

King Hall 801

Chapter 801: 12 Advance to 6!

Just when Lin Feng and Elder Cheng were doubtful about Mu Jinyu.

Mu Jinyu stood still, watching Wu Lei's ultimate killing move "Cloud Sea and Lone Peak," formed by the fusion of two Sword Intents, with increasing admiration in his eyes.

"Interesting. Since that's the case, let me show you what masterful 'Great Freedom Heavenly Wood Sword Qi' looks like!"

As soon as Mu Jinyu finished speaking, he flicked his fingers.

Instantly, streams of Heavenly Wood Sword Qi shot forth. Following the wind, they grew into massive trees and smashed Wu Lei's "Sword Intent Scroll" to pieces!

"What is this?!"

Seeing this scene, Lin Feng immediately straightened his back in excitement, his face filled with astonishment.

Elder Cheng also widened his eyes in disbelief and muttered, "This is master-level 'Great Freedom Heavenly Wood Sword Qi,' but how is this possible? Hasn't he only been in the Heavenly Sword Faction for ten days or so?"

It was no wonder they were so agitated.

Martial Techniques, Techniques, Divine Skills—after cultivation, their levels generally change noticeably, ranging from initial insight, integration, masterful skill, mastery level, and finally transcendence!

Mu Jinyu had previously demonstrated "Great Freedom Heavenly Wood Sword Qi," but only ordinary Heavenly Wood Sword Qi appeared, unable to change into actual giant trees for attacks, which clearly indicated he was just at the initial insight stage.

But even reaching the initial insight stage was surprising to them.

After all, this was a Wood Attribute Divine Power that had been collecting dust in the Scripture Pavilion for years, with no one able to master it.

Mu Jinyu's ability to reach the initial insight stage in just ten days was truly impressive.

This proved that his Wood Spirit Root aptitude was indeed extraordinary!

However, reaching the masterful skill stage in just ten days was astonishing but still somewhat acceptable. To reach the masterful skill level, though...

That was something they found hard to accept!

"This is a monster-level genius!"

The same thought occurred to both Lin Feng and Elder Cheng at the same time.

"Our Heavenly Sword Faction will produce a True Dragon!"

Not to mention the shock in Lin Feng and Elder Cheng's hearts, Wu Lei decided to risk everything in one final move, wielding a Sword Intent in each hand to pressurize and kill Mu Jinyu, but was immediately countered by Mu Jinyu's "Great Freedom Heavenly Wood Sword Qi," causing him to spit blood and fly backward!

"Puff!!"

In midair, Wu Lei couldn't stop vomiting crimson blood but refused to be defeated so miserably. Forcing himself to control his body, he barely managed to stand at the edge of the competition platform, avoiding being thrown out directly!

Unfortunately, Mu Jinyu wouldn't give him any chance!

After unleashing his master-level "Great Freedom Heavenly Wood Sword Qi," he wouldn't stop.

Thus, just as Wu Lei stabilized himself on the edge of the platform, dozens of Sword Qi rushed towards him, transforming into massive trees with infinite strength, crashing down on him!

With a loud "bang," Wu Lei's trembling hands tried to block the attack but were immediately crushed, sending him flying off the competition platform.

"Puff!"

He spit another mouthful of blood, his head tilted, his vision darkened, and he lost consciousness entirely!

"Brother Wu!"

Many Outer Sect disciples watching the battle exclaimed in surprise when they saw Wu Lei being defeated miserably by Mu Jinyu.

They immediately rushed forward to care for him!

Seeing this, Elder Cheng sighed helplessly, maneuvering quickly to Wu Lei's side, signaling everyone to step back, and then checked his pulse.

Afterward, he took out an Elixir from his Storage Bag and let Wu Lei consume it, stabilizing his injuries before instructing those close to Wu Lei to take him back to his residence for recovery.

Mu Jinyu observed this and slowly stepped down from the competition platform.

Actually, he had held back against Wu Lei.

If he had gone all out, with Wu Lei's limited strength, he would have been crushed into a pulp by the massive trees!

Even though Wu Lei had mastered Sword Intent, absolute strength overwhelms any skill; more techniques only add to the misery in the face of overwhelming power!

Chen Qiuqiao stood below, watching Mu Jinyu slowly descend from the platform, looking lost and somewhat dazed!

'How... How is he this strong?!'

Even Wu Lei, who had two Sword Intents, was easily defeated by Mu Jinyu. Although Chen Qiuqiao was very arrogant, he didn't think he could defeat Mu Jinyu to prove to the Sect Leader and others that he was a more talented disciple deserving of the Heavenly Sword Faction's resources.

He only felt that if he went all out, the best he could achieve against Mu Jinyu was a draw with mutual injuries, which seemed meaningless!

What then of the duel he had longed for and dreamed of with Mu Jinyu?

This moment severely impacted Chen Qiuqiao's confidence!

He felt worse off than when he had received the Pass Token from Mu Jinyu earlier.

Although humiliated then, he was fired up, eager to restore his honor!

But now, he felt disheartened, staring into an unclear future.

Li Xiaoxiao also watched Mu Jinyu stepping down with a serious expression, feeling that he was the true obstacle to her taking first place!

Simultaneously, her eyes shone with fascination when looking at Mu Jinyu.

This was the heartfelt admiration for a powerful member of the opposite sex.

'Unfortunately, he seems to have a wife...'

Li Xiaoxiao felt inexplicably sad inside.

Mu Jinyu was one of the few men in the Heavenly Sword Faction who truly captured her heart.

...

With Wu Lei defeated and Mu Jinyu stepping down, the competition continued uninterrupted.

But watching the fight between two disciples in the First Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm on the platform felt lackluster to everyone.

They had just witnessed the peak battle between Wu Lei and Mu Jinyu, where master-level Sword Intent clashed with Divine Skills—what a spectacle!

Now, the duel between the disciples in the First Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm seemed dull.

Soon, Jian Ruyan also stepped onto the platform, facing Brother Wei, who had won the Pass Token with his strength during the selection test.

This immediately lifted everyone's spirits.

After witnessing Wen Rou's previous battle, they knew that Wen Rou and Jian Ruyan's abilities were extraordinary, worthy of challenging Chen Qiuqiao and Li Xiaoxiao!

Brother Wei wasn't weak either, a top contender to replace the Inner Gate position after Wu Lei and the others transitioned.

Therefore, this battle was worth watching!

However, the audience was again disappointed.

Although Brother Wei had displayed impressive skills in the previous round to win the Pass Token, his strength was ultimately only at the Third Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm; he had no resistance against Jian Ruyan!

After Jian Ruyan won, the twenty-five duels quickly ended.

And another round of battles began.

With fifty eliminated and twenty-five remaining, there would be only twelve duels, leaving one person to advance directly to the next round!

Finally, drawing lots determined who would advance.

As luck would have it, the one to advance from the twelve-to-six round was Mu Jinyu!

Mu Jinyu was indifferent to advancing directly, but when he noticed Jian Ruyan was the first to step onto the platform, a playful expression appeared on his face.

Because her opponent this time was Chen Qiuqiao!

Chapter 802: Giving You a Chance Is Useless!

The numerous outer sect disciples, except for a few of Chen Qiuqiao's followers, hardly anyone knew that there had been a conflict between Chen Qiuqiao and Jian Ruyan in the Scripture Pavilion.

But this didn't matter; Jian Ruyan and Chen Qiuqiao were both strong contenders for the top three in the outer sect's grand examination. Their pre-emptive battle once again made everyone feel excited and passionate!

The disciples below the stage started secretly placing bets again, wagering on whether Mu Jinyu's sister Jian Ruyan would win, or the veteran outer sect expert Chen Qiuqiao!

In the end, the male disciples mostly bet on Jian Ruyan, while the female disciples bet on Chen Qiuqiao!

As they were placing their bets,

the drawing for the twelve to six finalists was completed, and Jian Ruyan and Chen Qiuqiao took the stage!

Jian Ruyan stood on the competition platform, her eyes coldly gazing at Chen Qiuqiao. Without hurrying to strike, she said calmly:

"In the Scripture Pavilion, you ignored the rules of first come, first served, trying to use your power to force me to hand over the 'Water Thousand Chill' secret manual. At the time, due to the sect rules, I couldn't fight you in the pavilion. Now that you have reached the fourth layer of the Divine Transformation Realm, we can have a proper battle!"

Chen Qiuqiao's face looked somewhat unpleasant, but he still replied firmly, "Then let's see how well you've mastered 'Water Thousand Chill'!"

With that, Chen Qiuqiao stopped wasting words, attacking directly, determined to defeat Jian Ruyan quickly as an appetizer before challenging Mu Jinyu!

Even if he ultimately lost to Mu Jinyu, at least defeating Mu Jinyu's sister would save him from losing too badly!

"Ha!"

Chen Qiuqiao shouted angrily, striking out with both hands. True Yuan transformed into a dragon, oscillating like water waves, charging straight at Jian Ruyan.

He had been practicing 'Thousand Water Cold' for some time now!

'Thousand Water Cold' is a door god skill, but not a water-based god skill. True Yuan manifests resembling soft water, constantly changing, making it quite favored among outer sect disciples of the Divine Transformation Realm.

