

## Cultivating 221

### Chapter 221: An Eternal Dilemma, That Day Will Never Come

Taoist Longshan looked at Jiang Baishan and Lin Ruhua, who were holding hands, feeling a sense of emotion.

Two people with such different and even opposing identities have come this far; it's a unique kind of fate. He doesn't want his disciple to face difficult choices in the future.

Taoist Longshan solemnly asked:

"Do you two truly share a deep affection, willing to endure hardships together, and remain united in heart and mind?"

Jiang Baishan turned his head to look at Lin Ruhua tenderly, then respectfully knelt before Taoist Longshan:

"Please, Master, bear witness. In this life, I will marry no one but Ruhua!"

Lin Ruhua also knelt down:

"Please, True Man, bear witness. In this life, I will marry no one but Baishan!"

The two shared a tacit understanding, their gazes meeting firmly.

Luo Wentian watched with great comfort, as this was the first among his many junior brothers and sisters to find their place. Ever since Lin Ruhua revealed many secrets of the Demon Sect, he knew his fifth junior brother had chosen wisely.

Taoist Longshan stroked his beard and laughed heartily, then jokingly asked Lin Ruhua:

"Since that's the case, why not call this old Taoist 'Master'?"



Lin Ruhua blushed, but her heart was filled with delight and sweetness. She softly called:

"Master."

Taoist Longshan laughed even more heartily, deeply comforted.

After the laughter, his expression gradually became serious.

"Logically, if you two wish to marry, I should arrange a lively wedding for you. But the present circumstances are special, so everything will be simple now, and will be made up for in the future."

He was very serious, so serious that it made Jiang Baishan nervous.

In the next moment, Taoist Longshan's words left him completely stunned.

"Baishan, Ruhua, from today onward, you must leave the mountain and go. For the next three years, find a secluded place to hide your names and pay no mind to anything beyond."

Jiang Baishan was anxious.

"Master, why is this?"

"I will not leave; the True Martial Sect is in danger now. How can I leave alone in a time like this? I will not be an unfaithful and unfilial disciple!"

Luo Wentian fell into slight silence, sighing inwardly. He roughly understood his master's intention.

Taoist Longshan countered:



"Let me ask you this: if there comes a day when Ruhua's mother and your master face off, who would you help? Who would you have Ruhua help?"

Jiang Baishan and Lin Ruhua both turned pale.

The two had overlooked this issue, or perhaps subconsciously avoided it, but now that Taoist Longshan pointed it out bluntly, their hearts were incredibly conflicted.

"I... I..."

They hesitated and were in pain.

Jiang Baishan's eyes were red.

This is an ancient dilemma, both sides are dear, it's impossible to choose.

"If it truly comes to that, I'll atone with death!" Jiang Baishan's eyes were determined, he glanced at Lin Ruhua, who also looked tenderly at him. She did not speak, but the meaning was clear in her eyes.

Perhaps, at that critical juncture, dying together is the best choice.

Taoist Longshan sighed inwardly, but scolded:

"Nonsense!"

"If you two truly love each other, then live well together. Death is the weakest behavior. I taught you to grow, not to have you seek death arbitrarily."

Luo Wentian slowly spoke:



"Wu, for you and Ruhua, what Master said is the best choice. You two should hide away for three years; then, when everything is settled, regardless of victory or defeat, it is fate, and you need not have any other thoughts."

Taoist Longshan continued:

"Also, don't feel as if abandoning the battlefield is letting down the sect. You have already made great contributions by bringing Ruhua to inform such crucial intelligence. What comes next doesn't require you to be caught between."

"Moreover, as a mere White Mist Realm, what effect can you have? Having one more of you doesn't matter, nor does having one less."

"Go, this is an order from your master. If unwilling, then from this day onward, consider me no longer your master!"

Taoist Longshan's tone grew severe.

Jiang Baishan's eyes reddened, unable to hold back his tears; he buried his head low, prostrating before Taoist Longshan, not daring to refute.

Lin Ruhua's nose was also acidic.

She could naturally see Taoist Longshan's sincere love and care.

She had heard Jiang Baishan speak of it before, but seeing it today, she truly understood what it meant for a master to be like a father. She had never witnessed such a scene in the Demon Sect. Perhaps at the start, the Demon Sect only sought to overthrow the Great Yan, but over the years, it has long changed.

Her respect for Taoist Longshan grew more sincere.

Luo Wentian gently helped Jiang Baishan up, patted his shoulder, then said:



"Master, in a few days it will be the True Martial Peach Assembly hosted by Jiu. Wu and Ruhua can participate before leaving."

Jiang Baishan's eyes were filled with hope.

Taoist Longshan remained silent for a moment, softly nodding.

"Go, and rest with Ruhua."

Jiang Baishan breathed a small sigh of relief, respectfully kowtowing a few times before leaving with Lin Ruhua.

Watching their backs.

Taoist Longshan sighed deeply.

Luo Wentian comforted:

"Wu finding his happiness is also a good thing, Master needn't worry too much. They naturally have their own fate."

He could see it.

His master was, in some way, making dual preparations.

If the Demon Sect and Southern Border truly send a Martial Saint to attack, then even if True Martial Sect perishes, some flame must be preserved. Jiang Baishan is one such flame, ready to rebuild True Martial when the time is ripe.



Of course, as the True Martial Sect Leader, Luo Wentian naturally wouldn't just preserve one such flame.

## Chapter 222: The Eternal Dilemma, That Day Will Never Come\_2

Just after Lin Ruhua mentioned the matter concerning the Martial Saint, he had already started planning various retreats. The foundation of the True Martial Sect naturally couldn't be abandoned, but neither could they put all their eggs in one basket.

However,

Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian had not completely lost hope.

The root cause was Ning Qi.

Only they knew how extraordinary Ning Qi was, and any miracle occurring with him was possible.

Both of them looked at the screen, expecting Ning Qi to appear silently. Earlier, Jiang Baishan mentioned that he had something important to tell Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian, so they called Ning Qi over together.

"Jiu, what do you think about the matter of the Demon Sect and the Southern Border about to give birth to a Martial Saint?" Their eyes were filled with hope.

Ning Qi's expression remained calm, which made them breathe a slight sigh of relief.

Ning Qi sat down and after some contemplation, he slowly spoke:

"To my knowledge, there is no longer any Martial Saint Technique in the world."

Neither the Town North King nor Wu Jianghe had any doubts about this, naturally not making baseless claims.



Luo Wentian's eyes lit up:

"So does that mean this is false?"

Ning Qi shook his head and said:

"No, it's likely true. The Fifth Senior Sister wouldn't lie to us; it's just that the Martial Saint birth in the Demon Sect and the Southern Border should be forcibly achieved through external forces."

He heard Lin Ruhua's earlier statement clearly, indicating a Martial Saint would be born within three years at the latest, showing that the Demon Sect and the Southern Border had foreseen the timing of the Martial Saint's birth, even having plotted for a long time. If one wishes to walk the path of creating a Martial Saint from scratch, it typically depends on enlightenment.

Of course, this wasn't the only reason Ning Qi speculated as such.

What truly made him conjecture this was that, long ago, when he wiped out a stronghold in Qing State of the Southern Border, he had already discovered the existence of the Blood Emperor Gu.

"The Southern Border likely relies on the Blood Emperor Gu to break through to the Martial Saint Realm, as for the Demon Sect, they should have their own methods. They have only recently formed an alliance, even if they have mutual assistance, success will not come quickly."

Ning Qi speculated.

This was one of the reasons he could remain calm.

His progress in Refining Spirit was smooth, and in about half a year's time, he could reach the Celestial Human Realm. By then, he wouldn't be completely helpless against the Martial Saints of the Demon Sect and the Southern Border.



