

Cultivating 121

Chapter 121: Got You

True Martial Mountain.

Seeking Tao Institute.

Zhuang Chen had already woken up two days earlier. Over these two days of recuperation, his external injuries had mostly healed, but the most troublesome issue was the shattered Sword Bone within him.

"Ninth Senior Brother, is there really still a way to restore my Sword Bone?"

There was a look of hope on Zhuang Chen's face.

If possible, he certainly did not want to be reduced to a cripple. He still had to seek justice for his master and personally ask Dong He why he did such a thing.

Ning Qi nodded slightly.

After a few days of research, he successfully advanced the Innate Sword Body Secret Technique further and deduced a method to restore the Sword Bone.

However, the process would not be pleasant.

Ning Qi asked solemnly:

"It will be very painful. Are you sure you don't want to wait until the injuries fully recover?"

Seeing Zhuang Chen unmoved, he added:

"It will be dozens of times more painful than when the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony explored your Sword Bone."

A trace of fear involuntarily appeared in Zhuang Chen's eyes but was quickly replaced by determination.

"Ninth Senior Brother, I'm not afraid! The sooner the Sword Bone recovers, the sooner I can start cultivating!"

He was afraid of pain, but he feared even more becoming a cripple for life.

"Alright, to reassemble your Sword Bone is not too difficult. The key lies in the Innate Sword Body Secret Technique I taught you before. You have already relearned the Reversing Fate Technique over the past two days, but now you have no Inner Strength, so you will have to rely on mine."

"The Secret Technique's resonance can guide the revival of your Sword Bone, but the process is incredibly painful, even more terrifying than being flayed alive. Also, the power comes from me, so you will be repelled by my strength, enduring double the pain. Throughout the process, you must keep your willpower clear, not letting it waver, or you will suffer even more serious injuries."

Ning Qi warned seriously.

Zhuang Chen took a deep breath and finally nodded firmly:

"Come on, Ninth Senior Brother, I can do it!"

"Alright."

Ning Qi didn't waste any time.

The two sat facing each other, their palms facing each other, and the White Ape was guarding them.

In an instant.

Ning Qi moved. He circulated Gang Qi, diluting its strength as much as possible, skillfully controlling it within the limits that Zhuang Chen could bear while still being effective, before flowing it into Zhuang Chen's body.

Zhuang Chen trembled all over, remembering Ning Qi's warnings.

He channeled this foreign power, reversing the Innate Sword Body Technique.

In an instant.

Vibrations formed, resonating with the shattered Sword Bone within his body.

He felt his whole body tremble as an indescribable pain attacked his soul, like countless steel needles piercing through his body. Not even the pain of being gnawed by ten thousand ants could describe his discomfort. Zhuang Chen's eyes bulged out, he grit his teeth ferociously, blood oozed from them, and a low growl was forcibly swallowed back...

Ning Qi paid close attention to Zhuang Chen's condition.

He had stated the situation so seriously earlier, but if Zhuang Chen truly couldn't hold on, he could stop immediately, preventing Zhuang Chen from suffering unnecessarily.

At this moment.

Seeing Zhuang Chen endure it, Ning Qi could not help but be impressed. Originally, he thought Zhuang Chen might need several attempts to adapt, but unexpectedly, he persisted through it in one go.

Looking at the chubby boy in front of him biting his teeth with bloodshot eyes, Ning Qi couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

He remembered the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony earlier when even just exploring the Sword Bone made Zhuang Chen scream like a baby. Yet now, he endured the pain dozens of times greater by gritting his teeth. The changes at the Divine Sword Sect indeed had a great impact on Zhuang Chen.

Yet misfortune and fortune co-exist.

Through this ordeal, if his Sword Bone breaks and then stands, forging such a tenacious will, Zhuang Chen's future will truly be unlimited.

After the incense stick burned out.

Ning Qi slowly withdrew his hands as Zhuang Chen collapsed on the ground like a lump of soft mud, gasping for air, his body twitching continuously, but there was an unexplainable excitement in his eyes:

"Ninth... Ninth Senior Brother, I... I should have... succeeded, right?"

Ning Qi smiled approvingly:

"It went very smoothly this time. However, reviving the Sword Bone will not be easy. I will guide you a few more times. Once your Sword Bone is preliminarily restored, you will be able to operate the Secret Technique on your own to recover the Sword Bone. In a month, there might be hope for complete restoration."

Zhuang Chen clenched his fists, extremely excited.

"Thank you, Ninth Senior Brother!"

He looked at Ning Qi, full of gratitude, while marveling. From the first time they met, Ning Qi's sword had seemed extraordinary to him, and now, having glimpsed just the tip of the iceberg, he felt this Ninth Senior Brother was unfathomable to the extreme.

Ning Qi merely smiled and waved his hand:

"No need to be so polite between us brothers. Rest well, we'll continue tomorrow."

He felt an unusual sensation in his heart.

Although Zhuang Chen was technically three years older than him, a junior disciple is still a junior disciple. This made Ning Qi, who had always been used to the role of a junior, experience the feeling of being a senior brother for the first time.

...

Midnight.

Outside True Martial Mountain, a figure in black quietly approached. Upon closer inspection, it was surprisingly a bewitching woman with striking beauty, one of the Primordial Core Realm individuals who had gathered earlier.

The bewitching woman's face was somewhat sullen. She never expected to draw the lot herself.

"Damn Zhao Dong, I've played along with you in bed so many times, and now you send me on such a dangerous mission. You refuse to recognize me once the deed is done; serves you right for being useless!"

She cursed the leader in her heart.

Though it was labeled as drawing lots, who could say there wasn't some trickery involved?

Gazing at the distant True Martial Mountain, she felt a flicker of trepidation.

The renown of True Man Tianjian naturally instilled fear.

Though Zhao Dong's analysis was somewhat reasonable, everyone understood that those Primordial Core Realm members going to carry out the mission were prepared to be sacrifices. Otherwise, there wouldn't be the preparation of the Heaven-Sensing Gu. Once it sensed the fluctuation of the Power of Heaven and Earth, it would instantly shatter, spreading its lethal poison, resulting in certain death.

No one would find it odd; even those in the Primordial Core Realm were vulnerable before the Celestial Human Realm, the gap being too vast.

But she dared not refuse the mission, for the consequences of refusal were even more severe.

Now the bewitching woman's only hope was that True Man Tianjian was not on the mountain, or that Zhao Dong's speculation was correct and that he wouldn't act over trivial matters. If so, she might have a slim chance of survival and even hope to complete the mission.

If she could indeed bring back the Innate Sword Bone, it would be a great achievement, and she could settle her scores with Zhao Dong later.

"I must stay as quiet as possible, preferably abduct that little fat kid silently."

Quietly, the bewitching woman donned a black face covering, concealing herself in the night, sliding forward like a snake with a somewhat strange body technique.

Evading several patrols, she headed in the direction of the Seeking Tao Institute. Through reconnaissance, they knew Zhuang Chen was currently staying at the residence of the True Martial Sect's ninth True Inheritor.

...

Ning Qi was cultivating in the Scripture Pavilion using the Heaven and Earth Grinding Wheel Quenching Gang Technique.

Though not as fast without the Golden Jade Pill, he still needed to accumulate slowly, step by step.

Suddenly.

He furrowed his brow, paused his cultivation, and looked in a certain direction.

"Someone has snuck in?" Various thoughts arose in Ning Qi's mind. "Seems like they're heading my way. Coincidence, or are they coming for Shi?"

His first thought was that Taoist Longshan's plan had succeeded; indeed, a snake had been lured out.

But it couldn't be confirmed completely.

Without hesitation.

Ning Qi stepped out of the Scripture Pavilion, his entire appearance and figure transformed. In a breath, he had turned into a plain-looking young Taoist. The background of this intruder was unknown, and Ning Qi planned to capture them alive. Looking younger might make them underestimate him.

Soon.

Ning Qi saw a figure in black darting through the shadows, moving at great speed, scanning around, lurking towards the direction of the Scripture Pavilion and the Seeking Tao Institute.

"Looks like not the Celestial Human Realm? Primordial Core Realm?"

Ning Qi planned to take action; he needed the opponent to relax their guard. He couldn't appear too strong, lest they commit suicide, and he aimed to seize the person by surprise.

The bewitching woman was traversing within the True Martial Sect, evading several patrols while secretly mocking that aside from True Man Longshan, there were only a few weak practitioners. In her complacency, her heart suddenly leaped; instinctively, she struck a palm to the side, the Primordial Core surging with Gang Qi, fiercely powerful.

A dull thud.

The assailant was struck in the chest by her palm, rolling away into the distance, spitting several mouthfuls of blood in the air. The bewitching woman's eyesight was excellent, and she immediately saw the attacker's face—a plain-looking young Taoist, with not very high cultivation, only in the White Mist Realm.

She breathed a slight sigh of relief yet remained vigilant, her eyes welling with intense killing intent.

She hadn't forgotten that she was inside the True Martial Sect, and if too much commotion attracted others, it would spell trouble.

"I need to conclude this swiftly!"

In an instant, the bewitching woman devised her strategy—to quickly subdue the young Taoist before he could react, to prevent him from summoning others.

The woman tapped her toes repeatedly, her Primordial Core vibrating, Gang Qi ejecting, her speed incredibly fast, like lightning in the night.

She didn't hold back at all; everything happened in a flash, and before the young Taoist even landed and could vomit blood in midair, she had already closed in, ready to deliver a fatal blow.

A fierce killing intent appeared in the bewitching woman's eyes.

But immediately.

This killing intent turned to astonishment.

