

## **My Master 431**

### Chapter 431: Full of Wealth and Arrogance\_1

Cao Zhen didn't know what a true State Preceptor should do for a Dynasty.

He didn't think about it either; after all, as the State Preceptor, he only needed to look after the Guardian Immortal Dynasty once the Grand Preceptor fell asleep.

There was only one problem.

"Grand Preceptor, leaving me behind will certainly arouse people's curiosity. Look, even His Majesty came to have a glance. When I return, everyone at Immortal Reception House will ask what you kept me for.

When that time comes, should I say that I've become the State Preceptor, or should I not mention it?"

The Grand Preceptor said indifferently, "Why not say it? In a few days, the Dynasty will announce your appointment as the State Preceptor, then everyone will know; there's no need for secrecy."

"Good, if that's the case, I'll return now if there's nothing else."

Cao Zhen soon took the carriage arranged by the Grand Preceptor back to Immortal Reception House.

Even though it was already dark, the commotion from the Grand Preceptor's Enlightenment was too great. Riding on the wave of enlightenment, some people started to return on their own to reflect and recall the moment of enlightenment.

Others gathered together to discuss their insights.

Although everyone was a cultivator, their cultivation methods differed. Some believed that after enlightenment, one should go into seclusion to ponder alone.

Some believed that one person's wisdom is limited and they should discuss with each other.

"What I just realized is..." one disciple was speaking when he noticed that the people around him all turned to look in one direction.

"Cao Zhen?"

"Cao Sibao?"

"Peak Master Cao?"

All eyes were on Cao Zhen as he approached.

Lan Pili hurried towards the returned Cao Zhen. As one of the top ten from an Immortal Sect, it was not possible for him to stay only in his own villa in Immortal Market after arriving.

Previously, when the Grand Preceptor experienced enlightenment, he was here discussing with others, and now, after enlightenment, he stayed as well.

"Peak Master Cao, you are indeed lucky today, having stayed by the Grand Preceptor's side all along. I suppose the insights you gained from watching the Grand Preceptor's Enlightenment are the highest among us all."

Cao Zhen couldn't be bothered to say that he had no enlightenment. After all, according to his observation, everyone had their moment of enlightenment; could it be that only he hadn't?

Wouldn't that make him look problematic? Then he would have to explain a whole lot.

As the crowd watched Cao Zhen continue towards the distance, someone hurriedly called out, "Peak Master Cao, wait a moment. Could you tell us what business the Grand Preceptor had with you?"

All around, people looked on curiously. Right now, what they were most curious about was why the Grand Preceptor wouldn't meet with anyone from the Hundred Peaks Sect, and moreover, why he kept Cao Zhen behind!

Even Lan Pili and several disciples from the Hundred Peaks Sect looked towards Cao Zhen with curiosity; they too wanted to know what the Grand Preceptor had kept him for.

Cao Zhen's forward steps momentarily paused, then he continued walking, speaking as he went, "It's nothing much; the Grand Preceptor just said he thinks I'm quite good, so he wants me to become a State Preceptor."

"You? Become a State Preceptor?" In the crowd, Li Qinglei of the Clearfall Sect burst into laughter upon hearing this, "You, a Peak Master of the Hundredth Peak of the Hundred Peaks Sect, are asked by the Grand Preceptor to be the State Preceptor?"

"Do you even know what a State Preceptor is? How dare you make such a claim, aren't you afraid of the wind snapping your tongue?"

"Whether it's true or not, you will find out in a few days."

Cao Zhen didn't want to bother with this Li Qinglei and quickly walked away. Lan Pili followed closely and asked, "Old Cao, tell me the truth, what exactly did the Grand Preceptor want with you? Was it because we saved his disciple on the way?"

Cao Zhen said helplessly, "Part of the reason is indeed her, but what I've said is true. The Grand Preceptor really has made me the State Preceptor. Do you think I would lie about something like that?"

"What? The Grand Preceptor really made you the State Preceptor? That shouldn't be. With the Grand Preceptor around, there's absolutely no need for another State Preceptor."

"The Guardian Immortal Dynasty doesn't need a State Preceptor."

In the distance, after Cao Zhen and the others from the Hundred Peaks Sect left, a middle-aged man shook his head and said, "With the Grand Preceptor present, the Guardian Immortal Dynasty doesn't need a State Preceptor."

"Even if they needed a State Preceptor, it couldn't be that Cao Zhen. He is only a hundredth-ranked Peak Master in the Hundred Peaks Sect. What is his cultivation base? I doubt whether he has even achieved Core Formation; even if he has, it must have just happened. Such a person as State Preceptor? Has he gone mad or has the Grand Preceptor gone mad?"

"The Hundred Peaks Sect is also one of the top ten Immortal Sects; how could they produce such a person who boasts so greatly?"

People shook their heads, with not a single person believing what Cao Zhen said.

The next day, early in the morning, Cao Zhen left Immortal Reception House alone, and started wandering around.

He didn't want to be like those protagonists in the novels, who are always either cultivating or fighting, fight, fight, fight. He also wanted to see this world, see the Capital City of the Guardian Immortal Dynasty.

The Capital City was really too big, and too prosperous. He spent the whole day lingering in the city like an ordinary mortal.

He went to see the silks and porcelain, visited the common market of flowers, birds, fish, and insects, went to the taverns outside, sat down for a meal, listened to various people talking about everything under the sky.

It was not until the evening that he returned to Immortal Reception House.

Seeing Cao Zhen return, Lan Pili immediately asked curiously, "Old Cao, where have you been all day?"

Chapter 432: Wealthy and Imposing\_2

Cao Zhen replied truthfully, "I strolled around the Capital City to experience the prosperity of the largest city in the Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty."

Lan Pili nodded and said, "So Peak Master Cao went to the Immortal Market in the Capital City? Speaking of which, as the first major city of the Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty, the variety of materials available here is indeed comprehensive."

"Old Lan, you misunderstood, I haven't been to the Immortal Market yet, tomorrow, I will go to the Immortal Market tomorrow."

Another day passed, and Cao Zhen was surprised to find that not only Lan Pili but also a group of disciples from the Hundred Peaks Sect had gathered.

It was his first visit to the Capital City, and likewise for the disciples of the Hundred Peaks Sect; they too wanted to go to the Immortal Reception House to take a look.

Cao Zhen had visited the markets of the Hundred Peaks Sect and those in Set Soil City before, but it was only now, in the market of the Capital City, that he realized the markets he had visited before could only be called markets; the markets here in the Capital City could even be considered a city in their own right.

The Immortal Market of the Capital City was really too vast, perhaps because a new sovereign was about to ascend the throne, people from various Immortal Sects had sent representatives here, resulting in Immortal Cultivation practitioners being seen everywhere within the Immortal Market of the Capital City.

Cao Zhen once again recognized the bustling activity of the Capital City; the market had far too many types of materials available. He had visited the market of the Hundred Peaks Sect several times before and was sure that all the materials available there could be found here.

Many materials that were available here, however, were nowhere to be seen in the market of the Hundred Peaks Sect.

He had originally just wanted to look around, but as he continued, he found himself unable to stop.

There were just too many precious materials here, and although the Grand Preceptor had given him many medicinal herbs the day before yesterday and had said that he would be given a batch of materials in due time,

no one could be certain that the materials given by the Grand Preceptor would be enough to gather everything he needed.

Besides, some precious materials were truly hard to come by; if he didn't buy them today, who knew whether they would still be available later.

Cao Zhen began to buy frantically. Although he hadn't brought much money on this trip, Elder Shadowless's Qiankun Bag contained both Spiritual Stone Tickets and Spiritual Crystal Tickets.

