

Emperor 3971

## Chapter 3971: Return

“Which dao lord is this?!” Numerous slumbering monsters were woken up by this unexpected development.

“Someone is still around?” An old sacred ancestor wondered.

Eight Desolaces didn't have a dao lord after the departure of Eight Stallion Dao Lord. Was there a hidden dao lord all this time?

Not to mention regular mortals and cultivators, even ancestors found it impossible to stand due to the pressure.

“Boom!” After a loud explosion, a red moon could be seen anywhere in Eight Desolaces.

“What is this sign?” Most living beings trembled because it looked like an ominous sign.

However, older ancestors and sovereigns recognized this moon.

“Scarlet Moon Dao Lord, this is his weapon!” One of them shouted.

“You're right.” A king answered back because he had read the dao lord's descriptions before.

“So the dao lord is still alive?” One ancestor shouted.

“No way, his untimely death is well-documented.” Another found this impossible.

“It could be a rebirth.” Someone else speculated.

Only the top masters could speak right now because the rest had become frozen due to the immense pressure. They didn't have the courage to speak.

“An animated corpse...” A top sovereign thought of this possibility. His scalp tingled as a result.

An animated corpse of a regular cultivator was no big deal. But as for a dao lord? One could actually massacre the world. The result would be unimaginable.

As for the Chi, the members of this clan prostrated with utmost reverence. The dao lord has always been their pride. His death was an unspeakable loss.

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Back in Black Tides, the blood moon devastated the region near Li Qiye. If anyone dared to get close, they would be melted into nothingness.

Li Qiye simply waved his finger in the air. “Buzz.” Laws were woven together in a complex manner on the ground and turned into a scripture.

This scripture engulfed the area and had the ability to contain everything. It flashed brightly and a small tree drilled out of the soil. The branches and leaves were golden.

They poured down chaos energy brimming with dao profundity. Each strand of this special energy could start a supreme grand dao.

The tree didn't choose to refine the dao lord but simply went on the defensive, stopping the dreadful aura of the blood moon. It exuded serenity and protection.

While standing below this tree, one would survive the sky falling down. Thus, the blood moon was impressive but couldn't overcome the tree.

Time and space have been stopped by the moon but Li Qiye remained unaffected. In the next second, he appeared before the dao lord and spoke: "Let go of this eternal obsession."

Having said that, he flicked the dao lord's forehead. A tiny law drilled into the corpse and reached the inner region of the mind. It then circled around the dao lord's tree and dao fruit.

"Poof!" The tree started burning with dao trueflame. The corpse's golden aura intensified as a result. The death energy haunting the dao lord was gradually being burned by this flame.

He looked magnificent and divine after the purification process. The grayness in his eyes disappeared as well.

They became bright and spirited, seemingly containing a galaxy. Of course, this didn't change the fact that he was dead.

He first bowed towards Li Qiye before giving a command to the ground beneath him.

"Rumble!" It started shaking and the dirt and rocks came together to form a coffin. He then lay down inside then the lid closed.

"Boom!" The coffin then pierced through the void and crossed numerous dimensions.

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Back in Eight Desolaces, the blood moon and the dao lord's aura suddenly disappeared.

This was akin to a gust of wind blowing by. Everything returned to normal right away. Nonetheless, everyone was still in shock. Where did this dao lord go?

Of course, the top sovereigns heaved a sigh of relief. They assumed that this was a matter of a reanimated corpse. This seemed to not be the case any longer.

A while later, the Chi had a solemn ceremony due to the appearance of a stone coffin in their ancestral hall. They realized that this was the corpse of their dao lord.

Previously, the dao lord went missing and they couldn't find his corpse for a proper burial. Now, it has finally returned. They considered this an act of kindness from heaven.

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Li Qiye smiled after seeing this and continued on his path.

He eventually reached the end - a place where everything suddenly stopped. All affinities have been severed.

The physical manifestation of this phenomenon was a steep cliff. Everything in front has collapsed and only a black void could be seen. However, Li Qiye noted some flashing lights deeper in the void.

To the front of the cliff were numerous dao platforms engraved with peerless runes. Thick chains made from laws locked them together.

The moment something happened to one, the rest would activate with haste. Each platform had something different on top.

One of them had Buddhist laws coming together to form a palm, always eager to start its suppression.

Another pulsed with a sword slash capable of decapitating the gods.

The third propped up a divine mountain, heavy enough to smash everything to pieces.

One more stored Buddhist hymns from the great Buddhas. They were meant for purification purposes.

These dao platforms were left here in order to suppress something beneath the cliff.

### **Chapter 3972: Facade**

Just one of these dao platforms anywhere else in the world would be unstoppable. Their sealing power and dao lord aura were beyond imagination.

Yet all of them were here solely to stop the thing beneath the cliff. This was a testament to the dreadful entity below.

Numerous top dao lords have made it here and created these platforms. They seemed to be afraid of it escaping eventually. They knew that they alone couldn't stop or kill it. Thus, they offered their assistance.

Maybe the dao platforms prevented Black Tides from actually causing immense damage or drowning out all of Eight Desolaces. They minimized the worst outcomes.

Li Qiye continued forward towards the edge of the cliff.

"Boom! Boom! Boom..." Loud detonations blasted continuously. Suddenly, an immortal light surged out of the void and illuminated the world.

Immortal laws emerged and the world resonated. Golden springs, magical dew, and holy scenes manifested. Anyone else would think that they have entered an immortal realm.

"Creak..." A massive gate slowly opened in the void and out came a flood of immortal rays.

The light before was only a candle in comparison. These rays appeared tangible and physical.

People would think that they could touch the mysteries behind the light. Allowing the rays to enter the body would result in an ascension process - perhaps the most pleasurable experience in the world. They couldn't help being drowned in this wonderful moment.

A path from the gate stretched to the edge of the cliff, seemingly welcoming Li Qiye.

Meanwhile, beyond the gate were images of dragons and phoenixes. Immortal springs and trees could be seen everywhere. Majestic palaces were built beneath the rainbows.

All in all, any spectator would want nothing more but to travel across the path with haste.

