

Cultivating 341

Chapter 341: Invitation_2

The response from Ning Qi brought joy to both of them.

Luo Wentian stood up and said:

"Time is of the essence. We need to set off immediately, as True Martial Mountain is far away."

He acted swiftly and went to make arrangements right away.

Ultimately.

Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan led the team, along with Ye Qinghe and several outstanding third-generation disciples, which would serve to broaden their horizons and gain some experience. Meanwhile, on True Martial Mountain, Blade Demon, Qin Yun, and Luo Wentian stayed behind, so there was no need for concern.

Ning Qi did not change his appearance. With the ancient saints reemerging, unless he spoke of it, others would only assume he was an ancient saint returning as well.

Previously, on True Profound Mountain, he was detected by Taoist Baishan because there was a peculiar aura and mark shared among ancient saints. After Ning Qi sensed this, he developed a disguise technique. Now, if discovered by other ancient saints, they would most likely regard him as a fellow practitioner.

In the skies above.

Ning Qi harnessed the Power of Heaven and Earth.

They all flew at breakneck speed, eliciting excitement and amazement from the disciples.

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Black Sand Sea.

A fleet of tower ship battleships centered around the misty island, spread out in all directions. Some people were prepared for a long-term battle, exploring the conditions to enter the misty island. So far, aside from the Vast Sea Sword Sect, only a few individuals with low cultivation had set foot inside.

Once they emerged, they were promptly 'invited' by the larger forces that had arrived in advance.

Unfortunately, these individuals couldn't explain why they were able to enter. They only recounted some encounters and gains inside, which made the major powers' eyes light up, and they happily accepted these fortunate individuals into their sects, resulting in a tenuous 'win-win' situation.

Of course.

Not everyone was willing to surrender, and those who resisted didn't fare well.

More and more powerful figures arrived.

Initially, a Gang Essence Realm expert was enough to suppress the scene, followed by the need for a Celestial Human Realm, and then a Celestial Being List expert. As time went on, the focus of most Celestial Beings was drawn to the area.

At this moment.

A figure staggered out of the misty area, initially looking around in confusion, disbelief in his eyes, then extreme joy. However, he quickly came to his senses, his gaze became bewildered again, and he sighed as he started to slip away.

This kind of scene was common.

There was no danger in entering the misty island, so many people dared to try.

But this middle-aged man was stopped.

A group of people approached with smiles, their eyes filled with fervor:

"Brother Jinda, others might not know, but we do. You've been inside for more than half a two-hour period. Anyone who stays in there that long must have entered the True Martial Hall. So, how about cooperating with our White Cloud Sect?"

Liu Jinda's face changed, barely managing a smile:

"You must be mistaken. I just went in a quarter of a two-hour period ago. As for that person, I remember they went in long before me."

His eyes darted, and he casually pointed at another martial artist who had just stepped out of the mist, trying to deflect the trouble. But the White Cloud Sect members had secretly monitored and recorded the events, so they knew better. Their leader smiled as they subtly began to encircle Liu Jinda, intending to take him aside without causing a commotion that might attract others.

Liu Jinda cursed quietly, abruptly whistled sharply, and a bird of prey instantly flew over. He tapped the ground with his toes, landing on the bird's back, and yelled angrily:

"Get lost, White Cloud Sect!"

If it had been another sect, it might not have been so bad, but the White Cloud Sect was notorious for being sanctimonious. Falling into their hands meant no good outcome.

The people of White Cloud Sect were furious.

They all gave chase.

In no time.

Gang Qi filled the air above the sea. Liu Jinda proved his abilities, not only with an unusual bird accompanying him but also with remarkable body techniques. He moved across the sea as if on solid ground, initially evading the White Cloud Sect's grasp.

The commotion quickly attracted the attention of others.

The entire sea region boiled again.

Liu Jinda instantly became a hot commodity.

Various factions unleashed their means, competing for Liu Jinda. Celestial Human Realm battles ensued, waves surged, even a Celestial Being List expert got involved, creating utter chaos.

When the True Martial Sect arrived, they witnessed this scene.

The sea turned crimson, with bodies floating and sinking into the depth.

Two Celestial Being List experts relentlessly clashed, unleashing True Flame. They tore Liu Jinda's bird apart mid-air, and in his desperation, Liu Jinda himself was ripped apart into a blood mist, dissolving into the air.

All was silent.

Everyone silently observed the scene before them, their previous fervor dissipating. With Liu Jinda dead, there was no further point in fighting.

The bloody spectacle made the third-generation disciples of the True Martial Sect turn slightly pale, realizing the outside world was not as kind as they thought. Without the protection of the True Martial Sect, they would just be meat on the chopping block.

Some disciples' eyes gradually grew resolute, secretly vowing to train diligently to avoid such a fate for their sect.

Taoist Longshan nodded slightly, acknowledging the purpose of bringing the disciples out for experience.

Broaden their understanding, and solidify their Martial Path will, which would gradually elevate a person's potential. While martial root bone matters, postnatal growth is even more important.

After lingering briefly, he prepared to lead his disciples towards the misty island.

They had done their homework before coming.

They understood the general situation inside.

But their arrival immediately caught some people's attention, causing their pupils to contract in apprehension.

"True Martial Sect!"

If there were any sect everybody least wanted to see,

It would undoubtedly be the True Martial Sect.

Not because the True Martial Sect was powerful, but because concerning the reemerging True Martial Hall, the True Martial Sect occupied a 'legitimate' position to some extent. Nobody could say for sure whether the True Martial Sect, upon entering, would claim everything inside. Everyone's efforts might then be for nothing.

Many eyes turned to Taoist Longshan.

The atmosphere grew tense.

An almost imperceptible alliance formed between two camps.

On one side were the people from the True Martial Sect, and on the other were individuals from other sects. Initially, those who were fighting each other now seemed to join forces upon the True Martial Sect's arrival.

Ning Qi lifted his gaze slightly, saying nothing.

"You must be True Man Longshan, I presume. I've heard much about you."

"The True Martial Sect is renowned throughout the world. Seeing it today, I find it indeed full of talent!"

Taoist Longshan frowned slightly, looking at the two individuals blocking their path. They were the same Celestial Being List experts involved in the earlier confrontation, both ranked between twentieth and thirtieth - one a blademan, the other skilled in fist techniques.

He faced them with a peaceful smile and said:

"The praise is undeserved, just the common folks' exaltation; we're not worthy of such accolades."

The black-robed blademan laughed:

"The renown of True Man Tianjian cannot be false in the slightest. However, it's a shame we couldn't meet the senior in person this time."

With these words.

The atmosphere became increasingly odd.

If True Man Tianjian wasn't present, the situation would look quite different with only Taoist Longshan here. After all, numerous Celestial Being List experts were present, keen observers noticed no trace of the number one swordsman in the world.

The other, an elder with white eyebrows, cheerfully invited:

"Seeing you today, I feel an extraordinary affinity with the True Man. How about coming aboard my battleship for a visit, where we can share recent tales and experiences, and gather energy before exploring the island again for maximum efficiency?"

The black-robed blademan also extended an invitation.

A friendly smile played on both their faces.

But Taoist Longshan's smile gradually faded away, and even the younger disciples caught on that these two old scoundrels had ulterior motives, anger rising in their eyes.

Their stares narrowed as they awaited Taoist Longshan's response.

Chapter 342: The Path of the Array

The scene was silent.

