

M. Slaying 251

Chapter 251: Run!

A huge stone obelisk was constructed on the Heaven-Reaching Peak

The stone obelisk faced the wall. Currently, there was nothing displayed on the monument. In a few moments, the ranking of the top sixty-four disciples on the Stairway to the Heavens would show up on the monument.

With their backs facing the observation platform, a stretch of dense fog hovered above. By concentrating their divine intent, the observers could see the climbing status of anyone they wanted to see.

Thirty-six peak masters gathered on the platform. Wang Xuanling, as the grand peak master, had to entertain guests from the other sects in the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten. Only after fulfilling this duty was he able to take his seat.

One of the peak masters on the side said, "Grand Peak Master Wang, thanks for your hard work."

"It's not hard when I'm doing it for the sect," Wang Xuanling responded with a steady calm tone.

At that moment, a sharp voice rang out. "Thanks for your hard work indeed. With your old bones, you should step down as soon as possible and let the younger, more talented people take your position."

"Di Nufeng..." Without looking back, Wang Xuanling knew that it was the troublemaker of the Mount Shu Sect speaking. He declared firmly, "Stop dreaming. You will never have the chance to be the grand peak master."

"Heh. Then watch how my disciple will crush your disciple," Di Nufeng said arrogantly.

"Such arrogance," Wang Xuanling scoffed disdainfully.

He had been keeping an eye on that young disciple from Silver Sword Peak. Admittedly, the boy was exceptional, but compared to his own disciple Xu Ziyang, he was still too weak.

Regarding this, Wang Xuanling was very confident.

"Let's wait and see," Di Nufeng, snorted, muttering under her breath, "If I can't fix you, all these years of study would've been for nothing."

Wang Xuanling's eyebrows, which were usually looking stern, started twitching. It took him great effort to suppress the burning rage.

Clearly, the Stairway to the Heavens was not only testing the disciples' Dao heart, but also his own...

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At that moment, a group of Mount Shu disciples stood on the other side of the square, gazing up at the ethereal stairway emerging from the clouds in front of them, marveling at its sight. This place, the Stairway to Heaven, was only opened during the Mount Shu Summit. This was a sight they would never have a chance to see during ordinary days.

The Heaven-Reaching Peak was already the highest point of Mount Shu. Where would this Stairway to Heaven lead to? Would it really live up to its name?

The Conservation Master stood in front of the clouds and transmitted his voice, "This test is just the preliminary stage. Only the top sixty-four people will be granted the chance to join the fighting tournament. However, this is a rare chance to test yourself. All you have to do is continue advancing forward. Don't think about the ranking. During the test, you will not be able to see other members. Just concentrate."

The group of disciples nodded in agreement.

The Mount Shu Summit that they had been looking forward to for a long time finally started. Obviously, everyone was very excited.

The Conservation Master gazed at the group of energetic youngsters. Without further delay, he waved his hand and declared, "Then, ascend this Stairway to Heaven!"

At his command, countless figures surged forward, swiftly rushing into the mist, fearing to fall behind even a fraction.

On the other hand, Chu Liang was in no rush.

As he contemplated this preliminary round, he figured this Stairway to the Heavens wouldn't possibly be some race. What would be the purpose of scrambling now for a temporary advantage?

As he stepped into the clouds, he felt his body momentarily blurred. Immediately, everything in front of his eyes changed dramatically. Having entered the hidden realm many times, he was very familiar with this sensation. Clearly, he had stepped into another realm.

The crowd before him vanished, leaving only a desolate and towering mountain. Along the mountainside, a winding path could be discerned, faintly visible for several levels before disappearing into the clouds above.

He wanted to soar upward, manipulating the wind. But then, he suddenly realized that there was no wind around him.

Clearly, a restriction was placed in the space between heaven and earth and flying was not allowed.

I have to walk up one step at a time?

He carefully observed the surrounding before he strode forward.

Just as he set foot on the walkway, the scenery ahead suddenly shifted, and several figures appeared before him in a flurry of light and shadow.

Di Nufeng, Liu Xiaoyu'er, Jiang Yuebai, Lin Bei, and even the Golden-Furred Hou—seven or eight figures in total appeared. These were all people that were extremely close to Chu Liang.

They all stood together, blocking the path ahead.

What's going on? Chu Liang wondered.

Chu Liang stopped in his step. He hadn't been pondering deeply when the Conservation Master's voice sounded from behind him. "They are all people that you care about."

The Conservation Master, being a tall and elderly figure, wore plain robes that day. His long beard flowed in the air as his eyes smiled. He said to Chu Liang, "To proceed through this level of the stone walkway, you must kill one person from this group."

Chu Liang stared at the group of figures before him. Although he knew that they were illusions and that he could just simply kill Lin Bei without bearing much psychological burden...

But could things truly be as simple as they seem?

...

"What is this?"

Xu Ziyang calmly stared at the people before him.

His esteemed teacher, his sister, numerous fellow disciples... Dozens of them stood before him, blocking his path.

The voice of the Conservation Master sounded behind him, "I didn't expect that you care about so many people. Nonetheless, you must kill one of them in order to move onto the next level of the stone walkway."

Xu Ziyang stared at him and contemplated for a moment before he asked, "If I kill one at this level, will I have to kill another one in the next level? And I will have to make a choice every time?"

The Conservation Master smiled and said, "You are very smart."

Xu Ziyang turned around and summoned his flying sword.

Swoosh...

With a swift burst of blood, he mercilessly slaughtered all the people before him without so much as blinking an eye.

"All of them hold equal weight in my heart. Since they are mere illusions, I might as well kill all of them instead of just one. This would save me the trouble of making more choices later on," Xu Ziyang stated emotionlessly.

It didn't matter who he killed. None of them would be pleased about it. In that case, he decided to treat them all equally and eliminate them all.

The Conservation Master nodded and remarked, "People like you are rare..."

However, Xu Ziyang didn't care about his comment as he had already strode forward to the next level.

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On the stone obelisk erected in the square, Xu Ziyang's name was prominently displayed at the very top, indicating he was currently first.

Wang Xuanling still maintained a serious expression.

"Hahahaha..." Di Nufeng laughed loudly as she remarked, "Look at your fine disciple. Did you see how ruthlessly he killed you? He probably wanted to do that for a long time!"

"It's just an illusion. There's nothing wrong with acting decisively," Wang Xuanling said.

"But why do I feel like he's using this opportunity to vent his frustration?" Di Nufeng said, intentionally provoking and attempting to sow discord between Wang Xuanling and his disciple.

"Hmph," Wang Xuanling retorted. "It's better than your disciple sitting there motionless. Who knows? Maybe he'll end up choosing you to eliminate first!"

Di Nufeng raised her eyebrow sharply as she scowled, "He wouldn't dare!"

...

Jiang Yuebai looked at the two blurry figures before her, feeling somewhat perplexed.

The Conservation Master behind her also found it odd as he asked, "Do you really...not care about anyone? These two blurry figures are not really people. They are more like your lingering attachments."

Jiang Yuebai stared at him emotionlessly. "What should I do?"

"Just step forward. This stage can't stop you," said the Conservation Master.

Without showing any hesitation, Jiang Yuebai, dressed fully in white, started walking up the stairs.

The scene returned to the square.

Her name alternated with Xu Ziyang's in the lead, with the two of them neck and neck.

As Luo Xiaoyong from the Greater-Yin Cult observed the scene through the misty clouds, he was taken aback. He found it peculiar and commented, "Those who are naturally indifferent and ruthless are most suited to follow the Dao of the Supreme Mind."

The elder of the Greater-Yin Cult who was in front of him shook his head as he explained, "Just because they don't care about anyone does not mean that they are absolutely indifferent and ruthless."

"Hmm?" The words prompted Luo Xiaoyong to enter into contemplation.

These core disciples of Mount Shu attracted significant attention, being the focal point of people's interest. However, beyond them, each individual had their unique circumstances and experiences.

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"Junior Sister Zhao... Junior Sister Qian... Chu Liang... Junior Sister Sun... Junior Sister Li..."

Lin Bei stared at the figures in front of him and was on the verge of tears.

"How can I decide? No matter who I choose to eliminate first, once they find out later, it will be hard to prevent a break up when I'm out.

"Oh Heavens, why are you so cruel to me!"

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"Crystal pig hock... Sweet and sour pork ribs... Steamed sea bass... Four-joy meatballs...

As Lackey B stared at the dishes appearing before him, his eyes were filled with agony. He was in immense pain and suffering.

"If I have to abandon one, what should I do?"

The Conservation Master behind him massaged his temples, clearly irritated. "I don't care which one you abandon. Do it quickly. The sooner you climb the Stairway to the Heavens, the quicker all of this will end. Stop embarrassing the Mount Shu Sect."

...

"You've already pondered this for quite some time. If you delay any longer, you'll fall far behind the others," the Conservation Master reminded.

Chu Liang sat cross-legged on the ground and pondered for a long time.

As he gazed at the people closest to him in this life, a pained expression crept across his face. "Must one of them die?" he asked.

Although they were all fake, each one of them felt incredibly real.

"Yes," the Conservation Master said. "If you don't kill one, you can't ascend the staircase. That's why they say it is difficult for indecisive people to achieve great things."

"Alright then..."

Chu Liang showed a fierce expression. Immediately, he summoned his flying sword.

Whoosh! With a swift motion, blood splattered everywhere! The Conservation Master's body collapsed to the ground.

A smile crept onto Chu Liang's face.

His guess was correct. The Conservation Master had to tend to hundreds of disciples attempting to pass this stage simultaneously, meaning that this clone wouldn't possess very strong spiritual energy.

In addition, he launched a sudden attack. There was no chance for the Conservation Master to fight back.

When faced with such a difficult choice and if he truly had to eliminate someone, he would choose the person who posed the question, provided he had the capability to do so.

As he watched the Conservation Master collapse on the ground, he shouted toward all the illusions of his friends and family, "Run! While this old man is gone, let's make a run for it!"

Chapter 252: Wang Xuanling, where have you gone? Say something!

The illusions found the scene that had just played out before them too complex to process. They didn't seem to understand at all what Chu Liang had shouted at them.

However, when Chu Liang leaped forward and climbed onto the first plank walkway of the Stairway to the Heavens, the illusions followed him anyway.

Right then, Chu Liang felt as though he was lugging something that weighed a thousand jun^[1] behind him. Each illusion was like a huge and heavy iron ball and chain shackled to him... imposing an enormous burden on him!

What's going on?

Chu Liang continued moving forward, but he couldn't increase his speed at all. Then that white-robed elderly man showed up in front of Chu Liang again.

The Conservation Master didn't seem to be in a good mood. Well, no one—even if it was just their clone—would be happy about getting killed all of a sudden, seemingly without rhyme or reason.

"I believe you've realized it, haven't you?" the Conservation Master said slowly. "It's not that I'm forcing you to kill one of them. These attachments manifest as sources of resistance against your ascent, and as you climb higher, the resistance will keep getting stronger. If you don't let go of your attachments, you won't be able to catch up with the others."

Chu Liang responded with a smile, "Then let's talk about it when I can't walk forward at all."

He continued climbing the Stairway to the Heavens, with the heavy pressure weighing down on him.

Chu Liang's physique, strengthened by the Secret Dragon Blood Technique, had surpassed the level of the Power of Ten Tigers a long time ago. The strength he possessed now was much closer to that of a half dragon. The pressure weighing down on him was immense, but it was not enough to hold him back.

Chu Liang was unwilling to kill the illusions because he had this nagging feeling that this trial couldn't be that simple.

Choosing to kill one of the illusions is an admittedly simple decision to make, but what about afterward? Will I have to kill an illusion every time I can't move forward? And what would happen after I've killed them all?

This trial was meant to test their Dao hearts. In that case, shouldn't taking a slow climb be one of the ways they could make it to the top of the mountain?

Of course, Chu Liang didn't know if it was right or wrong to persist with this. Nevertheless, he decided to follow his heart.

This is probably what the saying, "Stay true to your Dao Heart and not let external factors influence it" means, right? he thought.

Thud, thud, thud...

Chu Liang appeared to be strolling leisurely, but in reality, every step he took was extremely heavy.

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Unlike Chu Liang, most of the other people in the competition hadn't killed the Conservation Master's clone. Yet, surprisingly, there was actually someone else who had.

Like Chu Liang, Lin Bei was gritting his teeth and persevering despite the immense resistance.

"Excluding my good bro, the others are the loves of my life," Lin Bei muttered. "I can't bring myself to let go of any of them. I must take them to the top of the Stairway to the Heavens."

He bent forward and did his best to keep walking.

