

Doctor 1241

Chapter 1241: Disciple under Fang Bai

Almost at the same moment the Lightning Marten swiped its claws and harvested the life of that third-rank Sect Master, three other Sect Masters, including Wu Qitian, fleeing in different directions, also fell into deep despair.

Initially, when they saw the Lightning Marten chasing another person, they secretly felt lucky, thinking that they could escape this calamity and survive.

However, to their utter shock, they hadn't escaped more than a kilometer when they encountered a martial artist appearing ghost-like directly in front of each of them, blocking their paths.

The three martial artists blocking their paths were all young men in their twenties.

The one blocking Wu Qitian was a young man in a green robe, tall and straight, with a notably handsome face.

The ones blocking the paths of the other two Sect Masters were two figures, large and sturdy as bulls, standing like iron towers with an intimidating presence.

The sudden appearance of these three blockers astonished the four Sect Masters, and they soon sensed a powerful martial aura and an emanating murderous intent from the trio, realizing these blockers were foes, not friends.

Yet what truly drove them to despair were the figures standing not far behind the blockers: a fat Taoist and five beautiful female martial artists.

The fat Taoist was short and chubby, dressed in a wide, dirty Taoist robe, his messy hair adorned with strands of wild grass, and his small eyes rapidly darting about, giving off a sleazy and unkempt appearance.

The five beautiful female martial artists stood shoulder to shoulder, like ornaments of the seasons, each excelling in their presence, radiating a spiritual aura as if fairies had descended into the mortal world.

The five female martial artists remained still, merely casting frosty glances at Wu Qitian and the other two Sect Masters.

Only the fat Taoist moved back and forth among the three blockers, his eyes on Wu Qitian and the others filled with mockery.

Although the cultivation level of the three male blockers was only at the high rank of the Vast Level, a minor realm lower than that of Wu Qitian and the other Sect Masters, they overshadowed them in terms of aura.

And the aura from the fat martial artist and the five beautiful female martial artists seemed even stronger than that of the three young male blockers.

"Kind friends, please allow us a way out; I have a generous reward here!"

Seeing the blockers were not dressed in the garments of the Huaxia Sect disciples, Wu Qitian felt desperate yet saw a glimmer of hope. With quick thinking, he immediately threw several Spatial Rings towards the blockers.

Inside the Spatial Rings thrown by Wu Qitian were the cultivation resources he had accumulated over many years. Though it pained him to part with them, if it could buy them a way out, it was worth it.

The other two Sect Masters were also quick-witted and thought the same as Wu Qitian, attempting to sway the two male martial artists blocking their paths with their own cultivation resources.

The three male martial artists grabbed the thrown Spatial Rings, infused True Yuan to inspect them, exchanged glances from a distance with a simultaneous eerie smile, then casually stored away the Spatial Rings.

Seeing this, Wu Qitian and the other Sect Masters felt a surge of relief; since the other party had accepted their cultivation resources, they might just let them go.

"We'll take the cultivation resources, and you... go die!"

The handsome male martial artist in front of Wu Qitian suddenly shouted loudly, a golden staff appearing in his hand, as a powerful surge of Golden Essence Energy erupted, pressing down in all directions.

"Rod of Buddha's Fury!"

A loud roar erupted again; the handsome male Martial Artist's beard and hair stood on end, his eyes wide with fury, as he swung the golden staff in his hand, launching the first strike at Wu Qitian.

The striking male Martial Artist was none other than Ghost Hand, one of the disciples Fang Bai had taken in the Secular World.

Ghost Hand was the first disciple under Fang Bai, possessing an Innate Golden Spirit Root. Fang Bai had given him a Spiritual Artifact—a golden staff—and imparted to him the "Buddha's Fury Golden Staff Technique" and the attack Martial Arts "Rod of Buddha's Fury."

Before meeting Fang Bai, Ghost Hand was already a Martial Artist, albeit of average strength. His power had soared leaps and bounds only after receiving Spiritual Artifacts and Martial Arts Techniques from Fang Bai, placing him among the top disciples under Fang Bai.

Currently, Ghost Hand's cultivation level had reached the High Rank of the Vast Level Realm. Possessing an Innate Spiritual Root, he also had an unmatched ability among ordinary Martial Artists to challenge those beyond his level.

Although Ghost Hand's ability to challenge beyond his level couldn't compare to his master, Fang Bai, he could easily defeat Cosmic Level early-stage experts. Thus, dealing with Wu Qitian, a Martial Artist at Vast Level Perfection, was more than manageable for him.

Like an enraged Buddha, Ghost Hand swung his golden staff fiercely at Wu Qitian. The descending blow was mountainous, the sharp and lethal Golden Essence Energy enveloped Wu Qitian, who was shocked to find himself trapped as if wrapped in a swamp, unable to escape the reach of Ghost Hand's staff attack.

"Don't!"

Enshrouded by the shadow of death, Wu Qitian was terrified, pleading as he tried his best to dodge.

But Ghost Hand clearly had no intentions of sparing him, ignoring his pleas. The golden staff continued to fall relentlessly, with speed and force only a Cosmic Level Expert could deliver.

The difference between the Cosmic Level Realm and the Vast Level Realm was just a word, yet the gap in strength was immense.

Facing Ghost Hand's fierce attack, Wu Qitian, who had been unrivaled before invading the Huaxia Sect, felt utter despair, his heart as cold as ashes.

Pu—

With a sound like a watermelon being smashed, Ghost Hand's Buddha's Fury Golden Staff forcefully broke through Wu Qitian's Defense Qi Shield, striking him solidly on the head, instantly causing brain matter and blood to splatter.

With one strike, Ghost Hand killed Wu Qitian, the Sect Master of a third-rate sect, making a name for himself in one battle.

Followed by two more screams, after Ghost Hand, the two robust male Martial Artists who were with him also succeeded in dispatching the remaining two third-rate Sect Masters to the Nether Hell.

The two stout, ox-like Martial Artists were none other than Niu Ben and Xiong Yingxiong. Although they looked different, their builds were similar and their personalities both straightforward and honest, which greatly pleased Fang Bai.

Niu Ben and Xiong Yingxiong, one with an Innate Earth Spirit Root and the other with an Innate Fire Spirit Root, both had considerable natural talent. With Fang Bai's dedicated guidance in the Secular World, their strength had now advanced to the High Rank of the Vast Level.

While slightly weaker than Ghost Hand in terms of small realm differences, Niu Ben and Xiong Yingxiong, who also had the ability to challenge beyond their level, were still able to defeat their respective adversaries.

Almost within a few moments, the invading three Sect Masters were all slain.

"It wasn't even a challenge, totally lacking any thrill, just three weaklings!"

Xiong Yingxiong spat on the corpses on the ground, then, together with Ghost Hand and Niu Ben, they searched the bodies of the three Sect Masters and found all their Martial Arts Techniques and Cultivation Resources. They exchanged looks, delighted, and walked back to the five stunningly beautiful female Martial Artists.

"Ladies, these are the Cultivation Resources I've collected!"

Xiong Yingxiong, holding several Spatial Rings scavenged from the foes, passed them to the five breathtakingly beautiful Martial Artists. Scratching his head, he grinned sheepishly, eager for praise.

Chapter 1242: Meeting the Huaxia Sect

Su Linglong, Linghu Qianjiao, Linghu Baimei, and Dongfang Ruhua, four ladies who had already known Fang Bai in the Secular World, were wholeheartedly devoted to him, and Fang Bai likewise treated them as cherished confidantes.

Although Zhuge Lian met Fang Bai in the True Martial Realm, she had long harbored feelings for him. However, she lacked guile and was unable to keep things to herself, hence those little thoughts of hers couldn't be hidden from anyone.

Xiong Yingxiong, though simple and honest, was not foolish. He could see the affection these ladies held for their master, Fang Bai, and thought that since they might become his masters' wives in the future, it would be beneficial to win their favor now by courting their happiness.

Thus, along the way, Xiong Yingxiong respectfully addressed them as "Madam" repeatedly,

At the sound of being called "Madam" by Xiong Yingxiong, the four women reacted with joy or pleasure, some bashfully or blushing, yet no one raised any objections; all tacitly accepted the title.

Xiong Yingxiong was a person of utmost sincerity and filial piety. In the absence of his master Fang Bai, he regarded the ladies Su Linglong and others as his leaders. Upon obtaining Cultivation Resources, he did not dare keep them for himself and planned to respectfully offer the Spatial Rings to the five women.

Ghost Hand and Niu Ben did the same. After defeating their respective opponents, they gathered where Xiong Yingxiong was and also took out their acquired Spatial Rings, intending to hand them over to the five women.

This was the first time the five ladies had encountered such a situation, and they looked at one another, momentarily unsure of how to proceed.

"When on the sea vessel, your master had provided each of us with ample Cultivation Resources. These are yours... just keep them,"

Among the five women, Linghu Baimei was the most lively and quick to react; after a brief contemplation, she smiled and said to Ghost Hand and the others.

"Yes, we do not lack Cultivation Resources. Keep them."

"The Cultivation Resources we possess will last us a very long time!"

"You also need quite a lot of Cultivation Resources for your own cultivation. Just put them away!"

"Yes, we won't take them!"

Su Linglong and the other three women also reacted and politely declined the good intentions of Ghost Hand and the others.

