

Stronger 181

Chapter 181: An Unexpected Huge Surprise, Are Feng Family's Two Thousand Elites Strong?

Three streaks of Cyan Radiance True Qi shot forth with terrifying power. The red-faced man, a Martial Cultivator at the Early Stage of the Fourth Layer, was the first to react, decisively activating the Exorcism Equipment on his body. Simultaneously, one streak of Cyan Radiance True Qi struck his Exorcism Equipment. Blocked by the Exorcism Equipment, the Cyan Radiance True Qi immediately created a shower of sparks on the armor's surface. The violent Cyan Radiance True Qi sent the Exorcism Equipment, along with the red-faced man, flying back over ten zhang, and the streak of Cyan Radiance True Qi continued to spin, furiously depleting the Qi Blood within his body!

After three breaths, the red-faced man, a master of the Fourth Layer whose Qi Blood was now exhausted, saw his expression change drastically. The Exorcism Equipment on his body reverted to its weapon form, and the streak of Cyan Radiance True Qi pierced directly through his abdomen, ripping a huge, penetrating wound that exposed his mangled intestines!

The other two streaks of Cyan Radiance True Qi had already shot towards the Martial Cultivators who were demanding payment. In less than a breath, eighteen Martial Cultivators had their legs shattered by the Cyan Radiance True Qi! Without the protection of Exorcism Equipment and lacking the speed to evade the Cyan Radiance True Qi, the robust bodies and Qi Blood defenses these Second Layer and Third Layer Martial Cultivators prided themselves on were utterly useless. Before this Cyan Radiance True Qi, so condensed it was almost tangible and countless times more potent, they couldn't even resist for an instant!

Suddenly, the square echoed with a chorus of wretched screams. Eighteen Martial Cultivators, each missing the lower half of their bodies, rolled and struggled on the ground. Copious amounts of blood, mixed with severed limbs and mangled flesh, stained that section of the square crimson. The sight was horrifying, and the overwhelming stench of blood was nauseating, like a scene from an Asura Hell! Second Layer, Third Layer, and Early Stage Fourth Layer Martial Cultivators, in the presence of a Fifth Layer Martial Cultivator wielding Condensed True Qi attacks, were like a brood of chicks facing a hawk—utterly fragile, helpless, and unable to even flee!

At this moment, Yan Yunfei had already been forced back one hundred seventy or eighty zhang by the streaks of Cyan Radiance True Qi. He continuously swung his longsword in the main street, conjuring Sword Qi to counter the Cyan Radiance True Qi, but he was completely suppressed by it, unable to break free!

It wasn't until this moment that a Martial Cultivator clad in Emerald Exorcism Armor emerged from the gate of the Zhang Residence. It was the Feng Family's eldest son, the short, portly, narrow-eyed Feng

Zhushi. He casually swung the emerald longsword that extended from his Emerald Exorcism Armor, and one streak of Cyan Radiance True Qi after another shot out from it, instantly crossing nearly two hundred zhang to spiral and slash towards Yan Yunfei!

After more than ten breaths, Yan Yunfei, who could only defend, finally made a critical error and was struck on the right shoulder by a streak of Cyan Radiance True Qi. He hastily channeled all his silver True Qi to defend, but under the relentless barrage of dozens of surrounding Cyan Radiance True Qi streaks, his protective silver True Qi rapidly dissipated. After three more breaths, Yan Yunfei screamed miserably; his arm and a leg were severed, and his entire body was riddled with dozens of penetrating wounds from the Cyan Radiance True Qi...

"The Sect Leader of a mere declining Seven Swords Sect dares to act so arrogantly at the gates of my Feng Family!" Feng Zhushi declared. Displaying his powerful True Qi attacks, though short and portly, clad in his Emerald Exorcism Armor and wielding his longsword, he exuded an unparalleled might.

The Martial Cultivators still standing in the square trembled, their faces pale, daring neither to look directly at him nor to make a reckless move in the face of Feng Zhushi's terrifying display! A Fifth Layer expert! His ferocious might was overwhelming, truly terrifying!

Feng Zhushi then cast a cold glance at Lin Xuankong and the other Martial Cultivators, turned, and walked towards the residence. He didn't even spare them a second glance, as if these numerous, fairly capable Second Layer and Third Layer Martial Cultivators were merely ants unworthy of his attention!

Then, his calm yet infinitely menacing voice drifted out, "The Feng Family never shirks its debts. After my sixth brother's funeral rites are completed, in two months, anyone can come to collect their debts. At that time, I will personally await any fellow cultivators who come to demand payment. We'll see if you dare to come then!"

Seeing him return to the residence, the surrounding Martial Cultivators finally dared to move, each one fleeing into the distance. The dozen or so Martial Cultivators with shattered legs were all using their hands to drag themselves away... Of the forty to fifty Second Layer and Third Layer Martial Cultivators present, not a single one now dared to linger at the entrance of the Feng Family Mansion!

One could only imagine that two months later, not a single person would dare to come asking for payment... Was that asking for payment? That was asking for death!

Even Lin Xuankong was forcefully dragged away by Lin Jiao towards the main street, no longer daring to utter a single word about exchanging for silver taels!

Lin Xuankong turned to look back at the Feng Family Mansion. That display from the Feng Family's eldest son, Feng Zhushi, was truly terrifying and incredible! After opening the Sunflower Water Vein, a Fifth Layer expert possessing such methods is truly worthy of being called a True Qi master, far beyond what an ordinary Fourth Layer cultivator could contend with! Even though I'm at the Late Stage of the Fourth Layer and, with my explosive techniques, can match the flight speed of that Cyan Radiance True Qi, if a Fifth Layer Martial Cultivator attacked me constantly from a distance, it would be extremely troublesome. If I were surrounded by those countless streaks of Cyan Radiance True Qi, continuously suppressed... Unless I resort to methods beyond Martial Dao, or use Treasures or the Demon Pearl, only then would I have a chance to win, a chance to kill him! The crucial point is, this Feng Zhushi is merely the Feng Family's eldest son. There are several other Fifth Layer experts within the Feng Family Mansion, and countless onlookers around! This is not the time to reveal my true strength and my many trump cards.

Lin Xuankong's brow furrowed deeply. It's just that this Feng Zhushi is so damnably shameless! He talks about never shirking debts, yet he uses brute force to seize the principal of so many Martial Cultivators, including my Exorcism Hand! One Exorcism Hand is insignificant, but that was a gift from Ma Jiang back then. If not for that Exorcism Hand, how could I have obtained the Demon People's Essence and so many other resources at that time!

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Hmph, the Feng Family's eldest son, early stage of the Fifth Layer, such immense power... If I take him out, it would be a significant event, one that could make the Feng Family utterly overwhelmed and divert their attention. I need to find an opportunity... Lin Xuankong's eyes narrowed slightly.

Lin Jiao, pulling Lin Xuankong along, suddenly exclaimed as they passed Yan Yunfei's wounded body, "Yan Yunfei is actually not dead yet! The life force of a Fifth Layer expert is truly formidable!"

「...」

「Moments later,」

In a private room on the second floor of a restaurant on Cow and Horse Street, Lin Xuankong looked at Yan Yunfei, who was recovering from his injuries.

Yan Yunfei and his sworn brother Guan Zhong cupped their hands together, and Yan Yunfei said, "If it weren't for Steward Lin using the invaluable Marsh Python Gall, my sworn brother and I, with our injuries, would have lasted no more than a few dozen breaths before meeting our end!"

Lin Xuankong replied, "The sect just happened to allot me a drop. It was no effort at all, not worth mentioning!"

Next to him, Lin Jiao's expression was peculiar. In the Demon Slaying Valley, this Silver Jade Steward has amassed about one hundred and fifty drops of Marsh Python Gall. Only he would call it 'no effort at all'!

But little did Lin Jiao know, Lin Xuankong even possessed the Marsh Python Demon Pearl that could heal injuries, so how could he possibly attach any importance to Marsh Python Gall!

Yan Yunfei sighed, "For Steward Lin, it's a small effort, but for me, Yan, it is a life-saving grace. In the future, should Steward Lin require anything, my sworn brother and I will spare no effort!"

Lin Xuankong nodded slightly and asked, "When you just fought Feng Zhushi, why could your Silver Sword Qi only travel tens of feet, while Feng Zhushi's Sword Aura could attack two hundred feet? Aren't you both in the early stage of the Fifth Layer?"