In the sky was a gigantic figure. He sat on his throne, looking supreme while wearing a tasseled crown. Dao lords and other top cultivators would still instantly bow down to him.

There was no need for him to exude his aura and divinity. Just his very existence alone demanded reverence.

Entering the gate meant having the privilege to meet this great being. They might become eternal as well in his presence.

"Visitor below, come forward and I shall teach you the way of immortality." This immortal finally spoke.

His voice was gentle and comforting like the spring breeze. Any listener would start floating right away.

Their heart would palpitate with excitement. To be able to see an immortal in the legend means the chance of becoming one as well. Patience was no longer exercised.

The temptation was overwhelming. Even the experienced ancestors and kings would want to meet this immortal right away.

There had been a precedent back in Eight Desolaces - the tale of Blessed Dao Lord. He was taught by an immortal and eventually gone down in history as one of the greatest.

Li Qiye was an exception. He stretched lazily while smiling: "This despicable play might trick the unaware. They do not know who you are but shouldn't you recognize me?"

"Hmph!" A cowl came from the immortal paradise along with a destructive force. The wrath of an immortal was terrifying but Li Qiye withstood it without a problem.

In the next moment, the immortal rays and gate disappeared. The paradise dispersed into smoke, replaced by a gigantic creature.

The species was unknown since it wore a large robe. The robe was tattered and could be mistaken for trash.

However, it was still an immortal item unavailable to others. The creature's weapon of choice was a long scythe. It looked like the god of death, capable of harvesting billions of lives with one swing. Even the strongest cultivators wouldn't be spared.

The creature stared straight at Li Qiye. The only source of light in this world seemed to be its eyes.

The connected dao platforms immediately activated with loud explosions. They shook violently, ready to unleash the strongest dao lord attacks towards the creature.

As for Li Qiye, he was quite familiar with the creature. It has been numerous eras yet this thing was still alive.

"I shall take you down today." The creature spoke with an ancient language but Li Qiye still understood it.

"Stop blustering, paper tiger. I broke your weapon and pulverized you. Oh, I also refined that weapon now. I'm sure the likes of you won't be able to kill me even if I stand still." Li Qiye smirked.

The creature continued glaring at him without responding. This passivity lasted for a long while.

Li Qiye ignored its feeling and yawned: "What now, should I break it, or is it time for a nice talk?"

The creature pondered before disappearing from sight. The dao platforms stopped shaking as well.

"Li, come down here." Ancient words came from below the cliff. Very few in the world have heard them before.

Anyone else might hesitate but Li Qiye leaped down right away without putting up any defense.

There was a valley beneath the cliff, being the deepest and roughest area of this region. Nonetheless, it still suffered immense damages and was split into two halves.

He saw a small pond with a flashing law from within. It was naturally formed and had the shape of a spear.

This represented absolute suppression. Not to mention regular cultivators, even dao lords would be trapped here forever once shot by this law.

It was an ultimate prison. The law must have come down from above and pierced through the ground, creating the void and this broken valley.

### **Chapter 3973: A Seahorse**

This imprisoning law must have been here for eras. Those affected by it could only wait until death, never being able to see the sun again.

It pierced through the core of the earth and left behind a pond. Instead of water, there was a thick liquid resembling blood or ink.

Just one drop was heavy enough to crush anything. They contained unimaginable power.

The law crucified a particular creature. It was gray and small, not much larger than a thumb. The two have virtually become one after so many years.

It slightly resembled a sea horse. Its eyes were only a bit larger than the eye of a needle. Nonetheless, one would know that these were eyes and not just tiny dots.

The lights coming from them were incredible, capable of slaying Immortal Emperors and dao lords. They could end the world and destroy the myriad dao.

Strangely enough, Li Qiye didn't care about the seahorse. His focus was on a green leaf floating in the pond.

Leaves like this one could be seen everywhere in the outside world. However, the presence of one here wasn't normal.

He couldn't avert his gaze from the leaf as if nothing else in this world was more astonishing.

"It's a shame that you're alive." The seahorse spoke. The ancient language didn't stop them from communicating.

He glanced at it and smiled: "Don't be like that, it's been so long since our last meeting. The pettiness is unbecoming of someone of your stature, a supreme being."

"The only thing on my mind is to feast on your flesh and blood then devour your true fate." The seahorse answered in a matter-of-fact manner. There was no hint of anger in its voice. Alas, its ancient language could instantly drive someone crazy.

"It's not like you haven't tasted my flesh and blood before. I have experienced your greed, a bunch of supreme beings acting like a pack of hungry dogs." He chuckled.

"You will hunger one day, it is inevitable." The seahorse calmly said, not affected by the disdainful remark like many other important characters.

"Perhaps, but I won't turn into a hungry dog." He responded.

"Too early to be that confident, it's only because you haven't lived long enough. You'll change eventually." The seahorse said.

"Is that so? Unfortunately, I am me, not the same as your group." He chuckled.

"We'll see about that, you'll become the very thing you despise soon enough." It said.

"We know better than that at our level, the truth is that we're simply different from each other. The myriad eras can pass by within a single thought. My will shall be the same in the future. It's not unprecedented." He smiled.

"We'll see." The seahorse pondered a bit before replying.

"Well, I don't think you'll survive long enough to see that day anyway." He said.

"I'll live longer than time itself." The seahorse said flatly with absolute confidence. It sounded like a truth that could never be changed.

No listener would ever doubt the seahorse's claim after hearing its conviction.

"Are you sure, sea horse?" He picked up the leaf in the pond and said.

"My name is Yindu." The seahorse wasn't happy with Li Qiye's address. [1]

"And here I thought you've forgotten yourself." He commented.

The seahorse looked straight at him and said: "I have, this is nothing more than a name."

The conversation was strange since they were mortal enemies. The seahorse wanted to devour Li Qiye while he wanted to destroy it forever.

However, their conversation was rather calm and even-tempered. Top existences like them have experienced enough tribulations and problems. Thus, they always acted calmly regardless of the circumstances. Plus, feuds and hatred didn't matter in the grand scheme of things for them.

