

My Master 221

Chapter 221: Slaughter Pig Pen_3

Elder Copper Plate was in fact set up as an openly known figure, just to lead everyone else astray.

In reality, he secretly placed his bets on the rankings Four Treasures Peak truly had the potential to reach.

Wasn't it like this the last time when Cao Zhen and Starshine Peak had their contest?

Elder Copper Plate deliberately bet on Cao Zhen to lose, misguiding others.

It must be so. Cao Zhen had made a considerable amount of Spirit Stones from selling Divine Weapons before, far more than a hundred thousand. Certainly, he would use even more Spirit Stones to bet on other rankings.

He deceived others, probably fearing that too many people would select the same odds as he did, ultimately causing the betting house to go bankrupt and unable to pay out the Spirit Stones. That way, he would be at a loss, so he had to deceive others.

But since he spent these hundred thousand Spirit Stones to misguide others, the true ranking of Four Treasures Peak would surely be higher, with even greater odds.

The answer was now glaringly obvious; my earlier judgement was not wrong.

The odds higher than those for rankings fifty-one to fifty-five, would naturally be for ranks forty-six to fifty.

As for ranks forty-one to forty-five, despite even higher odds, it is impossible for Four Treasures Peak to surge to such high rankings.

"A thousand liang. I place my bet on Four Treasures Peak's ranking, forty-six to fifty!" Chen Shizhi finally made up his mind. He was just a scholar, and many of these thousand liang of Spirit Stones were borrowed.

But these thousand liang of Spirit Stones will become more.

"Four Treasures Peak's ranking forty-six to fifty, odds are one to four and a half. A thousand liang, this is your promissory note," the betting house clerk quickly brought the note over.

Around the room, many people sneered upon hearing the odds of this choice.

"Has this person gone mad? No matter how strong Four Treasures Peak is, they can't possibly break into the Upper Fifty Peaks."

"Indeed, I did hear someone say that Chief Tu of Vermilion Bird Peak let Cao Zhen rise to the Upper Fifty Peaks, but I think that was just Chief Tu encouraging Cao Zhen, not really intending for Four Treasures Peak to make it into the Upper Fifty Peaks."

"There's also a possibility that Chief Tu simply doesn't realize how vast the gap is between the Upper and Lower Fifty Peaks. After all, to her, being from the Top Ten Peaks, there might not seem much difference between Peaks ranked in the fifties and those in the sixties or seventies."

"It's not out of the question."

"No matter how strong Four Treasures Peak is, it's impossible for them to break into the Upper Fifty Peaks; they only have five disciples after all."

The crowd continued to mock while discussing how exactly to place their bets.

Suddenly, a loud voice came from behind, so loud that it could be clearly heard in the noisy betting house, drowning out everyone else's voice.

"Place my bet on Four Treasures Peak ranking last!"

Last place?

The crowd immediately laughed even harder.

"Who is this? Have they lost their mind? Betting on Four Treasures Peak to be last?"

"How many years has this person been in seclusion? Do they still think that the current Four Treasures Peak is the same as before?"

"Betting on Four Treasures Peak to be last is just plain crazy!"

"Isn't this just throwing money away to the betting house?"

"Who would do something so ill-advised?"

Everyone turned around to look, but upon seeing who it was that spoke, they shut their mouths immediately.

"The Five Evils of Hundred Peaks."

"BeiChen Ying of the Five Evils and Wu Jinhuan of the Three Evils."

"They've come to place their bets too."

"They had just accepted Cao Zhen as part of the Hundred Peaks Six Evils, yet they fell out with him the very same day because of Immortal Li Ke!"

"The Five Evils of Hundred Peaks betting on Four Treasures Peak ranking last; that actually makes sense, they are obviously here to spite Four Treasures Peak."

With the reputation of the Five Evils of Hundred Peaks, there was no need for BeiChen Ying and the others to speak; the crowd parted way for them. BeiChen Ying walked straight to the betting area, slammed the table, and exclaimed, "Three hundred thousand liang on Spirit Stones, all on Four Treasures Peak ranking last!"

No sooner had the words left his mouth, numerous gasps echoed around.

"Three hundred thousand liang?"

"That's quite a heavy hand they've dealt."

"Isn't that unnecessary? Just to disgrace Four Treasures Peak, do they need to bet so much?"

BeiChen Ying instantly looked furiously towards the direction of the voice, "Does anyone need to teach me how to conduct my affairs? I'm not just betting on Four Treasures Peak, I also want to bet on Vermilion Bird Peak."

As he said that, he turned to the clerk and demanded, "Add another three hundred thousand liang, on Vermilion Bird Peak ranking last."

"Number five, stop!"

Wu Jinhuan grabbed BeiChen Ying and whispered, "Have you lost your mind? I know, you feel that Cao Zhen has turned against us because of Immortal Li Ke and you hate Vermilion Bird Peak more than anyone else among us.

But we can't place bets like this. If we bet on Vermilion Bird Peak ranking last, we'd truly be provoking Vermilion Bird Peak to the core. We still have to live within the Hundred Peaks Sect."

"Well... all right, I'll listen to you and not bet on Vermilion Bird Peak. Then I'll add two hundred thousand, for a total of five hundred thousand liang all on Four Treasures Peak ranking last!"

"Number five, there's no need, you're just quarreling with your money. You..." Wu Jinhuan wanted to persuade further, but seeing the angry look on BeiChen Ying's face, he finally sighed and conceded, "All right, number five, it's your call, place the bet."

The betting house clerk, with trembling hands, handed over the promissory note to BeiChen Ying, and said, "Four Treasures Peak ranking one hundred, one to fifty odds, five hundred thousand liang."

BeiChen Ying took the note and sighed inwardly, what a pity that fifty was the maximum odds.

There used to be no cap on the odds offered by betting houses. However, after one betting house had once offered a hundredfold odds with no cap and that bet actually came true, causing the betting house to shut down for good, all betting houses then united to adjust their highest odds to fiftyfold.

Chapter 222: Killing the Pig - Part 4

However, half a million Spirit Stones multiplied by fifty would be twenty-five million Spirit Stones, which could be considered sufficient.

Now, he was going to visit the next gambling house.

He was not only planning to purchase for the five of them, but also for Li Ke, and in addition, for Cao Zhen, who had directly given three million Spirit Stones this time.

Buying Spirit Stones for Li Ke, he could still take a cut, but for Cao Zhen, he could not skim any off the top. After all, Cao Zhen was not just a brother, but also the most critical person.

The reason he chose to buy at the closing of the gambling house today was also deliberate. Their plan was indeed flawless, but what if someone saw through it and followed their bets?

Therefore, they chose to bet at the last moment, so that even if others followed suit, the amount they could bet would be limited, and the impact would not be significant.

The next day, as the sun just started to rise.

