

Stronger 151

Chapter 151: Martial Dao: Only Speed is Unbreakable, Becoming a Highly Respected Figure_3

Only Lin Xuankong, this fellow vigorous in old age, could keep on unleashing power, exploding again and again!

As his strength advanced by leaps and bounds, Lin Xuankong was in high spirits when footsteps were heard outside the stone building.

Han Feiyan opened the door excitedly and said, "Brother Lin, we have found those Martial Cultivators from the Ye Family. They are in a stone building to the south of the gathering place. If you plan to learn that Blood Burning Technique, now is the time to go!"

It had been Zhao Yufei's idea to have Han Feiyan and others call Lin Xuankong "Brother Lin." Otherwise, if Han Feiyan called him Master Lin all day long, others might suspect they were from the Yin Talisman Sect. After all, the Great Marsh Prefecture hardly had any sects with Daoists!

Lin Xuankong spoke with Zhao Yufei, then left the building and quickly followed Han Feiyan.

The gathering place at Luoxia Slope was much larger than those at Juefeng Mountain and Cold Fragrance Valley.

As Lin Xuankong and Han Feiyan headed towards the south of the gathering place, they looked at the stone houses lining both sides of the road.

Although these stone houses were temporary, most were quite orderly. Some even had exquisite carvings on their exteriors, indicating that those residing within were highly esteemed Martial Cultivators—individuals who valued enjoyment regardless of time or place.

After all, among these Martial Cultivators from the Great Marsh Hundred Cities were many important figures and genius disciples from various sects, families, and factions. Any one of them, if placed in a city like Ba City with its hundreds of thousands of people, could stand on equal footing with the City Lord!

At that moment, outside those stone houses and buildings, Martial Cultivators gathered in twos and threes, sitting by stone tables. Each looked well-dressed and possessed an extraordinary air as they discussed matters regarding Demon-Suppressing Valley. They were tasting Demon Flesh they had hunted and cooked themselves. Some had even brought out fine wine and food from a Ghost Frog Pouch to savor.

These Martial Cultivators were mostly discussing matters related to the martial arts conference.

As Lin Xuankong walked and listened, he had gained a general understanding of the martial arts conference by the time they approached the southern part of the gathering place.

The martial arts conference organized by the mysterious Female Martial Cultivator was not one where she would fight every Martial Cultivator. She had no interest in those at the Early Stage of the Second or Third Layers. Thus, Ding Rui had arranged for Liang Qinhu of the Qiu City Liang Family, ranked eighth on the Hero List, to select the top fighters.

Only those Martial Cultivators who could endure ten breaths under Liang Qinhu's attacks were qualified to officially fight the mysterious Female Martial Cultivator in five days.

In the past two days, over two hundred people had already fought Liang Qinhu on the stone platform north of Luoxia Slope.

About twenty of them had endured ten breaths under Liang Qinhu's attacks.

Without exception, these were all top experts at the Perfection of the Third Layer, possessing excellent Exorcism Equipment. Half of them were ranked within the top fifty on the Hero List!

When the Martial Cultivators discussed these experts who could endure ten breaths under Liang Qinhu, they admired them greatly. These discussants were elite Martial Cultivators from various cities and locations within the Great Marsh Prefecture, individuals who could be considered prominent figures. Yet, those who could withstand ten breaths from Liang Qinhu were truly exceptional even among them. Any one of those qualifiers, if outside, was a true powerhouse capable of causing immense panic among countless Martial Cultivators merely by stomping their foot!

Upon hearing these discussions and learning about the procedures of the martial arts conference, Han Feiyan remarked with some emotion,

"To fight against that Female Martial Cultivator in the conference, one must be extremely strong. The rewards for enduring three moves, three breaths, or ten breaths under her attacks draw countless desires. Yet, most in this gathering place don't even have the opportunity to participate; they can only watch others battle and broaden their horizons!

"Indeed, merely surviving past Demon Slaying Conferences is considered lucky for Martial Cultivators! But this time, these hundreds of top experts can leisurely sit here, watching the clash of top-tier fighters—an experience that Martial Cultivators from previous conferences never had the chance to enjoy!

"However, even those watching this martial arts conference are elite Martial Cultivators from various cities and places. If someone manages to stand out here, they might instantly become the most sought-after, renowned, and respected figure in the entire Great Marsh Prefecture once they leave the valley!"

After speaking, Han Feiyan secretly glanced at Lin Xuankong. Guo Chui, ranked fourth on the Hero List, wasn't even a match for him in a single exchange. What kind of results would Master Lin achieve if he participated in the martial arts conference? Could he emerge as the champion among these countless experts? If Master Lin wants to make a name for himself in the martial arts conference and become a renowned and respected figure in the Great Marsh Prefecture, it shouldn't be too difficult...

Lin Xuankong, meanwhile, had a hint of eager anticipation in his eyes. In Martial Dao, speed overcomes all barriers. Explosive Power and speed are the most fundamental aspects of Martial Dao. I wonder if I can successfully learn the Blood-Burning Secret Technique this time with Han Feiyan leading the way. Would this Blood-Burning Secret Technique stack with my various Abnormal Techniques? If it does stack, by how much could it enhance my already formidable Explosive Power?

Chapter 152: Rapid Increase in Strength, The Overwhelming Blood Burning Technique

Not long after, Lin Xuankong and Han Feiyan were already standing before a spacious stone building. This building had about twenty rooms and was exquisitely constructed, looking much better than the makeshift stone buildings Lin Xuankong and his companions usually put together. Above the main entrance hung a wooden plaque with seven large characters: "Ba City Ye Family Trading Post."

In over a dozen rooms, various Martial Cultivators were seated, engaged in transactions with their peers... The mysterious Female Martial Cultivator had slaughtered most of the Tier Three Demons in the

Demon-Suppressing Valley. Meanwhile, these Martial Cultivators from different gathering points had hunted Tier Two and Tier One Demons and were now trading them here.

"Your friend is quite the moneymaker, setting up a stone building here without any upfront costs and simply collecting transaction fees," Lin Xuankong remarked.

Han Feiyan smiled. "My good friend Ye Kai is talented, but he's too fixated on money to focus much on Cultivation. Otherwise, he would've reached the Late Stage of the fourth level by now!"

"Big-faced Yan, talking behind my back again! How do you know I don't focus on Cultivation? Let's talk about this once you've surpassed my Realm!" From the main entrance, a man in a green robe stepped out, fanning himself and looking at Han Feiyan. This man appeared to be thirty-three or thirty-four years of age, with a black mole at the corner of his eye. He was short and stout, dressed in fine clothes, and followed by two tall Martial Artists. Ye Kai looked more like a merchant than a Martial Cultivator.

Han Feiyan raised a thick eyebrow. "No time for idle talk. This is Brother Lin, and I've brought him here. Let's discuss business inside!"

She dared not waste Master Lin's time...

Seeing the usually playful Han Feiyan so serious, Ye Kai couldn't help but scrutinize Lin Xuankong for a moment. Then, he cupped his hands in a salute and led the two up to the second floor of the stone building.

Upon reaching the second floor, Han Feiyan retrieved a teapot. She served Lin Xuankong, who was seated at the table, a full cup first, then poured tea for Ye Kai and herself.

Seeing her show such respect to Lin Xuankong, Ye Kai's eyes flashed with curiosity. In Ba City, the Han Family and the Ye Family were both prominent families. Han Feiyan's abilities were far below his as the Ye Family's Second-in-Command, but she was a talented junior of the Han Family with formidable prowess. Anyone she showed such respect to was certainly no ordinary person.

So, he cupped his hands toward Lin Xuankong and got straight to the point. "Brother Lin, you're interested in learning our Ye Family's Blood-Burning Secret Technique?"

Lin Xuankong nodded. "Indeed. Name your price, Boss Ye."

Ye Kai frowned for a moment. "While the Blood-Burning Secret Technique isn't our Ye Family's Core Technique, it is an extremely important Minor Secret Technique. When our family ancestors acquired it, they spent a considerable sum—over ten thousand taels of gold—to buy it at an auction..."

As Ye Kai was speaking, Han Feiyan frowned and began coughing lightly.

Seeing this, Ye Kai's expression shifted, and he smiled. "Of course, since Brother Lin is a friend of Feiyan, I can't sell it at the original price. How about a twenty percent discount? Eight thousand taels of gold..."

"COUGH, COUGH, COUGH," Han Feiyan coughed even harder.

