

## **My Master 211**

Chapter 211:

Cao Zhen adjusted his state to optimal, then lifted his brush and began to write on the plaque.

"Immortal Pen Peak!"

"Wonderful Pen Peak!"

Four people, watching the six characters on the wooden board in front of them, were completely mesmerized in an instant!

How could there be such fine characters in the world?

How could there be such calligraphy!

What are these characters? Why have they never seen such script before?

The strokes were thin and forceful, so thin yet not lacking in substance; the technique was evident, clearly showing the traces of brush movement, lifting, and pausing—slender and neat, the side strokes like orchid bamboo... The horizontal strokes ended with a hook, the verticals with a dot, the slants like daggers, the presses like slicing knives, the vertical hooks long and restrained...

The four were completely dumbfounded, and it took a long time for them to come to their senses.

"This... I never imagined that such characters existed in the world; this is true writing. Could what we wrote before even be called writing?"

"To witness such calligraphy in one's lifetime, even death brings no regrets now."

Song Xianbi and He Miaobi looked at the characters on the wooden board in front of them, and the more they looked, the more they felt irresistibly drawn to them.

The gap, the gap between their writing and these characters was far too great. Even their understanding of writing, their understanding of the Calligraphy Dao, was far from fully grasping these few characters.

They even found they were not qualified to comprehend!

Calligraphy Dao also has its realms, and the higher the realm, the more one becomes aware of the gap between oneself and others. This gap appears smaller at higher realms, yet even the tiniest discrepancy seems as wide as a chasm.

And now, the gap between them and these six characters was not just a minor point but a chasm within a chasm.

They truly felt that facing these six characters, they could only appreciate them like ordinary people.

However, if they could come to an understanding through these characters, such a revelation would sublimate their entire being.

After a long time, Song Xianbi, full of hope, looked at Cao Zhen and asked, "Peak Master Cao, these characters..." His voice had even lost its normal tone.

Cao Zhen pointed at the two wooden boards and said, "Writing the names of your peaks, naturally, they are gifts for you."

"Thank you, Peak Master Cao, for your great kindness; Immortal Pen Peak (Wonderful Pen Peak) will never forget this favor for all eternity!"

The two saw the text on the wooden boards and guessed that it must be meant for them; but to actually hear Cao Zhen say that he was gifting the characters to them, they were so excited they couldn't help but tremble.

"Quick, quickly preserve these two plaques, don't let dust soil the immortal ink!"

"Careful, carefully store them!"

The two Peak Masters, treasuring the boards as if they were the greatest of treasures, directed their Disciples to preserve them well. They looked at Cao Zhen with excitement, thanking him again, "Peak Master Cao, there is no way to repay this great kindness. If there's anything you need from us, please just command."

As he spoke, He Miaobi suddenly had a thought and said to Peak Master Cao, "The ranking of the Hundred Peaks is about to be reshuffled. Peak Master Cao, what ranking does Four Treasures Peak aim for? And if there's any peak that you feel you cannot surpass, or that poses a threat, Wonderful Pen Peak can offer some assistance too."

"Yes, Immortal Pen Peak can also help," Song Xianbi added quickly, "Peak Master Cao, maybe we can't defeat some peak contenders, but the ranking of the Hundred Peaks isn't just about combat, it also involves competition in the Six Arts."

Some disciples excel in one of the Six Arts, yet their Cultivation Base may not be very high. We can help clear obstacles for Peak Master Cao."

"Exactly, Peak Master Cao, please tell us, what is your targeted rank?"

The two Peak Masters were exceedingly proactive; aiding Peak Master Cao was effortless for them—a mere pretext for squabbling with a peak that threatened Cao would suffice, even if it meant confinement for years, decades, or even a century; it would be worthwhile!

Befriending a calligraphy expert like Peak Master Cao could greatly benefit their peaks' future!

Cao Zhen was stunned as he watched the two Peak Masters. Perhaps I should enlist them as part of the Hundred Peaks Eight Evils? Is this even an option?

Nevertheless, this was good news.

After all, at the Golden Core Club today, everyone saw the two Peak Masters of Immortal Pen Peak and Wonderful Pen Peak courting his favor. If they acted out later, others would guess it was because of him, and they might even cleverly deduce his peak's targeted rank from that.

This way, others would be even more convinced that he was so desperate to climb ranks that they would bet more decisively and in larger amounts, meaning he could earn even more.

As for that rank...

After pondering, Cao Zhen said, "Upper Fifty Peaks, Chief Tu has demanded that we must at least reach the Upper Fifty Peaks. And my goal is to rank around fortieth."

"Fortieth?"

Song Xianbi and He Miaobi were both momentarily taken aback. They knew Four Treasures Peak was aiming to rise in ranking but hadn't expected such a lofty goal.

The gap between the Upper Fifty Peaks and the Lower Fifty Peaks was enormously significant, not to mention aiming for around the fortieth rank.

"Rank forty, Peak Master Cao, we will remember that. We need to return and consider this matter thoroughly."

The two Peak Masters quickly left with their Disciples and the two newly acquired plaques.

Cao Zhen returned to Four Treasures Peak and inspected the situation within the peak. After watering the Spirit Field again, he instructed several mechanical men to continue Talisman Making according to plan. Selling the talismans afterward, he left and returned once more to Hidden Dragon Observatory.

Chapter 212: Finished Writing But Forgot to Upload\_6

The Five-Element Pill Ground had still not been opened, with only Gu Chengyu and Gai Su'e, two members of the Five-Element Pill Ground, guarding it. What surprised them was that the Observatory Master had come here, and, unexpectedly, Cao Zhen as well.

Cao Zhen got straight to the point and said, "The Sect Leader has found me."

"I know," Lv Chaoqiong nodded and said, "The Sect Leader has already informed me of everything. Inside the Hidden Dragon Observatory, all resources are at your disposal."

Gu Chengyu and Gai Su'e straightened up in surprise upon hearing this, looking incredulously at Cao Zhen. They didn't know how many resources the Hidden Dragon Observatory had, but they were all too clear about the resources of the Five-Element Pill Ground.

Although Cao Zhen had used a large number of resources for alchemy in the past, and the Observatory Master had even closed the Five-Element Pill Ground because of it, there were still many medicinal materials left in the Five-Element Pill Ground, and moreover, during this period, the Five-Element Pill Ground had been replenished with quite a number of medicinal materials. The reason it remained closed was the fear that Cao Zhen would come again to exploit it.

But now, the True Person Sect Leader had actually agreed to let Cao Zhen use all the resources within the Hidden Dragon Observatory at will! The Sect Leader, what was he thinking? This was truly shocking!

Cao Zhen wasn't surprised, for Lv Chaoqiong was aware of Bai Fengzi's intentions. He nodded and said, "Since that's the case, I will start alchemy now. Could you take out all the medicinal resources within the Five-Element Pill Ground for me?"

"Alright, Elder Gu, please take out all the medicinal herbs and resources from the Five-Element Pill Ground without any hesitation," Lv Chaoqiong said without any reluctance.

Gu Chengyu and Gai Su'e were shocked once again. All the medicinal herbs, how many pills were you planning to craft!

Both of you really have the guts, one to ask, and the other to give.

