

Cultivating 101

Chapter 101: Fake Pill Technique

The prestige of True Man Tianjian is equally extremely high.

Some say that True Man Tianjian is genuinely a master of the Celestial Being List, even stronger than the Cyan Bull Blade Master and Divine Feather Grand General. A single Celestial Sword severely injured that old demon, while the Cyan Bull Blade Master and Divine Feather Grand General together merely made the old demon endure for quite some time.

This contrast is rather obvious.

Many people believe that with the next update of the Celestial Being List, True Man Tianjian might make it onto the list.

The only flaw is that True Man Tianjian has too few records of action.

However, these are from those unaware of the actual situation.

They wouldn't know that Ning Qi's sword took advantage of Old Demon Lin's underestimation, nor would they be aware that Ning Qi could only wield that one sword, and further attempts would at most just reach the standard of one newly entering the Celestial Human Realm.

But the Cyan Bull Blade Master and Divine Feather Grand General wouldn't come out to argue.

...

Bright Martial Pavilion.

Only Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan were seated opposite each other.

Taoist Longshan's aura had already stabilized somewhat, thanks to the Thousand-Year Flame Sun Jade gifted by Carefree Monarch earlier, allowing a much quicker recovery. But upon deeper nurturing, he found his injuries were more severe than he had imagined, with faint Blade Qi left by Old Demon Lin wreaking havoc within.

Even with the Thousand-Year Flame Sun Jade, it might take half a year to heal.

He had gained a deeper understanding of that Old Demon Lin's strength and marveled more at his disciple's prowess, such an old demon could be heavily injured with one sword. He himself fell far short.

At present.

Ning Qi is undoubtedly the strongest in the True Martial Sect!

What's most remarkable is that only True Man Longshan knows his disciple is currently just at the Gang Essence Realm, yet he matches a Celestial Being—within ancient history, few could achieve such a feat.

Usually, everyone below a Celestial Being is but an ant.

Only a peerless genius could defy convention.

This is one of the reasons Taoist Longshan fabricated an 'elder predecessor' to conceal Ning Qi's true identity.

Taoist Longshan chuckled and said:

"Jiu, your reputation as True Man Tianjian is much greater than your master's."

Ning Qi replied helplessly:

"Master, don't tease me; titles like True Man Tianjian are merely empty names. Moreover, too much limelight isn't necessarily a good thing."

There was worry in his gaze.

True Martial Sect gained immense fame by eliminating the Demon Sect division, but also inevitably drew resentment from the Demon Sect, a behemoth rivaling the Great Yan Dynasty. Despite being always on the losing side, it wasn't something True Martial Sect could fend off.

Currently, although the Divine Feather General attracts most of the hostility, it's not guaranteed that the Demon Sect won't launch a sudden retaliatory strike to vent their ire.

Even the slightest possibility is enough to make Ning Qi vigilant.

Ning Qi is well aware of his own circumstances; presently, only that one sword boasts the strength of the Celestial Being List, while the rest of the time he's at most at his master's level.

Taoist Longshan's expression turned solemn, slowly nodding:

"I understand your worries, but there's no need for excessive anxiety."

Ning Qi was startled:

"Master, do you know some news?"

Taoist Longshan continued:

"A few days ago, Divine Feather General was lightly injured in a sudden attack from the Demon Sect. These Demon Sect members are certainly vengeful, but it also incensed the Imperial Court, which has sent strong persons to lurk near the martial path sects involved in the extermination campaign."

"Especially around our True Martial Sect and the rebuilt Wang Clan, there are Celestial Being strong persons in hiding. Should the Demon Sect come, it would be a trap."

"A message has already arrived from the Wang Clan area in recent days; demon traces have appeared but the Demon Sect remains inactive, seemingly deterred by some discovery. Hence, our True Martial Sect is temporarily safe."

"After all, although we were forced to join this action, the Demon Sect likely won't dedicate too much effort against us, primarily aiming their revenge at the Great Yan Imperial Court."

Ning Qi exhaled softly.

But he didn't completely relax.

Relying on others is not his style. Who knows if these lurking Celestial Being strong persons might neglect their duties or suddenly withdraw.

The fundamental need is for his power to be sufficiently strong.

He already had ideas.

Seeking Taoist Longshan was for this purpose.

"Master, I need some of the gifts you received at the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony." Ning Qi grinned.

Taoist Longshan, smiling, pointed at Ning Qi:

"Whatever you want, go help yourself at the treasure vault; however, the Thousand-Year Flame Sun Jade cannot be given to you yet, as your master needs it to heal."

Speaking.

He looked somewhat regretfully at Ning Qi.

"Jiu, prior to this, your master promised you that after the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony, he'd assist in eradicating the Blood Rain Tower, but now it seems it must be delayed."

Currently, not only is Taoist Longshan injured and needing swift recuperation to prevent lingering issues, but True Martial Sect is also in the limelight. If the two were to venture outside and the Demon Sect suddenly attacked, regret would be too late.

Ning Qi nodded, he was not in a rush; seeking vengeance wouldn't be hindered by a year or two, and it was just the right time to further enhance his strength.

"Master, focus on recovering, don't worry about anything else; we'll deal with the Blood Rain Tower after you're well."

Thinking of his master's injuries, Ning Qi's gaze subtly changed.

The Wang Clan is now rebuilt, but its situation is similar to True Martial Sect, being eyed by the Demon Sect while the Imperial Court's Celestial Being strong persons lurk—it's not the best time to act, nor is his strength a guarantee.

"I'll wait a while."

Ning Qi paid his respects and departed.

Taoist Longshan watched Ning Qi's back, smiling contentedly.

...

A moment later.

Ning Qi returned from True Martial Treasure Vault with a full bounty.

Various precious gifts were essentially all taken.

A Luminous Pearl from Sea-covering Gang, a Relic Pill from Ascetic Sect, Bright Fruit from Nocturnal Blade Sect, Enlightenment Tea Tree seed from Ancestor Wang, and most importantly, what Ning Qi coveted most—the Flying Thunder Tiger Beast King's Inner Core.

Under normal circumstances, Ning Qi might leave some items for future use as rewards for enhancing disciples in the sect.

But now the Demon Sect was subtly watching.

Ning Qi needed to quickly enhance his strength; the most cost-effective for him also benefits True Martial Sect the most.

In the Seeking Tao Institute.

Ning Qi examined the treasures in front of him.

Contemplating their use.

"Bright Fruit... can be used to enhance the medicinal properties of the True Martial Peach Tree, provided I can research the corresponding cultivation method from the Bright Fruit. Difficult for me, but it would require some time. Moreover, even if the medicinal properties of the True Martial Peach Tree are enhanced, it won't increase my strength."

Ning Qi first dismissed researching Bright Fruit; it's beneficial for True Martial Sect's future, but can be postponed.

"Same goes for the Enlightenment Tea Tree seed."

He examined the seed, which had lost much of its vitality and slightly frowned, knowing Ancestor Wang wasn't so kind, probably having tried countless times before passing the seed on as a gift.

"I'll try later."

"As for the Luminous Pearl and Relic Pill... these two might work together, the Luminous Pearl can be ground into powder and see if it can be combined with the Relic Pill to refine a pill that enhances cultivation."

"However, this still can't rapidly enhance my strength."

Ning Qi placed these in the second sequence; if a pill is refined, it would accelerate his strength development.

But now, he needed potent external power.

He focused his gaze on the last item.

Beast King's Inner Core.

Slowly opening the jade box, the Flying Thunder Tiger Inner Core glowed with lightning, instantly floating upwards, with faint tiger roars and fierce residual might, and most importantly, the surrounding Power of Heaven and Earth.

Ning Qi's eyes showed anticipation.

Previously at the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony, when the Cyan Bull Blade Master brought out this core, as soon as he sensed the surrounding Power of Heaven and Earth, he thought of a particular use.

And now, observing it closely, he could clearly sense the energy within the core.

The thought in his mind grew more certain.

"Perhaps... I can use the Beast King's Inner Core as a base to refine a 'Fake Pill,' thereby replacing the Primordial Core inside my body with 'Fake Pill' to communicate with Heaven and Earth, allowing me to achieve a similar effect to Heaven-Reaching and Unity of Heaven and Man in the Celestial Human Realm!"

Currently, Ning Qi's shortcoming is not being able to sustain the damage output of the Celestial Sword Technique after initial use.

Yet, the root cause is not the Celestial Sword Technique but rather Ning Qi needing to use more than eighty percent of his Gang Qi to unleash such a powerful sword. To continuously unleash the might of the Celestial Sword Technique, he has to further enhance his Gang Qi, but that's not achievable overnight.

Therefore, Ning Qi chose another path.

Enhancing the resonance intensity of the Power of Heaven and Earth.

Relying solely on Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique could only achieve this level, but if the planned 'Fake Pill' succeeded, the Power of Heaven and Earth he could command would greatly augment.

At that point, the Celestial Sword Technique's sustainability would not only increase significantly, but its power would also enhance quite a bit.

He would genuinely possess Celestial Being List-level combat strength.

Though it's temporary, it would suffice to navigate through current challenges.

"Feasible!"

Ning Qi's mind bubbled with inspiration, placing 'Fake Pill' technique research in the forefront.

Chapter 102: Investment Master

In Ning Qi's imagination, this 'fake pill' is somewhat akin to an 'amplifier', which can greatly enhance his ability to manipulate the power of heaven and earth.

