

Doctor 481

Chapter 481: You all deserve to go to Avici Hell!

Long Jingtian made his way to Shaolin, in part to prevent Fang Bai and his disciple from senselessly throwing away their lives.

A day ahead of their scheduled arrival, the grandfather and granddaughter pair had already reached the vicinity of Shaolin and had successfully tracked down Fang Bai and his disciple.

When they saw that the two weren't using any True Yuan and were running at full speed purely on physical strength, the Dragon Maiden was puzzled, and so was Long Jingtian. However, he never believed that Fang Bai and his disciple would run around aimlessly. He guessed it must be some kind of cultivation method.

"Grandpa, should we stop them now?"

After tracking for a while and seeing that Song Mountain, where Shaolin was located, was already in sight, the Dragon Maiden asked with a turn of her head.

Long Jingtian shook his head and said, "No need! They don't have too much violent and murderous aura about them. Perhaps the battle we're imagining won't occur. I would prefer to avoid revealing myself unless absolutely necessary!"

"I was kind of hoping they would fight..."

the Dragon Maiden muttered under her breath.

"You girl, how would their fighting benefit you?"

Long Jingtian said with a tone of annoyance.

The Dragon Maiden giggled and said, "All the members of the 'Dragon Guard' say that Grandpa, you are the number one expert in the Secular Ancient Martial World. I've always wanted to see you show off

your skills, but I've never had the chance! If they start fighting, you'll have to step in to stop them, right? Wouldn't that be an opportunity?"

Long Jingtian scolded with a laugh, "You naughty girl, always causing trouble! Number one expert? That's just what others speculate; I would never dare to claim that title! The path of Martial Dao is neverending. Who in this world could dare to say they've reached the pinnacle of Martial Dao, invincible under the heavens?"

"In my heart, Grandpa is number one! You are invincible under the heavens!"

"Alright, enough with the flattery! Remember, once we sneak into Shaolin, it's best you stay quiet and just watch. Shaolin has many experts; if we're not careful, we'll be discovered, and then we'll have no choice but to reveal ourselves!"

"Got it!"

As they spoke, the grandfather and granddaughter noticed that Fang Bai and Ghost Hand had already reached the "Reception Pavilion" at the foot of Song Mountain.

The Reception Pavilion is a small pavilion at the foot of the mountain set up by Shaolin's Reception Hall, specifically for dealing with various affairs between Shaolin and the outside world.

For example, it's common for martial artists from the Ancient Martial World to come to Shaolin to challenge and seek fame through battle. In such cases, Shaolin typically sends a Reception Monk to the pavilion at the base of the mountain to handle the situation.

In the Reception Pavilion, two Reception Monks are on duty every day.

Upon arriving at the Reception Pavilion, Fang Bai and Ghost Hand saw an old and a young monk, both ordinary Reception Monks, sitting upright inside.

"Benefactors, may I ask what brings you here?"

When Fang Bai and Ghost Hand entered the Reception Pavilion, the two Reception Monks quickly stood up. The older monk clasped his hands behind his back and respectfully asked.

"Go tell that old Monk Jueren that Ghost Hand, a disciple of Myriad Medicine Valley, has come to Shaolin to settle a grudge!"

Ghost Hand stated coldly.

Seeing the sudden fierce glint in Ghost Hand's eyes and the overwhelming killing Qi, both Reception Monks shivered involuntarily.

"Please wait a moment, Benefactor..."

The elderly Reception Monk recalled the abbot's earlier admonition and immediately signaled the young Reception Monk with a meaningful look.

Without a word, the young Reception Monk spread his legs and ran up the mountain like a madman.

Following the incidents involving Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple, Shaolin also received word of caution, so Abbot Jueren repeatedly instructed the Reception Monks in charge of guard duty that as soon as they spotted two young men appearing at the foot of the mountain, they were to immediately report it up the mountain without delay.

Fang Bai and Ghost Hand came to Shaolin openly and honorably this time, seeking justice in a forthright manner, so they were in no rush. Seeing the young Reception Monk hurrying up the mountain, both of them sat down in the pavilion and waited patiently.

Shortly after, four middle-aged monks surrounded a fat monk with a large, ear-to-ear smile and rosy complexion as they sped down the mountain path.

Observing the movement techniques of the five monks, it was clear they were Martial Monks of no weak strength.

"One Earth Level beginner, four at Profound Level Perfection... The legend goes that Shaolin is the towering beacon of Huaxia's Ancient Martial World, one of the leading Ancient Martial Sects. Seeing it today, their reputation is indeed well-deserved!"

Fang Bai, noticing that even the weakest among the five descending Shaolin monks was at Profound Level Perfection and that there was even an Earth Level Martial Artist among them, comprehended that their strength alone made them incomparable to Misty Rain Tower or Qingcheng Temple.

Rumors depicted the current Shaolin abbot, Jueren, as a gaunt old monk in his sixties, wielding a Zen Staff and draped in a kasaya with a bright red base and gold threads. However, the fat monk swiftly approaching the Reception Pavilion was starkly different from the rumored image of Abbot Jueren. Judging by his strength, he was likely one of Shaolin's elder figures.

The fat monk, escorted by the four middle-aged monks, arrived outside the pavilion and glanced at Fang Bai and Ghost Hand. He then entered the pavilion with a solemn expression, brought his palms together in a gesture of respect, and said, "May I ask which of the benefactors is the Ghost Hand disciple of Myriad Medicine Valley?"

"That's me!"

Ghost Hand stepped forward, his eyes brimming with a cold gleam as he fixed his gaze on the fat monk and asked icily, "Are you Jueren?"

The fat monk replied, "I am Monk Jueming, currently the elder of Reception Hall. Abbot Fangzhang is in retreat and cannot conveniently come down the mountain. We ask for the benefactor's understanding!"

Ghost Hand scoffed, "In retreat? Hah, surely it's because he did something shameful and can't face anyone, right?"

"After Abbot learned that the benefactor is a disciple of Myriad Medicine Valley, he particularly entrusted me to bring a message..."

Confronting Ghost Hand's hateful gaze, Jueming spoke gravely and solemnly, "He said that although the incident at Myriad Medicine Valley was done by a small number of Shaolin monks without his

knowledge, as the abbot, he should bear the responsibility for failing to supervise them properly. He instructed me to represent Shaolin in delivering an apology to the benefactor and also to return a Heaven Rank Technique that was copied from Misty Rain Tower..."

"An apology... What a generous apology!"

Ghost Hand, listening to Jueming place a copied Heaven Rank Technique on the stone table of the Reception Pavilion, laughed loudly toward the sky, then glared at Jueming and yelled, "What if I kill several of you monks and burn down your temple, then apologize afterwards? Would you accept it?"

"Amitabha!"

Jueming intoned the Buddha's name loudly and said gravely, "To my knowledge, during the Myriad Medicine Valley incident, our Shaolin disciples withdrew partway and did not kill anyone among you..."

Ghost Hand questioned sharply, "You abetted tyranny. Though you did not kill, how is it different from murder? All of you monks speak of compassion, yet you engage in acts of murder and arson in secret. Don't you feel that you're desecrating the name of the Buddha? You all deserve to fall into the Avici Hell!"

Having said that, Ghost Hand walked to the stone table, grabbed the Heaven Rank Technique, infused it with True Yuan, and with a sweep of his hand, the entire Heaven Rank Technique instantly turned to scraps, scattering in the wind.

For the martial artists of the Secular World, a Heaven Rank Technique was a treasure beyond their wildest dreams; Jueming hadn't expected Ghost Hand to destroy it without so much as a glance, and he couldn't help but feel greatly pained. Hearing Ghost Hand's harsh words, his expression darkened and he said, "Benefactor, you go too far!"

Chapter 482: One Force Subdues Ten Meetings, One Palm Breaks Ten Thousand Laws.

"Heh, is that too strong a word?"

A smirk curled at the corner of Ghost Hand's mouth as he said coldly, "Compared to what happened at Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple, I think I'm being quite polite!"

The slaughter of the Profound Level experts from Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple had spread throughout the entire Ancient Martial World over the past few days, and Shaolin, as the leading authority in the Ancient Martial World, naturally received the news early on.

On the surface, Shaolin appeared as calm as ever, but in reality, all members of the temple, especially the Martial Monks, had received orders from the Abbot to be on full alert and ready for any emergency that might arise.

Just now, Abbot Jueren of Shaolin received a report from the Reception Monk at the foot of the mountain, saying a disciple from Myriad Medicine Valley had come to settle scores. He guessed that it must be the person who slaughtered the Profound Level experts of Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple and thus sent Elder Jueming from the Reception Hall to assess the situation.

After descending the mountain, Jueming saw Fang Bai and Ghost Hand, one an Earth Level beginner Martial Artist and the other a mid-ranked Profound Level Martial Artist, and he felt a sense of contempt, thinking that the Abbot's demands for an apology and the return of the copied Heaven Rank Technique were quite an overreaction.

Jueming was already somewhat dissatisfied, and upon hearing Ghost Hand's unfriendly and aggressive tone, bringing up the incident with Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple as if to threaten Shaolin, he couldn't help but glare fiercely, his eyes flashing sharply as his energy surged dramatically.

"What, do you mean to repeat what you did at Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple, to slaughter all our Shaolin Profound Level experts?"

Jueming said sternly, his gaze fixed on Ghost Hand.

The four middle-aged Martial Monks behind him also clenched their fists tightly, their energy bristling with tension.

