

Genius 1831

Chapter 1831 - Kidnapping the Holy Woman!

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Precisely because they don't know each other, Qin Fang is swaggering around impersonating someone, and no one has been able to expose him.

Even Miss Sakura, the Holy Woman, thinks that Qin Fang is really Hattori Hisanari... Perhaps it's also because Qin Fang's strength has made her very wary, leading her to make that assumption.

"Does it matter so much who I am?"

Qin Fang shrugged, neither confirming nor denying, just casually dropping this sentence, essentially trying to show off.

"What do you want to do?"

Miss Sakura seemed sure that Qin Fang was Hattori Hisanari, her eyes narrowing slightly, body still on guard, speaking with an unfriendly tone.

"I'm here today, actually... to discuss some business with Miss Sakura!"

Qin Fang, however, appeared completely unconcerned. Sakura's reaction was perfectly normal. If she had flirted with Qin Fang instead, then Qin Fang would need to be cautious.

"Business?"

Sakura was slightly stunned, a deep surprise revealed in her eyes. She looked at Qin Fang in confusion, seemingly waiting for his answer.

"Yes, indeed it's business..."

Qin Fang seemed very calm, even emphasizing his words a bit.

"What kind of business?"

Sakura's delicate eyebrows furrowed tighter. Qin Fang's mysterious demeanor was highly suspicious, and her wariness heightened.

"In fact, it's a very simple business deal. I just want to borrow something from Miss Sakura..."

Qin Fang maintained his usual slow pace, speaking ambiguously as if he were deliberately stalling for time, quite indecisive!

"Borrow what?"

Sakura clearly sensed this, her delicate eyebrows furrowing even tighter, her fair jade hands trembling slightly, seemingly unable to hold back.

"Borrow... Miss Sakura herself!"

Qin Fang's smile remained unchanged as he leisurely revealed his true purpose.

Almost as soon as Qin Fang uttered these words, he moved immediately, his whole person morphing into a swift black shadow, rushing towards Sakura.

"Hmm?"

Sakura, already suspicious of Qin Fang's motives, had a complete change in her expression upon hearing his words and seeing his actions.

Not only that, but her entire aura abruptly surged, with a terrifying energy expanding instantaneously.

Sakura's power was swelling, her momentum rising, a cold energy emanating from her as it expanded outward, creating a faint layer of frost on the ground.

Undoubtedly, Sakura's cultivation of Inner Strength was an extremely frigid True Qi, ominous and terrifying when unleashed.

And at this moment, just as Sakura was ready to battle Qin Fang, Qin Fang's rapidly moving figure twisted strangely and vanished into thin air.

"Ninja?"

This change was naturally caught by Sakura's eyes, a trace of mockery forming at her lips, as if she wasn't surprised at all.

"Hattori Hisanari, it is you indeed!"

Qin Fang's stealth technique further convinced Sakura, confirming that this intruder was Hattori Hisanari, like her, a candidate for the Great Priest position.

As for Hattori Hisanari's purpose, Sakura could speculate—it was either for her as a beauty or for the position of Great Priest.

The Six Great Holy Lands have six candidates, but only one can get the position, making the competition extremely fierce.

Over the years, of these six contenders, only one becomes the Great Priest, and only this one survives, while the others usually perish.

An absolute genius, not willing to live under anyone else, willing to die rather than submit...

Even though the current Great Priest is alive and it's not yet time for a successor, the competition has long begun.

Why do the six candidates not know each other?

To put it bluntly, it's because the major Holy Lands want to protect their disciples, minimizing their exposure and reducing the risk of them being killed off early.

Hattori Hisanari's sudden appearance in Sapporo was either business-related or specifically targeting Sakura, but only a genius would know why.

Yet, Sakura never imagined that the Hattori Hisanari before her eyes was actually a counterfeit, whose real identity was that of a Dragon Country Person...

"Ah, beauty is indeed beauty, but intelligence... seems to be a weakness!"

Qin Fang, of course, couldn't admit he wasn't Hattori Hisanari, yet in his heart, he couldn't help but mutter a complaint or two.

This was the effect he wanted; otherwise, why bother impersonating Hattori Hisanari?

Of course, it's still too early to speak of this. If Qin Fang can't kidnap Sakura, all his efforts will be for nothing.

The Six Great Holy Lands aren't fools; it wouldn't lead to their falling out just because someone suddenly appeared claiming to be Hattori Hisanari and attacked Sakura.

Chapter 1832 - Kidnapping the Holy Woman!

If Qin Fang kidnapped Sakura, then everything would be entirely different!

"The task is heavy and the road is long..."

Thus, Qin Fang almost used a killer move the moment he acted—not to directly take out this delicate Japanese beauty, but mainly to take her down as quickly as possible.

Clang~~

Sakura, being able to become the Holy Woman, naturally has quite strong abilities, having reached the Master Level Peak long ago and even crossed into the Semi-Grandmaster realm a while ago, just a little bit away from advancing to the Grandmaster Level.

When Qin Fang was hidden in ambush, Sakura also lightly touched her waist, causing the white belt to silently slip off, while a silver longsword appeared in Sakura's hand.

"A soft sword?"

Qin Fang was slightly surprised, though soft swords often appear in martial arts novels, he had never seen one in real life.

But the sword Sakura wielded was indeed a soft sword...

"Rounding Softness?"

When Qin Fang used his scouting skill to examine the soft sword, he was surprised to find that this soft sword was one of the legendary Divine Swords of Dragon Country, the Rounding Softness!

The Rounding Softness is quite famous, though far from the level of the Ten Great Divine Weapons, it's still considered a renowned sword. Who would have thought it has ended up in Japan?

Whoosh whoosh whoosh~~

While Qin Fang was surprised, Sakura seemed to have detected his presence, and the Rounding Softness Divine Sword in her hand immediately transformed into a soft and slender serpent, swiftly stabbing towards Qin Fang.

Unlike typical longswords, this Rounding Softness Divine Sword can both be firm and soft; when it becomes soft, it feels floating, just like now, with the sword god's flicker becoming agile and tricky, suddenly posing considerable threat to Qin Fang, almost making him feel unable to escape.

Ding~~

But Qin Fang wasn't easy prey either. With a slight twitch of his wrist, the Flowing Shadow Divine Sword was instantly unsheathed, rapidly colliding with the Rounding Softness Divine Sword, producing a crisp clash sound, with sparks flying.

At the same time, Qin Fang also revealed himself from his hidden state, quickly retreating to narrowly dodge Sakura's soft Rounding Softness Divine Sword attack.

The strength of Rounding Softness lies in its ability to not fear same-level divine swords when confronting head-on; it can quickly soften to evade a foe's longsword and rapidly drive forward...

One could say, this bizarre divine sword is certainly a terrifying presence, capable of achieving unimaginable effects if used appropriately.

Unfortunately...

