

Cultivating 111

Chapter 111: Powerful Suppression and Slaughter_2

The last sword strike just now landed on Elder Wang's back, leaving a Sword Qi imprint.

Ning Qi silently operated the Silence Technique and Body Shifting and Bone Changing, stepping out of the Scripture Pavilion.

...

In the night sky.

Bloodlight streaked across like a rainbow, shooting far into the distance in the blink of an eye.

Elder Wang was still in shock, not yet recovered from the terror of Town North King's sudden arrival, that punch almost blew him apart.

"If it weren't for the Cyan Thorn Treasure Armor, I'd probably already be dead on True Martial Mountain."

"Damn Town North King, damn True Man Tianjian!"

He cursed in his heart, but he didn't dare slow down, frantically operating the Blood Burning Technique, afraid that Town North King would catch up and suppress him.

The fear in his heart made him not even dare to look back.

Though there was no presence of Town North King, that punch was like a nightmare, casting a shadow over him.

But he wasn't like Old Demon Lin back then with the support of the Blood Demon Flower's power. Running the Blood Burning Technique now meant burning his own life essence by the second, his face visibly turning pale.

He didn't know how far he had run.

When he realized that Town North King really hadn't given chase, he finally stopped the Blood Burning Secret Technique.

At this moment, he looked withered, his already small stature now appearing even more shrunken, like a small skeleton from afar.

He had burned nearly half of his own life essence.

"Damn it, if I'd known Town North King wasn't coming, I shouldn't have burned blood for so long."

Elder Wang felt his heart bleed.

Life essence is the quintessence of the body, and if more than half is lost, the foundation would be damaged, and even now, it would shorten his lifespan significantly. But before, in his panic, he dared not stop.

Elder Wang landed on a mountain range, breathing slightly.

Reflecting on this night raid on True Martial Mountain, he felt something was off. Initially, he thought Town North King was fishing, but later realized he didn't even know the envoy had his son and Princess Qingyue.

Then doesn't that mean he was purely unlucky?

Thinking of this, Elder Wang was so angry he felt like spitting blood.

If he'd known, he would have attacked a few days earlier.

Now that things had come to this, he could only suppress his frustration and anger, sit down to stabilize his injuries, and wait to discuss the next steps with the sect once he returned. The thought of losing four Celestial Human Realm members drove him to the brink. In these few short months, the Demon Sect had suffered heavy losses.

Nurturing a Celestial Human Realm member isn't easy.

After just a brief moment of rest, Elder Wang felt a sudden jump in his heart. He instinctively took to the sky to evade, as a sharp Sword Qi came slashing, cleaving the tree he was sitting on in half, leaving a terrifying mark in the mountain forest.

"Who is it?!"

Elder Wang roared with anger, truly like a tiger fallen in Pingyang, bullied by dogs, getting ambushed wherever he goes. If he hadn't always been vigilant, sensing the fluctuation as soon as the Sword Qi was released, he would have been injured again.

Ning Qi stepped through the air, now appearing as a white-haired Taoist.

Elder Wang immediately realized:

"True Man Tianjian?!"

He gritted his teeth.

He couldn't believe Town North King didn't come after, but this old guy did.

Ning Qi snorted coldly:

"You're quite quick to react."

But he wasn't surprised, if it were that simple, the opponent would have already died on True Martial Mountain.

Elder Wang held his breath, and upon discovering it was only Ning Qi, he slightly relaxed, wary of Ning Qi's Celestial Sword, as that one sword had made him wary. In his injured state now, he might not be a match, needing to find a way to escape.

But to his surprise.

The Celestial Sword Master before him showed no signs of gathering Sword Qi.

Ning Qi looked at the energy-declined Elder Wang, without any nonsense.

He communicated with the Fake Pill inside him, the Power of Heaven and Earth gradually converging.

Ning Qi stepped into the sky, vaguely echoing the roars of True Dragon and Divine Eagle. Thunderlight gradually emerged on his skin, Elder Wang's eyes were filled with shock, as if the Taoist before him had disappeared, replaced by a Thunderous Divine Tiger, and what startled him most was as Ning Qi took each step, his size rapidly grew.

In just a few steps, the white-haired Taoist in front of him had already become a giant several zhang tall, the muscles under his Taoist robe gleaming with thunderlight, the vigorous life force making him gasp.

What about True Man Tianjian's imminent demise?

Ning Qi gave no time to breathe.

His figure quickly shattered the void, his thunderlit fist descending like a mountain.

He was curious to test the might of the Ape King's true form.

This Secret Technique had been untested since its creation, now was the perfect opportunity. He realized it might be because the Ape King's true form originated from the White Ape bloodline, it matched more harmoniously with the Fake Pill, the power unleashed exceeded his expectations.

"Boom!"

Elder Wang's expression dramatically changed, his poisonous palm seal exploded by Ning Qi's punch, thunderlight blossomed, and the giant fist pounded onto Elder Wang.

In the mountain forest, Elder Wang was plowed into a hundred-zhang long gash, smashing countless trees and rocks, ultimately embedded in the cliff.

Elder Wang spewed blood, feeling like his bones were breaking.

Ning Qi raised an eyebrow in evaluation:

"Quite resilient."

Elder Wang struggled to get out, looking at the giant Taoist, his pupils filled with terror, he was like a humanoid fierce beast, even at his peak he might not stand a chance, let alone now, half-dead.

He had only one thought, escape, escape quickly!

He gritted his teeth and burned blood, soaring into the sky.

But Ning Qi was already waiting for him, the tiger's roar resonated across the sky, Ning Qi lifted his leg, like a heavenly thunder pillar, stomping on Elder Wang's back.

With a rumbling sound, Elder Wang was blasted into the ground, climbing up again, hair disheveled, clothes already tattered, the blue-glowing treasure armor underneath surprising Ning Qi.

"I want to see how long you can last."

No matter how strong, the treasure armor has limits.

Ning Qi flashed down, shadowing him, another punch aimed at Elder Wang's head, fortunately, Elder Wang retained his wits, dodging the fatal point, raising his fist to meet.

As expected, Elder Wang was blown away again, spitting out a mist of blood.

In the mountain forest.

The earth trembled like two Beast Kings fighting, causing some hidden Exotic Beasts in the deep mountains to retreat in fright.

They didn't know, it was a one-sided suppression.

Ning Qi's plain punches shattered all of Elder Wang's pride, all his bones inside were broken, sustaining extremely grave injuries, if not treated in time, he wouldn't survive long, he had lost all resistance.

"No, True Man Tianjian, you can't kill me, if you do, countless strongmen from the Holy Sect will surely raze True Martial Mountain one day!"

Elder Wang, gripped in Ning Qi's grasp, begged in terror.

"If you let me go, the grudges between us will be wiped clean from today."

Ning Qi calmly looked at Elder Wang, speaking faintly:

"I think you misunderstand."

Elder Wang was bewildered.

Ning Qi gently clenched his fist, using force, blood mist spread from the tiger's mouth, he opened his hand, looked at Elder Wang's corpse, and softly said:

"The one who killed you is Town North King."

Chapter 112: Harvest

Ning Qi's gaze was somewhat peculiar.

All the Celestial Being Strong Persons from the Demon Sect who attacked were killed by the Town North King, with only Elder Wang escaping, which the Demon Sect does not know.

From the Demon Sect's perspective, it appears that the powerful individuals sent to annihilate the True Martial Mountain have not returned.

The Town North King cannot escape from taking the blame for this.

Claiming that he didn't kill Elder Wang?

Who would believe that?

Among all present, only he has the strength to easily slay Elder Wang.

Moreover, the fist technique Ning Qi used in the battle earlier vaguely carried some semblance to the Town North King; regardless of whether the Demon Sect can locate here, even if they do, they would likely first suspect that the Town North King pursued them covertly.

Even the Imperial Court may not think it was anyone else.

This was also why Ning Qi pursued decisively, as it allowed him to sever one of the Demon Sect's tentacles and weaken their strength while there was a ready scapegoat; why not?

As for whether putting the blame on the Town North King is somewhat unethical, Ning Qi thought that the guy was also secretly watching from the sidelines before, and thus felt at ease.

No one is much better than another.

With this thought, Ning Qi's body gradually returned to its normal size, and the experiment with the Ape King's true form proved quite effective this time, especially the synergy between the Ape King's true form and the fake pill which was beyond expectations; the power unleashed was also extremely strong, approaching the might of the Heavenly Sword Technique, but offering greater endurance compared to the Heavenly Sword Technique, which is more suitable for Ning Qi to use without revealing himself.

"If this fake pill was refined from an inner core of an ape-type Beast King, it might be even more formidable."

"However, the battle this time also consumed about thirty percent of the fake pill's energy, so I need to be a bit frugal in the future."

Ning Qi felt slightly heartache.

After all, there was only this one fake pill.

But considering he first tangled with Elder Wang using the Heavenly Sword Technique for a while, then chased for so long, and finally suppressed with the Ape King's true form, consuming only thirty percent energy is decent.

Ning Qi estimated that the Demon Sect lost five Celestial Human Realm individuals this time, so they have to quiet down for a while.

After all, Celestial Human Realm strong persons aren't like Chinese cabbages; even a strong Demon Sect would find it difficult to bear the loss of so many Celestial Beings in a short period.

The remaining seventy percent energy is sufficient.

He turned his gaze towards the corpse of Elder Wang before him, his eyes slightly brightened.

"Thankfully, there's still some compensation."

He squatted down.

Ning Qi meticulously searched, pulling out a pouch with a somewhat special material, unaffected by such intense combat.

Upon opening it.

It was filled with various jars; Ning Qi poured them out one by one to sniff and discern their properties, understanding roughly seventy to eighty percent of them.

They were basically healing or blood-replenishing pills or poison pills; none enhanced cultivation.

As for martial arts secret manuals, likewise, there was none.

Ning Qi wasn't surprised; it's normal, who would carry secret manuals and treasure pills while going out to kill unless they have no fixed abode, otherwise, if killed, wouldn't enemies reap the benefits, sending their head and wealth across miles.

Finally.

Ning Qi turned his gaze to the cyan light shining on the treasure armor.

This was the main harvest.

A single piece of treasure armor was surprisingly sturdy, capable of withstanding the Town North King's impressive punch while enduring so many savage blows from Ning Qi—a fact proven by Elder Wang's flesh and blood, despite Ning Qi restraining himself for fear of damaging his treasure armor.

"This treasure armor, truly remarkable."

Ning Qi cleansed it with Gang Qi, and the Cyan Light Treasure Armor appeared new, adorned with short spikes that were usually soft but became stiff upon forceful contact, explaining why Ning Qi previously found it somewhat prickly; ordinarily, a hand slapped onto it might get pierced directly.

But this was secondary; the primary feature was its strong defense.

Touching it felt like waves; if struck heavily, it could instantly disperse force, avoiding self-harm.

Ning Qi, who had studied Weapon Forging Techniques, knew that in this world, crafting weapons and armor was not particularly mystical; most of the power came from materials, with Weapon Refining Masters merely serving to fuse and shape, though some Divine Soldiers are said to be different.

But up to now, Ning Qi hadn't encountered any.

"However, the material of this treasure armor is somewhat unusual; perhaps with more observation, there may be different gains," Ning Qi thought to himself.

Clearly, now was not the time for research.

He donned the treasure armor.

Ning Qi glanced again at the corpse of Elder Wang, observing its unique vitality and liveliness, his eyes brightened, and he lifted it with Gang Qi as well.

The flesh body of a Celestial Being Strong Person held vitality stronger than many treasure materials.

It shouldn't be wasted.

He soared into the sky, returning to True Martial Mountain; though the Town North King was present, he shouldn't stay away for too long.

...

True Martial Mountain.

With all the Demon Sect forces put to death, the previously tense atmosphere gradually relaxed, as everyone looked at the invincible middle-aged man with respect and said:

"We have met the Town North King!"

Everyone's hearts were filled with awe.

The scene of slaughtering Celestial Beings like chickens shocked everyone.

Eunuch Ye and the butcher both pleaded for forgiveness:

"We were inadequate in protecting the Crown Prince and Princess, and ask the Town North King for punishment."

The Town North King merely waved his hand dismissively.

"You have already done your best."

He had been following behind, witnessing the entire process, knowing the two had done their utmost, and thus would not blame them baselessly; anyway, with him protecting them, nothing severe would happen, and the Demon Sect wouldn't dispatch unparalleled Celestial Beings from its top ten ranks for a True Martial Sect person.

Without his and the Great Yan Emperor's approval, Eunuch Ye could never have brought Li Ling and Li Qingyue out.

His objective was to let the two experience some ordeals to achieve growth.

Even without this Demon Sect attack, there would be other 'attacks.'

At this moment.

Li Ling and Li Qingyue had already recovered from their earlier fright, but Li Qingyue's face was still pale, lacking her previous vivacity. Li Ling was slightly better, occasionally looking towards the depths of the True Martial Sect, where it had been silent since the Celestial Sword vanished.

Taoist Longshan came over, sincerely expressing his gratitude:

"If it weren't for the Town North King's help, I'm afraid the True Martial Sect would have faced disaster today. Please accept my old offering of thanks."

In the current situation, though it was a mess, there were essentially no casualties, which was already a very good outcome.

Five Celestial Beings from the Demon Sect attacked.

Just the thought of it still made him shudder.