Ghost Hand and his two companions, though disciples under Fang Bai, were actually treated like brothers by him. Knowing the intelligence and sensitivity of the five women including Su Linglong, they would certainly not assume too much in front of Ghost Hand and his companions, and conversed with them with smiles and politeness.

After some modest exchanges, seeing that Su Linglong and the other four insisted on not taking the acquired Spatial Rings, the three of them had no choice but to keep them themselves.

"I'm glad we arrived in time, or Sister Fang Yun and the others would have been in danger!"

Su Linglong raised her eyes towards Huaxia Sect in the distance, and faintly made out several familiar figures swiftly approaching from afar, her eyes brightening excitedly.

Linghu Qianjiao and the other three also felt boundless joy.

After Fang Bai disappeared from the sea vessel, Su Linglong and the others only learned from a letter left in Fang Bai's room that he had jumped off the ship alone to lead away Madam Linghu, in order not to let the thousands of Martial Artists on the ship fall into danger.

Though Su Linglong and the others had witnessed the strength of Madam Linghu and were secretly worried for Fang Bai, they also knew of the many life-preserving means Fang Bai possessed and were confident that he would eventually escape Madam Linghu's pursuit and find them.

The sea vessel Su Linglong and the others were on did not dock at a port controlled by Tianji Sect, nor did they encounter any deliberate difficulties. After disembarking, they asked around for the address of Huaxia Sect and made their way there, unexpectedly running into the joint assault on Huaxia Sect by Lieyang Sect and the other three major sects.

However, by the time they arrived at Huaxia Sect, the Lightning Mink had already astonishingly repelled the disciples of the four major sects. Consequently, they intervened to intercept the fleeing Sect Masters of the four major sects and aimed to assassinate all four.

While the Lightning Mink was busy chasing the disciples of sects like the Lieyang Sect among others, it suddenly smelled the presence of Su Linglong and others. Instantly abandoning pursuit of the others, it shifted its body and dashed at lightning speed towards Su Linglong and her companions.

"Are you... the Lightning Mink?"

Dongfang Ruhua, upon seeing the Lightning Mink suddenly appearing before her eyes, was shocked and thrilled, her beautiful eyes wide open as she cautiously inquired, unsure.

Dongfang Ruhua still remembered that before entering the True Martial Realm, the Lightning Mink was only as big as a cat, but the spirit beast before her now, although familiar, had grown several times larger, resembling a small tiger with fur color also changed. While the aura was similar, she still wasn't completely certain.

"Ow..."

Understanding human nature well, the Lightning Mink nodded its head, then sprang next to Dongfang Ruhua's leg, affectionately rubbing against it.

"Wow, you really are the Lightning Mink!"

In the Secular World, the Lightning Mink enjoyed rubbing against Dongfang Ruhua's legs constantly. After it performed this action, Dongfang Ruhua was finally certain it truly was the Lightning Mink and was overjoyed. She bent down, hugged the Lightning Mink around its neck, and gently caressed its smooth fur.

To many martial artists from the Secular World, the Lightning Mink was considered Fang Bai's "pet beast," and Fang Bai doted on it greatly, lavishly providing it with abundant cultivation resources to "squander" without any heartache.

However, Su Linglong and others knew well that Fang Bai spoiled the Lightning Mink because he valued its potential abilities and future achievements.

Su Linglong and company shared Fang Bai's affections, liking whatever Fang Bai liked. Thus, each of them had played and frolicked with the Lightning Mink before. Now seeing it appear, they gathered around giggling and laughing, touching it here and there, like old friends and relatives reuniting after a long separation.

"Eh? Where is the Fat Taoist?"

Dongfang Ruhua suddenly thought of Wu De, looked around, and then realized that Wu De had taken over the Lightning Mink's previous role, was now pursuing the escaping disciples of the Lieyang Sect among the four major sects. For each disciple he killed, he collected their Spatial Ring and casually threw it into his own.

The disciples of the Lieyang Sect and the other major sects were primarily Desolate Level Martial Artists and Vast Level Martial Artists. For Wu De, who was at the Vast Level Realm himself, the cultivation resources stored by these disciples were just right for him, thus killing more provided him with additional resources.

"Linglong, Ruhua, Qian Jiao, Baimei... is it really you?"

Just then, Fang Yun's slightly trembling voice approached from afar, and in an instant, her figure clearly appeared in Su Linglong and others' view.

Following closely behind Fang Yun was Tang Wenrou along with a group of martial artists from the Secular World.

"Sister Fang Yun!"

Su Linglong and the others had journeyed far just to accompany Fang Bai in search of Fang Yun and other martial artists from the Secular World. Overwhelmed with emotion upon seeing them, they quickly hastened their steps to meet them.

Even Wu De stopped pursuing the disciples of the Lieyang Sect and other four major sects, rushing over towards them.

After arriving in the True Martial Realm, although they had only been separated for just over a year, it felt like a very long time. On seeing each other now, they hugged and then sighed with mixed feelings, some unable to hold back tears.

"Sister Fang Yun, let me introduce: this is Zhuge Lian, originally a disciple of Xuannv Sect from Tiansheng Continent, but now she has left the Sect and become a Loose Cultivator... She is also a good friend Fang Bai made in the True Martial Realm," Su Linglong pointed at the somewhat nervous Zhuge Lian, smiling as she spoke to Fang Yun.

Chapter 1243: The Helpless Fang Yun and the Resentful Tang Wenrou

Su Linglong, while introducing Zhuge Lian, Fang Yun and the Tang Wenrou behind her exchanged glances, secretly sizing up Zhuge Lian with various thoughts in their minds.

Fang Yun felt joy mixed with helplessness; Tang Wenrou, on the other hand, was filled with quiet resentment.

Fang Yun's joy stemmed from sensing a familiar aura on Zhuge Lian. She knew Zhuge Lian must have received the Martial Arts Techniques passed down by Fang Bai. In terms of appearance, figure, and temperament, Zhuge Lian was not inferior to Su Linglong and the other women, seeming to possess even greater strength.

The helplessness was because her own little brother was simply too passionate. He had already incurred many romantic debts in the Secular World, and now in the True Martial Realm, he had found another confidante. It would surely be his headache in time.

As for Tang Wenrou, after coming from the Secular World to the True Martial Realm, though separated by distance from Fang Bai, her heart was entirely fixated on him. Yet, to her dismay, before she could even see Fang Bai, she witnessed another of his confidantes whom he had met in this foreign world, feeling not only quiet resentment but also wronged.

However, in the presence of everyone, the resilient Tang Wenrou did not show her grievances or bitterness and simply looked at Zhuge Lian with an indifferent expression.

Moreover, during her time in the Secular World, Tang Wenrou had accepted the fact that Fang Bai had several confidantes at the same time. Over the past year in the True Martial Realm, she also understood that many male and female Martial Artists here had multiple cultivation partners.

These Martial Artists with multiple cultivation partners were not just fulfilling physical needs by being together but also mainly sought to enhance each other's Cultivation Levels through joint cultivation.

However, only mutual and tacit cultivation partners could achieve the best results during cultivation, benefiting both parties.

For those who were unrequited in their affection or used force to coerce others into joint cultivation, not only could they hardly achieve the desired cultivation effects, but they also risked harming the other's body.

In the Secular World, Tang Wenrou felt a secret affection for Fang Bai not long after they met. Later, she cultivated the Martial Arts Techniques taught by Fang Bai, forming a telepathic bond and feeling even more that besides Fang Bai, she could not harbor feelings for anyone else.

Therefore, while Fang Bai could have multiple confidantes including Tang Wenrou, it was harder for Tang Wenrou and her companions to develop feelings for other male Martial Artists.

Tang Wenrou had never thought of transferring her affections to any other male Martial Artist, so naturally, she hoped that Fang Bai would have fewer admirers around him, though it seemed somewhat unrealistic now.

"Sister Fang, Sister Tang, greetings to you both!"

Just as Fang Yun and Zhuge Lian harbored their thoughts, with a touch of nervousness and shyness, Zhuge Lian timidly greeted them with deferent manners.

On their way to the Huaxia Sect, led by Su Linglong and others, they had learned from various experienced Martial Artists they encountered that the Sect Master of the Huaxia Sect was named Fang Yun. They had also become very familiar with the names of several Elders, Stewards, and key Disciples.

Especially Fang Yun, who held the dual identity of being the Sect Master of the Huaxia Sect and Fang Bai's older sister. Upon finding out the identity of the beautiful woman before her, Zhuge Lian inexplicably grew nervous and reserved.

Seeing Zhuge Lian greeting them, Tang Wenrou still did not speak, only giving a slight nod in response to her.

Compared to Tang Wenrou, Fang Yun was naturally much warmer, as after all, Zhuge Lian was the confidante of her little brother.

"Zhuge Lian, right? Hello! Nice to meet you!"

She smiled, moved forward two steps, and took Zhuge Lian's hand, looked her up and down, and affectionately started asking her about how she and Fang Bai met.

"So, your father is Zhuge Dingtian... Hmm, before I entered the True Martial Realm, I heard my brother speak of your father. He was a strong figure of the True Martial Realm, yet he was pursued and killed. Accidentally, he entered the Secular World and, regretfully, perished there..."