In the entire Hundred Peaks Sect, from each peak and every location, a resonating bell chimed, each toll louder than the last.

At Four Treasures Peak, Ling Xi took the lead, with the five Disciples standing in a row before Cao Zhen. Apart from Yi Sheng, each radiated a thick aura of battle intent, every face resolute.

"Master, the grand competition of the Hundred Peaks is about to begin. Rest assured, we will not disgrace Four Treasures Peak!"

"Master, this time, we are determined to make Four Treasures Peak stand out!"

"Master, the glory of Four Treasures Peak will be safeguarded by us!"

Cao Zhen, feeling the soaring battle intent from his disciples, couldn't help but sigh internally, for the first time feeling a sense of apology towards them.

His disciples had been preparing for a long time, waiting for this day, ready to fight for the honor of Four Treasures Peak, but he himself was...

There was no choice, what needed to be said had to be said.

"This time, the re-ranking of the Hundred Peaks may not be what you expect," Cao Zhen's gaze swept across the faces of Ling Xi, Yan Yourong, Xiang Ziyu, and Bei Yan as he spoke with a grave tone, "This time, I hope you will not give your all in the fight."

"Why!" Yan Yourong couldn't help but blurt out a challenge. Since her breakthrough because of her master, she had treated his words as sacred and never disobeyed. This was the first time after her breakthrough that she questioned her master.

Since her breakthrough, she hadn't slacked off a single day, all in preparation to fight with all her might on the day of the grand competition of the Hundred Peaks, to strive for a higher ranking for Four Treasures Peak.

But now, her master was actually saying they were not to fight with full force!

Cao Zhen listened to the tolling bells and spoke heavily, "Master knows that you've prepared for today for a long time. I, too, wish to see Four Treasures Peak's ranking move forward, to not let down the ancestors of Four Treasures Peak, to not want to see Four Treasures Peak remain at the very bottom of the Hundred Peaks.

But there is no choice. The Minor Era of Inversion of Heaven and Earth is coming, a time when the darkness envelops and the masters slumber, and anything can happen.

I want each of you, my own Disciples, to survive. Therefore, I need to help you all improve your strengths.

To improve, we must have Pills, a large amount of Pills. The materials required for concocting Pills are far beyond your imagination. The only way we can get more Spirit Stones now is through the grand competition of the Hundred Peaks.

And the highest odds for Four Treasures Peak, which is the capped rate, depends on Four Treasures Peak not changing its ranking. We can only get more Spirit Stones by staying in the last place, which will allow us to concoct Pills for you..."

"Master, I was wrong!" Yan Yourong instantly stepped back and began to kowtow to the ground.

"Wait a moment... You've learned all the wrong things, why copy this? One person kowtowing is enough, and your senior sister has already done it," Cao Zhen quickly stepped forward and stopped Yan Yourong, his previously heavy heart somewhat lightened by this diversion.

"Thud..."

No sooner had his words fallen, Ling Xi already knelt to the ground, kowtowing, "Master, I've made a mistake, I shouldn't have taught my junior sister to kowtow."

Cao Zhen: ...

"You know you're wrong and still kowtow? Go back and write 'Master is the greatest' a hundred times. Also, when there are outsiders behind Master, you're not allowed to kowtow to Master."

With this interruption, Cao Zhen's mood improved significantly. He looked at everyone solemnly, "This time, it's for the future of our Four Treasures Peak. Next time, I will definitely let you go all out, fight freely."

"No, Master, it's not your fault this time, it's that we disciples are not strong enough," Yan Yourong said resolutely as she faced Cao Zhen, "If we were strong enough, if we could reach the first place, Master wouldn't need us to hold back, and we could still get the highest odds!"

Even without looking, Cao Zhen could guess that if Four Treasures Peak were to reach the very top, the odds would surely be capped.

But, given the current state of Four Treasures Peak, there was no chance of reaching first place; he hadn't even considered it.

"Right, senior sister is correct," Xiang Zi Yu's face showed excitement as he shouted, "We need to break into the top fifty this time. Such a ranking doesn't suit the protagonist's character. How can the peak where the protagonist resides be in the middle? We should either be last or first; that's the true protagonist!"

The bell continued to toll, each ring echoing for a long time.

Chapter 223: Slaughter Pig Plate_5

Cao Zhen listened to the tolling bells and raised his hand, declaring, "Good, next time, we'll aim for first. This time, let's keep a low profile and make money. Come on, let's head down the mountain."

The grand competition of the Hundred Peaks Sect had finally arrived!

Immortal Gathering Peak, a mountain that did not belong to any of the Hundred Peaks, was usually uninhabited.

However, whenever the Hundred Peaks Sect had a major event and the disciples gathered, the Immortal Gathering Peak was the designated meeting place, and the grand competition was no exception.

At a point near the summit of the Immortal Gathering Peak, the terrain was high all around with a low middle.

The Peak Masters and disciples of each peak were situated on the higher ground around the perimeter, while the competition space was in the low-lying center.

Yet the higher areas around also varied in elevation and were not uniformly elevated; befitting its last-place ranking, Four Treasures Peak naturally occupied the lowest spot, right beside the people of Seven Star Peak led by Deng Qixing.

Deng Qixing glanced at Cao Zhen not far away, observed the people from several other peaks farther away, then lifted his head to gaze into the distance, looking at the highest peaks, he sighed and said, "All of us from these last few peaks combined don't even amount to half the population of a single peak among those top ones.

However, after this grand competition, Four Treasures Peak will slowly change, and the number of disciples will gradually increase. Zi Zai, from now on, Seven Star Peak will be relying on you."

"Master, you..." Chao Zi had just begun to say something when the hundredth bell sound fell, and the tolling came to a stop.

He immediately ceased his intended words and looked towards the highest place.

Standing proudly at the highest point of Immortal Gathering Peak, Bai Fengzi's cloak billowed in the wind, the gusts of the mountain making a snapping sound against the fabric.

After scanning her gaze around the crowd, she spoke out, "Hundred Peaks Sect, the re-ranking of the Hundred Peaks begins now." The Minor Era of Inversion of Heaven and Earth was approaching, and she was not one to dally or make idle talk.

Having said her piece, she stepped back.

A white-haired, stern-faced elder then stepped forward.

"Elder Qin of the Mana Restoration Palace," someone beside Cao Zhen whispered.

Elder Qin spoke loudly, "For the re-ranking of the Hundred Peaks, the Six Arts examination begins with the first category, 'Talisman.' Disciples of each peak, proceed to the Gathering Immortals Platform."

As his voice faded, disciples from all over the Hundred Peaks Sect swiftly made their way toward the Gathering Immortals Platform, which was the massive platform in the center.

Cao Zhen turned to Ling Xi and said, "Go ahead, and there's no need to concede defeat right from the start. After all, you've prepared for so long, you need to show your skills. Once you've demonstrated them, it doesn't matter if you take the bamboo or not."

