

WAR SOVEREIGN 141

Chapter 141: Laying a Trap, Massive Gamble

"Kid, did you hear what the Vice Guild Master said? If you can't prove your identity as a Grade Nine Alchemist, then the Alchemist Guild will reclaim your Alchemist Guild crest." Xiao He looked at Duan Ling Tian with a gaze filled with a sense of looking at a joke.

What a joke!

He wouldn't believe no matter what that this little kid was a Grade Nine Alchemist...

One by one, the gazes of the people present descended upon Duan Ling Tian, and even more people were waiting for Duan Ling Tian to make a fool of himself.

Duan Ling Tian glanced at the surrounding people as he asked, "None of you believe that I'm Grade Nine Alchemist?"

Even though no one replied, their questioning gazes explained everything...

"You're called Xiao He?" Duan Ling Tian turned his gaze over to Xiao He, and his eyes flashed with a trace of a cunning brilliance that he didn't allow Xiao He to notice.

"Exactly, I'm Xiao He." Xiao He perked up his head in an incredibly arrogant manner as he looked down upon Duan Ling Tian.

"If do you dare to make a bet with me?" Duan Ling Tian asked.

"Humph! I'm not interested in betting with you," Xiao He sneered. Even though he didn't know what exactly Duan Ling Tian had up his sleeve, being someone who could become a Grade Nine Alchemist at the age of 20, he naturally wasn't a fool.

"Haha... The Crimson Sky Kingdom's most gifted genius alchemist, an alchemist at the age of 20? What an undeserved reputation!" Duan Ling Tian started laughing with a carefree expression, but anyone could perceive that Duan Ling Tian was actually mocking Xiao He as a cowardly person.

"Kid, don't change the subject. Didn't you hear what the Vice Guild Master said? If you can't prove you're an alchemist, then you have to hand over that Alchemist Guild crest!" Xiao He looked at Duan Ling Tian with an expression that said 'Stop acting, I saw through your act long ago.'

"When did I change the subject? The bet I want to carry out with you is precisely in response to the Vice Guild Master's request. What I want to bet on is: if I can prove that I'm a Grade Nine Alchemist, then you'll lose 5,000,000 silver to me. Conversely, if I'm unable to prove it, then I'd lose 5,000,000 silver to you.... Do you dare?" Duan Ling Tian gazed at Xiao he with a tranquil expression.

5,000,000 silver?

Hua!

The gamble which Duan Ling Tian spoke of was like a pebble tossed onto the water, raising a thousand ripples. The surrounding crowd instantly burst into an uproar!

Even the Alchemist Guild's main guild's Vice Guild Master, Ye Lun, looked at Duan Ling Tian with a gaze full of interest. "Could it be that he really is a Grade Nine Alchemist? However, if he really is a Grade Nine Alchemist and had passed the verification process to obtain the Alchemist Guild crest, then why didn't the Alchemist Guild that registered him not report this to the main guild?" There were too many questions within Ye Lun's heart...

"5,000,000 silver?" Xiao He was stunned.

5,000,000 silver was nothing to him. If he wanted it, the Xiao Clan would surely satisfy his wish. After all, he was the genius alchemist who the Xiao Clan was focused fostering, and he was an existence would sooner or later become a Grade Seven Alchemist.

However, he had only been a Grade Nine Alchemist for a year, and most of the medicinal pills he refined were to complete the Alchemist Guild's assignments in order to earn Alchemist Guild points. Currently, he only had with him the 3,000,000 silver the clan gave him.

"What, you don't dare?" Duan Ling Tian looked at Xiao He and started laughing. "If that's the case, then I guess you think I'm a Grade nine Alchemist. Now, shouldn't you take back your questioning towards me and admit that I'm a Grade Nine Alchemist? At the same time, you must admit that I'm an even more gifted genius alchemist than you! And your reputation as the Crimson Sky Kingdom's most gifted genius alchemist of the younger generation is undeserved!"

Since Xiao He appeared, Duan Ling Tian had seen through the sort of person he was. Xiao He was an arrogant and conceited person, and it was exactly this point that he picked out to use as a means to force Xiao He to accept his bet under the gazes of everyone present.

He was confident that with Xiao He's arrogant personality, he would absolutely not admit that he didn't dare.

"Haha. What a bullsh*t genius alchemist; he's nothing more than a coward!" Duan Ling Tian continued to add fuel to the flame, breaking down the last line of defense within Xiao He's heart...

Ye Lu glanced deeply at Duan Ling Tian. "This violet-clothed youth, can it be that he's really confident?"

"OK, I agree! However, can you even produce 5,000,000 silver?" In the end, Xiao He still agreed to the bet, and he looked at Duan Ling Tian with a mocking smile.

As far as he was concerned, everything this youth said earlier was surely said on purpose to embarrass him, and now he would unravel the violet-clothed youth's lies!

Can you even produce 5,000,000 silver?

For a moment, the gazes of the surrounding crowd all descended upon Duan Ling Tian. They were all stunned by the massive gamble that Duan Ling Tian spoke of... 5,000,000 silver wasn't something that anyone would be able to casually put forth!

Even a Grade Nine Alchemist would at least need tens of years to earn that amount of silver...

"Are you sure?" After hearing what Xiao He said, Duan Ling Tian didn't rush to withdraw his silver, as he wanted to make Xiao He enter his trap completely, and in this way Xiao He wouldn't be able to go back on his word.

"What, you're scared?" Seeing Duan Ling Tian like this caused Xiao He to think that Duan Ling Tian was afraid of being found out, and he laughed loudly before looking at the surrounding people and Ye Lun. "Vice Guild Master, you and everyone present here shall be the witnesses of today's gamble..."

"I, Xiao He, and this ignorant kid establish a gamble. If he can prove that he's a Grade Nine Alchemist, I'll lose 5,000,000 silver to him! And if he is unable to prove he's a Grade Nine Alchemist, then he will lose 5,000,000 silver to me!"

As he finished speaking, Xiao He added, "But of course, the precondition to this gamble would be him being able to produce 5,000,000 silver!"

The meaning of what he said was nothing more than saying if Duan Ling Tian couldn't produce such an amount of silver, then the gamble would have no meaning.

As far as he was concerned, doing this was more than enough to reveal Duan Ling Tian's scheme.

"Of course I'll produce the silver, but I'm afraid you might not be able to." Duan Ling Tian looked at Xiao He and smiled lightly.

"I can't produce it? Kid, I'm the genius alchemist that's being fostered by the Xiao Clan; I only need to say the word to get 5,000,000 silver. I understand now, this is just your way of evading the bet because you're incapable of producing 5,000,000 silver. You said this on purpose, right?"

The smile on Xiao He's face grew even wider, and the last trace of worry within his heart vanished as he firmly believed that Duan Ling Tian wasn't able to produce such an amount of silver. And everything that happened was just something Duan Ling Tian did on purpose with the objective of making him afraid of agreeing on the bet, thus causing him be embarrassed and lose face in public.

"What, I've unraveled your lies? Don't have anything to say?" Seeing Duan Ling Tian slightly hesitating caused Xiao He to sneer. "If you don't have that much silver, then don't act beyond your means! If you're sensible, then cut the crap and hand over your Alchemist Guild crest."

Duan Ling Tian's eyes narrowed as he spoke indifferently, "As long as you can produce 5,000,000 silver and pass it to the Vice Guild Master for safekeeping, I naturally will produce my 5,000,000 silver and pass it to the Vice Guild Master as well. Unfortunately, however, you're probably unable to produce such an amount..."

The smile on the corners of Xiao He's mouth completely froze as he said, in a low voice, "Kid, are you not done? Fine, I'll pass 5,000,000 silver to the Vice Guild Master right now. Vice Guild Master, I only have 3,000,000 silver with me right now; can I borrow the other 2,000,000 silver from you?" Xiao He withdrew a stack of silver with a wave of his hand and passed it over to Ye Lun.

As the Xiao Clan's genius alchemist, Xiao He was the only one among the Xiao Clan younger generation that possessed a Spatial Ring.

Ye Lun's brows lightly twitched, but in the end he didn't say anything as he received Xiao He's silver and nodded.

"Kid, did you see that? That's my wager. Where's yours?" Xiao He held his head high as he looked at Duan Ling Tian and sneered unceasingly as he waited for Duan Ling Tian to make a fool of himself.

"What a joke! You say you're the Xiao Clan's disciple, but you have to borrow from another person just to gather a mere 5,000,000 silver...tsk tsk." Duan Ling Tian couldn't help but laugh.

"Cut the crap. Where's your wager?" Xiao He's face sank, and a desire to kill the violet-clothed youth abruptly arose within his heart.

This kid was too hard to deal with!

"Watch closely. This is my wager.... Although I'm just a nobody, I don't need to borrow money from someone else to gather a mere 5,000,000 silver." Duan Ling Tian put his hand into his pockets on purpose before withdrawing all the silver within his Spatial Ring, then he passed it over to Ye Lun. "Vice Guild Master, this is my wager. Please count it..." Ye Lun was stunned for a moment before he received the silver from Duan Ling Tian.

After counting for a moment, he nodded. "Yes, it's precisely 5,000,000 silver."

As he finished speaking, Ye Lun had an extremely complicated gaze. He vaguely realized that everything was a trap laid by this violet-clothed youth, and he was just waiting for Xiao He to jump in... He used Xiao He's conceited personality against him!

This violet-clothed youth was really too terrifying; he completely made use of Xiao He's weakness. At this point, he was almost completely sure that the violet-clothed youth was a genius that slipped through the Alchemist Guild main guild's net; he should indeed be a Grade Nine Alchemist... but he was still slightly anticipating the scene when the youth proved himself.

"What the f**k! It's really 5,000,000 silver. Who is this youth?"

"Even Xiao He wasn't able to produce 5,000,000 silver and needed to borrow some silver from the Vice Guild Master.... However, he easily produced 5,000,000 silver. Truly unbelievable!"

"Since he can produce so much silver and he initiated this gamble, could it be that he's really a Grade Nine Alchemist?"

"Since the matter has already come to this, do you think it's possible that he's so kind as to gift so much money to Xiao He?"

"If he's really a Grade Nine Alchemist, then it's really too unbelievable! An 18-year-old Grade Nine Alchemist is absolutely a new record within our Crimson Sky Kingdom!"

"Looks like we're lucky enough to witness this special moment."

...

The surrounding crowd grew in number, as everyone who entered the Alchemist Guild crowded over. After some of the people who were unaware of what happened heard of the sequence of events from the person beside them, they looked at Xiao He and Duan Ling Tian with interest as they waited from the crucial moment to arrive...

Of these two people, one of them was the famous genius alchemist in Crimson Sky Kingdom! And the other was only a nobody!

Chapter 142: Divine Might Marquis Estate

"No... it can't be... how could he possibly be able to produce 5,000,000 silver!" Xiao He's expression became extremely unsightly when he gazed at the stack of silver in Ye Lun's hand. He was unwilling to believe that all of this was real.

Now even he realized that he had fallen for the violet-clothed youth's trap! However, deep within his heart, he still wasn't willing to believe that this youth was really a Grade Nine Alchemist.

Of course, this mostly came from him not accepting the fact that he was surpassed!

Only he knew how much hard work he expended in order to become a Grade Nine Alchemist at the age of 20. He wasn't willing to believe that there was someone within the younger generation in Crimson Sky Kingdom with natural talent that surpassed his!

Duan Ling Tian's brows slightly raised. He naturally noticed the change in Xiao He's expression, but there wasn't a trace of pity within his heart. Today, if it wasn't for this Xiao He picking a fight with him, he would have already accepted some assignments and started making money.

When completing an assignment of the Alchemist Guild, one is able to choose between points-based compensation and monetary-based compensation. Duan Ling Tian came here precisely to accept assignments and make money.... As for the Alchemist Guild points, when he was in Aurora City, he 5,000 points from Su Mo, and that was sufficient for now.

Since Xiao He incited the matter of his own accord, then he would have to pay the price for his actions. 5,000,000 silver was precisely the price Xiao He had to pay!

Actually, even Duan Ling Tian didn't expect that he would actually encounter such an unexpected joyful event when he came to the Alchemist Guild's main guild; it completely exceeded his expectations. He was going to obtain 5,000,000 silver without needing the slightest effort!

He wished he could encounter such a good opportunity a few more time.

Seeing that all of the gazes of the people present had descended on his body, the corners of Duan Ling Tian's mouth held a smile as he raised his hand with his palm facing upwards.

Hiss!

A strand of milky white Pill Fire instantly sprouted out of Duan Ling Tian's hand and slowly flickered...

Silence.

At this moment, the entire Alchemist Guild lobby was deathly silent. Everyone's gazes were upon the Pill Fire on Duan Ling Tian's hand, and they couldn't return to their senses even after a long while.

Grade Nine Pill Fire!

If it was only a Grade Nine Pill Fire, it wouldn't be sufficient to cause surprise in them. However, when the Grade Nine Pill Fire appeared on the hand of an 18-year-old youth, it was sufficient to cause them to be so surprised that they wouldn't be able to sleep for a few days...

An 18-year-old Grand Nine Alchemist... what kind of monster was this?!

Ye Lun was the first to react. His eyes narrowed as he stared at Duan Ling Tian and a slight smile appeared on the corners of his mouth. Never had he thought that there was actually such an outstanding alchemist within their Crimson Sky Kingdom!

This is the real genius alchemist!

Xiao He was utterly incapable of comparing with him!

Subsequently, the people present reacted, and for a moment the entire lobby was filled with the sounds of exhaling breaths of cold air that rose and fell unceasingly...

"An 18-year-old Grade Nine Alchemist. I wonder which clan he's from?!"

