

## **Y Master 1131**

### Chapter 1131: Challenge Wei Jun

After coming out of the Trial Pavilion, Ye Fan rested for a while in a small room nearby designated for closed cultivation under the arrangement of the Great Elder.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Sect Leader Tong Tianhao, along with a group of elders, transformed the Trial Pavilion back into a stone column standing in the middle of the square.

After putting away the Bronze Mirror, an elder reinforced the arena once more.

Since both Ye Fan and Wei Jun possess considerable strength, their match was bound to be intense. It would be troublesome if the stone platform were damaged.

When Ye Fan reemerged, the temporarily built stone platform was covered with numerous defensive Formations, enough to withstand their fierce battle.

“Two disciples, please come to the stage!”

The Second Elder stood on the stage, gesturing for Ye Fan and Wei Jun to step onto the platform.

The reason the Second Elder was chosen to preside over this match was simple: the Great Elder was not suitable because he was Ye Fan's mentor, which could lead to bias in judgment.

To avoid suspicion, the Great Elder voluntarily passed the referee position to the Second Elder and instead sat with the Seventh Elder.

The Seventh Elder was Wei Jun's mentor. Having the mentors of the two competing disciples sit together was also to mutually monitor, preventing any underhanded tactics during the match.

"Now, let me explain the rules of the challenge match!"

The Second Elder glanced at both of them, saying, "First, both challenger and challenged participate voluntarily. If any accidents occur during the match, each shall accept their fate."

This is the rule of all matches and the fundamental reason why the Xuanwu Sect could grow stronger. Life and death are left to fate, and no position is permanent. If you are confident enough to defeat a disciple of higher status, you may challenge them.

If you defeat them, their position becomes yours. This is evolved from the Law of the Jungle—strength is the primary guarantee of status.

"Second, if you feel incapable of defeating the opponent, you can admit defeat immediately. Once someone admits defeat, the victor must not pursue further, otherwise disqualification ensues."

After explaining the rules, the Second Elder asked Ye Fan and Wei Jun, “Do you understand?”

“Understood!”

Both answered in unison.

“Very well, I hereby announce that the challenge match where Ye Fan challenges Core Disciple Wei Jun officially begins!”

Saying this, the Second Elder rose into the air, observing their battle from above.

However, his role as a referee was somewhat redundant, because as long as neither side fully admitted defeat, the match would continue. His task was to intervene if the victor failed to pull back once the opponent admitted defeat.

“Go, Brother Jun, knock him down!”

“Just a True Qi Realm cultivator, why challenge Brother Jun? Just asking for humiliation!”

“I bet he won’t even last one move before Brother Jun defeats him!”

Qin Gui, along with his few cronies, supported Wei Jun not only because of his individual strength but also due to his various strategies, which won him a number of supporters.

Now that the match was about to start, his supporters all raised their voices to cheer him on.

Though Wei Jun has many supporters, Ye Fan's performance in the elite disciple competition had already garnered him the admiration of the majority.

"Ye Fan for the win!"

Upon hearing Wei Jun's supporters belittle Ye Fan, those who admired Ye Fan were displeased and cheered for him even louder.

Among them, Tong Qianchen's voice was particularly attention-grabbing. With her status as the sect leader's daughter, her staunch support of Ye Fan quickly drew a large number of voices in agreement.

For a moment, even before the fight began, the supporters on both sides seemed ready to roll up their sleeves and face off.

The entire Xuanwu Summit was buzzing like a bustling market, causing Sect Leader Tong Tianhao to frown.

“Silence, silence! What do you think this place is? Creating such a ruckus, how unbecoming! If it continues, you’ll all face a year of meditation facing the wall!”

An elder, unable to bear it any longer, threatened sternly, which immediately silenced the crowd.

“You are the challenger, so make the first move!”

Wei Jun, full of confidence, gestured to Ye Fan, signaling that out of respect, he would not make the first move.

“Alright!”

Ye Fan smiled, and without hesitation, instantly pushed his True Qi to the limit, launching a Domineering Fist straight toward Wei Jun’s face.

Whoosh!

Halfway through the punch, a sudden dragon’s roar erupted. The Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi was drawn towards Ye Fan’s Gang Fist, merging into the fist, forming a solid Punch Ray that whistled toward Wei Jun!

“My god, this punch from Ye Fan is absolutely domineering; he even managed to stir the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi.”

“No wonder he was able to slay a Mid True Essence Realm Xuan Beast with his True Qi Realm cultivation. Such powerful Attack Power, it’s simply terrifying!”

The spectators were completely stunned by Ye Fan’s world-shattering punch, never expecting he could deliver such a terrifying blow.

Not only were those elite disciples and core disciples shocked, but even the surrounding elders and Sect Leader Tong Tianhao were moved.

They could clearly sense the immense power of Ye Fan’s punch. Though it posed no threat to them, being able to deliver such a forceful punch at the True Qi Realm was beyond their comprehension.

“Just what is the origin of this Ye Fan?”

This was the question lingering in the minds of all the elders: Qidian’s martial technique was definitely not possessed by the Xuanwu Sect, yet it had definitely reached High-level Xuan, otherwise, it would have been impossible for a True Qi Realm cultivator to unleash such terrifying combat power.

Time seemed to freeze, even the Great Elder Wu Xinhai was extremely surprised.

Although he knew Ye Fan had a terrifying family-inherited martial technique that could maximize the power of his physical strength,

This was the first time he had seen Ye Fan deliver such a frightening punch.

Using his own True Qi as a medium to mobilize the Primordial Qi in Heaven and Earth for the attack, this was undoubtedly a powerful martial technique.

At this moment, the Great Elder even felt that Ye Fan's family might be a declining ancient clan; otherwise, how could they possess such a frightening martial technique?

Yet, he searched his memory and couldn't recall any strong people with the surname Ye. It wasn't that there were no strong people with the surname Ye in the history of the Xuan Realm, but the other party definitely didn't specialize in Ye Fan's pure physical-strength cultivation method.

Ye Fan's pure physical-strength martial technique was completely irrelevant to those, seemingly unrelated.

Among the crowd, Chu Feng displayed a sinister smile at the corner of his mouth. Although he was surprised by Ye Fan's sudden burst of power,

He believed more in Wei Jun's strength. After all, they weren't on the same level; Ye Fan was just at the True Qi Realm, while Wei Jun had already moved forward, otherwise he wouldn't have defeated the last core disciple and entered the ranks of core disciples.

Chu Feng knew well the power of the martial technique he had taught Wei Jun. As long as Wei Jun displayed that martial technique, Ye Fan was absolutely no match and might even be killed in one strike.

By that time, Ye Fan wouldn't have even the chance to admit defeat, and not even the Great Elder would be able to say anything.

Besides, even if something went wrong, Wei Jun would take the blame, and Chu Feng would only pretend to know nothing.

The entire Xuanwu Summit fell into silence, no one spoke, and countless pairs of eyes were fixated on Ye Fan's domineering and unparalleled punch.

How would Wei Jun defend against it?

Though his realm was much higher than Ye Fan's, could he defeat Ye Fan, this freak whose strength couldn't be measured by realm?

The disciples unaware of Wei Jun's trump card speculated about what martial technique Wei Jun would use to resolve Ye Fan's punch.

In their view, Wei Jun would either retreat to avoid its edge or go all out with the strongest strike from the Xuanwu Fist to meet force with force.

Whatever the case, the fight between the two would ultimately become a stalemate, as they both displayed their ultimate skills to vie for final victory.

For they were well aware that, although Xuanwu Fist was Xuanwu Sect's great martial art, few had managed to master it to perfection.

The Xuanwu Fist increased its power in tandem with the cultivator's strength, and given Wei Jun's current realm, matching Ye Fan's powerful punch would already be quite impressive.

This all seemed lengthy but happened within a split second.

As Ye Fan delivered his punch, Wei Jun moved too.

"Rice grain pearls dare to compare with the bright moon? Today, I'll show you my true strength!"

With a cold snort, Wei Jun's aura changed dramatically, emitting a strong evil aura.

"Fiery Flames Burning Sky!"

As the words fell, an Iron Fist was waved!

Wei Jun unleashed his trump card, the killing move from Fiery Flame Slash – Fiery Flames Burning Sky!

As he punched, the surrounding air seemed to ignite, and Wei Jun's face turned as red as a burning coal.

His fist also turned red, like a ball of fire, attacking Ye Fan directly, completely ignoring his attack!

He was confident that he could kill Ye Fan before Ye Fan's Punch Ray hit him!

As long as he killed Ye Fan, Ye Fan's Punch Ray would lose control and naturally dissipate.

Moreover, he had a replica Xuanwu Armor on his body. Though it was a fake, its defense was still impressive, and he was confident he could withstand Ye Fan's punch.

The air seemed on the verge of combustion, with the temperature rising abruptly to nearly ignite one's clothes, showcasing the might of Fiery Flame Slash.

Boom!

With a loud boom, Wei Jun's fist, striking later but landing first, hit Ye Fan's chest heavily, sending him flying backwards, crashing hard onto the stone platform.

“Puh—”

Ye Fan’s body trembled, and he spewed a mist of blood from his mouth.

He was injured by Wei Jun’s punch!

However, Wei Jun was also knocked to the ground by Ye Fan’s powerful punch, unable to continue his pursuit, immediately rising to neutralize the True Qi contained within Ye Fan’s Iron Fist.

Chapter 1132: Match Paused

After one strike, Ye Fan was injured and fell into a disadvantage!

The entire scene was silent!

No one would have thought that the duel between Ye Fan and Wei Jun would start in such a manner.

This unexpected outcome left everyone stunned!

The first to react was the match’s referee, the Second Elder. He directly landed beside Ye Fan and quickly checked Ye Fan’s injuries, finding that although Ye Fan was injured, it wasn’t fatal, which put his mind at ease.

As the Second Elder moved, the others also reacted, all surprised. How could Wei Jun wield such a powerful martial skill as the Fiery Flame Slash?

It should be known that Fiery Flame Slash is unparalleled in power, the strongest martial skill below the Earth-level martial arts. Logically speaking, Wei Jun just entered the ranks of core disciples and hadn't had time to enter Xuanwu Pavilion, so how could he have such a powerful martial skill?

Moreover, when challenging the last core disciple, he didn't use this Absolute Technique, which shows how much he concealed his strength.

Until this moment, he suddenly used this powerful martial skill, clearly intending to strike Ye Fan down in one hit. However, he didn't expect Ye Fan's body to be so strong and to withstand a Fiery Flame Slash without dying.

"How can this fight go on? Wei Jun possesses the powerful martial skill Fiery Flame Slash; Ye Fan doesn't stand a chance at all."

The disciples below the stage all discussed, thinking that Ye Fan shouldn't continue fighting. In terms of realm, he couldn't compare to Wei Jun, and in terms of strength, Wei Jun with the Fiery Flame Slash absolutely had the capability to crush him.

In those disciples' view, Wei Jun's sudden use of a Killing Move that didn't kill Ye Fan was already considered lucky, and there's no point for Ye Fan to continue fighting—being injured, he's even less likely to be a match for Wei Jun!

“I really didn’t expect this Wei Jun to be so restrained. With his strength, if he used Fiery Flame Slash when challenging the last core disciple, the outcome would have been decided in a single move!”

A core disciple couldn’t help but sigh. Wei Jun is incredibly adept at restraint, and such a person is the hardest to deal with because no one knows what his true trump card is.

“Wei Jun, you went too far!”

Tong Qianchen blushed with indignation as she leapt onto the stone platform, rebuking Wei Jun: “This is just a challenge match, yet you used such a powerful martial skill like Fiery Flame Slash. What’s your motive?”

Wei Jun awkwardly replied: “Junior Sister Tong, you can’t say that. You know how difficult it is for an elite disciple to become a core disciple. Since he wants to challenge me, I naturally have to give it my all, otherwise I would lose my position as a core disciple.”

“You...”

Tong Qianchen trembled with anger, her finger pointing at Wei Jun also shaking: “That’s nonsense. Using such a powerful martial skill against someone who hasn’t even reached the True Essence Realm, you obviously intended to silence him!”

“Junior Sister Tong, you can’t say that.”

Wei Jun's expression darkened as he said: "Although Ye Fan is in the True Qi Realm, his actual Combat Power is definitely not inferior to any elite disciple in the True Essence Realm. You all saw the scene just now. If I didn't use my strongest martial skill, the person lying on the ground would probably be me. To protect myself, what's wrong with using Fiery Flame Slash?"

