

## Cultivating 211

### Chapter 211: Tower of Ten Thousand Paths, Conclusion and Aftermath

True Martial Mountain.

One by one, the disciples looked with amazement at the towering Inheritance Sword Tower before them. It had just been dug out from the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, and the soil still carried a fresh scent. To minimize embarrassment, the two Celestial Human Realm Elders of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion traveled by night, avoiding many cities along the way.

The Inheritance Sword Tower, standing three hundred and thirty-three zhang tall, was quite majestic, with the occasional ripple of Sword Dao sentiments and sharpness, filling sword practitioners with yearning.

It held the essence of a millennium of accumulation and the Sword Dao legacies of many top swordsmen.

If one could ignore the wooden blackened faces of the two elders from the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, it would be even more perfect.

Ning Qi looked at the Sword Tower with some anticipation in his eyes.

To him, it was a good resource for advancement; the only pity was that it only contained Sword Dao.

However, it wasn't much of a problem.

He could draw parallels and use the Sword Dao to drive the development of other paths.

"Elders, you've worked hard," Luo Wentian said with a smile.

The elders' faces darkened further. Their hearts were bitter, and with wooden expressions, they said:

"Sect Leader Luo, the rest of the items are on their way with Tang Qiu and others. We at the Inquiring Sword Pavilion have made a mistake, but we've received the punishment we deserve. We ask Sect Leader Luo to be gracious and spare the Inquiring Sword Pavilion."

Such humility, such acts of appeasement—what's it all for?

Is it not for the continuation of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion?

Luo Wentian nodded faintly:

"Naturally, the Inquiring Sword Pavilion shall remain in seclusion for two hundred years."

He showed no mercy.

A mistake made requires a price to be paid.

However, this was the limit. The True Martial Sect couldn't possibly slaughter the entire Inquiring Sword Pavilion. Even if they could, the Great Yan imperial court would not allow it, and such actions would not align with the True Martial Sect's style.

Back when the Inquiring Sword Pavilion coveted the Heaven-Ascending Ladder and the True Martial Sword Stele, their own methods were applied against them, seizing the Inheritance Sword Tower in return.

If they truly intended to wipe them out, the True Martial Sect might face opposition from other Martial Path sects, which would not be a good thing. By then, many would no longer adhere to the unspoken rules when dealing with the True Martial Sect. After all, until now, the Inquiring Sword Pavilion hasn't harmed any member of the True Martial Sect.

The Inquiring Sword Pavilion has stood in the Great Yan for a thousand years with many allied sects.

If they went too far, these allied sects would also speak out in support.

The two elders from the Inquiring Sword Pavilion looked bitter, but inwardly, they breathed a sigh of relief.

"The Inquiring Sword Pavilion will uphold the promise."

They turned back for one final glimpse at the towering Inheritance Sword Tower, their hearts bleeding. Gritting their teeth, they left through the air, not wanting to stay a moment longer in this place of sorrow. A moment's mistake caused a millennium of effort to be destroyed overnight. No one could understand their pain.

Ning Qi simply watched silently.

Never mind two hundred years—who knows how much the True Martial Sect might transform in just twenty years? By the time the Inquiring Sword Pavilion reemerges, they might find the world has changed completely.

As the two Celestial Human Realm elders departed, a wisp of aura silently entwined with them, becoming an imperceptible mark.

Just in case these two acted rashly.

Ning Qi had a contingency plan.

With his current strength, dealing with ordinary Celestial Human Realm beings was as simple as a wave of his hand.

However, it's most likely that these two wouldn't dare to act recklessly, as doing so would bring about the true end of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion. With a glimmer of hope remaining, they dare not push to the brink. The most dangerous are those with nothing to lose, yet keeping the Inquiring Sword Pavilion serves as their 'shoes' to restrain them.

Retracting his gaze.

Ning Qi once again examined the Inheritance Sword Tower before him. With so many people around, it wasn't the right time to enter.

Luo Wentian spoke with a smile:

"Let's disperse for now. Once we have clarified the situation of the Sword Tower, it will be open for you all."

How to handle the Sword Tower specifically still required discussions with Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan.

All the disciples looked on with anticipation.

After all, it's the heritage of a millennium-old Sword Dao holy land, bringing a fresh sense of curiosity to them.

...

Late at night.

No one around.

Ning Qi silently entered the Sword Tower.

The Sword Tower was spacious and tall.

With its three hundred and thirty-three zhang, it had three hundred and thirty-three levels.

Each level had small rooms, and as Ning Qi stepped into one, he saw meditation cushions inside. On the walls were various patterns, writings, or sword marks. They seemed chaotic, but upon careful examination, one could discover the true intents of the Sword Dao hidden within.

The higher one ascends the Sword Tower, the more profound the Sword Dao true intents left behind.

By the later levels, there were already Sword Dao legacies left by Celestial Human Realm swordsmen, and the count exceeded ten.

Some were left by the Pavilion's historical powerhouses, while others were from invited external Celestial Human Realm swordsmen.

Although the Inheritance Sword Tower never opened to outsiders, exceptions were made. Some who had shown kindness to the Pavilion were permitted entry, while others were part of exchanges, unlike the True Martial Sword Stele, which was completely open to the outside.

Ning Qi contemplated the various Sword Dao present, spiritual light surged in his mind, and he felt he gained significantly.

He roughly understood the operational mechanism of the Sword Tower.

Over a millennium, the interwoven Sword Dao intents inside had formed an invisible Sword Intent barrier. Only by reaching a corresponding level in Sword Dao could one ascend to that layer.

"Every time a great swordsman from the Inquiring Sword Pavilion approached the end of their lifespan, they would enter the Sword Tower, ascend as if 'inquiring about the sword' across time and space with their predecessors. Until they reached the limits of their own Sword Dao and could no longer advance, they would leave all their Sword Dao essence on that level for future generations to comprehend."

Ning Qi sighed slightly.

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He vaguely saw swordsmen of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion laughing as they faced death, leaving behind their unique marks within the Sword Tower.

The higher the floor one reaches, the greater the honor.

"The one who left behind this Sword Tower was truly extraordinary."

Ning Qi sensed the strongest River Sword Intent of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, which was left by the pavilion's founder, an exceptionally talented swordsman in those days. It surpassed the Heart Inquiry Sword by a notch. Gu Changhe's Heart Inquiry Sword Intent was also on this level, but out of respect for the founder, he voluntarily etched his sword intent below it.

"River Sword Intent, Heart Inquiry Sword Intent, Mountain-Relocating Sword Intent, Falling Star Sword Intent... all have their formidable aspects."

"Especially the River Sword Intent, which starts with the river but is conceived with a high vision, vast and flowing endlessly, stretching across thousands of miles, embodying a sense of transcending time and space. This founder of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion was indeed extraordinary. No wonder he came up with the method of leaving this Inheritance Sword Tower. It's just a pity that subsequent generations are lacking..."

Ning Qi closed his eyes to comprehend.

The thousand-year accumulation of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion became the resources for his growth.

His sword intent encompassed everything, incorporating the essence of various sword intents for his growth.

From bottom to top.

As Ning Qi strolled leisurely, he already understood the marks left by many swordsmen over their lifetimes. His comprehension was naturally exaggerated, and with unparalleled Sword Dao, he digested quickly at an astonishing speed, gaining insights within just a breath.

He only ever paused when creating new techniques. In learning existing techniques, he never encountered any so-called difficulties.

If the True Martial Sword Monument is a steady stream, then this time the Sword Tower is an unprecedented 'feast.'

A few days later.

After digesting the 'feast,' Ning Qi exhaled a heartfelt sigh of relief.

He had a look of satisfaction on his face.

This time, he gained a lot, making significant progress in his sword intent and obtaining new insights into the Sword Dao, which further raised his ceiling of potential.

If forced to compare, it might equal years of gains from an open True Martial Sword Monument.

Of course.

Following the defeat of the Heart Inquiry Sword, the fame of True Man Tianjian rose further, attracting more swordsmen to come, and in turn, the True Martial Sword Monument would receive more feedback on Sword Dao simultaneously.

'Feasts' don't come every day, while the steady stream from the True Martial Sword Monument is the real path.