Ever since it appeared, Qin Fang had already identified its threat, but Sakura's attack just now didn't have any effect, instead putting herself in danger.

Having easily dodged Sakura's assault with the Rounding Softness Divine Sword, Qin Fang quickly retaliated, seizing the moment when Sakura hesitated, rapidly slashing the Flowing Shadow Divine Sword past Sakura's delicate white neck, resting on her shoulder...

Almost simultaneously, Qin Fang's other idle hand swiftly reached out, directly seizing the air-borne Rounding Softness Divine Sword.

Sakura, despite being a Semi-Grandmaster expert, possibly slightly stronger than Qin Fang, naturally wouldn't just resign to her fate.

Almost immediately, she countered, while shifting slightly to dodge Qin Fang's thrusting longsword, and trying to retrieve the Rounding Softness Divine Sword held by Qin Fang.

But her idea was very favorable, yet the reality remained equally harsh!

Though she managed to dodge Qin Fang's longsword calmly, her Rounding Softness Divine Sword didn't budge as if glued to Qin Fang's hand, and she astonishingly couldn't reclaim it.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh~~

Yet Sakura evidently wasn't ready to concede; gently activating her true qi, the Rounding Softness Divine Sword immediately softened, turning into a pliant longsword... more resembling an iron whip.

Sakura shook this soft sword, attempting to reclaim her weapon by this method...

But, she failed again!

Qin Fang's hand seemed to have a mystical power, such that despite her exertions, the Rounding Softness Divine Sword showed no motion.

"Miss Sakura, I advise you not to make any sudden moves, or else, I might have to destroy this lovely blossom... Tsk tsk, if a beauty with such grace and elegance were to bear a ghastly scar on her neck, would she still be considered beautiful?"

At this moment, Qin Fang casually remarked.

Somehow, the Flowing Shadow Divine Sword was already resting on Sakura's snowy neck, with the icy sharp blade only marginally away from slicing into it...

"You..."

Seeing that her sword couldn't be retrieved, and having fallen into her adversary's hands, Sakura's exquisite face brimmed with deep shock and despair.

"Hattori Hisanari, I swore, even by death...you won't succeed!"

Yet, Sakura, proud as she may be, a woman from Japan, upon realizing her capture by Qin Fang, defiantly clenched her teeth, uttered forcefully, then moved her tender neck closer to Qin Fang's sword edge...

Though the Flowing Shadow Divine Sword is not among the Ten Great Divine Weapons, it is nonetheless a weapon cutting iron like butter, severing hair with little effort, pushing against it would surely be fatal.

Evidently, Qin Fang didn't want Sakura to perish just yet, he had plans for her.

"Miss Sakura, you're overthinking it; I only wish to befriend you, with no ill intent, why such extremities?"

Meanwhile, Qin Fang, seemingly having noticed something, flashed a subtle smile upon witnessing Sakura's suicide attempt, instantly sheathing the Flowing Shadow Divine Sword, thwarting her self-sacrifice.

In tandem, Qin Fang's hand swiftly launched several silver needles, exploiting Sakura's surprise, rapidly striking several of her critical acupoints, sealing her impressive cultivation.

Following which, Qin Fang deftly collected the Rounding Softness Divine Sword from Sakura's hand and promptly shouldered the now subdued Sakura beauty.

"Hattori Hisanari, what are you doing? Let me go..."

Sakura gasped in shock, her snowy white face turned pale, seemingly aware of Qin Fang's intentions.

"Hehe, such beauty, how could I release you? Miss Sakura, come with me..."

Almost concurrently with Qin Fang's words, he quickly soared over the low courtyard wall, disappearing into the night towards the distance.

Just as Qin Fang carried Sakura out of this small courtyard, Sakura's close maid Yuriko hurriedly dashed in.

Unfortunately, she was a tad late; the courtyard was already vacant...

"Hattori Hisanari!"

Though she hadn't witnessed the proceedings, she vaguely overheard Miss Sakura's cry, seemingly calling Hattori Hisanari's name.

"You dare kidnap Miss Sakura! We of the Divine Palace won't forgive you..."

Boom~~

Regrettably, before her threats were completed, an abrupt sense of danger emerged, instinctively prompting her to evade.

But her prowess was far inferior to her ambusher, unable to dodge, darkness consumed her as she fell unconscious.

"Were it not for your utility, you'd be a corpse by now... To disrespect my master is intolerable, huh! A severe reprimand you'll escape; a lesser punishment you'll endure..."

This sudden intervention, naturally, was by Qin Zi, who was acting separately. Observing Qin Fang's abduction of Sakura, she had stealthily approached.

Chapter 1833 - Training the Holy Woman

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Qin Fang quietly left Hokkaido Shrine with Sakura on his shoulders, feeling somewhat surprised that Hokkaido Shrine did not assign a grandmaster-level expert to protect Sakura closely.

Of course, for Qin Fang, this was also a very unexpected surprise.

At least Qin Fang didn't need to worry about being chased by powerful experts after kidnapping Sakura...

Qin Zi handled the aftermath, helping Qin Fang deal with some potential troubles. After wandering around outside for a while, he finally regrouped with Qin Fang.

"Master, how should we deal with this woman? Kill her with one slash?"

But looking at the beautiful woman carried by Qin Fang, Qin Zi couldn't help but inquire with a pout, the murderous intent in his eyes fleeting but obvious, containing a hint of jealousy!

Perhaps she felt that Qin Fang should be the one carrying her instead of this unfamiliar woman... Despite Sakura's beauty, Qin Zi wasn't lacking either!

"She might still be useful..."

Qin Fang paused for a moment, then helplessly shook his head, deliberately ignoring the murderous intent in Qin Zi's eyes.

"But... where should we hide her?"

The problem arose immediately; how to hide Sakura was quite troublesome, given her exceptionally special identity.

"It's a hassle..."

Qin Fang furrowed his brows, realizing he had oversimplified things.

Sakura is the Holy Woman of Hokkaido Shrine and a candidate for the future Great Priest of the Dao Shen Sect, holding a very high status at Hokkaido Shrine. Her sudden kidnapping is undoubtedly a major event.

If this had happened elsewhere, Hokkaido Shrine, while anxious, wouldn't make a massive effort to search for her, but now Qin Fang and his team are in Hokkaido, essentially at their doorstep...

After kidnapping Sakura, Hokkaido Shrine must have received the news, likely dispatching a large number of experts to track and search.

If Qin Fang doesn't quickly hide Sakura, she may very well be discovered by these experts.

"How about... sending her to the Musashi School?"

Seeing Qin Fang's furrowed brows, Qin Zi felt somewhat frustrated and hesitated before whispering her suggestion.

Now that Qin Fang has eliminated Miyamoto Musashi from the Musashi School, Kawada Musashi should be able to take control of the entire Musashi School. With Qin Fang's current pressure on Kawada Musashi, asking him to help hide someone shouldn't be too big a problem...

