

Doctor 471

Chapter 471: Profound Level Perfection Counts for Nothing!

"Elder Taoist Qingxuan's disciples sure are plenty, but they're all a bunch of straw bags!"

Wu De disdainfully curled his lips, allowing his voice to reach the ears of the two hundred disciples of Qingcheng Temple around him.

These disciples of Qingcheng Temple were all proud and arrogant, and being described by Wu De as "straw bags," how could they not be enraged? They also knew that the strong enemy that had come must be these three people, two laymen and one monk. They began to clench their fists and rub their palms together, eager to try their skills.

"Dongxu, what's going on here?"

With an imposing look on his face, Taoist Qingxuan strode forward, glanced at Fang Bai and his two companions, and sternly asked the middle-aged Taoist at the initial stage of the Profound Level.

The middle-aged man named Dongxu bowed and said, "To report to Uncle Master, this man not only beat up Chongling, but also came here blustering and demanding to see the Temple Master... Seeing that they came with ill intentions and each possessed strong abilities, I rang the bell to warn everyone..."

Taoist Qingxuan was currently acting as the Temple Master, so the Temple Master Dongxu mentioned was referring to Elder Taoist Qingling, who had been away from the temple for several months.

Upon hearing this, Taoist Qingxuan's eyes flashed sharply, carefully assessing Fang Bai and his two companions.

Taoist Qingxuan was currently at the realm of Profound Level Perfection and just one step away from stepping into the ranks of the Earth Level Martial Artists. Alongside his senior brother, Elder Taoist Qingling, he was one of the two great experts of Qingcheng Temple.

The strength of Ghost Hand was immediately apparent to Taoist Qingxuan as belonging to a Martial Artist at the initial stage of the Profound Level, not something to worry about, but Fang Bai and Wu De shocked him greatly.

The cultivation levels of these two young men were like clouds covering mist, so much so that, with his eyesight, he couldn't discern their depths.

It seemed that Dongxu was right; all three individuals appeared to bear significant hostility, indeed posing a strong threat to Qingcheng Temple.

Even racking his brain, Taoist Qingxuan could not recall when exactly three such strong young individuals had emerged in the Ancient Martial World of Huaxia.

"May I ask what matter brings the three benefactors here seeking our Qingcheng Temple Master?"

Taoist Qingxuan lightly flicked his horsetail whisk and greeted them with a bow, asking in a cordial tone.

With the Temple Master Qingling currently away, Qingcheng Temple was one great expert short. If a fight were to break out between them, unless the disciples of Qingcheng Temple all rushed up together, it might be hard to repel the enemy.

And if a battle did ensue, casualties would be inevitable, which was a prospect Taoist Qingxuan hoped to avoid. Thus, he decided to clarify the situation first.

If there were any grievances between them, he would try to resolve them if possible. If not, then preparing to defend with a formation would be the next course of action.

"Old Taoist Qingxuan, don't you remember me, the Taoist Master?"

Wu De stepped forward, standing right in front of Taoist Qingxuan, and pointed to his own nose as he asked.

"This poor Taoist's eyesight fails him; may I know which Daoist friend this is...?"

Taoist Qingxuan scrutinized the slightly sleazy-looking fat Taoist for a long time but failed to recognize who he was.

That was no surprise. Twenty years ago, Wu De was just a young man in his twenties, dressed in tatters, thin as a rail, barely distinguishable from a beggar.

But today's Wu De, although still shabbily dressed, was no longer the starving, cold young boy he had been. His plump, round figure was a complete departure from his looks twenty years ago, and how could Taoist Qingxuan recognize him?

Furthermore, back then, Wu De was just a wandering Taoist from out of town. After people like Taoist Qingxuan chased him down the mountain, the incident was quickly dismissed from their minds. Who would have thought that twenty years later, that little Taoist they had humiliated and verbally abused would specifically come back to seek justice?

"Don't remember, do you? Heh, it's true what they say about the rich forgetting things easily!"

Wu De sneered mockingly, suddenly rolled up his left sleeve, revealing a harrowing scar on his left arm, and said, "Back then, when I clung to Elder Taoist Qingling's leg and begged him to take me in, he used his horsetail whisk to wrap around my arm and flung me away fiercely. This scar is from that time. Heh, if Elder Taoist Qingling were still alive, he would surely recognize this scar."

After a pause, he continued, "With the abilities I have now, I could have healed this scar, but I chose to keep it. I use it to constantly alert and remind myself: if one wants to live with dignity in this world, one must have strength!"

That one sentence from Wu De, "If Elder Taoist Qingling were still alive," exploded like thunder beside Taoist Qingxuan's ear, making his whole body shudder and it took him a long while to regain his senses.

"You... What do you mean by that sentence just now? What happened to our Temple Master?"

Taoist Qingxuan asked sharply, his voice trembling slightly.

Taoist Qingling was the number one expert of Qingcheng Temple and its spiritual pillar. If something had happened to him, it would be a tremendous blow to Qingcheng Temple.

Wu De sneered and said, "You don't understand what I mean? It means Elder Taoist Qingling is dead! It's a pity he didn't die by my hands, which is a bit regrettable!"

Taoist Qingxuan's body swayed, his face instantly turning somewhat pale, and he muttered, "Impossible... Impossible... the Temple Master's cultivation level had reached Profound Level Perfection, how could he die..."

Wu De rolled his eyes and said, "Profound Level Perfection counts for nothing! A slap from Taoist Master me can kill a bunch of them!"

"How did the Temple Master die?"

Taoist Qingxuan's gaze was fixed on Wu De's face, his eyes turned bloodshot, he asked in a deep voice, bristling with killing Qi.

In his eyes, Wu De had a grudge with Qingcheng Temple. Since he knew the Temple Master was dead, even if he didn't kill him, he must be inextricably involved.

"How he died... you'll have to ask him," Wu De said.

Wu De turned his head to look at Fang Bai next to him.

Taoist Qingxuan's gaze shifted towards Fang Bai, feeling a hidden surprise in his heart. Could the death of the Temple Master be related to this inscrutable young man?

"The Temple Master was killed by me."

Fang Bai simply nodded and admitted, then lazily said, "He's been dead for several months now!"

"Why did you kill my Temple Master? What grudge does Qingcheng Temple have with you?"

Elder Taoist Qingling used to travel outside, and each month news would be sent back to Qingcheng Temple. However, this time, there had been no news for several months, which made Taoist Qingxuan have a bad premonition. Now, hearing Fang Bai's words, he was certain Elder Taoist Qingling had met with disaster.

"Because he deserved to die!"

Fang Bai said expressionlessly, seemingly too lazy to explain too much.

Fang Bai had killed Taoist Qingling because Qingling had tried to coerce and entice his sister, Fang Yun, into becoming his disciple, which touched Fang Bai's bottom line, prompting him to take action.

Actually, even if Taoist Qingling had not died the last time, he would have hardly escaped this time. He was one of the leading culprits behind the massacre at Myriad Medicine Valley, and Ghost Hand surely wouldn't let him off.

"A life for a life, a debt paid in full. The Temple Master died at your hands, you... and you two, leave your lives behind as company for the Temple Master in death!"

Taoist Qingxuan laughed angrily, pointing his horsetail whisk towards the three of them.

Although Fang Bai was the murderer, the other two were his accomplices. Since they had come to Qingcheng Temple together, he decided to kill all of them together.

"Set up the Eight Trigrams Minor Sword Formation! Execute these three!"

Taoist Qingxuan shouted loudly.

Chapter 472: Divine Elephant Step! Lion's Roar Wave!

As Taoist Qingxuan's voice rang out, more than two hundred disciples of Qingcheng Temple surrounding the area, dozens of them drew their long swords, displayed their movement techniques, and enclosed Fang Bai, Ghost Hand, and Wu De within a sword array.

Fang Bai looked closely and saw that the sword array was composed of forty-nine disciples, standing in the positions of the Eight Trigrams, which secretly conformed to the Heavenly Dao. He thought to himself that it was no wonder Qingcheng Temple was one of the great sects of the Ancient Martial World of Huaxia, indeed possessing some true methods.

Fang Bai could tell that although most of the forty-nine Qingcheng Temple disciples that formed the sword array were only Yellow Level Martial Artists, once the array started to circulate, its power would be astonishing. Even an ordinary Earth Level Martial Artist would find it difficult to gain the upper hand.

Fortunately, Ghost Hand had brought him along on this trip; otherwise, had he come alone to seek revenge, he might have never returned.

With the sword array in place, the other hundred or so Qingcheng Temple disciples retreated a few dozen feet away, holding long swords, ready to sweep in from the side and provide support at any moment.

"The Eight Trigrams Sword Formation is our Qingcheng Temple's formidable grand array. It is mighty, and no matter how strong these three are, they will find it hard to escape today!"

Every Qingcheng Temple disciple thought so in their hearts.

"This formation has some merit! Haha... It just so happens that Taoist Master I haven't had a fight with anyone for a good ten days or half a month. My hands are itching, so I'll accompany you all for some fun!"

In the midst of talking, Wu De was already launching an attack.

As a High Rank Earth Level Martial Artist, his vision was extraordinary. At a glance, he identified the key to the sword array, thus his attack was directed straight at Taoist Qingxuan.

Taoist Qingxuan was the Array Eye of this sword array, commanding and driving the entire array. If Taoist Qingxuan could be killed, the sword array would break without an attack, posing no threat whatsoever.

