

Doctor 101

Chapter 101: Each With Their Own Scheme

The northern side of the valley wall was as smooth as if it had been sliced by a knife, nearly vertical at a nearly ninety-degree angle. Just above the ground at the base of the cliff, there was a cave spanning about ten feet in height and twenty feet in width. From a distance, it appeared deep and ominously dark, its depth unknown.

"The treasure of a Heaven Level Martial Artist lies within that cave!"

Standing on the southern ridge of the valley, a disciple of Qingcheng Temple in his early thirties had already raised his three-foot-long Green Peak Sword, pointing towards the cave and loudly proclaiming.

Upon hearing the words of the Qingcheng disciple, all the other martial artists were invigorated, quickly approaching the cave under the leadership of their respective sect elders.

"Everyone, be careful. Inside the cave, there's a Spirit Ape guarding the remains of that Heaven Level Martial Artist!"

The Qingcheng disciple shouted a warning, "That Spirit Ape is nearly two meters tall, extremely powerful, and vicious beyond measure. The last time Junior Brother Li and I entered the cave by accident, we fought with the Spirit Ape. Junior Brother Li was torn to shreds by its brute force, and if I hadn't reacted quickly, I would have lost my life too. This time, no matter what, we must kill that Spirit Ape to avenge Junior Brother Li!"

"Taoist Dongxuan, does that Spirit Ape truly possess the strength of a Profound Level Martial Artist?"

Even though they had been briefed about the Spirit Ape's strength before coming to Fuhu Mountain, Shaolin Monk Yuan Ci couldn't help but ask again.

Taoist Dongxuan was a High Rank Yellow Level Martial Artist, with a considerable seniority within Qingcheng Temple. Hearing the question, he replied, "If Master Yuan Ci doesn't believe my words, you're welcome to challenge the Spirit Ape yourself!"

Yuan Ci chanted a Buddhist mantra, his Zen Staff thudding forcefully against the ground, his deep voice saying, "If it turns out to be as you say, that Spirit Ape is indeed a rare creature. It would be best if we could tame it, but should it prove too ferocious, even though Buddhism preaches compassion, this monk may have no choice but to take life."

Yuan Ci spoke with full-bodied energy, his appearance dignified and imposing, exuding an aura of inherent authority.

"Master Yuan Ci, that Spirit Ape hand-ripped a disciple of our Qingcheng Temple, clearly a wild and brutal beast. Moreover, its strength is on par with a Profound Level Martial Artist, making it a formidable opponent for us. So in case of conflict, we absolutely must not harbor any shred of mercy!"

The speaker was Taoist Qingxu, the leader of the Qingcheng Temple delegation.

Taoist Qingxu, who was about fifty years old, had a lean figure with half-white hair and beard, presenting the image of a celestial being.

Taoist Qingxu, the uncle master of Taoist Dongxuan and the junior brother of Temple Master Taoist Qingling of Qingcheng Temple, possessed the strength of an early stage Profound Level Martial Artist.

While the other disciples of Qingcheng Temple all held three-foot-long Green Peak Swords, only Taoist Qingxu held a horsetail whisk in his hand.

"Taoist Dongxuan, since you're quite familiar with that cave and the Spirit Ape, could I trouble you to lure it out? Then, we can all work together to kill it. What do you say?"

The speaker was Wen Xiangrong, the leader from the Misty Rain Tower faction.

Wen Xiangrong, who appeared to be in his early forties, was dressed in a white Tang suit, holding a folding fan. His hair was neatly combed, giving off an impression of gentle, scholarly elegance.

Wen Xiangrong, like Yuan Ci from Shaolin, Qingxu from Qingcheng Temple, and Bian Xiqi from Myriad Medicine Valley, was of similar strength, all being early stage Profound Level Martial Artists, ranking among the top few powerhouses within their respective sects.

If Yuan Ci and Qingxu practiced Buddhism and Taoist martial arts, respectively, then Wen Xiangrong, hailing from the Misty Rain Tower of Jiangnan, cultivated the Confucian martial arts known for their free-flowing and elegant style.

"If you want to go, then go!"

Taoist Dongxuan gave Wen Xiangrong an irritated look, replying disdainfully, "That white-haired beast is too dangerous, I'm not about to throw my life away!"

Wen Xiangrong didn't take offense but simply smiled and said, "In that case, let's all move forward together and force it out!"

Over a hundred disciples from the four major sects nodded in unison and, under the guidance of their seniors, carefully approached the cave entrance on the north side of the valley.

After entering the valley, Fang Bai quickly hid himself on the west side among the dense, lush vegetation, closely observing the movements of the Shaolin, Qingcheng Temple, Misty Rain Tower, and Myriad Medicine Valley disciples.

Although Fang Bai was also tempted by the treasure of the Heaven Level Martial Artist, he was in no rush to make his move, prepared to be the 'mantis stalking the cicada,' unaware of the 'oriole behind.'

From the conversations of the disciples of the four sects, Fang Bai knew that although they were temporarily allied, each had their own calculations, and it was likely that they would turn on each other over the spoils after killing the Spirit Ape guarding the Heaven Level Martial Artist's remains.

Fang Bai planned to wait until their internal fight had drained their strength considerably before he would appear to seize the treasure, thus saving himself a lot of effort.

In the blink of an eye, the hundred-plus disciples from the four sects had come within ten meters of the cave entrance, forming a fan shape around it.

Yuan Ci, Qingxu, Wen Xiangrong, and Bian Xiqi, the powerful Profound Level experts from the four sects, were keenly alert. They listened closely and found that the cave was silent, with no sign of any living being's breath or heartbeat, suggesting that no creature was present.

"Could it be that the Spirit Ape isn't inside the cave?"

Bian Xiqi, the team leader of Myriad Medicine Valley, said with a frown.

Bian Xiqi was a gaunt old man nearing sixty, with a monkey-like face and sharp eyes. He was dressed in a green shirt, with a goat beard and a body that smelled of medicinal herbs, detectable from afar.

Bian Xiqi carried a bag on his back, bulging with contents unknown, but Fang Bai surmised that it likely held simple traditional medical equipment like acupuncture boxes and perhaps some common medicinal herbs.

"It's likely out. Otherwise, with the strength of that Spirit Ape, it would have detected us approaching this close by now."

Wen Xiangrong opened his folding fan with a "swoosh" and fanned himself leisurely, smiling as he spoke.

Some disciples from the four sects saw this as an opportunity and, not waiting for their leaders to speak, slowly moved toward the inside of the cave.

Taoist Dongxuan of Qingcheng Temple, having suffered a great loss at the hands of the Spirit Ape and still traumatized, had yet to completely recover from his injuries. If it were not for his Temple Master's orders to lead the way, he would not have wanted to come here again.

Seeing that disciples from Qingcheng Temple were also approaching the cave, he felt this was inappropriate. He opened his mouth to stop them but, upon second thought, considered that if the

Spirit Ape really wasn't in the cave, would they not be handing a great advantage to the other three sects? So, he remained silent.

Two Yellow Level Martial Artists from each of the four sects entered the cave, while those outside kept their gaze firmly fixed on the cave entrance. Spirits taut, they were ready to flood in for the treasure hunt once there had been confirmation of no threat inside.

Others were secretly on guard against disciples from the other sects, in case they decided to launch a surprise attack to silence them.

Thud thud—

Crack crack—

Ah—

Suddenly, an angry ape's screech came from the cave, followed by the sound of snapping tendons and breaking bones, along with shrill screams echoing from within.

The nearly hundred people outside were startled. They wanted to dash into the cave to see what had happened but hesitated, wary of rushing in.

While they hesitated, objects began to be thrown out of the cave one after another. The disciples standing guard outside dodged in a panic, then looked closely and couldn't help but inhale sharply in shock.

Chapter 102: Ghost Hand

The things that were thrown out were all the severed limbs and arms of the disciples from the four major sects, and even a human head.

None of the eight disciples from the four major sects who entered the cave survived, and all of them were dismembered, dying gruesome deaths.

This was like poking a hornet's nest, nearly a hundred martial artists outside the cave were inflamed with indignation, each of them shouting furiously at the cave, clenching their fists in readiness to rush in and avenge their fallen comrades.

Fang Bai, hidden not far in the small woods, was also secretly alarmed.

The eight Yellow Level Martial Artists had been torn apart and tossed out in the blink of an eye. If this was indeed the work of the Spirit Ape, it proved that what the disciples of the four major sects had said was correct; not only was the Spirit Ape powerful, but its methods were also brutal.

The small woods where Fang Bai was located were only two hundred meters away from the cave, which was not beyond the range of his senses.

When the eight disciples from the four major sects were killed, Fang Bai could sense a fierce and violent aura emanating, and after the limbs were thrown out of the cave, the aura returned to calm, leaving only the faint senses of breathing and heartbeat.

This indicated that the Spirit Ape's control over its own bodily functions had reached an extremely high level.

Fang Bai thus deduced that the Spirit Ape's strength had reached the level of a Profound Level Martial Artist and was comparable to his own, equivalent to a mid-tier Profound Level Martial Artist.

Just how terrifying a Spirit Ape with strength comparable to a mid-tier Profound Level Martial Artist and a ferocious nature could be, Fang Bai was very clear about.