"Yes, disciple understands," Ling Xi replied and headed straight for the Gathering Immortals Platform.

To the side, at Seven Star Peak's location, Cao Zhen noticed that five disciples from Seven Star Peak were descending toward the Gathering Immortals Platform.

Cao Zhen looked at Deng Qixing with surprise; in the grand competition of the Hundred Peaks Sect, during the Six Arts examination, it did not matter how many disciples each peak sent, since sending all your disciples was not an issue if you wished to do so.

The exam for each art would comprise three rounds.

The first round was a qualification test.

For instance, in the Talisman test, everyone would craft the same type of talisman. Those who managed to craft it, reaching a certain level, would qualify for the second round.

In the second round, again everyone would craft the same talisman. The higher the level of the crafted talisman, the more likely an entrant could proceed to the next round. If two individuals crafted talismans of equal level, then the tie-breaker would be the crafting speed; whoever was faster would advance to the next round.

From this, five hundred would be selected to enter the third round.

In the third round, the type of talisman to be crafted would no longer be specified; each person could craft a talisman that they were proficient at. Ultimately, based on the function, level, and speed of crafting the talisman, the top three hundred would be determined.

Each of the three hundred would receive corresponding bamboo, which is essentially points, added to their respective peaks. In the end, among the hundred peaks, whichever had the most bamboo would naturally rank first, and so forth. If there was a tie in bamboo count, it would come down to individual combat prowess.

Initially, the selection was for the top hundred, not three hundred.

But later, some Peak Masters of the lower fifty peaks suggested that in the Six Arts examination of the Hundred Peaks Sect's grand competition, each peak should only be allowed to send a maximum of ten disciples.

Those suggesting this were mostly Peak Masters from the lower fifty peaks. Without restrictions on participant numbers, disciples from the leading peaks mostly came from the upper fifty, leaving the lower fifty without a chance to stand out.

However, Bai Fengzi, the current Sect Leader, directly rejected this proposal.

In the words of the Sect Leader, disciples who diligently cultivate deserve an opportunity to showcase their skills, and she would not limit the number of disciples each peak could send. Nevertheless, she did

increase the number who could win bamboo rewards, expanding it from the top hundred to the top three hundred.

As a result, even the disciples from the lower fifty peaks could now gain some bamboo for their peak, and the lower fifty began to pay more attention to the Six Arts.

When there were only a hundred slots, many lower fifty peaks couldn't earn any bamboo in the Six Arts competitions, having to rely solely on combat prowess.

Therefore, sending multiple disciples into the Six Arts competition was not a problem, but the catch was ensuring that they advanced to the second and third rounds; otherwise, it was pointless.

Seven Star Peak...

Deng Qixing seemed to notice Cao Zhen's gaze and looked back with a hint of surprise in his eyes, "Peak Master Cao, why did you send only one disciple? Shouldn't all your disciples be capable of crafting the Gathering Spirit Talisman?"

If the first round of the competition is crafting the Gathering Spirit Talisman, then your disciples should be able to advance to the next round. Why didn't you send more disciples?"

"Well, it wouldn't be such a coincidence," Cao Zhen casually laughed it off, for how could he reveal that he was planning to lose deliberately, which is why he had only sent Ling Xi by herself?

"It might very well be. The reason I sent so many disciples is that I hope the first round involves crafting Gathering Spirit Talismans. If the second round is about crafting Mana Restoration Talismans, that would be even better."

The Mana Restoration Talisman was a talisman for replenishing mana, which Cao Zhen had not taught to other Taoist Institutions but had managed to teach Seven Star Peak when he found an opportunity.

Atop the highest peak, Bai Fengzi was not paying attention to either Flying Immortal Peak, which was ranked first, or Five Elements Peak, ranked second. Instead, her gaze was directed toward Four Treasures Peak.

Watching the solitary figure descend, her eyes suddenly narrowed. Was Four Treasures Peak really sending just one person?

At that moment, the voice of the presiding elder resounded again.

"In the first category of the Six Arts, 'Talisman', the first round will involve crafting the Gathering Spirit Talisman."

Chapter 224: Talisman King_1

Gathering Immortals Platform was crowded with disciples from the Hundred Peaks, and at a glance, it seemed as if there were a thousand of them.

Within the Hundred Peaks Sect, though the disciples from the lower fifty peaks were fewer and those who could participate in the Six Arts Assessment were not many.

The key was that the number of disciples from the upper fifty peaks was large, especially peaks like Spirit Symbol Peak that specialized in the Path of Talisman, nearly all of their disciples had been sent out.

On the Gathering Immortals Platform, stone tables had already been set up, each covered with the materials needed to craft Gathering Spirit Talismans. Even though everyone's talisman making technique differed, the materials used were roughly the same, and these materials were sufficient to ensure their success in creating Gathering Spirit Talismans.

The stone tables had been prepared in advance, but no one knew exactly how many disciples would participate in the assessment, so the sect had prepared slightly more tables than necessary. Of course, not too many were extra, only a few tables remained empty, while behind most stone tables stood a disciple ready for the assessment.

"In the first round of the assessment, you have three attempts, and a third-level talisman is enough to pass," the Presiding Elder announced.

At his command, the Gathering Immortals Platform was abuzz as disciples began to work. Even if it was just within the sect, even if it was just crafting the simplest Gathering Spirit Talismans, the simultaneous actions of the multitude caused the air around the platform to noticeably tremble.

Many eyes had already turned towards Cao Zhen.

The first challenge was the Gathering Spirit Talisman?

Who didn't know that Four Treasures Peak, with the help of experts from various Taoist Institutions, crafted Gathering Spirit Talismans and completely dominated the market?

Several Peak Masters from the lower fifty peaks immediately looked a bit more solemn.

"Looks like Four Treasures Peak picked up an advantage."

"Don't worry, this is just the first challenge. There's still a second round," someone remarked.

"No, look, there are still quite a few people standing around Four Treasures Peak. Did they only send one disciple to participate in the talisman assessment?"

"Isn't it said that Four Treasures Peak is most skilled in talisman making among the Six Arts? Yet they sent only one person in their best area. How many Peak Bamboos can they get in the end? I was worried Four Treasures Peak might influence our peak-ranking, but it seems I worried in vain."

"Those who bet on Four Treasures Peak breaking into the top fifty must be regretting it now."

"I even heard some people, I don't know what they were thinking, actually bet on Four Treasures Peak advancing into the upper fifty peaks," another added.

As a fellow Peak Master from the lower fifty peaks, Deng Qixing's smile could hardly be concealed as he said to Cao Zhen, "Peak Master Cao, I should thank you for teaching us how to craft Gathering Spirit Talismans. No matter what, my five disciples will have no problem advancing to the second round, we'll

just have to see how it goes in the second. Even if they can't pass that round, it's no big deal. The reason I had them all participate in the assessment was to boost their confidence.