Lin Bei also had a group of illusions following him, but he seemed to have even more illusions than Chu Liang. Nevertheless, Lin Bei was obviously nowhere as strong as Chu Liang, so this trial was probably unimaginably difficult for him.

"Such wishful thinking." The Conversation Master shook his head. "With the strength you possess, it's absolutely impossible for you to climb all the way to the top while bearing such immense weight."

"Ha." Lin Bei bitter smile. "A real man emerges after being tempered by the world[2]. Knowing something is impossible but still doing it—that's what it means to be a true hero."

"Well said. Then why don't you step forward? Why are you just standing there with those shaking legs?" the Conservation Master asked, mocking Lin Bei at just the right time.

It turned out that Lin Bei had only walked till midway of the first level of the winding mountain path. Now, he was just standing there, stuck. His legs were shaking with strain and fatigue; moving forward had become a monumental task.

Despite that, Lin Bei showed no signs of backing down.

He raised his head high and loudly proclaimed, "My legs are weak!"

"There's no need for you to be so prideful," the Conservation Master remarked in annoyance.

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Lackey B was in the same situation as Lin Bei.

All the dishes that had shown up were Lackey B's favorites, and he didn't want to give up any of them. Yet, the moment he tried climbing the Stairway to the Heavens and felt the weight pulling him down, he was unable to take a single step.

Lackey B turned around and gazed at the delicious dishes with conflicted emotions. He couldn't decide.

"What should I do?" Lackey B uttered.

The Conservation Master rolled his eyes. He hoped that his fellow immortality cultivators attending the Mount Shu Summit wouldn't pay any attention to Lackey B.

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Meanwhile, Xu Ziyang had sped through the winding mountain path and was already on the sixth level. On the obelisk, his and Jiang Yuebai's names were at the top. They were on levels far above everyone else.

Then when Xu Ziyang stepped onto the plank walkway for the seventh level, he felt a sense of resistance.

As he'd expected, this trial wasn't as simple as it seemed. He'd killed all of his attachments, but there was still something hindering him.

Regardless, this level of resistance was too weak to cause him any problems. He raised his qi output and continued charging forward like a gust of wind. It looked as if he hadn't been slowed down at all.

Outside the hidden realm, Wang Xuanling watched as his disciple's name repeatedly alternated with Jiang Yuebai's name in the rankings for first and second place. Nonetheless, Xu Ziyang took the lead in the end, and Wang Xuanling nodded in satisfaction.

He hadn't participated in designing this trial, so he didn't know what would come next. However, he believed in his disciple. Moreover, Xu Ziyang had already gained a significant lead. Wang Xuanling thought that it was impossible for anyone to surpass Xu Ziyang now.

Di Nufeng, on the other hand, had a rather displeased expression.

The obelisk only displayed the names of the disciples ranked in the top sixty-four, and Chu Liang's name hadn't appeared on it.

Nevertheless, Di Nufeng could see the disciples in action. Many of them had already slain several of their illusions and were moving swiftly along the mountain path.

Meanwhile, Chu Liang had only just leisurely arrived at the third level of the mountain path. His steps were slow like those of an old man pushing a heavy cart.

At that speed, he was highly likely to fail the preliminaries.

He's my only disciple. He won't really get eliminated in the first round, will he? Di Nufeng thought worriedly.

Right then, Wang Xuanling spoke serenely beside her. "Di Nufeng, you were pretty lively earlier. Why aren't you saying anything now?"

...

"The resistance is getting stronger."

When Jiang Yuebai reached the tenth level, she was surrounded by an intense pressure that was like a strong tide pushing against her. If she stopped pushing back even a little, she wouldn't be able to make progress and might even get pushed backward.

Jiang Yuebai didn't know how many levels there were above her, but it was clear to her that she hadn't reached the top yet. She didn't have great physical strength, so she couldn't keep advancing by just using her physical strength alone.

Whoosh.

Jiang Yuebai frantically circulated her cultivation energy, transforming it into a great strength that allowed her to advance. Her white robes, which had been fluttering ethereally in the breeze, were now billowing as if a blast of wind were sweeping past, and her cold, limpid eyes took on a grave expression.

Right then, she felt strength spread from her shoulders to the rest of her body.

She realized it was coming from her illusions—the two blurry figures from before. The two figures had placed their palms on Jiang Yuebai's shoulders. The force they were sending into her body was weak, but it was undeniably real.

Jiang Yuebai was stunned.

These illusions had been formed from her obsessions. She hadn't paid much attention to them during the earlier part of her ascent. However, they were now giving her a hand.

Could they actually help me?

Jiang Yuebai wore a pensive expression as she contemplated this.

Ever since she was a child, she had yearned to find the Divine Ruins. To find her parents' whereabouts, she'd avoided the secular world and always sought to have a state of mind that was free of attachments. She didn't want to and didn't dare to have any bonds that would hinder her.

Yet, at this moment, she suddenly wondered, Is this really the right path?

...

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Chu Liang's steps grew heavier and heavier, leaving behind a footprint with each step. He was drenched in sweat and about to reach the sixth level of the mountain path.

He flipped over his hand and melted a Dragon-Blood Crystal into it.

Boom!

Great power surged through Chu Liang, giving him a tremendous boost. He then continued on his path in large strides, headed toward the top of the mountain.

With his strength replenished by the Dragon-Blood Crystal, Chu Liang now had a burst of energy. He sped through the sixth level, swiftly arriving at the seventh level of the mountain path.

The moment he stepped onto the seventh level, the pressure on his shoulders suddenly became lighter, and the massive burden he'd been lugging around didn't seem so massive anymore.

At first, those changes were very subtle. However, the further Chu Liang climbed, the lighter his steps became.

He continued walking forward and felt a sense of resistance in the air around him. It was right then that he felt a hand suddenly on his shoulder.

Chu Liang turned his head to look and found the illusions of his friends and loved ones placing their hands on his shoulders resting on his shoulders, pushing him forward!

The illusions supported Chu Liang with great power, counteracting the resistance around him.

Chu Liang turned to look at the Conservation Master, seemingly in contemplation about the situation.

The Conservation Master smiled, gazing at Chu Liang with a look of approval. "You made the right choice."

I see.

Chu Liang immediately understood the deeper meaning behind the trial. In the first half, everyone they cared about had been attachments that they needed to let go, so they manifested as obstacles that hindered their advancement. However, in the latter half of the Stairway to the Heavens, each illusion would become a source of support. The more illusions they had left, the stronger the support they would receive!

The bonds they had once thought of as hindrances would ultimately become sources of strength to help them continue walking forward on their paths.

With all his illusions pushing him forward, Chu Liang's steps became lighter and faster. In the later stages when everyone else's advancement was hindered, Chu Liang's speed rose unexpectedly, and his ranking went up rapidly.

Soon after, Chu Liang's name appeared at the bottom of the obelisk with the ranking of sixty-fourth!

Then it continued to rise!

At an unbelievable speed, his name rushed into the top fifty, thirty, ten... and eventually into the top three.

At the next moment, Chu Liang's name took second place. It seemed that there wasn't much distance left between Chu Liang and Xu Ziyang!

Chu Liang's name rose with such fierce momentum that the spectators were in an uproar. Aside from Chu Liang's small number of friends and acquaintances, no one had paid much attention to him earlier. Yet, at this moment, practically everyone's gaze was focused on him.

As Chu Liang's name rose on the obelisk, Di Nufeng's eyebrows rose as well.

She smirked and let out a light cough. "Wang Xuanling, where have you gone? Say something!"

Chapter 253: How Powerful Could This First Place Be?

"Huff... huff..." Xu Ziyang felt his blood racing in his chest, powered by his inner energy. As he tapped into his cultivation with fervor, a misty aura surrounded him, like a cloak of flickering flames.

With his fists clenched tightly, Xu Ziyang pushed himself to take each step forward, each one a struggle, but he persisted nonetheless.

Standing on the fifteenth level of the Stairway to the Heavens, Xu Ziyang knew he was among the elite few who had reached this height. Each step he dared to take was a personal challenge, a testament to his own determination rather than a competition with anyone.

Upon the towering mountain, along the steep stone pathway, Xu Ziyang's solitary figure stood like a stalwart banner. Despite the relentless force he faced, his back remained resolute and unbowed.

Bang!

With each determined step, he shattered the rocks beneath him.

Just as his vision started to blur, a glimmer of dawn appeared in front of him.

Finally... Is that the end of the path? He wondered.

He gnashed his teeth and charged forward with all his might.

Whoosh—

With a flash of brilliance, he emerged atop Heaven-Reaching Peak, standing before the shadows of the stone obelisk.

As Xu Ziyang lifted his gaze, the towering stone obelisk greeted him, and one name on the very top of the obelisk stood out prominently, seeming as if it had been etched into the very essence of the stone, immutable and resolute.

The name was Chu Liang... Beneath it, Xu Ziyang's own name was engraved.

I lost again?

As Xu Ziyang laid eyes on Chu Liang's name, disbelief washed over him. Despite severing all attachments and pushing forward relentlessly, he still lost?

Lowering his gaze slightly, Xu Ziyang spotted Chu Liang standing before the stone obelisk. It appeared Chu Liang had arrived not long ago and was still taking in the surroundings.

Chu Liang appeared much more composed than Xu Ziyang, exuding an air of elegance and calmness, as if he hadn't exerted much effort at all.

How is this possible? Xu Ziyang wondered as he furrowed his brows.

Xu Ziyang wasn't the only one taken aback. Even the sects in the Divine Nine and the Terrestrial Ten, observing from the high platform, were equally astonished.

Previously, only a few had paid attention to the name Chu Liang. Most of those gathered at Mount Shu for the ceremony had focused more on Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai's names.

But at this moment, a junior disciple, who wasn't really famous, had completely stolen the spotlight from Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai, boldly securing first place in this preliminary round!

How powerful could this first place be? The representatives of the immortal sects, realizing this belatedly, turned their gazes towards Chu Liang. Seeing his innocent and harmless smile, they all made a mental note of this figure.

Wang Xuanling's expression, in particular, grew even more solemn.

Having watched the entire process, he could clearly see where Xu Ziyang had lost to Chu Liang.

In terms of cultivation, his own disciple was undoubtedly stronger.

However, from the very beginning, Xu Ziyang had severed all attachments and advanced without any lingering ties. Chu Liang, on the other hand, had indeed carried all his attachments forward, facing difficulties at every step of the way.

As climbers reached the midsection of the Stairway to the Heavens, the external pressure intensified, and attachments transformed into powerful support, aiding their progress.

At this point, Xu Ziyang started to fall behind.

Chu Liang, propelled by numerous illusions, found the latter half of the climb almost effortless, smoothly reaching the highest point of the Stairway to the Heavens.

Since he was the first to reach the peak, his name naturally remained unchanged on the stone obelisk, securing the first place.

It wouldn't be entirely accurate to say that Chu Liang won purely by luck.

Other disciples, like Lin Bei, also chose to hold on to their obsessions. However, they lacked the strength to carry their attachments to the midsection of the stairway.

Chu Liang secured first place due to a combination of capability, intelligence, and a bit of good luck.

Wang Xuanling quickly landed beside Xu Ziyang and placed his hand on his shoulder. Immediately, Xu Ziyang felt a warmth flow through his body, washing away all his tiredness.

"Esteemed Teacher..." Xu Ziyang said, his expression filled with shame.

"It's alright," Wang Xuanling said, seemingly understanding what was on his mind. He shook his head gently. "As long as you gain some insight from today's Test of Dao Heart, winning or losing doesn't matter."

"I've always told you that winning or losing doesn't matter, haven't I? How could you casually snatch the first place?" Di Nufeng flew over to Chu Liang, speaking loudly. "What about the person who worked so hard to earn second place? What happens to their pride?"

"Hmph," Wang Xuanling snorted coldly, brushing his sleeve dismissively.

...

In the dimly lit room, the apparition of the figure in white was once again having another meeting with the figure in black.

"The Mount Shu Summit has finally started," the figure in black remarked with a smirk. "I imagine it's quite lively up there, right?"

"It's only the first day of the preliminary round, and Chu Liang has already claimed the top spot again. It's infuriating to watch," the figure in white said, gritting his teeth in resentment.

"No rush. When we execute our plan, Mount Shu will be thrown into chaos. You can deal with him then," the figure in black said.

"Let's just forget about it," the figure in white replied after some thought, shaking his head. "There's something eerie about that kid. Even the Dual Wielder failed to kill him several times. I don't have that kind of confidence."

"Heh, you're actually afraid of a kid who's barely out of diapers," the figure in black chuckled.

"Have you noticed the peculiarities surrounding him?" the figure in white retorted.