Although the four major sects had over a hundred people, they would not stand a chance of killing the Spirit Ape and obtaining the treasure of a Heaven Level Martial Artist without paying a heavy price.

It seemed that not rushing to show himself and act hastily was a very wise decision.

Fang Bai secretly felt fortunate about this.

Fang Bai considered that even if he took action, he could not guarantee with certainty that he could kill the Spirit Ape.

However, if he really were to battle the Spirit Ape, by relying on his rich combat experience from his previous life and his extensive array of cultivation techniques, Fang Bai was confident that he could defeat the Spirit Ape. All he needed was time.

The hundred-plus martial artists from the four major sects, standing outside the cave, were screaming and yelling. Although they were all emotionally charged and thunderous in voice, not a single one dared to actually charge into the cave and fight the Spirit Ape.

After the martial artists had cursed at the mouth of the cave for a while without seeing the Spirit Ape appear, they grew bored and began thinking of other ways to force the Spirit Ape out and encircle and annihilate it.

Some martial artists continuously threw stones and other objects into the cave, while others set dry grass and wood on fire and threw them into the cave, but usually, as soon as anything was thrown in, it was immediately thrown back out by the Spirit Ape.

The disciples of the four major sects were both angry and anxious, yet could not think of any good plan.

Just then, a young male disciple from Myriad Medicine Valley stepped forward out of the crowd and said, "Stop throwing things at random, let me try."

"Ghost Hand, what can you do?"

Bian Xiqi, the leader from Myriad Medicine Valley, knew that his nephew was young, but full of cunning ideas, and couldn't help but ask.

The disciple known as Ghost Hand smiled and said, "Uncle Bian, have you forgotten that I can control bees?"

"Control bees?"

Bian Xiqi was taken aback, about to say what use controlling bees would be, when a light bulb went off in his head, and he laughed loudly, "Haha, I know what you're up to now, kid! Hurry up and use your trick. It's up to you whether we can force out that Spirit Ape."

Ghost Hand grinned, took out a small jade bottle from his body, opened the stopper, and a rich fragrance of flowers immediately filled the air, extending in all directions with the mountain breeze.

A moment later, a buzzing sound arose; the martial artists in the valley looked up to the north sky to see a dark "cloud" drifting toward them.

"It's bees!"

As thousands upon thousands of bees swiftly flew overhead, the faces of the martial artists in the valley slightly changed. They didn't understand where so many bees had come from and worried that the swarm would plunge down to attack them.

With their strength, they were not afraid of ten or so bees, and they could handle dozens or even hundreds, but the concentrated attack of thousands upon thousands was indefensible. Once their True Yuan was exhausted, and the bees took advantage of that vulnerability, the consequences were unthinkable.

It would be a laughingstock if a esteemed martial artist were to be stung by a swarm of bees, leaving large red welts all over the body.

Fortunately, the swarm only circled over Ghost Hand's head without attacking anyone.

The martial artists breathed a sigh of relief and turned their eyes towards Ghost Hand, wondering how he would control the swarm to flush out the ferocious Spirit Ape from the cave.

Ghost Hand's expression was grave as he tightly clutched the medicine bottle in his hand, constantly shifting his position, and finally stood firm on a rock near the cave.

From his standing position, any mountain breeze would carry the rich floral scent from the bottle in his hand into the cave.

Some of the more astute martial artists had expressions of realization on their faces, faintly guessing what Ghost Hand intended to do next.

Hum—

Suddenly, Ghost Hand made a humming sound similar to that of bees. This sound started smoothly but soon took on an aggressive and murderous tone.

The bees circling over Ghost Hand's head, as if receiving a command to attack, formed a long queue and followed the trail of the floral scent from the medicine bottle, rushing into the cave.

Soon after, a thunderous rumble echoed from inside the cave, accompanied by the sharp and piercing angry howls of the Spirit Ape; clearly, the swarm had brought considerable trouble to the ape and enraged it.

Seeing Ghost Hand reveal this skill to control bees, the disciples from Shaolin Temple, Qingcheng Temple, and Misty Rain Tower all displayed looks of vigilance on their faces.

Although Ghost Hand's own strength was not strong, he could control a swarm to carry out the attack, which, in the eyes of the disciples from the three major sects, made him as threatening as a Profound Level Martial Artist.

After a burst of noise from the cave, a white figure flashed, and a giant white-furred ape, nearly two meters tall, shot out like an arrow.

The swarm of bees closely followed behind the White Ape.

After bursting from the cave, the White Ape, with human-like eyes, looked towards Ghost Hand holding the medicine bottle, then with fierce light in its gaze, it lunged at Ghost Hand.

"Ghost Hand, be careful!"

Bian Xiqi, the leader from Myriad Medicine Valley, knew that the White Ape was targeting Ghost Hand and immediately shouted a warning while also moving swiftly to aid him.

The White Ape was hulking and appeared clumsy, but its speed was exceptionally fast; in the blink of an eye, it had darted more than ten meters. By the time Ghost Hand reacted, the White Ape's palm, large as a cattail leaf fan, was already swinging towards Ghost Hand's head.

The White Ape's strike was both swift and fierce, seemingly with the force of a thousand catties, and Ghost Hand even heard the sonic boom of its palm slicing through the air.

The attack strength of a Profound Level Martial Artist could break stone tablets and split rocks; Ghost Hand knew that if his head were to be struck by the White Ape's palm, it would likely burst open like a watermelon on the spot.

In shock, Ghost Hand desperately dodged to the left while raising the one-foot-long Bronze Medicine Pestle in his hand, using all his might to block the palm strike from the White Ape.

Chapter 103: Battle with the White Ape

Thump—

The White Ape's palm struck down on the Bronze Medicine Pestle wielded by Ghost Hand, breaking the pestle in two.

This ape was highly perceptive. After the swarm of bees forced it out of its cave, it recognized at first glance that Ghost Hand was the one controlling the bees to attack it. The ape hated Ghost Hand to the bone, and the force behind its palm strike was intended to kill Ghost Hand on the spot.

Luckily, the blocking move with his medicine pestle absorbed most of the ape's palm force, which slightly slowed down the impact. Otherwise, even if Ghost Hand had not died, he would have been seriously injured.

Nonetheless, after breaking the Bronze Medicine Pestle, the White Ape's palm still landed on Ghost Hand's left shoulder, sending him flying through the air.

Having been struck by the White Ape, Ghost Hand knew that the difference in strength between the beast and himself was too great. If he could not escape quickly, he might lose his life. So, despite being injured, he used the momentum from the White Ape's strike to carry himself several meters away.

At this moment, Bian Xiqi, along with over twenty other disciples from Myriad Medicine Valley, arrived just in time to back him up.

"Kid, are you alright?"

Seeing Ghost Hand staggering and with a pained expression, Bian Xiqi positioned him behind himself and turned to ask.

"Damn it, I nearly died! Uncle Master Bian, that white-haired beast is even tougher than you, you better be careful!"

Ghost Hand felt as if his left shoulder had been broken by the White Ape's palm; the pain was scorching.

Fortunately, his medical skills were excellent. After a self-examination, he knew that his arm was not severely damaged and that he would recover after a few days of rest. This eased his mind.

It seemed that the White Ape was determined to kill Ghost Hand, chasing after him immediately after sending him flying.

"What an arrogant beast!"

Bian Xiqi roared and, with a flick of his left hand, several streaks of silvery light shot out, targeting several vital acupoints on the White Ape's body.

These silvery streaks were in fact silver needles.

Disciples from Myriad Medicine Valley were almost all skilled in medicine, and like Ghost Hand, Bian Xiqi had considerable expertise in acupuncture. In their hands, silver needles could not only cure diseases and save lives but could also serve as lethal hidden weapons.

Once Bian Xiqi infused the fine and soft silver needles with True Yuan, they became as hard as steel darts, striking with lightning speed at the White Ape's chest and abdomen. As long as one could penetrate the ape's body, it would lose its fighting capability.

The White Ape was more powerful than Bian Xiqi. Seeing the silver needles shooting towards it, the ape did not slow down its charge at all, simply slapping away the needles with a swift palm.

"Disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley, join forces to slay this beast!"

A master is recognized by their first move. After seeing his silver needles effortlessly deflected by the White Ape, Bian Xiqi realized, just as Ghost Hand had said, that the ape was indeed formidable and hard to handle.

Though confident in his abilities, Bian Xiqi did not dare to be reckless. He rallied all Myriad Medicine Valley disciples to confront the White Ape together, while also loudly calling out to disciples from the other three sects, "Fellows, the White Ape has been lured out, come help us kill it!"

Seeing that Myriad Medicine Valley disciples were currently locked in an intense battle with the White Ape, holding it at bay, each of the disciples from the three other major schools calculated their next steps. For the moment, none of them advanced.

"Take this opportunity to grab the treasure. As soon as you have it, leave immediately. I'll cover your retreat!"

The Qingcheng Temple's Taoist Qingxuan's eyes flickered as he quickly instructed his disciple, Taoist Dongxuan, who was standing beside him.

"Understood, Uncle-Master!"

Taoist Dongxuan acknowledged with a shout and signaled three fellow disciples with Yellow Level mid-stage strength with his eyes. The four of them, holding long swords, charged with all their might toward the mountain cave.