"An external forces birth? Does that mean that the Martial Saint who breaks through this way would be weaker?" Luo Wentian's eyes lit up.

This was a reasonable conjecture.

On the Martial Path, breakthroughs with external forces often lead to unstable foundations and weaker strength compared to those of the same level. It requires a lot of time to solidify the foundation to eliminate such impacts.

Previously, when Luo Wentian and others broke through to the White Mist Realm using the Gang Condensing Pill, it was precisely like this. Later, Ning Qi created a solid foundation Secret Technique for them, and the pills he refined had very few side effects, successfully eliminating their impacts.

Taoist Longshan said:

"But even the weakest Martial Saint is still a Martial Saint; I'm afraid even the first on the Celestial Being List, the Wind-listening Old Man, can't be compared."

Ning Qi nodded slowly:

"Give me half a year, and I can reach the Celestial Human Realm."

Luo Wentian was stunned, his eyes widened. All along, he thought Ning Qi had already reached the Celestial Human Realm, but now he knew he was still in the Gang Essence Realm. He found it somewhat unbelievable; this was even more impactful than Ning Qi stepping into the Celestial Human Realm.

He already had nearly invincible Celestial Human Realm strength; what about after stepping into the Celestial Human Realm?

Wouldn't that mean he could contend with a Martial Saint!

Suddenly, the hope in his eyes grew even more intense.



Taoist Longshan was also reassured in his heart.

"Since that's the case, we must do everything to stall the Demon Sect and Southern Border, to buy time for Jiu."

Luo Wentian's brain worked rapidly.

"The Southern Border's reliance is most likely the Blood Emperor Gu; we need to clarify what method the Demon Sect relies upon to achieve Martial Saint, then we can tailor our response to delay their steps."

"Of course, relying on the strength of our True Martial Sect alone is difficult. We need external assistance."

"If the Demon Sect and the Southern Border were to give birth to a Martial Saint, the one who would least want to see it would surely be the Imperial Court of Great Yan. So they must feel urgency, and this news can be communicated to the Town North King, allowing him to unite with the Imperial Court to take action against the Demon Sect and the Southern Border."

"Additionally, we can disseminate the news within the Martial Realm to make other Martial Path sects apprehensive, thereby delaying their plans to a certain extent."

"As long as we delay for half a year, allowing Jiu to reach the Celestial Human Realm, then there's room for maneuver."

Luo Wentian realized the key point and finished in one breath.

"Thus, it seems our True Martial Sect may not be a dead end; there is life here."

But the core of all this was Ning Qi.



He needed to be able to hold on.

Taoist Longshan took a deep breath and asked:

"Jiu, if you reach the Celestial Human Realm, will you have the strength to contend with a Martial Saint?"

Ning Qi thought for a moment and said:

"I don't know how strong a Martial Saint truly is, but if I can reach the Celestial Human Realm, becoming ten times stronger than now is just a light matter, possibly even more exaggerated. I imagine the combat power of a Martial Saint wouldn't be absurdly unmatched. Even if I'm no match, I wouldn't be utterly powerless."

He's seriously estimating that after reaching the Celestial Human Realm, with his solid foundation, the power of Heaven and Earth he could resonate with would likely far exceed others' imaginations.

He had been trying to evaluate the strength of a Martial Saint optimistically.

Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian knew Ning Qi's personality, understanding that if he spoke this way, he had a few degrees of confidence, and thus they relaxed inwardly.

After half a year, he would reach the Celestial Human Realm. If the Demon Sect took longer for a Martial Saint to emerge, Ning Qi would have more time to grow.

"However, two plans must be made, Jiu, promise your master, if someday two Martial Saints come attacking, and you find yourself unable to oppose them, you must exert every effort to escape. I know you surely have the ability to do so. Do not make any meaningless sacrifices, for with your talent, after a few years of dedicated cultivation, you can easily cut them down like chickens and dogs!"

"By then, the responsibility of rebuilding the True Martial Sect will rest on your shoulders."



Taoist Longshan's gaze was earnest, even tinged with a hint of pleading.

Ning Qi fell silent.

He couldn't imagine if his master and fellow disciples died in front of him, and all he could do was flee in frustration, what kind of suffering that would be.

Taking a deep breath, he softly said:

"It won't happen, Master. That day will not come."

Taoist Longshan insisted:

"You must promise your teacher!"

Faced with Taoist Longshan's gaze, Ning Qi sighed internally. Ultimately, he nodded and said:

"I will."

He thought.

If that day truly came, he would certainly lay waste to the Demon Sect and the Southern Border, avenging True Martial.

However, he absolutely did not wish for that day to come.

A previously unknown motivation surged within him. Until now, Ning Qi had been cultivating in a step-by-step manner. Sometimes there was a little pressure, but nothing as intense as it was now. A single misstep could mean everyone he cared about might die.



As for escape?

That was an impossibility. The True Martial Sect had a grand reputation, and they couldn't just disappear under alias.

Taoist Longshan laughed.

He patted Ning Qi's shoulder and said:

"With you here, the True Martial legacy will not perish. I am relieved."

He looked at Luo Wentian with eyes overflowing with a hint of fighting spirit:

"If that's the case, we must do our utmost to stand against them!"

"Yes, and we shall fight, Master!"

Their eyes blazed with a rising battle spirit.

Since the Demon Sect and Southern Border are determined to push forward, fighting back is the only option.

If the power of the Demon Sect and Southern Border doesn't produce a Martial Saint within the next six months, perhaps they can attempt a proactive strike."

...

The next day.



Taoist Longshan wrote a secret letter by hand, describing the covert plot of the Demon Sect and Southern Border to achieve the Martial Saint.

Chen Xing and Chen Yue's expressions turned serious, nodding earnestly.

They didn't dare ask what it was.

Lin Ruhua stayed calm in True Martial City, while Chen Xing set off at night towards the Northern Barbarian where the Town North King was stationed.

Chapter 223: Gang Essence Sword Species, Enlightenment Tea

Silently.

The True Martial Sect has already begun to take action.

To the outside world, the True Martial Sect appears to be thriving, but what they don't know is that the sect has begun selecting seeds to hide away, all conducted in secrecy unknown to most.

Of course.

This is merely a precautionary measure.

Their larger efforts are still focused on delaying the progress of the Demon Sect and the Southern Border; sending a secret letter to the Town North King was one such strategy.

Aside from that.

Taoist Longshan is actively gathering all possible information about the headquarters of the Demon Sect and the Southern Border.



In recent days.

Jiang Baishan introduced Lin Ruhua to a group of senior and junior brothers, knowing his master's decision was irrevocable, he couldn't change it and must cherish the time spent with them despite his inner turmoil.

As Taoist Longshan had said, it is indeed a difficult choice.

Lin Ruhua, after careful contemplation, also realized this; she initially thought the Demon Sect's strength far surpassed the True Martial Sect. Perhaps her mother wouldn't be responsible for this, but if her mother did confront the True Martial Sect and Taoist Longshan, how should she position herself?

Both considered countless possibilities, ultimately acknowledging Taoist Longshan's arrangement as the best option.

However, Lin Ruhua felt inevitably guilty, feeling that Jiang Baishan and herself hiding away was unfair to the True Martial Sect, yet finding no better solution. She thought of uncovering as much secret information about the Demon Sect attaining Martial Saint status before cutting ties completely to ease their guilt somewhat.

This was the greatest value she could bring, also helping her and Jiang Baishan lessen their sense of guilt.

...

Several days passed in the blink of an eye.

The True Martial Peach Assembly arrived.

Today, the Seeking Tao Institute was particularly lively.

Because this year's True Martial Peach Assembly has two new faces.



