

Emperor 4461

Chapter 4461: The Wu

The devastation still left behind random vestiges. For example, a stone house within a hill could still be seen.

It had a natural feel to it as if it wasn't carved by men but was already there in the first place. It was easy to miss due to the dense foliage and weed taking over.

Li Qiye waved once and the unnecessary decorations disappeared from sight, revealing the true appearance of this house.

Above the entrance was an ancient character not belonging to this epoch. Its meaning was, Wu.

He entered and saw how simple it was, only having one room. There were no other household items. Of course, they might have rotted away after the years.

The one thing that was left was a bed slightly resembling a coffin without a lid. There was a chiseled hole nearby, seemingly used for incense sticks instead of storage. All in all, this appeared to be a grave. Nonetheless, it didn't feel gloomy at all.

Li Qiye waved his hand again and got rid of the dust. The place became spotless and he sat down on the side of the bed.

The surface was coarse outside of one spot. It wasn't due to polishing but rather, an unreasonably long period of someone sitting there.

"Buzz." He placed his hand on the bed and a spiral of light drilled into the ground. This gave the impression of the bed being connected to something deeper. However, the beam suddenly stopped as if the connected passage was no longer there.

Li Qiye sighed and said: "A so-called earth immortal still can't live forever."

Having said that, he raised his hand again and broke the illusion.

"Clank! Clank! Clank!" Energy slashes suddenly appeared with enough force to sever anything. This was a tyrannical saber style - the mark of a cultivator being invincible as long as he had a saber in his grasp.

"Heaven Traversing Eight Slashes." Li Qiye murmured while observing the room. He put his hand down and the room became normal again.

A cultivator had left an eternal saber intent in this place. This person was obviously gifted in this art. The intent remained after eras and had embedded itself into the fabrics of reality.

It's just that regular cultivators couldn't notice or sense it in the slightest. Only top masters or supreme geniuses could take note of this. Of course, Li Qiye had exceeded these two categories.

The saber user left behind this room as a method to record their saber art. Anyone would be ecstatic to find it.

Once finished, they might not become unbeatable but would wield enough power to roam the world untethered.

The current Li Qiye wasn't interested in this saber art because he had it before. He obtained it not for himself but for someone else. Another memory resurfaced in his mind.

He sat down on the stone bed and started meditating, piercing through time and space. It was an old era with entities known as earth immortals. Everything seemed so distant yet so close.

This state continued for some time. Today, a group consisting of both young and old cultivators arrived outside the stone house.

They wore the same uniform with a "Wu" emblem. However, this character was different from the one embedded above the door.

"We haven't been here before, right?" A middle-aged man looked around and asked.

"Yes, not this trip. I'm not sure about any previous one." The others also perused the area and agreed.

An older cultivator said: "This looks unfamiliar."

"Let me check the records." Their leader, an old man wearing an embroidered robe, took out an ancient book with immaculate handwriting.

He flipped through the pages carefully then shook his head: "Don't think we've been here before. Either that or no one spotted anything peculiar."

"We might have but I'm sure this stone house wasn't here before." A decrepit elder seemingly on the verge of death said.

"How? Was it built recently?" A disciple found this strange.

"Another possibility is that its veil has been lifted." The elder responded.

"It's absolutely related." The leader concluded.

"What do you mean, Clan Master?" Others got closer.

The clan master flipped to one page with a particular ancient character, Wu.

The group looked up above the entrance and saw the same thing. Alas, they didn't recognize it.

"What is it?" One of them asked.

"It must be our clan's oldest emblem." The near-death cultivator said.

"I agree with Wise Ancestor's opinion." The clan master said.

"Our clan's emblem?" The group exchanged glances.

"Could it be, an ancient ancestor from our clan?" One old man became emotional.

This sentiment spread among the group with haste. Because of this possibility, the clan master tidied his outfit and wiped away the dust.

The group also copied him and patted away any impurities while putting on a dignified expression.

“We’re paying respect.” The clan master said seriously.

The others nodded and became solemn.

“We are members of the Wu, here today to pay our respect, Forefather. Please grant us the honor of an audience.” The sect master said respectfully then bowed.

The others bowed as well.

Unfortunately, no one responded. Li Qiye didn’t open his eyes while sitting on top of the bed.

Meanwhile, the group continued kneeling. As time passed, they finally looked up.

“What should we do?” A youth became impatient.

“Should we enter?” An older peer suggested.

The clan master contemplated then looked at Wise Ancestor who nodded at him.

“We’re entering, do not be rowdy and rude.” The clan master ordered quietly.

The young ones put on their best attitude with haste.

“We wish to enter, please forgive our impoliteness, Forefather.” The clan master bowed his head one more time.

With that, he took a deep breath and entered the house with Wise Ancestor right behind him.

The young ones followed next, trying their best to not make any noise. They believed that an ancient ancestor from their clan might be in there.

Chapter 4462: Accepting The Ancestor

They came in and saw Li Qiye which prompted further confusion. Various emotions emerged - surprise and perhaps disappointment.

They hoped that this would be the abode of an ancient ancestor - an aged cultivator with a dignified aura.

Alas, this person was too young and ordinary. Most importantly, they used their heavenly gaze and could see his cultivation.

“Is he our ancient ancestor?” A disciple asked softly.

No one could answer. Given the first impression, they believed that he was not an ancient ancestor.

Alas, it would be too hasty to come to a conclusion. It would be disrespectful if it turned out otherwise.

“Clan Master...” An expert asked.

“Sir, is this your home?” Clan Master Wu bowed slightly and asked.

Li Qiye didn’t answer or move at all.

The group exchanged glances and didn't know what to do. Mistakenly accepting an outsider as an ancient ancestor could turn them into laughingstocks, a detriment to their clan's reputation.

"Ancestor, what do you think?" The clan master asked his senior.

Wise Ancestor contemplated quietly. He had no impression of an ancient ancestor from their clan resembling this youth.

Nonetheless, he held onto a sliver of hope because finding an ancient ancestor would be rather significant for them right now.

