SOVEREIGN OF THE THREE REALMS

BOOK 06

THE FIRST & SECOND SELECTION

Plow Days

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

Sovereign of the Three Realms

(三界独尊)

by

Plow Days

(犁天)

Synopsis

Jiang Chen, son of the Heavenly Emperor, unexpectedly reincarnated into the body of a despised young noble, thus embarking on the path of the underdog trouncing all comers.

No one has the right to call himself a genius in front of Jiang Chen, as no one has a better understanding of the heavens than the son of the Heavenly Emperor.

Genius?

He who adheres to me shall ascend, those who oppose me can find solace in hell!

Copyright © 2016 by Lisa Hayes

First Edition: October 2016

All rights reserved.

English Translation by etvolare @ Wuxiaworld

Translation Edit by Aruthea, Crimsonguard, LemonPEEL, Studmonster, and Premonition @ Wuxiaworld

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ Hasseno Blog

This is a free eBook. You are free to give it away (in unmodified form) to whomever you wish.

No part of this eBook may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the author.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

The First Selection Arc

Chapter 276: Final Preparations Before The Great Selection

Like Buddhist chants or ringing sounds coming from the ninth heaven breaking through the shackles inside his heart, Jiang Chen's words shattered the bindings on his martial dao and sent a beam of enlightenment into his mind.

"Raising the spirit ocean, training the arts of the heart. Only when an origin infant has a consciousness can it be called an origin infant. Without consciousness, the infant can only be called a false infant... arts of the heart, arts of the heart... consciousness combining with form, forming the origin infant..."

These expressions were like marvelous symbols continuously crashing around inside his mind, chipping away at the barrier to his understanding, shedding incessant light in his mind.

"Dan Fei, see little friend Jiang Chen out for me, I'm going into closed door cultivation."

Shrewdness gleamed out of Ye Chonglou's eyes as he gave those instructions to Dan Fei before he turned to Jiang Chen, "Little friend Jiang Chen, if I can successfully assail the origin realm this time, it will be all because of you."

Jiang Chen chuckled. With his discerning eye, he too could see that the lordmaster's level of training had long since reached the level where he could break through to the origin realm.

He'd been unable to not because he hadn't comprehended the essence of the origin realm, but because he hadn't grown conscious of the need to train in the mental arts but had placed his focus on elevating his spirit essence alone.

Before the power of the heart met the requisite conditions, any origin infant formed at that time would still be a false infant and one wouldn't count as having fully set foot into the origin realm.

An origin infant would only be formed when the consciousness was combined with form!

Jiang Chen had mused upon each of these words in his heart. All of them cut straight to the point. To the old tutor, they were precious teachings struck his mind.

"This junior will be leaving now, I hope the lordmaster breaks through and ascend to new heights sooner rather than later, haha." Jiang Chen laughed heartily and walked outside.

Dan Fei had been waiting on the side all this time without interjecting any comments.

That evening, beneath the moonlit night, after Dan Fei had spoken those words to Jiang Chen she had remained beneath the laurel tree for half a night. However, not only had she not straightened out her mental affairs, but she seemed to have sunk even further, finding it even more difficult to extract herself.

She'd even sulked a bit today and hadn't said a word on purpose, nor had she even chatted with Jiang Chen. She'd even purposefully avoided his gaze.

However, she hadn't thought that the devious brat would cause the old tutor to completely lose his composure and call him "little friend Jiang Chen", displaying faint undertones that Jiang Chen was the old tutor's peer.

This made her emotions even more complicated.

She'd wanted to one-up Jiang Chen and ignore him, but when she saw his light footsteps almost at the door, her steps still anxiously moved forward as she ran up to him.

"Sister Dan Fei, the honored tutor is about to go into closed door cultivation. Please stay your footsteps and take good care of him."

Dan Fei bit her lips lightly as her charming eyes focused on Jiang Chen. A glimmer flashed through them as she looked somewhat lost while she looked at Jiang Chen.

"Jiang Chen you little devil, how many secrets do you have?" She seemed to murmuring, as if in her sleep.

Jiang Chen smiled wryly, "Sister Dan Fei, I..."

Dan Fei suddenly spread out her hands, sighing, “Don’t bother explaining. Any of your explanations are surely just empty air. Jiang Chen, I’d rather you not tell me then always treat me as an outsider and use some casual words to stopper me with.”

“Eh… so I have this kind of image in sister Dan Fei’s heart?” Jiang Chen self-deprecated. “Alright, the honored tutor’s closed door cultivation cannot be delayed for a single second. Here is good, sister Dan Fei.”

Jiang Chen waved his hands as he spoke and pushed off his feet to land atop a Goldwing Swordbird, turning into a golden blur and disappearing from the front of the tutor’s manor.

Dan Fei fell into a deep reverie as she stared in the direction Jiang Chen had disappeared in, remaining silent for a long time.

……

When he returned to the Jiang manor, Jiang Chen swept away all the random thoughts from his mind. The day of the great selection wasn’t that far off.

He decided to use some of the spirit medicines he’d just obtained.

The task at hand was to raise the quality of his Swordbird army and have them all advance into the spirit rank.

If the Swordbirds all entered the spirit rank, then the inside of

the Jiang manor would be an impregnable fortress. Even when enemies came knocking, the Jiang manor would be able to hold them off for a bit.

Once a thousand spirit rank Swordbirds formed the Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation, even a spirit king protector wouldn't be able to break through, and might even find themselves in danger.