"Yeah, such a genius alchemist is virtually a new record in our Crimson Sky Kingdom. Even our Alchemist Guild's main guild's Guild Master, an existence that's from the Azure Forest Imperial Kingdom, allegedly only became a Grade Nine Alchemist when he was nearly 20."

"In other words, this youth's natural talent is even more monstrous than the Guild Master's during his youth! And his future accomplishments might even possibly surpass the Guild Master's?"

"The Guild Master is the one and only Grade Six Alchemist within our Crimson Sky Kingdom. Since this kid surpassed him, doesn't that mean that he has a chance to become a Grade Five Alchemist?"

"Monster! Monstrous talent!"

...

The surrounding crowd was not one bit stingy on their praises of Duan Ling Tian.

Some of the people's gazes descended onto Xiao He and they couldn't help but shake their heads. They knew that at the instant that violet-clothed youth condensed a Grade Nine Pill Fire, the genius halo atop Xiao He became a thing of the past; it was now history.

This violet-clothed youth was the one that truly deserved being acknowledged as the most gifted genius alchemist within the younger generation of the Crimson Sky Kingdom!

Xiao He didn't even amount to scraps in front of him!

Xiao He's body was trembling. He had recovered from the shock and quickly noticed the gazes full of pity that were upon him. At this moment, he felt his heart tremble!

One year ago, how awe-inspiring he was when he became a Grade Nine Alchemist at the age of 20! But now he was surpassed by an even younger youth, and had even lost 5,000,000 silver to the youth.... All of this made him feel too ashamed to show his face!

As far as he was concerned, the gazes from the surrounding people were more like gazes that were ridiculing and mocking him!

"Vice Guild Master, I'll get someone to send the 2,000,000 silver over to you later." Xiao He's voice was hoarse and deep. He swept Duan Ling Tian with a cold gaze and memorized Duan Ling Tian's appearance before leaving the Alchemist Guild, only leaving behind these words.

If Xiao He were to find out that Duan Ling Tian's current appearance was only the product of his disguise, it was a mystery as to what his expression would look like.

The people present all knew that it probably wouldn't take long for today's matter to spread through the entire Imperial City. At that time, Xiao He would really lose face!

"Kid, here's your 10,000,000 silver." Ye Lun took out another 2,000,000 silver from his own pocket, combined it with the 8,000,000 silver already in his hand, and passed it over to Duan Ling Tian.

"Thank you, Vice Guild Master!" Duan Ling Tian put away the silver and lightly smiled to Ye Lun.

"Hmm?" Meanwhile, Duan Ling Tian noticed that there were a few gazes filled with greed on him that were coming from the surrounding crowd.

The corners of Duan Ling Tian's mouth curled into a sneer.

Targeting his money?

"Kid, let's go have a chat inside. How about it?" Ye Lun looked at Duan Ling Tian and invited with a light smile.

Duan Ling Tian nodded before leaving the Alchemist Guild lobby with Ye Lun to enter to the rear hall.

"Kid, what's your name?" Ye Lun asked Duan Ling Tian.

"Ling Tian." Duan Ling Tian didn't reveal his full name, and this name was precisely his name during his previous life.

"Ling Tian? Surnamed Ling, named Tian.... What a good name!" Ye Lun praised as his eyes emanated a brilliant light. "Kid, are you interested in joining our Alchemist Guild? As long as you're willing to join, the Alchemist Guild will go all out in fostering you. In the future, you'll even have the chance to head to the Azure Forest Imperial Kingdom's Alchemist Guild and experience an even vaster world!"

As far as Ye Lun was concerned, this was an extremely huge temptation, and the youth before him probably wouldn't refuse.

However.

"Forgive me, Vice Guild Master, I have no intention of joining the Alchemist Guild." Duan Ling Tian faintly shook his head.

"Then that's really unfortunate." Ye Lun was stunned for a moment before returning to his senses. He didn't try to force Duan Ling Tian.

He was able to notice that although the youth before him was young, his eyes emitted a sense of wisdom, and he was absolutely not someone who would change his decision on a whim.

"Vice Guild Master, if there's nothing else, then I'll be taking my leave," Duan Ling Tian said to Ye Lun before leaving the rear hall.

Upon noticing Duan Ling Tian arriving at his counter, the young man behind the counter in the lobby took a deep breath and didn't dare neglect him in the slightest. "May I know if you're posting or accepting an assignment?"

"Accepting an assignment. Let me take a look at your assignment folders," Duan Ling Tian said with a light smile.

The young man didn't expect that Duan Ling Tian would be so friendly and felt slightly overwhelmed from the unexpected attitude as he hurriedly passed over the folder to Duan Ling Tian.

"Thank you." Duan Ling Tian smiled to the young man before starting to flip through the assignment folder.

Most of the assignments within the folders related to the refinement of grade eight medicinal pills, and although there were quite a few assignments requiring grade nine medicinal pills, the compensation was extremely low.... Duan Ling Tian had no interest whatsoever in such low compensation.

Before long, Duan Ling Tian arrived at the one of the first few folders among the assignment folders... An assignment that was posted 3 years ago.

Assignment poster:

Cavalry Grand General, Divine Might Marquis, Nie Yuan.

Assignment details:

Cure the poison of the Divine Might Marquis Estate's Senior Marquis!

The Senior Marquis was infected with the Void Stage Demon Beast Dark Nether Mink's poison...

A Demon Beast is a type of formidable beast that surpasses fierce beasts, similar to how a fierce beast surpasses a wild animal.

Only a fierce beast at the ninth level of the Nascent Soul Stage and who breaks through to the Void Stage after surviving the Six-Nine Lightning Tribulation will undergo a metamorphosis and transform into a Demon beast!

"Dark Nether Mink wouldn't attack humans under ordinary circumstances.... Looks like it's probably the Senior Marquis who provoked it, and as a result was bitten by it!" Through the memories of Rebirth Martial Emperor, Duan Ling Tian obtained quite the understanding of the Dark Nether Mink.

"This assignment's reward..." Duan Ling Tian's gaze descended upon the back of the folder.

Assignment reward:

The Divine Might Marquis Estate will satisfy any condition that is within their power by the person who completes this assignment.

"This generation's Divine Might Marquis seems to be that Cavalry Grand General or whatever again.... I wonder what his status is like within the Imperial City," Duan Ling Tian thought in his heart. He then asked the young man behind the counter, "May I know what sort of figure this Cavalry Grand General, Senior Grand Marquis Nie Yuan is?"

Unexpectedly, however, admiration and veneration was aroused in the young man upon hearing what Duan Ling Tian said. "Divine Might Marquis Nie Yuan Grand General is a figure similar to a God of War in our Crimson Sky Kingdom, and along with his majesty the Emperor, he holds control over half of the military might of the kingdom. As for the Divine Might Marquis Estate, its status within the Crimson Sky Kingdom is not one bit inferior to the large clans like the Xiao Clan."

"Besides that, the Divine Might Marquis himself is allegedly a Void Stage powerhouse with a strength not one bit inferior to the 18 County Governors of the Crimson Sky Kingdom!" the young man slowly said.

Duan Ling Tian was shocked, as he originally thought that the Divine Might Marquis Estate was just any other ordinary Grand General Estate, but never had he imagined that it would have such a background.

"Right, how do the Duan Clan and the Xiao Clan compare with each other?" Duan Ling Tian asked.

The young man lightly smiled as he said, "The Duan Clan and the Xiao Clan are both equally famous large clans of the Imperial City."

"Thank you." Duan Ling Tian nodded before closing the folder and passing it back to the young man.

"Didn't find a suitable assignment?" the young man asked.

"No." Duan Ling Tian lightly smiled and left after saying goodbye to the young man.

The young man couldn't help but sigh as he saw Duan Ling Tian's figure disappear into the distance.

"What demeanor! Not arrogant nor conceited.... Unlike that Xiao He, whose alchemist natural talent is only ordinary compared to his but is fond of putting on airs."

Duan Ling Tian had only just left the Alchemist Guild when three figures slowly walked out of a nearby street and followed him.

Chapter 143: Nie Yuan, Nie Fen

"Where's that kid?" The three middle-aged men had followed the violet-clothed youth into a secluded alleyway, and just when they thought that they were going to hit their target, they noticed that the violet-clothed youth had vanished at the fork in the road ahead.

"Split up and search!" a green-clothed middle-aged man said in a low voice as his eyes flickered with an extremely greedy brilliance. Just when the three of them were about to split up and search...

"You don't have to search anymore." A lazy voice echoed out before them, causing them to shudder as if being jolted awake from a dream.

Subsequently, what they saw was the violet-clothed youth walk out from the alley. Wasn't this youth exactly the target they were looking for?

Duan Ling Tian's eyes narrowed as he stared at the three of them. He had already taken notice of these three people when he was still at the Alchemist Guild's lobby. At that time, when he put away the 10,000,000 silver, these three people's eyes emitted a brilliance of greed and bloodthirst; they obviously coveted his silver. As expected, he noticed these three tails the moment he left the Alchemists Guild.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The three middle-aged men's bodies jerked as they flashed out to surround Duan Ling Tian, as if they were afraid that he would run away. They didn't even stop to ask themselves: if Duan Ling Tian wanted to run, would he have appeared at this time?

However, their minds were currently shrouded with covetous intentions, and all that was left in their hearts was that 10,000,000 silver!

One of the middle-aged men had a gaze filled with greed as he licked his dry lips and said, in a low tone, "Kid, hand over the 10,000,000 silver, and maybe the three of us might leave your corpse intact."

"An 18-year-old Grade Nine Alchemist... Tsk tsk, being able to kill such a genius alchemist in my lifetime is really the virtue of my ancestors." Another of the middle-aged men's eyes glowed as if Duan Ling Tian was already dead.

Duan Ling Tian's eyes narrowed as he unexpectedly asked, "If I hand over the 10,000,000 silver to you, will you let me off?"

"Kid, seeing as you're able to become a Grade Nine Alchemist at the age of 18, you probably have an extraordinary background... and you've seen the faces of us three brothers, so we won't take the risk. So you don't have the qualifications to negotiate with us! You'll undoubtedly die today!" The green-clothed middle-aged man in the lead grunted in a low voice as his eyes emitted a dense killing intent.

"Then there's nothing to talk about, right?" The corners of Duan Ling Tian's mouth contained a smile as he spread out his hands and shrugged.

The greed-clothed middle-aged man frowned, as Duan Ling Tian being so composed even until now made him feel apprehensive, and his face sank unconsciously as he shouted, in a low voice, "Kill him! Anything can happen at any time!"

Instantly, the three middle-aged men moved out in unison, and above each of them appeared tens of ancient mammoth silhouettes. They were obviously three Origin Core martial artists...

Duan Ling Tian's eyes focused as he raised his arm and said, in a low voice, "Little Black!"

Whoosh!

Instantly, a black bolt of lightning flashed out of Duan Ling Tian's sleeve and circled around him before bringing about three dazzling and resplendent strands of fresh blood as it dropped onto Duan Ling Tian's hand. It was a black, single-horned little python that was flicking its tongue, seeming to be seeking credit from Duan Ling Tian.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The three middle-aged men that were about to attack Duan Ling Tian instantly dropped to the ground dead! On each of their chests was a tiny, bloody hole which was unceasingly spouting out fresh blood....

"You..." The green-clothed middle-aged man was still slightly conscious. He glared at the violet-clothed youth, who was teasing the little black python, before struggling for a moment, but it was to no avail and he ended up dying in despair.

There was only one thought in his mind before he died: if the heavens were to give him a chance to do it all over again, he would absolutely not throw away the lives of himself and his two brothers for 10,000,000 silver.

But unfortunately, it was all too late!

"Little fellow, all you did was kill three Origin Core martial artists; is that something to be so complacent about?" Duan Ling Tian rubbed the small head of the little black python with a gaze filled with warmth before putting it back into his sleeve.

"I gave you all a chance... but unfortunately, you didn't cherish it." Duan Ling Tian's gaze locked on to the three corpses for bit, and the corners of his mouth curled into a vicious smile.

When he left, Duan Ling Tian's gaze descended upon the end of the alley ahead. He seemed to have noticed something. He glanced deeply at that direction before turning around and leaving.

After Duan Ling Tian left, a figure slowly walked out of the end of the alley. The figure's eyes were filled with a sense of astonishment.

"Did he notice me? How could that be possible.... Even that fourth level Nascent Soul fierce beast beside him didn't notice me. Maybe it's just my misconception.... However, I really worried for nothing, and I never imagined that he would have such a formidable fierce beast to protect him," the middle-aged man muttered to himself. Looking at his appearance, wasn't it precisely the Alchemist Guild's main guilds Vice Guild Master, Ye Lun?

"Infected with the Dark Nether Mink's poison.... That assignment was posted three years ago as well. If that Senior Marquis is a martial artist at the Void Prying Stage or above, then he might still be barely hanging on now. If he isn't, then I fear he's gone to heaven long ago. Hmm, I may as well go ask." Duan Ling Tian didn't return home after leaving the alley but instead inquired about the whereabouts of the Divine Might Marquis Estate before heading over.

As expected of an existence that was equally as famous as the Imperial City's large clans, such as the Duan Clan and the Xiao Clan. The entire Divine Might Marquis Estate encompassed a vast area of land and was extraordinarily grandiose, giving people an unconscious feeling that it was boundless.

At the Divine Might Marquis Estate's main gate, Duan Ling Tian was stopped by four soldiers in light armor.

"The Divine Might Marquis is worthy to be called a Grand General, so his estate guards are veteran soldiers that have bathed in blood on the battlefield." Duan Ling Tian felt a familiar aura on the four middle-aged soldiers, the aura of bloody slaughter from the battlefield...