For a moment, in the small Reception Pavilion, energies clashed, and the situation was as tense as drawn bows, on the verge of erupting into conflict.

"I have no intention of killing, but if Shaolin fails to provide an explanation for the slaughter at Myriad Medicine Valley that day, then things could turn uncertain!"

In the face of the intimidating presence of Jueming and the four Martial Monks behind him, Ghost Hand stood ramrod straight, his chest puffed out, unflinchingly defiant.

Jueming said, "I've already apologized on behalf of Shaolin and returned the copied Heaven Rank Technique to you. What more do you want as an explanation?"

Ghost Hand said, "First, I want Abbot Jueren himself to come and apologize to me; and second, strip the involved Martial Monks of their Cultivation Level."

"Patron, you're going too far!"

Jueming scoffed, "Those two demands are something Shaolin cannot agree to!"

In Jueming's view, the Abbot's high status and significant influence in today's Ancient Martial World meant he could not lower himself to apologize to two juniors over a trivial matter.

The very act of him, an Elder of the Reception Hall, personally stepping in was already giving these two young people plenty of face!

If they continued to be unreasonable and kept causing trouble, Jueming was prepared to take action personally, to suppress them and drive them down the mountain.

Although one of them was an Earth Level beginner Martial Artist, Jueming, together with the four Martial Monks behind him who possessed Profound Level Perfection strength, should have more than enough power to send them away.

"You won't agree? Then I'll just have to go up the mountain myself and have a direct discussion with Abbot Jueren!"

Ghost Hand said coldly.

"Even a Clay Bodhisattva has a three-point temper. Although this monk has renounced worldly pursuits, if the patron continues to push too hard, then don't blame us for not being polite!"

Jueming's anger rose when he heard Ghost Hand refer to his Abbot as "old monk" without a hint of respect, and he spoke icily.

Ghost Hand shouted, "I thought Shaolin was a place of purity, but it turns out to be an unreasonable place as well! What an eye-opener! If Abbot Jueren continues to hide his head like a shrinking turtle and refuses to show himself, then I'll have to force my way up the mountain!"

Striding forward, he intended to walk right through the middle of Jueming and the other four martial monks.

"Impudent brat!"

Listening to Ghost Hand's vulgar words and witnessing his attempt to forcefully barge into the temple, Jueming couldn't help but furiously snap. His right hand splayed, he reached for Ghost Hand's left shoulder with his fingers hooked like talons.

His fingers seemed like hooks, creating gusts of wind beneath them, with the True Yuan energy swirling violently around them. He was using the renowned Shaolin Dragon Claw Hand.

The Shaolin Dragon Claw Hand was an extremely formidable grappling technique. Once caught by the five fingers, one's half body would immediately become numb and lose the ability to resist.

Ghost Hand, although unrivaled at his level, did not dare to be careless in the face of an Earth Level strongman like Jueming. Seeing the claw headed his way, he grunted deeply, channeled True Yuan into his right hand, and swung his fist to meet the incoming claw.

Jueming, sensing the sudden eruption of formidable momentum from Ghost Hand, then realized that his combat power was not much weaker than his own. Shocked and astonished, his expression changed slightly, and he quickly switched from claw to fist, striking with his fist as well.

Boom—

The two fists, charged with True Yuan, collided in mid-air, creating a sound like muffled thunder. The True Yuan that burst out from their fists transformed into powerful shock waves that violently spread outwards.

Among the onlookers, Fang Bai stood still in his original position, without the slightest movement, not even a flutter in his clothes. It seemed that the devastating True Yuan shock wave did not affect him in the slightest.

However, the four Profound Level Perfection Martial Monks who had descended the mountain with Jueming couldn't withstand the power of the True Yuan shockwave. They were sent flying backwards, retreating two to three zhang away, outside the Reception Pavilion.

Even the Reception Pavilion itself swayed and trembled under the impact of the shock wave. If the two continued to exchange blows within the pavilion, it probably wouldn't take many hits before the structure would collapse.

"This old monk is so strong!"

When Ghost Hand's fist connected with Jueming's, he felt an immense force as heavy as a mountain rushing towards him, causing his chest to churn and his blood to boil. He stumbled back two steps before he could dissipate the force and barely managed to stabilize himself.

"This kid's cultivation technique is weird!"

Jueming was even more shocked than Ghost Hand. He felt that within Ghost Hand's True Yuan, there was an intense aggressive momentum and an indomitable will. If Ghost Hand's cultivation level were to advance just a small realm, Jueming might not be able to withstand it.

An average Profound Level middle-tier martial artist was actually able to contend with him, an Earth Level early-stage martial artist—this was simply inconceivable!

"Take my palm too!"

Jueming, after failing to gain any advantage from his punch, felt embarrassed and riled by his competitive spirit. With a loud shout, he transformed his fist into a palm and struck towards Ghost Hand's chest.

His expression was ferocious and exaggerated, like an enraged Vajra, formidable and awe-inspiring. Within his palm technique, it seemed as though there was an endless Buddhist power capable of suppressing all demons.

This powerful palm, the Great Strength Vajra Hand of Shaolin, was said to have evolved from the Great Vajra Sutra by Dharma Grandmaster. At a high level of mastery, it could crush all opposition with one hand, shattering thousands of techniques with a single palm.

Desperate to save face, Jueming unleashed his palm strike with all his might, aiming to defeat Ghost Hand in one fell swoop.

"All in!"

Although Ghost Hand was unbeatable in his own rank, facing an Earth Level martial artist was still challenging.

When Jueming deployed the Great Strength Vajra Hand, Ghost Hand knew that he likely couldn't withstand this palm, but he refused to back down and submit. With a fierce glare, he prepared to tap into his potential for a decisive battle against Jueming.

Chapter 483: Why Is Your Face Red?

"Ghost Hand, you step back first!"

Fang Bai's voice suddenly sounded beside his ear.

Upon hearing this, Ghost Hand didn't dare to hesitate. He slid backward, retreating swiftly. Then, before his eyes blurred, he saw his master Fang Bai already taking his place.

"Think you can block our path? You're not quite there yet!"

As Fang Bai's voice rang out, with a casual push of his palm forward, he met Jue Ming's full-strength Great Strength Vajra Hand.

"Arrogant!"

Seeing Fang Bai's easy and casual palm, showing no sign of taking his opponent seriously, Jue Ming couldn't help but snort with anger.

Bang—

As their palms collided, two streams of True Yuan burst outward on collision, creating a thunderous boom that made the space where Fang Bai and Jue Ming stood tremble.

Ghost Hand and the four Shaolin Monks, who were watching from a distance, felt their blood surge and a ringing in their ears, forcing them to circulate their cultivation techniques and gather their True Yuan to counteract the impact of the sound waves from the True Yuan collision.

Following the sound waves came an even more powerful surge of True Yuan shockwaves.

The True Yuan shockwaves, with the intersecting palms of the two as their epicenter, carried a destructive and annihilating force that radiated outwards.

The Reception Pavilion was the first to succumb to the force of the shockwaves, trembling for a moment before finally collapsing outward with a loud crash.

Ghost Hand and the four Shaolin Monks, sensing that the force entwined in the True Yuan shockwave was beyond their ability to withstand, had no choice but to retreat several meters more, avoiding the brunt of the impact.

The two combatants, however, didn't move back due to the rebounding force of the True Yuan; they stood their ground, seemingly evenly matched in this exchange, with neither gaining an advantage.

However, if one observed closely, they would notice Jue Ming's body trembling slightly and rapidly, his complexion flushed red, and a trickle of fresh blood spilling slowly from the corner of his mouth.

For any martial artist who saw Jue Ming in this state, it was clear that he had suffered internal injuries, and the damage was not light.

Indeed, Jue Ming had been injured.

In that palm strike just now, a torrential True Yuan from Fang Bai's palm instantly shattered Jue Ming's True Yuan, then pressed down like a collapsing mountain, engulfing and drowning him whole.

In that moment, Jue Ming felt as if struck in the chest by a ten thousand-pound hammer, his vision darkened, and blood gushed from his mouth. Then his True Yuan faltered, his organs burned as if afire, and his entire body ached as though falling apart.

Attempting to gather his scattered True Yuan, Jue Ming found himself powerless and realized at that moment that he was like a fish on a chopping board, fully at the mercy of his opponent. If Fang Bai wanted to kill him, it would be as easy as killing an ant.

Only then did Jue Ming understand that Fang Bai's arrogance was backed by the capital to be so.

Although their cultivation levels were at the same realm, when it came to combat strength, he was far inferior.

Surely, the young man must be practicing a higher tier cultivation technique, or how could his combat strength surpass his own by so much?

"Ghost Hand, let's head up the mountain!"

After Fang Bai struck down Jue Ming, temporarily incapacitating him as if it was a trivial matter, he called out to Ghost Hand and took a step out of the ruins of the Reception Pavilion, making his way toward Shaolin located on Song Mountain.

Ghost Hand stepped up briskly, his gaze filled with immense admiration for the tall and upright figure of Fang Bai.

The four Shaolin martial monks who had descended the mountain with Jue Ming looked at each other, wanting to stop Fang Bai but were held back by Jue Ming's gesture.

"Nevermind, Huiyuan, let them go up the mountain! The four of you can't stop them!"

Jue Ming gazed at Fang Bai's unconcerned figure with a complicated look, his expression filled with bitterness.

In Shaolin, each hall and abbey, the six great elders are all powerful, renowned throughout Huaxia, and revered by martial artists of the Ancient Martial World as senior figures.

