

Primordial 431

Chapter 431: Zhao Rushi Addicted to Alchemy

"You really are a freak of a kid, and in a little while, I'm afraid I won't be able to be your match anymore,"

After a round of sparring, Xu Ma'an gradually felt overwhelmed, as the fight was meant to bring out all their strength, which led to a huge consumption of Spiritual Power, and their sparring would also leave injuries on one another.

However, Lin Chen was of a Supreme God Body, and the speed at which his body healed was astonishing. Although it couldn't match Lin Chen's main body, it was still far superior to Xu Ma'an.

Therefore, Xu Ma'an helplessly couldn't stay and spar with Lin Chen's Second Soul Division all day. He needed to recover from his injuries and bring his condition back to its peak.

After that, it was Li Hanyi's turn to spar with Lin Chen.

When both wielded swordsmanship, before Lin Chen's talent had come to light, Li Hanyi was the foremost swordsman of the Jade Cauldron Sect.

However, after Lin Chen's strength was demonstrated, Li Hanyi became second to him, with Lin Chen's swordsmanship far surpassing that of Li Hanyi.

Moreover, Lin Chen's Second Soul Division's strength was now only two realms lower than Li Hanyi.

But when it came to combat power, Li Hanyi was far from being a match for Lin Chen. After no more than a hundred moves, Li Hanyi had already been defeated.

"Nephew, you must be holding back. Even the Sect Leader Senior Brother only lasted a hundred moves against you,"

Li Hanyi looked at Lin Chen, unable to do anything but give a wry smile.

Xu Ma'an also only lasted a hundred moves in his spar with Lin Chen before his Spiritual Power and speed of injury recovery couldn't keep up, forcing him to stop sparring and let Li Hanyi take over.

Now, in terms of combat strength, Lin Chen had already surpassed Li Hanyi, so Lin Chen's willingness to go through a hundred moves with Li Hanyi was purely because he was holding back.

However, Li Hanyi knew that Lin Chen was not completely holding back; it was more that as the two compared sword moves, they became engrossed and shared a feeling of mutual admiration.

The battles between Lin Chen, Xu Ma'an, and Li Hanyi had now truly invigorated all the disciples of the Jade Cauldron Sect.

They too began to strive harder, constantly sparring to unlock their own potential.

Throughout the Jade Cauldron Sect, the speed at which disciples were breaking through in cultivation far exceeded any previous time, and the development of the Jade Cauldron Sect was advancing toward an even more splendid future.

And Lin Chen's mentor, Yang Yuemin, as well as his martial sisters, all became even more diligent, not wanting to be surpassed by Lin Chen.

They still wanted to stand by Lin Chen's side in the future, to assist him, rather than hold him back.

Among all the Peak Masters, the one who made the most progress in cultivation was Yang Yuemin. She had broken through to the seventh level of the Reverting Void realm, making her the highest cultivated person in the Jade Cauldron Sect after Xu Ma'an.

And being only one realm lower, her cultivation level was only part of the equation. Yang Yuemin often discussed swordsmanship with Lin Chen, and having mastered all thirteen forms of the High Mountain Flowing Water Sword Technique, she wouldn't even lose to Xu Ma'an in a real fight.

In fact, both Xu Ma'an and Zhao Rushi were somewhat aware of the dramatic changes within Yang Yuemin.

Yang Yuemin's talent started to shift after she was poisoned by the Black Cloud Sect.

A martial artist's talent at the moment of stepping into cultivation is largely predetermined, related to one's physique and comprehension ability.

And comprehension ability wouldn't possibly have a moment of sudden enlightenment unless faced with some special opportunity.

As for physique, it's extremely difficult to change even with the help of Heavenly and Earthly Treasures, let alone by other means.

Yang Yuemin's talent could only be considered medium grade—something Xu Ma'an and Zhao Rushi, her seniors, were all too clear about.

Yang Yuemin was renowned among the various Peak Masters for her personality and her passion for swordsmanship.

However, since that poisoning incident, Yang Yuemin's talent had clearly changed.

The two speculated that it must have something to do with Lin Chen.

But they did not probe further, as after all, it was a secret belonging to Jade Bird Peak.

Xu Ma'an looked at the current Jade Cauldron Sect in all its glory, and he felt extremely contented inside.

Being too greedy could provoke Lin Chen's taboo, and that would result in more loss than gain.

Other Peak Masters of the Jade Cauldron Sect, such as Zhang Dachu, Li Xuanming, and Hong Yanbing, also made some breakthroughs in their cultivation.

After all, Lin Chen had shared the Blazing Fire Divine Decree with all the Peak Masters.

Even some core disciples, as long as they made significant contributions to the Jade Cauldron Sect, could have the chance to study the Blazing Fire Divine Decree, a Heavenly Top Grade technique.

This stirred up excitement and fervor among all the disciples of the Jade Cauldron Sect, as the technique was of Heavenly Top Grade. Compared to their current cultivation techniques, their own were nothing but rubbish.

Therefore, all disciples were extremely enthusiastic about contributing to the Jade Cauldron Sect.

Seeing the disciples so passionate, Xu Ma'an felt incredibly gratified inside, and that the Jade Cauldron Sect had achieved its present status was all thanks to Lin Chen alone.

However, among the entire Jade Cauldron Sect, everyone was diligently practicing their cultivation, except for one individual.

This person was Zhao Rushi, who was not in pursuit of immense cultivation but rather the art of alchemy.

At the moment, Zhao Rushi had been in seclusion in her alchemy room for half a month, constantly researching new pill recipes.

She had completely disregarded Wang Yilin and the disciples of Crimson Dawn Peak.

Only occasionally did Yang Yuemin come to Ninth Peak to help her good sister by guiding the disciples of Crimson Dawn Peak.

Xu Ma'an and the others had no way to deal with Zhao Rushi's passion for alchemy.

Although there was nothing wrong with Zhao Rushi's pursuit of alchemy, it shouldn't come at the cost of neglecting her cultivation. After all, martial artists in the Reverting Void Realm had a lifespan of only about five hundred years.

If Zhao Rushi continued to indulge in alchemy and neglected her cultivation, the situation where her older fellow practitioners broke through in cultivation, extending their lifespans, while Zhao Rushi remained stagnant and exhausted her lifespan would be unbearable for Xu Ma'an and the others.

It was important to note that both Zhao Rushi and Yang Yuemin were already over two hundred years old, with half their lifespans already behind them.

Hoo-hoo—

Lin Chen opened the restrictions and entered Zhao Rushi's pill refining room. With a wave of his hand, he took away the Pill Spirit Array that assisted in alchemy, as well as a large amount of precious herbal materials from the alchemy room.

"Kid, what are you doing? Give me back my elixirs and the Pill Spirit Array."

Zhao Rushi was in the midst of alchemy, but she suddenly felt the flame under her pill furnace slip from her control, leading to a failed alchemy. Turning her head, she saw Lin Chen taking away the Pill Spirit Array and a large amount of other herbal materials.

"Give it back to you? On what grounds? This Pill Spirit Array was set up by me, and these herbal materials, too, were obtained by me after taking down Divine Sun City and from the Wanxing Commerce Association. Whether I give them to my uncle or not is entirely up to me."

Chapter 432: Jade Cauldron Kingdom, Lingxi Commerce Guild

"Boy, are you returning it or not?"

Zhao Rushi glared at Lin Chen, her appearance disheveled from alchemy, her hair messy and clothes unkempt, a far cry from her usual beauty. To put it bluntly, she looked like a madwoman.

"Not returning!"

Lin Chen said definitively.

Upon hearing this, Zhao Rushi wanted to punish Lin Chen, but then she thought that her cultivation was no longer a match for his, so how could she possibly discipline him?

Afterward, the two engaged in another dispute, but no matter what Zhao Rushi said, Lin Chen had no intention of handing over the herbal materials and the Pill Spirit Array.

