

Prodigies 381

Chapter 381 Flowers Bloom and Fall

After a long moment of stunned silence, Spirit Vulture couldn't help but ask, "Can...Can you really do it?"

Lin Xun calmly responded, "I haven't made one before so I don't know."

Spirit Vulture rolled his eyes. It showed how dumbfounded he was given that he was always calm and composed.

"But I can give it a try. You might have forgotten that I was the one who designed the new Violet Hero Battleship of the empire." Lin Xun smiled slightly. He had to give Spirit Vulture some confidence and not make him think that he was just exaggerating.

Spirit Vulture seriously reminded him, "But Violet Hero battleships and rune armaments are not the same."

Lin Xun brought out his Flowing Light Blade and handed it to Spirit Vulture.

As Spirit Vulture stretched out his hand and took the blade, his eyes lit up. "An aeth treasure?"

Spirit Vulture had once again proved how sharp his eyes were.

Lin Xun nodded. "I made this when I was in Haze City last year. Sir, you should now believe that I have the potential to make a rune armament, right?"

Spirit Vulture nodded. "This is indeed enough to prove your talent and potential in the art of runes, but...I'm not trying to dampen your spirits but rune armaments and aeth treasures are different."

Before Lin Xun could respond, Spirit Vulture drew a deep breath and said, "Never mind. Let's not mention this matter again. It will be a waste of time."

Lin Xun thought for a moment and said, "You'll understand in the future. It might just be empty talk now, but you will understand when I actually create a rune armament."

Spirit Vulture silently stared at Lin Xun and then he smiled. "Okay, then I'll wait and see."

After the chat with Lin Xun, he was somehow full of anticipation. He couldn't wait to see if the youngster could give him an unexpected surprise!

.....

From that day on, Lin Xun adjusted his daily training plan. He carved out some time to focus on reviewing and honing his rune skills.

The art of runes was the path that Lin Xun was most familiar with!

During his time following Mister Lu, he had developed an incomparably strong foundation in the art of runes as well as unimaginable rune skills.

When he had arrived at Feiyun Village, he had helped the villagers eradicate the grain worms in the fields using his knowledge in the art of runes and, as a result, he had integrated well into Feiyun Village.

When he had been in Blood Kill Camp, he had helped Old Mo design a brand-new Violet Hero battleship and created the Flying Star Crossbow, a killing weapon that had caught the attention of Xiaoman, Xiaoke, Xu Sanqi and Old Mo.

Old Mo had repeatedly marveled at Lin Xun's attainments and potential in the art of runes. He had even remarked that he might be even better than Feng Qingyou, a talented maiden in Qinglu Academy.

It was also because of Lin Xun's remarkable talent in the art of runes that Xu Sanqi refused to let Xin Rutie take Lin Xun away.

Unfortunately, Old Mo had to bear some of the burden for Lin Xun.

After that, when Lin Xun arrived in Haze City, he had successfully passed the verification assessment of the Rune Master Association and had become friends with Chu Feng.

Even Liu Qingyan, a leading art cultivator in the empire, had asked Lin Xun to repair her precious Ancient Law Ocarina, and Lin Xun had successfully done so in the end.

At the time, Flowing Light Blade, an aeth treasure that Lin Xun created, had astonished both Xue Jin and Granny Feng. They both believed that Lin Xun was a rare talent in the art of runes!

When Lin Xun left Haze City and came to the Forbidden City, he had been troubled by many matters and didn't have the energy or time to practice his rune skills.

And now, to solve the problem of Third Old Zhu's breakthrough and also to help Spirit Vulture cure the Demon Tribulation Poison in his body, the only way that Lin Xun could think of was to rely on his skills in the art of runes!

Hope would appear in front of him as long as he could create a rune armament.

.....

Rune brush, rune ink and vessel.

Every day, Lin Xun sat still and motionless like a meditating old monk.

Sitting in front of his desk, he constantly inscribed rune patterns on beast skins, rocks, leaves, paper, and cloth using his powerful spirit sense.

Everything on Mind Cleansing Peak and the clamor in the outside world seemed to be isolated from Lin Xun.

He only had rune patterns in his eyes. Only the numerous mysterious and complicated rune patterns were in his mind.

Ten days later.

Lin Xun was no longer sitting in his room. He was strolling around Mind Cleansing Peak with empty hands. He paused before a waterfall, lay down in a meadow of flowers, stood tall on the edge of a rocky cliff and navigated through the rugged mountains.

Using his fingers as a rune brush, his perception as control, and his aeth power as the source of energy, he carved mysterious runes on the boulders, rocks and grass.

Later on, he began to carve runes in the flowing clouds, waterfalls and mist.

Runes were like ghost characters. In other people's eyes, Lin Xun seemed to be possessed by a demon as his behavior was very strange. He darted around Mind Cleansing Peak every single day and drew obscure runes that no one understood.

Although everyone found it strange, no one stopped him, because this was Spirit Vulture's order. Only he knew what Lin Xun was doing.

.....

Another month passed in the blink of an eye.

Autumn turned to winter. Everything on Mind Cleansing Peak had withered and faded. The leaves were all dried up, and only some exotic flowers and plants continued to sway in the icy wind.

Lin Xun never left his residence. It was as though he had vanished from the world. The heated discussions about him also had long ceased in the outside world.

After all, there were many new and sensational incidents and events happening every day in the Forbidden City as it was the capital of the empire.

During those days, the most sensational incident that happened was that the Water Tribe of the Magi Brute Race sent a large group of envoys to visit the Forbidden City.

There was deep-seated enmity between the empire and the Magi Brute Race, and war constantly broke out between the two. The sudden visit from envoys of the Water Tribe understandably attracted everyone's attention and caused an uproar in the Forbidden City.

Many people analyzed the purpose of the Water Tribe's envoys' visit. They found it most strange that, after they arrived in the Forbidden City, they settled in an ancient building specially provided by the imperial family in the west of the city and never left. Moreover, they did not reveal the purpose of their visit to the Forbidden City.

Their unusual move puzzled many people in the Forbidden City.

However, regardless of their purpose, the feud between the empire and the Magi Brute Race led to many hot-blooded young people causing trouble outside the Brute Residence every single day. They even threatened to kill the bastards of the dark races to avenge the heroes of the empire who died on the battlefield.

The Brute Residence was the place where the envoys of the Water Tribe resided. The name clearly showed the empire's attitude towards the envoys.

However, despite the disturbances outside their residence, the Water Tribe envoys never showed their faces and seemed to intend to stay in the Forbidden City for a long period.

The imperial family also showed an unusually strange response. They didn't care about the envoys and treated them like they didn't exist.

However, no one knew the reason for their strange behaviors. As time passed, the Water Tribe envoys did not do anything out of the ordinary, and many major forces and clans in the Forbidden City lost interest in them

Additionally, the West Creek, Cloud Weight and Flying Peak Lin Clans were facing endless troubles.

In recent days, competitors were frequently oppressing their businesses, and they even maliciously lowered their prices, severely impacting their earnings.

One day, Lin Tianlong, the clan leader of the West Creek Lin Clan, listened to the latest reports from his subordinates as usual.

"Clan Leader, an incident happened in our Blood Essence Iron Mine. Just like a few days ago, the buyer rejected all the Blood Essence Iron and claimed that the quality of our Blood Essence Iron was too poor. They demanded us to sell them at a much lower price, but if we did that, we would suffer a huge loss!"

"Also, the business in our aeth grain stores in the west of the city and our three medicine stores in the south of the city are doing very badly."

"This month alone, we have lost 390,000 gold coins! If this continues, within one year, our properties and businesses will...most likely fail."

The subordinate's face looked gloomy and troubled because of the poor business.

Lin Tianlong's face was livid, and his face frosted over. He was so angry that he almost crushed his own teeth. Someone has gone too far! They are secretly targeting us!

He had long sensed that something was wrong, but it was only now that he was certain that it was a deliberate, malicious attack!

"Clan Leader, the businesses owned by Cloud Weight and Flying Peak have also been impacted."

The subordinate reminded him, "Only the businesses owned by the North Light Lin Clan are unaffected. This doesn't feel right. Do you think the North Light Lin Clan and the kid are behind all this?"

"Even if they didn't do it, it has to be connected to them!" Lin Tianlong roared, and he had almost lost control of his anger. But at the same time he couldn't help but panic because he knew that ordinary forces couldn't attack them with such sinister means.

It's impossible for Lin Xun to do this even if he has the North light Lin Clan's support!

At that moment, a middle-aged man in gray anxiously rushed into the room.

Before he had come near, he had already started to report, "Clan Leader, it has been confirmed that the culprits secretly targeting us these days are from the Shi Family of Stone Cauldron Alms, the Ning Family of the Steel-Blood Army, the Never-Falling Geezer Family, the Gong Clan, and the Ye Family of the East Sea King!

The list of powerful names made Lin Tianlong's head buzz as if lightning had struck him. He sat there stiffly and turned ashen-faced.

Chapter 382 Spirit Accumulation Realm

It was unknown how long it took for Lin Tianlong to snap out from his state of extreme shock and anger, but his face remained livid.

"This is ridiculous! This is so ridiculous!"

In the end, he couldn't control himself anymore and unleashed a furious roar. His voice resembled that of a wild beast and terrified the two subordinates so much that they dropped to their knees.

"If you think you can use such a despicable way to make our West Creek Lin Clan submit, don't even think about it!"

Bang!

Lin Tianlong slammed the table in front of him to smithereens.

His aura was extremely violent, like a beast going berserk. His eyes were red, filled with bloodthirst, and extremely terrifying.

It was only after a long moment that he slumped back down on his chair, and his eyes dimmed.

Stone Cauldron Alms was already terrifying enough, but there was also the Ning Clan of the Steel-Blood Army, the Never Falling Geezer Clan's Gong Family, and the East Sea King, the Ye Clan. Lin Tianlong had lost all will to fight at the thought of his opponents!

They're too strong!

He knew that the West Creek Lin Clan would never be able to compete with them even if they were to join forces with the Cloud West and Flying Peak Lin Clans!

He was only glad that they had only suffered business losses thus far, and that the West Creek Lin Clan wasn't directly damaged.

However, he knew that the West Creek Lin Clan wouldn't be able to survive if the situation continued!

A clan needed resources to support it. Without resources, it would collapse sooner or later.

Lin Xun!

It's Lin Xun again!

Ever since that damn thing returned to Mind Cleansing Peak, he hasn't stopped for a day. I can't vent my hatred and anger if I don't kill him!

This was the first time in his life that he had hated a person to such an extent yet he couldn't do anything about it. After all, Lin Xun was safe in Mind Cleansing Peak and under the protection of powerful masters.

What to do?

Lin Tianlong's mind was in turmoil. He soon fell into deep thought.

The Cloud Weight and Flying Peak Lin Clans have suffered the same situation as the West Creek Lin Clan.

It's Lin Xun's retaliation.

It had to be Shi Yu's plan. They agreed to unite the families of Ning Meng, Gong Ming and Ye Xiaoqi to get revenge on the collateral branches of the Lin Family.

They could deal an incomparable blow without fighting head-on.

