

Cultivating 301

Chapter 301: Three Flowers Gathering at the Top, Continuation of the White Ape Picture_2

Ning Qi felt a great increase in his sense of security.

Of course, he was aware that there were various levels even among Martial Saints, but Martial Saints like those from the Southern Border and the Demon Sect, who forcibly step into the realm by external means, are probably at the lowest tier of Martial Saints.

This way.

Even if the yet-to-be-found Sect Leader of the Demon Sect stepped into the Martial Saint Realm, he was not afraid.

Next.

He could finally focus all his efforts on exploring the Martial Saint Realm.

Both the images deep in the White Ape bloodline and the Martial Saint power inside the Yu King Pearl provided Ning Qi with the conditions to explore.

At this thought.

He was a bit expectant.

...

Within the Seeking Tao Institute.

The White Ape sat beneath the Enlightenment Tea Tree, appearing more and more divine, its fur like snow or silver. During Ning Qi's exploration of the Golden Pupil of Illusion-breaking, the White Ape's bloodline was further developed, rapidly enhancing its power.

This development reflected upon the Martial Path realm, allowing it to successfully step into the White Mist Realm.

Its comprehensive combat power was even more exaggerated, extremely close to the Celestial Human Realm, and could be said to be invincible in the Gang Essence Realm.

"Tiansheng, concentrate your spirit and calm your mind." Ning Qi spoke gently, his voice was like a wake-up call.

The White Ape followed effortlessly.

Three Flowers appeared faintly above Ning Qi's head, and he instantly entered a resonance state. He immediately sensed that after the Three Flowers Perfection, his divine intent had changed, becoming much stronger than before.

"Buzz!"

An indistinct buzzing sound.

Ning Qi felt his consciousness as if it had descended upon a vast earth, with no surprise. He looked at the distant, mountain-sized Silver Giant Ape howling at the moon, already very familiar.

But this time, he clearly felt that his perception of this peculiar world was clearer, and everything seemed more concrete.

"Is it because of the Divine Flower Perfection?" he thought silently.

In the distance.

The Giant Ape roared, swallowing the moonlight and the power of heaven and earth.

Then, as usual, it began to become restless, breaking mountains and cutting off rivers, seemingly wanting to topple the heavens and earth.

Ning Qi watched silently, his consciousness becoming more focused.

Suddenly.

The Giant Ape turned around, its eyes emitting a blinding golden light sweeping over, as if to see through all phantoms. Ning Qi held his breath, his heart involuntarily pounding, having been stuck there every time before, his consciousness unable to bear it, and then the scene collapsing.

But now.

The Divine Flower had already perfected, and until now, it was still within his bearable range.

Ning Qi also turned around.

Only to find, behind him, there was nothing.

The Silver Giant Ape's eyes were bursting with golden light, the dazzling beams piercing through the earth, shattering the void; it was not just looking at Ning Qi but patrolling between heaven and earth, seemingly searching for something, its roar becoming more restless, even carrying a hint of fear.

But what Ning Qi saw was only the Giant Ape.

"What is the Giant Ape afraid of? Could it be that there is an unknown presence secretly watching?"

Ning Qi's mind was filled with all sorts of speculations. He, like the Giant Ape, surveyed around, trying to find the source of the Giant Ape's fear, but still, he found nothing.

Suddenly.

A heaven-shaking wail focused Ning Qi's gaze.

His heart trembled with fear.

He saw that the originally mountain-like Giant Ape began to wither at a speed visible to the naked eye, like a fully inflated balloon suddenly leaking air.

This was not the enlarging and shrinking of the body.

But an abnormal change.

The piercing wails resonated continuously. Ning Qi could see the Giant Ape desperately struggling or breaking free from something.

The more horrifying transformation followed.

Large patches of silver hair on the Giant Ape's body surface shed off, the exposed muscles rapidly shriveled, and its fierce tusks lost their luster at an incredible speed, gradually loosened, and then fell off. The once brilliant golden eyes became dull and murky, filled with pain and agony...

The Giant Ape struggled continuously, but its power dwindled too fast.

In mere moments.

The once powerful entity that viewed mountains and rivers as nothing was tripped up by a large tree, the Giant Ape staggered, a kick on the tree resulted in a backlash that knocked it to the ground, now seeming unbelievably old and weak.

Ning Qi witnessed this contrasting scene, feeling a chill in his heart.

The Giant Ape let out a low, sorrowful howl, eventually unable to escape its fate as it sat on the ground, gazing up at the sky, seemingly questioning why.

But there was no response.

The Giant Ape sat still, its mournful cry barely audible, gradually growing rigid.

A breeze passed by.

A few specks of dust were carried away by the wind, leaving nothing of the White Ape's fur, flesh, or bones.

Such a scene made Ning Qi feel even more eerie, and then, with a shake of his spirit, he finally saw the culprit.

Strands of the power of heaven and earth melted into the void, pushing Ning Qi's shock to its limit.

"There's something wrong with the power of Heaven and Earth!"

As soon as this thought emerged, the scene began to blur like ripples, not being forcibly pushed out like before. This time, it was a natural retreat, meaning a recorded scene in Yuan Tiancheng's bloodline ended here.

"This is a warning to the inheritors of the bloodline! There's definitely something wrong with the power of Heaven and Earth!"

Ning Qi stood beneath the Enlightenment Tea Tree, his stirred emotions unable to calm down for a long time.

The previous scene replayed continuously in his mind.

He contemplated the information hidden within.

"The Giant Ape was absorbing the power of heaven and earth and then suddenly met its misfortune, so does it mean that the power of Heaven and Earth had no problem initially, but later changed due to some external interference?"

"The extinction of the Heavenly Beasts is due to this reason!"

The Heavenly Beasts are the darlings of heaven and earth, innately capable of controlling the power of Heaven and Earth, and if there's anything awry with this power, they would suffer first.

"It's not just the Heavenly Beasts, but also those like Shi with innate Sword Bones. The 'Heavenly Beasts' among the human race may have also disappeared due to this reason. As for Shi's current innate Sword Bones, it's actually a version born to adapt to the changes in the heaven and earth, so Shi can't control the power of Heaven and Earth, and can't even awaken the Innate Divine Sword Qi."

"Re-thinking, those Exotic Beasts with Heavenly Beast bloodlines may be manifestations of Heavenly Beasts adapting to the changes in heaven and earth. Perhaps some Heavenly Beasts deliberately 'devolved' their descendants for preservation."

The more Ning Qi thought, the more he felt the truth might be just like this.

And the source of it all.

Is the unknown change in the heaven and earth.

"No wonder since I stepped into the Celestial Human Realm, I've always sensed a great fear from the power of Heaven and Earth, and before, the Blade Demon also said he had this feeling when he attempted to step into the Martial Saint Realm."

"If one not knowing the truth might only think it's the shackles of heaven and earth, a Heart Demon Tribulation, believing that overcoming it would reveal a new Martial Path."

"But looking at it now, if one really integrated the power of Heaven and Earth into oneself, immediate death and disappearance might not be out of the question."

Thinking of this.

Ning Qi felt a bit silent.

Originally, he thought after achieving Celestial Being Perfection, he could start exploring the Martial Saint Realm. With his enlightenment, and with the information he now possessed, spending some years he certainly could break through the Martial Saint Realm.

But now, everything has to be put on hold.

"The root lies in the problem with the power of Heaven and Earth; if not understood, rashly integrating it into the body will lead to endless troubles! Even if a Martial Saint Technique is presented to me now, I would definitely not dare to practice it."

Thinking of the tragic end of the Silver Giant Ape made Ning Qi's scalp tingle.

For the first time, he felt a bit at his wit's end as he stood below the Enlightenment Tea Tree, his stirred emotions long unable to calm down.

He waved his hand, using gentle strength to send the fainted White Ape into the tree, feeling its soft fur once again.

He needed to carefully think about how he could understand the root cause of this issue.

Unable to solve this problem meant no hope for advancement, and he could only maintain the status quo, making his whole body tremble.

Chapter 302: Deduction of Yu King Pearl

The breeze was invisible, the exotic fragrance of the Enlightenment Tea Tree lingered around.

