

Cultivating with Top Enlightenment

Chapter 26: Chapter 26 Divine Sword Old Man

True Martial Mountain was originally called Divine Sword Mountain.

Divine Sword Old Man was the owner of Divine Sword Mountain.

Decades ago.

Taoist Longshan traveled here and met Divine Sword Old Man. Divine Sword Old Man had a fiery temper, and for reasons unknown, the two got into a disagreement. Subsequently, Divine Sword Old Man set a wager himself: if he lost, he would hand over Divine Sword Mountain to him.

Unexpectedly, he miscalculated and lost to Taoist Longshan.

Taoist Longshan declined politely.

But Divine Sword Old Man honored his promise and left with his servants voluntarily.

Ultimately, Taoist Longshan straightforwardly rebuilt the True Martial Sect atop Divine Sword Mountain.

But this matter did not end there.

Divine Sword Old Man was quite dissatisfied. Upon seeing Taoist Longshan establish the True Martial Sect, he also stubbornly founded the Divine Sword Sect, and the two established a ten-year agreement; thereafter, every ten years, Divine Sword Old Man would come to True Martial Mountain to duel with Taoist Longshan.

If he won, he could reclaim True Martial Mountain.

The origins of the rivalry between the two sides were thus formed.

However, it was very evident.

Taoist Longshan was more talented; decades ago, Divine Sword Old Man was merely one move short, but now, Taoist Longshan had reached Primordial Core Perfection, with half a foot into the Celestial Being Realm, while Divine Sword Old Man had just stepped into Primordial Core recently.

The previous ten-year agreements.

Divine Sword Old Man always left crestfallen.

But he always arrived on time.

Thinking of these matters made Ning Qi smile.

In his view, his master and Divine Sword Old Man might have been close friends back then; it's just that Divine Sword Old Man had a volatile temper and couldn't swallow his pride.

Now that Divine Sword Old Man was coming up the mountain again to fulfill the agreement, as one of the True Disciples of the True Martial Sect, Ning Qi naturally had to make an appearance.

Ning Qi walked steadily and lightly, with his hands behind his back like a little adult.

Behind him followed the White Ape. Now in a Taoist robe, its white fur gleamed like snow, and its eyes were lively, giving it a fascinating appearance, making Ning Qi look even more extraordinary.

At this moment, the disciples of the True Martial Sect were gathered, and the True Disciples were arriving one by one.

"Is that Ninth Master Uncle?"

"I didn't expect Ninth Master Uncle to be so young, probably only seven or eight years old. I wonder if he has embarked on the Martial Path yet?"

Some newly initiated third-generation disciples were curious and discussing.

They were surprised to see the usually mischievous White Ape obediently following behind Ning Qi.

Some second-generation disciples were smiling and greeting.

Calling him Ninth Senior Brother.

Ning Qi nodded and smiled.

The True Martial Sect was united and rarely had any shady situations.

Thanks to the improvement of the Body Tempering Powder by Ning Qi, the foundation of the True Martial Sect was already showing, and each Body Tempering Realm disciple's cultivation exceeded that of their peers.

"Greetings to Master and all Senior Brothers and Sisters."

Ning Qi walked to the front and bowed respectfully.

The White Ape did the same.

Taoist Longshan stroked his beard and smiled.

Luo Wentian and others, upon seeing Ning Qi, all showed joy, for in the past year, except for some special days, they seldom saw Ning Qi and missed him dearly.

"Jiu, you've grown taller!"

Fifth Senior Brother Jiang Baishan said.

"Yes, the little rascal from back then is now growing bigger and bigger."

Everyone sighed; time indeed flew by.

It felt as if Ning Qi had just been brought to True Martial Mountain yesterday, yet five years had already passed, and Ning Qi had grown so much.

After a while.

Eighth disciple Qin Yun arrived.

He first apologized to Taoist Longshan and then greeted all the senior brothers and sisters with a smile.

In the past two years, Qin Yun had become increasingly diligent in his martial practice, almost turning into a martial fanatic.

His gaze fell on Ning Qi, and he laughed:

"Jiu, you're here."

He was somewhat perplexed, unable to discern Ning Qi's abilities at all.

Ning Qi nodded with a smile:

"I thought I was already hardworking enough, but didn't expect Eighth Senior Brother to arrive later than me."

Qin Yun sighed helplessly:

"There's no choice, my aptitude isn't enough, so I can only make up with effort."

Listening to this, Taoist Longshan frowned slightly.

Lately, he concentrated most of his energy on breaking through to the Celestial Being Realm, leaving the sect's affairs to Senior Disciple Luo Wentian; thus, he hadn't paid much attention to other disciples. He had heard from Luo Wentian about Qin Yun's obsessive cultivation before.

Now it seemed more excessive than he imagined.

The Martial Path is about persistence, balance, and moderation.

He planned to talk to Qin Yun sometime.

Given Qin Yun's talent no less than his own, there's no need to be in such a rush; steady cultivation would lead to achievements even beyond his own.

As for Ning Qi, he was different.

Taoist Longshan knew that this little disciple couldn't be judged by normal standards.

While contemplating.

There was movement coming from down the mountain.

Everyone turned to look.

