

Y Master 541

Chapter 541 You Won't Die if You Don't Seek Death

Swish!

Ye Fan's words seemed to carry a certain magic, causing Nolan Xuan and the others to look his way.

How could it be him?!

Seeing Ye Fan's face, which was not exactly familiar but not at all strange, Nolan Xuan was horrified!

As a Martial Arts genius of the Nolan Family, he had seen Ye Fan at the annual Cultivation World auction, and had recently heard of Ye Fan's deeds. His reputation was indeed thunderous!

Before coming down the mountain, he had wondered which sacred figure dared to provoke on the Nolan Family's turf, but he had not expected it to be Ye Fan!

"Brother, it's him! It's this bastard who hurt me and even threatened to deal with our Nolan Family!"

Unlike Nolan Xuan, Nolan Qi, who had studied in the American Alliance, did not know of Ye Fan's deeds. Seeing Ye Fan appear, he immediately roared in anger, as if he couldn't wait to pounce and tear Ye Fan apart.

Ignoring Nolan Qi's roar, Ye Fan stopped walking, his gaze settling on Nolan Xuan.

"Little Qi!"

Nolan Xuan suddenly snapped back to reality and subconsciously called out to stop Nolan Qi, his gaze towards Ye Fan carrying a trace of timidity.

That's right...

It was timidity!

Even though this was the Nolan Family's territory, even though he was the Nolan Family's Martial Arts genius, yet...facing Ye Fan, he felt fear!

On one hand, everything Ye Fan had done in the secular world was simply too shocking, backed by both the Ye Family and Chu Xuanji, these two mighty mountains, even the Bai Family had suffered successive defeats, not to mention the much weaker Nolan Family?

On the other hand, although Ye Fan was at the Peak of Innate, his Dual Cultivation of Magic and Martial Arts made his Combat Power comparable to that of an Innate Great Perfection Cultivator—the massacre at the headquarters of the Nanqinghong and the challenge at the Hongwu Sect was the best proof!

Competing in Combat Power, he might not win, reliant on backers, he was utterly crushed...

How could this not make Nolan Xuan fearful?

"Brother, what's wrong with you?"

The words of Nolan Xuan reverberated in his ears. Noticing the timidity in Nolan Xuan's expressions, Nolan Qi was utterly puzzled.

"Mr. Ye, we have met before at the annual Cultivation World auction, I wonder if you still remember?"
Ignoring Nolan Qi, Nolan Xuan paused for a moment and then smiled as he tried to ingratiate himself with Ye Fan.

"Uh..."

Hearing Nolan Xuan's words again, whether it was Nolan Qi or his classmates, they were all dumbfounded.

Keep in mind, they still vividly remembered Nolan Xuan's haughty words just a moment ago!

In their view, Nolan Xuan should have swiftly knocked Ye Fan to the ground, not be ingratiating as he was now!

Perhaps due to the huge contrast in Nolan Xuan's behavior before and after, Nolan Qi and the other six were all wide-eyed, filled with confusion as they looked at Nolan Xuan, seemingly asking: What... what's going on?

"Little Qi, Mr. Ye is a Ye Family's Young Master from Beijing, and also taken as a close-door disciple by Master Chu Xuanji. He is upright and highly cultivated, he would not arbitrarily teach you a lesson,"

Ye Fan's silence brought significant pressure to Nolan Xuan, he endeavored to control his emotions, indirectly revealing Ye Fan's identity to Nolan Qi, meanwhile conveying his message, "Tell me honestly, how did you provoke Mr. Ye? Why did he take action to chastise you?"

Ye Family's Young Master from Beijing?

The close-door disciple of Chu Xuanji?!

Hearing Nolan Xuan's words again, Nolan Qi's heart trembled violently, his body swayed, and he almost fainted from fear!

Although he was studying in the American Alliance, he knew that the Ye Family, hailed as Huaxia's number one prominent family, and he knew about Chu Xuanji's world-saving efforts!

He was well aware that, though the Nolan Family held sway over the Northeast, in the broader scope of Huaxia, they weren't even considered a prominent family, merely the first tier below the prominent families.

And the Ye Family was undeniably recognized as the foremost prominent family in Huaxia!

The two were simply not on the same level!

And Ye Fan was not only a member of the foremost Ye Family, but also a disciple of Chu Xuanji...

This revelation brought him an indescribable shock.

He almost instinctively moved his gaze away from Nolan Xuan and looked back at Ye Fan.

This moment.

There was no longer any resentment or rage in his gaze, only astonishment!

It wasn't just Nolan Qi who was alarmed, but also his six classmates.

Although they did not know how powerful the Ye Family in Huaxia was, they were aware of Chu Xuanji's heroic deeds, subconsciously regarding Chu Xuanji as a saintly figure.

"At this point, are you trying to hide something?"

Seeing that Nolan Qi was dumbstruck with fear, Nolan Xuan intentionally shouted angrily.

At this point, he no longer harbored hopes of avenging Nolan Qi, instead, he could only silently pray that Mr. Ye was magnanimous enough not to take offense at Nolan Qi's actions and spare both him and Nolan Qi.

"I... I wanted to find a girl in the village to accompany me drinking, but I didn't know that she was a friend of Mr. Ye."

Nolan Qi suddenly came to his senses, realizing that Ye Fan was not someone the Nolan Family could afford to provoke, his attitude immediately took a 360-degree turn.

"Mr. Ye, earlier Little Qi called and told me he had been injured. I was unaware of the specifics, and I brought him here to discover the truth. Now it seems that it was all my incompetent younger brother's fault, and also our Nolan Family's lack of discipline! I thank you for disciplining him!"

Nolan Xuan clasped his hands together, his face no longer showing any arrogance, only a feigned 'apology'.

"Thank you?"

Hearing this, Ye Fan, fully aware of Nolan Xuan's deep scheming, very tolerant, and highly skilled in pretense, responded with a cold laugh: "If I remember correctly, just now you said you wanted to cripple the person who injured your brother, let your brother personally flay him alive, and then throw him to the mountains to feed the bears—could it be that I misremembered?"

"Uh..."

Nolan Xuan had an embarrassed face but still plucked up the courage, "I'm sorry, Mr. Ye, I didn't know it was you before."

"If the person standing before you right now wasn't me, it's very likely you and your brother would have already killed him, right? Even Elder Miao and Xiu Ling might not have escaped your clutches, correct?"

Ye Fan did not give face as he peeled off Nolan Xuan's facade layer by layer, forcing him to show his true colors.

"_"

Nolan Xuan was left speechless.

Because.

If what Ye Fan said was true, if the one standing before him wasn't Ye Fan but a Peak stage of Innate Martial Artist with no powerful backing, he would have made his opponent kneel and beg for mercy long ago, rather than humbly seeking peace as he was now.

"Mr. Ye, you have the belly of a prime minister that can boat a ship, I beg you not to take us ordinary people to heart." Nolan Xuan clasped his hands together, bowed slightly, and put himself in a very low stance.

"Sorry, I am not a prime minister, and my belly can't carry a ship," Ye Fan said expressionlessly: "Repay kindness with kindness, and revenge for revenge—that is my way of handling things."

"You bastard, apologize to Mr. Ye now!"

Seeing that Ye Fan was relentless, Nolan Xuan grew uneasy; amidst his unease, he turned and shouted at Nolan Qi.

"I... I'm sorry, Mr. Ye!"

Faced with Nolan Xuan's scolding, Nolan Qi's face paled in fear as he hurriedly bowed to apologize.

"I recall you once demanded that I sever my own limbs to apologize, or else, even if I fled to the ends of the earth, the Nolan Family would never let me go, right?" Ye Fan narrowed his eyes, his face devoid of any mercy.

Click!

Nolan Qi's heart trembled, and he did not dare to make a sound, his body completely stiff.

"Mr. Ye... Little Qi is young and hot-headed, he doesn't understand things well..." Nolan Xuan tried to smooth things over with a pleasing smile.

"What about you?" Ye Fan interrupted coldly.

"_"

Nolan Xuan was once again left speechless, his expression growing more solemn.

He had heard that Ye Fan was always swift in both gratitude and revenge, dealing tit for tat; only now did he realize that Ye Fan was even more domineering than the rumors!

"I give you two choices. First, destroy your Dantian and take them away! Second, I'll do it for you!" As if to confirm Nolan Xuan's judgment, Ye Fan spoke, his tone leaving no room for doubt.

Whoosh!

At the cold sound of Ye Fan's words ringing in their ears, Nolan Xuan and the others' faces instantly turned pale!

Among them, Nolan Qi and his six classmates all nervously turned their eyes toward Nolan Xuan, anxiously waiting for his decision.

"Mr. Ye... we truly realize our mistake, please spare us a way out."

Ye Fan's dominance aroused a trace of anger in Nolan Xuan's heart, yet he did not let the anger show on his face, instead continuing to put on an agonizing plea.

"I give you ten seconds to decide."

Ye Fan remained unmoved, his aura gradually rising, his posture signaling he might take action at any moment.

"Ye... Ye Fan, are you really going to push us into a corner?"

Nolan Xuan could no longer keep up the pretense; fury surfaced on his face and his fists clenched tightly, "Although my brother was wrong first, he did not physically harm that girl, instead, you crippled one of his hands, and even made him lose the ability to procreate!"

"Now, I want to calm things down, yet you're asking me to destroy my Dantian, isn't that too much of a bully?"

At the end, Nolan Xuan's fury burst out completely, and he radiated the aura of an Innate Great Perfection cultivator.

"Can't keep up the act any longer?"

Ye Fan sneered coldly, his aura rose to its peak, a terrifying killing intent enveloping Nolan Xuan.

"Don't think I'm really afraid of you; it's only the Ye Family and Chu Xuanji that I'm wary of!"

Feeling the killing intent surge from Ye Fan, Nolan Xuan's face changed and, utterly irrepressible in his anger, he exclaimed, "One should always leave a line in life, so we may meet again in the future! I advise you not to be too ruthless, even a cornered rabbit will bite!"

"Since you're unwilling to destroy your Dantian, then let me help you!" Ye Fan said as he took out the Black Iron Fist set and put it on.

"Ye Fan, you're forcing my hand!"

Nolan Xuan roared angrily, fiercely drew a large saber from the north, his figure flashed, and he charged at Ye Fan with the saber.

"Die!"

Strike first to gain the upper hand; in the blink of an eye, Nolan Xuan dashed out several meters, lifting the big saber high, and swung it straight at Ye Fan's head!

—"Water-cutting Saber Technique, Five Waves!"

This move was the killing move of the fifth layer of Nolan Xuan's "Water-cutting Saber Technique", containing five layers of blade force within a single strike. The overlapping forces could split the water of Heavenly Pond into a gap dozens of meters wide, demonstrating such formidable power.

He hadn't made a move yet, but once he did, it was a deadly strike.

At this moment.

Nolan Xuan seemed to know the hatred couldn't be resolved, and, harboring a murderous intention, he aimed to cleave Ye Fan in two!

Chapter 542 You Won't Die if You Don't Seek Death Part 2

"Huff! Huff!"

With a slash, Nolan Xuan's large saber turned into a streak of white light that cut through the air, creating a terrifying blade wind.

The blade wind arrived before the saber itself.

The fierce blade wind swept toward Ye Fan!

As the blade wind howled, Ye Fan stood motionless like a steel spear, a stream of air miraculously formed around him, blocking the blade wind from coming any closer to his body.

"Whoosh—"

In a flash of lightning, the air around Ye Fan was split open, and the blade's edge did not pause, chopping toward Ye Fan's head.

There was no dodging, no shrinking back.

Ye Fan threw a punch!

"Smack! Smack! Smack!"

The air burst, and Ye Fan's right fist, like a cannonball, roared toward the large saber slashing at him.

"Clang!"

Fist and saber collided, energy burst forth, sparking a flurry of sparks.

The terrifying recoil made Nolan Xuan's tiger's mouth go numb, nearly causing the large saber in his hand to slip away as his qi and blood churned uncontrollably, and he retreated uncontrollably, causing the ground under his feet to collapse and dust to fly.