Almost simultaneously, disciples from the Shaolin Temple and Misty Rain Tower also dashed towards the cave.

Disciples from the three sects met at the entrance of the cave, each wanting to be the first to enter and obtain the treasure left by the Heaven Level Martial Artist; none would give way to the others.

As a result, a confrontation was inevitable and soon led to casualties.

Whenever a disciple of any sect was killed, it would incite rage among their fellows, resulting in even more joining the fray.

Bian Xiqi saw his own group engaged in battle with the White Ape, while the other three sects started infighting at the entrance of the cave for their own selfish reasons, feeling both anger and urgency.

The White Ape was immensely powerful and ferocious. In a brief moment, four disciples from Myriad Medicine Valley had been wounded or killed. If the three sects did not provide support soon, Bian Xiqi was ready to make a decisive retreat.

"You bunch of fools, you've not even seen the shadow of the Heaven Level Martial Artist's treasure, and you've already started to slaughter each other!"

While fighting fiercely against the White Ape, Bian Xiqi jumped up and cursed, "Fine, keep killing. When there are only a few of you left, wait for the White Ape to finish us all off! By then, your efforts will be in vain, and you'll get nothing. Then you can all regret it!"

Yuan Ci from the Shaolin Temple, Taoist Qingxu from Qingcheng Temple, and Wen Xiangrong from Misty Rain Tower, the leaders of the three major factions, heard Bian Xiqi's curses and also realized that if they continued to fight among themselves, it would be playing right into the White Ape's hands. There was a real possibility of being wiped out by the creature.

"Stop!"

"All of you, pull back!"

"Attack the White Ape, if we don't kill this beast first, none of us will gain any benefit!"

"The score of our disciples being killed will be settled later!"

Yuan Ci, Taoist Qingxu, and Wen Xiangrong reined in their disciples and led them to join the attack on the White Ape.

With dozens of martial artists from the other three major sects joining in, the pressure on the Myriad Medicine Valley disciples greatly diminished, and they all breathed a sigh of relief.

Although the White Ape was formidable, when faced with a joint attack by nearly a hundred Yellow Level and Profound Level Martial Artists, it still managed to occasionally launch a fatal attack, killing one or two disciples from the three sects. However, as the battle dragged on and its True Yuan was excessively depleted, it was put on the defensive and gradually suppressed by the disciples.

After killing more than a dozen disciples from the three sects, the White Ape also had two cuts on its body. Although the wounds were superficial, the blood that seeped out and stained its white fur made it look severely injured.

The wounds on its body thoroughly provoked the White Ape's wild nature. With blood-red eyes and bared teeth, it showed a ferocious expression and stopped defending itself to begin launching fierce and rapid attacks.

After sustaining several minor injuries, the White Ape's large paws smashed another dozen or so disciples from the three sects. Most of their bodies were incomplete, and two of them even had their heads crushed, scattering brain matter and blood everywhere. The scene resembled hell itself.

Bian Xiqi finally succeeded with a covert silver needle attack and was secretly delighted, only to find that when the needle struck the White Ape, the creature was still leaping around as if nothing had happened, not at all affected as he had hoped.

Upon reflection, Bian Xiqi realized that it was likely due to the White Ape's thick skin and the cushioning effect of its long white fur, which prevented the silver needles from entering its acupoints.

Therefore, Bian Xiqi started targeting the White Ape's eyes with his silver needles, but the ape was well-guarded. After using up all his silver needles without inflicting any harm, Bian Xiqi had no choice but to wield his Bronze Medicine Pestle and move in for a close attack.

Chapter 104: Joining Forces

Seeing the heavy casualties among the Yellow Level disciples of their respective sects, Yuan Ci, Taoist Qingxuan, Wen Xiangrong, and Bian Xiqi had the weaker disciples from their sects retreat to the outskirts, ready to strike opportunistically, while they, the four Profound Level powerhouses, took positions on four fronts and joined forces to attack the White Ape.

Four Profound Level early-stage Martial Artists joining hands to fight the White Ape, whose strength was comparable to a mid-stage Profound Level Martial Artist, surprisingly found themselves evenly matched, each side holding their ground.

The fight between the disciples of the four great sects and the White Ape was fierce, and Fang Bai, hidden in a small grove of trees to the west, found it quite the spectacle.

With Fang Bai's discernment, he deduced that the eventual winner of this intense battle would be the four great sects.

However, even if the four great sects emerged victorious, it would be a Pyrrhic victory.

Up to now, the four great sects had suffered around thirty casualties, nearly a third of their strength lost.

Fang Bai could imagine that after the four great sects killed the White Ape, they would certainly fight fiercely over the treasure left by the Heaven Level Martial Artist, and by then, it was likely that few would remain.

And he, lurking in the shadows, would undoubtedly be the final beneficiary.

In truth, Fang Bai could probably seize the treasure of the Heaven Level Martial Artist without much effort if he acted now.

But the disciples of the four great sects and the White Ape were already seeing red. If Fang Bai showed himself now, he would likely immediately become their target and be surrounded. If he got entangled, it would be a significant trouble.

Therefore, Fang Bai was not in a hurry. Without absolute certainty, he would not rashly make his move to seize the treasure.

Whoosh—

Whoosh—

Whoosh—

Unwilling to be trapped in a fight by Yuan Ci, Wen Xiangrong, and the other four powerhouses, the White Ape suddenly went berserk. Its body spun rapidly, and at the same time, it kicked out in a continuous chain, feet skimming the ground.

In the midst of the dust and smoke, the fragments of rock kicked up by the White Ape flew like rain towards the several dozen disciples from the four great sects surrounding it.

The rocks, large and small, kicked with the White Ape's full force, possessed tremendous power. Even Yuan Ci, Wen Xiangrong, and the other powerhouses dared not face them head-on and hurriedly dodged.

As they dodged, the several dozen disciples behind them were in big trouble.

Thump—

Thump—

The sound of rocks piercing flesh was unceasing, and the screams rose and fell in succession. As blood sprayed, another twenty or so disciples from the four great sects were wounded or killed.

Standing behind Yuan Ci, the two Yellow Level Martial Artists Wuzhen and Wuxing bore the brunt of it. Under the onslaught of the stony rain, their chests and abdomens were almost simultaneously penetrated, and they died on the spot.

"You beast, I will send you to the Western Paradise!"

Upon seeing two of his fellow disciples die gruesomely, Yuan Ci's tiger-like eyes bulged with rage as he roared furiously into the air.

His roar contained the power of the Buddhist Lion Roar, and his breath broke through, turning into a sonic wave that struck the White Ape.

At the same time, Yuan Ci's Zen Staff swept out in a move "Sweeping a Thousand Armies," aiming for the waist of the White Ape.

Yuan Ci's Buddhist Lion Roar was like a thunderclap from a clear sky, echoing throughout the whole valley. The disciples of Misty Rain Tower standing opposite Yuan Ci, especially the weaker ones, turned pale and felt dizzy from the sonic strike, losing their balance and collapsing to the ground.

Yuan Ci's Zen Staff, nearly two meters long and weighing over a hundred kilograms, was swept out with his full strength. The formidable and vigorous force seemed as if it could flatten a small hill in front of him.

Taoist Qingxuan, Wen Xiangrong, and Bian Xiqi, these three great Profound Level Martial Artists, would never dare to meet head-on the sweeping Zen Staff of Yuan Ci; their only option would be to evade.

Yet, the White Ape stood proudly in place, motionless until the Zen Staff neared its waist. Then, it suddenly reached out its hand and, astonishingly, caught Yuan Ci's Zen Staff with a single palm.

Although Yuan Ci was chubby with a large head and a hulking body, he was still much smaller in comparison to the nearly two-meter-tall White Ape.

Moreover, the strength of the White Ape was that of a mid-rank Profound Level, and Yuan Ci was merely at the initial stage of Profound Level. Although this was just a slight difference in the realm, the disparity in strength was at least double.

Both the man and the ape were power-type experts, and in every aspect, Yuan Ci was clearly at a disadvantage.

When the White Ape grasped his Zen Staff, the sweeping force was suddenly blocked, causing Yuan Ci to tremble from the recoil, and his palms felt immense pain.

If Yuan Ci had released his grip on the Zen Staff the moment it was caught, he would not have been injured. However, he stubbornly clenched his teeth and held on, resulting in his palms cracking from the immense recoiling force, with blood soaking his hand.

Roar—

The White Ape also suddenly let out an angry roar.

Though its roar was not a Cultivation Technique, it affected the disciples of the four major sects even more than Yuan Ci's Buddhist Lion Roar, causing those below high-rank Yellow Level to suffer ringing in their ears, unable to stand steady.

Even Yuan Ci, who was directly facing the White Ape, experienced a momentary dizziness.

In a confrontation between experts, a momentary dizziness was definitely a major flaw.

And this flaw could be fatal.

In the instant Yuan Ci was dazed, the White Ape's body surged forward along the Zen Staff it held, closing the distance between them to about one meter. Then with a direct punch, it struck Yuan Ci's chest.

Poor Yuan Ci, a Profound Level Martial Artist and among the top experts of the Shaolin, was struck in the chest by the White Ape, shattering his internal organs and killing him instantly.