Finally, both parties reached an agreement. As long as Zhao Rushi broke through to a new minor realm, Lin Chen would lend her the Pill Spirit Array for three months, and she could exchange for any herbal materials available at the Jade Cauldron Sect at will, until her cultivation reached the Fifth Layer of the Reverting Void Realm.

Once the agreement was reached, Lin Chen finally left Zhao Rushi's alchemy room.

After Lin Chen had left, Zhao Rushi clenched her teeth and watched his retreating figure with resentment. She had secretly resolved to give Lin Chen's real body a good lesson in the future.

She could not defeat his Second Soul Division now, but Lin Chen's real body was not nearly as strong as this division, which she believed she could certainly bully.

However, little did Zhao Rushi know that even Lin Chen's real body was no longer someone she could discipline; her plan was likely never to come to fruition.

Therefore, in order to gain access to the Pill Spirit Array, which greatly aided in alchemy, Zhao Rushi had no choice but to set aside her alchemy aspirations for the time being and focus solely on cultivation.

Zhao Rushi's talent was extraordinary to begin with, and once she got serious, it took her less than ten days to break through from the First Layer of the Reverting Void Realm to the Second Layer.

Right after her breakthrough, she eagerly sought out Lin Chen, demanding he hand over the Pill Spirit Array as per their agreement.

Lin Chen was quite speechless at this. With such strong cultivation talent, why was Zhao Rushi so obsessed with alchemy?

If she had put that same effort into her cultivation, perhaps her cultivation would even surpass Xu Ma'an's by now.

Nevertheless, Lin Chen did not offer much advice, for he knew it was impossible to persuade Zhao Rushi. He went to Crimson Dawn Peak and re-established the Pill Spirit Array in Zhao Rushi's alchemy room.

However, as Lin Chen was leaving, he emphasized that if her cultivation realm was still at the Second Layer of the Reverting Void Realm after three months, he would come to take the Pill Spirit Array away.

Zhao Rushi was quite upset by this because Xu Ma'an and others had taken a full two years to move from the Second Layer to the Third Layer of the Reverting Void Realm. Expecting Zhao Rushi to do it in three months was asking too much.

Therefore, Zhao Rushi simply decided not to worry about it and enjoyed her three months of alchemy life first.

Lin Chen was even more exasperated at this.

Because Zhao Rushi had once again secluded herself in alchemy, none of the disciples on Crimson Dawn Peak knew about cultivating.

Out of necessity, Yang Yuemin had to take up this burden. Although she was not good at teaching, thankfully, there were not many people on Crimson Dawn Peak, just like Jade Bird Peak—they had only eight or nine female disciples, so she could still manage to teach and solve their problems reluctantly.

As for Wang Yilin, this girl often sneaked out to play with Hua Lianxin, even leaving Divine Sun City to venture into the dangerous forests outside.

Lin Chen was worried about them, after all, Hua Lianxin's physique was special; if someone who recognized her physique discovered her, it would spell trouble.

However, Lin Chen couldn't restrict Hua Lianxin's freedom, so he simply followed the two of them out to the Demon Dragon Forest outside Divine Sun City.

And Wang Yilin and Xu Lianyu were as close as two peas in a pod. If they ventured out to Demon Dragon Forest and Wang Yilin was going, naturally, Xu Lianyu would be involved as well.

Upon knowing that Lin Chen would also join them, Wang Yilin, though she wanted to cultivate and catch up with Lin Chen's pace, decided to set aside her cultivation for the moment and accompany them outside Divine Sun City. After all, this was a rare opportunity to spend time with Lin Chen.

As Lin Chen's cultivation grew stronger, Xu Lianyu's chances to draw close to Lin Chen had become increasingly scarce.

Moreover, this opportunity to spend time together also gave Xu Lianyu the chance to exchange pointers with Lin Chen, request his swordsmanship and the Blazing Fire Divine Technique, and have the opportunity for close contact with him.

However, although the Second Soul Division shared the same divine sense as Lin Chen himself, the personality of this Second Soul Division seemed to pursue cultivation and martial force even more, and it was rather dense regarding matters of romantic affection, completely missing the chance to give Xu Lianyu any close contact.

In Divine Sun City, the War Department, following the rewards published by the Jade Cauldron Sect, rewarded not only those who contributed to Divine Sun City and the Jade Cauldron Sect but also those whose cultivation made breakthroughs.

This surely ignited everyone's determination to grow stronger, and many practiced their cultivation with diligence.

Having received rewards, their cultivation practices grew even more vigorous.

This decision was proposed by Lin Chen, and indeed, it significantly boosted the martial force within Divine Sun City.

The martial force of Divine Sun City's War Department could now even be compared to the large army of Red Soul Hall that had attacked Divine Sun City initially.

If they were to battle once again against the army of Red Soul Hall, the martial force of Divine Sun City's War Department would certainly be able to fight without falling behind, and perhaps even secure a complete victory.

Furthermore, the martial force of Divine Sun City's War Department was divided by Lin Chen into two parts.

One part was the main force of the War Department, named the Golden Arrow Army, because the weapon these martial artists wielded were golden bows and arrows, refined by the Artifact Refiners of the Jade Cauldron Sect, modeled after the Golden Bow and Arrow in Lin Chen's possession.

The other part of the War Department was called the Warship Battalion, comprising martial artists adept at manipulating magic artifacts and using formations.

The flying boats left behind in Divine Sun City by the Seven Sects, as well as the warships of Red Soul Hall, were all remodeled by Lin Chen's team and had become warships with formidable destructive power. Operating these warships required skilled martial artists and the development of strong rapport, hence the establishment of the Warship Battalion.

Moreover, Zhao Lingxi was in charge of all commercial affairs within Divine Sun City. After two months of operation, the various commercial activities within Divine Sun City had returned to normal production, but Lin Chen was not satisfied with just this; he instructed Zhao Lingxi to expand the business to the neighboring empires.

The Great Flame Dynasty had since changed rulers, and Lin Chen simply renamed the empire as Jade Cauldron Kingdom.

As the commercial representative of Jade Cauldron Kingdom, Zhao Lingxi naturally needed a name for the guild. Lin Chen suggested using the former Wanxing Commerce Association, considering its renown in other nations, but Zhao Lingxi flatly refused.

Ultimately, Lin Chen decided to name it after Zhao Lingxi, calling it Lingxi Commerce Guild.

Chapter 433: Da Yun Kingdom

Zhao Lingxi couldn't resist Lin Chen and eventually had to accept the name Lingxi Commerce Guild.

It must be acknowledged that Zhao Lingxi managed the business affairs of the Jade Cauldron Kingdom in an orderly fashion.

Initially, some of the elders within the Jade Cauldron Sect didn't approve of Zhao Lingxi, thinking she was too young and her cultivation was not high.

However, since Zhao Lingxi was recommended by Lin Chen, the elders had to follow the order.

After all, it involved the business economy of the Jade Cauldron Kingdom. If they caused trouble leading to an economic decline, Xu Ma'an would probably not let them off easily.

Moreover, Lin Chen had arranged for two martial artists at the Ninth Layer of the Heaven-reaching Realm to protect Zhao Lingxi. With Lin Chen's current status in the Jade Cauldron Sect, who would dare to disrespect Zhao Lingxi.

Yet, Zhao Lingxi was not satisfied with only developing the business economy within the Jade Cauldron Kingdom and extended her reach to other countries.

The geographical location of the Jade Cauldron Kingdom was unique, situated in the Eastern Domain but on the edge near the Western Region, and was a junction between the Southern and Northern Regions – essentially where the four regions intersected.

The foreign countries Zhao Lingxi chose were the Frost Chill Kingdom near the north of the Jade Cauldron Kingdom, and the Da Yun Kingdom near the south.

Both of these countries were within the Eastern Domain.

The Frost Chill Kingdom, like the Jade Cauldron Kingdom, was a vassal state under the Formation Sect.

However, vassal states were also ranked, from high to low level, into First Class Vassal State, Second-Rank Vassal State, and Third Grade Vassal State.

