

Cultivating 181

Chapter 181: Alliance Between Two Parties, Opening the Sect_2

She stood up and sighed faintly.

"The reign of Great Yan has occupied the land of the Central Domain for two thousand years, hasn't it been long enough?"

Everyone's emotions were slightly stirred.

The two-thousand-year reign of Great Yan was indeed too long.

"Do you in the Southern Border have a way to achieve the Martial Saint Technique?" Ghost Mask asked the most crucial question.

If they wished to overturn Great Yan, then the Martial Saint of Great Yan was an existence that could not be ignored.

The Saintess of the Southern Border shook her head and said:

"Ghost Mask Sect Leader lacks sincerity, this point is clear to both you and I. In today's era, the Martial Saint Technique has long been erased; one can only forcibly step into the Martial Saint Realm through other means. The Great Yan Martial Saint won't easily sit by and watch as a new Martial Saint emerges, as he has been unrivaled in the world for too long."

"Don't tell me you, the Demon Sect, don't have a way to achieve the Martial Saint? If so, then let's disregard the matter of alliance."

Ghost Mask hurriedly spoke:

"Saintess, wait!"

He chuckled twice:

"Our Holy Sect has been able to contend with the Great Yan Imperial Court for a thousand years, naturally, we have our own foundation. I was merely confirming whether you have the qualifications for an alliance or not. Since we're forming an alliance, we need to be united and exert joint effort."

"Hundreds of years ago, a Martial Saint was about to be born from our Holy Sect, but was annihilated when the Great Yan Martial Saint perceived and came for him at the critical moment. This time, we need to be more careful. When the time comes, with two Martial Saints born simultaneously, two against one, we should be able to suppress the Great Yan Martial Saint!"

"This old man has lived for so long, every time he acts, he's weaker than before. Even two newly born Martial Saints would be enough to contend with him!"

Ghost Mask gritted his teeth slightly.

These years, the Demon Sect was like a centipede that wouldn't die, even after losing a leg, but they weren't wasting time either. Almost every hundred years, they would make the Great Yan Martial Saint act once, to assess his condition.

The Saintess of the Southern Border was shaken inside, gaining a newfound understanding of the foundation and sincerity of the Demon Sect.

She sat down and voluntarily said:

"Our Southern Border needs your Demon Sect's cooperation to assist us in refining the Blood King Gu."

Ghost Mask smiled and said:

"No problem, our Holy Sect needs a large quantity of exotic beast inner cores, the higher the quality, the better! You in the Southern Border are very close to the Hundred Thousand Mountains, this won't be difficult for you."

The two exchanged glances, both understanding the meaning in each other's words.

Obviously, this related to the method for cultivating a Martial Saint for both factions, but among smart people, there's no need to spell things out. This was considered a preliminary show of sincerity.

Next up,

was the phase of haggling.

When it comes to profit distribution, every inch counts.

Qin Yun adjusted his mood and joined in, but the earlier mention of the True Martial Sect by the two left a shadow in his mind; he thought perhaps he should look for an opportunity to remind them.

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Time passed day by day.

The days were drawing closer to the opening of the mountain gates of the True Martial Sect.

A few days ago,

Luo Wentian and Taoist Longshan had already returned to the mountain, bringing back the news that the True Martial Sect had ascended to ninth among the Taoist sects in the world, instantly causing jubilation throughout the True Martial Sect. The enthusiasm for the open recruitment of disciples reached another level.

Ning Qi, in addition to his preparations for the recruitment, quietly honed the 'God'.

While further refining the Myriad Phenomena Secret Record, he also revised several secret techniques to make his combat power even stronger.

The Path Guardian Technique was also not neglected.

For instance, the previously created Virtual Sword Pill Dissolution Technique, now with the Primordial Core, Ning Qi adjusted it and could gather as many as three virtual sword pills near his Primordial Core to maintain balance.

This way, if he fully unleashes it, he can more than double his strength.

As for the Fake Pill,

it had already been extracted by Ning Qi.

In earlier times when he was weaker, he needed the Fake Pill to maintain appearances; but as his strength grew increasingly stronger, the role of the Fake Pill diminished, and even the Fake Pill Dissolution Technique had little use, similar in power to the improved Virtual Sword Pill Dissolution Technique.

Thus, Ning Qi completely severed the last thread of utility from it.

But Ning Qi hadn't planned on wasting it.

Instead, he opted to let Luo Wentian use it as a trump card. With his research into techniques such as the Fake Pill Co-Heaven Technique and the Fake Pill Dissolution Technique, Ning Qi's understanding of the Beast King's inner core was no longer as shallow.

A simple optimization of a new secret technique was formed.

A slight modification or two and the technique was re-implanted into Luo Wentian's body. Although Luo Wentian couldn't master the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique, using the power of the Fake Pill to unleash the might of the Primordial Core Realm was enough, and after he masterful controls it, he might even be stronger than the average Primordial Core Realm.

For this, to pair with the Thunder Tiger Beast King Inner Core, Ning Qi simplified some of the content of the Heavenly Thunder Technique, allowing him better command over the Path of Thunderous.

However, Luo Wentian was still familiarizing himself with this Fake Pill at present.

And aside from this,

Ning Qi continued to refine various changes of the Heavenly Sword Technique.

Having now stepped into the Primordial Core Realm, the quality and quantity of Gang Qi surged again, gradually realizing his previous conception.

And now,

Ning Qi could easily divide thirty-six Celestial Swords to form the Heavenly Gang Sword Array.

Moreover, he was attempting to integrate it with the Heavenly Thunder Technique. The Heavenly Thunder Technique was his own unparalleled secret technique of the Path of Thunderous, possessing numerous wonderful uses. Ning Qi already applied it to Alchemy Dao, and found that if he wanted to quickly enhance the strength of the True Martial Sect's members, it had to fall upon pills.

During free moments, he would study it a bit, using the Heavenly Thunder Technique to refine spirit medicine more efficiently, producing pills of higher quality.

However, Ning Qi wouldn't neglect his own cultivation.

But now, as his cultivation grew deeper, and with his martial path realm rising, he also began summarizing his previous path to make the martial path simpler, in some ways even using them as an 'experiment'.

Chapter 182: Two Parties Form an Alliance, Grand Opening of the Mountain Gate_3

Of course, this kind of experiment is harmless.

Time passes.

The much-anticipated day when the True Martial Sect opens its mountain gate has finally arrived.

During these days.

True Martial City is already overcrowded.

Many people have come from far away, and many of them are children mostly brought by their elders, hoping they can seize the opportunity before the True Martial Sect fully rises. A few have come alone, some being beggars or from impoverished areas, seeking to change their fate with this chance.

"Sister, I will definitely join the True Martial Sect and bring you a good life!"

The thick-browed, bright-eyed boy sincerely vowed to the thin girl beside him. His face was dirty, but his eyes were incredibly bright, though he was very weak, hunger gnawing at him.