Recalling the battle, intense hatred filled Yan Yunfei's eyes. This Seven Swords Sect Leader now deeply hated Feng Zhushi due to his ruthless tactics.

After a moment of silence, he began, "Steward Lin, even within the early stage of the Fifth Layer, there are differences. I only reached the early Fifth Layer two and a half years ago, so my Sword Aura's range is at most fifty or sixty feet!"

Lin Jiao spoke up from the side, "Silver Jade Steward, our Yin Talisman Sect's Thunder Technique is similar. Under normal circumstances, the Divine Thunder Illusion Technique relies on weapons, contact, or spreading through the ground to extend for around ten feet. But once one advances to the Fifth Layer, True Qi condensed thunder can strike out at least sixty feet, and its power increases by more than tenfold! As for why there's such a distance difference even within the early Fifth Layer, that's because Sect Leader Yan uses Exorcism Equipment, whereas Feng Zhushi uses a complete set of Azure Light Armor, making a huge difference in True Qi attack range!"

Lin Xuankong raised an eyebrow at this. "There's such a distinction between Exorcism Equipment and Battle Armor?"

Yan Yunfei added, "Exorcism Equipment varies significantly based on the amount of Forehead Scale, Profound Iron and the number of runes. Upon reaching the Fifth Layer, for Martial Cultivators with different Exorcism Equipment, the disparity in the combat power they can unleash will grow ever larger! My Silver Light Forehead Scale Sword is crafted with only three hundred Forehead Scales, hence it doesn't improve the attack range much. For Exorcism Equipment with more than three hundred Forehead Scales, the more runes and Forehead Scales, the greater the enhancement to True Qi attack range! Feng Zhushi's Azure Light Armor has Eight Hundred Forehead Scales and sixteen hundred runes, extending attack range by more than threefold!"

Lin Xuankong's eyes lit up upon hearing this. So Exorcism Equipment has such wondrous uses once one reaches the Fifth Layer! Feng Zhushi's Azure Light Armor, with its Eight Hundred Forehead Scales and sixteen hundred runes, can increase the attack range of Fifth Layer True Qi by more than threefold. What about my own Ruyi Battle Armor? The Ruyi Battle Armor is Great Xia's unique Supreme Battle Armor, with a Thousand Scales and nearly three thousand runes. How much would it enhance the attack range? It should increase the attack range by at least fourfold, right? Perhaps fivefold, or even more? If that's true, after I reach the early stage of the Fifth Layer, not only will my Thunder Power increase significantly, but with a single wave of my hand, my Divine Thunder will have an attack range of at least several hundred feet, far surpassing other Martial Cultivators of the same realm in both range and power! Previously, I was too focused on the cultivation of the Third and Fourth Layers and had little contact with Fifth Layer experts, so my understanding of matters beyond the Fifth Layer was limited. Only now do I realize that the more powerful the Battle Armor, the greater the combat power it can unleash after the Fifth Layer. This is truly a delightful and unexpected surprise, a wonderful surprise!

With this thought, Lin Xuankong grew even more eager to obtain the Innate Spiritual Object and quickly advance to the Fifth Layer.

At this moment, Yan Yunfei's eyes showed a trace of resentful unwillingness. "If I had a complete set of Exorcism Armor, how could Feng Zhushi have defeated me so easily? Alas, Exorcism Armor is extremely precious and rare, usually owned by major families and powerful factions. Even the top factions in Great Marsh Prefecture mostly have only three or four sets; where would others get a chance to obtain it!"

Lin Xuankong sighed, "Indeed, very precious!"

Even I only have a mere ten sets!

Hearing Lin Xuankong's sigh, Lin Jiao, who was beside him, fell silent.

Afterwards, they chatted for a while before bidding farewell. Lin Xuankong and Lin Jiao headed downstairs.

Just as they exited the restaurant, Lin Xuankong couldn't help but pause, glancing up at the second floor of the restaurant as his Double Pupil suddenly appeared.

His Pine Crane Longevity Technique had long reached a high realm, and being in the late stage of the Fourth Layer, his hearing far surpassed that of ordinary Martial Cultivators. Even sounds inaudible to regular Fourth Layer cultivators were easily caught by him! Now, activating his Double Pupil, he effortlessly overheard the secret conversation upstairs!

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At this moment, he suddenly realized something. After he and Lin Jiao had left the tavern, Yan Yunfei and Guan Zhong were discussing something in low voices. The two of them were likely extremely resentful towards the Feng Family due to the day's events and were planning to join forces with some Martial Cultivators to hijack a large batch of medicinal materials being transported by the Feng Family and the Black Tiger Gang!

A dozen breaths later, Lin Xuankong's eyebrows rose.

Conspiring to hijack a large batch of medicinal materials from the Feng Family, the Guo Family, and the Black Tiger Gang? Are these two planning a heist that will shock the entire Great Marsh Prefecture?

However, if this succeeds, it would deal a significant blow to the Feng Family, the Guo Family, and the Black Tiger Gang. This is indeed an excellent opportunity...

I just don't know how many medicinal materials the Feng Family and the Black Tiger Gang will be transporting this time. If it's only a few thousand units, it wouldn't be very interesting. But if it's tens of thousands, it might be somewhat interesting and worth my intervention...

「...」

Inside the hall of a small building within the Feng Family Mansion, Feng Zhushi, who had returned to the mansion, looked up at the middle-aged man in purple before him and said, "Sorry you had to see that, Brother Yun Kui! I never expected that dozens of Martial Cultivators would dare to come and demand payment!"

Guo Yunkui, dressed in a purple robe, leisurely took a sip of tea. "Brother Zhushi's display of prowess this time must have terrified those petty individuals. In the future, even if the Feng Family makes a grand show of wanting to repay debts, no one will dare to come!"

Feng Zhushi remarked coldly, "Did they really think my Feng Family is so easy to bully? They're just a bunch of despicable individuals obsessed with money, yet they don't even recognize their own meager abilities!"

"I just saw that Lin Xuankong from the Yin Talisman Sect was among the crowd. He bet on an Exorcism Hand at twenty-two times the odds... Now, he's probably dreaming of taking twenty-two pieces of Exorcism Equipment from my Feng Family. What a ridiculous and pathetic old fool!"

"If I weren't trying to avoid an immediate war with the Yin Talisman Sect, I could kill ten Second Layer Martial Cultivators like Lin Xuankong with a single streak of azure light!"

Guo Yunkui shook his head and said, "No need to pay attention to such ants! Did any news come back from the men Brother Zhushi sent out yesterday?"

Feng Zhushi shook his head. "No news yet. There are some issues with manpower! You know, in two days, our three families will mobilize two thousand elite Martial Artists to transport medicinal materials. This shipment is enormous, with hundreds of thousands of units of Qi Replenishing Soup ingredients, and it's our top priority for the near future!"

Guo Yunkui frowned. "This matter is indeed crucial. It concerns the supplies for the Black Tiger Gang and our two families for the next six months! Moreover, among these medicinal materials are fifty exceptionally precious Zhengyuan Grass!"

Feng Zhushi said, "I will lead the escort this time. Besides the two thousand elites, I will also bring ten Middle and Late Stage Fourth Layer experts, both to deter any troublemakers and to ensure everything goes off without a hitch!"

Guo Yunkui raised his eyebrows. "Deter troublemakers?"

"Is there anyone in the Great Marsh Prefecture so unafraid of death that they'd dare to rob such critical resources from our three families? Two thousand elite Martial Cultivators, ten Late Stage Fourth Layer experts, and one Early Stage Fifth Layer expert. With such a force, even if several Late Tier Four Demons appeared, they would merely be contributing their flesh and blood to us!"

"As for other forces, even if ten or eight Little Sect Leaders or Little Gang Leaders show up, they'd just be courting death!"

Feng Zhushi nodded slightly. "If some short-sighted Martial Cultivators or Demons come looking to die, it wouldn't be so bad. It would at least liven up an otherwise boring journey!"

At this point, the two looked at each other and laughed softly.

Feng Zhushi's narrowed eyes formed a line, carrying an undeniable confidence!

After a moment of light laughter, Guo Yunkui suddenly lowered his voice, "Brother Feng, I have another suggestion..."

