

Cultivating with Top Enlightenment

Chapter 46: Chapter 42 Demon Sect

The next day.

Ning Qi went to pay respects to Taoist Longshan early in the morning.

"Jiu, what's the matter?"

Taoist Longshan felt a strange tightness in his heart; Ning Qi seldom arrived at this time.

Ning Qi gently said:

"It's about Senior Brother Ba."

He slowly recounted the events of last night, including the various oddities of Qin Yun and his own speculations.

Originally, he intended to seek out Taoist Longshan last night, but then he thought if he immediately sought Qin Yun it might be awkward.

So he waited until the second day.

Taoist Longshan's expression grew increasingly grave as he listened.

"He actually sneaked to your place last night? No, we must go take a look right now. I originally thought Ba was just starting to become obsessed, but I didn't expect his heart demon to be so deep, he might even be influenced by external forces."

Ning Qi was also taken aback.

The two of them used their body technique to rush to Qin Yun's residence immediately.

They happened to run into Song City, who was rushing out in a hurry; upon seeing Taoist Longshan, he quickly shouted:

"Master, something's wrong!"

"I came this morning to chat with Senior Brother Ba, but he was nowhere to be found, and two letters were found on his desk."

Taoist Longshan was invigorated.

He took the letter handed over by Song City.

One of the letters was addressed.

To my master, personally opened.

Taoist Longshan quickly opened it, scanning through it swiftly; no one knew what Qin Yun had written, but Taoist Longshan's expression kept changing, and he couldn't help but sigh.

Ning Qi watched from the side.

He saw Song City hand over another letter:

"Jiu, there's also a letter for you."

Ning Qi was taken aback.

He took the letter, which was addressed to Jiu, personally opened.

He opened it.

The letter was full of hasty edits, revealing the writer's chaotic mind.

In the end, only a few scattered sentences were left.

"Jiu, I know you like reading. I've collected a batch of classics over the years in my room. If you don't mind, take them."

Ning Qi's expression was complex.

He seemed to see the sunny boy from a few years ago, full of vitality, saying the True Martial Nine Sons had finally gathered.

Just by looking at his own letter, he roughly guessed what Taoist Longshan's letter said.

It was perhaps.

That Senior Brother Ba would not return.

He could feel Qin Yun's inner conflict and complexity, perhaps even Qin Yun himself couldn't control the evil thoughts within, and thus chose to leave.

At this moment.

The other True Disciples also arrived upon hearing the news.

"Master, what exactly happened with Senior Brother Ba?"

Luo Wentian voiced everyone's thoughts.

Taoist Longshan put down the letter, remained silent, and did not explain.

Finally, he slowly said:

"Wentian, pay more attention to matters within the sect during this period. I am going down the mountain."

Saying this, he patted Ning Qi's head, and without packing, he went down the mountain.

Everyone sensed that something was wrong and felt uneasy.

"Jiu, do you know the reason?"

All eyes were on Ning Qi.

Ning Qi pondered for a moment and said:

"Perhaps it's related to Brother Eight's heart demon."

He didn't speak too clearly, but everyone had guessed as much, their expressions dimmed, and they watched the direction Taoist Longshan departed, hoping everything would be resolved smoothly.

...

In the Seeking Tao Institute.

Ning Qi exhaled a long breath.

Before him was a pile of precious classics.

Among them were medical books, assorted studies, but most were martial arts secret manuals, including several Inner Strength Techniques, all of a high grade, none of which were found in the Scripture Pavilion.

"It seems Senior Brother Ba really had a fortuitous encounter, perhaps he received some inheritance?"

Ning Qi speculated.

Frankly, these classics were quite useful to him.

He then sighed somewhat.

Even though Senior Brother Ba's heart demon was because of him, he never harmed him over the years and even treated him well.

"Nature is such; sometimes even one can't control oneself, and the Vengeance Stance is merely a Stance Skill martial art, not so powerful. It can only be said that when Senior Brother Ba chose this Stance Skill back then, it was fate. However, perhaps, the seed of this heart demon was already planted when I studied the Stance Skill."

"I just hope Master can bring Senior Brother Ba back. In the future, when my cultivation is deeper, I might be able to try and help him remove the heart demon."

Shaking his head.

Ning Qi didn't dwell on it.

Even if he had sought Qin Yun last night, the result might not have been different.

The key lies with Qin Yun himself.

If Qin Yun wishes to return, he naturally will; if he doesn't, he will always find an opportunity to go down the mountain, unless he was locked up like a prisoner.

Adjusting his mood, gradually tossing aside distractions.

Ning Qi began entering a cultivation state.

His understanding of the Strength-Transferring Technique had already reached a critical moment, and this batch of martial arts classics from Qin Yun was quite helpful to him.

Time passed gently.

Half a month later.

Taoist Longshan returned to the mountain alone.

All the disciples gathered in the Bright Martial Pavilion.

"Master, where is Senior Brother Ba?"

