

## Cultivating 231

Chapter 231: The Ultimate Battle's Opponent, Secret Talks Between the Two Sides

True Martial Mountain.

Unprecedented bustle.

Countless martial artists in the Jianghu were drawn here, traveling from far and wide.

After all, this time was different from before.

The two strong contenders were both top-tier in the current age.

One was True Man Tianjian, who rose to fame like a meteor, showcasing his prowess one after another, and six months ago, he even killed the Heart Inquiry Sword, becoming renowned worldwide.

Everyone knew his strength far exceeded 14th on the Celestial Being List, some even claimed he was already fit to claim the top swordsman's throne, though it was yet to be acknowledged, considering the Sun Chasing Sword King's fearsome strength and longstanding prestige couldn't be easily shaken.

The other was the Blade Demon, who, twenty years ago, emerged and slew the then third-ranked on the Celestial Being List. After a twenty-year absence, he reappeared and stirred the world, defeating numerous Celestial Being List experts with his blade, without ever needing a second stroke.

The clash between these two unparalleled experts naturally garnered much anticipation.

Some say.

This might be the Blade Demon's greatest fight yet, with the future battles unlikely to rival its splendor.

Many have discerned the Blade Demon's plan.

He's amassing power.

Through a series of battles, adjusting his essence, qi, and spirit to their peak state, then confronting the strongest opponent to elevate his Blade Path to unprecedented heights with external aid.

And this strongest opponent.

Some believe it to be the Sun Chasing Sword King, others think it's True Man Tianjian.

Thus.

True Martial City is in an unprecedented frenzy, with many arriving early, some even skipping prior battles to wait here.

For the True Martial Sect, it's both beneficial and burdensome.

The downside is the crowd; it's unpredictable if someone causes trouble, or if there are spies from the Demon Sect and the Southern Border, but the upside is undeniable, with world-class experts convening, accelerating True Martial City's development, and bringing fresh blood to the True Martial Sword Stele and the Tower of Ten Thousand Paths.

Some strongmen inevitably wish to ascend the mountain to see these world-renowned places of enlightenment.

This provides nourishment for Ning Qi.

Ning Qi also knows about the Blade Demon's impending challenge.

Yet his heart remains calm and undisturbed.

He is getting closer to the Celestial Human Realm, with breaking the realm just a couple of months away.

However.

Even if the Blade Demon challenges him before he reaches the Celestial Human Realm, he is unafraid. With his current cultivation, no one in the Celestial Human Realm is a match for him. He is even somewhat eager for the encounter, having heard so much about the Blade Demon's demonic single stroke he wishes to witness it firsthand.

This Blade Demon is undoubtedly a genius of the Blade Path, unparalleled in this world.

Time quietly passes.

In the blink of an eye, half a month has passed since the Blade Demon last appeared.

Countless people await eagerly.

Their anxiety gradually grows.

"Why hasn't the Blade Demon arrived yet?"

"Could we have speculated wrongly?"

"Do not fret, I've observed the Blade Demon elder's challenge timings, it's generally around half a month, but not strictly fixed. Perhaps the insights gained from the last battle took more time, or the journey itself had some delay."

Numerous speculations arise in everyone's hearts.

This day.

Within the Seeking Tao Institute.

Ning Qi is condensing Great Refining Spirit with the Power of Heaven and Earth. Suddenly, his mind stirs, a strange light flickers in his eyes, and silently, he steps out and leaves True Martial Mountain.

In the distant mountain range from True Martial Mountain.

A barefoot, disheveled old man walks slowly, his eyes unfocused, seemingly lost in thought. His pitch-black pupils carry an indescribable demonic charm.

"Can everything become a blade? Leaves are blades, flowers and plants are blades, stones are blades, clouds can also become blades? It's not the shape, but the spirit that matters; all things can transform into Blade Intent..."

The Blade Demon strokes the hilt of his blade at his waist, now slightly shorter.

Clarity returns to his gaze.

He realizes.

He has arrived within True Martial Mountain's territory.

Just as he's about to leap into action.

His steps halt suddenly.

Despite being separated by several thousand feet.

He catches sight of the Sword Stele.

The True Martial Sword Stele isn't particularly grand, chosen casually by Ning Qi with a huge stone, merely several dozens of feet tall. Yet in the Blade Demon's eyes, it shines bright like the moon among glowworms, dazzlingly resplendent. Even if only three inches high, it would be vividly visible to him.

The Blade Demon stops.

His pitch-black pupils deepen, becoming profoundly mysterious.

He's observing the Sword Stele, or rather, sensing its Sword Intent.

Unconsciously.

A demonic Blade Intent whirls and ascends from the hilt at his waist, spiraling around him. If not for a restraining force, it might have soared into the sky, resonating with the Sword Intent in True Martial Sword Stele, confronting it from afar.

Yet even so.

The Sword Stele several thousand feet away suddenly churns with waves.

The swordsmen who were just comprehending near the Sword Stele are startled, at a loss, unaware of what transpired as they gaze at the Sword Intent surging from the Stele, their minds are greatly shaken, churning with countless speculations.

"Could it be True Man Tianjian has gained another insight in Sword Dao?"

"It was said that when Heart Inquiry Sword visited True Martial Mountain, the Sword Stele also fluctuated. Could it be another great adversary approaches, is the Blade Demon here?"

Many considered this possibility.

One by one, they stood up, looking around.

But surveying heaven and earth, they saw no terrifying figure, leaving them even more bewildered.

The Blade Demon, if unwilling to be discovered, naturally no one could detect him.

Except for Ning Qi.

He sensed the fluctuation of the True Martial Sword Stele earlier and now appears silently, his presence like silent void, watching the Blade Demon from the shadows.

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He looked somewhat surprised.

Indeed, the Blade Demon lives up to his reputation. From the flourishing Blade Intent, one could tell that this Blade Intent is unparalleled, possessing an eerie demonic essence, as if the blade had its own life.

"However... it's still half a step away from the realm where everything can become a blade. It seems my guess was right; he's challenging the world's strongest to perfect his Blade Intent and then use it to enter the Martial Saint Realm?"

Ning Qi felt eager to try.

This was a formidable opponent, one that the likes of the Heart Inquiry Sword couldn't even hold a candle to.

Perhaps battling such a strong opponent could yield him some gains, shortening his time to step into the Celestial Human Realm.

Since the Blade Demon was already here.

He was probably about to issue a challenge.

But quickly, Ning Qi was taken aback.

He saw the Blade Demon slowly retract his gaze, and the once flourishing Blade Intent on him gradually retracted. His dark pupils carried a joyous gleam, that of 'meeting a soulmate over wine', 'a worthy opponent has arrived'.

He grinned silently.

It was the battle between True Man Tianjian and the Heart Inquiry Sword that spread across the world and inspired him to gain enlightenment through combat. Originally, he had placed the Sun Chasing Sword King as the final target, the ultimate battle, but upon seeing the True Martial Sword Stele today, he realized he had greatly underestimated this True Man Tianjian.

"Such Sword Intent is unparalleled. Even my Demon Blade Intent falls short by half a measure. Such an opponent is worthy of my full strength!"

The Blade Demon was intensely fervent.

He had already considered retreating.

Not out of fear of True Man Tianjian, but because he felt a senseless battle should be avoided. He wasn't at his peak state yet and needed to present his strongest self to fight this unparalleled swordsman he had never met before, out of respect for both sides.