The Town North King nodded and said:

"True Man, you are too polite. It was merely a fortunate coincidence. However, even if I hadn't come, with True Man Tianjian present, the True Martial Sect might not necessarily have suffered."

He commented lightly.

Earlier, he had observed for a moment in secret. When True Man Tianjian made his move, it was completely undetectable, even by him. Without showing himself, he was already matching that demon in battle, and if he went all out, he might not have lost.

True Man Tianjian is stronger than the legends say.

He is likely not inferior to Divine Feather, and when he makes a move, it doesn't seem like his lifespan is nearing its end.

Originally, he wanted to see more clearly, but the Celestial Being from the Demon Sect, unaware of death, tried to capture Li Ling and Li Qingyue, forcing him to reveal himself.

Everyone was astonished, not expecting the Town North King to hold Trueman Tianjian in such high regard.

However, it was also evident to everyone earlier.

If before today Trueman Tianjian was only suspected to have the strength worthy of the Celestial Being List, it was now a sure thing. When the list is next updated, Trueman Tianjian should be on it.

The Town North King looked at the two kids to his left and right, showing a rare smile:

"Will you come back with me?"

Li Qingyue quickly nodded:

"Imperial Uncle, I will go back with you."

She was genuinely frightened and realized that the world outside wasn't her playground. She no longer had that faint sense of superiority and didn't want to stay on True Martial Mountain for another moment. Whatever Celestial Sword was long forgotten in her mind.

The Town North King nodded in satisfaction and looked at Li Ling, who had a hesitant expression, but after glancing once more at the depths of the True Martial Sect, he still said:

"Father, I want to learn swordsmanship from True Man Tianjian."

Taoist Longshan's heart skipped a beat; this must not come to pass.

Fortunately, the Town North King already sternly rebuked:

"Nonsense!"

Although it's likely that the Demon Sect would be quiet for a while after suffering this blow, who knows if they would madly attempt a second attack? The chances are extremely slim, but he wouldn't gamble his youngest son's life on it. He didn't have the time to stay on True Martial Mountain indefinitely; this time was merely by chance.

But this reprimand instead stirred a rebellious heart in Li Ling.

His eyes turned red, tears welling up, but he didn't speak; he just looked at the Town North King.

Seeing his youngest son's expression, the Town North King's heart softened. He squatted down with some headache to comfort Li Ling:

"Ling'er, it's not that father won't let you learn, it's just that it's dangerous outside now. How about this: When we get back, father will teach you the Fist Technique, okay? Father's technique is much superior to True Man Tianjian's!"

"No, your Fist Technique is ugly, not cool at all. True Man Tianjian's sword is cool; I want to learn from him." Li Ling pouted.

Taoist Longshan and the others all awkwardly stared at their own noses and lips.

The Town North King almost choked.

To think the Fist Technique of the Town North King, desired by countless people under heaven, was despised by his own son. If someone else had said this, he would have punched them, but seeing Li Ling like that, he could only force a smile and say:

"If father's Fist Technique is ugly, then don't learn it."

"Then dad promises you, when we get back, I'll find an even cooler Sword Dao master to teach you, okay?"

He seized the opportunity and continued:

"Think about it, if the Demon Sect knows you are here, they'd definitely come to capture you again to threaten your dad, and it would cause a lot of trouble for the True Martial Sect. How about after dad takes you away for now, I'll bring you back when there's a chance in the future?"

Li Ling hesitated for a moment.

He didn't want to bring trouble to others.

"Then... okay."

He took another look at the depths of the True Martial Sect and finally didn't insist further.

The Town North King breathed a sigh of relief, ready to leave, for fear of Ling changing his mind again.

But then Li Ling let go of his hand, ran to Taoist Longshan, and bowed deeply:

"True Man, if it's safe in the future, Li Ling will come to visit again!"

Taoist Longshan was taken aback, then smiled and said:

"His highness is welcome anytime."

He had a good impression of Li Ling, who seemed kind-hearted, though a bit spoiled by the Town North King's overindulgence in his sumptuous lifestyle.

The Town North King chuckled.

After giving a few instructions to the butcher and Eunuch Ye, he took Li Ling and Li Qingyue away across the sky.

Taoist Longshan couldn't help but sigh.

"It's said that the Town North Princess died giving birth to a son, leaving him motherless, hence why the Town North King pampers his youngest son so exceedingly, granting whatever he wishes. As it appears, it's indeed true."

A top-ranked unparalleled expert on the Celestial Being List, bowing and scraping to a child, is something unique in the world.

After sighing, Taoist Longshan looked at the chaos around him and let out another sigh.

Hopefully, after this incident, the Demon Sect will quiet down.

Being caught up in such storms is truly beyond one's control.

Yet he always felt.

The world is likely to be restless, and days of peace and stability are probably limited.

Chapter 113: Shock from All Sides

After Eunuch Ye helped the envoy clean up the aftermath, he left with the bodies of the four Celestial Being strong persons from the Demon Sect.

Meanwhile, the butcher had not yet received orders to leave. He smiled at Taoist Longshan, then returned to True Martial City.

Some disciples of the True Martial Sect recognized his identity and were secretly astonished.

They knew he sold pork in True Martial City, and a select few had even conversed with him, but they never realized he was a Celestial Being strong person hidden by the Imperial Court.

Ye Qinghe widened her eyes, remembering that she and her junior brother had once bought pork at this butcher's stall.

"What a stroke of fate!"

She sighed in her heart.

And then she suddenly panicked, where was her junior brother?

She searched everywhere but couldn't find Ning Qi, and her heart filled with anxiety, wondering if he had been injured in the previous chaos.

Ye Qinghe quickly reported to Taoist Longshan:

"Master, junior brother is missing!"

Taoist Longshan paused, then smiled and said:

"Don't worry. I've already transmitted a message to Tiansheng, telling him and Jiu to hide."

Ye Qinghe immediately felt relieved.

Taoist Longshan looked at Ye Qinghe, secretly sighing. It was better to keep Ning Qi's identity as True Man Tianjian hidden for now; the fewer people who knew, the better.

If the Demon Sect knew that the esteemed True Man Tianjian wasn't an elder on the brink of death but an eight-year-old child, it would likely cause unrest.

Even.

The Great Yan Dynasty might not be able to accept Ning Qi.

Fortunately, it wasn't long before.

Ning Qi reappeared, looking dusty but unharmed, causing Ye Qinghe to laugh. Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan exchanged a glance and smiled, understanding each other without words.

...

The news of the True Martial Sect being attacked by five Celestial Beings from the Demon Sect spread from True Martial City throughout the Qing State.

In the attack by the five Celestial Beings, one was as formidable as a master from the Celestial Being List.

But it happened that the Town North King was visiting, and he swiftly wiped out four of the Demon Sect Celestial Beings, sending their strongest member fleeing in terror.

The whole Qing State was in an uproar.

The renown of the Town North King reached new heights.

As details emerged, people realized that before the Town North King appeared, True Man Tianjian had already intervened, resisting the Demon Sect's strongest Celestial Being, clearly displaying his Celestial Being List-level strength. Many swordsmen became fanatical, declaring that True Man Tianjian would surely enter the Celestial Being List next time.

The Martial Realm is full of opportunists, and the weapons used by those on the Celestial Being List—whether sword or blade—are closely watched, as the majority of martial artists use either a sword or a blade.

Therefore.

If swordsmen outnumbered blademen on the Celestial Being List, those using a sword would take pride in it.

Currently, the swordsmen and blademen are equal in number on the list, with the last spot occupied by a blademan.

If True Man Tianjian could enter the list, displacing the last spot, it would mean swordsmen would outnumber blademen on the Celestial Being List, making True Man Tianjian's achievements highly watched.

To this.

Ning Qi felt somewhat helpless.

He only wished to cultivate quietly and seek the path of immortality.

Meanwhile.

Not only did the attack on True Martial Mountain cause a sensation in Qing State, but the Wang Clan was also attacked by the Demon Sect on the same night!

But unlike True Martial Mountain, where they had the good fortune of the Town North King's presence,

the Wang Clan wasn't so lucky.

Although the Imperial Court paid more attention to the Wang Clan, stationing three Celestial Human Realm experts there, they were no match for Ghost Mask Vice Sect Leader, who also brought four Celestial Human Realm experts. The outcome was predictable.

The newly rebuilt main residence of the Wang Clan was once again razed to the ground, this time even more completely.

The three Celestial Human Realm experts from the Imperial Court were slain.

The Wang Family Ancestor was missing.

Some say they saw the Wang Family Ancestor crushed to dust, with no remains left, others say the Demon Sect strongmen took him away, and still others say he used a secret technique to escape.

Upon hearing.

Ning Qi's eyes remained calm.

Acts of heaven cannot be lived with; why involve oneself in such massive conflicts? One could only say the Wang Ancestor underestimated the Demon Sect's vengeance; even with the Imperial Court's protection, one can't be guarded forever.

Ning Qi speculated that it might have been the last straw, frustrated by being humiliated by his master, a younger generation, coupled with the Wang Ancestor nearing his end, which drove him to gamble by allying the Wang Clan with the Great Yan dynasty.

After all, the Wang Clan had made numerous enemies over the years. If the Wang Ancestor fell and there weren't any new Celestial Humans, it was inevitable that they would be eroded and destroyed.

Better to gamble.

Alas, the gamble was lost.

The Wang Clan, which prospered in Qing State for hundreds of years, vanished into thin air. Even the few branch families or the luckiest survivors would have to hide their identities in the future.

As for whether the Wang Ancestor died, Ning Qi didn't dwell on it.

If he did survive, he'd just deal with him casually when the time came.

Ning Qi lay on a rattan chair, comfortably changing positions. He felt the seed of the Enlightenment Tea Tree underground was noticeably more active, full of life.

Elder Wang's body lay beneath, providing nutrients to the seed.

Ning Qi couldn't help but remark:

"The flesh of a Celestial Human Realm being is truly something."

Thinking this, he felt a bit of regret.

The four other corpses of the Demon Sect's Celestial Beings had all been taken away.

If the Wang Ancestor were still around, he could have borrowed his body to use.

Perhaps then the Enlightenment Tea Tree would sprout soon.

...

The two instances of Celestial Human Realm battles involving the True Martial Sect and the Wang Clan shocked everyone and gradually instilled a sense of unease.

It's too frequent!

In the past, battles between Celestial Human Realm beings were rarely seen, but now they were falling one after another.

If this is how Celestial Human Realm beings fare, what about everyone else?

Are they just cannon fodder?

Some people consulted records and discovered the situation was somewhat similar to one hundred years ago when the Demon Sect was similarly menacing until a Martial Saint of Great Yan intervened, suppressing the Demon Sect's strongest, leading to their disappearance. Now it seems they're poised for a comeback.

Some people have keenly noticed that the current omens seem even more fierce than a hundred years ago.

Many have started to be cautious, avoiding getting involved.

After all, even if the Martial Saint from Great Yan intervenes, countless people may die in the process.

Yet there are those who are looking forward to it, even choosing sides secretly.

In chaotic times, heroes emerge, fortune is sought in danger, and the more chaotic Great Yan becomes, the more opportunities there are to accelerate growth.

The Martial Realm of Great Yan gradually descends into chaos.

No matter how the Martial Realm views this situation.

Both factions are extremely angry.

Great Yan feels that although both sides lost four Celestial Human Realm experts, the Demon Sect exterminated the Wang Clan, leaving them at a disadvantage.

On the other hand, the Demon Sect feels that this time they lost five Celestial Being experts, along with a strong Elder like Elder Wang, suffering heavy losses.

The Underground Palace of the Demon Sect.

The atmosphere was incredibly oppressive.

Ghost Mask sat atop the throne without speaking, but anyone could imagine the solemn expression beneath the bronze mask, making everyone afraid to speak.

After a moment.

Ghost Mask's indifferent voice sounded:

"Elder Wang has not returned yet?"

"Reporting to the Vice Sect Leader, he... he has not."

"It's been days, it seems Elder Wang has indeed fallen." Ghost Mask stood tall.

"I secretly investigated and discovered traces of a battle, suspected to be between Elder Wang and an unknown strong person. Elder Wang suffered a one-sided defeat and disappeared, and the person used a Fist Technique resembling Heaven-Suppressing Fist, likely Town North King, but it could be an impersonator."

A chilling aura instantly filled the entire hall.

"I have never heard of Town North King teaching Heaven-Suppressing Fist to anyone else."

"Town North King, excellent, truly excellent!"

Anger rose in everyone's eyes.

The world rumors that this time both the Demon Sect and the Imperial Court lost four Celestial Being experts, seemingly evenly matched, while only they know that they lost five Celestial Being, and the Imperial Court merely lost three Celestial Human Realm experts.

Not to mention that they also lost an existence like Elder Wang, comparable to being on the Celestial Being List.

"Town North King acts without conscience!"

"Someday Town North King must pay with blood!"

"Rumors say Town North King and the Great Yan Emperor are friendly only in appearance, originally contemplating recruitment, but now it seems, this bastard was merely acting!"

Angry curses rang out.

Someone's voice was filled with murderous intent:

"The True Martial Sect has repeatedly caused our Holy Sect to lose Celestial Beings. Though this sect is weak, it interferes with our Holy Sect's rise. I suggest, Vice Sect Leader, that you lead us to destroy the True Martial Sect!"

Everyone's gaze froze, looking at Ghost Mask.

Ghost Mask pondered, glancing at Qin Yun who had his head lowered.