For example, the former Great Flame Dynasty was merely a Third Grade Vassal State of the Formation Sect and was furthermore the lowest-ranked among them. Therefore, for nearly a hundred years, the Formation Sect had ignored them – even if the Great Flame Dynasty was annihilated, the Formation Sect would not pay much attention.

However, the Frost Chill Kingdom was a Second-Rank Vassal State, with overall national power and finances several times those of the Great Flame Dynasty.

But now, the Jade Cauldron Kingdom had developed and might slowly rise to the power of a Second-Rank Vassal State.

Since both countries were vassal states under the Formation Sect, as long as they showed sincerity and brought forth the goods needed by the Frost Chill Kingdom and signed a contract, business could operate normally.

As for the Da Yun Kingdom, it held a very special geographical position, being near the countries under the control of the Red Soul Hall.

The Da Yun Kingdom was not a vassal state of the Formation Sect but belonged under the Skyhawk Sect of the Divine Flame Alliance.

The power of the Skyhawk Sect was second only to the Formation Sect, but the Da Yun Kingdom was just a Second-Rank Vassal State. It was impossible to use it to resist the Red Soul Hall.

Hence, the Skyhawk Sect adopted an attitude of laissez-faire; as long as the actions of the Red Soul Hall within the Da Yun Kingdom were not too excessive, they would let them come and go as they pleased.

This was also considered a method of eased control, and it was precisely because of this approach by the Skyhawk Sect that Da Yun Kingdom became a mixed bag of elements, turning it into an exceedingly prosperous and affluent place.

Even some First Class Vassal States, in terms of wealth, were perhaps not comparable to one Da Yun Kingdom.

Because in the Da Yun Kingdom, only value exchange mattered. No one cared how the goods were obtained; as long as they had value, they could be traded.

Even some martial artists being pursued by others would flee to this place.

Although the Da Yun Kingdom was a mixture of the good and bad, its system was extremely strong. Even those who caused trouble within it did not need the enforcers of the Da Yun Kingdom to take action. Both parties involved would handle it themselves, because no one wanted to break the balance and system of the Da Yun Kingdom.

Thus, Zhao Lingxi set her sights on Da Yun Kingdom, a country without a system yet more stable than those with established systems.

Zhao Lingxi understood Lin Chen's inner thoughts deeply. Lin Chen's ambition was to develop the Jade Cauldron Kingdom into the strength of a First Class Vassal State and even surpass the power of the Formation Sect in the future.

To others, this might seem like a joke, but Zhao Lingxi had unwavering faith in Lin Chen.

Lin Chen had reached his current position step by step in just a little over two years; no one could predict what the future held. What Zhao Lingxi needed to do was to believe in Lin Chen, help him by her side, which was also helping herself. Zhao Lingxi also harbored her own ambitions in her heart.

Her current achievements had long surpassed those of the Wanxing Commerce Association from before.

Zhao Lingxi wanted to expand her business in Da Yun Kingdom and establish a foothold there, which required having her own unique products.

Although the Jade Cauldron Kingdom possessed many powerful magic treasures and high-grade elixirs, these items were consumables, and with the skills that Lin Chen had taught the kingdom's alchemists and artifact refiners, they were not yet capable of producing enough for export. They were barely meeting the needs of the kingdom's own martial artists.

Therefore, the special features of the Jade Cauldron Sect naturally became the talisman inscriptions and formations set by Lin Chen.

To have Lin Chen himself refine high-grade talisman inscriptions and sophisticated formations and sell them to other countries would exhaust him to death.

Moreover, the secret of automating alchemy and talisman inscription production was something that Lin Chen absolutely could not reveal, and currently, this formation could only refine low-level talisman inscriptions.

So when Lin Chen learned that Zhao Lingxi was going to trade abroad, he taught some sophisticated talisman inscriptions and formation techniques to the array masters of the Jade Cauldron Kingdom early on, to be produced by the Jade Cauldron Sect's Talisman Pavilion.

However, what Lin Chen taught them were only those with good effects, but not the core talisman inscriptions.

Such as the Qiankun Escape Talisman capable of teleportation, the powerful Explosive Flame Talisman, and Nine Heavens Thunderstrike Talisman, Lin Chen certainly would not teach these to the formation masters of Jade Cauldron Kingdom.

In case these formation masters intended to betray the Jade Cauldron Kingdom and turn these talismans against it, that would be a great trouble.

Therefore, Lin Chen only taught them talisman inscriptions like Swiftess Talisman, Strength Talisman, and Shadow-moving Talisman, among others, for them to produce and then hand over to Zhao Lingxi for international trade.

And these talismans were sufficient for Zhao Lingxi to gain a foothold in Da Yun Kingdom.

As for high-grade talisman inscriptions like the Qiankun Escape Talisman, the Explosive Flame Talisman, and the Nine Heavens Thunderstrike Talisman, Lin Chen would make them himself and deliver them to the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion, with only those who made significant contributions to the Jade Cauldron Kingdom eligible for exchange.

To prevent any problems before they arose, Lin Chen was concerned that these exchanged talismans would not be used by martial artists for themselves but instead resold.

He worried that purchasers might use these talismans to oppose the Jade Cauldron Kingdom. Therefore, when making these talismans, Lin Chen left a special mark within them.

If anyone tried to use these talismans against the Jade Cauldron Kingdom within a certain range, Lin Chen would sense it immediately.

At that time, anyone attempting to exploit these talismans would only be bringing disaster upon themselves.

With the talisman inscriptions refined by the Jade Cauldron Kingdom, Zhao Lingxi quickly established a foothold in Da Yun Kingdom and began establishing the Lingxi Commerce Guild.

Although the guild's reputation was not yet widely known, Zhao Lingxi had great confidence in it.

She believed that in the near future, the Lingxi Commerce Guild would become renowned across the entire Mysterious Heaven Continent.

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Chapter 434: 3000 Great Paths, Enlightenment Stone Pillar

Formation Sect, Enlightenment Stone Forest.

In the most secluded area of the Formation Sect lay a patch of stone pillars known as the Enlightenment Stone Forest.

Countless pillars stood arranged in a peculiar fashion throughout this place.

The Enlightenment Stone Forest was where the ancestors of the Formation Sect had infused their lifelong learning and insights into these pillars for the younger disciples to comprehend.

There are said to be three thousand Great Dao in the universe and even more lesser paths amounting to ninety thousand.

While these pillars could not cover them all, they did contain the Great Dao and lesser paths imparted by the Formation Sect's ancestors.

This place was of utmost importance to the Formation Sect. Normally, Formation Sect disciples were not allowed to enter unless they had made significant contributions and spent contribution points for access.

At this moment, among the disciples attending the Formation Sect's recruitment assembly, only twelve thousand remained. These martial artists originally had no right to enter the Enlightenment Stone Forest.

However, the fourth round of the recruitment assembly required these martial artists to enter the Enlightenment Stone Forest and comprehend the Great Dao, hence, they received this free opportunity.

Having reached the Enlightenment Stone Forest, many martial artists sensed the Great Dao embodied in the pillars. However, as they had not yet calmed their minds to comprehend, they were unable to grasp the Dao.

But with the Great Dao within sight, everyone was naturally filled with immense excitement.

Some pillars in the Stone Forest were engraved with names. Those who had comprehended the Three Thousand Great Dao and had mastered its essence could leave their marks on the pillars.

Disciples who left their marks on the Enlightenment Stone Pillars all invariably became strong individuals.

Over the tens of thousands of years of the Formation Sect's history, only a few hundred individuals had ever left marks on the Enlightenment Stone Pillars. These disciples were all considered Heavenly Prides, with only a few among the present crowd capable of comparing to them.

Following their arrival at the Enlightenment Stone Forest, individuals like Tang Yuntian were filled with anticipation, wondering if any of the current disciples could leave their marks there.

People like Tang Yuntian naturally had high hopes for Lin Chen and Qin Kaifeng, among a few others who had reached the highest levels of the Trial Tower.

