

Divine King 121

Chapter 121 Xu Nian's Strength

Ji Yun didn't even think before he swung his fist towards Xu Nian, because there wasn't time to consider; Xu Nian was too fast.

However, even so, his actions were still a beat too slow.

"Bang!"

Xu Nian's fist smashed directly into Ji Yun's chest, instantly sending Ji Yun flying backward.

Ji Yun retreated dozens of steps, the pain in his chest making him quite uncomfortable.

Yet, everything wasn't over. Just as he had steadied himself, Xu Nian's figure had already appeared in front of him again.

This time, what greeted him was not a fist but Xu Nian's knee.

Ji Yun hurried to defend himself, and his palms collided with Xu Nian's knee. The clash of Gang Qi caused a backlash that violently numbed Ji Yun's arms.

Ji Yun was horrified; he was having trouble keeping up with Xu Nian's attack speed, and Xu Nian's strength was also no less than his.

"Still distracted?"

Xu Nian coldly chuckled, his fist trailing a blur, smashing directly into Ji Yun's jaw.

"Bang!"

Ji Yun's jawbone shattered instantly, teeth flying backward mingled with blood.

At the same time, Xu Nian delivered a flying kick to Ji Yun's abdomen, sending him flying over thirty meters, nearly sliding off the battle platform.

"So fast, so strong! Xu Nian is defying the heavens! To dominate Ji Yun like this."

"Yes, that speed, that impact, watching it makes my blood boil, truly domineering!"

"I thought Xu Nian was just good at swordsmanship, but his physical strength is incredibly strong too, just perfect!"

The spectators were endlessly amazed.

The sequence of attacks from Xu Nian just now was fluid as a flowing cloud, incredibly swift.

His previously somewhat clumsy body skill now seemed to have transformed, his movement swift as wind, following the shadows.

They couldn't imagine how Xu Nian had managed to increase his speed so drastically.

"How about it, is my body skill speed acceptable?" Xu Nian did not rush to attack again but stood coldly in place, watching Ji Yun slowly getting up.

Freed from the constraint of a 4,800 jin iron hammer, Xu Nian felt like a fish that had rejoined the sea after being ashore far too long, experiencing an indescribable exhilaration.

Ji Yun's face was ashen, as if he had been harshly slapped.

Xu Nian's sudden surge had caught him off guard; he truly couldn't imagine how a Nine-star Body Cultivator could match or even exceed him in strength and speed.

"Xu Nian, I take back what I said earlier; your speed and strength are indeed the most terrifying I've seen in the Star Realm," Ji Yun said fiercely as he looked at Xu Nian.

"However, there is still a big difference between Star Realm and Silver Moon Realm. Now, let me show you the true strength of the Silver Moon Battle Sect," Ji Yun bellowed.

He was genuinely furious, being publicly humiliated to the point of losing teeth, the greatest disgrace of his life.

"Fine, I'd very much like to see what the difference is between the Silver Moon Body Sect and the Star Body," Xu Nian said with a cold laugh, an unconcerned expression on his face.

Seeing Xu Nian's expression only fueled the flames of anger in Ji Yun's heart.

"Roar!"

A lion's roar emanated from Ji Yun's body, followed by the colossal phantom of a lion forming behind him. Terrifying Gang Qi completely enveloped him, as if cloaking him in a layer of armor.

"Gang Qi Armor! Ji Yun is so formidable. He has just entered the Body Sect realm and can already release Gang Qi Armor."

"Yes, although it is deployed using a Gang Skill, Gang Qi Armor is generally a skill mastered only by Four-star or even Five Stars Body Sects!"

...

The audience on the battlefield were all amazed, having not anticipated Ji Yun being able to execute the Gang Qi Armor move.

Xu Nian was also somewhat astonished.

Gang Qi Armor was a unique skill of the Body Sect, releasing the body's Gang Qi to the surface to form a strong defense, much like the Spiritual Energy Defense Light Shield of the Battle Sect.

But to achieve this, one's internal reserves of Gang Qi had to be exceedingly rich; usually, only a general Four-star Body Sect could meet the requirements. Ji Yun having just entered the Body Sect realm and being able to use this skill spoke volumes of his extraordinary talent.

"Die!" Ji Yun bellowed as his figure explosively rushed forward in an instant, his fist charged with terrifying Gang Qi, viciously smashing towards Xu Nian.

The fierce Gang Qi surged, like an enraged lion roaring.

Earth-level Gang Skill, Fierce Lion Roar Fist.

Ji Yun had previously used this move to defeat Chen Xifeng. Now, having broken through to the Body Sect realm, this Gang Skill was significantly more powerful than before.

Xu Nian, watching the fist imbued with terrifying force, also had a flash of pride in his eyes.

"Hmph, what of an Earth-level Gang Skill, what of Gang Qi Armor? Today, I will still crush you," Xu Nian scoffed, a powerful force of Thunder Fire Power bursting from his hands. The two powers intertwined instantly, eventually transforming into a formidable purple Thunder Fire Power.

The purple Thunder Fire Power enveloped Xu Nian's fist, exuding an awe-inspiring stillness.

Not only that, but dragon roars also resonated from within Xu Nian, as two streams of Dragon Energy were released in a flash—one merging into Xu Nian's Thunder Fire Power, and the other forming Dragon Scale Boxing Gloves over his palms.

"Boom!"

Xu Nian's fist directly met Ji Yun's, creating a deafening booming sound.

The colliding forces shattered the giant lion phantom behind Ji Yun in an instant. The Gang Qi Armor on his body also fractured under the impact of the energy storm, eventually dissipating into the air.

Ji Yun was sent flying back twenty meters, crashing heavily to the ground, spitting blood.

While Xu Nian merely stepped back ten paces before firmly stabilizing his stance.

"How... how is this possible?"

The entire audience was momentarily stunned. The outcome was completely unlike what they had anticipated.

They initially believed that it would be impressive enough if Xu Nian could withstand the punch, but the result turned out to be Ji Yun's defeat.

Despite employing an Earth-level Gang Skill, a Body Cultivator had lost to a Nine-star Body Cultivator—had they not witnessed it themselves, even if killed, they wouldn't have believed it.

Chen Yao, standing in the stands, was also in shock. She herself wasn't sure she could have caught Ji Yun's punch, but the end result was utterly beyond her expectations.

"Sister, didn't I tell you? Even if Ji Yun made a breakthrough, he wouldn't necessarily be a match for my brother-in-law," Chen Wudi said with a smile.

Chen Yao glared at Chen Wudi, but she didn't rebut, as the shock Xu Nian had given her was immense.

At this moment, Ji Yun on the battle platform had a pale face, his eyes filled with unwillingness.

"No... I absolutely cannot lose!" Ji Yun roared, with a single gesture, the long spear lodged far away hurtled into his grasp, unleashing a tyrannical and vigorous Spear Intent auspiciously from his body.

Chapter 122 Get it Done with One Hammer

With the long spear in hand, Spear Intent emanated, instilling fear in the hearts of onlookers as if the Overlord himself had descended.

"Ji Yun has finally decided to use his long spear. I wonder if he can match Xu Nian with it."

"Hard to say. Although Ji Yun has achieved Man and Spear as One, Xu Nian has also reached Man and Sword as One. It seems there's no advantage either way. But it's difficult to judge; Ji Yun might have some hidden cards up his sleeve yet to be played."

...

The crowd at the scene was abuzz with discussion.

The outcome of this fight was still an unknown.

"Xu Nian, draw your sword. I know that with regards to hand-to-hand combat skills, I might be inferior to you, but when it comes to weapon combat, you're definitely no match for me," Ji Yun declared proudly, holding his spear as he looked at Xu Nian.

The Overlord Spear in his hand, forged from Xuan Iron and carved with resplendent red dragon patterns, was not only incredibly flexible but also harder than any ordinary spear. He had paid a great price to have a Nine-star Little Weapon Master especially craft it for him—it matched his aura perfectly.

"Is that so? You seem very confident in your spear technique," Xu Nian asked with a light smile.