"How much longer do you think you can last?" He asked with a smile.

"Still forever. I'll be alive long after your death." Yindu said.

"Trust me, I can absolutely destroy you." Li Qiye said.

"True, but you don't know how." Yindu admitted the possibility.

"Right." He nodded: "I don't need to waste time though. You're no different from a dead man here."

"Feel free to try, watching oneself being destroyed can be an enjoyable experience." Yindu said.

"I don't have to do it, I'm sure you'll make up your mind soon enough." He chuckled and tossed the leaf back into the pond.

Yindu's eyes slightly shifted after seeing Li Qiye's action. It chose to not say anything.

He sat down and stared at the leaf again. There was nothing special about this leaf. It was as if someone had just plucked it down from a branch and left it here.

Alas, this should be impossible. In history, the seahorse never let anyone else enter its domain.

Even Buddha and Vajra Dao Lord could only make it to the cliff. Nonetheless, the seahorse wasn't the one who brought the leaf here.

This meant that there was a previous visitor - another being on the same level as Li Qiye.

"He came." Li Qiye spoke with his hands around his knees.

"Yes." Yindu had no intention of hiding this.

"The true body?" Li Qiye's eyes narrowed.

"Scared?" Yindu asked.

"You tell me." Li Qiye chuckled.

"No idea." Yindu responded honestly.

"I actually don't think you know if it's the true body or not." Li Qiye smirked.

Yindu didn't respond.

"Tell me more about him, yes?" Li Qiye's tone became friendly as if he was seeing a friend again after countless eras.

"Don't want to." Yindu refused right away.

"I'm sure you'll talk." Li Qiye stated.

"Such confidence. Is it torture time?" Yindu suddenly became interested.

It wasn't that Yindu was a masochist. It's just that the world has become too boring for beings like them.

### **Chapter 3974: We Should Talk**

"You wish, wanting to use me as entertainment? I'm not that bored." Li Qiye smiled while staring at the seahorse.

Tortures were meaningless for top existences like them. Even the cruelest treatment might only serve to help them pass the time, a little bit of entertainment.

"Then I don't know anything." Yindu responded.

"We both know that your death is only a matter of time." He said.

"Everything is inevitable. However, I'll be here watching you die first." Yindu said.

"I see." He paused before bringing up a different issue: "What is your fear?"

"I fear nothing." Yindu answered without needing to think.

"I disagree, everyone has an opening or weakness, even those as powerful as us." He glanced at the leaf and continued: "Your fear will cause you to waver."

"What is your weakness then?" Yindu asked.

A brief silence ensued. He eventually responded: "My heart is still alive."

"That's why you'll die before me." Yindu smiled. It was impossible to tell whether a seahorse was crying or smiling but it gave off the impression that it was smiling.

"Your heart is dead but that doesn't mean you don't have a weakness." He smiled.

"An alive heart has too many weaknesses and potential threats. You'll never make it as long as us." Yindu said.

"True, it's potentially dangerous but it's also a sign that I have yet to waver." He calmly responded.

"A dead heart never wavers." Yindu insisted.

“Are you sure?” His lips curled into a faint smirk.

“Elaborate.” Yindu replied.

“Tell me, why did he leave this leaf? Just to decorate this place and add a little bit of life to it?” He turned his attention back to the leaf.

Yindu did the same and started contemplating. People like them didn’t think of it as an ordinary leaf. It was a world full of possibilities containing everything they desired.

In fact, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that possessing this leaf meant having everything in one’s grasp.

“You know the answer.” He added.

“No.” Yindu flatly replied.

“He already came. It doesn’t matter which form it was, the only thing clear was that he didn’t save you.” He said.

“Hmph.” Yindu scowled, the only one aware of what had happened in the distant past.

“Do you think it was a message for you or for me?” He asked.

“I’m not the only person who wants to eat you. Your true fate must be delicious, no one can resist the temptation.” Yindu said earnestly despite the bloody message.

“I can turn around and leave right now. Can’t say the same about you.” He said.

“It’s not bad, eras will pass by in the blink of an eye. This place is fine enough to be my grave.” Yindu said.

“That’s absolutely the case in the past but I’m sure you know things have changed.” He smiled.

Yindu didn’t respond.

“He gave you hope.” The smirk remained on his face.

Yindu’s voice turned a bit cold: “Hope? There’s no hope to speak of.”

“It’s a shame that I couldn’t find a better place for you after knocking you down. Being suppressed here must have been rough.” He looked around and said.

“Better than my old crappy place.” Yindu didn’t become angry.

“Let’s be honest, you have at least attempted.” He remained fixated on the leaf.

Yindu didn’t respond.

“Everything has a price.” He went on: “After all, cause and effect are inevitable. The effect is up to one’s effort, no?”

“There’s plenty of time.” Yindu said: “Unless you destroy me now.”

“Certain things will loosen with time.” He continued: “We’ve talked about weaknesses and having a dead heart earlier. The situation will change and you won’t be able to grow any more roots.”

Yindu’s eyes shifted again.

“You’re not afraid of death, the same with me. What am I afraid of? I’m sure you can make an educated guess, the villainous heaven knows as well. But, my heart is still alive so there is still hope regardless of how broken it is.” He said: “But as for you, can you live again with a dead heart? Can you get your roots out of the prison once more?”

With that, Li Qiye chuckled and said: “We all have fears, just different ones. Your group should be pretty similar in this regard.”

Yindu still kept quiet.

“That’s why we should talk about certain topics.” He concluded.

“What do you want?” Yindu eventually acquiesced.

“The matters of the world are meaningless to us.” He said: “We can talk about that person instead.”

“There’s nothing worthwhile to say.” Yindu shook its head.

“I’m sure just talking about this character is interesting. Tell me, you’ve met him before, and not just once either.” He smiled.

“Yes.” Yindu nodded.

“Then elaborate.”

“It’s useless, you won’t be able to dig out anything from our conversation. That person has gone farther than any of us, truly an enigma.” Yindu said.

“All puzzles have an answer and an origin. We and the villainous heaven do as well.” He said.

“Not incorrect.” Yindu replied.