Lan Pili, watching Cao Zhen constantly buying, couldn't help but tug at his sleeve and whispered, "Old Cao, I notice you're paying for these things using Spiritual Stone Tickets from a Qiankun Bag, isn't that Elder Shadowless's?"

Elder Shadowless had said that these items were to be brought back and handed over to the people of the Shadowless Pavilion... As members of the Ten Great Immortal Sects, we must keep our promises..."

"Old Lan, what do you take me for?" Cao Zhen pointed to the Qiankun Bag and said, "How could I possibly embezzle Elder Shadowless's money?"

Didn't you see that I haven't touched the materials inside? I'm using Spiritual Stone Tickets for my purchases, and there's no distinguishing those tokens. Since I didn't bring enough money this time, I'm just borrowing some from Elder Shadowless for now. When I return to Four Treasures Peak, I will repay whatever amount of Spiritual Stone Tickets I've used from Elder Shadowless."

Lan Pili expressed his surprise, "Repay it all? Old Cao, you've already spent seven or eight million taels of spirit stones; is Four Treasures Peak that wealthy?"

"Isn't it just seven or eight million taels of spirit stones? That's not a problem at all." Cao Zhen didn't care in the least.

Lan Pili found it strange; he knew that back when Cao Zhen was in the Hundred Peaks Sect, he was always coming up with ways to swindle other people's money, so Four Treasures Peak should really be short on cash. How could Cao Zhen not care about seven or eight million taels of spirit stones?

That number behind was in the millions, not just seven or eight hundred taels.

Could it be that after Cao Zhen returned, he could ask his partner Li Ke for the money?

Now, Cao Zhen finally understood why Ma Shoufu, in his previous life, was able to become the wealthiest person; this feeling of buying and buying was truly exhilarating and addictive.

He spent a total of fifteen million taels of spirit stones in the market before he finally called it quits.

The main reason wasn't that he didn't want to buy anymore, but that he had almost depleted all of Elder Shadowless's Spiritual Stone Tickets and Spiritual Crystal Tickets.

After wandering about for an entire day, they finally returned to the Immortal Reception House.

On the fourth day of his arrival in the Capital City, just after breakfast, he heard a commotion outside the door.

Cao Zhen, curious, asked Lan Pili who had just returned from outside, "Old Lan, what's happening? Who has arrived that's causing such a commotion outside?"

"People from the Thousand Caves Door and the Dharma Apex Sect, and also, also people from the Divine Occurrence Sect have arrived. With three of the Ten Great Immortal Sects showing up at the same time, how could it not be chaotic outside?"

"Let's go. With people from the Ten Great Immortal Sects arriving, we, as members of the Ten Great Immortal Sects, must also go and take a look, especially at the Divine Occurrence Sect; I want to see who they have sent to lead the group this time."

"People from the Dharma Apex Sect are also here, good, I also want to meet with the people from the Dharma Apex Sect." Cao Zhen followed Lan Pili out, with many disciples from the Hundred Peaks Sect also following behind.

After all, although he was not familiar with many Immortal Sects, he did know about the three Sects that had arrived this time; he had already come across Thousand Caves Door and the Dharma Apex Sect, and as for the Divine Occurrence Sect...

The Clearfall Sect, which was always at odds with the Hundred Peaks Sect and was not one of the Ten Great Immortal Sects, and the Divine Occurrence Sect, being one of the Ten Great Immortal Sects, always seemed to be at loggerheads with the Hundred Peaks Sect.

He did not know why the Divine Occurrence Sect was at odds with the Hundred Peaks Sect, but anyway, the historical memory was that the two Sects did not get along.

Chapter 433: Wealth and Boldness\_3

Of course, while there is animosity, it has not escalated to the point of tearing each other's faces off and engaging in outright slaughter. The hostilities could be characterized by mutual disdain and non-acceptance.

Cao Zhen and Lan Pili stepped out and soon caught sight of the people from the three major sects.

Like the Hundred Peaks Sect, each of the three major sects was led by a few elders accompanied by several dozen disciples. Within the group, he also spotted two familiar faces.

The Cave Master of Qi Bing Cave and Peng, the Cave Master of Dark Ink Cave.

At the same time, the pair noticed the members of the Hundred Peaks Sect. They exchanged glances, then cupped their hands towards Cao Zhen's direction, "Peak Master Cao, Peak Master Lan."

Behind them, the disciples of the Hundred Peaks Sect suddenly showed an awkward expression. They truly did not wish to encounter Cao Zhen and Lan Pili, especially Cao Zhen.

That Cao Zhen had just recently trampled upon their Thousand Caves Door.

What's more infuriating was that afterwards, Cao Zhen had those who acknowledged him as Pathfinder visit the Thousand Caves Door to trample on them yet again.

Both leaders from the caves wore complicated expressions. Logically, they should have been thankful to Cao Zhen for their enlightenment, but the problem was, Cao Zhen was too sly.

Repeatedly humiliating the Thousand Caves Door, on one hand, they truly owed Cao Zhen their thanks, while on the other, they found him utterly despicable. For a moment, they didn't know how to face Cao Zhen.

Many onlookers at the scene revealed expressions of astonishment.

It was quite normal for members of the Thousand Caves Door to recognize those from the Hundred Peaks Sect, as everyone was aware of the rivalry between the two sects.

However, Lan Pili was a Peak Master of over ninety peaks, while Cao Zhen was merely the Peak Master of the Hundredth Peak. Shouldn't the greeting have started with Lan Pili before addressing Cao Zhen?

Why did they put Cao Zhen of the Hundredth Peak first?

Leaders of the Dharma Apex Sect showed no strong reaction, merely glancing briefly. On the side, two leaders from the Divine Occurrence Sect began to taunt in a strange tone.

"It's odd indeed for the Hundred Peaks Sect. It's understandable when other sects arrive early, since they are closer than your Hundred Peaks Sect.

Your Hundred Peaks Sect is so far from Capital City, yet you arrived quite early.

Is the Minor Era of Inversion of Heaven and Earth near, or does your Hundred Peaks Sect have some plans in mind?"

Lan Pili retorted without any courtesy, "Whether my Hundred Peaks Sect arrives early or late, what business is it of yours, Divine Occurrence Sect?"

While speaking, he transmitted a secret message to Cao Zhen, "Divine Occurrence Sect is different from our Hundred Peaks Sect and the Thousand Caves Door, as they do not have many peaks or caves within their sect. These two are executives from the Divine Occurrence Sect. That gloomy-looking fellow is named Ougao Yi, and the slender one is Kou Shaoyuan.

Ougao Yi has reached the Second Layer of Golden Core. Although he has been there for quite some time, I'm not sure if he has made any further breakthroughs. As for Kou Shaoyuan, he is, like myself, at the peak of Core Formation."

Cao Zhen nodded slightly but did not even glance at the two men. Instead, he approached the leading pair from the Dharma Apex Sect, cupped his hands and said, "May I have a word in private with the two of you? There is something I would like to inform you about."

The two revealed a surprised expression. They had no acquaintanceship with the Cao Zhen standing before them. What could Peak Master Cao possibly want with them?

Despite their astonishment, they followed Cao Zhen as he walked towards a more secluded area.

As they walked, Cao Zhen softly asked, "May I know how to address you both?"

"Dharma Apex Sect, Executive Guan Wenxing."

"Dharma Apex Sect, Executive Fei Xiuran."

"Executive Guan, Executive Fei, this time, I wanted to discuss something regarding your fellow Dao Companions Fa Xiang, Fa Shi, and Fa Sha."