"Enough talk. My spear technique may not be the strongest, but it's more than enough to deal with you." Ji Yun flicked his spear, and the tip pierced the floor, shattering it instantaneously; his dominance was undeniable.

"It seems you are quite confident in your Spear Technique, but sometimes overconfidence can turn into arrogance. Since you believe your spear technique is strong, then today, I will shatter that confidence into pieces," Xu Nian's eyes sharpened.

With a single gesture, a hammer flew out from the beast skin bag at a distance.

Xu Nian grasped the hammer, his battle intent plainly visible as he stared at Ji Yun.

"A hammer? Shouldn't it be a sword? Why has it turned into a hammer?"

The audience on the scene showed surprised expressions, looking confused at Xu Nian's choice of weapon.

Even Leng Yanran, sitting high on the stage, revealed a hint of surprise in her eyes. Although she had always been curious about what was behind Xu Nian, she had never asked. Now, she had not expected it to be a hammer.

"This guy's finally going to use that thing; now we're in for a good show," Chen Xifeng said to Dugu Jingcheng beside him, his eyes brimming with anticipation.

Although Dugu Jingcheng didn't speak, the curiosity in his eyes was unmistakable.

They knew the weight of Xu Nian's hammer. They were indeed eager to see the kind of power it would display in battle.

"Are you planning to fight me with a hammer?" Ji Yun's eyebrows twitched slightly, not expecting Xu Nian to produce a hammer.

"Is there a problem?" Xu Nian retorted.

"No problem. If you're seeking death, then don't blame me," Ji Yun replied with a hint of ruthlessness in his eyes. Without another word, he swung his long spear at Xu Nian.

In his mind, Xu Nian, not using his renowned swordsmanship but instead wielding a random hammer to fight, was simply asking for humiliation.

However, he quickly realized his mistake. When his long spear clashed with Xu Nian's hammer, his spear was easily deflected, and with each collision, the force transmitted through his arm sent intense numbness rippling through it.

"Look out for the hammer!"

Xu Nian roared, swinging the hammer viciously at Ji Yun.

Ji Yun immediately brought his spear horizontally to block, but the moment the hammer struck the spear, Ji Yun nearly dropped his weapon, and he was forced back dozens of steps before he could steady himself.

Ji Yun stared blankly at his numb arm, shock written all over his face.

The audience was equally dumbfounded, unable to comprehend why Ji Yun suddenly seemed so weakened.

"There's something strange about that hammer," Ji Yun quickly realized, recognizing that the force of each hammer blow on his spear was alarmingly strong.

Even if Xu Nian's strength had been formidable before, it had never reached such a magnitude. Therefore, the problem must lie with the hammer.

The audience also began to speculate on this issue, their eyes fixed on the hammer in Xu Nian's hands.

"What kind of hammer is this?" Ji Yun asked.

Xu Nian couldn't help but laugh upon hearing this question; he knew that all of the hundred thousand spectators were curious about this as well. He chuckled and said, "It's actually just a common hammer, but the material is a bit special, made from Meteorite Iron. Secondly, it's quite heavy, weighing around four thousand eight hundred pounds!"

"What? What did he just say, how much does that hammer weigh?"

"It seems like he said the hammer weighs four thousand eight hundred pounds."

"My heavens, four thousand eight hundred pounds, how can he lift it, and with only one hand? Is he lying?"

"I finally understand why Xu Nian's speed surged so much after he removed the Beast Skin Suit earlier; it's because he has been fighting while carrying such a heavy object all along."

...

The audience in the arena exclaimed in awe, suddenly recalling moments of Xu Nian's previous battles, the more they thought about it, the more shocked they became.

Carrying nearly five thousand pounds of weight and still able to fight like that, just how strong is Xu Nian?

The crowd was beyond words to express their emotions, looking at Xu Nian as if he were a monster.

At this moment, Qin Tian below the stage was also dumbfounded; he had been defeated by Xu Nian earlier and still felt somewhat unconvinced, but now it seemed Xu Nian hadn't taken him seriously at all, the gap was too big.

Even Chen Tiansheng on the high platform was taken aback, he instinctively glanced at Leng Yanran, and she too had an expression of surprise on her face.

Ji Yun swallowed hard, his brain short-circuiting, having lost the ability to think for a moment.

He truly couldn't imagine how a person could be so monstrously powerful?

Sometimes, a monster was simply beyond understanding.

"Let's decide the victor with one move," Xu Nian said.

"Fine!" Ji Yun took a deep breath to suppress the shock in his heart, and as he finished speaking, a powerful Gang Qi surged up his Long Spear, causing it to tremble violently in his hands.

"Absolute Tyrant Spear, an Earth-grade Top-quality Gang Skill; if you can withstand it, I, Ji Yun, will concede defeat," Ji Yun said in a deep voice, swinging his Long Spear, its tip cutting through the air with a whistling sound.

The dragon patterns on the Long Spear seemed to come alive under the support of Gang Qi, coiling around the spear.

The audience was startled, feeling a chill down their spines.

An awe-inspiring presence, Ji Yun's spear thrust was absolutely tyrannical, evoking fear in people's hearts.

Xu Nian's eyes also sparkled with a fighting spirit, with Gang Qi in his body swirling like racing dragons, the endless Gang Qi churning like waves.

Xu Nian slowly swung his Tie Chui, the power on the hammer accumulating and compressing further.

The entire audience held their breath, awaiting the peak battle, which was about to commence.

"Take this!" Ji Yun shouted, and his Long Spear struck like a dragon leaving its cave, piercing fiercely toward Xu Nian.

The sharp spear tip tore through the air, emitting a piercing shriek, and the spinning tip stirred up a whirlwind.

In that moment, Xu Nian swung his hammer as well, with a roar like that of a giant dragon within him.

Collapse Thunder struck, smashing directly onto Ji Yun's spear tip.

A golden light erupted, with sparks flying in all directions.

Ji Yun's Xuan Iron-casted Long Spear burst open like a blooming flower in an instant, while Ji Yun himself was hit in the chest by the terrifying blast that followed.

His robe shattered, and he was sent flying backward, crashing into the distant spectator wall, his body denting the structure as blood gushed out without end.

And Xu Nian stood there like a War God, his lofty posture commanding awe.

Complete silence fell over the venue, everyone's mouth agape at the scene, for a full three seconds.

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Chapter 124 Bold as Brass

After sending Leng Yanran on her way, Xu Nian and the other two headed towards the location of the Battle Mansion within the city.

The Battle Mansion is the place where East Field County specially cultivates elite and powerful individuals.

Each year, the Battle Mansion only admits thirty-six members, all of whom are either strong or exceptionally talented geniuses.

Every Battle Mansion Student can cultivate there for ten years, enjoying various resources provided by the Mansion.

After ten years, they must leave the Battle Mansion, but once they leave, they will take up important positions in East Field County, with very high status. Even the City Lord has to be polite when seeing them.

Therefore, members of the Battle Mansion hold a high status across the entire East Field County, and some even take up official posts during their cultivation period in the Mansion.

Xu Nian and his two companions soon arrived at the core of the Battle Mansion, the Battle Hall!

The Battle Mansion is not an academy. Instead, its members enjoy considerably more freedom.

Initially, the Battle Mansion will assign you a residence in East Field County for temporary living, and aside from fixed cultivation resources, all other resources must be obtained by completing mission tasks.

The place where you receive missions and exchange for rewards is the Battle Hall.

Every city in East Field County has its Battle Hall, but Tianfeng City is home to the headquarters of the Battle Hall.

In the Battle Hall, as long as you are capable enough to complete missions, you can exchange for anything you want, including money, women, cultivation resources...

The headquarters of the Battle Hall in Tianfeng City sits in the east of the city, covering tens of thousands of square meters.

The grandeur of the great hall stunned Xu Nian and the other two for several seconds, especially the words "Battle Hall" on the plaque above the entrance, exuding a resounding martial aura, evoking both awe and boiling blood.

"I never expected that I, Chen Xifeng, would also have a day when I joined the Battle Mansion," Chen Xifeng said excitedly as he looked at the Battle Hall's plaque.