「....」

「Two days later, in the morning,」

Near the meeting hall of the Yin Talisman Sect, Lin Xuankong, who was about to enter, suddenly heard someone call his name. He turned to see Zhao Yufei.

Zhao Yufei, usually so aloof in public, gave him a gentle smile and beckoned. Soon, they walked to a secluded spot in a grove of trees within the sect's grounds.

There was a look of expectation in Zhao Yufei's eyes. "Have you prepared everything for the proposal?"

Lin Xuankong nodded. "Marriage is a major affair; of course, it needs careful preparation. We need to choose an auspicious day for the proposal. I've been looking at dates recently; it should be settled within a few days!"

Zhao Yufei nodded, but soon she remembered something and furrowed her brows, saying somewhat wistfully, "Recently, I've occasionally mentioned you to my father. I've subtly praised you as a high-ranking Silver Jade Steward in the Yin Talisman Sect, very steady and reliable in your work, and likely to be promoted to Silver Jade Steward or even Grand Chief Steward in the future. As a result... my father is very interested in you!"

Lin Xuankong was surprised. "Isn't that a good thing? Why the frown?"

Zhao Yufei sighed. "My father intends to befriend you. He said your status is acceptable, and if he were to befriend you, given your respective ages, he would have to call you Brother Lin!"

Zhao Yufei's father calling me Brother Lin?

He mentally winced.

Yufei's efforts to pave the way at home don't seem to be as effective as mine!

Zhao Yufei said wistfully, "Also, what about your wife? When can I meet her?"

Lin Xuankong raised his eyebrows. "I am the master of the Lin Family. If I say I'll marry you, then I'll marry you!"

At his words, Zhao Yufei couldn't help but feel a warmth in her heart. She moved closer to Lin Xuankong and gently leaned against him.

At that moment, the sound of distant drums, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!, suddenly echoed.

Lin Xuankong and Zhao Yufei exchanged glances and quickly walked out of the grove.

By this time, Jiang Yuran, Gao Yunchao, Wu Liangye, Ma Jiang, and others had already emerged from the meeting hall. Along with numerous Stewards, they leaped onto the fifth-floor rooftop of the General Manager's Tower and gazed into the distance.

Lin Xuankong and Zhao Yufei also leaped up and looked into the distance.

They saw, on a street seven or eight miles away, columns of men and horses emerging from the Feng Family Mansion. They were all elite Martial Cultivators from the Guo Family, the Feng Family, and the Black Tiger Gang.

These Martial Cultivators were all tall and imposing. More than twenty of them, carrying Exorcism Equipment, rode upon exceptionally majestic Exotic Horses.

Leading the large contingent of Martial Cultivators was none other than Feng Zhushi, the eldest son of the Feng Family, who had easily defeated Yan Yunfei two days prior!

Jiang Yuran observed them closely, her brow furrowed. "That's the two thousand elite Martial Cultivators from the Feng Family, the Guo Family, the Black Tiger Gang, and their affiliated sects. Most of them are Second Layer Martial Cultivators or above. They must be heading to the medicinal material production areas to transport a large batch!"

Lin Xuankong watched for a few moments. Recalling what Yan Yunfei and Guan Zhong had discussed two days ago, he felt a stir in his heart.

Gao Yunchao then spoke, "This joint transport of medicinal materials by the Feng Family, the Guo Family, and the Black Tiger Gang involves the largest number of elites they've ever mobilized. With Feng

Zhushi, a Fifth Layer powerhouse, leading them, this batch of medicinal materials must be enormous and critically important to these three families!"

Jiang Yuran frowned and said, "Hmph! These three families, along with the Spirit Snake Gang and others, monopolize medicinal materials. Countless Martial Cultivators hate them to the bone! They're transporting a large batch this time; it would be perfect if thousands, or even tens of thousands, of Martial Cultivators banded together and ambushed them!"

Hearing this, many of the Yin Talisman Sect's Stewards couldn't help but chuckle.

Gao Yunchao shook his head slightly and sighed. "With Feng Zhushi leading two thousand elites, including the four Grand Chief Stewards from the Black Tiger Gang's Hill City Branch...

"Furthermore, both the Guo and Feng Families have several Mid-grade and Late Stage Fourth Layer Martial Artists in full Battle Armor among them. Against such a lineup, unless several Middle or Late Stage Fifth Layer experts intervene, it would be incredibly difficult to challenge them!

"In the current Great Marsh Prefecture, where the Black Tiger Gang, Feng Family, and Guo Family dominate, besides our Yin Talisman Sect and the Huang Family, what other Middle or Late Stage Fifth Layer Martial Cultivators would dare to openly oppose these three major powers? Who would dare to hijack their convoy?

"Even that solitary Conical Hat Guest probably wouldn't dare to single-handedly challenge the combined might of these three families!"

Grand Steward Jiang Yuran wanted to retort, but when she considered that she had only recently entered the Early Stage of the Fifth Layer... Even if she herself went, she might not be a match for Feng Zhushi, who had been a Fifth Layer expert for years. Thus, she could only remain silent.

The other Stewards and Grand Chief Stewards of the Yin Talisman Sect were far weaker than Jiang Yuran; they all frowned, rendered speechless.

In the crowd, only Lin Xuankong's eyes kept flickering. With such a grand display by the Feng Family, Guo Family, and Black Tiger Gang, the amount of medicinal materials being transported must be immense...

As for those two thousand elites? Are they really that strong?

If I were to use the Ruyi Profound Gold Rod this time, the three families would definitely be in for a very unpleasant surprise. This would absolutely be a major incident, enough to divert their attention!

Chapter 184: The Terror of Lin Xuankong in Full Form

「Fourteen days later,」

The moon was dark, the wind high, at Fuhu Slope.

In the dense forest, Lin Xuankong, who was secretly cultivating, suddenly shifted his gaze. Soundlessly, he leaped onto the dense crown of a giant tree and looked into the distance.

A thousand feet away, over 2,000 extremely formidable Martial Cultivators were forming a long line, slowly heading towards Fuhu Slope. Among their ranks were thirty fully loaded medicinal vehicles, each carrying tens of thousands of pounds of medicinal materials. These vehicles, weighing tens of thousands of pounds each due to their cargo, were pulled by several extremely robust Martial Cultivators. The massive wheels of the Profound Iron Vehicles crushed the wild terrain, leaving deep ruts. At the rear of the convoy, seven or eight imposing Martial Cultivators rode on fine steeds, covering their flank.

At the head of the convoy, Feng Zhushi, the eldest son of the Feng Family, frowned as he glanced towards Fuhu Slope and raised his hand. Instantly, the entire convoy halted. These Martial Cultivators from the Black Tiger Gang, Feng Family, and Guo Family were not only powerful but also exceptionally well-trained. Once the convoy stopped, they each found a position near the medicinal vehicles and silently rested on the spot.

At this moment, BANG! A drum sounded. The hurried, dense patter of footsteps erupted as over a thousand black-clad Martial Cultivators suddenly appeared at the crest of Fuhu Slope and charged down. These Martial Cultivators were also imposing figures, each wielding sharp weapons. They sprinted with the speed of galloping horses; clearly, all were at least Late Stage First Layer cultivators, with some even being powerful cultivators at the Second, Third, and Fourth Layers.

In the blink of an eye, the numerous black-clad Martial Cultivators had charged to within 200 feet of the Feng Family's convoy before halting.

On the Feng Family's side, seeing over a thousand Martial Cultivators charging towards them, the elites of the Feng Family, Guo Family, and Black Tiger Gang remained unperturbed. They silently drew their weapons, rose to their feet, and fixed their gazes on the more than one thousand black-clad individuals. The 2,000-plus elites from the Feng Family, Guo Family, and Black Tiger Gang stood with weapons drawn, their murderous aura palpable. In both the number of powerful experts and sheer presence, they clearly outmatched the black-clad assailants. The Feng and Guo Families had stood firm in Great Marsh Prefecture for centuries, and not without reason. The sheer valorous aura of these Martial Cultivators alone was far beyond what ordinary Loose Cultivators or minor sects could compare to.

At this moment, the two sides faced off. The night wind whistled, bending the grass low. The air was thick with a chilling, murderous intent.

"Feng Zhushi, we've been waiting for you here for a full fourteen days!" From among the black-clad crowd, a Martial Cultivator with a longsword at his waist stepped forward, his eyes filled with killing intent. He was none other than Yan Yunfei, Sect Leader of the Seven Swords Sect.