Even Li Xiaoxiao and Wu Lei had borrowed the 'Thousand Water Cold' secret manual several times but eventually gave up, finding that the divine skill did not suit them.

Chen Qiuqiao didn't believe that Jian Ruyan, who had borrowed the manual for about ten days, could master it as Mu Jinyu did!

So he boldly attacked, aiming to defeat Jian Ruyan who dared to vie with him for the opportunity to borrow the secret manual!

He also intended to humiliate her, making her understand the consequences of overestimating herself!

"Hmph, petty tricks, and you dare show off?"

Jian Ruyan saw through Chen Qiuqiao's sinister motives the moment he used 'Thousand Water Cold' against her, showing disdain in her eyes.

Unwilling to draw her sword, she waited until the Water Dragon Column was close, then struck out fiercely, raising her hand to slap it away!

"Boom!!"

With a double palm strike, Jian Ruyan shattered the Water Dragon, scattering it like a celestial maiden scattering flowers!

If not for the defensive formation on the stage preventing the water droplets from flying off, the spectators below might have been seriously injured!

After smashing the Water Dragon Column with a single move, Jian Ruyan struck again as Chen Qiuqiao stood in stunned disbelief, using the divine skill 'Water Thousand Chill'.

"Screech!"

In an instant, faint phoenix cries echoed.

On Jian Ruyan's palms, two bird-like shadows formed.

The crowd quickly recognized that Jian Ruyan's left palm held a Water Phoenix, and her right palm an Ice Phoenix!

Jian Ruyan then merged the Water Phoenix and Ice Phoenix into a Yin Yang Fish Tai Chi Diagram as if performing Tai Chi, before striking out. The Phoenixes swirled together, combined, and launched straight at Chen Qiuqiao!

"Puff!!"

Chen Qiuqiao, reacting with a pale face, hurriedly tried to block. But he couldn't withstand the combined force of the Water Phoenix and Ice Phoenix, and was sent flying off the stage, spitting blood!

"Thud!!"

Chen Qiuqiao hit the ground heavily, gravely injured, his face white as a sheet. After vomiting several mouthfuls of blood, he looked extremely weak!

Lin Feng and Elder Cheng, watching Jian Ruyan on the stage, showed a hint of surprise. "Combining hardness and softness, she has also mastered 'Water Thousand Chill' to an integrated level?"

"Outstanding, just like her brother, their talents are equally strong!" Elder Cheng praised.

'Thousand Water Cold' is a divine skill that, when not grasped correctly, can only forcefully release True Yuan like a waterfall, seemingly mighty but easily broken!

Reaching the initial insight level shows the versatility and fluidity, as Chen Qiuqiao demonstrated earlier.

Achieving integration means combining hardness and softness, water and ice, immensely increasing its lethality!

That's why Chen Qiuqiao was defeated by Jian Ruyan in an instant!

"Ah, how could Brother Chen lose so quickly, my Spirit Stones!"

"Sigh, I should have bet on Jian Ruyan, I lost so much!"

"I decided, from now on, that woman is my goddess!"

Chen Qiuqiao lay on the ground, hearing the whispers and comments from the crowd, and in anger, spat out another mouthful of blood.

"Tap, tap, tap..."

Mu Jinyu approached Chen Qiuqiao, checking his injuries. They were not severe; Jian Ruyan had shown restraint, and he would recover after some time.

So Mu Jinyu decided not to heal Chen Qiuqiao's wounds.

"Sigh, I gave you a chance, but you're useless!" Mu Jinyu said, somewhat regretfully.

He had been looking forward to a fight with Chen Qiuqiao on the competition platform.

Unfortunately, like Wu Lei, though one of the three great experts of the outer sect, Chen Qiuqiao did not make it to the end.

However, being defeated by Jian Ruyan did increase his value somewhat, and perhaps Jian Ruyan would no longer hold a grudge over the Scripture Pavilion incident!

Chen Qiuqiao's spirit flagged as he heard Mu Jinyu's words, his chest heaving with anger, and his pale face turned red.

As one of the three great experts of the outer sect, failing the selection test and then being humiliated to receive the pass token from Mu Jinyu was already a bitter pill.

He originally intended to bear the humiliation, defeat Mu Jinyu in battle, and make Mu Jinyu regret giving him the token!

But he lost, defeated along the way by Jian Ruyan, who he had looked down on in the Scripture Pavilion, not even qualifying to fight Mu Jinyu!

What a heavy blow!

"Puff!!" Chen Qiuqiao spat out another mouthful of blood and, like Wu Lei, fainted on the spot!

"Tap! Tap!"

Elder Cheng and Lin Feng hurried over, Elder Cheng checking on Chen Qiuqiao's injuries, while Lin Feng angrily said to Mu Jinyu, "Why did you provoke him?"

Mu Jinyu shrugged and replied, "How did I provoke him? I was really looking forward to a fight with him; why else would I give him the pass token? Unfortunately, he's useless, isn't it the truth?"

"Stop talking," Lin Feng said irritably.

Then, after confirming Chen Qiuqiao's injuries weren't severe, Elder Cheng had him sent back to his quarters to rest.

Chapter 803: Would You Be Willing to Be My Disciple?

The three great experts of the Outer Gate, two had already been defeated in previous rounds.

The final result did not involve any unexpected circumstances.

In the six-to-three competition, one person had a bye, followed by the four-to-two and two-to-one contests.

Mu Jinyu naturally took the first place, Jian Ruyan the second, and Li Xiaoxiao the third.

Wen Rou, due to her lack of combat experience and limited knowledge of martial techniques, spells, and divine skills, did well to secure fourth place.

When Lin Feng returned to the competition platform and announced Mu Jinyu as the first place winner, many of the Outer Sect disciples looked at him with envious eyes.

Having just joined the Heavenly Sword Faction and becoming the first of the Outer Gate, winning numerous unimaginable rewards in the Outer Gate grand examination, how could they not be envious?

"Now, could the disciples who achieved the top ten rankings in the Outer Gate grand examination come up!" Lin Feng announced.

The disciples who had achieved the top ten rankings in the Outer Gate grand examination, upon hearing Lin Feng's words, ascended the stage without hesitation.

"The top ten can each receive one superior-grade spirit stone."

Once everyone had ascended the stage, Lin Feng took out ten pieces of jade from his storage bag, crystal-clear, evenly cut, and shimmering with a captivating brilliance, and handed them out one by one.

These were the superior-grade spirit stones.

Although it was just one piece, it could be exchanged for ten medium-grade spirit stones or one hundred low-grade spirit stones.

It wasn't a small matter; for the Outer Sect disciples, it required completing several sect missions to obtain it. It was indeed a fine reward!

The disciples ranked from fifth to tenth couldn't help but smile with joy on their faces.

"The top three can receive ten superior-grade spirit stones each!"

After distributing the rewards for the top ten, Lin Feng announced loudly again and took out thirty superior-grade spirit stones from his pocket, handing them out one by one to Mu Jinyu, Jian Ruyan, and Li Xiaoxiao!

Receiving the ten superior-grade spirit stones, Li Xiaoxiao's beautiful face lit up with an even more intense smile.

Although she was one of the top three experts of the Outer Gate and didn't lack one or two superior-grade spirit stones, a one-time reward of eleven superior-grade spirit stones was far more substantial than usual. How could she not be happy?

As for not winning the first-place reward, she wasn't disappointed or disheartened at all.

Regardless of Mu Jinyu and Jian Ruyan's sudden rise, she always understood that she would be ranked among the top three in the Outer Gate grand examination.

Compared to Wu Lei and Chen Qiuqiao, who didn't even make it into the top ten, she indeed felt very fortunate to secure the third place reward.

After distributing the rewards for the top three, Lin Feng announced again: "The first place winner can receive thirty superior-grade spirit stones, select secret manuals from the second floor of the Scripture Pavilion, and cultivate in the Heaven Cave blessed land for three days!"

Saying this, he pulled out a small bag containing thirty superior-grade spirit stones, handed it to Mu Jinyu, and then took out two tokens made of special materials.

He handed the tokens to Mu Jinyu and instructed, "This token grants access to the second floor of the Scripture Pavilion, and this one grants access to the Heaven Cave blessed land!"

"I understand." Mu Jinyu, excited to receive so many rewards at once, accepted them while speaking.

"Keep working hard. I believe it won't be long before you earn a place in the Four Sects' Genius Ranking!"

Lin Feng patted Mu Jinyu's shoulder and smiled with satisfaction.

'The Four Sects' Genius Ranking?' Mu Jinyu's heart stirred upon hearing Lin Feng's words.

But he didn't ask further, knowing that in front of so many people, asking such basic questions could easily cause laughter.

Just by the name, he could guess that the Four Sects' Genius Ranking must be the ranking list of the Yan Kingdom's Four Great Sects' genius disciples.

Whichever sect's disciples occupied more spots on the Four Sects' Genius Ranking, that sect would gain more prestige.

Perhaps, like the Kunlun Hidden Dragon List, there might also be some rewards involved?

Unaware of Mu Jinyu's inner confusion, Lin Feng patted his shoulder again with satisfaction and announced:

"This Outer Gate grand examination is the most successful and exciting in history, with six disciples reaching the fourth layer of the Divine Transformation Realm appearing at once!"