Figures with long swords on their backs swiftly approached, like divine swords in flight; their speed was extremely fast, treating the mountainous terrain as flat ground, and carried a sharp aura with them.

"Is it Divine Sword Step, created by Divine Sword Old Man? Indeed extraordinary."

Ning Qi nodded to himself.

He habitually observed the subtleties within, gaining some insights that were the nourishment for his growth and foundation.

Taoist Longshan laughed heartily and went forward:

"Divine Sword Brother is indeed punctual; never arrives early, never comes late."

A cold hum echoed:

"Longshan, you shameless old Taoist, stop with the sarcastic remarks."

All the disciples of True Martial Sect showed displeasure, yet Taoist Longshan remained cheerful, knowing well Divine Sword Old Man's inherent personality.

Ning Qi looked ahead.

And saw a vigorous and robust old man appearing before everyone. His eyes were sharp, carrying a long sword on his back, wider and longer than usual, quite tyrannical.

He was none other than Divine Sword Old Man.

Behind Divine Sword Old Man were disciples of the Divine Sword Sect.

These Divine Sword Sect disciples all wore in energetic outfits, were dignified and brilliant, with the aura of swordsmen fully revealed, yet their gaze towards True Martial disciples was hostile, a look Ning Qi found familiar. Generally, when children have their toys snatched by older kids and can't resist, they carry such an expression.

However, one particular figure caught Ning Qi's attention.

A fair and chubby little boy, also carrying a sword, looking around curiously, still with a runny nose, appearing not very bright.

He met Ning Qi's gaze, eyes lit up, smiling foolishly until a beside Divine Sword Sect senior brother pulled him back.

Ning Qi returned the smile.

"Divine Sword Brother, it's been ten years; you remain as majestic as ever."

Taoist Longshan exclaimed.

Divine Sword Old Man's expression softened slightly; he scrutinized Taoist Longshan, secretly astonished, unable to discern clearly.

Divine Sword Old Man couldn't help but ask:

"Did you take that step?"

Taoist Longshan shook his head:

"Still a bit short."

Divine Sword Old Man fell silent; after a moment, he sourly said:

"You, shameless Taoist, have indeed been faring well these years on True Martial Mountain."

Taoist Longshan smiled:

"Thanks to Divine Sword Brother's blessings, True Martial Mountain is surely a blessed land."

Divine Sword Old Man's face darkened, feeling the words of the other so infuriating, yet unable to refute.

He could only snort coldly:

"Don't be complacent; True Martial Mountain is just temporarily under your care."

Taoist Longshan shook his head, laughed earnestly:

"As long as Divine Sword Brother speaks, True Martial Mountain is yours again. I'll simply seek another place."

"Enough, enough!"

Divine Sword Old Man shouted angrily.

"Spare me with that chatter; I live my life needing no guidance from others. Having lost the wager for True Martial Mountain, I won't renege; taking it back must be done honorably!"

"Long Shan, do you think you're not a match for me, thus yielding eagerly?"

"I'm telling you, impossible!"

"Don't tell me you've forgotten the ten-year agreement?"

Divine Sword Old Man's hair and beard bristled, imposing and fierce, with the disciples of Divine Sword Sect standing tall and proud behind him.

Chapter 27: Chapter 27 The Little Fatty

The disciples of the Divine Sword Sect were full of vigor and spirit, looking at the True Martial Sect with unfriendly eyes, as if feeling that their belongings had been stolen and they were determined to take them back.

In response.

The disciples of the True Martial Sect were equally unyielding.

Led by the Nine Great True Inheritor, all the disciples' gazes were cold and stern.

The atmosphere suddenly became somewhat stagnant.

Taoist Longshan was helpless.

He sighed:

"I wouldn't dare forget the ten-year promise."

"As Divine Sword Brother said, shall we stick to the old rules?"

Divine Sword Old Man's originally imposing aura suddenly waned, his expression a bit unnatural.

Ten years ago, when he fought with Taoist Longshan, he already felt that the opponent was holding back, and now that he knew Taoist Longshan had half a foot into the Celestial Human Realm, fighting again would surely end in defeat.

Just thinking about being humiliated in front of so many disciples again made his teeth ache.

However, he had already spoken.

He certainly wouldn't embarrass himself in public.

He cleared his throat twice and snorted:

"Longshan, is this how you treat guests?"

Taoist Longshan was taken aback but then laughed heartily:

"Divine Sword Brother brought your brilliant disciples here, and our True Martial Sect has long prepared a welcoming feast!"

"Wentian, take the fine disciples of the Divine Sword Sect over."

"Divine Sword Brother, please!"

With that.

Taoist Longshan and Divine Sword Old Man headed towards the Bright Martial Pavilion, clearly having matters to discuss.

Seeing this.

The disciples of both sects were somewhat puzzled, looking at each other in confusion.

It felt like a fight was about to break out, tension high, but suddenly it turned into a meal.

Only a few could see clearly that the two elders seemed at odds only on the surface; deep down, they probably considered each other as friends but couldn't swallow their pride.

Ning Qi couldn't help but smile slightly.

Luo Wentian also shook his head.

He understood the situation a bit more clearly.

"Everyone, please."

He said to the senior disciple of the Divine Sword Sect, Dong He, who also smiled wryly.