Although Hokkaido Shrine is strong, if they haven't found any trace of Sakura in ten days or half a month, they will definitely expand their search range.

By then, even if Qin Fang openly brings Sakura out, no one would think she was right under Hokkaido Shrine's nose.

"No way! Kawada Musashi hasn't stabilized yet. Leaving this woman there... would be very unsafe!"

But Qin Fang rejected this idea, as it was truly unfeasible.

The Musashi School is newly chaotic, and while Kawada Musashi can suppress the opposition forces, even three days is too tight.

And now only a day has passed, so Kawada Musashi's side is still not settled.

Moreover, Sakura's identity is too special; if discovered, the entire Musashi School could be razed to the ground...

Although Qin Fang is indifferent to these Japanese, the Musashi School is potentially the first Japanese force he might control, so it has some value. It can't be destroyed over a mere woman!

"What should we do then?"

Seeing Qin Fang's denial, Qin Zi couldn't think of a better solution and helplessly said that this was her best idea. Beyond this, she was at a loss.

"No worries, just take her with us!"

Qin Fang paused for a moment but then smiled gently as if he had thought of a good plan. Seeing Qin Zi's eager eyes, he spoke slowly.

"Uh..."

Upon hearing this, Qin Zi's exquisite face filled with surprise, and her eyes froze, unable to believe that Qin Fang had said this.

"Master, are you sure you mean... take her with us?"

After hesitating, Qin Zi asked uncertainly.

Due to Sakura's overly special identity and her beauty drawing too much attention, once seen by others, she would easily be exposed.

In that case, taking Sakura with them wouldn't be retaining a hostage but merely attracting batches of experts to hunt them down.

Their current group has decent strength, equivalent to three to four grandmaster-level experts overall.

But this strength is akin to the Musashi School, a medium-level Ninja Sect. Compared to Hokkaido Shrine, one of the Six Great Holy Lands, the difference is quite significant.

Although Hokkaido Shrine ranks last among the Six Great Holy Lands, its strength is undeniable, even surpassing the two supposedly strongest Ninja Sects, Iga and Koga. It is way beyond the Musashi School, a minor sect...

Chapter 1834 - Training the Holy Woman

"Of course!"

Qin Fang smiled confidently and said.

"Don't worry, I have my ways..."

Qin Fang's face held a radiant and mysterious smile, with a hint of a playful smirk in his eyes, suggesting that his method was anything but simple.

"By the way, let them know to come back quickly!"

Then, as if suddenly remembering, he instructed Qin Zi beside him, as the kidnapping of Sakura was carried out by the two of them, and no one else was aware.

About an hour later, Qin Fang and his group gathered together once more.

This time, however, they switched to a different location instead of staying at the original hotel, merely giving a casual greeting to Kawada Masami and Saburo Kohara.

Especially Saburo Kohara, whom Qin Fang left with, "Keep your mouth shut," nearly scaring him to death.

"Damn, you really dare to do it..."

When the group reunited and heard about what Qin Fang and Qin Zi had done, Ji Xiang couldn't help but jump up first.

Monk Wukong and Song Qingshan just shrugged helplessly, appearing rather calm, while Hattori Sanzo's face turned green.

Sakura was the Holy Woman of the Hokkaido Shrine, one of the Six Great Holy Lands and a candidate for the future Great Divine Priest of the Dao Shen Sect. Now that she had been kidnapped by Qin Fang, if people from the Hokkaido Shrine pursued them, none of them could expect to get out alive.

"Young Master Qin, what you did is truly... truly... sigh!"

Hattori Sanzo, most afraid of dying, originally thought that following Qin Fang to kill Miyamoto Musashi, a Master Level Peak strongman, was already outrageous, but he didn't expect Qin Fang to pull an even bolder stunt.

Kidnapping Sakura was almost like desecrating the ancestors' graves at the Hokkaido Shrine.

If he guessed correctly, upon learning this news, Hokkaido Shrine would certainly send out numerous Grandmaster-level experts, and the entire Sapporo and even Hokkaido would be mobilized, all searching for Sakura's whereabouts.

Yet they hadn't even left and were right under their noses... this was absolutely courting death!

"Don't panic, it's not a big deal..."

Qin Fang, however, wore a faint smile, dismissively waving his hand, "Let me tell you, this is how it is..."

With that, Qin Fang simply recounted how Saburo Kohara met Yuriko in a bar and how he impersonated Hattori Hisanari, deliberately allowing Yuriko to hear Sakura's final scream...

"This could work?"

When everyone heard Qin Fang's cunning plan, they all looked rather odd, even twitching at the corners of their mouths, as Qin Fang's plan was truly scheming.

However, they could only silently mourn for Hattori Hisanari, who inexplicably became Qin Fang's scapegoat, but their expressions didn't improve much.

"Miss Qin Zi, that Yuriko..."

Hattori Sanzo even intentionally glanced at Qin Zi, somewhat unsure.

"I knocked her out, she should forget quite a bit if nothing goes wrong..."

Qin Zi seemed to have anticipated this and responded briefly.

She was careful not to take Yuriko's life but struck a very critical spot on the back of her head.

This position wouldn't kill her, but it might make her mind a bit hazy, with some memory regression.

This was actually one of the secret techniques from Qin Fang's Nine Revival Needles, which he had taught Qin Zi. Although she didn't use the Silver Needle, Qin Zi, with her Grandmaster Mid-Stage cultivation, executed it with similar effect.

This was why Qin Fang felt safe leaving Yuriko behind... Yuriko would remember the name Hattori Hisanari, but wouldn't recall many of the specifics.

And Qin Fang had already cleaned up most traces, with the only potential leak being Saburo Kohara, whom Qin Fang decided not to touch.

Because touching him would only create more holes and flaws...

Instead, it was better to let him live, as the guy knew what to say, and as long as he wanted to keep his life, he wouldn't dare act recklessly!

As for Yuriko, as long as she couldn't remember these events, the flaw would become seamlessly covered...

"You really intend to keep her by your side?"

Monk Wukong didn't have objections to Qin Fang's plan, but when he heard that Qin Fang intended to keep Sakura by his side, he couldn't keep a straight face.

The reason was clear to everyone; the woman was simply too dangerous!

"Don't worry, even if she's with us, she won't pose a threat..."

Qin Fang had long made up his mind, already having a strategy in place, and thus wasn't anxious at all.

"However, for safety's sake, from now on, we need to adopt new identities!"

To avoid unnecessary trouble, changing identities was necessary.

Chapter 1835 - Training the Holy Woman

Anyway, they were just passersby in this city. Not many people knew them, and hardly anyone was aware of their existence. Even if they changed identities, it wouldn't attract much attention.

