

Unparalleled 431

Chapter 431: Dao Enlightening Tea Bush, Spiritual Thoughts Restored, Honorable Xuan Qi Becomes A Sage

The changes in the outside world did not affect Chu Kuangren in the slightest.

During this moment, he was still busy analyzing the Heavenly Punishment Seal.

“Congratulations, Host. You have obtained a Legendary-grade item — Dao Enlightening Tea Bush!”

On that very day, Chu Kuangren received a Legendary-grade item from the Fantasy Roulette.

He curiously retrieved the item, and a lush tree bush appeared before him. Its mysterious Daoist Rhyme instantly filled the whole room.

The tea bush was a meter tall and had many leaves growing out of it. The higher quality ones, especially, had an even more mysterious presence compared to the others.

The Dao Enlightening Tea Bush was one of the best Emperor-grade treasures. Consumption of these tea leaves could help any cultivator to quicken the process of entering the Enlightenment Stage.

Even an Emperor could benefit from using this item.

This tea bush would only produce three thousand three hundred and thirty-three tea leaves every century. Amongst the many Dao Enlightening Tea Leaves, three thousand of them were Low-tier, three hundred of them were Mid-tier, and thirty of them were High-tier.

As for the most Top-tiered Dao Enlightening Tea Leaves, there were only three.

Producing three leaves every century was a clear sign of how valuable and rare the Top-tiered tea leaves were.

The Dao Enlightening Tea Bush before Chu Kuangren right now was fully matured, with three thousand three hundred and thirty-three tea leaves on it.

Chu Kuangren reached out to the top of the tea bush, plucked one of the tea leaves, and ate it. A sublime feeling instantly filled his mind.

Since he already possessed the Meditational Clarity trait, the piece of tea leaf instantly allowed his rate of understanding to skyrocket to an unbelievable level. Not wanting to waste any more time, Chu Kuangren quickly continued to analyze the Heavenly Punishment Seal.

As time passed...

Chu Kuangren's rate of analyzing the Heavenly Punishment Seal had increased tremendously with the help of the Dao Enlightening Tea Leaf. He was so immersed in it that he could not pull himself out of it.

Very quickly, a month had gone by.

Chu Kuangren had fully analyzed and unlocked the first two layers of the Nine-Layered Heavenly Punishment Seal. It enabled his Universal Cauldron Physique to break down the Heavenly Punishment Seal's energy at an even faster rate.

"This Dao Enlightening Tea Leaf is truly remarkable. I thought it would take at least ten years to unlock the first two layers."

Chu Kuangren slowly opened his eyes.

A horrifying streak of aura flashed across his deep and dark eyes.

If there were any other cultivators present, they would undoubtedly be shocked by that faint aura because it was the... Heavenly Punishment Aura!!

Chu Kuangren had gained the Heavenly Punishment Aura while analyzing the Heavenly Punishment Seal?!

Even Chu Kuangren himself did not realize that.

He looked at the tea bush before him. "This Top-tiered Dao Enlightening Tea Leaf has the greatest effect on me, while the High-tier ones come in second. When it comes to gaining insights on the Heavenly Punishment Seal, the Mid-tier and Low-tier ones are far less effective than the High-tier and Top-tier leaves."

"Hm, I shall send this tea bush to Fairfrost Sage for her to nurture it properly. I wonder if she knows how to process the tea leaves as well. By then, producing a few bottles of leaves for tea brewing won't be a bad idea at all."

Chu Kuangren mumbled.

Using his spiritual thought, he kept the tea bush within his Yin and Yang ring.

That was right. He could use his spiritual thoughts now.

By unlocking two layers of the Heavenly Punishment Seal, he had temporarily unlocked the sealing restraints on his spiritual thoughts. However, only his spiritual thoughts had recovered, not his cultivation base.

Nevertheless, since he possessed the Conjurer's Talent, regaining the use of his spiritual thoughts proved to be a tremendous help to him. At the very least, he was no longer powerless.

Chu Kuangren came out of his Daoist Palace and headed towards the Fairfrost Sage's residence.

Lan Yu followed along closely as well.

Ever since Chu Kuangren was struck with the Heavenly Punishment Seal, Lan Yu was always by his side, protecting him at all times.

Even if they were inside the Black Heaven Sect, a place where no harm would come to Chu Kuangren, Lan Yu was still worried.

As long as Chu Kuangren left the Daoist Palace, she would follow him wherever he went.

Fairfrost Valley in Black Heaven Sect.

The Fairfrost Sage was tending to some of the herbs and plants at that time. More than half of the mountain valley was damaged during the battle, but luckily, she had kept most of the herbal plants in a safe place before the battle. Only then was she able to prevent an even greater loss.

Now that a few months had passed, this valley had recovered almost to its original shape. It was full of lush greeneries brimming with life like a paradise garden.

Chu Kuangren soon arrived.

Having sensed his arrival earlier on, Fairfrost Sage led her disciples to the entrance to greet him.
“Greetings, Sect Leader.”

“A good day to you as well, Elder Fairfrost.”

Chu Kuangren chuckled and took out the Dao Enlightening Tea Bush. Instantly, an incredibly dense surge of Daoist Rhymes swept out and filled the entire valley.

Fairfrost Sage was stunned to see that tea bush. “Is this the legendary Dao Enlightening Tea Bush?!”

Chu Kuangren replied in surprise, “Oh, do you know about it as well?”

"I once came across, by luck, an ancient archive that had records of all sorts of rare and exotic plants. The Dao Enlightening Tea Bush was one of the plants inscribed in it, yet it stated it was extinct for a long time. Where did you get this, Sect Leader?"

"Oh, it's just one of my lucky finds." Chu Kuangren chuckled.

"Uh... Alright."

Having lived in the Black Heaven Sect for a while, Fairfrost Sage had also heard a little about Chu Kuangren's lucky finds. Hence, she did not ask any further.

Both of them then chatted for a while.

After handing over the tea bush to the Fairfrost Sage, the plant expert, Chu Kuangren took a few of the Top-tier and High-tier tea leaves with him and turned around to leave.

However, he was stopped by Fairfrost Sage.

After hesitating for a while, she took out a vial of medicine and said, "This is a Spiritual Supply Pill that I've developed with the help of Master Gu. The spiritual power produced by this pill doesn't go through your spiritual mound. Instead, it'll be circulated through your veins and meridians for immediate use. A single pill contains the full spiritual power of an Honorable."

Chu Kuangren was taken aback at first, but he soon understood.

The Spiritual Supply Pill was specially made for him.

His Heavenly Punishment Seal did not allow him to draw from the spiritual power inside his spiritual mound. Hence, Fairfrost Sage and Master Gujiang took another approach and developed this Spiritual Supply Pill.

“Heh, I’m deeply grateful for your kindness, Elder Fairfrost. However, I have my own means to deal with this Heavenly Punishment Seal. There’s no need for you and Master Gu to worry.” Chu Kuangren chuckled.

“If that’s the case, don’t hesitate to tell me if you need any help, Sect Leader.”

“I will.”

Chu Kuangren nodded and left.

A hint of sadness washed over Fairfrost Sage’s face as she looked at Chu Kuangren’s departing silhouette. She thought that his relaxed appearance was only an act. After all, how could the Heavenly Punishment Seal be so easy to get rid of?

“Sigh. D*mn the heavens for being jealous of a talented genius!” Fairfrost Sage shook her head and sighed. After she took a look at the vial of medicine pills in her hands, she casually tossed it into the pool beside her. “The Sect Leader could even slaughter Sages back in the days, so how could he possibly be interested in a pill that only contains an Honorable’s strength?”

“Something good better happen soon.”

Several days later.

The Fairfrost Sage sent someone to deliver a few boxes of freshly processed tea leaves. Those were the leaves from the Dao Enlightening Tea Bush, which meant that a small box of it was considered extremely valuable in the world.

Chu Kuangren could not wait to give it a try.

Its effects were remarkable.

Although it could not be compared with the Top-tier Dao Enlightening Tea Leaves, its ability to enable someone to enter a Dao Enlightening state so quickly was, to a Sage, a priceless item.

He sent some of them to the Black Heaven’s Second and Third Forefathers.

Not to mention the Second and Third Forefathers, but Honorable Xuan Qi, who originally required a few more decades to accumulate his foundation, immediately became a Sage after he drank the tea!

On that day, Daoist Rhymes echoed throughout the whole Black Heaven Sect and golden lotuses sprouted from the ground, hailing the birth of a new Sage. Some of the great ones, who still kept an eye on the Black Heaven Sect, could not help but feel surprised.

"I can't believe someone from the Black Heaven Sect has become a Sage at this time. I guess it must be Honorable Xuan Qi who went through his ascension a few years ago."

"It's only a Sage. What's the big deal?"

The crowd of great ones did not care much.

Since the times were different, a normal Sage no longer caused a great shift in the power balance among the different forces in the Firmament Star.

Chapter 432: Gu Linglong's Cooking, Chu Kuangren Goes Into Closed-Door Meditation, Waiting For Someone

"W-what kind of tea leaf is this?"

Honorable Xuan Qi, who just became a Sage, stared at the tea he was holding. He was stunned at how this cup of tea had replaced decades' worth of his hard work.

'Holy sh*t!'

Even consuming a spiritual marrow would not achieve this, let alone normal tea.

"This is the Dao Enlightening Tea. Fellow Forefathers, Honorable Teacher, please help yourselves to it. I still have some here as well," Chu Kuangren said as he took out another box of tea leaves.

Everyone looked at the tea leaves excitedly.

“Kuangren, I think it’s best that you keep something so precious to yourself. I believe that it’ll benefit you more.”

Honorable Xuan Qi said.

The other Forefathers came back to their senses and nodded too.

“Don’t worry, Honorable Teacher. There are still better ones over at my place. This Dao Enlightening Tea can help everyone here reach a Great Sage’s level quicker, so please accept them and help yourselves.”