All of this appeared slow but, in reality, happened within just a few seconds. Not only Nolan Qi's classmates but even Nolan Qi, who was at the Postnatal Great Success realm, couldn't clearly see the details of the exchange.

In fact, because of the flying dust from their exchange, they couldn't even locate their figures.

What was the outcome?

Looking at the dust in the air, Nolan Qi and the others asked themselves.

"Snap—"

Finally, the last crisp sound was heard as Nolan Xuan managed to halt his retreating figure.

As for Ye Fan, he had only taken three steps back!

"How... how can he be so strong?"

After a single move, it was clear who was stronger. As Nolan Xuan stabilized his qi and blood, he was shocked to see a notch on his large saber and realized Ye Fan had only taken three steps back.

Although his large saber was not the ancestral treasure saber of the Nolan Family, it was still a low-level Magic Artifact, much tougher than ordinary steel sabers.

And now, Ye Fan had nicked it with a single punch!

What's more critical is that he had just used the 'Water-cutting Saber Technique, Five Waves,' which, although not his best killing move, was still his second most powerful technique. It didn't harm Ye Fan, and instead, he was the one who ended up at a disadvantage.

Keep in mind that he was at the Innate Great Perfection realm!

And... Ye Fan was only at the Peak stage of Innate!

And this was without Ye Fan using any magic attack...

This outcome was simply unbelievable for Nolan Xuan!

"With the Black Iron Fist set and 'Qi Rushes to the Sky' at the second level, I can now defeat ordinary Innate Great Perfection stage martial artists with my martial arts cultivation alone."

As Nolan Xuan was greatly shocked, Ye Fan muttered to himself internally.

Nolan Xuan's earlier strike, although impressive, wasn't fast, and Ye Fan could have avoided it entirely.

He didn't dodge but chose to meet it head-on, merely to test his martial arts combat ability!

Nolan Xuan is not a match?

At that moment, Nolan Qi and the others saw where Ye Fan and Nolan Xuan were standing, capturing the expressions on both faces. They had a hunch about which of them was stronger and their faces showed deep concern.

"Whew..."

Nolan Xuan breathed deeply, stabilizing his qi and blood, and then, feigning composure, he looked at Ye Fan and said word by word, "Ye Fan, I admit that your strength is far beyond my expectations, but I just used the ordinary mid-grade martial technique 'Water-cutting Saber Technique,' not our Nolan Family's ancestral 'Soul Capturing Blade Technique.' If you agree to let today's matter rest, then our battle ends here; otherwise, I don't mind letting you experience our Nolan Family's 'Soul Capturing Blade Technique'!"

'Soul Capturing Blade Technique,' a top-grade mid-grade martial technique, bordering on high-grade.

Each slash can affect the opponent's consciousness, making it impossible for the opponent to concentrate during the fight.

The Nolan Family has established itself in the Huaxia Cultivation World, partly because of the ancestral treasure sword 'Soul-devouring Blade,' and partly because of the ancestral saber technique 'Soul Capturing Blade Technique,' which complement each other greatly.

By now, Nolan Xuan had mastered the third level of the 'Soul Capturing Blade Technique,' achieving the first killing move of the technique – the 'Shadowless Blade.'

Despite this, Nolan Xuan was unsure he could kill Ye Fan with his ultimate move 'Shadowless Blade,' otherwise, he wouldn't have negotiated and compromised with Ye Fan feigning composure.

"The moment you chose to strike, you sealed your fate—next year's today will be your death anniversary—you might as well use whatever techniques you have!"

Ye Fan was unafraid, with his strength, if he launched an attack with both magic and martial arts, he could contend with, or even ordinary Half-step Gang Qi realm masters.

And if it was a surprise assassination, he could even kill ordinary Half-step Gang Qi realm masters!

And Nolan Xuan was just a typical Innate Great Perfection martial artist.

If he were to go all out, he could instantly kill him!

"Swoosh—"

As he spoke, Nolan Xuan finally stabilized his qi and blood, reaching his peak state once more. Hearing Ye Fan's words, he preemptively moved, leaping forward, saber in hand, rushing toward Ye Fan.

Ye Fan remained unmoved, planning to meet each move and experience the 'Soul Capturing Blade Technique.'

"Shadowless Blade!"

Knowing that Ye Fan's strength was far superior to his own, Nolan Xuan didn't hold back, and his first move was the killing move from the 'Soul Capturing Blade Technique.'

As the shout came, the saber swung!

The snow-white large saber cut swiftly downward.

The blade wind howled, mixed with Nolan Xuan's furious shout, pouring into Ye Fan's ears like a demonic sound, assaulting his consciousness.

"So that's how it is."

Ye Fan's heart was as firm as a rock, his body slippery like a mudfish as he flashed backward, dodging the blade while also discerning the essence of the "Soul Capturing Blade Technique."

The so-called soul capturing was when the practitioner of the "Soul Capturing Blade Technique" would shout in a special way to harness a spiritual attack and then integrate this spiritual attack into the blade wind, thus affecting the opponent's consciousness, making it impossible for the opponent to fight at full strength and even causing them to experience a moment of trance, leading to their defeat!

In some sense, the "Soul Capturing Blade Technique" and the Qinghong Black Dragon Guards' killing move "Shadowless Yin Demon Slash" had a curiously similar ingenuity. However, the latter combined a formation and fused it with the evil yin Qi between heaven and earth, making its power far surpass the "Soul Capturing Blade Technique" and ranking it among the strongest martial arts in the world.

Putting aside the influence containing spiritual attacks, the power of Nolan Xuan's "Shadowless Blade" just now was still not as great as the previous "Water-cutting Saber Technique, Five Waves."

"Take another slash from me!"

Although his slash missed, Nolan Xuan subjectively thought that Ye Fan's consciousness had been affected and he wouldn't be able to take this next slash, so instead of retreating, he advanced, his momentum surged, and he struck with another slash.

"Whoosh!"

The sharp blade fiercely chopped down, once again slicing through the airflow over Ye Fan's head.

"Trivial trick!"

Understanding the principle of the "Soul Capturing Blade Technique," Ye Fan snorted coldly, lifted his right foot, gently turned his body like a spiral, and skillfully dodged, making Nolan Xuan's second slash miss again.

"Eat my blade!"

Immediately, without waiting for Nolan Xuan to retrieve his blade or change his move, Ye Fan's right hand formed a blade and chopped towards Nolan Xuan's wrist.

Nolan Xuan was shocked, too late to dodge, could only shake his wrist, and forcefully lifted the large blade in his hand to meet Ye Fan's hand blade.

"Clang!"

Hand blade hitting real blade, Nolan Xuan, knowing he couldn't withstand Ye Fan's strength, cleverly chose to loosen his grip on the blade, allowing Ye Fan to knock it down.

Seizing this opportunity, he also transformed his hand into a blade, jabbing towards Ye Fan's Dantian!

Ditching the blade for a defensive, hand blade attack...

This quick change in move was extortionately fast for Nolan Xuan, showing his cunning to the extreme, and he showcased his combat skills brilliantly.

Only—

Ye Fan was even faster!

"Swish!"

Ye Fan converted his hand blade into a grab, his right hand clutching Nolan Xuan's wrist, preventing his hand blade from advancing any further.

"So fast!"

Nolan Xuan was startled, his right hand generated power, shook powerfully like a python turning over, immensely strong, and shook off Ye Fan's right hand.

"Bang—"

Ye Fan pulled back his right hand, gathered his steps, and his right foot kicked at the back of Nolan Xuan's departing blade.

"Whoosh!"

The blade, under force, suddenly sprang up, chopping upward at Nolan Xuan's arm.

Nolan Xuan's face changed wildly as he hastily pulled back his hand and swiftly retreated.

"Swoosh—"

Ye Fan waved his right hand, grabbed the blade, then with a shake of his wrist, the blade transformed into a streak of white light, rapidly shooting toward Nolan Xuan.

In the nick of time, Nolan Xuan leaned backward, making the blade whoosh over his head, narrowly escaping the calamity.

"Go down!"

Just then, Ye Fan, like a shadow, followed through, turning his hand into a palm, forcefully striking Nolan Xuan's Dantian!

"Slap—"

With a slap, power erupted, directly shattering Nolan Xuan's Dantian and power seed!

"Spurt—"

Nolan Xuan spat out a mouthful of blood mist, flung onto the ground like a fly by Ye Fan, his meridians and internal organs all shattered, effectively turning him into a cripple.

"No... don't kill me!"

Everything happened so fast, so quick that Nolan Xuan had no time to prepare. The human instinct to survive made him immediately beg Ye Fan for mercy.

"Originally, if you had destroyed your Dantian yourself, I might have spared your life, but now it's impossible!" Ye Fan said, his right foot suddenly lifting, stomping toward Nolan Xuan's heart.

"No!!"

Nolan Xuan shrieked desperately, wanting to dodge but powerless to do so.

"Bang—"

Like a watermelon bursting, Nolan Xuan's heart was crushed under Ye Fan's foot, his internal organs shattered by the force, continuously spitting out three mouthfuls of blood, his head tilted, and his life completely extinguished.

"Gulp!"

Seeing the fight unfold like a scene from a movie, Nolan Qi's classmates were completely shocked, continuously swallowing saliva, their bodies convulsing uncontrollably.

And Nolan Qi, as if under an immobilization spell, couldn't move, looking at Ye Fan filled with terror.

"Go back and tell Nolan Mingde, if he dares retaliate against the Miao Family member, tomorrow I will surely blood-wash Nolan Manor!" Ye Fan looked emotionlessly at Nolan Qi, warning him for the second time.

"Thump—"

Without responding, Nolan Qi collapsed to the ground in fear.

"Ah... Ah..."

Coming out of their shock, Nolan Qi's classmates screamed and scattered in all directions.

Ye Fan paid them no more heed, turned around, and found Zhang Dasheng, Elder Miao, and Miao Xiuling standing in front of him, staring at him blankly like statues.

Just staring motionlessly...

Chapter 543 A Helping Hand, The Girl's Emotions Stir

Because he knew that Nolan Qi sought revenge, and because he saw Nolan Qi and the others' car return, Zhang Dasheng ran out from his home, intending to go to Elder Miao's house to see how things were unfolding. However, before he could get close, he was discovered by the guard dog raised by Elder Miao, which led to the dog barking furiously.

The barking attracted the attention of Elder Miao and Miao Xiuling, who came out of the courtyard and saw Zhang Dasheng. They were about to ask him why he was there when, unperceived, Ye Fan appeared at the entrance of the village, confronting Nolan Xuan and the others.

Then...

They witnessed the scene of Ye Fan killing Nolan Xuan.

This scene deeply shocked them!

"They must have seen it."

With the help of the moonlight, seeing the three of them with a dull look on their faces, Ye Fan's mind was as clear as a mirror, but he didn't dwell on it and quickly walked towards them.

At the village entrance, the classmates of Nolan Qi stopped in their tracks, struck by lingering fear when they saw that Ye Fan was no longer making a move. Only after Ye Fan approached Elder Miao and the other two did they come forward to pull Nolan Qi away and carry away Nolan Xuan's body.

"Xiao... Xiao Fan, are you alright?"

Watching Ye Fan approach, Elder Miao shifted his gaze, steadied his spirit, but still had a hint of shock on his face.

"I'm fine."

Ye Fan shook his head and turned his gaze to Miao Xiuling.

"Big... Big brother, was that Kung Fu you used just now?"

Contrary to Ye Fan's expectations, Miao Xiuling wasn't utterly terrified by the previous scene; instead, she seemed curious.

Upon reflection, Ye Fan understood the reason.

Because she was too far away and with her vision, Miao Xiuling couldn't see clearly the exchange between him and Nolan Xuan. It was even possible that she didn't know whether Nolan Xuan had been killed, so she wasn't traumatized.

This gave Ye Fan a sense of relief, and he gently nodded to Miao Xiuling.

Meanwhile, Zhang Dasheng asked in utter fear, "You... you just killed that person, the Nolan Family's young master Nolan Xuan, didn't you?"

