

Emperor 4471

### **Chapter 4471: Accepting The Ancestor**

“Brother, come over and greet the young noble.” Wise Ancestor said.

“Greetings.” Purpose Ancestor came over and was going to bow his head to greet the ancient ancestor. However, he stopped abruptly after taking a closer look at Li Qiye.

At first, he thought that this ancient ancestor invited back by the Wu should be an awe-inspiring cultivator. Alas, this ordinary youth’s cultivation was weaker than theirs. How could he be an ancient ancestor? Impossible.

Because of this, his head stopped lowering halfway. The other elders from the Tie shared the same sentiment while stealing glances at Li Qiye.

“Old Wise, are you sure you’re right on this? He’s your ancient ancestor?” Purpose Ancestor whispered to Wise Ancestor. He thought that the Wu has been tricked.

“A hundred percent.” Wise whispered back.

Purpose remained skeptical and said: “Which ancient ancestor then? This isn’t a trivial matter.” He kept his voice as quiet as can be.

If he didn’t trust Wise Ancestor, he would have thought that this was a joke and leave instantly.

“Trust me, it’s right. Hurry up and show respect before the young noble feels offended. Call him young noble.” Wise whispered.

“...” Purpose found this whole thing astounding.

“Ancestor, please do not hesitate. This is a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our four clans, it will never happen again.” Jian Ming added, aware of the actual significance, unlike Wise Ancestor.

“The descendants of the Tie greet you, Young Noble.” Purpose took a deep breath and prostrated, albeit with lingering doubts.

“We greet you, Young Noble.” The accompanying elders prostrated as well.

They still questioned whether this youth was an ancient ancestor or not, and what were his abilities and power? The reason they chose to believe was due to their close ties with the Wu.

“Rise.” Li Qiye told them.

They bowed their head once before getting up. Nonetheless, skepticism remained in their eyes.

“Can’t do well forever just relying on the eighteen thrusts and Jade Spiral Merit Law.” Li Qiye glanced at them and said: “What happened to your Spear Ancestor’s perfected Stormpetal technique?”

The members of the Tie exchanged glances and gasped because Li Qiye knew their situation too well.

“Please guide us, Young Noble.” Purpose got on his knees again.

The Tie was once famous for their spear techniques. Their forefather, Spear Ancestor, had followed the duck egg buyer just like Saber Ancestor. In fact, they became renowned together with the title of Saber-spear Duo.

Alas, the Tie declined just like the Wu. They eventually lost their spear dao and were only left with mediocre merit laws.

“Fortune will come if it’s meant to be.” Li Qiye casually responded.

“...” Purpose Ancestor paused. It seemed as if Li Qiye had no intention of teaching them.

Jian Ming then started winking at him. Purpose wasn’t a fool and took note of this. He understood what he should do right away and bowed his head again: “Thank you for your guidance.”

“We are planning on asking the young noble to revive the tree.” Wise Ancestor whispered after he stood up.

Purpose was moved and said: “Via the union?”

“Yes, only a dao trace through the primordial union can do it.” Wise said softly.

Purpose stole glances at Li Qiye again. He had accepted Li Qiye as an ancient ancestor but still wondered if he could perform the union.

“You’re aware that we’re missing the dao stones for the union.” Wise got straight to the point.

“Are you sure?” Purpose whispered. The tree was important so handing the dao stones over carelessly was reckless.

“Yes, the Jian has handed their stone over to the young noble as well. The union needs four stones, so we need yours and the Lu’s.” Wise said.

The circumstances left Purpose hesitating despite trusting Wise. If they were to lose the dao stones, they would become sinners of the clans.

“Ancestor, this is not the time to hesitate.” Jian Ming urged: “Don’t be a frog under the well. Your one thought can change the direction of our clans, please give us the stone.”

He worried that this hesitation might annoy Li Qiye. Everything would be lost then.

“I’ll go get it right away.” Purpose could tell that this was no time to hesitate. Thus, he decisively sent someone to fetch the dao stone.

It didn’t take long before the one from the Tie was taken here. He raised it with both hands and offered it to Li Qiye: “Young Noble, please accept the dao stone of the Tie.”

This one was of the frost affinity and had a white hue. The runic runes looked like ice flowers quietly blossoming.

It wasn’t cold to the toughest in the slightest, emitting a gentle sensation just like the fire stone.

“Still missing one.” Li Qiye said.

This prompted the trio to exchange glances.

#### **Chapter 4472: The Lu**

“The last stone.” Purpose said: “Let’s go to the Lu to negotiate then.”

Their expression looked rather strange when the Lu was brought up.

“I don’t think there is anyone in charge after the geezer’s passing.” Wise murmured.

“The current clan master is Daqi who is up there in age now.” Jian Ming shrugged.

“We need to go because the last stone is required anyway.” Wise Ancestor decided.

They knew that all four stones were essential for the union. However, there seemed to be something going on with the Lu.

“Virtuous Nephew, I think you might be able to convince their clan master for the dao stone.” Wise Ancestor suggested.

“Hehehe.” Jian Ming laughed: “Ancestors, don’t make it hard for a junior like me. The Lu Clan Master might not do anything crazy but he might either close the door or hit me with a broom.”

He made it clear that he didn’t want to go to the Lu.

“Our four clans have always been one, he won’t be that bad.” Purpose said without confidence.

“Hah, hard to say. My old man tried to come express sympathy last year but he didn’t even get inside.” Jian Ming laughed.

“I came for the funeral as well but the Lu didn’t see me. At least they gave me enough face to not chase me away with brooms.” Wise sighed and said.