"Maybe this fellow daoist is just training here right now, it's a coincidence." One youth said.

After all, this place didn't belong to any sect so anyone could train here.

"Take out our records, find out if we have an ancient ancestor resembling him." An expert whispered.

The clan master agreed with this: "Right, I'll do it."

He took out a thick book made from the strings of ice-jade silkworms. It had yellow spots and other defects - a sign of its age.

He flipped through the pages and focused on the ancestral portion - their ancient ancestors and their deeds. Moreover, some had portraits as well.

Due to its age, the lines have become faint but were still somewhat discernible.

"Not there." After one attempt, the clan master said.

"Yes, seems like he's just another fellow daoist training here." One expert agreed.

Many nodded in agreement. In fact, the clan master thought so too. This wasn't his first time reading the ancient book.

This youth didn't resemble any of their ancient ancestors. He merely checked again just to be sure.

"Not necessarily." Wise Ancestor borrowed the book and went to the last section with many empty pages still. The compiler didn't finish the book or perhaps left room for more additions.

One page stood out in this section. It had an incomplete portrait but one could still see that it depicted a youth.

Next to it was the start of a character. This made it seem as if the compiler wanted to write a description but refrained from doing so.

"This is it, I've seen this before." The ancestor's expression became serious.

"Hmm..." The clan master was moved as well and raised the book in order to compare it to the meditating Li Qiye.

It included very few lines and they have become faint. It was unclear whether this was due to the book's age or that the artist purposely did so. Calling it a portrait was an exaggeration since it only contained

the cheek. This made the clan master question. Did the compiler forget or not know the person's face? Or was it because of some other reasons?

The clan master leaned back and forth to check from various angles. He concluded: "Doesn't look like him."

The group started doing the same.

"I think they look familiar." Another had a different opinion.

All in all, it was impossible to come to a clear conclusion about whether this drawing depicts this youth or not.

"Can this just be a coincidence?" One of them wondered.

"What if we're wrong?" An older expert said. Accepting a fake into their clan as an ancient ancestor would be rather dangerous.

"It's best to be careful. The damage can be immense to our clan." An old man said.

"Why do the last few pages only have this drawing?" Someone else asked.

The book contained information about their history and ancient ancestors. On the other hand, this incomplete portrait was included in its own section. Was the compiler just having fun?

"It's there for a reason." Wise Ancestor said: "The compiler of this book is Benevolent Ancestor who takes history very seriously. He's well known to be an erudite historian, he won't casually leave behind a random drawing."

The older cultivators agreed with Wise Ancestor. Benevolent Ancestor was renowned in their clan for both his knowledge and his stoic personality.

"I don't know what to do then." The clan master hesitated.

"We recognize him as our ancient ancestor." Wise Ancestor thought about it and gritted his teeth.

"Really?" The clan master thought that this might be too rash.

"Yes." Wise Ancestor insisted.

The clan master took a deep breath and glanced at the other elders. They were at a loss as well.

Chapter 4463: Ancient Ancestor Of The Wu

At this crucial moment, the clan master decisively tidied his robe again. He kneeled towards Li Qiye and loudly said: "Your descendants greet you, Ancient Ancestor. In our ignorance, we do not recognize you."

The others followed suit despite their hesitation. This was simply a dangerous bet from the clan master.

Nonetheless, he felt that this was worth it due to the coincidences. First, this stone house had an ancient emblem of theirs. This youth also slightly resembled one page from their ancient record.

Though it wasn't a frontal portrait, the side profile looked similar enough. There was a non-zero chance that he might be their ancient ancestor, and the clan master thought that the risk was warranted. His Wise Ancestor shared the same thought, wanting to hope for the best.

Of course, doubts remained in their mind. The youth's cultivation was just not enough to be an ancient ancestor, the same for his aura.

Alas, the clan master and Wise Ancestor have spoken. Thus, they had to kneel and accept this as well.

Li Qiye didn't react at all to the kneeling party. They waited patiently and didn't dare to stand up.

After a few hours or so, some started doubting. One youth wondered if he was actually alive. Of course, their heavenly gaze would indicate that he was alive and well.

They just didn't have enough patience and wanted to stand up. Unfortunately, they had to follow their clan master's lead.

Time continued to pass with no reaction from Li Qiye. Eventually, even the seniors of the clan questioned this.

Wise Ancestor could see his clan master's hesitation, so he shook his head to tell the guy to continue onward.

He was an influential ancestor known for his wisdom. Thus, the clan master always listened to him. The guy took a deep breath and calmed his mind.

As days passed, the youths were going crazy and wanted to get out of this place. Alas, the same constraints remained.

Finally, the "statue" spoke: "I'm afraid I don't have unfilial descendants like you all."

The content was unpleasant but this sounded like the perfect melody to the ears of the clan master and Wise Ancestor. They became ecstatic right away. [1]

Li Qiye finally opened his eyes. He knew what was going on the whole time but didn't bother replying.

"Ancient Ancestor! The descendants of the Wu respectfully greet you!"

"Rise." Li Qiye stared at them with a smile and then waved his hand.

The group exchanged glances and thought that it was looking more likely.

"As I said, I am not your ancient ancestor. I don't have descendants like you all." Li Qiye shook his head.

"..." The clan master didn't know what to say. The others thought that he was putting them down.

"Ancient Ancestor, we have your portrait in our record." Wise Ancestor reacted quickly.

"Oh? Let me take a look." Li Qiye smiled and raised one hand.

The clan master gave him the record without any hesitation.

Li Qiye could tell that this record dated back to the previous epoch. However, it lacked actual details regarding the clan's glorious days, only containing a few writings regarding their progenitor.

The clan became famous for their alchemy for many eras. Later on, they obtained a supreme grand dao and changed into a cultivation lineage instead.

The first page of the book had the portrait of an old man with a goatee. His appearance was rather mediocre and his last name wasn't actually Wu. Alas, he was actually listed before their progenitor.

The page of their progenitor had the portrait of a lively girl. Just the picture alone seemed vivid and animated.