Chu Kuangren’s words gave Honorable Xuan Qi no choice but to accept the tea leaves.

After that, everyone started to ask him about the Heavenly Punishment Seal.

Similar to others, they were extremely worried as well. That was because Chu Kuangren was no longer just a mere Sect Leader of the Black Heaven Sect to them. He had contributed too much for the Black Heaven Sect, just too much...

There was no one within the sect that did not adore and respect him.

Even the Sages felt the same as well.

“Don’t worry, everyone. I have my own means of dealing with the Heavenly Punishment Seal.”

Chu Kuangren replied. After he had given them the tea leaves and chatted with them for a while, he stood up and left.

The few Sages exchanged glances as they looked at his silhouette.

"I thought that our Sect Leader would be devastated, but he looked very calm and relaxed. There was no hint of sadness on his face."

"This guy has such a rock-steady Daoist core."

Honorable Xuan Qi was silent for a while. Then, he said with a resolute look in his eyes, "I believe Kuangren will recover from this."

...

When Chu Kuangren returned to the Daoist Palace, the smell of food wafted up to his nose.

He looked toward the source of that scent, only to find Gu Linglong and Lil Bing cooking. The sight of that caught Chu Kuangren by surprise.

"Linglong, you're..."

"I'm cooking, of course."

Gu Linglong blinked and replied.

“Cooking? You?”

“That’s right.”

Now that Chu Kuangren had no access to his spiritual power, his physical needs were exactly the same as an ordinary person. For example, he would feel hungry if he did not eat for a whole day. As such, Gu Linglong decided to cook for him.

She had already made up her mind.

If Chu Kuangren could never recover, she would be willing to stay by his side as a regular person and accompany him throughout the rest of his life.

As if he had figured out her intention, he said, “Thank you.”

“What for? We’re husband and wife. Do we even need to bother with courtesy?”

Gu Linglong snapped at him.

“I’ll have a taste of this soup you made.”

With a smile, Chu Kuangren grabbed a spoon beside him and took a sip of the soup. His face immediately turned pale before it turned green...

“W-water...”

Chu Kuangren hurriedly looked for water.

He looked at the bowl of soup on the table strangely.

‘Humans drink this thing?’

‘It tastes salty and spicy at the same time. It’s too much!’

“Um, this is my first time cooking. I may not have gotten the hang of it yet. But don’t you worry, I’ll definitely learn to be a better cook in the future.”

Gu Linglong said with a face full of determination.

Unfortunately, she did not seem to have any talent for cooking at all. For the next few days, no one dared to touch the dishes she prepared.

Chu Kuangren could usually stay calm despite standing in the face of millions of powerful foes. However, he would turn pale as soon as he heard Gu Linglong's voice calling him to the table. Going to the dining table was akin to going to an execution ground for him.

After several days, Chu Kuangren finally could not stand it any longer.

He was going to go into closed-door meditation!

In order to never taste Gu Linglong's scary cooking ever again and prevent her from ever entering the kitchen, Chu Kuangren had decided to go into closed-door meditation! No matter what, he must find a way to unlock that d*mn Heavenly Punishment Seal!

With his Immortal Body, Chu Kuangren would not die from starvation even though he had been cut off from his spiritual power. After he had notified everyone about this point and assured them about him being in closed-door meditation for too long, he got started.

However, no one would have expected that his closed-door meditation session would last for three full years.

Towering Heaven Palace.

It was snowing again at the beginning of the new year.

Gu Linglong, Lan Yu, and Lil Bing were sitting in the courtyard enjoying the view of the snow.

The snow covered everything in white.

“It’s been three years since the Black Heaven Sect withdrew itself from the world.” Lil Bing suddenly lamented.

Sitting beside her, both Gu Linglong and Lan Yu nodded slightly.

“That’s right. It has already been three years.”

Although three years had passed, it was not long, so to speak.

For most cultivators, three years could go by within the blink of an eye. However, Black Heaven Sect was not the same without Chu Kuangren. To them, three years felt like a very long time.

“By the way, Lil Bing, how are Jun Yi and the others doing? Judging by the time of the year, I think it’s about time that they return,” Gu Linglong asked curiously.

Jun Yi was one of the Black Heaven Sect’s Daoists who was closer to Lil Bing than the others. They had kept in contact with each other all this while.

In the past two years, Nangong Huang, Jun Yi, and the others had achieved the goal that Chu Kuangren had set for them in the beginning. It was to reach the Honorable Supreme Realm within a year. After that, the few Daoists left the Black Heaven Sect and traveled out into the world.

During these past two years, they would return to the Black Heaven Sect occasionally.

They would visit the Heavenly Towering Palace every time they were back.

“They’re doing well, I suppose. I heard that they’ve gained quite some fame in the outside world. A few days ago, Nangong Huang even defeated an empyrean walker.”

“Oh, is that so?”

Lan Yu chuckled. “He used to be no match for the empyrean walkers, but it seems like he’s improving quite well these days.”

“Well, no matter how fast they improve, they will always end up beaten by Lan Yu every time they come back to challenge her.” Gu Linglong chuckled beside them.

Lan Yu’s strength has improved rapidly in these past three years.

Coupling her Supreme Daoist Physique with the many resources at Black Heaven Sect at her disposal, she had since passed the ascension trial and become a Boundary Sage.

It was the same with the other Daoists as well.

The only thing different was the gap in their combat strength.

“Also, any news about the sky-prides from the Nine Heavens?”

Gu Linglong asked.

A group of sky-prides from the Nine Heavens had appeared during the past three years. Their background seemed incredibly strong, and they even defeated all the empyrean walkers at one point.

“What else can they do besides traveling around?”

Lil Bing said.

The sky-prides from the Nine Heavens came to the Firmament Star with only one goal — to find the various Emperors’ Opportunity of Fortune to increase their chance of becoming one.

In these three years, many Opportunities of Fortune that the Emperors of Old left behind had continuously appeared, allowing countless sky-prides the chance to obtain them.

With the Emperor’s Opportunities of Fortune in their possession, the combat strength of those sky-prides became incredibly terrifying. Even the Sages of the older generation were no match for them.

The Firmament Star today had long belonged to the sky-prides, especially the younger ones who had become Sages. Even the Sage Rulers were cautious of them.

“Oh, there is still one thing worth mentioning. Some time ago, Murong Xuan was ranked among the top-fifty in the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard. He’s ranked forty-ninth, two places higher than Nangong Huang.”

“What about the number one rank in the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard? Any changes to that?”

“Nope, it’s still blank.” Lil Bing replied.

The Soaring Dragon Leaderboard was the greatest change that had happened in the last three years. That leaderboard was created by the world-best divine predictor’s personal deduction of the fate of the heavens. The leaderboard was currently hung above the Divine Predictor Pavilion.

However, it was interesting to see that the first ranking in the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard was left blank for the past three years.

The predictor mentioned that he was waiting for someone.

Waiting for someone who truly deserved to be ranked the first in the world!

Chapter 433: The Two Sky-Prides’ Dissatisfaction, Sneaking Into The Black Heaven Sect

“Only one can lead the sky-prides, Kuangren of the Black Heaven it shall be.”

In one of the mountain ranges outside the Black Heaven Sect’s Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation, a young man murmured with a hint of disdain in his eyes. “What a joke. How is a legendary tale about a person who has been crippled for three years still around? Are these people stupid?”

The young man snorted coldly with great dissatisfaction on his face.

If anyone familiar with Firmament Star's current situation were here, they would undoubtedly recognize him. That was because the young man was a top-notch sky-pride, ranked twenty-fifth on the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard.

He was also a Daoist of the Parchprime Palace, currently one of the best orthodoxies on the Firmament Star... Liu Yiqing.

The Parchprime Palace was part of the unknown lands three years ago. However, Liu Yiqing was not an empyrean walker during that time, not because he was not strong enough, but because he was in closed-door meditation.

It was only until three years ago, after the battle at Black Heaven Sect that he came into the world. It was the same time as when the Parchprime Palace and other unknown lands appeared.

Only then did Liu Yiqing start to appear in public and step into the scene of sky-prides. He was just getting started at that time.

His strength was remarkable. Over the past three years, he had continuously defeated numerous sky-prides all over the world, landing himself the twenty-fifth ranking on the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard.

Besides the top-notch sky-prides from the Nine Heavens, his strength could be considered the best among the younger generation.

Even so, he was not happy with his achievements.

It was all because of one person.

A man disappeared after he was crippled three years ago.

That man was Chu Kuangren!

When Liu Yiqing first entered the world, his impressive battle records had very quickly gained quite some fame. However, his thunder was always stolen by the mere mention of Chu Kuangren's name.

No matter who or what they were previously talking about, every sky-pride would instantly gravitate towards the mere mention of Chu Kuangren's name. They would immediately recall the glorious and legendary achievements he had accomplished.

It was as if the name itself contained a type of magic that could draw anyone's attention.

As a prideful and arrogant person, Liu Yiqing originally thought he would gain a lot of fame when he appeared. He even thought that he could eventually fight for a chance to become an Emperor.

However, his fame was overshadowed by one person's name instead.

More importantly, that person was already crippled with the Heavenly Punishment Seal three years ago and became an ordinary person. After that, there had been no news about that person for three years too.

Liu Yiqing was very dissatisfied with the strong comparison made between him and that man.

Just a few days ago, even his beloved goddess Feng Yaorao looked obsessed when Chu Kuangren was brought up in conversation. That was his final straw.

He swore that he would personally test Chu Kuangren's strength one day.

"Let's see whether this Chu Kuangren is as powerful as the rumors say, seeing that the world has not forgotten him yet!"

Liu Yiqing looked towards the Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation and said.

"Rumor has it that the Heavenly Punishment Seal has made him no different than an ordinary person." Beside Liu Yiqing, another young man uttered.

That person was standing under the shade of a tree silently.

A pale face revealed when the sun rays shone upon him as he walked out. That person was also a sky-pride whose name was listed on the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard.

