hurry back from Measure Heaven River overnight with 60 percent of his cultivation base restricted. It had to be said that his tenacity and will to survive were exceptionally shocking.

Sometimes, Lu Zhou wondered if Ji Tiandao merely picked his disciples to fulfill the words of the poem. ‘They’re all exceptionally talented, and their names fit with the poem. I think there’s too much of a coincidence here.’

Pan Zhong bowed and said, “It’s witchcraft indeed... We must undo this quickly. Otherwise, it might spread until Mister Fourth completely loses access to his cultivation base. At that time, it might be even more difficult to undo the witchcraft.”

Chapter 93: The Power of Witchcraft

Mingshi Yin was taken aback by Pan Zhong's words. He rolled his eyes and said, "Pan Zhong, you better not be trying to scare me."

Lu Zhou raised his hand. He stopped Mingshi Yin and gestured for Pan Zhong to continue.

Pan Zhong acknowledged it and continued to say, "I'm not making this up. When I was learning the trade back in Clarity Sect, I read the records on witchcraft in the library. Witchcraft is divided into white witchcraft and black witchcraft. A cultivator will wander down the wrong path if they cultivate with malicious intentions. I was young and brash back then. I was obsessed with improving my cultivation base as quickly as possible so I had looked up witchcraft. Alas, everyone in Clarity Sect guarded this secret tightly. On top of that, I couldn't find any seniors who had learned witchcraft and were willing to teach me..."

Zhou Jifeng asked curiously, "Is that why you chose the Three Yin Style?"

"The Clarity Sect's elder only told me that I'm suited for the Three Yin Style, but he didn't tell me that I had to pair it with the Six Yang Technique! I only learned about the balance between Yin and Yang after I met Old Senior Ji!" Pan Zhong said.

"And?" Zhou Jifeng asked.

Pan Zhong continued to say, "Speaking of witchcraft, witchcraft restrictions are similar to cultivation seals. They would slowly corrode a cultivator's meridians and block them. In fact, the Clarity Sect's Seal Block Technique is created based on a witchcraft technique as well."

The others nodded. This was why Pan Zhong was so confident and volunteered to seal the Dark Knights' cultivation bases.

Pan Zhong said, "In any case, the sooner we undo the witchcraft, the better it is for Mister Fourth. In Mister Fifth's case, her cultivation base has been completely sealed. The spellcaster must've cast the seal from a close distance, that's why it took effect immediately. For this reason, the outcome will be the same regardless of when we undo the witchcraft."

Zhou Jifeng asked, "Since you know so much about witchcraft, do you know of any way we can break the spell?"

Pan Zhong nodded. "I remember reading about a method to undo the spell. It's also the most trusted and reliable method. This requires the spellcaster to undo the spell itself. The second method is to cultivate Zen according to Buddhism or to cultivate Daoist methods. Once the victim's cultivation base surpasses the spellcaster's cultivation base, the victim would be able to undo the spell. However, this method is infeasible. After all, how can one continue to cultivate if one's cultivation base is sealed?"

"So what you mean to say is that there's nothing we can do about the spell on Mister Fourth?"

Pan Zhong shook his head. He cupped his hands together at Lu Zhou and said, "I'm afraid that the Pavilion Master is the only one capable of undoing it."

'Pavilion Master?'

Little Yuan'er and Zhou Jifeng turned to look at Lu Zhou.

Pan Zhong explained. "The third method is to have a cultivator who's much more powerful than the spellcaster forcibly break the spell. Otherwise, the conflict between witchcraft and Primal Qi would cause the cultivator's meridians to break, and the cultivator would implode and die. Hence, the Pavilion Master is the only one who can do this."

Although Pan Zhong's explanation made sense, Lu Zhou was speechless. Outwardly, he remained as steady as Mount Tai, but inwardly, he thought to himself, 'What should I do?'

Everyone's eyes were trained on Lu Zhou at this moment.

Mingshi Yin kowtowed and said, "Please undo the Restriction for me, master!"

Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he tried to think of a way to solve this.

Since there were witchcraft traps around the Measure Heaven River's Fish Dragon Village, this means he could not simply send people from the Evil Sky Pavilion there. After all, if someone like Mingshi Yin fell prey to it, there was no doubt the others would be more susceptible to falling into the trap. It seemed like he had no choice but to personally investigate the Fish Dragon Village.

As for undoing the witchcraft Restriction, Lu Zhou was stumped. He had no good solution for this. After all, he could not possibly tell these people that his cultivation base was only in the Brahman Sea realm.

At this moment, Duanmu Sheng who had received news about what happened arrived in the great hall. After learning the ins and outs, he instantly pleaded, "Master, although Junior Brother frequently makes mistakes, he's been doing a good job lately. Please save him, master!"

Zhou Jifeng and Pan Zhong pleaded on Mingshi Yin's behalf as well.

If this was in the past, Ji Tiandao would have most likely leaped into a great rage and kicked all of them out. However, it was undeniable that Mingshi Yin had been doing a good job lately. Although Mingshi Yin's loyalty was not as stable as Duanmu Sheng or Little Yuan'er, he was dependable when it came to completing missions. All Mingshi Yin needed was a little discipline.

Lu Zhou considered all of these for a moment before he finally waved his hand and said, "Come with me."

Mingshi Yin was overjoyed when he heard this. He rose to his feet and followed Lu Zhou like an obedient child.

Meanwhile, the others sighed in relief when they heard Lu Zhou's words. They watched as Mingshi Yin followed Lu Zhou into the hidden chamber.

Little Yuan'er smiled as she said confidently, "Since master is dealing with the witchcraft spell, there won't be any problem!"

Zhou Jifeng nodded and said, "Mhm. The Pavilion Master has a profound cultivation base. This minor spell is nothing to him."

Pan Zhong nodded as well, but he said nothing.

Duanmu Sheng glanced at the two of them and said, "Since Old Fourth is afflicted by witchcraft, both of you will do."

"What do you mean, Mister Third?" Pan Zhong and Zhou Jifeng were puzzled.

Swoosh!

Duanmu Sheng raised his Overlord and said excitedly, "Spar with me..."

Pan Zhong. "..."

Zhou Jifeng. "..."

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Inside the hidden chamber.

This was Mingshi Yin's first time in the hidden chamber. After all, no disciples were allowed to enter the hidden chamber. In the past, they had thought their master was hoarding treasure in here. Since there was no ventilation in the hidden chamber and their master usually spent all his time cultivating in the hidden chamber, it was impossible for them to sneak a peek. It was only natural that he was excited now that he was granted entry. He looked around curiously; there were various secret tomes lying on the table and an assortment of weapons on the racks. There were sabers, spears, rods, and maces. There were even weapons of other designs lying in the corner. He was awed by this scene. It seemed like his master had collected many treasures throughout his millennia of domination.

"Sit down." Lu Zhou pointed at the floor.

With that, Mingshi Yin quickly regained his senses. He hastily sat with his legs crossed and focused his eyes on one spot.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and stood behind Mingshi Yin. 'My cultivation base is only in the Brahman Sea Eight Meridians realm. Moreover, it's not the true Brahman Sea Eight Meridians realm. My avatar is only the Mighty Four Quadrants. There should be no problem for me to examine his body, but it would be nigh impossible for me to break the spell.'

At this moment, Lu Zhou discovered Mingshi Yin was sweating profusely. It seemed like the Restriction was acting up. 'Based on his condition now, it seems like the spell has already restricted 80% of his cultivation base.' He raised his wizened hand and gently pushed it against Mingshi Yin. His Primal Qi flowed through his palm into Mingshi Yin's meridians.

Mingshi Yin was shocked. 'Master's cultivation base is indeed profound. He's capable of suppressing his Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm's Primal Qi to such a gentle level.'

The gentler it was, the lower the probability that it would hurt Mingshi Yin's meridians.

Lu Zhou controlled his Primal Qi and inspected Mingshi Yin's meridians. He gently tapped Mingshi Yin several times.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Lu Zhou increased his output.

Mingshi Yin was a cultivator who had connected his eight meridians a long time ago. This amount of Primal Qi coursing through his meridians would not do him much harm.

However, when Lu Zhou's Primal Qi came in contact with the witchcraft spell, he felt a retaliating force.

Mingshi Yin frowned and immediately broke out in sweat.