Once Wu De moved, the entire sword array also sprang into action. Dozens of long swords were drawn simultaneously, their lights interweaving into layers of sword nets, fierce sword winds and sword energies surged from all directions towards the three trapped in the array, as if intending to slice the trio to pieces.

This Eight Trigrams Sword Formation, which subtly conformed to the Heavenly Dao, once activated, generated an endless flow of True Yuan, and incessant sword maneuvers seemed to never cease until the three within the array were slain.

Ghost Hand felt surrounded by sword shadows, not knowing which swords were real and which were false. Moreover, those sword shadows were imbued with robust True Yuan and sharp sword energies, each strike's power and might far beyond his expectations.

He couldn't think of a way to break the formation for a moment and could only fully circulate the Buddha's Fury Golden Staff Technique to protect his body with True Yuan. Meanwhile, he bellowed continuously, throwing punches non-stop, hoping to break the sword array with brute force.

However, despite his fierce punches, when they struck the layered sword screens around him, they seemed to sink into a pond of mud, finding no solid ground to hit, which only made him fight more and more in shock.

Hiss—

Hiss—

The sound of fabric tearing arose as Ghost Hand's clothes were sliced open by the sword wind, creating several cuts. If not for his swift movement technique, he would have already been injured.

In contrast, Wu De, whose strength was much higher than Ghost Hand's, seemed much more at ease.

Wu De was like a drunken man, swaying left and right, conveniently dodging the dense sword nets aimed at him in his staggering movements. Occasionally, when he struck out with his fists or feet, robust True Yuan surged out, causing the operation of the surrounding sword array to momentarily falter.

Wu De could have easily broken through this Minor Eight Trigrams Sword Formation, but he harboured the intent to play with these Taoists, continuously engaging with them, aiming to exhaust their True Yuan and physical strength.

Fang Bai was undoubtedly the most relaxed of the three in the sword array. He didn't even move the hands he held behind his back, simply employing the Dragon Soaring to the Heavens Technique to glide leisurely through the array. The dense and intersecting sword energies couldn't even touch a corner of his clothing.

"Form the Eight Trigrams Great Sword Array!"

Seeing that the minor sword formation could not trouble Fang Bai and his companions, Taoist Qingxuan's face shifted slightly, and he bellowed again.

With his shout, dozens more Qingcheng Temple disciples holding long swords immediately leaped and joined the sword formation.

In an instant, the Eight Trigrams Minor Sword Formation composed of forty-nine people transformed into an Eight Trigrams Great Sword Array made up of eighty-one people, its power increasing manifold.

Ghost Hand was trapped within the minor sword formation, struggling to cope, and when the great sword array formed, his pressure intensified. It wasn't long before his left arm turned cold, grazed by the tip of a long sword, causing him a minor injury.

Although divided and surrounded, Fang Bai's Divine Sense spread out, enveloping the entire sword array. He was crystal clear about the situations of Ghost Hand and Wu De.

The Fat Taoist Wu De, as an Earth Level high rank powerhouse, was far more at ease even though the great sword array greatly increased his pressure. However, he now needed some time to break the formation.

Fang Bai knew full well about the injury of Ghost Hand, but he did not lend a hand.

For a martial artist, the more dangerous and difficult the battle conditions, the more they enrich their practical experience and temper their combat will. The greater the pressure Ghost Hand endured, the more benefits he would obtain in the future.

It could be said that after this battle, Ghost Hand's combat strength would rise to the next level.

Rip—

Rip—

The continuous sound of fabric tearing was interspersed with the low moans of Ghost Hand.

Half an hour had passed, and Ghost Hand's clothes were tattered beyond recognition, his body covered with numerous sword wounds, blood continually seeping from his injuries, soaking his clothes, making him look like a bloody man.

This intense battle put Ghost Hand under unprecedented stress and immense exhaustion. Although he could continuously absorb Essence Energy from Essence Stones for replenishment, the rate of recovery couldn't keep up with his rate of exhaustion. Eventually, his True Yuan and physical strength were nearly depleted, his legs began to wobble, and he was on the verge of collapse.

Even though he knew his master must be close by, Ghost Hand still clenched his teeth and persevered without crying out for help.

When he was about to falter, a sudden enlightenment dawned on Ghost Hand, and his Cultivation Level instantaneously reached the brink of a breakthrough to a higher realm.

Given a moment's time, he would leap over the barrier to the next stage, reaching a new realm, with his strength skyrocketing dramatically.

Fang Bai felt the changes in Ghost Hand right away and intended to protect him, assisting his breakthrough. Therefore, he stepped forward with one foot and fiercely stamped on the ground.

"Get out of my way!"

As his right foot landed, Fang Bai opened his mouth and let out a deep, resonant roar.

Divine Elephant Eight Desolate Steps!

Lion's Roar Sonic Wave!

With that one stomp from Fang Bai, it was as if an ancient primordial divine elephant, towering a myriad of feet tall, stamped its pillar-like legs onto the ground, making the entire Qingcheng Temple seem to tremble.

The ninety and one Qingcheng Temple disciples forming the Eight Trigrams Great Sword Array stumbled about, struggling to maintain their footing, causing the sword array to instantly fall into disarray.

Meanwhile, the roar Fang Bai emitted was like that of an enraged lion, letting out a fierce roar toward the heavens.

The sound waves rolled out like invisible surges, striking out in all directions, causing all Qingcheng Temple disciples to reel with blood churning and heads spinning, their eardrums on the verge of splitting.

Some of the Qingcheng Temple disciples with weaker strength dropped their long swords, clutched their ears tightly, and rolled on the ground in agony.

Even Taoist Qingxuan, with his Profound Level Perfection strength, turned pale, staggered, and nearly plopped down on the ground.

Chapter 473: What Do You Really Want?

The powerful Eight Trigrams Great Sword Array, considered by the disciples of Qingcheng Temple as impregnable, was instantly broken by Fang Bai with a stomp of his foot and a roar.

"Predecessors! Infusing True Yuan into the ground for an attack, turning True Yuan into a sound wave for an attack... What kind of cultivation technique is this? It's simply terrifying! This Fang Bai, he's becoming more and more unfathomable!"

Wu De, too, was startled by the formidable cultivation technique that Fang Bai had suddenly employed and watched with awe as Fang Bai finished his technique, feeling a surge of reverence for him.

The only person at the scene who was not affected by Fang Bai's attack was Ghost Hand.

"Ghost Hand, concentrate your mind, circulate your cultivation technique, and prepare for your breakthrough! I will protect you!"

As he spoke, Fang Bai stood by Ghost Hand's side, his gaze sharp as a blade, sweeping over the disciples of Qingcheng Temple around them, with the air of a man who could single-handedly hold off a thousand foes.

Some of the relatively stronger disciples of Qingcheng Temple staggered to their feet, mumbling, as they looked at Fang Bai with horror.

At this moment, in their eyes, Fang Bai was like a god descending from heaven, exuding a powerful aura that brought them endless oppression, making it hard for them to breathe, and crushing their confidence and courage to approach and attack again.

With the sword array broken, the pressure on Ghost Hand lifted.

He let out a long sigh, gave Fang Bai a grateful look, then took out two Golden Essence Stones, clutched them in his hands, sat down cross-legged on the spot, closed his eyes, began to circulate his cultivation technique, and started trying to break through to the next realm.

Under Fang Bai's intimidating gaze and the pressure he exuded, no one at the scene dared to disturb Ghost Hand's cultivation, and no one even dared to make a sound.

Wu De stood by, his eyes wide as he watched Ghost Hand cultivating, his face full of disbelief.

Wu De noticed that, as Ghost Hand was cultivating, the two Golden Essence Stones in his grip quickly lost their luster in just a matter of minutes, turning into ordinary gray stones.

Wu De knew that when Essence Stones changed color, it meant that the Essence Energy within them had been completely absorbed.

Wu De had once received a Heaven Rank Technique, which also enabled the direct absorption of the Essence Energy contained in Essence Stones, and because of this, Wu De's strength had advanced by leaps and bounds. In just a short twenty years, he had squeezed into the ranks of Earth Level Experts, reaching a realm that countless martial artists could only dream of.

Of course, this was also related to Wu De's superhuman talent.

This fellow possessed both Earth and Metal Innate Spiritual Roots, with a physique ranked even higher than the "Innate Spirit Body"—the "Extraordinary Holy Body." Therefore, not only did his strength rise rapidly, but he also became an unrivaled master tomb raider.

If an ordinary martial artist was lucky enough to obtain a Heaven Rank Technique, without extraordinary talent and a strong physique to support them, they would not be able to cultivate it at all.

The reason why Wu De's face changed when he saw Ghost Hand cultivating was his amazement at the speed at which Ghost Hand absorbed the Essence Energy from the Essence Stones, which was much faster than his own.

When cultivating, Wu De needed at least an hour to completely absorb the Essence Energy from one Essence Stone, and after that, it took him at least a day to refine the Essence Energy from the Essence Stone and make it his own.

Yet Ghost Hand, after fully absorbing the Essence Energy from two Essence Stones, immediately took out several more in succession until, after absorbing the Essence Energy from the tenth Essence Stone, he began to silently cultivate and tried to break through to the next realm.

Such a rapid absorption of Essence Energy not only requires an Innate Spirit Body as a guarantee but also the assistance of higher-tier cultivation techniques; otherwise, the meridians and blood vessels could very likely burst from the sudden influx of massive amounts of Essence Energy.