“Looks like it is impossible to get the dao stone from them then.” Jian Ming said: “The Lu probably didn’t want to do it back then, just like everyone else, no?”

Everyone’s expression became awkward after hearing this.

“Let’s go and see.” Wise Ancestor pondered for a bit before speaking: “We must have the last stone.”

“What if they simply refuse?” Purpose prepared for the worst?

“Hmm, steal or rob?” Jian Ming’s eyes rolled back and forth.

“Not suitable.” Wise shook his head: “How can we steal from family? Preposterous.”

“The boy has a point.” Purpose said.

“We can only do our best, persuade them with feelings and logic.” Wise decided.

It seemed that the trio wasn’t optimistic about their chances in the slightest.

“Who will be the messenger?” Jian Ming shrugged: “Not me, they didn’t give my old man any face, so they’ll do the same to a junior like me.”

This left the group in a tough position. Since they were ancestors, they couldn't handle being refused entry at the door. It would be too humiliating.

"Fine, I'll go to the Lu for the last stone." Li Qiye who has been staring at the tree interrupted the group.

"You will, Young Noble?" The trio was caught by surprise.

"Your four clans are connected with me, it is worth my effort." Li Qiye said.

They didn't understand this connection he brought up. Nonetheless, they absolutely would never refuse his suggestion.

"We'll go together with you, Young Noble." Wise suggested.

"Let's prepare some gifts to show our sincerity." Purpose hurriedly said.

Li Qiye stared at them and said: "Seems like there is some guilty conscience going on here. Did your three clans team up and bully the Lu?"

"No, of course not..." Purpose smiled awkwardly and answered with a feeble tone.

"Then why the guilty conscience?" Li Qiye asked.

They couldn't answer right away. Eventually, Wise coughed and said: "The truth is that it was just a misunderstanding. We had no intention of bullying them, it's just that it had to be done back then for the Lu to avoid trouble. It was the best choice for the Lu and everyone. Plus, we're trying our best to compensate them for it."

"Best for the Lu and everyone? A lot of assholes in the world try to justify their actions by bringing up the greater good when in reality, it was selfish in nature. Worst of all, they would assume the moral high ground too." Li Qiye criticized.

The trio had no response once more.

"Compensation is absolutely in order." Jian Ming eventually said: "The four clans are one. Though there is a crack, we should try our best to mend it."

"Right, the feud shouldn't continue." The two ancestors solemnly nodded.

"Let's go." Li Qiye said and descended. The trio hurried after him.

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This was no longer the golden age of the four clans. They weren't prestigious and famous across the realm any longer.

However, their land was still fertile and their population was relatively acceptable. The only exception was the Lu.

Their declination was awfully apparent compared to the other three. Their territories were just as large as their counterparts. However, they were barren; even the streets looked abandoned.

It seemed that their population was declining at a rapid rate, making it harder for them to prosper and keep up with business.

Of course, the other three clans didn't take advantage of this to take over the Lu's towns. They, at the very least, maintained this final line and still considered the Lu as family.

Sure enough, as the group entered the Lu, they could see the desolation along the way.

The other three clans didn't produce any supreme genius but at least they still had many descendants. The same couldn't be said about the Lu.

### **Chapter 4473: Ancient Painting**

The Lu Clan Master actually granted them an audience. He was up there in age and had a slight hunch.

He looked just like an old farmer and had a tobacco pipe, inhaling and letting out smoke.

In terms of seniority, Wise and Purpose Ancestor far exceeded him. They were the strongest of their respective clan while he was only a junior.

Alas, he only showed his head ever so little, not performing a proper salutation. Nonetheless, the two ancestors didn't seem to mind.

They came with gifts this time. Wise Ancestor smiled and said: "A small token of our sincerity. Please accept them, Virtuous Nephew."

These two ancestors didn't have an overbearing attitude at all. The clan master nodded again and only quietly put away the gifts.

"This young noble is an ancient ancestor of our clan. He came today to see the descendant of the Lu." Wise introduced.

The Lu Clan Master finally showed some emotions, becoming startled. He took another look at Li Qiye and his expression said it all - skepticism.

He then focused on the ancestors and Jian Ming's expression. Alas, they didn't seem to be bringing a youth here to trick him. Both the Jian and the Tie seemed to have accepted this ancient ancestor.

Thus, he had no choice but to lower his head and said: "Greetings, Young Noble."

He then felt frustrated and sat back down. Since the other three clans have recognized him, the Lu had no choice but to do so as well.

Li Qiye didn't mind the cold reception. His attention was stolen by an old painting placed in the hall.

This hall has withstood the test of time. Rumor has it that it was built by their forefather, hence the fading paint and spotty damage.

The star of the hall, the painting, had a canvas made of nebula paper. Unfortunately, the years have robbed the painting of its original colors and lines. The corners have turned yellow and some parts have curled up. It seemed that just a slight touch would break it down to pieces.

It portrayed a lady with short hair, looking valiant and heroic - clearly inferior to no men. She had a divine sword hanging on her waist, seemingly capable of soaring into the air and sealing the gods.

Alas, the most notable thing about her was her crown. It wasn't made from a divine metal but rather, woven together from willow branches. It still had a golden hue but lacked the same weight. It felt soft and special, as eye-catching as can be.

It accentuated the lady's already impressive appearance, making her look like an unbeatable godking on the verge of ascension.

Because the painting depicted such a wonderful being, the woman still seemed animated and vivid. Spectators focusing on her would get the illusion that she was about to walk out of the painting. All the blurred lines became as clear as ever.