"It's considered a kind of secret technique, but it also requires an inner core of an exotic beast king of such level to work, and one must have the ability to communicate with the power of heaven and earth."

"How can the hidden power within the beast king's inner core be unleashed?"

"First, it must be sorted out."

Ning Qi could perceive that not only does the inner core contain the power of heaven and earth, but there are also traces of resentment. The Flying Thunder Tiger was undoubtedly dead beyond any doubt, but as a beast king comparable to the Celestial Human Realm, it inherently possessed mysteries that human warriors could not easily comprehend.

Ning Qi loosened his grip.

The inner core floated in front of his chest, rising and falling.

He employed the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique, using the power of heaven and earth to touch it. In an instant, thunder light burst forth, piercing through the void, and the inner core at his chest transformed into a thunderball bristling with lightning spikes.

Not only that, Ning Qi could also feel the intense roar of a tiger echoing in his mind. In a daze, he seemed to see a Thunder Tiger with wings standing atop a great marsh, bellowing to the heavens, murderous energy rolling as if harboring resentment.

Ning Qi's expression was calm:

"Since it has already passed away, might as well put it to my use and rest in peace completely."

He controlled the strength of the power of heaven and earth, cautiously rinsing the inner core again and again. During this, he utilized some techniques from the Heaven and Earth Grinding Wheel Quenching Gang Technique and discovered their miraculous effects.

Thus.

A two-hour period later.

He observed again.

There was still a Thunder Tiger with wings standing on the great marsh, mighty beyond comparison, but the previous murderous aura and resentment were absent.

Yet Ning Qi slightly frowned.

He found that although the beast king inner core became pure, it also lost the spirit of the Thunder Tiger.

However, this did not baffle him.

"Perhaps I can try to draw inspiration from the Dominating Tiger True Intent Painting."

Ning Qi slowly closed his eyes.

Constantly, flashes of insight surged into his mind.

One after another difficulty popped up, only to be individually resolved by him.

The conceived 'fake pill' method is naturally great, but wanting to quickly create it is not that easy. This is an entirely new attempt, with numerous difficulties, involving not only the intricacies of the power of heaven and earth but also the treasures of the human body. Replacing the primordial core with a 'fake pill' is no simple task.

Nevertheless, Ning Qi is confident of finding the solution, and it won't take too long.

This is already the fastest method he can think of to enhance his combat strength.

Next.

He devoted most of his energy to creating the 'fake pill' method, and the progress was quite promising. He estimated that in about one month's time, he should succeed.

Of course.

Ning Qi also did not forget his own cultivation. Every day, he pushed the limits of the Heaven and Earth Grinding Wheel Quenching Gang Technique, and his cultivation was also advancing at a rapid pace.

...

True Martial Mountain was calm and peaceful.

The spring sun gradually rose.

During this period, disciples of the True Martial Sect had been very low-key, rarely descending the mountain. Luo Wentian understood well the principle that a towering tree invites the raging wind. He strictly restrained his disciples. During this period, the True Martial Sect's fame had been too prominent, so it would be best to remain silent for a while to avoid attracting too much unnecessary attention.

In the Martial Realm, storms arise and fall; it only takes some time before martial artists are drawn to other matters.

But True Martial disciples did not descend the mountain.

Yet there were still others coming to visit. Although many knew that the True Martial Sect was now targeted by the Demon Sect, visiting posed some danger, but on the flip side, now is the best time to establish relationships with the True Martial Sect with fewer visitors.

Otherwise, when visitors throng in, it won't necessarily be their turn.

But today.

A group of special guests arrived.

Members of the True Profound Sect.

They brought the Taoist Canon.

Luo Wentian personally led several true disciples to welcome them, Ning Qi also came along. He was very much looking forward to the Taoist scriptures gifted by the True Profound Sect, having already perused the True Martial Sect's Scripture Pavilion, leaving only a few texts needing deeper comprehension, and seeking new resources.

Luo Wentian laughed heartily:

"Taoist friends from the True Profound Sect have come a long way and worked hard."

Everyone from the True Profound Sect wore white Taoist robes, with flowing cloud gold patterns at the cuffs. At first glance, they appeared chaotic, but upon closer inspection, contained a mysterious charm that served as the emblem of the True Profound Sect. The leading middle-aged Taoist also made a Taoist salute:

"Taoist Friend Luo, you are too kind. We should have arrived earlier, but were delayed due to some errors. We seek your understanding."

Luo Wentian waved his hand repeatedly:

"Taoist Friend Ye, you exaggerate. Our master has always appreciated True Man Baihe's goodwill."

The Taoist surnamed Ye smiled:

"This time, our True Profound Sect has brought a total of eighteen hundred volumes of Taoist scriptures. Please, Taoist Friend Luo, verify them."

Luo Wentian was taken aback.

Wasn't it supposed to be twelve hundred volumes? How has it become eighteen hundred volumes now?

He looked towards the Taoist surnamed Ye, who smiled silently, gradually realizing within his heart, and hurriedly thanked them, then led the group to the main hall for reception.

Ning Qi, listening to the side, was somewhat pleasantly surprised.

But he also understood that these additional six hundred volumes of scriptures certainly didn't appear from nowhere; surely True Man Baihe was moved to foster friendship after seeing the strength of himself and True Man Tianjian.

"No wonder these scriptures were delayed; they must have been waiting for the latter six hundred volumes to catch up."

After all, it wouldn't be good to split a congratulatory gift into two batches for delivery, as that would seem too intentional.

Ning Qi shook his head and chuckled:

"Didn't expect this True Man Baihe to be an investment master?"

This reminded him of angel investors from his previous life.

What Ning Qi didn't know was, that True Man Baihe actually secretly added two rounds of investment. Initially, the gift was only eight hundred volumes of Taoist scriptures, but after continuously noticing the True Martial Sect's potential and foundation, he changed his mind.

Chapter 103: Investment Master_2

Ning Qi watched Luo Wentian and the others leave. He didn't follow but started organizing the Taoist scriptures with several disciples, a hint of enthusiasm in his eyes.

The disciples nearby respectfully called out 'Ninth Master Uncle' and then began their work.

Ning Qi casually picked up a Taoist scripture that the True Martial Sect didn't have and was engrossed in reading it.

The scripture mostly recorded insights gained by Taoist sect masters from understanding the heavens and earth, experiencing the mortal realm, or observing exotic beasts, which greatly inspired Ning Qi, providing him with plenty of inspiration.

For instance, many 'phenomena' in his creation, the Myriad Phenomena True Gang, did not come from other martial arts but came from various Taoist scriptures.

Ning Qi was immersed in them.

Absorbing the nutrients within, he felt he had gained a lot.

An old Taoist with wild grass stuck in his hair came over, smilingly asking:

"Little boy, do you understand this Taoist scripture?"

Ning Qi glanced sideways.

He saw the old Taoist also wearing the Taoist robe of the True Profound Sect, but the pure white color on the other disciples turned almost yellowish-white on him, and it was wrinkled, the hairpin on his head was crooked.

Ning Qi retracted his gaze and said indifferently:

"Of course, I understand it."

The old Taoist grinned, revealing his front teeth: "Then let me test you."

"No, thanks."

Ning Qi's unexpected response choked the old Taoist.

"Oh dear, you little boy, I heard those little Taoists call you Ninth Master Uncle just now, you must be True Man Longshan's little disciple, how could you show such disrespect for elders?" The old Taoist was indignant.

Ning Qi ignored him.

The old Taoist scratched his ears and cheeks, finally finding someone pleasant to talk to, only to be ignored.

Seeing Ning Qi immersed in the Taoist scripture, he rolled his eyes:

"Little boy, do you like Taoist scriptures?"

"Yes."

"Then how about I take you to find more Taoist scriptures?"

"Where?"

Seeing that Ning Qi finally lifted his head with a hint of interest, the old Taoist patted his chest and said:

"Of course, it's in Tao State!"

"To be honest, I also like Taoist scriptures, but the ones in the True Profound Sect are particularly boring; you have to read other sects' scriptures. Little boy, you like the True Profound Sect's scriptures so much, probably fed up with the True Martial Sect's, haha, this way, we are kindred spirits."

"Sixty to seventy percent of the world's Taoist sects are in Tao State, especially six of the top ten Taoist sects are there, including all of the top three."

"Just imagine, if we plunder all these Taoist sects, you wouldn't be able to finish reading the scriptures even in ten lifetimes!"

His chest pounded loudly, his eyes gleamed as if talking about some grand achievement.

Ning Qi was speechless.

Knew this rogue old Taoist had nothing worthwhile to say, there's no reason to hold an ounce of expectation.

Rob those Taoist sects?

How could he even say such a thing out loud?

Ning Qi perceived that this old Taoist is strong, probably almost on the verge of stepping into the Celestial Human Realm, similar to Taoist Longshan before he broke through, but so what, the fifth-ranked True Profound Sect alone has three Celestial Beings.

Not to mention the top three Taoist sects?

Ning Qi gave him a sideways glance.

The old Taoist also glanced back:

"Little boy, don't you believe in my strength, the Taoist Baishan?"

Ning Qi snorted through his nose:

"What is your relationship with True Man Bai He?"

"He is my junior brother!" The Taoist Baishan was very proud.

"Junior brother?" Ning Qi elongated the note.

The Taoist Baishan understood Ning Qi's implication, and immediately got anxious.

"Little boy, don't underestimate me! Though my junior brother has already reached the Celestial Human Realm, he doesn't have a solid foundation, he'll stop at that realm for life. But I'm different, let me tell you, I'm practicing an Unparalleled Secret Technique, accumulating over time!"