He was Yin Li, ranked twenty-fourth on the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard!

He was neither an empyrean walker nor a sky-pride from the Nine Heavens. In fact, he was one of the ordinary sky-prides who had gotten stronger with the help of various Opportunities of Fortune he had obtained throughout these three years.

That person was displeased with Chu Kuangren, too, for reasons similar to Liu Yiqing.

Today, the two of them joined forces and arrived here to test Chu Kuangren.

“They’re here.”

Liu Yiqing uttered lightly.

Two figures were slowly walking on a path beneath the mountain range. Both of them were stunning beauties.

One was dressed in red while the other was dressed in blue.

“Jun Yi and Jin Feiyan, ranked fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh on the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard. They’re both Daoists from the Black Heaven Sect.”

“As long as we follow them, we can surely enter the Black Heaven Sect.”

Of course, both Liu Yiqing and Yin Li would never hastily enter the Black Heaven Sect’s territory. After all, the Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation was not set up just for show.

It was a formation technique that even a Sage Ruler could not breakthrough. Based on their current strength, rushing in was akin to seeking instant death.

Hence, they had concocted a plan beforehand.

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That was to have someone from the Black Heaven Sect lead them in!

They had gotten wind that Jin Feiyan and Jun Yi were inseparable. They traveled together in the outside world and would return to the Black Heaven Sect every six months.

These few days just happened to be the time when both of them would return.

“Get ready to move.”

Liu Yiqing said.

Yin Li nodded. With a wave of his sleeve, a black bundle of smoke appeared, immediately enveloping and concealing them within the void.

Such a concealment technique was extremely advanced, and it was one of the Opportunities of Fortune that Yin Li obtained. Even a Sage Ruler might not be able to spot them, let alone Jun Yi and Jin Feiyan.

Both of them followed closely behind the two ladies as they entered the Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation.

After walking into the Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation, Jun Yi took out a jade sword. Both ladies then followed the sword as it guided them on the path towards the Black Heaven Sect.

On the way, they passed by one formation technique after another, which intertwined with each other in a very complicated manner. It was the main contributing factor as to why the formation technique was impossible to defend against.

Without the guidance from the jade sword, even a Sage Ruler would not be able to escape easily should he happen to take a wrong turn or step.

The formation was just too terrifying.

Liu Yiqing and Yin Li followed closely behind the two ladies, afraid they would lose sight of them if they put too much distance between them.

“Roar...”

At this time, a roar was heard from the skies

A ferocious Cloud Dragon was soaring among the clouds.

Both Liu Yiqing and Yin Li, who were hiding in the void, trembled with fear upon seeing the Cloud Dragon. A look of horror flashed across their eyes.

‘What kind of monster is that?’

‘What the f*ck is going on with this formation technique?!’

“Hi...”

Jin Feiyan happily waved and greeted it. She had clearly gotten used to the Cloud Dragon’s presence.

Beside her, Jun Yi shook her head helplessly. “This dragon is only a part of the Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation. It doesn’t even have a mind of its own. What’s the point of greeting it?”

“I’m happy to be back. That’s all.”

Jin Feiyan smiled.

Both Liu Yiqing and Yin Li breathed a sigh of relief as they hid inside the void.

‘No mind of its own?’

'It's good that it's not sentient. If it really does have a mind of its own, what are we supposed to do once it notices us?'

At that moment, they started to regret it.

They would not even trespass their way in here if they knew this in the first place. After all, there was a reason the Black Heaven Sect's mega formation was named the eleventh Forbidden Area.

Soon, both Jun Yi and Jin Feiyan had arrived at the Black Heaven Sect's mountain entrance.

Once they greeted Elder Ruyan and the others, both of them went to visit the Heavenly Towering Palace as they usually do every time they were home.

Along the way, both Liu Yiqing and Yin Li observed everything that was going inside the Black Heaven Sect.

Although the Black Heaven Sect had invested a lot of resources into their disciples, to improve everyone's strength, only a few Daoists took them seriously.

"Jun Yi, how long more do you think our Sect Leader will take to come out from his closed-door meditation?"

Jin Feiyan casually asked while they were on their way to the Heavenly Towering Palace.

Both Liu Yiqing and Yin Li immediately pricked their ears up the moment they heard that. They knew that the Sect Leader that Jin Feiyan was talking about was Chu Kuangren.

However, what surprised them was the fact that Chu Kuangren was in closed-door meditation. Rumor had it that Chu Kuangren had the Heavenly Punishment Seal on him and had lost his cultivation.

‘Is he trying to unlock the Heavenly Punishment Seal?’

‘Give me a break.’

How could someone below a Sage’s level possibly break free from a seal that even the Emperors of Old could not unlock?

Both of them listened attentively to Jin Feiyan and Jun Yi’s conversation.

“I have no idea, but this is the longest our Sect Leader has ever been in closed-door meditation. It seems like the Heavenly Punishment Seal is extremely difficult to deal with.”

“Oh, even the heavens are not in favor of our Sect Leader’s talent.”

Both of them continued to chat until they arrived at the Heavenly Towering Palace. Having long known that they were coming back, Lan Yu, Gu Linglong, and Lil Bing went up to welcome both of them.

However, at this moment, a fireball suddenly burst in the skies. The Godly Phoenix soared into the air and stared coldly behind Jun Yi and Jin Feiyan. “Who and where did you guys come from?! How dare you sneak into a place like this? Show yourselves!”

Chapter 434: The Descendant Self Guards Its Master, Taking People’s Stuff Without Permission, Very Rude

“Who and where did you guys come from?! How dare you sneak into a place like this? Show yourselves!”

Lan Yu and Gu Linglong’s expression dropped at the Godly Phoenix’s cry. Both of them quickly put on their guard and stared at both Jun Yi and Jin Feiyan’s back.

Liu Yiqing and Yin Li were also extremely surprised.

Their concealment was blown!

The two of them then stepped out of the void.

Both Jun Yi and Jin Feiyan’s expressions turned grim upon seeing those two. They did not expect that they had been tailed by someone all this time!

No one else could go through the Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation.

Those two must have followed them through earlier.

“Who are you people?”

Lan Yu asked coldly.

“Tsk, this divine beast is the real deal, alright. I can’t believe it managed to see through my concealment technique.” Yin Li looked at the Godly Phoenix in surprise.

Even a Sage Ruler could not detect his technique. However, the Godly Phoenix had such remarkable perception that it managed to sense their presence up close.

“Liu Yiqing and Yin Li, sky-prides who’re ranked twenty-fifth and twenty-fourth in the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard.” Jun Yi revealed their identities. She had been in the outside world for a while, so she definitely knew a lot more about these people.

“We’re here because we want to see Chu Kuangren.”

Liu Yiqing uttered, stating his motive right at the start.

“Insolent fool!”

Lan Yu yelled with a cold expression. Having snuck into the Black Heaven Sect and now seeking to meet Chu Kuangren, how could she possibly let this slide?

Without another word, she immediately attacked.

A dense Holy Radiant Intent erupted from her punch.

Liu Yiqing's pupils shrank. 'The power of that punch is on par with the top thirty sky-prides on the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard.'

'How can such a sky-pride exist inside the Black Heaven Sect?!'

"Silver-haired woman..."

"Rumour has it that Chu Kuangren has a Winged Human follower by his side. I suppose that's her, then. I can't believe she's this powerful."

Liu Yiqing did not dare to let his guard down, and he channeled his spiritual power to unleash a punch. His vigorous surging spiritual power gathered in the air and formed a gigantic palm sign.

When the two energies collided, the impact pushed Lan Yu and Liu Yiqing back.

Meanwhile, Yin Li immediately turned his figure into a black shadow and disappeared upon diving into a shaded area.

His goal was clear.

That was to enter the Daoist Palace and find Chu Kuangren!

“Hmph, you dare disturb my brother’s closed door-meditation? Get out of my sight.”

The others may not be able to find Yin Li, but the Godly Phoenix possessed extremely keen senses. Its golden eyes darted back and forth into the shadows.

It did not take her long before she found Yin Li and immediately attacked him.

Golden flames blasted from her mouth.

The Godly Phoenix today was said to be the strongest being inside the Black Heaven Sect as her flames could burn even a Great Sage to death!

Slightly horrified, Yin Li kept on dodging the flames in the shadows.

Perhaps it was because of the concern that the area was the Towering Heavenly Palace, the Godly Phoenix did not dare to go all out in fear of disturbing Chu Kuangren.

However, that gave Yin Li the opportunity to take advantage of the situation.

Yin Li searched the Towering Heavenly Palace while he dodged the Godly Phoenix’s flames, and soon, he found Chu Kuangren’s closed-door meditation location.

It was because that location was the only one with seals and restricting barriers placed around it.

Hence, that must be where Chu Kuangren was.

He then dashed towards that house with curiosity in his eyes. Despite his dissatisfaction towards Chu Kuangren, he was curious about what made the latter so special to have garnered so much fame that the outside world still remembered him until this day.

“Let me see who you truly are.” Yin Li approached the house and raised his hand with spiritual power gathered around it, preparing to break through the restriction barriers.

However, a surge of sword qi immediately swept out like a violent wind.

It was so powerful that even Yin Li was forced back dozens of meters. He looked towards that room with surprise.

“Isn’t Chu Kuangren restrained by the Heavenly Punishment Seal? Where did this sword qi come from? Has he managed to unlock the seal?!”

“That’s impossible... No one has ever done it...”

Lan Yu, Liu Yiqing, and the others[1], who were in the middle of the fight, all looked towards the sword qi curiously. They were surprised.

“This sword qi... It’s the Sect Leader. Has he recovered his full strength?!”

Jin Feiyan was excited.

The others felt the same, too.

Under everyone's gaze, a gorgeous white jade sword broke through the room's window and flew out. It then placed itself before the door of that room. Surges of sword qi swirled around that sword. It was as if it was guarding the room against a million-strong army.

