Tumor tissue architecture, immune cells and molecular characteristics in relation to immune escape in colon cancer: what rises must fall

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Hehuan Zhu

About the cover:

Over a thousand years ago, the poet Cui Hao (崔顥) stood at the Yellow Crane Tower and wrote the famous poem:

"Lynsey rode the yellow cranes and flew away.
Now, the Yellow Crane Tower here is only a name.
The yellow cranes, once more, were gone forever.
Millenniums of white clouds have drifted idly by."

In this poem, the fairy rider and the yellow cranes have departed, leaving only an empty tower under slowly passing clouds. Centuries later, Li Bai (李白) visited the same site and felt that the landscape and the emotion were already perfectly captured. He wrote, "Before my eyes lies a scene yet I dare not frame a line, as Cui Hao's poem is already written high above."

On the cover, the Yellow Crane Tower represents the persistent tumor mass and its architectural constraints in colon cancer. The yellow cranes carrying a fairy and flying away symbolize impaired HLA class I antigen processing and presentation, with loss of tumor peptide visibility to immune recognition. Li Bai, standing at a distance with his sword on his back and looking toward the tower, mirrors cytotoxic T cells that infiltrate the tumor bed yet remain functionally constrained when antigen presentation becomes limiting and suppressive tissue circuits dominate. Together, the image captures the central message of this thesis and its title, What Rises Must Fall: Tissue Architecture and Immune Escape in Colon Cancer, in which rising immune pressure within structured tissues is met by adaptive immune evasion that shapes clinical outcome.

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