Lu Zhou thought to himself, 'Ah, so this is the power of witchcraft.' He tried to bypass the Restriction to inspect Mingshi Yin's other meridians. However, as soon as he tried to do that, the witchcraft spell seemed to gain a will of its own and suddenly attacked.

"Preposterous!" Lu Zhou pulled his hand back. However, the witchcraft's power shot out from Mingshi Yin's back like a surge of energy.

Lu Zhou waved his arm instinctively. He instantly went into the state after he had comprehended the Heavenly Writing. From his dantian to his sea of Qi, from his brain and eventually, to his entire body, a faint blue light appeared and repelled the attack of the witchcraft spell. It did not stop there. It rode on the momentum and entered Mingshi Yin's back.

Bang!

Mingshi Yin fell forward from the impact. At the same time, he felt the strange power from the witchcraft spell in his body disappear.

Chapter 94: Separation Hook

Initially, Mingshi Yin thought Lu Zhou was being rough. However, joy overwhelmed him when he felt the witchcraft Restriction in his body had disappeared. Although he was reeling from the impact, he did not feel unwilling or dissatisfied.

Clang!

Mingshi Yin crashed onto the rack of weapons, causing the weapons to fall on the ground.

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Meanwhile, in a dark room in Great Yan's palace.

From the glow of a candle that was blocked by a screen, one could see the room was in a mess.

Behind the screen, a girl dressed in brocade garments was cultivating with her eyes closed. Her expression changed slightly before she suddenly spat out a mouthful of fresh blood. Furious and flustered, she swiped her hands across a table, sending everything on the table to the ground. She mumbled with a hint of fear, "Someone managed to break my spell? Who is it?"

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Lu Zhou was shocked as well when he sent Mingshi Yin flying. At this moment, he felt the same refreshing sensation he had after he had successfully nullified the Brahman Lullaby! He was certain he

would gain extraordinary power by comprehending the Heavenly Writing. In any case, this was not the time to be thinking about such things. He quickly turned to look at Mingshi Yin.

Mingshi Yin who had felt the witchcraft restriction disappear could also sense his meridians and dantian's sea of Qi that were previously blocked became unblocked. His pain from being sent flying was inconsequential compared to this discovery. He quickly circulated his Primal Qi to stabilize himself before he knelt and said, "Thank you for undoing the Restriction, master! Your skills are peerless!"

Lu Zhou looked at Mingshi Yin with nary a change in his expression. 'The Heavenly Writing is truly extraordinary and powerful. It's even capable of suppressing witchcraft.'

Lu Zhou was still lost in his thoughts about the Heavenly Writing while Mingshi Yin's attention was drawn by the weapons around him. He picked up two weapons and appraised them.

"Master, what are these?" It was neither a sword nor a hook even though it resembled both items on both ends. The blade was serrated. It was an extremely peculiar design. The other weapon resembled a scabbard.

Lu Zhou's gaze fell upon these two weapons.

"Ding! Retrieved weapons, Separation Hook and Scabbard. Recommended owner: Mingshi Yin."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard. There were certainly some forces at play in the hidden chamber. Whether it was fate or pure coincidence, Mingshi Yin had somehow stumbled upon this weapon.

Before Lu Zhou could say anything, Mingshi Yin said with a smile, "Master, I think these weapons suit me! This blade, this scabbard... I like incongruous items like these. I'm sure it's at least an earth-grade weapon!" He paused for a moment before he read the small inscription on the scabbard out loud, "Se-pa-ra-tion Hook..."

Since Mingshi Yin did not test the weapons and only appraised them with his eyes, it was only natural that he thought they were earth-grade weapons. The Separation Hook and Scabbard seemed to have been lying around in the hidden chamber for a long time. They seemed old. However, since the system had recommended Mingshi Yin as the owner, it would definitely become a heaven-grade weapon after it was activated.

When Lu Zhou saw Mingshi Yin's reluctance to part with the Separation Hook and Scabbard and the ingratiating smile on Mingshi Yin's face, he shook his head and said, "Put them down."

"Huh?" Mingshi Yin was slightly stunned. Then, he carefully placed the Separation Hook and Scabbard on the floor. He did not dare to oppose his master.

Lu Zhou quickly found an excuse and said, "You've just entered the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, and your cultivation base isn't stable enough for now. It's still too early for you to handle a heaven-grade weapon."

When Mingshi Yin heard this, he felt disappointed. However, when he heard the hidden meaning in his master's words, he became happy again. Based on his master's words, it seemed like the Separation Hook would be given to him sooner or later.

"Yes, master! I'll get stronger as quickly as I can!" Mingshi Yin said excitedly.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded before waving his hand dismissively.

Mingshi Yin understood this was his cue to leave. When he reached the door of the hidden chamber, he turned around and looked at Separation Hook, clearly unwilling to part with it.

After Mingshi Yin left, Lu Zhou surveyed the items in the hidden chamber that were messily strewn everywhere. Fortunately, the hidden chamber was spacious. 'I'll just let it stay messy. It won't do me any harm, anyway.' He raised his hand and the Separation Hook and Scabbard flew into his hand.

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After a short while, Lu Zhou finally emerged from the hidden chamber into the great hall. He discovered that Duanmu Sheng and the others had left. At the same, he saw Mingshi Yin gesturing excitedly to Little Yuan'er as they spoke while Little Yuan'er would gasp in surprise intermittently.

Lu Zhou walked over to them. When his two disciples saw him, they instantly bowed and saluted him. "Master."

"Mingshi Yin."

"Yes, master."

"Although the spell's broken, you shouldn't be careless..."

"Yes, master," Mingshi Yin replied obediently.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. Initially, he had no intention of leaving Golden Court Mountain for the time being. After all, with his current cultivation base, the best course of action for him would be to stay in the Evil Sky Pavilion and think of ways to earn merit points through his disciples as he slowly built his strength. However, the truth behind the Fish Dragon Village incident was extremely crucial. It was also related to the witchcraft elite in the palace. If he could get to the bottom of this, he might be able to apprehend the person who sealed Zhao Yue's cultivation base.

Another factor that made Lu Zhou view this matter with the utmost importance was that the system's mission list clearly stated that investigating the truth behind the Fish Dragon Village incident would earn him 3,000 merit points. The system had never rewarded him with 3,000 merit points for a single mission before. The importance of this matter was clear.

Finally, Lu Zhou said, "I'll be leaving for the Fish Dragon Village first thing in the morning."

Mingshi Yin was taken aback when he heard this. After a while, realization dawned on him. He exclaimed, "Victory is certain since master is personally making a move!" Since Lu Zhou had just lifted the witchcraft Restriction on him, his faith and confidence in Lu Zhou were even higher than Lu Zhou himself.

On the other hand, when Little Yuan'er heard that Lu Zhou planned to go out, she was so happy that she began to clap her hands excitedly. She said, "Master, I want to go with you..."

Lu Zhou ignored Little Yuan'er. Instead, he looked at Mingshi Yin and said, "Guard the Black Knights well."

“Yes, master,” Mingshi Yin replied with a bow, “With Third Senior Brother and I here, they won’t be able to leave easily even if they sprout wings.”

After that, Lu Zhou turned to leave. However, he barely took two steps forward before he turned around and asked, “Is there any news about the traitors?” By traitors, he, naturally, meant Old First, Yu Zhenghai, Old Second, Yu Shangrong, and the others.

Mingshi Yin shook his head and said, “Recently, I have not left Golden Court Mountain. I’m unaware of the affairs in the outside world.”

Lu Zhou nodded slightly. Since he defeated the people from the Noble Path twice, the traitors seemed to be keeping a low profile and had not made any moves. ‘After I deal with the Fish Dragon Village’s matter, I’ll have to think of a way to deal with these traitors!’

...

After giving his instructions, Lu Zhou returned to the Evil Sky Pavilion to resume comprehending the Heavenly Writing. After he had perfectly undone the spell, his understanding of the Heavenly Writing seemed to have deepened.

Lu Zhou brought out the Heavenly Writing’s interface. The content of the Human Scroll appeared before him. It seemed to be glowing. At this moment, the usually awkward and difficult scripts seemed much livelier. It was so much more comfortable and easier to read.

