

Humanity 951

Chapter 951 Decision

The reason Third Brother Xiao Xinghe encountered so much unjust treatment over there, and why Tan Shu even attempted to use a borrowed knife to kill him in public, was all because of his affiliation with the Righteous Blood Sect.

Xiao Xinghe, who can barely count as a disciple of Green Emperor City now, is facing such dire circumstances there.

If Lu Ye, a legitimate disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect, were to go to Jinglan Lake Pass, who knows what kind of oppression he might face.

Therefore, even if he wanted to go to Jinglan Lake Pass, it is clear he definitely should not go.

Staying at Cangyan Mountain Pass is also not viable, as Nian Yuexian pointed out, in Bingzhou, the Righteous Blood Sect has many friends and just as many enemies. If a Divine Sea Realm cultivator who harbors a grudge against the sect master were to come, his future days wouldn't be any better.

Thus, although Nian Yuexian gave him three options, in reality, there's only one choice.

Go to the Justice Department and join Qian Wudang's side!

Fortunately, doing so is not without reason. Last time, Lu Ye collaborated with the A-3 squad and performed admirably, and coupled with the transaction of Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, going to the Justice Department means Qian Wudang won't overlook him.

Once a decision was made, Lu Ye stopped dwelling on this matter.

The battlefield marking suddenly activated. Upon investigation, Lu Ye discovered he had received battle merit from refining Explosive Fire Spirit Stones; six thousand Explosive Fire Spirit Stones brought him a full three hundred thousand battle merits.

Now his battle merits have exceeded five hundred and twenty thousand, breaking the previous record.

While he acquired battle merits easily, he spent them quickly. Not to mention that exchanging gold-hued spirit fortune sticks for cultivation requires a long-term financial commitment, Lu Ye eyed many treasures in the Hall of Battle Merits that he wished to buy, all requiring a considerable amount of battle merits.

After advancing to True Lake Level 3 last time, Lu Ye felt his cultivation was progressing too rapidly, so he hadn't focused on cultivation much over the past two months, fearing his foundation might be unstable.

Now, with so many battle merits in hand and more than two months' worth of accumulation, it's time to improve his cultivation.

If he is to work at the Justice Department in the future, naturally, the higher his cultivation, the better.

Moreover, with his current True Lake Level 3 cultivation, the next step is to reach Level 4.

For cultivators at every major realm, the breakthroughs at Level 4 and Level 7 bring considerable improvements in power.

This is why Lu Ye's slaying of True Lake Level 7 Tan Shu previously caused such a shock among both factions of cultivators.

Even though he had previously bested True Lake Level 6 sword cultivator Zhang Youlin, no one expected he could defeat Tan Shu—yet not only did he win, it was almost instantaneous.

Lu Ye headed to Heaven's Augury Hall, connected to the Hall of Battle Merits, as usual, fed the two dragons, and walked in with grace.

He exchanged twenty gold-hued spirit fortune sticks at once.

Such a bold move, if seen by others, would surely cause them to be astonished; cultivators from the Nine Provinces, when buying gold-hued spirit fortune sticks from Heaven's Augury treasure vault, rarely purchase so many at once and typically buy them one by one.

After all, battle merits are hard to come by...

The following days were spent in cultivation.

Three days later, Lu Ye once again arrived at Nian Yuexian's bamboo lodge.

"Have you made up your mind?" Nian Yuexian asked.

"I have decided, and I am willing to join the Justice Department. I request your recommendation, my lord."

This result was expected, so Nian Yuexian wasn't too surprised. There was no need for a recommendation either; back when Lu Ye went to Haotian City, Qian Wudang had already wanted to ask Nian Yuexian for him. At that time, he felt that Lu Ye had great potential and did not want him wasting away at Cangyan Mountain Pass.

The subsequent events further made Qian Wudang realize Lu Ye's immense value, especially in refining Explosive Fire Spirit Stones.

In this regard, Lu Ye can achieve as much as several Divine Sea Realm cultivators combined.

Lu Ye is willing to join the Justice Department; Qian Wudang couldn't ask for more.

"Then off you go. I've already spoken to Qian Wudang."

"Yes!" Lu Ye responded firmly, "I wish you, my lord, grand fortune and a new peak in your cultivation during this retreat."

He respectfully backed away, then turned and strode off.

"Lu Ye!" Nian Yuexian's voice called from behind.

Lu Ye turned back, "Any other instructions, my lord?"

Nian Yuexian's red lips twitched slightly, "Be careful always; whatever happens, preserving yourself is paramount."

Lu Ye nodded solemnly, "Thank you, my lord, for your concern!"

With a firm step on the ground and the activation of his spirit force, he soared into the sky, quickly turning into a speck of red light.

Nian Yuexian stepped to the doorway, raised her eyes to watch until Lu Ye's silhouette vanished from her sight, and only then did she slowly withdraw her gaze.

Lu Ye was gone; she would have to continue waiting. The deployment and arrangement from Haotian City required some procedures, and she needed to wait until the situation at Cangyan Mountain Pass settled down before she could leave.

The entire world seemed to quiet down.

This caused Nian Yuexian to frown slightly.

She had been holding her solitary post here for decades and was long accustomed to such solitude. Even while Lu Ye was around, they didn't communicate much, and the entire Cangyan Mountain Pass remained serene.

But after Lu Ye left, she realized that the solitude now felt different from the previous tranquility.

In just a few months, her state of mind had been affected...

She raced on, heading straight for Haotian City.

Lu Ye hadn't expected his tenure at the Cangyan Mountain Pass to be so brief, seemingly only four or five months in total, with two of those months spent in the Sword Weapon Sect's secret realm.

In other words, he spent less than three months at the Cangyan Mountain Pass.

But there was no help for it, as Nian Yuexian intended to be in secluded meditation for a long time. Such a large pass couldn't be left to someone like him, a True Lake Level 3 cultivator, to manage.

He had no idea who the new superior would be, nor if they would target or trouble him. Rather than wait for such an uncertain future, it was better to take a more stable path.

At the very least, he had some prior interaction with Qian Wudang, who harbored no malice toward him.

The journey was peaceful.

Haotian City came into view in the distance.

Entering the city, Lu Ye headed straight for the Law Enforcement Hall and was announced upon his arrival, stepping inside with his sword.

Qian Wudang sat behind a desk, seemingly handling official duties. Upon seeing him, he smiled and pointed to the side, "Sit for a while first!"

Lu Ye heeded the suggestion and took a seat, closing his eyes to rest.

Soon, someone brought aromatic tea, and a faint fragrance wafted over.

Lu Ye opened his eyes to see that the one serving tea was the same beautiful female cultivator he had seen here before. Their eyes met, and Lu Ye nodded slightly in greeting, to which she responded with a soft smile.

She did not leave but went behind Qian Wudang instead, massaging his shoulders with a tender demeanor, occasionally leaning over to look at the documents on the desk with him, appearing very intimate.

Lu Ye took a sip of tea and turned to look outside.

Qian Wudang... wasn't a great catch either.

Though he didn't know who the woman was, judging by the situation, he could guess she was likely Qian Wudang's wife or concubine and was quite favored. Otherwise, in such a setting, how could a Justice Department Chief like Qian Wudang be so indulgent with her?

The woman appeared young, but in the cultivator community, age couldn't be discerned from appearance alone. Both Shui Yuan and Nian Yuexian looked to be in their early twenties at a glance, yet they were indeed much older than twenty.

So while the woman looked young, she might actually be several decades old.

As for her cultivation... Lu Ye couldn't discern any depth since she wasn't using spirit force, making it difficult to judge.

"Alright, off you go," Qian Wudang suddenly said, possibly feeling the need to maintain a semblance of authority as the Department Chief in Lu Ye's presence, knowing they'd be working together in a superior-subordinate relationship.

The woman pouted, looking displeased, and clung to Qian Wudang's arm, coquettishly protesting, "I don't want to..."

Lu Ye got goosebumps.

Qian Wudang placated her softly, promising to see her later, finally managing to coax her away.

The woman showed etiquette by bowing to Lu Ye before leaving.

After she left, Qian Wudang gestured for Lu Ye to approach.

Lu Ye stood up and went to the desk, saluting as he spoke, "Lu Ye of the Righteous Blood Sect, reporting in!"

Qian Wudang leaned back in his chair, satisfied as he assessed Lu Ye, "I wanted to transfer you to the Law Enforcement Hall earlier, but Nian Yuexian wouldn't let you go, leaving me helpless. Fortunately, with her now occupied, she has entrusted you to me, which is a blessing in disguise." He paused. "Do you know what has happened to Nian Yuexian? She has never left the Cangyan Mountain Pass in all these years, and for her to suddenly resign is quite unexpected."

Lu Ye frowned slightly, from Qian Wudang's words it seemed he was unaware of Nian Yuexian's intent to enter seclusion for cultivation. Since Nian Yuexian hadn't mentioned it, he wouldn't speak up either, and instead replied, "I don't know. I had little interaction with the Mountain Pass Chief at the pass, so she wouldn't share such matters with me."

Qian Wudang nodded slightly, "That's understandable. A Divine Sea Realm cultivator wouldn't explain their actions to a True Lake Realm, especially someone like Nian Yuexian."

"Regardless, from now on, you are a member of the Law Enforcement Hall. I intend for you to focus on refining Explosive Fire Spirit Stones. Do you have any objections?"

"Yes!" Lu Ye responded immediately.

"Oh?" Qian Wudang smirked. "What objections do you have? Speak, though whether I heed them or not is up to me."

"Refining Explosive Fire Spirit Stones doesn't require much effort. I'm confident I can fulfill this duty while serving the Law Enforcement Hall and therefore don't need to devote all my energy to it."

Qian Wudang understood, "You mean you'd like to join the Law Enforcement Hall to take on missions outside?"

"Yes!"

"Explain your reasoning."

After a brief moment of contemplation, Lu Ye spoke, "Since beginning my journey on the path of cultivation, I have experienced battlefields like the Spirit Stream battlefield and Cloud River battlefield, but ultimately these places are just small corners of the Nine Provinces. Now that I have reached the True Lake Realm, I wish to witness more of the Nine Provinces' splendor, so I do not want to be confined to one place. I kindly ask for your approval."

"Makes sense," Qian Wudang stroked his chin. "With your cultivation level and your past performance, joining the Law Enforcement Hall shouldn't be an issue. However, do consider that carrying out missions can often involve risks. If you choose full-time refining of Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, at least your safety could be guaranteed."

Chapter 952 The Sect Master Has Arrived

"Fellow cultivators, if one blindly pursues peace and safety, then there's no need for cultivation at all. I might as well halt my progress at Spirit Stream Level 9 or Cloud River Level 9, reigning supreme in the Spirit Stream battlefield or Cloud River battlefield, wouldn't that be delightful?"

Qian Wudang nodded upon hearing this: "What you say... seems to have some truth, but I still hope you consider carefully. With your efficiency in refining Explosive Fire Spirit Stones, the battle merits you earn monthly are enough to support cultivation, and there's no need to venture out for danger. After your cultivation has advanced by a few more levels, if you still wish to join the Law Enforcement Hall, naturally, there would be no issue."

Throughout the Nine Provinces, the only one who can refine Explosive Fire Spirit Stones in such a manner is Lu Ye. Qian Wudang really doesn't want him to take any risky actions. But he also understands that this can't be forced, so he can't command Lu Ye to do anything; he can only persuade him kindly.

Lu Ye replied: "I am grateful for your care, my lord, but when it comes to advancing my cultivation, I am quite confident indeed. You might not know, but my cultivation aptitude... is excellent!"

In the future, when working under Qian Wudang, the advancement of cultivation couldn't be hidden from him. Instead of having him speculate due to rapid progress, it was better to say it now himself.

Qian Wudang almost laughed: "Do you not know how you gained your name of Yiye?"

"You misunderstand, my lord. On the day of talent detection at Evil Moon Valley, I indeed received the name Yiye, but there was likely some error. Later, I tested my talent again myself, and the results were vastly different from that day."

"Oh?" Qian Wudang showed interest. "And what were the results?"

"My talent is extremely high, with eight branches and eight leaves. The aptitude is absolutely top-tier!" Lu Ye calmly continued.

Though he hadn't truly tested himself, the giant stone disc encountered at Cangyan Volcano's crater with Ying Wuji and others likely measured aptitude, and the results indeed described top-tier talent.

"Really?" Qian Wudang couldn't help but be moved. Within the Nine Provinces, cultivators with aptitude exceeding sixty leaves aren't many but not few either; core disciples of major sects usually possess such aptitude. However, above sixty leaves, the numbers drastically lessen with each additional leaf.

