

Doctor 1101

Chapter 1101: Three Punches To Determine Life and Death

The stone platform in Purple Flame Sect's Practice Battle Arena was constructed from special materials sourced from the mountains, even more durable than steel, and it has been the stage for the martial arts competition segments of Thousand Lakes Country's Sect assemblies for generations.

For thousands of years, this platform had witnessed countless battles between martial artists and endured numerous True Yuan blasts, yet it remained unscathed.

However, today, as Fang Bai faced off against the Purple Flame Sect's best, just a few clashes were enough to cause a visible crack in the stone platform that otherwise would have remained intact for a millennium.

That fine crack was like a deep wound slashed across the hearts of the Purple Flame Sect disciples present, causing them profound pain.

This huge stone platform, unique in all of Thousand Lakes Country and one of the symbols and pride of the Purple Flame Sect, its fracturing was a sign to the disciples of the beginning of their Sect's decline.

Amidst the resounding echoes, Fang Bai was once again blasted backward by two small storms of Wind Essence Qi, his figure flying backward.

This time, Fang Bai was propelled even further, and when he finally steadied himself midair, he was at the very edge of the stone platform.

Blood began to ooze from Fang Bai's mouth and nose, his breathing was erratic, Essence Energy scattered, clearly more injured than before.

Under normal circumstances, a martial artist with such injuries should have experienced a decrease in strength by at least twenty to thirty percent, but to the astonishment of brothers He Yushu and He Linfeng, Fang Bai's form stabilized almost instantly after halting midair, his chaotic breath quickly steadying, scattered Essence Energy converging once more, and his fighting spirit soaring rather than waning.

"Come, fight again! Take my third punch!"

Under the shocked gaze of brothers He Yushu and He Linfeng, Fang Bai's figure shot down from the air once more, unleashing two more Flame Fists.

Fang Bai's attacks this time were fiercer. He Yushu and He Linfeng dared not relax in the slightest, marshaling their utmost True Yuan, responding with punches...

On the stone platform, the sound of impact reverberated every few breaths, each time louder than the last, each collision of True Yuan creating more and more cracks on the platform.

The more He Yushu and He Linfeng fought, the more terrified they became, for they found Fang Bai seemingly blessed by the gods, growing stronger with each exchange; every time the brothers pushed him back together, he would reorganize and launch an even more ferocious counterattack without any sign of weakening True Yuan.

Fang Bai grew stronger as he fought, his True Yuan seemingly inexhaustible.

However, for brothers He Yushu and He Linfeng, their True Yuan was rapidly depleting, they grew weaker as they fought, inwardly cursing their luck.

When the head-on exchange reached the eighth punch, brothers He Yushu and He Linfeng lost their advantage, finally fell into disadvantage, and were oppressively suppressed by Fang Bai.

"This guy is a monster!"

Zu Tiangang, who had retreated dozens of meters away from the stone platform watched, dumbfounded, as He Yushu and He Linfeng kept being driven back under Fang Bai's relentless assault. The hope that had kindled in his heart once again turned to despair, his face ashen as fear re-filled his gaze when he looked at Fang Bai.

When brothers He Yushu and He Linfeng, both early Cosmic Level fighters, had appeared, Zu Tiangang felt a surge of elation as if rescued from certain death, almost bursting into tears, believing that with the

brothers' combined might, Fang Bai was doomed and the Purple Flame Sect would once again emerge unshakeable as the foremost power in Thousand Lakes Country.

Yet, in the brief encounter between Fang Bai and the He brothers, defeat had quickly become apparent, greatly beyond Zu Tiangang's expectations.

If the He brothers lost, who else could stop Fang Bai from slaughtering the high-ranking members of the Purple Flame Sect?

Boom—

Boom—

Boom—

Fang Bai launched three successive punches, which the He brothers met with hard resistance.

"Mr. Fang, stop for a moment!"

"We have something to talk about!"

Pushed back to the edge of the stone platform by Fang Bai's barrage of punches, the He brothers suddenly called for a halt.

Zu Tiangang looked on intently and saw the He brothers' faces flushed red, their True Yuan scattered, their breathing in disorder. Most of their beards and hair had been singed off by the Flame Fist, their clothes burnt and perforated with several large holes, giving off a stench of charred fabric. They were in a far more sorry state than Fang Bai had been moments earlier.

It seemed that they had taken quite the beating under Fang Bai's triple consecutive attacks; if Fang Bai were to launch another round of three punches, the He brothers would surely be injured.

Fang Bai was enjoying the fight and had no intention of stopping. He burst out laughing and said, "Stop? Haha, if you can take another three of my punches, I'll let you go! Otherwise, leave your lives here!"

The Chaos Origin Energy within Fang Bai's Qi Sea was now swirling like a high-speed oceanic vortex, generating an astonishing absorption force. When the Wind Essence Qi emitted by the He brothers collided with this force, a portion of it would be sucked into Fang Bai's body, quickly coursing through his meridians. After several complete circulation cycles, it eventually turned into a strand of pure Wind Essence Qi and merged into the swirling Chaos Origin Energy.

Although this refined and nearly invisible strand of Wind Essence Qi was as thin as a hair, it still provided some assistance to Fang Bai's Cultivation Level.

Fang Bai felt that if he could force the He brothers to tap into their latent potential and exchange a few more punches with him, he could possibly use their power to break through his current limits and ascend to a new realm.

"Come on, these three punches will decide your fate! First, take my punch!"

With a roaring shout, Fang Bai took a heavy step forward, unleashing the most powerful Flame Fist he had used since the start of their exchange.

The step he took was that of the Divine Elephant Eight Desolate Steps from the Dragon-Tiger-Lion-Elephant Technique. As his foot hit the ground, True Yuan instantly seeped into the earth and extended in all directions, causing the stone platform within dozens of feet to tremble ceaselessly, as if an ancient behemoth had broken through the primordial Barrier with its mighty trample.

With that single step, several cracks on the stone platform instantly widened by several times, and plumes of stone dust billowed out from the fissures.

The He brothers were unsteady on their feet, their bodies swaying. Amid their shock, a surge of Fire Primordial Qi, seemingly capable of burning everything to ashes, bore down on them with terrifying momentum.

Empowered by the Divine Elephant Eight Desolate Steps, the psychological impact on the He brothers magnified the force of Fang Bai's attack.

"This punch is too strong, we have to go all out!"

Seeing Fang Bai's ferocious Flame Fist approaching, the He brothers realized they couldn't withstand it with their normal strength alone. Exchanging a knowing glance, they simultaneously spat out a mouthful of blood to stimulate their potential and each unleashed their Dragon Spin Fist.

The brothers reluctantly summoned their latent potential in order to defend themselves, their Dragon Spin Fists having threefold increased in power compared to before. They thought they could gain the upper hand, but when the fists collided, both were repelled several feet, resulting in a stalemate.

However, this stalemate came at the cost of the He brothers activating their body's latent potential, whilst Fang Bai had only struck a normal punch. Thus, the He brothers were effectively defeated.

Chapter 1102: Difficult Problem

Unexpectedly, after blasting out the first punch, Fang Bai did not immediately launch a second punch, but instead stood still with his hands hanging by his sides, eyes slightly closed, seemingly entering a state of cultivation.

Fang Bai indeed entered a cultivation state.

The Wind Tornado Fists thrown by the He brothers after stimulating their body's potential were like two massive hammers, smashing the shackles binding Fang Bai's cultivation level and clearing the obstacles on his path to advancement.

The Chaos Origin Energy floating in Fang Bai's Qi Sea transformed into thousands of threads under the guidance of his Divine Sense, flowing into the countless meridians in his body, where it circulated wildly, rapidly expanding and fortifying these meridians, making them wider and more resilient, capable of accommodating more powerful Essence Energy.

After seventy-seven small cycles, the Chaos Origin Energy disseminated among the countless meridians finally returned to Fang Bai's Qi Sea, condensing into a mass.

Through Inner Vision, Fang Bai could see that the Chaos Origin Energy had increased slightly, and although the change was minuscule, the enhancement to Fang Bai's strength was substantial.

The moment the Chaos Origin Energy condensed into a mass, Fang Bai's body shook gently, indicating a successful advancement in level—his cultivation had reached the mid-Vast Level.

With the ability Fang Bai possessed to challenge higher levels, he could now contend against mid-Cosmic Level experts in the future.

Upon Fang Bai's advancement, the hundreds of martial artists in the Practice Battle Arena sensed the sudden surge of his intense and domineering aura, which nearly brought them to their knees in submission.

However, that oppressive force soon vanished without a trace, allowing all the martial artists to breathe a sigh of relief.

The pressure had appeared abruptly and disappeared just as quickly, within the span of one or two breaths, leading some martial artists to think it might have been a transient illusion.

Even the He brothers thought they were hallucinating and couldn't believe that Fang Bai would advance during such a duel.

"Take my second punch!"

After his advancement, Fang Bai still suppressed some of his power, appearing unchanged to the He brothers and others. He shouted once more and advanced a step forward using the Divine Elephant Eight Desolate Steps.

As he stepped down, the stone platform beneath his feet trembled thunderously; the cracks widened further with some now able to fit a fist.

At this rate, if Fang Bai were to take another two or three steps, this ancient stone platform, which had stood undestroyed for thousands of years, might very well shatter and collapse.

Just as Fang Bai was about to unleash his second punch, He Yushu and He Linfeng, the two brothers opposite him, staggered, then leaped off the stone platform, stepping through the air, fleeing in the opposite direction of Fang Bai.