Thinking of higher-rank techniques, Wu De's gaze involuntarily turned back towards Fang Bai.

As the disciple of Fang Bai, the cultivation technique Ghost Hand practiced should have come from what was imparted by Fang Bai.

If the disciple is already cultivating a Heaven Rank Technique, what about the master?

The cultivation technique Fang Bai is practicing, could it not be even higher than a Heaven Rank Technique?

Could it be that this guy Fang Bai really comes from a world even more mysterious and superior to the Hidden Sect, as the legends say?

"Predecessors! This Fang Bai is truly unfathomable! From now on, Taoist Master must treat him like an elder and worship him, I mustn't offend him at any cost!"

Wu De thought to himself.

"Brother Wu, could you help me keep an eye on the Profound Level Martial Artists from Qingcheng Temple, and prevent them from slipping away! As for the others... let them be," Fang Bai suddenly said.

Wu De, who had been wondering how to ingratiate himself with Fang Bai, was revitalized upon hearing this and slapped his chest firmly, saying loudly, "No problem, leave it to me!"

He looked around at all the Qingcheng Temple disciples with a cold, murderous sneer and said, "There are quite a few Profound Level Martial Artists from Qingcheng Temple, more than twenty! All the Profound Level Martial Artists, listen up, stand there obediently for Taoist Master. Anyone who dares to slip away under my watch, don't blame me for not being polite!"

While he was speaking, a Profound Level Martial Artist from Qingcheng Temple took advantage of Wu De's back turned and, using his movement technique, silently dashed toward a distant exit.

"Seeking death!"

Wu De, with ears that could catch sounds from all directions, heard the sound of clothes whipping through the air and knew that someone was trying to escape. Instantly, his killing Qi surged and with the tip of his foot, he kicked up a long sword from the ground, grasped it in his hand, and threw it.

Whoosh—

The long sword, infused with Wu De's True Yuan, whistled through the air and instantly caught up with the Qingcheng disciple trying to flee, piercing through his left calf.

The Qingcheng disciple, suddenly wounded while in rapid flight, staggered and almost fell.

Wu De moved swiftly, caught up behind the Qingcheng disciple, grabbed his collar, dragged him back to the scene, slapped him unconscious with one blow, and cursed, "Predecessors! Taoist Master will knock you out with a slap; let's see if you still run!"

Seeing a fellow disciple with the strength of a Profound Level Martial Artist powerless in Wu De's hands, the other Qingcheng Temple disciples were frightened and did not dare to try and escape.

At this moment, Taoist Qingxuan looked ashen, filled with despair.

He had never imagined that the three young people before him would be so strong, especially the one wearing casual urban clothes, who looked harmless but, with his own power, had forcefully broken the Qingcheng Temple's millennia-old, greatly powerful Eight Trigrams Great Sword Array.

The Eight Trigrams Great Sword Array was the temple-protecting array of Qingcheng, which had relied on it to survive crises of life and death for a thousand years. Yet today, this sword array that had been honored for a millennium was effortlessly broken by an unknown young man, causing many of the array-forming disciples to be injured.

Taoist Qingxuan was well aware that, although the Qingcheng Temple currently had two hundred disciples, including over twenty Profound Level Martial Artists, there was simply no chance for a turnaround.

Each of the three opponents had outstanding strength, and the young man dressed in casual urban clothes was so powerful that it annihilated any thought of resistance in him.

"You... what exactly do you want?"

Taoist Qingxuan, suppressing a trace of fear arising within him towards Fang Bai, asked with a bitter taste in his mouth.

He understood that if the three before him had a killing intent, then none of the two hundred Qingcheng Temple disciples present today would be likely to survive.

Chapter 474: A Thought of Greed, Boundless Slaughter.

All two hundred disciples of Qingcheng Temple who were present were martial artists, the backbone of Qingcheng Temple in the Ancient Martial World of Huaxia. If they were slaughtered or disabled, Qingcheng Temple would fall into a state of utter decline and eventually become nothing more than an ordinary Taoist temple.

When Taoist Priest Qingxuan asked this question, it was directed at Fang Bai. He knew that although Fang Bai was the youngest, his strength was the greatest, and he was the backbone of the three.

"How things turn out isn't up to me, it's up to him!"

Fang Bai pointed to Ghost Hand, who was in the midst of cultivation, and said indifferently, "Wait until he finishes his cultivation, then let him tell you himself!"

Ghost Hand was sitting cross-legged, completely lost in his practice. His True Yuan flowed through his limbs and bones, rapidly strengthening and expanding his meridians and blood vessels under the constant impact of the True Yuan. The sphere of True Yuan within his Qi Sea was also growing more robust.

The fluctuations of aura emanating from Ghost Hand became increasingly intense, and his momentum climbed higher and higher. Except for Fang Bai, the martial artists nearby were secretly astonished by the changes coming from Ghost Hand. They had not expected such commotion from a martial artist who was just a junior at the Profound Level.

Wu De had already ascertained that the cultivation technique Ghost Hand practiced was at least of Heaven Rank, and possibly even higher.

Suddenly, Ghost Hand's body trembled slightly. After reaching a peak state of the martial artist's aggressive and offensive aura, it rapidly receded and finally returned to calmness.

At this moment, Ghost Hand appeared just like an ordinary person, not at all like a martial artist possessing extraordinary skills.

Even someone as powerful as Wu De found it harder to see through Ghost Hand at this time, feeling that both Ghost Hand and Fang Bai were shrouded in a mist that made them seem profound and elusive.

"If Ghost Hand advances another minor realm, he might even be able to fight on par with me! It's hard to believe unless seen with one's own eyes! Goodness! These master and disciple are each more monstrous than the other!"

Wu De, looking at Ghost Hand who had successfully advanced and was about to leave his cultivation state, sighed inwardly.

Before meeting Fang Bai and Ghost Hand, Wu De originally thought he was the unparalleled talent of the Martial Dao in this world. But he was surpassed by Fang Bai, and even Fang Bai's disciple Ghost Hand was almost at his level.

When Ghost Hand opened his eyes again, there was a significant change in his aura, his eyes sparkled like lightning, and he exuded an intense Killing Qi all over his body. With his blood-soaked clothes, he resembled a god of slaughter.

Even Taoist Priest Qingxuan, a high-ranking expert at Profound Level Perfection, felt an oppressive force when facing Ghost Hand, who was two minor realms below him. This was beyond his comprehension.

"The battle of life and death is indeed a good way for martial artists to improve their strength. It's just too bad that in this Secular Ancient Martial World, it's too hard to find a worthy opponent!"

Watching Ghost Hand stand up, Fang Bai also sighed silently, thinking that for the time being, his cultivation could only rely on a large number of cultivation resources for support. If he wanted to continuously temper himself through life and death struggles, he would have to go to the Hidden Sect World, where there were Heaven Level martial artists.

After Fang Bai had reincarnated, perhaps because he inherited some of the original owner's thoughts, he found that he couldn't quite let go or part with his family, friends, and beauties from the Secular World.

At least until his dear friends and beauties became martial artists and possessed enough ability to protect themselves, Fang Bai would not consider leaving the secular mortal world for a long time.

In Fang Bai's view, the Hidden Sect World and Minor World of this plane should be quite similar to the Cultivation World and Immortal Realm of his previous life's plane. There were numerous sects and martial artists, all adhering to the survival rule of the jungle: where the strong prey on the weak and the powerful are respected.

In such a world, one has to vigorously cultivate to gain dignity and status, hence it offers incomparable benefits to a martial artist's strength improvement.

But for Fang Bai, who cultivates with a heart full of emotions, such a world with its scant regard for personal relationships paled in interest compared to the Secular World he currently resided in.

The word "affection" could sometimes hinder cultivation, but at other times it could also become a significant aid in a martial artist's path of cultivation.

In his past life, Fang Bai wouldn't have been able to stride vigorously along the path of martial dao and ultimately achieve the status of Immortal Emperor if he hadn't had friends by his side and a favored consort to accompany him.

"Elder Taoist Qingxuan, do you remember the massacre at Myriad Medicine Valley?"

Ghost Hand, clad in blood-stained garments, marched up to Qingxuan with large steps and demanded loudly.

"You... who are you...?"

Upon hearing this, Taoist Qingxuan was greatly surprised and immediately thought of the recent event where all the Profound Level experts of Misty Rain Tower in Jiangnan had been slaughtered. He stared at Ghost Hand as though seeing a ghost, with eyes full of horror.

Could this man be the Myriad Medicine Valley disciple who had fortuitously escaped back then?

Could the downfall of Misty Rain Tower in Jiangnan be his masterpiece?

"That's right, I am that disciple from Myriad Medicine Valley who miraculously escaped from under the slaughter of your three major sects!"

Hate surged from Ghost Hand's chest as he spoke vehemently, "Heaven has pitied me, allowed me to survive by chance, and find a master to teach me this strength. Today, I will take the lives of your three major sects' disciples to appease the souls of my perished fellow sect members from Myriad Medicine Valley!"

His gaze swept across the disciples of Qingcheng Temple who were silent as cicadas in winter, and he bellowed, "Those who took part in the massacre of Myriad Medicine Valley, stand forth and accept your death!"

Around them, silence prevailed, with none stepping forward voluntarily. However, desperation was already apparent in the eyes of some Qingcheng Temple disciples, and many glanced towards Taoist Qingxuan.

"Alas..."