Qin Yun followed behind Luo Wentian, the sharpness in his eyes gradually dissipating, though still a bit indifferent.

Ning Qi walked at the back with the White Ape.

At this moment, a sneaky voice sounded:

"Is this your pet?"

Ning Qi turned to see a plump and fair kid staring eagerly at the White Ape, sniffing as if envious of Ning Qi having such a mystical pet. In fact, many of the Divine Sword Sect disciples had their eyes fixed on the White Ape.

Upon hearing this.

Ning Qi hadn't said anything yet, but the White Ape was already furious.

Having considered himself human, upon hearing the kid speak like this, he bared his teeth, scaring the kid. If Ning Qi weren't beside him, he would have surely teased the kid a bit.

Ning Qi said sternly:

"He is not my pet; he is a third-generation disciple of the True Martial Sect named Yuan Tiancheng."

The kid was taken aback and then saw the White Ape snort coldly, realizing with an "ah":

"Sorry, sorry."

He couldn't help but say:

"Yuan Tiancheng, you're so smart, being able to understand my words."

But the White Ape crossed his arms and snorted, ignoring him.

The kid sheepishly wiped his nose and looked at Ning Qi:

"My name is Zhuang Chen."

Ning Qi nodded and smiled:

"Ning Qi."

He could perceive that Zhuang Chen's vitality was not weak, clearly having stepped into the Martial Path at such a young age, indicating that he was a rare genius.

The disciples of both sects took their seats.

With Luo Wentian and others present, Ning Qi didn't have to do much; he only needed to mind his own business.

However.

A burden had been added.

Perhaps realizing there was a true disciple in the True Martial Sect of similar age, Zhuang Chen sat directly beside Ning Qi.

The senior disciple of the Divine Sword Sect, Dong He, wanted to stop him, but Luo Wentian smiled and persuaded, saying that their junior brother accompanying Zhuang Chen was not an issue.

This made Dong He give Ning Qi a surprised look.

However.

This was causing some trouble for Ning Qi.

The chubby kid Zhuang Chen turned out to be a chatterbox.

"Ning Qi, have you started practicing martial arts?"

"For a while."

"Ning Qi, do you know swordsmanship?"

"A bit."

"Ning Qi, how did you meet Yuan Tiancheng?"

"Ning Qi, let me tell you, I'm very strong."

"Ning Qi..."

Initially.

Ning Qi casually answered a couple of questions.

But after realizing the kid was becoming more talkative, Ning Qi wisely shut his mouth.

He zoned out, and after listening to the conversations between both sects' disciples for a while, he immersed himself in his own world, seeking enlightenment and contemplation, which could be done anywhere.

"Ning Qi, Ning Qi..."

Zhuang Chen looked at Ning Qi, who appeared unfocused and unresponsive, with pity in his heart:

"Ning Qi seems not so bright; I asked him several questions, and he only answered one."

Zhuang Chen then looked at the White Ape, trying to strike up a conversation.

But the White Ape merely made a face at him and ignored him, as the Little White Ape held grudges deeply.

Zhuang Chen pouted slightly and then focused entirely on the food in front of him.

Eating was his second favorite pastime.

The welcoming feast passed uneventfully.

Although the disciples of both sects were young and vigorous, having some discontent towards each other, they all knew their manners and restrained themselves.

Up until near the end, the figures of Divine Sword Old Man and Taoist Longshan appeared again.

Ning Qi awoke from his wandering state.

The two sat at the head of the table.

Taoist Longshan smiled and said:

"Just now, Divine Sword Brother and I discussed one or two things, and from now on, the ten-year agreement between our two sects needs some adjustments."

Everyone stared without blinking.

Divine Sword Old Man cleared his throat and said faintly:

"Now that we two old men have grown old, it is inconvenient for us to fight. It is said that when the master has something, the disciples do the work. From now on, the ten-year agreement will be based on sparring between you disciples. This time will be for adaptation and practice; next time, it will officially begin."

"By then, the winner will have the usage rights of True Martial Mountain for ten years."

The disciples were all inwardly startled.

Determination rose in their eyes.

Originally, they were mere bystanders and witnesses to this ten-year agreement, but now they must participate.

Ning Qi felt amused.

Wasn't this Divine Sword Old Man proposing this change because he knew he couldn't beat his own master?

However, seeing Taoist Longshan smiling, it seemed he didn't mind either.

Both were likely intending to put some pressure on their disciples, as pressure can drive progress, and the ten-year agreement hanging over their heads would spur faster improvement.

Ning Qi chuckled silently.

This method was evidently effective, even the nearby White Ape and the chubby kid were getting excited.

Some younger disciples' faces turned red with excitement.

For Divine Sword Sect disciples, it was an excellent opportunity to fulfill Divine Sword Old Man's long-time wish, while for True Martial Sect disciples, it was about defending their sect's honor.

Ning Qi kept sensing a bit of mischievous humor in the smiles of both his master and Divine Sword Old Man.

He wondered what they discussed in the Bright Martial Pavilion.

Seeing the atmosphere had been stirred up.

Taoist Longshan stood and said:

"Although this time is just for you to adapt and practice, you shouldn't be careless. You must give it your all; Divine Sword Brother and I have prepared some rewards, which will be awarded to those who perform outstandingly."