Both had cultivated Wind System Martial Arts Techniques, known for their speed, and having just stimulated their body's potential, their escape was a few paces quicker than usual, vanishing from the vast Practice Battle Arena in the blink of an eye.

None of the hundreds of martial artists present, including Fang Bai, had expected He Yushu and He Linfeng, two Cosmic Level early-stage experts from a current second-tier Grand Sect, to flee from battle.

"If they can't win, they run... These two guys, to be so lacking in backbone!"

Fang Bai watched in astonishment as He Yushu and He Linfeng, the brothers, rapidly fled.

Zu Tiangang sat collapsed on the ground, wanting to cry but unable to shed tears, his gaze dull and lifeless as he watched the direction of the He brothers' escape, looking as if he had lost all vitality.

He Yushu and He Linfeng were Zu Tiangang's greatest reliance for survival. Now that both had fled, Zu Tiangang knew he was powerless to turn the situation around, and Fang Bai would certainly not let him go, suddenly feeling a fear of death, his mind going blank.

"Elder Han, please look after the disciples from Bitao Martial Academy at the scene for me, I will be back shortly. You will be well rewarded later!"

After leaving these words, Fang Bai vigorously stomped on the stone platform, using the momentum to leap several meters into the air. While in the air, he stimulated his Wind Essence Qi, gliding through the air like a giant bird, chasing after He Yushu and He Linfeng who had already escaped over a thousand meters.

Everyone at the scene felt a blur before their eyes, and when they looked up, Fang Bai's figure had already turned into a black dot in the air, disappearing in an instant at an unimaginably fast speed.

The stone platform, already showing several fist-sized cracks, could no longer withstand the force after Fang Bai's forceful stomp. It finally collapsed with a loud bang, fracturing into pieces, eliciting a series of exclamations from the martial artists present.

The "Elder Han" Fang Bai mentioned was, of course, Han Xingyu.

Fang Bai was going after He Yushu and He Linfeng and was also worried about leaving Ge Feng, Liu Qingqing, and others behind. After all, this was the headquarters of the Purple Flame Sect. Although Fang Bai had severely wounded the high-ranking members of the sect, there were still many capable direct and core disciples. If they were to attack collectively, the lives of the eight Bitao Martial Academy disciples would be at risk.

Being an Elder of the Xuannv Sect and a powerful Martial Artist, Han Xingyu could deter the disciples of the Purple Flame Sect present if she agreed to look after the Bitao Martial Academy disciples, ensuring they did not act rashly.

Moreover, Fang Bai believed that after having defeated the strong fighters of the Purple Flame Sect as well as He Yushu and He Linfeng, two Cosmic Level beginners, displaying his remarkable strength, he would certainly impress Han Xingyu deeply, making it difficult for her to refuse his request.

"This Fang Bai... has given me a tough problem," Han Xingyu mused to herself, a wry, helpless smile forming at the corner of her mouth.

This battle had indeed created enmity between Fang Bai and Swiftwind Valley.

Han Xingyu could have stayed out of the conflict between the two parties, but Fang Bai's last words before leaving forced her into a difficult choice.

If Han Xingyu chose to help Ge Feng and others, she would offend Swiftwind Valley, a proud Second Grade Great Sect, a consequence their Third Grade Sect could not bear.

On the other hand, if Han Xingyu refused Fang Bai's request, allowing Ge Feng and others to be attacked by the disciples of the Purple Flame Sect, she would offend Fang Bai. Coupled with the Xuannv Sect's

detention of the Linghu sisters, a deep and unresolved grudge between Fang Bai and the Xuannv Sect would arise.

On one side was a renowned Second Grade Great Sect in the True Martial Realm, and on the other was a dominant Cosmic Level expert who had defeated two Stewards of the Second Grade Great Sect and who was both an Alchemist and an Artifact Refiner. The choice was hugely headache-inducing for Han Xingyu.

As for the Purple Flame Sect, which had always maintained a friendly relationship with the Xuannv Sect, regardless of the outcome, it could not escape the fate of destruction this time. Han Xingyu was thus too weary to consider the feelings of the Purple Flame Sect disciples anymore.

"Fang Bai could return at any moment, and offending him could spell doom for us, and the Xuannv Sect would swiftly face his vengeance. Whereas Swiftwind Valley, being thousands of miles away from the Xuannv Sect, separated by vast mountains and rivers, even if they were to send troops to seek justice, it would take months. Sigh, there's no other choice but to prioritize the present..."

After quickly weighing her options, Han Xingyu decided to accept Fang Bai's request and protect Ge Feng and the others present.

Chapter 1103: Ge Feng's Concerns

"The disciples from Bitao Martial Academy are friends of our Xuannv Sect," she declared, her voice filled with resolve. "If anyone dares to harm them, they will be making an enemy of the Xuannv Sect!"

Seeing that hundreds, maybe thousands, of Purple Flame Sect disciples around her were showing signs of malice and seemed ready to attack Ge Feng and his companions, Han Xingyu stood up abruptly and shouted, her own Martial Artist Aura spreading, imposing a pressure that enveloped all directions.

At this moment, with the high-ranking members of the Purple Flame Sect heavily injured, Fang Bai and both He Yushu and He Linfeng having left one after the other, Han Xingyu had become the strongest person present. Moreover, with her status as an Elder of the Xuannv Sect, she immediately deterred those disciples of the Purple Flame Sect.

"Elder Ge, please come over here!"

Seeing that her words had the desired effect, Han Xingyu gestured to Ge Feng and his group.

After Fang Bai had left, Ge Feng and the others immediately sensed hostile intent from hundreds of Purple Flame Sect disciples around them. They were ready to fight to the death but had not expected Han Xingyu to extend a helping hand. After brief hesitation, they swiftly made their way to her side, led by Ge Feng.

The words Fang Bai had left with Han Xingyu before departing were conveyed through the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique; no one but Han Xingyu could hear them. Therefore, her protection of the Bitao Martial Academy disciples came as a surprise to many at the scene.

Although there were many disciples of the Purple Flame Sect gathered, they were leaderless and intimidated by Han Xingyu, and could only watch helplessly as Ge Feng and the other Bitao Martial Academy disciples flew into the midst of the Xuannv Sect disciples.

Standing beside Han Xingyu, Ge Feng knew under the reputation of the Xuannv Sect that the Purple Flame Sect disciples would not dare to act rashly. They were momentarily safe, and he let out a sigh of relief. Then, folding his arms in a respectful bow, he gratefully said, "Senior Han, thank you!"

"There's no need to be so formal, Elder Ge!" Han Xingyu replied, quickly returning the gesture with a wry smile. "Let's address each other as equals. I really can't bear the title of 'senior'!"

Though Han Xingyu was an Elder of a Third-Rank Sect and in both status and power far exceeded Ge Feng, an Elder of a Fourth-Rank Sect, Fang Bai had, on this day, single-handedly inflicted heavy damage on fourteen high-level members of the Purple Flame Sect, becoming famous in one fell swoop and known throughout the world. Following this, the rank of Bitao Martial Academy would surely rise significantly, surpassing the Xuannv Sect and possibly even most of the existing Third-Rank Sects of the True Martial Realm, approaching the level of Second-Rank Sects.

By then, as an Elder of Bitao Martial Academy, Ge Feng's status would naturally soar, and with the help of Fang Bai, a mid-rank Pill Master, Ge Feng's power was sure to improve rapidly. It was possible that in the not too distant future, he might catch up to Han Xingyu. Therefore, Han Xingyu did not dare to assume an air of superiority in front of Ge Feng.

Ge Feng, being a clever man, understood why Han Xingyu did not dare to act superior in his presence, and so he nodded and did not continue the formalities.

Some of the Purple Flame Sect disciples realized that the situation was beyond salvage. Fearing Fang Bai's potential return and further bloodshed, they didn't want to stay and wait for death. Quietly, they slipped away, and within a blink of an eye, a great number had left, leaving only a few loyal to the Purple Flame Sect still standing in the Practice Battle Arena, ready to share the fate of Zu Tiangang and the other high-ranking members.

As for the disciples from the various Sects attending the grand assembly, not a single one had left. They were all waiting for Fang Bai's return to witness the monumental change that had not been seen in Thousand Lakes Country for thousands of years.

Fang Bai, unstoppable and overwhelmingly victorious over the elite of the Purple Flame Sect, had toppled the Sect from its dominant position of thousands of years. Bitao Martial Academy was set to take its place as the new overlord, and when that happened, all the Fourth-Rank Sects would have to respect and follow Bitao Martial Academy.

Some of the more astute high-ranking members from the Sects approached Ge Feng to converse, all addressing him as "Elder Ge," their demeanor and tone filled with flattery and sycophancy.

Ge Feng had lived for decades, yet he had never enjoyed such honor and prestige before. He knew that all these changes were because of Fang Bai, and his heart couldn't help but fill with emotions and reflections.

Ge Feng was not carried away by excitement. Instead, he felt worried about the powerful strength Fang Bai had revealed.

Ge Feng knew that Fang Bai, possessing Cosmic Level realm strength, had an identity far from simple. What purpose drove him to join Bitao Martial Academy as a Cosmic Level Expert?

"Perhaps he's a favored son of a first-class powerful sect, or maybe a gifted Individual Cultivation Martial Artist who suppressed his realm to join Bitao Martial Academy for the sake of tempering his spirit."