The two instantly showed an expression of surprise, "Peak Master Cao knows the three senior brothers? They haven't returned to the sect in a long time. I remember they've always been in Yong Feng City, in charge of guarding the Hundred Coffins of the Martial Immortal."

"On my way here, I passed through Yong Feng City where an incident occurred..." Cao Zhen briefly relayed the circumstances in Yong Feng City and sighed, "I'm sorry, on that day, the three Dao Companions expressed that they would rather be annihilated than become Zombie Soldiers or Corpse Generals after death, so they asked me to act decisively. I..."

"The three senior brothers..."

The two executives showed pained expressions and let out a long sigh, looking at Cao Zhen, "Peak Master Cao, this matter is not your fault.

In fact, we should be thanking you. After all, you fulfilled the last wishes of the three senior brothers. If it had not been for you, perhaps all three would have completely turned into Zombie Soldiers or Corpse Generals, which is certainly not what the senior brothers would have wanted to see."

The two bowed to Cao Zhen. Regardless, Fa Xiang and the others had been responsible for guarding the Formation. If an accident occurred to them and the Martial Immortal Helian Baitian truly broke free from the coffin, their Dharma Apex Sect would be implicated.

In essence, Cao Zhen not only rescued them, he also helped the Dharma Apex Sect.

This favor, the Dharma Apex Sect would remember.

"The three Dao Companions did not tarnish the name of our Dharma Apex Sect. By now, the Grand Preceptor is also informed, and there's no indication that he blames the three or expresses any censure towards our Dharma Apex Sect.

After all, by the time the three Dao Companions realized they were in peril, it was already too late. If Heaven's Dao had not shifted, they would not have been invaded by the Death Aura."

Cao Zhen offered another word of consolation before returning. As for the two executives, they quickly gathered their disciples to leave. They had to report back to the Sect Leader, although the Grand Preceptor should have already relayed the situation by that time. Nonetheless, they still had to report.

#### Chapter 434: Wealthy and Imposing\_4

People from various Immortal Sects gathered together grew even more curious as they watched the people from Dharma Apex Sect quickly return and then leave just as swiftly.

What did Cao Zhen say to those two stewards to make them leave so quickly?

Li Qinglei looked at the people from Thousand Caves Door nearby, then at the two from Divine Occurrence Sect, and an idea suddenly struck him. He spoke up, "There are still some days left before the coronation ceremony for the new emperor. Since many from our Immortal Sects have already arrived, why don't we discuss the Dao during these days?"

Of course, the disciples from our Immortal Sects will all go out to discuss the Dao, so there's no need for us to have the disciples do it again. We can have the Peak Masters, Cave Masters, Stewards, and Elders come forward to discuss the Dao.

This will also be a good opportunity for the younger disciples to learn."

As he spoke, he even glanced at Lan Pili and Cao Zhen, the two representatives sent by the Hundred Peaks Sect. One was the Peak Master of the Ninety-Three Peak and the other was the Peak Master of the Hundredth Peak. What could these two possibly understand!

In a while, regardless of the topic of the Dao discussion, these two were bound to lose without a doubt, perhaps even to some minor sects. Although those small sects were not powerful, they have sent their top experts for such a grand occasion as the coronation of the new emperor.

Even if Lan Pili and Cao Zhen were from the Hundred Peaks Sect, in terms of strength and the Six Arts, they definitely couldn't compare to those top experts.

In this way, if the Hundred Peaks Sect lost the Dao discussion time after time in front of so many Immortal Sects, especially to those minor sects, it would be a huge loss of face.

He believed that the people from Thousand Caves Door and Divine Occurrence Sect would definitely agree.

After all, both of those sects had issues with the Hundred Peaks Sect.

Cave Master Peng felt Li Qinglei's gaze and immediately started cursing inwardly. Why are you looking at me? Are you thinking that we, Thousand Caves Door, haven't lost enough face and want us to lose face again?

Are you in cahoots with the people from the Hundred Peaks Sect!

Discussing the Dao?

The entire Thousand Caves Door couldn't handle Cao Zhen, let alone the people here.

Do you believe that Cao Zhen, on his own, could discuss the Dao with everyone at the same time and still beat you all?

Cave Master Peng really wanted to turn around and leave. Losing face once was enough; did they really have to do it a second time? But before he could speak up, Cave Master Qi Bing from the side already nodded and agreed, "Since Dao Companion Li is interested, our Thousand Caves Door naturally has no objections."

Cave Master Peng immediately panicked, quickly using a secret technique to transmit his voice and asked, "Cave Master Hu, have you gone mad? Are you not satisfied with losing enough yet? Or do you think that after your enlightenment, you can beat Cao Zhen again?"

"Of course, I can't beat Cao Zhen, but do you think they can beat Cao Zhen?" Cave Master Hu of Qi Bing Cave said with a gleam of wisdom in his eyes, "If our Thousand Caves Door loses to Cao Zhen, it's our own disgrace. But if later everyone loses to Cao Zhen, then the disgrace is not ours alone.

If we're going to lose face, let's all lose face together!"

"This..." Finally, Cave Master Peng understood why, this time, the envoy was Cave Master Hu and not himself. Cave Master Hu's idea was flawless. Indeed, he is one who cultivates the way of Military Law!

Ougao Yi, upon hearing this, looked toward the direction of the Hundred Peaks Sect and chuckled lightly, "Since the Dao Companion from Thousand Caves Door has no objections, we naturally have none either. I wonder what the other esteemed Dao Companions..."

"Our Four Extremes Sect has no problem either," said an elder from the Four Extremes Sect with somewhat grizzled hair, glancing at Cao Zhen as he spoke.

In fact, on the first day he learned that Cao Zhen had come to the Capital City, he had wanted to compete with Cao Zhen in the Calligraphy Path.

Shi Xiaolou was his grandnephew!

On that day when Shi Xiaolou went to the Hundred Peaks Sect to participate in the Vermilion Bird Peak's Golden Core Club, he was humiliated by Cao Zhen, a fact clearly known to him.

Especially since Cao Zhen had the audacity to claim that "Heaven never created one like Cao Zhen, Calligraphy Path would be in eternal darkness," which was outrageously arrogant.

He was clearly not taking their Four Extremes Sect into consideration.

Now that the Four Extremes Sect had run into Cao Zhen in the Capital City, he was determined to win justice for his grandnephew and show Cao Zhen what true Painting Way was about.

His cultivation base might not be as high as Shi Xiaolou's, which is due to his inherently lesser talent for cultivation compared to geniuses like Shi Xiaolou.

There was also another significant reason, which was that Shi Xiaolou was exceptional in both calligraphy and painting.

Whereas he had dabbled in and mastered all of the four excellences of the Four Extremes Sect, namely calligraphy, painting, poetry, and music!

His skills in calligraphy and painting were above Shi Xiaolou's.

However, for some reason, since Cao Zhen arrived in the Capital City, he was either summoned by the Grand Preceptor or not seen at all.

Now that someone had brought up the idea of discussing the Dao, how could he refuse?

That day, Cao Zhen prevailed over Shi Xiaolou of the Four Extremes Sect in front of everyone from the Hundred Peaks Sect.

Today, in the presence of the Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty and various Immortal Sects, he was going to triumph over Cao Zhen!

He would reclaim the honor that was lost on that day!

Meanwhile, the people from various sects who heard the conversation also began to respond in kind.

"Since the esteemed ones wish to discuss the Dao, please count us in."

"Discussing the Dao is indeed interesting."

"Gathering many of our Immortal Sects here is quite a grand event, such an opportunity is rare, and we should indeed have exchanges and discussions of the Dao with each other."

"The only question is, when shall we start the Dao discussion?"