The disciples instantly became even more enthusiastic.

But Ning Qi felt indifferent.

The entire Scripture Pavilion of True Martial Sect was at his disposal; he reckoned Divine Sword Old Man wouldn't have any earth-shattering manual to produce either.

Chapter 28: Chapter 28: Compete Again

Soon.

Disciples from both sects had already gathered in the martial arts arena.

They were all high-spirited and eager.

Taoist Longshan and Divine Sword Old Man sat on the grandmaster chairs, smiling.

They spoke softly to each other.

"Brother Divine Sword, how do you like my idea?"

"You old Longshan are unexpectedly crafty."

"Brother Divine Sword, you are mistaken. This proposal is meant for our disciples to gain more practical experience. Think about it, usually we are the ones fighting, while they watch, how much do they learn by just observing? But now, they have to step on the field themselves, bearing the responsibilities of their sect, which will certainly push them to give their all. The effect is totally different."

"You are smart enough, let my Divine Sword sect's disciples beat your True Martial Sect until they're crying for their mothers, then I will reluctantly accept you staying on True Martial Mountain for a few more years."

Taoist Longshan just smiled and did not argue back against his old friend's verbal jabs.

In his heart, Divine Sword Old Man was slightly grateful.

He understood that Taoist Longshan proposed this plan to consider his pride.

But in reality, he did not plan on taking True Martial Mountain back, at most just teasing a bit.

Grateful as he was, pride was still a factor.

"If I can't beat you, it's the same if my disciples can beat yours!"

Divine Sword Old Man was quite confident.

Luo Wentian received Taoist Longshan's signal and looked at the disciples from both sects.

"Ladies and gentlemen, according to the words of my master and Senior Divine Sword, this sparring mainly serves as practice. Though you must give your all, please stop when necessary and avoid hurting others recklessly, otherwise, there will be serious punishment."

"Of course, if you perform well, both masters will generously reward you!"

"Which disciple wishes to go first?"

Everyone was eager to try.

Soon.

A disciple from the True Martial Sect's Outer Sect stepped forward.

"I am Wang Chong from the True Martial Sect's Outer Sect, may someone from the Divine Sword Sect offer me some advice?" The young man was full of youthful vigor.

In both True Martial Sect and Divine Sword Sect, there are Outer Sect, Inner Sect, and True Disciple divisions. Outer Sect disciples are all at the Body Tempering Realm, Inner Sect disciples are at the Inner Essence Realm, and those at Gang Essence Realm are elder-level figures, though they're rare as both sects were established not long ago.

As for True Disciples, they aren't ranked by strength. They are disciples personally taken by Taoist Longshan and Divine Sword Old Man.

A young man from the Divine Sword Sect drew his sword and stepped forward, revealing his edge.

"I am Li Bing from the Divine Sword Sect's Outer Sect here to meet you!"

The two fought into a tangled melee.

Sword lights flew, fist winds howled.

Those who dared to step out first surely have some confidence.

Everyone nodded secretly while watching.

Ning Qi was also watching, though he rarely fought, his comprehension surpassed merely the creation techniques, gaining experience from battles was easily achieved, and observing others fight allowed him to grow significantly.

"Wang Chong is about to win."

Wang Chong used the Tiger Slaughter Fist, a fist technique that Ning Qi had practiced too. In a brief moment, he reached the Perfection Realm with it, and then assimilated it into his Myriad Phenomena Fist, probably understanding it even better than its creator.

With this thought, Wang Chong's fist lashed out like a tiger's roar, carrying a fierce aura that blasted Li Bing away.

"Thank you for letting me win."

Wang Chong stopped at the right moment.

The disciples from the True Martial Sect were all excited and pleased, while those from the Divine Sword Sect could no longer hold back.

"Let me fight you!"

The atmosphere in the martial arts arena was thoroughly mobilized.

One Outer Sect disciple after another took the stage.

However, it was clear to see that the disciples from the True Martial Sect were stronger and more profoundly built, with Divine Sword Sect disciples losing more often than not.

Divine Sword Old Man was puzzled, slightly envious, and said:

"Longshan, you've indeed taken in a batch of fine disciples."

Taoist Longshan stroked his beard and laughed, glancing subtly at Ning Qi's direction with great satisfaction.

With nearly two years of improved Body Tempering Powder, the results were already showing.

It was anticipated that the foundation of True Martial Sect would only deepen in the future.

Seeing Taoist Longshan pretending to be profound, Divine Sword Old Man snorted uncomfortably.

Very soon.

It was time for the Inner Sect disciples to compete.

At this point, True Martial Sect's advantage wasn't as pronounced, since Divine Sword Old Man was formidable too, rumored to have obtained fragments of a Sword Saint's legacy, making Divine Sword Sect disciples proficient in combat.

The victories of True Martial Sect were nearly equal to those of the Divine Sword Sect disciples.

This time.

Divine Sword Old Man's expression finally improved a bit, though still somewhat dark.

He scanned the area with his gaze, and a white-clothed youth understood, immediately flying out with grandeur, his eyes like electricity, the three-foot cyan blade in his hand shone coldly like autumn water.