When Fang Yun reached this point, her expression turned serious, and she responsibly said to Zhuge Lian, "Rest assured, my brother has always been one to keep his promises. Since he made a vow before your father's remains, he will definitely do everything within his power to fulfill it! Perhaps it won't be long before you can find your mother."

Hearing Fang Yun mention her never-met father and her missing mother, Zhuge Lian couldn't help but feel somber and quietly nodded in agreement.

Zhuce Lian followed Fang Bai all the way from Tiansheng Continent for two reasons: one was that her heart was indeed tied to Fang Bai, and the other was her hope for Fang Bai's help in finding her mother.

But aside from knowing her mother's name, Zhuge Lian knew nothing else—how difficult would it be to find her mother?

After a brief exchange of pleasantries, Fang Yun ordered other Huaxia Sect disciples to clean up the battlefield and collect the spoils of war, while she herself returned to the Huaxia Sect with Su Linglong and the others.

On the way back, as Su Linglong and the others saw corpses and severed limbs strewn across the ground and smelled the blood in the air, imagining the fierce battle that had taken place, they couldn't help but shudder.

Groups of Huaxia Sect disciples were methodically moving the bodies, piling them up in the distance for incineration.

"I know my brother well; he's not one to recklessly risk his life in the heat of the moment. Since he left behind a letter before he left the ship, declaring that he was going to lure away Madam Linghu, it means he was confident of his own survival... Don't worry, let us just quietly wait for his return here at the Huaxia Sect!"

Once everyone returned to the Huaxia Sect, seated in the Sect Master Hall, Fang Yun listened to Su Linglong and the others recount the events on Misty Island. She did not show any sign of anxiety but comforted them instead.

"Fang Yun is right, Fang Bai is so formidable, there's no way he would be in any danger!"

Fang Bai's parents, who had rushed over to talk with Su Linglong and the others, agreed with their daughter Fang Yun upon hearing her words.

As parents who had witnessed Fang Bai's growth step by step to his current stature, Fang Gang and Yang Mei had an almost blind trust in their son, firmly believing in his fortunate and protected destiny, confident that nothing would happen to him.

Seeing that both Fang Bai's parents and sister all spoke with such confidence, Su Linglong and the others began to feel at ease.

That same day, Fang Yun had someone arrange accommodation for Su Linglong and the rest, provided them with food and drink, and advised them to rest and cultivate. At the same time, she dispatched two groups of disciples again, one to continue searching for news about Fang Bai, and the other to scatter across the entire Shenwu Continent to help Zhuge Lian find traces of her mother.

Su Linglong, Linghu Qianjiao, Linghu Baimei, Dongfang Ruhua, Zhuge Lian, Ghost Hand, Niu Ben, Xiong Yingxiong, and Wu De—each of their cultivation levels was at the pinnacle within the Huaxia Sect. Their arrival significantly strengthened Huaxia Sect's power, inspiring the Huaxia Sect disciples.

As for the Lieyang Sect and other major sects, with their Sect Masters and high-level members killed, the disciples either left or dispersed, and the sects gradually collapsed, leaving within a thousand miles, an area which became the sphere of influence of the Huaxia Sect.

Chapter 1244: A Strange Invitation Card

After the battle with the four major sects including Lieyang Sect, though it ended with Huaxia Sect's victory, Fang Yun and others realized some deficiencies in their sect.

Huaxia Sect was slightly stronger than Lieyang Sect, but if they had to face Lieyang Sect and the other three major sects at the same time like today, they would be insufficient and fall into a dangerous situation.

The main reason was the lack of sufficient numbers of disciples in Huaxia Sect.

In the True Martial Realm, a third-rank sect usually has several thousand disciples, whereas Huaxia Sect only had a mere thousand or so, even fewer than some fourth or fifth-rank minor sects. This could lead to a great disadvantage when facing invasions from numerically superior enemies.

After discussions, the higher-ups of Huaxia Sect including Fang Yun unanimously decided to recruit talented martial artists from across the Shenwu Continent to bolster the sect's strength.

In the previous battle, Huaxia Sect became famous in one battle by defeating the invading forces from Lieyang Sect and the other three major sects, gaining significant prestige.

The swift rise of Huaxia Sect attracted the attention and concern of many nearby sects.

Sects weaker than Huaxia Sect worried about their interests being encroached upon or even being annexed.

Sects stronger than Huaxia Sect worried about having a powerful new competitor, fearing they might be surpassed someday.

Thus, shortly after the great battle between Huaxia Sect and the four major sects including Lieyang Sect, a second-rank sect closest to Huaxia Sect came to confront them under the pretext that Lieyang Sect was under their protection, yet was annihilated by Huaxia Sect, and they wanted to seek justice for Lieyang Sect.

The overall strength of the second-rank sect, although only considered second-tier in the Shenwu Continent filled with strong sects, still had more than a dozen Cosmic Level experts, not something ordinary third-rank sects could contend with.

In the eyes of many martial artists, although Huaxia Sect had defeated Lieyang Sect and the other three major sects, its overall strength was still far from being able to compete with a second-rank sect, hence this time they probably could not escape disaster.

Before Su Linglong, Dongfang Ruhua, Ghost Hand and others arrived, facing the confrontation from that second-rank sect, Huaxia Sect really had no way to respond, and the threat they faced was much greater than the previous invasion by Lieyang Sect and the other three major sects.

However, now, with the addition of Su Linglong, Ghost Hand, and others, the overall strength of Huaxia Sect has greatly increased, especially after Su Linglong, Fang Yun and others repeatedly practiced the Combined Assault Formation initially taught by Fang Bai, they became more confident, capable of contending with the second-rank sect.

The second-rank sect that came to confront Huaxia Sect was composed of one Elder, two Stewards, and over a hundred elite disciples. In the eyes of that second-rank sect's Sect Master, such a lineup should have been enough to completely sweep over Huaxia Sect.

However, to everyone's surprise, after a brief disagreement leading to a fight, the leading figures and over a hundred elite disciples sent by that second-rank sect, under the siege of the Combined Assault Formation led by Fang Yun and others, did not last long and were entirely annihilated.

That heavily defeated second-rank sect, severely weakened by this battle, dared not make any rash moves anymore.

After this battle, Huaxia Sect's fame spread far and wide, establishing its position as the strongest sect within a thousand miles, and countless martial artists from various places came seeking to join Huaxia Sect.

Though Huaxia Sect urgently sought to recruit talent and expand its strength, they did not indiscriminately accept all who sought refuge, but would first assess the strength and character of the applicants, and after a period of observation to confirm that the applicants were not spies from other sects, only then would they formally accept them into the sect.

In just one month, Huaxia Sect, which initially had only about a thousand disciples, rapidly expanded to around four thousand, truly starting to look like a major powerful sect.

However, Fang Yun and others were well aware that Huaxia Sect's current number of disciples, strength, cultivation resources, and sect heritage still weren't comparable to a true major powerful sect.

Therefore, being low-profile and enduring would be the style of Huaxia Sect's disciples for the foreseeable future.

After Su Linglong and others arrived at Huaxia Sect, they were directly given the status of Elder or Steward, entering the high ranks of Huaxia Sect.

Knowing their shallow foundations, Fang Yun and the other higher-ups of Huaxia Sect sought to secure a foothold in the highly competitive and densely populated sect landscape of Shenwu Continent, thus they taught their disciples to diligently train and practice day by day.

That afternoon, Fang Yun was discussing matters with Su Linglong and other high-ranking members of the Huaxia Sect within the Sect Master Hall when suddenly, a disciple reported that two individuals claiming to be disciples of the Ruoshui Palace had delivered an invitation. The invitation was then handed to Fang Yun.

"Ruoshui Palace? How come I've never heard of such a sect in Shenwu Continent?"

Fang Yun frowned, muttering to herself as she opened and read the invitation.

"Fang Yun, sister, what does the invitation say?"

Seeing the peculiar expression on Fang Yun's face after she read the invitation, Dongfang Ruhua couldn't help but ask.

"See for yourself."

Fang Yun handed the invitation to Dongfang Ruhua, then furrowed her brows thoughtfully.

"At Zixia Mountain in Shenwu Continent, an Innate Spirit Beast, the Purple Cloud Eagle, has appeared. We cordially invite your sect's experts to join us in capturing it. Should we succeed, we are willing to share its flesh and drink its blood with your sect... Respectfully, Ruoshui Palace Master Zhou Qingyan."

After receiving the invitation from Fang Yun, Dongfang Ruhua, under the curious gaze of Su Linglong and the other women, read it aloud word by word.

After she finished reading, she closed the invitation and excitedly said to Fang Yun and the others, "Remember, before we entered the True Martial Realm, Brother Fang once said that the strongest martial artists here are supposed to be the Innate Experts. Given that, wouldn't an Innate Spirit Beast be comparable to an Innate Expert in strength?"

Hearing this, the women looked at each other, each of their faces filled with excitement and thrill.

Although they had never seen an Innate Expert, they had heard Fang Bai mention them more than once while in the Secular World, and knew that the power of Innate Experts was far beyond the 'Eight Great Realms' of 'Heaven and Earth, the Primordial Chaos of Universe.'

And an Innate Spirit Beast, which is comparable to a human Innate Expert, is said to have tendons, flesh, and even fur cores that are rare cultivation treasures, even more potent than high-grade cultivation resources for martial artists.