"Elder Miao, Xiuling, after this disturbance, the Nolan Family's people probably won't bother you anymore," Ye Fan said, ignoring Zhang Dasheng, turning to Elder Miao and Miao Xiuling.

In his view, with the deterrence of the Ye Family and Chu Xuanji, the Nolan Family would most likely swallow their broken teeth and not dare make another move.

"Big... Big brother, could you please ask the Nolan Family not to trouble me?" Before Elder Miao and Miao Xiuling could react, Zhang Dasheng recovered from his fright and asked in terror.

Earlier, Ye Fan had only warned Nolan Qi to prevent retaliation against Elder Miao and Miao Xiuling, but he hadn't said anything about not retaliating against him.

"If you haven't done anything wrong, what are you afraid of?"

Although Zhang Dasheng hadn't helped to tyrannize, his previous actions had disgraced Ye Fan, so naturally, he had no interest in dealing with Zhang Dasheng's life or death.

"Big... Big brother, I'm begging you!"

Upon hearing this, Zhang Dasheng turned pale with fear and made a motion as if to kneel before Ye Fan.

Ye Fan stretched out his hand to stop Zhang Dasheng and casually said, "As long as they don't retaliate against Elder Miao, they naturally won't come to settle accounts with you. You're overthinking it."

"That... that makes sense!"

Hearing Ye Fan's words, Zhang Dasheng's eyes rolled around as if the gears in his head had clicked. The anxiety on his face vanished into thin air, and he broke into a smile.

"Thank... Thank you, Xiao Fan!" In contrast, Elder Miao was full of gratitude.

"It was just a small effort, Elder Miao is too kind."

Ye Fan said, and then added, "Now that the threat from the Nolan Family is gone, I won't stay here—I plan to head into the mountains overnight."

"Ah... Big brother, are you going into the mountains this late? Why don't you wait until daylight to go?" Miao Xiuling said, insistently trying to convince him, with a hint of reluctance in the eyes she fixed on Ye Fan.

"For me, there's no difference between entering the mountains during the day or at night," Ye Fan said, smiling. Then, a thought struck him, and he asked, "Xiuling, would you like to go to the big city for school?"

"I would!"

Miao Xiuling almost blurted out without a second thought.

"Then I'll call a friend in a while, to help transfer your school records to Dong Hai, and you can go to school in Dong Hai."

Although Ye Fan judged that the Nolan Family wouldn't dare seek revenge, there are always exceptions, and if Miao Xiuling went to school in Dong Hai, it would be absolutely safe. Moreover, by doing so, he could make up for taking advantage of Elder Miao's Immortal Grass.

"My grandfather..." Miao Xiuling looked at Elder Miao, about to speak again.

"Xiuling, you go to school in Dong Hai by yourself; grandpa will stay here," Elder Miao said, cutting off Miao Xiuling with a bitter smile. He heard Miao Xiuling's unspoken wish—for him to accompany her to Dong Hai!

Ye Fan's offer to arrange for Miao Xiuling to study in Dong Hai was already more than Elder Miao could ask for; he didn't dare to presume that Ye Fan would arrange for him as well.

Moreover, as the saying goes, "fallen leaves return to their roots."

As people age, they wish to return to the place of their birth and growth.

The Miao Family had lived in Changshi Village for generations; it was the root of the Miao Family, and deep down, Elder Miao didn't want to leave Changshi Village.

"Elder Miao, my friend owns a medicinal company that has a team for gathering herbs. You could join them to collect medicinal herbs, or you could continue practicing medicine," Ye Fan said, having picked up on Miao Xiuling's hint and offering an alternative with a smile.

For him, helping either Miao Xiuling or Elder Miao was just a simple favor. Why wouldn't he help?

"Thank you for your kindness, Xiao Fan, but I'll stay here," Elder Miao replied.

Elder Miao hesitated for a moment, but still shook his head and declined, "I'm used to staying here; I definitely wouldn't adapt to the big city."

"Alright."

Upon hearing this, Ye Fan didn't insist any further.

Suddenly, Miao Xiu Ling asked again, "Big brother, if I go to Dong Hai, will I be able to see you often?"

"There should be a chance."

Ye Fan nodded with a smile, and then seeing Nolan Qi and the others depart, knew that the trouble had been thoroughly resolved. After a moment of thought, he said, "Elder Miao, Xiu Ling, if nothing unexpected happens, my friend will send someone over tomorrow. I'm going to leave now, see you later!"

As his voice fell, Ye Fan didn't waste any more words. With a push-off from the ground, he darted towards the mountain behind Changshi Village and instantly disappeared from the sights of Elder Miao, Miao Xiu Ling, and Zhang Dasheng.

"So there really are legendary martial arts experts in this world, it feels like a dream," Zhang Dasheng couldn't help but exclaim as he watched Ye Fan's leaving direction.

No one answered.

Miao Xiu Ling still stared motionlessly in the direction where Ye Fan had disappeared, her plain yet charming face filled with yearning.

It seemed as though she was looking forward to meeting Ye Fan again.

"Sigh..."

Seeing this, Elder Miao couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

He could tell his granddaughter was experiencing the dawn of her affections, but in his eyes, Ye Fan and his granddaughter belonged to two different worlds. Even if they had interactions in the future, it was absolutely impossible for them to be together!

Ye Fan was unaware of all this.

After leaving Changshi Village, he identified the direction but didn't rush on his way. Instead, worried about losing signal in the mountains, he took out his phone and dialed Chu Ji's number, asking her to help arrange school matters for Miao Xiu Ling.

"Little brat, it's nearly Ling Tian, and you're calling me? Don't you know it's very immoral to disturb someone's sweet dreams?"

In a villa at Ao Xiang Villa in Dong Hai, awakened by the vibrating phone from her meditation, Chu Ji picked up and said irritably, "And you're even worse than disturbing dreams—I was about to breakthrough to the Gang Qi realm, and your call has dispelled my inspiration. Now what should we do about it?"

"Stop it, you've just broken through to the Half-step Gang Qi, how could you breakthrough to the Gang Qi realm so quickly?"

Ye Fan didn't believe her at all. As he knew, the Gang Qi realm was a difficult threshold to cross in the cultivation world, and even one capable of entering it would have to stay at the Half-step Gang Qi for a long time.

"You don't know anything. For a cultivator, many times, breakthroughs rely on that moment of sudden enlightenment," Chu Ji replied with her face flushed, but righteously continued, "Anyway, I'm keeping a tab on this. If I fail to breakthrough the Half-step Gang Qi realm, it's on you."

"Xiao Yi, your words could easily lead people to think dirty thoughts," Ye Fan couldn't help but feel amused and embarrassed.

"Then why don't you think dirty and show Xiao Yi? Oh no, I meant, why don't you get hard and show Xiao Yi?" Chu Ji teased.

"_"

Ye Fan, at a loss for words, quickly changed the subject, "I called you this late to ask for a favor."

"If you want something arranged, just say it, what do you need?"

"Here's the thing..."

As Ye Fan walked, he recounted to Chu Ji everything that had happened since he arrived at Changbai Mountain.

"Nolan Family really is blind, causing trouble for anyone but messing with you, a calamity star!" Chu Ji sounded as if she'd been injected with adrenaline upon hearing about Ye Fan defeating Nolan Xuan, "By the way, how many moves did you use to kill Nolan Xuan? Was it an instant kill?"

"He was much stronger than when we saw him at the auction; he had broken through to the Innate Great Perfection realm..."

"If you can kill even a Half-step Gang Qi realm master, what's an Innate Great Perfection Stage Martial Artist to you?" Chu Ji interrupted without any patience.

"I didn't use any magic attacks, just martial arts to fight him, and it took me four moves to defeat him, but I had put on the Black Iron Fist set."

Ye Fan smiled wryly. He had first resisted Nolan Xuan's 'Water-cutting Saber Technique, Five Waves,' then used a regular lock to grab Nolan Xuan's wrist. After being shaken off, he kicked the large saber to

force Nolan Xuan back, and finally, followed up with a palm strike that destroyed Nolan Xuan's Dantian, summing up to four moves.

"Freak!"

Although Chu Ji guessed Ye Fan would still win easily with just martial arts, hearing that he only took four moves still surprised her. She then followed up, "Anyway, what do you need my help with? Don't tell me you want Xiao Yi to go annihilate the Nolan Family?"

"To be on the safe side, and also as compensation for Elder Miao and Miao Xiu Ling, I want to transfer Xiu Ling's school enrollment to Dong Hai," Ye Fan replied, perhaps fearing Chu Ji would veer off topic again, he got straight to the point.

"Please rest assured, lord, this servant will definitely handle this matter well," Chu Ji responded in jest, "But, lord, may your servant remind you that your seemingly effortless gesture can completely change that Xiu Ling's life—are you planning to take another concubine?"

"Screw off!"

Ye Fan cursed without any good humor and then hung up the phone. After discerning his direction, he leaped and dashed into the depths of Changbai Mountain.

In the darkness.

Ye Fan hadn't noticed that a figure, like a ghostly specter, silently trailed behind him without leaving a trace.

Chapter 544 For Revenge, Abandon the Treasure Sword

Nolan Manor was located in the suburbs of Shenjing, covering dozens of acres. The estate featured green mountains and water, and ancient-style courtyards and pavilions complemented each other, creating a scene so magnificent that it transported one back to the residences of ancient princes and generals.

After midnight, Nolan Manor was tranquil, with only a few courtyards styled in the Qing Dynasty architecture still lit up.

Among them, in a courtyard by the man-made lake of the manor, Wu Mu took advantage of the time when the Evil Yin Qi was the most intense to meditate and cultivate as usual.

Not far from Wu Mu, Ku Rong, the leading disciple of the Ghost Sect, also sat cross-legged, seemingly engaged in meditation cultivation. However, he couldn't calm his mind and would occasionally steal glances at Wu Mu.

The two had arrived at Nolan Manor in the afternoon, expecting that the head of the Nolan Family, Nolan Mingde, would be waiting for them. However, Nolan Mingde was in seclusion, attempting to break through to the Gang Qi Realm, and had instructed the members of the Nolan Family that they were not to be disturbed no matter what happened.

The Gang Qi Realm was a symbol of a Supreme Strongman, immensely difficult to break through and fraught with certain dangers.

As a Supreme Strongman of the Gang Qi Realm himself, Wu Mu was well aware of this and, therefore, did not throw a tantrum or act pretentiously. Instead, he and Ku Rong settled down in the manor to wait for Nolan Mingde to come out of seclusion.

Compared to him, Ku Rong did not have such patience.

In his view, given Wu Mu's strength and his status within the Hua Xia Cultivation World, Nolan Mingde should have emerged from seclusion sooner, rather than having them wait.

Whoosh!

After an unknown period, Wu Mu suddenly opened his eyes, saw Ku Rong looking at him, and frowned, "Every day after midnight, the Evil Yin Qi in the atmosphere is most intense. It's the best time to practice the 'Ghost Demon Skill.' Don't you know that?"

"Master... Master, I feel that Nolan Mingde lacks self-awareness," Ku Rong replied somewhat anxiously, expressing his dissatisfaction even in the face of Wu Mu's scolding. "You deigned to visit here, and it's bad enough that he didn't come out to meet you immediately, but now he is also reluctant to appear."

"He has already come," Wu Mu said indifferently.

Huh?

Hearing Wu Mu's words, Ku Rong stirred inside, opened his Spiritual Sense, and immediately sensed a powerful aura rushing towards the courtyard.

Although his strength was inferior to Nolan Mingde's, as a Magician, his consciousness was stronger than Nolan Mingde's, and naturally, he could sense Nolan Mingde's aura.

"Nolan Mingde's Blood Qi is so vigorous, it seems he's only half a step away from the Gang Qi Realm," remarked Ku Rong, unable to stop himself from praising after sensing the aura.

Wu Mu, expressionless, said, "He is among the top Half-step Gang Qi realm Cultivators in the Hua Xia Cultivation World, so naturally, his Blood Qi is vigorous. But breaking through to the Gang Qi Realm is not as easy as you think. To step into the Gang Qi Realm, one must achieve 'Break and Stand,' which requires a resolute Martial Arts Will."