The Dao of the Stone Forest, though not encompassing all Dao, nearly included all attributes of the Great Dao in the universe.

Within the Great Dao, the Power of the Five Elements was contained.

In addition, it possessed forces of wind, lightning, ice, space, and various other special attributes.

Ordinary martial artists generally mastered one of the Five Elements' forces, and their affinity determined their relative strength and weakness.

After receiving Tang Yuntian's permission, everyone immediately entered the Enlightenment Stone Forest and chose their respective spots to sit and comprehend.

People were not foolish; they understood that the Dao had attributes, and they sought to comprehend near the attributes they practiced.

For example, Xia Wanxin found a pillar embellished with the pattern of a Fire Dragon to sit beside.

"This is the Scarlet Flame True Dragon. I never imagined that the Formation Sect would possess such a formidable Dao. If I can comprehend its essence, it will be of tremendous help to my cultivation," Xia Wanxin joyfully observed the Fire Dragon pillar and promptly sat down to study it.

Deng Yu also found a pillar that shone with a golden light. From what he had observed earlier, this particular pillar's golden glow was the brightest, indicating that the Metal Property Dao it contained must be extraordinary.

Qin Kaifeng, the Purple-robed Maiden, the Bald Monk, and others hurriedly found their own spots as well.

"Qiu Ya, go there," Lin Chen said, noticing Qiu Ya's bewildered expression, he released his Divine Sense to probe the surroundings, then pointed to a secluded pillar and instructed Qiu Ya.

Other martial artists were vying for the best spots to comprehend the Dao, and the location Lin Chen had chosen was one that several people had passed by and then walked away from, paying it no heed, indicating it was not desirable.

Yet Lin Chen had directed Qiu Ya to that specific spot.

"Okay, thank you, Brother Lin Chen," Qiu Ya didn't overthink it and trusted Lin Chen immediately.

She had no defenses against Lin Chen and felt that he would never deceive her.

Arriving at the unremarkable pillar, Qiu Ya released her Divine Soul to probe it, her expression instantly transforming.

"The Way of the Wandering Dragon!" she mentally exclaimed, covering her mouth with her hand in shock, almost letting out an audible gasp.

The so-called Wandering Dragon was a powerful True Dragon in the world that, unlike other dragons, had no physical body; it was a Soul Body. However, its strength surpassed many other True Dragons because it excelled at Divine Soul attacks.

Because the Wandering Dragon was a soul state and adept at concealing its presence, that's why the pillar appeared so inconspicuous.

Yet, in Qiu Ya's eyes, this pillar was the most crucial one in the entire plaza. If she could comprehend its Dao, it would greatly benefit her Divine Soul.

This was a treasure that Formation Masters, Alchemists, and Artifact Refiners dreamed of.

Qiu Ya didn't make a fuss and quietly sat down cross-legged. Others seeing Qiu Ya choosing such an Enlightenment Stone Pillar assumed she was weak and didn't want to contend with other martial artists for better pillars.

Fist Technique, Swordsmanship; many martial artists were eager to claim these pillars since these were the most commonly practiced Cultivation Techniques among martial artists.

It was first-come, first-served, and those who didn't secure the best spot had to settle for sitting at a distance. Tang Yuntian had previously stated that it was forbidden to fight over spots, as doing so would result in being expelled from the Enlightenment Stone Forest and losing eligibility for the assembly.

As everyone searched for various pillars, Lin Chen did not remain idle. However, he did not need to check each pillar with his eyes; a sweep of his Divine Sense was enough to know what Dao and strength were contained within each Enlightenment Stone Pillar.

Therefore, Lin Chen could precisely identify the pillar that Qiu Ya needed.

For Lin Chen, his Divine Soul was already strong enough, so he didn't need to acquire Dao that would help with his Divine Soul.

Furthermore, his Swordsmanship and Fist Technique were already at Great Success, and while his Archery Technique was slightly inferior, with the help of his Divine Soul for aiming, it was barely adequate.

In the end, Lin Chen chose a pillar containing the Wind Attribute.

As martial artists with Wind Attribute Power were rare, no one competed with Lin Chen for it.

Chapter 435: Comprehending the Essence of Wind, Movement Technique Great Success

Lin Chen, due to practicing the Primordial Transformation Art, unlike other martial artists who have limitations, could cultivate power of all attributes within his body.

For someone like Xia Wanxin with a Fire Attribute physique, she could not cultivate techniques of the Water or Ice Attributes, as doing so would backfire on her body, and no matter how hard she tried, it would be absolutely impossible for her to make any progress.

Lin Chen sat down and immediately started cultivating with his eyes closed.

The others did the same, ten thousand two hundred martial artists filling the entire Enlightenment Stone Forest.

As everyone began their enlightenment, ten days quickly passed. Many martial artists slowly woke up, their faces all showing a look of desolation.

Clearly, these martial artists had not grasped the Great Dao within the Enlightenment Stone Pillars.

"Damn it, these Great Daos are too profound. Even if I were given another half a year, I'm afraid I wouldn't be able to understand it."

"Yes, it's too difficult. It's unimaginable how strong the predecessors who left the Great Dao in these pillars must have been."

"Look quick, someone's hair has all fallen out..."

Those who failed to understand the Great Dao and woke up were now complaining to each other about the profundity of the Dao within the Enlightenment Stone Pillars; they simply couldn't grasp it.

Let alone understanding it, many martial artists didn't even touch the threshold of the Great Dao during these ten days.

Outside the Enlightenment Stone Forest, Tang Yuntian and other elders like Tang Yunshan watched the martial artists who were waking up with drooping eyes and sighed slightly, continuously shaking their heads.

In fact, they were well aware that it was pretty good to have one or two people understand the Great Dao in each recruitment competition, and leaving a mark on the Enlightenment Stone Pillars was even more impossible.

Whoosh whoosh—

Suddenly, within the Enlightenment Stone Forest, a strong force of Soul Power burst forth, sweeping around. All the awakened martial artists and many elders turned their heads toward one corner of the forest. They saw a delicate figure surrounded by an invisible force, which was the power of the Soul.

"Who is this girl? She didn't seem outstanding in the previous assessments, how could she have understood the Great Dao? And it seems to be the Way of the Soul."

Tang Yuntian and other Outer Sect Elders all fixed their gaze on Qiu Ya, the anxiety on their faces dissipated, and they finally saw a martial artist who had grasped the Great Dao.

"This girl is named Qiu Ya, her cultivation is only at the Fourth Layer of the Heaven-reaching Realm. She was unremarkable before, but when she went through the Trial Tower, she followed Lin Chen and managed to secure a spot in the fifth floor," Tang Yunshan approached Tang Yuntian and said.

Upon hearing this, Tang Yuntian nodded, took a mental note of Qiu Ya, because she cultivated Soul Power, which would surely be sought after by some Inner Sect elders, and he wondered if he could find an opportunity to recruit her into the Tang Sect.

Since her cultivation was not high, if they offered decent conditions, she might agree.

Whoosh whoosh—

However, just as everyone's attention was on Qiu Ya, a hurricane suddenly rose within the Enlightenment Stone Forest.

"Such strong Wind Attribute Power, could it be that someone has comprehended the True Meaning of the Wind?"

A martial artist who cultivated Wind Attribute Techniques shouted. He had also been trying to comprehend the Great Dao of the Wind Attribute from an Enlightenment Stone Pillar, but he hadn't caught a glimpse of its true intent.

Boom—

The moment that person's voice fell, another powerful burst of the True Meaning of the Wind erupted from Lin Chen, and then the body of Lin Chen, who was sitting cross-legged in cultivation, astonishingly suspended and flew up into the sky.

There was no leakage of Spiritual Power from Lin Chen's body, it was purely the True Meaning of the Wind that lifted him up into the air.

"This is wonderful, someone has actually comprehended the true intent."

"Is it Lin Chen? This youth indeed has extraordinary celestial talent."