At this moment, Xu Nian's heart was filled with emotion, and a sense of pride spontaneously welled up inside him.

Just a few months earlier, he was a bereft dog thrown out by the Qin Family, yet today, he had leaped to become a genius of East Field County and even joined the Battle Mansion. The hardships and frustrations he had endured were truly unimaginable to the average person.

His growth over these past few months had awakened a heart of a warrior deep within him, bit by bit.

Xu Nian looked back at the two words on the plaque, his heart secretly astounded.

He knew his surging passion and warrior's heart were stirred by those two words on the plaque.

He truly couldn't imagine who it was who left those words, capable of moving their warrior's heart solely with the aura emanating from the calligraphy.

Xu Nian glanced at Chen Xifeng and Dugu Jingcheng and saw the same exuberant pride in their eyes, knowing they too were influenced by the aura of the words.

A good character penetrates the wood by three points, but that is just the form. The characters left by a true master, even after ten or a hundred years, still convey the writer's artistic conception—that is what true mastery is!

"Let's go inside!"

Xu Nian roused the two men beside him, then led them into the magnificent interior of the Battle Hall.

The Battle Hall is divided into three levels: the first level is for receiving members of the Low-level War Mansion, the second is for Mid-level War Mansion members, and the third is for High-level War Mansion members.

Members of the Battle Mansion are divided into nine stars, with one to three stars as Low-level, four to six stars as Mid-level, and seven to nine stars as High-level.

The level of the member differs, and so do the benefits they enjoy.

For instance, Xu Nian and his companions, having just entered the Battle Mansion as One-star members, do not have the privilege of entering the second level.

As for how the member rankings were divided, Xu Nian was still not entirely clear; he only knew that advancing was very difficult.

The Battle Mansion had been established for several hundred years, but the total number of high-level members throughout history was less than three hundred. There were even fewer current members, no more than a hand could count, and there had only been three Nine-star members in history. The last occurrence was a hundred years ago.

When Leng Yanran mentioned this information to them, Xu Nian and his two companions were all startled; they had not expected the Nine-star status to be so difficult to attain.

The great hall was very spacious and also quite empty.

It was entirely made of gorgeous yet sturdy White Jade Stone.

On one side was the members' rest area, and on the other was the reception area for Battle Mansion members.

In the rest area, only a few young Battle Mansion members sat in chairs, discussing something. When they saw Xu Nian and his group enter, they only glanced over and then promptly ignored them.

Xu Nian paid them no attention either and headed straight for the staff area.

The person in charge was a very beautiful woman, dressed in an extremely seductive white silk gown, with a graceful figure, her full bust and slim waist particularly enticing under the gown's silhouette.

However, her face was extremely indifferent. From the time Xu Nian and the others walked in, she merely glanced up at them once and then lowered her head again.

Such indifferent behavior subconsciously made Xu Nian frown.

Xu Nian used his Spiritual Sense to scan the woman in the white gown, but the result shocked him.

A Nine-star War Sect, an absolute powerhouse. In other cities, she would be a Family Head or City Lord, and yet this woman looked to be barely twenty-seven.

Such a young War Sect was incredibly rare.

"Name, identity!"

Before Xu Nian and the others could speak, the woman in the white gown said so, her voice indifferent, not even lifting her head.

"My name is Chen Xifeng, a disciple from Qinglin Academy, ranked sixth in the Academy's great competition," Chen Xifeng hastily stated his identity, looking at the woman with eyes full of fervor.

"This is your storage ring. Simply drop your blood to recognize the master. The token, residence key, and Battle Mansion rules are all inside; take a look for yourself. Next!" the woman in the white gown replied indifferently, made a check on a register, and tossed Chen Xifeng a ring.

Upon receiving the ring, Chen Xifeng was excited but felt a tinge of disappointment, seeing that the woman never once looked up at him from beginning to end.

"Dugu Jingcheng, a disciple from Qinglin Academy, ranked third in the Academy's great competition," Dugu Jingcheng followed with his reply.

"The same for you; this is your storage ring," the woman in the white gown continued without looking up, tossing Dugu Jingcheng a storage ring.

Dugu Jingcheng, however, didn't mind and, after taking the storage ring, went to the side to recognize the ring with his blood.

"Next!" said the woman in the white gown, her voice still cool.

Xu Nian touched his nose and then said, "Xu Nian, a disciple from Qinglin Academy, ranked first in the Academy's great competition!"

The moment Xu Nian announced his name, the few Battle Mansion members chatting in the rest area suddenly stopped and looked in Xu Nian's direction.

At the same time, the hand that the woman in the white gown had been about to move stopped, and for the first time, she slightly raised her head, which had been down all along, to look at Xu Nian, her eyes carrying a hint of curiosity and scrutiny.

The great hall was already quiet, but at this moment, everyone fell silent, and the atmosphere immediately turned eerie.

Xu Nian was taken aback, so were Chen Xifeng and even Dugu Jingcheng, who all noticed that the atmosphere in the hall was off, as they surveyed their surroundings with cold eyes.

Finally, the woman in the white gown smiled, put down her pen, and looking at Xu Nian, asked, "Are you that bold and brazen Xu Nian?"

Chapter 125 Liu Mushan's Provocation

Xu Nian was dumbfounded by the question.

"Audacity incarnate?"

How had he become the epitome of brazenness?

Beside him, both Chen Xifeng and Dugu Jingcheng looked at Xu Nian with skeptical eyes.

The woman in the white dress seemed to notice Xu Nian's confusion, and with a laugh, she asked, "You know Chen Yao, right?"

As soon as Xu Nian heard that name, he understood immediately.

However, he hadn't expected that Chen Yao would spread such a scandalous story.

"I've seen many ways of pursuing little sister Chen Yao, but it's the first time I've seen someone strip naked and run in front of a girl. Do you think that little sister Chen Yao will fancy your body? How about you strip for me too?" The woman in the white dress said with a light laugh, her eyes carrying a playful smirk.

Chen Xifeng and Dugu Jingcheng looked at Xu Nian as if they were looking at a pervert.

Xu Nian was speechless.

How had it become him stripping in front of Chen Yao?

It was clearly he who had seen and touched Chen Yao.

Yet Xu Nian didn't dare to argue because wouldn't that make him seem even more lecherous?

"Little sister Chen Yao is recognized as the number one beauty of the Battle Mansion, not to mention her talent and status. You can imagine how popular she is in the Battle Mansion. Not just the low-level members, most of the mid-level students are her admirers, too. Don't say I didn't warn you, your sleazy act has spread throughout the entire Battle Mansion. A lot of people are out to get you; you better pray for your own sake," said the woman in the white dress with a light laugh, before directly tossing a storage ring to Xu Nian.

Hearing this, Xu Nian didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

He had just joined the Battle Mansion and had already made a whole bunch of enemies; life here was not going to be easy.

Indeed, just as Xu Nian and his companions were preparing to leave the Battle Hall, those four chatting members of the Battle Mansion surrounded them, blocking Xu Nian's path.

Xu Nian instinctively furrowed his brow, sensing the unfriendliness of the newcomers.

All four members of the Battle Mansion were dressed in the Mansion's specialized battle robes. Three of them had a single heart embroidered on their chests, while the leader had two, indicating their ranks within the Battle Mansion.

Xu Nian had used his Spiritual Sense to probe the strength of these four, amongst whom the members with a single star on their chest were all Two-star at the Silver Moon Realm, two Spirit Cultivators and one Body Cultivator, whereas the young man with two stars on his chest was a Three-star Body Sect member.

Being part of the Battle Mansion meant they were all geniuses, their battle prowess far surpassing that of ordinary cultivators at the same level.

"What do you want?" Chen Xifeng could also tell that the newcomers bore ill intent and asked coldly.

"We don't want much, just to greet you newcomers who've just joined the Battle Mansion. Don't think you've come to heaven. That so-called Academy tournament champion is just child's play. To become a true member of the Battle Mansion, one must undergo the true test of blood and murder. If you don't have the guts, get out of the Battle Mansion," the leading Two-star young man said with a cold laugh, his eyes riveted on Xu Nian, filled with provocation.