While the two were gone to fetch the materials, Cao Zhen continued, "Observatory Master, the pills I'm going to craft this time will allow breakthrough upon consumption. However, I can't craft them for too many people, as the materials are limited after all.

I can only craft the pills for myself and a few for my disciples to consume. I can't take care of anyone else.

After all, you know that the Minor Era of Inversion of Heaven and Earth is coming. I need to enhance my cultivation base as quickly as possible before it arrives."

Lv Chaoqiong nodded in agreement and said, "I understand, it's indeed best to enhance the front... Peak Master Cao's cultivation is vital." Cao Zhen was a reincarnated being with great ability. Even at the same Golden Core Stage, she believed that Cao Zhen had more methods at his disposal and was far stronger than the average Golden Core participant.

Similarly, Cao Zhen's four disciples, who could privately be referred to as the Four Sons of the Hidden Dragon, had also proven their strength within their cultivational realm.

They too must have received Cao Zhen's legacy.

Before the Minor Era of Inversion of Heaven and Earth, enhancing their cultivation was also a better choice for the Hundred Peaks Sect.

"Since that's the case, I won't be polite," Cao Zhen then looked at Gu Chengyu and Gai Su'e and said, "Could the two of you help me with the alchemy?"

"Of course, no problem at all." The faces of the two instantly showed joy. This person before them was a reincarnated being with great ability and an alchemy master. Helping him with alchemy meant they could learn many alchemy techniques, which would greatly enhance their own capabilities.

Upon returning that day, Gu Chengyu had informed Gai Su'e that Cao Zhen was a reincarnated being with great ability.

Cao Zhen did not start alchemy right away but said, "Come, you two, I will first teach you how to craft pills. It might be a bit difficult, and might take a little time."

The joy on the faces of the two deepened, he was going to teach them directly how to craft pills... Difficult, they were in charge of the Five-Element Pill Ground, their level of alchemy mastery was notable within the entire Hundred Peaks Sect. How difficult could it be? And how long could it possibly take?

One month later...

Gu Chengyu and Gai Su'e suddenly felt incredibly foolish. For an entire month, they had only barely managed to learn the alchemy techniques taught to them by Cao Zhen, and to learn it completely—not to master it!

Or to say... it wasn't that they were dull, but that these alchemy techniques were truly too difficult to learn?

The two sighed, their gazes shifting to the side where, today, Cao Zhen had specially gone out and brought back a disciple named Yi Sheng.

Peak Master Cao came today with another disciple, implying he wanted this disciple to join them in learning alchemy. It took them an entire month just to barely complete the technique, and that too with their already considerable talent and a wealth of alchemy experience.

Peak Master Cao's disciple was so young and a whole month behind them in starting to learn alchemy, suggesting that Peak Master Cao intended them to finish learning before he would teach his own disciple.

After all, the Hundred Peaks competition was imminent. It seemed Peak Master Cao still had much to attend to, so he planned to have them assist in teaching the disciple. Therefore, they needed to make the most of their time and not delay Peak Master Cao.

The two studied even more earnestly and diligently.

But soon, they both began to question their life choices.

They felt that Peak Master Cao didn't bring this disciple over for them to teach, but for the disciple to truly learn alchemy from Peak Master Cao himself.

After half a month, they suddenly felt that perhaps Peak Master Cao brought this disciple to help teach them.

In just half a month, this girl named Yi Sheng had already completely mastered the alchemy techniques taught by Peak Master Cao!

Another half month passed, and the two finally took a deep breath.

It had taken them a full two months to truly master how to concoct the pills of Peak Master Cao.

This was with continuous, serious, and diligent teaching from both Peak Master Cao and his disciple. Yet, Peak Master Cao's disciple had needed only half a month.

Now, they felt it wasn't that the alchemy techniques were too difficult, but that they really were too stupid.

Gu Chengyu went over the alchemy techniques he had learned in his mind, and after a long period of furrowing his brows and pondering, he surmised, "Peak Master, this pill, I fear, may take a year to complete."

"A year? If it could be completed in a year, that would be good," Cao Zhen reflected upon the two's thoughts, trying to think if there was anything more he could teach them to speed up their alchemy, or perhaps set up an array here?

While he was pondering this, the voice of Lv Chaoqiong suddenly carried over from a distance.

"In half a month, the Hundred Peaks competition begins. By sunset, the Hidden Dragon Observatory will officially close, all disciples must leave promptly!"

As per the rules of the Hundred Peaks Sect, before the Hundred Peaks competition, all disciples must return to their respective Peaks to adjust their conditions and prepare for the final showdown.

Of course, returning to their Peaks didn't mean they couldn't leave their own mountains; it meant they had to return from places of trial like the Hidden Dragon Immortal Palace back to their Peaks.

Cao Zhen sighed with resignation, "Time passes so quickly; the Hundred Peaks competition is about to begin. Since that's the case, I must trouble you both. I will now leave first with my disciple."

Chapter 213: Hundred Peaks Convergence Method\_1

The disciples of Four Treasures Peak finally gathered together neatly.

Ling Xi and Yan Yourong, the two of them stood atop the peak, continuously pointing here and there, seemingly discussing what sort of things should be arranged and where in the future planning of Four Treasures Peak.

Little Beiyan was excitedly circling around each automaton, turning this way and that.

Yi Sheng started to tally the financial income and expenses of this recent period. She had been inside the Five-Element Pill Ground for this entire time, but the Gathering Spirit Talismans from the various Taoist Institutions of Four Treasures Peak had already begun to sell. Automatons making and selling talismans was not a problem, but asking them to manage financial accounting was a bit too difficult for them.

Cao Zhen silently opened his own document.

Earth Fire Thunder Light Circle: Level 31.

Chaos Demon Expelling Palm: Level 31.

Hidden Edge Sword: Level 31.

Flood Dragon Emerges from the Sea Spear...

He now had over forty new Divine Skills, and without exception, all these Divine Skills were at Level 31.

This was the feeling of winning effortlessly. These four apprentices had indeed each cultivated at least ten Divine Skills, and they all cultivated them to the utmost limit they were capable of, Level 31.

The only pity was that Little Beiyan hadn't joined in, so he couldn't gain the Divine Skills that Little Beiyan had cultivated. Fortunately, Zi Yu alone had provided twenty kinds of Divine Skills, which compensated for it.

Twenty kinds...

As Cao Zhen pondered, he felt something was amiss. Zi Yu possessed the talent to quickly master anything he cultivated.

Logically, he should have cultivated more Divine Skills. Why only more than twenty?

That kid couldn't have been slacking off, could he?

Cao Zhen looked up toward Zi Yu, only to discover that Zi Yu had come over and asked, "Master, since you created these automatons, you must know Artifact Refining, right?"

"Automatons involve Mechanical Techniques, which are not quite the same as Artifact Refining. Though I'm not highly skilled in Artifact Refining, teaching you is certainly within my capabilities."

Zi Yu nodded slightly, "As expected, how could my Master not know these things? Well then, Master, teach me how to refine artifacts now."

Cao Zhen looked at Zi Yu curiously and asked, "Why do you want to learn Artifact Refining?"