“So let’s smartly get through this. For example, why didn’t he devour all of you?” He asked.

“We have an agreement.” Yindu revealed.

“An agreement? Who are the parties? Just your group or is it your group and him?”

“It’s a tradition, always has been the case.” Yindu said.

“This only works when there’s a balance between the parties. I climbed up there and took you down, one by one, and pinned you here. Could he have done the same?” He stared at the seahorse.

“It’s because you chose to die together with us. We would have devoured you if it wasn’t for the primordial light.” Yindu’s voice became slightly murderous.

“See, I obtained the primordial light and took the next step. You’re not a fool, tell me, did he have the ability to come up with something similar?” He inquired.

Yindu didn’t respond, clearly agreeing with Li Qiye.

“That’s why it’s interesting. He actively chose not to eat your group. I don’t think it has anything to do with tradition or balance. Plus, you’ve never cared about the tradition with the other groups.”

“There are always exceptions.” Yindu said.

“Then what is it? Maybe there’s a deeper reason, perhaps he’s afraid of something or to take it deeper, you all were still useful...”

Yindu started contemplating.

“Aren’t we being productive right now? Let’s continue with sincerity.” He said.

“What’s in it for me?” Yindu said.

“I’ll come up with a way to help you die faster, okay? Of course, it can’t happen right away.” He smiled.

### **Chapter 3975: Tsunami**

“Boom!” Today, the currents from Black Tides returned. A surging tsunami could be seen from a distance, virtually unstoppable.

“The water is back!” Cultivators from Black Wood immediately took note of this.

“That’s the end of the tidal recession.” A big shot understood this development.

However, everyone was caught off guard because Black Tides became increasingly violent.

The massive tsunami smashed against Black Wood and didn’t stop. Waves continued in a ferocious and relentless manner.

The water didn’t only come back to fill the ocean. It seemed eager to destroy Black Wood along with all of the southern West King. Black Wood was nothing more than a helpless ship stuck in a storm.

“Sh\*t!” The inhabitants turned pale and trembled with fear. Some thought that escaping was futile so they dropped to the ground.

“What is going on?!” Big shots who have experienced the end of tidal recessions couldn’t believe it. This was unprecedented.

Black Tides resembled a roaring beast trying to lunge up the cliff. Strangely enough, though the water didn’t hold back, it still couldn’t make it past the shore. There seemed to be an invisible rein holding it back.

Most thought that this was the end of the world and that Black Wood had no chance of holding. However, this eventually subsided.

The water calmed again and Black Tides stopped its assault. The water has fully returned and covered up the seafloor.

Cultivators regained their wits and exchanged glances, still feeling afraid.

“It’s finally over.” They heaved a sigh of relief.

“This tidal recession was too scary, it wasn’t like this before.” A big shot took a deep breath.

All of them would have died if something invisible wasn’t holding it back.

They looked towards the ocean and still saw the same dark liquid. However, there was something different this time.

“It’s quieter.” An expert said with certainty.

This was indeed the case. The waves, albeit continuous and surging, weren’t raging as much. In the past, entering Black Tides meant risking being swept away by the waves. The current waves seemed rather weak in comparison.

“So what the hell happened?” A cultivator quietly asked. Unfortunately, no one could answer his question.

“Where, where is His Majesty?” Another remembered something.

Everyone knew that Li Qiye had entered the inner region of Black Tides. Alas, nothing came back, no signs of a fierce battle either.

They started wondering about his goal in that region.

“Is he okay?” Someone became worried because Li Qiye had been there for too long.

Of course, some big shots felt just fine about him. Even Worldly Immortal treated him with respect. A monster like Li Qiye should have no problem leaving the inner region alive even if it meant being empty-handed.

Most didn’t discuss this matter in public and only talked about Li Qiye’s disappearance with their friends.

Numerous rumors spread as a result. One stated that Li Qiye had died in battle there. Another said that he was still struggling against the dangers there. The third spoke of Li Qiye opening an immortal portal and leaving for the upper world...

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Eight Desolaces had a region named Sword Continent. True to its name, swords were everything there.

West King was considered small compared to Sword Continent. However, the eight regions were separated by forbidden zones.

These seals would only go down during the presence of a dao lord. Otherwise, it became difficult for one to travel across the regions. It would require an unreasonable amount of resources.

Sword Continent was massive and diverse. There were too many sects to count but several stood out - Sea Emperor Sword Kingdom, Nine-wheel Citadel, Sword Temple, Virtuous Sword School, Daoist Sword Ground, Wooden Sword Holy Kingdom...

Their specialty was obvious given their name. This was often the case in this region. More than eighty percent of sects focused on the sword dao.

Of course, there were notable exceptions such as Nine-wheel Citadel. Nonetheless, the sword dao still reigned in this continent.

There was a popular adage in Sword Continent - as long as I hold my blade, the world is mine.

Their fanaticism towards the sword resulted in producing numerous top sword users - Sword Sea Dao Lord, Sword Empress, War God Dao Lord, Violet Abyss Dao Lord...

These powerful dao lords paved the path for Sword Continent, turning it into one of the strongest regions.

The ultimate sword dao for the continent turned out to be one of the nine Heavenly Scriptures - the nine paths of Finality.

### **Chapter 3976: Woman**

Eastern Sword Sea belonged to Sea Emperor Sword Kingdom.

There was an island named Ancient Crimson in this sea, not too large and not too small. It had numerous villages scattered about.

Li Qiye got out of the water and climbed up this island. He had left Black Tides and crossed through a forbidden barrier to reach this territory.

He strolled through an alley with no goal in mind. Other passersby didn't pay attention to someone as average as him.

He eventually reached a winding creek with a calm current. He stopped and followed the shore.

There were people living here. Smoke from kitchen stoves could be seen. A woman was also doing laundry.

Li Qiye stopped to watch her. She was above thirty and wore a white dress commonly seen in poorer villages. It had patches but was still very clean - clearly an indicator of her humble status.

Of course, this should be obvious from the start. No wealthy lady would be caught washing their clothes here.

She wasn't gorgeous by any means but there was a dignified elegance to her - healthy complexion and soft features.