Not just for Fang Yun and the others, even Universe Level Experts from first-tier sects would dream of acquiring anything from an Innate Spirit Beast.

It is no exaggeration to say that consuming the flesh and blood of an Innate Spirit Beast could propel even a martial artist of the poorest aptitude to soar to the heavens and stand among the powerhouses of their era.

"The Ruoshui Palace that issued this invitation, I wonder which sect it belongs to, and to what category of sect it pertains."

"Thinking of targeting an Innate Spirit Beast, it must be at least a first-tier sect, right?"

"Where is Zixia Mountain? I've never heard of it within ten thousand li around here! And I've never seen what a Purple Cloud Eagle looks like either!"

"The authenticity of this matter needs to be verified."

"We should send some disciples to inquire about it."

"If this matter is true, should we accept this invitation?"

"That's an Innate Spirit Beast, we must go and see it no matter what! If we can get something from that Innate Spirit Beast, it would be immensely beneficial!"

...

The women chattered away, each voicing their opinions, and the tranquility of the grand hall was disrupted by a single invitation.

Chapter 1245: Forest of Myriad Medicines

In the Shenwu Continent, there are countless Individual Cultivation Martial Artists, numerous Sects, and many Prominent Clans.

Each Sect has its own ranking, and so do the Prominent Clans.

Those first-rate Martial Dao Prominent Clans, with millennia of inheritance and profound foundations, have overall strengths that are by no means inferior to first-rate Sects.

The "Golden Crow Manor", located on the edge of the "Forest of Myriad Medicines", owns more than a dozen Universe Level Experts, dominating an area of thousands of miles with more than ten thousand disciples. Its overall strength surpasses that of any second-rate Sects or Clans, making it one of the famous first-rate Prominent Clans in the Shenwu Continent.

The Forest of Myriad Medicines is one of the oldest primeval forests in the Shenwu Continent, with numerous Spirit Beasts and countless varieties of Spiritual Medicines ranging from low to high grades, hence the name "Myriad Medicines."

Since its foundation, the Golden Crow Manor has backed onto the Forest of Myriad Medicines, obtaining an endless supply of resources such as Spirit Beasts and Spiritual Medicines for Cultivation, as well as the Martial Arts Techniques passed down by forebearers, growing into a generation of powerhouses.

Although the Golden Crow Manor intends to claim the entire Forest of Myriad Medicines as its own territory, preventing other Individual Cultivation Martial Artists and Sect forces from intervening, the complex and boundless terrain of the forest makes it impossible for the Manor to manage thoroughly with its capabilities.

Furthermore, around the Forest of Myriad Medicines, there are other Sect forces, some of which are not weaker than the Golden Crow Manor and share the same intention, considering the Forest of Myriad Medicines their own.

Therefore, when disciples from the major Sect forces enter the Forest of Myriad Medicines for training expeditions, conflicts are inevitable upon encountering each other, resulting in bloodshed and casualties.

In addition, many Martial Artists from other territories sneak into the Forest of Myriad Medicines to hunt Spirit Beasts and gather Spiritual Medicines, adding to the chaos of the forest.

At this time, the sun was setting behind the western mountains, and dusk was approaching. Most of the Spirit Beasts in the Forest of Myriad Medicines had settled in for the night, and the entire primeval forest fell into silence. Occasionally, the roar of a large Spirit Beast would startle the birds into flight, but the quiet would soon return.

It was then, by a winding creek deep in the forest, that a group of more than a dozen Martial Artists was hastening along the stream bank.

Among the dozen or so Martial Artists, there were both men and women, with young people making up the majority. Each one of them radiated a strong Martial Artist Aura.

The two Martial Artists walking at the front and rear of the team appeared to be in their sixties, but were actually in their eighties. Although their temples were slightly frosted with white, their faces were ruddy, their spirits vibrant, and their eyes piercing, exuding a formidable, awe-inspiring demeanor even without anger.

Both octogenarians possessed Universe Level intermediate Cultivation Level, a prowess that would position them among the high ranks within the first-rate Sects and Prominent Clans of the Shenwu Continent, dominating a territory of their own.

The dozen or so Martial Artists walking in the middle ranged from twenty to forty years old, and except for one, all had strengths above the Cosmic Level Realm.

Though not numerous, the combined strength of these Martial Artists was enough to easily wipe out a second-rate Sect.

The dozen Martial Artists were dressed in uniform attire with a three-legged Golden Crow bathed in flames embroidered prominently on their chests.

If any Martial Artists nearby from the Forest of Myriad Medicines were to see them, they would instantly recognize these individuals as disciples from the Golden Crow Manor.

Among these Golden Crow Manor disciples, the two at the forefront and at the rear held the rank of Steward, while the other dozen or so were a mix of External Courtyard disciples, Core Disciples, and Direct Disciples.

Their entry into the Forest of Myriad Medicines was for the annual routine training expedition, and they were also tasked with bringing back some Cultivation Resources for the Golden Crow Manor.

The training expedition involved the young disciples, and the two Stewards from the Golden Crow Manor provided protection and escort.

However, the two Stewards would not intervene lightly — they'd only offer assistance when those disciples on the training expedition faced life-threatening danger. At other times, even if the training disciples suffered severe injuries, they would remain bystanders as long as there was no danger to life.

Martial Artists often choose to train in dangerous areas to push their limits and strengthen their will. If a strong protector always accompanied them during their training, it would defeat the purpose of the experience.

"Since night has already fallen, let's all rest here. We will continue our journey early tomorrow morning!"

Seeing the sunset and the sky growing darker, the Steward at the head of the group stopped in his tracks and turned around to speak.

"Thank goodness!"

"Finally, we can rest!"

"Steward Sun cares for our well-being, thank you so much!"

"I've been walking all day, killed over a dozen Spirit Beasts, and gathered hundreds of Spiritual Medicines; my True Yuan and physical strength are nearly depleted!"

"Aren't we all?"

...

As soon as Steward Sun finished speaking, the disciples of Golden Crow Manor let out a sigh of relief, each wearing a happy expression. A few of the younger disciples, just over twenty years old, couldn't contain their joy and shouted in celebration.

"Enough, enough, all of you quiet down and find a place to rest! Remember, don't stray too far from each other, and don't go beyond a radius of three hundred meters. That way, if anything urgent happens, Steward Li and I can support you in time!"

Steward Sun watched the dozen or so disciples laughing and joking without a care, and couldn't help but smile wryly with patience, advising them.

Three hundred meters was the range within which Steward Sun and Steward Li could sense dangerous auras. Within this radius, should any emergencies arise, they could arrive in an instant, minimizing the risk of harm to the training disciples.

Steward Sun's name was Sun Guangyi, and Steward Li was Li Jingren. Both were about the same age and had similar strengths, serving as stewards for Golden Crow Manor.

This training mission was led by the two of them, responsible for the safety of the dozen or so young disciples participating in the training.

Despite the journey being fraught with dangers that luckily turned out to be safe, both of them remained extremely vigilant, daring not to slack off in the slightest.

Especially now that they were approaching the most dangerous heartland of the Forest of Myriad Medicines, at any moment they might encounter powerful Spirit Beasts. Any carelessness could result in the loss of a disciple.

The young disciples of Golden Crow Manor dispersed in pairs or small groups, sitting cross-legged and closing their eyes to recuperate and restore their Essence Energy as quickly as possible.

Stewards Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren leaped onto nearby ancient trees to recuperate, all the while keeping a close watch on the slightest movements in their surroundings.

The disciples from Golden Crow Manor participating in this training had exceptional talent and extraordinary temperament, true dragons and phoenixes among men. Among them, a Female Martial Artist was particularly eye-catching.

This Female Martial Artist, just over twenty, had a graceful figure and stunning beauty, her natural charm shining through her brows, standing out amongst the other Female Martial Artists.

Her cultivation level was the weakest among the training disciples, merely at the Vast Level Realm, but the aura she exuded was no less than those of the Cosmic Level Realm disciples from Golden Crow Manor.

"Chenyu, are you troubled?"

Seeing the Female Martial Artist sitting alone on a large stone by the stream, lost in thought with her brows slightly furrowed as if harboring some concerns, an older Female Martial Artist approached and sat down cross-legged next to her, asking with a hint of a smile.

Chapter 1246: Chenyu's Worries

"Huh?"

The female martial artist named Chenyu snapped back to her senses, her face slightly flushed, stammering somewhat incoherently, "Senior Sister Ye, I... I'm not preoccupied..."

Senior Sister Ye giggled and edged closer to Chenyu, nudging her with her shoulder, and whispered, "Come on, my Junior Sister Xia, there's no need to hide it from your senior sister. I've been through it all, do you really think you can keep secrets from me? Tell me, did you set your heart on one of our fellow brothers from Golden Crow Manor, wanting to be his martial dao companion?"

"It's not like that, Senior Sister Ye... I..."

Chenyu shook her head, quickly regaining her composure, then let out a deep sigh and looked up at the dark night sky that had set in.

At that moment, a bright moon rose, and the cold moonlight filtered through the gaps between the ancient trees of the sky, casting its light on Chenyu's face, which bore a hint of heroism amidst its stunning beauty. The faint silver halo that surfaced on her fair, jade-like skin added an ethereal, captivating allure to her.