"Next, as the top three of the Outer Gate grand examination, Mu Jinyu, Jian Ruyan, and Li Xiaoxiao, will be promoted to Inner Sect disciples of the Heavenly Sword Faction, with an additional reward of three hundred contribution points each. Wen Rou, Wu Lei, and Chen Qiuqiao, although not ranking in the top three, will also be promoted to Inner Sect disciples for reaching the middle stage of the Divine Transformation Realm, but without the contribution point reward!"

"Clap clap clap!!"

Nearly five hundred Outer Sect disciples present clapped enthusiastically at Lin Feng's announcement.

The rules of the Heavenly Sword Faction's Outer Gate grand examination were such that if one's cultivation hadn't reached the middle stage of the Divine Transformation Realm, even securing a top-three spot in the grand examination only granted rewards but no direct promotion to the Inner Sect.

Thus, despite Wu Lei and Chen Qiuqiao consistently taking the third spot in the Outer Gate grand examination multiple times, they remained among the top three experts of the Outer Gate without breaking into the Inner Sect.

Only by reaching the middle stage of the Divine Transformation Realm could one be promoted to the Inner Sect after the Outer Gate grand examination.

Typically, those who performed exceptionally in the Outer Gate grand examination with cultivation at the middle stage of the Divine Transformation Realm would rank in the top three, thus receiving an additional reward of three hundred contribution points for encouragement.

This time was unique; six participants in the middle stage of the Divine Transformation Realm made it impossible for everyone to rank in the top three.

Wu Lei and Chen Qiuqiao had it worse; after facing Mu Jinyu and Jian Ruyan, they were knocked out early and didn't even make it into the top ten.

If it weren't for their high reputation in the Outer Gate, Lin Feng's announcement of their promotion to the Inner Sect would have caused an uproar with many disagreeing!

As the applause died down, Li Xiaoxiao, standing beside Mu Jinyu, put away her eleven superior-grade spirit stones and smiled at Mu Jinyu, "Congratulations, Senior Brother Mu; we shall meet again in the Inner Gate."

"Thank you, and congratulations to you too." Mu Jinyu wasn't surprised at Li Xiaoxiao's change of address, understanding that Kunlun Ruins respected strength above all.

Then, Mu Jinyu put away his forty-one superior-grade spirit stones and two tokens, preparing to leave the stage with the others and return to his residence to pack up and head to the Inner Gate.

"Mu Jinyu, please wait a moment."

At this time, Elder Cheng, who had remained mostly silent, suddenly spoke up.

"Hmm?" Mu Jinyu paused and looked at Elder Cheng.

Li Xiaoxiao and the other top ten outer gate examinees also slowed down upon hearing Elder Cheng, looking back thoughtfully at Elder Cheng and Mu Jinyu.

They understood now why Elder Cheng attended this Outer Gate grand examination; he was here for Mu Jinyu.

Seeing the wary look in Mu Jinyu's eyes, Elder Cheng smiled and waved his hand, "Don't be nervous. I mean no harm. Once you are promoted to the Inner Gate, it won't be like the Outer Gate, where no one guides you, no masters to pass on skills, and only periodic teachings from the Elders in the hall. Would you be willing to become my disciple and let me mentor you..."

"No need, I've already told the Sect Leader that I have only one master." Mu Jinyu coldly rejected.

Elder Cheng quickly explained, "Oh, my mistake, I don't mean the formal master-disciple relationship with rituals and lifelong obligations, but more like a regular teacher-student relationship..."

Chapter 804: The Four Heaven's Pride Rankings!

"To be honest, with your talent, I'm not brazen enough to be your master, but having lived for so many years, though without major achievements, I can still teach you some things..."

Elder Cheng said sincerely.

He didn't care, even though he was an Inner Sect Elder, about saying in front of everyone that he wasn't brazen enough to be Mu Jinyu's master.

He feared no mockery. Since Mu Jinyu had even rejected the Sect Leader's offer of apprenticeship, what was strange about rejecting him?

Hearing Elder Cheng's words, Mu Jinyu furrowed his brows slightly, not replying, his gaze flickering with unknown thoughts.

Seeing this, Elder Cheng spoke again, "I think you have a great talent for alchemy, truly. I've never encountered such good potential in the Heavenly Sword Faction. I don't want to die without someone inheriting my legacy..."

As he spoke, Elder Cheng gritted his teeth, preparing to say that if Mu Jinyu didn't want to be his student, they could at least call each other fellow Daoists and learn from each other, right?

At this moment, Mu Jinyu looked up at him and asked, "If I become your student, can I see the pill formulas in your possession?"

Upon hearing this, Elder Cheng let out a sigh of relief and smiled happily, "Of course, you can. Whatever you want to learn, as long as I know it, I will share it without reservation. Any secret formulas, I will reveal to you completely!"

"Even what I don't know, as long as I can acquire it to teach you, I will do my utmost!"

Elder Cheng promised.

"Alright, then I agree," Mu Jinyu nodded.

Then, he performed the disciple's salute to Elder Cheng, without kneeling, yet Elder Cheng was still very pleased.

"Hahaha, good, good, good..." Elder Cheng laughed heartily, then hurriedly turned to Lin Feng, "Old Lin, quickly, bring the item to me!"

At this, Lin Feng showed a bitter expression and said, "I thought you had forgotten."

With a helpless shake of his head, he retrieved an ordinary-looking branch from his storage bag.

Elder Cheng snatched it at once and handed it to Mu Jinyu, saying, "Today, as you become my student, I have nothing special to give you, so let this be my gift to you."

"Thank you, teacher." Mu Jinyu looked at the branch, his eyes showing a hint of curiosity, as he reached out to take it and expressed his gratitude.

Suddenly, he recalled that Elder Cheng and Lin Feng seemed to have wagered on his trial time earlier, with this item as the stake.

Although he wasn't sure what it was, it must be something valuable, otherwise Elder Cheng wouldn't have given it as a greeting gift.

Many Outer Sect Disciples thought the same. Though few knew about the Sacred Wood Branch, they recognized from Elder Cheng's solemnity that it was something precious and looked on with envy.

If they could become Elder Cheng's disciples, they would be very willing.

Despite Elder Cheng not being of high alchemist rank, he was the only alchemist in the Heavenly Sword Faction, following him yielded benefits beyond those of ordinary Inner Sect Elders.

Li Xiaoxiao stopped and watched Mu Jinyu accept the branch, her beautiful eyes flashing with curiosity.

She knew that the Sacred Wood Branch in Lin Feng's possession was coveted by the Heavenly Sword Faction's upper echelon and was surprised that Lin Feng had given it to Elder Cheng, and Elder Cheng had given it to Mu Jinyu.

"Is wooing a Spirit Root genius really worth it?" she wondered curiously.

Seeing Mu Jinyu accept the Sacred Wood Branch, Elder Cheng said with a smile, "Alright, go back and pack up. Once you reach the Inner Sect, come find me to start learning."

"Mm," Mu Jinyu nodded.

With a smile, Elder Cheng and Lin Feng left together.

"Congratulations, Senior Brother Mu!"

As soon as Elder Cheng and Lin Feng left, Li Xiaoxiao approached Mu Jinyu, congratulating him with a smile.

Mu Jinyu toyed with the branch in his hand and asked, "What are the congratulations for? Becoming Elder Cheng's student, or... this branch?"

Li Xiaoxiao laughed and said, "Both congratulations, but more envy for this Sacred Wood Branch!"

Mu Jinyu asked, "Sacred Wood Branch?"

Li Xiaoxiao explained, "Perhaps you don't know, Senior Brother?"

Looking around, she suggested, "Let's talk while we walk."

"Alright," Mu Jinyu nodded.

He then joined Wen Rou and Jian Ruyan, walking with Li Xiaoxiao towards their living quarters.

The surrounding disciples, eager to know what Elder Cheng had given Mu Jinyu, were disappointed as they didn't dare to eavesdrop. The source of this content is NOvelFire.net

Once they were at a distance, Li Xiaoxiao began to explain the origin of the Sacred Wood Branch to Mu Jinyu.

"Sacred Wood Branch, possibly a Builder Wood Branch?"

After listening, Mu Jinyu looked at the branch with more seriousness.

If Li Xiaoxiao was telling the truth, then this Sacred Wood Branch was indeed precious.

"But why would Elder Lin be willing to gamble it?" Mu Jinyu wondered.

"Maybe because Senior Brother Mu has great potential, and he wants to befriend you?" Li Xiaoxiao smiled and said, "He did say that you have the potential to be on the Four Sects' Genius Ranking."

Mu Jinyu, moved by her words, asked, "By the way, what is this Four Sects' Genius Ranking? Is it like the Hidden Dragon List?"

Li Xiaoxiao, having a vague understanding of Mu Jinyu's background, patiently explained, "The Four Sects' Genius Ranking isn't related to the Hidden Dragon List, but its creation is somewhat because of it."

"Have you heard of the Four Sects Martial Meeting held every ten years among the Four Great Sects in the Yan Kingdom?"

Mu Jinyu, embarrassed, nodded and said, "I've heard a bit..."