A wooden pin kept her hair together. They were slightly messy due to her being busy at work but this didn't diminish her noble aura. Her clothes weren't a perfect fit, being slightly too hard. Nonetheless, they still couldn't hide her curvy figure with valleys and hills where needed.

She was in deep focus. Her reflection on the water and herself seemed to be one. In this particular moment, she was in tune with heaven and earth - a truly captivating spectacle.

Li Qiye was the spectator in this case. She noticed the stranger but wasn't afraid of him while continuing to wash her laundry.

He sat down by the water with both hands around his knees. It was as if she was a supreme beauty in his eyes.

Eventually, she finished and got back to her courtyard in order to hang the clothes up.

He followed her and watched the process again, not thinking that he was being out of line.

Just think about it, a woman all alone being followed by a man. This was awfully inappropriate but Li Qiye turned a blind eye to this.

After she finished with her task, she looked at him and asked: "Do you have business here, Young Noble?"

Her voice was pleasant and gentle, sounding as natural as stream water splashing against rocks.

"What is your name?" Li Qiye impolitely asked instead of answering her inquiry.

"Xi Yue." She didn't seem to mind.

"Xi Yue." Li Qiye repeated once then left without saying anything else.

She simply watched his departure with her brows slightly raised. She then returned to her room.

As Li Qiye followed the next path, he eventually reached a city and saw more people along the way.

There were more mortals than cultivators, always busy trying to make a living.

Once he got closer, he half-reclined on a streetside boulder to look at the city. He looked a bit dispirited, seemingly needing to rest before continuing.

The city ahead wasn't a metropolis or anything like that. It was built a long time ago; the walls have fallen into piles of broken bricks.

Nonetheless, given the style of the remnant bricks, one could see how majestic it used to be.

On the gate was a stone plaque with ancient words. They were beaten by time despite being engraved on the plaque. Only a few faint outlines could be seen.

Li Qiye had a blade of grass in his mouth, looking to be contemplating.

The characters on the plaque couldn't be read by the present generation. However, they still knew the name of this place - Holy City.

It seemed strange for this small city to have such a grand name. Nonetheless, its name has been known and passed down for eras.

"Holy." He sighed, looking a bit disappointed and sentimental.

Holy no longer had its old appearance and inhabitants. This was akin to the sun during dusk. It seemed to be the twilight of this city. Soon, nothing would be left of it but broken bricks and tiles.

In fact, when given ample time, weed would cover them too.

He stared at the city, wondering if he should enter or not. Other passersby didn't pay attention to Li Qiye. After all, everyone needed to rest for a bit after a long journey.

A young passenger stopped near him and stared at the city.

The sun began to set and painted a sad yet beautiful scene. Nonetheless, some solo travelers could appreciate the somber mood. This youth became immersed in looking at the sad city.

He seemed to have traveled a long way. He wasn't overly tall and sturdy but one could still see his muscles beneath his tight robe. He looked vigorous like a fierce tiger ready to pounce.

His robe was simple and clean. Judging by his expression and pose, it seemed that he came from a famous clan.

Instead of a traveler, he resembled a soldier returning home. There was a hint of emotion building within him.

He regained his wits and thought about entering before seeing Li Qiye relaxing on the boulder.

"You're not coming in, Brother?" He could tell that Li Qiye was a cultivator so he cupped his fist.

Li Qiye glanced at the city and said softly: "The city is as old as I am tired, just resting right now."

"Oh?" The youth seemed amused by the comment: "True, it is almost the end of a long day."

He appeared to be affected by the scenery so he spoke: "I've heard about this city's history, too old to be traced. I wonder why it is here on this small island."

"Indeed, the city is still here but people have come and gone." Li Qiye nodded and murmured.

The youth didn't know why Li Qiye was being so sentimental. The only thing special about this island was some big events in the past. Otherwise, no one would think twice about it.

It was nothing more than a speck of dust compared to the massive continent.

"Brother, it's alright, this city is old but you should still lodge for the night. There aren't many places to stay the night on the island." The youth smiled.

“Right.” Li Qiye nodded in response.

“My name is Chen Cangsheng, nice to meet you. I’ll be going now.” The youth cupped his fist and left.

Li Qiye chuckled and continued laying on the boulder. Once the sun disappeared, he finally stood up and said: “Old but still okay for a stay. Let’s go.”

Li Qiye entered the city and walked on the paved road.

It might only have eight to ten thousand citizens. This wouldn’t be considered a small town in Sword Continent.

Nonetheless, the streets were paved with ancient stones. Most were broken but one could still imagine the city’s glorious days.

The lamps were lit and merchants were still shouting. People were what gave the city life.

“Old city, new people. Life never stops.” He thought to himself.

### **Chapter 3977: Visiting Everlasting Courtyard Again**

He smelled various scents along the way - roasted meat, makeup powders, and blooming jasmine flowers.

The mortal world had its fair share of suffering but this was a part of life. All living beings struggled for various reasons. Nonetheless, they kept on producing and allowed the world to brim with life.

Li Qiye took a deep breath. These lingering smells were unforgettable even for a top existence like him.

He had tasted all kinds of delicacies before from the rarest creatures and plants. However, the smells here still invoked more emotion than anything else.

“Everything will end soon without scenes like these.” He continued onward.

Eventually, he stopped after seeing an old daoist holding a cloth sign and shouting: “Everlasting Courtyard is recruiting disciples right now, we are the number one sect in Holy City, come and sign up!”

He looked just like a merchant while waving the sign. However, everyone seemed to know him so no one stopped.

Some occasionally smiled and made some remarks. This didn’t diminish his enthusiasm in the slightest.

He appeared around fifty to sixty years of age and wore a large daoist robe. It had several holes that were horribly patched. One would think that his master could no longer tolerate the old robe and decided to pass it down to him.

His hair was white but he still looked rather youthful - a pink complexion and freed from wrinkles. His body seemed to be in good shape, able to leap and frisk about.

The cloth sign had the characters “ Everlasting Courtyard”. Alas, the calligraphy skill left much to be desired.