Taoist Qingxuan sighed, his face pained as he said with a smile, "Back then, a single thought of greed led to endless killing. Whenever I reflect upon it, it is always too late for regrets!"

Seeing Taoist Qingxuan beating his chest and stamping his feet in an ostensibly remorseful manner, Ghost Hand simply sneered coldly.

Had you known this day would come, why did you do it in the first place?

Since you created this slaughter back then, you must face the consequences today.

Ghost Hand's desire for vengeance was as firm as iron, and no matter how pitiful Qingxuan acted, it wouldn't waver his resolution at all.

With a pallid face, Taoist Qingxuan gazed sadly at Ghost Hand and lamented, "The great mistake has been made, and regrets are now useless. Now that the Temple Master is dead, let all the blame fall upon me alone! If you seek vengeance, just kill me!"

"Just kill you? Hah... dream on!"

Ghost Hand scoffed, "I, Ghost Hand, do not kill the innocent indiscriminately, but I will also not spare a single butcher! There were twenty-six Qingcheng Temple disciples involved in the massacre of Myriad Medicine Valley, all Profound Level Martial Artists; that much is correct, isn't it? Do not deny it, for I extracted this information out of Wen Shiba of Misty Rain Tower!"

Looking around, he continued, "And now, here we have, neither more nor less, exactly twenty-six Profound Level Martial Artists. It seems all the butchers who killed the disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley are present! Very well, this saves me the trouble of having to find each of you."

Taoist Qingxuan was both shocked and angry as he bellowed, "Do you intend to slaughter all the Profound Level Martial Artists of Qingcheng Temple just like you did to Misty Rain Tower?"

Chapter 475: A Battle to Decide Life and Death!

"Why not?"

Ghost Hand took a step forward, slowly advancing towards Qingxuan, his fighting intent and killing Qi escalating with each step, like a tidal wave crashing towards Taoist Qingxuan.

When Ghost Hand was at the initial stage of the Profound Level, he had already managed to kill the Misty Rain Tower's Master Wen Xiangxin, a high-ranked Profound Level Martial Artist. Now that his strength had increased by a small realm, he naturally feared not even the Profound Level Expert, Taoist Qingxuan, and even felt confident in emerging victorious from such a battle.

"Today, I only kill Profound Level Martial Artists. All unrelated disciples from Qingcheng Temple, roll away now!"

Ghost Hand uttered each word with a chilling coldness in his voice.

"Go! All unrelated, leave! Qingcheng Temple needs to preserve some Essence Energy... Disperse now!"

Taoist Qingxuan looked around at the Qingcheng Temple disciples and said in a stern voice.

The Qingcheng Temple disciples who were not Profound Level Martial Artists, feeling relieved at these words, exchanged glances before many started to leave.

However, some Qingcheng Temple disciples with backbone chose to stay, indicating they would live and die with Qingcheng Temple, but they were heartlessly driven away by Taoist Qingxuan.

After a moment, on the vast empty ground, only Fang Bai, Ghost Hand, Wu De, and the twenty-six disciples who had gathered around Qingxuan remained.

In the initial attack on Myriad Medicine Valley, Qingcheng Temple had twenty-eight participants in total. Among them, Qingling and Qingxuan were only responsible for commanding while the actual killing was done by twenty-six disciples of Qingcheng Temple.

Even though Taoist Qingxuan did not kill anyone with his own hands, Ghost Hand did not plan to let him go, for it was these two persons, Qingling and Qingxuan, who had coveted the Heaven Rank Martial Artist's relics obtained by Ghost Hand, leading to the joint massacre of Myriad Medicine Valley's disciples by the three Sects.

It could be said that the two main figures of Qingcheng Temple, Taoist Qingling and Taoist Qingxuan, had committed greater sins than the twenty-six disciples under their command.

"Will you end it yourselves, or shall I do it?"

Ghost Hand clenched his fists tightly, scanning the twenty-seven Qingcheng Temple disciples, including Taoist Qingling, who were confronting him, with flames seemingly burning fiercely in his eyes.

His fighting intent had reached its peak, and once the battle began, it would pour out wildly with his fists!

Fang Bai and Wu De slowly stepped back, leaving the space to Ghost Hand.

With only twenty-seven Qingcheng Temple disciples present, all of whom were Profound Level Martial Artists but with the exception of Taoist Qingxuan only at the initial stage, Ghost Hand no longer regarded them as a threat.

Furthermore, the twenty-seven Qingcheng Temple disciples could no longer form the Eight Trigrams Sword Formation. In such a situation, unless they surged forward and encircled Ghost Hand, they could pose no threat to him.

With Fang Bai and Wu De, two strong figures, watching the battle, how could the Qingcheng Temple disciples have the chance to collectively attack?

The twenty or so Qingcheng Temple disciples on the scene also knew it was a moment of life and death. With swords in hand, their emotions were stirred, ready to cast aside all concerns and join forces to fight Ghost Hand to the death.

"Let's decide life and death with one battle!"

At this point, Taoist Qingxuan unexpectedly calmed down. He looked gravely at Ghost Hand and said in a deep voice, "How about you and I fight one-on-one? If I win, we will handle our end ourselves. If you lose..."

"If I lose, I will leave immediately and from then on, never again trouble the disciples of Qingcheng Temple," Ghost Hand interrupted, his expression filled with pride.

"Good! It's a deal!"

Taoist Qingxuan turned around and said to the twenty-six Profound Level disciples of Qingcheng Temple: "This battle is a matter of life and death for all of us. If I win, you all live; if I lose, you all die! If anyone doesn't want to put their life in my hands, they can step forward now! You may fight individually later!"

After he finished speaking, not a single disciple of Qingcheng Temple stepped forward, nor did anyone speak up.

Taoist Qingxuan was a Martial Artist who had reached the realm of Profound Level Perfection, his strength only slightly inferior to Temple Master Taoist Qingling. If even he was defeated, then the others would stand even less of a chance.

Some disciples of Qingcheng Temple still harbored fantasies, thinking that even if Taoist Qingxuan were to lose, everyone could band together in a desperate struggle, and there might still be a chance to slay the three adversaries.

For now, they would place their lives in the hands of Taoist Qingxuan!

Seeing no one dissent, Taoist Qingxuan nodded his head and faced Ghost Hand once again.

For Taoist Qingxuan, this battle was one he had to win, even if it cost him his life. Otherwise, the entire Qingcheng Temple's Profound Level experts would be annihilated, and the consequence would be the decline of Qingcheng Temple, which had flourished for a thousand years.

"Come then! Let me, Qingxuan, on behalf of the hundreds of disciples of Qingcheng Temple, experience your grand skill!" he said.

The sorrowful and gloomy look on Taoist Qingxuan's face disappeared, replaced by a firm resolve to meet death.

He waved his horsetail whisk, and his robe moved without any wind, his long beard fluttering. He exuded an imposing air without being angry.

The might of a Martial Artist at Profound Level Perfection was fully displayed in this moment, with no reservations.

Although Ghost Hand had recently advanced in rank and his strength had increased significantly, he dared not underestimate Elder Taoist Qingxuan, who was at Profound Level Perfection and ready to stake his life.

Taking a deep breath, Ghost Hand circulated the "Buddha's Fury Golden Staff Technique" Cultivation Technique. His True Essence circulated wildly within his body, and then his figure shot out like an arrow released from its bow, charging straight towards Elder Taoist Qingxuan.

"Well done!" Taoist Qingxuan roared as he swung his horsetail whisk fiercely towards Ghost Hand, who was charging at him.

The thousands of soft and flexible strands of the whisk, once infused with True Essence by Taoist Qingxuan, stood on end, as firm as steel. If Ghost Hand's vulnerable face were struck, it would certainly be completely destroyed.

Ghost Hand's eyes shot out beams of light as he let out a cold snort. He spread the fingers of his left hand and reached out to grab the whisk Taoist Qingxuan was sweeping towards him.

Seeing Ghost Hand intending to grab the whisk that was infused with True Essence by Taoist Qingxuan, which was even sharper than swords, the disciples of Qingcheng Temple who were watching the battle immediately thought "overestimating oneself," and their spirits were greatly buoyed.

If Ghost Hand's hand were to be destroyed, his combat power would naturally decline, and the chances of Taoist Qingxuan winning would then increase, meaning they would have a greater chance of preserving their own lives.

Fang Bai and Wu De stood side by side at a leisurely distance, not worried in the slightest for Ghost Hand.

In Wu De's view, Ghost Hand had the ability to challenge those beyond his level and could fight an Earth Rank Martial Artist, so facing an old Taoist at Profound Level Perfection was no pressure at all.

In Fang Bai's eyes, Ghost Hand's palm, which was condensed with Golden Attribute True Essence, was comparable to an iron hand, which even swords found difficult to damage, let alone a mere horsetail whisk?

"Sever!" Ghost Hand's right hand moved as fast as lightning and accurately caught the whisk that Elder Taoist Qingxuan had swung, and without giving Elder Taoist Qingxuan time to react, he roared and unleashed the force of True Essence from his fingers, shattering the whisk.

This horsetail whisk was an extremely fierce weapon in the hands of Elder Taoist Qingxuan and had caused many opponents to suffer greatly; it was completely unexpected that it would be broken by Ghost Hand in their first exchange.

Elder Taoist Qingxuan was shocked and immediately retreated several meters. He kicked up a longsword from the ground, leaped a zhang into the air, with his sword pointing downward, he slashed down towards Ghost Hand.