"Not just the True Martial Sword Monument, but this Inheritance Sword Tower can also be opened to the public."

Ning Qi had already thought about how to deal with the Sword Tower.

In his view, the way the Inquiring Sword Pavilion hoarded it was too wasteful; otherwise, how would there be only these Sword Dao essences accumulated over a thousand years? But this was understandable, as not everyone had the absolute confidence of Ning Qi.

Moreover, people always have possessive desires for their belongings.

With a thought.

An unparalleled and unrivaled sword intent instantly soared within the Sword Tower. In an instant, all the sword intents erupted, intertwining like an invisible web seeking to shatter Ning Qi's sword intent.

But unfortunately, it was futile.

The sword-intent web melted like spring snow encountering the sun when it met Ning Qi's sword intent.

Ning Qi was cleansing the Sword Tower.

After digesting all the residues, he understood the situation within the Sword Tower like the back of his hand. He knew that some sword intents were repetitive, shallow, or even chaotic. Not all of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion's Sword Dao masters were formidable.

At this moment, Ning Qi's sword intent swept through, erasing many of the traces.

The entire Sword Tower became significantly cleaner.

After some contemplation.

Various intents manifested from Ning Qi, such as Fist Intent, Blade Intent, Spear Intent, and so on. Although not as strong as his sword intent, they were unparalleled if brought outside. Many intents left marks within the Sword Tower before vanishing.

This acquisition of the Sword Tower from the Inquiring Sword Pavilion was an opportunity for Ning Qi to experiment.

As True Man Tianjian, he could only establish the True Martial Sword Monument, and if he set up a monument encompassing all paths, it might cause great turmoil and attract the attention of that Great Yan Martial Saint.

Ning Qi was still extremely cautious of the Martial Saints before having absolute strength.

He always remembered what the Town North King said, that the world no longer had Martial Saint Techniques. If it was indeed erased by someone, it was best not to show too many anomalies.

"But the Sword Tower before my eyes exists on its own, not established by True Man Tianjian."

"Once the Inheritance Sword Tower is open to the public, it won't be as freely accessible as the True Martial Sword Monument. Conditions can be set so that martial artists entering the Sword Tower, in comprehending a particular layer's sword intent, must leave martial path or ultimate skill of equivalent realm as an exchange."

"In this way, over time, the Inheritance Sword Tower will not just be limited to Sword Dao."

"Then, during this process, the various intents and martial arts I've left will gradually emerge. The beauty lies in no one knowing which strong one left them. The Inheritance Sword Tower will truly become a Tower of Ten Thousand Paths, where all formidable ones enter to aid my growth!"

"Therefore, calling it the Inheritance Sword Tower no longer suits it. From now on, let's call it the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths."

"In a sense, this is a more in-depth attempt based on the True Martial Sword Monument, and it has more benefits for the True Martial Sect. After all, the True Martial Sword Monument only lets disciples comprehend my sword intent, while the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths allows them to also gain the ultimate skills of those who enter."

Thinking this, a smile appeared on Ning Qi's face.

This was beneficial for both the True Martial Sect and him.

It was even extremely advantageous for the entire Great Yan Martial Realm.

Perhaps, at first, some would hoard their own ultimate skills, unwilling to exchange them, but someone will always exchange if you don't. As those people grow stronger and you fall behind, even if you don't want to exchange, you'll have to.

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He informed Luo Wentian and Taoist Longshan about the matter, and both of them were naturally overjoyed, with no objections whatsoever.

Even that very night.

Taoist Longshan personally relocated the Sword Tower to the other side of the mountain gate, reflecting beautifully with the True Martial Sword Stele.

He even changed the name on the tower to the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths.

A few days later.

Tang Qiu, along with a group of experts from the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, delivered all the previously negotiated compensations: treasures, ancient books, all carted into the True Martial Sect.

Seeing their once Inheritance Sword Tower now standing outside the True Martial Mountain gate, renamed to the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths, was heart-wrenching for them, as if they were watching their wife being handed over to their enemy and forced to wear the enemy's favored clothing. Their eyes turned red.

But all they felt was a deep sense of powerlessness.

"Sect Leader Tang, two hundred years of seclusion. If the Inquiring Sword Pavilion fails to keep its promise, I'm afraid many peers in the Martial Realm will not stand by your side," Luo Wentian stated calmly, with a faint hint of threat in his words.

He was just telling the truth.

Tang Qiu had a bitter look on his face:

"I understand, once we return to the sect, we will announce the closure of the mountain for two hundred years."

Luo Wentian nodded slightly:

"Take care."

He watched the desolate backs of Tang Qiu and his companions without a hint of sympathy.

This is all their own doing.

If Gu Changhe had won before, the outcome for the True Martial Sect would not be favorable either, with the Heart Inquiry Platform and the True Martial Sword Stele among other foundations likely to be taken away.

He didn't dwell on this matter any further.

Luo Wentian and Ning Qi exchanged smiles and began to inventory the compensation delivered by the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, which was much more than what the Formless Sect had provided before.

After all, being a Holy Land with millennia of sword dao heritage, this harvest was enough to greatly enhance the foundation of the True Martial Sect!

The numerous ancient books didn't need further elaboration.

The treasures sent were enough to make Ning Qi smile, as he could spend some leisure time refining them into pills, accelerating the strength enhancement of the True Martial Sect disciples.

After creating the Heavenly Thunder Technique, Ning Qi's alchemy abilities further improved, and the pills refined through heavenly thunder had no side effects, as long as the dosage was controlled.

It is foreseeable.

Once the True Martial Sect assimilates this harvest, it will truly possess the grandeur of a Taoist Holy Land.

The True Martial Sect is becoming increasingly vigorous.

Ning Qi was in a good mood.

He thought, the effect of making an example out of someone should be good enough to deter the probing of the Demon Sect and Southern Border, and with a little more time, neither will pose a threat.

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The outcome of the battle between True Man Tianjian and the Heart Inquiry Sword was still spreading, with many people keeping an eye on the developments.

Several days later.

Two more pieces of news spread across the world, causing a sensation.

The first was the Inquiring Sword Pavilion's closure for two hundred years.

The second was the reopening of the True Martial Sect's mountain gate, along with the announcement of the opening of the True Martial Sword Stele and the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths.

This not only made the Martial Realm even more lively but also marked the complete end of the previous conflicts between the Inquiring Sword Pavilion and the True Martial Sect.

After learning about the Inquiring Sword Pavilion's two hundred years of seclusion as the result.

Many people sighed.

Some felt a vague regret, thinking that if the True Martial Sect had been more ruthless, they could have watched the downfall of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion openly, then stood on a moral high ground to attack the True Martial Sect, thus splitting two great bounties at once.

But unfortunately, things didn't go as people wished.

However, subsequently.

Everyone's attention shifted entirely to the True Martial Sect.

The re-opening of the True Martial Sword Stele naturally excited and thrilled many swordsmen. Originally, the True Martial Sword Stele was already well-known, and after this incident where the stele summoned heavenly thunder to slay the Heart Inquiry Sword, it became evident to everyone that the True Martial Sword Stele had been underestimated.

But some couldn't help but wonder.

"Tower of Ten Thousand Paths? What's that?"

After some well-informed people made inquiries, they were dumbfounded, then excitedly spread the news.

"What? The Tower of Ten Thousand Paths is the former Inheritance Sword Tower of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion?"

"The True Martial Sect is incredibly bold! They actually dare to take out such a heritage-like artifact? The comparison with the Inquiring Sword Pavilion is instantaneously telling..."

"Not only that, but all martial artists who meet the criteria can enter the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths, but they must exchange one for one, gaining one insight requires leaving another. However, it seems that most of what's inside the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths is likely still sword dao insights..."

Voices of discussion sprang up across the land.

Some people felt this Tower of Ten Thousand Paths did not live up to its name, claiming to be all paths but likely still dominated by sword dao.

Others speculated the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths might be a conspiracy, suspecting the True Martial Sect of aiming to seize others' martial paths.

Yet most people marveled at the audacity of the True Martial Sect.

The previous opening of the True Martial Sword Stele had already earned them much goodwill, and now, with the opening of the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths, even more so.

Everyone knew.

The True Martial Sect's rise, stepping on the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, likely greatly increased its foundation, harvesting countless treasures, making others envious.