Han Feiyan wasn't worried that Lin Xuankong couldn't afford this sum. With the items Lin Xuankong possessed, even a tiny fraction would be enough to buy things worth tens of thousands of gold taels. But she had clearly told Ye Kai beforehand that this Brother Lin was a significant figure, and Ye Kai should seize this opportunity to cultivate a connection. Why was Ye Kai still so fixated on silver? Building a good relationship with Master Lin was worth far more than any amount of silver!

Seeing Han Feiyan like this, Ye Kai couldn't help but frown. As someone who prioritized earning resources for his family, what mattered most to him were tangible benefits. Regarding Han Feiyan's claims about Brother Lin's importance, how significant could he be? Could he be more influential than those ranked in the top ten of the Hero List? He hadn't even heard of anyone named Lin in the top thirty...

Lin Xuankong didn't think eight thousand taels of gold was expensive. But he didn't have any gold on him; covered by his long robe, the Ghost Frog Pouch he carried was filled with hard currency... far more valuable than gold!

At this moment, seeing Ye Kai speaking in such a manner, he said, "Then eight thousand taels of gold it is. However, I don't have any gold on hand..."

Hearing this, Ye Kai frowned. He glanced at Lin Xuankong, his eyes lingering on the ordinary Python Skin Robe he wore. "No silver, then? But you must have other items, right? Such as Demon Flesh?"

As he spoke, his tone had already turned three parts colder.

Lin Xuankong asked, "How many jin of Marsh Python Flesh would it take to buy the Secret Manual?"

Ye Kai raised his eyebrows and said, "Tier One Marsh Python Flesh has recently been trading on Luoxia Slope at a price of four taels of gold per jin. For eight thousand taels, that would be two thousand jin. Tier Two Marsh Python Flesh has recently been trading at eight taels of gold per jin. One thousand jin of Tier Two Marsh Python Flesh would be eight thousand taels!"

Hearing this, Lin Xuankong was somewhat surprised. He couldn't help but calculate silently. In his Ghost Frog Pouch, he had over 30,000 jin of Tier Three Marsh Python Flesh and well over 100,000 jin of Tier Two Marsh Python Flesh. Initially, he had found the Tier Two Marsh Python Flesh to be a nuisance, taking up space in his two Ghost Frog Pouches. He hadn't expected that Tier Two Marsh Python Flesh, so abundant in this Demon-Suppressing Valley, would actually be this valuable!

Considering how expensive Tier Two Marsh Python Flesh was, he pondered how much silver's worth of food he consumed daily by eating eight to nine hundred jin of Tier Three Marsh Python Flesh. How many baked wheat cakes would that equate to each day?

At this moment, seeing Lin Xuankong's silence, Ye Kai couldn't help but frown. Big-faced Yan said this Brother Lin was a significant figure, but it doesn't look like he's all that impressive! Nowadays, on Luoxia Slope, which of the powerful and well-connected figures doesn't carry several thousand jin of Demon Flesh on them!

Chapter 153: Rapid Increase in Strength, The Overwhelming Blood Burning Technique_2

This person hasn't even managed to hunt a thousand jin?

He shook his head slightly, thinking to himself. A Tier One Marsh Python can produce two hundred jin of flesh, and a Tier Two Marsh Python can yield three to four hundred jin. However, these demons possess incredibly strong life force and live in groups. Even several Tier Three Martial Cultivators working together would risk their lives to hunt them!

If one wants to obtain a thousand jin of Tier Two Marsh Python Flesh, they would need to team up and kill ten or so Tier Two Marsh Pythons. How could that possibly be easy!

Thinking of this, Ye Kai looked coldly at Lin Xuankong and said, "If the Demon Flesh on hand isn't enough right now..."

At this moment, Lin Xuankong lifted his long robe. He removed a Ghost Frog Pouch hanging from his belt, rummaged inside it for a moment, and then took out a pile of Tier Two Marsh Python Flesh, placing it on the ground. "This should be about a thousand jin!"

Ye Kai, who had just been giving Lin Xuankong a cold look, froze on the spot.

Ye Kai wasn't startled by the thousand jin of Tier Two Marsh Python Flesh. He was a mid-grade Tier Four Martial Cultivator of considerable strength who ran the Ye Family Trading Firm. Every day, he dealt with seven to eight thousand jin of Demon Flesh. A thousand jin of Tier Two Demon Flesh wouldn't surprise him that much!

The reason he was shocked was what lay beneath Lin Xuankong's robe, around his belt: five or six fresh-looking Ghost Frog Pouches! These were Ghost Frog Pouches, almost as valuable as Battle Armor, formed only within the bodies of late-stage Tier Three Ghost Frog Kings!

Six Ghost Frog Pouches? That's not just six ordinary wine bags!

Five of those Ghost Frog Pouches were vibrant in color, clearly taken recently from Ghost Frogs... This meant the man before him had killed five late-stage Tier Three Ghost Frog Kings?

Ghost Frog Kings are proficient in Demon Techniques like Invisibility, Long Tongue, Devour, and Venom, possessing unparalleled combat strength. Even he himself would need to team up with three or four people to kill just one in the Demon-Suppressing Valley. Yet this guy killed five?

This guy's strength must be exceedingly formidable! He's probably strong enough to be in the top ten of the Hero List!

The top ten of the Hero List... compared to someone like me, ranked seventy-second... Thinking back to how he had just coldly treated Lin Xuankong, Ye Kai's heart suddenly clenched.

No wonder Big-faced Yan said he was an important figure!

Lin Xuankong glanced at the silent Ye Kai. "If you're worried it's not enough, you can weigh it."

Ye Kai, having witnessed his share of grand scenes, quickly composed himself.

He immediately beamed, his expression becoming extremely amiable. "Since Brother Lin and Feiyan are close, you're like my own elder brother! Why would we need to worry about the weight!"

He quickly stood up and retrieved a Secret Manual from the cabinet.

"Brother Lin is a straightforward man, and I won't beat around the bush. Here, I've transcribed the Blood-Burning Secret Manual!"

Lin Xuankong opened it and scanned it for a moment, a delighted expression appearing on his face. He then stood up and said, "Feiyan, Boss Ye, I won't disturb you any longer."

「A moment later,」

Han Feiyan escorted Lin Xuankong out of the building.

After Lin Xuankong left, she quickly returned to the second floor, her expression somewhat sour as she looked at Ye Kai.

Seeing her come upstairs, Ye Kai couldn't help but smile. "This Brother Lin you brought is quite generous! That Marsh Python Flesh actually weighed in at about eleven hundred jin!"

Han Feiyan's face turned bitter. "You actually weighed it?"

"Do you realize that building a good relationship with him is more important than any amount of silver taels you could earn? And yet, you were still there haggling over every jin, over a measly eleven hundred jin!"

"He is indeed generous and seems powerful, but surely not as exaggeratedly so as you claim!" Ye Kai glanced sideways at Han Feiyan.

Han Feiyan frowned. "You idiot! One day, you'll understand just what kind of major figure he truly is!"

Being addressed like that by his good friend, Ye Kai, who had been in a perfectly good mood, suddenly looked a bit sheepish.

"No matter how 'major' a figure he is, can he possibly compare to the young masters from the Guo Family, Huang Family, or Feng Family of the Great Marsh Prefecture, or those from the Black Tiger Gang and Spirit Snake Gang? Could he even be on par with the top few on the Hero List? Am I supposed to take a financial loss just to curry favor with him?"

"Does transcribing a Secret Manual cost you any money? You're utterly obsessed with money! There will come a day when you regret this!" If she weren't incapable of beating him, Han Feiyan would have wanted to slap this friend of hers flying.

"Regret my ass! Only a fool wouldn't take money when it's offered!" Ye Kai also grew angry, snapping his fan open with a cold smirk.

Back in his stone tower, Lin Xuankong carefully examined the Secret Manual.

Once he had committed its many contents, Heart Methods, and key points to memory, a line of large text suddenly appeared in his mind.

[Blood-Burning Secret Technique: Uninitiated 1/900]

The four words 'Vigorous in Old Age' flashed with a purple-gold light. The next moment:

[Blood-Burning Secret Technique: Uninitiated 1/15]

Just as Han Feiyan had said, this Cultivation Technique indeed had a massive consumption.

The Blood-Burning Secret Manual clearly stated that once activated, the technique would immediately consume an amount of Qi Blood equivalent to what twelve portions of Qi Replenishing Soup could replenish—approximately sixty points of Perfection Level Qi Blood.