That was the only conclusion Ge Feng could come to.

Having spent a significant amount of time with Fang Bai, Ge Feng felt that he had come to understand him fairly well. In Ge Feng's view, no matter what identity Fang Bai held, he at least bore no ill will towards the Bitao Martial Academy.

Ge Feng's concern was whether, by no longer suppressing his power and fully revealing his strength, Fang Bai was signaling his departure from Bitao Martial Academy.

One could imagine that once Fang Bai left Bitao Martial Academy to gain experience elsewhere, the power dynamics of Thousand Lakes Country would likely remain the same, without significant change.

Although the upper echelon of Purple Flame Sect had been severely damaged by Fang Bai and could possibly be entirely wiped out by him, there were still many Desolate Level Experts, such as Direct Disciples and Core Disciples, thus the sect's overall strength would still be enough to overpower a fourth-class Sect like Bitao Martial Academy.

That is to say, even if Purple Flame Sect's future overall strength took a hit, they would still be the top power of Thousand Lakes Country and continue to occupy the dominant position.

The only change would be that without Vast Level Experts, Purple Flame Sect would lose its absolute advantage, and thus the other dozens of sects in Thousand Lakes Country might be able to band together to contest Purple Flame Sect, no longer having to suffer bullying and oppression as they did before.

What worried Ge Feng most was that once Fang Bai left Bitao Martial Academy, without his presence to deter them, Purple Flame Sect might likely seek revenge.

Unless, before leaving, Fang Bai could help Bitao Martial Academy cultivate a group of Desolate Level Experts, thereby possessing the strength to stand against Purple Flame Sect.

As a Cosmic Level Expert and a mid-tier Alchemist and Artifact Refiner, if Fang Bai was willing to stay at Bitao Martial Academy a bit longer and provide guidance to the talented geniuses within, then refine

some mid-tier Elixirs and Spiritual Artifacts for Bitao Martial Academy, he would undoubtedly enable the disciples' strength to rise rapidly.

Regarding the materials for Alchemy and Artifact Refining, Purple Flame Sect surely had plenty stocked up, and Ge Feng believed Fang Bai would not miss the opportunity to claim them for himself.

Ge Feng had decided that once this matter was settled, even if he had to kneel and kowtow, he would request Fang Bai to chart a clear path for the future of Bitao Martial Academy, not to simply wash his hands of them and leave.

Half a two-hour period later, a long whistle approached from afar, and then Fang Bai's figure appeared in the sky above the Practice Battle Arena like a Divine Dragon, before slowly descending.

"Brother Fang!"

Liu Qingqing had been worried about Fang Bai all this time, and on seeing his return, she cheered and hurried to greet him. After scrutinizing him and finding no injuries on his body, she felt reassured and asked, "What about those two guys? Brother Fang, did you catch up with them?"

When Zhuge Lian saw Fang Bai, she subconsciously wanted to greet him as well but was one step behind Liu Qingqing. She then thought that her relationship with Fang Bai was not yet close enough to do so, and thus she stood still in her original spot without moving.

Chapter 1104: Then You Shall Die!

Fang Bai knew that the "two people" Liu Qingqing referred to were the He brothers, He Yushu and He Linfeng. He smiled and nodded, saying, "With just the two of them, how could they ever escape from the palm of my hand?"

Upon hearing this, Liu Qingqing's cherry lips pursed lightly, and with a bright smile, she said, "Brother Fang is mighty!"

Liu Qingqing cultivated the Martial Arts Techniques taught by Fang Bai and had a mutual understanding and connection with him. She sensed a lingering murderous intent and a faint scent of blood coming from Fang Bai, knowing that He Yushu and He Linfeng had met their ends at the hands of Fang Bai.

In the Martial Dao World where the strong prey upon the weak, killing was as common as daily meals. Once a grudge formed between martial artists, it was kill or be killed, so Fang Bai's slaying of the He brothers did not surprise Liu Qingqing.

At the same time, Liu Qingqing also understood that as Cosmic Level early-stage experts, He Yushu and He Linfeng must have had strong backgrounds. Should they escape, they would quickly bring great trouble to both Fang Bai and the Bitao Martial Academy.

Of course, with hundreds of Sect Disciples present at the Practice Battle Arena, word of Fang Bai killing the He brothers would inevitably spread through them sooner or later, bringing trouble nonetheless. But for the time being, nothing would happen, allowing Fang Bai and the Bitao Martial Academy some time to prepare countermeasures.

"Those two guys had quite a stash of Cultivation Resources in their Spatial Rings, making for a tidy sum of loot!"

Fang Bai flipped his right hand, and two Spatial Rings emitting a dark luster appeared in his palm.

The disciples from the various major sects who were spectating from a distance had some doubts about whether Fang Bai truly killed the He brothers. Seeing the two Spatial Rings, which the He brothers used to wear, now in Fang Bai's hands, they were fully convinced.

Fang Bai had caught up with the He brothers, killed them both, and returned to the Practice Battle Arena—all within a mere half an hour. His formidable strength elicited respect and awe from the onlookers.

"This Fang Bai, able to effortlessly take down two early-stage Cosmic Level experts, must be as strong as the Elders from the second-grade major sects. Coupled with his credentials as a mid-grade Artifact Refiner and Alchemist, he is destined to become one of the top figures in the True Martial Realm! Building a relationship with him would indeed have many advantages!"

Thinking this, the upper echelons of the various major sects warmed up considerably in their gazes toward Fang Bai.

At this moment, should any Purple Flame Sect Disciple attempt to encircle Fang Bai again, it was likely that disciples from all the major sects would not allow it.

Ge Feng, with several disciples from the Bitao Martial Academy, approached Fang Bai. He looked at Fang Bai with a complex expression, opening and closing his mouth, unsure of how to address him.

In front of Fang Bai, someone like Han Xingyu, a third-grade Sect Elder and Vast Level Expert, had to be considered a junior, let alone them, mere Heaven and Desolate Level martial artists?

Calling Fang Bai by his name as before was definitely not appropriate anymore, but switching to "Senior" also seemed difficult to say. Ge Feng stood there awkwardly, mumbling and blushing with embarrassment.

"Elder Ge, as before, you can just address me by my name. Let's not stand on ceremony with each other," Fang Bai said with a smile, knowing what Ge Feng was thinking.

Ge Feng was not a dithering, indecisive person. Hearing Fang Bai's words, his expression quickly returned to normal, and he said, "Alright then, I'll still call you Fang Bai. Fang Bai, I want to ask you some things, this..."

Ge Feng paused and looked at Fang Bai, seemingly holding back further words.

Fang Bai smiled and said, "Elder Ge, let's handle the matter at hand first and talk about other issues later. How about that?"

Ge Feng looked around. After the fierce battle, the practice battle arena was in a state of disarray. In addition to the high-ranking members of the Purple Flame Sect who had been critically injured by Fang Bai, and those disciples of the Purple Flame Sect who were full of hatred and malicious intent, there were indeed many follow-up matters to deal with. He nodded repeatedly and said, "Yes, yes, let's deal with the other matters first. Fang Bai, you decide what should be done. From now on, we're all listening to you."

Fang Bai's expression turned serious as he solemnly declared, "From today forth, the Purple Flame Sect will cease to exist, and this place will become the new headquarters of the Bitao Martial Academy."

Fang Bai's words clearly reached the ears of the disciples from various major sects in the arena. Led by Ge Feng, the disciples of the Bitao Martial Academy were wildly ecstatic, while the disciples from the other major sects looked on with envy.

The Purple Flame Sect headquarters were situated by a mountain with water nearby, surrounded by forests. The terrain was exceptional, and Essence Energy was abundant. To the disciples of the Fourth Rank sects in the Thousand Lakes Country, this place was a coveted treasure land for cultivation, where training year-round would result in a quicker advancement in rank compared to other places.

As soon as Fang Bai had defeated the high ranks of the Purple Flame Sect, the disciples from the other major sects had already guessed that the Bitao Martial Academy would take over the headquarters of the Purple Flame Sect and use it to grow and expand. No one was surprised; it was expected.

Although the disciples of the Purple Flame Sect were extremely dissatisfied and unwilling to accept this outcome, when they saw their own high ranks such as Zu Tiangang seriously injured, they were filled with fear and dared not voice any protest.

"As long as I, Zu Tiangang, am alive, you will not destroy the Purple Flame Sect's legacy of thousands of years!"

Zu Tiangang bellowed furiously, shakily standing up. Then, with all his might, he charged at Fang Bai, apparently intending to crash into Fang Bai with his own body.

His way of fighting completely disregarded his own life, ready to gamble life for life.

Although Zu Tiangang was also severely injured, due to his powerful strength, he still retained some combat effectiveness compared to the thirteen high ranks of the Purple Flame Sect who were at death's door. The power of this strike was comparable to a full-force attack from a Vast Level Perfection expert.

But Fang Bai, who had easily killed two Cosmic Level early-stage experts, how could he take Zu Tiangang's attack seriously?

"Then go die!"

Fang Bai glanced at Zu Tiangang, his eyes flashing coldly, and sent a casual palm flying out.

Heat waves roared to the skies, and a fierce wave swept across, the rich and boundless Fire Primordial Qi engulfed Zu Tiangang, who was charging at him, sweeping his burly body high into the air.

"Ah..."

Zu Tiangang, suspended in midair, let out a piercing scream. After a few breaths, he went silent; his charred body, like a kite with its string cut, fell from the sky, all traces of life extinguished.