She saw a pair of eyes; the young Taoist looked at her, with indifference, tinged with faint mockery.

The bewitching woman sensed an ominous foreboding, but it was too late to react, the astonishment in her eyes rapidly transformed into deep horror.

She only saw those hands gently waving, and her fierce Gang Qi was dispersed, as effortlessly as swatting a fly—no, like dust—simply unbelievable.

A boundless mighty force pressed down on her; unable to resist, she became immobilized, unable even to move a finger, her inner Gang Qi forcibly suppressed.

"How could this be?? Why didn't the Heaven-Sensing Gu react? Could this person not be in the Celestial Human Realm?"

The Celestial Human Realm was far superior to the Primordial Core Realm due to the blessing of Heaven and Earth's Power. Without utilizing Heaven and Earth's Power, a Celestial Human wouldn't render a Primordial Core expert utterly powerless, unable even to commit suicide.

A terrifying thought arose in her mind, yet she was powerless to move.

A hand clasped her neck.

Ning Qi's calm voice resonated:

"Got you."

Chapter 122: Southern Border Tribes

With Ning Qi's cultivation and strength, if he directly fought, he could naturally suppress the attacker before him. The reason for the elaborate scheme was simply for a more secure outcome.

For instance, now.

The attacker, caught off guard, never imagined that the pitiful little rabbit would suddenly transform into a man-eating tiger.

Ning Qi stared at the attacker before him, a strand of Gang Qi lifted her mask, revealing her true face. Unexpectedly, the attacker was a stunningly beautiful woman.

But Ning Qi did not hesitate, grabbing her neck and holding her before him, his vast Gang Qi pressed down like the sea, instantly locking down her movements, and even suppressing the Gang Qi within her body.

"Indeed, a Primordial Core Realm."

Ning Qi sensed the woman's realm, his eyes slightly narrowing.

The alluring woman felt a torrent of emotions, the indifferent gaze of the young Taoist opposite made her tremble, and his strength was unbelievably overpowering.

"Who is this person? True Man Tianjian? True Man Tianjian's true face is actually so young? Or is this not his true face at all?"

She raged internally, never expecting herself to be discovered by True Man Tianjian before making any commotion, but soon she dismissed her thought:

"No! This person may not be True Man Tianjian!"

"My heart's Heaven-Sensing Gu showed no signs, meaning no fluctuation of Power of Heaven and Earth appeared!"

This discovery further horrified the alluring woman.

"Relying solely on Gang Qi to strip me of all abilities? Even an unparalleled expert in the top ten of the Celestial Being List couldn't achieve this, right?"

"How could there be such a terrifying person in the world? Who is this person, and why hasn't he taken action during the repeated crises at True Martial Mountain? Or perhaps he isn't from the True Martial Sect at all?"

The woman was filled with various speculations.

Then she heard the young Taoist speak slowly:

"Who are you?"

Her body instinctively trembled, suddenly finding herself able to speak, but only barely, as threads of Gang Qi flowed, constantly monitoring her actions.

She snorted coldly, turning her head away.

While cursing Zhao Dong, she was already considering how to end her own life.

As for escaping?

She had abandoned this thought.

"Fine." Ning Qi smiled faintly, "It just so happens I know a bit about interrogation techniques, you can try them."

The woman's pupils shrank rapidly, heart trembling.

Though she was a well-trained death warrior, the person before her was just too mysterious and frightening.

Ning Qi grasped her neck, walking forward, and suddenly, his eyes locked with hers, his voice carrying a peculiar bewitchment:

"Look into my eyes."

Caught off guard, the woman's eyes instinctively met Ning Qi's gaze, her heart already sensing danger, but it was too late. She seemed to be staring at a deep, bottomless pool, or perhaps a dark and boundless abyss, unable to resist, sinking into confusion, her focus lost.

Ning Qi's lips curved slightly.

This was a pupil technique he created during leisure, with a hypnotic effect.

"What's your name?" Ning Qi's voice maintained a special allure.

"Shen Yubing." The woman instinctively replied.

Continuous tests showed no anomalies.

Ning Qi went straight to the point.

"Why did you infiltrate the True Martial Sect late at night?"

"Came for the Innate Sword Bone."

Ning Qi's spirit shook, it turned out to be a big serpent.

"Why do you need the Innate Sword Bone?"

"The Innate Sword Bone is a major ingredient to refine Blood King Gu."

"What is Blood King Gu?"

"Don't... know."

The woman's brow furrowed tightly, as if struggling to recall. Ning Qi quickly changed the question; the pupil technique wasn't omnipotent, questions concerning memories too deep or potentially life-threatening could shock the spirit, causing awakening, and a shock might leave the person a mindless idiot.

"Was the Divine Sword Sect destroyed by you?"

"Yes."

"What's the name of your organization?"

"Nameless."

"What's your relationship with Blood Rain Tower?" Ning Qi asked this crucial question.

"From the same place."

"Where are you from?" Ning Qi locked eyes firmly.

The woman's brow furrowed, the question seemed to touch an exceptionally sensitive and profound part of her heart.

"Some... Southern Border."

"Where in the Southern Border?"

Ning Qi pursued the question.

But the woman showed signs of breaking away from the pupil technique, with no answer forthcoming, she began to struggle, the question triggering her fear.

Ning Qi focused his mind, instantly entering the Realm of Celestial Being Unity.

He aimed to fortify his pupil technique with the Power of Heaven and Earth, but this approach was too brutal, fearing the woman might soon face mental collapse and death. This was why Ning Qi initially refrained from directly using Power of Heaven and Earth to enhance.

Yet as the Power of Heaven and Earth just started to ripple beside him.

The woman's body suddenly trembled, waking her up. She looked at Ning Qi in horror, only to realize that she had said so much just now. This person before her was practically like a demon!

She sensed the Heaven-Sensing Gu at her heart shatter, feeling both bitter and relieved.

The poison erupted from her heart, instantly sweeping through her entire body.

Ning Qi sensed the faint vibrations coming from this woman's heart, and his face changed. He extended his Gang Qi, but it was too late.

The woman only had time to look at Ning Qi with hatred in her eyes before she died.

Ning Qi silently looked at the woman's corpse, taking a deep breath after a moment.

"These people from the Southern Border... their methods are truly strange."

When he had caught this woman earlier, Ning Qi had already probed her entire body with Gang Qi and confirmed nothing unusual. He had never expected her to still manage to take her own life.

"Is this some sort of special Gu insect? It melds with the heart without the slightest trace, even Gang Qi can't detect it, and once it senses the fluctuations of the Power of Heaven and Earth, it shatters and releases poison instantly?"

Ning Qi pondered for a moment, nearly pinpointing the woman's method of taking her own life.

"This person was probably just a pawn, already prepared to encounter a Celestial Human Realm expert when she climbed the mountain. If one such expert appeared, she would kill herself, leaving no trace. If no such expert intervened, she would successfully take the tenth junior brother, using the Innate Sword Bone as a medicinal guide while also intimidating the master, causing him to act with caution. A truly twofold gain."

There was no need to search to know that this woman must have nothing on her, no trace of identity to be found.

It must be said.

The mysterious force from the Southern Border, though somewhat reckless in their actions, were indeed in control. They simply could not have anticipated that there would be an anomaly like Ning Qi.

Yet even so, they still managed to catch Ning Qi off guard.

At this moment.

Ning Qi could only be grateful that he hadn't immediately used the Power of Heaven and Earth, otherwise he wouldn't even have these current bits of information.

Ning Qi took a deep breath, pondering the questions that the woman had responded to earlier.

"This unnamed organization and the Blood Rain Tower both hail from the Southern Border. The Southern Border has the Hundred Thousand Mountains, filled with countless powerful exotic beasts.

According to fifth senior brother, there might even be a Beast Emperor that can rival a Martial Saint. Besides that, there are also some mysterious tribes."

"Those tribes have mysterious methods, dabbling in divination, Gu insects, and beast taming. Originally, these tribes were situated in the Southern Border, rarely contacting the outside world. Who would have thought they were secretly controlling some forces to commit such vile acts within the Great Yan region!"

Ning Qi's gaze turned cold.

Perhaps it was because his parents discovered some trace back then that they were slaughtered and their clan exterminated.

"For the Blood King Gu? What is this Blood King Gu?"

Earlier, even the woman only knew the name of the Blood King Gu, unaware of its specific purpose. From this, it was clear that the so-called Blood King Gu was kept highly confidential.

Ning Qi speculated it might be some kind of object for ascension.

But that's not important. What's important is that he finally knew who was behind the Blood Rain Tower.

Knowing that both the Blood Rain Tower and the unnamed force that destroyed the Divine Sword Sect came from the Southern Border made things simpler. Moreover, their use of a Human Blood Pool to raise the Blood King Gu means they would undoubtedly commit abductions or trafficking in secret. Now that there's a direction, it will be much easier to track down, and there will surely be clues.

"I must immediately send a message to Master, asking him to come back once."

Explaining in a letter could easily lead to leaks. If someone from the unnamed force intercepts, it would be a disaster. It wouldn't take long for Taoist Longshan to return this way, which would be more secure.

...

Nameless town.

Secret chamber.

Several people in black gathered together, some meditating with eyes closed, some deep in thought, while others stared at a Gu insect on the table.

The Heaven-Sensing Gu Mother and Child Two Insects, this was the mother insect.

If the mission succeeded, the mother insect could lure out the child insect upon return, ensuring safety. If the mission failed, the child insect would shatter, and the mother insect would perish likewise.

And at the moment the seductive woman in the body of the Heaven-Sensing Gu shattered.

The mother insect let out a mournful cry, its mystical connection severed, and its vitality immediately extinguished.