"Hmph!"

When it came to verbal sparring, Tong Qianchen, who was taught strict etiquette from a young age, couldn't utter a curse, and how could she be a match for rogues and scoundrels like Wei Jun? She was immediately rendered speechless, only to fling her hand in anger and step down from the stone platform with a sullen face.

She intended to speak to the Great Elder about this!

Because she knew her father, Tong Tianhao, although the Sect Leader, in the name of fairness and justice, wouldn't interfere in this matter, so she could only seek out the Great Elder.

"Heh...!"

Wei Jun secretly chuckled, having verbally defeated Tong Qianchen and injured Ye Fan in the match made him feel particularly pleased.

However, he also knew there probably wouldn't be a chance to kill Ye Fan now, as the Second Elder was present and would never let him continue to act.

Understanding this, Wei Jun remained calmly standing in place, waiting for the Second Elder to announce the match's result.

"Heh, the higher they bounce, the harder they fall!"

In the crowd of core disciples, Chu Feng's lips curled slightly, his thoughts clear and feeling extremely pleased.

Originally, he thought Wei Jun could strike Ye Fan dead with one hit. Yet he didn't expect Ye Fan's resilience to be so strong that he survived a Fiery Flames Burning Sky with merely injuries.

This thought made him secretly regretful.

While feeling regret, he also knew that with the Second Elder present, Wei Jun had lost the chance to make another move.

Although he couldn't kill Ye Fan, which left him very disappointed, seeing Ye Fan heavily injured and on the ground still brought him a sense of dark pleasure.

On the ring, Ye Fan lay on the ground, his clothes emitting light smoke and giving off a scorched smell—his chest's clothing was ignited by Wei Jun's scorching punch.

At this moment, he extinguished the flames, but his body was invaded by the fire poison contained in Wei Jun's punch, which constantly eroded his body.

Fortunately, the Nine Heavens Profound Body was particularly strong, and combined with the Pure Yang Qi for repairs, it spared him from the suffering of the fire poison.

"Elder Qiu, does the match continue?"

After waiting for a while, Wei Jun asked Second Elder Qiu Xuanyuan.

This was actually superfluous because anyone with eyes could see that Ye Fan was heavily injured and couldn't possibly continue. He said this merely in hopes that the Second Elder would announce the match result soon.

Of course, if the Second Elder said the match could continue, he wouldn't oppose it, as it would be a good opportunity to finish Ye Fan once and for all, eliminating future threats!

The Second Elder glanced at Great Elder Wu Xinhai, for at this moment, only the Great Elder could make decisions for Ye Fan. He hoped the Great Elder would step forward to end the match to avoid offending anyone and to sell a favor to the Great Elder.

Elder Wu Xinhai took a step onto the stone platform, came to Ye Fan's side, and said: "Xiao Fan, admit defeat. It's not shameful. With Wei Jun having Fiery Flame Slash, you can't possibly defeat him!"

Seeing even the Great Elder advising Ye Fan to admit defeat, Second Elder Qiu Xuanyuan assumed Ye Fan would surely listen to Wu Xinhai and concede.

Thus, Elder Qiu Xuanyuan prepared to announce the match result, declaring Ye Fan's loss and Wei Jun's victory, formally making him a core disciple.

"Wait, Elder Qiu, the match isn't over yet!"

As if realizing the Second Elder was about to announce the result, Ye Fan struggled to rise from the ground and spoke up to stop him.

"What? Are you still going to continue?"

Qiu Xuanyuan widened his eyes as he looked at Ye Fan with an incredulous expression. He couldn't believe Ye Fan could continue competing in his current state.

To take a step back, even if Ye Fan could still hold on, there's no point in continuing the competition under these circumstances. Even if he persists, Ye Fan would just be torturing himself with no hope of turning the tables.

"Ye Fan, I hope you think it through clearly; this is a competition, where life and death are disregarded. You're not fit to continue competing in your current state! I don't see any chance of victory for you. Competing further will only bring humiliation, and even risks getting killed! Admit defeat!"

The Second Elder analyzed the gap between Ye Fan and Wei Jun in his heart, shook his head, and advised Ye Fan.

“Elder Qiu, it’s hard to say who will win until the very last moment.” Ye Fan shook his head and said.

Hmm?

Upon hearing Ye Fan’s words, and seeing Ye Fan’s determined expression, Qiu Xuanyuan slightly furrowed his brows, uncertain if he was annoyed by Ye Fan’s defiance or dissatisfied with Ye Fan’s lack of tact.

Immediately after, he flashed aside, decided to ignore Ye Fan, and left the situation to the Great Elder.

“Ye Fan actually wants to continue competing, could it be that he has some kind of trump card?”

“I don’t believe he has any chance. As we know, Fiery Flame Slash is an extremely powerful martial arts technique that can transform True Essence into elemental martial arts, which is very strong. He has no chance of winning!”

“Man, if you’re courting death, no one can save you. Continuing to challenge Wei Jun while injured, isn’t this seeking death?”

“Indeed, I’m very curious about what drives him to continue the challenge? Could it be he has a hidden card?”

“He may not have a trump card, but his courage is commendable!”

“What courage? In my view, this is the behavior of a reckless man, knowingly courting death, yet stubbornly pushing forward, simply seeking death!”

At that moment, almost everyone was discussing.

Everyone was very eager to know why Ye Fan dared to continue challenging Wei Jun, who possessed the Fiery Flame Slash, while injured!

Most martial arts techniques max out the user’s own True Qi, True Essence, driving it with various mental methods to ultimately build a powerful attack force.

However—

There are some martial arts techniques that can transform True Essence through the martial arts into formidable elemental attacks.

Such martial arts techniques are extremely rare, naturally increasing their power severalfold, just like Wei Jun's Fiery Flame Slash, which can transform True Essence into the Fire Element, generating flames, with attack power multiplied.

Elements like gold, wood, water, fire, and earth make up this world, so these martial arts techniques that can transform True Essence into elements are the strong martial arts techniques.

"It's really like expecting rain when heaven wills it, expecting marriage when the mother wills it, if someone's seeking death, nothing can stop it!"

Chu Feng chuckled inwardly, feeling extremely refreshed. He hadn't anticipated Ye Fan would persist in competing under such circumstances; what else could this be but seeking death?

While chuckling, Chu Feng gave Wei Jun on the stone platform a secret look, directing Wei Jun to exert his killing moves in the next match to eliminate Ye Fan.

In his view, Ye Fan already injured, would have his strength significantly reduced, whereas Wei Jun remained unscathed, his combat power still intact, executing Ye Fan would be as easy as playing around.

Not only did he think this way, but other disciples also no longer held any hope for Ye Fan. They believed that although Ye Fan had amazing talent and was powerful, his ignorance in holding back meant such people weren't destined to live long.

"Elder Qiu, could you pause the competition?"

Just when everyone believed Ye Fan was courting death, Ye Fan suddenly spoke.

“Pause the competition”

Qiu Xuanyuan first paused in surprise, then nodded. Pausing during a competition is permissible, although he didn’t understand why Ye Fan made this request. He nodded in agreement.

“You can pause the competition, but the time can’t exceed one sand clock; once the sand runs out, the competition must resume. Otherwise, I will decide that you voluntarily forfeited.”

Seeing Ye Fan’s plea on Wu Xinhai’s behalf, Elder Qiu agreed to Ye Fan’s request, temporarily halted the competition, and then had someone bring out an hourglass, placing it on the stage.

Ye Fan looked at the hourglass and roughly estimated that there were only half an hour’s time, whether enough or not, now he must gamble!

He... refused to admit defeat!

“What does he want to do?”

Seeing the hourglass being brought out, everyone knew it was a pause in the competition, but they didn't know what Ye Fan was intending to do.

"A sand clock's worth of time may be enough for healing, but even if he weren't hurt, he's absolutely no match for Wei Jun. Wonder where he gets the confidence to dare continue competing!"

On what basis?

Ye Fan answered that question with actions.

In the next instant.

Under the watchful eyes of the crowd, Ye Fan sat cross-legged and his entire aura surged.

He intended to break through to the True Essence Realm in front of everyone!

Chapter 1133: Half-step True Essence Realm!

Actually, back in the Trial Pavilion, Ye Fan could have easily broken through to the True Essence Realm, but he didn't do it.

He was suppressing his own power!

Because Ye Fan learned from Elder Xuan that the True Qi Realm and True Essence Realm were merely foundational processes in cultivation.

Having faced numerous challenges, Ye Fan thoroughly understood the importance of fundamentals.

A skyscraper rises from the ground up, and whether the foundation is firm or not affects whether future cultivation progresses smoothly.

No matter how luxurious a tall building constructed on sand is, it will eventually collapse due to an unstable foundation.

Cultivation follows the same principle; only by solidly building a foundation can one avoid encountering overly difficult bottlenecks in future cultivation.

However—

Today, Ye Fan understood that if he didn't choose to break through to the True Essence Realm, he feared there would be no opportunity, as Wei Jun's martial arts skills were simply too strong.

Thirty minutes, not to mention Ye Fan, even ordinary cultivators find breaking through from the True Qi Realm to the True Essence Realm to be extremely difficult.

After all, transitioning from the True Qi Realm to the True Essence Realm on Earth was nearly an insurmountable chasm!

The Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi in the Xuan Realm is far more abundant than on Earth, and the rules of the world are significantly different, making the bottleneck between the True Qi Realm and True Essence Realm much looser.

Even so, compressing gaseous True Qi into liquid True Essence is a true test of a cultivator's control and will over True Qi.

At the same time, it is a time-consuming process.

Generally speaking, transitioning from the True Qi Realm to the True Essence Realm, even for a genius, requires at least one hour of conversion to achieve.

But Ye Fan only had thirty minutes, which means merely two quarters of an hour.

"Can he succeed in breaking through to the True Essence Realm in such a short time?"

Everyone asked themselves secretly, staring intently at Ye Fan, closely observing his every tiny change.

Of course, some were also watching the hourglass, as the sands in the hourglass flowed steadily, marking the passage of each second.

“It seems time is a bit tight...”

Ye Fan sighed, knowing that if he were in the Virtual Space of the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown, he would surely have the confidence to break through into the True Essence Realm within thirty minutes.

Because his True Qi was already quite condensed, hovering between gaseous and liquid states, needing just a slight compression to turn it into liquid and achieve True Essence.

Unfortunately, time was too pressing now!

Sighing, Ye Fan carefully controlled a strand of True Qi, attempting to compress it into liquid; for caution’s sake, his pace was very slow.

Once, twice, three times, as Ye Fan tried again and again, he finally succeeded in transforming a strand of True Qi into liquid True Essence!

With the experience of the first success, the subsequent steps became simple, just like a photocopier reproducing documents, as long as he followed the previous process, compressing True Qi into True Essence.

But time was too short; in thirty minutes, no matter how demon-like Ye Fan was, he only managed to convert True Qi into True Essence in more than seventy main acupoints; the True Qi in most acupoints remained unchanged.

“Time’s up!”

As the last grain of sand dropped in the hourglass, Second Elder Qiu Xuanyuan spoke with a blank expression, stopping Ye Fan from continuing to transform True Qi into True Essence.

Half-Step True Essence Realm!

Ye Fan stood up, stretched his body, sensing the enormous changes after the transformation of True Qi into True Essence.

Initially, his body couldn’t hold any more True Qi, but after this compression, the gaseous True Qi transformed into liquid True Essence, clearing a significant amount of space in the meridians and acupoints.

Quantity leads to quality change, and that is indeed true; Ye Fan found that, compared to the True Qi Realm, the Attack Power of the True Essence Realm became explosively stronger due to the energy compression!

This is akin to the principle of explosive powder; scattered powder doesn’t produce explosive force, only light and heat at most.

But compressed into solid explosive material, it possesses astonishing destructiveness and explosive power!

True Qi, when in a gaseous state, is like scattered explosive powder; while igniting can still emit dazzling light and faint sound, it holds no destructive power.

But once compressed into liquid True Essence, Attack Power increases geometrically.

Ye Fan's true realm couldn't be hidden from Great Elder and Sect Leader Tong Tianhao, as their sharp eyes quickly discerned that Ye Fan hadn't completely converted all his True Qi into True Essence, only part of it.

However, the familiar Great Elder knew that even at Half-Step True Essence Realm, Ye Fan was already vastly different from before!

With each level of realm improvement, Ye Fan's strength makes a leap in growth; let alone from True Qi Realm to Half-Step True Essence Realm?