This level of Qi Blood consumption to unleash combat power meant that any Martial Cultivator below Tier Four simply couldn't use it. A Tier Three Martial Cultivator, for instance, would have their Qi Blood instantly depleted upon activation. How could they possibly continue fighting—with what, their Jill?

For ordinary Martial Cultivators, such a high-consumption Secret Technique could only be used for escaping or launching a surprise attack. It was entirely unsuitable for prolonged combat.

Of course, I'm an exception! This Cultivation Technique is perfect for me!

Without hesitation, Lin Xuankong immediately began to cultivate the Heart Method, footwork, and Body Technique of the Blood-Burning Secret Technique.

As time gradually passed, numerous new insights regarding the Blood-Burning Secret Technique continuously flooded his mind.

「More than two hours later,」

the line of large text in Lin Xuankong's mind flickered slightly.

[Blood-Burning Secret Technique: Uninitiated 2/15]

Chapter 154: Rapid Increase in Strength, The Overwhelming Blood Burning Technique_3

The next moment, Lin Xuankong's eyes flickered as he activated the Blood Burning Technique. His Qi Blood suddenly began to circulate at high speed; in the blink of an eye, more than half of his Qi Blood was consumed. Simultaneously, every inch of his skin became scorching hot and red. The Qi Blood within his body seemed to be burning, raising his body temperature to an extreme level, and the sweat on his skin quickly evaporated into steam. Lin Xuankong turned to look at the water cup on the stone table beside him, dipped his crimson finger into it, and in an instant, the water in the basin began to emit hot steam!

Such a scene... At this moment, my body temperature must be at least sixty or seventy degrees!

Fortunately, this body had already been tempered many times and was no longer ordinary flesh and blood. If a normal person's body temperature rose to this level, their flesh would probably be medium-well, and their intestines cooked through.

Lin Xuankong's face also showed some surprise. He took the Ruyi Profound Gold Rod out of the Ghost Frog Pouch and weighed it. He discovered that the Ruyi Profound Gold Rod, which felt slightly heavy in his hand under normal circumstances, felt almost weightless after activating the Blood Burning Technique. My strength has indeed increased significantly!

His face couldn't help but reveal a look of joy. This is just the entry-level Blood-Burning Secret Technique! Merely activating the Heart Method and consuming Qi Blood to reach this special burning state has already more than doubled my original explosive power. If I cultivate it to the Initial Glimpse Realm, the explosive power will definitely increase significantly! This Han Feiyan truly is a lucky star, finding such an excellent Cultivation Technique for me!

A trace of eagerness flashed in his eyes, and he began to calculate secretly. Among my many explosive power Cultivation Techniques, the Blood Burning Technique requires the consumption of more than sixty points of Perfect Qi Blood. The Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique consumes four to five points per breath, and the Kui Ox Drum around four points per breath. The Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique consumes the most, with each strike requiring four to five points... And this is all at my current realm. Once the realms of the Blood Burning Technique, Frenzied Tiger Technique, and Shadow Concealment Technique increase, the consumption will be even greater! Others, even if they learned these techniques, couldn't possibly activate them simultaneously, let alone sustain them! In this world, the only one able to activate so many beneficial techniques simultaneously and sustain them is probably me, a Blood Ox! Most importantly, in Martial Dao, speed is paramount! To exert terrifying power in Martial Dao attacks, the most basic requirements are explosive power and speed. Now that I have so many secret techniques that greatly enhance both, after cultivating for a few more days... when I face

that Female Martial Cultivator and throw a punch, what kind of scene will it be? With such terrifying explosive power, there should be a small chance to injure a Female Martial Cultivator whose realm is suppressed to the third layer, right?

...

「In the blink of an eye, five days had passed.」

Inside the stone tower, having finished his cultivation, Lin Xuankong sensed the many changes in his body.

[Realm: Mid-stage Transcendence Fourth Layer]

[Yin Talisman Technique: Minor Success 138/232]

[Pine Crane Longevity Technique: Minor Success 70/500]

[Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique: Minor Success 56/450]

[Eight Gates Celestial Eye: Fifth Layer 61/200]

[Perfect Qi Blood: 385,893/500,000]

[Poison Resistance: Immortal Tier First Grade 3/1600]

[Heart Thought: Mortal Tier Sixth Grade 2/80]

[Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique: Integration 21/50]

[Blood Eating Technique: Integration 41/50]

[Blood-Burning Secret Technique: Initial Glimpse 1/25]

[Divine Protection Elixir: Initial Grade Alchemy Technique 8/32]

Among these, after his Poison Resistance increased to Immortal Tier First Grade, even if Lin Xuankong ate almost a thousand pounds of Ghost Frog Flesh every day, he could no longer improve his Immortal Tier Poison Resistance. It seems I need to consume higher-tier Ghost Frog Flesh, or other Demon Flesh! However, even with Immortal Tier First Grade Poison Resistance, probably no Demon Poison in the entire Great Xia Dynasty could affect Lin Xuankong.

The effectiveness of the Nourishing Spirit Pill became negligible once the grade of his Heart Thought advanced to the sixth grade. This is likely because the Nourishing Spirit Pill can only raise Heart Thought to the sixth grade. To continue to rapidly improve my Heart Thought, I'll need new, stronger elixirs!

Fortunately, Young Lady Lii Xiaolan had probably refined many batches of Divine Protection Elixir during this time. Her Alchemy Technique had already advanced to Initial Grade and was rapidly improving at a daily rate of roughly two proficiency points. Every morning when Lin Xuankong woke, his mind would be filled with many new insights and understandings of alchemy. An Initial Grade Alchemist can easily refine various Initial Tier Elixirs. Such Alchemy Masters are extremely rare, holding esteemed positions in any sect, often on par with Stewards or even Grand Chief Stewards! Young Lady Lii Xiaolan clearly has remarkable talent and comprehension in alchemy, and with the thirtyfold enhancement... I'm just enjoying the fruits of her labor daily!

With the continued growth of her Alchemy Technique, if I can gather sufficient precious materials in the future, refining Grade-Entering, Middle Grade, or Top-grade Divine Protection Elixirs should provide opportunities to continue improving my Heart Thought!

Aside from these enhancements, all his Cultivation Techniques were rapidly improving at sixty or thirty times speed. The Yin Talisman Technique was approaching the late stage of Minor Success, and the Divine Thunder Root's power was also increasing. This indicated that Lin Xuankong's realm would reach the late stage of the Fourth Layer in a few days. The late stage of the Fourth Layer was the realm of cultivators like Jiang Yuran, the Grand Steward of the Yin Talisman Sect, and Liy Ruofeng, the Vice Hall Master of the Black Tiger Gang. Individuals of this realm were among the few elite in the Great Marsh Prefecture.

In addition to these enhancements, the Blood-Burning Secret Technique had reached the Initial Glimpse Realm. After testing it, Lin Xuankong found that activating the Initial Glimpse Blood-Burning Secret Technique consumed a significantly higher amount of Qi Blood, with an instant consumption reaching eighty points. Naturally, the explosive power enhancement had also reached a very satisfying fourfold increase for Lin Xuankong, and it could last for several dozen breaths. This technique's immense consumption and powerful enhancement far exceeded my previous expectations, bringing me great joy!

At this moment, clearly sensing his various improvements, Lin Xuankong felt a strong sense of fulfillment and grew more confident about the upcoming competition.

Just then, a knock sounded at the door. Lin Xuankong opened it to see Han Feiyan and three others.

"Brother Lin, today is the official duel day! It's about to start over there!" Han Feiyan said respectfully, cupping her hands.

Two days ago, Lin Xuankong had already obtained the qualification token. Enduring ten breaths under Liang Qinhu, who ranked eighth on the Hero List, had been no pressure at all for him.

Today is the day for the official duel! Lin Xuankong's eyes showed a trace of anticipation, and he nodded. After so many days of preparation, the time had finally come to face the mysterious Female Martial Cultivator.

Zhao Yufei looked at Han Feiyan. "Feiyan, these past few days, did you try to get the qualification?"

Han Feiyan replied, "I tried two days ago, but under Liang Qinhu, I could barely last two breaths. The gap between Master Lin and me is like the difference between heaven and earth; I couldn't even get the qualification!"

Han Xiu sighed beside her. "Sister, you lasted two breaths. When I faced Liang Qinhu yesterday, I was sent flying in just one move!"

Han Feiyan glared. "With your limited skills, you weren't killed by Liang Qinhu's palm?"

Han Xiu felt a surge of 'warmth'. Is this really my sister?