As for those with sixty-four leaves, they're extremely rare.

If Lu Ye truly had sixty-four leaves, certain things would make sense.

Qian Wudang was always puzzled by the mismatch between Lu Ye's cultivation speed and his name of Yiye, initially thinking it was due to many fortuitous encounters. Now it seems, while encounters play a part, his fundamental aptitude is the key. Without such aptitude, mere encounters wouldn't suffice.

"I recall the last time I saw you, you were at True Lake Level 1. Currently, you have reached Level 3!" Lu Ye said, slightly channeling his spirit force.

He hadn't mentioned this before; otherwise, Qian Wudang hadn't realized. Though he's a strong cultivator in the Divine Sea Realm, he's not one to casually probe others' cultivation.

Only now, as Lu Ye's spirit force from True Lake Level 3 manifested...

Qian Wudang was astonished.

Calculating the time, it's only been three months, yet he advanced from Level 1 to Level 3. Looking further back, when Lu Ye joined the Bingzhou guard, he wasn't even in the True Lake Realm.

In other words, in just over four months, he progressed from Cloud River Level 9 to True Lake Level 3.

This pace of cultivation advancement is truly frightening!

With the facts laid out, Qian Wudang couldn't help but believe Lu Ye's words, sighing: "Veteran Thang truly found a treasure."

He'd somewhat heard about Lu Ye joining the Righteous Blood Sect.

Reportedly, Lu Ye was detected to have the talent of Yiye, seemingly with no chance of joining any cultivation sect. Yet somehow, someone advised him to choose only the Righteous Blood Sect, thus allowing him to enter.

Calling him a fortunate find isn't wrong at all.

"Alright, I'll take your word for it and grant your request. Conveniently, the A-3 squad has been down one member without replacement since last time you joined them for a task. Warlord Geng keeps mentioning you to me, so why not join A-3 squad?"

"I defer to your decision, my lord!" Lu Ye naturally had no objections.

Regardless, he'd somewhat cooperated with Warlord Geng's group, even shared a drink, so they could be considered familiar to an extent.

Qian Wudang nodded slightly: "If that is so, take your rest. Before the official command is issued, you may act freely."

"Yes!" Lu Ye retreated in large strides.

After he left, Qian Wudang's gaze shifted to a corner of the grand hall, his expression helpless: "Are you not coming out?"

From the darkness there, a shadow suddenly twisted, revealing a graceful silhouette—it turned out to be the woman who previously served tea to Lu Ye.

She had withdrawn earlier, yet somehow stealthily returned. Even Lu Ye hadn't noticed.

Her methods, able to deceive Lu Ye, couldn't escape Qian Wudang's vigilance; he's a Divine Sea Realm, after all. He just didn't expose her earlier, as it wasn't appropriate to do so.

The woman revealed herself playfully, sticking out her tongue at Qian Wudang.

Qian Wudang glared at her: "You're getting more and more outrageous."

The woman came forward, clinging to Qian Wudang's arm, shaking it with playful pleading that left him dizzy, quickly raising his hand: "Alright, alright, speak directly if you have something to say!"

With his understanding of her, he naturally saw she had a request, and it gave him a headache. Each time proved hard to reject, otherwise peace would be elusive.

"I want to join the Law Enforcement Hall too!" Her words were shocking.

Qian Wudang frowned: "Why do you want to join the Law Enforcement Hall?"

"To help ease your burdens!"

"Nonsense! Just stay by my side obediently. It's very dangerous outside," he glared.

"But I can't stay by your side forever. Those with lower cultivation than mine are running everywhere; I've already reached True Lake Level 7. Am I not better than them?"

"That's not how it is. They have compelling reasons to run everywhere; you do not."

"Why not? They're cultivators, I'm a cultivator. I don't care, I also want to join the Law Enforcement Hall. Will you agree or not?"

"Impossible!" Qian Wudang firmly rejected.

"Sob sob sob..." The woman suddenly broke into tears, large drops cascading down.

Qian Wudang, the renowned Divine Sea Realm strong cultivator and Justice Department Chief of the Nine Provinces, suddenly found himself at a loss, just about to offer comfort. Yet the woman stamped her foot and said with red eyes, "I hate you!"

She turned and fled.

Qian Wudang's raised hand froze in mid-air, with only the three words "I hate you" echoing endlessly in his ears, as if his heart were about to shatter!

A moment later, within the Heralds Office, the woman ran in crying and threw herself into the arms of the Chief of Heralds Office: "Aunt Fan!"

Fan Xiangyi was startled: "What's happened? Who bullied you? Tell Aunt Fan, and she'll teach him a lesson."

"Qian Wudang bullied me!" The woman raised her head and decisively reported a name.

Fan Xiangyi was momentarily speechless.

...

Having left the grand hall of the Justice Department, Lu Ye looked around and unexpectedly felt adrift.

Qian Wudang had allowed him to act freely until an official order was given, yet for a time, he didn't know what to do.

Other sect disciples in Haotian City ultimately had fellow students or seniors present, but now, as the only member from the Righteous Blood Sect here, he found no one to converse with.

After pondering, he decided to send a message to Warlord Geng, as they would all become colleagues and even teammates in the future; building rapport in advance was good.

Warlord Geng quickly replied, stating that the A-3 squad was not in Haotian City, as they were currently undertaking a task elsewhere and would need a few days to return.

Left with no choice, Lu Ye abandoned the idea.

Just as he prepared to find a room to rest, the battlefield marking suddenly transmitted a signal.

Lu Ye investigated and was greatly surprised.

For the message's sender was none other than the sect master himself!

This was unprecedented.

Although Lu Ye had the sect master's marking, they had never exchanged messages directly; he usually communicated with Shui Yuan more often and didn't understand why the sect master would suddenly reach out.

He hurriedly replied: "What instructions does the sect master have?"

A moment later, another message came.

"Are you in Haotian City?"

It was not surprising that the sect master knew this; Shui Yuan was closely acquainted with Nian Yuexian, and it was certain that Nian Yuexian had informed Shui Yuan of Lu Ye's departure from the Cangyan Mountain Pass, and thus the sect master must have heard about it from Shui Yuan.

"Yes."

"Where are you?"

Lu Ye scratched his head, but before he could reply, another message from the sect master arrived: "I see you."

Lu Ye was taken aback, but in the next moment, he sensed someone quickly approaching him. Looking up, he saw two streaks of light descending rapidly from the sky, landing not far in front of him.

One of them, a figure with an ethereal and wise presence, brimming with vigor, could only be the sect master.

Lu Ye was overjoyed and hastily saluted: "Greetings, sect master."

Thang Yifeng looked at him with a smile and raised his hand, an invisible force lifting Lu Ye up.

Lu Ye then turned to look at the person beside the sect master, who was spirited and valiant, though dressed as a man, yet with the grace of a woman and the boldness of a man.

"Palace Master Pang."

"Greetings, senior brother." Pang Huanyin saluted, but it was not the courtesy of a woman, rather the fist salute common among male cultivators.

"Why are you..." Lu Ye was momentarily confused about why the sect master had come to Haotian City and why Pang Huanyin had accompanied him.

"I am here to take up a position in Haotian City, and as for Palace Master Pang... she is preparing to join the Bingzhou guard, so she came along with me."

"Take up a position?" Lu Ye was surprised, not knowing what position the sect master was taking.

The sect master smiled slightly, appearing a bit mysterious: "You are still young, naturally unaware that the Bingzhou guard's Elder Council has a seat for our Righteous Blood Sect. However, in recent years, I have been engrossed in self-cultivation and have not come here."

Lu Ye instantly understood.

Previously, the Righteous Blood Sect had few members, even if there was a seat in the Elder Council, the sect master had no interest in fostering relationships, and there were no disciples from the sect to send here.

But now things were different, as Lu Ye had joined the Bingzhou guard, and there would be more Righteous Blood Sect disciples joining in the future.

Other sect disciples had elders to look after them to avoid bullying, and naturally, the Righteous Blood Sect must have similar protection.

Or else, situations like the previous incident might occur, and at the very least, future Righteous Blood Sect disciples joining the Bingzhou guard would not be assigned to particularly treacherous mountain passes.

Chapter 953 A More Enthusiastic Conversation

The sect master does not like to chase fame and profit. In the past, there were no disciples under the Righteous Blood Sect, and he was like a free spirit. He would come to Haotian City whenever he wanted, and not come if he didn't want to.

But now, considering the future of the disciples, he has to come even if he doesn't want to.

Looking at the sect master suddenly appearing before him, the feeling of drifting in Lu Ye's heart instantly vanished, and he felt a sense of stability.

He was just thinking about how disciples from other sects at least had fellow disciples or elders in Haotian City, while the Righteous Blood Sect was just him, a lonely man. Who would have thought that the sect master would come...

"I am going to meet some old friends for a chat. Lu Ye, you are more familiar with Haotian City than Palace Master Pang, so please take her to the Recruitment Department to handle the procedures."

"No problem," Lu Ye agreed.

The sect master left, and Lu Ye and Pang Huanyin escorted him together.

"Palace Master Pang, this way please." Lu Ye gestured.

Pang Huanyin looked at him and said, "Senior brother, you always seem so distant. In Ziwei Dao Palace, I am the Palace Master, but in front of you, I am just the junior sister. There's no need to keep calling me Palace Master, it feels so formal."

"Junior Sister Pang?" Lu Ye, feeling cheerful, went along with it.

"That's more like it." Pang Huanyin smiled gently, "It would be even better if you could drop the 'Pang' altogether."

"So why did you think of joining the Bingzhou guard, is everything settled at the Dao Palace?"

"It's relatively settled. Being able to come to the Nine Provinces is all thanks to you, senior brother. Now I also have Veteran Thang and Senior Sister Shui Yuan helping, but since we've just arrived not long ago, there is much to learn gradually. I've advanced to the True Lake, so I thought I'd come ahead to the Bingzhou guard to explore the way. Later, the disciples will surely come here as well."

This was indeed in line with Lu Ye's thoughts. In the future, many disciples from the Righteous Blood Sect would come to the Bingzhou guard, and his efforts here could lay a foundation for those junior brothers and sisters.

As a pioneer, one must blaze the trail.

Now, the Righteous Blood Sect and the Ziwei Dao Palace have an upper-lower sect relationship, and both sects are located in the Mount Ao region. When they come to the Bingzhou guard in the future, they can help and support each other.

The future seems bright.

After some more casual conversation, they arrived at the Recruitment Department.

Coincidentally, it was Yue Shan on duty today, considered an acquaintance.

Having acquaintances indeed makes things easier.

Seeing Lu Ye bring such a charming lady, Yue Shan winked and made faces at Lu Ye, though it's unclear what he was trying to imply.

Lu Ye pretended not to see it.

After Pang Huanyin reported her origin, Yue Shan couldn't help but be surprised, "You're from the Unparalleled Continent?"

Being in Bingzhou, he had heard that there was a Ziwei Dao Palace on the Unparalleled Continent that acknowledged the Righteous Blood Sect as its superior sect. There was a bustling event a few months ago at Mount Ao when the sect was established, but Yue Shan had only heard of it and had never seen a cultivator from the Unparalleled Continent.

Now it seems there isn't much difference from the Nine Provinces cultivators.

However, the identity of the Palace Master of Ziwei Dao Palace did make Yue Shan become more serious, and he stopped making faces at Lu Ye.

Although his cultivation was higher than both Pang Huanyin and Lu Ye, cultivation is one thing, and identity is another.

Registration was done, and the battle merit was tested using a battle merit panel. Unsurprisingly, it showed a white light, meaning Pang Huanyin had not earned any battle merit before.

This was natural; she had only been in the Nine Provinces for a few months, continuously managing palace affairs, and had no opportunity to earn battle merit.

Upon walking out of the Recruitment Department, Pang Huanyin fiddled with her guard token, looking intrigued.

But soon lost interest since the token itself wasn't particularly entertaining.

"Now that you are officially in the Bingzhou guard, where you will be assigned should be decided by the sect master, so wait patiently, junior sister."

This is the advantage of having someone in a high place.

When there's no one to back you, the new guard's assignment is entirely a matter of luck. After all, the entire structure of the Bingzhou guard is extensive, with many branches. Naturally, they are assigned where manpower is needed.

But it's different when someone is up there. As a member of the Elder Council, the sect master has the authority to influence the assignment of some new recruits. The old man has many enemies but also many friends. Although the cultivation world values cultivation above all, it does not shy away from using personal connections.

"Alright." Pang Huanyin nodded and looked up at the sky, "It's still early. Senior brother, take me for a stroll."

"Alright," Lu Ye agreed readily. After all, he had nothing to do.