"I am Yan Shiheng, the sixth True Disciple of the Divine Sword Sect, here to seek guidance from the True Martial Sect's True Disciple!"

All eyes shook.

The confrontation between True Disciples was undoubtedly the most captivating, as they represented the true foundation of a sect in a sense.

Ning Qi raised an eyebrow, interested.

Qin Yun was about to rise.

A figure beside him held him down.

The young man in a blue Taoist robe, slim and dry, smiled:

"I am Sun Chuanhai, the sixth True Disciple of the True Martial Sect, asking Brother Yan for guidance!"

Sixth True Disciple against sixth True Disciple, this was right.

They greeted each other.

And then, almost simultaneously, launched at each other.

The True Martial disciple's strike made it immediately apparent; though both were at the Inner Essence Realm, their combat strength was much stronger than that of Inner Sect disciples. Their exquisite moves were enthralling, drawing exclamations from the crowd continually.

Even Taoist Longshan and Divine Sword Old Man watched much more attentively.

"Sixth brother will likely lose."

Ning Qi watched very seriously.

He wanted to observe the operation of Inner Strength, but Inner Strength at the Inner Essence Realm was restrained, only enhancing the body. Those deeply cultivated can extend it outside, but not release it like the Gang Essence. Ning Qi could only deduce the changes in Inner Strength from the shifts in the two's moves, after straining himself.

Hence, he could see that after hundreds of exchanges, Sun Chuanhai was gradually struggling.

A flicker of joy surfaced in Divine Sword Old Man's eyes.

Sure enough, Sun Chuanhai's expression suddenly changed as Yan Shiheng's sword subtly landed at his throat.

In the first battle of True Disciples, Divine Sword Sect took the victory.

"Brother Yan, your swordsmanship is amazing."

Sun Chuanhai took a deep breath and said, acknowledging his defeat without protest.

Yan Shiheng responded:

"Brother Sun overpraises; it's merely the result of eating a few more meals."

He looked at the others from True Martial Sect, peacefully asking:

"Any other True Disciple willing to offer guidance?"

The disciples from Divine Sword Sect relaxed, while those from True Martial Sect were becoming a bit anxious.

Qin Yun finally couldn't hold back, with a kick, he gracefully landed across from Yan Shiheng.

"I am Qin Yun, the eighth True Disciple of the True Martial Sect!"

Fighting spirit rose in his eyes.

Yan Shiheng frowned slightly; although Sun Chuanhai was around his age, Qin Yun was likely five or six years younger, and winning would be unfair.

But in the next instant.

He changed his mind.

Qin Yun wielded a blade; with just one slash, the strong and fierce blade light made him discard his previous thoughts.

This young man was even stronger than the sixth True Disciple before!

Within the arena, blade light and sword light crisscrossed, and despite their best effort to control, several intersecting marks had been carved on the martial arts arena.

Qin Yun's gaze was cold, growing stronger with each fight.

After just a hundred moves.

A blade light tore through Yan Shiheng's chest garment.

True Martial Sect disciples couldn't help but cheer excitedly.

"Eighth brother, mighty!"

Defeating the sixth True Disciple with the eighth was quite a morale booster.

Divine Sword Old Man's expression was complex.

He could tell that this eighth True Disciple of True Martial Sect had a remarkably high talent, potentially progressing towards the Great Success of Inner Essence Realm, a rare achievement for such a young age, unmatched by anyone currently within his Divine Sword Sect.

Taoist Longshan also smiled.

Before Ning Qi came to the mountain, Qin Yun was the most talented disciple of True Martial Sect.

Enjoying the sensation of being the center of attention, Qin Yun felt inexplicably cheerful.

He calmly said:

"Thank you for letting me win."

Yan Shiheng merely smiled bitterly and waved his hand, slightly defeated.

Taoist Longshan smiled and said to Divine Sword Old Man nearby:

"Brother Divine Sword, how about ending today's battle here?"

"It seems the disciples have an understanding of each other's strength, so let's wait until the next decade for the results."

Divine Sword Old Man was slightly silent.

He felt somewhat suffocated.

Outer Sect disciples were entirely outmatched, Inner Sect disciples slightly inferior, though with True Disciples one win and one loss, their eighth defeated the Divine Sword's sixth, hardly equating to a draw.

His face burned, glancing at a chubby boy, Zhuang Chen, sniffing on the side, and resolutely suggested:

"How about one more match?"

Chapter 29: Chapter 29: Innate Sword Bone

Divine Sword Old Man was a bit unwilling.

Originally, he had accepted the fact that he wasn't as good as Taoist Longshan, planning to regain his face through his disciples, but he didn't expect to end up on the back foot.

Although this was just a casual trial where neither side exerted full effort, ending in such a way still left him feeling uncomfortable.

Taoist Longshan helplessly said:

"According to Brother Sword God's words, shall we let the True Disciples continue?"

Divine Sword Old Man shook his head, pointed to Zhuang Chen, and with a hint of affection on his face, said:

"A few years ago, I accepted a Last Disciple, named Zhuang Chen. He is now eight years old and has been practicing martial arts for just two years."