When everyone sensed these waves, they immediately looked over, surprise flickering across their faces, followed by silence.

"It seems that True Man Tianjian was the one who acted, Lady Yu is dead," someone sighed softly.

This mission was a gamble, betting that True Man Tianjian was not at True Martial Mountain or wouldn't intervene over such a minor matter.

But now it seems, they lost the gamble.

Though the cost was tolerable, losing a Lady Yu wouldn't leak any important information anyway.

The leader, Zhao Dong, took a deep breath and said:

"Since things are this way, let's cancel the operation targeting the Innate Sword Bone. I'll explain the situation above, and we can discuss it later if there's a chance. For now, lie low until this blows over. Lady Yu dying at True Martial Mountain is not without its benefits."

"At least it's a warning to True Man Longshan."

This was their only mental solace.

A Primordial Core Realm powerhouse sent out like this is sure to make True Man Longshan reconsider the pros and cons of further investigation.

Everyone nodded in agreement.

No one felt regret or sorrow for Lady Yu's death; they were simply relieved. Thankfully, it wasn't they who had gone on this mission this time. Though they weren't afraid of dying, they still wished to live a little longer.

Someone else then asked:

"What about the orders from above?"

Zhao Dong's eyes flickered slightly:

"I'll go ask for instructions. If it's truly unfeasible, then decentralize, even if it means being a little more troublesome but not overly conspicuous. Let Blood Rain Tower take on a bit more burden. If not for their unwillingness to join the Divine Sword Sect operation, how would we end up with so much trouble?"

He snorted coldly, speaking with a tone of dissatisfaction towards Blood Rain Tower.

If there had been a few more Primordial Core Realm experts, even if the Divine Sword Old Man exploded with Secret Techniques, he wouldn't have had a chance to escape, thus avoiding the current problems.

Everyone merely nodded.

Then they left.

In an instant, the once occupied secret chamber was now empty.

Chapter 123: Sword Saint Legacy

True Martial Mountain.

Taoist Longshan's figure stepped through the air. After receiving Ning Qi's secret letter, he returned at full speed, landing directly outside the Seeking Tao Institute.

"Jiu, do you have any clues?" Taoist Longshan hastily asked.

Ning Qi slowly recounted the events of that night.

The seductive woman's corpse was still kept by him. Although, as expected, nothing useful was found, Ning Qi temporarily preserved it with Extreme Cold Gang Qi, thinking it might come in handy someday.

At this moment.

As Ning Qi narrates, Taoist Longshan's expression gradually becomes solemn.

"Southern Border tribes? Blood King Gu?"

Ning Qi nodded and asked:

"Master, how much do you know about the Southern Border?"

This was also the reason for calling Taoist Longshan back; books and records might contain some knowledge, but not all.

Ning Qi roughly understood that the Southern Border lies south of Great Yan, and generations of dynasties tried to conquer it, adding it to their territory, but failed. It carries a mysterious aura among Great Yan's people, and those strong enough know its strength is exceptionally formidable; otherwise, it would've already been annexed by Great Yan.

Taoist Longshan's gaze carried a hint of wariness:

"Southern Border has Hundred Thousand Mountains, vast and unknown, and besides numerous exotic beasts, what we know is there's Southern Border tribes. These tribes are scattered throughout the Hundred Thousand Mountains, not quite harmonious among themselves, with mutual conflicts, only heard vaguely they don't unify like Great Yan into a dynasty, resembling a tribal alliance instead."

"These tribes rarely contact the outside world, each possessing mysterious means, Gu Manipulation Technique is one. As someone who traveled the world, I've heard rumors these tribes cultivate peculiar Gu and integrate them with their martial path, exhibiting various wonders, such as the Strength Gu, which boosts power immensely upon fusion."

"This Blood King Gu I've never heard of, but from its sinister birth process, its utility seems significant, potentially for cultivating Celestial Human Realm martial artists, even... higher!"

Ning Qi was stunned.

But also found it reasonable.

Primordial Core Realm experts are abandoned so easily, couldn't be just to cultivate some Gang Essence Realm experts with this Blood King Gu; that evidently lacks sense, the investment and the output don't match.

"The involvement behind this matter is likely substantial; almost certainly, Celestial Being strong persons are involved, sparing the uncertainty that this is perpetrated by a particular Southern Border tribe or several tribal alliances."

The nature is distinctly different.

If it's the latter, True Martial Sect probably can't shake it off.

"I tend to believe only a few tribes are involved; otherwise, they wouldn't be so cautious." Ning Qi said.

Snow Plum Manor's downfall was nine years ago, and Divine Sword Sect was destroyed just recently; if there was significant commotion during this time, it couldn't have gone unnoticed.

Using this reasoning, it is evident those behind the scenes are greatly wary of Great Yan.

Taoist Longshan agreed with a nod.

"That's right, perhaps one or two Celestial Human Realm may be behind this, but nothing more than that."

"This matter requires continuing investigation, whether for you, Jiu, or for Divine Sword brother and Shi, or for those innocent ones, it must be pursued to the end. Now that there's direction, it's much better, we can investigate in the direction of human trafficking next, centering around the Human Blood Pool Divine Sword brother mentioned..."

He began to devise a plan.

Ning Qi was constantly adding supplements by his side.

"Those unlike traditional martial artists of Great Yan should also be monitored; combining the two can greatly narrow the scope."

Master and apprentice soon settled on a strategy, both finding it feasible.

"They may keep a low profile for a while, but as long as they don't abandon cultivating the so-called Blood King Gu, they will inevitably expose weaknesses."

Ning Qi nodded and said:

"Exactly, judging by the special Gu insects that woman carried, they might think she would perish instantly encountering Celestial Human Realm, yet they don't know, we've already gathered much information, this is our advantage, now, we are in the dark, they are in the light!"

Taoist Longshan decisively said:

"Jiu, as usual, you remain at True Martial Mountain, while I descend the mountain to investigate."

This time, he won't make a grand spectacle, seeking contacts quietly to explore.

In Taoist Longshan's view, Ning Qi is stronger than himself, better to remain at True Martial Mountain. For instance, last time the woman launched a night raid, had he faced her, capturing her wouldn't be problematic, but drawing out so much useful information would be impossible.

Of course, he intentionally wants to give Ning Qi more time for cultivation.

His own cultivation progresses slowly now, half a year or a year's time means little to him, but the same time for Ning Qi brings much greater progress; he hasn't forgotten Ning Qi is still only nine.

Ning Qi did not decline.

"Master, wear this Cyan Profound Treasure Armor."

He handed the Cyan Profound Treasure Armor to Taoist Longshan, given they've learned Celestial Human Realm experts are involved behind, naturally, concerns for master's safety arise. Besides, he has Cyan Profound Body Protection Technique now, whose defense surpasses the Cyan Profound Treasure Armor.

Taoist Longshan's eyes held some surprise, and upon slight perception, he knew the treasure armor's power, even faintly felt a hint of familiar aura.

Seeing the puzzled look in his master's eyes, Ning Qi didn't hide it.

"This was obtained from the last attack by a Demon Sect expert."

Taoist Longshan was shocked.

He finally recalled where that familiar feeling arose.

That day the Great Yan envoy ascended the mountain, Demon Sect launched a night raid with five Celestial Beings, among which four perished, only the Demon Sect Celestial Being, comparable to Celestial Being List strong person, escaped severely injured by Town North King. During which he tried hitting the drowning dog, but his attack against the armor-clad Elder Wang naturally harmless.

"Didn't that person escape??" Taoist Longshan's mind surfaced with numerous questions.

Seeing his disciple smile silently, he instantly realized.

"No wonder Jiu appeared so late that night, it turns out he went to hunt down that thief."

A dignified Celestial Being List-level strong person was killed by Ning Qi, this feeling made Taoist Longshan unreal, everyone in the world thought that person had fled, but unexpectedly, he was quietly

killed by his little disciple. It was likely that this blame had already been placed on the Town North King by the Demon Sect, making him feel a bit amused and helpless.

He marveled in his heart, ultimately not being pretentious, and put away the Treasure Armor.

This was a gesture of filial piety from his disciple.

Ning Qi said with a smile:

"Master, if there is any news, let me know immediately. I know some tracking techniques, let's not alert the snake in the grass."

Taoist Longshan nodded solemnly.

He no longer doubted his little disciple's methods.

Taoist Longshan also met Zhuang Chen. After learning that Zhuang Chen's injuries had recovered and his Sword Bone was already awakening, he was greatly pleased and offered some words of encouragement.

"I am still investigating your First Master's enemy. I will definitely give you an explanation. Rest assured and focus on healing. For now, I am short on time to teach you. If there's anything you don't understand, consult your Ninth Senior Brother more."

He did not hide anything from Zhuang Chen and told him that the culprit behind the downfall of the Divine Sword Sect might be related to the Southern Border as well.

Feelings deepen through interactions, and Taoist Longshan, having interacted with Zhuang Chen and understanding his genuine heart, believed that Zhuang Chen would eventually fully acknowledge the True Martial Sect.

Zhuang Chen was moved.

He felt warm.

Although the Divine Sword Sect and his First Master were gone, he had gained a Master who cared for him and a group of senior brothers and sisters who cared for him.

These past few days, Luo Wentian and others frequently visited him. Their sincere concern brought immense warmth to his heart, which had experienced sudden change.

"Thank you, Master!" Zhuang Chen called out sincerely.

He was never one for many thoughts; he remembered kindness shown to him and was grateful to repay it.

Taoist Longshan smiled and waved his hand:

"There's no need for such formality between master and disciple."

Seeing that Taoist Longshan was about to leave.