Ku Rong nodded thoughtfully upon hearing this.

"Sorry, Master Wu Mu, Nolan Mingde has neglected you," Ku Rong said.

Soon afterward, before Ku Rong could come up with a reason, Nolan Mingde stopped outside the door of the courtyard, and his resonant voice filled the air.

"Mingde, attempting to break through to the Gang Qi Realm is a major event; there is nothing neglectful about that," Wu Mu said as he slowly stood up.

Huh?

Outside, Nolan Mingde, hearing Wu Mu's words and sensing the familiarity in his tone, couldn't help feeling astonished.

Because... as far as he knew, as the Sect Leader of the Ghost Sect and a Supreme Strongman of the Gang Qi Realm, Wu Mu, although not as unpredictable as Chu Xuanji, was very somber and difficult to get along with.

"If he's not seeking something, he wouldn't visit—Wu Mu being so courteous probably means nothing good," thought Nolan Mingde, a leader with not only strong capabilities but also high emotional intelligence. Having a vague hunch, he pushed the door open and entered.

"Mingde has seen Master Wu Mu," Nolan Mingde said, greeting with a fist and palm salute as soon as he entered, bowing slightly, maintaining a very humble posture.

"Mingde, you are too polite; let's go inside to talk," Wu Mu returned the gesture, uncharacteristically.

Seeing this, Nolan Mingde's unease intensified, but he did not show it on his face. Instead, he nodded with a smile, made a welcoming gesture, and then entered the hall together with Wu Mu and Ku Rong.

Like the overall style of Nolan Manor, the hall of this courtyard was decorated in an ancient style; all the furniture was made of high-quality rosewood, and the walls were adorned with calligraphy and paintings by famous artists, each priceless.

This also indirectly proved the centuries-old heritage of the Nolan Family, far beyond what those who had become wealthy through coal mining and real estate could compare.

"Mingde, to be honest, my uninvited visit to Nolan Manor was to discuss a matter with you," Wu Mu took the initiative to start the conversation once they were seated.

"Please speak, Master Wu Mu," Mingde's eyes flashed with unease.

"You should know, I specialize in Artifact Refining," Wu Mu said.

Whoosh!

Upon hearing this, Nolan Mingde suddenly thought of something, his expression changed, and he momentarily forgot to respond.

"I'm planning to refine a High-level Magic Artifact soon, which requires absorbing a large amount of resentful energy, even resentful spirits," Wu Mu, seeing his reaction, decided not to beat around the bush and got straight to the point.

Upon hearing Wu Mu's words again, Nolan Mingde's complexion completely changed.

Nolan Manor was strategically located, not only combining Feng Shui knowledge in its layout but also forming a Formation, considered a rare geomantic treasure in the secular world.

There was hardly any resentful energy or the presence of resentful spirits in the entire estate, except for the Nolan Family's ancestral treasure sword—the Soul-devouring Blade!

Chapter 545 For Revenge, Abandon the Treasure Sword_2

Wu Mu said that resentment and resentful spirits were needed, which amounted to setting his sights on the Soul-devouring Blade!

"Mingde, I trust you understand what I mean—I want the ancestral Soul-devouring Blade of the Nolan Family."

Wu Mu's tone was calm but gave Nolan Mingde an undeniable feeling, "Of course, I won't take your treasure for nothing. I will exchange it for three magic artifacts, all sabers, one of which is a mid-level magical artifact just like the Soul-devouring Blade."

"This..."

Nolan Mingde looked troubled, unsure how to respond.

Although the Soul-devouring Blade was a mid-level magical artifact, because it harbored a resentful spirit inside, it was considered top-grade among mid-level artifacts and could match three ordinary mid-level artifacts.

His ability to hold sway in the Northeast wasn't only because he was a seasoned Half-step Gang Qi realm master, but also because he had the Soul-devouring Blade—with his power, if he used the Nolan Family's ancestral ultimate technique, the "Soul Capturing blade Technique," in battle, his combat power could rival that of a Supreme Strongman of the Gang Qi Realm. He was truly the overlord among Half-step Gang Qi realm cultivators!

Moreover, the Soul-devouring Blade was an ancestral treasure sword of great significance to the Nolan Family.

Under such circumstances, he naturally did not wish to exchange with Wu Mu.

But—

He also feared that refusing Wu Mu would bring about enmity.

After all, it was well-known in the Cultivation World that Wu Mu was narrow-minded.

"My master is offering three magic artifacts to exchange with you, what are you hesitating for?" Seeing Nolan Mingde remain silent, Ku Rong became somewhat irritated.

"Master Wu Mu, as you know, the Soul-devouring Blade is the inherited treasure of our Nolan Family and holds great significance to our clan..." Nolan Mingde said, noticing Wu Mu's expression growing colder, he dared not continue.

"Heh heh... Mingde, as I said before, I am proposing an exchange, not a theft. If you feel at a loss, we can discuss further. You can state your conditions."

All of a sudden, Wu Mu smiled, a smile that, to Nolan Mingde, seemed like that of a devil, sending shivers down his spine from head to toe.

Reason told him that Wu Mu was determined to get the ancestral treasure Soul-devouring Blade of the Nolan Family. If he didn't agree to an exchange, Wu Mu would surely turn hostile!

Realizing this, Nolan Mingde's heart sank, and he furrowed his brows tightly.

Seeing this, Ku Rong wore a displeased expression as if wanting to say something but was stopped by a look from Wu Mu.

"Mingde, someone is coming."

After a full three minutes, seeing that Nolan Mingde had still not given a response, Wu Mu spoke again.

Upon hearing this, Nolan Mingde emerged from his contemplation, sensed briefly, and detected the presence of his eldest son, Nolan Changfeng, outside the door.

"Dad, are you in there?"

Immediately, without waiting for Nolan Mingde to reply to Wu Mu, Nolan Changfeng's voice sounded, carrying a very low tone, filled with anger that he couldn't suppress.

"I am discussing matters with Master Wu Mu. Go back first, and we'll talk about it later."

Nolan Mingde's refusal to let Nolan Changfeng come in, fearing Wu Mu's displeasure, made Nolan Changfeng's odd behavior puzzle him.

"Dad, I have something very important to tell you!"

Contrary to expectations, Nolan Changfeng, who always obeyed Nolan Mingde, did not leave.

"Master Wu Mu, may I step out for a moment?"

Moving at heart, Nolan Mingde knew that Nolan Changfeng must have encountered a significant matter; otherwise, he would never act so unbecomingly, and thus, he looked inquiringly at Wu Mu.

"Nolan Mingde, you..."

Perhaps feeling that Nolan Mingde was giving too little face to him and his master, Ku Rong "shwooshed" to his feet, staring angrily at Nolan Mingde.

"Hmm."

Wu Mu gestured to stop Ku Rong and nodded slightly, saying, "Go ahead and deal with your matters, Mingde."

"Thank you, Master Wu Mu."

Nolan Mingde stood up, bowed his hands, and then hurried out of the hall.

"What has happened?"

Outside the courtyard, Nolan Mingde was taken aback to see Nolan Changfeng with a face full of grief, his eyes bloodshot and seeming about to spit fire, a bad feeling surged inside him.

"Xiao... Xiao Xuan has been killed!" Nolan Changfeng said hoarsely.

"What... what?"

Startled by Nolan Changfeng's words, even Nolan Mingde, as a top figure among the Half-step Gang Qi realm masters, changed color in shock.

It seemed he could not believe that any of this was true!

"Just now, Little Qi called and said Xiao Xuan was killed, and he was also injured," Nolan Changsheng said through gritted teeth.

"Who did this??" yelled Nolan Mingde furiously.

As his words fell, a terrifying murderous intent surged from Nolan Mingde, as if he wanted to tear the murderer of Nolan Xuan into a thousand pieces right at that moment!

"Ye Fan!"

Nolan Changfeng squeezed out two words through gritted teeth.

"Ye Fan? The disciple of Chu Xuanji??"

Nolan Mingde's face changed again, his pupils dilated to their fullest, filled with shock..

"Yes."

Nolan Changfeng nodded with a pained expression on his face.

"What exactly happened? How could they have provoked the disciple of Chu Xuanji??" Nolan Mingde's murderous intent dissipated by more than half, and his face turned extremely ugly.

Because.

He knew very well that if the murderer of Nolan Xuan was Ye Fan, then the Nolan Family would have no choice but to swallow the broken teeth in their stomach—both the Ye Family and Chu Xuanji behind Ye Fan were existences that the Nolan Family could not afford to provoke!

"Little Qi said..."

Nolan Changfeng relayed the events he had learned from his son, Nolan Qi, growing more incensed as he spoke.

"This cursed child, not only did he get Xiao Xuan killed, but he also dared to spout nonsense!"

Nolan Mingde immediately noticed that Nolan Qi had concealed some key details in his recounting of the events, and his anger knew no bounds.

"Dad, although Little Qi is not without fault, that Ye Fan went too far by killing Xiao Xuan directly! He made things too absolute!" Nolan Changfeng said through clenched teeth, filled with boundless resentment.

Nolan Mingde's face turned ashen, but he did not utter a word.

After listening to the whole story, he could tell that Nolan Qi had hidden some important details, but he believed, given Nolan Xuan's character, it was likely as Nolan Qi had said—after recognizing Ye Fan, he would directly seek peace, instead of intensifying the conflict!

In such a scenario, Ye Fan killing Nolan Xuan directly amounted to a complete disregard for the Nolan Family's existence!

"Not only that, but he also said that if our Nolan Family dared to retaliate against those surnamed Miao, he would come and slaughter everyone in Nolan Manor!" Nolan Changfeng added.

"Slaughter Nolan Manor?"

Upon hearing these words, rage completely took over Nolan Mingde's body, his previously subdued murderous intent surged forth, more intense than before, "I will send him to King Yan's Palace first!"

With these words, Nolan Mingde turned and walked back to the other courtyard.

Nolan Changfeng was initially stunned, then quickly followed.

"Mingde, what's happened?"

Master Wumu, who had been in the hall, had heard the entire conversation between Nolan Mingde and Nolan Changsheng clearly, and had a hunch about what Nolan Mingde's last words meant. Pretending to be ignorant, he asked knowingly.

"Master Wumu, I am willing to exchange our Nolan Family's ancestral Soul-devouring Blade for you, but I want to add a condition!" Nolan Mingde spoke straightforwardly.

"What?"

"I want the head of Chu Xuanji's closed-door disciple, Ye Fan!" Nolan Mingde was seething with killing intent.

"Uh..."

Upon hearing this, Nolan Changfeng looked at Nolan Mingde, full of shock.

Although he knew Nolan Mingde valued Nolan Xuan highly, he did not expect that to avenge Nolan Xuan, Nolan Mingde would choose to trade their ancestral treasure sword with Master Wumu!

What he didn't know was that previously, Nolan Mingde was already in a tough spot facing Master Wumu's pressure—reluctant to give up the Soul-devouring Blade yet afraid to offend Master Wumu.

Now, knowing Ye Fan had killed Nolan Xuan and even threatened to bloodbath Nolan Manor, Nolan Mingde, driven by his anger, made the resolute decision to abandon the blade!

"Deal!"

Master Wumu laughed, his laughter filled with joy.

He had gone through great lengths to obtain the Soul-devouring Blade and to craft the Soul Summoning Banner, specifically to send Ye Fan on his way!

Now, Nolan Mingde was offering this as a condition, which, to him, was no loss at all.

"You killed my junior brother, insulted my master, I will capture your soul in the Soul Summoning Banner and make sure you never find peace ever again!" Ku Rong was also utterly excited, as if he had already seen himself holding the Soul Summoning Banner, forcing Ye Fan to kneel and beg for mercy!

Chapter 546 The Inevitable Battle - Part 1

When the first streak of red dawn pierced through the sky from east to west, Ye Fan slowly opened his eyes, concluding his meditation cultivation.