"Junior Sister Xia is exceptionally talented and highly gifted, and with her beauty, it's no wonder that after becoming a disciple of Golden Crow Manor, she has been given special attention for her development by the higher-ups, and so many fellow brothers have been smitten with her. If I were a man, I too, would likely fall for her."

Senior Sister Ye admired the delicate profile of Xia Chenyu under the moonlight, feeling a tinge of envy in her heart.

"Senior Sister Ye, to tell you the truth... I've already given my heart to someone. In this life, I wish only to be his martial dao companion..."

Xia Chenyu murmured, and in her trance, the bright moon before her eyes gradually transformed into the smiling face of the man she yearned for day and night.

Seeing Xia Chenyu talk about the man of her dreams so fondly, Senior Sister Ye became immensely curious, wanting to know what sort of outstanding man could make this breathtakingly beautiful, disinterested-in-all-others junior sister so infatuated.

"Let me take a guess; your beloved must be tall and valiant, supremely talented, and extraordinarily strong, right?"

Senior Sister Ye propped her cheek with one hand, tilting her head as she asked.

Xia Chenyu nodded, "In my eyes, he is all-powerful; no other man in the world can compare to him."

Senior Sister Ye snorted with laughter, "Whoever one loves, they always think is the best in the world. It's like that for everyone."

Chenyu, seeing Senior Sister Ye's disbelief, hurriedly said, "Senior Sister Ye, you haven't met Fang Bai. If you did, you'd know I'm not blindly praising him."

Senior Sister Ye uttered an "Oh," smilingly said, "So your heart belongs to someone named Fang Bai. Tell your senior sister, is he a disciple of a Sect or one of the Prominent Clans?"

Xia Chenyu realized she had slipped but felt it was not a big deal. Answering Senior Sister Ye's inquiry straightforwardly, she said, "He's not a Sect or Prominent Clan disciple, but a Loose Cultivator..."

"A Loose Cultivator?"

Senior Sister Ye was taken aback, her expression full of astonishment. She could hardly believe that her sister, who had an immeasurable future in the martial dao, would actually fall for a Loose Cultivator.

In the True Martial Realm, the majority of martial artists come from Sects and Prominent Clans, then rely on the powerful Cultivation Resources of these Sects and Clans to enhance their Cultivation Levels, eventually becoming mighty figures who dominate the land.

The relatively few Individual Cultivation Martial Artists are generally divided into three categories:

The first category is due to mediocre talent, with no Sect or Prominent Clan willing to take them in.

The second type either have a proud backbone or a naturally free-spirited nature, unwilling to submit to others or be restrained, which is why they prefer not to join any Sects or Prominent Clans.

The third type consists of Martial Artists who, for various reasons, have betrayed and fled from major Sects and Clans or have been expelled by them.

These Individual Cultivation Martial Artists often lack Cultivation Resources, and it is rare for them to possess exceptional strength; the vast majority remain obscure throughout their lives.

Of course, there are also a few Individual Cultivation Martial Artists with remarkable talents who manage to encounter serendipitous opportunities while experiencing the world of the True Martial Realm, enabling them to achieve extraordinary accomplishments on the path of Martial Dao and become powerful figures admired by thousands of Martial Artists.

However, the likelihood of an Individual Cultivation Martial Artist reaching the Martial Dao Peak within the True Martial Realm is exceedingly scarce.

Therefore, when Senior Sister Ye heard that Chenyu's beloved was a Loose Cultivator, she found it hard to believe at first, and then thought that even if it were true, it would surely be met with strong opposition from the higher-ups of the Manor. She feared that Junior Sister Xia's wish to become Martial Dao companions with that Loose Cultivator would be difficult to fulfill.

Senior Sister Ye, named Ye Qingxuan, had the closest relationship with Xia Chenyu among all the disciples at Golden Crow Manor, and knew that Chenyu herself had also been an Individual Cultivator. Over a year ago, after being severely injured in a conflict, she was saved by a high-ranking member of Golden Crow Manor who was out on training and subsequently became a disciple of the Manor.

Initially, Chenyu's Cultivation Level was only at the initial Vast Level, which was far below even that of a menial servant disciple at Golden Crow Manor. However, due to possessing an Innate Fire Spirit Root, Chenyu received special cultivation from the Manor's leaders, who provided her with a large amount of Cultivation Resources and had an Elder personally direct her in her Martial Arts Techniques.

And Chenyu's performance had astounded the leaders of the Manor, earning their admiration and revised perspectives.

In just over a year, Chenyu's Cultivation Level had made breakthroughs, advancing from the initial stage of the Vast Level to the initial stage of the Cosmic Level, leaping an entire realm, and joining the ranks of the External Courtyard disciples of Golden Crow Palace Mountain.

Even though Chenyu was just one among tens of thousands of External Courtyard disciples, she was the only one with an Innate Fire Spirit Root. Given her astonishing rate of advancement in strength, perhaps the External Courtyard was merely a temporary stay for her.

Chenyu was seen as a promising disciple by all of Golden Crow Manor's upper echelons, who believed that if she were supported and cultivated with full effort, she would surely become a cornerstone of the Manor.

How could Golden Crow Manor possibly allow such a disciple with boundless potential and laden with high expectations to become Martial Dao companions with a Loose Cultivator?

Even if one day Chenyu wished to find a Martial Dao companion, given her innate talent and the resources of Golden Crow Manor, without daring to say of seeking out disciples from reclusive Innate Sects or prominent families, at the very least she would need to match with a talented disciple of equal standing.

Therefore, in Ye Qingxuan's opinion, it was impossible for Xia Chenyu to become Martial Dao companions with her unschooled beloved.

If Xia Chenyu insisted on becoming Martial Dao companions with that Loose Cultivator, it might even bring lethal trouble upon him.

For the Manor, eliminating an unschooled, unaffiliated Loose Cultivator for self-interested reasons, would not be problematic at all.

But Ye Qingxuan also understood Chenyu's character, knowing that she was soft on the outside but tough on the inside, and extremely tenacious. Applying pressure on her would likely provoke fierce resistance.

If Golden Crow Palace Mountain objected to Chenyu becoming Martial Dao companions with her beloved in the future, Chenyu might react extremely and could possibly turn against Golden Crow Palace Mountain and stand as its adversary.

Thinking of this, as Chenyu's good friend, Ye Qingxuan couldn't help but worry for her.

"Junior Sister Xia, you really must think this through! If you become Martial Dao companions with a Loose Cultivator, you will surely face opposition from the Manor's higher-ups. Your relationship is doomed to fail..."

Ye Qingxuan glanced toward two Golden Crow Manor Stewards in the distance, then spoke to Xia Chenyu using the Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique.

Ye Qingxuan knew that such topics were best discussed privately, and it would not be good for the two Stewards to overhear.

Chapter 1247: I Know! I'm Not Afraid!

"What if the higher-ups oppose us?"

Chenyu Xia smiled indifferently and responded to Ye Qingxuan with Thread Condensation Sound Transmission Technique, her tone firm: "I, Chenyu Xia, will not easily develop feelings for a man. But once I truly fall for someone, no matter how many complications and obstacles I face, I will be with him."

She paused here, took a deep breath, her expression serious and earnest, and said each word with emphasis: "In this world, no one can stop me from being with the man I love!"

"But..."

Ye Qingxuan hesitated for a moment, stole another glance at the two Stewards, and continued transmitting: "Do you know what the consequences of that would be?"

"Hmm, I know. But I'm not afraid!"

Chenyu Xia's face revealed an unflinching courage, her lips curling into a confident smile: "Fang Bai is even less afraid! If he knew I was here, he would definitely come looking for me... definitely!"

Knowing Fang Bai well, Chenyu Xia was certain that he would break through all barriers to see her if he knew she was at Golden Crow Manor.

It was just that she didn't know Fang Bai's current whereabouts, and had no idea how long it would be until they could meet again.

After the training in the Forest of Myriad Medicines was over, Chenyu Xia had already planned to request to travel the True Martial Realm from the Golden Crow Manor's higher-ups. This would give her a chance to seek news of Fang Bai.

While Chenyu Xia was grateful to Golden Crow Manor for saving her life and providing refuge, she felt there were many ways to repay that kindness. However, under no circumstances would she allow anyone to interfere in her romantic affairs with Fang Bai.

Moreover, Chenyu Xia had always had great confidence in Fang Bai's strength, thinking that his innate talent far surpassed her own. Now that she herself was a Cosmic Level Expert, Fang Bai's Cultivation Level must be even more formidable.

As long as Fang Bai knew she was in Golden Crow Manor, even knowing it was a top-tier Sect filled with formidable individuals, he would certainly come fearlessly to meet her.

If Golden Crow Manor were to obstruct Fang Bai, refusing to let him meet her, a conflict would be inevitable in the event of Fang Bai's forceful entry.

Chenyu Xia did not wish for any conflict to arise between Fang Bai and Golden Crow Manor, but if tensions escalated and a clash became unavoidable, then naturally, Chenyu Xia would stand by Fang Bai's side.

It had been over a year since Chenyu Xia became a disciple of Golden Crow Manor, and she was well aware of the Sect's might. Nevertheless, she was mentally prepared— if Fang Bai one day came knocking, it would be best if he could deter the other Sect Disciples with his powerful strength; otherwise, she would join forces with him to fight, leaving the outcome to fate, be it life or death.