Taoist Longshan slowly spoke, his voice somewhat hoarse.

"Qin Yun... has joined the Demon Sect."

His eyes were somewhat complex.

In the letter, Qin Yun talked about many things, that was the first time Taoist Longshan understood the mental state of his eighth disciple over the years.

Shortly after going down the mountain, he had already found Qin Yun's traces.

But Qin Yun refused to return to the mountain.

He even knelt under the hand of Taoist Longshan, willing to die.

He felt he had let down Taoist Longshan, let down his fellows.

That night.

Both the master and disciple stood quietly like sculptures.

In the end, Taoist Longshan wearily waved his hand, allowing Qin Yun to leave.

Afterward, he heard the news that Qin Yun seemed to have been favored by a Celestial Being strong person from the Demon Sect, joined the Demon Sect, and at that point, there was no turning back. After clashing with the people from the Demon Sect, he had to return to the mountain helplessly.

"Demon Sect?"

All the disciples were incredulous; the sunny boy from the past had actually joined the Demon Sect, which was rumored to be connected to the previous dynasty and had become increasingly active in recent years. Being involved with the Demon Sect was nothing good.

"Master, you..."

Taoist Longshan shook his hand and said:

"You should all go. From now on, there is no more Qin Yun in the True Martial Sect. You must no longer concern yourselves with this matter. I am exhausted and need rest."

All the disciples left in silence.

Leaving the Bright Martial Pavilion, they all sighed. The fifth disciple, Jiang Baishan, snorted coldly:

"If I ever meet this traitor one day, I must ask him the reason and give him a good slap. Hasn't Master's years of nurturing meant anything?"

He strode away.

The others just smiled wryly.

Luo Wentian quietly said to Ning Qi:

"Jiu, this matter has nothing to do with you, don't overthink it."

Ning Qi silently nodded.

He had not expected that Senior Brother Ba, Qin Yun, would ultimately join the Demon Sect.

The development of worldly affairs is not something one can control.

Even the Martial Saint, invincible under heaven, also has helpless matters, but he thinks if there is an opportunity in the future, he would still lend a hand to Qin Yun if he could.

Deep night.

Taoist Longshan quietly arrived at the Seeking Tao Institute.

He saw Ning Qi standing quietly under the moonlight.

"Jiu, Qin Yun's choice was his own; his nature is such, it has nothing to do with you."

Ning Qi turned to look at Taoist Longshan, sensing that he seemed a bit dejected; the one most affected by the matter of Qin Yun was Taoist Longshan.

"Master, I have never blamed Senior Brother Ba. If one day I can create a Secret Technique to remove heart demons, please give it to him then."

Taoist Longshan shook his head and said:

"Let's speak of this matter later."

"Jiu, from now on, focus on your cultivation progress, and even I need not remind you of it. Here is the key to the True Martial Sect's treasury, take whatever you need."

Dropping the key, Taoist Longshan's figure floated away into the distance.

This time going down the mountain to search for Qin Yun, he realized that his youngest disciple's strength might have already reached an extremely powerful level.

He knew.

The fewer people knew about it, the better, perhaps even he didn't need to know.

Ning Qi silently sighed.

Chapter 47: Chapter 43: Myriad Phenomena Chapter

Qin Yun's incident caused quite a stir in the True Martial Sect, leaving the various True Disciples a bit disheartened.

Ning Qi gradually returned to his previous cultivation state, though he couldn't help but think of his former eighth senior brother when reading the texts Qin Yun had left behind. He wondered what the circumstances would be the next time they met.

But time can heal all wounds.

The True Martial Sect gradually recovered its past splendor.

Everyone was united in preparing for the upcoming Celestial Being Grand Ceremony.

Perhaps influenced by Qin Yun's situation, Taoist Longshan went into seclusion, waiting for a breakthrough, sure to achieve the Celestial Human Realm!

Once again, the peach blossoms bloom this year.

This year, the peach blossoms outside the Seeking Tao Institute bloomed even more brilliantly and beautifully.

Ye Qinghe picked some more to make Peach Blossom Brew. She secretly resolved that she would successfully brew the wine, but this time she didn't publicize it much, deciding to work quietly and surprise everyone.

Ning Qi chuckled silently.

The White Ape had already informed him that Ye Qinghe had quietly approached the White Ape, using both threats and incentives to secretly have the White Ape brew a batch as well.

If she succeeded, she'd use hers; if not, she'd use the White Ape's.

Ning Qi procured a wicker chair and lay under the peach blossom tree.

Serene and at ease.

He was just over six years old but looked no different from a ten-year-old boy, dressed in a Taoist robe, with a calm gaze and an extraordinary demeanor.

He was contemplating the Transferring Strength Technique of the Great Dream Nine Deaths Strength.

"The so-called Transferring Strength Technique means letting Inner Strength attach various characteristics; some characteristics don't need external aids, like Heaven-shaking Strength, Earth-shaking Strength, and Sea-covering Strength."