However, he wasn't very familiar with Haotian City himself, so he just took Pang Huanyin around to look around.

Pang Huanyin seemed very happy.

Never on the Unparalleled Continent had she seen such a grand city?

After arriving in the Nine Provinces, she had been staying in the Mount Ao area.

Her understanding of the Nine Provinces was limited to hearsay.

Until this trip away with the sect master, her eyes were opened, especially now, comparing the Nine Provinces to her birthplace, the Unparalleled Continent, the difference was like night and day. If Haotian City were compared to the Nine Provinces, then the Unparalleled Continent was like a remote village seen in passing.

The world is vast, with endless prospects, and she felt increasingly grateful for Lu Ye's actions that day.

If it weren't for Lu Ye and others' valiant efforts, people in the Unparalleled Continent would still be suffering from the Corpse Race's troubles every day. Perhaps one day the entire Unparalleled Continent would no longer have a place for the human race, leading to a tragic end.

The sky gradually darkened, yet Pang Huanyin remained exuberant.

The sect master sent a transmission.

Lu Ye investigated briefly, then led Pang Huanyin swiftly towards a direction.

Before long, they arrived above a small courtyard, and descended directly.

The sect master was standing in the courtyard with his hands behind his back, facing away from them, appearing profound and inscrutable.

"Sect Master." The two of them saluted in unison.

"Has the matter been handled?" the sect master asked.

"It's done, Palace Master Pang has joined the provincial guard. As for the next steps... we need your decision," Lu Ye replied.

The sect master nodded: "There's no hurry. In a few days, I will make proper arrangements. For now, you two can stay here."

This must be the sect master's residence in Haotian City. The treatment of the Elder Council is different from ordinary provincial guards. Although Lu Ye holds the rank of Capital Commandant, he still doesn't have a fixed residence in Haotian City, always randomly finding an unoccupied room to stay.

But as a member of the Elder Council, the sect master naturally has the qualification to have his own small courtyard.

In the future, when traveling to Haotian City, there would finally be a place to settle down.

"Thank you, Sect Master. I shall take my leave now," Pang Huanyin said, then retreated, finding a room to enter.

She had discerned that the sect master had some words to speak with Lu Ye.

"Lu Ye, come with me," the sect master said, heading to the central room, followed closely by Lu Ye.

Soon after, an elder and a young one were seated.

Yiyi emerged from Amber's body and respectfully performed a salute: "Greetings Sect Master!"

She was truly a disciple of the sect master, taught personally in terms of magic and spells, and spent more time with the sect master than Lu Ye, thus being closer to him.

"Rise." The sect master extended his hand to raise her up.

Yiyi raised her head, suddenly startled: "Sect Master, what happened to you?"

Lu Ye was also surprised; only now did he notice something amiss.

The sect master's right eye socket seemed a bit bruised, and from the remaining marks, it was clearly a fist imprint...

Weren't they supposed to catch up with some old friends? How did it end up this way?

As a Divine Sea Realm strong cultivator, the sect master possessed formidable recovery capabilities, yet still bore the imprint of the punch, revealing the punch's immense power.

No wonder the sect master turned his back outside earlier, evidently not wanting Pang Huanyin to see it, avoiding the loss of dignity.

The sect master chuckled, stroking his beard: "No worries, just catching up too eagerly with some old friends after many years."

Lu Ye's eye twitched, and Yiyi was speechless too, this eagerness seemed a bit too much...

"Let's not dwell on me." The sect master waved his hand: "Shui Yuan spoke to me about your matters here, well, I commend you for your hard work."

Lu Ye straightened his posture: "You're overstating, Sect Master, I haven't done much."

"The sect has been desolate and neglected for some past events, losing hope alongside me, causing tireless efforts on your behalf. But rest assured, with me stationed in Haotian City, if any issues arise in the future, feel free to inform me, I'll back you up."

Lu Ye immediately felt his spine straighten considerably.

The sect master then shifted his tone: "I heard from Shui Yuan that you want to join the Justice Department?"

"Yes. Lady Nian Yuexian needs to retreat for a long period, and another Divine Sea Realm will take over Cangyan Mountain Pass, so she inquired about my intention before leaving, deciding to join the Justice Department. Today I have reported to the department and met Lord Department Chief."

"Qian Wudang is in charge at the Justice Department. Although he has no direct affiliation with the sect, he is quite a decent person. Working under him should be fine. However, the Justice Department often operates externally, carrying tasks filled with risks. You must discern carefully."

"I understand," said Lu Ye.

The sect master nodded slightly: "Then I am relieved."

"By the way, Sect Master, how is Master doing?" Lu Ye asked.

"Your master..." The sect master's hand, stroking his beard, paused; his muscle twitched slightly below his eye, as if recalling something unpleasant, "All is well, no need for concern."

With these words, he handed a storage sack to Lu Ye: "Your master entrusted this to me for you."

Lu Ye accepted it and opened the storage sack. His eyes lit up with joy: "Is it repaired?"

The contents of this storage sack were none other than the Dragon Throne Cover Armor he had brought back from the Soaring Dragon.

It was heavily damaged before and when Lu Ye brought it back from the Soaring Dragon, he handed it over to his master for repair. Now, after so long, it finally got repaired.

The sect master shook his head: "Not quite, your master said its quality is exceedingly high, surpassing the scope of repair for Nine Provinces cultivators. She could only perform the most basic repairs. Its full power cannot be exerted anymore, yet it should bring some benefits to you. The key might be within your attempts to grasp it yourself. Additionally, your master mentioned, while external power can be borrowed, it shouldn't be relied upon. In cultivation, one should take oneself as the foundation and not excessively obsess over power from external objects."

"I will keep it in mind," Lu Ye replied.

Chapter 954 Situation Has Changed

The night was deep, and the sky was filled with stars.

Lu Ye left Haotian City, heading straight in one direction, until he flew over three hundred miles, then he found a desolate area and landed.

The sect master brought the Dragon Throne over, so Lu Ye naturally needed to familiarize himself with its power.

Although the Dragon Throne was taken by Lu Ye from the Soaring Dragon World, it was not a native artifact of the Soaring Dragon World, and Lu Ye was not very clear about its specific origins.

His master said its quality was extremely high, already beyond the scope that the Nine Provinces cultivators could repair, so it appeared the Dragon Throne's quality might be above the spirit treasure level.

However, this thing was different from normal spirit treasures, as Lu Ye's cultivation could not activate treasures above spirit treasure level at all.

But in the Soaring Dragon World, Lu Ye had once activated the power of the Dragon Throne.

With the Dragon Spine Saber, with one slash, the altar painstakingly built by the Blood Race was shattered, Blood River collapsed, and the power of that slash even cut into the Sky Ravine.

Of course, the cost was incredibly high; just that one slash left Lu Ye completely exhausted and on the brink of life.

The power of that slash was not entirely generated by Lu Ye himself; at the time, he was enhanced by destiny, with the entire Soaring Dragon World backing him. Though it was Lu Ye who struck that slash, it

was also supported by the entire domain of the Soaring Dragon World, leveraging the Dragon Throne's counterattack, thus achieving such powerful might.

In other circumstances, even with Lu Ye's current True Lake Level 3 cultivation, he wouldn't be able to unleash that earth-shattering slash.

It could be said that this slash was the strongest one Lu Ye had ever delivered so far.

He suspected that even if he promoted to Divine Sea, he might not be able to deliver such a slash with just his own strength.

There's no need to mention what happened afterward.

Completely exhausted, life hanging by a thread, only with the help of the broken origin of the Soaring Dragon World did he come back to life, even altering his cultivation aptitude, and acquiring the capability to mirror the origin of the Soaring Dragon World.

Regarding the Dragon Throne, Lu Ye was full of anticipation.

However, the sect master could only carry out simple repairs on the Dragon Throne, and how much power it could unleash now was unclear to anyone.

Hence, he needed to personally experiment with it.

This place was desolate and secluded, and now it was late at night, presenting the perfect opportunity for trial.

Lu Ye took the Dragon Throne out from his storage sack.

It was a sphere the size of an infant's head, in a crimson color, with scale-like patterns on the surface, which should be actual dragon scales...

Without rushing to activate its power, Lu Ye first swallowed a handful of elixir pills, then took a sip of Soul Cleansing Water, preparing fully.

Having learned from a past mistake, Lu Ye deeply understood the price of using the Dragon Throne; although now its might might not be as immense as before, and the cost may not be as great, he had to be cautious.

With a deep breath, spirit force surged into the sphere in his hand, then he used his own aura to guide it.

Crackling sounds emerged, and the sphere suddenly disintegrated, transforming into countless tiny scale armor fragments, which, guided by Lu Ye's aura, seemed to have a life of their own and attached themselves to his body.

Continuous explosive sounds echoed out, as the tiny scale armor fragments enveloped Lu Ye, and in the blink of an eye, a crimson figure appeared at the place where Lu Ye had been.

The crimson figure was tall, reaching three meters, with a slender build, its curves smooth and fluent, akin to a masterpiece of nature and something crafted with divine skill.

A soft groan could be heard from within the crimson figure, with Lu Ye frowning deeply inside the Dragon Throne.

Just like last time, the instant the Dragon Throne adorned him, it brought an incredibly intense pain.

It was not an illusion but rather genuine stabbing pain.

The interior of the Dragon Throne seemed to spawn countless tiny, nearly visible spines that pierced into Lu Ye's body from all directions, and even with his current physique, it was hard to withstand.

When Lu Ye used the Dragon Throne that day, he was only at Cloud River Level 6, so he didn't feel it so acutely; now at True Lake Level 3, he has developed Mental Consciousness, and through careful sensation, he detected the anomaly immediately.

What was piercing his body was not the imagined tiny spines, as those things weren't material; what exactly they were, Lu Ye was still clueless.

Moreover, this stabbing pain affected not only the flesh but even made the psyche tremble slightly.

The Soul Cleansing Water took effect, slightly reducing the pain in Lu Ye's psyche.

He could feel clearly that the Dragon Throne was thirstily devouring everything from him that it could.

Spirit force, physical strength, even Psyche Force...

With this devouring, his origins were continuously draining away.

Yet, what made Lu Ye slightly assured was that this time's devouring was much gentler compared to the last time.

The last time when the Dragon Throne was used, the draining of origins was uncontrollable and terrifying, which was the fundamental reason Lu Ye ended up completely exhausted after delivering that one slash with such might, albeit with destiny empowered and the Soaring Dragon World as backing; as the one using the Dragon Throne, Lu Ye inevitably had to pay an incredibly huge price.

This time, though the draining speed of origins was not slow, it was at least within an acceptable range; thus, as long as he detached from the Dragon Throne, Lu Ye's foundation would remain unaffected.

His spirit was elevated, and the entire world felt vastly different, with colorful hues flowing through his vision, which were the colors of nature's spiritual energy, that normally Lu Ye could only see with Insight Spirit Runes enhancing his eyes.

Everything around seemed to slow down a lot.

Amber and Yiyi were observing from nearby, both amazed by the sight.

In the vision of the spirit and the tiger, the overall design of the Dragon Throne hadn't changed much, but now it had many intricate patterns compared to before. Crisscrossing lines extended from the cheeks down to the neck, chest, arms, legs, and even the back...

Like an extremely wild totem.

This was clearly Madam Yun's craftsmanship; she had engraved some spirit runes on the surface of the Dragon Throne.

A crimson towering figure stood, with two points of blood-red light shining from the eye sockets, coupled with the wild totem, giving a sense of extreme domineering ferocity.

As if it could tear apart all things in the world!

Lu Ye silently felt the current Dragon Throne.

Compared to before, the Dragon Throne's drain on him was undoubtedly much less, which was a good thing, but in doing so, its power might also be affected.

He then took the Dragon Spine Saber from the storage sack.

A one and a half fathom long blade that seemed to be forged from fresh blood. Its body wasn't smooth, with a node every foot, slightly bulging, like bamboo joints. Blood-red light flowed along the blade, making it seem as though it had its own breath.

With the saber in hand, an even fiercer aura emanated.

Even knowing Lu Ye meant no harm to them, Amber couldn't help but shiver, and Yiyi too felt a chill all over.

As the long saber moved, the three-fathom tall figure, paired with the one and a half fathom long saber, turned thirty fathoms into a land where one could defeat a nation!

Shadows of the saber merged repeatedly, Amber and Yiyi had already run several hundred fathoms away, watching from afar the towering figure wielding the saber, as with each movement, the two points of light in the eye sockets dragged two blood-red streaks through the shadowy night.

Not until one incense stick's time did Lu Ye suddenly sheath the saber and stand.