Only the sound of waves gently washing over lingered, gradually, even the sound of the waves began to fade.

Taoist Longshan scanned the surroundings; some lowered their heads, some smiled, while others calmly met his gaze. He looked at the two people before him and finally said mildly:

"Thank you both for your kind offer, but there's ancient wisdom in striking while the iron is hot. How about we talk after I lead my disciples out from the island?"

As the words fell.

The expressions of the black-robed blademan and the white-browed elder gradually darkened.

"Brother Chen, it seems our face isn't big enough," jested the black-robed blademan.

The white-browed elder also nodded with a sigh.

But sharp eyes could catch the trace of mockery in both of their gazes.

Ning Qi looked calm.

Given his current strength, the two before him were akin to ants; however, since his master was leading the team, he naturally had to show respect. Ning Qi merely glanced at the faintly visible mist ahead, his eyes slightly surprised; he sensed a peculiar force, resembling a Qimen Array, but seemingly more formidable.

"It's a misunderstanding," Taoist Longshan said with a smile, then refrained from speaking more. He waved his hand, leading the disciples toward the misty area.

But invisibly, two auras locked onto the group.

Greed stirs the heart.

No matter how renowned True Man Tianjian was, since he wasn't present, there would still be those tempted, especially as more and more rumors indicated that the True Martial Hall held Martial Saint lineage, making people green with envy, willing to take risks.

"True Man, it looks like you're giving us no face at all?"

The two Celestial Being List experts who were once fighting to the death instantly reached an accord, though they smiled, there was a chill in their eyes.

The atmosphere dropped to a freezing point in an instant.

Everyone held their breath, eager to see how the True Martial Sect's people would respond—whether they'd use True Man Tianjian's fame to deter the enemy, deploy other tactics, or simply retreat under the pressure of the two Celestial Being List experts, in which case the True Martial Sect's reputation would certainly suffer a significant blow.

The True Martial Sect contingent paused.

Ning Qi's expression remained indifferent, and the next instant, he chuckled.

A calm voice arose:

"What do you count as?"

Seeing Dragon Mountain Taoist with an unwavering expression, everyone was stunned, unable to believe such words came from his mouth. But the disciples of True Martial Sect all brightened, especially Ye Qinghe and others.

They wouldn't forget how when Taoist Longshan once secluded himself to break through to the Celestial Human Realm, an external threat invaded True Martial Mountain. After he succeeded, he stirred up the winds in Qing State.

Nowadays, Taoist Longshan hadn't acted for a long time, overshadowed by True Man Tianjian, leading many to forget his character.

The black-robed blademan and the white-browed elder stared at Taoist Longshan, dumbfounded.

They found it hard to believe what they heard, unsure how this person who had only set foot in the Celestial Human Realm for a few years had the courage to challenge two Celestial Being List experts.

But soon.

They understood.

The thick Power of Heaven and Earth converged, like waves overturning, surging mightily.

Before the anger in their eyes could rise, it was all replaced by astonishment and then disbelief.

Taoist Longshan wasted no words.

The secret technique of the Bridge of Celestial Being operated, mastering the Power of Heaven and Earth which instantly multiplied, now far beyond his former self. Having taken the Heaven-Reaching Pill for over half a year, the medicinal power mostly refined, his strength rose significantly. If one must compare, he ranked at least among the top twenty of the Celestial Being List, given he also mastered many secret techniques taught by Ning Qi.

Bang!

People vaguely heard the roar of the Power of Heaven and Earth, columns of water surged forth, pushing away all onlookers.

In shock, the two Celestial Being List experts used all their strength.

A hundred-foot Blade Gang broke out of the sea, slashing the columns of water, akin to a dragon emerging from the sea, while the white-browed elder threw raging punches, with Fist Gang having a mystical traction force that formed a whirlpool of seawater around them. Amidst the fluctuation of Power of Heaven and Earth and under pressure, the cooperation between the two seemed somewhat harmonious.

But it was futile.

Taoist Longshan looked indifferent, as he drew circles with both hands, the invisible Power of Heaven and Earth divided into two currents, mutually attracting and responding, then transformed into two giant waves of palm, pressing down.

Under the awestruck gazes of the crowd.

The Blade Gang shattered, the fist waves dispersed.

The two Celestial Human Realm experts vomited blood, were knocked flying, suppressed into the sea by the giant palms.

Taoist Longshan stood with his hands behind his back.

Soon.

Two battered figures burst from the sea, blood trailing from corners of their mouths, their eyes filled with darkness and dread.

The scene gradually fell silent.

At this moment, Taoist Longshan had already become the focus of the whole place, his prestige soaring. At this moment everyone shared a single thought.

"How does Taoist Longshan possess such terrifying strength?"

Initially, Taoist Longshan was treated with deference by the two Celestial Being List experts due to True Man Tianjian, but now it was genuinely due to his own strength.

The True Martial Sect people were all excited.

Ning Qi chuckled lightly.

Just witnessing his master's displayed methods made it clear that he'd toiled hard these days; perhaps aware of the pressure the whole sect placed on Ning Qi, he felt powerless, able only to transform it into stronger motivation, growing rapidly.

Taoist Longshan glanced casually at the two Celestial Being List experts, without speaking.

He then waved his hand, leading True Martial Sect disciples swiftly towards the mist.

This time.

Chapter 343: Array Road_2

No one dared to stop him anymore.

The gazes were extremely complex, with some jealousy and some amazement.

"The True Martial Sect already has a True Man Tianjian, and now there's another True Man Longshan. If they obtain the inheritance of the True Martial Hall, they might become a holy land of martial arts in the future!"

The two Celestial Being List experts were helpless, and regret was evident in their eyes.

Not only did they fail to stop the True Martial Sect, but they also offended them, truly losing on both fronts.

If they could go back in time, they definitely wouldn't act like this.

...

"Master, you were amazing!"

Ye Qinghe didn't hold back her praise, and the other disciples felt the same.

Standing with hands behind his back, the originally calm and poised Taoist Longshan couldn't help but glare at Ye Qinghe in exasperation, but Ye Qinghe just turned her head with a smile.

Taoist Longshan shook his head and chuckled, then looked towards the white mist ahead, with some gravity.

"Jiu, what do you think?"

Ning Qi's eyes emitted a soft golden light, and after a moment, he spoke:

"It's similar to a Qimen Array, but infused with spiritual power, making it much more flexible than a regular Qimen Array. Anyone who steps in would lose their way; although there's no danger, it would still harm their Divine Intent. Even if we travel together, we might be separated."

Everyone nodded.

This was already public information. Previously, a sect tried to measure the place using sheer numbers, and found out that even hundreds of people entering together would unknowingly end up alone.

He Yan quickly asked:

"Is there a way to break it?"

"Either have a high enough realm."

"Like the Vast Sea Sword Sect?"

"Exactly."

"Is there any other way?"

Seeing the eager eyes, Ning Qi observed carefully again and then said:

"Then you must meet some special conditions."

"Let's try our True Martial Sect's exclusive martial arts."

Besides the True Martial Nine Stances, the True Martial Sect also obtained some martial arts from the True Martial Underground Palace back in the day. Hearing this, everyone's eyes lit up; if what Ning Qi said was true, then the True Martial Hall might have indeed opened a special path for them.

Ye Qinghe and others laughed excitedly, eager to try.