Although merely Half-Step, Great Elder Wu Xinhai was reassured, believing that after this half-step, Ye Fan's strength would inevitably make a qualitative leap!

Coupled with Ye Fan's 'Family Inheritance' martial arts skills, Wu Xinhai thought that even if Ye Fan couldn't defeat Wei Jun, he now possessed the ability to protect himself.

Sharing this view was Sect Leader Tong Tianhao.

As a Sect Leader, although Tong Tianhao's Martial Arts Cultivation wasn't the strongest, his insight was extremely keen. From Ye Fan's calm, collected, and composed stance, he could discern the powerful confidence he possessed.

Unfortunately, only a few people on site could notice the change in Ye Fan. Besides the Great Elder Wu Xinhai and Sect Leader Tong Tianhao, only a few elders had the insight to see it. Some elders didn't notice that Ye Fan was different from before at all.

"Failed to break through?"

Elite disciples and core disciples had come from the True Qi Realm, and they were very familiar with the shift from the True Qi Realm to the True Essence Realm.

The aura emanating from Ye Fan was clear; there was still a large amount of True Qi Realm aura on him, although there was also True Essence Realm aura, the True Qi Realm aura was stronger.

Thus, they concluded that Ye Fan had failed to break through during the battle and had not fully converted True Qi into True Yuan.

"What a pity. If he had successfully broken through to the True Essence Realm, he might still have a fighting chance. But now..."

“A Half-step Yuan realm is, after all, only a half-step! To challenge Wei Jun, who’s cultivated to the extreme of the Mid True Essence Realm, with such cultivation, Ye Fan is sure to meet a tragic end!”

Nearly all the disciples believed Ye Fan had no chance of winning. After all, he was only in the Half-step Yuan realm, the difference in realm was too great.

Wei Jun possessed such terrifying martial arts as the Fiery Flame Slash, and also had a replica of the Xuanwu Armor for protection. What did Ye Fan have to defeat Wei Jun?

Originally, some Xuanwu Sect disciples still had some expectations, thinking that if Ye Fan broke through to the True Essence Realm, it might be hard to predict who would win.

But now...

In their view, there was almost no suspense about the outcome, a Half-step Yuan realm Ye Fan was definitely not a match for Wei Jun!

“Heh, failed!”

Chu Feng smirked coldly, looking forward to Ye Fan continuing the match.

Only in this way could Wei Jun have a reason to continue his actions, to assassinate Ye Fan during the competition.

Evidently, in his view, no matter what, a Half-step Yuan realm Ye Fan wouldn't be Wei Jun's opponent. As long as Ye Fan continued the match, he would surely die!

"He still wants to succeed in advancing to the True Essence Realm to fight me, how wishful thinking!"

Wei Jun also sneered, half an hour meant nothing to him, but he used this half hour to adjust his state to peak condition, his eyes emitting a cold, snake-like glow.

In contrast, Ye Fan, in the Half-step Yuan realm, seemed like an ordinary person, without the slightest aura of a strong person, his eyes concealing a divine light.

For a moment, the scene was silent.

No one spoke, and everyone's eyes were focused on Ye Fan on the stone platform, waiting for his decision.

His choice would decide whether the competition would continue and who would be the final winner of this elite disciple tournament!

Wei Jun was also awaiting Ye Fan's decision, his heart was very conflicted.

On one hand, he hoped Ye Fan would forfeit the match and admit defeat, which would make his position as a core disciple unshakeable, and he would gain immense face in front of so many people.

After all, Ye Fan had previously created many miracles!

A person who created countless miracles voluntarily admitting defeat would surely give his vanity a great boost.

At this moment, he didn't care about the fact that he had two realms over Ye Fan, absolutely using strength to bully the weak, and winning would not be much of a glory.

On the other hand, he wanted Ye Fan not to admit defeat, to continue the match so he could fulfill Chu Feng's task.

In front of so many people, killing or crippling Ye Fan would bring him great satisfaction, and slaying Ye Fan would improve his relationship with Chu Feng further.

He firmly believed, as long as Ye Fan was dead or crippled, Tong Qianchen would belong to Chu Feng sooner or later, and Sect Leader Tong Tianhao had only this one daughter, no son.

When Tong Tianhao aged, he would inevitably pass the position of Sect Leader to Chu Feng, this son-in-law.

In this way, although he might offend Tong Qianchen temporarily, for the sake of long-term plans, he wouldn't hesitate to take action.

Just as Wei Jun was struggling, the Second Elder Qiu Xuanyuan came between the two and asked Ye Fan, "Ye Fan, the time is up, please state your choice, do you wish to continue the match?"

"Continue!"

Ye Fan nodded, his reply was resounding and forceful.

Because...

In his dictionary, there were no words for admitting defeat!

Chapter 1134: Victory in a Single Move!

"He... He actually chose to continue the competition? Did I hear wrong?"

Below the stage, an elite disciple nearly dropped his jaw to the floor, looking incredulously at Ye Fan on the stage, and exclaimed.

“You didn’t hear wrong, I heard it too. He wants to continue the competition. Hey, he’s only at the half-step Yuan realm, does he really think he can defeat Wei Jun?”

The elite disciples below the stage erupted into discussions after a brief silence, questioning why Ye Fan dared to continue the challenge.

Originally, they thought that under such circumstances, conceding was Ye Fan’s best and wisest choice.

Temporary endurance doesn’t count for much, and knowing that it’s impossible to succeed yet still trying isn’t bravery, it’s recklessness, overestimating oneself.

“Never bow down, never admit defeat, Ye Fan you’re great!”

At this moment, a small part of the disciples were inspired by Ye Fan’s fighting spirit.

Even though they thought Ye Fan might still be unable to defeat Wei Jun, these people still loudly cheered for Ye Fan from below the stage.

“Brother Wei, since he doesn’t know good from bad, don’t hold back, take him down!”

While there were those cheering for Ye Fan, naturally there were also those rooting for Wei Jun, all of them excitedly wishing they could step onto the stage themselves.

“Hey, some people are actually supporting that fool!”

Seeing Ye Fan gain some support without saying a word, Chu Feng’s expression turned sour.

But he soon shrugged it off. This was like a feast before the head gets chopped off, no matter how splendid, it’s only this one meal. Why should he bother with a dead man?

Ye Fan and Wei Jun stood facing each other again, Wei Jun exuding a powerful aura, while Ye Fan had not the slightest aura of a strong person.

However, amidst Wei Jun’s powerful aura, Ye Fan was like a rock by the sea, unmoved despite the fierce winds and waves.

“Spirit restrained, aura as deep as a hidden abyss or a towering mountain, Ye Fan has faintly revealed a master’s demeanor!”

Great Elder Wu Xinhai sighed, his insight razor-sharp. Just from Ye Fan’s stance of responding to changes without changing himself, he could discern that Ye Fan was already standing in an undefeatable position in this battle.

“Hmph! Not necessarily, don’t think your disciple breaking through to half-step Yuan realm can defeat Little Jun, that’s impossible. Strength is far more important than appearance.”

Seventh Elder snorted coldly, failing to see Ye Fan's powerful confidence, and was particularly dissatisfied with Great Elder.

"Let's wait and see then!"

Great Elder Wu Xinhai was too lazy to argue with Seventh Elder, calmly said, then turned his gaze to Ye Fan on the stone platform.

"Hmph!"

After getting nothing from Great Elder, Seventh Elder snorted again. He firmly believed that even if Ye Fan broke through to half-step Yuan realm, Wei Jun would certainly win with his strong Fiery Flame Slash!

"The competition continues!"

Under the watchful eyes of thousands, the match continued as Second Elder Qiu Xuanyuan announced, then flew high into the air, overseeing the match from above.

"Hey! I thought you could successfully break through!"

Wei Jun sneered, "If you could break through and reach the early-stage True Yuan realm, perhaps you'd qualify as my opponent for me to take seriously."

"But unfortunately, you couldn't break through, only at half-step Yuan realm, how dare you request to continue the competition with such strength?"

"With current you, I could kill you with a slap. I really don't understand, how you dare request to continue the competition?"

Wei Jun looked at Ye Fan with mockery, continuously attacking with words, not as psychological warfare, but because he truly didn't regard Ye Fan at all.

The previous battle had made his confidence soar. He was convinced that before Ye Fan broke through True Yuan realm, he absolutely wasn't his opponent!

"You talk too much!"

Facing Wei Jun's cold mockery, Ye Fan showed no anger, his expression calm, eyes deep like an ancient well, without waves, but a gleam of killing intent flashed deep in his eyes.

Because, in previous encounters, he clearly felt Wei Jun's murderous intent toward him.

Facing someone who wanted to kill him, Ye Fan would never show mercy!

Domineering Fist!

After speaking, Iron Fist swung!

Ye Fan operated the Domineering Fist Heart Technique, his right fist suddenly swung out, using the killing move 'Domineering Fist'.

At this instant, Ye Fan perfectly combined True Yuan and physical strength, merged Primordial Qi into the world, and unleashed the most powerful strike he had ever made!

"Fiery Flames Burning Sky!"

Though Wei Jun was arrogant, he wasn't a fool, he wouldn't sit and wait for death.

As Ye Fan unleashed the most powerful strike, he too unleashed Fiery Flame Slash's strongest blow.

Wham——

Violent Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi collided, the air seemed to ignite, and the surrounding temperature suddenly rose several degrees.

‘Domineering Fist’ versus ‘Fiery Flames Burning Sky’!

Everyone below the stage held their breath, staring unblinkingly at the two people above, afraid to miss even an instant of the most thrilling duel.

Both the Great Elder and the Seventh Elder stood involuntarily, watching nervously, their fists clenched tightly.

Tong Qianchen covered her pretty face with her hands, unwilling to witness Ye Fan being knocked away.

Yet, she couldn’t resist looking, spreading her fingers apart to peek through the gaps, her little heart pounding fiercely, betraying her anxiety.

Chu Feng also stood up, hands clenched tightly, his anxious expression giving him away.

At this moment, Chu Feng cared little for grace; this duel could determine Ye Fan’s fate and his own chance to win back Tong Qianchen’s heart.

The hearts of several lower-ranked core disciples beat furiously, sensing a deep crisis from Ye Fan and Wei Jun’s attacks.

Putting themselves in their place, many felt cold sweat running down their foreheads.

They realized that even if it were them, they wouldn't know if they could withstand an attack from Ye Fan or Wei Jun.

Sect Leader Tong Tianhao felt a deep sense of relief, his eyes shining brightly, seeing Xuanwu Sect's future rise from Ye Fan and Wei Jun's performance.

Core disciples are the future hope of Xuanwu Sect; the stronger they are, the brighter Xuanwu Sect's future.

"Who will emerge victorious?"

It felt like the image frozen, time standing still; almost everyone silently questioned themselves at this moment.

There was no answer, but everyone could tell from Ye Fan and Wei Jun's performance that this would be decided by one move!

Transforming decay into magic, both abandoned flashy moves, merging all their techniques into a killing move.

In competition, fists and feet have no eyes, and reaching the core disciple standard means everyone is strong; life or death is almost inevitable with every action.

To encourage sect disciples to cultivate diligently, the Xuanwu Sect does not forbid private duels, though challenge matches must be approved by elders, and life-or-death contests can occur anytime on the stage before them.

The next moment.

Under everyone's expectant gaze, Ye Fan's Iron Fist collided with Wei Jun's Fiery Flames Burning Sky.

Bang!

A loud explosion ensued, with Heavenly Qi and True Yuan emitting dazzling radiance from their fists' collision.

Crack!

"Ah..."

With the sound of a light fracture and a wretched scream, the two briefly separated after Ye Fan shattered Wei Jun's fist. The Punch Ray broke through Wei Jun's Protective True Essence, directly shattering his imitation Xuanwu Armor, and the domineering True Yuan surged into Wei Jun's Dantian.

"No..."

Wei Jun let out an earth-shattering scream, his body thrown through the air, vomiting a mouthful of blood, face ashen, breath waning.

Meanwhile, Ye Fan stood still as a War God!

One punch sent flying!

Striking again, Ye Fan sent Wei Jun flying with a punch!

"Uh..."

This scene deeply shocked everyone present!

They widened their eyes, their gaze continually shifting between Ye Fan and Wei Jun, as if to ask: How could this happen?

“Thud!”

An answer came as a muffled sound.

Wei Jun was punched away by Ye Fan over thirty meters, crashing hard onto a sturdy rock, his entire body convulsing violently.

Soon, Wei Jun’s body stopped twitching!

Because...