Li Xiaoxiao didn't expose him but continued, "Yan Kingdom's cultivation resources are limited, and each of the Four Great Sects wants to secure more. In the past, they fought fiercely, causing numerous casualties. Eventually, the sect leaders decided to establish the Four Sects Martial Meeting, where the new generation disciples fought for resources."

"With its inception, the Four Sects' Genius Ranking was introduced to motivate disciples to be fearless and ambitious. Those who make it to the ranking receive ample sect resources."

"The nearer to the top of the Genius Ranking, the greater the rewards from the sect, including cultivation resources."

"As they fought their way up, they not only progressed but also won considerable resources for their sect."

"Thus, it's a win-win situation,"

Pausing for a moment, Li Xiaoxiao continued meaningfully, "Senior Brother, once you enter the Inner Sect, there's no need to deliberately hold back. Our Inner Sect's senior brother, Yun Ge, advanced

unabashedly, now ranking in the top three of the Genius Ranking, standing in the Ninth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm, just a step away from the Fanxu Realm!"

"And our Heavenly Sword Faction has never treated him unfairly!"

Chapter 805: Yan Ran and Huang Daochen!

Watching Li Xiaoxiao leave, Mu Jinyu pondered her recent words, wondering if she had truly discerned that his cultivation wasn't just at the Fourth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm but at the Sixth Layer.

Even the Sect Leader and the Elders couldn't see through his Concealment Art, which masked his true strength at the Sixth Layer beneath the Fourth Layer. How did she manage to see through it?

Could it be due to her innate divine skills, possessing heterochromia?

Mu Jinyu was filled with uncertainty.

"Will there be any danger? Should we find an opportunity to deal with her?"

Jian Ruyan asked Mu Jinyu, her eyes flickering uncertainly.

"No need. Concealing strength is just a precaution. Whether she sees through it or not is irrelevant. There's no need to call for her head."

Mu Jinyu shook his head. "Moreover, from Elder Cheng's attitude, it's clear what Heavenly Sword Faction's stance towards us is. There's even less necessity for that."

"Alright," Jian Ruyan said, the killing intent in her eyes gradually dissipating.

Then, Mu Jinyu led Jian Ruyan and Wen Rou back to their quarters. After packing their belongings, they headed toward the peaks where the Inner Sect disciples of Heavenly Sword Faction resided.

The peak where the Inner Sect disciples of Heavenly Sword Faction resided was called Tianlan Peak, and the Inner Sect disciples lived halfway up the mountain.

As soon as Mu Jinyu and his companions arrived at the halfway point of Tianlan Peak, they saw someone already waiting at the door to greet them.

"You must be Junior Brother Mu, Junior Sister Wen, and Junior Sister Jian?"

The young man in Inner Sect disciple attire greeted Mu Jinyu warmly as he approached them.

"Yes, that's right. And you are?" Mu Jinyu paused, asking the young man.

The young man smiled and introduced himself, "My name is Yan Ran, a disciple of Elder Cheng. My master asked me to come and assist you with the procedures for entering the Inner Sect."

"Oh, I see. Thank you, Senior Brother Yan." Mu Jinyu smiled and nodded at Yan Ran upon hearing this.

"No need to be so formal, Junior Brother Mu. We're all fellow disciples now," Yan Ran replied with a smile.

He then led Mu Jinyu and his companions to the Inner Sect office to exchange their identity tokens, receive Inner Sect disciple clothing, and get a handbook with various precautions.

Following this, Yan Ran didn't rush to take Mu Jinyu to see Elder Cheng but first showed them to the Inner Sect disciples' residence.

The accommodation for Inner Sect disciples was much better than that for Outer Sect disciples. Outer Sect disciples lived in extremely simple stone huts, while Inner Sect disciples resided in beautiful courtyards.

The courtyards had miniature mountains and bamboo groves, as well as defensive formations and spirit gathering arrays. Moreover, Tianlan Peak was closer to the Main Peak of Heavenly Sword Mountain,

meaning the spiritual energy was far richer compared to the Outer Sect disciples' quarters. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the treatment of Inner Sect disciples was ten times better than that of Outer Sect disciples.

Yan Ran chose three unoccupied courtyards for Mu Jinyu and his companions. After manipulating the formations, he registered their identity tokens, and successively activated the arrays to enter the three courtyards.

With the courtyard owners' identities registered in the identity tokens, Yan Ran handed the tokens back to them, smiling, "Alright, from now on, no one can enter these three courtyards without your permission."

"Thank you, Senior Brother Yan..." Mu Jinyu felt somewhat indebted, given Yan Ran's diligence in handling various procedures for them. He then suggested, "Why not come inside for a cup of tea?"

"Alright." Although Yan Ran wanted to take Mu Jinyu to see Elder Cheng sooner, he knew that Mu Jinyu needed to settle in first, so he graciously accepted the invitation.

Just then, a spirited Inner Sect disciple walked by nearby.

Yan Ran quickly noticed and greeted, "Greetings, Senior Brother Huang!"

Huang Daochen heard Yan Ran's greeting, glanced over casually, and gave a slight nod, acknowledging the greeting.

He was about to leave directly but then noticed Jian Ruyan and Wen Rou.

His gaze froze for an instant, showing a hint of admiration.

Ignoring Mu Jinyu, Huang Daochen looked at Jian Ruyan and Wen Rou, saying, "Hey, are these two Junior Sisters newly entered the Inner Sect? I don't recall seeing them before."

He was known as a top Inner Sect disciple with decent aptitude, with his only flaw being his love for beauty.

Huang Daochen was familiar with all the beauties within Heavenly Sword Faction.

Whenever a large number of new disciples joined, he would go to the Outer Gate to see if there were any promising ones.

Thus, he had a good impression of the beauties within the Outer Gate of Heavenly Sword Faction.

But today, upon seeing Jian Ruyan and Wen Rou, he felt he had no such impression.

With beauties like Wen Rou and Jian Ruyan at such levels, Huang Daochen believed that if he had seen them before, he wouldn't possibly have no impression of them. They must have joined Heavenly Sword Faction recently.

Joining Heavenly Sword Faction recently and rising quickly to Inner Sect disciples suggested their aptitudes were quite exceptional!

Huang Daochen's interest was piqued, thinking how wonderful it would be to form Daoist companions with Wen Rou and Jian Ruyan.

With these thoughts, he couldn't help but whistle at Jian Ruyan and Wen Rou, smiling, "Junior Sisters, your accommodations are quite basic. The formations are poor. How about Senior Brother takes you to Tianlan Peak Summit to see the residences of the top disciples on the List of Outstanding Talents?"

Yan Ran felt a chill at Huang Daochen's words, suddenly remembering his flirtatious nature, cold sweat appearing on his forehead.

He quickly transmitted a message to Mu Jinyu, "Junior Brother Mu, don't mind Senior Brother Huang. He's always like this, liking to spout nonsense. Ignore him; after all, he is a top disciple from the List of Outstanding Talents, with fairly strong prowess."

After this, he also transmitted a message to Huang Daochen, reminding, "Senior Brother Huang, don't bother them. One is Junior Brother Mu's wife, the other his sister. And Junior Brother Mu is the spirit root genius who recently declined the Sect Leader's offer to become a personal disciple. He just ascended to Inner Sect disciple ranks by taking the first place in the Outer Gate exam and is now learning alchemy under Elder Cheng..."

Yan Ran was anxious, hoping Mu Jinyu and Huang Daochen would heed his words and avoid conflict!

Mu Jinyu received Yan Ran's transmission, wondering, 'List of Outstanding Talents? What kind of list is this?'

Huang Daochen heard Yan Ran's transmission, his eyes flashing with a different light, muttering a few words, then disdainfully said, "Spirit root genius? First place in the Outer Gate exam? Elder Cheng's disciple? Hmph, what does that count for?"

He shook his head slightly, coldly saying to Yan Ran, "If you hadn't mentioned this, I might not have been interested. But now, I want to see what kind of confidence this guy has to refuse the Sect Leader's offer of a personal disciple!"

With that, he raised his hand and took out a treasured sword from his storage bag, with sword light surging, moving directly to attack Mu Jinyu!

Mu Jinyu's face darkened seeing Huang Daochen attacking so boldly.

This guy really was arrogant and domineering!

First making lewd comments to Wen Rou and Jian Ruyan, and before he could teach him a lesson, he now dared to attack him outright?

Judging by his power, Huang Daochen appeared to be at the Fifth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm, which was no match for Mu Jinyu.

Mu Jinyu was ready to use the Great Freedom Heavenly Wood Sword Qi to beat him like a dead dog.

Suddenly, an idea struck him, and he flipped his hand to take out the Sacred Wood Branch gifted by Elder Cheng!

Chapter 806: Tianlan Peak Summit!

This Sacred Wood Branch was given by Elder Cheng to Mu Jinyu as a greeting gift, with great significance.

Mu Jinyu had intended to test the power of this Sacred Wood Branch after hearing Li Xiaoxiao's introduction, but had to suppress the thought temporarily due to moving to the Inner Sect.

Now that Huang Daochen wanted to fight him, an idea sparked in Mu Jinyu's mind – it was the perfect opportunity to test the power of the Sacred Wood Branch!