This sword carried with it an upright and majestic power, and it emanated a vast righteousness. The sword emitted faint chants as if a true immortal who had attained the Dao was reciting a scripture, intending to subdue demons and vanquish evil.

Chapter 476: You Have a Better Future in Tomb Raiding!

Elder Taoist Qingxuan's strike with his sword was the most powerful technique among the Taoist Sect's Demon-Subduing Sword skills. Its fierce momentum and formidable strength far surpassed the Eighteen Swords of Whirlwind Rain from Jiangnan's Misty Rain Tower.

The sword strike seemed to come from beyond the heavens, and in an instant, it cleaved down toward Ghost Hand's head.

Ghost Hand sidestepped half a step with his right foot, while simultaneously tilting his body slightly, narrowly avoiding the sword in a critical moment. The blade of the sword nearly touched his chest as it sliced down rapidly.

Elder Taoist Qingxuan, steeped in swordplay for decades, was undoubtedly a swordsman of the highest order. When his initial strike missed, he immediately swept his sword horizontally toward Ghost Hand's abdomen.

Ghost Hand sucked in his belly violently, bending his body forward fiercely as he retreated rapidly with the direction of Elder Taoist Qingxuan's horizontal sweep.

Elder Taoist Qingxuan shadowed his movements, following closely. The sword's momentum was unrelenting, with the blade remaining a mere half a foot from Ghost Hand's belly. Had Ghost Hand's speed slowed even slightly, his soft abdomen would have been slit open by the sword in the elder's hand, his innards spilling out and his life ending there and then.

Elder Taoist Qingxuan's strike amalgamated all of the essence of the Demon-Subduing Sword, exquisite to the extreme. Seeing this, the more than twenty disciples from Qingcheng Temple couldn't help but burst into exclamations of praise.

Even Wu De, who had maintained a calm expression throughout, couldn't help but frown slightly at that moment. He thought to himself that Elder Taoist Qingxuan, in his desperate bid for survival, had played beyond his level; that sword strike had probably reached the level of an Earth Level initial stage martial artist.

If Ghost Hand wished to avoid this strike, he'd likely have to reveal some of his true abilities.

Taoist Priest Qingxuan and Ghost Hand, one advancing and the other retreating, one attacking and the other defending, had quickly moved back by more than ten meters. Ghost Hand's back was about to slam into a high wall, leaving him no room to retreat.

A few disciples from Qingcheng Temple, as if foreseeing the scene of Ghost Hand being bisected by a sword strike, couldn't hold back their cheers.

Contrary to everyone's expectations, just as Ghost Hand's back was about to press against the wall, he made an extremely bold move.

He suddenly quickened his retreat, then twisted his waist with a slight tilt to the right, and incredibly, used the left side of his waist and abdomen to meet Taoist Priest Qingxuan's horizontally slashing sword.

"Die!"

Elder Taoist Qingxuan clenched his teeth, gripped his sword even tighter, and, summoning all his potential, sent the sword cutting out horizontally with all his might.

Clang—

Instead of the sound of flesh being instantly severed, the sharp blade produced a crisp clang, like metal striking stone, when it hit Ghost Hand, and sparks flew.

"What has he got on him?"

Elder Taoist Qingxuan was taken aback and had barely formed the question in his mind when he saw a fist gleaming with golden light strike with incomparable speed, directly targeting his own chest.

Before Elder Taoist Qingxuan's eyes, an illusion seemed to appear; a towering Buddha adorned in golden robes swung a Zen staff, pounding towards him with an overwhelming pressure that sparked desperation.

"No good!"

Elder Taoist Qingxuan cursed inwardly and bit his own tongue hard. The pain shattered the illusion in front of him.

Although Elder Taoist Qingxuan's reaction was fast, it was not faster than Ghost Hand's fist. As the illusion vanished, Elder Taoist Qingxuan realized that Ghost Hand's punching fist was already touching the fabric of his chest, leaving him no space to dodge.

"It's over!"

Before the fist even touched his flesh, Elder Taoist Qingxuan felt a vast, heavy, and vigorous force surge into his chest, as if it could shatter and smash everything.

Elder Taoist Qingxuan let out a mournful sigh, mobilizing the last bit of his potential and concentrating all his True Yuan in front of his chest, hoping to fend off Ghost Hand's earth-shattering blow.

Hope is beautiful, but reality is cruel.

Ghost Hand's fist viciously struck Elder Taoist Qingxuan's chest, sending him flying through the air. Even before he hit the ground, his internal organs were completely destroyed, and he died.

Until his death, Elder Taoist Qingxuan did not understand how his sword stroke had been so easily blocked by Ghost Hand.

Elder Taoist Qingxuan did not know that, due to the lack of a Spatial Ring, Ghost Hand had to temporarily stash the Essence Stones given to him by Fang Bai in his clothes, including a few tucked into the waist pocket on his left side.

Elder Taoist Qingxuan's fierce sword strike had hit one of those Essence Stones in Ghost Hand's left waist pocket. The hardness of the Essence Stone far exceeded that of ordinary rocks, hence the sword stroke did not injure Ghost Hand at all.

"Uncle-Master!"

Witnessing Elder Taoist Qingxuan's lifeless body hitting the ground, the twenty-plus Qingcheng Temple Disciples watching were dumbfounded for a moment before they let out mournful cries. They rushed forward in a swarm, surrounding Elder Taoist Qingxuan's body.

"Let's fight him together!"

After a moment, someone shouted in rage, and the twenty-plus Qingcheng Temple Disciples turned and, with bare hands or swords, charged at Ghost Hand, filled with a desire for vengeance.

Ghost Hand bowed his head to adjust the clothing that had been cut by Elder Taoist Qingxuan's sword then confronted the challenge, charging into the midst of a group of Qingcheng Temple Disciples.

Those Qingcheng Temple Disciples were, after all, Profound Level early-stage Martial Artists. Had they calmed down and coordinated their attacks, they might have caused Ghost Hand considerable trouble. But at that moment, with blood boiling in their heads and grief in their hearts, they fought individually—and were no match for Ghost Hand.

With anger fuelling his force, Ghost Hand showed no mercy. Almost with each punch, one of the twenty-plus Qingcheng Temple Disciples was sent flying, none able to withstand the might of his fist.

More than ten minutes later, the ground around Ghost Hand was randomly littered with over twenty bodies, each one bearing the deep dent left by the impact of Ghost Hand's fist.

"Change your clothes, and let's go!"

Fang Bai took out a set of clothes from his Spatial Ring and threw them to Ghost Hand, then turned and started descending the mountain.

Wu De flashed a grin and followed Fang Bai down the mountain.

Ghost Hand stepped in front of the clothes left by Fang Bai, his body shook slightly as the True Essence Force radiated from him, instantly shattering his bloodied garments and revealing his scar-covered, naked body.

"Misty Rain Tower... Qingcheng Temple... Next up is Shaolin!"

Ghost Hand quickly changed into the clothes he had picked up, then glanced at the corpses of Qingcheng Temple Disciples strewn across the ground and strode away.

"Younger brother, where's your next stop? If there's more fighting to be had, take me with you! The Taoist Master... ahem, this humble Taoist can not only rob tombs exceptionally well but is also quite strong in a fight!"

At the base of Qingcheng Temple, Wu De looked at Fang Bai who was standing with his hands behind his back by the pathway, his expression indifferent, and asked with a chuckling rub of his hands.

Before Fang Bai, he dared not call himself "Taoist Master". After pondering, he felt that "humble Taoist" was more appropriate.

There was no helping it; who could deny Fang Bai's superior strength?

In the Ancient Martial World, power is paramount, the mightier lead the way, mighty fists make you the boss. Wu De's show of humility was both to ingratiate himself with Fang Bai and acknowledge his strength.

Fang Bai smiled and said, "I think compared to fighting, tomb robbing has more prospects for you!"

Wu De thought Fang Bai was mocking him, so he responded with a forced laugh, "I know that robbing graves is a vile act, but having followed my wild Taoist master since childhood, it's become a habit I can't kick! If I go three to five months without doing it, my hands start itching!"

Chapter 477: He Who Understands Me, Brother Fang!

"You obviously misunderstood my intention,"

Fang Bai said solemnly, "What I mean is, tombs of experts like Zhuge Dingtian usually have a large amount of cultivation resources buried with them. If you could rob one every now and then, you wouldn't have to worry about cultivation resources anymore. Brother Wu, remember to call me next time you find such a good opportunity! I'll join you in the tomb-robbing!"

"Brother, are you serious?"

At these words, Wu De's spirit was lifted.

"Do I look like I'm joking?"

Fang Bai earnestly continued, "To tell you the truth, the cultivation technique I practice is quite special, and my need for cultivation resources is likely greater than that of any other martial artist in this world! If you ever have surplus resources, you can bring them to me, and I'll exchange something of equal value with you! How about that?"

Wu De slapped his thigh excitedly and said, "That's great! With your words, Brother Fang, I will definitely devote my limited life to the boundless endeavor of tomb-robbing, and work tirelessly until my last breath!"

Fang Bai said, "You now have a Spatial Spirit Device, but you lack an Offensive and Defensive Spirit Instrument. Once I'm capable of crafting spiritual artifacts, I'll make one for you, and then wait for you to exchange it with cultivation resources!"

"He who knows me, Brother Fang indeed!"