He turned around.

And walked away slowly.

No one knew the Blade Demon had been here.

Ning Qi looked slightly bewildered.

He had been prepared for a battle but hadn't expected the Blade Demon to retreat. But after a moment's thought, Ning Qi understood the Blade Demon's intentions.

He chuckled silently, not taking it to heart.

Whenever the Blade Demon decided to come would not affect him. But since he chose not to challenge at this moment, in two months' time, he himself would also be far different than he was now.

"However... he glanced in my direction earlier. Did he notice me? Or was it just instinct?"

Ning Qi shook his head slightly, and then also departed gracefully.

If there is no battle, so be it. Going home for enlightenment is a pleasant affair as well.

No one knew that True Man Tianjian and the Blade Demon had already quietly confronted each other in the shadows once.

At this moment.

As the Blade Demon departed, the Blade Intent subsided. The True Martial Sword Stele returned to tranquility, and many were left puzzled, not knowing what had transpired. Numerous speculations remained baseless, unable to be verified, leaving them with no choice but to continue contemplating the Sword Stele.

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Several days passed.

The Blade Demon had yet to make an appearance at True Martial Mountain, leaving some who were calm originally unable to figure out what was happening.

"What's going on? Has the Blade Demon decided to retire to the woods?"

"Or, do you think it's possible that the Blade Demon simply doesn't want to challenge True Man Tianjian right now? After all, even though True Man Tianjian ranks fourteenth on the Celestial Being List, the whole world knows his strength is not just limited to being fourteenth."

This speculation abruptly ended two days later.

Everyone was stunned.

Simply because.

The Blade Demon appeared again, but not at True Martial Mountain; instead, he challenged the twelfth-ranked Night King Blade Venerate on the Celestial Being List.

This time.

Finally, someone withstood the Blade Demon's first strike, though only for one more hit.

For a time, the world was in an uproar, filled with excitement.

They realized that the Blade Demon had skipped over True Man Tianjian, which suggested what?

It indicated that in the Blade Demon's mind, True Man Tianjian was stronger than the Night King Blade Venerate.

"This is obvious; it shows the Blade Demon is challenging from the weaker to the stronger in order."

"But do you think the Blade Demon decided to bypass True Man Tianjian from the start, or only after reaching True Martial Mountain?"

"I think it was a decision made after reaching True Martial Mountain."

Some noticed certain clues.

Firstly, there was the mysterious manifestation of Sword Intent from the True Martial Sword Stele a few days back.

Then, this time, the interval between Blade Demon's challenges was unusual, significantly longer than before.

With these conjectures,

True Man Tianjian's loyal supporters became agitated instantly.

"It seems the Blade Demon has decided to regard True Man Tianjian as the ultimate opponent! This indicates that in his heart, True Man Tianjian is the true first swordsman!"

The supporters of the Sun Chasing Sword King naturally disagreed.

The two sides argued fiercely, yet neither could convince the other.

Thusly,

Amidst the attention on the Blade Demon's challenges, a new anticipation grew—who would be the final opponent chosen by the Blade Demon.

Concerning this,

Ning Qi merely shook his head with a laugh.

To him, none of this mattered.

He knew the Blade Demon wouldn't come to challenge for a while, so he focused on refining his spirit, aiming to step into the Celestial Being Realm within two months.

...

Time passed quietly.

More than half a month went by again.

The Blade Demon challenged the tenth-ranked Proud Heaven Sword on the Celestial Being List. The strength of those ranked in the top ten was clearly on another level; the Blade Demon delivered five strikes, while Proud Heaven Sword countered with three swords, but ultimately was severely injured and retreated.

The Blade Demon's momentum was more resplendent than the sun at noon.

Everyone's eyes were on him, and the feast of duels between unparalleled masters kept the entire Great Yan in a constant uproar.

At this point,

only the eighth-ranked Divine Wind Blade Venerate, the sixth-ranked Vast Sea Sword Sect, and the fifth-ranked Sun Chasing Sword King, along with True Man Tianjian, were left, totaling just four matches. But so far, no one had seen the Blade Demon's full strength.

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Everyone was eagerly anticipating.

Yet beneath this fervor, the covert struggles of the Imperial Court, Demon Sect, and Southern Border never ceased. If the True Martial Sect is counted in, it becomes a four-way struggle, but excluding Ning Qi, the True Martial Sect is negligible compared to the other three forces.

At the summit of a thousand-foot cliff.

Palaces stood layer upon layer, resplendent with gold and jade.

Powerful martial artists gathered here, all high-ranking figures of the Demon Sect and Southern Border.

The Demon Sect had all three Vice Sect Leaders present, but there was no sign of Qin Yun, while on the Southern Border side, besides the Southern Border Saintess and Snake Granny, there were two others standing on equal footing with the Saintess.

One was a bald middle-aged man, with muscles so robust they were intimidating, like a small mountain, with even his facial muscles bunched together.

The other was an elder with a silver crown, possessing a dignified demeanor, implicitly leading the Southern Border people.

However, at this moment, the atmosphere was somewhat silent.

Finally.

Xiang Tianxing broke the stalemate, speaking in a deep voice:

"Gentlemen, we have gathered here today not to perform a silent act. We all clearly understand the situation. If anyone has any ideas, feel free to express them. What do you think, Lanhe Elder?"

Lanhe Elder, the silver-crowned elder, nodded slightly at Xiang Wentian's words:

"Indeed. The Great Yan Imperial Court has already uncovered our plans, biting at our heels like mad dogs these days, greatly slowing our progress in cultivating the Blood King Gu. We must devise a counter-strategy."

Everyone wore expressions of fury.

Everything had been going well since the alliance was formed, but it was unknown where the leak occurred that drew the attention of the Great Yan Imperial Court.

"It's all the damn True Martial Sect's fault. I only regret not exterminating them a few years ago! When the Martial Saint emerges in the future, we must annihilate the entire True Martial sect to quell the fury in our hearts!" Ghost Mask said coldly.

He had been extremely aggrieved lately.

He had initially placed high hopes on Qin Yun, but Qin Yun wavered regarding the True Martial Sect matters, and now, the True Martial Sect had finally become a significant threat. Through informants, they knew that the information was leaked to the Imperial Court by the True Martial Sect.

The bald middle-aged man named Hei Yan spoke in a deep and muffled voice:

"But, how did the True Martial Sect come to know of our plans? Vice Sect Leaders, you must thoroughly investigate yourselves; this great undertaking allows no negligence."

Hearing these words.

Ghost Mask and Lin Xueshuang both turned pale, their expressions ugly.

Both the Southern Border and Demon Sect were powerful, their influence far-reaching, and they could uncover some traces. This involved Qin Yun and Lin Ruhua, though Hei Yan did not point it out directly, leaving them some face.

Xiang Tianxing was secretly pleased, but had to unite against the common enemy, so he smiled to ease the atmosphere:

"However, this might not be a bad thing."

Seeing the crowd's gaze on him, he showed a confident smile:

"Think carefully, with the Great Yan Imperial Court pressing this hard, doesn't it show their bluff and bluster more? They're afraid of us! They're afraid we are about to have a Martial Saint born!"

"Thinking even deeper, doesn't it suggest that the Great Yan Martial Saint is weaker than we imagined? We probed a hundred years ago, and he was far less formidable than two hundred years ago. Now another hundred years have passed, perhaps he's become even more feeble!"