"Qin Yun, what do you think?"

Qin Yun's body slightly shook, he lifted his head, gaze calm:

"I believe... we should not."

A voice came from behind, dripping with sarcasm:

"I've heard before that Guardian Qin hails from the True Martial Sect, now preventing us from destroying True Martial, does he still harbor feelings for the old master?"

Mocking and questioning gazes fell upon Qin Yun.

Qin Yun remained silent, without refuting.

Ghost Mask stared at him:

"Give me a reason."

Qin Yun slowly spoke:

"Our Holy Sect has fought continuously, losing ten Celestial Beings. Continuing large-scale conflict is detrimental to our future; it's better to recuperate for now."

"Though True Martial Sect is weak, it possesses True Man Longshan and True Man Tianjian, two Celestial Beings. If we continue to send multiple Celestial Beings there and fall into an Imperial Court ambush, our Holy Sect will suffer greatly."

"You want the Vice Sect Leader to go personally; if the Imperial Court has laid down a trap, wouldn't that put the Vice Sect Leader in danger?"

"Dare I ask, what are your intentions?"

His words were calm, yet sharp, leaving the person speechless, his face turning pale.

"You! I am loyal to the Vice Sect Leader; how could a mere child like you speculate? The True Martial Sect, insignificant as they are, wouldn't warrant such attention from the Imperial Court?"

Qin Yun faintly retorted:

"Then how do you explain Town North King? Do you claim it's a coincidence? Are you going to use this coincidence to disregard the Vice Sect Leader's safety?"

Ghost Mask's gaze narrowed.

The person behind cold sweat pouring, knelt to the ground:

"I mean no such thing; Qin Yun clearly holds old sentiments for the True Martial Sect!"

Qin Yun bowed and cupped his fists towards Ghost Mask:

"Vice Sect Leader, I merely believe that the insignificant True Martial Sect is like an ant, unable to obstruct our Holy Sect; otherwise, it would be ridiculous. There is no need to persist in this at the current crucial juncture. Even if we are to destroy the True Martial Sect, wait a few years for the turmoil to pass, when the Imperial Court's attention is elsewhere, and our Holy Sect can crush them effortlessly."

"At that time, I am willing to take the lead and personally take the head of Taoist Longshan."

His gaze was calm, as if he was discussing a trivial matter.

Ghost Mask chuckled, his gaze somewhat cruel and callous.

"You make a good point, I'll give you three years, then you will personally lead to destroy True Martial Sect, how about it?"

Qin Yun's heart trembled, but he finally took a deep breath:

"I accept the orders."

"However, I feel my strength is insufficient, and have a request."

"Say it."

"I'd like to enter the Blood Demon Pool."

The hall was silent, shocked gazes turned to Qin Yun.

This guy... is crazy?

Ghost Mask's pupils contracted slightly, then burst into laughter:

"I permit it!"

Chapter 114: True Martial Underground Palace

Everyone looked at Qin Yun as if they were looking at a dead man.

What kind of place is the Blood Demon Pool?

It's practically ten deaths and no life!

It harbors great terror, yet also great opportunities. It is a forbidden land of the Demon Sect and one of the strongest foundations of the sect.

Generally speaking.

If a Gang Essence Realm expert within the Demon Sect is nearing their end, they will apply to enter the Blood Demon Pool. If they can survive and come out, nine out of ten can step into the Celestial Human Realm, extending their life by four hundred years. However, the vast majority dissolve within, becoming nourishment for the pool.

Over generations, even the people of the Demon Sect do not fully understand the perils within the Blood Demon Pool.

Qin Yun is very young and has just recently reached the Gang Essence Realm, yet he chooses to enter the Blood Demon Pool, leaving everyone puzzled.

Suddenly.

Someone recalled a rumor.

Qin Yun used an unparalleled secret technique to burn his lifespan into the Gang Essence Realm.

As they looked at Qin Yun's hanging white hair and his decision to enter the Blood Demon Pool today, many began to believe the rumor.

"If you successfully come out of the Blood Demon Pool, I will personally ask the sect leader to nominate you as a candidate for our Holy Sect's Saint Heir!" Ghost Mask laughed and promised, believing that Qin Yun, with his unparalleled talent, could stand at the top of the world if he transformed after coming out of the Blood Demon Pool.

Upon hearing this.

Everyone felt a thrill.

Currently, the Holy Sect's Saint Heir position is vacant. If Qin Yun can come out of the Blood Demon Pool alive, he will become a hot contender for the Saint Heir position.

But no one argued.

Everything depends on Qin Yun coming back alive from the Blood Demon Pool. In there, one must comprehend the true essence of the Holy Sect and protect oneself with it; otherwise, it is ten deaths and no life. If Qin Yun can return safely, it will prove his loyalty.

No one naturally had any doubts.

Qin Yun bowed:

"Thank you, Vice Sect Leader!"

He lowered his head, his gaze complex.

Securing three years for the True Martial Sect is the best he can do, better than suffering an attack from the Demon Sect now.

After that, if he dies in the Blood Demon Pool, everything will naturally be over, and he won't have to worry about anything anymore. If he can come out alive and lead a group, maybe there will be other opportunities.

Ghost Mask's cold voice resounded in the grand hall:

"Suspend actions for now; Celestial Human Realm experts are to rest temporarily, not to make a move. All subordinate forces and halls of the Holy Sect, Gang Essence Realm and below, act freely."

"As you command!"

As the doors of the grand hall slowly closed.

Ghost Mask, sitting on the throne, suddenly asked contemplatively:

"What do you think of this Qin Yun boy?"

"His talent is not bad and suits the Sad White Hair Secret Technique you taught him, but his loyalty seems lacking. Previously he spoke up, indicating he still harbors some attachment to the True Martial Sect?" A voice laughed with an exaggerated, eerie cackle after each statement.

Ghost Mask smiled:

"No matter, when he emerges from the Blood Demon Pool, he will naturally belong wholly to our Holy Sect."

"By then, letting him personally destroy the True Martial Sect might indeed evoke the presence of a Saint Heir!"

He could see Qin Yun's little schemes, but the True Martial Sect was indeed a small player in his eyes; the grand plan of the Holy Sect was the focus. He had not yet destroyed the True Martial Sect not because of Qin Yun's advice, but because the commotion was indeed too much.

The main reason was that the Great Yan Martial Saint's deterrent force was too powerful. Even though he wouldn't strike casually, the Demon Sect didn't dare be too reckless either.

Ghost Mask looked into the darkness, sighing softly:

"Let's hope the Sect Leader succeeds soon..."

...

A storm.

It began with Divine Feather Grand General's destruction of the Demon Sect's Death Fire Abyss division, leading to a tumultuous struggle between the Great Yan court and the Demon Sect.

Using the attacks on True Martial Mountain and the Wang Clan as a turning point, the situation reached an extremely tense level.

Just when everyone thought it would escalate further.

Surprisingly, both forces strangely became silent, filled with an indescribable tacit understanding.

Of course.

It wasn't complete silence, but rather the battles among Celestial Human Realm experts gradually decreased until they ceased, while the killings below the Celestial Human Realm intensified significantly.

From time to time, there were reports of Demon Sect martial artists creating chaos in various places.

The entire Martial Realm began to stir.

Some became famous for slaying demons, while others joined the Demon Sect to obtain resources and strengthen themselves.

Inside the Bright Martial Pavilion.

Ning Qi listened to Taoist Longshan's account, lost in thought:

"So it seems, the Great Yan court and the Demon Sect must have reached some kind of understanding, with Celestial Human Realm experts not taking the field, only allowing clashes below that level, making us temporarily safe."

Taoist Longshan nodded and said:

"Precisely, the destructive power of Celestial Human Realm experts is too great. If they really fought with anger, it would likely lead to widespread disaster, something the Great Yan Dynasty is unwilling to see."

Ning Qi understood.

Although the Great Yan Dynasty has the upper hand with greater strength and the Great Yan Martial Saint overseeing them, they also have a fatal weakness, which is the vast territory and millions of common people.

If the Demon Sect fears the Great Yan Martial Saint's intervention and doesn't act too excessively.

Then the Great Yan court fears the Demon Sect turning completely reckless, resulting in indiscriminate slaughter, making it impossible for them to protect against every Celestial Human Realm of the Demon Sect.

Although the Demon Sect also seeks to overthrow the Great Yan and views its land and people as their own possessions, they usually don't target civilians. But when cornered, who knows what madness they might commit.

The Demon Sect gained the term "demon" because they sometimes act with extreme tendencies.

Yet Ning Qi was puzzled.

"Why does it always feel like the Great Yan Martial Saint is restraining himself? Logically, with the strength of a Martial Saint, he should be able to suppress everything below the Martial Saint level."

Although Ning Qi had never seen the Martial Saint personally take action.

However, judging from scattered records in ancient texts and the strength of the Town North King, it can be surmised somewhat that being ranked ninth on the Celestial Being List already carries such prestige, let alone being a Martial Saint.

"Is it unwillingness to act, or inability, or perhaps there are other hidden reasons?"

Facing Ning Qi's question, Taoist Longshan was also a bit puzzled. Perhaps the whole world is confused, and only a very few people know the real secrets within.

"Perhaps the complete True Martial legacy records the secrets of the Martial Saint, but the one I obtained was somewhat incomplete."

Taoist Longshan unusually spoke of the time he acquired the True Martial legacy.

His gaze revealed an expression of reminiscence.

"Back then, when I was young, I accidentally entered the True Martial Underground Palace. With the ability to remember everything at a glance, I obtained part of the legacy, then fell into a coma. Upon waking, I found myself in a barren mountain wilderness, and the Underground Palace was nowhere to be seen."

"Over these years, I have secretly revisited the old place, but the Underground Palace remains elusive, perhaps fate won't allow me to see it again in this lifetime."

Taoist Longshan sighed lightly.

Ning Qi was filled with astonishment.

"Is the True Martial Underground Palace truly so magical?"

"Could it be covered by a Qimen Array? Or is the Underground Palace 'alive' and has moved elsewhere?"

He continuously expressed various conjectures.

Taoist Longshan shook his head slowly, dismissing his first guess:

"It shouldn't be a Qimen Array. I once asked a friend skilled in Qimen Technique to take a look, and indeed, there was nothing there."

Seeing Ning Qi's interest, Taoist Longshan smiled and said:

"I'll take you there someday, and you'll see for yourself."

Ning Qi nodded gently.

He was genuinely looking forward to discovering what secrets the True Martial Underground Palace held.

...

Time passed quietly.

As the Celestial Human Realm battle gradually subsided, Ning Qi finally breathed a sigh of relief. This situation turned out better than he expected, as even the Fake Pill only consumed about thirty percent of its energy.

He could finally continue cultivating with peace of mind.

Every day, reading scriptures, enlightenment, and refining Gang was leisurely and carefree.

Within Seeking Tao Institute.

Ning Qi was focused on alchemy.

Yesterday, after some experimentation and deduction, he finally combined Relic, Luminous Pearl, and other spiritual materials to create a pill formula that accelerates the tempering of Gang Qi.

He named it the Golden Jade Pill.

Ning Qi's actions were remarkably fluent, with a beauty that was close to the essence of Dao, while the White Ape observed and learned, fascinated. However, it truly wasn't suited for this task; it had tried once, ending up covered in ashes, and was still striving to one day become a qualified Pill-refining Boy.

Gang Qi transformed at Ning Qi's command. If other alchemists saw alchemy being performed this way, they would be astonished beyond belief.

Finally.

As Ning Qi stopped, the alchemy furnace before him emitted strands of golden light.

Ning Qi looked intently.

He saw six shiny, dragon-eye-sized small pills quietly resting inside.

"Let's test the effect."

Without hesitation, Ning Qi turned and entered the room, while the White Ape cleaned up the aftermath.

A Golden Jade Pill was swallowed.

Instantly, a vast medicinal power surged.

Yet it was exceedingly gentle.

Falling into the Dantian location, it did not explode violently.

Ning Qi entered the Realm of Celestial Being Unity, the Power of Heaven and Earth formed a grand millstone enveloping him, and only Ning Qi could hear the rumbling sound as the medicinal power surged in, causing strands of White Mist Gang Qi to become thicker and purer, faster than ever before!

Two hours later.

Ning Qi stopped cultivating, sensing the differences before and after.

A smile emerged on his lips.

"This Golden Jade Pill isn't about rapid enhancement; rather, it's about slow and steady progress. A single Golden Jade Pill can provide me a month of cultivation effect."

"In this way, after six Golden Jade Pills, I can enter the Jade Liquid Realm."

Ning Qi was very satisfied.

By then.

He would be just under nine years old.

Feeling the intense Gang Qi within, capable of unleashing the Heavenly Sword Technique twice, Ning Qi eagerly anticipated his power upon entering the Jade Liquid Realm; perhaps, by then, false pill augmentation would be unnecessary to possess the strength of the Celestial Being List, perhaps even more extraordinary.

Ning Qi's strength had already shown explosive growth, related to the Supreme foundation he laid before.

Now he was unlocking treasures step by step, his combat power far exceeding his realm, unimaginable to the world.

Joy filled Ning Qi's heart.

He stepped outside, looking again towards the direction of the vine chair.

Or more precisely, beneath the vine chair.

His eyes immediately showed amazement.

He could sense that the Enlightenment Tea Tree seed had slightly sprouted, striving to break through the earth, and this day wasn't far away.