The emaciated girl's eyes filled with hope:

"Brother, I believe in you!"

But she immediately sensed some mocking glances, instinctively shrinking into the boy's embrace. Their clothes were tattered, and if it weren't springtime, they might not have even made it to the True Martial Sect.

A figure stopped in front of them.

The boy hurriedly stood in front of his sister, not daring to look up, nervously saying:

"Sir, we will leave right away, right away."

The figure said nothing, merely put down an oil-wrapped bun and turned to leave. The boy looked in surprise, only seeing the departing white-haired figure, faintly visible with a mask covering part of his face.

"Thank you, thank you!"

The boy trembled with excitement, continuously murmuring thanks, his eyes somewhat blurry. On this journey, only he knew the hardships endured; few had extended a helping hand, and he was too weak from hunger. These few buns might be enough to change his fate.

"Sister, quickly eat."

"Brother, you eat. You need to be full to pass the True Martial Sect's test, and then you can repay me with ten buns!"

The boy just shook his head.

He firmly shared the buns with the girl, remembering the image of that white-haired figure.

Such scenes are not uncommon in True Martial City.

There are simply too many people; the True Martial disciples are overwhelmed just with maintaining order, preparing for the recruitment, and have no time to mind other matters.

In a pavilion.

The white-haired masked man stood by the railing, a cold voice nearby said:

"I didn't expect that a Saint Heir of the Demon Sect would have such kindness. It truly refreshes this Saintess's perception of the Demon Sect."

Qin Yun did not look at the Southern Border Saintess, only slowly said:

"Saintess has such a mind to observe me; it would be better to think about how to insert our people into the True Martial Sect during this disciple recruitment."

The Southern Border Saintess laughed:

"The Southern Border has its ways; I can't manage you Demon Sect's matters. In any case, with the True Martial Sect recruiting so openly, it will inevitably mix in spies from other forces. Some chaos could be interesting, just to test and see if the incident with Elder Wang and the Qing State stronghold is really the doing of the True Martial Sect."

Saying this, she suddenly turned her head, her eyes carrying a certain seductive charm:

"Speaking of which, I remember Saint Heir Qin was once a former disciple of the True Martial Sect? Are you not reluctant?"

Qin Yun coldly stared at her:

"I advise the Saintess not to assume victory is assured. I know my senior brother very well; he seems simple but is actually very prudent. Since he decided to open the mountain gate, he naturally has corresponding countermeasures. The Saintess should be prepared for failure."

"I did not agree with this method before; it might even expose our intentions instead."

The Southern Border Saintess furrowed her brow and eventually chuckled softly:

"I simply don't believe it."

Qin Yun said nothing more.

At this stage, he couldn't stop it; he had done everything he could, and now he could only take it one step at a time.

...

Inside the Bright Martial Pavilion.

Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan sat across from each other.

In front of them was a chessboard.

With their level of expertise, they could naturally sense the bustle at the mountain gate, where many participants had already gathered, just waiting for Luo Wentian to officially announce.

Taoist Longshan casually placed a black piece and sighed:

"This recruitment, I don't know if it's good or bad, I didn't expect so many eyes on us."

"Jiu, what do you think about the secret message sent quietly a few days ago, is it true or false?"

His eyes showed a hint of coldness.

A few days ago, a secret message was quietly delivered.

It only said one sentence.

The Southern Border Alliance and the Demon Sect have formed an alliance, intending to infiltrate the True Martial Sect.

This news stirred everyone's hearts.

Ning Qi paused his action of holding a white piece.

"Whether true or false, we will be able to tell during the test."

He had many speculations in his heart.

Since eliminating the Southern Border Alliance's stronghold in Qing State, there had been no sign of the Southern Border Alliance. He thought their attention had been successfully diverted to the Demon Sect, or perhaps they hadn't detected any traces of falsity.

But now it seems he underestimated them.

After circling around, the Southern Border Alliance still suspected the True Martial Sect and even formed an alliance with the Demon Sect.

However, Ning Qi wasn't overly anxious.

Now that he has entered the Primordial Core Realm, his powerful strength gave him ample confidence.

If given another year or so, when he advances to the Celestial Human Realm, if the Southern Border Alliance and the Demon Sect dare to cause trouble, it would be courting death.

"But... who sent this secret message?" Ning Qi murmured.

Taoist Longshan was also speculating.

But there was too little information.

"Could it be that this secret message is just a probe? Perhaps they are not certain whether you, Jiu, took down the Qing State stronghold."

Hearing Taoist Longshan's speculation, Ning Qi slowly nodded.

Chapter 183: Alliance of Two Parties, Grand Opening of the Mountain Gate_4

"In any case, let's remain calm for now; the longer we delay, the less threatening they become. Today, as we open the mountain for recruitment, we should take advantage of the examination to completely eliminate these 'snakes and rats.'"

The two were discussing.

Their gazes were focused on the mountain gate.

Luo Wentian's voice echoed across the entire True Martial Mountain, indicating that the examination was about to begin.

At the mountain gate.

There gathered many participants, some hoping to join the True Martial Sect and others simply here for the spectacle.

The True Martial disciples were striving to maintain order.

Luo Wentian surveyed the crowd, exuding the presence of a sect leader, and said loudly:

"Today, our True Martial Sect open its mountain gate widely. I am grateful for all traveling from afar. But as for this recruitment, it has been clarified beforehand that only children under ten who have not yet embarked on the Martial Path will be accepted as disciples. As for those accomplished in Martial Arts, only those above the White Mist Realm will be accepted."

"Others who do not meet the requirements, please leave the mountain."

His voice was calm, yet carried an undeniable authority.

All at once.

The crowd erupted in uproar.

"How could this be? We traveled from far away, please give us a chance, Sect Leader Luo!"

"Yes, yes, our young master has just started on the Martial Path, practicing some family martial arts."

"Unexpectedly, the True Martial Sect is so tyrannical, contrary to its reputation..."

Some underhanded remarks began to surface.

Many tried to pressure Luo Wentian into changing his mind by rallying the masses.

But Luo Wentian remained unmoved, for this was decided long ago and would not change in the slightest. Moreover, this was not a spontaneous decision by the True Martial Sect; the recruitment standards had been spread along with the news three months prior.

Many present knew this, yet still came, vainly hoping to try their luck.

Hoping to find an opportunity to sneak in.

Because the True Martial Sect was known for its benevolence.

However, they had forgotten that the True Martial Sect was also known for decisive action.

Luo Wentian remained still.

Beside him, Xiong Shi bellowed angrily, his Gang Qi surging like an enraged lion:

"The examination standards were set three months ago. Anyone speaking nonsense will be killed!"

He punched out, his Gang Qi smashing a large stone, instantly quelling all commotion.