Tang Yuntian and the other elders were also looking towards Lin Chen in amazement at this moment, their faces full of joy.

In truth, the fourth challenge wasn't about any elimination rule, but rather the Formation Sect hoped to discover a real heavenly pride, which is why they allowed them to enter this place to comprehend the Great Dao.

The Great Dao is eternal; what is actually lacking is time.

The time given for everyone to freely comprehend was also ten days, hence some martial artists who really couldn't grasp the threshold of the Great Dao just woke up.

Understanding the Great Dao requires extreme comprehension ability, and this comprehension is just as important as a martial artist's physique.

Martial artists with extreme comprehension abilities cultivate cultivation methods and martial arts skills much faster than those with poorer comprehension.

At this moment, not only had Lin Chen comprehended the Great Dao, but he had even sensed the Great Dao True Intent, which showed the strength of his comprehension ability.

As Lin Chen comprehended the Great Dao True Intent of the Wind Attribute, the hurricane slowly dissipated, and Lin Chen also slowly began to emerge from his meditation.

The hurricane that had dragged Lin Chen's body up slowly descended opposite him; Lin Chen opened his eyes, and two hurricanes burst forth from his eyes, turning into two whirlwinds that blew towards the sky.

"Although I've only grasped a trace of the true intent, I have reached a new understanding of the Purple Cloud Wings," Lin Chen muttered to himself.

No sooner had he spoken than his body slightly flickered on the spot, leaving behind an afterimage instantaneously, then Lin Chen's body swiftly circled the Enlightenment Stone Forest and returned to his original position.

Some martial artists' eyes simply couldn't keep up with the speed of Lin Chen's movement technique.

In their eyes, it seemed as if Lin Chen had never left his original spot.

The people around him looked at Lin Chen; some subtly discerned the mysterious and unpredictable movement technique of Lin Chen, thinking it was formed by Lin Chen's comprehension of the True Meaning of the Wind, but little did they know that Lin Chen had not only comprehended the True Meaning of the Wind but also cultivated such a movement technique as the Purple Cloud Wings.

In fact, Lin Chen was very clear that he had only comprehended the essence left by the Great Dao of the True Meaning of the Wind, and he was far from mastering it.

This shows how incredibly powerful the person who left behind this Great Dao was. If one truly mastered this Great Dao of the True Meaning of the Wind, one might reach the same speeds as cultivating the Purple Cloud Wings Flight Martial Technique even without it.

Now, with the help of the True Meaning of the Wind, Lin Chen had cultivated the second layer of the Purple Cloud Wings to great success and could move as he wished.

Lin Chen was completely confident that, including the Inner Sect Disciples, there was likely no one who could keep up with his speed.

"That guy, always so dazzling!"

When Lin Chen comprehended the True Meaning of the Wind, Deng Yu, who was in the distance, couldn't help but clench his fists, his eyes shooting forth a cold as ice gaze towards Lin Chen, filled with immense resentment in his heart.

He was originally the true heavenly pride, even the Inner Sect disciples wanted to take him under their wing, but now, all the attention had been stolen by Lin Chen alone.

Chapter 436 Enlightenment Ends

After Lin Chen had executed his movement technique and roamed around the Enlightenment Stone Forest for a while, he looked back and saw the resentful look in Deng Yu's eyes.

Seeing this, Lin Chen knew he had probably made an enemy of this guy.

As for Deng Yu, Lin Chen did hold some wariness towards him. After all, the man was strong, with superior talent, and might even be chosen as a Core Disciple of the Formation Sect.

If that child targeted Lin Chen in the future, Lin Chen would indeed face some trouble within the Formation Sect.

Even without considering the far future, there were also some troubles in the current assessment.

In the past, Deng Yu had always been the center of attention in front of everyone. But now, the person who had received all the attention, praise, and admiration had suddenly changed to Lin Chen, and Deng Yu naturally harbored deep hatred towards Lin Chen.

"Brother Lin, it seems your talent is far above mine," Qin Kaifeng came up to Lin Chen and offered his congratulations.

During these ten days, Qin Kaifeng had always been very close to comprehending the true intent, but comprehension is such that, even if it's just half an inch away, as long as you haven't grasped it, it amounts to nothing.

So, after witnessing Lin Chen's enlightenment, he returned to his original spot to continue his efforts.

According to the rules of the Formation Sect's recruitment competition, everyone had fifteen days to comprehend the Great Dao.

Now that ten days had passed and only five days remained, Qin Kaifeng and Deng Yu became extremely anxious.

If they couldn't surpass both Lin Chen and Qiu Ya, Deng Yu wouldn't even be able to respect himself.

Not just Deng Yu, Xia Wanxin, the Heartless Monk, Ouyang Xuan, and others all became very anxious. They wanted to comprehend the true intent within the remaining five days as well.

Time flew, and four more days passed.

Many martial artists became nervous because only the last day remained, and they still hadn't even touched the threshold of the Great Dao. With only one day left, it seemed they were fated to miss out on the Dao within the stone pillars.

Meanwhile, some martial artists gave up on the Dao of the attribute they practiced and attempted to comprehend the Dao of other attributes, but this approach only diminished their hopes even further.

At this moment, people like Qin Kaifeng had entered a meditative trance, which suggested they had touched the threshold of the Great Dao and were in the midst of comprehension.

Elders like Tang Yuntian were overjoyed, for among this group of disciples, there seemed to be over ten showing signs of comprehension, indicating this could be the most extraordinary batch in many years.

Humming—

Spiritual power fluctuations emanated from Deng Yu's body, clearly indicating the signs of comprehending the true intent.

Soon after, Xia Wanxin, Qin Kaifeng, the Heartless Monk, and Ouyang Xuan all manifested signs of activity, suggesting they too had comprehended the true intent.

As for Lin Chen, he also entered a meditative trance at this moment. After comprehending the True Meaning of the Wind, Lin Chen continued to seek comprehension of other Great Daos.

Between the flame technique and the thunder technique, Lin Chen chose the Power of Thunder and Lightning.

Flame technique, which means mastering the power of fire, Lin Chen's Second Soul Division had refined the Blue Lotus Divine Flame and therefore already possessed powerful flame powers.

Even if he master flame technique, the actual increase in strength it provided was still not higher than that of the Blue Lotus Divine Flame, so Lin Chen simply chose thunder technique instead.

Both thunder technique and flame technique are among the two powerful destructive Great Dao paths, which have a suppressive effect on creatures with dark attributes.

The reason Lin Chen chose thunder technique to comprehend was also because of the golden bow and arrow he used, whose arrow feathers were infused with the power of thunder and lightning; thus, if Lin Chen could grasp the thunder technique, it would inevitably enhance the power of the arrow feathers shot from his golden bow.

On the last day, martial artists like Qin Kaifeng finally comprehended the Great Dao True Intent, though each of them understood only one true intent.

Comprehending a single true intent in half a month's time was already a very remarkable achievement.

Because the martial artists of the Formation Sect who had comprehended the Great Dao True Intent and left their marks actually did not achieve this during the recruitment trial, but after they joined the Formation Sect, spending Contribution Points to enter this place alone and comprehending for a long time to reach that goal.

One must fully grasp the Great Dao to leave marks on the Enlightenment Stone Pillar.

Therefore, the trial that Lin Chen and the others were partaking in was just a taste of sweetness offered by the Formation Sect.

Lin Chen had comprehended two true intents, an event that had never occurred in the history of the Formation Sect's annual trials.

Lin Chen's talent could only be described as terrifyingly exceptional.

Everyone present was looking at Lin Chen with disbelief, unable to trust their own eyes; during the second round of aptitude testing, Lin Chen was merely considered superior, among those present like Qin Kaifeng, Xia Wanxin, Heartless Monk, Deng Yu, and Ouyang Xuan, all had stronger aptitude than Lin Chen, yet they only comprehended one true intent each, while Lin Chen had grasped two.