After a brief pause, the figure in black replied, "Nevertheless, he won't be able to change the outcome of our boss's grand plan."

"When does he intend to execute the plan?" the figure in white asked. "He still hasn't given me an exact time."

"Because we're still waiting updates from the Dark King Sect. The Mount Shu Sect is not any ordinary sect, and there are certain preparations we're relying on them to manage," the figure in black explained. "The closer we get to this pivotal moment, the more patience we must exercise."

"You aren't in a rush, but I can't wait to leave this place," the figure in white said grudgingly. "Do you know that the Alchemy Master finally chose his successor[1]?"

"Oh?

The one who will inherit his legacy?" the figure in black asked. "I thought you were eyeing this position for a long time. Has someone with even greater talent emerged after all?"

"Yes," the figure in white nodded as he answered, "And that person is Chu Liang."

"Again?" The figure in black was astonished.

Suddenly, he realized that this name had appeared too frequently.

Why is he always mentioned? The figure in black wondered.

"Not only does this dude's cultivation progress feel diabolical, he can also refine pills?" The figure in black could not believe what he had just heard.

"It took him only a month to refine the high-grade Green Pill, which caught the Alchemy Master's attention. The most infuriating part was that..." the figure in white gritted his teeth as he continued, "He rejected the offer."

The Alchemy Master had been seeking an official successor to inherit the position of head alchemist of Mount Shu upon his passing. His disciples were well aware of his intentions and had been diligently competing for this title in recent years.

The figure in white was no exception.

To everyone's surprise, the Alchemy Master ended up choosing a disciple from outside the Hall of Alchemy. Adding to the shock, this individual then declined the offer!

The disciples of the Alchemy Master had spent years competing for this title, only to see it being offered to someone who didn't even care about it. This naturally stoked even more fury than anything else.

"It seems I should inform the boss and emphasize the importance of this individual over Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai," the figure in black muttered to himself.

"A genius in alchemy is undoubtedly more worthy of attention than a mere cultivator."

...

"Ahhhhhhhhhh-choo." Chu Liang sneezed again, but he shrugged it off. He had grown used to being the subject of gossip.

Moreover, he had more pressing matters to attend to at the moment.

Before him stretched a vast open square, with hundreds of tables arranged at intervals of several yards. This time, it wasn't just the disciples from various peaks participating; even the peak masters and some elders were personally present, seated at the tables with serious expressions as they prepared for action.

In front of Chu Liang, three individuals sat with serious expressions, their attention fixed on the table before them. Spread across the surface were numerous white jade mahjong tiles, tightly packed together.

It was now the second day since he had won first place on the Stairway to the Heavens event and the Mount Shu Mahjong Tournament was happening today!

The atmosphere felt even livelier than the Stairway to the Heavens event that took place yesterday!

On Mount Shu, many would tolerate remarks about their weak cultivation energy, but they couldn't accept any criticism of their mahjong skills.

In the first round of the Mahjong Tournament, participants were randomly assigned to tables of four. Each table played sixteen rounds, with the player holding the most chips at the end advancing to the next round, while the other three were eliminated.

The other three disciples were unfamiliar to Chu Liang, whom he had never met before. However, it was clear that these three were familiar with Chu Liang. Following the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony and the Stairway to the Heavens event yesterday, Chu Liang had become a well-known figure on Mount Shu.

"Senior Brother, you are here to attend the Mahjong Tournament too?" a disciple greeted.

"I'm just here to check things out," Chu Liang said with a faint smile. "I don't know how to play."

Upon hearing this, the other three immediately broke into smiles.

One of them reassured him, saying, "No worries. Beginners always seem to have the best luck."

Chu Liang widened his eyes innocently and asked, "Really?"

Chapter 254: On the Holy Mountain

"It's true!"

Chu Liang's eyes were filled with naive surprise as he glanced around at everyone and pushed his wall of tiles down.

The implication in his gaze seemed to suggest, "Beginner's luck is real!"

All in One Suit[1]! A Floating Win[2] Winning Draw![3]

In an instant, he swept away a significant portion of the chips in front of the other three players. What's more, the game ended just as they were entering the third round of discarding tiles, barely giving them time to organize their own tiles.[4]

This was already Chu Liang's fourth consecutive win and they had only played four rounds in total.

Was this beginner's luck? He must be lying!

"In our entire lives of playing mahjong, we've never seen anything like this," one of the players remarked. "This guy is clearly pretending he has never played mahjong before but he is secretly really good at playing mahjong!"

The other three disciples from Mount Shu, who had immersed themselves in the game for years, naturally didn't buy into Chu Liang's nonsense. They exchanged glances and silently reached a consensus.

In the first stage of the Mahjong Tournament, one out of every four participants would advance. After sixteen rounds, only one player from each table would move on to the next stage. With four rounds played and Chu Liang having won all four, he naturally became the target.

The other three were determined to advance to the next round, but more importantly, they wanted to ensure that Chu Liang gave back all the chips he had won!

Do you think you can still win if it's the three of us against you alone?

Bam!

"Is this called Pure Seven Pairs of Dragons[5]?"

Chu Liang had only played two rounds of tiles when he pushed his wall of tiles down again, wearing a bewildered expression as he looked around at everyone. The winning combination of tiles he revealed was indeed shocking to see.

"What?" The three were so astonished that their jaws dropped in disbelief.

If this weren't the venue of the Mount Shu Mahjong Tournament, they would have undoubtedly suspected that this person was cheating using divine abilities.

However, the venue of Mount Shu's tournament had been shielded by enchanted tools and formations, ensuring that any cheating methods involving the manipulation of foundational qi would be rendered ineffective. The person before them relied solely on either luck or skill.

But could such magical mahjong-playing skills really exist?

As cultivators, they were well aware of the strength of their mental faculties. They understood that achieving such a level without relying on divine abilities was almost impossible.

Even if the three of them were determined to target one person, they still needed opportunities to make their move! Now, it seemed like all the tiles were listening to his command. How could they even continue playing?

When Chu Liang consecutively won the tenth round, one of the disciples couldn't hold back any longer and stood up suddenly!

He stared at Chu Liang for a while before saying, "Senior Brother Chu, I don't want to compete against you anymore. Please accept me as your disciple! I want to learn how to play mahjong from you!"

Chu Liang quickly waved his hand and said with a smile, "I was just lucky."

"You can't possibly do all this relying on luck!" the disciple shouted loudly.

"Why not? Look at her..." Chu Liang raised his hand and pointed to the table next to them.

The disciples then realized that he was not only focused on the game but also keeping an eye on the table beside theirs. He pointed at a naive-looking girl who appeared clean and fair. She nervously clutched the tile she had just grabbed.

"Can you guys take a look at this? Did I just win again?" the girl asked nervously.

She was feeling scared as she sensed the growing anger radiating from the three in front of her.

Their anger intensified further when she effortlessly grabbed some tiles and achieved the Heavenly Winning Hand.[6]!

The girl was obviously Liu Xiaoyu'er from Silver Sword Peak. At this moment, she looked at the gloomy expressions of the three people at her table and cautiously asked, "Did I do something wrong?"

"No," a male disciple across from her managed to force a smile. "You did great."

Chu Liang looked at the towering stacks of chips in front of Xiaoyu'er, taller than her head, and nodded approvingly. "Indeed, she's a true representative of Silver Sword Peak!"

Upon witnessing this, the others at the table felt a sense of unease creeping into their hearts.

Is Silver Sword Peak the birthplace of the god of gambling? Are all its disciples so terrifying when they play mahjong?

The moment this thought crossed their minds, they heard a thundering roar.

"DO YOU EVEN KNOW HOW TO PLAY!"

Upon hearing that, Chu Liang looked over in shock. "Esteemed Teacher?"

He saw Di Nufeng stand up and point at a timid disciple in front of her, shouting at the top of her lungs, "You clearly knew the person after you wanted the bamboo tile, yet you still discarded it? Are you colluding with him secretly? Where is the elder? There's corruption at my table! I refuse to be eliminated like this! AHHHHHHHHH—"

Seeing Di Nufeng about to explode in anger, Chu Liang hurriedly stepped forward to restrain her, repeatedly advising, "Teacher! Calm down! You still have me and Xiaoyu'er here; we can definitely win for the Silver Sword Peak! Don't get angry! Don't get angry!"

But Di Nufeng lost her temper and started wreaking havoc, sending people and tiles flying in all directions.

The scene momentarily descended into complete chaos.

...

The Holy Mountain of the Northern Regions.

In the far north, beyond the Northern Regions, lies a range of snow-capped mountains. Among them towers the tallest and grandest peak, piercing the icy sky like a sharp sword.

In the Northern Regions, there existed a legend. It was said that atop this Holy Mountain resided the most revered figure of the Buddhist sect in the mortal realm.

Every year, countless youngsters set out northward to hike up this mountain, seeking to catch a glimpse of the noble one mentioned in the legend.

According to legend, only the talented ones would be given the opportunity to see the dharma seat of the noble one and become a disciple. Those lacking in talent would only behold a cold and frosty, empty snowy mountain, gaining nothing from the journey.

Aside from religious devotion driving people to hike up this Holy Mountain and become disciples of the venerable one, another major reason was the famous deeds of this revered figure.

In the world of immortality cultivators, most people knew that this Noble Dharma was a human cultivator who had lived the longest and had taught so many famous disciples.

Five hundred years ago, a disciple who was taught by him descended this Holy Mountain and went to the capital of Yu, the most prosperous city of human societies, and built a temple outside of that city. That temple was named the Monastery Tower.

Indeed, it was the Nation Guard Monastery Tower, one of the sects in the Terrestrial Ten.

Two hundred years ago, a disciple who had learned the art of the saber from him descended this Holy Mountain and established his own sect by the North Sea.

When the human world fell into turmoil, this sect rose to prominence, becoming one of the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten. This sect was called the Night-Saber Sect.

The members of the sect would cross the North Sea at night, wielding their sabers.

The leader of the Night-Saber Sect was now known as the Celestial Saber of the North, renowned and unmatched in the entire Northern Regions. Many years ago, he was also one of the youngsters who hiked up this Holy Mountain to seek the venerable one as his teacher.

How could future generations resist the urge to follow in their footsteps?

However, without the legend and the famous figures in the world, this mountain would just be an ordinary snowy peak.

On the snowy mountain, there sat a simple, pure white temple, hidden amidst the mist and clouds, making it difficult for ordinary people to see.

The side hall of the temple was filled with abundant spiritual qi.

A young girl, appearing rather youthful, sat upright in the hall with her eyes tightly closed. Her face revealed a pained expression, and several chains were wrapped around her body. The entire ground was drawn with complex enchanted formation diagrams.

The enchanted formation flashed red. Whenever it did, the chains around the girl's body trembled, and black qi flowed out of her.

Outside the side hall, the Whale-Riding Immortal, wearing a bamboo hat, observed the scene inside with great concern. A hint of worry flashed in his eyes as he murmured, "It's been forty-nine days... Will this really work?"

He brought the girl who came out of the Immortals' Marsh to the Holy Mountain in the Northern Regions to find the way to resolve the karmic calamities within her. He did find the way, but even as this process was reaching completion, he felt somewhat nervous.

"So far, everything seems to be going smoothly," remarked the slightly balding middle-aged monk standing beside him. He was of shorter stature and a bit overweight, clad in a thick cotton monk's robe with a face bearing a hint of kindness.

Faced with the Whale-Riding Immortal's question, the monk answered in a very gentle tone, "I have already cleansed the deathly qi accumulated in her body. However, Ba are beings of yin energy that have transformed into yang energy, gaining life from death. As long as she continues to live, she will accumulate deathly qi. Wherever she goes, she will attract and activate the evil yin of the heavens and earth, thereby unleashing various calamities. By invoking these calamities, her blood-stained aura will grow stronger. If we succeed this time, she should remain on the Holy Mountain."

"Should we stay here?" The Whale-Riding Immortal pondered.

Just then, a sharp cry echoed from the hall... "Ahhhhhh—"

The young girl's brows furrowed tightly, as if she were on the verge of opening her eyes. The iron chains around her seemed to tightly suppress her soul, preventing her from awakening fully. Every struggle caused the iron chains to tremble violently, and with each tremor, the recoil grew stronger against her body.

Boom!

The flickering of the enchanted formation abruptly ceased, replaced by a steady glow that filled the area with the scorching heat of red light, resembling a sea of fire! Amidst this sea of fire, the girl screamed in agony, exhaling a large cloud of black qi.

Boom!

The black qi surged dangerously towards the dome of the side hall, almost breaking through. However, it was ultimately refined by the pervasive red light, dissipating into nothingness.