Across from him, Feng Zhushi glanced at Yan Yunfei, a cold smile playing on his lips. "Yan Yunfei? Still alive, I see. Lucky enough to be saved by Marsh Python Gall, were you? But who gave you the audacity, Yan Yunfei, to dare and try to hijack the medicinal materials of our three families? With that broken sword of yours, adorned with merely three hundred Forehead Scales? Or with your cultivation, which only reached the Fifth Layer two and a half years ago? Or perhaps with those thousand-odd filthy scum behind you?"

He slowly drew a green longsword from his waist. With a gentle shake, his Battle Armor materialized, encasing his entire body. Then, he pointed the sword at Yan Yunfei. "Within ten breaths, you will surely die!"

Before Feng Zhushi finished speaking, a Martial Cultivator stepped out from the black-clad crowd. The long saber in his hand vibrated gently, transforming into red Battle Armor that enveloped him. "Feng Zhushi, what if you add me to the equation?"

Feng Zhushi frowned as he looked over, his eyebrows then arching slightly. "Yuan Butong from the Blood Saber Sect of Prison Dragon City!"

At this moment, upon seeing the newcomer, not only did Feng Zhushi's expression shift, but even among the 2,000 elite Martial Cultivators behind him, a good number showed solemn expressions. Clearly, they had all heard of this Martial Cultivator.

Sect Leader Yuan Butong of the Blood Saber Sect had reached the Fifth Layer nine years ago. He was currently at the Mid-grade of the Fifth Layer. With his exquisite Blood Saber Technique, he was renowned as the foremost expert in Prison Dragon City. Although the Blood Saber Sect could not match the Black Tiger Gang or the Feng and Guo Families, it was still a formidable power. It was considered second only to the Feng, Guo, and Huang Families, the Spirit Snake Gang, and the Yin Talisman Sect, on par with Zhao Yufei's Zhao Family, and was quite renowned.

Yuan Butong's Blood Scale Armor was even more renowned than Feng Zhushi's Azure Light Armor. Although both were Eight Hundred Forehead Scale armors, the Blood Scale Armor was crafted by an Artifact Refiner from Kyoto and inscribed with 1,690 interconnected Runes, more than the Azure Light Armor's 1,600 Runes. This slight difference between the Azure Light Armor and the Blood Scale Armor was not particularly evident when activated by Fourth Layer cultivators. However, the distinctions between Exorcism Armors, when wielded by True Qi experts, would be magnified to their absolute limit—especially since Yuan Butong was at the Mid-grade of the Fifth Layer!

For a moment, the 2,000 elite Martial Cultivators from the Feng, Guo, and Black Tiger Gang forces all tightened their grip on their weapons.

"So what if you, Yuan Butong, have come?" Feng Zhushi stared at Yuan Butong as he stepped out of the crowd. "Do you truly believe you can withstand the 2,000 elites of my Feng Family, Guo Family, and the Black Tiger Gang? Your True Qi would likely be exhausted before you could kill even half of them, and you would perish amidst the chaos of battle!

"Furthermore, Yuan Butong, are you not afraid of facing the relentless pursuit from the Late Stage Fifth Layer experts of our Feng and Guo Families, and the Black Tiger Gang, starting from this day forward?"

At this, Feng Zhushi, who had been relaxed moments before, found his expression turning somewhat somber.

Seeing Feng Zhushi's expression, Yan Yunfei felt a surge of satisfaction. My sworn brother, Yuan Butong, is Mid-grade Fifth Layer and wields the renowned Blood Scale Armor of Great Marsh Prefecture! In both

strength and equipment, he completely surpasses Feng Zhushi! Thinking of Feng Zhushi's brutal actions days prior, he couldn't resist tightening his grip on his Forehead Scale Sword, his True Qi flaring.

Chapter 185: The Terror of Lin Xuankong in Full Status_2

Yuan Butong walked briskly towards Feng Zhushi, his eyes filled with murderous intent and excitement.

"I believe," Yuan Butong declared, "the moment you, Feng Zhushi, die at my hands, the morale of your so-called two thousand elite soldiers will collapse immediately! As for what happens after I kill you, the Great Xia Dynasty has more than just the Great Marsh Prefecture... As long as I, Yuan Butong, get my hands on over a hundred thousand portions of medicinal materials tonight, where can't I go?"

Yuan Butong was indeed somewhat excited. He had never expected it to be a full thirty carts of medicinal materials—that was hundreds of thousands of portions! Combined, he might even be able to buy two or even three plant-type Demon Pearls! In the future, with Demon Pearls in hand, no matter where he went, the Blood Saber Sect could become a first-rate power!

Nearby, Yan Yunfei also walked towards Feng Zhushi, his eyes full of hatred.

Right at that moment, Feng Zhushi, who initially had a gloomy expression, suddenly showed a change in countenance; a mocking smile spread across his face.

"Hahaha, I've tricked you!" he laughed. "Seeing you two so full of confidence is too funny! No wonder Brother Yun Kui told me that with this transport of over three hundred thousand portions of medicinal materials, we might catch a big fish. He told me to be prepared, and he was indeed right! Just now I thought Yan Yunfei was the big fish, but now it seems the real big fish is Yuan Butong, and his famed Blood Scale Armor! It seems this time, I am going to make a fortune!"

Yan Yunfei and Yuan Butong stopped their footsteps simultaneously, their faces showing evident confusion.

With a mocking expression, Feng Zhushi reached into his robes, and a pink Demon Pearl suddenly appeared in his hand, flashing with an eerie light.

Yuan Butong's brow furrowed tightly upon seeing this Demon Pearl, his eyes showing alarm.

"It's the Feng Family's Demon Fox Demon Pearl, one of the Feng Family's only two Demon Pearls! Damn it, it's just a transport of medicinal materials, yet you brought the Feng Family's Demon Fox Demon Pearl!"

Feng Zhushi ignored him and infused True Qi into the Demon Pearl.

BOOM!

Demon Qi billowed out, and a giant Demon Fox, as tall as a two-story building and possessing five tails and five eyes, suddenly materialized near Yuan Butong and Yan Yunfei.

A demon summoned by a Fifth Layer True Qi expert was naturally a Tier Five demon. It was enormous and unparalleled, its Demon Qi surging to the sky! This Demon Fox was more than ten times fiercer than the one summoned by Prefect Liy's son, Liy Changming, in the Demon-Suppressing Valley!

As soon as the Demon Fox appeared, each of its five giant eyes shot out a red beam of light towards Yuan Butong and Yan Yunfei.

The Demon Fox's five tails also whipped through the air, creating powerful ripples as they smashed towards Yuan Butong and Yan Yunfei's bodies!

Each of those tails was so thick it would take several people to encircle one, and each was several times thicker than Yuan Butong's burly frame!

At the same time, SWISH! SWISH! SWISH! SWISH! Beams of Cyan Radiance True Qi continuously shot out from Feng Zhushi's green longsword.

These powerful and agile cyan radiances, along with the Demon Fox's red light beams, which spanned tens of zhang, continuously rushed towards Yan Yunfei and Yuan Butong!

A fierce battle immediately erupted.

Yuan Butong and Yan Yunfei frantically dodged, constantly using blood-red saber lights and Silver Sword Qi to fend off those red and cyan beams.

Saber lights, Sword Qi, cyan radiance, red light, and giant tails continuously collided; the site of their battle was instantly thrown into chaos, with dust and stones flying everywhere!

The most ferocious of all were the crimson light beams shot out by the five eyes of the Demon Fox. These beams contained terrifying power, instantly carving ravines over a zhang deep into the ground when they struck.

Yuan Butong, a mid-Fifth Layer expert, and Yan Yunfei, an early Fifth Layer expert, both dared not face those red light beams head-on. They constantly dodged to evade the attacks. Unfortunately, Feng Zhushi's Cyan Sword Qi kept attacking, coordinating with the Demon Fox. It continuously harassed Yuan Butong and Yan Yunfei, pressing them so hard they could barely defend themselves!

At this moment, Feng Zhushi, who was clearly only at early Tier Five, relying on the Feng Family's treasure—the Demon Fox Demon Pearl—was impressively suppressing both of them single-handedly!