One was naturally the eleventh disciple Li Ling, and the other was Lin Ruhua.

Over the past year, Li Ling had heard Zhuang Chen mention the True Martial Peach Assembly to the point of weariness; now he finally had the opportunity to participate, his small face was flushed with excitement.

He relished in the harmonious atmosphere among the brothers, something unobtainable at the Town North Royal Mansion.

After joining the True Martial Sect, his sense of belonging grew day by day, and he had completely come to regard the sect as his second home.

"This cup is to honor Shiyi!" everyone raised their glasses in laughter.

Li Ling hurriedly stood up; he had had the Town North Royal Mansion send numerous exquisite delicacies, adding even more splendor to the Peach Assembly.

"Thanks to Ninth Senior Brother for the Peach Fruit, thanks to Third Senior Sister for the Peach Blossom Brew, these are the best Peach Fruit and wine brew I've ever tasted in my life!"

Hearing Li Ling's words, Ye Qinghe broke into a wide smile.

"Shiyi, you really have good taste. Whenever you want to drink, just let Sister know and she'll whip up something special for you!"

Her winemaking skills had improved drastically compared to before, specializing in Peach Blossom Brew, even rivaling the White Ape. The change seen by everyone helped illustrate Ye Qinghe's journey, and they were not only impressed but also joyous for her; her example showed that as long as there's passion, poor talent can still achieve greatness.

"This cup, is for our 'traitor' Wu, and Ruhua!"



As Luo Wentian spoke, everyone laughed even more boisterously.

Jiang Baishan was the first among the many True Disciples to have a Daoist partner, while others hadn't even glimpsed the shadow of one yet.

Every eye was filled with smiles and blessings, Jiang Baishan and Lin Ruhua's bond was deep, inseparable.

Jiang Baishan and Lin Ruhua stood, exchanged gazes, and saw the intentions in each other's eyes.

"Thank you to all our dear senior and junior brothers and sisters!"

"Today, we ask you all to witness, Lin Ruhua and I becoming husband and wife!"

Jiang Baishan spoke with firmness and strength.

In these final days, they wanted to obtain the blessings of those closest to them. Last night, they visited Taoist Longshan and received approval, today they shared the good news with everyone, though the wedding couldn't take place yet, it didn't hinder their deeper connection.

In some ways, this was an embodiment of their shared determination to live and die together.

Everyone was initially taken aback.

Then they were collectively delighted.

None of them cared about cumbersome procedures—since Jiang Baishan and Lin Ruhua were committed to each other, from now on they were a married couple.



"You, Wu, really can't be judged by your appearance!"

"Silently accomplishing such a major task! So suddenly, we didn't have time to prepare any gifts for you!"

"Fifth Senior Brother, we want some wedding candies!"

Everyone chuckled.

Jiang Baishan felt deeply moved inside.

"The wedding candies are already prepared for you!" Lin Ruhua and Jiang Baishan took the candies specially purchased from True Martial City and distributed them one by one.

Everyone ate the candies, feeling both joy and a touch of sadness.

As they ate, silence crept in.

Everyone knew about Lin Ruhua's identity and the fact that Jiang Baishan would descend the mountain, perhaps not returning for several years. Today, though everyone deliberately avoided mentioning it, when Jiang Baishan stated that they were now married, slight sorrow inevitably rose anew.

Ning Qi smiled.

In recent days, he contemplated a lot, increasingly resolved not to let the Demon Sect and Southern Border threaten those dearest to him.

He was determined to stop it all.

Therefore, he didn't believe he wouldn't see Fifth Senior Brother Jiang Baishan again; he merely considered Jiang Baishan to be out adventuring for a few years, and that he'd return.



## Chapter 224: Gang Essence Sword Species, Enlightenment Tea\_2

Ning Qi broke the slightly silent atmosphere with a smile.

"You all didn't prepare a new wedding gift for fifth senior brother, but I did."

Everyone's eyes lit up.

"Good for you, Jiu, quietly preparing something on your own!"

They were somewhat looking forward to Ning Qi's gift.

Everyone was gradually becoming more aware of Ning Qi's uniqueness. Although they didn't know, like Luo Wentian did, that Ning Qi was True Man Tianjian, they recognized that Ning Qi was extraordinary. This True Martial Peach Fruit was evidence of that.

Up to today, after years of continuous cultivation, the Peach Fruit, having absorbed part of the essence of the Bright Fruit and the Enlightenment Tea Tree, had become an exceptional Exotic Fruit. Its effectiveness was even better than last year, able to strengthen the foundation and essence and explore the physical body.

One can imagine the reaction when those disciples receive the rewarded Peach Fruits at the end of the year competition.

The crowd was only not overly astonished because they were accustomed to it.

But to Li Ling and Lin Ruhua, it was still extremely impressive.

At this moment.



Jiang Baishan felt even more touched. He had watched Ning Qi grow up step by step. He didn't care what Ning Qi gave; he was simply moved by the sentiment behind it.

Lin Ruhua was curious.

Even though it had only been a few days, with her cleverness, through observation and the attitudes of others, she could perceive that this ninth junior brother was not simple.

Ning Qi didn't keep them in suspense.

He got up and went inside, then came out holding a small jade box.

As everyone's gaze was drawn to it, the jade box opened, revealing a pair of green Mandarin Duck Jade Pendants in front of everyone. The ducks were vivid, as if alive. Ning Qi picked them up and handed them to Jiang Baishan and Lin Ruhua, saying solemnly:

"These are jade pendants I made myself. I wish for fifth senior brother and sister-in-law to fly side by side, united forever, and after traversing countless mountains and rivers, may everything remain as it is."

These words were meaningful, understood slightly by only Luo Wentian, who felt a subtle shock in his heart and then sighed.

Jiang Baishan was grateful and said:

"Thank you, Jiu, for your blessings and gift! We both really like it."

Ning Qi smiled gently:

"Since you like it, you should wear it close to your heart."



Jiang Baishan didn't hesitate.

He took the Mandarin Duck Jade Pendant from Lin Ruhua's hand and placed it on her right waist, while Lin Ruhua placed hers on Jiang Baishan's left waist.

The crowd looked over.

The green light of the jade pendants enveloped the two in a faint glow, making Jiang Baishan and Lin Ruhua look like celestial lovers, envied only by Mandarin Ducks, not the Immortals, creating a tangible manifestation in that moment.

Moreover.

Upon wearing the Mandarin Duck Jade Pendants, they both felt rejuvenated, as if their bodies were crystal clear. When they exchanged glances, they saw the amazement in each other's eyes and realized the jade pendants were not just beautiful, but rare treasures.

Ning Qi felt relieved.

These jade pendants were, of course, not simple.

After Ning Qi detected the alliance between the Southern Border and the Demon Sect, he felt a sense of crisis. He wasn't worried about his own safety, but concerned that the Demon Sect and Southern Border might target his martial brothers and sisters. After all, they couldn't stay on True Martial Mountain forever; they would eventually go out.

Therefore, he kept researching ways for them to have some self-defense capabilities.

Among them, the Gang Essence Sword Species was one direction.

It could store a part of Ning Qi's Gang Qi and Sword Intent for an explosive release. Although it lacked the power of heaven and earth, it could still withstand some of the Celestial Human Realm without



issue. This idea was naturally good, but very difficult to achieve. It was nearly impossible to preserve Gang Qi for long. But Ning Qi drew from the principle of condensing the Sword Pill in the Virtual Sword Pill Dissolution Technique and devised a way to condense the Sword Species externally.

But he encountered the biggest problem.

There was no suitable carrier.

If Ning Qi was present, the Gang Essence could naturally transform endlessly, but once it was detached, it couldn't last. This was an unchangeable nature.