But now, he, an Elder of the Reception Hall, had actually been defeated by an unknown youngster in his early twenties, and the defeat was so crushing that he would be too ashamed to show his face if the story spread.

"Alas... the new waves of the Yangtze River drive on those ahead!"

Jueming sighed deeply, took out a few of Shaolin's healing pills they formulated themselves, swallowed them, and sat cross-legged on the spot, starting his healing process.

"That old monk Jueming is an Earth Level early-stage martial artist, yet he was defeated by a single move... It seems I might have underestimated this Fang Bai before!"

Several hundred meters away, behind a row of trees, Long Jingtian said with a surprised look on his face.

"Fang Bai won very easily; I guess he has at least the strength of an Earth Level mid-stage! Ah, he's about the same age as me but his cultivation level is a whole realm higher... Is there no justice in this world?!"

The Dragon Maiden put down her binoculars, her pretty face filled with discouragement.

She was about the same age as Fang Bai and possessed the strength of a Profound Level mid-stage martial artist. In the Ancient Martial World of Huaxia, she was regarded as a favored daughter of the heavens, but she felt eclipsed in comparison to Fang Bai.

Long Jingtian said with a laughing voice, "What's this, the always defiant Dragon Maiden admits defeat?"

The Dragon Maiden responded listlessly, "There's no way I can't admit it. The gap of an entire realm is too hard to catch up to! It seems the title of 'Dragon Guard's' number one youngster will no longer belong to me."

Long Jingtian said, "You don't need to belittle yourself! Our 'Dragon Guard' also has a powerful heritage. Once your cultivation reaches Earth Level, I will teach you even higher-level cultivation methods. At that time, you will still have a chance to catch up to Fang Bai!"

The Dragon Maiden sighed, "Grandfather, you have said that the path of Martial Dao becomes harder the further one progresses. I'm afraid there's no hope for me to reach Earth Level within three to five years..."

Long Jingtian said solemnly, "The most taboo thing in a martial artist's cultivation is impatience and the thirst for quick success. Instead, one must advance in a steady and orderly manner, never rushing for instant results..."

"Grandfather, you've said this countless times already! My ears have developed calluses hearing it... Alright, I will pull myself together and strive diligently, hoping to catch up with Fang Bai as soon as possible!"

"Haha... Good! Young people should have aspirations! That's how my granddaughter should be!"

"Oh my, Fang Bai and his apprentice have already reached the mountain top. We should hurry too!"

"Remember my words, once we're in Shaolin, keep a tight lip and refrain from speaking carelessly to avoid drawing attention. Shaolin has a heritage of nearly two thousand years, and Dharma Grandmaster was an astounding and brilliant master. It is quite possible that powerful cultivation techniques have been passed down, and they might have produced several super-strong martial artists!"

"Grandfather, do you think there could be Heaven Level martial artists like you in Shaolin?"

"I asked Abbot Jueren the same question, and that old monk wouldn't say. Anyway, I suspect there should be existences like me within Shaolin. Perhaps only when Shaolin's survival hangs in the balance will such masters show themselves!"

"Oh no, if there really are Heaven Level martial artists, wouldn't Fang Bai be at a disadvantage?"

"Why are you so worried? Are you concerned about Fang Bai?"

"..."

"It's normal to care. Since ancient times, beauties have adored heroes! That youngster Fang Bai is an outstanding young hero; only someone like him could move the heart of a celestial maiden like you... Hehe..."

"Grandfather..."

"Hahaha... I'm just kidding... Huh? Why is your face red?"

"If you say any more... I won't talk to you ever again!"

"Okay, okay! No more words! Let's go!"

Two figures swept out from behind the trees, transformed into wisps of smoke, skirted around to the north side of Song Mountain, and began to climb nimbly up the rugged and steep peak like agile monkeys.

After ten minutes or so, the two figures settled on a densely leafed thousand-year-old tree at the mountaintop. Standing on the stout trunk of the ancient tree and peering through the gaps in the leaves, they had a bird's-eye view of the entire Shaolin.

Chapter 484: I'm Very Disappointed in You, Shaolin!

Dong—

Dong—

Dong—

Just as the two figures had concealed themselves, the Shaolin warning bell, quiet for a hundred years, sounded again. The deep and distant tolling echoed through the mountains within a ten-mile radius, startling flocks of birds into flight.

Amidst the sound of the bell, hundreds of martial monks rushed out from their respective pavilions, courtyards, and halls—some bare-handed, some wielding staffs—and quickly assembled in the large courtyard in front of the Thousand Buddha Hall.

The Thousand Buddha Hall served as the training room for Shaolin monks. Around the walls inside the hall were many ancient martial arts murals for the monks to refer to during their training. It was one of the most secretive places in Shaolin, where many monks with unique abilities and fame in the Ancient Martial World had emerged.

Naturally, it was Fang Bai and Ghost Hand who had forced Shaolin to sound its century-old warning bell and gather all the temple's monks for defense.

The master and disciple, seeking to confront Abbot Jueren for an explanation, did not know the location of his residence, so they fought their way from the gate of the mountain, only to be surrounded by a group of martial monks in front of the Thousand Buddha Hall.

Along the way, the pair had caused injuries to quite a few monks who tried to stop them. Even Elder Juecong, who rushed over from the Discipline Hall after hearing the news, sustained minor injuries from a single punch from Fang Bai.

Realizing the formidable strength of Fang Bai, and that not even the Abbot might match him, Juecong signaled one monk to strike the warning bell, hoping to suppress Fang Bai and his disciple with the collective force of all Shaolin monks.

The sound of the warning bell not only disturbed Jueren, who was in deep cultivation within the Abbot's hall, but also alerted the other elders from the different courtyards, pavilions, and halls to hurry over. Together with Jueming, who had just finished recuperating and ascended from the base of the mountain, the Abbot and the six elders overseeing one pavilion, one courtyard, and four halls, were all present.

It was a rare sight to witness the seven most powerful elders of Shaolin, who usually held different responsibilities—some of them spending years in seclusion, seldom having the chance to meet—now gathered together.

Especially Elder Jueyi, who oversaw the Scripture Pavilion, was shrouded in mystery; many Shaolin martial monks were seeing his true appearance for the first time.

The six elders each possessed the strength of an Earth Level beginner, while Abbot Jueren was an Earth Level intermediate martial artist.

In the Secular Ancient Martial World, a sect like Qingcheng Temple, stationed by two experts at the Profound Level Perfection, was already considered a first-rate sect. Shaolin not only had experts at the Profound Level Perfection but also seven Earth Level martial artists, showcasing their overwhelming strength.

"Actually having seven Earth Level experts... No wonder Shaolin is known as the number one major sect in the Huaxia Ancient Martial World..."

Fang Bai's gaze swept over the seven elderly Shaolin monks, led by Jueren, through the human wall formed by numerous Shaolin monks. He felt a hint of excitement and anticipation stirring within him.

Although Fang Bai's current cultivation level was only equivalent to that of an Earth Level intermediate, his combination of high-ranking martial arts techniques and a formidable physique meant his true combat strength far exceeded his own cultivation level, enabling him to battle Heaven Level martial artists.

Fang Bai had always regretted the lack of equals in the Secular Ancient Martial World, but now, if the seven Earth Level experts of Shaolin were to join forces, perhaps he could engage them in full combat.

For a martial artist, battling an equal opponent can draw out one's potential, which is a good method to improve one's own cultivation level, even more so for Fang Bai.

In his previous life, Fang Bai was known as the "Immortal Realm War Emperor," and "Doctor Venerable." The title "War Emperor" was earned through countless battles and victories.

In combat, Fang Bai continuously deepened his understanding of the Martial Dao and improved himself until he stood at the peak of the Immortal Realm emperors.

This life, reborn in possession of another body, Fang Bai had countless martial arts techniques in his mind, which needed to be re-perceived and perfected through relentless battling to return to the pinnacle.

"Abbot, I was entrusted by you to go down the mountain and offer an apology to these two, and to return the copied Heaven Rank Technique, but they provoked trouble without reason..."

Elder Jueming, upon seeing Abbot Jueren, walked up to him, and recounted the events at the base of the mountain with a face full of indignation.

"Jueming, you've been injured?"

After listening to Jueming, Jueren asked with a frown and then looked at Fang Bai and his disciple in surprise.

Jueming was the one dispatched down the mountain to apologize to the disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley who had come seeking justice from Shaolin; now he had been injured. Needless to say, it must have been the two young men who were surrounded.

What surprised Jueren was that of these two young men, one was an Earth Level Junior Martial Artist, and the other only possessed mid-tier Profound Level strength. How could it be possible for them to injure Jueming with just their abilities?

"Abbot, this young... this young benefactor is very powerful; he injured me with just one move. I failed to stop them from ascending the mountain and am willing to accept punishment!"

Jueming pointed at Fang Bai and said with a face full of shame.

"What?"

As soon as Jueming spoke these words, not only did Jueren cry out in shock, but the other Elders present also changed color abruptly.

As the Elder of Reception Hall, Jueming's strength was comparable to the other five Elders. To defeat him in one move, one would need at least the strength of a mid-tier Earth Level Martial Artist; even Abbot Jueren would not be confident in defeating Jueming in one move.

Jueming was certainly not one to lie, yet the young man he referred to clearly only had the cultivation level of an Earth Level Junior realm!