"Who are you?" A soldier in light armor glanced at Duan Ling Tian before shouting a question in a stern voice.

Duan Ling Tian's brows raised as he slowly spoke. "Who I am isn't important. I came here because I wanted ask you all one thing. Is the Senior Marquis of your Divine Might Marquis Estate still alive?"

As far as Duan Ling Tian was concerned, as long as the Senior Marquis was still alive, then he had a chance. He didn't, however, think that anyone would have cured the Senior Marquis of his poison during these three years, as the Demon Beast Dark Nether Mink wasn't a poison that just anyone could cure!

"Ignorant kid, you actually dare curse our Senior Marquis?!" The expressions of the four soldiers turned grim and the auras of slaughter on their bodies increased explosively. They were about to attack Duan Ling Tian.

However, what Duan Ling Tian said next made them stop in their tracks.

"I'm here to help your Senior Marquis cure his poison." Duan Ling Tian had a carefree expression as he slowly spoke.

What Duan Ling Tian said caused the four armored soldier to glance at each other, and after a moment, one of them turned around to enter the Divine Might Marquis Estate.

"Wait a moment. My brother has gone to report to the Marquis," one of the armored soldiers said to Duan Ling Tian. Although he felt that what this youth said wasn't really believable, he still didn't dare neglect him. If the youth had a remarkable figure behind him and they were to offend the youth, then it would also mean that they'd offended the remarkable figure.

If that remarkable figure were to really have the ability to cure the poison of the Senior Marquis but refused due to their disrespect, then their losses would outweigh their gains. Moreover, he noticed that although this violet-clothed youth's appearance was ordinary, his movements were filled with the bearings of a remarkable figure, so he obviously wasn't an ordinary youth.

Duan Ling Tian's current appearance after disguising himself was indeed an extremely ordinary face, one that would be easily lost within a crowd.

In next to no time, the soldier that went to report Duan Ling Tian's arrival exited the estate and respectfully said to Duan Ling Tian, "Young Master, the Marquis requests your presence."

Duan Ling Tian nodded before following behind the soldier and entering the Divine Might Marquis Estate.

Within the Divine Might Marquis Estate's audience hall.

A robust middle-aged man with a dignified appearance wore casual clothes as he paced back and forth...

"Father, didn't the soldier say that the person who came was just a youth? Can he really help cure grandfather's poison?" A young man around the age of 25 that had an imposing appearance spoke with a tone filled with doubt.

"Fen, three years ago when your grandfather was poisoned, even the Alchemist Guild's main guild's Guild Master, that Grade Six Alchemist, wasn't able to help. After that, even though our Divine Might Marquis Estate pledged a heavy promise, not one person came. If your grandfather continues to delay the poison within him, he probably won't be able to live another year."

"Therefore, no matter what, I still want to try. Moreover, how do you know that there isn't a remarkable figure behind that youth?" The robust middle-aged man was precisely the current Divine Might Marquis of the Crimson Sky Kingdom, the Cavalry Grand General, Nie Yuan!

Ordinarily, even when he met the Emperor of Crimson Sky Kingdom, he had not once lost his composure like this...

"That's true; there's no harm in trying. If he really can cure grandfather's poison, I, Nie Fen, will be deeply grateful!" The young man nodded with a flickering gaze.

The person he respected the most in his entire life was his grandfather, the figure that once shook the entire Crimson Sky Kingdom and was conferred the rank of nobility by the Emperor. That was how he became the Divine Might Marquis. In a manner of speaking, the glory of the Divine Might Marquis Estate was built up solely by his grandfather.

"Marquis, I've brought him." The voice of the soldier sounded from outside the audience hall.

Divine Might Marquis Nie Yuan's footsteps stopped when he heard the soldier's voice, and his gaze moved like lightning to look off far into the distance outside the audience hall. "Ask him in."

The moment Duan Ling Tian walked into the audience hall, he saw a robust middle-aged man with an extraordinary imposing manner.

"He should be the current Divine Might Marquis, the Cavalry Grand General, Nie Yuan...Eh? Wasn't he supposed to be a Void Stage powerhouse comparable to the 18 County Governors? He probably hasn't experienced the Six-Nine Lightning Tribulation and at most is an existence at the ninth level of the Nascent Soul Stage, or half a step into the Void Stage," Duan Ling Tian thought in his heart. Relying on the memories of Rebirth Martial Emperor, he saw through the middle-aged man's cultivation but with a glance.

"Divine Might Marquis." Duan Ling Tian slowly walked in and stood not far from the Divine Might Marquis as he lightly smiled. This could be considered his way of showing respect.

"Audacious!" Just at this moment, an explosive shout sounded from behind the Divine Might Marquis.

Duan Ling Tian glanced over to see a young man who had a 50-60% resemblance to the Divine Might Marquis. His eyes were wide open as he glared at Duan Ling Tian...

"Junior Marquis, I wonder where I have been audacious." Duan Ling Tian lightly smiled, as he guessed the identity of the young man.

"You meet the Divine Might Marquis, the Cavalry Grand General, but you actually dare to not bow? Is this not audacious of you?" the young man asked, in a low voice.

"Junior Marquis, what you say is incorrect. The most important in bowing is sincerity. If there is no respect in my heart and I bow insincerely, what use is that? Could it be that Junior Marquis likes an insincere bow?" Duan Ling Tian shook his head with a laugh.

Chapter 144: Senior Marquis

"You... you're arguing irrationally!" Nie Fen was flustered and exasperated when he heard Duan Ling Tian's difficult-to-refute words.

"Enough, Fen. What this little brother said isn't without its logic." The Divine Might Marquis Nie Yuan spoke before looking over to Duan Ling Tian with a focused gaze. "Little brother, do you really have a way to cure the Dark Nether Mink's poison?"

Duan Ling Tian lightly smiled. "Marquis, the current me doesn't have the ability to completely cure the Dark Nether Mink's poison within the Senior Marquis yet..."

"Humph! Father, I told you, even the Alchemist Guild's main guild's Guild Master was helpless against grandfather's poison; how could a kid like him have a way?" Nie Fen's face sank when he heard what Duan Ling Tian said.

"Fen, shut up." Nie Yuan glared at Nie Fen before gazing once more at Duan Ling Tian and asking, "Little brother, what do you mean by what you said?"

Duan Ling Tian shrugged as he slowly said, "The meaning is.... I can temporarily cure a portion of the Dark Nether Mink's toxic poison for the Senior Marquis, whereas the other portion would need to wait until I've become a Grade Eight Alchemist."

Grade Eight Alchemist? The father and son pair were both dumbstruck, then they sized up the violet-clothed youth in front of them.

This kid only looks to be around the age of 18, but he actually talked nonsense about becoming a Grade Eight Alchemist? Even if he can become a Grade Eight Alchemist, when will that be?! Who could afford to wait?!

"Kid, our Divine Might Marquis Estate doesn't have the time to fool around with you. Grade Eight Alchemist... to think you would dare to utter such nonsense! Even if it's just to become a Grade Nine Alchemist, I wonder how many more years it would...." Nie Fen had a displeased expression, but he wasn't able to finish what he wanted to say before being utterly dumbstruck and standing there like a log.

Only because in the movement of lifting his hand, a Grade Nine Pill Fire ignited on Duan Ling Tian's palm...

Nie Yuan's eyes shone.

An 18-year-old Grade Nine Alchemist?

This youth is virtually a bigger monster than that Xiao Clan's genius alchemist, Xiao He!

It was unknown, however, how Nie Yuan's expression would be if he knew that not too long ago, Duan Ling Tian had made fun of Xiao He in the Alchemist Guild and even duped Xiao He of 5,000,000 silver...

"I will surely become a Grade Eight Alchemist within two years! Before that, I can cure the toxic poison within the Senior Marquis's internal organs and allow the Senior Marquis to be rid of any pains from the toxic poison's flare. Once I've become a Grade Eight Alchemist, I can completely cure the Senior Marquis's poison, and furthermore cure his Void Prying Stage strength!" Duan Ling Tian tone was clear and firm, containing an extremely strong confidence.

Nie Yuan took a deep breath before he asking, in a low voice, "You... How did you know that my father was a Void Prying Stage martial artist?"

"The Senior Marquis couldn't have survived until now if it wasn't for him being a Void Prying martial artist. If I'm not wrong, the Senior Marquis's health is already on its last leg, and if he doesn't find a way to cure the poison within his internal organs, he probably won't last a year," Duan Ling Tian slowly said.

Nie Fen was slightly moved. He never would have thought that this youth that seemed seven or eight years younger than him would actually have such skill. The matter of his grandfather, the Senior Marquis of the Divine Might Marquis Estate, being unable to last another year was something that only a few people knew of even within the entire Divine Might Marquis Estate! But this youth was actually able to deduce it so accurately!

"Little Brother, I still don't know what your name is." Nie Yuan suppressed the excitement in his heart, as he now nearly completely believed what Duan Ling Tian said.

An 18-year-old Grade Nine Alchemist might really be able to make a miracle happen. Or maybe, an 18-year-old Grade Nine Alchemist was the miracle itself!

"Ling Tian!" Duan Ling Tian slowly said. He similarly didn't proclaim his true name in front of the Divine Might Marquis.

"Ling Tian?" Unexpectedly, however, Nie Yuan seemed to be dazed upon hearing his name, seeming to have thought of something as he sighed. Then he looked at Duan Ling Tian and asked, "Brother Ling Tian, how about I take you to see my father right now?"

Duan Ling Tian nodded.

Nie Fen's gaze flickered as he stared at Duan Ling Tian for a moment with a weird expression before lightly shaking his head.

Before long, Duan Ling Tian met the Senior Marquis in the rear courtyard of the Divine Might Marquis Estate.

The old man wore a grey robe, and due to being poisoned for many years, he seemed sickly to the point that it gave the illusion that a gust of wind would be able to blow him down. But even then, a domineering and dignified presence was emitted from the old man's brows, seeming to recount his glorious past...

"Father." Nie Yuan respectfully bowed the moment he arrived in front of the old man.

"Grandfather." Nie Fen was reverent and respectful as well.

"Senior Marquis." Duan Ling Tian followed up and smiled lightly to the old man.

"This is?" The old man's murky eyes abruptly shone when they saw Duan Ling Tian, his gaze seeming to be able to see through everything...

"Father, this is Brother Ling Tian. He's here to cure your poison," Nie Yuan said respectfully. He had always held his father in reverence. Even though his father wasn't as renowned compared to all those years ago, his father was still the towering colossal mountain within his heart.

"Oh?" The old man's eyes emitted a trace of amazement. He understood his son and thus knew that his son wasn't the type of person to shoot off at random. Since the youth was able to arrive here, then it showed that his son believed in this youth.

Duan Ling Tian casually acted like he put his hand into his pockets before withdrawing a paper and brush from his Spatial Ring. He wrote down some medicinal materials on it before passing it over to Nie Yuan.

"Marquis, prepare these medicinal materials, and after it's done, I'll refine a poison-curing pill for the Senior Marquis."

Refine a medicinal pill?

The old man's gaze focused and then he asked, in a slightly surprised tone, "Kid, you're an alchemist?"

"Grandfather, despite Brother Ling Tian's young age, he's a Grade Nine Alchemist," Nie Fen said with a light smile.

"Grade Nine Alchemist? Not bad, not bad." The old man nodded continuously as he looked at Duan Ling Tian, his tone filled with a heartfelt praise. An 18-year-old Grade Nine Alchemist... even his tranquil innermost being was startled....

Nie Fen followed Nie Yuan and left the rear courtyard, as they went to prepare the medicinal materials.

"Hey, Fen, tell me, how nice would it be if Brother Ling Tian was the son of your uncle Ru Feng..." On the way, Nie Yuan abruptly sighed.

"Father, they only just have the same name. Moreover, brother Ling Tian is surnamed Ling, and Uncle Ru Feng's son should be called Duan Ling Tian." Nie Fen shook his head. He couldn't help but think back to that unparalleled genius martial artist of the Duan Clan.

But unfortunately, the heavens were jealous of outstanding talent, so they gave them a rocky road to travel through!

"I don't know why, but when I see him, I have this kind of intimate feeling.... If it wasn't for me going out to battle that year, how would I have let sister-in-law and little Tian leave the Duan Clan! But unfortunately, I never once asked Ru Feng about sister-in-law's background, and although that Duan Clan fourth brother knows of her background, he's unwilling to say! I virtually have no way of tracking her and the child down."

"So many years have passed... I wonder how the two of them are doing." Nie Yuan had a face full of guilt and regret.

"Don't worry, Father. Aunt Rou and little Tian are be fine, as the heavens protect good people," Nie Fen consoled.

"Little Tian, that child should have grown up by now and should probably be around the same age as brother Ling Tian... Fen, do you think it's possible that they might be the same person?"

"Father, don't overthink things. Think about it, Uncle Ru Feng had an elegant and handsome appearance; even aunt Rou had a drop dead gorgeous appearance. How could their child have such an ordinary appearance? It's only just a coincidence. Moreover, Brother Ling Tian isn't surnamed Duan."

"That's true as well. The child of Ru Feng and sister-in-law would surely have an exceptional appearance."

...

In the rear courtyard, Duan Ling Tian and the old man sat facing each other.

"Senior Marquis, according to my knowledge, the Dark Nether Mink wouldn't attack humans on its own accord, so how did you come into conflict with it?" Duan Ling Tian asked the old man in doubt.