The Sect Master of the strongest sect in Thousand Lakes Country had fallen.

Watching Zu Tiangang's body, the disciples from the various major sects at the site sighed and lamented, some remained silently pensive, some secretly rejoiced, and some openly cheered.

The thirteen high-ranking members of the Purple Flame Sect, severely injured by Fang Bai, saw their Sect Master die so miserably, seemingly foreseeing their own fate, each of them showing an expression of horror.

Han Xingyu looked at the elders and stewards of the Purple Flame Sect, thinking that Fang Bai would probably go to kill them next, and felt somewhat reluctant, he asked, "Fang Bai, do you intend to kill all the high ranks of the Purple Flame Sect?"

"What, Elder Han wants to plead for their lives?"

Fang Bai glanced sideways at Han Xingyu with a smile and asked.

Chapter 1105: The Brink of Life and Death

Fang Bai's smile, when it fell into Han Xingyu's eyes, caused her heart to involuntarily skip a beat, as she remembered that this seemingly harmless youth had just killed the Purple Flame Sect's Sect Master Zu Tiangang. Even two early-stage Cosmic Level Experts from Swiftwind Valley had fallen by his hand.

Moreover, Fang Bai's body seemed to still hold an unsettling aura of evil Qi that hadn't yet dissipated, a common phenomenon among martial artists after slaughtering in anger.

Han Xingyu shook her head and said with a wry smile, "I'm not pleading on their behalf. It's just that they have all suffered heavy injuries and it's very unlikely that they would recover their peak strength. They won't pose much of a threat now, so there's no need for killing... Of course, that's just my personal view. How you treat them, Fang Bai, is still your own decision."

"Elder Han, showing mercy to enemies is cruelty to oneself! Only by completely uprooting them can future troubles be prevented! Fang Bai, I think we can spare the ordinary disciples of the Purple Flame Sect, but the high-ranking ones must be killed," Ge Feng said with determination.

As Ge Feng saw it, if the Purple Flame Sect were likened to a dragon, then the dozen or so Vast Level Experts would be the head of the dragon. By beheading the dragon, the other disciples of the Purple Flame Sect would not be able to make any waves and pose any threat.

If Fang Bai spared the high-ranking members of the Purple Flame Sect, and if any one of them encountered a fortuitous opportunity to recover their strength, it could be a disaster, especially if Fang Bai had already left Bitao Martial Academy. After all, the weakest among the Purple Flame Sect's higher-ups were early-stage Vast Level Experts, while the strongest person in Bitao Martial Academy, apart from Fang Bai, was Ren Jingbo, the academy head who was only at Desolate Level Perfection and unable to contend with the Purple Flame Sect's higher-ups.

After Han Xingyu and Ge Feng gave their opinions, they both turned to look at Fang Bai, knowing that the lives of these high-ranking officials of the Purple Flame Sect hung on Fang Bai's thoughts.

Fang Bai's gaze swept over the thirteen high-ranking officials of the Purple Flame Sect, who were on their last breath. After a moment's thought, he finally said, "Originally, I was going to kill all of these people, but what Elder Han has said makes sense... Alright then, I will spare their lives."

Ge Feng, seeing that Fang Bai was actually planning to spare those high-ranking officials of the Purple Flame Sect, became anxious. He opened his mouth, wanting to persuade him otherwise, but then heard Fang Bai continue, "However, their death sentence can be spared, but they cannot escape the punishment for living crimes."

Having said that, Fang Bai walked up to the collapsed bodies of the high-ranking officials of the Purple Flame Sect and lightly tapped each of them, utterly destroying their Qi Sea.

By doing so, the thirteen high-ranking officials of the Purple Flame Sect were now normal people who could no longer cultivate. Unless they consumed an Immortal Pill or Divine Medicine, which could possibly regather their Qi Sea, they would live mediocre lives until the end of their days.

"I have destroyed their Qi Sea; let them live as ordinary people from now on," Fang Bai stated indifferently as he returned to the sides of Ge Feng and Han Xingyu.

Ge Feng was very satisfied with Fang Bai's way of handling the situation, laughing heartily, "They have kept their lives, and from now on they won't be able to pose a threat to Bitao Martial Academy. This is the best resolution!"

Han Xingyu let out a quiet sigh, still wearing a bitter smile on her face.

She herself felt that Fang Bai's treatment of the high-ranking officials of the Purple Flame Sect was the best method, but at the same time, she felt pity for them.

Just imagine, the Purple Flame Sect's high-ranking officials, who were once esteemed and worshiped, commanding respect and having control over the life and death of numerous beings, had now become the lowest of common people. That massive plummet from heaven to hell, how many could endure it?

Han Xingyu didn't know how others would react in such a situation, but if it were her, she felt that she certainly wouldn't have the courage to continue living.

It was unclear how many of those thirteen high-ranking Purple Flame Sect members could surmount the hurdle between life and death.

Fang Bai, by crippling their Qi Sea, hadn't killed them, but he employed a method even more formidable than killing.

"Disciples of the Purple Flame Sect, listen up. If any of you wish to leave, I won't make it difficult for you. But remember, from now on, this place belongs to the Bitao Martial Academy. Do not attack the disciples of the Bitao Martial Academy, or I will not be polite. I've killed your Sect Master, I wouldn't mind killing a few more disciples!" Fang Bai said loudly, his gaze sweeping over each disciple of the Purple Flame Sect in the Practice Battle Arena, before continuing, "Of course, if any of you are willing to switch allegiances and join the Bitao Martial Academy, we will welcome you with open arms! I cannot guarantee other things, but if you join the Bitao Martial Academy, your strength will definitely increase faster than it did in the Purple Flame Sect. Advancing from Heaven Level to Desolate Level, from Desolate Level to Vast Level, it's certainly not a dream!"

Upon hearing Fang Bai's words, some Purple Flame Sect disciples who had originally planned to leave halted in their tracks, their hearts beginning to burn with excitement.

Most Purple Flame Sect disciples had joined the sect initially because it had the most cultivation resources, the best cultivation environment, and the most profound Martial Arts Techniques in the Thousand Lakes Country.

Although the Bitao Martial Academy was only a fourth-rank sect, with Fang Bai, a Cosmic Level Expert, capable of both Alchemy and Artifact Refining, it was certain that under his leadership, the Bitao Martial Academy would swiftly rise to a third-rank sect without any issue.

Moreover, Fang Bai was young with limitless potential, and with him at its helm, the Bitao Martial Academy had the potential to achieve even more glorious accomplishments in the future.

"If there are any Purple Flame Sect disciples willing to join the Bitao Martial Academy, stand behind Elder Ge."

Seeing that many Purple Flame Sect disciples were tempted, Fang Bai quickly exchanged a glance with Ge Feng and loudly added, "You needn't worry about reprisal from your former sect members. Once you join the Bitao Martial Academy, you become disciples of our academy, and I will protect you!"

Fang Bai's words were like a Heart Stabilizing Pill, thoroughly reassuring the Purple Flame Sect disciples present who wished to join the Bitao Martial Academy.

"Senior Fang, I, Zhou Xiong, a disciple of the Purple Flame Sect's Inner Court, wish to join the Bitao Martial Academy!"

From the group of Purple Flame Sect disciples gathered at the east side of the Stone Platform, a voice boomed like thunder, followed by a strapping big man stepping forward.

That big man possessed the strength of the mid-Desolate Level. Under the watchful eyes of disciples from various sects, he walked proudly up to Ge Feng with a dragon's stride and a tiger's bearing, first bowing deeply to Ge Feng, then respectfully taking his place behind him.

Although Elder Ge had the status of an elder, he was also just a mid-Desolate Level Martial Artist, of equal strength to Zhou Xiong, the Purple Flame Sect disciple who had just defected.

Under normal circumstances, Ge Feng and Zhou Xiong would be considered equals, but now Zhou Xiong was giving him a respectful bow, which Ge Feng found somewhat awkward to accept at first. However, after seeing Fang Bai by his side, Ge Feng composed himself and graciously accepted the gesture.

It is human nature to seek benefit and avoid harm.

Following Zhou Xiong's lead, the majority of the Purple Flame Sect disciples present moved to stand behind Elder Ge, indicating their willingness to join the Bitao Martial Academy.

There were tens of thousands of Purple Flame Sect disciples, and although only about a thousand were present, they were the elite of the sect. Their addition significantly increased the overall strength of the Bitao Martial Academy and was sure to influence many more Purple Flame Sect disciples.

It was foreseeable that in the near future, the majority of the tens of thousands of Purple Flame Sect disciples would turn to the Bitao Martial Academy.

From that point on, the Purple Flame Sect crumbled and disintegrated, leading to its ultimate collapse.

Chapter 1106: The New Owner of Purple Flame City

Ge Feng had originally thought that taking control of the Purple Flame Sect, with its thousands of years of foundation and heritage, would not be an easy task, even if Fang Bai had already eliminated many of

the Purple Flame Sect's top echelons. There could still be relentless resistance from the tens of thousands of disciples.

However, in the following days, about eighty percent of the Purple Flame Sect disciples abandoned the sect to join the Bitao Martial Academy, which greatly surprised Ge Feng. The seemingly mighty Purple Flame Sect turned out to be like a bubble that bursts upon the slightest touch.