Ye Qingxuan knew she could not dissuade Chenyu Xia and was genuinely doubtful about the outcome for Chenyu Xia and her beloved. With a bitter smile, she said no more and sat down cross-legged beside her.

Meanwhile, Chenyu Xia's expression remained lovesick as she kept reminiscing about every little detail of her time with Fang Bai in the Secular World, her longing growing ever more intense.

Over a dozen Golden Crow Manor Disciples were finding their own spots to rest and recuperate by the creekbank. The two Stewards, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, took turns keeping watch to guard against Spirit Beast attacks.

In the dead of night, although the distant roars of Spirit Beasts occasionally disturbed them, fortunately, no Spirit Beasts approached their camp.

A night passed in a flash, and early the next day, the dozen or so disciples of Golden Crow Manor ate some food they carried with them and then set off again, moving towards the core area of the Forest of Myriad Medicines.

In the Forest of Myriad Medicines, there are countless spiritual medicines. However, a top elite sect like Golden Crow Manor, which has overall immense strength, primarily requires high-rank spiritual medicines. High-rank spiritual medicines are mostly found deep within the Forest of Myriad Medicines, even at the core areas. There are not only dangerous terrains but also strong spirit beasts guarding them, making harvesting extremely difficult.

If it weren't for their mission to enter the mountain for training while also bearing the responsibility to find Blood Bodhi for a severely injured direct disciple of the manor, no one would be willing to enter the core area of the Forest of Myriad Medicines.

The injured direct disciple is the beloved son of Huang Canghai, the current manor master of Golden Crow Manor. His name is Huang Yuanqi, and he is around forty years old. His strength has reached the Cosmic Level of perfection. During a period of training, he had a conflict with disciples from other sects, which led to a severance of his meridians and damage to his Qi Sea, causing him to stay unconscious ever since.

For a martial artist, having severed meridians is already a severe injury, and damage to the Qi Sea is a critical one. It is highly likely that he will be cut off from the Martial Dao and become useless, even worse than a regular person.

Huang Canghai was angry and anxious. He initially wanted to seek revenge against the "culprit" who had severely injured his son. Later, when he learned that the incident was actually instigated by his own son and was self-inflicted, and that the "culprit" was also a disciple from a top elite sect, revenge became complicated, so he had to temporarily suppress his anger.

Huang Canghai was unwilling to let his son become useless like this. Knowing that the high-rank Nine Revolutions Rebirth Pill made from Blood Bodhi of over a thousand years could reconnect meridians and repair the Qi Sea, he dispatched manor disciples to search for Blood Bodhi everywhere. The team that Xia Chenyu is in is one of them.

Blood Bodhi is already a rare species among spiritual medicines, and finding one that is over a thousand years old is even rarer. In the Forest of Myriad Medicines, it might only be possible to venture into the seldom-visited core region and try your luck.

"Valuable spiritual medicines are often guarded by powerful spirit beasts nearby. Everyone, be careful!"

"Deploy your spiritual artifacts, just in case!"

Upon entering the core area of the Forest of Myriad Medicines, the voice of Steward Sun Guangyi reached the ears of every Golden Crow Manor disciple.

Consequently, more than a dozen Golden Crow Manor disciples deployed their spiritual artifacts one after another, tense and on high alert. Under the protection of two stewards, one in the front and one in the back, they held their breath, moved slowly, and cautiously proceeded forward, all the while sensing the Essence Energy around them.

Areas with high-rank spiritual medicines tend to have much richer Essence Energy than other places. Almost all martial artists are capable of sensing these variations in Essence Energy.

Martial artists entering mountains and forests to harvest spiritual medicines mostly rely on sensing Essence Energy. The purer and richer the Essence Energy, the higher the grade of spiritual medicines growing there.

In the Forest of Myriad Medicines, filled with spiritual medicines extruding Heaven and Earth Origin Energy in between the trees, which gathers but does not disperse, it's ideal for cultivation. Therefore, not only do martial artists regard it as a treasure trove, spirit beasts also consider it a paradise.

After entering the core area of the Forest of Myriad Medicines to expand the search area, more than a dozen Golden Crow Manor disciples spread out in a line horizontally, maintaining a distance of about a hundred meters from each other, and advanced together.

"Thousand-Year Melting Origin Grass!"

Suddenly, a disciple from the Inner Court of Golden Crow Manor on the far left exclaimed in excitement and rushed towards a patch of lush grass not far away.

"Yu Hu, be careful!"

Seeing the disciple rush towards the treasure like a madman, Sun Guangyi was startled and immediately shouted a warning.

In the True Martial Realm, spiritual medicines with over a thousand years of medicinal age are considered rare cultivation resources, providing great aid to martial artists' cultivation. However, such spiritual medicines are usually guarded by spirit beasts with formidable attacking power. If a martial artist dares to approach, they will be considered invaders and subjected to fierce attacks.

The Golden Crow Manor disciple named Yu Hu sensed and discovered the Thousand-Year Melting Origin Grass, which could be used to refine high-rank Gathering Yuan Pills, and in his excitement, rushed out rashly, completely forgetting the presence of spirit beasts guarding it.

Chapter 1248: Bone-Eroding Python

Yu Hu is an Inner Court Disciple of Golden Crow Manor, possessing Cosmic Level mid-stage strength. Sensing the Essence Energy released by the Fusion Essence Grass, he wanted to be the first to pick it, and thus he exerted all his strength, shooting out like a bolt of lightning.

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Ignoring the shouting of Sun Guangyi, Yu Hu's speed increased even further. Wherever his gaze fell, a nearly three-thousand-year-old Fusion Essence Grass was already in sight.

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A three-thousand-year-old Spiritual Medicine, even in the Forest of Myriad Medicines where such herbs are everywhere, is still considered a rare treasure, extremely hard to come by, and of astonishing value. Thus, upon seeing it, Yu Hu couldn't help but show a look of ecstatic joy.

-

According to the rules of Golden Crow Manor, Disciples on an external trial can exchange the Cultivation Resources they obtain for Elixirs, Spiritual Artifacts, or Martial Arts Techniques of equal value at Golden Crow Manor's Elixir Hall or Classics Hall, or they could even get a chance for guidance from the higher-ups of Golden Crow Manor.

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Yu Hu's talent and innate capacity were only mediocre among Martial Artists. After his Cultivation Level reached the Cosmic Level mid-stage five years ago, he had been at a standstill without hope of a breakthrough, which caused him considerable distress.

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Yu Hu had once asked one of the higher-ups of Golden Crow Manor, who told him that if he could obtain a two-thousand-year-old high-grade Gathering Yuan Pill, a Marrow Cleansing Pill, or a Creation Pill, his strength might have a chance to break through again.

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The Gathering Yuan Pill can gather Heaven and Earth Origin Energy and is an essential Elixir for Martial Artists during Cultivation.

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The Marrow Cleansing Pill is used for Marrow Cleansing; it can improve a Martial Artist's physique and enhance Cultivation efficiency.

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The Creation Pill can greatly increase a Martial Artist's chances of breaking through and advancing in rank.

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Once these three types of Elixirs reach a high grade, their value becomes extraordinarily high, and they are treasured by Martial Artists as essential for Cultivation. They are not easy to come by.

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As a Disciple from a prominent clan, it is not difficult for Yu Hu to obtain high-grade Elixirs; what is difficult is to obtain Elixirs concocted from rare herbs older than two thousand years. Even the higher-ups of Golden Crow Manor only receive a few bottles every year for their own Cultivation, and an Inner Court Disciple like Yu Hu could only gaze longingly at them.

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Since he couldn't obtain the necessary Elixirs from the Manor, Yu Hu had to rely on himself to search far and wide. However, the older the Spiritual Medicine, the harder it is to find. How easy could it be to find one that's two thousand years old?

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Over the years, Yu Hu traveled all around, hoping to come across a fortuitous encounter that would yield the Spirit Pills he needed for Cultivation, but he found nothing and almost lost hope.

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At this moment, in the Forest of Myriad Medicines, he suddenly discovered a three-thousand-year-old Fusion Essence Grass, which made his heart almost leap out of his chest with excitement.

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If anyone were to compete with Yu Hu for that Fusion Essence Grass at this time, in his urgency, even if the other person were a fellow Disciple, he would fight them desperately.

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The three-thousand-year-old Fusion Essence Grass, if taken back to Golden Crow Manor, would be exchangeable for ten bottles of high-grade Elixirs concocted from two-thousand-year-old rare herbs. That was where Yu Hu's hope for advancement lay.

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"Ssss..."

Just as Yu Hu was about a hundred meters away from the Fusion Essence Grass, a faint and strange "ssss" sound suddenly arose. Though the sound was quiet, all the Golden Crow Manor Disciples on this trip possessed strong abilities beyond the Cosmic Level, with sharp senses, and naturally heard it clearly.

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"Bone-Eroding Python!"

Hearing that strange sound, Li Jingren's nostrils twitched, detecting a rare stench of poison. His face changed dramatically, and he shouted with a grave voice, "Yu Hu, come back quickly!"

As soon as he finished speaking, he saw a giant python as thick as a water tank, twisting its body that measured dozens of yards long, bursting out from among the rocky weeds to the left of the Fusion Essence Grass.