Li Qiye became sentimental since another part of his past resurfaced. Of course, this was only in his memory since she was no longer around.

The only constant in this world was the grand dao. Everything else would gradually disappear on the river of time, the same for all traces of them. Li Qiye proved himself to be an exception thus far while others were mere passersby.

Who was more pitiful? Those who eventually obtain eternal rest or Li Qiye who would flow on the river of time forever like a mosquito larva?

Perhaps the length of the journey and the flow of the river of time were different for everyone. A long-enough river would be able to drown out the most supreme genius and unbeatable master. Even the lineage of someone with countless descendants would end one day.

Those who were capable of leaving indelible traces in history included the most terrifying existences. They were dark butchers who stained the river with a tsunami of blood.

Meanwhile, the ancestors were talking with the clan master of the Lu.

"Virtuous Nephew, the young noble has returned in order to perform the Primordial Union." Wise Ancestor revealed.

"The union?" The clan master's eyes flashed brightly for a split second before dimming back down.

"You are surely aware of the union's significance for our four clan. It pertains to our glory. Outsiders do not know but we, the descendants, are aware of our ancestors' feat and contribution with the supreme existence. The union was formed then and we shall have it again." Wise Ancestor continued.

According to the legend, this phenomenon known as the Primordial Union was started after the duck egg buyer created Eight Desolaces.

"Get straight to the point." The clan master pondered for a moment before asserting. He wasn't an idiot; people wouldn't come bearing gifts for no reason.

Wise Ancestor glanced at his group. Jian Ming understood and smiled: "Clan Master, our very foundation is the Tree of Contribution. The young noble shall activate it again with the union and we will have primordial energy again. Glory will then return to the four clans."

“Hmph, so you want our dao stone.” The clan master scowled.

“Virtuous Nephew.” Wise Ancestor smiled wryly: “The four dao stones were left behind by our ancestors, not belonging to any single clan. They were simply divided for safekeeping reasons.”

“Then what about our clan Willow Crest?” The clan master retorted.

“...” The trio couldn’t come up with a response right away.

Purpose coughed and said: “Virtuous Nephew, you know about the history of this. The crest was given by an immortal in the distant years and represented ultimate authority. We all know that it belonged to the Lu, but our four clans came up with an agreement. The four clans would pick a leader to wear it. Plus, the three clans have compensated as well.”

“We never said that it would last forever, and we haven’t had a leader for the last few eras.” The clan master was unsatisfied.

#### **Chapter 4474: Ten-crest Ancestor**

“Well...” Wise Ancestor smiled awkwardly before replying: “Though the times are different and we can’t compare to the past, the rules still remain. Once we rise again, we’ll have a leader once more.”

“Yes, we should and will have a leader soon enough.” Purpose Ancestor said: “I have hope for the future. Remember, the rules were created by the forefather and honored by their descendants. Even though we are incapable, we just need to persevere and one day, a leader will rise upon us, one deserving the golden crest.”

“Hmph.” The clan master snorted and took another deep breath from his pipe.

The four clans shared the Willow Crest even though it belonged to the Lu. It was left behind by the Ten-crest Ancestor. Rumor has it that an immortal bestowed it to the ancestor.

It granted the user a regal and oppressive aura. It also boosted their battle potential, improving the efficacy of each technique. Most importantly, it served as a symbol of authority and prestige.

Because of this, whenever the four clans chose an alliance leader, this person would get to wield the crest.

After all, a worthy leader deserved a worthy crown. Therefore, the other three clans paid a proper sum in order to use the Lu’s crest.

Later on, a leader was no longer necessary due to the clans’ decline. They lost their influence and didn’t need a leader to give orders.

Unfortunately for the Lu, their decline was swifter than the others. They eventually lost many treasures and asked for the crest back in order to pawn it. Alas, the other three clans refused, using the future and past glory as justification.

To be blunt, they didn’t want the Lu to lose the crest forever. After all, it had pivotal importance to the alliance and symbolized hope for a better future.

The Lu asked repeatedly only to be vetoed. Though it still maintained an ally relationship, a rift clearly existed. They were suffering yet their allies held on to their heirloom?

Because of this, they stopped interacting with the three clans and showed a clear distaste.

In this case, the clan master absolutely didn't want to hand their dao stone over.

"Virtuous Nephew, there are certain things that our generation alone can't fix. However, the dao stone is one thing we can definitely do. It doesn't only benefit our three clans, right?" Wise persuaded: "If we can gather all four, the young noble will revive our Tree of Contribution and primordial energy will return again. Your clan will benefit just as much in the future, right?"

The clan master opened his mouth for a moment but decided to go back to smoking his pipe.

"Virtuous Nephew, the young noble is here and the union draws near, we can't miss this opportunity. After all, our solidarity made us strong in the past. Furthermore, there is no benefit for your clan to hold onto the dao stone."

"What's the benefit to your three clans holding on to our Willow Crest?" The clan master retorted.

This shut the trio up again.

"All of this bickering over one crown." Li Qiye shook his head.

The group could only stare at Li Qiye after hearing this.

He ignored them and stared at the lady in the painting, becoming slightly emotional: "An intent left behind for an epoch just because of one fateful meeting. It's time for it to disperse."

Having said that, he reached forward to touch the painting.

"Buzz." The painting suddenly lit up. All the details and outlines of the lady also did the same. The radiance coming from them brimmed with divinity.

"Ten-crest Ancestor!" The Lu Clan Master became startled since his ancestor seemed to be coming back to life. One could even see her eyes blinking at this point.