Li Qiye chuckled after seeing the old man’s show.

“Young man, what do you think? We only recruit once a year so our meeting must be a touch of fate.” The old man stopped Li Qiye who was walking away.

He noticed Li Qiye because the latter actually stopped for a bit while everyone else kept on walking.

“You’ve been doing this for years now, it’s not going to work. I’m sure you just woke up and decided to recruit.” One familiar passerby teased him.

“No, we only care about fate, that’s right, fate. Don’t think about joining our sect if it isn’t meant to be.” The old daoist’s face turned red.

“Fine, fine, keep on doing your thing, Daoist peng.” The passerby smiled and shook his head.

The old daoist saw a chance because Li Qiye still didn’t leave. He grabbed his sleeve in order to stop him from escaping and hurriedly spoke: “Remember, joining our academy is an honor decided by fate, others beg and beg and still can’t join us...”

“What are the benefits of joining your sect?” Li Qiye asked.

The old daoist thought that Li Qiye was tempted and bragged: “Hmm, let me take a closer look at you. Wow, if you join, you’ll definitely become our First Disciple, you’ll inherit my legacy and will become the sect master. Everyone in the world will know of you. Plus, we’ll take care of your living situation and food too. Our sect has an ocean view mansion, there aren’t that many in Holy City...”

The old man let out a barrage of good things about the sect.

“Just come take a look, we’re very easygoing. You can change your mind if you don’t like it then...” The old daoist started sounding like he was begging.

“Fine, I’ll go take a look.” Li Qiye smiled.

“Good! Off we go!” The old daoist rolled up the cloth sign.

“You’re not recruiting more people?” Li Qiye teased.

“Ahem.” The old daoist looked a bit awkward for a second before coming up with a good answer: “It’s all about fate and karma, no need to force it. We are connected so I only need you, no more.”

“Let’s go then.” Li Qiye didn’t bother exposing the guy.

As the old daoist moved ahead, he kept looking back every three steps or so as if he was afraid of Li Qiye running away.

After all, recruiting wasn’t easy for his sect. He would never miss a potential new recruit. In his mind, letting the sect disband under his watch would make him into a sinner.

“You don’t have to be so nervous, I won’t leave.” Li Qiye shook his head.

The old daoist became embarrassed but was still quite happy with this development.

Everlasting Courtyard was located in Holy City. They traveled through several winding streets and made it there.

Unfortunately, it was literally a courtyard, not a sect. There were no other buildings nearby. Moreover, it seemed abandoned due to the weed infestation at the front.

The front wooden gate hasn’t been fixed in a while and issued creaking noises due to the winds.

After entering, there was a small pond. It might have had something in there before but it was empty now.

“This is your ocean-view mansion?” Li Qiye glanced at the pond and said flatly.

“Well, the island is surrounded by water so yeah, this is an ocean-view mansion. You can see the ocean by just taking a few steps. It’s large too, at least seven or eight rooms. You can pick any of them.” The old daoist scratched his head before pointing at the rooms.

“Got it. So there are only two of us, no wonder why I’m the First Disciple. Looks like inheriting this sect will be a tough job.” Li Qiye nodded.

It turned out that Everlasting Courtyard only had one disciple in the old daoist. Its only property was the courtyard as well.

No one would want to join this sect outside of wanderers with no home left. However, the island was isolated and rarely had outsiders coming in.

“Don’t say that.” The old daoist replied: “We do have some capital left. Join me and I will give you our sect’s heirloom.” He then tapped on the sword hanging by his waist.

The sword was wrapped several times around by a dirty bundle of gray cloth. This made the sword seem rather shabby.

“This sword?” Li Qiye was slightly moved to see this but didn’t show it.

“Don’t look down on this sword, it might appear unremarkable but it is our sect’s heirloom.” The old daoist said: “We’re in a bad situation right now but keep in mind that our history is rich and glorious. Our sect was built during an ancient era, too old to be found in any record. The ancestor said that we were unstoppable and had more than just Everlasting Courtyard. There’s also hmm, Emperor Era Hall, I think, and some other peerless halls...”

### **Chapter 3978: The Distant Past**

“Our sect ordered the world back then. We had numerous experts and resources, few can compare to us. Clouds and winds dispersed when the six halls appeared together.” Daoist Peng’s eyes lit up as he told Li Qiye the history of the sect. He wanted nothing more than to be living in the old era.

Nonetheless, pessimism took over because this was no longer the case. Their past glory and strength had nothing to do with the present.

“Unfortunately, we have lost our supreme artifacts and immortal items.” He said wistfully before tapping the sword hanging by his waist again: “But, at least we still have this heirloom.”

“If it’s the heirloom, how powerful is it?” Li Qiye smiled.

“Well...” Daoist Peng turned red and smiled wryly: “Hard to say, I’ve never been able to exert its power before. Ancient Crimson is a peaceful island, there’s no fighting.”

“But forget about that, you’re the First Disciple and will inherit everything in the future, including this sword. If you find our missing treasures and scrolls from the six halls, they’re all yours too. At that point, you won’t need to worry about anything or anyone. See, that’s our incredible and frightening potential.” He went on.

This was an empty promise since their resources have probably turned into ashes long ago.

“The six halls during their golden age were impressive indeed.” Li Qiye sighed and said. The academy had plenty of talents in the past and now, only Everlasting Courtyard was left.

“You know about them?” Daoist Peng was surprised.

“I’ve read a few things.” Li Qiye nodded. Of course, he had personally experienced it back then.

“Since that’s the case, don’t you want to stay and be the First Disciple?” Daoist Peng didn’t give up.

It wasn’t easy tricking someone to go back with him. He needed to find a disciple in order to continue the lineage. Otherwise, he would be too ashamed to meet the ancestors and forefathers in the afterlife.

In reality, he had successfully recruited others before. Alas, the sect was too poor and had nothing outside of the heirloom. Who would want to join this sect with zero potential?

All of his recruitment plans failed because of this. Li Qiye became his next hope.

“No rush, I’ll think about it.” Li Qiye smiled while recalling the past.