With Yuan Ci's demise, the remaining dozen or so Shaolin disciples lost their mainstay and instantly lost the will to fight, retreating one after another.

The death of Yuan Ci and the withdrawal of the Shaolin disciples drastically increased the pressure on the disciples from the other three major sects.

Although Taoist Qingxuan, Wen Xiangrong, and Bian Xiqi were united in appearance but divided in secret, allies on the surface but rivals in the dark, Yuan Ci's death inevitably evoked a feeling comparable to the sorrow of one seeing a like-minded comrade fall.

"Taoist Qingxuan, Mr. Wen, we can't hold back any longer. If we don't go all out, not only will we fail to obtain the relic, but we may also be defeated by this white-furred beast one by one and all be killed!"

Bian Xiqi suddenly shouted aloud.

He could see very clearly that both Taoist Qingxuan of Qingcheng Temple and Wen Xiangrong of Misty Rain Tower had been holding back in their fight against the White Ape, only using eighty percent of their strength as they were saving something for the upcoming battle for the Heaven Level Martial Artist's relic.

Even Bian Xiqi himself had only been using ninety percent of his strength, holding back a little.

Yuan Ci of the Shaolin had indeed given his all, alas, due to a moment of carelessness, he was killed by a punch from the White Ape.

And with Yuan Ci's death, the Shaolin were essentially out of the treasure hunt.

If the four Profound Level experts had worked together wholeheartedly, Yuan Ci might not have died, and the situation would not have deteriorated to this extent.

With Yuan Ci's death, the morale of the disciples from the four major sects plummeted, and the White Ape instantly gained the upper hand, switching from defensive to offensive.

The disciples' attempt to seize the Heaven Level Martial Artist's relic had ignited the White Ape's ferocity and killing intent.

After killing Yuan Ci, its ferocity intensified, seemingly intent on completely annihilating all the disciples from the four major sects, its attacks becoming more and more fierce.

Chapter 105: The Punishment of White Ape

The White Ape darted left and right, reaping the lives of disciples from the four major sects as if entering an uninhabited territory, not even sparing the Shaolin Temple disciples who had retreated to one side.

Those Shaolin disciples were also unlucky. With their leader Yuan Ci dead, they were like a dragon without a head. They had intended to withdraw from the battle, but unexpectedly, the White Ape charged into their midst and began a killing spree.

Without the protection of a Profound Level Martial Artist, the dozen or so Shaolin disciples were no match for the White Ape. Under its attack, they had no chance to defend, let alone escape.

In the blink of an eye, the dozen Shaolin disciples were slaughtered in despair.

The disciples of the other three sects didn't even have time to come to their aid.

By now, half of the hundred or so disciples from the four major sects had either died or were injured at the hands of the White Ape.

Of course, the desperate counterattack of the Shaolin disciples before their death also added several wounds to the White Ape, one of which was bleeding profusely, suggesting it was quite serious.

The White Ape's entire body, once covered with white fur, was now dyed red with blood. Combined with the ruthless and ferocious aura it exuded, it resembled a god of slaughter.

"Everyone, this white-haired beast is powerful and vicious. Do not confront it directly. Try to move around and tangle with it. It is already injured. Before long, if it bleeds too much, it will defeat itself without us fighting,"

Wen Xiangrong, a Profound Level Martial Artist from Misty Rain Tower, shouted loudly.

So the remaining dozens of disciples from the three sects surrounded the White Ape tightly and began to tangle with it, hoping to wear it down by delaying time.

The White Ape wasn't a fool. While the disciples of the three sects wanted to delay, it sought a quick resolution.

When the disciples of the three sects surrounded it without attacking, it took the opportunity to launch its own attacks.

Although the Shaolin disciples had been completely wiped out, there were still three Profound Level Martial Artists and more than a dozen Yellow Level High Rank Martial Artists at the scene. No matter who the White Ape targeted, they would join forces to repel it.

To avoid the complete annihilation suffered by the Shaolin disciples, the remaining disciples of the three sects united as one with unprecedented solidarity. It was not so easy for the White Ape to pick them off one by one as it had done before.

Indeed, the strategy of hit-and-run fighting against the White Ape proved to be effective.

The White Ape, eager to kill the disciples of the three sects, moved its huge body frequently and rapidly, quickly depleting its True Yuan and leaving it no chance to stop bleeding and heal. Its combat strength grew weaker and weaker.

"Now!"

Bian Xiqi of Myriad Medicine Valley seized a weakness exposed by the White Ape and flung his Bronze Medicine Pestle like a hidden weapon, smashing it heavily into the back of the White Ape with a muffled "thud."

The White Ape spat out a thread of blood from the corner of its mouth and let out an angry roar to the sky, its eyes filled with blood staring fiercely at Bian Xiqi and launching an attack on him as if it had no regard for its own life.

With the sudden increase in pressure, Bian Xiqi retreated continuously in great shock.

The White Ape, shadowing him closely, swung its arms crisscrossed, its sharp fingertips slicing through Bian Xiqi's clothes and leaving a series of bloody marks on his chest and abdomen.

If the White Ape were a bit faster, or if Bian Xiqi retreated any slower, there was a real danger of being disemboweled.

As the White Ape attacked Bian Xiqi, it also exposed a large flaw in its own defenses.

Wen Xiangrong of Misty Rain Tower brandished the folding fan in his hand vigorously, and three steel fan ribs, glittering with a cold light, shot out and embedded deeply in the White Ape's back.

Taoist Qingxuan of Qingcheng Temple swung his long sword, slicing downward and leaving a foot-long cut on the back of the White Ape.

The White Ape's back suffered two heavy blows, and blood immediately gushed forth.

Perhaps stimulated by the wounds on its back, the White Ape suddenly quickened its leap forward, its pair of massive palms penetrating Bian Xiqi's chest like a pair of steel forks.

Howl—

In the midst of the White Ape's furious roar, its malevolence erupted as the giant palms that had penetrated Bian Xiqi's chest tore violently to either side.

Bian Xiqi let out a scream of agony as his body was ripped apart from the middle, instantly blood rained down from the sky, and his organs splattered all over the ground.

"Uncle Master!"

Seeing Bian Xiqi die so horribly, Ghost Hand, who had retreated to one side with injuries, had his eyes shoot red with rage and roared, "You beast, I'll fight you to the death!"

He sprang toward the White Ape, and before his body even arrived, his hands were already flinging out, sending several dozen glinting silver needles streaking through the air.

He always carried hundreds of silver needles for self-defense, but now, to avenge Bian Xiqi, he shot them all out at once.

Dozens of silver needles, dense as rain, covered the White Ape's dozens of large and small acupoints.

If it had been during the White Ape's peak strength, these silver needles would have posed no threat. However, with the Ghost Hand attacking in rage and the White Ape's True Yuan greatly depleted, its strength was less than a third of what it usually was. Although most of the needles were deflected by the White Ape's palms, a few still sank deep into its flesh and acupoints.

The White Ape felt half of its body go numb, its True Yuan circulation was hindered, and its movement speed considerably restricted. Meanwhile, Qingcheng Temple's Taoist Qingxuan stealthily approached from the side and swung his long sword, severing one of the White Ape's arms, which fell to the ground.

Having lost an arm, the White Ape's combat power halved again. It seemed to know it was no longer capable of defending itself, so it abandoned attacking the Ghost Hand and attempted to flee the valley.

"You beast, after killing so many of us, you think you can escape?"

Wen Xiangrong from Misty Rain Tower suddenly flung his right hand outwards, transforming the folding fan in his hand into a flying weapon that whizzed out, violently striking the White Ape at the back of its heart.

The White Ape felt as though its back had been struck by a massive weight, darkness encroached its vision, and a mouthful of fresh blood spewed out.

This consecutive injury further reduced the White Ape's combat power, and its movements became staggered.

Disciples from the four great sects, numbering over a hundred, had been killed or injured by the White Ape, each sect suffering heavy losses. Those still alive harbored deep hatred toward this white-furred beast, not inclined to let it escape.

Several dozen people caught up with the White Ape, surrounded it in the middle, and launched a relentless assault using fists, long swords, and hidden weapons, giving the White Ape no opportunity to rest.

The White Ape quickly received several more serious injuries on its body. Seeing no chance of escape, it summoned its residual strength for a final stand.

In its last bout of frenzy, it took the lives of seven disciples from the four major sects, including Taoist Dongxuan from Qingcheng Temple.

Seeing his nephew fall, Taoist Qingxu furiously grabbed a long sword from a nearby Qingcheng disciple. With the move "Flying Dragon in the Sky," he soared into the air and then inverted his figure with "Dragon Diving into the Abyss," pointing the tip of the sword downward from above his head and plunging it into the top of the White Ape's head.

Taoist Qingxu's sword strike emphatically demonstrated the essentials of speed, accuracy, and ferocity; the blade, upon entering the White Ape's skull, buried halfway into it.

The White Ape, towering over two meters tall, shuddered violently as if struck by lightning. Then, it slowly collapsed, stirring up a large cloud of dust.

With the White Ape defeated, all the martial artists present breathed a sigh of relief, and some couldn't help but cheer loudly.

Chapter 106: The Treasure in the Cave

This battle, which went on for about half an hour, was short but intense; outside the cave, dozens of bodies lay sprawled in disarray, and some of the injured were in agony.