In the Qing State, the White Mist Realm is considered a top-tier expert. Even the strongest of some weaker Martial sects may not reach such a realm, so the deterrence is effective. Particularly now that Xiong Shi has assumed the role of Punishment Elder, his influence has become increasingly apparent.

The instigators immediately turned pale.

Especially upon seeing the cold looks developing in the eyes of the surrounding True Martial disciples, they couldn't help but shiver, realizing their plans were mistaken.

One by one, figures hurriedly bowed their heads and departed.

The previously noisy base of the mountain was suddenly left half-empty.

However, it was starkly divided into two parts.

One part consisted entirely of children, some accompanied by elders, others alone.

These children numbered nearly ten thousand, with an estimated total of thirty to forty thousand including those who left earlier. They formed the main force of the examination this time.

The other part had only around a hundred people, all strong practitioners above the White Mist Realm. At this moment, their expressions varied; some crossed their arms, some stared straight ahead, while

others whispered discussions. These were all loose martial artists, here for better prospects and resources.

They had struggled outside for a long time, rarely getting such an opportunity. Now, with the possibility of joining the True Martial Sect, they valued it greatly.

Luo Wentian carefully perceived those unconcealed auras, feeling quite astonished that there was actually a Primordial Core Realm expert among them, and also seven or eight from the Jade Liquid Realm.

Though astonished, he was secretly cautious, as Long Shan had previously discussed the matter of confidential letters with him.

Looking at the crowd gradually settling down.

Luo Wentian declared loudly:

"I hereby announce that the True Martial examination officially begins!"

"The first round is the Heaven-Ascending Ladder!"

He gestured with his hand, and everyone's gaze fell upon the green stone steps behind him.

Luo Wentian's gaze was full of authority:

"Only those who can cross the Heaven-Ascending Ladder will pass the first round. Those who give up halfway, or cannot reach the top, cannot enter the gates of True Martial."

The children immediately became nervous.

The green stone steps appeared ordinary, yet seemed to emit a certain peculiar force. With Luo Wentian's words, the green stone steps also started to appear less ordinary.

Chapter 184: Heaven-Ascending Ladder, Mechanical Being Array, the Terrifying Heart Inquiry Platform

Luo Wentian, having spoken, smiled at the other standing Gang Essence Realm experts and said:

"Everyone, please follow me up the mountain."

This Heaven-Ascending Ladder is used for assessing children who have not yet embarked on the Martial Path. Ning Qi employed a special type of mineral coupled with a simple Qimen Array to magnify the pressure as one walks on it. The higher one ascends, the more difficult it becomes.

This test is of willpower.

A total of nine hundred and ninety-nine steps, those who can reach the summit are surely individuals of extraordinary perseverance.

This time's recruitment will lay the foundation for the future decades of the True Martial Sect. Absent special circumstances, there won't be another large-scale disciple recruitment for a long time, so Ning Qi regards it with high importance.

Now, as his Martial Path realm deepens, he gradually understands that to walk further on this path, perhaps root bone isn't the most critical factor.

Outstanding root bone might let you advance smoothly in the initial stages, but martial willpower allows lateness to surpass prevalence, even breaking one's own limits.

Thus, he established the Heaven-Ascending Ladder as part of the assessment.

Luo Wentian, taking many Gang Essence Realm experts, departed up the mountain; with their cultivation, a few leaps took them out of sight.

As they open the sect this time.

Recruiting children is paramount, yet these Gang Essence Realm experts cannot be underestimated.

After all, the True Martial Sect is currently in an awkward stage. At the top, True Man Tianjian and Taoist Longshan awe the world, and the middle and lower levels in Body Tempering Realm and Inner Essence Realm can likewise look down upon the Martial Realm, but there is a significant lack in the Gang Essence Realm.

To this day.

Only seven former True Disciples have stepped into the White Mist Realm. Although they possess uncommon aptitudes and their combat strength surpasses ordinary White Mist Realm, as the True Martial Sect grows stronger, they still find themselves stretched thin.

Hence, there arose the idea to recruit additional Gang Essence Realm experts.

This is a transitional phase.

Once many Gang Essence Realm experts emerge within the True Martial Sect, this awkward period can be overcome.

For their assessments, it naturally differs from that of the children, prioritizing evaluations of combat strength and mindset.

Watching Luo Wentian and the others leave.

Remaining behind, Xiong Shi continued, adding:

"All those participating in the assessment, please note the following during the Heaven-Ascending Ladder:"

"Firstly, do not rely on external forces, use your own willpower to reach the summit!"

"Secondly, do not attack other participants on the Heaven-Ascending Ladder. Anyone caught will immediately be disqualified from the assessment!"

"Thirdly, if you can't hold on, call for help; a True Martial disciple will escort you down the mountain."

He glanced around at the crowd, his gaze carrying a faint sense of menace, and the earlier scene made everyone gradually develop a sense of awe towards this Punishment Elder, naturally nodding repeatedly at this moment.

"Now, I announce that the assessment formally begins!"

As his words fell.

The prepared children started climbing orderly forward, not rushing to compete, as the True Martial disciples had already explained the rules, it only matters how much time it takes each individual to reach the top, not who gets there first.

Otherwise, with nearly ten thousand people surging together, even if the Heaven-Ascending Ladder is large enough, it wouldn't be possible for everyone to be on the starting line at once.

Amidst the crowd.

A skinny little girl encouraged the thick-browed boy:

"Big Brother, you can do it!"

The thick-browed boy was also cheering himself on, looking at the surrounding richly dressed boys, all strong and robust, yet he had nothing but a determination to fight with all means at his disposal.

The children began stepping onto the Heaven-Ascending Ladder and immediately noticed something unusual.

Just after stepping on, they felt a faint pressure. Initially, it was still easy, but after every few dozen steps, the pressure escalated a level, causing them to tremble.

For a child not yet ten, climbing nine hundred and ninety-nine steps isn't easy, much less with increasing pressure.

Many children looked towards the front, seeing the seemingly endless stairs, and a sense of despair arose in their hearts.

As their spirit waned.

People began to give up one after another.

The True Martial disciples traversed the Heaven-Ascending Ladder, escorting children down one by one.

This scene, observed by other participants, invisibly magnified the pressure.

Most here for the assessment were already among the top of ordinary people, but now, as the assessment was too challenging, just having passed one-third, half were eliminated.

The previously crowded Heaven-Ascending Ladder suddenly became notably sparse.

And this.

Was just the beginning.

Constantly, people fell behind, some voluntarily withdrew.

Some children even collapsed crying.

The seemingly simple Heaven-Ascending Ladder was in truth full of great challenges.

Xiong Shi and Ye Qinghe watched these scenes unfolding, reflecting:

"Jiu's Heaven-Ascending Ladder is indeed not simple. Now thinking about it, the Martial Path is like this Heaven-Ascending Ladder, endless in sight, and wanting to walk it unwaveringly requires courage far beyond ordinary. Those who pass this ladder's test are bound for great achievements in the future."