The might of a godking instantly took over the hall and made them shudder. This was a being who had protected Eight Desolaces and commanded reverence.

This oppressive aura was as tangible as can be, not a mere illusion. They didn't dare to look straight at her.

"This is..." The four of them were astounded.

This painting has been in the hall for so long. The members of the Lu had no idea when it was placed here, only that it has been around right at the start of the clan.

The portrait depicted the Ten-crest Ancestor, a being dating back to the previous epoch. They only viewed it as an heirloom and didn't think about anything else.

Alas, the painting was coming back to life and emitting such a frightening phenomenon.

“Pop!” Sure enough, the lady walked out of the radiant painting. This only made the aura more unbearable.

“The spirit of our ancestor is back!” They prostrated on the ground and shouted, overwhelmed with emotion. They kept on smashing their forehead onto the floor.

The lady focused on Li Qiye with her bright eyes. Time seemed to be reverting back to a previous epoch - the nine worlds. She reverted into a woman from Static Stream, always decisive and straightforward.

### **Chapter 4475: Old Friend Gone**

Eras disappeared in the blink of an eye along with their secrets. Amazing tales and memories became forgotten; her story was one of them.

Despite her humble beginning, she surpassed all odds and became a sword-wielding god-king. Her tale started near the lake and beneath the gigantic willow tree.

She never told anyone about her past and her success - how she climbed up to an even higher sky.

There, she tried her best to catch up to a figure traveling on an endless journey. Unfortunately, her effort and success were not enough to make up for the insurmountable difference.

She became world-renowned during her pursuit but the world didn't know about her failure. The thing she treasured the most was still the treasure known back then as the Golden Willow Crest. Its significance in her heart outweighed its actual value.

In the end, she had no choice but to leave the crest behind to her descendants along with a single intent, hoping to meet the figure again in the future.

Life and death; yin and yang - these contrasting affinities separated people. Nonetheless, an eternal intent could surpass this, allowing one's dream to come true.

The intent was the only thing left of this wondrous cultivator. Of course, it was still impressive and mighty, forcing her descendants down on their knees.

However, she didn't pay any attention to them, focusing solely on Li Qiye. She saw how he gently flicked her forehead again as time came to a halt.

The very existence of the intent was for this moment alone - a meeting to satiate her longing. Alas, this also meant the end of the intent.

She bowed her head and he accepted her gesture. This scene shocked the spectators.

She was an ancestor from time immemorial, someone worshipped by all four clans. Why was she bowing to Li Qiye?

“I am not lonely on the dao path. Don't worry, your intent has accomplished its goal, no need to linger any longer.” He stared at her and sighed.

She gazed intensely at him, seemingly wanting to carve his image into her very soul. The climax of her tale was tragic. When he finally returned, she was no longer around. This obsessive intent was the only thing that was left.

“Return now, both your wish and dao are complete.” He gently flicked her forehead and created a spatial fluctuation. This encapsulated this moment and separated it from the river of time.

With that, ripples formed and started dispersing. The figure turned into particles and disappeared from sight. It became a part of time once more.

History was endless. Even top cultivators were nothing more than ripples. Alas, these ripples contained legends, longing, and hope...

Li Qiye felt a bit disappointed about this meeting. Nonetheless, let the past be the past. There was no need for him to dwell on it.

He walked on this path alone. Only someone with an immovable dao heart could last as long as time itself.

“Dust to dust, return to the earth.” He concluded. This was just another of many goodbyes. Disappointing, but at the very least, it was proof that he was still alive.

“Ancient Ancestor!” The group bowed again.

“Young Noble, your descendant was rude to you...” The clan master of the Lu apologized. He felt that Li Qiye was definitely an ancient ancestor of the Wu.

“Rise.” Li Qiye waved.

The group got up and didn’t dare to breathe loudly.

“Give the crest back to the Lu.” Li Qiye ordered: “Since Ten-crest Ancestor left it to them, it is theirs, no excuses.”

“We understand.” Wise and Purpose exchanged glances and obeyed.

The rift between the four clans has been mended with Li Qiye’s absolute command.

“Hand over the dao stone.” He continued.

“About this...” The clan master of the Lu became awkward.

“Virtuous Nephew, the young noble has spoken. Does the clan still not wish to obey?” Purpose said.

“Virtuous Nephew, don’t worry, we will bring the crest back to your clan in just a moment.” Wise nodded.

“There is no point for you to guard the dao stone right now.” Purpose added.

“It’s... not like I don’t want to hand it over.” The clan master coughed.

“Don’t tell me... your clan has lost it?” Jian Ming became startled.

“Is it true?” Both ancestors panicked.

“No, no. It’s not that serious yet.” The Lu waved repeatedly. Alas, he didn’t seem confident.

“Elaborate.” Wise pursued the matter.

“We don’t have the dao stone right now.” The clan master said with embarrassment.

“Where is it then?” Purpose asked. The group had a bad feeling about this.

The clan master took a deep breath and revealed the truth: “When our ancestral aunt was married to the Yu, the dowry included the dao stone.”

“What?! Your clan dared to use the dao stone as a dowry?!” Wise shouted.

“Those damned thieves?” Jian Ming interjected.

#### **Chapter 4476: The Dao Stone’s Whereabout**

“Yes, it should be in their possession right now.” The clan master admitted.

The group didn’t know what to do. Purpose murmured: “Such an important item is in their hand...”

“The ancestral aunt brought it with her back then.” The clan master smoked his pipe again out of embarrassment.

His embarrassment stemmed from his animosity towards the three clans for keeping their crest. The latter feared the Lu losing the crest due to their decline.