The remaining twenty percent of the Purple Flame Sect disciples were partly die-hard loyalists. They hid within Purple Flame City, foolishly clinging to the hope of an opportunity to restore the Purple Flame Sect. The rest left Purple Flame City to seek survival elsewhere.

Fang Bai, indifferent to those who harbored ulterior motives in Purple Flame City or those who wished to leave the sect, let them be.

For Fang Bai, the strongest of the Purple Flame Sect disciples were merely Desolate Level Experts—incapable of forming any significant threat.

After the sect assembly, Purple Flame City was somewhat chaotic, with many matters needing attention.

Fang Bai dumped all affairs on Ge Feng, adopting a hands-off approach.

Ge Feng, aware that the Purple Flame City would now belong to Bitao Martial Academy, whose headquarters would also relocate here, paid extra attention to the aftermath.

However, Ge Feng only had ten disciples from the Bitao Martial Academy in Purple Flame City. With Fang Bai uninterested in trivial matters and Yang Lin expelled from the sect for betrayal, the eight of them were stretched thin, overwhelmed with daily tasks.

Feeling the strain from the lack of manpower, Ge Feng enlisted the help of some Purple Flame Sect disciples while sending Shen Yulin and Huang Miao to venture overnight back to Bitao Martial Academy to ask for reinforcements, urging Headmaster Ren Jingbo to relocate the Bitao Martial Academy headquarters to Purple Flame City swiftly to strengthen its hold.

During this period, there were isolated incidents where loyal Purple Flame Sect disciples secretly united and attacked the Bitao Martial Academy disciples. There were also disciples from other sects trying to exploit the chaos for their own gain but all were met with prepared and thunderous retribution by Fang Bai, effectively deterring further disturbances. Peace then returned to Purple Flame City.

After eliminating the upper echelon of the Purple Flame Sect, Fang Bai searched for Elder Hong Qitian and Personal Transmission Disciple Zu Yu but failed to locate them. Later, he heard from a few informed Purple Flame Sect disciples that after the severe injuries inflicted on the top-level figures of the sect by Fang Bai, Hong Qitian and Zu Yu sensed the imminent danger and secretly fled the city, their whereabouts unknown.

"These two guys sure ran fast, otherwise they wouldn't have avoided the same fate as those top-level Purple Flame Sect members!"

Regarding the escape of Hong Qitian and Zu Yu, Fang Bai just laughed it off, not taking it to heart.

On the day the Purple Flame Sect was overthrown, Second You, who was idling at home, learned through various channels that the Bitao Martial Academy had replaced the Purple Flame Sect and had become the new ruler of Purple Flame City.

What excited and exhilarated Second You was that the one who destroyed the Purple Flame Sect was the very Senior Fang Bai he had met.

Imagining Senior Fang single-handedly inflicting heavy damage on over a dozen Vast Level Experts of the Purple Flame Sect, Second You was filled with surging emotions and boiling blood.

After finding out about Fang Bai's residence, the next morning, Second You, along with his Martial Dao partner Hua Sanniang, his good friends Hei Tan, and Tie Hai, went to visit Fang Bai.

Inside the Sect Master Hall of the Purple Flame Sect, Fang Bai, along with Ge Feng, received the group of four led by Second You. After some pleasantries, when Fang Bai inquired whether Second You's group was willing to join the Bitao Martial Academy, having already decided in their hearts, they immediately agreed.

Now, the Bitao Martial Academy had become the overlord of Purple Flame City and the strongest Sect in Thousand Lakes Country. With a powerful figure like Fang Bai as its anchor, it was like a rising sun with limitless potential. Now that Fang Bai had personally extended the invitation, if Second You were to decline, that would be truly foolish.

Ge Feng was very welcoming of Second You's group joining.

Among Second You's group were two Desolate Level Experts, and having lived in Purple Flame City for a long time, they had many friends and extensive connections, which would definitely assist the Bitao Martial Academy in quickly taking control of Purple Flame City.

Within just two or three days, Fang Bai and others had recruited most of the disciples of the Purple Flame Sect and thus gained full control over Purple Flame City. Observing how the situations unfolded, the disciples from various other Sects realized that the situation was settled and dispersed, preparing to return to their respective Sects to discuss countermeasures.

All the major Sects recognized that with Fang Bai, a Cosmic Level Expert, a medium-grade Alchemist, and a medium-grade Artifact Refiner in residence, the overall strength of the Bitao Martial Academy would far surpass that of the former Purple Flame Sect. Establishing good relations with them was in the Sects' best interests.

After making this decision, the Sect Masters from various major Sects of Thousand Lakes Country soon personally visited Purple Flame City to meet with the upper echelons of the Bitao Martial Academy. They congratulated the Bitao Martial Academy for replacing the Purple Flame Sect as the strongest Sect in Thousand Lakes Country and expressed that they would regard the Bitao Martial Academy as the leader and pay a regular tribute of cultivation resources.

After the Bitao Martial Academy had taken full control of Purple Flame City, as soon as Ren Jingbo led the Bitao Martial Academy disciples to move headquarters to the former Purple Flame Sect headquarters, he renamed Purple Flame City to Bitao City.

One day, nearly a hundred Sect Masters from large and small Sects across Thousand Lakes Country gathered at the headquarters of the Bitao Martial Academy, where Ren Jingbo personally received them. However, the person whom all the Sect Masters were most eager to meet, Fang Bai, did not show up.

"Our Supreme Elder Fang Bai is currently in closed-door cultivation, aiming for a higher realm, and will not be emerging for some time."

When the Sect Masters inquired about Fang Bai, Ren Jingbo and Ge Feng exchanged glances, then quickly provided an explanation.

Fang Bai's appointment as the Supreme Elder of the Bitao Martial Academy was unanimously recommended by all the senior leaders of the academy. Furthermore, it was stipulated that Fang Bai's position as Supreme Elder was above all other disciples in the Bitao Martial Academy, and he even had the direct authority to appoint or dismiss the Sect Master.

The Bitao Martial Academy did not originally have the position of Supreme Elder, but it was created especially for Fang Bai, aiming to maintain a relationship with Fang Bai. Even if Fang Bai were to leave the Bitao Martial Academy in the future, this relationship would cause other Sects to fear the Bitao Martial Academy to some extent.

Hearing that Fang Bai was aiming for a higher realm, all the Sect Masters present were greatly shocked. They thought that Fang Bai had already defeated two early-stage Cosmic Level Experts; if he advanced further, wouldn't he become even more formidable?

For a while, the reverence felt by the various Sect Masters towards Fang Bai only increased, and they showed even greater respect towards Ren Jingbo, the head of the Bitao Martial Academy.

Following Fang Bai's instructions, Ren Jingbo assuaged the various Sect Masters and announced on the spot that the cultivation resources paid by the major Sects would be reduced by thirty percent based on the original amount, and there were guarantees that the Bitao Martial Academy would not deliberately suppress any of the Sects.

The Sect Masters rejoiced at heart; with a thirty percent reduction in the cultivation resources they had to pay, they would have more resources to provide for their disciples' cultivation, boosting their Sects' strength, which was definitely good news.

Chapter 1107: I Must Find You!

Ren Jingbo announced a reduction in the resources each major Sect had to contribute to their Cultivation, eliciting joy and praise from every Sect Leader. In addition to their reverence for Bitao Martial Academy, gratitude now filled their hearts.

As for Fiery Sect and Cloud Feather Sect, which already harbored conflicts with Bitao Martial Academy and had even attempted to assassinate Fang Bai together, the upper echelons of these two Sects, upon learning the news from Purple Flame City, feared Bitao Martial Academy's retaliation and disappeared overnight with a portion of the Cultivation Resources, leading to their disciples scattering without leadership.

In a single night, two fourth-grade Sects ceased to exist.

The disciples of Bitao Martial Academy learned of this and celebrated with high fives.

"Fang Bai's departure leaves his return uncertain! From now on, we must unite and diligently practice our Cultivation, while also encouraging our disciples to double their efforts, striving to make Bitao Martial Academy the undisputed number one power in Thousand Lakes Country,"

After bidding farewell to the various Sect Leaders, Ren Jingbo addressed the senior members of Bitao Martial Academy with gravity.

Hearing Ren Jingbo mention this, the senior members of Bitao Martial Academy exchanged glances and shook their heads in sighs.

"When Fang Bai showed his true strength, I knew we couldn't keep him at Bitao Martial Academy! I thought he would leave soon, but he stayed a week longer. That was surely for the sake of Elder Liu!" said Ge Feng, his gaze settling on the disheartened Liu Qingqing as he offered comforting words, "Elder Liu, you needn't be downhearted. Before leaving, Fang Bai said that once your Cultivation Level reaches the Cosmic Level, you can seek him out. With your talent and the Cultivation Resources and Martial Arts Techniques he left behind, I don't think it'll take long for you to advance to the Cosmic Level Realm."

Before Fang Bai left Bitao Martial Academy, he persuaded the eager Liu Qingqing to stay and then spent a week crafting numerous Elixirs and Spiritual Artifacts. Using some miraculous secret technique, he helped Liu Qingqing advance from the Heaven Level Realm to the Desolate Level Realm.

Afterward, Fang Bai suggested Liu Qingqing assume the position of Elder and take over the Classics Hall, replacing Lei Li, who had been expelled from the Sect.

Although Liu Qingqing was young and not strong enough, Ren Jingbo and the others noticed her special relationship with Fang Bai. Consequently, they not only had no objections to Fang Bai's suggestion but were secretly pleased.