The mountain wind carried the thick scent of blood, which pervaded the entire valley, causing nausea.

After this battle, within the four martial sects, the Shaolin Temple was completely wiped out, and Bian Xiqi, a Profound Level Martial Artist from Myriad Medicine Valley, had died, thus losing the qualification to compete for the treasure left by the Heaven Level Martial Artist.

Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple suffered relatively smaller losses, but only had a little more than ten disciples each who were still capable of fighting.

Fortunately, the Profound Level Martial Artists from both sects were still alive.

The few surviving disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley, led by Ghost Hand, retreated far but did not leave, obviously still harboring some hope of luck regarding the Heaven Level Martial Artist's treasure.

"Taoist Qingxuan, now that the White Ape is dead, the treasure left by the Heaven Level Martial Artist is within our reach. Currently, only our two sects are qualified to obtain the treasure left by the Heaven Level Martial Artist. What do you say as to how it should be divided?"

Wen Xiangrong instructed two disciples to tend to the injured of Misty Rain Tower and then asked with a smile to Taoist Qingxuan of Qingcheng Temple.

Taoist Qingxuan tossed the long sword in his hand back to the disciple from his temple and asked with a grin, "What does Mr. Wen think would be a fair division?"

Both men were cunning old foxes, each not wanting to be the first to reveal their hand, preferring the other to make the first offer so they could then negotiate.

Wen Xiangrong said, "No matter what treasure is inside the cave, we shall split it fifty-fifty, how about that?"

Taoist Qingxuan shook his head and replied, "That's not fair."

"What's unfair about it?"

"Before coming here, we had agreed that whoever contributes more gets more. I killed the White Ape, so naturally, our Qingcheng Temple should get more."

Wen Xiangrong also shook his head and said, "That's not right. Before the White Ape was killed, it was already gravely injured and hardly had any strength left to resist. You were just faster, taking advantage of the situation, but that doesn't mean you killed it."

Taoist Qingxuan's gaze turned sharp, and with a cold laugh said, "The number of our Qingcheng Temple's disciples who were killed or injured is more than those from your Misty Rain Tower, which shows that we have put in greater effort!"

Wen Xiangrong raised his eyebrows and countered, "Your disciples dying in larger numbers is a reflection of their own strength, or lack thereof. It cannot be blamed on others and does not prove that your Qingcheng Temple put in more effort than our Misty Rain Tower."

Taoist Qingxuan said angrily, "Are you implying that my Qingcheng Temple's disciples are weak?"

Wen Xiangrong did not respond, which was tantamount to an agreement.

With a sweep of his horsetail whisk, Taoist Qingxuan said, "If Mr. Wen is interested, why don't we have a fight to see whether my Qingcheng disciples are indeed weak, or if your Misty Rain Tower disciples are worse."

A shade of cunning passed through Wen Xiangrong's eyes as he waved his hand and said, "The disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley are still watching us like tigers out for prey. It wouldn't be good for us to fight among ourselves, would it? How about this, let's split the treasure seventy-thirty, with seventy percent for you and the remaining thirty percent for our Qingcheng Temple. Does this satisfy the Taoist Priest?"

Taoist Qingxuan laughed heartily and said, "That's how it should be!"

"Then, let's go into the cave and see what good things are inside."

"Let's go."

Saying this, Taoist Qingxuan and Wen Xiangrong walked side by side towards the interior of the cave with large strides.

The disciples of the two major sects followed closely behind, each gripping their weapons tightly, on guard against each other.

The cave wasn't very deep, and after walking about ten meters or so, he reached the end.

The farthest end of the cave was quite spacious, covering an area of more than a hundred square meters. With the help of the dim light, one could make out stone beds, stone tables, stone chairs, and other such items within the cave.

On the stone bed, an elderly man was sitting cross-legged. Most of his clothes had already disintegrated, leaving only a few shreds hanging on his shoulders. It seemed he had died many years ago, and his clothes had weathered away.

What was remarkable was that the old man's remains were perfectly preserved. His facial features and expressions still looked lifelike, even his hair was still as black as ink.

If it wasn't for the absence of a heartbeat and breath in the old man, one might have thought he hadn't died but was merely closing his eyes to rest and recuperate.

On the wall behind the old man, there was a line of characters the size of a palm, inscribed with some sharp tool.

The content of those characters was: "In my life, I traversed the Hidden Sects, rarely meeting an adversary. Later, villainously ambushed, I sustained severe internal injuries. Fleeing to this place, knowing my days were numbered, I've left behind a few treasures for the fated. Regrettably, my Heaven Level prowess has no successor, making it hard to rest in death."

Previously, a disciple of Qingcheng Temple named Dongxuan had entered this cave by chance with his fellow disciples and, after seeing this line of characters, ascertained that the deceased was a Heaven Level Martial Artist. This revelation kicked off the joint treasure hunt by the disciples of the four major sects.

"My nephew Dongxuan was right, the one who died was indeed a Heaven Level Martial Artist. This Martial Artist must have left behind treasures to be given to the destined. Haha, the destined, isn't that referring to us?"

Taoist Qingxuan swept his gaze over the characters and burst into laughter.

Laid out in front of the Heavenly Martial Artist on the stone bed were a sheathed dagger, two slightly yellowed booklets, two fist-sized porcelain vases, and additionally, a wooden box.

A dagger wielded by a Heaven Level Martial Artist would undoubtedly be a weapon capable of slicing through iron as if it were mud.

Those two yellowed booklets could very well be Cultivation Techniques suitable for Heaven Level Martial Artists to practice.

As for the porcelain vases and the wooden box, it was unknown what they contained, but since they were carried by a Heaven Level Martial Artist, they must be treasures too.

The disciples of the two major sects kept their eyes greedily fixed on the six items laid out in front of the deceased Martial Artist, their hearts racing. If not for the caution needed towards their rivals, they would have pounced forward to grab the items and examine them closely by now.

"Taoist Qingxuan, there are six items: the dagger, the Cultivation Techniques, and the porcelain vases can be easily divided, but we don't know what's inside the wooden box. I think we should open the wooden box first to see what's inside before deciding how to distribute them, what do you say?"

"Fine. Let me see what treasure is in this wooden box."

Qingxuan approached the stone bed, picked up the wooden box, and slowly opened it. He glanced inside and couldn't hide his disappointment.

Inside the wooden box, there were exactly ten jade stones the size of pigeon eggs. The stones were a fiery red color, resembling ten balls of flame, emitting dazzling and captivating light.

To ordinary people, each of these ten red jade stones was worth a fortune, but for a Martial Artist like Taoist Qingxuan, no matter how expensive the jade stones were, they were not as valuable as a Cultivation Technique or even a single pill.

Just as Qingxuan opened the wooden box, Fang Bai, who was hidden in the small woods outside the cave, felt streaks of Essence Energy spreading out.

"Essence Stones!"

Fang Bai immediately became excited.

Although the Essence Energy that spread from the cave was not very strong, Fang Bai instantly guessed it came from Essence Stones, and it was most likely the lowest grade among the seven colors — the Red Essence Stone.

For Fang Bai, who was desperately in need of cultivation resources at the moment, even if the effectiveness of the Red Essence Stone for cultivation was slightly poor, it was still far better than having nothing at all.

Chapter 107: The Masked Man

The jade pendant that Xia Chenyu originally wore did contain a strand of Essence Energy, but after being carved by human hands, the Essence Energy had almost dwindled away, making it less effective for cultivation.

Ever since Fang Bai learned that the jade stones in this world were similar to the Essence Stones of the Cultivation World, he had been preparing to work hard to earn money and then purchase a large amount of uncarved jade stones for cultivation.

"These jade stones are obviously valuable, but I have no interest in them. They're for you, Misty Rain Tower."

Taoist Qingxuan closed the wooden box and casually tossed it to Wen Xiangrong.

Wen Xiangrong took a quick glance at the red jade stones in the wooden box and with a chuckle, handed it over to a Misty Rain Tower disciple beside him.

Although Qingcheng Temple was a Semi-Hidden Sect and its disciples focused on cultivation, rarely engaging with the material world, they didn't place much importance on wealth.

However, Misty Rain Tower was different; their disciples were deeply immersed in the secular world, with many among them being business elites who valued money a great deal more.

In Wen Xiangrong's eyes, the color and quality of those ten red jade stones were excellent, each worth at least a million, making the ten stones worth tens of millions.

To anyone, tens of millions of dollars were not a small sum.

Taoist Qingxuan picked up the dagger and drew it from its black sheath, instantly emitting a cold glow that made many people on the scene shiver uncontrollably.

"What a fine dagger!"

Wen Xiangrong exclaimed loudly in praise.

Taoist Qingxuan chuckled, swinging the dagger in his hand and turning to strike at a corner of the stone table. With a light sound, the dagger effortlessly cut off a piece of the stone table and dropped it to the ground.

"It cuts through stone like mud, indeed a fine dagger! This dagger is claimed by Qingcheng Temple!"

Taoist Qingxuan returned the dagger to its sheath and put it into his bag.

"It's actually 'Gathering Yuan Pills'! Haha, and they're Heaven Level 'Gathering Yuan Pills' at that. We've struck it rich this time!"