Zi Yu proudly held up the Heavenly Gang Disha Beads and declared, "I plan to descend the mountain. I believe that once I do, I'll encounter numerous opportunities and obtain countless materials. Hence, I must learn Artifact Refining first to prepare for repairing the Heavenly Gang Disha Beads after I leave."

Cao Zhen was momentarily speechless. You're quite confident, planning so far ahead. But his disciple wanting to learn Artifact Refining was indeed a good thing.

Artifact Refining was not his strong suit, but even Zhang Daoling, who was not proficient in Artifact Refining, could still teach a Core Formation Stage disciple, couldn't he?

"If you want to learn Artifact Refining, I can teach you right now. But before that, answer me, have you been slacking off inside Hidden Dragon Observatory?"

"Slacking off?" Zi Yu immediately protested indignantly, "I am the protagonist; what protagonist ever slacks off? Master, I learned twenty Divine Skills in Hidden Dragon Observatory, all of which were lost skills that required my own research..."

"Lost skills?" Cao Zhen's eyes widened, "Don't tell me the skills you've been cultivating are like those in the Record of Deities and Demons?"

"No, no," Zi Yu shook his head with regret, "The foundation of our Hundred Peaks Sect is just too weak. The books I found were the kind that couldn't be worse, with who knows how many parts missing. Although I managed to successfully cultivate them, even though they also feel strong, there isn't one that can compare to the Record of Deities and Demons."

Cao Zhen didn't want to talk anymore, so he finally understood why Zi Yu's cultivation of Divine Skills was so slow—he had been cultivating those missing skills all along.

Missing Divine Skills, even if others attempted to cultivate them, would likely fail, and if not careful, might even lead to deviating from the right path, resulting in all manner of problems.

Yet Zi Yu had managed to learn twenty of them. What more could he say?

"Come, let's start with Artifact Refining. It seems we don't have the materials for Artifact Refining on our peak... Wait for your master, I'll go find some materials and come back."

Cao Zhen quickly left Four Treasures Peak and returned to Hidden Dragon Observatory.

Though the Hidden Dragon Observatory was closed, who was he? The current Deputy Master of Hidden Dragon, the future Master of Hidden Dragon. The others couldn't go in, but could he not?

He went directly into the Immortal Soldier Workshop, took a load of Artifact Refining materials, and quickly went back to Four Treasures Peak to start teaching Zi Yu Artifact Refining.

Soon, he discovered that his disciple was indeed a genius in Artifact Refining, possibly not even less talented than Yi Sheng was in Alchemy.

Moreover, his gift for Artifact Refining was different from Yi Sheng's alchemical talent. Yi Sheng possessed a pure talent for Alchemy, quickly learning whatever pills she was told to refine and always achieving excellent results.

Zi Yu also learned quickly, but whenever he was refining artifacts, he always came up with all sorts of bizarre ideas.

"Master, I think the flame needs to be hotter... Yi Sheng, increase the fire for me..."

"Bang!"

As the temperature of the flame increased, the newly forged iron embryo completely melted away...

"Master, why stop at eighty-eight strikes? I think the limit should be ninety-nine."

In not much time, there was also a pile of shattered metal materials on the ground...

"Master, do you know what Nine Heavens of Ice Fire is? We should use both ice and fire simultaneously, that's the real way to greatness. How could I, the protagonist, refine artifacts the same way others do?"

Chapter 214: Hundred Peaks Convergence\_2

Cao Zhen looked at piles of discarded materials all around, turned, and walked away, thinking that if he didn't have free reign over the resources of the Hidden Dragon Observatory, he wouldn't be able to bear Xiang Ziyu's extravagance.

However, although Xiang Ziyu's manufacturing was intense, the level of artifact refining improved quickly. In just a few days, he had already broken through to the fifteenth level.

Cao Zhen then turned to his other disciples and said, "You shouldn't always be refining here alone, you should also go to Vermilion Bird Peak and seek guidance. Ling Xi, when you go to Vermilion Bird Peak, don't be too low-key, you still need to show off your talisman-making skills. And Yi Sheng, you should go to Vermilion Bird Peak as well, let them see the level of your pill refining."

He and Yi Sheng had stayed in the Five-Element Pill Ground for so long, teaching Gu Chengyu to refine pills. They couldn't possibly just teach verbally; they had to refine the pills while teaching. During this period, Yi Sheng even managed to produce several pills and improved her pill-refining level.

Chief Tu Zhuque had told him to let his disciples learn more about the Six Arts, so he sent the two strongest disciples in the Six Arts to Vermilion Bird Peak, allowing the people there to witness his disciples' skill levels.

Once Ling Xi's talisman-making skill and Yi Sheng's pill-refining level become known, Four Treasures Peak will certainly attract more admirers.

"By the way, how have our Gathering Spirit Talismans been selling recently?" Cao Zhen asked Yi Sheng with concern, "How is the income situation?"

Yi Sheng looked at the spreadsheet that her master taught her to make and reported, "Our Gathering Spirit Talismans have rapidly dominated the market since we started selling them. Now, in the Hundred Peaks Sect, almost no one besides our people is selling Gathering Spirit Talismans anymore.

Because our Gathering Spirit Talismans are of better quality yet more affordable, others can't earn much by selling them.

Moreover, the materials we stockpiled before are now being sold off in large quantities, at double the price."

"However, in my calculation these past few days, I've noticed that the people from the Taoist Institutions have been getting increasingly disobedient, secretly keeping more and more Gathering Spirit Talismans for themselves."

"We'll deal with those issues after the rearrangement of the Hundred Peaks. We don't have time to bother with them right now," Cao Zhen didn't have the energy to deal with these people for the moment and continued, "So, how many Spirit Stones do you think we can gather by the day before the rearrangement of the Hundred Peaks?"

Yi Sheng quickly began calculating, and after a moment, she looked up and answered, "Master, counting your own Spirit Stones, and after mortgaging our two Spirit Fields, Four Treasures Peak will have gathered at least three million two hundred thousand Spirit Stones before the rearrangement of the Hundred Peaks."

"Three million two?!" Ling Xi, hearing the number his junior sister mentioned, was almost moved to tears. That was a whole three million two hundred thousand Spirit Stones. There was a time when Four Treasures Peak couldn't even gather three hundred Spirit Stones, and now they could easily produce three million two!

Cao Zhen, seeing Ling Xi's excitement, also showed a smile. Three million two Spirit Stones seemed like a lot, but without earning a few more sums from the gambling houses, it would be far from enough.

The materials of Hidden Dragon Observatory had already been almost entirely used up by him, and he still needed to refine Dragon and Tiger Golden Pills, the cost of these materials had to be borne by him. Additionally, in the upcoming Minor Era of Inversion of Heaven and Earth, as the powerful practitioners begin to sleep, the world would become more chaotic, and he must refine more pills just in case.

Pills for healing wounds, Revival Pills for quickly recovering mana during fights, all these had to be refined.

If he didn't earn a fortune from the gambling houses, these Spirit Stones would definitely not be enough.

After finishing the accounting, Yi Sheng followed Ling Xi down the mountain, heading straight for Vermilion Bird Peak.

Soon after the two had left, Elder Copper Dish arrived at Four Treasures Peak.