Zhuang Chen remembered something and quickly said:

"Master, before my First Master passed, he instructed me to give you the Sword Saint inheritance he had obtained."

After burying the Divine Sword Old Man, he had fallen unconscious. Only now did he have the chance to see Taoist Longshan again, and from what he just heard, it seemed that Taoist Longshan would be leaving the mountain again for a while.

Taoist Longshan was startled. If Zhuang Chen hadn't mentioned it, he almost forgot about it.

He didn't turn back, only smiled and said:

"You should tell your Ninth Senior Brother."

Zhuang Chen stared blankly at the back of Taoist Longshan, feeling even more at ease, with a hint of reverence rising in his eyes.

...

The next day.

Taoist Longshan quietly descended the mountain. This time, he did not make a grand exit or cause a stir. Apart from a few True Disciples, even the other members of the True Martial Sect were unaware that Taoist Longshan had already left the mountain.

Inside the Seeking Tao Institute.

Ning Qi was still assisting Zhuang Chen in reversing the Innate Sword Body Secret Technique.

After several days of training, Zhuang Chen had gradually become accustomed to the intense pain. Although he was still quite battered, he was able to endure for increasingly longer periods. This was a unique kind of training for Zhuang Chen, and now his eyes were sharp, like a sword ready to be unsheathed, completely different from before.

It wasn't until Zhuang Chen collapsed, convulsing on the ground, that Ning Qi stopped.

In his eyes, there was a trace of approval:

"Shi, with the power of your newly reborn Sword Bone, you should be able to run the Innate Sword Body Secret Technique independently. After a month, your Sword Bone will naturally fully awaken, and it may even be stronger than before."

Ning Qi was no longer worried about the rest. Now that the most painful stage had been endured, reversing the Secret Technique with one's own power would become easier, requiring only patience.

Zhuang Chen's eyes were full of gratitude.

But he didn't express it verbally, only holding it in his heart. During this time spent with his Master and senior brothers and sisters, he learned not to be overly polite, to remember the kindness in his heart and repay it later.

Zhuang Chen began to adjust his breathing.

After a moment.

He looked at Ning Qi and said:

"Ninth Senior Brother, I have finished adjusting my breathing, now I can tell you about my First Master's Sword Saint inheritance!"

He felt no reluctance, as Ning Qi had been selfless to him, and he would not hold back anything. This might be the only thing he could do to help Ning Qi at this stage.

Ning Qi nodded with a smile:

"Alright."

There was a bit of anticipation in his eyes.

Although the Sword Saint inheritance obtained by the Divine Sword Old Man was incomplete, it might still provide some insights for him.

Chapter 124: Great Gains

The Sword Saint is an unparalleled expert who has reached the level of a Martial Saint in the Sword Dao.

However, in the current era, it's been a long time since a Sword Saint of this caliber has emerged. The Great Yan Martial Saints are not known for their swordsmanship. Ning Qi speculated that the incomplete Sword Saint inheritance that the Divine Sword Old Man received must have been left by a Sword Saint from long ago.

Zhuang Chen began to recall what the Divine Sword Old Man had taught him. Ever since he stepped into the Inner Essence Realm, the Divine Sword Old Man had gradually taught him the Sword Saint inheritance he received. During their escape, he even passed on the remaining essence to him.

Fortunately, Zhuang Chen had the Innate Sword Bone, giving him a unique understanding of the Sword Dao, allowing him to remember everything.

At this moment.

He gathered his thoughts and began to speak slowly:

"The Sword Saint inheritance that the master received was passed down from a predecessor named the Cyan Blade Sword Saint, which includes several cultivation secret techniques such as Cyan Blade Strength, Cyan Blade Gang, and Cyan Blade Secret Record. Besides these, there are also some sword path secret techniques used for combat."

He first gave a general overview of the contents of the Sword Saint inheritance, then began to speak in detail starting with Cyan Blade Strength.

Ning Qi listened attentively.

He suddenly gained a deeper understanding of the sword.

The True Martial Sect also has ultimate skills in the Sword Dao, but they are clearly not as intricate. This excellently filled the gaps in Ning Qi's knowledge.

Long before, Ning Qi understood that not everyone who holds a sword can be called a swordsman. In fact, a significant part of those in the Martial Realm are not qualified swordsmen, the key lies in Sword Strength and Sword Gang.

Strictly speaking, only Martial Artists who have achieved Great Success in the Inner Essence Realm and have mastered Sword Strength can be considered swordsmen.

After achieving Great Success in the Inner Essence Realm, one can transfer strength, and those who cultivate Sword Strength exhibit unparalleled sharpness when striking, far surpassing ordinary sword users. Sword Strength is an extremely potent attribute of Inner Strength. This Cyan Blade Strength is especially outstanding in the realm of sharpness.

"To capture the essence of the three-foot cyan blade, straight to the core of the sword's sharpness, truly worthy of the Sword Saint inheritance."

Just from listening, Ning Qi already gained some insight.

His internal Gang Qi transformed, already carrying with it the unmatched sharpness. For Ning Qi, learning ready-made skills was extremely simple, as he already knew other methods of Sword Strength and Sword Gang. Now, after absorbing the essence of Cyan Blade Gang, the transformation was effortless, and the power became even stronger.

Undeniably.

Next, if Ning Qi were to use Heavenly Sword Technique and other secret techniques, their power would be enhanced further.

A smile naturally appeared on his face.

Even after Zhuang Chen finished describing the Cyan Blade Secret Record, Ning Qi still felt unsatisfied and couldn't help but ask:

"Did the Cyan Blade Sword Saint not leave any Martial Saint cultivation method?"

With this inheritance added, Ning Qi already possessed three Celestial Being inheritances, but the Martial Saint methods remained at a superficial explanatory level.

Zhuang Chen scratched his head apologetically.

"The master previously told me that the Sword Saint inheritance he obtained only contained this, the most crucial part being erased."

Ning Qi furrowed his brow slightly.

However, he soon understood, as this was normal. Otherwise, if a complete Martial Saint cultivation method existed, even a rumor of it would be enough to cause the Divine Sword Sect to be destroyed countless times.

"But the master mentioned that at the end of the Cyan Blade Secret Record, there is an annotation that says, to achieve Martial Saint, one must absorb the Power of Heaven and Earth for personal use."

Ning Qi's eyes brightened.

This coincided with the direction he had been deducing.

The Celestial Human Realm cultivates the Three Flowers of Essence, Qi, and Spirit; Three Flowers Gathering at the Top leads to Celestial Being Perfection. If one were to go further, perhaps it involves absorbing the Power of Heaven and Earth into the body. This was a direction he considered, but he currently had no way to confirm it until he stepped into the Celestial Human Realm for further deduction.

"However, why add such an annotation after erasing the Martial Saint cultivation method?"

"If unwilling to let the Martial Saint method spread in the world, the annotation seems redundant. If wishing to leave behind the Martial Saint method, why erase it? This seems to imply a certain kind of inner conflict?"

"Could it be that advancing to Martial Saint involves some kind of unknown crisis, causing previous Martial Saints to be unwilling or unable to pass down Martial Saint techniques?"

Ning Qi speculated, but he was not overly obsessed.

When the time comes and he gradually reaches that realm, he will naturally come to understand.

"Ninth Senior Brother, shall I continue speaking about other secret techniques?" Zhuang Chen asked.

Ning Qi came back to himself, smiling and nodding.

Zhuang Chen continued:

"Aside from previously recorded cultivation secret techniques, there are other ultimate skill secret techniques used for combat."

"For instance, the Divine Sword Step. This step uses the body as a sword, stepping as if striking, unstoppable..."

Zhuang Chen spoke slowly.

Several secret techniques among them made Ning Qi's eyes brighten, significantly enriching his foundation.

But what moved him the most was the last secret technique Zhuang Chen spoke of.

Zhuang Chen's expression dimmed slightly as he said:

"The last secret technique is the Sword Pill Dissolving Technique, nourishing the Primordial Core with Sword Gang daily to form a Sword Pill, which can burst forth with several times the combat power at critical moments. But it is a fighting method with no survival, only death; it was this technique that the master used to bring me to escape to safety..."

Ning Qi sighed softly, merely patting his shoulder.

It was already nightfall.

The Sword Saint inheritance contained extensive knowledge; Zhuang Chen now only chose the essence to speak to Ning Qi. After Zhuang Chen was free, he would transcribe them into scrolls and place them in the Scripture Pavilion.

Zhuang Chen returned to his room to rest.

Ning Qi, meanwhile, reflected on the Cyan Blade Sword Saint inheritance he had just received.

"Though it's merely an incomplete inheritance, a Sword Saint is still a Sword Saint, having unique insights into the cultivation path. It helps me a lot, better than the Dragon, Tiger, and Eagle inheritance I received from Iron Ridge Three Fierce before."

Chapter 125: Great Gains_2

"Especially this Sword Pill Dissolving Technique is very interesting."

Ning Qi was very intrigued.

Without a doubt, this is a secret technique for explosive growth, used at critical moments, it can increase combat power several times.

However, the cost is somewhat high.

"If I could reduce this cost, it might become a major trump card for me."

Although Ning Qi seeks the path to immortality, he would not mind having excessively strong combat power. Moreover, in these increasingly chaotic times, having enough martial strength to safeguard one's path brings a greater sense of security. Even though Ning Qi already has strength ranking high on the Celestial Being List, it is still not enough.

"I haven't advanced to the Primordial Core Realm yet, so even if I want to use this secret technique, I can't for the time being."

