

1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 26

夜梟◎作品

Page 10 of 10

10-11-2019 10:11:20 AM

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 1: Nine Serenities Secret Records | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 1: Nine Serenities Secret Records

Chapter 1, Nine Serenities Secret Records

On the highest platform on Devil Peak stood a black-garbed man with rapt attention.

High above the clouds, the sun and moon hung side by side, flooding the land below in their warm glow and sharp coldness. The man took deep breaths as he spread his arms toward the sky, and the lights gathered in his palms. And the world dimmed.

A foul wind stirred, wreathing with endless howls of agony from untold ghosts.

The wind picked up the man's elegant hair, revealing a demonic face behind.

The sun and the moon dimmed while the man grew in power from the rays. Soon, even dark energy began to rise from him.

With his face battered by the freezing winds, the dark energy grew thicker until it covered him whole. He released a breath and an evil smile adorned his face.

Rumble!

With a loud sound as the trigger, the four mountains in vicinity erupted while Devil Peak itself was wracked by terrible tremors. The man absorbing the essences of the sun and moon opened his eyes.

With a space rending sound, seven flashes of light appeared. As the light scattered, there stood seven figures radiating ruthless power.

His eyebrows shook but a fraction as the man spoke in an eerie voice, "How are the seven of you here? Didn't you all despise us demonic cultivators to no end?"

"Humph, Demonic Emperor, Zhuo Yifan, isn't it obvious why we're here?" An old man stroked his white beard as he gave a look of disdain.

His heart skipped a beat and Zhuo Yifan sounded out, "Geezer Sword Emperor, I do not know what you mean."

"Humph, stop faking it and take out the Nine Serenities Secret Records." A female Daoist stepped arrogantly as she threw her chin forward.

Zhuo Yifan paled.

It had been only a month since he found the legendary Nine Serenities Emperor's dwelling. After brushing death countless times in the process, he finally obtained the written accounts he wished to study for all his life. How was it that they caught wind of this?

He suddenly recalled something and his face grew darker by the second.

"Zhao Chen, come out." shouted Zhuo Yifan.

A cheery voice rang through the empty forest on the mountain. Immediately, a handsome youngster in white robes walked from behind the seven, smiling; all the while as he made a curt bow to Zhuo Yifan, "Ha-ha-ha, Master, did you ask for me?"

Zhuo Yifan glared with hatred at the hypocrite and said, "Is this your doing?"

"Yes!" nodded Zhao Chen with a smile.

"Did you also cancel the guarding array?"

"Yes!"

"Why? I never slight you in the least." Zhuo Yifan clenched his fist as murderous intent flared out from his eyes.

Despite being a demonic cultivator, he normally did not kill without reason. If he did, he was just acting out on his nature. Else, those righteous cultivators would've come to end him much sooner. Zhao Chen, for that matter, was an orphan that Zhuo Yifan took in when he saw his talent. Yet, who'd have thought the day would come when Zhao Chen would betray him.

Despite putting a front with his calm demour, before Zhuo Yifan's increasing killing intent, Zhao Chen's feet betrayed him as he took two steps back, moving closer to the seven beings behind him.

"Master, I understand your kindness is as heavy as a mountain. But that doesn't give you the right to steal the Eight Emperor seat and cast me in your shadow for all eternity. Even more so, regarding the Nine Serenities Secret Records. Ever since you've obtained it, you've trained alone, even afraid of me catching a glimpse of it."

Zhuo Yifan's heart clenched when he heard this.

Zhao Chen would never know he did it for his sake. Having low cultivation and going head first into studying the Nine Serenities Secret Records would deviate one's cultivation. He had opted to understand it in its entirety and only then impart it to him.

Yet all his plans were ruined in just a short month.

"Ha-ha-ha, well said. Zhao Chen, you're a true disciple!"

Zhuo Yifan's roaring laughter reached the heavens and so did his rage, "Since it is so, Master will give you a taste of the Nine Serenities Secret Records."

"Zhuo Yifan, it is not your place for such unbridled words in the presence of us seven." The white-bearded old man stepped before Zhao Chen.

"Humph, everyone in the Sacred Domain knows me as the Eight Emperor. I could care less if all seven of you Emperors come at me together!"

No sooner said than done, Zhuo Yifan launched a palm at Zhao Chen.

A black claw flashed in the sky reaching out for him.

His eyes shrunk, face paled, and retreated with haste, fear having taken its grip on the youth.

In the face of that powerful claw, the old man drew a sword. A sword wave flashed and the black claw was turned to nothing.

“Humph, Nine Serenities Secret Records is nothing great.” The old man stood in the wind with his sword ready, disdain all over his face.

Zhuo Yifan smiled and waved his palms, “Geezer, stop being so arrogant.”

Boom!

As if endless thunders were rumbling, the sky was covered by thousands of black palms, bearing down on the seven. Each palm was twice as big as the claw. Such power reached a new height that even the seven were in shock.

“How can this be? Did he break through to the Sacred Stage?” Sword Emperor sucked in a cold breath at the sight.

As they watched, they could feel bravery leaving them.

Not even seven Emperors together were a match against a Sacred stage expert.

Zhao Chen’s face grew paler as regret gnawing his heart. Who’d have thought just a month of practice would elevate Zhuo Yifan to such height in power.

“Humph, damn traitor, this is the end for you.” Sneered Zhuo Yifan.

Whoosh!

A light fell from the heavens above, piercing the black hands and went straight for Zhuo Yifan. With no time to react, the light passed right through him.

Scarlet blood spurted from his mouth and the thousands of black hands vanished. Zhuo Yifan looked with his wan face at the sky to see a middle-aged man basked in a holy aura of light.

“Saint!” Zhuo Yifan bit his lips in defiance. He knew in his heart the newcomer’s intention.

“Demonic Emperor Zhuo Yifan, this Saint represents the Sacred Domain in retrieving the Demon Emperor’s legacy. If you hand it over, your life shall be spared.” The surroundings and people entered his eyes yet none of them were reflected within. He wouldn’t even deign to look at Zhuo Yifan, if not for having the Nine Serenities Secret Records.

This was the strongest Saint in the Sacred Domain. Even Emperor stage experts were mere ants before him.

With a miserable chuckle, Zhuo Yifan took out a dazzling multi-colored jade slip from his bosom.

The mere sight of it changed the expressions of everyone present, especially Saint’s.

With a look of derision to all around him, Zhuo Yifan jeered, “What righteous cultivators, what Saint? Aren’t you all just thieves lusting a poor man’s wealth? I won’t let any of you get one word from the Nine Serenities Secret Records even if I have to destroy it.”

As if to prove his conviction, a powerful energy rose up from his body.

“Damn! He’s gonna self-destruct.”

Sword Emperor’s eyes shrank speeding further away, with the other not far behind. Only the Saint exploded in holy wrath and charged for Zhuo Yifan, “Stop!”

With a proud smile, Zhuo Yifan pinched and the jade slip was turned to dust right under the Saint’s eyes. The rage and bitterness he saw in the Saint as he gnashed his teeth elicited an unrestrained laughter from Zhuo Yifan.

Boom!

His laughter was soon accompanied by powerful shock waves leveling the entire Devil Peak.

As the smoke and dust cleared it was soon clear to see the angry face of the Saint, along with his worse for wear clothes.

“Even in the face of such a terrifying explosion, a Saint can come out of it without so much as a scratch.” The Sword Emperor came before the Saint to express his admiration.

The Saint snorted and was about to leave.

It was then Zhao Chen blocked him, “Please wait, Saint. Demonic Emperor Zhuo is cunning and deceitful. If he possesses someone, just from knowing the Nine Serenities Secret Records, he will one day come to exact vengeance upon us all.”

“Humph, his self-destruction was down to his soul. What possession?” He waived his sleeve and vanished.

The hearts of everyone present eased after hearing this.

With a Saint present, an Emperor stage expert would find it impossible to escape with their soul even if they self-destructed. It was a pity for the loss of the ancient Demon Emperor’s legacy, Nine Serenities Secret Records.

As people gazed upon the ruins of Devil Peak, they each felt differently. Some were rejoicing, others lamenting, while most were feeling pity...

Silavin: Yo, we are picking up this novel since there are some people asking for this. I’m also personally interested in this story.

As for how many chapters a week, this week will have one chapter. Update you guys on the .

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 2: Demonic Emperor's Rebirth | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 2: Demonic Emperor's Rebirth

In the dead of night, even the moon's radiance was snuffed out by the black clouds.

Bodies laid in a pile in a quiet part of the forest, the aftermath of a gruesome battle. The air reeked of blood drawing all kinds of wild animals to feast on their flesh.

"Ugh..."

Among the countless chomping sounds of animals, from amongst the bodies, a young man let out a groan.

Ears twitched and the animals approached the source in silence.

Thump!

With a loud sound, two corpses were thrown to the side to reveal a bloodstained figure wrestling out from the pile. The animals jumped two steps back in fright, but when they noticed he was alive, they came back with a vengeance to rob life from him.

Yet, the youth hardly noticed the imminent danger, still sat there in a daze.

"Is this... the current me?" He checked his hands as his eyes glazed over.

Awoo!

A wolf's howl echoed as the beast sprung towards the youth.

He turned his head, his eyes shining with blood thirst from his blood stained face. The killing intent was akin to two swords stabbing into the wolf's eyes.

Whoosh!

The wolf grounded to a halt, shivering as it curled backwards. The rest of the animals were also making a run for it when they watched those demonic pair of eyes.

Despite his weak appearance, the animals' instinct screamed at them of the danger the youth posed.

As silence set in once again, the youth took a deep breath and closed his eyes.

His name was Zhuo Fan, fifteen years of age, a servant of the Luo clan at Cloud Manor. His life was happy and carefree, until three days ago when a band of Blackwind Mountain bandits butchered the manor. He along with some guards escorted the young master and young miss as they fled, only to find his end in this forest at the hand of their pursuers.

In his final breaths, he was filled with an obsession. It was this that drew the drifting Demonic Emperor Zhuo Yifan's resentment and allowed the Demonic Emperor to possess him.

Zhuo Fan's eyes flashed with demonic glee.

"Ha-ha-ha, Sword Emperor, Zhao Chen, you would have never imagined the Nine Serenities Secret Records has a way of possessing someone without the need of a soul. Wait for me, I will soon return to Sacred Domain and behead you myself. "

Only Zhuo Fan's mad laughter echoed in the bleak forest. Even the other animals chewing on corpses were startled into fleeing.

Cough!

A sudden cough cut his raving laughter short as his eyes turned like a hawk towards the source.

"He-help me!"

Zhuo Fan rushed to it to see a Luo clan's guard buried in bodies, with blood pouring from his mouth.

"Humph, the affairs of mortals have nothing to do with me."

His eyes shrank and shook his head as he was about to leave. The previous Zhuo Fan would've done his best in helping the man. But he was now replaced by the Demonic Emperor Zhuo Yifan. To Yifan, the Luo clan were nothing but ants to him.

Who was so bored as to save an ant's life?

He took only two steps before stopping. Recalling something, he dropped down cross-legged to inspect his body.

Not a moment passed and Zhuo Fan flashed his eyes open with glee.

"This kid is 15 yet has never cultivated. His body is untainted."

On the Martial Emperor Continent, most could cultivate. Even farmers would have a 1st or 2nd layer in the Foundation Establishment stage. It was rarer to find a fifteen years old who never cultivated once.

And the strongest cultivation method is the Nine Serenities Secret Records – Demon Transformation Art, who could use other's cultivation and later allow one to swallow the Heavens and devour the Earth, reaching the highest realm of power in this world, needed a pure body to train in it.

This cultivation method was something the Nine Serenities Emperor comprehended only after he entered the Emperor stage. Just when he was contemplating destroying his cultivation and starting anew, he suffered at the hands of the other Emperor stage experts.

In ancient times, the Nine Serenities Emperor was among the top three strongest Emperors, for it to make even him consider restarting his cultivation, this cultivation method must be of tremendous might. Maybe it surpassed even a Heaven ranked cultivation method.

As such, once Zhuo Yifan obtained it, he began to consider his next course of action. But before he could decide, the seven Emperors and Zhao Chen came and forced him on this path.

With a pure body, the effect would be even more pronounced.

At this point, Zhuo Fan returned to the guard. He removed the corpses covering him and pulled him out of the rest.

Empty eyes watched as he got pulled from the brink of death. The guard smiled, "Ah, it's you, Zhuo Fan. Thank you, I'll repay you when we get back."

"He-he-he, why wait when you can just as well do it now." With a corner of his mouth perked up, Zhuo Fan exposed an odd smile.

The guard froze as a chill seized his heart.

As they were both from the Luo clan, this wasn't the first time he saw Zhuo Fan. But this was his first time watching such a sinister expression. It was akin to how a wolf would set its sights on a rabbit.

"Zhuo Fan. what are you going to do?" The guard watched him vigilant.

Zhuo Fan ignored him as he watched with the same smile, mumbling all the while, "Not bad, a 2nd layer of Qi Condensation cultivation. Solid foundation material."

While other cultivation methods absorbed the spiritual energy around them to refine the host's body, the Demon Transformation Art robbed others of their cultivation to further his own.

But how could a normal man steal from a cultivator? When the target was wounded of course, to the point he couldn't even move.

This was the reason for Zhuo Yifan's uncertainty to abolish his cultivation at the time. If such an encounter never happened, he would've been a mortal for the rest of his life. It would end in a complete loss, something he believed caused even the Nine Serenities Emperor to hesitate at that time.

Only

Yet, here he was, with a newly possessed body that the heavens dropped on his lap.
'Truly something only found by luck.'

Seeing the insidious Zhuo Fan watching him like a rogue watched a beauty, the guard's heart never knew rest as he shouted, "Y-you're not Zhuo Fan!"

"He-he-he, correct!"

The evil laughter further emphasized Zhuo Fan's malevolent look, "I am the Sacred Domain's Eighth Emperor, Demonic Emperor Zhuo Yifan!"

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 3: Demon Transformation Art | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 3: Demon Transformation Art

The guard watched in horror as Zhuo Fan raised a palm over his head and began operating his cultivation method.

Black streams came from it, twisting like worms as they burrowed into the guard's body. The moment they entered, the guard's face changed.

His horrified visage, twisted from pain, now darkened the pale face from the extreme blood loss. With each passing moment, the man inched closer to turning as black as charcoal. In the dark night, even if one didn't pay attention, no one would claim him to be a human.

This perked Zhuo Fan up, riveted in excitement to the sight before him.

Demon Transformation Art might take other's cultivation as his own, but when was it that easy to steal one's Yuan Qi? Even if he did, it would probably reject him. He needed to show extreme caution, especially now when he was building his foundation.

Therefore, Zhuo Fan chose to first demonify it before absorbing it.

Taking a deep breath to calm his excitement, his hand tightened and the black streams began to flow back from the guard into his body as the guard himself was withering in front of his naked eye.

An hour later, Zhuo Fan took back his hand and sat cross-legged, beginning to refine the new Yuan Qi.

The guard collapsed and scattered to ashes. It was as if an ancient corpse was unearthed only to scatter in the wind the moment they made contact.

Nine Serenities Emperor's creation not only took other's cultivation but also their essence.

The black energy roamed around his body like a flood. Zhuo Fan sank into concentration as he operated the cultivation method to make the energy flow through his meridians and widening little by little.

The entire power of a Qi Condensation expert flowed through his untrained body. The force was on the verge of bursting his meridians as his forehead broke out in sweat.

But he pushed through because he knew this power could build a never before seen foundation. Such a stable foundation would guarantee an easier and smoother path of cultivation.

Time passed one second at a time for two hours long hours, as Zhuo Fan gnashed his teeth and sweat poured from him like a river...

He loosened his jaw only on the sixth hour, when the black energy, after roaming his body for hundreds of times, gathered in his Dantian and settled in the form of a black lake.

He slowly opened his eyes and released a long breath. The clouds in the horizon began to brighten, and the stuffed wild animals returned to the depths of the forest.

"It's dawn? Ha-ha-ha, I didn't expect for a 2nd layer Qi Condensation's cultivation would require an entire night."

Zhuo Fan shook his head and examined his body.

Bang!

A loud sound echoed and the rock crumbled under the Zhuo Fan's frail punch.

Zhuo Fan nodded in satisfaction. The Qi Condensation expert's cultivation refined his body and improved it greatly. Based on his body strength alone, he was no weaker than a Qi Condensation expert.

Next he inspected his cultivation.

He was calm before, but that look scared the living daylight out of him.

As for his cultivation, not only did it reach the 5th layer of Foundation Establishment, the Yuan Qi inside him was that of Qi Condensation, and not of Foundation Establishment.

"Man, this Demon Transformation Art is fantastic." Zhuo Fan couldn't help smacking his lips, being secretly delighted.

Generally speaking, even those rare geniuses from the Sacred Domain needed a year to reach the 5th layer of Foundation Establishment. Yet, he needed one night to do what others had to work for two-three years to attain.

"It won't be long before I return to the Sacred Domain. He-he-he..." Zhuo Fan snickered.

Just as he was indulging in his fantasy when he returned, shouts woke him up.

Frowning, he walked cautiously in their direction. He was clear on his limitations. Even if he had a 5th layer Foundation Establishment cultivation, this little achievement couldn't deal with the simplest martial skill. He had no power to retaliate if he met an expert.

As such, being prudent took first priority. After all, he wasn't the all-powerful Demonic Emperor right now.

With steps as light as a cat, he neared a bush. Zhuo Fan pushed aside the leaves to see two parties in a stalemate.

One had more than a dozen men, Luo clan's guards surrounding an eighteen-year-old girl and a six-year-old boy.

The other group wore black and was led by an old man, over twenty people. The man was familiar to Zhuo Fan. He recalled seeing him in the Luo clan as their steward. Then the pair surrounded by the guards had to be Luo clan's young master, Luo Yunhai, and young miss, Luo Yunchang.

"Humph, no wonder the mountain bandits breached the tight security of the Luo clan guards, we had a traitor amongst us. "

Zhuo Fan sneered inside. He recalled his disciple and clenched his fists.

Only

In his past life, he was betrayed by his disciples, and the one he possessed now died from a similar result. He couldn't help relating a bit to the body he occupied.

But he soon shook his head and sighed, ready to turn around and leave.

With his strength, he had no way of helping them. Besides, there was nothing tying him to the Luo clan. It just wasn't worth throwing his life away for.

Yet, he only took two steps before his heart seized with pain. The third step never came.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 4: Heart Demon | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 4: Heart Demon

Chapter 4, Heart Demon

In fear, Zhuo Fan tightened a hand over his chest. The pain was so excruciating, it brought him to his knees, mumbling, "What's going on? Did my cultivation deviate?"

His heart welled with panic. If he deviated right as he built his foundation, the result wasn't as simple as losing all progress. He would never again be capable of cultivation, he would become a cripple.

But the pain left as soon as it came.

Zhuo Fan stood up and took a deep breath. He couldn't make heads or tails of it.

Yet the next step brought with it the same heartache!

"No, this isn't deviation but... heart demon!"

Thinking of this, he began to look for the source of the heart demon. If a cultivator ignored it, he wasn't far from deviating and becoming a demon.

Zhuo Fan soon found its source, but the result left him feeling discontent.

Before being possessed, Zhuo Fan was a devoted servant. Luo clan's young miss was very kind to him and so he pledged life-long devotion to the clan. The resentment before death was born out of regret of not protecting the Luo clan.

It was then the Demonic Emperor's hatred and his resentment fused, possessing his soul and breathing life into his body. And his resentment became a contract with the Demonic Emperor, turning into his shackles.

In short, the Demonic Emperor lived so he could replace him in protecting the Luo clan, or the heart demon would haunt him.

"Blast it! This punk is the worst. He wants me to be a servant?" Zhuo Fan wanted to cry but no tears came out as he kept cursing.

How could the glorious and magnificent Demonic Emperor Zhuo Yifan, the Eighth Emperor of the Sacred Domain, be tied down by some nameless clan?

Yet the heart demon couldn't be ignored either.

Helpless, he caressed his forehead, "It would be better if a punk like you wished for vengeance instead. This way, it would've taken me a few years to kill him. Yet... you went and ruined my life."

"Who's there? Show yourself!"

An aged voice shouted and Zhuo Fan sensed a thick killing intent aimed at his location.

Shaking his head, he sighed and walked out.

Since he got found out, he might as well go deal with that traitorous Steward Sun...

Seeing who it was, Steward Sun smiled with derision, "Humph, I wondered who it could be, when in fact it was just a little bastard."

Then Steward Sun turned to Luo Yunchang, paying him no heed.

"Young miss, I advise you to hand over the Returning Dragon Palm martial art to avoid any unnecessary casualties. I don't think you want that either."

"Rubbish, geezer Sun, you traitor. As long as we're here, you won't harm a single hair on young miss and young master." The Luo clan's guard captain took a step forward.

Luo Yunchang glared back, her pretty face filled with resolve, “Steward Sun, Returning Dragon Palm is a spirit ranked martial art handed down in the Luo clan for generations. We will never hand it over.”

Zhuo Fan snorted inside.

He was wondering why the mountain bandits raided the Luo clan. It was all for a mere spirit ranked martial art.

On the Martial Emperor Continent, all cultivation methods and martial arts were divided into five ranks: spirit, profound, earth and heaven. Each in turn was split in low, mid and high. In Sacred Domain, spirit ranked martial arts were at every corner and mere trash in the eyes of a Demonic Emperor such as himself. He had thousands of them already.

It was a total waste to die for such junk.

Zhuo Fan sighed and shouted bored, “Young miss, it’s just a spirit ranked martial art. Just give it to him and I’ll just give you another.”

All eyes quivered in shock, then looked at him like a nut case.

“Zhuo Fan, quite the cheeky tone you have there. Taking out a random spirit ranked martial art? On what grounds can a fifteen-year-old Luo clan servant do that? Ha-ha-ha...”

Steward Sun threw his head back and laughed, eyes filled with mockery. Even the bandits followed with their taunting laughter, not hiding their ridicule.

While the guards looked at him in doubt. Even his former friends familiar with him looked oddly.

[This kid is usually honest. Why does he speak nonsense all of a sudden? Did the mountain bandits scared him silly?]

[Eh, that must be it!]

Only

With that, all guards changed their looks into those of sympathy.

Zhuo Fan saw through them and just shrugged. His repertoire wasn't limited to spirit ranked martial art, and even included Demon Emperor's ancient art, the Nine Serenities Secret Records. But they'd never believe him.

"Zhuo Fan, enough nonsense. Hurry up and look after the young master."

Zhuo Fan turned at the scolding voice to find Luo Yunchang in a mask of rage. But her eyes conveyed a trace of pity.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 5: Obnoxious Servant | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 5: Obnoxious Servant

Perking up into a grin, Zhuo Fan picked up on her intent.

Young miss had to be thinking he was insane, yet she still did not want him to die. As they were speaking, she was looking for a chance to hide him behind the guards.

“What are you waiting for? Get him over here before he humiliates us further.” Luo Yunchang shouted at the guards.

Before anyone even moved, a bloody blade rested on Zhuo Fan’s neck.

“Wait!”

Steward Sun snickered, his eyes piercing through Luo Yunchang’s as he had figured out her plan. “He-he-he, young miss is as kind as ever, wanting to save even a mentally unstable servant.”

Luo Yunchang raged, “Steward Sun, you won’t let even the demented live?”

“Ha-ha-ha, right back at you. If you don’t want the innocent to die, take out the Returning Dragon Palm. We don’t care if our blades get slick with the blood of one more man.”

With that, the bandit brushed the edge along Zhuo Fan’s face and sported a bloodthirsty grin.

Luo Yunchang pursed her lips, hesitation visible in her eyes, yet still decided to close them.

Zhuo Fan understood.

Although the young miss had no plan to save him by taking the martial art out, as his mistress, it filled him with gratitude just from hesitating.

But in the end, it would come down to him if he could save himself.

Taking a look back at the bandit, he found a fat man of the same height at 7th layer of Foundation Establishment.

[It should be doable!]

Zhuo Fan clenched his fist and gathered Yuan Qi in his left, eyes flashing with ruthlessness.

“Humph, since you’re so stubborn, Zhuo Fan will be the first to die because of you.” Steward Sun’s hand dropped, staring at Luo Yunchang’s pain-filled eyes, “Fatty, kill him.”

He grinned, and raised the blade way up high.

It was then that a thump echoed out, soon followed by bone snapping along with the fat man’s wails.

His blade had long ago slipped from his hand.

Zhuo Fan picked it up and decapitated the man.

Blood spurted and a large head trailed the air.

Zhuo Fan was only in the 5th layer of Foundation Establishment, yet his Yuan Qi was something only a Qi Condensation expert would possess. In a moment of the fat man’s ignorance, he elbowed his chest and snapped his ribcage.

He followed with a swing of the sword in one smooth motion.

None could even react as the fat man’s head flew from his shoulder.

Plop!

The bloody head rolled around and stopped right before Steward Sun.

He looked dumbly at the familiar face, incredulous of the outcome.

He saw Zhuo Fan grow up in the Luo clan and knew the kind of person he was. He was honest to a fault, a slave begging to be picked on.

Yet this sheep bared its fangs like a tiger, killing a 7th layer Foundation Establishment expert in one strike. It was done with such brutality that it even shook the bandits.

The guards on Luo clan's side were even more devastated. Was he the same man they used to laugh with, the same honest to god Zhuo Fan? Leaving the kill aside, his quick and brutal act was something not even the captain of the guards could match.

Every single one of them stood in shock, watching dumbly as blood dripped down Zhuo Fan's blade, to the point they forgot even to breathe.

If Zhuo Fan didn't take this chance to leave, he'd never get another.

Zhuo Fan's eyes squinted, pressed his advantage and threw the bloody saber at Steward Sun. all the while running for young miss and young master. By the time the saber arrived, he was already before Luo Yunchang.

One hand held Luo Yunhai while the other grabbed her, running like hell deeper into the forest.

Luo Yunchang was still in a daze, letting him pull her.

Steward Sun saw the target slipping away again and panicked, "After them!"

But the captain and his guards were there to block them.

"Humph, think you can stop us?" Steward Sun said with cruelty.

The captain smiled and shook his head, "No, but we can buy them some time for them to get away."

“He-he-he, with you dead, you still think they can escape?”

Only

Taking one last look in their direction, the captain nodded, “If it was before, perhaps no. But they have that boy.”

The guards nodded, with their trust in Zhuo Fan beginning to grow in their hearts.

They might not know why Zhuo Fan was so bold all of a sudden, but with him next to the young miss and young master, their chances of survival were high.

Gnashing his teeth, Steward Sun looked darkly beyond them, “That brat dares to meddle in my affairs. Once I get my hands on him, I will flay him. I’ll make him wish for death!”

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 6: Vile Servant Actually | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 6: Vile Servant Actually

Zhuo Fan carried Luo Yunhai in one hand while the other pulled the tender arm of Luo Yunchang in his mad dash, leaving behind the cries and wails of the guards at their backs.

“Wait, we can’t just leave them.” Luo Yunchang recovered after a while and said anxiously.

Zhuo Fan kept going without paying her any heed.

“Let go!”

Luo Yunchang saw him disobeying her and threw his hand off. Zhuo Fan stopped and stared her down.

“We need to go back. We can’t let the guards throw their life away for us. ”

“Can you beat them?” said Zhuo Fan.

Luo Yunchang sighed with a frown, “The others are bad enough, but they have Steward Sun, in the 6th layer of Qi Condensation while I am only in the 3rd layer and the captain in the 4th. Even if we join forces, we are still no match for him.”

“What’s the point of returning then? Let’s go.”

Zhuo Fan snorted and grabbed her again to dash.

It was now that the child in his other hand squirmed, “Stinky slave, how dare you talk back to your master. Apologize to my sister and I won’t let you butt blossom in pain.”

Zhuo Fan looked in a daze, the pup bearing his fangs in his arm then looked at Luo Yunchang. The young miss was angry. Recalling he was but a mere servant of the Luo clan, only now did his disrespectful words sink in .

But so what? He wasn’t the real Zhuo Fan anyway.

Moreover, they weren’t exactly the same revered Luo clan either. [Your family is on the brink of being exterminated yet you have time to nitpick?]

If not for the heart demon, the majestic Demonic Emperor would have never even minded your trifling matters!

“Brat, think I won’t make your butt blossom?” Zhuo Fan stared at Luo Yunhai.

“You dare, slave!” Luo Yunhai glared back without fear. He grew up in the manor and knew of the gap in their status. How could he ever come to fear a servant’s threat?

Such a pity the one before him wasn’t Luo clan’s servant.

With a grin, Zhuo Fan bent him over the knee, pulled his pants and slapped like no tomorrow.

The sonorous slaps rang in their ears, striking Luo Yunhai and Luo Yunchang dumb. They never dreamed of this ever happening. A servant daring to slap a master’s bum.

To the point even the bratty Luo Yunhai forgot about the pain. But he soon got a taste of the scorching sting on his rear.

“Impudent!”

Luo Yunchang cried in alarm, wrestling her brother from him and into her embrace, “Zhuo Fan, you dare raise your hand against your master?”

Luo Yunchang was known in the clan for her gentle nature, and warm and refined demeanor, a girl from a wealthy family that never got angry. But Zhuo Fan's act took the cake and made the rage inside her burn like never before.

Zhuo Fan avoided her eyes as he sneered, "Not as daring as young miss. To the point of wasting time berating others while the enemy is just around the corner."

The noise behind them was getting weaker. Zhuo Fan and Luo Yunchang were clear the guards couldn't hold on much longer.

"I only slapped him a few times, but if you do not run, those men will soon take his life." Zhuo Fan pointed at Luo Yunhai.

Luo Yunhai was still angry but Zhuo Fan's words struck close to home. Her brother was the only male left in the clan. She could sacrifice herself, but nothing must happen to him.

After some thought, she became serious, "Zhuo Fan, take young master and leave while I stall them."

"I refuse!" blurted Zhuo Fan, "If you dare leave, I will kill this brat."

"You..."

She was at a loss for words. Never would she have imagined her clan would house such an arrogant and impudent servant that would dare threaten their master.

"I've lived in the Luo clan for all my life and do not know the surrounding. If you leave, me and the brat won't make it." Zhuo Fan continued.

Luo Yunchang nodded in silence, her anger cooling. It made sense. But the next words flamed her anger to new heights, staring daggers at him.

"It won't mean much even if you die, but try not to take me down with you.."

"You..." Luo Yunchang turned green, but held it in.

He ignored the pair and turned to walk, "Is there any place nearby where we can hide?"

Snorting, Luo Yunchang glared at him while ignoring the insufferable servant.

But she was a young miss after all and even though her anger never waned, she still knew to look past it in this dangerous situation, "There's only farmland around us for a hundred miles and only the west face of the Blackwind Mountain is the only place few people venture in. It is a forest covered in fog that not even the mountain bandits know in detail."

"Then, That's where we'll go."

Zhuo Fan nodded, "Carry your brother and lead the way."

Only

She snorted and walked forward without sparing him another look.

Just how could she stumble upon such bad luck, where the two siblings were now accompanied by an arrogant and rotten slave. She was in front and he was in the back, it was as if the master-servant roles were reversed.

Never had the siblings suffered such humiliation.

[Just you wait. Once we get out of this, I will put you in your place.] Thought Luo Yunchang in anger

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 7: Wraith Array | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 7: Wraith Array

Four hours later, they found them before a fog wreathed forest.

Zhuo Fan's eyes flashed each time they roamed over the trees swallowed by the mist.

"This is Misty Forest, covered in fog year round. Any who enters will find it hard to come out." Luo Yunchang hesitated, "We might lose them there, but we might also get lost for all eternity."

Zhuo Fan didn't pay her much heed, inspecting the area, especially the mountain in the east, which was surrounded by clouds.

"Is that Blackwind Mountain?"

Luo Yunchang nodded, "My dad said Blackwind Mountain's Mountain Lord has great power, no less than his. Our clans have been fine for decades yet, for some reason, their bandits attacked our manor."

"He-he-he, good place!" Zhuo Fan rubbed his chin, showing heartfelt admiration.

"Azure Dragon in the East, White Tiger in the West, Vermilion Bird in the South, Black Tortoise in the North, and Qilin's horn in the center, breaking the sky!"

"This is a natural array!" Zhuo Fan mumbled, "Such a pity, no one knowledgeable discovered it. Now that I'm here, I'll make this place my second Devil Mountain!"

Zhuo Fan's eyes flashed with joy.

He was clear of this mountain's value. If this was Sacred Domain, only a Saint could grab hold of such a place.

"Young miss, want to kill Steward Sun and the rest here?" Zhuo Fan turned his head.

Luo Yunchang was startled.

They only numbered three while a strong party was hunting them down and they had hardly enough time to escape. Just how were they going to destroy them?

Luo Yunhai snorted and smiled wryly at Zhuo Fan, "Stinky slave, stop bragging!"

"Is your butt itchy again?"

Zhuo Fan's glare stuck Luo Yunhai's words in his throat. That round of slapping to his rear told him this servant couldn't care less for this young master.

"Humph, a wise man knows when to retreat. Once I get home, I'll see how tough you are!" He mumbled on his sister's shoulder.

With her brother in her arms and to avoid the vile servant's wrath, Luo Yunchang asked in doubt, "How?"

With a light smile, Zhuo Fan extended his arm, "Young miss, how many spirit stones do you have? Please give them all to me."

"What do you need them for?" Luo Yunchang watched him with a vigilant eye.

"Ha-ha-ha, young miss misunderstands, I'm not trying to take advantage of a declined clan and turn into an evil servant that robs it. All my actions are for your safety."

"Humph, still consider yourself a loyal servant? The way I see it, there's not a viler servant out there who can outmatch you."

Luo Yunchang rubbed her pitiful brother's butt, as she thought that, but still gave him her ring, "This is all my wealth. If you dare lie to me, I will never forgive you."

Zhuo Fan took it with a smile and sank in the mist.

“Wait for me here.”

“Humph, this servant is too outrageous. He even dares to order his master! Sister, you need to punish him for me!” Luo Yunhai raved once the servant was gone.

She shook her head and looked at the roaming mist, “Yunhai, he might be rude, but he’s always helping us, much better than those strong hypocrites. We can’t reward kindness with enmity. ”

Luo Yunhai thought for a moment then nodded, “Yes, it’s all that damned Steward Sun’s fault.”

Luo Yunchang was pleased and praised him, “Yunhai, you’re growing up.”

But then he hissed through his teeth, “As for that stinky slave, he should be spanked like no tomorrow. Killing him is too easy for him!”

Luo Yunchang was silent.

Zhuo Fan walked among the white fog, his deep eyes taking in his surroundings. From time to time, his hand flashed and a spirit stone flew out from the ring and disappeared into the ground.

Despite it being his first time here, he was remarkably familiar with its layout. His path never once was disturbed by the fog.

In but a quarter of an hour, he traveled across the entire forest.

“Nine Underworld Gates open! Four Cardinal Wraith Array activate!”

His hands made signs with lightning speed, while he spoke the incantation from the Nine Serenities Secret Records.

The wind shifted and the sky darkened. With wails, gray shadows fell from the sky and hid in the Misty Forest.

The fog reddened, then blackened, the same color as the sky.

Constant shrieks came out.

The siblings held closer to each other, shaking in fear while taking steps back for some semblance of comfort.

Yet the wails and shriek stopped as soon as they started while the sky cleared up and even the sun peeked through the clouds. Misty Forest's fog dissipated and revealed a gasping Zhuo Fan walking over.

"What just happened? What did you do?" Luo Yunchang watched him with bewilderment.

He only waved and entered the forest.

"Follow me."

Luo Yunchang was suspicious, however she led her brother behind. Zhuo Fan had a mysterious appearance that made the two not voice their doubts.

When they arrived at an ancient tree, Zhuo Fan said, "Stay below this tree for now. I will teach you how to control the Wraith Array and when Steward Sun comes, you can use it to kill them."

"What!? This is an array?"

Only

Luo Yunchang was stunned.

Arrays were even more precious than martial arts in this world. No sect would ever dare release even a normal array to outside. Even if the auction had a 1st grade array, it would still sell for hundreds of thousands spirit stones. They were rare and in high demand.

If their Cloud Manor had a protective array, they would've never sunk so low from mere bandits.

Yet, at this very moment, a mere servant casually set up an array. It was impossible that this feat would result in the young miss being shocked silly.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 8: Baiting the Enemy | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 8: Baiting the Enemy

"H-how can you..."

"Forget about how for now, and do what I said. This is a bewildering array which can affect the perceptions of others inside. And this is also a killing array, controlling wraiths to kill your enemies."

Luo Yunchang copied stiffly as Zhuo Fan performed the gestures. However, he was too fast. She could only watch him do it as she fumbled to a stop. Unable to remember the movements as he carried on, stuck on the last sign she did.

"Sigh, how are you so slow? This is the simplest method!" Zhuo Fan got angry and cursed, "If you keep going like this, Steward Sun will be upon us. We might as well just serve ourselves on a silver platter. You're as slow as a pig."

All her life, Luo Yunchang was handled with finesse and attention a pearl would need. She received others love and respect. Never has she been mistreated like this, degraded to such a degree.

Glittering tears started welling in her eyes as she lowered her head. Yet, she persevered.

Seeing his sister humiliated, he found courage and shouted at Zhuo Fan, "Stinky slave, don't mock my sister."

Zhuo Fan just shook his head, not having the time to bicker with the brat.

He found his Yuan Qi was only enough to start the array, failing to control it.

If one were to speak of a complete Wraith Array, even if none of them controlled it, a trash like Steward Sun would end up beaten to a pulp either way. However, he only had around a thousand spirit stones. If not for being a natural array, he wouldn't have been able to set even a damaged one.

It was now in the hands of 3rd layer Qi Condensation young miss to control the array.

But for her, the method was long and complicated. It was hard to grasp. Worse, they were on the clock.

Helpless, Zhuo Fan embraced her from behind and took hold of her hands.

"What are you doing?" Luo Yunchang froze up as her cheek blossomed with red.

"Don't move and let me guide you." Zhuo Fan led her hands and taught her the signs.

Despite catching his intent, being embraced by an unfamiliar man threw her heart in chaos and cheeks burned hotter, since this was the first time it ever happened to her.

Each time her mind drifted, a voice would ring in her ear, "Pay attention."

She peeked at him and saw how serious Zhuo Fan was, that his actions were not aimed to take advantage of her.

[Humph, he knows when to be a gentleman!]

Luo Yunchang calmed down and her body drew nearer to his. Feeling the strong arm behind her, this was the first time in the last three days she felt safe.

"Steward Sun. they went towards the Misty Forest." Ten miles outside the Misty Forest, a lanky bandit checked for tracks and reported to him.

With cold laughter, Steward Sun straightened his white moustache, "Quite a good hiding place. We know the mountain area but not that eerie place. However..."

Steward Sun looked at the bound captain and his eyes flash with an evil glint.

"Captain Pang, you're up soon. With how kind young miss is, she won't ignore your pleas."

"Ptooeey, don't think you can use me to threaten young miss." His eyes were bloodshot as he glared at Steward Sun.

"You'd better kill me, or I will murder you and avenge my fellow guards."

"Ha-ha-ha, when I get the martial skill, I'll be happy to fulfill your wish." Squinting his eyes, Steward Sun let out a creepy laughter. "Let's go."

It took an hour for their group of twenty to reach Misty Forest.

Yet before they could get any closer, snoring came from a man sleeping against a tree. A careful look identified him as Zhuo Fan.

"Steward Sun, it's the one who killed the fatty."

Woken up by the voice, Zhuo Fan yawned and opened his weary eyes. Seeing Steward Sun and co., he showed no fear, no anxiety. Instead, a smile.

"Steward Sun, I've waited so long to see you."

Frowning, Steward Sun watched him. He eyed him with utmost care yet nothing seemed to tell him anything. He was just calm.

"What a deep-rooted schemer you are. I underestimated you," thought Steward Sun.

If it were any other time, he would've never paid attention to a servant.

But ever since Steward Sun witnessed Zhuo Fan kill so brutally, Steward Sun's image of him turned upside-down. [This punk not only hid deeply, but he's also ruthless. If he matures, only suffering awaits.]

"Zhuo Fan, you've quite the nerve to show off before me," squinted Steward Sun at him.

Zhuo Fan cut to the chase instead of replying, "Steward Sun, want to make a deal?"

“What deal?”

“I’ll give you the Luo clan’s young master and mistress. So, secure my career in Blackwind Mountain.”

[What?]

Not only was Steward Sun shocked, but even the guard captain was also dumbfounded.

He rested his hopes on Zhuo Fan to take the siblings far away. Who’d have thought Zhuo Fan would defect and use them as bargaining chips.

“Why are you doing this? Luo clan hasn’t scorn you,” doubts arose in Steward Sun’s heart.

“Ha-ha-ha, then why do you? Luo clan treated you even better.”

Steward Sun reddened at this and felt his rage boiling.

As he calmed himself, Zhuo Fan continued, “Every man for himself. With how much the Luo clan has fallen, reviving it isn’t something one man can do. Why should I walk towards my death? Using them to secure my life is but human nature.”

He picked the red rope from the ground who followed into the mist.

“Young miss is at one of the ends of the rope. I left a few forks on the rope along the way that only I know about.”

Steward Sun nodded as he grabbed it, “Good plan, to use a rope to mark your way. And you even included forks to safeguard the right trail for yourself. A true double-crosser, ha-ha-ha...”

He gave the rope back, “Deal, lead the way. But don’t even think of playing tricks.”

Only

“Steward Sun, I am an honest man!” smiled Zhuo Fan.

Steward Sun sneered, "I would've believed you before but now... who would!?"

The two locked their eyes, each laughing as their looks hid devious thoughts.

The captain's hair stood on end. He kept cursing Steward Sun as a rotten and vile human, while he barked at Zhuo Fan as one who betrayed their master. Though everyone ignored him as he was escorted by other men as they ventured into the thick mist.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 9: The Array's Power | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 9: The Array's Power

The row of people stuck together and held on to the red rope as they walked through the mist. Zhuo Fan went first with Steward Sun right behind him. Holding onto him with a firm grip on to prevent the boy from escaping.

Because of the thick mist, one couldn't even see the figure of the one in front and relied on their hands to feel their neighbor.

At the heart of the Misty Forest, where it was impossible for anyone to escape, Zhuo Fan stopped.

"What is it?" Steward Sun was feeling apprehensive, tightening his grip on Zhuo Fan's clothes.

With a snicker, Zhuo Fan said, "Steward Sun, we'll be paring here. It's best if you travel the Underworld River without me."

With acute fear, Steward Sun discovered he fell in Zhuo Fan's trap. He pulled Zhuo Fan close and slapped him.

The clothes were turned to ribbons, but instead of Zhuo Fan, they held a log.

'W-when did he escape?'

He'd been holding tight on Zhuo Fan to prevent his escape, yet reality showed the opposite.

"Turn back, quick!" Steward Sun rushed from where they came.

As soon as he shouted, the men used the rope to retrace their path.

But then, a shout came from the mist, "The rope has been cut!"

It was as if lightning struck them and they all turned pale. How would they get out of this thick mist without the rope?

Steward Sun stomped as he gnashed his teeth, "Blast it! That brat got us."

"Bring that damn Pang over."

"Steward Sun, he's gone."

"Bastard!"

Steward Sun punched the ground and made a meter wide hole in rage.

He was a schemer himself, yet he fell at the hands of a stinky brat.

"Damn punk, I've played this game longer than you. Don't think a puny Misty Forest can trap me." Steward Sun roared towards the sky. "Once I get out! I'll tear you to pieces!"

"Ha-ha-ha, you'll never have the chance."

With Zhuo Fan's mad laughter as the signal, the mist reddened.

"Why is the mist turning red?"

They were in shock by the sudden change. They were bandits that killed people for a living, yet these strange circumstances had them on edge.

"Steward Sun, you are wiser than most... Can you tell us what this is?"

Even though the bandit shouted, only silence echoed back. He felt around him yet touched no one, as if everyone around him vanished and left him all alone.

He wasn't the only one. The people that hung on to the rope began to vanish one at a time.

Steward Sun could hardly believe what was happening, “C-can this be... an array?”

One as old as Steward Sun has seen many things and experienced even more, yet the more he knew, the more he realized how terrible arrays were and fear’s grip his heart.

An array worked using Heaven and Earth’s energy. As long as a man controlled it, it could wipe out a dozen equal to him in power. Even if tens of experts gathered, they still could not measure to its power.

Of all the possibilities he thought of, not once did he consider being trapped in an array.

“Zhuo Fan, w-who exactly are you?”

Steward Sun trembles from the feeling of dread.

He saw at last that Zhuo Fan wasn’t just any ordinary man, how could a simple man know how to use or set up arrays? If Zhuo Fan had taken out an array when they met, he wouldn’t have had the nerve to chase him.

Standing in the center of the array, Luo Yunchang was clear of the situation. Her eyes drifted to Zhuo, filled with intrigue.

Squinting, Zhuo Fan kept a cold and callous expression as he said:

“Kill them!”

She followed his order by following his hand signs.

The blood-red fog changed again, this time black, and swallowed all that laid within. Now they couldn’t even see themselves.

Only their ears picked the mournful wails of thousands of wraiths.

With fear as their only companion, they lost all their will to resist once the black streams of energy started burrowing inside them.

They felt their soul devoured yet were powerless to resist.

Only

All succumbed to terror at this point.

Smirking, Zhuo Fan's eyes shined with glee. He left Luo Yunchang and sat cross-legged in another center of the array.

The Nine Serenities Secret Records stated that the Demon Transformation Art user had a backdoor into all arrays.

The men in the array were driven mad, and all he needed to do now was to absorb their Yuan Qi.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 10: Constant Breakthrough | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 10: Constant Breakthrough

“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; Nine Underworld wraiths return to me.”

Zhuo Fan's hands moved as he stole the array from under Luo Yunchang's control while also making the clear figures of Steward Sun and the rest disappear from her mind

Luo Yunchang felt it odd and redo the signs to no avail.

“Ah...”

The Misty Forest was drowned with shrieks and wails. Steward Sun and the rest became pitch-black but still had a sliver of awareness left as black shadows left their body.

Each time one flew out, it evoked cries of torment as if pieces were ripped from its body. When the last shadow left, the cries stopped and so did their life. Their body dried up like a mummy and they turned to dust.

In the darkness, the shadows returned like bees to Zhuo Fan and entered his body.

He accepted them with a calm face and soon his body turned black just like Steward Sun did. When the last shadow burrowed, he began doing hand signs to practice the Demon Transformation Art.

The still black Yuan Qi inside him boiled as it charged through his meridians and settled in his Dantian. And his power grew with it.

In an instant, he entered the 6th layer of Foundation Establishment.

In the next instant, he was in the 7th.

And then, he was at peak 7th layer.

He kept going like this through the 8th layer, then the 9th, until the peak of Foundation Establishment.

He opened his eyes and took a deep breath as he clenched his hands, feeling the power course through him.

This time, it wasn't as easy. The wraiths were almost spent when he demonified the Yuan Qi for himself. But with his experience as a veteran demonic cultivator, he understood that breaking through in a state of exhausted Yuan Qi, holds much more value with his future progress.

He clenched his teeth and operated the cultivation method. He sucked the wraiths dry and used the remaining Yuan Qi he had to make one final push.

Bang!

Zhuo Fan heard something explode. He felt as if a dam broke and his body coursed with powerful Yuan Qi then settled in his Dantian to replenish his spent reserves.

This act of scraping for the last traces of energy enlarged his meridians by more than double.

Qi Condensation!

Zhuo Fan's eyes opened with glee.

Even when he did this in his previous life, his meridians were nowhere near as wide as they were now. And the Yuan Qi in his Dantian allowed him to face an expert at Qi Condensation. He was three times as powerful as before.

He released a long breath and made some hand signs to release the wraiths. They turned back to gray and he went back to normal.

When all wraiths were gone, Zhuo Fan stood up and a single wave from his hands pushed away the black fog. Allowing the sun's rays to land on the forest.

He could now control the array himself, no longer needing Luo Yunchang's assistance.