As disciples from the ninety-ninth peak, they're used to being looked down upon and lack self-confidence. This time, I want to tell them they're much stronger and more outstanding than they think."

Cao Zhen looked at Deng Qixing, who spoke with great enthusiasm, a bit surprised. Although Seven Star Peak was among the ninety-ninth peaks, Deng Qixing's educational methods were not inferior.

If Seven Star Peak had more resources, they wouldn't have fallen to such a position.

Suddenly, several exclamations erupted from beside him.

"Why has Ling Xi from Four Treasures Peak stopped moving?"

"She... she's finished already?"

"That was fast!"

"She's actually faster than He Tianqi from Spirit Symbol Peak."

On the Gathering Immortals Platform, Ling Xi was already standing with her hands clasped behind her back, and in front of her on the stone table, an additional Gathering Spirit Talisman now lay. She was, after all, endowed with the Ancient Talisman Immortal Body and had previously taught many people how to craft Gathering Spirit Talismans, so she was extremely familiar with the process.

But she had not imagined she would be the first to finish making her talisman without even exerting her full effort. No one else had managed to complete their Gathering Spirit Talisman when she put hers down; she was the first among them all!

"Look quickly, He Tianqi has finished too. Truly worthy of being a genius from Spirit Symbol Peak dedicated to the talisman arts!"

"It's a pity, I thought He Tianqi would be the first to finish crafting, but it turns out he's the second."

"First or second doesn't really matter, does it? After all, the main thing is to pass the first round. I believe He Tianqi didn't go all out."

At the Gathering Immortals Platform, in a position close to the center, a handsome man in a golden-yellow robe looked through the crowd, somewhat surprised, towards where Ling Xi was.

He wasn't the first one?

Someone was faster than him!

Although he hadn't used his full strength, for someone to finish crafting so quickly was indeed impressive.

However, even though it was only the first round and the order of finishing didn't matter, as a disciple of Spirit Symbol Peak, losing to someone else was a bit embarrassing. In the next round, although it wouldn't be the last, he needed to do better and aim for first place. Otherwise, as a disciple of Spirit Symbol Peak, he might have a hard time explaining himself.

As he pondered, more exclamations of surprise came from the surrounding peaks.

"Shao Yijian from Flying Immortal Peak is the third one."

"Brother Shao Yijian has already reached the Perfect Completion Golden Core, a formidable existence among all the Hundred Peaks Sect's disciples. It's unexpected that his talisman making technique is also so skilled."

Chapter 225: Talisman King_2

"Indeed, the top-ranked Flying Immortal Peak."

In the midst of astonished cries from the crowd, a stern-faced man looked at the Talisman he had finished making in front of him, expressionless and seemingly lost in thought.

Gradually, more and more people completed their Talisman Making.

Until the last person finished, the voice of the Elder in charge rang out.

"Those who have successfully made a Gathering Spirit Talisman, and that Talisman reached the third level, carve your names and affiliated peaks on the stone tables in front of you; the other disciples, leave the Gathering Immortals Platform."

As his words fell, several disciples, some frustrated and some regretful, slowly walked out and left the Gathering Immortals Platform.

Cao Zhen looked down at those departing disciples; there weren't many, just thirty or forty. This first round of testing was not hard.

The remaining disciples were not checked for their Spirit Talismans.

This was the Hundred Peaks competition, after all. With the Sect Leader, the higher-ups of the Hundred Peaks Sect, and Peak Masters from various peaks watching from above, who would dare to stay without having completed the task?

After the last disciple who should leave the Gathering Immortals Platform had left, the Elder spoke again: "For the second round, you will be making Mana Restoration Talismans. You also have three opportunities. Now, you may begin making them."

"Mana Restoration Talisman?" Deng Qixing was momentarily dazed, then ecstatic: "May our ancestors bless us, the second round is for making Mana Restoration Talismans. Seven Star Peak, Seven Star Peak's ranking in the Hundred Peaks is really going to rise this time!"

Mana Restoration Talismans, Cao Zhen had indeed taught his disciples how to make them.

Considering the topic was Mana Restoration Talismans, he was confident that all five of his disciples could advance to the next round.

If they made it to the third round, they would have a chance to get the Peak Bamboo!

Right, Cao Zhen!

Deng Qixing turned his head and thanked Cao Zhen: "Peak Master Cao, thanks to you teaching us at Seven Star Peak how to make Mana Restoration Talismans, this round is indeed for them. My Seven Star Peak has a chance to win the Peak Bamboo, Cao..."

But as he spoke, he felt awkward looking at Cao Zhen. If Cao Zhen was willing to teach their Seven Star Peak the special technique for making Mana Restoration Talismans, how could he not teach his own disciples at Four Treasures Peak? Unfortunately, out of all the disciples of Four Treasures Peak, only Ling Xi participated.

What a pity, truly a pity. If the other disciples of Four Treasures Peak had participated in the Talisman trials, they would certainly have made it into the third round and had a chance at the Peak Bamboo. Now, only Ling Xi had a chance to obtain it.

Cao Zhen feigned a look of regret and said, "Among my disciples, only Ling Xi is good at Talisman Making; the others are not, which is why I did not send them. If I had known, I would have sent them all."

As he said this, he looked towards the Gathering Immortals Platform.

On the Gathering Immortals Platform, Ling Xi's hands moved rapidly, making the Talisman with a special technique. Gradually, ten Phenomenon Tao Bases, ten Phenomenon Immortal Bridges, and a Phenomenon Pill materialized behind her. Ancient talismanic phenomena vibrated and resonated with her as she infused talismanic gestures into the Talisman before her.

A moment later, the Talisman was complete.

It was just an ordinary Mana Restoration Talisman, but even from a distance, its rich Mana could be felt.

Nearby, a few disciples of Seven Star Peak curiously turned their heads to glance in Ling Xi's direction.

What is this?

Has it been made?

Their Mana Restoration Talismans were not even half-finished, and Ling Xi had already completed hers? This speed was surely too fast, and besides, are you sure what you made is a Mana Restoration Talisman?

They often made Mana Restoration Talismans and knew them all too well. A Mana Restoration Talisman definitely didn't emanate such a strong Mana presence.

"Done?"

"Ling Xi, has she once again completed her Talisman Making?"

"That's too fast!"

Around the high mountains, people quickly noticed Ling Xi, the only disciple among the Talisman makers who had stopped.

"This is the second round of the assessment? Although speed is also a factor, the premise is to compare the grade of the Spirit Talismans first. Only when the grades are equal, will there be a comparison of the speed of making the Spirit Talismans. She finished making it so quickly, what high-grade Spirit Talisman could she possibly produce?"

"Maybe she made a basic Talisman first as a foundation, after all, with three opportunities, with a foundational Talisman, she can try to make higher quality ones with the remaining chances."