He clearly sensed his Dantian was crippled, never again able to gather even a trace of True Yuan!

From now on, he would be a cripple!!

Chapter 1135: Becoming a Core Disciple

Wei Jun’s dantian was shattered by Ye Fan’s powerful punch, leaving him with no cultivation, completely reduced to a cripple...

The outcome made Wei Jun faint right on the stage.

“How could this happen?”

“This... isn’t real, right?!”

The silence in the crowd was broken, with many disciples rubbing their eyes desperately, completely unable to believe everything in front of them.

Originally, in the view of many disciples, Ye Fan’s failure to break through to the True Essence Realm made it impossible for him to be a match for Wei Jun, yet Ye Fan sent Wei Jun flying with just one punch, causing him to vomit blood and faint...

The shock this caused them was unimaginable?

“Hiss...”

Among them, the members of the top twenty-ranked core disciples drew a sharp breath, as Ye Fan’s punch moved even them.

To knock Wei Jun, who possessed the Fiery Flame Slash, flying with one blow, causing him to vomit blood and faint, what level had Ye Fan’s combat power reached?

They believed that although Ye Fan had just stepped into the Half-step True Essence Realm, his true combat power was already on par with theirs.

But those ranked twenty-first to thirty-fifth were shocked and changed color, everyone was on guard, afraid that Ye Fan would continue to challenge them.

Because, with the power of Ye Fan's punch, even if it were them, it would be hard to withstand!

In other words, Ye Fan already had the qualification to challenge them, and might even replace them.

Among them, the most worried was the core disciple ranked thirty-fifth!

There were thirty-six core disciples in total, based on the Heavenly Gang Number, and the rankings were arranged according to strength; the higher the rank, the stronger the strength.

At this moment, the disciple ranking thirty-fifth was covered in cold sweat, his gaze towards Ye Fan full of terror!

His strength was not much different from the previously lowest-ranked core disciple, just slightly better.

In this situation, even if Wei Jun had continued to challenge and used the Fiery Flame Slash, he would have had a hard time keeping his position, let alone against Ye Fan?

Among the core disciples, there was only one exception who was not worried about Ye Fan's strong performance and instead was very happy.

Tong Qianchen!

The moment Ye Fan sent Wei Jun flying with a punch, she was also shocked.

Previously, Ye Fan failed to successfully break through to the True Essence Realm, only reaching the Half-step True Essence Realm.

In this situation, even though she had a special trust in Ye Fan, she also believed that even if Ye Fan could defeat Wei Jun, it would certainly be an extremely tough battle with a narrow victory.

However —

The result was just one punch!

Ye Fan only needed one punch to cripple Wei Jun!

This left her not only shocked but also greatly pleased by Ye Fan's strength.

What she didn't know was that, unbeknownst to her, Ye Fan had already occupied an important position in her heart. The stronger Ye Fan grew, the more important he became in the Xuanwu Sect, and the higher his safety index, the happier she felt.

Moreover, Tong Qianchen was particularly displeased with Wei Jun. If it weren't for the sect rules preventing her from personally dealing with him, she would have long wanted to personally teach Wei Jun a lesson.

Not only were the disciples of the Xuanwu Sect shocked, but even Sect Leader Tong Tianhao and the elders standing on the bronze chariot were stunned.

"How is this possible..."

Previously, the elders' minds seemed to short-circuit. At that moment, their brains went blank, watching in astonishment as Wei Jun was sent flying by Ye Fan with a single punch, only to faint and vomit blood afterward.

Now, they came back to their senses one by one, but still couldn't believe that all this was real.

"Little Jun..."

The Seventh Elder exclaimed, moving his foot, his body flashed like an arrow, and he instantly shot over, catching Wei Jun in his arms.

Swish!

The Seventh Elder reached out and probed Wei Jun's dantian, his expression changing dramatically!

With his cultivation, he knew immediately that Wei Jun's dantian had been completely destroyed by Ye Fan's domineering power, rendering him a cripple for the rest of his life!

In stark contrast to the Seventh Elder's reaction, Great Elder Wu Xinhai couldn't close his mouth from smiling, swaggering down from the chariot to the stone platform, flaunting to the Second Elder Qiu Xuanyuan in charge of the match: "Old Qiu, did you see? My disciple is the most outstanding, breaking through mid-battle and effortlessly crushing a Mid True Essence Realm opponent with his Half-step True Essence Realm cultivation."

Qiu Xuanyuan was silent. Previously, he also didn't think highly of Ye Fan, believing that Ye Fan hadn't completely broken through to the True Essence Realm and wasn't a match for Wei Jun.

However —

Ye Fan's actions showed him just how naive his judgement had been!

“Ye Fan’s attack is too ruthless and not suitable to become a core disciple. I suggest the match be voided!”

At this moment, the Seventh Elder, with eyes blazing with anger, carried Wei Jun towards the stone platform, glaring intently at Ye Fan, who stood in the center of the platform, and said.

“What did you say?”

Great Elder Wu Xinhai’s eyes immediately narrowed, and a fierce intent suddenly burst out.

This is a joke, Ye Fan is his disciple, who openly and successfully challenged across levels, defeating Wei Jun who was two realms above him, how is he not suitable to be a core disciple?!

Tong Tianhao frowned, also got off the chariot, came in front of Ye Fan, and said to the Seventh Elder: “I also feel very regretful about the incident of Wei Jun’s cultivation being abolished, but it was already stated before the match that life and death are no consideration, so the match result cannot be invalidated, you should accept it!”

Huh?

Hearing Tong Tianhao say this as well, the Seventh Elder was stunned, but remembering that earlier Wei Jun had injured Ye Fan with one punch and Great Elder Wu Xinhai hadn’t said anything, he could only stomp his foot, swallow this resentment, and leave with the still-unconscious Wei Jun.

“Old Qiu, have you announced the match result yet?” Wu Xinhai jokingly looked at Second Elder Qiu Xuanyuan and asked.

Qiu Xuanyuan gave a bitter smile, is there still a need to announce it? The opponent had already been crippled by Ye Fan, the victor and loser are already obvious.

“In this battle, Ye Fan wins!”

However, as the referee, the Second Elder had to announce the match result, so he stepped forward two steps, gathered his Qi Yun Dantian, and announced loudly like a bell that Ye Fan’s challenge was successful, and he officially joined the ranks of core disciples.

“How is the disciple I selected?”

Great Elder Wu Xinhai looked proudly at the elders, showing off.

Although he only had one disciple, Ye Fan really brought him face— a good disciple doesn’t need to be many, one equals ten.

Ask, in the entire Xuanwu Sect, so many elders have their own disciples, and definitely not just one, but whose disciple can be like Ye Fan? Repeatedly creating miracles? Completely crushing opponents two realms higher with half-step True Yuan realm cultivation?

“Elder Wu, he is only at the half-step True Yuan realm right now, yet possesses such terrifying combat power. If he breaks through to the True Yuan realm, how powerful would his combat power be?” One of the elders couldn’t help but ask.

How powerful will Ye Fan become after breaking through to the True Yuan realm?

No answer!

Even Wu Xinhai didn’t dare to say how powerful Ye Fan’s combat power would be after breaking through to the True Yuan realm.

The other elders were equally silent.

And among the core disciples, aside from the top ten disciples, all other core disciples looked ashen.

From the peak of the True Qi realm to the half-step True Yuan realm, Ye Fan’s strength had a qualitative leap, once he breaks through to the True Yuan realm, his strength will surely rise to another level.

The current Ye Fan already gave them tremendous pressure, rationality tells them that once he truly breaks through to the True Yuan realm, they definitely won’t be his match!

Even the top ten core disciples felt an intangible pressure when they thought about Ye Fan successfully breaking through to the True Yuan realm.

“Damn it!”

Among them, Chu Feng felt the most deeply, and he was extremely displeased.

Because, from the moment Ye Fan crippled Wei Jun’s cultivation with one punch, he knew he had misjudged— Ye Fan’s potential was far more terrifying than he imagined!

He is very clear, if Ye Fan continues to grow, in the not-too-distant future, even he may not easily be able to kill Ye Fan.

Such an opponent must be eliminated early, otherwise, if he is allowed to grow, he will become a great trouble in the future.

Compared to the disciples, the Xuanwu Sect Leader Tong Tianhao and the elders were secretly delighted, as the sect suddenly had such a demon-level genius, if he can grow, the Xuanwu Sect will surely shine brilliantly under Ye Fan’s influence in the future.

Of course, the Seventh Elder was an exception, he had already left with the severely wounded and crippled Wei Jun, even if he hadn’t, he surely wouldn’t look favorably on Ye Fan.

While everyone was harboring their own thoughts, Second Elder Qiu Xuanyuan returned with a smile on his face and said to Ye Fan, “Xiao Fan, now that you have officially become a core disciple, but you are the last among the core disciples, having taken Wei Jun’s place, let me ask you, do you wish to continue to challenge?”

Woosh!

Upon hearing the Second Elder’s words, the thirty-fifth core disciple instantly looked ashen, his heart sank to the bottom, nervously watching Ye Fan, silently praying that Ye Fan wouldn’t continue challenging, otherwise, he would definitely end up as the bottom-ranked core disciple.

“No challenge.” Ye Fan shook his head, deciding not to continue challenging.

Seeing Ye Fan’s decision, Sect Leader Tong Tianhao was first stunned, then loudly announced: “Now, I declare, Ye Fan replaces Wei Jun as the thirty-sixth core disciple, and can enjoy all the benefits of a core disciple!”

The sound of Tong Tianhao’s voice rang in their ears, and everyone knew clearly, although Ye Fan was ranked last among the core disciples, his strength absolutely wasn’t at the bottom!

As long as Ye Fan desires, the ranking of core disciples can be changed at any time!

Chapter 1136: Changes in Status and Identity

“The Elite Disciple Competition has come to an end. All disciples should return to your respective residences and strive to cultivate, enhance your strength, and bring glory to the Sect, as well as to your own clans!”

Sect Leader Tong Tianhao spoke once more, announcing the end of the competition.

In his view, since Ye Fan was no longer continuing to challenge, this Elite Disciple Competition could be declared a great success.

Of course, compared to previous competitions, this one was truly full of twists and turns.

No one expected Ye Fan to emerge as the ultimate dark horse.

Although many had already estimated Ye Fan’s strength highly, the truth proved that they had still underestimated it.

As his words fell, Tong Tianhao waved his large sleeve and flew off from Xuanwu Summit towards his own residence, leaving only a remnant shadow, his figure disappearing into the sky.

The other elders also departed separately, each having their own matters to attend to. Since there was nothing more here, they naturally left.

Great Elder Wu Xinhai approached Ye Fan, patted his shoulder, and said, "Come to Spirit Turtle Island later to find me; I need to speak with you."

After saying this, Great Elder also gracefully departed, flying directly towards Spirit Turtle Island.

After the Sect Leader and elders had left, Tong Qianchen came forward and said to Ye Fan, "Brother Ye, congratulations on officially becoming a Core Disciple. You will have more cultivation resources from now on."

"Thank you, I will continue to work hard to catch up with you."

Ye Fan smiled in gratitude, without a trace of complacency and pride. Becoming a Core Disciple for him was just a new starting point.

"Alright, stop being modest. Even though your realm is low, your combat power is astonishingly strong, and everyone knows it."

Tong Qianchen covered her mouth with a smile, suddenly seemed to remember something, and seriously said to Ye Fan, "By the way, Brother Ye, there's something else I need to tell you. Earlier, when you entered the Trial Pavilion, I made a bet with Wei Jun, winning a month's cultivation resources from him. Although he is now incapacitated, the cultivation resources shouldn't be lacking. I have no use for his month's resources, so I'll give them to you. Just tell Elder Xie, who is in charge of resources, when the time comes."

Ye Fan's heart stirred; a month's cultivation resources for a Core Disciple should be the same as his own, right?

Even if distributed according to elite disciple standards, it would still be a huge amount of resources. If he could truly obtain double the cultivation resources, he was confident in charging directly into the True Essence Realm and consolidating his realm.

Just as Ye Fan was pondering, a slender, pale-faced young man walked out from the core disciples crowd, heading straight toward Ye Fan.

Hmm?

Ye Fan was alert; although he had never met this person, he had heard Tong Qianchen mention him before.

During a previous conversation, Ye Fan had inquired about details on core disciples from Tong Qianchen.

This slightly pale-faced young man in front of him was Zhang Taiyi, the top core disciple, said to be an extremely mysterious person, seldom seen even within the Sect.