The iron chains, depleted of their spiritual energy, lost their power to bind the girl who had just exhaled the cloud of black qi. They crashed to the ground as the little girl herself slumped backward and collapsed.

The Whale-Riding Immortal hurried into the side hall and assisted the little girl to her feet. "How are you feeling?" he asked with concern.

"Ahhh..." the little girl mouthed.

The Whale-Riding Immortal asked caringly, "what do you want to say?"

The little girl opened her eyes slowly and uttered a word with much difficulty, "Fr-ui-ts..."

The Whale-Riding Immortal fell silent for a moment.

Great. Still thinking about food at this time.

Chapter 255: Truly, It's Just One

“Wow!” Lin Bei exclaimed as he looked at the scene before him.

It was the first day of the Mount Shu Summit's main competition, and there was an extremely lively atmosphere in the spectator stands. The main competition was much grander than the previous day's Mahjong Tournament after all.

The public square on Heaven-Reaching Peak was crowded. There was only one fighting stage in the center, ensuring that all the duels would receive maximum attention. Every candidate for the position of head disciple had to be acknowledged by their fellow disciples before they could rise to the position!

This was the first round of the main competition, where the sixty-four candidates would be reduced to thirty-two. Chu Liang would be taking the stage later.

Lin Bei was stronger than some of the top sixty-four, but he had failed to make it past the first three tiers of the Stairway to Heaven due to being burdened by his many attachments. So, he, unfortunately, did not make it through the preliminary round.

The same was true for Lackey B.

Among Chu Liang's team members for the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony, Shang Ziliang was the only one who had made it into the first round of the main competition.

Now, he was about to step onto the stage.

Earlier, Lin Bei had run out to discreetly inquire about the duel.

Upon his return, he told Chu Liang, “Shang Ziliang's opponent is named Ling Ao. He is Solitude Peak's only disciple, and he's at the later stage of the Spiritual Awareness Realm.”

Solitude Peak... So, that's Old Man Sikong's disciple?

Chu Liang couldn't help but take a closer look at Ling Ao, who was currently standing on the fighting stage.

Dressed in black robes, Ling Ao was of a medium build and had a fringe that covered one of his eyes. He had a rather nonchalant expression.

In recent years, Old Man Sikong had been focused on finding a dragon for Mount Shu, so he hadn't put much effort into training disciples. He only had one disciple that was part of the current generation of the Mount Shu Sect's disciples. Consequently, that one disciple, Ling Ao, entered the main competition.

Ling Ao was only at the late stage of the Spiritual Awareness Realm, so theoretically, Shang Ziliang, who was at the pinnacle of the Spiritual Awareness Realm, should have no problem defeating him. Yet, when Chu Liang saw Ling Ao, his heart jumped like he'd sensed a threat.

Could it be that this guy has some peculiar abilities?

Right then, an old man in long robes stepped onto the stage and gave the order for the duel to begin.

Without any delay, Shang Ziliang formed the hand seal for the Hundred Swords Seal several times.

Simultaneously, he shouted, "Rise!"

His flying sword flew out of its sheath with a clang and transformed into several hundred beams of swordlight aimed at Ling Ao.

The disciples of the Mount Shu Sect often used the Hundred Swords Seal, which could be used for both offense and defense, as a way to test their opponent's abilities.

Ling Ao narrowed his eyes. Without even drawing his sword, he darted forward, facing Shang Ziliang's multitudinous beams of swordlight head-on!

The sight of Ling Ao charging over so dauntlessly startled Shang Ziliang, weakening his resolve to attack. After all, this was just a spar between disciples of the same sect. He couldn't make a lethal move against a fellow disciple.

Seeing Ling Ao face the flying swords with just his body, Shang Ziliang couldn't help but hesitate. Nevertheless, he quickly regained his composure, focusing on controlling the beams of swordlight.

Since Ling Ao seemed determined to charge through the sword formation, Shang Ziliang would do his best to avoid striking Ling Ao's vital points and only injure him enough to make him incapable of fighting back.

Yet, while Shang Ziliang was worrying that he might unintentionally deal Ling Ao with fatal injuries, Ling Ao suddenly sped up. Looking like an evil spirit, he darted through the multitudinous beams of swordlight in the blink of an eye! He was so fast that he even left behind a trail of afterimages!

The spectators were stunned. What's this insane speed??

Shang Ziliang witnessed that speed up close. Ling Ao suddenly appeared before him, setting off his alarm bells. Shang Ziliang swiftly formed a different hand seal, and an invisible breeze enveloped him and transformed into a solid protective barrier.

For the fighting tournament, disciples were only allowed to use one enchanted tool in addition to their flying sword, and they had to report it to the sect elders for approval before the tournament. Using any other enchanted tools would be a violation of the rule.

This rule prevented participants from using numerous powerful enchanted tools to overpower others, ensuring fairness in the tournament. After all, the aim of the Mount Shu Summit was to select the most outstanding disciples, not the wealthiest.

The problem was that this rule left disciples like Shang Ziliang in a bad position. He had chosen an offensive enchanted tool for this duel.

In fights against an opponent of the same cultivation level, offense was undoubtedly more important than defense, so he hadn't made the wrong choice. Nevertheless, that meant Shang Ziliang couldn't do what he was accustomed to—use an enchanted tool for defense.

That placed him at a significant disadvantage in this situation where his opponent was closing in on him much quicker than expected. The best Shang Ziliang could do was rely on the Cool-Breeze Barrier for the time being.

However, Ling Ao charged over to Shang Ziliang and punched him.

Wham.

Shang Ziliang's barrier was shattered instantly, and in the next second, he was sent flying high into the air.

Then he crashed heavily onto the ground.

Thud.

The duel ended in an unexpectedly straightforward and efficient manner.

Ling Ao had charged straight through Shang Ziliang's beams of swordlight and punched Shang Ziliang, defeating him in one simple move.

That ending left the spectators flabbergasted. Is this the speed and power of a cultivator at the later stage of the Spiritual Awareness Realm?

Chu Liang muttered, "He probably had some fortuitous encounter..."

It certainly wasn't normal for someone at the later stage of the Spiritual Awareness Realm to possess such great speed and power.

In fact, it was likely that Ling Ao hadn't even used his full strength against Shang Ziliang, yet the physical strength he displayed seemed to be on a similar level to Chu Liang's. Chu Liang was at the Golden Core Realm and even had additional enhancements. How could Ling Ao be as strong as Chu Liang?

It appeared that there were some unknown but talented individuals participating in the Mount Shu Summit. Chu Liang had made significant progress in his cultivation, but he couldn't afford to be complacent in the slightest.

...

"Silver Sword Peak, Chu Liang!"

"Knowledge Keeper Peak, Cheng Jian!"

After waiting for a long time, it was finally Chu Liang's turn to take the stage. He'd been itching to get on with it this whole time.

Chu Liang's opponent was a youthful-looking disciple from Knowledge Keeper Peak. He seemed to be a couple of years older than Chu Liang, but his cultivation was only at the pinnacle of the Spiritual Awareness Realm, which was the average for his age group.

Despite that, Chu Liang didn't dare to underestimate his opponent.

He respectfully cupped his hands together in greeting. "Senior Brother Cheng, I look forward to receiving your guidance."

Opposite Chu Liang, Cheng Jian returned the courtesy. "Junior Brother Chu, same here."

After the exchange of pleasantries, the sect elder in the middle gave the command for the duel to begin!

Chu Liang took the initiative to attack. He raised his hand, and a beam of green light emerged!

"Hisssss."

A slithering green snake soared through the air, aiming ruthlessly for Cheng Jian's head!

Seeing as Chu Liang could only take one enchanted tool into the duel, he had obviously picked the Green Leaf.

Chu Liang raised his hand to control the green snake. The sight of its massive fangs sent shivers down Cheng Jian's spine!

Cheng Jian quickly raised his hand as well and conjured a golden jade talisman. A curtain of light immediately appeared in front of him, stopping the snake's attack with a steady block!

Bang.

As the green snake bit the light curtain, it made some unhappy sounds.

It turned out that Cheng Jian had brought a defensive enchanted tool with him into the duel.

After blocking Chu Liang's attack with the jade talisman, Cheng Jian immediately launched a counterattack, unwilling to miss the opportunity to fight back.

He raised his right hand, with his index and middle fingers pointing toward the sky. A split second later, nine beams of black swordlight shot out like streaks of lightning! They flew toward Chu Liang from all directions, leaving him no way to dodge them!

However, the green snake had already returned to Chu Liang. There was a flash of light, and the green snake transformed into a large green umbrella, continuously blocking the barrage of black swordlights.

Then Chu Liang raised the green umbrella high into the air and leaped.

Whoosh.

He was rushing toward Cheng Jian like a gale!

Astonished by Chu Liang's speed, Cheng Jian recalled his flying sword. The nine beams of swordlight merged into one, forming a slender black longsword. With it in hand, Cheng Jian prepared to unleash a sword seal.

Yet, before Cheng Jian could act, Chu Liang stopped in his tracks. There was another flash of light, and a curved saber suddenly appeared in his hand. He hurled the curved saber forward, and it flew so swiftly that an afterimage was all that could be seen!

Greatly alarmed, Cheng Jian instinctively conjured the jade talisman again, forming a curtain of light in front of him.

However, at the very next moment, he felt a sharp pain in his back.

Huh?

Cheng Jian paid more attention to what he was feeling and confirmed that it was indeed pain.

"Aaahhh!!" Cheng Jian finally cried out in agony, falling forward onto the ground.

There was a radiant object embedded in his back. It was the Razor Leaf!

Attendants from the Alchemy Hall surrounded Cheng Jian at once. They stopped the bleeding and treated the wound, swiftly healing the simple saber wound.

Cheng Jian had lost the match, but he was unwilling to accept the loss.

He approached the sect elder on the stage and asked, "Aren't we only allowed to use one enchanted tool? He clearly used three!"

The sect elder's expression darkened. "I can confirm that Chu Liang only used one enchanted tool."

When Chu Liang informed the sect elders of the Green Leaf earlier, it had sparked a dispute among the sect elders. Some thought that the Green Leaf had too many abilities, making it unfair to the other disciples. Nevertheless, others argued that the rule about only allowing one enchanted tool meant to prevent disciples from taking legendary artifacts or annihilation artifacts into the fighting tournament. Normal enchanted tools made from common materials should not be restricted.

Ultimately, when the sect elders discovered that the Green Leaf was the work of a junior disciple from the Hall of Weapons, they decided not to intervene any further. If even the enchanted tools that had been made by the Mount Shu Sect's very own disciples couldn't be used, then what should they allow to be used?

However, the sect elders had no idea that the Green Leaf would allow Chu Liang to have such an easy victory.

Cheng Jian looked at Chu Liang in disbelief. "Is that truly just one enchanted tool?"

"Senior Brother Cheng, please forgive me." Chu Liang wore a humble smile. "Without putting my enchanted tool's abilities to good use, I would indeed have had a hard time defeating you. But this is... truly just one enchanted tool."

Chapter 256: The Sword God of the Falling Waterfowl Peak

As Cheng Jian gazed at the smile on Chu Liang's face, an indescribable pain washed over him.

The news of Chu Liang forming an ultimate-tier Golden Core had spread throughout all of Mount Shu. Furthermore, his victories during the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony and the Stairway to the Heavens event, where he surpassed Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai to claim first place, had solidified his reputation.

Therefore, there were high hopes for Chu Liang among the disciples of Mount Shu. Although he had recently formed the ultimate-tier Golden Core and despite his inability to match Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai in combat skills, many thought that a swift victory wouldn't be strange as he was fighting a disciple at the Spiritual Awareness Realm.

Cheng Jian himself could accept this defeat.

However, Chu Liang opted for a strategy that some might deem as cunning. He used a versatile enchanted tool with multiple functions, which included the ability to execute sneak attacks.

This made Cheng Jian feel terrible. He felt as though he had just eaten a fly.

Simultaneously, doubts arose among the audience. Was Chu Liang resorting to such methods because his combat skills weren't strong enough?

It could be said that Chu Liang's victory actually tarnished his own reputation.

However, Chu Liang remained composed. He gave a slight salute, then leaped down from the platform, preparing to leave with an air of nonchalance.

It was as though he was completely oblivious to the discussions happening behind him.

The main competition of the Mount Shu Summit and the recreational competitions were held concurrently. Today marked the first round of the fight tournament, while the preliminary round for the Flying-Sword Race was scheduled for tomorrow.

Chu Liang had entered the Flying-Sword Race and needed to head back home to prepare for it.

At that moment, Lin Bei stopped him and asked, "The next fight is Senior Sister Jiang's. Aren't you going to stay and watch?"