"But some characteristics require external aids, like Ice Silkworm Strength, where it's mentioned it's best to use an Extreme Cold Treasure to cultivate, enhancing the Inner Strength's power; otherwise, the power is not as great."

"I pursue not just one characteristic but something all-encompassing, just like the Myriad Phenomena Origin Stance of the past."

Ning Qi slowly became aware of his path.

He was destined to be different from ordinary people with his perfect level of perception.

By refining the Myriad Ways, perhaps it could help him reach the highest achievements and walk even farther.

"In recent days, I've read many Inner Strength techniques, from the Scripture Pavilion and the ones left by the eighth senior brother. The so-called characteristics of Inner Strength are essentially forming different trajectories within the human body, creating various characteristics."

"In that case, as long as I make the trajectories indefinite, I can switch freely at any time."

Ning Qi looked up, and a peach blossom slowly fell.

He casually caught it and smiled.

He had comprehended ninety-two Transferring Strength Techniques and understood the essence of Transferring Strength, also observing the Myriad Phenomena of heaven and earth and experimenting with various trajectories.

At this moment, he finally understood.

Within his body.

The already incredibly solid Inner Strength kept spinning, transforming into various special trajectories with his thoughts.

A tiny bit of Inner Strength erupted along Ning Qi's palm, and a fiery heat emanated, causing the once vibrant peach blossom petal to spontaneously ignite without wind.

But that was not the end.

The trajectory of Inner Strength within his body changed; the original fiery heat disappeared, transforming into extreme coldness. A cracking sound was heard, and the burning petal was instantly frozen, turning into a stunning ice sculpture.

Ning Qi's mind moved again.

His fingers remained unchanged, and a thread of Inner Strength emerged with a slight tremor.

The ice sculpture turned into powder, crystalline like fine sand, falling through Ning Qi's fingers.

Ning Qi's gaze was filled with delight.

"Inner Strength can be converted at will, characteristics can be switched arbitrarily, all-encompassing—this is the Myriad Phenomena Chapter of the Great Dream Nine Deaths Strength, also the Transferring Strength Technique of the Great Dream Nine Deaths Strength."

"My Inner Strength can be extremely hot, extremely cold, can 'vibrate,' can 'rotate,' can even carry sinister poison, capturing the essence like a Divine Tiger or Ancient Eagle; it can also have layered characteristics, being both extremely cold and vibrating."

This was Ning Qi's achievement during this time.

Accomplishing this is not easy; others' Inner Strength trajectories are fixed after Transferring Strength, while Ning Qi's are variable. This requires an extremely solid physical foundation—only with Ning Qi's strong physical foundation could this be achieved.

Were it someone else, their body would likely collapse and die in moments.

"However, the Myriad Phenomena Chapter still has a long way to go to truly achieve universality."

It's not that Ning Qi lacks insight, but existing Transferring Strength Techniques are too few, only ninety-two. Building on this foundation, Ning Qi created many characteristics, but it's still not enough. Later, if new Transferring Strength Techniques are collected, they can be incorporated."

"With the Myriad Phenomena Chapter, my power has grown even stronger."

The Inner Strength with added characteristics possesses power not comparable to 'three-free' Inner Strength.

For example, now Ning Qi can freeze someone into an ice sculpture with a single palm strike, while before, he could only kill with force.

"Next, I must single-mindedly aim for the Great Success of Inner Essence. Given the consolidation of my Inner Strength, by then, I'll be able to extend my Inner Strength outside my body."

Ning Qi was quite looking forward to this.

The Laser Sword in past film works had always fascinated him, and the effect of extending his Inner Strength out of his body was basically akin to a laser sword, only it couldn't leave the body and fly.

Having a goal.

Ning Qi was even more motivated in his cultivation.

Thanks to the Great Dream Nine Deaths Strength, his cultivation speed had always been fast.

In a little over a year, he had already reached the Inner Essence Fivefold, and now he was about to achieve Sixfold Great Success.

Within the Seeking Tao Institute.

The peach blossoms were splendid. With Ning Qi's perception, he could tell that there were more disciples coming and going from the Scripture Pavilion than before.

The news of Qin Yun's betrayal of the True Martial Sect had long spread through the Outer and Inner Sects; some were angry, some regretted, but some felt fortunate. Without Qin Yun, it meant that Taoist Longshan might once again accept disciples, and some wanted to seize this chance to soar to the skies.

Ning Qi didn't see any problem with it; it's human nature.

People strive for greater heights.

He silently cultivated.

During this time, it seemed that because of Qin Yun's matter, his senior brothers and sisters visited much more frequently, showing great care for Ning Qi.

They feared that one day Ning Qi would also have a Heart Demon, not wanting to experience the same pain a second time.

Ning Qi was not annoyed.

He gradually understood that pursuing longevity isn't about turning himself into an emotionless, cold cultivation machine. Previously, he might have thought he wanted more alone time, more time to grow, but now he realized he needed to cherish the people before him.