But now.

The True Martial Sect sharing the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths was, in a sense, enough to silence the world, preventing others from envying the True Martial Sect for its other achievements.

This is human nature.

Some martial sects with a long heritage secretly lamented that the rise of the True Martial Sect was unstoppable.

Not only did they have supreme experts as their foundation, but they also lacked a lack of long-term vision, making their rise inevitable.

Some regretted bitterly.

Not participating in the True Martial Sect's assessment earlier, missing an opportunity to soar.

The Town North King heard this news and shook his head with a smile.

He realized his reminders were somewhat unnecessary; the True Martial Sect clearly knew what to do and had their bounds.

"However... this time, True Man Tianjian is indeed likely to truly enter the sight of those standing atop the Great Yan, but I wonder if it will catch the glance of that one."

He gazed into the distance.

In the direction of the Imperial City of Yan State.

Chapter 214: Supreme Powerhouses, Inquiring Sword Pavilion's Ancient Texts

Yan State.

It is the central region of Great Yan, and also the most prosperous land for the Martial Path. However, in Yan State, martial sects are not flourishing, simply because under the Emperor's authority, the imperial power is supreme, with various governmental institutions jointly nurturing martial artists. Martial academies are widespread, and additionally, various military forces constantly recruit fresh blood here.

In the Imperial Capital Taian, there are even many heavyweight figures.

Flame Martial Grand General's Residence.

The residence is not that grand, but its proximity to the Imperial Palace is a testament to its status. Eight fierce guards stand like sculptures at the gate, and their intimidating presence makes people dare not fix their gaze.

Flame Martial Grand General, a true legendary figure of the Great Yan Military.

Renowned across the world two hundred years ago, his martial cultivation today is even more unfathomable, ranked second on the Celestial Being List.

Although he is second.

In the eyes of the countless soldiers of Great Yan, he is undoubtedly the first.

The rankings of the Celestial Being List are almost entirely based on past achievements.

The top three positions on the Celestial Being List, except for the time when Blade Demon unexpectedly took third place by defeating the previous third, have not changed for a long time. It's truly difficult to say who is stronger than who, as if the two sides don't exchange blows, the result will remain forever unknown.

A figure dressed in armor stopped before Flame Martial Grand General's residence, a trace of reverence rising in his eyes.

The fierce guards resembling sculptures paid respectful gestures:

"Greetings, Divine Feather Grand General!"

Divine Feather Grand General waved slightly, then stepped inside.

Under the guidance of a servant, he bypassed seven or eight corridors, maintaining his gaze steadily forward, and stopped before a courtyard, where the servant said:

"Divine Feather Grand General, Flame Martial Grand General is waiting for you inside."

Divine Feather Grand General took a deep breath and stepped through the courtyard gate, his view instantly broadening as a gentle breeze stirred ripples on the green lake water. A pavilion with eight corners faintly revealed a figure, an elder dressed in casual attire. The reverence in his eyes grew stronger, and he walked slowly towards him.

Both bore the title of Grand General, yet he knew how immature he was before the other.

Given the title Flame Martial, it was evident.

Divine Feather Grand General walked slowly, careful not to disturb the elder fishing.

Standing behind the elder, he respectfully waited with his hands lowered, showing no impatience.

Half an hour later.

The elder's fishing rod suddenly dipped, his face showing joy as he hurriedly pulled up the rod, but the fish seemed somewhat heavy, resisting mightily, even making the elder somewhat strained.

"Divine Feather, lend a hand."

Divine Feather Grand General promptly seized the fishing rod together, daring not use any martial power, nor even physical strength beyond an ordinary level. Combining efforts, the rod finally sprang up, a plump fish leaping under the sunlight, its scales glimmering.

The big fish landed on the pavilion, ceasing to struggle, as if trembling in fear.

"Grand General, what a great catch!" Divine Feather Grand General praised.

Flame Martial Grand General simply smiled slightly.

He admired his prize, running his fingers along the scales, and ultimately, with some effort, lifted it and tossed it back into the lake, the breeze sweeping past his gray hair, with some sweat on his forehead, looking every bit like a regular old man, his movements even somewhat lacking agility.

Yet Divine Feather Grand General dared not show any disdain.

He knew, it was related to Flame Martial Grand General's cultivation.

The two sat facing each other.

Flame Martial Grand General gazed at the lake water, musing:

"The world is like this lake; we beings are like the fish within. Whether big fish or small, seeking transcendence relying on oneself is immensely difficult, but if relying on external forces to leap out, can only become someone else's catch, our fate subject to someone else's will."

Divine Feather Grand General listened intently, sensing some profound meaning in his words, yet unable to comprehend fully, as he hadn't reached that level yet.

He could only cautiously say:

"But figures like the Grand General naturally have long leapt out of this lake."

Flame Martial Grand General smiled:

"Who knows whether outside this lake isn't merely entering a larger one?"

Divine Feather Grand General was speechless, feeling any reply seemed wrong.

Flame Martial Grand General chuckled, shifting the topic to recent world-shaking events:

"What do you think of that True Man Tianjian?"

Divine Feather Grand General's body trembled slightly, having considered reasons why Flame Martial Grand General had summoned him, surprised this was indeed regarding True Man Tianjian. Recalling recent rumors, his heart too was uneasy.

"Is the Grand General referring to the recent battle between True Man Tianjian and the Heart Inquiry Sword?"

Flame Martial Grand General sipped tea.

Divine Feather Grand General caught on quickly, ordinary news being something Flame Martial Grand General would certainly know.

"During the eradication of Death Fire Abyss' branch, a Demon Sect Celestial Human Realm Elder fled to True Martial Mountain. That was the first time True Man Tianjian made a move, the Celestial Sword descended from the sky, seriously wounding Old Demon Lin, thus establishing his initial fame as True Man Tianjian."

"But... it was somewhat illogical. With True Man Tianjian's strength, he should have easily slain Old Demon Lin back then, yet he didn't."

He hesitated slightly.

"Two possibilities exist: either, his strength was only that then."

"Or, he was merely hiding it before."

Flame Martial Grand General's expression remained calm:

"Which possibility do you think is greater?"

Divine Feather Grand General replied:

"I believe the latter possibility is greater. In just a few years, how could one jump in strength from the lower ranks of the Celestial Being List directly into the top ten? Yet if so, it indicates this True Man Tianjian doesn't favor interacting with our Imperial Court, possibly as he concealed his strength originally to avoid being disturbed by the court."

Chapter 215: The Supreme Experts of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, Classics\_2

He narrowed his eyes slightly, recalling Taoist Longshan's words from the past.

"So, what do you think of his strength now?"

This time, the Divine Feather Grand General hesitated.

"Being able to so easily slay the Heart Inquiry Sword at least places him in the top ten, but as for higher, I can't be certain."

The Flame Martial Grand General laughed:

"Let me tell you, even the Sun Chasing Sword King facing the Heart Inquiry Sword wouldn't find it this easy."

The Divine Feather Grand General was immediately invigorated.

This meant that, in the eyes of the Flame Martial Grand General, True Man Tianjian already had the qualifications to contend for the title of the world's top swordsman, perhaps even considering him as the current top swordsman!

For these unparalleled experts on the Celestial Being List's top ten, even the Divine Feather Grand General couldn't fully grasp all the details, but there was no doubt when the Flame Martial Grand General said so.

He couldn't help but exclaim:

"True Man Tianjian is actually this strong?"

The Flame Martial Grand General sighed:

"True Man Tianjian is no ordinary being, perhaps he is like a fish that can leap out of the lake."

"People say his lifespan is almost depleted, yet they do not realize that those nearing their end often possess a courage and boldness unattainable to the ordinary man."

He stood up, gazing at the lake, as if through its surface he could see the world's state of affairs, the numerous conflicts.

"Now the Demon Sect is frequently active, even allying with the Southern Border, a time of much unrest, True Man Tianjian is an anomaly, such an existence is best tied to our Imperial Court's chariot."

The Divine Feather Grand General's pupils shrank, but he couldn't help but say:

"Grand General, the Demon Sect is nothing but a clown, at the critical moment the Martial Saint..."

Before he finished speaking, the Flame Martial Grand General glanced at him, sending waves of shock through his heart.