"After ten years, most True Disciples will have surpassed thirty years old, and it won't be their turn to appear. These younger ones will be the main force for the next ten-year challenge, so why not let them familiarize themselves now?"

"I won't take advantage of you. Any True Martial Sect disciple under ten years old can battle with Zhuang Chen. Whoever wins will receive this Dragon Owl Sword as a gift!"

With that.

He drew out the wide and long sword from behind him and placed it on the Martial Arts Arena.

The blade had no shine, but it carried a captivating edge.

Definitely a top-notch legendary sword!

This was undoubtedly the most outstanding reward present this time. Clearly, Divine Sword Old Man also felt embarrassed, directly offering his own sword as a reward, but to a certain extent, it also showed his confidence.

In an instant.

The eyes of many True Martial Sect disciples lit up.

But their hearts were filled with regret, wishing they were under ten years old, or they might have a chance to obtain this famous sword.

Yet, some noticed the hidden information in Divine Sword Old Man's words.

"This child is eight years old and has been practicing for two years. Does this mean his Root Bone formed at age six?" Qin Yun's eyes slightly narrowed, his mind rippling with thoughts.

His Root Bone had formed at age seven, and Zhuang Chen was a year faster.

Though forming the Root Bone early or not is not entirely related to talent, Qin Yun couldn't help but feel a tightness in his heart.

Ning Qi glanced at Zhuang Chen with mild surprise and received a naive smile in return.

He hadn't expected that the seemingly not-so-bright little chubby boy could have such high talent.

Taoist Longshan saw Divine Sword Old Man take out his sword and couldn't help but smile wryly:

"Brother Sword God, why go to such extents..."

Divine Sword Old Man waved grandly, filled with bravado:

"It's no matter. If True Martial Sect has such talent, they might as well take this Dragon Owl Sword!"

Ye Qinghe had a peculiar look.

Wasn't this like handing over the famous sword?

She knew well how fierce her little junior brother was; a year ago, when encountering the White Ape, he had already entered Bone Refining, and he might now have reached Refining Organ or even Marrow Refining!

She didn't believe the silly little chubby boy could be so monstrous after two years of cultivation.

As everyone had different thoughts.

The senior disciple of Divine Sword Sect, Dong He, whispered a few words to Zhuang Chen, and Zhuang Chen's eyes lit up as if haggling with Dong He, until Dong He wore a bitter smile and Zhuang Chen swaggered to the center of the Martial Arts Arena.

His voice had a silly note:

"I am Zhuang Chen from Divine Sword Sect. Who will give me a drumstick, oh no, who will challenge me?"

Seeing the little chubby boy sniffle hard, a low chuckle spread from True Martial Sect, and the people from Divine Sword Sect covered their faces, while Divine Sword Old Man fell silent and turned his head.

"I, Zhao Changhe, will meet you!"

Before Ning Qi stood up, a ten-year-old boy from True Martial Sect had already rushed out first.

This boy developed early, appearing at least two heads taller than Zhuang Chen. He was a standout among disciples of the same age, practicing martial arts since age eight, now also two years into training, having just broken through to Flesh Refining Realm a couple of days ago, with almost next-to-True-Inheritor talent.

"You're not my opponent." The little chubby boy nodded his head.

Zhao Changhe snorted coldly:

"We will know after a fight."

He practiced the Rock Spear Technique, which carried an offense with defense, and now, holding a spear to attack, along with the strength increase from entering Flesh Refining, it was quite formidable.

Zhuang Chen drew his sword and seemed to transform into a different person.

His eyes were sharp, even the running snort turned into two 'Green Swords'. Seeing his plump figure agile as unbelievable, with a light step, like a breeze brushing the willow, he easily dodged Zhao Changhe's spear thrust.

Qin Yun's pupils contracted slightly.

"Refining Tendons? This guy training for two years already stepped into Refining Tendons realm?"

This speed of cultivation surpassed his.

Taoist Longshan also took a sideways glance.

Divine Sword Old Man's mouth curved upwards.

On the field, Zhuang Chen countered, wielding a wooden sword that held a dragon's roar and tiger's growl, heavy like a mountain pressing down.

Zhao Changhe was sweating at his forehead; his spear felt steady and solid.

Yet he couldn't block.

Power and Martial Arts Realm weren't on the same level.

A loud bang was heard, Zhao Changhe's figure flew back, fell to the ground.

Several True Martial Sect disciples rushed forward to check for injuries, finding Zhao Changhe had gotten up on his own, his eyes filled with disbelief, as the wooden sword seemed like a mountain crushing him, as if to go against his bones and body, but at the crucial moment, the force disappeared altogether, he was just left in a messy fall, entirely unharmed.

"Sorry, I didn't know you were so weak, almost didn't restrain myself."

Zhuang Chen's words left him gnashing his teeth.

Yet, the sincerity in the other's eyes was evident.

Taoist Longshan stared at Zhuang Chen, a bit unsure:

"Lifting Heavy as Light? So young, his Sword Dao is already at such a realm. Could this one possess the Innate Sword Bone?"

Divine Sword Old Man couldn't help but laugh proudly:

"Your old bull nose has some knowledge, otherwise, do you think my Last Disciple is a mere plaything? Your eighth disciple indeed has talent, but Chen'er, if of the same age, may not be his opponent."