The situation reversed in an instant. The originally imposing Yuan Butong and Yan Yunfei were forced onto the defensive, struggling to fend off the red and cyan beams!

Their eyes were filled with unwillingness. How could they have known that for merely transporting medicinal materials, Feng Zhushi would use the Feng Family's trump card? This Demon Fox Demon Pearl was ranked over five hundred on the Demon Pearl Ranking! It was priceless and far stronger than many 'animal-type' Demon Pearls, far surpassing the value of any plant-type Demon Pearl!

As they resisted, the thought of retreating had already surfaced in their minds, but now, suppressed by the Demon Fox and Feng Zhushi, escape seemed incredibly difficult!

Especially since the more than two thousand elites from the Guo Family, Feng Family, and Black Tiger Gang had already quickly surrounded them, trapping the more than one thousand Martial Cultivators, along with Yan Yunfei and Yuan Butong, in the center!

Yan Yunfei kept waving his Silver Sword Qi, unwillingness increasingly evident in his eyes. He detested Feng Zhushi's myriad shameless acts and, even more, seethed at the injustice of the world. Why could such a shameless family like the Fengs continue to prosper?

At this moment, as he resisted the attacks, he glanced at the more than one thousand disciples from the Seven Swords Sect and Blood Saber Sect who had dared to confront the Feng Family with him.

He knew that if he and Yuan Butong were defeated, everyone here tonight would likely perish; not a single one would survive!

"Don't leave a single one of these filthy rebels who dared to resist the Feng Family alive! Bring me all these thousand-plus heads here and hang them in the Feng Family's plaza! I want the entire Great Marsh Prefecture to know the consequences of resisting the Feng Family!" Feng Zhushi ordered coldly, directing the cyan radiance to attack Yan Yunfei and Yuan Butong.

Then, he slowly raised his left hand—the one not holding his sword...

Chapter 186: The Terror of Lin Xuankong in Full State_3

Opposite them, over a thousand disciples of the Blood Saber Sect and Seven Swords Sect gripped their weapons tightly.

They knew that when Feng Zhushi's left hand swung down, those two thousand martial cultivators, as fierce as wolves and tigers, would slaughter them! Without the support of Yan Yunfei or Yuan Butong, they had almost no chance of victory!

"Damn it! Following the Sect Leader out, I never planned to return alive! Killing one means we break even, killing two is a profit!" a disciple from the Blood Saber Sect suddenly roared.

Another disciple from the Seven Swords Sect also shouted, "Damn! Even if we die, we'll drag some down with us! Feng Family, Guo Family, Black Tiger Gang, you shameless scoundrels, come on!"

With the shouts of these two disciples, more disciples from the Seven Swords Sect and Blood Saber Sect suddenly felt a surge of heat in their hearts and began to roar as well.

Having been robbed of their medicinal herbs by the Feng Family, Guo Family, and the Black Tiger Gang for months, their cultivation had shown no progress. Their hearts had long been filled with resentment and indignation!

The actions of the Black Tiger Gang, Feng Family, and Guo Family had long made countless Martial Cultivators in the Great Marsh Prefecture hate them to the bone; these individuals were just a small fraction of that number!

"Powerless rage. Just a bunch of wretched fools!" Feng Zhushi looked at the over one thousand roaring Martial Cultivators, his lips curling into an even more delighted smile. His hand was already raised to its highest point!

At this moment, under the dark moon, at the top of Fuhu Slope, unnoticed by anyone, a figure wearing a conical hat and a mask stepped out.

He patted the small drum in his hand and ran downhill. It was Lin Xuankong, already clad in his Ruyi Battle Armor!

However, amidst the chaos of the battlefield where the Demon Fox, Yan Yunfei, Yuan Butong, and others were engaged in fierce combat, no one noticed him!

As Lin Xuankong ran silently, he glanced at his Life Plate:

[Realm: Transcendence - Fourth Layer Perfection]

[Yin Talisman Technique: Attained Minor Success 221/232]

[Pine Crane Longevity Technique: Attained Minor Success 151/500]

[Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique: Attained Minor Success 149/450]

[Eight Gates Celestial Eye: Fifth Layer 99/200]

[Perfect Qi Blood: 499,999/500,000]

[Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique: Entering the Hall 61/100]

[Blood Eating Technique: Entering the Hall 81/100]

[Blood-Burning Secret Technique: Entering the Hall 11/100]

[Divine Protection Elixir: Mid-grade Pill Technique 23/72]

After more than ten days of cultivation, the power of the Divine Thunder Root from the Yin Talisman Technique had become increasingly stronger.

With high-speed refinement, his Transcendence Realm had finally reached the Fourth Layer of Perfection. His bones had metamorphosed once again, their strength far surpassing their previous state many times over. Now, at this realm, he was just a hair's breadth away from being able to consume Innate Spiritual Objects!

Besides this, Lii Xiaolan, the young lady possessing a mysterious Primordial Strange Vein and talent comparable to that mysterious Female Cultivator, had not disappointed Lin Xuankong. With an infinite supply of Tier Three Demon Flesh, her Cultivation Speed had indeed increased dramatically, far surpassing her previous rate!

With a thirty-fold amplification and abundant resources, Lii Xiaolan had managed to cultivate the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique to the mid-stage of the Minor Success Realm in less than twenty days. The technique's stealth ability and explosive power had greatly increased. Especially its explosive power, which had risen from six times to a full seven times. Lin Xuankong naturally accepted it all, laughing heartily!

It wasn't just his realm and the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique.

The Blood-Burning Secret Technique had also seen breakthroughs in these ten-plus days. It had reached the Entering the Hall Realm, increasing explosive power by more than fivefold!

Even Ye Kai, who had cultivated it for over ten years, had not reached this realm. Lin Xuankong, however, had forcefully reached this level in just over thirty days! If Ye Kai knew how quickly he had cultivated it to the Entering the Hall Realm, he would probably come from Ba City immediately, fanning Lin Xuankong day and night!

The Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique had also reached the late stage of the Entering the Hall Realm. Its explosive power increase was nearing fivefold.

This level of the Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique was something the top Grand Chief Stewards, Vice Hall Masters, and Hall Masters of the Black Tiger Gang could only reach after twenty years of cultivation! Yet who could have imagined that the Black Tiger Gang's Secret Technique would be brought to such heights in the hands of their archenemy, the Conical Hat Guest!

Now, with such massive improvements in his Cultivation Techniques and Secret Techniques, even without the Golden Body Treasure Elixir, Lin Xuankong, once he activated all his Secret Techniques, would be no less powerful than when he had consumed the Golden Body Treasure Elixir!

The most crucial point was that Lin Xuankong was not wearing the battle armor weighing over thirty thousand pounds, but was instead clad only in a Ruyi Battle Armor.

Traveling so lightly, at this moment, not even Lin Xuankong himself knew how terrifyingly fast he would be, or how ferocious he would become with his Fourth Layer of Perfection cultivation, once he fully activated all his Secret Techniques and abilities!

At this time, augmented by the Kui Ox Drum, Lin Xuankong ran downhill from the top of Fuhu Slope.

His body temperature suddenly rose. The Ruyi Battle Armor around him began to steam, distorting the air—that was the Blood-Burning Secret Technique.

Then, his height surged, reaching fourteen or fifteen feet, like a giant—that was the Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique.

Next, his body transformed into a shadow, his speed increasing sevenfold—that was the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique!

Finally, his Ruyi Battle Armor suddenly extended, transforming into a giant Profound Iron Rod forty to fifty feet long!

At this moment, in Lin Xuankong's vision, everything had slowed down. The two thousand elites from the three families seemed to freeze, as did the more than one thousand disciples of the Seven Swords Sect and Blood Saber Sect.

The only ones still appearing to move normally were Yan Yunfei, Yuan Butong, the Demon Fox, the shooting red lights, the Sword Auras, and Feng Zhushi, who was emanating a green light.

Now feeling triumphant, Feng Zhushi hadn't noticed that Lin Xuankong, having activated the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique, had transformed into an incredibly fast shadow and was rushing toward him!

His plump face was still filled with murderous intent, his slitted eyes carrying a trace of amusement. His raised left hand was about to fall!

Just then, this True Qi expert, who had intimidated countless Martial Cultivators, suddenly felt his pupils shrink. Sensing a deadly crisis, at this critical juncture, he hastily gathered his highly refined True Qi to protect every inch of his body!