Li Qiye smiled after seeing this progenitor and said: "I see, another touch of fate."

He then flipped the page and eventually stopped at a different ancient ancestor. Amusingly enough, she looked very similar to the progenitor. In fact, they could be identical twins.

"Saber Ancestor of the Wu." Li Qiye read.

"Yes, the saber ancestor is our most brilliant ancient ancestor. Rumor has it that she and the progenitor are sisters but she was in hibernation most of the time." The clan master said: "She contributed greatly to Eight Desolaces. Her deeds are still remembered now."

This ancient ancestor played a key role in the transformation of the clan, shifting them from alchemy to cultivation.

Li Qiye noted that there were more details on this ancient ancestor than their progenitor.

Their progenitor's title was Alchemy Saint and only had one page. However, the saber ancestor had a dozen pages dedicated to her.

The main focus was during the early Chaotic Era when she reached her prime. Most importantly, she followed a person known as the duck egg buyer. Their group focused on re-creating Eight Desolaces. [2]

Remember, the world was torn asunder during the great calamity. This duck egg buyer stabilized the world and formed Eight Desolaces. If it wasn't for this cultivator, the present wouldn't be anywhere near as prosperous.

Thus, since their saber ancestor was a follower, she greatly contributed to the current landscape. Unfortunately, their record didn't say much about this duck egg buyer.

This being was another question mark in history. The only thing clear was the being's frightening power.

The saber ancestor's generation was already so long ago, let alone their progenitor's. Their clan has been around since before the great calamity.

Eventually, Li Qiye finally stopped at the last section - the unfinished portrait of a youth resembling him.

Chapter 4464: No Unfilial Descendants

The side-profile portrait lacked details, only possessing a brief outline. Upon careful inspection, it did resemble Li Qiye.

This couldn't be verified because the drawer stopped before adding any description. The person was clearly tempted, hence the initial line, but eventually stopped for some unknown reasons.

Li Qiye smiled after seeing this while the group watched with bated breath.

He then closed the book and returned it to the clan master: "Your ancestor is a good artist. There are many interesting descriptions but I am not your ancient ancestor. My last name isn't Wu."

The clan master was speechless, the same with his clan members. They have been kneeling the entire time to a stranger.

"But our record has your portrait, Ancient Ancestor." Wise Ancestor remained calm and said.

"Well, if we have to be particular, that is indeed me." Li Qiye stared at him and admitted.

"It is you!" Wise Ancestor became excited again.

Li Qiye only smiled in response.

"It is an honor to be in your presence, Ancient Ancestor." Wise Ancestor decisively stepped forward and prostrated.

This confused the group. Li Qiye had already said that he wasn't from their clan. However, Wise Ancestor still wanted to prostrate? That would be rather improper, accepting a stranger as an ancestor.

Nonetheless, the clan master wasn't an idiot. He thought carefully about this and found logic in this move. He also walked forward and prostrated: "It is an honor to be in your presence, Ancient Ancestor."

"Greetings, Ancient Ancestor." The others calmed down and followed along.

Li Qiye waved and said: "Very well, since I do have ties with your ancestors, I will accept your grand gesture today. Rise."

"Thank you, Ancient Ancestor." Wise Ancestor and the others bowed one more time before standing up, still acting respectfully.

"Nothing good can be said about your cultivation. However, your politeness and sincerity show your intelligence." Li Qiye commented.

The group didn't know what to say.

"Call me young noble or young master, I am not that old." He went on.

"Yes, An-, Young Noble." Wise Ancestor responded.

"What is the reason for spending painstaking effort to find an ancient ancestor?" Li Qiye asked.

The clan master and Wise Ancestor exchanged glances. The group did the same.

"We..." The clan master didn't know how to respond.

"There is always a reason behind flattery and undue respect." Li Qiye continued.

The atmosphere became awkward and the clan master felt his face turning red.

Wise Ancestor remained calm and coughed wryly. He bowed his head and said: "Ancient Ancestor, the truth is that we wish to invite you home. We invite you to participate in the Primordial Union."

“Primordial Union?” Li Qiye raised his brows.

“Yes, the union was started by our saber ancestor and the duck egg buyer.” Wise Ancestor elaborated.

He paused for a bit before continuing: “Your descendants are incompetent so we need your help, Ancient Ancestor. Participate in the union, enter the dao source, recreate the grand dao, all of this to help our clan once more.”

“A bit interesting.” Li Qiye said.

The others became anxious.

“An-, Young Noble, please participate.” The clan master bowed and said earnestly.

Li Qiye stared at them and answered: “Spending so many days here, wasting so much saliva. It turns out the goal is to wake an ancient ancestor from their slumber, wanting them to toil for you like an ox.”

“We do not dare!” The group became frightened and got on their knees again. The clan master said: “This is not our intention, please forgive us, Young Noble.”

If this was their actual intention, it would be rather disrespectful.

“Dare? You already did it, wanting to take advantage of having an ancient ancestor. This stems from your own incompetence, needing to rely on them.” Li Qiye criticized.

The group had an embarrassed expression, feeling rather ashamed.

“You’re right, our clan has fallen so we have no choice but to beseech you, Ancient Ancestor.” Wise Ancestor decided to admit instead of deny.

“Digging your ancestor’s grave to make your clan a bit richer and bigger. Don’t worry, this isn’t surprising. You’re not the only clan with these thoughts.” Li Qiye chuckled.

They heaved a sigh of relief. It seemed that Li Qiye had no intention of punishing them.

“Fine, consider this meeting a fortune for your clan.” Li Qiye said.

“...” The group didn’t quite understand.

“Your clan started with Martial Ancestor.” Li Qiye revealed: “Fate dictates my involvement.”

This didn’t help either. They scratched their head in confusion.

According to their records, their progenitor was Alchemy Saint. The next noteworthy character was Saber Ancestor. They had no records of anyone known as Martial Ancestor.

Of course, this wasn’t their fault. Their clan was an ancient entity. Too much time has passed for an accurate tracing.