"It won't be long before I step into the Celestial Human Realm, then I'll soar into the skies, on the Celestial Being List, heading straight for Martial Saint!"

"By then, I'll take you to plunder the Yin Yang Sect, plunder the Pure Sect, plunder the Heavenly Thunder Sect, and rob across all the top ten Taoist sects, lift you high!"

As the Taoist Baishan spoke more and more enthusiastically, he seemed to imply Ning Qi should cling to his coattails now before it's too late.

Ning Qi looked down at his book:

"Oh."

By the time you become a Martial Saint, I won't even know what realm I'm in, will you still take me high?

The Taoist Baishan went crazy.

The True Profound Sect disciples counting Taoist scriptures up front all wore wry smiles, they heard the Taoist Baishan saying 'it won't be long before I enter the Celestial Human Realm' ten years ago, but ten years later, he's still the same Taoist Baishan, not a True Man Baishan.

Now he's even trying to deceive a little boy, but the key is the little boy doesn't buy it.

They lowered their heads, feeling embarrassed even for the True Martial Sect.

Ning Qi chuckled to himself, closing the Taoist scripture, and asked:

"Why don't you tell me about the situation in Tao State?"

Since the old Taoist is babbling around, he couldn't concentrate anyway, might as well ask something practical, after all, the True Martial Sect will inevitably deal with Tao State when entering the world's Taoist sect ranking.

The old Taoist instantly brightened up.

"You came to the right person!"

"Decades ago, I started scouting, there's no one more familiar with the situation of those Taoist sects than me in Tao State, Tao State with many strong sect masters ranks in the top among the Great Yan Thirteen States. Let's start with the top-ranked Yin Yang Sect. This Yin Yang Sect, let's say, practices the Great Path of Yin and Yang and has the most female Daoists, hehe..."

As the old Taoist talked animatedly, spit flew around.

Ning Qi asked questions from time to time, finding it quite beneficial, the old Taoist's incessant chatter seemed much more pleasant.

He also had a general understanding of the various Taoist sects in Tao State.

"The Yin Yang Sect practicing the Great Path of Yin and Yang, the Pure Sect skilled in Alchemy, the Spirit Treasure Sect adept in Artifact Casting, and the Heavenly Thunder Sect primarily practicing the Path of Thunderous?"

"Interesting."

However.

During the period, the old Taoist would quietly inquire about the True Martial Sect's situation, his eyes cleverly glancing around, leading Ning Qi to think.

This guy came to the True Martial Sect this time.

Isn't he here to scout as well?

...

In the following days.

The Taoist Baishan would occasionally visit Ning Qi, saying that he only held Ning Qi in high esteem throughout the True Martial Sect, he even tried to coax Ning Qi into secretly returning with him to the True Profound Sect. Ning Qi indicated that it's fortunate his master didn't know about this, otherwise, he'd have a fit.

Ning Qi was browsing the newly acquired Taoist scriptures, excluding the duplicates, there were more than a thousand volumes of fresh material.

He felt he gained a lot.

Especially some of the rare editions, which provided him great inspiration; he felt that the time required to create the Fake Pill Technique would be significantly reduced, maybe he would succeed in several days.

During this time.

The Taoist Baishan saw the White Ape, eyes full of brilliance, exclaiming its intelligence.

He thought he needed such an exotic beast Taoist child to showcase his status.

"Little White Ape, the old Taoist will soon step into the Celestial Human Realm, then soar into the skies, on the Celestial Being List, heading straight for Martial Saint!"

"If you follow me now, you'll be the first Taoist child under the True Monarch in the future!"

His words were full of allure, and he even took out Spirit Fruit from somewhere as a promise.

In response.

The White Ape bared his teeth, showing a fierce appearance.

He has immense respect and reverence for Ning Qi; if he didn't feel he couldn't defeat this old Taoist, he would have probably already revealed his Ape King true form for a fight.

Ning Qi laughed heartily, the Taoist Baishan looked embarrassed.

He became more determined to take Ning Qi away.

After all, this was a great deal, buy one, get one free.

Unfortunately.

Until the day the True Profound Sect left, he was unsuccessful.

Chapter 104: Combat Power Soars

The 1,800 volumes of Taoist scriptures are indeed very useful.

On the day when the disciples of the True Profound Sect descended the mountain, Luo Wentian escorted the True Inheritor disciples all the way to the outskirts of True Martial City, and they reluctantly bid farewell.

"Taoist Friend Luo, let's part here. Someday, come visit our True Profound Sect, and we'll welcome you warmly."

The Taoist with the surname Ye from the True Profound Sect felt the enthusiasm of the True Martial disciples and smiled warmly.

Luo Wentian laughed and said:

"Certainly! I've long heard of the famous True Profound Sect, and I will definitely visit in the future!"

In recent days, the disciples of the two sects exchanged their teachings and skills, benefiting from each other, and had a good impression of one another. The disciples of the True Profound Sect were not arrogant, nor did they look down on the True Martial Sect for being ranked fifth among Taoist sects.

"Farewell!"

The Taoist with the surname Ye waved with a smile.

Turning his head, he was suddenly speechless.

Not far away, an old and a young figure were walking arm in arm; to be precise, the old Taoist was clinging to the young Taoist, whispering about something.

"Uncle Baishan!"

The veins at the temple of the Ye-surnamed Taoist throbbed, and in a raised voice, he felt his face burning with embarrassment. He didn't need to think much to know that it was their own uncle trying to fool someone again, with words he had heard countless times.

Taoist Baishan impatiently waved his hand, then shamelessly smiled at Ning Qi and said:

"Little Ning Qi, you must come to Tao State for a visit sometime. Within three years, this old Taoist will surely reach the Celestial Being Realm—I'm not lying to you! At that time, during the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony, come, and this old Taoist will take you to look at some small Taoist scriptures first!"

Ning Qi was somewhat surprised.

The old Taoist usually wasn't serious, but he spoke these words quite naturally.

He sensed the old Taoist's aura, feeling it might actually happen, and couldn't help but nod slightly.

"Make sure to bring the Little White Ape with you then!"

The old Taoist reluctantly waved as he was pulled away by the Ye-named Taoist with a darkened expression.

The group from the True Profound Sect departed into the distance.

Faintly, one could still hear the bickering between the old Taoist and the Ye-named Taoist, which brought smiles to the faces of everyone. Luo Wentian, familiar with Taoist Baishan's antics, couldn't help but sigh:

"Taoist Baishan is truly an amusing person."

Ning Qi's mouth curved into a smile.

Luo Wentian waved broadly:

"Let's go, we're heading back to the mountain."

But Ning Qi shook his head and laughed:

"Senior Brother, I'm going to take a look at True Martial City."

Everyone was momentarily stunned.

Watching Ning Qi walk towards the direction of True Martial City, Ye Qinghe's eyes lit up:

"I'll accompany Jiu. You all head back first."

Luo Wentian chuckled softly.

He thought it was a good thing. Ning Qi had always stayed within the sect and rarely went down the mountain. Now that he actively wanted to visit True Martial City, everyone felt gratified.

"Return early," Luo Wentian only admonished.

...

This was indeed Ning Qi's first visit to True Martial City.

He had visited the small town once or twice before, but now, after True Man Longshan's Celestial Being Grand Ceremony, it had been rebuilt into True Martial City, which was much grander.

The eastern, southern, western, and northern gates subtly embodied the Four Symbols, with main roads extending in all directions, dividing the city into small blocks. For the citizens of the former town, this was beneficial, and many gained from the restructuring.

"So, what do you think, is this True Martial City impressive? I was one of the overseers back then. Jiu, you should have come to see it earlier," Ye Qinghe eagerly introduced it at his side.

Ning Qi merely nodded with a smile.

He wasn't here today for sightseeing.

He was here to find the Celestial Human Realm experts hidden by the Imperial Court.

If the Imperial Court sent experts to lurk around the True Martial Sect, then True Martial City was the most suitable place. If a strong member of the Demon Sect attacked True Martial Mountain, they could immediately offer support.

Ning Qi's Silence Technique concealed his aura so that no one could detect it. Additionally, he reversed it into a powerful Perception Martial Arts, the results astonishing.

These past few days, thanks to the many Taoist scriptures sent by the True Profound Sect, Ning Qi found inspiration from a Taoist scripture on Wind Phenomenon and further developed his Perception Martial Arts, creating a Wind Sensing Chapter.

At this moment.

Walking on the bustling streets of True Martial City.

Ning Qi could sense the movement of the wind. An invisible breeze fluttered, brushing against passersby, and even the slightest aura he could detect.

Ning Qi stopped in front of a butcher shop.

The shopkeeper was a strong, muscular butcher with an open chest, barely suppressing his ferocity, forcing a smile:

"Little kid, want some top-grade black pork?"

Ning Qi smiled slightly:

"I'll take a pound."

Ye Qinghe was puzzled; there was plenty of Exotic Beast meat on the mountain, which was much better than ordinary pork, but she wisely didn't ask more questions.

"Alright, here, take it!"

After Ning Qi received it, the two left, and watching their backs, the butcher was puzzled. He recognized these two as disciples of True Man Longshan, but why come to him for meat?

Could they have recognized his identity?

But even True Man Longshan didn't know he was here; he was very confident in his Breath Concealment Technique.

Strange indeed.

He shook his head, not thinking much of it, assuming it was just a coincidence.