Then, through his slitted eyes, he saw a Golden Giant Rod, as thick as a large urn, obscuring his vision!

Where did this giant rod come from???

Chapter 187: Killing a Fifth Layer Expert in Half a Breath, What to Do with Too Many Demon Pearls

Feng Zhushi was a solid Fifth Layer expert. A body refined by such potent True Qi naturally possessed reflexes far exceeding those of a Fourth Layer Martial Cultivator!

In the instant before the enormous rod struck his face, Feng Zhushi ultimately reacted. He dodged to one side without hesitation. However, although an early-stage Fifth Layer expert was fast, he had only refined his body with True Qi for a few years, making him far inferior to Lin Xuankong, who had activated several potent Secret Techniques! He only had time to tilt his head half an inch to the side before the Ruyi Profound Gold Rod smashed into his face!

BOOM!

A tremendous noise erupted, like a meteor crashing to the ground, like Mount Tai collapsing. Feng Zhushi was directly smashed into the ground, creating a pit several zhang deep where he stood! A massive shockwave instantly radiated outwards, blasting countless pieces of rubble from the ground. In an instant, within a radius of several hundred zhang, sand and stones flew everywhere. Those Martial Cultivators who were somewhat closer turned pale. Enduring the painful, deafening noise, they circulated their Qi Blood to protect their bodies and retreated backward!

The ground then began to tremble violently, with huge cracks spreading from the pit's location! This, however, was just the beginning.

BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM!

Explosions burst forth in rapid succession. The pit in the ground constantly expanded. The shockwaves and countless cracks continuously spread outwards, causing the earth to tremble repeatedly. The thousands of Martial Cultivators nearby turned deathly pale, struggling to maintain their footing!

It was Lin Xuankong continuously swinging the rod. Having landed a successful hit, how could he let such an opportunity slip by? Consequently, he smashed the rod again and again towards Feng Zhushi's position underground!

In half a breath, eighty-one blows were struck! The enormous pit in the ground had already reached a depth of twenty to thirty zhang! Only then did Lin Xuankong cease, looking towards the bottom of the pit at a Demon Pearl, an Azure Light Forehead Scale Sword, and a Ghost Frog Pouch!

And Feng Zhushi... was already gone... By the sixty-third blow, his greatly refined True Qi had completely dissipated. No matter how condensed True Qi was, it ultimately had its limits. Under the continuous,

terrifyingly brutal onslaught, his True Qi only lasted for a quarter of a breath. Then, in the ensuing attacks, his formidable Fifth Layer body was obliterated!

Looking at the Demon Pearl and the Azure Light Forehead Scale Sword, Lin Xuankong sighed inwardly, I'm still not strong enough! It took half a breath to kill an early-stage Fifth Layer expert... If I had already reached the Fifth Layer, close combat wouldn't even be necessary. I could have quickly dealt with Feng Zhushi from several hundred zhang away with lightning!

Putting away the Demon Fox Demon Pearl, Ghost Frog Pouch, and Azure Light Forehead Scale Sword from the bottom of the pit, the over one zhang tall Lin Xuankong, carrying the four to five zhang long Ruyi Profound Gold Rod, leaped out of the pit and looked around.

At this moment, as they saw this Martial Cultivator—who had slain Feng Zhushi in half a breath—look their way, everyone wore expressions of fear. This included disciples and Stewards from the Blood Saber Sect, the Seven Swords Sect, the Feng Family, the Guo Family, and the Black Tiger Gang, as well as Yan Yunfei and the even more formidable Yuan Butong. None dared to meet his gaze, avoiding his glance!

Among the Seven Swords Sect Martial Cultivators, someone suddenly exclaimed in a low voice, "Golden Armor and Golden Rod, Conical Hat Mask... this... this is the Conical Hat Guest! The Conical Hat Guest who specifically targets the Black Tiger Gang!"

Upon hearing this low exclamation, the expressions of those originally extremely fearful Seven Swords Sect and Blood Saber Sect Martial Cultivators changed. All showed a flicker of excitement and a profound sense of respect! As members of minor sects that dared to resist the Feng Family, the Guo Family, and the Black Tiger Gang, these Martial Cultivators, regardless of their strength, possessed at least a core of courage. They had long harbored deep respect for this Conical Hat Guest, renowned throughout Great Marsh Prefecture for daring to single-handedly confront the top-tier Black Tiger Gang!

Yan Yunfei patted the dust and sand off his body, showing a trace of post-catastrophe relief on his face. He cupped his hands towards Lin Xuankong, saying, "Elder Conical! Thank you, Elder Conical, for your assistance!"

Lin Xuankong looked at the Feng Family, Guo Family, and Black Tiger Gang Martial Cultivators retreating backward. "It's not yet time to thank me!"

"Retreat!" a late-stage Fourth Layer Martial Cultivator from the allied forces of the three families bellowed. After activating his full Battle Armor, he frantically retreated.

Immediately, more than two thousand elite Martial Cultivators from the three families scattered and fled. Like mice fleeing from a shattered nest, they scattered in all directions, none daring to stay a second longer!

However, the Seven Swords Sect and Blood Saber Sect Martial Cultivators showed a collective look of astonishment. Among these over two thousand escaping Martial Cultivators, those wearing any Exorcism Equipment or Exorcism Armor suddenly all started shuddering. Immediately afterward, these individuals collapsed one after another, their faces etched with abject terror. Instantly, some wet their trousers, others soiled themselves, and a few even rolled their eyes back and fainted on the spot!

Once all the Martial Cultivators wearing Exorcism Equipment and Exorcism Armor had collapsed, even the Black Tiger Gang's Stewards began to show signs of distress. This included the four Grand Chief Stewards from the Hill City Branch, as well as the early, mid, and late-stage Fourth Layer Martial Cultivators who had been fleeing the fastest. They all began to shriek in terror, uttering incoherent cries as they collapsed, their faces contorted in absolute fear, as if they had witnessed the most horrifying spectacle imaginable!

Meanwhile, the Conical Hat Guest, wielding the Ruyi Profound Gold Rod, transformed into an ethereal silhouette, weaving among the Fourth Layer Martial Cultivators.

Chapter 188: Killing a Fifth Layer Expert in Half a Breath, What to Do with Too Many Demon Pearls_2

After a single breath, all twenty-plus Fourth Layer Martial Cultivators among the two thousand Martial Cultivators were already dead!

It was only then that the Conical Hat Guest, who was starting to gather their equipment, looked at Yan Yunfei and said, "The rest are just Second and Third Layer cultivators; I'll leave them to you!"

Upon hearing Lin Xuankong's words and recalling the strange demise of those Fourth Layer Martial Cultivators, this Early Stage Fifth Layer expert couldn't help but feel the corner of his eye twitch. The apprehension he already felt towards Lin Xuankong intensified!

When Yan Yunfei and Yuan Butong chased after the Feng and Guo Family Martial Cultivators, as the only two Fifth Layer experts present, their Sword Auras and Blade Auras swept out. No one could block or evade them.

One by one, the once formidable Martial Cultivators of the Black Tiger Gang, the Feng Family, and the Guo Family, who had rampaged through the Great Marsh Prefecture, fell like ants touched by a torch, their bodies instantly turning to dust!

How could Third Layer Martial Cultivators possibly resist the might of Fifth Layer experts?

However, when these two ferocious Fifth Layer experts gathered, their faces still showed lingering shock and doubt.

Yuan Butong approached Yan Yunfei, his expression wary as he said, "This Conical Hat Guest... he actually injured an Early Stage Fifth Layer expert in a single strike! He didn't even use ranged True Qi attacks. Such divine might! Even I, a Mid-grade Fifth Layer expert, fear I wouldn't be able to achieve that even in another ten years!"

Yan Yunfei frowned. "He's indeed terrifyingly strong, but it's also very strange. Once Martial Cultivators reach the Fifth Layer or above, who still uses close-quarters combat? Aren't ranged True Qi attacks more ferocious and convenient? Perhaps... perhaps the Conical Hat Guest isn't a Fifth Layer True Qi expert?"

Yuan Butong stared at his friend in surprise. "What are you thinking? If he weren't a Fifth Layer Martial Cultivator, how could he unleash such speed? When that Conical Hat Guest charged over earlier, I didn't even notice him... It wasn't until he smashed Feng Zhushi into the ground with a single blow that I realized someone had entered the battlefield! Can you unleash such speed?"