"Is it really necessary to watch Senior Sister Jiang's competition? She will definitely win within the blink of an eye," Chu Liang said with a smile.

Although he said that, he still paused in his footsteps.

I guess I can wait a bit, he reasoned.

At that moment, the stark contrast in popularity became evident.

Although it had been lively earlier, many disciples from Mount Shu and other immortal sects had yet to arrive. However, as Jiang Yuebai's match was about to begin, it suddenly became significantly more crowded.

In an instant, a sea of people filled the area.

For the disciples of various immortal sects, Mount Shu had accommodations arranged. However, the Mount Shu Summit lasted several days and it was impossible for them to stay the entire time. Many disciples from nearby sects returned home after the opening ceremony and only came back for matches they were particularly interested in attending.

Jiang Yuebai's match clearly sparked a lot of interest.

Even some who hadn't attended the opening ceremony showed up. Mount Shu rarely held celebrations that were opened to the public and there was no harm in attending.

Beneath the platform stood a tall and slender young man dressed in white sword attire. His eyes were as dark as ink, sparkling like bright stars. With his arms folded across his chest, he seemed rather nonchalant. Even so, he was like a vortex, attracting all attention just by standing there.

When he saw Jiang Yuebai step onto the platform, he even cupped his hands and shouted, "Fairy Jiang, you've got this!"

"That's Feng Chaoyang from the Celestial King Sect. I heard he's been eyeing Senior Sister Jiang," Lin Bei explained, casting a hostile glance at Feng Chaoyang. With a disdainful snort, he turned and shouted, "Senior Sister Jiang, let's keep the romance within the Mount Shu Sect!"

When Chu Liang glanced over, he observed that the audiences from the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten had split into two distinct groups.

With Feng Chaoyang at the forefront, the Celestial King Sect, Celestial Pivot Pavilion, the Sea King Sect, as well as the other sects that had branched out from the Heavenly Star Divine Cult, stood together as a single group.

It has been many years since the Heavenly Star Divine Cult had split up. In the early years, there were intense conflicts between the factions that had branched out. However, the current division had stabilized, and several sects had regained a sense of being branches of the same tree, due to a natural sense of kinship.

However, this might not just be a result of natural kinship, but a result of the reality in this world. In the world of immortal cultivators, the Penglai Supreme Sect was a dominating force that could only be slightly suppressed through the unity of the few immortal sects that branched out from the Heavenly Star Divine Cult. After the dissolution of the Heavenly Star Divine Cult, the sects that branched out from the cult went on to develop and thrive independently. This resulted in the current united forces of these immortal sects becoming even stronger than the Heavenly Star Divine Cult was back then.

This was something the Penglai Supreme Sect could not ignore. These sects were like scattered stars filling the night sky.

However, the Penglai Supreme Sect was not the group vying with the one formed with Feng Chaoyang at the forefront. In fact, the core disciples of the Penglai Supreme Sect did not even

attend the ceremony, likely due to their arrogance or their disregard for the Mount Shu Sect, which was in its declining state.

At the center of the other group stood a mighty and vigorous young man.

Indeed. Just by the brows and eyes of that person, he looked rather young, likely around the age of seventeen or eighteen. Yet, he sported a neatly trimmed thick beard around his face.

There were disciples of the sects in the Terrestrial Ten, such as the Ascending Dragon Academy and the Monastery Tower, standing around him. This group of people faced off with Feng Chaoyang's group, appearing to demonstrate equal strength.

"That person is Deng Yixiao, ranked third among the three core disciples of the Thunderbolt Stronghold. In recent years, the Thunderbolt Stronghold has been aligning itself with the imperial court, hence why it should be rather close to the Ascending Dragon Academy and Monastery Tower, both of which were built relying entirely on the Yu dynasty," explained Lin Bei.

"It looks like they don't have a good relationship with the Heavenly Star faction[1]?"

"To put it simply, Feng Chaoyang just had an intense fight with Wei Tiandi, the second eldest disciple of the Thunderbolt Stronghold. There is obviously conflict between them," Lin Bei explained. "If we talk about this issue on a larger scale, it's because the imperial court has been trying to win over the Penglai Supreme Sect, a sect of a higher ranking, as well as the Thunderbolt Stronghold, a sect of a lower ranking. However, the imperial court has always struck down the Heavenly Star faction as these sects would always defy the imperial decree. Naturally, there would be conflict between them."

As Lin Bei finished explaining, he even whispered, "Fight, fight, fight!"

Chu Liang nodded. During complicated situations, having someone well-informed about gossip and aware of everything could indeed save him a lot of effort.

He had only heard a little about these internal strife among the higher-ups, and he didn't know much about it. After all, he has never been the one representing Mount Shu. He understood that Mount Shu's stance would likely align with the Heavenly Star faction. The Mount Shu Sect was in a situation similar to that of the Heavenly Star faction. Aligning with the Heavenly Star faction would allow them to maintain some dignity in the face of pressure from the Penglai Supreme Sect and the Imperial Court.

But...

As Chu Liang cast a glance at Feng Chaoyang and then at Senior Sister Jiang, who was fighting on the platform, he suddenly realized that he was just a small figure. As a small figure, he wouldn't have to always share the same stance as the Mount Shu Sect.

With the hidden strife happening below the stage, Senior Sister Jiang's match suddenly seemed less interesting.

In previous years, disciples at the Golden Core Realm were able to directly advance to the next round as seeded players. This year, however, due to the considerable number of disciples at the Golden Core Realm, the system of seeded players has been abolished.

However, this led to competition where there was a significant disparity in strength.

For instance, the opponent against Jiang Yuebai in this fight was a disciple at the pinnacle of the Spiritual Awareness Realm. Reasonably speaking, he wasn't weak.

However, he wouldn't even last through a single move from Jiang Yuebai.

The moment Jiang Yuebai's sword qi reached its target, his flying sword fell to the ground. Thankfully, he wasn't injured because Jiang Yuebai had shown mercy.

The highlight of the fight was his speech afterward.

"I lost..." he muttered as he stared at the sword on the ground. Suddenly, he lifted his head and said, "But Senior Sister Jiang, I want to tell you...I have admired you for a long time!"

"Booooo—"

The crowd's immediate chorus of boos forced him off the stage. If he had uttered a few more words, bricks or eggs might have been hurled at him.

...

After watching Senior Sister Jiang's match, Chu Liang didn't care about the fights that happened later on. He returned to Silver Sword Peak to prepare for the Flying-Sword Race tomorrow.

He wanted to practice for a bit for the Flying-Sword Race.

The preliminary round involved a course circling the mountain several times. He was confident in his fine control of sword.

With a bit of practice, he believed it wouldn't be difficult for him to make it to the next stage.

Sizzle—

His foundational qi surged forth as he rode on the Dustless Sword. In the blink of an eye, he had flown around the entire Silver Sword Peak, leaving behind a crisscrossed white trail of foundational qi that resembled a dragon.

When he landed on the ground, he heard a voice saying, "Too slow."

"Eh?" Chu Liang looked over in a frown.

Chu Liang then saw Wen Yulong appear in a flash from the side, shaking his head as he said, "Senior Brother Chu, why didn't you tell me you signed up for the Flying-Sword Race? I could have helped you prepare for it. I just saw your name on the list in the Hall of Weapons. Unfortunately, it's too late now."

"Junior Brother Wen! I was just about to visit you to express my gratitude," Chu Liang said with a smile. "Thanks to the enchanted tool you made, I won the fight very easily. But are you saying that my sword manipulation speed is not fast enough?"

This took Chu Liang by surprise. He considered himself the top of Mount Shu in terms of cultivation energy and exercising fine control. Although his flying sword manipulation might not have been the best, it seemed unlikely to disappoint Wen Yulong.

"With your abundant cultivation energy, this is still too slow," Wen Yulong said. "The control of the sword during the Flying-Sword Race is different from the usual flying by sword manipulation. The sword you usually use is for combat purposes and was crafted with the purpose of killing. However, in a Flying-Sword Race, the goal is the high speed, which means the sword itself is not the same as what you would use during combat."

"What do you mean? Are you saying there are flying swords specially crafted for the Flying-Sword Race?" Chu Liang instantly understood what Wen Yulong was trying to say.

"Of course there are!" Wen Yulong said. "In the Mount Shu Sect, there are the Five Peaks of Swordsmanship—Astral Inferno Peak, Falling Waterfowl Peak, and others—all of which possessed strong legacies in flying-sword racing, passing down many techniques and specially designed flying swords with the purpose of racing for generations."

The Silver Sword Peak was one of the Five Peaks of Swordsmanship.

Regardless, Chu Liang had never received any teachings or advice.

After all, the legacy of the Silver Sword Peak had ended many years ago. When Di Nufeng assumed leadership, the peak had long ceased to have any association with the Five Peaks of Swordsmanship from its past.

As for the other peaks, their legacies never truly came to an end, with some items and knowledge continuing to be passed down from one generation to the next.

For instance, there were flying swords specifically crafted for races. Unlike those intended for combat, these flying swords likely lacked enchanted formation inscriptions for battle. Instead, they were madly engraved with enchanted formations for speed boosting.

The Dustless Sword was powerful, but it would still lose to these flying swords that were specially crafted for speed.

But Chu Liang had no idea about this.

"It is probably too late to use another sword..." Chu Liang said in contemplation.

Just because a flying sword was fast didn't necessarily mean it was better, and familiarizing oneself with the sword was essential. If he attempted to ride an unfamiliar flying sword and flew too quickly, accidents could happen.

"You can't switch swords now. Let me get you some enchanted tools. With your abundant cultivation energy, it will ensure you stand out," Wen Yulong said considerately.

After so many interactions, his bond with Chu Liang has deepened so much.

With this, he took out four silver bracelets and said, "These are the Hands of the Azure Dragon and the Feet of the Azure Dragon. Try them on."

"The Hands of the Azure Dragon and the Feet of the Azure Dragon?" Chu Liang said, puzzled, as he took the four silver bracelets.

He followed Wen Yulong's instructions, wearing two around his wrists and two around his ankles. With some foundational qi, he activated the bracelets.

Whoosh!

Suddenly, silver light shot out from the four silver bracelets. An iron chain shot out from each of the bracelets, wrapping around whatever was in front.

"In a Flying-Sword Race, the immense speed can generate tremendous force. Relying solely on foundational qi to stay attached to the flying sword might result in you falling off, causing an accident. Therefore, use the Feet of the Azure Dragon to secure yourself onto the flying sword. Once that's done, you can accelerate with one less worry," Wen Yulong explained.

Chu Liang nodded in agreement.

He had experienced the struggle of flying too fast and nearly falling off his sword. In a fight, it would be impossible for him to tie himself onto the sword with four chains. However, in a simple racing competition, this could definitely be of great benefit.

Then, Wen Yulong took out four yellow talisman papers and said, "These are the Wind-Manipulation Talismans.

"I thought the Flying-Sword Race banned the use of talismans?" Chu Liang asked.

Although he didn't understand the tradition of the races, he did read the rules.

"You aren't supposed to stick these on the sword. Stick them on your body," Wen Yulong explained. "In a race between experts, even a slight difference in weight can significantly affect their chances of winning. Therefore, they would use Wind-Manipulation Talismans to lift their body up and reduce their weight, which is allowed by the rules. The four Wind-Manipulation Talismans would be just enough for you to use."

"Hmm..." As Chu Liang listened to his explanation, he couldn't help but say, "You really have to think about every factor."

"These preparations are done to ensure that you won't fall behind at the start. However, victory ultimately depends on your skills," Wen Yulong said. "Legend has it that there was a sword god from Falling Waterfowl Peak who didn't rely on such items. They say he could win even while holding tofu with both hands. It was said that when he crossed the finish line, the tofu still remained intact."

Chapter 257: Flying Sparks of Fire

"I have heard of the sword god from Falling Waterfowl Peak," Lin Bei exclaimed, equally excited. "It would be understandable if he was only defeating disciples at the same cultivation realm as him. However, back then, he was only at the Golden Core Realm. Yet, in the art of flying sword manipulation, he overpowered everyone. There was no one worthy of being called his opponent."

"What is the name of that sword god from Falling Waterfowl Peak?" Chu Liang asked.

Yesterday, Wen Yulong had mentioned this sword god, and today, the same person was being praised by Lin Bei. Yet, his name remained a mystery to everyone.

"I have no idea," Lin Bei answered. "Which is strange. This has been told as a legend for years, yet his name was never known on Mount Shu. But he should be around the same age as your teacher and Daoist Yan. Why don't you ask your teacher?"