Taoist Longshan smiled and said:

"Then let's try it together. If we lose our way and are transported out, gather on Jade Snake Island. If we reach Mist Island, do not act rashly. Wait for everyone to arrive before searching for the True Martial Hall."

"Okay!"

After responding, everyone activated their body techniques and rushed forward.

Walking on waves was not difficult for them.

Ning Qi stayed at the back.

He smiled slightly, with anticipation in his eyes. Once all the disciples disappeared, he too sped inside.

Before him was a vast expanse of white.

Ning Qi paused in mid-air, with amazement in his eyes.

He could feel his perception was completely blocked, as if he were surrounded by confusion from all sides. A peculiar force attached to the white mist, generating various mystical powers. Trying to activate the True Martial Martial Arts, the white mist sensed it immediately, revealing a faint path within.

Thrilled by the sight, he activated the Golden Pupil of Illusion-breaking, and the white mist before him slowly thinned. Far ahead, thousands of feet away, a small island loomed in and out of view. Looking around, he could see silhouettes slowly moving within; there were disciples of the True Martial Sect as well as others attempting the same.

Entering the mist with True Martial Martial Arts was a method for others to enter, but with Ning Qi's strength, going in alone wasn't a problem.

Ning Qi felt assured, then sat down cross-legged in mid-air.

He began to intricately perceive the mysteries of the mist's power.

"This white mist should be a combination of spiritual qi and a Qimen Array, used to confuse directions."

"It seems more than that; if changed further, it could trap enemies."

Ning Qi was somewhat amazed.

"Even ordinary Celestial Human Realm experts might not distinguish directions; even with someone beside them, they wouldn't sense it. Such an array is truly formidable!"

"I didn't expect the combination of a Qimen Array and spiritual power to produce such wondrous power; this is another direction."

Ning Qi felt as if a new world was opening before him.

He continued to comprehend the mysteries contained in the white mist, with streams of spiritual light like a waterfall in his mind, gradually revealing a new path. It was then he realized his previous mastery of Qimen Arrays was far from exhaustive.

With the infusion of spiritual power, the mundane could transform into the miraculous.

About one two-hour later.

Ning Qi slowly stood up.

He took a long breath, appearing satisfied. Even without setting foot on the small island, the insights gained from the mist already made the trip worthwhile, making him even more eager for the upcoming True Martial Hall.

Ning Qi put his hands behind his back, strolling across the waves with an indescribable grace.

Without even using the Golden Pupil of Illusion-breaking, he still advanced unhindered, as the white mist withdrew to either side like opening a path for him.

Soon after.

The small island was in front of him.

Ning Qi slowly stepped in; the True Martial Sect members had been waiting at the edge for a long time, and were relieved to see his arrival.

"Jiu, did something unexpected happen?" Taoist Longshan asked, as he believed Ning Qi should have arrived much earlier.

Ning Qi shook his head with a smile:

"I was thrilled by the sight and spent some time understanding the white mist, which delayed me a bit."

Seeing Ning Qi's slightly delighted expression, Taoist Longshan, Ye Qinghe, and the others knew that the gains must have been considerable, secretly expressing awe in their hearts.

"Let's go." Taoist Longshan took the lead and the mist gradually receded.

Instinctively, everyone looked up and stood frozen in place.

In the distance, numerous immortal palaces loomed amidst the clouds and mist, with white cranes flying and spirit beasts calling, countless exotic flowers and herbs extending all the way to their feet.

"Is this really on Mist Island? Why is there no sign of it from the outside world?"

"I used to think the rumors were exaggerations, but now it seems those people were conservative. Such a scene might only exist in the Upper Realm where Martial Saints ascend to."

The disciples were in awe.

Especially when they saw the towering True Martial Hall in the center.

The mere words of "True Martial Hall" exuded various mystical auras, enough to inspire many insights at a glance.

Taoist Longshan's eyes glistened with tears, filled with a pilgrim's excitement.

"So... this is the True Martial Underground Palace I once saw! I was in the mountains, not seeing the true form; now I finally see it, a blessing across three lifetimes!"

Everyone's emotions surged.

Ning Qi's gaze fell on the words "True Martial Hall," with golden light flowing in his eyes, trying to glean the mysteries, but he immediately restrained his secret technique because he sensed a strange power obstructing his probe, feeling that continuing might lead to backlash.

He merely stared at those words, relying on his understanding to perceive their profoundness, with streams of spiritual light continually rising.

The simple three words revealed to him a towering immortal mountain, invisible in its entirety, majestic and ethereal, a power unimaginable to him.

"Is this the source of our inheritance?" A pride welled up in every disciple's heart.

Continuing forward.

Entering the Immortal Palace.

It was then noticed that the previously seen immortal cranes and spirit beasts seemed to vanish like illusions, leaving only the still grandiose palaces filled with immortal charm. However, Ning Qi felt this might not be the case.

Each immortal palace, not like anything of this world, remained tightly closed, and everyone cautiously explored.

"Come take a look, everyone!" Ye Qinghe's voice drew everyone's attention.

She stood excitedly before the tallest, impossible-to-see-top True Martial Hall.

The crowd arrived, their gaze fell on the stone tablet in front of the True Martial Hall.

One line stood out.

"Enter the True Martial Hall, those who pass the test shall receive the True Martial inheritance."

Eyes instantly turned to Taoist Longshan.

Taoist Longshan didn't delay.

Suppressing his excitement, he took a deep breath and said:

"Opportunity is before you, seize it well!"

With that, he led the way towards the True Martial Hall.

Chapter 344: Martial Saint Turtle

The closer they got to it,

the more everyone felt that the True Martial Hall before their eyes was incomparably magnificent, infinitely towering, bringing about a sense of insignificance, and a feeling of awe rose in their hearts.

As if in response to them, the originally tightly-closed hall doors opened with a rumbling sound.

Gentle light poured out, engulfing everyone; even Ning Qi's heart instinctively skipped a beat, and the Yu King Pearl was already in an activated state.

The group stepped in slowly.

Once the light completely receded, everything before their eyes emerged, and the scene left everyone stunned. The vast hall was almost empty, with only three towering doors emanating different glows, and their auras were distinct.

Almost immediately, everyone reacted.

"This bronze door corresponds to martial artists below the Celestial Human Realm, this silver door corresponds to Celestial Human Realm martial artists, then doesn't this gold door correspond to... above Celestial Human Realm?"

Everyone was mentally shaken, their breaths somewhat stifled.

Though rumors outside had always suggested that the True Martial Hall housed a Martial Saint's inheritance, these were half-truths. Only upon arriving here did they truly understand the magnitude of the place.

"Even Martial Saints must undergo trials here; what is the origin of this True Martial Hall anyway?"

Ning Qi felt that this True Martial inheritance was far from simple.

Initially, from what Taoist Baishan had said, he thought this True Martial inheritance was founded by a powerful Ancient Saint, but what he saw and heard now made him realize it might not be so.

The group paused in front of the three doors.

Ye Qinghe stepped forward:

"Master, should I give it a try first?"

As she was the highest-ranking person besides Taoist Longshan, it was her responsibility to take the lead; since the road ahead was unknown, probing it was a good idea.

Taoist Longshan nodded slowly.

Under the expectant gazes of everyone, Ye Qinghe walked toward the bronze door.

Suddenly.

A strong light flashed, startling everyone, only to see Ye Qinghe being directly sucked in, disappearing completely.