The area within a hundred-fathom radius around him was a complete mess.

With a crackling sound, the Dragon Throne was dismissed, reverting into a sphere the size of an infant's head; Lu Ye's face was slightly pale, drenched in sweat.

In just one incense stick's time, Lu Ye had nearly exhausted all his power, showing the current Dragon Throne's immense consumption.

Even if its power had greatly reduced, leading to lesser consumption, it still wasn't something that could be maintained for a long time.

But no matter what, he had still gained another treasure to fight fiercely with strong foes.

After the recent attempt, Lu Ye had a general grasp of the Dragon Throne's enhancement to his abilities, but this thing shouldn't be shown lightly and should only be used when fighting desperately.

Overall, Lu Ye was very satisfied with the current Dragon Throne, even more so than before.

The previous Dragon Throne certainly had immense powers, but its side effects were strong, not suitable for him now.

The current Dragon Throne, used with appropriate force, had almost no side effects.

When his master repaired this item, it was clear that much thought was spent.

He called Amber and Yiyi, leading them toward Haotian City. Once back at the sect master's small courtyard, he found a room and entered, to recuperate and rest.

The next day, as soon as Lu Ye recovered, he received a message from Qian Wudang, instructing him to come to the Justice Department immediately.

Lu Ye didn't know what he wanted, but since he was now under his command, he had to comply with the Department Chief's orders.

He left the small courtyard, heading straight to the Justice Department's main hall.

Soon, he met Qian Wudang.

"Sir."

"Hmm." Qian Wudang nodded slightly, gesturing with his hand, "Sit!"

Lu Ye then sat on the chair opposite him, separated by a desk.

"What is it, sir, that you summoned me for?"

"It's like this..." Qian Wudang displayed a somewhat difficult expression, as though encountering something challenging, "Wasn't it mentioned before that you'd be placed in the A-3 squad?"

"Has the situation changed?" Lu Ye asked.

"There have been some changes." Qian Wudang nodded, "The A-3 squad is already full, you know, the Law Enforcement Hall squads generally consist of six members per group. It's mainly convenient for using the Six-Element Spirit-Sealing Lock, and six people per group can mutually support each other. Too

few members would be difficult for task execution, and if it's too many, it would be a waste of manpower, so it seems you won't be able to go to the A-3 squad."

"If that's the case, I can go to another squad,"

Lu Ye didn't have any particular requirements for this; if not the A-3 squad, he could go to another team. Since he was now a member of the Justice Department, he naturally had to follow the superior's orders, leaving no room for picky choices, nor did he have that flaw.

"Hmm... other squads also don't lack personnel." Qian Wudang raised his hand to press his brow.

Lu Ye's eyes slightly narrowed, "What do you mean, sir? Just speak plainly."

If Qian Wudang, due to some unspeakable pressure, no longer wanted to accept him into the Justice Department, Lu Ye didn't care; now the sect master was in Haotian City, and he had nothing to fear about not having a good place to go.

At worst, he could go to some mountain pass, which wasn't a bad thing either.

Chapter 955 Leading a Team

"Don't overthink it, it's not as you believe." Qian Wudang noticed Lu Ye's thoughts, sat up straight with his hands folded on the table before him, and said frankly, "Since there are no slots left in the other squads, I intend to form a new team, with you leading as the captain!"

"What?" Lu Ye almost thought he misheard, "Me, as the captain?"

Was this guy joking with him?

"Exactly!" Qian Wudang nodded with a serious expression, "You as the captain, forming a new squad for the Law Enforcement Hall, what do you think?"

Lu Ye was a bit stunned.

He initially thought Qian Wudang had encountered some difficulty, hence couldn't include him in the Justice Department, yet it turned out not only wasn't that the case, but he was also to be made a squad captain.

Lu Ye didn't know much about the Justice Department, and his only encounter with the Law Enforcement Hall was with the A-3 squad, whose captain, Warlord Geng, was True Lake Level 9, just one step away from the Divine Sea. The lowest cultivation level among the team members was also between Level 3-4.

He didn't know the situation in other squads, but he figured they wouldn't be much different from the A-3 squad.

With his cultivation level, even if he joined the Law Enforcement Hall, he would be at the bottom, only executing orders, with no qualifications to command others, let alone being in the captain's position.

But someone like Qian Wudang wouldn't joke about such a matter.

"Sir, may I ask why?" Lu Ye spoke up.

Qian Wudang said, "I have carefully reviewed the last mission report of the A-3 squad. Warlord Geng and his team highly rated you, unanimously crediting you as instrumental in accomplishing the mission. In danger, you remained calm, unafraid of the strong, and you united your companions, finding ways to break through in dire situations, showing great adaptability. These are excellent qualities that the Law Enforcement Hall values highly."

Lu Ye received quite the praise, making him even more wary, thinking that things couldn't be so simple.

"Moreover, you're strong. When you joined the A-3 squad's mission, although only True Lake Level 1, the strength you displayed far exceeded that level. I've heard you're adept at crossing levels to defeat enemies, so though you're now only True Lake Level 3, I believe you're at least not weaker than a typical True Lake Level 5."

That was an understatement. Forget True Lake Level 5; he had previously instantly killed someone at True Lake Level 7. But such matters were best not shared with others.

"Of course, the most crucial point is your military rank, which is sufficiently high. Within the entire Bingzhou guard, those with similar cultivation levels usually hold ranks between Major and lieutenant colonel, but you're already a Capital Commandant, which gives you the authority to order others. Otherwise, placing someone like you, a Capital Commandant, as captain in a squad whose captain is only a lieutenant colonel wouldn't work, as others couldn't order you around."

Lu Ye frowned slightly. The logic made sense; military rank indeed determined authority in certain situations. However, something still felt off to him.

"In summary, you indeed qualify to lead a team and act as captain, which is my considered conclusion." Qian Wudang looked at Lu Ye earnestly.

Lu Ye nodded, reluctantly accepting his reasoning.

But as for taking the captain's position... truth be told, he wasn't very interested. In a six-member law enforcement team, being a member only required following orders, but as captain, there were more factors to consider, like ensuring the safety of the members under his command during missions.

"Sir, this matter..."

Just as Lu Ye started to speak, Qian Wudang interrupted him, "Being a captain comes with quite a few benefits. For one, a Law Enforcement Hall squad captain receives a double monthly salary. As a Capital Commandant, you currently earn thirty thousand battle merit per month, but as a captain, it would be sixty thousand."

I received a double salary at Cangyan Mountain Pass... just too bad I can't draw that since leaving, due to Heaven's Augury's oversight of cultivator job adjustments.

"You also earn one hundred fifty thousand monthly from crafting Explosive Fire Spirit Stones. All in all, your monthly battle merit amounts to at least two hundred ten thousand."

Calculating, Qian Wudang himself was startled.

Across the entire Nine Provinces, which True Lake Realm cultivator could steadily accumulate so much battle merit monthly? With so much battle merit, exchanging for the gold-hued spirit fortune stick would surely accelerate cultivation progress.

That's not accounting for mission rewards.

"Furthermore, after mission completion, the captain claims thirty percent of the battle merit reward, while the remaining seventy percent is divided among the five team members. Also, a Law Enforcement Hall captain is entitled to a fixed residence in Haotian City, and moreover, inside our Law Enforcement Hall, you have a discount on resource exchanges."

Before Lu Ye could finish his sentence, Qian Wudang listed a slew of benefits.

However, the more he did so, the more vigilant Lu Ye became.

He had a distinct feeling that Qian Wudang was eager for him to take the captain's role... why was that?

"Sir, I..."

"Think it over carefully." Qian Wudang leaned slightly forward, staring intently at him, clearly signaling that if Lu Ye didn't provide a satisfactory answer, he wouldn't be allowed to leave today.

Lu Ye understood the meaning in his eyes and calmly said, "Sir, my sect master came yesterday; I wonder if you received the message."

"Veteran Thang came?" Qian Wudang was momentarily stunned; he indeed hadn't known of this. After arriving, the sect master had only met a few old friends for a chat, with no word reaching him about it.

Realizing quickly, this audacious brat was using Veteran Thang to threaten him. Qian Wudang couldn't help but glare at Lu Ye.

"May I ask, sir, is appointing me captain an order?" Lu Ye inquired.

If it's an order, then he really can't refuse it; otherwise, he'll be guilty of defying commands, and he hasn't forgotten the taste of the Reversed Dragon Spike from the prison—he definitely doesn't want to experience it a second time.

"Hmm... do you want to make this an order?" Qian Wudang tossed the question back.

"Then I'll consider it not an order." Lu Ye stood up, clasped his fists: "Thank you, sir, for your kindness. I truly lack the ability and cannot undertake the position of team leader. Please choose someone more competent, sir."

"Alright." Qian Wudang nodded slightly. "Since that's the case, let's just leave it be."

One cannot force a horse to drink water; some things can't be over-demanded. It's just that it seems like he'll not have peaceful days ahead...

"You may leave now, I'll find a suitable team and arrange for you to join it later." Qian Wudang waved his hand.

"Thank you, sir. I take my leave." Lu Ye turned and departed.

His initial steps were brisk and bold, but the further he walked, the slower his pace became. By the time he reached the door, he suddenly turned back.

"What is it?" Qian Wudang asked, perplexed.

"Sir, if I agree to undertake the position of team leader, can I select the team members myself?" He suddenly remembered something, and if this were indeed the case, it would resolve one of his concerns.

"Of course!" Qian Wudang nodded. "Since it's a newly formed team, everything is new. The choice of members naturally depends on the wishes of you, the team leader."

As he spoke, he vaguely understood something, and smiled slightly: "Have you found someone you fancy?"

Lu Ye didn't respond directly, but instead asked: "If I choose, is there any restriction? For instance, can I freely select soldiers from the front-line mountain passes?"

"Generally speaking, it shouldn't be an issue, but it depends on whether their superiors are willing to release them." The transfer of front-line soldiers is quite common; it can be done with properly issued documents or a hand-written command signed by someone above the Mountain Pass Chief level.

"What if their superiors aren't willing to release them?" Lu Ye asked again.

Qian Wudang smiled confidently: "I do have some standing."

As the Justice Department Chief, his position is on par with the elders of the Elder Council. Just mobilizing a few personnel shouldn't be a problem; no one would likely refuse him this favor.

This confirmed that Lu Ye must have taken a liking to someone and wanted to transfer them from a particular mountain pass; otherwise, there would be no reason for his sudden change of attitude.

"Whom are you planning to recruit under your command?" Qian Wudang couldn't help but be curious.

"I haven't decided yet, but if the sir wants me to lead this team, I have one request and hope you will grant it."

"Speak!"

"I want the authority to freely conscript personnel from the front-line of major mountain passes!"

"No problem!" Qian Wudang agreed readily and smiled a bit: "However, I do have a request as well."

"What request does sir have?" Lu Ye became alert, thinking to himself that Qian Wudang's intent today indeed had a purpose, and this request should be his true aim.

"Rest assured, it won't be difficult for you, and if you find it troublesome at that time, you can absolutely refuse."

Hearing this, Lu Ye felt relieved.

"You should head back; you'll know tomorrow."

"Sir, regarding the matter of team leader-level having a residence in Haotian City..."

"..." Qian Wudang was a bit speechless, feeling the lad was indeed a bit too pragmatic as he had not even officially assumed the position yet and was already pondering over the residence.

But it's a minor issue, so he agreed readily: "Find a place where no one lives, and let me know the location afterward, and I will report it for you. However, be aware, it's only for you to reside in; it's not completely yours. One day if you're no longer with the Justice Department, Haotian City will reclaim it."

"Understood."

Shortly thereafter, Lu Ye left the Justice Department main hall in high spirits, wandered near the sect master's small courtyard, and found a small unoccupied house.

He contacted Qian Wudang via guard token and reported the location of the small house, leaving Qian Wudang to register it officially.

Thus, this small house became his residence in Haotian City.

Though not large, it had several rooms, enough to accommodate his six-member squad in the future.

As for the selection of squad members... Lu Ye already had some plans in his mind.

For now, it certainly wasn't feasible to gather all six members, but he could recruit a few to start with.

Chapter 956 Lin Yinxiu

"Senior Brother wants me to join the Justice Department?"

In the sect master's small courtyard, Pang Huanyin looked at Lu Ye with some surprise. She had been learning about some common knowledge of the Bingzhou guard these past two days and knew the responsibilities of the Justice Department. She knew it was a good place, but she didn't expect Lu Ye to recruit her.

Qian Wudang had granted Lu Ye the authority to freely recruit personnel, and the first person he thought of was Pang Huanyin.