When his senior brothers and sisters came, he would gladly chat with them, and in truth, it didn't take up much time.

Just like that.

When the peach blossoms were in their most brilliant bloom.

Ning Qi encountered the opportunity for his fifth pseudo-death.

His Inner Strength and physical body were already significantly interconnected; with the fifth pseudo-death, he could advance to the Sixfold Realm, at which point he could try the exhilaration of a 'laser sword.'

But just as he was about to go to the treasure vault to get some resources for the pseudo-death.

Luo Wentian brought an incredibly exhilarating piece of news, causing Ning Qi to halt temporarily.

The fifth disciple, Jiang Baishan, has broken through to the Gang Essence Realm!

Chapter 48: Chapter 44 Great Success

Due to the matter concerning Qin Yun, plus Taoist Longshan's seclusion, the True Martial Sect has inevitably felt some impact. Although morale has recovered somewhat over this period, it still remains low.

And now.

Jiang Baishan's breakthrough to the Gang Essence Realm has instantly uplifted everyone's spirits tremendously.

With a Gang Essence practitioner holding the fort, at the very least, it can deter those who harbor ill intentions from acting rashly.

The True Martial Sect, established on True Martial Mountain, cannot possibly sustain such a large number of disciples on mountain resources alone.

In reality.

The main sources of wealth for the True Martial Sect are twofold.

One is from wealthy families who send their children to the True Martial Sect to train in martial arts, requiring them to pay a considerable fee annually. Naturally, the True Martial Sect ensures their safety, and others, seeing this, would show some respect and dare not infringe.

In these increasingly chaotic times, this kind of revenue has been rising year by year.

Secondly, the True Martial Sect has its own industries.

Some disciples who are not adept at martial arts are arranged to go down the mountain to manage businesses like escort agencies, restaurants, and money shops, accumulating considerable wealth over time.

When disciples descend the mountain for training, they also resolve any issues faced by these businesses.

The rest are smaller sources.

But regardless of the type.

Powerful martial strength is the guarantee.

If it becomes known that the True Martial Sect is weak, wolves will gather to devour it.

Recently, there was a rebellion by a True Disciple, followed by the sole Gang Essence practitioner entering seclusion, naturally inviting many probes since True Disciples knew Taoist Longshan was aiming to break through to the Celestial Human Realm, but outsiders did not know this. Moreover, rumors of Taoist Longshan having contended with a master from the Demon Sect further fueled speculations.

Fortunately, Taoist Longshan's seclusion was not prolonged, and his deterrent effect remains, with Luo Wentian and others temporarily able to handle matters.

And now.

Jiang Baishan's advancement to the Gang Essence Realm suffices to completely quell their challenges.

At the Martial Arts Arena.

Jiang Baishan is surrounded by disciples, and everyone is extremely excited.

"Congratulations to Fifth Senior Brother for stepping into the Gang Essence Realm!"

Ning Qi heard these congratulatory shouts from afar.

Luo Wentian intentionally gathered the disciples to spread this news and bolster their strength. He stood by with a cheerful expression, showing no hint of displeasure, as the eldest who had witnessed most True Disciples' childhood and youth.

"Congratulations, Fifth Senior Brother."

Ning Qi congratulated Jiang Baishan with a smile, his gaze filled with curiosity.

The Gang Essence practitioners he had encountered were all top-tier experts like Taoist Longshan and the Divine Sword Old Man. He had never seen someone who had just broken through to the Gang Essence Realm and was always curious to compare his current strength with that of the White Mist Realm.

Now might be his opportunity.

Jiang Baishan was full of spirit.

He initially thought he needed one or two more years to consolidate his power, but he unexpectedly broke through to the Gang Essence Realm due to the recent events involving Qin Yun, which fueled his determination.

"Jiu, do you want to witness what Gang Qi is like?" Jiang Baishan laughed heartily.

Ning Qi smiled and nodded.

Beside them, Fourth Disciple He Yan chuckled,

"You're quite something, Little Wu. We've been talking for ages, and you act mysterious. Now Jiu just arrived, and you haven't even spoken yet, and you want to show off."

Everyone burst into laughter.

"Fourth Senior Brother, just say if you want to see it or not!"

"Watch! Watch!"

All the disciples were expectant and then dispersed.

Ning Qi focused on Jiang Baishan.

Jiang Baishan exhaled lightly, his gaze then turned serious. The technique he cultivated in the Inner Essence Realm was Heaven-shaking Strength, and the Gang Essence Realm technique he was transitioning to was Heaven-shaking True Gang. Already, transitioning to the new cultivation method exuded an extraordinary presence.

The crowd had already sensed the oppression.

He lightly swung the long sword in his hand.

Sword Qi streaked out like meteors, its edge seemingly cutting through the air, striking a boulder thirty feet away.