After absorbing the physical body of a Celestial Human Realm, the seed underwent a miraculous change.

A double blessing arrived.

This made Ning Qi's heart filled with emotions.

The dead seeds sprouted, and the haze brought by Demon Sect days ago gradually dispersed.

Given some time, he would surely surprise the Demon Sect a little.

Chapter 115: The Secret of the Martial Saint

Another year of the True Martial Peach Assembly.

Eight True Disciples gather together.

During this year, many things have happened. Taoist Longshan held the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony, the intricacies of which only True Martial disciples know, and everyone is full of sentiments.

This year.

Ye Qinghe's Peach Blossom Brew has become even sweeter; she seems to have really mastered the technique.

But Ning Qi knows there's only this one kind.

Ye Qinghe secretly tried other types of liquor and failed every time, so she self-proclaimed herself as the master of Peach Blossom Brew, specializing in this one drink. Everyone smiles knowingly and only offers praise.

This year's peach fruit astonished everyone even more.

"How do I feel that this peach fruit is better than previous years? It's not just my imagination, right?"
The seventh disciple, Song City, couldn't help but grab another.

Everyone nodded:

"It's not an illusion; eating it makes the body heat up, seemingly strengthening our foundation."

Each person is surprised; it's somewhat magical.

Ning Qi smiled slightly:

"Previously, Master obtained three Bright Fruits at the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony. I studied them a bit and improved the cultivation method of the peach trees, but it's only the beginning; the effects aren't that obvious yet."

The fourth disciple, He Yan, looked exaggeratedly at the peach trees outside the yard:

"Good heavens, does that mean our True Martial Sect will have large areas of spirit species comparable to the Bright Tree in the future?"

"It's still early."

Ning Qi just chuckled.

To achieve the effect of the Bright Fruit, there is a long way to go.

But perhaps in a few years, at the True Martial Peach Assembly, we might be drinking Enlightenment Tea.

Everyone is expectant; they no longer have any doubts about Ning Qi. Though they don't know what his specific realm is, they don't think it's low, and some even believe he might have surpassed a few weaker ones among them.

The Sleep Dream Pill from before is the proof.

This year.

First disciple Luo Wentian and second disciple Xiong Shi, benefited from the Gang Condensing Pill, successfully broke through the White Mist Realm and rapidly grew with the help of the Quenching Gang Pill. This pill's wonder surpasses any pill they previously knew, likely enough to easily break past their former cultivation records.

The others also progress rapidly.

The wonder of the Sleep Dream Skill and Sleep Dream Pill left them in awe.

Ye Qinghe has long reached the Ninth Fold of the Inner Essence Realm, just needing some more accumulation to step into the Gang Essence Realm with the Gang Condensing Pill.

Since Ning Qi, the cultivation of the True Disciples of True Martial Sect began to speed up significantly, much faster than their previous cultivation pace alone.

Themselves being like this, not to mention Ning Qi himself.

Even when young, his cultivation is likely already extremely remarkable.

However, everyone tacitly chose not to ask much.

They believe that when the right day comes, Ning Qi will naturally inform them.

"Jiu, after this Peach Assembly, we will probably descend the mountain for training. When that time comes, we will find you more interesting things. You like reading; your senior brothers and sisters will try to find some rare records for you. Do you have any preferences?" Everyone asked.

As senior brothers and sisters, being repeatedly cared for by the junior brother, they feel somewhat embarrassed.

Ning Qi pondered and then said:

"If there are records about the Martial Saint, you can find me more, and some miscellaneous odd skills interest me too."

With the senior brothers' and sisters' abilities, too profound martial arts might be hard to find, so it's better to turn to other aspects.

Ning Qi wants to learn more about things concerning the Martial Saint Realm.

The Celestial Human Realm holds no secrets to him anymore; he needs to prepare in advance and not wait until the last moment to start searching, for he feels the Martial Saint Realm is not that simple.

Recently, he explored the records of past conflicts between the Great Yan Imperial Court and the Demon Sect. The Great Yan Martial Saints seem to be avoiding action, not acting freely.

Thinking of past eras where Martial Saints were rarely left with detailed information, only fragmented descriptions,

Ning Qi felt strange.

"Even if Martial Saints have ascended, they shouldn't leave no trace behind, right?"

Of course.

Having the senior brothers and sisters attempt to seek is just trying, not holding much hope.

Everyone agreed with laughter:

"We will surely make you, Junior Brother, satisfied!"

Ning Qi thought a moment and reminded:

"But now the Demon Sect and Great Yan's struggle continues endlessly. I've heard chaos everywhere, with Gang Essence Realm experts frequently appearing. Senior brothers and sisters, you must be careful."

He turned and walked into the house, then took out a ceramic bottle and poured out several crimson pills.

"These are Blood Burning Pills. If you encounter a foe you cannot defeat, you can consume them to unleash potential for counterattack or escape. Remember, the effect lasts only fifteen minutes."

This is Ning Qi's idle work.

The Demon Sect's Blood Burning Technique gave him the inspiration.

Though the Blood Burning Pill's aftereffects are not as strong, causing only temporary weakness without harming foundations, comparatively, the efficacy isn't as potent.

Everyone is touched and solemnly stores the pills.

They didn't speak, just silently made up their minds to find some useful rare books for the junior disciple.

Watching the departing backs of his senior brothers and sisters, Ning Qi sighed lightly.

Unlike the others, he possesses full enlightenment; even sitting casually in the mountain allows him to grow quickly and gain insight. For others to improve, training is indispensable. The conflict between the Demon Sect and Great Yan causes chaos in the Martial Realm, but opportunities lie within danger, and one must seize them to make bold advancements.

Ning Qi is not a saint, unable to protect everyone's safety or make decisions for them.

The only thing he can do is prepare some trump cards like Blood Burning Pills for them as much as possible.

...

Many True Martial disciples have gone down the mountain.

Previously, they had been stifled on the mountain for a long time; now with the Demon Sect's Celestial Beings dormant, it is an opportunity to venture outside.

On True Martial Mountain.

It is rarely quiet.

Taoist Longshan is still recovering from injuries. Previously, the Demon Sect attacked True Martial Mountain at night, forcing him to fight with Demon Sect's Celestial Beings, worsening his recently improved injuries. Fortunately, with the Blood Sun Ginseng bestowed by the Great Yan Imperial Court along with Thousand-Year Flame Sun Jade, he is steadily recovering now.

Ning Qi's Seeking Tao Institute has become quiet without the comings and goings of several True Disciples.

He feels at ease.

Every day, he enjoys reading Taoist Scripture and seeking enlightenment.

The Taoist Scripture sent by True Profound Sect has greatly benefited him, the insights of predecessors on the universe inspire him occasionally. Now, Ning Qi's foundation is much deeper than a few years ago. If he were to return to when he first practiced the Martial Path, he surely wouldn't take so long to create the Myriad Phenomena Origin Stance.

This makes him think of Taoist Baishan, and for a moment, he felt tempted by the old Taoist's proposal to plunder Taoism.

He further thought:

"If one day I can use the aspirations of all beings in the world as nourishment, gathering the wisdom of all beings, how refreshing would that be?"

Ning Qi shook his head with a chuckle, feeling he was thinking a bit too much for now.

After all, he hasn't reached the Celestial Human Realm yet, attempting to gather wisdom of all beings is a bit ambitious, but for now, he does not need it.

He practices inner observation.

Having taken a second Golden Jade Pill, Gang Qi swirled like mist and lakes, with astonishing power lurking within, nearing Jade Transformation Liquid.

Ning Qi did not continue refining Gang Qi.

Refining Gang Qi is a gradual process, not to be overdone.

He holds the Treasure Armor he obtained previously, carefully examining it. Upon entering the Unity of Heaven and Man state, the Power of Heaven and Earth caresses its surface, testing the armor with various levels of impact and vibration.

Ning Qi named this armor Cyan Profound Treasure Armor, experimenting with it has been one of his pleasures lately.

"This armor is as soft as water, but becomes instantly firm against force, able to withstand impact. This is partly due to the skill of the Weapon Refining Master, but mostly due to the material itself."

"The material is extremely special; the way it absorbs forces is also exceptionally unique. If I could thoroughly research it, perhaps I could develop a strong Defense Secret Technique."

Ning Qi feels somewhat tempted.

After all, armor is external and only protects the body.

If a secret technique were to be created, it would be a personal strength, flawless, with secret technique and armor protection, the safety factor would greatly increase. Ning Qi is very keen on such Path Guardian Techniques.

He switches to using Gang Qi to touch the armor.

Observing the armor's special wave when dispersing force, noting its special changes, and Gang Qi starts to simulate accordingly.

After days of study, he has gained some insights.

Gang Qi transforms into strands of cyan profound light, these cyan lights meander unpredictably, spiraling in a unique manner around Ning Qi, looking intangible to the eye, yet when touched, they immediately become sturdy barriers.

Ning Qi manipulates the Power of Heaven and Earth, gently pressing it onto the cyan light barrier, increasing the force constantly.

At first.

The cyan light barrier remains poised, but as Ning Qi increases the force, it suddenly bursts into countless light points with a boom.

Ning Qi slightly frowns:

"Still not enough, Cyan Profound Body Protection Technique can almost withstand attacks at the Primordial Core Realm level. When standing still, Primordial Core attacks struggle to break it, but facing Celestial Human Realm strength, it can only withstand two or three hits."

To be honest, this secret technique can be considered successful in creation, but obviously it does not meet Ning Qi's expectations and needs further improvement.

He hopes the Defense Secret Technique can reach the defense level of Cyan Profound Treasure Armor.

"At least... needs to be able to withstand a punch from the Town North King?" Ning Qi thought.

The Town North King is the strongest he has seen, Ning Qi uses him as a hypothetical enemy, first aiming to survive his hands.

"Continue optimization!"

Ning Qi does not feel discouraged. If Gang Qi can fully simulate the mystique of Cyan Profound Treasure Armor, it should be possible.

This process is not wasted, it also strengthens the foundation of Myriad Phenomena True Gang.

Embracing the characteristics of all things in the world, merging them into unity; this was Ning Qi's original intention in creating Myriad Phenomena True Gang.

Time flows slowly.

Ning Qi has been consistently cultivating as planned, and under his deductions and improvements, the defense of Cyan Profound Body Protection Technique becomes increasingly abnormal.

Golden Jade Pills are consumed one by one, Ning Qi's aura growing increasingly strong.

While digesting the fourth Golden Jade Pill.

The fifth disciple Jiang Baishan returned to True Martial Mountain, catching Ning Qi's attention.

Because Jiang Baishan took a Blood Burning Pill, his left arm hung limp on his body, almost severed.

Chapter 116: Jade Liquid

Ning Qi arrived upon hearing the news.

Just as he reached the courtyard of Jiang Baishan, he heard the hearty laughter of his senior brother:

"Old Five, are you saying you got yourself beaten by a little girl?"

Ning Qi walked into the courtyard and saw Jiang Baishan with his left arm wrapped in layers of white cloth, looking a bit disheveled.

"What happened here?"

Ning Qi became somewhat curious.

Originally, he thought the matter was serious, but seeing his senior brother and fifth brother like this, it didn't seem too severe; instead, he wanted to know what Jiang Baishan had gone through. A master of the White Mist Realm shouldn't be this embarrassed, right?

Jiang Baishan, upon seeing Ning Qi, became even more embarrassed but still slowly recounted the events.

Ning Qi's expression gradually turned peculiar.

So, it turned out.

Jiang Baishan's recent descent from the mountain had been smooth, everything going well. He was even helping Ning Qi gather strange tales about the Martial Saint, but one night, while traversing through the mountains, he came upon a secluded pool and decided to take a bath.

Who would have thought that during the bath, he accidentally emerged from the other side, finding himself face to face with a woman in her natural state?

The consequences were as expected.

The woman was no easy mark; her cultivation was not low. She chased Jiang Baishan with her sword for a month.

Jiang Baishan felt guilty, thinking that since he had seen the woman's body, he shouldn't retaliate. But he never expected to almost lose his left arm to her sword. In the end, it was thanks to the Blood Burning Pill Ning Qi gave him that he managed to escape her.

Ning Qi's expression grew even stranger, while Luo Wentian couldn't hold back his laughter and teased:

"Old Five, oh Old Five, you're usually so decisive in battle, yet you showed mercy to a woman. I bet that woman must be a stunning beauty, making you so reluctant to harm her."

Jiang Baishan's face turned slightly red, then he retorted fiercely:

"Nonsense! I felt guilty first, so I kept letting her off. Just wait; once I heal and go down the mountain again, I'll teach her a harsh lesson."

He felt a bit humiliated.

Ning Qi chuckled softly but thought that this woman indeed had a ruthless side — she genuinely wanted to hack him. If Fifth Brother hadn't dodged quickly, he might have lost an arm.

"Fifth Brother, you'd better heal up first before anything else."

Jiang Baishan patted his chest decisively and said:

"Little Junior Brother, don't worry. This time, I won't hold back. I'll strip that little vixen naked and throw her into the river!"

The three of them joked around a bit before discussing more serious matters.

"However, during this descent, I found that the Great Yan Dynasty is indeed different from a few years ago."

Luo Wentian asked with concern:

"How so?"

Currently overseeing many aspects of the True Martial Sect, he was particularly concerned about such matters.