"Brother Ling Tian, you even know the habits of the Dark Nether Mink?" The old man was slightly surprised, and the feeling that the youth before him wasn't simple became even stronger. "You're right, the Dark Nether Mink wouldn't attack me of its own accord, but at the time I urgently needed a Spirit Fruit that the Dark Nether Mink was guarding, so I could only take a risk and force it to leave.... In the end, although it left, it also bit me. Luckily, I was able to smoothly obtain that Spirit Fruit."

"That Spirit Fruit is very important to you?" Duan Ling Tian asked.

"Yes, extremely important.... Without it, great misfortune would have befallen my wife." The old man slowly nodded.

The old man didn't give any details, and Duan Ling Tian didn't inquire any further, as everyone had their own secrets. Although, he was very curious about what Spirit Fruit the Dark Nether Mink guarded that would actually make the old man risk his life.

"Looks like Senior Marquis is not one bit regretful towards this matter," Duan Ling Tian said with a light smile.

"In life, there are things you must do and there are things you mustn't.... As far as I'm concerned, as long my family is safe and sound, it doesn't matter even if I die." The old man lightly shook his head with a carefree expression.

At this moment, even Duan Ling Tian couldn't help but be aroused with admiration... "This old man is worthy of respect!"

"Don't worry, Senior Marquis, the toxic poison within your inner organs can be cured as soon as the medicinal pill is refined, and at that time, although you still won't be able to use your Origin Energy, you can still live like an ordinary person and not be affected by the pain from the toxic poison flares," Duan Ling Tian slowly said.

"Then I'll thank Brother Ling Tian in advance." The old man nodded with a smile, and deep with his eyes, a trace of respect flashed by.

Maybe in terms of the Martial Dao he once stood at the peak of the Crimson Sky Kingdom and looked down upon everyone in his surroundings. But in terms of the Dao of Alchemy, he couldn't help but admire the youth before him.

A Grade Nine Alchemist at the age of merely 18, such natural talent was utterly astounding!

Before long, Nie Yuan and his son finished preparing the medicinal materials Duan Ling Tian requested.

Duan Ling Tian was free from concern as he directly withdrew his Cauldron in front of the three Nie family members and started refining the medicinal pill...

Although the three of them were outsiders of the Dao of Alchemy, Duan Ling Tian's practiced movements made it seem as if the gods were helping him. This became an eye-opener to them and caused respect to be aroused within their hearts.

After two hours, Duan Ling Tian focused and calmed himself before his hand struck down onto the Cauldron! Three medicinal pills that had streams of light revolving around them instantly flew out of the Cauldron before falling into his hand.

The medicinal pill he refined this time was the Spirit-Cleansing Pill. It was the Rebirth Martial Emperor's masterpiece of his lifetime and was able to cure a myriad of poisons...

Although the old man's poison was formidable, it was still inferior to the Origin Sealing Parasite Xiong Quan was infected with, and would thus only require a Grade Eight Spirit-Cleansing Pill to fully cure the poison. Whereas Xiong Quan's poison, on the other hand, would require a Grade Seven Spirit-Cleansing Pill to be cured.

"Senior Marquis, consume these three medicinal pills over the course of three months." Duan Ling Tian passed over the medicinal pills to the old man.

Chapter 145: The Start of Term is Around the Corner

"Alright!" The old man received the medicinal pills with a smile and directly consumed one of them.

After a short moment, the old man's gaze shone. "What a miraculous medicinal pill... The medicinal strength has only just dissolved and I already feel much more comfortable. Brother Ling Tian, what medicinal pill is this?"

"The Spirit-Cleansing Pill." Duan Ling Tian lightly smiled before bidding his farewell to the old man and returning to the Divine Might Marquis Estate's audience hall with Nie Yuan and his son.

"Brother Ling Tian, no words can express my gratitude! In the future, if you ever have any requests, as long as it's within the power of my Divine Might Marquis Estate, I will take responsibility without question!" The Divine Might Marquis Nie Yuan glance at Duan Ling Tian with a serious expression as he pledged.

"Marquis, you're too kind." Duan Ling Tian lightly smiled. He came to the Divine Might Marquis Estate to help the Senior Marquis cure his poison exactly for this promise, as he deeply knew how important this promised was.

At a critical juncture, it would even be able to save his life!

Although he had only been at the Imperial City for a month, he had already made two formidable enemies: the Duan Clan's second master and the Imperial Family's Fifth Prince.

Although he had never thought of using the power of the Divine Might Marquis Estate to deal with them, he still had to leave a path for himself to retreat.... The relationship with the Divine Might Marquis Estate was something that he wouldn't make use of lightly and would keep as a last resort!

Nie Yuan ordered Nie Fen to personally send Duan Ling Tian out.

"Brother Ling Tian, in my entire life, I seldom admire others besides my grandfather and father. Needless to say, you're the third person that I truly admire from my heart, as you've not only become a Grade Nine Alchemist at the young age of 18, you're even able to refine the medicinal pill to cure the poison of a Dark Nether Mink." Nie Fen couldn't help but sigh. He himself was an extraordinary young man within the Imperial City, and at a young age his cultivation had stepped into the Origin Core Stage. Combined with his impressive family background, he was an existence that did as he pleased within the entire Imperial City, but even then he still couldn't help but admire Duan Ling Tian.

He was deeply aware that a genius alchemist like Duan Ling Tian would absolutely not be limited to the Crimson Sky Kingdom in the future and would sooner or later become a formidable existence he had to look up to.

"Junior Marquis, you're too kind. Your natural talent in the Martial Dao isn't any worse." Duan Ling Tian modestly smiled.

Before long, Nie Fen sent Duan Ling Tian out of the Divine Might Marquis Estate. When the four soldiers noticed that the Junior Marquis personally sent the youth out, they were so shocked that cold sweat flowed from their bodies. "Luckily, we didn't offend this youth earlier, or else we would've really made a grave mistake!"

"Brother Ling Tian, in the future, if you're faced with any troubles within the Imperial City, you can come see me at any time. I dare not speak about other places, but in the Imperial City, there aren't many things that I can't settle!" Before going their separate ways, Nie Fen smiled to Duan Ling Tian and made this promise.

"If it really comes to that, I will surely not hold back." Duan Ling Tian nodded with a smile and bid his farewells before turning and leaving.

Only after Duan Ling Tian's figure disappeared into the distance did Nie Fen turn around and return to the Divine Might Marquis Estate.

The four soldiers at the gate glanced at each other with gazes that emitted astonishment.

"I didn't hear wrong, right? The Junior Marquis actually gave that youth such an exaggerated promise earlier!"

"With the Junior Marquis's promise, he can nearly do as he pleases within the Imperial City."

"Does the Junior Marquis taking a stand in such a way show that the youth was really able to cure the Senior Marquis's poison?"

...

After leaving the Divine Might Marquis Estate, Duan Ling Tian took a few detours before returning to his house. When he arrived, he removed the makeup on his face and recovered his handsome, sword-shaped eyebrows and starry-eyed appearance.

"I never thought that I'd gain such results in only just half a day." It was currently noon, and the corners of Duan Ling Tian's mouth curled into a satisfied smile as he smelled the scent of food coming from the kitchen...

The 5,000,000 silver was great, but the promise from the Divine Might Marquis Estate was absolutely priceless.

After leaving the front courtyard, Duan Ling Tian passed the main building and walked into the rear courtyard. Compared to the front courtyard, the rear courtyard was much more spacious. Duan Ling Tian had only just walked in when he saw two figures that seemed like butterflies dancing in the wind, giving off a beautiful feast for the eyes...

Duan Ling Tian walked into the pergola and greeted the woman that sat within. "Mom."

"Tian, you're back?" Li Rou's eyes flashed with a trace of doting as she lightly smiled.

Her days went by in a very relaxed manner, no different from how it used to be when her husband was still present, and all of this was something that her son strived for. Unknowingly, her son who once made her worry her heart out had now grown to this extent.... Now she had no other requests.

"Yes." Duan Ling Tian nodded. He sat with his mother and started to gaze at the two beautiful girls that were currently cultivating their martial skills in the distance...

"Tian, no matter what, you can't let them down, or else Mom won't forgive you!" Li Rou abruptly said, with a tone filled with warning.

"Don't worry, Mom." Duan Ling Tian shook his head and laughed bitterly. He felt that his mother was really too oversensitive. The two girls had practically become a part of his life that was difficult to give up; how could he ever let them down?

Time flew by, and in the blink of an eye, nearly two months passed.

"Still slightly lacking." Duan Ling Tian sat cross-legged on his bed as he slowly opened his eyes, and sighed.

Ever since he returned from the Divine Might Marquis Estate that day, he hadn't once stepped foot outside his home, and besides accompanying his mother and his two fiancées, he spent practically all his time cultivating. Although he progressed swiftly, up until now he was still a small step away from the fifth level of the Core Formation Stage.

"Never mind, I'll let nature take its course.... It's about time to report in at Paladin Academy." Duan Ling Tian's brows knitted as he got up from his bed.

Duan Ling Tian didn't bring the two girls along when he went to Paladin Academy; only Xiong Quan and Little Black followed him as he swiftly left the house. The house Duan Ling Tian bought was situated very close to Paladin Academy, and thus he arrived at Paladin Academy's main gate before long.

Presently, Paladin Academy's main gate was extremely bustling. Some of the youths and the people beside them seemed worn out from their travels, as they obviously had only just made it to the Imperial City. If they were late by just a few more days, they would miss the allocated timeframe to report in, and then even if they had the qualifications to become a student, it would still be extremely difficult for them to step past Paladin Academy's main gate.

"I wonder if Xiao Yu has reported in yet." Duan Ling Tian's brows knitted as he thought about Xiao Yu. He started following the stream of people to arrive before Paladin Academy's main gate and started to register himself.

The person in charge of registration was a middle-aged man. He glance at Duan Ling Tian before saying, in a flat tone, "Proof of qualification."

Duan Ling Tian withdrew his proof of qualification and passed it to the middle-aged man.

"From the Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp?" The middle-aged man glanced at the proof of qualification and was slightly surprised.

"Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp?" Upon hearing the middle-aged man's voice, the pupils of the few youths standing behind Duan Ling Tian constricted.

"I heard only seven people passed the training and obtained the qualifications to enter Paladin Academy in the end during this year's Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp."

"I once heard that the Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp is famous within the 18 counties for being abnormal. Since this youth has displayed his talent and emerged from there, it would seem like he isn't any ordinary person."

"Even though I'm from Swallow Mountain County, I didn't dare enter the Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp because I might not have been able to survive."

...

The discussions of the youths that entered his ears caused the corners of Duan Ling Tian's mouth to unconsciously twitch. "The Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp was so famous even in the other counties?"

"Duan Ling Tian? This name seems like someone of direct descent within the Duan Clan..." After comparing the proof of qualification with the information he had on hand, the middle-aged man thought this in his heart but didn't take further notice.

In his opinion, if the youth was really a Duan Clan disciple, since he had the ability to pass the Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp, the Duan Clan would have long ago directly given him one of the positions of their recommendation quota and wouldn't make him risk his life. Entering the devilish training of the Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp was no different than risking one's life.

Slap!

The middle-aged man stamped a seal onto the proof of qualification before saying to Duan Ling Tian, "If you need to put up within the academy, then go in now and look for the teacher that is in charge of this to make arrangements. If you don't, then go home and take a look at this student's handbook. The term starts five days from now. Remember to bring your proof of qualification along."

Duan Ling Tian nodded and put away the proof of qualification before leaving with Xiong Quan.

Put up in the academy? He didn't require it. Duan Ling Tian's courtyard house was situated south of Paladin Academy.

Presently, in a private courtyard house north of Paladin Academy, two young men sat together. One of them had a face full of unwillingness.

"Cousin Brother, it's been three months. The people uncle sent out actually still haven't found that little bastard!" Duan Rong had a face full of anger. As he recalled what happened three months ago, flames of fury couldn't help but be ignited within him.

That violet-clothed youth shattered his carpal bone with a single finger attack that day, and even though his injuries had been healed, it still left behind some lingering effects. Currently, when he executed a martial skill, it was at least 20% weaker than before...

"It can't be helped; you provided too little detail. Violet-clothed youth, middle-aged man that wore a mask.... In the Imperial City, where streams of people move about, similar people are everywhere." The other young man shook his head.

"Cousin Brother, aren't you acquainted with the Fifth Prince? That store that sold the courtyard house is a business under the Imperial Family that our Duan Clan is unable to intervene in, but if the Fifth Prince wanted to investigate, it shouldn't be too difficult, right?" Duan Rong seemed to have thought of something as his eyes shone.

The young man frowned before relaxing and saying, in a perfunctory manner, "Tell me again next time when I meet the Fifth Prince."

He and the Fifth Prince had only met a few times, so they couldn't be considered as familiar. Even though he was the only son of the Duan Clan's second master, he was nothing before the Fifth Prince.

There were more than ten Princes within the Crimson Sky Kingdom, and besides a pavilion within the Imperial Palace, they each had a vast estate within the Imperial City's inner city. Ordinarily, these princes usually stayed in their inner city estates.

Fifth Prince's Estate.

"Cousin Brother, it's been three months. Is there still not even a bit of news?" Tong Li, who was wearing a full body of red clothing, pouted. She was extremely unhappy.

"Li, the people I sent have investigated for the past three months and have still come up empty handed. You don't know his background, nor his name, so it's indeed difficult to investigate. Even to the extent that he might be someone who only came to the Imperial City to sightsee and might have already left the Imperial City." The Fifth Prince shook his head. His face always held a smile that made people feel like a spring breeze brushed by; it was an extremely comfortable feeling.

"Then what are we to do? Surely it doesn't mean that we'll just leave it as it is, right?" Tong Li had a face full of unwillingness.