Did that mean... not even the Martial Saint's action could be assured?

Is there something wrong with the Martial Saint, or do the Demon Sect and Southern Border have a method against the Martial Saint?

The Flame Martial Grand General said softly:

"No matter the reason True Man Tianjian is somewhat resistant to our Imperial Court, at least we can't let him lean towards the Southern Border, fortunately now the Demon Sect and Southern Border seem hostile to the True Martial Sect, Divine Feather, go investigate this, and then station yourself in Qing State."

The Divine Feather Grand General respectfully replied:

"Yes!"

He turned and left, but from just those few words, he already realized True Man Tianjian was far more powerful than he had imagined, and very important to the Imperial Court.

The Flame Martial Grand General gave a light sigh, turned to look in the direction of the Imperial Palace, and picked up his fishing rod again.

"I just hope you can wake up soon."

...

Sunset Sword Sect.

Sword King Peak.

A boundless Sword Burial Land stretched out as far as the eye could see.

Figures waited respectfully outside.

"Ancestor, that's the way it is; now people are saying that True Man Tianjian already possesses the qualification to challenge for the title of the world's top swordsman, hmph, absolutely absurd, if it weren't for you not acting for so long, there would be no room for True Man Tianjian to show off."

"Even slaying the Heart Inquiry Sword, so what, how can he be compared to you, Ancestor?"

Unconvinced voices rose.

True Man Tianjian's fame skyrocketed, many believed he already had the qualification to rank in the world's top five, inevitably making comparisons with the Sun Chasing Sword King. Some staunch supporters of True Man Tianjian even felt that the Sun Chasing Sword King was no match for him, naturally irritating the people of the Sunset Sword Sect.

Before this.

Benefiting from the Sun Chasing Sword King's suppression of the Sword Dao for one hundred and sixty years,

the Sunset Sword Sect had gradually earned the title of the premier holy land of the Sword Dao, but now, undoubtedly, this title began to waver again.

"Especially with the True Martial Sect feigning generosity, opening up the True Martial Sword Monument and Tower of Ten Thousand Paths, it's simply nonsensical, if one day their ultimate skills become known to the world, perhaps that will be the time of the True Martial Sect's demise."

No doubt about it.

This move by the True Martial Sect also irritated many sects in secret, since they were inevitably compared, appearing selfish and narrow-minded.

After everyone finished speaking,

deep within the Sword Burial Land, there was sudden movement.

Layers upon layers of Sword Intent vibrated, converging into a grand voice:

"Do you wish for me to act?"

Detecting the anger in that voice, everyone hurriedly kowtowed in terror and trepidation.

"Ancestor, we dare not, we merely wish for the Sunset Sword Sect to firmly establish its position as the premier holy land of the Sword Dao!"

That grand voice, full of bitter disappointment:

"A bunch of worthless creatures!"

"How could the premier holy land of the Sword Dao be achieved by standing on others' shoulders? A blacksmith needs their own strength; otherwise, even if one forcefully stands in that position, sooner or later, they will be pulled down! I've been in seclusion for years, how could the sect's atmosphere become like this, this must be punished!"

Everyone was drenched in sweat, repeatedly pleading for forgiveness.

That voice finally calmed.

"True Man Tianjian? I never would have imagined in just a few decades, such an outstanding figure would emerge in the world. Gathering his own Sword Intent for the world to study, truly a remarkable method with great courage, I am ashamed, this world, it is indeed wonderful."

Everyone was shocked.

Someone couldn't help but ask:

"Ancestor, are you saying even you are not a match for True Man Tianjian..."

As he spoke, he was filled with trepidation.

The Sun Chasing Sword King's voice was steady and serene:

"If it was before, perhaps not, but now, it's still unclear who would win."

"But perhaps what does it matter, remember, if one cares about trivial reputations, how can they climb to the peak of the Sword Dao? Even becoming the world's top swordsman, what use is it, those of us who wield swords should aspire, once through the Sword Dao's gate, naturally we must move towards that highest peak, without becoming a Sword Saint, one is merely an ant."

Chapter 216: Peak Powerhouses, Inquiring Sword Pavilion's Classics\_3

The crowd was ashamed, and someone's eyes lit up as they asked:

"Ancestor, have you perhaps taken that step already?"

The Sun Chasing Sword King's voice was somewhat desolate:

"So difficult it is, merely somewhat of a clue, I wish for another thousand years of life."

He continued:

"True Man Tianjian had the courage to establish the True Martial Sword Stele; I think this move was very commendable, it inspired me to imitate it in the future. You should not harbor jealousy; instead, be humble, so that our Sunset Sword Sect can endure for a long time. If it is like the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, where there is always a higher mountain, we will inevitably face a time where we cannot recover from disaster."

Such earnest teaching made everyone lower their heads even more, as the layers of Sword Intent prompted reflection, making them understand their impatience over the years.

"Thank you, Ancestor, for your guidance!"

The Sun Chasing Sword King's voice gradually quieted:

"In the Sword Dao of the world, there are individuals like True Man Tianjian, and I am not alone. When I come out of seclusion, I shall visit and spar; to have a comrade is such fortune."

The crowd was again embarrassed.

Originally, they thought the Ancestor would be displeased at being compared to others, but now they realized that the Ancestor's realm was something they could not reach.

...

A mountain slope.

An old man with disheveled hair walked barefoot, and through the faint gaps in his hair, one could see the old man's gaze was very cold, a kind of madness-like indifference.

"Misfortune, it's only one old man!"

A burst of laughter rang out.

Bandits emerged from various parts of the forest, recklessly scrutinizing the old man in front of them, spitting while another laughed:

"Come over here, old man, and crawl under Uncle Liu's dragon crotch!"

The crowd jeered.

"I didn't expect Leprosy Liu to favor this!"

Leprosy Liu chuckled:

"You guys wouldn't understand, the old man has his magic."

The crowd laughed even more joyously.

Yet the old man seemed to turn a deaf ear.

He kept moving forward.

The sound of his barefoot feet rubbing against fallen leaves and stones was conspicuous in the forest, further angering the crowd.

Leprosy Liu fumed:

"Damn it, turns out he's a madman, a deaf fool."

He picked up his big machete, taking a step forward, ready to hack the old man alive.

The old man finally moved, his gaze flicked a glance, and Leprosy Liu felt as if he fell into an ice cellar, what pair of eyes were those, filled with terrifying madness, causing one to sink; vaguely he read in those eyes the meaning 'you dare use a blade', and then fell into complete silence.

The old man walked barefoot.

The forest's commotion altogether ceased, the bandits turned into statues, only after the old man had completely walked past did the statues start to bleed from the forehead, turning into fragments of corpses, precise and incredible.

The old man raised the black object in his hand, his eyes finally showed waves.

Vaguely visible, it seemed to be a piece of a knife handle.

Originally, it was an unparalleled divine blade, now only the handle remained.

This was the old man's Dao.

If even the knife handle completely disappeared, that would be the day his Blade Path reached Perfection.

However, this was rather difficult; he needed to find a suitable method.

The old man continued wandering the mountains, somewhat aimlessly, passing by a tea house, where someone glanced at the mad old man and then withdrew the gaze, continuing the boastful dialogue:

"Speaking of that True Man Tianjian, merely with the sword stele, he summoned Heavenly Thunder, transforming into thirty-six unparalleled celestial swords, thereby slaughtering Wentian Sword, ranked fourteenth on the Celestial Being List, it was indeed a sudden emergence, nearly rivaling the Blade Demon's terror when he slew the third-ranked on the Celestial Being List!"

"In my view, now True Man Tianjian not only has the power to compete for the world's number one swordsman with the Sun Chasing Sword King, but possibly even has hope to battle the Blade Demon."

The old man paused his actions, his eyes rarely showed a trace of clarity, some distant memories finally surfaced from his heart.

"True Man Tianjian...?"

He murmured.

Suddenly, he knew how to completely 'disappear' his knife handle.

...

A bustling town.

The blind storyteller narrated recent events.

When recounting the battle between True Man Tianjian and Wentian Sword, he couldn't help exaggerating, ten thousand celestial swords tore through the void, while Wentian Sword pierced the earth with one strike; as they battled, the sky and earth darkened, ultimately Wentian Sword was defeated, slain by True Man Tianjian.