"This time I went to Chu State, and if a few years ago the Demon Sect was just a fleeting rumor, now they are much more frequent, found in prefectures, counties, and cities. The Demon Sect's reach has extended to many areas, suggesting that their century of recuperation should not be underestimated."

"The Imperial Court and the Demon Sect are subtly clashing, with some areas already vaguely under the Demon Sect's control. I originally thought the Demon Sect was no match for the Imperial Court, but now it seems otherwise. The recent wartime truce by the Imperial Court might also stem from concern over this."

After all, even if Celestial Beings are mighty, if the dynasty's foundation is controlled, it would be difficult to sustain.

You can't just destroy cities and states with a single strike.

The Great Yan evidently doesn't want its own realm to be left in ruins, so it's trying to find a solution.

"Moreover, the Martial Realm is much more chaotic than before. Many martial sects, taking advantage of the conflict between the Demon Sect and the Imperial Court, started to eliminate dissent and settle old scores. The fighting is far more frequent, and tales of annihilated sects are common. It seems there's a great upheaval on the horizon."

"I wonder if it will be like a hundred years ago when the Great Yan Martial Saint intervened to stabilize the world."

At this, Jiang Baishan lowered his voice and said:

"There are vague rumors in the Martial Realm that the Great Yan Martial Saint has long since perished, though it's unsure if they're true."

Luo Wentian seemed a bit worried.

He was pondering what path the True Martial Sect should take amidst such a situation.

Even with the backing of his master and True Man Tianjian, two Celestial Human Realm experts, caution was necessary.

Ning Qi quietly listened.

He felt that the current turmoil would last for some time, and the situation was far from clear. From the previous truce between the Imperial Court and Demon Sect, it was evident that both sides were still restraining themselves, brewing something.

As for the rumor of the Great Yan Martial Saint's fall?

Ning Qi felt it was likely untrue. Thinking from another perspective, if it were his time to go, he would at least clear a path for those after him, rather than slipping away silently.

Ning Qi wasn't overly worried.

In another two or three years, as long as he reached the Celestial Human Realm, protecting the True Martial Sect shouldn't be difficult.

Jiang Baishan's injuries weren't too severe. After a month, he descended the mountain again, eager to redeem his previous disgrace, while also promising Ning Qi that this time he would bring back more information about the Martial Saint Realm.

Ning Qi merely nodded with a smile and then gave him two more Blood Burning Pills, urging him to stay safe.

He wasn't particularly worried. Jiang Baishan was strong, and having seen his wounds, although they looked vicious, the other party had actually shown restraint. In this light, the two seemed a bit like old foes.

...

Time passed quietly.

The chill of autumn slowly set in.

Thanks to the dual effects of the Thousand-Year Flame Sun Jade and Blood Sun Ginseng, Taoist Longshan's injuries healed faster than expected.

He hadn't forgotten his promise to Ning Qi. After explaining the situation to Ning Qi, he quietly descended the mountain to trace the whereabouts of the Blood Rain Tower.

Such assassin organizations are extremely secretive.

To destroy the Blood Rain Tower, with their strength, it wouldn't be difficult, but the premise is to first find the Blood Rain Tower and find the culprit who annihilated the Snow Plum Manor back then.

Fortunately, over the years, Taoist Longshan has many friends who can help.

Ning Qi is very grateful for this.

If he were to search by himself, it would probably take a lot of effort, and he might not even find it.

In his spare time, he is attempting to simplify several secret techniques that he knows, intending to hand them over to Taoist Longshan later. It's not that he doesn't want to teach the full version, but due to others' lack of comprehension, they wouldn't be able to learn it.

As for the numerous Martial Arts Secret Techniques that Ning Qi placed in the Scripture Pavilion, he had already informed Taoist Longshan, who then informed Luo Wentian to handle them properly.

Although he hopes for the disciples of the True Martial Sect to become stronger, there must be corresponding regulations. Otherwise, if everyone becomes complacent with ready-made ultimate skills and secret techniques, the sect would not be far from extinction.

During this period.

When Ning Qi had just swallowed the sixth Golden Jade Pill, Ye Qinghe also returned to the mountain.

Her situation was much better than Jiang Baishan's. This journey down the mountain brought her opportunities, and she has already touched upon the chance to advance to the Gang Essence Realm. Upon returning to the mountain, she only needs to take a Gang Condensing Pill to accelerate this process and smoothly become the fourth Gang Essence Realm expert of the True Martial Sect.

However.

Before entering seclusion, Ye Qinghe sought out Ning Qi.

"Jiu, during my trip down the mountain, I passed through a small town and heard from a blind old man about a rumor concerning a Martial Saint. It's said that it is the hometown of that Martial Saint, and someone once saw the Martial Saint in his old age, a fleeting glance, incredibly aged. It seems that the Martial Saint did not ascend, and ultimately his whereabouts became unknown."

"This rumor has been passed down by word of mouth for many years, and it's unknown how much truth there is to it."

Ye Qinghe felt a bit embarrassed.

With great ambition before descending the mountain, only to realize how scarce the information about the Martial Saint was after descending, and this rumor was the only one vaguely relevant.

She felt a bit sorry towards her little junior brother.

Ning Qi inquired about the location of that small town and expressed that he liked hearing such rumors, which brought joy back to Ye Qinghe.

After Ye Qinghe left, Ning Qi fell into contemplation.

This rumor at least offered two points for Ning Qi to ponder.

"Firstly, the Martial Saint's Three Flowers of Essence, Qi, and Spirit is at Perfection. Logically speaking, even if approaching life's end, the physical body shouldn't just wither, right? Could it be that he was severely injured?"

"Secondly, the Martial Saint did not ascend? Is it due to insufficient realm, or other reasons?"

Ning Qi silently noted down this information.

He simply placed a mental question mark since it was a rumor Ye Qinghe heard, and its authenticity was unknown. If there's an opportunity, he could visit that small town himself to see.

Shaking his head.

Ning Qi temporarily set these matters aside.

This is destined to be a long exploration process. If by then he has not found more records regarding the Martial Saint Realm, he would set out personally to search. However, that would be after he sets foot on the Celestial Human Realm.

Only then would he have enough confidence.

Inner observation.

His internal Gang Qi had surged significantly compared to when he initially entered the White Mist Realm, and the dantian area was shrouded in white mist, already shining with a luster. After months of cultivation, aided by the Heaven and Earth Grinding Wheel's Quenching Gang Technique and the Golden Jade Pill, Ning Qi's progress was exceptionally rapid.

If ordinary people saw such immense Gang Qi within Ning Qi, they would probably be speechless in shock.

"Now it's the last Golden Jade Pill, and in half a month to a month, I can attempt White Mist transforming into Jade Liquid."

Ning Qi was somewhat expectant.

This would be a qualitative transformation.

The Gang Qi of the Jade Liquid Realm would be much stronger and gradually possess a wonderful spirituality. For ordinary Jade Liquid Realm experts, this spirituality might only make their Gang Qi more nimble, but with Ning Qi's exceptionally vast amount of Gang Qi, it could possibly offer more wondrous phenomena, perhaps enabling him to accomplish things previously impossible.

...

Time passed slowly.

The peach trees outside the Seeking Tao Institute gradually withered, life faded, and a cold wind howled, with sporadic small snowflakes falling.

Ning Qi stood within the Seeking Tao Institute, experimenting with improvements to the Cyan Profound Body Protection Technique.

A faint cyan light intermittently appeared on his body surface, occasionally solidifying, exuding a sense of heaviness. Ning Qi integrated the essence of mountains and the Profound Turtle's intent, significantly increasing the defense, now reaching seventy percent of the Cyan Profound Treasure Armor's defense capability.

"But... it's already at its limit."

Ning Qi sighed.

Further improvements wouldn't be cost-effective, as spending a great amount of time might only yield minimal enhancements, making it unworthy.

The reason lies in.

Ning Qi's Gang Qi quality setting its limit.

Even if it's a piece of paper, no matter how folded, there's always a limit; if it's iron, it would be entirely different.

If one wishes to make the Cyan Profound Body Protection Technique more potent, they must enhance the Gang Qi quality.

Fortunately, it's not difficult.

A slight smile appeared on Ning Qi's lips.

He stood with hands behind his back, looking up at the sky. As the sparse snow turned heavier, with a thought, he instantly entered the Realm of Celestial Being Unity.

The Heaven and Earth Grinding Wheel gathered around his whole body.

His Gang Qi, already immense to an incredible extent, started rotating in a wondrous manner. The Myriad Phenomena True Gang technique operated, the white mist continually compressed and condensed, everything falling into place and following its natural course.

Drip!

In the dantian, a drop of liquid with a jade-like luster splashed, and waves of Gang Qi ripples spread outwards, initiating the transformation process.

White Mist transforming into Jade Liquid, and so it is.

Chapter 117: Strength Soars

...

One drop after another of Gang Qi Jade Liquid condensed, dripping into the boundless space of the dantian.

In the blink of an eye, it formed a 'small pond'.

Yet above the 'small pond', there was a vast and majestic white mist, and endless white mist continually surged out from within Ning Qi's body.

It can be foreseen.

This transformation is not something that will end in a moment.

Snow like goose feathers gradually covered the peach blossom trees outside the courtyard. Ning Qi stood quietly, but the snowflakes seemed to have their own spirit, bypassing him and creating a small snowflake vacuum.

When the White Ape returned from play and saw this scene, it instinctively acted as a guardian for Ning Qi.

In fact, Ning Qi didn't need it.

Advancing to Jade Liquid was natural and inevitable.

He could start or stop at any time.

This transformation lasted three days.

The heavy snow had long stopped, and the changes within Ning Qi's body had reached the final moment.

As the last wisp of white mist condensed into Jade Liquid and dripped into the Jade Liquid Sea below, Ning Qi's entire body trembled, and a series of wonderful changes began to occur. The previously calm Jade Liquid Sea within him surged, with each wave carrying a powerful force.

Ning Qi felt his physical body growing stronger and more vibrant.

He could feel that his lifespan seemed to have increased mysteriously, which was quite incredible, as ordinary martial artists, whether at the White Mist, Jade Liquid, or Primordial Core stages, all within the realm of Gang Essence, had a lifespan of four hundred years.

But he had far exceeded this realm.

As his thoughts turned in his mind, waves of spiritual light emerged, the most direct manifestation. Every time his life essence improved, his capacity for understanding increased once again.

Ning Qi opened his eyes and nodded with a smile at the White Ape.

He then focused on his own changes.

"So much stronger than before!"

He casually clenched his fist, and the power of the Jade Liquid Sea within him burst forth, with an intention to tremble the void.

This transformation once again uncovered a large amount of potential in Ning Qi's physical body, allowing his Gang Qi not only to transform in quality but also to surpass expectations in quantity. If others' Jade Liquid were just a small pond, Ning Qi's was a vast ocean, an unbelievable difference.

"Now, just with the power of Gang Qi itself, I should be able to contend with the strong ones on the Celestial Being List, right?"

Ning Qi compared himself to the Celestial Being List level strong ones he had encountered before.

The Divine Feather Grand General, Cyan Bull Blade Master, Old Demon Lin, that unknown Elder, and the Town North King.

At least the first four, he felt he could contend with even without entering the Realm of Celestial Being Unity, or even defeat.

"As for the Town North King... it's hard to say, as that day he didn't fight with all his might. Even if I use all my methods now, I'm uncertain if I could contend with him."

Ning Qi's gaze flickered.

He estimated that his combat power should be between the top ten to twenty on the Celestial Being List, but it's hard to measure accurately, as there are too few samples, and Ning Qi has many methods, which makes it hard to judge.

But undoubtedly.

This level of power.

Already stands at the pinnacle of Great Yan. Without the Martial Saint's appearance, few could threaten Ning Qi's life.

The constant sense of crisis Ning Qi had felt was greatly reduced.

Although the Demon Sect was temporarily at rest, Ning Qi dared not be completely lax. If the Demon Sect resurged, relying solely on the power of a Fake Pill would be far from enough, but now, it was much better. Even if there were such unparalleled strong ones from the Demon Sect, they wouldn't be many.

Moreover, he would continue to grow.

"If I step into the Primordial Core Realm, I might be invincible among the Celestial Beings." Ning Qi was somewhat expectant.

The cultivation ahead.

Was to condense the Primordial Core from Jade Liquid.

Ning Qi sensed the vast sea of Jade Liquid within him and smiled helplessly. In everything, there are pros and cons. With such a colossal Jade Liquid Sea as his, forming it into a Primordial Core wasn't an easy task.

Of course, it wouldn't be too troublesome either.

At most, it would just take some time to gradually polish.

Without dwelling on this too much, Ning Qi began to carefully comprehend the changes in his Gang Qi. After advancing to the Jade Liquid Realm, he could distinctly feel that his Gang Qi had become much more agile, possessing some kind of previously unseen spirituality.

He extended a finger, and the Gang Qi surged and condensed, instantly conjuring a mighty and fierce Bian in the courtyard.

The Bian's gaze was fierce, lifelike.

The White Ape, who had just settled in for cultivation, instinctively had its hair standing on end. It opened its eyes, was startled by the Bian.

But soon.

The Bian vanished.

Then Qiu Niu, Chaofeng, Divine Eagle, True Dragon, among many other Divine Beasts appeared, each with an extraordinary presence. Accompanied by the True Intent Ning Qi had mastered, they seemed like real Exotic Beasts, though after all, they were Gang Qi condensed and couldn't compare to flesh and blood.