The gazes of Jueren and others momentarily fell on Fang Bai, appraising him non-stop, as if they wanted to see through to his very core.

"No need to look any further; I am indeed the one who injured this old monk!"

Fang Bai looked at Jueren with piercing eyes and said, "You must be the Abbot of Shaolin, right? You should know why we have come! Give us an explanation for the matter of Myriad Medicine Valley!"

"Amitabha!"

Jueren chanted the Buddha's name, greeted with a gesture of prayer, and asked, "Is the young benefactor the Myriad Medicine Valley disciple who slaughtered all the Profound Level Experts of Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple?"

"I am not."

Fang Bai pointed at Ghost Hand beside him and said, "The Myriad Medicine Valley disciple is here; I am his master!"

Jueren glanced at Ghost Hand and sighed, "For the matter of Myriad Medicine Valley, I deeply regret. However... just now, I entrusted Elder Jueming to offer you both an apology and the return of the transcribed Heaven Rank Technique. Are the two benefactors still not satisfied?"

"Reporting to the Abbot, these two benefactors just proposed two conditions: one is for you to personally apologize to them; the other is to abolish the cultivation of the Martial Monks involved in the Myriad Medicine Valley matter. I refused them, and as a result, they forced their way up the mountain, insisting on an explanation from you!"

Jueming spoke indignantly.

"How audacious!"

"Presumptuous!"

"How preposterous!"

"Such oppressive behavior, utterly unreasonable!"

"Why waste words with them? Just drive them down the mountain!"

No sooner had Jueming finished speaking than the Elders present glared at Fang Bai and his disciple, rebuking them loudly.

Fang Bai laughed, ignoring the accusations of the several Shaolin Elders, and said to Jueren, "To be honest, I previously held some respect for Shaolin, believing that Shaolin monks were all compassionate and taught righteousness. But now... I am very disappointed in you Shaolin! As Shaolin monks, yet you partake in secular conflicts and commit sinful deeds. How can you then teach righteousness and convert all living beings?"

Chapter 485: What Can You Do to Me?

Among the Shaolin Monks present, many had participated in the Myriad Medicine Valley incident. Although they had chosen to withdraw halfway due to the excessive slaughter by the Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng disciples, they nevertheless bore the blame for aiding tyranny.

After some Shaolin Monks returned to Shaolin, they felt a perpetual guilt within their hearts and took the initiative to seek punishment in hopes of absolution for their sins.

Jueren, as the Fangzhang of Shaolin, saw that the number of implicated martial monks was significant. Moreover, those monks sought the Heaven Rank Technique from the Myriad Medicine Valley for the benefit of Shaolin. Thus, with the belief that the law does not punish the masses, he only subjected them to light punishment, having them face the wall in contemplation for a month before ceasing any further inquiry.

The Shaolin Monks had thought that the Myriad Medicine Valley incident was over and would not be mentioned again, but to their surprise, today a surviving disciple from the Myriad Medicine Valley had come seeking justice.

Upon hearing Fang Bai's words, some of the implicated Shaolin Monks were reminded of the past and showed shame on their faces.

Jueren furrowed his brow slightly, took a moment to think, and then said, "The young benefactor asks for this old monk to personally offer an apology. This old monk agrees to do so. However, to cripple the cultivation of monks involved in the Myriad Medicine Valley incident... this, I cannot accept!"

Pausing for a moment, and seeing Fang Bai's cold smile, Jueren sighed, "The young benefactor is also a martial artist and should understand what cultivation means to us. To take away their cultivation is to take their lives!"

Fang Bai let out a "pfft" of laughter, his voice dripping with mockery, "Now you speak of compassion? When slaughtering the disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley, where was the Shaolin monks' compassionate heart?"

His gaze turned icy, sweeping across some of the Shaolin Monks, he continued, "To cripple their cultivation and leave them to accompany the ancient Buddhas and the dim lantern, to become ordinary monks reciting scriptures, wouldn't that be better? Otherwise, why keep their cultivation, so they may continue to do evil deeds in the future?"

Jueren replied, "Those monks have realized their mistake and have accepted their punishment. I believe they will not transgress again."

Fang Bai replied, "Some mistakes can be made repeatedly, but others, once committed, must not be forgiven. If not, what use are the laws and rules of this world? I feel that the Shaolin disciples involved in the Myriad Medicine Valley incident no longer deserve to be martial monks."

Jueren intoned, "Amitabha! I cannot comply with the young benefactor's second demand. If the benefactor does not object to proposing a different condition..."

Fang Bai waved his hand dismissively and said coldly, "No change! Old monk, if you haven't the heart to cripple their cultivation, then let me do it for you!"

"How audacious! How dare you run wild in our great Shaolin?"

The Elder of the Discipline Hall, Juecong, said angrily.

Fang Bai glanced at him disdainfully and retorted, "If you're weaker than me, don't bother speaking!"

"You..."

Juecong was so incensed he nearly spat blood. When Fang Bai and his disciples had forced their way up the mountain earlier, he had stepped forward to stop them and had clashed with Fang Bai, receiving a minor injury. He had not fully recovered yet and was aware that this young man's strength far exceeded his.

Shaolin monks, sharing the same breath, felt indignant to see Juecong belittled by Fang Bai, thinking that the young man was too arrogant because of his skills.

Moreover, during Fang Bai and his disciple's forced ascent up the mountain, they had injured dozens of Shaolin martial monks. If today they allowed these two to leave unharmed, Shaolin's reputation and dignity would be completely lost.

Jueren's eyebrows twitched as he suppressed the anger in his chest and said solemnly, "The two benefactors have forced their way up the mountain and injured dozens of our Shaolin disciples. Surely by now, your resentment must have been appeased, right? Amitabha, our Buddha is compassionate. If you leave the mountain now, I will not hold you accountable and will respectfully see you off..."

"What if we don't leave the mountain?"

Fang Bai asked expressionlessly.

Jueren slammed his Zen staff heavily on the ground and declared loudly, "Although my Buddha is compassionate, he also has the wrath of Vajra!"

"Haha..."

Fang Bai burst into laughter, his gaze sweeping over Jueren and the other six Great Shaolin Elders. He spoke arrogantly, "I've long heard that Shaolin is the Mount Tai and the North Star of the Ancient

Martial World in Huaxia, filled with countless masters. Today, let me weigh the caliber of Shaolin's finest!"

Lifting a finger towards Jueren, he said, "Old Monk, if you can defeat me, my disciple and I will no longer pursue the Martial Monks responsible for the massacre at Myriad Medicine Valley. Furthermore, we will immediately roll down the mountain and never set foot in Shaolin again! Do you dare to fight?"

Jueren was taken aback, looking at Fang Bai with surprise, wondering where he got the confidence and courage to challenge him.

It should be known that he was an Earth Level mid-realm Martial Artist, which made him stronger than Fang Bai by a small realm!

As Martial Artists progress higher up in cultivation level, the gap in strength between each realm grows wider. Although there is only a small realm difference between the initial and mid stages of Earth Level, under normal circumstances, Jueren alone could combat the other six Great Elders of Shaolin.

Which is to say, the strength of one Earth Level mid-realm powerhouse could match that of six Earth Level initial-realm Martial Artists.

Although Fang Bai's previous move that defeated the Reception Hall Elder Jueming was shocking, Jueren believed it was because Jueming had underestimated the enemy. He did not believe that Fang Bai would be a match for him, a seasoned Earth Level mid-realm Martial Artist.

So, facing Fang Bai's direct challenge, Jueren felt somewhat astonished and even thought that this young man was utterly overestimating himself.

Jueren really wanted to accept the challenge and fight Fang Bai, but he also worried that if he did, it could be seen as bullying the weak and young, which, if spread, could damage his own reputation. Therefore, facing Fang Bai's challenge, he was hesitant and undecided.

"This benefactor is of impressive strength, only brother Fangzhang can suppress him! For the sake of preserving the cultivation levels of our Shaolin Monks and the millennium-old reputation of Shaolin, I implore brother Fangzhang to take action!"

The Elder of the Discipline Hall, Juecong, spoke with a grave voice.

The six Great Elders of Shaolin were of similar strength, and Juecong, having just suffered a significant setback at Fang Bai's hand, knew that the other Elders wouldn't be Fang Bai's match. Only Jueren engaging in the battle could quell Fang Bai's aggressiveness.

"Elder Juecong is right. Please, brother Fangzhang, make your move!"

Reception Hall Elder Jueming, who was struck by Fang Bai's move and coughed up blood at the Reception Pavilion below, was aware of Fang Bai's battle prowess, which far exceeded his cultivation level, and certainly matched that of brother Fangzhang. Therefore, he deeply agreed with Juecong's words.

Although the other Elders on the scene had not exchanged blows with Fang Bai, hearing what Jueming and Juecong had said, they all understood that Fang Bai was not to be taken lightly, so they turned their gazes towards Jueren, hoping he would agree to the battle.

The millennium-long esteemed name of Shaolin was at stake. If they were to be suppressed by a young upstart from the Ancient Martial World today, it would be a colossal joke.

"Amitabha! Since the young benefactor is so aggressive and relentless, I, as a humble monk, have no choice but to do my best to contend with the young benefactor, fulfilling my duty as Fangzhang!"

Jueren handed his Zen staff to a young Monk beside him, bowed to Fang Bai with his palms together, and said with a solemn expression, "Buddha is merciful! When I spar with the young benefactor, I will not use weapons, only fists and feet, and we will stop when a point is made. How does the young benefactor feel about this?"