He showed a small smile as he looked at the sky, "Now that I'm in the Qi Condensation, I can practice some martial arts!"

Despite the end of Steward Sun and his retinue of bandits, Zhuo Fan had managed to free the Luo clan siblings. It could be said Zhuo Fan benefited the most out of this. Without devouring Steward Sun, he would have never reached Qi Condensation.

It was at this stage that he could practice martial arts. Later, not only could he defend himself, but also easier to devour others, becoming stronger himself.

"Zhuo Fan."

A clear shout came from Luo Yunchang as she came over, embracing her brother. Meanwhile, the guard captain followed behind. "Where did you run off to? Why did I lose control of the array?"

"Uh, perhaps there were too few spirit stones and the array collapsed. I just saw Steward Sun die. This is worthy of celebration. No one escaped," dodged Zhuo Fan.

He wasn't about to reveal his secret, because in this world, demonic cultivators were strong, uncanny and cultivated with shocking speed.

And his Demon Transformation Art was even more monstrous. If others knew, he'd be a public enemy. This was why he died last time. So, for his second life, he made sure to avoid any mistakes.

Luo Yunchang nodded, believing him.

After some hesitation, Captain Pang toughened his resolve and kneeled.

"Brother Zhuo Fan, I was too reckless before, unaware of your plan and still cursed you. If you must punish me, I will accept any that you might have for me. Even if you ask for my head, I will gladly offer it. "

Zhuo Fan nodded inside. Captain Pang was a loyal retainer. If Zhao Chen had this level of devotion, Zhuo Fan wouldn't have fallen so low.

Sighing inside, he helped Captain Pang up, "Captain Pang is a captain of the guards while I am just a mere servant. How could I receive such courtesy? Moreover, we have young miss to thank for setting up an array to eliminate Steward Sun's group."

Luo Yunchang watched him, confused. Only nodding when he threw Luo Yunchang a look.

Although Luo Yunchang didn't know why Zhao Chen avoided admitting he was the one who set the array, he did save her and still deferred for her opinion.

Captain Pang turned to Luo Yunchang in shock, "Young miss knows arrays?"

Only

Luo Yunchang laughed, embarrassed, forced to admit it.

"Heaven protected the Luo clan! Young miss knows arrays, our rise is imminent!" Captain Pang threw his head back and laughed, exhilarated by the prospect.

Zhuo Fan rubbed his nose.

Luo Yunchang stole a glance at Zhuo Fan, [If Luo clan is to rise, it's only thanks to this man.]

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 11: Entering Windgaze City | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 11: Entering Windgaze City

Zhuo Fan understood her and quickly said, "Now that we no longer have Steward Sun breathing down our necks, what does young miss intend to do next?"

"Uh, we were planning on seeking shelter at Cai Manor!" Captain Pang spoke before she could.

This captain of the guards no longer treated Zhuo Fan as a common servant, but of equal status.

"You should know that Cai clan's young master has a marriage agreement with young miss."

"Hmm, Windgaze City's Cai clan?"

Zhuo Fan rubbed his chin, nodding.

According to this body's memories, Cai clan was the best clan in the Windgaze City, of the same power as Luo clan. If he could hand over the Luo siblings to them, then the grudge would be settled and his heart demon lightened. Maybe it could even be dispelled.

Zhuo Fan nodded at this thought, "Alright, let's go to the Cai clan."

But not before he took one last look at Blackwind Mountain, mumbling, "I'll be back."

At the same time, in a dark cave atop Blackwind Mountain, a malevolent youth was on a large seat. His eyes were filled with cruelty as they flicked to his subordinate, "Any news of Steward Sun?"

"Reporting to young lord, Steward Sun said he'd soon have the martial art." The bandit was shaking like a leaf, fearing to even meet the youth's eyes.

"Ha-ha-ha, withdraw."

"Yes!" The bandit wiped the sweat from his head, not lingering one moment more if he could help it, from fear of being eaten.

The youth rose and moved behind the cover placed at the back of his seat. An old man laid there, glaring with fury at him. His lips trembled but no words came out.

The youth patted the man's hand with a smile, "Master, be at ease, your friend left first and is waiting for you. Once Returning Dragon Palm arrives, I will reunite you two old friends."

The old man's eyes were bloodshot at this, as if wanting to eat him alive. Despite the constant trembling, he could do nothing else.

In response, the youth's savage and vicious laughter echoed throughout the cave...

Windgaze City was the largest city in a hundred miles and a ten day-journey from the Luo clan. From fear of other bandits pursuing them, Zhuo Fan and the others sped up and reached it in five.

Once inside, the bustling of the city assaulted them while also bringing some comfort. All the tension accumulated over these past days seemed to seep from them.

Now that she was finally around other people, Luo Yunchang's strained face finally revealed a smile.

"Yunhai, look there!" pulling his hand, she pointed at a juggling stall.

Captain Pang was happy to know the fall of the young miss' clan didn't put a damper on her spirits, "Brother Zhuo Fan, I seem to recall you never came to Windgaze City."

Zhuo Fan just nodded.

Captain Pang was stunned at that.

Windgaze City's bustle was famous around these parts. He recalled the last time he came here and was so excited he couldn't sleep for three nights. Why was it that a home grown kid who never saw the flourishing city didn't even flinch?

Of course, how could he know? In Zhuo Fan's eyes, this place was no different than a village.

"Old Pang, is Cai clan far from here?" Sharing hardships brought them closer and even started calling each other brothers.

Luo Yunchang spoke before Captain Pang could, "We don't need to go so quickly. I and Yunhai must make an official visit first, then I will come see you. Stay at a tavern in the meantime."

"So annoying!" frowned Zhuo Fan.

With a bitter smile, Captain Pang just shrugged, "Can't be helped. There's no one rushing us now. If we go there now, they will laugh at us for not showing propriety."

"Fine, you go first." Zhuo Fan sighted, but nodded.

As long as the siblings were safe and he gained his freedom, waiting for a bit more wouldn't hurt.

After five days of silence, someone couldn't restrain their temper and began running his mouth.

"Humph, stinky slave. Windgaze City is my sister's domain. Just you wait, see how I'll deal with you." Luo Yunhai crossed his arms and flared his nostrils, becoming the same old impertinent young master from before.

Bam!

He didn't get to enjoy it though, as Zhuo Fan delivered a healthy kick to his rear. He flew a meter and landed on his face.

"No need to wait, let's settle this now."

Luo Yunchang rushed to help her brother and glared at Zhuo Fan, "Why do you always pick on a child?"

"It's your brother who needs a spanking."

Zhuo Fan shot her a look then waved, "Go already. After you settle in, if you still look at me with such discontent, I will not hesitate to leave you."

Luo Yunchang snorted and left while hugging her brother.

Luo Yunhai rested his head on her shoulder, face red as if choking but not daring to make a peep.

Even a child like him understood the two siblings had no power in the forest and suffered at the hands of that despicable and dastardly servant. But now that they were in Windgaze City, his sister's turf, it didn't seem to make much difference. [Why am I getting beaten by that damn slave again?]

[Does this slave fear not even Heaven and Earth?] Luo Yunhai never saw anyone like him in the Luo clan.

Captain Pang watched this unfold with shock to say the least, as his eyes were close to popping.

Not even he knew Zhuo Fan was so daring and impertinent that he'd beat up the young master right in front of young miss. Yet she did not make a complaint nor retaliate.

Only

Young miss dotted on her brother, never once being harsh with him. Yet Zhuo Fan trampled over young master with no regard to her with uncanny ease and skill.

Now he understood why young master looked at Zhuo Fan like a mouse eyeing a cat.

Wiping the sweat off his forehead, Captain Pang said, "Brother Zhuo Fan, young master is your lord. If not out of respect for the young miss, do it out of respect for her husband. How could you kick him?"

Zhuo Fan laughed then shrugged. No one was a lord in his eyes. Everything he did was to remove the heart demon.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 12: Odd Girl | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 12: Odd Girl

“They won’t come back for a while. Let’s stroll around the city.”

Zhuo Fan turned around and walked away. Captain Pang knew he didn’t take his words to heart and sigh as he followed.

They were soon in the market area. This was where rogue cultivators sold their wares, to exchange items or other cultivating materials.

With Zhuo Fan’s experience, he should be able to find goods which others overlooked.

The two visited many stalls, and many times, Captain Pang wanted to put his hands in his pocket, but when he saw Zhuo Fan walking away with a dull look, he followed suit.

Perhaps he wasn’t aware, but the grand captain of the guard was reduced to following Zhuo Fan at every step.

“Ai, since when did the world overflow with overlooked treasures? Let’s just go.”
Zhuo Fan scoured the market but nothing caught his eye.

It was then he heard a ruckus.

He went to see a stall owner and a red-faced girl in a heated dispute.

He led Captain Pang through the crowd’s center and saw the girl’s appearance. She wore white clothes, with fine eyebrows like a crescent moon and looked calmed and gentle. Even when yelled at, she never lost her smile as if she never got angry. She

persevered despite opposition.

“This black jade is fake.”

“How is it fake? This is the purest black jade, one that if left in the sun for a day, will still feel cool to the touch. If worn as a pendant, cultivation will be much easier...”

The man spat non-stop about how pure it was, “Young miss, do you understand what I’m saying?”

She shook her head, but her smile never faltered, “I do not know much about black jade, but I have seen one so I can tell this one’s a fake.”

“Ha-ha-ha, you saw it once and dare to say you find this one fake? Did you hear, everyone? Has there ever been such an absurd situation in the world?”

“It has, and I know I’m right. If we talk about price, the worst black jade is worth 10 spirit stones while the best a hundred. Yet yours is only 3 spirit stones.”

“Get out of here! Enough with your rubbish, little girl. Don’t ruin my business. How could you possibly know of its value?”

The girl smiled while staring at the man. He felt a rage burning inside, but had nowhere to vent.

As the saying goes, you can’t strike one who only smiled.

The girl kept denying the black jade’s price without a solid reason. If it was any other person, he would’ve slapped them silly. But her smile left him powerless to even lift his hand.

“That black jade is indeed fake.”

A man’s voice echoed out and the crowd saw Zhuo Fan watching the girl with a smile, “Young miss’ eyes are true, but cannot explain where the fault lies. As everyone knows, reality is a matter of perception. What’s real can be fake and what’s fake can be real..”

The girl was taken aback but nodded while scrutinizing him.

Zhuo Fan turned to the crowd, "Everyone, is it possible to prepare a few things? Sulfur, clover..."

He enumerated some of the most common things, and some people already bought them.

Under everyone's eyes, Zhuo Fan threw them in water, stirred, and said to the stall owner, "Please place the black jade inside."

"Humph, you're just washing it!" He was also confident, even as he placed it inside.

But once it entered, the water began to bubble and turn red. It even released a faint hint of blood energy.

"How can it be?" The stall owner was shocked.

The girl also watched wide-eyed, astonished.

"Ha-ha-ha, no need to be so surprised. This black jade was just an imitation that will show its real color once introduced to water." Zhuo Fan took the black jade and gave it to the owner, "Now you should know this lady was right."

"That bastard lied to me! He sold it to me for 20 spirit stones." The stall owner gnashed his teeth.

"This black jade is only worth 3 spirit stones."

The girl declared her assessment then smiled to Zhuo Fan, "Mister has good eyes. I knew it was fake, but couldn't pinpoint the difference. I thank mister for his intervention."

"It was nothing. I have also seen this once," Zhuo Fan smiled. "Young miss, won't you buy it? It's just 3 stones now."

"No need. I only wanted to inform others of the stone's real price." She chuckled and left.

Only

Watching her figure fading into the crowd, Captain Pang sighed next to Zhuo Fan, "What an odd girl."

Zhuo Fan, on the other hand, breathed out relieved as he muttered, "That girl's eyes are sharp and sinister. It's a good thing she is still inexperienced, or she would've taken the treasure without hesitation."

He then turned to the black jade, eyes shining with excitement.

But the stall owner was sighing as he packed his things, ready to go home...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 13: Blood Spirit | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 13: Blood Spirit

“Never thought I’d make a mistake.”

The stall owner was carrying his bag while walking along a remote alley. He didn’t talk, just sighed as he walked.

But then a voice came from behind, “Owner, please wait.”

He stopped with a startle and looked to see Zhuo Fan walking over.

“You’re the one from before...” He recognized Zhuo Fan. It was him who showed everyone his black jade was fake.

“Is there something you need?”

“Ha-ha-ha, owner, I like your black jade and will pay ten spirit stones for it.” Zhuo Fan laughed, taking glances at the man’s bag.

After some muttering, the owner looked oddly at Zhuo Fan, “Mister, you know this stone is fake, so why pay 10 spirit stones? The lady said it was worth 3.”

Shaking his head, Zhuo Fan added, “Even if it is fake, it can still pass off for the real thing. I might be able to sell it as a black jade.”

“Oh, I see. You want to trick others into buying it.” The owner nodded in understanding then scanned around, “Since this is the case, things are different now, it is worth much more than just 10 spirit stones.”

“How much do you want then?” Zhuo Fan squinted with murderous intent.

“At least 50!” The owner showed his own sneaky side, “If not, I’ll just find my own target and sell it at a hundred.”

Thanks to Zhuo Fan’s reminder, the owner realized how rare were people who could tell the real black jade from fake. He could sell the fake himself and earn a fortune.

“Are you buying, or do I have to look elsewhere?”

Seeing Zhuo Fan’s expression, the owner knew he didn’t have that many spirit stones on him. But it was fine since he could sell it himself and dupe another in the process. He walked away.

“Wait!”

The moment he took the first step, a hand grabbed his shoulder like an iron claw, eliciting a shout of pain from the owner.

“Owner, don’t be too greedy.” Zhuo Fan warned.

“Humph, so what if I am? The black jade is mine and I’ll sell it at whatever price I want...”

His voice choked as a black Yuan Qi entered his body.

After his body turned black, a breeze scattered his dust into the wind.

Releasing his breath, Zhuo Fan felt his Yuan Qi grow a bit. He was a 1st layer Qi Condensation expert. The 7th layer Foundation Establishment owner hardly helped in increasing his power.

He just wanted to trade, but the owner had to be ruthless and force his hand.

Zhuo Fan took the black jade and returned to the tavern.

He wasn’t addicted to killing, but some people were addicted to courting death.

Zhuo Fan met with Captain Pang at the tavern and threw him a pouch, “Old Pang, here.”

Captain Pang didn't understand, "Eh? The 10 spirit stones are all here? Didn't you buy it?"

Zhuo Fan left Captain Pang at the tavern after borrowing 10 spirit stones, saying he found something that caught his eye. Yet the same spirit stones were left in the bag, untouched.

"Oh, that old man was so nice he just gave it to me." Zhuo Fan dodged.

"Also, Old Pang, guard my door and don't let anyone come in."

With that, he closed the door to his room. Captain Pang found it strange, but since they were like brothers now, he helped him out. As such, he sat before Zhuo Fan's door as a guard.

Zhuo Fan was clear as to what happened beyond his door and nodded, pleased. He lucked out in finding such a loyal man.

Next, he settled the black jade on the table and released his dark Yuan Qi.

Bam!

The stone's exterior cracked and fell, revealing a blood-red light.

It was no longer a black jade but a bloody one. Moreover, it gave the impression of a heart as it flashed on and off like heartbeats.

"I knew it, it's the Blood Spirit!"

Zhuo Fan swallowed, his face working hard to restrain the obvious delight in his voice.

The Blood Spirit stems from any stone. It's only requirement of formation is to be bathed in the blood of millions of people, absorbing the essence of sun and moon for thousands of years, it would take form. It was a demonic cultivator treasure, rarest of treasures.

A cultivator would use the Blood Spirit to form a Blood Infant. In battle, he could send the Blood Infant to absorb the opponent's blood essence then kill him. And the Blood Infant could grow along with the cultivator. Once Zhuo Fan grew strong enough, even an Emperor wouldn't dare mess with it.

According to the Nine Serenities Secret Records, there was once an ancient demonic cultivator expert, Patriarch Blood Demon, that trained the Blood Infant to the Saint Stage. Even the ancient ten Emperors were unwilling to make an enemy out of him.

Patriarch Blood Demon felt invincible and went to challenge Nine Serenities Emperor for the title of the strongest demonic cultivator. It was a drawn out battle, with the Nine Serenities Emperor heavily wounded at the end; barely overcoming the Patriarch Blood Demon by half a move.

Only

However, the Nine Serenities Emperor obtained Patriarch Blood Demon's secret method to raise the Blood Infant, improved it, and added it to the Demon Transformation Art. The Nine Serenities Emperor wanted to train the Blood Infant too, but never got the chance.

Never did he, Zhuo Fan, the Demonic Emperor, think he'd have such a stroke of luck after rebirthing to train the Blood Infant.

If he had it in his past life, a Saint would've been nothing.

That thought made him eager to slash his wrist and pour his blood onto the blood jade.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 14: Refining the Blood Infant | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 14: Refining the Blood Infant

Plop... plop...

Just like how an infant breathed, each drop of blood landed on the stone and disappeared the next instant. The stone started to throb and the sensation only grew stronger with each drop of blood.

Zhuo Fan smiled viciously and pushed out more blood for the jade.

If he wanted to refine the Blood Infant, he needed to bathe it in his blood until the Blood Spirit synchronized both their breathing and heartbeat.

The seconds trickled by as Zhuo Fan's blood thinned, but the Blood Spirit was never sated, devouring everything he gave.

Zhuo Fan licked his dried lips, growing paler as his mind was clouded. He knew the loss of blood was too great, but he'd come too far now.

There was only one chance to refine the Blood Infant. If he stopped, it'd be like throwing a child away. It would think Zhuo Fan abandoned it and would never approve of him ever again.

This was why there was no going back once Zhuo Fan started the process.

After an hour, Zhuo Fan felt the world spinning. If he dared keep this up, it would endanger his life. If his life came at an end, the Blood Spirit would lose its meaning.

Just as he was considering abandoning the process, an indescribable feeling arose in his heart.

Zhuo Fan was stunned, then overjoyed. His mind and the Blood Spirit were now connected.

He held onto the bloodstone and activated the Demon Transformation Art. Black Yuan Qi enveloped the stone and strands of blood left it to enter Zhuo Fan.

Finally, the bloodstone shattered with a loud sound and a red glow shot for his body. Zhuo Fan checked in glee and saw the red palm-sized infant resting in his Dantian.

Sensing his eyes, the infant opened his eyes then went to sleep.

"T-this is the Blood Infant!"

After a moment of stupefaction, he jumped in joy. He never thought it would be so easy to refine the Blood Infant.

Even though he succeeded, he lost too much blood. When he stood up, his legs went soft and hit the ground. But even that couldn't wipe the grin off his face.

"Now that I have the Blood Infant, the next step is to settle on a martial art to learn."

Blood Palm, a mid mortal ranked martial art. The palm would rain havoc to one's blood and reverse its flow. Thanks to also having the Blood Infant, it was now savage enough to even damage one's blood essence.

Despite a mere mid mortal ranked, its power was as strong as a high mortal ranked martial art. It might even surpass it...

Ten days later.

The door opened with a creak and Zhuo Fan came out grinning. Captain Pang rose to his feet and rubbed his eyes.

"Why did you take so long? Cai Manor already sent someone over."

Seeing the dead tired Old Pang, Zhuo Fan smiled, "Old Pang, thank you for your hard work."

"Ai, what hard work between brothers? But we cannot let young miss and young master wait for too long."

"Hmm, you're not curious what I've been doing the past ten days?"

"That is your business. You'll tell me when you want to." Captain Pang waved indifferently, pulling Zhuo Fan with haste towards Cai Manor.

Zhuo Fan was touched seeing this rough man. Despite not knowing each other for long, Old Pang had complete trust in him.

This never happened for all his life as Demonic Emperor.

They arrived an hour later before a majestic gate with a sign inscribed in golden letters, Cai Manor.

Just when they were about to enter, the guards stopped them.

"Stop. Who are you to dare enter Cai Manor?"

Captain Pang clasped his hand, "Ha-ha-ha, I am Luo clan's captain of the guard, Pang Yu, and this is Luo clan's steward, Zhuo Fan. My young miss and young master are guests in your home."

Zhuo Fan was taken aback. Since when did he become the Luo clan's steward?

Pang Yu knew what he was thinking and whispered, "Eight days ago, Cai clan's men came to say you are Luo clan's steward. Young miss must have done it. Congratulations, brother Zhuo, he-he-he..."

Shaking his head out of helplessness, Zhuo Fan let out a bitter smile.

He didn't want to be some steward, but to entrust the safety of the siblings to the Cai clan and free himself of the heart demon. How could the grand Demonic Emperor be a puny clan's steward?

But just as how he looked down on the Luo clan, so did the guards of the Cai Manor.

The two guards shot a glance filled with contempt, "Humph, another two showed up to cheat their way to a free meal."

"Hey, what did you say?"

Captain Pang was pissed and wanted to argue, but Zhuo Fan stopped him. They walked inside.

Captain Pang didn't understand, "Why did you stop me?"

Zhuo Fan only had a grave expression. These two server's attitude was a reflection of their lords. Nothing good would come out of talking to them. The two needed to find Luo Yunchang and understand what was happening. The Cai Manor might not be such a good place to place his trust in.

After some inquiry, they arrived at the siblings' dwelling.

Seeing the wretched place they lived in, even lower than the tavern rooms, Captain Pang cursed, "Why is the Cai clan treating young miss and young master like this? They are even less than guests."

"Not just that, they don't even consider them humans." Zhuo Fan felt anger seething inside. If not because of the siblings' injustice, then because of wasting his time and energy.

"Let's go in."

Zhuo Fan rushed next to Captain Pang who was in a hurry to open the door. Inside, they saw Luo Yunhai sitting on the bed crestfallen, without his usual enthusiasm.

The place was crude, with just a broken chair and a broken table.

Captain Pang's eyes teared up, "Young master, don't be sad..."

"Kid, where's your sister?" Zhuo Fan was blunt, with no sympathy.

It seemed Zhuo Fan's beating casted a shadow on his heart. The lifeless Luo Yunhai shivered and woke up.

Luo Yunhai stammered at the raging Zhuo Fan, "Sister went to look for him... hic, young master Cai, to help rebuild the Cloud Manor."

Only

"Asking for help in this situation is asking for humiliation. Let's go look for your sister." Zhuo Fan dragged Luo Yunhai off the bed, his attitude worse than ever.

Captain Pang was in a panic, wanting to stop Zhuo Fan from being so rude to his master. But Zhuo Fan's mood seemed to put him off, and all the courage left him.

As such, Luo Yunhai was shaking in fear as he led them.

Captain Pang cached up to them, thinking. [Just who is the lord here?]

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 15: Annulled Marriage | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 15: Annulled Marriage

Next to a clear stream, an elegant man was frolicking with a charming lady in red. They chased each other around the pond, laughing all the while in this peaceful place.

Luo Yunchang felt only sorrow as she watched the flirting couple. But for the good of the clan, she braced herself and stepped forward, "Brother Xiaoting..."

The mood of the man turned sour as he glared at her, "Luo Yunchang, I thought I made myself clear. From now on, I have nothing more to do with you. My eyes are only for Yufei."

"Yeah, now get lost. Brother Xiaoting doesn't love you anymore." The lady in red sneered at her.

Biting her lip, Luo Yunchang's eyes mist over.

At the time when Luo and Cai clans were on good terms, the parents of both families arranged their marriage. She and Cai Xiaoting grew up together and swore their love for each other, to never abandon the other.

This was why the first person she thought of was her fiancée when she needed help.

Yet reality was cruel. Ever since they came here, she and her brother kept suffering while Cai Xiaoting had the arrogant and insufferable Sun clan's young miss, Sun Yufei, next to him.

She knew all hope of marrying into the Cai clan was lost. But for the sake of rebuilding her clan, she hoped to stir Clan Head Cai's amiable emotions the two clans had in the past and lend a helping hand.

Yet Clan Head Cai Rong was cold and unfeeling to their plight, not moving an inch.

The siblings stayed here for ten days, all in hope of gaining some assistance. But since Cai Rong ignored her, she could only turn to Cai Xiaoting.

"Brother Xiaoting, I don't ask for you to go through with the engagement, and only hope you can persuade your father, for old time sake, and help the Luo clan. "

"It has nothing to do with me. Talk with dad." Cai Xiaoting waved his sleeve coldly.

Luo Yunchang knelt with tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Brother Xiaoting, if you don't agree, I will kneel here until I die."

Taking a long look at her, Cai Xiaoting frowned and was plagued by hesitation.

But then Sun Yufei jumped between them and slapped Luo Yunchang. The blow threw her back and blood trickled from her mouth.

"Humph, bitch, Cai Xiaoting is mine. Stay away from him."

Sun Yufei's phoenix eyes glared and raved. She turned to Cai Xiaoting and said harshly, "You stay away from her too. If I find there's still something left between you, I will leave you."

As if waking up, he nodded and swore, "Yufei, relax, my heart is yours. Other girls are dirt compared to you."

Cai Xiaoting's eyes showed his sincere feelings, watching her like a love-struck puppy.

Sun Yufei nodded pleased, as Luo Yunchang's face turned ashen. She knew her last hope faded away...

Whoosh!

A shadow flashed by and two slaps echoed. Sun Yufei and Cai Xiaoting were still confused about what happened, when a red handprint appeared on their faces.

Zhuo Fan stood in front of Luo Yunchang as he stared at them, "A damn illicit couple dares to ruin my affairs?"

"Who are you?"

Sun Yufei and Cai Xiaoting woke up with a start. They were geniuses of Windgaze City, Qi Condensation experts, and peerless in their generation.

Yet here was Zhuo Fan, of similar age yet faster than even them. They got slapped before they could react.

Is it possible for such an individual to exist in this world?

As the scene played out, only Captain Pang and Luo Yunhai came to Luo Yunchang's help.

Seeing the thin figure in front, Captain Pang was even more shocked.

Although he was an expert in the 4th layer of Qi Condensation, while Cai Xiaoting was in the 3rd, a level beneath him; They had different upbringings and if they clashed, he might even lose.

Yet such arrogant geniuses were slapped by Zhuo Fan. Thinking about the power he displayed in the forest, Captain Pang couldn't help but wonder how he got so strong in such a short span of time.

Ignoring the two and the shocked Captain Pang, Zhuo Fan turned to the crying and pitiful Luo Yunchang and felt pain in his heart.

"Wretched heart demon." Zhuo Fan gnashed his teeth.

With his Demonic Emperor disposition, he could look beyond the world's entire sufferings. How could a girl's humiliation ever cause him pain? He could only attribute it to this body's former soul, who felt anger for his master.

"Ai, it looks like I'll be stuck with the Luo clan for some time."

Zhuo Fan sighed inside as he wiped Luo Yunchang's tears, "Let's go."

Luo Yunchang nodded, there was no point in staying here. She carried the bitter Luo Yunhai and walked with Captain Pang's help.

"Humph, don't think you can run after hitting us."

Sun Yufei shrieked as she barred their way. Cai Xiaoting chimed in, "Luo Yunchang, you think this is a place you can come and go as you please?"

Luo Yunchang was filled with grief and balled her fists. She regretted ever coming here for help. Facing this overbearing couple in their home, she could only reign in her anger.

If she were alone, she would've rather fight them for her honor, but she still had her brother. If he died, she would be too ashamed to meet her parents in the Underworld River.

"W-what do you want?" Luo Yunchang's voice trembled.

"Humph, simple. Kneel and kowtow three times." Sun Yufei smiled viciously and pointed at Zhuo Fan, "Especially him!"

Clenching his teeth, Captain Pang's eyes went red, wanting nothing more than to beat them senseless. This was too humiliating.

Luo Yunchang hesitated, then closed her eyes as her knees bent.

Only

"Kneel, all of you."

They could all hear her faint mournful voice. Sun Yufei stuck out her chin with arrogance and smiled with pride.

Bam!

Before they kneeled, Sun Yufei and Cai Xiaoting took the initiative to kneel first with a cry. Rather saying they kneeled, it was better to say their knees were forcible smacked onto the pavement.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 16: Tomorrow, You'll Be Beneath Me | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 16: Tomorrow, You'll Be Beneath Me

Chapter 16, Tomorrow, You'll Be Beneath Me

Cracks spread like spiderwebs on the pavement. If they weren't Qi Condensation experts, their knees would be crushed, unable to walk again.

The two grimaced as they looked up to see Zhuo Fan standing before them.

"You again!"

The couple knew Zhuo Fan was the only one among the group who had the power to attack them out of the blue.

"Even if you beg on your knees now, I won't ever let you go." Sun Yufei glared scornfully at Zhuo Fan, howling with rage.

Pa, pa!

Two hits echoed and Zhuo Fan kicked them without hesitation.

"You want me to kneel? You think too highly of yourselves."

Sun Yufei and Cai Xiaoting were dumbfounded, even forgetting the pain from the kick.

Slapping them to help Luo Yunchang out of a predicament, was something they could understand. To make amends, they were ordered to kneel. Yet, the steward still had the guts to strike them. Was he not afraid they would never be allowed to leave Cai Manor alive?

Captain Pang was enraged by the two's act, but he looked at it from a different perspective and felt it was better to endure, or the Luo clan would be perishing here.

Luo Yunchang smiled dejectedly. Others didn't understand Zhuo Fan, while she gained first-hand knowledge of his violent character in the forest. He never once acted like a servant. He just did whatever he wanted. She just could not cope with the fact their Luo clan had such a servant.

Yet, Luo Yunhai's attitude changed completely. He now looked at Zhuo Fan with worship and adoration.

This damnable slave's nerve that always bullied him wasn't limited to picking on his masters, but even on others. He just didn't know fear. In that instant, the image of the damnable slave turned into an almighty hero coming to rescue the Luo clan.

"Who dares to act impertinently in the Cai clan's domain?"

A man's rebuke echoed as he appeared before them.

Luo Yunchang's face dropped. She pulled her brother so close that even he could feel her anxiety.

Cai Xiaoting was overjoyed, "Dad, you're here! He is looking for trouble with our Cai clan."

Knowing Clan Head Cai Rong came, Zhuo Fan eyed him more carefully.

Cai Rong looked to be in his fifty, tall and sturdy, and a powerful aura emanating from him.

"8th layer of Bone Tempering." Smiled Zhuo Fan.

Cai Rong's eyebrows jumped as shock flashed over his face. He never thought possible for a youth to see through his cultivation.

"Good eyes!" Patronized Cai Rong, "May I ask who you are?"

"Luo clan's steward, Zhuo Fan!"

Cai Rong was startled and observed him closely.

He heard from Luo Yunchang that Luo clan had a new steward, since the old one turned traitor, but he didn't think it'd be one as young as Zhuo Fan. And he also gave off a strange energy.

If it were any other time, a fox like him would never mess with an unknown variable like Zhuo Fan. Such a pity there was now a power in this city he could offend even less.

"Uncle Cai, you must bring justice to us victims." Sun Yufei revealed the red print on her face while glaring at Zhuo Fan.

Cai Rong understood the situation in an instant. He placate her, "Don't worry, uncle Cai is here now."

He then turned solemn as he looked at Luo Yunchang, "Yunchang, I took you, siblings, out of kindness. It is fine if you do not reciprocate, but why look for trouble?"

Luo Yunchang shuddered, lost for words.

Zhuo Fan stepped forward with a smile, "You even bully a lady at your age, Clan Head Cai. I needn't say anything more. Moreover, stop preaching kindness. No need to mince words, you did it out of benefit, or you wouldn't have annulled the marriage. "

"Alright, since you want us to be hostile, I won't be lenient." Cai Rong's face changed, "Today, I will have to settle this for Yufei. You need only handle my palm attack. I won't take advantage of you and only use two tenths. Let life and death be decided like this."

Two tenths?

As his pupils shrunk, Captain Pang shouted, "Coming from you, it's even stronger than a 9th layer Qi Condensation expert's all-out attack. You clearly want us dead!"

"Uncle Cai, I beg you. Yunhai is still a child, he is innocent!" Yunchang implored.

But Cai Rong snorted, then smiled at Sun Yufei.

"Alright, I'll go first." Zhuo Fan's mouth perked up.

Whoosh!

A great red palm appeared in the air. Cai Rong didn't expect for Zhuo Fan to attack first and turned serious as he sent his own palm attack.

At contact, the blood palm scattered and Zhuo Fan fell back ten steps, yet was unharmed.

"A 2nd layer Qi Condensation can withstand two tenths of my power!?" Cai Rong's heart was in shock, "But your survival all came down to luck."

"Ha-ha-ha, the only reason I'm still alive is because I don't believe in luck." And he pointed at Cai Rong's hand with a grin, "But power."

Cai Rong's eyes squinted. His hand was bleeding from the previous exchange.

How could this be? [He is just a 2nd layer Qi Condensation cultivator while I am an 8th layer Bone Tempering cultivator. That's a whole stage difference!]

"Furthermore," followed Zhuo Fan, "You really think that was two tenths? That wasn't even a tenth."

Cai Rong began to recall what transpired.

Despite the abruptness of it all, he indeed wanted to release two tenths, but when he released the palm, his blood fell in disorder and the result was obvious to all.

"Also, take a look at your son."

Zhuo Fan pointed at Cai Xiaoting. Cai Rong saw his son spat a mouthful of blood.

"Dad, w-what's happening?" Cai Xiaoting panicked. He wasn't wounded yet he puked blood.

"Zhuo Fan, what the hell did you do?" Cai Rong roared.

Zhuo Fan replied with a sneer, "I only wanted to tell Clan Head Cai I can take your son's life anytime. Please take it into consideration."

As Cai Rong was hesitating, Zhuo Fan pointed again, eliciting another mouth of blood from Cai Xiaoting.

"Alright, I believe you." Cai Rong wiped his brow of sweat as he spoke in a shaky voice.

He didn't know what trick he pulled on his son, but Zhuo Fan was prepared for his intervention. He was now regretting. If he knew the Luo clan had such a shrewd and decisive steward, he wouldn't have taken things this far.

"Then, I will bid you farewell here. Clan Head Cai." Zhuo Fan sneered as he cupped his hands then pulled Luo Yunchang and walked away.

Zhuo Fan laughed all the while, "Today you love to bully me, tomorrow you'll be beneath me."

"Uncle Cai, are you letting him go?" Sun Yufei said with resentment.

Sighing helplessly, Cai Rong muttered as he watched Zhuo Fan leave, "Instead of offering shelter, I invited an enemy..."

Shaking his head, he helped Cai Xiaoting walk inside. After a few steps, his eyes flashed as he turned to Sun Yufei.

"Yufei, we need to end Zhuo Fan as soon as possible. He will endanger your Sun clan."

"Humph. you don't dare to attack him because of your son. My Sun clan isn't afraid. I will let him have a taste of what it means to offend the Seven Noble Houses!" Sun Yufei spoke with hatred.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 17: Veiled Dragon Pavilion | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 17: Veiled Dragon Pavilion

As the three left Cai Manor, Captain Pang and Luo Yunchang were trembling and even looked back now and then for fear of Cai Rong having changed his mind. Only Zhuo Fan was calm, yet a bit of rage still existed in his heart.

“Young miss, is there anywhere else we can go?” Zhuo Fan asked in a cold tone.

Her eyes turned misty as she shook her head. Captain Pang also signed in sorrow.

Taking a deep breath, Zhuo Fan gnashed his teeth and promised himself to run the Cai clan into the ground one day.

He was just a step away from providing a safe haven for the Luo siblings, yet Cai clan’s father and son ruined it all.

If the day came that the Cai clan was ruined because they offended Zhuo Fan, Cai Rong would be twisting inside with regret.

But that was the future. Now, Zhuo Fan was pissed. His hopes were dashed and he had to spend more time to look after the siblings.

Zhuo Fan mumbled for a while, then said, “Young miss, do you know what are the Seven Noble Houses?”

“What! W-where did you hear that from?”

Luo Yunchang was in a panic as she watched Zhuo Fan. It was as if he knew a heavenly secret. But recalling the fantastic events that happened the past days, she relaxed.

Captain Pang also looked oddly at Luo Yunchang. This was the first time he heard of them.

Pursing her lips for a long time, Luo Yunchang finally spoke in a solemn tone, "Since we lived in Cloud Manor and had no dealings with them, not knowing them is normal. But we are now wondering outside. If you ever meet someone from the Seven Noble Houses, you must avoid him, even if it's a dog."

Captain Pang was shocked. This was his first time seeing Luo Yunchang speaking on such a heavy tone; as if she was talking about horrifying people. Yet, a proud girl like her, even if from a fallen clan, did not speak near as highly about the Cai clan.

The warning seemed to go right past Zhuo Fan as he retained his calm.

"Be it Luo clan or Cai clan, regardless of how strong they are, they are only mortal clans. But in Tianyu Empire, there are seven officials who earned the imperial family's approval and can stand next to the Emperor. Their power and territory are above all mortal clans. Fighting them is like going against the Empire."

"What? This world has clans that can stand next to the imperial family?" Captain Pang's face contorted in fear.

Luo Yunchang nodded with extreme seriousness, "Every clan knows these seven families must not be touched. I am telling you this so that you all must remember to be careful!"

"Is the Sun clan one of them?" interrupted Zhuo Fan.

Stunned for a second, Luo Yunchang shook her head, "Why do you ask?"

"Yeah, brother Zhuo, if she was of the seven houses, then young miss would've stopped you from smacking her. " Captain Pang snickered. Since Luo Yunchang didn't stop him then she agreed in silence.

As if she was found out, Luo Yunchang reddened and glared at him.

In fact, seeing Sun Yufei slapped was the most refreshing event for Luo Yunchang. Since Captain Pang could tell how glad the girl was, how could Zhuo Fan not? But Zhuo Fan's vision was much further. Even if they had a falling out with the Sun clan,

he had to understand the other's background.

"Then is the Sun clan part of the seven houses?"

"What made you come to that conclusion?" Luo Yunchang was feeling nervous for some reason.

Her only hope right now was that Zhuo Fan was joking around to scare her, but his next words were spoken with a straight face, "That girl raved how she'll let us see the might of the Seven Noble Houses."

"H-how can this be? Did we offend Seven Noble Houses' people?"

Luo Yunchang paled and her mind blanked, watching Zhuo Fan with empty eyes. Captain Pang was even worse, his heart froze up.

At this moment, the world seemed to have vanished, making way for silence...

"Zhuo Fan, quick, we need to apologize to young miss Sun."

Luo Yunchang pulled him to Cai Manor, but Zhuo Fan was stuck like a rock.

"If we go, we'll die." Zhuo Fan said coldly.

Luo Yunchang froze and her eyes glazed with helplessness. Zhuo Fan's words were ear-piercing but they all spoke of the harsh truth. If offending the Seven Noble Houses was so easily settled, no one would've regarded them with such fear.

"Brother Zhuo, what do we do?"

They were all surprised to find Luo Yunhai speaking as he gazed at Zhuo Fan with unshakable faith.

Not even Zhuo Fan foresaw it. A kid that everyone overlooked was now watching him with such big and innocent eyes.

"Wasn't I a stinkin' slave?" squinted Zhuo Fan.

"Big bro Zhuo, we, brother and sister, are grateful for this new chance at life. You're our greatest benefactor, my dear brother. My dear brother-in-law, please save us once again."

"Yunhai, don't talk nonsense." Luo Yunhai glared with a red face, yet her eyes couldn't help sneaking a glance at Zhuo Fan.

They were alive thanks to him. Despite being inferior in his eyes, Zhuo Fan's abilities made others have a whole new level of respect for him. This was the reason why she appointed him as the clan's steward.

For the rebuilding of the clan, men like him were needed.

Zhuo Fan saw Luo Yunhai's imploring eyes and laughed inside.

[This kid is a clan's son after all, haughty but also clever to see another's talent; how adorable.] Moreover, helping the Luo clan was a given for him, "Does Windgaze City have men from the seven houses?"

"Yes, the Veiled Dragon Pavilion, the number one treasure appraising clan among the seven houses. Its wealth knows no bounds."

"Then let's return to the tavern and go to Veiled Dragon Pavilion tomorrow." Zhuo Fan ruffled Luo Yunhai's head.

Only

"What for?" Luo Yunchang rushed to ask.

"Allies!" Zhuo Fan's curt reply came.

The others were stunned.

Why would one of the Seven Noble Houses, the Veiled Dragon Pavilion, ally with a run down clan? That was more of the wish of a hopeless loser...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 18: Long Kui | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 18: Long Kui

A tens of meters tall ancient building stood in the eastern part of Windgaze City. It's size overwhelmed any from approaching to the point that not a single person dared get within a hundred meters of it.

Two guards in golden garb stood at the gates. Their aura gave off the impression of veterans, of imperial bodyguards.

Despite standing still, their eyes roamed everywhere, staring daggers at any who dared match their gaze.

But in this place, four people suddenly appeared.

"Peak of Qi Condensation!"

Zhuo Fan muttered as he walked in front of the siblings and Captain Pang. While he had no problem facing such imposing guards, the three stiffened, to the point they almost forgot to walk.

"Stop!"

The guards barred Zhuo Fan's path, "Veiled Dragon Pavilion is not a place for you to wonder about!"

"I ask that you send word of Cloud Manor Luo clan's young miss, Luo Yunchang, I have arrived to have something appraised." Zhuo Fan's eyes didn't even look at them.

The two exchanged a look of surprise.

Windgaze City didn't lack people who came here to see the appraiser, but all were fearful and fawned them when talking. This was a first though, meeting such a smug kid.

"We've never heard of you. Our appraiser can't meet with nobodies!" spoke a guard harshly.

Luo Yunchang lowered her head. One of the Seven Noble Houses, Veiled Dragon Pavilion, would never pay attention to an ant-like clan. They weren't even worthy to speak with them, not to mention become allies.

"Zhuo Fan..."

Luo Yunchang pulled Zhuo Fan, but before she could finish, he shook her off, "That is the appraiser's concern to see us. Try and act as the servants you are."

"What did you say?" The guards were outraged, releasing their full aura.

The Luo clan members felt their breathing become heavier as they retreated back. Only Zhuo Fan stood in his place and roared, "Is this how the Seven Noble Houses treats its guests? Humph, truly renowned."

"Stop."

A girl in white came out to meet them. The guards bowed, "Young miss, these people are looking for trouble."

"I heard what you said, and it is you who are in the wrong. All who come are guests. Make sure to show respect." The girl berated them in a cold tone, then smiled at Zhuo Fan, "Mister, we meet again."

"It's you?"

Zhuo Fan and Captain Pang were startled. She was the one that quarreled with the stall owner.

But things were different now.

Zhuo Fan sneered inside, "I didn't expect for young miss to be from the Veiled Dragon Pavilion. Please forgive my lack of respect."

The girl nodded with a smile, "I am Long Kui, only a small appraiser here. I wonder why mister has come to us?"

"To be honest, I am Luo clan's steward, Zhuo Fan. Because a terrible misfortune plagues us, I accompanied my young miss to the Veiled Dragon Pavilion, the number one appraising noble house in Tianyu Empire's number one appraising noble house, to sell the clan's treasure."

"Eh?" Eyes flashing, Long Kui smiled when she saw Luo Yunchang nodding, then turned back to Zhuo Fan, "Then I will do my best to examine your treasure. Please, follow me."

She showed them in, to the shock of the guards, "Was that... young miss' friend?"

"No way. How can young miss have such a dirt poor friend? She must be doing it for the treasure. Once it fails to meet her expectations, they will be kicked out. Then, he-he-he..."

"We will teach them a lesson they won't ever forget, especially that rude Zhuo Fan. But what if the item is to her liking..."

"That's impossible. Just look at them, how can these wretched people have anything that is worth more than black jade? Ha-ha-ha..."

The other also jeered, rubbing his hand in eagerness to vent all his energy...

On the other side, Long Kui took them to a flourishing room and smiled once they were seated, "I wonder what treasure did you bring? Please take it out."

Zhuo Fan grinned.

[This girl thinks herself above others, but is quite shrewd as well.] He was certain she knew exactly what went on at the entrance, but let the guards test them if they were worthy of her time.

If they showed any sign of giving up, her current attitude would've been unyielding.

Despite how cunning she was, she was far too naive when up against the devilish Zhuo Fan.

Whoosh!

Zhuo Fan placed a scroll with countless images before her, which immediately caught her full attention.

Taking it in her hands, Long Kui took careful and long looks at the contents.

Luo Yunchang and Captain Pang were in a bit of a shock. This drawing was something Zhuo Fan made last night. When they saw it, they only had one thought. [What is this thing?]

Yet from the looks of Long Kui's expression, it must be worth a fortune.

"Mister Zhuo Fan, how much do you want?" Long Kui placed the scroll back and watched Zhuo Fan with a hardened gaze.

"Young miss Long is an appraiser and saw your skill in the market. Please be the first to state a price." Zhuo Fan chuckled.

Biting her lip, Long Kui noticed from his eyes that this man was also knowledgeable. She couldn't swindle him, "How does twenty thousand spirit stones sound?"

"What, twenty thousand?"

Luo Yunchang stood up in shock.

If you'd take Cloud Manor's wealth when it was at its peak, you'd get fifty thousand. Yet Zhuo Fan messed around with a brush and came up with twenty?

Captain Pang was dumbstruck.

Only

Long Kui couldn't restrain her disdain for the two.

[Humph, I am a madam while you are a pack of stray cats.]

But when she saw the silent yet smiling Zhuo Fan, she turned serious.

[The true expert is this steward...]

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 19: Godeye Long Jiu | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 19: Godeye Long Jiu

“Twenty thousand, ha-ha-ha...”

Zhuo Fan rubbed his chin, shaking his head as he reached for the scroll, “Since young miss Long isn’t honest, there’s no need to continue.”

Her body moved back and hugged the scroll, afraid Zhuo Fan might take it.

“Mister Zhao, twenty thousand isn’t little for a 1st-grade array. And this is a drawing instead of a jade slip. This price of mine is fair.”

“Ha-ha-ha, young miss Long, I might not be too learned, but I know when you try to cheat me. Give me the scroll.” Zhuo Fan reached out but was in no rush to take it as he stared down at her.

Tightening her grip on the drawing, Long Kui bit her lip and shouted, “Take it as my loss, thirty thousand.”

“Young miss Long, still is not honest enough.” Zhuo Fan shook his head in disappointment and leaned over to grab for the scroll.

Long Kui curled backward, wanting to dodge Zhuo Fan’s evil clutches.

This drawing was indeed a 1st-grade array, and this wasn’t the first time she saw one. Her original price was quite fair and began with twenty thousand because she knew she couldn’t swindle the knowledgeable Zhuo Fan.

But even so, with how many arrays were out there, she didn't know them all. The number one appraising noble house in the empire had many arrays in storage, yet this was a rare chance for her to encounter one that was unlike any she saw before.

As such, even if she would lose out, she would do all she could to have this array.

A pity that the relentless Zhuo Fan stood in her way, unwilling to back down even half a step. As such, she turned to the ignored young miss of the Luo clan, "Young miss Luo, this drawing is thirty thousand at most. Only the Veiled Dragon Pavilion has the wealth to buy such a drawing in the entire empire. You won't gain a better price elsewhere."

"Uhm..." She hesitated and glanced at Zhuo Fan.

Long Kui knew she had an escape and pushed her advantage to entice her, "Young miss Luo, you and the Veiled Dragon Pavilion are making a great transaction and will become our honored guest. Our doors will forever be open to you."

Honored guest?

Luo Yunchang mumbled, "Isn't this gaining a supporter?"

Her heart was overtaken with joy and turned to Zhuo Fan, "What if..."

"Not a word!" Zhuo Fan roared and glared at her.

This foolish woman was swayed in seconds. How could the Veiled Dragon Pavilion stick their heads out for some bullshit guests? To get the best of their power, to have their protection, they could only attain it through a trade of equals.

"Young miss Long, I am Luo clan's steward, in charge of all matters concerning it. Please return the drawing." Zhuo Fan's smile was replaced by a cold stare.

Luo Yunchang looked in a daze, first at him then at Luo Yunchang.

Though his words rang true, since when did a steward's power superseded his lord's? How was he the steward?

[By the look of things, the lady of Luo clan is unable to keep the steward in check.]