White Ape was in awe, his eyes widened in shock at the miraculous sight. Having spent much time with Ning Qi, Ning Qi didn't bother to hide his methods from him. He was probably the one who knew Ning Qi best, aside from Taoist Longshan.

In his heart, he always regarded Ning Qi as a goal to aspire to.

After the White Ape reached the Inner Essence Realm, its cultivation speed remained unstoppable. Its overall combat power now was likely approaching the Gang Essence Realm. After all, its bloodline had a natural advantage compared to the Human Race, able to unleash stronger fighting abilities.

Ning Qi was absorbed in his activities, feeling somewhat intrigued.

A flash of insight occurred in his mind as the Jade Liquid Sea surged, and a humanoid figure condensed from Gang Qi emerged beside Ning Qi.

Its gaze was cold and emotionless, and although its movements were initially stiff, they soon became remarkably agile.

With a cloak, it could deceive the eye.

The only drawback was that it would collapse if subjected to a powerful attack.

"Perhaps I can explore this further. If I can form a Gang Qi avatar, it might be exceptionally useful at certain times."

Ning Qi mused to himself.

True Man Tianjian cannot remain hidden forever; if the enemy is too strong, Ning Qi would have to intervene personally. If the Town North King hadn't intervened last time, Ning Qi would have had to reveal himself. Although it was possible to use disguise, having such a Gang Qi avatar as a substitute might be better.

However, to reach the level where a Gang Qi avatar can contend with a strong opponent from the Celestial Human Realm or even the Celestial Being List would require additional time for deduction.

Otherwise, at its current level, its practicality is limited.

Ning Qi dissipated the Gang Qi figure.

Then he continued deducing the Cyan Profound Body Protection Technique.

Now that the Gang Qi had greatly improved, this Defense Secret Technique could be further enhanced. It was originally capable of achieving seventy percent of the defense of the Cyan Profound Treasure Armor, and now, after reaching the deduction's limit, surpassing the Cyan Profound Treasure Armor was an easy feat.

...

A few days later.

Ye Qinghe successfully broke through and advanced to the White Mist Realm, becoming the fourth Gang Essence Realm True Disciple of the True Martial Sect on the surface.

The members of the True Martial Sect were all joyful, as this signified a stronger foundation for the True Martial Sect.

To this point, aside from the fourth disciple He Yan, the sixth disciple Sun Chuanhai, and the seventh disciple Song City, all True Disciples had entered the Gang Essence Realm.

Of course, they were unaware that Ning Qi had long since reached the Gang Essence Realm.

Ning Qi advanced to the Jade Liquid Realm, unknown to anyone.

He was not one to flaunt, and had always been this way.

In the days that followed, his life remained just as before.

He spent part of his time in the Scripture Pavilion studying Taoist Scriptures to enhance his own foundation, and part of his time was dedicated to improving and creating various Secret Techniques. After advancing to the Jade Liquid Realm, there was still room for improvement in several Secret Techniques.

Lastly, he methodically refined Gang Qi daily.

To break through from the Jade Liquid Realm to the Primordial Core Realm was essentially no different; it was still about refining Gang Qi. Although the Jade Liquid within Ning Qi was quite abundant, a thousand-mile journey begins with one step, and with daily cultivation, his progress was remarkably fast.

Unfortunately, without the Golden Jade Pill, the cultivation would have been much quicker.

"There's still the Luminous Pearl and other spirit medicines, but the relic is hard to find."

Generally speaking,

the Buddhist Sect usually considers relics as precious gifts to repay kindness and won't trade them. To do so would desecrate the venerable Arhat monks who passed on, making obtaining a relic from the Buddhist Sect unrealistic unless one annihilates a sect and destroys temples.

This did not align with Ning Qi's principles.

If someone provoked him, he could deal with them decisively, but he could not bring himself to annihilate a sect and commit senseless slaughter for the sake of his own cultivation.

Another option was to exchange with someone who had been gifted a relic in the past, but such people were rare. Ning Qi had already spoken with Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian about this, merely expressing that the relic was useful to him and asking them to help search for one.

Of course, Ning Qi didn't pin all his hopes on acquiring a relic; he was also searching for alternative items.

Taoist Longshan had already returned to the mountains some time ago.

Currently, the Great Yan was in chaos; the Imperial Court and the Demon Sect were in constant conflict. Likewise, Martial Sects were at odds with each other. Assassin organizations like the Blood Rain Tower

naturally wouldn't stay hidden and occasionally made moves. Through certain connections, Taoist Longshan had located some traces of the Blood Rain Tower, but it only made him more alarmed.

This Blood Rain Tower was no simple matter, as there seemed to be traces of other forces behind them.

Taoist Longshan became more cautious, fearing he might alert the enemy.

If he were to continue probing persistently, it might raise suspicion, causing the Blood Rain Tower to hide even deeper.

After informing Ning Qi, Taoist Longshan and Ning Qi made a plan to descend the mountain together once they had a clearer picture of the Blood Rain Tower's movements, ensuring a decisive strike to avoid future troubles.

Unknowingly,

Ning Qi had already turned nine.

Currently, Ning Qi's physique was tall and slender, almost comparable to teenagers, and years of studying the scriptures and seeking enlightenment had given him an intangible aura of transcendence that captivated others.

His thoughts drifted back to nine years ago.

At that time, when he had just traveled to this world, he encountered a murderous situation.

His mother in this life was only glimpsed briefly, and he never even saw his father, becoming an orphan. Ning Qi himself almost perished in a sea of flames. If Taoist Longshan hadn't arrived in time, he would probably have met his end already. Ning Qi naturally remembered all of this.

Over the years, he quietly cultivated, occasionally using these events as one of his motivations, for he did not wish to emulate Huang Shang and achieve mastery only to find that his enemies were already dead.

Now, Ning Qi's strength was now among the highest in the Great Yan, giving him the means for revenge.

He no longer needed to wait.

"Father, Mother, I cannot repay your kindness in bringing me into this world; I can only offer the blood of my enemies to honor your spirits in the heavens."

Ning Qi watched the heavy snow falling in the courtyard and sighed softly.

That year, it was also snowing heavily.

Chapter 118: Slaughter (Requesting Monthly Votes!)

The snow on True Martial Mountain fell even heavier.

Even though Taoist Longshan was already a Celestial Human Realm expert, he wouldn't casually change the heavenly phenomena.

As the year-end approached, one by one, disciples of the True Martial Sect gradually returned to the mountain. Both Outer Sect and Inner Sect disciples were itching to showcase their skills at the year-end martial arts competition. With Taoist Longshan stepping into the Celestial Human Realm, the True Martial Sect also began to expand in an orderly manner.

The rewards at the competition were even more generous, with many martial arts secret techniques tempting the disciples greatly.

But what they didn't know was.

Most of these were created by Ning Qi.

Over the years, Ning Qi had read through the Scripture Pavilion. Even casual creations were remarkable martial arts. With his current level, creating martial arts for the Body Tempering Realm and Inner Essence Realm was as easy as eating and drinking.

His focus now was mainly on Celestial Human-level secret techniques.

One by one, True Disciples also returned to the mountain.

They had all visibly improved, but none brought back the news Ning Qi wanted to know about the Martial Saint. Each felt guilty and only managed to collect more miscellaneous books to enrich the Scripture Pavilion.

Ning Qi was not surprised by this, only smiling and comforting his senior brothers that it was alright, and to pay more attention in the future.

After all, it was just a try; the senior brother and sister had Inner Essence Realm and Gang Essence Realm cultivation. Seeking out anything related to the Martial Saint, even just rumors, required luck.

But Jiang Baishan seemed to have better luck.

He was the last to return to the mountain.

This time, Jiang Baishan returned with a slight smile at the corners of his mouth, unlike the last embarrassing return.

Everyone teased him about nearly having his arm severed last time and asked if he had avenged the incident this time. Jiang Baishan only slightly awkwardly shook his head, not minding the teasing but unwilling to reveal more details.

Everyone clicked their tongues in wonder.

Soon, they were drawn to another piece of news that Jiang Baishan brought:

"Junior Brother, though I didn't find news about the Martial Saint this time, I learned something about beings of the same level as the Martial Saint."

Ning Qi became interested and quickly caught on:

"You mean, Exotic Beasts?"

Jiang Baishan smiled and said:

"Correct, as we all know, Exotic Beasts are said to be descendants of Heavenly Beasts. Exotic Beasts comparable to Celestial Human Realm experts are called Beast Kings, while those comparable to Martial Saints are called Beast Emperors. I heard there is a Beast Emperor in the depths of the Hundred Thousand Mountains in the Southern Border!"

"But for some reason, these Beast Emperors have gradually disappeared after a brief appearance, rarely venturing out."

"There's a theory that the Beast Emperors have delved deeply into their Heavenly Beast bloodline, but since Heavenly Beasts are said not to be tolerated by heaven and earth, these Beast Emperors might face similar treatment."

Ning Qi's eyes lit up with increased interest.

"Where did you hear this news?"

Jiang Baishan scratched his head and said:

"I heard it by chance, not sure if it's true, so don't take it all to heart, Junior Brother."

Ning Qi nodded slightly.

His intuition told him there was a connection between Beast Emperors and entities of the Martial Saint level, undoubtedly not unrelated.

Perhaps one day, if the White Ape's bloodline is explored deeply enough to advance to a Beast Emperor, there might be hope to uncover the truth. Ning Qi silently kept this thought in his mind; it might be a long road, but it's not impossible.

Jiang Baishan continued:

"Next year, I'll look for more detailed information."

Ning Qi nodded with a smile.

He always felt that the news Jiang Baishan obtained might be related to that mysterious woman, but he didn't press the matter. Everyone has their secrets, and even with good relations between brothers, there needs to be some sense of boundaries. Knowing such a piece of information was already very satisfying to him.

...

As the year-end gathering unfolded, everyone shared sights and sounds from the places below the mountain.

Ning Qi, who had spent most of his time on True Martial Mountain, listened with interest. Over the past nine years, besides experiencing a bit of Great Yan Dynasty's culture on his way to True Martial Mountain with Taoist Longshan, the farthest place he had been to was True Martial City at the mountain's foot.

However, Ning Qi didn't feel bored.

Being able to endure solitude leads to seeking the Great Dao.

But Ning Qi estimated.

He'd likely have to go down the mountain next year.

The root lies in the Blood Rain Tower.

A few days ago.

Someone sent a message via carrier pigeon to Taoist Longshan, indicating that the Blood Rain Tower had suddenly contracted, seemingly aware that someone was investigating them in secret.

"Little Jiu, this Blood Rain Tower isn't simple. There might be a Celestial Human Realm expert behind it. The ones who slaughtered Snow Plum Manor years ago could have just been a small faction of it," Taoist Longshan discussed with Ning Qi.

Eventually, Ning Qi decided.

After the year-end, he would personally track the movements of the Blood Rain Tower.

As long as Blood Rain Tower showed a flaw, with all the secret techniques Ning Qi possessed, it would be easy to trace. Though he originally intended to have someone else complete the process, with him only making the final move to slay the enemy, it seems best to resolve it quickly rather than let it drag on.

Ning Qi didn't dwell too much on the issue.

With his current strength, finding them was enough. Even that 'Lord Feng' was wary of Taoist Longshan when he was still in the Primordial Core Realm, so it's unlikely they'd already reached Celestial Human Realm in these nine years — even unparalleled geniuses don't advance that quickly.

Besides, even if they did reach the Celestial Human Realm, Ning Qi could easily suppress them.

The True Martial Sect's year-end competition proceeded normally, with the sect thriving as a whole.

The foundation of the True Martial Sect was deepened further now, and with some time, they would surely burst forth with a great strength that would make everyone take notice.

...

Heavy snow fell.

The Divine Sword Sect was also holding a year-end competition. In the last battle at the Death Fire Abyss branch, the Divine Sword Old Man participated, too. However, he was fortunate and only suffered minor injuries, which had long since healed.

At this moment.

The Divine Sword Old Man watched the inner sect disciples spar, but his mind wandered elsewhere, recalling the news reported by a disciple two days ago, feeling something was amiss.

"Master, are you still thinking about the news Junior Brother Zhang brought back?" asked the senior disciple Dong He by his side. "Wasn't the Blood Pool already destroyed? You need not worry."

The Divine Sword Old Man nodded:

"I feel that the Blood Pool is not that simple, not merely a wealthy merchant seeking longevity; perhaps it involves something greater."

Dong He paused and said:

"If that's the case, our Divine Sword Sect should not delve any deeper. If it involves something extensive, I'm afraid the disciples might get caught up in the turmoil. Better to act as if it never happened."

The Divine Sword Old Man furrowed his brow, shouting angrily:

"Dong He! How have I taught you all usually? When encountering injustices, one must have a righteous heart. Ignoring demonic heresies makes one an accomplice. If we don't pursue the Blood Pool matter to the end, who knows how many more innocent lives will be unjustly lost?"

His eyes showed disappointment towards Dong He.

Everyone looked on nervously, not knowing why the Divine Sword Old Man was so furious, why the master and the senior disciple suddenly clashed.

The Divine Sword Old Man, suppressing his anger, spoke in a deep voice:

"After the New Year, I will personally investigate this matter. I want to see who is stirring up trouble behind the scenes!"

Dong He bowed his head, his voice carrying an unusual tone:

"Master, why do you always cling to your pride, suffering just for appearances?"