Everyone was wondering if there was an issue with the testing stele during the second round, suggesting Lin Chen's aptitude was far beyond what had been recorded.

Otherwise, how could Lin Chen's performance in the Trial Tower and now be stronger than the other Heavenly Prides?

Zhao Zhongtian and Zhao Zhongchuan were standing in a corner at this moment, their gaze towards Lin Chen brimming with complexity.

Given Lin Chen's demonstrated talent, it seemed he would definitely earn the spot of an Inner Sect Disciple, and after the trial was over, it was likely an Inner Sect Elder would approach him and accept him as a Core Disciple.

Becoming a Core Disciple of the Formation Sect signified an unlimited future, by then he would definitely be beyond what the Zhao Family could afford to provoke.

Zhao Zhongchuan and Zhao Zhongtian felt incredibly stifled at this moment, as they had irreconcilable hatred with Lin Chen; now that Lin Chen had become so powerful, how could they settle their accounts with him?

"Even if he is a Heavenly Pride, what of it, his Cultivation is ultimately only at Melding Earth Realm, as long as we have the opportunity to eliminate him before he has fully grown."

Zhao Zhongtian's face was filled with hatred, as he and Zhao Zhongchuan's enmity toward Lin Chen had reached an irreconcilable level.

They had to snuff him in the cradle before Lin Chen could grow up, which was why Zhao Zhongtian had already made contact with some assassins within the Formation Sect, paying for Lin Chen's life with money.

Although the Formation Sect conducted very strict investigations into the killings of Heavenly Prides, the people they were in contact with had abundant experience, always cleverly evading the Sect's investigations.

The fifteen days had passed, and many Heavenly Prides had also comprehended the Great Dao; Tang Yuntian was satisfied and led everyone away from the Enlightenment Stone Forest.

After everyone had left the Enlightenment Stone Forest, a formation immediately appeared around its perimeter, transforming into restrictions to protect it.

Chapter 437: Lin Chen's Back

In the Jade Cauldron Kingdom, atop the city walls.

Lin Chen's Second Soul Division was holding a cyan bow in his left hand, which he had forged in imitation of the Blazing Fire Divine Bow belonging to Lin Chen's original body. Although its power was not as great as the golden bow and arrow, it was not to be underestimated.

At that moment, in Lin Chen's right hand, he placed ten specially refined arrow feathers with lightning attributes on the cyan bow, drew the bow to its full extent, and aimed at a huge boulder on the mountain peak opposite.

Swish swish—

Silver lightning flashed ten times in quick succession, and the arrow feathers flew from Lin Chen's hands, shooting towards the mountain peak on the opposite bank.

The ten arrow feathers hit their target perfectly, instantly blasting the giant rocks into smithereens.

The cyan bow itself possessed the power of the lightning attribute, and the refined arrow feathers were the same. Lin Chen's Second Soul Division further enhanced the power of the arrow feathers by infusing them with lightning system power while drawing and releasing the bowstring.

To maximize the power of his bow, Lin Chen had specially learned a swordsmanship known as Thunder Chasing Strike, an archery technique of the Earth Level Low Grade, which significantly enhanced the power of the arrow feathers.

Now, the arrows in Lin Chen's hand had the power to match the prowess of a Fifth Level Reverting Void Realm warrior with a single shot.

Furthermore, Lin Chen had mastered the ability to draw the bowstring and shoot ten arrows at a time, giving him a certain multi-target capability, which could provide an advantage in group battles.

In the case of single combat, Lin Chen could focus all his power on one arrow, which could then unleash a might comparable to the Reverting Void Realm Sixth Layer.

"This guy is getting more and more monstrous."

"If we do not make efforts, I'm afraid we won't even be able to keep up with his shadow."

Xu Ma'an and Li Xuanming and others, witnessing the commotion stirred by Lin Chen, felt a sense of dread in their hearts.

In particular, Hong Yanbing, who had some past grievances with Lin Chen, knew that if Lin Chen had aimed that attack at him just now, he would undoubtedly be dead already.

Clenching his fists, Hong Yanbing was inwardly glad that he had long since resolved his hostilities with Lin Chen, for he would not have been able to withstand that attack from Lin Chen otherwise.

Xu Ma'an, Yang Yuemin, and others recognized that Lin Chen's attack contained the power of wind, fire, and lightning attributes, which was why it could unleash such formidable force.

"Truly worthy of the person who has led the Jade Cauldron Sect to such glory, indeed unbelievably powerful."

Yu Liyan gazed at Lin Chen, feeling utterly astounded. Lin Chen's growth rate was beyond imagination. She remembered when the Floral Transfer Palace merged with the Jade Cauldron Sect, Lin Chen was nowhere near as powerful as he is now. Back then, his strength was not even on par with hers, but now, they could only look up to Lin Chen.

They had also exchanged and learned the Blazing Fire Divine Decree. In a First Class Vassal State where Heavenly Skill Techniques were scarce, such cultivation techniques were usually only accessible to core elders of Sects like Formation Sect and Skyhawk Sect.

For martial artists of Xu Ma'an and Yu Liyan's generation, to cultivate to the Reverting Void Realm was regarded as exceptional talent. If not for Lin Chen's rise, they might never have broken through the Reverting Void Realm in their lifetimes without some special fortune, with the Heavenly Human Realm seeming utterly unattainable.

But now, equipped with the Blazing Fire Divine Technique, everyone was filled with confidence about breaking through to the Heavenly Human Realm. They were not only focused on the Heavenly Human Realm, but even the higher Nirvana Realm seemed possible, because once their cultivation reached the Heavenly Human Realm, their lifespan would also be extended to two thousand years.

Witnessing Lin Chen's display of formidable strength, everyone's competitive spirit was ignited. Although Lin Chen was young, his cultivation and strength far exceeded theirs, which was a significant asset to the Jade Cauldron Kingdom.

However, everyone was acutely aware that the gap between them and Lin Chen was only going to grow wider, until they no longer mattered in his eyes. By then, to Lin Chen, their cultivation might seem as trifling as the difference between the kingdom's common disciples and themselves.

Not wanting to be left far behind by Lin Chen, they all needed to keep pace with him in order to travel further on the Martial Path.

...

In the Formation Sect, a huge Martial Arts Practice Ground.

At the moment, the Practice Ground was filled with twelve thousand and two hundred martial artists participating in the recruitment conference.

The fourth trial of Enlightenment had no dangers and no elimination mechanism, so even those who failed to grasp the true intent would not be disqualified by the Formation Sect.

However, those who did grasp the true intent would be awarded a thousand extra points, creating ever larger disparities in rankings.

And now, the total score Lin Chen had accumulated reached an astonishing nineteen thousand points.

This was a score unseen in the entire history of the Formation Sect; the second place, Qin Kaifeng, had only nine thousand points, a whole ten thousand points behind first place Lin Chen.

Heavenly prides like Xia Wanxin and Ouyang Xuan had only managed to secure scores between five and six thousand.

At the moment, the square accommodating everyone had arrays set up at the very front, with several stone lion sculptures placed there. The lion's teeth were some kind of jade, and not just that, there were certain formations beneath the stone lions.

This trial was to enter a secret realm for assessment.

And this trial was the most dangerous of the five so far.

In the past, nearly half of those who entered this secret realm would be injured.

"Before entering, all of you should think twice. The secret realm is fraught with peril. Those who fear death can choose to leave now,"

Tang Yuntian reminded everyone with a word of caution.

But since they had come this far, naturally no martial artist wanted to back down, and no one left.

"Since that's the case, I will now distribute Teleportation Jade Slips to you. If you encounter danger, just infuse Spiritual Power into it and then crush it to be immediately teleported out of the secret realm."