“Gain insight into origin and light. From power, the paths are opened. Giving rise to ten skills of might, the wonderful journey is delightful,” Lu Zhou read the lines out loud. Then, he paused for a moment before he mumbled to himself, “The Brahman Lullaby was ineffective, and it can suppress witchcraft. Is the Human Scroll effective against cultivation methods that muddle the heart?”

He continued reading. As expected, new content had appeared below.

“To gain the power of incorporeality so that we may visit many places without having to move, reaping many benefits. To gain the power to silence everything, to maintain and manifest samadhi. Like light and shadow, permeating everywhere, while staying still in samadhi.” Lu Zhou was completely engrossed in studying, losing track of time.

...

The next morning.

Lu Zhou felt extremely invigorated. After he closed the Heavenly Writing’s interface, he left the hidden chamber.

Little Yuan’er was waiting for him in the great hall. Her eager expression told Lu Zhou that she wanted to go out as well. When she saw her master, she ran over and said, “Master, master... I want to ride Whitzard! I don’t want Bi An!”

Lu Zhou shook his head. “Childish!” He wanted to reprimand her but eventually, decided to satisfy her whim. After all, he was old and could not endure a rocky journey.

Both of them walked out of the Evil Sky Pavilion.

Little Yuan'er flashed a grin at Mingshi Yin who had just arrived. Mingshi Yin followed them outside the great hall.

When they were outside, Whizard appeared on a cloud from Golden Court Mountain's forest.

When he saw the appearance of the legendary mount, Mingshi Yin was so envious that his eyeballs nearly dropped out from their sockets. If he could have a mount like this, he was willing to endure beatings every day.

"Master, I want to sit up front!" Little Yuan'er pointed naughtily at the front part of Whizard's back.

Lu Zhou said nothing.

Whizard's back was wide, and the rider would have a clear view of the scenery in front. Its flight was extremely steady so it would not interrupt one from enjoying the scenery.

When the two of them eased themselves on its back, Whizard gave a low growl before it launched itself into the air and disappeared into the horizons.

Mingshi Yin ran after them and searched the skies, but Whizard could no longer be seen.

...

While Whizard flew in the sky, Lu Zhou inspected the system dashboard. He had 2,210 merit points left. He did not buy any item cards and decided he would only buy them, based on the situation he was in, when he needed them. For instance, if he was in a dangerous situation that he could not defuse, he could pick four Impeccable Cards. If he had enough time, he would leave the area on Whizard's back.

...

Two hours later.

Whizard began slowing down and descended from the sky.

"Master, are we there already?" Little Yuan'er seemed reluctant to alight from Whizard's back.

Lu Zhou ignored her and continued to urge Whizard to land.

Little Yuan'er had no choice but to dismount once they landed.

Lu Zhou recalled Whizard and surveyed his surroundings. He said, "We're close to Measure Heaven River. Whizard will attract too much attention."

"Master, since you're so powerful, you can just make your way there and kill all of them, right?" Little Yuan'er asked in confusion.

"Are you talking back to your master..." Lu Zhou said in a chiding tone. The master's words were law after all!

Both of them were about to rest when Little Yuan'er suddenly said, "Master, someone's approaching us!" She proved to be useful at this moment.

Soon enough, several cultivators could be seen flying above the forest on flying swords.

“Ji Tiandao’s coming for us! Run!”

“The villains of the Evil Sky Pavilion are here! Hurry!”

Whoosh! Whoosh!

The cultivators flew past Lu Zhou’s and Little Yuan’er’s heads in broad daylight.

When a Brahman Sea Eight Meridians realm cultivator flew past them, he good-naturedly advised them, “Old man, quickly run! The old villain, Ji Tiandao, is coming! Are you sick of living?!”

Whoosh!

The cultivators flew at speed and disappeared into the forest.

Little Yuan’er pouted and asked skeptically, “Master, when did you chase them?”

Chapter 95: The Style of the Grand Patriarch?

Lu Zhou’s expression was indifferent. ‘Why would I do something so meaningless? They’re just a group of small fries.’ He stroked his beard, and it did not take long before he forgot about them.

After the cultivators went away, their surroundings fell silent. Little Yuan’er spoke at this moment, “Master, why don’t we catch up to them and kill them?”

“Why?” Lu Zhou asked.

“They were cursing and accusing you of something you didn’t do! We have to go and kill them. You can’t be wrongly accused for nothing,” Little Yuan’er said righteously.

‘I’m rendered speechless by her logic.’ Lu Zhou thought nothing of Little Yuan’er words. He shook his head and said, “I think they’re cursing someone else.”

“Who?”

At this moment, approaching footsteps could be heard, accompanied by slight vibrations on the ground.

When they looked toward the source of the noises, they saw a group of people coming toward them at a pace that was neither fast nor slow. They were riding on an epic mount.

Mounts were far more valuable than flying chariots. Flying chariots were only difficult to make, but any cultivator with the right materials and Formations could activate it. Mounts were rare to begin with. They were difficult to catch and even more difficult to tame.

A huge mount emerged slowly out of the forest. Its body resembled a castle wall while its legs were like stone pillars. This was the epic mount, Elephant King. It was hardy and had strong defenses. It could maneuver rugged mountain paths and cross raging rivers. The only thing it could not do was fly.

Elephant King was carrying a chariot on its back. The chariot was as wide as its shoulders. It was simple but extravagant at the same time.

“Elephant King,” Little Yuan’er mumbled.

Three cultivators hovered on Elephant King's sides. There were one female and two male cultivators. They moved out of the forest at a speed that was neither fast nor slow.

Elephant King covered several meters in a single stride. Every time it took a step forward, a loud thud could be heard.

Lu Zhou motioned to Little Yuan'er to leave with him. As the saying went, 'River water does not interfere with well water'.

"Oh." Little Yuan'er followed her master obediently. They made their way to the Fish Dragon Village.

However, they had barely taken a few steps forward when the young girl who hovered next to Elephant King approached them on a flying sword. She stood on her flying sword as she said rudely, "Hey!"

Seeing that the young girl was only about the same age as her, Little Yuan'er was angered by the young girl's audacity for blocking their path. She responded, equally as rudely, "Hey what? Get out of the way!"

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and looked at the young girl indifferently. 'A Divine Court realm cultivator. She seems talented, but she's a far cry from Yuan'er. It's not worth it for me to waste my item cards on this group of useless cultivators.'

The girl on the flying sword placed one hand on her waist as she pointed at Little Yuan'er. She announced arrogantly, "I'm the ninth disciple of the Evil Sky Pavilion, Ci Yuan'er! I have a question for you. Did you see 10 cultivators running this way?"

Little Yuan'er was stunned. Her temper flared, and she no longer had the mood to listen to the young girl's words. 'You dare impersonate me?! I can't take this!' She pushed herself off the ground and launched herself at the girl like a fired arrow.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Two of them began fighting furiously.

In terms of physical powers, Little Yuan'er's Supreme Purity Jade Slip was peerless. The fake did not expect Little Yuan'er to attack her so suddenly so she was completely caught off guard and was forced into retreating.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Little Yuan'er used her fists and legs. She moved at lightning speed as she bore down on her opponent.

'This little girl's temper is still fiery.' Lu Zhou glanced at Elephant King. The people there did not seem like they planned to make a move.

The cultivator who was fighting with Little Yuan'er was in the Divine Court realm. Little Yuan'er was more than capable of dealing with a few of these kinds of opponents. However, the person on Elephant King must possessed a cultivation base in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, at least. If that person made a move, Little Yuan'er would have no hope of winning. However, that person did not seem interested in making a move, only looking on curiously. That person's attention was focused on Little Yuan'er.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

While Lu Zhou was calculating in his mind, Little Yuan'er shot up and landed a series of kicks, causing the young girl to fall.

Bang!

When the fake crashed onto the ground, she continued rolling on her back. She looked battered.

Just when the fake was planning on getting up for another round, a low voice drawled, "Stand back." The voice came from the person on Elephant King's back.

Lu Zhou looked at that person. An old man with white hair and a white beard emerged from the chariot on Elephant King's back. His eyes were deep, and his face was full of wrinkles. At a glance, he truly resembled Ji Tiandao when Lu Zhou had just transmigrated here. However, since Lu Zhou had used his Reversal Card, his outer appearance had changed a lot. For this reason, there was a stark difference between his and this old man's appearances.

Name: Ding Fanqiu.

Race: Human.

Realm: Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm.