People competed fiercely in order to join the academy before. Now, recruiting a single disciple required this much effort?

This sect had fallen to an unsalvageable level. Disbandment was near.

“Okay, just let me know after you think it through.” The daoist couldn’t force Li Qiye and chose to exercise patience.

“There are no rules here, you can stay wherever you want. There’s still some food in the kitchen so help yourself, don’t worry about me, I’ll be busy.” The daoist suggested.

“Going into isolated cultivation?” Li Qiye asked.

“Our sect has no training or isolated cultivation. Our merit law consists of mainly sleeping all the time, it is unique and magical. Your cultivation will soar after starting.”

“Like hibernation.” Li Qiye smiled.

“Yes, there are pros and cons to everything. Our merit law is different. Look at me, I’ve trained for more than ten thousand years and I’m still healthy. Those who were a hundred times stronger than me have returned to the earth.” The old man coughed and said.

In fact, he had no idea which merit law he was training with. However, it definitely belonged to the academy.

Whenever he recited the characters, he would become unbearably drowsy. Each sleeping session would last for a long time. Whenever he woke up, he would feel something different.

The thing troubling him was that his cultivation didn’t improve that much. Alas, each session lasted longer than the previous. If this trend persisted, he would become a sleeping god.

“That does sound impressive.” Li Qiye chuckled.

“Come, I’ll show you some merit laws from the academy, you can pick some to train.” The daoist pulled Li Qiye into the main chamber.

Inside was a tablet filled with ancient engravings. The symbols were strange and didn’t look like present characters. There were tinier annotations on top of the symbols, clearly added by future descendants.

Merit laws were considered top secret but Everlasting Courtyard didn’t have a problem letting outsiders take a look.

The daoist wasn’t worried about people stealing the tablet either. In reality, he somewhat welcomed it because this meant that their lineage would continue.

The issue was that the characters were inscrutable. It required generations of research or it would be lost with history.

“This is the ultimate secret of our sect.” The daoist took him in front of the tablet and said: “If you can learn it, your name will go down in history. Hmm, take a look at it for now and I’ll teach you another day.”

He left after saying this, leaving Li Qiye behind to gaze at the tablet filled with merit laws.

Though the daoist was trying to flaunt his sect, he was indeed correct. The merit laws here were peerless indeed.

Li Qiye naturally knew of its origin since he couldn’t be more familiar with it. Just one glance was enough for him to derive its mysteries and profundities.

He then took note of the annotations and shook his head. Some were incorrect; others went the other direction completely.

Of course, he didn't blame them for their mistakes. It has been too long and a new page has been turned. This gap couldn't be made up. Thus, the ancestors of the courtyard failed to learn anything worthwhile despite their best effort.

He left the chamber and heard the daoist snoring. The latter had entered a state of hibernation. It wouldn't be easy to wake him up.

Li Qiye decided to stay here for a bit. His daily essentials were met on top of being connected to this place by fate.

He didn't bother learning the merit laws on the tablet since it wasn't the right fit for the current Li Qiye.

The next morning, he was bored and decided to go on a walk. This island was only a minor stop in his journey but its peaceful nature was worth his time.

He made it to the other side of the island and climbed up the highest peak to look at the ocean ahead.

He didn't expect to see someone else here before him - Chen Cangsheng. The youth gazed at the ocean; his eyes darting back and forth. He seemed to be looking for something.

### **Chapter 3979: Nine Grand Sword Dao**

Chen Cangsheng was surprised to see Li Qiye. He smiled and said: "We meet again, Brother."

"Indeed." Li Qiye nodded and smiled back.

Cangsheng took a closer look at Li Qiye and became curious: "Brother, may I ask why you're here in Ancient Crimson?"

He had no ulterior motive in prying. This was only out of curiosity. He then realized that he might have been too intrusive and apologized: "I apologize for being nosy."

"I'm just passing by, that's all." Li Qiye told the truth. His friends were long gone now; only memories remained.

"I see, as for me, I'm searching for the traces of a senior who visited before." Cangsheng revealed while pointing at the ocean: "He fought in this place before."

The two sides of Ancient Crimson were dramatically different. One side had calm waves while the other had dangers everywhere.

There were actually other islands in front of them. They weren't as large as Ancient Crimson but still had rolling mountains and hills.

However, they have been destroyed. Only one-half of one island remained. Another was pierced completely and seawater gushed from the hole. One more was cut into two halves. There were rubbles and boulders everywhere - most likely remnants of destroyed islands.

Moreover, the waves weren't calm either. They saw a tsunami raging from a distance, towering at a thousand meters. There were massive whirlpools as well.

This place wasn't overly dangerous for cultivators as long as they kept a distance. Getting too close would result in being dragged inside by an unknown force. Waves of energy were still emanating from the center.

This power originated from the previous battle. Though many years have passed, the remnant energies remained in a dangerous manner.

"This is the battlefield of the overlords." Cangsheng told Li Qiye.

"Overlords?" Li Qiye glanced at it.

"Ten thousand years ago, the overlords fought here and destroyed this ocean. It shocked the entire world." Cangsheng elaborated.

"Who are the overlords?" Li Qiye chuckled, not really paying it any mind.

"You don't know the five overlords of Sword Continent?" Cangsheng found this surprising.

"No." Li Qiye said.

Normally, whenever the five overlords were brought up in Sword Continent, the crowd would show their respect and awe. All cultivators knew about the five regardless of their background.

They were mountains towering over everyone else. People had no choice but to look up to them. The five represented the highest echelon of power in the continent.

Some believed that only dao lords could compete against them, no one else.

"You really haven't heard of them? Are you a new cultivator, Brother?" Cangsheng inquired because Li Qiye didn't look like a new cultivator.

"I'm just a passerby who doesn't know much about this region." Li Qiye smiled.

"The five overlords are the strongest characters in our continent. Only the dao lords can take them on." Cangsheng said: "They fought in this area before, completely changing the landscape. No one can get close even now."

"Why did they fight?" Li Qiye smiled.

"The details were unclear. Rumor has it that it had something to do with the Myriad Era Dao Sword." Cangsheng said.