There was no earth-shattering sound, just brilliant Sword Qi slicing through continuously.

The Sword Light was blindingly sharp.

Then.

The crowd collectively gasped.

Only to see that the distant boulder had transformed into a pile of exceptionally neat fragments, the cuts impossibly smooth, with almost uniform sizes.

"This is Gang Qi! With such terrifying power even thirty feet away, it's much stronger than Inner Strength. No wonder they say when Inner Strength Ninefold meets the Gang Essence Realm, the only option is to flee—the gap is too large, even close combat is difficult."

Luo Wentian couldn't help but sigh.

A chorus of amazed gazes followed, with many witnessing the power of Gang Qi so closely for the first time.

Even Ye Qinghe, who usually showed little interest in martial arts, rarely felt a desire for the Gang Essence Realm.

Jiang Baishan laughed even louder, he began to perform a complete set of sword techniques, and under the augmentation of Gang Qi, the originally ordinary swordplay became exceedingly formidable.

Cheers of astonishment erupted continuously.

The atmosphere was mesmerizing.

Ning Qi also watched.

He was impressed.

"Gang Qi extending thirty feet, perhaps it's not even the limit—it truly is formidable."

Yet, Ning Qi realized he seemed to both underestimate and overestimate the Gang Essence Realm's power.

Underestimated because he didn't expect Jiang Baishan, only in the White Mist Realm, could have Gang Qi shooting thirty feet, able to kill enemies and protect himself. The Sword Qi was much stronger than Inner Strength.

Overestimated because when comparing it with his own strength, Ning Qi felt that, though Gang Qi had substantial power, if he exerted himself fully... he seemed to surpass it?

"The advantage of Gang Qi practitioners lies in their ability to extend Qi outward, giving them a range advantage over me. But if I can get close, with my terrifying physical strength bolstered by my abundant Inner Strength, even Gang Qi might not be able to fend me off."

Ning Qi pondered the strengths and weaknesses of the Gang Essence Realm versus his own.

He used Jiang Baishan as a hypothetical opponent, finally drawing a conclusion.

"If I go all out, Fifth Senior Brother should not be my match?"

He couldn't help but slightly curl his lip.

Though he hadn't fought yet, he believed his assumption was likely correct.

However, the power of Gang Qi still commanded his respect. He thought that if he faced an opponent in the Gang Essence Realm, it would be best to use his body technique to evade the Gang Qi, then swiftly close in and achieve victory in one strike. Otherwise, allowing the Gang Essence Realm to widen the distance would be troublesome.

The news of Jiang Baishan's elevation to the Gang Essence Realm spread.

The True Martial Sect's situation stabilized.

The longevity of the Gang Essence Realm practitioner, four hundred years, already marked him as a renowned powerhouse in Great Yan, a force that ordinary powers dared not offend, and many of those coveting eyes instantly disappeared.

Ning Qi also began to perform his fifth Fake Death with peace of mind.

Half a month later.

Ning Qi awoke.

His physical form underwent another transformation, its strength already reaching six times that of the Body Tempering Perfection state, which was extremely exaggerated.

But what brought Ning Qi the most joy.

Was the breakthrough in his Inner Strength.

Sixfold realm, Great Success of Inner Essence!

Ning Qi reached out his hand, and exceedingly solid Inner Strength surged forth from his palm, continuously gathering and extending until it exceeded ten feet, reaching its limit, like a sword growing from the flesh of his hand.

With a mere thought.

The originally invisible 'Inner Strength Sword' underwent changes, sometimes exuding heat, sometimes brimmed with frost, sometimes echoed with the low growl of a Bian, sometimes resembling the long screech of an ancient eagle, interspersed with vibrational spins and other mysterious phenomena.

Ning Qi revealed a smile.

"Ordinary Ninefold realm martial artists don't have Inner Strength as solid as mine. With this more than ten-foot extension of Inner Strength, I can now confidently say, Fifth Senior Brother is not my match, and could perhaps be defeated by me quite easily."

That thought swiftly passed, and he soon directed his attention to the White Ape, somewhat intrigued.

"Now that Inner Strength can extend outside the body, perhaps I can attempt to explore the innate bloodline within?"

Chapter 49: Chapter 45 True Martial Peach Assembly

As soon as the thought arose, Ning Qi couldn't contain his curiosity.

"Tiansheng, come over here."

Ning Qi said with a gentle smile.

The White Ape couldn't help but tremble; he felt his teacher's gaze was somewhat terrifying.

"Don't worry, it's a good thing for you. If I can investigate the circumstances within your body, I might be able to activate the bloodline inside you in the future."

Upon hearing this.

The White Ape's eyes lit up.

Now, the White Ape's size had grown considerably, even surpassing Ning Qi, perhaps because it's in its growth phase. Who knows how tall it will be when fully matured.

With a smile, Ning Qi placed his hand on the White Ape's shoulder. Originally, he planned to start from the head but considered it a bit dangerous, so he decided beginning from the body would be better.