Ding Fanqiu stood with one hand on his back. He had a pleased expression on his face as he looked at Little Yuan'er. Then, he shifted his gaze to Lu Zhou and asked, "You're not afraid of me?"

Lu Zhou replied indifferently, "Why should I be afraid?"

Ding Fanqiu pointed at Little Yuan'er and said, "I'm in a good mood today. If this were any other day, I would've punished you for being rude."

Little Yuan'er could not stifle her laughter. She descended from the air and moved to Lu Zhou's side. She pointed at Ding Fanqiu who stood on Elephant King and said, "Old man, do you know who this person is?" Her gaze was furious as though it was saying, 'My master will show you the consequences of impersonating him!'

Without waiting for Lu Zhou to speak, Ding Fanqiu looked at Little Yuan'er again. A hint of glee flashed in his eyes as though he had just spotted a prey. However, his expression was calm as he said, "Little girl, you're highly talented. It's rare for someone as young as you to reach the Divine Court realm."

Little Yuan'er moved closer to Lu Zhou. She stuck her tongue out at the girl she defeated.

Lu Zhou's expression remained calm, and he made no reply.

Ding Fanqiu was not angered. Instead, he regarded Lu Zhou indifferently and said, "I'm sure you've heard of my mighty name, old householder."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said without any inflection in his tone, "I've been living in the mountains for a long time. I'm afraid I don't know much about the outside world..."

"..." The other two cultivators beside Ding Fanqiu seemed angered by these words.

Ding Fanqiu waved his hand dismissively and said, "There's no need to worry. I'll tell you all about myself." After that, he said, "Please, get on the chariot." It was clear he was threatening them.

A shocked expression could be seen on the faces of Ding Fanqiu's disciples. They could not understand their master's actions. However, they did not hesitate as they flew toward Lu Zhou and Little Yuan'er.

Lu Zhou thought to himself, 'What are they doing near the Measure Heaven River? This Ding Fanqiu's cultivation base is in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm. He uses my name and isn't afraid of being hunted down by the people from the Noble Path? There must be more than meets the eyes with this person.' However, nobody in this world could threaten nor scare Lu Zhou, not even Ding Fanqiu.

Lu Zhou asked, "Are you going to Measure Heaven River?" As he spoke, an item card that was faintly glowing appeared in his hand. Everyone else was unaware of this, they did not even sense any fluctuation in the aura.

At the same time, Ding Fanqiu was still putting on airs. He did not know that he was standing right before the gates of hell. If Ding Fangqiu answered in the negative, Lu Zhou would not hesitate to use the item card.

"Indeed, I'm heading toward the Measure Heaven river... Elephant King can maneuver through brambles with ease. Come on up."

The disciples next to Ding Fanqiu made inviting gestures as well.

The faint glow in Lu Zhou's hand vanished instantly.

"I'm advanced in age and can't move around very well. I'll take you up on your offer then," Lu Zhou said calmly.

"Old man, are you going to Measure Heaven River as well?" Ding Fanqiu asked.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded. He said, "You seem interested in Measure Heaven River."

Ding Fangqiu chuckled before his expression turned calm and cold. He waved his arm ostentatiously.

As if on cue, Elephant King bent its front legs to lower the chariot on its back.

Chapter 96: Truth and Lies

Ding Fanqiu's disciples noticed that Lu Zhou had been addressing their master without any honorifics so they were furious. However, there was nothing they could do.

Ding Fanqiu stood at the side with his hands on his back. He did not seem to care about Lu Zhou's attitude. Instead, his attention was focused on Little Yuan'er.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou calmly stroked his beard. He looked left and right before he lightly jumped on Elephant King's back and entered the chariot.

Little Yuan'er was unwilling to do the same. However, seeing her master's actions, she had no choice but to get on the mount. 'Since master is here, I don't think these people will be able to do anything.'

The chariot was spacious. Lu Zhou and Little Yuan'er sat on the side where they could see the forest.

Soon after, Ding Fanqiu leaped into the chariot with light movements and sat on the other side. After he issued an order, Elephant King continued forward. Its footprints were deeply imprinted on the ground with each step it took. Its speed was also acceptable.

Lu Zhou was quite pleased. He nodded and said, "It's not easy to tame Elephant King."

Ding Fanqiu said indifferently, "Elephant King is nothing. I have 10 other mounts at the back of Golden Court Mountain."

Little Yuan'er rolled her eyes when she heard this. 'Go on! Brag some more!'

Ding Fanqiu saw the expression of disbelief on Little Yuan'er's face, and he asked good-naturedly, "Little girl, don't you believe me?"

Little Yuan'er replied, "The only person I believe is my ma... grandfather!"

Ding Fanqiu regarded Little Yuan'er solemnly. Then, he turned to look at his female disciple outside before he shook his head lightly.

The expression on Lu Zhou's wizened face remained calm from the beginning until now. He continued to stroke his beard.

Elephant King continued on for some time.

"Master, the two cultivators who escaped from us last time are up ahead." One of Ding Fanqiu's disciples' voice rang from outside.

"Kill them," Ding Fanqiu said indifferently.

"Understood." Two of Ding Fanqiu's disciples flew ahead. It did not take long before the sounds of killing could be heard from the forest. After a short while, the two disciples returned as though nothing had happened.

Ding Fanqiu pointed up ahead and said, "There's no need to be afraid, old householder... Although I committed many wicked crimes, I'm a reasonable person."

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Me too."

Ding Fanqiu smiled brightly and said, "I think we'll get along well, old householder."

At this moment, Elephant King stopped moving.

"Measure Heaven River is up ahead!" Ding Fanqiu stared ahead before he leaped off Elephant King's back.

Ever since Lu Zhou comprehended the Heavenly Writing, his ability to sense aura had improved. When Ding Fanqiu had dismounted, he discovered that the aura Ding Fangqiu had released was extraordinary. It was not difficult to tell that Ding Fangqiu had intentionally released his aura.

When Little Yuan'er sensed the aura, she shrunk back slightly into Lu Zhou's arm.

Lu Zhou stood up slowly without any changes in his expression. "Let's go."

Lu Zhou and Little Yuan'er leaped off Elephant King's back with light movements and landed on the ground.

Ding Fanqiu said with his hands on his back, "Little girl, how long have you been cultivating?"

"More than five years," Little Yuan'er said with a proud expression on her face.

"Five years to the Divine Court..." A shocked expression quickly flitted past Ding Fanqiu's face before it disappeared. He pointed at the girl next to him and said, "She's very talented as well. However, she's a far cry from you."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard indifferently and looked in the other direction.

Little Yuan'er rolled her eyes again. She did not think that a counterfeit was worthy of being compared to her. She turned to look at the other two cultivators. She blinked her big eyes and asked, "Both of you are in the Divine Court realm as well?"

The two cultivators looked proud as they nodded.

"Still a little too weak," Little Yuan'er mumbled to herself.

"Little girl, if it weren't for my master, I would have torn you into a million pieces for disrespecting the Evil Sky Pavilion."

Little Yuan'er scoffed before she began to bicker with the impostors. "We'll see who's going to tear who into a million pieces."

Lu Zhou shook his head and looked at Ding Fanqiu, "My granddaughter has always been unruly.

"That's alright."

They continued their journey. When they came to a ravine, they came to a halt.

Beyond the ravine was the Measure Heaven River.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and looked in front. Unfortunately, things remained the same, but the people had changed. The Fish Dragon Village no longer existed. In his memories, this place had been full of villagers and fishermen. He did not expect to see a barren and deserted ravine in its place now. He decided to start with the officers who were fishing corpses from the riverbed first to get to the bottom of the Fish Dragon Village incident.

While Lu Zhou contemplated his options, Ding Fanqiu who stood with his hands on his back said valiantly, "Many years ago, I dominated the Measure Heaven River. I fought against many elites here, and the battles lasted for three days and three nights. We fought with our avatars. For that reason, this area was unfortunately reduced into a ravine.

Lu Zhou asked in confusion, "This is your doing?"

"Yes."

Indeed, the record regarding the destruction of Measure Heaven River's Fish Dragon Village stated that the culprit was Ji Tiandao.

Suddenly, one of Ding Fanqiu's disciples waved his arm and said, "Master, the Azure Dragon Association's branch is up ahead. I'll drive them away."

"Go on."