Hearing this, Yan Yunfei looked somewhat embarrassed. "I can't."

Yuan Butong sighed. "You can't, and neither can I. For this Elder Conical Hat to achieve such speed, he must have advanced to the Fifth Layer at least fifteen years ago. He's likely a Martial Cultivator approaching the Late Stage of the Fifth Layer!"

Yan Yunfei's eyes flickered, the apprehension in his heart growing stronger. He waved his hand, unleashing a Silver Glow to slay a Black Tiger Gang Steward, trying to calm his nerves.

Yuan Butong sighed again. "It's not just his Explosive Power! He definitely used a Pupil Technique on those Fourth Layer Martial Cultivators—a Pupil Technique capable of influencing one's Heart Thought! Attacks on the Heart Thought are impossible to defend against... As long as one's Heart Thought Grade is lower than Elder Conical's, they would be completely unable to resist such an attack!"

Yan Yunfei frowned. "Then why didn't the Conical Hat Guest use his Pupil Technique on Feng Zhushi?"

Yuan Butong glared at him. "Why don't you go ask Elder Conical yourself?"

Yan Yunfei: ...

Yuan Butong continued, "Actually, what surprised me most about this battle is that Elder Conical dealt with Feng Zhushi without even using the Twin Vine Demon Pearl, which is famous throughout the Great Marsh Prefecture! If he had used ranged attacks and that Twin Vine Demon Pearl..."

Hearing this, Yan Yunfei stopped in his tracks, his expression shifting rapidly. "It seems Elder Conical was far from using his full strength in this battle! I really don't know how powerful he would be if he used all his techniques and the Twin Vine Demon Pearl!"

After saying this, he looked at Yuan Butong. They exchanged a glance and couldn't help but sigh with emotion once more.

But how could these two know that Lin Xuankong hadn't just refrained from using the Twin Vine Demon Pearl? He hadn't even had a chance to use the Black Soul Wondrous Jade, Marsh Python Demon Pearl, Evil Sheep Demon Pearl, Ghost Frog Demon Pearl, or Manluo Demon Pearl. The main reason was that Feng Zhushi, an Early Stage Fifth Layer cultivator, had died too quickly!

Even Lin Xuankong himself hadn't expected it. He had a whole pile of Demon Pearls, yet he hadn't used a single one, relying solely on his full-power Explosive Power!

Lin Xuankong was actually quite frustrated himself. Having too many trump cards, too many Demon Pearls, and never getting a chance to use them was also a problem... Of course, he now had another Demon Pearl in his possession: the Demon Fox Demon Pearl, one of the Feng Family's only two Demon Pearls!

In the distance, Lin Xuankong was gathering the Exorcism Equipment. As he organized it, he mused to himself, So many Demon Pearls. Are Demon Pearls really that valuable...?

「More than an hour later,」

Yan Yunfei and Yuan Butong, who had been leading their disciples in pursuit of the fleeing Martial Cultivators, returned to the transport convoy's location.

Over two thousand Martial Cultivators from the Feng Family, Guo Family, and Black Tiger Gang had scattered and fled. Normally, it would have been impossible to annihilate them all; dealing with even a quarter would have been a good outcome. But under Lin Xuankong's Eight Gates Celestial Eye, all the Fourth Layer cultivators and those possessing Exorcism Equipment among them had been dealt with beforehand. Only some Second and Third Layer cultivators remained, making them naturally much easier to handle.

After more than an hour of pursuit, nearly four-fifths of the over two thousand Martial Cultivators from the Feng Family, Guo Family, and Black Tiger Gang had been killed, with only a few hundred managing to flee in disarray.

At this moment, everyone had returned to the transport convoy's location.

They saw that the Conical Hat Guest had already finished gathering all the Exorcism Equipment and Exorcism Armor and was now inspecting the medicinal herbs on the transport vehicles.

Those twenty-odd pieces of Exorcism Equipment, three sets of Exorcism Armor, along with the Azure Light Armor, were casually piled in an open space!

Yan Yunfei, Yuan Butong, and the more than one thousand Martial Cultivators with them all stared at the Exorcism Equipment and Exorcism Armor with burning desire in their eyes.

As Martial Cultivators, who wouldn't want to possess a piece of Exorcism Equipment? Who wouldn't desire a complete set of Exorcism Armor?

Chapter 189: Killing a Fifth Layer Expert in Half a Breath, What to Do with Too Many Demon Pearls_3

Just the thought that the Conical Hat Guest was the owner of this Battle Armor and Exorcism Equipment made everyone, despite their envy, hesitant to approach any of it. Lin Xuankong had just killed Feng Zhushi, a Fifth Layer expert, in half a breath. Furthermore, his Pupil Technique had instantly controlled more than twenty Martial Cultivators. These displays of power left a deep psychological shadow on everyone present.

Yuan Butong glanced at the Exorcism Equipment, then at the Conical Hat Guest rummaging through the vehicles. Is this Elder Conical intending to kill all of us? he suddenly thought. Otherwise, why would he leave that tempting Exorcism Equipment and Battle Armor there? Could he be luring us to make a move and snatch them?

At this moment, Lin Xuankong, who was rummaging through the vehicles, opened one of the boxes and suddenly spoke, "The other vehicles are loaded with ingredients for the Nine Revolutions Qi Replenishing Soup, but this box is different. Sect Leader Yan, Sect Leader Yuan, do you recognize this herb?"

Yan Yunfei and Yuan Butong looked at each other and walked over together. They looked into the box and saw it contained palm-sized herbs emitting a faint green mist. Instantly, their expressions changed, showing astonishment.

Yan Yunfei, somewhat excited, said, "Green mist curling, emerald green, twelve leaves, nine roots... this is Zhengyuan Grass! The Zhengyuan Grass that can detoxify Demon Poison! Consuming this Spirit Grass allows one to resist most Tier Five and below Demon Poisons for a period of time!"

Hearing this, Lin Xuankong's eyes lit up. He had heard Han Feiyan mention the valuable Zhengyuan Grass. Generally, Martial Cultivators intending to enter the Ba Mountain Secret Realm had to prepare at least two or three Zhengyuan Grass to neutralize Corpse Scorpion Venom. It was said that the usual price of this Zhengyuan Grass could reach twenty to thirty thousand taels each. Once Secret Realms like the Ba Mountain Secret Realm, Nine Nether Secret Realm, and Mang Mountain Secret Realm—all filled with highly poisonous Demons—opened, the price of Zhengyuan Grass would skyrocket. Sometimes, a single stalk could fetch forty thousand taels of silver.

Thinking of this, he rummaged through the box and found that there were actually fifty stalks of Zhengyuan Grass inside! Forty thousand taels of silver each, fifty of them... What would that be worth in silver?

Lin Xuankong immediately reached out and put all fifty stalks of Zhengyuan Grass into his Ghost Frog Pouch. Then he walked towards the other vehicles, using his Ghost Frog Pouch to gather the medicinal ingredients for the thirty carts of Qi Replenishing Soup.

While gathering, Lin Xuankong couldn't help but sigh. A few months ago, he had often fretted over a single ingredient for Qi Replenishing Soup. He had gotten up early and stayed up late selling baked cakes to earn money, all for just a few ingredients. And now, after only a few moments of battle, he had reaped such a large amount of medicinal ingredients!

Yan Yunfei watched this scene with a look of satisfaction. "Hundreds of thousands of portions of ingredients for Qi Replenishing Soup, and fifty stalks of Zhengyuan Grass! This time, even if the Feng Family, Guo Family, and Black Tiger Gang are the top powers in Great Marsh Prefecture, they will suffer a heavy blow!"

Yuan Butong, a Mid-grade Fifth Layer expert, looked at Lin Xuankong with extreme envy. He had joined Yan Yunfei to deal with the Feng Family and Guo Family caravan this time, not only because of his good relationship with Yan Yunfei but mainly to snatch some medicinal ingredients. However, he hadn't expected the Feng Family to be transporting thirty carts of medicinal ingredients, totaling hundreds of thousands of portions! But now, he could only watch as Elder Conical packed them away, cart by cart.