Fang Bai's request for Liu Qingqing to stay implied that he hadn't completely abandoned Bitao Martial Academy. With Fang Bai's renowned deterrence, other than the very few first and second-grade Sects in the True Martial Realm, who would dare provoke Bitao Martial Academy?

Moreover, before his departure, Fang Bai used hundreds of thousands of Essence Stones to set up several layers of Offensive and Defensive Great Formations around the headquarters of Bitao Martial Academy. Even Universe Level Experts from first-grade Sects would struggle to breach them without paying a heavy price.

It was only when the Formation was completed that Ren Jingbo and the others discovered that Fang Bai was not just an Alchemist and Artifact Refiner but also an Array Master—deepening their admiration for him.

In addition, Fang Bai passed on a set of Martial Arts Techniques to Liu Qingqing and others like Ren Jingbo. The profound and intricate contents of these techniques hinted at vast and mysterious depths.

Fang Bai claimed that with dedicated practice of these techniques, there was hope for them to join the ranks of the topmost experts in the True Martial Realm.

To Ren Jingbo and the others, Universe Level Experts represented the pinnacle of this world, and becoming one had always been an unthinkable dream.

For Ren Jingbo and his cohort, reaching the Cosmic Level Realm was reason enough for celebration, let alone the Universe Level Realm.

By then, even if Fang Bai never returned, Bitao Martial Academy would have sufficient strength to defend itself.

Fang Bai left the Bitao Martial Academy yesterday, and Liu Qingqing had been feeling somewhat dejected ever since. Hearing Ge Feng's comforting words, she managed a forced smile and said, "Elder Ge, I'm alright, I just miss Brother Fang a little... If there's nothing else, I'll be on my way! I'm going to diligently cultivate and strive to advance to the Cosmic Level Realm that Brother Fang mentioned as soon as possible!"

Ren Jingbo smiled and nodded. "You go ahead! Elder Ge and I still have some matters to discuss. Our Bitao Martial Academy isn't lacking in cultivation resources now, you may use them as you see fit!"

Liu Qingqing nodded and, under the gaze of Ren Jingbo and others, slowly walked out of the Sect's grand hall.

"Brother Fang, I'll follow your advice and will earnestly cultivate here at Bitao Martial Academy. I so hope that I can become a Cosmic Level Expert soon and then go to find you! Even if it means searching throughout the True Martial Realm, I will find you!"

At that moment, with the sunrise just beginning, the world was filled with rich Essence Energy. Liu Qingqing stood outside the grand hall, her delicate face slightly lifted, and she took several deep breaths in the warm sunlight, her face showing a resolute expression.

...

"Clap clap clap... clap clap clap..."

Hasty and chaotic hoofbeats sounded on a small forest path three thousand miles away from Purple Flame City.

The horses were Swiftwind Horses, tall and heroic.

The riders were several uniformly dressed women of exceptional countenance.

A mist of Essence Energy enveloped these women; clearly, they were Martial Artists who at this moment hurried along, incessantly striking their Swiftwind Horses with their whips, urging them to run faster.

Swiftwind Horses have enduring stamina, capable of travelling thousands of miles in a day without tiring, but since leaving Purple Flame City, they had been running at full speed for three straight days with very little rest. Now, they began to show signs of fatigue, continuously exhaling white mist from their nostrils and occasionally crying out to the sky, expressing their protest to the riders on their backs.

Eight riders rode side by side, with an old and a young woman at the forefront.

The elder woman appeared to be around sixty, with arched eyebrows and phoenix eyes. Her gaze carried an imposing pressure, and her face was full of anxiety and worry, clearly carrying heavy concerns.

Judging by the Martial Artist Aura emanating from the elder woman, she was a mid-stage expert of the Vast Level.

The younger woman was only seventeen or eighteen, with a fair complexion, delicate features, and apricot-shaped eyes, radiating beauty.

The beautiful girl possessed the strength of Desolate Level Perfection and had an ethereal and transcendent air about her, a rare sight among Martial Artists of the same age.

"Elder Han, the Swiftwind Horses are about to collapse! Shall we rest for an hour or two before continuing?" asked the beautiful girl suddenly after they emerged from the forest and ahead lay a thousand miles of fertile fields. Her voice was as melodious as a singing oriole.

"No!"

The elder woman decisively refused without hesitation, looked forward, and said, "A hundred miles ahead is Liulin Town. When we get there, we will buy a few more Swiftwind Horses and continue our full-speed journey. I want to return to the Xuannv Sect as quickly as possible to persuade the Sect Master to release the Linghu Sisters from imprisonment. Xiao Lian, you've seen Fang Bai's strength too; if we wait until he comes knocking, then it will be too late! If Fang Bai could wipe out the Purple Flame Sect single-handedly, he could do the same to our Xuannv Sect!"

Chapter 1108: Nine Bends Gorge

Three days later, led by Han Xingyu, the Xuannv Sect disciples arrived at the Nine Bends Gorge, which lay at the border between Thousand Lakes Country and Qingping Country.

Qingping Country was the home of the Xuannv Sect headquarters. Both in terms of area and population, it surpassed Thousand Lakes Country by a great margin, and there were over a hundred different Sects within the country.

Unlike the sole dominance of the Purple Flame Sect in Thousand Lakes Country, although Qingping Country also revered third-grade Sects, it was jointly ruled by the Xuannv Sect and Dragon Tiger Palace.

The Xuannv Sect and Dragon Tiger Palace, one in the south and the other in the north, each occupied half of Qingping Country's population and land, and more than eighty percent of the cultivation resources were under the control of these two major Sects.

As the saying goes, a single mountain cannot harbour two tigers.

Since their founding, the Xuannv Sect and Dragon Tiger Palace had been natural adversaries, each wishing to overpower the other and become the sole ruler of Qingping Country. However, due to their comparable strength, neither could suppress the other over thousands of years, maintaining a balance of power without breaking into open conflict.

Nevertheless, with the succession of Yang Ruojun as the new Xuannv Sect Master, this situation had begun to change.

Yang Ruojun was unyielding and obsessive; she could not stand even a grain of sand in her eye. After taking the position as the Sect Master of the Xuannv Sect, she adopted a tough stance against Dragon Tiger Palace. The rivalry between the disciples of the two Sects had become public and escalated.

In order to gain an advantage in the struggle between the two Sects, both Xuannv Sect and Dragon Tiger Palace had formed strategic alliances to bolster their influence. The Xuannv Sect had formed multiple marital alliances with the Purple Flame Sect precisely for this purpose—to secure the Purple Flame Sect, another third-grade Sect, as an ally.

This time, Zhuge Lian, a direct disciple, was sent to the Purple Flame Sect to marry its direct disciple Zu Yu, with the objective of further strengthening the relationship between the two Sects. Yet, to Han Xingyu's dismay, not only did the marriage alliance fail, but she also bore witness to the destruction of the Purple Flame Sect.

With the fall of the Purple Flame Sect, the Xuannv Sect had lost a powerful ally. Han Xingyu could imagine that should the Dragon Tiger Palace be informed of this news, they would undoubtedly rejoice in the misfortune and take the opportunity to act against the Xuannv Sect.

Therefore, after attending the inauguration ceremony of Bitao Martial Academy's new headquarters in Purple Flame City, a worried Han Xingyu hurried back to the Xuannv Sect with disciples like Zhuge Lian, ready to discuss countermeasures with the high-level leaders of the Sect.

The Nine Bends Gorge spanned between Thousand Lakes Country and Qingping Country, a vast canyon that stretched thousands of miles and was named for its meandering shape.

With an average depth nearing a thousand meters, its widest point reaching hundreds of Baili, and the narrowest nearly a hundred zhang, even Cosmic Level Experts were unable to cross it directly.

Moreover, numerous fierce Spirit Beasts roamed at the bottom of the Nine Bends Gorge. Should any Martial Artist attempt to use the vines on the canyon walls to descend to the bottom and climb to the opposite side, they were very likely to be attacked by the Spirit Beasts and perish at the bottom of the gorge.

Nonetheless, there were always solutions.

Some Sects near the Nine Bends Gorge constructed Iron Chain Bridges at its narrowest points to facilitate passage for Martial Artists traveling between the two countries, charging a certain amount of Essence Stones as a toll fee.

Since the key narrow locations of the Nine Bends Gorge were all within the territory controlled by Dragon Tiger Palace, and the Sects that had built the bridges were all following Dragon Tiger Palace's lead, the Xuannv Sect disciples passing through the Iron Chain Bridge to Thousand Lakes Country would be deliberately obstructed by the Sect disciples guarding the bridge. They would need to pay more Essence Stones than other Martial Artists to cross.

Although the Xuannv Sect disciples were indignant about this, they were helpless. Unless the Xuannv Sect could one day overpower the Dragon Tiger Palace and take control of the Iron Chain Bridge, they would remain stuck in this situation of being controlled by others.

"The Iron Chain Bridge of the Seven Stars Stronghold is just ahead! Remember, no matter how difficult the disciples guarding the Iron Chain Bridge make it, you must endure it for the time being! The Iron Chain Bridge is presided over by high-ranking members of the Dragon Tiger Palace, and in case of conflict, we would not be at an advantage!"

Han Xingyu and others galloped their horses for over a hundred miles along the edge of Nine Bends Gorge, and upon seeing an iron chain bridge ahead, Han Xingyu sternly told the people beside him, including Zhuge Lian.