"And failing to pass, no matter how good the root bone, is all in vain."

Everyone nodded in agreement.

Unknowingly, they forgot that Ning Qi was just over ten years old.

Time passed.

The first stage of the assessment continued.

Many were already near the summit.

Among them, several outstanding saplings attracted their attention.

"That leading boy's steps are steady, his eyes firm, his bones robust, hailing from Gaoyang Lu family, named Lu Mang."

"The girl behind him isn't bad either, adept at using force skillfully, quite agile; if I recall correctly, she hails from a branch of the Ouyang family in Qing State City, named Ouyang Yuxuan."

Chapter 185: Heaven-Ascending Ladder, Mechanical Being Array, Terrifying Heart Inquiry Platform_2

"..."

Everyone commented one by one.

Their faces showed satisfaction.

The prestige of the True Martial Sect increased greatly, and some renowned families were also willing to send their potential offspring here.

At this moment.

The Heaven-Ascending Ladder was already sparsely populated.

People were dragged in a long line.

Divided into several groups.

It was estimated that less than five percent would reach the top, which meant fewer than five hundred people.

The difficulty was imaginable.

Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan had stopped their chess game and walked to the window, gazing at the top of the Heaven-Ascending Ladder in the distance. Luo Wentian and others were waiting there. One by one, the children who reached the top stood in joy. Their journey up the Heaven-Ascending Ladder had been a baptism of their will and character, making their future path in Martial Arts smoother.

Taoist Longshan sighed with emotion:

"Jiu, your method is really good. Once these disciples mature, True Martial Sect will indeed be as stable as Mount Tai."

Ning Qi merely chuckled softly.

He made a light "hmm" sound, his gaze somewhat amazed.

Taoist Longshan followed his gaze and was equally shocked.

Near the top of the Heaven-Ascending Ladder, a boy with thick brows and big eyes was struggling to climb. Most of those who should have reached the top had already done so. The boy was using both his hands and feet, with an astonishing determination in his eyes, leaving a faint trail of blood behind him.

Those were the hands and feet worn bloody.

The shoes on his feet were already in tatters, but he was still resolutely moving upward.

With the vision of Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan, it was not difficult to see that the boy's internal strength was almost exhausted, and he seemed to be participating in the test on an empty stomach. Judging from his clothes, he came from a very low background.

Taoist Longshan sighed deeply:

"This child has great perseverance."

Ning Qi nodded appreciatively.

This was rare indeed.

Naturally, people at the mountaintop also noticed this boy.

When he used up his last bit of strength to climb the final step, Luo Wentian's eyes were full of admiration.

He personally went over to offer food and water.

"Little one, what's your name?"

The boy was extremely nervous; he never expected to be noticed by a big figure like Luo Wentian. He hadn't even had time to rejoice in finishing the Heaven-Ascending Ladder, and he instinctively stammered:

"I, I don't have a name. People in the village used to call me Gou Dan."

Some around him showed disdain, while others looked with respect, knowing how hard it was for the boy to get here.

Luo Wentian patted him on the shoulder, smiling encouragingly:

"Gou Dan, right? Have a good rest and work hard from now on."

Gou Dan nodded vigorously, his mood extremely excited.

At this moment.

Luo Wentian's silhouette was full of radiance in his mind. He began to ravenously devour the food in his hand, feeling somewhat regretful that his sister couldn't share it with him. He made up his mind in his heart to pass the test and become a True Martial disciple!

In the past, he wanted to become a True Martial disciple just to fill his stomach, but now he had an indescribable feeling towards the True Martial Sect.

Luo Wentian looked around the people and said loudly:

"Firstly, congratulations on passing the Heaven-Ascending Ladder test. Whether or not you can become a True Martial disciple, this is a valuable experience for you, enough to take you further!"

"Now rest well and prepare for the next challenge. You can also take the opportunity to observe the formidable strength of your Martial Arts seniors and set goals for yourselves."

The children's eyes sparkled.

They realized that this might be the test of those Gang Essence Realm experts, who were super big figures beyond reach for most of them.

Luo Wentian smiled at the numerous Gang Essence Realm experts:

"Ladies and gentlemen, who will go first?"

The format of the test for the Gang Essence Realm was not difficult; the first round was about combat power, which he had already introduced quite clearly.

And the subject of the combat power demonstration.

Was the mechanical beings before their eyes. As long as they could hold out under the mechanical beings' siege for a quarter of an hour, they would pass smoothly.

At this moment.

Everyone was looking at those mechanical beings with a strange gaze. They stood several meters tall and exuded a sense of oppression. This was naturally also Ning Qi's recent achievement, or rather, he had always dabbled in Mechanical Technique.

Previously, He Yan had brought some miscellaneous skills for him to gain some insight.

Though these mechanical beings were somewhat clumsy and couldn't chase enemies, after Ning Qi combined them with the Qimen Array, they became practical tools for testing.

From the Body Tempering Realm to the Inner Essence Realm and on to the Gang Essence Realm, they all existed.

The mechanical beings before them formed an array that could pose a significant threat to the White Mist Realm, only the best among them could pass.

Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan were watching, and with their insight, they could discern some clues from the many Gang Essence Realm experts' actions. Perhaps they could even tell their origins from their Martial Arts techniques, unless they had never learned those iconic Martial Arts, in which case it would be hard to conceal.

On the field.

Over a hundred Gang Essence Realm experts were a bit unsure of the strength of these mechanical beings.

But eventually, someone was willing to be the first to take the plunge.

A Cyan Robed Swordsman stepped forward, his eyes brimming with confidence:

"I'll go!"

As soon as his words fell.

He had already rushed out.

Crack, crack, crack.

A buzzing sound ensued as all the mechanical beings seemed to awaken from a deep sleep and began to move.

Though clumsy, every move carried great power. The whistling sound was hair-raising, and when they formed an array, it exerted an airtight pressure. Moreover, their extraordinary material meant that Gang Qi strikes only left white marks on them, and that pressure came rushing in an instant.

Of course, since this was a test, the Gang Essence Realm experts couldn't flee. In normal circumstances, no number of mechanical beings could pose much of a threat to them, as they could easily widen the distance with their speed.

Chapter 186: Heaven-Ascending Ladder, Mechanical Being Array, Terrifying Heart Inquiry Platform_3

But now, taking the initiative to withstand the attacks from the Mechanical Beings is entirely different.

The Cyan Robed Swordsman is quite formidable, ranking above average among everyone here.

Yet now, he is struggling, facing danger at every turn. If it weren't for his truly exquisite swordsmanship, he might already be out. Even so, sweat is beading on the Cyan Robed Swordsman's forehead, and he no longer holds the previous contempt.

Everyone's expressions changed instantly.