"Boundary Emperor Weapon! It's a Boundary Emperor Weapon with a mind of its own!"

"This must be the sword that Chu Kuangren has infused with a sword soul. The sword that's ranked number one in the Hundred Swords Spectrum, the Descendant Self Sword!"

Yin Li looked at the Descendant Self Sword with passion in his eyes.

It was the best sword in the world.

"That sword qi was unleashed by this Descendant Self Sword on its own. What a great sword. I can't believe it even has the will to protect its own master. If this sword grows in the future, it can rival or even exceed the strength of most Emperor Weapons!" Yin Li exclaimed excitedly. He could imagine himself obtaining that sword and decimating everyone with it.

Without another word, his figure immediately darted forwards and grabbed the Descendant Self Sword.

However, surges of sword qi swirled and shot out from the Descendant Sword!

As if he was prepared for something like this, Yin Li's figure appeared and disappeared at random. He was using some weird technique to dodge the incoming attacks.

None of the streaks of sword qi that filled the air managed to hit him.

Soon, Yin Li had come before the Descendant Self Sword. With a dense surge of spiritual power between his fingers, he reached out and grabbed the sword's handle.

A surge of sword qi erupted from the Descendant Self Sword, attempting to resist Yin Li's palm.

A battle soon broke between a person and a sword. Surges of sword qi and spiritual power intertwined and formed a horrifying energy field around them.

The ground in the surrounding area soon cracked and began to cave in.

"Stop it."

Jin Feiyan and Jun Yi rushed out towards him.

As soon as both their swords clashed, a sword formation containing the power of flames and water formed. A red and blue colored sword ray then unleashed towards Yin Li.

“Hmph, you want to stop me? Too bad!”

Yin Li waved his sleeves, and a Black Mantle suddenly appeared in mid-air, repelling all the sword qi away.

That Black Mantle was a powerful Boundary Emperor Weapon.

It was also Yin Li’s greatest Opportunity of Fortune as well.

No matter how remarkable the Descendant Self Sword was, it still could not unleash its full strength without being controlled by someone.

The sword qi gradually lost against Yin Li’s palm.

Everyone looked on anxiously from the side.

That was Chu Kuangren’s personal sword!

They could never allow that sword to be tainted by someone else’s hand.

“Let me through!”

The Godly Phoenix unleashed a golden fireball that landed on the Black Mantle, but it still could not break through it.

After all, that was a Boundary Emperor Weapon. Even a Sage Ruler could not destroy it.

One meter, half a meter, a quarter of a meter...

Yin Li's hand got closer and closer towards the Descendant Self Sword.

"Taking other people's stuff without permission is quite rude, you know."

At this moment, an apathetic voice suddenly came out from inside the room.

Then, the surrounding spiritual qi surged and interweaved into countless mysterious runes in the void, forming a huge golden sword!

In an instant, an overpowering Sword-based Daoist Rhyme raged everywhere like a crashing tide, spreading so far that all the cultivators in the Black Heaven Sect could feel it.

At the sword mountain far away, the sounds of a thousand swords clanging could be heard.

Within the few cottages, the Sages opened their eyes.

A great golden runic sword fell from the air along with a domineering force and cut through the Black Mantle!

Unable to bear the impact of that terrifying force, Yin Li was sent flying out of the Daoist Palace before his body landed on the ground, dripping with blood.

The sudden change of events attracted everyone's attention.

Everyone looked towards that room.

Lan Yu, Gu Linglong, and others got even more excited.

Chapter 435: Although I Still Have The Heavenly Punishment Seal, I Can Still Reign Undefeated In This World

A squeaking sound was heard.

As the door of that room opened, a familiar person walked out.

The person was dressed in white with long black hair, handsome, and had an otherworldly demeanor!

A weird aura instantly emanated across the realm. For a moment, the winds stopped blowing, clouds stopped rolling, and everything else stopped moving. A hush fell over the realm!

This person's appearance had seemingly sunk the heavens and earth.

"Master..."

"Sect Leader!"

Lan Yu, Jun Yi, and the others could not hold back their delight.

The weather that day was clear.

Chu Kuangren had come out from his closed-door meditation!

"So that's Chu Kuangren!" Liu Yiqing was shocked yet surprised upon seeing Chu Kuangren's appearance.

Although the person standing before him indeed possessed an otherworldly demeanor, Liu Yiqing still could not detect the slightest hint of spiritual power in him.

'That person is just like an ordinary man with no cultivation base. But if he truly is a normal person, then how can we explain the great runic sword earlier?'

'What is going on with this guy?!'

‘Has he unlocked his Heavenly Punishment Seal?’

Meanwhile, Chu Kuangren did not seem bothered with the current situation in his Daoist Palace. He simply walked towards the Descendant Self Sword, picked it up, and stroked two fingers on the sword body. The sword began to tremble slightly and let out a clear sword chant which reverberated through the skies.

“Thank you for standing guard for me by my side all these years.”

Chu Kuangren chuckled.

He then tied the Descendant Self Sword to his waist and walked out of the Daoist Palace.

Lan Yu and the others quickly came up and greeted him.

“It’s been a while, everyone.”

Chu Kuangren greeted everyone before he looked at Liu Yiqing and Yin Li, whom he asked, “Tell me, what’s the reason for your visit?”

“To challenge you, of course!”

Liu Yiqing took a deep breath and replied coldly.

Chu Kuangren froze for a second upon hearing that. However, he then let out a chuckle. "Challenge me? Oh, it's been quite some time since I last heard something like that."

It was as if he was reminiscing about the past.

After all, it had been quite a long time since he was challenged to a fight.

Whoosh...

While Chu Kuangren reminisced, Liu Yiqing took the opportunity and rushed towards him, blasting a surge of horrifying energy from his palm.

Sensing his actions, Chu Kuangren turned his head and glanced at him.

That glance alone made Liu Yiqing's expression sink as an incredibly overpowering and terrifying aura instantly weighed down upon him.

That aura was not something a normal cultivator had.

'This is... the Heavenly Dao Aura!'

At that moment, it was as if the handsome Chu Kuangren before him had transformed into the almighty supreme Heavenly Dao, whose aura could suppress every living being in the realm!

How was this possible?

How could the Heavenly Dao Aura appear from a mere human?!

Before Liu Yiqing's palm qi could get near Chu Kuangren, it dispersed on the spot due to the intimidation he felt from the menacing aura in his opponent's glance.

His legs turned soft, and he fell to his knees on the ground.

He had lost the fight before he could even attack!

How could he possibly compete with the heavens itself?

"Oh, he already kneeled." Chu Kuangren chuckled.

"Chu Kuangren, did you really unlock the Heavenly Punishment Seal?"

Liu Yiqing asked with a pale face.

"Nope. But for me to defeat you, it doesn't really matter."

Chu Kuangren lifted his arm as he replied. An invisible ripple appeared in the skies, and suddenly, multiple runes gathered in the void, merging to form a halo around both Liu Yiqing and Yin Li's bodies.

Despite how they urged their spiritual power to resist, it was futile.

Lan Yu and the others were incredibly surprised to see that move.

That was because all this while, they had not sensed any sign of spiritual power surging from Chu Kuangren's body at all. If so, then how could he cast the runes?

"Lock these two up for now."

Not long after, Elder Ruyan, Fairfrost Sage, and others rushed to the Heavenly Towering Palace once they received news that Chu Kuangren had come out from his closed-door meditation.

"Sect Leader, did you manage to unlock the Heavenly Punishment Seal?"

Elder Ruyan asked curiously.

"Not yet."

Everyone was disappointed to hear that.

However, they were not surprised as well.

Although they had no idea how terrifying the Heavenly Punishment Seal was, they knew that it was something even the Emperors of Old could deal with. Since Chu Kuangren had only been in closed-door meditation for three years, it was quite normal that he could not unlock it.

“What’s with all the long faces? Just because I said I haven’t, it doesn’t mean I can’t unlock it.” Chu Kuangren said with a smile.

“What does that mean? Is there any difference?”

“Of course there is. If only I had more time, this Heavenly Punishment Seal would’ve been fully unlocked...”

During the three years of closed-door meditation, he had gained complete insights into the Nine-Layered Heavenly Punishment Seal with the help of the Dao Enlightening Tea Bush and his crazy level of cognizance. Besides that, his Universal Cauldron Physique had also refined and unlocked eight out of the nine layers of the Heavenly Punishment Seal!

Only one layer remained before he could fully unlock the seal as a whole.

However, the troubles caused by both Liu Yiqing and Yin Li gave him no choice but to come out of closed-door meditation earlier than planned.

Elder Ruyan and the others were fuming mad upon hearing Chu Kuangren’s explanation. “D*mn those two b*st*rds. They will suffer for this.”

“Sect Leader, I shall dispose of those two for you right now.”

A short-tempered elder said out loud.

“Come back, now. They are just two small fries. Don’t bother wasting your efforts. I may have had to come out from my closed-door meditation earlier than expected, but I did not suffer any losses. The Heavenly Punishment Seal will still be unlocked in due time.”

Chu Kuangren said.

Those words made everyone feel better.

After that, Elder Ruyan updated Chu Kuangren about the Black Heaven Sect’s developments for the past three years.

Having invested large amounts of resources into nurturing every Black Heaven Sect disciple, everyone had made rapid progress in their cultivation level. A few of the Daoists had even made a name for themselves in the outside world.

Besides that, Elder Ruyan, the Seventh Forefather, and a few other elders had also succeeded in their ascension trials, reaching the level of a Boundary Sage.

“That’s great. How is our resource consumption holding up?”

“We still have quite a lot remaining.”

Elder Ruyan answered.

After all, Chu Kuangren had brought back too many resources. Just the contents of the Serpent Deity's treasury alone could last the Black Heaven Sect for a long time.

Even if Elder Ruyan trained the disciples without caring about the cost in the past three years, their resources would not be exhausted that quickly.