Li Qiye, on the other hand, knew their origin rather well. They were already a famous lineage before Alchemy Saint.

Martial Ancestor was famous for many eras. Later on, their clan declined and was on the verge of total destruction.

During this dark period, they had a female disciple who would later go on to become Alchemy Saint. She followed an old alchemist and learned his skills. This allowed her to teach alchemy to the rest of the clan.

This was the reason why the first page of their records was the portrait of an old man. He wasn't a member of the clan but was pivotal in their survival.

Their clan actually went from a cultivation clan to an alchemy clan and back to a cultivation clan. The key characters were Martial Ancestor, Alchemy Saint, and Saber Ancestor of the Wu.

For the last character, the legends said that she had obtained an ancient legacy. Another said that she was taught by the duck egg buyer or that she had learned a heavenly dao...

All in all, her divergence from the alchemy path was actually a return to the clan's original way.

Chapter 4465: Dao Enlightenment

The incomplete history in the book was understandable. The majority of it depicted the periods after their saber ancestor. The initial period was simply too long ago in the previous epoch.

In fact, the original writer clearly knew many things. Alas, they couldn't be recorded due to their taboo nature. For example, the incomplete portrait and its lack of description was one of them.

This was recorded for the sake of the future descendants, to remind them discretely about a potential being not to be crossed.

Fortunately, they actually got lucky in this case and accepted Li Qiye as their ancient ancestor.

The group was amazed by their rich history and stared at each other. They haven't heard of it before.

Wise Ancestor thought that he had a firm grasp on his clan's history. Alas, this was still news to him.

They believed that their progenitor was Alchemy Saint. Because of this, their clan prospered due to their alchemy ability. The saber ancestor eventually changed this and turned their focus towards cultivation instead. They had no idea that their original root came from martial cultivation.

"Your saber ancestor is obviously known for her saber skill." He continued: "How adept are you all at either the saber or alchemy?"

The group smiled wryly and lowered their head in shame.

"We are incapable and have very few alchemists in the clan." The clan master said: "As for the saber dao... the saber dao..."

He paused and said: "The saber ancestor has left behind her techniques but the descendants couldn't master it. We've lost it at this point..."

He looked rather ashamed for letting down the ancestors. The clan has fallen in both alchemy and cultivation.

Their alchemy was the first to fall since during the eras of the saber ancestor, they stopped caring about it as much and never produced a top alchemist. Way later on, they eventually lost their saber arts as well. This marked the true decline of the clan.

“Seems like ancestors don’t need to leave a big inheritance behind since if the descendants are incapable, they’ll squander it away.” Li Qiye joked.

This only further embarrassed the group. They kept their head lowered, not knowing how to answer. The clan’s declination was the reason why they tried so hard to look for ancient ancestors everywhere, hoping that some were still around to participate in the conference.

“Don’t be too down, fortune goes up and down.” Li Qiye smiled and said: “At least your ancestors have left legacies behind. Though some have been lost, they will return eventually. For example, today, I will give you back your Heaven Traversing Eight Slashes. What you get out of it is up to you.”

“Heaven Traversing Eight Slashes?!” Wise Ancestor bellowed in astonishment.

“So you have heard of it.” Li Qiye glanced at Wise Ancestor.

“Yes.” Wise Ancestor took a deep breath and solemnly said: “Rumor has it that our saber ancestor’s saber dao originated from this technique.”

Listeners became emotional upon hearing this. Though they haven’t heard of this title before, this revelation alone was stirring enough.

The saber ancestor was the most renowned cultivator of their clan. She and the progenitor might be twins but she was in hibernation and came out in the future. Her sister was an alchemist while she was a saber user.

She followed the duck egg buyer and helped create Eight Desolaces. Her saber rarely met a worthy opponent along the way.

Due to her power, her clan started shifting their path to the saber art as well. They prospered for a long period but nothing lasted forever.

Later generations couldn’t keep up with training, having grown used to luxury and arrogance. Eventually, this saber art no longer had worthy successors and was lost.

Therefore, the group was shocked to hear Li Qiye’s comment about the original saber art.

“Watch carefully, it is up to you now.” Li Qiye didn’t give them time to prepare and raised his hand, summoning the saber art.

“Clank!” Saber energy slashes and images appeared inside the house.

This frightened the group since they were afraid of being targeted by the slashes.

“A saber dao...” Wise Ancestor was the strongest and could see the mysteries of the dao unraveling before his very eyes.

“Focus up, use your heart to learn this saber art!” Wise Ancestor shouted.

Everyone else calmed down and immediately sat down in the meditative pose, wanting to learn.

As for Wise Ancestor, he did his best to record the transformations of the slashes. It didn't matter whether he could learn them or not. At the very least, he wanted to record them for the sake of the clan.

Since they already knew an incomplete version of the saber dao, staring at the very source resulted in a harmonious learning experience. The process was smooth and fitting.

Li Qiye had his reason for accepting their worship and giving them back this art. In the past, he once borrowed this art. Today, he came across this house by accident and also met the descendants of the Wu. Giving it back to them finished the karmic ties.

Every member of the Wu was immersed in dao enlightenment. Suddenly, someone else came inside.

"Heaven Traversing Eight Slashes!" This person actually managed to recognize the peerless saber art.

"Clank! Clank! Clank!" The Wu members reacted quickly, unsheathing their saber and surrounding this person.

Merit laws and techniques were guarded secrets. Some would kill to keep them a secret.

"Wu Brothers! Wait, I'm a friend, look, it's me, Merchant Jian!" The intruder was startled and waved his hands repeatedly, trying to put on a smile.

The Wu members calmed down after seeing the familiar face.

"Virtuous Nephew, why are you here?" Wise Ancestor slightly frowned and asked.

Chapter 4466: Merchant Jian

The newcomer turned out to be a youth in high spirits. His eyes shifted back and forth to gauge the situation - a sign of craftiness.

He wore a non-fitting robe in a strange manner. It was oversized yet he tied it up by the wrists and ankles, leaving ample room within to store many things.