Wen Yulong stroked his chin as he speculated, "Perhaps an accident happened to that senior. Otherwise, with his talent, it's impossible that his identity would remain unknown on Mount Shu today."

"Then I won't bring it up with my teacher for now," Chu Liang said, looking up and gazing into the sky.

A dozen beams of white light streaked back at lightning speed, producing a series of sonic booms.

Today marked the preliminary round of the Flying-Sword Race, with over a hundred participants ready to compete. They were divided into ten groups of eleven, each vying for advancement to the next stage. Only two from each group would advance to the next stage in the Flying-Sword Race.

And the race for Chu Liang's group would be happening soon.

Wen Yulong, standing nearby, advised, "I just checked, and only Chen Zheng from the Astral Inferno Peak is exceptionally strong. Even if you can't beat him, your advancement to the next stage is still secured."

Chu Liang nodded gently as he looked over at Chen Zheng, the guy that Wen Yulong had pointed out.

There, by the hill, stood a disciple of short and diminutive stature. With deeply tanned skin and bright eyes, he emanated a robust and vigorous aura.

A few disciples of the Astral Inferno Peak cheered him on, one of whom held a sword box. Inside should be the flying sword specially crafted for racing, known as "Flying-Stars Sword," part of the legacy of the Astral Inferno Peak.

"Hey, no need to admire others and undermine our own strength right now," Lin Bei encouraged, giving Chu Liang's shoulder a reassuring pat. "With a little effort, you'll surely surpass him!"

"I will try my best," Chu Liang said with a smile.

This was just a recreational competition, and he didn't feel much stress about it.

"Yeah, just give it your all," Wen Yulong added. "It's just a recreational competition. You'll only win some sword coins. No need to stress about it."

Yes! Chu Liang thought.

The moment Wen Yulong said that, Chu Liang suddenly straightened his back, as if a blazing flame of determination had ignited within him!

"Oh, no," Lin Bei muttered, covering his face. "By saying that, you've got him fired up to race like his life depends on it."

...

"All participants, please line up and await the signal. When the command is given, activate your swords simultaneously! No rushing ahead; anyone who violates this rule will be disqualified."

An attendant from the Hall of Weapons raised his hand high and scattered a sparkling herbal powder into the air, which fell evenly onto each disciple.

They were currently on the cliff with a sea of clouds right ahead. However, at this moment, the sea of clouds had been cleared away, revealing a specially designated path of white clouds. During the race, participating disciples would have to navigate their swords along this cloud path. If they strayed from it for even a moment, some of the sparkling powder scattered on them would fall off their bodies.

If all the sparkling powder fell off their bodies by the time they reached the finish line, their performance in this race would be considered invalid.

This rule was set to ensure that the participants followed the designated path. Without it, with the sea of clouds around, there would be no way to determine if the participants had attempted to take shortcuts.

"Fly!"

At a single command, over ten disciples, with their hearts pounding with anticipation, simultaneously infused their foundational qi and activated their flying swords.

Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh...

Suddenly, a steady stream of flying sword sounds echoed through the air, as if rending through the fabric of space itself!

The first streak of sword radiance slashed through the vast sky! Leaving behind a long trail of flames!

It was Chen Zheng from the Astral Inferno Peak.

He rode on the Flying-Stars Sword, his ankles securely tied to the sword with the Feet of the Azure Dragon. As his sword soared forth, the sword qi trailing behind him seemed to ignite into flames!

Flying sparks of fire!

Chu Liang activated the Dustless Sword and followed closely behind. With the Cloud of Determination sword qi that also contained the dragon breath, he instantly caught up to the Flying Star. It almost seemed as though he would overtake Chen Zheng in the blink of an eye.

The speed was crazy!

He was extremely fast!

If it weren't for the Feet of Azure Dragon tightly coiled around his ankles, Chu Liang might have been thrown off the sword the moment he took off!

In a normal fight, flying his sword at this speed would have been impossible! If he were even briefly distracted, he would have lost control of his sword! Even though he was securely tied onto the sword, it wasn't completely safe.

Both of his ultimate-tier Golden Cores were operating at an incredibly rapid pace. Within a split second, there were no more flying swords in front of him.

"That dude is not that skilled," Lin Bei said as he watched the fight. "Look! Chu Liang has already overtaken that Flying Star, right?"

"Senior Brother Chu has abundant cultivation energy, which is why he has the upper hand when it's a full propulsion. But just going fast in a straight line doesn't mean much..." Wen Yulong said, shaking his head. "The real skill is being fast around turns."

...

Boom!

The race track for this preliminary round wasn't very long or complicated. In this path of clouds, Chu Liang just had to fly around four peaks. He only needed to complete one loop around each peak to reach the finish line.

In the blink of an eye, Chu Liang arrived at the first turn. With full concentration and using his divine intent, the chains from the Hands of the Azure Dragon popped up, and the four silver chains wrapped around his wrists, securing him to the flying sword, allowing him to navigate the turn!

With the intense speed, he was almost thrown off the path of clouds by the centrifugal force. In fact, he felt his body being torn by the combined forces. [1].

However, in this very instant, a flying sword of fire appeared in front of him.

Swoosh!

The Flying-Stars Sword didn't slow down; instead, it suddenly accelerated. With the sword's tip pressing down, carving out a semicircle, Chen Zheng completed the overtaking maneuver in an instant!

When the Dustless Sword and the Flying-Stars Sword both returned to the straight path, Chu Liang was already a dozen zhang behind!

Flying such a short distance would typically take less than a blink of an eye. However, with Chen Zheng also flying at a high speed, overtaking him despite being only a dozen zhang ahead, it felt like an eternity for Chu Liang!

He exerted all his strength, causing his two Golden Cores to stir up massive waves in his Sea of Qi, creating a roaring surge!

Finally, he managed to reduce the distance by half.

However, the next turn was already approaching.

Whoosh!

The Flying-Stars Sword executed a deft maneuver around the corner, swiftly widening the gap once again!

Boom!

Every time Chu Liang made a turn, he had to grapple with the immense force, frequently on the brink of slipping off the sword. He exerted all efforts to adjust his foundational qi, struggling to stabilize it. As a result, he had to slow down.

Yet Chen Zheng, riding the Flying-Stars Sword, seemed to effortlessly glide through every turn, showing no signs of such struggle.

Chu Liang was certain that there must be some secret technique or trick that he didn't know about.

After four turns, the gap between him and the Flying-Stars Sword had widened to several dozen zhangs. By the time they completed the final lap around the peak, it was impossible for him to catch up.

Swoosh!

With a trail of fire and lightning, the Flying-Stars Sword zoomed past the finishing line, clearly securing the first place in the race.

Boom!

The Dustless Sword crossed the finishing line just a second after the Flying-Stars Sword, securing the second place.

After a moment, the participants behind him crossed the finishing line. Streaks of light flashed across the horizon.

"Phew..." Chu Liang sheathed his sword and landed on the ground,

This was too exciting.

Unknowingly, Chu Liang's clothes were drenched in sweat. The race, with its lightning-fast flying swords, required him to constantly control the wildly speeding sword, leaving him oblivious to the intense feeling of nervousness.

As he turned around, he realized that Chen Zheng was right behind him. He had no idea when he appeared.

"You're quite fast," he remarked, smiling as he stared at Chu Liang. "I can tell you're new to flying sword races. Keep practicing. I look forward to competing with you again in the final round."

"Absolutely," Chu Liang replied with a smile.

Chen Zheng then left with the other disciples of the Astral Inferno Peak. At this moment, Wen Yulong and Lin Bei gathered around Chu Liang.

"We were close," Lin Bei said. "Just try harder next time, and I'm sure we will win."

Chu Liang pondered for a moment before explaining, "It's not as simple as it seems. He was using the momentum from the turns to drift along the trajectory while accelerating with the fire enchanted formation inscription. His speed was incredibly fast. If I can't bridge these gaps, I'll never stand a chance against opponents of this level in the race."

As he was just about to head back and contemplate further, he heard noises of commotion coming from the public square of the Heaven-Reaching Peak.

He glanced over and heard someone shouting, "The members of the Celestial King Sect and the Thunderbolt Stronghold are fighting!"

"Eh?" Lin Bei was taken aback. "Are they really fighting?"

Chapter 258: A Massive and Chaotic Fight

The Flying-Sword Race had just ended, so the crowd of disciples at the race location proceeded to flock toward the square upon hearing the commotion. They sped over on their flying swords, producing a gust of wind that was illuminated by dazzling and vibrant colors of their swordlights.

Chu Liang couldn't help clicking his tongue at the sight. If they had possessed such great vigor and enthusiasm for the Flying-Sword Race instead, half of them could have participated in the race and even done well in it.

Nevertheless, Chu Liang stood up and hurried over to the square too with Lin Bei and Wen Yulong. The cliffside was not far from the square, so they arrived there in a flash and saw a heated battle taking place.

"Woah!" Lin Bei exclaimed in surprise.

...

This whole incident had begun with Feng Chaoyang and Deng Yixiao's previous confrontation.

Feng Chaoyang and Deng Yixiao had disliked each other for a long time, and they ran into each other after the fighting tournament ended the day before. It's unclear who approached whom first, but they likely said some crap like "The hell you lookin' at?"

Nonetheless, everyone was watching, so they didn't get physical with each other. Xu Ziyang took it upon himself, as a disciple of Mount Shu, to step in and break up the fight, putting a temporary end to the conflict.

Unfortunately, after the main competition ended the day before, neither Feng Chaoyang nor Deng Yixiao left Mount Shu. They both stayed on at the accommodations that the Foreign Affairs Hall had arranged for them.

Then after spending the night on Heaven-Reaching Peak, they met again at breakfast the next morning. This time, there was no one to intervene. They had another verbal spat, which evolved into a heated and violent clash like a strike of lightning setting greenery alight.

The cultivation art that Feng Chaoyang cultivated was the Celestial King Sect's Heavenly Star Unusual Art. The moment he activated his divine ability, he was enveloped by divine light, transforming into a divine figure that radiated sparkling golden light!

Deng Yixiao was from Thunderbolt Stronghold, so instead of activating a divine ability, he whistled. His spirit pet, a Five-Fire Divine Ape, began rushing over to him.

His spirit pet had always accompanied him, but it wasn't appropriate to bring it into the dining area on Heaven-Reaching Peak, so he'd left it nearby. However, he needed his spirit pet now, so he summoned it.

Yet, Feng Chaoyang didn't give Deng Yixiao the chance to rely on his spirit pet. Taking advantage of the Five-Fire Divine Ape's absence, Feng Chaoyang leaped forward and ruthlessly swung a punch of divine light at Deng Yixiao.

Many beast-taming sects had existed since ancient times, but it was rare for them to successfully make a name for themselves. The Thunderbolt Stronghold was the only beast-taming sect that had managed to become renowned across the nine provinces, so it was undoubtedly an extraordinary sect.

The biggest difference between ordinary beast-taming sects and the Thunderbolt Stronghold was that the Thunderbolt Stronghold followed a philosophy that emphasized the need for tamers and their beasts to cultivate alongside each other. It meant that if their spirit beast was powerful, their tamer had to be strong as well. By following that philosophy, they eliminated the greatest weakness of beast tamers.

Feng Chaoyang charged toward Deng Yixiao with a powerful momentum. Yet, Deng Yixiao remained unafraid. His hands grasped at the empty space before him, and a chain of lightning appeared like a golden dragon roaming the skies.

As the lightning crackled and buzzed, it was condensed into a pike! The lightning had been turned into a legendary weapon!

Boom!

Feng Chaoyang's fist collided with Deng Yixiao's weapon, resulting in a blinding explosion of light.

Deng Yixiao's spirit pet, the ferocious and powerful Five-Fire Divine Ape, arrived at this moment, leaping over with a roar!

This spirit beast was a giant red-haired ape over one zhang tall. It had muscles that bulged all over its body like little mountains, and its eyes were filled with a vicious intent to kill.

The moment the ape went into battle mode, raging flames ignited all over its body. Then it threw an explosive punch!

Feng Chaoyang was shrouded in divine light, so no one could see his reaction clearly. Nonetheless, at the next moment, the divine light around him flickered, and a golden copy of Feng Chaoyang split off from him!

It was the Divine-Light Clone! This divine skill was different from the Immortal Art: External Manifestation, but they produced the same result.

Both versions of Feng Chaoyang were shrouded in divine light, making the real Feng Chaoyang indistinguishable from his clone. Yet, they both possessed equally great combat prowess!

Boom!

The Divine-Light Clone caught the Five-fire Divine Ape's blazing fist, causing a blinding explosion and a terrifying shockwave!