Lin Xun must know about the plan, but Shi Yu handled everything so Lin Xun is unaware that the three branches had already fallen into turmoil and suffering.

.....

Time flew by. Two months had passed since Lin Xun began reviewing the art of runes.

Under Spirit Vulture's arrangement, everything on Mind Cleansing Peak was progressing in an orderly fashion. Mind Cleansing Peak was thriving and showing signs of rising.

Everyone was very busy. Even Jiujiu. Yang Ling had taken it to the Blacksmith Workshop to take on the role of smelting master.

However, all that had nothing to do with Lin Xun.

At that moment, his long hair was draped over his shoulders like a shawl, and his beard was unkempt. Only his dark eyes were incredibly bright.

He crouched down on the dirt floor, his expression calm and focused. His dust-covered fingers casually drew across the ground.

A wisp of azure aeth power carved out numerous tracks under the control of his mighty spirit sense power like the tip of a brush.

The tracks were incredibly natural without any sparks or showy displays, just like flowing clouds and water.

Before long, Lin Xun lifted his finger and got up. Just as he was about to leave, a strange feeling surged to his heart. He abruptly paused and looked at the dirt floor.

He saw a pale green seedling break the surface of the soil from the rune pattern he had just drawn. It grew at an astonishing speed. A stem rapidly sprouted and gave birth to leaf buds.

In the blink of an eye, a one-foot-long phoenix tail grass had matured and swayed gracefully in the breeze.

The rune pattern had already faded from the ground.

A smile quietly spread across Lin Xun's lips.

His smile was extremely bright because he knew the scene represented that he had finally reached the Spirit Accumulation Realm in the art of runes!

The so-called Spirit Accumulation involved nurturing a spiritual nature using the mysterious power of runes!

For example, the phoenix tail grass had been awakened and produced a unique spiritual nature like it had gained life force from the green wood rune. As a result, it grew in the blink of an eye!

It was similar to turning rock into gold. It seemed insignificant, but the power could turn something rotten into something beautiful!

The power was called Spirit Accumulation in the art of runes!

Only true rune grandmasters could comprehend the mystery of Spirit Accumulation, and only very few could master it in the end.

Such people were considered rare existences in the world.

This was because it was too difficult to acquire the Spirit Accumulation skill. It was a mysterious and obscure process that granted certain items and objects a spiritual nature using the art of runes.

Some rune grandmasters would never even reach the door of the Spirit Accumulation Realm even with a lifetime of hard work if they weren't talented enough!

At least, as far as Lin Xun knew, Old Mo was only one step from controlling Spirit Accumulation.

It might be only one step, but it was more like a giant door blocking his way. Through the door was another world—a whole new world!

It was two completely different worlds.

In the empire, only rune grandmasters who had mastered the Spirit Accumulation skill had the potential to become a rune founder.

Additionally, only they could create rune armaments!

It was easy to imagine how remarkable it was for Lin Xun to be able to control Spirit Accumulation skills at such a young age.

If this matter spread out, no one would believe that a youngster could become a rune grandmaster with the Spirit Accumulation ability!

However, it might be a difficult thing for Lin Xun, but it wasn't something remarkable.

This was because Mister Lu had shown him many Spirit Accumulation means from a young age.

Mister Lu had also indifferently said to him, "Spirit Accumulation is nothing special. It just proves that you are a true rune master. There is still a long path to go."

Lin Xun still vividly remembered his words

When he was young, he had thought that only when he could accumulate spirit would he be able to become a respected rune master.

However, now that he had grown up, he knew that Spirit Accumulation might seem nothing special to Mister Lu, but it was no easy task to the vast majority of rune masters in the world!

"I can start to prepare now..." Lin Xun muttered, drawing a deep breath.

His eyes became indescribably bright and resolute. He no longer looked as berserk as he did a few days ago.

In his mind, his insights and comprehension into the art of runes he had obtained recently had all been digested.

He was most surprised to learn that, after these days of training, his cultivation had solidified, and he was close to breaking through to the intermediate Spirit Sea Stage!

Most importantly, when he circulated his vast aeth power in his body, he realized he had perfect control over it like it was his own arm. He didn't feel any signs of discomfort caused by the rapid improvements in his cultivation like he did in the past.

This was an unexpected benefit from tempering his rune skills!

Every time he inscribed a rune pattern, he had to precisely control his aeth power. After thousands of times, he inevitably became incredibly skilled in it.

.....

Seven days later in the Blacksmith Workshop.

As Yang Ling looked at the twelve rudimentary versions of aeth tools in front of him, a satisfied smile lit up his face.

The twelve rudimentary aeth tools included swords, spears, blades and axes, and all of them were of completely different styles.

This was what Lin Xun had asked him to help refine. Rune masters could make such materials into true earth-grade aeth tools!

Yang Ling was just puzzled about what Lin Xun planned to do with the aeth tools.

Before long, Lin Xun appeared in the Blacksmith workshop and nodded in satisfaction at the rudimentary aeth tools.

Yang Ling is indeed a rare talent in forging weapons. These rudimentary aeth tools are all top class.

Lin Xun's long hair was tied up, his beard was cleanly shaved and his figure was graceful. He exuded an ethereal demeanor.

He put away the twelve rudimentary aeth tools and instructed, "Can you continue to help me make rudimentary aeth tools according to the standards of Earth-grade aeth tools? I will specially send someone to come and collect them when they are done."

Lin Xun hastily left.

Yang Ling frowned in bewilderment. Could the Young Master still intend to make aeth tools by himself?

He had also heard that Lin Xun was also a rune master and that he had designed the latest Violet Hero Battleship that the empire used.

Yang Ling still couldn't understand why Lin Xun, the master of Mind Cleansing Peak and a cultivation genius, would be tinkering with all these things and not focus on important affairs.

In the end, Yang Ling couldn't hold back and shared his thoughts with Old Diao. Old Diao also looked bewildered and couldn't understand what Lin Xun was doing.

Old Diao then told Blood Thorn...

It didn't take long for everyone on Mind Cleansing Peak to know that Lin Xun, the young master in charge of Mind Cleansing Peak, was playing around with making weapons!

Many people expressed their concerns. Mind Cleansing Peak was thriving, but the master of Mind Cleansing Peak was not attending to his proper duties.

Only Xiaoke knew that Lin Xun was not doing irrelevant work but that he was an extraordinarily talented rune master.

Of course, Xiaoke was also very curious about what treasures Lin Xun planned to make from the months of preparations.

Spirit Vulture knew, but he couldn't say it. After all, it was a shocking matter to make a rune armament and it would cause an uproar.

Of course, Spirit Vulture was certain that Lin Xun wasn't currently making a rune armament because a rune armament wasn't made from such rudimentary aeth tools.

What is Lin Xun planning to do?

Spirit Vulture couldn't help but feel curious.

Chapter 383 Intense Weapon Refining Operation

Seven days whizzed by under everyone's anticipation.

Lin Xun had been in closed-door cultivation on the third floor of Mind Cleansing Peak and hadn't left once. No one knew what he was doing.

Soon, many people lost their patience. Only Xiaoke and Spirit Vulture continued to pay close attention to him.

One day, Lin Zhong stepped out of Mind Cleansing Hall.

Both Xiaoke and Spirit Vulture immediately turned their heads towards the Mind Cleansing Hall. For the past seven days, Lin Zhong has been waiting for orders on the third floor of Mind Cleansing Hall.

Since he has left Mind Cleansing Hall, does that mean Lin Xun has finished his closed-door cultivation?

Xiaoke and Spirit Vulture found it odd that Lin Zhong had an indescribably strange expression on his face. He had a dazed look like he had encountered something shocking and incomprehensible.

Xiaoke couldn't help but ask, "What happened?"

Lin Zhong suddenly snapped awake and couldn't help but smile bitterly. "It's so unbelievable."

He led Xiaoke and Spirit Vulture to a secret room and, with a flick of his sleeve, brought out twelve glowing aeth tools.

The dazzling glow immediately illuminated the room.

Blades, spears, swords, halberds, battleaxes, hooks, forks...There were a total of twelve aeth tools, and each one emitted a completely different aura.

In particular, one of the aeth blades constantly produced a clear cry in the air, released violet-colored haze, and shone with a fierce, baleful aura.

The air around constantly whimpered like it was being torn apart!

There was no need for Lin Zhong to explain as Xiaoke and Spirit Vulture were both stunned into silence.

After a long moment, Xiaoke drew a deep breath and exclaimed. "Twelve earth-grade aeth tools!"

They knew that Lin Xun had no doubt been making aeth tools in the past seven days, but they couldn't believe that he was able to produce twelve earth-grade aeth tools during that period!

In other words, he had made two earth-grade aeth tools almost every day. His speed was too incredible.

Earth-grade aeth tools were much superior to human-grade aeth tools!

It was an extremely troublesome process to create one. Only Spirit Sea cultivators could perfectly control weapons of that level and unleash their full power.

Generally speaking, it would take an experienced rune grandmaster at least three to five days to make a single earth-grade aeth tool.

This showed how abnormal it was for Lin Xun to produce so many in such a short period.

Xiaoke was most shocked because she remembered that Lin Xun had taken twelve rudimentary aeth tools from Yang Ling, and now twelve earth-grade aeth tools were lying in front of her. What did it mean?

Lin Xun had a perfect weapon refining success rate and hadn't failed once!

His abnormal speed and success rate astonished Xiaoke as he was just a young rune master.

Even though she already knew about Lin Xun's extraordinary mastery in the art of the runes, she couldn't imagine how he could manage to do that.

While Xiaoke was inwardly quivering from shock, Spirit Vulture said aloud, "One of them is an earth-grade aeth treasure!"

Aeth treasure!

This was an incredibly rare treasure with an unimaginable power that was seen as a gift from the heavens.

Only a handful of rune grandmasters in the empire could refine aeth treasures!

Lin Xun hadn't only made twelve aeth tools in seven days, but one of them was also a heaven-blessed aeth treasure. Spirit Vulture couldn't maintain his composure anymore.

It's too unbelievably terrifying!

Although it is rare to find rune masters in their teens, it's not impossible. But there has never been anyone able to produce two earth-grade aeth tools in one day as Lin Xun did!

Xiaoke and Spirit Vulture finally understood why Lin Zhong looked so dazed.

No one would be able to keep calm after witnessing Lin Xun's feat, right?

After all, it is too unbelievable!

"Young master said that apart from the Purple Soul Blade, you can decide how to distribute the rest. You may want to use them as rewards," Lin Zhong said after a while.

"That's a good idea, treasures like these shouldn't be sold," Spirit Vulture agreed.

"Reward? He's so smart. We can arrange an assessment with these aeth tools as rewards to select talents!"

Xiaoke was from Blood Kill Camp, so she knew a lot about assessments, rules and rewards.

It wouldn't be difficult to select some talents from Mind Cleansing Peak if they had such aeth tools as rewards.

Lin Zhong quickly left. He headed to the Blacksmith Workshop to retrieve sixteen more rudimentary aeth tools from Yang Ling and returned to the third floor of Mind Cleansing Hall and handed them to Lin Xun.

.....