He also had a trunk tied to his back by a cloth - showing that he was a traveling merchant. This wasn't an uncommon sight. However, the trunk was just ridiculously large. An extendable piece of cloth stuck out from the top of the trunk. Its purpose was to shield him from the sun and rain when necessary. He didn't seem to feel the weight of the trunk either. He walked as if it was as light as a feather.

If anyone else were to spy on their saber art, the Wu members might just kill them outright. Alas, the merchant was not a stranger.

Everyone knew who he was and considered him a friend. He was as slippery as a loach and could travel anywhere.

In fact, all four clans were friends with him. He sold them strange yet useful gadgets.

"Jian Ming, did you follow us?" One youth glared at him.

“You’re finished for interrupting our meditation, Wise Ancestor is going to teach you a lesson.” Another added.

“Scram already, Jian Ming, don’t delay our session.”

The youths sheathed their saber, no longer acting aggressively like before.

The young merchant still wore a smile, seemingly unaffected by the complaints. However, he noted that Wise Ancestor was not happy.

“Wise Ancestor, I came across this place by accident and wanted to take a look, that’s all.” He smiled.

Wise Ancestor couldn’t do anything about it. He might not be an official member of their clan but wasn’t far from it.

After all, the four clans were on the same side. Moreover, this youth has been active and amiable, winning everyone’s love.

“Heaven Traversing Eight Slashes.” The merchant then said with admiration: “Congratulations, brothers. This is your origin saber art, the legacy of Martial Ancestor.”

“Seems like you know quite a bit.” Li Qiye spoke.

At first, the merchant only focused on diffusing the situation with the Wu members. Li Qiye was blocked by the group so he didn’t see him on the stone bed.

The moment he saw Li Qiye’s face, he couldn’t believe his own eyes and started rubbing them. He opened his eyes again and became frozen.

“Got a good look yet?” Li Qiye smiled.

The merchant looked as if he was struck by lightning. His soul nearly left his body but he regained his wits and got on his knees. He smacked his forehead on the ground repeatedly while speaking: “I, Jian Ming, a descendant of the Jian, respectfully greet you, Ancestor!”

This display of reverence was one level above the Wu’s. A while ago, they treated him as juniors officially meeting their ancestor - a very proper showing.

As for Jian Ming, he crazily smacked his forehead, seemingly overwhelmed with emotions.

“Jian Ming, he’s our ancestor.” Wise Ancestor didn’t know whether to laugh or cry, feeling that the brat was trying to steal their ancestor.

“Isn’t this too exaggerated?” Li Qiye smiled while the youth was still bowing.

“I am but a brat from the dog pen, to be blessed by your supreme radiance, prestigious aura, and matchless voice...” The youth spewed out a barrage of flattery.

“Stop, speak normally.” Li Qiye shook his head: “It looks like you are quite lucky, to be able to enter the secret domain.”

“Your insight is incredible.” The youth was shaken.

His current state of mind couldn't be understood by the others because he knew that Li Qiye wasn't just an ancient ancestor.

He has been fortunate enough to visit a particular place. There, he saw miracles and knew who Li Qiye actually was.

"As I said earlier, Ancestor, everything I have is thanks to your blessing." The youth didn't dare to get up.

"Rise, member of the Jian." Li Qiye said softly and sighed, feeling a bit disappointed about the past: "No need to be so formal, be at ease."

"Thank you, Ancestor." The youth finally got up.

"Call me young noble." Li Qiye said before assessing: "Hmm, looks like the Jian has a capable successor."

"I'm afraid my worthlessness will only bring shame to the clan." The youth said: "Well, our current branch right now in Inner Ruins is only an outer branch, the main branch isn't here."

"Your branch wasn't the only one." Li Qiye said.

"Yes, Young Noble. Several branches followed the forefather to create Eight Desolaces and decided to take roots here. We do not represent the main branch." The youth said.

The listeners from the Wu were at a loss. Only Wise Ancestor had an idea regarding this topic. Alas, he knew less than the youth because the latter traveled extensively while he was stuck in the clan for the most part.

Among the four clans, this youth was one of the most knowledgeable.

"It's fine, this is another path, not bad at all." Li Qiye smiled.

"We owe it to you, Young Noble." The youth hurriedly responded.

This was indeed the truth, not mere flattery. He saw many things in the secret domain and gained a better understanding of the four clans along with many other lineages.

Currently, the four clans had a deep history with Eight Desolaces and Inner Ruins. Alas, they didn't know that this wasn't originally their home. Moreover, they weren't actually part of the main branch.

For example, the Wu started with Alchemy Saint according to their record. Alas, their history was far older than that.

In reality, Alchemy Saint started the clan in another area, not Inner Ruins. The latter became their home due to the saber saint. She followed the duck egg buyer and eventually created a branch in Inner Ruins.

In other words, they were only a branch of the orthodox clan. Alas, they lost contact long ago and current members had no idea about it.

Something similar also happened to the other three clans - the Tie, Jian, and Lu.

Their ancestors left their homes in order to help the duck egg buyer. Eventually, these cultivators decided to stay in Eight Desolaces.

Chapter 4467: Pertaining The Legend

The four clans had a complicated history beyond the grasp of their current members. The Wu had a detailed record but it was still missing multiple important information and periods. This was only rather inadequate.

The youth from the Jian was luckier because a particular opportunity granted him more information than the rest.

For example, Wise Ancestor's group had no idea who they were dealing with. They guessed that Li Qiye was an ancient ancestor. As for the youth, he had met legends before and knew about this particular being.

"Enough flattery, get back to comprehending the dao." Li Qiye said.

The Wu disciples immediately sat down again to learn the saber art. Wise Ancestor went back to copying each variation and transformation of the art, every small movement and swing.

The Wu wouldn't allow the merchant to learn the art. However, he had no intention of doing so in the first place.

He came closer to Li Qiye and mustered his courage to smile: "Young Noble, my cultivation and abilities are shallow, would you be so kind to bestow me a supreme merit law? Just so that I have something for self-defense."