"Boom!!"

Sword light surged, the void trembled, and the dazzling sword light made everyone's eyes sting.

Although Huang Daochen spoke scornfully of Mu Jinyu, he did not dare to be careless and went all out when making his move!

This move was a Mid-Profound Rank quality swordsmanship called "Escaping Light Shadow Sword." Once activated, the sword transformed into escaping light, with chaotic sword shadows. If one could not discern the genuine sword shadow and escape, the intersecting sword cuts would leave them dead with no remains!

"Hmph!"

Mu Jinyu held the Sacred Wood Branch and snorted coldly, slashing lightly forward!

While trying to test the power of the Sacred Wood Branch, to see if it could indeed easily destroy magic treasures as Li Xiaoxiao claimed, Mu Jinyu was also prepared with a backup plan, just in case the branch's power was merely a boast.

"Heh, absurd!"

Seeing Mu Jinyu using a wooden branch to fight him, Huang Daochen sneered contemptuously. He pinched his left hand into a sword seal, preparing to use the sword shadows to rip Mu Jinyu's clothes and carve a green turtle onto his back to humiliate him!

"Swish!!"

The sword shadows intertwined, and the void seemed to be on the verge of being torn apart.

As Mu Jinyu slashed forward with the Sacred Wood Branch, he faintly felt a sting on his face.

"Boom!!"

At that moment, the Sacred Wood Branch finally slashed down through the void.

Afterwards, there was no terrifying sword qi, no phenomenal occurrences, yet the countless sword shadows conjured by Huang Daochen with his treasured sword instantly vanished.

Like mist being swept away by a fierce wind!

Huang Daochen stood there dumbfounded, rubbing his eyes vigorously several times, unable to believe what he was seeing.

He repeatedly pinched his sword seal, trying to summon his treasured sword back, but received no response.

His sword had severed all connection with him, as if forcibly taken by someone – its imprint erased, or completely broken, thus losing its mark...

"You bastard, return my Clear Shadow Sword at once!!"

Huang Daochen couldn't believe that his treasured sword had been cut in half by Mu Jinyu in one stroke. He assumed Mu Jinyu had stolen it through trickery, glaring angrily at him!

Just as he finished speaking,

"Rustle, rustle!!"

Suddenly, the sound of dust falling to the ground echoed.

Huang Daochen noticed a small pinch of silver-white fine sand three feet in front of Mu Jinyu!

"Sinking Silver Iron fragments?!"

Seeing this small pinch of fragments, Huang Daochen's face changed dramatically, exclaiming in shock.

This was because his Clear Shadow Sword was forged primarily from Sinking Silver Iron!

Then, Huang Daochen looked at the seemingly ordinary branch in Mu Jinyu's hand with eyes wide open, filled with terror!

"Is that Elder Lin Feng's Sacred Wood Branch?!"

Initially, he had been disdainful, seeing Mu Jinyu take out a branch to fight him; naturally, he had not connected it to the Sacred Wood Branch that Elder Lin Feng revered as a treasure!

But now, with Mu Jinyu's slash, his Clear Shadow Sword disappeared, leaving behind only Sinking Silver Iron fragments. How could he not realize that the branch in Mu Jinyu's hand was indeed the revered Sacred Wood Branch?

His fear soared to the extreme. Knowing that he was no match for Mu Jinyu with such a Sacred Wood, Huang Daochen did not wait for a response and fled immediately!

"Whoosh, whoosh!!"

Huang Daochen performed his movement technique, moving like a rabbit and swift as a leopard. In the blink of an eye, only afterimages were left behind as he raced toward Tianlan Peak's summit!

"Where do you think you're going?!"

Mu Jinyu was also stunned, not expecting Huang Daochen to be so cowardly. His sword was broken by Mu Jinyu's single slash, scaring him so much that he fled!

Mu Jinyu hesitated for a moment, and Huang Daochen had already run over a hundred meters away.

Realizing this, Mu Jinyu started chasing but found that his qinggong couldn't match Huang Daochen's unique movement technique; he couldn't catch up at all!

"Boom!"

Mu Jinyu became somewhat angry, slashing at Huang Daochen's figure from afar with the Sacred Wood Branch.

Instantly, a huge boulder dozens of meters away on the mountain path was turned to powder!

Unfortunately, the distance was too far – the Sacred Wood Branch wasn't a long-range attack magic treasure, and couldn't harm Huang Daochen!

Noticing the commotion behind, Huang Daochen was terrified and vanished up the mountain without looking back!

"He sure runs fast!"

Mu Jinyu gave up the chase and remarked with some dissatisfaction.

"Junior Brother, is that branch in your hand really Elder Lin Feng's... Sacred Wood Branch?"

At this moment, Yan Ran, Jian Ruyan, and Wen Rou caught up and stood beside Mu Jinyu. Yan Ran looked at Mu Jinyu in surprise and asked in disbelief.

Having heard Huang Daochen's exclamation earlier, Yan Ran had been skeptical, thinking it unlikely that the branch in Mu Jinyu's hand was the Sacred Wood Branch, given that Elder Lin valued it so much.

But now, seeing Mu Jinyu split a boulder into powder with a single strike, he began to believe that this was indeed the Sacred Wood Branch revered as Builder Wood!

"Yes, it is." Mu Jinyu nodded and elaborated without waiting for Yan Ran to ask further. "During the Outer Gate's grand examination, our teacher and Elder Lin Feng made a bet, with the Sacred Wood Branch as the stake. In the end, Elder Lin lost it to my teacher, who then gave it to me."

"So that's what happened!" Yan Ran understood after hearing Mu Jinyu's explanation but was still puzzled about why Elder Lin Feng and Elder Cheng used the Sacred Wood Branch as a stake and gifted it to Mu Jinyu.

Mu Jinyu did not elaborate further, as he was also unclear on certain points. After answering, he asked, "Senior Brother Yan, do you know where that guy lives?"

As he spoke, a cold light flashed in Mu Jinyu's eyes, filled with murderous intent!

He wasn't someone to be trifled with. Huang Daochen had made a move on Wen Rou and Jian Ruyan in front of him, and even initiated a fight with Mu Jinyu. If he let this slide, how could he stand his ground in the Heavenly Sword Faction?

He had to give Huang Daochen a profound lesson, ensuring no one dared to disrespect those around him again!

Realizing Mu Jinyu's intent, Yan Ran knew he was trying to find Huang Daochen's residence to teach him a lesson. Yan Ran's expression turned somewhat awkward.

"Senior Brother Yan, don't you know?" Seeing Yan Ran not answering, Mu Jinyu asked again.

Yan Ran smiled wryly and said, "I know, but Huang Daochen lives at the summit of Tianlan Peak, where only the Inner Sect disciples on the List of Outstanding Talents can reside. Without their permission, an ordinary Inner Sect Disciple cannot go up there randomly, so..."

He didn't finish his sentence, but the meaning was clear. Going up there would be dangerous, as stronger Inner Sect disciples might disapprove of Mu Jinyu's behavior and act against him!

Mu Jinyu frowned, "The Inner Sect's List of Outstanding Talents, what sort of list is that? How does it relate to the Four Sects' Genius Ranking!"

Chapter 807: Huang Daochen, Get Out Here!

Yan Ran explained, "The Inner Gate List of Outstanding Talents is indeed related to the Four Sects' Genius Ranking, and it was created to inspire the disciples of the Heavenly Sword Faction."

"Of course, the difficulty of entering the Inner Gate List of Outstanding Talents is much lower than that of the Four Sects' Genius Ranking, so the rewards are also much less."

"In other words, those who can make it to the Four Sects' Genius Ranking within the Heavenly Sword Faction are definitely also listed on the Inner Gate List of Outstanding Talents and occupy the top positions. But not everyone on the Inner Gate List can make it to the Four Sects' Genius Ranking."

"Because there are only fifty positions on the Four Sects' Genius Ranking, whereas our Inner Gate List of Outstanding Talents has seventy-two!"

"That Huang Daochen just now, he is also on the Inner Gate List of Outstanding Talents, but he's ranked seventieth!"

"However..." Yan Ran hesitated before continuing, "Although he is just ranked seventieth, which is at the bottom of the list, he's still a part of it. I'm not his match, and the residences of the disciples on the list have better Spirit Gathering Arrays and Defensive Formations than those halfway up the mountain. So even though you have the Sacred Wood Branch, Junior Brother Mu, once you get to his place, it might not be effective..."

"The most important thing is, to go to the summit of Tianlan Peak, you need the consent of a disciple on the List of Outstanding Talents. If you are not invited, as soon as another disciple on the list sees you, and if they're in a bad mood, they might take action against us!"

"Oh, is it that overbearing?" Mu Jinyu frowned and asked, "What is the general strength of those on the Inner Gate List of Outstanding Talents?"

Yan Ran replied, "Those ranking at the bottom are generally at the Fifth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm, while those in the middle-upper range are at the Sixth or Seventh Layer!"

"Is that so? Then I have a rough idea." Mu Jinyu smiled knowingly upon hearing Yan Ran's response, not caring at all about the so-called geniuses on the list.