"Of course not. However, we don't have a way to find him, right? How about this: in the future, as soon as we have a clue about their whereabouts, Cousin Brother will surely take revenge for you, OK?" The Fifth Prince then changed the subject. "Li, Paladin Academy's term starts five days from now. General or Mastermind, have you decided which you're going to choose?"

Chapter 146: Reunion of Friends

"General or Mastermind?" Duan Ling Tian was attracted by a set of words within the student handbook.

It turned out that the students who entered Paladin Academy were required to choose between two departments...

These two departments were respectively:

The Star General Department and the Star Mastermind Department.

"Someone who can gallop into the battlefield, is able to command 10,000 soldiers, possesses fearless courage, can easily take the head of the enemy general in the midst of a powerful army, and is full of spirit as he treads through corpses to taint the azure sky.... That is the Star General!"

"Someone who is hidden behind the scenes and possesses extraordinary wisdom. During peaceful times, he is able to govern the lands under him, whereas during times of war, he is able to map out a strategy and take control of everything, annihilating the enemy army with only the slightest effort.... This is the Star Mastermind!"

Duan Ling Tian shook his head and laughed. Paladin Academy deserved the title of being the Crimson Sky Kingdom's cradle for geniuses, because if one was able to graduate from Paladin Academy, then no matter where he goes, he will be an exceptional and formidable person.

"Choose one out of two? Interesting." The corners of Duan Ling Tian's mouth held a smile, and he'd already come to a decision within his heart.

Five days later.

Duan Ling Tian brought along Little Black as he left the house alone and walked towards Paladin Academy. According to the rules within the student handbook, students of Paladin Academy were disallowed from bringing an entourage into academy grounds...

In next to no time, Duan Ling Tian arrived at Paladin Academy. At the main gate, an extremely grand sight of a long line of wagons could still be vaguely seen from one end of the street to the other.

Many students were either sent over by their elders or by their entourage; however, in the end, only the student may enter Paladin Academy.

"There's actually so many female students." Duan Ling Tian couldn't help but be surprised when he noticed quite a few female students producing their proofs of qualification and entering the academy. "Looks like among the other counties, the tests for the qualification to either Paladin Academy are open to females, unlike the Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp."

The Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp that Duan Ling Tian attended didn't accept females, and if a female from the Swallow Mountain County were to desire to enter Paladin Academy, then they would have to travel to another county to take part in a similar test.

"Where should I go now?" Duan Ling Tian noticed that after he entered Paladin Academy, he had been aimlessly walking and couldn't find his way. Eventually, his sharp eyes caught a group of people going east, and he hurriedly followed them.

On a vast field on the east side, some weapon racks were scattered about, as this place was obviously the Paladin Academy Martial Arts Practice Grounds.

Duan Ling Tian took a glance and noticed that there were many young men and young women that had already been waiting here for some time, and the ages of these people were all around 20 years old... Compared to them, Duan Ling Tian was obviously much younger.

"Xiao Yu!" Finally, Duan Ling Tian noticed Xiao Yu within the crowd. Presently, Xiao Yu was chatting with another young man that stood beside him.

Duan Ling Tian walked over, and before long, Xiao Yu noticed him as well. He notified the young man beside him before walking over.

"Duan Ling Tian, I've finally found you." Xiao Yu shook his head with a smile. "I arrived at the Imperial City half a month ago, but I didn't where you were."

"How about you? What've you been doing for this past half month?" Duan Ling Tian asked with a light smile.

"I was at the Xiao Clan Estate," Xiao Yu said.

"Xiao Family? Xiao Clan?"

"Xiao He?" Duan Ling Tian's expression stiffened. He recalled the genius alchemist, Xiao He, or in other words, a members of the Xiao Clan.

Could it be that Xiao Yu was related to the Xiao Clan? Or maybe Aurora City's Xiao Clan was related to the Imperial City's Xiao Clan. The facts of the matter proved that Duan Ling Tian's guess was correct.

"Yes, the Xiao Clan. Our Aurora City Xiao Family is precisely a Branch Family of the Imperial City's Xiao Clan. I've already been specially admitted as a member of the Imperial City Xiao Clan by the Patriarch after obtaining the qualification to study at Paladin Academy." Even though there was no change on Xiao Yu's face, his eyes obviously had a trace of excitement within them.

Becoming a member of the Imperial City Xiao Clan meant that he'd taken one more step forward, and in the future he would be able to use it as a stepping stone to leap up higher and further...

Meanwhile, Xiao Yu realized that the young man beside him had been left out in the cold, so he hurriedly introduced him. "Duan Ling Tian, he's Xiao Xun, a genius martial artist of the Imperial City Xiao Clan, and my friend."

"Duan Ling Tian." Duan Ling Tian nodded to Xiao Xun as he introduced himself.

"Xiao Xun." Xiao Xun replied with a smile, without a trace of that type of arrogance from a disciple of a large clan.

"Duan Ling Tian, Xiao Xun's elder brother, Xiao He, is the most gifted alchemist within our Xiao Clan. One year ago, he became a Grade Nine Alchemist at the age of 20," Xiao Yu added.

"Xiao He?" Duan Ling Tian's face stiffened. Enemies were really bound to meet. He had only casually gotten to know a Xiao Clan disciple and it was already Xiao He's younger brother.

Xiao Xun's pupils constricted as he slowly said, "I used to think that my brother was a rare genius alchemist, but that changed two months ago when an 18-year-old Grade Nine Alchemist appeared in the Alchemist Guild's lobby. Only then did I realize that no matter how great a person is, there will always be someone greater! It's better this way; it can help lessen my brother's arrogance."

"I've heard of this as well. I heard that an 18-year-old alchemist even cheated your brother off 5,000,000 silver... Do you hate him?" Duan Ling Tian's eyes narrowed as he asked curiously.

"What is there to hate? I've heard of the sequence of events too. At the bottom of it all, the entire matter was my brother's wrong. If it wasn't for my brother being overbearing, the later events wouldn't have occurred. If I meet that genius alchemist, I might even thank him, as he caused my brother to undergo a change and become much more reserved than before." Xiao Xun shook his head, seeming to not mind.

Duan Ling Tian glanced deeply at Xiao Xun. Birds of a feather flock together, and Xiao Yu's friend was indeed not like those usual profligate disciples of large clans.

"Duan Ling Tian! Xiao Yu!" Suddenly, a familiar voice sounded from afar.

Duan Ling Tian looked over to a red-clothed young man walking over shoulder to shoulder with a robust young man. The person who spoke was precisely the robust young man.

The two people who were walking over, weren't they the two youths that passed the Genius Camp test with them and obtained the qualification to study at Paladin Academy, Su Li and Tian Hu?

After a year's time, the two of them had obviously matured. Su Li was much more reserved; the original him had a pressing drive, but now it was completely restrained, and his cultivation had obviously progressed.

"Su Li! Tian Hu!" Duan Ling Tian and Xiao Yu greeted them with light smiles.

"Duan Ling Tian, let's have a battle when we have the chance!" Su Li looked at Duan Ling Tian, and within his sharp gaze, battle intent flared...

"I'll be happy to accompany you!" Duan Ling Tian nodded with a smile.

"Duan Ling Tian, you need to be careful, this fellow Su Li's already stepped into the seventh level of the Core Formation Stage.... What a fellow! When I met him a few days ago, he pulled me aside to battle and nearly finished me." Tian Hu seemed to have a slight lingering fear when he mentioned what happened a few days ago.

"Seventh level of the Core Formation Stage?" Duan Ling Tian pupils constricted and he was extremely shocked.

It had only been a year and Su Li has already broken through from the fifth level to the seventh level of the Core Formation Stage in one go? Xiao Yu and Xiao Xun were shocked as well.

"Seventh level of the Core Formation Stage? Such a cultivation can be considered one of the top among this year's intake of new Paladin Academy students," Xiao Xun praised, with a sigh.

"Yeah, there probably aren't many seventh level Core Formation martial artists within this year's new students." Xiao Yu deeply agreed.

Su Li's gaze descended upon Duan Ling Tian as he lightly said, "I don't know about the others, but Duan Ling Tian is surely at the seventh level of the Core Formation Stage..."

"So certain?" Tian Hu was slightly surprised.

"One year ago, he was already at the sixth level of the Core Formation Stage!" Su Li added. He still remembered the scene from one year ago when he challenged Duan Ling Tian to a battle after the Genius Camp final test was concluded.

At that time, he thought that since he had broken through to the fifth level of the Core Formation Stage, it would be more than sufficient to battle Duan Ling Tian. But unexpectedly, Duan Ling Tian directly drew upon the energy of heaven and earth and condensed eight ancient mammoths' silhouettes, causing him to instantly feel frustrated...

Only Xiao Yu nodded without thinking it was unexpected when he heard what Su Li said. Tian Hu and Xiao Xun, on the other hand, looked at Duan Ling Tian in surprise.

Especially Xiao Xun. He was secretly startled in his heart. "This youth that has the same name as the Duan Clan direct descendants and looks to be around 18 was already a sixth level Core Formation martial artist last year?"

Even the Imperial Family and the few great clans of the Imperial City didn't have such a monster appear within their midst in the past few years! Such natural talent could already be compared to the student who entered Paladin Academy last year, Xu Qing!

Xu Qing was an existence that was publically acknowledged as Paladin Academy's genius student with the highest natural talent within the last 20 years.

"It's you!" Suddenly, a figure walked over swiftly from afar. This voice emitted the conflicting combination of rage and joy.

"Hmm?" Duan Ling Tian looked over when he heard the voice. The person that appeared before him was none other than Duan Ling Xing's cousin, Duan Rong!

Duan Rong walked over swiftly before staring at Duan Ling Tian and saying, "I've finally found you. I didn't think that you'd be a student at Paladin Academy as well. Now let's see where you can hide."

"Hide?" Duan Ling Tian smiled indifferently, and the corners of his mouth held a disdainful smile. "You said I was hiding from you? As a person who lost to me, you... are you even worthy?"

Duan Rong's expression went grim as he shouted, in a low voice, "Long story short, you're a dead man!"

"Trust me, I can grant you death right now!" Duan Ling Tian's gaze turned cold when he was threatened by Duan Rong. A terrifying killing intent swept out of his body to envelop Duan Rong when he took a step forward, causing Duan Rong's face to turn ghastly pale before fleeing in panic...

"Duan Ling Tian, who's he? Why does it seem like he has great enmity and deep hatred for you?" Xiao Yu asked.

"Just a profligate disciple." Duan Ling Tian shrugged before speaking of the conflict between Duan Rong and himself...

"The nephew of the Duan Clan's second master?" Xiao Yu's pupils constricted. He had gained quite an understanding of the various clans within the Imperial City during this past half month's time, and thus was extremely clear as to the ability of the Duan Clan's second master.

"Duan Ling Tian, need any help?" Su Li's gaze went cold as he looked at the far away Duan Rong. The sword in his hand seemed to be ready to leave its sheath at any moment.

"It isn't necessary, it's only just a clown." Duan Ling Tian shook his head and paid no attention to Duan Rong even though the one standing behind Duan Rong was the Duan Clan's second master, Duan Ru Lei!

If he was afraid, then he wouldn't have entered Paladin Academy with his real appearance when he already knew that Duan Rong was a student in Paladin Academy this year. If he were to come in disguise, it would be utterly impossible for Duan Rong to recognize him.

Chapter 147: Star Mastermind Department, Sima Chang Feng!

Xiao Xun's brows knitted, but similar to Duan Ling Tian and Su Li, he paid no attention to Duan Rong, as Duan Rong was at most a Branch Family disciple of the Duan Clan, and thus was far from being comparable to him in terms of status...

"I didn't think that there would be so many female students." Tian Hu's gaze descended upon the bustling group of female students that were gathered on the other side of the vast Martial Arts Practice Grounds. As for the male students, they were gathered near Duan Ling Tian's group.

"Do you guys know what we're gathered here for?" Duan Ling Tian asked.

"No, we followed the crowd over as well." Tian Hu shook his head. He and Su Li were obviously similar to Duan Ling Tian and had followed the others to arrive here.

Xiao Xun lightly smiled as he said, "We're gathered here right now precisely for the reason of making it convenient for us to choose our departments. In a short moment, when nearly everyone has gathered, a teacher will come over. At that time, we'll be faced with an important choice in our life."

The two departments within Paladin Academy treaded on two different paths. Moreover, the curriculums that Paladin Academy offered to the two departments were completely different as well.

"Talking about choosing departments, have you all decided your departments?" Tian Hu's eyes shone as he asked Duan Ling Tian and the others.

Xiao Yu lightly smiled as he said, "Xiao Xun and I chose the Star Mastermind Department." Xiao Xun nodded, and his eyes flashed with a luster of wisdom.

"Then you two are different from me. I decided to choose the Star General Department." Tian Hu grinned.

"We can tell." Duan Ling Tian sized up Tian Hu with a glance before laughing.

"Really? You're not just making a smartass remark, right? Then tell me, what department did Su Li choose?" Tian Hu asked.

"Isn't it obvious? He'll naturally be choosing the Star General Department like you," Duan Ling Tian said, in a matter-of-fact tone.

Su Li was like a sharp sword with a pressing spirit,; if such a person were on the battlefield, he would absolutely be a slaughtering machine and cause the enemy army to be terrified.

"Su Li, you're not really choosing the Star General Department as well, right?" Tian Hu asked.

"What, got a problem?" Su Li's gaze was like a sword as he stared at Tian Hu.

"What problem would I have? I'm just slightly surprised..." Tian Hu laughed embarrassedly. If it was said that the him who had just arrived at the Iron Blood Army's Genius Camp that day was still able to compete with Su Li at that time, then the current him had already been left far behind by Su Li.