Ning Qi concentrated his spirit and calmed his mind, the slight agitation in his heart gradually settling.

Ideas flashed through his mind, and he began to carefully consider the connections behind this information.

"Perhaps... the situation isn't as bad as I imagined."

"I must admit, the tragic scene of the Giant Ape seen deep within the Tiansheng bloodline had a great impact on me, but thinking about it carefully, is it still the same now? The time when that scene occurred is unknown, but it must be a very long time ago, would the Power of Heaven and Earth now still be as terrifying as before given such a long passage of time?"

Ning Qi felt that probably not.

"Even if there are anomalies in the Power of Heaven and Earth, the intensity may have diminished."

"Proof is that there still exist Martial Saints today! After all, the path of the Martial Saint is precisely to refine the Power of Heaven and Earth into the body."

His eyes gradually brightened, slowly finding his direction.

"Firstly, there's the Great Yan Martial Saint! Since he could survive for so long, perhaps he found a way to cope, which indicates that the change in the Power of Heaven and Earth is not without solution."

"Secondly, the Secret Techniques of the Demon Sect and the Southern Border Martial Saints, according to the Grand Elder of the Demon Sect, the Demon Sect previously used the Holy Pill Technique to create Martial Saints, but they were destroyed by the Great Yan Martial Saint. Does this indicate that the horror contained in the Power of Heaven and Earth isn't as extreme as I imagined?"

"Lastly, the Yu King Pearl. The Yu King Pearl contains the condensed power of the Martial Saint, or rather, the refined Power of Heaven and Earth, yet nothing else terrifying happened. Could it be said that the changes in the Power of Heaven and Earth only affect living entities?"

Ning Qi pondered.

These are the three angles he could explore.

But the challenges vary.

The attitude of the Great Yan Martial Saint is unclear, he's likely the one who eliminated the Martial Saint Technique, rashly approaching him might bring great trouble.

Meanwhile, the Demon Sect now only has the Sect Leader struggling to survive, whereabouts unknown, only the Blood Emperor Gu's technique from the Southern Border might hold some hope.

"The most accessible is still the Yu King Pearl. By thoroughly researching the Martial Saint power within the Yu King Pearl, perhaps I can unravel some reasons. As for the Southern Border... could there be any information obtained from Lan Yiyi?"

Thinking of this, Ning Qi felt somewhat guilty.

No matter what, Lan Yiyi came to save Qin Yun, if she is unwilling to disclose anything about the Southern Border, Ning Qi would definitely not force her, he'll just think of other methods later.

"It's better to focus wholeheartedly on the Yu King Pearl first."

Ning Qi took a deep breath, deciding the direction for his subsequent cultivation.

Now his cultivation has reached Celestial Being Perfection.

There's no higher realm to progress.

The only thing he can do is to enhance his combat power as much as possible, whether by delving into Secret Techniques or honing Martial Intent, or other methods, these are his goals for continued effort. Of course, finding the problem with the Power of Heaven and Earth is the most crucial, for no matter how strong one is within the same realm, it ultimately falls short of the advantages brought by elevating one's realm, this is the essence of life's difference.

After a moment's thought.

The White Ape had slowly awakened.

He did not know what had happened, only felt that his bloodline seemed to have suddenly developed greatly, strands of power continuously emerged, needing just some time to digest these gains, he was confident he could even contend with Celestial Human Realm martial artists, by then, his Martial Path realm would also improve accordingly.

The White Ape was indescribably delighted.

"Thank you, Master!" He bowed respectfully.

Ning Qi merely smiled and waved his hand, after a pause, he again recalled the miserable fate of the previously seen Silver Giant Ape and couldn't help but advise:

"Tiansheng, should your bloodline have any mutations in the future, inform me immediately, especially concerning changes related to the Power of Heaven and Earth, don't be careless!"

Seeing Ning Qi's seriousness, Yuan Tiancheng felt somewhat terrified, hastily nodded in acknowledgment.

Ning Qi suddenly thought.

Perhaps the Beast Emperor within the Hundred Thousand Mountains could also be a direction for exploration.

"The Beast Emperor is an existence on the same level as a Martial Saint, it is even highly possible the Beast Emperor is indeed the descendant of a Heavenly Beast bloodline awakened and developed to a certain realm, maybe someday there will be an opportunity to visit the Hundred Thousand Mountains."

He let go of miscellaneous thoughts, turned to look outside the courtyard.

In the distance, two figures approached together.

It was Zhuang Chen and Li Ling.

Since Ning Qi's identity was revealed, they would come every half month to seek guidance in Sword Dao, Ning Qi would also impart teachings to both without bias.

Although Li Ling's Sword Dao talent wasn't as powerful as Zhuang Chen's Innate Sword Bone, his sincere dedication was equally commendable, Ning Qi taught him the Innate Sword Body Secret Technique, using it to research whether postnatal cultivation could forge a 'Innate Sword Bone' special physique.

"Ninth Senior Brother!" The two of them greeted him courteously, their eyes full of admiration.

Ning Qi smiled and nodded.

Things were already much better for them now; previously, when they had just learned of his identity, they were extremely reserved every time they came to seek Sword Dao guidance, unlike their previously carefree demeanor, for the prestige of True Man Tianjian was indeed too overwhelming, even affecting them.

However, as they slowly grew accustomed, they realized that Ning Qi remained the same calm Ninth Senior Brother, gradually returning to normal, but their admiration and respect intensified.

Unbeknownst to the, Ning Qi had already become their target.

"Come and sit cross-legged."

He planned to examine Zhuang Chen's Innate Sword Bone again, to see if any new changes appeared after he reached Celestial Being Perfection.

The two respectfully complied.

Chapter 303: Deduction of Yu King Pearl_2

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An hour later.

Zhuang Chen and Li Ling left excitedly, also taking the White Ape with them. Whenever they had time, the two men and the ape would hang out together, and they had developed a good relationship. Strictly speaking, however, Zhuang Chen and Li Ling were the White Ape's martial uncles.

Ning Qi shook his head helplessly.

Just now, he had taught the two of them a lesson in Sword Dao, and during the session, tried to use Divine Intent to resonate with the innate sword bone within Zhuang Chen. However, he didn't see any more images than before, though things were a bit clearer.

"It seems that the innate sword bone and the bloodline inheritance of the heavenly beasts have some differences," Ning Qi thought to himself.

But this was to be expected.

The Seeking Tao Institute returned to calm.

A treasure pearl with a faint blood-red hue hovered in front of Ning Qi.

The Yu King Pearl, a Martial Saint Secret Treasure obtained from the Grand Elder of the Demon Sect. Since it came into Ning Qi's possession, he had been researching it, but the gains were not substantial; he could only say he had become more adept at controlling the treasure.

For him, the greatest value of the treasure was the Martial Saint power contained within it.

"Without developing an alternative Dharma Method to condense the Martial Saint power, the power within will diminish with each use, so I must conserve it."

The Martial Saint power within the Yu King Pearl was condensed back then using the bloodlines of the many descendants of Great Yu. Now, Ning Qi couldn't find any descendants of Great Yu, which is why he had been cautious in his research.

However, now that he has reached Celestial Being Perfection, with Three Flowers Gathering at the Top, he can maximize efficiency.

With a thought, the Divine Intent led the way.

A blood-red band immediately shot out from the Yu King Pearl, coiling around Ning Qi like a flood dragon. It seemed to be alive, with the contained power astonishingly potent. Yet, visibly, even without doing anything, the blood-red band was dissipating slowly, as its energy returned to heaven and earth.

Ning Qi dared not waste time, in his peak state with Three Flowers Gathering at the Top, carefully observing and deeply contemplating its mysteries.

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Time passed.

Insights bubbled to the surface of his mind, streams of spiritual light emerged.

"This power is so magical; the power of heaven and earth was once stagnant, only manipulated by humans, but now, after being refined, there's a peculiar vitality within. The strength of Martial Saint power is closely related to this."

"But how can I attain this vitality? The power of the Yu King Pearl is crucial, as it can condense the power of heaven and earth into Martial Saint power through a special method. If I can comprehend the principle, perhaps even the Martial Saint Technique will have a solution."