Yan Ran heard Mu Jinyu's words, his heart skipping a beat, and then asked, "Junior Brother Mu... are you still planning to go up?"

"Yes, please lead the way, Senior Brother Yan." Mu Jinyu smiled.

"But..." Yan Ran was full of worry and indecision.

In his view, Mu Jinyu's strength was merely at the Fourth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm, just barely entering the Inner Gate. If he intends to go to the summit of Tianlan Peak, it would be like seeking his own doom.

He couldn't understand why Mu Jinyu was so confident, still wanting to go confront Huang Daochen. Did he really believe that with a Sacred Wood Branch in hand, he was invincible?

Mu Jinyu said, "Don't worry, Senior Brother Yan, I won't act recklessly. I only do things I am confident in. If you don't want to go up, I can go alone."

Hearing Mu Jinyu's words, Yan Ran's expression changed several times, finally gritting his teeth and sighing, "Sigh, forget it. Master told me to guide you, so if you insist, I'll accompany you at the risk of my life."

Yan Ran, with a bitter expression, led Mu Jinyu toward the summit of Tianlan Peak, to the residences of the disciples on the List of Outstanding Talents.

Following Yan Ran, Mu Jinyu quickly reached the expansive summit, seeing at the entrance a black stele nearly three zhang high.

The stele was entirely black, of unknown material. At the top were five large characters: Inner Gate List of Outstanding Talents.

Below were seventy-two columns of names, glowing faintly, indicating their remarkable status.

Mu Jinyu glanced over them, noticing the name of Yun Ge, whom Lin Feng had mentioned during the Outer Gate exam, high on the first column.

"Third on the Four Sects' Genius Ranking, first on the Inner Gate List of Outstanding Talents..." Mu Jinyu murmured, his gaze passing over to the seventieth name, Huang Daochen!

Withdrawing his gaze, Mu Jinyu said to Yan Ran, "Let's go, Senior Brother Yan."

"Mm." Yan Ran responded, carefully noting no one was around before leading Mu Jinyu toward Huang Daochen's residence.

They had just reached the vicinity of Huang Daochen's door.

The door of the house opposite Huang Daochen's opened, and four to five people walked out.

One man, with a somewhat gloomy face, saw Mu Jinyu's group's strength, only at the Fourth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm, sneaking around, and couldn't help but furrow his brow, shouting, "Who are you? Who allowed you up here?!"

His tone was accusatory. If they couldn't explain who allowed them up to the summit of Tianlan Peak, he seemed ready to teach them a lesson with a thunderous hand!

Yan Ran trembled upon hearing this voice, swallowing hard, feeling doomed.

Mu Jinyu stopped, looking back indifferently while saying, "We're here to find Huang Daochen."

"Oh, Senior Brother Mu, you're here too?"

At this moment, a woman at the back of the group spoke with a tone of surprise.

Mu Jinyu glanced over, his eyes flashing as he recognized her.

It was Li Xiaoxiao, with whom he had exchanged a few words after the Outer Gate exam.

She was also at the summit of Tianlan Peak, having just come out of a disciple's residence on the List of Outstanding Talents.

After a brief thought, Mu Jinyu guessed that she had some connections within the Heavenly Sword Faction. Once promoted to the Inner Gate, she must have come to visit the Senior Brothers and Sisters on the list.

"Hmm." Mu Jinyu nodded slightly to Li Xiaoxiao as a greeting.

Li Xiaoxiao, recalling Mu Jinyu's earlier words that he came to find Huang Daochen, couldn't help but curiously ask, "Senior Brother Mu, was it Senior Brother Huang who allowed you up?"

Mu Jinyu shook his head, lightly saying, "No, I don't know him. He offended me, so I'm here to settle the score."

"Junior Sister Li, do you... know each other?!"

One of the people beside Li Xiaoxiao spoke up, noticing her conversation with Mu Jinyu, and Mu Jinyu's bold claim about seeking trouble with Huang Daochen.

"Yes." Li Xiaoxiao quickly introduced, "This is Senior Brother Mu I mentioned earlier. He placed first in the Outer Gate exam and even rejected the Sect Leader's offer to take him as a disciple!"

"The Spirit Root genius?!"

The others were stunned upon hearing Li Xiaoxiao's words.

They hadn't expected Mu Jinyu, newly promoted from the Outer Gate to the Inner Gate, to already dare to come to the elite summit of Tianlan Peak.

This was a bit...

Too arrogant!

A man resembling Li Xiaoxiao chuckled after recovering from his surprise, "Interesting, interesting. Previously, you refused to be the Sect Leader's disciple in order to cultivate in seclusion within the Outer Gate. Now, you ascend to the top in the Outer Gate exam, and upon entering the Inner Gate, you challenge someone on the List of Outstanding Talents..."

"You truly aim to be earth-shattering with your moves!"

The gloomy-faced man smirked, "I hope this is a case of a hidden dragon ascending and not mere arrogance!"

They doubted Mu Jinyu's challenge against Huang Daochen would end well.

Given Mu Jinyu's Concealment Art, they only saw him as being at the Fourth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm. Challenging Huang Daochen at the Fifth Layer seemed a losing battle!

Seeing they didn't intend to cause trouble and merely wanted to watch, Mu Jinyu ignored them, stepping directly to Huang Daochen's courtyard door and delivering a thunderous kick.

The courtyard, under attack, immediately activated its Defensive Array, trying to resist Mu Jinyu's assault.

But because Mu Jinyu's attack was too fierce, the Defensive Formation quickly became unstable, shaking violently, making nearby courtyards feel like an earthquake!

While attacking Huang Daochen's courtyard, Mu Jinyu shouted, "Huang Daochen, get out here!"

"Get out here!"

"Get out here..."

Chapter 808: A Leap Forward!

Mu Jinyu's voice exploded like thunder, coupled with the trembling caused by his strikes on Huang Daochen's courtyard array. Aside from those deeply in seclusion among the Inner Gate talents, everyone else at the Tianlan Peak Summit came running out!

"What's going on? Is someone challenging the List of Outstanding Talents?"

"Judging by the direction of the sound, it's probably a challenge for ranks around sixtieth to seventieth on the list?"

"Let's go take a look!"

Several disciples on the List of Outstanding Talents, whose cultivation were at the Sixth or Seventh Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm, came out of their rooms upon hearing the commotion and, after exchanging a few words, flew towards the sound with amused expressions!

"Hey, he's only at the Fourth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm? And he dares to challenge the List of Outstanding Talents? Such bravery!"

After seeing Mu Jinyu, they landed on the ground, their eyes showing a hint of surprise, and whispered to themselves.

"Although it's just the seventieth rank on the List of Outstanding Talents, this courage is commendable!"

"The one ranked seventieth on the List of Outstanding Talents seems to be Huang Daochen, right?"

"Yes, even though that guy's strength is nothing to brag about, his 'Escaping Light Shadow Sword' is quite tricky. He can go toe-to-toe with someone at the Sixth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm. A Fifth Layer opponent fighting him unprepared would be as easy as cutting through butter. So, what do you think, how many moves can this kid last against Huang Daochen?"

"I guess one move."

"So disrespectful? I'll guess three moves."

"..."

They joked around, not taking Mu Jinyu's challenge to Huang Daochen seriously at all.

Li Xiaoxiao stood behind her brother Li Yichen, dumbfounded at the sight of Mu Jinyu violently attacking Huang Daochen's courtyard, drawing a large crowd of top experts from the Inner Gate's List of Outstanding Talents. She stood there in a daze.

Then she came to her senses, shook her head speechlessly, and smiled bitterly.

If Mu Jinyu had not caused such a fuss in challenging Huang Daochen, and if he were to lose the fight and be in danger, she might have been able to get her brother to save him!

But now, with Huang Daochen infuriated, her brother's persuasion likely wouldn't do any good.

"Sigh..." Li Xiaoxiao sighed softly, not daring to say anything.

"Booming!"

Mu Jinyu, with the strength of the Fourth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm, continued to bombard the defensive formation around Huang Daochen's courtyard. The formation shook violently, but it would still take some time to break through.

The few experts from the List of Outstanding Talents waited for a while, didn't see Huang Daochen come out to face the challenge, and couldn't help but frown.

"Strange, no one is coming out?"

"Could it be that Huang Daochen went out? Not at home?"

"Or is he too afraid to come out and face the challenge?!"

"..."

At this moment, the courtyard several houses away from Huang Daochen's suddenly opened, and a man who looked somewhat similar to Huang Daochen came out.

He walked out of the courtyard, saw Mu Jinyu attacking his younger brother's residence, and angrily said, "Who are you? How dare you come and trouble our Huang family brothers!"

Saying this, he leaped towards Mu Jinyu!

"Hey, Huang Daotian has come out!"

"He's ranked forty-fifth on the List of Outstanding Talents, far stronger than Huang Daochen. This young man is in trouble now."

Mu Jinyu continued to patiently attack the defensive formation around Huang Daochen's courtyard. Hearing an angry roar from not far away, filled with murderous aura rushing towards him, he stopped his actions.

Then, he turned his head and saw Huang Daotian's menacing figure, who bore some resemblance to Huang Daochen.

"Sixth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm, Huang family brothers..."