Many from smaller sects also echoed the sentiment, the ten major Immortal Sects, and those just below the ten major ones had even more profound heritages. To be able to discuss the Dao with these sects was a great benefit for the smaller ones, as even a single point learned could be immensely beneficial.

Chapter 435: Wealthy and Overbearing \_5

If he could luckily win one or two matches, he would indeed be able to establish a formidable reputation throughout the Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty.

According to what they pointed out, this time the major Immortal Sects of the Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty, especially the Top Ten Immortal Sects, had not sent particularly formidable experts to congratulate the new emperor on his ascension.

They had a great chance of winning one or two matches by luck!

Lan Pili glanced at Cao Zhen beside him and loudly declared, "Our Hundred Peaks Sect, has never known what it means to shrink back, if everyone wants to discuss the Dao, then we shall accompany them."

What did he have to fear when he had a Cao Zhen by his side? Whoever came, be it from any sect or clan, he was ready to defeat them all!

Seeing that Lan Pili had agreed, Li Qinglei smiled secretly, afraid that Lan Pili might come to his senses later, he quickly said, "Why pick another day when today is already here? How about we start the Dao discussion now? How about we head to the arena now and use it as the Dao discussion platform?"

Inside the Immortal Reception House, there was an arena.

After all, the cultivators were all people of the Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty, and almost all of them were from reputable and orthodox sects. Yet, conflicts could arise even among members of the same sect, let alone among cultivators from many sects gathered together.

When conflicts arose, they naturally needed an outlet.

This being the Capital City, they could not allow these cultivators to fight recklessly, and so the Immortal Reception House had an arena.

Under Li Qinglei's suggestion, figures from the various Immortal Sects who had arrived at the Immortal Reception House all made their way toward the arena.

Cao Zhen noticed that in the few days since his arrival, many more sects had come to the Immortal Reception House.

The crowd quickly converged at the arena, and for a moment, all eyes fell on the figures of the Top Ten Immortal Sects.

After all, within the Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty, the Immortal Sects were led by the Top Ten Immortal Sects.

With the people from the Top Ten Immortal Sects present, the Dao discussion naturally should start with them.

Although Li Qinglei was displeased that the Hundred Peaks Sect was among the Top Ten Immortal Sects, in front of so many people, it wasn't appropriate for him to directly challenge the members of the Hundred Peaks Sect. Instead, he turned to the two Cave Masters of the Thousand Caves Door nearby, with a smile on his face, he suggested, "Cave Master Peng, Cave Master Hu, your Thousand Caves Door and the Hundred Peaks Sect are both among the Top Ten Immortal Sects, and both are Mixed Clan Immortal Sects. How about we start with the Thousand Caves Door and Hundred Peaks Sect initiating the Dao discussion?"

After realizing that Cave Master Hu's wisdom far surpassed his own, Cave Master Peng wisely chose to remain silent, waiting for Cave Master Hu to respond.

Cave Master Hu gently shook his head, looking at Li Qinglei and praised, "We are just discussing the Dao, let's not be too formal. The proposal for the Dao discussion was energetically brought up by Li Dao Companion, so how about we let Li Dao Companion start the discussion with the Hundred Peaks Sect?"

Let their Thousand Caves Door go up to discuss the Dao first? Don't even think about it!

If they went up and lost, everyone would know how formidable Cao Zhen was. Who would then challenge Cao Zhen? By then, it would only cause their Thousand Caves Door to lose face again.

He certainly wasn't going to be the first to go up for the discussion.

This time, the Dao discussion was a fire that Li Qinglei had eagerly stoked, so naturally, it was Li Qinglei who should go first.

Li Qinglei showed a look of surprise on his face. What was going on? In the entire Immortal Cultivation world of the Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty, who didn't know that the Thousand Caves Door and the Hundred Peaks Sect were always competing against each other, challenging each other at every opportunity?

Why weren't the people from the Thousand Caves Door going first?

"I should go first? That doesn't seem quite right," Li Qinglei hesitated a bit. Although he too wanted to go up first and severely trample the Hundred Peaks Sect, he also believed that their Clearfall Sect was not much behind the Top Ten Immortal Sects in strength.

But in the end, Clearfall Sect wasn't one of the Top Ten Immortal Sects, and taking the stage first really wasn't quite appropriate.

"It's just the first match of the Dao discussion. Since you all are being so modest, then let my Four Extremes Sect go first," suggested an old man with a head full of white hair from the direction of Four Extremes Sect. He leaped onto the arena and looked toward Cao Zhen, "Peak Master Cao, shall we start the Dao discussion?"

"Elder Xue of Four Extremes Sect?"

The surrounding crowd was surprised to see the old man who climbed onto the arena wanting to discuss Dao directly with Cao Zhen.

Whether it was Thousand Caves Door or Divine Occurrence Sect challenging the Hundred Peaks Sect first, they could understand because both these major sects had a bad relationship with the Hundred Peaks Sect. But Four Extremes Sect was different.

The relationship between Four Extremes Sect and Hundred Peaks Sect has always been good. They had even heard that one of the geniuses from Four Extremes Sect had recently become a Dao companion

with the disciple of the Peak Master from one of Hundred Peaks' Top Ten Peaks, the Azure Pheasant Peak.

With such a relationship, why would Four Extremes Sect be the first to discuss the Dao with Hundred Peaks Sect?

Perhaps it was intentional on Elder Xue's part?

Knowing that both Peak Masters from Hundred Peaks Sect were among the lower-ranked Peak Masters, afraid that they would lose too embarrassingly to others, he planned to go first and then let them win slightly, barely overcoming one of them.

As long as the people from the Hundred Peaks Sect didn't lose too badly, it wouldn't be too shameful for the Hundred Peaks Sect.

Cao Zhen was at a loss for words, wondering why everyone seemed to want to challenge him. He just wanted to keep a low profile and gain some benefits, yet everyone seemed to be forcing him to show off?

He leaped onto the arena as well.

Being outside and currently serving as the deputy envoy representing the Hundred Peaks Sect, he naturally couldn't refuse a direct challenge.

Chapter 436: Fame Spreads Far and Wide\_1

Capital City, Immortal Reception House, atop the fighting platform.

Elder Xue looked at Cao Zhen's youthful face, waved his hand, and from his Qiankun Bag he took out a writing desk.

Cao Zhen's eyes twitched slightly; he had seen people earn money with their Qiankun Bags, store materials in them, but this was the first time he had seen someone take out a desk. What's next, are you going to pull out a chair as well?

In front of the writing desk, Elder Xue's face took on a serious expression and said, "Peak Master Cao, I have heard that you excel in the Dao of Calligraphy, even claiming that 'without Cao Zhen, the Calligraphy Path would be in eternal darkness.' I, for one, would like to experience Peak Master Cao's Calligraphy Knowledge."

The surrounding crowd, upon hearing this, were greatly surprised.

"What's going on?"

"Elder Xue is going to discuss calligraphy with Cao Zhen?"

"I thought Elder Xue was just going to casually debate with Cao Zhen, maybe win a little to save Cao Zhen's face, but this turned into calligraphy?"

"Four Extremes Sect's four great arts are poetry, music, calligraphy, and painting. Discussing calligraphy, isn't that complete domination?"

"Hasn't the Four Extremes Sect always had a good relationship with Hundred Peaks Sect?"

"What does 'without Cao Zhen, the Calligraphy Path would be in eternal darkness' mean? Is Cao Zhen that arrogant?"

"Perhaps it's because of that statement that Elder Xue is angry?"

"Likely so, isn't that statement too arrogant?"

As the crowd buzzed with discussion, Cave Master Peng looked towards Elder Xue's position above the platform and began to silently mourn for the other party.