The Divine Sword Old Man stood dumbfounded, looking at Dong He in disbelief, unable to believe such words were coming from his senior disciple's mouth.

"You!"

Dong He slowly raised his head, his eyes showing a hint of blood-red. Without warning, he struck, a strand of Gang Qi slashing towards the close Divine Sword Old Man.

He didn't know when he broke through to the White Mist Realm; even the Divine Sword Old Man hadn't noticed.

"You what? Old thing, die for me!"

He roared angrily, his face frighteningly twisted, and everyone else watched the scene in shock, not knowing what was happening.

The Divine Sword Old Man trembled, his Primordial Core shook, Gang Qi surged, but he instantly noticed something wrong.

"Traitor! You poisoned me?"

He was furious and filled with deep sorrow.

Back in Divine Sword Mountain days, Dong He had followed him; he never expected to be betrayed today, making it unbelievable:

"Why?"

Dong He unsheathed his long sword, vicious Sword Qi slashing out, seemingly to unleash all his evil thoughts:

"Why? It's all because you, old fool, cling to appearances and suffer for it, giving and asking for nothing. Losing at Divine Sword Mountain back then, you think yourself noble, but you are the fool of fools. Do you know how much cultivation time I wasted because of it?!"

"Why? How dare you ask me why? I also want a Gang Condensing Pill. I also want to break through to the Gang Essence Realm!"

Heaven knows how envious he was when Luo Wentian stepped into the Gang Essence Realm with a Gang Condensing Pill.

Unfortunately.

He wasn't that lucky.

The Divine Sword Old Man was utterly disappointed, feeling his years of teachings had gone to waste, his eyes becoming sharp:

"Wretch, do you think poisoning me allows you to oppose me? Naive!"

Gang Qi surged within him, suppressing the poison.

Dong He's smile grew twisted, blood-red in his eyes, with a certain satisfaction:

"I alone am indeed not able, but..."

"What about with us?"

Low laughter echoed; outside the Divine Sword Sect entrance, a group of black-clad figures attacked like eagles, carrying murderous intent. Even among the Divine Sword Sect, some disciples' eyes turned blood-red.

The Divine Sword Old Man felt his heart sinking.

He knew.

Today might just be a calamity.

The origin of the attacking black-clad figures was unknown, but their leaders' auras erupted; all were in the Primordial Core Realm, hard to handle even at his peak, let alone now, having been poisoned by Dong He.

"Divine Sword Sect disciples, meet the enemy!!" he shouted fiercely, howling toward the sky.

The battle was imminent.

Heavy snow flew, tainted with blood.

Screams and battle cries filled the Divine Sword Sect.

Zhuang Chen stood nearby, petrified by the change, unable to believe the usually kind and lovable senior brother had turned into a vicious specter. He gritted his teeth and wielded his sword, having reached the Inner Essence Realm, and with Ning Qi's Innate Sword Body secret technique, could unleash remarkable power.

A leading black-clad figure focused on him:

"Capture that fat one for me! Alive!"

Greed flashed in the black-clad figure's eyes, already informed by Dong He that Zhuang Chen was an Innate Sword Bone.

The Divine Sword Old Man moved his Gang Qi, shielding Zhuang Chen behind him. He looked back, his eyes desolate.

One familiar disciple after another lay in pools of blood.

The Divine Sword Sect was destined to be destroyed today.

Tears streamed down his face, heart full of guilt, but looking at Zhuang Chen, a hint of affection flickered in his eyes.

"Chen, as your master, I'll protect you one last time!"

The Divine Sword Old Man roared to the sky; within him, his Primordial Core cracked with a loud sound, splintering. Boundless Gang Qi burst forth like a Divine Sword, sharp and unparalleled, his hair and beard spreading like a god or devil.

This was the final dance recorded in the incomplete Sword Saint legacy he had obtained back then.

Sword Pill Dissolving Technique.

Chapter 119: One Last Request (Asking for Monthly Tickets at the Start of the Month!)

The snow fell heavily.

Two figures tumbled into the mountain forest.

"Master, Master, please rest. If you continue like this, you'll die!"

Zhuang Chen's tearful voice echoed, both master and disciple covered in ghastly blood stains, but Divine Sword Old Man was in a far worse state, riddled with frightening blood holes. The once robust and mighty old man now looked utterly bedraggled, stirring a sense of sorrow.

Watching his master in such a condition, tears fell from Zhuang Chen's eyes like rain, his heart wrenching with pain.

The night's upheaval was overly burdensome for him, a mere twelve-year-old, affecting both his mind and body. Amidst the chaos, a strand of Gang Qi nearly shattered his Sword Bone, and though he survived, his foundation was ruined, rendering him akin to a cripple.

Divine Sword Old Man smiled and patted Zhuang Chen's head:

"It's alright. I can still hold on. Once we reach the True Martial Mountain, you'll be safe."

There was a hint of regret in his eyes, lamenting that he wouldn't live to see Zhuang Chen grow, lamenting that his last sword stroke didn't slay that scoundrel, just severed an arm.

"Chen, you must survive."

He silently vowed in his heart.

With Zhuang Chen on his back, he rallied the remaining Gang Qi within him to keep running, his speed as swift as lightning.

But the cracks in his Primordial Core were becoming more evident, on the verge of collapsing, as if it could shatter at any moment.

After using the Sword Pill Dissolving Technique, his combat power skyrocketed. If he decided to fight to the death, he could at least take two or three Primordial Core realm men in black down with him. However, that would surely leave Zhuang Chen in their hands.

Therefore, Divine Sword Old Man did not fight to the death. Instead, he staged a feint, leading Zhuang Chen to break through the encirclement. Now, they've been fleeing for a day and a night.

His only remaining obsession is to get Zhuang Chen safely to the True Martial Mountain.

As for trusting others.

He couldn't feel at ease.

Divine Sword Old Man's eyes were resolute. They were very close to the True Martial Mountain now, and he had to hold on.

...

A moment later.

Several powerful presences appeared in the forest, their gazes examining the lingering traces with murderous intent:

"Damn old thing, he tricked us and got away!"

"He severed my arm. Too bad I can't personally take the old thing's head." Someone gnashed their teeth in anger.

Divine Sword Old Man's sudden outburst earlier caught everyone off guard, causing them to suffer heavy losses. If he hadn't been intent on fleeing, some of them would've met their end there.

The leader snorted coldly:

"Yet this old guy also paid a price, barely managing to flee this far. He's probably down to his last breath; not even a god can save him."

The others all looked to the leader:

"Should we keep pursuing?"

The leader's eyes flickered momentarily before he finally waved his hand, saying:

"No need to pursue. From this old guy's escape route, his destination seems to be True Martial Mountain. If we go any further, and draw out True Man Longshan, we might not have a good end. Besides, True Martial Mountain has an even more formidable True Man Tianjian, an unmatched strongman of the Celestial Being List!"

At the mention of True Man Longshan, everyone showed a slight apprehension, but at the mention of True Man Tianjian, their bodies instantly tensed.

The gap between an ordinary Celestial Human realm and a Celestial Being List expert is significant.

"Anyway, that old Divine Sword can't survive, but it's a pity about that little chubby one's Innate Sword Bone, would've been perfect for medicine..."

The leader sighed lightly.

Someone hesitated to speak:

"If True Man Longshan finds out..."

"True Man Longshan has just entered the Celestial Human realm, not a real threat. The key is True Man Tianjian. If he pokes his nose in, I fear..."

Everyone fell silent momentarily.

The original plan to raid Divine Sword Sect was meant to cover things up, but now it seems to have backfired noisily.

The leader suddenly cursed a few times:

"If it weren't for those fools claiming someone was investigating them and hesitating to act, old Divine Sword wouldn't have had any chance to escape."

After a pause, he continued:

"Let's halt for a while. True Man Tianjian reportedly doesn't have much longevity left, and his reclusive nature might mean he won't meddle in such affairs."

"We can watch True Martial Mountain's movements from the shadows and decide based on the subsequent reactions."

Everyone nodded in agreement.

Then, in a flash, they all disappeared, and the heavy snow continued to fall, gradually covering the traces beneath the snowflakes.

...

True Martial Mountain.

Just within reach.

Divine Sword Old Man's legs gave way, the last of his Essence, Qi, and Spirit dissipated. His body riddled with exploding blood holes, he collapsed to the ground, rolling a great distance, while Zhuang Chen also tumbled several times.

Seeing his master barely clinging to life, Zhuang Chen's eyes turned red.

"Master, we're at True Martial Mountain. We're at the True Martial Mountain, hold on!"

There would be no more pursuers. Zhuang Chen lifted Divine Sword Old Man onto his back and dashed towards the True Martial Mountain gate.

A shrill, mournful cry resounded:

"Ning Qi, help! Ning Qi, help!"

The True Martial Sect's gatekeeping disciples were all alarmed, and upon seeing the two bloodstained figures in the distance, they were all astonished.

Soon.

Taoist Longshan arrived, followed by Ning Qi and a multitude of true disciples.

Upon seeing the pitiable state of Zhuang Chen and Divine Sword Old Man, everyone was taken aback, unaware of what had transpired.

"Senior, please save my master!" Zhuang Chen wept, looking utterly ruined, devoid of his previous vibrant appearance.

Ning Qi helped him up, sighing inwardly.

He had spent some time with Zhuang Chen, and although this little chubby kid was a bit of a chatterbox, he wasn't a bad person.

Given the current situation, it seems the Divine Sword Sect has undergone some upheaval.

Taoist Longshan looked at his old friend with closed eyes, and sadness welled up in his heart. Without hesitation, he immediately supported the Divine Sword Old Man to check his internal condition. Upon inspection, Taoist Longshan's face turned pale, and his sorrow deepened.

Ning Qi quietly sent out a wisp of Gang Qi and then fell silent.

He also devised some healing secret techniques, but now the Divine Sword Old Man's condition was exceedingly dire. His Primordial Core was shattered, streaks of Gang Qi scattered into his limbs and bones, even reaching his internal organs, along with vicious external and internal wounds. His internal vitality was nearly extinguished.

Imagine that.

This old man must have summoned incredible willpower to reach True Martial Mountain.

If the Divine Sword Old Man's condition was slightly better, he might be able to sustain his life and slowly research a cure, but now, there's no time left.

He could only barely use secret techniques to activate the last trace of the Divine Sword Old Man's vitality.

Zhuang Chen sensed something from everyone's silence, continuously wiping his tears with the back of his hand, just about to kneel down, but an arm had already caught him, and the hoarse voice of the Divine Sword Old Man sounded:

"Chen'er, I know my own condition, your safety is all that matters."

Zhuang Chen was sobbing uncontrollably.

The Divine Sword Old Man turned his head towards Taoist Longshan.

"Brother Longshan."

This first sentence made Taoist Longshan's heartache, at this moment he wished the Divine Sword Old Man could jokingly call him 'Longshan Ox Nose' in full spirit.

Taoist Longshan closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and opened them again:

"Brother Divine Sword, what happened? How did you become so seriously injured?"

The Divine Sword Old Man's expression darkened.

"Misfortune at home..."

He began to speak slowly.

Although he didn't know why those people attacked the Divine Sword Sect, the Divine Sword Old Man wasn't a fool and could roughly guess.

After he finished speaking.

Taoist Longshan and Ning Qi exchanged glances, both unconsciously shuddering.

"Human Blood Pool? Dong He's betrayal? Black-clothed people night-attacked the Divine Sword Sect!"

They couldn't help but feel that this scene was strikingly similar to the incident at Snow Plum Manor back then. Previously, Ning Qi's father also informed Taoist Longshan in a letter that there were important matters to discuss, and then he suffered extermination. For some reason, they both felt that there must be unusual secrets hidden in this Human Blood Pool, maybe the same kind Ning Qi's father discovered back then.

An invisible hand seemed to be manipulating everything from behind.

Ning Qi's eyes narrowed slightly.

Taoist Longshan thought of this as well, and he solemnly asked:

"Brother Divine Sword, was it the Blood Rain Tower who acted?"

The Divine Sword Old Man didn't know why Taoist Longshan mentioned the Blood Rain Tower but slowly shook his head and said:

"It wasn't the Blood Rain Tower. The martial arts style is hard to discern, but it vaguely doesn't seem like the traditional martial artists of Great Yan, more like something exotic."

He looked a bit apologetically at Taoist Longshan:

"Brother Longshan, I just hope this doesn't bring you trouble."

Taoist Longshan sighed:

"At this point, there's no need for such formality between us. Don't worry, I will investigate thoroughly, and I won't let the Divine Sword Sect be destroyed in vain. These evil people using human blood as a pool, whatever dark activities they're engaging in, I absolutely won't spare them!"

The Divine Sword Old Man suddenly laughed heartily, with immense joy and abandon, laughing so hard that he coughed up blood, but he didn't mind at all. To have such a friend in one's life is without regrets.

"All these years, only you, Brother Longshan, could gain my admiration. Alas, I could never take True Martial Mountain from your hands till my death. I must admit, this ox-nose of yours indeed has some skill!"

Taoist Longshan also laughed, his eyes slightly moist.

Everyone was silent, Zhuang Chen cried softly.

Ning Qi sighed lightly in his heart, as the vitality of the Divine Sword Old Man was already weakening.

He pulled Zhuang Chen over and looked towards Taoist Longshan:

"Brother Longshan, I have one last request."