Moments later, the group left the stone tower and stood midway up Luoxia Slope.

At this time, the platform midway up the mountain had already gathered elites, Stewards, and Grand Chief Stewards from various cities, regions, and sects, totaling five to six hundred people. These people represented the core strength of eighty to ninety percent of the forces within the Great Marsh Prefecture. With everyone gathered here, it was truly a gathering of heroes and a convergence of elites.

Chapter 155: The Youth's Invincible Stance, Holy Dragon Association's Plot Against Zhao Yufei

This mountainside platform, about several acres in size, was adorned with hundreds of stone stools. Numerous Martial Cultivators were seated on these stone stools, engaging in fervent discussions with their peers and friends.

Among them, three distinct areas were occupied by several Martial Cultivators each. Almost no one dared to approach the vicinity of these three spots.

As the hundreds of Martial Cultivators chatted, they glanced at these three locations with expressions of reverence.

Of the three areas, the most prominent one was occupied by three Martial Cultivators. All three were clad in black robes, their expressions stern. They were in their fifties or sixties, their faces reflecting their age.

These three were masters from the Holy Dragon Association, which operated under the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect. Anyone who joined the Holy Dragon Association had either performed extraordinary deeds for Great Marsh Prefecture or was a top-two genius from previous Demon Slaying Conferences.

In the area to the left, there were six people. The Martial Cultivator seated at the forefront wore a purple long robe. He had a handsome face and appeared to be about thirty-two or thirty-three years old. This Martial Cultivator was Liy Changming, the eldest son of Prefect Liy of Great Marsh Prefecture, ranked third on the Hero List and at the Late Stage of the Fourth Layer.

Beside him sat other elite Martial Cultivators from among the officials of Great Marsh Prefecture, most of them possessing strength around the Mid-grade of the Fourth Layer.

In the area to the right were several Martial Cultivators from the Spirit Snake Gang. The two leading them were Chu Yuhui, the Vice Gang Leader, at the Mid-grade of the Fifth Layer, and Chu Qing, the Young Gang Leader, ranked first on the Hero List and at the Perfection Stage of the Fourth Layer.

Everyone in these three groups possessed an extraordinary bearing. When they glanced around, the other Martial Cultivators present hardly dared to meet their eyes. This was partly due to the reputation of the Holy Dragon Association, the Liy Family, and the Spirit Snake Gang, and partly because their strength was so overwhelming that they could dominate almost everyone present.

Lin Xuankong stood at the edge of the platform. After listening to Han Feiyan's whispered introduction, he cast a thoughtful glance at the Spirit Snake Gang members, then led Zhao Yufei toward an unoccupied area.

Just then, someone not far away stood up. "Feiyan, Brother Lin, come and sit over here!"

They looked up and saw it was Ye Kai, the short and stout Second-in-Command of the Ye Family, waving at them.

Han Feiyan shot her friend an irritated look, then glanced at Lin Xuankong questioningly. Lin Xuankong gave a slight nod, so the six of them headed towards Ye Kai's position.

Upon reaching Ye Kai's spot, Ye Kai bobbed his short, thick neck and shot a glare at Han Feiyan before turning to Lin Xuankong. "Brother Lin, I heard you've already passed the preliminary martial competition. I wonder what your ranking is?"

A Martial Cultivator in a nearby spot heard this, looked over, and said, "Of those who managed to last ten breaths against me, there were eighty-seven in total. This Brother Lin ranked eighty-second. He'll likely have to wait until the afternoon to go to the top of the slope and compete against that Female Martial Cultivator!" The speaker was none other than the renowned Liang Qinhu from the Qiu City Liang Family, ranked eighth on the Hero List!

Ye Kai turned his head, his face immediately breaking into a wide smile. He was several times more enthusiastic than when he had greeted Lin Xuankong and the others moments before. "Mr. Liang, you ordered four hundred pounds of Tier Three Demon Flesh from me last time. I've gathered it all and brought it over. I saw you were talking with your fellow sect members just now, so I didn't dare to disturb you!"

Liang Qinhu nodded slightly, an arrogant look on his swarthy face.

He was thirty-four years old, at the Late Stage of the Fourth Layer, and possessed immense strength; otherwise, he wouldn't have been chosen by Ding Rui, a female disciple of the Celestial Sect, to be a defender for the preliminary martial competition. The Liang Family's influence was enormous, nearly comparable to top families in Great Marsh Prefecture like the Guo Family, Feng Family, and Huang Family. It was rumored that the Liang Family Patriarch also possessed a plant-type Demon Pearl and had a Fifth Layer Late Stage Cultivation.

As the Second-in-Command of the commerce-focused Ye Family, Ye Kai naturally spared no effort in currying favor with the heads of such influential families.

He then walked over with great enthusiasm, handed the Tier Three Demon Flesh he had brought to the swarthy-faced Liang Qinhu, and began to chat cheerfully with him, completely ignoring Lin Xuankong, Guo Feiyan, and the others whom he had just called over.

Lin Xuankong, however, didn't pay it much mind. He selected a stone stool for himself, sat down, and gazed up towards the summit of Luoxia Slope.

Zhao Yufei, beside him, shot Ye Kai a dissatisfied glance before sitting down next to Lin Xuankong. Guo Feiyan grumbled a few quiet complaints before leading Guo Xiu and the others to sit behind Lin Xuankong.

A few moments later, Ye Kai finished chatting with Liang Qinhu and returned to their side. He smiled, cupped his hands in a salute towards Lin Xuankong, and then sat down beside him.

Seeing this, Han Feiyan frowned. "Brother Ye, come sit over here with me. Don't disturb Brother Lin."

In her mind, Master Lin's status was not something a money-grubber like Ye Kai could ever be on par with. A fellow like him, reeking of wealth, should naturally sit behind Master Lin, not beside him.

Ye Kai, however, ignored Han Feiyan. Fanning himself, he sat beside Lin Xuankong and started chatting with two other Ye Family Martial Cultivators.

After chatting for a while, Ye Kai lowered his voice and said, "Something really strange has been going on lately. I heard that people from the Guo Family, Feng Family, and Gu Yue Sect have all arrived at this gathering spot! But for the past few days, surprisingly, we haven't seen any of the young masters from the Guo or Feng Families, nor San Gu from the Gu Yue Sect, who has already joined the Holy Dragon Association. They are all incredibly strong. Logically, they should be showcasing their abilities in this martial competition, giving us all a grand spectacle and a chance to broaden our horizons!"

Upon hearing this, Lin Xuankong remained silent. However, Han Feiyan, Han Xiu, and the other two behind him all lowered their heads, peculiar expressions on their faces.

Chapter 156: The Invincible Stance and the Holy Dragon Association's Scheme Against Zhao Yufei_2

Beside them, Liang Qinhu from the Liang Family spoke, "I heard that a few days ago, San Gu and the young masters of the Guo and Feng Families took many people out of the settlement. I'm not sure if they went to hunt Demons or for some other reason; anyway, they haven't returned yet. However, considering the strength and resources of their three families, they probably don't care much about the rewards from this martial arts tournament!"

Ye Kai cupped his hands and said, "Mr. Liang is right. The Guo and Feng Families, and the Gu Yue Sect possess extraordinary strength... San Gu, Feng Zhulong, and Guo Chui can easily hunt a large amount of Demon Flesh, so they might not necessarily need to participate in this martial arts tournament! But... the Marsh Python Demon Pearl and the Evil Sheep Demon Pearl are so precious. If they miss this opportunity, it would be extremely difficult to obtain Demon Pearls while hunting! Alas, the perspectives of family heads like Mr. Liang, and the young masters of those prominent families and powerful gangs, are certainly different from those of us!"

Hearing this, a flicker of pride appeared in Liang Qinhu's eyes, and he was clearly pleased.

In the distance, Chu Qing and Chu Yuhui from the Spirit Snake Gang turned their heads to look in this direction.

Chu Qing said via Qi Blood Transmission, "Master, the Steward I secretly sent to investigate has confirmed it. The middle-aged couple with Han Feiyan and the others should indeed be Lin Xuankong and Zhao Yufei, whom San Gu planned to deal with earlier. Although they've disguised themselves, Zhao Yufei has cultivated the Eight Gates Celestial Eye. Her eyes are exceptionally bright and vibrant, distinctly different from ordinary Martial Cultivators, making her easy to recognize. San Gu, Feng Zhulong, and Guo Chui haven't returned these past few days. Could it be that..."