"Duan Ling Tian, how about you? You should probably be the same as Su Li and I and be choosing the Star General Department, right?" Tian Hu asked, and followed by his question, the gazes of Su Li, Xiao Yu, and Xiao Xun all descended upon Duan Ling Tian.

Under the gazes of the four people, Duan Ling Tian's mouth only slowly spat out three words: "Star Mastermind Department!"

Star Mastermind Department?

They were all slightly surprised and felt that with Duan Ling Tian's strength, it would really be a waste if he entered the Star Mastermind Department...

Duan Ling Tian only shook his head with a smile towards their surprised reaction.

In his previous lifetime, Duan Ling Tian was a formidable weapons specialist, so what he specialized in was no different from what the Star General Department taught. Thus, in this lifetime, if he were to once again choose the Star General Department, it would be pointless.

Therefore, he chose the Star Mastermind Department!

"The Paladin Academy teachers have arrived." Duan Ling Tian's sharp gaze noticed the two middle-aged men that were walking over swiftly from afar.

At the same time, there were two young women that walked over to the group of female students. They were obviously teachers of Paladin Academy as well.

"Good day, everyone. I'm the teacher for the Paladin Academy's Star General Department, Niu Mang." Among the two middle-aged men, the robustly-built bearded fellow's voice was like explosive thunder, causing the earbuds of the students near him to hurt.

"This Niu Mang's probably cultivated a martial skill similar to a lion's roar." Duan Ling Tian was slightly surprised.

Among the offensive martial skills, there was an outlier subsection called sound martial skill. Generally, only a martial artist at or above the Nascent Soul Stage would be capable of displaying the true might of a sound martial skill, and during actual combat, an unexpected attack using a sound martial skill would be able to induce a split-second daze on the opponent. Sometimes, during combat, a split-second daze was more than enough to decide the outcome!

"Good day, everyone. I'm the Star Mastermind Department's teacher, Sima Chang Feng." Compared to Niu Mang, the other middle-aged man was obviously more refined and extraordinary; he was dressed like a scholar, with a silk headdress and a feather fan in his hand, and had an extremely graceful bearing.

"Now, those students who chose the Star General Department, gather behind me. And those that chose the Star Mastermind Department, gather behind teacher Sima." Niu Mang spoke once more and went straight to the point.

Immediately, the group of male students started moving.

"See the three of you later." Tian Hu greeted Duan Ling Tian's group of three and Su Li nodded to the three as well before the two of them left to gather behind Niu Mang.

As for Duan Ling Tian's group of three, they glanced at each other before heading to gather behind Sima Chang Feng.

"So few people for the Star Mastermind Department?" Duan Ling Tian glanced at the Star General Department gathering, then he looked around himself and was slightly surprised.

The number of students entering Paladin Academy this year was 116. Among them, there were around 100 male students, and currently there were more than 80 males gathered for the Star General Department, whereas over at the Star Mastermind Department, there weren't even 20 people.

Sima Chang Feng and Niu Mang were obviously not surprised by this result.

"Students that chose the Star Mastermind Department, follow me." Under the call of Sima Chang Feng, Duan Ling Tian's group of three and the other Star Mastermind Department students followed behind.

As for the Star General Department students, they instead stayed on the spot.

"Even if you chose the Star Mastermind Department, you can't escape death!" Duan Rong was amongst the group of Star General Department students, and his eyes stared off onto Duan Ling Tian's disappearing figure with a strong killing intent...

Duan Ling Tian and the group of new students were taken into a spacious classroom by Sima Chang Feng.

"Sit." Sima Chang Feng walked up the podium and faintly nodded to the 18 people that entered the classroom.

Duan Ling Tian sat down as well.

Sima Chang Feng's gaze swept past the group of youths before slowly saying, "From today onwards, I'm the teacher for the Star Mastermind Department for your year. I will teach you how to become a mastermind that's up to standards!"

"Now, who among you can tell me what a mastermind is?" Sima Chang Feng's calm gaze abruptly turned to become filled with wisdom as he spoke.

The instant Sima Chang Feng finished speaking, a student stood up and said, "A mastermind is someone who is hidden behind the scenes and possesses extraordinary wisdom. During peaceful times, he is able to govern the lands under him, whereas during times of war, he is able to map out a strategy and take control of everything, annihilating the enemy army with the smallest amount of effort!" The gazes of all the students present, including Duan Ling Tian's, fell onto the youth.

"Too shameless! Isn't this the introduction on the student handbook?"

"That works?"

Many students were speechless.

Sima Chang Feng pressed down his hands to signal for the students to sit back down before saying indifferently, "Exactly, just like the student handbook says. Possessing extraordinary wisdom and

mapping out strategies is the core of the mastermind! In your coming days within the Star Mastermind Department, what I will teach you all is precisely how to become a mastermind that's up to standards!"

"You all must remember that a mastermind can allow the general to be undefeated but similarly is also able to make a general be annihilated! Sometimes, a single decision of the mastermind can decide the fate of the general." As he spoke up to this point, Sima Chang Feng's expression became serious.

Duan Ling Tian deeply agreed with what Sima Chang Feng said. If you think of the general as the limbs of a martial artist, which are used for executing martial skills and dodging attacks, then the mastermind would be the eyes of the martial artist, which are able to gain insight into everything. This is extremely important!

"Today, the first class I'll give you all is precisely on how to deal with one of the types of circumstances on the battlefield." Sima Chang Feng's gaze was filled with wisdom as he slowly asked, "If the enemy forces are stronger than mine, and the enemy knows of my situation, besides the most straightforward method of sneak attack, what strategy can be used to crumble the enemy forces?"

"If the enemy forces are stronger than mine, and the enemy knows of my situation?" Besides Duan Ling Tian, whose eyes flashed and seemed to be confident, the remaining students muttered to themselves and unceasingly pondered.

"Hmm?" Sima Chang Feng's gaze descended onto Duan Ling Tian before long.

He had long since taken notice of this student, as a youth around the age of 18 stood out within a group of 20-year-old young men. Now that he noticed the youth's demeanor, his heart jerked. "Could it be that he's thought of a strategy so quickly?"

After a short moment, Sima Chang Feng's gaze fell onto Duan Ling Tian as he asked, "Looking at your appearance, it seems like you've reached a conclusion. Have you thought of a strategy?"

For a moment, all of the students including, Xiao Yu and Xiao Xun, looked at Duan Ling Tian...

"He can think of a way?"

"It's a joke, right? He looks like a little kid; what way could he possibly have?"

Some of the students glanced at Duan Ling Tian disapprovingly.

Duan Ling Tian's brows knitted as he stood up and went straight to the point. "If I were to meet this type of situation, I would use the strategy of 'crossing the sea while deceiving the heavens' by intentionally and repeatedly using disguised methods to confuse and deceive the enemy, causing them to let their guard down before I abruptly attack to achieve victory."

If someone from the nation of Hua from his previous lifetime were to be present, they would instantly react and realize that what Duan Ling Tian spoke of now was precisely the first stratagem of the 36 stratagems, crossing the sea while deceiving the heavens! [1]

Sima Chang Feng's pupils constricted. He actually never thought that this violet-clothed youth would be able to produce any good strategy, but the strategy that the violet-clothed youth spoke of now was in perfect harmony with his thoughts in some areas. This caused him to be unable to stop himself from being shocked... "Is this really only a 18-year-old youth?"

"Crossing the sea while deceiving the heavens.... Excellent! Excellent!" After hearing what Duan Ling Tian said, Xiao Xun carefully savored it for a moment. He was the first among the group of youths to react and couldn't help himself from praising Duan Ling Tian.

"This..." Some of the students who looked down on Duan Ling Tian earlier were stunned. They had no choice but to admit that it was indeed an absolutely excellent strategy.

After all, if anyone were to repeatedly be deceived, they would surely let down their guard. This was human nature!

"Good, good... What a good strategy, crossing the sea while deceiving the heavens!" Sima Chang Feng laughed heartily before he looked at Duan Ling Tian and asked, "What's your name?"

Chapter 148: Higher Grade Students

"Duan Ling Tian!" Duan Ling Tian nodded to Sima Chang Feng as he replied.

"Duan Ling Tian?" Sima Chang Feng's brows knitted. He was slightly surprised. "You're a Duan Clan direct descendant?"

Besides Xiao Yu and Xiao Xun, the other students that were somewhat acquainted with the Imperial City's Duan Clan looked at Duan Ling Tian as well, as the direct descendants of the Duan Clan in this generation all had the name Ling.... However, all of the students, including Sima Chang Feng, felt it to be slightly strange. If Duan Ling Tian was really a member of the Duan Clan, he probably wasn't a nobody. Moreover, not mentioning how the strategy he spoke of earlier was more than enough to prove that he was intelligent and resourceful, just being able to enter Paladin Academy at the age of 18 was extremely rare as well.

"No." Duan Ling Tian shook his head. So what if the blood that flowed through his veins was the blood of a Duan Clan direct descendant?

That clan that was cold and detached was something he disdained!

"Sit down." Sima Chang Feng nodded. If Duan Ling Tian wasn't a Duan Clan disciple, then he could understand why he'd never heard of him. The Crimson Sky Kingdom encompassed a vast area of land, and there were plenty of people surnamed Duan, so this was nothing strange.

The other students heaved a sigh of relief.

"If he was a Duan Clan disciple, his name would probably have spread through the Imperial City long ago."

"However, even if he isn't a Duan Clan disciple, being able to pass one of the tests within the 18 counties at such an age is indeed monstrous!"

Many student glanced at Duan Ling Tian with gazes that contained slight fear.

"This Duan Ling Tian, not only does he have great natural talent in the Martial Dao, he has such an intelligent mind as well.... The strategy of crossing the river while deceiving the heavens, to think he can

think of such a strategy!" As Xiao Xun glanced at Duan Ling Tian, a feeling of admiration was aroused within him.

Xiao Yu's gaze flickered. Although he was surprised of the strategy that Duan Ling Tian spoke of, when he thought of all the repeated miracles that Duan Ling Tian created, he felt at ease.

In his opinion... Duan Ling Tian was a little freak!

Meanwhile, Sima Chang Feng's voice sounded. "Duan Ling Tian's strategy of crossing the river while deceiving the heavens can be considered to be flawless. Even the plan I thought of contains some of the essence of the strategy of crossing the river while deceiving the heavens. Overall, my plan can't compare to his strategy of crossing the river while deceiving the heavens!"

Hua!

Sima Chang Feng's voice had only just faded when the entire classroom burst into an uproar. Never had they imagined that the dignified Star Mastermind Department teacher of Paladin Academy would actually show a bearing of being ashamed of his inferiority to a new student...

However, with a few thoughts, they came to an understanding. The strategy that Duan Ling Tian spoke of was indeed worthy of admiration; it left no room for criticism.

"This teacher seems slightly interesting." Duan Ling Tian focused his gaze onto Sima Chang Feng and was slightly surprised.

Ordinarily speaking, a teacher would place great importance on maintaining their pride and would absolutely not admit themselves to be inferior in any aspect to a student, but Sima Chang Feng, however, behaved in a frank and open manner and didn't feel even slightly ashamed.

Such admirable demeanor!

In next to no time, an entire morning's worth of time passed within Sima Chang Feng's lengthy lecture. Amazingly, Sima Chang Feng's lectures were considerably interesting and contained much interaction, so for the entire morning, there actually wasn't a single new student among the 18 of them that dozed off.

The vastness of Sima Chang Feng's knowledge was something that even Duan Ling Tian couldn't help but admire!

When it was nearly noon, Sima Chang Feng collected Duan Ling Tian and the other students' proof of qualification before handing out delicate, small badges that were the same on both sides. Besides having some patterns on the edges, the middle was engraved with two words: Paladin Academy.

"This is the Paladin Academy Student Badge. You can use this badge to travel in and out of Paladin Academy." As Sima Chang Feng spoke up to this point, his eyes, which were just filled with wisdom, abruptly became slightly fierce. "However, if someone uses this badge and uses the name of a Paladin Academy student to bully the innocent and commit crimes in violation of the law, then Paladin Academy has the right to reclaim the badge and expel him from Paladin Academy!"

Sima Chang Feng's warning caused some of the students that planned on using this badge to show off later quickly dispelled the thoughts that had just arisen.

They had all spent tremendous effort to enter Paladin Academy, and only they were clear of the hardships they faced. Now that they had become Paladin Academy students, they were the focus of attention and even brought honor to their families. If they were to be expelled from Paladin Academy, then it would really be an extreme loss of face!

"Paladin Academy is divided into six grades, and you're all grade 1 new students. Grade 1 new students have classes for five days and rest for two. According to the school's rules, the students of the Star Mastermind Department will have classes in the morning, have lunch in the academy's cafeteria at noon, and have free personal activity time within the Martial Arts Practice Grounding in the afternoon, where they may discuss the Martial Dao or spar with another, but it's disallowed to harm another's life!" Sima Chang Feng left after finishing.

Xiao Xun stood up and said to Duan Ling Tian and Xiao Yu, "Let's go have food!"

The three of them headed to the academy's cafeteria, where they found an empty table and sat around it.

The cafeteria in Paladin Academy was similar to the restaurants in the city. Before long, an attendant walked over and asked respectfully, "Young Masters, what would you like to have?"

The three of them ordered some dishes and a jug of wine.

"Teacher Sima's knowledge is really vast, and he is admirable." Xiao Yu said.

"Indeed." Duan Ling Tian agreed with him.

Xiao Xun glanced at Duan Ling Tian with a strange gaze. "Duan Ling Tian, Xiao Yu saying he admires teacher Sima isn't strange to me... but you, who could think of a strategy that caused teacher Sima to be ashamed of his inferiority, also admire teacher Sima?"