Generally, he is in seclusion cultivating, rarely seen by anyone. If it weren't for the Elite Disciple Competition aligning with his emergence from seclusion, he likely wouldn't have appeared.

Moreover, even when Zhang Taiyi did appear, he always wore a stern face as if everyone owed him money, never smiling.

In addition to this, his strength is incredibly formidable, reportedly capable of catching even some elders who have just entered the Holy Embryo Realm off guard.

For such a person to come towards him, what could it be?

Ye Fan asked himself silently.

This was his first time meeting Zhang Taiyi, having no previous interactions.

There was no answer, but Ye Fan believed that the other party didn't come to cause him trouble.

After all, it was their first meeting without any prior contact.

Moreover, a person like Zhang Taiyi, being highly self-assured, had no reason to find trouble with him.

As if to confirm Ye Fan's speculation, Zhang Taiyi walked up to Ye Fan and unexpectedly smiled, saying, "Junior Brother Ye Fan, congratulations!"

"Thank you, and I hope for your guidance in the future!" Ye Fan was initially stunned by the words, then expressed his gratitude.

“Junior Brother Ye Fan, your combat power amazes me. However, remember, the path of cultivation is like sailing against the current – if you don’t advance, you’ll regress. I hope you can continue your efforts, making greater progress, and I look forward to participating with you in the Tianyuan City talent competition!”

Zhang Taiyi spoke earnestly to Ye Fan, genuinely hoping that Ye Fan would rise. Being able to fight alongside such a genius is what every unselfish genius hopes for.

“I will strive hard, thank you!”

Hearing Zhang Taiyi’s kindly reminder, Ye Fan thanked him again, sensing that Zhang Taiyi was sincere rather than offering false platitudes.

“Oh my, Senior Brother Zhang actually initiated a conversation with Ye Fan!”

“Not only that, Senior Brother Zhang even smiled during the conversation!”

“Are you sure? Isn’t it said that Senior Brother Zhang never smiles?”

As Ye Fan and Zhang Taiyi conversed, many disciples from the Xuanwu Sect witnessed this scene, causing a great sensation.

Because, in their memories, Zhang Taiyi, the top core disciple, had always been very mysterious, even difficult for people within the Sect to meet.

More importantly, Zhang Taiyi had never smiled!

Yet now, Zhang Taiyi took the initiative to congratulate Ye Fan and even showed a smile...

How could this not leave them shocked?

“Keep up the cultivation; I look forward to you joining me at the Tianyuan City talent competition!” Zhang Taiyi patted Ye Fan’s shoulder and, without waiting for Ye Fan’s reply, turned and left.

As Zhang Taiyi departed, the second-ranking core disciple Shen Tu and the third-ranking Jin Zhanfei both approached Ye Fan.

Hmm?

Seeing Shen Tu, Ye Fan slightly furrowed his brows. From Tong Qianchen, he learned that this Shen Tu ranked second among the core disciples, not only powerful but also extremely arrogant, acknowledging no one except for Zhang Taiyi, who ranked first.

In this situation, Ye Fan didn't think that Shen Tu came looking for him with any good intentions.

As Ye Fan expected, Shen Tu came up to him and, without any courtesy, said directly, "You're Ye Fan, right? I heard you intend to participate in the genius competition in Tianyuan City with Senior Brother Zhang?"

"I just mentioned it casually, no need to take it seriously, Senior Brother Shen!" Ye Fan didn't want to bother with such a person, so he brushed it off casually.

"Casually mentioned? Indeed, you are not qualified to participate in the genius competition."

With a haughty expression, Shen Tu looked down on Ye Fan and continued, "Although your strength is impressive within the same realm, your level is too low, and you're a bit too old. Compared to true geniuses, you have no advantage!"

"Why do you talk like this? Why don't you have anything nice to say?" Tong Qianchen couldn't take it, coldly staring at Shen Tu and questioned.

"What's wrong? I'm just telling the truth. If he were a few years younger, I would not only acknowledge him as an unparalleled genius but also feel inferior. But as it stands, he hasn't reached the time to be proudly arrogant. He still needs to work harder to improve his strength to stand alongside true geniuses."

After speaking, Shen Tu didn't wait for Tong Qianchen to burst out in anger; instead, he left directly and didn't return to the core disciples' ranks, going straight down the Xuanwu Summit.

“Brother Ye Fan, don’t take it to heart. He’s just that kind of person. Except for Senior Brother Zhang, there’s no one he acknowledges. I often get put down by him too.”

Watching Shen Tu’s departing figure, Jin Zhanfei gave a bitter smile and consoled Ye Fan, “Don’t bother with him. What’s the deal with being older? Age doesn’t matter. With your potential, as long as you keep working hard, your future achievements are absolutely limitless!”

“You’re too kind, Brother Jin. I didn’t take it to heart at all.” Ye Fan faintly smiled. He could tell that although Shen Tu was somewhat arrogant, he bore no malice, instead reminding him to keep up his efforts.

“It’s good you think that way. If you ever need anything, just let me know. As long as it’s within my capability, I won’t refuse!” Jin Zhanfei said with a laugh.

“Then thank you in advance, Brother Jin!” Ye Fan was also straightforward.

After all, he could see that Jin Zhanfei was passionate and straightforward, somewhat similar to Lv Zhan in temperament, but not as roguish, definitely someone worth befriending.

With such a person, being overly courteous would instead make him uncomfortable.

“What are you saying? In the future, just call me Zhanfei, or Little Gold. You’re older than me, calling me Senior Brother is awkward!” Jin Zhanfei laughed heartily; Ye Fan’s personality really suited him.

“Uh...”

This scene made the elite disciples who hadn't left yet incredibly envious, their eyes filled with jealousy and hatred.

Besides the jealousy and envy, they also knew that Ye Fan earned such treatment through his efforts and strength!

At the same time, they believed that after today, Ye Fan's status in the Xuanwu Sect would ascend dramatically, absolutely not lower than the top ten core disciples!

As for them...

They couldn't compare to Ye Fan at all!

The disciples ranking first, second, third, and fourth among the core disciples all came to greet Ye Fan. Though Shen Tu, who ranked second, had slyly insulted Ye Fan, he still showed up in the end.

Only Chu Feng, who ranked fifth, didn't move. He was extremely displeased, watching Ye Fan and Tong Qianchen chat and laugh. It felt like finding a fly in his meal, utterly disgusting!

“Hmph!”

Chu Feng didn’t greet Ye Fan. Instead, he snorted coldly and walked straight down the Xuanwu Summit, as if staying a second longer was torture.

After bidding farewell to the others, Ye Fan also left the Xuanwu Summit, flying towards Spirit Turtle Island.

“Master!”

Ye Fan had just arrived at Spirit Turtle Island when he saw Great Elder Wu Xinhai waiting for him not far away and hurriedly went over to greet him.

“No need for formalities between us as master and disciple. I asked you to come to let you know that I’ve relocated your dongfu to a place where Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi is more abundant, more suitable for your cultivation.”

As Great Elder Wu Xinhai spoke, he took Ye Fan to a richly Primordial Qi-filled dongfu, saying, “Xiao Fan, this will be your retreat dongfu from now on. Are you satisfied?”

“Thank you, Master. I’m very satisfied. The Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi here is very abundant.”

Ye Fan took a few deep breaths, sensing the Primordial Qi density around him, finding it indeed much richer than the dongfu on the outskirts of Spirit Turtle Island before.

“No need for thanks. You striving in cultivation and making your master proud is the best repayment.”

Wu Xinhai smiled, taking out a green silk cloth bag and handing it to Ye Fan. “This is a space bag. Though it seems small, it has its own space inside, enough to hold a house. It contains your cultivation resources for the next month – a total of ten thousand spirit stones.”

“Additionally, I sponsor you with ten more spirit stones, which I acquired with great effort.”

As he spoke, Wu Xinhai waved, materializing ten radiant spirit stones on the ground, each the size of a fist.

Ye Fan pinched the rice-grain-sized spirit stones in the space bag, estimating in his heart that one such spirit stone was worth ten thousand of those given by the sect!

“Rest assured, I won’t disappoint your expectations, elder!”

Ye Fan responded solemnly, filled with gratitude.

With these spirit stones, he could easily break through to the True Essence Realm and then cultivate the second level of the Nine Heavens Profound Body!

## Chapter 1137: Body Refinement with True Yuan

“Get up, get up, what are you doing?”

Seeing Ye Fan bow to express his gratitude, Great Elder Wu Xinhai quickly helped Ye Fan up and said, “I’m giving you these spirit stones not for you to be grateful to me, but to encourage you to work hard in cultivation. Close yourself off and train well; I hope when you come out, you will have successfully stepped into the True Essence Realm, truly embarking on the path of cultivation.”

“Mm.”

Ye Fan nodded, preparing to go into seclusion, suddenly thought of something, and said, “By the way, master, Xiao Qian once mentioned that she won a month’s worth of cultivation resources from a bet with Wei Jun and said she would give them to me. Should you speak with Elder Xie about it?”

“Xiao Qian gave you the spirit stones she won? Wait for me; I’ll go get them right away. If Old Xie dares not to give them to me, I’ll teach him a lesson!”

Great Elder Wu Xinhai originally didn’t care much about cultivation resources, but for Ye Fan’s sake, he decided to make the trip.

Moreover, during Ye Fan’s duel with Wei Jun before, the arrogant demeanor of Seventh Elder made him somewhat displeased.

With that, Elder Wu Xinhai flew straight toward the Xuanwu Sect's resource library.

Great Elder Wu Xinhai had never gone to collect any cultivation resources before; for a strong person like him, regular spirit stones wouldn't satisfy his cultivation needs, and he didn't really pay attention to such resources.

But ever since taking Ye Fan under his wing, to ensure Ye Fan could cultivate quickly without lacking resources, he started frequenting this place more.

Watching the Great Elder's disappearing figure, Ye Fan couldn't help but be stunned. His master was indeed decisive—doing things without hesitation or delay.

A moment later, the Great Elder returned with a smile, clutching a green bag filled with spirit stones, the same quality as those the Xuanwu Sect had distributed to Ye Fan.

"Got them, that rascal Old Xie dared to stall me, so I knocked him out and seized them."

Great Elder Wu Xinhai tossed the bag of spirit stones to Ye Fan and said, "You should go into seclusion quickly; leave the rest to me. Right now, the most important thing is to increase your strength as rapidly as possible, and break into the True Essence Realm."

"Seized... seized?"

Ye Fan was amused yet exasperated; his master was truly... top-grade!

...

After Wu Xinhai left, Ye Fan went directly into a cave to inspect it and found this cave was better than any he'd used for seclusion before.

The entrance was not large, but inside was like another world—a stalactite cave, lined with strange stones and hanging stalactites. Earthly Milk formed by Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi dripped down the hanging stalactites, creating pleasing waterdrop sounds.

The whole cave was filled with ethereal Primordial Qi. On top of the odd stones occasionally hung Luminous Pearls, emitting a soft glow, turning the cave into a fairyland.

Such a Dong Mansion was truly worthy of being called a blessed sanctuary, and Ye Fan was quite satisfied.

Ye Fan activated a mechanism, sealing the cave entrance with a stone gate, leaving only a few holes for ventilation, ensuring he'd not be disturbed during seclusion.

After sealing the gate, Ye Fan entered the virtual space within the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown for cultivation.

The virtual space within the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown was linked to the outside world; the denser the outer world's Primordial Qi, the denser the virtual space's Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi.

Placing the spirit stones in front of him, Ye Fan began refining them, assisted by the thick Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi, breaking into the True Essence Realm.

Having the experience of converting True Qi into True Yuan before, this time, Ye Fan was quite proficient, compressing the Qi vortex in each acupoint into liquid True Yuan.

Under inner vision, Ye Fan found his body seemed like a vast ocean, where each True Yuan vortex rotated slowly like whirlpools within an ocean, with liquid True Yuan circulating throughout his entire meridian system.

From the outside, Ye Fan's appearance was not visible; the rich Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi wrapped him like a cocoon.

Threads of Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi were continuously attracted to the cocoon, but the cocoon didn't enlarge at all; the rich Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi entered Ye Fan's body through his breathing, pores, and circulated through a Grand Circulation before being stored in various acupoints throughout his body.

In just one day, Ye Fan completely converted all True Qi into liquid True Yuan, even recompressing the previously incompletely transformed True Yuan.

This process was quite lengthy but only for Ye Fan; compared to other cultivators, this speed was already astonishing.