This was the first time in Elder Ruyan's life that she felt the "pain" of having too many resources and nowhere to use them all.

"I see. Just use as much as you can as you see fit."

Chu Kuangren said lightly.

If those words got out, there was no telling how many people would be shocked.

After all, the other orthodoxies had to carefully plan and allocate their resources, unlike Chu Kuangren, who could use as much as he wished without consideration or planning, and regardless of cost.

It was something a normal person could say out loud.

"I guess Nangong Huang and the others are still out in the world, huh? I wonder how much has changed outside." Chu Kuangren gazed into the horizon and murmured.

He chuckled. "Why don't I go out on a journey?"

Elder Ruyan's and the others' faces dropped upon hearing what he said.

"Sect Leader, please reconsider your plans."

"That's right, Sect Leader. Your Heavenly Punishment Seal has not been unlocked yet. If you venture out now, what can you do if your enemies come looking for trouble?"

"You can't afford to suffer any more losses."

The elders tried to persuade him.

"Don't worry. Although my Heavenly Punishment Seal hasn't been unlocked, I still have my own ways to protect myself."

Chu Kuangren then lifted his arm and gathered the spiritual qi from his surroundings. One by one, numerous mysterious runes appeared in the void. Soon, half the sky was filled with densely packed runes that emanated boundless surges of aura.

That very sight shocked everyone at the scene. Even the Sages were stunned to see the countless runes in the air.

Standing under the sky full of runes, Chu Kuangren's figure appeared unusually stalwart and mighty despite having no sign of spiritual power on him.

He was akin to an ancient Runic Emperor who could control everything in the heavens and earth.

"If anyone wishes to defeat me, they are free to try. Although I, Chu Kuangren, still have the Heavenly Punishment Seal on me, I can still reign undefeated in this world!"

Chapter 436: Ransom, Developing The Mind Power, Leaving The Black Heaven Sect

No one knew just what Chu Kuangren had managed to achieve apart from comprehending his Heavenly Punishment Seal in three years of closed-door meditation.

What was more, they had no clue how Chu Kuangren managed to exhibit a set of remarkable runic abilities in the absence of any spiritual energies.

However, what they did know was that the undefeatable, daring, and energetic Chu Kuangren was back!

Having witnessed the sky full of runic symbols, the Black Heaven Sect disciples were so moved that their eyes turned red from all the tears of joy they were holding back.

"He's back. Sect Leader is finally back."

"I knew it. The Sect Leader would never be defeated by some random seal. With his capability, he would surely become an Emperor one day."

“That’s right...”

...

The Black Heaven disciples were not the only ones who were surprised.

Locked within a stone cellar by runic chains, Liu Yiqing and Yin Li were in disbelief when they looked to the sky.

“He can still unleash such a technique while under the Heavenly Punishment Seal. So this is the unparalleled Chu Kuangren who stunned the world three years ago!”

Liu Yiqing muttered.

Liu Yiqing was initially in denial of the battle outcome. However, he could now see how far he fared behind Chu Kuangren.

“No wonder Yaorao admired him so deeply. No wonder every cultivator in this world keeps reminiscing his tales...” Liu Yiqing laughed bitterly.

Yin Li was sitting in another corner. His fair skin had turned completely white from his injuries.

Yin Li recalled something from his memories. “The first place in the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard of the Divine Predictor Pavilion has always been empty for the past three years. Rumor has it that the divine predictor is reserving it for Chu Kuangren.”

“It looks like it’s true after all. Seeing his techniques while under the punishment seal, it’s hard to imagine how overpowered Chu Kuangren will become once he manages to break the seal. No one else can ever come close to topping the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard.”

Yin Li lamented. No matter how dissatisfied he was, he could only admit defeat in the face of such a remarkable gap in their abilities.

The runic symbols gradually faded from the sky.

Soon.

Tip-tap...

The sound of footsteps approached the stone cellar.

Chu Kuangren came before the stone cellar and peeked at the cultivators with mischief. “Pfft, you both are surely brave to infiltrate the Black Heaven Sect with that level of cultivation.”

“If it wasn’t for you, no one else could’ve stopped us.”

Liu Yiqing said.

It was true. Although the duo had yet to ascend into a Sage, their combat strengths were comparable to a Seven-Step Sage or even a Great Sage! On top of some tricks such as Yin Li's Black Mantle, no one in the Black Heaven Sect could have stopped them.

Or at least, no one was capable of killing them.

Never would they have thought that Chu Kuangren would possess a set of remarkable runic techniques while under the Heavenly Punishment Seal.

He could mobilize countless runes without relying on even an ounce of spiritual energy.

Liu Yiqing could no longer withhold his curiosity. "Every runic technique surely requires some level of spiritual energy. How did you do it?"

"Oh, you mean this?"

Chu Kuangren snapped his finger. A runic symbol materialized in front of him before it turned into a ball of lightning that struck out at rock near them and shattered it.

Liu Yiqing and Yin Li stared closely, confirming that Chu Kuangren did not use any spiritual energy.

The rune was forged out of the natural spiritual qi around them.

Chu Kuangren had found a way to mobilize the natural spiritual qi without using his spiritual energy.

This was one of Chu Kuangren's findings during his closed-door meditation. He could use his spiritual thoughts to channel the heavenly and earthly spiritual qi into countless forms of runes!

It was a feat only Chu Kuangren could achieve, for he possessed the Conjurer's Talent and had studied the Elysian Emperor Scripture. He was incredibly well-versed in Runic Dao too.

The Heavenly Punishment Seal was not entirely a bad thing after all. It allowed Chu Kuangren to develop many techniques related to his mind power, putting his Conjurer's Talent to great use.

By studying the Heavenly Punishment Seal, his spiritual thought grew stronger as time passed. In this aspect, Chu Kuangren's spiritual thoughts had far surpassed that of any ordinary Sages.

Even a Great Sage would find it difficult to defeat him.

Besides, Chu Kuangren had also discovered other perks.

Chu Kuangren, however, would not reveal his discoveries to Liu Yiqing and Yin Li, so he said to them, "I gain nothing if I kill both of you. How about this? Is there anyone who's willing to rescue the two of you? I'll make an arrangement to have them prepare some ransom payments."

To Chu Kuangren, Liu Yiqing and Yin Li were both insignificant characters. Their deaths were almost inconsequential to him.

Hence, he might as well think of a way to benefit from this situation.

“Ransom? There are countless treasures within the Parchprime Palace. If you let me go, I’ll surely let you have it.”

Liu Yiqing’s eyes lit up.

Since Liu Yiqing was confined to a cell, he had no choice but to yield to Chu Kuangren’s demand.

“I know of an Emperor’s Opportunity of Fortune. If you let me go, I’ll make sure to share it with you,” Yin Li said hastily. Similarly, he had no more strengths to resist. This was the only bargaining chip he had.

As for his Boundary Emperor Weapon, it had long been confiscated by Chu Kuangren.

Chu Kuangren stroked his chin and said, “Let you go? Who are you kidding? Who else can I seek the ransom payment from if I set both of you free?”

“What’s your plan, then?”

“Write a letter for me. I’ll make a personal visit to the Parchprime Palace to receive my payment. As for your Emperor’s Opportunity of Fortune, why not tell me more about it? Only time will tell if both of you deserve to be freed,” Chu Kuangren said.

The duo was starting to feel uncertain.

It seemed like Chu Kuangren was holding all the cards.

“Fine, I’ll write it.” Liu Yiqing nodded.

He had no choice but to follow Chu Kuangren’s suggestion.

/strong>

Yin Li also revealed what he knew about the Emperor’s Opportunity of Fortune to Chu Kuangren, who would personally make a trip to verify his claims.

Upon receiving the letter and learning about the Opportunity of Fortune, Chu Kuangren took out a red scarf and threw it outwards. The scarf instantly transformed into a red forcefield that sealed the stone cellar within.

It was the Nine Profound Heavens Fire Forcefield, which the Acheron Manor Lord previously used to seal the Black Heaven Sect within. It was one of the Black Heaven Sect’s findings when they looted the battlefield.

The Nine Profound Heavens Fire Forcefield was a Boundary Emperor Weapon, so there was no way the duo could escape.

Only then did Chu Kuangren feel assured enough to leave the cultivators alone.

...

Black Heaven Sect, outside the Astonishing Sea of Clouds Formation.

In the past three years, many cultivators had visited the perimeters of the mega formation in hopes of looting any Opportunities of Fortune.

It was not entirely a fruitless endeavor.

The great war that took place three years ago was intense. Countless cultivators had perished, with many Sages included amongst those casualties.

Their remains and possessions were scattered all over the battlefield. It was reasonable to suggest that the Black Heaven Sect would not be able to locate them all.

Soon, word spread that someone had found an Honorable Weapon in the outer perimeter of the Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation. This caught the attention of many cultivators, which created a gold rush phenomenon near the Black Heaven Sect. Many had even risked their lives entering the Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation in search of valuable items.

Some managed to discover some valuable items, but there were many who lost their lives as well.

“Old Li, did you manage to find anything today?”

In the outer perimeter of the Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation, a middle-aged cultivator was speaking to someone who had just returned from the mega formation.

Old Li curved his lips and said, "I've searched for more than half a day only to loot a couple of soulstones. How unlucky."

"Three years have passed, so most valuable items have most probably been found by now. I plan to leave after spending a while longer here."

The middle-aged cultivator chuckled and said.

"Sigh, same for me. Eh, what's wrong with you...?"

Old Li sighed helplessly, only to notice that the middle-aged cultivator was staring at something behind him with his eyes wide open. It was as if the middle-aged cultivator had just witnessed an unbelievable phenomenon.

Old Li curiously turned around to see a man and a lady exiting the formation.

Chapter 437: A Familiar Name, Rise To The Top Of Soaring Dragon Leaderboard

The Astonishing Sea of Clouds Formation.

In the outer perimeter, dozens of cultivators stared dumbfoundedly at the appearance of the duo.