Chapter 486: The Essence of Boxing

"The four words 'Buddha's Mercy' sound rather grating to my ears when they come from Shaolin disciples,"

Fang Bai said with a smirk, "Enough talk. We're here at Shaolin not to exchange martial arts knowledge but to seek justice. How can we do so without a bit of injury, a sight of blood? If you're afraid, then bow your head, concede, and accept my terms!"

"So, young benefactor has really decided to be at odds with Shaolin!"

Upon hearing Fang Bai's words, Jueren's normally impeccable composure couldn't help but crack, his white beard moving without wind, his monk's robe bulging as it was inflated by the stirring True Yuan within him.

"That's right, I am set on making things difficult for you!"

Fang Bai beckoned Jueren with a hook of his finger and said, "Come on, old monk, let's fight this out, and all will be settled!"

"In that case, this old monk must offend you!"

Jueren bellowed, his left palm striking out followed by his right, overlaying both hands, and using his forward momentum, he aimed a blow at Fang Bai's chest.

This palm technique was one from the Vajra Pushing Mountain, a move within Shaolin's Vajra palms.

Shaolin's Ancient Martial emphasizes stability, grandeur, and robust masculinity. Jueren had deeply grasped the essence of Shaolin's Ancient Martial, and his palm contained the vast True Yuan of an Earth Level mid-tier martial artist. The force seemed so strong that it could even misalign a small mountain.

Jueren wasn't a person prone to belligerence, cruelty, or sadism, and he worried Fang Bai couldn't withstand his full power, so he intentionally held back.

"Old monk, if you show mercy, be careful you don't suffer for it!"

Sensing that Jueren wasn't using his full strength, Fang Bai scoffed dismissively and casually met the attack with a palm of his own.

When their palms collided, Jueren's body shook. He could feel that Fang Bai's True Yuan was similarly masculine and powerful – grand and stable, somewhat similar to Shaolin Martial Arts, yet even more ferocious.

Jueren, who had underestimated his opponent, was forced back two steps by the surge of True Yuan erupting from Fang Bai's palm, his chest heaving with tumultuous breaths.

Not only was Jueren himself taken aback by this turn of events, but the observing Shaolin Monks around them also displayed expressions of shock, finding it unbelievable.

Through the eyes of these Shaolin Monks, Abbot Jueren was an Earth Level mid-tier master, a top figure within Shaolin. They had assumed he could suppress Fang Bai, who only possessed the strength of an Earth Level early-stage, but instead he had suffered a small setback.

The Abbot's cultivation level was a small realm higher than that young man's. Even if the Abbot had shown restraint in his attack, such an outcome shouldn't have occurred!

At first, some of the Shaolin Monks thought Fang Bai was young and brash, arrogant and presumptuous, but now, not a single one held onto that thought.

A mere twenty-year-old, able to repel an Abbot of Shaolin who was a small realm above – such a martial artist indeed had the basis for his arrogance and pride.

"This young man's cultivation technique is peculiar, his True Yuan profound, truly mind-boggling! No wonder he is confident enough to challenge me! If I don't go all out, it seems I may not be able to defeat him!"

Jueren speculated Fang Bai must have practiced some special cultivation technique that concealed part of his power, so he no longer held back. His aura surged once more, his fighting spirit peaking, as he transformed his palms to fists and launched another assault on Fang Bai.

The ordinary, entry-level Shaolin Arhat Boxing, when executed by Jueren, became utterly forceful and yang to the extreme, as if it had become the most formidable boxing technique in the world, encapsulating the concept of "the greatest wisdom is simplicity, the greatest skill appears clumsy."

Ghost Hand watched from the side and thought, "This old monk truly deserves his position as Fangzhang of the first great Sect of Huaxia's Ancient Martial World. He indeed has some tricks up his sleeve. If it were me facing him, I would likely suffer an injury and be forced to retreat within three punches."

Fang Bai's combat strength was on par with Heaven Level Experts, while Jueren was merely a mid-stage Earth Level Martial Artist. Therefore, when Fang Bai sparred with him, he appeared relaxed and at ease, only utilizing half of his combat power.

Fang Bai employed the "Dragon-Tiger-Lion-Elephant Technique," specifically the Tiger Roar Thunder Fist. The rank of this fist technique was far superior to that of Shaolin Arhat Boxing. Although both were inherently aggressive in style, the Tiger Roar Thunder Fist brought the concept of 'fierce aggressiveness' to its utmost limit, as if peering into the utmost principle of fist techniques.

As the two exchanged four punches, they were head-to-head, clashing continuously, accompanied by horrifying roars and thunderous sounds. The shockwaves of True Yuan that were generated dispersed in all directions, forcing Ghost Hand and the surrounding Shaolin Monks to retreat several zhang away.

Jueren's figure was swift like the wind; his fists and palms constantly transformed, pushing the millennially inherited Shaolin Martial Arts to its full glory in an attempt to suppress Fang Bai and seize the upper hand.

However, Fang Bai merely responded with Tiger Roar Thunder Fist. No matter how agile Jueren's movements or how exquisite his techniques were, as soon as Fang Bai threw a punch, it was 'one punch to break all techniques,' instantly overpowering Jueren and leaving him so frustrated he felt like spitting blood.

"Grandpa, what is the Cultivation Level of that old monk Jueren?"

Concealed among the ancient pine's branches and leaves and looking through binoculars at the ongoing fight between Yang and the others, Dragon Maiden suddenly asked in a low voice.

"Mid-stage Earth Level."

Long Jingtian also watched Fang Bai and Jueren's exchange intently, but his gaze was mostly fixed on Fang Bai, as if he was trying to discern something from Fang Bai's fist techniques.

In Long Jingtian's eyes, Fang Bai's fist techniques had the momentum of a tiger's roar and the authority of thunder. Each punch, though seemingly simple and straightforward with no frills, contained a supreme fist technique mystery, unfathomably profound, beyond the comprehension of gods and ghosts.

"The punches Fang Bai is throwing seem not just as fists, but as a kind of Dao, a Dao that can crush and destroy everything! What rank is this fist technique? What kind of serendipitous encounter has Fang Bai had?"

From Fang Bai's fist technique, Long Jingtian seemed to have a vague enlightenment, gaining a sudden comprehension and elevation in his understanding of Martial Arts.

Attaining enlightenment through observing a battle was a rare opportunity for a Martial Artist. Long Jingtian was both shocked and delighted, his eyes wide as he continued to watch Fang Bai relentlessly throwing punches, hoping to realize even more.

Alas, Fang Bai did not grant him much more opportunity to observe. Suddenly, he threw a punch, which streaked like a meteor, carrying an overwhelming power that struck right into the palm of Jueren's slapping hand.

Boom—

Amid the booming sound, Jueren's figure was tossed about like leaves caught in a strong breeze, tumbling several times in the air before falling to the ground.

Fang Bai had clearly pulled his punch, and Jueren was only lightly injured.

"Old monk, you are not my opponent!"

Fang Bai's gaze swept over Abbot Jueren and the seven other elders of Shaolin's one pavilion, four institutes, and six chambers, saying, "Even the seven of you together would not be enough! I hear Shaolin has the formation of the Eighteen Arhats, composed of Shaolin's strongest eighteen Martial Monks. Could you allow me to witness it?"

Sparing with just Jueren, Fang Bai didn't even need to exert his full strength, and even if the other six Great Elders joined in, their combined power would only double, still not enough to pique Fang Bai's interest.

Yet, Fang Bai was somewhat expectant of the legendary Shaolin Eighteen Arhat Formation, hoping it could put him under some pressure, compelling him to fight with all his might.

Chapter 487: A life turns into resentment

As soon as Fang Bai spoke these words, there was a dead silence on the scene.

If Fang Bai had said this before, surely a Shaolin martial monk would have taken him for a madman full of arrogance, but now, there were few who dared to question his words.

It was clear to everyone present that, in his battle with Jueren, Fang Bai hadn't used his full strength. His claim that Jueren and the six Elders couldn't beat him together, perhaps wasn't just boasting.

This young man dressed in casual clothes, seemingly warm and harmless when he smiled, whose appearance was sunny and handsome, was shrouded in mystery—his true power inscrutable to all.

"An Earth Level mid-tier martial artist can't even defeat Fang Bai... How outrageously strong is this guy? What secrets could he possibly be hiding?"

Dragon Maiden, looking at Fang Bai through the binoculars in her hand, had a gleam of admiration in her eyes.

"That kid is actually challenging the Eighteen Arhat Array of Shaolin... With the confidence he exudes, could it be that his cultivation level has reached Earth Level Perfection? Otherwise, how could he leave unscathed..."

Long Jingtian seemed to be shocked by Fang Bai's performance, fingers continuously twirling his beard while he muttered to himself.

"Earth Level Perfection? Wouldn't that be just one step away from Heaven Level, as powerful as you, Grandpa? Even if he received guidance from a master or encountered some kind of extraordinary fortune, at the age of twenty, it's impossible for him to have reached that realm starting from the womb, right?"

Dragon Maiden set down the binoculars, looking at her grandfather with a face of shock.

Long Jingtian said, "In this world, nothing is impossible! Let's just wait and see... If Fang Bai is really that formidable, then it might not be the Shaolin side that I ought to persuade to stop, but Fang Bai himself! I'm afraid Fang Bai might destroy a good thing like Shaolin! If that happens, the loss to our Ancient Martial World of Huaxia will be significant!"