Ding Fanqiu's disciple flew into the air before making a left turn, disappearing in just a blink of an eye.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "Azure Dragon Association?" When he was in Anyang, he had encountered the Azure Dragon Association's Anyang branch. He did not know there was another branch in Measure Heaven River. If the Azure Dragon Association's influence was so vast, their backer, the Nether Sect, definitely would not be weak.

Ding Fanqiu spoke with pride, "The Azure Dragon Association is backed by the Nether Sect... Yu Zhenghai, the Sect Master of Nether Sect, was my great disciple."

Lu Zhou nodded indifferently. He would allow Ding Fanqiu to continue his act for now. 'Although the Azure Dragon Association only has small fries, it's much better to have these people clean up the mess for me. I want to save as many item cards as I can. They're too valuable.'

Ding Fangqiu said confidently, "Since I'm here, the Azure Dragon Association will crumble."

A short while later.

The disciple flew back. He bowed before he said, "Master, it's as you've expected. When the members of the Azure Dragon Association heard that you're coming, they ran off in fear."

"Very good." Ding Fangqiu waved his arm dismissively before he walked forward.

...

Meanwhile, in the Crouching Dragon, Darknet's headquarters.

"I have a report, Sect Master. Old senior Ji has been spotted near Measure Heaven River."

Si Wuya opened his eyes. He rose to his feet slowly and said indifferently, "The Nether Sect has also received this information. There's no need for us to do anything... Impersonating the Evil Sky Pavilion will certainly bring calamity to those people."

"Impersonating?" The subordinate was taken aback.

"Keep an eye on the Evil Sky Pavilion. Also, where's the master of Fiend Temple now?" Si Wuya asked.

"In reply to your question, Sect Master, Ren Buping is at the Green Jade Altar now. He has the support of Zhang Yuanshan, the Sect Master of Righteous Sect Master."

When Si Wuya heard this, he chuckled. His voice was low and deep. , "The Noble Path and Fiend Path are working with each other for nefarious reasons. This is the greatest joke under the heavens."

"Sect Master, there's another report."

“What is it?”

“The leader of the Black Knights, Fan Xiuwen, went to the Evil Sky Pavilion before this, and his current status is currently unknown. Senior Sword Devil didn’t wait for Fan Xiuwen, and his current whereabouts are unknown. I... I didn’t dare to follow Senior Sword Devil.”

“Second Senior Brother is a humble and gentle person. There’s no need for you to fear him,” Si Wuya said slowly.

“I understand.” Contrary to his words, he shuddered inwardly. It was no surprise his words did not sound convincing.

“Sect Master, there are quite a lot of activities at Measure Heaven River lately... Are you certain there’s no need for us to monitor that place?”

Initially, Si Wuya planned to reject the proposal. However, after considering it, he decided it was better to be cautious. In the end, he said in a deep voice, “Leak this information to the palace. They should clean up their own mess.”

“A wise move, Sect Master. I’ll get to it right away.”

Chapter 97: Sunken Bones

Measure Heaven River.

Lu Zhou and the others approached the area from beyond the ravine and entered a crumbling courtyard.

Two of Ding Fangqiu’s disciples lifted their hands and sent out their energy to open the courtyard’s doors.

After that, all of them slowly walked in.

One of Ding Fangqiu’s disciples said, “Master, this is the rendezvous point. They won’t dare to be tardy since you personally came.”

Ding Fangqiu nodded.

The two disciples hastily found a chair in the simple and crude house before placing it in the middle of the courtyard.

When Little Yuan’er saw this, she said, “I’ll go and look a chair for you as well, grandfather.”

After Little Yuan’er left, Ding Fangqiu asked nonchalantly, “Do you know why I’m not giving you a hard time?”

“Oh?” Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said nothing.

Ding Fangqiu continued on, “If I did, that little girl would certainly hold a grudge against me.”

As expected, Ding Fangqiu coveted Little Yuan’er. Lu Zhou knew that something was off based on their conversation, but he continued to remain silent.

Upon seeing this, Ding Fangqiu turned away.

The other disciples thought Lu Zhou was shocked speechless. They shook their heads.

After Little Yuan'er found a chair, she wiped it clean before placing it behind Lu Zhou.

Shortly after Lu Zhou took a seat, footsteps could be heard approaching them from outside. It sounded like there was more than one person.

"They're here."

The door was pushed open as officers and soldiers filed into the courtyard. The officers carried a box in pairs. There were about six boxes in total. There was a strange stench from the boxes. It was the smell of rot.

After placing the boxes on the ground, the leading officer cupped his hands together and said, "This is our catch for the day..."

"Is this all?"

"The palace has ordered that the corpses we fished out from the river are not to be moved. Our deal will end tomorrow," the leading officer said.

"It's too late to end it now." Ding Fangqiu waved his hand.

"How dare you?!"

"There's nothing that the Evil Sky Pavilion is afraid to do!"

Ding Fangqiu's three disciples quickly unsheathed their swords and moved through the soldiers' ranks.

Lu Zhou calmly took a few steps back.

The three Divine Realm court cultivators were like wolves that were set loose on a herd of sheep. Their swords gleamed in the light as the officers and soldiers fell to the ground one after another. Not a single one was left alive.

After the killing, Ding Fangqiu stood up slowly with his hands on his back. When he saw Lu Zhou's calm expression, he said, "Your courage is extraordinary, old householder. It seems like I've misjudged you."

Lu Zhou stroked his beard as he looked at the boxes and corpses indifferently.

Little Yuan'er asked curiously, "What is in the boxes?"

"Bones... Human bones..."

Little Yuan'er took a step back with an expression of disgust on her face. She was not afraid of dead people, but these were fished out from the riverbed and put into the boxes. It was only natural for her to feel disgusted.

Ding Fangqiu walked up to one of the boxes. He waved his arm lightly, using his energy to destroy the lid of the box.

Lu Zhou looked inside the box. 'These bones look strange. They're slightly translucent, like impure glass or white jade with a muddy coloration...' Soon after, realization dawned on him. 'The Bai people?' From his memories, he discovered the source of these bones. It was clear that the villagers from Fish Dragon Village had been dumped into the river. They were Ye Tianxin's people! 'In that case, why did the palace order people to fish the sunken corpses out?'

Ding Fanqiu and the others searched through the boxes and shook their heads. It seemed that they did not find what they wanted. It was apparent these bones from the Bai people were useless to them.

Lu Zhou asked indifferently, "What are these bones for?"

"Old householder, some things are better left unknown," one of Ding Fanqiu's disciples said.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard calmly and said, "Even the Evil Sky Pavilion is concerned about these things?"

"This is how we've always done things."

When Little Yuan'er heard this, she muttered, "I don't know if this is how things are done. I only know it's lame."

The disciples were not happy to hear this.

Ding Fanqiu waved his hand and chided his three disciples, "Enough."

After that, the three disciples no longer dared to quarrel with Little Yuan'er. They were confused as to why Ding Fangqiu seemed to be taking Little Yuan'er's side.

Ding Fanqiu said, "Remove their paizas¹."

"Understood."

When Lu Zhou saw the paizas, Lu Zhou stroked his beard calmly and said, "Should I tag along and widen my horizons?"

"Grandfather, I want to go..." Little Yuan'er said excitedly. She was interested in this matter after all.

It was only natural for Lu Zhou to bring Little Yuan'er with him. She was more than capable to deal with Divine Court realm cultivators should the occasion arise.

Ding Fanqiu looked at Lu Zhou and said, "There are many witchcraft traps near the place where the bodies are fished out. Aren't you afraid?"

It was apparent this was not their first visit here. They were very familiar with this place.

"There's nothing under the heavens that my grandfather is afraid of," Little Yuan'er said with a wave of her fist.

Ding Fanqiu regarded Little Yuan'er with a look of satisfaction. 'This is what I like. Nobody can blame me if something happens. It's best if something happens.'

They took the paizas. After Ding Fangqiu's two male disciples changed their clothes, they left the crumbling courtyard and walked toward the jetty where the corpses were being fished out from the river.

...

About 15 minutes later.

They saw the jetty. Apart from the ships that were there to fish out the corpses, there were no other commercial vessels. Officers and soldiers were patrolling the area as well.

Ding Fanqiu maneuvered the area with great familiarity. He walked calmly along the way.