Chen Xifeng immediately grew angry and was about to take action but was stopped by Xu Nian, who turned to the leader with a smile and said, "Thank you for the reminder, senior brother. We will work hard to become qualified members of the Battle Mansion. If there's nothing else, then we'll be on our way."

With that, he prepared to leave with Chen Xifeng and Dugu Jingcheng.

"Stop, did I say you could go?" the young man raised his voice.

"Is there anything else, senior brother?" Xu Nian turned and asked.

The young man sneered and said to Xu Nian, "Kid, you seem to be quite shrewd, with impressive tolerance. But let me warn you, you'd better stay away from Junior Sister Chen Yao. I don't care whether

that matter is true or not, just don't let me see you near Junior Sister Chen Yao again, or you will die a miserable death."

The three lackeys behind the Two-star young man showed mocking expressions on their faces upon hearing this.

The woman in the white dress also looked over with a playful look in her eyes.

Xu Nian, however, smiled and said to the Two-star young man, "Senior Brother, whatever my relationship is with Chen Yao, it seems to be none of your business. As for where I show up, that's my freedom. If Senior Brother finds it displeasing, feel free to make a move. I, Xu Nian, will accompany you with all my strength."

Xu Nian's voice was not loud, but it carried weight, with an impressive momentum.

The Two-star young man was slightly taken aback, not expecting Xu Nian to suddenly drop his previous restraint and become so tough, which made him feel humiliated.

"Senior Brother Liu, let me teach him a lesson," said a Two-star Body Sect member from behind the Two-star young man.

But before he could nod, a cold voice intervened.

"Fighting is forbidden within the Battle Hall! If you want to fight, take it outside!"

The one who spoke was the woman in the white dress.

The Two-star Body Sect young man's face fell, clearly aware of the woman's prowess and not daring to offend her.

The Two-star young man also frowned slightly, knowing that this was the woman in the white dress giving him a reminder.

"Hmph, I'll let you off this time, kid. Remember my name, I'm Liu Mushan, and we'll be meeting again soon." With a cold snort, the Two-star young man left the Battle Hall with the three people behind him.

Xu Nian responded to the woman in the white dress with a smile, then left the Battle Hall with Dugu Jingcheng and Chen Xifeng, heading towards the residence assigned to them.

The woman in the white dress watched Xu Nian's departing figure with a light smile in her eyes.

"Interesting, anyone with clear eyes could see that Chen Yao was lying, but because of the lie, the effect was even stronger. Xu Nian seems to be quite shrewd, with good strength and talent too, but he's just too young, not my type, alas, what a pity!" The woman in the white dress sighed and then continued with her work.

Indeed, what the woman in the white dress said was correct.

Not many believed Chen Yao's lie, but for her to target someone so specifically, it meant she either truly harbored a grudge or cared a great deal about that person. No matter the angle, Chen Yao's suitors would find trouble for Xu Nian.

If it was the former, they would be happy to strike Xu Nian to earn a smile from the beauty.

If it was the latter, it meant a rival in love, who must be eliminated quickly.

Walking on the road, Xu Nian also came to understand this point.

In other words, life in the Battle Mansion would be much more difficult than he had imagined.

Moreover, Xu Nian's decision to hold back just now was because Liu Mushan and the other three all exuded a certain aura, which was the aura of killing intent.

Killing intent was not something one could simply wish to possess; it had to be acquired through real slaughter, killing enough people to have such a presence.

Liu Mubai's killing intent was clearly stronger than the other three, which meant he had killed more people.

So Xu Nian had no doubt about Liu Mushan's words.

To become a qualified member of the Battle Mansion, one had to undergo a baptism of blood.

"It seems that life in the Battle Mansion won't be too boring after all," Xu Nian said to himself, with unabashed excitement dancing in the depths of his eyes.

Chapter 126 Choosing a Task

"Boom, boom, boom..."

The roaring sound kept echoing, and to the unaware, it might have seemed like there was thunder at his house.

But in fact, Xu Nian was practicing his hammer technique, having mastered fifty percent of the power of the first style, Collapse Thunder.

The terrifying roar just now was the sound of his iron hammer striking the air.

If someone were to visit Xu Nian's courtyard, they would surely discover that it had become dotted with one pit after another.

Each of those pits, created by his hammer strikes, was half a meter deep.

Twenty days had passed since Xu Nian joined the Battle Mansion, and during these twenty days, he had been relentlessly practicing his hammer technique behind closed doors.

However, the later stages of the Three-Forging Hammer technique proved to be progressively more difficult to master, and his progress was not as rapid as he had anticipated.

Aside from practicing the hammer technique, Xu Nian had also committed to memory the rules of the Battle Mansion, and he had finally come to clearly understand what the members needed to do, as well as the rules and benefits of promoting one's star level.

Members of the Battle Mansion were ranked from one to nine stars, and the perks each star level member could enjoy varied.

For example, one-star members were required to purchase combat skills or Gang Skills at full price from the Battle Mansion.

Whereas two-star members could enjoy a ten percent discount, three-star members a twenty percent discount, and so on, to the point where nine-star members could enjoy a ninety percent discount.

This discount should not be underestimated, knowing that a Heavenly Rank Technique sold outside for one million Gold Coins; a one-star member would need to pay a full million, while a nine-star member would only have to pay one hundred thousand.

The difference was a full nine hundred thousand, which speaks volumes about the disparity.

Secondly, some high-level items were only available for purchase to members of certain star levels.

For instance, exotic metals required a minimum of four stars or above to purchase, and these metals were valued at ten million Gold Coins.

Therefore, the more precious the item being bought, the greater the benefits enjoyed by those of a higher star level.

As for how to promote one's star level, it was through completing missions.

The Battle Mansion would continuously offer a variety of missions, categorized into nine levels, from one to nine stars.

By completing a two-star mission, one could be promoted to two-star level, complete a three-star mission, and the student's level would be raised to three-star, and so forth.

These missions were usually highly dangerous, with higher levels corresponding to greater risks.

A one-star mission involved at least slaying a master or a Demon Beast of Silver Moon Battle Sect level.

While a two-star mission required at least a Mid-level Battle Sect, which means masters of at least Four-star level.

These masters were not ordinary in any sense; they were demons who had accumulated blood debts and could kill without batting an eye, and if it were a Demon Beast, those would be Four-star level or higher beasts with Divine Beast Bloodlines, possessing formidable combat power.

It is easy to imagine how difficult these tasks were.

Most crucially, the Battle Mansion didn't keep idle people; as members of the Battle Mansion, they were required to undertake a mission every month.

Many Battle Mansion students died during missions, and those who survived were all exceptionally extraordinary.

This was the reason why every member of the Battle Mansion carried themselves with great pride, for their achievements had all been earned through bloodshed.

...

Xu Nian put away his hammer, took a bath, changed into his Battle Mansion's academy robe, and then headed for the Battle Hall.

He had been in the Battle Mansion for twenty days now; it was time to undertake a mission, or else he would be expelled from the Battle Mansion.

In those twenty days, Chen Xifeng and Dugu Jingcheng had both already set out to execute their tasks. According to them, the tasks they had chosen were the weakest among the One-star tasks, and yet, they still nearly didn't come back.

For example, Chen Xifeng's task was to exterminate a mountain stronghold outside Tianyu City. The leader of the stronghold was a One-star Silver Moon Body Sect member. However, during the encounter, he discovered that the leader had already broken through to the Two-star realm.

What's more, this person didn't engage him in a head-on fight, but instead used his subordinates to surround him, and he would sneak attack from the sidelines.

Chen Xifeng took four knife wounds from that stronghold leader, each one nearly fatal. If it hadn't been for a moment of negligence from the leader, which Chen Xifeng had seized to decapitate him with one sword strike, he would have truly been done for. Even so, he had to lie in bed for five days before he could get up and walk.

Dugu Jingcheng wasn't much better off; his face was left with a scar, nearly blinding one eye.