Long Jingtian had rushed to Shaolin intending to convince the Shaolin monks to spare Fang Bai and his disciple, but the situation had taken a dramatic turn. Instead, it was Fang Bai and his disciple who held the upper hand. Should Shaolin's Eighteen Arhat Array also fail to contain Fang Bai, Shaolin would be in great trouble.

What Long Jingtian feared most now was that, in a fit of rage, Fang Bai would slaughter the Shaolin experts, just as he had with Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple, potentially triggering a massive upheaval.

After all, for centuries, Shaolin had been the representative of the righteous sects in the Ancient Martial World, its reputation far surpassing that of other great sects like Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple. If Fang Bai and his disciple caused havoc in Shaolin, most likely, the majority of the martial artists in the Ancient Martial World would turn against them.

Of course, as the leader of the Dragon Guards, Long Jingtian certainly wouldn't allow such an event to occur. At a critical moment, he would reveal himself to prevent both sides from engaging in a fight to the death.

When Abbot Jueren heard Fang Bai's words "You're not my opponent", his body trembled slightly, and his usually straight back began to stoop. The sharp light in his eyes vanished, his expression dimmed, and he appeared to have aged considerably in an instant.

Being defeated by an unknown junior like Fang Bai was a huge blow to him.

"Alas..."

After a long while, Jueren, having struggled to calm himself, let out a sigh. He looked at Fang Bai, who stood proudly opposite him, managed a bitter smile, and said, "Your strength is extraordinary, the likes of which this monk has only seen once in my life. I concede defeat in this battle, wholeheartedly convinced!"

After a pause, he continued, "As for the Eighteen Arhat Array... Even if the eighteen most powerful monks of Shaolin, working together, defeat you, what then? Such acts of overwhelming the few with the many do not honor the martial way, and we monks of Shaolin disdain to engage in it!"

Fang Bai said, "Old monk, are you so certain that the Eighteen Arhat Array can win against me? Come on then, let's fight it out and see!"

Jueren didn't argue with him, but grew solemn and said, "Young benefactor, this monk has a request and hopes you will honor it."

Noting the resolute look in Jueren's expression, something in Fang Bai stirred, and he said, "What request? Let's hear it."

Abbot Jueren took a deep breath, brought his hands together in a gesture of prayer, his noble visage dignified, and proclaimed aloud, "I am willing to trade my life to dissolve the resentment in both benefactors' hearts. I implore you, young benefactor, to grant this wish!"

As soon as these words were spoken, the Shaolin disciples present stirred, their faces changing color, all understanding that Jueren intended to exchange his own life for Fang Bai and his disciple's forgiveness of those Shaolin Monks involved in the Myriad Medicine Valley incident.

"Abbot, brother, you must not do this!"

"Abbot, we should bear the sins we have committed!"

"Let these two benefactors cripple our cultivation levels! We have no complaints!"

"Shaolin cannot be without its Abbot!"

...

Surrounding Shaolin disciples, numbering in the hundreds, tried to dissuade Abbot Jueren with loud voices, and those monks involved in the Myriad Medicine Valley matter were even more emotional, with tears welling up in their eyes.

A Shaolin Monk walked up to Fang Bai, sat down cross-legged before him, palms pressed together, his expression one of tragic determination, and said loudly, "I participated in the Myriad Medicine Valley incident. If you wish to cripple my cultivation, please do so without hesitation!"

Following that Shaolin Monk, nearly twenty more Shaolin Monks came forward from the crowd and similarly sat down cross-legged before Fang Bai, hands in prayer, each saying, "We, too, were involved in the Myriad Medicine Valley incident. Please go ahead and cripple our cultivation levels, benefactor!"

"Preposterous! Everyone, return to your places! If you still acknowledge me as your Abbot, then stand back!"

Watching each Shaolin Monk walk up and sit down before Fang Bai, Jueren was both angry and anxious, beating his chest and stamping his feet as he shouted loudly.

These young Shaolin Monks were the elite of Shaolin's younger generation, as well as the future pillars of Shaolin. If their cultivation levels were crippled, it would shake the very foundation of Shaolin's standing in Huaxia's Ancient Martial World to its core.

At that point, Shaolin would likely follow the decline of Misty Rain Tower and Qingcheng Temple.

This was not the outcome that Abbot Jueren, in his role, wanted to see. Therefore, he was willing to trade his own life to prevent Fang Bai and his disciple from pursuing the responsibility of those Shaolin disciples any further.

But no matter how loudly Jueren called out, not a single Shaolin Monk heeded him. The twenty or so Shaolin Monks closed their eyes and sat cross-legged, waiting for Fang Bai's punishing strike to descend, destroying their meridians and Qi Sea, and wasting away their life's cultivation.

Elder Jueyi of the Scripture Pavilion, Elder Jueli of the Dharma Hall, Elder Juezhi of the Prajna Hall, Elder Jue Xin of the Arhat Hall, Elder Juecong of the Discipline Hall, Elder Jueming of the Reception Hall—the six great elders of Shaolin's pavilion, hall, and four other halls—each had a solemn expression, emotionally stirred.

Whether it was the self-destruction of the Abbot or the crippling of the twenty or so martial monks, either would be an unbearable pain for Shaolin. As the six great elders of Shaolin, it was their duty and obligation to prevent such a tragedy from happening.

The six great elders exchanged glances, moving to Abbot Jueren's side, ready to persuade him to join forces with them in the Eighteen Arhats Formation to battle Fang Bai.

For the future of Shaolin, what did reputation and face matter? They could well be cast aside!

"Sigh..."

Just then, a sigh filled with the vicissitudes of time came from beyond the monastery walls.

Chapter 488: Shaolin Sweeping Monk

The sigh seemed ethereal and faint, yet it resounded like evening drums and morning bells, filled with supreme Buddhist hymns, striking heavily on the hearts of everyone in the courtyard. The Shaolin disciples, who had been filled with a sense of desperate sorrow, felt all their stray thoughts vanish, regaining a state of tranquility.

"The courtyard I just cleaned is messed up again because of you people... Get out of the way! Get out of the way! I will clean it up again!"

Following the sigh, an elderly voice sounded. Accompanied by the voice, an old monk's figure slowly appeared at the entrance of the courtyard.

The people in the courtyard turned to look and saw the old monk wearing a patched robe, holding a broom in his hand. As he slowly walked towards them, he swung the broom to sweep away the debris on the ground. He turned out to be a Sweeping Monk of Shaolin.

The Sweeping Monk had long eyebrows and beard, a face full of wrinkles, and his age was indiscernible. He had a stooped back and a slim figure, as if a gust of wind could blow him away.

"Elder Xuan Ku!"

Even though this Sweeping Monk's status in Shaolin was not high, his seniority was a generation above monks like Jueren. Therefore, when monks like Jueren saw him, they all performed a respectful Buddhist salute.

"Abbot! Elders! Why aren't you practicing your Cultivation Techniques and chanting scriptures, but gathering here instead? I need to clean the courtyard, so please leave!"

The Sweeping Monk named Xuan Ku returned the salute with one hand and said expressionlessly.

Abbot Jueren and the six Elders exchanged wry smiles upon hearing this.

Xuan Ku had been in Shaolin for who knows how many years; anyway, Jueren remembered that he was already there when he first joined Shaolin.

Back then, Xuan Ku was sweeping the floor, and now, decades later, Jueren had become the Abbot of Shaolin, but Xuan Ku was still a Sweeping Monk.

All the monks within Shaolin, including Abbot Jueren, thought Xuan Ku was just a diligent, no-matter-the-weather, ordinary Sweeping Monk. He was respected superficially because of his seniority, but in reality, many monks never really looked at him directly, considering him to be dispensable.

Perhaps Xuan Ku's eyesight was failing; upon entering the courtyard, he seemed neither to see the drawing of swords on both sides nor to feel the tense and oppressive atmosphere. After greeting Jueren and the other monks, he continued sweeping the ground and gradually approached the Shaolin Monks who were sitting cross-legged in front of Fang Bai.

"Elder Xuan Ku..."

Jueren was about to persuade Xuan Ku to leave, but before he could finish his sentence, his facial expression froze, witnessing a scene that shocked him.

Suddenly, with a light swing of his arms, a strong gale swept out from under Xuan Ku's broom, and the twenty or so Shaolin Monks sitting in front of Fang Bai couldn't maintain their posture against the fierce wind. They tumbled and were "cleared" from the area.

Even Abbot Jueren and the six Great Elders, under this rampaging gust, felt a suffocating sensation and were forced to take several steps back, having to Circulate their True Yuan to resist.

More than twenty Shaolin Monks, equating to more than twenty Profound Level Martial Artists, were forcibly cleaned away from their spots by a sweep of Xuan Ku's broom. Just what kind of immense power was hidden in it?

All the Shaolin disciples, including Jueren, stared in stunned silence at the hunched-back Xuan Ku, feeling as though they were in a dream. What followed was endless joy and excitement.

So this unremarked and overlooked Sweeping Monk was actually an exceedingly skilled master who had kept a low profile!

With such a master in Shaolin, those two young intruders who had brashly made their way up the mountain to demand justice would find it difficult to stir up any trouble now, wouldn't they?

Jueren observed Xuan Ku with meticulous attention for the first time and realized that with his own cultivation level, he couldn't sense even the slightest martial artist aura from Xuan Ku, making this seemingly ordinary and frail old monk completely inscrutable.

Jueren knew that the more inconspicuous such martial artists seemed, the more powerful they were.