"Perhaps... I can try to integrate this blood-colored band into myself?"

But as soon as this thought arose, Ning Qi instinctively felt a surge of apprehension, as if something extremely harmful would occur.

He quickly abandoned this idea.

Now he understood that his Divine Intent and intuition far exceeded others, allowing him to detect the great terror lurking within the power of heaven and earth after reaching the Celestial Human Realm. This was a warning and a hint, not a whim.

"It seems the blood-colored band condensed by the Yu King Pearl has its issues too; it may be usable for enemy combat, but attempting to refine it into the body will inevitably lead to problems."

Ning Qi switched his thoughts, quickly redirecting the focus of his experiments.

"First, I must quickly explore a new method to condense Martial Saint power, to prevent becoming driftwood without roots."

"Second, I must explore more applications; the Demon Sect Grand Elder's method is too crude, with low potential."

"Finally, I should see if I can safely deduce the problems associated with the power of heaven and earth."

With these goals.

Ning Qi could push forward with greater clarity.

However, this is no ordinary matter.

It consumes a great deal of mental energy.

Time passed.

The sun set in the west.

Ning Qi's eyebrows showed traces of fatigue. Watching the blood-colored band shrink in size, he quickly recalled it into the Yu King Pearl. The pearl's hue seemed to have slightly faded, which caused him some distress, but such loss was necessary.

"Tomorrow, I'll continue deducing. At this rate of consumption, the Martial Saint power within the Yu King Pearl can sustain my contemplation for up to two months. I must deduce a new method to condense Martial Saint power within those two months!"

Ning Qi felt a slight pressure, but he was more eager to try it.

He wanted to see the limits of his enlightenment.

...

Time gradually passed.

The peach blossoms of the Seeking Tao Institute grew more vibrant, nourished by the flesh and blood essence of dozens of Celestial Human Realm individuals. This year, both the Enlightenment Tea Tree and the True Martial Peach Tree were transforming at a remarkable rate, with changes nearly visible daily, raising the anticipation of Luo Wentian and others for this year's True Martial Peach Assembly.

However,

They had an even greater wish.

Which was for Qin Yun to awaken before the True Martial Peach Assembly, allowing the true reunion of the brothers.

Every day.

Brothers went to the Bright Martial Pavilion to check on Qin Yun and Lan Yiyi's condition.

Four months had passed since Lan Yiyi went to True Martial Mountain. What was visible was that the Shared Destiny Gu Child Gu was about to take form, but the two showed no signs of waking. If Lan Yiyi hadn't previously stated that it would take three months to half a year, the crowd might have started to worry.

On this day.

Ning Qi was still at the Seeking Tao Institute contemplating the Yu King Pearl. He had a clue, and with more attempts, he could deduce a method to substitute bloodline as a guide, then he wouldn't need to be so frugal when reflecting on the Yu King Pearl.

He was ready to enter the state of contemplation.

In the distance, the figure of a running White Ape appeared.

Breathlessly, he said, "Teacher, the Grand Elder wants you to visit the Bright Martial Pavilion!"

Chapter 304: Deduction of Yu King Pearl_3

Ning Qi opened his eyes.

His heart was filled with joy.

"Has your eighth senior uncle woken up?"

The White Ape scratched his head and said:

"It doesn't seem to be the eighth senior uncle; it's that girl, Lan Yiyi."

Ning Qi's figure flickered, and he disappeared from the Seeking Tao Institute. With his hands behind his back, as if shrinking the earth to an inch, he appeared outside the Bright Martial Pavilion in a few breaths.

"Senior brother, is there a problem?" Seeing Luo Wentian, he immediately asked.

Luo Wentian shook his head:

"Miss Yiyi wants to see you."

With that said,

he respectfully left with Taoist Longshan.

Inside the Bright Martial Pavilion, only Lan Yiyi and Ning Qi were left.

Ning Qi was slightly startled, a bit puzzled. As he approached the Profound Ice Jade Bed, he saw that Lan Yiyi was already awake, standing dazedly by the bedside, staring blankly at Qin Yun's face. At this

moment, Qin Yun's complexion was much rosier, and he could sense a mysterious power brewing within him.

"Miss Yiyi," Ning Qi said softly.

"You're here?" Lan Yiyi glanced at Ning Qi, then said, "Rest assured, everything is going smoothly. The Shared Destiny Gu child Gu has been implanted into Qin Yun. In another month or two, the child Gu will transfer life force to him, and he will be able to wake up."

Ning Qi's heart relaxed, and he immediately said:

"Thank you, Miss Yiyi. This time, eighth senior brother being able to wake up is all thanks to your generous help. I will remember this kindness in my heart."

Lan Yiyi just chuckled and shook her head:

"I did it willingly."

Ning Qi sighed lightly in his heart and said:

"Is there anything Miss Yiyi wants to tell me by calling me here?"

Lan Yiyi slowly turned around and, for the first time, carefully observed Ning Qi. Her eyes inevitably reflected a trace of surprise, as the young Taoist in front of her had an extraordinary demeanor, even more outstanding than many Celestial Human Realm elites she had met. She could roughly sense the unusualness of the young man before her.

She let out a deep breath and slowly said:

"Qin Yun... he actually mentioned you to me."

Ning Qi's body trembled, but he didn't interrupt.

Lan Yiyi's eyes drifted slightly as she fell into memories:

"He told me some things from back then... He said how happy he was when he first saw you come up the mountain, that he could finally be a senior brother... He told me he wanted to become the best in the world, to fulfill his master's wish, to revitalize True Martial, and he had always worked hard..."

"He told me he regretted everything back then, that he felt he hadn't been a good senior brother or a good disciple..."

"He said he went astray and didn't know if he could ever return. If he had the chance, he wanted to apologize to you in person."

Ning Qi listened, feeling extremely complex inside.

Over the years, he often thought about the past. He sometimes wondered if not hiding his realm from Qin Yun back then would have prevented all of this from happening, but it's all unknowable. His comprehension was unparalleled, but human nature is not controllable.

Ning Qi softly said:

"Thank you."

Lan Yiyi shook her head:

"I just wanted to tell you how Qin Yun has felt over the years. He made mistakes, but he suffered too. If possible, I hope you can forgive him."

Ning Qi gazed at Qin Yun's aged face, lost in thought, as if seeing the excitement of the handsome young man from eleven years ago when he first climbed the mountain.

"Don't worry, I've never blamed the eighth senior brother. Perhaps I also had problems. Now that everything has a chance to be redone, we'll all cherish it well."

Lan Yiyi smiled, and even through the black veil, one could sense her relief.

"Since that's the case, I should be heading down the mountain too."

Ning Qi solemnly said:

"No matter what, this time, it's thanks to Miss Yiyi for eighth senior brother's matter. Consider me indebted to you. If you ever need anything in the future, feel free to write to me."

The Southern Border is the Southern Border; Lan Yiyi is Lan Yiyi. He could distinguish between the two.

Lan Yiyi was surprised, then her eyes curved in a smile:

"Okay!"

She didn't take Ning Qi's promise to heart, only feeling that her efforts and hard work had been recognized.

Ning Qi walked out of the Bright Martial Pavilion with Lan Yiyi.

The figures of the two disappeared, but they didn't notice the faint tear marks falling on Qin Yun's aged face.

Chapter 305: Milestone Breakthrough

Lan Yiyi descended the mountain.

Everyone watched her leave. Taoist Longshan wanted to speak to dissuade her, but ultimately, he held his tongue. Lan Yiyi's only request was not to tell Qin Yun that it was she who rescued him. Whatever motives lay behind this, he was unaware, yet he had to respect Lan Yiyi's decision.

Everyone watched as Lan Yiyi's silhouette disappeared into the horizon, and a sense of reverence arose in their hearts.

Ning Qi felt somewhat emotional.

The words Lan Yiyi had spoken to him earlier revealed that this Yiyi girl probably had deep feelings for her senior brother Ba.

He had left a trace of his aura on Lan Yiyi.

Having promised to owe Lan Yiyi a favor, he would not go back on his word.

"Master, are we truly not going to explain the truth to Ba once he awakens?" Ye Qinghe felt uneasy.