Chu Yuhui shook his head slightly and said via Qi Blood Transmission, "It shouldn't be related to those two. With the strength of San Gu, Guo Chui, and Feng Zhulong, they would even have a chance of defeating Liang Qinhu. When Lin Xuankong participated in the preliminary martial arts contest the other day, his strength was average; he barely withstood Liang Qinhu's attacks for ten breaths. Moreover, even if he was hiding his strength, there's no way he could have killed dozens of Third Layer Martial Cultivators with no survivors. Even I, a Mid-Fifth Layer cultivator, with my strength suppressed in the Demon-Suppressing Valley, couldn't annihilate everyone San Gu brought. Some would definitely have escaped!"

Chu Qing frowned upon hearing this. "Then what about San Gu, Feng Zhulong, and Guo Chui?"

Chu Yuhui raised his eyebrows. "Perhaps they found the lair of a Tier Three Demon and went to hunt it! Disciple, do not involve yourself in too many disputes. Focus on your Cultivation. For now... your primary focus should be on assisting the Saintess! As for the Black Tiger Gang, the Guo Family, the Feng Family, and the Gu Yue Sect all targeting the Yin Talisman Sect and the Huang Family... our Spirit Snake Gang stirring things up from the shadows and reaping the rewards is the best strategy!"

Chu Qing nodded and said via Qi Blood Transmission, "I will remember your teachings, Master. This time, I will give my all to assist the Saintess in comprehending the Cultivation Technique!"

Chu Yuhui smiled and communicated via Qi Blood Transmission, "That's right! This time, as long as we can help the Saintess comprehend the Cultivation Technique, we will have made a great contribution to the Great Xia Dynasty and the Celestial Sect. If we win the Saintess's favor, we will surely rise to prominence. At that time, what would the disputes of Great Marsh Prefecture matter? The Guo Family, the Feng Family, and the Black Tiger Gang may dominate Great Marsh Prefecture, but in the entirety of Great Xia, they are nothing more than minor families and factions under its rule!"

While the two were communicating via Qi Blood Transmission, the three individuals from the Holy Dragon Association seated in the most prominent positions were also using Qi Blood Transmission.

One of the Holy Dragon Elders furrowed his brow, glanced in Zhao Yufei's direction, then addressed the two Holy Dragon Stewards behind him, "Are you certain the Tier Four Spirit Insects you brought detected traces near Blackwater Lakefront?"

The Long Eyebrow Martial Cultivator, who appeared to be in his fifties, nodded. "Reporting to Black Dragon Elder, after several days of investigation, it is confirmed: the aura of the new disciple San Gu and the others vanished near Blackwater Lakefront! Additionally, according to the senses of the Tier Four Spirit Insects, Han Feiyan and her group of four, as well as the disguised Zhao Yufei of the Yin Talisman Sect, all lingered near Blackwater Lakefront!"

The Black Dragon Elder's eyes revealed a cold gleam. "Han Feiyan and her companions, during the preliminary martial arts contest, couldn't withstand Liang Qinhu's attacks for even two breaths. The disappearance of San Gu and the others cannot be their doing! However, that Zhao Yufei and the other Martial Cultivator, arriving in disguise, are indeed suspicious. Although their strength shouldn't be sufficient to deal with the many experts San Gu brought, any suspicion must be thoroughly investigated. However, today is the Celestial Sect Saintess's martial arts tournament. We absolutely must not disrupt it, lest we incur the Saintess's displeasure and face punishment! After today's martial arts tournament concludes, you two will apprehend Zhao Yufei and the other Yin Talisman Sect Martial Cultivator. Use the Saint Dragon's Tendon-Separating Bone-Dislocating Technique to thoroughly interrogate Zhao Yufei. If they are indeed involved, execute them immediately once the information is obtained. If not, simply reward them with some Demon Flesh and send them away!"

The two long-eyebrowed Holy Dragon Stewards cupped their hands in agreement.

One of the Stewards asked, "Black Dragon Elder, are we not participating in the martial arts tournament this time? If we could assist the Saintess in her comprehension, wouldn't that be a great achievement? Our Holy Dragon Association's Seventeenth Subdivision could finally distinguish itself among the many subdivisions!"

The Black Dragon Elder snorted coldly. "Although your Cultivation has reached the Late Fifth Layer, you are both nearing sixty, and your Qi Blood is declining. Suppressed to the Third Realm within the Demon-Suppressing Valley, you are inferior even to the top ten young Martial Cultivators on the Hero List. What use would there be in you competing?"

Chapter 157: The Invincible Stance and the Holy Dragon Association's Scheme Against Zhao Yufei_3

The Saintess's talent is prodigious, making her the foremost celestial beauty among the hundreds of millions in the Great Xia Dynasty. Even though she is at the late stage of the Fifth Layer, once she activates the Blood Bath Divine Technique, even I, at the early stage of the Sixth Layer, am no match for her. In the Demon-Suppressing Valley, when our cultivation is suppressed to the Third Realm, if I were to

face her, I wouldn't be able to withstand even three breaths of her attacks. How could you possibly resist?

I estimate that this time, the Saintess didn't have high hopes when organizing this martial arts tournament. Even Chu Qing, first on the Hero List, likely wouldn't last long against her, let alone anyone else! We subordinates can only hope that some truly hidden prodigies exist among these Martial Cultivators. Perhaps then the Saintess might encounter a peerless genius who, at the Third Realm, could contend evenly with her and offer some challenge!"

Upon hearing this, both men's expressions turned solemn, and they dared not say anything further. However, their hearts were filled with emotion as they sighed at how time waits for no one. Twenty to thirty years ago, when they participated in the Demon Slaying Conference, they were ambitious and full of vigor, all ranking at the top! Now, with the passage of time, they could only watch as the new rising stars stepped onto the stage to showcase their brilliance! After this moment of reflection, they glanced sideways at Zhao Yufei, a touch of coldness in their eyes.

After the crowd on the mountainside had discussed for a while, at the summit of Luoxia Slope, a dozen slender female figures descended gracefully, positioning themselves before the many Martial Cultivators. The leader was none other than Ding Rui, a talented female disciple of the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect.

She stood at the forefront and announced loudly, "Everyone, you are all aware of the rewards for this martial arts tournament. This time, there are no other requirements. You must simply give your all, using your strongest Martial Dao, to attack the individual at the summit of the slope.

Next, Martial Cultivator number one who passed the preliminaries, Sun Haiguang, please prepare yourself and proceed to the summit platform for the challenge. The rest of you, please follow in sequence!"

After stating the rules, she left the dozen women at the mountainside platform to maintain order and then, with a leap, returned to the summit platform.

The many Martial Cultivators on the mountainside stood up one by one, carefully looking towards the summit platform. These Martial Cultivators wanted to see for themselves who this mysterious Female Martial Cultivator was—the one who could command such a gathering—and what she looked like!

At this moment, the summit platform was enveloped in a thick white mist, evidently induced by some Treasure. Through the swirling mist, the crowd could only vaguely discern a shadowy figure emerging from the stone building at the summit before it merged into the white haze and vanished from sight.

No one dared to approach the summit platform rashly, nor could anyone clearly see which Female Martial Cultivator stood there.

Sitting in a corner, Lin Xuankong quietly activated his black Double Pupils, peering through the fog. In the next moment, a trace of surprise flickered in his eyes. I haven't used the Celestial Eye for several days, he thought. It seems a bit 'unfamiliar.' I accidentally used too much force and saw things I shouldn't have. What a transgression!

After looking carefully for a few moments, a look of amazement appeared in his eyes. Though this mysterious woman isn't as lovely as Young Lady, nor as strikingly beautiful as Yufei, her transcendent and ethereal demeanor is truly unique. Ding Rui, the female disciple from the Celestial Sect, is already exceptionally beautiful, but standing next to this Female Martial Cultivator, the contrast is as stark as that between common cabbage and exquisite white jade...

While Lin Xuankong was lost in his thoughts, the Martial Cultivator named Sun Haiguang walked out from the crowd, his eyes filled with fighting spirit.

Among the many Martial Cultivators, dozens stood up, their faces showing respect as they greeted Sun Haiguang.

"We wish you success in this battle, Brother Sun! Let the Martial Cultivators of Great Marsh Prefecture know that we Martial Artists of Wine City also have peerless talents!"

"Brother Sun, known as Sun Wudi of Wine City! After this battle, your invincible name will surely be known to all!"

"I've already prepared fine wine and food. Brother Sun, your strength is astounding, and you possess an invincible aura! After this great battle, we brothers will celebrate for you!"