Chapter 438: Ambushed in a Secret Realm

"Additionally, aside from the Teleportation Jade Slip, each of you will receive a personal command token, which will record your information. In this secret realm competition, all of you will be teleported to different sectors. You need to survive in the secret realm for two months, and at the same time, try to snatch other people's command tokens. After two months, your score will be determined based on the command tokens you've collected. We will select the top one thousand contestants based on the total scores from these five trials and then proceed to the final decisive competition,"

After Tang Yuntian finished explaining the rules, he activated the secret realm's Teleportation Array with several Outer Sect Elders. Upon seeing the teleportation portal open, the martial artists rushed into the secret realm en masse.

Lin Chen watched the countless martial artists surge into the secret realm, feeling a bit uneasy in his heart.

Because among these twelve thousand martial artists, there were countless Heavenly Prides. Although Lin Chen had performed exceedingly well in the previous Trial Tower and Enlightenment Stone Forest, if one were actually to discuss combat strength, there were at least several hundred martial artists among them with the capability to contend with Lin Chen.

Lin Chen's performance thus far had been too dazzling, likely stirring displeasure in many people.

Once inside the secret realm, Lin Chen would probably be targeted by quite a few people, which could become troublesome for him.

Actually, even if they didn't enter the secret realm for the trial, others would be unable to catch up with Lin Chen.

Even if they caught up, it was impossible for Lin Chen to be eliminated beyond a thousand miles; therefore, even if Lin Chen chose not to enter the secret realm for the trials, it would actually not matter.

However, if Lin Chen were to back out at this moment, it would mean he acknowledged fear in his heart, which was in opposition to the Martial Path spirit Lin Chen pursued.

Therefore, faced with the trial of the secret realm before him, Lin Chen had no way out; he had to bravely embrace the challenge.

With Lin Chen's current strength, even for a martial artist at the Ninth Layer of the Heaven-reaching Realm, he actually had the strength to fight against them. Only if he encountered a martial artist like Qin Kaifeng, who was at the Half-Step Return to Void Realm, would things become very tricky.

Moreover, Lin Chen was different from the others, as most people tended to travel in groups. If Lin Chen encountered more than one person, that would greatly increase the danger.

So, Lin Chen had made up his mind; since the secret realm was controlled by the Formation Sect, it was bound to have Heavenly and Earthly Treasures inside. For the two months, Lin Chen did not aim to snatch others' command tokens; his goal was to safely pass the time until his Cultivation advanced to the Heaven-reaching Realm.

In two months, Lin Chen was confident enough to elevate his Cultivation to the Heaven-reaching Realm, and then it wouldn't be too late to consider snatching other martial artists' command tokens.

Moreover, snatching command tokens wasn't necessarily better the earlier you started. If you put a lot of effort and energy into snatching command tokens but lacked the strength to keep them, then you would just be making wedding clothes for others.

Afterward, Lin Chen also entered the secret realm.

Upon entering the secret realm, before him lay an impossibly vast Fantasy Forest with towering trees that reached into the clouds.

Lin Chen was thrilled, for the presence of these trees gave him a tremendous advantage in hiding his presence.

However, it also made it difficult to spot others.

Lin Chen dared not release his Spiritual Sense to probe into the forest, as that could make it easier for other martial artists to detect him.

Tang Yuntian had mentioned that this relic was filled with numerous dangers.

However, while Lin Chen refrained from using his Spiritual Sense to detect others, someone else was using theirs.

"Spiritual Sense?"

Lin Chen's brow suddenly furrowed, knowing something was amiss.

For he perceived a surge of Spiritual Sense sweeping towards him. Judging by the strength of the Spiritual Sense, it should belong to a martial artist at the Eighth Layer of the Heaven-reaching Realm.

Just as Lin Chen sensed the martial artist, a cold gust struck him from behind.

An individual dressed in gray, wielding a large saber, had launched a sneak attack at Lin Chen's back.

Lin Chen activated his Purple Cloud Wings, his figure flashing to easily dodge the gray-clothed man's attack.

"Kid, hand over your command token and I can spare your life. Otherwise, don't blame me for not warning you—before you can crush that Jade Slip, I will take your life,"

threatened the gray-clothed man, brandishing his saber with an ill-intentioned look as he glared at Lin Chen.

Hearing this, Lin Chen didn't waste words. A flicker of light flashed, and the Flowing Light Sword appeared in Lin Chen's hand, a surge of Sword Intent bursting forth from him.

"Damn it, it's this guy,"

the gray-clothed man cursed inwardly, his heart filled with panic as he recognized the strong Sword Intent Lin Chen emitted. He took a closer look at Lin Chen, only then realizing that his opponent was Lin Chen himself.

Having extended his Spiritual Sense earlier, he had detected a lone martial artist and thought it was his lucky break. However, who would have thought that he had kicked an iron plate?

But now that matters had escalated to a standoff, naturally, the gray-clothed man would not back down.

"If you won't hand over the command token willingly, then prepare to die,"

the gray-clothed man shouted, as if to bolster his courage. He then swung his saber towards Lin Chen with killing intent.

Lin Chen, too, was unyielding. Wielding his sharp sword, Sword Qi surged forth towards the gray-clothed man in an instant.

The piercing Sword Qi clashed with the gray-clothed man's overbearing saber, sending out powerful ripples of Spiritual Energy all around.

"I need to resolve this quickly, otherwise the commotion from the fight will attract more trouble,"

Lin Chen thought. But the man before him was no pushover, with the Cultivation of the Eighth Layer of the Heaven-reaching Realm, and combat power comparable to a half-step Reverting Void Realm. The saber in his hand was also an Earth-grade Low Quality magic treasure.

"Thunder technique! Wind Intent! Arise!"

Lin Chen held his sword, his expression turning serious as he channeled Spiritual Power into the Flowing Light Sword. The blade suddenly emitted two blinding rays of light, enveloping the sword.

Chapter 439: Killing the Ambusher

"This guy, his talents are indeed outstanding. How long has he studied the True Meaning of the Wind and the thunder technique? He's already able to fuse them together."

Watching the dazzling lights on the sword in Lin Chen's hand, the man in grey was filled with terror.

After fusing the two powers and channeling them into the Flowing Light Sword, Lin Chen's eyes brimmed with a cold murderous intent as he slowly turned his gaze to the man in grey.

"Unfortunately for you, you want to kill me, and I share the same idea," Lin Chen said.

"And it's not just your command token I want, but all the cultivation resources and treasures on you," he added, a hint of arrogance playing on his lips.

"Boy, your talents indeed make one envious and jealous. However, being so high-profile before you've fully grown will only hasten your death," the man in grey retorted.

"Do you really think you're the only one with such methods? Today, I will cripple you. Just thinking about crushing your bones one by one later fills me with an exhilarating pleasure," the man said, his lips curled into a cold smile as if slaughtering Lin Chen was an immensely enjoyable affair for him.

Hum—

As he spoke, the man in grey took out a Jade Vial from his bosom, took a swig, and then his aura began to change.

Lin Chen sensed that the man's original Wood Attribute cultivation, after drinking a mouthful from the Jade Vial's contents, actually transformed into Fire, and it was an extremely violent Fire Attribute energy at that.

Hum—

Humming—

The man opened his mouth wide, and a massive Flame Breath spewed out, heading straight towards Lin Chen.

"Such intense flames, but compared to the Blue Lotus Divine Flame of the Second Soul Division, they're quite insignificant," Lin Chen remarked.

Lin Chen, looking at the flames rushing at him, didn't dodge but instead raised his palm towards the incoming Flames.

Whoo, whoo—

The Primordial Transformation Art within Lin Chen's body circulated, creating a powerful suction force that instantly absorbed the Flame Breath from the man.

"Impressive power, but the energy is not very high," Lin Chen commented casually, his eyes landing on the Jade Vial in the man's hand, which suddenly intrigued him.

"You can absorb my Flame Breath?" The man in grey, seeing Lin Chen's unexpected absorption technique, was momentarily stunned.

Immediately, his face lit up with manic joy because he knew that Lin Chen must possess an enormously great opportunity. If he were to kill Lin Chen, that opportunity would be his.