The children who had just passed, however, couldn't tell. They just watched the legendary Gang Qi flying around, marveling in their hearts. Gou Dan, while gnawing on a hot pancake, was full of longing in his eyes, hoping that one day he could become as strong as this Cyan Robed Swordsman.

A quarter of an hour passed in the blink of an eye.

The bell rang.

The Cyan Robed Swordsman felt relieved.

He immediately sped up, breaking out from the encirclement of the Mechanical Beings. There was already a hint of awe in his eyes. The legends he heard in the Martial Realm were one thing, but experiencing the True Martial Sect's foundation for himself, his heart burned even more, strengthening his resolve to join the True Martial Sect.

The others thought similarly.

"Congratulations!" Luo Wentian said with a kind smile.

He had been observing all along; this Cyan Robed Swordsman was indeed a talent within the White Mist Realm.

The Cyan Robed Swordsman hurriedly returned the courtesy, without any neglect.

With him setting an example,

the others roughly estimated their chances. Although some were anxious, they had already come this far, so naturally, retreat was not an option.

One by one, Gang Essence Realm experts charged out afterwards.

The array of Mechanical Beings was sufficient to accommodate a dozen for joint examination.

In an instant,

various Gang Qi flew around.

Blade Gang and Sword Gang filled the air.

The children's eyes were filled with wonder. If it weren't for the inappropriate occasion, they would have already exclaimed in amazement. The number of Gang Essence Realm experts they've seen today far exceeds the past few years combined.

In the array of the Mechanical Beings,

Gang Essence Realm experts displayed their Divine Techniques.

Some showcased profound Martial Arts expertise, some had exceptionally robust Gang Qi, some had strong physiques, and others possessed extraordinary Body Techniques...

In summary,

those with a special skill in some field could usually pass. Conversely, if one was ordinary in all aspects, naturally, they wouldn't pass.

One by one, the White Mist Realm experts were eliminated.

They accounted for more than seventy percent of those in the White Mist Realm, leaving less than thirty percent able to pass.

As for the rare few in the Jade Liquid Realm and one in the Primordial Core Realm, they passed with ease. This trial was designed to filter out those in the White Mist Realm.

Ning Qi watched, his eyes already stirring.

Taoist Longshan turned his head and asked,

"Jiu, how many did you spot?"

Ning Qi chuckled lightly,

"Eight. These people truly regard our True Martial Sect highly."

Taoist Longshan was stunned.

He had only seen through four, but he didn't expect Ning Qi to have spotted eight. Yet he knew Ning Qi wasn't one to speak baselessly. As Ning Qi pointed them out one by one, Taoist Longshan's face grew more somber with anger.

These were only those the two of them had identified. What about those concealed deeper?

Doesn't it mean that out of more than a hundred Gang Essence Realm participants, nearly ten percent are spies?

"This is quite something!" Taoist Longshan's eyes held anger.

Ning Qi reassured,

"Master, don't be angry. We can just catch them all in one swoop."

He did not turn his head, only advising,

"Tiansheng, go once."

The White Ape now possessed formidable strength, developing its bloodline step by step at an extraordinary pace, not to be viewed with a human perspective. Two years ago, the White Ape could

oppose the White Mist Realm, and now even more so. After years of dormancy, it's time for the White Ape to gradually emerge. Not everyone can remain completely low-key; appropriately showcasing its ability will be beneficial for its future cultivation.

Taoist Longshan's gaze had a hint of curiosity, but he said nothing, slightly anticipating instead.

Delight flickered in the White Ape's eyes as it understood Ning Qi's intent.

"Yes, teacher!"

With that, it strode away eagerly, already a bit restless.

In the distance,

all the Gang Essence Realm experts had finished their tests.

Of the more than a hundred Gang Essence Realm experts, only thirty-some remained, including one Primordial Core Realm and seven or eight Jade Liquid Realm individuals.

The eliminated White Mist Realm martial artists appeared somewhat chagrined, but seeing those remaining, they knew they were simply not as skilled.

Luo Wentian consoled,

"You are all talents, but unfortunately, our True Martial Sect lacks the foundation to support so many powerful ones. Otherwise, we would welcome you all into our sect."

"For those who didn't make it this time, our True Martial Sect will still offer a Martial Arts scripture as a token of appreciation for traveling such a long distance to honor us with your presence. Why not stay and watch the completion of this examination before descending the mountain?"

With these words,

everyone was momentarily stunned, then felt quite pleased. Regardless of the Martial Arts' level, the True Martial Sect had shown tremendous respect by doing this.

Everyone responded,

"Sect Leader Luo is too kind!"

And those who passed the examination smiled even wider. Imagine this: if the True Martial Sect is so generous to those eliminated, how could they lack resources and Martial Arts for those who successfully join? As long as they remain dedicated, they will surely be rewarded.

This small gesture inadvertently further elevated the True Martial Sect's prestige in everyone's eyes.

Luo Wentian turned to everyone and said,

"Now that you all have passed the first stage, only the second stage remains. If you can pass the Heart Inquiry Platform, you will become our True Martial disciples!"

This was addressed not only to the Gang Essence Realm martial artists who passed the Mechanical Beings' array.

It was also spoken to the children who ascended the Heaven-Ascending Ladder.

The first stage differed between the two.

But the second stage is the same.

For this examination, Luo Wentian didn't intend to have seven or eight rounds—it would be meaningless.

Chapter 187: Heaven-Ascending Ladder, Mechanical Being Array, Terrifying Heart Inquiry Platform_4

After chatting with Ning Qi.

The newly initiated children focus on perseverance and character.

The Gang Essence Realm recruits emphasize combat strength and character.

This Heart Inquiry Platform is precisely where character is tested.

"Heart Inquiry Platform?" Someone slowly repeated these words, their eyes flickering slightly.

Those with a clear conscience felt fine, but those with secrets felt uneasy.

The three words themselves carry an oppressive feeling.

With the previous Heaven-Ascending Ladder and Mechanical Being Array as precedents, no one thought this so-called Heart Inquiry Platform was just for show.

This Heart Inquiry Platform is naturally also a creation of Ning Qi.

He previously developed the miraculous Soul Capturing Eye Technique, optimized it, combined it with several special treasure materials and Qimen Array techniques, creating the Heart Inquiry Platform. Those in it, if they relaxed their minds, would naturally be guided to speak their most genuine thoughts.

True Martial Sect disciples must not be evildoers or have an improper mindset.

Of course, using this method, capturing spies is almost certain.

Luo Wentian smiled broadly, a hint of malice in his expression:

"Ladies and gentlemen, you are the seniors, why not demonstrate for these little ones first?"

Under the leadership of True Martial disciples, everyone arrived at the edge of a platform large enough to accommodate hundreds. Around the platform stood various green stone pillars of different heights, carved with divine beast engravings, possessing a certain mysterious charm that immediately conveyed an extraordinary feeling.