At the entrance, two guards with spears in their hands barred their way.

“Authorized personnel only.”

Ding Fanqiu’s disciples produced the paizas.

“Those at the back...” One of the soldiers began to say.

“Please, make an exception.”

Some silver was exchanged, and everything proceeded smoothly.

If they were only fishing corpses for a day, the soldiers would not be able to make money through such means. However, these men had been doing this for a decade. They were unsure of what they were fishing out of the river themselves nor were they aware of the importance of the task they were carrying out. Rocks, rotten fishes, rotten shrimps, everything was taken away. After repeating the same routine day after day, they became apathetic toward their jobs.

Little Yuan’er muttered under her breath, “Why aren’t we killing our way in? This is so much more complicated.”

The girl whom Little Yuan’er defeated turned around to look at her said, “There are powerful witchcraft traps around here. Someone’s controlling them.”

“Oh,” Little Yuan’er replied, “I still don’t get it.”

They walked at a fast pace along the way. It was clear that this was not their first visit.

“The warehouse is up ahead...”

They easily avoided the guards. They passed several buildings before they prepared to enter the warehouse.

Ding Fanqiu raised his hand suddenly. His voice was deep and domineering as he said, “Stop.” It seemed like he had discovered something. He bent down and scrutinized the tracks on the ground. “There’s a witchcraft cultivator around.”

Lu Zhou looked at the lines on the ground as well. Indeed, the soil was fresh. Someone had planted a trap here.

In witchcraft, timing, location, and the people involved were important. The spellcaster would call upon the power from external structures to inflict harm or bestow blessings on the target.

Ding Fanqiu turned around to look at Lu Zhou and said, "Old householder, please take care of yourself." Then, he turned his attention to Little Yuan'er and said, "Little girl, if you're afraid, you can stay closer to me."

Little Yuan'er hugged Lu Zhou's arm and said, "I'm not afraid!"

"Let's go."

They walked around the trap and found themselves looking at the huge warehouse. It was impossible for the doors of the warehouse to stop a bunch of cultivators from entering.

With a slight movement of the hand, the lock was broken.

The instant the warehouse's doors opened...

Lu Zhou frowned.

This warehouse was dozens of meters long. Rows of boxes were arranged neatly inside the warehouse. They were stacked on top of each other as well. On the other side, there was a mountain of bones.

Chapter 98: Truth?

From the looks of the exposed bones, there were many that were different from the ones they had seen in the crumbling courtyard. Many of them were just ordinary bones.

The Fish Dragon Village had been destroyed. There were 354 villagers living in the village back then. Even if all of their corpses were here, there should not be so many of them. Moreover, they had been fishing out corpses in the last decade and they were still going strong to this day. Taking into account the remains that had been washed away by the current, just how many people had died in the river? There were certainly other people as well, apart from the Bais.

Ding Fanqiu's expression was indifferent. It was as though he was used to seeing dead people. When he entered the warehouse, he merely raised his hand slightly to cover his mouth and nose. He ordered his disciples, "Search."

"Understood." The three disciples went to work and checked the contents of the boxes.

Lu Zhou felt even more suspicious when he saw this. 'What are they looking for?'

However, before Lu Zhou could ask about it, Ding Fangqiu suddenly said, "These are the bones of the Other Tribes..."

"Other Tribes?"

"There is no place for the Other Tribes on Great Yan's lands... Over the millennia, after Great Yan had conquered the lands, there have always been Other Tribes wanting to cause a disturbance. Measure Heaven River is fated to be drenched in blood," Ding Fangqiu said calmly.

Lu Zhou asked, "These are all the remains of the Other Tribes?"

Ding Fanqiu glanced at Lu Zhou and laughed mockingly. He replied, "Well, that's what the palace says."

Little Yuan'er poked her head out and asked, "What are you guys looking for?"

"A bone... an extremely special bone..." Ding Fangqiu replied.

"What special bone?" Little Yuan'er's curiosity was piqued.

Ding Fangqiu did not answer her question directly. Instead, he said, "Little girl, if you become my disciple, I'll teach you everything that I know."

Little Yuan'er frowned slightly. She glared at Ding Fangqiu, "You?"

"There are many who wish to join the Evil Sky Pavilion, and yet, they don't have the chance... You should think about this carefully... All of my nine disciples are experts whose names inspire awe everywhere they go."

"Not her..." Little Yuan'er pointed at the girl who was searching the boxes. The female cultivator was young and she had a babyface.

"..." Ding Fangqiu was speechless, unable to retort.

It seemed like Ding Fangqiu was revealing his foxtail. Lu Zhou was not surprised. Instead, he said, "I'm afraid you won't be able to teach her."

Ding Fangqiu was clearly displeased by Lu Zhou's words. His hands remained on his back as he said, "There's no one under the heavens whom I can't teach."

Lu Zhou did not want to waste his energy bickering with Ding Fangqiu. The reason he came here was to investigate the truth behind the Fish Dragon Village incident. 'I'll let him continue his act and impersonate me for the time being. After all, he still has some value.'

With that being said, Lu Zhou was still puzzled. How did Ding Fangqiu and his three disciples manage to form a connection with this place? It seemed like they had been doing this for a long time. What was Ding Fangqiu's objective? Who was backing Ding Fangqiu?

After searching for some time, Ding Fangqiu's three disciples returned.

The warehouse was in a complete mess now. Most of the boxes were overturned. The environment was bad. The stench of rotting flesh permeated the air.

The girl said, "Master, we didn't find anything."

The other two disciples shook their heads as well.

Ding Fangqiu frowned slightly. He asked calmly, "Is there another warehouse?"

The three disciples shook their heads again.

This warehouse was large enough that there was still some space left even with all the boxes in here.

Lu Zhou looked up at the sun and noticed that it was already setting. At the same time, he glanced at the mission list on the system dashboard.

When they were about to leave, they heard the sound of shuffling footsteps from outside. Moreover, the hurried footsteps indicated that there were more than one person.

“An ambush.” Ding Fanqiu did not even look at the newcomers when he said coldly, “Kill them.”

“Understood.” The three disciples shot out of the warehouse and went on a killing spree.

The newcomers were a group of soldiers. They were no match for cultivators.

At this moment, Lu Zhou remembered that Mingshi Yin had encountered a witchcraft trap when he was here previously. Surely a place this important would have better security?

“I’m curious...” Lu Zhou said suddenly.

“Hm?”

“What’s the special bone you mentioned earlier?” Lu Zhou asked.

With his hands on his back, Ding Fangqiu replied, “Old householder, I’ll remind you again. The more you know, the more dangerous it will be.”

“At my age, life and death matter not.” Lu Zhou stroked his beard indifferently. He was not lying. Before he had transmigrated, he had already died once. Moreover, this was nothing compared to when the ten elites laid siege on Golden Court Mountain.

“Very well...” Ding Fanqiu shook his head.

The sounds of fighting intensified. The number of people increased as well. Shortly after, groups of cultivators began showing up as well. It seemed like they had rushed here after receiving news about what happened. The number of cultivators continued to grow.

A projected voice rang in the jetty at this moment. “You’ve walked into a trap. Death to the intruders!” Although the voice was not loud, everyone heard it clearly.

It seemed like things were getting more and more complicated.

Lu Zhou was not worried about this. If he wanted to leave, these people would not be able to stop him.

Ding Fangqiu glanced at Lu Zhou before he walked out.

Outside the warehouse, soldiers were gathered in ranks on the shore beside the jetty. They wielded spears and blocked the path. Many cultivators hovered in the air above the soldiers.

The three disciples returned to Ding Fanqiu’s side after killing the soldiers at the warehouse’s door.

“We’re surrounded. It’s a trap!”

Ding Fangqiu calmly stood with his hands on his back. He did not seem to be affected by this news. He was an elite in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm after all. There was no need for him to feel afraid.

No number of soldiers could stop a Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivator from leaving through the air.

Ding Fangqiu looked at the cultivators hovering above the soldiers. ‘Sense Condensing realm, Brahman Sea realm, and a few in the Divine Court realm. With these numbers, they want to stop me?’ Little girl... don’t blink...” Although Ding Fangqiu did not turn around, it was clear he was speaking to Little Yuan’er.

Lu Zhou continued stroking his beard as though all these had nothing to do with him.