Last night, he had made his way into the mountains, reaching the depths of Changbai Mountain after three hours. However, since the herbs grew on the cliffs and were hard to find at night, he started with meditation cultivation to restore the power he had expended.

After a night of meditation cultivation, Ye Fan had restored the power he had exhausted through fighting and traveling the previous evening, but his martial arts cultivation had not improved at all, making the breakthrough into the Innate Great Perfection seem infinitely far away.

"If one wishes to enhance their martial arts cultivation, they must absorb the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi to enhance the purity and quality of their power, forming essence of power. Only when the existing essence of power is saturated can new Power Seeds form in the new vital acupoints," he thought.

Gazing at the slowly rising red sun in the east, Ye Fan frowned slightly.

Because he practiced the Nine Heavens Profound Skill, his cultivation methods and breakthrough techniques differed from other cultivators.

Ordinary cultivators only formed Power Seeds in their Dantian to store power. Once there was enough essence of power, the Dantian would expand, allowing them to break through until they reached the Innate Great Perfection, where the Dantian could expand no further. Instead, they would compress all the Gang Jin into Gang Qi, entering the Gang Qi Realm.

He, however, did not need to expand his Dantian, but needed to form Power Seeds in all 108 acupoints within his body to step into the Innate Great Perfection Realm. Afterward, compressing all the Gang Jin in the 108 vital acupoints into Gang Qi was necessary to enter the Gang Qi Realm, making the process several times harder than for ordinary cultivators!

Of course, with great effort comes great reward—his special cultivation method significantly improved his physical strength, power quality, and quantity beyond that of ordinary cultivators, allowing him to challenge opponents beyond his level by relying solely on his martial arts cultivation!

"Now, the speed of enhancing my martial arts cultivation through meditation is too slow; it's better to enhance my magic cultivation through meditation. This way, I can also devote some of my energy to studying the third level of 'Qi Rushes to the Sky'."

Ye Fan pondered thoughtfully. His body harbored 108 Power Seeds, but he had only one Mind Power Seed. Enhancing his magic cultivation through meditation seemed much easier than enhancing his martial arts cultivation.

Once his magic cultivation improved, if he broke through to the Innate Great Perfection Realm, then the power of his flying knife assassination would be significantly enhanced!

The Qi Rushes to the Sky was his primary killing move in his martial arts domain. If he could break through to the third level, it would allow him to strike with 27 times the power of a normal hit, and with the amplification of the Black Iron Fist set, it would be 54 times. This power exceeded even that of the flying knife assassination!

Although the flying knife assassination was covert and suited for catching an opponent off-guard, Ye Fan knew that now, with the entire Huaxia Cultivation World's attention on him, those martial arts geniuses

prepared to attend the Qing bang competition were likely aware of the prowess of his flying knife assassination and would take extra precautions.

Thus, the threat posed by the flying knife assassination had greatly reduced, naturally making it necessary to think of a new trump card!

Deep in thought, Ye Fan did not notice, nor could he have detected, that hundreds of meters away in a grove, Chu Xuanji, with white hair, held an ancient compass, activating the Divination Skill.

"Master Wumu hasn't shown up, but why is there still a symbol of great misfortune? Could it be that Xiao Fan's herb-seeking journey will encounter an assassination by a foreign Gang Qi realm expert? Or perhaps an encounter with a demon beast that mutated after absorbing the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi?"

Understanding Master Wumu's character, since he had humiliated him that day, Chu Xuanji believed it highly possible that Wumu might seek revenge, and it would likely target Ye Fan.

Having this thought, he divined for Ye Fan before he set off to gather herbs and, discovering signs of great misfortune, followed him all the way.

So far, Master Wumu had not appeared, but the omens of great misfortune for Ye Fan had not only persisted, they had become even clearer, which perplexed Chu Xuanji.

He was well aware that the Gang Qi realm experts outside Huaxia, due to their fear of the Yanhuang Organization and the entire Huaxia Cultivation World, would mostly not dare to take the huge risk of entering Huaxia stealthily.

As for a beast absorbing the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi and mutating into a demon beast comparable to Gang Qi realm experts, that only happened once globally at Mount Tian, involving a mutated White Tiger.

Back then, the mutated White Tiger had attacked a village near Mount Tian and was killed by the itinerant Bodhi Wu Yin using a supreme spell from the Wu Shang Buddha Sect!

"The sign of great misfortune for Xiao Fan must still stem from Master Wumu!"

After pondering, Chu Xuanji still adhered to his initial judgment, a flicker of murderous intent passing through his eyes.

Out of respect for Yan and due to a proud warrior's dignity, he wouldn't slay Wumu using his superior strength, but if Wumu tried anything against Ye Fan, Chu Xuanji would not let him survive!

...

Nolan Manor.

Having not slept all night, Nolan Changfeng arrived at an estate in the middle of an artificial lake.

Like the other buildings in the manor, the lakeside estate was also built in Qing dynasty style.

It was the residence of Nolan Mingde and also the center of Nolan Manor; it also served as the Array Eye of the formation in the manor, gathering the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi from the surroundings, making it quite suitable for cultivation.

As the absolute overlord of the Half-step Gang Qi realm, Nolan Mingde also knew that breaking through to the Gang Qi realm was not something that could be achieved overnight, nor could it be rushed.

As a result, after another failed attempt to break through to the Gang Qi realm, Nolan Mingde did not continue his retreat last night. In fact, due to the matter of Nolan Xuan being killed, he wasn't even in the mood for cultivation.

"Dad, although Xiao Xuan was killed by that little beast Ye Fan, it fundamentally stemmed from those two people from Changshi Village," said Nolan Changfeng, surrounded by a murderous aura, his eyes filled with intense killing intent. "Therefore, not only must we make that little beast's head accompany Xiao Xuan in death, but those two from Changshi Village must join them too!"

"We cannot rush this matter."

Nolan Mingde shook his head. He was deeply saddened and angered by Nolan Xuan's death, but he knew they couldn't touch Elder Miao and Miao Xiuling until after Master Wumu had dealt with Ye Fan; otherwise, if Ye Fan truly waged a massacre at Nolan Manor, it would spell disaster for the Nolan clan!

"Dad, that little beast is just bluffing; he won't stay in Changshi Village to protect those two," perhaps overflowing with rage, Nolan Changsheng was eager for vengeance and couldn't wait a moment longer.

"He has now entered Changbai Mountain, and it's very likely he'll leave from Changshi Village when he descends."

Nolan Mingde, seeing the vengeful urge in Nolan Changsheng, thought for a moment and said, "Let's wait for him to leave Changbai Mountain before we make a move on those two."

"Okay!"

Nolan Changfeng nodded, then asked, "By the way, Dad, did Wu Mu say when he would make a move on that little beast?"

"Wu Mu won't take action personally; instead, he has instructed his senior disciple, Ku Rong, to do it."

Nolan Mingde replied, "Currently, Ku Rong is at the realm of Innate Great Perfection but isn't confident about killing that little beast. Therefore, Wu Mu wants to craft a top-grade high-level magical artifact, the Soul Summoning Banner for him! That's also why Wu Mu came to our family to exchange for the Soul-devouring Blade—the crafting of the Soul Summoning Banner requires a large amount of resentful energy and spirits."

"And if he can't craft the Soul Summoning Banner, or say he can't do it within a few years, what then?" Nolan Changfeng couldn't wait that long.

Nolan Mingde shook his head and said, "That won't happen. According to Wu Mu, he is going next to the North Korea Special Zone. That area was a battlefield in the 1950s, where over a million soldiers were buried, abundant with resentful energy, more than enough for him to craft the Soul Summoning Banner. If nothing goes wrong, he should be able to do it very soon."

"That's good."

Having heard this, Nolan Changfeng breathed a sigh of relief, but his expression soon turned dark again, "I really want to tear that little beast into pieces myself!"

This time,

Nolan Mingde was silent.

Because he sensed that Ku Rong's presence was approaching them.

A moment later, Wu Mu arrived at Courtyard No. 1 with Ku Rong.

"Mingde, to help you kill Chu Xuanji's disciple sooner, I'm taking Ku Rong to the North Korean Special Zone now and came to bid farewell," Wu Mu said frankly without sitting down as he entered the hall.

"Everything is in Master Wu Mu's hands now!"

Nolan Mingde gave a respectful bow, then, along with Nolan Changfeng, escorted Master Wu Mu and his disciple Ku Rong out of Nolan Manor.

"Master, we've already obtained the Soul-devouring Blade, why not extract the spirits from the blade first and initially craft the Soul Summoning Banner into a mid-level magical artifact?" Ku Rong couldn't help but voice his confusion after they had left Nolan Manor nearly three miles behind.

Last night, after Nolan Mingde and Wu Mu reached an exchange agreement, Nolan Changfeng retrieved the Soul-devouring Blade and handed it over to Wu Mu right away.

Initially, Ku Rong thought Wu Mu would craft the Soul Summoning Banner last night, but Wu Mu spent the night in meditation and cultivation, and after he finished, he immediately took him to bid farewell to Nolan Mingde.

"The spirits inside the Soul-devouring Blade are more formidable than I anticipated and are not easy to extract and integrate into the Soul Summoning Banner," Wu Mu explained. "Furthermore, while we could first craft the Soul Summoning Banner as a mid-level magical artifact and upgrade it to a high-level artifact with absorbed resentful energy once we reach the North Korea Special Zone, the effect wouldn't be as good as crafting it in one go—I plan to set up the Soul Summoning Array in the North Korea Special Zone and absorb the lonely souls' resentful spirit. Once the time is right, then I'll extract the spirits from the Soul-devouring Blade."

"I see," Ku Rong suddenly understood, then again inquired, "Master, since the spirits in the Soul-devouring Blade are stronger than you expected, then the Soul Summoning Banner must surely become a top-grade high-level magical artifact, right?"

"Heh! If I, as your master, completely absorb the resentful energy of a million lonely souls in the North Korea Special Zone, along with the spirits from the Soul-devouring Blade, the Soul Summoning Banner will become the most powerful magical artifact in this world! It might even rival the Sect Suppressing Demon Artifact of the ancient Cultivation World's Demon Sect!" Wu Mu said with a cold smirk.

"Sss—"

Upon hearing this, Ku Rong involuntarily gasped.

As the senior disciple of the Ghost Sect, he had seen numerous records about the ancient Cultivation World and was well aware of the Demon Sect's strength back then.

The strength of the Demon Sect, besides the formidable power of its sect leader, largely depended on possessing a powerful Demon Artifact!

According to the records, that Demon Artifact was more powerful than any magical artifact from the righteous path at that time, even claimed to be a legendary 'semi-magical weapon'!

"Master, based on what you've said, if I wield the successfully crafted Soul Summoning Banner, killing that bastard will be as easy as turning over my hand!" Excited at the prospect of wielding a Soul Summoning Banner comparable to the ancient Cultivation World's Demon Artifact, Ku Rong was as thrilled as if injected with adrenaline.

"Hmph, not only that. Your master is already one foot into the Peak of Gang Qi. Once the Soul Summoning Banner is crafted, even Chu Xuanji won't be able to do anything against me!" Wu Mu gave a sinister smile, his eyes filled with anticipation, "And once I successfully step into the Peak of Gang Qi, even if Chu Xuanji doesn't come for me, I will go to him and show him who truly is the number one Magician!"

Chapter 547 The Inevitable Battle - Part 2

A month later.

Changbai Mountain Heavenly Pond.

A figure stood in the icy water, his right fist swung up violently, and he struck the pond with a punch!

"Boom——"

With the punch, power burst forth, blasting the water open and turning it into a spray that scattered in the air, a spectacular sight to behold.

"Still not right!"

As the water droplets fell, soaking Ye Fan's hair and bare upper body, he wasn't concerned about it. Instead, he frowned in deep thought.

In the past month, he had explored all the dangerous places around Changbai Mountain and finally, ten days ago, found another herb necessary for the Lifespan Extension Pill in a crevice of the rocks in a valley not far from the Heavenly Pond—the Sky Cold Mushroom.