The turning point came after defeating the Heart Inquiry Sword.

Inquiring Sword Pavilion sent over numerous compensations, and Ning Qi discovered a peculiar treasure ore among them, referred to by the Inquiring Sword Pavilion as Spirit Concentration Stone, which could seal the Gang Essence Sword Species within it. With this, Ning Qi finally created this Secret Technique.

By doing this, combining with Ning Qi's Sword Intent, it could explode in times of crisis.

In addition.

Ning Qi could more or less sense the location of the jade pendant holders, and the jade pendants also had the effect of calming the mind.

Knowing that Jiang Baishan and others were going to leave soon, Ning Qi first made a pair of Mandarin Duck Jade Pendants. As for the other martial brothers, those could be made a few days later.

With this interlude.

The slightly melancholy atmosphere was instantly diluted.



The future is unpredictable, so it's better to cherish the present.

Amidst the joyful laughter, Lin Ruhua gradually integrated into the group. Ye Qinghe whispered to her non-stop, bringing up many of Jiang Baishan's embarrassing moments, like when he was almost 'chopped on the arm by Lin Ruhua' and was constantly teased about it in the past.

The two didn't really know each other until they fought, became entangled along the way, and after surviving life and death situations together, their relationship slowly changed until they developed mutual affection.

But it was clear.

Lin Ruhua wasn't the docile and gentle type of girl. She had tried to dig out Jiang Baishan's eyes and cut his tongue several times before.

Everyone listened with glee, clicking their tongues.

Li Ling couldn't help but shrink his neck:

"If I were to find a Dao companion in the future, she'd have to be a gentle and lovely girl."

Ye Qinghe smacked the back of his head, laughing and scolding:

"You cheeky little devil, you're still so young and already thinking about Dao companions. Clearly, your usual workload is too light. I'll have to tell the master to give you more. Besides, are you saying your fifth sister-in-law is too fierce?"

Confronted with Lin Ruhua's half-smiling gaze, Li Ling immediately cowered and quickly hid behind Ning Qi.

The laughter was even more joyful.



Jiang Baishan gave a helpless look.

After the laughter.

Ning Qi looked up at the sky; the moon was full, and the peach party was coming to an end.

"Tiansheng, bring out the tea."

The White Ape understood and immediately turned and went inside.

The Enlightenment Tea had been brewing for so long that its spirit had completely infused into the tea.

Upon hearing this.

Everyone's eyes lit up, filled with anticipation.

Their prior knowledge that the Enlightenment Tea Tree had grown a few leaves made them believe they'd have no chance to taste it today, not expecting Ning Qi to save it for the finale.

Of course.

They all knew that the Enlightenment Tea Tree was cultivated by Ning Qi's efforts alone. Even if Ning Qi hadn't brought it out, they would have understood and had no other thoughts.

Soon.

The White Ape carefully walked out, holding a cup of tea, afraid of breaking it.

This teacup was made of white jade, having a special function of concealing the tea's distinct fragrance.



At this moment, Ning Qi uncovered the lid.

An overwhelmingly rich aroma immediately burst forth, lingering at everyone's nostrils.

Just by smelling the tea.

Everyone felt a bit heady, as if they were about to enter enlightenment.

Indeed, it was an illusion, merely a precursor to entering a strange state after suddenly being exposed to the tea fragrance.

"Good tea!" Luo Wentian exclaimed.

Lin Ruhua also showed surprise. As a daughter of the Vice Sect Leader of the Demon Sect, she had seen countless good things, but it was her first time encountering Enlightenment Tea. She had heard rumors about the Enlightenment Tea Tree, never expecting to see one on True Martial Mountain.

Jiang Baishan whispered, telling her that Ning Qi had cultivated it from a Dead Species. She found it even more incredible.

This ninth junior brother was overly mysterious.

Her curiosity only grew.

Ning Qi smiled and said:

"Let this tea be the blessing for all my senior and junior brothers and sisters; may your martial journey be prosperous and smooth."



He lifted his cup of tea.

He, too, was a bit expectations, wondering if it might be beneficial for him, but he had a calm mindset. Even if it wasn't helpful, he wouldn't mind. The process of cultivating the Enlightenment Tea Tree had already brought him significant insights.

Especially observing the young sprouts breaking through the soil, deepening his understanding of the Path of Life, ready to manifest in suitable moments in the future.

The rest of them were even more eager.

After expressing words of blessing.

Everyone raised their cups and drank it all in one go.

Chapter 225: All Have Gains, Blade Demon Comes Out of the Mountain

The Enlightenment Tea enters the stomach.

Ning Qi felt a warm current surging through him, while an exotic fragrance suddenly burst forth. It was overwhelmingly rich, not only enveloping the body but also immersing the spirit within the aroma of the tea.

In an instant.

Streams of spiritual insights gushed forth like a spring.

Ning Qi entered a state of 'pseudo-enlightenment'.

This feeling was certainly enjoyable.

However, Ning Qi's expression appeared somewhat odd.



"Isn't this just my usual state during enlightenment?"

At this moment.

He realized the function of the Enlightenment Tea was to induce a special mental state in the drinker, thus achieving a 'pseudo-enlightenment' state. Yet, the problem was that Ning Qi could enter this state at any time even without drinking tea.

Moreover, the 'enlightenment' state that ordinary people longed for was something Ning Qi often entered. Although not as easy as eating or drinking, once his state was slightly better or his accumulation of spiritual insights exceeded a certain point, enlightenment would naturally occur.

Ning Qi shook his head and laughed softly.

He came to understand that the Enlightenment Tea indeed had no use for him.

He had been mentally prepared for this, so he was not disappointed. Instead, he decided to savor the taste of the Enlightenment Tea. Setting aside its effects, it was an unparalleled fine tea in its own right.

"However, the current Enlightenment Tea is useless, but it doesn't mean it won't be useful in the future. If we continue to cultivate it and refine it, perhaps in the future the tea leaves produced could truly induce a state of enlightenment!"

Ning Qi felt a bit of anticipation. If it could reach that stage, it would also be beneficial to him.

As for whether it would succeed.

He had confidence in himself.



Ordinary peach trees had gradually been cultivated by him into rare spirit fruits, and naturally, he had hope that the Enlightenment Tea tree could be elevated another level. He would continue researching in this direction.

He leisurely sipped tea, smiling as he watched the other fellow practitioners.

While for Ning Qi, the tea was just a taste to savor, for them it was a fortuitous opportunity granted from heaven.

At this moment.

One by one, they entered the 'pseudo-enlightenment' state, countless spiritual insights arose, and the accumulation of their insights during regular times erupted in this instance.

First was Luo Wentian.

With Ning Qi's implanted Thunder Tiger Fake Pill, he had consistently and meticulously comprehended the Path of Thunderous, developing some understanding and foundation. Now under the influence of the Enlightenment Tea, his control over the Fake Pill accelerated from a short distance to a long way, equating to about a month's usual effort in just moments.

Not only that, but with deeper comprehension of the Fake Pill, he also gained different insights into the cultivation of the Gang Essence Realm, even prematurely unveiling some secrets of the Primordial Core Realm.

He sat cross-legged, afraid to waste even the slightest bit of this opportunity.

Then Jiang Baishan.

Of the group, he was the first to step into the White Mist Realm without leveraging the power of a Gang Condensing Pill. After years of cultivation, with aid from Ning Qi, he was making rapid progress. Now bolstered by the Enlightenment Tea, he gained a whole new understanding of the Jade Liquid Realm.



And Zhuang Chen.

Born with Innate Sword Bone, exceptionally perceptive, he sowed anew after breaking, his talents reaching new heights. After recent retraining, he was preparing to re-condense inner strength and step into the Inner Essence Realm. His foundation was even sturdier than before, with his mind now ablaze with spiritual insights, eagerly resolving some sword dao challenges he previously couldn't comprehend.