Taoist Longshan said in a deep voice:

"Quickly go in together; if any situation arises, you can support each other."

He Yan and others promptly affirmed, then each disciple rushed into the bronze door without hesitation.

Instantly, only Ning Qi and Taoist Longshan remained in the hall.

"Master, let's go together," Ning Qi smiled.

Taoist Longshan's eyes showed expectation, and the two walked side by side, then were together sucked into the silver door.

The previously bustling True Martial Hall fell quiet once more, with only the three doors standing silently, a faint, lingering sigh echoing before disappearing.

...

Taoist Longshan opened his eyes again to find Ning Qi no longer by his side.

"It seems that once you enter and accept the trials, you'll be separated." He was somewhat helpless, but given that it's an inheritance, there shouldn't be any danger, especially since the True Martial Sect shares a connection with the True Martial Hall. At least there's no need to overly worry about the disciples' safety.

Putting aside his concerns, he began to survey his surroundings.

This was a quiet chamber.

Empty, with only a single bookshelf, and on the shelf, there were just two items: a book and an hourglass, with all the sand gathered in the lower part.

Directly opposite him.

Was another door.

Taoist Longshan attempted to push it, but it wouldn't budge. He tried communicating with the Power of Heaven and Earth, but even using the power of a Celestial Being, the door remained as stable as Mount Tai, causing him to gain insight.

"It seems that only by passing the test here can I leave."

He took a deep breath and slowly approached the bookshelf.

The three characters 'Yin Yang Fist' on the book immediately caught his eye, and as he flipped it open, amazement rose in his eyes; it turned out to be a Celestial martial arts manual, enough to incite life-and-death struggles among countless martial artists in the Martial Realm.

Meanwhile.

The hourglass also showed movement. As Taoist Longshan picked up the Yin Yang Fist manual, the sand that had settled in the bottom half began to rise and reverse into the top half.

Taoist Longshan suddenly understood.

"To pass the test, I must comprehend this Yin Yang Fist to a certain extent before the hourglass runs out, only then will the door open!" His eagerness surged.

Having once obtained the True Martial inheritance and founded the True Martial Sect, Taoist Longshan naturally had no lack of talent and insight.

He meticulously studied the fist manual, occasionally practicing a move or two, with his eyes gradually turning serious.

"The Yin Yang Fist contains the Path of Yin and Yang, a profound Celestial martial arts. If I had ample time, I could naturally comprehend it, but now, at most, I have just one two-hour period... it's rather challenging." He exhaled lightly, feeling somewhat defiant, not believing he couldn't even pass the first stage.

Focused all his efforts to comprehend.

He felt hopeful.

Meanwhile.

In another quiet chamber.

Ning Qi also opened the Yin Yang Fist manual.

He raised an eyebrow, glanced at the running hourglass, then flipped through the fist manual. After just a dozen breaths, he stood before the door.

Clenched his fist, struck out.

In one seamless motion.

The Power of Heaven and Earth gathered, transforming into the energies of yin and yang, two fist seals, one yin and one yang, each with mysteries, then merged into one, the potency skyrocketing.

With a buzzing sound, the once impregnable door shattered and scattered.

For Ning Qi, what would stump countless geniuses about this Celestial martial arts was astoundingly simple. His extraordinary comprehension was one aspect, and his profound foundation was another. With the myriad paths as his goal, the Path of Yin and Yang was naturally included, and his expertise was not low. Now comprehending this Yin Yang Fist was like a dimensional reduction attack, accomplished with casual ease.

Chapter 345: Martial Saint Turtle_2

However, Ning Qi's focus was not on this. He was perceiving the power waves left behind after the portal shattered.

"Sure enough, it's not some physical substance, but should be a special power that makes this portal indestructible, only able to be broken by Yin Yang Fist." A thought of enlightenment flashed through his mind.

He had tried earlier.

No matter how powerful the force he exerted, he couldn't shatter the portal. Although he didn't fully exert himself, he knew it wasn't simple.

This further confirmed the idea in his heart.

"True Martial inheritance has some weight," Ning Qi's curiosity was somewhat piqued.

He stepped through the portal.

Another quiet chamber appeared before him, with the same layout, but the martial arts on the bookshelf had become 'Four Symbols Palm'.

"Is this to... test perception?"

This thought surfaced in Ning Qi's mind, but he was not surprised. To select a qualified inheritor, perception is naturally important.

"Let's see your limit."

Ning Qi flipped open the Four Symbols Palm, clearly feeling that the difficulty of this martial art had been raised a notch.

However.

To him, it was no difficult task.

With only a few more breaths than before, Ning Qi gathered the Power of Heaven and Earth to form Cyan Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird, and Black Tortoise, blasting the second portal into smithereens.

For the average person.

Just these two powerful Celestial Being martial arts would be quite rewarding, but Ning Qi's goal was naturally beyond this.

Yet another quiet chamber appeared.

Ning Qi was comprehending the next martial arts.

Without exception, they were outstanding among Celestial Being martial arts, enough to be considered foundational in those top martial sects, increasingly so further along, with several martial arts making Ning Qi's eyes light up, drawing ample nourishment from them.

The third quiet chamber.

The fourth quiet chamber.

...

All the way to the ninth quiet chamber.

Ning Qi looked at the identical layout, very patiently, even somewhat expectantly.

The test was very simple for him, but the gains were quite rich, thus not feeling impatient at all, especially in the seventh and eighth quiet chambers, where the martial arts were as exquisite as the Heavenly Sword Technique he created.

"Small True Martial Seal?"

Seeing the martial arts in the ninth quiet chamber, Ning Qi was taken aback.

The name was somewhat meaningful.

Small True Martial Seal? Doesn't that mean there is a True Martial Seal? What kind of level would the True Martial Seal be, the answer naturally presents itself.

Flipping open the martial arts.

He immersed into them immediately, spirals of Spiritual Light ascended, with a trace of astonishment gradually surfacing in his eyes.

"Such strong martial arts! Comparable to the Thousand Stars Sword Array created by my Heavenly Sword Technique!" Throughout the world, he had never seen such powerful martial arts, those legendary martial arts from top sects paled.

It could even be said, to some extent, this Small True Martial Seal was deeper than the Heavenly Sword Technique, given that the manifold sword arrays evolved from the Heavenly Sword Technique he created require the unfathomable power of Heaven and Earth, whereas the Small True Martial Seal's requirements in this regard were a bit lower.

Correspondingly.

The difficulty in comprehending the Small True Martial Seal also presented a geometrical increase, far more challenging than the eighth chamber.

To learn this Small True Martial Seal within a two-hour time frame is unlikely for many under the sky, possibly no one could even grasp the basics.

Even Ning Qi.

It took him a full incense time to completely reach perfection.

"Indeed, it's remarkable."

Ning Qi couldn't help but smile—the martial arts he created had always been self-crafted since learning martial arts from elsewhere failed to fully unleash his strength, but this Small True Martial Seal was somewhat different.

Ning Qi's fingers moved, gathering the Power of Heaven and Earth, instantly forming an Ancient Seal carrying a graceful aura as though the surrounding space became still.

With a booming sound.

The portal was shattered into powder, with Ning Qi's urging, the martial arts of the Small True Martial Seal exhibited extraordinary power.

Ning Qi felt delighted.