"Elder, what brings you here?" Cao Zhen looked at Elder Copper Dish in surprise; without any issues, Elder Copper Dish rarely went out.

Elder Copper Dish spoke slowly, "The Supreme Elder has entered his slumber."

"What!" Cao Zhen's face changed drastically, wasn't there still three to four months to go? The Supreme Elder had already entered his slumber now?

The number one person in the Hundred Peaks Sect was not the Sect Leader Bai Fengzi, but the Supreme Elder. Now that the Supreme Elder was in slumber, Hundred Peaks Sect had lost its strongest combat force!

"The Sect Leader True Person might not hold out much longer either," Elder Copper Dish said to Cao Zhen with deep sincerity, "I came to inform you of these matters so that you can be prepared in advance and speed up your cultivation."

After all, once the powerful ones go into slumber, no one knows what kind of danger Hundred Peaks Sect might encounter.

Though I've heard that Li Ke is your Dao companion, however strong Li Ke may be, she is ultimately one person. She is also a disciple of Vermilion Bird Peak, not a disciple of Four Treasures Peak.

At a critical moment between Vermilion Bird Peak and Four Treasures Peak, she can only protect one—how will she choose?

Ultimately, one must rely on oneself."

Cao Zhen nodded heavily and replied, "I understand, I will speed up my cultivation."

After Elder Copper Dish had conveyed the latest news he knew about, the conversation took a turn, and he suddenly asked, "Another thing, I've come to find you about is the Hundred Peaks Contest. How confident are you in the Hundred Peaks Contest, and what ranking do you think you can reach? I have some Spirit Stones here, and I'm planning to place a bet on you."

"Around the fifty-fifth rank, the limit for Four Treasures Peak is probably just to reach this rank. Chief Tu once told me to push Four Treasures Peak into the Upper Fifty Peaks, but reaching the Upper Fifty Peaks is just too difficult."

Chapter 215: Hundred Peaks Convergence Law\_3

Cao Zhen thought about it but still didn't speak the truth. Everyone in the Hundred Peaks Sect knew he was close to Elder Copper Plate. If Elder Copper Plate were to press for Four Treasures Peak to keep its ranking unchanged, then everyone would suspect something was amiss, and how would he make money?

Moreover, if Elder Copper Plate knew that he didn't want to change Four Treasures Peak's ranking, he would surely say that Cao Zhen didn't care about the glory of Four Treasures Peak.

So, Cao Zhen decided it was simpler to deceive Elder Copper Plate as well.

"Fifty-five? Good, good, that's already very high!" Elder Copper Plate said cheerfully upon hearing the news, his face full of relief as he looked at Cao Zhen, seemingly lost in reminiscence, "Do you know? When your master was alive, he once got drunk and told me that he hoped one day Four Treasures Peak could break into the top ninety. That way, he could rest in peace.

Now, in such a short time, under your leadership, Four Treasures Peak is pushing for the top fifty peaks.

Don't feel pressured. Even if we don't make it into the top fifty this time, I believe that by the next re-ranking of Hundred Peaks, Four Treasures Peak will certainly break into the Upper Fifty Peaks under your leadership.

"You haven't let your master down! You haven't let the ancestors of the Hundred Peaks Sect down!" Elder Copper Plate said, and he even reached up to wipe away a tear.

For a moment, Cao Zhen didn't know what to say. Suddenly, a voice came from outside.

"Old classmate, I've come to see you."

The voice was alarmingly familiar.

A look of joy instantly spread across Cao Zhen's face. It was Chen Shizhi coming to see him—his old classmate had never forgotten him.

Seeing that someone had come to see Cao Zhen, Elder Copper Plate whispered, "Alright, my child, I won't disturb you any longer. I should go back and think about who to send to the gambling house to place bets. With our relationship, if I go and bet directly, others will know, and there won't be much money to be made.

After the grand competition of Hundred Peaks, Four Treasures Peak's ranking will rise, and you will surely recruit more disciples, which will require more resources. I, Copper Plate, have no family ties, and keeping money is of no use to me. I need to prepare for you in advance."

Cao Zhen gently wiped the sweat from his forehead. Elder Copper Plate, I really didn't mean to deceive you. I can only ensure Four Treasures Peak's survival in the upcoming Qiankun small epoch by earning more money and refining enough pills.

All of this is for the good of Four Treasures Peak. After the grand competition of Hundred Peaks, whatever money you've lost, I'll return tenfold.

He sent Elder Copper Plate to the door and saw Chen Shizhi, who had already entered the courtyard, carrying two boxes of gifts in his hands.

"Old Chen, what is this..." Cao Zhen hurriedly met him, reprimanding, "I'm already happy that you came to see me, why did you bring gifts? You Rong, what are you standing there for? Didn't you see the guest has arrived? Hurry and make tea, and remember, the best tea!"

He sounded reproachful, yet his heart was warm. Chen Shizhi, only a scholar, what money could he have? And yet, he'd brought gifts. That was the camaraderie between classmates.

"Old Cao, there's no need for such formalities between us classmates," Chen Shizhi said, looking at Cao Zhen's enthusiastic manner and sneering inwardly. This eager hospitality was surely to show off: boasting about how well you're doing now, flaunting the rise of Four Treasures Peak.

If it weren't for the purpose of gathering information today, you think I'd come to your run-down Four Treasures Peak! If you want to put on an act, then I'll let you act for a while and see what you're pretending to be.

The two entered the room, and despite feeling reluctant, Yan Yourong still prepared the top-quality tea sent by Vermilion Bird Peak and served it.

Originally, Four Treasures Peak had no good tea; this was given by Tu Zhuque when Yi Sheng left Vermilion Bird Peak. After all, with Cao Zhen and Li Ke's relationship as it was, it would be improper for Cao Zhen's disciple to leave Vermilion Bird Peak without any acknowledgment, so Tu Zhuque sent some tea as a gesture.

Chen Shizhi picked up the cup and upon seeing the tea, he smirked inwardly. As expected, Cao Zhen was eager to show off to him.

Although he was a teacher at the Taoist Institution, he was very familiar with the affairs of each peak within the Hundred Peaks Sect. The tea was generally green, but the very top layer was tinged with a fiery red hue—only Vermilion Bird Peak had such tea leaves.

Cao Zhen was showing off, reminding him of the close relationship they had with Vermilion Bird Peak, hinting that Immortal Li Ke would be his future partner.

Let him show off now.

He didn't believe that Cao Zhen would truly become Immortal Li Ke's partner in the future.

Li Ke was currently deceived by Cao Zhen, but could Cao Zhen deceive her for a lifetime?

Cao Zhen, the manipulator, would eventually reveal his true colors!

Chen Shizhi decided to keep playing along with Cao Zhen. After taking a sip of the tea, he exclaimed, "What wonderful tea."

"Old Chen, do you like it?" Cao Zhen turned to Yan Yourong and said, "Go later and pack some of this tea for my old classmate."

While speaking, he was wary Chen Shizhi might decline out of politeness, so without waiting for Chen Shizhi to refuse, Cao Zhen said, "I don't know much about tea, it's wasted on me. Since you like it, Old Chen, take some more when you go back."