Mu Jinyu muttered, his eyes flashing with cold light. He took out the Sacred Wood Branch and shouted, "Since Huang Daochen doesn't dare to come out, you, as his elder brother, can die for him first!"

"Die!" Huang Daotian roared in anger, not using any magic treasure, and directly charged at Mu Jinyu, throwing a punch at his chest like a cannonball!

In his view, there was no need to go all out against Mu Jinyu, who was only at the Fourth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm. One punch should severely injure him.

Mu Jinyu snorted coldly, wielded the Sacred Wood Branch, and lashed out at Huang Daotian's waist and back!

"Pa!"

With a crisp sound.

The seemingly invincible Huang Daotian was directly knocked backward, vomiting blood, by one strike from Mu Jinyu's tree branch.

"Boom!!"

Huang Daotian landed heavily on the ground, smashing several floor tiles and creating a deep pit, spewing another mouthful of blood. His head tilted to the side, and he fell unconscious!

The originally worried Yan Ran, who was watching Mu Jinyu, was stunned by this scene.

The crowd around them, who were watching the commotion, also had their mocking expressions frozen on their faces!

"What... happened?"

"This young man knocked out the forty-fifth ranked Huang Daotian with a tree branch?!"

"Am I seeing things? What's wrong with this world?"

"Wait... isn't that branch the Sacred Wood Branch from Elder Lin?!"

After a few words of disbelief, someone suddenly recognized the origin of the branch in Mu Jinyu's hand and shouted.

"Hey, it does look like Elder Lin's Sacred Wood Branch. How did it end up in his hands..."

"Something's not right. Even with the Sacred Wood Branch, you can't defeat someone two layers higher in just one strike!"

"Yes, I remember Elder Lin himself used the Sacred Wood Branch to fight people several layers higher and still lost!"

The crowd discussed with serious expressions, their gaze toward Mu Jinyu turning wary.

Mu Jinyu, however, didn't care about their thoughts. After understanding the attitude of the Heavenly Sword Faction towards him, he didn't bother hiding his strength anymore, always ready to escape at any moment. Being seen using his true strength didn't matter to him.

After all, his plan was to rapidly increase his cultivation by challenging the List of Outstanding Talents and the Heaven's Pride List to gain a massive amount of resources!

Walking to the unconscious Huang Daotian, Mu Jinyu looked at the stunned Yan Ran and asked, "Senior Brother Yan, how do I take the rank from someone on the List of Outstanding Talents?"

"Huh?" Yan Ran was taken aback, but quickly realized Mu Jinyu intended to take Huang Daotian's rank and move directly to the summit of Tianlan Peak, forgoing the mid-mountain residences.

He quickly explained, "You just need to shatter the opponent's identity token!"

"Oh?" Hearing this, Mu Jinyu searched for and found Huang Daotian's identity token, crushing it with a single squeeze, and noted that Huang Daotian would need to reissue another one.

"Boom!"

As Huang Daotian's identity token was shattered by Mu Jinyu, Mu Jinyu's own token immediately began to shine brightly.

Everyone noticed that on the towering stone list at the entrance of Tianlan Peak's summit, the name of Huang Daotian, who was ranked forty-fifth, had been replaced by Mu Jinyu.

At this moment, Li Xiaoxiao also snapped out of her shock, still staring dazedly at Mu Jinyu, finding it hard to believe what she had just witnessed.

This guy, who had just passed the Outer Gate examination and entered the Inner Gate, hadn't even been here for two hours and had already ascended to the forty-fifth rank on the List of Outstanding Talents.

And this was without Mu Jinyu going all out to challenge the List of Outstanding Talents, merely exacting revenge on someone.

How ridiculous that she had thought of having her brother save Mu Jinyu at a critical moment.

It turns out the one truly unaware was herself...

After successfully replacing Huang Daotian's rank, Mu Jinyu turned around and walked toward Huang Daochen's courtyard again!

The main culprit who angered him was still intact and hadn't been dealt with yet. There was no way he would let Huang Daochen off just because he had dealt with Huang Daotian!

Chapter 809: Breaking the Rules! Switching Positions!

"Boom boom boom!!"

Mu Jinyu ignored the gazes of others and once again stood in front of Huang Daochen's courtyard. While smashing the increasingly shaky defensive formation, he coldly shouted:

"Still not willing to come out? If you come out now, it will be less painful. If I break down your door and drag you out, you'll know the meaning of regret!"

"Creak!!"

The courtyard gate opened.

With a pale face, Huang Daochen, desperate and unable to hold on, finally crawled out!

"Thud!"

Huang Daochen staggered out of the courtyard, his face ghostly white as he looked at Mu Jinyu, then glanced at the deep pit not far away and bent his knees, kneeling before Mu Jinyu.

"Brother... brother, I was wrong. Please spare my life..."

Huang Daochen cried bitterly, wailing while repeatedly slapping his own face.

He now regretted why he had been so blinded by lust earlier, teasing Jian Ruyan and Wen Rou, and actively attacking Mu Jinyu.

If not for his loose tongue and hands, he wouldn't have implicated his brother, who was beaten like a dead dog by Mu Jinyu, nor would he need to kneel in humiliation before everyone to admit his mistake!

But he was scared. He truly couldn't stand firm any longer.

While hiding in the house earlier, he had clearly seen his own protector being struck unconscious by Mu Jinyu's sword.

That was the 45th-ranked expert on the Inner Gate List of Outstanding Talents, yet he couldn't even withstand a single strike from Mu Jinyu. Huang Daochen felt as though the sky was collapsing.

Huang Daochen didn't know if Mu Jinyu would kill him when he broke the defensive formation and entered the house, but he dared not bet and stubbornly stand firm. His inner torment grew with each hit Mu Jinyu took at the formation, making it shaky and about to break down, totally breaking his resolve.

He chose to crawl out proactively, kneel, and apologize to Mu Jinyu!

The spectators were surprised again when they saw Huang Daochen appear.

They had originally doubted whether Huang Daochen was home, which was why Mu Jinyu was allowed to smash his courtyard.

But now, with Huang Daotian struck unconscious by Mu Jinyu, and Huang Daochen coming out once again in disgrace, they immediately understood that Huang Daochen must have already fought Mu Jinyu, and realizing he wasn't his match, he hid in his house not daring to come out!

Huang Daochen's original plan was likely to have his brother Huang Daotian deal with Mu Jinyu, but he didn't expect that Huang Daotian, ranked 45th on the List of Outstanding Talents, wasn't a match for Mu Jinyu either, forcing him to crawl out and kneel to admit his mistake!

"Hmph, finally not acting like a turtle hiding in its shell?!"

Seeing Huang Daochen come out and kneel while slapping himself, Mu Jinyu sneered coldly and flicked his hand.

"Whoosh!"

Instantly, nature's spiritual energy condensed into a large palm and slapped Huang Daochen's face hard!

"Slap!"

The slap sound was crisp and pleasing. Huang Daochen was directly sent flying, his right cheek swelling up like a pig's head!

"Blegh!!!"

He spat out several mouthfuls of fresh blood, mixed with numerous broken teeth, showing how merciless Mu Jinyu's slap was!

"Smash!"

Huang Daochen fell to the ground, shattering several tiles, though not creating a deep pit like his brother Huang Daotian, which could bury them alive.

With a groan, Huang Daochen spat out several more mouthfuls of blood, and then, like his brother, fainted.

Silence fell over the scene, only the faint sounds of the Huang brothers convulsing and vomiting blood could be heard.

No one dared to speak casually, fearing to anger Mu Jinyu, leading to a fight with him.

Among them, some were ranked in the top ten on the List of Outstanding Talents. They didn't think they were inferior to Mu Jinyu, but under the current circumstances, they felt there was no need to confront him.

Mu Jinyu, after slapping Huang Daochen half-dead, had his anger dissipated.

After all, though Huang Daochen was guilty, his crime wasn't worthy of death.

Turning to Jian Ruyan and Wen Rou, Mu Jinyu said, "Come, who will destroy his token?"

Jian Ruyan and Wen Rou exchanged a glance and both courteously said, "You go ahead."

The spectators heard Mu Jinyu's words and paused for a moment, then understood his meaning, their expressions instantly darkening.

Mu Jinyu's meaning was clear. He had already defeated Huang Daotian and become the 45th-ranked on the List of Outstanding Talents. Huang Daochen's 70th rank meant nothing to him, but it's wasteful to leave it unused, so he wanted Jian Ruyan or Wen Rou to take his place on the list!

However...

This isn't in accordance with the rules!

Inner Sect Disciples who want to be on the List of Outstanding Talents must rely on their own strength to defeat opponents, never through another's hand.

Otherwise, the Huang brothers wouldn't be 45th and 70th on the list.

With Huang Daotian's strength, he could easily place his brother in the 60th or even 50th rank.

But he didn't do so, because if he did, others could do the same, potentially eliminating his place on the list!

Therefore, Mu Jinyu's face grew dark.

Some people moved their lips several times but did not dare to speak.

The young man ranked in the top ten of the List of Outstanding Talents finally lowered his face and said, "This is against the rules, I advise you not to act rashly!"

"Are you teaching me how to do things?"