Although this Palace Master of the Ziwei Dao Palace was only at the True Lake Level 1 now, her talent was undeniable. She was the Child of Destiny from the Unparalleled Continent, a person blessed with fortune. Even in the harsh environment of the Unparalleled Continent, she managed to cultivate to the peak of the Cloud River, and after not long in the Nine Provinces, she advanced to True Lake.

As long as the resources keep up, her cultivation will surely progress quickly in the future.

So it's not a problem that her cultivation is low now; her prospects are good. Plus, given the relationship between them and their respective sects, they can generally be considered to be one of their own.

If one has to recruit people, naturally, it's more reassuring to recruit one's own people.

"What do you think, Junior Sister?" Lu Ye asked.

"Of course, it's a good thing." Pang Huanyin showed a longing expression but still shook her head, "But I'm afraid I'll disappoint Senior Brother."

"Why?"

Pang Huanyin explained, "I joined the provincial guard as a forward for my disciples. If I join the Justice Department with Senior Brother, then the original intention of joining the provincial guard is lost. When my many disciples come over later, not all of them will have the opportunity to join the Justice Department like me. They will mostly be assigned to various frontline mountain passes. As the Palace Master of Ziwei Dao Palace, naturally, I have to consider them more."

Lu Ye hadn't thought of this layer. The Justice Department's selection criteria are very stringent, and not just anyone can join. As Pang Huanyin said, when the disciples of Ziwei Dao Palace come over, they will mostly be assigned to various frontline mountain passes. If she joined the Justice Department, she wouldn't be able to look after the disciples who come later.

One can't completely rely on the sect master; the sect master is the sect master of the Righteous Blood Sect, not the sect master of her Ziwei Dao Palace.

"You have considered comprehensively; I was too simplistic."

"Senior Brother, please forgive me."

The plan to recruit Pang Huanyin didn't work out, but it was no big deal since Lu Ye had many people in mind anyway.

After leaving the sect master's small courtyard and returning to his residence, he hadn't even landed when he saw a figure waiting in the small courtyard from a distance.

Judging by the figure, it was a woman, and she looked somewhat familiar...

Lu Ye landed, and the slight commotion startled the visitor. Upon turning to meet eyes, Lu Ye recognized the visitor.

No wonder the figure seemed familiar; it turned out to be Qian Wudang's woman!

Why is she here?

Just as Lu Ye was puzzled, the woman solemnly saluted, "Bingzhou guard Lin Yinxiu, ordered to report in, greetings to the captain!"

Lu Ye swallowed the words on his lips and looked astonished at this woman named Lin Yinxiu.

Slowly realizing, "Did the Lord Department Chief send you over?"

Lin Yinxiu responded, "Yes!"

Lu Ye frowned, "The Lord Department Chief granted me the authority to freely recruit personnel, but didn't say anything about sending someone to me."

What is Qian Wudang up to? A dignified Divine Sea Realm strong cultivator, the Justice Department Chief, yet still thinking about using connections. The Justice Department has so many squads; why push someone into mine?

The woman before him was Qian Wudang's woman, and Lu Ye didn't want to get entangled with her. If something happened during missions, he'd have no way to explain it to Qian Wudang.

He was looking for capable and competent team members, not mediocre ones with connections.

This matter needed a good talk with Qian Wudang.

Lin Yinxiu smiled, "Didn't the Lord Department Chief tell you earlier that he had a request? I am that request. The Lord Department Chief said to join your squad!"

Lu Ye's frown deepened further.

He had guessed yesterday that the unmentioned request from Qian Wudang was his intention to have him lead the captain role, but never expected this request to be putting someone into his not yet fully established squad.

Why?

As Qian Wudang's woman, she's not lacking in cultivation resources, so why enter the Justice Department to risk life and limb?

Difficult? It was a bit; Lu Ye truly didn't want nor was willing to take in such a team member. Qian Wudang said yesterday that if he found it difficult, he could completely refuse.

But if he really refuses, Lu Ye reckons he won't be able to be the captain.

Yesterday, he was indifferent to the captain position, but if it comes with the authority to freely recruit personnel, the captain role becomes very important to him.

"Rest assured, Captain, I am obedient and well-behaved. Whatever you tell me to do, I will do," Lin Yinxiu hurriedly said as Lu Ye pondered silently.

Lu Ye spoke, "Junior Sister misunderstood, I don't have anything against you, it's just that this matter..."

After a slight pause, "Forget it, I'll go see the Lord Department Chief myself."

Saying this, he was about to head to the Justice Department Hall.

Lin Yinxiu hurriedly said, "Captain, I am at True Lake Level 7, I won't drag you down."

Lu Ye halted his steps, half-turned to look at her, utterly amazed, "You are at True Lake Level 7?"

"That's right!" Lin Yinxiu nodded emphatically, channeling her spirit force.

Lu Ye took a look, and indeed she was True Lake Level 7...

He had mistakenly called her "Junior Sister" earlier; in terms of cultivation level, he should be calling her "Senior Sister."

"By the way, this is the hand token signed by Lord Department Chief. With this token, you have the authority to mobilize personnel at various institutions and mountain passes within the provincial guard." Lin Yinxiu handed a jade tablet to Lu Ye. "But Lord Department Chief said that the token's effect lasts only until our squad is full."

Lu Ye took the jade tablet and infused it with his spirit force, immediately detecting a hint of Qian Wudang's aura within.

"Captain, does this mean I'm joining the squad?" Lin Yinxiu looked at Lu Ye with clear eyes.

Lu Ye, sensing the fluctuation of spirit force from her, had no choice but to nod: "From now on, you're a member of my squad."

True Lake Level 7; it's impressive anywhere you go. At the very least, she shouldn't be a hindrance, accepting this member didn't pose any issues.

Lin Yinxiu immediately beamed with joy: "Thank you, Captain!"

She turned to look at the small courtyard and asked brightly, "Captain, which room do you live in?"

Lu Ye pointed to the room in the center.

Lin Yinxiu quickly ran to the adjacent room: "Then I will stay in this room."

Halfway there, she ran back, raised her hand to point at her battlefield marking, and a blue light drifted towards Lu Ye: "Captain, let's exchange marking imprints. It'll make contacting each other easier in the future."

"Alright," Lu Ye responded.

After a short moment, Lin Yinxiu happily dashed into her room, leaving Lu Ye standing in the courtyard, lost in thought.

The one he wanted to recruit didn't join, and the one he didn't want to recruit came to him on her own. What is this?

Either way, he needed to ask Qian Wudang and see what he meant by this.

Shooting into the sky, he headed straight for the Justice Department's main hall.

To Lu Ye's surprise, Qian Wudang wasn't in the Justice Department's main hall. Even the cultivator guarding the entrance didn't know his whereabouts.

Left with no choice, Lu Ye had to use the guard token to make contact.

In the Heralds Office's main hall, Fan Xiangyi was handling official duties. Not far away, Qian Wudang lounged ungracefully on a chair, sighing endlessly.

"If you're worried, then let her go. Once she's gone, don't sulk about it!" Fan Xiangyi's forehead throbbed with veins, mainly irritated with Qian Wudang, as if she could relieve her frustration by driving him out.

"Young women can't be kept close for long! I can protect her temporarily, but not forever. She must venture out and see the world."

"So you understand this principle." Fan Xiangyi sneered, "You've kept her by your side all these years, I thought you were clueless."

"How could I not know, but I can't help worrying."

"But there are so many teams within the Justice Department, why place her by Lu Yiye's side? Lu Yiye's cultivation isn't high; he might not be able to ensure her safety if there's real danger."

"Do you think I want this?" Qian Wudang agonized, "I also wanted to find her a more reliable team, but it was Yinxiu who insisted on going."

"Why is that?" Fan Xiangyi was puzzled.

Qian Wudang's expression grew even more pained: "It's a long story," he clearly didn't want to delve into it further.

"Then tell it at length," Fan Xiangyi wasn't about to let him off the hook, clearly determined to get to the bottom of it.

Qian Wudang was silent for a long time before he spoke: "You're acquainted with Yinxiu's mother."

"Naturally," Fan Xiangyi nodded; they had quite a good relationship in the past.

"Then you should know, Yinxiu's mother greatly admired one person."

Fan Xiangyi caught on: "Righteous Blood Sect, Feng Wujiang!"

"Yes, during that era, Yinxiu's mother wasn't the only one who revered him. Didn't you also?"

"That's in the past," Fan Xiangyi smiled faintly, recalling Nian Yuexian, whose circumstances mirrored theirs.

As Qian Wudang said, during that time, there were many who admired Feng Wujiang, not limited to women, but including many men too—a multitude of strong individuals followed him, for he was the only one in nearly a millennium who had the potential to unify the two major factions.

Unfortunately, he ultimately fell short, and his reputation was tarnished.

"The issue lies with Feng Wujiang. When Yinxiu was little, her mother often told her about Feng Wujiang and lamented in front of her that she didn't get to witness Feng Wujiang's rise and growth firsthand..."

"Yinxiu was influenced by her mother?" Fan Xiangyi got the gist.

"Indeed, she's keenly interested in many of Lu Yiye's feats, because in her view, Lu Yiye is the second Feng Wujiang. Her mother didn't witness Feng Wujiang's ascension and growth, which she regrets, so Yinxiu doesn't want to have any regrets herself. She's probably trying to fulfill her mother's unfulfilled wishes as well."

"First there was Feng Wujiang, now there's Lu Yiye; the Righteous Blood Sect is certainly a place of fortune, always producing extraordinary figures. What's your take?"

"If he can grow, then so be it. Feng Wujiang's era was different from now; at least he only had to face Ten Thousand Demons Ridge back then."

Chapter 957 Jinglan Lake Pass

That's quite true, Feng Wujiang's era wasn't as complicated as it is now. Lu Ye faces more difficult challenges than Feng Wujiang did.

Fan Xiangyi smiled slightly, "Aren't you afraid he'll have the advantage?"

Qian Wudang was taken aback and became furious, "He wouldn't dare!"

Just then, his guard token moved, upon inspection, it was Lu Ye sending a message, inquiring about Lin Yinxiu.

Qian Wudang was already in a bad mood, and immediately sent a message back, "The person is handed over to you, but if you dare have any improper intentions towards her, I'll break your legs!"

Outside the Justice Department hall, Lu Ye was speechless.

What improper intentions could I have towards Lin Yinxiu? Has a mule kicked Qian Wudang in the head? Is he worried about his own woman? He should be warning Lin Yinxiu, not me!

However, the situation left him no choice, if he wanted to keep his position as captain and the freedom to recruit members, Lin Yinxiu had to be accepted.

Rushed back to the courtyard from the Justice Department hall, Lu Ye called out, "Lin Yinxiu!"

"Here." From the adjacent room, Lin Yinxiu quickly emerged.

"There's a mission, follow me!" Lu Ye beckoned.

Lin Yinxiu quickly followed, looking eager, "What mission, Captain?"

She hadn't expected a task right upon arrival, and couldn't help feeling excited, wondering if this time involved punishing the wicked or removing traitors.

"No need to ask, you'll find out when the time comes." Lu Ye said with a cold expression.

Lin Yinxiu obediently responded.

She was reasonably obedient, Lu Ye thought to himself, from their limited interaction so far, this woman doesn't seem particularly scheming, lacks extensive experience, and has sufficient cultivation, making interactions likely uncomplicated.

Besides, the main thing is her obedience.

In the future, as captain, he would inevitably issue commands, if she relied on having Qian Wudang as support and defied orders overtly or subtly, it would be problematic for Lu Ye.

Two figures soared into the sky.

With cultivation four small levels higher than Lu Ye, Lin Yinxiu's speed in traveling through air was undoubtedly swift. After leaving Haotian City, she thoughtfully brought out her flying spirit artifact, "Captain, come aboard, save some energy."

Lu Ye glanced at her flying spirit artifact, it resembled Hua Ci's, a flower basket.

Except hers seemed significantly more valuable than Hua Ci's, adorned more flamboyantly.

He resolutely declined, "Not necessary."

Summoning his spirit ark, he stepped onto it.

Soaring swiftly.

It's worth noting that Lin Yinxiu performed impressively, unless Lu Ye inquired, she wouldn't disturb him impulsively. Nonetheless, Lu Ye felt puzzled, she appeared as if she hadn't seen much of the world, continuously scanning the surroundings with curiosity after departing Haotian City.

Contemplating briefly, Lu Ye roughly understood, this woman was likely akin to a caged bird previously, with Qian Wudang backing her, she hadn't needed to travel and earn her cultivation resources, naturally lacking worldly experience.

In this light, her cultivation at True Lake Level 7 might warrant skepticism, encountering actual adversaries might hinder her capability to display her expected prowess.