In a day, he converted all the True Qi into True Yuan, not just in the Dantian, but in three hundred sixty acupoints—as if a regular cultivator had the True Qi of three hundred sixty Dantians...

This speed was terrifying!

However, Ye Fan did not have such smooth progress afterward.

After successfully stepping into the True Essence Realm, Ye Fan took another ten days to completely solidify his realm.

During this process, Ye Fan refined a full ten thousand grain-sized spirit stones!

A month's worth of cultivation resources was spent in just ten days!

The speed at which spirit stones were consumed made Ye Fan grit his teeth.

At this rate, he couldn't imagine how many spirit stones it would take to break from the True Essence Realm to the Holy Embryo Realm!

Ye Fan found it terrifying to think about; so many spirit stones—even a major sect like the Xuanwu Sect might feel the pinch in providing them!

After stabilizing his realm, Elder Xuan appeared in the virtual space with a smile, and said to Ye Fan, “Not bad, not bad; your cultivation speed has quite satisfied me.”

Are you satisfied?

Ye Fan gave a bitter smile, thinking his cultivation speed was already quite fast, right? Yet, to say only satisfied meant Elder Xuan felt his pace was just average, not outstanding.

“Don’t be unsatisfied. Objectively speaking, your cultivation pace is just average. Don’t forget, you’re the son of Ling Yun, the heir of the Great Emperor, with a trace of the Nine Heavens Xuan Emperor’s bloodline. Is this speed fast?”

After hitting Ye Fan with harsh words, Elder Xuan said, “Alright, now that you’ve reached the True Essence Realm, you can cultivate the Second Level of the Nine Heavens Profound Body. I will pass on the cultivation techniques to you; ponder them yourself!”

As he finished speaking, Elder Xuan recited the method and incantation for the Second Level of the Nine Heavens Profound Body to Ye Fan and then sat nearby to supervise his cultivation.

Following the incantation and method Elder Xuan provided, Ye Fan took out all his Spirit Stones and Beast Cores, placing them around him. Instantly, the entire virtual space was filled with radiant nine-colored light.

The cultivation of the Nine Heavens Profound Body's Second Level, both simple and complex, involves using True Essence to cleanse the body, eliminate impurities, achieve clarity, and finally integrate True Essence into the body.

This process is extremely painful; cleansing the body with True Essence is excruciating and demands tremendous perseverance!

It should be known, when Ye Fan initially refined his body with Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi and True Qi, his body repeatedly shattered and repaired, the whole process was unbearably painful.

"Hiss~"

On his first attempt, Ye Fan winced in pain, breathing sharply as the True Essence broke through his meridians, cleansing his body—a brutal process.

"Endure!"

Ye Fan gritted his teeth, determined to cultivate the second level of the Nine Heavens Profound Body, with Pure Yang Qi to heal his injuries at any time.

As long as he doesn't die, what's a little pain?

Even though Ye Fan's willpower was strong, supported by the spirit of resilience, he still underestimated the pain of cultivating the second level of the Nine Heavens Profound Body.

The pain was bone-deep, far more intense than when he cultivated the first level of the Nine Heavens Profound Body on Earth!

The virtual space echoed with Ye Fan's inhuman cries, and as the impurities were expelled and mixed with blood, his body cracked open, making him appear like a blood-soaked figure!

"This kid..."

Elder Xuan was stunned, not expecting Ye Fan to endure his first True Essence body refinement.

It should be known that refining the body with True Essence is as painful as a rebirth where all meridian blood and bone are shattered and reformed.

Such a painful process would leave the average person with lifelong trauma; many can't endure even one cycle without passing out.

Yet Ye Fan remained conscious, His throat torn from screams, could only produce hoarse wails.

Even so, he persisted, a perseverance that moved even Elder Xuan.

For a full sixty cycles, Ye Fan refined his body sixty times, consuming all his Spirit Stones. Each cycle integrated True Essence into flesh, using a specific method of body refinement.

Then he would reconsolidate True Essence, once saturated, begin the next cleansing cycle.

In this cycle of repetition, Ye Fan's body cracked and healed, until the Spirit Stones ran out...

The results were remarkable; after True Essence cleansing, Ye Fan's body was lustrous, skin like bronze, exuding a healthy sheen, and every muscle containing terrifying power!

Ye Fan felt that now, relying solely on physical strength, he could kill an early-stage True Essence Realm Xuan Beast with one punch!

"Alright, let's stop here for now!"

Elder Xuan couldn't bear watching Ye Fan torture himself any longer, stood up, and came before Ye Fan saying, "You are merely in the early-stage of the True Essence Realm; the quality of your True Essence isn't yet perfect. There's no rush to refine your body with True Essence. First, raise your realm so the True Essence is more refined before refining the Nine Heavens Profound Body again!"

"Hmm, Elder Xuan, that's what I plan to do!"

Ye Fan recognized the truth in Elder Xuan's words—being merely at the early-stage True Essence Realm, the True Essence's quality was limited, and refining the body with it had reached its peak; further cultivation had little point.

Moreover, with his Spirit Stones exhausted, relying solely on the local Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi to cultivate the Nine Heavens Profound Body was impossible.

"According to sect rules, I've become a Core Disciple, able to freely choose the sect's cultivation techniques and martial arts!"

After stopping cultivation, Ye Fan decided to leave seclusion and head to the Xuanwu Pavilion to see if he could find suitable martial arts.

Chapter 1138: Return to the Xuanwu Pavilion

Ye Fan stepped out of the mountain cave and immediately sensed Wu Xinhai's presence. Then he saw Wu Xinhai swiftly approaching him like the wind.

"You truly haven't let me down; you've successfully broken through to the True Essence Realm!" Wu Xinhai's eyes sharpened as he spoke.

In the vast Xuanwu Sect, not even Sect Leader Tong Tianhao's strength could compare to Wu Xinhai's; only those few remaining Supreme Elders were stronger than him.

He instantly sensed that Ye Fan's aura was much more powerful than before, and it was clearly stable at the early-stage True Essence Realm.

"Yes, I've successfully broken through to the True Essence Realm. Now I'm at the early-stage True Essence Realm."

Facing his master, Ye Fan had nothing to hide. Furthermore, when it comes to realms, unless one uses secret treasures and techniques to conceal their aura, it's impossible to hide from others.

Wu Xinhai's cultivation is unfathomable. Ye Fan has neither secret treasures nor secret techniques, so it's virtually impossible to deceive him.

"Not bad, not bad. In just ten days, you've not only broken through to the early-stage True Essence Realm but also stabilized it."

Great Elder Wu Xinhai smiled at Ye Fan and said, "I want to test your strength. Attack me with all your might so I can see the level of your current attack power."

"Alright."

Ye Fan laughed bitterly, never expecting Wu Xinhai to pull this stunt again.

After a bitter laugh, Ye Fan gathered his consciousness, steadied his breath, and his expression turned serious. His entire aura suddenly surged as he lightly shouted, “Master, watch my punch!”

The words fell, and the Iron Fist swung!

Ye Fan unleashed a punch, sounding like a dragon’s roar. The surrounding Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi suddenly became violent, attaching itself to the Punch Ray in the blink of an eye, and fiercely struck toward Wu Xinhai’s chest.

Boom!

A loud explosion erupted, causing Ye Fan to stagger back several steps from the powerful recoil, only stopping after hitting the stone wall behind him, with his fist faintly numb.

Yet, Wu Xinhai remained unmoved, not even his clothes fluttered. He effortlessly resisted Ye Fan’s domineering punch with just his body, appearing relaxed but internally surprised—although Ye Fan’s punch didn’t injure him, its fierce attack power left him deeply impressed.

“Good, good, good!” Wu Xinhai exclaimed in excitement, repeating “good” three times.

Judging from the power of Ye Fan’s punch earlier, he now definitely has the strength to challenge disciples in the top ten of the Core Disciple rankings!

Beside himself with joy, Wu Xinhai seemed to recall something and said to Ye Fan, "Xiao Fan, during your seclusion, Xiao Qian frequently came looking for you. She's on Spirit Turtle Island now."

Upon saying this, Wu Xinhai looked at Ye Fan teasingly and continued, "Though I'm a bachelor, I was quite the charmer in my younger days. I can tell Xiao Qian has feelings for you."

"If you have any thoughts, I'm willing to discard my old dignity and speak to Tian Hao. I'm sure he wouldn't refuse."

"Absolutely not, Master. I only see Xiao Qian as a sister and have no other intentions. Please don't play matchmaker!"

Ye Fan was startled. He came to the Xuan Realm with a crucial mission and didn't want any complications.

With that said, images of Su Liuli, Su Yuxin, and others flashed in Ye Fan's mind, remembering how Su Liuli's soul was shattered for him, leaving her a vegetable, causing him pain like a knife.

Born from the heart, the deep sorrow and longing in Ye Fan's heart surfaced on his face.

Great Elder Wu Xinhai keenly sensed Ye Fan's profound sadness and longing, but didn't inquire further.

Everyone has their secrets, and he respected Ye Fan's privacy. When it comes to emotions, who doesn't have secrets?

He was no exception.

"Since you don't have such thoughts, then forget it. But be mindful not to let Xiao Qian mistakenly think you have feelings for her, lest you incur emotional debts."

Wu Xinhai patted Ye Fan's shoulder, offering his advice as someone who has been through such matters.

"I understand, Master!"

Ye Fan knew emotional debts are hard to repay, but such matters are beyond his control and must be approached step by step.

"Alright then, I know you're always prudent. Entering the Core Disciple rank allows you to choose martial arts skills in the Xuanwu Pavilion. I have other matters to attend to, so I won't accompany you. Go select something on your own!"

With that, Wu Xinhai left Spirit Turtle Island straightaway, flying in the direction of Xuanwu Summit.

Ye Fan gathered his emotions, preparing to leave Spirit Turtle Island for Xuanwu Pavilion to see if there's any martial arts skill he fancies. As for cultivation techniques, with the Nine Heavens Profound Skill, he doesn't care for other techniques.

Just after leaving the Dong Mansion, and walking not far, Ye Fan met Tong Qianchen, who came looking for him.

Today, Tong Qianchen was wearing a pink Yan Luo dress, lightly made-up. Coupled with her cultivation, the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi infused her skin, making her look especially graceful, like a Heavenly Immortal fallen to the mortal realm.

"Brother Ye, congratulations on breaking through so quickly!"

Tong Qianchen, whose realm was much higher than Ye Fan's, had a keen eye. She immediately noticed that Ye Fan's aura had become much stronger compared to before and greeted him with a smile, offering her congratulations.

"Thank you. Haven't you been in closed cultivation recently?" Ye Fan curiously asked Tong Qianchen.

"Do you think everyone is like you? Always in closed cultivation. My cultivation hasn't reached a bottleneck, so there's no need for me to go into seclusion."

Tong Qianchen laughed charmingly and then asked, "Brother Ye, since you became a core disciple, you haven't gone to Xuanwu Pavilion to choose martial arts skills, have you? How about I accompany you there?"

Ye Fan nodded. He was planning to go to Xuanwu Pavilion anyway, and Tong Qianchen's kind offer made it difficult to refuse.

Moreover, Tong Qianchen was the daughter of the Sect Leader, and having her along could save a lot of trouble on the way.

This time, neither of them flew. After descending from Spirit Turtle Island, they walked towards the direction of Xuanwu Pavilion. Fortunately, the distance wasn't far, so they reached there quickly even on foot.

Along the way, Ye Fan saw many core disciples hurrying past them, caught up in their own tasks.

But since they were core disciples, they had a high degree of freedom in the sect. Ye Fan didn't care what they were busy with, as it had nothing to do with him.

However, when the core disciples saw Ye Fan and Tong Qianchen walking together, their expressions were a bit strange, leaving it unclear whether they were envious or jealous.

Tong Qianchen was completely immune to such looks. No matter who she walked with, others always looked at them with that strange gaze.

Ye Fan cared even less, as he had a clear conscience and no other thoughts. What others thought was not his concern.

Soon, they arrived at the entrance of Xuanwu Pavilion, which was still guarded by the same elderly guard. He hadn't changed much over time, his eyes still cloudy and his expression tired, as if he would never wake up.

Yet, he seemed to recognize Ye Fan, as it hadn't been long since his last visit — less than half a year.

Seeing Ye Fan visiting Xuanwu Pavilion again, the elderly guard's eyes seemed to brighten slightly as he praised, "Not bad, not bad, you've become an elite disciple so quickly; your future is limitless!"