After collecting the Sky Cold Mushroom, Ye Fan intended to leave but discovered that the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi around the Heavenly Pond was rich, so he decided to cultivate there.

This cultivation lasted ten days.

During the past ten days, apart from using meditation to absorb Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi to enhance his Magic Cultivation, he devoted all his energy to cultivating the Third Level of "Qi Rushes to the Sky".

As the killing move of the High-level Martial Arts "Xuansha Fist", each level of "Qi Rushes to the Sky" increased the power ninefold, extraordinarily powerful, yet so difficult to master that Ye Fan spent a full ten days and still couldn't figure it out.

"In the world of martial arts, speed is of the essence. That old bastard and Aunt Chu Ji both said that the second and third levels of 'Qi Rushes to the Sky' emphasized speed, while levels beyond the fourth combined both speed and slowness."

"After ten days of exploration, although I can now accumulate power in a very short period, I can't compress it at the same time, and I can't release 27 times the power!"

"The reason for all this is because I cultivated the 'Nine Heavens Profound Skill', storing power in 72 acupoints with different pathways for the power to travel through."

In the morning light, Ye Fan reflected on what Chu Xuanji and Chu Ji had said, and murmured thoughtfully, "True speed is not only about how fast the punch is thrown, but also how quickly the power is gathered and condensed into one point before it bursts out."

Thinking hard, a spark of insight flashed in Ye Fan's mind, and he slapped his forehead suddenly, "I'm such an idiot——why am I trying to gather power from 72 vital acupoints? If I only use the power from one vital acupoint, it could solve the problem of not being able to gather up the power at the same time!"

"Huh!"

Having realized this, Ye Fan threw another punch in the manner of 'Qi Rushes to the Sky'.

This punch, because he only mobilized the power from the acupoint closest to his right fist, gathered power much faster than any of his previous punches!

Power concentrated, compressed...

Release!

"Boom——"

Accompanied by a muffled sound, the water in front of Ye Fan blasted away again, creating a whirlpool as the water dispersed in all directions.

"Huh~"

Sensing the power of this punch, Ye Fan let out a long sigh of relief and a smile of joy appeared on his face, "I've finally mastered the Third Level of 'Qi Rushes to the Sky'. With the power of this punch, if an Innate Great Perfection Cultivator were to take it directly, it would undoubtedly be lethal!"

"This kid managed to master the Third Level of 'Qi Rushes to the Sky' in just ten days, truly worthy of being Xiao Yun's son, his comprehension is terrifying."

Several hundred meters away from the Heavenly Pond, within the forest, Chu Xuanji watched Ye Fan create a whirlpool with a punch and scatter the water around him, so shocked that his mouth hung open.

As in the past month, because Chu Xuanji was far stronger than Ye Fan and deliberately concealed his presence, even with the High-level Magic Artifact, the Ghost Ring, Ye Fan couldn't sense Chu Xuanji's presence.

"Although the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi here is abundant, it's impossible for me to break through to the Innate Great Perfection Realm in a short period. It's time to leave." Ye Fan emerged from the Heavenly Pond and decided to leave.

After all, his main reason for coming out was to find the herbs for the Lifespan Extension Pill, and furthermore to see if he could encounter any serendipity that could improve his strength in a short time—cultivation was a secondary concern.

"Now that I have the Immortal Grass and Sky Cold Mushroom for the Lifespan Extension Pill, only four ingredients are missing, one of which is the Yin Spirit Flower located in the Shangganling area of North Korea Special Zone, not far from here. I should head there first."

Putting on a set of gray sportswear, Ye Fan thought for a bit and decided his next stop would be North Korea Special Zone.

In the afternoon, Ye Fan returned to Changshi Village and did not see Elder Miao in the village but learned from Zhang Dasheng that Elder Miao had gone into the mountains to gather herbs early in the morning.

Concerned, Ye Fan specifically inquired if any Nolan Family member had come to cause trouble for Elder Miao, and, having learned that they hadn't, he was completely relieved. He decided not to wait for Elder Miao and left Changshi Village directly, heading for North Korea Special Zone.

...

Just one hour after Ye Fan left Changshi Village, Nolan Changfeng appeared in the lakeside No. 1 Pavilion's hall at the Nolan Manor.

"Dad, you really thought of everything!"

In the hall, Nolan Changfeng stood in front of Nolan Mingde and spoke with lingering fear.

"That little bastard went to Stone Village again when he left?" Nolan Mingde, after a moment of thought, guessed the reason.

"Yes, it's all thanks to your advice to practice patience and hold back from taking action against that old bastard."

Nolan Changfeng nodded, recalling how he had sent people to Stone Village and learned that Miao Xiuling had been taken away and only Elder Miao remained in the village.

At that time, he wanted to order Elder Miao's capture, but he remembered Nolan Mingde's warning and held back.

And just a while ago, he received a report from the Nolan Family intelligence personnel that Ye Fan had reappeared in Stone Village, hence he came to report to Nolan Mingde.

"Now that he has left Changbai Mountain, you can take action against that old man."

Nolan Mingde said, understanding very well that Nolan Changfeng had had a tough month; if not for the Nolan Family's overall interest, Elder Miao might have been torn to pieces long ago!

"Mmm!"

Sure enough, Nolan Changfeng coldly nodded his head, then coldly laughed, remembering something, "Dad, guess where that little bastard went?"

"Where?"

"North Korea Special Zone!"

"Uh..."

Startled by the news, Nolan Mingde first froze, then sneered, "It seems he's in a hurry to join Xiao Xuan in the afterlife!"

Nolan Changfeng sneered and nodded in agreement.

Because he knew Wu Mu and Ku Rong, the master and disciple, were currently in the North Korea Special Zone and would stay there for some time.

And since the North Korea Special Zone wasn't large, Ye Fan was likely to encounter them there!

...

Just as Nolan Changfeng had predicted, Wu Mu and Ku Rong had indeed not left the North Korea Special Zone.

Five Saints Mountain in the central part of Jinhua County, North Korea Special Zone.

Seventy years ago, during the era of the nation-states, a battle that was called a miracle by the militaries of various countries erupted here.

The Battle of Shangganling.

That battle was decisive for the war, completely crushing the arrogance of the Alliance Army and destroying their confidence, laying the foundation for the ultimate victory.

In that battle, the Volunteer Army annihilated 25,000 members of the Alliance Army, but also paid a heavy price—sacrificing 11,500 of their own!

After the war ended, China and North Korea built the Martyr Garden on Five Saints Mountain in memory of this great battle. It has now become the largest Martyr Garden in the North Korea Special Zone, where the heroic souls of tens of thousands of volunteers are buried!

Besides, the remains of the 25,000 members of the Alliance Army are buried in a place not far from the Martyr Garden, an area heavy with yin energy.

"Master, nearly forty thousand people died or were injured in the Battle of Shangganling. It should be the place with the heaviest yin energy in the North Korea Special Zone, with so many resentful spirits!"

At night, Ku Rong and Wu Mu arrived at Five Saints Mountain and sensed the pervasive yin energy. Far from paying respects to the valiantly fallen volunteers, they instead wore smiles of ill-intent.

Over the past month, he had accompanied Wu Mu to many places in the North Korea Special Zone, all of which were ancient battlefields with heavy yin energy and full of resentment.

Wherever Wu Mu went, he would set up a Soul Summoning Array, absorbing the resentment and resentful spirits of those places into a magic artifact.

Now, using that artifact, Wu Mu had already absorbed nearly a million resentful spirits, forming an entity even more powerful than the one inside the Soul-devouring Blade.

"After absorbing the resentful spirits and resentment here, we'll be able to forge the Soul Summoning Banner!"

Wu Mu also sensed the pervasive resentful spirits and resentment across the mountain and clearly saw a small military camp guarding the garden within.

Upon seeing this, Wu Mu, just as he did in the previous days when absorbing resentful spirits and resentment, first made hand seals, setting up a high-level 'Mysterious Formation.'

"All of you, sleep!"

Having done this, Wu Mu sneered and made hand seals once again.

As the seals were completed, the Primordial Qi above Five Saints Mountain fluctuated, forcibly dividing the yin and yang energies. A column of Evil Yin Qi descended from the sky, invisible, hurtling towards the military camp in the Martyr Garden.

In a matter of moments, the soldiers were overwhelmed by the Evil Yin Qi, collapsing unconsciously to the ground.

"Master, did you kill them?"

Ku Rong was slightly taken aback upon sensing this.

Although it would be trivial for Wu Mu to kill those soldiers, much like stepping on an ant, their deaths could potentially draw the military's attention. If the Yanhuang Organization decided to investigate, they might uncover some clues.

"I've merely put them to sleep temporarily."

Wu Mu sneered and shook his head, "Of course, by the time they wake up, they will all have gone mad, becoming lunatics."

"Master, how clever!"

Upon hearing this, Ku Rong immediately understood Wu Mu's intentions.

Besides the Shangganling Martyr Garden, many other martyr gardens and special cemeteries under guard have also had media reports over the past years of the guardians going insane and soon after departing this world.

Now, by doing this, Wu Mu seemed to be merely putting the soldiers guarding the Shangganling Martyr Garden to sleep when in reality, he was indirectly sending them to meet the King of Hell, just without leaving any traces.

After setting up the Enchanting Soul Array and dealing with the soldiers guarding the Martyr Garden, Wu Mu didn't linger. He took out five small black flags, each printed with many strange patterns and teeming with yin energy.

"Swoosh swoosh swoosh swoosh swoosh..."

Shortly after, Wu Mu activated his Mind Power, and the five small black flags flew out simultaneously, eventually planting themselves in five positions atop Five Saints Mountain.

After accomplishing this, Wu Mu took out a black jar.

Compared to the five small black flags, the yin energy within the black jar was even denser, enough to give Ku Rong a feeling of hair standing on end.

"Swoosh—"

Once again activating his Mind, Wu Mu released the black jar, which dropped to the center of the Martyr Garden.

Immediately afterward, Wu Mu didn't pause but began to wave his hands, releasing multiple hand seals as he started setting up the 'Soul Summoning Array.'

Wuu wuu wuu! Wuu wuu wuu!

Quickly, the sinister 'Soul Summoning Array' was successfully established. The mournful wails of ghosts and howls of wolves rang out as the resentful spirits, summoned by the array, scrambled towards the black jar.

"After seven days and seven nights, the resentful spirits and resentment here will be completely absorbed, and then we can forge the Soul Summoning Banner!"

Under the night sky, Wu Mu showed not a hint of remorse. Instead, he let out a sinister laugh, full of anticipation.

Chapter 548 The Great Battle Arrives

Time flowed like water, and before realizing it, seven days had passed.

At dusk, the afterglow of the setting sun spilled over Five Saints Mountain, which gleamed golden in the distance, seemingly no different from usual.

However—

If a cultivator approached, they would discover that a high-level array, the Enchanting Soul Array, had been set up on Five Saints Mountain, and the wandering lonely soul resentment had vanished without a trace.

"Congratulations, Master, on successfully collecting the lonely soul resentment from this place!"

On Five Saints Mountain, Ku Rong noticed that all the lonely soul resentment had been collected by Wu Mu's black clay pot and immediately offered his congratulations with a smile.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh..."

Without replying, Wu Mu's consciousness stirred, and he lifted the Soul Summoning Array. Five small flags, emanating sinister yin energy, flew through the air towards him, and he grabbed them all, stowing them in the backpack he carried.

Having put away the small flags used to set up the array, Wu Mu gestured with a large hand, and the black clay pot storing the lonely soul resentment flew into the air and landed in his hand.

"Hiss~"

Witnessing this scene, and feeling the cold energy from within the pot, even as an Innate Great Perfection Cultivator, Ku Rong felt a shiver in his heart.

With his current strength, he was incapable of controlling the resentful spirit formed by millions of lonely soul resentment.

On the contrary, if he dared to infuse his mind power into the pot, the resentful spirit within would attack his consciousness immediately, leading to his death and the annihilation of his path.