Sighing, Long Kui was very reluctant in giving the scroll back, evident by her slow movement, "Such a pity, mister Zhuo Fan. Your request is too high and I can't fulfill it. But I am willing to guarantee on our Veiled Dragon Pavilion's fame, that this 1st-grade array won't go beyond thirty thousand."

With the scroll in hand, Zhuo Fan rose from his seat and leaned closer to Long Kui, leaving her flabbergasted.

Before she could say anything, he said, "Sorry, it seems I thought too highly of the young miss. You truly don't understand. Does this place have any other appraiser?"

"W-what, I do not understand?"

Long Kui's cheeks were tinted red as her heart swelled with anger.

No item that passed her hands hadn't received a correct assessment. The fact she could point out the fake black jade, yet unable to explain why, was her talent. It was because of this that she rose to a top-rated appraiser.

In short, she was an expert!

Yet, here came Zhuo Fan mocking her talent, refuting her skill in appraising. It was worse than any physical attack, an insult to her dignity.

"Mister Zhuo Fan, your eyes are not wrong, but it is best not to overreach." Long Kui showed a smile that went beyond just anger. All of them could hear the gnashing of her teeth.

Yet Zhuo only smiled, "Is there any other appraiser here?"

Long Kui glared, "Fine, just wait here."

And she left. Luo Yunchang was worried about the anger Long Kui showed, "Did we offend the Veiled Dragon Pavilion?"

Zhuo Fan shook his head with an unusual smile.

Moments later, Long Kui appeared again with steady steps. But this time, an old man was at her side.

“Godeye Long Jiu?”

Luo Yunchang shouted in shock and turned to Zhuo Fan, “He is the supervisor of the Veiled Dragon Pavilion in Windgaze City, the head appraiser, Godeye Long Jiu.”

“Ah, it’s Luo clan’s young miss.”

Even from a hundred steps, Long Jiu’s voice resounded clearly in their ears, “I’ve met your father twenty years ago. He was full of mettle then. I didn’t expect for your clan to sell their treasure.”

Zhuo Fan’s heart shivered as his brows knitted.

This man’s power was a cut above Cai Rong’s, to the point not even Zhuo Fan could see through him. It wasn’t that his eyesight were poor, or the fact the old man hid his power. The difference between them was just too deep.

[I see. So Veiled Dragon Pavilion has such an expert], thought Zhuo Fan.

Soon, Long Jiu was supported by Long Kui and arrived before them. Luo Yunchang bowed, “Grandpa Jiu.” The others were quick to follow, yet Zhuo Fan just stood there.

Long Jiu sized him up with his only hazy eye, “Are you Luo clan’s steward?”

“Yes!”

“Alright. Anyone’s better than that old Sun.” Long Jiu shot a meaningful glance at them, then sat down, “I heard you doubt little Kui’s skill.”

“Yes.” Zhuo Fan didn’t mince words, eliciting a snort from her and a roll of the eye.

“Ha-ha-ha, little Kui might be new in this line of business, but her eyes are true. She must be more or less right with her assessment. But since you doubt her, this blind old man will take a look.”

“Please.”

Zhuo Fan offered the scroll. The Long Jiu's smile vanished when he turned to its contents, staring intently at it.

Only

"Uncle Jiu, wasn't I right?" Long Kui grinned and shouted, "1st-grade array, thirty thousand spirit stones."

Long Jiu kept staring at the drawing and only after a while did he spoke with a solemn face, "I never thought the Luo clan would hide such a thing. Kid, what do you think of 1.8 million spirit stones?"

What?

They all went slack-jawed, Long Kui in particular. Never had she dreamed of the day the supervisor of Veiled Dragon Pavilion, Long Jiu, would utter such an astronomical number...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 20: Ancient Array | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 20: Ancient Array

"Uncle Jiu..."

Long Kui watched Long Jiu wide-eyed, who instead watched the calm Zhuo Fan with his only eye.

Zhuo Fan gazed back with a grin, "Too low."

"Wh-"

They all cried out in response.

1.8 million was an inconceivable wealth for the Luo clan. Luo Yunchang never dreamed of having such riches. Yet in the eyes of Zhuo Fan, it wasn't enough.

Luo Yunchang and Captain Pang looked lost at him. If not for being born and raised in the Cloud Manor, they'd be thinking he was a noble descendant.

His gaze traveled so far.

Yet before others could recover from Zhuo Fan's attack, here came Long Jiu's reply.

"I understand, but this is the most this old man can give."

"Uh, then I'll sell it as a favor for grandpa Jiu at this price." Luo Yunchang chuckled embarrassingly as she wiped her brow.

She never imagined a random drawing from Zhuo Fan would garner such an insane price that took all of Godeye Long Jiu's wealth to pay for it.

And by the looks of it, Long Jiu seemed to have set his sights on it. As such, it was better to earn his favor and be on good terms with Veiled Dragon Pavilion.

Long Jiu showed a gratified smile, as expected, being extra careful as he rolled the drawing.

But then, Zhuo Fan slapped the table, "Since you can't go higher, the deal is off."

"Zhuo Fan!"

Luo Yunchang gave him a look, but he ignored her as he reached for the scroll.

Squinting his eyes, Long Jiu unleashed his awe-inspiring power, "Kid, this old man wants it."

Under such tremendous pressure, everyone recoiled, while Luo Yunchang and Captain Pang were overwhelmed from shock.

Long Jiu was far above Cai Rong. Offending him would be tantamount to instant death.

Yet, Zhuo held his own under the man's power and even sneered, "Grandpa Jiu, you're staining Veiled Dragon Pavilion's reputation."

"Kid, are you not afraid?" Long Jiu kicked his power up a notch.

"Humph, aren't you?"

Blanking out for a second, Long Jiu took back his power and laughed, "Ha-ha-ha, good kid. With you in charge of the Luo clan, they have nothing to worry about."

The others were baffled. The two were a step away from jumping at each other's throat and in the next instant all went up in smoke.

Yet, no one knew the two moved the battle from brawn to mind.

Long Jiu released his power to soften Zhuo Fan into selling him the drawing. Instead, Zhuo Fan pushed through the pressure and asked the old man about his honor. Veiled Dragon Pavilion was the number one appraising house among the

seven nobles. If this coercion leaked then the damage would be unimaginable.

Zhuo Fan bet on his fate and the clan's honor's place in Long Jiu's heart and won.

With a deep look directed at Zhuo Fan, Long Jiu took the direct approach, "Kid, I know you didn't come just to sell this drawing. What are your terms?"

Grinning, Zhuo Fan pushed the drawing before Long Jiu, "Ten million is a fair offer. Let's start by having you pay us a million and the rest slowly."

"That's..."

Long Jiu eyed the scroll then nodded after a while, "Alright. Until the debt is paid, the Veiled Dragon Pavilion shall owe Luo clan."

Long Jiu took the scroll and left. Yet once he was gone, his voice lingered, "Little Kui, give them a million spirit stones and walk them out."

"Uh, yes!"

Long Kui was overwhelmed with different thoughts as she had never seen Long Jiu with such a sour expression. Turning back to Zhuo Fan, it was the first time she saw him sporting such a content smile.

Next, she handed a million spirit stones and saw them out.

At the gate, the two guards were eager for them to show up and teach them a thing or two, but Long Kui's respectful attitude threw a wrench in their plans. And when they heard the deal they made included a million spirit stones, they were stunned.

Never had they imagined a remote place like this could come with such an important deal. It became one of the top three deals in Veiled Dragon Pavilion's history.

"Damn, thank god we didn't do anything or disaster might have struck." A guard watched the four leave and wiped the sweat off his brow. The other just bobbed his head.

Veiled Dragon Pavilion treated a rich clan with respect. If any of their men dared to offend the clan, the noble house would exact punishment.

In the case of a clan with a million spirit stones, the guards' complete lack of courtesy would even end with their deaths.

Thinking about it, they began to sweat buckets...

On the other hand, Long Kui returned to Long Jiu who was now looking at every detail of the 1st-grade array.

"Uncle Jiu, isn't it just a 1st-grade array? How is this worth ten million? I never even seen an item worth that much." Long Kui asked the moment she went through the door.

Sighing, Long Jiu gestured to her next to him, "Little Kui, look closer, this might be the only one of its kind in the empire."

"This is..." Long Kui's eyes flashed with shock.

"An Ancient Array!"

Long Jiu showed how moved he was with every word, "The ancient arrays are a lost art, yet this has essentially proven their existence. It is priceless, and even ten million is too low."

"What? It's that valuable?"

Nodding, Long Jiu revealed a childish smile, as if he got his most cherished toy. But something occurred to him that soured his mood.

"Little Kui, tell Ah Jie to find five experts and watch over the Luo clan. They offended the Sun clan today."

"Why should we help them?"

Only

Long Jiu snorted, "Haven't you been listening? We owe them."

Long Kui began to recall. [So this is what Zhuo Fan and Long Jiu were haggling over.]

Yet, the veteran uncle Jiu was defeated in negotiations by a pup. Of course he was in a bad mood.

Long Kui couldn't help but let out a giggle...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 21: Trouble Comes Knocking | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 21: Trouble Comes Knocking

Chapter 21, Trouble Comes Knocking

The second day, Zhuo Fan was meditating in his room at the tavern when hurried footsteps closed in. Captain Pang rushed in with an anxious face.

“Sun clan has us surrounded outside.”

Slowly opening his eyes, Zhuo Fan evoked an odd smile, “They’re finally here.”

“Eh, why are you so calm?”

Zhuo Fan walked outside without a care, “I’ve been waiting for them. Tell the siblings to come out too.”

Captain Pang couldn’t help but roll his eyes helplessly. Zhuo Fan was the official Luo clan steward and called young miss and young master in other’s presence, but when they were alone, he had no such restraints.

If it were the past, Captain Pang would’ve gone the distance in enacting the clan head’s rules. But he got used to the tough-looking but soft-hearted Zhuo Fan. He had the habit of criticizing the siblings on and on, but he was the first to jump in front of them when the need arose.

Just like yesterday, when he rebuked Luo Yunchang for speaking out of place and coming close to ruining their deal. Although wronged at the time, the young miss knew when they saw Long Jiu leaving that Zhuo Fan had done a great favor for the Luo clan.

With how the rundown Luo clan turned in a million spirit stones, they wouldn't be in the precarious position of living on the streets or relying on others.

What was most important was Long Jiu's evaluation of Zhuo Fan. As long as the Luo clan had him, it would soar.

"A capable man stands at the top!" Captain Pang rubbed his chin, taking one last look of admiration at Zhuo Fan then went to get the siblings.

Soon, Captain Pang accompanied them to Zhuo Fan in the tavern's hall. Luo Yunchang still bore the marks of grievance from yesterday's tongue-lashing on her face.

"Let's go, young miss and young master."

Zhuo Fan gestured outside with his eyes and Luo Yunchang snorted as she pulled her brother along.

The tavern keeper opened the doors with a creak.

Luo Yunchang showcased her young miss qualities by shifting her posture and expression to ones worthy of such status. Zhuo Fan even sighed inside that she was a prime example of a clan's lady.

Thirty Sun clan guards stood outside, Qi Condensation experts. In the lead was Sun Yufei and a tall, dignified young master. He held a fan as his ghostly eyes roamed over Luo Yunchang's lithe figure.

Noticing his gaze, Luo Yunchang shifted hers to Sun Yufei, "Why has young miss Sun brought so many people to look for us?"

"Humph, why ask when you already know he offended this young miss in the Cai Manor!" Sun Yufei pointed with hatred at Zhuo Fan, "I will make sure to wipe out all of the Luo clan today!"

Luo Yunchang knitted her brows and pulled Luo Yunhai tighter, but a look at the relaxed Zhuo Fan eased her tension.

It was in these moments of extreme danger, that Zhuo Fan dissolved all problems. Be it in front of Cai Rong or even Long Jiu, his cunningness and meticulous planning pulled them through.

In front of those two experts, these people were nothing.

Luo Yunchang knew, as long as Zhuo Fan was calm, the matter was as good as settled.

Seeing Zhuo Fan unflinching, Luo Yunchang began to smile, lifting her chin with confidence, "My Luo clan had lorded over Windgaze City for centuries, you think we'll bend over just because you say so? Young miss Sun, your clan has only been here for just a few decades, please watch your tone."

Luo Yunchang had finally recovered the lofty bearing she had in the time of Luo clan's prosperity. Such confidence left others speechless.

The audience reduced Sun Yufei to a shrew servant while raising Luo Yunchang to a noble lady.

Noticing their expressions, Sun Yufei's face was inflamed, bursting with Yuan Qi, "Luo Yunchang, I will teach you the meaning of a fallen clan."

She charged for her and Captain Pang rushed to protect his young miss. But before they could meet, a fan rested between them.

"Cousin..." Sun Yufei watched him with bloodshot eyes.

Without paying her any attention, he showed respect towards Luo Yunchang, "Young miss Luo, please forgive my cousin's lack of manners. We have come to your home for your steward to seek justice for my cousin. It does not concern young miss. If you hand him over, I guarantee not to harm any Luo clan member."

"Cousin, didn't we say we're going to destroy them, why..." Sun Yufei was panicking, but he covered her face with the fan.

"I could also bring back the glory of old to the Luo clan."

"No need, Zhuo Fan is part of the Luo clan. If you're looking to trouble him you're dealing with the whole clan. If you have any complaints, come to me. I am in charge of the Luo clan." Luo Yunchang stood fearless before all.

Losing his smile, the youngster shook his head, "I urge young miss to not be taken in by emotions. If you knew who I am, you might not say the same."

Frowning, Luo Yunchang glared at him.

"I am You Quan, a disciple of Hell Valley."

"Wh-" Luo Yunchang was shocked and took two steps back, "That's... Seven Noble Houses..."

"Ha-ha-ha, scared now?" Sun Yufei laughed with pride.

Everyone, besides Zhuo Fan, sported grim expressions. There was no reason to fear meeting Long Jiu since they were negotiating, but in this case, they were at odds with the Hell Valley.

Any from the Seven Noble Houses needed to only lift a finger and a mortal clan would fall or thrive. No wonder even the Clan Head Cai Rong saw the Sun clan girl with importance, her clan had a connection with the Seven Noble Houses.

"Zhuo Fan..."

Luo Yunchang grabbed his hand as her voice trembled.

With a reassuring smile, he stepped forward, "I am Luo clan's steward, Zhuo Fan. What do you think of fighting one on one?"

"Humph, cousin was right, you are an arrogant slave," sneered You Quan as he approached him, "All of us against someone like you will smear Hell Valley's reputation."

With his last word, a whoosh sound traveled and You Quan disappeared.

Zhuo Fan's eyes narrowed, somersaulting backward. When he looked forward, a trace of blood flowed down his face.

As blood dripped from his cheek, the youth now occupied Zhuo Fan's previous position.

"Humph, so you've managed to dodge it." You Quan eyed him evilly, as if he was toying with him.

[6th layer of Qi Condensation, demonic cultivator.]

Zhuo Fan squinted and smiled, "Interesting."

When You Quan attacked like a demon, if Zhuo Fan wasn't a veteran demonic cultivator, it would've killed him. But this revealed Hell Valley's nature, that of a demonic faction.

If another met such a problem, he'd have a hard time coping.

Demonic cultivators gained power through any means, filled with danger and ruthless natures. Righteous cultivators took the opposite approach, taking it one step at a time. They weren't as impressive as demonic cultivation experts, but they hardly encountered problems in cultivation.

And this explained why despite only in his 6th layer, You Quan was far more dangerous. Yet Zhuo was in the 2nd, and four layers difference would make him hard-pressed even against a righteous cultivator.

Luck had it though that Zhuo Fan was an old monster in demonic cultivation, knowing his fair share of its arts and methods. This was his only hope of success.

"Are you alright?" Luo Yunchang was anxious, watching the blood trail down his cheek.

He wiped the blood and showed an excited smile. It wasn't that he never fought with higher layers before, just that they were all righteous cultivators. This was his first encounter with a demonic cultivator in this situation and began to enjoy the novelty of it.

"Fight!"

Even if the Luo clan wasn't here, it was still important to go through with this fight for the sake of his meticulous schemes. This fight followed no logic, as his boiling blood dictated his movements.

The bloodthirsty look in Zhuo Fan's eyes caught You Quan off guard.

Common sense told him his first move should have robbed Zhuo Fan of his life, and even if he escaped by some miracle, he'd be scared witless. But instead of fear, Zhuo Fan showed thrill and thirst for battle.

"Can it be..."

You Quan thought of something but was forced to block.

Bam!

A blood palm exploded in his hand, pushing him back again and again. When he finally stopped, his hand was dripping blood.

"Cousin, be careful. Even Cai Rong suffered from this palm." Sun Yufei advised.

You Quan frowned, his casual expression turning grave, "This is going to be a pain. Never thought I'd meet someone like him..."

He saw Zhuo Fan sporting a grin and he sighed inside, while also raising his vigilance.

[If I had known, I wouldn't have caught myself in this...]

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 22: The Most Dangerous Man | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 22: The Most Dangerous Man

Demonic cultivation had a single pursuit: power. Meanwhile, the righteous path followed set rules to form a solid foundation and advance one step at a time. Because of this savage pursuit, demonic cultivators were seen as madmen, resorting to any despicable means to further their might. This was why righteous cultivators feared them.

Fighting them was tantamount to fighting a madman.

With this knowledge in mind, You Quan began to regret fighting Zhuo Fan. Despite being confident in his success, fighting an unscrupulous demonic cultivator would be sure to come with negative repercussions on his part.

"I need to settle this quickly." You Quan's eyes flashed with murderous intent and dark-blue energy came out of his palm.

The air around him chilled in an instant and even Luo Yunchang, who was ten feet away, felt the cold biting her.

She was aware of its danger and her heart was in a panic. But before she could warn Zhuo Fan, You Quan turned into a black shadow and charged. All the flowers along the way wilted.

"High mortal ranked martial art, Hell Claw."

Bam!

The blackish cold energy struck Zhuo Fan's chest until the latter spat blood along with pieces of ice.

"Humph, I have your heart. No matter what you're trying to do, it's useless."

You Quan was pleased his sudden strike worked and relaxed.

There were four layers of power between them, and even if demonic cultivators, no matter the weird techniques or savagery, once one's heart was in a vice, he couldn't use most of his power. It was the same as being powerless.

Sun Yufei cheered at her cousin's success, "Kill him." While Luo Yunchang and the others were nervous.

Nodding inside, despite knowing his cousin was rash and prone to anger, You Quan had to admit her words this time were true. A demonic cultivator enemy must never be left alive.

Because a demonic cultivator's vengeance will always be ruthless.

Now, another dark-blue palm aimed for Zhuo Fan's head, "Humph, die!"

Luo Yunchang and the rest were in shock, hearts in their throats.

But following an explosive sound, Zhuo Fan's head was fine while You Quan was flung like a ragdoll, trailing a bloody arc in the air.

"Blood Palm!" Zhuo Fan bellowed, staying in the move executing stance.

"That's impossible!"

You Quan crawled to his feet and clasped his chest with an incredulous expression, "I sealed your heart, how can you still use martial arts?"

"Humph, there's nothing bro Zhuo Fan can't do!" Luo Yunhai stuck his chin out as Luo Yunchang and the others chuckled in relief.

But then, Zhuo Fan spat out another mouthful of blood. A sudden hole was now adorning his chest, which leaked blood.

"Wh-what's going on?" Luo Yunchang was stunned while Captain Pang rushed to support the collapsing Zhuo Fan.

Only You Quan understood and cackled, "He seemed to have exploded his heart on purpose when I used my skill on him to break out of Hell Claw's grip. He won't have long to live."

"What did you say?" Luo Yunchang was nervous.

Ignoring her, You Quan ridiculed the hazy eyed Zhuo Fan, "Such a pity. If you were at my stage, your move would have ended with mutual destruction. But it ended with quickening your death. Even hurt, I can finish you off."

He rushed for Zhuo Fan and, though his speed dropped, it wasn't something Luo Yunchang and the others could cope with.

"No!" Luo Yunchang jumped in front of Zhuo Fan with her arms spread. You Quan sneered, "He-he-he, young miss Luo, I would hate to kill you."

Whoosh!

The Luo clan members saw You Quan's claw but were powerless to stop it from approaching Zhuo Fan's head.

You Quan wanted to kill Zhuo Fan in front of them.

Sensing the incoming danger, Zhuo Fan gave out a strange smile.

Bam!

Suddenly, the blackish claw was caught in a vice-like grip.

"Mid mortal ranked martial art, Hidden Dragon Claw?"

You Quan raised his head to find a warm face greeting him. It belonged to a youth of around eighteen, dressed in golden clothes and a scholarly face, yet having a sharp pair of eyes.

"Long Jie?" You Quan gnashed his teeth.

Sun Yufei was in shock, "Veiled Dragon Pavilion..."

"You Quan, do you need to kill for every little mistake?" Long Jie smiled.

"Humph, that's my business, butt out."

Shaking his head, Long Jie might look kind, but there was a certain determination in his eyes, "I was ordered by Uncle Jiu to protect the Luo clan. If you want to kill him, you have to go through me."

"Why is the Veiled Dragon Pavilion suddenly..."

Sun Yufei trembled, never imagining the Luo clan could gain the help of Veiled Dragon Pavilion.

The Sun clan was under the protection of Hell Valley and even though the Luo clan only had four people, they had the Veiled Dragon Pavilion to back them. Based on background, the only clan that could fight the Sun clan in Windgaze City was the Luo clan.

This deflated Sun Yufei's superiority. A clan under Veiled Dragon Pavilion's backing was bound to rise.

Gazing at Luo Yunchang, Sun Yufei hardly hid the hatred in her eyes.

"Humph, Long Jie, we have the same strength. You think you can protect them?" You Quan looked at Zhuo Fan hanging by a thread with killing intent.

With a serious face, Long Jie said with coldness, "You Quan, don't forget your wounds. Think you can match me as you are now?"

Before he could retort, Long Jie said, "I know what you want to say, that a demonic cultivator can show 120% of his power. But if we fight here, it will incur an open war between our houses. Are you prepared to bear such responsibility?"

You Quan hesitated.

Hell Valley and Veiled Dragon Pavilion were of the Seven Noble Houses, yet also at odds. It was only a matter of time till war broke out, but not now. If he ruined his clan's plan, he wouldn't be able to bear the repercussions.

“Al-“

Just when he nodded, a hand grabbed at his chest.

He rushed his Yuan Qi in a panic to block the attack, but a sudden blood energy messed up his control. In but an instant, the hand pierced his chest and gripped his heart.

“Didn’t your Master warn you? In a battle with demonic cultivators, never let down your guard or you will forfeit your life.”

A familiar voice reached You Quan’s ears while his eyes were greeted with Zhuo Fan’s evil grin.

“Y-you can’t...” You Quan was in shock.

Zhuo Fan was on the brink of death yet, now, had the energy to move around. But what was even more baffling was that he was stronger and faster than when Zhuo Fan first fought him...

Everything was clear now. He fell in his trap, and not just him...

He turned to the equally shocked Long Jie with an imploring gaze.

[Save me...]

“Die!” Zhuo Fan’s demonic voice echoed in the two’s ears and both shouted, “No!”

It was too late. Zhuo Fan already gouged out You Quan’s heart. Blood flowed like a fountain from You Quan’s chest as he collapsed.

He didn’t want to fight a demonic cultivator since every move was planned and vicious...

“Cousin!”

Sun Yufei cried in pain as she walked in a daze to his body. Sun clan’s guards took her and left in a rush. They no longer had a backing and this place was filled with Veiled Dragon Pavilion’s men.

The calm Long Jie, witnessing death for the first time, swallowed dryly and turned to Zhuo Fan. He saw the still-beating heart in Zhuo Fan's hand and broke out in a sweat.

He saw his fair share of demonic cultivators but Zhuo Fan horrified him the most. If he compared them, those demonic cultivators he saw were noblemen when up against Zhuo Fan's methods.

"You're the one grandpa Jiu sent to protect us? Thanks for the help. Please send him a message, that we no longer need protection." Zhuo Fan flung the heart and clasped his hands.

Long Jie returned the gesture with a bitter smile. Then he left without a word, like a defeated general.

Six hours later, inside Veiled Dragon Pavilion.

Bam!

Long Jiu smacked the table in a fit of anger as his only eye was on the verge of popping out. Long Jie and Long Kui stood with heads bowed, not daring to make a peep.

"Never thought I'd see the day I, Long Jiu, who moved unhindered across the world, was had today by a brat. To think he would ruin all of our clan's plans."

Long Kui hesitated and asked, "Uncle Jiu, I do not understand. What does Zhuo Fan's sneak attack have to do with Veiled Dragon Pavilion?"

"Foolish child." Long Jiu cursed, "Ah Jie was there and was at odds with You Quan, everyone saw it. That punk killed You Quan right before Ah Jie. You tell me, who will the blame will fall on?"

"Luo clan!" Long Kui said like it was obvious.

Long Jiu laughed as he shook his head. Long Jiu explained, "Little Kui, do you believe a small clan would dare to kill a disciple of the Seven Noble Houses?"

Long Kui shook her head after thinking it over.

Long Jie continued, "If even you don't believe it, then Hell Valley and Sun clan will surely refuse to. They will blame us."

"What? But that will mean we're the ones down on our luck. Why should we be the Luo clan's scapegoat?"

"Humph, luck? All of this is the work of that punk. From Ah Jie, I understand the kid was on the verge of dying when he arrived. Even if You Quan wanted his life, he couldn't do anything since Ah Jie stopped him. Then he sneak attacked him with a stronger move than in the beginning. This clearly states how cunning he was and that he planned ahead."

"What? Does that mean he knew brother Long Jie was there from the start and targeted You Quan?" Long Kui exclaimed.

Sighing, Luo clan shook his head in helplessness, "Silly girl, not only did he plan against You Quan, but he also included Veiled Dragon Pavilion and Hell Valley in his calculations. Our houses would fight while his Luo clan escapes."

Only

"Impossible! Isn't he afraid of offending two houses?"

"He thought this one out too. When he sold us that drawing, he already ascertained our house's position. If we attack them or ignore the Luo clan's plight, it is the same as showing weakness in front of Hell Valley, damaging our Veiled Dragon Pavilion's honor. Our only choice is to protect the Luo clan.

"Sigh, he had me from the start... This punk is the most dangerous man I have ever seen."

Recalling the previous scene, Long Jie had to nod his head in agreement.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 23: Conspiracy | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 23: Conspiracy

“Get out!”

In the dead of night, Zhuo Fan was trying hard to staunch the flow of blood from his chest while sitting on the bed. Luo Yunchang wanted to help him but Zhuo Fan’s bellow drove her out.

Despite winning against You Quan, his victory wasn’t a sweet one.

If not for his sneak attack, the fight would’ve been one-sided, a common occurrence when demonic cultivators were involved. But he felt a deep sense of powerlessness from today’s fight.

Although they were 4 layers apart, he believed himself to be a Demonic Emperor, that using all his power would have certainly finished off a kid still wet behind his ears.

Yet reality showed that not only he couldn’t win, but he also couldn’t even get the upper hand in the fight. He had to rely on scheming to lure Veiled Dragon Pavilion out in the open and kill his enemy when he least expected by inciting chaos among the houses, while also providing the Luo clan a way out.

It all went according to plan, yet it didn’t leave a good taste in his mouth.

“Too weak...”

To get rid of their trouble with the Cai clan and Sun clan, they got tangled up in the Seven Noble Houses’ conflict. It was trading one poison for another. All was quiet for now, but they’d have to face the music sooner or later.

Yet, with his meager power, he couldn't protect himself, let alone the Luo clan.

"I need to get stronger fast!"

Zhuo Fan clenched his teeth and performed strange hand gestures as his eyes let out an eerie red light.

At this moment, Cai Xiaoting was meditating in a room when a sudden ache in his abdomen twisted his face in pain. Beads of sweat rolled down his forehead and he soon passed out.

A bloody light flashed from his abdomen and a palm-sized infant came out.

It was Zhuo Fan's Blood Infant.

At the time he was in Cai Manor, Zhuo Fan inserted the Blood Infant in Cai Xiaoting, to control Cai Rong. Because his movement was too fast, no one saw him. And under the threat of his son's life, Cai Rong was forced to let the Luo clan go.

Thanks to the Blood Infant in Cai Xiaoting's body, Zhuo Fan could monitor their affairs. He would get an early warning to any plan they might come up with.

But now, spying on the Cai clan has lost its value.

The Blood Infant saw the unconscious Cai Xiaoting and let out a sneer in Zhuo Fan's voice, "Humph, I won't take your life so you could bear witness to the fall of the Cai clan."

The Blood Infant then turned into a red light and flew outside.

In a dark garden, a Cai clan guard was patrolling when a red light entered his body. He couldn't utter a sound as his body numbed. He soon shriveled up and a light wind scattered him to dust, leaving behind the red glow.

In this manner, more than thirty guards disappeared from the Cai clan.

In the tavern, Zhuo Fan snickered and sent Blood Infant for the next prey.

He and the Blood Infant were one. When the Blood Infant entered a cultivator, he used the Demon Transformation Art to absorb the person's blood essence and Yuan Qi for Zhuo Fan to refine later.

He didn't plan on using the Blood Infant so soon, but he needed it to heal his heart. So he might as well reduce Cai clan's numbers while he was at it.

The Blood Infant reached the Qi Condensation and even an early Bone Tempering expert would find it troublesome to fight with. As for Qi Condensation opponents, it would kill them in an instant.

If Zhuo Fan had the Blood Infant on him in his fight with You Quan, he could've won without having to resort to any schemes.

He could only sigh as he thought of how it was the perfect match to have both the Blood Infant and the Demon Transformation Art.

Raising the Blood Infant was very difficult, and even Patriarch Blood Demon only reached Saint Stage with it. Yet, thanks to the Demon Transformation Art, Zhuo Fan raised it to Qi Condensation after ten days of hard work in the tavern.

He did it during his previous seclusion. The first day he used to bind the Blood Infant and the rest to provide it with blood essence. Since the Blood Infant reached such a level, it was time for it to collect blood essence.

And in a clan like the Cai clan, Bone Tempering experts were rare, so Zhuo Fan wasn't afraid the Blood Infant would be harmed. This led to an unrestrained hunt as he sucked dry fifty more guards.

But just when he planned to wipe away any Cai clan remnants, an eerie energy caught his attention.

"A Demonic cultivator expert?"

Zhuo Fan was startled and guided the Blood Infant to the source.

It arrived near a small room, where a faint light burned. There were two dozen peak Qi Condensation cultivators standing guard.

It stirred Zhuo Fan's curiosity and drew Blood Infant to a window. As for those guards, they couldn't even detect the Blood Infant, not to mention see it.

Three elderly sat in the guest and main seats inside the room.

The one in the main seat was Cai Rong. The first seat on his left was occupied by a bald old man with cloudy eyes and exuding a peculiar energy.

Zhuo Fan recognized it in a second, it was from a demonic cultivator expert.

The old man on Cai Rong's right wore noble attire and faint traces of demonic energy leaked from him. It showed he was in the middle of changing to a demonic cultivation method.

Yet Cai Rong and the noble dressed old man were showing great respect to the bald demonic cultivator.

[Can it be...]

Zhuo Fan felt he was onto something when Clan Head cupped his hands before the bald man, "Elder Jian, to what do I owe the honor of your and Clan Head Sun's visit?"

Cloudy eyes stared at Cai Rong until he trembled. It was then that Elder Jian smiled, "I'm sure you know that a disciple from my Hell Valley was killed today by a Veiled Dragon Pavilion."

"Uhm, wasn't it done by the Luo clan?" Cai Rong let out a dry laugh.

"You think the Luo clan would have the nerve?" Elder Jian laughed as his cloudy eyes shined, "The feud between my Hell Valley and Veiled Dragon Pavilion was at a stalemate where neither dared to make the first move and break the balance of the seven houses. Yet the Veiled Dragon Pavilion used the Luo clan to kill my disciple. What are they aiming for?"

This made Zhuo Fan muffle his laughter.

Just as he expected, these seven houses were treated like kings for so many years that they would never believe anyone would challenge their authority. It was because of such raw arrogance that made them believe there was a deeper scheme

involved instead of taking what happened at face value.

Veiled Dragon Pavilion was no different, willing to accept this injustice instead of showing weakness.

“Uh, then you visited me because...” Cai Rong hesitated.

“Ha-ha-ha, nothing much, just help us to spy on Veiled Dragon Pavilion and understand their intent. It seems this event will trigger a battle between the houses.”

“Uhm... Elder Jian, that’s the Veiled Dragon Pavilion. My Cai clan can’t afford to offend them.” Cai Rong panicked.

He thought, [Why the hell are you Seven Noble Houses dragging my small clan into this?]

Shaking his head, Elder Jian said, “Clan Head Cai, don’t misunderstand. There is no need for your clan to go head to head with Veiled Dragon Pavilion. It’s just testing them, that is, dealing with the Luo clan and observing the Veiled Dragon Pavilion’s reaction.”

“What, Luo clan?”

Cai Rong was shocked.

There wasn’t anyone in the Windgaze City who didn’t know of today’s fight between You Quan and Zhuo Fan, that Luo clan was backed by the Veiled Dragon Pavilion. [Yet here you are asking me to go make a mess of Luo clan. Isn’t that the same as offending the Veiled Dragon Pavilion?]

Cai Rong looked over at Clan Head Sun, only to see him smile with a hint of schadenfreude.

[Damn you! Since you’re so close with Hell Valley, why don’t you go mess with Luo clan? Didn’t your daughter make a scene today? But now that you saw them with the Veiled Dragon Pavilion, you don’t dare move an inch.]

Cai Rong felt his tooth itch from hatred but didn't have the courage to refuse Hell Valley, "Ai, to tell the truth, I hate that punk, Zhuo Fan, the most. He came to my clan a few days ago to look for trouble. I don't know what evil trick he used, but he made my son cough blood for several days and we still haven't found a cure. If I go after him, he would use the same trick to take my son's life..."

Pff...

Before Cai Rong even finished, Zhuo Fan could barely hold his laughter.

He left the Blood Infant inside Cai Xiaoting to teach the Cai clan a lesson, but never used it again afterward. He didn't expect the Clan Head would use such a lame excuse to escape this predicament.

Even Elder Jian was skeptical of Cai Rong's flowery speech and his face hardened.

Upon seeing this, Cai Rong rushed to present an alternative, "Elder Jian, Clan Head Sun is the best man for the job and is also close with Hell Valley. Letting him in charge of this task won't disappoint you."

"Hey, Cai Rong, what are you trying to pull?"

Clan Head Sun jumped to his feet. Luo clan was a headache and they didn't know how tight its relation was with the Veiled Dragon Pavilion. If he'd instigated Veiled Dragon Pavilion's involvement when he messed with the Luo clan, he'd be ruined.

Despite the Sun clan and Hell Valley being related, the former was by no means one of the Seven Noble Houses. Getting on the Veiled Dragon Pavilion's wrong side was out of the question. It was unknown if the Hell Valley would stick its neck out for the Sun clan.

Going after Luo clan was plain suicide.

Seeing the two clans proclaim loyalty by day and shirking off their duties at crucial times, Elder Jian snapped, "Enough, you useless fools, I don't need any of you. I will find someone else for the job."

"Also, Cai Rong, have you brought your spirit ranked martial art, Wind Kick?"

"Please inspect it, Elder Jian." Cai clan rushed to present the jade slip, yet his eyes showed reluctance, "Elder Jian, this is the only spirit ranked martial art the ancestors have passed down in my Cai clan."

"Fine, I won't take advantage of you." Snorting, Elder Jian threw him a jade slip, "This is the spirit ranked martial art, Flaming Finger, a higher rank than yours."

Cai Rong was overjoyed, expressing his thanks again and again. Zhuo Fan standing outside was puzzled, [Is Hell Valley muddled to exchange a mid spirit ranked martial art for a lower one?]

"Elder Jian, who did you find to deal with Luo clan, if you don't mind me asking?"

Ignoring the martial art the Hell Valley bestowed on Cai Rong, Clan Head Sun asked. Cai Rong pricked up his ears to catch the answer.

Snickering, Elder Jian's eyes flashed with disdain, "You bunch of dogs, afraid someone might replace you? Humph, relax will you, that person is from Hell Valley."

"Does the Hell Valley plan to step forward? Why..." Cai Rong and Clan Head Sun didn't mind Elder Jian's disdain and were surprised.

With an odd light in his eyes, Elder Jian said, "He is a spy we have long planted in the Blackwind Mountain..."

"Blackwind Mountain!"

Zhuo Fan was so shocked his heart skipped a beat and his control over his energy slipped.

"Who's there?"

Elder Jian whipped his head and launched a palm attack. The door was blown to pieces as Blood Infant turned into a red streak of light and flew away.

Only now did Elder Jian rush outside.

"So quick!"

Zhuo Fan's shock wasn't small, but luck was with him as the guards were surrounding the place. He grinned and urged the Blood Infant to enter one of them.

"Blood Boil!"

Only

The guards were in shock as Zhuo Fan's shout blew up the guard. With no time to dodge, all the others next to him lost their lives.

Elder Jian's figure was blocked by the sudden explosion, allowing Blood Infant's escape.

Cai Rong and Clan Head Sun saw the wretched aftermath and were frightened, "What was that?"

Elder Jian shook his head, yet his face turned grave, "I don't know, but it must belong to a demonic cultivator..."

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 24: Breakthrough Again | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 24: Breakthrough Again

Whoosh!

A red light streaked in the dead of night, passing through doors and entering Zhuo Fan's body.

Letting out a breath, Zhuo Fan opened his eyes as he rejoiced. Fortunately, the Blood Infant was quick to escape or it would've been ruined by the bald elder.

He never imagined he'd bump into such a strong opponent in the Cai clan. Even if he couldn't recognize the elder's cultivation, he was certain the elder was no less powerful than Godeye Long Jiu.

And once Blood Infant was destroyed, because of Zhuo Fan's connection with it, it would spell doom for him too. But the opposite was also true. Even if his heart exploded, he wouldn't die as long as the Blood Infant lived; because the moment he bound with the Blood Infant, it became his heart.

"I need to work harder on improving my strength."

His vast experience told him danger was looming. For now, it looked like Hell Valley and Veiled Dragon Pavilion were silent, but the Blackwind Mountain might be the fuse to a disaster with the Luo clan smack in the middle.

His fate rested on strengthening the Blood Infant to Bone Tempering Stage. This was the only way to ensure some semblance of control when he met an expert like Long Jiu.

Zhuo Fan closed his eyes and refined the Yuan Qi and blood essence the Blood Infant collected.

In the next moment, red flashes came from his chest as red energy coursed through his veins to his heart. As the energy gathered the whole in his chest began to heal. His weak heartbeat soon started pounding with greater force.

In but an hour, his chest healed, with not even a scar left behind. If one didn't witness his heart exploding, they wouldn't believe the events of this morning occurred.

He continued refining Blood Infant's gathered Yuan Qi and turning into black energy. One part flowed into his Dantian and another back to the Blood Infant.

No less than 50 Qi Condensation experts' Yuan Qi were refined and propelled Zhuo Fan through the 3rd layer of Qi Condensation and to the brink of entering the 4th layer.

With a faint boom, Zhuo Fan and Blood Infant broke through to the 4th layer.

Zhuo Fan was happy. It was so easy to increase one's strength. It was only ten days ago that he entered the 2nd layer and here he was now in the 4th.

But when he wanted to work towards the 5th layer, he found Blood Infant's Yuan Qi reserves had been spent.

He wanted to keep going, but he was satisfied he at least advanced two layers in one go.

He looked out the window at the clearing sky and walked out to stretch his legs. Now that Blackwind Mountain was coming, he had to find a safe haven for the Luo clan.

Zhuo Fan opened the door to his room but before he could take a step, a thump resounded and something fell at his feet. He looked to see a drowsy Luo Yunchang getting back up in embarrassment.

"What are you doing?" Zhuo Fan frowned.

He poured all his focus on controlling the Blood Infant last night and then cultivating, so he didn't pay attention to what happened outside his room to the point he didn't detect her.

[Damn it! How could I become so careless? If it were an enemy instead, I would've been dead.]

Seeing his angry look, Luo Yunchang was apologetic as she mumbled, "I was worried about your wounds worsening and waited outside. Now that you're alright, I'll be going. "

"Wait, you stood guard all night?" Zhuo Fan was shocked.

Luo Yunchang blushed and turned to leave with a hurried pace than before.

Captain Pang took this moment to appear and saw Zhuo safe and sound and shouted in joy, "Brother Zhuo, you've recovered. That wound of yours scared all of us to death. Young miss always stayed at your door, worried for your life. Eh, where is she?"

"She left."

Zhuo Fan rubbed his nose and said calmly, yet warmth grew in his heart.

[Damn this heart demon!]

Zhuo Fan cursed. How could the glorious Demonic Emperor feel anything for a mere woman? [This must be the work of the kid's heart demon.]

"Right, old Pang, you came right on time. Come with me to the Veiled Dragon Pavilion."

"But what about young miss and..."

"Relax, after yesterday's event, no one would dare touch them, if not for fear of offending Veiled Dragon Pavilion..." Zhuo Fan snickered.

Captain Pang had to take a moment to recover and reacted by giving thumbs up as his eyes glittered with worship. He didn't get Zhuo Fan's plan but he was clear Zhuo Fan made others misunderstand Veiled Dragon Pavilion was backing Luo clan.

"Steward Zhuo, I am now thoroughly convinced. If the Luo clan doesn't have you as a steward, we would have been doomed. It was a waste of your talents to have left you sweeping the courtyard back in the day."

Laughing, Zhuo Fan patted Captain Pang's shoulder and shook his head.

[That person wasn't me...]

Fifteen minutes later found the two at the gates of Veiled Dragon Pavilion, before the same two guards. But this time, they showed proper respect.

"Please enter, dear guests."

"What, you won't go and report first?" Zhuo Fan mocked.

After giving a silly laugh, a guard knew Zhuo Fan was still bothered by what happened before and apologized, "It was us who were ignorant before and didn't recognize your greatness. You made a deal of a million spirit stones. We do not have the right to block such an honorable guest."

"Humph, snobs!" Zhuo Fan sneered then took Captain Pang inside, leaving the guards still bent and flattering him. They were clearly miserable inside but still plastered a fake smile on their faces.

The two ran into Long Kui. This time, she lacked the respect she showed before and snorted in anger as she walked away.

"Uhm, how did we offended her?" Captain Pang was baffled.

Zhuo Fan smiled.

"Young miss Long Kui, is this how Veiled Dragon Pavilion treats its guests?"

"Humph, how are you guests?" Raising an eyebrow, she glared at him, "You don't deserve to be guests when you used us!"

Rubbing his chin, Zhuo Fan smiled and muttered, "Still just a girl, and so naive."

Zhuo Fan's voice was faint but not enough to prevent the disdain in his voice from reaching Long Kui. She was treated as the jewel of the clan, and never received such contempt, especially from people around her age.

"Zhuo Fan, who are you calling naive?"

"You, of course!" Zhuo Fan smiled, "Be it business or the politics between the seven houses, everything must be taken into consideration when looking to make a profit. Yet you are prone to anger just from being used in someone else's plan. Just how did you survive this long? Compared to you, Long Jie is much more mature. He realized I used him and just walked away instead. The way I see it, admitting a loss is also a kind of power. At least the next time I plan on using him, it won't be as easy."

This was the first time Long Kui heard such an argument and was stunned.

She came from the clan's estate and was put in Long Jiu's care. The elders in the estate spoke highly of her talent but not enough to entrust her with heavy responsibility. When she arrived here, Long Jiu spoke the same. Her talent wasn't any less than Long Jie but Long Jiu didn't trust her in being responsible.

She didn't understand, but now it seemed she was clear on something...

"Love, hate, closeness, and vengeance won't help you, only benefits." Zhuo Fan saw her bewildered eyes and chuckled, "Let's set aside our personal grievances and talk about business. It is also where your talent lies."

Long Kui thought for a bit and nodded.

But just then a light cough came, along with an aged voice, "Mister Zhuo Fan, let's talk."

The three of them looked to see Long Jiu accompanied by Long Jie walking towards them. But Long Jie couldn't mask a glint of shock as he gazed upon Zhuo Fan.

Yesterday, he saw Zhuo Fan's heart exploding, but now, he was walking like it never happened. His breath was even and spoke calmly.

[Did he recover in one night? How?]

"Grandpa Jiu, won't you give this young one a chance?" Not paying any heed to Long Jie's shock, Zhuo Fan spoke.

Shaking his head, Long Jiu laughed, "Ha-ha-ha, just from talking with you, I ended up being used in the end. To think you still dare to come here. If I knew your true colors before, I would've taken you as a thousand-year-old monster taking shelter in the Luo clan."

[Damn! I almost got found out!]

Zhuo Fan forced a laugh as he dismissed him, "You're too kind, grandpa Jiu. How can I compare to you?"

"Cut the crap!" Long Jiu switched tones in an instant and said harshly, "Why are you here?"

"I am looking for a safe house for the Luo clan to live in. Does grandpa Jiu know of a good place?"

Stroking his beard, Long Jiu replied, "Why should I help you?"

"Simple, Veiled Dragon Pavilion owes us! Also..." Zhuo Fan laughed eerily, "It will help you watch over us more easily."

Long Jiu's eyes squinted as his heart trembled in shock.

[This punk can see through anyone. Ever since killing You Quan yesterday, Veiled Dragon Pavilion has been on the defensive. With how tense our relation with Hell Valley is now, a battle might break out at any time.]

Only

And Luo clan was a variable because of their connection with Veiled Dragon Pavilion, no one dared to mess with it, but it also allowed the Luo clan to do whatever it wanted. One wrong move and it could trigger a war between the houses.

This was why Long Jiu placed surveillance over the Luo clan. Yet, Zhuo Fan went and exposed it. This left Long Jiu feeling apprehensive.

[What is this punk scheming?]

He never imagined a veteran practitioner a century-old would one day be toyed with by a punk. And he didn't understand the whole picture either, leaving him with an unpleasant feeling...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 25: Array Grandmaster | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 25: Array Grandmaster

Seeing the old man hesitating, Zhuo Fan smiled, "Guess I'll have to suffer a loss and give you something."

"Humph, what could you possibly know that the Veiled Dragon Pavilion doesn't?" Long Kui stuck her chin with disdain.

Zhuo Fan smiled, "I have heard of the Veiled Dragon Pavilion boundless strength, but the cat and mouse each have its own means. What I know doesn't mean you do as well."

Long Kui grinned unconvinced. Long Jie also shook his head. But only Long Jiu fixed his single eye on Zhuo Fan.

Long Jiu wouldn't even care if it were anyone else. But it concerned Zhuo Fan, who gave them too many shocks these past days. He began to add a certain importance to the youth before him.

"Let's hear it!"

Snickering, Zhuo Fan said, "Did you know Hell Valley's men are already here?"

"What?"

Long Jiu shouted in shock.

Since the founding of the empire, the Seven Noble Houses' domains had clear boundaries. Windgaze City was Veiled Dragon Pavilion's and no other house was allowed to establish a branch here or it would be taken as provocation and war

would break out.

Of course, their disciples were the exception, as it could be seen from Veiled Dragon Pavilion ignoring You Quan's arrival. However, this didn't extend to elders or similar experts, they needed consent first.

Zhuo Fan knew of this rule from Luo Yunchang and was now probing. It went just as he thought. From their faces, they had no idea the bald old man was here.

"Impossible, we have scouts all over Windgaze City and no one can escape our notice." Long Jie shook his head with a grim look.

"Humph, don't listen to him. He just wants to scare us." Long Kui glared at Zhuo Fan.

Only Long Jiu spoke in a grave tone, "What proof do you have?"

Zhuo Fan smiled, "None."

"So you're just running your mouth." Long Kui threw a despising glare his way.

Zhuo Fan laughed, "But his appearance was that of a bald old man, with Cai Rong and Clan Head Sun calling him Elder Jian!"

"Condor Jian Fan?"

Long Jiu's only eye squinted as his power exploded. It was so strong none of the others around him could breathe, stepping back again and again.