Qin Yun lowered his head and clenched his fist, remaining silent.

Taoist Longshan, with admiration in his eyes, nodded slightly:

"Innate Sword Bone, along with a pure heart, Brother Sword God, you have taken a good disciple."

Divine Sword Old Man felt extremely comfortable.

He chuckled to turn his head, wanting to see a change in Taoist Longshan's expression, but to his astonishment, Taoist Longshan, although full of admiration, did not show the envy he had imagined.

Taoist Longshan secretly smiled.

Earlier, he might have felt some envy.

But since accepting Ning Qi, no matter what kind of genius disciple arises in the world, none could make him envious anymore.

He looked over.

And saw Ning Qi already getting up and heading towards Zhuang Chen.

Taoist Longshan hurriedly transmitted a thought:

"Jiu, hold back a bit."

He feared his disciple might accidentally hurt the treasure of Divine Sword Old Man.

Probably on True Martial Mountain, he alone understood Ning Qi's realm best.

Ning Qi nodded slightly.

He stopped a disciple ready to head up and said calmly:

"Let me do it."

He saw clearly that the little chubby boy probably had just stepped into the Refining Tendons realm and possessed a decent realm of swordsmanship. Among all True Martial Sect disciples under ten, none could rival him.

Except for himself.

Ning Qi didn't intend to hide and not appear; as a True Martial Sect True Disciple, it wasn't possible to watch the little chubby boy rampage unscrupulously. It was merely a display of minor strength, no big deal.

He didn't plan to wait until the disciples were beaten up one by one and then come out last as some savior amusement.

He wanted to solve it quickly and return to the Seeking Tao Institute to read.

Everyone was surprised.

After all, Ning Qi now appeared less frequently; in many True Martial Sect disciples' eyes, Ning Qi had some mystery about him.

No time to think further.

Ning Qi was already facing Zhuang Chen.

"Little chubby, make your move."

Zhuang Chen didn't mind Ning Qi's manner of address, he seriously said:

"Ning Qi, I don't want to fight you. Step down."

He initially intended to say 'Ning Qi, you're not smart, I feel bad beating you,' but thought that might be impolite, and chose a different way to express it.

However, Ning Qi could discern his thoughts from the look in Zhuang Chen's eyes.

Ning Qi helplessly sighed.

He calmly exhaled, deciding to give this silly little chubby boy a lesson.

Chapter 30: Chapter 30: Jealous

Seeing Ning Qi remain silent.

The little chubby Zhuang Chen switched into chatterbox mode.

"Ning Qi, really, you should back down."

"Ning Qi, that wasn't all my strength just now."

"Ning Qi, why are you ignoring me?"

"Ning Qi, are you not too bright, sigh, if you won't step down, then I'll go easy on you."

When Zhuang Chen finally couldn't help but say this, everyone's expressions turned peculiar.

The Senior Brother of the Divine Sword Sect and the Divine Sword Old Man twitched at the corners of their mouths.

Taoist Longshan smiled faintly.

This little chubby is quite amusing.

Ning Qi glanced speechlessly at Zhuang Chen and finally spoke:

"If you keep talking, your master will beat you up."

Zhuang Chen looked back and saw the gradually darkening face of the Divine Sword Old Man, and couldn't help but sniff hard.

He reached back and drew the Profound Black Wooden Sword, and his whole demeanor began to change.

A sharp aura began to rise and entwine, making Ning Qi slightly surprised, and only by facing him directly did he realize some people could change so drastically.

If the previous Zhuang Chen was just a silly, food-loving chubby kid, now he seemed to have the early makings of an unparalleled swordsman.

"Ning Qi, are you unarmed?"

Zhuang Chen's voice was different from the previous seriousness; in this state, he seemed to see Ning Qi's complexity.

Ning Qi slightly raised his eyebrows.

"I also use a sword."

He hadn't specialized in the Sword Dao, but he had read numerous sword manuals. With his aptitude, he could spontaneously grasp more than what others toil for endlessly. Moreover, understanding one principle allows understanding of all; Myriad Phenomena Fist is also Myriad Phenomena Sword. The little chubby might be a peerless genius in swordsmanship, but before Ning Qi, he was still a bit immature.

Zhuang Chen's eyes lit up with battle intent.

"Then why don't you draw your sword?"

As soon as he finished speaking.

From the True Martial Sect's side, Ye Qinghe's voice rang out:

"Junior Brother, catch the sword."

A wooden sword matching Ning Qi's height flew over; without turning back, Ning Qi effortlessly caught it, the sword seemingly falling right into his hand as if alive.

To ordinary eyes, it seemed nothing special, but the Divine Sword Old Man narrowed his eyes instantly.

Somewhat puzzled and uncertain.

Seemingly sensing Ning Qi's complexity, Zhuang Chen couldn't help but smile. Sword training was his greatest hobby, and he was delighted to spar with various Sword Dao experts. However, there was no one of his age to fight within the Divine Sword Sect, not even those a few years older.

"Ning Qi, be careful!"

His stout body moved with unmatched agility, having evidently refined his tendons to the Tendon-Refining First Realm, granting extraordinary resilience and agility, allowing him to perform incredible feats.

Like now.