Another seven days passed.

Lin Zhong walked out of Mind Cleansing Hall once again.

Xiaoke and Spirit Vulture were astonished to see Lin Zhong. They had thought that Lin Xun would take longer than seven days to make sixteen Earth-Grade aeth tools.

They were wrong.

Lin Zhong was someone who had seen and experienced many storms in his lifetime. Additionally, he had already witnessed Lin Xun's extraordinary earlier feat. Even so, he still had a dazed look on his face when he stepped out of Mind Cleansing Hall.

Soon, Lin Zhong revealed that Lin Xun had successfully produced sixteen earth-grade aeth tools and hadn't failed once in those seven days.

The greatest difference from last time was that he had made two aeth treasures!

Si—

Xiaoke and Spirit Vulture narrowed their eyes and their minds shook.

Aeth treasures are incredibly rare. A rune master would be extremely proud if they were able to make one in their lifetime.

However, refining aeth treasures doesn't seem to be a problem for Lin Xun!

“He made twelfth earth-grade aeth tools last time and one was an aeth treasure,” Spirit Vulture exclaimed. “And now, he made sixteen aeth tools, two of which are aeth treasures! His rapid progress in the art of runes is too abnormal!”

Xiaoke was speechless.

Lin Xun again kept the two aeth treasures, one of which was a pair of bronze truncheons and the other was a chest plate.

As for other aeth tools, Lin Zhong left them with Spirit Vulture.

Another seven days passed by in the blink of an eye.

Lin Xun made another nineteen earth-grade aeth tools, but only two were aeth treasures.

Even so, Xiaoke and Spirit Vulture were astonished once again and lost their composure.

Fortunately, Lin Xun ended his intense weapon refining operation after that, which made both Xiaoke and Spirit Vulture breathe a sigh of relief.

In truth, if Lin Xun continued to produce weapons, they didn't know whether they could withstand the shock of his result every time.

After days of observation, Spirit Vulture no longer doubted whether Lin Xun could make rune armaments.

Instead, he was full of anticipation. At least, given Lin Xun's mastery in the art of runes, he had proved he had the potential to make a rune armament!

Other rune masters would never have such potential in their entire life.

.....

In the secret training room on the third floor of the Mind Cleansing Hall.

Lin Xun lay on the ground, panting and sweating profusely.

He was chewing a piece of Snow Infant Jade Ginseng in his mouth while its tremendous medicinal power was constantly replenishing his exhausted aeth power.

For the past couple of weeks, apart from meditating and cultivating, he had been frantically making weapons and honing his rune skills.

The high-intensity training had an amazing effect: he not only produced many earth-grade aeth tools but also made five aeth treasures!

In addition, his cultivation had improved tremendously. He had broken through into the intermediate Spirit Sea Stage!

Given his current combat strength, he would be able to effortlessly defeat Hua Wuyou unlike before.

At the same time, the improvement in his cultivation meant that his spirit power had also soared. Currently, nine hundred spirit stars were lit up in his mind-sea!

The dazzling, dreamy starry light filled his mind-sea and bathed his spirit.

The increase in his spirit power meant that Lin Xun could more easily and accurately control and manipulate a rune brush and rune ink when inscribing rune patterns.

For example, his speed of producing aeth tools had improved so tremendously precisely because his spirit power had been strengthened, which catalyzed everything.

Soon, he consumed the last stem of the Snow Infant Jade Ginseng.

The dried-up sea of qi in Lin Xun's body had been restored and refilled with vast pale cyan aeth power. The moon and sun reflected one another, stars gathered around them, and a storm vortex stretched across the sky.

Lin Xun rose to his feet, his dark eyes clear, and his figure graceful and ethereal.

Without further delay, he walked out of the training room and headed straight to Mind Cleansing Hall to find Lin Zhong.

"Lin Zhong, how is the preparation for the aeth treasures going?" Lin Xun asked.

"Young Master, everything is prepared."

"Okay, send someone to deliver them to Shi Yu, Ning Meng, Ye Xiaoqi and Gong Ming.

Lin Xun issued an order and then said, "After you handle that matter, can you and Third Old Zhu go on a walk with me."

"Young Master, where do you want to go?"

It had been three months since Lin Xun's duel with Hua Wuyou, and he hadn't left Mind Cleansing Peak since then. What did he plan to do?

Lin Xun didn't try to hide anything and said bluntly, "The headquarters of the Rune Master Association."

Chapter 384 Grandmaster-Level Assessment

Stone Cauldron Alms.

Shi Yu crossed one leg over the other, frowning at Lin Xueting, who was opposite him.

Lin Xueting smiled, his expression unchanged.

He was Lin Xuefeng's cousin. He was intelligent, friendly, and good at socializing. Lin Zhong had entrusted him to deliver a gift from Lin Xun.

The gift was stored inside the jade box in Lin Xueting's hand.

"Excuse me for being blunt, but isn't Lin Xun treating me like an outsider? Why did he suddenly bring me a gift?" Shi Yu asked in bewilderment.

Lin Xueting said respectfully, "I'm only responsible for delivering the item. I don't know anything else. Young Master, maybe if you open the box and take a look at the gift first you'll have a better idea."

Shi Yu suddenly smiled, a proud look in his eyes. "Do you think my Stone Cauldron Alms doesn't have enough treasures? Take it back. Tell Lin Xun that if he treats me like an outsider again then don't ever come to see me!"

Lin Xueting smiled bitterly. "If you don't accept it, I can't complete my mission and can't report back."

Shi Yu snorted coldly, "Lin Xun has such a big temper now!"

Lin Xueting frantically shook his head. "Young Master, please don't misunderstand. Even if you don't accept it, at least take a look inside the box. If you don't like the item, I can bring it back and explain."

"Fine, open it. Let's see what the hell Lin Xun is doing this time," Shi Yu said impatiently,

As Lin Xueting lifted the lid of the jade box, a blast of chilling azure light shot out and caused a layer of frost to form around the surrounding space.

Huh?

Shi Yu didn't care much at the beginning. He just wanted to quickly glance inside the box and send Lin Xueting away, but he couldn't move his eyes away from the box when it opened.

A pair of bronze truncheons lay quietly in the jade box. Both were two feet and four inches in length and thick as a candle pillar. The bodies were engraved with obscure runes and exuded a soul-chilling azure light

Shi Yu was most skilled in using bronze truncheons. His go-to weapon was a pair of earth-grade treasures called Dragon Sealed Jade Truncheon. They were the masterpieces of a famous rune master and couldn't be bought with money.

However, compared with the bronze truncheon in the jade box, his current set of weapons was much dimmer and even... more inferior!

Suddenly, Shi Yu got up, took out the items from the jade box, and examined them closer. His eyes gleamed even more brightly.

Aeth treasure!

It's a pair of earth-grade aeth treasures!

Shi Yu's face lit up with undisguised excitement, and he was captivated by the treasures. The pair of truncheons was so perfect that he felt a strong connection with them as he held them in his hands.

"Young Master, are you satisfied?" Lin Xueting asked gently.

"I'm satisfied, very satisfied. That bastard Lin Xun gave me an unexpected surprise!" Shi Yu laughed, beaming with joy.

It was incredibly rare to find aeth treasures of such a high grade!

"Does this have a name?" asked Shi Yu.

"It hasn't been named yet. Cousin Lin Xun said that you are the most fitting person to give them a name."

"Hahaha, Lin Xun knows me so well. Well then, let's call them Azure Cloud Bronze Truncheons."

"Rise into the azure clouds! What a good name!" Lin Xueting said with a smile.

He couldn't help but swell with pride.

A similar situation happened to Ning Meng, Gong Ming and Ye Xiaoqi. Lin Xun gave them each an earth-grade aeth treasure!

Ning Meng and the others were elated and couldn't put their new weapons down like it was their most precious treasure.

These treasures were Lin Xun's way of paying them back.

Recently, Shi Yu and the others had secretly been targeting the West Creek, Cloud Weight, and Flying Peak Lin Clans by suppressing their businesses. As a result, the three branches had fallen into endless turmoil.

How could Lin Xun forget what they had done for him?

Therefore, he specially made an aeth treasure for each of them to express his gratitude.

Of course, he also made a blade for himself, an earth-grade aeth treasure called Purple Soul!

As for the Flowing Light Blade, it was only a mid-human-grade aeth treasure. Its power was no longer sufficient for Lin Xun after he broke through to the intermediate Spirit Sea Stage.

.....

A jeweled carriage drove out of Mind Cleansing Peak and headed towards the headquarters of the Rune Master Association.

Very quickly, Lin Tianlong, the West Creek clan leader, was notified that Lin Xun had left Mind Cleansing Peak.

His spirits were immediately lifted. He gritted his teeth and roared, "That little trash has finally emerged! Quickly invite the two clan leaders of Cloud Weight and Flying Peak over and notify them that we have an important matter to discuss!"

Within a few minutes, Lin Nianshan and Lin Pingdu arrived in high spirits after finding out that Lin Xun had finally emerged after months of hiding on Mind Cleansing Peak.

The three branches had lived miserably in recent days. Their commercial properties had been repeatedly suppressed, and they had each lost close to one million gold coins every month. The damage had caused a huge turmoil in their respective clans, and many clan members couldn't eat or sleep properly.

Although it was the doing of Stone Cauldron Alms and other major clans, Lin Xun was the true culprit!

How could they not hate Lin Xun?

They had already given up all hope to regain control of Mind Cleansing Peak and were only focused on how to kill Lin Xun and retaliate!

"Everyone, the boy has finally left Mind Cleansing Peak. This is undoubtedly the best chance for us to kill him now."

Lin Tianlong's expression was ice-cold and filled with killing intent. "However, Third Old Zhu and Lin Zhong are always with him. Do we have a strategy? If we fight recklessly, the outcome will be unpredictable."

Third Old Zhu!

That name made the glow of excitement fade from the faces of Lin Nianshan and Lin Pingdu. Third Old Zhu was a fierce and ruthless man who could easily suppress Hua Qiancheng and was brave enough to fight Hua Qinglin, one of the five tiger generals of the empire. How could he be an ordinary person?

Furthermore, Lin Zhong might seem like only an old servant who guarded Mind Cleansing Peak, but he was a Heaven Ascension cultivator!

It was undoubtedly difficult to assassinate Lin Xun with those two masters protecting him.

"If we ask any of the patriarchs of our three clans to help, perhaps...we can solve this problem," Lin Nianshan said hesitantly.

"No!"

Lin Tianlong immediately refused, "The patriarchs need to oversee the clan. If something happens in the clan when they are away, the consequences could be disastrous. This plan is too risky."

"Then...how about we ask some powerful Heaven Ascension cultivators to help us?" Lin Pingdu said aloud.

"No, it's still too risky. Now isn't the time to fight to the death with Lin Xun," Lin Tianlong rejected his suggestion again.

Lin Nianshan and Lin Pingdu fell silent. Their opportunity had finally come, but they were faced with great challenges, and they didn't know what to do.

At that moment, a subordinate rushed in to report that Lin Xun had arrived at the headquarters of the Rune Master Association.