I mean, you discuss calligraphy with Cao Zhen? Isn't that like seeking death?

Why discuss anything at all? You...

But then again, it seems there's nothing Cao Zhen doesn't understand; the outcome would be the same no matter the topic.

Below the platform, Chang Tiance heard Elder Xue's words and immediately pridefully said, "Elder Xue, the phrase you heard is outdated. It should be, 'Without Cao Zhen, both Calligraphy and Painting would be in eternal darkness.'"

The crowd turned their gaze towards Chang Tiance.

Many didn't care that he was a disciple of Hundred Peaks Sect, one of the top ten Immortal Sects, and directly called out, "Arrogant! How can you make such a claim?"

"Do you understand the meaning of your words, implying that no one in Calligraphy and Painting can compare to Peak Master Cao Zhen?"

"The world is vast with countless masters; who dares to claim they are the best!"

"The implication of their words isn't merely of being the best in the world; it suggests that Cao Zhen is the pioneer of Calligraphy and Painting. Without Cao Zhen, the world would be in darkness."

"Even the Sect Leader True Person of the Four Extremes Sect and the Four Extremes Elder haven't made such a claim. What merits and abilities does Cao Zhen have to do so?"

"It's simply too arrogant!"

Li Qinglei couldn't help laughing, with people from the Hundred Peaks Sect making such a claim in front of so many people, in no mere backwater, but in the Capital City!

Having said this, by tomorrow...

No, there's no need to wait until tomorrow. By tonight, this phrase will have spread throughout the entire Capital City.

If the people in the Capital City know, then it's as if the whole world knows, and in just a few days, the entire Guardian Immortal Dynasty will know that there is an Immortal Sect known as Hundred Peaks Sect, and that people from Hundred Peaks Sect don't recognize their place, daring to boast such grand claims as 'Without Cao Zhen, Calligraphy and Painting would be in eternal darkness,' which is utterly laughable.

In the world, there are countless masters in Calligraphy and Painting, but has any of them said such a thing?

No!

Not a single one!

Once this matter spreads, let's see how Hundred Peaks Sect still has the face to show themselves!

Later, after the debate ends, I will most certainly promote this incident well to their Hundred Peaks Sect!

"The Path of Calligraphy and Painting?"

Upon the platform, Elder Xue heard the words coming from below, and his entire beard seemed to bristle with anger.

"Good, good, after I experience Peak Master Cao's Calligraphy Knowledge, I must also experience Peak Master Cao's Painting Way!"

Kou Shaoyuan looked at Cao Zhen and Elder Xue on the platform, a thought crossed his mind, and he spoke out, "Right, just debating like this seems somewhat lackluster."

Why don't we make it more interesting, since Peak Master Cao hasn't started yet, we can place a wager on who will win. How about this, I'll wager 500,000 Spirit Stones on Elder Xue's victory."

In the world of Immortal Cultivation, it is common to bet during a magical duel without it meaning any disrespect.

If one can wager on magical duels, naturally, one can also bet on debates.

Hearing Kou Shaoyuan's words, the eyes of everyone around fell on Cao Zhen, signaling that Kou Shaoyuan was putting Hundred Peaks Sect on the grill.

People from Hundred Peaks Sect certainly could choose not to wager Spirit Stones, and if they didn't, they wouldn't lose anything. But in doing so, they would face great humiliation.

They are also members of the top ten Immortal Sects, after all.

Everyone else is betting on the other party during the debate, not betting on Hundred Peaks Sect, how could they not lose face?

"Well said, we should indeed place a wager. I also put down 500,000 Spirit Stones on Elder Xue's victory," Li Qinglei responded upon hearing the words, quickly catching on.

Whether he earns Spirit Stones or not doesn't matter; he wants to see Hundred Peaks Sect embarrassed.

If no one from Hundred Peaks Sect bets, then it's a loss of face for them. If people from Hundred Peaks Sect do continue to bet...

He didn't believe Hundred Peaks Sect could afford it.

If it were the Peak Masters from the Upper Fifty Peaks, 500,000, even a million Spirit Stones they could easily afford.

But who was in front of him now?

A Peak Master from Ninety-Three Peak, a Peak Master from Hundredth Peak—could the combined wealth of these two amount to 500,000 Spirit Stones?

Chapter 437: Fame Spreads Far and Wide\_2

The people from the other sects around did not speak, as it was clear that the betting going on now was taking advantage of the Hundred Peaks Sect.

They had no grudge against the Hundred Peaks Sect and did not want to offend one of the top ten Immortal Sects for no reason.

However, the Thousand Caves Door should be willing to bet quite a bit.

Many people's gazes turned toward the two from the Thousand Caves Door.

Peng, the Cave Master's heart stirred; this was one million taels of Spirit Stones. If he wagered one million taels of Spirit Stones on the Hundred Peaks Sect winning, wouldn't he make a huge profit?

But the problem was...

"Cave Master Peng, do not bet for now," Cave Master Hu quickly sent a secret message to remind him, "Once we bet, everyone will think there's something special about Peak Master Cao, and what then?"

Peak Master Cao will probably bet himself, and thus, we would be competing with Peak Master Cao, also offending him in the process.

Even more, we might prevent Peak Master Cao from earning any Spirit Stones.

No matter what, the two of us had our moments of Enlightenment thanks to Peak Master Cao; we must remember his kindness. So let's just let this matter go."

"That makes sense... But Peak Master Cao might not have enough Spirit Stones to bet or maybe we could find a way to lend some to him? This way, it would be only right for us to bet," Cave Master Peng was still somewhat greedy.

This was already a bet of one million taels of Spirit Stones, and one wonders how many more Spirit Stones could be made if others were to bet later on!

"That will not happen; they are not going to care how many Spirit Stones Peak Master Cao and his people have. Besides, rest assured, Peak Master Cao will not fail to respond," after sending back a secret message, Cave Master Hu looked at the people glancing over and said with a cold face, "There's no need to look at me; I've never liked betting."

Cave Master Peng shrugged very cooperatively and said, "Well then, since Cave Master Hu is not betting, neither will I."

Cao Zhen, seeing that the two had chosen not to bet, displayed a look of surprise on his face; people from the Thousand Caves Door knew about his calligraphy skills, yet they did not bet on him winning.

It was clear they were giving him the opportunity to make money.

Indeed, indeed, these two Cave Masters were not bad at all.

His heart stirred, and he sent a secret message to Cave Master Hu: "Later, I will share ten percent of the Spirit Stones won from the bets with the Thousand Caves Door."

Others might not say anything, but he could not fail to show gratitude.

Now that others are not betting, but what about later? As he continued to expound on his theories, if someone else bets on his loss, and the people from the Thousand Caves Door bet on his victory, it wouldn't be a problem the first time, but what about the second or third time? Others would start to realize that there was something wrong, and how would he make money then?

One shouldn't smash one's own rice bowl just for a quick profit.

Sharing a portion of it would cause no issue.

Upon hearing this, Cave Master Hu's face also showed a bit of surprise but did not refuse, responding directly, "Then, thank you, Peak Master Cao."

If he refused, Peak Master Cao might suspect something.

After all, who doesn't love money in this world, and who would find money excessive?

After Cao Zhen ended his secret communication, he then looked at the crowd and said, "No matter how many of you bet on Elder Xue winning, I, Cao Zhen, will match the same amount of money and bet on myself to win!"

A moment after these words dropped, the crowd around was instantly shocked!

Has Cao Zhen gone mad?!

Now that two sects have bet on Elder Xue winning, a total of one million taels of Spirit Stones were at stake, which meant he needed to wager one million taels of Spirit Stones on his own victory.