Most of them had yet to recover their senses even when the duo had left.

“Was that...”

Old Li stuttered as he struggled to find the correct words to speak.

“It was definitely him!”

The middle-aged cultivator said with certainty as he stared into the duo’s direction. There was an inexplicable hint of excitement written all over his face.

“It’s really him! But didn’t the rumors say that he’s been sealed by Heavenly Punishment? If so, why is he leaving the formation?”

Old Li was equally puzzled as he was surprised.

“Why not?”

“He’s Chu Kuangren! Is there anything that he can’t do?!” the middle-aged cultivator said in excitement.

Old Li stared strangely at the middle-aged cultivator.

He would never have thought that his friend was a die-hard fan of Chu Kuangren.

...

Firmament Star, Divine Predictor Pavillion. Three years ago, the Four Seas Firm had built this residence in dedication to the best divine predictor in this world.

Three years ago, the divine predictor had inferred the fate of the heavens and published the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard. After that, his reputation soared.

In front of the Divine Predictor Pavillion was a golden leaderboard.

It was the widely-known Soaring Dragon Leaderboard.

Any onlookers on the streets could read it just by looking up. The leaderboard would change anytime once the divine predictor sensed the shift in the heaven's message.

Many sky-prides were proud to be enlisted on the leaderboard. After all, those who were ranked closer to the top would find themselves recognized worldwide.

In a restaurant nearby the Divine Predictor Pavillion.

Many patrons had gathered in a huge room. Some of them were drinking away, while others were discussing current issues. Amongst these issues was the discussion of sky-prides who originated from all forms of orthodoxies.

“Two days ago, the fourth-ranking Nine Heavens’ sky-pride, Wang Tianteng, fought Xiao Lintian of the Heavenly Golden Imperial Palace. I heard Xiao Lintian didn’t even survive ten techniques before he was defeated. What shocking news.”

“Tsk, it’s surprising considering that Xiao Lintian is the host of the Heavenly Golden Imperial Physique and ranks eleventh in the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard. It seems like there’s a huge leap in abilities between the top ten sky-prides of the leaderboard and the remaining sky-prides.”

“Indeed. This must be an embarrassing loss for the Heavenly Golden Imperial Palace. Apparently, Xiao Jingchen has since announced that he will fight Wang Tianteng the next time he sees him. If the battle does happen, I wonder who will come out on top.”

“It’ll surely be an interesting battle.”

“Sigh. The world does belong to these sky-prides now. The older Sages can do nothing but to watch their glories fade away.”

The patrons were conversing with one another.

One of the patrons looked out the street to the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard and marveled at the names in envy.

Suddenly, something caught him off guard. As he rubbed his eyes and took another closer look, the patron exclaimed, "Look! The Soaring Dragon Leaderboard is changing!"

The other patrons did not think it was a huge deal at first.

After all, sky-prides fought with each other, so it was common that some of them would emerge as victors and others as losers. Some would even end up dead.

The Soaring Dragon Leaderboard was never meant to be fixed, and it could change at any time.

Even the top ten names had been shuffled many times before.

"Let's see whose rankings have changed."

The cultivator began to read the list from the bottom and noticed that there were no drastic changes at all.

"Nothing's changed at all. Why are you..."

It was then his eyes fell onto the first row of the leaderboard, which he rarely paid attention to in the past.

After all, that place had been empty for the past three years.

However, the first row of the leaderboard was now glowing with traces of golden lights!

The rays of lights intersected as Daoist Rhymes flowed seamlessly around the leaderboard.

It was almost as if a person's name was about to appear on the list.

The patrons immediately gasped in shock. At that point, everyone was staring deadly at the leaderboard. No one even dared to blink.

"Gosh, finally! After three years of silence, there's finally news about the first rank of the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard. I wonder who will bear the honors?"

"Didn't the divine predictor say that he was waiting for someone? Why the sudden change? Has that person finally appeared?"

"Who exactly is capable of defeating all these strong cultivators and emerging at the top?"

Their eyes were glued to the leaderboard.

The change in the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard had caught much attention in Firmament Star, and countless cultivators were curiously awaiting its reveal.

Soon, the name of the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard's first rank was finally revealed in two golden, glamorous letters!

It was a familiar name that belonged to the distant past.

Chu Kuangren!

After Chu Kuangren's name appeared on the leaderboard, the world fell silent. No one knew what to say.

It was a name familiar to every cultivator of this world!

Albeit its familiarity, no one had ever thought they would see this name appearing at the top of the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard.

After all, the person was under the Heavenly Punishment Seal!

With the Heavenly Punishment Seal, his cultivation was rendered inaccessible, so how exactly was he going to climb the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard?!

"How's it possible? How's it him?!"

"Impossible! Has the divine predictor made a mistake?"

"This is nonsense. No matter how much the divine predictor admires Chu Kuangren, he can't just place him at the top of the leaderboard."

A commotion soon started among the cultivators on the street.

“Divine predictor, what’s this all about?!”

A voice came from the edge of the world.

It was one of the Firmament Star’s great ones.

“I need an explanation too.”

Another great one demanded an explanation.

“Divine predictor, Chu Kuangren is under the Heavenly Punishment Seal. How can he lead the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard? Don’t you think you need to explain?”

“That’s right! Anyone can be the first, but not Chu Kuangren!”

“Divine predictor, you’re making a grave mistake!”

The great ones, who were usually nowhere to be found, began to question the divine predictor. All this for just a single name.

A name that the world could never forget nor contain its existence!

Everyone had heard the voices of the great ones.

For reasons left unknown, the crowd could sense the odd emotions in the great ones' tones. It was almost as if they were... panicking?!

Were the great ones... panicking?!

What an incredulous observation.

"It's just a name. Do they need to overreact?"

Someone muttered.

Another person replied, "Of course they do. It's Chu Kuangren, a person who defined an entire era!"

In the Divine Predictor Pavillion.

The divine predictor was faced with countless questions from the great ones, to which he merely replied, "This is merely my inference of the heavens' fate. If you are unhappy with the results, perhaps you should pose your questions to the heavens!"

The great ones were speechless.

Ask the heavens?

How?

They did not know how to communicate with the Heavenly Dao.

Just when the great ones were about to question the divine predictor's abilities, they received another news... Chu Kuangren had left the Black Heaven Sect!

This made the great ones even more flustered.

"He's out!"

"How does he have the courage to come out?!"

"There are too many people who want him dead. With the Heavenly Punishment Seal constraining him, only death awaits him! This Soaring Dragon Leaderboard is a ruse!"

"Hmph, indeed!"

The great ones soon vanished.

It was unknown what kind of plans they had for Chu Kuangren. However, one thing was for sure — the great ones would not just sit idly by as Chu Kuangren roamed around.

It was funny how everyone seemed to be convinced that it was over for Chu Kuangren.

Yet, as Chu Kuangren reappeared after disappearing under the radar for three years, he was still the center of focus as he once was. Just his name itself was enough to strike fear into the hearts of many and cause a huge uproar!

On this day, Chu Kuangren exited the Astonishing Cloud of Seas Formation and instantly rose to the top of the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard!

Chapter 438: Revolution, The Royal Azure Dynasty's Current Situation

News of Chu Kuangren's exit from the mega formation soon reached all corners of the world. Every influential powerhouse would have caught wind of the news by now.

Although Chu Kuangren was still under the Heavenly Punishment Seal, his reappearance in this world still raised many concerns.

No one would ignore his presence; no one dared to.

In the Heavenly Golden Imperial Palace.

A terrifying burst of aura emanated on a mountain's peak.

A young cultivator dressed in golden robes slowly walked out with a powerful aura around him. The youngster was none other than Xiao Lintian.

He was the second sky-pride of the Heavenly Golden Imperial Palace.

"Chu Kuangren, you're finally out!"

"If that's the case, don't blame me for what I'm about to do. I shall make you pay for all the humiliations you've brought onto me!"

Then, Xiao Lintian transformed into a ray of light and vanished from sight.

Aside from Xiao Lintian, many other sky-prides were planning for their next moves as well, especially those who once crossed paths with Chu Kuangren three years ago.

The entire world was looking for Chu Kuangren.

However, where was he?

Chu Kuangren had arrived at the Royal Azure Dynasty.

More precisely, Chu Kuangren had arrived with Gu Linglong.

They had made this trip to visit Gu Linglong's father. After all, Gu Linglong had not seen her father for the past three years that she had been in the Black Heaven Sect.

However, Gu Linglong was infuriated and devastated by what she saw on the way back to the Royal Azure Dynasty.

Countless citizens had lost their homes and were starving on the streets. They frequently heard voices of protests against the kingdom's royalty.

What happened to the once-prosperous kingdom she left behind?

Within the Royal Azure Dynasty's city hall.

A group of bandits was raiding a cargo that was transported by a troop of soldiers. The soldiers could not fight back, so the only option left for them was to either flee the scene or die.

"Boss, these are Green Jaspers."

One of the bandits opened a crate.

Inside the crate was filled with green ornamental stones, each carved with a unique pattern that radiated a peculiar form of Daoist Rhyme.

This crate of Green Jaspers alone could fetch at least a million worth of upper-grade soulstones.

Meanwhile, the bandits had managed to secure thirty crates of them.

Thirty million soulstones were by no means a small amount. Some orthodoxies were not worth that much, even if they had sold all their assets.

“Damn it, those b*stards!” The bandit leader, who had a scar on his face, appeared to be a middle-aged person. Not only did he not cheer at the Green Jaspers before him, but he was cursing at the soldiers instead.

“How many orthodoxies have they raided to get all of these Green Jaspers? How many small orthodoxies have perished in the process? The royalties are growing more despicable!”

The scar-faced man yelled.

He then arranged for his subordinates to store these items before they began to leave.

At that moment, a man and two women appeared before them. Each of them looked like stellar individuals of their own.

One of the women dressed in red, long robes gave the bandits a cold glare.