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After discussing with Ji Xiang, Monk Wukong, and others, Qin Fang managed to calm them down and finalize the next plan. Only then did he enter the room where the Holy Woman of the Hokkaido Shrine, Sakura, had already woken up.

Yet, when she tried to break free from the ropes binding her, she was stunned to find she had no strength at all, feeling weak and limp.

Not only that, she couldn't muster her Half-step Grandmaster Level True Qi, making her feel like an ordinary woman with no strength to even truss a chicken.

With no energy and unable to break free from the ropes, Sakura could only give up helplessly. She didn't know if she was drugged or under some sort of restriction.

One thing was for sure, she couldn't escape now...

It was not until Qin Fang pushed open the door and walked in that she suddenly looked up, glaring angrily at the man who had kidnapped her.

"Who exactly are you?"

Sakura, who stood out among sect disciples due to her strength and talent, was also a very clever woman.

If she had previously thought Qin Fang was really Hattori Hisanari, now... she clearly rejected that possibility.

Looking at Qin Fang again, her gaze was full of deep apprehension, and she appeared extremely gloomy, as if filled with a sense of crisis and uncertainty about her fate.

"I am Hattori Hisanari..."

Qin Fang chuckled and said casually. Since he was framing, he had to continue to play the role of Hattori Hisanari seriously.

Except...

"Do you think I'm a fool?"

Sakura looked at him with eyes full of sarcasm and then asked ungratifyingly.

"Kind of!"

Qin Fang shrugged indifferently. When he kidnapped this woman before, he had ridiculed her for her intellectual shortcomings.

"You..."

Sakura's face changed dramatically, staring at Qin Fang furiously, clenching her teeth, as if she couldn't wait to tear him apart.

Unfortunately, that's all she could do, without being able to take any substantial action. First, she was still tied, and second, she lacked the strength.

"You should save your strength... Your power has been sealed by me. Now you're even weaker than an ordinary person, and it's impossible for you to escape from here or do anything to me..."

Qin Fang said with a dismissive smile, even stepping forward to untie the ropes on Sakura, allowing her to move freely.

There were so many of them here, all powerful experts. Even if Sakura restored her strength, it would be impossible for her to escape, let alone in her current state as a weak woman.

"What do you want to do..."

Seeing Qin Fang actually untie her ropes, Sakura was stunned and asked puzzledly. After all, it was too strange for Qin Fang to kidnap her, only to give her such freedom.

"What do you think?"

Qin Fang just smiled without intending to explain.

"Then what do you intend to do with me?"

Sakura paused and then changed her way of questioning.

"It's actually quite simple. If you don't want to become an ordinary woman from now on, you better stick around me obediently..."

This time, Qin Fang didn't hold back, speaking leisurely with a smile.

"What?"

Sakura was taken aback and instinctively tried to gather her True Qi, but the result was apparent—she failed... and quite utterly. Her abundant True Qi in her dantian seemed to be imprisoned by an invisible force, stubbornly staying there and unable to be summoned.

"Stop struggling, it's useless... This is my unique skill, impossible for anyone to break except for me!
Unless..."

Qin Fang said confidently with a smile.

"Unless what?"

Sakura asked nervously, just like a drowning person grasping the last straw.

"Unless you break your dantian, only then might you break my restriction..."

Qin Fang shrugged and replied with a grin, quite generously.

"You..."

But Sakura's face instantly turned ashen upon hearing Qin Fang's words.

Once a martial artist's dantian is broken, all their efforts are wasted. Even if the restriction is broken, it remains futile, leaving them worse off than now!

"Don't think I'm bluffing... You can completely try it! I wouldn't mind at all..."

And just as Sakura's thoughts couldn't help but wander, Qin Fang poured a bucket of cold water over her, directly dousing her last intention.

"I've said all there is to say. From now on, you are no longer the Holy Woman Sakura of Hokkaido Shrine, but just Maid Cherry Blossom by my side... Oh, and you're mute!"

Of course, Qin Fang wasn't just scaring her simply, immediately giving a whistle, and before Sakura could react, Qin Fang's hand flashed with silver light. Sakura only felt a slight numbness on her cheeks, and then...

"Mmm mmm mmm~~"

She really became mute!

A perfectly good Martial Arts Expert and a great beauty, was not only turned into an ordinary person by Qin Fang but now even made into a mute!

How could such a proud beauty like Sakura possibly accept this?

At this moment, Sakura nearly felt a suicidal urge...

"If you really want to die just like that, I won't stop you! However, I'll surely strip your body naked and throw it on the street... No point in looking at me like that, it's useless. After all, Hattori Hisanari will take the fall for me..."

Chapter 1836 - The Mysterious Little Island!

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"Done?"

When Qin Fang walked out of Sakura's room, the others were still there, and seeing the calm smile on Qin Fang's face, they couldn't help but ask in surprise.

Among them, Hattori Sanzo was the most surprised, his mouth wide open, unable to close for a long while.

Although the others were not as exaggerated, they too found it somewhat unbelievable.

"Yes, it's done!"

Qin Fang lightly nodded, providing a definite answer.

Unless Sakura had directly ended herself, abandoning her life, then she wouldn't have yielded. But for such a beautiful expert with boundless prospects, it clearly seemed very unworthy.

At the very least, she now hated Qin Fang fiercely. If she died like this, it would truly be unclear why she died, and even the people of the Hokkaido Shrine wouldn't know where to find the enemy to avenge her.

So, for the sake of her own life and her desire to personally avenge herself, she decided to endure humiliation and follow Qin Fang like a maid, persisting no matter what.

Qin Fang naturally knew Sakura's thoughts, but he didn't care at all. This woman still had some use, even quite significant use, so he certainly wouldn't kill her off so easily...

A mere semi-grandmaster level expert wasn't even worth much experience points to Qin Fang, who now focused his attention on those grandmaster-level experts. Killing one of them would be worth several times the experience points of a semi-grandmaster expert...

As for the items that might drop, Sakura wasn't a ninja, couldn't even drop a Ninja Token, so Qin Fang didn't have even the slightest expectation.

And as for other items, besides rare treasures like the Secret Realm Map, he wasn't very interested; many things he could directly exchange for with experience points, so he wasn't intrigued.

"Young Master Qin, keeping her around... is really dangerous!"

Hattori Sanzo was still somewhat worried in his heart. Even though he knew Sakura's cultivation had been suppressed by Qin Fang, she was still a core figure of the Hokkaido Shrine, and might have special means to break the restriction. If she secretly targeted them viciously, they might be completely wiped out by the experts of the Hokkaido Shrine.

"It's fine!"

Qin Fang didn't explain much; he had already made arrangements, others would naturally be assured in due course, needing no excessive worries.

Having lost her cultivation, Sakura was now just an ordinary beautiful woman, or perhaps... she could no longer keep that exquisite face!

Earlier in the room, Qin Fang not only made Sakura a mute who couldn't speak but also slightly modified her beautiful face.