The crowd listened with enthusiasm.

Calling for more, for another segment.

The blind old man chuckled:

"In that case, let me tell you about the story of Heaven-Slaying Martial Saint from my hometown, I guarantee it will be even more exciting than the previous one!"

The audience cheered repeatedly.

The blind old man began to speak.

But his thoughts inevitably became turbulent.

"True Man Tianjian? Sudden emergence? Interesting... Just wondering if he might be an old friend?"

He laughed.

Thinking that maybe he'll see the True Martial Sword Stele someday.

Don't know why, but he recalled the young man who listened to him narrate in the rain long ago.

In all these years, there were few people he couldn't see through.

That young man was one of them.

But he didn't like peering into others' secrets, just as he didn't like others peering into his.

Someone noticed he was distracted, hastily urging:

"What happened next, where did Heaven-Slaying Martial Saint go afterward?"

The old man smiled:

"It's said... He suffered heavenly punishment, picked up by a young lady, then got married and had children..."

...

Throughout Great Yan, everyone was hotly discussing the matter of True Man Tianjian, even some deeply hidden old monsters were stirred.

Most people under the heaven were merely watching for amusement, thinking True Man Tianjian was very strong for slaying Wentian Sword, but actually had no real conception of how strong; only those at that level knew.

True Man Tianjian had truly stood among the Martial Artists' absolute pinnacle.

Countless gazes held deep meanings.

Numerous top sects, the Great Yan Imperial Court, Demon Sect, Southern Border, and even Northern Barbarian, were secretly discussing the matter.

Powerhouses of such caliber possessed sufficient threat to warrant serious consideration from all sides.

From this perspective.

Ning Qi's intimidating tactics were very successful.

At least in the short term, the Demon Sect and Southern Border dared not undertake excessive actions; small moves might continue but at least overtly they wouldn't be too vicious.

Meanwhile, now at True Martial Mountain.

It was more bustling.

After reopening the sect.

The True Martial Sword Stele attracted more swordsmen than before, while Martial Artists' attitudes towards the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths were somewhat conservative. After all, it required one to trade their own Martial Arts Ultimate Skills in exchange, which made many hesitate, but there were always those who were the first to try, and those who entered came out excited.

The True Martial Sword Stele was excellent, but actually had a high threshold, requiring both insight and a high realm in Sword Dao to gain enlightenment.

But the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths was not.

After Ning Qi's organization, its levels were more distinct.

Entering it is always rewarding.

Trading one for one.

In fact, it never loses.

Those who entered came out and began to spread the word madly, gradually more and more people entered the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths, and in just a short time, it was already full, Luo Wentian happily promulgated long-prepared management rules to let Martial Artists orderly enter.

He was glad to see the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths so popular.

As time goes by, this would become the heritage of True Martial Sect!

All kinds of Martial Arts under heaven emerged from it, it would become the truly named Tower of Ten Thousand Paths.

He looked in the direction of the Seeking Tao Institute, increasingly proud of his Ninth Junior Brother's excellence, indeed an unprecedented prodigy, whose ideas completely differed from ordinary people; if the Inquiring Sword Pavilion had such courage before, it would probably have already become the foremost Sword Dao Holy Land.

True Martial Sect was thriving and prosperous.

Ning Qi too was delighted.

He perused numerous records of Inquiring Sword Pavilion, which documented many Secret Techniques and accounts, allowing him substantial gain.

That day, the thirty-six celestial swords' suppression terrified Tang Qiu; he dared not miss anything, he recorded all the records meticulously, not daring to gamble if True Man Tianjian would notice, even some records he thought unimportant were brought over in original form.

As for the nearby Enlightenment Tea tree, it unexpectedly grew again before the True Martial Peach Assembly arrived, now already level with Ning Qi.

The reason was simple.

Gu Changhe and another Celestial Being from Inquiring Sword Pavilion's corpses were buried beneath it, providing nourishment.

Ning Qi thought.

Once he finished digesting this wave of gains from Inquiring Sword Pavilion, his heritage would greatly increase.

Moreover, occasional feedback from the True Martial Sword Stele and Tower of Ten Thousand Paths made his heritage grow much faster than before.

But at present.

His primary focus was on the numerous records among Inquiring Sword Pavilion's concerning the Martial Saint Realm, Inquiring Sword Pavilion's millennia-long legacy might hold some clues.

Ning Qi patiently perused.

Chapter 217: Borrow Another 1,000 Years, Surely Become Martial Saint  
Seeking Tao Institute.

The gentle breeze swept by, carrying the exotic fragrance of the Enlightenment Tea tree, making Ning Qi feel more at ease. In the distance, the White Ape was diligently cultivating. Ever since that day when he shone during the assessment, he had been practicing even harder.

Although cultivation isn't for showing off, proper display indeed can make cultivation more motivated.

Ning Qi flipped through the tome in his hand.

He read quickly, immediately aware if something was useful to him. If he found some essence worth integrating, he would pause slightly, but even so, it wouldn't take much time.

From time to time, he waved his hand, and another tome would float towards him.

In the distance, there was a small mountain of books.

This was Ning Qi's reading volume for the day.

Once he finished reading, the White Ape would go to the Scripture Pavilion to exchange them for a new batch for Ning Qi.

Ning Qi was engrossed.

"Sword Hero's Travelogue? This is an account of a Celestial Human Realm swordsman's sixty-year journey across the Great Yan from the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, encountering a great storm in the western desert that covered the sky and devoured the light. It wasn't until witnessing the Power of Heaven and Earth that he realized he was like an ant..."

He carefully comprehended, feeling as though he was also experiencing it firsthand through the detailed descriptions.

To the people in the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, this might just be a special experience of an ancestor. Such tomes they might not even give much attention to, at most, some disciples might read it casually as a leisure text.

These types of tomes are mostly travelogues and autobiographies. Inquiring Sword Pavilion doesn't value them much, so they sent them all over this time, not even bothering to transcribe them thoroughly.

But to Ning Qi, these were excellent ways to enrich his foundation, allowing him to indirectly comprehend the myriad phenomena of the world and gain much from it.

He extracted the essence, continuously drawing nourishment for growth.

Nowadays, he only needed to spend some time each day refining the spirit, and cultivation was easier than when he broke through from Jade Liquid Realm to Primordial Core Realm, leaving him with more time for enlightenment and creation techniques.

"Maritime Experiences..."

"Exotic Beast Theories..."

Tome after tome was swiftly scanned.

Suddenly.

Ning Qi's gaze paused on the one in his hand.

"River Chronicles."

Interest welled up in his eyes.

When he previously entered the Sword Tower, he learned that the Sword Intent comprehended by the ancestor of Inquiring Sword Pavilion was named River Sword Intent. Later he found out that this talented ancestor even changed his name to Wu Jianghe.

"Could this be his autobiography?"

Ning Qi opened it.

He immediately knew his guess was correct.

His interest deepened.

He turned page by page, reading attentively, finding that this autobiography only recorded part of Wu Jianghe's life trajectory.

"From being ordinary when he first set foot on the Martial Path to gradually rising after initially condensing the River Sword Intent, this tome records Wu Jianghe's experiences during that period. Yet, it's filled mostly with trivial daily matters and some life reflections, appearing somewhat immature. As

for insights into Sword Dao, they're scarcely mentioned, no wonder Inquiring Sword Pavilion relegated it to this neglected pile."

Ning Qi estimated that after so many years, some people in the Inquiring Sword Pavilion might not even remember this autobiography.

"However, actually, you can see from it that Wu Jianghe was the kind of person who develops late. Some daily routines, albeit mundane, easily show certain good habits, truly causing Inquiring Sword Pavilion to miss the point."

Ning Qi shook his head slightly.

Even though this tome doesn't record any Sword Dao insights, if someone were willing to delve deeply, they could gain something. It only shows how the efforts of this Inquiring Sword Pavilion ancestor were in vain, reflecting that the pavilion has become extremely impetuous. Even if it hadn't antagonized the True Martial Sect, it would sooner or later provoke other strong beings.

He continued reading.

Suddenly, his gaze halted.

He turned to the last page.