That's a whole one million taels of Spirit Stones.

Were the Hundred Peaks Sect so wealthy to this extent?

Could a Peak ranked one hundred produce one million taels of Spirit Stones?

Or did he believe he had a chance of winning?

But the opponent was an Elder from the Four Extremes Sect who was said to be proficient in poetry, music, calligraphy, and painting—Elder Xue!

How could Cao Zhen possibly win?

Or was it that Cao Zhen was doing this for the face of the Hundred Peaks Sect and was willing to throw away one million taels of Spirit Stones just to not lose in terms of momentum? Wasn't that crazy?

But if one were to say that Cao Zhen could win?

No matter how the crowd thought about it, they just could not believe that Cao Zhen could win.

Forget Cao Zhen, even Peng, the Cave Master from the Thousand Caves Door, who was an Elder of the Calligraphy Cave, they did not believe he could win over Elder Xue.

"I'm going all in!" said a middle-aged man who had so far been inconspicuous, suddenly raising his head and exclaiming, "I'll bet two hundred thousand taels of Spirit Stones on Elder Xue winning."

If offending the Hundred Peaks Sect was what it took to win Spirit Stones, so be it.

With someone starting, suddenly individuals from various Immortal Sects began to speak up, and without exception, everyone bet on Elder Xue winning.

Since so many people had already bet, even if the Hundred Peaks Sect held a grudge, it would be against everyone. No laws punish a crowd—there was no need for fear with so many people involved.

Finally, after everyone had finished betting, the people betting on Elder Xue winning had actually placed a total of five million taels of Spirit Stones.

Five million taels wasn't a small sum.

Li Qinglei gave Cao Zhen and Lan Pili a glance; he didn't believe that the leaders of the Hundredth Peak and Ninety-Three Peak could produce five million taels of Spirit Stones.

So much Spirit Stones, perhaps even the Peak Masters of the Upper Fifty Peaks of the Hundred Peaks Sect might not be able to easily provide.

Yet, he said not a word.

What was there to say?

If people from the Hundred Peaks Sect couldn't produce the Spirit Stones, all the better, as not being able to produce them would be even more embarrassing!

Elder Xue quickly prepared the Four Treasures of the Study, collected himself, bringing his mind to an optimal state, then lifted the brush and began to write on the paper before him.

As the first character was written, Li Qinglei immediately began to clap lightly and praise, "Good writing, good writing! It is only after seeing Elder Xue's characters today that I understand, truly, how beautiful writing can be."

Chapter 438: Fame Spreads Far and Wide\_3

"Indeed, those are fine characters," Ougao Yi of the Divine Occurrence Sect also exclaimed in admiration, "I observe that the brushstrokes flow like dragons and snakes. Clearly, they are mere characters, yet they seem to contain the path of cultivation within. Truly rare and remarkable!"

Cave Master Hu of Qi Bing Cave was not much into the study of script, yet he was somewhat curious and glanced towards Cave Master Peng at his side, asking softly, "Cave Master Peng, what is your take on these characters?"

Within their Thousand Caves Door, Cave Master Peng's calligraphy was nearly ranked first. Later, after his enlightenment, Peng had become even more superior to everyone else.

Cave Master Peng did not answer directly, but rather conveyed through a secret transmission, "The script is certainly good. Even so, it can be said that before Peak Master Cao visited our Thousand Caves Door, my script could not match his, but now..."

Cave Master Hu instantly understood, "So, you are saying that his current script can no longer compare to yours, Cave Master Peng."

"No, it cannot be said like that. Our calligraphy specializations are different, it can only be said that there is little to choose between us, but given time, I am confident that my script can surpass his."

"However, the premise is that he does not gain enlightenment during this discussion of the Dao. If he does, then it is hard to say."

Enlightenment...

Upon hearing these words, Cave Master Hu didn't quite know what to say; he too had reached enlightenment thanks to Peak Master Cao. Countless individuals in the Thousand Caves Door had achieved enlightenment because of Peak Master Cao.

Peak Master Cao was from the Hundred Peaks Sect, and if he had the ability to help the people of Thousand Caves Door reach enlightenment, then naturally he could do the same for members of the Hundred Peaks Sect.

Peak Master Cao, it was unknown how many within the Hundred Peaks Sect he had assisted in achieving enlightenment.

Indeed, the Hundred Peaks Sect was fortunate to have Peak Master Cao, a figure of such capabilities.

Elder Xue composed a poem, and Cao Zhen didn't recognize it at all. In any case, it was supposedly a piece describing the Capital City.

To him, that poem was just mediocre.

Although he did not compose poetry, he had seen countless poems in his previous life, and he did possess the skill to critique them.

Elder Xue seemed very pleased with his work, lightly blowing on his calligraphy and looking at Cao Zhen with pride as he asked, "Peak Master Cao, how do you find my calligraphy?"

Before Cao Zhen could speak, many around them had already started to praise it.

"Elder Xue's script flows as if the clouds in the sky, the water in the rivers, smooth and unfettered, with no sense of confinement."

"Yes, look how the script moves, be it strong and rigid, or gentle and smooth, like a graceful and slender woman, or like a robust and brave warrior..."

"Not only the script but also the poem..." Kou Shaoyuan of the Divine Occurrence Sect pointed at the paper full of words and inquired with amazement, "Elder Xue, I have never come across this poem before. May I ask if it is your own creation?"

Obviously touched by the compliment, Elder Xue wore an even prouder expression. As he gently touched his beard, he modestly shook his head and responded, "Moved by the sights of the Capital City, I composed these verses. They are but humble words, neither genuinely laudable nor worthy of merit."

"Elder Xue is worthy of being proficient in all four great arts. The marvel of this script is evident to all, but in my view, the poem is yet more exquisite," Kou Shaoyuan saluted Elder Xue with a fist and palm, "Elder, I have an impertinent request. May I ask if you could gift me this script? After all, I truly do admire the poem."

"You jest," Elder Xue waved his hand magnanimously, "If Dao Companion Kou likes it, by all means, take it."

"Many thanks to Elder Xue," Kou Shaoyuan appeared very delighted as he picked up the script, but he did not tuck it away, instead holding it in his hands, "Elder, I shall have it framed when I return home, but I'll keep it here for now, since you and Peak Master Cao have yet to conclude your poetic duel. After Peak Master Cao finishes his writing, we shall compare them side by side."

Tucking the script away now, how was he to show how lacking Cao Zhen's script was later?

It's only through comparison that the weakness of Cao Zhen's calligraphy would become apparent.

However, Cao Zhen looked towards Chang Tiance, "Prepare the Four Treasures of the Study for me."

He did not always carry the Four Treasures of the Study with him, but Chang Tiance certainly did.

Chang Tiance was swift. He leaped onto the platform and, wearing an honored expression, took out the Four Treasures of the Study, beginning to grind the ink for Cao Zhen.

Elder Xue glanced over, revealing a look of disdain. A true connoisseur of the arts would prepare all Four Treasures of the Study himself, even the grinding of the ink, as did he. Didn't he too have disciples behind him?

Yet he ground the ink himself.

Why?

Because only oneself knows one's needs the best, one's own grinding suits oneself the best.

Cao Zhen, young with limited ability, yet not lacking in pride, even having his disciple carry the Four Treasures of the Study and grind the ink for him.

Soon, Chang Tiance finished grinding the ink and did not leave the platform; instead, he stepped back to one side.

Picking up the brush, Cao Zhen pondered briefly; Elder Xue had written a poem, and if he did not do the same, it seemed somewhat improper.

But what to write?

He scanned his surroundings and, spotting the distant chrysanthemums, was inspired and began to write.