Zhuang Chen thrust his sword; with a flick of his wrist, a dozen sword flowers blossomed, drawing gasps of astonishment from the audience.

Zhuang Chen looked solemn, different from his earlier silliness, exuding sharp intent.

The sword flowers appeared light and fluttering, yet bore a sense of gravity, like a great cauldron, like a massive boulder.

"Lifting Light as Heavy!"

Qin Yun spoke clearly, his gaze focused.

Earlier, Zhuang Chen had already demonstrated the advanced state of Lifting Heavy as Light, able to maneuver elegantly; now he casually unleashed a dozen strikes of Lifting Light as Heavy. Such a state of Sword Dao was unimaginable coming from an eight-year-old child.

"Is this the Innate Sword Bone?"

Qin Yun pondered silently.

Initially, he was skeptical of the Divine Sword Old Man's claims, but now he was silent.

Ning Qi held the wooden sword casually.

Presently, his physical body was flawless, capable of exerting tremendous force; if he were to exert himself fully, he could easily crush the little chubby. Even Taoist Longshan was unaware of his overwhelming foundation.

Not to mention Ning Qi's Sword Dao realm far surpassed Zhuang Chen; they weren't on the same level at all.

But there was no need to be so ostentatious.

Ning Qi took action.

Partly due to some interest in the Dragon Owl Sword, belonging to a Gang Essence Realm expert, and partly to uphold his sect's reputation; a disciple stepping up when the master is preoccupied—this face Ning Qi needed to earn back. As for whether Taoist Longshan wanted it or not, it was his business.

"Just using a body strength similar to the little chubby's, perhaps?"

For Ning Qi, it was no difficult task.

The sword light approached.

Ning Qi remained still.

This puzzled the Divine Sword Sect's crowd.

But Zhuang Chen felt an unprecedented pressure. Ning Qi had yet to draw his blade; clearly, he was just standing there relaxedly, but it felt like he was facing countless invisible swords; sweat already dotted his forehead.

He had never encountered such an opponent.

Zhuang Chen shouted.

Finally unable to withstand the pressure.

He went all out, the dozen sword flowers vanished, and the wooden sword thrust straightforwardly, yet the piercing sound it made resonated clearly.

Taoist Longshan couldn't help but exclaim:

"Is this... the Unity of Man and Sword?"

Though Zhuang Chen only had a rudimentary grasp of this realm, it was remarkable.

The Divine Sword Old Man didn't feel proud this time because he witnessed something even more astonishing in Ning Qi. A look of shock slowly arose in his eyes.

Ning Qi finally moved.

Calmly watching Zhuang Chen, he casually lifted his sword and slashed as if a gentle breeze caressed a willow.

The speed and power weren't striking, potentially even inferior to Zhuang Chen, yet it had an all-encompassing beauty and artistic conception.

In Zhuang Chen's eyes.

The sword in Ning Qi's hand seemed like a wisp of wind, a cloud, light and ethereal, yet omnipresent and inescapable.

Zhuang Chen widened his eyes, nearly stupefied.

When he came to his senses.

He discovered that his sword had unknowingly fallen to the ground, whereas Ning Qi's sword pointed at his chubby belly.

Ning Qi grinned as he tapped the little chubby's belly with the sword:

"This is how you use a sword."

Looking at the dumbfounded little chubby, he felt a guilty pleasure of bullying a child.

At that moment.

The Martial Arts Arena fell into silence.

Everyone around was dumbstruck by the sight, the Divine Sword Sect members incredulous, unable to believe Zhuang Chen was instantly defeated.

Within the True Martial Sect, those disciples who had never seen Ning Qi in action were incredibly excited.

"Ninth Master Uncle (Ninth Senior Brother) is actually so formidable!"

Ye Qinghe secretly stuck out her tongue.

"Jiu is truly monstrous, I can't even comprehend his Sword Dao realm."

She initially thought Ning Qi would defeat the little chubby with overwhelming strength, but she didn't expect the suppression through Sword Dao.

In an instant, Ning Qi had become the center of everyone's focus.

Qin Yun watched the scene, his gaze complicated.

Filled with joy, yet tinged with bitterness.

A storm of emotions surged in the Divine Sword Old Man's heart.

At this moment.

He finally understood why Taoist Longshan was only amazed but not envious before.

Having such a disciple, who would envy others' disciples?!!

He suppressed his envy and jealousy, speaking with a tone filled with bitterness:

"So young yet comprehending Sword Intent, forging your own Sword Dao path, the makings of a Sword Saint... Longshan, what kind of luck did you stumble into..."

Taoist Longshan laughed heartily, feigning ease.

"You flatter me, Brother Divine Sword, you flatter me."

Secretly, his guard went up further, hearing the envy and covetousness in the Divine Sword Old Man's voice was none too subtle.

Before addressing the audience.

Ning Qi was as calm as ever; a glance at his silly disciple made the sour feeling rise in his heart once more.

At this moment.

Zhuang Chen snapped back to reality, his eyes filled with fiery excitement, and he suddenly knelt down.

"I realize I don't know how to wield a sword properly. Please accept me as your disciple!"

The Divine Sword Old Man's face darkened like the bottom of a pot.

This rebellious disciple!