The experiences of these two served as a warning to Xu Nian, that he must take these tasks seriously and not underestimate them.

Soon, Xu Nian arrived at the Battle Hall.

The same white-dressed woman as before was there, and when she saw Xu Nian walk in, her face revealed a hint of surprise.

"I was just thinking that it's about time for you to come, and unexpectedly you really did come," the white-dressed woman said to Xu Nian with a smile.

Xu Nian gave a bitter smile. This white-dressed woman was definitely no easy opponent, which was evident from her strength.

Although he was unsure of the woman's status in the Battle Mansion, he was certain that her position there was by no means low.

"I'm here to select a task," stated Xu Nian straightforwardly.

"Here, everything has been prepared for you already," responded the white-dressed woman with a smile and directly tossed a small notebook to Xu Nian.

Xu Nian didn't speak, merely glancing over the contents of the notebook.

The small notebook had rows upon rows of characters, each line representing a task. Some lines were crossed out, indicating that those tasks had already been carried out by others.

Xu Nian noticed that all the tasks listed were One-star tasks.

He guessed that the tasks of other Star Levels were probably in other notebooks, but the woman in white hadn't taken them out, probably thinking he didn't need them.

Although curious, Xu Nian didn't ask for them.

After all, it was better to be safe on his first mission.

So, Xu Nian began to carefully look at the tasks in the notebook, but the tasks listed therein shocked him to the core.

One, slay the demon Zhang Yu, with Two-star Battle Sect strength, once killed three Two-Star Battle Sect members, charged with the massacre of the Luo Family in Wind City and the violation of women, level One-star, reward ten thousand gold coins.

Two, annihilate Gentle Wind Village, the village leader with Two-star Body Sect strength, commanding three One-star Battle Sect members, charged with robbery, murder, and village slaughter, level One-star, reward thirty thousand gold coins.

Three, slay the Demon Beast Chasing Wind Bloodthirsty Leopard, a Three-star Silver Moon Level Demon Beast with a Divine Beast Bloodline from an ancient Screaming Wind Divine Leopard, located deep within the Demon Beast Forest, level One-star, reward fifty thousand gold coins.

...

The more Xu Nian looked at these tasks, the more alarmed he grew.

These tasks were more twisted one after the other. Take, for example, the Chasing Wind Bloodthirsty Leopard: a Demon Beast of Three-star Divine Beast Bloodline caliber. Its unleashed power was even stronger than a Four-star Peak Level Body Sect member. Normally, only Battle Sect members of the Five-star Level would dare to fight it head-on.

He had anticipated these tasks to be dreadful, yet they turned out to be even more horrific than he had imagined.

"Stunned, aren't you? Who told you to come so late? All the simpler tasks have been picked clean by others; what's left are the One-star tasks with considerably higher difficulty," said the white-dressed woman, seeing Xu Nian's astonished expression, teasingly.

Xu Nian gave a wry smile. So there was such a trick to it?

"This one then!" Xu Nian said, pointing to the last task in the small notebook.

The white-dressed woman glanced at the task Xu Nian was pointing at; her smile suddenly froze. She looked at Xu Nian seriously and said, "Are you sure you want to choose this task? I suggest you pick another one, or you'll die a horrible death."

Chapter 127 Impossible Task

"Why?" Xu Nian asked, puzzled.

"Because this mission has been posted here for ten years, and each year people take it but none return alive. Thus, this mission is the most difficult among the One-star missions. Even Two-star Members don't dare to claim they can complete it. Do you still want to take it?" the woman in the white dress said seriously.

"Oh? That difficult?" Xu Nian showed a surprised expression and glanced again at the last mission in the small booklet.

He had initially picked this last mission out of curiosity, not realizing it was the toughest among the One-star missions.

The mission's content was fairly common: to exterminate the Heavenly Slash Gang, a bandit group outside Yu State. The bandits were strong, reaching the Three-star Body Sect level, though it was said they had attained this level through taking Pills, trapping them at this level for life.

Among them, there were two of the Two-star War Sect, one of the one-star Body Sect, and two of the One-star War Sect. Their strength could be considered formidable among bandits, yet not to the extent of being impossible to overcome.

Xu Nian had chosen this mission with the purpose of honing his actual combat skills. With Little Xu Yu, who had reached the Four-star Silver Moon Realm, the bandits would hardly pose a threat to his life.

But now, hearing her say this, he felt that these bandits might not be so simple.

"Then since this mission is so difficult, why not upgrade it to a Two-star?" Xu Nian asked.

"We've wanted to upgrade it to Two-star as well, but the employer is unwilling to offer more than one hundred thousand Gold Coins, so we can't meet the threshold for Two-star, and thus can't upgrade the mission's level," the woman in the white dress replied.

Xu Nian nodded.

The missions at Battle Mansion were released by the major powers of East Field County, which naturally had to provide a certain reward amount. Only when the reward amount met the minimum threshold could the mission be classified at a respective level.

The threshold for Two-star missions was one hundred thousand Gold Coins, and this mission's reward was ninety thousand, missing the mark for a Two-star by ten thousand, naturally making it impossible to upgrade.

"Have you decided?" the woman in the white dress asked again.

"That's the one, I'm not changing my mind!" Xu Nian replied with a smile.

He always felt that there was a huge secret hidden behind the Heavenly Slash Gang.

Of course, the reason Xu Nian was so sure about choosing this mission was because, when he had rescued Murong Xue years ago, he had inadvertently heard the people chasing her mention the Heavenly Slash Gang, making Xu Nian believe that there must be a connection with Murong Xue being shot back then.

However, the woman in the white dress didn't know what Xu Nian was thinking. When she heard that Xu Nian still insisted on choosing this mission, her finely sculpted eyebrows furrowed instantly.

"Xu Nian, I'm telling you, you're not proving your strength; you're seeking death," the woman in the white dress scolded angrily.

She meant well, but he wasn't listening at all.

Xu Nian gave a helpless smile, well aware that the woman before him thought he was just trying to show off, which is why he had chosen this incredibly difficult task.

"Sister, don't worry, I'm confident I can complete this task," Xu Nian said with a smile.

He knew the woman in the white dress was concerned about his safety, so he wasn't upset.

"Blind confidence, arrogant, so many have died; what makes you think you can complete the task?" the woman in the white dress persisted, her stern sister-like tone scolding a stubborn younger brother.

Xu Nian was instantly exasperated, feeling a mix of amusement and helplessness.

"Sister Zhao, if someone is stubbornly seeking death, why bother stopping him?"

At that moment, a cold laugh sounded from outside the hall, and a man with bloodstains on his clothes walked in, carrying a square box that emitted a bloody scent, obviously containing a human head.

The newcomer was none other than Liu Mushan, who had just completed a mission.

At that moment, Liu Mushan exuded a thick aura of slaughter, clearly having just gone through a fierce battle.

"Get out of here, this has nothing to do with you," the woman in the white dress glared at Liu Mushan.

Liu Mushan, unfazed, smiled and continued, "Sister Zhao, I'm just thinking of you after all. You've spoken so earnestly, yet they simply don't appreciate your kindness."

The woman in the white dress ignored Liu Mushan and instead turned to Xu Nian, "I'll ask you one more time, are you going to change your task or not?"

Xu Nian gave a bitter smile, then his expression hardened as he said, "No!"

The woman in the white dress stared coldly at Xu Nian for three seconds before angrily saying, "Fine, here are the materials for the Heavenly Slash Gang, now you can get lost!"

After speaking, she tossed a booklet onto the table and didn't look at Xu Nian again.

Xu Nian picked up the booklet, still wanting to explain something, but eventually he gave up.

This woman in the white dress had a really difficult character. Now that she was truly angry, further words were pointless. Only actions could prove everything.

"Hmph, utterly ignorant of your limits," Liu Mushan sneered mockingly after seeing Xu Nian accept the task. "I was actually thinking of settling scores with you when you returned from this mission, but it seems unnecessary now, because you are surely going to die on this mission. Even I wouldn't dare to accept this task, yet you, a new member of the Battle Mansion, brazenly claim you can complete it. What a joke."