In a few simple exchanges, Lu Ye gleaned some of her basic information.

She's a ghost cultivator, with some secondary healing practices.

This was unexpected but welcome news, as among Lu Ye's prospective squad members, there wasn't a ghost cultivator, Lin Yinxiu's presence undoubtedly filled this gap.

The reason Law Enforcement Hall squads number six per team primarily facilitates deployment of the Six-Element Spirit-Sealing Lock, another reason being to maintain balance among various factions, ensuring the team achieves an optimal level of cooperation.

Just like Warlord Geng's A-3 squad, being a physique cultivator himself, capable of excelling in battle, Kang Yuanqiao is a sword cultivator, Shangguan Qiu a magic cultivator, Xiao Ruyun a ghost cultivator, Muk Zheng a combat cultivator with some healing skills, this kind of team structure undoubtedly is highly efficient, regardless of major or minor battles, through teamwork, members can consistently exhibit remarkable fighting strength.

Traveling day and night, crossing over ten thousand miles from Haotian City, not until noon of the third day did they reach their destination.

Jinglan Lake Pass!

The purpose of Lu Ye's journey was to transfer Third Senior Brother from here.

He agreed to take on the captain role for this very purpose.

Although he previously transformed into Li Taibai and killed Tan Shu, Tan Shu wasn't the source. The ones behind Tianyuan Sect or Tan Shu are, and after killing one Tan Shu, there will be Zhang Shu and Li Shu. The only way to escape this quagmire completely is to leave Jinglan Lake Pass.

Lu Ye didn't know what kind of place Green Emperor City was. His disciples were bullied, yet he was powerless. But Xiao Xinghe was the third senior brother, so if Green Emperor City couldn't help, then it would have to rely on mutual support among the brothers.

The hand order signed by Qian Wudang granted him the right to freely recruit personnel.

As for whether he can rescue the third senior brother from Jinglan Lake Pass, it depends on his methods. Qian Wudang also said that if he wanted to recruit someone, it depended on whether the other party's superiors were willing to release them. Such matters could not be forcibly interfered with, as they belonged to different organizations. Even though the Justice Department Chief held a high position of authority, he couldn't command the Mountain Pass Chief of Jinglan Lake Pass.

Liew Yuemei, most likely, wouldn't be willing to let people go. If that's the case, Lu Ye also wouldn't be able to forcibly take Xiao Xinghe away.

Jinglan Lake Pass is located at the center of a large lake, named for that reason. Moreover, there's a powerful array cultivator here who has laid out a Water Curtain Array based on Jinglan Lake. If strong enemies come to attack, the lake water within the entire Jinglan Lake can transform into a barrier, offering a natural advantage in defense.

When Lu Ye led Lin Yinxiu here, they saw many cultivators moving in and out hastily, some returning with injuries, and some even dead, with their corpses being carried back.

Lin Yinxiu's face turned slightly pale, hiding behind Lu Ye and whispered, "Captain, it looks like the battle here is quite intense."

Originally, there were no battles at Jinglan Lake Pass. But ever since they proactively launched a strong attack against Dark Moon Forest Pass and broke its defenses, the tacit peace was shattered.

Dark Moon Forest Pass suffered such a great loss, they couldn't possibly let it go. After Li Taibai left, Lin Yue and Zhang Kun ordered their soldiers to attack, resulting in fierce battles in the buffer zone between the two passes.

However, in this battle, both parties showed restraint, and their Divine Sea Realm cultivators did not intervene. It wasn't a large-scale battle but rather constant encounters between small squads.

Consequently, both sides suffered casualties.

The big array at Jinglan Lake Pass was activated, allowing easy entry and exit for its soldiers, but Lu Ye and Lin Yinxiu couldn't enter freely.

Fortunately, there were always guards stationed here. Lu Ye found a guard and greeted him, "Lu Ye from the Justice Department, here on official business. Please inform the Mountain Pass Chief."

"The Justice Department?" The guard looked surprised, not knowing how their pass had provoked the Justice Department.

The Justice Department had quite a reputation, and whenever its people were mobilized, it was usually not for good reasons. So upon hearing Lu Ye's affiliation, the guard felt uneasy and didn't dare neglect it, speaking quickly, "Please wait for a moment!"

Saying this, he turned and went into the city to report.

Lu Ye and Lin Yinxiu waited outside, attracting the curious glances of other guards, but no one dared to approach them, showcasing the Justice Department's influence.

Shortly, inside a large hall in the city, the guard hurriedly entered, saluting, "Lord Mountain Pass Chief, there are two from the Justice Department seeking an audience outside."

Above, a man was evaluating numerous complicated reports. In recent days, constant clashes between soldiers beneath the two passes left no time for the previously leisurely days, and naturally, his duties had increased.

Especially since Liew Yuemei was deeply grieving the loss of her son, unable to extricate herself. All duties fell upon him, leaving him quite dissatisfied.

The man was Cher Zixiong, the other Mountain Pass Chief of Jinglan Lake Pass. Though his cultivation matched Liew Yuemei, and his strength even slightly surpassed hers, he was the junior Mountain Pass Chief here, while Liew Yuemei was the senior.

After all, she had Yu Huajin backing her, and Jinglan Lake Pass was under Sky Gate Checkpoint's jurisdiction. He couldn't match Liew Yuemei in terms of background.

"Why are the Justice Department people here?" Cher Zixiong frowned. His first thought, like the guard's, was wondering if someone had committed an offense and the Justice Department was here to arrest them. But he quickly realized, "You said only two people?"

"Yes, only two, a man and a woman."

Cher Zixiong became more puzzled.

Normally, when the Justice Department executes missions, they operate in six-person squads, never in pairs, indicating they weren't here for arrests.

Feeling slightly relieved, Cher Zixiong said, "Let them in."

"Yes!" The guard retreated, opened a gap in the big array, and guided Lu Ye and Lin Yinxiu to the hall.

Soon, Lu Ye and Lin Yinxiu reached the hall and looked up, seeing a man seated above, but not Liew Yuemei.

"Lu Ye from the Justice Department's Law Enforcement Hall, with squad member Lin Yinxiu, greeting Lord Mountain Pass Chief!"

Cher Zixiong nodded, "What is your business here?"

Lu Ye stood holding his sword, raised his voice, "By order of Lord Department Chief, I'm here to recruit someone from your pass. Please grant permission, Lord Mountain Pass Chief." Saying this, he stepped

forward a few times and handed over the signed hand order from Qian Wudang: "This is the hand order signed by Lord Department Chief, please inspect it."

Cher Zixiong took it, infused it with spirit force, immediately detecting Qian Wudang's aura. He then checked the remaining information in the jade tablet, confirming it, then returned it to Lu Ye.

"The hand order is valid," Cher Zixiong said, "Which person does your department wish to recruit?"

It's not unusual. Various front-line passes often have standout cultivators or those with powerful backgrounds who get recruited by different departments. Generally, in such cases, the passes cooperate.

Chapter 958 Meeting Xiao Xinghe

"Green Emperor City, Xiao Xinghe!" Lu Ye announced his name.

Cher Zixiong was stunned.

He originally thought that someone with outstanding performance was being recruited by the Justice Department, which is why they had come to enlist them. Who knew it would be Xiao Xinghe.

Truthfully speaking, Xiao Xinghe is indeed quite good, performing commendably at Jinglan Lake Pass, but still far from being noticed by an institution like the Justice Department to the extent of directly enlisting him.

Especially considering that Xiao Xinghe's cultivation isn't very high, only at the True Lake Level 3. Why would a huge Justice Department suddenly come to enlist Xiao Xinghe?

Suddenly realizing, he looked at Lu Ye: "Are you that Lu Yiye from the Righteous Blood Sect?"

Earlier, when Lu Ye reported his name, he merely listened casually, vaguely feeling that the name Lu Ye was familiar, but didn't think much of it. Now he recalled.

No wonder they would come to enlist Xiao Xinghe, it turns out there is this reason.

"Yes."

Cher Zixiong's brow furrowed slightly, secretly finding it troublesome.

Logically speaking, with Lu Ye holding Qian Wudang's token to enlist someone, he couldn't possibly obstruct it; both emotionally and rationally, he should give Qian Wudang face.

The cultivators at Jinglan Lake Pass are many; one more Xiao Xinghe doesn't matter, one less doesn't matter, there's no reason to obstruct.

But he knows better than anyone why Xiao Xinghe is at Jinglan Lake Pass. If he rashly lets him go, wouldn't it offend that person?

Even though he is also in the Divine Sea Realm, he belongs to a 3rd grade sect and absolutely cannot afford to offend that person.

While pondering how to resolve this matter, the battlefield marking suddenly registered a disturbance. He quickly checked and was delighted, slamming the table as he stood up: "Bold indeed!"

With these words, he was about to rush out.

Lu Ye frowned: "My lord, what is the matter?"

Cher Zixiong hastily said: "A Divine Sea Realm from Dark Moon Forest Pass has mobilized, I need to go intercept them for a bit. You two stay calm, I'll be back soon!"

The last word had just fallen, and the person had disappeared, leaving it unclear whether a Divine Sea Realm from Dark Moon Forest Pass had really mobilized.

This was something Lu Ye couldn't verify, but the timing of the Divine Sea Realm's mobilization from the other side was indeed somewhat convenient.

He knew long ago that this trip to enlist someone wouldn't be easy, but it was surprising that just at the start, the Mountain Pass Chief of Jinglan Lake Pass would vanish like this.

"Captain." Although Lin Yinxiu was simple-minded, she vaguely sensed something wasn't quite right. No matter what, she was a Level 7 True Lake, simple-minded yet not stupid.

"No problem." Lu Ye replied indifferently.

The host had left, leaving the two guests here. Lu Ye roughly understood what Cher Zixiong was thinking, clearly feeling that his request was tricky and not wishing to handle it.

Since he didn't want to handle it, someone who did would surely appear.

"Let's go." He beckoned to Lin Yinxiu and walked out of the main hall.

Looking around, he stopped a hurried cultivator, cupping his fists, "Fellow Daoist, may I ask if Xiao Xinghe from Green Emperor City is within the pass?"

"You're looking for Xiao Xinghe?" The cultivator eyed Lu Ye up and down, confirming he hadn't seen Lu Ye before, which made him a bit wary, "What do you want?"

"I am from the Justice Department, here on orders."

The cultivator's face changed slightly: "What mistake did Brother Xiao make?"

From the way he addressed and treated him, it seemed he had some friendship with Xiao Xinghe.

Xiao Xinghe's situation at Jinglan Lake Pass was indeed not very good; someone from above was suppressing him both openly and covertly, but it takes all kinds to make a world. Some follow orders mindlessly, some don't care to get involved, and naturally, there are those who stand up for others.

While Liew Yuemei had control over Jinglan Lake Pass, she couldn't prevent some from associating with Xiao Xinghe.

So when this person heard Lu Ye was from the Justice Department, he instinctively became cautious.

"Not at all." Lu Ye shook his head and hesitated, "Xiao Xinghe is my senior brother."

"So, you're from Green Emperor City." The cultivator couldn't help but misunderstand further, slightly relaxing, "In that case, follow me."

"Much obliged."

Following this cultivator, they quickly arrived in front of a house.

"Does Senior Brother live here?" Lu Ye glanced around, eyebrows furrowing slightly. This location was undoubtedly very poor because if the defense of Jinglan Lake Pass was breached, this place would bear the brunt, and Senior Brother's house was noticeably smaller in layout compared to those they'd seen on the way.

"Brother Xiao was injured previously, and should be healing now." The cultivator said, flicking his fingers gently in front of the void three times.

If Xiao Xinghe was indeed healing, then the house's protective restrictions must have been activated. With the cultivator's movement, a transparent light curtain appeared, rippling and spreading inward.

"Is Senior Brother's injury serious?" Lu Ye asked gravely.

"Fairly serious. Previously, we at Jinglan Lake Pass launched a strong attack against Dark Moon Forest Pass, many died. Your senior brother was fortunate to have escaped with his life, recuperating for several days now; he should have recovered quite a bit."

Just as they were speaking, the protective restriction was lifted, the door opened, and a man with thick eyebrows, large eyes, an imposing figure, and a slightly pale complexion appeared in Lu Ye's view.

Who else but Xiao Xinghe?

He looked at the cultivator leading Lu Ye over: "Brother Wang, is there something?"

The cultivator surnamed Wang spoke: "Your junior brother came looking for you, I was just leading the way."

He pointed to Lu Ye beside him.

"Junior brother?" Xiao Xinghe looked at Lu Ye in confusion and then glanced at Lin Yinxiu behind him, momentarily bewildered.