"Relax."

After speaking.

Gentle strands of Inner Strength seeped out from Ning Qi's palm, operating the 'Water Softness' characteristic. The White Ape instinctively let out a shout but soon realized that aside from a tickling sensation, there was a gentle comfort.

Yet Ning Qi gradually furrowed his brow.

He discovered.

After his Inner Strength entered the White Ape's body, at first, he could sense it, but it was consumed at an alarming speed, leaving no time to go further. He could barely perceive the skin and flesh on the shoulder.

"Could it be that the Inner Strength isn't consolidated enough?"

Ning Qi withdrew his palm, speculating internally.

Inner Strength is a magical force born from one's flesh, likely to be repulsed when attempting to enter someone else's body.

"It seems I'll have to wait until my Inner Strength is stronger."

He wasn't disappointed.

Instead, the White Ape was a bit let down after earlier anticipation.

"You little monkey, now you're feeling disappointed. Practice well, strive for Refining Organ Perfection soon, then you can learn the Abdominal Language Skill."

Seeing the little White Ape scribbling with frustration, Ning Qi mocked with a smile.

He had already devised the Abdominal Language Skill for the White Ape.

But the skill requires strong organs.

The White Ape showed an expectant look in his eyes, respectfully saluted, and then practiced martial arts. Although the Abdominal Language Skill isn't speaking with one's own mouth, it enables communication.

He wasn't too far from this step.

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Ye Qinghe's Peach Blossom Brew unsurprisingly failed again.

However, she felt she made significant progress this time; at least the Peach Blossom Brew wasn't sour and foul, it just lacked flavor.

Fortunately, there was the White Ape's brewed wine to fall back on.

This time, she was upfront.

"This was brewed with the joint effort of me and Little White Ape!"

The true disciples all discreetly smiled.

Yet, they still complimented.

Taoist Longshan had not emerged from his seclusion, undergoing a closed life-and-death retreat, with the resolve not to exit before breaking through to the Celestial Human Realm, not knowing how long it would take.

Maybe one year, maybe two.

But everyone believed that with Master Longshan Taoist's talent, it definitely wouldn't take more than two years to succeed. Had it not been for the previous influence from Qin Yun's situation, Longshan Taoist might have already surpassed to the Celestial Human Realm.

Everyone rarely gathered at Ning Qi's Seeking Tao Institute.

Drinking Ye Qinghe and Little White Ape's collaboratively brewed Peach Blossom Brew, eating fresh peach fruits, they enjoyed the harmonious atmosphere.

Qin Yun's matter, in contrast, made everyone cherish the camaraderie more.

"Jiu, I always feel that the peaches outside your courtyard taste better than those in other places, even more so than last year."

The second disciple Xiong Shi was rather straightforward.

"Qinghe, I think next time you brew, you could wait until the peaches ripen; maybe adding them will bring a unique flavor."

Ye Qinghe was indignant, crossing her arms, she glared at Xiong Shi:

"Second Brother is saying my brew doesn't taste good, huh?"

Xiong Shi quickly pleaded, and everyone laughed heartily.

"But, to be fair, the peaches outside Junior Brother's courtyard are indeed delicious."

Everyone nodded in agreement.

Last year after tasting them, they couldn't forget the flavor.

Ning Qi chuckled:

"If all of you, Senior Brothers and Sisters, find them delicious, how about gathering here each year when the peach fruits ripen?"

He had optimized the cultivation technique further.

Perhaps in a few years, these peach trees would begin to exhibit mystical qualities.

Everyone's eyes lit up:

"Jiu, that proposal is excellent, although it won't disturb your cultivation?"

Ning Qi laughed and shook his head.

He increasingly felt that, in seeking immortality, one must also cherish those around them.

Luo Wentian decisively concluded:

"Alright then, every year at this time, no matter what, we'll gather at Junior Brother's courtyard. Hmm... let's call it the True Martial Peach Assembly?"

Everyone got excited.

It might become a fond memory many years down the line.

Ye Qinghe quickly added:

"Junior Brother provides peach fruits; I'll provide Peach Blossom Brew, perfect harmony!"

Everyone laughed heartily.

In their minds, they began to ponder what to bring to the next gathering.

Watching his senior brothers and sisters engaged in joyful conversation, Ning Qi smiled, feeling a deeper peace within.

After the lively gathering.

The Seeking Tao Institute resumed its quiet.

Ning Qi didn't find it unsettling.

He resumed his cultivation.

...

Time quietly passed.

In a flash, autumn arrived.

Taoist Longshan still showed no sign of emerging.

On the contrary, Ning Qi had made another breakthrough.

He successfully linked Inner Strength with his flesh, entering the sixth stage of Fake Death.

Half a month later, he awoke from the Fake Death state, his eyes sharp and his aura powerful.

"The Sevenfold Realm, my current Inner Strength can extend over three feet outside my body, it's somewhat terrifying, the consolidation seems to have some Gang Qi qualities; if caught off guard, opponents will suffer greatly."