Not only for the Small True Martial Seal, but also because he drew inspiration from this martial arts, even without a sequel, he could deduce the complete True Martial Seal. After comprehending the Small True Martial Seal, he was absolutely certain that the Small True Martial Seal was a simplified result of Martial Saint-level martial arts.

This is naturally a matter for later.

The most crucial thing now is to pass the test and claim the True Martial inheritance.

He stepped through the portal slowly.

Everything around him disappeared, and before him appeared not a quiet chamber but a vast ocean. Ning Qi was somewhat astonished, unsure of whether he was still on that small island, or if perhaps it was an illusion. He surveyed the surroundings with the Golden Pupil of Illusion-breaking, but found no flaws.

Simultaneously.

A vast voice resounded:

"Successfully passing the Celestial Being Enlightenment Nine Passes grants you half the Martial Saint-level True Martial inheritance. Would you like to continue with the Celestial Being Nine Battles test?"

Ning Qi stood above the ocean, trying to locate the source of the voice but found nothing.

His face was calm:

"Accept."

Now that he was here, he couldn't leave with half the inheritance.

As Ning Qi's voice fell.

The originally calm ocean suddenly turned tumultuous.

He looked closely.

He saw a blade qi slicing through the ocean precisely, dividing the waters in two, spreading into water curtains around, a water path emerged, then, a giant turtle slowly surfaced, its dramatic entrance caught Ning Qi's attention.

Yet, upon closer inspection, his expression became peculiar.

It had to be said, this giant turtle wasn't weak, estimated by Ning Qi to be between the ordinary Celestial Human Realm and the strong ones on the Celestial Being List. For a typical Celestial Human Realm person, such an opponent was not to be underestimated, nonetheless, for Ning Qi, it seemed rather childish.

He found it amusing.

Without waiting for the giant turtle to unleash its power.

Ning Qi casually waved.

Two Fist Seals, one Yin and one Yang, merged into one, instantly exploding it. Strangely, after the giant turtle was blasted, it didn't burst into a sky-full of blood mist, but instead turned into clusters of seawater.

Yet for some reason.

He always felt a chill on the back of his neck after exploding the giant turtle.

He did not look into it deeply, thinking it merely a trick of his mind, as his attention was soon drawn by the disturbances below the sea.

The waves spread even wider.

Another giant turtle came riding the waves.

"The strength of the tail of the Celestial Being List."

Ning Qi's eyes flashed, evaluating the strength of this giant turtle, then casually struck again, manifesting Four Symbols, shattering the giant turtle.

He intended to engage quickly, unwilling to waste time.

According to the vast voice, the Celestial Being Nine Battles meant there would be nine opponents.

He stood above the ocean with hands behind, his posture relaxed.

One giant turtle after another came riding the waves.

With strength increasingly powerful.

A constant rise.

Soon.

The seventh giant turtle rose to a level comparable to the Blade Demon.

Ning Qi employed the Small True Martial Seal to explode this giant turtle once more.

The prior tests were not difficult for him, as his combat prowess could no longer be measured by common realms.

But vaguely, he felt a sense of unease creeping in his heart.

Taking a deep breath, Ning Qi cleared away distractions.

Another giant turtle emerged, now dozens of feet in size, resembling a massive sea rock on the move, its aura incredibly potent.

A fierce battle was imminent.

Ning Qi once more condensed the Small True Martial Seal, subduing the giant turtle, and simultaneously activated the Thousand Stars Sword Array, thunderous Sword Qi engulfing the turtle.

After this twofold approach.

Finally, he managed to explode the giant turtle again, but clearly, it was no longer as effortless, costing some energy.

"Close to the Blood Demon monsters created by the Demon Sect," Ning Qi sighed in relief. Following this trend, the giant turtle appearing at the ninth pass should possess the caliber of the Grand Elder from the Demon Sect using the Yu King Pearl.

He felt anticipation rising.

If he could pass all the Nine Battles and the Enlightenment Nine Passes, he could smoothly claim the Martial Saint inheritance!

Reflecting on these tests, they seemed simple, with Ning Qi advancing unhindered, but that was just Ning Qi; for others, it would be nearly impossible!

Some distractions arose in his mind; Ning Qi exerted Divine Intent to cut them off.

The ocean waves became increasingly turbulent.

His sense of foreboding intensified.

Then.

He saw a hundred-foot giant turtle appearing in front, its eyes carrying threads of indifference, with such potent aura that threw Ning Qi into shock.

Martial Saint Giant Turtle?!

Chapter 346: Gaining the Inheritance

The giant turtle in front of him was as large as a hundred zhang, with a sturdy and ancient shell. As it stepped through the waves, it was like a small mountain, full of oppressive presence. Although Ning Qi had never seen a Martial Saint, he was absolutely certain that this was a Martial Saint-level giant turtle.

Ning Qi's expression immediately turned grave.

To be honest, this was beyond his expectations.

According to the power increase of each previous trial, he originally thought that the final opponent would be someone on the level of the Demon Sect Grand Elder after using the Yu King Pearl. Considering the previous trial where the Small True Martial Seal's difficulty spiked, he was already prepared to face a Fake Saint.

But unexpectedly.

It was actually a true Martial Saint-level giant turtle that appeared!

The spiritual power fluctuations surrounding it were undoubtedly genuine, with an endless vitality, completely different from the Fake Saints Taoist Bai Shan had described before.

He scrutinized the giant turtle before him. There was a trace of coldness in its eyes, unlike those puppet-like giant turtles from before. It was obviously more intelligent, and for some reason, Ning Qi felt as though the turtle's gaze harbored ill intentions towards him.

He took a deep breath, his entire being fully alert.

This opponent was overwhelmingly powerful, requiring his full effort, and even then, Ning Qi had no guarantee of victory. After all, he had previously attempted and failed to utilize the power of the Yu King Pearl in this trial.

"For a Martial Artist in the Celestial Human Realm to defeat a true Martial Saint? It's surely impossible for anyone in this world to achieve. The True Martial Heritage might indeed be lost forever," Ning Qi mused silently.

He couldn't believe anyone else could achieve this feat, not even those so-called Ancient Saints; there wouldn't be the slightest hope.

Only those who understand the divide between the Celestial Human Realm and the Martial Saint Realm would know how vast it is.

However.

Unknowingly.

Fighting spirit gradually ignited in Ning Qi's eyes.

An opponent like this was hard to find.

"Come, let's see where my limits lie!"

The Martial Saint giant turtle seemed to sense Ning Qi's fighting spirit, and disdain flickered in its eyes. It roared deeply, its voice shaking the ocean, and columns of water shot into the sky like frenzied dragons, aiming to annihilate Ning Qi. These simple water columns, enhanced by spiritual power, were overwhelmingly powerful, able to instantly kill the top ten on the Celestial Being List.

It sat in the air like a rock that could calm the sea, watching Ning Qi with amusement.

Ning Qi's hands moved rapidly.

His Divine Intent surged, and for the first time, he went all out.

The immense Power of Heaven and Earth gathered around him. Though not as refined as spiritual power, its magnitude was awe-inspiring, conjuring an ancient seal that pressed forward, even causing the air to stagnate.

Ning Qi utilized the newly learned Small True Martial Seal, having gained further insights from previous battles, now wielding it with greater efficacy to suppress the void.

The sea dragons were shattered by the suppressive force, but the ancient seal seemed on the verge of collapse.

The turtle's eyes, once filled with mockery, now showed a hint of astonishment.

Ning Qi, always observant, quickly realized why he used the Small True Martial Seal first: to test the waters.