Hearing the words "Offensive and Defensive Spirit Instrument," Wu De's eyes lit up with excitement, and he scratched his head frantically, saying, "I can't wait! I'm going to run around the whole world to find the tombs of great experts! Lest, by the time you craft the spiritual artifact, I won't have the appropriate cultivation resources to exchange for it! Brother Fang, I'm taking off now, we'll meet again later!"

Having said this, he waved to Fang Bai, slapped his butt, and swiftly dashed out, vanishing in the blink of an eye.

Fang Bai hadn't expected the man to leave so suddenly; it seemed he cared greatly about the so-called "Offensive and Defensive Spirit Instrument."

No wonder, for although Wu De was a high-rank Earth Level martial artist, virtually unrivaled in the Secular Ancient Martial World, he was somewhat insignificant in the Hidden Sect World.

The Hidden Sect World primarily consisted of Earth Level experts, and was not lacking Heaven Level martial artists. With an Offensive and Defensive Spirit Instrument in his possession, Wu De's strength would increase manifold, granting him the power to contend with Heaven Level martial artists. He would then be able to traverse the Hidden Sect World freely and unobstructed.

However, Fang Bai was not optimistic about Wu De finding another grave of a great expert or relic of a strong martial artist anytime soon.

The tombs of great experts and relics of strong martial artists were surely extremely secretive; finding one was a stroke of fortune that came once in a millennium, a twist of fate. How could it be easy to find a second, a third, or even more?

But on second thought, Wu De was a naturally gifted tomb-robbing genius. He even discovered the grave of an Innate Expert like Zhuge Dingtian, which was hidden under a hill. Perhaps he might indeed come across some great opportunities in the future?

A familiar aura approached from afar; Fang Bai turned to look, only to see Ghost Hand soaring down from the mountain and quickly arriving at his side.

"Is everything taken care of?"

Fang Bai asked indifferently.

"Yes, twenty-seven Profound Level experts, plus Elder Taoist Qingling previously killed by Master, all twenty-eight Qingcheng Temple experts who participated in the massacre at Myriad Medicine Valley, have been fully executed,"

Ghost Hand reported respectfully.

"Misty Rain Tower's eighteen men, Qingcheng Temple's twenty-seven... Do you feel that having these people die at your hands means you're cold-hearted and evil, and therefore you're burdened with guilt?"

Seeing Ghost Hand's serious and solemn expression, Fang Bai asked again.

Ghost Hand shook his head and said, "No! Master once said that if killing one evildoer who deserves to die could save ten or even more innocent lives, then we must act decisively. Otherwise, the evildoer will continue to commit atrocities, harming even more innocent lives. Those from Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple, having committed the massacre at Myriad Medicine Valley, could do it a second or third time... Their hands are stained with fresh blood, they are deeply sinful and deserve to die!"

Fang Bai nodded and said, "Then why do you look so troubled?"

"I..."

Ghost Hand glanced at Fang Bai, hesitated, and then stopped short.

Fang Bai smiled and said, "It's alright; whatever you want to say, just say it."

Ghost Hand said, "Among the three major sects that attacked Myriad Medicine Valley, the disciples of Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple were the ones who took action and killed people; they were the principal offenders. The Shaolin disciples withdrew midway, which makes them accessories to the crime. So, I was thinking..."

"You were thinking of letting off the Shaolin disciples?"

"No!"

Ghost Hand said, "Master has also said that we martial artists must act with clear distinctions between gratitude and grudges. The Shaolin disciples were among the participants in that massacre. Since they have made mistakes, they must be punished! It's just that the Shaolin disciples did not kill the disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley, so I believe their punishment can be somewhat lighter..."

"As for the Shaolin disciples, how to punish them and to what extent is up to you; you have complete authority. I will not interfere."

Fang Bai observed Ghost Hand's expression and listened to the tone of his speech; he knew that the actions of Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple had fully vented the killing intent and resentment in Ghost Hand's heart. As for the Shaolin disciples, who had not stained their hands with the blood of Myriad Medicine Valley disciples, he did not wish to strike them down mercilessly.

Fang Bai silently nodded in approval, agreeing with Ghost Hand's approach in his heart.

For a martial artist, it's commendable to be decisive in killing and to indulge in passions of gratitude and grudges, as it aids in the cultivation of a martial artist's state of mind. However, blind killing and an overly heavy heart of slaughter can easily lead one onto the Demon Dao and turn good intentions into bad actions.

Still, the Shaolin disciples, though their crimes did not warrant death, could not be easily let off. Ghost Hand meant that the Shaolin party must go, and those participants had to receive appropriate punishment, as a warning.

"Thank you, Master, for your indulgence."

Ghost Hand had been worried that his master would reprimand him for being too lenient, but hearing him speak thus, he could not help but heave a sigh of relief and bowed deeply to Fang Bai.

.....

Just a few days after the Profound Level experts from Jiangnan's Misty Rain Tower were slaughtered, the Profound Level experts of Qingcheng Temple also all perished.

When this news spread, Huaxia's Secular Ancient Martial World, which had not yet settled from the Misty Rain Tower incident, was thrown into another massive upheaval.

Some individuals and forces associated with these two great Ancient Martial Sect families felt an unprecedented crisis. Some shut themselves away and refused to go out, others scrambled to gather information, and yet others formed temporary alliances to face any potential crises together.

Almost everyone believed that Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple must have provoked a certain Hidden Sect power, leading to their downfall.

Decades ago, an expert emerged from the Hidden Sect and caused significant destruction to the Secular World. This later led to the establishment of the "Dragon Guard" to counter the threats from the Hidden Sect.

Now, with the successive incidents of the slaughter of Profound Level Experts from Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple, could it be that some powerful experts from the Hidden Sect, unable to remain content in obscurity, had come to stir up the Secular World?

For a time, the entire Secular Ancient Martial World of Huaxia was in turmoil, with everyone feeling insecure and speculating about who the "Hidden Sect Expert's" next target might be.

Chapter 478: Fang Family Discipline

"Based on the descriptions from those Taoist priests at Qingcheng Temple, we can confirm that the murderers are Fang Bai and his disciple Ghost Hand. Additionally, an unidentified fat Taoist also took part. Grandfather, I didn't send anyone to investigate Fang Bai and his disciple's whereabouts this time!"

In a high-walled courtyard in Yanjing, the Dragon Maiden clad in a crimson thin jacket and white snow boots stood under an ancient pine tree. She waited until her grandfather, Long Jingtian, slowly finished a set of boxing movements before stepping forward and speaking.

"We can infer from this that the incident at Misty Rain Tower must have been done by the two disciples of Fang Bai as well! Grandfather, do you think these two guys have some kind of life-and-death grudge against Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple? Otherwise, why would they commit such insane acts? Grandfather, you should at least say something!"

Seeing that her grandfather remained calm and reclined in a sun chair to rest with his eyes closed after finishing his exercises, as if unconcerned about the matter, the Dragon Maiden grew anxious. She squatted beside her grandfather and continued with furrowed brows, "We can't let them continue to kill like this; otherwise, the vitality of the Secular Ancient Martial World will be greatly damaged! Grandfather, please think of a solution!"

She paused, then added, "The commotion Fang Bai and his disciple caused at Qingcheng Temple wasn't done in secrecy, so many martial artists in the Ancient Martial World already know about it. Just now, quite a few members of the 'Dragon Guard' came to ask me why you, Grandfather, have yet to give the command to punish Fang Bai and his disciple. Some members are even dissatisfied, saying... saying..."

"Say what?"

Long Jingtian opened his mouth slowly and asked in a deep voice.

"They said that martial artists like Fang Bai and his disciple are the scum of the Ancient Martial World. Accepting them into the 'Dragon Guard' is a desecration of it! Sigh, I don't know how to explain it to them..."

The Dragon Maiden, with her brows tightly knitted, spoke with a worried face.

To this moment, the Dragon Maiden couldn't understand why her grandfather, who always hated evil and upheld justice, would be so indulgent towards Fang Bai and his disciple, who had killed dozens of martial artists from the Ancient Martial World.

"Sigh..."

Long Jingtian was silent for a moment, then he suddenly let out a sigh and slowly sat up, murmuring, "Misty Rain Tower... Qingcheng Temple... It seems their next stop will be Shaolin..."

"Grandfather, what are you talking about? What Shaolin?"

The Dragon Maiden asked curiously. Suddenly, she had a realization, and with a shock, she exclaimed, "Could it be... could it be that Fang Bai and his disciple are planning to strike at Shaolin next? What exactly are they trying to do?"

"Pack up immediately and accompany me to Shaolin!"

With his white eyebrows raised, Long Jingtian stood up, his tall figure erect.

Though he typically seemed like an indolent old man, at that moment, he stood tall and imposing, as if a deity walking among mortals.

"Yes, Grandfather!"

Knowing her grandfather was going to take action himself, the Dragon Maiden's pretty face flushed with excitement, and she turned to leave at once.

Since the founding of the "Dragon Guard," the number of times Long Jingtian personally took action could be counted on one hand.

In recent years, Long Jingtian had been even more reclusive, devoted to cultivation, and one could scarcely witness the elegance of this Heaven Level Martial Artist.

Even as his granddaughter, the Dragon Maiden, who had seen her grandfather only lazily practicing his boxing occasionally from childhood, never saw him truly compete with anyone. She was immensely curious about his true strength.

However, this time, the Dragon Maiden never expected that her grandfather would personally take action because of Fang Bai and his disciple.