Despite fighting two opponents, there were no signs at all that Feng Chaoyang was losing.

It wasn't long before people began rushing over.

The fight was taking place at the dining area assigned to the visiting disciples of the sects in the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten. Groups of disciples had already gathered there for breakfast, so when they saw the fight, they decided to join in.

A disciple of the Celestial Pivot Pavilion summoned a circle of jade talismans around him, and they spun rapidly around him several times. Then he raised his hand and hit one of them, sending it flying like a bolt of lightning toward Deng Yixiao's weak spot!

Whack.

Nevertheless, a cultivator from the Ascending Dragon Academy, who was dressed like a scholar, stopped the jade talisman midflight.

He snorted coldly. "You're ganging up on someone and attacking them from behind... How is that the conduct of a righteous cultivator?"

That cultivator then summoned a golden brush and drew four talismanic characters in the air.

Boom.

The four ancient talismanic characters were laid over each other, combining to produce a divine intent that harnessed a level of power similar to that of divine law.

The disciple from the Celestial Pivot Pavilion was suddenly overwhelmed with a sense of heaviness that was like a thousand jun weighing down in him. His body felt so heavy that he didn't even have the strength to move his little finger!

The Ascending Dragon Academy disciple drew another string of talismanic characters and bombarded the Celestial Pivot Pavilion disciple with it. However, it was intercepted by dense foundational qi that was like a tide of torrential sea waves. The string of talismanic characters swirled around in the air before redirecting and heading back the way it came!

This was the work of a disciple from the Sea King Sect. Seeing that two sects from the Heavenly Star faction[1] had joined hands, he'd rushed over to join the opposing side.

Then came a young monk from the Monastery Tower. He joined the battle with a shout, lifting his robe to reveal his muscular body. The young monk looked just like a glowering vajra warrior!

In recent years, the Monastery Tower had been the representative Buddhist sect in the north, well known for their warrior monks who trained in martial arts!

This battle was just a continuation of the conflict between the Heavenly Star faction and a faction of those who opposed them. Up to this point, no one else had gotten involved.

The Great Astral Sect's Yun Chaoxian and his junior sister Tang Shi were among those watching the battle.

Yun Chaoxian's eyes lit up when he saw the monk fighting. "He's a warrior monk from Monastery Tower! For years, they've said that the Great Astral Sect's martial arts legacy is inferior to that of the Monastery Tower and that we only hold a position in the Divine Nine because of our legendary artifacts! I've long wanted to challenge one of their monks!"

"Senior Brother Yun, I'm afraid..." Tang Shi murmured.

"Don't be afraid. I'll be right back!" Yun Chaoxian shouted as he left.

He didn't even take his weapon. Leaving his halberd to one side, Yun Chaoxian jumped into the fight barehanded!

He didn't attack the monk stealthily though. Instead, he approached the monk from behind and waited for when the monk was taking a breather.

Then Yun Chaoxian yelled, "Watch my fist!"

He threw a punch toward the monk with a loud whoosh.

The monk was caught off guard by the sudden attack from behind, but Yun Chaoxian's warning gave him just enough time to react.

Receiving the punch with his palm, the monk asked, "What are you doing?"

Before Yun Chaoxian could answer, Deng Yixiao, who was fighting without restraint, shouted, "The Celestial King Sect wants to fight us, and now the Great Astral Sect has come to get in on the action! Sure, let's fight!"

Covered in a dazzling display of divine fire, the Five-Fire Divine Ape was in the midst of pressuring Feng Chaoyang's clone to retreat. However, upon receiving Deng Yixiao's command, the ape charged toward Yun Chaoxian instead!

Yun Chaoxian was now fighting three opponents simultaneously!

Someone bellowed viciously, "Don't you dare hurt my senior brother!"

A muscular figure in female clothes charged over and punched the ape from the side with a force of ten thousand jun[2].

Despite being extraordinarily strong, the Five-Fire Divine Ape couldn't withstand the punch at all and was sent flying backward dozens of zhang!

Upon seeing the face of the person who just joined the fight, the other people cried out in surprise, "Is that a woman??"

Tang Shi, the little vajra warrior, looked majestic and imposing!

"Since you disciples of the Divine Nine want to abuse your power and pick on us, we, the disciples of the Terrestrial Ten, won't stand for it!" someone else shouted from the side.

Accompanied by a howling black wind, a slim youngster used his hand as a saber and intercepted Tang Shi's next punch.

Thud!

"Even Guo Zhanlei from the Night-Saber Sect is getting involved? This a great opportunity!" a disciple from Taotie City exclaimed. Unable to stay on the sidelines, the disciple leaped over as he yelled, "I support the Terrestrial Ten, but I've disliked the Night-Saber Sect for a very long time!"

Bright and colorful enchanted tools whizzed about in midair!

Seeing a disciple of Taotie City join the fray, disciples of several traditional immortal sects that disliked Taotie City, such as the Endless Sword Sect and the Fog-Hidden Mountain of Immortals,

joined in as well. These disciples wanted to take the opportunity to teach a lesson to a disciple of the upstart sect Taotie City.

Despite that, there were conflicts among the disciples of the traditional immortal sects too. They saw each other as they approached the disciple from Taotie City and couldn't hold back from attacking each other first!

The disciples of the Noblemen's Hall in Jiangnan initially stayed out of the fight. Nevertheless, upon seeing their fellow Confucian cultivators from the Ascending Dragon Academy get beat up so badly, they couldn't help but join in to help.

The disciple from South Melody Conservatory was a young musician. The South Melody Conservatory didn't have many disciples, and this year, the older ones were all making preparations for their tours, so they sent a young lady.

The young lady's eyes filled with excitement as she watched the massive and chaotic fight. It was a rare sight for her. She wanted to join in, but she didn't dare to.

After pondering for a moment, she placed her guqin on the ground and gently plucked the strings.

Twang~

It was the "Morale-Boosting Melody: The Rise of the Azure Waves"!

Chu Liang had experienced the power of this song before. Upon hearing it, even a disabled person would want to grab a crutch and charge into battle!

The parties in the fight were already beating each other senseless. With this battle song playing, it would be even harder to stop the fight now.

It would be a very hard task to try and find a sect among the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten that had never wronged another sect, so pretty much all of them harbored a desire to get revenge against one sect or another. They usually kept some self-restraint, but it was now time for vengeance and settling scores. There was no holding back anymore.

Even the Greater-Yin Cult, the most reclusive sect among them, was no exception. Luo Xiaoyong was enjoying the fight as a bystander. He had no grudges or animosity against the disciples engaged in the fight or their sects, and he had no intention of participating in the fight.

Yet, at this moment, an oblivious disciple approached Luo Xiaoyong and stood in front of him.

The oblivious disciple yelled, "Dear beauty, do not be afraid! I will protect you!"

He even turned back to show a confident and greasy grin to Luo Xiaoyong with some bonus winks.

A moment ago, the oblivious disciple had noticed a beautiful woman sitting alone as she watched the fight. Spotting an opportunity to make a move, he'd rushed over in a frenzy to showcase his masculine charms.

However...

Wham.

Luo Xiaoyong did not hold back; he sent the oblivious disciple flying with a kick. Consequently, Luo Xiaoyong joined the fight as well.

...

Meanwhile, on the other side of Heaven-Reaching Peak...

Lu Xun, who was dressed in a white robe, had just buried an object in the ground. He formed a hand seal, and a burst of darkness flashed past him from the ground.

In that instant, he sensed a fluctuation in the qi around him. Then an enchanted formation descended to the ground.

Everyone on Heaven-Reaching Peak had their attention focused on the chaotic fight, so no one was aware of Lu Xun's actions.

He glanced indifferently behind him, making sure no one had noticed him. After that, he flew up and headed toward the square.

When Lu Xun landed and saw the chaotic scene, he put on an enraged expression and shouted, "Stop fighting!"

Chapter 259: Shameless Punk

Everything happened so quickly.

The brawl between the disciples of the immortal sects lasted only a short while, but it resulted in significant destruction. Within a short while, they wrecked the entire hall and the fight spread across half of the public square.

The disciples of Mount Shu, whose cultivation energy was lacking, didn't dare to step in and stop the fight—besides, most were enjoying the spectacle.

"Wow... ouch... that person hit way too hard," Monk Pushan remarked, shaking his head in disapproval as he stood next to Chu Liang.

Chu Liang stared at him and asked, "Aren't you going to join them?"

"Monks are compassionate and do not engage in violence," replied Monk Pushan.

Before he could finish speaking, a figure was hurled from the fight, crashing to the ground and sliding several zhang before coming to a stop. It was a disciple from the Monastery Tower, his bald head standing out.

"He's a warrior monk," Monk Pushan quickly added.

Chu Liang glanced at Pushan and at the warrior monk, thinking that there was indeed a stark difference between a warrior monk and a monk who practiced silent meditation.

The commotion didn't last long. Soon, a terrifying pressure of authority descended upon the area, immobilizing all the disciples of the immortal sects. Whether they were talented or ordinary, every single one of them was rendered motionless as they looked up at the sky.

An old woman in black, with a frosty demeanor, descended from the sky. She glared at the disciples of the various immortal sects, who were in a state of chaos, and said, "You might be used to acting freely in your own sects, but here on Mount Shu, you must abide by the rules of the Mount Shu Sect. Any act of causing a scene or displaying violence will not be tolerated. If this happens again, you will be banished from Mount Shu without exception."

It was the Discipline Master!

With just a few light and casual words, she instantly brought the situation under control. She didn't bother to investigate the reason behind the brawl, clearly not wanting to judge the disputes between the disciples of these immortal sects.

In reality, it was impossible for the elders of the sect to notice the brawl only after it had been happening for a while. They likely didn't intervene initially, thinking it wasn't a big deal, but decided to step in once they saw things getting out of hand.

This aligned with their usual attitude towards their disciples.

Feng Chaoyang withdrew his divine light, his body spotless, as if he had never been in a fight.

He looked at Deng Yixiao and snorted coldly, "If you want to continue, let's set a time at the foot of Mount Shu. I'll be ready anytime."

Deng Yixiao had clearly suffered some minor injuries, with bloodstains on one of his brows. Yet, he remained unfazed. In fact, the bloodstains made him look even fiercer.

As Deng Yixiao faced Feng Chaoyang's glare, he remained calm and said, "When the Mount Shu Summit is over, I will settle this with you."

The grudge between Feng Chaoyang and the three brothers of the Thunderbolt Stronghold now seemed irrevocable.

Both sides departed with their own groups.

As Chu Liang watched Deng Yixiao's retreating figure, he suddenly sensed that something was odd.

Rather than being someone who would impulsively start a fight in another immortal sect, Deng Yixiao appeared to be more reserved and introspective in nature.

Could it be simply because of the existing grudge between his second elder brother and Feng Chaoyang?

However, since Chu Liang wasn't familiar with either side and didn't know much about the matter, he didn't dwell on the confusion and moved on.

After all, he had many other things to do.

...

The following day arrived.

In light of yesterday's events, the Mount Shu Sect prepared separate viewing areas for the disciples of the other sects in the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten, hoping to prevent further encounters between them.

As for the disciples of the other immortal sects, they were more well-behaved. After the incident blew up, they had likely received warnings from their elders and didn't dare to cause a scene again.

Chu Liang would be spending his entire day watching the fighting tournament matches.

The tournament had advanced to the stage where participants competed to move from the top thirty-two to the top sixteen. Every winner today would secure a place in the top sixteen, and all of them were exceptionally strong. It was crucial for Chu Liang to study his opponents at this stage.

Currently, the match on the stage featured Ling Ao, a disciple of Solitude Peak.

Even with the lock of black hair covering his eyes, he moved with the agility of the wind. Multiple afterimages trailed behind him as he effortlessly evaded his opponent's strikes, then shattered their defenses with a single, powerful punch.

This was exactly how he had defeated Shang Ziliang before.

Apart from displaying his powerful physique, Ling Ao revealed nothing else. Yet Chu Liang grew more convinced that Ling Ao had not yet shown his full potential.

In the past few days, rumors about Ling Ao had been spreading wildly throughout Mount Shu. Previously, he wasn't famous, and with so few disciples from Solitude Peak, almost no one was familiar with him. Now, with his sudden rise to prominence, he naturally attracted a lot of attention.

Such occurrences were not unusual. Every year at the Mount Shu Summit, one or two dark horses whose strength exceeded their reputation would emerge into prominence.

Insiders revealed that he wasn't this strong six months ago, and his sudden surge in power suggested a lucky encounter. Given his origin from Solitude Peak and his immense physical strength, the most accepted theory was that he had received a gift from a True Dragon.