The giant python was known as the "Bone-Eroding Python," a venomous python that caused martial artists of the True Martial Realm to pale at the mention of its name. It was said that the poisonous fog it exhaled could easily corrode the hard bones of human martial artists or other spirit beasts, thus earning its name.

The Bone-Eroding Python had been guarding this Fusion Essence Grass for over a thousand years. It had planned to devour the grass before long, after which it could shed a layer of skin, greatly enhancing its combat power and lifespan, becoming a king amongst high-rank spirit beasts.

Unexpectedly, human martial artists had invaded its territory and even aimed to snatch the Fusion Essence Grass it had been guarding for a thousand years, which greatly enraged the Bone-Eroding Python.

Among spirit beasts, the Bone-Eroding Python was relatively docile and adhered to the principle of not attacking if not attacked. It wouldn't actively assault martial artists, but that Fusion Essence Grass was its forbidden delicacy. Anyone who tried to touch it would provoke its towering rage.

"Ssssss..."

The Bone-Eroding Python hissed with its crimson tongue, followed by bursts of poisonous fog spreading out from its mouth. The grass and trees within a ten-yard radius that came into contact with the poison withered and died instantly, and even the rocks nearby were corroded by the fog, flaking off piece by piece.

The intense toxicity of the Bone-Eroding Python was evident from this.

The python, covered in palm-sized scales of various dazzling colors, reflected blinding light in the sun's rays.

Above its head, there was a fist-sized bump, well-known to martial artists familiar with the Bone-Eroding Python. That bump housed its spirit core, the most valuable part of its body. The Bone-Eroding Python relied on the spirit core within that small bump to absorb the Heaven and Earth Origin Energy, nourishing its body and strengthening its power.

Yu Hu, having traveled the True Martial Realm in his early years, had heard of such spirit beasts and knew of their formidable nature. This particular Bone-Eroding Python, as thick as a water tank and dozens of yards long, wreathed in poisonous mists and exerting a heavy oppressive force, led Yu Hu to believe that its age could not be less than that of the Fusion Essence Grass.

Which is to say, the gigantic Bone-Eroding Python could likely be up to three thousand years old.

A spirit beast of a thousand years was extremely intelligent and belonged to the ranks of high-grade spirit beasts, its attack power comparable to a Cosmic Level expert amongst humans. And a spirit beast of three thousand years could cause a Universe Level expert at perfection realm to feel troubled.

Universe Level experts had extremely keen senses. Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, two stewards from the Golden Crow Manor, sensed the presence of the Fusion Essence Grass and a powerful spirit beast's oppressive force at the same time, immediately warning Yu Hu to be careful. However, Yu Hu ignored it and charged forward, ultimately drawing out the Bone-Eroding Python.

Right as Li Jingren shouted "Come back quickly" to Yu Hu, the Bone-Eroding Python burst forth. Yu Hu, stunned by the sight of the dozens of yards long spotted giant python, stood frozen. By the time he snapped back to reality and thought to turn and run, it was already too late.

The Bone-Eroding Python's oppressive force spread out for dozens of yards, enveloping Yu Hu in it. He felt as though he was trapped in a mire, where even moving a single step seemed a luxury. He could only watch helplessly as the Bone-Eroding Python that was exhaling poisonous fog charged swiftly in his direction.

The Bone-Eroding Python was still tens of meters away from Yu Hu when its foul poisonous breath drifted into his nostrils, causing him to feel dizzy and nauseous.

Desperate, Yu Hu turned his head and shouted, "Two stewards, save me!"

"Evil beast, back off!"

Stewards Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, with kind hearts, couldn't bear to watch Yu Hu perish in the jaws of the Bone-Eroding Python. They instructed Xia Chenyu and a dozen other disciples from Golden Crow Manor to retreat to a safe area at once, while they themselves drew out their spiritual artifacts and charged side by side toward the Bone-Eroding Python, aiming a slash at the bump on its head.

Chapter 1249: Showing Off Power

The lump on the top of the Bone-Eroding Python's head concealed its Spirit Core, which was the softest part of its body, akin to a snake's vital spot. If attacked, it could result in either severe injury or death.

However, that lump was also the most heavily defended area of the Bone-Eroding Python, so much so that even human warriors at the Universe Level Realm would find it difficult to penetrate its defenses and inflict substantive damage.

For someone like Yu Hu, a mid-stage Cosmic Level warrior, being targeted by the Bone-Eroding Python meant a slim chance of survival.

Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, two Stewards from the Golden Crow Manor, although they possessed mid-stage Universe Level strength, were also aware of their limitations. They knew that even if they joined forces, they could not contend with the Bone-Eroding Python.

They charged forward, attacking the Bone-Eroding Python in hopes of delaying it for a few moments, allowing Yu Hu to escape the perilous situation.

But it appeared that the Bone-Eroding Python saw through their intentions. Its movements became swifter, its colorful, massive body turned into a blur of rainbow light. Wherever it passed, trees snapped, grass broke, stones flew scattering, and the air was filled with banging noises. Anything in its path was sent flying to the sides, while the stench of its venomous breath grew even more intense and pungent.

"My head is spinning... I feel really sick!"

"The poisonous fog from that Bone-Eroding Python has drifted over here!"

"The toxicity is so strong! Everyone, hold your breath and contain it to avoid inhaling the poison!"

"Yu Hu is so close to the Bone-Eroding Python, he's doomed now!"

"Not even a Great Luo Immortal could save him!"

"That Bone-Eroding Python moves so fast, it's not just Yu Hu, even our chances of escaping are slim!"

"If I had known, I would have never come to the heart of the Forest of Myriad Medicines. It's far too dangerous!"

"Everyone, be prepared. If the Bone-Eroding Python charges in our direction, flee immediately!"

...

When the two Golden Crow Manor Stewards, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, rushed to rescue Yu Hu, the other disciples from the manor who had retreated to a distance were holding their Spiritual Artifacts and discussing with alarmed faces as they watched the massive, brightly colored Bone-Eroding Python.

Although they were nearly a hundred yards away from the Bone-Eroding Python, the poison fog it continuously exhaled was slowly seeping through the forest breeze, enveloping them and causing severe headaches and nausea. They had no choice but to keep retreating backward.

"Ah..."

A wail of extreme anguish suddenly erupted from Yu Hu.

The group of Golden Crow Manor disciples trembled, looking on as Yu Hu, completely shrouded in the poisonous fog exhaled by the Bone-Eroding Python, contorted in pain, his clothes, skin, muscles, and bones corroding at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Seeing the situation as hopeless, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren heaved a silent sigh, stopped in their tracks, and quickly retreated.

The Bone-Eroding Python was not easily provoked, but once its ferocity was stirred, it would unleash a terrifying offensive power. Even if the group of Golden Crow Manor disciples teamed up, they had no hope of withstanding its assault. If they did not exit its territory immediately, the consequences would be dire.

After Yu Hu was engulfed by the Bone-Eroding Python's poisonous fog, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren realized that charging forward with their strength would only lead to a senseless death. The two decisively gave up on the rescue and quickly retreated, preparing to lead the remaining Golden Crow Manor disciples to flee far away.

Yu Hu's piercing scream lasted for only a brief dozen breaths before disappearing.

After the poison fog thinned out, Yu Hu had vanished without a trace, and at the spot where he had stood, there was nothing but a puddle of pus that emitted a foul stench.

The dozen or so disciples of Golden Crow Manor who were hiding in the distant mountains and forests saw this and turned deathly pale, with the weaker ones either bending over to vomit or openly crying, on the verge of collapse.

Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, who were retreating, witnessed the horrific scene, shocked and angry that Yu Hu, a disciple of the Inner Court with Cosmic Level intermediate strength, could fall in such a manner.

"Run! Flee this place at once!"

During the retreat, Sun Guangyi shouted urgently, warning the other Golden Crow Manor disciples in the distance, knowing that the Bone-Eroding Python would chase after them the next moment. If those disciples failed to escape in time, they were at a grave risk of perishing here.

"Junior Sister Xia, we must hurry back!"

Ye Qingxuan saw that the other fellow sect members around her had turned to flee with all their might, while Xia Chenyu stood still as if stunned. In a panic, she grabbed Xia Chenyu's arm and pulled her along, escaping at full speed.

Ye Qingxuan and Xia Chenyu were the weakest among the group from Golden Crow Manor on this trip, and therefore the slowest to flee. They were quickly left behind by the dozen or so fellow disciples, while behind them came rumbling noises mixed with the stench of the wind and the unique oppressive aura of the Spirit Beast.

"We're done for! We're going to die, Junior Sister Xia!"

Ye Qingxuan caught a whiff of the poison fog, felt dizzy and terrified out of her wits, realizing that the Bone-Eroding Python was chasing after them. She couldn't help but cry out in alarm.

"Don't be afraid, Senior Sister Ye!"

Compared to Ye Qingxuan's panic and distress, Xia Chenyu was calm, comforting her instead.

Xia Chenyu possessed an Innate Spiritual Root with a special constitution that included anti-poison abilities. Furthermore, she practiced the Martial Arts Techniques taught by Fang Bai, so the whiff of poison fog that drifted with the wind did not pose much of a threat to her. Seeing that Ye Qingxuan had inhaled some poison fog, looked dazed, and was in poor condition, which slowed her escape, Xia Chenyu grabbed her arm and continued to flee at high speed.