Ning Qi turned around, a slight smile on his face. With the recent close contact, he finally was able to accurately assess the butcher's strength.

There was no doubt about it.

A bona fide Celestial Human Realm expert.

"Looks like the Imperial Court wasn't just making empty threats."

Ning Qi relaxed a little.

He was just afraid that the Great Yan Imperial Court would play with trickery and deception. If the Demon Sect truly came, it would be too much for the True Martial Sect to bear.

Next.

He and Ye Qinghe strolled casually through the city, stopping occasionally to buy or inquire, looking like a curious child. Ye Qinghe cheerfully explained everything to Ning Qi.

However.

Ye Qinghe didn't know that during this process, Ning Qi managed to clearly identify the hidden experts from the Imperial Court within the city.

The Wind Sensing Chapter was used for a broad scan first, then any anomalies were carefully sensed; no one could escape Ning Qi's Dharma Eye.

Two hours later.

Looking at the large and small packages in his hands, Ning Qi said with a smile:

"Senior Sister, let's go back."

On the road back to the mountain.

Ning Qi felt much more relaxed.

"There are three Celestial Human Realm, ten Primordial Core Realm within the city. It seems Great Yan places great importance here. Although the firepower attracted by Divine Feather Grand General and the Wang Clan is even greater, there's no telling if the Demon Sect might strike unexpectedly, with the Imperial Court lying in wait."

"I just don't know if there are hidden Celestial Realm experts besides within True Martial City."

Ning Qi pondered.

At least on the surface, with himself and his master, there are already five Celestial Human Realm combat forces. In this case, the Demon Sect would need to dispatch seven or eight or even more Celestial Realm experts to forcibly take this tough nut.

This possibility is not great.

The True Martial Sect doesn't have that much weight.

And if the number of Celestial Realm coming is less, they could be easily blocked.

"At least during the time the Imperial Court Celestial Realm are present, True Martial Mountain is relatively safe. As long as the Fake Pill Technique is developed before they leave, it will be even safer."

Ning Qi breathed a sigh of relief.

This night, he ate two more pieces of pork.

In his previous life, he liked pork, but today, this black pork felt especially delicious.

...

Ten days passed in the blink of an eye.

Seeking Tao Institute.

The White Ape was cultivating Ape King Strength; after entering the Inner Essence Realm, he continued to cultivate diligently as always. Ning Qi also taught him the Sleep Dream Skill and prepared a Sleep Dream Pill, hence the White Ape's progress was extremely rapid, far exceeding ordinary people.

As for Ning Qi himself.

He was in enlightenment.

With Taoist Scriptures unconsciously flipping through his hands, Ning Qi's mind recalled the scene of the Divine Feather Grand General and the Cyan Bull Blade Master besieging Old Demon Lin. Strictly speaking, that was the only Celestial Realm battle Ning Qi had observed.

Not to mention that all three were experts on the Celestial Being List, their use of the Power of Heaven and Earth surpassed that of ordinary Celestial Beings.

Many parts of it inspired Ning Qi.

His research on the Fake Pill Technique was essentially about the use of the Power of Heaven and Earth, and that battle allowed him to draw analogies.

"After all, the Beast King's Inner Core is an external object; if you want to replace the Primordial Core, you might have to take a risky move?"

Ning Qi remembered how, during that battle, Old Demon Lin's body was maimed, with blood mist spraying, fleshy buds wriggling constantly, yet he remained ferocious in battling the two, which was astonishing.

"This is because the body has established some kind of connection with the Power of Heaven and Earth. As long as the Primordial Core isn't shattered, the Power of Heaven and Earth floods back, no matter if the body is maimed."

"If that's the case, perhaps I can also try forming a connection between the body and the Fake Pill?"

Spiritual Light surged in Ning Qi's mind, as if a great bell was tolling.

The biggest problem that plagued him these days was already solved.

The jade box in front of him opened automatically.

The Inner Core, shining with a thunderous light, floated up.

The Beast King's Inner Core at this moment, after being cleansed by the Power of Heaven and Earth, appeared like a flawless purple pearl.

Ning Qi's gaze was calm and resolute, as Gang Qi surged at his fingertips. He lightly slashed at his own heart area, the skin parting like fabric, with even a glimpse of the beating heart faintly visible, while the blood that wanted to gush out was locked in by the powerful body.

Then, he held the Inner Core, and slowly pressed it against the heart's blood scar.

As the blood scar gradually healed, the Beast King's Inner Core was also integrated into Ning Qi's body.

Ning Qi immediately entered the Unity of Heaven and Man state, with the Power of Heaven and Earth surging around. He performed inner observation, seeing the Beast King's Inner Core settle on the surface of his heart, yet not integrated into it.

Gang Qi began to vibrate and operate at a special frequency, with Dominating Tiger True Intent permeating all over.

Tiny blood-colored branches extended from the surface of the Inner Core and the heart, resembling blood vessels, which then entwined together.

In an instant.

Ning Qi's body trembled.

An unprecedented strong feeling filled his entire body.

"Using the Beast King's Inner Core to condense a Fake Pill, preemptively peering into the Celestial Being Realm, this method could be called the Fake Pill Co-Heaven Technique!"

Ning Qi opened his eyes, lightly clenched his fists, excitement in his eyes.

He felt that now, he was somewhat strong.

Chapter 105: Asking Others is Not as Good as Relying on Yourself

At this moment, Ning Qi, with a thought, communicates with the fake Dan within his body and can perceive the omnipresent power of heaven and earth. If he enters the Unity of Heaven and Man state, it will be even easier.

"This fake Dan, to some extent, is equivalent to a signal receiver and amplifier for the power of heaven and earth."

Ning Qi seemed to have an epiphany. Threads of the power of heaven and earth swirled around his fingertips, then dissipated.

If he were to use the Heavenly Sword Technique now, its power would be stronger, and its sustainability would greatly increase, preventing the awkward situation of staring blankly after just one attack.

If he had this fake Dan when Old Demon Lin attacked that day.

He would have been confident enough to cut the old demon directly with one strike, rather than severely injuring him.

"However, the fake Dan also has drawbacks."

"Every time the fake Dan is used, it consumes the energy gathered within it. If it's depleted, it basically becomes an empty shell. At that point, the fake Dan can be extracted, but given the strength of this Beast King Inner Core, it might only be enough for me to fight a few battles."

This means the fake Dan is a consumable.

If it runs out, he must find another Beast King Inner Core.

"However, it's enough for now."

Ning Qi ordinarily does not engage in battles with others, and the fusion of this fake Dan was primarily to deal with the Demon Sect's threat.

Even if the Demon Sect truly attacks, it won't result in consecutive battles.

Perhaps, before the fake Dan's energy is used up, Ning Qi will have already stepped into the Jade Liquid Realm. At that time, Ning Qi might already possess the combat strength of the Celestial Being List, no longer needing to rely on the fake Dan's power.

This secret technique is excellent for transitioning.

Ning Qi felt the pulsation of the fake Dan at his heart, and through this method, he formed a connection with the fake Dan, as if they were one entity.

But actually, if one hopes to achieve flawless integration, the best method is to fully merge it with the heart, forming something like a 'second Primordial Core,' which is a further application of the Fake Pill Co-Heaven Technique.

"If someone is willing to permanently fuse this Beast King Inner Core, forming a 'second Primordial Core,' it would no longer be a consumable. It would cause a miraculous transformation in the body, allowing self-recovery, greatly enhancing combat strength for those who are stuck in the Celestial Human Realm."

Yet Ning Qi's requirements are not that low.

He does not want his body to contain foreign objects, fearing they will 'contaminate' his foundation, thus he uses the fake Dan only as a consumable.

As for other Gang Essence Realm experts, they first need to learn the Unity of Heaven and Man secret technique, which is a prerequisite for mastering the Fake Pill Co-Heaven Technique, not to mention understanding the similar true intent within the Beast King Inner Core.

Ning Qi smiled slightly.

White Ape, who had just walked out the door, was taken aback upon seeing Ning Qi. Respect filled his eyes, as if he was witnessing a Divine Tiger standing still, with just its faintly domineering aura overwhelming him.

"Teacher, why do I feel a bloodline suppression from you?" White Ape asked, puzzled.

Ning Qi chuckled lightly:

"It's your imagination."

White Ape rubbed his eyes and looked again, finding that Ning Qi was still Ning Qi, nowhere was there any Divine Tiger.

Ning Qi's lips curled.

Actually, White Ape wasn't wrong in his feeling. Having fused with the Flying Thunder Tiger Beast King Inner Core, in some ways, he indeed counts as half a Beast King, a human form Beast King!

For instance, at this moment.

He felt his control over Thunderous Power surpassed other fields.

...

After creating the Fake Pill Co-Heaven Technique, Ning Qi's long-tense spirit finally relaxed significantly.

He finally freed up more energy to do other things.

Every day, he diligently practices the Heaven and Earth Grinding Wheel Quenching Gang Technique to refine Gang Qi. The vast and majestic Gang Qi within his body is visibly increasing in both quality and quantity.

Elsewhere.

Ning Qi began digesting the Taoist Scripture sent by the True Profound Sect, which concerns his future path of cultivation and requires constant sharpening and accumulation without interruption.

Of course.

Ning Qi finally found time to study the other gifts received at the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony.

"Relic Pill is something left behind by an Arhat of the Buddhist Sect after death, containing vast energy. However, its energy is usually restrained. If powdered Luminous Pearl is used as a catalyst, supplemented with other herbs, it might be possible to create a pill that enhances Gang Qi."