Luo Wentian reminded:

"Relax, everyone, it's just a simple small assessment. Once on the platform, just relax your mind. The Heart Inquiry Platform will not pry into your privacy. If you refuse to relax your mind for a long time, it will be considered a failed assessment."

This is a drawback of the Heart Inquiry Platform, as it's merely a derivative of the Soul Capturing Eye Technique.

If it could force a heart inquiry, that would indeed be impressive.

Ning Qi thought perhaps it required even more miraculous forces to achieve that.

Still, it wasn't a big issue; those unwilling to relax their minds were naturally problematic, and during disciple trials, participants would naturally be willing to relax their minds.

The remaining thirty-some Gang Essence Realm strongmen exchanged uncertain glances.

But at this critical moment, it was impossible to give up.

Even those harboring ill intentions could only try with a hopeful mindset.

The children too were watching intently.

They would also have to undergo the Heart Inquiry Platform's test soon.

As the thirty-some individuals sat cross-legged.

Luo Wentian's expression gradually turned somber, he exchanged glances with Xiong Shi and others, and nodded silently, then streams of Gang Qi shot out, activating the Qimen Array within the Heart Inquiry Platform.

"Relax your minds!" A stern voice resounded.

In an instant.

A wave of miraculous and mysterious energy swept over the people on the platform.

"If to obtain an unparalleled martial art, you need to kill an innocent family, would you do it?" The stern voice continued to echo.

"If one doesn't act for oneself, heaven and earth will destroy them; naturally, I would!"

"I would not!"

"Such an act is monstrous, I refuse!"

...

The responses varied, some tightly closed their eyes, but malice appeared on their brows.

Even if they feigned benevolence, in front of the Heart Inquiry Platform, their true thoughts were completely exposed.

Disciples nearby immediately recorded all the responses.

The stern voice continued questioning.

Each question pierced the heart.

For example, during times when the True Martial Sect is in trouble, would you retreat or fight; when encountering injustice, intervene or not. These comprehensive questions needed to be considered together, as humans are complex, a single question couldn't determine everything.

The True Martial Sect is not looking to recruit saints.

As long as it doesn't harm the core interests of the True Martial Sect, those candidates would naturally be prioritized.

However, those with excessive malice cannot pass either, as those who easily resort to mass murder are not aligned with the True Martial Sect's path.

The stern voice raised the final question:

"What forces do you belong to?"

In an instant.

The responses were diverse.

"I serve the Qingquan Li Family, and I come seeking higher-level inheritance!"

"I'm a loose martial artist!"

Such responses were very normal.

But a few responses were extremely jarring.

"Holy Sect!"

"Southern Border!"

"Inquiring Sword Pavilion!"

"Formless Sect!"

Luo Wentian squinted his eyes.

He already had his suspicions about the Demon Sect and the Southern Border.

This Inquiring Sword Pavilion was most likely targeting the True Martial Sword Monument.

And the Formless Sect was the one pushed out of the Ninth Sect by True Martial Sect.

These two sects probably saw the wide recruitment by the True Martial Sect as an opportunity to plant some spies, in case of future actions?

The spectators looked shocked, especially those dozen eliminated Gang Essence Realm martial artists, whose hearts raced. The miraculousness of the Heart Inquiry Platform had already stirred unease among a few of them, and upon realizing that some had blurted out intentions so blatantly, their hearts pounded.

Someone couldn't remain seated any longer; they erupted their Gang Qi and shouted angrily:

"Wake up quickly!!"

This furious howl jolted everyone on the Heart Inquiry Platform awake.

The Gang Essence Realm strongmen on the platform all showed expressions of horror. It was only at this moment that they realized what they had said.

This Heart Inquiry Platform was truly terrifying!

Chapter 188: The Power of the Fake Pill, the 16-Foot White Ape, Seeks to Accept a Disciple

Those who had no guilt in their hearts were fine; at most, they were somewhat shocked, feeling that the methods of the True Martial Sect were simply beyond comprehension, making them even more respectful. However, those with impure intentions had darkened expressions, as this seemed like a public execution under the watchful eyes of the masses!

Especially some who usually had a reputation as heroes; now, it was as if their hypocritical masks had been completely torn off. Yet, they did not dare to get angry, as the True Martial Sect had already instilled fear in their hearts.

But these two kinds of people were not the most panicked.

The ones most shocked in expression were the few spies hiding among them.

The deepest secrets of their hearts were revealed just like that in broad daylight.

They already knew.

This mission had failed.

The methods of the True Martial Sect were beyond their imagination. No matter how well they disguised their origins, they couldn't withstand such a direct heart-targeting Qimen Array. Just now, they had relaxed their mindset following Luo Wentian's words, and ended up almost revealing even the color of their underwear.

In an instant.

Several people moved simultaneously.

They had long been distanced by other Gang Essence Realm experts, and now spies from different forces coordinated unexpectedly, choosing a direction to charge explosively without a word, decisively.

Are you kidding?

The True Martial Sect had two Celestial Human Realm experts in command. Not to mention True Man Tianjian, even if True Man Longshan made a move, they couldn't withstand it at all. If they gathered in one place to escape, none would get away and all would be captured.

But if they scattered to escape, there might be a sliver of hope.

At this moment, the middle-aged blademan of the Primordial Core Realm, two from the Jade Liquid Realm, and two from the White Mist Realm, totaling five spies, were all fleeing towards the outside of the Heart Inquiry Platform.

The situation instantly spiraled out of control.

Bursts of Gang Qi erupted, shooting around, with some intending to create chaos to ease their escape.

Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan watched silently, with no intention of intervening.

As long as no Celestial Human Realm person made a move, they wouldn't step in.

The True Martial Sect wasn't just the True Martial Sect of the two of them. Some matters required Luo Wentian and his people to handle, especially since Sect Leader Luo had always been criticized for his low cultivation in the Martial Realm. This was also an opportunity to prove himself.

The other elders felt the same.

This was a trial for the rest of the True Martial Sect.

With the two of them present, nothing could go wrong.

Around the Heart Inquiry Platform.

Luo Wentian, observing the spies taking action in their escape attempt, had anger welling in his eyes. As they unleashed Gang Qi recklessly towards the surrounding True Martial disciples and even some children attending the assessment, trying to delay Luo Wentian and others with such tactics.

But unfortunately.

Luo Wentian and his people were already mentally prepared.

Before these spies set foot on the Heart Inquiry Platform, the children had been protected by top-ranked True Martial disciples.

Xiong Shi and Ye Qinghe, among others, also took action to intercept the Gang Qi.

At this time.

The Gang Essence Realm individuals who failed their assessment also erupted into chaos.

Among them were several spies, now bursting forth all wanting to leave.

"Impudent! Daring to cause chaos on the day of my True Martial assessment, you cannot be left alive!"