This was Qin Fang's first attempt, as he found his acupuncture skills combined with metamorphosis could not only change his own appearance and physique but even perform cosmetic surgery on others!

Indeed, cosmetic surgery!

And Qin Fang's first test subject, most unfortunately, was the almost flawless Miss Sakura!

Sakura's face was extremely perfect, otherwise she wouldn't have become one of the four great beauties of the Japanese Martial World, but now... she was merely on the level of Qin Zi, prettier than most women, but not astonishingly stunning.

With her appearance changed and being unable to speak, not threatening their strength, how could such a woman pose any threat?

Moreover, Qin Fang would always keep Sakura by his side, so if she wanted to inform the Hokkaido Shrine, she would have no chance.

This was the reason Qin Fang dared to keep Sakura around!

Of course, Qin Fang took such a risk mainly to slowly learn some hidden secrets of the Japanese Martial World from Sakura, especially about the Hokkaido Shrine, the Six Great Holy Lands, and even the Dao Shen Sect.

Things that Hattori Sanzo couldn't uncover due to his status, yet Sakura knew much more due to hers.

At least, Hattori Sanzo knew nothing about the Six Great Holy Lands, but Sakura did, at least the matters of the Hokkaido Shrine weren't hidden from her!

"A long road ahead..."

Qin Fang traveled far to Japan with the intention of stirring trouble in the Japanese Martial World. As the saying goes, know yourself and the enemy, and you can win every battle.

Wanting to know these things, the only breakthrough was choosing this beauty, Sakura.

Silent night.

The whole of Sapporo was in an uproar, yet things remained quiet around Qin Fang and his party, without disturbance.

The Holy Woman of Hokkaido Shrine had been kidnapped, and on the territory of Hokkaido Shrine at that, which was a brutal slap to the Shrine, quite venomous, enough to anger them tremendously...

Consequently, the entire Hokkaido Shrine was almost entirely mobilized, with many powerful experts quickly infiltrating Sapporo and surrounding areas.

Additionally, Hokkaido Shrine ordered martial schools within its jurisdiction to assist in the search, and the Musashi School naturally received notices as well.

Chapter 1837 - The Mysterious Little Island! (Part 2)

However, now that the Musashi School itself is in turmoil, Kawada Musashi is busy preparing to take the position of Sect Master, and has no intention of dealing with these matters. Even if it involves a massive force like the Hokkaido Shrine, it doesn't matter, so he directly handed the matter over to Kawada Masami to handle.

Kawada Masami originally had no idea what Qin Fang and his group had done. Although Saburo Kohara had some vague suspicions, he didn't dare to say anything and even kept it from Kawada Masami.

Thus, Saburo Kohara sent his men to search for Sakura's whereabouts, handling Kawada Masami's orders while also leading the matter astray.

"To the grasslands?"

Qin Fang and his group, who should have been at the center of the storm, seemed relaxed and carefree. Early in the morning, they notified both Saburo Kohara and Kawada Masami to arrange a trip to the grasslands for leisure.

Now that Sapporo City was in chaos, though they were not afraid of trouble, they preferred not to be caught up in it, so they decided to avoid it for now.

This was also pre-planned. Saburo Kohara made arrangements, and it wouldn't seem abrupt, at least not enough for Kawada Masami to suspect anything.

"Young Master Qin, I won't be able to accompany you today. Something happened last night, and I must stay in Sapporo to keep things under control..."

Kawada Masami also did not leave with Qin Fang and his group today. The kidnapping of Sakura had significant implications. Although Kawada Musashi didn't care much, he had to keep up appearances. Since he couldn't make time to come down, the task naturally fell to Kawada Masami.

However, this worked in their favor. Today, all of Qin Fang's group had changed their appearances, and it was more convenient without Kawada Masami around, reducing the likelihood of exposure.

Without Kawada Masami, Saburo Kohara came along. He may not be timid, but he's not reckless either, especially when it comes to life-threatening situations; he'd rather not be involved.

With Saburo Kohara driving, despite the strict checks throughout Sapporo City, Qin Fang and his group smoothly left Sapporo and entered the nearest grasslands.

Though Japan is a tiny country, it has extensive greenland and forests, especially in Hokkaido, where agriculture and animal husbandry are developed, and the grasslands are quite vast.

Leaving the city's hustle and bustle, Qin Fang and his group set foot on the lush green grasslands, feeling instantly more relaxed and carefree.

The Japanese are cunning; they destroy and pollute abroad, yet their own domestic environment is well-preserved. At least, this grassland is far better than some in Dragon Country.

Saburo Kohara arranged activities for Qin Fang and his group, preparing a sturdy horse for each person so they could gallop freely on the grasslands. The exhilarating speed differed entirely from car racing, providing an indescribable sense of enjoyment.

"Young Master Qin, you all can enjoy yourselves freely on the grasslands, but... there is one place you must not go!"

At this point, Saburo Kohara couldn't help but glance at the sixth person who had joined Qin Fang's group.

Originally, Qin Fang's group consisted of five people: four men and one woman, Qin Zi. Yet overnight, they had one more.

Though Saburo Kohara didn't know what was missing from the Hokkaido Shrine, he vaguely knew it was an extremely beautiful woman. The sixth person in Qin Fang's group happened to be a very beautiful woman.

Unfortunately, while she was indeed beautiful, she was mute and couldn't speak...

Despite Saburo Kohara's speculation, a chilling glint in Qin Fang's playful gaze quickly dispelled those thoughts.

Regardless of whether he guessed something he shouldn't have or let Qin Fang misunderstand his intentions toward the beauty, such thoughts were potentially deadly, and Saburo Kohara wasn't foolish enough to bring them up.

"What place?"

Fortunately, Qin Fang simply changed his expression briefly and then calmly inquired.

"This grassland is vast, and there is a sizable lake within it; it's fine to water your horses by the lake, but don't get too close... especially, especially to the island in the lake. Don't go there!"

Saburo Kohara, after calming himself, spoke seriously, looking quite serious, clearly not joking.

"Lake Heart Island?"

Qin Fang looked surprised at Saburo Kohara and then glanced at Sakura, now mute, as surprise flashed in his eyes, replaced by confusion.

"Understood, we will keep it in mind..."

From Saburo Kohara's reaction, there was clearly something special about that Lake Heart Island, which is why Saburo Kohara was so secretive and even fearful.

But Saburo Kohara's fear didn't mean Qin Fang and his group would be afraid. Besides, they were just there to have fun and not necessarily visit Lake Heart Island.

After a brief adjustment, everyone could comfortably ride, as they were all exceptionally skilled, making controlling a horse easy even for a novice, especially since these horses had been tamed and had little wildness left.

Once they could ride, each person said their farewells to Saburo Kohara and quickly rode off, disappearing beyond the horizon.