"What, Brother Xiao, you don't recognize him?" The cultivator surnamed Wang became cautious again, looking at Lu Ye with an odd expression, as if associating him with something unfavorable.

Xiao Xinghe glanced at the long blade at Lu Ye's waist, his heart stirred, and suddenly he laughed heartily: "Naturally, I recognize him! Junior brother, how did you find your way here?"

He had already guessed Lu Ye's identity.

Their eyes met, Lu Ye clasped his fist: "I've seen the Third Senior Brother!"

Xiao Xinghe raised his hand to support Lu Ye's arm: "Among brethren, no need for such formalities." He stepped aside, "Come, let's talk inside!"

Lu Ye nodded, leading Lin Yinxiu as he stepped inside.

"Much obliged, Brother Wang." At the door, Xiao Xinghe thanked the cultivator surnamed Wang.

"Just a trivial effort." The cultivator surnamed Wang waved his hand and glanced around, noticing several eyes covertly or overtly watching the place. He sighed slightly: "Brother Xiao should recover his wounds quickly. Now that you've shown up, the Mountain Pass Chief likely won't let you idle away any longer."

If not for the previously severe nature of his injuries, Xiao Xinghe wouldn't have had the chance to heal. But now, several days have passed, and even if his wounds haven't fully healed, once the Mountain Pass Chief orders, he cannot avoid going to battle, otherwise, he'd be guilty of defiance and would face consequences.

"I understand."

After some small talk, the cultivator surnamed Wang left hurriedly. Though he intended to befriend Xiao Xinghe and disapproved of certain practices up top, he was merely an ordinary soldier within the mountain pass and couldn't change anything.

Turning inside the room, closing the door, Xiao Xinghe looked at Lu Ye, his face full of delight: "You little rascal, you've reached True Lake!"

"Third Senior Brother." Lu Ye formally saluted once more.

"I already said we are among brethren." Xiao Xinghe feigned anger and glared at Lu Ye, welcoming him warmly: "Come, sit and talk!"

From the outside, the house didn't seem large, and inside, it felt even more narrow. For cultivation convenience, Xiao Xinghe hadn't placed any beds or tables, just a meditation mat.

"When did you come to the provincial guard?" Sitting cross-legged, Xiao Xinghe asked.

"Over four months ago."

"That's quite a while... How is the old sect master?"

"The sect master came to Haotian City the day before yesterday, his health is really good. As soon as he arrived, he enthusiastically exchanged with a few old friends..."

Although Lu Ye didn't say it explicitly, Xiao Xinghe understood the meaning behind his words and couldn't help laughing: "The sect master is still so vigorous! How's Sister Shui Yuan?"

"Second Senior Sister is also doing well, Third Senior Brother doesn't need to worry. Since the sect master is not in the sect, Second Senior Sister is guarding the sect. If Brother has some free time, just go back and have a look."

Xiao Xinghe nodded: "I've wasted so much time, should go back and see. I wonder if Second Senior Sister will punch me when she sees me."

"That's for sure, I won't be helping at that time," Lu Ye nodded heavily.

Xiao Xinghe chuckled.

Though they were meeting for the first time, there was no sense of estrangement or unfamiliarity between them. Lu Ye secretly thought this must be the camaraderie among sect members, just like when he first met Shui Yuan and Li Baxian on the Spirit Stream battlefield.

"Junior brother, have I met you somewhere before?" Xiao Xinghe suddenly showed a puzzled expression again.

"Where does Third Senior Brother think he has met me?" Lu Ye raised his brow.

Xiao Xinghe shook his head: "Not really sure, I should have never met you before, but there's an oddly familiar feeling."

Lu Ye smiled silently.

Xiao Xinghe was seeing Li Taibai, naturally, he had a peculiar sense of familiarity.

"Oh, I've been preoccupied talking with you, this person is..." Xiao Xinghe slapped his forehead, finally recalling Lin Yinxu who had entered with Lu Ye.

"My team member, Lin Yinxu." Lu Ye briefly introduced.

They greeted each other, Xiao Xinghe couldn't help but be suspicious: "Your what team member?"

Lu Ye's expression turned solemn, he spoke: "I'm now with the Justice Department, by order of Lord Department Chief, and the reason I'm at Jinglan Lake Pass is to recruit Brother into the Justice Department."

"Justice Department..." Xiao Xinghe was stunned.

That's quite a place. Although tasks performed there often encounter dangers, is serving at the mountain pass not dangerous? Despite the rare battles at Jinglan Lake Pass, when they do erupt, they happen suddenly. After a battle, many familiar faces are never seen again.

Thus, even with high casualty rates, many cultivators desperately vie to enter, not just for its inherent deterrence—which is unmatched by ordinary assignments.

Cultivators from the Justice Department are respected wherever they go.

He certainly wanted to join the Justice Department, but for Lu Ye to personally recruit him made the situation somewhat extraordinary.

With a quick deliberation, Xiao Xinghe guessed some things, smiling subtly: "It's a good thing the Department Chief appreciates you, but you should act prudently. I won't be joining, Junior Brother."

Chapter 959 A Glimmer of Possibility

Although Xiao Xinghe appeared bold, his thinking was extremely meticulous, deducing some things after just a few short sentences.

Being summoned clearly was the merit of his little junior brother, as he didn't believe he could attract the attention of the Justice Department on his own strength and talent.

From this, it seemed that his little junior brother was quite favored by the Department Chief Qian Wudang; otherwise, he wouldn't have been given this authority, allowing him to personally summon people.

His little junior brother considered him, so he naturally couldn't just think of himself.

This Jinglan Lake Pass, others might find leaving simple, but for him, escaping was extremely difficult; if he were to truly let his little junior brother face that vicious woman, things would become very complicated.

Lu Ye said, "Rest assured, senior brother, if things truly can't be done, I won't force it. I ask you to bear with it here for the time being; I will look for another opportunity to get you out in the future."

Wanting to move Xiao Xinghe this time, the key was whether Jinglan Lake Pass would let him go, and the initiative was completely in Liew Yuemei's hands. If she insisted on not letting him go and gave no face to Qian Wudang, Lu Ye would have not a shred of chance.

If that's the case, don't blame him for targeting the disciples of the Tianyuan Sect.

Most cultivators are unruly, always inadvertently offending the guard discipline somewhere; how could the disciples of the Tianyuan Sect be exempt?

Only many things are harmless, go unreported, and are not pursued.

But if the people from the Justice Department are watching...everyone makes mistakes, just take Lu Ye himself as an example. Leaving Cangyan Mountain Pass together with Nian Yuexian for two months, upon real investigation, would be tantamount to a charge of dereliction of duty, and even Nian Yuexian wouldn't escape.

Lu Ye felt that upon returning this time, he should carefully study the guard discipline, as he will inevitably need to use it while working in the Justice Department.

Xiao Xinghe nodded, "With you saying this, I'm relieved."

It was apparent that this little junior brother of his was not impulsive. There's a fear that Lu Ye, in his youthful vigor, might insist on taking him away from this place, which would lead to an uncontrollable situation.

Bang bang bang, the door vibrated as someone outside beat on it fiercely.

Lu Ye turned his head abruptly, his gaze instantly growing cold.

Normally, cultivators searching for people wouldn't be so rude. Should anyone be in seclusion, such disturbances are inappropriate. Previously, when Cultivator Wang came here, he merely lightly touched the restriction to remind Xiao Xinghe of a visitor, whether Xiao Xinghe saw him or not depending on his intentions.

This time, however, someone was rudely beating on the door, clearly with ill intent.

Judging by the other party's posture, if not for some concerns, they would've probably barged in.

Xiao Xinghe comforted, "Don't be anxious, junior brother."

He stood up to open the door, finding a youth with an impatient expression standing outside. He couldn't help but frown, "Senior Brother Chen Ke, is there something wrong?"

The youth named Chen Ke glanced at Xiao Xinghe disdainfully, sweeping his gaze inside to Lu Ye and Lin Yinxiu.

"Move aside!" Chen Ke raised a hand, pushing Xiao Xinghe to the side, spirit force surging, showcasing his impressive True Lake Level 7 cultivation.

He strode straight into the room, looking down at Lu Ye, "You are from the Justice Department?"

Lu Ye slowly stood up, meeting his eyes directly, "Correct!"

Chen Ke snorted, "The Lord Mountain Pass Chief requests your presence, follow me."

"Pass Chief Liew?"

"Naturally."

Lu Ye mused at the swift response of the other party; he had only been here shortly, yet news had already reached them.

However, it was understandable, as this place was Jinglan Lake Pass, essentially her territory, and she was a Divine Sea Realm cultivator, how could she not be aware?

Cher Zixiong didn't want to handle Lu Ye's summoning of Xiao Xinghe, finding an excuse to absent himself, but now someone capable of handling the matter appeared, which suited Lu Ye just fine.

"Lead the way!"

Chen Ke's mouth twitched into a meaningful smile, then he turned and left the room, flying off in one direction.

Lu Ye and the others followed closely behind.

Xiao Xinghe seemed uneasy, quietly advising Lu Ye, "Since you arrived here for me, you must know the grievances between Liew Yuemei and the sect. Although you now have the Justice Department's protection, you still need to act cautiously before her. She just experienced the pain of losing a child and is irrational, who knows what crazy actions she might take."

"I understand, senior brother, rest assured." Lu Ye nodded.

Following Chen Ke, they quickly returned to the previous grand hall.

Cher Zixiong was still nowhere to be seen, but there was a more desolate figure inside the hall, none other than Liew Yuemei.

Lu Ye had a deep impression of this woman; after all, Li Taibai was almost beaten to death by her a few days ago...

However, she probably couldn't have imagined that Li Taibai, whom she believed was certainly dead, was now alive and publicly appeared before her.

"Pass Chief, I've brought the people." Chen Ke cupped his fists.

Liew Yuemei stood there quietly, but her icy gaze was fixed on Lu Ye, her eyes suddenly overflowing with boundless hatred and murderous intent.

Without any warning, the might of the strong cultivator in the Divine Sea Realm suddenly spread.

Lu Ye, who was about to salute, instantly felt pressure like a mountain. His figure bent slightly, his bones creaking. Behind him, although Xiao Xinghe wasn't directly targeted, he was injured, and the residual wave made him groan.

Lin Yinxiu was the least affected; her cultivation was higher than the other two, and unlike Lu Ye, she wasn't targeted. But under the might of the strong cultivator in the Divine Sea Realm, her face was also pale.

Time seemed to slow down significantly. Lu Ye endured immense pressure, his bones creaked continuously, and his figure remained hunched.

Although he knew meeting Liew Yuemei wouldn't be good, Lu Ye didn't expect this woman to be so insane. As the Third Senior Brother said, having just suffered the pain of losing her son, she was somewhat unreasonable, clearly trying to force him to kneel.

Lu Ye wouldn't kneel to her. Even if the pressure felt like a mountain, he still stood firm!

Now, at least, he was with the Justice Department. He represented them to perform official duties, and Liew Yuemei wouldn't dare go too far; otherwise, she'd be insulting Qian Wudang.

With great effort, Lu Ye spoke, almost word by word: "Lu Yiye of the Justice Department, along with team member Lin Yinxiu, greets Pass Chief Liew!"

As soon as he finished, the overwhelming pressure suddenly vanished.

The abrupt reversal made the blood Qi churn in Lu Ye's chest, a mouthful of blood rising to his throat, almost spurting out.

Xiao Xinghe beside him was the same; he groaned, fresh blood spilling from the corner of his mouth, undoubtedly aggravating his injuries.

Lu Ye raised his head sharply, his gaze like a blade on Liew Yuemei, his mouth filled with blood's metallic taste: "I've long heard of Lord Mountain Pass Chief Liew's great name. Seeing today, your might is truly mountainous, such a great prestige, my humble self is enlightened!"

"Hmph!" Liew Yuemei snorted softly and turned, sitting serenely behind the desk, saying, "I've heard of your great reputation long ago too."

"My humble self is immensely honored that Lord Mountain Pass Chief remembers."

"Oh yes, I remember you quite well." Liew Yuemei coldly chuckled, her expression icy, malice towards Lu Ye evident, "So why have you come this time?"

"By the order of Lord Department Chief Qian Wudang, to enlist Xiao Xinghe into the Justice Department. This is the hand order signed by the Department Chief." Lu Ye stepped forward and presented the hand order.

Liew Yuemei remained seated, showing no intention to connect.

Knowing that Lu Ye had arrived at Jinglan Lake Pass, she naturally knew his purpose and preparations. Her previous question was purely nonsense.