Sun Haiguang nodded slightly to the crowd. His weapon shimmered and transformed into a resplendent golden Battle Armor that covered his entire body. Looking exceedingly imposing and extraordinary, he gave a light shout and leaped towards the summit platform.

Beside Lin Xuankong, Ye Kai whispered, "This Sun Haiguang from Wine City is a master who possesses a full set of Exorcism Armor. He is skilled in the Spiritual Ape Fist and ranked thirteenth on the Hero List—extremely formidable! This Sun Haiguang is exceptionally talented. At just twenty-nine, he's already at the early stage of the Fourth Layer. His most renowned achievement was when he was at the late stage of the Third Layer; he fought and easily defeated four Martial Cultivators of the same cultivation. He's known as Wine City's foremost genius, famously called Sun Wudi of Wine City!"

Han Feiyan glared at him. "You know so much about him. Why don't you guess how long he can last?"

Ye Kai, shaking the exquisite Jade Fan in his hand, watched Sun Haiguang approach the summit platform and smiled. "Sun Wudi is ranked so high, and that Female Martial Cultivator is at the same Realm as him... No matter how great the disparity between them, how large could it truly be? Even if that Female Martial Cultivator is incredibly strong, Sun Wudi should be able to hold out for at least several dozen breaths..."

Han Feiyan shook her head slightly. She had personally seen Lin Xuankong slay dozens of Same Tier cultivators as easily as swatting flies. How vast can the gap within the Same Tier be? she mused. It's enormous—larger than the difference between a Dragon Blood Fierce Dog and a small puppy!

Seeing her shake her head, Ye Kai chuckled. "What, you think he won't last several dozen breaths? How is that possible? The name Sun Wudi is known by at least half the Martial Cultivators even in Ba City, hundreds of miles away!"

"He's entered the mist-shrouded summit platform..." Guo Xiu murmured from the side.

Ye Kai looked up. "Feiyan, I'll start counting now..."

Just then—BANG!

A muffled sound suddenly erupted.

Sun Haiguang, ranked thirteenth on the Hero List and known as Sun Wudi of Wine City, had just entered the mist-shrouded platform. Before half a breath had passed, he was blasted out of the mist, flying in an arc as he fell from the summit platform.

The female disciple from the Celestial Sect stationed on the mountainside platform leaped out, catching the unconscious Sun Wudi. She landed on the ground and looked at the few Sun Family Martial Cultivators gathering around. "Don't worry, he's not dead, just knocked out!"

At that instant, the entire mountainside platform fell utterly silent. The many Martial Cultivators stood frozen, eyes wide, staring at Sun Wudi who had been knocked out in less than a breath. Every face showed extreme shock.

Who could have imagined it?

Who could have guessed?

Who could have predicted this outcome?

Sun Haiguang—ranked thirteenth on the Hero List, known as invincible, hailed as the foremost genius of Wine City—had faced that mysterious Female Martial Cultivator of the same Realm and hadn't even lasted half a breath!

Ye Kai, who had been about to start counting, stood stunned, his mouth agape.

Han Feiyan sneered, "So, how many did you count to?"

Ye Kai's mouth twitched. "It was over before I even started counting? This is too fast! How can the Female Martial Cultivator on the summit platform be so... so... utterly dominant?"

For a moment, this usually well-informed merchant was at a loss for words to describe the mysterious Female Martial Cultivator on the summit.

Nearby, Lin Xuankong, who was secretly activating his black Double Pupils, shifted his gaze, his eyebrows rising slightly.

Chapter 158: Securing the Golden Body Treasure Elixir and Marsh Python Demon Pearl is a Must

At this moment, everyone present wore expressions of shock, completely at a loss.

Only Lin Xuankong, in the corner, saw the entire battle process clearly.

It had to be said that Sun Wudi of Wine City, Sun Haiguang, was indeed very strong and his personality quite forceful. True to form, after leaping onto the Cloud Mist Platform, he completely ignored the Mysterious Female Cultivator. With a sudden roar, his arms more than doubled in length as he charged forward, unleashing the Spiritual Ape Fist!

His speed was extremely fast, roughly comparable to Lin Xuankong's when Lin Xuankong wasn't using any Beneficial Techniques.

In an instant, he stirred up countless air ripples as he crossed the dozens of zhang on the platform. His elongated arm shot out in a punch aimed directly at the veiled face of the White-clothed Female Cultivator. The attack carried tremendous momentum, truly befitting his title as Sun Wudi of Wine City!

Unfortunately, while he was fast and ferocious, the White-clothed Female Cultivator was even faster and fiercer!

She merely shifted her body slightly to evade Sun Wudi's formidable punch. Then, she raised her hand and, with lightning speed, struck Sun Wudi on the temple. The renowned Sun Wudi was sent flying out effortlessly.

Strictly speaking, Sun Wudi wasn't defeated in half a breath; he hadn't even lasted one-fiftieth of a breath!

During this process, the White-clothed Female Cultivator's entire body emitted a mysterious red light.

She had evidently activated an extremely Profound Mysterious Technique that enhanced her abilities. The burst of speed she displayed was similar to the Explosive Power bonus Lin Xuankong received when he activated the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique.

Among Lin Xuankong's various Beneficial Techniques, the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique provided the greatest boost to Explosive Power, achieving up to a sixfold enhancement. With such a sixfold bonus from the White-clothed Female Cultivator, coupled with the vast disparity in their speed and Explosive Power, it was perfectly normal for Sun Wudi to be sent flying by a single strike.

If Sun Wudi's Battle Armor hadn't protected his head, with that strike, he would have gone from being Sun the Invincible to Sun the Headless!

Of course, what made Lin Xuankong raise an eyebrow in amazement wasn't the White-clothed Female Cultivator's sixfold Explosive Power.

Lin Xuankong's own Explosive Power was augmented by: over fourfold from the Blood-Burning Secret Technique, over fourfold from the Frenzied Tiger technique, fourfold from the Kui Ox Drum, and over sixfold from the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique. The White-clothed Female Cultivator merely had a sixfold burst enhancement. Her movements, which other Martial Cultivators might not even be able to dodge, seemed incredibly slow to Lin Xuankong.

The time it took her to land one punch was enough for Lin Xuankong to throw and retract his own fist many times over!

What truly amazed Lin Xuankong was that the White-clothed Female Cultivator's strike, landing on Sun Wudi's Battle Armor, had actually siphoned off a vast amount of his Qi Blood *through* the armor.

If she hadn't instantly extracted Sun Wudi's Qi Blood with that strike, Sun Wudi, with his fourth-layer Cultivation, wouldn't have been knocked out on the spot even when facing such a fierce blow. He fainted entirely because the depletion of his Qi Blood left him unable to form a defense for his head, causing him to lose consciousness instantly.

This Mysterious Female Cultivator's technique was exceedingly strange. It didn't just increase Explosive Power; it could also instantly siphon massive amounts of Qi Blood. Compared to the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique, it was far more sinister.

At that moment, Lin Xuankong looked up into the mist.

He saw the Mysterious Female Cultivator standing on the Cloud Mist Platform, the red glow around her body now even more vibrant after that single strike. This captivating red light, combined with her ethereal beauty and transcendent aura, made her appear extraordinarily divine.

Moreover, this Mysterious Female Cultivator seemed to have an extreme fondness for cleanliness. As she stood on the Cloud Mist Platform, there was actually an immaculate white carpet spread beneath her feet, and her white robes were spotless.

A few moments later, Lin Xuankong withdrew his gaze and closed his Double Pupils. He turned to look at the crowd on the mountainside, thinking to himself, This Mysterious Female Cultivator, even without resorting to other methods, could probably defeat most Martial Cultivators instantly with just this sixfold Explosive Power and her Qi Blood siphoning ability!

By this time, Sun Wudi had already regained consciousness.

When Sun Wudi saw the hundreds of Martial Cultivators staring at him, he recalled his earlier triumphant display and contrasted it with his current disheveled state. His face turned ashen. Beside him, a few friends who had prepared food and drinks in advance awkwardly returned them to their Ghost Frog Pouches.

After standing up, Sun Wudi, his face grim, clasped his hands in a brief salute to the few people nearby. He then turned and leaped off the platform, leaving behind a crowd of Martial Cultivators who were both deeply impressed and utterly astonished.

The crowd immediately began to discuss amongst themselves.

Sun Haiguang, who was renowned as invincible in Wine City, had been defeated in less than half a breath! This outcome deeply shocked the Martial Cultivators, making the Mysterious Female Cultivator seem even more enigmatic to them.