Each member of Qin Fang's group had a horse, including Sakura. Though her cultivation was gone, her riding skills were noticeably better than the others'.

Nonetheless, Sakura was astonished to discover that one person's riding skills far surpassed hers...

Undoubtedly, that person was Qin Fang.

With Grandmaster Level Riding Skills, Qin Fang's equestrian prowess was unrivaled. Even professional jockeys were inferior, and Qin Fang easily performed tricks on horseback that nearly left Ji Xiang and others in awe.

"Eh, what's that place?"

Playing and frolicking, they ventured deeper into the grassland. The grasslands were not entirely flat, having some undulation, and upon crossing a small mound, they heard Ji Xiang's surprised voice.

When Qin Fang and his group looked over, besides the expanse of green grasslands, they saw a patch of blue water.

"This should be the lake that guy mentioned, and the Lake Heart Island..."

Monk Wukong couldn't help but mumble as he noticed the small island in the lake, his expression turning a bit peculiar.

"Lake Heart Island..."

Qin Fang arrived later, despite his excellent riding skills; he still had to keep an eye on Sakura and arrived somewhat later. Hearing the others' discussions, he finally came over.

Upon seeing Lake Heart Island, his face also changed a bit, even more so than the others.

"How is this possible?"

After a moment of silence, Qin Fang couldn't help but exclaim, his eyes filled with disbelief, almost on the verge of bursting out.

"Qin Fang, do you think we're seeing things?"

Monk Wukong then rubbed his eyes and asked uncertainly, while Ji Xiang and Song Qingshan also looked to Qin Fang, seemingly waiting for his answer.

"It's not an illusion!"

Qin Fang shook his head with a wry smile and said, "What we see is real..."

"Young Master Qin, what's going on? What's wrong with that Lake Heart Island?"

Hattori Sanzo, Qin Zi, and even Sakura, who had just joined, appeared puzzled, seeing the Lake Heart Island but not sensing anything unusual about it.

Chapter 1838 - This Little Island Is Weird!

...

"You can't see it?"

But Hattori Sanzo's question left Qin Fang stunned, and he couldn't help but feel surprised. It was truly unexpected.

Hattori Sanzo shook his head blankly, giving a negative response.

And when Qin Fang's gaze shifted to Qin Zi, she too responded with a bewildered shake of her head, not knowing what it all meant.

Although Sakura held a deep grudge against Qin Fang and didn't want to pay him any heed, she was indeed very curious now. She also shook her head a bit strangely, then looked at Qin Fang with a very eerie expression. Even though she couldn't speak, her eyes seemed to be asking, "See what?"

"Isn't that just an ordinary Lake Heart Island? There's nothing special about it..."

Hattori Sanzo couldn't help muttering again. He had carefully scrutinized it once more but still couldn't spot anything unique.

He only saw seemingly ordinary scenes, nothing that would surprise them to such an extent.

"Could our eyes have deceived us?"

Seeing that the others didn't look like they were faking it, Qin Fang was also a bit puzzled. He muttered to himself while glancing at his companions around him.

However, although those around him were also confused, after exchanging a few looks, they vaguely sensed something but chose to remain silent in unison.

Even though they were supposed to be companions in the same group now, Qin Fang and the others should not have hidden anything. But there was still an outsider, and that was Sakura.

Hattori Sanzo was technically an outsider too. However, with everything he had done, it was inevitable that he could not return to his previous position. He could only continue down a path with Qin Fang and the others, making him effectively one of them.

Only Sakura, whom Qin Fang kept by his side as a maid, but truth be told, he was merely holding onto her, not truly trusting her.

Now she was mute and couldn't speak, but that didn't mean she couldn't pass on messages, unless all her limbs were disabled.

But that was impossible, so they had to keep a closer watch on her, and there were things she shouldn't know that naturally she didn't need to know.

"Let's go, let's take a look at the lake..."

Qin Fang and the others didn't say much more, just gave a simple order and the group went down from the small hill towards the mysterious lake in the prairie.

Qin Fang, being quite skilled at riding, naturally whipped his horse into a gallop, followed closely by Ji Xiang, Monk Wukong, and the others. Hattori Sanzo and Qin Zi, however, received a signal from Qin Fang and slowed down, dragging Sakura along and gradually widening the distance.

"Qin Fang, what's going on here?"

Seeing Sakura getting further away, out of earshot, Qin Fang and the others finally gathered together, and Monk Wukong couldn't hold back and immediately asked.

"I don't understand the specifics either, but I did notice something... It seems they really didn't see anything, and... they're all Fusang people!"

Qin Fang shook his head, not particularly certain but voicing a little suspicion forming in his mind.

Such speculation by Qin Fang was quite laughable, almost absurd. This expanse of prairie, this little lake, and the Lake Heart Island were all on Fusang land.

However, earlier, when they saw that scene, Qin Fang and his three companions saw it clearly, but Qin Zi, Hattori Sanzo, and Sakura saw nothing.

Apart from them all being Fusang people, Qin Fang really couldn't find any other distinguishing factors...

To be more precise, the four of them who saw the scene, including Qin Fang, seemed to be Dragon Country people, or at least had Dragon Country lineage.

Ji Xiang, although Thai, was of Chinese descent, pure-blooded, not much different from Qin Fang and the others.

But factually, this lake and island had existed on this land for a very long time, seen by not millions but at least hundreds of thousands of people.

Yet, apart from the four of them, no one else seemed to have made such a bizarre discovery, which to some extent proved Qin Fang's hypothesis wasn't completely baseless – not just random guessing...

"Let's not talk about that now, I just want to know if the grand architectural complex we saw really exists..."

Monk Wukong hesitated for a moment, then spoke with a bit of bitterness.

Earlier, standing on that slope and gazing out over the lake and the Lake Heart Island, aside from its azure waters, they actually discovered that this not-so-large island held a grand architectural complex.

Not the kind of modern urban architecture, but a vast, ancient-style architectural complex... Most importantly, the architecture they saw had a very distinct Dragon Country flavor, clearly different from those of the locals!

If this were in the Dragon Country, Qin Fang and the others wouldn't find anything unusual. But they were in Fusang.

Moreover, they were in Hokkaido, a region separated from mainland Fusang, which made it even stranger...

If you add to that the fact that Qin Zi, Hattori Sanzo, and Sakura saw nothing, this Lake Heart Island is indeed quite eerie.

"No matter what, let's go and take a look!"

Qin Fang's intuition told him that the scene they just saw should be real. However, because it was so far away, his scouting skill couldn't be used, and he could only rely on his own guesses.

But one thing was certain: the few of them had indeed been captivated by this scene, and a strong sense of curiosity drove them closer to the lake.

You can look at the mountain from afar, but it'll wear out a horse running towards it!

This, Qin Fang did know, but now he felt there should be another saying—it wears out a horse running across the grassland. It didn't feel like it on the hillside, but once they descended, they realized the distance was anything but ordinary.