Taoist Longshan sighed softly:

"I understand your feelings, but since we have promised Miss Yiyi, we cannot break our promise. Once Ba wakes up, just say Jiu healed him. As for what transpires between him and Miss Yiyi, let them handle it themselves. If he has feelings, he'll surely not forget Miss Yiyi after awakening."

He sees it clearly too.

The relationship between Qin Yun and Lan Yiyi is unlike that between Jiang Baishan and Lin Ruhua, where mutual affection has been openly declared. Qin Yun and Yiyi probably have feelings for each other but have yet to break through certain barriers due to some reason, which might also be why Lan Yiyi does not want to reveal the truth to Qin Yun.

Under such circumstances, outside interference might be counterproductive, hence it might be best to leave it to chance.

Everyone nodded silently.

As long as Qin Yun can awaken, they have plenty of time ahead, with opportunities to seal their bond still possible. But when they think of the Southern Border being an adversary of the True Martial Sect, Taoist Longshan couldn't help but smile bitterly.

It's rare for him to have two disciples fall in love.

One being the daughter of the Deputy Sect Leader of the Demon Sect, the other being the Saintess of the Southern Border.

The mystery of fate in this world is truly difficult to decipher.

...

As time passed.

The True Martial Sect gradually returned to tranquility.

But within Great Yan's territory, there remained underlying currents. The Demon Sect's forces were deeply entrenched, making it difficult to cleanse them entirely, requiring a gradual approach to avoid overlooking any trace.

Under such circumstances, many Martial Path sects began noticing irregularities.

Upon realizing the Demon Sect was steadily being defeated, they grew increasingly alarmed, holding Great Yan in even greater esteem. In the past, when the Demon Sect was present, there was at least a force capable of counterbalancing Great Yan, allowing Great Yan some leeway with the Martial Path sects under its rule.

But now, with the Demon Sect eliminated, many Martial Path sects inevitably began to worry that Great Yan might become more stringent with them.

However.

This concern did not last long.

The northern conflicts flared up once more.

On the grasslands, the Northern Barbarian Race gathered its forces, catching the Town North King off guard, reportedly severely wounding him, now in recuperation. Afterward, the Northern Barbarians pressed southwards, but fortunately, the Imperial Court quickly dispatched reinforcements to stem the decline.

Several Grand Generals have led their armies and are now engaged in a stalemate.

And beyond that.

The remaining Demon Sect remnants seemed to be aided by an unknown power, demonstrating remarkable resilience. Though still outmatched, they no longer faced total collapse as before. After all, even a Celestial Human Realm expert couldn't conduct indiscriminate slaughter, as annihilating the Demon Sect would also bring heavy losses.

With internal issues and external threats.

What once seemed like a promising situation suddenly grew tense, especially after the Northern Barbarians diverted attention, Great Yan found it impossible to swiftly eradicate the Demon Sect remnants.

This news reached True Martial Mountain.

After hearing it from Luo Wentian, Ning Qi fell into contemplation.

"An unknown power has appeared behind the Demon Sect remnants? Has the Demon Sect leader come forward, or is there another factor?" His eyes shimmered slightly.

"And why have the Northern Barbarians chosen this very moment to strike? Is it a tactical maneuver to divert our forces or due to some other reasons? The Town North King has guarded the Northern Pass for many years, never before suffering such an attack, it's unprecedented, the Northern Barbarians must have been planning for a long time."

"Could there be a connection between these two events?"

Luo Wentian frowned:

"The Demon Sect might have partial involvement from certain Martial Path sects... many do not wish to see the Demon Sect utterly destroyed; if Great Yan frees up its energy, it might potentially impose stricter constraints on the Martial Path sects."

Ning Qi nodded slightly.

Sects bow to Imperial Authority, but if given the chance, anyone would seek freedom.

"But only minor actions from some Martial Path sects wouldn't achieve this level; there must be involvement from other forces, people from the Southern Border or other factions? Or perhaps all of them?"

The Southern Border remains extremely subdued for now, yet it's unclear whether they're in the shadows behind these incidents.

In essence.

The situation that was gradually becoming clear has now turned complex again, with multiple forces seemingly involved.

Luo Wentian pondered for a moment and whispered:

"The Northern Barbarian military movements might be connected to a certain rumor."

Ning Qi asked:

"What rumor?"

Luo Wentian pointed towards the direction of Yan State:

"It's said... since the Great Yan Martial Saint emerged a century ago, he has remained in seclusion without any response. Perhaps something has gone wrong. The Northern Barbarians have been testing the waters for years, but now, for unknown reasons, they have suddenly begun a full-scale advance south."

Ning Qi's spirit trembled slightly.

The Great Yan Martial Saint stands as the world's sole remaining Martial Saint, a formidable presence towering above all. Demon Sect, Southern Border, Northern Barbarians, or any force attempting to challenge Great Yan cannot easily bypass this formidable mountain.

Chapter 306: Milestone Breakthrough_2

"Where did this information come from?"

"I don't know, it just suddenly started circulating in the Martial Realm. The Great Yan Imperial Court suppressed many martial artists for this, and although it stopped large-scale spreading, those in the know are aware of it."

Ning Qi nodded.

In that case, it wouldn't be good to continue investigating.

After discussing for a moment, the two decided unanimously that it would be best not to wade into troubled waters. True Martial Sect has many treasures Ning Qi brought back from the Demon Sect's headquarters. The most important thing now is to develop quietly without making any other moves.

After all, with the True Martial Sword Monument and Tower of Ten Thousand Paths around, even if True Martial Sect disciples don't go down the mountain, its reputation won't be lost. Instead, it will continue to grow, and more people will feel indebted to True Martial Sect and give it face.

Ning Qi watched Luo Wentian leave.

Thinking to himself:

"If the Great Yan Martial Saint truly isn't as formidable as before, then perhaps this could be seen as a breakthrough point for resolving the Power of Heaven and Earth issue?"

He had previously considered this direction, but the Great Yan Martial Saint's dominance over the world for so many years probably wouldn't be easily overcome, so it's only now that he can consider it.

He then shook his head.

Unless absolutely necessary, he didn't intend to go down this path; the risk was too great.

Concentrating spirit and calming the mind.

Ning Qi took out the Yu King Pearl again for careful comprehension.

The blood-red color of the Yu King pearl had faded so much that it was almost restored to its original jade-like gloss.

"Today should be the day it succeeds!" Ning Qi's eyes held some anticipation.

The days of deduction weren't in vain; Ning Qi's control over the Yu King Pearl was now vastly different compared to before. If the Demon Sect Grand Elder were resurrected, he would surely be astounded, having only scratched the surface of the Secret Treasure after centuries of sacrifices.

With a single thought, a blood-colored band of energy immediately swirled around Ning Qi.

As Ning Qi's intentions shifted, the band transformed endlessly—sometimes into a Heavenly Blade, sometimes into a Divine Sword, sometimes converging into a mountain, sometimes galloping like a river. Moreover, it continued to evolve into various Exotic Beasts with diverse powers.

The intricacy of it might be beyond what the Demon Sect Grand Elder could aspire to even after a thousand years of enlightenment.

Ning Qi was quite satisfied.

He was not only studying the Dharma Method of Martial Saint power condensation but was also deducing the application of Martial Saint power. The same Secret Treasure wielded by different hands yields drastically different potency. The other day, when the Grand Elder wielded Martial Saint power, it was a reckless, shameless explosion, very rigid, nowhere near the agility and fluidity of Ning Qi's control. The difference in power could be several-fold.

After maneuvering for a while, Ning Qi felt a bit reluctant.

If used sparingly, this Martial Saint power could at least be wielded against the enemy a few more times.

But without risk, there's no reward.

His gaze gradually firmed up as he began to fully activate the Yu King Pearl.

Strands of Martial Saint power surged out; the blood-colored band grew increasingly dense. Then, with a thought, he let it disperse. In an instant, the band began to collapse, turning into smoke and mist, transforming into the purest Power of Heaven and Earth, no longer retaining its previous agility until it vanished completely.

By now, the Yu King Pearl had recovered to its original Bright Jade Treasure Pearl form, emitting a gentle and soft glow.