Only after a while did he calm down.

Zhuo Fan gasped as his heart shivered. Long Jiu's power contained naked killing intent that shocked even him.

"Grandpa Jiu, you've met that old man?" Zhuo Fan probed.

"Not only met him... That man ruined uncle Jiu's godeye." Long Jie explained.

Zhuo Fan was in joy. [I was scared you had no grievances. Now that I know you're archenemies, it couldn't be better.]

"Restrain your anger, grandpa Jiu!" Zhuo Fan switched to a fake compassionate tone.

Waving, Long Jiu's eye glinted with coldness, "Alright, since you spoke of his appearance, I'll believe you. You can take the courtyard a hundred yards from here."

"Thank you, grandpa Jiu!" Zhuo Fan clasped his hands and walked away with Captain Pang. But after a couple of steps, Long Jiu spoke coldly, "Kid, where's that geezer?"

Stopping, Zhuo Fan replied, "Cai clan, but it's more likely he's in the Sun clan now."

"I see!" Long Jiu nodded as the bones in his fists crackled. Once Zhuo Fan was out of sight, he spoke, "Ah Jie, report it to the clan so they can send some elders. I won't let Jian Fan leave this place alive. Also, stay for now in that courtyard and look after the Luo clan. I don't want them to do anything that might scare away Jian Fan."

"Uncle Jiu, he is a Hell Valley elder, if he dies here, it will trigger a war between our houses." Long Jie showed his worry.

"Humph, it is he who doesn't follow the rules and sneaked my domain. If I let him live, I won't be able to live with the regret of him taking my eye."

Seeing his advice falling on deaf ears, Long Jie sighed and left with Long Kui. Though they left, they could still hear Long Jiu's angry laughter...

The next morning, Zhuo Fan took the siblings and Captain Pang to their new home. This was where the Veiled Dragon Pavilion received their honored guests. It was far larger than the reception house where they were welcomed before. It was the best place in town.

In a short while, Luo clan was the talk of the town, of how they were under Veiled Dragon Pavilion's close care. Everyone knew the Veiled Dragon Pavilion supported them, or they wouldn't have placed them in one of their courtyards, protected day in day out.

Cai clan and Sun clan rejoiced they didn't accept Elder Jian's task. Just from today's circumstances, it was clear that any who dared to harm the Luo clan would face the wrath of Veiled Dragon Pavilion.

Just like that, the moment the Luo clan stepped foot in their new home, it was publicly declared as the number one clan in the Windgaze City. They were held above even the Cai clan and Sun clan, despite being a small clan of four.

"Are we going to live here from now on?"

Being the first to enter, Luo Yunchang was shocked by the imposing atmosphere of the place, including the sheer number of guards around them, all Qi Condensation experts. Adding to them were two dozen more golden armored guards staying vigilant. They were clearly Bone Tempering experts.

Such guards could only be seen in the Seven Noble Houses.

Luo Yunhai and Captain Pang were struck dumb. The later was even in awe by the number of experts, while the former inquisitive.

"Old Pang, when the Luo clan recovers, what do you think of becoming the leader of such a team?" Zhuo Fan patted his shoulder.

Captain Pang shyly shook his head, "Any guard here is stronger than me. It is great if I can be as strong as them, but I don't dare lead them."

Despite saying that, his eyes flashed with hope.

Zhuo Fan laughed, "That day will come."

But a sudden mocking laughter reached them, "Mister Zhuo Fan, you not only lie to others but even lie to your own people. A steward like you is only good at conning."

Many turned to see Long Jie and Long Kui walking over.

Ever since she realized Zhuo Fan made use of Veiled Dragon Pavilion, she lost all amiable pretense with Zhuo Fan, "With Captain Pang's talent, he'd reach the 6th layer Qi Condensation at best. Such a man is but a basic guard to us, not a captain. I advise your little clan not to dream for something out of reach."

Luo Yunchang and Captain Pang saddened while Zhuo Fan steeled his face.

"Young miss Long Kui, as the saying goes, don't mock a destitute youth. Your words are too harsh."

"Humph, what youth am I mocking? That's just an excuse to deceive dreamers. Every glorious clan built their way over thousands of years to reach the top. Don't think you can rely on your wit to stay under Veiled Dragon Pavilion's protection forever. In my eyes, Windgaze City is but a grain of sand. Even if you're a king or overlord here, you'd only be a frog in a well, oblivious to the vast world outside..."

Hearing her incessant babbling, Zhuo Fan laughed.

[Oblivious to the vast world? A frog in a well? If anything worked as it should, the glorious Demonic Emperor wouldn't have fallen from Sacred Domain.] In his eyes it was this Tianyu Empire who was the speck, to say nothing of the Veiled Dragon Pavilion.

"Zhuo Fan!"

Seeing him angry, Luo Yunchang pulled his hand with a frown. They shouldn't offend their protector.

Long Jie also felt Long Kui crossed the line and shook his head after drawing her attention. But the lady only snorted.

"Young miss, lend me some spirit stones." Zhuo Fan said coldly.

Luo Yunchang was startled. She didn't know what he wanted to do but she gave him a ring containing what he requested.

Zhuo Fan jumped on the highest point on the roof and overlooked the area.

"Hey, this isn't your home. Get down from there!" Long Kui barked.

Ignoring her, Zhuo Fan spoke, "3rd grade, Coiling Dragon Array."

Long Kui and Long Jie were shocked. Zhuo Fan's words spoke of the array Long Jiu set up in this place yet this kid saw through it with one look.

Yet before the shock lessened, Zhuo Fan jumped and spread spirit stones around him from the ring. In fifteen minutes, close to ten thousand spirit stones were buried in the courtyard.

When Zhuo Fan landed, Long Kui asked, "What are you trying to do?"

Zhuo Fan began making hand signs.

In an instant, the ground trembled and dragon roars resounded followed by nine golden dragons bursting out of the ground.

The dragons spread across the sky above Windgaze City for all to see.

Elder Jian, who was in a hidden room in the Sun clan. He opened his eyes and stared in shock, "Who's setting up the array? Is it that geezer? No, he doesn't have the skill to set up one such as this."

In Veiled Dragon Pavilion, Long Jiu shot to his feet as he watched in astonishment, "Is that my Coiling Dragon Array? No, my array isn't as strong."

On Blackwind Mountain, a sinister youth turned to Windgaze City's direction with a frown, "What's going on in the city? Was the plan pushed forward?"

But he soon shook his head, "No, Elder Jian isn't impulsive. What could have happened..."

Everyone's eyes turned to this strange light. After fifteen minutes, Zhuo Fan's hand signs changed and the nine golden dragons returned to the earth of the courtyard.

It was soon followed by a golden glow that spread all over it.

"W-what did you do?" Long Kui stammered.

Zhuo Fan ignored her again and showed deep respect as he presented the ring to Luo Yunchang, "Young miss, I notice the 3rd grade Coiling Dragon Array lacked in strength to safeguard young miss' safety. As such, I took it upon myself to upgrade it to the 5th grade Nine Heavens Coiling Dragon Array. I have wasted spirit stones, please punish me, young miss."

W-what?!

Long Jie and Long Kui were gob-smacked.

There were but a handful of people who could set a 5th grade array in the Tianyu Empire. Not even the seven houses had such a talent. But this kid had just simply deployed one.

Was he a 5th grade array master?

Luo Yunchang knew Zhuo did it on purpose to humiliate them, then deferred to her. This was also the first time she saw him so subdued. It was the perfect moment to install her rightful status as a young miss onto him.

Luo Yunchang smiled inside yet her face was stone cold, "Steward Zhuo, I should punish you for taking so many spirit stones without consent. But I won't blame you as you did it for our sake. Let's go. "

What? Punishment? Not even the Seven Noble Houses would dare rebuke such a lofty existence.

Long Kui looked as if she had a fly stuck in her throat.

Only

Soon, Zhuo Fan accompanied Luo Yunhai as they swaggered inside, to the endless shock of the others and the snickering of Captain Pang and Luo Yunhai.

Only Long Jie and Long Kui stood there with their hearts in chaos.

They never thought it possible for a scheming 2nd layer Qi Condensation Zhuo Fan to also be a 5th grade array master.

How could an unknown clan have such a talent...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 26: Invitation | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 26: Invitation

Chapter 26, Invitation

Translator: StarReader

Editor: Silavin

Looking for Proofreaders for this Novel

Whoosh!

With a sudden boom, a figure appeared before the two, it was Long Jiu. His eyes were filled with excitement.

“Who set up the array just now?”

“Uh, it’s...”

The two looked long at each other before Long Jie replied, “Luo clan’s steward, Zhuo Fan!”

“What, him?”

Long Jiu turned to the array and the more he examined it, the more shocked he got, “An array master needs to know each array as the back of his hand and pours years and years into understanding heaven and earth. At my age, I can only set up 3rd grade arrays, so how can a pup set up a 5th grade array so quickly?”

Long Jiu seemed to be asking Long Kui and Long Jie, but it also seemed to be asking himself. The two only shook their heads.

It was unknown what kind of man Zhuo Fan was as he kept doing extraordinary and shocking things again and again. Even the two of them, born in a powerful clan, no longer dared to underestimate Zhuo Fan. They even felt inferior.

“Go and call the kid over. Uh, no, invite him. I want to speak to him.” Taking a look around, Long Jiu grinned.

The two cupped their hands and followed his order. Soon, in a pavilion in the garden behind the courtyard, Long Jiu served tea at a stone table. It didn’t take long before Zhuo Fan came in, followed by Long Jie and Long Kui.

“Ha-ha-ha, brother Zhuo Fan, sit.” Long Jiu laughed as he invited him.

Long Jie and Long Kui were shocked.

Brother Zhuo Fan?

Long Jiu had a high position in the clan, as such, the two of them called him uncle. Yet a proud man like Long Jiu only respected a handful of people in the Tianyu Empire.

But to call this kid ‘brother’ left the two stumped.

Zhuo Fan took it in stride however, sitting without hesitation. In his eyes, this was a world where the strong were respected. With enough strength, even this old man’s grandpa would call him brother.

“Why has bro Jiu called for me?” Zhuo Fan wasn’t a stickler for rules and poured himself some tea. He didn’t seem to know the meaning of shame as he called Long Jiu bro without so much as a blush.

Long Kui couldn’t even react. Long Jie rolled his eyes, cursing him for being shameless and taking advantage of circumstances.

But Long Jiu was overjoyed. Their relationship was now tighter and that was a good thing for him.

“Brother Zhuo Fan, since you called me bro Jiu, I won’t mince words. I’ll be honest with you, brother. For a 5th grade array master to stay in a fallen clan like the Luo clan is a sin. It’s best if you join the Veiled Dragon Pavilion. We will even treat you as a Venerable. Even the Clan Head will have to show you respect.”

Long Kui and Long Jie never imagined Long Jiu wanted to invite Zhuo Fan as Veiled Dragon Pavilion’s Venerable.

That was the highest status in the Veiled Dragon Pavilion, even higher than an elder. How could a kid, still wet behind his ears, receive such honor?

Then again, Zhuo Fan was a 5th grade array master only in the Qi Condensation Stage. Any of the seven houses would invite such a person to be a Venerable.

Asking him to join the Veiled Dragon Pavilion was for the clan’s future.

Zhuo Fan sipped tea with a smile.

He knew of Long Jiu’s intention even before he came. Who wouldn’t fight and seize a 5th grade array master in such an empire? Even the emperor would have to show him courtesy.

He foresaw this even as he set up the array.

“Brother Zhuo Fan, what do you say?” Long Jiu asked again.

Zhuo Fan grinned, “I have one condition.”

“If it’s in Veiled Dragon Pavilion’s power, you can ask for anything.” Long Jiu expressed his consent.

“Even making her serve me tea, rub my feet, and warm my bed?” Zhuo Fan pointed at Long Kui.

Long Kui’s cheeks flared red with anger, “Keep dreaming.”

Long Jiu had to shake his head in embarrassment, “It’s impossible with little Kui.”

“Ha-ha-ha, it’s just a joke. I already have a young miss so why would I look for another?” Zhuo Fan’s eyes were radiant as he turned serious, “I want the Luo siblings... forever safe.”

Zhuo Fan paused after each word.

Long Jiu showed his admiration. He never expected for Zhuo Fan’s condition to be just this. Such devotion inspired respect from the three around him.

Even the always angry Long Kui looked at him longer.

“I agree. As long as the Veiled Dragon Pavilion exists, the Luo clan, not only this generation but its descendants will also live in peace.”

Smiling, Zhuo Fan sipped his tea again.

“Then from now on, you are Veiled Dragon Pavilion’s Venerable. I will report it to the clan and three days later, I will ask Ah Jie to escort you to the clan estate.”

“Wait!”

Zhuo Fan raised his hand, “I didn’t agree.”

“What? But just now...” Long Jiu stood in panic then glared at Zhuo Fan, “Brother Zhuo, were you messing around?”

Zhuo Fan turned serious, “If it were 15 minutes ago, I would’ve agreed without hesitation. But now...”

“What about ‘now’?” Long Jiu’s beard trembled.

Shaking his head, Zhuo Fan let out a mysterious smile as his voice turned cold, “Young miss Long Kui, do you remember what you said?”

Zhuo Fan extended his fist, “Within ten years, I will make the Luo clan stand above the seven houses!”

He down the tea in one gulp and smacked the cup on the table as he left.

Long Kui had a strange feeling watching his back.

It was impossible for a small clan to rise above the Seven Noble Houses in ten years, even if he was a 5th grade array master. The Seven Noble Houses' reserves weren't something he alone could overcome.

But Zhuo Fan's confidence left her without retort.

"Little Kui, what did you say?" Long Jiu turned to the two. From Zhuo Fan's expression, he knew Zhuo Fan was not lying. So, something must have happened earlier.

Long Kui only stared at Zhuo Fan's back as Long Jie spoke after hesitating.

Long Jiu shook his head after hearing the story, "I've said already not to insult people and cut at their shortcomings. You've insulted the Luo clan and they are sure to not take it lying down."

"But... what he said can't be achieved." Long Jie muttered.

Long Jiu stroked his beard, "Luo clan has a 5th grade array master. Even if it won't rise above the seven houses, it will still be well known in the land. It's best to get closer to it.

"We were so close to having him as Venerable..." Long Jiu sighed as he fixed his eye on Long Kui.

Regarding Zhuo Fan, he went to Luo Yunchang, his mind going a mile a minute.

He could have completely put his heart demon to rest but chose not to because of Long Kui's words.

[Pipe dream? If we can't even dream, our only choice is to leave it up to fate.]

Demonic cultivators walked in defiance of heaven, fighting for their own fates. Zhuo Fan thus hated when someone told him that any goals he had was a pipe dream, that he should feel grateful for his fate.

He had to prove to everyone that even a fallen clan could reach the top one day. He no longer helped the Luo clan just for the sake of his heart demon, but also for his path as a demonic cultivator.

[Nothing in this world is impossible! If Heaven stands in my way, I will kill it. My fate is my own and not Heaven's.]

The day shall come when he would rebuild this ruined clan to the best the world had ever seen! As long as Demonic Emperor Zhuo Yifan was here, nothing was impossible.

Bam!

Zhuo Fan slammed the door open full of anger.

Luo Yunhai, Luo Yunchang, and Captain Pang were startled. Luo Yunchang hesitated before building up the courage to speak to him, "Zhuo Fan, what did grandfather Jiu want?"

"He invited me to join Veiled Dragon Pavilion."

The three's faces saddened. Despite being downhearted inside, Luo Yunchang strained a smile, "Congratulations, Veiled Dragon Pavilion will offer you a far more glorious future than Luo clan."

She had a guess Zhuo Fan's talent as a 5th grade array master would attract the seven houses' invitation. The Luo clan would find it impossible to hold onto such a man.

Zhuo Fan snorted, "What are you sad about? I declined."

"What?"

Shock was seen but happiness was the most obvious emotion, "Why?"

"Just because. I'll be in my room!" Zhuo Fan left without answering. But just before he was gone, he said coldly, "Young miss, don't interfere in any future matters of the Luo clan, be it big or small."

Luo Yunchang nodded absentminded. Wasn't it like this so far? Why did he bring this up?

Zhuo Fan then seemed to talk to her but also to himself.

"From now on, I am Luo clan's steward. In ten years, I will raise the Luo clan above the Veiled Dragon Pavilion!"

His figure left with the last word, leaving the three in shock...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 27: Capturing a Bandit | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 27: Capturing a Bandit

Chapter 27, Capturing a Bandit

Translator: StarReader

Editor: Silavin

Looking for Proofreaders for this Novel

For the next ten-odd days, there was not a shadow of Zhuo Fan gracing the small courtyard in the Veiled Dragon Pavilion. Not only Long Kui, not even Luo clan's members saw him.

After his bold words that day, Zhuo Fan worked harder on cultivation, locked up in his room. He only let Blood Infant roam free at night to gather Yuan Qi.

His target, the Cai clan.

As such, Clan Head Cai was dejected all this time. His guards shrank in numbers with each passing day, without so much as a trace left behind. This left him wondering if the Luo clan he offended asked Veiled Dragon Pavilion to deal with his clan.

In his opinion, only the Seven Noble Houses had such dreadful power to reap his guards without notice. As such, Cai Rong's heart grew heavier, to the point his son balled up under his blanket, shivering at night; afraid he would be next.

To the living, it wasn't death that was scary, but the wait before. Father and son felt the crawling of time in the agony of fear.

He also thought of seeking Hell Valley's help. But ever since it got his family martial art, it cut off all ties.

This only went to further prolong Cai Rong's agony as he shouted out his frustration one day in his room. No demonic cultivator was trustworthy, but he was in too deep to turn back now.

Zhuo Fan took them all in stride with a sneer.

As for the Sun clan, he let the Blood Infant pay them a few visits too. However, Elder Jian was there so, there were many close calls to getting caught. And as of late, many great powers have been present there, so Zhuo Fan avoided entering.

He only left Blood Infant to monitor at the gates.

On this day, as per usual, the Blood Infant ate a dozen Cai clan guards then staked Cai clan's gates for a bit before returning to the little courtyard, pleased.

Just as he was about to enter his home, a trace of energy caught his eye. Zhuo Fan frowned in his room as the Blood Infant hid its energy. Soon, in a corner across from the little courtyard, a shadow was reflected in his eyes.

That person was watching his home.

"Humph, no one dares to step inside Veiled Dragon Pavilion's territory yet this one does? He must be from Blackwind Mountain." Zhuo Fan grinned.

He recalled Elder Jian telling it wasn't the Cai clan nor the Sun clan who'd come after the Luo clan, but a third party unrelated to them, Blackwind Mountain.

If the Luo clan fell, Hell Valley was spared of all liability. But how were a bunch of bandits going to enter the little courtyard?

[You think this is the Cloud Manor?]

Raising an eyebrow, Zhuo Fan guided the Blood Infant after the person in black. Because Blood Infant's hidden energy, it wasn't found out.

After taking stock of the surrounding, the bandit left, followed by a red trace.

An hour later, the person jumped through a window of a tavern and the Blood Infant floated to peer inside. Zhuo Fan saw seven strong men and a 17-year-old girl to the side. They were all waiting for the person in black to speak.

“Young miss, how’s the situation?” Before the person in black spoke, the girl poured tea and spoke with concern.

Zhuo Fan was taken aback, “A woman?”

He never expected the leader of the Blackwind Mountain bandits to be a woman. Were they looking down on the fact that the Luo clan had only four members?

Zhuo Fan shook his head.

He saw the person in black remove her veil to reveal a pair of bright eyes, black hair flowing down to her waist, with fair and unblemished skin worthy of the title beauty.

Even the men couldn’t help but swallow dryly and stare. But the woman’s glare made them lower their heads.

“Xiao Cui, get me a pen and paper.” Being shouted to, the girl rushed to obey.

The beauty drew in detail for fifteen minutes. The contents shocked Zhuo Fan.

That was Veiled Dragon Pavilion’s little courtyard in minute detail. He had to admit, making such a map after one night of staking earned a thumbs up from him.

She wasn’t the leader for nothing.

“Look closely. Here, here, and here are guards. The four corners here have Bone Tempering experts... ”

“Young miss, this is Veiled Dragon Pavilion, how do we proceed? By the look of things, we’ll be dead before we even make it through the door.” One man wiped his sweat from fear.

The woman dismissed him. “Relax, senior brother got in contact with Hell Valley’s men and said they will distract the guards. We just need to capture Luo Yunchang and kill the rest.”

[What? She isn't a man, so why capture young miss for?] Zhuo Fan was baffled, but not worried. Even without the guards, he still had the Nine Heavens Coiling Dragon Array.

They were ants throwing their lives away.

But what caught his attention was that Blackwind Mountain and Hell Valley were connected. They were being exploited just like the Cai clan, but on a much deeper level.

"Uhm, young miss, there's something you might not like to hear, but it concerns our lives..."

"Say it!" Waving her hand, the girl spoke calmly.

The man hesitated before firming his resolve, "Young miss, the young lord and Hell Valley are connected and will listen to him. Even if Hell Valley's men help us, the Veiled Dragon Pavilion is still one of the Seven Noble Houses. Offending them will leave us with no place to hide. Will the Hell Valley shelter us then? If they abandon us instead, death will be our only outcome."

"Humph, that's like saying you're scared of dying!"

"Don't you think you're letting down Mountain Lord with your words? For helping camp lord recover, for his revenge, the least we can do is stake our lives!"

Her words brought shame on their faces.

She glared at them and shouted, "Withdraw! Follow the predetermined plan without fail."

"Yes!"

They cupped their hands and shouted with respect. When they left, they were resolute with staring death in the face.

"Not bad!"

Zhuo Fan raised an eyebrow as he left the room.

Now it was his turn...

When all the people left, the girl clapped her hands in glee, "Young miss is amazing, like a true Mountain Lord."

Shaking her head, the woman sighed, "If godfather was back to health, he'd do it far better. No one on Blackwind Mountain would have doubted him, nor question his orders."

"Maybe, but they still believe in young miss."

The woman shook her head, "Xiao Cui, don't comfort me. I only hope to cure my adoptive father once we get the Returning Dragon Palm."

"Young miss will succeed in her filial duty!" The girl giggled.

However, it was now that a faint sigh reached them, "Girl, filial and success are different things. Moreover, who told you the Returning Dragon Palm can heal wounds?"

"Who's there?"

The woman and the girl turned to find Zhuo Fan sitting on the window frame with a smile.

"No need to panic, I have no ill intent. I just came to chat and clear some things up." Zhuo Fan made a friendly gesture.

"Who exactly are you?"

The woman drew Xiao Cui two steps behind her. She didn't realize Zhuo Fan was spying on them. If he wanted her life, she'd be dead by now.

"Oh, I haven't introduced myself." Zhuo Fan bowed, "I am Luo clan's steward, Zhuo Fan."

"What, the Luo clan?"

The woman's eyes squinted and gnashed her teeth, "Then die."

She stabbed with two fingers. Piercing lightning danced between her fingers as if it wanted to shatter the skies.

Zhuo Fan was a bit startled, "9th layer of Qi Condensation, spirit ranked martial art?"

He'd never expected for the lass to be so strong and even wield a spirit ranked martial art to boot. Her power was close to a Bone Tempering cultivator.

Unfortunately, she met Zhuo Fan. He mocked all those below Bone Tempering.

Because he had the Blood Infant!

With a hand sign, a red light flashed from his body into the woman.

Her body froze yet the lighting still buzzed between her fingers.

She was afraid, "What did you do to me?"

Grinning, Zhuo Fan shook his head, "Nothing, I am only controlling your body."

And then grabbed her two fingers, "Cancel."

In an instant, the piercing lightning died out.

Blood Infant was born of blood and controlled blood. This, in turn, led to the control of the whole body. Only strong cultivation and Yuan Qi could repel such restrictions.

But this was because the Blood Infant was still weak. If it was in the Saint Stage, even an Emperor would find it hard to deal with.

"Come with me."

Zhuo Fan hugged her waist. She could do nothing but let the strange man embrace her as they went.

"Young miss." Xiao Cui shouted.

Zhuo Fan turned and thought of something, "Oh, forgot about you."

His hand grabbed her shoulder and the lass blanked out. Xiao Cui was just a servant that had yet to enter Qi Condensation.

Thus, as the first rays of dawn graced the earth, Zhuo Fan walked to his home embracing one girl and one woman...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 28: Interrogation | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 28: Interrogation

Whoosh!

As dawn approached, Zhuo Fan carried a pretty girl in each hand to his courtyard. The guards were taken aback seeing this steward locked up for ten-odd days, only to follow up with a knowing smile.

One even teased, "Steward Zhuo, last night must've been exhausting for you!"

Long Kui happened to pass by and saw him with two beauties. She frowned and rolled her eyes as she walked away with large steps. She ignored him while her mouth kept criticizing, "Men are all the same."

Zhuo Fan didn't care that they misunderstood and threw the two in his room. He closed the door and sat on a chair.

"Ow!"

Xiao Cui recovered from hitting the ground and rubbed her eyes, "Where is this?" But shouted when her eyes landed on the other woman, "Young miss, are you alright?"

The woman laid motionless on the floor, presenting her delectable assets to Zhuo Fan to see.

Smiling, Zhuo Fan moved his finger and she regained her freedom.

The woman rose in a flash and reached for her ankle. Her hand now had a dagger that rushed at Zhuo's neck.

Yet, only a groan came as the dagger stopped an inch from his throat as she froze in place.

Zhuo Fan admired her with a sneer, "Nice skills, but that won't work on me. I only invited you over to clarify some things. If you are honest, I will let you go.

"Also, it's best if you don't bare your fangs at me again." Zhuo Fan took the dagger from her hand then spared a second glance to her shapely body, "Oh, we'd have to make sure you have nothing else hiding on you."

Zhuo Fan adopted the frisking posture.

The woman turned beet red, "You dare?"

His hand stopped as Zhuo Fan looked into her eyes, "Whether I dare or not depends on you."

Then his tone turned grave, "Who are you? What are you doing in Windgaze City?"

The woman ignored him.

Whoosh!

Zhuo Fan ripped a part of her clothing wrapped around her waist and threw it to the ground.

"Ah!"

With a shriek the woman's anger exploded. Her eyes seemed to spew fire yet Zhuo Fan couldn't care less.

Xiao Cui rushed over and smacked Zhuo Fan with her tender fists, "Bastard, how dare you do that to young miss!"

Zhuo Fan's other hand moved with ease and some of Xiao Cui's clothing fell on the floor. She was stunned for a second before shooting back and holding her clothes tighter with tears swelling in her eyes.

Zhuo Fan was nonplussed, asking in the same calm voice, "Who are you? What are you doing in Windgaze City?"

Gnashing her teeth, the woman bit her lips in answer.

Her clothing was torn to shreds before as Zhuo Fan repeated with coldness, "Who are you? What are you doing in Windgaze City?"

Zhuo Fan's cruelty was akin to a heartless machine that brought fear to the woman's heart. She finally relaxed her clenched jaw, "I am Blackwind Mountain Mountain Lord's goddaughter, Lei Yuting. I have come to Windgaze City to end the Luo clan."

"Why?" Zhuo Fan's face was unfeeling as if it had nothing to do with him. This only worked to stoke Lei Yuting's fear. This man didn't look human in her eyes.

"Hell Valley will distract the guards while we sneak in."

Zhuo Fan nodded satisfied. He knew this beforehand and asked this to shred her heart's defenses.

The next question was something he wanted to know the most.

"What's your connection with Hell Valley? What do they get by helping you?"

Lei Yuting was at a loss too, "I don't know."

Zhuo Fan kept his eyes on her, and when he found her answer truthful, "How are you in contact with Hell Valley? Who mediates?"

Lei Yuting's eyes shook but her lips pursed.

Zhuo Fan had a guess but he wanted to hear it from her, so he ripped Lei Yuting's shirt.

Her body was exposed to Zhuo Fan's eyes in an instant, leaving only a red lace cloth to protect her final vestige of modesty.

Lei Yuting's tears dropped without a sound. Zhuo Fan's hand closed in on the red cloth as his voice dropped even lower, "This is your last chance to maintain your honor. If you don't answer, there are more than a dozen craving men outside beside me."

"Bastard!" Lei Yuting hissed.

"I'll count to three. One, two..." The higher he got the closer his hand was to the red cloth.

Lei Yuting's bit her lips, close to drawing blood while crying, yet no word came out.

"You're quite brave!" Zhuo Fan nodded and was about to pull when Xiao Cui shouted in panic, "Don't! I beg you, don't bully young miss. It's senior brother Yang who's in contact with Hell Valley."

"Who is he?" Zhuo Fan's curled up an evil smile. Lei Yuting wanted to shout for Xiao Cui to stop, but Zhuo Fan's robbed her voice.

Xiao Cui saw young miss suffering and spoke truthfully, "He is Mountain Lord's disciple, Yang Ming. The Mountain Lord formed a marriage contract between senior brother Yang and young miss. But one day, Luo's Clan Head, Luo Zhennan caught him off-guard and wounded him heavily. He lays paralyzed, unable to even speak..."

"So you thought of catching the Luo clan off-guard?" Zhuo Fan grinned, "Killers must pay and revenge must be dealt, right?"

"And then?"

Xiao Cui hesitated but then she saw Zhuo Fan's hand drawing near Lei Yuting's chest, "We were at a loss in the face of Luo clan's tight guard, but then senior brother made a pact with Steward Sun. He worked with us from the inside and defeated the Luo clan. Then Luo clan's young miss ran away and we lost track of her. It was also then when senior brother Yang found out you were all here and asked Hell Valley's help..."

"Good."

Zhuo Fan's hand remained still, "How did you know Mountain Lord was sneak attacked by Luo Zhennan? Did you see it?"

"Senior brother Yang did!"

"Did your senior brother Yang also tell you Returning Dragon Palm can heal him?"
Zhuo Fan raised an eyebrow as he asked Xiao Cui who nodded. She was amazed he got it right.

With a clear picture, Zhuo Fan withdrew his hand from Lei Yuting's chest.

However, a light voice came from outside, "Zhuo Fan, are you there?"

Luo Yunchang went inside with Luo Yunhai and Captain Pang. The image rooted them in place.

An extra two beauties with messed up clothing were inside, with Zhuo Fan's nefarious hand in front of one's chest. Luo Yunhai was slack-jawed, yet his eyes roamed like lightning.

Covering her brother's eyes, Luo Yunchang shouted at Captain Pang, "Get young master out."

Captain Pang nodded as he carried Luo Yunhai outside, but not before he threw Zhuo Fan a vulgar smile any man would understand.

"Steward Zhuo!"

Luo Yunchang raged, "This is Veiled Dragon Pavilion. Why are you making trouble?"

Shrugging, Zhuo Fan said, "Everything I do is for Luo clan's sake."

"For Luo clan?"

Luo Yunchang laughed from anger, "You bring two flossies to mess around with and you say it's for Luo clan? Didn't you say you were getting stronger? Didn't you say you'll raise the Luo clan above the seven houses in ten years? Is this how you do it?"

Zhuo Fan was stunned. Luo Yunchang carried herself with dignity and virtue at all times, even when angry. Why did she snap today so bad that she lost all composure?

Shaking his head, Zhuo Fan said, "If you knew who they were, you wouldn't be saying that."

Luo Yunchang was skeptical.

"They are from Blackwind Mountain and I was interrogating them." Zhuo Fan sneered at the two girls with messed up clothing, "This method is the most effective against women, even in the case of bandits."

"What, they're from Blackwind Mountain?"

Luo Yunchang's eyes went bloodshot as she used her Yuan Qi to punch Lei Yuting, "Give me back my father."

Zhuo Fan caught her soft hand, "Calm down, I believe Blackwind Mountain and the Luo clan's grievances are connected. The Seven Noble Houses were probably behind it all."

What?

Not only Luo Yunchang, even Lei Yuting and Xiao Cui were stunned.

Both the Luo clan and Blackwind Mountain were mere ants to the Seven Noble Houses. Why go to such lengths to hide their intention when they could deal with them with a snap of their fingers?

Zhuo Fan didn't figure it out yet, but he still let go of Lei Yuting.

"Young miss Lei, I have a presumptuous favor to ask of you." Zhuo Fan bowed, "I want you to take me to Blackwind Mountain. I want to get to the bottom of this."

"Humph, there's no way you can enter Blackwind Mountain." Lei Yuting snorted.

Zhuo Fan smiled at Luo Yunchang, "Young miss, please take out the Returning Dragon Palm."

“Why?”

Luo Yunchang took it out anyway. If others asked for it, she wouldn't have been so quick to respond. But since Zhuo Fan was a 5th-grade array master, he wouldn't covet a mere spirit ranked martial art.

Zhuo Fan smiled, “Young miss Lei, this is the Returning Dragon Palm you wanted. But this is a martial art, it is unable to heal Mountain Lord's wound. I can only ask for you to take me to Blackwind Mountain to investigate. The chance is Yang Ming had always lied to you. We need to make matters clear, otherwise, Luo clan and Blackwind Mountain will be crushed by the seven houses.”

“Senior brother Yang is a good man, not a liar.” Xiao Cui said.

Zhuo Fan only looked at Lei Yuting, “How could Yang Ming make Luo clan's steward defect after decades under Luo clan and also be in constant contact with Hell Valley? Lei Yuting, do you even know your fiancée?”

Zhuo Fan's words struck a chord inside Lei Yuting and doubt sprouted. Tracing Returning Dragon Palm's jade slip with her hand, she nodded.

Since they gave her the martial art, one passed down through generations, even she found something amiss and agreed. Moreover, Blackwind Mountain was her home and Zhuo Fan was but one man. No trick of his would work there.

Zhuo Fan was pleased, but he cleared his voice in embarrassment the next second, “Miss Lei, be careful not to catch a cold.”

“Ah!”

Only now did she react to the vile steward ripping her clothes and could only use her hands for cover.

Only

Luo Yunchang and Xiao Cui shoved Zhuo Fan out the door, “Scram!”

The door slammed behind him as the three girls exchanged a smile. But then it dawned on them how complicated the matter got. They were still enemies and lost their smiles.

Then came Zhuo Fan from outside, "Miss Lei, next time don't forget to wear more."

Lei Yuting was so embarrassed her eyes burned with rage, while her face grew hotter...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 29: Entering Blackwind Mountain | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 29: Entering Blackwind Mountain

Chapter 29, Entering Blackwind Mountain

Editor: Silavin

Looking for Proofreaders for this Novel

A woman and an old man walked down a forest road.

She was tall, mesmerizing and emanating a perfume that drew in butterflies. The wizened old man had a white goatee, yet his eyes flashed with vigilance now and then.

The two arrived at the foot of a mountain and looked to the summit. The beauty eyed the elder but her tone was laced with anger, "Zhuo Fan, you better behave. If I find you have any evil intentions towards Blackwind Mountain, I won't let you off."

"Ha-ha-ha, relax miss. This old man only came to investigate. Moreover, what could a lone man possibly do?" The old man's laughter reached the heavens above.

Snorting, Lei Yuting ignored him, "Furthermore, if you harm even a hair of Xiao Cui, I will end you."

"Relax, I took her hostage because we don't trust each other. On one hand, I needed some insurance. On the other..." Zhuo Fan spoke in a mysterious voice, "It is for your own good."

"For my own good?"

Lei Yuting didn't understand, but the only response she got was Zhuo Fan shaking his head.

The two climbed in silence. Halfway up, they got to the first checkpoint.

"Who's there?"

A strong man jumped out in their path. But when he saw Lei Yuting, he bowed, "Ah, so it's Young miss. Weren't you in Windgaze City, why..."

"I had to return!"

Lei Yuting jutted out her chin, walking without sparing the man a glance.

"He is on Yang Ming's side."

Zhuo Fan whispered, "Tell me, if your task in Windgaze City was so secret, why is it that a common bandit knows of it?"

Lei Yuting frowned.

Her previous unshakable trust in Yang Ming was gnawed by Zhuo Fan these past few days. She, herself, started to notice many more inconsistencies in Yang Ming's behavior. The same could be said about the man they just met. He was watching her every movement, but what she used to take it as normal before, now it felt like a warning.

"You'll see. Once we arrive, Yang Ming will welcome you." Zhuo Fan smiled as he sped up. Lei Yuting watched his figure with a heart filled with doubts.

They passed several more checkpoints before reaching the summit, they now stood in front of the Blackwind Mountain camp's gate. Since Zhuo Fan was impersonating an old man and was led by Lei Yuting, no one questioned him.

But just as they stepped foot across the gate, a man appeared.

He was tall and majestic, just that a wicked smile smeared his handsome face. Zhuo Fan knew in a flash he was Yang Ming.

"See, all your actions were reported back." Zhuo Fan raised an eyebrow at Lei Yuting, like a child who won the bet.

But Lei Yuting didn't humor him by playing his game, and instead had a solemn face.

Zhuo Fan had been feeding her doubts every step of the way, particularly regarding Yang Ming, who might've been a spy from the Hell Valley.

She didn't want to believe it since he was the fiancée her godfather arranged for her. It was hard for her to change her perception of a man who had the trust of everyone, her godfather included.

But these doubts were the fruit of Zhuo Fan's careful wording along the way.

Biting her lip, Lei Yuting saw Yang Ming with a complicated gaze and braced herself for what was to come.

"Sister Yuting, shouldn't you be in Windgaze City? Why the sudden return?" Yang Ming approached her with a smile and turned to Zhuo Fan, "And this is..."

Lei Yuting hesitated a moment, "Senior brother, Veiled Dragon Pavilion isn't someone we can provoke, while Hell Valley's men aren't worthy of trust. This operation has too many dangers so I've put the men on stand by to observe for now."

Yang Ming's face changed, not much but enough for Zhuo Fan to notice the killing intent in his eyes.

"Sister Yuting, Master's kindness is as heavy as a mountain. How can we not give our lives for such a man? How can we be so selfish? Furthermore, aren't we supposed to avenge Master?"

"I am aware, however..." Lei Yuting frowned, "We cannot disregard the lives of our brothers. This is a 2nd ranked alchemist I have found to save godfather. We will settle this vengeance once he recovers."

Sensing his cue, Zhuo Fan cupped his hands, "Ha-ha-ha, this old man has wandered the pugilistic world and cured countless illnesses. No injury or disease can escape my trained eye..."

"Humph, if you were so great, we'd have known about you. Who are you trying to deceive?"

Yang Ming interrupted Zhuo Fan bragging, "Junior sister, only Returning Dragon Palm can heal wounds this martial art caused. Don't you trust me?"

Lei Yuting recalled the times she spent with Yang Ming and her heart was in chaos.

Zhuo Fan stood between the two and asked Yang Ming, "Little brother, give me a chance. I'm an expert healer."

"Get lost!"

Yang Ming was furious and sent a palm attack. Zhuo Fan felt the power behind it but didn't dodge, opting to take the strike with clenched teeth.

Bam!

Despite not using a martial art, the palm backed up by the power of an early Bone Tempering cultivator struck Zhuo Fan's chest and sent him sprawling while coughing blood.

"Why did you attack if you refused him entry?" Lei Yuting yelled.

Zhuo Fan staggered to his feet after puking another mouthful of blood, "This old man can't take too many hits. Miss, I'm sorry but I will have to refuse this deal. I should've known no good comes from dealing with bandits."

"What did you say?"

Yang Ming was enraged and slapped again, but Lei Yuting stopped him.

"I invited him. If you want to hit him, you'll have to go through me."

"Humph, let him try for all I care. But if this healer makes the Master worse, he won't leave this place alive." Yang Ming flung his sleeve and walked out in anger.

Lei Yuting felt wronged and glared at Zhuo Fan, "It's all your fault senior brother ignores me. I was a fool for believing you. There's no way my caring senior brother could harm godfather."

"Miss, didn't your godfather teach you how to judge people?" Zhuo Fan wiped the blood from his mouth with a smile, "But this is perfect since he bought it."

Lei Yuting was shocked, then doubtful.

"When you talk to someone, you don't pay attention to what they speak but how they act."

Zhuo Fan's grinned evilly, "The reason he stopped me before was because he didn't know of my level. Thanks to his palm strike, he gauged my strength was negligible and let me pass. You tell me if he's caring or not."

Lei Yuting replayed the early scene while leaving out Yang Ming's words. All of his actions went according to Zhuo Fan's conjecture. To the point that when he left, Yang Ming showed a faint smile to her.

[Can it be...]

Lei Yuting didn't dare finish. If she did, her heart would be in too much pain and wouldn't be able to stop herself from confronting Yang Ming. At that time, the two would break all relations.

Zhuo Fan patted her shoulder, "Come, take me to your godfather."

"Damn swindler! It's fine if you want to act but there's no point in seeing him." Lei Yuting could hardly reign her emotions.

Zhuo Fan smiled while shrugging nonplussed, "When you act, you need to be thorough. Moreover, the act hasn't reached its climax."

With the final word, Zhuo Fan walked forward and Lei Yuting followed.

As they passed, hundreds of eyes focused on them.

Lei Yuting felt uneasy from so many stares. What used to be eyes filled with respect, now held only wariness.

The two entered the Mountain Lord's room and saw Yang Ming inside. He held a bowl of gruel, feeding the old man on the bed.

"Hack, I will hold you responsible for anything that happens to Master."

Yang Ming smacked the bowl on the table and glared, then took a seat to the side to observe.

Zhuo Fan laughed inside as he inspected the patient.

When his fingers touched the old man's wrist, he injected his Yuan Qi and what he saw stunned him. It was all clear to him now.

"He has no external wounds." Zhuo Fan shook his head.

Yang Ming rolled his eyes and snorted, "Is there a need to even say it?"

"But neither... internal ones."

Yang Ming's eyes squinted and his hands tightened.

He judged the 4th layer Qi Condensation Zhuo Fan as having no skill to speak of, but reality proved him wrong.

Yang Ming's killing intent spiked!

"If godfather isn't injured, why can't he move or speak?" Lei Yuting doubted Zhuo Fan's diagnosis, thinking he was just putting on a show. [When you put up an act, try to make it believable.]

[How are you going to explain an immobilized Bone Tempering expert having no injuries?]

Zhuo Fan scratched his nose as he smiled, "This old man has concluded he has something foreign inside."

Bam!

Yang Ming snapped the corner of the table while the old man on the bed glared at Zhuo Fan. He wanted to speak with such ardor but he was powerless to do so.

Yet his emotional gaze said it all...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 30: Mad Slaughter | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 30: Mad Slaughter

Chapter 30, Mad Slaughter

Translator: StarReader

Editor: Silavin

Looking for Proofreaders for this Novel

“Nonsense!”

Yang Ming stormed before Zhuo Fan and pulled him back. Lei Yuting was stunned.

“Senior brother, what’s wrong?”

Squinting his eyes, Yang Ming turned to Lei Yuting, “Junior sister, are you hiding something from me?”

Lei Yuting froze but shook her head after hesitating, “How can I?”

Yang Ming snickered, “Junior sister, after being in contact for so long, you’re unable to lie to me.”

“Of course!”

Lei Yuting felt danger behind Yang Ming’s smile. As if a viper had its eyes on her, forcing her to stagger back.

Yang Ming flashed with determination, “Junior sister, where is Xiao Cui?”

"I had her do some things." Lei Yuting stammered.

Yang Ming nodded, pleased. But the next second, his eyes flashed evilly as he sent a palm strike. The powerful strike to her chest sent Lei Yuting flying.

A trail of blood hung in the air.

Yang Ming then pressed a spot on the bed and a trap door opened beneath Lei Yuting.

Zhuo Fan faked shock and fled. But Yang Ming's quick hand clutched his neck throwing him inside the hole and then closed the trap door.

The old man trembled from fury seeing the two falling in Yang Ming's trap.

Bam!

Lei Yuting's body ached as she landed in the black cave. But then, with a loud bang, something crashed onto her with such force that she spat blood.

"Didn't think this kid would have a trap door." Zhuo Fan reached for the ground and felt something soft in his palm, "Why is the ground so soft?"

"Ah, bastard! Get off me!"

A shriek pierced his ears and Zhuo Fan realized he was on top of Lei Yuting with his two hands conveniently placed on her chest.

He rushed away and said embarrassed, "Sorry, it was a total accident..."

Lei Yuting, with a beet-red face, didn't argue.

She stood up and raved, "Yang Ming, so you're the one behind it all!"

"Ha-ha-ha..."

Yang Ming's egotistical laughter came from above, "Junior sister, I knew your return was suspicious. And you even brought a 2nd-grade alchemist. You started to doubt me."

"Why are you doing this? Godfather always treated you well." Lei Yuting wailed in grief as her heart broke.

Yang Ming replied with a sneer, "I have my own plans, this old man means nothing to me. I didn't hope to deal with you so soon, but you even went as far as bringing a 2nd-grade alchemist to ruin my plan."

"What, do I mean so little to you?"

Tears streamed Lei Yuting's cheeks. She spat blood again from heartache.

Zhuo Fan shook his head, unmoved by her plight. [You only have yourself to blame.] But since he had a play to finish, he still kept true to his role as a healer.

"Little brother, I have nothing to do with your problems. Let me go, I'm innocent."

Yang Ming only laughed.

"Damn hack, if you were useless it wouldn't have made much difference if I killed you or not. Such a shame you figured out the old man's illness."

"Illness? What illness? I only thought he didn't move for so long that toxins started to set in and wanted to give him a laxative!" Zhuo Fan cried his injustice, "This is how I earn my meager living, why... "

Yang Ming rubbed his forehead.

[Curses, it's all a misunderstanding!]

He took the old man as having skills when he was nothing but a swindler looking to earn his next meal. [In the end, what skill can a 4th layer Qi Condensation old man have?]

Yang Ming shook his head, regretting his rash actions. He wanted Lei Yuting to complete his job, but now he had to do it himself.

"Damn hack! You ruined everything!" Yang Ming roared, "Once I come back, I'll deal with you both!"

"Guards, make sure no one comes in."

"Yes!"

Zhuo Fan then heard two guards taking positions at the door and Yang Ming leaving.

"Hey, little brother, I'm not the only one who makes a living like this! Hey, let me go, I'm innocent..."

Zhuo Fan shouted a few more times but didn't get a reply and was certain Yang Ming was gone.

He turned to Lei Yuting to find her sitting blankly. She just found out her fiancée was someone else entirely and felt nothing for her, willing to even kill her. Any girl would feel their heart torn to shreds from this.

Rubbing his fake beard, Zhuo Fan spoke, "You're not too different from my Young miss. You should later share each other's pain and learn from them."

"Humph, later? It's still unclear if we'll survive." Lei Yuting lashed.

Zhuo Fan's smile brimmed with confidence, "It's all going according to this old man's plan. Relax, we're leaving tonight. But if you want to die, you can take your life now of course. After all, you've been discarded."

Lei Yuting snapped, "If I die, I'll drag you down with me."

Zhuo Fan chuckled as he closed his eyes, waiting for the night.

Lei Yuting pouted, yet she found bickering with Zhuo Fan had eased the pain inside and that something faint sprouted...

In the dead of night, a crescent moon hung in the clouded sky above Blackwind Mountain. Most bandits were asleep, with the exception of the guards.

In the dark cave, Zhuo Fan neared the wall and flashed his eyes open as Lei Yuting was sleeping further behind.

He pointed and a red light flashed from Lei Yuting's body and floated before Zhuo Fan.

The Blood Infant.

Zhuo Fan didn't trust Lei Yuting even with an agreement in place. So he took Xiao Cui hostage and placed the Blood Infant inside her.

If she made one wrong move, he'd end her in an instant.

It was fortunate Lei Yuting's act was in order, but now it was time for Blood Infant to show its strength.

The Blood Infant was acting as if it hadn't seen its parent for days, rubbing Zhuo Fan's cheek. He smiled for a moment before his eyes flashed with mad killing intent.

Blood Infant knew his heart desires and flew outside. The thick stone walls didn't hinder it in the least.

The mountain forest was particularly quiet at this time and the bandits were enjoying their dreams in their rooms.

But a red light flashed inside one of them, only to leave the next second to enter another bandit. The previous content smile faltered and was soon devoid of life.

The Blood Infant's speed was dreadful, cleaning up a room of twenty bandits in one breath. When it left, the room was robbed of life.