The Seven Stars Stronghold was a fourth-ranked Sect within Qingping Country and a staunch ally of the Dragon Tiger Palace. The Iron Chain Bridge they erected was the nearest shortcut for the disciples of the Xuannv Sect. Han Xingyu and his group were passing through here to reach Purple Flame City.

However, guarding this Iron Chain Bridge were not only the disciples of the Seven Stars Stronghold but also an Elder from the Dragon Tiger Palace and two Stewards who were stationed there. Their strength far surpassed that of Han Xingyu and the others, which was why Han Xingyu specifically reminded Zhuge Lian and the rest to swallow any grievances should they face difficulties, to avoid jeopardizing their mission.

Zhuce Lian and the others also understood their primary task was to return to the Xuannv Sect and report the drastic changes in Purple Flame City to strategize a response. If they were to be delayed by other matters along the way, the Xuannv Sect might face a catastrophic disaster. Therefore, upon hearing Han Xingyu's words, they all nodded their heads in understanding.

In front of the Iron Chain Bridge of the Seven Stars Stronghold, many Martial Artists from Thousand Lakes Country and Qingping Country were already queuing to cross.

Eight disciples of the Seven Stars Stronghold and two Stewards from the Dragon Tiger Palace were stationed at either end of the bridge, collecting Essence Stones from those crossing.

In a large stone house on the Qingping Country side, an Elder from the Dragon Tiger Palace who was assigned there lived. Typically, the Elder spent time in secluded Cultivation within the stone house, appearing only when the two Stewards from the Dragon Tiger Palace encountered problems they could not solve.

Han Xingyu and his party dismounted before the Iron Chain Bridge and led their Swiftwind Horses to line up behind a group of Martial Artists, waiting patiently.

Just at that moment, a lean middle-aged man in a green shirt with an ordinary appearance emerged from the distant woods. He glanced at Han Xingyu and his group with a smile that was not quite a smile and then queued up to cross the bridge as well.

The robust middle-aged man was a Loose Cultivator with Desolate Level Perfection, possessing strength comparable to Zhuge Lian. His Martial Artist Aura was sharp and aggressive, clearly indicating that he practiced Golden System Martial Arts Techniques.

The man was not wearing the attire of any Sect or faction, revealing that he was an Individual Cultivation Martial Artist. With his Cultivation Level of Desolate Level Perfection, he stood out among the Martial Artists in line, thus drawing the attention of some on-site Martial Artists who struck up a conversation with him.

"Brother, my name is Hu Ren, a Loose Cultivator from Qingping Country. May I inquire about your honorable name?"

The person standing in front of the robust middle-aged man was a slightly older burly man who also possessed a Cultivation Level of Desolate Level Perfection.

The burly man was dressed in a worn hemp robe, and he turned around and gave the robust middle-aged man a grin before they started chatting.

Seeing the burly man's simple and straightforward manner, evidently not a schemer, the middle-aged man laughed and said, "My surname is Bai, my first name Fang, from Thousand Lakes Country. Just like Brother Hu, I am also a Loose Cultivator..."

"So it's Brother Bai! Lucky to meet you! Brother Bai, do you have business in Qingping Country? Though I'm a Loose Cultivator, I have quite a few friends in Qingping Country. If there's anything you find difficult to handle, you can tell me, and maybe I can help you..."

The man named Hu Ren was very outgoing and, after getting into a conversation with the middle-aged man, he enthusiastically chatted away.

The middle-aged man, called Bai Fang, always had a smile on his lips, wasn't bothered by Hu Ren's talkativeness, and answered his questions. They quickly became familiar with each other.

Chapter 1109: Trouble Comes!

Bai Fang naturally referred to Fang Bai.

When Han Xingyu and his entourage left Purple Flame City, Fang Bai had also disguised himself and followed them, preparing to head to the Xuannv Sect to look for the Linghu sisters.

After learning from Zhuge Lian that the Linghu sisters, Qian Jiao and Baimei, were imprisoned by the Xuannv Sect, Fang Bai was quite annoyed and wished he could immediately storm the Xuannv Sect to demand their release.

The Linghu sisters and Fang Bai knew each other in the secular world and had shared their Cultivation Techniques, making them both teachers and friends. Fang Bai, who always valued friendships, naturally could not stand by idly when his friends were in trouble.

However, later, after Zhuge Lian softly pleaded with him, and Han Xingyu promised that once he returned to the sect, he would immediately persuade the sect leader to release the Linghu sisters, Fang Bai temporarily halted the idea of directly storming into the Xuannv Sect to demand their release.

Despite this, Fang Bai was still somewhat uneasy. Since the situation in Purple Flame City had already been stabilized, and his presence there was no longer needed, he left a message for Liu Qingqing and the head of Bitao Martial Academy, Ren Jingbo, saying that he would follow Han Xingyu and others to the Xuannv Sect alone to see if they would release them.

If the Xuannv Sect lifted the imprisonment of the Linghu sisters and guaranteed that no such incidents would occur again, then all would be well. If not, Fang Bai would have no choice but to take matters into his own hands and fight until they released them.

Although the Xuannv Sect was dominated by female martial artists, Fang Bai, when he took action, had no mercy for beauty or tenderness.

There were dozens of martial artists in front of Fang Bai in line, and it would be some time before it was his turn to cross the bridge. Having nothing to do, he struck up a chat with Hu Ren, who was next to him, and began to smile and talk.

For Fang Bai, the True Martial Realm was a completely foreign world, yet through Hu Ren, he had come to understand a lot about the customs and culture of Qingping Country.

"Hu Ren, get the Essence Stones out, it's almost our turn to cross the bridge!"

As Hu Ren and Fang Bai were chatting happily, suddenly a female martial artist in front of them turned her head and said.

The female warrior was holding the hand of a fourteen or fifteen-year-old boy, and the two bore a slight resemblance to each other, looking like a mother and son.

The female martial artist was also in her forties, with a slender figure and delicate features, and she wore the same tattered linen clothes as Hu Ren. She occasionally glanced at the young boy beside her, her eyes full of love and pity.

The young boy had a waxen complexion and disordered breath, walking unsteadily, and Fang Bai could tell at a glance that someone had shattered his meridians with robust True Yuan.

If the boy's condition wasn't treated and his meridians weren't reconstructed, he would remain an ordinary person, unable to ever cultivate martial arts techniques again.

"This is my martial companion, Miao Feng, and this is my son, Hu Yi."

Hu Ren chuckled, quickly pulled out thirty Essence Stones from his pocket, and handed them to the female martial artist. Seeing Fang Bai looking thoughtfully at the woman and the boy, he introduced them.

"Brother Hu, your son's health... seems to be in poor condition!"

Fang Bai casually inquired.

Hearing Fang Bai mention his son, Hu Ren's smile was quickly replaced by anger and hatred. He clenched and unclenched his fists several times before he finally sighed deeply, slapped his own head hard, and said, "It's my fault! If I hadn't taken my son out to gain experience, he wouldn't have gotten into a conflict, been injured, and become someone who can't cultivate... Ah, I'm so useless! I'm so useless..."

As he spoke, his eyes reddened, and he began to forcefully smack his own head, full of self-blame.

"Dad! I insisted on following you to gain experience. If something like this happened, I don't blame you! It's only the fault of those villains who hurt me!"

Hearing his father's self-blaming words, young Hu Yi's eyes also reddened, and tears silently fell.

"Yi'er, real men don't shed tears easily! Don't cry!"

Although Hu Ren said this, his lips trembled slightly, and his own eyes began to moisten.

"Hmm, I won't cry! Father, you shouldn't cry either!"

Miao Feng casually wiped away the tears on his face, his expression set with determination. He clenched his fists and declared, "I'm still young, and I will often travel. Perhaps, I may encounter a fortuitous event that can restore my broken meridians and allow me to step back onto the path of Martial Dao. Yes, I truly believe such a day will come!"

Hu Ren suddenly clapped his hands loudly, exclaiming, "Exactly! Heaven never seals off all exits! Let's first return to Qingping Country and consult with the Elder of Tribute from Dragon Tiger Palace. If even he can't cure your injuries, then your mother and I will take you across the whole True Martial Realm to find an opportunity!"

Fang Bai smiled and said to Hu Ren, "Your son is clearly a person of deep fortune. I believe his injuries can definitely be healed!"

Hu Ren responded, "Thanks to Brother Bai's blessings, if Yi'er's injuries can be healed, even if it meant I had to die right now, I would be willing!"

Miao Feng scolded, "Hu Ren, what are you talking about! If you were to die, what would happen to us, your wife and child?"

Hu Ren, seemingly intimidated by his martial partner, rubbed his head, gave a dry laugh, and fell silent.

At this moment, Han Xingyu and the other disciples had already led the Swiftwind Horses onto the Iron Chain Bridge.

Before setting foot on the Iron Chain Bridge, just as Han Xingyu had predicted, they indeed faced ridicule and difficulties from a steward of Dragon Tiger Palace. In the end, each person had to pay a sum of one hundred Essence Stones as a toll fee before they were allowed to cross.

Other martial artists who crossed the bridge only needed to pay ten Essence Stones each, but Han Xingyu and his companions each paid one hundred Essence Stones, clearly being taken advantage of on purpose.

Though Zhuge Lian and the others were furious, they remembered the earlier advice from Elder Han and could only suppress their anger.

After paying the Essence Stones, Han Xingyu, beckoning to Zhuge Lian and others, quickly led the Swiftwind Horses onto the Iron Chain Bridge and hastened across to the other side.