"But looking at her, she clearly has no intention of starting to make another one."

"Strange, what is she doing?"

Around the area, many who were paying attention to Four Treasures Peak were puzzled.

This Hundred Peaks competition was not the most watched because of Flying Immortal Peak or Five Elements Peak, the top-ranking peaks, but because of Four Treasures Peak.

Flying Immortal Peak, Five Elements Peak, those top-ranking peaks, they didn't have much to do with most people. However, Four Treasures Peak was rising in rank, posing a direct threat to them.

Moreover, several of them had bet on Four Treasures Peak; they couldn't help but focus on its progress.

He Tianqi cast a distant glance in Ling Xi's direction, chuckling softly in his heart. What use was there in merely seeking speed? In this round, the final comparison would be based on the quality of the Talismans made.

Four Treasures Peak, such a peak probably only relied on these tactics to draw attention.

He quickly gathered his thoughts and concentrated fully on making the Talisman in front of him.

Though he was solely pursuing a high-quality Talisman this time, his speed in making them was still among the fastest.

Chapter 226: Talisman King_3

Even though he was a few people behind, he still belonged to the top ten who had completed the Talisman.

Level thirty-five, Mana Restoration Talisman!

He Tianqi looked at the Talisman he had finished with satisfaction and nodded; this time, he had performed quite well. Although he had once made a level thirty-six Mana Restoration Talisman.

But that was in a quiet environment without any disturbances. Now, here on the Gathering Immortals Platform, in this unfamiliar environment, and during an examination no less, being able to make a level thirty-five Mana Restoration Talisman was already enough.

He glanced at the remaining materials on the table, thought for a moment, and decided not to continue making Talismans.

He still had two chances left, but he couldn't guarantee that he would be able to make a level thirty-six Mana Restoration Talisman with those opportunities.

A level thirty-five Mana Restoration Talisman was a proud existence among the disciples. Even among the elders of the Hundred Peaks Sect who were skilled in Talisman Making, there weren't many who could make a higher-level Mana Restoration Talisman than this.

Level thirty-five was already sufficient.

He needed to conserve more energy to prepare for the next round of the competition.

More and more disciples on the Gathering Immortals Platform stopped Talisman Making.

Finally, after the last disciple finished making their Mana Restoration Talisman.

High up, the law-enforcing elder raised his hand and grabbed forward, and in the Void, a giant hand's shadow emerged, plucking up each of the Talismans from the stone tables in front of the disciples and dropping them into its palm.

The next moment, the giant hand swiftly pulled back.

The law-enforcing elder pondered briefly before starting to report decisively, "Rank five hundred, Zhao Wenbo from Seven Star Peak, a seventh-level Mana Restoration Talisman, rank nine hundred ninety-nine, Hidden Sword Peak..."

Yi Sheng stood behind Cao Zhen, and as he heard the law-enforcing elder call out the rankings of the top five hundred one by one, a look of awe appeared on his face as he said admiringly, "With so many disciples, the law-enforcing elder just had to reach out, and he took away everyone's Talismans. He doesn't even have to touch those Talismans with his hands to accurately determine their level and know which disciple made each one. Such control is terrifying."

"Don't worry," Xiang Ziyu stretched out his hand, trying to pat Yi Sheng on the shoulder, but embarrassedly found that he had to reach up to touch Yi Sheng's shoulder, so he retracted his hand and continued, "As the protagonist's junior brother, you won't need to reach his age to have that kind of control."

Yan Yourong, hearing this, immediately turned her head away, too lazy to deal with this disciple who was acting up again. Yi Sheng, however, obediently nodded and said, "Senior brother, I will definitely cultivate and strive to catch up with your pace as soon as possible."

"Catch up with us?" Xiang Ziyu proudly puffed out his chest and said, "Little junior sister, you might have some possibility of catching up with the others, but catching up with your senior brother me, is forever impossible. Because I, your senior brother, am destined to become a legend of this era."

"Senior brother," Little Bei Yan gently poked Xiang Ziyu and called out, "Senior brother, you don't need to puff out your chest, no matter how much you do, you won't be as tall as junior sister Yi Sheng."

Xiang Ziyu immediately looked down at Little Bei Yan and said instructively, "Little Bei Yan, do you know? It's dangerous to talk to the protagonist like this.

And before you discuss this matter with your senior brother again, take a look at how tall you are first."

"It's different for me," Little Bei Yan replied nonchalantly, "I might not be as tall as junior sister, but I am still young, I can grow taller."

"Alright, you two, shut up," Yan Yourong couldn't stand their bickering any longer and said coldly, "Let's first listen to what rank your senior sister is."

The law-enforcing elder was announcing each rank one by one, and in no time at all, he reached the top hundred.

And Deng Qixing had already almost danced with excitement: "All five disciples entered the top five hundred, they all have a chance to compete for rankings. I, Deng Qixing, have finally done my ancestors proud. This time, our Seven Star Peak has a chance to break into the top ninety-five, no, even the top ninety."

Deng Qixing was quickly calculating, among the last fifty peaks in the Six Arts assessment, there weren't many who could secure a Peak Bamboo, and the last ten peaks hadn't secured one in the Six Arts assessment for five consecutive Hundred Peaks Competitions.

Now, however, his Seven Star Peak had five disciples in the top five hundred. Even if these five disciples only secured one Peak Bamboo in the third round, it would be a significant advantage among the last ten peaks.

Plus, considering the greatly improved Chao Zi Zai, by the time of the final Hundred Peaks martial meeting, they would surely surprise the people of the last ten peaks.

This time, his Seven Star Peak really had a chance to break into the top ninety.

And all this, thanks to Cao Zhen.

His life, frankly speaking, had been unremarkable; he hadn't done much wrong, nor had he done any significant right. Now, however, he felt that several months ago, he had made the most correct decision of his life—allowing Chao Zi Zai and Cao Zhen to swear brotherhood. Now, even before they had taken the oath, Seven Star Peak had already reaped many benefits.

However, the strength of others is ultimately others' strength; in the end, one must rely on oneself.

Above, the law-enforcing elder continued to call out the names.

All around, as people heard these names, they kept looking toward the direction of Four Treasures Peak and Ling Xi's direction.

"It's already the top fifty, and I haven't heard the names of Four Treasures Peak or Ling Xi yet."

Chapter 227: Talisman King_4

"That Ling Xi, she couldn't possibly have been eliminated, could she?"

"She shouldn't have been. Didn't you see the Tao Base, Immortal Bridge, and inner core she released just now? Those phenomena were clearly talisman phenomena."

"With talisman phenomena, she should be good at talismans. She couldn't have failed the second round."

"But, they've already announced up to the top ten, and her name hasn't appeared yet. She couldn't possibly be in the top ten, could she?"

"I also think that, no matter how skilled she is at talisman making, she shouldn't be able to enter the top ten."