"Well, thank you then, Old classmate," Chen Shizhi thought with a sneer. That wasn't enough to show off in Four Treasures Peak, now you want me to bring the tea back, so every time I make it, I'm reminded of your relationship with Vermilion Bird Peak; you wish to boast even when you're not around!

Chapter 216: Hundred Peaks Convergence Technique\_4

Show off all you want, I'm curious to see how much longer you can keep up this arrogance.

Chen Shizhi put down his teacup, pretending to be on good terms, and asked, "Old Cao, we've been classmates for so many years, can you level with me this time? With the re-ranking of the Hundred Peaks, around what rank do you think Four Treasures Peak can get?"

You know I've always been frugal, and I still have some spare money. This time, with the re-ranking of the Hundred Peaks, I also want to place a wager."

"The re-ranking of the Hundred Peaks..." Cao Zhen glanced at Yan Yourong in the room and waved his hand slightly, "Yourong, you go out first."

Now, aside from Yi Sheng who was with her that day, none of the disciples of Four Treasures Peak knew that he wanted to keep Four Treasures Peak's ranking at one hundred. It wasn't that he didn't trust these disciples, but he feared that if they knew, they might inadvertently reveal his plan. He intended to clarify everything to his disciples only during the grand competition of the Hundred Peaks.

"Yes." Yan Yourong, with dissatisfaction written all over her face, cast a glance at Chen Shizhi and left the room.

After Yan Yourong closed the door, Cao Zhen looked at Chen Shizhi with a mysterious expression and said, "This time in the re-ranking of the Hundred Peaks, I plan to aim for the hundredth rank!"

Chen Shizhi was his old classmate, now living a mediocre life, and he wanted Chen Shizhi to live better.

Moreover, Chen Shizhi was different from Elder Copper Plate; he was just a teacher at the Taoist Institution and wouldn't attract too much attention.

"What!" Chen Shizhi was instantly stunned.

"Keep it down." Cao Zhen said in a low voice, "My disciples don't know yet, but I'm prepared to have Four Treasures Peak rank at the very last place.

It's actually quite simple. With the current odds for Four Treasures Peak, if I want to earn more Spirit Stones, the only way is to keep Four Treasures Peak's ranking unchanged.

Right now, this secret is known to no one. If you want to wager, then stake all your assets on Four Treasures Peak ranking at one hundred! I guarantee you'll make a fortune this time!"

"So, that's how it is! Since that's the case, when I go back, I'll definitely place my bet on your rank of one hundred." Chen Shizhi was cursing inwardly. Cao Zhen, you cheated me once before, not satisfied with just once, you want to cheat me again, aiming to rob me of all my assets, huh? You're ruthless!

No wonder you sent your disciple away in advance; you're afraid she'll see you cheating me and tarnish the image you have in the hearts of your disciples.

Do you think I, Chen Shizhi, am a fool?

To maintain the rank of one hundred? During the grand competition of the Hundred Peaks, which peak isn't giving their all to climb even just one or two ranks higher?

The ranking of the Hundred Peaks represents the honor of a peak!

Also, I've heard that the Peak Master of Vermilion Bird Peak has said he hopes Four Treasures Peak can break into the top fifty. Only then would Immortal Li Ke agree to become your Daoist companion.

Don't you want to become Daoist companions with Immortal Li Ke?

You think I came here just to listen to you and then directly go and place my bets?

Am I, Chen Shizhi, that foolish?

I came here to use my own observations and your words to determine the rank that Four Treasures Peak aims to achieve.

Now, the answer is quite clear.

Cao Zhen cares so much about Vermilion Bird Peak; he's so eager to become Daoist companions with Li Ke, he would certainly do everything possible to break into the top fifty. Plus, considering the tea leaves from Vermilion Bird Peak, the answer is quite obvious.

Four Treasures Peak will break into the top fifty!

Now, I can go and wager on Four Treasures Peak's ranking.

Thinking this, Chen Shizhi didn't want to stay any longer. He stood up and said to Cao Zhen, "Old Cao, if that's the case, then I must take my leave first."

Cao Zhen hurriedly tried to retain him, "No, Old Chen, stay for a meal before you go."

"No thanks, after all, I still need to gather some money." Chen Shizhi cursed inwardly, a meal? To hear you show off during the meal?

"Then wait, the tea leaves, there are also the tea leaves."

"No need, we can talk about it next time I come." Chen Shizhi didn't want to spend another moment there; he turned and left.

Cao Zhen watched Chen Shizhi's retreating back, sighed with a hint of regret, "It's always like this, not even staying for a meal, we haven't had a proper chat in so long. That's right, and there's Chao Zi Zai, I haven't seen him for a long time either."

Thinking of another old classmate, he quickly made his way to Seven Star Peak with the pills he had recently refined at the Five-Element Pill Ground.

He hadn't visited other peaks lately, but from what he knew, every peak within the Hundred Peaks was in a state of tension, making last-ditch efforts for the grand competition of the Hundred Peaks, and he assumed the other peaks were doing the same.

However, when he arrived at Seven Star Peak, he couldn't feel any trace of tension. It seemed as if from the Peak Master Deng Qixing to every disciple, they had resigned themselves to their fate and chosen to lie flat.

It was said that Seven Star Peak and Four Treasures Peak were of equal standing, and the reason Seven Star Peak ranked ninety-ninth was only because there was the even worse Four Treasures Peak.

Now that everyone knew Four Treasures Peak had risen, Seven Star Peak had become the sole holder of its rank. If they didn't lie flat, what else could they do?

"Old Cao, what brings you to Seven Star Peak?" Chao Zi Zai, seeing Cao Zhen coming, expressed joy, but his heart immediately felt a slight sorrow.

Everyone knew that Four Treasures Peak had risen and that its ranking would surely climb significantly in this re-ranking of the Hundred Peaks.

His good brother's peak climbing in rank made him happy, but their Seven Star Peak... this time, it might very well be the turn for Seven Star Peak to become the last, the one hundredth.

"I came to see you, naturally, because there's something good. Come on, let's go inside and talk."

Chapter 217: Hundred Peaks Gathering Method\_5

Cao Zhen led Chao Zi into the room, closed the door, and recited the excuse he had concocted on the way, "Old Chao, you must have heard about the Nirvana Pill I gave to Li Ke at the Golden Core Club of Vermilion Bird Peak."

"Of course, I've heard about it. It is said to be the Cycle of Nirvana Pill that has disappeared from the entire Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty," Chao Zi replied with a joyful smile, "I haven't even congratulated you yet. I say, you really hid it well, even I didn't know that you and Immortal Li Ke were together. You really have a way."

"That's not the point," Cao Zhen helplessly steered the conversation back, "Actually, the opportunity I received at that time was not just the Nirvana Pill; there were others."

"Pure Yang Utmost True Solution!" Chao Zi reacted instantly, exclaiming, "I know now! You obtained your Pure Yang Real Solution at that time. Such a cultivation technique, yet you gave it to me."

"Old Chao, wait a moment, let me finish speaking," Cao Zhen said with resignation. The excuse I've been pondering over on my way here, can't you let me finish it in one go?