No, wait a minute! Yuan Butong's eyes flickered. Elder Conical has too many Ghost Frog Pouches! One, two, three, four... To pack all those ingredients, he used nine Ghost Frog Pouches? Those are Ghost Frog Pouches, not ordinary storage bags! How could he have so many? Even Feng Zhushi of the Feng Family only had one Ghost Frog Pouch!

At this moment, Yuan Butong and Yan Yunfei, along with their thousand-plus disciples, watched with extremely complex expressions as the medicinal ingredients gradually disappeared.

When Lin Xuankong had filled all nine of his empty Ghost Frog Pouches, plus Feng Zhushi's Ghost Frog Pouch, the entire thirty cartloads of medicinal ingredients were perfectly packed away. Lin Xuankong then walked over to the pile of Exorcism Equipment, collecting all of it along with the four sets of Exorcism Armor.

Lin Xuankong looked at Yan Yunfei, Yuan Butong, and the others. "Here in Great Marsh Prefecture," he said, "there are few who dare to oppose the Guo Family, the Feng Family, and the Black Tiger Gang like I, the Conical Hat Guest, do! What are your plans for the future?"

Yan Yunfei and Yuan Butong exchanged looks. Yan Yunfei cupped his hands and said, "This time, we owe Elder Conical our lives. Without your intervention, I fear all of our thousand-plus people would have perished here. Currently, among the three families' Martial Cultivators, some three to five hundred have escaped. News that Sect Leader Yuan and I led people to intercept the medicinal ingredients of the Black Tiger Gang, Feng Family, and Guo Family will likely spread throughout Great Marsh Prefecture within two days. We definitely can't stay in the Great Marsh Hundred Cities any longer! We plan to head to the border between Nanyuan Prefecture and Dongyang Prefecture. Although Demon Kings are causing trouble there, most cities are still under the governance of the Great Xia Dynasty. Also, recently, we two also plan to take a few Grand Chief Stewards from our sects to visit the Ba Mountain Secret Realm!"

At this moment, Yan Yunfei clearly admired Lin Xuankong greatly. Since they both considered the Feng Family and the Black Tiger Gang enemies, he wasn't too guarded with his information.

Upon hearing this, Lin Xuankong pondered for a moment, then took out two cartloads of medicinal ingredients from his Ghost Frog Pouches. "The border between Nanyuan Prefecture and Dongyang Prefecture is constantly at war," he said, "making it harder to obtain medicinal ingredients. You are all hot-blooded men, worthy of being befriended by me, the Conical Hat Guest. Take these two cartloads of ingredients as a token of my respect for your passion and courage!"

Chapter 190: Killing a Fifth Layer Expert in Half a Breath, What to Do with Too Many Demon Pearls_4

Yan Yunfei and Yuan Butong were deeply moved by his words. A single cartload contained ten thousand portions of Nine Revolutions Qi Replenishing Soup, and there were two additional carts of medicinal herbs. In the current Great Marsh Prefecture, their total value was close to a million silver taels!

The two immediately cupped their fists. Yan Yunfei said, "With these nearly twenty thousand portions of medicinal herbs, our people will definitely be able to establish a firm foothold once we reach the border of Nanyuan Prefecture. If Elder Conical ever visits that region, please seek out our two families. Whatever your needs may be then, we will certainly offer our full support!"

"Furthermore, if Elder Conical also intends to visit the Ba Mountain Secret Realm, we might encounter each other there. Should you have any instructions for us at that time, please do not hesitate to find us!"

「Two days later,」

「At the Black Tiger Gang branch,」

Zhao Renxiong, Liy Ruoqing, and Guo Yunkui, along with Second-in-Command Feng of the Feng Family, Feng Menghu—a Late Stage Fifth Layer expert—all wore extremely grim expressions.

Three hundred thousand portions of Qi Replenishing Soup ingredients and fifty stalks of Zhengyuan Grass—their value was now beyond calculation in silver taels. These supplies were intended for their clansmen and Gang Members for the latter half of the year, yet not a single herb had made it back!

The most devastating blow was that two thousand elite members from the Feng Family, the Guo Family, and the Black Tiger Gang had been nearly annihilated! Even for prominent powers like the Feng Family, Guo Family, and the Black Tiger Gang, this was a catastrophic loss, shaking the very foundations of their three organizations!

Zhao Renxiong, the Hill City Hall Master, was deeply dejected. He had just reassigned the four Grand Chief Stewards from the Black Tiger Gang's Hill City Branch to the transport convoy, only for them to be immediately wiped out. Previously, the Black Tiger Gang's three branches boasted a total of twelve Grand Chief Stewards, a testament to their formidable power. Now, only the four Grand Chief Stewards at the main headquarters remained...

Nurturing a Fourth Layer Martial Cultivator required an immense amount of resources and could take more than ten, twenty, or even thirty years. Yet now, so many had perished in an instant!

"Damn it, it's that Conical Hat Guest again!" Zhao Renxiong snarled, clenching the Demon Pearl in his hand, his facial muscles twitching.

Of course, among those present, Feng Menghu was the most grief-stricken. The Feng Family possessed only two Demon Pearls, and now they had lost a precious Demon Fox Demon Pearl. In addition, they had lost a suit of Azure Light Armor, a rare expert from their family—Feng Zhushi, an Early Stage Fifth Layer cultivator—and another seven to eight hundred of the Feng Family's most elite Martial Cultivators!

Feng Menghu ground out, "And Yan Yunfei and Yuan Butong! They are simply audacious, daring to strike against our three families!

"This time, we must join forces! Even if it means turning all of Great Marsh Hundred Cities upside down, we have to find the Conical Hat Guest, Yan Yunfei, and Yuan Butong!"

When Feng Menghu finished speaking, he noticed Zhao Renxiong, Guo Yunkui, and Liy Ruoqing remained silent, and he couldn't help but frown at the three of them.

"What? This time, countless Martial Cultivators throughout the Great Marsh Hundred Cities must be laughing at our three families, gloating over our misfortune! Are we supposed to just swallow this humiliation?"

A weary expression appeared on Liy Ruoqing's face.

"First, our elites were annihilated at the Demon Slaying Conference. Now, due to this herb transport incident, we've lost another two thousand elite members.

"I fear our three families cannot endure many more setbacks like this! My old gang leader has already instructed me to randomly apprehend two or three hundred Loose Cultivators, declare them to be Yan Yunfei and his accomplices, and then execute them publicly as a show!

"As for dispatching a large contingent to deal with the Conical Hat Guest, Yan Yunfei, and Yuan Butong...

"Firstly, don't our various enterprises require manpower for their defense?

"Secondly, the Conical Hat Guest was able to severely injure Young Master Feng and kill him within half a breath. Can we truly rely on our subordinates to capture someone like him?"

At this moment, this Late Stage Fifth Layer Hall Master of the Black Tiger Gang Great Marsh Hall felt his usual confidence falter.

Hearing this, Feng Menghu and Guo Yunkui were rendered momentarily speechless.

They suddenly realized that the Conical Hat Guest, whom they had initially dismissed as a minor nuisance, had gradually revealed a level of strength that their three families could no longer easily eliminate. He was even beyond their control!

After all, a solitary and enigmatic Fifth Layer expert like him was the most troublesome type to deal with. Their families were large, with extensive holdings and numerous concerns; how could they afford to act recklessly?

A heavy silence gradually fell within the hall. The three Fifth Layer experts were, to a man, frustrated and sullen, yet utterly helpless!

Who could have imagined that someone in Great Marsh Prefecture was capable of achieving this? Not even the Spirit Snake Gang Leader, Huang Nishang of the Huang Family, or the two Hall Masters of Yin Talisman had ever inflicted such a grievous blow upon their three families!

"Hmph! Have you all forgotten? It's less than a month until the eighth day of the ninth month!" Zhao Renxiong declared, abruptly standing up.

"So what if he's an expert close to the Late Stage Fifth Layer? If he dares to show up, he'll face a combined siege by more than ten Late Stage Fifth Layer experts from our three families, wielding over ten Demon Pearls! Could he possibly survive that? Forget being close to the Late Stage Fifth Layer; even an Early Stage Sixth Layer or a Mid-grade Sixth Layer expert, facing such an assault, would die in bitter resentment on the spot, without a doubt!"

Hearing his words, Liy Ruoqing, Guo Yunkui, and Feng Menghu all had a sudden change in expression. A murderous glint flashed in their eyes, mingled with a trace of hateful anticipation!