"Forget the top ten, now they've moved on to the top five."

"Third place, Flying Immortal Peak's Shao Yijian, Level Thirty-three Mana Restoration Talisman." From above, the Elder's voice traveled down, and immediately, a wave of astonishment swept through the crowd below.

"Third place is actually Shao Yijian!"

"Flying Immortal Peak really lives up to its name. Even if talismans aren't their main focus, they still secured third place."

"This time, it seems that no Peak will shake Flying Immortal Peak's position."

"First place must be Spirit Symbol Peak's He Tianqi. I wonder who is in second."

Amid the crowd's astonishment, the Elder's voice came again. "Second place, Spirit Symbol Peak's He Tianqi, Level Thirty-five Mana Restoration Talisman."

"What?"

"He Tianqi is only second?"

"If he is second, who is first?"

"A Level Thirty-five Mana Restoration Talisman isn't enough for first place?"

The surrounding crowd was instantly stunned; the first place wasn't He Tianqi? That was the genius disciple of Spirit Symbol Peak, personally acclaimed by the Peak Master as the best talisman-making talent they had received in a century.

But now, He Tianqi hadn't secured first place.

He Tianqi looked dazedly at the Elder, thinking that if this were not happening at the Hundred Peaks competition, and if the speaker were not an Elder, he would have already questioned aloud whether it was true that he wasn't first. He had crafted a Level Thirty-five Mana Restoration Talisman, and it still wasn't enough for first place? Then who was first!

"First place, Four Treasures Peak, Ling Xi, Level Forty-one Mana Restoration Talisman!" From above, the Elder, instead of using a mana-conjured hand to hold the talisman as before, took Ling Xi's crafted talisman in his own palm.

A Level Forty-one Mana Restoration Talisman was too astonishing, and even he couldn't help but hold it in front of his eyes personally to confirm it once more.

The crowd below seemed to explode in an instant, bursting into a series of exclamations.

"Level Forty-one?"

"Heaven, am I hearing things?"

"It's really Level Forty-one!"

"Can someone in our Hundred Peaks Sect actually craft such a high-level talisman?"

"If it weren't for the Elder's words, I simply couldn't believe it!"

"We, at our Peak, are very skilled at talisman making, and one of our senior brothers made it into the top ten. But even our Peak Master can't craft a Level Forty-one talisman. This is Level Forty-one! It's terrifying!"

He Tianqi turned his head in stunned disbelief to look at Ling Xi in the distance. A Level Forty-one talisman? How could that be possible? For him to have crafted a Level Thirty-five talisman was already shocking enough. If it were claimed that someone did something even more astonishing, like crafting a Level Forty talisman, he would believe it.

But Level Forty-one, he simply couldn't believe it no matter what.

The gap between a Level Forty talisman and a Level Forty-one is only one level, but the difference is as vast as heaven and earth, a threshold many could not cross in their lifetime.

Anyone who could craft a Level Forty-one talisman would be honored as the Talisman King!

The disciple of Four Treasures Peak, ranked last, this young disciple, was actually a Talisman King!

"Talisman King!"

"Ling Xi, she's a Talisman King!"

For a moment, the entire Hundred Peaks Sect was stunned.

At the highest point, Bai Fengzi, hearing the praises for Ling Xi, shifted his gaze to Cao Zhen.

Is this what you are doing for the Hundred Peaks Sect?

Not only teaching your disciples cultivation techniques and helping them cultivate, but also transmitting all sorts of knowledge to them, elevating the entire Sect in all areas.

How wonderful it would be if the Minor Era of Inversion of Heaven and Earth had arrived a little later, allowing you more time to prepare.

Alas, I can no longer hold on for much longer, and in the future, I must rely on them.

In the direction of Spirit Symbol Peak, the Peak Master looked at the figure below with a gaze that, aside from shock, was filled with regret, deep regret.

He had some impression of this disciple, as Ling Xi was born with the Ancient Talisman Immortal Body, and he had read in ancient texts about how terrifying their growth could be, how suitably tailored they were for the art of talismans.

Yet, he had not taken her as a disciple back then, convinced that the Ancient Talisman Immortal Body could not possibly flourish in this era.

Who would have thought that Ling Xi had not only broken through Core Formation but was also capable of crafting a Level Forty-one talisman—no matter the type, anyone who could craft a Level Forty-one talisman was a Talisman King!

If only he had known this earlier, he would have taken Ling Xi into Spirit Symbol Peak at all costs.

From Vermilion Bird Peak, Tu Zhuque clapped his hands thrice: "Good, very good." Four Treasures Peak having a Talisman King—when people inquire about Li Ke's partner, to say Li Ke's disciple is a Talisman King would also be a matter of pride.

Deng Qixing was already staring wide-eyed at Cao Zhen, having finally realized why he had only sent Ling Xi.—

Ling Xi was a Talisman King, just one person was enough! Did they need to send any other disciples?

Chapter 228: Talisman King_5

One after another, the individuals who had bet on Four Treasures Peak had different expressions on their faces.

"Four Treasures Peak actually has a Talisman King!"

"I bet that Four Treasures Peak would rank between sixty-first and sixty-fifth, and now I feel, my chances are even better."

"Is that so? I bet on Four Treasures Peak ranking between fifty-six and sixty, which clearly means my bet is more likely to succeed."

"Good, the stronger Four Treasures Peak is, the better, for that gives me a chance to make a big sum of Spirit Stones."

Anyway, Four Treasures Peak posed no threat to their own peaks, the better Four Treasures Peak performed, the higher their odds of winning their bet.

As a member of the Hundred Peaks Sect, Chen Shizhi was also on Immortal Gathering Peak, except his standing position was lower than that of Four Treasures Peak. Listening to the shouts around him, he looked up in the direction of Cao Zhen, a cold sneer in his heart. Cao Zhen, that sinister fellow, truly had a backup plan—his disciple was actually a Talisman King!

He was definitely aiming to break into the Upper Fifty Peaks.

That guy probably still thinks that he bet on Four Treasures Peak's ranking staying the same. If he knew that because of what he said that day, I bet on Four Treasures Peak entering the Upper Fifty Peaks, he would probably die of anger.

After the Law Enforcement Elder announced the rankings, he did not linger for too long and soon spoke again, "Those ranked in the top five hundred may stay; all others, leave the Gathering Immortals Platform."

With the fall of his words, each eliminated disciple had to leave.

Once all the disciples had left, the third round of the examination did not immediately begin. Instead, several Hundred Peaks Sect disciples flew down onto the Gathering Immortals Platform, taking out a variety of materials and placing them on each stone table.

Only then did the Law Enforcement Elder's voice ring out once more.

"The assessment of 'Talisman,' the final round, begins."

At the fall of his words, the disciples who were still in shock had no choice but to regain their composure and start studying the crafting materials in front of them.