Ning Qi felt much stronger now.

As his Inner Strength gradually strengthened, he started exploring lethal moves, martial intents like the Sword Intent and Fist Intent he had comprehended before, if imbued with Inner Strength, would unleash tremendous power, especially with Ning Qi's Inner Strength properties that can stack, making it more frightening.

Take for example the Cold Flame Triple Sword.

Not only does it include both ice and fire characteristics, it also carries vibration, rotation, and slicing traits.

If this move was executed, even Fifth Senior Brother's Protective Gang Qi couldn't withstand it.

Ning Qi attempted using Inner Strength to delve into the White Ape's body again, but failed.

However, this failure affirmed Ning Qi's belief that the Inner Strength was insufficiently powerful.

"Breaking through once more, reaching the Eightfold Realm, should resolve the issue."

Ning Qi thought he could achieve the Eightfold Realm at around seven years of age without much trouble.

As he pondered.

Outside the courtyard, Luo Wentian's joyous voice resounded:

"Jiu, did you finish your retreat?"

Luo Wentian had come by before, but White Ape informed him that Ning Qi was in seclusion, so he didn't disturb him. Now returning, he found Ning Qi had finished the retreat.

Ning Qi laughed:

"I just came out today, haven't had the chance to inform the Senior Brother yet."

Luo Wentian waved his hand:

"No worries, I just dropped by randomly to check in. If you need anything, just let Senior Brother know anytime."

Ning Qi nodded.

He had no doubts about that, so far he hadn't descended the mountain to acquire Martial Path resources, unlike those loose cultivators without master guidance, who might have to risk everything for a breakthrough pill. He considered himself quite lucky.

Avoiding strife in his weaker days.

"Senior Brother, how's the situation within the sect recently?"

"Going well, nothing major, just that Master still hasn't emerged."

Luo Wentian's expression showed some worry. Although he trusted his master, this retreat already lasted nearly half a year.

"Master will definitely be alright."

They conversed.

After a moment, from a distance came Jiang Baishan's voice:

"Senior Brother, people from the Purple River Sword Sect are here again!"

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Ning Qi keenly grasped the keywords among them.

Here we go again.

He naturally knew about the Purple River Sword Sect; it's one of the top sects within the Qing State, with the strongest member being the Purple River Sword Venerate, also a top-tier expert in the Primordial Core Realm.

"Senior Brother, has the Purple River Sword Sect come more than once?"

Ning Qi asked.

Luo Wentian nodded:

"This is the second time. Next month marks the 120th birthday celebration of the Purple River Sword Venerate. Normally, Master would attend, but they came last time when Master was in closed-door cultivation. Now, it's likely they're here to invite again."

"Master has considerable face in Qing State. I'll meet them; it's no big deal. You just focus on your own tasks."

Luo Wentian patted Ning Qi on the shoulder and prepared to leave.

Ning Qi, however, said:

"I'll go with Senior Brother."

Luo Wentian was taken aback; it was rare for Ning Qi to make a proactive request.

"Alright, you'll need to see more of the world in the future anyway."

Soon.

The group met the representatives from the Purple River Sword Sect, led by the third disciple of the Purple River Sword Venerate. He seemed about the same age as Luo Wentian but his cultivation was somewhat lower.

"Brother Luo, I've come unannounced and hope I'm not intruding. It's just that my master is mindful of Taoist Longshan's presence and hopes he could come for a talk. Do you know if the Taoist Longshan has come out of his retreat?"

Luo Wentian shook his head:

"We appreciate the generous invitation from the Purple River Sword Venerate, but Master is still in closed-door cultivation. I will represent Master, hoping for your understanding."

The third disciple waved his hand repeatedly:

"Brother Luo, you're too kind. Inviting twice has indeed been intrusive. My master just wished to know if Taoist Longshan needed any assistance, so I came along to check."

Luo Wentian squinted his eyes slightly, then smiled:

"I'd trouble the Purple River Sword Venerate for his concern, but Master is in closed-door cultivation, confidently breaking through to the Celestial Human Realm; it is just a matter of time."

The third disciple's eyes showed some respect:

"I see, then I wish Taoist Longshan a smooth retreat. I must go invite others, so I will not disturb further."

They watched as the people from the Purple River Sword Sect left.

Ning Qi, who had been silent, spoke slowly.

"Senior Brother, why does it seem like the people from the Purple River Sword Sect aren't here just to invite us to the birthday, but are rather probing Master's situation?"

Luo Wentian said:

"Little Junior Brother, you're insightful. Do you know any rumors circulating in Qing State now?"

"I don't know."

"It is said that Master was wounded by a strong figure from the Demon Sect, forcing him into closed-door recovery, and even critically injured."

Beside him, Jiang Baishan snorted coldly:

"Were it not for that traitor, this trouble wouldn't have arisen."