Amidst the discussions, a Martial Cultivator holding the number two token gave a soft cry, leaped out from the crowd, activated his Armor, and jumped onto the Cloud Mist Platform.

This second Martial Cultivator was named Wu Ming. He was ranked twenty-first on the Hero List and was also an extremely strong Martial Cultivator, though naturally quite inferior when compared to Sun Wudi.

However, to everyone's surprise, after Wu Ming leaped onto the Cloud Mist Platform, he managed to last for a full two breaths before being blasted off!

After he landed, everyone looked at Wu Ming in amazement and gathered around to ask what had happened. Wu Ming, however, said nothing. He merely clasped his fists proudly, then turned and descended the mountainside.

Ye Kai, standing beside Lin Xuankong, remarked in surprise, "That's not right. Sun Wudi only lasted half a breath, yet Wu Ming managed to hold on for two breaths! Such an achievement should be enough for Wu Ming to feel proud. Why does he look so dissatisfied? It's too strange!"

Han Feiyan, her typically square face etched with confusion, mused, "Could it be that once he got on the platform, he just ran around trying to evade her attacks and managed to dodge for two whole breaths that way?"

Hearing this, Ye Kai's eyes lit up. Shaking his fan, he laughed and said, "That sounds like a good tactic! It's a pity I don't have the qualifications to compete. Otherwise, if I got up there, I'd just run around like mad. Using that method to last for three breaths shouldn't be a problem, right? If I can't win, surely I can outrun her!"

Chapter 159: Securing the Golden Body Treasure Elixir and the Marsh Python Demon Pearl Must Fall into My Hands_2

At this moment, Lin Xuankong, retracting his Double Pupils, shook his head repeatedly upon hearing Ye Kai's words. The mysterious Female Martial Cultivator possessed a terrifying Sixfold Burst of power; how could anyone outrun her? This was akin to pitting a Teddy against a Dragon Blood Fierce Dog—wouldn't it be over in an instant!

Wu Ming had managed to last for two breaths just now, not because he had evaded for that long. Rather, after jumping onto the Cloud Mist Platform, he had first politely introduced himself and then

proceeded to ask the White-clothed Female Cultivator opposite him some questions. This exchange bought him two breaths before the annoyed Female Cultivator sprang forward and blasted the chatterbox off the platform! Otherwise, Wu Ming, like Sun Wudi, would probably have been sent flying within a single breath.

The competition continued. As time gradually passed, Martial Cultivators from the mid-mountain platform leaped onto the Cloud Mist Platform one after another, only to be blasted off in an instant. Even those ranked high on the Hero List were swiftly defeated. Indeed, not a single person managed to last two breaths on the platform as Wu Ming had. Even those who heeded Ye Kai's advice, taking it to heart and attempting to flee the moment they entered the platform, were invariably chased down in an instant and sent flying with a single palm strike.

By the time the competition had progressed to over fifty participants, the spectating Martial Cultivators were discussing matters with even greater fervor, all speculating on who might be the first to endure three breaths under the mysterious Female Cultivator's assault.

When the sixty-first participant was due, Liang Qinhu, who had remained silent all this time, suddenly spoke in a low voice, "Next should be the Prefect's son."

Before he could finish, everyone discussing on the mid-mountain platform abruptly fell silent. All eyes turned to Liy Changming, son of Prefect Liy, for the Prefect's son had just risen to his feet.

Instantly, a flash of excitement appeared in the eyes of the surrounding Martial Cultivators. Liy Changming, son of the Great Marsh Prefecture's Prefect, not only possessed an extensive background but was also a cultivator at the Late Stage of the Fourth Layer. His Martial Dao Technique was the Profound Blood Shifting Technique. Furthermore, he possessed the Exorcism Armor and a Demon Fox Demon Pearl. With such a combination of Treasures and Martial Dao, he was virtually unmatched!

At this moment, after standing, Liy Changming nodded a greeting to Chu Qing of the Spirit Snake Gang. Then, with a light tap of his foot, his form transformed into a shadow and drifted straight onto the Cloud Mist Platform.

Lin Xuankong raised his eyes to observe the platform carefully.

Soon, fighting resumed on the Cloud Mist Platform. Liy Changming, empowered by his Demon Pearl, was indeed formidable. After entering the Cloud Mist Platform, he immediately activated the Demon Fox Demon Pearl, summoning a giant, three-tailed, three-eyed Demon Fox. His Profound Blood Shifting Technique was exceptionally wondrous; upon activating his Qi Blood, it conjured twelve phantoms identical to himself—a truly bewildering sight!

In the ensuing battle, Liy Changming's true form, his twelve Qi Blood phantoms, and the three-tailed, three-eyed Demon Fox launched a coordinated assault on the White-clothed Female Cultivator from multiple directions.

Just at this moment, a clear bird cry echoed above the Cloud Mist Platform, "SCREECH~~~~~"

A giant Demon Sparrow, its feathers a dark red, appeared amidst roiling Demon Qi. This Tier Three Demon Sparrow was immense, standing eight to nine stories tall, like a small mountain. Indeed, were it not for the clouds and mist obscuring the view from the mountaintop platform, its sheer ferocity would have sent the hundreds of Martial Cultivators below scattering in terror on the spot!

As soon as it appeared, it swooped down, its talons seizing two of the Demon Fox's tails. From its fiery red beak, it unleashed a torrent of flame, dozens of yards long, at the three-eyed, three-tailed Demon Fox. The Demon Fox raised its three eyes, firing three crimson beams that barely managed to hold back the flames. Meanwhile, its remaining tail lashed out at the giant Demon Sparrow with terrifying speed!

The giant Demon Sparrow's feathers bristled, deflecting the Demon Fox's tail lash. It then pinned the Demon Fox down, its enormous talons tearing viciously. Within moments, it had shredded the Demon Fox's massive tails and ripped its body apart, reducing it to Demon Qi and a mist of blood. This Demon Sparrow, whose origins were unknown, was terrifyingly ferocious, capable of killing a Same-Tier Demon in a single breath!

On the other side, the White-clothed Female Cultivator once again erupted with sixfold speed. She swiftly struck out with her palm, hitting each "Liy Changming" on the Cloud Mist Platform. The giant Demon Sparrow also spat flames at the Qi Blood phantoms. Within two breaths, all twelve phantoms had exploded!

Another breath later, Liy Changming groaned as the White-clothed Female Cultivator's palm struck his chest. Although he had dodged early, dissipating most of the force, a large portion of his Qi Blood was still extracted. With his Qi Blood depleted, he could no longer withstand the onslaught. Another palm

strike from the White-clothed Female Cultivator caught him in the abdomen, sending him plummeting from the Cloud Mist Platform!

A quarter of a breath later, with a resounding "BOOM," Liy Changming landed steadily on an open space on the mid-mountain platform.

His expression shifted several times as he looked towards the mountaintop and cupped his hands. "Your Excellency's Divine Technique is truly peerless, far beyond what Changming can withstand. Changming is ashamed!"

Though he spoke thus, he couldn't help but touch the faint handprint left on the Battle Armor on his chest, thinking to himself, To have withstood three and a half breaths against Xiaoo Ying'Er, the foremost prodigy among the countless millions in Great Xia, means I'm not a mediocrity after all. Even among the many descendants of the dozens of Prefects in Great Xia, such a battle record is already outstanding! When I return to the Great Marsh Prefecture, Father will surely be pleased to hear of this!

On the mid-mountain platform, the hundreds of Martial Cultivators were now all silent; none dared to comment carelessly.

Chapter 160: Securing the Golden Body Treasure Elixir and the Marsh Python Demon Pearl Must Fall into My Hands_3

After all, it was no big deal when other Martial Cultivators won or lost and discussed it among themselves. But now, the eldest son of Prefect Liy had been defeated by the Mysterious Female Cultivator. If they dared to discuss it carelessly and ended up being remembered, it would be very difficult for them to live in the Great Marsh Prefecture in the future!

Liy Changming looked with a trace of admiration in his eyes, carefully gazing at the platform atop the mountain peak. Then he withdrew his gaze and walked down the mountain. When passing by the Spirit Snake Gang members, he cupped his hands and said, "Brother Chu Qing, I lack the ability and couldn't even make this Female Martial Cultivator use her full strength. It's up to you now. I hope you will demonstrate the might of the Martial Cultivators of the Great Marsh Prefecture!"