The more he savored the strategy of crossing the river while deceiving the heavens that Duan Ling Tian presented earlier in class, the more he felt it to be profound and difficult to be fully understood!

This strategy was not something that could only be applied on the battlefield; it could also be used in a myriad of different places... And it was a very practical strategy!

A trace of embarrassment appeared on the corners of Duan Ling Tian's mouth as he heard what Xiao Xun said, as the strategy of crossing the river while deceiving the heavens wasn't something that he thought about but rather was based on the 36 stratagems of his previous life...

Now that Xiao Xun said that it was he who thought of it, he couldn't help but feel ashamed.

Before long, the students that arrived at the cafeteria grew in number. Among these students, some were 20-year-old new students, and there were also some that were over 20 years old and were higher grade students.

In next to no time, the spacious cafeteria hall was filled with people, and some students could only stand aside and wait.

"Duan Ling Tian!" A familiar voice sounded from afar. It was Tian Hu and Su Li who had arrived. Even though the table wasn't too large, with a little squeeze, it could still fit the five of them.

"Why are you all so late?" Duan Ling Tian was slightly surprised.

"Don't mention it. There are a lot of people in our Star General Department, so it was further divided into two classes... And we were unlucky to be divided into Niu Mang's class. That Niu Mang is a freak! He only spoke briefly about the Dao of being a general in the classroom before dragging us off to the Martial Arts Practice Grounds to run, and we ran the entire morning. I'm dead tired." Tian Hu cursed as he spoke.

Meanwhile, Duan Ling Tian noticed that the clothes on Tian Hu's body were drenched in sweat.

Xiao Yu glanced at Su Li who seemed to be sitting there leisurely and teased, "Tian Hu, it's you who can't handle it, right? Su Li doesn't seem to be out of breath nor flushed. It doesn't seem to be as bad as you say."

"Can I compare to him? He's a fre..." Tian Hu was just about to call Su Li a freak when he noticed Su Li's gaze, which was like sword, look over at him, and he hurriedly shut his mouth.

"In other words, our Star Mastermind Department is much more relaxed than yours. We enjoyed sitting in the classroom the entire morning." Xiao Xun laughed.

"If I knew earlier I would've chosen the Star Mastermind Department," Tian Hu said in slight regret.

Su Li grunted coldly and disdainfully said, "Are you even suited for that?"

Duan Ling Tian and the others started laughing. If Tian Hu were to really become a mastermind that mapped out strategies, it would indeed be quite difficult on him.

Before long, the steaming hot dishes arrived, and Duan Ling Tian asked the attendant for two more pairs of chopsticks.

The five of them had only just picked up their chopsticks and were about to eat.

"Hey! You five, put down the silver for this meal, and then you can leave." Just at this moment, an abrupt voice broke the peace at Duan Ling Tian's table.

Duan Ling Tian's face sank as he looked over at the person who spoke.

The person who spoke was a young man over the age of 20, and there were three more young men with similar ages behind him. Based on Duan Ling Tian's guess, these four people should be grade 2 students.

"There's nothing wrong with you, right?" Tian Hu's eyes glared with his enormous eyes. He was not one bit fearful as he crossed eyes with the young man in the lead.

"Kid, I asked you to leave your money and f**k off. Didn't you hear me?" The young man in the lead's expression sank.

Last year, when he was faced with the threats of a higher grade student, even though he, who was a new student at the time, felt like refusing to obey, he still obediently put down his money and left in the end. Now a new group of students had arrived at the academy, and he originally thought that he would be able to throw his weight as a higher grade student about, but who would have known that he actually encountered someone that would refuse to give in!? Thus, he was slightly embarrassed.

"We asked you to f**k off, didn't you hear?"

"Remember to put down the silver for this meal. Just take it as showing respect to us, and in the future we'll protect you in the academy."

"What're you looking at? F**k off!" The other young men spoke out as they glared angrily at Duan Ling Tian's group.

Duan Ling Tian, while looking at the surroundings, noticed that there were many new students that were faced with similar conditions. Most of the new students chose to swallow the insult and humiliation silently by leaving after putting down their silver and giving away the dishes and wine they'd chosen for themselves to the higher grade students.

"There are disgusting flies around everywhere these days, so annoying." Duan Ling Tian shook his head and sighed before clamping some food and eating, completely ignoring the higher grade students.

Upon hearing what Duan Ling Tian said, Tian Hu, whose rage was rising rapidly, was stunned for a moment and couldn't help but laugh. "Yeah, I didn't think that flies were so poor these days. They don't even have the money to eat.... Tsk tsk, if you ask me, it doesn't matter if you don't have money; just kneel down and sing a few tunes, maybe this Young Master will be pleased and will reward you with some spare change." After hearing what Duan Ling Tian and Tian Hu said, Xiao Yu and Xiao Xun laughed loudly. They stopped paying attention to the four higher grade students that were staring furiously at them; they minded their own business and started to eat.

As for Su Li, he was sweeping through the food on the table with a cold expression without any fluctuation in his emotions.

"You... you all..." The young man in the lead's expressions was filled with anger and embarrassment, and the fury in his eyes soared.

Chapter 149: Accepting Su Li's Challenge

"Good... very good, just you wait." Even though the young man in the lead was furious and wished for nothing more than to put down the five new students before him, he still didn't dare make a move within the cafeteria.

This cafeteria was a business under the Vice Dean of Paladin Academy, and the group of attendants within the cafeteria were the Vice Dean's eyes and ears. Therefore, if he were to attack someone within this cafeteria, even if he was lucky enough to not die, he would still face dire punishment! Even to the extent that he might be expelled from Paladin Academy!

In Paladin Academy, the Dean almost never showed his face. Even among the grade 6 students, there weren't many who had seen the Dean in the flesh, and most of the time it was the two Vice Deans that were in charge.... The Vice Deans had absolute authority!

The four higher grade students quickly left Duan Ling Tian's table and walked over to a nearby table. After they made those students leave their money and scam, they directly sat down and started gulping down the food, while not forgetting to coldly gaze at Duan Ling Tian's table every now and then... as if they were deeply afraid that Duan Ling Tian's group would vanish before their eyes.

Duan Ling Tian's group of five paid no attention to them; they continued to eat and drink in extreme satisfaction.

"So full." After a while, Duan Ling Tian ate his fill and burped with a satisfied smile. Xiao Yu and the others had eaten their fill as well.

"Let's go take a stroll to digest our food." Duan Ling Tian stood up and took the lead as the five of them slowly walked out of the cafeteria.

As expected, the four higher grade students that had long since gobbled down their food followed Duan Ling Tian's group and left the cafeteria, then they surrounded Duan Ling Tian's group. Duan Ling Tian wasn't surprised about being surrounded by them. The corners of his mouth held a smile.

"Since you new students don't know the rules, as your seniors, we will properly teach you the rules today!" The young man in the lead had a face that seemed to be covered in a layer of ice, emanating a pressing, cold aura. The other three young men looked fiercely at Duan Ling Tian's group of five as well.

Su Li grabbed his sheathed sword in his arms as his eyes stared at them. "F**k off!" he said, in a cold and indifferent voice that seemed to come out of a pit of ice. His tone shocked their senses.

The four young men were stunned for a moment before bursting out with faces filled with rage!

They were grade 2 students, but now they were actually being trampled on by a grade 1 student. If news of this were to spread, how would they stand their ground at Paladin Academy in the future?

"Kid, you're courting death!" The face of the young man near Su Li sank, then he burst out with rage and his body flashed towards Su Li. Above him, eight ancient mammoth silhouettes condensed into form!

"Sixth level of the Core Formation Stage?" Duan Ling Tian shook his head, as he knew that misfortune was about to befall this higher grade student...

Bang!

The young man slapped out his palm as his Origin Energy condensed. He seemed to form a layer of Origin Energy flames on his palm that emitted a burning aura, and it moved to envelop Su Li.

"Hao Ji's Profound Flame Palm is worthy of being a high grade Profound Rank martial skill at the Perfection Stage; his Origin Energy has almost really condensed into flames..."

"Humph! This grade 1 student dares to be arrogant and act cool in front of us. He's courting death!"

The other two young men that surrounded Duan Ling Tian's group sneered; however, in the next moment, the smiles on their faces completely froze.

Whoosh!

They weren't even able to see how Su Li moved. A strand of sword light whistled out before instantly returning to its sheath with a clang.

At this exact instant.

"Ah!" The young man that executed his Profound Flame Palm towards Su Li abruptly emitted a miserable, shrill cry.

Chi!

A strand of fresh blood violently shot out of his wrist, and the Origin Energy on his feeble palm dissipated, then the young man's body moved forward due to momentum before crashing on the ground in a sorry state.

The other three young men unconsciously retreated a step back. They had extremely unsightly expressions.

"Ten... The strength of ten ancient mammoths! Seventh level of the Core Formation Stage!" A trace of terror appeared in their eyes as they gazed at the 10 ancient mammoth silhouettes that were slowly dissipating above the young man with a cold expression.

At this moment, they felt like they had really stepped on sh*t luck. The amount of grade 1 new students that were at the seventh level of the Origin Core Stage could be counted on hand; however, one was precisely encountered by them!

Although they were grade 2 students, during their year, they were at the bottom of their batch of students. Even after being at Paladin Academy for a year, they had been stuck at the sixth level of the Core Formation Stage due to the bottleneck, and they were still unable to break through to the seventh level of the Core Formation Stage...

Some of the students that followed them out of the cafeteria to watch show, no matter whether they were new students or old students, they were all dumbstruck.

Seventh level of the Core Formation Stage! And he's even a new student!

Their gazes descended one by one onto the cold figure that held a sheathed sword within his arms.

"Su Li's sword skill is even faster than before." Duan Ling Tian was slightly surprised. The speed at which Su Li's sword attacked earlier was completely on par with his Sword Drawing Arts, and when executed with a cultivation at the seventh level of the Core Formation Stage, it moved like thunder and was swift like lightning!

Besides Tian Hu, who didn't feel it was one bit unexpected, Xiao Yu and Xiao Xun's pupils constricted and their faces were full of surprise, as they obviously didn't expect Su Li to be so formidable.

Based on Su Li's sword strike before, Su Li's strength could be considered outstanding even among most seventh level Core Formation martial artists.

"Hehe, didn't the three of you want to teach us about rules? What're you retreating so far away for? What, afraid?" Tian Hu laughed complacently as he looked at the three young men that were retreating.

The three young men had expressions as unsightly as they could possibly be. They lowered their heads in shame and supported the injured young man up before leaving gloomily.

Tian Hu looked at Su Li after withdrawing his complacent gaze and said, while shaking his head, "Su Li, you let them off too easily. I originally thought that you would cut off his hand; I didn't think that you would only give him a flesh injury.... This isn't like you."

"Hmph!" Su Li grunted coldly before coolly walking forward. He paid no attention to Tian Hu.

Duan Ling Tian shook his head and laughed. "Tian Hu, is the wrist tendon being severed only a flesh injury to you?"

He clearly saw the sword strike that Su Li executed earlier. That young man's hand could be considered to be utterly crippled.

"Wrist tendon severed?" Tian Hu was stunned on the spot. Xiao Yu and Xiao Xun were so shocked that their pupils constricted. To a martial artist, the wrist tendons being severed was no different than their arm being severed!

Su Li stopped dead in his tracks and looked back to glance at Duan Ling Tian with a gaze filled with soaring battle intent. He didn't think that Duan Ling Tian would actually be able to clearly see his sword strike!

As expected, it was just as he had thought, Duan Ling Tian's strength had improved once again...

Duan Ling Tian's group walked off swiftly, leaving behind a group of new and old students alike who gazed at each other with eyes that were filled with traces of fear.

"I never thought that there would be such a formidable person among this year's new students!"

"Remember that person properly. We mustn't offend him!"

They all had a slight lingering fear.

Just at this moment, a red-clothed girl with eyes that had a trace of peerless arrogance walked out of the cafeteria. "What are you all doing here?" she asked the students outside the cafeteria, in a condescending manner and on her high horse.

Every student that was able to enter Paladin Academy was a person who was proud and arrogant, so virtually no one paid attention to the red-clothed girl.

The red-clothed girl's expression instantly sank.

"Hey! Big Sister Li asked you all something. Are you all mute? Do you all know what big sister Li's identity is?" Behind the red-clothed girl, a brown-clothed girl glared at the surrounding students. "Let me tell you all, Big Sister Li is Imperial Concubine Ling's niece, the Cousin Sister of Fifth Prince!"

Fifth Prince's Cousin Sister?

The male students present shuddered and their eyes shone. When they gazed once more at the red-clothed girl, their faces were full of flattery. All of them seemed to have become a completely different people.

"So it's Miss Li. I once heard off Miss Li's drop-dead gorgeous appearance. Seeing you today, your reputation is truly well deserved!" a male student with a wretched appearance flattered.

"Yeah, Miss Li's a born beauty, truly an unrivalled beauty!"

"I finally know after seeing Miss Li today that the people of ancient times did not lie. A beauty beautiful enough to cause flowers to blush and the moon to hide and causes fish to sink and birds to alight, such an appearance really exists!"

...

Every one of the students that paid no attention to Tong Li earlier now seemed as if they were bulls on aphrodisiac and were extremely excited, as they all wanted to use Tong Li as a means to get a chance to flatter the Fifth Prince and join his entourage to seek riches!

Tong Li's gloomy face slightly eased up as she grunted coldly, "This Miss asked you all what you were all doing here? And that puddle of blood, it should have been left there recently. What happened here?"

Instantly the surrounding male students tried to get a word in as they explained the sequence of events...

"New student? Seventh level of the Core Formation Stage?" Tong Li's pupils constricted as they flashed with a trace of an odd light...