"Amitabha! For the tribulations faced by Shaolin this time, I am grateful for Uncle Master Xuan Ku's resolution," Jueren chanted solemnly, bringing his palms together and bowing deeply.

This time, his respect for Xuan Ku truly came from the heart.

"Ah... You young monks, instead of chanting scriptures and deeply cultivating your spirituality within the temple, how come you engage in worldly trifles, swayed by mortal desires? It's fortunate that you didn't wander into committing killing sins, otherwise, I would not have helped them!" Xuan Ku stopped his sweeping and, leaning on his broom, looked at the twenty-plus martial monks he had just "swept" aside, shaking his head and sighing, as if disappointed by their lack of progress.

"I know you all yearn for Heaven Level Techniques, but our Shaolin has plenty of cultivation techniques to pass down. If you can properly cultivate what has been passed down to you, that will be more than enough! Sometimes, a single thread of greed can breed endless disaster! If it weren't for the fact that this incident is crucial to the rise and fall of Shaolin, I would have preferred not to get involved and let you all deal with your own headache!" Xuan Ku's usually turbid eyes suddenly flashed with sharpness as he scanned over the twenty-plus Shaolin monks. They felt an overwhelming pressure akin to a mountain descending upon them, involuntarily shuddering.

The slight display of pressurized aura from Xuan Ku intimidated nearly everyone present. Jueren and the other monks gazed at the old monk with a mix of reverence and worship, feeling as though his seemingly frail frame was now as majestic and grand as a mountain.

"Grandpa, do you recognize that sweeping monk? He seems very powerful!" The Dragon Maiden on a distant ancient tree held a telescope, shifting her gaze from Fang Bai to Xuan Ku, her face showing surprise as she whispered.

Although the Dragon Maiden couldn't hear what Xuan Ku was saying, from his demeanor and the reverent attitudes of old monks like Jueren toward him, she knew that this old monk was extraordinary.

Abbot Jueren is a mid-Earth Level strength powerhouse, so a monk capable of commanding such respect from him must at least be a high-Earth Level strength fighter, right?

"I knew it... I knew it... There truly are crouching tigers and hidden dragons within Shaolin... That sweeping monk, Xuan Ku, must be over a hundred years old, and his cultivation level is not much weaker than mine..."

The Dragon Maiden exclaimed, "Could he be a Heaven Level Martial Artist?"

Long Jingtian shook his head and said, "Not quite Heaven Level, but rather a Half-Step Heavenly Level. But just think about it, he is but a sweeping monk! Who knows whether Shaolin harbors even more powerful martial artists?"

The Dragon Maiden's face turned to worry as she murmured, "I wonder if Fang Bai can defeat that sweeping monk... Grandpa, we should show ourselves and intervene. If they truly start fighting and something happens... it wouldn't be good for either side to get hurt!"

"Don't rush; let's wait and see... I am quite curious to see how much strength that lad Fang Bai has truly hidden," Long Jingtian gazed intently at the center of the action, seeing Fang Bai's unchanging expression and calm demeanor when facing Half-Step Heavenly Level Sweeping Monk Xuan Ku. He was inwardly amazed, finding Fang Bai more and more unfathomable.

Even a high-Earth Level Martial Artist would struggle to cope with the pressure from a Half-Step Heavenly Level Martial Artist, but Fang Bai maintained a serene composure; evidently, his cultivation level was absolutely not just high-Earth Level. No wonder he had boldly declared earlier that he wanted to challenge the Shaolin Eighteen Arhats Formation.

Chapter 489: Half-Step Heavenly Level

"If he's not a high-rank Earth Level, then he must be at Earth Level Perfection... This Fang Bai, what special cultivation technique has he practiced? To be able to suppress his cultivation level to the initial stage of Earth Level so firmly that even I can't see through it..."

Long Jingtian concluded that Fang Bai's true strength must be that of Earth Level Perfection, not much different from that Sweeping Monk. He didn't even consider any higher level.

After all, throughout history, although the Ancient Martial World of Huaxia has seen many geniuses, not a single person has been able to reach the Heaven Level by around the age of twenty.

Reaching the realm of Earth Level Perfection was enough to shock the world, qualifying as an unprecedented existence.

Through the gaps in the leaves, Long Jingtian watched Xuan Ku, the Sweeping Monk, and Fang Bai in the courtyard, feeling extremely excited. He thought his trip to Shaolin had not been in vain, having discovered one at Earth Level Perfection and another at Half-Step Heavenly Level.

Now that Fang Bai was a member of the Dragon Guard, if he could also bring that Sweeping Monk, Xuan Ku, into the fold, the strength of the Dragon Guard would surely increase greatly. Should they face threats from the strong warriors of the Hidden Sect World again, they would be much more confident in contending with them.

In the courtyard in front of the Thousand Buddha Hall, with a broomstick as his support, the Sweeping Monk Xuan Ku faced Fang Bai, silent and motionless, the old and the young sizing each other up.

On Xuan Ku's wrinkled and aged face was an expression of seriousness and shock, while Fang Bai's expression was filled with more excitement and anticipation.

Xuan Ku was serious and shocked because this young man in front of him was like being enveloped in fog, making it impossible for him to see through clearly.

He quietly released a trace of oppressive aura to probe Fang Bai, intending to see his reaction, but that trace of pressure sank like a stone into the ocean, stirring not even the slightest ripple.

The pressure of a Half-Step Heaven Level Expert was extremely formidable, enough to crush a high-rank Earth Level warrior, yet Fang Bai was unfazed, proving that his cultivation level was not inferior to Xuan Ku's.

Xuan Ku had lived beyond a century, and after nearly a hundred years of ascetic cultivation in Shaolin with a clear heart and few desires, he had achieved today's cultivation level. Yet, Fang Bai was merely in his twenties and was already on par with him, how could this not astonish him?

Fang Bai was excited and anticipatory because Xuan Ku was a Half-Step Innate Expert, one step away from joining the ranks of true Heaven Level Experts. Only by clashing with such a strong opponent could he further his own Martial Dao cultivation.

"Amitabha!"

A moment later, Xuan Ku's gaze shifted away from Fang Bai. With one hand he gave a gesture of courtesy and slowly spoke to Fang Bai, "The young benefactor seemed to have said that if anyone among my Shaolin disciples happens to defeat the young benefactor, you would be willing to descend the mountain without pursuing the offenses committed by those Shaolin disciples. Does that still hold true?"

"It does!"

Fang Bai nodded, "If any Shaolin disciple beats me, my master and I will immediately leave the mountain. The matter of Myriad Medicine Valley will be put to rest, never to be mentioned again!"

Shaolin did not deeply involve itself in the affair of the Myriad Medicine Valley, nor did it injure a single disciple of Myriad Medicine Valley. Before coming to Shaolin, Ghost Hand was already inclined not to pursue the responsibility of the Shaolin disciples any further. Moreover, the recent actions of Abbot Jueren and more than twenty Shaolin disciples begging for punishment, willingly sacrificing themselves to protect their fellow disciples, had moved Fang Bai's heart, and he no longer harbored thoughts of punishment.

However, holding onto the thought that "there might be hidden strong warriors in Shaolin, and not challenging them would mean this trip was in vain," Fang Bai did not leave immediately with Ghost Hand.

When he said, "If any Shaolin disciple beats me, my master and I will immediately leave the mountain," Fang Bai was also trying to see if he could force out any hidden expert within Shaolin. He had not expected it to be actually effective.

The Sweeping Monk Xuan Ku in front of him might not be a Heaven Level Martial Artist, but at Half-Step Heavenly Level, he already possessed the strength to fight Fang Bai.

"I see that the young benefactor's heart bears no malice or killing intent. Why must you insist on a battle? In a fight, the fists and feet have no eyes, and should anyone be injured, it would be another transgression!"

Xuan Ku shook his head and sighed.

Fang Bai said, "Shaolin's peerless martial arts are famous throughout the world, and I have long yearned to experience them. Now that I am here, if I don't have a good fight with a Shaolin master, I would feel unfulfilled!"

"It seems the young benefactor is determined to fight!"

Xuan Ku sighed again, his expression filled with helplessness.

"Please enlighten me, Master!"

Fang Bai said with a smile.

He had just called Abbot Jueren an "old monk" because in the Ancient Martial World, strength and power are respected; his strength was much greater than Jueren's, so he could afford to be casual in his address.

However, Xuan Ku was a master of an equal caliber to Fang Bai, hence Fang Bai addressed him as "Master" to show his respect for Xuan Ku.

"Amitabha! Benefactor, your strength is profound and unpredictable; I am not confident I can win against you! Please follow this old monk to the back mountain's Pagoda Forest, my senior brother Xuan Nan wishes to exchange a few words with you," Xuan Ku said.

Upon hearing Xuan Ku mention the name "senior brother Xuan Nan," Abbot Jueren and the six Great Elders, such as Juecong, seemed as if they were struck by a heavy hammer; their bodies trembled violently, followed by faces full of excitement and disbelief.

They had originally thought Xuan Ku, the Sweeping Monk, was the last remaining monk of the 'Xuan' generation in Shaolin, only to find out that there was still another alive, and the "Xuan Nan" mentioned by Xuan Ku was a legendary martial monk recorded in the annals of Shaolin.

If Xuan Nan were still alive, he would be at least one hundred and twenty years old by now.

Historical records indicated that Xuan Nan was exceptionally talented and brilliant, the Shaolin monk with the highest martial arts accomplishments in nearly two hundred years.