"Breaking to establish a foundation! If not dispersed, the Martial Saint power condensed through Great Yu's bloodline would repel the Martial Saint power condensed through my Dharma Method!"

"This attempt not only further explores the Yu King Pearl but is also an experiment on the path of the Martial Saint!"

Without ample confidence, he wouldn't have acted so decisively.

In Ning Qi's mind, streaks of Spiritual Light flashed continuously, with the essence interweaving.

With all his might, he channelled himself, and his body began to radiate light.

In an instant.

The Three Flowers of Essence, Qi, and Spirit gathered at the top!

The energy within the Seeking Tao Institute was multiple times more abundant.

"Power of Heaven and Earth, gather!"

Ning Qi murmured inwardly.

He recalled the Blade Demon's realm-breaking experience, the silver pages Wu Jianghe left behind, and all his recent thoughts. Without any hesitation, a turbulent swirl of Power of Heaven and Earth converged, making the Seeking Tao Institute the vortex's center.

In the Bright Martial Pavilion, Taoist Longshan, who was absorbing Heaven-Reaching Pill's potency, immediately awoke and turned towards the Seeking Tao Institute.

In the back mountain, the Blade Demon, who was in seclusion, also noticed the sudden fluctuation of the Power of Heaven and Earth and paid attention. His expression shifted, and he felt a bit excited because he sensed a fluctuation similar to that from the day he tried to break into the Martial Saint Realm.

"Could it be that Taoist Friend Tianjian has already begun his attempt?" He couldn't help but stand up and gaze in that direction.

Fortunately, Ning Qi had prepared in advance, so the Celestial Human Realm experts studying near the True Martial Sword Monument and Tower of Ten Thousand Paths were unaware.

Ning Qi focused intently.

The Three Flowers gathered at the top, forming a peculiar 'funnel,' not significantly different from the one Blade Demon had gathered back then, but much stronger.

Power of Heaven and Earth streamed through the 'funnel,' seemingly 'filtered' slightly.

Ning Qi's Divine Intent carried a sense of oppression.

He was restraining the flow of Power of Heaven and Earth.

Despite the overwhelming urge to refine the Power of Heaven and Earth into his body, the terrifying sensation in the void warned him that the 'funnel's' 'filter' likely wouldn't have much effect. He commanded inwardly, and all connections instantly transferred to the Yu King Pearl in front of him.

This was precisely Ning Qi's plan.

According to normal thinking, the next step should be refining the Power of Heaven and Earth into the body and then converging it into Martial Saint power. However, aware of the abnormalities in the Power of Heaven and Earth, he certainly wouldn't dare; thus, he took a different approach, conveniently combining it with the Yu King Pearl.

In some respects, this was similar to the Outer Core Technique.

The inspiration indeed came from this method, yet the difficulty was vastly higher, even Ning Qi himself was only ninety percent confident.

Ning Qi dared not relax.

His Divine Intent continued to communicate with the Yu King Pearl, which glowed brilliantly, gentle yet powerful. Its internal special pattern began operating, strands of Power of Heaven and Earth being drawn in. Ning Qi then split his focus, starting to resonate the Power of Heaven and Earth at a particular frequency.

The Yu King Pearl's light grew increasingly intense, akin to a small sun.

Inside the Seeking Tao Institute.

A shocking, monstrous wave.

Wave after wave of Power of Heaven and Earth converged, but without a vent, Ning Qi's pressure mounted, fine sweat beading his forehead.

Fortunately, this deadlock didn't last long.

All the previous deductions Ning Qi made weren't in vain; amidst his constant adjustments, the Yu King Pearl finally began to change!

"Buzz!"

Invisible waves spread to all corners.

The Power of Heaven and Earth pouring into the Yu King Pearl finally began to transmute and compress astronomically. Ning Qi's spirit was invigorated, earnestly perceiving the changes, realizing that after operating special patterns inside the Yu King Pearl, some material melded in, then the vast Power of Heaven and Earth transformed into strands of extraordinary Martial Saint power!

Strands of shining white power condensed within, completely distinct from the previous blood-colored band.

"It's a success! Indeed, purely using the Power of Heaven and Earth to condense Martial Saint power differs from the Grand Elder's use of secret techniques, consolidating the power now is more moderate and balanced. Perhaps this is the right path, simply because the Grand Elder and others couldn't grasp it before."

"Yes, Martial Saint Secret Treasures are meant to be wielded by Martial Saints; apart from myself, others could only leverage some tricky secret techniques to provoke certain potentials, even if now I haven't fully harnessed this Secret Treasure."

Thoughts flashed instantly, Ning Qi felt immense joy.

Undoubtedly.

This was a milestone breakthrough.

It meant that he independently condensed Power of Heaven and Earth into Martial Saint power for the first time, even if aided by the Secret Treasure's power, it was still commendable.

From now on.

The Yu King Pearl is no longer a rootless wandering object, not requiring the consuming Martial Saint power bit by bit. This will greatly enhance Ning Qi's combat ability. But most crucially, Ning Qi can unapologetically deduce and study Martial Saint power. Just by understanding the mystery of Yu King Pearl's condensation of Martial Saint power thoroughly, the Martial Saint Realm is nearly open to him.

All he needs to do is resolve the Power of Heaven and Earth's anomaly, then smoothly step into the Martial Saint Realm.

Chapter 307: Reincarnation Dao Seed

Many thoughts flashed through Ning Qi's mind, yet the process of converting the power of heaven and earth became increasingly smooth.

The whole process gradually stabilized, as the once surging power of heaven and earth found a vent, no longer converging and clogging together, but orderly absorbed into the Yu King Pearl, transforming into a more powerful Martial Saint power. However, in the process, a 'vacuum belt' of heaven and earth power inevitably formed.

Several experts in the Celestial Human Realm, who were comprehending at the True Martial sword monument, looked doubtfully and uncertainly towards the depths of the True Martial Sect, only now becoming aware.

"Could it be that True Man Tianjian has had another breakthrough, or possibly comprehended some unparalleled secret technique?"

Everyone felt even more reverence in their hearts.

Nowadays, many believe True Man Tianjian has the strength to strike for the first on the Celestial Being List. If another breakthrough has been achieved, this news, once spread, will surely cause a stir.

A smile appeared at the corner of Taoist Longshan's mouth.

His cultivation is also advancing by leaps and bounds, just waiting for the medicinal power of the Heaven-Reaching Pill to be refined, then he will naturally step into the Celestial Being Perfection Realm. At that time, with the secret techniques like the Bridge of Celestial Being taught by Ning Qi, his power will also become exceptionally formidable.

"Jiu's capabilities are unprecedented throughout the ages; this world cannot confine him."

He sighed in his heart.

Now he also knew many secrets of the Martial Saint Realm, but he firmly believed that Ning Qi could forge ahead fearlessly. As for himself, as long as he doesn't hold his disciple back, it would suffice. He recalled eleven years ago, as if seeing those flames illuminating his pupils.

Taoist Longshan thought, rather than saying he saved Ning Qi, it might be more accurate to say Ning Qi chose him. This would be something he prided himself on for a lifetime.

At this moment, the most excited one was the Blade Demon in the back mountain.

He looked around, constantly gazing in the direction of the Seeking Tao Institute.

Feeling the increasingly steady power of heaven and earth, he was restless, even scratching his ears and cheeks as if compared to the day he broke through, the elements weren't the same. Having personally experienced such a breakthrough, he could clearly perceive the differences.

"Could it be that Taoist Friend Tianjian succeeded?" he wondered.

An instinct urged him to go see it, but at last, he took several deep breaths to quell such impulse.

"If Taoist Friend Tianjian succeeded, he wouldn't hide it from me, no need to be anxious at this moment."

He trusted in True Man Tianjian's promise.

Yet he couldn't help but look forward more, as if he had already seen the gate to the peak of the Martial Path gradually opening before him.

Everyone's thoughts were different.

But Ning Qi was unaware of this, having already shielded those disturbances as much as possible. However, the fluctuations from condensing Martial Saint power somewhat exceeded his expectations, but fortunately, it was harmless.

At this moment.