Sure enough, they had lost another important item, the dao stone. Moreover, this thing didn’t belong to them either.

Unfortunately, descendants of the Lu couldn’t quite ask for the dao stone back since it was their ancestral aunt who brought it to the Yu. They lacked the power to do so as well.

Thus, if this became known, the three clans would have a reason to never give back the crest, hence the need for secrecy.

Ultimately, he still told the truth because the Lu alone wasn’t strong enough. However, the four clans working together might have a chance of demanding the stone back from the Yu.

If they couldn’t get it back, then the Lu would become sinners and the rift would be permanent.

“What should we do? Taking the stone back from those thieves will be difficult.” Wise thought that this was quite a predicament.

“I know quite a few of them.” Jian Ming shrugged and said: “The problem is that we have no proof, why would they admit that they even have it in the first place? We can’t do anything if they remain stubborn.”

“Evidence? I actually have some.” The Lu Clan Master said: “During the ancestral aunt’s marriage, they left behind a note about giving it back eventually.” He then left to fetch it.

“It’s too long ago, I’m afraid her generation is all dead. The descendants of the Yu won’t admit to it.” Purpose smiled wryly.

“It’s still better to give it a shot.” Wise wanted to keep trying.

The clan master returned with an old box. He presented it to them and said: "Here is the proof from back then. We didn't lose it."

No one wanted to accept the box and take responsibility for this. The box seemed like a hot potato right now. Thus, they stared at Li Qiye.

"Brat, you take it." Li Qiye ordered and Jian Ming obeyed instantly.

"Now, we have to find them." Purpose said: "Those thieves are always on the move like drifting clouds, it's not easy to find them when Inner Ruins is so large."

The Yu was a strange clan. Rumor has it that their forefather was a member of a secret realm. The descendants of this person eventually stuck around in Inner Ruins, notorious for being bandits and thieves.

According to another legend, their original clan was ancient and powerful with ample resources. It was under the protection of a supreme existence. Moreover, the clan wasn't located in Eight Desolaces either.

A few rotten eggs stole things from the clan and were eventually banished by their forefather. Thus, they had no choice but to stay in Eight Desolaces and form a new clan. Of course, their bad habits remained, inciting the hatred of other sects.

Nonetheless, their crimes weren't overly wicked and brutal. After years of accumulation, they became rather powerful despite their nomadic nature.

"I actually know a few of their members. I think we should start with Golden City, we can find their clan there." Jian Ming said.

"So be it." Wise didn't have a better plan.

The marriage of the Lu's ancestral aunt was a hundred thousand years ago. The Yu's descendants might deny it and not give back the dao stone.

Moreover, given their unsavory nature, they might even take advantage of this and bully the four clans.

"I'll go with you." Wise decided to tag along with Jian Ming since he worried that the youth alone didn't have enough influence.

"Young Noble, please wait. We will find the dao stone and bring it back." He requested.

"It's boring to stay here, you two might not be able to get it back so I'll go as well." Li Qiye smiled.

"We will follow your lead then, Young Noble." Wise agreed.

They had a quick discussion about the trip. Wise would get to go while Purpose would have to stay behind. The four clans required a powerful ancestor to stick around in case of unexpected enemies.

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"Which way?" Wise asked Jian Ming.

The latter rubbed his nose and said: "The Yu might be somewhere in Golden City. I heard that they got a big catch not long ago and will want to unload the stolen goods there. I know enough people there to get more information."

"So you hang around with these bandits?" Wise aid.

"Ancestor, of course not. I always abide by the law, I'm a good kid." Jian Ming smiled awkwardly.

Wise gave him the side-eye. If he was considered a good kid, then all the youths of the four clans would be considered angels.

The kid was famous for his trouble-making. He disappeared for a long time and everyone thought he was killed after antagonizing others. They searched extensively and eventually gave up. In the end, he came back without a scratch.

"Head for Golden City." Li Qiye ordered.

Wise immediately prepared for the journey.

Inner Ruins was large with many inhabitants. Many cities were built along the outskirts. They served as entry points for adventurers wanting to enter Inner Ruins. Of course, they were few in numbers due to the potential danger.

The most prosperous location was none other than Golden City. One would think that the walls were made from gold. However, the name was metaphorical - implying that this was a city of opportunities.

Like many famous places in Inner Ruins, it also had an ancient history, rumored to be as old as Inner Ruins. There were indeed records of it being around during the Chaotic Era.

The architecture was indeed impressive and diverse, originating from Sword Continent, Sky Border, West King... A few weren't traceable at all.

Among the halls, pagodas, and busy streets were different races from all over the world. This might be the most diverse area in all of Eight Desolaces. Moreover, they have been living in peace for so long - something rather miraculous.

In Golden City, one's background and race didn't matter. They were allowed to stay in Golden City as long as their pockets were full enough.

### **Chapter 4477: Golden City**

Visitors and citizens came and went, only the city remained. Golden was older than many great powers in Eight Desolaces.

Numerous reasons were attributed to its long-lasting success. First was freedom. Anyone could have a place here, provided that they had enough money to back it up.

Another stated that this was because Golden was close to Inner Ruins. The dangers hidden in the ruins made it difficult for others to wage war. Thus, even top cultivators refrained from doing anything here.

There existed certain rules as well. They were inviolable and protected Golden from any troublemaker.

Of course, the most popular theory talked about the islands above the city. They served as a pillar and kept the city safe from harm.

All in all, it was a popular place for cultivators to visit. This made it rather prosperous with more buildings and markets built. Therefore, it became a paradise for those with money. As long as they had enough in their pocket, they could find the right merchandise here.