Mu Jinyu heard someone trying to stop him, glanced at the person sideways, sneering coldly.

The young man, hearing Mu Jinyu's words, didn't get angry but instead kindly explained, "The List of Outstanding Talents was established by the sect to motivate disciples to strive. If everyone supported friends in this way, what fairness and credibility would the list have? How could other Inner Sect Disciples continue to strive forward?!"

"So this is against the rules. Don't act rashly."

Seeing that this person was not using idle threats but kindly explaining the reason, Mu Jinyu did not get angry, smiled, and asked, "May I know your name, Senior Brother?"

The young man, mistakenly thinking Mu Jinyu was planning to retaliate, didn't show fear. He calmly replied, "Su Xin, trust in truth. If you have any discontent, you can always come find me."

"No, no, Senior Brother misunderstood. I just think you are reasonable and want to make friends. My name is Mu Jinyu, indicating fullness and prosperity."

Upon hearing this, Su Xin smiled, bowed, and left without saying more.

He knew Mu Jinyu had understood and wouldn't act impulsively, so there was no need to stay anymore.

Seeing Su Xin leave, Mu Jinyu glanced at the crowd, then squatted beside Huang Daochen, found his identity token, and shattered it with a finger.

Immediately, Huang Daochen's name disappeared from the List of Outstanding Talents, being replaced by another person in the 72nd rank.

This person was once on the List of Outstanding Talents but was later defeated, unable to climb back up, so he remained hidden.

If Mu Jinyu continued eliminating a few more, Huang Daotian might also reappear at the 72nd rank.

With Huang Daochen removed from the List of Outstanding Talents, Mu Jinyu smiled at Yan Ran and said, "Senior Brother Yan, help me find some Inner Sect disciples to take these two back to their dwelling at the mountainside."

"Uh, sure..." Yan Ran hesitated, then quickly agreed.

He hurriedly ran down, feeling mixed emotions.

Originally, Huang Daochen had lured Jian Ruyan with promises of advanced dwellings at the Tianlan Peak Summit, despising Mu Jinyu for residing at ordinary Inner Sect disciple accommodations. But now, in an instant, their positions swapped.

Mu Jinyu directly occupied the Huang brothers' accommodation, while they were forced to retreat to ordinary Inner Sect disciple dwellings.

Of course, given Huang Daotian's strength, he would soon climb back onto the List of Outstanding Talents, but this humiliation would inevitably accompany him throughout his Inner Sect disciple career at the Heavenly Sword Faction.

Chapter 810: Elder Cheng's Another Gift!

The unconscious Huang family brothers were quickly carried down the summit of Tianlan Peak by the helpers called by Yan Ran.

During this period, Mu Jinyu officially moved into the courtyard that originally belonged to Huang Daotian.

Huang Daotian's courtyard, in terms of both area and concentration of Spiritual Energy, far surpassed the one belonging to Huang Daochen.

The ordinary disciples' courtyards halfway up Tianlan Peak couldn't even compare.

Of course, the concentration of Spiritual Energy here was still inferior to Yinlong Mountain.

However, Mu Jinyu didn't feel any regret. Though the Spiritual Energy was low now, even a small residence for an Inner Sect disciple in the Heavenly Sword Faction had such a level of Spiritual Energy. In the future, when he went to better places for cultivation, Yinlong Mountain would be incomparable.

Moreover, the elixirs here were far beyond what Yinlong Mountain could offer.

"Phew... phew..."

With Mu Jinyu's permission, Yan Ran ran into the main building of the courtyard. After seeing Mu Jinyu brewing tea, he took a few deep breaths and smiled wryly, "Master Mu... Senior Brother Mu, I've already dealt with the Huang family brothers."

"Hmm," Mu Jinyu responded, not stopping his tea brewing. After finishing, he looked up at Yan Ran and divided the tea into three cups for him, Jian Ruyan, and Wen Rou. He moved one cup opposite Yan Ran.

He then said, "Senior Brother Yan, no need to follow their formality. Just call me Junior Brother Mu."

"No, it's the sect rules. You are now ranked forty-five on the Inner Sect List of Outstanding Talents, and though I entered earlier, I cannot call you Junior Brother," Yan Ran shook his head.

"Alright," Mu Jinyu replied, no longer insisting.

He knew this was indeed the rule of the Heavenly Sword Faction and of most sects in the Kunlun Ruins.

Just like Huang Daochen and Huang Daotian, who originally looked down on him, they must now respectfully call him Senior Brother if they encounter him on the road.

Otherwise, if Mu Jinyu was displeased, he could easily teach them a lesson without the sect punishing him.

This was the ethos cultivated in the Kunlun Ruins, whether intentionally or not: strength is supreme and the strong are respected.

If you don't want to be a junior, then strive to become stronger!

Yan Ran took a sip of tea, set the cup down, and nervously asked, "Senior Brother Mu, you've settled your residence, is there anything else you need to take care of?"

"No," Mu Jinyu knew why Yan Ran had come. He was continuing to carry out Elder Cheng's command to handle various entry matters for him and then take him to meet Elder Cheng.

"We can go now and meet the teacher," Mu Jinyu said, finishing his tea. He smiled at Yan Ran.

"Okay, then let's head out," Yan Ran replied, smiling brightly.

With his relatively low strength at the Fourth Layer of the Divine Transformation Realm, staying at the summit of Tianlan Peak, which was reserved for top-ranking Inner Sect seniors, made him feel very uneasy. He wanted to leave as soon as possible.

After giving a few instructions to Jian Ruyan and Wen Rou, Mu Jinyu left the summit with Yan Ran to find Elder Cheng on another peak where he resided.

Soon, Mu Jinyu followed Yan Ran to Elder Cheng's cave residence.

Though the cave residence was simple, it was filled with dense Spiritual Energy, medicinal fragrance, and Dan fragrance, along with numerous scrap alchemy furnaces scattered about.

"Here, everything's settled?"

Elder Cheng, seeing Mu Jinyu following Yan Ran into his cave residence, immediately put down his work and asked excitedly.

"Yes, teacher, carry on with your work; don't let me interrupt," Mu Jinyu said.

Elder Cheng waved his hands, "Ah, you agreed to be my student. I'm too excited to even focus on alchemy. I was merely sorting herbs, nothing important."

Yan Ran, perceptive, knew Elder Cheng would discuss many matters with Mu Jinyu, possibly imparting his true teachings. Thus, he quietly bowed and left without disturbing them.

Elder Cheng noticed Yan Ran's silent departure, though he did not speak, he kept it in mind and decided to teach him well.

"I heard from Yan Ran that you just entered the Inner Sect and defeated the Huang family brothers, now ranked forty-fifth on the List of Outstanding Talents?" Elder Cheng asked happily.

"Yes, they brought it upon themselves. I used the Sacred Wood Branch given by the teacher to teach them a lesson. I suppose they have woken up now and will soon challenge the list again," Mu Jinyu said calmly.

"Good, good," Elder Cheng patted Mu Jinyu's shoulder with satisfaction, "They are mere clowns, don't bother with them. Here, this is something I prepared for you..."

Saying this, Elder Cheng handed Mu Jinyu a storage bag.

Mu Jinyu initially wanted to refuse, but sensing it might contain the promised Pill Formulas among other things, he thanked the teacher and accepted it.

With his Divine Sense entering the storage bag, Mu Jinyu saw several items: a few alchemy furnaces, of better quality than his Shennong Cauldron.

There were several books and a mountain of various spiritual medicines.

Spiritual medicines and alchemy furnaces didn't interest him much; his concern was the Pill Formulas.

This was the reason he ultimately chose Elder Cheng as his teacher.

While he could explore elixir ingredients by consuming pills and master specific techniques through continual alchemy,

it was laborious, wasting spiritual medicines and consuming significant mental strength. A small second-grade elixir had already cost him a whole night; if he aimed for third or even fourth-grade elixirs later, the effort would be overwhelming.

With existing Pill Formulas to study, it was undeniably a delight.

Mu Jinyu took several booklets from the storage bag and began casually flipping through one.

Elder Cheng noticed Mu Jinyu didn't choose spiritual medicines or treasure furnaces first but instead the Pill Formulas and alchemy experience, silently nodding, more satisfied with him.

Only those truly yearning for knowledge in the Alchemy Dao would prioritize Pill Formulas and related scriptures.

Those common people would more likely value seemingly precious spiritual medicines and furnaces!

This was why Mu Jinyu managed to produce fine elixirs with Six Paths Elixir Patterns.

Thinking of the Six Paths Elixir Patterns' fine elixirs, Elder Cheng felt an itch, longing for Mu Jinyu to craft one himself for him to see.

Yet he knew Mu Jinyu still lacked trust in him, so he dared not make presumptuous suggestions, aiming instead to earn Mu Jinyu's trust with sincerity.

Mu Jinyu soon finished reading a Pill Formula, closing his eyes, then mentally deducing the alchemy techniques.

He quickly opened his eyes and sighed, "Sigh, what a loss."

"What happened?" Elder Cheng asked curiously.

Seeing Mu Jinyu sigh after finishing the Pill Formula, he thought perhaps he wanted to try crafting a pill, but his sigh intrigued him even more.