Xu Nian coldly glanced at Liu Mushan. He could overlook the woman in the white dress underestimating him as it was genuinely out of concern, but he could not tolerate Liu Mushan's blatant mockery.

"Your fear only shows how worthless you are, not that everyone else is as weak as you," Xu Nian said coldly.

"You're courting death!" Liu Mushan was enraged and was about to punch Xu Nian but was stopped by a stern look from the woman in the white dress.

"Hmph, this time I'll spare you for Sister Zhao's sake," Liu Mushan said coldly. "You say you can complete the task? Fine, if you truly can, I, Liu Mushan, will kneel at your house's gate for three days and nights."

"Remember what you said, and don't try to deny it later," Xu Nian said with a cold laugh, then ignored Liu Mushan and walked out of the Battle Hall.

Liu Mushan watched Xu Nian's departing figure with blazing anger in his eyes, which eventually turned into mockery.

"Just a man doomed to die, he won't be arrogant for much longer," Liu Mushan snorted with a sneer, then turned his thoughts away.

The woman in the white dress was also sitting on a chair, her pen hovering in hand, her mind in turmoil.

After a moment of thought, she stood up, gritted her teeth, and walked toward the City Lord Mansion.

She felt it was necessary to report to the Lord Governor, not for any other reason.

Just because a few days ago, Lord Governor Chen Tiansheng had personally approached her to inquire whether Xu Nian had reported to her and had instructed her to report immediately if there was any news regarding Xu Nian.

"Lord Governor, Xu Nian has accepted a task that he cannot possibly complete, it might be dangerous," the woman in the white dress arrived at the Governor Mansion and made her way familiarly to the study to find Chen Tiansheng.

"Which task, how many stars?" Chen Tiansheng stopped his writing to ask.

"One-star," the woman in the white dress answered.

"Then let him be," Chen Tiansheng said with a slight smile, unconcerned.

"But..." the woman in the white dress tried to speak, but Chen Tiansheng cut her off.

"Don't talk about a One-star task, even if this guy took on a Two-star task, I wouldn't be surprised," Chen Tiansheng laughed.

The woman in the white dress was stunned.

Chen Tiansheng looked up, smiled at the woman in the white dress, and tossed a stack of documents to her, saying, "Yanyun, if you don't believe what I'm saying, why not go back and take a look at this young man's documents? Honestly, they even made me break out in a cold sweat."

A cold sweat?

The woman in the white dress rigidly took the stack of documents, her expression one of astonishment.

Chapter 128 First Arrival at Yu State City

Xu Nian accepted the mission to eradicate the Heavenly Slash Gang, and that very day, he rode Little Xu Yu to Yu State.

Now, Little Xu Yu had reached the Four-star Silver Moon Realm, capable of traveling five thousand li in a day, so Xu Nian arrived in Yu State that same day.

The reason he chose to come to Yu State rather than directly attacking the Heavenly Slash Gang

was, first, because he wanted to further understand the information about the Heavenly Slash Gang. Although the Battle Mansion had been collecting information about them over the years, the latest news had stopped three months ago.

Secondly, he felt that since the Heavenly Slash Gang had managed to survive outside Yu State for so long and with so many Battle Mansion members failing in previous attempts, a rash attack would definitely not bring any advantage.

So, Xu Nian planned to first inquire around in Yu State before making any decisions.

"Server, bring me five jin of Bloodthirsty Mad Beef and a pot of strong liquor," Xu Nian, dressed in coarse cloth warrior attire and carrying a beast skin suit on his back, walked into a tavern and ordered.

"Alright, sir, please take a seat. I'll prepare it for you immediately," the server promptly said with a smile.

A server needs to be observant. With Xu Nian's attire, he was clearly a Cultivator who roamed the world, so he must not be offended.

Xu Nian chose a seat by the window. He was not wearing the Battle Mansion's robes, as that would be too conspicuous, so he opted for a ranger's outfit.

The reason Xu Nian came to the tavern was that, besides brothels, taverns were the places with the most accessible information. He could hear much of what he wanted to know here.

As for why he didn't go to a brothel?

First, Xu Nian had never been, and secondly, he was short on money. He only had the thousand Gold Coins he got from selling those discarded swords, which was enough to cover his lodging and meals for ten days.

Gold Coins were the common currency on the Tianhen Continent. With Gold Coins, you could buy anything you wanted, so even Cultivators valued them greatly.

Of course, that was for Low-level Cultivators. In the eyes of Saint Level powerhouses, these Gold Coins were as insignificant as Soil.

Xu Nian was still very concerned about Gold Coins because he needed them in many ways, such as his profession as an Artifact Refiner. Before becoming a Great Refiner,

he needed to purchase materials for practice, which was a significant expense.

Xu Nian didn't think further, as his attention was soon drawn to a conversation at the table next to him.

"Hey, did you hear? The Zhao Family's miss was captured by the Heavenly Slash Gang. It's likely more misfortune than fortune!" one of the men started.

"Yeah, none of the women who were taken ever returned alive. The Heavenly Slash Gang is getting more and more audacious. It's been ten years, hasn't anyone been able to deal with them?" another man said with a sigh.

"Deal with them? Don't you know that the Heavenly Slash Gang has the backing of powerful people? Who dares to meddle?" the last man said helplessly.

The other two sighed.

On the side, Xu Nian's eyes lit up when he heard this; indeed, the Heavenly Slash Gang had backers, but he still couldn't confirm who was behind them.

"Changing the subject, the Ouyang Family is pretty tragic as well. Both of their genius sons were killed. Hasn't the Ouyang Family taken revenge?" someone asked.

"Of course they took revenge. It's just that the person who killed their two sons, Xu Nian, is a genius. Now he's even with the Battle Mansion. It's tough for the Ouyang Family to make a move," one of the three responded.

"The Battle Mansion, ah. If the Ouyang Family really wants revenge, that's going to be difficult. Killing a member of the Battle Mansion is a serious crime," another person lamented.

"Yes, so isn't that why the Family Head Ouyang adopted a foster son?" the aforementioned person replied.

"Speaking of this foster son, Ouyang Long, he's really useless, far inferior to the previous two sons. He's always indulging in pleasures; he's probably still in the Zuihong Building by now," another person sneered.

"That's right. I also heard that Ouyang Long is quite close to the Gang Leader of the Heavenly Slash Gang and even willingly offered his own women to the Gang Leader." As soon as he said this, it sparked a chorus of agreement from the other two.

"Indeed, none of the Ouyang Family are good; alas, who knows when Yu State will have peace," someone lamented.

"Peace? The City Lord of Yu State has been undermined. The entire Yu State is now under the Ouyang Family's control. If there's no major incident, we should count ourselves lucky," one of them exclaimed angrily.

Hearing this, everyone else couldn't help but sigh.

Xu Nian, however, smiled at the corner of his mouth. Hearing their conversations, he had gained a rough understanding of the situation in Yu State.

Sure enough, the Ouyang Family was behind the Heavenly Slash Gang.

He hadn't expected the Ouyang Family's influence to be so strong that they had even undermined the City Lord's power in Yu State.

There was one thing Xu Nian didn't understand, though. Since the Heavenly Slash Gang was backed by the Family Head Ouyang, why would Ouyang Long send his own women to the Gang Leader?

It didn't make sense!

Logically, it should be the Gang Leader who fawned over Ouyang Long.

"It seems the waters are deeper than I previously thought. I should meet the City Lord of Yu State first," Xu Nian decided in his heart.

After finishing the five jin of Bloodthirsty Mad Beef, he headed towards the City Lord Mansion.

As the City Lord of Yu State, even without any power, he should know more than others. Xu Nian was eager to learn from the City Lord what the exact situation was in Yu State.

"Stop, this is the City Lord Mansion, not just anyone can enter freely."

However, as Xu Nian approached the entrance of the City Lord Mansion, he was stopped by two guards.