There was even speculation that he might have received the complete legacy of a True Dragon.

But Chu Liang knew this guess was entirely wrong as he was the one who had received the legacy of a True Dragon.

And from Ling Ao, he felt no trace of dragon breath.

"The next match: Chu Liang from Silver Sword Peak versus Fang Ting from Jade Sword Peak!"

"Wow—"

Excitement rippled through the crowd like a wave.

So far in the main competition of the Mount Shu Summit, this was the first clash between two Golden Core Realm cultivators. Typically, cultivators at this level would have secured a spot in the top sixteen, but now one of them would have to be eliminated early.

One of them was going to be the unlucky one.

Fang Ting stepped onto the stage with a confident smile.

He was sure that the unlucky one wouldn't be him.

"Senior Brother Fang," Chu Liang greeted him with a smile, clasping his hands in salute.

The two were quite familiar with each other. Fang Ting had led Chu Liang on his first mission to the Southern Bastion Mountain in the Southern Regions. At that time, Fang Ting was in the early stage of the Golden Core Realm, and to Chu Liang, he seemed incredibly powerful.

But now, it only took half a year for Chu Liang to stand proudly before Fang Ting as an equal.

"Junior Brother Chu," Fang Ting said, cupping his hands in a salute. "I know you've had many fortuitous encounters and progressed rapidly over the past six months, even forming an ultimate-tier Golden Core. You've been standing out lately, taking first place at both the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony and the Stairway to the Heavens event.

"But I haven't been idle either. Today, I'll show you what true strength is!"

Bang!

With these words, a powerful surge of foundational qi burst forth from him, like a raging inferno.

Fang Ting was at the middle stage of the Golden Core Realm!

It seemed Fang Ting had also made significant progress recently.

Many people were aware of the bet between Silver Sword Peak and Jade Sword Peak. They often compared the eldest senior brothers of each peak, pitting Chu Liang against Xu Ziyang.

But Fang Ting believed that they would know the result of this bet today.

He had seen how weak Chu Liang was when he first descended Mount Shu and always thought that no matter what lucky encounters he had, he couldn't have grown that strong in such a short time.

Even if you formed an ultimate-tier Golden Core, so what?

Can your physical body keep up? Can your divine abilities match the challenge? Is your mental state strong enough?

Regardless of the tier of your Golden Core, you stepped into this stage too late. It hasn't been that long since you formed your core. On the other hand, I have been at the Golden Core Realm for a long time. I have reached the middle stage of the Golden Core Realm.

I will show you the true power of the Heavenly Golden Core of Five Lightning today!

These were the thoughts running through Fang Ting's mind.

As he drew the Thunderstrike Sword with his right hand, it seemed as though there was a golden dragon coiling around the blade, suppressing the powerful flow of qi coursing through the sword! Clearly, Fang Ting was eager to showcase his abilities through this fight. He couldn't wait!

He had been itching for a thrilling fight ever since he reached the middle stage of the Golden Core Realm. His opponent in the previous round was too weak to bring out his full strength. Chu Liang, however, was the perfect match.

Let's do this!

A full-on fight!

As he shouted inwardly, thunder seemed to roar within his heart.

"Ha! I've been eagerly anticipating this match as well!" Chu Liang retorted with enthusiasm. "Let's do this! And let's give your teacher Wang Xuanling, who's watching from below the stage, a show to see whose disciple is stronger!"

As he spoke, his gaze shifted behind Fang Ting.

Hearing the name Wang Xuanling, Fang Ting shuddered. Is my teacher really here? He thought to himself.

I didn't hear about him coming to spectate the fight?

Instinctively, he turned to look, but saw nothing.

Slash.

It was the dull sound of a saber piercing into flesh.

Chu Liang's hand was in a position as if he had just thrown a hidden weapon, and a gleaming curved saber was embedded in Fang Ting's chest.

"..."

The crowd became silent.

Fang Ting turned back, his lips trembling in disbelief. He couldn't speak as he fell backward with a thud. Disciples from the Hall of Alchemy then rushed to his aid. Though the wound looked severe, Chu Liang had avoided all vital points. For a cultivator, such wounds on the flesh would heal very quickly.

In comparison, healing the wound in Fang Ting's heart might be more challenging.

After a long moment, a weak but clear voice expressed everyone's thoughts: "Shameless!"

Chapter 260: The Economic Potential of Tourism

Fang Ting felt the urge to cry, but not a single tear could be shed.

He had intended to use this fight to show the capabilities at the middle stage of the Golden Core Realm.

He wanted to show everyone on Mount Shu the power of his Heavenly Golden Core of Five Lightning! This was meant to be the fight that would make him famous!

Yet, he was suddenly defeated in such a manner.

The injuries were of minor concern. It was mainly the feeling of something being lodged in his throat that he couldn't swallow or spit out.

But as Fang Ting spent more time pondering what had just happened, he realized that the moment of distraction shouldn't be the reason why he couldn't react to the sneak attack.

It was really because Chu Liang's attack was too swift, fierce, and precise, allowing him to defeat his enemy with one strike.

Clearly, Chu Liang wasn't weak.

As Fang Ting cast his glance over at Chu Liang, he saw Chu Liang smiling and cupping his hands while saying, "Senior Brother Fang, thank you for letting me win."

Pfft.

He had just calmed down, but now he felt his qi and blood boiling with anger again. He wanted to spit a mouthful of blood in Chu Liang's face and shout, "Your mama should be thanking me Ahhhhhh..!"

But ultimately, he had lost. The elder hosting the fight announced in a stern tone, "Chu Liang from the Silver Sword Peak...won!"

As the elder said this, he averted his gaze downward, clearly showing some unwillingness.

The area around buzzed with quiet chatter.

"Hey, isn't that the guy from Silver Sword Peak who took the top spot in the Stairway to the Heavens event? I thought he was pretty tough. Why does he keep pulling moves like that?"

"Well, it hasn't been too long since he formed his core. He's no match for Fang Ting in sheer strength yet. Guess that's why he went for those tactics."

"But there are so many people watching. How can he be so..."

"His teacher is Di Nufeng..."

"Ah, that explains it... So he's a shameless punk."

Chu Liang, however, remained nonchalant. He landed gracefully as Lin Bei approached, giving him a thumbs up and remarking, "You're the first to earn a bad reputation point with every victory."

"It can't be helped," Chu Liang said with a chuckle. Without dwelling on the matter, he changed the subject, asking, "How are sales?"

"I sold out long ago. Not sure about the others," Lin Bei answered with a smile.

A new match soon started on the stage, drawing the audience's attention. Chu Liang moved over to a corner of the square and a few figures immediately gathered around him.

Along with Lin Bei, there were Liu Xiaoyu'er, Shang Ziliang, Lackey A, and Lackey B—core members of Chu Liang's team.

Each of them wore a basic storage enchanted tool, filled with candied fruits, sweetened tea, and boxes of Dragon Breath Golden Vein Berries..

These candied fruits, sweetened tea, and snacks were perfect to eat while spectating the fight. These snack choices were specially made by Chu Liang after he descended the mountain and did a survey of the surroundings. He then made arrangements with the vendors nearby.

The Dragon Breath Golden Vein Berries were considered high-end specialties of the Mount Shu Sect, perfect gifts for disciples from the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten immortal sects to take back to their family and friends. The Golden Vein Berry brand had already made a name for itself within Mount Shu; fellow disciples recognized it as a premium product.

When the disciples of the other immortal sects saw these berries, they asked the disciples of Mount Shu and found out that the berries were good. And soon, word began to spread.

The Mount Shu Summit organized by the Mount Shu Sect provided Chu Liang and his team a rare opportunity.

"Lin Bei sold out the earliest today, so he is undoubtedly the sales champion for the day," Chu Liang remarked. "How about the rest of you?"

"I'm almost sold out too," Liu Xiaoyu'er said with a smile, raising her hand.

The little girl looked adorable and charming. She didn't have to exert much effort in selling her items as people naturally gravitated towards her, eager to make a purchase.

Shang Ziliang and Lackey A didn't fare as well, only managing to sell about half of their stock.

Lackey B was the only one left to answer. He blinked his eyes and uttered, "Mine is gone too..."

"Sold out?"

"Ate it all..."

Chu Liang gazed at Lackey B and let out a sigh. "If you keep doing that, I can't pay you," he said.

Ever since they teamed up for the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony, Chu Liang decided to officially organize the crew for future convenience. He discussed it with Shang Ziliang and the others, and they were all willing to follow his lead. Now, they were considered unofficial members of Silver Sword Peak.

When they were eliminated from the fighting tournament, Chu Liang shared his plan with them.

Chu Liang proposed taking advantage of the Mount Shu Summit organized by the Mount Shu Sect to start a small business. If they agreed to be his seller, he would pay them a base wage of fifty sword coins per day plus a twenty percent commission on sales. Additionally, the top seller each day would receive a bonus of fifty sword coins.

If anyone consistently performed well, they could be promoted to partner, allowing them to share in the overall profit with Chu Liang. This excellent offer was very enticing to the group members.

Sales for the first two days were mediocre, and Chu Liang had to pay their wages out of pocket. However, as they gradually tapped into the market, he anticipated making a profit today. According to his calculations, in a couple more days, once they had fully established their foothold in the market, his daily income could reach several hundred sword coins.

Chu Liang came up with this idea after seeing visitors from far and wide converging to celebrate the Mount Shu Summit with the sect. Yet, the Mount Shu Sect had neglected to harness the economic potential of tourism, which pained Chu Liang deeply.

The snack business was small-scale. These items were not worth much and couldn't be sold for a high price. However, they were just what people needed, and Chu Liang could use this business to create a good impression. The real money-makers were the gift boxes of berries, which had low costs and high profits. The deluxe gift boxes were almost pure profit. The disciples of the Mount Shu Sect knew the original price of the berries—although it was already quite high, the gift boxes were priced even higher. Naturally, the locals wouldn't buy the gift boxes themselves. After all, these gift boxes were meant to scam... no, to be bought as gifts for the families of the tourists visiting Mount Shu.

Mount Shu currently didn't have any must-try foods or must-buy items for visitors. Chu Liang planned to turn the Golden Vein Berries into a renowned brand of the Mount Shu Sect. In the future, people who visit would want to buy a few boxes home for their friends and family, ensuring a steady stream of profits in the future.

"By the way," he reminded them, "Make sure to tell them that there's a discount if they use Mount Shu Sect's sword coins."

This puzzled Shang Ziliang and the others.

In the world of immortality cultivators, the most commonly used currency was the Taotie City's Four-Animals coins[1], followed by Penglai Supreme Sect's Penglai coins. The former was widely accepted because Taotie City was the most convenient place for transactions, while the latter was considered the safest to hold due to the Penglai Supreme Sect's immense power.

As for the sword coins of the Mount Shu Sect, these coins generally circulated within Mount Shu itself.

"Those disciples from the other sects in the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten don't have sword coins. If they need to exchange them, it will be quite troublesome," Lin Bei added.

"Even though it might be a hassle, we must advocate for the use of our coins. We're on Mount Shu after all. What else would they use if not sword coins?" Chu Liang remarked. "But let's not rush into it. Let's take our time."

As he spoke, his eyes sparkled with hope.

...

Chu Liang then sent them all out to sell more items. Suddenly, he felt a tremor in his enchanted storage tool.

Chu Liang's expression tightened. He exchanged knowing glances with Monk Pushan and Luo Yao, each understanding what weighed on the others' minds. Without a word, they all took off towards Silver Sword Peak, gathering there with a shared purpose.

[Eastern-Route Guider]: "I have found a new way to infiltrate the White-Bone Hall again. Time is tight; can you all gather by tomorrow?"

The three of them took out their Soul Subjugator Tokens and saw the message.

"Good timing," Chu Liang said as he nodded, appearing rather pleased with the timing. "The Spirit-Pet Combat Tournament is tomorrow, and I won't need to participate."

"Alright." Luo Yao nodded and sent a reply.

[Sixtieth]: "Noted."

[Fifty-Ninth]: "Wow, here we go again! Another thrilling undercover mission! It feels like ages since our last raid on White-Bone Hall. Honorable Guider, you're incredible. Always finding a way to infiltrate."

Chu Liang glanced curiously at Monk Pushan, wondering how he managed to send such a long message within such a short time.

After a moment, he replied as Fiftieth-Eighth.

[Fiftieth-Eighth]: "Noted."

Fortunately, the Soul Subjugator Token didn't show the sender's location. Otherwise, it would be hard to explain if all three of them were shown to be at Mount Shu.

[Eastern-Route Guider]: "Alright, meet tomorrow at the usual place. My subordinate will meet up with you."