"But there's a way. The Fake Pill within me still has seventy percent energy remaining. Could it substitute the Primordial Core? Or perhaps, can I construct a 'Virtual Sword Pill' specifically for explosive growth?"

Sparks of inspiration kept rising in Ning Qi's mind.

In the blink of an eye, he had devised two approaches.

Now, Ning Qi's own strength is already sufficiently powerful; the enhancement from the Fake Pill has decreased significantly unless he replaced it with a stronger Fake Pill. Therefore, using this Fake Pill as a substitute for the Sword Pill Dissolving Technique doesn't trouble him.

Moreover, Ning Qi's Gang Qi is extremely vast, far surpassing ordinary people.

Segmenting a portion to condense a 'Virtual Sword Pill' would have no impact on him, which others cannot achieve.

Ning Qi felt both plans were feasible and enthusiastically began in-depth deduction.

...

Time passed.

Taoist Longshan was secretly investigating at the foot of the mountain, keeping constant contact with True Martial Mountain. Ning Qi was patient, understanding that it might not be a matter of a few days to find out, even with some direction it would still take some slips from the other side.

But he was not worried, judging from the conduct of people here, it definitely wouldn't be long.

To catch them red-handed is only a matter of time.

Ning Qi continued his growth, not letting this issue cause a halt in his stride, merely a minor episode on his path of seeking.

During this period.

Zhuang Chen moved out of the Seeking Tao Institute after recovering from injuries.

This was quite normal, after all, each True Disciple of True Martial Sect had their own private residence, just like the one that was built for Ning Qi at the Seeking Tao Institute in those days, a group of senior and junior brothers also helped Zhuang Chen build a courtyard.

Zhuang Chen named it Inquiring Sword Institute.

He indeed passionately loves Sword Dao, hoping to be able to occasionally question his Sword Heart and forge ahead in Sword Dao.

The Inquiring Sword Institute is quite close to the Seeking Tao Institute, since Zhuang Chen and Ning Qi have the best relationship. He deeply admired this Ninth Senior Brother, as before entering True Martial Sect, Ning Qi already taught him a move of swordsmanship and the Secret Technique of Innate Sword Body.

This short period of being close to Ning Qi made Zhuang Chen perceive Ninth Senior Brother's unfathomableness, silently taking Ning Qi as his goal, striving to catch up.

However, the process is bound to be lengthy, his Sword Bone recovery would require some time, then starting cultivation anew, but with previous foundations, relearning would be much faster.

After Zhuang Chen moved out.

The Seeking Tao Institute became much quieter again, the White Ape, now and again, would seek Zhuang Chen, guiding him through True Martial Sect's garden paths. Unintentionally, the relationship between this person and ape became increasingly close, though Ning Qi often witnessed their bickering scenes, causing him to smile inadvertently.

In the blink of an eye, more than a month had passed.

Ning Qi's Jade Liquid Sea within his body grew even more strong. His so-called slow cultivation was relative only to himself, but compared to other Jade Liquid Realm individuals, it was like thousands of miles a day.

At this moment.

Through Zhuang Chen's relentless endeavors, his Sword Bone had completely revived.

Ning Qi was examining him.

Strands of Gang Qi, under Ning Qi's manipulation, moved agilely without any aggression, and only Myriad Phenomena True Gang could achieve such, leaving no blind spot unattended.

After a moment.

Ning Qi smiled and said:

"Tenth Junior Brother, your Sword Bone has completely revived, you can resume martial practice."

Upon receiving Ning Qi's affirmative response, Zhuang Chen relaxed completely from his previous tension, the excitement evident, only he knew how restless he had felt in those days.

If he truly could not cultivate again, he'd be unaware of where to go next.

Gathered around were Luo Wentian, Ye Qinghe, and others who laughed heartily.

The genuine joy of everyone made Zhuang Chen even more excited.

After the laughter died out, Luo Wentian spoke:

"Shi, now you can continue cultivating as well. Before Master left the mountain, he instructed me to have you train in the Vengeance Stance, one of the True Martial Nine Stances, as a foundation."

Upon hearing this.

Everyone's expression grew slightly complex.

The Vengeance Stance was learned by Qin Yun back then; ever since Qin Yun left True Martial Sect, the True Martial Nine Sons missed one member, and the beautiful hope of the 'Nine Great Celestial Beings Battle Martial Saint' was entirely dashed.

All along, this was a knot in Taoist Longshan's heart, and consequently, he hadn't taken in new disciples.

Upon receiving the Divine Sword Old Man's bed-side plea, it was considered as resolving Taoist Longshan's inner conflict.

However.

Everyone roughly understood Master's intentions, particularly regarding Qin Yun's matter, it was more about self-reproach than disappointment with Qin Yun. Accepting Zhuang Chen as the tenth disciple, it was evident; the eighth position has been vacant.

Thankfully, now Zhuang Chen has entered the sect, the Vengeance Stance has once again someone to inherit.

Zhuang Chen quickly nodded and said:

"I shall listen to Master."

He had heard about the matter with the eighth senior brother, not being foolish, seeing the emotions of senior brothers and sisters now he somewhat understood.

Ning Qi jovially broke the quiet atmosphere:

"I know the Vengeance Stance, I will teach you later, the other Stances in the True Martial Nine Stances, you can learn those too if you wish, as for the Cyan Blade Sword Saint's heritage, you can cultivate that as well, the two do not conflict."

Ye Qinghe also laughed and said:

"Indeed, Little Jiu should teach, we only grasp the basics of the Vengeance Stance. Now that Master isn't on the mountain, he is the one to teach."

Everyone recalled back to Ning Qi's monstrous display upon initially learning Stance Skill, sharing an understanding smile.

In the blink of an eye.

It had been six years ago.

Everyone felt a myriad of emotions.

Zhuang Chen did not understand why, just foolishly grinned, scratching his head.

Seeing the quivering fat on Zhuang Chen's body, Ning Qi suddenly thought that Zhuang Chen should not continue cultivating the Dreaming Gluttony secret technique, otherwise he'd turn into a mountain of meat, quite unsightly. Now that Zhuang Chen's his junior brother he would take some interest, optimize it a little would be better.

Later he might arrange for Zhuang Chen to practice Sleep Dream Skill together.

...

Zhuang Chen had great comprehension.

Training in the Vengeance Stance, he quickly mastered it and became adept.

Retracing his original path, Zhuang Chen's cultivation accelerated rapidly.

And once Zhuang Chen's cultivation undeniably entered the proper track, Ning Qi resumed deducing a more optimal version of the Sword Pill Dissolving Technique.

In these recent days.

Aside from cultivation and studying texts, a substantial portion of Ning Qi's energy was spent on this secret technique.

Now nearing completion.

Within Ning Qi's body.

The Jade Liquid Sea surged and roared, occasionally throwing up a splash, each exceedingly pure Gang Qi.

"The two previously deduced possibilities were excellent, each with its advantages and drawbacks, but using the Fake Pill to substitute the Sword Pill posed higher difficulty. I'll first attempt to condense a Virtual Sword Pill; thereafter substituting the Fake Pill involves only altering some parts."

His heart was stirred, Myriad Phenomena True Gang operated, with part of the Gang Qi already transformed into strands of unmatched keen Sword Gang, amalgamating characteristics of several Sword Gangs, prominently Cyan Blade Gang.

Strands of Sword Gang soared upwards, coalescing under Ning Qi's manipulation above the Jade Liquid Sea.

Incorporating elements cleverly derived from the Heaven and Earth Grinding Wheel through Quenching Gang Technique, each motion of Sword Gang began to condense, shortly forming a spherical shape.

And then continuing to condense, condense, condense.

Finally.

It formed into an incomparably round Sword Pill.

This Sword Pill couldn't be compared with the Primordial Core Ning Qi would achieve eventually, but it still greatly surpassed typical Primordial Core Realm experts!

Ning Qi observed within himself.

The Sword Pill hung high above the Jade Liquid Sea, resembling a giant sun.

He could feel the formidable power it contained, but the Sword Pill's primary function was explosive growth. Once detonated, it would stir the Jade Liquid Sea, enabling Ning Qi to unleash multiplied strength instantly!

Ning Qi smiled contentedly.

In this way, the Virtual Sword Pill Dissolution Technique was considered achieved.

Though its might was somewhat lesser, mainly due to Ning Qi's overwhelming base strength, and the cost was considerably smaller than that of the Sword Pill Dissolving Technique; upon detonation, the most he'd suffer would be internal injuries, recoverable after a period, far from shattering the Primordial Core bringing demise.

Chapter 126: Seedling Breaking Through the Soil

For Ning Qi.

The greatest need is not to maximize power but to minimize side effects, ensuring it doesn't affect his future and foundation.

This Virtual Sword Pill Dissolution Technique is just perfect now.

"This Virtual Sword Pill Dissolution Technique can be used as a small ace up the sleeve, reusable, but each use requires healing before spending a little time to condense a new Sword Pill."

Ning Qi's positioning is very clear.

But this is not the only result of this enlightenment.

His perception moved upwards, landing on the Fake Pill beating continuously in his heart.

During the process of condensing the Sword Pill earlier, he also cleared the last obstacle and created the Fake Pill Dissolution Technique.

Just a little surge of Gang Qi, the Fake Pill shatters, capable of unleashing even more terrifying power.

This is much stronger than the Virtual Sword Pill. Ning Qi estimates it can amplify his current combat power by about threefold, but the side effects will also be much greater, possibly causing severe injuries. Although it won't destroy the foundation, recuperating for half a year is inevitable.

This is the ultimate ace.

Ning Qi wouldn't use it unless absolutely necessary since he can't afford to waste half a year on recovery.