Taoist Qingxuan saw that the two jade bottles were identical, with the words "Gathering Yuan Pill" written on them, and was delighted once again.

"Gathering Yuan Pills" are refined from nine kinds of precious medicinal herbs, each with over a hundred years of medicinal age. Even the Hidden Sects seldom possessed such pills, making them priceless treasures to the Semi-Hidden Sect martial artists.

"Two bottles of 'Gathering Yuan Pills,' one for each of us. As for the two cultivation techniques, I have the right to choose first. Mr. Wen, do you have any objections?"

With reluctance, Taoist Qingxuan handed one bottle of "Gathering Yuan Pills" to Wen Xiangrong, kept one for himself, and then turned his attention to the last two cultivation techniques.

Wen Xiangrong rolled his eyes, thinking, what good does it do to have an opinion? Will this old fellow listen to me?

Taoist Qingxuan ignored him and picked up the two cultivation techniques, discovering that one was a sword technique and the other a movement technique.

"I'll take the sword technique, and you can have the movement technique."

Qingcheng Temple was known for its sword techniques, ranking among the best even among the Semi-Hidden Sects, but when Taoist Qingxuan reviewed the Heaven Level sword technique in his hands, he found it far more intricate and superior to all the sword techniques he had practiced before, and he was ecstatic with joy.

As for the movement technique, Qingcheng Temple had the Flying Dragon Body Method, which was not inferior to Wudang's Cloud Ladder Leap, so its importance was less than that of the sword technique.

To avoid further conflict with Misty Rain Tower and to take the treasures back to Qingcheng Temple, Taoist Qingxuan resisted the urge to claim the movement technique for himself, and instead, handed it over to Wen Xiangrong.

In this way, Qingcheng Temple obtained a dagger, a Heaven Level sword technique, and a bottle of Heaven Level "Gathering Yuan Pills."

Meanwhile, Misty Rain Tower obtained a Heaven Level movement technique, a bottle of Heaven Level "Gathering Yuan Pills," and a box of jade stones that were of little use to martial artists.

On the surface, six treasures split between them, three each—it seemed very fair, but every martial artist present knew that Qingguan City had gained the advantage.

For any martial artist, a dagger that could carve stone as if it were mud was far more useful than a box of jade.

However, the division of the treasures had been previously agreed upon; Qingcheng Temple getting a bit of an advantage, and Misty Rain Tower raised no objections.

But when Wen Xiangrong took the Heaven Level movement technique and skimmed through it, a fierce and brutal glint flashed in his eyes.

"We've got the treasures, let's go!"

Taoist Qingxu waved his hand expansively and, with a dozen or so disciples from the Qingcheng Temple, strode towards the cave entrance without bothering to deal with Wen Xiangrong and his company.

When Wen Xiangrong saw that Qingxu had walked a distance away, he sneered with disdain and quickly stepped forward, retrieving a round, smooth medicinal pill from the mouth of the deceased Heaven Level Martial Artist.

"I knew it, the body of a Heaven Level Martial Artist remaining uncorrupted for so many years, maintaining its youthful appearance, there had to be some treasure preventing decay and preserving youth. Heh, the value of this pill exceeds that of the dagger by far! That old Taoist Qingxu thinks he's taken a huge advantage!"

While thinking, Wen Xiangrong carefully placed the pill into a jade bottle, and then, with a wave of his hand, led the subordinates of Misty Rain Tower out of the cave.

As he walked outside the cave, Wen Xiangrong saw a scene that made him pause, an odd expression flitting across his face.

The group from Qingcheng Temple hadn't left the valley and were instead blocked by a person at the entrance of the cave.

The one blocking them was a man wearing a ghastly mask.

From his build, it was clear he was a man, and a very young one at that.

The masked man was dressed in a black T-shirt, paired with blue jeans, and white sneakers on his feet. He had a travel backpack slung over his shoulder, resembling a city youth in the midst of travel.

In fact, the martial artists at the scene also took the masked man for a tourist who happened upon the valley by chance, figuring he might have stumbled in here accidentally.

And wearing a ghostly mask might have been a peculiar quirk of this urban youth.

Yet, he dared to block the path of the martial artists from Qingcheng Temple, which was incredibly bold.

The martial artists in the valley, who had been at each other's throats over the treasures just moments ago, did not care whether the masked man was a martial artist or a common man. If they were not on speaking terms, they might just kill on a whim.

"Brother, listen to me, leave this place at once. What's happening here is not something a commoner like you can get involved in!"

Ghost Hand was one of the few martial artists there with a sense of chivalry, and he never killed commoners. Seeing Fang Bai looking like a stunned greenhorn, he could not bear to see him killed without reason and called out loudly from a distance.

The masked man turned his head to look at Ghost Hand and chuckled, "I like you, you seem pretty agreeable. Fine, once I snatch up all of the Heaven Level Martial Artist's treasures, I'll share some with you."

"You're aware of the Heaven Level Martial Artist's heritage? You... are you a martial artist too?"

Ghost Hand's eyes widened in disbelief as he looked at the masked man.

He did not sense the commanding aura typically associated with a martial artist coming from the masked man.

If the masked man truly was a martial artist, then there was only one possibility—that his strength far surpassed his own, so much so that he couldn't sense his martial artist aura at all.

"That's right, I am a martial artist."

The masked man said with a smile, "That's why I am also very interested in the Heaven Level Martial Artist's heritage."

He then turned his gaze to Taoist Qingxu across from him, beckoned with his finger, and added, "Now, hand over the heritage you got from the Heaven Level Martial Artist, and I'll let you leave. Otherwise, once a battle starts, you may end up just like these corpses on the ground, never able to leave this place again."

Chapter 108: The Sparrow Stalks the Mantis

"This guy must be insane!"

"He doesn't have the aura of a martial artist, yet he wants to impersonate one? His brain must be messed up!"

"Judging by his outfit, he must be a tourist. It's not easy for him to have made it here!"

"A good dog doesn't block the road, move aside, or I'll slaughter you, you road-blocking dog!"

...

The disciples of Qingcheng Temple looked at the masked man as if looking at a fool, with some already unable to hold back their laughter.

The masked man was, of course, Fang Bai who had been tracking them all the way here.

Everything that had just happened in the cave had been heard loud and clear by Fang Bai, whose senses were exceptionally keen. Seeing that the people from Qingcheng Temple wanted to leave with the treasure, he stepped out from the small forest and confronted them head on, blocking their path.

All six Heaven Level Martial Artist relics were something Fang Bai intended to claim for himself, especially the ten Red Essence Stones infused with Essence Energy—he was not going to let them go.

In terms of strength, he was slightly stronger than the ferocious White Ape, so taking on the remnants of Qingcheng Temple and Misty Rain Tower, he anticipated victory with no suspense.

While the other disciples of Qingcheng Temple ridiculed Fang Bai, Taoist Qingxuan did not join in their laughter.

Because he simply could not laugh.

In the eyes of others, Fang Bai was either a madman or a fool.

But in the eyes of Qingxuan, Fang Bai was an extremely dangerous individual.

The fact that the other party knew about the "Heaven Level Martial Artist relics" meant he had been lurking nearby the whole time and overheard the conversations between the disciples from the four major sects.

The most terrifying part was that if he had not chosen to reveal himself, not a single disciple among the hundreds from the four major sects would have noticed his presence.

All of this was enough to show that the person wearing the demonic mask was not only a martial artist but also more powerful than all the martial artists present.

Qingxuan concluded that Fang Bai's strength was at least comparable to that of the White Ape.

Listening to the laughter of the Qingcheng Temple disciples behind him, Qingxuan's face alternated between green and white, his back already soaked with cold sweat.

"Our Qingcheng Temple paid the price of nearly twenty disciples' lives to obtain three Heaven Level Martial Artist relics. If the benefactor truly desires them, we can offer one to you. However, it's absolutely impossible to take all three," said Qingxuan with a firm look, but his heart was filled with bitterness.

Earlier, hundreds of disciples from the four major sects had, at a grievous cost, finally managed to slay the White Ape.

Now, with more than half of the disciples from the four major sects gone, including two Profound Level Martial Artists, how could they possibly be a match for Fang Bai?

Rather than waiting for the other party to forcefully take the treasure, it was better to actively offer one in exchange for safe departure.

This is what Qingxuan thought, but whether Fang Bai would agree, he had no confidence at all.

If it were him, with great advantage, he would certainly take all the relics left by the Heaven Level Martial Artists for himself.

For this, he would not hesitate to kill everyone present who dared to oppose him.

Fang Bai had said before that once the battle began, the disciples of Qingcheng Temple might end up like the corpses on the ground, never able to leave this place.

Qingxuan did not think Fang Bai was joking about this in the slightest.

That's why he decided to proactively offer up a treasure to avoid conflict with Fang Bai as much as possible.

"Has Taoist Qingxuan gone mad too?"

As soon as Qingxuan's words were spoken, the laughter of the disciples of Qingcheng Temple behind him stopped abruptly, and everyone's eyes were filled with disbelief and astonishment.

Many of them couldn't understand why Taoist Qingxuan, a Profound Level Martial Artist, would show weakness and kowtow to someone from the mundane world.

Some astute disciples from Qingcheng Temple pondered carefully and shared Taoist Qingxuan's earlier speculation. When they looked at Fang Bai again, their eyes couldn't help but show more fear.