The rest displayed various expressions.

Each had gained tremendously.

Fellow practitioners sat cross-legged, wielded swords to dance, or split the air with fists; all erupted in fundamental insights under the power of Enlightenment Tea. Even though it was a 'pseudo-enlightenment', it was priceless to them.

Not everyone could be a prodigy like Ning Qi.

This state persisted for two hours thereafter.

The effects of the Enlightenment Tea dissipated.

Everyone jerked awake almost simultaneously, gradually returning to their senses, eyes filled with a deep reluctance and loss. The elevated state just now was indeed so wonderful they couldn't help but wish to remain continuously in that mystical realm of enlightenment.

Even though it lasted only for a short two hours, the gains were enormous.

Numerous unsolvable problems were effortlessly resolved, bottlenecks shattered entirely. Although for now, the Enlightenment Tea didn't directly enhance their cultivation, it significantly simplified their future path, allowing them to progress easily from here on.

With just a bit of time, their cultivation was poised to undergo an explosive growth.



All eyes were filled with astonishment.

"Jiu, this Enlightenment Tea is truly unparalleled!" Luo Wentian couldn't help but admire, his strength had improved most among them, thanks to the leverage gained from the Fake Pill. He felt that should he activate the Fake Pill again, he would rank as a top-tier expert within the Primordial Core Realm.

"Indeed, hard to imagine. If I could drink Enlightenment Tea every day and continually enter into that wondrous realm of enlightenment, it would be so nice!" Ye Qinghe's eyes showed yearning.

The gaze of everyone revealed reminiscence.

That near-enlightenment state was genuinely marvelous.

They cheerfully shared their recent gains.

Ning Qi merely offered a slight smile.

He disrupted Ye Qinghe's "beautiful dream":

"Even if I let you drink Enlightenment Tea every day, it wouldn't always have such effects."

Ye Qinghe was taken aback:

"Does the Enlightenment Tea develop resistance?"

Indeed some Spirit Fruits have this property, the more consumed the less effective they become.

Jiang Baishan thoughtfully said:



"That shouldn't be the case, Jiu means our accumulation is insufficient."

"The reason why drinking Enlightenment Tea this time had such an outstanding effect was because we accumulated extensively beforehand. If we drink it again in a short time, even if it takes us once more into that wondrous realm of enlightenment, the accumulation doesn't suddenly arise, thus the effect will weaken quite a bit."

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Ning Qi nodded with a smile.

"That's right."

Why does he always delve into Taoist scriptures, ancient texts, and miscellaneous studies?

Just to accumulate his own foundation, providing nourishment when he attains enlightenment. However, his rate of accumulation is evidently much faster than ordinary people, which is unimaginable for most.

He then spread his hands and said:

"But even if you all accumulate enough, there won't be any Enlightenment Tea to drink. This year's yield is only so much, and some must be left for the master; otherwise, we 'ungrateful disciples' would be expelled from the sect."

Everyone looked at the barren tip of the Enlightenment Tea tree and burst into laughter.

"Accumulate well for a year and drink again next year, leaving a thought for you."

Ning Qi smiled.

Next year's yield should be more, so he could share a bit with everyone.



However, Jiang Baishan's gaze dimmed, thinking about the next year... he wouldn't be able to drink it.

Luo Wentian patted him on the shoulder, grinning.

Jiang Baishan looked at the encouragement in his senior brother's eyes, and his lips slowly curled into a smile, nodding heavily afterwards, everything conveyed without words.

"Fifth brother, take care."

Ning Qi watched the backs of those departing, sighing lightly in his heart.

He had done what he could; the rest was up to fate.

The next day.

Jiang Baishan and Lin Ruhua quietly went down the mountain without alarming anyone, leaving only a letter.

Upon reaching the foot of the mountain.

Jiang Baishan turned, gazing at the True Martial Mountain reaching into the clouds, heartbroken, tears streaming down his face uncontrollably. He knelt towards the direction of True Martial Mountain, knocking his head respectfully three times. Lin Ruhua looked on, sighed softly, and hugged him; in their brief time together, she fully understood Jiang Baishan's feelings.

"Let's go," Jiang Baishan said solemnly.

He only hated his own lack of strength.



If he could be as powerful as a Great Yan Martial Saint, he could deal with others from the Demon Sect without facing such a choice. He had unprecedented longing for power.

A moment later.

A soft sigh echoed.

The figure of Taoist Longshan appeared.

As a Celestial Human Realm expert, how could Jiang Baishan leave without disturbing him?

Watching Jiang Baishan's departing back, his face was full of complexity. If possible, how could he let his disciple flee far away? This departure might mean never seeing him again.

Ning Qi also stepped out, standing shoulder to shoulder with Taoist Longshan, watching the two figures in the distance.

He comforted:

"Master, do not worry. I gave fifth brother some things for self-defense; they should have no problem with their safety. It's just a temporary separation; once the matter is resolved, there will naturally be a time to reunite."

Taoist Longshan nodded slowly, suppressing the sorrow within his heart bit by bit.

From now on.

One must find a way to get through this crisis.

...



From now on.

Ning Qi's life became calm and orderly once again, but the looming threats from the Demon Sect and Southern Border drove him with purpose.

But rushing is futile; strengthening oneself is the most important.

Aside from daily Refining Spirit practice.

Ning Qi focused on studying scriptures and contemplating enlightenment. Occasionally, he would take out the silver pages left by Wu Jianghe to reflect upon them, deducing various possibilities of the Martial Saint Technique, preparing for future challenges, and trying to understand the Martial Saint better to handle things more effortlessly.

Moreover.

He was perfecting various secret techniques to make his combat strength as formidable as possible.

He highly valued the Cyan Profound Body Protection Technique as a defense secret technique.

Previously in confrontations, the gap was vast; mostly, he suppressed the opponent with ease. The Cyan Profound Body Protection Technique came into play only when facing High Heaven's Thunder, but this time was different. If he truly faced the Martial Saint, a body protection secret technique is critical, potentially even turning the tide at a crucial moment.

Ning Qi absorbed the essence from numerous texts in the Inquiring Sword Pavilion, hoping to integrate his Sword Intent to further enhance the Cyan Profound Body Protection Technique.

After all, among the various paths he currently mastered, the Sword Dao was the strongest.

The sword can be used not only for offense; if combined with others, it can also be used for defense.



Day by day passed.

Until one day.

Chen Xing returned from Northern Barbarian; she brought back a reply from the Town North King and also brought along someone, the Divine Feather Grand General.

True Martial Hall.

Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian welcomed the two.

"Greetings Senior Chen Xing, Divine Feather Grand General," Luo Wentian spoke courteously.

One was a Celestial Being expert from the Town North King's residence; the other was a strong presence from the Celestial Being List. Had he not been the sect leader of the True Martial Sect, he wouldn't qualify to stand here conversing with them.

But Divine Feather Grand General returned the gesture with a smile:

"Sect Leader Luo is too polite."

"True Man is well?"

Taoist Longshan smiled slightly:

"Divine Feather Grand General remains distinguished; I still recall the grand general's elegance when he beheaded Old Demon Lin. It's already been more than two years since then."



He still remembered two years ago, Divine Feather Grand General stood high above, though not displaying any hostility towards the True Martial Sect, their statuses were not equivalent. But returning to True Martial Mountain this time, Divine Feather Grand General was extremely courteous.

He knew very well why this was.

The True Man Tianjian's current fame was indeed colossal.

Divine Feather Grand General laughed bitterly, waving his hand:

"True Man, do not mock me. Had True Man Tianjian been willing to act then, what chance would I have had to claim credit?"