"The Fake Pill Dissolution Technique and the Fake Pill Co-Heaven Technique can be recorded together as a series of Secret Techniques."

Ning Qi thought, a smile appearing at the corner of his mouth.

With these two Dissolution Techniques, his sense of security increased a bit more.

Now.

Just wait to trace the Blood Rain Tower's whereabouts, then he can completely resolve the events of the past once and for all.

...

The spring breeze blew softly, and flowers bloomed on True Martial Mountain.

Zhuang Chen has gradually integrated into the True Martial Sect, and the outer and inner sect disciples all know there is an additional Tenth Senior Brother. Ye Qinghe was even more delighted because she gained a drinking companion. She found that Zhuang Chen was also quite interested in wine, so she took him to share the fine wines collected over the years, and even brewed Peach Blossom Brew together.

For a time.

The combination of Ye Qinghe, Zhuang Chen, and Yuan Tiancheng—two people and an ape—became quite the unruly presence in the True Martial Sect, often causing chaos and commotion.

Only Luo Wentian and Ning Qi could suppress these three.

However, seeing Zhuang Chen integrating so quickly, everyone was inwardly very pleased.

People should remember their grudges but shouldn't live in hatred. A pure heart clearly distinguishes grievances, and sometimes when thoughts are pure, one won't be affected.

In the blink of an eye.

Three months have passed since the Divine Sword Sect was exterminated.

Outside the Seeking Tao Institute, peach blossoms were in full bloom.

Taoist Longshan occasionally sent back messages.

Since last month, there have been some traces of the Southern Border forces emerging, but it's just a small movement, still probing. Taoist Longshan was very patient and didn't alert the enemy. Only when enough influential individuals appear would he close the net.

Ning Qi was somewhat anticipating, as that would be the time for him to descend the mountain.

But now, he still has to wait.

After digesting the Cyan Blade Sword Saint's inheritance, Ning Qi returned to his usual cultivation and scripture reading.

The Taoist Scripture sent by the True Profound Sect was being absorbed at a very fast rate, with less than half unread now.

And cultivation also went very smoothly.

Advancing with a firm stride.

Ning Qi's Jade Liquid Sea became increasingly vast and deep; it's hard to imagine what kind of terror such a vast Jade Liquid Sea would form if condensed into a Primordial Core.

Besides, there was another matter he was looking forward to.

The Enlightenment Tea Tree.

In recent days, Ning Qi could feel the Enlightenment Tea Tree seed becoming more and more active. The flesh of the Demon Sect Celestial Being realm expert caused it to undergo an extraordinary change. Combined with Ning Qi's cultivation method, it genuinely seemed to come to life, on the verge of breaking through the soil.

At this moment.

Nine pairs of eyes were fixed intently on that soil.

Little chubby Zhuang Chen and the White Ape were even lying on the ground, their eyes level with the ground. However, the White Ape's actions were obviously more nimble, while Zhuang Chen's belly pressed against the soil, looking somewhat comical.

Yesterday Ning Qi casually mentioned that the Enlightenment Tea Tree seed might be sprouting, and this morning, all the fellow disciples came, claiming they wanted to witness the sprouting of the Enlightenment Tea Tree seed, leading to the current scene.

They had been watching for a whole two-hour, and by the look of things, they would continue watching.

Ning Qi couldn't help but shake his head and chuckle, shifting his gaze back to the Taoist Scripture in his hands.

Although the seed's spirit had reached its peak of activity, who knew when it would break through the soil? He didn't want to waste this time.

But moments later.

Ning Qi's eyes revealed an expression of surprise. He put down the Taoist Scripture in his hands and looked at that soil.

Joyful exclamations were already coming through:

"It's out! It's out!"

"The Enlightenment Tea Tree really sprouted! Jiu, come and see!"

In the sight of the eyes.

A young seedling broke through the soil, its growth not fast, but steadfast and resilient, evoking an inexplicable emotion in those who saw it. Ning Qi felt a subtle touch in his heart, perceiving a certain taste of life on the Enlightenment Tea Tree seedling.

The crowd gazed in awe.

Under the nourishment of spirit, the seedling grew at an astonishing rate. In a blink of an eye, it was already the size of two palms, its entire trunk appearing reddish-brown, with several small branches faintly visible as bulges.

Everyone was excited, marveling at the miracle of life they had witnessed.

Zhuang Chen chuckled foolishly:

"In two years, we might be able to taste the Enlightenment Tea!"

Everyone chuckled.

They all looked at Ning Qi and saw him in a trance, seemingly having gained insight. The crowd quieted down, secretly amazed by Ning Qi's extraordinary perceptiveness.

Everyone watched the Enlightenment Tea Tree seedling break through the soil together. Others merely found it intriguing without any deep insight, but Ning Qi saw a different essence.

A moment later.

Ning Qi came back to his senses.

Indeed, he had gained enlightenment, but hadn't developed any Secret Technique or Ultimate Skill from it. He simply consolidated the life rhythm he sensed in the process of the seedling breaking through the soil. This served as solid grounding, which might be useful for something in the future.

He had spent many years reading scriptures in this way, accumulating foundation, so when creating techniques he could draw upon it effortlessly.

This time the inspiration was particularly strong, and he would attempt to utilize this life rhythm in the future.

Ning Qi had a premonition that frequently observing the Enlightenment Tea Tree could be notably beneficial.

But for now, the tea tree needed to grow.

He smiled and said:

"Let's strive to have it grow a few tea leaves within two years, so that during the True Martial Peach Assembly we can all taste it together."

Ning Qi was confident.

The hardest part is starting, and the most difficult step has been completed; the remaining cultivation is just a matter of course.

He was curious whether the effect of the Enlightenment Tea was as legendary as rumored, and he wanted to see if the Enlightenment Tea Tree could provide additional enhancement to himself.

The crowd all cheered.

Especially Zhuang Chen, whose mouth was almost watering; he had long heard Ye Qinghe speak of the True Martial Peach Assembly shared only among the True Inheritors, and he was tremendously looking forward to the True Martial Peach Fruit. Now, with the addition of the Enlightenment Tea, his anticipation grew even more.

...

Another month passed.

Peach blossoms gradually wilted, and peach fruit began to form.

Numerous True Inheritors already started anticipating the True Martial Peach Assembly, and unless urgent matters arose, they would often descend the mountain for an extended period of training after the assembly each year.

But before the True Martial Peach Assembly arrived.

Taoist Longshan brought news.

The Southern Border forces finally showed significant activity!

To prevent leaks, Taoist Longshan personally returned to True Martial Mountain.

"It's the 'Lei' among the 'Wind, Rain, Thunder, and Lightning' quartet from the Blood Rain Tower!"

Taoist Longshan's first sentence made Ning Qi's spirit tremble.

This was the closest they had come to the killer. After years of investigating, they believed that the 'Lord Wind' who massacred Snow Plum Manor was more than ninety percent likely to be 'Wind' of the 'Wind, Rain, Thunder, and Lightning' quartet. Now, having found 'Lei', 'Wind' wouldn't be far behind.

A fleeting cold flash appeared in Ning Qi's eyes, then he calmly asked:

"Where is he?"

Taoist Longshan gestured for Ning Qi to remain calm, then slowly began:

"During this time of investigation, the nameless force that massacred Divine Sword Sect has instead fallen silent. But Jiu's intelligence from that night raid was correct; the Blood Rain Tower and the nameless force are indeed acting together. Soon after, movements from the Blood Rain Tower began to become active."

"Initially, only some bronze and silver rank assassins were being dispatched, but this time, a gold rank assassin is involved."

"I have learned that in seven days, the two major forces in Canghe Prefecture City will clash, and the Iron Fist Gang has paid dearly to invite 'Lei' to assassinate the head of Black Wind Thieves. If successful, they plan to take away all bodies of Black Wind Thieves."

"During these days, they have been extremely cautious, mostly using similar methods to collect Martial Artist bodies. If we hadn't known about the trick, ordinary people wouldn't notice!"

Taoist Longshan coldly snorted.

During this time, he had been biding his time, long prepared to catch these people in one fell swoop.

It was precisely because there were seven days that he made a special trip back to True Martial Mountain.

Ning Qi listened and understood.

Following the trail of 'Lei', they would certainly be able to uncover the Blood Rain Tower and even the forces behind it, as long as this lead didn't break, which would alert the adversary. Therefore, this operation was very crucial.

However, Ning Qi had confidence.

The strength and methods he possessed now were far beyond what others could imagine.

"Jiu, are you prepared?" Taoist Longshan asked.

Ning Qi smiled calmly and nodded:

"Naturally."

During this period, he had dedicated substantial efforts to various Secret Techniques like tracking, Concealing Breath, and Pupil Technique.

The blade was long sharpened.

Chapter 127: Following the Clues and Catching Them All

Upon seeing Ning Qi fully prepared, Taoist Longshan felt relieved and sternly said:

"That's good. Then you and I, master and disciple, will go down the mountain together, unite our efforts, and strive to eradicate these scourges once and for all!"

But Ning Qi slowly shook his head and said:

"No, I am enough on my own. Master, you should stay on True Martial Mountain."

Taoist Longshan was startled.

Ning Qi explained with a smile:

"If you and I go together, won't True Martial Mountain be without someone to guard it? Although the Demon Sect is quiet now, just in case, it would be better to have a Celestial Human Realm expert guarding True Martial Mountain. Moreover, we don't know if those Southern Border forces will dare to venture up the mountain again."

"Besides, going after the gold-tier assassin 'Lei' does not require a large number of people; it's mainly about tracking and understanding the traces. I know some tracking and transformation techniques, and being alone will be more flexible."

He didn't mention another thing.