Moreover, this was a place of possibilities as well. A random merchant on the street could turn out to be a famous monarch. An old man in the valley could have been a notorious cultivator. A salted vegetable stand could actually be the property of Lion's Roar...

Some enjoyed the bustling life in Golden enough to forget their way home. This was especially true for newcomers from humble backgrounds.

Li Qiye's group arrived near the city and could see the great walls and rolling mountains. They noticed massive palaces and pavilions floating in the air.

Each place had a different visual phenomenon. A mountain range had an auspicious glow while a floating palace had a divine one. Rainbows could be seen in the air as well.

People and carriages came from all directions. Massive beasts, flying cultivators, chariots... An inexperienced cultivator would be shocked to see this scene.

They would be impressed to see the various races as well - ghosts covered in black clouds, heavenly devils with their signature black radiance, and other strange demons. Even the elusive sky spirits could be seen as well. Awe-inspiring spectacles were common in Golden. This was a great world with no end in sight.

"Golden, the never-falling city." Wise Ancestor became sentimental.

He was emotional because in the past, their four clans had properties here as well. Alas, they eventually lost the ability to run these businesses, hence the need to sell them.

Today, they no longer had a place to stay in Golden.

"The city is okay, what I really want to visit is that city in the sky." Jian Ming smiled and stared upward.

A blinding radiance occupied the air with waterfall-like rays pouring down. Massive islands were floating a million miles above the city. From the ground, they looked as big as fists.

When spectators activated their heavenly gaze, they saw magnificent scenes. Rays poured down and served as curtains, completely shielding the islands.

Nonetheless, they could see towering trees on the islands, looking like umbrellas to block the sun rays. The islands, rays, and trees were divine, rendering it impossible for anyone to come close.

They were protecting the ancient palaces and architectures. These things also emitted supreme dao laws.

These were known as Golden Isle. Any cultivator looking up would feel nothing but respect and fear.

“Ridiculous!” Wise Ancestor smacked the youth’s head and scolded: “Are you tired of living? Your old geezer would be the first to tie you up and ask for forgiveness.”

“Hehe, I’m just curious and want to take a look.” Jian Ming laughed.

“Only a selected few are eligible to be invited for an audience.” Wise said.

Golden Isle never participated in outside events. Nonetheless, all of Eight Desolaces still feared it. It seemed to prefer isolation, not even interfering with the prosperous city beneath and viewing it as their property.

“Hehe, Ancestor, I heard you were invited before, tell me more.” Jian Ming’s eyes lit up.

“It’s nothing, I was only there as a crowd member.” Wise said without pride: “No one dares to be arrogant there, not even the sect master of True Immortal.”

“Haha, that’s understandable.” Jian Ming said: “Who ended the Blessed Era? Who else but the invincible Emperor Ye, easily dominating True Immortal Sect during their golden age. They didn’t even dare to fart in the emperor’s presence.” [1]

“You need to watch your words.” Wise glared at the youth, causing him to only chuckle and stop talking.

Everyone knew this story but they didn’t want to talk about it lest they offend True Immortal Sect.

#### **Chapter 4478: Golden Isle**

Golden Isle was connected with a peerless dao lord - Emperor Ye.

This being had “emperor” in the title instead of “dao lord”. In history, many believed that the emperor was one of the strongest dao lords, comparable to Blessed Dao Lord or Puresun Dao Lord.

The emperor had entered forbidden zones before and killed the ominous existences there. This was an unparalleled achievement.

However, the most interesting tale included the end of the Blessed Era and the sealing of True Immortal Sect. From then on, this sect no longer produced another dao lord.

Remember, True Immortal was considered unbeatable due to its foundation erected by Blessed Dao Lord.

During this era, Blessed Dao Lord spread the seven laws to all existences. This started the golden age of cultivation.

In fact, eighty to ninety percent of all cultivators back then considered themselves to be students of Blessed Dao Lord. His cultivation methods truly benefited the world.

He had numerous capable followers back then, too many to count. The beings in the forbidden zones kept quiet during his reign.

The most magical part was how his successors also became dao lords. In other words, True Immortal Sect had a monopoly of dao lords during this era.

The second most famous dao lord in True Immortal was none other than All-things Dao Lord, Li Dao’er.

His cultivation was impeccable; his mastery of All-things Mantra actually exceeded Blessed's own. Moreover, he taught three thousand disciples and each of them went on to become top masters. All of them also changed their last name to Li. Because of this, some respectfully gave All-things Dao Lord another nickname, Li Sanqian. [1]

At first glance, three thousand disciples didn't seem impressive compared to Blessed Dao Lord's widespread fame.

After all, nearly every cultivator back then considered themselves to be under Blessed Dao Lord's banner.

The main difference was the actual tutelage. Blessed Dao Lord didn't teach them while All-things Dao Lord was actually involved in training his disciples.

Later on, future generations said that although All-things Dao Lord wasn't as strong as Blessed Dao Lord, his disciples were far superior.

These three thousand disciples made True Immortal unbeatable. The sect's actual power might actually be greater than during Blessed Dao Lord's era.

Unfortunately, his legacy had a large stain caused by a single arrogant woman. She severed the monopoly and became the dao lord instead, the only person to do so during the Blessed Era.

She had an amusing phrase even before becoming the dao lord, "I will tie and beat up Li!" [2]

Everyone thought that since this was her "slogan", she was purposely aiming for True Immortal. After all, the disciples of All-things Dao Lord had changed their last name to Li. Therefore, the top dogs of True Immortal and even the entire world had this last name.