“The dynasty’s law dictates that looting the royalty’s possession is a crime punishable by death!”

“Do all of you plead guilty?!”

The woman said coldly.

The bandits immediately withdrew their weapons in anticipation of a battle. The scar-faced bandit leader said, “Hmph, it looks like we have a royalty bootlicker here! The royalty has committed so many atrocities. You’ve destroyed countless lives, and all major orthodoxies in this kingdom hate you. I have no remorse in stealing your possessions.”

The woman replied coldly, “The Royal Azure Dynasty’s royalty has never interfered with the major orthodoxies within its kingdom. As long as they don’t breach the law, the royalty will not harm them. What do you mean that the royalty is hated by all major orthodoxies?”

“Hmph. Still playing ignorant, I see. If you wish to fight, I suggest that we skip this nonsense!” The scar-faced man retorted.

Just then, one of his subordinates looked at the woman and was suddenly struck by surprise. “Boss, this woman looks really familiar. I think she’s Queen Linglong.”

The scar-faced man was taken by surprise too. “Queen Linglong? Hasn’t she left for the Black Heaven Sect? Why’s she here? Are you sure it’s her?”

“I can confirm. I saw her from a distance a few years ago when I was in the capital city.”

The scar-faced man turned to Gu Linglong in shock.

Queen Linglong was known by many to be one of the most astonishing rulers of the kingdom. She had ascended to the throne as a woman even when the Crown Prince was still alive...

Not only had Queen Linglong brought stability to the kingdom, but the Royal Azure Dynasty had also flourished under her rulership.

However, three years ago, the legendary queen abruptly retreated from her throne and left for Black Heaven Sect. Her mission was to accompany her husband who was none other than the legendary Chu Kuangren.

“Your Majesty. I’m Bai Long, the Original Mad Sword Sect Leader!”

The sudden change in attitude stunned Gu Linglong for a moment.

“What’s all this about?”

“Ma’am, please come back and take control of your kingdom!”

Bai Long pleaded solemnly.

“Speak. What happened?”

“Ma’am, during your absence, the head of Yun family became the new ruler of the Royal Azure Dynasty. Later, in his effort to please the Craggy Ocean Tower, the new royalty robbed the people of its wealth as a gift to the unknown land’s orthodoxy. The Royal Azure Dynasty now lies in a precarious state.”

Bai Long described the entire event to Gu Linglong.

Gu Linglong’s face sank. “I’ll personally investigate this matter at the royal palace. If it’s true, be assured that I won’t let this matter rest.”

Now that she understood the latest development of the Royal Azure Dynasty, Gu Linglong would not sit idly by. The group soon made their way to the Royal Azure Palace.

...

In the Royal Azure Palace.

An elder was playing around with a piece of jadestone. Before the elder were several crates of treasures, each worth an enormous amount of value. These items were pillaged from the hands of the kingdom’s citizens.

A middle-aged man dressed in a royal robe was sitting beside the elder.

He was the current Royal Azure Dynasty Ruler, Yun Changfeng!

The Yun family was one of the noble families in the Royal Azure Dynasty. When the great war erupted at Black Heaven Sect, Yun Changfeng took this opportunity to rub shoulders with the Craggy Ocean Tower, using their resources to take over the kingdom. As a result, a revolution happened, and Yun Changfen ascended to the throne.

“Elder, what do you think about our contribution this time?”

“Hmm, not bad. Not bad at all.”

The white-haired elder nodded.

“Well, if that’s the case, I wonder if there are any updates to that matter we previously discussed...” Yun Changfeng smiled mischievously. He had no semblance of a noble ruler at all.

“Your performance has been rather satisfactory lately. Here, take this.”

The elder retrieved a medicinal bottle and tossed it to Yun Changfeng.

“Thank you, elder. Thank you!”

“These medicinal pills are capable of strengthening your soul. It won’t be long before you can defeat anyone who’s below the Sage Realm.”

The white-haired elder said.

Yun Changfeng was delighted. For the past few years, he had rubbed shoulders with the Craggy Ocean Tower, invested countless hours of effort, and contributed an endless amount of treasure just to have one of the Craggy Ocean Bestial Souls that he so desired.

This was one of Craggy Ocean Tower's secret medicinal pills. It was capable of strengthening his soul and enhancing his abilities.

"Your Majesty, bad news..."

At that moment, a palace guard rushed into the hall in panic.

It made Yun Changfeng annoyed. "What's there to be so panicky about? Can't you see that our elder is here? How rude."

"T-the ruler is here."

"The ruler? Am I not here? What in the heavens are you talking about?" Yun Changfeng said furiously.

"No, Sir, it's Queen Linglong! She's back! And she's accompanied by... Chu Kuangren!"

Chapter 439: Ten Thousand Cautious Guards, Can You Run From My Five Fingers Mountain?

From My Five Fingers Mountain?

“She’s accompanied by... Chu Kuangren!”

The palace guard stuttered. The mention of Chu Kuangren’s name had evoked a deep sense of fear within him.

The elder aside was stunned too, so much that the jadestone unconsciously slipped from his hands. With a clang, it broke into several pieces upon landing on the ground.

“Chu Kuangren’s here?! Why’s he here?”

The white-haired elder and Yun Changfeng were frightened.

The palace guard muttered to himself, “For starters, you’ve stripped this kingdom away from his wife’s family. How are you not expecting him to come?”

“Oh, that’s right, quick! Hurry and bring Gu Qing here.”

Yun Changfeng thought of a plan and hastily instructed the palace guard.

Gu Qing was the name of Gu Linglong’s father.

After occupying the Royal Azure Dynasty, Yun Changfeng did not kill Gu Qing and the rest of his family. Instead, he had them locked up after forcing them to consume a secret medicine that impaired their combat abilities. It was in hopes that these prisoners could one day be put to good use.

It seemed like this day had arrived faster than expected.

“Elder, you need not worry. Chu Kuangren is still under the Heavenly Punishment Seal, so he isn’t a threat. All we need to do is to deal with Gu Linglong.”

Yun Changfeng said to the elder.

Only then did the elder manage to calm himself down and forced a smile on his face. “That’s right. Chu Kuangren’s no longer a threat.”

Despite the self-reassurance, the elder was still feeling uneasy.

After all, it was Chu Kuangren they were talking about!

In the palace’s compound, tens of thousands of palace guards surrounded Chu Kuangren and his two other companions.

Chu Kuangren was leading at the front.

With his elegant sword strapped to his waist, Chu Kuangren carried a composed demeanor as he approached the grand hall nonchalantly.

The entire troop of palace guards retreated step by step. None of them dared to charge at Chu Kuangren.

Even though the palace guards noticed the absence of spiritual energies around Chu Kuangren, they could not muster the courage to halt him.

It was an interesting scene to witness ten thousand palace guards be intimidated by an ordinary person who could no longer use his spiritual energy.

“Chu Kuangren, this is the royal palace. We shall not tolerate your behavior!” a palace guard’s commander yelled. He was personally handpicked by Yun Changfeng to fill this spot. Hence, his loyalty towards the ruler was unlike any others.

Chu Kuangren played dumb and did not even bother to look at the commander.

Infuriated by Chu Kuangren’s disrespect, the commander withdrew his long sword, channeled his spiritual energy, and launched himself at Chu Kuangren.

However, before his long sword could reach Chu Kuangren, a ray of white light immediately struck the commander. In a split second, the commander’s body flew a hundred meters away and bashed into a palace wall.

“Chu Kuangren, Gu Linglong, I command thee to halt your actions!”

An abrupt voice interrupted the scene.

Yun Changfeng and the Craggy Ocean Tower's elder appeared.

They were initially frightened by the sight of Chu Kuangren. However, when they noticed that Chu Kuangren did not emit a single ounce of spiritual energy, the duo rejoiced and heaved huge sighs of relief.

"Chu Kuangren, I didn't think you'd dare venture beyond the Black Heaven Sect's territories. And Gu Linglong, I wasn't planning to harm you at all had you not returned, but it seems you were foolish enough to return."

Yun Changfeng smirked triumphantly.

With the lift of his hand, a ferocious bestial soul appeared above him. "If that's the case, allow me to fulfill your favor."

The wild bestial soul then charged towards Gu Linglong.

Beside Gu Linglong, Chu Kuangren observed his attack and commented, "Oh, it looks like the Craggy Ocean Tower is here too."

Gu Linglong greeted the incoming wild bestial souls with her long sword. Its blade was carved with the depiction of a bright lunar moon.

With the swing of her sword, the sword ray curved like a crescent moon, sending the beast howling in pain before it was sliced into half.

The energy contained within her attack already resembled that of a peak Boundary Sage.

For the past three years that Gu Linglong had been in the Black Heaven Sect, she did not merely occupy herself with house chores. Gu Linglong had also spent considerable effort in improving her skills.

In fact, her abilities were more or less on par with the sky-prides who were enlisted in the Soaring Dragon Leaderboard.

“What?!”

Yun Changfeng was shocked. The Craggy Ocean Bestial Soul that it took him so hard to earn had been destroyed by Gu Linglong in one sword move!

It was not even a close fight!

“You sure have big words for a treasonous thief!”

Gu Linglong snorted.

“Elder, please help me.” Knowing that he was incapable of defeating Gu Linglong, Yun Changfeng begged the Craggy Ocean Tower’s elder for help.

The white-haired elder took a glance at Gu Linglong and said, "Hmph, she's just a petty little girl who isn't even a Sage yet. Rest assured that she'll be done within seconds."

Then, the elder lifted his hands and unleashed a strong burst of Daoist Rhymes. A giant golden eagle suddenly appeared above them. It was the elder's Craggy Ocean Bestial Soul, and it possessed the ability equivalent to that of a Sage.

"If you dare make another move, I'll make sure it'll be the end of you and the entire Craggy Ocean Tower." Chu Kuangren finally spoke.

The elder was initially frightened by Chu Kuangren's abrupt threat.