Chu Qing stood up and replied, "It's mainly because in this Demon-Suppressing Valley, Brother Liy, your Realm was suppressed. Otherwise, with your Body Shifting Technique at the Fourth Layer, you'd be able to summon over twenty aggressive Qi Blood phantoms and definitely wouldn't have ended up like this!"

Liy Changming shook his head slightly. "Even outside the Demon-Suppressing Valley, against the one on the mountaintop, I fear I wouldn't even have time to activate my Cultivation Technique before they took my head from hundreds of feet away!"

At this point, he seemed to think of something and said, "Brother Chu Qing, when sparring with the one on the mountaintop, try not to use the Demon Pearl. The Demons you and I can summon with our Demon Pearls are far less fierce than those summoned by that one's Demon Pearl. They would be instantly torn apart, just wasting our Qi Blood! Besides, if you don't use your Demon Pearl, that Female Cultivator likely won't summon any Demons either. That might make the battle more manageable for you!"

Finishing his words, he shook his head ruefully and walked down the slope.

「After Liy Changming left,」

The Martial Cultivators on the mountainside resumed their discussions.

Ye Kai's expression changed, and he whispered, "That Mysterious Female Cultivator can kill from hundreds of feet away. Could she be a Late Stage Fifth Layer Martial Cultivator? No wonder... No wonder she's so fierce that even Young Master Liy could only last three and a half breaths!"

Han Feiyan's face also turned somber. She looked at Lin Xuankong with a trace of worry in her eyes, thinking: Although Master Lin possesses numerous Treasures and exquisite Martial Dao, can he really compete against a Fifth Layer Martial Cultivator? Moreover, Young Master Liy said that the Female Martial Cultivator's Demon could instantly tear apart a Demon Fox. It must be even fiercer than the Ghost Frog King. With such a disparity, can Master Lin endure ten breaths against the Mysterious Female Cultivator?

At this moment, even Zhao Yufei displayed a trace of concern when she looked at Lin Xuankong. These two Martial Cultivators, who always had faith in Lin Xuankong, began to waver seeing Liy Changming's quick defeat.

Lin Xuankong, noticing Zhao Yufei's worried gaze, was moved and smiled. He grabbed her hand and held it tightly, signaling her not to worry.

Zhao Yufei responded with a firm nod and a smile, though the worry in her eyes lingered.

Next to them, Liang Qinhu muttered, "Young Master Chu Qing is about to face her. I hope he can hold out for ten breaths! But if even Young Master Liy could only last three and a half breaths, then I, at most, can last one or two breaths!"

For a moment, this originally confident Third Leader Liang Qinhu revealed a trace of helplessness when looking at the platform atop the mountain.

Seeing this, Ye Kai's eyes gleamed, and he approached Liang Qinhu. "Mr. Liang, I have a Golden Body Treasure Elixir here. Our Ye Family's Alchemist managed to refine a batch by a stroke of luck. This Golden Body Treasure Elixir can significantly enhance a Martial Cultivator's bone and flesh Bursting Ability in a short time, roughly quadrupling it. More importantly, this Treasure Elixir can prevent a Martial Cultivator's body from sustaining damage under immense bursts of power!"

Hearing this, Liang Qinhu's eyes brightened. "Your family possesses the Alchemy Technique for the Golden Body Treasure Elixir passed down from the Rakshasa Kingdom? And you have a Pill Master who refined it?"

Ye Kai fumbled for something, took out a Jade Box, and opened it to show Liang Qinhu. "I was planning to use this during a danger in the Demon Valley. But now that there's no danger from the Demon Slaying Association, if Mr. Liang is interested, this Elixir is yours!"

Liang Qinhu was worried that he could hardly last three breaths and might lose face in front of countless Martial Cultivators in the Great Marsh Prefecture. Upon seeing the golden Treasure Elixir in the Jade Box, covered in mysterious Buddhist Secret Patterns and radiating golden light, he was overjoyed. "Though this Treasure Elixir only temporarily enhances a Martial Cultivator's strength, its value is immense. How can I take it for free... How about this: my Liang Family's Profound Iron Ore, which we have always sold in collaboration with the Ye Family, Yang Family, and Zhou Family, will be offered fifty percent to your Ye Family from now on. What do you say?"

Joy spread across Ye Kai's face. He had waited for this moment to present the Treasure Elixir, hoping to secure more profit in cooperation with the Liang Family. Seeing Liang Qinhu's generosity, he couldn't have been more pleased and immediately handed the Treasure Elixir to Liang Qinhu.

After a few more words, Ye Kai happily returned to his spot.

At this moment, Han Feiyan was worried whether Lin Xuankong could endure ten breaths. Seeing her friend Ye Kai had such a valuable item, she decisively pulled him to a back seat. "Do you have another such Treasure Elixir? Give me one quickly!"

Ye Kai looked exasperated. "The Golden Body Treasure Elixir is invaluable! Even if I had more, I couldn't just give you one! You're my buddy, not my wife!"

"Husband, give me one!" Han Feiyan demanded decisively.

Ye Kai was speechless.

Ye Kai stared at Han Feiyan's square face, whom he had never considered feminine. Hearing her call him "husband," he felt an indescribable awkwardness!

Lin Xuankong, however, was moved by this. The Golden Body Treasure Elixir can boost Explosive Power fourfold. This effect isn't what I'm most interested in; after all, with my current level of Explosive Power, any further increase would shatter my bones! But if the Golden Body Treasure Elixir can prevent a Martial Cultivator's bones from being damaged during immense bursts, it might allow me to use a very special tactic, increasing my combat strength more than tenfold!

"Brother Ye, can this Treasure Elixir really allow a Martial Cultivator to withstand immense bursts?" Lin Xuankong asked Ye Kai, turning his head.

Ye Kai nodded. "Of course, it can!"

Not far away, Liang Qinhu clutched the Jade Box and eagerly declared, "The Golden Body Treasure Elixir is a secret Buddhist Treasure Elixir from the Rakshasa Kingdom. It's extremely mystical and one of the ten great Buddhist Treasure Elixirs. After consuming it, a Martial Cultivator's bones gain Buddhist Golden Body Secret Patterns for a short period. During this time, forget just being unharmed during an explosion of power—within ninety breaths, even if struck by heavy objects weighing hundreds of thousands or millions of pounds, the bones won't break!"

Seeing both affirm it, Lin Xuankong's eyes shone. "Brother Ye, do you have another Treasure Elixir? Do you have the Alchemy Technique? If so..."

He pondered for a moment, leaned close to Ye Kai, and whispered a few words in his ear.

Ye Kai, who initially looked indifferent, changed his expression after hearing those words. "Brother Lin, are you serious?"

Lin Xuankong nodded. "A gentleman's word is his bond!"

Ye Kai immediately took out another Jade Box from his robes. "The Treasure Elixir is here, and the Alchemy Manual is with my family's Alchemist in Ba City! We have a deal!"

Lin Xuankong took the Treasure Elixir. "No regrets!"

Nearby, Han Feiyan looked at the two with a puzzled expression. What did Master Lin whisper to Ye Caimi? Ye Caimi agreed just like that? He gave Brother Lin such a precious Golden Body Treasure Elixir so readily?

She didn't feel it was right to ask Lin Xuankong, so she pulled Ye Kai aside. "Caimi, what did Brother Lin promise you?"

Ye Kai, ecstatic at the thought of Lin Xuankong's promise, couldn't help but grin upon hearing her question. "What, changed your tune so quickly? Not calling me 'husband' anymore?"

"In your dreams! A money-grubber like you thinks he's worthy of being my husband? I, Han Feiyan, would rather die of old age, be beaten to death, or even be devoured by a Demon, than marry you!" Han Feiyan said disdainfully.

Ye Kai was speechless again.

While Ye Kai and the tomboy Han Feiyan bickered endlessly to the side, Lin Xuankong opened the Jade Box and examined its contents carefully. Seeing the golden, round Elixir inside, covered with mystical Buddhist Secret Patterns and constantly flickering with a mysterious golden light, his heart filled with anticipation.

Lin Xuankong thought to himself: If this Golden Body Treasure Elixir is truly effective, then the tactic I've devised will absolutely guarantee my victory against that Mysterious Female Cultivator. Even if the Demon she summons with her Demon Pearl is as large as a small mountain, six or seven times bigger than the Ghost Toad, I won't have to worry in the slightest!

Thinking this, he looked up at the Cloud Mist Platform on the mountaintop, a smile playing on his lips. The Marsh Python Demon Pearl will be mine. Injuring this Mysterious Female Cultivator... how hard can it be?