At the time, he thought True Man Tianjian was inferior to himself, but repeated facts later proved he was the frog at the bottom of the well. Especially after speaking with Flame Martial Grand General, he truly realized the exceptional nature of True Man Tianjian; he now considered the True Martial Sect with great importance.

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Everyone smiled.

Then Taoist Longshan turned his expectant gaze toward Chen Xing.

Chen Xing did not hesitate and produced a secret letter, saying:

"True Man, the Prince is already aware of all matters. He values this highly and has already informed His Majesty. The arrival of Divine Feather Grand General and me is precisely for this matter."

Taoist Longshan was not surprised.

Seeing Divine Feather Grand General arrive, he had already understood.



He opened the secret letter.

His furrowed brows gradually relaxed.

Since learning that the Demon Sect and Southern Border were planning to achieve Martial Saint status, there had always been a shadow in his heart. But now, he finally felt a bit relieved. At the very least, the True Martial Sect wouldn't have to face this challenge alone; there would be strong support.

Whether for Li Ling's sake or Great Yan's realm, Town North King would not stand idly by.

However, recently the Northern Barbarians have been stirring again; he needs to oversee that side, hence he reported to the Imperial Court.

The letter's content was primarily in two parts.

Firstly, Great Yan's Imperial Court would make every effort to thwart the Demon Sect and Southern Border's plan to achieve Martial Saint status, striving to crush their plans in the cradle.

Secondly, concerning the safety of the True Martial Sect, Divine Feather Grand General, who was recently dispatched to guard Qing State, has now moved closer, establishing a presence in the nearest city to the True Martial Sect. In this way, should anything occur, Divine Feather Grand General and his formidable army can arrive at once.

One must also guard against some of the minor maneuvers of the Demon Sect and Southern Border, not merely limiting concern to the threat of Martial Saint.

After reading the secret letter.

Taoist Longshan expressed his thanks solemnly:

"Divine Feather Grand General, there will be many occasions to bother you in the future."



Divine Feather Grand General's expression grew solemn, he waved his hand saying:

"True Man is courteous. The ambition of the Demon Sect and Southern Border is evident; they collaborated intending to overturn our Great Yan. Naturally, I won't sit by and watch. True Man can rest assured their plans won't easily succeed."

He recalled Flame Martial Grand General's instructions earlier, aimed to shift the True Martial Sect's stance, leaning more towards supporting the Imperial Court. Initially, he thought it would be difficult, planning to gradually find an opportunity, but unexpected pressure from the Demon Sect and Southern Border has pushed the True Martial Sect over.

Nevertheless.

The fact that the Demon Sect and Southern Border are planning to achieve Martial Saint status has left him somewhat alert.

After all, Flame Martial Grand General's attitude was elusive, and he was uncertain whether Great Yan's Martial Saint could emerge at the crucial moment. Although he stood among Great Yan's top ranks, some core secrets were still beyond his reach.

While he pondered.

Luo Wentian had also finished reading the secret letter and asked:

"May I ask the Grand General, what shall we True Martial Sect do if the Demon Sect and Southern Border indeed produce a Martial Saint?"

The meaning within his words was apparent.

Only Martial Saint can handle a Martial Saint.



Against them, others face a path to death.

Divine Feather Grand General's heart was tight, but he knew not to show a hint of trepidation.

He replied calmly:

"If that day arrives, there are those who will handle it, rest assured. Since I guard this place, no matter what, I'll share the fate with True Martial Sect, never leaving."

His words were resolute.

Luo Wentian apologized softly.

Taoist Longshan smiled and moved past the matter, saying:

"If it's not absolutely necessary, it'd be best not to proceed as such. Rather than waiting for the Demon Sect and Southern Border's Martial Saints to come knocking, it's better to kill from the source. I believe the Grand General knows that our True Martial Sect has offended the Southern Border because of the Blood King Gu matter; we can use it as a starting point to investigate."

Regardless of whether Great Yan's Martial Saint will act, he couldn't risk the safety of the entire True Martial Sect gambling that Great Yan's Martial Saint could block the attacks of two Martial Saints.

Rather than this, why not prevent the birth of two Martial Saints?

Divine Feather Grand General nodded seriously:

"True Man can be assured, the Imperial Court has already initiated action; secret agents in the Thirteen States are quietly probing. However deeply the Southern Border's people hide, they can't completely conceal. Daring to conduct such vile acts on our Great Yan soil must be severely punished!"



His eyes carried a murderous intent.

Then he added:

"Regarding the Demon Sect achieving Martial Saint through Secret Technique, there have been some clues; it might relate to the inner cores of exotic beasts. The Southern Border, backed by the Hundred Thousand Mountains, is familiar with the situation inside, making it easier to acquire exotic beast cores. Perhaps this is the fundamental reason for their alliance."

Taoist Longshan's eyes showed a hint of surprise.

Although Great Yan is still investigating Southern Border, the information on the Demon Sect's Martial Saint Secret Technique was obtained so quickly, indicating that numerous spies exist within the Demon Sect.

After years of struggle.

Great Yan and the Demon Sect were surely infiltrating one another to some extent.

Reflecting on this, Taoist Longshan was more alert, aware that he couldn't fully trust the Imperial Court, else he wouldn't know if he'd be betrayed by a Demon Sect insider someday.

The four discussed many details.

All regarding various actions to be taken next, essentially exchanging information.

Seeing Chen Xing and Divine Feather Grand General off.

Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian both breathed a sigh of relief and then immediately relayed these messages to Ning Qi.



Ning Qi also felt somewhat relieved.

With Great Yan's intervention, at least the pressure was less intense.

Even if unable to completely prevent the emergence of Martial Saints from the Demon Sect and Southern Border, it would at least greatly delay their progress, gaining ample time for himself. If not even half a year could be gained, then Great Yan's Court would be too incompetent.

Ning Qi didn't believe Great Yan's Court was only capable of this much; since they were willing to intervene, perhaps he wouldn't have to act himself in the end.

But he wouldn't harbor any false hope, relying on others.

In the coming days.

Ning Qi continued his cultivation.

The waves stirred by True Man Tianjian's slaying of the Heart Inquiry Sword also gradually dispersed; the Martial Realm has never lacked for new events, and Ning Qi enjoyed the peace; too much attention on True Man Tianjian wasn't good.

But very soon.

An event once again shook the world, attracting numerous attentions.

The Blade Demon, ranked third on the Celestial Being List, emerged!

Chapter 228: A Knife with Only a Handle, Speculation

Who is the Blade Demon?



Twenty years ago, no one knew, but with a sudden rise to fame, he suppressed the then third-ranked Inaction Guest on the Celestial Being List, making his name known throughout the world. In that battle, he displayed an uncanny, demonic blade technique and cleaved a mountain a thousand feet tall with a single stroke, earning him the title of the Blade Demon.

Though ranked third on the Celestial Being List, many blademen believe that the Blade Demon simply had too few achievements, otherwise he might have a chance to claim the top spot.

Regrettably.

After killing the Inaction Guest that year, the Blade Demon vanished again without a trace.

Until recently, reemerging from seclusion.

And as soon as he emerged, he made a big impact.

Half a month ago.

The Blade Demon appeared in Shi State and battled Ice Soul Swordswoman, ranked thirty-first on the Celestial Being List. It couldn't even be considered a battle but a one-sided crushing; with just one slash, the Ice Soul Swordswoman was severely injured and had to retreat. She was astonished and unable to face that demonic and careful stroke, leaving a shadow in her heart.

Afterward, the Blade Demon drifted away, seemingly a bit disappointed.

Countless blademen were excited.