"Grandpa Li, you guessed wrong this time. Brother Ye Fan is now a core disciple!" Tong Qianchen blinked her big eyes and said with a smile.

The guard's pupils suddenly shrank, and a sharp light flashed in his eyes, "A core disciple already?"

"Yes, Grandpa Li. Brother Ye is amazing..."

Tong Qianchen laughed and recounted Ye Fan's impressive performance in the elite disciple competition, leaving the elder shaking his head in amazement at how uninformed he was about such significant events in the sect.

"Brother Ye Fan, now that you're a core disciple, you can choose any martial arts skills, cultivation techniques, including secret techniques, from all three levels of Xuanwu Pavilion. However, when taking a cultivation technique, you need to register it, and after copying it, you must return the original!"

After recounting Ye Fan's achievements, Tong Qianchen briefly explained the privileges of a core disciple in the sect, emphasizing that he could select any martial arts skill in Xuanwu Pavilion.

At this point, the guard suddenly remembered something and said to Ye Fan, "Oh, I almost forgot, didn't you take a step technique manual, Wind Shadow Steps, from the first level of Xuanwu Pavilion last time? When will you return it?"

"Grandpa Li, you might be mistaken. Last time, I took a handwritten copy; the original is still inside!" Ye Fan replied with a wry smile, showing his handwritten copy.

He's already thoroughly familiarized himself with Wind Shadow Steps. Though he hadn't reached its extreme level, he had grasped its essence.

"Ah... you took the handwritten one? Then I was mistaken. My mind is so muddled, sigh..."

The elderly guard sank back into his reclined chair, shut his eyes, and dozed off, ignoring Ye Fan and Tong Qianchen.

Tong Qianchen chuckled in exasperation and said to the elder, "Grandpa Li, aren't you afraid that I'll tell my father to remove you from guarding Xuanwu Pavilion?"

"You should inform him now; I'm getting mouldy staying here all day, unable to go anywhere. It would be much quieter without this duty!"

The elder didn't even lift an eyelid, casually retorting Tong Qianchen, leaving her at a loss for words.

Ye Fan shook his head with an amused smile and said to Tong Qianchen, "I'll just go in; wait here for me."

Just as Ye Fan was about to step into Xuanwu Pavilion, the guard's voice came from behind, "Young man, although you can choose any martial arts or cultivation technique from Xuanwu Pavilion, let me remind you: don't bite off more than you can chew. It's better to choose one or two to master thoroughly than to learn many but know none well."

"Thank you, old sir, I understand!"

Ye Fan clearly understood that even though learning many skills could be beneficial, mastering one could be universally effective. Martial arts are the same; quality outweighs quantity.

Chapter 1139: Thunderclap Treasure Skill

Ye Fan stepped into Xuanwu Pavilion, greeted by a sense of ancient and rustic elegance.

Xuanwu Pavilion housed the cultivation techniques, martial arts, secret techniques, and more that Xuanwu Sect had collected and passed down over the years.

In truth, Xuanwu Pavilion was the heart of Xuanwu Sect, carrying the hope of its legacy.

As long as Xuanwu Pavilion remained, even if Xuanwu Sect had only one person left, it would one day flourish again. This was the foundation of Xuanwu Sect.

Upon entering the first level of Xuanwu Pavilion, Elder Xuan's voice resonated in Ye Fan's mind: "Kid, there's nothing worth seeing here. You've already seen it last time. I assume, with Xuanwu Sect being such a sect that doesn't even qualify as third-rate, there's surely nothing good here. If there is, it must be on the top level, so don't waste your time here — go directly to the top!"

Ye Fan nodded. Though he didn't fully agree with Elder Xuan, he would never go against him, knowing well that Elder Xuan wouldn't harm him.

Yet, he was somewhat critical of Elder Xuan for calling Xuanwu Sect a small sect that didn't even count as third-rate.

"Kid, the Xuan Realm is vast. What you've seen is not even a grain in the ocean. When you become truly powerful and come across the Wu Shang Sect, Holy Lands, and Di Clan, you'll know I'm speaking the truth. Xuanwu Sect is merely a sect in the Southern Domain Tianyuan State of Tianxuan Continent; even calling it third-rate is an overstatement."

Elder Xuan naturally sensed Ye Fan's thoughts and smiled slightly, explaining to Ye Fan in his mind.

Ye Fan remained noncommittal, but he knew Elder Xuan was right. Xuanwu Sect might seem imposing but was only prominent in a corner of Tianyuan State in the Southern Domain of Tianxuan Continent. Moreover, even within Tianyuan State, Tianyuan Sect and Qingxuan Sect were two major sects capable of standing toe-to-toe with it in a three-pronged power struggle.

Thus, considering it, Xuanwu Sect really didn't count as a third-rate sect.

Talking, Ye Fan had already reached the top level of Xuanwu Pavilion. It was a narrow room, with only three antiquated wooden racks besides the four walls, the material of which was unknown, yet even after all these years, they still looked quite sturdy.

Each rack held a box glowing with purple light, carved from high-quality purple jade; just the purple jade box alone was a treasure invaluable in the Mortal World.

Ye Fan approached one of the purple jade boxes and discovered inscriptions carved into its lid.

Having been in the Xuan Realm for over half a year, Ye Fan had already systematically understood the language here, yet when looking at these inscriptions, he found himself dumbfounded, unable to recognize a single character.

Helplessly, Ye Fan communicated with Elder Xuan using his consciousness, transmitting the inscriptions to Elder Xuan for help in identifying them.

"The inscriptions describe what martial art is inside the box; this box contains Xuanwu Sect's treasure 'Xuanwu Sword Technique.' However, it's not of much use to you. The Domineering Fist suffices; you don't need this type of offensive martial art!"

Elder Xuan quickly deciphered the inscriptions and imprinted their meaning in Ye Fan's sea of consciousness, turning it into a part of him to avoid being bothered by such inscriptions in the future.

According to Elder Xuan, these inscriptions were incredibly ancient, not seen for thousands of years. As times changed, the language of the Xuan Realm also underwent reforms, leaving many ancient inscriptions unrecognizable now.

On this point, Ye Fan wholeheartedly agreed — it was like in Huaxia, how many people now could fully recognize the bronze inscriptions and major and minor seal scripts before the Pre-Qin period? Only three thousand years had passed, yet the changes in script had been substantial.

These inscriptions, as Elder Xuan mentioned, were at least seven to eight thousand years old, explaining why Ye Fan couldn't recognize them. Even Elder Xuan hadn't anticipated Ye Fan would encounter such ancient inscriptions so swiftly.

Once Ye Fan received the imprint of these inscriptions, he could naturally understand them. Since the Xuanwu Sword Technique wasn't useful to him, there was no need to dwell on it.

Ye Fan turned his gaze to another purple jade box, observing identical types of inscriptions, which this time posed no challenge to him.

From the box's details, Ye Fan discovered that it too contained a secret technique, named 'Xuanwu Armor Technique'!

As for its contents, he'd have to open it to see.

Having inspected two of the three martial arts, a little more time wouldn't hurt, so Ye Fan simply checked the last purple jade box.

The final box also had inscription details — though sparse, containing only four characters.

Thunderclap Treasure Skill!

“What? Thunderclap Treasure Skill? Kid, you must cultivate this skill, absolutely must! I can't believe such a heaven-defying thing exists in a sect that doesn't even count as third-rate! It's unbelievable!”

Upon learning that the final box contained Thunderclap Treasure Skill, Elder Xuan was astounded, emphatically insisting that Ye Fan had to cultivate this secret technique.

It was the first time Ye Fan had seen Elder Xuan so visibly stunned, prompting him to curiously ask, “Elder Xuan, why the urgency? Is Thunderclap Treasure Skill such an extraordinary technique?”

“What do you know!”

Elder Xuan calmed himself, scoffing, “This Thunderclap Treasure Skill is extremely powerful, rivaling even Emperor-level techniques. It was created by Thunder Venerable master...”

Thunder Venerable master was a mighty figure predating the Taigu era in the Xuan Realm, earlier than the Nine Heavens Xuan Emperor, once hailed as the most promising to achieve the Proving Dao as a Great Emperor in that era.

However, because the Thunderclap Treasure Skill he created was excessively heaven-defying, he was subject to Heaven's Punishment, reportedly dying under an extremely terrifying Heavenly Tribulation.

"How exactly is Thunderclap Treasure Skill heaven-defying? That it would make its creator intolerable to the heavens?" Ye Fan asked, curiosity piqued.

"Thunder Venerable master intended for Thunderclap Treasure Skill to replace the heavens, to wield heavenly tribulations. If you were the heavens, wouldn't you resent someone trying to seize your power?"

Elder Xuan vividly explained to Ye Fan, leaving him shocked, wanting to act on behalf of the heavens? To wield Heaven's Punishment — that's utterly heaven-defying! No wonder it attracted Heaven's Punishment.

"Elder Xuan, one more question," Ye Fan asked, "If cultivating Thunderclap Treasure Skill inevitably results in Heaven's Punishment and certain death, why urge me to cultivate it?"

"Foolish boy, not everyone who cultivates Thunderclap Treasure Skill is inevitably doomed; otherwise, I wouldn't advise you to cultivate it."

Elder Xuan said, "On the contrary, the reason the Nine Heavens Xuan Emperor was able to achieve the position of Great Emperor back then was largely because he referenced and drew from the secret technique within the Thunderclap Treasure Skill, allowing him to overcome the strongest heavenly tribulation in history and achieve the emperor position. Would you say then that this Thunderclap Treasure Skill is a good thing?"

"What... what? A secret technique even the Great Emperor referenced? It must be something good."

Ye Fan was shocked. Even the Nine Heavens Xuan Emperor, before proving Dao, had to draw from the Thunderclap Treasure Skill. It shows that this secret technique is undoubtedly something good.

Ye Fan hurriedly opened the Purple Jade Box and took out a thread-bound handwritten book from inside.

Calling it a book rather flatters it; it probably doesn't even count as a pamphlet, with only a few thin pages.

Opening the pages, Ye Fan soon immersed himself in this secret technique, carefully reading through it word by word, and was surprised to find that this Thunderclap Treasure Skill was merely an incomplete volume, and only the introduction, with nothing else. Still, it was a rare find.

Ye Fan forcibly imprinted the Thunderclap Treasure Skill into his mind because when he ascended to the top floor, he saw a rule at the entrance: the martial arts secret techniques from the top floor could not be taken out of the Xuanwu Pavilion, but could only be memorized by heart.

After spending a long time, Ye Fan finally imprinted these short three pages of the introduction into his mind.

Then, at Elder Xuan's suggestion, Ye Fan went ahead and imprinted the Xuanwu Sect's other sect treasure, the "Xuanwu Armor Technique," as well.

The Xuanwu Armor Technique doesn't quite count as a secret technique, but its effects are practically indistinguishable from one, so it was reluctantly listed as one of the secret techniques.

According to legend, in the Xuan Realm, there has always been a Heavy Treasure whose whereabouts are unknown, even several successive Great Emperors have sought it, but in the end, failed to find it.

This Heavy Treasure has a resounding name, called the Xuanwu Armor.

It's said that the first Sect Leader of the Xuanwu Sect, the founding leader, once had the fortune to see the Xuanwu Armor. Although he couldn't obtain it, he created the Xuanwu Armor Technique based on its characteristics, which is said to be able to exert a trace of the Xuanwu Armor's power.

These legends were inadvertently told to him by Tong Qianchen.

Of course, Tong Qianchen spoke quite vaguely at the time, but with an all-knowing Elder Xuan around, Ye Fan naturally understood the origin of the Xuanwu Armor Technique.

In the Xuanwu Sect, many disciples have imitated the Xuanwu Armors, but those imitations can't even be considered fakes, only substandard among substandard products.

Even so, the defensive power of those Xuanwu Armors is incredibly strong and shocking.

After coming out of the Xuanwu Pavilion, Ye Fan exchanged a few words with Tong Qianchen before setting off back to Xuanwu Summit to find Great Elder Wu Xinhai.

Meanwhile, Tong Qianchen was called away by Sect Leader Tong Tianhao.

Upon returning to the Xuanwu Summit, Wu Xinhai greeted him with a smile, asking Ye Fan, "How was it? Did you gain anything from visiting the Xuanwu Pavilion this time?"

"Master, I..."

Ye Fan made no secret, truthfully telling the Great Elder about his choices.

"What? You actually chose the Thunderclap Treasure Skill?" Wu Xinhai was very astonished. Is this kind of treasure technique something ordinary people can comprehend?