Ning Qi was holding the lustrous Treasure Pearl, exceedingly delighted.

The Yu King Pearl was already saturated.

"Now, the amount of Martial Saint power within the Yu King Pearl is at least three times what it was before! Not only that, its quality has also surpassed."

In other words.

If Ning Qi now manipulated the Yu King Pearl, it could unleash even greater power. With a wave of his hand, a lustrous slash streaked through the air, transforming into a five-clawed White Dragon amidst a formless roar, majestic and awe-inspiring. Perhaps because Ning Qi himself personally gathered this power, he found it more flexible to control.

Ning Qi was thoroughly enjoying himself.

After a long while.

He finally stopped, somewhat reluctant to end.

"Just controlling the Martial Saint power condensed by the Yu King Pearl is already like this. I wonder how it would feel if I condensed Martial Saint power within myself?"

Ning Qi felt a bit eager.

The feeling of reaching a realm through external force and doing so personally were entirely different.

Just like back then, although he could touch the power of the Celestial Human Realm with the Thunder Beast Fake Pill, it couldn't compare to reaching the Celestial Human Realm himself.

"However, until I understand what kind of change has occurred in heaven and earth, the Yu King Pearl is a very good substitute so that my power doesn't stagnate entirely."

"Now that Martial Saint power is no longer exhaustible, I should study more on how to use it to unleash greater power."

Ning Qi put away the Yu King Pearl, gradually calming his joy.

The way forward on the Martial Path is unknown, and the task heavy with a long way to go.

He had already prepared for the worst. If the path of heaven and earth power was not viable, he might try to develop another path, to see if he could bypass heaven and earth power, though that would necessarily consume a lot of time; he wouldn't do so unless absolutely necessary.

Currently, the best direction is still to explore the anomalies in the power of heaven and earth.

"If after the Eighth Senior Brother wakes up, there is still no gain, perhaps... it's time to go down the mountain to have a look around," Ning Qi thought in his heart. Currently, his power was almost invincible, and going down might yield unexpected gains.

...

Time passed.

Qin Yun had not yet awakened.

But this year's True Martial Peach Assembly arrived.

The Seeking Tao Institute was bustling as ever.

This year saw several new members: Luo Nianchu, Lu Mang, and Ouyang Yuxuan, as they were currently the only disciples of Luo Wentian, Xiong Shi, and Ye Qinghe respectively, naturally being brought along.

The three little fellows were somewhat apprehensive.

Watching the junior and senior uncles laugh and talk, they felt immense longing in their hearts.

Looking at the casually piled True Martial Peach Fruit, they couldn't help but swallow their saliva, realizing only now that the exotic fruit which could boost one's foundation was actually cultivated by that Ninth Master Uncle, leaving them utterly shocked and rendering them too scared to speak out of turn.

Fortunately, Zhuang Chen and Li Ling weren't actually much older than them, so the three were not completely bored. With the addition of a White Ape, the six little ones gathered as a group.

Chapter 308: Reincarnation Dao Seed_2

Luo Wentian glanced at a few people with a smile:

"Fourth Junior Brother, Fifth Junior Brother, you can't be lazy. In a few days, you should start finding some outstanding disciples to strengthen the foundation of our True Martial Sect. By then, we can let these young ones spar at the True Martial Peach Assembly; it'll be a form of encouragement."

Everyone's eyes lit up.

Meeting just to chat every year indeed felt a bit dull, they as brothers knew each other too well, sparring was no longer interesting.

It would be better to let these younger disciples liven things up.

"Yes, yes, great idea. At that time, each of us can prepare some prizes, not only to make these youngsters liven up but also to give them some rewards so they can grow faster." Song City slapped his thigh.

"Hehe, my Martial Path realm might not be as high as yours, but when it comes to teaching disciples, you may not be better than me!" He Yan had a confident look on his face.

Everyone was talking eagerly, already a bit impatient to take in disciples.

This was also a little pleasure among the brothers, competing with each other, which was an amusing thing over the long years.

Ning Qi also nodded with a smile.

Perhaps, hundreds or thousands of years later, this would become a good story passed down, maybe even a tradition, which he would be happy to see.

Then Ye Qinghe grinned and said:

"Hold on, Jiu, you can't let Tiansheng participate, otherwise all these young ones together wouldn't be enough to handle even one finger of his!"

Everyone burst into laughter.

The previously ecstatic White Ape instantly deflated, causing Luo Nianchu and others to snicker.

Indeed, it was true.

Now, with the further development of the White Ape's bloodline, he is solidly a Celestial Human Realm expert. Let alone these young ones like Luo Nianchu, even Luo Wentian with his Fake Pill boost is no match. Letting him participate would be cheating.

Ning Qi smiled helplessly and nodded:

"Then you guys have to persuade Tiansheng yourselves."

Ye Qinghe grinned and said:

"Little Tiansheng, come over and tell your Third Uncle what reward you'd like?"

Yuan Tiansheng's body stiffened, and he repeatedly shook his head and waved his hands:

"I won't participate, Third Uncle, don't reward me!"

Everyone burst into laughter.

This was something everyone came to know later, it was said that before Ye Qinghe had an enlightenment while brewing wine, he would daily pester the White Ape for advice. Due to courtesy, the White Ape couldn't just leave, but Ye Qinghe's talent for winemaking was so poor that it was torturous.

It was like a scholar teaching a simple addition problem slowly; the White Ape was utterly exhausted.

After all the laughter and noise.

Everyone started discussing the details.

They planned to start this initiative after most of the brothers had taken in disciples. Additionally, it was mentioned that the annual True Martial Peach Assembly had become too frequent. As everyone's cultivation deepened, sometimes a single closed-door retreat could last half a year. Coupled with their roles as Elders, if something happened, it was very easy to miss the assembly.

Thus, everyone unanimously decided.

To change it to once every three years from now on.

And adjust gradually based on circumstances later.

"When Wu went down the mountain last year, I thought it would be a long time before seeing you all again. Unexpectedly, for this True Martial Peach Assembly, we've gathered together. Truly, the world is full of surprises. The only regret is that Ba hasn't woken up yet, otherwise, all the brothers would be truly reunited!"

Luo Wentian sighed sincerely.

They recalled this day last year, thinking it was a farewell, and Ning Qi even gave gifts like the Mandarin Duck Jade Pendant.

"Don't worry, Eighth Brother will wake up soon. The next True Martial Peach Assembly will be the time of reunion."

Ning Qi gestured, and cups of Enlightenment Tea appeared in front of everyone.

The astonishing aroma burst open, attracting everyone's attention, and Ning Qi said with a smile:

"This year's Enlightenment Tea is even more lush, with better potency. Have a try."

Everyone's eyes lit up, especially the three young ones, Luo Nianchu among them, who widened their eyes in disbelief at Ning Qi. The Enlightenment Tea, rumored to be a peerless treasure, was so casually placed before them. At this moment, Ning Qi's figure became immensely grand in their hearts.

They originally thought the opportunity the master spoke of was the True Martial Peach Fruit, but didn't expect there was also Enlightenment Tea!

Ning Qi watched everyone down their cups with a smile.

And then they each entered a state of enlightenment.

Indeed, this year's Enlightenment Tea Tree was impressive, nourished with the flesh and blood of dozens of Celestial Human Realm experts, it had undergone further transformation. Not only had the yield increased significantly, but the effect had also greatly improved. With such a developmental trend, it might truly produce Enlightenment Tea capable of bringing someone into a true state of enlightenment.

...

While True Martial Mountain was full of joy.

Far away in Tao State.

True Profound Mountain.

This was the founding place of the True Profound Sect, its mountains ethereal, hidden among the clouds, seemingly an Immortal Realm, extremely profound, it was a treasured land specially chosen by the True Profound True Monarch, the founding ancestor of the True Profound Sect.

Outside the Forbidden Land of the True Profound Taoist Palace.

Three Taoists dressed in purple Taoist Robes were waiting respectfully, their eyes full of piety.

If there were outsiders present, they would surely see.

The identities of these Taoists were far from simple.

True Man Bai He, True Man Bai Xiang, and the True Profound Sect Leader True Man Baiye!

All were Celestial Human Realm experts.