"This giant turtle can evidently recognize the Small True Martial Seal, unlike before. Could it be that the others were its projections or creations? Did I inadvertently anger it by crushing those giant turtles in haste?"

In that moment, Ning Qi seemed to understand.

He couldn't help but bitterly smile; this was truly a disaster uncalled for.

But there was no use in regretting now.

The giant turtle's body trembled, and the previously scattered water columns merged into a ferocious sea dragon, pouncing at Ning Qi with unmatched strength. It was far mightier than those so-called Beast Kings, tearing space as it came, forcing Ning Qi to concentrate fully.

Decisively, Ning Qi acted.

The Three Flowers gathered at the top, the Bridge of Celestial Being activated, drawing in a vast amount of Power of Heaven and Earth. Moreover, the Three Flowers began to vibrate at a special frequency, acting like a purifier, making the celestial power even more resilient and stronger.

This was the result of recent experiments with the Blade Demon.

An unexpected byproduct of studying the Martial Saint Technique.

Equally effective in combat.

Celestial Swords gathered, imbued with an unmatched sharpness; Ning Qi's Sword Intent constantly grew, paralleling the increasing power of the Heavenly Sword Technique.

The turtle's eyes were now filled with surprise.

In the blink of an eye.

The Celestial Swords filled the sky like stars.

A hundred!

A thousand!

Ten thousand!

The Celestial Swords traversed the sky, their unmatched sharpness interweaving, and the passive Sword Qi formed a Senluo Sword Net. Subtle rends appeared in the void, and compared to the previous battle with the Demon Sect Grand Elder, Ning Qi's cultivation had reached Celestial Being Perfection, with many secret techniques further advanced, boosting his combat power beyond recognition.

The turtle no longer showed any trace of derision.

The sea dragon roared, raising massive waves that crashed down, their oppressive force striking at the soul.

But Ning Qi's thoughts moved as countless Celestial Swords split into hundreds of Sword Qi, forming a fearsome web of a million dense Sword Qi, each drawing on one another for strength.

The void was sliced to pieces.

The giant waves were completely pulverized by the Sword Qi, and even as the Sword Qi continued to adapt, the once-roaring sea dragon was trapped. Despite the powerful spiritual power within threatening to obliterate the Sword Qi, there were simply too many, gradually wearing the dragon down.

Chapter 347: Gaining the Inheritance_2

The ocean shook endlessly, the giant turtle's heart stirred.

The young Taoist in front of it was indeed extraordinary, beyond imagination.

The mockery in its eyes had vanished. If before, it was merely intent on teaching the brat a lesson, now, after seeing that familiar Small True Martial Seal, it knew Ning Qi was not simple. And now, it even vaguely considered Ning Qi as a worthy adversary to take seriously.

"It's indeed unusual for someone in the Celestial Human Realm to be so powerful."

The giant turtle also had its pride.

Seeing the Sea Dragon being shredded into pieces within the sword qi cage, it finally moved.

Buzz!

Ripples of special fluctuations spread out.

The giant turtle's limbs moved seemingly slowly, but actually very fast.

Its techniques were simple and unadorned, like a mountain pressing down.

Ning Qi's eyes shone with gold, attempting to find a flaw, but the giant turtle before him was unified, with no visible weak point. The oppressive aura induced fear, and in it, Ning Qi saw traces of the Small True Martial Seal, albeit more advanced.

"Impressive!"

He praised internally, yet his movements didn't slow.

Celestial swords blazed, not splitting sword qi this time, but attacking directly.

Ning Qi formed a sword technique with his hand, his Taoist robe fluttering, his aura soaring.

"All Swords Return to the Root!"

He pointed with his finger.

Sword intent rose from various spots in the void, interwoven.

A myriad of Celestial Swords simultaneously aimed to suppress and kill the giant turtle, the terrifying killing aura creating tiny spatial cracks, causing the entire void to appear somewhat fragmented.

BOOM!!

Terrifying vibrations rang out.

The aftermath shook, countless seawater completely evaporated, and the ensuing white mist was entirely eradicated.

Unfortunately,

Such a heaven-shattering, unparalleled battle had few spectators.

RUMBLE RUMBLE!

Each Celestial Sword struck the turtle shell, greatly alleviating the giant turtle's advancing momentum, but even the sharpest Celestial Sword couldn't pierce the heavy shell, layers of dark green spiritual power glow flowed on the shell, the defense unparalleled.

Ning Qi's gaze shifted, the mystical effect was more remarkable than the Cyan Profound Body Protection Technique he had devised earlier. He observed, slightly enlightened, though now wasn't the time for contemplation; he simply remembered it, intending to study it further later.

Disrupting the giant turtle's assault.

Ning Qi pressed on aggressively.

Changing his sword technique, the remaining Celestial Swords instantly converged into one, transforming into a more terrifying giant Celestial Sword!

This was the limit of his Divine Intent's control.

The expression in the giant turtle's eyes changed, sensing a threatening aura.

The next moment.

Its head, limbs, and tail all retracted, the shell sealed tight, the dark green glow enveloping it. From afar, it looked like a giant egg, its heavy aura making Ning Qi's eyelids twitch.

The giant Celestial Sword struck down.

Terrifying reverberations echoed through heaven and earth, the entire ocean upheaved, and the dark green turtle shell was blasted into the sky.

Seeing the nearly unscathed turtle shell, with only a white mark, Ning Qi cursed under his breath:

"This turtle shell is really tough!"

His gaze focused; he still had his strongest attack, but was unsure if it could defeat the giant turtle, as this defense was excessively abnormal. He didn't believe every Martial Saint had such powerful defenses.

In the distant sky.

The dark green turtle shell finally halted.

Under Ning Qi's watch, it continued to tremble, settling down after a moment, then the giant turtle swayed as it extended its head and limbs, shaking several times before gradually regaining consciousness. Ning Qi could clearly see traces of blood seeping from the giant turtle's limbs, which steadied his heart.

If All Swords Return to the Root couldn't break through the giant turtle's defense, it would truly be troublesome.

It seemed the giant turtle didn't fare too well.

The giant turtle's gaze was clear, then it let out a deep roar, as waves rolled over. Its eyes grew more serious than ever; Ning Qi could discern obvious shock, along with some anger, evidently surprised yet frustrated at being injured by Ning Qi.

Since it was, after all, a Martial Saint-level Beast Emperor.

Buzz!

Dark green spiritual energy twined around its sides, spreading waves, the giant turtle's already massive form seemed to have a trend of further expansion, but this was secondary; the most astonishing change was in its tail.

Originally an ordinary tail, now shockingly extending and writhing, Ning Qi sensed a surge of astonishing vitality and aura brewing within.

A strong sense of crisis tightened Ning Qi's heart.

He took a deep breath, channeling the Innate Divine Sword Qi within him. After reaching Celestial Being Perfection, this remained his strongest attack.

Neither the man nor the turtle yielded.

Both eager to defeat the other, for Ning Qi, there was no logic in falling at the final step. Unknowingly, he had reached a mystical state; under the Golden Pupil of Illusion-breaking, his focus was unprecedented. Initially flawless, the giant turtle finally revealed a hint of weakness under his golden pupil.

The earth-shattering moment awaited the next instant.

The giant turtle's roar shook the heavens.

But then suddenly halted.