"Waiting for the eighth of the Ninth Moon fair, my flowers bloom to kill the hundred with flair. Soaring scent pierces through Immortal Market's square, the city clad in golden armor everywhere."

In his view, the Capital City resembled the ancient Chang'an City on Earth, and since it was currently September, it seemed quite fitting to write this poem.

To complement the poem, the characters he wrote also brimmed with an endless aura of ferocity.

As the last character was set down, a surge of energy swirled around Chang Tiance by his side, a tumult of inky essence soared to the heavens.

Chapter 439: Fame Spreads Far and Wide\_4

Enlightenment!

After examining numerous scriptures written by Cao Zhen, he finally achieved enlightenment.

Previously, during his first visit to the Hidden Dragon Immortal Palace, he experienced enlightenment upon seeing the calligraphy penned by Cao Zhen for the first time. However, after that, despite witnessing Cao Zhen's writing numerous times, whether at the Golden Core Club on Vermilion Bird Peak, or the plaques specifically written for their peak by Cao Zhen alone, or even Cao Zhen's calligraphy during two debates, he witnessed them all but never achieved enlightenment again. His realm was simply too inferior.

Although he never achieved enlightenment again, he gained some insight every time.

Now, after accumulating insights time and again, he finally grasped the implied meanings of the characters.

He achieved enlightenment!

Next to him, Elder Xue looked on, his body breaking out in goosebumps at the sight of each character brimming with boundless murderous intent.

This writing, the killing intent is too deep!

He even felt as though Cao Zhen was about to draw his sword as if he would act the next moment!

This writing...

How could Cao Zhen craft such writing!

Could this be the writing of a Peak Master of the Hundred Peaks Sect ranked at the hundredth position?

This writing is not a bit inferior to that of their Sect Leader, a True Person!

Elder Xue looked at the words before him, utterly unable to comprehend.

How many years had he spent to achieve such a level in the Dao of Calligraphy? How could Cao Zhen possess such calligraphic prowess!

Around them, individuals from various Immortal Sects also started to look at the writing produced by Cao Zhen. Upon one glance, their hearts sank.

This writing...

Whether they understood calligraphy or not, they could all instantly see the gap between them.

This writing doesn't even need comparison.

Although Elder Xue's writing also looked good and beautiful, Cao Zhen's writing, every single character, every stroke, was filled with endless killing intent!

The spiritual aura within this writing far surpassed what Elder Xue could compare to.

Did Cao Zhen win?

He actually won in the Dao of Calligraphy against Elder Xue of the Four Extremes Sect!

After Cao Zhen finished writing, he didn't even bother to dry the ink and looked towards Elder Xue with a smile, asking, "Elder, how would you rate my writing?"

The other side wrote first, then it was his turn. This made things much easier for manipulation; all he needed was to outdo his opponent.

It wasn't like the time at Thousand Caves Door when he didn't even know the exact level of his opponent and dared not be too lenient.

Elder Xue's face turned a deep red instantly, he glared furiously at Cao Zhen but eventually said, "Peak Master Cao's writing is beyond my reach!"

Inferior was inferior; there was no hiding such things.

Being a disciple of one of the top ten Immortal Sects, he couldn't do something so low as to claim he was stronger when he was clearly outmatched.

Beneath the platform, Cave Master Peng whispered secretly to Cave Master Hu, "Peak Master Cao held back. This writing is slightly inferior to what he had produced at our Thousand Caves Door on that day."

"It seems that Peak Master Cao still possesses a benevolent heart and does not wish to shame Elder Xue too much, considering that the relationship between Hundred Peaks Sect and Four Extremes Sect isn't

bad," nodded Cave Master Hu slightly as he replied, "However, I did not expect Elder Xue not to have an instant of enlightenment; that is beyond my expectations."

Cave Master Peng conveyed privately, "Calligraphy knowledge does not guarantee enlightenment upon witnessing superior writing. The writing must resonate with one's spirit."

Elder Xue's writing carries the essence of being carefree and natural, whereas Peak Master Cao's suddenly became filled with murderous intent, fundamentally different from Elder Xue's carefreeness. With such different paths, naturally, there couldn't be any enlightenment."

Unexpectedly, Peak Master Cao's cultivation in calligraphy knowledge reached such profound depths. Previously, when Peak Master Cao debated in our Thousand Caves Door, none of the words he wrote carried such thick murderous intent!"

As the two exchanged whispers secretly, Lan Pili asked from below the platform, "Peak Master Cao, this poem was also composed by yourself, wasn't it?"

"Indeed, it was my work," Cao Zhen replied without flinching, since he'd already plagiarized, one more poem didn't matter.

With an I-knew-it expression, Lan Pili turned towards Elder Xue and deliberately raised his voice, "Elder Xue, how does your poem compare to that of Peak Master Cao?"

Elder Xue's face was already beet red, a perfect imitation of a liver. Was there any need to ask? This should be obvious!

Cao Zhen's poem, with its undercurrent of killing intent and its unrestrained spirit, surpassed all the poetry he had ever composed in his life, not to mention his impromptu compositions.

"Peak Master Cao truly possesses a grand spirit; his poetry is beyond me," Elder Xue sighed deeply, unable to fathom how Cao Zhen could have crafted such a poem. Perhaps others couldn't perceive it, but he could clearly sense the deeper meaning within the poetry...

He even felt that Peak Master Cao...

No, it would be more accurate to say the Hundred Peaks Sect, was perhaps harboring thoughts of rebellion. Otherwise, why would Cao Zhen produce such a poem?

Rebellion?

Why would the Hundred Peaks Sect suddenly think of rebellion?

Aren't they afraid of the Grand Preceptor?

No, Cao Zhen had just met with the Grand Preceptor not long ago. Could it be that something had gone wrong with the Grand Preceptor?

But hadn't the Grand Preceptor just experienced an enlightenment?

For a time, Elder Xue considered many things.

Down below the platform, Kou Shaoyuan's face had turned completely black. Cao Zhen had actually won!

Wasn't it said that although Elder Xue from the Four Extremes Sect didn't have an exceptionally high cultivation base, he was well-versed and excelled in everything?

So, this was being well-versed and excelling in everything? He couldn't even defeat a mere hundredth Peak Master from the small Hundred Peaks Sect!

Chapter 440: Famous Across the Four Seas\_5

Five hundred thousand taels of Spirit Stones, he lost five hundred thousand in one go!

Five hundred thousand taels of Spirit Stones – losing them was bearable, although it did pain his heart, it wasn't crippling. The key issue was that it allowed Cao Zhen and the people of the Hundred Peaks Sect to win!

Cao Zhen had stopped looking at Elder Xue and instead addressed the crowd, "Everyone, the Spirit Stones just lost..."

"Five hundred thousand taels of Spirit Stones, I can still afford to lose," Kou Shaoyuan huffed coldly and promptly took out several Spiritual Stone Tickets with a flick of his hand.

Below the platform, Lan Pili, who had no sense of responsibility as the main envoy of the Hundred Peaks Sect's delegation, ran straight to the crowd and said, "Everyone, Peak Master Cao and Elder Xue's debate isn't over yet, and it's not convenient to collect the Spiritual Stone Tickets. You can give them to me. By the way, Elder Xue, what will you discuss next with Peak Master Cao?"

On the platform, Elder Xue's face instantly darkened. What was Lan Pili implying?

This was a clear sign of disrespect to him.

He didn't believe that if Cao Zhen's mastery of the Calligraphy Dao was so high, his skill in the Painting Way could be equally high.