In the same manner, the Blood Infant travelled all over Blackwind Mountain, taking every breath of life along the way. Its final stop was the two guards at Mountain Lord's door.

Whoosh!

One guard saw his partner being assaulted by a red light, "Something went inside you!"

The other guard froze, not getting what happened, but then Zhuo Fan's voice came from within his body, "Let us out."

The guards' hearts were in a panic. Why did the voice of the one trapped beneath them come from one guard's body?

Before they could understand what happened, the Blood Infant dried up its host before the other one's eyes, leaving nothing but dust. It then entered the other guard.

The guard was scared to death to the point he lost his voice.

It was then Zhuo Fan's voice came from inside him, "Let us out!"

It carried with it an undeniable power that softened the guard's knees as he relieved himself in his pants.

"Lord, please wait, I'll do it right now." The guard cried.

Anyone who had seen their partner turn to dust would have no shred of courage left. The guard rushed in tears to open the mechanism.

Rumble!

The trapdoor opened and light shined inside.

Lei Yuting was roused by the sudden light and looked to see Zhuo Fan next to her, "If you want to live, come with me."

Then he jumped.

Lei Yuting was amazed at how he did it, but his words made her angry, "Humph, I won't die so easily."

She then jumped after him...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 31: Frigid Pool Snow Worm | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 31: Frigid Pool Snow Worm

Chapter 31, Frigid Pool Snow Worm

Translator: StarReader

Editor: Silavin

Looking for Proofreaders for this Novel

Returning to Mountain Lord's chamber, the guard begged for his life, "Lord, Young miss, spare me. Young-, no, Yang Ming that bastard forced me..."

Lei Yuting was clueless as Zhuo Fan waved, "Stand aside."

The guard curled up in a corner.

Then Zhuo Fan walked to the old man's bed. Zhuo Fan smiled at the naked killing intent in the old man's eyes, "I can heal you, but you have to listen to me afterwards."

Lei Yuting was moved, "You can heal godfather?"

Zhuo Fan only stared at the old man in the eye.

The old man hesitated but Zhuo Fan dispelled it with a smile, "Relax, I won't do anything that might jeopardize your clan. I am Zhuo Fan, Luo clan's steward. We have a common enemy and I am missing a Bone Tempering expert that I hope you can fill in for."

His words worked to intensify the glare in the old man's eyes.

Zhuo Fan grinned, knowing he agreed, with a wave of his finger the Blood Infant left the guard and floated in front of Zhuo Fan.

At the sight of the bloody light, the guard shivered. This was the one behind his partner's gruesome death.

Lei Yuting was shocked, having also suffered at the hands of this light, "Zhuo Fan, what are you trying to do?"

"Heal him." Zhuo Fan flitted his eyes over her.

"Can... this thing heal?" Lei Yuting was doubtful, having seen Zhuo Fan using it to attack and humiliate her before.

[What if this thing worsens godfather's illness?]

Zhuo Fan sneered, "Young miss, your godfather agreed already. I have no reason to hurt him."

"Then what is that thing?" Lei Yuting watched the old man with worry.

"Demonic creature!"

Zhuo Fan explained coldly, "Us, demonic cultivators, refine demonic creatures. Be it for attacking or defending, these creatures are essential. Do you know why Yang Ming snapped when I said the old man had a foreign object inside?"

Lei Yuting shook her head, "Didn't you say it was a blind guess?"

Zhuo Fan almost spat blood, "Now I know why he fooled you. You're a blockhead. Did you also believe me when I was fooling him? I see now why he left so at ease, even while you are alive."

Lei Yuting blushed and lowered her head.

Godfather always told her she had a talent for cultivation, a genius. But Zhuo Fan was the first to call her blockhead.

"The reason why he flipped was because my words hit him where it hurts." Zhuo Fan spoke gravely, "As for why the old man is immobilized, it's because of a demonic creature! I will now use mine to expel the one inside him."

Even so, Lei Yuting was still worried, "Your demonic creature can expel his?"

"Ha-ha-ha..."

Zhuo Fan laughed as he heard the biggest joke in his life.

Based on his early diagnosis, Yang Ming's demonic creature was refined from a parasitic worm, the lowest among demonic creatures. But his was the Blood Infant, feared by even the ten Emperors of old. How could they ever be equal?

[Sigh, ignorance is terrifying!]

Zhuo Fan no longer wasted words on Lei Yuting and waved his finger so that the Blood Infant entered the old man.

A flash of red passed and the old man's skin crawled. As it started to wiggle, a light flashed over that spot.

Wherever the light went, the wiggling stopped.

After a few dozen breaths, the Blood Infant returned to Zhuo Fan's body while the old man began to move his finger. His lips parted to let a faint whisper, "Ting'er..."

"Godfather!"

Lei Yuting grabbed his hand as tears fell. But Zhuo Fan frowned and muttered, "Damn it. This old man won't move anytime soon, his blood vessels atrophied. He needs at least half a year to recover; I helped him for nothing."

Even with his low voice, Lei Yuting picked up his every word.

Lei Yuting glared at him, "Make no mistake, my godfather owes you and I will do everything to repay it. You won't lose out."

He shrugged. He wanted a Bone Tempering expert, not a run of the mill cultivator stuck at the cusp of entering Bone Tempering Stage that he could easily deal with.

It was at this time the old man's body trembled and an inch-long snow-white worm crawled out of his mouth.

"Ah..."

Lei Yuting shrieked. But when she saw the worm, her anger got the best of her.

"So you're the cause of my godfather's illness!" Lei Yuting poured all her power into the lightning between her two fingers and stabbed at the worm.

"Stop!"

Zhuo Fan grabbed her hand. Lei Yuting saw his eyes flash with an odd light.

"What are you doing? We need to kill this parasite!"

"You know nothing!"

Zhuo Fan looked for a box to put the worm carefully. Before closing the lid, he dropped a few drops of blood essence and smiled with satisfaction as he hid it in his chest.

Never did he expect to earn so much on this trip.

This creature was called Frigid Pool Snow Worm, one that lived in the coldest waters and was very rare. It was a parasite that would die if the larva didn't find a host in two hours after hatching.

But the cold pool it lived in hardly had any living beings and most of the worms would die soon after being born.

A demonic cultivator would raise it into an inferior demonic creature since most poisonous worms or insects could be turned into parasites. This was why many demonic cultivators considered the Frigid Pool Snow Worm a mere parasite, albeit a rarer one.

Yet even in the Sacred Domain, one would be hard-pressed to find someone who knew of Frigid Pool Snow Worm's fatal flaw. It would only leave its host when it was on the brink of death.

Just now, the Blood Infant used the Demon Transformation Art to kill its larva and make it believe its life was threatened so it would come out willingly. Another way was to kill the old man.

By destroying all its larva, the worm had now become a common parasite.

However, a treasure such as this could be refined into an unprecedented demonic creature in Zhuo Fan's hands.

He started to let out an evil smile. His grin only made the other three's hearts shudder, thinking Zhuo Fan was worse than Yang Ming.

"Carry him, we're returning to Windgaze City."

Zhuo Fan then turned to the remaining guard with a kind smile, "Thank you for opening the door for us."

With a strained nod, the guard squeezed a smile.

Then a steel grip lifted him by the throat, "But now, you're expendable."

"No!"

Lei Yuting was late in stopping him. Black energy burrowed into the guard and he soon blew up in a cloud of dust.

She froze seeing Zhuo Fan kill a man for the first time.

He was so ruthless, he didn't even leave a corpse. Lei Yuting recalled how she spent the last few days next to such a murderer and fear swelled inside her.

Even the old man's eyes squinted. He was a seasoned cultivator yet also felt his courage falter from Zhuo Fan's act.

Lei Yuting looked at her godfather with a heavy heart, unsure if joining Zhuo Fan was a good choice. But one thing was certain, she should never ever make an enemy out of him!

Sighing, she resigned in carrying her godfather behind Zhuo Fan.

Bodies were strewn everywhere they looked around the camp. Each man had a peaceful death, but it was this calm expression that struck the greatest fear in the two's hearts.

The mountain camp had around four hundred men, yet they all died without a sound, including those who weren't corrupted by Yang Ming.

The old man had tears streaming down his cheeks when he recalled drinking with his brothers.

But far from hating Zhuo Fan, he was more grateful. He was the lord of Blackwind Mountain and knew decisiveness was needed here. Once word got out about his rescue, not only the ones here but also the ones living in Windgaze City would find themselves dead.

If Zhuo Fan didn't do it, the old man would've asked him to.

He was grateful that Zhuo Fan spared him from giving out the kill order.

"Steward... Zhuo, thank... you." His strained words shocked Lei Yuting, while Zhuo Fan understood.

The old man was both in admiration and fearful as he watched the bodies.

"You... did a great deed..."

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 32: Men from Headquarter | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 32: Men from Headquarter

Chapter 32, Men from Headquarter

Translator: StarReader

Editor: Silavin

Looking for Proofreaders for this Novel

Ten days later, Zhuo Fan returned in secret to the small courtyard in Veiled Dragon Pavilion.

This trip took them half a month, but Zhuo Fan made sure to tell Lei Yuting to place the Blackwind Mountain bandits in the city on stand by.

Since the bandits were still, so was Hell Valley.

On the way to his home, Zhuo Fan found that Long Jie and Long Kui weren't around and set for a guard to put the old man in a room while he went to look for Luo Yunchang.

Fifteen minutes later, Xiao Cui cried when she saw the door open. She ran in tears to Lei Yuting, "Young miss."

Lei Yuting wiped the girl's tears and bopped her nose, "Silly girl, they weren't hard on you, were they?"

Xiao Cui shook her head, "All Luo clan, besides that evil steward, treated me with kindness."

"Ahem, girly, don't talk bad about people when they're present or they will put you in your place."

Zhuo Fan then walked next to the rest of the Luo clan's members who smiled at Xiao Cui's antics.

Luo Yunhai approved, "You dumb girl, bro Zhuo likes to spank people the most. You messed with him, now see how he messes up your rear."

Xiao Cui hid behind Lei Yuting.

Zhuo Fan rolled his eyes. Was he a fiend in these kids' eyes? Luo Yunchang and Captain Pang exchanged a glance but felt warm inside.

Zhuo Fan always did what he wanted and never left a good first impression, to the point some might even call him vile. They experienced this first hand. But once they got to know Zhuo Fan, they would discover that he was a trustworthy person.

"You're... Yunchang?"

They all turned to the old man behind Lei Yuting who watched Luo Yunchang with emotion. Then he turned to the child, "And you are... Luo Yunhai?"

"Gods be praised, brother Zhennan's children are alive!"

"Senior, are you perhaps..." Luo Yunchang hesitated.

The first thing Zhuo Fan did when he returned was to bring her to Blackwind Mountain's lord to understand the relationship between Blackwind Mountain and Luo clan, and why Hell Valley set its sights on them.

Zhuo Fan made the introductions, "This is Blackwind Mountain's lord, the leader of the bandits who destroyed Cloud Manor."

"What?"

Luo Yunchang's face turned gloomy and dignified as killing intent surged and her Yuan Qi leaked.

Lei Yuting jumped in front of the old man.

His frail hand moved Lei Yuting aside and dropped to his knees, tears flowing freely, "Yunchang, Luo clan's disaster is all my fault. If you want to kill anyone, kill me."

"Godfather!"

"Mountain Lord!"

Lei Yuting and Xiao Cui shouted but the old man dismissed them, "I owe it to the Luo clan. You are not to stop her."

Luo Yunchang watched the weak old man with anger, yet she didn't strike.

Zhuo Fan patted her shoulder, "Yang Ming had him fooled for so long, immobilized him in his bed, and he had only recently recovered somewhat. The attack on the Luo clan had nothing to do with him."

"Why didn't you say so earlier?" Luo Yunchang grumbled, blaming him for almost having killed an innocent.

Zhuo Fan rubbed his chin, "Although, this old man is so blind that taking him in might sink the Luo clan. Killing him for revenge is only natural."

She rolled her eyes at Zhuo Fan's dubious logic.

Despite making some sense, blaming the old man was going too far. Luo Yunchang wasn't a person who took her anger on others. Even more so when the old man seemed to have known her father well.

"Senior, you're also a victim."

"No, I and Zhennan are sworn brothers but the Luo clan fell because of me. It is because of me his soul can't rest." He wiped the tears from his pain-stricken face.

Luo Yunchang was shocked and then saw Luo Yunhai shaking his head, "Senior, why is it that father never mentioned you?"

Releasing the breath that he was holding, the old man calmed his restless heart, "Luo clan is a distinguished clan, leagues above an old bandit such as I. But your father and I became sworn brothers right as we met and kept it hidden, afraid of affecting the Luo clan's reputation. Furthermore, my Lei clan has an ancient rule, never to make enemies of Cai and Luo clans."

"Eh?"

Luo Yunhai cried out then muttered, "Dad once told me that regardless of the situation, to always survive or perish alongside Lei and Cai clans. I know of the Cai clan, but is the Lei clan he was referring to, yours?"

Luo Yunchang turned to her brother, "How come father never told me anything about this?"

Luo Yunhai stuck out his chin and snickered, "Dad said it's a secret between men. It is not for women or outsiders to know of."

Zhuo Fan frowned, "Is it possible that this ancestral rule in the Lei and Luo clans is passed down to the Clan Head only?"

"Correct, but as I do not have a son to pass it on, I speak of it now. Moreover, I and Zhennan became brothers, so the Luo clan would never harm us."

But then he recalled how Luo clan fell because of him and shook his head in shame.

"Old man, do you have a martial art passed down in your clan?" Zhuo Fan asked.

The old man nodded, "I passed down my clan's spirit ranked martial art, Lightning Finger, to Ting'er as I have no son. But that bastard Yang Ming took the jade slip instead."

Bam!

Zhuo Fan clapped, "That's it. That's what they are after."

Then he rushed out the door, "Wait here."

Everyone was stunned, clueless as to what he wanted to do...

Zhuo Fan passed like a storm through Veiled Dragon Pavilion's gates guarded by the same pair of guards, they didn't even try to stop him.

"Bro Jiu!" Zhuo Fan shouted as he searched for Long Jiu.

He soon saw a closed door with Long Kui and Long Jie acting as guards and knew Long Jiu was inside. He rushed over as he shouted.

Long Kui blocked him, enraged, "Shut up! Uncle Jiu won't receive guests today. Get lost!"

"Humph, I'm not a guest. I have important matters to discuss with Long Jiu. Stand aside." Zhuo Fan wanted to charge in but Long Jie and Long Kui's power barred him entry.

"Important is it? Don't mistake Uncle Jiu's appreciation of you for weakness! This is Veiled Dragon Pavilion, not your backyard." Long Kui glared at him as she stood her ground before the door.

"Brother Zhuo, Uncle Jiu can't see you today. Please go back." Long Jie was firm.

Zhuo Fan knew charging in was pointless and smiled, "Girly, do you know where I've been these past few days?"

"Humph, where could a filthy man possibly go? Last time you had two in your arms and this time you must have spent a tender night out in their village." Long Kui rolled her eyes.

Zhuo Fan shook his head with a sneer, "Ha-ha-ha, I wish, but I'm not as free as Young miss Long. Back to the matter at hand, I followed a lead on Hell Valley. Any time now they will come to Veiled Dragon Pavilion, so don't say I didn't warn you!"

"Humph, nonsense. If you know Hell Valley's actions, then bulls can fly." Long Kui disdained.

Zhuo Fan shook his head and left, shouting his final warning, "Tell Uncle Jiu I am taking the Luo clan into hiding, so we won't get dragged in Veiled Dragon Pavilion's fall."

Long Kui wanted to curse, [We've always treated you so well yet you even curse us after breaking all ties?]

She didn't get the chance however, as the door opened with a creak and Long Jiu's voice came, "Please bring brother Zhuo in!"

Long Jie and Long Kui were shocked, then bowed, "Yes!"

Zhuo Fan flitted past them like smoke, "No need, I can do it myself, he-he-he..."

Long Kui panted with rage when she saw his smug look, "What's so great about him? Isn't he just a 5th-grade array master? Why does Uncle Jiu care so much about him?"

With a bitter smile, Long Jie returned to guarding the door.

[This is a prime example of hating grapes from being sour without trying them. If Young miss was a 5th-grade array master instead, not only Uncle Jiu would've cared for you, he'd even praise you to high heaven...]

On the other hand, Zhuo Fan, who couldn't care less about Long Kui's increasing discontent of him, walked inside a huge house after spending five minutes crossing a corridor.

He soon saw Long Jiu sitting on a high chair beaming at him. On either side of him were another two identical seats, with the exception that they were facing in the opposite direction.

"Ha-ha-ha, brother Zhuo, what brought you here today?"

Zhuo Fan stopped before Long Jiu who was smiling at him, but that smile was soon replaced by a grim look, "But I must remind you, if you came here with nonsense, there will be consequences."

Scratching his nose, Zhuo Fan smiled, "Hell Valley's experts are here and will soon attack this place. I wonder if this is considered nonsense."

"Of course not, if it's true!"

Before Long Jiu responded, an aged voice came from one high chair, followed by the slow turning of both the chairs. Two ferocious auras, stronger than Long Jiu, swept Zhuo Fan.

His breath caught in his throat and staggered backwards as a drop of cold sweat trailed down his shocked face...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 33: Movements From All Sides | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 33: Movements From All Sides

The two chairs creaked as they turned slowly, revealing two old men.

One had sandy hair, with big eyes and thin hands that each time his finger tapped the armrest, it echoed out. His eyes flashed golden like a piercing sword, enough to cut one's heart.

The second elder had red hair and took long breaths. Each exhale warped the air as if he breathed fire.

One look was enough for Zhuo Fan to know they were stronger than Long Jiu. One of them even trained the Golden Body to completion while the other cultivated a fire cultivation method to great success.

In the short time Zhuo Fan was exposed to their power, he knew the old men weren't far from the Radiant Stage. In the mortal domain, any who reached this stage was among the few strongest on the continent.

[So this is the power of the Veiled Dragon Pavilion.] Zhuo Fan sighed inside.

The blond elder glanced at Zhuo Fan, "Are you that Zhuo Fan old Jiu couldn't stop praising?"

"Yes!"

"I heard you're a 5th-grade array master."

Zhuo Fan nodded. Before grasping the two's character, he refrained from acting casually, "Junior has a trivial understanding of 5th-grade arrays, but nothing seniors could consider as worth."

"Ha-ha-ha, a 5th-grade array master is a Venerable in the Veiled Dragon Pavilion. And we two are just Elders. Even we have to show you respect." The blond elder let out a friendly laugh, unfitting of his stiff expression.

The red-haired elder's rough voice boomed, "Hey kid, old Jiu said you're quite arrogant, that you can raise an unknown clan above the seven houses in ten years. Listening to you shout bro Jiu sure is arrogant enough. How come you're so shy when facing us two?"

Zhuo Fan smiled, "I have met with bro Jiu many times and got to know his limits. But this is my first time meeting the two of you."

The elders were surprised.

Long Jiu's face twitched and snapped, "Kid, you say you saw through me, is that it? And here I thought you were bossy to anyone you met when in fact you acted like this only around me. You think this old man is all washed up?"

"He-he-he, of course not. I consider bro Jiu my friend, and with how a broad-minded senior you are, you would never lower yourself to my level. If I were to act the same with a one-track minded person, I'd be dead."

Zhuo Fan shook his head and continued, "That is no longer arrogance, but idiocy."

The three smiled inside. The blond and the red-haired elders even showed approval.

[Just as old Jiu said, this kid can see through others while also handling each of them with flawless flattery. His words might irritate old Jiu but as a senior, he won't bicker with a junior.]

"I like this kid, ha-ha-ha..." The red-haired elder laughed, while the blond elder nodded, "If I didn't know you have no intention to join Veiled Dragon Pavilion, I would've insisted on having you join us, ha-ha-ha..."

Zhuo Fan might be cupping his hands with a smile, but a sneer laid in his heart.

In the off chance this glorious and fallen Demonic Emperor couldn't rise again, he would still not join a party that didn't even have a Radiant Stage cultivator. [Quite the opposite, in fact. If you old fogies are stuck in cultivation, this old man will give you pointers.]

"Oh, you were saying just now that Hell Valley's men are here. Are you certain?"

The blond old man's face turned solemn as they went down to important matters. Long Jiu turned his eye over to him, eager to know.

Zhuo Fan nodded, "Half a month ago, I discovered the Sun clan had two more incredibly strong auras besides Elder Jian. As I was out with work these past days, I hadn't kept an eye on Sun clan and am unclear if more had come."

"Humph, the more the better! I will kill them regardless!" Long Jiu slapped the table as his eye turned bloodthirsty.

"Old Jiu, don't let anger cloud your judgment!" The blond old man frowned and said to Zhuo Fan, "Little brother, how do you know?"

"A cat has its way, and so does a mouse. The less you know, the better." Zhuo Fan shook his head.

The blond old man was doubtful, while Long Jiu was convinced, "Third brother, brother Zhuo's news is reliable. When that bastard Jian Fan came to Windgaze City, our spy network didn't pick it up and we only knew it thanks to brother Zhuo's warning. I can attest to that, as I checked its validity myself."

"Eh?"

The blond elder frowned and said surprised, "Little brother, you're quite amazing. I wonder who your Master is..."

"Overlord Nine Serenities!" Zhuo Fan blurted.

They were stunned.

This name was domineering to the extreme, but when did this continent have such a persona?

Zhuo Fan smiled to himself. In the Sacred Domain, it would hint to the Nine Serenities Emperor's location, but in the mortal domain, no one was the wiser.

After all, the folk here were too far away, enough to keep such ancient rumors from reaching their ears.

"Uh, your Master must be a hidden expert to train brother Zhuo to 5th-grade array master." The blond elder didn't press for more.

"Brother Jiu, do you have a Recovery Pill?" Zhuo Fan popped a question.

Long Jiu nodded as he took out a bottle, "Is someone from Luo clan hurt?"

A Recovery Pill was a 3rd-grade pill, not too expensive and neither too common, valued a hundred thousand spirit stones at the minimum. But since Zhuo Fan wanted it, Long Jiu was bound to acquiesce.

What could this pill be worth when the two were close as bros and there was even a 10 million debt binding them?

Zhuo Fan took the pill then cupped his hands, "Thank you, bro Jiu and elders. I will be going now."

"Damn punk, this was your aim all along." Long Jiu cursed, "You disturbed us for some meager pill, so now you must suffer my punishment."

Zhuo Fan laughed as he dismissed him, "I'll tell you something else then. Hell Valley will attack in two days. Better bump up security."

Then he walked out laughing.

Long Jie and Long Kui saw the immensely pleased Zhuo Fan come out and knew he had a delightful conversation, which only worked to sour the two's hearts.

The fact that a kid like him had more right than them to join a meeting of elders left them annoyed, Long Kui in particular.

The blond elder stroked his beard, keeping Zhuo Fan's figure in his eyes, "Brothers, this kid puts on a smart appearance, while each word he spoke was carefully considered. So young yet so skilled. I can't help but wonder whose disciple he is. Veiled Dragon Pavilion will have to get in touch with his master."

The two nodded.

On the other hand, Zhuo Fan went straight home. Along the way, he even spotted quite a few suspicious individuals prowling around.

A great fight was about to erupt.

He soon returned to Luo Yunchang.

Thanks to the old man's briefings, Luo Yunchang was now privy to the ups and downs of past events and was beginning to sympathize and relate with them.

Since both of them have suffered at the hands of a common enemy, their alliance became more solid.

Zhuo Fan relaxed seeing this and threw a bottle at the Mountain Lord, "Take this. I hope you'll be up to your peak in no time."

"What's this?" Lei Yuting asked.

"Recovery Pill!"

"What?" Lei Yuting was stunned.

She knew of its value. Even if Blackwind Mountain robbed for a whole year, they'd still be unable to gather the spirit stones to pay for it. Yet he threw such a precious pill just like that.

Was Luo clan that rich?

Seeing through her, Luo Yunchang patted Lei Yuting's hand, "Sister Yuting, be at ease. Veiled Dragon Pavilion owes us 10 million. A 3rd-grade pill is nothing!"

Lei Yuting's shock left her slack-jawed.

No wonder Veiled Dragon Pavilion was protecting them free of charge.

[Wait, was Cloud Manor that wealthy?]

But Zhuo Fan rolled his eyes at Luo Yunchang's radiant smile.

[Women are all the same. They all love to compare...]

Meanwhile, in a dark room of the Sun clan sat four people. Three of them had their faces hidden, though unable to hide the vile energy they gave off, while the fourth was Hell Valley's 8th elder, Condor Jian Fan.

The handsome youth standing before them with a creepy smile was Yang Ming. Also known as You Ming in Hell Valley.

"You Ming," Elder Jian began, "You hid for more than a decade in Blackwind Mountain. You've done well! But this isn't a job for a girl."

"There was an incident, but it was taken care of!" You Ming smiled.

Whoosh!

A black light trailed his face, drawing blood.

You Ming was appalled Elder Jian would strike him.

Staring at him, Elder Jian said unfeelingly, "This secret plan had been going for a decade. If your overconfidence ruins the house's plan, I will make you beg for death."

"Yes!" You Ming bowed as cold sweat formed.

"Leave." Elder Jian waved, "We'll begin three days from now."

You Ming was at the door when he caught Elder Jian's sneer, "No Luo clan member is allowed to live, especially..."

Only

“Zhuo Fan!” You Ming paused after each word.

Nodding, Elder Jian’s killing intent surged, “Even if Veiled Dragon Pavilion used him to kill You Quan, his hands are stained with your junior brother’s blood. No such person shall live in this world!”

“Yes!”

You Ming gnashed his teeth, his smile bloodthirsty...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 34: Battle Approaches | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 34: Battle Approaches

Chapter 34, Battle Approaches

Translator: StarReader

Editor: Silavin

Looking for Proofreaders for this Novel

Zhuo Fan was sitting cross-legged on his bed when he opened his eyes.

He was but a step away from entering the 5th layer of Qi Condensation. But his lack of Yuan Qi blocked his advance.

If he had known, he would've spent more time on Blackwind Mountain to absorb more people's Yuan Qi. But since he was pressed for time, he only let Blood Infant do the killing, wasting good materials in the process.

With the battle knocking at his door, he refrained from letting Blood Infant roam. It would be a huge loss for it to die if Elder Jian bumped into Blood Infant.

Zhuo Fan muttered, "I can only hold it in. It will not be long before they attack!"

Yet, his last word was followed by a terrifying power looming ever closer towards his direction.

He ran out of the house and jumped onto the roof to see a man was already there, floating in the sky, Long Jiu.

He too felt the power approaching closer and closer, as his single eye squinted with the release of killing intent. Despite this place being a hundred meters from Veiled Dragon Pavilion, Zhuo Fan shivered from the intense desire to kill.

"I knew it. They're Profound Heaven experts!"

Even if Zhuo Fan couldn't pinpoint Long Jiu's power, figuring out his stage was easy. Hovering in the sky was all the proof he needed. As for the other two elders, they were even stronger.

Thinking of them, he swept the area, but Zhuo Fan saw no shadow of them. They had to be laying an ambush to trap Jian Fan.

Zhuo Fan sported a wicked grin.

The three elders' plan showed Veiled Dragon Pavilion's decision to fight Hell Valley to the death, regardless of consequences. This left no room for amicable conciliation, while also securing the Luo clan's safety.

"Zhuo Fan, what happened?"

Luo Yunchang with Lei Yuting and the rest came outside. Zhuo Fan guessed Mountain Lord hadn't finished digesting the pill since he didn't come. Zhuo Fan sorely lacked a peak expert.

He yelled, "What are you doing? Get back inside!"

Their little power was nothing to a Profound Heaven expert, unlike Zhuo Fan who relied on the Nine Heavens Coiling Dragon Array.

Luo Yunchang knew the gravity of the situation from Zhuo Fan's tense face. She took her brother and the others to hide in the house while also saying, "Zhuo Fan, be careful!"

Zhuo Fan nodded.

A sudden cawing echoed in their ears and a black cloud floated above Veiled Dragon Pavilion. With a laugh, a black-robed old man walked out of the cloud. The few strands of hair on his head drifted in the wind as his evil eyes narrowed on Long

Jiu. But even so, he couldn't help spare the small courtyard a glance.

"Condor Jian Fan, how dare you step into my domain?" Long Jiu's one and only eye was bloodshot. His bone-deep hatred seeped into every word he uttered.

Snickering, Condor Jian Fan laughed, "Long Jiu, Veiled Dragon Pavilion killed Hell Valley's disciple, You Quan. You're saying I can't even come to seek justice?"

"Justice? Since when did Hell Valley know the meaning of the word?"

Long Jiu's breathing grew ragged from the grudge he carried, "Who then plotted against me in Drifting Leaves City? Who then set a trap for me and ruined my Purple Lightning Gold Eye?"

[Purple Lightning Gold Eye?]

Zhuo Fan didn't expect the people in the mortal domain to cultivate such a remarkable ability.

The legend of the Purple Lightning Gold Eye went back to the time of the ten emperors, pertaining to one of the top three emperors, Heavenly Emperor's mystic eye. It released a golden light, divine lightning that could crush Heaven. Even a Saint Stage expert would fall from his gaze.

Yet, this amazing cultivation method appeared in the mortal domain. He was curious as to how in Heavens Long Jiu managed to cultivate it. If it was cultivated to the 6th Heaven, it was a pity to have it ruined.

Even he, the Demonic Emperor, would feel the same hatred as if having his wife stolen or his father killed.

"Ha-ha-ha..."

Jian Fan wasn't the least bit ashamed and laughed instead, "Who is to blame for your idiocy? Relying on your eye, you became a top expert in the Veiled Dragon Pavilion. Without this crutch, you've degenerated to become one of the nine elders, stuck to defend Windgaze City. Oh, the horror."

"Jian Fan!"

Long Jiu's energy blew with his rage and even his eye was on the verge of bleeding, "I will have my revenge!"

Long Jiu charged as a golden dragon coiled around his hand.

"Mid spirit ranked martial art, Soaring Dragon Claw!"

Roar!

The dragon roared and left Long Jiu's arm, bearing its fangs at the enemy.

Jian Fan sneered and simply waved his hand.

A black mist formed chains as it left his sleeve, binding the golden dragon. With a twist of his hand, the golden dragon wailed and shattered to pieces.

"Mid spirit ranked martial art, Hell Chains!"

Jian Fan mocked, "Long Jiu, you were a dragon with your eye before, but you are now a mere bug. The name of Godeye Long Jiu will never rise again..."

Before he could finish, a palm appeared before him and a claw grabbed his wrist.

"Veiled Dragon Claw!"

Jian Fan was unable to escape the vise but he wasn't too worried as he laughed, "Humph, think you can face me with mortal ranked martial arts when even spirit ranked martial arts are useless?"

"He-he-he, I don't need to take your life, just..."

Grinning, Long Jiu threw Jian Fan to the ground! The blond and the red-haired elders jumped from nearby to attack him.

"Not good!"

Jian Fan started panicking.

Only now did he realize Long Jiu's ploy. Long Jiu wanted to trap him with two others, cutting off his escape.

[Long Jiu is set on killing me, but...]

Jian Fan grinned.

"Now!"

The black cloud revealed two men in black as they converged on Long Jiu.

This left Long Jiu and the elders in shock. But thanks to Zhuo Fan's intelligence, they had a contingency in place.

"Old Jiu, hold fast!"

The blond elder moved swiftly towards Jian Fan with the red-haired elder behind him, ignoring Long Jiu's fate.

Long Jiu grinned as a golden light shined on his palm and a dragon-shaped sword appeared, "As long as you kill Jian Fan, I can die in peace."

"3rd-grade spiritual weapon, Dragon Sword?"

The two men in black stopped in their attacks and dodged the incoming sword attack.

Whoosh!

A golden light passed just an inch from them as a thunderclap followed behind it. The light split the sky in half and only after ten breaths did it recover.

The two men in black felt dread while retreating ten steps. They didn't expect Long Jiu to use a treasure to deal with them.

"Good!"

The blond elder shouted in glee. Long Jiu's attack scared the two men. He wrapped himself in golden light and charged at Jian Fan.

Attacked from two sides, Jian Fan was like meat on a chopping board.

“Old Jiu, take a look, see how third brother ends him.”

The blond elder laughed as he attacked. Despite not using a martial art, ear-piercing sounds were heard as his hand moved.

Jian Fan began to sweat as his eyes squinted, feeling death breathing down his neck...

Boom!

But then a purple light exploded. It not only blocked the attack but even forced the blond elder to cough blood.

The red-haired elder rushed to check on him while the blond elder ignored his wounds and stared at the rolling smoke.

As for Long Jiu, he was shocked.

When the smoke scattered, it revealed a panting Jian Fan. But this time, he was no longer afraid and even grew rampant having escaped death.

“That was close. Didn’t think Veiled Dragon Pavilion would send 5th and 3rd elders after me! Devastating Gold Dragon and World-burning Fire Dragon, your reputation precedes you!”

The two elders were staring, not at Jian Fan, but at the thing on his shoulder...

Soul Devouring Crow!

Zhuo Fan frowned.

He didn’t expect for Elder Jian to have such a demonic creature.

The Soul Devouring Crow’s body wasn’t formidable, but it can devour anything and transfer what it swallowed to its owner. Soul Devouring Crow’s power depended on its owner. But one thing was certain, Soul Devouring Crow was among the strong demonic creatures.

Zhuo Fan's eyebrows shook as he looked into the crow's eyes. One was black, while the other was golden and released a purple light. Even faint thunder sounds came out.

"3rd Heaven, Purple Lightning Gold Eye!"

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 35: Purple Lightning Gold Eye | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 35: Purple Lightning Gold Eye

"That's... that's my eye!"

With just a look, Long Jiu saw through the secret of crow's eye. He used to move unhindered thanks to that same eye and even earned the name Godeye Long Jiu.

But the godeye was now his enemy's weapon to be used against him.

"I-impossible!" Long Jiu shook his head in denial.

Jian Fan's laughter was unrestrained, "Long Jiu, did you ever think that your precious Purple Lightning Gold Eye will one day be put to use on my demonic creature? If you want to kill me, you'll have to first overcome this eye."

Then he began making hand signs.

The crow flew and purple light glinted in its golden eye, rumbling as it charged at Long Jiu.

"Watch out!"

The blond elder woke Long Jiu out of his stupor in time to defend with his Dragon Sword.

Boom!

Long Jiu was struck down by one purple lightning after another and was blown away coughing blood.

The two elders rushed to Jian Fan in panic. They knew that as long as Jian Fan stopped his hands, the crow would stop moving.

But how could Jian Fan not see such an obvious flaw?

Sneering, he gestured again and caused two explosions, the purple lightning struck the two elders. They bore the brunt as it sent them flying and blood leaked from their mouths.

Zhuo Fan was shocked by how vicious the Purple Lightning Gold Eye was. It was only in 3rd Heaven and it could already outclass a Profound Heaven expert.

As matters stood, Veiled Dragon Pavilion would lose, and the Luo clan would be next.

“No, I cannot let that happen.”

Squinting, Zhuo Fan gnashed his teeth and pointed, sending a red light at Jian Fan.

He was taking a huge gamble. If Blood Infant was found out, it would die in a blink from the purple lighting, and him along with it.

But if he stood at the sidelines, the Luo clan would be sure to fall for good.

Zhuo Fan hardened his heart and sent the Blood Infant on the offensive.

Jian Fan was focused on Veiled Dragon Pavilion's three elders and was oblivious to the incoming danger.

“Ha-ha-ha, Purple Lightning Gold Eye is awesome. Not even together are you three fools its match.” The crow flew back to Jian Fan's shoulder as he cackled.

The two men in black flew to either side of Jian Fan and grinned.

The three Veiled Dragon Pavilion elders' faces darkened. The enemy looked down on them despite acting together. This was the first time this ever happened.

If they lost here today, Veiled Dragon Pavilion's reputation would be thrown into the mud, all thanks to them.

“Don’t think you can win with a damn demonic creature and a stolen eye, Condor.”
The blond elder’s eyes flashed golden and exploded with killing intent.

“Old Jiu, old Wu, stay here. I will take their heads.”

While shocked, the red-haired elder saw the determination in his eyes and nodded, as did Long Jiu.

As they were all elders of Veiled Dragon Pavilion, they knew the blond old man’s true power.

Once the Devastating Gold Dragon was enraged, he would split the earth and shatter the heavens. During the time when Long Jiu had his eye, there were three people in Veiled Dragon Pavilion he couldn’t beat.

1st and 2nd elder were the first two, while the last was the enraged 3rd elder.

Whoosh!

A dazzling golden light shined and started covering him with a thick film, like a golden armor. Each time his finger moved, it let out a metallic sound.

Jian Fan’s face turned grave, picking up on the threat to his life the old man’s change promised.

“Allow me to educate you that the name of Devastating Gold Dragon isn’t an empty title.”

The blond elder formed claws with his hands, all the while radiating in gold and staring at Jian Fan with a cold gaze. Then he rushed at Jian Fan. In his charge, the elder brought his hands together, just like scissors.

Roar!

A dragon roar echoed in the pitch-black night. Jian Fan saw the blond elder appeared surrounded by the image of a huge dragon.

It unclenched its jaws and followed the blond elder’s claws to swallow the three enemies whole.

“High spirit ranked martial art, Devouring Dragon Claw!”

Startled, Jian Fan hastened his hand gestures to control the crow’s Purple Lightning Gold Eye.

Boom! And a purple light flashed!

But this time, when the lightning fell on the dragon, it bounced off like a bullet, not even able to slow it down.

Jian Fan panicked, unable to believe that the blond elder would be so strong that he could deflect Purple Lightning Gold Eye’s attack. But he did notice how the dragon’s golden aura dimmed.

“Hell Chains!”

Jian Fan and his two men moved together. Tens of black chains flew from their arms and fell on the dragon like a dark cloud.

The chains tightened and the dragon body was rendered motionless under their vise, yet the dragon still lingered, wanting to press on the attack.

“You’re not Veiled Dragon Pavilion’s 3rd elder for nothing, needing all three of us to hold you back.”

Jian Fan gave his all in grasping the black chains along with his men. They even began to sweat.

The 3rd elder gnashed his teeth, his lips curling in disdain, “You think the three of you could’ve held me if not for the Purple Lightning Gold Eye?”

“He-he-he, you’re right. We still have the Purple Lightning Gold Eye.”

Jian Fan snickered, now that 3rd elder reminded him, he used the hand that held the black chains to make hand signs. With a cawing sound, purple lightning flashed.

The 3rd elder’s scalp went numb.

Both sides were in a deadlock. If the purple lighting hit, it would spell heavy wounds, if not death.

“Third brother!”

Long Jiu and the red-haired elder were nervous, rushing to help despite not making it in time.

Seeing 3rd elder’s fate sealed under the purple lightning, Jian Fan grinned.

It was at this moment when Zhuo Fan, who was just a hundred feet away, showed a mystifying smile.

“Using this chaos, I’ll take your life. I can’t have the Veiled Dragon Pavilion lose such an important battle!”

Zhuo Fan’s killing intent spiked as his hand moved. The Blood Infant lying in wait just around the corner sprung up from its hiding place, aiming for Jian Fan. With Jian Fan and his two men focused on 3rd elder, they were oblivious to the impending danger.

“He-he-he, die, 3rd elder!”

Jian Fan cackled as the crow’s eye spilled purple lightning. But then a sudden flash of red entered his body and felt his breath hampered, dispelling the black chains from his hand.

“Elder Jian, what are you doing?” His two men jumped in fright.

Jian Fan found something burrowing in his body and wanted to expel it but it was too late...

3rd elder pressed his advantage and exploded with power.

Roar!

The dragon burst out of the chains and bit down.

The two men's eyes squinted as they fled. But the pitiful Elder Jian was rooted in place thanks to Blood Infant's control. The next instant, an arm flew way up high.

3rd elder grabbed it and stood with pride as he laughed at the one-armed Jian Fan and his men.

"Curse you. Veiled Dragon Pavilion went as far as refining demonic creatures to make a sneak attack..."

Jian Fan clenched his teeth as his heart bled with grief. Thinking how a veteran demonic cultivator as himself was hampered by a demonic creature left a bad taste in his mouth. Would he get any respect from others now? What was even worse was that this was done by righteous cultivators.

"Let's go!"

Jian Fan knew he lost the advantage and there was nothing to gain from fighting a losing battle.

Yet Long Jiu wasn't one to let them go.

"After them!"

3rd elder's feelings were mutual and shouted while pursuing them.

The Blood Infant returned inside Zhuo Fan without anyone's knowledge. He smiled. [It's best for Hell Valley to put this blame on Veiled Dragon Pavilion. Their hatred isn't light anyway and a bit more won't affect them.]

Zhuo Fan justified his actions.

Just that he couldn't help the Purple Lightning Gold Eye to catch his attention.

"One way or another, I'll have to get it." Zhuo Fan rubbed his chin as his eyes roamed around. Few things caught the Demonic Emperor's eye, and the Celestial Emperor's Purple Lightning Gold Eye happened to be one of them.

"Kill!"

But then, a group of men in black charged into Veiled Dragon Pavilion. They were all Bone Tempering experts.

However, Veiled Dragon Pavilion had a contingency in place and Long Jie led his own team to repel the enemies. Mere moments after the two sides clashed, Long Kui came out to meet them with her own team from the small courtyard.

During the Profound Heaven experts' battle, they remained hidden, waiting for the right moment to strike. They waited for all of Hell Valley's men to charge in so they could kill them all in one go.

Hell Valley acted as if they didn't expect an ambush and retreated with Long Jie and Long Kui hot on their tails.

No sooner did they retreat after the initial 'attack', leaving the Luo clan and the ones in the small courtyard.

"Aren't they baiting?"

Only

Zhuo Fan was calm, having known Hell Valley's plan. He was waiting for the true mastermind to come out.

Soon after, Yang Ming appeared leading Blackwind Mountain bandits.

Zhuo Fan smirked, "Hell Valley had paid a heavy price to have the Lei clan wipe out the Luo clan. I wonder how far are they willing to go?"

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 36: Lone Sentry | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 36: Lone Sentry

Chapter 36, Lone Sentry

Translator: StarReader

Editor: Silavin

Looking for Proofreaders for this Novel

Bam!

The little courtyard's door was kicked open and Yang Ming and his bandit gang stormed the premises.

"Get the Returning Dragon Palm! And kill the Luo clan!" Yang Ming extended his hand.

Whoosh!

A breeze passed, followed by Zhuo Fan landing from the roof and barring their path, "People, the way is closed off. Please go back, for your own sake."

The bandits stopped in shock. Yang Ming stepped from among them and snickered, "Are you from the Luo clan?"

Zhuo Fan nodded, "I am Luo clan's steward, Zhuo Fan."

"Zhuo Fan?" Yang Ming exposed a savage grin, "Here I was wondering where to look for you and yet you were kind enough to jump right in my path."

"Whoever brings me his head will get a reward." Yang Ming shouted to the bandits around him.

"Oh!"

Under Yang Ming's enticing offer, the bandits shot for Zhuo Fan like cannonballs.

Zhuo Fan sneered inside, [What could 2nd layer Qi Condensation cultivators possibly do?]

In but a breath, Zhuo Fan's hand moved like a shadow, touching the head of the first victim that dared to step close and sending out black energy through the use of Demon Transformation Art.

Under the shocked gaze of the rest, the victim turned to dust and was swept away by the wind.

Even Yang Ming was scared, never seeing such a ruthless killing method despite his stay in the Hell Valley which was filled with its fair share of demonic cultivating monsters. If he was scared, the bandits were horrified.

Despite Zhuo Fan having killed a weakling, how he did it drew a far greater reaction out of them.

"T-that's the best demonic method!"

Yang Ming's eyes flickered on and off, gone was his disdain for Zhuo Fan, now replaced by endless caution, "Who the hell are you? There's no way the Luo clan could have someone like you."

With a sinister smile, Zhuo Fan pretended to caress an imaginary beard while speaking in an aged voice, "Little brother, did you forget? This old man is but a swindler."

"It's you!"

Yang Ming realized he was the old guy accompanying Lei Yuting before. Since he was here, that meant...

Killing Intent flashed as Yang Ming spoke, "Where are they?"

Zhuo Fan shook his head, "Are you dumb or what? Since I'm here, of course they're here with me."

Yang Ming's heart tightened. If the old man and Lei Yuting came out, his control over the Blackwind Mountain bandits would crumble.

"I should've killed you two from the start." Yang Ming's Yuan Qi exploded. His Bone Tempering power caused the bandits to flinch back three steps.

Zhuo Fan only shook his head, "You wouldn't have attacked, not until you saw Xiao Cui. For you to have hidden for so long in the Blackwind Mountain shows your careful nature, unable to accept the smallest mistake. Until you knew for certain Xiao Cui's location, you'd never kill her master."

Yang Ming's heart was in upheaval.

Never for the likes of him could he imagine a stranger had such a piercing analysis of him, that could see through his every move. He was far more cunning than even the old men in the Hell Valley.

He had to die.

As Zhuo Fan words landed, the bandits began to doubt.

Yang Ming couldn't drag this any longer, for fear of exposing himself for good and ruining the house's plan. He chose to attack Zhuo Fan.

Zhuo Fan's demonic method left him in shock, but as Zhuo Fan was but a 4th layer Qi Condensation cultivator, he could kill him in one blow.

Zhuo Fan was taken aback by Yang Ming's sudden attack and retreated, "Have you no dignity? How can a Bone Tempering cultivator use all his power against a Qi Condensation cultivator?"

Yang Ming cackled, "You think I'm as dumb as You Quan to be caught off guard by you?"

His finger extended and lightning blossomed, the same move used by the Lei clan, Lightning Finger.

For early Bone Tempering Yang Ming to use a spirit ranked martial art on Zhuo Fan showed the desperation he had in wishing to kill him.

And yet, despite his opponent's fierce momentum, Zhuo Fan stopped and spread his arms as he welcomed Yang Ming with a mystifying smile.

Yang Ming was unnerved, but not enough to curb his attack.

Zhuo Fan then curled a finger and a yellow light encased him.

Yang Ming collided with the light and bounced off while coughing blood.

"What is that?"

Yang Ming was dumbstruck in the face of such a light. He only felt as if Zhuo Fan's finger held the power to send him flying.

How did he do it?

[Wasn't he just a Qi Condensation punk? Didn't You Quan give him a heavy wound? How is he so strong?]

Zhuo Fan chuckled at Yang Ming's puzzlement as his hand moved, "You're a bit stronger than You Quan, but still trash. The only fate of trash... is death!"

Zhuo Fan's eyes flashed with killing intent.

A golden dragon burst out of the ground and swooped down on Yang Ming. Its majestic power brought everyone else to their knees.

Yang Ming felt fear and wanted to curse.

[Blast it, the house lied to me!]

[Didn't they say this punk can only sneak attack? How does he have this much power? If that dragon attacks, not even my bones will remain.]

[Only a Profound Heaven expert has such power!]

The Blackwind Mountain bandits were terrified. Didn't Hell Valley bait all the experts? Why was one still here? [No one from the seven houses is trustworthy.]

"Stop!"

Just when the golden dragon was poised to strike, a shout came. The bandits knew it belonged to their Young miss and hope rose within them.

Zhuo Fan snorted.

Yet the next moment tens of black chains descended from the black cloud above. They not only tied the dragon up but also crushed it.

Zhuo Fan looked with contracted pupils.

The black cloud was the same one the three elders from the Hell Valley relied on before.

"There was another one?" Frowning, Zhuo Fan knew the black cloud hid another elder.

"He-he-he..."

A man descended from the black clouds and landed in front of Yang Ming. Lei Yuting also arrived next to Zhuo Fan and glared, "Didn't I tell you to stop?"

"Anyone who stands in my way is my enemy. Why should I listen to you?" Zhuo Fan didn't look at her, only staring at the newcomer.

Lei Yuting snorted.

"Sigh, that old Jian Fan told me to watch over the Blackwind Mountain bandits. I thought it was a waste of time and did not take it seriously." The man waved, "You Ming, leave!"