Especially the eldest, True Man Bai Xiang, a peerless expert on the Celestial Being List, but despite his white hair and white brows, he was as reverent as the others.

It wasn't long before.

The doors to the Taoist Palace opened wide.

A slightly disheveled old Taoist stepped out, his Taoist Robe disarrayed, somewhat carefree, but the three True Men bowed deeply and saluted:

"Junior disciples Bai He (Bai Xiang, Baiye) greet the True Profound True Monarch!"

The eyes of the three were filled with excitement and thrill, their bodies even slightly trembling.

The person before them, the legendary founding ancestor of the True Profound Sect, the True Profound True Monarch!

Celestial Humans are called True Men.

But if one is called True Monarch, naturally, this would be... Martial Saint!

The old Taoist just waved his hand casually, he grinned, revealing yellow teeth:

"Bai He, I still prefer you to call me Senior Brother."

Bai He wore a wry smile.

Looking at that familiar face, he was somewhat in a daze. After Taoist Baishan stepped into the Celestial Human Realm, True Man Bai Xiang revealed everything, that True Man Baishan was not just True Man Baishan, but the reincarnated Taoist seed of the True Profound True Monarch, specifically sought out by True Man Bai Xiang.

It was only then he realized this was the fundamental reason why True Man Bai Xiang said he would take disciples on behalf of the master.

"Bai He greets Senior Brother!" True Man Bai He complied, but the respect in his words was completely different from before, causing the old Taoist to purse his lips, feeling a bit disinterested. He still preferred the old Bai He, who would occasionally discipline and scold him, which was a wholly different experience.

Unfortunately, those days would never return.

Now, as memories gradually resurfaced, he would begin to change.

Sighing inwardly, the old Taoist said indifferently:

"Henceforth, there will be no True Profound, only Baishan."

The three were all taken aback.

True Man Bai Xiang cautiously asked:

"True Monarch... will you no longer need to reincarnate in the future?"

Taoist Baishan sighed deeply:

"This is the last time. From now on, it's unnecessary and impossible to reincarnate."

There was a trace of loneliness in his words as he gazed into the distant sky, lost in thought.

The others were puzzled and couldn't understand the meaning behind Taoist Baishan's words. Among them, only True Man Bai Xiang carried the ancient teachings, and he knew the founder had reincarnated more than once. Each time a reincarnated Taoist seed was found, the foundation of the True Profound Sect would greatly enhance, which was why the True Profound Sect had always stood among the top Taoist sects.

Though seldom topping the Taoist sects, it thrived and was the longest-lasting, earning the world's admiration.

Originally, he thought this time would be customary too, but unexpectedly, it was an exception.

Why can't he reincarnate anymore?

True Man Bai Xiang dared not ask more but felt an inexplicable fear in his heart, sensing something major was about to happen, otherwise, the founder wouldn't be like this.

"True Monarch, will your Celestial Being Grand Ceremony still proceed as scheduled?"

Taoist Baishan slowly stepped forward, his aura ethereal, entirely different from that of a Celestial Human Realm.

"Let it proceed as scheduled; perhaps, some old friends might come." He grinned, surprisingly looking forward to it.

Chapter 309: Age 8, White Mist Realm?

Taoist Baishan brushed his sleeve, his eyes filled with a hint of reminiscence.

Speaking of which.

After all these years of reincarnation, most of the time was spent in a daze. After regaining consciousness, most of my energy was spent on understanding the Martial Path. As for those old friends, I only occasionally heard about them, and the chances to meet were few and far between.

I just don't know how many old friends can live to this day, he sighed inwardly.

Hearing what Taoist Baishan said, the three were secretly shocked.

Old friends?

To be called old friends by Taoist Baishan, they must be of the same level of existence.

They secretly gasped, and, recalling Taoist Baishan's earlier words about no longer reincarnating, they vaguely realized that something significant would happen, even changing the dynamics of the entire world.

"I have already sent out invitations to many allied sects in Dao State; by that time, many Taoism sects will attend," True Man Baiye quickly said.

Taoist Baishan nodded slowly and suddenly asked:

"Did the True Martial Sect send an invitation?"

"As per your instructions, they invited True Man Longshan and his ninth disciple, Ning Qi."

The three looked somewhat curious. Inviting Taoist Longshan was normal. After all, when Taoist Longshan held the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony back then, True Man Baihe also personally attended to show support, but why insist on inviting the ninth disciple of Taoist Longshan?

Could it be that this person has some special quality that makes the True Monarch look at him differently?

True Man Baihe pondered.

He recalled an old incident from the past.

It was after Taoist Longshan reached the Celestial Human Realm; he had someone send the Taoist Scripture to True Martial Mountain, and Taoist Baishan also went there and stayed for quite some time. Later, Junior Brother Ye mentioned that during his stay, there was a funny incident involving Taoist Baishan continuously bothering Ning Qi, which left him both amused and speechless, thinking his senior brother was just fooling around.

But now, could there be another hidden reason?

"Senior Brother, could there be something special about that little guy named Ning Qi?" True Man Baihe couldn't help but ask curiously. He remained respectful, yet increasingly saw more of the free-spirited senior brother he once knew in Taoist Baishan.

He wondered if his True Monarch senior brother really wanted to snatch Ning Qi as his disciple, as he had heard before that his senior brother was very fond of this disciple of Taoist Longshan and had made many offers to entice him over.

Taoist Baishan chuckled:

"This little guy is no ordinary person. Three years ago, when I went to True Martial Mountain, though my innate wisdom had not yet awakened, I instinctively felt he was extraordinary. But now, thinking back, tut-tut, he truly is a prodigy of the world!"

His face revealed undisguised admiration, making the three True Men all curious at heart.

"If I'm not mistaken, at that time, his bone age was only eight years. Can you guess what his cultivation level was then?"

True Man Baixiang ventured:

"Body Tempering Perfection?"

Ordinarily, an eight-year-old child would just be beginning martial arts. Even if this child's root bone matured earlier, it would be at most two or three years; achieving Body Tempering Perfection in such a short time is already extremely monstrous. If it weren't for this being a youth favored by the True Monarch, he wouldn't even make such a guess.

The other two thought the same, imagining Body Tempering Perfection or at most the initial stage of the Inner Essence Realm.

Taoist Baishan didn't keep them in suspense, simply stating:

"White Mist Realm."

As soon as he said it.

The three True Men all trembled, almost thinking they heard wrong.

"True Monarch, is this... really true?" Bai Xiang calmly breathed.

Eight years old, White Mist Realm?

This seems already beyond monstrous, doesn't it?

Taoist Baishan appeared amused:

"Could I deceive you?"

The three exchanged glances, still finding it somewhat dreamlike, remembering what they were doing at the age of eight... How could there be such a monstrous person in the world?

True Man Baihe couldn't help but ask:

"Senior Brother, could it be that he is also like you..."

Taoist Baishan shook his head and said:

"No, he is not a reincarnated body."

Then he frowned slightly:

"However... it's hard to say, after all, back in the day, those old folks each used their own methods, and no one knew which worked; some were obliterated in the long river of time, others fortunately survived, and perhaps a certain mutation occurred."

"So... you want to invite this Taoist Friend Ning Qi over to see if he is one of those people from the past?" True Man Baiye said.

Taoist Baishan waved his hand:

"Whether he is or not isn't actually that important. I just find this little guy interesting, that's all. If he is not one of those old folks, then he's truly born at the wrong time."

There was a note of regret in his words.

The three True Men all became serious, understanding what Taoist Baishan was referring to.

The Martial Saint Realm!

They too yearned for it in their hearts, but did not dare to think too much about it, as it was an unspeakable matter that the True Monarch never explained much about, keeping it in deep secrecy. All they could infer from clues was that the Martial Saint Realm was almost unattainable.

This left them with both regret and fear in their hearts.

At this point.

Taoist Baishan clearly lost some interest.

"Tell little Ning Qi that I'm personally inviting him to come to the ceremony, and he must come. Then I will take him to raid the other sects' scripture collections," he said, with a smile resurfacing on his face, making the three True Men chuckle wryly.

This True Monarch truly acts with complete disregard for taboos.