The last round did not specify which talisman had to be crafted, but since the materials provided to everyone were the same, it ensured the greatest fairness.

If everyone could bring their own crafting materials, then the peaks with higher rankings and more resources could naturally use better materials, and the talismans they crafted would naturally be stronger. That would be too unfair to the peaks with fewer resources.

Ling Xi merely glanced at these materials and her hands were already in motion.

The gazes of the audience from the high grounds had already all focused on her.

"Indeed, a Talisman King is a Talisman King, just a glance and she knows what rune to craft."

"Look, she's not crafting as quickly this time, obviously paying more attention."

"What technique is that? Peak Master Hu, you are skilled in Talisman Making, can you tell what technique that is?"

"Alas, my eyesight fails me, and I cannot discern what method it is."

Ling Xi, with her full cultivation powers unleashed, had ten Phenomenon Tao Bases, ten Phenomenon Immortal Bridges, and a single Phenomenon Pill all surface behind her, as ancient talismanic phenomena twinkled with blinding brilliance.

In front of her, a Spirit Talisman gradually took shape. Although it was not yet fully crafted, the Seven-Colored Radiance emanating from the talisman already informed everyone that if this talisman were successfully crafted, it would be astonishing!

"This... even from such a distance, I can feel the overwhelming power radiating from the talisman!"

"Yeah, look, the talisman isn't even finished yet, but the air around it is already violently vibrating."

"Is this the true power of a Talisman King?"

"Ling Xi, she's definitely not one of those who can only craft one or two types of talismans; she is a genuine Talisman King!"

"This time, the first place is definitely Ling Xi's."

"This Hundred Peaks competition will make history, the last-ranked peak achieving first place in a contest of the Six Arts—it's never happened before!"

Cao Zhen, hearing everyone's exclamations and feeling the talisman Ling Xi was crafting, was utterly panicked. His disciple wasn't actually aiming for that first place, was she?

If she took first place, the rest wouldn't even need to compete, and Four Treasures Peak would certainly not end up last in the rankings, and his three million Spirit Stones would go down the drain.

He hastily transmitted a message to Ling Xi, "Ling Xi, what are you trying to do? You're not really thinking of going for first place, are you?"

"Master..."

Ling Xi had just replied with two words when the talisman forming in front of her suddenly exploded with a bang.

"The talisman exploded?"

"This is..."

"Did it fail?"

Everyone watching Ling Xi was suddenly stunned. This was not what they had expected. How did it suddenly fail?

Ling Xi, looking at her failed talisman, helplessly transmitted to Cao Zhen, "Master, your disciple just thought, it's rare to use the sect's materials without spending money, I wanted to test a new kind of Spirit Talisman I conceived."

"This... Master got anxious, too anxious. You continue with your experiments, you still have two more chances, right? Master promises not to disturb you."

Cao Zhen lightly wiped the sweat from his forehead, relieved that Ling Xi wasn't truly aiming for first place after all. It was his disturbance that caused Ling Xi to lose concentration, leading to the failure of her talisman crafting.

He must not disturb Ling Xi taking advantage anymore.

Surrounding her, the crowd watched as Ling Xi quickly picked up the materials to craft another talisman, once again filled with anticipation.

"It's okay, she has three chances in total."

"Right, she still has two chances. She's a Talisman King, what's there to fear from one failure?"

"If she's just a little more careful, the first place will be hers."

They all bet on Four Treasures Peak to rise in the rankings!

Chapter 229: Never Had_1

The Grand Competition of the Hundred Peaks Sect had never seen such a situation before, where everyone was not concerned about their own peak but rather about the disciples from other peaks, even becoming anxious over the prospect of others' talismans failing.

In the last round of the Six Arts competition, the "Talisman" category, Ling Xi failed in talisman making for the second time.

As the yet-to-be-formed talisman burst apart, the disciples of Hundred Peaks Sect who had placed heavy bets on Four Treasures Peak rising in the ranks became increasingly anxious.

If the first failure was still acceptable, there would be two more chances.

But having failed a second time, there was only one opportunity left.

If she failed the last time, wouldn't that mean that Four Treasures Peak wouldn't gain a single Peak Bamboo?

If Four Treasures Peak couldn't secure any Peak Bamboo, how could they rise in the ranks, and if they didn't, all their Spirit Stones would have been wasted!

Many, in their anxiety, even began to shout at Ling Xi from afar, "Stop trying to make that kind of talisman!"

"Immortal Ling Xi, we believe in your strength, just stay calm, and you will certainly be first, stop taking risks."

"Right, Immortal Ling Xi, just stay calm, you are the Talisman King, you just need to casually make a talisman and you'll be first, there's no need to try for such a difficult talisman!"

At the Gathering Immortals Platform, near the center, He Tianqi, hearing shout after shout around him, felt a sudden surge of fighting spirit from deep within as his originally dimmed face became animated.

Ling Xi had failed again?

That meant she had already failed twice and had only one chance left. Even if she was the Talisman King, she couldn't guarantee success in every attempt at making talismans. Given the only chance left, she would be more cautious than ever, likely opting for the safest method, and that was when his opportunity would arise.

It was as if Ling Xi hadn't heard the crowd's shouts at all, and she began the talisman making process again using the same method as before.

Almost everyone who had bet on Four Treasures Peak ranking above sixty became panic-stricken.

"This technique she's using, why does it look so familiar to me?"

"Although I don't understand talisman making, I can still see clearly with my eyes, and her movements are no different from the previous two attempts."

"No way, she's not going to try that talisman which has already failed twice, is she?"

"Has she lost her mind?"

"If she fails again, Four Treasures Peak won't get a single Peak Bamboo!"

"We can't let her continue like this."

In their great urgency, people became even more fervent in their persuasion.

"Immortal Ling Xi, don't always try making such difficult talismans!"

"Immortal Ling Xi, if you fail again this time, there won't be another chance, this is the best opportunity, it's better to play it safe."

"Immortal Ling Xi, even if you don't get first place, it's still good to be among the top few."

"Yes, and with your level of skill, even if you don't challenge such a high-difficulty talisman, no one should be able to surpass you."

Ling Xi, unfazed by the crowd's persuasion, continued to focus solely on making the talisman she intended to make.

Seeing that Ling Xi was ignoring them, many people directly ran to Cao Zhen's side.

"Peak Master Cao, please persuade your disciple."

"Peak Master Cao, it can't go on like this; what if there's another failure?"

"Peak Master Cao, we truly have Four Treasures Peak's best interests at heart. We also recognize that Immortal Ling Xi is the Talisman King, but now, she only has one chance left."

Cao Zhen looked at all the earnest individuals urging him on, and he almost wanted to ask, since when had Four Treasures Peak become so well-liked? When Four Treasures Peak was poor, why didn't any of you give us some money?