The group rode fast horses for nearly half an hour before they barely reached the edge of the lake...

And at this time, when looking from the lakeside to the Lake Heart Island in the middle, Qin Fang's face turned green.

"It's so far?"

From the hillside, the view could almost cover the entire lake, and the Lake Heart Island didn't seem particularly large. But standing by the lake now, they realized how big the lake really was. Not only could they not see the other side of the lake, but even the Lake Heart Island was just a vague black dot.

Moreover, the weather in Japan was good, with the azure sky and the blue lake blending into one. If Qin Fang hadn't already marked the direction, they probably wouldn't even be able to find the direction of the Lake Heart Island.

Looking at this expanse of blue water, there wasn't even the shadow of a single boat around, and it was a vast grassland with plenty of green grass but hardly any trees. It was impossible to build a boat even if they wanted to...

"How do we get across?"

Ji Xiang had a wry smile, the Lake Heart Island was in the distance, hardly visible, so how could they be sure about what they saw earlier?

"Don't worry, let's take a closer look first..."

However, Qin Fang smiled a calm smile, reached into his clothes, and fished out a military binocular.

With this binoculars, Qin Fang immediately took a closer look at the Lake Heart Island in the distance.

"Wow, where did you get that from?"

Ji Xiang was puzzled when he saw Qin Fang take out a binocular and was stunned for a moment before expressing his surprise, "Do you have more? Do you have more?"

"Huh? How can that be?"

But Qin Fang ignored him, concentrating on observing the distant Lake Heart Island, and immediately froze, making an incredulous exclamation.

"What's wrong?"

Monk Wukong and the others were also puzzled and asked.

"See for yourself..."

Qin Fang chuckled wryly, handed the binoculars to Monk Wukong, and said.

Although Monk Wukong had a puzzled look, he took the binoculars and looked toward the Lake Heart Island.

But it was as if he hadn't seen it, and once he saw it, his expression shifted. Although not as surprised as Qin Fang, his expression was not much different.

Then he didn't say a word, silently passing the binoculars to Ji Xiang, who then gave them to Song Qingshan... After they all had a look, their expressions were all more or less the same.

"Could it be we were all seeing things earlier?"

Finally, Ji Xiang couldn't help but question, though his tone clearly hinted at disbelief.

Earlier, all four of them had looked through the binoculars to see that the Lake Heart Island was just a small island. Apart from some simple trees and rocks, there was nothing else.

Forget grand structures, there wasn't even a small thatched hut; it was practically an abandoned island rarely visited by people.

"It's possible for one person to see things, but all four? That's far less likely... Even hallucinations wouldn't align perfectly among four different people!"

Monk Wukong shook his head, dismissing Ji Xiang's guess.

"This Lake Heart Island...is definitely suspicious!"

Qin Fang concluded decisively. Seeing the same scene, all four were unlikely to have shared the same hallucination, suggesting the Lake Heart Island was indeed problematic.

"Remember what Saburo Kohara said?"

It was Song Qingshan who suddenly remarked casually.

Only then did Qin Fang and the others remember that Saburo Kohara had earlier warned them that there was something strange about the Lake Heart Island in this lake.

Chapter 1839 - Island-guarding Great Array

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Saburo Kohara is merely a gang leader in Sapporo City; he might be familiar with the grassland here but definitely cannot regularly appear here.

So regarding the matters on this grassland, at most he would have only heard about them.

Even Saburo Kohara knows, which indicates that many others know as well, perhaps Qin Fang and his group are not the only ones who have seen that scene; some might have witnessed it earlier.

But as for the result, it's undoubtedly true that no one has been able to discover why such mysterious phenomena appear on Lake Heart Island.

If that weren't so, then surely someone would have targeted here long ago, and it wouldn't still be unoccupied, since that magnificent architectural complex clearly is not an ordinary place, and Hokkaido Shrine would certainly have taken action.

Yet, Qin Fang and his group had just seen clearly that Lake Heart Island is simply a deserted island, nothing of interest there, really isn't appealing.

Moreover, Lake Heart Island's area isn't large, and it's situated at the center of the lake deep in the grassland, even developing it would be a hassle, let alone inhabiting it.

This discovery amazed Qin Fang and his group, while also filling them with an unusual sense of eeriness, giving them the feeling that this island was rather strange.

"Anyway, I think we should go and take a look at Lake Heart Island... I feel that what we saw isn't that simple!"

After a brief moment of silence, Qin Fang couldn't help but express his thoughts.

Though what one's eyes see isn't necessarily real and can often deceive, Qin Fang felt the island was quite suspicious.

Even though he had seen it fairly clearly with binoculars earlier, noting even the few trees on the island, he felt uneasy without personally setting foot on Lake Heart Island.

"I'll go with you..."

Almost as soon as Qin Fang expressed his thoughts, Monk Wukong immediately chimed in, clearly sharing the same idea as Qin Fang.

"I'll go too!"

Ji Xiang, with his energetic and curious nature, also promptly added his intention.

As for Song Qingshan, although he remained silent, he stepped forward, making his intention quite clear. All four had seen that scene which then abruptly vanished; they probably wouldn't sleep soundly without personally solving this mystery.

"Young Master Qin, are you really going over?"

At this moment, Hattori Sanzo and Qin Zi caught up with them. Although they hadn't witnessed anything like Qin Fang's group, seeing the lake naturally reminded them of Saburo Kohara's earlier warning and Qin Fang's group's unusual behavior, prompting them to ask.

They weren't foolish; even though Qin Fang's group hadn't said much, they recognized something was wrong with Lake Heart Island or assumed the group had discovered something, urging them to investigate further!

However, the problem was, despite having seven people now, the strongest are Qin Zi and Hattori Sanzo, yet neither saw anything.

"You guys stay here, we'll go check it out and come right back..."

In truth, Qin Fang had planned to go alone, making it easier for him to move freely and handle any danger himself.

Yet, with the others so determined to join, being his regular companions, Qin Fang couldn't be too indifferent, so he couldn't refuse; thus, they decided to go together.

While Qin Fang's group could leave, Qin Zi and Hattori Sanzo had to stay behind, besides they needed to keep an eye on the Sakura.

Hattori Sanzo had lost a wrist, though the wound had healed, getting into the water was still inconvenient, even if he wished to join.

Qin Zi wanted to go, but being a woman among a group of men going into the water seemed inappropriate... Qin Fang, though not having accepted this Japanese female slave, didn't wish to suffer any loss.

Thus, they left the three behind to wait, while Qin Fang and his three companions went straight into the water, heading directly towards Lake Heart Island.

Fortunately, none of the four were inexperienced swimmers, skilled in swimming and backed by powerful True Qi, making the mere one or two kilometers of water surface trivial for them.

Upon entering the water, Qin Fang released Little Dragon, sending it ahead to Lake Heart Island to explore.