"No, Elder Yun. I want to get Zhuo Fan's head myself, for junior brother You Quan's revenge." You Ming glared at Zhuo Fan.

Bam!

The man gave him an unexpected slap, sending him flying.

"You think you can?"

The man sneered, "You can't even match his skill, so go back to Hell Valley! This doesn't concern you anymore."

"Elder Yun..."

You Ming was distracted seeing the unfeeling gaze in the man's eyes. He never saw Elder Yun like this. You Ming was among the best in Hell Valley and no elder ever looked at him with such cold eyes.

"W-why?"

The man snorted, "Despite your scheming heart, I used to see you as a man of talent, worthy of raising. But now that I met this youngster, I realized you are nothing more than an insect."

The man then turned to Zhuo Fan with a smile, "Child, you have one chance, join Hell Valley and all our differences shall be made void. Or..."

Whoosh!

He swiped and a black chain tightened tens of Blackwind Mountain bandits. He pulled a bit and all that was left were pieces of flesh.

"Or follow in their footsteps."

Shock spread to those still alive to see this and Lei Yuting glared in rage at him.

Rubbing his chin, Zhuo Fan smiled, "Wasn't Hell Valley using Blackwind Mountain to save its reputation. Why kill them?"

"With how smart you are, I'm sure you can figure it out." The man snickered, "Since our plan is out in the open, I would rather avoid raising doubts in them by killing all now."

“Them? Who’s that?” Zhuo Fan frowned.

The man shook his head, “You will know once you join us.”

Zhuo Fan only laughed, “To me, Hell Valley is the same as he is to you, a mere insect.”

He pointed at You Ming with a taunt.

The man’s ire grew, “Kid, don’t you fear death?”

Zhuo Fan snickered, “Can you deliver it?”

The man jumped and hacked his palm in rage at Zhuo Fan, “Die!”

Zhuo Fan made a gesture and a yellow light blocked the attack.

You Ming saw them clash with jealousy and hatred. He was considered outstanding and was sent on an important mission to Blackwind Mountain. But Zhuo Fan’s sudden appearance ruined everything.

It even caused the elder to abandon him.

“Zhuo Fan, you’ll see.” You Ming wiped the blood from his mouth and fled.

Lei Yuting chased at once and the two were gone moments later.

Zhuo Fan, on the other hand, faced the man with the help of the array. Seeing her go, he sighed, “Foolish girl!” And he sent Blood Infant to follow them in secret...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 37: Fighting a Profound Heaven Cultivator | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 37: Fighting a Profound Heaven Cultivator

Chapter 37, Fighting a Profound Heaven Cultivator

Translator: StarReader

Editor: Silavin

Looking for Proofreaders for this Novel

The man struck three times and Zhuo Fan countered with a hand sign, which erected yellow light. After twenty-odd hits, the man floated in the air and sneered, "You're really something to be able to control the 3rd-grade Coiling Dragon Array at such a young age. It's most unfortunate you met me."

He then rushed towards Zhuo Fan again as the latter formed a golden dome of light to stop him. Having foreseen this, the man gathered 20% more power in his palm before striking.

The dome crumbled under the devastating blow and he continued to speed towards Zhuo Fan, "Humph, the power of Profound Heaven isn't something a Qi Condensation kid can even begin to imagine."

Zhuo Fan smiled and muttered, "A 5th-grade array isn't something a novice can comprehend either."

With a snort, Zhuo Fan's hand signs took a sudden change.

"1st Heaven!"

Roar!

A golden dragon erupted from the ground and moved to attack Elder Yun.

With disdain plainly seen on his face, Elder Yun waved tens of black chains around the dragon and crushed it.

Just as the dragon dissipated, Zhuo Fan's gesture changed again.

"2nd Heaven!"

Roar! Roar!

Two golden dragons charged this time.

Shocked, the man never saw this array forming two dragon images. This exceeded his understanding of the Coiling Dragon Array.

But it wasn't something out of his control. Both of his arms moved and the dragons were crushed under black chains.

Even before the man could take a breather, Zhuo Fan shouted two times.

"3rd Heaven!"

Three dragons took to the skies!

"4th Heaven." And the fourth dragon appeared.

"5th Heaven, 6th Heaven..., 9th Heaven." A total of nine golden dragons roamed the skies as their fearsome roars echoed everywhere.

Every great clan in the city burrowed deeper into their homes, without daring to make a peep. This battle was by far the most horrifying one in their lives.

The man was gasping for breath and looked appalled at the majestic scene. Never in his wildest dream could he ever conceive that a Qi Condensation child was able to control such an imposing array.

"This isn't the Coiling Dragon Array!" The man saw the nine golden dragons setting their vicious sights on their enemy, him.

Zhuo Fan gave a cruel grin, "This is the 5th-grade array, Nine Heavens Coiling Dragon Array. Try it, if you have the nerve."

After a deep look at Zhuo Fan, the man cackled, "How amusing. To think a kid can control a 5th-grade array! I am more and more intrigued."

"For the last time, will you join Hell Valley?" The man's fervent look was akin to gazing upon a priceless treasure.

But he only received disdain, "I've never once considered joining a run-down place like yours!"

"Since you chose to keep that road shut, the only path left is to your death."

The man flew like the wind, with all his killing intent focused on Zhuo Fan.

Zhuo Fan was but a teenager, but the ruthless and calculative mind coupled with his preeminent talent left the man with dread for the future.

It was best to avoid any future mishaps and kill him on the spot.

Zhuo Fan was clear of Elder Yun's intention and with a hand sign from him, he sent the nine dragons to attack the Elder.

Nine dragon tails charged.

An ear-piercing sound came and the man had to come face to face with the awe-inspiring power of nine dragon tails, stopping him dead in his tracks.

His only choice was to unleash his black chains, hoping their power was enough.

Rumble!

Under the shaking sky and spinning ground, the man's chains and the dragon tails clashed. It resulted in him being sent flying.

He flew fifty meters before landing, puking blood the first instance his body made contact with the ground.

Zhuo Fan mocked, "How did you become an elder with just this much strength? How did Hell Valley even wiggle its way among the Seven Noble Houses?"

The man was about to spout obscenities.

Who'd imagine this day would come when a Qi Condensation child would toy with him. Once word got out, he'd be the butt of the empire's joke!

Even if he returned to the valley, the Valley Lord wouldn't let him off with just a tongue lashing.

"Kid, even if you go down on your knees and beg, I will still kill you."

His eyes bloodshot, a golden ring appeared on the man's hand exuding a dreadful aura.

"Demonic treasure?"

Zhuo Fan started to get serious.

A demonic treasure was a demonic cultivator's weapon, just as how a spiritual weapon was to a righteous cultivator. With it, the man's power would multiply.

"Hell Valley's elder, have you no shame? To use a demonic treasure against a Qi Condensation junior?" Zhuo Fan mocked.

But Elder Yun replied with a savage grin, "He-he-he, who will be able to tell when everyone's dead?"

Zhuo Fan was anxious now.

He wanted to provoke Elder Yun just so he could avoid this situation. But when up against a demonic cultivator, they would stoop to any low. Then again, if it were him, he'd come to the same decision as well.

If a righteous cultivator gave up his life for honor, fought for justice and yet still died gruesomely, a demonic cultivator would only take that man for a fool.

This was why no demonic cultivator would ever wish to battle with another demonic cultivator. They were ruthless, scheming and sinister characters and the only outcome of fighting them was one victor and one loser with no in-between, particularly in the shameless one's case.

"He-he-he, die, kid!"

The man attacked again and Zhuo Fan sent the nine dragon tails to fend him off.

But this time, the ring flashed silver light and increased the man's speed, cutting through the tails like a silver saber.

"So fast!"

Zhuo Fan sucked a cold breath. He knew the man's newfound power was all because of the ring.

The silver light then flashed in front of him, followed by the man's vicious grin, "Kid, there's nowhere left for you to run."

Zhuo Fan clenched his teeth seeing the ring's saw blade edge. The silver light seemed to cut even the air.

"3rd-grade demonic treasure?" Zhuo Fan smiled.

"Good eye." The man nodded, "You're the first Qi Condensation with the honor of dying from this 3rd-grade demonic treasure, Savage Moon."

"Wait." Zhuo Fan waved frantically, "If I join Hell Valley now..."

"Too late!" The man laughed as Savage Moon approached Zhuo Fan.

Zhuo Fan didn't want to die, he just got reincarnated. But all he could do was sigh and close his eyes.

Boom!

A sudden thunderclap reached his ears and Zhuo Fan could still feel that he was alive. Opening his eyes, he saw a tall old man in front with blood trickling down his arm.

The old man was facing Elder Yun, who's Savage Moon's blade was stained in fresh blood.

"Who are you?" Elder Yun asked.

"Blackwind Mountain's Lei Yuntian!" As the old man shouted, lightning flashed all over him, "Any that dares to mess with the Luo clan are my enemies."

Zhuo Fan now knew the old man was, in fact, the Mountain Lord of Blackwind Mountain. Before, he was but a bedridden patient and now was back to his health.

"You've recovered?" Zhuo Fan was overjoyed.

Smiling, Lei Yuntian expressed his thanks, "Thanks to Steward Zhuo's kindness, I've not only recovered but also entered the Profound Heaven Stage."

Zhuo Fan was in glee. That was exactly what he needed right now.

"Humph, what can a Qi Condensation kid and a fresh Profound Heaven geezer do? You'll all die just the same under my Savage Moon's blade!"

He lifted the bloody Savage Moon.

"Don't be so sure." Chuckling, Zhuo Fan made a sign and nine golden dragons soared, "Old man Lei, please hear me out. This time we'll be taking this geezer's life."

Lei Yuntian saw the confidence in Zhuo Fan's eyes and nodded. While their enemy seemed to have heard the biggest joke in his life.

"Ha-ha-ha, I've broken through your array once, kid. This Profound Heaven old man's cultivation is still unstable, not enough to take my life!"

Smirking, Zhuo Fan muttered, "When I use someone, I never take any rules into consideration. This is our best chance, old man Lei. Attack!"

“Good!”

Since Zhuo Fan saved his life once, Lei Yuntian had faith in him. He knew the enemy was stronger than him but still chose to face him.

“Lightning Finger!”

Elder Yun sneered and sent black chains. Even if Lei Yuntian did not die from this attack, he’d still be sporting heavy wounds.

However, the nine golden dragons charged into battle as well.

Elder Yun had no choice but to soar up and use the silver light from his weapon to cut the dragons in two. The dragons were unable to stop his assault as he inched closer to Zhuo Fan.

“It’s best I kill you first.”

Elder Yun’s speed left Zhuo Fan without time to make a hand sign, but Lei Yuntian appeared with his Lightning Finger aimed at the Elder’s throat.

“You’re asking for it!” The man had to shift Savage Moon’s target from Zhuo Fan to the Lei Yuntian. Lei Yuntian showed a gratified smile, still willing to attack Elder Yun. For Lei Yuntian, even if Zhuo Fan had intended to send him to his death, he’d be willing.

Dying for the Luo clan’s sake was a good death to him.

Yet something happened just when Savage Moon was nearing the old man’s chest.

Thanks to the old man’s distraction, Zhuo Fan finished his hand signs and bit his tongue, spitting blood essence, “Humph, have a taste of Nine Heavens Coiling Dragon Array’s real power!”

The nine cut dragons turned into golden dots and rushed to Zhuo Fan. A glorious and ancient roar was released, followed by a huge dragon far greater than all the previous nine dragons combined.

This new dragon immediately rushed towards Elder Yun.

The man's eyes narrowed as his heart shook, but it was already too late.

The new dragon's speed was even greater than Savage Moon's. He couldn't even poise Savage Moon to defend and the dragon crashed into him, carrying him off into the sky.

"How can... a Qi Condensation brat..."

Following his final wail, the dragon held the man in its jaws and exploded...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 38: Scary Zhuo Fan | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 38: Scary Zhuo Fan

Boom!

A grand explosion rumbled the skies above the small courtyard as the dragon ignited the heavens in a flash of gold. The shockwave even put pressure on the building, despite being so far, while other houses crumbled in the aftermath.

Deafening noise from the explosion attacked people's ears even as they covered them up and laid trembling on the ground. This sound attack lasted for a full minute.

But nothing could erase that dreadful image from their hearts, nothing...

A hundred miles out, two men in black fought as they fled from Long Jiu's group.

"Where is that bastard Jian Fan?" Long Jiu's anger spiked when he caught no sight of his mortal enemy, "Son of a-, that old dog must've left these two to stall us."

"Forget it." 3rd elder glared with killing intent, "Let's finish off these two first!"

Under the three elder's united assault, the two men in black were sweating bullets, having no choice but to fight.

Then, a dreadful noise came from Veiled Dragon Pavilion's direction, followed by a golden light that lit up the whole sky. The five people stopped their attack and stood in shock.

"What was that? Did another expert appear?" 3rd elder felt his ears rumbling and sucked in a cold breath, "But... which expert could've unleashed such a move?"

“Retreat!”

With no time to waste, 3rd elder shouted as he flew back to Veiled Dragon Pavilion. He was far more worried about its wellbeing than the death of these two Hell Valley elders.

Though Long Jiu was unwilling, he followed the 3rd elder with a sigh.

Seeing the three Veiled Dragon Pavilion elders retreat, the two men in black let out a sigh of relief, yet were still puzzled by how the events turned out.

They knew an elder was there to make sure the plan didn’t go south. But even that elder wasn’t powerful enough for this kind of feat. Plus, a bunch of Qi Condensation insects didn’t garner such a heavy hand either.

The answer was quite simple in this case, another expert much stronger than Elder Yun showed up.

Hearts heavy with worry, the two discarded any plans of going there to assist Elder Yun. They feared that the Veiled Dragon Pavilion’s three elders might set a trap. So, they took the only viable choice, retreat.

[Elder Yun, you’re on your own...]

At the small courtyard, Lei Yuntian watched the night sky slack-jawed. He thought Zhuo Fan wanted him to bait Elder Yun and leave him open for a sneak attack.

He went with it despite knowing he was a dead man. As long as Luo clan survived, it was worth dying for. But Zhuo Fan defied his imagination. He still acted as bait but did not pay the ultimate price. While the enemy was caught unaware, the lad sprung up with a devastating blow that took Elder Yun’s life, leaving no remains.

Recalling the sky-blazing aftermath, Lei Yuntian shuddered. Not only was he surprised, but also shocked.

[A Hell Valley’s elder, a Profound Heaven expert, died in one move!]

[This kid is terrifying...]

“Old man Lei!”

Zhuo Fan caught his breath and stood up weakly. Lei Yuntian heard him and rushed over to hear his instructions. His faith in the kid had once again strengthened.

This was no longer just gratitude for having saved him or faith in a youth’s potential, but the respect for the strong, “Steward Zhuo, if there’s anything you want done, just tell me.”

Zhuo Fan nodded, “Old man Lei, I’ll leave Luo clan in your care while I go bring Young miss Lei back.”

“No worries, they’ll have to pass over my dead body before they can harm a hair of Yunhai and Yunchang.” Lei Yuntian nodded with resolve.

Zhuo Fan showed a relieved smile and went after Lei Yuting.

Hell Valley had left only one elder here and he too was dead now. Seeing how no other enemy popped up while fighting, Zhuo Fan was certain Hell Valley only sent four men in total, including the ones Veiled Dragon Pavilion’s elders were chasing.

Under a Profound Heaven expert’s careful watch, the Luo clan siblings’ safety was guaranteed. So he could devote all his attention to saving that foolish girl. To be on the safe side, he picked up the Savage Moon first.

[A 3rd-grade demonic treasure shouldn’t be wasted.]

Yang Ming ran like mad while clutching his chest in the gloomy forest. He was injured from the smack he got from Zhuo Fan’s array, but Elder Yun’s slap made it worse. His mind was clouded and breath ragged.

As for the dreadful explosion before, he didn’t have the time to waste on it. But he was shocked nonetheless, finding it inconceivable for Elder Yun and Zhuo Fan’s fight to escalate to such degree.

“Stop!”

A clear and angry shout came from behind, freezing Yang Ming in place. He turned to see Lei Yuting watching him with complex emotions.

Making sure she was alone and double-checking Zhuo Fan wasn't there, Yang Ming relaxed and showed a wicked grin, "Junior sister, you want to stop me all by yourself?"

Frowning, Lei Yuting's eyes turned misty, "For my godfather, I will help him get rid of such a traitorous disciple."

"Ha-ha-ha, traitorous disciple? I was never one of you in the first place." Yang Ming mocked her, "Moreover, do you think you can kill me with your strength?"

"Even if we are to die together, at least I can repay godfather's kindness for raising me." Lei Yuting's eyes glittered with tears as she stared at him right in the eye, "I just want to know, did you ever love me?"

Black demonic energy drifted from Yang Ming's hand as he sneered, "I am a genius disciple of Hell Valley. If I am ever to marry, I would choose from among the seven houses. How can I be tied down with the likes of you?"

Tears fell unabated but Lei Yuting hardened her determination, "Then from now on, we are through."

Lei Yuting followed her last word with lightning flickering between her fingers. Yang Ming laughed, hardly afraid, and fought back with the black-colored hand.

In the clash between the freezing palm and the flickering lightning, sparks flew.

However, Yang Ming dodged Lightning Finger at the last second and struck down Lei Yuting with no remorse.

Lei Yuting saw his evil grin and came to terms with the outcome, closing her eyes for death to take her.

It was then that a flash of red struck Yang Ming's black palm.

Bam!

Yang Ming was sent flying and coughed blood in midair.

An infant's cry came from the red light as it flew into a bush.

Waking from her stupor, Lei Yuting saw Yang Ming heavily wounded on the ground and the weakened red light among the bushes.

She knew it was Zhuo Fan's Blood Infant.

She stood there in a daze, muttering as she glanced at Blood Infant, "Was it you who saved me?"

The Blood Infant tried to fly again, only to collapse.

She did not know of the inseparable bond between Zhuo Fan and the Blood Infant, however, she knew it was something he treasured. But even so, to think that Zhuo Fan would send his treasure to save her.

Lei Yuting began to feel warm inside. When she turned her focus to Yang Ming, only killing intent remained in her eyes.

Walking over, Lei Yuting's fingers crackled with lightning.

Yang Ming was panicking, wanting to flee but hardly had the energy to get up.

"Sister Yuting, have mercy. Remember how close we were? Remember how we used to laugh?" Yang Ming shrank backwards while begging.

"Now I want to kill you even more!"

Snorting, her fingers struck without hesitation.

"W-wait, spare me..." Yang Ming wailed, but there was no one to hear his cry.

Bam!

When Lei Yuting's attack was about to land, a tremendous power blew her away.

A bald elderly landed next to Yang Ming.

"Elder Jian!" Yang Ming cried out. He took Elder Jian as his savior, having pulled him out of the jaws of death. Never had he been so thrilled to meet an elder from his house.

Throwing a side glance at the wounded kid, he bellowed, "How did you fall so low? What about the plan?"

Yang Ming's face fell and shook his head, "Unclear."

Elder Jian wanted to kick this worthless thing away, [You are the one most knowledgeable about this plan and yet you come to me saying it's unclear?]

[The house's expense was heavy in this decade long plan, and this is your answer?]

If Elder Jian didn't need to hear the kid's report, he would've killed him right then and there.

"Forget it, we'll speak of it when we return." Sighing, Elder Jian's eyes turned to the stunned Lei Yuting, "After we get rid of this girl."

He then jumped at her with a palm strike.

Coming face to face with a Profound Heaven expert for the first time, Lei Yuting was frozen in fear. Under such power, she couldn't even defend.

"Is this the power of the Profound Heaven Stage?"

Lei Yuting paled, rooted to her spot as she waited for the palm to take her life.

Only

Whoosh!

A sudden silver flash cowered Elder Jian into retreating before the hit landed. A figure made itself notice as it walked next to Lei Yuting, striking a sinister grin, "Do all elders from Hell Valley like to pick on juniors?"

"Zhuo Fan!"

Lei Yuting cried in joy as her heart found peace.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 39: Killing Another Profound Heaven Cultivator | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 39: Killing Another Profound Heaven Cultivator

Chapter 39, Killing Another Profound Heaven Cultivator

"You again." Elder Jian squinted his eyes at the Savage Moon in shock, "Why do you have that demonic treasure? What happened to Elder Yun?"

Grinning, Zhuo Fan pointed Savage Moon at Elder Jian, "Oh, you recognize it."

Jian Fan's mind was in chaos, "Don't tell me... how can that old guy die at the hands of a pup? But..."

The more he looked at the demonic treasure, the more Jian Fan felt shock, hatred, and above all, confusion...

Be that as it may, but no Hell Valley's demonic treasure was allowed to fall into an outsider's hand. Elder Jian then saw the naked killing intent in Zhuo Fan's eyes.

Aware of the other's intention, Zhuo Fan snickered as he sent a whisper to Lei Yuting, "Listen, aim for the old man's heart and close your eyes as you attack with Lightning Finger. Ignore everything else!"

She turned to him in shock, [How can I hit him if I close my eyes? We won't win against a Profound Heaven cultivator regardless!]

But she soon recalled Zhuo Fan's unscrupulous character and understood his intention. The only reason he saved her was to use her as a live bait to throw into the jaws of death.

Lei Yuting nodded despondently. She was already prepared to die when she made the decision to come here.

Zhuo Fan curled his finger, making Blood Infant return to his body unnoticed as he shouted, "Now!"

Zhuo Fan went first and Lei Yuting followed his plan by closing her eyes and using Lightning Finger.

Startled, Elder Jian didn't expect them to move first. But he didn't mind as a Profound Heaven cultivator's defense wasn't something a Qi Condensation cultivator could pierce. The only danger to his life was posed by that Savage Moon. As such, Zhuo Fan had his complete focus.

Lei Yuting charged the lightning with her eyes closed, ignoring everything, while Zhuo Fan flitted left and right.

Elder Jian sneered, turning a blind eye to the girl.

When she was near Elder Jian, Zhuo Fan flashed in front of her and attacked with Savage Moon.

It was a simple thing for Jian Fan to grab Zhuo Fan's hand and snap it in two.

"Humph, don't think a petty diversion is enough to trick my eyes. I've lived far longer than you. Smoke and mirrors won't work on me." Jian Fan sneered.

"Yet... it still has!" Zhuo Fan's smile remained.

Suddenly, Elder Jian's heart was filled with unease.

Before he could make clear as to why, a red light flew from Zhuo Fan into his body.

From Zhuo Fan's broken arm, blood spurted out like a stream and dyed the trees red.

Jian Fan watched Zhuo Fan with rage, "It... was you back then?"

He now knew what had entered his body not too long ago and allowed the three elders from Veiled Dragon Pavilion to use that chance and tear one of his arms.

Zhuo Fan grinned.

"You're brave, I'll give you that, to rob me of my arm!" Jian Fan gnashed his teeth, "Once I get out of your demonic creature's control, I'll tear you to pieces."

Elder Jian focused all his Yuan Qi into his body while talking.

Zhuo Fan smiled, despite sensing the increasing pressure on Blood Infant, "Elder Jian, you've been tricked yet again."

Lightning crackled as Lei Yuting's fingers came from behind Zhuo Fan and struck Jian Fan's chest.

Watching Zhuo Fan's eerie smile with doubt, Elder Jian's eyes bulged out from grievance and unwillingness to die like this.

"Elder Jian, you were wrong. I was the distraction." Zhuo Fan smiled despite the blood leaking from his mouth, "You only paid attention to Savage Moon, but you forgot your wounded state. Weakened as you are now, you no longer have the same amount of Yuan Qi as before, ha-ha-ha..."

The fear in Elder Jian's eyes grew thick.

[Such a cunning and vicious youth...]

"How horrifying..."

This was how the expert Jian Fan breathed his last breath.

Zhuo Fan used himself as bait while leaving the final blow to Lei Yuting. Each step was filled with perils. The slightest mistake, the slightest hesitation would've meant death.

Yet when Zhuo Fan was involved, everything they did was as if they were dancing to his tune, resulting in Elder Jian's ultimate demise. It was especially so when Zhuo Fan blocked Elder Jian from noticing the real danger hiding behind him, Lei Yuting's

Lightning Fingers.

Two Qi Condensation juniors killing a Profound Heaven expert! If anyone spoke of this, none would believe it.

Plop!

Zhuo Fan collapsed in his own blood.

Lei Yuting was crying in despair when she saw this. She thought Zhuo Fan wanted her to act as bait, but it exceeded her expectations when he took the most dangerous role onto himself.

All kinds of emotions swept her heart, pain, warmth and even something Yang Ming never managed to stir.

"Zhuo Fan, forgive me." Lei Yuting kneeled at his side, watching his pale face.

Zhuo Fan waved, "This isn't your fault. When Blood Infant was wounded, I also suffered internal injuries."

He recalled Blood Infant from Elder Jian's corpse, "This time, it'll take a lot more time to heal."

His wounds mattered little when compared to Blood Infant's, which represented his life.

This only worked to increase Lei Yuting's flow of tears. She now knew that the demonic creature wasn't a treasure, but something bound to his life.

Yet even in such a perilous state, he chose to take a life-threatening hit for her.

She began to see Zhuo Fan with different eyes, but Zhuo Fan himself couldn't care less.

Zhuo Fan pointed at Jian Fan, "Search him. A Hell Valley elder has to have valuable things on him."

"Alright."

Lei Yuting used her highly dexterous hands to complete this task with such skill that Zhuo Fan couldn't help but raise an eyebrow, [A bandit sure is skilled.]

Once Jian Fan was picked clean, Lei Yuting returned to Zhuo Fan. In her entire life, this was the first time she ever lowered her head in shame from doing something so unbecoming of her. But he couldn't care less about the reason why she was hiding her face.

As she strewed the things before Zhuo Fan, she kept avoiding his eyes.

Zhuo Fan found it odd but didn't care and started to rummage through Elder Jian's stuff.

The first and foremost thing that caught his eye was the storage ring and soon found what he was looking for inside.

A light flashed and two jade slips appeared in his hand, Lei clan's spiritual ranked martial art, Lightning Finger, and Cai clan's martial art, Wind Kick!

He was clueless as to the secret involving the three clans' martial arts but did not hesitate in taking them into his own ring.

What was left were some cultivation methods, martial arts and spirit stones. Zhuo Fan, as a former Demonic Emperor, couldn't care less about those and threw the ring to Lei Yuting.

"According to bandit's rule, half belongs to you."

Lei Yuting shook her head, "The old man was your kill. They are yours."

"I don't want them, he has nothing of value!" Zhuo Fan smiled and turned his eyes to a bag.

It was only as big as a palm but Zhuo Fan knew of its remarkable quality. It was a bag that could store living creatures. And what laid within was none other than the Soul Devouring Crow.

Stashing it in his chest, Zhuo Fan smiled pleasantly. It held the largest interest to him. Who knew, he might even discover the secret of the Purple Lightning Gold Eye.

“Zhuo Fan, at least take the ring.”

Lei Yuting was shocked at the ring's contents and still decided to give it to Zhuo Fan, “I know Luo clan is wealthy, but there are some spirit ranked martial arts and cultivation methods inside which are of far greater value than mere spirit stones. It will provide great help in restoring your clan.”

Zhuo Fan shrugged as he weighed the ring, “Such trashy things I have in heaps. There's nothing rare or great about them. If you don't want it, I'll just throw it.”

He was about to do just that when Lei Yuting took the ring from his hand, “How can you be such a wastrel, to not even want spirit ranked martial arts? How did you manage to become a steward anyway? With how you act, Luo clan's money will get flushed down the drain.”

Zhuo Fan smiled as he put Jian Fan's corpse into his ring, “Time to head back. Veiled Dragon Pavilion has some explaining to do.”

Lei Yuting nodded and rushed to support him. As Zhuo Fan was far too weakened, he could only lean onto her shoulder, tinting her cheeks red in the process.

“Wait!”

Zhuo Fan stopped to look around, “Where's Yang Ming?”

Lei Yuting looked everywhere but there was no sight of Yang Ming.

They forgot about him in the heat of the battle.

“Curses, he got away.” Lei Yuting gnashed her teeth.

Zhuo Fan shook his head, “No need to bother with an insect.”

But then he recalled his disciple, Zhao Chen, and killing intent flashed in his eyes, “But even insects can spell trouble. The next time I see him, he's dead!”

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 40: Shock | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 40: Shock

The sun's warm rays shone from the East as Long Jie and Long Kui led hundreds of Veiled Dragon Pavilion guards back to the branch. Even tiredness couldn't hide the prideful air they carried themselves with.

Not only did they win the battle with Hell Valley, but did it spectacularly.

Long Jiu, with 3rd and 5th elder, stood at the gates watching their return with negligible casualties.

"Uncles!"

Long Jie and Long Kui bowed with a smile.

The three elders were pleased, "Little Kui, Ah Jie, how was your fight?"

Long Kui was the first to report, "As the uncles predicted, after you chased the elders from Hell Valley, a large force came to attack us only to be defeated by us. Barely a scant few Bone Tempering cultivators escaped."

"Well done!"

Long Jiu shouted his approval, "Your improvement has been great lately. Magnificent for you to not only lead your own team but to also wipe out the enemy."

"Third brother, when you return to the estate, make sure to report the two's merit to Pavilion Lord. Ha-ha-ha..." Long Jiu's laughter shook the air as if he was relieved of the past years' pressure.

3rd elder stroked his beard with a smile. This huge merit the two achieved for Veiled Dragon Pavilion was the first in their lives.

Such accomplishment was always followed by a sense of honor and pride.

"Oh, right."

3rd elder furrowed his brow, "Do you know what was the cause of that tremendous explosion last night?"

Long Jie and Long Kui were also puzzled.

"That sound shook the world and I thought it was from 3rd elder's fight with Hell Valley's elders. Wasn't it?" Long Kui asked.

The three elders' expression turned grave as they shook their heads.

The explosion shook the hearts of everyone last night, instantly becoming a mystery as to what caused it.

"Oh, didn't the Luo clan stay hidden in their small courtyard all this time? Let's go ask them." Long Jiu slapped his head as he turned to 3rd elder.

Nodding, 3rd elder walked in the small courtyard's direction, followed by the others.

Long Kui smirked, "The battle must've been so brutal last night that a tiny clan like them were scared to even poke their heads. They probably hadn't seen anything."

None spoke while Long Jie shook his head.

They clearly approved of her stance, as they were only going there to ask for clues.

When they arrived before the guest room of the small courtyard, they saw Luo clan's members standing before Zhuo Fan's door with worried faces. With them were three more people and one among them was in the Profound Heaven Stage.

"It can't be that... yesterday was because..."

The three elders were startled, hurrying to pay their respects to Lei Yuntian.

"May I inquire brother's name?" Long Jiu looked at him while being confused, [When did Luo clan get an expert?]

Lei Yuntian returned the gesture as he knew of Veiled Dragon Pavilion's might, "I am Lei Yuntian from Blackwind Mountain. It's an honor to meet the famous Veiled Dragon Pavilion. I am fortunate to come face to face with elders!"

Long Jiu nodded.

Having stayed in Windgaze City for so long, he knew the city had many clans with different power levels. But only the recently established Sun clan along with the previous Luo clan, Cai clan and Blackwind Mountain's Lei clan were first-rated clans.

Of course, this applied to a small town like Windgaze City, not including the seven houses.

As the Lei clan now had a Profound Heaven expert, the Blackwind Mountain's influence would expand like never before. Despite how Bone Tempering Stage and Profound Heaven Stage were but a stage apart, the fact that a clan had a Profound Heaven expert as overseer, it now became a second-rate clan on this continent. Those that lacked such power, were mere third-rate or fallen clans.

Lei clan can now be considered as the most outstanding clan in Windgaze City.

"Clan Head Lei, I wonder what are you..." Long Jiu roamed his eyes over the people gathered before Zhuo Fan's room.

Lei Yuntian sighed, "Steward Zhuo was hurt last night and is unclear if he will survive..."

"What, this place was under attack too?"

3rd elder was shocked. He thought that Long Jie and Long Kui had blocked all Hell Valley's men last night, but it seemed that wasn't the case.

"Did they prepare two teams?"

"Humph." A sudden snort of disdain came from behind, "Wasn't Zhuo Fan always acting so high and mighty? Didn't he boast he'd surpass the seven houses in ten years? So useless, to only end up on his death bed from a bunch of thieves!"

Luo clan and Lei clan all glared at the speaker, but Long Kui just rolled her eyes.

"Quiet, little Kui." Long Jiu shot her a glare and Long Kui was forced to remain silent.

Looking apologetic toward Lei Yuntian, Long Jiu spoke, "Please excuse her rash behavior. Just who could it be, powerful enough to injure Zhuo Fan to such a state even with a Profound Heaven expert such as yourself protecting him?"

[What, me protecting him?]

Lei Yuntian was taken aback, but then shook his head, "I am ashamed to say that I only advanced last night and still lacked the power to defend Steward Zhuo."

To others, Lei Yuntian was the strongest here and it was natural for him to protect everyone. But only he was the clearest as to who protected who last night.

"But the enemy was a Profound Heaven expert that called himself Elder Yun."

"What, You Yunqing?"

3rd elder and Long Jiu were startled as the former muttered, "I never thought that he'd also come."

But then he turned with joy at Lei Yuntian, "Brother Lei, you're amazing. That man was one of Hell Valley's twelve elders, having entered the Profound Heaven Stage for decades. Yet you just advanced to Profound Heaven Stage and defeated him. Impressive indeed."

The other two elders also showed their admiration.

Lei Yuntian blushed and said with a cough, "3rd elder is exaggerating. I couldn't even take a single blow from him."

"Then how did you all pass the night unharmed?" Long Jiu asked.

Scratching his head, Lei Yuntian looked at Zhuo Fan's door, "It's all thanks to Steward Zhuo. If not for him, everyone here would've undoubtedly perished."

"You're saying Zhuo Fan held You Yunqing back by himself, all night?"

Everyone was stunned, Long Kui included.

"B-but he's just a Qi Condensation cultivator." Long Jiu refuted.

Lei Yuntian shrugged at a loss, "I am clear on that, but so what?"

The last words choked Long Jiu. Lei Yuntian said it as if it was a common occurrence for a Qi Condensation cultivator to fight off a Profound Heaven cultivator for an entire night.

"And?"

3rd elder clenched his fists, staring at Lei Yuntian, "You mean to tell us Zhuo Fan forced Elder You Yunqing into retreating?"

"Retreat?"

Frowning, Lei Yuntian showed a trace of fear as he relived the last night's events, "You are underestimating Zhuo Fan far too much."

[Underestimate? How?]

[Even if one scoured the continent, would he ever find an instance where a Qi Condensation cultivator forced a Profound Heaven expert into retreating?]

[We only made the most reasonable guess, yet even this is such a far fetched exaggeration that not even Zhuo Fan would believe. If not for you mentioning it, we'd have never conceived such ideas.]

The three elders swallowed dryly, with hearts in their throat.

"The fool didn't even have time to flee, killed in one move by Zhuo Fan!" Lei Yuntian sighed.

“What?”

The elders were overwhelmed with shock.

This was unprecedented!

Long Kui and Long Jie were also dumbfounded.

Long Jiu’s hands began to shiver without his knowledge, “Are you saying Zhuo Fan was behind the huge explosion last night? He killed a Hell Valley’s Profound Heaven elder and got out with a light wound?”

Lei Yuntian saw their eager expressions and wanted to nod, but frowned instead with a shake of his head.

“What was it then?” Long Jiu was anxious and his aura leaked, forcing the others to take a few steps back.

Lei Yuntian sighed, “I told you not to underestimate the kid. He killed Hell Valley’s elder, but not at the cost of injury. Only his Yuan Qi was depleted.”

“That’s impossible! He came out unscathed?” Long Jiu was battered with one shock after another that even he didn’t know what he was saying, “B-but then how did he get hurt?”

Bam!

A pale-faced Zhuo Fan slammed the door open and snapped at Long Jiu, “Isn’t it because of you, bro Jiu?”

“Zhuo Fan!”

Some were shocked, some were glad, some were amazed, but most were filled with doubts as they turned to him.

“Are you alright?” Luo Yunchang was worried.

“Alright my ass!”

Zhuo Fan snorted as he glared at everyone who was present, "Here I am trying to keep my life and you people had to yap on and on. You think one can get well like this?"

Only

They all started getting embarrassed and lowered their heads. Only the three elders looked at him at a loss.

Zhuo Fan secretly snorted, "Bro Jiu, didn't you want to know how I got hurt? It's all because of him!"

Zhuo Fan took out a cold corpse shocking them all. The ones most shocked were, of course, the three elders.

"Condor Jian Fan!"

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 41: Purple Lightning Gold Eye's Secret | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 41: Purple Lightning Gold Eye's Secret

Chapter 41, Purple Lightning Gold Eye's Secret

The fear in Jian Fan's eyes hadn't dissipated even after his death and was clearly visible for everyone as they looked at his corpse that laid stiff on the ground. What manner of death could have evoked such expression from a monster who roamed the continent unhindered?

"H-how? Condor Jian Fan is actually dead. W-who killed him?" Long Jiu was unnerved and stammered.

Zhuo Fan sneered, "Is there a need to ask when I was the one who took out his corpse?"

They all looked at Zhuo Fan with a stranger's eyes. Each guessed as such, but none dared to believe it.

This monster had even escaped the Veiled Dragon Pavilion's three elders' joint attack!

"I knew that there was a deep grudge between him and bro Jiu. Since I chanced upon him, I killed him." Flicking off imaginary dust from himself, Zhuo Fan smiled, "Bro Jiu, please don't take offense from meddling in your affairs."

"H-how can I?"

Long Jiu panted and was staring at the corpse with bloodshot eyes, "This monster ruined my eye and my future. I can hardly contain myself from drinking his blood and feasting on his flesh. How can I blame you for taking revenge in my stead?"

“Brother Zhuo.”

Suddenly, Long Jiu cupped his hands, “From this day forth, I shall treat you as a sworn brother. As long as you’re in my domain, you just need to ask and I’ll do it.”

“Sigh, bro Jiu is too courteous. I barely did anything.”

Zhuo Fan dismissed him with a wave, but that little movement stirred his wound and winced. Long Jiu appeared next to him in a flash, “Don’t move brother, here are some Recovery Pills. In three days you’ll be up and about.”

Long Jiu took out a few small bottles and placed them in Zhuo Fan’s hand.

With how caring Long Jiu was, the other elders stared at Zhuo Fan in amazement. Long Kui pouted, feeling her heart dumped in vinegar.

They just wiped out Hell Valley’s men and earned great merit that even the three elders were overjoyed, yet it paled in comparison with Zhuo Fan, who killed two of Hell Valley’s elders.

“Humph, who knows what trick he pulled to get so lucky and snatch their heads. How could a Qi Condensation cultivator ever kill a Profound Heaven expert?”

Long Kui muttered in jealousy, but everyone heard her.

3rd elder glared but then shook his head.

Yet Zhuo Fan laughed, “It is true that it was by luck that I encountered the one-armed elder and got his head, bad luck in fact. Because I had just then killed a Profound Heaven expert and was out of Yuan Qi. But this also made him underestimate me. How else could I have killed the wounded Elder Jian?”

“If it were any other time, wouldn’t the elder kill me with but a wave of his hand? Sigh, last night I had the worst luck. Unlike some people, who only had to lead their men to ensure their safety...” Zhuo Fan sighed as Long Kui’s face flushed red.

“You...”

Lei Yuting giggled.

She was clear on what happened last night. Zhuo Fan was indeed amazing, forcing the elder to act as he wanted. But amazing as he was, such an instance wasn't going to repeat itself every time.

Zhuo Fan said that just to spite Long Kui.

[I am better and stronger than you. My merit is also greater, all coming from one well-placed hit. While you can only yap your mouth...]

The three elders laughed as they shook their heads.

They knew that Zhuo Fan succeeded in bringing down a Profound Heaven expert only through special means and not like how he bragged about, killing because he met him.

But the fact remained, him killing two such experts in a single night shook the elders' core.

"Old Jiu, take care of brother Zhuo's wound. We will also add a few hundred guards around the premises while I and brother Wu report back to the estate. We must notify Pavilion Lord."

Long Jiu nodded while Long Kui and Long Jie froze, [Why even 3rd elder is calling Zhuo Fan brother?]

Zhuo Fan adapted to the change on the spot, "Bro San, bro Wu, take care!"

Stumbling, 3rd and 5th elders shook their heads in dismay.

[Old Jiu was right, this kid's greatest talent is to read hearts.]

After they left, Long Jiu and the others helped Zhuo Fan back to his room. Long Jie and Long Kui left to handle the additional security of the small courtyard.

In bed, Zhuo Fan eased his breathing and asked, "Everyone leave, I have to talk with bro Jiu alone."

As the people left, Long Jiu was wondering what could Zhuo Fan want to know so urgently.

“Bro Jiu, I have a gift for you.”

“Gift?” Long Jiu only laughed, “Brother, I’m not trying to discourage you, but the Luo clan hasn’t got anything I could take interest in! Or is it that you have another ancient array?”

Zhuo Fan shook his head, “In your dreams! That array alone is worth ten million at the minimum. Do you think they’re easy to come by? But I’m pretty sure you’re going to like this gift.”

Zhuo Fan took out a bag.

Frowning, Long Jiu didn’t understand until Zhuo Fan opened the bag and a crow landed on his shoulder.

“Jian Fan’s Soul Devouring Crow?”

“Correct.”

“Ever since that old guy died, this crow has been without an owner. I’m sure bro Jiu wouldn’t need long to turn it into your spirit animal, always there to protect you.”

Long Jiu’s eyes began to glisten.

The title of Godeye Long Jiu lost all it’s power ever since his eye was robbed. Now that he had the crow, it was as if he recovered his mystic eye.

“Brother, thank you for your kind intention.” Long Jiu’s eye trembled from the heartfelt gratitude.

Zhuo Fan continued, “Bro Jiu, there’s just one thing I am unclear about. Since you trained one eye in Purple Lightning Gold Eye, why couldn’t you do the same for the other?”

“Sigh, brother, this mystic eye of mine was gained through a chance encounter. A once in a lifetime opportunity.” Long Jiu sighed recalling his youth.

“This mystic eye wasn’t cultivated through a cultivation method from Veiled Dragon Pavilion. It was something I found through luck.”

Long Jiu considered Zhuo Fan as one of his closest friends. Thus, he became the first listener to this secret Long Jiu had buried for such a long time, "Brother, do you know of the three danger zones on this continent?"

After Zhuo Fan shook his head, Long Jiu smiled, "You can go anywhere you want across the continent, except for the three danger zones. Regardless of your strength, you'll find helpless against the dangers in there."

Zhuo Fan nodded from how serious Long Jiu looked but didn't take the warning to heart.

"The zones are Lightning Canyon, Ice Mountain and Fire Pit!"

Long Jiu stared at Zhuo Fan in all seriousness, but then laughed in the end, "Never mind, even if you want to go you still can't. Only if your luck is sky-high will you enter one."

"Why?"

"Because these zones appear at random. Today, they might be in the East and tomorrow in the West. Regardless of where they descend, it will cause a terrible tornado that draws in all who dared approach, while also trapping them inside."

[That must be an array which an expert had deployed. If one didn't know how the array operated, they would have no hope of finding the entrance.]

Zhuo Fan asked, "Then how did you get out?"

Long Jiu nodded with a deep look, "You're smart, brother. Yes, in my youth I chanced upon the Lightning Canyon."

"At that time, the tornado swept me away and all I could see was a world of purple lightning. Every single expert there fell under the purple strikes. Just recalling it sends shivers down my spine. Then the oddest thing happened. The strike that was meant for me hit in my eye. While I was unharmed, all that I could feel from my eye was scorching heat."

Zhuo Fan now understood.

As it was stated in the Nine Serenities Secret Records regarding the Heavenly Emperor's Purple Lightning Gold Eye, everything was subjected to be destroyed under its gaze, all except the eye. This was why when the purple lightning struck Long Jiu's eye, he was unharmed.

"Perhaps because of my will to survive, I gave it my all in fighting for my life. I was aware of the purple lightning's power but still wanted to live. It was at that moment that a man's voice reached me. He was reciting some method and I, in my confused state, mimicked his words. It shocked me in the end when my eye released purple lightning."

"It may have been because of the eye that the purple lightning no longer struck me. Finally, when the tornado passed, only I survived. But ever since I was robbed of my eye and because of the frantic situation when I gained it, I no longer recalled the words that man recited and had no way of forming another mystic eye."

Long Jiu sighed while Zhuo Fan nodded.

Lightning Canyon was a remnant the Heavenly Emperor left behind and contained his cultivation method. [I have to find it. If I add the Nine Serenities Emperor's legacy with Heavenly Emperor's, with two of the three ancient Emperors' legacy in my hands, none can contest me!]

[I didn't reincarnate in vain!]

[No one would ever imagine that a powerful Emperor Stage expert would leave his remnant in the mortal world. Ha-ha-ha...]

Zhuo Fan wanted to cackle but was sensible enough to refrain since Long Jiu was next to him.

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 42: Resisting | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 42: Resisting

Their talk took the entire day. Once Zhuo Fan got hold of all the information that interested him, he walked Long Jiu out after which he entered seclusion for a month to heal.

With Long Jiu's Recovery Pills, he was back to full health in ten days but was forced to spend the remaining time to patch up Blood Infant's precarious state.

A month later, Zhuo Fan came out of his room stretching his limbs and enjoying the fresh air. Moreover, just a few days ago, he and Blood Infant entered the 5th layer of Qi Condensation.

Just that it was a pity one of the two elders from Hell Valley died for naught. He truly hoped he could absorb the elder's Yuan Qi at the time.

With it, he'd be in the Bone Tempering Stage by now.

"Ah, Steward Zhuo..."

Xiao Cui shrieked in joy seeing him but then bolted.

Zhuo Fan was stumped, feeling his face unconsciously. [Did something change about me? Why did she run as soon as she saw me?]

[What's so scary about me? I'm not a man-eating monster.]

But he soon had it all figured out.

[I must've been too rough on her when I ripped their clothes that time and this girl is now afraid of me. The same as how Luo Yunhai was before.]

Zhuo Fan snickered, [I was kinda too hard on both the kids.]

"Brother Zhuo, are you feeling better?"

This time it was the uncouth Captain Pang.

"Old Pang!"

Captain Pang was the only one he admitted being his friend since he reincarnated. Zhuo Fan started to miss him after not seeing each other for a month.

However, just as Captain Pang was about to give him a friendly hug, his face changed and away he ran.

This time, Zhuo Fan was floored.

[Forget that lass, Xiao Cui, why is even Old Pang avoiding me like a plague?]

Zhuo Fan frowned, unable to get to the bottom of it.

He was expert in reading people's intentions in negotiations and fights, but that was because he was convinced every man's actions were motivated by benefit.

Yet Old Pang's behavior had him stumped.

[I've done nothing to hurt him and he shouldn't have a reason for being scared of me. Then what's the deal with him running away?]

Zhuo Fan shook his head in puzzlement but he wasn't in the mood to find out the reason. A man such as Demonic Emperor was a man of great action, not bothered by petty affairs.

When he was about to leave, Lei Yuting appeared in his sight with a lunch box and Xiao Cui running behind her.

Her cute body hid behind Lei Yuting, peeking her small head to gaze at Zhuo Fan.

“What are you up to?” Zhuo Fan stood in place, puzzled.

Lei Yuting walked with unsure steps, unlike the usual decisive nature she carried herself with. When she looked at Zhuo Fan, her cheeks were rosy, “Um, Steward Zhuo, thank you for saving me. Please accept this small token of appreciation.”

Zhuo Fan eyed the lunch box with suspicion as he eased the lid open.

A wonderful smell swept him when the intricately made dishes prepared from the heart were in the open.

“What a wonderful smell!”

Zhuo Fan asked, “Where did you buy them from? Did Windgaze City have such a great restaurant?”

“Humph, they weren’t bought.” Xiao Cui jumped out with a smile, “Young miss spent ten hours each day making them and waited for Steward Zhuo to come out of seclusion to try them out!”

[Every day?]