"This is her own choice, and I will not force her to change. Moreover, this is also my choice," Cao Zhen said solemnly, looking into the distance with determination, "Four Treasures Peak has been in decline for far too long. We don't want to remain at the hundredth position any longer; we want to aim for a higher rank, and each of us has to give it our all!

Even though Ling Xi is the Talisman King, if she were to make only a low-grade talisman, she might still not get first place in the end. To secure first place, she has to make a high-grade, high-level talisman."

People understood Cao Zhen's intentions.

This last round was about who could make the better talisman.

How to judge which talisman was better? That would depend on the talisman's rank and level.

Basic and low-level talismans like the Gathering Spirit Talisman and Mana Restoration Talisman are all First Class Talismans, and there are higher grades like Second Class Talismans, Third Class Talismans, and so on.

Even if they are all First Class Talismans, different people can produce talismans of different levels.

The higher the rank, naturally, the better the talisman, and among talismans of the same rank, the higher the level, the better.

Typically, no matter how high the level of a low-rank talisman, it cannot compare to a high-rank talisman.

Even a Gathering Spirit Talisman at Level Forty would not outperform a Second Class, Level One Talisman.

Hence, for Ling Xi to win first place, she must ensure that the talisman she makes is of the highest rank among all talismans.

But with so many experts making talismans, what if someone else makes a talisman of the same rank as hers?

Being able to make a Level Forty-one Talisman is what qualifies one to be called the Talisman King, but that doesn't mean the Talisman King can definitely make a very high-rank talisman.

Chapter 230: Never Had _2

Although generally speaking, anyone who could refine a talisman, even a level one talisman, to level forty-one must have considerable skill in talisman making; otherwise, they wouldn't be fit to bear the title of a king.

But no one could guarantee that the opponent wouldn't be able to create a talisman of the same grade.

Therefore, to take first place, one had to pursue not only the grade of the talisman but also its level.

Everyone wanted Ling Xi to take first place, but they were genuinely afraid, for Ling Xi had already failed twice. What if she failed a third time?

The crowd started persuading her once again.

"However, Peak Master Cao, there is no need to chase perfection too far, right?"

"Exactly, your disciple is the Talisman King; it's impossible for her to lose."

"Just let her continue refining and don't pursue perfection too much."

Cao Zhen shook his head resolutely and said, "No, in order to take first place, we must pursue perfection. We have waited too long for this day; Four Treasures Peak does not wish to remain in last place any longer!"

"Peak Master Cao, even if you don't want to stay in last place, you must ensure that you can obtain the Peak Bamboo."

"That's right, Peak Master Cao, this time, the ranking of Four Treasures Peak will surely rise quite a bit."

Cao Zhen continued vigorously, "Merely rising is far from enough; our goal for Four Treasures Peak is the Upper Fifty Peaks!"

The Upper Fifty Peaks!

Around them, many people were shaken. Cao Zhen's goal was indeed to reach the Upper Fifty Peaks. They had heard rumors before, that Chief Tu from Vermilion Bird Peak had told Cao Zhen to propel Four Treasures Peak into the top fifty, and they had laughed.

After all, the gap between the lower fifty peaks and the upper fifty was enormous; even a peak ranked fifty-one would have a significant disparity compared to one ranked fiftieth.

In the last three Hundred Peaks Competitions of the Hundred Peaks Sect, not a single peak from the lower fifty had made it into the top fifty.

In the last five Hundred Peaks Competitions, only one peak moved from the lower fifty to the upper fifty, and that was from rank fifty-one to fifty.

And among them, very few had bet that Four Treasures Peak could break into the Upper Fifty Peaks.

However, if Ling Xi really did take first place this time, Four Treasures Peak might genuinely have a chance.

In the Six Arts competition, those who entered the top three hundred would each receive Peak Bamboo, with the three hundredth rank receiving one, the two hundred and ninety-ninth rank receiving two, and so on.

But the top three places were different.

The third place could take three hundred and ten pieces of Peak Bamboo.

The second place, three hundred and forty pieces.

The first place could take an entire four hundred pieces of Peak Bamboo!

The gap between the first and second place was a whopping sixty pieces of Peak Bamboo; this was no ordinary disparity.

They understood Ling Xi's determination to reach first place all too well. But Ling Xi only had one chance left; what if something went wrong?

"Peak Master Cao, we mean no offense, but reaching the Upper Fifty Peaks is extremely difficult."

"Peak Master Cao, your peak will surely rise a lot this time. Afterwards, you can recruit more disciples and wait for the next Hundred Peaks Competition. That will be the best chance for Four Treasures Peak to break into the top fifty."

"Right, Peak Master Cao, you can always aim for it next time."

The crowd tried to persuade him once more.

"Next time?" Cao Zhen shook his head vehemently, "Next time is too far away. For us at Four Treasures Peak, we strive for immediate results!"

As his words fell, as if responding to him, the talisman that had been taking shape before Ling Xi suddenly exploded with a bang, scattering bits of paper all around.

Ling Xi looked at the scattered talisman papers with a face full of regret, deep in thought. She was so close, just so close to success—she could have taken one more step, tested that last part.

But now, having failed before reaching that last step, she could only go back to Four Treasures Peak and use the resources there to conduct her trials.

As she pondered, she lamented, "The last step, just the last step. Next time, I will definitely succeed."

Around her, one by one, those who had bet on a higher ranking for Four Treasures Peak felt the world turn bleak.

"She failed!"

"She failed again!"

"She, she actually failed again."

"A Talisman King, failing three times consecutively in talisman making during the competition, not winning a single piece of Peak Bamboo!"

"I always said, she needed to be more stable. She pursued perfection too much!"

"Look at how regretful she is, sigh, she's still too young. We advised her for so long, but she didn't listen at all."

"She says next time will be fine, but what's the use if there is no next time? She only had three chances, and now she has none left."

"If she had been more cautious, she wouldn't have ended up without a single piece of Peak Bamboo."

"It's all over, completely over. If she had just been a bit more stable, she could have gotten at least three hundred pieces of Peak Bamboo. Now, she's got none. With the remaining arts competitions, Four Treasures Peak probably won't stand a chance."

"It's finished, my Spirit Stones are all gone."

"Wouldn't it have been better to just secure a place in the top three steadily? She is the Talisman King; as long as she stabilized, there wouldn't have been any problem for her to reach the top three."

The people acted as though they were part of Four Treasures Peak, each more upset than the last.

From a distance, quite a few individuals showed a hint of joy on their faces.

"Thank goodness, thankfully Ling Xi failed at her last attempt. She really scared me just now; I felt like she was about to succeed!"

"Yes, thank goodness, she failed in the end."

"It feels like now, our bets on rank eighty or so are secure."

"Even ranks in the seventies are possible."

Above the crowd in an elevated spot stood only five people, set apart from the densely gathered crowd elsewhere.