"Peak Master Cao, you claim to have said, 'The Dao of Painting and Calligraphy last eternally like a lengthy night.' Next, I would like to see for myself Peak Master Cao's mastery of the Painting Way."

"Very well, then, Elder Xue, please go ahead," Cao Zhen put away his own rice paper and stepped back to the side. *freewe&novel.com*

Below the platform, Lan Pili proactively looked to the crowd and said, "Everyone, is there anyone else who wants to place a bet? Same rules – however much you bet on Elder Xue, we of the Hundred Peaks Sect will match on Peak Master Cao."

At his words, there was an unusually silent reaction from the crowd.

Continue betting?

They had just lost, to bet again and lose even more?

Traditionally, those proficient in one aspect of the calligraphy and painting arts tended not to be too bad at the other.

Of course, there are exceptions, and there are those who are only skilled in one aspect.

But with the people of the Hundred Peaks Sect being so confident, they really didn't dare to bet casually.

"No one else is betting? What's the matter? All scared?" Lan Pili provocatively stared towards the Divine Occurrence Sect's direction and asked, "Dao Companion Kou, adding stakes was your idea, aren't you going to place a bet?"

Kou Shaoyuan, singled out, showed a look of hesitation and after a moment of silence spoke again, "I still favor Elder Xue; I'm betting one hundred thousand taels of Spirit Stones that Elder Xue will win."

He simply didn't believe that Cao Zhen was also so adept in the Painting Way.

However, he dared not bet as many Spirit Stones as before.

Lan Pili looked down on him and curled his lip in disdain, "Only one hundred thousand taels of Spirit Stones? What, did losing five hundred thousand leave you broke? Is everyone in the Divine Occurrence Sect this poor?"

"You!" Kou Shaoyuan immediately became furious, his cold voice replied, "I just don't want to win too much from the Hundred Peaks Sect and make things awkward for you when you return."

Surrounded by so many people, he couldn't admit that seeing Cao Zhen's previous victory, he still had some misgivings in his heart and didn't dare to bet too much.

"Win too much?" Lan Pili shook his head, "No worries, Dao Companion Kou, you don't have to be concerned. We've just won five million taels of Spirit Stones, we're not afraid. Bet as you wish, however much you want."

Kou Shaoyuan, however, did not speak again.

The various other members of the Immortal Sects around hesitated as well.

They were genuinely afraid that Cao Zhen was also proficient in the Painting Way.

But some of the Immortal Sects, after some hesitation, still began to speak up.

"I bet one hundred thousand taels of Spirit Stones that Elder Xue will win."

"I bet fifty thousand taels of Spirit Stones, also on Elder Xue's victory."

"I bet..."

This time, there were clearly fewer people betting than before. These people were probably skeptical that Cao Zhen could reach such heights in the Doctrine of Calligraphy and also possess equally profound skills in the Painting Way, or maybe because they lost earlier, they were eager to win back their losses so they placed bets.

However, in the end, the total amount of Spirit Stones wagered by everyone didn't reach two million taels.

Above the platform, Elder Xue began his painting.

The time required for painting was naturally longer than that for writing.

Elder Xue took a whole two incense sticks of time to complete his painting. Then, he watched as Chang Tiance, who had just come out of enlightenment, took the stage again, readying his pigments and brushes.

After the time it takes for one incense stick to burn.

Elder Xue looked at the painting on the desk before him, about to collapse.

What he had painted was the scene of the debate at hand, including all the people present.

And Cao Zhen, he actually painted the same debate scene, with all the people present, but Cao Zhen's painting portrayed everyone with more vividness, each person with a different expression...

His painting was already of a high standard, but when compared to Cao Zhen's, it seemed that his was far, far worse.

Cao Zhen was speechless too, why would you paint these people, when Zhao Ji's strongest suit was various portraits...

Below the platform, face after face of those who hadn't placed bets revealed expressions of 'just as expected'. They knew that someone skilled in the Dao of Calligraphy wouldn't be bad at the Painting Way either.

And since people from the Hundred Peaks Sect were so confident, it was obvious that Cao Zhen was also adept in the Painting Way. Those who dared to bet on Elder Xue to win, what were they thinking?

On the side of the Four Extremes Sect, the disciples had already fallen silent. The name of their sect originated from the four grand arts, and now, three had been lost, all to a Mixed Clan Immortal Sect like Hundred Peaks.

What would people say when this spread out?

Both being one of the top ten Immortal Sects, while Hundred Peaks Sect was still a Mixed Clan, practicing all manners of arts, they could still best the Four Extremes Sect in the arts they were known for.

Would others think that the Four Extremes Sect did not live up to its name?

Elder Xue, looking down from the platform, started collecting the Spiritual Stone Tickets with a heart full of unwillingness. He couldn't believe that he couldn't surpass Cao Zhen in calligraphy, painting, poetry, and not even in musical rhythm.

Calligraphy and painting have little to do with musical rhythm!

How old was Cao Zhen, how many years had he lived? How many years had he lived? He had spent his lifetime devoted to calligraphy, painting, poetry, and the ways of musical rhythm.

If he couldn't outdo Cao Zhen in the first three, there was no way he could lose to him in musical rhythm!

Even if Cao Zhen spent his entire life doing nothing but mastering these four grand arts, he couldn't possibly surpass him in every one!

Considering this and that, how could Cao Zhen possibly be just a Peak Master of the Hundredth Peak!

He addressed Cao Zhen, "Peak Master Cao's painting is indeed formidable, but I also excel in the Musical Rhythm. I wonder if Peak Master Cao dares to debate musical rhythm with me?"

Cao Zhen did not agree immediately. Earlier when painting, he had agreed too eagerly, resulting in few betting on him, causing him to lose a considerable amount of money.

Now that he had won twice consecutively, if he agreed hastily again, those people weren't fools; what if they all decided not to bet? Wouldn't he be at a great loss!

But how should he appear to agree half-heartedly?

His gaze drifted towards Lan Pili.

Lan Pili seemed to have realized the problem of too few bets just now and, without waiting for Cao Zhen to speak, irritably shouted, "Elder Xue, isn't that a bit excessive? Whatever you're good at, you make Peak Master Cao debate with you on that subject. This isn't how you hold a debate. Why don't you see what Peak Master Cao is good at and challenge him to debate on that?"

Elder Xue's face turned red instantly. Lan Pili was right; that was not the proper way to debate. But he had already lost three matches in a row. If he didn't win this one, where would he put his old face, where would the Four Extremes Sect put theirs? That's why he was so eager to suggest a debate on musical rhythm.

But as Lan Pili said, one cannot only debate the paths that he excels at; one must also debate what Cao Zhen is good at.

Before, because a disciple from Hundred Peaks Sect had proclaimed, "Heaven would have been eternally in darkness without the birth of Cao Zhen, for the way of calligraphy and painting," Cao Zhen couldn't refuse to debate him.

But now, no one from Hundred Peaks Sect had claimed, "Without Cao Zhen, the way of musical rhythm would be eternally in darkness."

With a sigh, he asked, "Then what does Peak Master Cao excel in, and what would you have me debate with you?"

"I... I don't suppose I excel in anything special," Cao Zhen said, showing a troubled expression on his face. He wasn't lying; he truly didn't excel in anything special. He was an all-rounder, after all!

From below the platform, Li Qinglei called out upon hearing this, "Since Peak Master Cao doesn't excel at anything in particular, he has automatically given up the right to initiate a debate. Therefore, the debate on musical rhythm should continue."

With that, fearing Cao Zhen might find another excuse, he urgently goaded, "I'll bet five hundred thousand taels of Spirit Stones on Elder Xue's victory. Of course, if you from Hundred Peaks Sect are scared, you can choose not to bet."