"What is that kid doing there? Does he want to recruit rune masters to work for him?" Lin Tianlong frowned.

However, Lin Nianshan suddenly thought of something and burst out laughing. "I have a plan!"

Lin Tianlong and Lin Pingdu looked at Lin Nianshan at the same time. "What plan?"

"I have a close friend who works in the headquarters of the Rune Master Association. He is a true rune grandmaster and wields great power. If we can get him to help us, we can completely control Lin Xun!"

Lin Nianshan's face shone with excitement.

"Really?" Lin Tianlong's face also lit up.

"Haha, I guarantee it. Once the kid steps into the headquarters of the Rune Master Association, Third Old Zhu and Lin Zhong won't be able to protect that kid anymore. If we dispatch Old Devil Qu to join forces with my friend....." A ruthless glint flashed across Lin Nianshan's eyes. "Lin Xun is doomed!"

"Can I ask who your friend is?" Lin Pingdu couldn't help but ask.

"When this task is completed, you two will know." Lin Nianshan smiled, acting mysterious.

Lin Tianlong immediately made a decision. "Let's go with your plan. Quickly start now!"

.....

Rune Master Association headquarters.

"Young man, are you here to be verified as a rune master?" An old man looked at Lin Xun in surprise.

"Yes." Lin Xun nodded.

"Haha, amazing! If a young rune apprentice like you can pass the verification and become a true rune master, I'm sure you will bring honor to your ancestors."

The old man said with a smile, "Come, pay a fee of one thousand gold coins and take a token..."

Before he finished his sentence, Lin Xun shook his head with a smile. "Apologies, I'm here to be verified as a rune grandmaster."

"What?"

The old man's jaw dropped open, and his eyes widened in disbelief.

Lin Xun handed over his token that represented his identity as an initiate rune master and said, "Please take a look."

The old man glanced at it, and his expression suddenly changed. "It turns out that you're already a rune master at such a young age."

He scratched his head. "But...but you're so young! Do you really want to be verified as a rune grandmaster? Are you mistaken?"

Lin Xun just smiled and didn't respond.

The old man took a deep breath, pondered for a moment, and signaled an attendant over. "Take this young master to the grandmaster-level assessment hall."

The attendant was also taken aback. He swept a strange glance over Lin Xun, but in the end, he suppressed his bewilderment and led the way for Lin Xun.

“Ah, young people are impatient nowadays. He’s just an initiate rune master and hasn’t even made it as an intermediate or advanced rune master, yet he wants to be verified as a rune grandmaster. This...this is too ridiculous.” The old man shook his head.

He knew that Lin Xun had pretty good talent in the art of runes since he could become an initiate rune master at such a young age, but he thought that the youth was too arrogant and wouldn’t pass the rune grandmaster verification assessment.

In the art of runes, no one had ever reached the sky in one step!

Chapter 385 Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate

The hall was grand and magnificent with towering stone pillars and an unimaginably large space.

Rows of seats were arranged around the hall, and in the center was a tall, black jade stage hundreds of feet wide.

Nine stone tablets stood tall on the black jade stage.

Each tablet was ten feet high, mottled, and covered with the markings of time.

It was the grandmaster-level assessment hall!

That black jade stage was called the Dragon Gate Stage, and the nine ancient stone tablets were the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate that many rune masters worshiped in the world!

When Lin Xun arrived under the guidance of an attendant, he noticed many figures already seated around the hall.

Among them, there were either mighty-looking middle-aged people or elderly folks with gray hair.

Relatively speaking, there were very few young people like Lin Xun.

“Young master, please wait here. When the verification begins, you only need to follow the instructions and head up the stage for the assessment,” explained the attendant before he left in a hurry.

Lin Xun sat down on a random seat. Then, he turned to the Dragon Gate Stage in the center of the hall.

Before he arrived, he had already researched and found out that he had to pass the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate to be verified as a rune grandmaster.

Outsiders couldn’t intervene in the verification assessment process to ensure fairness.

Of course, it also prevented cheating, and a rune master would not pass if they were not strong enough.

Rune masters who were able to pass the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate were unquestionably powerful and not ordinary.

However, it wasn’t that easy to pass the tests.

Suddenly, a clamor of discussion in the distance caught Lin Xun’s attention.

"I heard that even Elder Cheng Jing, an advanced rune grandmaster from the Divine Workshop, and Elder Shen Tuo, the chief rune grandmaster of the Rune Department of Qinglu Academy, as well as other extraordinary people, have arrived in the headquarters of the Rune Master Association."

"Haha, only a person as amazing as Haidong can attract the attention of so many big shots."

"Yes, Haidong has been studying the art of runes for over ten years. He can definitely pass the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate!"

Everyone was full of admiration as they shifted their gaze to a black-robed youngster.

The young man had an impressive presence, dark brows, and bright eyes. He was also quite handsome.

He saluted the praises with a cupped fist salute and said with a smile, "Everyone, you flatter me. I only made it so far because of your care and cultivation."

"Haidong, you're too modest."

"Yes, we came to cheer for you. You must do well."

The elderly and middle-aged people all spoke at the same time, their words full of encouragement and admiration.

The Chu Family?

Lin Xun looked surprised. In the Forbidden City, there are three major rune master families, namely the Chu Family, the Feng Family and the Mo Family.

The young man called Chu Haidong has to be from the Chu Family, one of the three major rune master families since he came to be verified as a rune grandmaster.

Lin Xun suddenly thought of Chu Feng in Haze City. Chu Feng also came from the Chu Family, but an incident caused him to be expelled from the family, so he had to hide in Haze City.

A thought struck Lin Xun's mind. He realized that he still didn't know why Chu Feng had been expelled from the family, and he wanted to inquire about Chu Feng's situation when he had a chance.

However, he didn't plan to do that now to avoid stirring unnecessary waves.

Following that, Lin Xun roughly determined the identities of the other people in the hall through observation.

He was most surprised to find that only four to five people among them were there to be verified as rune grandmasters, including Chu Haidong.

As for the rest, they were all rune masters spectating the assessment or cheering for Chu Haidong and other cultivators participating in the verification assessment.

The elderly and middle-aged people around Chu Haidong were all from the Chu Family and were all rune masters. There were around a dozen of them.

This clearly showed that the Chu Family, as one of the three main rune master families, had a remarkable foundation.

“Huh? Lin Xun!?”

A surprised voice suddenly rang in the distance.

Lin Xun turned around and noticed an unfamiliar-looking man in a yellow robe staring wide-eyed at him.

Lin Xun?

His exclamation caught many people’s attention.

“Why are you here? Could it be that...you also came to participate in the rune grandmaster verification assessment?”

The yellow-robed man was so shocked that his voice became uncontrollably loud. It was hard for others to not take notice.

Before Lin Xun could speak, someone asked, “Brother, who is Lin Xun?”

“Who? He defeated Hua Wuyou a while ago, and his name shook the entire Forbidden City.”

The yellow-robed man had a strange look of excitement on his face like he had discovered some earthshaking secret.

An uproar broke out.

“It turns out that he’s Lin Xun. He is indeed very young as they say!”

“His duel against Hua Wuyou caused a sensation in the Forbidden City, and he became a well-known figure among the younger generation. But, why did he show up here?”

As the discussion continued, many gazes turned curious as they looked at Lin Xun like he was a monster.

Lin Xun smiled bitterly. I didn’t know I’d become this famous. What a surprise!

“Lin Xun, are...are you here to take the rune grandmaster verification assessment?” asked the yellow-robed man again.

Lin Xun nodded and answered him because he could tell that the man had no malice and was just curious.

However, his response lit up the yellow-robed man’s face. He exclaimed, “My heavens! The owner of Mind Cleansing Peak, an outstanding genius of the younger generation, has come to be verified as a rune grandmaster. This matter will no doubt cause a sensation in the Forbidden City!”

His expression was full of admiration and his voice was extremely loud. He stirred up everyone again and shock and disbelief filled their eyes.

What?

Is Lin Xun here to verify his qualification as a rune grandmaster?

That’s unbelievable!

Who would dare to imagine that a youngster with some dazzling achievements in cultivation suddenly wanted to be verified as a rune grandmaster?

That's too unbelievable!

Lin Xun understood their shock. After all, even Spirit Vulture was stunned for a long moment when he learned about his decision to be verified as rune grandmaster.

Amidst the uproar, someone sneered, "Absurd, a boy in his teens wants to become a rune grandmaster? How ridiculous!" It was an old man sitting next to Chu Haidong.

Everyone immediately recognized that the old man was an advanced rune master of the Chu Family. He was called Chu Yunkong and had a well-respected status due to his age and seniority.

Seeing Chu Yunkong suddenly speak out and question Lin Xun without any hesitation, many people snapped to their senses. Yes, Lin Xun is only in his teens, so how can he become a rune grandmaster?

Lin Xun grinned and didn't bother to explain to them.

However, his silence made Chu Yunkong more and more convinced that Lin Xun wasn't qualified enough.

He smiled coldly again. "Almost all of you here are rune masters, so you must all know how difficult it is to become a true rune grandmaster. Only one in ten thousand can make it past the chasm!"

Many people nodded inwardly. Indeed, rune grandmasters are extraordinary existences and one must possess extraordinary talent and foundation in the art of runes to become one.

Chu Yunkong continued, "I'm not talented, and I am limited by my mediocre aptitude. Even if I have exhausted my energy, I never managed to become a rune grandmaster and am now only just an advanced rune master."

After a pause, he sneered, "Based on that, how ridiculous is it that a teenager is arrogantly claiming he is qualified to become a rune grandmaster? How arrogant! How ignorant!"

He not only said it out loud but was also being extremely rude. It was no different from scolding Lin Xun in the face.

Everyone couldn't help feeling shocked and bewildered. Although Chu Yunkong's words are harsh, it's the truth. Lin Xun is only in his teens.

Does he think that anyone can become a rune grandmaster?

Everyone's gazes changed as they looked at Lin Xun again.

Even the best-tempered person wouldn't be able to stand being criticized by an old man and being stared at suspiciously by everyone.

Let alone the fact that Lin Xun was never a good-tempered person.

On the contrary, from a young age, he had already shown vengeful and ruthless characteristics, and he never liked to suffer a loss.

“Old man, just because you’re old doesn’t mean you’re wise. You’re so old already, but you can’t even control your mouth. Do you know that disaster starts from a loose tongue? Have you ever heard of the saying that the old farts who live to an old age are pests!?”

Lin Xun fought back. His voice was indifferent, but his every word rang clearly in everyone’s ears.

Many people froze. Lin Xun’s counterattack is so vicious! He called Chu Yunkong an old fart!

As expected, Chu Yunkong’s face darkened. “Little brat, you’re...too ridiculous!”

The faces of the Chu Clan members also darkened, and their eyes turned hostile.

Lin Xun seemed to not care and just said with a smile, “Old man, everyone can be a witness. I didn’t say a word just now, but you criticized me time and time again. Who is more ridiculous? I always respect the elderly and am always polite to the teachers, but old man you don’t even respect yourself. I’m embarrassed to let you sing a one-man show by yourself.”

“You—!”