"Thus, if we endure through this time, once the Martial Saints of our two forces are born, the situation will swiftly change!"

Everyone nodded slowly.

This hypothesis had some reasonableness to it.

They were desperately seeking information on the Great Yan Martial Saint, but the Great Yan Imperial Court's defenses were so tight they couldn't gather a trace. But the tighter the defenses, the more it confirmed the Imperial Court's trepidation.

The Southern Border Saintess Lan Yiyi's eyes were cold:

"Yet if this continues, neither the Blood Emperor Gu nor your Holy Pills will know when they'll be completed. The expected time might be delayed by more than double. Delays bring changes. What if the Great Yan Martial Saint recovers significantly during this time?"

"Remember, we are in a race against time."

Lanhe Elder nodded in agreement:

"Yes, we must come up with a feasible counter-plan."

The members of the Demon Sect's eyes flickered slightly.

Breeding the Blood Emperor Gu requires the Blood King Gu, which needs to consume human blood essence. However, their Holy Pills require a large amount of exotic beast inner cores. Comparatively, under the pursuit of the Great Yan Imperial Court, the cultivation of the Blood Emperor Gu is more affected.

Ghost Mask slowly began to speak:

"How about this? You help us complete the Holy Pill refinement first, and when our Holy Sect's Martial Saint is born, we'll immediately assist you with full force to refine the Blood Emperor Gu. This way, we can achieve a win-win situation."

As his words fell, silence reigned within the hall.

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As Ghost Mask's words fell, everyone in the Demon Sect's eyes flickered, but there was no surprise. It was evident that they'd considered this before coming here, and they quietly watched the expressions of those from the Southern Border, trying to understand their thoughts.

The people of the Southern Border acted as if they hadn't heard.

Ghost Mask brought up the matter again:

"What does Elder Lanhe think?"

Elder Lanhe's expression finally changed. He raised his eyelids slightly, his gaze remaining indifferent.

Then, a cold laugh escaped Hei Yan's mouth. He slowly rose, and a mountain-like pressure instantly descended upon the room, with his energy, like a furnace, recklessly spattering around. This alone proved his remarkable expertise in the Flower of Essence, likely on par with the Buddhist Sect's Arhats.

"Do you Demon Sect folks take us of the Southern Border for fools? You even dare to plot against us!"

"Do you think without your help we wouldn't be able to refine the Blood Emperor Gu? Your Demon Sect relies on the acquisition of Exotic Beast Inner Cores to remain unaffected, so you think you can control us? Fine then, let's part ways; from now on, we'll refine our Blood Emperor Gu, but don't you dare expect to get even a single Beast Pill from the Hundred Thousand Mountains!"

Hei Yan's voice was thunderous, his presence imposing. Some of the Demon Sect members visibly changed color.

The Southern Border's foundations were indeed deep; even a master like Hei Yan, who had not shown his face much, had such cultivation that he could easily rank in the top twenty on the Celestial Being List.

People from the Southern Border wore cold smiles.

If they were to help the Demon Sect fully become Martial Saints, wouldn't they eventually be manipulated? By then, the Blood Emperor Gu's ownership would be unknown.

Though the Demon Sect and the Southern Border had already allied, they were not completely harmonious. They had mutual guard against each other, and only if both gave birth to Martial Saints simultaneously could they continue this cooperation; otherwise, the balance wouldn't be maintained if one side grew too strong.

Sensing the tense atmosphere.

Lin Xueshuang gracefully saluted, with a charming smile on her lips, with her green dress swaying, that made Hei Yan's gaze flicker.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please don't be angry. It was merely a suggestion. Indeed, this is a method, but since you think it's inappropriate, let's drop it. We are all in the same boat, so let's not speak of parting ways, as the ultimate beneficiary would be none other than the Great Yan."

"Now, with the grudge against Great Yan already formed, it's either them dead or us alive; it's crucial to unite our hearts."

Xiang Tianxing also mediated:

"Exactly, let's not harm the harmony. Since you find Ghost Mask's words inappropriate, how about proposing a feasible method? After all, the cultivation of the Blood King Gu requires absorbing human blood essence, but under the tight surveillance of the Great Yan, we have no choice."

The Southern Border Saintess pulled down a section of her sleeve from her wrist, speaking casually:

"Who said the Blood King Gu must consume human blood essence?"

The faces of the Demon Sect members showed surprise.

Lan Yiyi continued:

"There's no need for human blood; using beast blood is also possible. However, the process will be much more complicated. It requires removing impurities and also poses certain requirements for Exotic Beasts."

"Besides, the world doesn't consist solely of Great Yan. Though the population of the Northern Barbarians on the plains doesn't match up to Great Yan, they can fill part of the gap."

"With this two-pronged approach, progress won't be delayed, but we must engage in deadly contention with Great Yan without letting them notice. Thus, it requires collaboration from your Demon Sect, sending some people to the Hundred Thousand Mountains to hunt Exotic Beasts, which will help you obtain Exotic Beast Inner Cores and aid us in the Southern Border."

She spoke slowly, evidently having had plans well in advance.

Demon Sect members nodded secretly, recognizing that this method considered both sides.

Ghost Mask smiled and said:

"According to the Saintess, how many people should our Demon Sect send?"

Lan Yiyi's eyes paused for a moment, then she said softly:

"That's for you all to discuss among yourselves. Ultimately, make the most of your resources; now is indeed the time when manpower is needed."

Ghost Mask smiled and said:

"Well said."

He understood well, knowing whom Lan Yiyi was referring to. It wouldn't be a bad idea to let Qin Yun go to the Hundred Thousand Mountains under this pretense, especially since he was a Celestial Human Realm expert and had consumed a lot of the Demon Sect's resources.

Smart people need few words.

Lan Yiyi nodded slightly, yet within her heart was a feeling she couldn't quite describe.

Both sides began to discuss and agree on many details, arranging specifics.

After that, the people from the Southern Border used their own methods to leave one by one.

But before they left, they couldn't help but emphasize probing more into the realities of Great Yan's Martial Saints and applying pressure on the True Martial Sect.

They also discussed the recent matter of the Blade Demon challenging all under heaven, wishing desperately for the Blade Demon to kill True Man Tianjian with a single slash, or severely injure him. By then, they would seize an opportunity, as most from True Martial Sect were hiding in True Martial Mountain, with those occasionally emerging causing them as much distress as having eaten a mouse.

After the people of the Southern Border completely disappeared.

The Demon Sect members fell silent once again.

A moment later.

Xiang Tianxing suddenly sneered:

"Vice Sect Leader Lin, indeed, you've raised a good daughter!"

Earlier when those from the Southern Border were present, they avoided airing much dirty laundry, but now there was no such concern.

Over this period.

They had already known.

Lin Ruhua, at an unknown time, had become a pair with True Martial Sect's Jiang Baishan, leaking who knew how many sect secrets, causing the Great Yan Imperial Court to take notice early, resulting in their current passive situation.

This mistake was something Lin Xueshuang couldn't evade.

Lin Xueshuang's body trembled slightly, her face remained calm, but her emotions were extremely complicated.

Upon hearing this initially, she was both shocked and angry. Having lost her husband early on and never remarried, she had only this one daughter whom she cherished like a treasure. Yet, she never expected her to elope with another man, without even notifying her mother.