At the same time, an imposing aura surged out from Ding Fangqiu’s body. With a single step, he was out of the warehouse.

Bzzt!

A 50 feet tall avatar towered above the others in the air. The avatar was faint blue in color. It looked extremely terrifying. It was surrounded by energy. The golden lotus under it unfurled its leaves, revealing four leaves.

The soldiers and cultivators near the jetty saw this, and their expressions changed greatly as they took several steps back. However, they did not run away. They only cautiously put some distance between them and the avatar.

Little Yuan’er muttered disdainfully, “Only four leaves...”

Ding Fangqiu’s female disciple rolled her eyes and said, “What do you know? Our master’s strength is peerless. He’s conserving his strength. Four leaves are enough to deal with these people. A Divine Court realm cultivator’s avatar can reach Ten Worlds, at most. With the Hundred Tribulations Insight, everyone here will have to prostrate themselves.”

At this moment, waves and waves of energy rolled off Ding Fangqiu’s Four-leaf avatar.

Rumble! Rumble! Rumble!

The buildings near the jetty shook and rattled.

The soldiers retreated further. The cultivators raised their guards.

One of the cultivators shouted, “Everyone, stay calm... Let’s retreat slowly. News from the palace states that this person isn’t the real Ji Tiandao!”

“A Grand Witchcraft Formation has been laid down here yesterday... Let’s head back to the Grand Formation. When the elites from the palace arrive, these criminals will be taken care of in one fell swoop. No matter who it is, death to the intruders!”

“Death to the intruders!”

“Death to the intruders!”

The soldiers began chanting loudly.

Chapter 99: Little Girl, Let’s Go Before It’s Too Late

The soldiers were emboldened by the cultivators’ motivational words, and they stood their ground firmly.

Lu Zhou and Little Yuan'er had arrived at the entrance of the warehouse at this moment. They were slightly taken aback when they saw several thousands of soldiers and several hundreds of cultivators before them.

It was clear that everything was a trap. Lu Zhou said calmly, "This is a trap." It seemed like this had been planned for the start. Since the trap had been laid out, it was only natural that they could not find what they wanted in the warehouse. That thing had to be hidden or it was still somewhere on the riverbed.

Little Yuan'er asked in a soft voice, "What do we do now? Do we charge through their ranks?"

"There's no need for that," Lu Zhou stroked his beard and said, "Since that person likes being in the spotlight, let him do it."

Little Yuan'er pouted and said, "A Four-leaf avatar... This won't be interesting at all." She was used to a grander display of strength after all. It was only natural that she disdained an avatar of this level. It was similar to how a person who was used to riding legendary mounts would feel if they were offered a low-grade mount. How could they not feel disdainful?

However, for the other cultivators, a Four-leaf Golden Lotus Avatar could be considered an elite among elites.

The cultivators who were hovering in the air gulped. They were wary of the avatar's intimidating power. No one dared to make a move against a Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm elite at this moment.

Meanwhile, Ding Fanqiu's three disciples had expressions of admiration on their faces.

The female disciple glanced at Little Yuan'er and said mockingly, "Little girl, don't be arrogant just because you had a stroke of luck and managed to defeat me earlier. With your strength, you won't even be able to make a single move against my master."

Little Yuan'er snorted. "Loser."

"You..." The female disciple wanted to retort. However, now was not the time to bicker. She had no choice but to let the matter go for now. Moreover, if they fought, there was no doubt she would be in a disadvantageous position. After all, her master was not in the position to protect his disciples now.

The energy swirling around the Four-leaf avatar glowed faintly, forming energy seals. Then, they shot out.

Lu Zhou remarked offhandedly, "Daoist Mudras." He did not expect Ding Fanqiu would use Daoist Mudras.

Daoist Mudras were different from Zen Sect's Mudras. Zen Sect's Mudras relied on the Golden Body's support and the cultivator's own Primal Qi. The two were then combined to form energy that was the fierce Buddhist power. On the other hand, Daoist Mudras mainly manipulated the Primal Qi in the area so it gave one better range. Regardless, both Mudras were connected. Their differences were not as distinct as one might imagine.

The densely packed Mudras shot toward the soldiers and cultivators.

Puh! Puh! Puh!

The soldiers were sent flying by the Mudras. Some of the cultivators turned to flee when they saw things were not in their favor.

“Retreat! Don’t fight him! Wear him down!”

“Prepare the Witchcraft Formation!”

Many cultivators stood far away. Their cultivation bases were barely enough to protect them from the avatar’s intimidating aura. They had no additional strength to fight back.

Ding Fanqiu controlled his Mudras like a heavenly maiden scattering blossoms. In just a blink of an eye, he took out several hundred soldiers. It was as though a flood had just washed over the area.

The sound of people screaming rang in the air.

The remaining soldiers retreated further away.

Ding Fanqiu said loudly, “Who dares to stop me from leaving?” This was not his first time here. He knew there were many witchcraft traps here. If this fight dragged out and the elites from the palace arrived, he would not be able to escape.

Ding Fanqiu’s deep voice resounded in all directions. His voice could be clearly heard in every corner of the place. The houses, buildings, and fishing boats shook from the soundwave of his voice.

The soldiers retreated again.

“Get back! Everyone, get back!”

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The soldiers retreated swiftly. It was better for them to retreat than to throw away their lives in vain. Their mission was to protect the witchcraft traps and wait for the elites from the palace to arrive.

Ding Fanqiu’s expression darkened. He tapped the ground with the tip of his toes and launched himself into the air. His 50-foot avatar kept him hovering in place.

The reason why Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm cultivators were so terrifying was due to the Hundred Tribulation Insight avatar. The higher the avatar rose, the wider its intimidation aura would spread.

When Ding Fanqiu leaped into the air, the energy around his avatar spread in all directions with overwhelming force.

Bzzt! Bzzt!

Mudras flew out like flower petals being scattered.

Lu Zhou stroked his beard and nodded slightly. “He’s slightly accomplished in Mudras.”

“This is a slight accomplishment?” The Supreme Purity Jade Slip was all Little Yuan’er knew. She was not familiar with the cultivation methods of other sects.

Lu Zhou spoke slowly, "Daoist Mudras mainly manipulate the Primal Qi in their surroundings, condensing Qi into energy. For a great cultivator, even an avatar can be converted into energy. Zen Mudras are mainly created by the cultivator himself. Usually, they're in the form of palm prints."

"So, which one's more powerful? The Daoist Mudras or the Zen Mudras?" Little Yuan'er asked curiously.

Lu Zhou nodded in approval. 'Little Yuan'er's interested to learn more. This is a good thing. She'll surely become a great person in the future if I can groom her well.'

"Each has its own advantages. It's impossible to compare them," Lu Zhou said.

Little Yuan'er nodded.

"Ding! Teach Ci Yuan'er. Reward: 100 merit points."

When Ding Fanqiu's three disciples who were standing at the side heard Lu Zhou's words, they were slightly taken aback.

"You're quite knowledgeable, old mister. Indeed, our master is using Daoist Mudras!" The female disciple looked at the Mudras that covered the sky reverently. "However, Daoist Mudras have hand seals as well. There are 12 Daoist Mudras in total. The more profound one's cultivation base is, the more powerful the hand seals will be. It won't lose to Zen Mudras."

Lu Zhou did not deign to look at the female cultivator. 'A young junior who's still wet behind the ears but is too proud to ask for guidance. She can view the sky from the bottom of the well forever.'

At the same time, Ding Fanqiu's Mudras struck the soldiers and cultivators in the air who were not fast enough to move out of the way like killer butterflies. He sent all of them flying.

Those with cultivation bases lower than the Sense Condensing realm spat out blood and died on the spot. The Brahman Sea realm cultivators dropped to the ground and seemed to be in excruciating pain. Even the Divine Court realm cultivators had to descend from the air to repel the Mudras by using their Primal Qi.

Ding Fanqiu called out, "Elephant King." With a wave of his hand, loud thuds reverberated through the surroundings.

From the forest, Elephant King came charging out. Although its speed was not fast, it trampled the enemies like a tank.

Many of the soldiers could not dodge in time and died on the spot. Some of them were impaled by Elephant King's tusks and were tossed aside.

"Let's go," Ding Fanqiu said after he turned around.

The soldiers and cultivators did not dare to go near the avatar. They could only look on helplessly.