Chu Yunkong never thought that Lin Xun would have such a vicious tongue. He was so furious that his eyes almost popped out, and his lungs almost ruptured.

Chu Haidong couldn’t help frowning and interrupting, “Lin Xun, what my uncle said just now may be a little extreme, but it’s the truth. You don’t have to agree but you don’t need to be so serious.”

Seeing Chu Haidong also stand up, Lin Xun scrunched his eyebrows and smiled contemptuously. “Stupid idiot!”

“You want to die!” Chu Haidong snapped.

Lin Xun shrugged., “What I said is the truth. You don’t have to agree but you don’t need to be so serious, right?”

Chapter 386 Feng Qingyou

An eye for an eye!

Lin Xun indifferently called Chu Haidong a stupid idiot, but then his next sentence was simply a stroke of genius. He made him have a taste of his own medicine. It was direct, fierce and beautiful.

Everyone couldn’t help but assume strange looks. Lin Xun is going all out!

Chu Haidong’s face turned livid, and he was so furious that he almost crushed his own teeth. “Do you want to be enemies with the Chu Family?”

“That depends on your attitude,” answered Lin Xun with a smile.

“Okay, very good! Let’s see if you can pass the rune grandmaster verification assessment today!”

Chu Haidong drew a deep breath and forcibly managed to curb his anger before uttering in the most ice-cold voice, “When the result comes out, it will prove who is the most ignorant one and who is the...stupid idiot!”

The last two words seemed to be squeezed out between his teeth.

He not only sounded overbearing, but also contemptuous. He wanted to use an upright way to prove Lin Xun's arrogance.

He was very confident that Lin Xun, a teenager, couldn't pass the rune grandmaster verification assessment.

After all, the tests in the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate were too difficult. In the past hundreds of years, only Feng Qingyou had passed all tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate at the young age of seventeen.

Other than Feng Qingyou, no one else had ever passed the assessment in their teens!

Based on those statistics, Chu Haidong didn't believe that Lin Xun could create another unprecedented record and miracle as Feng Qingyou had done.

Therefore, he was confident that Lin Xun would suffer great humiliation and consequences when the result came out!

Not only did Chu Haidong look down on Lin Xun, but also none of the other rune masters present believed Lin Xun could pass.

However, Lin Xun's expression didn't ripple in the slightest. He simply smiled and said, "Don't worry, it definitely won't be me."

"Stop!"

Chu Haidong didn't say anything more. He also knew that if he continued to quarrel with Lin Xun, he would only suffer from the youth's vicious tongue again and it wouldn't be worth it.

Only facts could suppress Lin Xun's arrogance!

The rune masters from the Chu Family all wore dark and unpleasant expressions. They couldn't wait to see Lin Xun be taught a lesson.

Especially Chu Yunkong. After Lin Xun had given him a tongue lashing, he almost went berserk and secretly planned to get revenge. How should I humiliate this kid after he fails the verification?

The little disturbance soon ended, and the atmosphere in the hall turned solemn.

Everyone knew that the dispute between Lin Xun and Chu Haidong would re-erupt after the verification assessment!

Meanwhile, in another elegant and magnificent hall at the Rune Master Association headquarters.

A light screen emerged in the center of the hall, presenting what was happening in the grandmaster-level assessment hall.

Six to seven elderly folks in different styles of clothing were sitting opposite the light screen.

The elderly people included Yu Beidou, the chief rune grandmaster at the headquarters of the Rune Master Association, Cheng Jing, an advanced rune grandmaster at the Rune Department of Qinglu Academy, and Shen Tuo, the head lecturer of Qinglu Academy's Rune Department.

Each one was an authority figure in the empire and well-respected by countless rune masters.

Most importantly, there was an extraordinarily pure and beautiful maiden with long, jet-black hair standing leisurely behind Shen Tuo.

Her clear eyes looked distracted.

If students of Qinglu Academy were around, they would immediately identify that she was Feng Qingyou, the genius maiden in the art of runes!

She was from the Feng Family, one of the three major rune master families in the empire. Her father was the head of the Feng Family, and she was a formal student of the Rune Department.

She had an extremely noble identity and status.

"Lin Xun's tongue is so vicious. Although Chu Yunkong's words were biased, he is still Lin Xun's elder. If Lin Xun had tolerated him a little, this little storm wouldn't have happened."

Yu Beidou couldn't help but shake his head as he watched the light screen.

"Haha, it's understandable. If Lin Xun isn't brave, then how would he dare to violently beat up the descendants of the Song Clan and accept the duel against Hua Wuyou?" Cheng Jing chuckled.

The other big shots were speechless. Indeed, Lin Xun is a sharp thorn. No one in the Forbidden City dares to anger two high clans like he did.

However, he is still alive and jumping around. It's too unbelievable.

"That guy is a little rascal," Feng Qingyou remarked playfully. She had also witnessed the quarrel, and she almost burst out laughing when Lin Xun called Chu Haidong a stupid idiot. Lin Xun might be the master of Mind Cleansing Peak, but he had such a vicious tongue.

"Speaking of which, where did Lin Xun get the confidence and the courage to take the verification assessment to become a rune grandmaster?" someone asked in puzzlement.

The other big shots nodded. Yes, the kid is only in his teens. He might be a genius in cultivation, but how would a kid like him understand the profoundness of the art of the runes?

"I received a report from my subordinate that Lin Xun had passed the initiate rune master verification when he was in Haze City. Come to think of it, he must have some talent in the art of runes," remarked Yu Beidou.

"An initiate rune master?" many influential figures exclaimed in shock. It turns out that Lin Xun has some accomplishments in the art of runes.

"Even so, it's still too absurd. He's just an initiate rune master and not an intermediate or advanced one, but he suddenly wants to become a rune grandmaster? He is too arrogant and ignorant!" Someone shook his head.

Indeed, it's impossible to jump ranks like that!

Especially in the art of runes. No one can ascend into the sky in one step!

"The kid might just be here to join in the fun. He just wants to test the waters. I bet he also has never thought of passing the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate," remarked Shen Tuo.

Many people echoed his thoughts. This was the most reasonable analysis.

"Join in the fun? It looks like he's more here to create trouble. He doesn't look like an honest guy at all."

Feng Qingyou pursed her lips and giggled. Her voice was soft, sweet and full of the naive charm of a young maiden.

"Let's just wait and see what the result of the assessment is."

Yu Beidou summoned an attendant with a wave of his hand. He then instructed, "Go, tell Linghu Xiu that he can start the assessment now."

The attendant hurriedly took the order and left.

.....

In the grandmaster-level assessment hall.

A graceful middle-aged man with a beard that framed his face walked up the dragon gate stage in a gorgeous luxurious robe.

He was called Linghu Xiu, and was a rune grandmaster working at the Rune Master Association headquarters!

His appearance made the atmosphere turn solemn and silent as all gazes shifted onto him.

"Sorry to keep you all waiting. The assessment will begin now. There are a total of five people who have signed up for the verification assessment. They are Chu Haidong, Hu Linchuan, Lou Kun, Yue Peng...and Lin Xun." Linghu Xiu's voice reverberated throughout the hall.

When he read out Lin Xun's name, Lin Xun sharply noticed Linghu Xiu sweep a glance over him before quickly retracting it.

Does this guy know me?

However, when Lin Xun observed him, he found nothing unusual, so he didn't think much of it.

He was at the headquarters of the Rune Master Association. Even if the Hua Clan sent people after him, they wouldn't be able to touch him because it was an important place of the empire and was under the protection of the imperial family!

"I believe you all know about the rules so I won't waste your time explaining. Let's just start the assessment. There is no specific order for the five candidates to take the verification assessment. Whoever is confident can first ascend the Dragon Gate Stage and receive the tests from the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate."

After Linghu Xiu finished speaking, he moved to one side and waited quietly.

“Since that’s the case, I’ll take the offer.”

A gray-haired old man stood up, and with a flash, leapt onto the platform. He drew a deep breath and sat down facing the nine ancient stone tablets.

Hu Linchuan!

Ruminative expressions crept into many rune masters’ eyes when they saw Hu Linchuan. He was a well-known advanced rune master in the Forbidden City.

His fame wasn’t attributed to his deep mastery in the art of the runes. Instead, he was well-known because he had taken the rune grandmaster assessment dozens of times and had failed every single time.

However, he still hadn’t given up. Although he was much older than other candidates, he was very persistent, so many rune masters knew about him.

“This is already the 38th time right?”

“Yes, sounds about right. But I don’t know if Hu Linchuan will be lucky this time and pass the assessment.”

“It’s hard to say. He has limited potential. He can’t possibly become a rune grandmaster.”

“That guy...is quite pitiful.”

Lin Xun quietly listened to the whispers around him, and he realized that the gray-haired old man who leapt onto the stage first had taken the verification assessment multiple times already.

A tinge of admiration rose in his heart as he looked at the slender figure sitting cross-legged on the stage.

The path of the Dao is difficult, but he hasn’t given up. This is already worthy of respect!

Buzz—

Suddenly, a wave of cryptic undulation swept the crowd and shrouded the hundred-foot stage.

Immediately, the nine mottled stone tablets, which seemed to have been standing since the start of time, released an illusory and dreamy brilliance.

Hu Linchuan’s body was also shrouded in brilliance.

Within seconds, the surrounding people could no longer see Hu Linchuan’s figure. They could only see clouds of light forming, and the nine ancient stone tablets seemingly awakening from a deep slumber.

The assessment was starting!

Lin Xun’s eyes narrowed. He cast all distracting thoughts away from his mind and stared intently at the Dragon Gate Stage. Everything before him seemed indescribably mysterious and piqued his curiosity.

Chapter 387 Hard Work Makes up for the Lack of Talent

Rumored had it that the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate had long existed since ancient times.

They were regarded as sacred objects of the Rune Master Association Headquarters, and the mysterious secret realm contained within the nine tablets was said to present many mysterious rune visions!

The most amazing thing was that a rune master would receive the qualification and identity of a rune grandmaster if they could pass the assessment of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate.

Hu Linchuan was taking the assessment!

“Last time, Hu Linchuan failed at the sixth stone tablet. I wonder how far he will get this time,” someone whispered.

“There is no need to guess. After all, Hu Linchuan is already very old and has already exhausted his potential. His chances of success this time are very slim,” someone stated confidently.

Each of the nine tablets of the dragon gate had its own secret realm.

Inside of each secret realm were different rune visions.

One had to comprehend and control a complete rune pattern from the rune visions within ten minutes to pass the test of the stone tablet.

One was only considered a true rune grandmaster once they passed the tests of all nine tablets.

However, it was easier said than done. The rune visions within each tablet became more and more obscure and difficult to understand than the previous one.

Additionally, there was a time limit to comprehend the rune visions in each stone tablet!

Candidates only had ten minutes.

Imaginably, it was incredibly difficult to pass the tests of all nine stone tablets.

The ninth tablet was called the Heaven Barrier Tablet as the rune vision contained within was very abnormal and difficult to pass like a barrier from the heavens!

In the past, many rune masters and also remarkable figures had failed at the ninth tablet despite their outstanding abilities.