Both guards were quite strong, at the Five-star Warrior Level. Such strength would make them leaders of a major squad in any city, not just simple gatekeepers.

Combining it with what he had overheard, Xu Nian deduced that these two guards were sent by the Ouyang Family to monitor the City Lord of Yu State.

"Interesting, even the gatekeepers have been replaced. The City Lord of Yu State really is pitiful," Xu Nian muttered to himself with a cold chuckle.

He then looked at the two grim-looking guards and smiled faintly. With a sharp glance, a dagger appeared in his hand.

A flash of cold light, and a stroke of blood appeared on the necks of the two guards.

Before the guards could fall, Xu Nian waved his sleeve, and two fireballs instantly incinerated the bodies cleanly.

Destroying the evidence, Xu Nian didn't want the Ouyang Family to notice his arrival; otherwise, his actions would become extremely difficult.

After dealing with the two guards, Xu Nian walked into the City Lord Mansion and closed the gate behind him.

Since it was night, no one noticed what had just happened, and thus Xu Nian stealthily infiltrated the City Lord Mansion.

Chapter 129 Yan Wu Submits

"Dad, what should we do? I don't want to marry that Ouyang Long."

Inside the City Lord Mansion of Yu State, a beautiful woman pleaded desperately with the middle-aged man sitting in the seat of honor, tears still on her face.

The middle-aged man's expression was defeated, his eyes filled with sorrow and helplessness.

He didn't want to marry his daughter to Ouyang Long either, but the Ouyang Family was now too powerful. If he didn't marry off his daughter, not only would he lose his position at the City Lord Mansion, but even the lives of his entire family would be threatened.

"Daughter, dad doesn't want this either, but... Dad really has no other choice!" the middle-aged man sighed helplessly.

The beautiful woman collapsed to the ground, her pretty face pale, her lips trembling, her eyes filled with despair.

"Dad, but that Ouyang Long is a shameless bastard. He's already married three wives, and he sent them all to the Gang Leader of Heavenly Slash Gang. Daughter really doesn't want to end up like them..." the beautiful woman wanted to struggle one last time.

Hearing this, the middle-aged man also lowered his eyes, his eyes brimming with deep guilt.

He knew all too well that marrying his daughter to Ouyang Long was tantamount to pushing her into a fire pit, but he truly had no alternative. He couldn't oppose the Ouyang Family.

"Daughter, dad knows he has let you down, but for the sake of our Yan Family, dad can only sacrifice you." The middle-aged man said, fighting back tears and trying to suppress the agony in his heart.

The woman's face turned completely pale, with no trace of color left.

"City Lord Yan truly has a heart of stone, actually watching his own daughter being pushed into a fire pit."

However, at this moment, a cold voice came from outside the hall, followed by the doors of the great hall being pushed open, and a young man walked in.

"Who are you? How did you get in?" Yan Wu immediately looked at the newcomer with vigilance and asked in a cold voice.

The beautiful woman also stopped crying and dazedly looked at the young man walking in.

"It doesn't matter who I am. You just need to know that I'm here to help you." Xu Nian replied coldly, and a token appeared in his hand.

Yan Wu's expression was taken aback. His eyes flashed with a glint of understanding, and he quickly stood up from his seat, bowing respectfully to Xu Nian, "My name is Yan Wu. I didn't realize that an esteemed person had come. Please forgive me for not welcoming you properly."

Xu Nian nodded slightly, and then he strode towards the seat of honor, taking the place where Yan Wu had been sitting.

To this action, not only did Yan Wu not feel the slightest bit uncomfortable, but he also thought it was entirely appropriate.

On the other hand, Yan Ruyu sat on the ground, dazed, wondering how this young man, who appeared even younger than herself, could command such respect from her father.

She knew that even if her father had no power, he was still the lord of a city. Even if Family Head Ouyang Tian of the Ouyang Family came, he would have to treat her father as an equal on the surface.

Yet now her father stood while this young man sat.

"May I ask, Sir, why do you grace our Yu State in the dead of night? What brings you here?" Yan Wu asked cautiously, also taking the opportunity to scrutinize Xu Nian.

He found that Xu Nian was far too young. Unless someone dared to falsely claim to be a member of the Battle Mansion, he would automatically assume that the young man's token was found rather than rightfully possessed.

As Yan Wu scrutinized Xu Nian, Xu Nian was also scrutinizing him.

He saw that Yan Wu was clearly a Nine-star War Sect warrior, but the energy emanating from him was almost the same as an ordinary Seven-star Martial Sect's. After a thorough investigation with Spiritual Sense, he realized that Yan Wu had been poisoned with a strong toxin, and in order to suppress the poison, his power had significantly declined.

"I am here to eradicate the Heavenly Slash Gang. If I am not wrong, the person who issued the bounty through the Battle Mansion must be you," Xu Nian said, looking at Yan Wu.

"Indeed, it was I who posted it," Yan Wu replied, his eyes flashing with a hint of disappointment.

He had set a One-star bounty, which only members of the Battle Mansion with a One-star rank would accept. Given that this youth had come due to the task, it meant he must be a One-star member of the Battle Mansion, and being so young, his strength couldn't possibly be that great. He even suspected that the youth before him had just barely entered the Silver Moon Realm.

In fact, he was wrong, Xu Nian hadn't even reached the Silver Moon Realm.

Xu Nian saw right through Yan Wu's thoughts and he wasn't foolish enough to ask Yan Wu why he had only posted a One-star task.

Was it because there wasn't enough money?

Of course not, clearly the Ouyang Family had pressured him, and posting a One-star task was merely for appearances.

"Speak, what's the situation with the Heavenly Slash Gang?" Xu Nian asked.

Yan Wu hesitated for a moment, then spoke up, "Sir, if you are truly here just for the task, then I advise you to go back. The Heavenly Slash Gang is not as simple as you think. Frankly speaking, Sir, if you really go to the Heavenly Slash Gang, it's very likely you'll never come back."

Yan Ruyu, who was to the side, finally understood the identity of the youth before her, a member of the Battle Mansion.

She curiously scrutinized Xu Nian. She had seen members of the Battle Mansion once or twice before, but she had never seen one so young.

Xu Nian, hearing Yan Wu's words, just laughed. He had anticipated Yan Wu would say this, but at least Yan Wu's warning proved that he wasn't a bad person at heart.

If it had been someone with a poisonous nature, they would have simply briefed him on the Heavenly Slash Gang and sent him off to die.

"Do you think that I am not strong enough?" Xu Nian asked with a smile.

Yan Wu's brows involuntarily furrowed, his disappointment growing.

In his heart, he had already pegged Xu Nian as a somewhat talented but arrogantly self-assured youngster.

However, Xu Nian's next words froze him completely.

"Every night at midnight, City Lord Yan, do you feel an discomfort anywhere?" Xu Nian asked with a cold smile.

Yan Wu stared at Xu Nian, his eyes filled with astonishment and wariness as he asked, "How do you know?"

"Don't worry about how I know. You just need to understand that now, only I can save you and your daughter," Xu Nian replied with a light smile.

Hearing this, Yan Wu grew even more startled, and he turned to Yan Ruyu, speaking sternly, "Ru Yu, go back to your room."

Although Yan Ruyu was curious, she obediently left the hall.

Xu Nian didn't stop Yan Ruyu from leaving; he knew Yan Wu had something he wanted to say.

"Sir, can you truly save me and my daughter?" Yan Wu asked anxiously.

"The Extreme Cold Viper Poison you are afflicted with is indeed difficult to cure, but not impossible. If you follow my instructions obediently, I can not only rid you of your poison but also help you make a breakthrough to the Xuantian-level Battle General," Xu Nian stated, standing with his hands behind his back, an authoritative presence emanating from him.

Breakthrough to a Xuantian-level Battle General?

Yan Wu's pupils constricted, and then with a 'thump,' he fell to his knees and said in an extremely respectful tone, "I, Yan Wu, swear to the heavens, if Sir can save my family's lives, I, Yan Wu, am willing to follow Sir to the death and will never betray you."

As Yan Wu made his oath, a ripple of heavenly and earthly energy followed.