Ghost Hand also stared at Fang Bai, dumbfounded.

Hearing Taoist Qingxuan's submissive words, Ghost Hand immediately understood that Fang Bai was a martial artist of extraordinary strength.

It was laughable that he had just advised Fang Bai to leave quickly, worrying that he might get killed.

"A dagger, two cultivation techniques, two bottles of medicinal pills, a box of jade stones... You've obtained six treasures of a Heaven Level Martial Artist from the cave. If you want to live, hand them all over to me! If you don't want to live, that's fine too, I'll kill you and take them myself!"

Fang Bai stood arrogantly in front of the Qingcheng Temple disciples, speaking in a domineering manner.

At this time, Fang Bai no longer deliberately suppressed his essence energy, releasing it completely.

Standing opposite Fang Bai, Taoist Qingxuan immediately felt an invisible pressure, like a small mountain bearing down on him, making his breathing stifled.

"Just as I thought!"

Seeing his speculation confirmed, that Fang Bai's strength was indeed comparable to the White Ape, Taoist Qingxuan's face darkened, and he sighed in his heart.

Under the current circumstances, unless he fought all out against Fang Bai, the three treasures of a Heaven Level Martial Artist he possessed were definitely not safe.

"Taoist Qingxuan, we paid a huge price to obtain these treasures. Are you willing to just hand them over to someone else?"

Wen Xiangrong from Misty Rain Tower went to Taoist Qingxuan's side, standing shoulder to shoulder with him, and spoke softly.

His folding fan was already put away, tightly grasped in his right hand, watching Fang Bai as if facing a great enemy, as if afraid he would suddenly attack.

"Mr. Wen, you mean..."

Taoist Qingxuan turned his head and glanced at Wen Xiangrong.

"Better to be a shattered jade than an intact tile! If someone wants me to hand over the treasures of a Heaven Level Martial Artist, they'll have to kill me! Taoist Qingxuan, if we join forces, we might not be unable to fight him! Even if we can't beat him, at least we can hold him off and give our disciples a chance to escape with the treasures!"

Wen Xiangrong's expression was stern as he spoke to Taoist Qingxuan in a deep voice, wanting to form a united front with Qingxuan against a common enemy.

"Good! Then let's fight!"

Taoist Qingxuan took a deep breath, threw the dagger, cultivation techniques, and medicinal pills he had obtained to a High Rank Yellow Level Martial Artist behind him, and shouted fiercely, "Dongling, take the treasures and go! You must bring them back to our temple!"

As he shouted, he swiftly wielded his horsetail whisk and charged forward, launching a swift and fierce attack at Fang Bai.

"Wen Long, you leave with the items too!"

Almost simultaneously, Wen Xiangrong handed the three treasures he had obtained to a disciple of the Misty Rain Tower and followed closely behind Qingxuan, attacking Fang Bai with his fan.

The other disciples from Qingcheng Temple and Misty Rain Tower also wielded their weapons, courageously charging at Fang Bai without looking back.

Dongling from Qingcheng Temple and Wen Long from Misty Rain Tower, each holding three treasures of a Heaven Level Martial Artist, desperately dashed towards the eastern ridge of the valley.

As long as they could cross that ridge and enter the lush forest beyond, it would be extremely difficult for Fang Bai to find them.

There were less than forty people from Qingcheng Temple and Misty Rain Tower combined. If their opponent were the White Ape, they might have been able to hold it off for a while.

But Fang Bai's "Divine Elephant Eight Desolate Steps" combined with the "Dragon Soaring to the Heavens" movement technique was peculiarly fast and extremely exquisite, allowing him to easily break free from the encirclement of nearly forty people.

"Fall for me!"

Fang Bai, who charged out from the encirclement, launched a series of kicks, sending two chicken egg-sized stones whistling from the ground, striking Dongling and Wen Long squarely in the back.

With a cry of pain, both instantly passed out, and the six treasures of a Heaven Level Martial Artist in their hands scattered on the ground.

Chapter 109: Intercepting Dragon Hand

Gulp—

Ghost Hand watched the six Heaven Level Martial Artist treasures drop to the ground, his Adam's apple bobbing involuntarily as he swallowed several times.

He resisted the urge to immediately rush over, grab the six treasures, and flee the scene.

Ghost Hand was clever and knew that although the man in the mask was fighting desperately with Qingcheng Temple and Misty Rain Tower disciples, the moment he dared to run off with the six Heaven Level Martial Artist treasures, he would instantly become the public enemy of both sides.

By then, not to mention Wen Xiangrong and Taoist Qingxuan, even the masked man could easily kill him.

After Dongling and Wen Long had passed out, disciples from Qingcheng Temple and Misty Rain Tower kept flying over to their side, picking up the treasures and running.

But their fate was the same; no one could escape the stone attack from Fang Bai.

In the blink of an eye, six disciples each from Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple had been knocked out by the stones kicked by Fang Bai while trying to pick up the treasures.

For a while, the six Heaven Level Martial Artist treasures on the ground became like death warrants; no one dared to touch them again.

Qingxu and Wen Xiangrong knew that without killing Fang Bai, they could forget about taking any of the treasures away. So, they stopped sending their disciples to pick up the treasures and flee. Instead, they focused their attention and fought against Fang Bai with all their might.

Fang Bai had boldly declared he would kill all the disciples of Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple present, but in reality, he wasn't as ferociously cruel as the White Ape, who would kill without blinking and was utterly callous. His greater purpose was to deter the enemy.

When it really came to a fight, Fang Bai would at most knock the opponent out or make them lose their combat ability; he didn't actually kill anyone.

After all, Fang Bai's purpose in making a move was solely for the treasures, and he didn't have any deep-seated hatred with the two major sects of Qingcheng Temple and Misty Rain Tower.

Therefore, as long as they didn't threaten his life, Fang Bai had no intention of killing them.

Moreover, Fang Bai was wearing a ghastly mask when he appeared, with his entire face covered. Even if he gave his opponents a chance to live, they wouldn't know who their enemy was and would have no target for revenge.

Fang Bai, moving with the "Divine Elephant Eight Desolate Steps" and using the "Tiger Roar Thunder Fist," went back and forth unopposed among the few remaining disciples of the two great sects.

Not wanting to kill didn't mean that Fang Bai was soft-hearted.

Slap—

Slap—

Ah—

Hiss—

The crisp sounds of broken bones and tendons and the sharp, piercing screams of agony continued unabated at the site; each scream signified a disciple from the two sects losing their ability to fight.

After advancing to the intermediate stage of the Accumulating Essence Realm with the second level of the "Dragon-Tiger-Lion-Elephant Technique," Fang Bai's execution of the "Divine Elephant Eight Desolate Steps" reached the power of the Four Symbols.

Every time his foot touched the ground, the earth trembled, stones flew and sand scattered, dust billowed, enveloping an area of two or three zhang.

This sight had an even greater effect on the psyche of the opponents.

The disciples of the two sects, engulfed in the dust stirred up by Fang Bai's footsteps, could hardly see each other's figures.

They could only hear the roar of a fierce tiger and the distant sound of thunder that accompanied Fang Bai's punches.

Occasionally, in the midst of the diffuse dust, they could also hear the Lion's Roar Sonic Waves from Fang Bai.

This sound wave attack technique, mimicking the roar of an enraged lion, produced a powerful shockwave that often caught opponents off guard.

The slightly weaker Martial Artists would experience temporary deafness or a sensation of dizziness due to these sudden sonic wave attacks.

Quite a few disciples from Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple suffered greatly from Fang Bai's "Lion's Roar Sonic Wave," becoming unsteady and falling to the ground, only to be knocked out by a casual palm strike from Fang Bai.

Even Ghost Hand and others watching from afar were affected by the sound waves and had to retreat to a further distance.

"Good heavens, this masked man is incredibly powerful! Our Master of Myriad Medicine Valley is no match for him!"

Fang Bai moved left and right, as if he were in a land where no man had tread, leaving disciples from the two major sects collapsing wherever he went. Ghost Hand watched, enraptured and tipsy with excitement, unable to help shouting out praises loudly at the most thrilling moments.

Soon, Wen Xiangrong and Taoist Qingxuan found themselves to be 'commanders without an army'.

Their accompanying disciples had all been knocked down by Fang Bai, leaving only the two of them still fighting tooth and nail.

And judging by how relaxed and effortless Fang Bai looked, it seemed that he could easily beat them both.

The reason Fang Bai hadn't struck them down hard was likely because he was toying with them on purpose.

Looking at Fang Bai's mocking gaze, Taoist Qingxuan and Wen Xiangrong felt a maddening itch in their teeth. They exchanged glances and were both spurred on by a desperate will to fight.

"This is too much to bear!"

Taoist Qingxuan bellowed, his wide Daoist robe billowing without any wind, like an airbag filled to the brim.

At the same time, the aura he released also became crazed and fierce.

Hair as white as snow and pouring down like a three-thousand-zhang waterfall!

Faced with Fang Bai's relentless pressure, Taoist Qingxuan didn't hesitate to expend his life force, tapping into his body's potential to unleash the strongest attack of his life.

True Yuan surged into his horsetail whisk, making each of its bristles stand on end. Hundreds of whisk bristles, resembling steel needles, shot out suddenly, covering the sky and enveloping Fang Bai like a dense barrage.