"Speak." Taoist Longshan did not hesitate for a moment.

The Divine Sword Old Man lovingly glanced at Zhuang Chen, his withered hand patted his head, and he smiled:

"In my life, my proudest achievement was taking Chen'er as my disciple. Not just because he has the Innate Sword Bone, but because he has a pure heart. He's a good child, only misfortune befell him following me."

"Now his Sword Bone is shattered, and his foundation destroyed. I ask you, take him as your disciple."

"If his Sword Bone can revive in the future, undergo Cocoon Breaking and Rebirth, he will surely become a top powerhouse of the True Martial Sect. Otherwise, let him live peacefully as an ordinary person on True Martial Mountain."

His gaze was pleading, and his voice became increasingly faint.

Taoist Longshan grasped both his hands and agreed without hesitation:

"Rest assured, from now on, he shall be my tenth true disciple, regardless of whether his Sword Bone revives or not, I will protect him all his life!"

"Chen'er, acknowledge your master!" The Divine Sword Old Man shouted forcefully.

Zhuang Chen was tear-stricken but still respectfully knelt before Taoist Longshan to kowtow in salute.

Taoist Longshan assisted him up.

The Divine Sword Old Man's eyes were almost closing, his voice was too faint to hear:

"Thank you, thank you."

He struggled to move closer to Taoist Longshan and whispered:

"Chen'er knows about the Sword Saint inheritance I obtained back then, let it be his acknowledgment gift."

Ning Qi heard this, sighing softly in his heart.

Parents love their children and plan deeply for them, a master is like a father indeed.

The Divine Sword Old Man finally smiled, waved to Zhuang Chen, and then slowly closed his eyes, his vitality completely extinguished.

Everyone was silent, leaving only Zhuang Chen's wailing cries.

Chapter 120: Break and Then Rebuild (Request for Monthly Ticket)

The Divine Sword Old Man was buried in the back of True Martial Mountain.

Ning Qi took out the Dragon Owl Sword and buried it together with the Divine Sword Old Man. It was the Divine Sword Old Man's favorite sword during his life. Last time, he lost it to Ning Qi in a ten-year agreement, and now it returned to its rightful owner. To Ning Qi, the Dragon Owl Sword was no longer of use to him.

Zhuang Chen gratefully called out, "Ninth Senior Brother."

Then.

Zhuang Chen personally erected a monument for the Divine Sword Old Man.

He respectfully kowtowed several times.

In this misfortune, the saving grace was that his master could pass away peacefully, and he could still come to visit if he wished.

Even though Zhuang Chen's eyes were filled with sorrow, they also contained determination. He remembered everything that happened that night, as well as the terrifying look of his once kind and amiable eldest brother. He secretly vowed to seek justice for his master.

Taoist Longshan sighed softly, brushing Zhuang Chen's head:

"Shi, from now on, True Martial Mountain is your second home. It was also the home of the Divine Sword Brother. With him here, you won't be alone."

Zhuang Chen nodded vigorously:

"Yes, Master."

Luo Wentian and the others all looked at Zhuang Chen with concern. For this additional Tenth Junior Brother, they all felt a sense of pity and sympathy.

"Shi, you can stay with peace of mind at the True Martial Sect. If anyone dares to bully you, just come to your senior brothers for help!"

Looking at the many kind senior brothers and sisters, a warm feeling arose in Zhuang Chen's heart.

Then he felt waves of fatigue sweeping over him, and he fainted.

He had been fleeing for a long time and sustained serious injuries. Zhuang Chen had been relying on sheer willpower to hold on, but now, after handling the funeral affairs of the Divine Sword Old Man, he had finally reached his limit.

Everyone was startled.

Taoist Longshan and Ning Qi examined him closely.

Taoist Longshan initially sighed in relief, but then frowned slightly. The condition inside Zhuang Chen's body was not good.

"Such a malicious force, it destroys one's foundation and even shatters Shi's sword bone. Surviving is not a problem, but can he still cultivate in the future?"

Everyone was shocked.

If he really couldn't cultivate, it would be another huge blow to Zhuang Chen.

Taoist Longshan looked at Ning Qi, as did everyone else. They all knew Ning Qi was skilled in the medical and alchemical arts, perhaps he had a solution.

Ning Qi spoke softly:

"We don't know how yet; we can only try. Let's place the Tenth Junior Brother in the Seeking Tao Institute, and I'll first stabilize his injuries."

He had some confidence, but couldn't guarantee anything for now, and it wasn't the right occasion. Luckily, during the previous Celestial Being Grand Ceremony, he had thoroughly investigated the condition of Zhuang Chen's Innate Sword Bone and, based on that, developed the Secret Technique of Innate Sword Body.

Now, the hope for the revival of Zhuang Chen's Sword Bone rests on this Secret Technique.

Everyone breathed a silent sigh of relief.

They understood Ning Qi and knew that since he hadn't guaranteed its impossibility, it meant there was still hope.

Taoist Longshan instructed all the disciples to disperse and be on guard. The enemy was hidden, their exact strength unknown. Although the Divine Sword Old Man had said that no Celestial Human Realm experts had appeared, it was still wise to be cautious.

He himself then accompanied Ning Qi back to the Seeking Tao Institute.

"Jiu, I always felt that the group attacking the Divine Sword Sect and the group that annihilated Snow Plum Manor years ago were somewhat similar. Perhaps there's some connection between them." Taoist Longshan said in a deep voice.

Some things were not appropriate to discuss in front of everyone just now.

Ning Qi nodded slightly:

"I have the same feeling. The Blood Rain Tower might just be a smokescreen like the golden cicada shedding its shell."

The two bear some resemblances. Both were annihilated after discovering some truth. Now, if it could be verified that what Ning Qi's father discovered back then was also a Human Blood Pool or something similar, it could nearly conclude that there was indeed a connection between the two.

Taoist Longshan pondered for a moment before finally making up his mind:

"I'll go down the mountain now and head to the Divine Sword Sect to have a look. Perhaps there will be some traces left. Additionally, I'll create a bit of a stir to let those people know I've left the True Martial Sect."

Ning Qi immediately understood Taoist Longshan's intention.

As long as Taoist Longshan remained on True Martial Mountain, those in hiding wouldn't dare to attack. But if it was confirmed that Taoist Longshan was absent, the situation would change.

In the eyes of outsiders.

The True Martial Sect apparently only had a few White Mist Realm True Disciples.

As for True Man Tianjian, an old monster nearing the end of his lifespan, he might not intervene for minor matters and might not even always be on True Martial Mountain.

After all, there was a precedent. When Taoist Longshan was in life-and-death seclusion, the Iron Ridge Three Fierce and several Gang Essence Realm experts once attacked True Martial Mountain at night, but it was never heard that True Man Tianjian intervened. Known to all, True Man Tianjian first acted when Old Demon Lin attacked.

Ning Qi nodded and said:

"This method is worth a try. It might lure the snake out of its hole. Master, you can leave the mountain with peace of mind. Since I am here within the sect, it's also a good time to treat Tenth Junior Brother's injuries and revive his Sword Bone, which requires some time."

He had just checked the condition inside Zhuang Chen's body, which was indeed not good.

Now was the best time to revive the Sword Bone. If he waited to descend the mountain and then return to revive Zhuang Chen's Sword Bone, it would likely be too late, and Zhuang Chen would forever be crippled. Therefore, now sending Taoist Longshan down the mountain was the best choice.

Taoist Longshan looked at the unconscious Zhuang Chen and sighed:

"Shi is also a pitiable person. Jiu, if you have confidence, do your best to revive his Sword Bone."

Ning Qi solemnly said:

"I will do my best."

He always had a good impression of Zhuang Chen. Now that Zhuang Chen had become his junior brother, he would care even more. This was a matter of legacy, just like when he had first come up the mountain, the senior brothers and sisters had all treated him with great care.

Taoist Longshan left.

Ning Qi then turned his gaze to Zhuang Chen, who was lying on the bed, and instructed White Ape:

"Tiansheng, go get some Gold Silver Grass, Phoenix Tail Flower, Purple Rattan..."

He needed some herbs to stabilize Zhuang Chen's injuries.

White Ape left quietly, looking worried. Although he had a small conflict with Zhuang Chen when they first met, they got along well afterwards. Zhuang Chen was one of the few who knew part of White Ape's abilities, and now seeing Zhuang Chen in such a terrible state, he was somewhat angry.

He ground the herbal juice and had White Ape feed it to Zhuang Chen.

Several silver needles fell, swiftly darting across various points on Zhuang Chen's body.

Although Zhuang Chen was still unconscious, his originally pale face was gradually improving. With Ning Qi's medical skills, such wounds were naturally not a problem, but the crucial issue wasn't these external injuries, it was Zhuang Chen's Sword Bone.

Ning Qi took a light breath, a wisp of Gang Qi probing out, beginning a more detailed examination of Zhuang Chen's internal condition.

A moment later.

His expression turned slightly surprised.

He discovered.

After Zhuang Chen's Innate Sword Bone shattered, some of the fluctuations within became even more evident, much clearer than during previous examinations. Ning Qi almost instantly recorded these special fluctuations, then compared them one by one with the Innate Sword Body he had created.

Immediately, he found that the Innate Sword Body he had created previously still had many flaws.

This was not hard to understand, after all, Ning Qi's study of White Ape and Zhuang Chen was only superficial, the essence of power wasn't sufficient to support deeper exploration. It was only by accident that a part of the essence had been revealed.

"Moreover, initially I didn't notice anything during a rough check, but now on closer inspection, Shi's Sword Bone seems to be actively converging?"

This was somewhat miraculous.

But Ning Qi also discovered that this active convergence was only a tendency and wasn't very strong, furthermore, there was tremendous resistance. Without strong external interference, it was more likely than not to fail.

"But it is much better than I initially predicted. Studying these fluctuations to improve the Secret Technique of the Innate Sword Body, using it to promote resonance to assist the Sword Bone's convergence seems highly feasible."

"Moreover, after the Sword Bone re-converges this time, Shi might be able to further tap into the potential of the Sword Bone."

"In some respect, this can be considered as breaking and then establishing anew, it's just that the price is somewhat too heavy."

Looking at Zhuang Chen, who was still furrowing his brow in his sleep, Ning Qi sighed lightly.

...

Taoist Longshan instructed the disciples to remain vigilant at all times and then descended the mountain, heading straight to the former site of the Divine Sword Sect. He wanted to start investigating from there to see whether that group of people had left any traces.

Furthermore, the destruction of the Divine Sword Sect would also stir up a wave in Qing State.

Although the Great Yan Dynasty was somewhat chaotic now, the annihilation of a first-rate force with a Primordial Core Realm expert would still attract considerable attention.

Taoist Longshan did not deliberately conceal his movements.

Three days later.

News of the Divine Sword Sect's annihilation gradually spread, and Taoist Longshan's involvement in helping an old friend track down the culprits also drew much attention.

In a small courtyard within a county town near the True Martial Sect, unnoticed by others, several figures gathered in a secret room.

Each of them exuded a powerful aura, all in the Primordial Core Realm.

If anyone knew, they would be utterly shocked, finding it hard to imagine that such an ordinary small town housed so many Primordial Core Realm experts.

The leader spoke:

"The Innate Sword Bone is a perfect great elixir for cultivating the Blood King Gu. If we can bring it back, it will be a great achievement. Now that True Man Longshan is not at the True Martial Sect, perhaps it is our chance."

He looked around at the few people, his gaze carrying a certain oppressive force.

The scar-faced middle-aged man said in a deep voice:

"Even though True Man Longshan is not here, the True Martial Sect still has an even more powerful True Man Tianjian!"

Another alluring woman chimed in:

"That's right, True Man Tianjian is of the Celestial Being List caliber. Even if we all attack at once, it would be just a flick of a hand for him."

The leader shook his head:

"No, True Man Tianjian might not concern himself with such a trivial matter. I have studied the two times True Man Tianjian made a move. Both were during attacks by Celestial Human Realm experts, only when the survival of the True Martial Sect was at stake did he act. Previously, when True Man Longshan secluded himself to break through to the Celestial Human Realm, several Gang Essence Realm figures attacked the mountain, yet True Man Tianjian did not make a move."

"This time, our target is merely the Innate Sword Bone, without harming others, it might not alarm True Man Tianjian."

"Besides True Man Longshan and True Man Tianjian, the True Martial Sect only has a few True Disciples at the White Mist Realm. We just need one Primordial Core Realm to easily take away the Innate Sword Bone, thus intimidating True Man Longshan and making him wary."

Several fell silent, then said:

"Ultimately, this is just your speculation. What if we actually encounter True Man Tianjian, what then? If he catches us, it would ruin everything."

The leader was prepared; he took out a wax-sealed pill and said:

"This is the Heaven-Sensing Gu. Swallowed, if unusual Power of Heaven and Earth fluctuations are detected nearby, it will immediately shatter, releasing poison, blasting the shackles. At that time, don't hesitate in the slightest, shatter your Primordial Core and commit suicide to avoid falling into enemy hands."

Everyone's expressions turned solemn.

There was no fear, only a clear understanding that the importance of the Innate Sword Bone even surpassed that of a Primordial Core Realm life, to the point of sacrificing one to probe, most likely due to orders from above in recent days.

"Who's going?" someone asked the question that concerned everyone.

The leader scanned the crowd, finally taking a deep breath and said:

"Old rules, draw lots."