A smile also appeared on Xu Nian's face as the ruler of a city thus submitted at his feet.

Chapter 130 The Power of the Ouyang Family

Xu Nian naturally didn't have the ability to remove the Extreme Cold Viper Poison that even a Nine-star War Sect couldn't resolve, but just because he couldn't remove the poison didn't mean that Emperor Ye Tian couldn't.

Such poison was, for Emperor Ye Tian, virtually effortless to eliminate.

As for helping Yan Wu break through to the Xuantian-level Battle General realm, it was because Yan Wu had long reached the bottleneck of the Nine-star War Sect. However, he had always been depleting a

considerable amount of strength to suppress the Extreme Cold Viper Poison, which prevented his breakthrough.

Once he was helped to resolve the Extreme Cold Viper Poison, his breakthrough to the Battle General Level would naturally become a matter of course.

"Sit cross-legged now, channel your Combat Technique, and I will help you with the poison," Xu Nian instructed Yan Wu.

"Now?" Yan Wu was startled but soon showed a look of great joy and immediately sat cross-legged right in the hall, starting to operate his Combat Technique.

The Extreme Cold Viper Poison had tormented him for three years, and he wanted nothing more than to be free from it at every moment. Now that Xu Nian said he could help him with the poison, how could he not be excited?

"Your Majesty, please make your move!" Xu Nian spoke to Emperor Ye Tian in his heart.

"Hmph, meddling in affairs, this will be the last time I help you. Next time, resolve your own matters, even if you die, this Emperor won't intervene," Emperor Ye Tian's voice echoed in Xu Nian's mind. Following that, a powerful force surged out from Xu Nian's Dantian.

Xu Nian smiled slightly; he knew that Emperor Ye Tian was a person whose bark was worse than his bite. If he truly faced danger, Emperor Ye Tian would definitely not stand idly by.

"Buzz!"

A powerful black force emanated from Xu Nian's hand and eventually slammed down fiercely on Yan Wu's head.

As this black force struck, an extremely strong cold energy was forcibly expelled from Yan Wu's body by Xu Nian.

The cold air spread rapidly, instantly forming a layer of frost on the floor. In contrast, there appeared a trace of blood color on Yan Wu's face, his complexion gradually turning from pale to ruddy.

"It's really gone, hahaha, the Extreme Cold Viper Poison is finally removed! Hahaha..." Yan Wu abruptly opened his eyes, felt the change in his body, and began to shout loudly and unrestrainedly.

"Thank you, Master, for the life-saving grace. From today onwards, I, Yan Wu, am yours," Yan Wu quickly turned his head towards Xu Nian, his eyes filled with gratitude.

At this moment, he sincerely submitted to Xu Nian.

"Don't be too happy just yet. Keep focusing on channeling your Combat Technique and talk about breaking through to the Xuantian-level Battle General later. Here is a flaw in your Combat Technique. Understand it well on your own, and I believe you will be able to break through to the Xuantian-level Battle General very soon."

Xu Nian pointed a finger onto Yan Wu's forehead, then without paying attention to Yan Wu's astonishment, he strode out of the hall.

Yan Wu was truly shocked at this point. Just the fact that Xu Nian had released him from the poison with a single palm strike alone was astonishing enough.

Now, in just this short span of time, Xu Nian had also managed to discover the flaws in his Combat Technique and even helped him to amend them. Such skill probably couldn't even be accomplished by a Saint, right?

Most importantly, Xu Nian had used the method of Spiritual Sense to transfer the information directly into his brain. Only a powerhouse of the Saint Level or above could possess such a method.

So now, Xu Nian had become incredibly mysterious and powerful in Yan Wu's eyes. He was extremely grateful for his earlier decision to submit to such a powerful being—it was his great fortune.

...

After Xu Nian left the hall, he immediately started to practice the Three-Forging Hammer Technique in the courtyard outside the hall.

Although he had subdued Yan Wu and was about to gain a Xuantian-level Battle General as a subordinate, this mission was far from simple.

Cultivation must be carried out at all times. Only by becoming stronger himself could he better face all crises.

Xu Nian constantly swung his hammer, and as his iron hammer moved tirelessly, the power of his Three-Forging Hammer Technique also gradually increased.

Under the moonlight, Xu Nian was drenched in sweat, yet he persisted strenuously.

The night passed without incident, and soon the sky brightened with dawn.

"Ha ha, I've broken through, I've finally broken through!" A hearty laugh echoed from inside the great hall, followed by a tall and imposing figure who strode out, his face brimming with undeniable joy.

Xu Nian also stopped hammering and stood upright, looking at Yan Wu, who had emerged from the great hall, with a cold gaze.

Seeing Xu Nian, Yan Wu immediately restrained his smile and stepped forward respectfully, saying, "Master, I thank you for granting me a new lease on life. From now on, this life of Yan Wu's is yours."

Xu Nian nodded and said, "Very well, you are at least not a man of broken promises. When I imparted the Combat Technique to you earlier, I left a Spiritual Sense Seed in your mind. So, if you had shown me the slightest disrespect just now, you would likely be a corpse by now."

Yan Wu felt a chill down his spine and inwardly rejoiced at his earlier behavior.

"Alright, get up. From now on, don't call me master; just call me Young Master, as I do not wish to draw attention to my presence in Yu State City," instructed Xu Nian to Yan Wu.

"Yes, Young Master!" Yan Wu immediately responded.

Even though he had broken through to the Xuantian-level Battle General Realm, Yan Wu still felt an instinctive fear when facing Xu Nian, daring not act out of line.

"Now, tell me about the strength of the Ouyang Family and the secrets of the Heavenly Slash Gang," Xu Nian cut straight to the point.

After some thought, Yan Wu responded, "My lord, I fear it will not be easy to eradicate the Heavenly Slash Gang. This gang is covertly supported by the Ouyang Family. Apart from the Family Head Ouyang Tian, who is a Nine-star War Sect, there are more than ten War Sect powerhouses in their clan. In addition, there are two senior ancestors in the Ouyang family, both experts at the Xuantian Battle General Level—one is a One-star Battle General and the other is a Two-star War General who is tough to deal with. Moreover, it is said that there is a mysterious force backing the Ouyang Family. Thus, other forces, even if they are stronger than the Ouyang Family, do not dare to offend them lightly."

"Two Xuantian-level Battle Generals, a mysterious force?" Xu Nian furrowed his brow. He had originally supported Yan Wu with the intent of using him to counter the Ouyang Family, but now it seemed that the Ouyang Family was even more formidable than he had imagined.

No wonder Qin Yuanshan was so wary of the Ouyang Family; it was clearly because of the mysterious force hidden behind them.

"What exactly does the Ouyang Family want to do? They couldn't possibly support a gang for no reason, could they?" Xu Nian prodded again.

"I do not know their specific intentions, but I have unintentionally come across a rumor," Yan Wu said after another thoughtful pause.

"What rumor?" Xu Nian pressed eagerly.

"The rumor is that the Ouyang Family has been mining Xuan Iron Vein for that mysterious force, and this vein is located within Qingliang Mountain, where the Heavenly Slash Gang operates. The existence of the gang is merely to mislead the public," explained Yan Wu.

"A Xuan Iron Vein?" Xu Nian was startled. If the rumor was true, then this matter was indeed significant.

The value of a small Xuan Iron Vein could match the income of a city for a hundred years, and if it were a large vein, its worth would be immeasurable.

Generally, Xuan Iron Veins were not allowed to be mined privately; all veins were controlled by the Governor Mansion.

If the Ouyang Family was truly mining a Xuan Iron Vein, then they were audaciously bold.

"My lord, my lord, something terrible has happened! Ouyang Long has come to take the young lady by force," blurted out a servant who burst into the courtyard in a panic.

"Ru Yu?" Yan Wu was startled and quickly turned to Xu Nian.

After a moment's contemplation, a slight smile crossed Xu Nian's lips as he said, "Let's go and meet this Ouyang Long."

He then led Yan Wu toward the residence where Yan Ruyi was located.