The range of the whisk bristles' onslaught reached several zhang in radius, and the distance between the two men was very close. It seemed that no matter how skilled Fang Bai's movements were, he would have difficulty avoiding the fate of being turned into a porcupine by the silver needles.

Fang Bai didn't flee.

Facing the hundreds of bristles streaking towards him, his expression remained calm. His arms moved rapidly, tracing one circle after another in front of him.

After several circles were drawn, there seemed to be visible ripples forming in the space before Fang Bai.

Those ripples, like those on water, made Fang Bai's entire figure appear much more blurred.

The hundreds of whisk bristles, flying at high speed, slowed drastically as they reached the rippling space in front of Fang Bai, as if they had been trapped in a swamp.

Then, with the corner of Fang Bai's mouth twitching slightly revealing a scornful smile, his hands shot up again and again, and the hundreds of bristles were astonishingly caught in his palms.

Seeing his most secret technique thwarted by Fang Bai, Taoist Qingxuan's face turned ashen, and he descended into utter despair.

The technique Fang Bai used to counter Taoist Qingxuan's whisk bristle attack was named "Intercepting Dragon Hand," a cultivation technique specifically designed to counter projectile attacks.

To perform "Intercepting Dragon Hand," one needed to fuse powerful True Yuan with exquisite palm techniques.

First, form an invisible energy wall in front of oneself using True Yuan to obstruct and slow down the projectiles' speed, and then catch the projectiles with outstanding hand movements.

This was the ingenious application of "Intercepting Dragon Hand."

When "Intercepting Dragon Hand" was cultivated to a profound level, even attacks from a True Dragon soaring through the skies could be intercepted, let alone mere whisk bristle projectiles from Taoist Qingxuan?

"I'm returning these to you!"

With a light shout, Fang Bai forcefully threw his hands up.

The hundreds of whisk bristles that Fang Bai had caught in his palms now shot out like a dense barrage of rain, all aimed back at Taoist Qingxuan.

Even Wen Xiangrong, who stood beside Taoist Qingxuan, was enveloped in this barrage of whisk bristles.

Fang Bai was significantly stronger than Taoist Qingxuan, and his technique for launching projectiles was incomparably superior.

Chapter 110: Obtaining the Treasure

Those hundreds of dust threads in his hands seemed to have been infused with life itself; when shot out, each one targeted an acupuncture point on Qingxu and Wen Xiangrong's bodies, and they were more than twice as fast.

Qingxu and Wen Xiangrong had just gone through several battles, their True Yuan and physical strength nearly depleted. They hadn't had time to catch their breath and recover, leaving them at the end of their rope.

Moreover, neither of them could produce a move similar to Fang Bai's "Intercepting Dragon Hand." Seeing a curtain of white rain looming over them, the two couldn't help but show shock on their faces.

Despite their best efforts to dodge, each was pierced by a body full of dust threads, resembling two oversized white porcupines.

Fang Bai's precision in targeting acupuncture points was unmatched. He inserted dozens of silver needles into Qingxu and Wen Xiangrong, each needle sealing an acupuncture point on their bodies.

Qingxu and Wen Xiangrong felt their bodies go numb in an instant, losing all sensation and unable to stand, they fell to the ground.

It was fortunate that Fang Bai didn't intend to kill; otherwise, a slightly deeper thrust of those dust threads would have cut off their breath and they would have died on the spot.

Still, two Profound Level Martial Artists, now rendered incapable of the slightest movement in their bodies apart from their facial features, laid there, almost no different from invalids.

At this moment, even an ordinary person without the strength to truss a chicken could easily finish them off.

Fang Bai glanced at Wen Xiangrong and Qingxu, no longer paying them any mind, and beckoned to Ghost Hand to come over.

"What are your orders, senior?"

Ghost Hand, having witnessed Fang Bai eliminate dozens of Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple disciples in moments, and being more powerful than the White Ape, was already filled with respect. He had no choice but to steel himself and approach, cupping his fists and respectfully asking.

Although Fang Bai was wearing a mask and Ghost Hand couldn't determine his true age, in the world of martial artists, capability commanded respect. Regardless of Fang Bai's age, addressing him as a senior could never be a mistake.

Fang Bai appeared to be around twenty years old, slightly younger than Ghost Hand, but his mental age was already several tens of thousands of years. Thus, being addressed as a "senior" by Ghost Hand didn't feel awkward to him at all.

"Go get the six Heaven Level Martial Artist treasures."

Fang Bai pointed towards the distant ground where the six treasures lay scattered and said to Ghost Hand.

Without a word, Ghost Hand ran over, carefully collected the six Heaven Level Martial Artist treasures, and brought them back to Fang Bai.

"I'll keep these three items. The dagger and two cultivation techniques, as I said, I'll give to you," Fang Bai said, picking up two jade bottles containing "Gathering Yuan Pills" and a wooden box with ten Red Essence Stones. He then waved his hand.

After speaking, Fang Bai didn't wait for Ghost Hand's reaction and turned to leave, drifting away.

His movement technique was incredibly fast, and in the blink of an eye, he had left the valley and disappeared into the vast mountains.

For Fang Bai, what happened in the valley was but a trivial matter, and the disciples of the four major sects were just fleeting passersby in his path of cultivation. He had no interest or intention to entangle with them too deeply.

Ghost Hand stood staring at Fang Bai's departing figure for a long while before coming to his senses.

He could never have imagined that a simple act of kindness from before would bring such a massive reward. Looking at the three treasures in his hands, he felt as if he was in a dream.

"Junior Brother Liu, come and pinch me! Put some strength into it!"

After a while, Ghost Hand turned his head and said to a Myriad Medicine Valley disciple who approached him.

The disciple surnamed Liu reached out and pinched him hard on his body.

Ouch—

Ghost Hand cried out, the pain nearly bringing tears to his eyes.

"It's not a dream, it's real!"

Ghost Hand, ecstatic, brandished the dagger and two cultivation techniques in his hand and said to the dozen disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley surrounding him, "This trip was not in vain; we've got three treasures. Once we return to Myriad Medicine Valley, we will surely receive the Valley Master's rewards!"

After a pause, he continued, "There's no time to delay, let's leave immediately and head back to Myriad Medicine Valley."

The dozen Myriad Medicine Valley disciples responded and, with Ghost Hand in their midst, cheerfully exited the valley.

As for the dozens of disciples from Qingcheng Temple and Misty Rain Tower knocked out by Fang Bai, including the incapacitated Wen Xiangrong and Qingxu, Ghost Hand and the others paid them no heed.

This was deep in the mountains, where at night, beasts would roam. Whether the people in the valley would survive was left to fate.

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The torrential downpour was like the waters from the Galaxy pouring down, instantly enveloping Yanjing City, with its population of over ten million, within.

For a time, Yanjing's streets and alleys were nearly empty of pedestrians, and vehicles became sparse.

At this moment, Fang Bai, holding a small black umbrella he carried with him, braved the wind and rain, striding along a national highway outside Yanjing City.

Such fierce rain and powerful winds did not seem to impact Fang Bai, as not a drop of rain splashed upon him.

After leaving Fuhu Mountain, the road to Yanjing was basically a flat plain.

Fang Bai had visited many places but hadn't found any more useful cultivation resources. Seeing that time was running out, he stopped dawdling and flew straight to the vicinity of Yanjing.

As for the "Gathering Yuan Pills" and ten Red Essence Stones he had obtained in Fuhu Mountain, Fang Bai planned to settle down in Yanjing before finding a secluded, uninhabited place to take them out for cultivation.

With two bottles, a total of ten "Gathering Yuan Pills," and ten Red Essence Stones, aided by these cultivation resources and his own training, Fang Bai believed he could elevate his strength by a small realm in a short time.

Because of the heavy rain, there were practically no pedestrians on the national highway, and only after a lengthy interval would a vehicle be seen speeding past.

As long as there were no people, Fang Bai's speed would suddenly increase, flying forward for a while.

When a vehicle drove past, Fang Bai would slow his pace, appearing like a traveler in a hurry.

When he reached the middle of a stone bridge hundreds of meters long, Fang Bai's steps slowed again. He glanced over the tree-lined paths on the other side of the bridge.

"There's killing Qi."

Fang Bai frowned slightly, muttering under his breath.

Di di——

Just then, a series of urgent car horn sounds came from behind.

Fang Bai moved his foot to the side, stepping out of the way.

Turning his head, he saw four identical black sedans escorting a silver armored vehicle passing through the heavy rain curtains towards the opposite end of the bridge.

Fang Bai had excellent vision. As the convoy passed by, he saw through the window gap of the silver armored vehicle inside sat four people.

The two in the front were both in black suits, the standard dress of bodyguards, one serving as the driver and the other sitting in the passenger seat.

The two in the back included an old man in a red Tang suit and a young girl with twin ponytails.

The man in the Tang suit looked to be over seventy years old, and the twin-tailed girl appeared to be only thirteen or fourteen. Her profile suggested she was quite beautiful.

"Those lying in ambush in the forest ahead must have targeted this convoy," he deduced.

Watching the convoy that flew past him, Fang Bai continued to walk, holding his black umbrella, but slowed down even more.