Compared to Ku Rong, Wu Mu was already a Gang Qi Great Success Realm Cultivator, with one foot stepping into the peak state. His strength far exceeded Ku Rong's, and his consciousness was much stronger.

Facing the pot that made Ku Rong feel uneasy, Wu Mu looked on as if gazing at a beloved, with a smile in his eyes.

"Master, will you refine the Soul Summoning Banner here, or will you wait until we return to the Sect?"
Ku Rong hesitated before asking.

"Naturally, I shall craft it here."

Wu Mu shifted his gaze away from the black pot, speaking with absolute firmness, his eyes full of anticipation.

For cultivators, combat strength mainly consisted of one's cultivation base, martial arts skills, combat experience, and magic artifacts. Improving any of these aspects would enhance one's combat ability.

For Wu Mu at present, if he succeeded in refining the top-grade high-level magical artifact, the Soul Summoning Banner, his combat power would greatly increase. He was confident that he wouldn't be at a disadvantage even if he faced Chu Xuanji.

In such a situation, he was naturally eager to craft the Soul Summoning Banner—why would he wait to return to the Sect?

"Next, your teacher will begin refining the Soul Summoning Banner. It will take approximately twelve hours. During this process, you should stand by quietly and observe without making any noise to disturb me," Wu Mu instructed.

"Yes, Master!"

Ku Rong quickly nodded. As Wu Mu's eldest disciple, although he had not fully inherited all of Wu Mu's teaching, he was knowledgeable in artifact crafting and well aware of the difficulties in creating high-level magical artifacts, where the slightest carelessness could lead to failure.

Wu Mu no longer paid attention to Ku Rong but took out an essence of plant that would drive ordinary cultivators to frenzy and ingested it. He then sat down cross-legged and entered meditation, converting the essence of Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi from the plant essence into mind power, replenishing the mental power he had previously expended.

Besides, he could store any remaining essence of Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi within his body, in case he ran out of mind power during the process of refining the Soul Summoning Banner.

"Give me the Soul-devouring Blade."

After an unknown period, Wu Mu, his mental power fully restored, suddenly opened his eyes, revealing a strange black gleam.

Ku Rong, hearing the command, didn't dare delay. He promptly removed the Soul-devouring Blade from his back and handed it to Wu Mu.

The Soul-devouring Blade was roughly a meter long and seven centimeters wide, with a dark, sinister blade and a snow-white edge that was dazzling to the eyes. It had complex patterns engraved on its handle.

As an ancestral treasure of the Nolan clan, passed down through generations, every head of the Nolan Family had practiced blood recognition with the blade, leaving behind a spiritual imprint and making it their life-bound artifact.

Although Wu Mu had traded three magical artifacts with Nolan Mingde for the Soul-devouring Blade, he had not yet erased Mingde's spiritual imprint within the blade. As such, withdrawing the resentful spirits with his techniques would not be easy.

First, he had to start by erasing Nolan Mingde's spiritual mark from the Soul-devouring Blade.

As soon as he set his mind to it, a flash of black light shot from Wu Mu's brow, and an invisible wave of mind power surged from the mind power seed within his forehead into the Soul-devouring Blade, transforming into an intangible blade of consciousness.

Telekinetic Transformation!

This was a technique available only to a Gang Qi Great Success Realm Mage, similar to how a Gang Qi Great Success Realm Martial Artist could physically manifest Gang Qi.

Swish!

The blade of consciousness transformed from Wu Mu's mental power was incredibly powerful, and it cut through Nolan Mingde's spiritual imprint in an instant.

With Mingde's spiritual imprint gone, the Soul-devouring Blade became an ownerless object; the spirits within no longer had any control, instantly lunging towards Wu Mu's mental projection.

"Hmph!"

Wu Mu let out a cold snort as his mental power evolved again, transforming from a blade into a large net that ensnared the resentful spirit.

Wuwuwu! Wuwuwu!

The resentful spirit was bounded by Wu Mu's net of mental power and began struggling wildly; ghostly wails resonated within Wu Mu's mind.

Wu Mu's consciousness was as unyielding as rock, unshaken. A flash at his brow, and another wave of mental power entered the Soul-devouring Blade, strengthening the net of mind power and greatly increasing its might, rendering the resentful spirit immobile.

Swish!

Having done all this, Wu Mu pulled out a black flag from his backpack. The flag was made from a piece of special cloth adorned with various terrifying patterns, dark as ink and rolling with yin energy.

Ku Rong saw this and his pupils shrunk abruptly.

This flag was the legendary Soul Summoning Banner in its embryonic form, which Wu Mu had once obtained from an ancient tomb. Its age was considerable, its array had dissipated, and it could no longer be classified as a magical artifact. However, Wu Mu was capable of refining it into a fully-formed Soul Summoning Banner.

Chapter 549 The Great Battle Arrives_2

Whoosh!

Extracting the Soul Summoning Banner, Wu Mu's hands transformed into a series of Phantoms, rapidly waving and casting a sequence of complex and intricate handprints.

When the handprints were completed, the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi above the Five Saints Mountain fluctuated violently, and streams of Evil Yin Qi separated from it, then converged together to form a bone-chilling Yin wind.

"Summon!"

Immediately, Wu Mu uttered a low shout, raising his handprints to the sky. The gathered Evil Yin Qi in the sky, as if beckoned by a call, shaped into an invisible column of Yin Qi that descended from the sky and surged into the Soul Summoning Banner.

As the Evil Yin Qi poured in, the flag of the Soul Summoning Banner flickered with black light, displaying one terrifying pattern after another that appeared devil-like and demon-like, dazzling to the eyes.

Time was lost before the Evil Yin Qi above the Five Saints Mountain was entirely absorbed by the Soul Summoning Banner, transforming it into an invisible vortex of Yin Qi; the flag fluttered without wind, eerily so.

Noticing this scene, Wu Mu silently breathed a sigh of relief, then re-entered a state of meditation cultivation, absorbing part of the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi stored within his body into Mind Power, before he then performed magic to extract resentful spirits from within the Soul-devouring Blade.

Woohoo! Woohoo!

The resentful spirits burst forth from the Soul-devouring Blade emitting a scream that made Ku Rong's scalp tingle, and then, drawn by the Yin wind vortex, they plunged into the Soul Summoning Banner.

The Soul Summoning Banner immediately became even darker and more secluded, with an air of Yin Demons seeming to emerge on its surface.

"Hoo~"

Having successfully drawn the resentful spirits from within the Soul-devouring Blade into the Soul Summoning Banner, Wu Mu silently breathed another sigh of relief, and then proceeded as before, triggering magic again to extract the resentful spirits from a black earthen jar.

Woohoo! Woohoo!

Likewise, as the resentful spirits formed by millions of Lonely Soul Resentments emerged from the black earthen jar, they emitted a heart-pounding scream, and then directly lunged at Wu Mu!

Whoosh!

Sensing this, Ku Rong's face suddenly changed!

Nevertheless, Wu Mu's expression remained unchanged. His hands moved quickly to form handprints, and he shouted lowly, "Go!"

"Swoosh——"

Restrained by magic, the resentful spirits couldn't approach Wu Mu more than half a foot, and uncontrollably poured into the Soul Summoning Banner.

Inside the Soul Summoning Banner, the resentful spirits from the Soul-devouring Blade, originally furiously absorbing the Evil Yin Qi, noticed the new resentful spirits integrating, and immediately pounced on them, intending to devour them, only to be counter-devoured instead.

Ultimately, only one immensely powerful resentful spirit was formed within the Soul Summoning Banner, wrapped in Evil Yin Qi, and emitting a terrifying aura.

The aura was so sinister and evil that it made Ku Rong tremble in fear, feeling as if a mere touch from that resentful spirit would obliterate both body and soul.

"Hoo~"

Having successfully extracted and merged the two resentful spirits, Wu Mu was finally done with the first and most crucial step in refining the Soul Summoning Banner, and he sighed in relief once more.

Next, like refining any other Magic Artifact, he would lay one Formation after another inside the Soul Summoning Banner, and finally seal his own Spiritual Imprint, turning the Soul Summoning Banner into his Life-bound Artifact.

Sometime later, under Ku Rong's watchful eye, Wu Mu repeatedly formed handprints, setting up Formations inside the Soul Summoning Banner, not stopping until the distant sky showed the first light of dawn.

Is it done?

Seeing Wu Mu with sweat on his brow and a somewhat pale face, Ku Rong was a bit worried but more so hopeful.

"Swoosh——"

Ku Rong's question was answered by a whooshing sound as the Soul Summoning Banner suddenly flew up and landed in Wu Mu's hands.

"Master, has the Soul Summoning Banner been successfully refined?" Ku Rong couldn't help asking.

Wu Mu wiped the cold sweat from his forehead and nodded slightly, "Originally, I thought that with my strength, crafting a top-grade high-level magical artifact would be no problem, but now it seems I was somewhat arrogant—if I hadn't prepared a plant essence in advance, I probably wouldn't have been able to successfully craft it!"

"Congratulations, Master! From now on, with the Soul Summoning Banner in hand, not to mention Chu Xuanji, even Yan wouldn't be able to trouble you!" Ku Rong promptly offered a flattery upon hearing this.

"Alright, as your master, I need to meditate to replenish the mind power I've spent. You familiarize yourself with the Soul Summoning Banner," he instructed.

Although Wu Mu knew that with the Soul Summoning Banner he could contend against Chu Xuanji, realistically contending against Yan, the strongest person of this era, was unlikely, but he still enjoyed Ku Rong's compliment and with a flick of his hand, sent the Soul Summoning Banner flying towards Ku Rong.

Ku Rong caught the Soul Summoning Banner and triggered mental perception.

"It's... It's really powerful!"

Under its influence, Ku Rong's complexion drastically changed as he exclaimed incessantly.

Wu Mu smiled and absorbed the essence of Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi stored within his body.

Meanwhile.

Tens of kilometers away, Ye Fan, clad in a sportswear, carrying a backpack, and swift as the wind, hurriedly streaked towards Five Saints Mountain!

"A Mysterious Formation?"

When he was less than five kilometers from Five Saints Mountain, Ye Fan noticed that the mountain was enveloped by a surge of Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi, forming a Mysterious Formation. He abruptly stopped, his pupils contracting!

"Whoosh——"

Just then, a sound of breaking air arose, and Chu Xuanji, who had been secretly following and protecting Ye Fan, suddenly appeared.

"Old... old guy?!"

All this time, Ye Fan had not noticed Chu Xuanji following him and was stunned upon seeing him, unable to close his mouth.

"There are traces of Wu Mu and his major disciple, Ku Rong, on Five Saints Mountain!"

Chu Xuanji didn't explain why he appeared, but instead frowned and said, "If I am not mistaken, Wu Mu the old thief previously set up a Soul Summoning Array here to absorb the lonely soul resentment for crafting magic artifacts!"

"Absorbing lonely soul resentment to craft magic artifacts? This is Shangganling Martyr Garden, where the heroes of the Volunteer Army from those days are buried. His actions severely violate the Yanhuang Organization's rules!" Ye Fan's face changed.

"Not only that, the lonely soul resentment in many places within the North Korea Special Zone has vanished without a trace, presumably all his doing," Chu Xuanji's eyes narrowed slightly, almost certain of his suspicion.

"Master, since he blatantly violates the Yanhuang Organization's rules and desecrates the heroic souls who sacrificed themselves to protect our homeland, you can punish him on behalf of Master Yan," Ye Fan suggested.

"Hmm, I will rush over first, lest Wu Mu the old thief escapes!"

Previously, Chu Xuanji was reluctant to strike against his old rival, Wu Mu, as he didn't want to bully the weak and be ridiculed by those in the cultivation world; he also wanted to give face to Yan. But now, he had an excuse to act.

As his words fell, a surge of Gang Qi appeared beneath Chu Xuanji's feet. He leapt up, stepping on the Gang Qi, and flew rapidly towards Five Saints Mountain.

Qi Control Flight!

At this moment.

To prevent Wu Mu from escaping, Chu Xuanji, sparing no expense of his internal Gang Qi, proceeded with Qi Control Flight.