It was no exaggeration to say that only one in a million rune masters could pass the final level!

This was also one of the most important reasons why there were so few rune grandmasters in the empire!

Although Lin Xun understood this, he hadn't truly experienced it so he ignored everyone else's discussion and was fully focused on the dragon gate stage.

Soon, a peculiar buzz rang from the surface of the first stone tablet. Then a divine golden arc of light emerged like a bolt of lightning!

It signified that Hu Linchuan had comprehended a complete rune pattern from the rune vision in the first stone tablet!

This didn't surprise anyone. Although Hu Linchuan had failed several times in the past, he had acquired many experiences. It would be more bizarre if he couldn't pass the first stone tablet.

Ten minutes quickly passed.

In the end, Hu Linchuan comprehended five complete rune patterns and five golden arcs of light emerged one after another from the first tablet.

The spectating rune masters judged Hu Linchuan's performance based on the number of golden arcs that had shot out from the stone tablet.

"As far as I know, the best record for the first stone tablet was nine golden arcs of light. Hu Linchuan isn't bad to form five," someone remarked.

However, someone quickly refuted, "How many times has that old guy taken the assessment? It would be more bizarre if he couldn't pass."

Many people nodded in agreement.

Only Lin Xun's expression remained unchanged. The experience was a part of a cultivator's strength. As they said, hard work was also a skill.

Amid the discussion, Hu Linchuan started the test of the second tablet.

He comprehended and controlled four complete rune patterns within the time limit and successfully passed the test.

Next, Hu Linchuan also successfully passed the test of the third, fourth and fifth tablets, but he only managed to comprehend and control around two rune patterns at each one.

When he started the test in the sixth stone tablet, many people paused their discussions and focused their attention on the Dragon Gate Stage.

Hu Linchuan had failed at the sixth tablet several times in the past. Could he make a breakthrough this time?

It's going to be difficult!

Many people weren't optimistic about Hu Linchuan's situation as they could tell that the number of arcs of golden light decreased as he progressed through the tests of the stone tablets.

Time flew by and the time limit was almost over. There wasn't the slightest movement from the sixth tablet, and many people couldn't help but shake their heads and sigh.

Some people smiled expectantly.

Lin Xun frowned, worried for Hu Linchuan.

Buzz!

Just as the time limit neared, a thunderous rumble and an arc of golden light surfaced under everyone's astonished, stunned and unbelievable gazes.

He actually...succeeded!

Everyone exclaimed.

The had never thought a miracle would happen to Hu Linchuan at the last moment!

Lin Xun breathed a sigh of relief. He didn't think it was a miracle as he knew it wouldn't have happened without Hu Linchuan's perseverance and dedication.

Rather than a miracle, it is more like a reward for his hard work!

Unfortunately, Hu Linchuan failed at the seventh tablet.

The splendid brilliance faded from the Dragon Gate Platform, clearly revealing Hu Linchuan's figure.

He stood up; his face pale and his body dripping with cold sweat. His long, gray hair sticking to the sweat on his thin, wrinkly face made him look even more distressed and haggard.

However, his eyes were extremely bright, filled with endless excitement and joy. It seemed like the failure didn't affect him in the slightest.

This was because he viewed the fact that he was able to pass the sixth tablet as a victory in itself!

Hu Linchuan's response moved many rune masters, and they couldn't help but applaud and praise him. He was worthy of their respect in terms of perseverance, persistence and tenacity.

Lin Xun couldn't help but smile. Hard work can make up for weakness and a lack of skill. One can make progress and improve despite poor talent and limited foundation as long as they don't give up!

Even if the progress is tiny, it is still progress!

In another huge hall.

Shen Tuo, the head lecturer of Qinglu Academy's Rune Department, also marveled at Hu Linchuan's performance, "Hu Linchuan...is also an impressive character!"

Many people echoed his words.

Everyone in the world took notice of, envied, and admired geniuses, but only very few people in the world noticed that there are only very few true geniuses in the world. Ordinary cultivators like Hu Linchuan with average qualifications were the vast majority.

However, among them, who would be able to never give up like Hu Linchuan?

"Unfortunately, cultivation is cruel, and the art of runes is even crueler and more brutal. Although Hu Linchuan persevered and never gave up, he came to a stop at the seventh tablet of the dragon gate," someone sighed.

This was the truth so the other people couldn't refute it.

.....

Amidst applause from the audience, Hu Linchuan stepped down from the Dragon Gate Stage.

It was at that moment a voice abruptly rang out, "It's good that you know your limit and know how far your strength is."

It was Chu Yunkong.

He said indifferently, "In my view, your action is no different from an ant shaking a giant tree."

Everyone was taken aback by his remark. Hu Linchuan had finally passed the test of the sixth tablet. How could he be so cold?

Hu Linchuan's expression visibly changed. He stood there blankly for a moment before he shook his head and turned away. He had been ridiculed and mocked for many years, and he was used to it.

"Hu Linchuan, I might have spoken harshly but it's for your own sake. I advise you to let go of your obsessions as soon as possible. Don't become crazy or you will only hurt yourself in the end," Chu Yunkong reminded again

His advice made many people feel a little uncomfortable.

Chu Yunkong was already very old, how could he speak so harshly to Hu Linchuan?

This reminded them of how Chu Yunkong had mocked and lectured Lin Xun.

Hu Linchuan ignored him and quickly disappeared from the hall.

"Haha, you have no ability, but you want others to be as unsuccessful as you. Today was an eye-opening experience for me," sneered Lin Xun

Chi Yunkong's behavior had disgusted him. He not only acted superior because of his age, but he also intentionally attacked and mocked other people. It's a miracle that a person like him is still alive and hasn't been beaten to death yet!

"Little trash, are you talking about me!?"

Seeing that it was Lin Xun again, Chu Yunkong's face immediately darkened, and anger surged to his heart. He hated the fact that he couldn't slap Lin Xun to death.

Everyone's eyes widened. Lin Xun is so courageous. He has provoked the clansmen of the Chu Family again and again. Who else would dare to do that?

"Old fart, I said if you're so capable, you should also take the assessment on the Dragon Gate Stage? Although Elder Hu Linchuan is not qualified enough, he has worked hard. But you, old fart, you're so old yet you're not even a rune grandmaster. What qualifications do you have to criticize other people?"

Lin Xun spoke rudely and coldly, "If you didn't have the protection of the Chu Family, you would have been killed countless times already!"

"You—!"

Chu Yunkong quivered with anger and his face flushed. He almost coughed up blood.

The others all assumed strange expressions. Although they didn't dare to laugh out loud for fear of the Chu Family's power, Lin Xun's pointed remarks still made them feel very satisfied.

In another hall, Yu Beidou, Cheng Jing, Shen Tuo and other authority figures all had strange looks on their faces. Lin Xun...is so courageous!

As for Feng Qingyou, she couldn't help but giggle out loud. Her charming, pure, and sweet smile resembled a beautiful flower blooming after the misty rain.

She found Lin Xun's fearlessness very interesting.

"Lin Xun, you insulted me earlier, and now you have provoked an elder of my Chu Family. Do you think my Chu Family don't dare to do anything to you?"

Suddenly, Chu Haidong rose to his feet, his expression icy-cold and his eyes sharper than a blade.

He glowered at Lin Xun and said loud and clear, "Let's compete against each other in the assessment on the Dragon Gate Stage! Facts will prove who is the ignorant and shameless, and who is the real...stupid idiot!"

Chapter 388 Shone With Boundless Radiance

If Lin Xun was remembering correctly, this was the second time that Chu Haidong had said something similar to him.

A smile rose involuntarily to his lips, but just as he was about to say something, Chu Haidong was already walking up the Dragon Gate Stage in large strides.

Chu Haidong was clearly mad as hell. He was eager to prove his point with actions and attack Lin Xun through humiliation.

"Elder Linghu, I'll take the assessment next," stated Chu Haidong with a cupped fist salute.

Linghu Xiu nodded with a smile on the side of the Dragon Gate Stage. He didn't stop the disturbance nor did he do anything else, so no one knew what he was thinking.

However, Lin Xun had sharply noticed Linghu Xiu's strange gaze toward him when he was arguing with Chu Yunkong and Chu Haidong.

If Lin Xun hadn't refined his spirit power to such a strong level, he wouldn't have perceived such a subtle change.

That guy seems to be paying very close attention to me...

Lin Xun couldn't understand the reason.

Buzz—

A wave of cryptic power rippled on the Dragon Gate Stage as mysterious light spread out like a tidal wave.

Chu Haidong sat down cross-legged on the ground with an extremely serious expression. As he slowly closed his eyes, bright and dazzling light completely shrouded his body.

The spectating rune masters all cleared their minds and focused on the Dragon Gate Stage.

The majority of the rune masters came to spectate because of Chu Haidong!

Chu Haidong was only in his early twenties, but he was already very accomplished in the art of runes and was known as a leading figure of the younger generation.

Furthermore, he was considered the most promising candidate to pass the rune grandmaster verification assessment!

Everyone knew he was a genius in the art of runes as he possessed such remarkable skills and abilities at such a young age.

Among the younger generations of the three major rune families, Chu Haidong might not be as well-known as Feng Qingyou, but apart from her, no other person could be compared with him.

Therefore, many rune masters rushed to the assessment site when they heard the news that Chu Haidong had come to be verified as a rune grandmaster. They wanted to catch a glimpse of his marvelous abilities.

Noticing the change in the atmosphere and the anticipation and excitement from the audience, Lin Xun realized that Chu Haidong had to have some ability despite his arrogance.

In the other hall.

A group of senior authority figures also began to pay serious attention to the assessment. They had gathered to see how far the leading figure of the Chu family's younger generation had reached in the art of runes.

Of course, if possible, they also wanted to use the opportunity to recruit Chu Haidong!

Yu Beidou came to represent the Rune Master Association headquarters.

Cheng Jing represented the Divine Workshop of the empire.

Shen Tuo represented the Rune Department of Qinglu Academy.

If Chu Haidong performed well and successfully passed the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate, they would recruit Chu Haidong with the utmost sincerity.

After all, rune grandmasters were very rare in the entire empire, and young rune grandmasters such as Feng Qingyou were even rarer.

If they could invite Chu Haidong to join them, they could perhaps cultivate him to become a rune founder in the future!

Of course, Chu Haidong first had to be outstanding enough to pass the certification examination.

.....

Splendid brilliance filled the Dragon Gate Stage and completely enveloped Chu Haidong's figure. The nine ancient tablets appeared even more sacred and mysterious after being bathed in the dazzling light.

Chi—

Not long after the assessment started, an arc of golden light flashed out like lightning from the first stone tablet.

“He comprehended a complete rune pattern so quickly! Is the Young Master trying to break the record?”

“He’s much stronger than Hu Linchuan!”

Members of the Chu Family exclaimed in excitement and compared Chu Haidong to Hu Linchuan.

However, no one paid any attention to them as they were all focused on Chu Haidong’s performance.

Only Lin Xun frowned. Then he chuckled. The Chu family dares to speak like that because they are used to being arrogant and fearless. It’s understandable. The Chu family is one of the three great rune master families, and very few people among the rune master community would dare to provoke them.