"I see." Li Qiye smiled.

"Do you know about it? It is one of the nine grand sword dao, matchless in history." Cangsheng went on.

"Not too clear." Li Qiye said.

Cangsheng found this astonishing as well and stared at Li Qiye as if he was a monster.

The sword was everything in this continent. Its inhabitants have been connected with this sword dao since birth. They lived and died for the sword. Thus, this continent was unique in both its power and purity.

People in this continent haven't heard about many things. However, all knew about the nine grand swords.

This was another name for the nine paths of Finality Sword, one of the nine Heavenly Scriptures. It encompassed nine heavenly swords and nine sword dao.

Each dao had a sword counterpart. Thus, they were the strongest when used together. The combination could allow anyone to dominate regardless of their cultivation.

Moreover, a myth said that Sword Continent actually came from this scripture. This was the reason why its inhabitants were so obsessed with the sword.

They grew up hearing stories about the scripture and the nine dao. However, Li Qiye said he wasn't too clear on this issue. Was he still a member of Sword Continent?

Cangsheng ignored this and went on: "It'll take more than three days and three nights for me to go on about the nine swords. The most mysterious is the one we brought up earlier, Myriad Era."

"Most mysterious?" Li Qiye smiled.

"Ever since these swords started appearing, people obtained and lost them across the eras. But, no one has seen Myriad Era yet." Cangsheng elaborated.

Everyone was curious about this sword since its peers have shown up before. One sword god said that its appearance was inevitable.

Perhaps it had shown up before, people just didn't know about it. In this case, its master should have become famous or started a powerful sect.

This never occurred. Therefore, this sword remained a puzzle.

### **Chapter 3980: Seeing Thunder Tower Again**

Myriad Era has always been a legend desired by all inhabitants in Sword Continent.

Chen Cangsheng stared emotionally at the waters in front of them and said: "There was news of this sword ten thousand years ago. It caused a stir across the continent, chaos ensued. Even the five big shots took note of this."

Sects and individuals started planning for this competition. Eventually, the five strongest cultivators joined in too. Strangely enough, no one caught a glimpse of the sword itself or the scene of its emergence during this event.

Nonetheless, a fierce battle broke out in the Eastern Sword Sea. The continent slightly shifted from the shock waves.

Spectators trembled in fear, completely oppressed by the terrible pressure emanating from the combatants.

The battle eventually ended and no one knew the result. The location of the sword remained unknown as well.

The five big shots of Sword Continent stopped showing up. Various rumors came out of it - serious injuries or even death for these masters.

“Sounds like the sword is quite tempting.” Li Qiye smiled.

“Definitely, it’s the only one out of the nine that is still mysterious. We only know that it does exist, nothing more.” Cangsheng nodded right away.

All the sects and kingdoms paid special attention to Myriad Era. If it somehow was superior to the other swords, it would change the political landscape of Sword Continent.

Li Qiye chuckled and didn’t say anything else.

“Do you want to look for it too?” Cangsheng thought that their meeting wasn’t just a coincidence. Li Qiye might be searching for something too.

“Not interested. You can keep looking.” Li Qiye replied.

“I do not dare to covet this supreme sword. I am more than satisfied just practicing my sect’s sword dao since I am not that bright. One law is more than enough for me.” Cangsheng said.

“That’s a good mindset.” Li Qiye praised and didn’t observe the ocean for long before leaving.

Cangsheng didn’t expect him to leave so soon. Now, he believed that Li Qiye was telling the truth.

“What a strange guy.” Cangsheng murmured then regained his focus: “Ancestors, I hope I’ll be able to find and bring it back home.”

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Li Qiye descended from the peak and continued walking in the wilderness without a direction. He traveled off road without a care.

Though the scenery wasn’t the same as the past, he still felt something familiar embedded within.

He once left behind his traces on this land, leaving behind grand momentum in order to protect it...

Alas, nothing could last forever. These powerful foundations and formations still dissipated. Time could erase everything, even the marks of someone as powerful as him.

He eventually stopped because something attracted his eyes. He made it to a mound and saw a tower in the middle.

Only the bottom portion remained but it was still high up in the air. The bricks have been weathered, no longer possessing their original appearance.

Nonetheless, anyone with a sliver of knowledge would see that this tower must have been majestic and colossal.

Unfortunately, the tower lost all of its old glory. It was slanted now, no longer standing proud like before.

Li Qiye got closer and gently rubbed the outer wall that was covered in moss.

Emotions and dusty memories emerged again as if it was only yesterday. A few people and things couldn't be forgotten.

The period of creating this tower was magnificent. Numerous human sages worked hard in order to create the tower.

"The human race is eternal as long as Thunder Tower and Holy City exist." Li Qiye murmured.

Today, both Thunder Tower and Holy City were gone yet the humans lived on. The races never stopped producing and toiling to survive.

"Nothing is eternal." Li Qiye patted the wall and chuckled.

"You're here, Young Noble?" When he walked to the other side of the tower, he saw a woman visiting as well. She was the one who did her laundry by the creek the other day.

"Yes." He smiled, not too surprised to see her here.

The two continued to observe the tower without speaking.

This wasn't Li Qiye's first time visiting this tower. He was there during its creation and returned numerous times in subsequent generations.

It had always protected this land but now, its guardian aura was gone. The only thing left was a broken structure.

"You know this tower, Young Noble?" The woman asked.

"I've heard of it." Li Qiye replied.

"Me too, I was told that this guardian tower represents the glory of the human race." She sighed: "It's a shame that it can't last the myriad eras. Do you have any insight? The tower might be broken but its dao foundation is still there."

“The tower won’t falter as long as the sages are around.” Li Qiye casually responded.

“I see...” The woman tilted her head and pondered. Her external appearance wasn’t exceptional but she looked in tune with the dao, seemingly a part of this world. Physical beauty no longer mattered for someone like her.

“Yes, there’s more to this tower yet.” She eventually concluded.

“Don’t tell me you’re here for Myriad Era.” Li Qiye stretched lazily.

“No, Myriad Era has been elusive for so long, I can’t figure it out in such a short time.” She shook her head.