Since the feud between sword and blade subsided, blademen had felt suppressed, unable to hold their heads high until recently when Heart Inquiry Sword and True Man Tianjian, two unparalleled swordsmen, fought internally. They felt slightly better, and now they finally have the right to stand tall.

"The Blade Demon senior has emerged for the glory of us blademen!"



"The swordsmen have been too arrogant lately; it seems even the Blade Demon senior couldn't bear it. Is he trying to challenge all swordsmen under heaven?"

"Tsk tsk tsk, this is truly exciting!"

Countless blademen eagerly awaited.

However, what happened next dumbfounded all the blademen.

The Blade Demon appeared in Yun State.

He confronted Heart Blade Old Man, ranked twenty-sixth on the Celestial Being List.

Again, it was just one slash.

Heart Blade Old Man was severely injured and retreated.

But Heart Blade Old Man was over seven hundred years old, a renowned elder in the Blade Path with students all over the world. Even several unparalleled blademen ranked ahead of him would give him face, yet now he was treated so mercilessly. It was hard to accept, prompting him to mock with a few words.

Unexpectedly, the Blade Demon was not accommodating at all.

With another slash, he killed Heart Blade Old Man, then descended the mountain and left.

From that point on.

The world was in an uproar.



Everyone realized that this Blade Demon indeed had deep demonic tendencies, leaving blademen bewildered. Initially, they thought the Blade Demon emerged to earn blademen's honor, but now it seemed he made no distinction, treating everyone equally.

The Blade Demon's challenges continued, almost once every half month, with each challengee's ranking moving forward.

Setting aside blademen's colored glasses.

Countless people began to examine the Blade Demon's goals.

After all, judging from his current behavior, this matter will definitely not stop.

Why does the Blade Demon challenge the world's unparalleled strongmen?

Martial artists were all curious, with many scouring ancient texts for answers, while some couldn't resist searching for the Blade Demon's origins.

At last.

Some people discovered some clues.

"Have you noticed the Blade Demon's knife handle! Twenty years ago, it was a broken Demon Blade. I once had the fortune to witness the battle between Inaction Guest and the Blade Demon back then, and at that time, there was still half a Demon Blade! Is it my misconception, or is the knife handle in the Blade Demon's hand seemingly getting shorter after these challenges?"

"Could it be that the Blade Demon is using the world's strongmen to test his blade? Then why doesn't he specifically seek out Blade Path strongmen?"



"There are rumors that the Blade Demon practiced Sword Dao early on and only later switched to Blade Path. Observing the strongmen he challenges now, they are all swordsmen and blademen, so this rumor might be true!"

Countless people discussed it hotly.

This is an enduring major event.

Every half month comes a great battle, even if it's just the Blade Demon one-sidedly crushing, it's still a grand event.

Some curious individuals have already deduced the Blade Demon's next challenge opponents based on his movements and stayed on guard in advance.

The world is bustling, with most attention drawn to this matter.

Even though Ning Qi was at the Seeking Tao Institute, he had already heard of it.

It was Luo Wentian who came specifically to tell him, and this matter had some relation to Ning Qi as well.

"A knife with only a hilt?" Ning Qi showed some amazement in his eyes.

He roughly guessed some of the Blade Demon's intentions.

"That blade is his Blade Path. When one day even the hilt is gone, it will be the supreme realm where all things can be the blade. Is the Blade Demon using the world's strongmen as sharpening stones to help his Blade Path achieve the last step?"

"Could it be... he's using this to break the Martial Saint bottleneck?"



Ning Qi raised his eyebrows.

A strongman like the Blade Demon must have already reached the Celestial Being Perfection Realm and perhaps has been stuck there for a long time. This might be his method to break through, but Ning Qi was a bit pessimistic. His Sword Dao realm had long surpassed the Celestial Human Realm, having reached the realm where all things can be swords, but using that to break the Martial Saint bottleneck seemed unlikely.

However, he wasn't assertive; perhaps the Blade Demon had other plans.

He was just a bit curious. If possible, it would be best to exchange insights.

Luo Wentian seemed somewhat worried:

"Jiu, considering the Blade Demon's route, I'm afraid it won't be long before he challenges you at True Martial Mountain. Do you feel prepared?"

The world's many eyes were drawn to the Blade Demon's affairs, but they did not know the undercurrents surging through the Great Yan's states. The tension between the Imperial Court and the Demon Sect Southern Border erupted everywhere.

True Man Tianjian has not been defeated, which is a great deterrent to the Demon Sect and Southern Border.

If he is defeated by the Blade Demon, the deterrence would greatly diminish, and he feared that the Demon Sect Southern Border might, therefore, undertake other actions. After all, the True Martial Sect had been secretly assisting the Imperial Court, and the tension with the Demon Sect Southern Border was already irreconcilable.

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Ning Qi smiled faintly, comforting Luo Wentian:



"Senior brother, do not worry. When soldiers come, we'll counter them with generals, when water arrives, we'll handle it with earth."

Two or three months passed.

Ning Qi's strength had further progressed, and he was drawing even closer to the Celestial Human Realm.

Now, he could indeed claim invincibility in the Celestial Human Realm.

As long as the Blade Demon remained in the Celestial Human Realm, he was unafraid.

If the Blade Demon's actions were slower, and he reached the Celestial Human Realm before being challenged again, there would be even less suspense.

However.

He was somewhat anticipating meeting this Blade Demon, perhaps it could provide some enlightenment for himself.

Luo Wentian, hearing this.

The worry on his face gradually dissipated. He was somewhat amazed, gaining a further understanding of Ning Qi's strength. Since his ninth junior brother spoke this way, he must be confident.

"Since that's the case, I'm relieved. I will keep an eye on the Blade Demon's movements and inform you immediately if there is any news," Luo Wentian said.

Ning Qi nodded:



"Senior brother, how have the operations against the Demon Sect and Southern Border been progressing?"

Luo Wentian thought for a moment and said:

"Recently, our True Martial Sect disciples have started to retreat, most of them are cultivating on True Martial Mountain, while a few elite disciples are sent out to participate in the Imperial Court's operations. In a few months, there have indeed been some gains."

"Several strongholds in the Southern Border have been secretly destroyed, but with the assistance of the Demon Sect, the Southern Border has also become alert, and no trace of the Blood King Gu has been found."

"As for the Demon Sect, the Imperial Court followed the thread of the inner cores of exotic beasts, using channels such as black market auctions to trace back to a few Demon Sect strongholds. It's almost certain that the Demon Sect's achievement of the Martial Saint Technique is related to this, but the Demon Sect is very cautious. Most of the exotic beast inner cores might have already been transferred from the Hundred Thousand Mountains."

Ning Qi pondered.

The results could be considered neither good nor bad. To some extent, it delayed the progress of both forces, but there were no critical gains.

However.

He had already guessed.

The Demon Sect has been plotting for a thousand years and must be extremely cautious. Moreover, they have been entangled with the Great Yan for many years; it's not easy to deal with.

"The Demon Sect is difficult to handle; perhaps we can focus more on the Southern Border, and if possible, get hold of one or two Blood King Gu," Ning Qi said softly.



He thought.

If he could obtain another Blood King Gu, whether he could use it to sense the positions of other Blood King Gu, and trace them to capture the Southern Border in one strike.

Previously, he had obtained two Blood King Gu, but at that time, due to insufficient strength, he feared being confronted by the Southern Border, so he chose to refine them quickly. But now, he hopes to find the place where the Southern Border nurtures Blood Emperor Gu.

Reversal of offense and defense is nothing at all.

The best defense is a good offense.

But no matter how strong, if he couldn't find the enemy, it would be like punching in the air.

Luo Wentian nodded solemnly:

"Alright, I will inform Divine Feather Grand General and the others about this matter."