It unwillingly growled in a certain direction; after pausing for a moment, it growled repeatedly, seemingly explaining something. Ultimately, a thread of fear appeared in its eyes, it reluctantly glanced at Ning Qi, as if glaring at him fiercely, then turned away, tail waving, retreating into the sea.

Chapter 348: Inheritance _3

The waves subsided.

Everything that had transpired earlier seemed as if it had never happened.

Ning Qi was slightly dazed.

"What is this? Did I pass the trial?"

He steadied his breath, sensing the movements ahead, but no giant turtle came forward.

He pondered deeply.

Perhaps hurting the giant turtle earlier was enough to meet the standard, or maybe someone hidden in the shadows didn't want him to fight the giant turtle with all his might, but everything remained unknown. However, after battling with the giant turtle, Ning Qi remembered something that Taoist Baishan once called the source of the True Martial legacy, 'old turtle.'

Initially, Ning Qi thought it was just an old friend's joke, like how Divine Sword Old Man used to jokingly call Taoist Longshan an ox-nosed. But now, Ning Qi felt the need to reconsider carefully.

Could it really be a turtle?

Countless thoughts arose in his mind.

He quietly awaited what would come next.

It wasn't long before the sea finally stirred again.

"Successfully passing the Celestial Being Enlightenment Nine Passes and Celestial Being Nine Battles, the True Martial legacy at the Martial Saint level can be obtained." A grand voice resounded once more, with a trace of barely perceivable surprise.

Ning Qi's heart filled with a hint of joy.

His efforts had not been in vain.

Especially this last battle with the Martial Saint giant turtle, where he had to reveal nearly all his cards. In terms of power alone, he might not be far off from the Ancient Saints appearing on True Profound Mountain, but the turtle was even harder to deal with. Ning Qi was certain that All Swords Return to the Root hadn't caused much damage to the giant turtle.

In his line of sight.

A black vortex gradually appeared and then grew larger.

Ning Qi took a deep breath, heightened his vigilance, and stepped inside.

In an instant.

The vortex contracted, and the world changed.

When Ning Qi opened his eyes again, he found himself in a vast Scripture Pavilion. He rarely described a Scripture Pavilion as vast, but the sight of the pavilion before him was truly awe-inspiring, with books as numerous as the sea, making the scriptures of the True Profound Sect seem trivial.

He looked up to see the spiral bookshelves stretching endlessly, visually quite breathtaking.

Ning Qi casually picked up a book, which recorded a Stance Skill he had seen before at the True Martial Mountain's Scripture Pavilion.

He instinctively floated up, and one ancient text after another floated into his hands and then flew back again.

Martial arts theories, path expositions, scripture texts, from Martial Path enlightenment to the Celestial Human Realm, covering everything. It could be said that if someone acquired these texts, they could easily establish a colossal sect if sheltered for a while.

The sheer completeness of everything before him was exceptional. In comparison, the remnants his master had acquired weren't even a fraction.

Among them, he even found the Secret Technique of 'Nine Great Celestial Beings Battling the Martial Saint,' indeed extraordinary, deemed the Supreme Secret Technique. Just a cursory glance already gave him new insights.

Ning Qi's gaze grew fervent as he looked towards the very top, suspecting that the Martial Saint Technique should be stored there.

"Is this the True Martial legacy?" he muttered in amazement.

"Strictly speaking, this is just the True Martial legacy at the Martial Saint level." A voice spoke after an elderly cough.

Ning Qi was startled.

He hadn't detected any presence, a rarity indeed.

Turning around, he saw on the spiral staircase, an elderly man with sparse hair and a hunched back leaning on a cane. He stopped at Ning Qi's level and smiled calmly:

"Young man, you're quite remarkable."

Ning Qi heard the praise and realized the old man was satisfied with his performance in the trial. Stabilizing his mind, he moved beside the elderly man, showing respect:

"Ning Qi greets senior. Are you the founder of the True Martial legacy?"

The hunched elderly man chuckled, shaking his head:

"Me? I'm not qualified."

Ning Qi felt a slight shock.

The old man before him seemed even more unfathomable than Taoist Baishan and others, yet he claimed not to be qualified to have founded the True Martial legacy. It astonished him.

The hunched elderly man slowly walked upward while Ning Qi followed closely and asked:

"Senior just mentioned this is only the Martial Saint level legacy?"

The hunched elderly man smiled:

"Indeed, you only passed the Celestial Human Realm test, so naturally, you can only obtain the Martial Saint level legacy."

"What if I passed the Martial Saint Realm test?"

The old man glanced at Ning Qi:

"Not possible for now."

Ning Qi nodded silently, estimating that his performance in the trial was under the watchful eye of the elder, who clearly understood his limits. Yet he couldn't help but yearn for the Martial Saint Realm test, pondering if passing it meant obtaining a legacy beyond the Martial Saint?

"In the ninth gate, I didn't defeat my opponent. Why did I pass the trial?" Ning Qi suddenly asked.

The hunched elderly man paused, coughing heavily:

"That was a small mishap. Your performance was already exceptional."

Saying this,

he gestured towards a few ancient texts in front of them, seemingly changing the subject.

"These are the Martial Saint Techniques you anticipate."

Ning Qi's eyes lit up.

Traveling thousands of miles here was all for acquiring these Martial Saint Techniques as a reference. Now, they were finally before him.

"Apologies, senior."

Ning Qi expressed and began to carefully peruse the texts.

"True Martial Scripture!"

"Mountain-Suppression Scripture!"

...

One Martial Saint Technique after another lay before him, and the first one Ning Qi focused on was naturally the True Martial Scripture.

Opening it,

the first sentence read:

"Martial Saint, refines Spiritual Qi, transforms it into Magical Power, enters the Five Organs, gathers the Five Elements, living three thousand years."

Chapter 349: Gaining the Inheritance_4

Ning Qi's eyes narrowed:

"Magical Power?"

The hunched old man chuckled nostalgically:

"It's the same thing as spiritual power that everyone knows about, just called differently."

Ning Qi nodded slightly.

His eyes gleamed brightly. During experiments with the Blade Demon, he had discovered that the part of the human body most harmonious with spiritual power was the five organs. Now it seemed his deduction was correct; this was indeed the right path. The wisdom of generations proves not to be in vain. They had already discovered the optimal solution through exploration.

He flipped through rapidly, thirstily absorbing the knowledge.

In his mind, flashes of spiritual light continuously appeared. After a long period of solo exploration, he finally found the answer. In truth, Ning Qi already had countless thoughts and directions. Now reading the True Martial Scripture, it felt less like learning and more like verification.

"Refining spiritual power is indeed realized through Three Flowers Gathering at the Top, thereby tempering magical power within the body."

"A Martial Saint cultivates magical power, which is vast and wondrous, containing numerous miraculous aspects. The five organs are the vessels for magical power."

"Heart, liver, spleen, lungs, kidneys correspond to fire, wood, earth, metal, water—thus they are used to refine the five elements magical power. Consequently, the Martial Saint is divided into five realms; when one organ's magical power reaches perfection, it constitutes the First Realm Martial Saint. With each additional organ achieving perfection in magical power, both quantity and quality transform. Eventually, when all five organs' magical power is complete, resulting in Five Elements Perfection, one becomes a Fifth Realm Martial Saint."

For the first time, the path unfurled slowly before Ning Qi's eyes.

How to achieve the Martial Saint Realm, its classifications, and its myriad wonders, all were revealed in detail.