Luo Wentian's Taoist Robe flapped violently without wind, a powerful aura emanating from him. Ordinarily, he wouldn't be a match for those in the Jade Liquid Realm or even the Primordial Core Realm, but now, with the many trump cards given by Ning Qi, if he couldn't resolve the crisis before him, he considered himself no different from a waste.

In an inspiring moment.

He instantly activated the Thunder Tiger Fake Pill in his heart.

In an instant.

A powerful aura erupted, with bolts of lightning intertwining beside him. With a strike of his palm, the lightning crackled dominantly, accurately striking the few eliminated spies, sending them flying backward.

The White Mist Realm spies had almost no resistance.

Everyone was astonished.

"Wasn't it rumored that Sect Leader Luo only had a White Mist Realm cultivation, how can he be so powerful?"

"This probably doesn't fall short compared to the Primordial Core Realm, does it?"

All at once, those eliminated in the Gang Essence Realm looked at Luo Wentian with changed expressions. This didn't align with rumors.

But soon, they realized.

The True Martial Sect's foundation was unimaginably strong.

How could the sect leader possibly be limited to the rumored strength? Now this seemed normal.

Ye Qinghe and others were also surprised, not understanding why their senior brother was suddenly so strong, just guessing that it must be their master's doing.

Luo Wentian felt joyful inside.

He felt unprecedented strength in himself, his worries melting away. However, he knew it wasn't due to his own abilities. Without the Thunder Tiger Fake Pill, he would at best be stronger than an ordinary White Mist Realm. Deeply impressed, he silently glanced towards the Bright Martial Pavilion, knowing two people were watching from there, which was the source of his constant confidence!

Luo Wentian shouted to the sky:

"Capture all the spies!"

With his previous show of might, those originally planning to stand by and watch immediately changed their attitudes.

Some began to take action, aiding in intercepting the spies.

Especially among those who performed well on the Heart Inquiry Platform, knowing they were almost True Martial Sect members, they were even more motivated. Of course, these people were inherently of good character and wouldn't stand by in the face of such an unexpected situation.

In an instant.

The spies were all surrounded.

Chapter 189: The Power of the Fake Pill, the 16-Foot White Ape, Seeks to Accept a Disciple 2

Outnumbering the few with many.

Even if these spies possess Heaven-Reaching abilities, they're powerless.

All those spies at the White Mist Realm have been captured.

Only three are still fleeing.

The middle-aged blademan at the Primordial Core Realm, the black-skirted beautiful woman at the Jade Liquid Realm, and a one-eyed man also at the Jade Liquid Realm.

The black-skirted beautiful woman and the one-eyed man are from the Demon Sect, while the Primordial Core Realm blademan is from the Southern Border.

Luo Wentian was surrounded by thunderous light and had already caught up with the Primordial Core blademan, engaging in a fierce battle.

The two at the Jade Liquid Realm were intercepted by several skilled fighters from the Heart Inquiry Platform who performed admirably.

The Blade Gang and Thunder Palm clashed continuously, their shockwaves scattering.

With the support of Thunder Tiger's Fake Pill, Luo Wentian completely suppressed the Primordial Core Realm blademan. This Sect Leader of the True Martial Sect exuded a boundless aura, causing all the disciples to be shaken, especially the children who came for the assessment, their eyes filled with admiration.

Originally, they were somewhat flustered, but the True Martial disciples quickly reassured them.

Now the situation was almost under control, and they were unharmed.

The children felt more deeply the foundation and strength of the True Martial Sect, yearning even more to join.

Gou Dan watched the scenes unfolding before him, feeling as if a door to a new world was opening for him. Watching Luo Wentian, surrounded by thunderous light, he felt he was extremely majestic.

"If one day, I could be as strong as Sect Leader Luo, my sister would never have to go hungry again," he thought.

Suddenly.

His eyes widened, and he couldn't help but rub them.

He almost thought he was seeing things.

He actually saw a White Ape dressed in a Taoist Robe. The White Ape didn't look tall, but rather somewhat petite, yet its visible fur was like silver snow, extremely mystical. This White Ape silently appeared near the ongoing battles, its small stature making it seem as if it was accidentally involved.

He couldn't help but want to shout a warning.

But the next moment, he was stunned.

He saw that as the White Ape stepped forward, its size suddenly expanded, one step growing at a time, instantaneously becoming a colossal figure.

The Giant Ape, standing six zhang tall, wore a Taoist Robe, embodying both ferocity and peace, its eyes glinting with a golden hue, seemingly able to see through everything.

Inside the scene.

The one-eyed man shouted harshly:

"You all meddle in my Holy Sect's affairs, are you courting death?"

He and the black-skirted beautiful woman felt increasing pressure and had to invoke the Demon Sect to intimidate everyone.

Someone couldn't help but change their expression.

This was indeed troublesome. If they failed to join the True Martial Sect and were remembered by the Demon Sect, it would truly be disastrous.

But the next moment.

Someone couldn't help but take a sharp breath, eyes wide with astonishment.

The one-eyed man felt something.

He turned his head, his pupils suddenly contracting.

He saw a six zhang tall White Ape silently charging in, its body like a small mountain filled with terrifying oppression, especially its eyes with golden intent, carrying a coldness that could see through everything. His heart beat wildly, letting out a strange cry, fully unleashing his Gang Qi, sensing an unprecedented crisis.

Yuan Tiancheng roared at the sky, having followed Ning Qi for six or seven years in cultivation, he had never revealed his true Ape King form.

Now, with Ning Qi's permission, he finally had the chance.

Sweeping with golden eyes, he saw the one-eyed man's movements exposed, and with a simple punch, terrifying brute force swept out, the silver light swirling above his fur, crushing the one-eyed man's Gang Qi effortlessly.

Then.

He slammed angrily onto the one-eyed man's body.

The sound of bone cracking echoed, with the one-eyed man being blasted into a pit, continuously vomiting blood.

All the spectators were shocked, not knowing where such a fierce White Ape suddenly came from, easily suppressing a Jade Liquid Realm with one punch!

Is this also the foundation of the True Martial Sect?

They felt that today their eyes were opened wide.

But even the True Martial disciples were dumbfounded.

Even the few disciples who were familiar with playing with the White Ape were like this, though the White Ape displayed some power occasionally, it was not outstanding. In their impression, the White Ape was usually mischievous, sometimes silly, serving as the Taoist Child under the Ninth Master Uncle.

But now they realized.

The White Ape Taoist Child under the Ninth Master Uncle was actually this strong!

Ye Qinghe's eyes widened even more. She couldn't believe that the little monkey she brought back with Ning Qi a few years ago had suddenly become so powerful, stronger than herself. Seeing the one-eyed man's miserable state, she feared she couldn't withstand a punch either.

Is this really that silly little monkey who taught me to brew Peach Blossom Wine?

Zhuang Chen and Li Ling were also dumbfounded.

Originally, the two often hung out with the monkey, but suddenly you tell me you can punch at the Jade Liquid Realm and kick at the Primordial Core Realm!