"To those who come after, whether they're from Inquiring Sword Pavilion or not, it's fate that leads us here."

Ning Qi slightly furrowed his brow, not because of the content, but because he sensed an extremely subtle fluctuation from between the lines. As he fully perceived it, the fluctuation became increasingly apparent, and the River Chronicles before him seemed to change its form.

He sat up straight.

Threads of the Power of Heaven and Earth gathered by his side, Divine Intent burgeoned, even the White Ape looked over with an astonished gaze.

Ning Qi's eyes grew increasingly bright.

The Gang Qi in his palm gathered, transforming into a ball of flame.

Then it enveloped the River Chronicles.

In an instant.

The yellowed pages turned to ash, but within the ashes, they weren't empty; a few pages of paper shimmering with silver light appeared, making Ning Qi's lips slowly curve upwards.

His feeling was indeed correct!

"This River Chronicles has a secret. To glimpse this secret isn't easy. It's unlikely that an ordinary Celestial Human Realm could achieve it. It must be an unparalleled Celestial Being Realm Perfection kind of strong person, perhaps even Gu Changhe was a bit short. Of course, even if he could sense something unusual from the last sentence, he wouldn't have the disposition to read such a boring book."

Perhaps in the past, some disciples from Inquiring Sword Pavilion browsed it, but they didn't have the qualifications to witness its true face.

By a twist of fate, it instead fell into Ning Qi's hands.

Ning Qi shook the silver pages in his hand with anticipation.

The first sentence immediately invigorated him.

"Regret! Regret! Regret! If only I could borrow another thousand years from the heavens, why worry about achieving the pinnacle of Martial Saint?"

A strong feeling of unwillingness emerged.

Even an unparalleled Celestial Being Perfection strong person can only have a lifespan of eight hundred years.

"There no longer exists a Martial Saint Technique in the world. Relying on our own strength to recreate a Martial Saint Technique, how extremely difficult it is! It's no less than retracing the path of our ancestors."

"However, the predecessors blazed a trail through hardship, expending time measured in thousands of years to open up the Martial Saint realm. How can we achieve it in just a few hundred years? Only an unrivaled prodigy, unprecedented through the ages, could have a glimmer of hope!"

Chapter 218: Borrowing Another Thousand Years, Surely Becoming a Martial Saint\_2

"I have comprehended the Martial Saint Realm for five hundred years, and only then did I gain some insights."

"I especially leave this page for future reference for those who come after."

"Remember, if the world is still under the command of the Great Yan, whoever obtains this page, do not publicize it, do not study it with others, be extremely cautious of the Great Yan Martial Saint!!!"

Ning Qi looked at the information left in front of him.

His heart was extremely uneasy.

Originally, he just wanted to search through the various tomes in the Inquiring Sword Pavilion to see if there were any descriptions about the Martial Saint Realm, but unexpectedly, he learned such astonishing news.

He couldn't help but recall the intelligence he had received from the Town North King before.

"Is there no longer any Martial Saint Technique in the world? Wu Jianghe advised us in such a manner, could it be that this Martial Saint Technique was really erased by the Great Yan Martial Saint? Is there someone who doesn't want a Martial Saint to be born?"

"Is it because if it were known to the Great Yan Martial Saint, they would be preemptively annihilated?"

"Then why not simply execute all the Celestial Being Realm Perfection experts, would this not sever the possibility of others rising to become a Martial Saint from the root? Is it perhaps because doing so too openly would lead to chaos?"

Ning Qi's eyes shone deeply.

In a single thought, many notions turned in his mind.

When the intelligence from the Town North King came, he and Taoist Longshan thought that eradicating the Martial Saint Technique was not the doing of the Great Yan Martial Saint, but now the pages left by Wu Jianghe obviously made Ning Qi hesitate again.

"It seems that there must be an invisible hand controlling everything behind the scenes."

"Originally, I thought that if one day I achieved the Celestial Human Realm, I could begin to solve the issues of the Demon Sect and the Southern Border, but now it seems that merely reaching the Celestial Human Realm is not enough; perhaps I need to become even stronger, until I achieve Celestial Being Realm Perfection, or even glimpse the Martial Saint Realm!"

Ning Qi has already taken the Great Yan Martial Saint as an imaginary enemy.

Now his strength is already powerful enough, when he previously slew the Heart Inquiry Sword, he hadn't even used twenty percent of his power. With this in mind, he feels that within the Celestial

Human Realm, none should be his adversary, perhaps he could be called invincible among the Celestial Human Realm.

Once he ascends to the Celestial Human Realm, he feels hopeful to fight a Martial Saint.

But that is only what he believes.

How strong a Martial Saint truly is, he has no concept, and the Great Yan Martial Saint who has lived so long is likely not an ordinary Martial Saint either.

Therefore, before achieving absolute strength, he cannot reveal himself.

Ning Qi took a deep breath.

He understood a truth, that the unknown is the most terrifying.

"The most important thing next is to understand how strong a Martial Saint truly is, in this vast universe, it's impossible for even the slightest trace to be left behind, no matter how much is erased it can't be completely removed. Only by knowing the strength of a Martial Saint can I compare it with myself, having enough confidence."

"If it's truly impossible to understand, then I'll just keep cultivating to become a Martial Saint! By then, no matter what the Great Yan Martial Saint, no matter what the Demon Sect or Southern Border, no matter what demons or monsters, all of them will be crushed!"

Ning Qi unusually felt a bit ruthless, perhaps the information he learned made him a little agitated.

He took a deep breath and adjusted his own emotions.

"But there's no need to be overly tense, nine out of ten of the top ten on the Celestial Being List are at the Celestial Being Perfection Realm, plus some hidden ancient monsters, they're still alive, which means the situation might not be particularly dire."

Ning Qi continued to look down.

After Wu Jianghe's warnings, there were genuinely recorded insights about the Martial Saint Realm.

This ancestor of the Inquiring Sword Pavilion was also exceptionally talented, and five hundred years of enlightenment naturally did not yield nothing.

Having finished reading, Ning Qi's eyes flashed with spiritual light.

"Celestial Being Perfection is the Three Flowers of Essence, Qi, and Spirit Perfection, and the key to stepping into the Martial Saint realm, as Wu Jianghe surmised, is to refine the Power of Heaven and Earth for one's own use!"

"The power of the Celestial Human Realm lies in the ability to resonate with the Power of Heaven and Earth, but Wu Jianghe thinks that this kind of action is actually separated by a veil, metaphorically speaking, it's like using a gun or cannon in the past life to hit people? Although it's not bad, it still hasn't touched the essence."

"If one could refine the Power of Heaven and Earth into the body to form a mystical power, akin to Gang Qi, then it would truly utilize the Power of Heaven and Earth, which means truly demonstrating the power of 'guns and cannons'?"

Ning Qi instantly connected many thoughts.

Back when he received the Cyan Blade Sword Saint's legacy from Zhuang Chen, there was a note.

Absorbing the Power of Heaven and Earth for personal use.

At that time, Ning Qi had many speculations about the path to ascend to the Martial Saint Realm.

Now, Wu Jianghe's deductions match this quite closely.

It seems to be the right path, but there are numerous challenges to overcome along this path.

"However, wanting to refine the Power of Heaven and Earth into a force freely controlled like Gang Qi is not easy. Wu Jianghe spent five hundred years and only found some clues, and he speculated that it is related to the Three Flowers of Essence, Qi, and Spirit, making some attempts, but all failed."

"Nevertheless, these experiences are indeed very valuable, reducing many detours for others. Presumably, in the past, the ancestors of the Human Race went through relay battles across generations, opening up the Martial Saint Realm."

"Unfortunately, now it's even more difficult than before, with a suspected big hand manipulating everything, preventing the emergence of the Martial Saint Realm."

An ordinary person, even an unparalleled genius that emerges once in a century would despair.

But Ning Qi's mind had completely calmed down.

His reverse-heavenly comprehension provided him with confidence.

Given a little time, even not too long, the Martial Saint Realm would be like taking something out of a bag to him.

Wu Jianghe's centuries of effort might be enough for just a few months for him.

Ning Qi cherished and carefully put away the silver page.

This is one of the few accurate secret information and records he has about the Martial Saint Realm, which will serve as his support when he ascends to this realm in the future.