During the escape, Xia Chenyu occasionally looked back to see trees falling and rocks splashing dozens of yards behind her in the midst of spreading poison fog and flashing lights; the Bone-Eroding Python was indeed pursuing them in the direction they were fleeing.

"Damn Venomous Python, why is it chasing us? Because we seem easy to bully?"

Xia Chenyu cursed inwardly.

Xia Chenyu was unaware that the Bone-Eroding Python was only chasing them because of her Innate Spiritual Root. In its eyes, Xia Chenyu, a human Martial Artist with an Innate Spiritual Root, was a treasure for cultivation. Devouring her would be almost as effective as consuming the three-thousand-year-old Fusion Essence Grass, and so, driven by desire, it pursued them relentlessly.

The plan for the Bone-Eroding Python had been merely to drive away the human Martial Artists who had entered its territory, but now it was unwilling to let go of Xia Chenyu and wanted to catch her for consumption. Ye Qingxuan, who was in a semi-conscious state, had no idea she was ensnared in this situation because of Xia Chenyu—there's no telling what she might think if she knew.

"You vile creature! Stop harming the disciples of my manor!"

Seeing that the Bone-Eroding Python had abandoned the pursuit of other disciples and was only chasing Xia Chenyu and Ye Qingxuan, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren quickly understood that the Python's target was Xia Chenyu. They yelled in anger, no longer focusing on fleeing for themselves but instead moved toward the Bone-Eroding Python.

Xia Chenyu had exceptional talent and aptitude, and among the tens of thousands of Golden Crow Manor disciples, she was highly regarded by the Manor Master and various Elders. They hoped she would become the pillar of the manor in the future. If she were to meet her demise here, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren would bear the responsibility of failing to protect her, and even if they managed to escape back to the manor by luck, they would not have the face to meet the Manor Master and the Elders.

Therefore, in a moment of extreme urgency, the two clenched their teeth with determination, thinking that even if it cost them their lives, they had to stop the Bone-Eroding Python to ensure Xia Chenyu's safety.

Chapter 1250: Inescapable

The Bone-Eroding Python, tens of zhang long, was like a rapidly moving small mountain, rumbling as it rolled over the ground, as if the entire Earth itself was trembling.

Wherever it passed, the black poisonous fog mixed with plant debris and rocks, spread rapidly in all directions, covering the sky and blanketing the surroundings, an utterly terrifying sight.

Dozens of Golden Crow Manor disciples, who had just witnessed Yu Hu's tragic demise, were already scared out of their wits, and now seeing the Bone-Eroding Python relentlessly pursuing them, they were even more panicked, fleeing along the path they came with all their might.

As for Xia Chenyu and Ye Qingxuan, who were left behind at the end of the group, apart from the two stewards, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, no one else cared about their life or death at this moment; everyone was only concerned with saving their own skin.

Seeing the Bone-Eroding Python moving as fast as lightning, drawing ever closer to Xia Chenyu and Ye Qingxuan, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, in utter desperation and with eyes nearly splitting in anger, exchanged a glance between them, their expressions filled with resolve.

"Phoosh!"

Two mouthfuls of vital blood were sprayed out by Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, driven to the extreme to save Xia Chenyu, the Golden Crow Manor's most promising junior disciple, even at the cost of unleashing their body's potential to stop the Bone-Eroding Python.

After the vital blood was expelled, the auras of Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren exploded, their strength surged enormously, and their rushing figures suddenly accelerated, reaching within range to attack the Bone-Eroding Python in a flash.

"Kill!"

Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren's eyes bulged with anger, and with a thunderous roar, they wielded their Spiritual Artifacts and launched an assault on the Bone-Eroding Python.

The weapons they used, a sword and a spear, were both high-quality Spiritual Artifacts, incomparably sharp and immensely powerful. With slashes and stabs, they aimed for the bulging flesh sac on top of the Bone-Eroding Python's head.

Universe Level Experts can project True Yuan outside of their bodies, solidifying it for long-distance attacks.

The two mid-Universe Level Experts, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, triggered their body's potential, their Essence Energy swirling around them like a tempest, their Spiritual Artifacts aglow, shining as brightly as rainbows.

As the two men unleashed their battle cries, their handheld sword and spear Spiritual Artifacts were swung forth, and the Essence Energy-concentrated blade and spear separated from the Artifacts, tearing through the air with a whistle as they sliced and stabbed at the Bone-Eroding Python.

Both were powerful mid-Universe Level Experts, with the support of their Spiritual Artifacts, and having invoked their potential, their combat power soared to rival those of High Rank Universe Level Experts. The sword and spear they struck with carried a formidable and fierce force, pulverizing all trees and shrubs in their path into dust.

The Bone-Eroding Python, with its lifespan of over three thousand years, having absorbed Heaven and Earth Origin Energy and ingested the essence of the sun and the moon, had developed high intelligence, matching that of human Martial Artists. Confronted with the combined attack from Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, it rapidly reacted, tilting its head high just before the Essence Energy-formed blades were about to strike the flesh sac on its head.

"Clang!"

"Clang!"

The Essence Energy-formed blades from Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren struck the brilliantly colored scales beneath the Bone-Eroding Python's head, emitting two crisp sounds almost simultaneously, shaking everyone to their core.

"This..."

Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren, seeing that their combined strike, after spitting sparks, only left deep marks on the Bone-Eroding Python without inflicting any actual injury, stood dumbfounded, their faces showing disbelief.

They knew the scales covering the Bone-Eroding Python were incredibly tough, but they had hoped that their collaborative, fully-powered attack, which channeled all their potential, would cause some damage and make it reconsider its attack, thus averting the danger facing Xia Chenyu.

What they absolutely did not expect was for this Bone-Eroding Python's defensive capability to far exceed their imagination.

With such formidable defensive power, how could they continue to fight against the Bone-Eroding Python?

For a moment, Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren were overwhelmed with despondency, a feeling of despair enveloping their hearts.

"Boom, boom, boom..."

"Steward Sun, be careful!"

A resounding blast, accompanied by Li Jingren's urgent cry, reached the somewhat distracted Sun Guangyi's ears.

A strong sense of crisis suddenly snapped Sun Guangyi back to reality, only to feel a surging wave of air towering sky-high, as a mountain-sized massive shadow loomed over him, swiftly bearing down upon him.

That shadow was the Bone-Eroding Python's sweeping gigantic tail.

The towering waves of air were the Essence Energy released by the Bone-Eroding Python.

While Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren's strike did not injure the Bone-Eroding Python, it inflicted intense pain, which, in its fury, made the Bone-Eroding Python abandon its pursuit of Xia Chenyu, and instead, it turned to retaliate against both Sun Guangyi and Li Jingren.

And Sun Guangyi, being closer to the Bone-Eroding Python, became its primary target.

The Bone-Eroding Python, enraged, had an extremely terrifying attack power; its tail swept out, Essence Energy erupted like a storm, sweeping everything around, causing mountains to crumble, grass and trees to disintegrate, and striking fear into the hearts of onlookers.

Sun Guangyi, targeted by the Bone-Eroding Python's breath, felt his scalp tingle and breathing constrained under the overwhelming pressure of the python's aura, and even his retreat through the air slowed considerably.

"This time, I fear I won't escape this disaster and will fall here!"

Sun Guangyi silently lamented in his heart, gritted his teeth, and instead of retreating, he lunged forward, clutching the knife-shaped Spiritual Artifact in his hands, and viciously slashed at the arriving colossal tail of the Bone-Eroding Python.

Sun Guangyi, prepared to die, only hoped that his attack could delay the Bone-Eroding Python for a little longer, to give more time for Li Jingren and the other Golden Crow Manor disciples to escape.

Some of the fleeing Golden Crow Manor disciples looked back and saw this scene, tears streaming down their faces.

"Boom..."

Before Sun Guangyi's Spiritual Artifact could touch the Bone-Eroding Python, it was struck by its sweeping tail, his body tumbling through the air like a fallen leaf, thrown dozens of feet away, and he hit the ground, losing consciousness.

Li Jingren and Sun Guangyi, fellow disciples for decades with a deep relationship, seeing Sun Guangyi lying unconscious with weak breath, uncertain how long his spark of life might last, felt a mixture of urgency and hatred in their hearts.

"Evil beast, die!"

Seizing the fleeting opportunity as the Bone-Eroding Python's tail had not been retracted yet, Li Jingren, with his long spear quick as lightning, once again stabbed at the protruding flesh bump on the python's head.

The Bone-Eroding Python was too slow to defend and dodge; the edge of the flesh bump's weaker spot was pierced by the spear tip, immediately causing blood to gush out.

The Bone-Eroding Python, having one of its most vital parts attacked, experienced excruciating pain; its body twitched, and it became even more irrationally enraged, turning its head and unleashing a stream of black venom toward Li Jingren.

This venom, the essence of the Bone-Eroding Python, was even more toxic than the poison mist it had emitted earlier. Just a whiff of the scent it exuded made Li Jingren's head spin and felt as if it would split with pain.

Li Jingren gritted his teeth and did not collapse; he retreated swiftly, putting a safe distance between himself and the Bone-Eroding Python.

"Hiss, hiss..."

The black venom sprayed by the Bone-Eroding Python hit the surrounding branches, leaves, and ground; the trees, weeds, and even the Wanshi rocks emitted smoke, quickly dissolving, eventually turning into puddles of liquid.