However, he soon burst into a peal of laughter as if Chu Kuangren's words were a joke. "Chu Kuangren, who are you kidding? Do you think you're still the same undefeatable cultivator from three years ago?"

"The Heavenly Punishment Seal has chained you. You can't even use an ounce of your spiritual energy! How different are you from an ordinary person? You wish to destroy the Craggy Ocean Tower? Stop joking around. Do you think the forces involved in the great war will just let you roam around freely? It'll be a few more days before you'll be fighting for your own life."

As soon as the elder said that, he immediately commanded the golden eagle to dive ferociously towards Chu Kuangren.

He planned on getting rid of Chu Kuangren first.

"Well, you reap what you sow."

Chu Kuangren said as he shook his head. After that, he lifted his hands and activated his spiritual thought. The surrounding spiritual energy then formed into lines of runic symbols, which then transformed into a boundlessly powerful golden greatsword.

The runic greatsword swung outwards and instantly slashed the ferocious golden eagle in half. Meanwhile, the remaining sword qi struck the elder, sending him flying into the grand palace hall.

“How’s that possible?!”

“Could it be that Chu Kuangren has unlocked the Heavenly Punishment Seal?!”

The white-haired elder was mortified.

If Chu Kuangren had indeed broken the seal, the elder was no match for him, not even if he had ten times the power!

At that thought, the elder no longer intended to fight Chu Kuangren. He broke through the palace’s dome and flew into the distance.

The elder wanted to escape!

Chu Kuangren chuckled and extended his fingers. For a moment, it appeared as if Chu Kuangren was grasping onto the entire fabrics of this realm.

As his formless mind power extended outwards, its energy manifested as a giant formless palm that grabbed the white-haired elder while he was in mid-air.

“Trying to run? Can you run from my Five Fingers Mountain?”

Chu Kuangren taunted before he proceeded to clench his fist. The white-haired elder did not even have the chance to wail before he was crushed into a blood mist!

It was a terrifying scene for all of the witnesses!

They had not picked up any form of spiritual energies from Chu Kuangren from the beginning. Hence, they had no clue what methods Chu Kuangren had used to kill the elder.

The mystery only added to Chu Kuangren’s intimidation.

Chapter 440: End The War, Visited By The Acheron Manor and Craggy Ocean Tower

Chu Kuangren had used his spiritual thought to crush the white-haired elder!

The blood mist exploded like a blossoming flower.

Everybody at the scene could feel shivers running down their spine. This was especially true for Yun Changfeng, whose face had turned pale from the sheer horror he was experiencing.

“Impossible. This is impossible...”

“Isn’t your power sealed? How do you have this power?”

At that instance, several patrol guards escorted a group of people into the scene.

The group of people was dressed in prison attire, and there was a general air of malaise to them. Upon seeing this, Gu Linglong could not contain herself. “Father!”

Those were Gu Linglong’s father and siblings.

Like a desperate survivor who was clutching at straws, Yun Changfeng rushed to Gu Qing’s side and pointed his blade at Gu Qing’s neck.

“Gu Linglong, Chu Kuangren, it’s best that you both stay back. Otherwise, I’ll kill them all!”

Chu Kuangren glared at Yun Changfeng. “I’ve never seen someone as foolish as you are.”

Chu Kuangren gradually made his way into the grand palace hall.

Each step Chu Kuangren took struck a deeper sense of fear in Yun Changfeng. His heart pounded with each passing moment.

Terror overwhelmed Yun Changfeng and the palace guards.

“Chu Kuangren, don’t you come any closer! Stay back! Or else they’ll be dead!” Yun Changfeng screamed desperately.

However, Chu Kuangren did not intend to stop at all. “Go ahead. If you do end up killing them, I can guarantee that the entire Yun family will experience the worst punishment there is in this world. They shall forever be stuck in the boundary between life and death!”

Chu Kuangren said with a tone that evoked a chilling fear in the witnesses at the scene.

Yun Changfeng was still gripping his sword tightly, but his arms were trembling out of control.

He did not dare to follow through with his threats.

Yun Changfeng feared that killing Gu Qing would bring him to the point of no return. He was afraid that the entire Yun family would descend into an endless cycle of torture because of his actions.

Deep down, Yun Changfeng knew Chu Kuangren’s words were not to be taken lightly!

“Why don’t you go ahead... and kill them?”

At this point, Chu Kuangren was standing before Yun Changfeng and the prisoners. With a cold snort, Chu Kuangren’s overwhelming aura emanated. As if he was face-to-face with a heavenly entity, and Yun Changfeng’s body trembled out of control before he knelt onto the ground helplessly.

"I beg you. Please spare the Yun family..." Yun Changfeng, who had just recently threatened Chu Kuangren, was now kowtowing on the ground.

"The fate of the Yun family shall be determined by the law."

The entire incident was the Royal Azure Dynasty's affair.

Chu Kuangren decided that he would let Gu Linglong take care of the rest.

"Those who surrender shall be spared!"

Gu Linglong turned around and yelled at the ten thousand palace guards.

The entire troop of palace guards immediately dropped their weapons and knelt to surrender.

After all, even Yun Changfeng had conceded defeat. What else could they do?

...

"Father, are you alright?"

Gu Linglong went to check on Gu Qing and the other prisoners.

"I'm alright. But Yun Changfeng has fed us some form of medicine that prevents us from using our cultivation," said Gu Qing.

"Where's the antidote?"

Gu Linglong barked at Yun Changfeng.

There was no way Yun Changfeng could refuse at this point. Hence, he obediently handed the antidote over to Gu Linglong. He could only wish that Gu Linglong would show mercy and spare the Yun family's fate.

"Guards, lock him up in the dungeon."

Gu Linglong commanded. After curing Gu Qing and the prisoners with the antidote, the Royal Azure Dynasty's rulership now returned to the Gu family.

An internal war had been settled without needing to sacrifice an entire troop.

Next, Gu Linglong had much to do.

With the support of many officials, Gu Linglong regained control over the Royal Azure Dynasty. She began sorting out the kingdom's affairs while taking measures to restore the livelihood of its citizens.

This was destined to be a long process.

Although three years was not a long period of time, it was enough for Yun Changfeng to flip the entire kingdom over.

Restoring the kingdom to its former glory was definitely no easy matter, so Gu Linglong had a lot to take care of.

In the palace garden.

Gu Linglong was dressed in a set of royal robes. She stared at Chu Kuangren apologetically and said, "My husband, I need to stay here."

"Alright, I understand. The Royal Azure Dynasty is in a shaky state for now. I think it's best for a person with your caliber to stay too."

Chu Kuangren smiled. He was not surprised about Gu Linglong's decision at all. He knew Gu Linglong was not the kind of woman who would be blinded by romance. The kingdom held an important place in her heart.

As the Royal Azure Dynasty now lay in an uncertain state, with many of its citizens having no homes, the kingdom needed a capable leader to guide them out of this mess. There was no better person than Gu Linglong for this.

Chu Kuangren remained in the capital city for the next couple of days.

News of his appearance in the Royal Azure Dynasty had inevitably spread to those who were eager to find him. As such, many cultivators soon flocked towards the kingdom.

In a restaurant within the capital city.

Chu Kuangren and Lan Yu were sitting near a window.

At that moment, a person walked into the restaurant.

It was a handsome young cultivator. The moment he entered, his eyes were immediately fixated on Chu Kuangren's table as he unhesitantly approached them.

"Brother Chu, the entire world's looking for you, yet here you are leisurely indulging in alcohol. I have to say that I find this quite admirable."

Chu Kuangren glimpsed at the youngster and asked, "Who are you?"

The cultivator did not take offense. Instead, he chuckled and said, "I'm Yuan Xian of the Craggy Ocean Tower. I must say that I've been looking forward to this encounter for quite a while, Brother Chu."

"You have quite some balls to address me as your Daoist Brother. Even your Sect Leader used to address me by seniority. What more for a lowly person like you?"

Yuan Xian was taken aback.

He tried to calm his nerves before he proceeded to say, "Sect Leader Chu, in that case, I shall skip the formalities. There's only one reason I've come to see you."

"Please return the Mountain River Scroll to us."

Mountain River Scroll?

Chu Kuangren felt the name to be vaguely familiar.

The Mountain River Scroll was a Boundary Emperor Weapon used by the Craggy Ocean Tower Lord three years ago during the Black Heaven Sect's battle with the orthodoxies. The scroll contained a large number of bestial souls, and it was one of the strongest weapons in the Craggy Ocean Tower.

"I've yet to make Craggy Ocean Tower pay for what they did to the Black Heaven Sect three years ago. But I never expected that you'd come looking for me first, and you have the guts to request that I return the Mountain River Scroll?!"

"Wow, your skin is surely as thick as the mountains."

Chu Kuangren sneered.

"Sect Leader Chu, I hope you can see the bigger picture. You're no longer the undefeatable person you once were. Why are you still so stubborn?"

Yuan Xian said faintly.

Somehow, the only people left in the restaurant now were Chu Kuangren, Lan Yu, Yuan Xian, and two elders, whose aura had long been locked onto Chu Kuangren.

Evidently, their intentions were not kind.

These elders were also from the Craggy Ocean Tower.

“Feel free to try and attack me.”

Chu Kuangren said calmly.

There was no hint of spiritual energy to Chu Kuangren, but Yuan Xian and the Craggy Ocean Tower Sages did not dare act hastily.

In fact, they were hesitant in their actions.

“Haha, Chu Kuangren, you surely live up to your name! Although you’re under Heavenly Punishment Seal, you’re as arrogant as the rumors described you to be.”

An abrupt burst of laughter interrupted the scene as a black-clothed cultivator entered the restaurant. There was a malicious and sinister aura to him.

Chu Kuangren could immediately recognize his identity.

“Oh, it looks like the Acheron Manor is here too.”

“That’s right! Zheng Miao is my name!” Zheng Miao let out a peal of sinister laughter as he glared mischievously at Chu Kuangren.