Arhat is a term of respect for certain Buddhist Sect experts in the Celestial Human Realm who specialize in the Flower of Essence. After their death, their bodies incinerate, leaving multiple relics with various mystical uses.

Although a single relic doesn't compare to a Beast King Inner Core, its value is quite significant.

"According to Master, he once helped the Ascetic Sect, which is why this time they sent generous gifts."

In reality, the relationship between Taoism and the Buddhist Sect is not particularly good. Ascetic Sect monks are quite unconventional within the Buddhist Sect.

Ning Qi began experimenting.

Of course.

More of it focused on deduction, cautiously scraping off a little relic powder to experiment only where unavoidable.

This method of creating pill formulas is slower but avoids waste.

After all, there's only this one relic and it cannot be squandered.

While deducing the pill formula, Ning Qi also attempted cultivating the Enlightenment Tea Tree.

Looking at the seed, mostly depleted of its spiritual essence, Ning Qi silently noted another grievance against Ancestor Wang, considering it a waste of treasure.

He spent some effort and managed to stimulate the seed's spiritual essence significantly.

After wandering around the Seeking Tao Institute for a long time.

Ning Qi didn't find any suitable place for planting.

He consulted related ancient books and conducted his own research, realizing that growing the Enlightenment Tea Tree was no easy task.

Finally.

Ning Qi had an idea.

He slightly moved some True Martial Peach Trees to encircle the Seeking Tao Institute, forming a unified trend, and planted the Enlightenment Tea Tree seed beneath the wicker chair where he often lay.

Ning Qi had studied the art of feng shui geomancy.

He hoped to nourish the Enlightenment Tea Tree with the spirituality of many peach trees for a significant boost.

However, despite his efforts, Ning Qi himself couldn't be completely sure if the Enlightenment Tea Tree would ultimately grow successfully.

He just found some more spiritual materials from the treasury and buried them underground, hoping to achieve success.

"Hope I can relax under the Enlightenment Tea Tree in two years."

Ning Qi thought.

Of course, he was most curious about the effect of the Enlightenment Tea Tree, uncertain if it would be useful to him, but regardless, it was unquestionably a good thing to strengthen the True Martial Sect's foundation.

As for researching the method to amplify the medicinal properties of the True Martial Peach Tree using the Bright Fruit, this was the simplest task for Ning Qi.

After all, with three Bright Fruits, Ning Qi was not afraid of wasting them and could boldly experiment.

After consuming one Bright Fruit, he finally succeeded.

...

Ning Qi immersed himself in cultivation, digesting the various gains from the past period.

The heat of extinguishing the Demon Sect's Death Fire Abyss branch was gradually passing, but just when everyone thought the Demon Sect was silent, suffering in silence from the recent setback, a major event occurred.

The Divine Feather Grand General was attacked again.

This time, the Demon Sect strongmen intervened, and the Divine Feather Grand General was injured again, both sides suffered losses, and the Demon Sect even gained a slight upper hand.

Having remained silent for so long, they struck again.

The Demon Sect showed everyone what it meant to repay vengeance, and for a time, everyone was wary of the Demon Sect.

But the imperial court was furious.

The Demon Sect, like a centipede, refuses to die even when decapitated; they had remained dormant since the Martial Saint took action a century ago, but now they were becoming rampant, yet internally, Great Yan wasn't united, and the two sides were vaguely at a stalemate.

However, the Demon Sect could only remain in the shadows.

The Great Yan Imperial Court still held the absolute upper hand, especially with the Martial Saint as the ultimate deterrent, although the Martial Saint seldom took action, even appearing rarely.

Upon learning of these matters.

Ning Qi immediately went to True Martial City.

Sure enough.

The preceding imperial court strongmen that had been lurking there were mostly gone.

Only the butcher selling meat remained.

The Divine Feather Grand General was attacked again, clearly showing that the Demon Sect had focused most of its efforts on the imperial court, necessitating manpower withdrawal from this side.

"Originally there were three Celestial Human Realm, ten Primordial Core Realm, now only one Celestial Human Realm and three Primordial Core Realm remain, a full seventy percent of the forces were withdrawn."

"Indeed, one cannot rest their hopes on others, seeking others is not as good as seeking oneself."

Ning Qi sighed inwardly.

Fortunately, he had now mastered the Fake Pill Technique; otherwise, if the Demon Sect attacked, he would only be able to leave it to fate.

...

Qing State.

In an unnamed secluded valley, an underground palace exists.

Usually, this underground palace is quiet and devoid of people, but today numerous powerful figures were gathering.

Once everyone was assembled.

The dim great doors suddenly closed, pale flames ignited, and everyone saw that the top throne unknowingly had another figure, causing everyone's hearts to tremble.

That figure was wrapped in a black robe, with a bronze ghost mask on the face, somewhat horrifying.

"We pay our respects to the Vice Sect Leader!"

Numerous Demon Sect experts all bowed, eyes showing awe.

Within the Demon Sect, the Sect Leader is the most senior, but rarely appears, often in retreat, leaving several Vice Sect Leaders to collectively manage internal affairs, with Ghost Mask being one of them, and under him are many Elders.

Ghost Mask nodded slightly.

"Gathering you all here today, do you know the reason?"

"Vice Sect Leader, is it about the assassination of that Divine Feather scoundrel some days ago?" someone immediately spoke.

Everyone showed no signs of surprise; they had already discussed this many times on the way.

Ghost Mask nodded slowly.

"Correct."

"But to continue supporting there, that Divine Feather rogue must pay a bloody price!"

Everyone's anger flared up, ready for action.

Having a branch obliterated is a significant loss to the Demon Sect, not to mention many among them were relatives or friends, this revenge is inevitable; to outsiders, he is Old Demon Lin, but to them, he is Elder Lin.

Within the Demon Sect, only those in the Celestial Human Realm may serve as Elders, and Elder Lin is one of the top-ranking figures among them.

Ghost Mask, seeing the morale could be leveraged, nodded in satisfaction but then said:

"Revenge is essential, but Great Yan is closely watching over Divine Feather, further attacks are not as effective, this will be handled over time; there is another agenda this time."

Everyone showed a look of confusion, but quickly someone realized.

Then Ghost Mask slowly stood up.

An aura of deep and domineering essence rose and swept over:

"Destroy the Wang Clan and True Martial Sect!"

Chapter 106: Generous Rewards

The voice of Ghost Mask echoed in the underground palace.

A series of glances gradually became excited.

This is about to counter the norm. Now everyone thinks the Demon Sect will clash with Divine Feather Grand General and the Great Yan Imperial Court, but suddenly turning to attack the Wang Clan and the True Martial Sect will definitely catch them off guard.

"The Wang Clan in Qing State are the court's running dogs. They must be heavily suppressed, otherwise those martial path sects will taste the sweetness, and in the future, they'll all oppose our Holy Sect!"

"I'll personally handle the Wang Clan."

Ghost Mask's eyes were utterly cold.

This momentum must be nipped in the bud.

Initially, the Demon Sect was hidden in the shadows, at a disadvantage. If other martial path sects still lean towards the court, then there's no hope of changing days and nights.

"As for the True Martial Sect, although they were forced to participate in this affair, Elder Lin's death has an inseparable connection with them. Elder Wang, we must trouble you this time."

"In a few days, the court's reward for the True Martial Sect should arrive. That'll be the best time to strike and kill those people altogether!"

Ghost Mask looked at a short-statured elder, who stood at the front, although respectful to Ghost Mask, he didn't have the same awe-filled fear as others.

"Subordinate accepts the order."

Elder Wang nodded calmly.

Although that True Man Tianjian's sword severely injured Elder Lin, gaining great fame.

But they all knew that was because Elder Lin was already heavily injured by Divine Feather and Cyan Bull Blade Master, and chased by that Divine Feather for a whole day and night, finally being caught off guard by Tianjian's sudden attack.

And Elder Wang's strength is not inferior to Elder Lin.

With preparation this time, even if he can't kill True Man Tianjian, at least defeating him isn't a problem, and the rest would make the True Martial Sect pay a heavy price.

All arranged, the eyes of everyone were now filled with eager killing intent.

Only one person.

Was restless inside, his heart felt like being gripped tightly by something.

The white-haired young man lowered his head, hiding his slightly pale face, preparing to leave with the others.

Ghost Mask's voice suddenly rang out:

"Qin Yun, you don't need to participate in this action. Stay and cultivate in the underground palace."

Everyone halted simultaneously, then looked at the white-haired young man with slightly strange eyes, some finally remembered, Qin Yun was originally the eighth true disciple of True Man Longshan from the True Martial Sect and joined the Holy Sect two years ago.

Now planning to assassinate the True Martial Sect, yet the Vice Sect Leader asked Qin Yun not to participate, clearly still not enough trust.

A few people showed mocking expressions, Qin Yun was talented and always valued by the Vice Sect Leader, rumors even said he was taught unparalleled secret technique and considered a Saint Heir candidate, but now it seemed just mere hearsay.

Qin Yun's eyes paused, then raised his head again, his expression extremely calm:

"I will follow the Vice Sect Leader's arrangements."

But within his heart, a faint anxiety emerged.

Initially, he thought if he participated, perhaps through some channels, he could quietly leak the news to the True Martial Sect, allowing them to prepare in advance, but now, he could only hope that True Man Tianjian was strong enough.

Qin Yun's figure disappeared in the underground palace.