With Ning Qi's current strength, if he couldn't complete it, adding Taoist Longshan wouldn't help either.

If they really encounter some unbeatable enemy, Ning Qi could escape using various methods, but if Taoist Longshan were there, it might lead to a deadly confrontation, so going alone is actually the best choice.

Taoist Longshan hesitated slightly; Ning Qi's reasoning had some merit, but long ago, he had promised Ning Qi to help him eradicate the Blood Rain Tower together.

Of course, his foremost concern was Ning Qi's safety alone.

"Although, Jiu, your strength now surpasses mine, if I go together, there will be some mutual support. Behind these Southern Border forces, there's almost certainly a Celestial Human Realm expert." He was still somewhat uneasy.

Ning Qi just smiled.

The next moment.

Inside, the Jade Liquid Sea trembled, strands of Gang Qi vibrating and surrounding them.

Taoist Longshan's expression changed slightly, quickly mobilized the Power of Heaven and Earth to resist the pressure, but no matter how hard he tried, the terrifying Gang Qi remained overwhelmingly strong, with an unfathomable feeling.

Even when he exerted himself fully, Ning Qi remained calm.

Taoist Longshan finally chuckled and waved:

"Alright, alright, Jiu, be careful yourself."

His heart was a mix of bitterness and pride.

Just last year, he measured Ning Qi's strength using the Power of Heaven and Earth; now it was Ning Qi measuring his Power of Heaven and Earth strength with Gang Qi, their roles switched so quickly, catching him off guard.

He understood.

With his disciple's current strength, forcing himself to accompany would not be helpful and might even hinder.

Thinking this way.

Taoist Longshan no longer insisted, as Ning Qi said, staying on True Martial Mountain would ensure its safety further.

Ning Qi nodded with a smile:

"Rest assured, Master, I cherish my life more than anyone."

Taoist Longshan added:

"If convenient, kill the perpetrator who exterminated the Divine Sword Sect as well; consider it a solace for Brother Divine Sword's spirit in heaven."

Ning Qi nodded solemnly.

He intended to do just that.

...

The next day.

Ning Qi announced he was secluding himself, but secretly, he went down the mountain. No one knew except Taoist Longshan.

At this moment.

Ning Qi transformed into a middle-aged man in black, walking along the bluestone streets, feeling the bustling crowd and the lively atmosphere, he couldn't help but reflect.

He had traveled to this world for nine years.

Strictly speaking, this was the first time he ventured so far from True Martial Mountain; the furthest he had been before was True Martial City.

Though initially fresh,

after several more rounds around the area, Ning Qi felt it was just so; he wouldn't let the worldly splendor shake his path. This journey down the mountain was merely to settle old matters from nine years ago.

Determining the direction of Canghe Prefecture City, Ning Qi took to the air unnoticed.

...

Canghe Prefecture City.

A famed prefecture city within Qing State, its prosperity ranks among the top five in Qing State, with intertwined forces inside. Besides the government, there are several top-tier forces, among which is the Iron Fist Gang.

Ning Qi found an inn and sat down. Now a seemingly ordinary man, his presence was not strong and barely attracted attention.

After casually ordering some small dishes, Ning Qi sensed the surroundings, gathering information he desired.

"Hey, have you heard? The Grand Elder's son of Iron Fist Sect was kidnapped by the Black Wind Thieves, and that old man's beloved son was humiliated to death..."

"Such a thing happened? Aren't the two forces set to clash?"

"Indeed, I heard they've tried to negotiate several times, but each ended in failure, eventually heating up the conflict. Iron Fist Sect already declared they would annihilate the Black Wind Thieves completely!"

"With Black Wind Mountain's perilous location, it might not be so easy to eliminate them, right?"

...

Ning Qi listened, somewhat surprised.

In just two or three days, the confrontation between two top-tier forces was evidently brought to light.

Clearly.

Someone was stirring up the trouble.

It might involve some forces' overt and covert struggles, possibly involving Demon Sect and the government's influence.

But Ning Qi was indifferent; with his current strength, struggles among Gang Essence Realm rivals were child's play.

The Great Yan is vast.

Celestial Human Realm experts don't appear easily.

"Since 'Lei's target is the leader of the Black Wind Thieves, I'll wait at the Black Wind Thieves in advance."

Ning Qi's plan was simple.

Chapter 128: Following the Clues and Catching Them All_2

As long as we meet 'Lei', the rest will be easy to handle.

His Soul Capturing Eye Technique has improved further, now with the Power of Heaven and Earth to support it, it's sufficient to extract a lot of information. He doesn't think this 'Lei' would typically carry a Gu Insect like that woman used for suicide last time, otherwise, if he accidentally encountered a Celestial Being, wouldn't it be in vain?

People aren't that foolish. Those kinds of things are surely only used during missions with a high likelihood of death.

Ning Qi is not in a hurry.

Silently experiencing the prosperity of Canghe Prefecture City.

It's a rare trip down the mountain. While there's no attachment, experiencing it deeply is a change of mindset, which might provoke a different kind of inspiration for Enlightenment.

In a blink.

Another four days passed.

Ning Qi silently headed towards Black Wind Mountain.

During these days, he was not idle and had secretly familiarized himself with the terrain of Black Wind Mountain.

It was late at night.

He changed his appearance and concealed his breath, like a ghost, treading in the air from the perilous back cliff. He released his Perception, quietly waiting with a calm heart.

Soon after.

Suddenly, cries and shouts of killing erupted in the night sky.

"Dog Zhao, give me back the life of my son!"

A loud cry full of grief and fury started the night battle.

A hearty laugh was heard:

"Tsk tsk tsk, your son's flavor was indeed not bad. My brothers and I played with him for three days and nights; he was even tenderer than the courtesans of Snowflake House. What a pity, what a pity, if only he could last longer, maybe Old Man Sun could have seen for himself!"

Loud, unrestrained laughter echoed continuously.

One ferocious Martial Artist after another charged out.

New grudges and old hatreds, entangled interests.

The two forces were fiercely clashing in a treacherous spot, with other forces even placing bets.

Among them.

There were the most Martial Artists at the Body Tempering Realm, the Inner Essence Realm Martial Artists were the backbone, and a few Gang Essence Realm Martial Artists would decide the ultimate outcome of the battlefield.

Ning Qi just stood in the shadows watching, undetected by anyone.

With his current strength, watching this perilous battle was like watching children play, giving him the feeling of being a high-level player bullying novices in the newbie village.

He was waiting for 'Lei' to appear.

The gap between the two forces wasn't that big, only the appearance of the assassins from Blood Rain Tower could deliver a decisive blow.

The battle grew ever more intense.

Ning Qi was very patient.

Suddenly.

He raised an eyebrow, focusing on the most intense battleground, where the Iron Fist Sect Leader and the Black Wind Thieves' leader were locked in a struggle. In the shadows, a figure stealthily approached, unnoticed by anyone but Ning Qi.

"Here it comes!"

Just as this thought crossed Ning Qi's mind.

A killing intent suddenly appeared from the shadows, a long sword like lightning and thunder, stabbing towards the leader.

The Iron Fist Sect Leader seized the opportunity to unleash his full power.

With this two-pronged approach.

In just a brief moment, the Black Wind Thieves' leader was killed.

Everyone in the Black Wind Thieves was shocked, this sudden change threw them into chaos.

The following outcome needs no further elaboration.

With the addition of two Gang Essence Realm experts, and a new wave of black-clad reinforcements joining the fight, it was a one-sided massacre.

Screams echoed unceasingly.

Not long after.

The battle came to a complete halt.

Everyone in the Iron Fist Sect cheered.

But the Sect Leader and the Grand Elder looked at the black-clad assassins with a hint of apprehension:

"Many thanks for Lord Lei's assistance! Truly worthy of the Blood Rain Tower's gold-class assassins, renowned in Qing State, I am impressed!"

Lei's voice was emotionless, he simply said calmly:

"Just as agreed beforehand."

The Iron Fist Sect Leader nodded, feeling a bit of pain in his heart, as the price for hiring Blood Rain Tower's gold-class assassins was no small cost.

"Understood."

Moments later, the spoils of war were collected.

Everyone in the Iron Fist Sect departed, and once they reached the foot of the mountain, a great fire was set ablaze on Black Wind Mountain.

The Grand Elder was puzzled:

"Why is Blood Rain Tower setting a fire? Didn't they want Black Wind Mountain?"

The Iron Fist Sect took a deep gaze towards the mountain:

"Why worry about so much, the more you know, the faster you die, better deal less with these kinds of people in the future, they always seem a bit sinister."

...

On Black Wind Mountain.

The fire burned fiercely.

But it wasn't as the Iron Fist Sect thought, where everything was reduced to ash, instead the bodies of numerous Martial Artists were neatly arranged together.

'Lei's eyes were fervent as he gazed at the many bodies, feeling particularly delighted.

Among them, there were two or three bodies of Gang Essence Realm, one even reaching the Primordial Core Realm, with high quality.

Ever since they found out someone was secretly investigating, Blood Rain Tower had been acting cautiously, just looking for scraps here and there, finally finding an opportunity to take a big bite this time!

"Fearless of hunger, daring brings prosperity, with this achievement, the Blood Pool already has enough to let the Blood King Gu absorb again, those worthless things have no room to complain, they can't even destroy the Divine Sword Sect, and they dare blame us, they are unworthy!"

'Lei' felt a bit disdainful in his heart.

Taking advantage of the conflict between the two major forces to pull off a stealth move under the table, quietly bringing these bodies back, no one would find out, a big fire would erase all traces, and since this was a normal Martial Path Sect dispute, it wouldn't arouse any suspicion.