They were merely three steps apart. Liew Yuemei stared into Lu Ye's eyes and said flatly, "The Justice Department, where experts gather, values someone unimpressive in my pass?"

Lu Ye retracted the hand order and said, "That is the Department Chief's consideration, my humble self is merely carrying out orders."

In such moments, pushing matters onto Qian Wudang's hands is never wrong.

"Go back and tell Chief Qian that we are currently understaffed at Jinglan Lake Pass, and Xiao Xinghe performed excellently in the previous battle. I have plans to promote him, so Chief Qian's kindness can only be appreciated."

"Yes!" Lu Ye responded, clasped his hands, and said, "Then I shall take my leave!"

He said this and promptly turned to leave.

Lin Yinxiu, with a bewildered expression, hurriedly followed.

Behind the desk, Liew Yuemei was slightly stunned, clearly not expecting Lu Ye to leave so swiftly and neatly.

She thought Lu Ye had other preparations or some means to make her release him.

Just when Lu Ye was about to step out of the great hall with Lin Yinxiu, Liew Yuemei's voice came from behind, "Wait."

Lu Ye halted his steps, exhaled gently, his tense expression slightly relaxed.

The progress was... somewhat smooth.

He feared that this woman wouldn't call him. If she hadn't, the enlistment of Xiao Xinghe would have been impossible to start. As long as she called him, there was a sliver of hope.

Only a sliver of hope. Whether things would continue as planned, Lu Ye couldn't be sure; after all, too many variables existed in such matters.

He didn't actually need to come himself to enlist Xiao Xinghe; now he had Lin Yinxiu under him, and she could handle it in his place.

Due to Liew Yuemei, if he came personally, things would get complicated. Yet he still came, because only when things become complicated, would there be a sliver of possibility for enlisting Xiao Xinghe.

Otherwise, sending Lin Yinxiu for a one-time visit would be futile; Liew Yuemei definitely wouldn't release him.

"Does Lord Mountain Pass Chief have any other orders?" Lu Ye turned and asked.

For the first time, the always cold Liew Yuemei flashed a smile, albeit sinister and frightening: "I've heard of Lu Yiye of the Righteous Blood Sect many times; your achievements in the Spirit Stream battlefield

and Cloud River battlefield, I'm familiar with. Such talent is wasted in the Justice Department. Lu Yiye, I wish to recruit you to serve at my pass and slay enemies. What do you say?"

He came here to enlist Xiao Xinghe, but Liew Yuemei wanted to enlist him in return; truly absurd.

As for Liew Yuemei's intention to enlist him, Lu Ye could easily guess.

His expression remained calm, but inwardly, he was pleased.

The fish... has taken the bait.

Chapter 960 Young and Ignorant Lu Yiye

Although Xiao Xinghe has the backing of the Righteous Blood Sect, he is ultimately a disciple of Green Emperor City now, and there is a distance between him and the Righteous Blood Sect. Compared to Lu Yiye, a legitimate disciple of the Righteous Blood Sect, how could he hold more allure for Liew Yuemei?

If she could bring Lu Yiye to Jinglan Lake Pass, his life or death would entirely depend on Liew Yuemei's whims.

She had just experienced the pain of losing a child, and although she personally killed Li Taibai, the anger and sorrow deep in her heart could not be vented easily. As Lu Ye entered her sight at this time, how could she not have thoughts?

This was why Lu Ye knew that coming personally would complicate matters, yet he still came himself.

He was just bait, a lure to attract Liew Yuemei!

"I fear I must disappoint Lord Pass Chief. I'm currently serving in the Justice Department, and this is my first time executing official duties. If I don't handle this task well, I won't have the face to meet Chief Qian, so how can I join another now?"

"You really want to do your duty well?"

"Naturally."

"Good!" Liew Yuemei shouted charmingly, "I've thought about it. You came with Chief Qian's order, and I can't disregard it. You want to do your duty well, so I'll give you an opportunity. Whether you can grasp it depends on your own ability!"

Lu Ye raised an eyebrow: "Really?"

Liew Yuemei lightly snickered: "Although I am a woman, I always keep my word. I wouldn't deceive you."

Lu Ye showed a hint of vigilance and cautiously asked, "What does Lord Pass Chief require of me?"

Liew Yuemei smiled lightly: "I've long heard that Lu Yiye of Righteous Blood Sect excels at defeating enemies beyond his level. But it's not in the ordinary sense of crossing levels. Unfortunately, I haven't seen it firsthand..."

Lu Ye revealed an understanding look: "Lord Pass Chief wants me to spar with someone?"

"If you win, you can take Xiao Xinghe away. But if you lose, you must stay and serve under me. Do you have the courage?"

After a brief contemplation, Lu Ye nodded: "It's not impossible. But may I ask, Lord Pass Chief, who will be sparring with me?" He glanced intentionally at Chen Ke standing nearby: "If it's this Fellow Daoist Chen, there's no need. I admit I can't beat him."

"Don't worry, I won't make things difficult for you. Chen Ke's cultivation is indeed far beyond yours." Saying this, Liew Yuemei immediately sent a message out. Soon, a lean man swiftly entered the hall, respectfully saluting: "Greetings, my lord. What are your orders?"

This man did not appear striking, nor was he tall, but his expression was fierce, and his aura was extremely sharp, with a faint hint of bloodiness, showing he had killed many people.

Upon his arrival, Xiao Xinghe's face changed involuntarily, and he whispered: "Qi Wu!"

Clearly somewhat apprehensive of this person.

From behind the desk, Liew Yuemei spoke: "Qi Wu, I want you to spar with Lu Yiye, only victory is allowed, defeat is not. Do you understand?"

Qi Wu turned to Lu Ye with a glance, frowning slightly: "What is his cultivation?"

"True Lake Level 3!"

Qi Wu's brow furrowed further: "My lord, my cultivation is three levels higher than his. He's not my match, and you know I never spar with others. I don't compete in skills; I only have a killing technique. If I accidentally kill him, that wouldn't be good."

Before Liew Yuemei could speak, Lu Ye retorted disapprovingly with a cold laugh: "Coincidentally, I also only have a killing technique!"

Qi Wu remarked indifferently: "Haven't seen someone as bold as you in a long time. Hope your skills match your courage."

"Likewise."

As their gazes locked, sparks seemed to fly.

Beside Lu Ye, Xiao Xinghe kept signaling to him, even Lin Yinxiu was quietly anxious.

Behind the desk, Liew Yuemei rested her arms on the table, her hands supporting her chin, observing with interest. Seeing Lu Ye so youthful and impetuous, she immediately decided: "Since you both only know killing techniques, then let's have a Fight to the Death."

"My lord!" Xiao Xinghe's expression changed drastically, exclaiming in protest. If it was just a spar, it was not a big deal; at worst, he'd concede defeat due to inferior skills. But a Fight to the Death could truly end in deaths, especially since Qi Wu was indeed vicious and three small levels above the junior disciple. How could the junior disciple stand a chance?

"This isn't your place to speak!" Liew Yuemei coldly snorted, Divine Sea Realm might emanating, suppressing Xiao Xinghe's speech, forcing him to struggle to stay upright. She looked at Lu Ye and Qi Wu, "What do you two think?"

Qi Wu responded indifferently: "If it's the orders of Lord Pass Chief, I'll naturally obey."

Lu Ye casually took out an item from his storage sack: "If that's the case, let's do it thoroughly. Why not enter this and fight? It will prevent others from witnessing the bloodshed!"

Qi Wu looked at the item in Lu Ye's hand, slightly amazed: "Combat arena!"

This famed exotic treasure was one he was bound to recognize. He had thought Lu Ye was merely boasting, yet here he was, bringing out such a treasure, making his heart sink. For the first time, he seriously scrutinized Lu Ye...

If there wasn't a certain level of confidence, why would the opponent willingly use the combat arena? But he truly couldn't understand where Lu Yiye, at True Lake Level 3, got the confidence to challenge him to a Fight to the Death. If the opponent was hiding his cultivation, that was impossible; how could anything be hidden under the eyelids of a strong cultivator at Divine Sea Realm? Thus, he must genuinely be a True Lake Level 3.

"I only follow Lord Pass Chief's commands." Qi Wu suppressed a faint unease and turned to look at Liew Yuemei.

Liew Yuemei's eyes narrowed slightly: "Lu Yiye, it seems you are quite confident."

Lu Ye remained calm and composed: "This subordinate only wishes to give his all."

Liew Yuemei was silent for a moment, then said, "If so, then you two shall enter the combat arena for battle!"

Lu Ye cupped his hands: "Before that, this subordinate has one request."

"Speak!"

"This subordinate asks Chief Liew to establish a Heaven's Augury Pact, that if I happen to survive, I will take Xiao Xinghe away, and Chief Liew must not obstruct."

"You question this Chief?" Liew Yuemei's gaze held a touch of fire.

"Words alone are not proof!" Lu Ye met her eyes fearlessly. From a simple interaction, it was clear that Xiao Xinghe's prior concerns were accurate; Liew Yuemei, having suffered the pain of losing a son, had somewhat lost her reason. As a Mountain Pass Chief, she agreed to let her subordinate engage in a Fight to the Death, which was not the demeanor a strong cultivator of the Divine Sea Realm should have.

She likely wanted me dead now, but was hindered by her position from striking personally, so she had to rely on others.

Such a mad and irrational woman naturally had no credibility to speak of.

Before the combat, establishing a Heaven's Augury Pact was the best response.

"Fine, just as you said!" Liew Yuemei coldly retorted, lifting her hand to conjure a Heaven's Augury Pact amidst golden light. She grabbed it, drafted terms, branded her seal, and then tossed it to Lu Ye.

Lu Ye bowed his head, meticulously inspecting line by line. When he saw a particular line, his heart steadied; things were unfolding just as he had anticipated. Liew Yuemei had indeed manipulated some barely noticeable details within the Heaven's Augury Pact.

He pretended not to see it, eagerly branding his own seal.

The Heaven's Augury Pact dissipated into fluorescence, vanished, and in the mysterious ether, Heaven's Augury descended, and the pact was sealed.

"If neither of you have anything else to say, then begin," Liew Yuemei impatiently urged.

"I'll try to leave you a whole corpse," Qi Wu said.

Lu Ye said nothing, channeling spirit force into the combat arena in his hand, raising it to strike at Qi Wu.

Xiao Xinghe was burning with anxiety, wanting to intervene, but he was continually suppressed by Liew Yuemei's Divine Sea Realm pressure, unable to move or speak, let alone interfere.

On the contrary, Lin Yinxu was no longer agitated, though he seemed somewhat contemplative.

The small combat arena flew towards Qi Wu and exploded violently, yet at that instant, Liew Yuemei suddenly raised her hand, teleporting Qi Wu to her side from afar, while Chen Ke, who had been standing motionless nearby, instantly appeared where Qi Wu had been.

Lu Ye's expression turned utterly shocked, blurting out, "You all..."

Chen Ke smiled at him: "Please enlighten me!"

As soon as he finished, both figures simultaneously vanished.

"Hahaha!" Liew Yuemei suddenly burst into laughter, sounding deranged, "Did you really think this Mountain Pass Chief would be outsmarted by you? Truly young and naive!"

Among all the True Lake Realm cultivators in Jinglan Lake Pass, many met the criteria. She hadn't sought anyone else and summoned Qi Wu, known for his fierce aggression, hoping that during the duel, Qi Wu might cripple or accidentally kill Lu Ye.

This was her original plan.

Yet as events unfolded, she vaguely realized one thing—Lu Ye seemed unafraid of Qi Wu. His proactive use of the combat arena indicated this; he was not only fearless but confident in his ability to defeat Qi Wu. Otherwise, why would he actively produce the combat arena?

Liew Yuemei was somewhat incredulous; they were three minor levels apart, where did Lu Yiye's confidence come from?

Regardless, Lu Ye's attitude and actions provided her with the basis for these deductions.

If so, actually sending Qi Wu might result in his death.

With Qi Wu being unreliable, she had to rely on Chen Ke.

Chen Ke was her disciple, possessing True Lake Level 7 cultivation. Although only one level above Qi Wu, his strength greatly exceeded.

Lu Yiye may have confidence in defeating Qi Wu, but certainly can't match Chen Ke.

As for the last-minute swap of participants, for someone like her at the Divine Sea Realm, it was merely a trivial task, impossible for anyone present to stop.

For this reason, she had laid the groundwork while drafting the terms for the Heaven's Augury Pact, which never mentioned Qi Wu's name, specifically to exploit this loophole.

Fortunately, though she had lost her reason and acted crazily, she knew it was inappropriate for her to strike directly; otherwise, it would have been her, not Chen Ke, entering the combat arena.