He aimed to take advantage of this ultimate opportunity. Gaining something would be a lifetime of benefit.

Li Qiye glanced at him and said: "Do you know the origin of your clan?"

The youth honestly responded: "I do if it's just about our clans. Our forefather entered the world and followed the mysterious duck egg buyer, contributing to the creation of Eight Desolaces. Eventually, these followers chose to stay here."

"As for anything beyond that, I know very little, just that our clan has been there since time immemorial under someone's protection. Am I right, Young Noble?" He carefully chose his words.

"If you know about this, then don't you have enough merit laws already? You aren't satisfied with them?" Li Qiye said.

"Well... I, unfortunately, don't have access to the ancient arts." The youth smiled wryly.

"Oh? I'm sure your forefather didn't return empty-handed after following the duck egg buyer." Li Qiye smirked.

The duck egg buyer was an elusive individual. Historically, dao lords were well-known, especially their background.

One particular question was always up for debate - who was the first dao lord?

Two top answers included Puresun Dao Lord and the duck egg buyer.

According to the records, Puresun might be the oldest dao lord. Moreover, his method of proving his dao was different from all the subsequent dao lords.

The tale told of him during his youth. He sat on top of an immortal tree and obtained a dao fruit, becoming a supreme dao lord in the process. In a sense, he was the progenitor of the dao lords.

The opposing theory stated that the first dao lord was actually the duck egg buyer, not Puresun. This person was the first to obtain the grand fortune, already learning the dao beneath the tree way before Puresun Dao Lord.

This particular event lacked sufficient evidence and record. Nonetheless, regardless of whether the duck egg buyer was a dao lord or not, the being was unbeatable and even stabilized Eight Desolaces.

None of the subsequent dao lords could match these achievements, hence the belief that the duck egg buyer must have been a dao lord.

The being's background and everything else were a mystery, hence the strange title. In the legends, the being's catchphrase was "just passing by to buy some duck eggs."

Since future generations knew nothing about this being outside of this catchphrase, the being's title became "duck egg buyer".

Of course, the four clans most likely knew more since they followed the buyer into battle. Alas, these ancestors kept their mouth shut and didn't pass down any pertinent information.

Thus, future descendants only knew that their clans had followed the duck egg buyer, nothing more.

Merchant Jian was the same way. He knew many things due to his fortuitous life, just not any information regarding the duck egg buyer.

"I'm afraid our clan has failed and didn't inherit anything." Jian Ming took a deep breath then said.

"A failure indeed." Li Qiye smiled: "Because of your fortune, you have access to the immemorial legacy and all the advantages. If your ancestors know about your current cultivation and how unmotivated you are, they'll climb out of their coffin to teach you a lesson."

"I apologize..." The youth became startled and lowered his head.

"Merit laws are bestowed by the heaven but cultivation is earned by men." Li Qiye continued: "You are an inheritor of the Jian's legacy, try harder instead of shaming your ancestors' prestige."

"I understand." The youth started sweating and got on his knees.

Li Qiye spent more effort on the youth than the others. The past was long gone; these descendants couldn't be blamed for knowing nothing about their ancestors.

"Try your best, all you need is determination and perseverance to live up to your potential, you already have the right fortune." Li Qiye sighed and said.

"Thank you, Young Noble." The youth was happy to hear this positive assessment. Someone of Li Qiye's level was stingy with his praises. His fortune must be above most supreme geniuses'.

“You are smart but in order to become a legend, intelligence isn’t enough. Your determination needs to turn into an unyielding stubbornness, an obsession of sorts. To put it simply, your dao heart needs to be focused. Alas, your vanity and mortal attachments will become your burdens. Always remember, there is no lack of geniuses possessing both talent and luck. But, only a few ever become legends. After all is said and done, only the dao heart matters.”

“I will keep this in mind, Young Noble. Thank you for your guidance.” The youth said.

Li Qiye smiled, having said what he needed to. The youth’s future was up to himself.

When comparing Wang Weiqiao with this genius, Wang Weiqiao appeared to be a fool. Nonetheless, Li Qiye believed that Wang Weiqiao’s future achievements would far exceed Jian Ming’s.

This was because Jian Ming enjoyed life and its pleasures, making it hard for him to focus. On the other hand, the old man was simplistic and plain, resulting in having a stabler dao heart.

The reason why Li Qiye spoke so much was because of the youth’s last name - Jian, not just his talent. The members of the Wu weren’t so lucky.

Chapter 4468: Visiting The Wu

The saber images and dao gradually disappeared since time was up. The young ones weren’t satisfied yet and tried their best to remember everything possible about its mysteries and profundities. There might not be another chance like this ever again.

Wise Ancestor heaved a sigh of relief. He merely focused on copying the content instead of understanding it. Fortunately, he managed to do just that before the room returned to normal.

“Thank you for your gift, Young Noble.” The clan master of the Wu led the others to prostrate before Li Qiye.

This gift of his gave them an opportunity to revitalize the clan.

“It came from the Wu, not it is back with the Wu, finishing the threads of fate.” Li Qiye accepted the gesture.

Of course, they didn’t know the fateful ties Li Qiye had with their clan in the past. They viewed him as an ancient ancestor of sorts.

“Young Noble, it’s rare to be blessed by your presence. Please, visit our clan so that I can have the chance to show you around.” Jian Ming bowed and said with a smile.

This peeved the members of the Wu since he was trying to steal their ancestor.

Thus, Wise Ancestor slapped the back of his head and said: “Jian Ming, where do you get the audacity to steal our ancestor? Why don’t we just move our ancestral shrine to your clan too?”

“Hehe, Ancestor, that’s not what I meant. Plus, you know that our four clans are one and the same. Your ancestor is my ancestor, I just want to do everything I can so that the ancestor can have a good time. Also, don’t you remember how well I served you when you visited our clan?” He spoke with sincerity, making it hard to retort.

“Brat, you and your sweet tongue.” Wise Ancestor had no response because the brat was right. The four clans have always been tight-knitted and supported each other.