"Indeed, I obtained the Pure Yang Utmost True Solution at that time because the predecessor who left the legacy had a disciple who was of the fire system, and apart from the Pure Yang Utmost True Solution, he left several other pills too." As he spoke, Cao Zhen took out some pills that he had previously refined at the Five-Element Pill Ground, "These two pills are especially suitable for a fire system constitution."

"I don't need them," Chao Zi immediately shook his head as he looked at the two pills in Cao Zhen's hands, saying, "I know these two pills might be very useful to me, but I understand myself. I am not a person with exceptional talent. For me to take these pills would be a waste."

But your disciple Yi Sheng, she is also of the fire constitution and is recognized by everyone as a genius. You should give these two pills to her," Chao Zi suggested.

Cao Zhen felt the sincerity in Chao Zi's words, reached out, and patted Chao Zi's shoulder heavily twice, saying, "Old Chao, it's rare to find someone as 'foolish' as you are. If it were someone else, they might have taken the pills and consumed them right away."

Don't worry, I have even more suitable pills for Yi Sheng, and moreover, I have already prepared her path of cultivation for the future."

Chao Zi still did not reach for the pills, but instead asked skeptically, "Are you lying to me?"

"Why would I lie to you? Yi Sheng is my disciple; how could I neglect her? You probably don't know, but I even pleaded with Chief Tu of Vermilion Bird Peak to allow Yi Sheng to enter the Vermilion Bird Blood Pool of Vermilion Bird Peak. How could I not care for her?"

"You should have heard that my other disciples are now at the Core Formation Stage and are called the Four Sons of the Hidden Dragon. They are also my disciples; how could I favor only those four and not care for Yi Sheng?"

"The pills you see here are indeed more suitable for you, and not so much for Yi Sheng," Cao Zhen asserted.

After thinking for a moment, Chao Zi finally nodded and said, "That's true. Since it is so, Old Cao, I will not stand on ceremony any longer. How should I take these pills?"

"First, consume the red pill. Yes, then now swallow the blue pill," Cao Zhen instructed.

Chao Zi took the two pills one after the other, and the next moment, he felt a powerful surge of energy wildly stirring inside his body. His qi surged crazily, his heart pounded furiously, and he even felt as if his body were a treasure trove that had been fully opened, revealing the barely perceptible Red Abyssal Flame within him that now seemed to burn uncontrollably.

Seeing the Red Abyssal Flame around Chao Zi, Cao Zhen quickly said, "Destroy all your Tao Bases. Trust me, those Tao Bases are no longer worthy of you; they will only hold you back. Now, circulate the Pure Yang Utmost Real Solution I gave you and rebuild your Tao Base."

Without a word, Chao Zi's Tao Base shattered to pieces behind him!

He trusted that his close friend would not deceive him. What did it matter if they were destroyed? If necessary, he would just start over again.

Moreover, he could now sense the surging power within him even more acutely.

Instantly, his Foundation Establishment crumbled completely!

But quickly, the pills absorbed all the power from the shattered Tao Base and then infused it back into him.

In an instant, Chao Zi felt as if the scene before him had dramatically transformed; it was as if he was no longer in his own room, but standing amidst wildly burning flames.

As he began to circulate the Pure Yang Utmost True Solution, a Tao Base radiating divine light of five colors quickly emerged behind him.

One Tao Base appeared, followed by a second, a third... Tao Bases appeared one after another, and soon, ten Tao Bases emerged, each crowned with a whirling flame. These flames were composed of both red and green colors.

Red Abyssal Flame!

Great Perfection of ten Tao Bases, each one a phenomenal Tao Base!

These were his Tao Bases; he too could achieve Great Perfection of his Tao Bases!

Chao Zi was nearly driven to madness in an instant; such phenomena were meant only for geniuses, and yet... he had managed to accomplish this himself.

Old Cao, what kind of pill had he given him!

"Gather your spirit!" Cao Zhen shouted lowly and produced another pill, launching it into Chao Zi's mouth from afar.

The voice rang out like the drum at dusk and the bell at dawn, tolling within Chao Zi's heart. Chao Zi took a deep breath, quickly gathered his spirit, and continued to circulate the Pure Yang Utmost True Solution.

The next moment, an Immortal Bridge with flames both red and green appeared behind him.

Chapter 218: Hundred Peaks Convergence Law\_6

Immortal Bridge of Wonders!

Shortly thereafter, a second, a third...until all ten Immortal Bridges appeared, each one an Immortal Bridge of Wonders!

Perfect Fulfillment on the Ten Dao Platforms, Perfect Fulfillment on the Ten Immortal Bridges!

Cao Zhen felt the power gradually fading from Chao Zi's body and sighed softly. Indeed, the purity of Old Chao's Red Abyssal Flame Body was too low. Managing to complete ten Immortal Bridges was already the limit; there was no chance he could condense a pill directly like Ling Xi and the others.

Feeling an unprecedented power within him, Chao Zi nearly wanted to howl longingly at the sky.

Before, he was merely at the Tao Base stage, but now he had achieved a perfect Ten Immortal Bridges!

"Old Cao!" Chao Zi looked at Cao Zhen. For a moment, this rugged man was so moved that he didn't even know what to say; faintly, tears of emotion even appeared in his eyes.

"Cut it out, we're both grown men here; don't play sentimental with me. I'm helping you as much as I'm helping myself. We're about to swear brotherhood after all."

Cao Zhen thought that after Chao Zi's breakthrough, Seven Star Peak's ranking should improve somewhat. The competition of the Hundred Peaks was indeed more demanding than that of the Six Arts, but they would still have to fight. Seven Star Peak was not strong in the Six Arts, but moving up a rank or two should be possible.

Time passed slowly.

Now, every peak was preparing for the competition of the Hundred Peaks, but daily life still had to go on. They needed to go out and purchase various necessities, especially during these last moments of preparation. While getting ready, they were also gathering information on their competitors.

Especially the masters of the bottom twenty peaks. They were extremely concerned with the state of Four Treasures Peak.

Soon, a piece of news began to spread, and it originated from Vermilion Bird Peak.

"Have you heard? Ling Xi from Four Treasures Peak is actually a genius in talisman crafting. I have a junior sister, a very good friend of mine from Vermilion Bird Peak, and she told me that recently, Ling Xi

often visits Vermilion Bird Peak to exchange ideas about talisman making. Initially, it was just an exchange, but later on, it turned into Ling Xi instructing Vermilion Bird's people on talisman making."

"How could that be? Even if the people of Vermilion Bird Peak aren't adept at talisman making, they are still from one of the Top Ten Peaks. How could they need guidance from Four Treasures Peak?"

"How could it not be possible? Those Gathering Spirit Talismans that have been selling like hot cakes were passed down from Four Treasures Peak. Anyway, I've told you the news—it's up to you to believe it or not. I'm sharing this news because of our life-and-death friendship, hoping that you can also make a fortune. If you don't believe me, there's nothing I can do about it. Now, I'm going to the betting house to wager on Four Treasures Peak's ranking."

Revolving Thought Peak, the ninetieth.

Liu Zhixing looked at his close friend who had just arrived, full of surprise: "Brother Yue Chong, the competition of the Hundred Peaks is about to begin. As the leading disciple of your peak, shouldn't you be helping your master with the final preparations instead of running over here to Revolving Thought Peak?"