"Xiao Fan, I understand your desire in choosing the Thunderclap Treasure Skill, but it's really too profound. I also chose it back then, but even now I haven't grasped it, so you shouldn't spend too much thought on it. Just take a look, at most use it as a reference, don't waste time on it."

Wu Xinhai thought for a moment and decided to caution Ye Fan, after all, the Thunderclap Treasure Skill is too mysterious, even he couldn't comprehend it, and Ye Fan is likely wasting his efforts.

With this effort, it's better to comprehend the Xuanwu Armor Technique some more. No matter what, the Xuanwu Armor Technique is still a sect treasure of the Xuanwu Sect, and if cultivated to the extreme, its power is unimaginable, its defense equivalent to giving a cultivator an extra life.

"I understand!"

On the surface, Ye Fan agreed perfunctorily, then bid farewell to Wu Xinhai, returning to his own cave on Spirit Turtle Island to comprehend and cultivate.

"Young people! Only when they hit a wall will they know to turn back..."

How could Wu Xinhai not understand Ye Fan's thinking? However, he didn't persuade him further, planning to let Ye Fan retreat after encountering difficulties.

After returning to his cave, Ye Fan did not rest and directly went into seclusion, entering the virtual space to comprehend the Xuanwu Armor Technique and the Thunderclap Treasure Skill.

Ten days later, Ye Fan finally grasped the secret technique of the Xuanwu Armor Technique, externally manifesting True Yuan to form a set of earth-yellow armor covering all parts of his body, multiplying his defensive capability.

However, for the Thunderclap Treasure Skill, Ye Fan sadly found that he simply couldn't comprehend it. Up to now, he hasn't touched a single clue; it was just too profound.

Ye Fan even suspected whether something important was left out during the transcription of the Thunderclap Treasure Skill; otherwise, why couldn't he understand it?

Chapter 1140: The Xuanwu Bell Rings

"Hehe..."

Just as Ye Fan was feeling puzzled, Elder Xuan beside him suddenly laughed.

After laughing, Elder Xuan said to Ye Fan, "There's nothing missing in the Thunderclap Treasure Skill, but since you've never experienced the feeling of being struck by lightning, it's normal that you can't comprehend it."

"What? Struck by lightning?!"

Ye Fan couldn't help but roll his eyes. The conditions for cultivating the Thunderclap Treasure Skill are too harsh, aren't they? Do you really have to get struck by lightning? That's ridiculous, right?

Bear in mind, the power of lightning is one of nature's mighty forces. Even ordinary lightning carries a billion volts, equivalent to the output of a small nuclear power plant. It can kill with ease.

Elder Xuan didn't know what Ye Fan was thinking at that moment and continued, "If you ever have the opportunity to experience the Thunder Element within lightning, you might gain sudden enlightenment and understand the essence of the Thunderclap Treasure Skill."

"That's as good as saying nothing. I certainly won't seek out lightning for fun. Isn't there any other way besides this?"

Ye Fan rolled his eyes again. The method Elder Xuan proposed was indeed unreliable. No normal person would seek out lightning on purpose.

Elder Xuan thought for a moment and said, "There are only two methods. The first is what I just mentioned: find a thunderstorm, fly up high, and attract the lightning to strike. However, this method is too dangerous and has a high chance of getting you killed directly. With your current strength, you shouldn't do it."

"\_\_"

Ye Fan couldn't help but roll his eyes again. He also knew that it wasn't advisable to do so at present as he had important tasks to complete. If he got struck by lightning and died, wouldn't that be unjust?

"Then what about the second method?"

“The second method is to find places where the Thunder Venerable master or his disciples once lived or cultivated.

These places where the Thunder Venerable or his disciples cultivated have a Thunderbolt Aura. However, such locations are extremely rare and usually belong to Secret Realms, mostly occupied by some powerful forces. Finding an unoccupied Thunder Realm is almost impossible!”

“Uh...”

Ye Fan was dumbfounded. By this account, he barely had any hope of understanding the Thunderclap Treasure Skill, and the chances of discovering an unoccupied Thunder Realm by sheer luck were too slim.

Adjusting his disappointed mood, Ye Fan said to Elder Xuan, “Now I’ve almost comprehended the Xuanwu Armor Technique, and my Martial Arts Cultivation has reached the peak of the Early-stage True Yuan Realm. There’s no point in continuing to seclude myself; I need battles or trials to possibly break through to the Mid True Essence Realm, so I want to exit the retreat!”

Elder Xuan nodded. The virtual space within the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown and the space in reality were not synchronized. Although not much time had passed in reality, a long time had already passed in the virtual space.

Elder Xuan also knew that pure cultivation was only about improving strength, but if the Mental Realm didn’t improve along with strength, it would be difficult to break through once a bottleneck was encountered.

Ye Fan indeed needed a good trial. During these days, he had almost no free time, cultivating day and night.

Keeping the nerves too tight wasn't good either. If overstretched, breaking the string could be fatal to Ye Fan.

With Elder Xuan's approval, Ye Fan decided to come out of retreat. Taking a step out of the virtual space, the golden Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown instantly sank into his sea of consciousness.

"Hoo~"

Opening the Stone Gate and stepping out of the cave, Ye Fan took a deep breath of air filled with Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi, allowing it to circulate once through his internal organs before exhaling the stale air from his lungs.

The air carried the subtle fragrance of flowers, the distant sky was as clear as washed, with white clouds drifting lazily, offering a refreshing view.

Just as Ye Fan was about to head towards Xuanwu Summit, he suddenly sensed Wu Xinhai's aura rapidly approaching, which brought a smile to his face.

This mentor of his was truly attentive; he had just exited the retreat for less than five minutes, and he had already arrived.

Since Wu Xinhai had already arrived, Ye Fan decided not to move and instead stood there waiting for him, earnestly appreciating everything around him — Yao Grass, Spiritual Flower, Strange Stone, Ancient Tree, and old vines...

Soon, Great Elder Wu Xinhai appeared in front of Ye Fan, excitedly looking at him and asked, “Xiao Fan, you’ve exited? How’s your comprehension of the Xuanwu Armor Technique?”

He didn’t ask about Ye Fan’s comprehension of the Thunderclap Treasure Skill because he knew it was too mysterious. He himself hasn’t grasped it after decades, so Ye Fan couldn’t comprehend it either.

However, the Xuanwu Armor Technique is one of the treasures of the Xuanwu Sect and a secret technique handed down by the founding master. Comprehending it is like gaining extra insurance for the practitioner.

The defensive power of the Xuanwu Armor Technique is undeniable. Although it doesn’t compare with the secret defensive techniques of the Di Clan or Holy Lands, it’s considered a terrifying defensive secret technique.

“I suppose I’ve grasped a bit of it!”

Ye Fan was very humble. He didn’t believe he fully comprehended the essence of this secret technique.

After all, those capable of creating the Xuanwu Armor Technique were geniuses of their time. If it were easily comprehended, wouldn’t that suggest the secret technique was too simple?

“Don’t be discouraged; how long has it been? Being able to grasp a bit is already quite impressive. Come, show me, let me see if there’s any bias in your comprehension. There’s still time to correct it now.”

Great Elder Wu Xinhai also believed that Ye Fan had only grasped a bit of it. He himself took a full three months to understand the Xuanwu Armor Technique. It’s been less than a month; Ye Fan being able to grasp a bit was already a sign of being a genius.

To prevent Ye Fan from taking detours, he decided to let him demonstrate so he could point out any deficiencies, helping him avoid the detours he encountered during his own comprehension.

Although Ye Fan was very confident in his understanding, having an available teacher right in front of him meant he should make reasonable use of it.

Wow!

Immediately, Ye Fan executed the Xuanwu Armor Technique; pale golden True Yuan instantly formed a solid-looking ochre armor on his body, enveloping him entirely yet without hindering his agility.

At the chest area, there were intertwining patterns forming a design similar to a turtle shell, looking very much like the genuine Xuanwu Armor.

“This...”

Wu Xinhai's eyes almost popped out, staring in shock at the Xuanwu Armor formed by a True Essence on Ye Fan's body, nearly biting his own tongue.

Is this still considered minor comprehension?

Even if he were to perform it now, he could at most surpass Ye Fan in form and defensive capability by a little, and that's only because his strength far exceeds Ye Fan's.

After the initial shock, wild joy followed. Wu Xinhai really didn't expect Ye Fan's comprehension to be so terrifyingly high, having grasped the Xuanwu Armor Technique to such a level in such a short time. Given time, he might be able to execute the strongest Xuanwu Armor Technique.

"You little rascal, you're not being honest! Is this still called minor comprehension?" Wu Xinhai scolded Ye Fan with a smile.

Ye Fan smiled and rubbed the back of his head.

Dong!

Just as Wu Xinhai was about to lavish praise on Ye Fan, a loud bell sound suddenly echoed in his ears, shaking one's soul.

Swish!

Wu Xinhai's expression changed dramatically, suspiciously looking toward the direction the bell sound came from.

At that moment, the bell sound faded, and the voice of Sect Leader Tong Tianhao resounded throughout the Xuanwu Sect: "Elder Shen Ximen and all elders, please proceed to the main hall on Xuantian Peak for a meeting..."

Hearing Tong Tianhao's words, Great Elder Wu Xinhai's face lost all signs of joy and became extremely solemn, his eyes filled with worry and doubt.

"Master, has something major happened? Why would you have all the elders go to Xuantian Peak for a meeting?" Seeing Wu Xinhai's serious expression, Ye Fan hesitated for a moment and asked.

He was really curious about what major event could mobilize all the elders to gather for a meeting?

"It's still unclear what exactly happened, but one thing is certain, something major has occurred within the sect, otherwise the Xuanwu Bell wouldn't have sounded."

Great Elder Wu Xinhai looked at Ye Fan with a worried expression and then said, "You stay here for now, I'll be back shortly. I want to see just what exactly has happened."

As soon as he finished speaking, without waiting for Ye Fan to reply, Wu Xinhai leaped up, transforming into a stream of Flowing Light heading toward Xuantian Peak, disappearing in the blink of an eye.

The Xuanwu Bell is a treasure, usually hanging in the bell tower, and it wouldn't toll without an event that greatly threatens the life and death of the entire sect.

Before, while Ye Fan and Tong Qianchen were strolling and chatting in the sect, they happened to pass by the bell tower. Tong Qianchen explained to him the origin and function of this Xuanwu Bell.

According to Tong Qianchen, since the establishment of the Xuanwu Sect, the Xuanwu Bell has always been there, hanging in this bell tower from the beginning to the present.

Throughout these years, records show that the Xuanwu Bell has only been tolled five times, each time marking a major event that shocked the entire sect.

The last time was when the Xuanwu Sect faced an invasion from the Qing Xuan Sect and Tianyuan Sect, which was over a thousand years ago.

During that time, the Xuanwu Bell tolled incessantly for half a month, with Xuanwu Sect's strong people training outside rushing back every day to participate in defending the Xuanwu Sect in battle.

Before that battle, the Xuanwu Sect was undoubtedly the top among the Three Major Sects of Tianyuan State, with powerful talents emerging in every generation, dominating the Three Great Sects.

Qing Xuan Sect and Tianyuan Sect joined forces to suppress the Xuanwu Sect, attempting to divide it.

However—

The Xuanwu Sect brought out all its strong people, initiated the Mountain Protection Array, and the battle lasted an entire half a month, resulting in numerous Xuanwu Sect strong people's demise.

However, Qing Xuan Sect and Tianyuan Sect also suffered heavy losses, unable to take down the Xuanwu Sect ultimately. To avoid mutual destruction, they had to sign an armistice agreement in the end.

After that battle, the Xuanwu Sect lost nearly all its elites, transforming from a once unparalleled major sect to the weakest among the three major sects, almost losing its legacy.

The main responsibility for that battle lay with the Tianyuan Sect, for if it weren't for the Tianyuan Sect instigating the war and uniting with Qing Xuan Sect to besiege the Xuanwu Sect, the Xuanwu Sect wouldn't have declined so drastically.

This is the origin of the rivalry between Xuanwu Sect and Tianyuan Sect. The Tianyuan Sect fears the Xuanwu Sect's rise in power, for if it becomes strong, it will undoubtedly seek revenge.

And the Xuanwu Sect harbors deep-seated hatred, always thinking about revenge.

“What major event has occurred within the Xuanwu Sect?”

Recalling what Tong Qianchen said at the time, watching Wu Xinhai’s departing figure, Ye Fan was filled with curiosity.