"Little girl, come to my side." Ding Fanqiu descended slowly along with his avatar.

Boom!

The instant Ding Fanqiu landed, the ground shook. This served as a powerful intimidation, further discouraging the soldiers and cultivators from attacking them.

Ding Fanqiu cast his eyes into the distance. It seemed like the cultivators were growing in numbers. “The people from the palace are here.”

‘Hm? Why isn’t the little girl coming over?’ Initially, Ding Fanqiu thought Little Yuan’er would immediately rush to his side out of fear. However, he discovered that not only did Little Yuan’er seem unafraid, but she was observing everything curiously. Moreover, a hint of disdain could be seen in her eyes as she looked around.

Lu Zhou said calmly, “Elephant King won’t make it.”

Elephant King could make a great impact and was a wonderful war machine. However, it could not fly.

Ding Fanqiu looked at Little Yuan’er pitifully as though she did not know what was good for her. He persuaded her again, “Little girl, let’s go before it’s too late!”

Chapter 100: Ding Fanqiu’s Strength

Ding Fanqiu had never met a young person with such outstanding talent for cultivation like Little Yuan’er. She was undoubtedly better than his female disciple. ‘If she becomes my disciple, she’ll definitely be of great help to me. What a shame!’ He looked at Little Yuan’er regretfully as these thoughts ran through his mind. After a while, he raised his hand slightly and the 50-foot tall Four-leaf Golden Lotus Avatar disappeared.

The soldiers and cultivators immediately felt the pressure disappear.

With a tap of his foot, Ding Fanqiu shot toward Elephant King with movements as swift as a swallow. His three disciples hovered above Elephant King’s chariot. They guarded against the cultivators who might attack them. He entered the chariot and sat down gracefully. Even without making a move, his aura alone was enough to keep the soldiers at bay.

Lu Zhou shook his head. He was not interested in these things. If he wanted to leave, he could have summoned Whizard to take them away at any time.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Elephant King stomped its feet on the ground, sending out tremors.

Every time Ding Fanqiu raised his hand, a soldier died.

Ding Fanqiu was about to leave when faint purple circles appeared under the feet of the soldiers. The circles were strange and mysterious. A substance that resembled green smoke began to rise from the purple circles.

“The Grand Witchcraft Formation!” One of the cultivators shouted, “Take these intruders down! You’ll be handsomely rewarded!” A commander seemed to have emerged among the cultivators.

When the Grand Witchcraft Formation was activated, the commander finally revealed himself. He slowly rose into the air with a huge blade on his back.

Elephant King was an animal, after all. Although it had absorbed Primal Qi in the cultivation world, which made it terrifying and ferocious, its intelligence was nowhere comparable to humans. When it saw the faint purple circles, it retreated.

Ding Fanqiu's expression darkened. He waved his arm and forced Elephant King forward.

Toot!

Elephant King's trumpeting sent soundwaves rolling across the mountain forest and beyond. However, it did not advance. Instead, it seemed to be retreating!

"Livestock!" Ding Fanqiu cursed and leaped into the air again as energy surged out of his body.

"Hundred Tribulation Insight!"

'Hundred Tribulation Insight avatar? That's an ultimate skill. It consumes a lot of Primal Qi!' Lu Zhou had difficulties understanding Ding Fanqiu's action. It was not rational to expend so much energy at this time. After all, these people were only small fries. 'What are you going to do when the elites from the palace arrive?' Ding Fanqiu did not have Peak Form Cards that would grant him limitless energy after all.

When the Hundred Tribulation Insight Avatar appeared, the cultivators who prepared to advance retreated again. Their movements and actions seemed rehearsed.

The substances that had risen were not smoke. It was part of witchcraft. Someone had used witchcraft to turn Primal Qi into iron-clad traps. Interestingly, the soldiers and cultivators were not affected by it.

"Sky Energy Seal!" Similar to before, the avatar launched countless Mudras in the air.

Even with the Mudras unrelenting assault, the light purple circles remained unaffected. It seemed to have slowed down, but that was it. There were no miraculous effects.

At this moment, the circles had covered the grounds. As the circles grew, they began to merge with each other, forming interlinking circles. They began to shine brightly as the Great Witchcraft Formation was completely activated!

Elephant King retreated again.

Toot!

If they had not seen it with their own eyes, they would never believe that the epic overlord of the forest, Elephant King, would be fearful as well. No matter how much its master urged it forward, it refused to move and continued to retreat.

The witchcraft circles kept expanding. They continued to grow at a speed that was unaffected by the Hundred Tribulation Insight's aura.

At this moment, Ding Fanqiu's three disciples had a worried expression on their faces. It seemed like the Grand Witchcraft Formation was much more fearsome than they had expected. Although Ding Fanqiu's

cultivation base was in the Nascent Divinity Tribulation realm, there was nothing he could do to the circles. Who was this elite from the palace who set up this Grand Witchcraft Formation?

Ding Fanqiu's brows were knitted together. He looked at the Grand Witchcraft Formation that kept growing, closing in on him.

The soldiers and cultivators advanced as the circles grew.

"The river." Ding Fanqiu instantly recalled his Hundred Tribulation Insight avatar. He had expended too much energy to maintain his powerful avatar. He had to conserve his strength. The only place that seemed calmer was the surface of the Measure Heaven River. Perhaps, he would be able to escape from there. In just a blink of an eye, he and his disciples turned tail, abandoning Elephant King. When they turned around, they saw Lu Zhou and Little Yuan'er looking at them as though they were watching a show.

Lu Zhou said indifferently, "The river has already been covered by the witchcraft circles... They've already spread to the bottom of the river."

Ding Fanqiu frowned slightly. He rose into the air and looked down at the surface of the river near the jetty. Indeed, the river's surface was now covered by the light purple circles that were expanding.

They could not touch the witchcraft circles. Otherwise, they would be shackled! Moreover, the circles would corrode their cultivation bases until nothing was left. At that time, they would be like pieces of meat on their enemies' chopping board.

Elephant King continued to trumpet. Its body was too huge so it could not get past the buildings. It did not take long before the witchcraft circles reached it.

The witchcraft circles seemed to have eyes of their own. They tied Elephant King down, the rising green smoke seemed like vines now. They looked extremely terrifying.

Elephant King struggled for a moment before it completely lost its strength to fight back.

These witchcraft circles were clearly the same type of trap Mingshi Yin had fallen into. This was a binding Grand Witchcraft Formation.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhou remained calm. He was waiting for an opportunity and for the caster of the Grand Witchcraft Formation to appear. Since they found nothing in the warehouse, he had no choice but to investigate this person from the palace.

On the other hand, Ding Fanqiu no longer had the dignified air of the Master of Evil Sky Pavilion that he had been putting on before this. He was frowning, nobody knew what he was thinking about. He had a feeling the old man before him had a plan. "Old householder, you seem calm. Do you have a plan?"

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "I don't."

"Forget it." Ding Fanqiu turned around with his hands on his back. He looked at the witchcraft circles intently.

The cultivators did not leave the witchcraft circles. They were waiting for the circles to close in on Ding Fanqiu and the others. A short while later, the witchcraft circles were barely dozens of meters away from them.

At this moment, the commander of the cultivators flew toward them and said from above, "Yo, isn't this the Fiend Path's Patriarch whose name shocks the heavens? Where did your arrogance go?"

When Ding Fanqiu unleashed his Hundred Tribulation Insight avatar, the commander had hidden himself. He only revealed himself when the Grand Witchcraft Formation was activated.

"We were told that you were coming. The palace has ordered for the Grand Witchcraft Formation to be set up. We were waiting for you to take the bait," the commander said, "I've never seen a Grand Witchcraft Formation as magnificent as this one in all my life. What do you think? How does it compare to the barrier around Golden Court Mountain?"

When he heard the middle-aged man's mocking words. Ding Fanqiu said in his deep voice, "Preposterous! Hundred Tribulation Insight!" His 50-foot tall Hundred Tribulation Insight Four-leaf avatar appeared again and sprouted another leaf!

Boom!

Waves and waves of energy rolled off the avatar. The soldiers and cultivators who had thought victory was in the bag were sent flying at this moment.

At this moment, Ding Fanqiu's three disciples looked at him reverently.

"This is my master's true strength!"

Lu Zhou's brows merely twitched slightly before his expression turned indifferent again.