"If I don't come now, it'll be too late. I've got urgent news for you." Yue Chong was very familiar with Liu Zhixing. He didn't even wait for Liu Zhixing to open the door, but pushed it open himself, pulling Liu Zhixing into the room before closing the door and speaking urgently, "I'm here because I'm afraid you'll make the wrong bet on Four Treasures Peak's ranking."

We've analyzed before that although the disciples of Four Treasures Peak can fight, they're few in number and at most, they're proficient in talisman making. But I just got news that the lead disciple of Four Treasures Peak, Ling Xi, has reached a height in talisman making far beyond our imagination.

Even the people of Vermilion Bird Peak have to consult with Ling Xi on this craft. And alchemy! Do you remember the rumor we heard before about Cao Zhen going to Precious Cauldron Pavilion to perform alchemy before his challenge against Starshine Peak?

I've inquired about it, and that rumor is true—Cao Zhen is indeed skilled at alchemy. And his junior disciple Yi Sheng is equally proficient in alchemy, even going to Vermilion Bird Peak to provide guidance in recent days."

In addition to that, Cao Zhen's not so sharp third disciple, Xiang Ziyu, turns out to be skilled at artifact refining.

With this in mind, Four Treasures Peak has significant ability in three out of the Six Arts, particularly two of them.

Therefore, the weakest aspect of Four Treasures Peak, the Six Arts, isn't dragging them down quite as much as we thought it would.

Moreover, I've heard that the master of Vermilion Bird Peak has instructed the disciples that if Four Treasures Peak has any cultivation or Six Arts problems, they should visit Vermilion Bird for assistance, and they must teach them diligently.

Vermilion Bird Peak is clearly set on helping Four Treasures Peak rise in the rankings of the Hundred Peaks, and that's a contender from the Top Ten Peaks!"

"Damn it!" Liu Zhixing cursed softly, saying sternly, "Cao Zhen has really struck it lucky to have caught Li Ke's attention! With this, could it be that Four Treasures Peak's ranking will soar above the eightieth?"

"Eightieth? I fear not just that!" Yue Chong said as he analyzed, "Don't forget the news brought back by those who returned from Hidden Dragon Immortal Palace—that aside from Yi Sheng, the other four disciples of Four Treasures Peak are all extremely strong.

They can fight if it comes to fighting, and they have the Six Arts. In fact, the Six Arts have now become their strength.

It's true that everyone practices the Six Arts, but like the peaks in the bottom twenty or even thirty, each peak may be good at one or two of the Six Arts, or at most three. They don't have an advantage over Four Treasures Peak, and might even be disadvantaged. Plus, with those four strong disciples from Four Treasures Peak, do you think their goal could only be the eightieth place?"

Liu Zhixing frowned and said, "Could it be the seventieth?"

"Not just that, I think at the very least, they could surge to around the sixtieth rank," Yue Chong stated his analysis, "Think about Cao Zhen. Before his challenge with Starshine Peak, who knew he was that strong? At that time, he was already scheming to make money through the challenge.

This time, during the Hundred Peaks competition, don't you think he wants to make money? If he does, then he would definitely keep some cards up his sleeve. By then, their obtained ranking, I estimate, will be much higher than many people expect."

"Right, considering that shameless character of Cao Zhen, he's definitely plotting something!" Liu Zhixing nodded emphatically in agreement, "Even sixty might be too low. I think it should be even higher, perhaps around fifty-five. Come on, let's hurry to the pawnshop."

Yue Chong was puzzled, "Why go to the pawnshop? You don't want to pawn items to exchange for Tao Spirit Stones and then bet on Cao Zhen, do you? It's fine to make some money, but there's no need to pawn."

"I have no choice but to pawn. I've already wagered on Four Treasures Peak ranking in the eighties before, and with what you've just said, I'm bound to lose all those Spirit Stones, so I need to bet more to break even."

Chapter 219: Slaughter Pig\_Platter\_1

Every time the Hundred Peaks Sect holds the Hundred Peaks Grand Competition, it's the busiest time for the gambling houses, but this year, in addition to the gambling houses, the pawnshops discovered that their business was booming in an incredible manner.

The Hundred Peaks Sect has several pawnshops that compete with each other on normal days, wishing for everyone to pawn their items at their establishments.

Today, the shop assistants in the pawnshops, seeing customers come in, almost all said the same thing.

"Kind customer, why don't you take a look at the pawnshop next door."

"It's not that we've stopped doing business, but we simply have no more Spirit Stones to offer you. Recently, there have been too many pawning customers, and all the Spirit Stones have been spent."

Liu Zhixing and Yue Chong visited four pawnshops before they finally encountered one that still had Spirit Stones. They pawned everything they had and, holding the Spirit Stones they had just gotten from the pawnshop, ran at full speed to the nearest gambling house.

Today, only three days remained until the Hundred Peaks Grand Competition, and the gambling house was already overfilled with people, so much so that one couldn't even squeeze inside. The gambling house had to hang bamboo lists outside, showing the betting odds for rankings of each peak, with most of the crowd gathering around the Four Treasures Peak lists.

With every Hundred Peaks Grand Competition, most peaks' positions wouldn't fluctuate much; a change of five or six places was considered significant, and a shift of ten places was definitely an anomaly.

Since the fluctuations weren't great, the odds naturally were not high.

To earn more, you'd bet on a peak with greater ranking fluctuations.

Take Four Treasures Peak, for instance. No one believed that it would continue to linger in the bottom ten places, and even fewer people bet on it being ranked below eightieth.

The rankings of Four Treasures Peak fluctuated greatly, so the odds were naturally high, and betting correctly could yield a significant profit.

Of course, odds like Vermilion Bird Peak falling out of the top fifty, or Flying Immortal Peak dropping from the top ten were also extremely high. If you bet ten thousand liang of Spirit Stones...

Then you would lose all ten thousand liang of your Spirit Stones.

These odds are high, yes, but even a fool knows they're impossible to hit.

Four Treasures Peak is different, though.

Everyone knows that Four Treasures Peak's ranking is sure to rise significantly, but no one knows by how much. That's why the gambling houses won't offer super low odds. If you bet accurately, you can still make a tidy sum.

Liu Zhixing didn't even look at the odds listed on the signboard, and simply ran straight to the betting area. Although the gambling house added extra staff to take in Spirit Stones for betting today, there were so many people betting that lines were still necessary.

After waiting for a good while, Liu Zhixing finally had only one person left in front of him.

"I'll bet five thousand liang of Spirit Stones on Four Treasures Peak ranking between sixty-first and sixty-fifth," a man said, laying down a Spiritual Stone Ticket worth five thousand liang on the counter.

Initially, when betting on the rankings of the Hundred Peaks Grand Competition at the gambling houses, there were no ranges—bets were placed on specific ranks.

For example, for Four Treasures Peak, you could bet on it ranking sixty-first, and if you hit the mark, you'd get the corresponding payout in Spirit Stones. If you were wrong, you'd lose everything.

If you wanted to bet on Four Treasures Peak ranking anywhere from sixty-first to sixty-fifth place, you had to buy all five different odds from sixty-first to sixty-fifth place.

This could lead to a situation where even if you eventually hit the mark, the payout might not be high enough to cover your bets, resulting in a loss.