He didn't ask why Ning Qi needed it. Since Ning Qi mentioned it, it must be useful, and he chose to trust him.

Not disturbing Ning Qi further, Luo Wentian talked about the recent situation and then left.

He knew that everything the True Martial Sect was doing now was merely supporting Ning Qi; the real key lay with Ning Qi.

Ning Qi watched Luo Wentian's back and slightly shook his head, putting aside this small episode.



The matter of the Blade Demon was indeed lively, but even if it really came to True Martial Mountain, it wouldn't affect him.

The current urgent task was still to advance to the Celestial Human Realm as soon as possible.

Ning Qi operated the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique, instantly resonating with the Power of Heaven and Earth, forming the Great Refining Spirit.

To this day.

The Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique was as simple as breathing and drinking water for Ning Qi. Since stepping into the Primordial Core Realm and starting to refine his spirit, he had discovered that the stronger his 'spirit' was, the more potent the Power of Heaven and Earth he could mobilize through the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique. This is why Ning Qi's strength has been constantly growing.

Ning Qi refined his spirit while contemplating cultivation after reaching the Celestial Human Realm.

If he wanted to maintain his ability to surpass realms just like now after stepping into the Celestial Human Realm, it wouldn't be simple and would require considerable effort.

"The reason my strength can far surpass those in the same realm and easily defeat Celestial Beings is firstly because my foundation is excessively solid, whether it be the physical body or Gang Qi, reaching a level unattainable by ordinary people. The second key point lies in the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique, which allows me to control part of the power of the Celestial Human Realm in advance, thereby partially leveling with it."

"But once I advance to the Celestial Human Realm, things will be different. The Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique will no longer be an advantage. I can only rely on my extremely robust foundation and powerful secret techniques."

"But then, can I, as someone in the Celestial Human Realm, contend with Martial Saints or even slay a Martial Saint?"



Ning Qi temporarily left a question mark in his mind.

Undoubtedly, after advancing to the Celestial Human Realm, with his foundation, the Power of Heaven and Earth he resonates with will be unimaginable, causing his battle strength to surge. Yet, whether this can bridge the gap between the Celestial Human Realm and the Martial Saint Realm remains uncertain.

"A Martial Saint refines the Power of Heaven and Earth for personal use, an absolute leap in the nature of power. To compensate for the qualitative gap, it must be filled with quantity."

"Therefore, my approach should be to allow myself to control as much of the Power of Heaven and Earth as possible. If I can surpass the Power of Heaven and Earth controlled even by Celestial Being Realm Perfection tenfold, a hundredfold, or even a thousandfold, why worry about not being able to overwhelm it with sheer quantity?"

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Ning Qi's mind was filled with spiritual light.

This was the direction he was contemplating.

"The Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique allows me to harness the Power of Heaven and Earth ahead of time. After stepping into the Celestial Human Realm, can I further perfect it by combining my 'Invisible Root Bone' with the 'Formed Primordial Pill' within me to greatly increase the amount of Power of Heaven and Earth I control?"

This seems very feasible.

Ning Qi was already deducing various paths, just waiting for his promotion to the Celestial Human Realm to begin creating a new technique.

And besides the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique.

He was also contemplating the cultivation within the Celestial Human Realm and continuously perfecting the Myriad Phenomena Secret Record.



"Cultivation in the Celestial Human Realm involves condensing the Three Flowers: Flower of Essence, Flower of Qi, and Divine Flower, also known as the Three Flowers of Heaven, Earth, and Human. This actually has a pattern to follow: the Flower of Essence corresponds to the Body Tempering Realm, the Flower of Qi corresponds to the Gang Essence Realm, and the Divine Flower corresponds to the Celestial Human Realm."

"By achieving Three Flowers Perfection, one attains Celestial Being Realm Perfection, and only through Three-Floral Cultivation can one hope to enter the Martial Saint Realm."

"However, in an era without Martial Saints, many strong figures in the Celestial Human Realm, in pursuit of more powerful combat prowess, have abandoned Three-Floral Cultivation, choosing instead to cultivate only one realm. For example, Wang Quan, the ancestor of the Qing State's Wang Clan, specialized in the Flower of Essence."

"Actually, the manifestations of specializing in different paths can vary, but the essence is the same: to leverage more vigorous Power of Heaven and Earth."

"For instance, the Flower of Essence involves using the Power of Heaven and Earth to temper the flesh, ultimately resonating the flesh with the Power of Heaven and Earth, excelling in close combat. The Buddhist Sect's Arhat and Vajra practice it this way, while among swordsmen and blademen, some martial artists specialize in the Divine Flower, using Sword Intent or Blade Intent to resonate with the Power of Heaven and Earth, possessing formidable killing power."

"Specializing in one realm is a shortcut, but naturally, I cannot follow that path; the correct way is cultivating all Three Flowers."

"However, there are intricacies to cultivating the Three Flowers quickly. My physical strength, unparalleled, might be able to leverage the Heavenly Thunder Technique to condense the Flower of Essence..."

As Ning Qi thought about it.

Countless inspirations emerged in his mind.



Although he had not yet entered the Celestial Human Realm, he already had few secrets left about it. One reason was the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique, and the other was that Ning Qi had obtained many Celestial Being Secret Records, which detailed invaluable information for reference.

...

Time slowly passed.

The turmoil in the world stirred up by the Blade Demon grew ever more intense.

Countless gazes converged.

In front of Luofu Mountain.

Many people were already waiting here, hoping that if the Blade Demon appeared, it would mean their prediction of the Blade Demon's route was correct.

Luofu Sword Venerate's face was extremely grim.

As the reputation of True Man Tianjian rose, he felt increasingly distressed because his visit to True Martial Mountain to borrow a sword had turned him into little more than a backdrop for True Man Tianjian, constantly reminding him of his clown-like status.

And now.

He was about to face a challenge from the Blade Demon.

Facing this dreadful opponent, it was impossible for him not to feel apprehensive. He originally intended to avoid the confrontation, but now with everyone waiting here, he had no choice but to abandon that idea; otherwise, he would be unable to hold his head up in the world afterward.



He took a deep breath.

He could only hope the Blade Demon wouldn't come.

But unfortunately.

He was destined to be disappointed.

With an excited uproar, everyone's gaze fixed on one spot where an elder with disheveled hair walked barefoot, a piece of a sword hilt on his waist.

Luofu Sword Venerate's face was grim.

He took a deep breath, preparing to fight.

But he was met instantly with a terrifying blade light, exuding extreme demonic allure, that plunged everyone into oblivion.

...

Without a doubt.

Luofu Sword Venerate, ranked twenty-first on the Celestial Being List, was defeated, and defeated badly, unable to withstand even one strike from the Blade Demon.

He fortunately restrained his anger, for the fate of Heart Blade Old Man was still fresh in his mind.

Henceforth.



The Blade Demon grew increasingly fearsome.

The blademen were all agitated.

Endless discussions ensued.

They all wondered who could withstand the Blade Demon's second strike.

Nineteenth on the Celestial Being List.

Eighteenth.

Sixteenth.

Two months went by in a flash.

One after another, the strong were knocked down.

Still, no one could withstand a single strike.

Yet, no one showed any signs of relaxation; rather, they grew increasingly fervent, filled with unprecedented anticipation.

Because.

Following the Blade Demon's route.

Next was True Man Tianjian!



Previously, True Man Tianjian had slain Heart Inquiry Sword, thereby naturally inheriting Heart Inquiry Sword's rank, occupying fourteenth place.

Fifteenth on the Celestial Being List was neither a blademan nor swordsman.

Therefore, the next challenge from the Blade Demon was naturally without doubt.

This had been verified numerous times.

Countless people converged towards True Martial Mountain.