At the age of twenty, Xuan Nan became a Profound Level Martial Artist, advanced to Earth Level at forty, and reached Earth Level Perfection at sixty. After that, he began his secluded cultivation in a nine-tiered pagoda in the back mountain's Pagoda Forest and had not been seen since.

Latter it was said that Xuan Nan failed in his attempt to reach the Heaven Level Realm of martial arts and had passed away in meditation on the top tier of that nine-tiered pagoda, which all Shaolin disciples believed to be true.

As a tribute to the legendary martial monk Xuan Nan, later generations of Shaolin disciples specially sealed and locked the pagoda where he was believed to have passed away in meditation and decreed that no monk should enter the pagoda and disturb his golden body.

When Xuan Nan was alive, the current Abbot Jueren was young and of low status within Shaolin, not qualified to enter the back mountain's Pagoda Forest, nor had he ever seen what Xuan Nan looked like.

After becoming Abbot, although Jueren often meditated among the pagodas in the back mountain, he dared not break the rules and enter the nine-tiered pagoda where Xuan Nan was said to have passed away.

But today, the Shaolin Monks present heard from Xuan Ku, the Sweeping Monk, that Xuan Nan was still alive—how could they not be shocked and delighted?

When Xuan Nan entered the Pagoda Forest for secluded cultivation, he was already a martial artist of Profound Level Perfection. Now, decades had passed, and the Xuan Ku before them was already an Earth Level Perfection expert. If Xuan Nan was indeed still alive, how formidable must his strength be?

Jueren, Juecong, and the other old monks exchanged glances, all seeing the wild joy in each other's eyes.

Chapter 490: Hello, Group Leader Dragon!

Above the realm of Earth Level Perfection is Heaven Level; even just at the initial stage of Heaven Level, in the Secular Ancient Martial World, one is already the most powerful existence.

For an Ancient Martial Sect, what a Heaven Level Martial Artist means is self-evident.

It is foreseeable that, with two great Martial Monks of the Xuan Group presiding, Shaolin's position in the Huaxia Ancient Martial World will become even more secure, unshaken by anyone, and no one will dare to casually cause trouble in Shaolin again.

For instance, today, if the two Martial Monks of the Xuan Group had come forward, how could Fang Bai and his disciples have broken into Shaolin? They probably wouldn't have been able to step even a foot through the mountain gate.

Master Xuan Nan's specific invitation for Fang Bai to meet and talk at the Pagoda Forest on the back mountain shows that Xuan Nan did not underestimate Fang Bai because of his age, but rather treated him as an equal.

Including Jueren, the Shaolin monks looking at Fang Bai were all filled with envy.

Master Xuan Nan is a legendary Monk of Shaolin, revered by generations of Martial Monks; to meet him face to face and listen to his teachings on both martial arts and Buddhism is an incredible honor, a glorious opportunity, and a fortunate destiny.

"Grandfather, what's wrong?"

Standing amidst the foliage of distant ancient trees, the Dragon Maiden glanced over and saw her grandfather's astonished expression, and couldn't help but ask.

"Who would have thought that Master Xuan Nan is still alive!"

Long Jingtian said excitedly, "Shaolin's Master Xuan Nan, a senior of the Ancient Martial World on par with my own master. With his high talent and strong power, even my master felt inferior! When Shaolin announced that Master Xuan Nan had passed away, my master believed it to be true and even offered distant respects..."

With a gasp, the Dragon Maiden said, "Then he must be quite old now! Isn't he over a hundred years old?"

Long Jingtian nodded and said, "Yes, he should be about 120 years old!"

The Dragon Maiden said, "To have lived so long... then his strength must be immense, right? How does he compare to you, Grandfather?"

Long Jingtian rolled his eyes and said, "I've never met Master Xuan Nan, so how could I know his strength? Hmm? This aura is..."

All of a sudden, Long Jingtian sensed something, shifting his gaze away from the courtyard in front of the Thousand Buddha Hall to look in the direction of the Pagoda Forest behind Shaolin. A strange light flickered in his eyes as he murmured, "This Heaven Level Martial Artist Aura must be from Master Xuan Nan... It seems Master Xuan Nan has stepped into the Heaven Level Realm long ago..."

The Dragon Maiden followed Long Jingtian's gaze, only barely making out the silhouettes of some pagodas on the back mountain, and wondered aloud, "Grandfather, does Master Xuan Nan live in the Pagoda Forest behind Shaolin? You can sense his aura from here?"

"This must be an intentional release of a strand of his aura by Master Xuan Nan, otherwise I wouldn't be able to sense it..."

Long Jingtian replied with a wry smile, "It seems Master Xuan Nan has already noticed us, grandfather and granddaughter. How laughable that I thought we came here undetected!"

The Dragon Maiden stuck out her tongue and said, "So, you mean Master Xuan Nan is even stronger than you, Grandfather?"

"Yes,"

Long Jingtian said with a sigh, "Not only stronger, but he must be significantly stronger. Otherwise, I would have sensed his aura and known about his presence long ago..."

The Dragon Maiden said, "So what do we do now? Do we show ourselves, or do we leave immediately?"

Long Jingtian replied with a bitter laugh, "We slipped in here secretly, so let's slip away secretly, too! It's a bit disgraceful to be seen..."

"But what about Fang Bai and the others?"

"Don't worry, neither side harbors any killing intent. At most, there will be a fight, some injuries, but it won't escalate to a fatality! Let's go..."

As the two of them talked quietly under the tree, Xuan Ku, the Sweeping Monk who was about to lead Fang Bai and his disciples to the Pagoda Forest on the back mountain, suddenly twitched his ears and received a few transmitted messages. Then, with an odd look on his face, he turned around, his eyes directed towards a huge ancient tree outside the walls of the courtyard.

That huge ancient tree was precisely where Long Jingtian and his granddaughter were hiding.

"Not good!"

Seeing Xuan Ku suddenly looking this way, Long Jingtian cursed under his breath, realizing they might have been discovered.

"Since the two benefactors have come from afar, please descend and join us to the Pagoda Forest behind the mountain for a chat!"

Xuan Ku beckoned towards the ancient tree and spoke with a smile that was not quite a smile.

His voice wasn't loud, yet every word clearly reached the ears of Long Jingtian and Dragon Maiden.

"Since we've been discovered, let's go down! Anyway, I've also wanted to see Master Xuan Nan's elegance for myself!"

With Long Jingtian's strength, if he was determined to leave, Xuan Ku's power wouldn't be enough to stop him. However, Long Jingtian had a good private relationship with Abbot Jueren of the Shaolin, his own master was close friends with Master Xuan Nan in the ways of the Martial Dao, and several martial monks from Shaolin were also members of the "Dragon Guard." Since Xuan Ku had politely invited him, it would be inappropriate for him to sneak away unnoticed.

Long Jingtian sighed, pushed aside the branches in front of him, and with a light tap of his toes, his figure shot out like an arrow. Then he stepped through the air as if he were treading invisible stairs, descending step by step into the courtyard in front of the Thousand Buddha Hall.

His Light Body Technique was extremely exquisite, even more sophisticated than the "Cloud Ladder Leap" from the other great Ancient Martial Sect of Wudang, and it was indeed stunning.

Everyone present, including Fang Bai and Xuan Ku, privately applauded his skill.

Compared to Long Jingtian's cool entrance, Dragon Maiden's appearance was much simpler. She just leapt from the ancient tree to the ground, then strode quickly with her long, straight legs to Long Jingtian's side.

With so many experts around, Dragon Maiden didn't dare to show off for fear of making a fool of herself.

Even though they were being watched by hundreds of somewhat unfriendly eyes, and the Sweeping Monk Xuan Ku's slightly squinted eyes also swept over her, there wasn't a hint of panic or fear on Dragon Maiden's face.

With her grandfather, a super high-level expert, she feared no one.

"Fang Bai, hello!"

Dragon Maiden greeted Fang Bai with a smile, though she felt a bit uneasy inside, knowing that she and her grandfather had been following them, which wouldn't be good if they knew.

In fact, Dragon Maiden was unaware that the conversation she and her grandfather had just had on the ancient tree had already been overheard clearly by Fang Bai, who had his Divine Sense enveloping the area.

Fang Bai knew that the grandfather-granddaughter duo had followed him and his disciple to Shaolin with good intentions, wanting to prevent a conflict with the Shaolin disciples at a critical moment. Any dissatisfaction he might have felt, therefore, dissipated.

"Group Leader Dragon, hello to you too! What brings you to Shaolin?"

Fang Bai asked with a smile, pretending to be oblivious.

Dragon Maiden was one of the vice leaders of the "Dragon Guard" Xuan Group and was preparing to compete with other members for the next group leader. Fang Bai's way of addressing her clearly had a teasing implication.

"We... uh, my grandfather and I came here for a visit to see the millennium-old temple of Shaolin... indeed, its reputation is well deserved..."

Dragon Maiden made up an excuse on the spot; after all, she couldn't admit that she and her grandfather were there because they were tracking him and his disciple.

However, it was the end of the year with heavy snow sealing the mountains and making roads difficult to traverse. Nobody would believe they came to Shaolin for a visit at this time.

And if it was just for a visit, why not walk up openly through the main gate, instead of sneaking around and hiding in trees in such a secretive manner? Who would sightsee like that?

After Dragon Maiden's words left her mouth, she realized there was a flaw in her statement, and her pretty face couldn't help but heat up slightly.