He thought of his master, Taoist Longshan, thought of Senior Brother Luo Wentian, thought of Little Brother Ning Qi.

Finally.

He sighed softly in his heart.

...

Time slowly passed.

Outside the Seeking Tao Institute, the True Martial Peach Tree had sprouted, more vibrant compared to previous years. The seeds of the Enlightenment Tea sown in the courtyard also showed a gradual increase in spiritual energy, but hadn't broken through the ground.

Ning Qi waited silently.

Since visiting True Martial City, after learning that most of the court's concealed experts had been withdrawn, Ning Qi became secretly vigilant.

While cultivating, he would occasionally calmly perceive True Martial Mountain.

And so, a few days passed again.

True Martial Mountain welcomed a group of special guests.

A group of people were calm in demeanor, powerful in aura, with peaceful eyes but with an underlying pride. The leader and several others had smooth faces without beards, in the midst of the group were also a boy and a girl. The boy was about seven or eight years old, while the girl was slightly older, around ten years old, both with extraordinary bearing, clearly not from an ordinary family.

"So this is True Martial Mountain? Looks pretty nice." The boy commented with hands behind his back, like a little adult.

The girl agreed:

"Brother Ling, look, this True Martial Mountain pierces the clouds like a Divine Sword, no wonder it can nurture such a powerful swordsman like True Man Tianjian."

The boy's eyes lit up:

"Sister Qingyue speaks rightly. If you look closely, this mountain indeed resembles a Divine Sword flying in. Just wondering if True Man Tianjian is as powerful as rumored. I wonder if we can meet him on this trip."

Both were somewhat expectant.

Regardless of boy or girl, both loved swordsmanship. After hearing about True Man Tianjian, they came along together.

The leading Eunuch Ye chuckled and said:

"The Crown Prince and Princess may not know, but True Martial Mountain used to be called Divine Sword Mountain. Originally, it was a place of secluded cultivation for a man named the Divine Sword Old Man. Later, he bet with True Man Longshan and lost Divine Sword Mountain to him."

"After that, True Man Longshan established a sect here and founded True Martial, thus changing Divine Sword Mountain's name to True Martial Mountain."

"As for True Man Tianjian, he most likely came along with True Man Longshan later."

The boy Li Ling quickly asked:

"Was the Divine Sword Old Man very powerful too? Why have I never heard of him?"

Eunuch Ye shook his head and smiled:

"The Divine Sword Old Man was merely in the Primordial Core Realm."

Both the boy and girl looked disappointed, and their impression of True Martial Mountain instantly diminished.

The Primordial Core Realm is indeed formidable, but to them, they've seen numerous strong ones in the Celestial Human Realm. Only those at the level of the Celestial Being List truly inspire their admiration.

"Eunuch Ye, do you think if I ask True Man Tianjian to come out, he would?" the girl, Li Qingyue, asked.

Eunuch Ye's heart skipped a beat, and he quickly replied:

"My Princess, once at the mountain, you mustn't say such things again."

"True Man Tianjian is rumored to possess strength akin to that of the Celestial Being List, even Divine Feather Grand General couldn't meet him before. Such reclusive experts cannot be forced; if fate allows, you may meet him. This visit is chiefly to commend True Martial Sect for its merits in eradicating the Demon Sect, so please don't act rashly."

Princess Li Qingyue nodded:

"Eunuch Ye, rest assured. I know, and Brother Ling and I are just here to try our luck, at most staying longer at the True Martial Sect, not interfering with your duties."

Eunuch Ye inwardly gave a bitter smile.

With his level in the Celestial Human Realm, he shouldn't have had to come for this reward. The True Martial Sect hadn't reached that level of prestige, but due to these two young nobles wanting to come, he was tasked with accompanying them.

Li Qingyue was a very favored princess, and Li Ling was the son of the illustrious Town North King, both of noble status.

He just hoped he could return quickly with his task completed, otherwise any mishap would be beyond his responsibility.

Eunuch Ye glanced at the distant but gradually visible figures on the mountain and immediately said:

"Princess, Crown Prince, True Man Longshan and others have arrived."

Everyone instantly adopted a solemn demeanor.

In the distance, Taoist Longshan's loud laughter could be heard:

"All you angels coming from afar, what a test of endurance!"

He appeared more energetic than before; he had been in seclusion and hadn't shown himself even when the True Profound Sect came. But with the imperial court coming to give rewards, not showing himself wasn't plausible.

Eunuch Ye also laughed heartily:

"True Man Longshan is too courteous; your sect's merit in demon eradication is rightfully acknowledged."

Both sides exchanged polite remarks while carefully evaluating each other.

Seeing True Man Longshan and the aura of his true disciples behind him, Eunuch Ye nodded internally, thinking the rumors were true indeed, and True Martial Sect holds extraordinary potential. These individuals will likely be formidable figures in the future.

Li Qingyue and Li Ling focused on True Man Longshan for a moment before looking around curiously.

Meanwhile, Taoist Longshan was also secretly startled.

The leading eunuch's aura wasn't concealed, unmistakably in the Celestial Human Realm—but sending someone with such strength simply for awards seemed excessive.

Then, his gaze fell on the boy and girl who were looking around, realizing something.

Eunuch Ye did not conceal, introducing the pair:

"This is Princess Qingyue, and this is the Crown Prince from the Town North King."

Taoist Longshan understood, and the disciples behind him immediately performed ceremonial greetings.

"Greetings to Her Highness and His Highness."

Li Qingyue and Li Ling were not arrogant and returned the greetings. Their initial observations of True Martial Sect left a favorable impression.

The group entered the mountain gate.

Eunuch Ye gave a light cough and raised his voice:

"True Martial Sect, receive the imperial edict!"

Taoist Longshan's expression became solemn, slightly bowing in ceremonial salute, and the gathered disciples of True Martial Sect followed suit, albeit with more humble postures.

Eunuch Ye continued:

"By the mandate of His Majesty, True Martial Sect has excelled in demon eradication, setting an example for Taoism across the realm. An honorary jade plaque is bestowed upon the sect, and True Martial City is granted to the sect's ownership. Additionally, a Blood Sun Ginseng is granted to True Man Longshan for his injuries in demon eradication!"

"By decree!"

Taoist Longshan was initially slightly surprised, but then his expression turned joyful.

The imperial court's reward was unexpectedly generous.

"True Martial Sect thanks His Majesty's grace!" Taoist Longshan led the group in expressing their gratitude.

Chapter 107: The Celestial Sword Appears Again, Town North King

"Eunuch Ye, thank you for your effort." Taoist Longshan's smile became more sincere.

No choice.

It's hard to talk when you're taking favors, hard to act tough when you're receiving benefits.

Perhaps this time the Great Yan imperial court meant to make an impression on the martial sects of the world, and they were quite generous.

Firstly, there's the Taoism plaque, which is more of an honorary thing than substantial, but for the True Martial Sect, which doesn't have deep foundations, it's exactly the kind of 'official acknowledgment' they need. This way, whenever disciples of the True Martial Sect go out in the future, court forces will have to give them some respect.

Secondly, there's the ownership of True Martial City.

Though True Martial City was expanded with the help of the True Martial Sect, in reality, the sect only had the authority to assist in its management.

But from this moment, it's different.

The tax revenue and personnel management of True Martial City have been handed over to the True Martial Sect, allowing them to build a firmer foundation, nurturing the sect's growth even more swiftly. Furthermore, if the sect widens its gates to recruit disciples, True Martial City would be a vast resource pool.

Lastly, there's the Blood Sun Ginseng.

Combining the Blood Sun Ginseng with the Thousand-Year Flame Sun Jade previously gifted by the Carefree Monarch will allow Taoist Longshan's injuries to heal faster.

Eunuch Ye smiled warmly:

"I'm just a messenger, not worthy of such praise from a True Man."

He mentioned casually:

"The crown prince and princess admire the Sword Dao of True Man Tianjian, which is why they accompanied me to True Martial Mountain. Upon seeing it today, they both agree that True Martial Mountain is imbued with Spiritual Qi and truly a treasure land."

Originally glancing around, Li Ling and Li Qingyue both lit up and looked at Taoist Longshan with anticipation.

However, remembering Eunuch Ye's reminder, they refrained from speaking themselves to avoid any discourtesy.

Taoist Longshan immediately caught the underlying message in Eunuch Ye's words.

He merely smiled:

"Thank you both for your high regard, but Senior Tianjian has always been elusive, even I have to see if he's willing before I can meet him. It's possible he might have already left the mountain to wander. If the two of you like True Martial Mountain, you could stay for a few days. Perhaps if Senior Tianjian sees the intelligence and aptitude of you both, he might choose to meet you."

Li Ling and Li Qingyue appeared slightly disappointed, not being foolish, they could perceive the gentle refusal within the words.

Li Qingyue opened her mouth but ultimately said nothing.

Ning Qi observed from the side, secretly amused.

Yet, looking at the two youthful children, he felt a bit strange at heart. By reason, True Martial Mountain might be attacked by the Demon Sect now, and these two with such honorable status should not be exposed to such danger.

Although escorted by a Celestial Human Realm Eunuch Ye, if the Demon Sect truly arrived, that would not suffice.

These naive kids wouldn't understand, but surely the Emperor and the Town North King couldn't be so foolish?

"There are only two possibilities."

"Either, the Great Yan imperial court is certain that the Demon Sect won't act again, so having just one Celestial Being accompanying would suffice."

"Or, they're simply unafraid of a Demon Sect attack, could it be there are strong ones following them in secret?"