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But with the delivery of an unknown secret letter from Lin Ruhua, her anger gradually subsided, and then she could not help but feel heartache.

Only then did she know that her daughter and Jiang Baishan had secluded themselves in a place unknown to anyone, simply not wanting to get caught in a dilemma. Her heart was filled with Lin Ruhua's guilt and apology. She does not ask for her mother's forgiveness, only that her mother should not be sad, promising to repay the kindness of upbringing in the next life. This only made Lin Xueshuang feel like her heart was being torn apart.

Lin Xueshuang spoke softly:

"A son's misbehavior is the father's fault. Ruhua's father died early, and it is indeed I, as her mother, who failed to teach her properly."

She understood why Xiang Tianxing brought up this matter, fearing that the other two Vice Sect Leaders had already planned to take this opportunity to weaken her power.

Ghost Mask spoke:

"Vice Sect Leader Lin, you are being too hard on yourself. Perhaps Miss Ruhua was merely bewitched by the young Jiang boy. Once they are brought back to the sect, we can counsel them properly. However, the Holy Sect has its own rules, and it would be inappropriate for Vice Sect Leader Lin to intervene. Whether it is the matter of Great Yan or the True Martial Sect, Vice Sect Leader Lin needs to avoid suspicion."

Lin Xueshuang gave a cold snort, wanting to lash out, but after a moment of silence, she sighed deeply:

"Very well, I will take charge of the task of hunting the Exotic Beasts in the Hundred Thousand Mountains."

She knew.

This time, once she left, after things settled, her power would inevitably be divided by Ghost Mask and Xiang Tianxing.

She could choose not to go, but when she thought of her daughter's letter, her heart softened.

"If I were to face off against the True Martial Sect, it would inevitably hurt Ruhua's feelings. Now, by heading far away to the Hundred Thousand Mountains and ignoring matters here, it acts as an explanation to Ruhua, preventing her from being caught in a dilemma."

Lin Xueshuang vaguely also had the intention of backing her daughter; if the Taoist Longshan of the True Martial Sect could exhaust all efforts for his disciple, then naturally Lin Xueshuang could also make elaborate plans for her beloved daughter.

Ghost Mask and Xiang Tianxing exchanged glances, seeing joy in each other's eyes, and then jointly cupped their hands and said:

"Vice Sect Leader Lin, your honor is noble. If the grand undertaking of our Holy Sect succeeds, you will surely have great merit in it!"

Lin Xueshuang saw their insincere words and suddenly felt a sense of disillusionment for some reason. She used to be full of ambition, wanting to accomplish great things, but over the years, either actively or passively, she had been fighting for power and profit, and the Demon Sect had long lost its original intent, with even different voices emerging within the sect.

"If you find Ruhua, bring her to the Hundred Thousand Mountains to see me."

With that, she turned and left.

But inwardly, she hoped that her daughter and her beloved could remain hidden from the world.

...

Time passed slowly.

The conspiracy between the Demon Sect and the Southern Border was naturally known to no one.

On the surface, they were still engaged in fierce battles with the Great Yan Imperial Court, even deliberately creating some illusions as if they were desperately protecting certain strongholds, sometimes even sacrificing some experts to confuse the audience. But secretly, their focus had already shifted to the Hundred Thousand Mountains and the Northern Barbarian Grassland, where they were pushing towards preparing what would culminate in the Martial Saint.

Meanwhile, the world of Great Yan continued to be in an uproar over the affair of the Blade Demon.

In the blink of an eye, half a month passed.

Yet another epic and highly anticipated duel.

The Blade Demon challenged the Divine Wind Blade Venerate, ranked eighth on the Celestial Being List!

This battle had a different significance.

Simply because.

These two were the most powerful blademen on the surface, representing the pinnacle of the world's Blade Path, besides those who have secluded themselves or, for various reasons, do not appear on the list.

This battle, whoever emerged victorious would be the undisputed number one blademan in the world.

Though the Blade Demon's power was unmatched, some still hoped for a miracle, as the two had never faced off before.

Countless blademen arrived, eagerly anticipating the birth of this ultimate blade.

The Blade Demon arrived as promised, meeting the Divine Wind Blade Venerate on the Red Leaf Plain.

The two stood between heaven and earth.

The infinite blade momentum made everyone's heart palpitate, even the Divine Wind Blade Venerate himself, who was looking forward to this battle with great anticipation.

"Wind God Blade!"

His blade howled like a divine wind, with blade shadows filling the space, seemingly omnipresent. Even those watching from a thousand feet away felt immense pressure. The Wind God Blade's sharpness was incredibly vexing, compressing the void into storms of terrible Blade Qi.

The spectators were shocked, retreating again and again.

For the first time, the Blade Demon took this so solemnly.

More seriously than when he fought Proud Heaven Sword before, for from the Divine Wind Blade Venerate, he saw something that piqued his interest.

"Human Demon Blade!"

He held the now shorter hilt of the blade, not releasing his grip, while a horrifying demonic aura rose from the Blade Demon. At this moment, he seemed to merge completely with the Demon Blade; he was the Demon Blade, and the Demon Blade was him.

The Divine Wind Blade Venerate's expression changed.

Endless Blade Gang covered the heavens and earth, the wind howling, the intersecting blade marks on the Red Leaf Plain extremely prominent. The lingering Blade Intent was astonishingly thrilling, hinting it could become a good place for future blade enlightenment, though the Blade Intent would be somewhat violent, necessitating caution.

The spectators' hearts swayed.

This was the most pinnacle battle in recent years.

The blademen were immensely fascinated.

Finally.

All Blade Gang ceased, and everyone quickly looked over.

They saw the two had already landed on the ground, with the Blade Demon slowly releasing his grip on the hilt with his right hand, while the Divine Wind Blade Venerate was half-kneeling on the ground, his face desolate, the outcome of victory and defeat clearly apparent. Notably, however, there was admiration in the eyes of the Divine Wind Blade Venerate.

The crowd held their breath and heard the Blade Demon speak for the first time:

"Your blade is not bad."

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This was the first time he praised an opponent like this, making everyone glance over in surprise. Although the Divine Wind Blade Venerate was defeated, he was still honored.

However, the Divine Wind Blade Venerate felt somewhat uncomfortable. He had roamed the world for many years and never expected to suffer such a crushing defeat today. Such praise might be an honor to others, but to him, it was quite unsettling. However, he had to accept that his skills were inferior, and there was nothing more to say.

Watching the barefoot old man turn away, the Divine Wind Blade Venerate couldn't help but ask:

"How much further do you have to go?"

The Blade Demon paused, knowing he was asking about the highest realm of the Blade Demon.

He continued walking, his voice faintly trailing behind:

"Half a step."

The Divine Wind Blade Venerate was impressed.

He himself was still one step away from the realm where 'everything could be a blade', and the difference between one step and half a step, though seemingly small, was actually significant.

At this point.

The opponent could already be called the world's number one blademan!

He noticed that the Blade Demon's blade handle was shorter than when he arrived, and he was even more impressed, lamenting how the world could have such a blade path genius who could gain insight from one battle. Who in the world could stop his progress?

The result of this battle spread.

The world was abuzz.

The name of the Blade Demon as the number one blademan was no longer under any doubt.

Next.

There were only three people left.