Therefore, if Li Qiye was an ancient ancestor of the Wu, the Jian could also treat him as theirs.

“Young Noble, please return to the Wu.” Wise Ancestor prostrated and asked.

“Young Noble, please return to the Wu.” The others raised their voice.

“I also ask you to return to the Wu, then come to our clan later.” Jian Ming had a sloppy pose but still had an earnest tone.

He couldn’t directly ask Li Qiye to come to the Jian first. However, coming to the Wu first then his clan seemed perfectly proper.

Of course, the Wu didn’t mind this request either due to their close relationship.

“I have to go to each clan and bless them too?” Li Qiye chuckled.

The group felt their face becoming hotter. Wise Ancestor was the one to answer: “We have no hope of revitalizing the clan and aren’t qualified to participate in the Primordial Union. We’ll ruin our clan’s prestige so that’s why we put our shame away and invite you to participate, Young Noble.”

“The union...?” Jian Ming wanted to say something but refrained. He eventually murmured: “The young noble’s participation will be perfect.”

He knew a lot more but couldn’t reveal the details to them right now.

Li Qiye smiled and said: “Fine, I have time anyway so I’ll tag along with you unfilial descendants. Remember, you’re not my unfilial descendants though.”

The group became ecstatic despite the playful criticism.

“Thank you, Young Noble!” They happily prostrated again.

“Thank you, Young Noble!” Jian Ming was happy as well. Though Li Qiye has yet to agree to visit the Jian, this was still a great development for the four clans and their members.

“Let’s go.” Li Qiye stood up and the group respectfully made way for him.

Their trip back to the Wu began. Of course, the youth from the Jian also tagged along. He was far more clever than his peers, speaking in a pleasant and likable manner.

The Wu was built in Inner Ruins and right next to Desolate Wild, not part of any other territory.

Though there were many sects here, war was rather rare. The reason could be due to old pacts or out of fear due to the existence of ancient lineages. Because of peace, prosperity was inevitable.

The other three sects were located next to the Wu as well. They picked a prosperous area and built their clans together. Their solidarity has withstood the test of time thus far.

They were around during the Immemorial Era and chose to reside in Inner Ruins during the early Chaotic Era.

These were the years when numerous sects have been reduced to ashes. This land became available for the four great clans.

They prospered and became famous, actually having produced top masters - some were comparable to dao lords. Unfortunately, this golden age didn't last forever. Nonetheless, they were lucky to have survived until now despite the gradual decline.

By this point, they were no longer well-known, the same for their illustrious history.

The borders of the four clans weren't well-defined because this was unnecessary. Their members got along as well.

In the center was a towering peak considered to be owned by all four clans. Most importantly, there was once a great tree here.

It witnessed their rise and fall. Alas, it had withered in time. Now, it only served as a spiritual totem for the clans, a symbol of their unity, and a token of their past success. All in all, the withered tree carried symbolic significance for them.

Chapter 4469: Short Tree

Li Qiye's group finally returned to the Wu's territory. Judging by its majestic architecture, one could easily imagine its past glory.

The buildings had an air of vicissitudes, clearly having been around for many years. They were built with exquisite details and grandeur, a testament to the Wu's prestige.

If one had to pick out a difference between the Wu and the other clans, it would have to be the alchemy aspect.

There were many locations with alchemy gardens, furnaces, and ample materials. The Wu was indeed an alchemy clan once.

Right after Alchemy Saint's success, other great powers came to ask the alchemists of the Wu for help with pill creation.

Next came the period dominated by saber masters. The alchemy clan abandoned the pills and took up the blades, earning success and recognition in this field as well. Of course, their alchemy dao was still superior to their peers, it just wasn't the best any longer.

In the present day, they still had a relative focus on alchemy. On the other hand, a second atmosphere - one that was bold and forceful - could be sensed here. This was the presence of saber energy.

The saber dao has penetrated every inch of the land and manifested into a faint presence.

"Do you sense the saber energy here, Young Noble? Something similar is there at the Tie as well in the form of spear energy. One could hear the clank of a spear upon entering right away." Jian Ming chatted with Li Qiye.

The Tie was another of the four clans with a focus on the art of the spear. Their progenitor also followed the duck egg buyer and was known as Spear Ancestor.

Li Qiye smiled after hearing this and looked up at the peak: "Let's take a look up there."

"Sure thing." Wise Ancestor immediately led the way since he was proud of their divine peak.

In fact, everyone in the group wanted Li Qiye to see this monument.

"This is the symbol of our four clans." Jian Ming smiled and said: "Rumor has it that it might be our source, the container of our miracles. They used to happen here but no more. Maybe you will be able to see one."

"Miracles." Li Qiye smiled and didn't say anything else.

For eras now, the members of the four clans climbed up the peak in order to stare at their beloved lands and remember their ancestors.

In reality, this peak was just another peak with no miracles to speak of. This might have been different in the past.

The clans used to refer to it as the divine peak because it used to contain a primordial power in the form of miracles. This helped them survive the Chaotic Era.

As they declined, the miracles also disappeared. This was attributed to the dispersion of primordial power. Though the peak was no longer special, it was still viewed as a symbol of pride for the four clans.

Li Qiye took his time climbing the peak, seemingly measuring it with each step. The scenery was a beautiful green. The place brimmed with life and gave off a refreshing feeling.

From the base up the winding paths were many historical sites left behind by the four clans.

After reaching the peak, one could look down and see all of their territories - fertile agricultural fields, buildings, and other wonderful aspects. Though they had declined, they still had ample resources. Smaller clans couldn't compete in this regard.

The pinnacle didn't have much outside of some dried branches and weeds. There was a clear lack of verdant trees compared to the dwindling path.

Li Qiye's eyes fell onto an altar in the center, seemingly made from piles of ancient stones. They were placed in a neat and deliberate manner. Each contained a suitable dao for the spot.

It was only the size of a table or so, surrounding a small tree in the center. The tree was as tall as an adult but its trunk was the size of a basin. Thus, it looked rather short and round.