He exhaled a gentle breath.

Temporarily not planning to continue reading tomes, he needed some time to buffer.

He closed his eyes to rest, and as thoughts of spiritual light surfaced in his mind, he began contemplating a recent conception.

How could Gang Qi persist outside of his body, allowing it to serve as a trump card for his brothers and protect their safety?

This was an inspiration he found from the texts of the Formless Sect and the Inquiring Sword Pavilion.

To others.

Creation Technique is an arduous and frustrating task that requires deep thought.

But to Ning Qi, it's very enjoyable.

His way of resting is Creation Technique.

...

Time slowly passed.

True Martial Mountain grew increasingly lively as the renown of the True Martial Sword Stele and the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths spread across the land, many Martial Artists came attracted by the name, greatly invigorating the martial atmosphere of Qing State.

And at the forefront.

Was True Martial City and its surroundings.

Many Martial Artists stayed and settled in True Martial City, and the average strength of Martial Artists in this area skyrocketed, and the expansion of True Martial City continued, seemingly becoming another martial arts center of Qing State, gradually showing a trend comparable to the State City.

It can be foreseen.

As long as the True Martial Sword Stele and Tower of Ten Thousand Paths exist.

It's only a matter of time before True Martial City surpasses Qing State City.

As a result, the people of the True Martial Sect were, of course, very happy.

After all, this would undoubtedly strengthen the foundation of True Martial City even more.

Within the city.

Streams of bustling traffic.

Disciples of True Martial Sect, acting as Guardians, observed the order, but the reputation of True Man Tianjian maintained general restraint.

Jiang Baishan gave a light cough and turned to Song City with a chuckle and a wink, saying:

"And five more days until the Peach Assembly, I heard from Jiu that the Enlightenment Tea Tree has matured this year, and there is fortune to be had."

Song City grinned, knowing what Jiang Baishan went to do, and then cheekily winked and smiled at him as he was leaving into the distance.

Song City chuckled, he knew Jiang Baishan was going to prepare for the True Martial Peach Assembly.

#### Chapter 219: Revealing Identity, Pressure from the Martial Saint

Jiang Baishan walked on the streets of True Martial City, quickly turning into a small alley, and then appearing at the entrance of a small courtyard.

"Ruhua!"

He looked joyfully at the woman in white clothes who was watering the flowers, his eyes filled with tenderness.

Lin Ruhua turned around, her smile radiant, she leaned against Jiang Baishan's chest, the two of them deeply in love, the tenderness in their eyes seemed to melt each other.

"It's my fault for leaving you alone these days." Jiang Baishan said guiltily.

Lin Ruhua smiled and shook her head:

"I understand, recently there's been a lot going on at True Martial Sect, as an Elder, you have to set an example."

She then playfully protested:

"Am I such an unreasonable woman?"

Saying so, she punched Jiang Baishan in the chest, causing him to grimace in pain, the words 'back then I wondered who was wielding a huge knife at me' held back at his lips.

He laughed:

"Yes, yes, my Ruhua is the gentlest of all!"

Lin Ruhua nodded with satisfaction, Jiang Baishan suddenly said seriously:

"If so, would you be willing to become an Elder Lady at True Martial Sect with me? The True Martial Peach Assembly is about to start this year, and the brothers are eager to meet you."

Lin Ruhua froze, her cheeks reddened.

This was too sudden, she wasn't prepared at all.

Her eyes held joy and sweetness but were eventually replaced by hesitation. Looking at the determination and sincerity in Jiang Baishan's eyes, she stepped back and sighed softly:

"Baishan, I don't want to deceive you, I've never told you about my identity..."

Before she could finish speaking, Jiang Baishan interrupted:

"Are you trying to say that you belong to the Demon Sect?"

Lin Ruhua looked at Jiang Baishan in shock, only to see him smiling:

"We've been through so much together, if I were completely oblivious, wouldn't that make me seem too foolish? My master taught me that a person cannot choose their birth, a gentleman judges by deeds not intentions, though you're from the Demon Sect, but have never committed heinous acts, even possessing a kind heart, what does being part of the Demon Sect matter?"

Lin Ruhua was moved.

"But... I'm not an ordinary member of the Demon Sect, I'm the daughter of Lin Xueshuang, one of the three Vice Sect Leaders of the Demon Sect."

With these words.

Jiang Baishan was dumbfounded.

He guessed that Lin Ruhua held some position in the Demon Sect, but never imagined it would be so significant, a Vice Sect Leader is just below the Sect Leader, and now, he seemed to have eloped with the daughter of such a figure, this was quite magical.

Lin Ruhua chuckled:

"Are you scared?"

Jiang Baishan quickly replied:

"Hmph! Her daughter is in my hands, what should I fear!"

Lin Ruhua immediately pinched the soft flesh at Jiang Baishan's side, causing him to grimace and repeatedly beg for mercy.

Finally.

Lin Ruhua hugged Jiang Baishan's arm and said softly:

"Baishan, as long as you don't mind my identity, I'm not worried. I wasn't deliberately hiding this from you, as you know, the Demon Sect has always been at odds with True Martial Sect, I feared you'd misunderstand my intentions in approaching you."

Jiang Baishan said solemnly:

"Demon Sect matters have nothing to do with you, my master and the others are fair in their distinctions."

Lin Ruhua breathed a sigh of relief, she had always been rebellious since childhood, not strongly identifying with the Demon Sect, with her beloved not minding her origins, she felt unprecedentedly relaxed. She pondered:

"I have some things I want to tell you."

"Speak."

The two confided openly.

Lin Ruhua organized her thoughts, then began to tell many of the secrets of the Demon Sect:

"The Demon Sect originally had conflicts with the Southern Border Alliance, leading to the deaths of several Celestial Human Realm members, but later both sides agreed to negotiate, believing there was a third party orchestrating from behind, deliberately encouraging war between the two, and the two main suspects were your True Martial Sect and Town North King."

Jiang Baishan's expression became serious.

This information was beyond his imagination.

"And now, they suspect True Martial Sect even more than Town North King, previously sending spies was a test, originally the Demon Sect and Southern Border were planning to seize an opportunity to strike at the True Martial Sect, but True Man Tianjian suddenly emerged and killed the Heart Inquiry Sword, making them wary."

"However, they certainly won't let it go easily, though there won't be any major actions for now, there might be some targeting of the True Martial Sect disciples, you must be careful."

Then she began to disclose some details, intelligence she had gathered using her status.

Originally she thought of revealing it to Jiang Baishan in another manner, but now that their identities were out in the open, she decided to lay everything bare.

Jiang Baishan tightly held Lin Ruhua's hand, his eyes full of gratitude.

"Ruhua, was it also you who disclosed the issue with spies from the Demon Sect and Southern Border during the assessment?"

Lin Ruhua was stunned, because she had learned about this afterward as well.

"It wasn't me..."

Both were taken aback.

Jiang Baishan furrowed his brows:

"If it wasn't you, then who was it?"

Lin Ruhua's thoughts raced, suddenly her eyes brightened, realizing something, her expression slightly peculiar:

"I know who it was."

Facing Jiang Baishan's inquisitive gaze, she slowly said:

"Qin Yun."

"That traitor?" Jiang Baishan's eyes were filled with disbelief.

Back then he had a good relationship with Qin Yun, which is why, after Qin Yun left True Martial Sect, he was the most angry among the brothers, vowing repeatedly to one day bring Qin Yun back to repent before their master.

Years passed without any news of Qin Yun, unexpectedly he learned of it from his beloved.

## Chapter 220: Confessing Identity, Pressure from the Martial Saint\_2

Lin Ruhua nodded and said:

"It's him. My mother even wanted him to marry me to help him ascend to the position of Saint Heir in the Demon Sect. Originally, I thought he was a traitor, but now it seems that Qin Yun might still have fond feelings for the True Martial Sect."

"Let Qin Yun marry you??" Jiang Baishan was anxious.

Lin Ruhua patted his hand, calming him down.

"Previously, five Celestial Beings from the Demon Sect attacked the True Martial Sect at night. Afterwards, the Demon Sect wanted to retaliate further, but Qin Yun stopped them by sacrificing himself to enter the Blood Demon Pool. Who could have imagined that this guy is ruthless; not only did he emerge from the Blood Demon Pool, but he also burned four hundred years of his life to step into the Celestial Human Realm in one go, becoming one of the three potential Saint Heirs of the Demon Sect."