And these three were all swordsmen: the Vast Sea Sword Sect, the Sun Chasing Sword King, and the True Man Tianjian.

The blademen were confident and hopeful that the Blade Demon could sweep through all three, cementing his invincible reputation.

Unexpectedly, however,

the Blade Demon did not appear soon after his battle with the Divine Wind Blade Venerate. Normally, there was a battle about every half month, except for a delay when he faced the True Man Tianjian, but this time, the delay was even longer, and unknowingly, more than half a month had passed.

"Could it be that the Blade Demon was also injured in that battle?"

Countless people speculated, feeling anxious.

They feared the Blade Demon might disappear, making this unprecedented event end with a whimper.

Fortunately, this anxious mood did not last long.

A month after the battle with the Divine Wind Blade Venerate, the Blade Demon finally reappeared.

This time.

He challenged the sixth-ranked on the Celestial Being List from the Vast Sea Sword Sect. He traveled to the near-sea Vast Sea Pearl Island, where martial artists had gathered in anticipation, some choosing the reefs, some choosing deserted islands, and others settling on large ships. The area around Vast Sea Pearl Island was unprecedentedly lively.

Soon.

Everyone realized why the Blade Demon took so long to appear this time.

He battled fiercely with the Vast Sea Sword Sect.

Everyone could clearly see that the Vast Sea Sword Sect was slightly stronger than the Divine Wind Blade Venerate, but unexpectedly, the Blade Demon won even more easily!

Watching the Blade Demon stride over the sea.

Countless people were astonished.

This indicated that the Blade Demon had gained great insight from the previous battle with the Divine Wind Blade Venerate, which explained the month's delay.

Observant people noticed.

The Blade Demon's blade handle was now very short, probably only half the width of a palm, looking like a piece of iron.

The result of this battle spread once again throughout the world.

Next.

Only two people remained.

One was the True Man Tianjian, and the other was the Sun Chasing Sword King.

At this point, no one knew whom the Blade Demon would challenge next.

If he challenged the True Man Tianjian first, it would indicate that the Blade Demon believed the Sun Chasing Sword King to be the strongest swordsman, and vice versa, if he challenged the Sun Chasing Sword King first.

The swordsmen argued endlessly, as both had a considerable number of supporters.

Which site should be chosen for the next battle's audience?

The crowd was at a loss.

Thus, a ridiculous scene occurred.

Supporters of the True Man Tianjian headed towards the Sunset Sword Sect, convinced that the next battle would be between the True Man Tianjian and the Sun Chasing Sword King and not wanting to miss such a grand event.

While supporters of the Sun Chasing Sword King flocked to the True Martial Mountain.

The world's martial artists were divided in half.

Both True Martial Mountain and the Sunset Sword Sect were crowded.

When Ning Qi learned of all this, he couldn't help but shake his head and smile.

However.

He wasn't concerned.

He was in high spirits, and although the shadows of the Demon Sect and Southern Border Martial Saint were not yet visible, he was just about to break through to the Celestial Human Realm.

Chapter 237: Entering the Celestial Human Realm

The world is in chaos.

Yet Ning Qi is alone in the Seeking Tao Institute, devoting himself to quiet cultivation, watching flowers bloom and wither, a delightful affair indeed. He practices diligently every day, making steady progress that is pleasing.

Up until now.

His Refining Spirit is nearing Perfection, stepping into the Celestial Human Realm is a natural progression.

Ning Qi estimates, it's a matter of one or two days.

"Unknowingly, I am already eleven years old."

Ning Qi stands with his hands behind his back, gazing at the starry sky, filled with endless reflections.

At eleven, he possesses a towering, unparalleled elegance, surpassing even that of fifteen or sixteen-year-old youths, which upon first glance, leaves people internally exclaiming over such an extraordinary Little Taoist. A few more glances, and they would be even more astonished by his transcendent poise, enough to captivate.

This is the unique aura cultivated from years of scripture reading and Enlightenment by Ning Qi.

Were there Immortals in the world, they would be no different.

Because of this, many senior and junior brothers in the True Martial Sect acknowledge Ning Qi's exceptional nature, a result of him no longer concealing himself. With his full-fledged capabilities, he no longer needs to completely hold back, sometimes acting freely, rendering Zhuang Chen and Li Ling utterly stupefied, viewing this Ninth Senior Brother as a Celestial Being.

Zhuang Chen knows more, recalling when he was a disciple of the Divine Sword Sect, exchanging techniques of Dreaming Gluttony for Ning Qi's extraordinary sword skill, later taught the Innate Sword Body Secret Technique by Ning Qi, but he has never mentioned these matters to anyone else.

Li Ling, on the other hand, occasionally has flashes of insight, suspecting that Ninth Senior Brother's demeanor bears a slight resemblance to the stern and cold Senior Tianjian, though Ninth Senior Brother is noticeably more amiable.

He can't help but speculate if Ninth Senior Brother secretly inherited the teachings of Senior Tianjian, which only grants him more respect, aware that gaining recognition from such an enigmatic predecessor is no easy task.

Ning Qi looks back on past events.

Divine Intent disperses.

Almost forgetting about various past lives, the eleven years of this life have mostly passed atop True Martial Mountain.

He gazes afar, sensing something within.

"Could the place from my past life be a star in the sky? Have the hundreds of reincarnations I've undergone been similar? Will there be a chance in the future to look back?"

Ning Qi bears no attachments to places of his past life, moved purely by curiosity.

He inadvertently recalls a prior journey to High Heaven, its rules clearly different from the previous planets, the might of the Thunderous Forbidden Zone still unsettling upon recollection, preventing another visit even after advancing to the Primordial Core Realm.

He even feels that once stepping into the Celestial Human Realm, he must remain exceedingly cautious, avoiding any rashness.

Many thoughts flashing by in an instant.

Countless principles surge into his mind.

Ning Qi stands quietly under the peach tree, slowly closing his eyes.

Everything comes naturally, Divine Intent effortlessly reaching the Realm of Perfection, his Divine Intent incomparable to others. Covering the entire True Martial Mountain is merely ordinary for him, brushing past it all.

He sees true martial disciples striving diligently in the Martial Arts Arena, seemingly that boy named Gou Dan; he sees his eldest senior brother leaving the Martial Arts Arena with hands behind his back, looking satisfied; he sees his second senior brother frowning at the desk; he sees his master cradling scriptures in contemplation, suddenly raising his brows, seemingly aware, glancing towards the direction of the Seeking Tao Institute in surprise...

Ning Qi finds this state incredibly marvelous.

But it too is ephemeral.

He strives to remember this state.

For a moment.

An immense Divine Intent contracts, as if drawn by a tremendous force, stirring vast waves in the formless void, then fully retracting into Ning Qi's body.

At this moment.

The Primordial Core within Ning Qi emits a golden glow, constantly rotating.

This is the activated Primordial Core state, now merging with the Perfect Divine Intent, seeking the vast, mysterious Power of Heaven and Earth, easily resonating and controlling it in the future. Although it's merely resembling 'swinging a hammer' or 'levering a pole', it can still unleash unmatched might.

This is the origin of the statement 'beneath the Celestial Human, all are ants'.

For ordinary people, this barrier is exceedingly difficult; previously, Taoist Longshan was stuck here, unable to comprehend, ultimately breaking through to the Celestial Human Realm only after a closed retreat, almost causing True Martial Sect to face danger.