However, considering the True Monarch's status, it would not be an exaggeration to call him the leader of Taoism. If he revealed his identity, even the number one Taoism sect in the world, the Yin Yang Sect, would have to comply with his demands without a word of dissent.

Chapter 310: Age 8, White Mist Realm?_2

The three quietly withdrew, beginning to fully prepare for the upcoming Celestial Being Grand Ceremony.

From the words of Taoist Baishan, it wasn't difficult to infer that even if the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony was grander this time, it wouldn't matter. Since that was the case, the three wouldn't miss this opportunity to bolster the prestige of the True Profound Sect.

In past lives, the reincarnation of the True Profound Taoist Monarch had always been extremely low-profile. Since this was the last time, there was no need to be low-key anymore.

Taoist Baishan watched the three leave, gradually retracting his gaze.

He looked to the sky, his emotions complex.

"Where is the path?"

...

The news that True Man Baishan was about to host the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony spread rapidly, especially since invitations had been sent to friendly forces months in advance. Now, it attracted much attention as the usually low-key True Profound Sect became uncharacteristically high-profile.

This caused the Tao State to become lively too, with many forces sending strong individuals to attend.

True Martial Mountain.

Luo Wentian also received an invitation.

"Master, Jiu, this True Man Baishan has specifically invited the two of you to attend his Celestial Being Grand Ceremony."

He was somewhat surprised; this was the second time that True Man Baishan seemed particularly fond of Ning Qi.

It was normal for his master, a Celestial Human Realm powerhouse, to receive a specific invitation since the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony needed other strong figures to back it up, but repeatedly inviting Ning Qi was somewhat odd since, on the surface, Ning Qi was just an unknown disciple of Taoist Longshan.

"Master, could he have already discovered Jiu's true strength?"

Taoist Longshan slightly frowned:

"He probably hasn't. True Man Baishan was undoubtedly at the Primordial Core Realm when he previously ascended the mountain; with his power, he couldn't possibly see Jiu's true strength, and Jiu has had no contact with him since. Perhaps he just favors Jiu."

Speaking, he slightly smiled.

He was aware of the amusing stories of how Taoist Baishan tricked Ning Qi three years ago to go to the True Profound Sect, but wouldn't mind it given his own generosity.

"There's still a month left, going won't be an issue. Jiu, what do you think?" Taoist Longshan asked.

Ning Qi pondered and finally nodded:

"Let's go."

His cultivation had reached a peak where he could no longer advance and the only thing left was to study the Martial Saint Power within the Yu King Pearl to see if he could find a way to break through it. He initially planned to travel after Qin Yun awoke, and although Qin Yun hadn't awakened yet, attending the Celestial Being Grand Ceremony wasn't a problem.

Moreover, the matters Taoist Baishan mentioned in the letter were quite intriguing to him.

"Joking about looting various Taoism sects is indeed a jest, but... it's a thought. If there's a chance to observe various Secret Taoist Scriptures, perhaps I could get some information regarding the changes in the Power of Heaven and Earth or even find inspiration for the solution."

"With Taoist Baishan guiding, it's better than wandering aimlessly myself."

Ning Qi was not familiar with the situation in Tao State.

Now was the perfect opportunity to get some insight.

Seeing Ning Qi agree so decisively, both Taoist Longshan and Luo Wentian were rather surprised, as Ning Qi typically avoided leaving the mountain; the previous two times he left were to deal with adversaries, and unexpectedly, this time he was willingly seeking adventure.

Ning Qi laughed:

"Let me know when we are about to depart."

He glanced at Qin Yun again.

The fluctuations within Qin Yun were becoming increasingly stable, the day of his awakening drawing nearer, which all the brothers longed for.

"Hopefully when I return from Tao State, the Eighth Senior Brother will have safely awakened." Ning Qi thought to himself.

...

Time passed.

Half a month later.

The True Martial Sect delegation set off to attend the ceremony.

Besides Taoist Longshan and Ning Qi, Zhuang Chen and Li Ling were also included, accompanying to broaden their horizons. Additionally, various inner and outer sect disciples bearing carefully prepared gifts were on their way.

If it were just the two of them, the journey would be swift, but with so many accompanying, it was much slower.

However, Ning Qi didn't mind.

Such opportunities were rare for him, perfect for appreciating the scenery along the way.

However, as they proceeded, the young Taoist boy leaning against the carriage, absorbed in the scriptures, became a unique sight.

Ning Qi was contemplating the changes in the Power of Heaven and Earth:

"From the information gathered so far, perhaps there's some impurity mixed within the Power of Heaven and Earth, causing the Silver Giant Ape to meet such a tragic fate. If so, could removing these impurities and restoring the Power of Heaven and Earth to purity enable its harmless absorption into the body, thus safely breaking into the Martial Saint Realm?"

"The Three Flowers Gathering at the Top has a certain 'filtering' effect during the process of absorbing the Power of Heaven and Earth, but it's still inadequate; can it be further strengthened?"

This was a direction Ning Qi had been considering frequently.

He derived inspiration from the Yu King Pearl.

Initially, the Demon Sect's Grand Elder used the bloodline of Great Yu descendants as a medium to condense Martial Saint Power, later Ning Qi himself explored and directly used the Three Flowers Gathering at the Top method through the Yu King Pearl to condense an entirely new Martial Saint Power.

This Martial Saint Power had evident disparities before and after.

It instantly made Ning Qi realize that the Power of Heaven and Earth and Martial Saint Power could indeed incorporate other substances.

Then, recalling the deep-seated images within the White Ape bloodline.

Initially, the Silver Giant Ape wielded extraordinary dominance but suddenly deteriorated like that, perhaps due to impurities in the Power of Heaven and Earth.

The more he thought, the more plausible he found this speculation.

But ultimately, it was speculation, unable to be confirmed.

"The best solution is to verify and practice, using my body as an experiment, which might quickly yield conclusions, or even deduce a solution."

"Unfortunately, I don't dare."

Ning Qi was very cautious with his life.

He was far from helpless now and did not wish to take this risky move.

He couldn't predict the consequences of absorbing the Power of Heaven and Earth into his body; if it affected his future path, he'd regret it immensely. Therefore, before uncovering the truth, he wouldn't absorb a trace of the Power of Heaven and Earth into his body.

"Then... how about using others to experiment? Though it wouldn't be as effective as personal testing, it's certainly safer. However, the experiment target isn't easy to find; it must be strong enough, capable of absorbing the Power of Heaven and Earth into the body."

"The best choice is naturally enemies; using them incurs no burden; death doesn't matter. But the problem is, they're hard to find; perhaps only the former Demon Sect's Grand Elder had such qualifications."

As Ning Qi pondered.

A figure abruptly surfaced in his mind.

Blade Demon.

"Perhaps, conducting experiments with him might actually work?" Ning Qi's eyes lit up.

However,

he was definitely not someone who only looked out for himself. Having promised the Blade Demon regarding the Martial Saint Technique, he wouldn't go back on his word.

"If indeed using Blade Demon for experiments, I should explain the pros and cons, without concealing anything. If he agrees to cooperate, it would be ideal; if not, I must not force him." Ning Qi thought, perhaps he can discuss this matter with Blade Demon after returning to True Martial Mountain.

Various thoughts flowed.

Ning Qi exhaled deeply.

This was a plan he thought of, though it might not succeed.

Even if Blade Demon agrees to cooperate with experiments, he would need to minimize risks first; leaving aside other factors, he greatly respected Blade Demon's Martial Path determination; he was indeed a pure Path Seeker.

At this moment.

Zhuang Chen's chubby face leaned closer. After glancing at the Taoist Scripture in Ning Qi's hand and secretly clicking his tongue, he smiled and said:

"Ninth Senior Brother, we're almost at True Profound Mountain yet you keep perusing your scriptures back and forth. Throughout this journey, I still feel like you're in the Seeking Tao Institute, apart from admiring the scenery along the way, you don't go out to explore; truly a pity!"

Others around all chuckled.

Ning Qi shook his head, chuckling, and looked into the distance, where a mysterious mountain, concealed under mists, began to reveal itself.

True Profound Mountain, we have arrived!