If it were just Qin Fang alone, he'd ride Little Dragon straight there, but with company, revealing Little Dragon became inconvenient.

It's akin to the death of Miyamoto Musashi, as Ji Xiang and others still believed Qin Fang used Tang Sect's poison to kill Miyamoto Musashi.

Unfortunately, they never imagined Miyamoto Musashi wasn't killed by their poison, but by the poison of Little Dragon... which even surpassed the venom of the Golden Crested Snake, leaving the poisoned without cure!

Of course, Little Dragon has many talents, notably its Water Control Technique, nearly divine in nature, making it invincible in the water.

Though Qin Fang's Swimming Skill was seldom used, he had honed it to advanced level, swimming like a fish, effortlessly gliding through the water, though he remained the fastest among them.

Chapter 1840 - Island-guarding Great Array (Part 2)

After spending so much time together, the others had long become accustomed to Qin Fang's extraordinary abilities. It seemed there was nothing he wasn't skilled at—whether it was horseback riding or swimming...

They had seen it many times before and were too lazy to be surprised any longer, so they chose to ignore it.

"Is there really a problem?"

A one to two-kilometer swim was not a difficult task for Qin Fang and his group. Moreover, the lake was free from fierce beasts like great white sharks, making it a relatively smooth journey. In just over ten minutes, they could already see the lake heart island, which wasn't very large.

It was at this moment that Little Dragon, who was part of the advance team, relayed a message—it had discovered some anomalies!

They had previously witnessed a mysterious scene, but later couldn't find it again, which was already quite strange. It seemed as if what they had seen earlier was like a mirage.

But if it truly were a mirage, there was no reason why only Qin Fang and his group saw it, while Hattori Sanzo and his group did not.

If it wasn't a mirage, then there was definitely something very wrong with this lake heart island...

Now that Little Dragon had indeed discovered some anomalies, Qin Fang understood and yet felt that something was amiss.

"What's wrong?"

Noticing the change in Qin Fang's expression, Song Qingshan, who was closest to him, asked.

"Something feels off..."

Qin Fang's swimming speed didn't slow, but his brows were furrowed, as he had a very strange feeling deep inside.

This sensation came abruptly. Given that martial arts experts like Qin Fang usually had very stable minds, nothing should provoke such a reaction in them, unless...

"Quick! Get to the island fast..."

As Qin Fang was still contemplating, his eyes suddenly darted around as if he remembered something, and he loudly urged the three accompanying him.

Not only that, Qin Fang immediately burst forth with incredible power, flailing his arms as he swam rapidly toward the shore of the lake heart island with astonishing speed.

"What's going on?"

The others were also startled and somewhat confused, not knowing what was up with Qin Fang.

But since Qin Fang was swimming so quickly and urgently, it definitely meant something was happening. Though they found it strange, they also burst into action, frantically paddling their arms toward the shore.

Originally only around one to two hundred meters away, the four of them closed the distance in the blink of an eye, swimming at a pace that could compete with professional swimmers, if not faster...

These martial arts experts are like glitches—they could easily dominate many Olympic events, including swimming.

Qin Fang didn't have time to explain further. At top speed, he even left the others behind as he approached the lake heart island. Nearing the shore, he slammed the water surface, propelling himself several meters into the air before landing steadily on the shore.

Nearby, Monk Wukong wasn't to be outdone. He executed a similar move, leaping out of the water, and with the Reed Crossing River Technique, rushed straight to Qin Fang.

As for Song Qingshan and Ji Xiang, they weren't as fortunate. Without any Qinggong skills, they had to keep paddling vigorously.

Though not far away, the distance did cost them some time. By the time they reached the shore, Qin Fang and Monk Wukong had already dashed quite far.

When they finally caught up to Qin Fang, both Qin Fang and Monk Wukong had stopped for quite a while...

Precisely speaking, they were standing on a small patch formed by randomly piled rocks, looking dazed.

"Any discoveries?"

As soon as Ji Xiang arrived, he noticed something was odd about Qin Fang and Monk Wukong's expressions and couldn't help but ask.

He carefully examined the surroundings of the lake heart island but saw nothing peculiar, finding no anomalies.

Regarding the spot where Qin Fang and Monk Wukong stood dazed, aside from some scattered rocks, there seemed to be nothing extraordinary.

"Formation?"

Ji Xiang hadn't noticed anything, but Song Qingshan mumbled suspiciously.

Given the strange expressions of Qin Fang and Monk Wukong, they must have discovered something. Yet, the surroundings seemed ordinary, indicating there was something wrong here.

If there was a problem but it remained undetected, Song Qingshan instinctively thought of formations... Additionally, he noticed Qin Fang's fingers constantly moving as if calculating something.

Although Monk Wukong didn't imitate Qin Fang, his face was somber and brows tightly knotted, searching for something.

"Alas..."

A few minutes later, Monk Wukong sighed, "Still a step too late..."

Qin Fang remained frowning, but upon hearing Monk Wukong's sigh, he paused only slightly before resuming his task.

"What? Late for what?"

Ji Xiang, still puzzled, asked Monk Wukong directly.

"This lake heart island is special; it conceals a very unique formation. The scene we saw earlier was likely due to a flaw in the formation's operation."

Monk Wukong knew more about formations than Song Qingshan, giving Ji Xiang a brief explanation. Ji Xiang, having grown up abroad, had little knowledge about ancestral things despite advancing in strength. Monk Wukong had to explain it to him.

"But you said 'a step too late'..."

Ji Xiang only knew the name of formations without real experience; even with Monk Wukong's explanation, he struggled to understand.

"This formation is of high level, and its flaws aren't always apparent!"

Monk Wukong smiled wryly, pointing at the rocky area.

His implication was clear—the formation's flaw had vanished, its operation restored. Without finding the flaw, they couldn't break the formation.

Moreover, he explained that even if a flaw existed, breaking such a high-level formation was uncertain; without the flaw, there was even less hope.

"Did we come for nothing?"

Ji Xiang was disappointed and frustrated.

A high-level formation concealing the lake heart island intrigued him deeply—what hid within?

Especially the scene they had witnessed, likely cloaked by the formation, deeply fascinated Ji Xiang.

Now that the formation's flaw had vanished, everything remained hidden, leaving him disappointed.

"Don't worry, it might not be hopeless..."

As their spirits dulled, Qin Fang, who had been silent, suddenly spoke.

His words immediately rekindled the spirits of Ji Xiang, Monk Wukong, and Song Qingshan, who looked at Qin Fang with surprise and anticipation.

"This is an island-guarding great array, very high-level. Although it remains operational, the array itself has likely been unattended for years, and is severely damaged... By carefully searching, we might find a breakthrough!"

Qin Fang's expression didn't change much, but he gave a brief explanation.

"Breaking this formation might be impossible with our abilities... but opening a small breach might be possible!"