Chi—

Just as such a thought flickered across Lin Xun’s mind, another golden arc shot out from the first stone tablet.

It was like a spark—arcs of golden light flashed out from the tablet one after another. In the blink of an eye, eight arcs of golden light flooded the stone tablet!

Many rune masters’ faces were alighted with amazement. As expected, Chu Haidong lived up to his name and was worthy of being called a genius talent.

Chi—

Not long after that, another arc of golden light burst forth from the tablet and the entire audience cried out in surprise.

“The ninth golden arc!”

“That’s the previous record!”

“There is still some time before the time is up. Can Chu Haidong really create a new record?”

Everyone broke into a discussion.

Chu Haidong had demonstrated a powerful foundation. His performance at the first stone tablet alone already showed his remarkable accomplishments in the art of runes.

Even Lin Xun couldn’t help but narrow his eyes, surprised by Chu Haidong’s performance.

However, Lin Xun wasn’t so generous that he would be happy for his opponent.

Buzz—

Just as time was up, another arc of golden light emerged from the first stone tablet!

In other words, Chu Haidong had comprehended ten complete rune patterns within the time limit!

The audience broke into an excited clamor. He had broken the record and created history!

Many rune masters' eyes glimmered with awe and admiration when they looked at Chu Haidong. Feng Qingyou didn't achieve this but Chu Haidong did!

"Hahaha, Haidong is amazing!"

The members of the Chu Clan cheered, no longer able to contain their excitement.

"This is called true power, unlike some people who only know how to play tricks!" Chu Yunkong smirked.

He was clearly mocking Lin Xun.

However, Lin Xun was too lazy to care about him. That old man was born a scumbag. He can't live if he doesn't mock or insult other people.

In the other hall.

All the authority figures were moved. It was no doubt a joyful event to be able to witness a new record being set.

Furthermore, the record was set by a young man!

"Whether or not Chu Haidong passes the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate, the Rune Master Association headquarters is going to recruit him!" Yu Beidou said resolutely.

"Brother Yu, you can't eat hot tofu in a hurry. The Chu family has always had a good relationship with the Divine Workshop. I believe the kid will make a wise decision," Cheng Jing said with a smile.

"Hmph, then let's wait and see!"

"Fine."

Seeing the two fighting for Chu Haidong, Shen Tuo said indifferently to Feng Qingyou, "Look, Chu Haidong has created a new record and became so popular."

Feng Qingyou nodded distractedly. "When I passed the exam, I was only seventeen years old. Are you comparing me to him?"

Her slender and fair hands twiddled with her hair, and her pretty face was filled with indifference.

Shen Tuo laughed. Indeed, Feng Qingyou passed the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate at the age of seventeen, and Chu Haidong is in his twenties. Although he is still considered young, he is still inferior to Feng Qingyou.

.....

The assessment continued on the Dragon Gate Stage.

After passing the test of the first stone tablet and creating a new record, Chu Haidong had become the most dazzling figure there and stirred the audience.

As the assessment continued, his performance was just as remarkable. He passed one test after another without any difficulty.

The second stone tablet.

The third stone tablet.

The fourth...

Chu Haidong encountered no obstacle up until the ninth tablet. He passed the test successfully within the time limit every time.

Moreover, his results were extremely outstanding at every stone tablet. He had obtained no fewer than five arcs of golden light from the second stone tablet to the eighth.

Gasps and exclamations rippled throughout the audience. The clansmen of the Chu Clan were beaming with joy and excitement.

Chu Yunkong ridiculed and mocked Lin Xun from time to time.

Lin Xun just regarded him as a scumbag and ignored him.

However, that only made Chu Yunkong happier. He thought that Lin Xun's arrogance had been curbed and that the youth didn't dare to argue back.

The atmosphere stilled when Chu Haidong came to the ninth stone tablet.

This was because everyone knew that the last test was called the Heaven Barrier, and many outstanding geniuses had failed there in the past.

Therefore, no one was certain whether Chu Haidong would succeed at the last test.

The authority figures in another hall also quietly focused on the scene and no longer exchanged a word.

Chu Haidong didn't disappoint them. Before the time limit, a golden arc of light broke out from the ninth stone tablet.

Just before the time was over, another golden arc of light was born.

In other words, Chu Haidong had comprehended two rune patterns in the ninth test and successfully passed the Heaven Barrier, becoming a true rune grandmaster.

The atmosphere buzzed like never. All rune masters sprang to their feet, applauding and cheering.

Even Linghu Xiu stepped forward to congratulate Chu Haidong!

Under the gaze of everyone, Chu Haidong was shining with boundless radiance and became the focus of attention.

Chapter 389 Rare Talent

In another hall.

Yu Beidou was a little irritated, "Cheng Jing, do you really want to fight with me? Your Divine Workshop is full of talent. Do you need Chu Haidong?"

Cheng Jing sighed, "Our Divine Workshop indeed has many talents, but most of them are old people. We lack young talent like Chu Haidong, so I won't give up."

“You...”

Yu Beidou’s eyes went wide, and then he said through gritted teeth, “I’ll give you three aeth crystals, and you give me that kid!”

Cheng Jing smiled, but didn’t say a word.

Yu Beidou was so infuriated that he roared, “And a bunch of empty underworld grass! That is my limit! Don’t try to push your luck!”

Cheng Jing snorted, “I can give you all those things too! Why don’t you give me Chu Haidong?”

Yu Beidou’s expression changed. “Why?”

Cheng Jing said seriously, “It’s rare to find such talent. I have to do this.”

“You leave me with no choice! Let’s see who will have the last laugh!”

Cheng Jing smiled, “I have the same thought.”

The other big shots were a little dumbfounded to see the two turning crimson in the face from the quarrel.

But then again, if they could recruit Chu Haidong, it was worth it.

After all, it was rare to see a rune grandmaster of such a young age. There were likely less than a few in the entire Forbidden City.

This was because the art of runes was too demanding and difficult, and not everyone was able to embark on that path.

As a result, there was always an insufficient number of rune masters in the world.

Secondly, Chu Haidong was indeed an outstanding figure among the younger generation. At least, in terms of mastery of runes, very few people could compare to him.

Therefore, it wasn’t surprising that Yu Beidou and Cheng Jing, two authority figures, would fight over Chu Haidong.

“Shen Tuo, are you not going to fight over Chu Haidong as well?” an influential figure suddenly asked aloud.

His one sentence snapped everyone awake. Yes. It is not only the Rune Master Association and the Divine Workshop of the empire that can recruit Chu Haidong but also the Qinglu Academy!

However, Shen Tuo smiled. “It’s useless to fight. Chu Haidong is from the Chu Family. He has to receive the support of his clan wherever he plans to go. I’m not confident in convincing him to join Qinglu Academy.”

Understanding dawned on everyone.

Only Feng Qingyou knew very well that Shen Tuo was planning to sit on the sidelines and watch the others fight. He wouldn’t give up until the last moment.

This was how Chu Haidong was being treated at the moment. He had passed the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate and became a true rune grandmaster at the age of twenty. His achievements would no doubt cause a sensation once it spread to the Forbidden City.

It was normal that he received such special treatment.

He shone with boundless radiance and received attention from countless people!

At that moment, Chu Haidong proudly straightened his back on the Dragon Gate Stage, enjoying the rare honor.

However, when his gaze inadvertently swept past Lin Xun, the incident that happened between them suddenly flooded his mind again.

Without any hesitation, he strode down the Dragon Gate Stage, looked at Lin Xun and said indifferently, "Lin Xun, it's not too late for you to apologize. As long as you admit your stupidity and ignorance in front of everyone, I won't take this matter further. I also don't want people to say that I bully juniors like you."

The buzzing atmosphere suddenly turned strange.

Many people realized that Chu Haidong was about to get revenge on Lin Xun!

Some couldn't help but frown pitifully at Lin Xun.

Lin Xun had previously offended Chu Haidong, and now that Chu Haidong had passed the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate and created a new record, Lin Xun would utterly lose to Chu Haidong if he didn't do anything soon.

Most importantly, what did Lin Xun have to compete with Chu Haidong if he didn't use force?

To everyone's astonishment, Lin Xun showed not a tinge of panic as he faced Chu Haidong's fierce and domineering attitude. Instead, a hint of a smile spread across the corners of his lips.

Then, he spat out two words, "Stupid idiot."

The two words had too much destructive power especially since Chu Haidong was now a true rune grandmaster yet Lin Xun still insulted him in a very disrespectful manner!

Isn't he too arrogant?

The audience was stunned.

Even the authority figures in the other hall couldn't stop their lips from twitching. That kid...how to describe him?

Cheng Jing looked a little displeased as he said, "That kid Lin Xun is too daring and arrogant. He's like a thug! This is outrageous!"

The other authority figures echoed, "That kid is indeed a bit too much. Given his arrogance, he will destroy Mind Cleansing Peak one day!"

"Chu Haidong might be no match for Lin Xun in battle, but Lin Xun is definitely not qualified to criticize a gifted rune grandmaster!"

"It's inevitable that youngsters have some temper issues. His words mean nothing. Everything depends on true strength," Shen Tuo suddenly said aloud.

"Isn't Lin Xun also here to be verified as a rune grandmaster? We can see who's better between him and Chu Haidong based on his assessment result."

Everyone nodded in agreement.

"I somehow feel that Lin Xun dared to say that because he's confident in himself." Feng Qingyou suddenly spoke out.

Everyone shook their heads in disagreement. How old is Lin Xun? He is only an initiate rune master! How can he pass the verification assessment of rune grandmaster?

Even in the unlikely situation that he passed the assessment, how can he possibly be able to beat Chu Haidong who has set a new record?

Simply speaking, the majority of people didn't believe that Lin Xun could pass the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate.

Meanwhile, Chu Haidong couldn't believe that Lin Xun insulted him by calling him a stupid idiot again.

Is that kid blind?

Did he not see that I had just passed the assessment and became a true rune grandmaster? Did he not see that I have set a new record?

Does he...not know what fear is? Or what is admitting defeat?

All of a sudden, Chu Haidong's face turned livid and cold. If he hadn't forcibly suppressed his anger, he would have snapped at Lin Xun already.

However, Lin Xun suddenly got up and glanced around. "Is there anyone who wants to take the assessment next?"

The hall fell silent.

Another two rune masters were waiting to take the assessment but how would they dare get involved after witnessing everything?

Moreover, Chu Haidong was glaring at them with blade-like gazes as if he was saying, 'whoever of you dares to go next is going against our Chu family!'

Under such a threatening gaze, the two rune masters unhesitatingly shook their heads, indicating that Lin Xun could go first.

"Hurry up, no one wants to go before you!"

Chu Haidong's voice seemed to be squeezed out from between his teeth.

"Oh, I didn't think you would be able to stand being called a stupid idiot. As expected of the Chu Family descendants, your anger-suppressing skills are amazing," Lin Xun remarked with a smile.

“Little trash, are you done yet?”

Chu Yunkong seethed as he stood up, his hair standing up in anger.

“Old man, I can let you go first, do you dare to take it?” asked Lin Xun.