The Dragon Maiden couldn't quite fathom it; after all, Fang Bai was at most a Profound Level Martial Artist slightly stronger than herself. Even if he was a genius in both medical skills and martial arts, there was no reason for her grandfather to take him so seriously, was there?

"Hmm, maybe Grandpa has been in this high-walled courtyard for too long and wants to go out and see the great rivers and mountains of Huaxia, and by the way, try to stop Fang Bai and his disciple from stirring up more trouble in the Ancient Martial World? It must be so!"

Walking back to her residence, Dragon Maiden thought to herself.

...

The weather was getting colder, and the Chinese New Year was drawing nearer. After Fang Bai returned from the Qingcheng Temple with Ghost Hand and stayed at home in Zhongzhou for two days, buying some New Year goods, the master and disciple duo once again disappeared.

Yang Mei wanted to ask her son what he was up to, but all she got was that he was out on business. As for what that business was, her son was evasive and wouldn't give a clear answer.

Yang Mei felt helpless, knowing that her son had grown up and become independent, no longer as easy to manage as when he was a child. She let him be, only reminding him and Ghost Hand to make sure they returned home before New Year's Eve, otherwise they would face "family law."

As for the "Fang Family's family law," it was of course designed for Fang Bai. When he was young, it was Fang Gang spanking him, and as he grew up, it turned into Yang Mei pulling his ears.

However, her son was obedient and sensible now, and the family had undergone earth-shaking changes because of him. Thinking about it, Yang Mei felt immensely proud and wouldn't really bring herself to pull her son's ears again.

"If anyone's ears need pulling, it's Fang Gang, that old coot! Now that he's become a boss and has money, he acts all high and mighty. Just yesterday, while examining a beautiful female patient, he was flirting with her! It makes me so angry just thinking about it! Hmph, from now on, I'll use that family law more often on him!"

This morning, after sending off her son and Ghost Hand from the Traditional Chinese Medicine clinic, Yang Mei turned back and walked into the warm, spring-like hall. Remembering yesterday's incident, she couldn't help but glare with killing intent at her husband Fang Gang, who was treating a patient.

When Fang Gang's gaze met his wife's, he shivered, thinking that he had only asked the female patient a few more questions out of his duty as a doctor yesterday, and now his wife had misunderstood him. It was such a great injustice!

But thinking back, that female patient really was beautiful, especially those electrifying eyes that made one's heart itch...

Seeing his wife walking towards him, Fang Gang immediately cut the image from his mind, cast aside the distractions, and focused on diagnosing the patient sitting in front of him.

"My dear, with the New Year approaching, I just remembered something..."

After Fang Gang had finished treating that patient, Yang Mei leaned in close to him and spoke in a hushed voice.

Fang Gang asked with a smile, "You look so secretive... what is it?"

Yang Mei said, "I was thinking... since Chenyu doesn't have any relatives left, why not invite her to celebrate the New Year at our home? It would be a good opportunity for our son to spend more time with her and increase their affection for each other! What do you think?"

"I think it's a good idea!"

Fang Gang nodded in agreement and said, "A girl being all alone during the New Year is indeed quite pitiful... You have Chenyu's phone number, right? Call her when you have time and ask if she would like to come over!"

"Alright, I'll call her now!"

Yang Mei said, and went into a room on the side. She came out about ten minutes later with a beaming smile, and happily said to Fang Gang, "It's settled! Chenyu not only agreed to come to our house for the New Year, but she also kindly asked if we had prepared all our New Year goods. If not, she offered to help buy them... That girl has such a sweet mouth, keeps calling me 'Auntie,' it really warms my heart..."

Fang Gang laughed heartily and said, "I bet you'd be even happier if she called you 'Mom,' wouldn't you?"

Chapter 479: The Blessing of Qi People

Yang Mei said with laughing eyes, "You know, if Chenyu were willing to be my daughter-in-law, I'd really like it! She's beautiful, treats our son well, and she's the CEO of a big company... Tell me, where can you find such a daughter-in-law? No, I have to talk to our son later, tell him to keep in touch with Chenyu more often, maybe even turn the raw rice into cooked rice..."

Fang Gang rolled his eyes and said grumpily, "Our son is only twenty years old, what's the rush?"

Yang Mei said, "Am I not allowed to be eager for a grandchild? Look at Boss Li next door, he's our age and his grandson can already go buy soy sauce! Besides, Chenyu is a few years older than our son. Our son can wait, but she can't!"

When you mention this, it reminds me of Su Family's girl."

Fang Gang touched his chin and frowned, "That girl from the Su Family got along well with our son in medical school, and when our son went to intern at Yanjing Hospital, she helped him a lot. Do you think there might be something ambiguous going on between our son and her?"

"This... This is indeed possible..."

Upon hearing her husband's words, Yang Mei thought carefully and couldn't help frowning sadly, "As for Su Family's girl, when it comes to looks and family background, she's not inferior to Chenyu. But I haven't had much contact with her, so I don't know what her personality is like, whether she treats our son well... Ah, this is going to be difficult!"

Fang Gang scratched his head and also felt perplexed. Suddenly, with a "hei" of laughter, he said proudly, "My son is really capable! Other people's sons have a tough time finding a wife, but this kid has quietly got involved with two, and both are rich and beautiful! Heh, if this were ancient times, taking both as wives would have been a great fortune!"

Seeing her husband shaking his head and getting carried away, Yang Mei glared at him and scoffed, "Are you envious? If you're envious, go hook up a few fox spirits and enjoy the 'great fortune' yourself!"

Fang Gang shrank his head and chuckled, "In modern society, monogamy is the law, anything more is illegal... illegal..."

Suddenly puffing out his chest, he said earnestly, "The wife of Fang Gang is gentle and virtuous, knowledgeable and polite, beautiful as a flower. Even if you gave me the seven fairies, I'd never trade!"

"You old rascal! Always talking nonsense!"

Yang Mei chuckled and then touched her own face, sighing, "I was twenty-two when we got married, and in the blink of an eye, more than twenty years have passed... Time spares no one. I've aged, and my face is full of wrinkles!"

"Whoever dares call you old, I'll flatten him! Big White, come and tell me, does your auntie look old?"

Fang Gang saw Zhou Dabai coming over and asked him seriously.

Zhou Dabai had been working at Fang's Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic for a few days and was preparing medicine for a patient. Hearing Fang Gang's question and though not quite understanding the situation, he was quick to respond with a smile to Yang Mei, "Auntie, may I ask if you've yet to turn thirty?"

Yang Mei spat disdainfully, "Get out of here! Cheeky boy, go back to your medicine! You haven't been here long and you're already learning bad habits from your Uncle Fang!"

Zhou Dabai earnestly said, "I'm not brown-nosing! Auntie, you look to be in your early thirties at most!"

"Really?"

"Absolutely true!"

"I believe you! I'll get your Uncle Fang to give you a raise later!"

Yang Mei said, beaming with delight.

Actually, Zhou Dabai wasn't entirely sucking up. Yang Mei had recently used a beauty cream personally formulated by her son, Fang Bai, which made her skin moist and lustrous, significantly reducing her wrinkles. Indeed, she looked much younger than before, and sometimes when she went shopping with her daughter, people mistook them for sisters.

Regarding the matter with Xia Chenyu and Su Linglong, after discussing it, Fang Gang and Yang Mei decided they couldn't favor one over the other. They would simply invite both girls to their home, but they had to stagger the invitations to avoid a clash; otherwise, good intentions might lead to trouble.

Moreover, they had to wait for their son, Fang Bai, to come back and discuss the matter with him to see what he thought.

While the common people of Huaxia busied themselves with preparing New Year's goods and readying for the New Year, Fang Bai and Ghost Hand braved the wind and snow, speeding on their way to Shaolin.

Zhongzhou was not too far from Shaolin, only a few hundred li away, which is why Fang Bai and Ghost Hand did not take a car but chose to walk instead.

For the two of them, the so-called "walking" did not mean using their legs to walk, but to run, and they did so without using True Yuan, relying purely on the strength of their bodies.

The methods of cultivating for a martial artist are divided into Qi cultivation and body cultivation.

Qi cultivation involves using a certain Cultivation Technique to absorb Essence Energy for cultivation, while body cultivation involves extreme exercises to stimulate the body's potential and strengthen the physique.

Qi cultivation mainly trains the meridians, blood vessels, and the Qi Sea of the Dantian, whereas body cultivation trains the internal organs as well as the skin, muscles, and bones.

Fang Bai's practice involved simultaneous Qi and body cultivation, which allowed him to achieve the effects of cultivating both internally and externally. Therefore, his strength improved much faster than that of other martial artists.

After leaving Zhongzhou, the two formally began their body cultivation.

To avoid encountering travelers on the way, they would enter mountains whenever they met them, traveling quickly through mountainous areas; on plains, they would take secluded paths; when faced

with forests, they would go straight through them; and if there were rivers in their way, they would swim across...

If Fang Bai and Ghost Hand were to circulate True Yuan for swift travel or took breaks along the way, a mere few hundred li would not pose a problem to them, yet they purposely pushed themselves to the brink of exhaustion and collapse before stopping to rest and recover.

Once their strength was somewhat restored, they would set off again, until the next cycle of complete exhaustion and collapse...

They pressed and squeezed their physical limits in such an extreme manner to achieve the objective of a mighty physique.