Hum—

At that moment, atop the broadsword in the man's hand blazed wild flames; then, he brandished his flaming broadsword and charged at Lin Chen.

"Just in time," Lin Chen declared.

Wielding the Flowing Light Sword, Lin Chen leapt into action, clashing with the man.

Sword light and blade shadow burst forth in the secret realm's woods, leaving countless marks on the surrounding trees due to their attacks.

Strangely, despite the ferocity of their assault, the trees were not destroyed, indicating that the trees in this area of the ruins were anything but ordinary.

Boom—

Rumbling—

The ground bore numerous deep ravines due to their skirmish.

Sometime later, the man in grey's expression had turned sour.

After a series of exchanges, he found to his dismay that he was completely suppressed by Lin Chen, barely managing to hang on.

"I must say, your defensive power is commendable. If the commotion we caused here wasn't so large, I might have considered keeping you around as a sparring partner," Lin Chen remarked.

"Alas, now is not the time."

"So, you can die," he concluded.

With that, Lin Chen brandished his sword and struck again, then instantly disappeared from the spot.

The disappearance alarmed the man in grey, who quickly released his Spiritual Sense in all directions but couldn't sense Lin Chen's presence at all.

"Fool, whom are you looking for?" Just when the man in grey was startled by how Lin Chen had managed to escape, Lin Chen's voice suddenly came from behind him.

Startled, the man in grey changed his expression and swung his broadsword toward his back, but a sharp sword pierced his body from behind, skewering him completely.

"You..."

The man in grey felt the Flowing Light Sword entering his body, with two powerful forces instantly beginning to ravage his insides.

His eyes widened as he was filled with infinite regret.

If he had another chance, he certainly would not have provoked Lin Chen.

Lin Chen's fearsomeness was not something he could have ever afforded to provoke.

"Next life, be smarter," Lin Chen advised.

Lin Chen pulled the sword out of the man's body and pushed him to the ground.

Subsequently, Lin Chen picked up the man in grey's Storage Bag and took out a command token from it.

After examining the contents of the Storage Bag, Lin Chen found that although the man's cultivation wasn't profound, the treasures inside the bag were considerably abundant.

Finally, Lin Chen identified a small Jade Vial hidden in a corner of the Storage Bag.

"Essence Blood of some Fire Attribute Magical Beast, huh? To think he used it to stimulate his Wood Attribute as a Bloodthirsty Medicinal Guide; what a waste," Lin Chen thought.

Lin Chen recalled that the man in grey had consumed it to temporarily gain Fire Attribute powers. Due to his Wood Attribute nature, he could utilize the essence blood of this Fire Attribute Magical Beast to its fullest potential. Alas, it was such a pity for him to encounter Lin Chen, for if he had faced any other Martial Artist, perhaps he indeed could have used this power to dominate his opponent.

Chapter 440: Pursuit and Kill

After slaying the man in grey, Lin Chen immediately left the area with the spoils of battle.

During the previous encounter with the man in grey, Lin Chen had used up a great deal of Spiritual Power, and the battle had been anything but quiet. If he were to encounter more enemies now, Lin Chen feared he would be unable to cope.

As Lin Chen did not release his Divine Sense, he had no idea which direction in this secret realm led deeper inwards or towards the periphery.

Since he was looking for a place to go into seclusion and cultivate, it didn't really matter which direction he took as long as he found a hidden spot.

It wasn't long before Lin Chen arrived at a new area. Suddenly, the pungent scent of blood in the air drew his attention.

Looking around, he saw three corpses lying in the distance. Their valuables had clearly been plundered; even the Jade Slips for teleportation were dropped on the ground, indicating they hadn't managed to inject Spiritual Power to escape during the ambush.

"This guy... is it Lin Chen!?"

"No mistake, it's definitely him."

"This time, brothers, we're going to make a fortune. This guy has a lot of treasures on him."

"Quick, surround him. Don't let him escape. This guy has mastered the True Meaning of the Wind and is nimble and quick with his movement technique. We absolutely can't be careless."

Looking up, Lin Chen saw five figures in the distance, two of whom he recognized as lackeys who had followed Deng Yu around; both possessed Ninth Layer Heaven-reaching Realm Cultivation. As for the other three, who were of the Eighth Layer of the Heaven-reaching Realm, Lin Chen had no recollection of them.

Whoosh—

However, as soon as these five had finished speaking, Lin Chen did not hesitate to use his movement technique and flee from the spot, escaping in the opposite direction they had come from.

"Chase him! That guy has caused us extreme humiliation. There's no way we can let him get away alive from here."

Seeing Lin Chen fleeing, the leader in green clothes let out a furious bellow and immediately led the chase after Lin Chen.

Little did Lin Chen know that two of Deng Yu's minions had made a wager with someone else when entering the Trial Tower, and they had been completely defeated due to Lin Chen's performance, not just in terms of materials lost but also in sense of pride.

Thus, the five of them sought revenge on Lin Chen, who could have expected that they would run into him so soon after entering the secret realm?

Upon using the Purple Cloud Wings, Lin Chen's speed became extremely fast. The five pursuers, though they could not catch up to Lin Chen given their great disparity in strength, would not be easily thrown off by him either.

"This is troublesome. I can't keep being chased like this; otherwise, who knows if it will draw out the rest of these guys' comrades. If Deng Yu arrives, then the matter will become difficult to resolve," Lin Chen thought to himself. Immediately, he stopped holding back any of his strength and directly deployed the Purple Cloud Wings from behind him.

A pair of purple wings appeared on Lin Chen's back which greatly enhanced his already swift speed, and within a few breaths, he completely shook off the group pursuing him.

After chasing for a while, they completely lost sight of Lin Chen.

"Damn it, he escaped. Was that a Flying Magic Treasure just now?"

"Indeed, it certainly was a Flying Magic Treasure, and its Quality Grade is not weak—at least an Earth Grade."

The five discussed among themselves, their eyes gleaming.

A Flying Magic Treasure was extremely rare, and the Purple Wings on Lin Chen had such a high Quality Grade—how could they not be tempted?

"It's not only the Flying Magic Treasure; Lin Chen must have many other extraordinary treasures on him. We must find this person," declared the man in the green clothes, his face full of unwillingness, to the others.

The other four strongly agreed with the decision, as they did not wish to let Lin Chen and the treasures on him slip away.

Without delay, the five split into two groups and started searching the surroundings for Lin Chen.

Both parties had ways to communicate, and as soon as someone spotted Lin Chen, they could send a signal for the other group to arrive immediately.

The man in green clothes and the man in yellow, having seen Lin Chen's capabilities in the Trial Tower, were quite wary of him.

But no matter how strong Lin Chen was, he surely could not overpower the five of them together.

After all, the Spiritual Puppets in the Trial Tower were vastly different from a martial artist's strength. Lin Chen must have possessed some force or magic treasure that suppressed them to have been so invincible in the Trial Tower.

This was also what Deng Yu had told the two of them; otherwise, with Lin Chen's invincible strength, how could they possibly dare to set their sights on him?

And now, seeing that they had actually managed to escape only further confirmed what Deng Yu had said.

At this moment, Lin Chen used his movement technique to flee, quickly flying into a gorge.

Lin Chen descended into the gorge, breathing heavily.

The Purple Cloud Wings Technique, coupled with the Purple Cloud Wings, allowed Lin Chen's speed to surpass that of a Reverting Void Realm powerhouse, but it consumed huge amounts of Spiritual Power. Moreover, Lin Chen had already fought a major battle with the man in grey and was not at the peak of his Spiritual Power.

Without worrying about anything else, Lin Chen released his Spiritual Sense to check for any dangers in the vicinity.

After sensing around, Lin Chen discovered two women hiding within the gorge.

Whoosh whoosh—

Sensing Lin Chen's arrival, the two women immediately emerged from where they were concealing themselves.

Lin Chen looked up, and to his surprise, the two women turned out to be Xia Wanxin and her purple-clad personal maid.

At the moment, both of them were severely injured.