Zhuo Fan now unraveled the mystery of Xiao Cui running at the sight of him. It was to notify Lei Yuting.

Not knowing when he’d come out, Lei Yuting cooked for him every day. Her perseverance moved him.

Nodding, Zhuo Fan spoke, “I accept your gift.”

Lei Yuting cupped her blushing face and whispered, “Steward Zhuo just got well and needs to take care of his body. Hurry and eat before it gets cold.”

“Right!”

Zhuo Fan returned to his room with the lunch box. Even though he was in the Qi Condensation Stage, not eating for a month made him hungry.

Lei Yuting with Xiao Cui in tow followed him in. Her eyes shined like the sun, soft yet warm enough to melt a glacier.

When Zhuo Fan was about to dig in, Luo Yunchang's charming figure entered the room with a knock. Captain Pang followed behind her.

Quirking an eyebrow, Zhuo Fan saw her carrying a lunch box too.

"Oh, I didn't know Steward Zhuo already had someone bringing him breakfast. I was worried for nothing."

When she saw the lunch box in front Zhuo Fan, Luo Yunchang's smile widened but her eyes became sharp as if they were about to poke holes into everyone present.

"What got her in such a foul mood this morning?" Zhuo Fan flickered his brow in confusion. But when he picked up on Captain Pang's pitying glance, it got him baffled.

Bam!

Luo Yunchang slammed the box in front of Zhuo Fan while squeezing a smile, "Steward Zhuo, this is something I made for you to help in your recovery."

"I already have a share. I'm not a glutton to eat so much."

Zhuo Fan shrugged, planning on pushing aside Luo Yunchang's box but then he sensed killing intent. He caught Luo Yunchang's eyes glaring at him.

"Um, I'll try both of them."

Zhuo Fan flinched for the first time in his life. He didn't understand what the fuss was about but knew that if he hadn't said that, there would have been a real danger to his life.

Revealing Luo Yunchang's dishes, he found them scorched black, cutting most of his appetite.

"Um, I think I'll eat this one."

Zhuo Fan went for Lei Yuting's box as she showed a bright smile.

But even before his hand reached it, Luo Yunchang bumped her box closer to him with a glare, "Didn't you say you'll eat them both?"

Zhuo Fan's brow flickered, hesitation setting in as he took another long look at Luo Yunchang's burnt dishes.

But he could hardly refuse her sincere eyes and nodded, "Alright, I'll eat them."

Luo Yunchang broke out into a wide smile, to which Lei Yuting was showing disdain.

"Mine first." Luo Yunchang urged.

"No, mine." Lei Yuting said in haste.

The two women's eyes met and sparks seemed to fly.

Zhuo Fan wondered, [Weren't they close? Why are they fighting all of a sudden?] He couldn't comprehend what could bring such a change in them.

"First come, first served."

Zhuo Fan then took a bite out of Lei Yuting's dishes. She was staring at him with wide and expectant eyes.

Zhuo Fan gave a thumbs up, "Delicious!"

Lei Yuting's smile bloomed like a flower while Xiao Cui pushed out her chin and shouted, "My Young miss started cooking since she was ten. No one in Windgaze City can match her skill. You are fortunate today, Steward Zhuo."

Xiao Cui's boast embarrassed Lei Yuting, but even that couldn't take away the radiant smile from her face.

Luo Yunchang pouted, "Zhuo Fan, try mine."

Zhuo Fan took a bite but spat it out as soon as it touched his tongue.

"Even poison is better." His words were sharp as he took Lei Yuting's box, "I still choose this one."

Lei Yuting was smiling, while Luo Yunchang's eyes started tearing.

"Wow, such a great smell!"

At this time Luo Yunhai shouted in surprise as he jumped into Zhuo Fan's room, "Bro Zhuo, you're out! And you are having such a feast, why didn't you invite me?"

"Go and eat your sister's cooking." Zhuo Fan dissed him.

Luo Yunhai complained, "Her skill isn't worth a dime. She doesn't know anything besides opening the kitchen door."

Unable to stay there any longer, Luo Yunchang ran out with her lunch box. But people could see the droplets she left behind on the floor.

"Um, was I wrong?" Luo Yunhai was confused.

"Not at all." Zhuo Fan gorged on Lei Yuting's cooking as he said, "But some people have low confidence."

After finishing his meal, Zhuo Fan informed the others before leaving, "Stay here as Hell Valley's people might still lurk around. I'm going to pay Veiled Dragon Pavilion a visit."

Luo Yunhai and Captain Pang nodded then turned to Lei Yuting. Seeing her all flushed, Xiao Cui was even more excited, "How great, Young miss, Steward Zhuo is interested in you."

Lei Yuting only smiled.

At the same time, in the Imperial City.

In a magnificent office, two people sat side by side. One man was in his forties, dressed in a white silken robe. He had a small hanging mustache that shook with his smile.

The other man was in his fifties, with a somber complexion and wearing a dark cloak. His pair of large eyes were filled with grievance.

The two acted like strangers, not meeting each other's eyes.

Cough, cough, cough...

With a cough, a shaky body appeared before the two. It was an old man dressed in a golden robe embroidered with nine dragons.

"Your Majesty!"

The men rose up and bowed.

The elder waved for them to sit, "Veiled Dragon Pavilion and Hell Valley both are from the Seven Noble Houses, the pillars of the empire. What matter has made you request an audience with me?"

This elder was the Emperor of Tianyu Empire!

"Your Majesty, Veiled Dragon Pavilion killed two of our Hell Valley's elders last month, breaking the seven houses' agreement. Your Majesty, please punish the Veiled Dragon Pavilion!" The black-robed man complained.

Sneering, the middle-aged man spoke, "You Wanshan, you have some nerve complaining first! Your Hell Valley's elder infringed upon my Veiled Dragon Pavilion's domain. How are you going to explain it? Who is it that broke the seven houses agreement first?"

"One of my valley's disciple, You Quan, was killed in Windgaze City. Can't I send an elder to bring the matter to light?" You Wanshan squinted, "Long Yifey, you are just making an excuse to exact revenge for what happened two decades ago."

"Ha-ha-ha, and? Twenty years ago, you trapped Elder Jiu in Drifting Leaves City and ruined his mystic eye. You accused him of entering your domain and breaching the seven houses agreement, I didn't object. This time, however, it is your elder who entered mine. And not just one, but four! Is this what you call investigation?"

"Enough!"

The Emperor's cold shout came as his eyes flashed in anger, "Both sides are in violation. This is my judgment. Veiled Dragon Pavilion shall withdraw from Windgaze City, it is no longer part of your domain. Hell Valley and Veiled Dragon Pavilion's people are never to set foot in this city ever again."

"Your Majesty!"

The two cupped their fists, but the Emperor flicked his sleeve, "This matter is settled, withdraw. I no longer want to hear anything about the seven houses, nor about internal disputes."

"Understood!"

Only

None of them was willing to accept this conclusion but retreated nonetheless.

When they were gone, the Emperor's eyes flashed, "For Hell Valley's people to enter Windgaze City, they must be privy to the thousand-year-old secret."

"The Imperial City has always been a place of conflict, filled with the eyes and ears of every faction. This should be known to Your Majesty." An aged voice replied from behind.

The Emperor chuckled, "It seems... the plan has begun. Pearls will always shine, he-he-he..."

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 43: A Stubborn Fatty | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 43: A Stubborn Fatty

Chapter 43, A Stubborn Fatty

Since the Veiled Dragon Pavilion's grand gate was but a few hundred steps away, Zhuo Fan chose to walk.

However, he stopped before passing through it.

In front of the gate was a yellow palanquin with four peak Qi Condensation cultivators as carriers and 16 Bone Tempering cultivators surrounding it.

A fat figure in yellow stood in front of the palanquin. You could barely make out his pin-sized eyes from his bulging cheeks. At first glance, one would take him as having a bun in place of his head.

Zhuo Fan shook his head. He'd seen his fair share of people, but this was his first encountering such a fatso.

[How can one get so fat?]

Zhuo Fan resumed his gait, glancing at the fatty from time to time. His appearance was far from attractive, but his 7th Qi Condensation cultivation and the large number of guards was nothing to scoff.

If the fatty was from Veiled Dragon Pavilion, he'd have gone in by now.

"Wait!"

Zhuo Fan's entry was stopped by a sudden shout. Turning around, he caught the sight of fatty's feet sinking into the ground with each step towards him.

Zhuo Fan's cheek started twitching, "Do you... need something?"

"He-he-he, are you from Veiled Dragon Pavilion?"

The fatty smiled. It would've been better if he hadn't, as his eyes were now gone for good.

Zhuo Fan was shocked by such a baffling appearance for a moment, "I'm just a guest."

"Eh, that means you can also enter." The fatty showed a warm smile, "Can I ask brother's help with a small matter? Please send word to Young miss Long Kui. She hasn't come out for a whole day and I had to sleep outside."

[This weird fatty is pursuing Long Kui.]

Zhuo Fan wanted to laugh, but he couldn't, not when there were so many people around. [To think that haughty Long Kui knows this fellow.]

Setting aside his status, his weight alone would make her awkward if someone caught them together.

"Alright, I will tell her right away." Zhuo Fan struggled not to laugh as the fatty cupped his hands in gratitude, "I'll leave it to brother."

Zhuo Fan hastened his pace in fear of laughing if he spent one more moment with this guy. It wasn't worth it offending a great faction for such a reason.

He soon arrived at the meeting room and met Long Kui, "Miss Kui, long time no see. How have you been?"

"Great, until you showed up." Long Kui snorted. Zhuo Fan didn't mind it, "Where's bro Jiu, I want to speak with him."

"Out!" Long Kui rolled her eyes.

Zhuo Fan read her face and found that she didn't lie. Since he didn't see Long Jie either, it meant that he must be with Long Jiu on business.

This would put a delay on the things he wanted to know. But he still had that fatty's message to deliver. [To get that guy's gratitude and support, all I have to do is make this smug girl see him. What's the harm in passing the time while embarrassing this missy while I'm at it?]

Zhuo Fan showed a wide grin.

"What's with you?" Long Kui frowned.

"Oh, nothing. There's a rich handsome guy outside who wants to talk to you. Hurry up and see him before he's gone."

"Hey, Miss Long, who's he?" Zhuo Fan elbowed her with raised eyebrows.

Long Kui knew Zhuo Fan was making fun of her and got angry. Ignoring him, she walked to the gates with Zhuo Fan laughing behind her.

"Damn fatty, haven't I rejected your marriage proposal already? What are you still doing here?"

The fatty's smile fell.

"Sister Long Kui, that happened when I was ten. Now I'm twenty. Don't you feel anything after I proposed a thousand times these past ten years?"

"Of course I have, annoyance!"

Zhuo Fan butted in at this point, patting the fatty's shoulder as he looked at Long Kui, "Miss Long Kui, such tender and strong love are rare these days. My dear friend is so smitten by you that he even slept outside waiting for you."

The last words almost made Zhuo Fan burst in laughter. The fatty was so touched that the thick sarcasm flew right past him.

Long Kui saw them working in unison, one explaining while the other agreeing, and felt her anger peaking. But for some reason, she changed to a charming smile.

Even Zhuo Fan blanked out from seeing her smile like this for the first time. And there was no need to mention the drooling fatty.

Long Kui felt sick inside but still maintained her composure, "Brother Cong, you've always treated me so well ever since we were little. But my heart belongs to another... "

"What, who's the punk?" The fatty's face changed and his eyes spat fire.

Zhuo Fan thought, [Uh-oh. She isn't planning on dragging me into this is she?]

Yet Long Kui turned to him with an enigmatic smile.

[Oh. Hell.]

Zhuo Fan didn't know which faction the fatty belonged to, but one thing was clear, he wasn't to be provoked. Zhuo Fan already had Hell Valley as his enemy and messing with another faction just as strong, if not stronger, then even Demonic Emperor would have a hard time turning disaster into an opportunity.

"I was wondering why you are able to enter Veiled Dragon Pavilion like you own the place. It was because you and Long Kui are..." The fatty grabbed Zhuo Fan's collar and glared.

Zhuo Fan denied, "Brother, it's all just a misunderstanding..."

However, the fatty's eyes were red from anger and blinded to reason. There were two things any man would go berserk from, having his father killed and wife stolen. But the latter caused way more outrage than the former.

Feeling as if he was wearing such a hat with no rime or reason turned this misunderstanding into a conflict.

Zhuo Fan sighed, [Now I have to ask Long Jiu to explain in order to avoid offending another power.]

He was pondering on how to do it when he was floored by fatty's next words.

"Sister Kui, what do you not like about me? Does this punk have something that I don't?"

Zhuo Fan almost spat blood, watching the fatty in a daze, "Brother, now I know why you proposed a thousand times."

Cocky people, he has seen aplenty, but this was Zhuo Fan's first time meeting one as oblivious about himself as this guy.

Watching the fatty, who could burrow the earth just by standing, Zhuo Fan wanted to shout, [Brother, it's more like you pack something way extra than me!]

Even Long Kui was silently rolling her eyes.

"Brother Cong, there must be some other reason for you to be here. You do not have the luxury of leaving the Imperial Capital as you wish. Take care of your matters and stop wasting time."

"That is out of the question. You are my future wife. I even applied for this task just to see you. Yet..."

Then the fatty glared at Zhuo Fan.

"Let's duel!"

He pointed at Zhuo Fan's nose as he raged, "We will duel today to settle Sister Kui's groom."

Zhuo Fan took a closer look at the fatty, secretly admiring him, [This kid is the first who didn't shout out his glorious clan's name before me.]

Just from this, Zhuo Fan liked him.

Hearing the fatty request a duel, one of his guard stepped forward, "Young Master, your body is too precious to participate in duels! It's best if you let me handle him..."

"Quiet!"

The fatty interrupted the guard, "It is I who want to marry Sister Kui. My honor and dignity as a man are on the line. If you fight, I'll be mocked forever and Sister Kui will despise me even more!"

[I will never ever approve of you!] Long Kui rolled her eyes.

Zhuo Fan agreed with a grin, "Well said, I accept. However, all your guards are stronger than me and I can't take even a single hit from them if they interfere."

"If I say we will duel, then it will be one on one. My word is gold. You don't believe me?" The fatty was even angrier now.

Zhuo Fan shook his head, "I do believe you. But if I defeat you, can they hold themselves from not jumping in? At that point, even if you order them not to, it won't do much good."

It was unknown if the fatty was pondering or fuming since his eyes disappeared when he squinted. But then he barked at the guards, "All of you stay put. If anyone has the nerve to move, I'll kill him."

Then he turned to Zhuo Fan, "Pick a location where we won't be disturbed."

Zhuo Fan smiled while Long Kui frowned and blocked him, "You truly intend to fight? If he gets hurt, even Veiled Dragon Pavilion can't help you."

He just nodded, "This fatty isn't bad."

Long Kui was stunned.

When the fatty saw them stick together, his heart was aflame from rage, panting with each word, he declared, "Punk, you'll see. I will mop the floor with you."

Zhuo Fan smiled, not minding it in the least...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 44: Assassin | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 44: Assassin

Chapter 44, Assassin

Zhuo Fan took the fatty to a remote place in the woods. Since Long Kui was afraid of mishaps she also went along, but Zhuo Fan already had Blood Infant keep an eye out.

At least the fatty's order worked like a charm and the guards stayed behind.

Zhuo Fan clapped, "Fatty I praise you for not using the guards."

"Humph, I am always true to my word. This is related to me and Sister Kui's happy marriage. I will have to beat you, pesky puck, so thorough you can't contest my victory. Or who knows what excuse you'll use later to pester Sister Kui." The fatty jutted out his chin.

Smiling, Zhuo Fan showed his vicious side, "Aren't you worried I laid an ambush?"

The fatty frowned. His pin-sized eyes scoured his surroundings as he roared, "Humph, I am willing to venture alone against any adversity, but if you think Sister Kui will look kindly to such a despicable punk, think again. No matter what you have in store, I will never lose!"

"Ha-ha-ha, enough with the heroism. Kid, I like you. It's time we get this duel started." Zhuo Fan smiled.

Yet even before he finished, a punch came his way.

Zhuo Fan rushed to dodge, but he was too late to react. His body flew and his right cheek was now red and swollen.

“Hey fatso, I thought you were an honorable man!” Zhuo Fan snapped at the nonchalant fatty who replied, “Didn’t you just give start to the duel? All is fair in love and war.”

Zhuo Fan took a long look at him and secretly nodded.

[This kid is more cunning than he lets on, yet he conducts himself with honor. He is as honest as Old Pang but that is where the similarities end.]

Compared to the simple Old Pang, Zhuo Fan liked the shrewd fatty more.

A demonic cultivator would use any means to reach his goal. This fatty, who bent the limits of morality, was more to Zhuo Fan’s liking.

“Ha-ha-ha, you’re right!” Zhuo Fan cackled and pointed at Long Kui, “Fatty, look, Long Kui is undressing!”

The fatty could spot a lie when he heard one, but he still bought it this time and turned towards Long Kui’s direction.

Bam!

Zhuo Fan used this chance to kick the fatty into the air.

“Bastard!”

Long Kui fumed at the sideline with a red face, yet the culprit didn’t mind it in the least when her glare focused on him.

“Wretched punk, you dared sully Sister Kui’s honor. I will show you!” The fatty wobbled as he got to his feet but his eyes burned hotter than ever.

Zhuo Fan dissed him, “I was just messing around, yet you looked anyway. Weren’t you also thinking something shameful about our Young miss Long?”

The fatty gasped.

Never had he heard this kind of counter before. Zhuo Fan might have disrespected Long Kui but didn't he himself sully his goddess by imagining something inappropriate? If so, did he have the right to blame Zhuo Fan?

Fatty's resentment was gone just like that and he even felt ashamed. But once he imagined Long Kui changing clothes, his face went beet-red. His small eyes were perfect in hiding his secret stare over Long Kui's enticing figure.

But she found him out nonetheless and stared him down with killing intent.

When a shiver crawled up his spine, the fatty focused on the fight, "Punk, I will let this matter slide. Time to get serious."

The fatty's body gave out a golden shine and even the ground started cracking around him.

"High mortal ranked martial art, Mountain Shaking Punch!"

The fatty darted towards Zhuo Fan like a raging bull, cracking each and every stone he set his foot on.

"Punk, better dodge. But if you do, admit your loss!"

Grinning, Zhuo Fan extended a red palm, not intimidated in the least.

The fatty raved, "Damn punk, this will be your funeral! I am at the 7th layer of Qi Condensation and using a high ranked martial art. This is not a move which a 5th layer Qi Condensation punk can withstand!"

"If you treasure your life, dodge!"

But Zhuo Fan didn't budge.

The fatty didn't wish for the worst outcome and wanted to hold back some of his power, but it was too late now. His flabby body was already upon Zhuo Fan.

Boom!

Something strange happened. The weak-looking Zhuo Fan was still standing as a breeze ruffled his hair.

The fatty, however, had his golden light scattered thanks to the red glow and was sent flying.

He hit the ground in a daze and even as he got up, he still couldn't shake his astonishment.

"How can this be? I am clearly stronger so why was I the one who got pushed back?" He needed a long time to recover from the shock.

Long Kui scoffed.

She didn't like Zhuo Fan one bit, but that didn't stop her from admiring his strength and ability. After all, he was the first on the continent to have killed two Profound Heaven expert while being a Qi Condensation cultivator.

Arriving next to fatty, Zhuo Fan offered his hand with a smile, "Fatty, I know you went easy on me."

The fatty sighed, "A loss is a loss. Using all my power against someone weaker is the same as losing. I am an upright man. This is your win."

Zhuo Fan turned serious, "You might take it as being upright, but I see it as kindness."

The fatty looked closer at Zhuo Fan. He was amazed this man found out his intention in that split second.

"I see now why Sister Kui likes you!"

The fatty praised him and took Zhuo Fan's hand. He went to Long Kui and sighed, "Sister Kui, you've found a great man. This punk will turn into a monster one day."

The fatty felt dejected.

But a sudden sound broke the silence.

Zhuo Fan squinted his eyes and pushed the fatty to the ground. A green light passed above them the next second, cutting all the trees in its path.

The fatty looked up at Zhuo Fan with gratitude, "Brother, thank you for saving me. I never thought that my love rival will become my savior."

"It's too early for thanks. Here they come." Zhuo Fan frowned as he helped the fatty up. Long Kui also ran next to them.

A dozen men appeared around the three of them the next moment, each giving off the energy of a Bone Tempering expert.

"What now?"

Long Kui's expression was grave as she looked at Zhuo Fan. With the Veiled Dragon Pavilion being even farther than the fatty's guards, the only one she could turn for help was the guy she disliked the most. But he was also the one most likely to pull off a miracle.

The fatty strode out from between the two with confidence, "It's me you're after. Let them go."

"Hi-hi-hi, as a member of the imperial family you sure have the air of a King. But too bad we can't leave any witnesses." A man stood out from the group, he was their leader.

The fatty was filled with hatred.

Suddenly, Zhuo Fan kicked the fatty with a snicker, "This fatty is under my care. If you want to kill him, you'll have to go through me first."

The dozen men laughed.

"A mere Qi Condensation insect wants to act tough?"

"Since they'll all die anyway, let's start with him."

"It's best we kill the fatty first and complete the mission. It was hard enough finding this opportunity after waiting for so long. We can't let it go to waste..."

As they were rambling on and on, the fatty whispered to Zhuo Fan, "Brother, they're after me. I will run towards East while you take Sister Kui back to Veiled Dragon Pavilion."

Zhuo Fan shook his head, "With your speed, you won't even last one second."

"What other choice do we have?" Asked the fatty flustered.

Zhuo Fan hardened his tone and said, "Slaughter them all!"

He took a step and reached their leader as Savage Moon flashed in his hand.

"Demonic treasure?"

The leader was shocked and wanted to dodge, but a red light entered his body and froze his movements.

Whoosh!

With a silver flash, a head trailed the sky followed by a fountain of blood. Only Zhuo Fan stood in the pool of blood with cruel eyes.

For the first time in fatty's life, his eyes bulged out from his chubby face, becoming larger than ever...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 45: Slaughter | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 45: Slaughter

The silence was deafening!

Everyone watched slack-jawed at the unfolding event. No one there could've imagined a Qi Condensation kid blindsiding them, who were Bone Tempering experts, and even killing one in a single hit.

All the mockery and disdain they had for Zhuo Fan was now replaced with extreme caution.

Fatty was still out of it, staring at Zhuo Fan like his brain was on the fritz. It finally dawned upon him that it wasn't him who held back the most in their duel, but Zhuo Fan.

"Kill the punk first!"

With a sudden shout, the men charged at Zhuo Fan together. They were now of one mind, no longer of a different opinion. They had to kill this dreadful and sinister punk first. If they were to leave him for later, they were sure they'd have to pay a steep price, even if they outnumbered him.

They had long forgotten their main objective and were now pointing their weapons at the punk who was holding Savage Moon and standing in a pool of blood.

Smiling wryly, Zhuo Fan snickered, "I wouldn't have it any other way!"

The next moment, he jumped at the first enemy. The man was startled and rushed to retreat. Even if Zhuo Fan was just in the Qi Condensation Stage and unable to hurt him, the 3rd-grade demonic treasure would cut through him like butter.

Their leader got such a miserable death for underestimating Zhuo Fan and he wasn't willing to make the same mistake.

With eyes fixed on Savage Moon's trail, the killer grinned. He knew how to deal with Zhuo Fan. Since his speed was superior to Zhuo Fan, all he needed to do was pay attention to Savage Moon, and killing this kid would be a breeze.

However, just as he was about to jump into action, Savage Moon flashed a silver glow. The light wrapped around Zhuo Fan and then streaked by the killer's body.

The killer had no idea what happened and was looking up as his upper half slid to the ground while his lower half stood there unmoving.

While he fell, he could still see Zhuo Fan's grim face. Especially the eyes, cold and unfeeling.

Everyone sucked in a cold breath as they watched Zhuo Fan with dread.

If one were to say that killing their leader was from a sneak attack, this time around it was a fair fight and yet Zhuo Fan still killed a Bone Tempering expert in an instant.

When the silver light flashed again, he was so fast that none of the killers had time to react before Zhuo Fan felled another.

Such horrifying speed coupled with the sharp edge of the Savage Moon soaked the backs of the killers in a cold sweat.

"As you dared to come look for trouble in my domain...", Zhuo Fan squinted at each man around him and trailed a finger across his neck as his eyes turned red, "...Your lives are forfeited."

At that moment, all of them paled and stepped back. The fear they felt from his eyes mounted the dread they already had. Their roles began to blur as it became unclear who was the victim and who was the killer.

The hunter's and prey's role were now switched.

The fatty watched Zhuo Fan's domineering gaze while being shell-shocked. Then, he was swept by a sudden familiar feeling, the imposing and grand feeling he felt only from his father.

But what he felt from Zhuo Fan was far more assertive. As if all who dared resist this man would find themselves dead beyond a shred of a doubt.

The pressure Zhuo Fan's power released was something that even made him shiver.

Seeing that they couldn't contend with Zhuo Fan individually, a killer shouted, "Don't be afraid, let's attack together. He's just a Qi Condensation punk relying on a 3rd-grade demonic treasure. If we surround him, he's done for."

The others nodded as fear eased from their faces, now that they had a plan, they found hope.

With a cry, the killers jumped at Zhuo Fan closing the net on him.

Sneering, Zhuo Fan rushed forward without fear as he held Savage Moon. His target swallowed dryly but didn't retreat since he had men on each side releasing punch at Zhuo Fan.

If Zhuo Fan pressed on, the killer would die, but so would Zhuo Fan under the joint attack of two Bone Tempering experts.

But if he retreated instead, it would only work to tighten the net and his death would be just a matter of time.

Zhuo Fan didn't plan on dying in this fight, or he would've fled a long time ago with the help of Savage Moon's speed boost.

Whoosh!

With a flash of silver, Zhuo Fan vanished from their sights and the punches hit nothing but air. Zhuo Fan then landed right in front of the killer who was standing behind the other two.

Having not seen this coming, the killer was frightened but soon became elated seeing that Zhuo Fan was not facing him. He didn't waste this chance and punched towards Zhuo Fan's defenseless back.

[Your head is mine, kid.]

But a silver light flashed by and the man froze.

In the moment of impending doom, Zhuo Fan swept Savage Moon around him and jumped from their tight circle.

As for the man behind Zhuo Fan, he watched wide-eyed as his body hit the ground in two pieces, blood and guts spilling everywhere.

Another one!

Even under their joint efforts, Zhuo Fan came out unscathed and robbed them of another comrade. Fear in their eyes mounted higher and higher.

They had some hope before, wishing to kill him with numbers. But that hope was now lost.

"What kind of freak is he? When did the Seven Noble Houses have such a person?"
A killer cursed as he felt his knees trembling.

Secretly sneering, Zhuo Fan squinted his eyes and bathed the world with the killing intent they contained.

These killers were routed, they lost their nerve and were no longer a threat. Now was the perfect time to end them.

Zhuo Fan rushed forth with a savage grin.

Silver light flickered as Zhuo Fan brandished Savage Moon and sent limbs flying with each passing. The killers cried during their futile attempts to evade, having lost any and all will to resist.

Zhuo Fan was like a wolf among sheep, taking his fill of slaughter and carnage. For the occasional spirited and still brave souls among them, Blood Infant would enter their body and seal their movements. Thus priming them for Zhuo Fan, only to leave them mangled.

If it was any other day, with Zhuo Fan's strength and Blood Infant's help, he could only fight with a single Bone Tempering expert. If another joined, he'd have a hard time reacting to their attacks, let alone killing a dozen.

But luck had it he got Savage Moon off Elder Yun, whom he killed a month ago.

This gave him newfound confidence. Savage Moon was just as deadly as Blood Infant was on Bone Tempering experts, perhaps even more. Especially when taking its ability to increase one's speed into consideration. And all of this was added to Zhuo Fan who already had the skills to skip stages.

Now that he thought about it, he really ought to thank Hell Valley for throwing such a nice toy in his lap.

Hearing the Bone Tempering experts' miserable wails, watching heads and entrails flying about, the fatty remained lifeless from shock. He stood there witnessing the gruesome dance Zhuo Fan was performing with Savage Moon. For these killers to cry and beg for their lives was something unheard of.

He could hardly believe that the man he recognized as a love rival, the man he challenged, was strong to this degree.

Recalling their duel, it seemed more like a joke now.

The Bone Tempering experts were butchered like animals in front of the fatty. [I, a 7th layered Qi Condensation cultivator, dared to issue a challenge, and still was lenient with him while preaching fairness.]

"Sigh, Yuwen Cong, your lenient act and fairness preaching was meaningless." The fatty shook his head, feeling mournful.

He had seen many peers among the seven houses who were geniuses and even if he wasn't stronger than them, he believed their strength wasn't far from his.

But Zhuo Fan showed him today what the saying 'a man above man, and a sky above a sky' meant.

Those geniuses were nothing but trash by comparison. Furthermore, the gap was so huge at such a young age...

Long Kui covered her mouth experiencing the greatest shock she ever felt.

This was the first time she saw Zhuo Fan fighting. She had heard of him killing two Profound Heaven experts, but doubt still existed. This notion was far too outrageous for anyone to believe.

But watching him fight today, left this young miss stunned.

The cruelty, the overbearing eyes, it was as if a demon had descended, one which was capable of scaring and overpowering even Bone Tempering experts.

Whoosh!

When Zhuo Fan finally stopped, Savage Moon in his hand was dripping blood. The dry earth around him had become a wide pool of blood.

A killer shivered as he watched the Savage Moon's fall with dread. His legs were severed, but the pain wasn't registered as begging was all that was left on his mind.

Not sparing him a glance, Zhuo Fan asked coldly, "Who sent you?"

Zhuo Fan's eyes didn't reflect an ounce of pity towards any living creature in this world, only coldness.

The killer looked around to see his dead brothers and fear swept his heart. He didn't know where to begin describing the savagery and cruelty of this youth before him. This youth was, in all sense of the word, a demon.

The killer's heart was in shambles.

Only

"I-it's..."

But a sudden whistling sound was heard and the killer's eyes lost its light.

"Killing with intent, a Radiant Stage expert!"

Zhuo Fan drew a cold breath. His bottomless and cold eyes now showed a ripple of panic...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 46: Alliance | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 46: Alliance

The whistling sound was heard clearly by everyone, but none could afford to slack their guard. On the contrary, each felt their heart in their throat.

A Radiant Stage expert was able to kill with divine intent alone. This was an enemy Zhuo Fan wouldn't be able to defeat even with Blood Infant and Savage Moon.

An icy shiver traveled down his spine as Zhuo Fan turned more and more serious.

Whoosh!

The whistle stopped suddenly and a pair of steps echoed. Zhuo Fan and the other two forgot to breathe. Their eyes were fixed towards the sound's location.

But when the person came out into the open, the fatty was stunned for a second before shouting, "Teacher, how come you're here?"

Long Kui cried with joy, "Senior Fang, what brought you here?"

Zhuo Fan saw the two recognizing the new entrant and began sizing him up.

The man had a goatee and looked like he was in his sixties. He was dressed in a blue robe and had a sword strapped to his back. All this time he was smiling as the green jade flute revolved in his hand.

The jade flute shocked Zhuo Fan. He remembered something and asked, "Are you one of the five Divine Dragons, the guardians of the imperial family, Jade Flute Divine Sword, Fang Qiubai?"

Zhuo Fan heard Long Jiu mention that even if the imperial family could no longer control the seven houses, they could still persevere, all thanks to the five Divine Dragons. Each was a peak Radiant Stage expert whom none of the seven houses would dare mess with.

Among them, there was a man known as the First Divine Sword, and he was Fang Qiubai, Jade Flute Divine Sword.

He boasted himself as having united the sword and the flute as one, that his sword followed the sound and turned it into sword intent. One time, he singlehandedly defeated five Radiant Stage experts with a sword strike, forcing the seven houses to forget about testing him while also spreading his name to the four corners of the world.

The man raised an eyebrow and watched Zhuo Fan with a profound look before nodding.

With laughter, Long Jiu appeared before everyone, "Wasn't I right? This kid has sharp eyes. I only mentioned you once and he already recognized you."

"Uncle Jiu!"

Long Kui was overjoyed as she ran to him, "When did you and Senior Fang arrive? Why didn't you come out sooner?"

"Ha-ha-ha, we've been here since Brother Zhuo and the 3rd Prince's duel."

Long Jiu turned to Zhuo Fan, "Brother Zhuo, you're quite something to keep a straight face against a dozen Bone Tempering experts. When I was your age, I certainly lacked the courage you showed today. I truly admire you!"

Long Kui pouted while casting a side glance towards Zhuo Fan.

Seeing Zhuo Fan in action had her convinced, but admitting it was a whole nother matter.

"Master, with you two seniors here, why didn't you act? You almost worried your student to death." Fatty clapped his fat chest, "It mattered little what happened to me, but what if Sister Kui got hurt?"

“Ha-ha-ha, and miss a good show?”

Fang Qiubai laughed, eyeing the calm and collected Zhuo Fan, “Moreover, I’ve never seen such a genius’ marvelous display before.”

“Senior, you’re too kind!”

Zhuo Fan cupped his hands, but his face was stone-cold, “I’m only curious, why did senior kill the last one? Is it...”

Fang Qiubai squinted and his smile turned fake as he spoke in a frosty tone, “Youngster, you are exceptionally sharp, but your strength might turn this advantage into a flaw.”

Raising an eyebrow, Zhuo Fan laughed and cupped his hands, “Junior thanks for senior’s lesson. Junior has already forgotten this encounter.”

Zhuo Fan picked up on Fang Qiubai’s warning. He did not wield enough power to poke his nose in their conflict. The man had silenced the killer to protect him.

Fang Qiubai took one more long look at him and his admiration grew, “You’re not only smart but also know when to retreat; how rare. What a surprise, finding someone like you in the mortal world yet outside the seven houses. If you weren’t a demonic cultivator, something I am unsuited with, I would’ve wanted to teach you for two years and make your future limitless.”

Long Kui and fatty were shocked.

Outsiders may not know who Fang Qiubai was, but the seven houses were crystal clear on his character. Who among the Heads of the seven houses didn’t want to have their child under his tutelage?

But this old man was stubborn as a mule, not giving them any attention.

Even if the Emperor were to request him on behalf of his sons, he’d act no differently. He’d been teaching the fatty for three years because Fang Qiubai appreciated his strong will, yet the fatty barely learned a few moves. But it wasn’t enough to accept him as a disciple.

Yet the first time he laid eyes on Zhuo Fan, Fang Qiubai took the initiative to invite him. If the two had walked the same cultivation path, Zhuo Fan would've been Divine Sword's first disciple.

Wherever he'd go, if any seven houses' disciples saw him, they'd have to bow down to him.

Long Jiu saw the two kids' shock and surmised their thoughts with a shake of his head. [These kids are yet to reach our level. So they don't know the meaning of rare find.]

With Zhuo Fan's talent, any expert who saw him would want to take him as a disciple. Even if one was unrivaled in the world, to pass on his mantle he needed to find the best disciple suited for his legacy.

The greater the strength of the expert the higher the expectation!

But Zhuo Fan shook his head at this and even sneered.

Forget about Fang Qiubai not accepting him because of cultivation path difference, even if he could be accepted, he'd still refuse. As a Demonic Emperor, the only one worthy of him calling Master was an Emperor Stage expert.

Fang Qiubai was reluctant to let Zhuo Fan pass by him but, in the end, he took fatty and left, "Long Jiu, 3rd Prince still has a task to complete, so I'm taking him with me."

Fang Qiubai and fatty disappeared the moment he finished.

"Wait..." Fatty still wanted to say something to Long Kui and Zhuo Fan, but it was too late. One second his anxious face was there, and the next it was gone.

"So fast!"

Zhuo Fan was shocked, then he hardened his resolve. He had to reach Radiant Stage as soon as possible to guarantee his safety in his travels across the continent.

"Brother Zhuo."

Long Jiu walked to Zhuo Fan with a solemn face, "Come with me to Veiled Dragon Pavilion, there's something I have for you."

Smiling wryly, Zhuo Fan nodded. He had anticipated this.

Fifteen minutes later, Zhuo Fan and Long Jiu were in Veiled Dragon Pavilion's meeting room and Long Jiu pushed an unwilling Long Kui to guard the door outside. Long Jiu took out a sheepskin branded with four dragon marks.

The first words that Zhuo Fan recognized were alliance agreement.

Skimming through it, a pleasing smile bloomed on his face.

This was what he aimed for from the start, an alliance between Veiled Dragon Pavilion and the Luo clan. Veiled Dragon Pavilion would not only become a support for the Luo clan but would also provide resources without any conditions attached.

If the agreement came into effect, he'd be worry-free from any outside attacks and would have the time to develop the Luo clan into a great power.

Long Jiu was a bit astounded, "Why do I feel like you knew this was coming?"

Zhuo Fan smiled.

It had nothing to do with predicting, but planning.

Once he settled on having Veiled Dragon Pavilion as an ally, he used the ancient array diagram to entice Long Jiu, then took advantage of Veiled Dragon Pavilion in sticking its neck out for him.

But that wasn't an alliance, it was just the Luo clan seeking shelter. When faced with great danger, Veiled Dragon Pavilion would've kicked them out.

To avoid the worst outcome, he and Veiled Dragon Pavilion fought side by side and even killed two Profound Heaven elders. He risked offending the Hell Valley to show the potential of the Luo clan.

His aim was an alliance agreement of equals.

If he were alone, he would've avoided showing off by fighting two Profound Heaven experts and amassed fortune instead.

If Veiled Dragon Pavilion's Pavilion Lord was a man of vision, he'd choose alliance. Because he would know that the alliance offered now was like fire in winter for the Luo clan. But if offered in the future, it would be more like decoration, one among many.

As such, Zhuo Fan made a daring gambit. Gambling if the Pavilion Lord was a man of ambition who did not bother with trifles, and willing to make an ally out of a fallen clan.

Fortunately, he won.

Of course, if he lost, then Zhuo Fan would cross Veiled Dragon Pavilion from the list of future potential allies. Just because their leader lacked the bravery and ambition of one.

Zhuo Fan smiled as he rolled up the sheepskin, "I will now take it to Young miss for signing."

"Wait!" Long Jiu gripped his shoulder, "Sign it here and now!"

Zhuo Fan smiled, "I'm not the Clan Head. Signing it as a Steward will make it void."

With a sly smirk, Long Jiu looked at Zhuo Fan in the eye, "Pavilion Lord said this agreement is not with the Luo clan, but with Zhuo Fan."

Frowning, Zhuo Fan stared hard at Long Jiu.

"Wherever Zhuo Fan is, that place is Veiled Dragon Pavilion's ally!" Long Jiu spoke, "This is Pavilion Lord's intent!"

Zhuo Fan frowned, then smiled with a nod.

"Pavilion Lord sure is ambitious, ha-ha-ha..."

In the dead of night, Zhuo Fan returned to the small courtyard and looked for Captain Pang, "Old Pang, where's missy, I'm looking for her."

Sighing, Old Pang muttered, "I'll take you to her."

Zhuo Fan was taken aback but followed nonetheless.

The two entered the kitchen and Zhuo Fan looked at Captain Pang in puzzlement when the latter pointed at Luo Yunchang.

Zhuo Fan saw the chaos inside the kitchen and Luo Yunchang, who had fallen asleep next to the stove. Her face even had traces of soot.

"Sigh, Young miss kept asking the cook for guidance from morning till late into the night." Captain Pang sighed, blaming Zhuo Fan a little.

"Steward Zhuo, I know of your skill, and that Young miss and Young master do not enter your eyes. But you must know, Young miss worked hard day in day out for a whole month to cook for you so that you could have them when you come out of seclusion. But her efforts were not appreciated instead she received your harsh criticism. Any girl would've been devastated after such a response..."

Ignoring Captain Pang's rant, Zhuo Fan walked next to the stove where the few dishes Luo Yunchang made laid. Compared to those at noon, these dishes were almost burned.

Zhuo Fan took a bite and shook his head, "She has no talent whatsoever."

"Sigh, even so, at least show some consideration for her work." Captain Pang rebuked as he walked next to the dishes and tried one, "How hard can it be to swallow?"

He also took a bite and chewed it just once before spitting it right back out.

"You're right, Steward Zhuo, Young miss is inept at cooking. Sorry for blaming you." Captain Pang wiped his mouth and walked out with a red face.

Only

But when he turned back, he saw Zhuo Fan taking one bite after another, and even savoring it.

“Uh, Steward Zhuo, don’t force yourself. Ignore what I said. Now that I’ve also tried Young miss’ cooking, it’s indeed...” Captain Pang’s mouth clamped shut and his face twisted.

“I’m just a bit hungry.”

Zhuo Fan smiled as he ate everything...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 47: Imperial Family's Invitation | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 47: Imperial Family's Invitation

Chapter 47, Imperial Family's Invitation

In the morning, a ray of sunshine entered the small courtyard's kitchen.

Luo Yunchang's eyelids trembled as she opened her drowsy eyes. She looked around the kitchen and smiled dejectedly.

Last night, she was so tired after cooking that she fell asleep in the kitchen itself.

Even if anyone caught wind of this, no one would believe it. A Qi Condensation cultivator tiring herself out from cooking? But the truth was she was too fatigued that she would rather pick cultivation instead of cooking.

Just as she was getting up, she froze. Someone had put a plain cover on her and her back wasn't leaning on the hard stove but on something soft instead.

Pursing her lips, she turned her head only to see a sleeping Zhuo Fan leaning on her. And what kept her back soft was his arm.

"Ah..."

Luo Yunchang was about to yelp but she covered her mouth. It never crossed her mind that Zhuo Fan would spend the night with her here.

Blushing, Luo Yunchang observed his face and wanted to take advantage of this opportunity. Young miss' red lips were inching ever closer to his face.

"Steward Zhuo, Young miss..."

A sudden rough shout came from Captain Pang. Zhuo Fan's eyelids trembled and were about to open.

Luo Yunchang immediately laid her head back on his shoulder and faked sleeping without budging. Just that her red face betrayed her as if she'd done something she shouldn't.

Zhuo Fan opened his eyes, took a deep breath, and frowned when he saw Captain Pang coming in, "Old Pang, what's the rush?"

"Uh, Brother Zhuo, Young miss..." Captain Pang pointed at Luo Yunchang with shock.

Zhuo Fan turned to see Luo Yunchang's red and shivering face. He touched her forehead, "It's burning up. Did she catch a cold?"

Shaking his head, Zhuo Fan blamed himself.

Last night, he wanted to take Luo Yunchang back to her room, but afraid of waking her up, he chose to watch over her in the kitchen. He didn't think sleep would cast its spell on him too.

"Old Pang, say what you came to say. Meanwhile, I'll take this missy back to her room."

Zhuo Fan carried Luo Yunchang, but Old Pang was panicking, "You can't, brother Zhuo. Someone wants to invite Young miss for a chat. Someone we can't offend."

"What can't offend? She won't be going even if the Veiled Dragon Pavilion asked." Zhuo Fan snapped, "Can't you see she has lost consciousness? She must be sick. Wait for a bit and I'll go see the guest."

"Sigh, brother Zhuo, Steward Zhuo, Young miss must go meet him in person. He bears the Imperial Golden Seal." Captain Pang shouted.

Zhuo Fan stopped.

Only the Imperial family's guards had this seal. Even the seven houses' leaders would have to respond at once or they'd have committed a grave crime. The lightest punishment was death, while the harshest was dragging one's whole clan with him.

Of course, with the Seven Noble Houses' power, the Imperial family would refrain from resorting to such methods. But that didn't apply to a fallen clan like them.

Zhuo Fan squinted and thought it through, "Old Pang, tell him Young miss is unwell and that he should come back tomorrow."

"What?"

Captain Pang's heart jumped in fright.

[That person carries the Emperor's edict. If you do this, it is the same as saying you don't want to talk to him.]

But Zhuo Fan had it thought out. Thinking back to last night, he guessed the one calling him over was that fatty's guard.

The fatty was a good man and wouldn't let emotions cloud his judgment, slaughtering innocents left and right.

"Do what I said, now!" Zhuo Fan raised his voice.

"Wait!"

Luo Yunchang yelled, struggling out of Zhuo Fan's embrace and spoke with a stern face, "Captain Pang, tell him to wait a moment to make myself presentable."

"Understood!"

Captain Pang bowed and secretly rejoiced. [Thank god, Young miss woke up or who knew how much trouble brother Zhuo's arrangement would've stirred up.]

[But this Steward Zhuo sure is dauntless. If I were to follow his words, I'll die of fright.]

Captain Pang shook his head and left.

Zhuo Fan watched Luo Yunchang skeptically. [How did she regain consciousness all of a sudden?]

Luo Yunchang rolled her eyes, "Why are you so reckless? Is the Imperial family someone you can offend?"

To avoid him noticing anything, Luo Yunchang rushed away. Zhuo Fan was left to walk alone to the living room, with doubt in his heart.

He met with the man carrying the seal, a peak Qi Condensation cultivator. He was one of the porters to fatty's palanquin.

"Are you Steward Zhuo? My master is inviting you and Young miss Luo for a talk."

The envoy cupped his hands, but the prideful attitude never left him. And either on purpose or otherwise, the Imperial Golden Seal flashed on his waist. Perhaps he was afraid they'd mistake him for someone other than the Imperial family's guard.

Zhuo Fan snorted, [You're still soft thinking you can fake your arrogance around me. When I was faking it, you were still but an egg in your mother's belly.]

Zhuo Fan didn't even look at him as he slumped in a chair, one leg over the other.

The envoy's eyes swelled with rage.

"Is the fatty's injury healed?" Zhuo Fan asked in passing.

[Fatty?] The man was stunned.

Then it hit him that Zhuo Fan was calling his master fatty. But the number of people in this world who dared to call him that was less than ten.

[Then he and master are...]

His heart started beating a mile a minute and the arrogance was gone from his eyes, "My master did not mention any injury when he returned last night."

"Is that so?"

Zhuo Fan raised an eyebrow, then laughed, "He must be thinking of his image. I punched him thirty-odd times yesterday and kicked him a dozen times more. There's no way he's fine."

"Don't you think so too? That fatty must be faking it so you guys won't laugh at him, ha-ha-ha..." Zhuo Fan quirked his eyebrows at the man.

The envoy's lips twitched, unable to respond. But he was embarrassed nonetheless.

"Right, was that old goat Fang Qiubai still angry after he arrived?" Zhuo Fan looked at him carefully this time.

But the envoy just shook his head.

Fang Qiubai returned with his master yesterday and only then did they find out about Fang Qiubai's arrival. Since Zhuo Fan knew this before them, it spoke how close he was with his master.

At this point, the envoy stashed the seal in his pants. It worked well in scaring some, but it was best to not make a fool of himself in front of such a Young master like Zhuo Fan.

"Great!"

Seeing the envoy shaking his head, Zhuo Fan rejoiced, "Perhaps you don't know but that old goat wanted to take me as a disciple. If not for my staunch heart and me choosing death over kneeling, the old goat would've taken me away by now. I still thought he was angry and was going to come nag me again. Now that I know he isn't, I can rest easy. That old goat understands my predicament."

"What, Fang Qiubai wanted to take you as a disciple?"

The man shouted as his legs went soft and collapsed.

[Heavens! Who the hell is this Young master? He is a friend that beat up master and also someone wanted as a disciple by Jade Flute Divine Sword Fang Qiubai, who the Emperor shows respect to?]

Zhuo Fan secretly sneered, "What's wrong? Why fall over?"

"Let me help you!" Zhuo Fan said so but showed no intention of moving.

The envoy was sharp enough to get back on his feet while waving his hand, "No need, Steward Zhuo, I don't dare ask you of such a favor. I am not worthy."

"Humph, a servant's instinct!" Zhuo Fan disdained, "You call helping you get up, a favor?"

"Might you be the Emperor's envoy?"

Luo Yunchang, dressed to impress, walked before him and bowed. The envoy rushed to kowtow, "You are making it hard on me. Please don't be so courteous. If master heard I was disrespectful to his friends, he will punish me."