Nonetheless, it emitted a powerful feeling. Each bark resembled the scale of a true dragon, looking as tough as can be. This, in turn, made the tree look like a dragon that has been here for eras.

Unfortunately, it has withered long ago, holding onto one last breath. The withered leaves were yellow with no sign of life.

Near the roots were four embedded holes. There used to be something in there but they had been taken away.

Li Qiye stared at the withered tree as if it was a priceless treasure, not averting his gaze. The group patiently stood behind him.

After a while, he stared at them and said: "I see, you invited me back here to revive this tree."

"..." Wise Ancestor smiled awkwardly then told the truth: "Young Noble, you are absolutely right. Our four clans haven't had a supreme ancestor in so long so the tree withered. We have tried everything to call the miracles back. Alas, it's all futile."

"Young Noble, we call it the Tree of Contribution." Jian Ming said: "It used to have primordial energy circling around it as if it was the source of the dao."

Chapter 4470: Dao Stones

The Tree of Contribution remained standing despite its withered state. Li Qiye glanced at it and said: "It's not due to the lack of supreme ancestor. Its decline is due to your own clans."

"Well..." The group didn't have a response.

"I think that is recorded in our history book." Wise Ancestor eventually said: "The ancestors took out the dao stones."

"Is that what you're referring to, Young Noble?" Jian Ming said: "The records are lacking down. It simply states that after a full deliberation of the four clans, we decided to take the dao stones for the sake of the descendants."

"That's putting it nicely." Li Qiye chuckled and said: "They worried that their descendants would be useless and incapable of protecting it. In order to avoid greed and clan destruction, they took away the dao stones. With them gone, the tree withered right away. Nonetheless, it's still holding on."

"So you think that if we put the dao stones back, the tree will be fine again?" Wise Ancestor became excited.

"Your recent ancient ancestors probably weren't stupid and have tried this before." Li Qiye commented.

Jian Ming knew more about this subject and said: "That is indeed the case. The dao stones alone can't revive the tree. The ancestors debated this and believed that one must enter the dao source and re-create the grand dao using primordial energy."

"This is the reason why we were looking for someone like you, Young Noble." Wise Ancestor smiled wryly.

"Is that so? You got lucky like a blind cat coming across a dead mouse. If it was so easy, your ancient ancestors would have done them long ago." Li Qiye said.

The reason for reviving the tree was due to its nature as a dao source. Its existence allowed the clan members to cultivate far faster.

Nonetheless, their older ancestors believed that withering the tree was necessary for survival.

Such a divine tree was coveted. During the prosperous generations, too many powerful cultivators appeared so the risk was high.

Recently, the current ancestors found this unacceptable and wanted to revive the tree. Unfortunately, adding the dao stones again didn't work.

They kept on researching this issue and believed that one has to go straight to the dao source and stimulate it once more. They have attempted countless times to no avail, hence the need to find the ancient ancestors.

"We are too weak so attempting the Primordial Union is meaningless. I'm sure you, on the other hand, will be able to trace back to the source." Wise Ancestor continued. [1]

"Even if I'm interested in participating in this union, it is useless without the four dao stones." Li Qiye said while staring at the four missing holes.

"Each clan has one, and I actually have the one from the Wu with me." Wise Ancestor took a deep breath and revealed.

"Coincidentally, I have the one from the Jian." Jian Ming searched his sack for a bit and took out a dao stone: "Here you go, Young Noble. This is the dao stone."

He held the radiant stone with both hands. It had a blue color just like the sky, looking like a piece of jade. Inside its azure hue were many dao runes in the shape of clouds.

They gathered and dispersed - a process that one could construe as the breaths of the world.

"You were keeping this stone?" Wise Ancestor found this surprising.

Though the dao stones didn't have any effect alone, the four clans knew how important they were and kept them safe.

Who would expect for the Jian to let a youth keep it? It showed how much trust the ancestors of the Jian placed in him. This was truly surprising.

"I think the ancestors are starting to be senile from old age, that's why they gave it to me." Jian Ming joked.

Wise Ancestor didn't waste time and took out their clan's dao stone. He presented it to Li Qiye with both hands and said: "Young Noble, here is the stone of the Wu."

It was different from the Jian's stone. It was transparent with runic fire within. The fiery strings resembled a sky-searing inferno. The thing looked hot but was rather cool to the touch.

"We will gather the four stones for you, Young Noble." Wise Ancestor said confidently.

"I'm sure you will be able to obtain the union, Young Noble. After all, no one else can match you." Jian Ming was excited as well.

"Don't be so blatant with your flattery." Li Qiye chuckled: "If your four clans want to revive this tree, go gather the other two stones."

He paused for a bit before concluding: "Fate has brought me here today, so I shall do what should be done."

“Thank you, Young Noble!” The two prostrated.

“We will go get the other stones now.” Wise Ancestor wasn’t one to waste time and discussed this with Jian Ming.

“The Tie should be easy.” The youth said: “But I don’t know if the Lu still has theirs...”

He became worried after thinking about this potential problem.

“Hmm, the Lu...” Wise Ancestor hesitated as well. The Lu’s decline was faster than the rest and it has been rather distant lately.

“Start with the Tie first then worry later.” Jian Ming said decisively.

“I’ll go visit the geezer, we’re friends so it should be easy to get their dao stone.” Wise Ancestor nodded in agreement.

Speak of the devil - an old voice interrupted them: “Old Wise, I heard you managed to find an ancient ancestor. Why didn’t you let me know first?”

A group wearing tight black robe appeared. They stood proudly with their back straight, looking like javelins. They were up there in age yet still had ample vitality and spirit.

“The Tie is here just in time.” Jian Ming greeted them: “Hehe, Purpose Ancestor, I was worried about how to invite everyone here...” He kept on going.

“Brat, you must be up to no good to be blabbering like this.” Purpose Ancestor was from the Tie, being in the same generation as Wise Ancestor.

“Of course not, Wise Ancestor is here as well. Are you here to greet the ancient ancestor? Such perfect timing.” Jian Ming said with a sincere tone.