“You—”

Chu Yunkong was completely enraged. His eyes almost popped out. He hated the fact that he couldn't skin Lin Xun alive and crush his bones into ashes.

In the end, Chu Haidong stopped him and did not let him speak again.

Chu Haidong knew that Lin Xun would take advantage of the situation if he continued to talk. This guy is so shameless. How can our Chu Family be as shameless as him?

If so, what's the difference between us and women hysterically shouting on the street?

Lin Xun grinned, seemingly satisfied. He didn't say anything else and strode up the stage.

All rune masters were stunned. That kid...really dares to accept the challenge? Isn't he afraid of failing? Isn't he afraid of humiliation?

Even the big shots sitting in the other hall had to admit that Lin Xun was very courageous despite his vicious tongue.

He didn't bow his head in the unfavorable situation and got up on the stage to take the assessment.

However, everyone knew that Lin Xun's reputation would be tarnished if he failed. His quarrel with Chu Haidong would spread throughout the Forbidden City and he would become a laughingstock. He wouldn't be able to lift his head again!

When Lin Xun walked past Chu Haidong, he heard him whisper coldly, “Lin Xun, I can't wait to see your good show. Don't disappoint me.”

His voice was full of threat.

Lin Xun smiled slightly and headed straight up to the Dragon Gate Stage.

“Young man, are you ready?” Linghu Xiu asked, looking ruminatively at Lin Xun.

“Yes.”

Lin Xun nodded and sat cross-legged in front of the nine ancient stone tablets.

His back was straight as a spear and the moment he sat down, the calmest expression replaced the smile on his lips. There wasn't a ripple of expression on his face.

“Haha, I can't wait to see how that vicious little trash will fail miserably!” Chu Yunkong's voice was filled with malice.

“If that kid can pass the assessment, I will kneel and repent!”

“Hmph, he’s just a trash who knows how to play around. How can he possibly pass? He only knows how to entertain the crowd like a clown!”

The Chu Clan members shouted one after another.

The other rune masters looked at each other in dismay. Although they did not have any prejudice against Lin Xun, they were also not optimistic about his result.

Lin Xun was too young and he was only an initiate rune master, how could he possibly pass the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate?

The rune masters sighed inwardly. They didn’t know how the Chu Family would treat Lin Xun if he failed...

Soon, the familiar cryptic undulation again swept across the hall and the splendid brilliance enveloped the stage, drowning Lin Xun’s figure.

Chapter 390 The Legendary Golden Clouds Soar to the Sky

All eyes gathered on Lin Xun, and all with different expressions.

The clansmen from the Chu Family smiled coldly, waiting to see Lin Xun embarrass himself.

The other rune masters either pitied or frowned at him.

Even the authority figures in the other hall wore disapproving looks when they looked at Lin Xun.

Lin Xun only felt a cryptic power drowning him, and a wave of dizziness swept over him.

He seemed to have arrived in an ancient world of chaos where everything was gray and blurry and only a stone tablet was towering into the sky.

It was propping up the sky and connecting the sky and the earth!

Upon a careful look, one would notice that the stone tablet was of infinite height, entirely jet-black, and resembled a pillar.

The surface was engraved with strange and winding runes like earthworms. They all emitted a strange, mysterious glow like stars in the sky.

At a glance, they looked like countless magnificent paths running across the stone tablet’s surface.

Lin Xun immediately knew that that was the rune vision concealed in the dragon gate tablet!

However, he didn’t expect to see them in such a mysterious way. He felt like he had been plunged into an incomparably ancient secret realm and returned to ancient times.

Hu—

Lin Xun drew a deep breath, cast away the distracting thoughts in his mind, and began to observe the complicated rune visions around the tablet.

Instantly, he noticed that the thousands of rune tracks were all completely different, complicated and intricate.

It would be incredibly difficult for ordinary rune masters to comprehend and control a complete rune pattern from it.

Even Lin Xun couldn't help but frown because it was the first time he saw such a strange assessment method.

However, soon, he was captivated.

He had a greater mastery in the art of runes compared to ordinary people. After all, he had been fascinated by runes since a young age, so he wouldn't be hindered by the assessment thrown at him.

Within moments, Lin Xun successfully understood a complete rune pattern from the complicated rune vision.

Almost at the same time, the rune pattern in his mind surfaced on the stone tablet, glowing a golden hue.

Lin Xun suddenly felt enlightened. The rune pattern he comprehended would become his assessment result and presented on the Dragon Gate Stage.

However, he suddenly scrunched his brows.

That's not right!

It shouldn't be this simple.

He pondered and wasn't in a rush to act. Instead, he focused his mind on the rune vision around the tablet.

Before long, he indeed noticed something different and comprehended another complete rune pattern. Additionally, he found that the newly discovered rune pattern was in perfect harmony with the first one and together they transformed into a new rune pattern.

No, it should be called a rune array!

However, he soon found that even if the rune array seemed complete, it still wasn't that simple. He had a feeling that the rune array could be supplemented with even more rune patterns and become more complicated and greater.

He attempted to comprehend and observe again.

As he had thought, he confirmed his speculation!

The rune array could be supplemented with new rune patterns.

"The countless rune tracks on the first tablet seem to be completely different, but amazingly, they not only can be transformed into several different complete rune patterns but also combined in a special way, integrating into a rune array..."

"They are like the strokes of a character and can form different words. These words seem chaotic and disorderly, but they can create sentences when combined and even arranged into a splendid essay!"

Lin Xun's thoughts grew increasingly clear. He felt enlightened. He was completely immersed in the state of comprehending the rune vision and had forgotten that he was undergoing an assessment.

.....

Time flew by.

On the Dragon Gate Stage, there wasn't the slightest movement from the first tablet.

Everyone's expressions changed strangely. Lin Xun...wouldn't fail the first level right?

That would be pathetic!

Many people sighed inwardly. Why did Lin Xun go to such trouble? He is just an initiate rune master, but he came to be verified as a rune grandmaster. Why did he bring humiliation upon himself?

He is biting off more than he can chew!

"Haha, ten minutes is almost up, but the kid hasn't even comprehended a complete rune pattern. What a joke!" A clansman of the Chu Family burst into wild laughter.

"Hey, wasn't he very arrogant before? But he can't even pass the first level. How embarrassing!"

"When he fails, I have to properly humiliate him to get revenge for Haidong."

"We not only have to humiliate him, but also have to make the entire Forbidden City know about it and make Lin Xun become a laughingstock and not able to lift his head again!"

"He's a joke if he thinks he can be compared to Young Master Haidong!"

The clansmen of the Chu Clan sneered.

Especially Chu Yunkong. He was so excited that his fists were clenched tight like he could already see Lin Xun's tragic defeat.

It was the same for Chu Haidong.

When Lin Xun fails, I won't need to say anything to make everyone know who is the real stupid idiot!

"Lin Xun...I don't know what to say about him. He is arrogant, but if he is arrogant to the point of ignorance then he is too stupid," an influential figure sneered in the other hall.

"This is the price he has to pay for underestimating the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate. He is just an initiate rune master but he thinks he can pass the assessment! He thinks too highly of himself."

The other big shots also sighed. They found it very strange that he couldn't even pass the first level.

"As I said earlier, he is just here to entertain." Cheng Jing shook his head.

"How could that be? Based on Lin Xun's feats in the Forbidden City, he doesn't seem like such an arrogant and ignorant person..."

Shen Tuo frowned in bewilderment. He found it very bizarre that Lin Xun's performance was so poor.

Feng Qingyou nodded secretly. She shared the same thought with Shen Tuo. She also found Lin Xun's performance a little strange.

Just as time was almost up, there was still no movement from the first stone tablet.

Chu Haidong couldn't help but cackle to himself. Lin Xun, Lin Xun, your defeat is going to be ugly!

He was secretly planning in his mind how to humiliate Lin Xun and vent his anger.

It was then that an exclamation rang out, "That is?"

Immediately, mutters of exclamation and astonishment rippled through the hall.

"Heavens!"

"What...what is going on?"

Chu Haidong was startled at first before he noticed dazzling golden light rushing forth from the first tablet and rising excitedly like golden waves that were about to drown the entire stone tablet!

"That..."

Chu Haidong stared dumbstruck at the tablet. What's going on?

In the past years, never had such an abnormal thing happened in the tests of the Nine Tablets of the Dragon Gate!

The entire audience was bewildered.

Time was almost up but arcs of golden light continued to emerge from the stone tablet's surface, and a golden wave was rising. It was too unbelievable.

Linghu Xiu trembled all over, and his pupils enlarged like he had realized something.

In the other hall, the group of authority figures reacted immediately, crying out in astonishment.

"Golden clouds soar to the sky! The legend is true!"

"It is rumored that when one fully comprehends and controls the rune vision in the tablet, one will awaken the origin power within the stone tablet and produce dazzling golden clouds that resemble waves soaring in the sky! That kid... managed this?"

"I never thought that I would be so fortunate to witness such a legendary spectacle! Lin Xun is really...an abnormal freak!"

All the other influential figures broke into an uproar. Their faces glowed with excitement as they sprang to their feet one after another like they saw the birth of a miracle.

Yu Beidou, Cheng Jing, and Shen Tuo quivered, and their countenances visibly changed.

They understood what the spectacle Golden Clouds Soar to the Sky meant. Lin Xun had obtained a perfect result in the test of the first tablet!

They couldn't believe it. They had previously thought that Lin Xun was a stupid and arrogant idiot and was just bringing humiliation upon himself.

But then, the spectacle of golden clouds soaring into the sky appeared!

It felt like an invisible slap to their faces. They felt their faces burn with pain and flush with embarrassment.

Who would have thought that Lin Xun, a teenager, and only at the initiate rune master level, could achieve that?

He's too abnormal!

Feng Qingyou stared at the spectacle in stunned silence. She had long known that something was strange, but she had never thought that Lin Xun would achieve such a magnificent result.

Even she...didn't achieve such a remarkable result when she took the assessment!

"What a weird but amazing guy," Feng Qingyou muttered to herself.

At that moment, everyone still hadn't recovered from the shock. Most of them hadn't even heard of the legend of Golden Clouds Soar to the Sky, so they didn't understand how amazing and abnormal Lin Xun's result was.

Among them, included Chu Haidong and Chu Yunkong.

Their expressions morphed indefinitely. That kid...passed the assessment?

Chu Yunkong couldn't help but ask, "Brother Linghu, what's going on?"

Swoosh!

All gazes shifted to Linghu Xiu. Everyone was eager to know the answer.

Linghu Xiu's face was blank. It was only after a moment that he slowly regained his senses, drew a deep breath, and explained, "That's...the legendary Golden Clouds Soar to the Sky!"

Chu Yunkong was even more perplexed. "What is that?"

Linghu Xiu sneered inwardly. This old guy is as stupid as Lin Xun has said. He has lived for so long, but he has never even heard of Golden Clouds Soar to the Sky!

However, because he was from the Chu Family, Linghu Xiu patiently explained, "This means that Lin Xun...has obtained the most perfect assessment result!"

Si—

Immediately, a chorus of sharp gasps rang out from the audience.