"You mentioned someone sent a secret letter during the assessment; now I think it's very likely that Qin Yun did it since he and the Southern Border Saintess were in charge of that matter, but he's in a tough spot recently."

"Originally, with Ghost Mask Vice Sect Leader's support, he was a strong contender for the Saint Heir position, but now he's subtly under house arrest. My mother no longer talks about my marriage to him either. If not for the Grand Elder's intervention, the situation might have been worse. His old feelings for the True Martial Sect make him intolerable to the Demon Sect."

"Those who enter the Blood Demon Pool must be loyal to the Demon Sect, but Qin Yun broke this precedent, and now a Demon Sect expert is interrogating him carefully. I heard from my mother that he once had a Heart Demon, and the Demon Sect expert is trying to nurture his Heart Demon so that he becomes controlled by it."

Lin Ruhua slowly recounted.

She knew Qin Yun underestimated the means of the Demon Sect, thinking that his actions were unknown and undetected, but he took a big fall. Earlier she didn't know why the Demon Sect's attitude towards Qin Yun changed abruptly, but now with the information she has, she understood.

Jiang Baishan's face gradually grew complex, and his original anger dissipated without him knowing, turning into a barely audible sigh.

"That Ba guy..." He felt a mix of frustration and helplessness in his heart, emotions tangled and restless.

Taking a deep breath, Jiang Baishan said seriously:

"Ruhua, can you accompany me to True Martial Mountain to meet my master and senior brother? This news is very important to them. Don't worry, they won't mind your identity."

Lin Ruhua's heart skipped a beat, but she decided that the truth must eventually be revealed. She nodded softly:

"I'll listen to you."

The two had experienced life and death many times, having long recognized each other.

She didn't feel much belonging to the Demon Sect, her only concern being her mother, but now with the True Martial Sect being the weaker side against the Demon Sect and Southern Border, she didn't need to worry about her mother, but rather about Jiang Baishan.

The two stood embracing each other.

After nightfall, they quietly went up the mountain.

...

Bright Martial Pavilion.

Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian were both present, while Jiang Baishan and Lin Ruhua stood side by side, their hands clasped tightly.

"Greetings to True Man Longshan and Sect Leader Luo!" Lin Ruhua greeted nervously.

Jiang Baishan also stammered:

"Master, this is my beloved, Lin Ruhua."

Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian exchanged glances and both smiled, lightly examining Lin Ruhua. Observing her demeanor and appearance revealed hints of her character, and they silently nodded in their hearts.

Luo Wentian laughed and said:

"Ruhua, there's no need to be so formal. I've heard this boy Baishan mention you before. There was once a time he almost lost an arm to you, and he kept talking about it for months. You can call me Senior Brother."

Lin Ruhua was no longer nervous and discreetly pinched Jiang Baishan.

Jiang Baishan awkwardly shook his head, knowing there's no escape from this embarrassing past.

Taoist Longshan also laughed kindly but did not ask Lin Ruhua to call him master, which would await after the two were married.

"Baishan, what is the important matter you mentioned before?" he asked.

Jiang Baishan assumed a serious expression and slowly said:

"It concerns Ruhua's identity; she's the daughter of one of the Demon Sect's three Vice Sect Leaders, Lin Xueshuang."

Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian's faces grew tense, but they quickly eased, knowing Jiang Baishan's nature wouldn't act recklessly.

Lin Ruhua watched their expressions change, relaxing inwardly before bowing:

"True Man, Senior Brother, it's like this..."

She slowly revealed the previous plans of the Demon Sect and Southern Border against the True Martial Sect.

She also spoke about Qin Yun's current situation.

After she finished:

Taoist Longshan's expression was complex.

Back when the True Martial assessment secret letter incident happened, they made many guesses, not knowing who did it, that it was Qin Yun. Considering Qin Yun's current situation, he felt a bit regretful.

One wrong thought led to this unfortunate state.

Luo Wentian also sighed in his heart, feeling grateful:

"Thank you, Ruhua, for informing us."

With the past and present clearly understood, they realized that the Demon Sect and Southern Border suspected the True Martial Sect due to the destruction of the Qing State base.

Especially since subsequent plans and actions of the Demon Sect are crucial to the True Martial Sect; knowing in advance allows for countermeasures.

He knew.

Lin Ruhua's willingness to reveal these secrets probably meant she was deeply attached to his fifth disciple, making significant sacrifices.

Lin Ruhua waved her hand repeatedly, her face slightly red:

"Senior Brother, you're too kind."

She hesitated slightly before biting her lip and saying:

"There's another matter; although the True Martial Sect has True Man Tianjian overseeing it, the Demon Sect and Southern Border have deep foundations. After forming an alliance, they've been secretly plotting to achieve the status of a Martial Saint, complementing each other's weaknesses. If either side gives birth to a Martial Saint, it could cause chaos, declare war on Great Yan, and possibly use the True Martial Sect as a sacrificial flag!"

"I hope True Man and Senior Brother can prepare in advance!"

After saying this she felt completely relieved, having revealed everything she knew.

Bright Martial Pavilion fell silent.

Taoist Longshan's expression grew serious.

Luo Wentian and Jiang Baishan were astonished.

The pressure of a Martial Saint is incredibly overwhelming.

Jiang Baishan's face turned pale; he gazed at Lin Ruhua, somewhat out of sorts, then anxiously said:

"A Martial Saint? How could it be possible? It's been ages since a Martial Saint was born under Great Yan's rule. How could the Demon Sect and Southern Border so easily have a Martial Saint?"

Lin Ruhua gently held Jiang Baishan's hand and said:

"In fact, the Demon Sect and Southern Border have always had ways to achieve the status of Martial Saint using external forces, trying for a thousand years. Now they're close to success. A hundred years ago was just a test. They have awaited the weakness of Great Yan's Martial Saints, seeking this opportunity to rise."

"Now, after the alliance, their progress is accelerating."

Luo Wentian couldn't help but ask:

"Ruhua, do you know how soon the Demon Sect and Southern Border might give birth to a Martial Saint?"

Lin Ruhua apologetically replied:

"I don't know the specifics, that's a top secret of the Demon Sect. I accidentally found out this information from my mother, but judging by their recent activities, it won't exceed three years at the latest."

Taoist Longshan also felt unease in his heart.

Which means.

In no more than three years, the world will drastically change?

It can be foreseen.

If both Southern Border and the Demon Sect have a Martial Saint born, they will undoubtedly challenge Great Yan's rule. Two thousand years of dominance is indeed too long.

Originally thought the True Martial Sect was on the rise, but unexpectedly faced such a drastic change.

And the True Martial Sect was at the forefront.

Having previously destroyed the Qing State base, the conflict between True Martial Sect and the two forces became irreconcilable. Furthermore, the greater the fame of True Man Tianjian, the better a sacrificial symbol to demonstrate power.

At that moment.

A magic sword seemed to hover, ready to slice down upon the True Martial Sect at any moment.

Said to be no later than three years, but what if the Demon Sect gives birth to a Martial Saint two years or even a year earlier?

No one can be certain.

Taoist Longshan cast an imperceptible glance at the screen behind him, exhaled a long breath, and said:

"This news is very important to us. Thank you, Ruhua."

He slightly bent in acknowledgment.

If not for Lin Ruhua's information, the True Martial Sect would be entirely unaware of the looming crisis.

Lin Ruhua quickly stepped back, waving her hands frantically:

"True Man, you're too gracious. Baishan's sect is my sect too, as we are in love."

Taoist Longshan sighed inwardly.

He had lived nearly a hundred years, seeing things more clearly than younger people, naturally knowing Lin Ruhua's heart was tied to his fifth disciple.

This situation was unfair to Lin Ruhua as well; the Demon Sect and True Martial Sect were enemies. Lin Ruhua was the daughter of a Demon Sect Vice Sect Leader, and Jiang Baishan Taoist Longshan's disciple, even if they succeed, one would inevitably suffer.

Taoist Longshan needed to consider more.

Possibly the best way was to keep both of them from getting involved in the middle of this.