Luo Yunchang was at a loss and turned to Zhuo Fan, who just shrugged.

But Captain Pang, who was behind her, was stunned silly at the sight of the envoy's courteous attitude.

[Where's your previous haughty attitude? Spouting something like if Young miss didn't come to see you in fifteen minutes, you'd be executing all of us. Why the sudden change of tones?]

But even this change was too outrageous and polite.

Captain Pang eyed Zhuo Fan who only sported a puzzling smile.

Old Pang figured Steward Zhuo had something to do with it and gave him a thumbs up.

[Only Steward Zhuo can make an Imperial family's guard kowtow to our Young miss.]

Zhuo Fan dismissed the envoy's courtesy, "Why is that fatty calling me?"

"I-I do not know. I was only ordered to invite Windgaze City's Cai clan, Lei clan and Luo clan." The envoy spoke with extreme politeness.

Zhuo Fan squinted.

[It seems that the Hell Valley targetting the three clans must have something to do with the Imperial family...]

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 48: Thousand-year-old Secret Edict | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 48: Thousand-year-old Secret Edict

Chapter 48, Thousand-year-old Secret Edict

In a peaceful location within the forest, a kilometre from Windgaze City, stood a remote courtyard. The four guards posted at the door were Bone Tempering experts.

Zhuo Fan and Luo Yunchang came along with Luo Yunhai and Captain Pang with the envoy as their guide.

“Steward Zhuo, Young miss Luo, please enter!”

The man was very polite. He opened the door, stood to the side and bowed for them to pass. The other guards frowned with doubt and a flicker of scorn in their eyes.

They were Imperial family’s guards, always welcomed with bows and courtesy everywhere.

But this guy went to invite some no-name Clan Heads and even bowed down before them. He was seen as a disgrace by his fellow guards.

The man picked up on scorn, but he just smirked.

[How can idiots know the importance these people hold?]

[Steward Zhuo is master’s friend, who even Senior Fang Qiubai has his eyes on. He needs to say just one word and he’d be Fang Qiubai’s disciple. Even the Emperor will have to show respect then.]

[As for the other three, they're Steward Zhuo's friends. We can't show any disrespect even to them.]

Secretly snorting, the envoy still showed a flattering smile as he guided them inside.

They soon arrived at a garden.

A single pavilion laid in the middle with a stone table inside. Fatty sat in the seat of honor and behind him stood Jade Flute Divine Sword, Fang Qiubai.

On one side of the fatty was Lei Yuntian, with Lei Yuting and Xiao Cui behind him. On the other, it was Cai Rong and his son, Cai Xiaoting.

There were two additional empty stools around the table, for Zhuo Fan and Luo Yunchang.

"This must be a meeting of the three Clan Heads." Zhuo Fan rubbed his nose and took a step back, letting Luo Yunhai take the lead.

"Bro Zhuo..."

Luo Yunhai didn't understand, while Zhuo Fan smiled, "Show them the dignity of a Clan Head, and don't let them look down on you."

Luo Yunhai understood as Luo Yunchang showed a grateful look.

It was clear this meeting was between the three Clan Heads and the Imperial family. But after the events over the past few months, all of Windgaze City knew that Luo clan's true Clan Head was Zhuo Fan.

Even the Imperial family might be considering Zhuo Fan as the master of the Luo clan.

Zhuo Fan did this now so that he did not exceed his authority, and was letting Luo clan come into the light. He wanted to state the fact Luo clan's Clan Head was still named Luo.

"Please, come in."

The envoy saw the 3rd prince and bowed ninety degrees towards Zhuo Fan in a show of respect he had for his master's friend.

But this had a different effect on everyone. The fatty was stunned, [Since when were the Imperial family's guards so humble?]

Cai clan and Lei clan were of the same opinion.

When this guard came to invite them, he was brazen, cocky and flaunting, not carrying in the least who he was talking to. But towards the Luo clan, he treated them like guests.

The two clans felt apprehensive in their hearts, they were even more envious. They were all clans of Windgaze City yet the treatment was worlds apart.

Only Fang Qiubai smiled, guessing Zhuo Fan might have twisted facts to scare the envoy. But this only worked to admire him more.

Under the envoy's polite call, the Luo clan stepped into the pavilion. Luo Yunchang greeted the fatty, "I am Luo Yunchang, greetings, Your Highness!"

On the way here, the envoy told them of his master. The others followed Luo Yunchang in showing respect. But Zhuo Fan just shrugged.

The fatty only waved, not taking Zhuo Fan's disrespect seriously, "Please sit."

Luo Yunchang and her brother took a seat, while Zhuo Fan and Captain Pang stood behind them.

Fatty threw a long look towards Zhuo Fan, secretly nodding. [Great authority, but without any arrogance. He is a loyal subject!]

Fang Qiubai smiled with praise in his eyes.

Zhuo Fan's conduct was etched in the two's hearts. Wielding his martial prowess to protect his master, and courteous enough to defend his master's honor. In the eyes of the Imperial family, he was a rare and valuable official.

The fatty began, "I have invited the three Clan Heads today per the Imperial edict to reveal to you the thousand-years-old relationship between the three clans."

Everyone was focused on fatty's next words.

"The three Clan Heads must have each received an instruction from the previous Clan Head, to not make an enemy out of each other. And perhaps even mentioned about helping one another."

Fatty stood up, "Moreover, the three clan's power must never leave Windgaze City until the pearls shine."

Cai Rong and Lei Yuntian watched the fatty in puzzlement. Luo Yunchang got a nod from her brother and also looked puzzled.

"Ha-ha-ha, in fact, this is an agreement between the founding Imperial family a thousand years ago and the three Clan Heads of that time, known as Secret Pearl Order." Fatty smiled and his eyes flashed, "Cai clan, Luo clan, Lei clan and the Seven Noble Houses are the same, they are all loyal officials, founders of the empire."

"What?"

Like a bomb was thrown on them, the three clan's representatives were shell shocked. They never thought that their origins were the same as the seven houses. But why had they fallen so low that they could only stay in Windgaze City as mortal clans?

The fatty turned a bit bashful, guessing their thoughts, "Sorry, this is what our Yumen clan owes you."

Sighing, fatty continued, "At that time, Tianyu Empire was just established and was shaky, with unrest among its people. The Great Ancestor and founder sent his seven ministers across the kingdom to employ autonomous administration and settle the land. This gave them enough power to make them equal to the Imperial family. They later became the Seven Noble Houses."

"In just twenty years, the seven houses grew exponentially, and their greed ignited a war among them. The Imperial family could no longer keep them in check and had to employ schemes in weakening them. The seven houses were ultimately aware that there will be no winners in their war and ceased fire. But the aftermath was cruel. The people were suffering, the empire was mourning, and it was just one step away from collapsing."

"But how is this connected to us?" Zhuo Fan frowned.

Taking a deep breath, fatty straightened his back, "Everyone, to be honest, your clans are founders of our empire. If your elders were still sitting in the Imperial court, they would be no less famous than the Four Pillars!"

Everyone sucked in a cold breath.

Four Pillars were the support of the Tianyu Empire, leading the military, economy, politics, external affairs... They were the only ones capable of resisting the seven houses.

There was a rumor, the Four Pillars' power was so strong it struck fear in the Imperial family.

Imperial family, Four Pillars and the Seven Noble Houses represented the empire's highest power, but also restricting each other in a delicate balance. If one side tips, the balance would crumble and the empire would fall.

No one could believe that their ancestors were so amazing and capable of becoming the empire's Four Pillars of today.

The fatty lost his smile at this point, "The Great Ancestor at the time set up the Secret Pearl Order with your ancestors to prevent another war from breaking out among the seven houses. The Emperor used all kinds of excuses to demote your ancestors to Windgaze City and become common clans. But the Imperial family could, at any time, combine the three clans into a great clan equal to the rank of the seven houses. This would occur only when war broke out again between the seven houses. Then this new clan would add balance to the equation, to save as many lives as possible."

"But, even if an eighth house were to appear, it cannot stop the seven houses." Luo Yunchang voiced her doubts.

Zhuo Fan cut fatty off with a smile before he could speak, "Young miss, the eighth house's purpose isn't to stop them but to add balance. A war breaks out only when one side has absolute confidence in winning it. But a war in which winning was possible at a heavy cost won't happen unless the two sides hated each other to the bone. Sometimes, when two power starts a conflict, it is very easily solved, since no one wants to suffer irreparable damages."

Luo Yunchang nodded, and the fatty praised Zhuo Fan, "Steward Zhuo is amazing. Luo clan will rise for sure in your capable hands."

Cai Rong's lips twitched from the regret he felt.

If he hadn't offended Zhuo Fan, he might've been able to rope him. This kid was a genius seen once in a thousand years.

"3rd Prince, we know of the relationship between the three clans. What I want to know is, how are you going to secure our rise to the eighth seat." Zhuo Fan stared at the fatty.

Raising his brow, the fatty nodded in admiration, "That's Steward Zhuo for you, hitting the nail on the head."

"Of course, the Imperial family's power is enough to make a clan rise in a short time. The hard part though is how to keep it hidden!" Zhuo Fan smiled, "You think the seven houses would just watch us rise up to their level?"

Cai Rong and Lei Yuntian's backs went cold with sweat.

They were elated that their ancestors had been Imperial court officials. They were thinking, [My clan will receive the Imperial family's support to rise above a common clan.]

But Zhuo Fan brought them down to earth.

Not to mention growing stronger, the seven houses wouldn't even let the new clan grow to their level. They would be destroyed while they were at their weakest.

Cai Rong and Lei Yuntian were grateful for Zhuo Fan's reminder.

The Imperial family wanted the seven houses' power in balance, but the three of them wanted to survive.

Cai Rong had to admire Zhuo Fan's prudent mind...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 49: Three Clans as One | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 49: Three Clans as One

After muttering under his breath for a while, the fatty spoke, "This was settled at the moment the secret order was given. What is a clan's foundation? Spirit stones, pills? No, these are support items. Strength is the best guarantee of a powerful clan."

"Veiled Dragon Pavilion has its nine outstanding elders, Hell Valley has its twelve elders as overseers. Each of the seven houses has its own strength. Also, every one of them has invited a Venerable. Along with other secret weapons they're holding, even we, the Imperial family, don't dare stir them."

Fatty's eyes then shined like a radiant sun, "At the time, in order to paralyze the seven houses, Great Ancestor confiscated the wealth of your clans. This is why none of you has any decent cultivation method and martial arts. It was also because of this reason the seven houses withdrew their surveillance on you five hundred years ago."

"Yet none of them would have thought that you all are still holding a low profound ranked martial art." Fatty showed a sneaky smile, "With this martial art all of you can become strong. Even the seven houses only have one or two profound ranked martial arts."

The three clans were amazed.

When did they have such a martial art? If they had it, they'd have used it to grow strong by now.

Only Zhuo Fan's eyes rolled about, recalling something.

With a vague smile, fatty's hand flashed and revealed a green jade slip, "This is a low mortal ranked martial art, Combining Art. By itself, it holds no value, but if you use it along with your clans' spirit ranked martial arts you inherited, you can combine them into a single martial art of the profound rank."

"In other words, Luo clan's Returning Dragon Palm, Cai clan's Wind Kick, and Lei clan's Lightning Finger were originally one single martial art that the Imperial family split among the three clans. And only the Imperial family knew the way to restore it." Zhuo Fan squinted.

Fatty was shocked but then nodded, "Steward Zhuo is wise. There aren't many martial arts which are capable of splitting other martial arts, and the number of martial arts that can restore them are even lesser. I didn't think Steward Zhuo would know of this. If imperial father hadn't mentioned it, I would've never found out."

Zhuo Fan just smiled.

Perhaps because the splitting martial arts were uncommon even at the mortal rank, each sect in the Sacred Domain seized them. They split their core martial arts to prevent degenerate disciples from spreading it. Only the sect leader's disciple had the right to learn the entire set of martial arts.

Zhuo Fan turned to look at Cai clan and Lei clan. They were startled, but their eyes showed deep regret.

Perhaps because they were negligent in safeguarding their inherited martial arts and let the Hell Valley steal them. Especially with regards to Cai clan, who were quick to give it away.

[It must be really eating Cai Rong inside right now!]

"Clan Heads, please take out your inherited martial arts." Fatty placed the jade slip on the table with a smile.

But only Luo Yunchang took out her clan's martial art. After Lei Yuting got to know of Yang Ming's treachery, she gave back the Returning Dragon Palm to Luo Yunchang. But the other clan heads looked at each other in shame.

Fatty frowned as he stared at them.

Sighing, Lei Yuntian cupped his hands, "Your Highness, I was unable to protect my ancestor's martial art from Hell Valley's thieving hands. I accept Your Highness' punishment."

"What?" Fatty slapped the table.

Cai Rong also cupped his hands, "Your Highness... I am the same..."

Fatty's body shivered in rage, "Y-you, just how are you both Clan Heads? Have you forgotten your ancestor's instructions? You should have defended it with your lives."

The two kneeled, "Please forgive us, Your Highness."

Fatty sighed as he scratched his head.

Cai Rong peeked at him, "Your Highness, can't the Imperial family bestow us another profound ranked martial art?"

"Bestow your mom!"

Fatty couldn't hold it in and began raining curses and spitting all over Cai Rong's kneeling figure, "What do you take profound ranked martial arts for, cabbage? Even the Imperial family has only four of them. And they're each registered. If I take one out, everyone will know. How are your clans gonna rise then?"

"You dumb pig, are you tired of living?" Fatty gave Cai Rong a round of slapping then stomped his feet.

Cai Rong curled up and shivered on the ground.

"What now, what now? The Secret Pearl Order is ruined!" Fatty paced around.

Zhuo Fan smirked and two jade slips appeared with a flash in his hand, "3rd Prince, there's no need to worry. I have their clans' martial arts."

"What?"

The two Clan Heads shouted in unison, staring dumbfounded in Zhuo Fan's direction. Cai Rong in particular, having not witnessed Zhuo Fan's prowess, was incredulous at what was happening.

Lei Yuntian gave Zhuo Fan a thankful nod. If not for him, not only Lei clan wouldn't recover, they'd even be executed in a fit of anger by 3rd Prince.

"Ha-ha-ha, Steward Zhuo, you truly are amazing. I see why Elder Jiu of Veiled Dragon Pavilion speaks so highly of you!" Fatty was overjoyed, and ran into Zhuo Fan for a bear hug, "If not for you, I would've failed Imperial Father's task. I owe you one."

Smiling, Zhuo Fan shook his head, "This is all for the Luo clan!"

"Yes, right, for the Luo clan and for me, ha-ha-ha..." Fatty slapped Zhuo Fan's shoulder, then gathered the four jade slips, "Now that we have the martial arts, next is the merger of the three clans. According to the Great Ancestor's Secret Pearl Order, two clans are to merge with the strongest. And the profound ranked martial art will be in the Clan Head's care. As such, you..."

"Your Highness," Cai Rong seemed hyped as he jumped to his feet, "Luo clan has little strength and only four members, and Lei clan is on the verge of collapse, only my Cai clan is flourishing. As such, I will begrudgingly accept this responsibility and support them under my clan's wing. As of now, I will take Lei and Luo clan as Cai clan's disciples and assist the Imperial family in fulfilling the secret edict."

As he finished speaking, Cai Rong reached for the jade slips but a rough hand stopped him. Lei Yuntian glared at him as he asked.

"Cai Rong, how can a Bone Tempering cultivator be enough to act as Clan Head?"

"Humph, so what? Based on strength, my clan is the best." Cai Rong raised his brows.

"Don't be so sure." Lei Yuntian sneered at Cai Rong and looked at Lei Yunting. She showed a proud smile and stepped forward, "Clan Head Cai, in this last month, I gathered all the scattered Blackwind Mountain's men. We have six hundred men,

half of them are in Qi Condensation. Based on strength alone, the Cai clan is weaker.”

“Ha-ha-ha, so what if you’re strong? You’re just bandits!”

Cai Xiaoting laughed at her, “Lei clan is but a rabble of thugs! If you take the role of Clan Head, we’ll only be the seven houses’ laughingstock, never will we be able to reach their level.”

“Who are you calling a thug? You want a piece of me?”

“You say you’re not, thug granny?”

In an instant, the Lei and Cai clans started fighting for the leader’s position. Zhuo Fan was secretly sneering at the side.

[This new clan is just being established, and it was still a question if it could survive. Yet these bunch of idiots are plagued with delusions of grandeur that they could hold their own against the seven houses.]

Fatty and Fang Qiubai mocked the quarrelling clans with their eyes.

Luo Yunchang’s face burned in anger. They were fighting against each other while ignoring the Luo clan. It clearly showed that they thought little of her clan.

Although they were but four members, they were still one of the three clans in the edict. But these clans didn’t even ask for their opinion!

Bam!

With that loud slap, the two clans stopped and turned to see the brat Luo Yunhai hitting the table.

His face was stern and his eyes were steadfast, unlike his usual childish self. Even Zhuo Fan quirked an eyebrow.

“Why all this fuss?”

Luo Yunhai swept the people with his eyes and spoke with resolve, "In this merger of clans, the only one worthy of the leader position is none other than my Luo clan."

Luo Yunhai's declaration shocked them silly. Cai Xiaoting mocked, "What does a brat know? You're the weakest of us, nothing of worth at all. What gives you the right to lead us?"

Sneering, Luo Yunhai grinned.

Everyone there recognized his look, the spitting image of someone they all knew very well. This made them turn their eyes to Zhuo Fan.

[Hell, Zhuo Fan ruined him!]

Zhuo Fan was quite piqued by this brat.

"Luo clan has no men, money or pills. It only has us four, masters and servants." Luo Yunhai looked at them with sparkling eyes, "But our clan is the strongest because we have Steward Zhuo!"

Luo Yunhai turned to Zhuo Fan with worship in his gaze.

If Luo clan was to have any right to become the head, it would all be thanks to Zhuo Fan. His skills were obvious to anyone there. Even Veiled Dragon Pavilion was certain that if Zhuo Fan stayed with Luo clan, its rise was but a matter of time.

Under the hopeful and worried gazes, especially Luo Yunhai's expectant look, Zhuo Fan shook his head.

[This kid hardly ever shows such great expectations from me. I can't disappoint him now, can I?]

"Humph, Zhuo Fan is a mere steward. How can a person of low status like him be worthy to hold on to all our Cai clan's guards and wealth? Punk, our clan shall be the head, don't... "

Cai Xiaoting mocked but didn't finish as Zhuo Fan slapped the table, revealing the alliance agreement.

Under the puzzlement of others, Zhuo Fan sneered, "This is Luo clan and Veiled Dragon Pavilion's alliance contract."

"What?"

The fatty was so shocked his whole body trembled and was close to falling off his chair. Even the relaxed and uncaring Fang Qiubai behind him narrowed his eyes as he scanned the sheepskin with shock.

Veiled Dragon Pavilion was one of the Seven Noble Houses. The only ones worthy of signing an alliance agreement with them were others from the seven houses, while the rest only had the right to sign a subsidiary agreement. But now...

With a deep look, Fang Qiubai sighed as he asked Zhuo Fan, "Kid, how did you do it?"

"Recognized and valued as a hero!"

He nodded towards Fang Qiubai then turned to the two clans and spoke in a cold tone, "Let me tell you, even if this crappy Secret Pearl Order never existed, as long as I'm here, Luo clan will ultimately rise to the ranks of the seven houses."

Only

"You're of no help to us! On the contrary, you are a burden." Zhuo Fan sneered.

The two other clans lost their voices in shock.

With rosy cheeks, Luo Yunchang raised her chin proudly. Luo Yunhai was grinning from excitement, watching Zhuo Fan with veneration...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 50: Merger | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 50: Merger

Chapter 50, Merger

Mulling over, the fatty traced his hand on the alliance agreement.

He found Zhuo Fan's strength exceeding his expectations as it was not a simple matter to gain such an alliance agreement. Even if Long Jiu was in favor of him, an elder didn't hold much sway in the Veiled Dragon Pavilion.

Fatty sighed, "Steward Zhuo, I am saddened by seeing you live in such a poor clan. Why don't... you come help me. Just think about it."

To the shock of everyone present, the 3rd Prince expressed his intention in recruiting Zhou Fan. It amazed them that Zhuo Fan was so highly sought after that even the Imperial family was willing to have him.

Luo Yunchang stood up nervously, thinking Zhuo Fan would be snatched away.

Zhuo Fan smiled and shook his head, "3rd Prince, you're overestimating me. Even in the Luo clan, am I not doing my best for the Imperial family?"

Fatty quirked an eyebrow and smiled, "Alright. I'll leave it at that."

He then turned to the rest, "It's decided. The Luo clan will be the leader of the three clans merger. Cai and Lei clans are to assist the Luo clan in fulfilling the Secret Pearl Order."

"Your Highness..."

Cai Xiaoting was disgruntled and wanted to voice his objection, but Cai Rong gripped his arm. He didn't understand the reason but fatty's pin-sized eyes left him shivering from the killing intent.

Secret Pearl Order was a millennium-old secret plan, and it held great importance to the Imperial family. It was understandable that they would only choose the best clan for the position of leader.

If the three clans were equal, the Imperial family would've taken his objection into consideration.

But Zhuo Fan took out the alliance agreement, making all dissent moot. It turned the Luo clan into the best choice in implementing the secret edict for the Imperial family. If even with this, the other clans voiced their discontent, the Imperial family would deal them with a heavy hand.

Just as Zhuo Fan said, the Luo clan had all the power it needed to bring the secret edict to fruition. This, in turn, made the other two clans their vassals. If they felt that being a vassal was unpleasant, the Imperial family would finish them off with a mere swipe.

Cai Xiaoting let the matter drop, yet the discontent never left his face. He could only follow Cai Rong's actions in submitting.

Fatty nodded, then turned to Lei Yuntian to see if he had objections. The old man said, "Your Highness, be at ease. I will give my all in assisting Yunhai and Yunchang. As Cloud Manor fell because of me, I will become a servant to atone for my crimes."

Fatty nodded at his sincerity, "Good, since there are no objections, the three clans shall unite."

"Understood." Everyone bowed, "We shall now withdraw!"

"Steward Zhuo stay for a while."

Zhuo Fan was unclear as to the reason why but remained nonetheless under the departing and curious gazes of the rest.

The fatty let out a breath then rushed to Zhuo Fan and dragged him to an empty place in the garden.

“3rd Prince...” Zhuo Fan frowned.

Fatty waved, “Just follow my lead.”

Fatty then pointed two fingers at the sky as he shouted, “I, Tianyu Empire’s 3rd Prince, Yuwen Cong, vow to heaven to become sworn brother with Luo clan’s steward, Zhuo Fan. To share life and death together and never betray him!”

“Your turn!” Fatty watched Zhuo Fan impatiently.

Zhuo Fan was confused, but becoming sworn brothers with 3rd Prince had to be a good thing so he went along, “I, Luo clan’s steward, Zhuo Fan, vow to Heaven to become sworn brother with Tianyu Empire’s 3rd Prince, Yuwen Cong. If he doesn’t betray me, I won’t either!”

Fatty muttered when he heard the last part, “Brother, you sure are meticulous.”

“Fatty, it’s not that I don’t trust you, but the pugilistic world is too vicious.” Zhuo Fan shrugged, not having any restraint in calling him fatty. Since no one was here, the fatty himself wouldn’t blow a gasket over this.

[Plus, this kid needs me to complete the secret edict.]

Zhuo Fan was perfectly clear when to be fierce and when to be scared.

Just as he foresaw, the fatty nodded instead of getting angry, “Call me how you like it. I feel much better since we are sworn brothers now.”

Zhuo Fan looked at him in puzzlement.

Fatty sighed, “Do you remember our bet from yesterday? The winner gets to have Sister Kui. I lost the bet but I still can’t let it go. So I decided to become sworn brothers with you. This way I won’t go after my brother’s wife and it would help me forget about Sister Kui too.”

Zhuo Fan rose an eyebrow, incredulous that the fatty wanted to become sworn brothers over this, "Fatty, there's nothing between me and that girl. She was just making excuses."

"What, is that true?" Fatty even jumped ten meters in joy, "Then can I still chase her?"

Nodding, Zhuo Fan showed a vague smile, "Go, go, annoy the little lass to death!"

"Awesome, brother. You are indeed my sworn brother, ha-ha-ha..." Fatty was skipping and whooping in joy. Now that the bet was off, he could chase Long Kui to his heart's content.

Zhuo Fan smiled, "Fatty, what does the Secret Pearl Order truly say?"

The fatty dropped his smile, watching Zhuo Fan with embarrassment, "Brother, didn't I say it already?"

"This plan is very delicate, and even the goal is fair, but," Zhuo Fan squinted, "It lacks ambition. So much so that an Emperor of a founding empire would never come up with it."

The Great Ancestor showed great ambition when he established the empire. Zhuo Fan wasn't gullible enough to believe the secret millennium order was limited to restricting the seven houses and maintaining a balance of power.

Fatty shook his head, "I do not know either. This was what I've been told."

Zhuo Fan stared him down but discovered nothing else. Maybe he knew nothing, or maybe his acting was top notch.

"Then how did Hell Valley catch wind of this thousand-year-old secret edict?" Zhuo Fan smiled, "All of Hell Valley's actions were against the secret edict while looking innocent doing it. They were afraid of the Imperial family's investigation."

Fatty frowned, "Reason points to the contrary, but there are many spies in the Imperial Capital, the information about secret edict might have leaked."

"It remained hidden for a thousand years and only now it gets leaked?" Zhuo Fan frowned, "Maybe leaking it is part of the secret edict's contents?"

The fatty shivered and went wide-eyed.

Zhuo Fan smirked, [It's clear now.]

"Never mind, it works in Luo clan's benefit anyway. So there's no need to poke my nose in it. There's no need to worry over nothing, ha-ha-ha..."

Zhuo Fan waved as he left, "Fatty, I'll be going. We'll meet again if we get the chance!"

A voice rang in fatty's ear as Zhuo Fan's figure distanced.

"This kid is perhaps too sharp... scary even!"

Whoosh!

It was Fang Qiubai in his blue robe.

Fang Qiubai muttered, "The more I watch him the more he resembles someone!"

"Who?" Fatty asked.

Fang Qiubai's eyes flashed, "Zhuge Changfeng!"

"The Leader of Four Pillars, Prime Minister Zhuge Changfeng?" Fatty was in shock, "Are you saying Zhuo Fan..."

Nodding, Fang Qiubai smiled, "Cong'er, becoming sworn brothers with him was the best decision you made in your life. One day, he will become one of your Four Pillars, helping you rule!"

The fatty was stunned, watching Zhuo Fan getting further away as ambition flickered in his eyes...

Zhuo Fan returned to the small courtyard and saw the others waiting outside.

"What's wrong? Did 3rd Prince say something?" Luo Yunchang was worried. He refused Veiled Dragon Pavilion's invitation but this was the Imperial family.

With just a nod, he could become an official with the support of the Imperial family.

Secretly smiling, Zhuo Fan said, "Fatty told me to do my best in fulfilling the secret edict."

Luo Yunchang covered Zhuo Fan's mouth then looked around before saying, "How can you call 3rd Prince like that? Be careful or he might take your life!"

"He won't. He still needs me!"

Zhuo Fan dismissed her worry and even gave a thumbs up to Luo Yunhai, "Your performance was perfect, worthy of a Clan Head. You made me proud."

"Please, didn't I learn it all from bro?" Luo Yunhai stuck up his chin. It was clear the bro he referred to was Zhuo Fan.

Everyone laughed and Luo Yunchang showed a relieved smile.

[Dad, can you see? Yunhai has grown up. He can shoulder the honor and glory of the Luo clan!] Luo Yunchang looked at the sky with sparkling eyes.

On the second day after the meeting, the new clan was established with Luo clan at the helm. The name was, of course, Luo clan. Zhuo Fan, with the Imperial family's support, had no trouble becoming the Head Steward of the clan, handling all affairs.

He appointed Lei Yuntian as Luo clan's Grand Elder and Cai Rong as the 2nd Elder while keeping Old Pang as the Captain of the guards, leading the Cai clan's guards. Lei Yuting was made the leader of the shadow corps, taking Blackwind Mountain's bandits under her, and in charge of intelligence gathering and training assassins.

Because of the Imperial family's decree, the Veiled Dragon Pavilion and Hell Valley were banned from entering the Windgaze City. The rest of the seven houses remained within their borders, thus making this city belong to the Luo clan alone.

As for the Luo clan's estate, Cai clan suggested for it to be the former Cai Manor, but Zhuo Fan had other plans.

Blackwind Mountain, the place where a natural array took form!

And so, another Devil Mountain was established, and Zhuo Fan's plans advanced one step at a time...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 51: Four Pillars' Leader | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 51: Four Pillars' Leader

The slums in the Imperial Capital were the darkest corners of the empire. Seedy, good, devious, and all other kinds of people mixed in here, along with the downed shacks painted a perfectly wretched image. Any self-respecting man who had some money on the side would never choose to live here.

Only those living from one day to the next and the truly poor stayed here, waiting for the day that would rob them of their lives.

Yet in the worst corner of the slums was a courtyard the people feared to the point of being afraid to step through its doors. Even if the vilest and most sinister man was to wander by happenstance here, he would be warned to leave this house be.

This courtyard was unoccupied, but at night, there were eerie whispers coming from it. Some braved to investigate, but it was as if their traces in this world vanished the moment they stepped foot inside.

Recently, some Bone Tempering and even a Profound Heaven expert charged in, fearing no evil.

Afterwards, well, there was no news. They were gone all the same. From that moment, the courtyard became a taboo, avoided by the strong and weak alike.

On a full moon night, when the slums had turned unusually quiet. The people had gone home earlier and as far away from the demonic courtyard as possible.

But it was then that a faint lantern lit up in the courtyard. It was akin to ghost fire, flickering on and off.

In a ruined room of the courtyard, an elderly with white temples sat in a pleased manner on a tutor's chair, waving a goose feathered fan. His half-lidded eyes flashed here and there, and his mouth was twisted at the corners. It was as if the world's suffering and happiness were beneath him.

Two old men stood behind, one with black hair and the other with white hair. Their eyes were closed but their powerful auras identified them as experts, preventing any living creature from approaching a hundred meters around them.

Even a harmless beetle would find its tiny heart wrecked with fear.

Whoosh!

A sound broke the silence and a black-clothed man suddenly appeared outside the room. He had a bamboo hat that hid his features.

The sitting old man stopped fanning and smiled, "Valley Lord You, how is it progressing?"

The bamboo wearing man was Hell Valley's Valley Lord, You Wanshan!

Sighing, You Wanshan shook his head, "A dozen years of painstaking effort was ruined. The Emperor ordered for Hell Valley to stay away from Windgaze City. The same goes for the other houses. He must have sensed something."

"Oh." The old man raised an eyebrow with a smile, "The Emperor is planning on enacting the Secret Pearl Order?"

"My guess is yes."

You Wanshan's face grew angry, "They got luck on their side last time, but next time, it won't be so simple. Emperor wants to raise the 8th house, but we shall see if the clan can live to see that day!"

"Ha-ha-ha, Valley Lord You, ease your anger. A loss is a loss. Why make excuses?" The old man was still calm, yet his words were sharp and filled with disdain, "Hell Valley is one of the Seven Noble Houses, yet it can't even deal with three common clans. The time of its fall must be close at hand."

You Wanshan snapped, his power exploding. Peak Profound Heaven cultivation smashed the windows to splinters. He unleashed all of it to pressure the old man.

“Zhuge Changfeng, you were the one who told me of the contents of the Secret Pearl Order. It was also you who said the Emperor wants to help in the rise of the 8th house. The dozen years plan also came from you. So how can you speak like this?”

You Wanshan bellowed, “Go to hell!”

The smile never left the old man’s face, still sitting calmly and fanning slowly.

Boom!

Just when the pressure was drawing near Zhuge Changfeng, the black and white elders behind him opened their eyes.

At that moment, one’s eyes flashed black while the other’s flashed white. A ripple echoed outwards and clashed with You Wanshan’s display of power, creating a jarring sound.

The entire slums shook.

You Wanshan’s felt a sweetness in his throat and spat blood as his face paled.

The two elders closed their eyes again, while Zhuge Changfeng swayed the fan like nothing had happened, still sporting that ever-present smile.

You Wanshan watched the black and white elders incredulously, “Yin Yang Elders?”

Zhuge Changfeng nodded, “Valley Lord You sure is knowledgeable. These seniors haven’t shown up over the past century. I find it amazing that you still recognize them.”

Grinding his teeth in anger, You Wanshan panted while also spitting blood now and then, but the look he had when he turned to the elders was now one of fear.

"You are worthy of being Tianyu's number one sage, Four Pillars's Leader, Prime Minister Zhuge. To be able to make these monsters leave their mountain, not even that Fang Qiubai from the Divine Dragons can compare to you."

"Ha-ha-ha, Valley Lord You is exaggerating. I am not worthy of such a title. I do not dare face the Imperial family in the open just yet." Zhuge Changfeng let out a short laugh, but the confidence he exuded was unshakable.

You Wanshan snorted and muttered, "Prime Minister Zhuge is as modest as he is arrogant. Who in the Tianyu Empire can match your power? Not even the Imperial family can!"

"Sigh, I can see why you failed in Windgaze City. In this world, strength and weakness aren't obvious at a glance!" Zhuge Changfeng sighed as he looked at the sky, "Furthermore, I am not the number one sage in Tianyu."

"If not you, then who?"

"That person above me!" Zhuge Changfeng pointed upward with a grave expression.

You Wanshan disdained, "You're talking about that senile Emperor?"

"Senile?"

Zhuce Changfeng chuckled, "I've been a Prime Minister in the Imperial court for forty years now, and I still can't read him."

"Valley Lord You, go back. Make sure to not cause any further trouble!"

Zhuce Changfeng swayed his fan as his countenance went back to normal, "Be careful to not give that old man the perfect chance to remove you for good!"

"Humph, the Imperial family's power is hardly enough to deal with my Hell Valley." You Wanshan grinned, but when he saw the cold look in Zhuge Changfeng's eye, he didn't continue. He just cupped his hands and vanished in the night.

After You Wanshan left, Zhuge Changfeng took a deep breath and looked to the heavens.

“Your Majesty, what is your plan? What is the Secret Pearl Order?”

Three months later, in the Misty Forest at the foot of Blackwind Mountain.

Zhuo Fan stood near a frigid blood pool, holding a gourd. His hands performed signs and red dots flew from the pool into the gourd.

A smile tugged at Zhuo Fan’s face as he watched the wiggling red dots.

This blood pond was something Zhuo Fan made to raise the Frigid Pool Snow Worm. Though, its name should more aptly be Frigid Pool Bloodworm.

Zhuo Fan used a secret art from the Nine Serenities Secret Records to train this particular demonic creature. So it not only retained the parasitic ability of the Frigid Pool Snow Worm but it also connected to Zhuo Fan through telepathy. It could now work in tandem with him in performing a secret and evil magic art from the Nine Serenities Secret Records, the Blood Curse.

The Blood Curse was a demonic cultivator’s way of controlling his men. Once he put the Blood Curse on someone, they had to obey him for life. If not, the Blood Curse would flare up and the victim would die of blood explosion, a cruel and savage ending.

But the Blood Curse had a fatal flaw. If the target was stronger than the caster, the later would be devoured. This wasn’t anything good for Zhuo Fan.

But now that Zhuo Fan had the Bloodworm, this flaw could be eliminated. Since the Bloodworm lived in the target’s body, they would never be able to remove the Blood Curse.

With this special demonic creature, Zhuo Fan would be in control of a large group of experts to assist him.

If anyone heard of this, they’d come to kill Zhuo Fan themselves, even Radiant Stage experts. This demonic creature was an abomination, an affront to Heaven.

Any listener would shiver hearing one could make any expert into a slave.

With a maniac grin on his face, Zhuo Fan took the gourd filled with Bloodworms and left Misty Forest. He performed a hand sign and the forest's fog turned bloody, barring any entry.

This was his rearing grounds. Why would he ever let another find it?

Stashing the gourd in his ring, Zhuo Fan returned to Blackwind Mountain. On his way, he paid attention to every grass, every tree to make sure all was in order.

Over the past three months, besides the Imperial family sending thousands of spirit stones and hundreds of pills, the Veiled Dragon Pavilion also sent two thousand spirit stones.

He had enough spirit stones on hand that he could flaunt his array grandmaster's skills. Plus with the natural array here, he could still set up some decent defensive array even without such an amount of spirit stones.

To the East of Blackwind Mountain was the Azure Dragon position under the wood attribute. It was a place filled with vitality. As such, Zhuo Fan set up a 5th-grade array, Poison Dragon Array. Poisonous thickets grew inside the array and the miasma above them would never scatter. Even a Profound Heaven expert would find it hard to escape with his life.

Only

To the West was the White Tiger position under the metal attribute. It was a place filled with sharp and overgrown plants. Zhuo Fan set up a 5th-grade array, Dazzling Gold Array. Nine suns shined brightly within the array in every direction that no one could walk with their eyes open. Each ray of golden light was like a sharp sword, capable of robbing people of their lives, yet incorporeal.

To the South was the Vermilion Bird position of the fire attribute, filled with burning Qi. Zhuo Fan set the 5th-grade array, Blackflame Array. The fires within it were demonic flames that corroded bones. When it entered one's body, it would be hard to remove, and it wouldn't stop gnawing until the target was burned to ashes.

To the North was the Black Tortoise position of the water attribute, a place filled with piercing chills. Zhuo Fan set up the 5th-grade array, Ice Shadows Array. Howling winds blew within the array's territory, forming endless illusions. Anyone who entered it would lose their way easily and freeze to death under the bone-piercing coldness that seeped into the victim's body.

Zhuo Fan didn't tell anyone about the four new arrays. But since today was the day of his departure, he had to give the arrays' method of control to those he trusted...

The Steward Demonic Emperor - Chapter 52: Departure | Light Novel Pub

The Steward Demonic Emperor (<https://www.lightnovelpub.com/novel/the-steward-demonic-emperor-16091325>) Chapter 52: Departure

Chapter 52, Departure

“Young miss, come with me.”

Zhuo Fan beckoned Luo Yunchang. She was unclear as to the reason, but she followed nonetheless. She was filled with glee as she saw so many things brought from the Imperial family over the past few days.

Especially with two elders standing watch, Luo clan was becoming stronger day by day. She was so moved that she was lost for words. It got so far that she even let Zhuo Fan’s disappearance for these past three months slide.

“Steward Zhuo, is there something?”

Luo Yunchang smiled as they entered a small room. Zhuo Fan closed the windows and doors without replying. Her thoughts started going in a particular direction and her face flushed.

“Zhuo Fan, w-what are you trying to do?” Luo Yunchang was bashful.

Taking a deep breath, Zhuo Fan began, “I’m leaving!”

“What?”

Luo Yunchang stood there in shock. She had a face of complete disbelief, wondering if she had heard him wrongly. Only when Zhuo Fan repeated was she certain.

"Why, Luo clan is growing and is already the number one clan in Windgaze City. Why do you want to leave?"

"For Luo clan's safety!"

Zhuo Fan's tone was grave, "Luo clan is safe, for now. And there's no other clan around to mess with it. But remember what we had to do in exchange for all this."

"We accepted the Imperial family's vague Secret Pearl Order and offended the Seven Noble Houses' Hell Valley. As for Veiled Dragon Pavilion, if we do not rise to the level of the seven houses, they will change their stance with us!"

"Then we need you even more. What will we do without you?" Luo Yunchang teared up, her heart was unwilling to let him go. In a blink, a glittering tear fell.

Wiping her tears away with a gentle touch, Zhuo Fan said, "Fatty was right about one thing, a clan's foundation is strength. I am leaving now to bring back experts for the Luo clan, to protect our future."

"This is the control method of the four arrays around Blackwind Mountain. Only you must use it. If I'm not back in time, you can activate the arrays to deal with any trouble that arises. These are four 5th-grade arrays, plus the Wraith Array in the Misty Forest, it should defend you for a good while."

Zhuo Fan gave a jade slip to Luo Yunchang, who accepted it in tears. She asked softly, "How long will you be gone?"

Sighing, Zhuo Fan shook his head, "I don't know. But I'll be back as soon as I can."

He wasn't leaving just to recruit experts, but also to search for the Heavenly Emperor's remnant Long Jiu talked about, Lightning Canyon. At any given time, raising one's power was the most basic way to guarantee one's safety.

"Alright, go now. Send Captain Pang and Yunhai in."

Nodding, Luo Yunchang left but stopped to kiss Zhuo Fan. He froze for a moment and watched her leave with a deep look.

Luo Yunchang blushed but didn't turn around as she mumbled, "Come back soon."

When the words came, she was already gone.

Not a moment later, Captain Pang brought Luo Yunhai over. Even they were shocked that Zhuo Fan was leaving.

"Silly kid, you're the only man of the Luo clan. Your sister will have to rely on you in the future. You must act like a true Clan Head who bears the Luo clan's responsibilities." Zhuo Fan patted Yunhai's shoulder.

Luo Yunhai nodded while sobbing.

Turning to Captain Pang, Zhuo Fan's hand flashed and revealed a jade slip. But when Captain Pang was about to take it, Zhuo Fan clenched his fist.

Captain Pang looked at him in doubt.

Zhuo Fan stared hard at him, "Pang Yu, do you remember what Long Kui said? She is right, with your talent, you'll only be a Qi Condensation cultivator at best."

Captain Pang's face darkened, his hand shivered and withdrew a bit.

"But," Zhuo Fan's tone turned grave, "Nothing is set in stone. I have on me a way to change your body anew, to gain incredible power. But the terror you will experience would be worse than death and the pain unimaginable. Are you willing?"

Captain Pang was stunned, then he was overjoyed.

"Truly?"

Nodding, Zhuo Fan raised the jade slip, "This is a mid profound ranked demonic method, Wraith Art! It is unlike other cultivation methods. It is a cultivation method for the body, ignoring one's talent for cultivation or his constitution. Just that cultivating it will make your life a living hell. It's no different from being boiled alive. And once you start, you can never stop or your soul will perish!"

Captain Pang licked his dry lips, yet he wasn't afraid, his eyes only held excitement.

"No worries. As long as I can become strong, no torment shall best Old Pang."
Captain Pang snatched the jade slip as he shouted.

Zhuo Fan reminded him, "The horrors you will experience from cultivating it aren't something you can fathom. Maybe you will be under such a pain that your mind will collapse and die in the end. This is a mid profound ranked cultivation method, matching a high profound ranked cultivation method, but with the process being so excruciating, many great demonic cultivators never even dared to touch it. Choose wisely!"

Waving his hand, Captain Pang's eyes flickered.

"Brother Zhuo, Old Pang's only torment in this life was to see Clan Head die before me and unable to stop it. Now, my greatest wish is to protect Young miss and Young master."

Captain Pang looked gratefully, "Brother Zhuo, thank you for giving me this chance to have no more regrets."

Zhuo Fan's heart shivered as he nodded. His eyes held respect.

"The next time we see each other, I hope to see a powerful Old Pang and not a corpse!"

"Ha-ha-ha, no worries. I am stubborn, not one to die from just this!" Captain Pang laughed and squeezed Zhuo Fan in a bear hug with moist eyes.

"Brother, come back soon. Luo clan won't be the same without you!"

Patting Zhuo Fan's shoulder, Captain Pang left with Luo Yunhai. Per Zhuo Fan's instructions, Lei Yuting came soon after.

"Miss Lei, how is the task I gave you?" Zhuo Fan smiled.

Lei Yuting blushed with a nod, "Brother Zhuo, the six hundred ten-year-old children you asked me to gather are almost here. They all are high talents and await your teachings."

Zhuo Fan eyed her then nodded, "How did you know that I wanted to teach them?"

Lei Yuting spoke with confidence, "I know you too well to believe that you helped those orphans out of the goodness of your heart. So I guessed you wanted to train them as Luo clan's guards and make me their leader."

At her words, Zhuo Fan recalled something and sighed.

[Goodness? I once raised an orphan out of kindness and look where it got me. Didn't he betray me in the end?]

Zhuo Fan's eyes flashed coldly at that point, scaring Lei Yuting.

"Miss Lei." Zhuo Fan held a jade slip, "This is a mid spirit ranked cultivation method, Elusive Shadow Art. Cultivate it and then give it to those you trust to form the shadow corps, protecting the clan in the dark. Begin with the six hundred children the same way I taught you."

"Use the worst of them as guards, the average for the shadow corps, and hand the best among them over to Captain Pang to train them in secret. Pass him my word, he'll understand."

Lei Yuting took the jade slip with a blank look, then stared at Zhuo Fan, her heart uneasy, "Why not do it yourself?"

"I'm leaving."

"What?" Lei Yuting asked, "Why?"

Zhuo Fan was forced to retell his reasons. Lei Yuting nodded, but before she went out the door, she pecked Zhuo Fan's cheek.

He was floored, watching her dash away in a blink.

[What is going on? Do all women like to peck?]

Next was Lei Yuntian's turn. Zhuo Fan explained to him his affairs and Lei Yuntian took his instructions to heart in an honest manner.

Although he was the Grand Elder, he was clear Zhuo Fan controlled everything.

“Elder Lei!”

Zhuo Fan took out another jade slip, “This is the profound ranked martial art I recorded after merging the three clans’ martial arts, Thunderwind Sweeping Dragon Art! Since this is part of the Imperial family’s Secret Pearls Order, this will be the Luo clan’s best martial art on the surface. As the Grand Elder, you need to be diligent in practicing it.”

Lei Yuntian raised an eyebrow but nodded.

Zhuo Fan put an emphasis on the words ‘on the surface’, making it clear he had other high ranked martial arts that the Imperial family was unaware of, his secret weapons.

A day may come when the Imperial family might discover that the 8th house they raised was out of their control. But at that time, it would already be too late.

Zhuo Fan was young, but his wisdom and shrewdness drew the old man’s admiration.

“Rest assured, Steward Zhuo, I will be the best Grand Elder there is.” Lei Yuntian laughed, reaching an understanding with Zhuo Fan.

Even without Zhuo Fan’s reminder, he was clear what it meant to stand close to a ruler, and that the Imperial family wasn’t to be trusted. But Zhuo Fan gave this old man the nerve to tangle with this behemoth.

“Right, Steward Zhuo, what of Cai clan’s father and son?”

Lei Yuntian frowned, “Its already been three months since the merger of the three clans, but I still feel that the Cai clan is of a different thought, always acting suspiciously. The Blackwind Mountain’s guards have people from the Cai Manor. I fear...”

“Let them!”

Zhuo Fan waved with a smile, “The Cai clan is part of the Secret Pearl Order. If we deal with them, we’ll earn the Imperial family’s ire. But if they betray us first, he-he-he...”

Lei Yuntian's eyes flashed with a nod, "You're amazing, Steward Zhuo, to plan so far ahead."

Zhuo Fan squinted as killing intent filled his eyes.

On the morning of the second day, Zhuo Fan left Blackwind Mountain all by himself. On the mountain peak, Luo Yunchang, Lei Yuting and Lei Yuntian along with other Luo clan members watched him leave. All except Cai clan's duo.

But in the forest halfway up the mountain, Cai Rong and his son watched Zhuo Fan's retreating figure with cold eyes.

"Humph, without this wretched punk, Luo clan will fall from grace." Cai Xiaoting snorted, "That stinky girl, Luo Yunchang, made eyes with Zhuo Fan every single day, not sparing me even a glance. With Zhuo Fan gone, Blackwind Mountain is ours. Let's see her act haughty now!"

"Sigh, one must give credit to Zhuo Fan for his rare talent. He has Veiled Dragon Pavilion on his left and 3rd Prince on his right, while he himself has the power to shake the three clans. All of Blackwind Mountain knows the true Clan Head of this merged clan is him."

Cai Rong shook his head, "The most unfortunate thing is that he chose to be against us. Since he is leaving, we might as well take everything back."

"Dad, what do we do?" Cai Xiaoting asked.

Shaking his head, Cai Rong said, "Don't be hasty. With Zhuo Fan gone, the Luo clan is nothing. The Lei clan is our true enemy. We need to ally ourselves and become stronger than the Lei clan..."