But for Ning Qi, it is as simple as can be.

He created the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique, already familiar with the process.

At this moment, under his control, Divine Intent instantly forms a 'Bridge' with the Primordial Core within, this 'Bridge' as the key connection of humans and the heavens and earth.

Once the Bridge of Celestial Being is completed.

Ning Qi naturally steps into the Celestial Human Realm.

His body shook.

Immediately, he feels different.

In a moment.

The entire world looks different to him, contrasting the vague Perception of the Power of Heaven and Earth using the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique before. Now it is clearly 'visible', he sees strands of energy like fireflies billowing in the heavens and earth, its vastness is unimaginably overwhelming.

"Is this the Power of Heaven and Earth?"

Ning Qi is astounded, feeling a sense of seeing the truths of heaven and earth, with waves of Spiritual Light in his mind, realizing that once this force is used like an arm, it's indeed unimaginable, fearing that destroying the world would be effortlessly easy.

Regrettably, even the strong of the Celestial Human Realm can only utilize it at a shallow level, hardly grasping its essence. Perhaps only Martial Saints can truly master such force.

Chapter 238: Entering the Celestial Human Realm\_2

Ning Qi gained a somewhat direct understanding of the Martial Saints' might.

He took a deep breath.

Stabilizing his mind.

He remained standing quietly under the peach tree, sensing the changes within his body. With the effect of the Bridge of Celestial Being, boundless vitality spread throughout his body, enhancing his life essence further, extending his lifespan. Consequently, his understanding elevated once more, allowing his thoughts to touch upon the essence.

"I might now have a lifespan nearly double that of an ordinary Celestial Human Realm being!"

Ning Qi's lips curved slightly, showing some delight.

Even though he was still far from his goal of immortality, the feeling of growth step by step equally made him happy. The process of pursuing the path to immortality was extremely important as well.

Each leap in life indicated that he was one step closer to his goal.

This was the satisfaction of 'attaining the Dao.'

Ning Qi continued to sense the changes within him, benefiting from the Bridge of Celestial Being, with certain improvements in his Essence, Qi, and Spirit. However, it wasn't to an extent unreachable by the Primordial Core Realm. Thus, he knew the ancient texts weren't wrong. If one set aside the Power of Heaven and Earth, the Celestial Human Realm wasn't extraordinarily stronger than the Primordial Core Realm.

This was the fundamental reason why the woman from the Southern Border dared to ascend the mountain for a night visit with the Heaven-Sensing Gu.

Ning Qi was an exception never seen before.

He took a deep breath and communicated with the Bridge of Celestial Being.

In an instant.

A vast amount of Power of Heaven and Earth roared from all directions. The magnitude was far more than Ning Qi had resonated with using the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique before, perhaps as much as a hundredfold.

Though Ning Qi meant to conceal it, there were still some waves and commotion.

Ordinary disciples might just think it's the night wind, but Taoist Longshan's eyes revealed more astonishment, developing a certain speculation, and then turning into deep joy and anticipation. He stepped lightly and slowly approached the Seeking Tao Institute.

"I've just stepped into the Celestial Human Realm, yet the Power of Heaven and Earth I can resonate with rivals those unparalleled Celestial Being Perfection powerhouses, possibly even exceeding them by much. Thus, considering my massive Gang Essence and the power of various secret techniques, though it hasn't surged a hundredfold, tenfold isn't a problem."

"Moreover, this isn't the limit. Having entered the Celestial Human Realm this time, I have an overwhelming amount of inspiration in my mind. With a time of peaceful digestion, whether it's the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique or the Heavenly Sword Technique, there can be significant progress."

"Facing a Martial Saint now, I certainly wouldn't be powerless!"

Ning Qi's heart was determined.

Before, he didn't know how powerful a Martial Saint was, only imagining it as powerful as possible.

But now, seeing the truth of Heaven and Earth, he roughly understood that the strength of a Martial Saint lies in truly exploiting the essence of the Power of Heaven and Earth. Although his own power essence was inferior, overwhelming quality with quantity might not be impossible.

Only Ning Qi could achieve such a thing.

After ordinary people step into the Celestial Human Realm, their Gang Qi doesn't disappear, but compared to the Power of Heaven and Earth's might, it is undoubtedly as ornamental—only acting as a catalyst when cultivating the Flower of Qi. Yet Ning Qi's Gang Qi possesses substantial might, combining both in an unprecedented manner.

Moreover.

The many secret techniques he mastered and the high realm of the Paths he reached were beyond ordinary imagination.

Ning Qi felt.

No matter how powerful a Martial Saint was, it wouldn't be so overwhelmingly defiant.

He found peace in his heart.

Ever since he learned that the Demon Sect and Southern Border were soon to birth a Martial Saint, he showed no sign of it externally, comforting his master and senior brother. But deep down, he too felt certain pressure. Although he could certainly flee himself, he couldn't safeguard the lives of True Martial Sect's two thousand disciples.

Now.

He finally gained a certain amount of confidence.

"However, it's still not enough. I need to become even stronger."

He had just entered the Celestial Human Realm and still had great potential for growth, progressing rapidly in the short term. Furthermore, after entering the Celestial Human Realm, he could continue researching the secrets of the White Ape bloodline and Zhuang Chen's Innate Sword Bone.

Yet he can't just shut himself away.

Ning Qi decided to employ a two-pronged strategy.

While strengthening himself, he would also try to ascertain the secret land of the Martial Saints of the two forces. It would be best to strike first, rather than waiting for them to grow powerful before resisting.

His strength had increased greatly, feeling capable of freely moving in the Demon Sect and Southern Border. If he could nip this crisis in the bud, it would be ideal.

However.

The Demon Sect has always been crafty, with many hideouts. Even the Martial Saints of Great Yan could not eradicate them. Ning Qi would find locating their secret land challenging, not something to be rushed. Otherwise, alerting them without destroying the Martial Saint secret land might let them become more wary and go deeper into hiding.

Just as he thought about this, he slightly opened his eyes, smiling as he looked forward.

Taoist Longshan walked over, seeing Ning Qi's distinctly different demeanor, eyes filled with expectation and hope:

"Jiu, you..."

Ning Qi smiled and nodded.

Taoist Longshan stood dumbfounded, his hope realized, yet feeling surreal, and after a moment, he laughed heartily.

"Good! Good! You are truly the Path Guardian of True Martial!"

His laughter grew more and more relieved as he faced the sky, causing tears at the corner of his eyes to escape Ning Qi's notice.

Ning Qi reflected emotionally.

During this time, not only he felt some pressure. Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian experienced significant stress as well. While carrying out the fire seed plan, their hearts couldn't help but grow anxious. Now, finally, they reached the fruition of their efforts.

The bright moon hung in the sky.

Master and disciple strolled side by side, feeling hopeful about the future of True Martial Sect amidst laughter and conversation.

...

No one in the world knew that Ning Qi had silently broken through, achieving power far beyond the Celestial Human Realm.

Now, all eyes were fixed upon the Sunset Sword Sect and True Martial Sect.

Martial Artists gathered.

Awaiting the Blade Demon.

The atmosphere at True Martial Mountain was unprecedentedly intense, prompting many to leave their mark on the True Martial Sword Monument and Tower of Ten Thousand Paths. This pleased Ning Qi, as his Sword Intent had surpassed the realm the Blade Demon dreamed of, even further than that, achieving a mastery where everything could serve as a blade.