Ning Qi speculated.

The Wind Sensing Chapter quietly began its operation, an invisible current of wind fell upon each member of the envoy, yet to his puzzlement, even though he discovered several Gang Essence Realm experts with concealed auras, none reached the Celestial Realm.

"Strange."

Ning Qi slightly frowned.

Then he stopped pondering over it, thinking it wasn't necessarily a bad thing for the True Martial Sect.

Taoist Longshan had already welcomed the imperial envoy into the main hall, hosting a reception in their honor.

During which.

Everyone engaged in lively conversation.

Ning Qi roughly deduced that these young ones had snuck out, or at least believed they had, though from Eunuch Ye's response it wasn't hard to tell those behind them knew full well.

"You're called Ning Qi, right? I heard them say you're the youngest disciple of True Man Longshan, have you ever met True Man Tianjian?"

The Town North King's crown prince quietly came over and asked.

Now, Ning Qi exuded an inexplicable aura that easily drew people in, as it did with Zhuang Chen before, and Bai Shan the elder, and now with Li Ling.

Ning Qi gently shook his head:

"I've been on True Martial Mountain for over eight years and have never seen him, perhaps he just doesn't think I qualify for his Dharma Eye."

Li Ling felt a little disappointed.

"Sigh, I wanted to take him as my master."

Ning Qi, puzzled, asked:

"Why? The Town North Royal Mansion must not lack Celestial Human Realm experts, and your father ranks ninth on the Celestial Being List. Wouldn't it be better for him to teach you personally?"

Li Ling shook his head and said:

"You don't understand. First, they don't practice swordsmanship, and I only want to learn the sword. Secondly, if they were to teach me, without scolding or beating, I wouldn't learn as earnestly as I should."

Ning Qi glanced sidelong.

Good heavens, you feel uncomfortable if you're not getting smacked?

For a moment, he didn't know what to say, he didn't understand Brother Fu's quirks.

But upon further thought, there indeed weren't many swordsmen on the Celestial Being List, though the Town North King held great power, drawing strong practitioners at will wasn't an option.

Ning Qi casually chatted with the crown prince of the Town North King.

He found the young boy's tone could be somewhat arrogant at times but his essence wasn't bad. He was just too pampered and hadn't seen the world's dangers. By comparison, the princess seemed gentle but occasionally showed an air of superiority that he did not like.

The reception ended.

Li Qingyue whispered to Li Ling:

"Brother Ling, since we can't meet True Man Tianjian, there's no point staying here, shall we return tomorrow?"

Her interest in the sword wasn't as fervent as Li Ling's, in fact, she just wanted to step out for some fun and now found the True Martial Sect uninteresting.

Chapter 108: Celestial Sword Reappears, Town North King_2

Li Ling was somewhat hesitant.

Eunuch Ye quickly advised:

"Crown Prince, the Princess makes a good point. We cannot just wait here for True Man Tianjian to appear. If the Town North King learns you've come out..."

Li Ling retorted with a pout:

"So what if he finds out..."

Eunuch Ye immediately gave a wry smile.

Ning Qi paused his steps, not continuing to listen. Half the day was wasted already; he might as well return to study the Taoist Scripture and practice Gang Qi.

...

The night sky was clear, and the starlight shimmered faintly.

Ning Qi sat solemnly in the Scripture Pavilion, performing the Heaven and Earth Grinding Wheel Quenching Gang Technique. The pill combining the Relic and Luminous Pearl was still under study, so he had to rely on self-cultivation for now.

The Power of Heaven and Earth surged around him, reverberating in a roar only Ning Qi could hear. Threads of pure Gang Qi flowed from within the grinding wheel.

Inner Observation.

He could see that the White Mist Gang Qi within Ning Qi's body had become somewhat thicker, and its quantity had increased compared to before.

This was a process of accumulation leading to transformation, where quantity leads to quality change.

But during the process, strength would also improve.

Ning Qi estimated that after cultivating for some more days, he could perform the Heavenly Sword Technique twice with his Gang Qi.

Suddenly.

Ning Qi's heart skipped a beat; he interrupted his cultivation, stood, and gazed through the Scripture Pavilion window into the distant sky.

Several powerful auras were approaching!

Without any hesitation.

Ning Qi communicated with the Heart Fake Pill through his Divine Thought. Instantly, the Power of Heaven and Earth he controlled surged to visible levels; his eyes grew colder, and the Innate Sword Body began to work silently.

In fact.

It wasn't just his keen perception; it was also because those powerful auras did not hide.

They came with ill intentions.

A surging murderous aura flooded from all directions, accompanied by deep laughter as formidable figures broke through the air.

Some disciples who were already asleep were startled awake, looking toward the sky in shock.

Taoist Longshan, along with the True Disciples, had already emerged to confront them.

They gazed at the sky, their pupils contracting violently, their hearts pounding.

In the void around True Martial Mountain.

Mighty figures stood poised, their powerful auras unmistakable.

Four Celestial Human Realm entities!

If that were all, Taoist Longshan would not have been so solemn. The crux was that besides these four, another figure stood at the top, small-statured yet exuding an aura far surpassing typical Celestial Human Realm strength.

Elder Wang gazed indifferently at the True Martial disciples below, his cold voice echoed:

"The True Martial Sect aids tyranny, insults our Holy Sect, must be destroyed!"

Taoist Longshan took a deep breath, not arguing. He knew the Demon Sect wouldn't reason with him; a desperate battle was the only option left.

"True Martial disciples, prepare to fight!" Taoist Longshan shouted, activating the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique in silence.

Behind him, Luo Wentian and others showed determined eyes.

They hadn't lost hope.

They knew Senior Tianjian had yet to appear.

Elder Wang sneered.

He stretched out his hand, and a massive Palm Seal dozens of feet wide crashed down toward the crowd, emitting a green mist with a pungent poisonous odor that made anyone dizzy at the slightest whiff, clearly filled with toxins.

As the Great Hand Seal moved along, it made sizzling sounds, seemingly corroding the void itself.

Everyone was aghast.

Taoist Longshan's gaze turned extremely solemn, prepared to actively confront and shield the disciples behind him. This person seemed to have strength no less than Old Demon Lin, but he could not retreat, or the other disciples would suffer heavy casualties.

But someone was faster than Taoist Longshan.

From deep within the True Martial Sect, a familiar aura arose, the sharpness of its brilliance bringing joy to all who sensed it.

"True Man Tianjian! I knew he was here!"

Luo Wentian and others laughed.

The familiar Celestial Sword pierced through the sky in a flash, striking at the fierce green Palm Seal, its unmatched sharpness obliterating the green mist. Sword Qi exploded, disintegrating the mountain-like Palm Seal into countless green dots.

Everyone watched this scene with excitement.

Li Ling and Li Qingyue watched from afar with excitement:

"True Man Tianjian! I knew True Man Tianjian was still at True Martial Mountain, this sword strike is awesome! Even more impressive than the legends!"

Li Ling praised from the heart.

His eyes carried desire.

"If only I could learn that sword strike."

Eunuch Ye also sighed:

"With just this sword, True Man Tianjian should enter the Celestial Being List!"

However.

After sighing, he immediately instructed:

"You all keep a close watch on the Crown Prince and the Princess."

With that said.

He took the initiative to rush out.

The True Martial Sect was under attack; if he stood by, how could the Demon Sect spare them after destroying True Martial Sect? Hiding here would be pointless, and he couldn't escape, so he might as well join in repelling the enemy.

He hadn't forgotten.

The Demon Sect still had four Celestial Human Realm entities waiting to pounce.

Ning Qi unleashed a sword strike, shattering Elder Wang's Palm Seal, following which the Celestial Sword hovered in the void, resonating with extreme sharpness pointed at Elder Wang.

Elder Wang's lips curled, unfazed, even a bit delighted:

"Old dog of the Celestial Sword, good that you're here!"

"You harmed Brother Lin; today, I shall make you pay dearly!"

He laughed viciously.

"A coward hiding in shadows, daring not show your true form. Since you care about True Martial Sect, I'll let you watch its destruction firsthand!"

With those words, he moved through the air, a boundless green mist emanated, as Palm Seals and Fist Seals bombarded the Celestial Sword with a malicious grin, countering its sharp Sword Qi entirely.

The rest of the Demon Sect's Celestial Beings understood the cue.

Chapter 109: Celestial Sword Reappears, Town North King_3

He also laughed hideously.

One of the four Celestial Beings wielded a sword, the Sword Qi poured down like a torrential rain, covering the disciples of the True Martial Sect. Taoist Longshan glared angrily and shouted, 'Scoundrel, don't be arrogant,' before rushing to meet the attack.

Another Celestial Being from the Demon Sect attacked from the east.

But unexpectedly.

A robust figure with a bare chest charged out to intercept him, holding a butcher knife, glaring angrily while cursing:

"Damn it, you Demon Sect bastards have a keen nose! It infuriates me!"

The butcher knife cleaved through the air, with blade glows venting the butcher's rage.

A few days ago, when two Celestial Beings were just transferred away, the Demon Sect attacked. They were indeed like dogs.

He heard the commotion from True Martial City and rushed to support.

There were also two other Celestial Beings from the Demon Sect attacking from the west and north.

With a ghostly presence, Eunuch Ye intercepted the Celestial Human Realm from the north halfway.

In an instant.

Nine Celestial Beings battled on the scene, with the tremors resonating through the night sky, the repercussions falling upon the True Martial Sect, causing pavilions to collapse and shatter, but this was not the most distressing concern for everyone.