Luo Wentian slightly shook his head:

"It is also because our True Martial Sect has become prominent in recent years, inevitably attracting some envious eyes. Master's closed-door breakthrough to the Celestial Human realm this time is also a test for us. Fortunately, Fifth Junior Brother has advanced to the Gang Essence Realm; with him here, there's no major issue."

"The Purple River Sword Sect isn't the only one probing, but they're not to be feared. Since they invited us, I will go openly; otherwise, it would seem we're lacking confidence."

"I'll be going to attend the birthday then, Fifth Junior Brother, keep your spirits up and discuss anything with Second Junior Brother and the others."

Jiang Baishan nodded repeatedly.

"Don't worry, Senior Brother. With us here, nothing will happen at home. Just focus on attending the birthday."

Ning Qi's eyes flashed slightly.

He always felt the situation wasn't that simple, and secretly resolved to stay vigilant during this period.

He worried.

Whether Fifth Brother Jiang Baishan could handle the pressure remained uncertain.

Time passed.

Half a month later, Luo Wentian selected several outstanding disciples from the inner and outer sects, preparing to descend the mountain to attend the Purple River Sword Venerate's birthday.

The journey is long, so they needed to set off early.

"Fifth Junior Brother, you're the strongest; be careful these days, and Second Junior Brother, Third Junior Sister, you both stay alert too; under no circumstances should anyone disturb Master's retreat." Luo Wentian cautioned.

"Don't worry, Senior Brother. I recently broke through to the Gang Essence Realm but my sword hasn't tasted blood yet."

Jiang Baishan spoke with a tone of killing intent.

The True Martial Sect is righteous, it's true, but as martial artists, whose hands are free of blood?

"Don't be careless."

After reiterating the caution, Luo Wentian led the group away.

Within the Seeking Tao Institute, Ning Qi received the news, his eyes moved subtly.

He instructed the White Ape to pay close attention to the sect's movements lately, reporting any anomalies promptly.

No one knew.

This barely over six-year-old Junior Brother is actually the strongest in the True Martial Sect besides Taoist Longshan.

Luo Wentian's departure didn't bring much change to the True Martial Sect.

Jiang Baishan remained stationed on True Martial Mountain, reassuring the disciples and sect members greatly.

Looking across the land, sects having a Gang Essence Realm expert are not many. These are prominent figures, don't be mistaken; True Martial Sect's Inner Essence Realm disciples would be top experts if placed outside.

The Great Yan Kingdom is divided by provinces and counties, where Body Tempering Perfection is sufficient to dominate and become local magnates.

However, Jiang Baishan and the others remembered Luo Wentian's advice, staying vigilant without easing up.

The sect's disciples are patrolling more closely than ever.

In the blink of an eye.

It was already ten days later.

Night falls deeply.

At the base of True Martial Mountain.

Three dark-clad figures squatted on the tree branches, revealing no faces, only fierce eyes, akin to night hawks, quite eerie.

One was burly, one tall and lanky, and the one in the center exuded the most aggressive aura.

If someone familiar with them were present, they could recognize their identities.

The Iron Ridge Three Fierce: River Overturn Dragon Tie Long, Walking Tiger Tie Hu, and Flying Heaven Eagle Tie Ying. In the Qing State territory, they're notorious for ruthless deeds, extinguishing families, moving unpredictably, with all three being in the White Mist Realm; even prominent sects generally avoid angering them.

"Boss, after waiting this long, when do we go in for the kill?"

Tie Hu couldn't help licking his lips, his eyes slightly bloodthirsty.

"We haven't done such exterminating acts in ages; the Qing State might almost have forgotten our might!"

He chuckled coldly, sending a chill down one's spine.

But Tie Long in the center barked reproachfully in a low voice:

"Tie Hu, are you trying to get yourself killed? Taoist Longshan is still there; you want to wipe out his sect?"

"Isn't there a rumor that Taoist Longshan was struck by a Demon Sect master, breaking his heart and veins, probably not far from death? I haven't killed a Primordial Core Realm yet. If I could kill one, my life would be worthwhile." Tie Hu dismissed it.

"Idiot!"

Tie Long snapped.

"You think that rumor is true? There's also rumors of Taoist Longshan about to reach Celestial Human. Why don't you believe that?"

Tie Hu immediately shut his mouth.

The Celestial Human Realm, killing him would be like crushing an ant.

Tie Ying, who hadn't spoken, laughed and said:

"Alright, Boss, Old Three has always been brainless; you know that already, no need to get angry with this fool."

"That seriously wounded, dying rumor, the breakthrough to Celestial Human, unknown if it's true, but one thing the person surnamed Wang definitely didn't lie about, Taoist Longshan is in deadlock retreat; as long as we don't stir up too much trouble, he absolutely won't risk his life coming out."

"Without Taoist Longshan, the True Martial Sect just has a newly advanced Gang Essence Realm Jiang Baishan; the others aren't worth fearing."