Whoosh!

Meanwhile, atop Five Saints Mountain, Wu Mu suddenly opened his eyes, his gaze sharp as a knife sweeping towards the rapidly approaching Chu Xuanji!

Chapter 550 Chu Xuanji vs Wu Mu - Part 1

"Master... Master, who is that person? What a terrifying aura?"

Ku Rong's eyes were wide with alarm, yet he could only perceive a stream of Qi rapidly approaching, unable to clearly discern Chu Xuanji's figure within it. He could only sense the terrifying presence that was Chu Xuanji.

"Chu Xuanji!"

Wu Mu stood up abruptly, a trace of surprise crossing his features.

Because... he could vividly feel the frightening war intent emanating from Chu Xuanji, realizing that Chu Xuanji was coming for him.

Surprise aside, Wu Mu was relieved to have already successfully refined the Soul Summoning Banner, and, by absorbing the stored essence of Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi within his body in the short time just now, he had recovered more than half of his telekinesis.

Otherwise, had Chu Xuanji caught him absorbing the lonely souls' resentment of the Shangganling area through the Soul Summoning Array and attacked him, he would have had no power to fend off the assault.

"Chu... Why would Chu Xuanji come here?"

As Wu Mu's senior disciple, Ku Rong was acutely aware of the past grudges between Wu Mu and Chu Xuanji. Knowing about Wu Mu's humiliation at the hands of Chu Xuanji in Hospital 301, he was so startled upon hearing the newcomer was Chu Xuanji that his mouth hung open in shock.

"Wu Mu, you old fiend, you dare to openly harvest souls and resentment from the Martyr Cemetery, desecrating heroic spirits, treating the Yanhuang Organization's regulations as nothing. You are truly heinous and deserve death. Come forward and meet your end!"

Without waiting for Wu Mu to respond, Chu Xuanji's voice suddenly exploded in the sky, thunderous like rolling thunder.

"Hmph!"

Upon hearing this, Wu Mu snorted coldly, his consciousness stirring, as he manipulated Qi streams with his mind, leaping into the air and soaring into the sky.

Just like a Martial Artist at the Gang Qi Great Success Realm, a Mage at the same realm could fly, not by Qi Manipulation Flight, but through the use of mind power to manipulate Qi streams for flight.

Moreover, Mages at the Gang Qi Great Success Realm could also use their minds to manipulate Qi streams for transformation during attacks, though the power was not as great as that of Martial Artists at the same realm when they transformed Gang Qi into form for attacking.

But—

Mages at the Gang Qi Great Success Realm could also use thought transformation to attack the opponent's soul and perform magic attacks, which in terms of attack power far exceeded those of

Martial Artists at the same realm. However, their physical capability was too weak and their defense too poor; if a Martial Artist got close, it would be unquestionably fatal.

"Old Dog Chu, which of your eyes saw me harvesting the souls' resentment from the Martyr Cemetery?"
Wu Mu quickly flew into the air, confronting Chu Xuanji from a distance.

Although he was not afraid of Chu Xuanji because he possessed the top-grade high-level magic artifact, the Soul Summoning Banner, he did not want to admit to harvesting the heroic spirits from the Martyr Cemetery; otherwise, he would be hunted down by the Yanhuang Organization.

The Yanhuang Organization, apart from Yan, had three other Inner Sect Elders.

With his strength, he couldn't even contend with Yan, let alone face the joint pursuit of the four; he would most likely fall!

Of course, if he fled to other alliances and hid, the Yanhuang Organization would have no way to deal with him.

But in that case, he would have to vanish and live in constant fear for the rest of his life.

"Although you removed the Soul Summoning Array, you left the Mysterious Formation, and here the resentful spirits have vanished completely—the evidence lies plainly before our eyes, how can you still deny it?"

Chu Xuanji stopped flying, levitating 500 meters from Wu Mu, staring coldly at him while releasing his Spiritual Sense to perceive everything happening around Five Saints Mountain.

"Old Dog Chu, you've never cared for the world's populace, so why do you suddenly play the Saint today? I see you falsely accusing me, framing me in order to find an excuse to strike at me," Wu Mu said with a scornful smile. It had been Yan who had gone to Spirit Mountain to invite Chu Xuanji, who then chose to descend the mountain to save the world, and not a decision made by himself.

"Falsely accusing?"

Chu Xuanji locked his mind onto the Soul Summoning Banner behind Wu Mu, narrowing his eyes and saying, "The Evil Yin Qi rolls off your Soul Summoning Banner; it must be a high-level magic artifact. If you did not absorb the resentful spirits' Qi in the North Korea Special Zone, how could you possibly have refined it?"

"Moreover, if I'm not mistaken, in refining the Soul Summoning Banner, on one hand you wanted your disciple to use it against Xiao Fan to make a name for himself in the Qing Bang competition, and on the other, you aimed to use it against me!"

At last, Chu Xuanji realized the source of the looming great disaster for Ye Fan. His aura surged, eyes filled with intensified killing intent, "Today, you will undoubtedly meet your death here!"

"Maybe if it were Yan, but you're not capable!"

Seeing that he could no longer hide the fact that he was absorbing the lonely souls' resentment, Wu Mu stopped pretending and responded with a cold laugh.

"Swoosh—"

As his words fell, the Soul Summoning Banner, under the manipulation of his mind, automatically flew out, hovering in front of him.

In the morning light, amidst howling yin winds, the Soul Summoning Banner exuded strands of Evil Yin Qi.

Unlike ordinary Evil Yin Qi, the Qi from the banner was exceptionally pure, no longer formless or colorless, but appeared as black mist enveloping Wu Mu.

Hm?

Noticing this, Chu Xuanji's brows rose.

He'd only suspected earlier that the Soul Summoning Banner in Wu Mu's hands was a high-level magical artifact, but now, seeing the black-colored misty Evil Yin Qi, he was certain of it!

"Wu Mu, you old fiend, do you really think a high-level magic artifact is enough to withstand me?" After a fleeting surprise, Chu Xuanji relaxed his brows, full of disdain.

Even though his magic cultivation was only a half-step into the Peak of Gang Qi, his martial arts cultivation had already reached that peak. Combining magic and martial arts, he was unquestionably invincible below the Great Perfection peak.

"High-level magical artifact? Open your dog eyes and look carefully!"

Upon hearing this, Wu Mu sneered and fully activated the Soul Summoning Banner.

Woo woo woo! Woo woo woo!

The sound of ghostly wails and wolf howls arose as the Soul Summoning Banner burst forth with dazzling black light. The range of the black mist expanded nearly a hundredfold in an instant, engulfing the entire sky above Five Saints Mountain like a massive black cloud.

Within the black mist, a sinister ghost appeared intermittently, with an evil stare fixed on Chu Xuanji, as if ready to pounce on him and tear him to shreds at any moment.

"A top-grade high-level magical artifact?"

As the full power of the Soul Summoning Banner was displayed, Chu Xuanji immediately discerned its quality but still didn't take it to heart, sneering instead, "Wu Mu, if you had broken through to the peak stage of Innate, you might have been worthy of a battle with me, but now you're nothing—prepare to die!"

"Swoosh!"

As his words ended, Chu Xuanji fully triggered the Gang Qi within his body, his speed suddenly increasing as he transformed into a streak of light, rushing toward Wu Mu.

"Ghost King Descent!"

Despite possessing a top-grade high-level magical artifact, Wu Mu did not dare to be negligent in the face of Chu Xuanji, ranked second on the Dragon Ranking. He multitasked, retreating explosively while controlling the air currents with his mind power and simultaneously waving his hands, executing the handprint for the 'Ghost King Descent'.

'Ghost King Descent' was a killing move from the Ghost Sect's signature technique, 'Ghost Demon Skill,' and was recognized as a high-level technique. It could summon evil yin objects by utilizing evil yin Qi to attack and harm or destroy an opponent's consciousness, and its power was extremely formidable.

Previously, when Wu Mu's disciple, Duanmu, failed to assassinate Ye Fan, he used a mid-level magical artifact, Ghostly Gourd, to trigger this move. Although it was just the first level of its power, it nearly killed Ye Fan.

Although it was a killing move, due to Wu Mu's profound mastery of magic cultivation and his main study in the 'Illusion Technique' stream within magic and formations, his hand-sealing speed was far beyond what Ye Fan could compare with.

Three breaths later, Wu Mu completed the hand-sealing. The Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi surrounding the Five Saints Mountain seemed to be summoned, converging towards the sky above the Five Saints Mountain. Strands of evil yin Qi separated from it, pouring down toward Wu Mu's location like a waterfall.

Woo woo woo! Woo woo woo!

As the yin energy appeared, resentful spirits howled.

Resentful spirits inside the Soul Summoning Banner emitted a hair-raising shriek and burst out of the banner, turning into a dark shadow.

The shadow was nearly three meters tall and enshrouded in black mist, which seemed to be formed from thousands of yin ghosts with ferocious expressions, chilling to the bone.

"Swoosh—"

With the appearance of the resentful spirits, the omnipresent evil yin Qi seemed to be summoned, all being absorbed by the resentful spirits.

After absorbing the evil yin Qi, the shadow formed by the resentful spirits grew continuously larger, eventually becoming a monstrous figure tens of meters tall. It radiated rolling yin energy and wielded an Evil Yin Blade, extremely terrifying.

Beneath the Five Saints Mountain, as an Innate Great Perfection Cultivator, Ku Rong saw the evil yin monster in the sky, felt the evil, decayed aura emanating from the monster, trembling in spirit, his face pale, his body uncontrollably starting to shake.

Not just him, even Ye Fan who was swiftly approaching the Five Saints Mountain, upon remotely sensing the presence of the evil yin monster, felt a palpitation.

Even Chu Xuanji, upon detecting the fearsome aura of the evil yin monster, abruptly stopped and his eyebrows knitted slightly.

On one hand, the strength of the evil yin monster formed by Wu Mu through the Soul Summoning Banner using 'Ghost King Descent' exceeded his expectations. On the other hand, since the core of the evil yin monster was the resentful spirits, he could not break it with magic—If he used his magic to attract evil yin Qi, it would all be absorbed by the resentful spirits, inadvertently aiding Wu Mu in strengthening the evil yin monster!

"Go!"

Seeing Chu Xuanji halt, Wu Mu ceased his retreat, switching from defense to offense, commanding the evil yin monster to fight through the Soul Summoning Banner.

"Hehehehe..."

The evil yin monster let out a hair-raising sinister laugh, leaped forward, and rapidly burst forth, blade in hand, charging at Chu Xuanji.

Facing the attack of the evil yin monster, Chu Xuanji stood in place without dodging or evading. The blood Qi within his body completely boiled over, forming an almost tangible halo of Blood Qi around his body.

Five hundred meters!

Four hundred meters!

Three hundred meters!

Two hundred meters!

Just as the evil yin monster got within less than two hundred meters of Chu Xuanji, Chu Xuanji sent a punch through the air toward the monster!

"Whoosh!"

With one punch, a stream of Gang Qi shot out from Chu Xuanji's right fist, mingled with the Blood Qi in front of him, blasting toward the evil yin monster like a cannonball. The air was completely ruptured in its path, creating a vacuum with crackling sounds incessantly ringing in the ears.

"Swoosh—"

Faced with Chu Xuanji's ferocious strike, the evil yin monster, as if sentient, didn't dodge or evade but directly slashed out!

Swish—

With one slash from the evil yin monster, a surge of evil yin Qi was brought up, turning into a dark sword light, cleaving at the rapidly approaching Gang Qi.

"Boom—"

In an explosive moment, the sword light collided with the fist Gang Qi, creating a thunderous sound.

Crackle and pop!

After the muffled sound, both the sword light and the fist Gang Qi nearly dissipated at the same time, with the terrifying energy waves spreading outwards in every direction, the sounds of air bursting continuously echoing about!

An equal match!

In this strike, the evil yin monster and Chu Xuanji fought to a standstill.

"Heh, it seems I still underestimated the power of the Soul Summoning Banner!"

Upon seeing this, Wu Mu sneered confidently.