Because there was still one Demon Sect Celestial Being left alone.

No new Celestial Human Realm appeared to counter him.

Thus, that Demon Sect Celestial Being was simply invincible, unmatched.

"Tsk tsk tsk, Celestial Sword old dog, watch the True Martial Sect be destroyed!"

Elder Wang laughed malevolently, somewhat intimidated by True Man Tianjian's strength, even more formidable than rumors suggested. He could only contend with the Celestial Sword, but fortunately, there was an extra Celestial Human Realm on the Demon Sect's side, giving him the upper hand. He taunted recklessly, trying to disrupt the opponent's mind.

Inside the Scripture Pavilion.

Ning Qi frowned slightly.

His appearance and physique began to change, transforming into an elderly man with white hair.

For now, he could only personally step out and face two.

But just as he lifted his foot, Ning Qi retracted, his eyes filled with astonishment as he whispered:

"Has it finally appeared?"

He sensed a new powerful presence emerging near Li Ling and Li Qingyue.

At the very moment Eunuch Ye made his move.

The Demon Sect Celestial Being discovered his identity.

"Eunuch?!"

All the Demon Sect Celestial Beings were taken aback, then Elder Wang quickly reacted, eyes gleaming with excitement, laughing:

"A Celestial Human Realm eunuch coming to grant rewards, seems there's someone of no low status in the envoy?"

He hadn't expected such an unexpected delight.

Initially planning to wipe them out when the envoy arrived, he hadn't anticipated catching a big fish.

"Old Zhang, go fish out that big one!"

The only Celestial Human Realm without an opponent, Old Zhang, laughed wildly as well. He initially intended to slaughter the True Martial disciples to disturb True Man Longshan and True Man Tianjian, but now he had a new target.

The Power of Heaven and Earth continuously perceived.

Soon he identified those conspicuous targets.

A boy and a girl, protected by several Gang Essence Realm experts, had just emerged from a collapsing pavilion.

"Big fish, found you!"

Old Zhang laughed heartily, with a movement, appearing before Li Ling and Li Qingyue. His pupils shrank sharply, recognizing their identities:

"Young son of Town North King? Princess Qingyue?"

He was so excited, his body trembled.

"Big fish, indeed a big fish!"

Elder Wang's body also shook with exhilaration, hastily instructing:

"Capture them alive! Capture them alive!"

Old Zhang laughed:

"Rest assured Elder Wang, I understand."

Overwhelming murderous aura crushed those before him, the experts protecting Li Ling and Li Qingyue all spat blood and flew backward, unable to withstand a blow before the Celestial Human Realm.

Li Ling and Li Qingyue trembled, Li Qingyue had completely lost her previous arrogance, her eyes filled with tears, holding back from crying out, struggling amidst the ruins, her face smudged with dirt. Li Ling fared slightly better but his legs trembled. He shielded Li Qingyue behind him, struggling to shout:

"You dare harm us, my father won't spare you!"

The Demon Sect Celestial Being mocked them with a smile:

"Don't worry, your father will naturally come begging to me by then."

As his words fell.

A soft voice sounded behind him:

"Oh? And how should I beseech you?"

"Naturally by cooperating with my Holy Sect..." the Demon Sect Celestial Being couldn't finish his words before his pupils contracted to a dot.

Fear and shock surged in his heart as he instinctively turned his head, only to see a dignified middle-aged man in royal robes standing there, a hand slowly reaching out, very slowly, yet he could do nothing to resist.

That hand naturally clasped the Demon Sect Celestial Being's throat, twisting slightly.

The Celestial Being perished.

The Town North King looked at the dumbfounded Li Ling and Li Qingyue, smiling faintly:

"Now you know not to mess around, right?"

Chapter 110: Powerful Suppression and Slaughter

The Town North King chuckled lightly.

Li Qingyue couldn't hold it back any longer. Ignoring her princess dignity, she clung to the Town North King's clothing and sobbed uncontrollably:

"Imperial Uncle, I want to go back to the palace!"

Li Ling held back his tears with difficulty, stubbornly tilting his head upwards, a pout on his lips. The Town North King smiled and patted his head, and Li Ling immediately dived into the Town North King's arms, his shoulders shaking.

After all, the two are merely children under ten years old.

Unaware of the dangers in the world before, today's ordeal brought them to the brink of life and death. Though slightly frightened, they understood many of the great truths their elders had preached before.

Lessons learned directly can't compare to personal experience.

This was also the purpose of the Town North King.

He didn't have time to always watch over his young son; he had to let him learn to grow up. Otherwise, if one day he sneaks out without him knowing, it would be too late for regrets.

Nevertheless.

Seeing his young son like this, his heart couldn't help but ache a bit, which made his gaze towards the many Demon Sect Celestial Beings grow indifferent.

At this moment.

Many strong fighters engaged in battle noticed the situation over here.

The middle-aged man appeared silently and crushed a Celestial Human Realm like a chick!

The difference in power was astounding.

"Is this the strength of someone ranked ninth on the Celestial Being List?" Ning Qi in the Scripture Pavilion was visibly shaken.

He had heard that every tenth rank on the Celestial Being List marked a qualitative change in power, but he had only dealt with those at the bottom of the list and lacked a direct experience. Now, seeing the Town North King in action, the difference made the opponent seem no more than Gang Essence Realm.

"Could this guy have already achieved Celestial Being Realm Perfection?"

Ning Qi cautiously restrained his aura and fluctuations. With the Town North King present, he didn't need to worry about other matters, only focusing on urging the Celestial Sword to entangle Elder Wang.

Eunuch Ye, Taoist Longshan, and the Butcher all showed invigorated expressions upon seeing the Town North King.

As for the Demon Sect strong fighters, an incredulous look appeared in their eyes.

Even Elder Wang couldn't help but utter in horror:

"Town North King?!"

His voice shrill and distorted, tinged with fear.

A person's name is like the shadow of a tree.

The Town North King's prestige resounded through Great Yan.

"Aren't you supposed to be guarding the Northern Barbarians? How come you're here?!"

Elder Wang's gaze landed on Li Ling, seemingly realizing:

"You actually use your own young son as bait?! Quite the cunning!"

The Town North King grunted coldly:

"Presumptuous! Are you even worthy?"

"You dared bully Ling'Er, you deserve ten thousand deaths!"

He couldn't be bothered to explain, gently caressing Li Ling's head with his left hand, while his right hand clenched and slowly punched towards Elder Wang.

A seemingly ordinary punch in fact contained much profoundness.

Yet Ning Qi's gaze was grave, seeing in it a more ingenious combination of Essence, Qi, and Spirit, and Power of Heaven and Earth. He was comprehending, keeping this punch in mind.

Elder Wang's eyes showed horror, pupils suddenly contracting.

He screeched without hesitation, spewing vital blood from his mouth.

Power of Heaven and Earth gathered around him, mixing with poison mist to form a giant toad, which continuously spewed green poison mist, transforming into barrier after barrier to intercept the fist seal.

But it was futile.

Everything turned to dust under this punch, the green mist shattered, layers of barriers crumbled.

Elder Wang's defenses were unleashed, but couldn't withstand the Town North King's pinnacle punch.

The poison toad wailed and exploded, the lightweight fist seal striking Elder Wang's body.

"Boom!"

Terrifying strength erupted, nearly splitting Elder Wang in half.

He coughed up mouthfuls of blood, heavily injured.

Ning Qi's eyes flashed slightly, seizing the opportunity, the Celestial Sword sliced through the air to assault Elder Wang. Though Elder Wang took another hit, the unusually sharp Celestial Sword didn't slice him in two.

Once more injured, Elder Wang spat blood, a dazzling blood light flashed as he fled. He didn't even dare utter a cruel word, directly using a Secret Technique to burn vital blood and escape, ignoring the other Demon Sect Celestial Beings.

The Town North King frowned slightly, surprised:

"Treasure Armor?"

That wasn't an ordinary punch. Logically, it should have crushed this guy; at least, it should have rendered him immobile.

Yet Elder Wang survived a punch and a sword strike and managed to flee.

Indeed, he had a few trump cards.

Watching the distant blood light gradually fade, the Town North King ultimately suppressed the urge to pursue. With his power, he could catch up, but looking at Li Ling and Li Qingyue beside him, he decided against it.

"Forget it."

Just an old demon isn't important.

Still, his gaze turned towards the depths of the True Martial Sect, with a hint of surprise. That sword strike made him reconsider:

"This True Man Tianjian indeed has some skill, especially his attack showed no aura fluctuations, even I couldn't detect his presence, interesting."

But he had no intention to delve deeply.

Anyone who could cultivate to this level had a few tricks up their sleeve.

At this time.

The remaining three Demon Sect Celestial Beings watched Elder Wang heavily injured and fleeing instantly, terrifying them out of their wits, each desperately attempting to escape.

But they neither possessed Elder Wang's strength nor his Treasure Armor.

The Town North King unleashed three punches, and True Martial Mountain instantly gained three Celestial corpses.

Such charisma left everyone in awe.

Everyone looked at the dignified middle-aged man with eyes full of reverence.

Indeed, slaying Celestial Beings like slaughtering chickens.

Only Ning Qi.

Looked towards the sky.

That was the direction Elder Wang had fled. Seeing the wreckage of the True Martial Sect, a cold killing intent rose within him. Now with the Town North King on True Martial Mountain, safety was assured; if the Demon Sect dared come, they must pay the price.