Ning Qi roughly speculated.

This realm was one of the conditions for reaching the Martial Saint, but just one of the conditions.

Before stepping into the Celestial Human Realm, the Blade Demon couldn't be his opponent, even more so now, leaving Ning Qi unperturbed. He paid no attention to such concerns.

Should the Blade Demon come to challenge earlier, he would defeat him earlier. If he came later, he would defeat him later.

He disregarded all speculations under the heavens, focusing solely on comprehending the many wonders of the Celestial Human Realm.

He was enhancing the Celestial Being Unity Secret Technique, or rather a completely new secret technique.

Previously, this secret technique allowed him to prematurely grasp the secret of the Celestial Human Realm. Now that he had stepped into the Celestial Human Realm, it seemed to have lost its usefulness. But Ning Qi thoroughly contemplated and felt there's still more to explore. The wondrous aspects of the body's Root Bone were yet to be fully understood.

Now, focusing all efforts on comprehension, inspiration flashed, intending to model the idea of the Bridge of Celestial Being to construct a second Bridge of Celestial Being using the body's Root Bone as a medium!

In this way.

Two Bridges of Celestial Being exerting their power simultaneously could increase the Power of Heaven and Earth Ning Qi could resonate with manifold. Moreover, if the two bridges could mutually enhance each other, the effect wouldn't merely be doubling but potentially tripling or quadrupling.

This would greatly enhance Ning Qi's combat prowess.

Because of this, he temporarily set aside continued cultivation in the Celestial Human Realm, as enhancing strength quickly was essential and needed immediate mastery.

Yet others in the world couldn't remain as composed as Ning Qi.

The matter of the Blade Demon continued to be chaotic.

A half-month had passed since the defeat of the Vast Sea Sword Sect.

Unexpected to all martial artists, the Blade Demon reappeared. They thought he would retreat for another month or longer, yet it was only half a month.

He slowly ascended the mountain gate of the Sunset Sword Sect, igniting all in fervor.

"The Blade Demon has chosen to challenge the Sun Chasing Sword King first!"

"Doesn't this imply that, in his mind, True Man Tianjian is the strongest, indicating that the Blade Demon had gone to True Martial Mountain on a trip, and upon seeing the True Martial Sword Monument realized it was his destined strongest opponent, thus leaving True Man Tianjian last!"

Hearing such remarks, everyone in the Sunset Sword Sect was silently furious.

Yet, after being admonished by their Ancestor, the Sunset Sword Sect had shifted their mindset. Though angry, they weren't overly enraged. At this point, only facts could speak for themselves.

They only knew.

If the Blade Demon were defeated by their Ancestor, who he thought was strong would cease to matter.

Chapter 239: Blade Demon and Sword King, The Great Terror in the Nether

Amidst the gaze of countless eyes.

The Blade Demon approached slowly.

The scenery of Sunset Sword Sect was breathtakingly beautiful, with silver waterfalls cascading. Ever since the Sun Chasing Sword King's rise, the sect had ascended with astonishing speed, vaguely holding the position as the number one Sword Dao Holy Land in the world, housing various sacred places like the Sword Burial Pool and Sword King Peak.

In the past.

Sunset Sword Sect rarely entertained external guests.

But now, the Blade Demon's challenge was a grand event, and naturally, they couldn't show weakness, allowing many martial artists to watch from the periphery. People marveled at the heritage of Sunset Sword Sect while eagerly anticipating the upcoming battle.

No matter how the Blade Demon viewed it.

The Sun Chasing Sword King was currently the highest-ranking swordsman on the surface.

Ranked fifth on the Celestial Being List!

This was truly a peerless powerhouse standing at the pinnacle of Great Yan, even when accounting for those hidden monsters.

The Blade Demon stood beneath Sword King Peak, his jet-black pupils gazed over, slightly rippling. He perceived an extremely formidable sword intent hidden there, and if his intuition was correct, it should be someone walking a similar path to his own.

His battle intent soared, realizing that this Sun Chasing Sword King was stronger than imagined.

The blade intent surged skyward, sweeping across the layers of clouds, forming an invisible vortex. Countless people were horrified by this demonic blade intent, especially those who had witnessed every battle since the Blade Demon emerged, who were extremely excited.

They were loyal followers of the Blade Demon and could fully see that the Blade Demon had become stronger since emerging.

This also completely confirmed everyone's suspicions that the Blade Demon emerged to test his blade against the world's strongest, aiming to reach the Supreme realm.

The members of Sunset Sword Sect all gathered at Sword King Peak.

They were astonished in their hearts and bowed in unison, shouting:

"Please, Ancestor, come forth!"

Countless gazes converged on Sword King Peak, which was also surrounded by various mysterious legends. It was said that this was the place where the Sun Chasing Sword King attained Sword Enlightenment, originally just an ordinary mountain, but over time, every flower, plant, tree, and stone was imbued with powerful sword intent, earning it the name Sword King Peak.

In the past, people were unsure whether this legend was exaggerated by Sunset Sword Sect to enhance its reputation.

But upon witnessing today's events.

They realized their naivety.

As the members of Sunset Sword Sect finished their call, everyone saw the originally silent Sword King Peak come to life, sword intents surged into the sky, converging into form, creating an astonishing phenomenon like a grand sun, leaving people speechless.

A faint voice echoed:

"Stand down."

The crowd focused their gaze and saw a figure standing opposite the Blade Demon, the old man's brows and eyes like swords, a majestic presence, casually standing there with an overwhelming aura, naturally not an ordinary person to bear the name chasing the sun.

The Sun Chasing Sword King looked at the Blade Demon opposite, his gaze resting on the hilt of the demon's blade, with a sense of caution.

He softly remarked:

"The world is truly full of hidden talents. First, there was an unheard-of True Man Tianjian, and now you've emerged, unstoppable. Your blade, I fear, is nearly complete."

Everyone was astonished.

The Sun Chasing Sword King also mentioned True Man Tianjian, and his words seemed to hold him in high regard.

The Blade Demon slowly spoke, his voice somewhat hoarse:

"Still a bit short, you're not bad either."

The Sun Chasing Sword King laughed heartily, finding a sense of camaraderie in an unexpected encounter.

"Shall we decide victory in three moves?"

"Alright."

The Blade Demon's voice remained calm as ever, but everyone was astonished. Since his emergence, the Blade Demon had hardly spoken, only having exchanged a few words after his battle with Divine Wind Blade Venerate. But now, before the duel had even started, he was already conversing calmly with the Sun Chasing Sword King, showing his respect for him.

Everyone secretly anticipated.

They widened their eyes, even relaxing their breaths, fearing to disturb the duel of these two peerless powerhouses.

In an instant.

The wind and clouds shifted.

The Sun Chasing Sword King pointed with his hand, and a vast sword intent condensed, transforming into a radiant sun suspended high in the sky. Even from a distance, everyone could perceive the overwhelming sense of oppression. The myriad things in the world, be it divine mountains, great rivers, or deep seas, paled in comparison to the boundless grandeur of the sun.

The Sun Chasing Sword King bore the name chasing the sun, not to pursue the sun like Kuafu, but to pursue his own sword intent to be as vast and boundless as the sun.