In truth, it was practically impossible for her to pass any of the 18 counties' tests and enter Paladin Academy with her natural talent. The only reason she could enter Paladin Academy was by relying on the relationship she had with the Imperial Family to obtain a place in the recommendation quota.

But the actual objective she had for coming to Paladin Academy was precisely to find a formidable groom, as she thought extremely highly of herself and swore that she would find an unparalleled and peerless man. Now that she had heard of that sword-wielding young man, even though she didn't see it with her own two eyes, it still aroused a trace of interest in her, an interest to want to get to know the young man!

However, at this moment, the Su Li that Tong Li wanted to get to know had arrived with Duan Ling Tian and the others at a bamboo forest behind Paladin Academy.

This time, when faced with Su Li's challenge, Duan Ling Tian accepted!

He didn't reveal his full strength to make Su Li aware of the difficulty and retreat. Instead, he decided to limit his strength to a strength comparable to Su Li's.

Su Li's sword skill aroused his battle intent as well!

In the quiet and secluded bamboo forest, Xiao Yu, Xiao Xun, and Tian Hu stood at a side and acted as spectators.

Duan Ling Tian and Su Li stood facing each other.

Duan Ling Tian focused his gaze on Su Li. At this moment, Su Li seemed like a swift sword in his eyes, a swift sword that would whistle out at any moment!

Compared to a year ago, not only did Su Li's cultivation increase swiftly, even his martial skills' stages had improved.

"Duan Ling Tian, watch out," Su Li said in a low voice, and in the next moment his entire body moved as if it had transformed into a swift sword. It flew out and flashed towards Duan Ling Tian.

10 ancient mammoth silhouettes dashed out in tow!

"Bring it on!" Duan Ling Tian's gaze focused as he moved out.

Spirit Serpent Movement Technique!

Duan Ling Tian's figure jerked as he exerted the strength of 10 ancient mammoths. His entire body seemed to transform into an agile serpent as he moved to intercept Su Li.

In terms of speed, both of them were executing high grade Profound Rank movement techniques at the Perfection Stage, and were thus comparable.

Xiao Xun had astonishment within his gaze because although he had heard that this Duan Ling Tian's strength was extraordinary, when he really saw it, it was a totally different feeling....

Chapter 150: Spiritual Force Breakthrough!

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Accompanied by two extremely swift figures that crossed paths each other, two sword howls echoed out at practically the same time...

And at almost the exact same time.

Clang!

Two extremely swift swords collided together before splitting apart abruptly. Duan Ling Tian and Su Li exchanged positions before once again facing each other.

Their first engagement was actually a tie!

Seeing this scene caused Tian Hu to mutter, "Two freaks!" Even Xiao Yu and Xiao Xun were moved.

Xiao Yu didn't know that Duan Ling Tian's was already this strong. Xiao Xun was even more surprised; he could almost completely be certain that among their Xiao Clan's younger generation, there was

absolutely no seventh level Core Formation martial artist that was a match for the two that were currently locked in combat.

Their swords were just too swift!

All he could see was a violet sword light and a red sword light flashing by followed by a clang sound, and nothing more after that.

Duan Ling Tian gazed fixedly at Su Li as he asked, "Su Li, since your sword is a spirit weapon, why don't you use the amplification of it?"

"Didn't you not use it as well?" Su Li asked rhetorically.

Duan Ling Tian's gaze focused as he slowly said, "I want to experience you at your strongest!"

"I understand." Su Li nodded, then his legs jerked and his entire body was suffused with Origin Energy. He seemed to once again transform into a swift sword as he whistled out, kicking up dust all over the air.

A strand of red sword light moved like a shadow, flashing straight towards Duan Ling Tian's chest!

In the blink of the eye, 11 ancient mammoth silhouettes condensed into form above Su Li. The extra ancient mammoth was precisely the amplification from the grade nine spirit weapon in Su Li's hand!

Spirit Serpent Movement Technique!

Duan Ling Tian focused his gaze as he flashed out. The strength of 10 ancient mammoths exploded forth as he instantly went to intercept Su Li, and his flexible and agile body seemed like a spirit serpent!

At the moment he intercepted Su Li, an extra ancient mammoth silhouette appeared out of thin air above Duan Ling Tian.... 11 ancient mammoth silhouettes dashed out in tow!

Clang!

Their swords collided.

Bang!

At this exact instant, Su Li's other hand slapped out with a palm that was coiled in raging Origin Energy, descending onto Duan Ling Tian's body.

It was actually another high grade Profound Rank martial skill at the Perfection Stage!

Greater Teleportation!

Duan Ling Tian hurriedly circulated his defensive martial skill. He didn't expect Su Li to have cultivated another martial skill that had extraordinary might.

Su Li's palm strike descended onto Duan Ling Tian's defensive qi barrier!

Duan Ling Tian's defensive qi barrier shook, whereas Su Li's oncoming palm lightly trembled. The might of his attack was instantly reflected back to him by Duan Ling Tian's Greater Teleportation!

Meanwhile, Duan Ling Tian's defensive qi barrier shattered with a crash!

Whoosh!

And at this exact instant, Duan Ling Tian's other arm abruptly swung straight out like a raging python swinging its tail!

Bang!

Su Li's internal organs were already shaken by the counter-force from Duan Ling Tian's Greater Teleportation, and now that the sword in his right hand was stopped by Duan Ling Tian, he had no way of dodging Duan Ling Tian's arm that swept towards him, so he was blasted away.

Luckily, Duan Ling Tian was able to withdraw his force in time, and thus prevented him from being heavily injured.

Su Li's figure flew out, and when he finally stabilized himself with great difficulty, all he felt was the lifeblood within him roiling. He didn't dare to hesitate to hurriedly withdraw a Grade Nine Gold Injury Pill and consume it. Only after doing so did he recover slightly...

"Duan Ling Tian won?" Tian Hu was dumbstruck.

Earlier, he originally thought that Duan Ling Tian would at most battle to a draw with Su Li, and when he saw Su Li's palm slapping towards Duan Ling Tian, he thought that Duan Ling Tian was about to lose.... Never had he imagined that Su Li had always been concealing his strength, and besides his sword skill, he'd cultivated another shocking martial skill.

But what occurred in the next instant caused his heart to be like a wagon passing a mountain road, continuously rising and falling. Duan Ling Tian executed his defensive martial skill to stop Su Li's palm strike, then he followed it up with a swing of his arm that blasted Su Li flying.

When he saw Su Li's current expression, he understood that Su Li had lost!

Xiao Yu and Xiao Xun glanced at each other and both saw a sense of fear within each other's eyes...

"Duan Ling Tian's strength is actually so formidable." Xiao Xun sighed in admiration.

"I didn't expect it either. It's only been a year since I last saw him, but his strength has increased so much." Xiao Yu's gaze was complicated, as it could be said that he watched as Duan Ling Tian grew step by step...

From the first time Duan Ling Tian stood out during the genius gathering and defeated him to become the top ranked on the Hidden Dragon List to when he was full of heroic spirit during the Genius Camp.... Duan Ling Tian repeatedly created miracles and caused him to be practically numb to them!

Unknowingly, the youth that once had a strength merely a strand above his was now far beyond his reach.

"Duan Ling Tian, I didn't think that I'd still be inferior to you after a year." Su Li lightly sighed but didn't become dejected, and the battle intent within his eyes didn't lessen one bit. "However, I will make you my target... I will defeat you one day!"

"I'll be waiting to see!" Duan Ling Tian lightly nodded.

Su Li was the martial artist with the most indomitable and firm disposition he'd seen in his lifetime.... He did not discouraged by failure and would get more valiant as he battled!

Of course, there were many similar figures within the memories of Rebirth Martial Emperor, and all of those figures carved out a place for themselves in this world! They were all great figures whose names were known across the lands!

Duan Ling Tian was confident that as long as Su Li's indomitable and firm heart towards the Martial Dao didn't perish, he would surely be able to become a powerhouse whose name is known across the lands in the future!

After putting away his Violet Myrtle Flexible Sword, Duan Ling Tian looked at Su Li and Tian Hu as he asked, "What's the plan for your Star General Department in the afternoon?"

Tian Hu slowly said, "Niu Mang said to be at the classroom on time. As for anything besides that, I don't know for now.... How about you all?"

"We have free personal activity time at the Martial Arts Practice Grounds in the afternoon, and once time's up we can leave the academy." Xiao Yu laughed.

"Your Star Mastermind Department is so nice." Tian Hu had a face full of envy, but unfortunately he wasn't made for that.

Duan Ling Tian's brows knitted. "It's about time now.... Let's go."

After walking out of the bamboo forest, Duan Ling Tian, Xiao Yu, and Xiao Xun walked towards the Martial Arts Practice Grounds. As for Su Li and Tian Hu, they instead walked towards the Star General Department classroom.

On arrival at the Martial Arts Practice Grounds, Duan Ling Tian noticed that there weren't many people present. Besides their grade 1 Star Mastermind Department students, there seemed to only be the Star Mastermind Department Students of the other grades...

For an entire afternoon, Xiao Yu and Xiao Xun discussed the Martial Dao and sparred with other people. Duan Ling Tian lied atop a large tree outside the Martial Arts Practice Grounds and slept soundly.

At the moment he woke up, he noticed that most of the people in the Martial Arts Practice Grounds had already left.

"Duan Ling Tian, you really are so carefree, sleeping the entire afternoon.... Let's go have a drink?" Unknowingly, Xiao Yu had arrived under the tree and raised his head to look at Duan Ling Tian.

"Another day. I've been out all day today, so my family is probably worried." Duan Ling Tian refused Xiao Yu's invitation. Before he came today, he wasn't aware that Paladin Academy students weren't allowed to leave the academy at noon and had to stay within the academy to have lunch. Thus, the young and old beauties at home would surely be extremely worried.

"OK." Xiao Yu didn't insist. He left Paladin Academy with Xiao Xun to return to the Xiao Clan Estate.

Duan Ling Tian returned to his own courtyard house, and as expected, it was just as he had thought. The three women at home were extremely worried about him, and they started asking all sorts of questions the moment he entered the house.

Only after he explained the reason did the three woman heave a sigh of relief.

That night, after dinner, Duan Ling Tian continued to cultivate the Nine Dragons War Sovereign Technique. He kept having the feeling that he would break through soon, but it seemed like he lacked a certain critical element.

"Never mind, I'll take it slowly. There's no rush! Maybe it's because of psychological reasons!"

After falling asleep, at dawn the next day, Duan Ling Tian, who was cultivating as usual, didn't feel the resistance of breaking through within his heart... And just at this moment, a scene that made Duan Ling Tian joyous appeared.

Bang!

His Origin Energy charged through the bottleneck as if being helped by the gods.... Instantly, his cultivation broke through to the fifth level of the Core Formation Stage!

"Is it possible to do it like this?" Needless to say, this was an extremely pleasant surprise to Duan Ling Tian.

At the same time, Duan Ling Tian could feel that a change occurred in his Spiritual Force as a consequence of the break through, and now when he sensed the objects in his surroundings, they seemed to be much clearer...

"Is this the Spiritual Force of a Nascent Soul martial artist?" Duan Ling Tian gaze abruptly shone.

"Young Master, it's time for breakfast." Ke Er's voice sounded from outside the room.

"Ke Er, you all eat first, I'll come out once I get dressed." While Duan Ling Tian got dressed, the memories of Rebirth Martial Emperor unceasingly flashed within his mind. What he wanted to do now was choose an inscription from the boundless memories of Rebirth Martial Emperor, an inscription that could be inscribed with the Spiritual Force of a Nascent Soul martial artist.

There were many inscriptions at this level, but offensive inscriptions accounted for most of them. As for the other inscriptions, Duan Ling Tian didn't study them, as the silver he had was at most enough to buy materials to inscribe three inscriptions that were sufficient to annihilate Nascent Soul martial artists.

He wouldn't waste his silver on other inscriptions!

Only offensive inscriptions fundamental to preserving one's life!

After getting dressed, Duan Ling Tian arrived at the rear courtyard. Normally, he, his mother, and the two girls would have their meals here.

As the owner of the courtyard house, Duan Ling Tian personally created a rule stating that besides his family members, only Xiong Quan and Jing Ru were allowed within the rear courtyard.

Li Rou noticed Duan Ling Tian's glowing face and curiously asked, "Tian, what're you so happy about?"

"Mom, it's nothing; it's only a breakthrough in my cultivation," Duan Ling Tian casually said.

What he cared about wasn't the breakthrough of his cultivation, but the breakthrough of his Spiritual Force. The breakthrough of his cultivation would only be able to provide him an extra strength of one ancient mammoth, and this was nothing much. But the breakthrough of his Spiritual Force, on the other hand, was sufficient for him to inscribe inscriptions that were able to annihilate Nascent Soul martial artists!

"Scoundrel, I heard Xiong Quan say that there's a piece of news that's been spread around the entire inner city and gave rise to much discussion. The news said that two months ago, an 18-year-old Grade Nine Alchemist appeared in the Alchemist Guild. It was you, right?" Li Fei looked at Duan Ling Tian with a spurious smile.

She still remembered that Duan Ling Tian once left the house in disguise two months ago.... And that matter in the Alchemist Guild seemed to have occurred on that day.

"Since you've already guessed it, why ask?" Duan Ling Tian rolled his eyes at Li Fei, then his gaze moved downward to descend upon Li Fei's pair of plump jade hills, and his lower region burned as it reacted.

In fact, it had been quite some time since he's doted on this little girl...

When Li Fei noticed Duan Ling Tian's gaze, her peerlessly beautiful face flushed and she glared at Duan Ling Tian.