After Xiong Shi and others recovered from their shock, they reacted quickly.

Immediately stepped forward to capture the one-eyed man.

These spies couldn't be killed so simply.

There was a need for a thorough interrogation, to squeeze out every bit of value. Xiong Shi's eyes were cold, already thinking about how to interrogate these spies.

At this moment.

The black-skirted beautiful woman, seeing her companion's miserable state, was even more terrified and had no desire to continue fighting, only wanting to escape quickly.

But Yuan Tiancheng was not slow.

His steps seemed to bring wind and thunder, catching up with the black-skirted beautiful woman in a few strides, extending a mountain-like hand. The black-skirted beautiful woman screamed in panic, the oppression making her feel suffocated, but resistance was futile.

Within merely a breath.

She followed in the footsteps of the one-eyed man, being grabbed by the White Ape, her bones and muscles all breaking.

The White Ape had no pity for beauty, casually tossing her behind, causing the Gang Essence Realm masters a scalp-tingling sensation.

Chapter 190: The Power of the Fake Pill, the 16-Foot White Ape, Seeks to Accept a Disciple_3

Too fierce!

The situation changed too quickly.

In just a moment, only the Primordial Core Realm Blademan was left fighting alone, but he was also being crushed by Luo Wentian. Strikes of thunder pierced through the void and fell on him, his whole body already starting to numb, while his Blade Gang couldn't break through Luo Wentian's thunder light.

This was simply unwinnable.

And at this moment, witnessing the sudden appearance of the sixteen-foot White Ape made him even more alarmed.

He gritted his teeth, making a desperate move, with his blade like a flying dragon breaking through the air, then forcibly retreated using his left arm to bear a Thunder Light Palm as a cost. This was a risky move, and if unsuccessful, he would end up gravely injured, falling into a catastrophic situation.

The Blademan coughed up a mouthful of blood.

Retreating rapidly.

Luo Wentian was initially startled, his lack of combat experience between Gang Essence Realm warriors was evident, but he quickly calmed down, showing an approving smile in his eyes.

In the distance stood the waiting White Ape.

In its eyes gleamed a golden light, enough to see the trajectory of power movements, easily discerning the Primordial Core Blademan's intentions.

Waiting patiently.

The Giant Ape kicked its leg, as if to shatter mountains, with a momentum of wind and thunder, stomping on the middle-aged Blademan. Even as a Primordial Core Realm adept, he couldn't withstand such immense force, flying back even faster.

Luo Wentian delivered a palm strike, thunder light flooded the sky, deciding the outcome.

The Primordial Core Blademan spat blood continuously, nearly dying.

Xiong Shi personally captured him.

In a blink of an eye, the turmoil subsided.

Inside the Bright Martial Pavilion.

Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan both had smiles on their faces.

The True Martial disciples handled the situation with composure, completely controlling the spies, leaving them quite satisfied.

Taoist Longshan exclaimed:

"Tiansheng, this young monkey has unknowingly grown so strong?"

Previously, he was only vaguely aware, but did not know Yuan Tiancheng's limits had reached such a level, almost becoming the third strongest in the True Martial Sect!

Ning Qi smiled and said:

"Tiansheng has a strong bloodline, coupled with both perseverance and insight, with a resolute Dao heart. It's not surprising he possesses such strength, as he has rapidly awakened his bloodline and also practices Martial Path."

Taoist Longshan was surprised:

"Martial Path?"

Earlier, although Yuan Tiancheng did not display much, he could vaguely perceive something peculiar.

Ning Qi nodded:

"I incorporated the Martial Path of the Human Race to create the Ape King Stance, Ape King Strength, and Ape King True Gang for him, which successfully awakened his bloodline. However, the more I observe, the more I realize that the path of exotic beasts awakening their bloodlines may ultimately converge with Martial Path, not as mystical as previously imagined."

Taoist Longshan's eyes widened with amazement.

Creating a Martial Path for an exotic beast, such a groundbreaking thing was stated so nonchalantly by his little apprentice.

But this was indeed Ning Qi's thought.

Currently, in the composition of the White Ape's strength, its bloodline power accounts for much. Otherwise, relying solely on its Inner Essence Realm level wouldn't suffice to achieve such strength. Of

course, Ning Qi's teachings in various martial arts were also crucial, with the secret technique of the Ape King's true form, in some ways, being akin to the White Ape's bloodline abilities.

But he also discovered that the Martial Path has two major roles for exotic beasts: providing ordinary-bloodline beasts a chance for growth and breakthrough, and aiding in exotic beasts' bloodline awakening.

Taoist Longshan could only sigh with emotion.

Silently, his little apprentice accomplished so much.

He then sensed carefully and asked:

"Jiu, have you sensed any Celestial Being's involvement?"

Ning Qi shook his head slightly:

"Not yet. If a Celestial Being were to appear, the True Martial Sword Stele would sense it."

After advancing to the Primordial Core Realm, he reinforced the Sword Intent within the True Martial Sword Stele, which could be used for comprehension and, at critical moments, could also face enemies.

"It's normal they haven't appeared. Southern Border people are always cautious. Previously, the woman of the Primordial Core Realm who attacked late at night was the same. These spies are probably an attempt, and if successful, could probe the sect's situation. If not, they'd be abandoned."

Taoist Longshan nodded in agreement.

His gaze gradually became stern:

"Several forces have placed spies within our True Martial Sect. It's partly due to the visible success, but the Southern Border Alliance may indeed suspect us because of prior incidents."

"Later, we must remind disciples to be cautious when training outside, lest they fall into targeted schemes."

Ning Qi nodded slightly.

He pondered on how to respond.

Currently, it's not possible to eliminate the Demon Sect and the Southern Border Alliance, so the only thing that can be done is to strengthen the disciples' abilities as much as possible.

...

In True Martial City.

In a guest room of an inn.

Qin Yun and the Southern Border Saintess were quietly sipping tea, surrounded by the occasional heated conversations about the True Martial examination.

"Heaven-Ascending Ladder, Mechanical Being Array, Heart Inquiry Platform?" The Southern Border Saintess listened to the news, her eyes flickering.

The first two had already been detailed.

Their miraculous nature surprised her, as this True Martial Sect, established less than a few decades ago, continuously introduced such incredible things.

"Saint Heir Qin, have you heard of these before in the True Martial Sect?" she asked curiously.

Qin Yun shook his head silently.

He had left the True Martial Sect just four or five years ago, yet the changes now were greater than in the over twenty years he had been there, leaving him with mixed feelings.

He didn't know where this change originated.

However.

The Southern Border Saintess's words clearly made him uncomfortable, and he replied coldly:

"Saintess, if you're interested in Qin, you might be more concerned with the upcoming Heart Inquiry Platform. My intuition tells me it's going to be a major issue."

Judging by the timing, those pieces had likely already begun their Heart Inquiry Platform tests.