The might of True Immortal was not enough to stop her. They had no choice but to watch her become the dao lord since she was unstoppable.

After her generation, True Immortal's geniuses started taking over again. The monopoly resumed for the subsequent generations.

No one could change this fact so the sect appeared to be eternal, always standing at the apex.

Another person disrupted this cycle - Emperor Ye - a girl praised to have the greatest innate talent in history.

Back then, ninety percent of potential heirs came from True Immortal. They had so many that it required a system to keep track of these heirs - three Lord Princes, six Heavenly Princes, thirty-eight Sacred Princes, Ninety-two Celestials...

This didn't matter because these high-potential geniuses were all killed by Emperor Ye. This golden age of talent couldn't match up to a single cultivator.

Before becoming a dao lord, she fought her way into True Immortal three times and left successfully.

Keep in mind that at this point, even the forbidden zones refrained from provoking True Immortal. Alas, she had no problem doing so even before proving her dao.

The sect was aware of her frightening talent and even resorted to ambushes in order to stop her from taking the dao lord position.

They sent seven ancient gods, thirteen golden dragons, sixty-seven godkings, eighty-nine paragons, and countless other ancestors... This was their full force, all mobilized for the sake of dealing with one girl.

This expedition was enough to destroy all of Eight Deolaces and campaign against the forbidden zones. They were ready to pay any price for the sake of keeping their monopoly.

According to the legends, she massacred them all, resulting in rains of blood and the world torn asunder.

She inflicted untold destruction on True Immortal. In the end, they failed to stop her from becoming a dao lord despite trying everything. This marked the end of the Blessed Era.

They declined afterward and couldn't produce another dao lord. It wasn't until recently that they started recovering and becoming a top behemoth once more.

It gradually became the leader of Eight Desolaces and could look down on the world again. Alas, their top disciples and sect masters never brought up retribution against Golden Isle.

As Wise Ancestor had said, even the sect master of True Immortal would act with respect while visiting Golden Isle.

After millions of years, Emperor Ye's prestige and authority still remained unchallenged.

"Golden Isle." Li Qiye looked up and murmured.

#### **Chapter 4479: Legend**

"Golden Isle doesn't care about external matters or domination. However, even True Immortal and Three Thousand Dao didn't dare to challenge it back then." Wise looked up at the floating islands and commented.

"Yes, it had plenty of invincible masters, not just Emperor Ye." Jian Ming said: "After the emperor, it had Tree Ancestor, Mulberry God, Heaven Fountain, and many more. This is before taking into account the ancient beings before Emperor Ye. That's why Golden Isle is so frightening. How many sects can match up to it in terms of age and resources?"

"No one likes sharing a bed." Wise continued the train of thoughts: "There are unfathomable lineages in Inner Ruins. However, Golden Isle still existed so close to them, meaning that they have qualms against moving against the isle."

Ultimately, Golden Isle might actually be on par with True Immortal Sect and Three Thousand Dao. It's just that it preferred to be isolated from the rest of the world.

"This has plenty to do with their races." Li Qiye's eyes could pierce through the barriers shrouding the islands.

Wise Ancestor activated his heavenly gaze and nodded: "Yes, with the exception of Emperor Ye, the ancient ancestors of Golden Isle exist within the islands. In a sense, they have become a part of their lineage. This is the most frightening detail."

He was talking about the waterfalls and towering trees. They looked just like guardian deities.

This referred to a particular legend - that the ancestors of Golden Isle didn't pass away. They became a part of Golden Isle and as long as the islands were around, so would they. Perhaps their original self was no longer there, but this was indeed a method to last forever. The accumulation of top cultivators resulted in a matchless foundation.

This played a part in why disciples from Golden Isle were rarely seen outside. Once they reached a certain realm, they could take roots in Golden Isle for eras to come.

Eras seemed like an eternity for regular cultivators but for these members, it would only be the blink of an eye.

"People might be afraid of Golden Isle but not our young noble. Hurricanes and tornados are as light as a breeze in his presence." Jian Ming smiled.

"Watch your words." Wise glared at him.

However, he seemed audacious this time and continued: "I'm merely speaking the truth, Ancestor. The young noble is invincible without needing to do anything. In fact, upon meeting, Golden Isle will regret their late reception."

"Seems like you're eager for a beating." Wise's glare intensified.

Jian Ming hid behind Li Qiye and continued: "Young Noble, am I wrong here?"

"I can see that you have learned many bad things in recent years. I would have kicked you flying if your last name wasn't Jian." Li Qiye said flatly.

"... Thank you, Young Noble." Jian Ming continued: "I didn't know it was so wrong to speak the truth. You are special, even the top masters are nothing more than laymen in comparison."

"Stop buttering me up." Li Qiye gave him the side-eye and said: "Get on with this and find people from the Yu."

"I understand." Jian Ming immediately said: "In my opinion, if they want to sell the stolen goods, they'll definitely visit Dark Street. We should go there now." Having said that, he led the duo into the city.

Along the way, Li Qiye suddenly stopped on a large street. Next to it was a strange place, a complete contrast to the bustling city where each inch of land was unreasonably expensive.

It could be considered the center of the city yet it was rather quiet and pristine. One could see a verdant mountain range with gurgling streams and cranes. Only a few old buildings with red bricks and green roof-tiles could be seen. This resembled a sect but there weren't that many disciples, only one or two passing by.

The rowdiness of the city couldn't reach this place. Even travelers walked slowly and quietly when passing by. A mysterious power here demanded so.

Li Qiye let out a sigh after seeing this serene spectacle.