At this moment, as he made his move, it instantly caused a shock among countless people. Such sword intent was rare in the world; it was clear the Sun Chasing Sword King had made further progress since last taking action.

The Blade Demon's jet-black pupils rippled, his battle intent surged, and he gently caressed the hilt of his blade.

The terrifying demonic nature rose and swept, the Blade Demon at this moment seemed to transform into the Demon Blade, someone recognized it; this was the unparalleled blade that defeated Divine Wind Blade Venerate, the Human Demon Blade!

The two peerless powerhouses had widened the gap from others with just one move.

Only now did everyone understand.

The peerless powerhouses ranked in the top five of the Celestial Being List had reached a different realm, incomparable by multiple levels.

The brilliant sun descended from the sky, carrying vast pressure, while the pitch-black Demon Blade ascended against the current, possessing an invincible aura to annihilate everything.

Like oil boiling in a blazing fire.

The void resonated with a sizzling sound that made one's scalp tingle, the sun attempting to devour the Demon Blade while the Demon Blade sought to destroy the sun, both sword intent and blade intent contained within. Any slight leak of such energy would be enough to leave Sunset Sword Sect in ruins.

But strangely, the two forces only dissolved each other, without any extra waves spilling out.

A moment later.

Both the sun and the Demon Blade dissipated, with innumerable winds passing through, leaving everyone in shock. This was the first individual to evenly match the Blade Demon, causing great cheer within the members of Sunset Sword Sect, further deepening their reverence for their Ancestor.

Chapter 240: Blade Demon and Sword King, The Great Terror in the Nether\_2

But the Sun Chasing Sword King's expression was slightly complex.

Only he knew that in the previous exchange, he lost. Although he didn't lose by much, a loss is still a loss. The opponent's realm in the Blade Path was obviously higher than his own, and that Demon Blade's Blade Intent was slightly stronger than his Sun Chasing Sword Intent.

He took a deep breath and said:

"It seems I have underestimated you, sir."

"I have comprehended for one hundred and sixty years and have one supreme sword. Please have a taste, sir."

There was a burst of battle intent in his eyes.

Earlier, he thought of deciding victory in three moves, but now it seemed there was no need. It was just a waste of time; might as well be straightforward.

"So it should be!" Blade Deon's hoarse voice rang out, and in an instant, wild hair flew. Everyone could see that his demeanor was completely different from before, clearly treating the Sun Chasing Sword King as a completely different kind of opponent.

The Sun Chasing Sword King laughed up to the sky.

Along with the laughter, Sword King Peak behind him suddenly radiated brilliance, and the flowers, trees, flying sand, and rolling stones all seemed to 'come alive.' From everything, astonishing Sword Intent burst forth, creating a terrifying scene that left everyone dumbfounded.

"Everything can be a sword? This is the highest realm of Sword Dao! It is said that this is the realm of the Sword Saint. Could it be that the Sun Chasing Sword King has reached this level?"

Someone trembled with fright and pointed out the subtlety within, causing an uproar among the crowd.

Blade Demon also narrowed his eyes.

He saw the subtlety, with divine light blooming in his eyes, eager to try.

The Sun Chasing Sword King's laughter echoed far and wide, unrestrained:

"Sitting on Sword King Peak for one hundred and sixty years, although unable to glimpse the supreme Sword Realm, there has been small gain, but only by relying on the home advantage. I beg your pardon, sir."

The crowd thought deeply.

It became clear that this "everything can be a sword" of the Sun Chasing Sword King was not very complete, relying on Sword King Peak. Only through the day-after-day influence of his Sword Intent could the flowers, grass, and trees come to possess Sword Intent.

But no matter what, this was already a realm difficult for swordsmen in the world to reach.

At this moment.

Countless Sword Intents gathered upon the great sun, making it increasingly dazzling, several times stronger than before.

The Sun Chasing Sword King's expression was incomparably solemn, his entire being enveloped within the great sun, seeming to transform into the great sun itself, with only laughter transmitting from within vast spaces. He didn't care about winning or losing, just relished having an evenly matched opponent today to give his all.

Blade Demon brushed over the handle of his sword. For the first time, he unsheathed that 'iron piece,' leaving less than half a palm's width. He raised the 'blade' and swung down, his voice carrying an extreme demonic nature.

"This blade is called Heavenly Demon."

He had three blades: Human Demon, Earth Demon, and Heavenly Demon.

Now, facing this supreme sword honed over one hundred sixty years from the Sun Chasing Sword King, the Earth Demon Blade was insufficient to match it, so he employed the Heavenly Demon Blade.

In an instant.

All things were silent; it seemed that in the void, endless Blade Intent erupted, enhancing the devilish nature of this swing intensely. Formless whirlpools twisted everything, and Blade Demon's figure melded within, with terrifying might overshadowing Sunset Sword Sect.

All the spectators shivered as if the end of the world had arrived.

The great sun hung high in the sky, each ray of light a terrifying Sword Intent. But as the Demon Blade struck, it twisted the void, as if a demonic world was born, wanting to devour everything. It seemed no ray of Sword Intent could escape this dreadful prison.

Both were inflating increasingly.

Overwhelming everything.

Countless people were horrified, instinctively widening their eyes. At this moment, even supporters of True Man Tianjian couldn't help but question whether True Man Tianjian could truly compare to the two before them. They had witnessed the world-shattering scene of those thirty-six Celestial Swords in the sky, but couldn't see it matching the great sun and the Demon Blade before them.

The dark whirlpool swallowed the great sun like a celestial hound devouring the sun.

The world fell into darkness.

Everyone closed their eyes, feeling only waves passing through, making them shiver.

Finally.

All fluctuations dispersed; everyone looked intently and saw Sun Chasing Sword King still standing where he was, and Blade Demon was about to turn and leave.

"What's going on? Did Blade Demon lose?"

This thought just arose in everyone's minds.

The Sun Chasing Sword King showed a bitter smile and shook his head helplessly:

"Your Blade Path is the greatest in the present age; even relying on the power of Sword King Peak, I still lost a bit. It is I who am inferior."

With these words.

The crowd was in an uproar, especially the people of Sunset Sword Sect, who were as if in mourning. Obviously, the Sun Chasing Sword King lost. Although it wasn't a crushing defeat like previous ones, a loss was ultimately a loss.

Blade Demon paused, seeming to reminisce:

"You are stronger than that person twenty years ago; he only took half of my Heavenly Demon Blade."

Everyone was aghast.

The person from twenty years ago could only have been that former number three on the Celestial Being List, Inaction Guest!

At this moment, this secret came out from Blade Demon's mouth, letting them know Inaction Guest hadn't even taken half of the Heavenly Demon Blade and perished at Blade Demon's hands. And now, the Sun Chasing Sword King had taken this blade unharmed. Although he lost, who was superior was clear at a glance.

The Sun Chasing Sword King only sighed lightly.

He had no intention of comparing himself too much with others.

"Next, will you fight True Man Tianjian?" he asked curiously.

The name of True Man Tianjian he already knew, a fellow unparalleled swordsman. One only needed to look at the True Martial Sword Stele to know this True Man Tianjian was extraordinary, not beneath himself, and as for the Blade Demon in front of him, there was no need to say more, since he had just lost to him. Such a battle between two unparalleled powerhouses, even he was a bit excited.

Blade Demon nodded and said:

"Indeed, during a previous trip to True Martial Mountain, his Sword Intent made me uncertain."