In just a fleeting moment, countless spiritual inspirations emerged in Ning Qi's mind as he rapidly theorized, solving previous puzzles. Given some time, he undoubtedly could create a Martial Saint Technique perfectly suited to himself.

However.

The greatest problem remained unresolved.

Turning to the last page, finding it completely blank, Ning Qi felt a slight agitation—as if halted at a crucial moment, a feeling so unsettling that it made one want to spit blood.

The hunched old man smiled knowingly.

Ning Qi asked:

"May I inquire, elder, is this Martial Saint Technique a Dharma Method from before the world's changes?"

He gazed at the old man, utterly convinced.

There was no mention at all of the toxic essence in spiritual qi within this Dharma Method; training according to this could mean never becoming a Martial Saint until death.

The hunched old man was somewhat surprised:

"It seems you're not entirely ignorant."

Then he sighed and shook his head, waving his hand as beams of light gathered, forming characters imprinted in the void.

"What you need is this."

Ning Qi took a deep breath, feeling a bit hesitant, then scrutinized it seriously. His mind trembled as he realized that the characters etched in the void were a Supreme Secret Technique, a method to alleviate the toxic essence within spiritual qi.

"Indeed, the Ancient Saints found ways to mitigate the side effects of poisonous essences!"

Ning Qi felt greatly relieved.

With just a brief glance, he knew this secret technique would greatly benefit him. Though it merely alleviated, he could use it to further theorize and perhaps create a filtering method.

If he were to theorize alone, it would take more time, but with this reference, the time required would be significantly reduced. He could fully enhance his foundation before spiritual awakening, then soar to great heights.

Yet.

A lingering question remained in Ning Qi's mind.

He slightly bowed to the hunched old man, then earnestly asked:

"I once asked the True Profound True Monarch what the phenomenon changing the world was. He only replied, 'It cannot be said.' Having received guidance today from you, elder, and enlightened by this secret technique, may I further ask, what is the toxic essence within spiritual qi, really?"

Inside the Scripture Pavilion, the atmosphere suddenly became still.

But Ning Qi sensed that the old man before him was different; he might provide an answer.

Unconsciously, Ning Qi's heart began to beat slightly faster.

Chapter 350: Life Poison

Ever since Ning Qi learned about the celestial mutation from the depths of Yuan Tiancheng's bloodline imagery, he has been extremely wary, constantly reminded by the fate of the Silver Giant Ape.

Later, he met Taoist Baishan.

The words "unspeakable" only deepened his apprehension.

Then came the experiment with the Blade Demon, which made him understand that the spiritual energy indeed contained toxic elements, and these toxins existed between reality and illusion, extremely peculiar, containing some kind of power that Ning Qi couldn't comprehend, which once pushed him into a deduction bottleneck, until he received the True Martial inheritance today to finally resolve it.

But despite this.

Questions still lingered in Ning Qi's mind.

What were these toxins? Where did they originate? Why did they suddenly integrate into the world?

He longed for answers.

Hearing Ning Qi's inquiry, the hunchbacked old man fell silent, his eyes showing a complex expression.

"He wasn't wrong, it truly is 'unspeakable,' because he can't bear the backlash." The old voice slowly sounded, the old man gazing at Ning Qi, "But I can."

Ning Qi instantly felt the pressure.

The truth that required enduring a backlash to speak of, no wonder the Martial Saints avoided mentioning it, with no records over such a long time.

He felt somewhat silent, unsure if he should continue to ask.

Clearly.

The cost to pay was significant.

The hunchbacked old man patted Ning Qi on the shoulder, sighed, and smiled:

"You're excellent, so excellent that I almost can't believe it, how could such an Immortal Flower be born in this world, perhaps you are that variable, the variable is not among those old fellows, but in you, so... you qualify me to pay this cost."

He had observed Ning Qi's challenge.

Such comprehension was simply outrageous, he was inwardly amazed, in his long life, he had never seen such a prodigy, he had seen all kinds of Immortal Species, all kinds of innate physiques, but never someone with Ning Qi's level of comprehension.

The old man looked up at the pavilion's top, seemingly trying to see beyond the sky, his voice gradually becoming heavy:

"This is... Life Poison!"

Life Poison!

That name immediately shook Ning Qi's spirit, almost in an instant, he realized, the old man's breath beside him was declining at an alarming rate, already sparse hair fell off a few more strands, and his originally hunched back seemed to be sagging more vertically.

His heart tightened, and he hurriedly supported the old man, wanting to say something but was stopped by the old man's gesture.

"Life Poison, a poison of lifespan, merges with the spiritual energy and becomes one with it, unable to be eradicated, this is a Rule Poison, not something a Martial Saint can solve. Anyone who refines

spiritual energy into their body, once invaded by Life Poison, their lifespan withers, and their Spirit Soul vanishes."

Though the old man's words were calm, they were deafening.

Waves surged in Ning Qi's heart.

The poison of lifespan, referring to Life Poison's effect.

Rule Poison, referring to the essence of Life Poison's power.

Rules, a domain Ning Qi couldn't reach for now, just these two words were enough to leave him breathless.

A strong vitality emerged from the hunchbacked old man, resisting the backlash from unknown origins, his aura fluctuating like a roller coaster, Ning Qi hurriedly asked:

"The ancient Martial Saints, all fell to Life Poison, resulting in exhausted lifespan, only surviving in the world through various means? Anyone afflicted with Life Poison, bound by rules, cannot speak of it to others, or they will face Life Poison's backlash?"

The old man nodded, speaking in a low voice:

"When Life Poison appeared, all saints fell, and the world mourned, fortunately, some exceptionally talented individuals found a method of alleviation, which is the Secret Technique I just handed to you, developed and refined over generations, though it can't completely break Life Poison, it can reduce its impact, so one doesn't immediately exhaust their lifespan upon advancing to a Martial Saint."

"However, Life Poison and spiritual energy are one, one yin and one yang, as your cultivation deepens, your lifespan will wither more, countless talents in the world, all meeting their end in regret, unable to advance further."

Ning Qi immediately understood.

These returning Ancient Saints were incredibly powerful.

Once they may have been unparalleled geniuses of their era, overshadowing their peers, but even so, under the oppression of Life Poison, they resorted to various secret techniques just to survive into the present.

"It seems, the various methods of the Ancient Saints were to minimize Life Poison's impact, otherwise they would have already fallen."

Numerous doubts were resolved.

But new questions were born.

"But if that's the case, shouldn't there be more collective wisdom, gathering the world's intellect to figure out a solution to Life Poison? Why cut off the path of the Martial Saint, erasing all the Dharma methods?"

"And, this Life Poison... where exactly did it come from?"

Ning Qi threw out question after question.

He couldn't comprehend it.

He had many speculations in his heart, but they were just speculations.

The hunchbacked old man's aura was extremely weak, he didn't respond, but slowly closed his eyes, which made Ning Qi's heart tighten, he immediately understood, the backlash from Life Poison was extraordinary, even this unfathomable old man couldn't ignore it, he could see it, if it were Taoist Baishan instead, he would probably fall immediately.

But even so, these words had already come at a considerable cost.

A moment later.

The hunchbacked old man slowly opened his eyes, with a touch of lingering fear, then in a slightly feeble voice said:

"I know you have many questions, but the old man can only say so much today, if I say more, you might have to collect my corpse."

Ning Qi immediately fell silent.