"Young Noble, this is Land of the Pure Lotus." Wise whispered: "This is the holiest place in Golden or maybe all of Eight Desolaces. Conflicts are prohibited."

"I've heard of many legends regarding this place." Jian Ming whispered: "It belongs to an attendant of the Imperial Queen. No one is allowed to be disrespectful here."

"I see." Li Qiye said.

"The legends are so old, virtually impossible to trace or research. They state that there used to be a sect here. Its saintess became the greatest queen's attendant. Later on, no one saw them again but this place still became a hallowed ground. It doesn't matter what feud two parties might have, they must not act or even be loud here. This rule has never been challenged before." Jian Ming went on.

"Right. Even dao lords would need to tidy their robes before entering this place." Wise Ancestor nodded: "Puresun Dao Lord, the ancient one, even showed his respect from a distance. The peerless Blessed Dao Lord also stopped here and lowered his head. The subsequent dao lords showed the same level of care when approaching this place."

"But, I've heard of one exception. He actually came and stay for a long time. Can you guess who it is?" Jian Ming asked.

"It's Duality Master." He then answered his own question.

"Yes, the only outsider to sleep in the hallowed ground. It might just be a rumor though." Wise added.

Pure Lotus enjoyed peace for eras now. However, it wasn't an unbeatable sect or anything, not even one single brilliant disciple could be seen. Nonetheless, dao lords still didn't dare to disturb this place, always hiding their auras and fanfare when near.

#### **Chapter 4480: Land of the Pure Lotus**

From one perspective, Pure Lotus was rather normal. The sceneries and disciples weren't special. The only exceptional aspects were its prime location in Golden City and its serenity.

In history, the world knew that the dao lords were the strongest cultivators. They dare to campaign against the forbidden zones and more. Nonetheless, the holiness of this place seemed to be above all of that.

Moreover, the rule was unspoken as well. Pure Lotus never announced the need for serenity yet everyone still obediently adhered.

More amusing enough, whenever its rare disciples came out to the outside world, they were always protected by others. If an unknown bully were to pick on them, other experts would immediately jump in to stop.

In fact, it was obvious that Pure Lotus no longer had any talent. They were few in number, going as low as three to five disciples at worst. This was only enough to pass down their arts.

Alas, this tiny sect still occupied such a huge area in one of the most expensive cities in Eight Desolaces.

If someone were to ask - what if my mortal enemy was hiding in Pure Lotus?

This has happened before. Some arrogant or reckless souls have actually tried to trespass with animosity on their mind.

However, experts nearby would immediately stop them. In one case, a mighty Heavenly Sovereign tried to do so.

He was too strong for the crowd members to deal with. However, a massive palm descended and annihilated him like an insect. No one knew where the palm came from but the powerful sovereign was killed in the blink of an eye. These stories all contributed to why the serenity here couldn't be broken.

Land of the imperial attendant, no trespassing or fighting.

This phrase has been carved on a tablet at the entrance to Pure Lotus. Li Qiye took a look and saw the old tablet.

The characters were carved powerfully. The calligraphy style nearly pierced through the entire width. No one knew who created the tablet but even a fool could tell that the carver was an incredible cultivator. Not even time could affect or change the characters.

Li Qiye patted the tablet and sighed sentimentally after reading the content.

The latter was obvious - the unspoken rule that has been written down at the entrance. However, the first part was worth pondering.

According to the legend, the saintess from Pure Lotus became the attendant for the one and only Imperial Queen in history. Some scrolls also addressed her as Prime Queen.

The question was - who was this queen? Why did the records speak so highly of her?

The confusion stemmed from the level of reverence. Even the wives of the dao lords didn't enjoy the same treatment.

Remember, Pure Lotus wasn't even the queen's abode. It was only her attendant's sect. Moreover, the two of them had never been seen in recent eras.

Nonetheless, their influence still affected the contemporary and made Pure Lotus unique. This made many people think about the queen's actual background.

There weren't that many clues or answers still left. Pure Lotus was one of them - a piece of evidence of her actual existence.

"The Prime Queen, a mystery indeed." Jian Ming murmured.

"Don't run your mouth here of all places. It is forbidden." Wise smacked his head harder this time.

Due to the four clan's history, he had heard of many legends regarding the queen before. Thus, he immediately stopped the brat from running his mouth.

Many big shots have tried to find out more about the queen. Some did it in a blatant manner and eventually, they disappeared from the world, seemingly evaporating into thin air.

The ancestor's attitude reminded Jian Ming of a few things. This made him turn pale and curse his big mouth.

He slapped himself several times and kneeled in the direction of Pure Lotus: "I sincerely apologize."

Wise didn't scold him any longer. The wise sages and dao lords stopped before the tablet only to observe quietly. They were awfully rude just now.

Meanwhile, Li Qiye traced his hand over the characters. The past became so near again.

After a while, he sighed and said: "Let's go."

The duo caught up to him. Once they were far away enough from Pure Lotus, Jian Ming said: "I'm very familiar with Dark Street. Do you need anything, Young Noble? You can definitely find it there."

"Let's take a look first." Li Qiye said.

"Don't forget why we are here. Once we get to Dark Street, I'll break your legs if you hang around your pack of scoundrels." Wise warned.

"Ancestor, your comment is unwarranted since I'm always honest and never hang around a pack of scoundrels. Heaven and earth can be my witnesses." Jian Ming protested.

"You shouldn't say something like that so trivially." Li Qiye chuckled.

"My mistake." Jian Ming immediately shut his mouth. A few phrases were considered taboo and carried immense consequences.