He commanded in a deep voice:

"Bring these bodies back!"

"Yes, Lord Lei!"

One by one, the black-clad assassins began to move, assured since the bodies had already received additional cuts.

The ready-prepared carts took the bodies away.

But they didn't know.

In the shadows, a calm gaze had been watching them all along.

Chapter 129: Following the Clues and Catching Everything in One Go_3

Ning Qi's expression was somewhat playful.

He originally planned to capture Lei directly, then use the pupil technique to interrogate him, and finally storm their lair.

But now, he had a better idea.

...

Lei sat upright in the carriage, closing his eyes to rest.

The recent slaughter had drained him somewhat, and for some reason, he constantly felt uneasy, yet he couldn't locate the source.

"Where are we now?" he asked in a deep voice.

A respectful voice came from outside the carriage:

"Sir, about one more two-hour to the base."

Lei took a deep breath.

He stepped out of the carriage.

He felt the need to relax his tense spirits.

"Take a break, check if any of the bodies are still alive."

With that said,

he walked alone into the dense forest.

As soon as he entered the forest, his gaze changed. Hiding in the shadows, his sharp eyes continuously scanned the busy men in black, occasionally perceiving his surroundings. He believed firmly in his instincts, which would never mislead him.

If someone truly were spying secretly,

either they would disguise themselves as a corpse or mix with the team, or shadow them from the dark.

He clearly knew that somebody had been secretly investigating them recently, so being overly cautious was never a bad thing.

But after watching for a while,

he found nothing, leaving him somewhat puzzled.

"Could it really be that I was mistaken?" Just as this thought arose in Lei's heart, his pupils contracted suddenly.

A mysterious voice whispered into his ears:

"Are you... looking for me?"

Lei was instantly gripped with horror, a chill racing to the top of his head, but he couldn't utter a sound. A large hand was clasped around his neck, terrible pressure enveloping every inch of his flesh and blood, and he even heard the groaning of his own muscles and bones.

No matter how vigilant he was, he couldn't escape this massive attack.

Ning Qi was too thorough for him.

Ning Qi watched the fierce-looking middle-aged man before him, his gaze as deep as a murky pool:

"Look into my eyes."

...

A moment later.

Lei emerged from the forest once more.

The many men in black greeted him respectfully:

"Sir, the inspection is complete, no problems found."

Lei nodded slightly.

He got into the carriage.

After the curtain was drawn, Lei's eyes became somewhat strange. No one knew that the real Lei had died in the forest without a trace, and the current Lei was Ning Qi in disguise.

With his mastery of body shifting and bone changing, even those who spent day and night with Lei couldn't discern a flaw.

Back in the forest,

Ning Qi was well-prepared and used the pupil technique to extract many answers he sought. Drawing on previous experiences of interrogating an enchanting woman, Ning Qi skillfully avoided asking certain forbidden questions this time.

Now armed with information about various secret codes, organizational structure, and whether there were masters behind the scenes, he had enough to temporarily disguise himself as Lei.

This was Ning Qi's new plan.

Killing them one by one would inevitably let some slip through, since these people didn't usually gather together, and if 'Master Feng' received word and managed to escape, it would be troublesome to track him down again.

But with Lei's identity, he could find an excuse to gather everyone together.

At that time,

it would be delightful to catch them all in one go.

Avoiding the needless waste of time.

"According to Lei, here in Qing State, there are mainly Blood Rain Tower and an unnamed power, and above them, there are two Celestial Human Realm masters, one called Fatty Elder and the other Skinny Elder."

"These two elders each have a Blood King Gu, and when there is a significant gain, one of the elders would usually be invited to bring the Blood King Gu over."

"As for what exactly the Blood King Gu is used for, only these two would know."

Ning Qi's eyes sparkled.

He had a hunch that the Blood King Gu might be very useful for him, potentially replacing relics in alchemy, not an unfounded suspicion, but inferred from the way the Blood King Gu was cultivated.

"A Gu insect nurtured by absorbing human blood essence must contain extremely abundant vital force."

In an instant, Ning Qi's interest was piqued even more.

If he could obtain these two Blood King Gu, it might significantly shorten his time to ascend to the Primordial Core.

Since he was already there, Ning Qi wouldn't miss the chance, seeing it as a side benefit while seeking revenge.

"That Fatty Elder seems a bit weaker, so let's use this opportunity to invite over Fatty Elder with the spoils, and then, under Fatty Elder's name, bring everyone else over!"

"Otherwise, directly summoning the others in Lei's identity might seem abrupt."

Ning Qi had formulated a plan in his mind.

The convoy moved swiftly forward.

After one two-hour.

They arrived at the base.

The base was deeply hidden within a valley, heavily guarded from the shadows, and the carriages loaded with bodies underwent rigorous inspection, even Ning Qi was checked.

However, Ning Qi's mastery of body shifting and bone changing was extraordinary, and none could detect any anomalies.

Upon entering the valley,

the group began transporting the bodies into the underground palace.

Subsequently, they reached the deepest part of the underground palace.

Ning Qi looked at the blood pool before him, a surge of killing intent rising in his heart.

It was hard to imagine how many had perished here.

The likes of the Black Wind Thieves being slaughtered hardly mattered, but most of them were likely innocents.

The stench of blood in the blood pool was overwhelming. Besides human blood, many precious herbs were added. Ning Qi only had to sniff lightly to identify a few of them. He watched as bodies were thrown into the blood pool, bubbling as they gradually dissolved, appearing especially sinister.

As powerful martial artist corpses were thrown in, the eerie vitality in the blood pool grew even denser, turning the pool a clear hue.

Chapter 130: Following the Clues and Catching Them All_4

It seems to have reached some kind of limit.

The surrounding confidants all knelt and shouted in unison:

"Congratulations, my lord! May my lord be blessed with rewards! With this success, you will surely receive great rewards from the two Elders!"

Ning Qi laughed heartily and waved his hand:

"Someone, quickly send a message to invite the Fatty Elder!"

There was some anticipation in his eyes.

...

In the stronghold.

Ning Qi was alone.

Even with the Body Shifting and Bone Changing technique, there was still the possibility of saying too much and making mistakes.

He silently awaited the arrival of the Fatty Elder.

The blood pool reaching its limit is a normal procedure, and that Fatty Elder wouldn't have any suspicions.

One day later.

A figure appeared above the stronghold, treading on air as they approached.

This figure had his hands behind his back, a fat head and big ears, fair skin, and a certain arrogance in his eyes. Ning Qi had already brought a group of subordinates waiting here, secretly observing the Fatty Elder, sensing his aura.

"Just an ordinary Celestial Human Realm, probably with strength on par with the Carefree Monarch."

With thoughts turning in his mind, his actions did not slow.

"We have met the Fatty Elder!"

The Fatty Elder snorted lightly through his nose in response, his gaze stopping on Ning Qi, finally praising him:

"Lei, you've done well. If you keep it up, I will recommend you to become the Blood Rain Tower Master."

Since its establishment, the position of Tower Master has always been vacant, making the four top assassins very envious.

Ning Qi feigned an appearance of being ecstatic yet striving to restrain himself:

"To serve the Elder is my duty; I dare not aspire for anything more!"

The Fatty Elder waved his hand casually:

"Take me to the blood pool."

Ning Qi hurriedly led the way.

They entered the deepest part of the underground palace where the blood pool was located, while the others all respectfully withdrew. The door closed, leaving only Ning Qi and the Fatty Elder.

It was routine; others only knew to collect blood for the pool but did not know its purpose. Only core experts of the Primordial Core Realm knew of the Blood King Gu's existence.

The Fatty Elder surveyed the blood pool in front of him, teeming with a dark and vibrant life force, his eyes burning with intense eagerness.

"Good! Well done! Much better than Zhao Dong and those useless ones!"

He did not hold back his praise.

Ning Qi hurriedly complimented in return.

Then.

He saw the Fatty Elder carefully take out a bamboo tube from his bosom. This bamboo tube was unique, looking like it was made of purple jade, seemingly having a nourishing effect.

The Fatty Elder muttered rapidly under his breath, speaking in a language that was not the Great Yan Official Language.

Ning Qi's spirit was stirred, listening carefully to the variations in his syllables and paying attention to the fluctuations in his aura, gaining some understanding in his heart that this should be the Gu Manipulation Technique, which wasn't difficult.

Then a Gu insect, entirely blood-red, lazily crawled out from the purple jade bamboo tube.

He saw it clearly.

The Gu insect was about the size of an adult's thumb, as if made of blood-colored agate, with strange patterns on its back resembling eyes, and it had three pairs of transparent wings, though the last pair looked somewhat weak and small.

"Is this the Blood King Gu?"

As soon as the Blood King Gu appeared, the abundant life force it emitted made Ning Qi's eyes light up.

He knew his speculation was correct; this was definitely an excellent substitute for a relic, even more effective than a relic.

At this moment.

The previously lazy Blood King Gu, once it emerged, seemed attracted by the dark life force within the blood pool, immediately becoming active.

With a shake of its wings, it had already landed in the blood pool.

Then it delved deeper.

Ning Qi could feel the previously dark life force in the blood pool weakening at a rate visible to the naked eye, being consumed by the Blood King Gu. Although he couldn't see the Blood King Gu, Ning Qi could feel the burgeoning life force within it, even a power transforming in quality, which was the fluctuation of the Power of Heaven and Earth.

"This Blood King Gu seems to have a filtering and purifying role?"

Ning Qi vaguely already understood the use of this Blood King Gu.

If the Blood King Gu matured, it could probably serve as a supreme treasure that could help one break into the Celestial Human Realm.