When they were nearly a hundred li from Shaolin, for some unknown reason, Fang Bai and his disciple stopped their body cultivation and took out several Essence Stones in a deserted valley to absorb the Essence Energy within and rapidly recover their strength.

It wasn't that Fang Bai didn't want to continue body cultivation; he simply didn't dare to.

Not long ago, he noticed with his Divine Sense Diffusion that there were two martial artists following from afar. One was the Dragon Maiden who had tried to recruit him to join the "Dragon Guard" of Huaxia, and the other was a white-browed old man whom he had never met before.

The Dragon Maiden was not much of a concern, but the white-browed elder made Fang Bai somewhat wary.

The cultivation realm of the white-browed elder had actually reached the early stages of Heaven Rank, which greatly surprised Fang Bai.

Fang Bai had thought that within the secular Ancient Martial World, high-rank Earth Rank martial artists like Wu De were already few and far between, and it was impossible for there to be Heaven Rank experts.

This was based on what the runaway couple, Baili Zhan and his wife, said upon escaping the Hidden Sect World. The Hidden Sect World was rich in Essence Energy and Spiritual Medicines, with a cultivation environment far superior to that of the secular world.

In the secular world, heavy air pollution and the scarcity of Spiritual Energy and Spiritual Medicines meant that if martial artists remained in the secular world without a substantial supply of cultivation resources, their Martial Dao cultivation might stagnate or even regress.

Therefore, most martial artists in the secular world, once they reached Earth Rank, would try every means to find a way into the Hidden Sect and would not cling to the secular vanities. This was even more so for Heaven Rank experts with a deeper understanding of the Martial Dao who were single-minded in pursuit of higher cultivation levels.

Unless they were like Baili Zhan and his wife, who had escaped into the secular world because they had no choice but to flee the Hidden Sect World for the safety of their family.

Based on this, Fang Bai believed that there should not be any Heaven Rank martial artists in today's secular world, and even Earth Rank martial artists were rare.

Chapter 480: Do You Think They Are Both Fools?

And indeed, it was so. Before the appearance of the white-browed elder with the strength of an early-stage Heaven Level Martial Artist, Fang Bai, himself a Heaven Level Martial Artist, had not encountered any, and only met two Earth Level Martial Artists.

One was Nangong Ming from the Hidden Sect's "Ghost Doctor Valley," and the other was the Fat Taoist, Wu De.

Nangong Ming had emerged into the secular world by the order of his master to collect Wood Element Stones while simultaneously pursuing the married couple, Baili Zhan.

As for the Fat Taoist, Wu De, a master tomb raider, he was able to acquire quite a few Cultivation Resources in the secular world, so it didn't matter to him whether he joined the Hidden Sect World or not.

Thus, the emergence of this white-browed elder with Heaven Level strength surprised Fang Bai greatly.

However, Fang Bai was only surprised and wary, but not afraid.

Fang Bai's cultivation of the "Dragon-Tiger-Lion-Elephant Technique" had reached the middle stage of the Xingyuan Realm, the third layer, equivalent to a Martial Artist of mid-Earth Rank in the Secular Ancient Martial World. The high rank of the "Dragon-Tiger-Lion-Elephant Technique" granted Fang Bai the ability to fight beyond his level.

Although Fang Bai had never encountered or confronted a Heaven Level Martial Artist, he had a strong confidence that with his current strength, he could battle a Heaven Level Martial Artist.

"The Dragon Maiden is a member of the 'Dragon Guards.' The white-browed elder with her, could he also be from the 'Dragon Guards'? But why are this old and young pair stealthily following us, what is their intention? From the aura emanating from them, there doesn't seem to be any intent to kill or malice..."

Fang Bai secretly speculated about the white-browed elder's identity, and a certain possibility suddenly crossed his mind, though he was not yet certain.

"Master, what's wrong?"

Ghost Hand saw his master suddenly call to stop, no longer continuing to run for physical training, and with a bizarre expression pondering something, he couldn't help but ask.

Though Ghost Hand had unmatched strength at his level, he was still only a Profound Level Martial Artist. His sensory range only extended to a hundred meters radius, completely unable to detect the Dragon Maiden and the white-browed elder who were several hundred meters away.

"It's nothing."

Hearing Ghost Hand's inquiry, Fang Bai waved his hand and immediately regained his composure.

Fang Bai wanted to see what the Dragon Maiden and the white-browed elder's purpose was in following him and Ghost Hand, so he chose not to reveal the truth to Ghost Hand to prevent him from looking around restlessly, which might let the other party know that their tracks had been exposed.

Ending their pure physical sprinting state, they began to circulate True Yuan and advanced forward with swift movements.

The Dragon Maiden and white-browed elder, who were trailing them by several hundred meters, maintained the same speed to continue their pursuit.

"They are all Martial Artists, so why didn't they circulate True Yuan and use movement techniques earlier, instead choosing to drain their physical strength by running madly? They ended up utterly exhausted and panting heavily; is that pleasant? I really can't understand what Fang Bai and his disciple are up to!"

Several hundred meters behind Fang Bai and his disciple, the Dragon Maiden put down her telescope, her brow furrowed in confusion as she muttered to herself.

"Do you think the two of them are fools? If I'm not mistaken, this should be one of their training methods!"

Standing beside the Dragon Maiden, the white-browed elder's eyes peered ahead, gleaming with intelligence as he spoke in a deep voice.

The white-browed elder was a Heaven Level Martial Artist, with keen senses, making it hard for any movement within a thousand meters to escape his notice.

Similarly, he could easily capture any fluctuations in the martial artist aura within this range.

Therefore, the white-browed elder did not need to use a telescope to observe Fang Bai and his disciple's movements all the time like the Dragon Maiden; he merely had to follow the martial artist aura emanating from the two individuals. This way, he wouldn't lose track of them.

Of course, given Ghost Hand's current cultivation level, there was still a significant gap compared to the white-browed elder, so no matter how much he tried to conceal his own aura, the elder was able to capture some of it.

But Fang Bai was different.

If Fang Bai wished, he could perfectly hide his own aura, making himself appear to outsiders like an ordinary person. It wouldn't matter if it were a Heaven Level Martial Artist like the white-browed elder or even those of a higher realm—they wouldn't feel any martial artist aura fluctuations from him.

However, Fang Bai was now a member of the "Dragon Guard," and in front of the Dragon Maiden, there was no need for him to hide his strength. He merely suppressed his cultivation level and realm slightly.

At this moment, in the eyes of the white-browed elder, Fang Bai was merely an Earth Rank beginner-level martial artist.

Still, a twenty-year-old Earth Rank beginner-level martial artist was enough to astonish the white-browed elder deeply. He thought it was no wonder that Wang Huashan, the top expert of the Wang Family in Yanjing with mid-level Profound strength, was defeated by Fang Bai in one move—the gap in their cultivation realms was simply too vast.

Wang Huashan, merely a mid-level Profound martial artist, had once dared to challenge Fang Bai, who possessed Earth Rank beginner-level strength. It would be utterly against the natural order if he had not lost; the fact that he had not been injured or crippled was due to Fang Bai showing mercy.

"I, Long Jingtian, once prided myself on my exceptional talent, but even I hadn't reached this realm by the age of twenty! A twenty-year-old Earth Rank martial artist, perhaps this is unique in the history of the Secular Ancient Martial World?"

The white-browed elder, sensing the fluctuations of Fang Bai's martial artist aura from afar, couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

The white-browed elder accompanying the Dragon Maiden was naturally Long Jingtian, the leader of the "Dragon Guard."

The reason Long Jingtian personally left retirement was to prevent a deadly dispute between Fang Bai and his disciple and Shaolin, similar to the bloody incidents with Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple. If necessary, he would intervene and stop it.

This was because Long Jingtian, in his covert investigation of the massacre at Myriad Medicine Valley, learned that the Shaolin disciples had backed out midway and had not participated in the slaughter of the Myriad Medicine Valley disciples.

Furthermore, Long Jingtian's private relationship with Abbot Jueren of Shaolin was very good, and Jueren was also an important member of the Dragon Guard's Earth group. An incident with either him or Fang Bai would be a significant loss for the Dragon Guard.

Long Jingtian believed that there was no factor necessitating a fight to the death between Ghost Hand and Shaolin. If he could persuade them to avoid conflict, that would be best. If persuasion failed, he would need to exert his own strength and forcefully prevent it.

Even though Fang Bai and his disciple had successfully slaughtered all the Profound Level Experts of Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple, coming out unscathed, Long Jingtian was not optimistic about their visit to Shaolin.

Shaolin's heritage had lasted for over two thousand years, with numerous martial monks and experts. It was said that there were 108 Profound Level Martial Artists alone, and their overall strength far surpassed that of Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple.

The strength of Master Jueren, the current Shaolin Abbot, had reached Earth Rank mid-level, and in Long Jingtian's view, even if Fang Bai and his disciple joined forces, they might not be Jueren's match.

Moreover, Shaolin was famous for the "One Pavilion, One Court, Four Halls," the six elders, and the renowned formation of the Eighteen Arhats.

Particularly, the Eighteen Arhats Formation, led by the six elders of the "One Pavilion, One Court, Four Halls," together with twelve other martial monks with Profound Level Perfection, was so formidable that it could trap any expert below a Heaven Level Expert.

Thus, Long Jingtian was more worried about Fang Bai and his disciple. The two of them were young and impulsive; if they failed to see the difficulty and chose to clash heads with Shaolin, they would likely meet their ends there.