Following that, Hu Ren's family of three along with Fang Bai and the other martial artists also stepped onto the Iron Chain Bridge.

The Iron Chain Bridge, about three hundred meters long, was composed of several thick iron chains, with a robust layer of iron planks laid on top.

The bridge, several hundred meters above the canyon floor, swayed as the mountain wind blew, giving a terrifying feeling of potential collapse, enough to horrify the faint-hearted and those with weaker capabilities.

When they reached the center of the Iron Chain Bridge, Fang Bai suddenly sensed something amiss.

Behind them, many martial artists from Seven Stars Stronghold and Dragon Tiger Palace had appeared. They stopped other martial artists from ascending the bridge further and looked coldly at those already on the bridge, a murderous aura emanating from them.

Moreover, at the front end of the bridge stood numerous martial artists from Seven Stars Stronghold and Dragon Tiger Palace shoulder to shoulder, with a bald, strong man at the forefront holding a golden long saber, dressed in the attire of a Dragon Tiger Palace Elder.

This bald elder, about eighty years old with triangular eyes and a hooked nose, had a chilling gaze. Surrounded by swirling True Yuan, his Martial Artist Aura was potent, marking him as a middle-rank Vast Level powerhouse.

"Is that Lin Xiaotian, an Elder from Dragon Tiger Palace? What does he want to do?"

Han Xingyu, upon seeing the bald elder and the golden long saber in his hand, his pupils contracted, feeling a sense of foreboding.

"We're in trouble now!"

Fang Bai, seeing the bald elder Lin Xiaotian suddenly raise his golden long saber, couldn't help but smile wryly.

That golden long saber was a Spiritual Artifact; although it was a low-grade one, cutting through the thick iron chains of the bridge would be effortless.

"Everybody, be careful!"

Han Xingyu, also noticing Lin Xiaotian lifting the golden long saber, his face turned grim, and he sharply cautioned the disciples from Xuannv Sect surrounding him.

Chapter 1110: Falling into the Gorge

"Han Xingyu, today you will die knowing why!"

Across the Iron Chain Bridge, Lin Xiaotian, holding a golden long saber, looked triumphantly at the panicked Han Xingyu and others, and burst into loud laughter, "In two days, Dragon Tiger Palace will join forces with Snow Fox Mountain, Spirit Crane Sect, Wind Cloud Island, and Ruyi Monastery to besiege Xuannv Sect. Hehe, by then, Xuannv Sect will cease to exist! As commanded by our Palace Master, I am here to send you on your way first!"

Hearing Lin Xiaotian's words, Han Xingyu's mind buzzed, and her face instantly lost all color.

Snow Fox Mountain and the other three great sects, all located within the territory of Xuannv Sect, had always looked up to Xuannv Sect as their leader. For thousands of years, they had stood shoulder to shoulder with Xuannv Sect, jointly countering Dragon Tiger Palace.

The successive Sect Leaders of Xuannv Sect had also treated these smaller sects generously, only requiring them to hand over a small portion of their cultivation resources each year in exchange for their loyalty.

However, this situation changed with the inauguration of the new Sect Leader, Yang Ruojun.

Yang Ruojun, who detested evil and was headstrong, unlike her predecessors—who were either humble and gentle or composed in joy and anger—would openly show her distaste for anyone she disliked, irrespective of their status, even publicly chastising them without sparing their dignity.

Such a character inevitably offended many sect disciples.

Moreover, Yang Ruojun believed that the former leaders were too lenient towards the various sects within their domain, which undermined the interests of Xuannv Sect. Not long after taking office, she declared that the cultivation resources submitted annually by each major sect should be increased by ten percent.

This decision further displeased the major sects towards Yang Ruojun and even against Xuannv Sect.

Han Xingyu and several elders of Xuannv Sect felt that the Sect Leader's approach was inappropriate and could lead to the alienation and betrayal of the major sects, so they collectively tried to persuade Yang Ruojun. However, she turned a deaf ear, insisting stubbornly that Xuannv Sect, with its overwhelming strength, need not fear these sects' submission.

Han Xingyu and the others, feeling helpless, had to let it be, fearing that the Sect Leader's suppressive measures might provoke rebellious sentiments among the sects, or even push them covertly to side with Dragon Tiger Palace—which would certainly not bode well for Xuannv Sect.

Before this trip to Purple Flame City, Han Xingyu had heard from another worried elder that there had been rumors of possible collusion between some sects and Dragon Tiger Palace, which could act against Xuannv Sect. At the time, Han Xingyu was somewhat skeptical, thinking that the elder was overly alarmist, but now it seemed his words had come true.

At this moment, hearing Lin Xiaotian's words, Han Xingyu's mind buzzed again, and her first reaction was that it spelled major trouble.

Han Xingyu knew Lin Xiaotian's words must be true.

Although there had been occasional conflicts between Xuannv Sect and Dragon Tiger Palace, they had never openly killed each other's disciples in broad daylight to avoid triggering a full-scale war between the two sects. And now, Lin Xiaotian's readiness to cut off the Iron Chain Bridge clearly showed that Dragon Tiger Palace was prepared to utterly break with Xuannv Sect.

Han Xingyu also understood, Dragon Tiger Palace's joining forces with Snow Fox Mountain and the other three major sects to besiege Xuannv Sect must have been long premeditated, and they must have made ample preparations. Xuannv Sect was likely facing a huge crisis.

Han Xingyu, worried about the safety of Xuannv Sect, wished she could sprout wings and fly back immediately.

However, whether they could safely get through this current crisis remained an unknown.

Suddenly—

Suddenly—

The sharp wind of the blade suddenly arose, as Lin Xiaotian's golden longsword drew two dazzling golden glimmers, slashing towards the two iron chains deeply embedded within the stone wall.

"Don't do it!"

At the same time as Lin Xiaotian's golden longsword slashed down, a chorus of alarmed shouts erupted from atop the Iron Chain Bridge.

Those who issued the cries were the martial artists already on the bridge, who had no affiliation with the Xuannv Sect.

These martial artists included Hu Ren, Miao Feng, and the three members of Hu Yi's family, totaling twenty or thirty people. They had never anticipated that the people from Dragon Tiger Palace, in order to deal with Han Xingyu and other disciples of the Xuannv Sect, would also doom them to the same fate—a completely unforeseen disaster.

At that moment, aside from Fang Bai and Han Xingyu, the cultivation levels of the dozens of martial artists on the bridge were mostly at the Heaven Level Realm and Desolate Level Realm. Once the Iron Chain Bridge broke, given their abilities, they could not float through the air to the opposite side; they could only plummet to the gorge below.

And with Nine Bends Gorge reaching a depth of a kilometer, although the bottom was covered in assorted grass and trees—which meant they wouldn't die instantly from the fall—the bottom was said to be home to many highly aggressive spirit beasts. Once they fell to the bottom of the gorge, they would be treated as delicacies and attacked en masse by these beasts, which would indeed prove fatal.

According to some martial artists who had ventured to the bottom of the gorge and fortunately escaped, not only were there numerous spirit beasts at the bottom of Nine Bends Gorge, but they were also exceptionally fierce and mighty. Being at the bottom was even more terrifying than being surrounded and attacked by a third-rate Sect. Even for Vast Level martial artists, it was a situation of likely death.

Thus, seeing Elder Lin Xiaotian of Dragon Tiger Palace intending to cut the Iron Chain Bridge, how could Hu Ren and the group of martial artists not be scared?

However, their cries of alarm apparently had no effect. The golden longsword in Lin Xiaotian's hand still mercilessly continued its descent.

Clang—

Clang—

The crisp sound of metal clashing rang out one after another, as the golden longsword, capable of slicing through iron like mud, cut through the two iron chains as easily as slicing tofu.

"Ah..."

Echoing screams of extreme fear and despair reverberated across the skies of Nine Bends Gorge, as the figures of dozens of martial artists on the Iron Chain Bridge, along with the severed bridge, plummeted swiftly towards the gorge's floor, a thousand meters below.

At this time, unless one was a martial artist who had cultivated in wind system martial arts techniques, it was very difficult for their bodies to hover in mid-air. Even for a Vast Level Expert like Han Xingyu, after

the bridge broke and the ground vanished beneath his feet, he only remained suspended for a few moments before his True Yuan was exhausted, and he continued to fall.

Fang Bai, who was originally capable of passing through the air to the opposite bank and even saving two others, also fell along with the group as the number of plummeting martial artists was too great, and his mind raced with thoughts.

During the fall, Fang Bai circulated the Wind Art, mobilized the Wind Essence Qi, and controlled the speed and direction of his descent, swiftly taking stock of the situation around him.

Of the dozens of martial artists falling, aside from Han Xingyu who still appeared composed, the faces of the other martial artists were stricken with panic, their screams unceasing.

Hu Ren's son, fourteen or fifteen years old Hu Yi, due to his severed meridians which rendered him akin to an ordinary person, had absolutely no ability to cope with this sudden peril; hence, he was falling at the fastest speed. Fang Bai knew that if he continued falling like this, even with many trees in the gorge to break his fall, he would still end up shattered to pieces.

As for Zhuge Lian, although her pretty face was deathly pale and she was terribly frightened, she knew to protect herself with True Yuan. Her descent to the bottom of the gorge, aided by the resistance of the large trees there, actually posed no life-threatening danger, and she would at most sustain minor injuries.