But if you only bet on one or two ranks, the chances of hitting the mark were too low since even members of one's own sect could only roughly predict their possible ranking, not the exact place they would end up in.

As a result, initially, people were very cautious when betting on Hundred Peaks rankings, until one gambling house introduced this range betting method.

You could bet directly on a range of ranks, and, naturally, the odds were not as high as betting on a single rank, but the chances of winning were higher.

So everyone started to bet at this gambling house, and the others, seeing this trend, quickly followed suit. If they didn't, all the money would go to that one gambling house.

The gambling house assistant quickly took the Spiritual Stone Ticket. While writing a voucher, he said, "Betting on Four Treasures Peak ranking between sixty-first and sixty-fifth, the odds are two to one..."

"Wait a moment," the man who had laid out his Spiritual Stone Ticket called out, pressing down on his ticket, "This morning the odds for Four Treasures Peak ranking between sixty-first and sixty-fifth were two and a half to one. How come it's only two to one now?"

The assistant hurriedly explained, "These are the new odds set by the boss just recently. Kind customer, if you find the odds too low, you don't have to bet. However, these odds are already the higher ones; other gambling houses have even lower ones."

The gambling house's odds weren't set in stone; they would change based on the amount people bet and various snippets of information. The reduction in the odds for Four Treasures Peak ranking between sixty-first and sixty-fifth indicated that more people were optimistic about Four Treasures Peak reaching that range.

"Fine, I'll bet," the man hesitated for a moment, then decided to go through with his bet. If he waited any longer, he feared the odds would drop even lower.

The man quickly took his voucher and left, and it was Liu Zhixing's turn.

"Fifty thousand liang of Spirit Stones, all on Four Treasures Peak ranking between fifty-sixth and sixtieth," Liu Zhixing announced as he laid his Spiritual Stone Tickets emphatically on the counter. This was everything he could gather after pawning all that he could pawn.

If he lost the bet, he would be left with nothing, but he still went ahead, trusting his own judgment.

The clerk asked quickly, "Four Treasures Peak ranks fifty-sixth to sixtieth, the odds are one to 2.5, fifty thousand taels, are you sure?"

"Sure!" Liu Zhixing collected the gambling house's receipt, he believed his judgement was not wrong!

Today, the gambling houses of the major clans were already packed enough, but two days later, the day before the Grand Competition of the Hundred Peaks, they would be even more crowded.

Chen Shizhi came to one of the gambling houses early in the day and began to wait.

He was waiting for someone; although he had already decided which odds to choose, he wanted to wait a bit and confirm his decision was correct.

The spirit stones he carried were all he had, and half of them were borrowed!

He had to be extra cautious!

Suddenly, his gaze landed on a nondescript disciple,

That's right, it was him!

Chen Shizhi hurriedly stood up and quietly followed, wondering why this disciple had chosen this particular gambling house out of the many in the Hundred Peaks Sect.

The reason was that this gambling house was the closest to the Ministry of Works Immortal Palace, and he had also heard that Elder Copper Plate had bet here last time.

He guessed that Elder Copper Plate would definitely not come to bet in person. Everyone knew about his relationship with Cao Zhen; if he came to bet, others would naturally follow suit.

Elder Copper Plate would probably send someone he trusted instead.

Others might not be aware, but Chen Shizhi, who had been classmates with Cao Zhen, had heard him mention Elder Copper Plate before, and knew that Elder Copper Plate had a close friend at the Ministry of Works Immortal Palace. For some reason, they had a falling out and stopped interacting.

However, their cessation of interaction didn't mean they became enemies; instead, they were both waiting for the other to apologize.

They still cared about each other. Because he knew Elder Copper Plate was an Elder in the Ministry of Works Immortal Palace, he thought he might need Elder Copper Plate's help after leaving the Taoist Institution, so he remembered this very clearly.

As it turned out, he didn't join any of the peaks and instead became a schoolmaster.

Yet, he remembered the name of Elder Copper Plate's old friend—Elder Silver Disk. In this period, he had done everything possible to find out more about Elder Silver Disk's background. The unremarkable person before him, named Du Yu, was a disciple of Elder Silver Disk.

Clearly, Elder Copper Plate had sought out Elder Silver Disk, who in turn had sent this disciple to place the bet.

After noticing Du Yu, he quickly followed, intending to bet right after him, but for some reason, a few more people showed up and made their way in front of him.

Several individuals now separated him from Du Yu.

Du Yu walked up to the bookmaker and said somewhat timidly, "I bet on Four Treasures Peak ranking fifty-first to fifty-fifth. A total of one hundred thousand taels, please split it up and give me two receipts."

Of the one hundred thousand taels, fifty thousand were from his master, Elder Silver Disk, and the other fifty thousand were from Elder Copper Plate.

It was known to all that Elder Copper Plate had a close relationship with the Peak Master of Four Treasures Peak, and Elder Copper Plate even said he had studied the odds carefully and had gone to Peak Master Cao of Four Treasures Peak to ask whether it was better to bet on ranks fifty-one to fifty-five or fifty-six to sixty. Peak Master Cao had answered that they would definitely be within the top fifty-five.

With Elder Copper Plate saying so, what else was there to consider? His master naturally joined in the betting as well.

The clerk, upon hearing the request for two receipts, showed no surprise; these days, there were too many like him. He had seen people who, after betting, requested ten receipts.

"Four Treasures Peak ranking fifty-first to fifty-fifth, the odds are one to 3.5, one hundred thousand taels, two receipts, please keep them safe." Since it was a betting interval, the odds were generally not very high, and 3.5 was actually not low.

Du Yu quickly took the receipts and put them into his chest, even pressing one hand firmly on top of them as he backed out of the place. This was one hundred thousand spirit stones that, if nothing went wrong, would turn into three hundred fifty thousand—what if they were stolen?

Just as Du Yu left, someone behind him said, "One hundred thousand taels, I also bet on Four Treasures Peak ranking fifty-first to fifty-fifth."

Chen Shizhi's brows furrowed tightly. Du Yu definitely didn't have the one hundred thousand taels of spirit stones, so this must be Elder Copper Plate's bet.

Yet, didn't he judge that Cao Zhen's Four Treasures Peak could break into the Upper Fifty Peaks? Why was Elder Copper Plate only betting on ranks fifty-one to fifty-five?

Had he made a wrong judgement?

"I also bet on Four Treasures Peak ranking fifty-first to fifty-fifth, one hundred thousand taels."

Another voice sounded from in front of him.

Chen Shizhi looked forward and slowly, he was astonished to find that the people who had cut in front of him were all betting at least one hundred thousand at a time, and they were all betting on Four Treasures Peak ranking fifty-first to fifty-fifth.

Clearly, these people were following Du Yu's bet and had hastily placed their own bets after he appeared!

Thus, they were like him.

They knew of Du Yu's existence!

No, that wasn't right!

Chen Shizhi suddenly realized Cao Zhen was very cunning; he couldn't possibly be unaware that everyone knew his relationship with Elder Copper Plate. He should have also guessed that others would investigate Elder Copper Plate's actions.

So, was it possible that Cao Zhen was still deliberately putting on a show with Elder Copper Plate?