However, it wasn't a small scale project to have thousands of Swordbirds break through.

It was fortunate that he'd gotten quite a haul this time, he'd done so precisely for this purpose.

The spirit medicines that he'd gotten from the Iron family would fill this need, and even have some left over.

As for the four saint rank medicines, Jiang Chen had wanted them to be of the ice and fire attributes precisely for the Bewitching Lotus of Ice and Fire.

Of course, he didn't plan on using those just yet.

He was only in the small spirit realm at the moment, using a spirit rank medicine would be quite a waste. It wouldn't be too late to use them after he'd entered the earth spirit realm.

Usually only spirit king level practitioners had the right to use

saint rank medicines.

However, Jiang Chen was different from others in that his spirit ocean had been refined hundreds and thousands of times. His small spirit realm was the equivalent of other's earth spirit realm, so he'd be able to just barely use the saint rank medicines.

It was something he'd taken from others anyways. It'd be a waste to not use ill gotten gains.

In the next couple days, Jiang Chen spent most of his time on the Swordbirds.

He also wanted to refine another batch of the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill.

This was because of his eight personal guards, apart from Xue Tong, the Qiao brothers, Guo Jin, and Wen Ziqi had all made it into the true qi master realm.

They would be sure to assail the spirit realm when the time came.

Of these eight personal guards, Jiang Chen had been raising them from the Eastern Kingdom and so he had to make some preparations for their future.

The two Silvermoon Monsterapes were also in the focus of Jiang Chen's attention.

Rather, it was the Goldbiter Rats that Jiang Chen had yet to locate the right way for them to proceed with their bloodline evolution.

After all, evolving bloodlines and raising strength were different. The process of evolving the Goldbiter Rat bloodlines was destined to be a long and arduous one.

This needed fortune's hand.

It was a good thing that the Rat King had devoured many experts lately and was satisfied with its current life. He knew just as well that evolving bloodlines was up a bit to destiny, and so he didn't pressure Jiang Chen too much.

Half a month passed as Jiang Chen's plan neared completion.

The day of the great selection was also drawing closer.

On this day, Jiang Chen summoned his guards, planning a candid conversation.

"The eight of you have been with me for around two years now. You've been by my side from the Eastern Kingdom to the Skylaurel Kingdom. I've seen your loyalty. This time, the sixteen kingdom alliance is about to undergo a tremendous change. A chance lies in front of me, and so it also lies in front of you."

Jiang Chen smiled. “I’m not a selfish person and will naturally not strip this chance from you. I just ask, who amongst you will be participating in the selection this time? Tell me if you want to participate. I’ll give leave to any who wish. If you emerge from the masses from the great selection, I will absolutely give you my best of wishes and won’t hinder your future.”

“Don’t be in a hurry to make your decisions, carefully think about it first. After all, this is a chance. A sect is an unattainable existence for an ordinary practitioner. This time’s great selection is a chance for the ordinary to become sect disciples. This can change not only your destiny, but that of your clan, your descendents, and everyone associated with you. Therefore, you must choose wisely.”

The temptation of a sect was boundless.

Particularly for ordinary disciples, it was impossible for youths to be completely unaffected by the attraction of the lofty sects opening their doors to mundane practitioners.

A sect! That was the sacred place for every young practitioner.

Xue Tong however, didn’t hesitate in the slightest. His brief pause was actually out of consideration for his peers’ face. After a short silence, he took the lead, “Young master, I won’t consider it. I wouldn’t be where I was without the young master. Unless the young master orders me out one day, I’ll die as a Jiang family ghost!”

Guo Jin hesitated a moment and said, “Ah forget it. I’m the only one left of my Guo family. I have no worries and will still follow the young master. With my personality, I’d likely be repressed after I enter the sect anyway.”

The Qiao brothers chuckled in a silly manner. They were martial dao fiends and were still full of yearning towards a sect.

“Qian Shan and Qiao Chuan, what are your thoughts?” Jiang Chen’s tone was calm.

“I… I’m still going to follow the young master.” Qiao Shan finally said.

“Us brothers have one heart. Mine brother’s decision is mine decision.” Qiao Chuan added.

Wen Ziqi’s voice was like a mosquito’s as she said lowly. “I just want to feed the Silvermoon Monsterapes. Those sects… I don’t like them and wouldn’t be used to them.”

Wen Ziqi had been a sect disciple to begin with, but she’d been part of those small sects in the Eastern Kingdom counties.

However, she patently didn’t have much of an infatuation for the sect life. Otherwise, she wouldn’t make the trek to answer Jiang Chen’s call for personal guard recruitment.

The last three were obviously the most tempted.

Jiang Chen smiled when he saw that they seemed to want to say something. “Don’t be so indecisive, you three. Go if you want to participate. With your training, it won’t be hard for you to achieve glory and honor should you fail and return to the Eastern Kingdom or remain within the Skylaurel Kingdom.”

It wasn’t that they were unloyal, but that their training had slightly fallen behind Xue Tong and the others these past few years. The deficiencies in potential were beginning to grow apparent.

This made them feel self-conscious. It was normal that they sought some change.

“Young master, we… “ Shen Yifan opened his mouth and tried to explain.

“Speak no further, you know what kind of person I am as well. Although our relationship of master and follower no longer exists, our friendship does. If you fail in the selection and run into some difficulties, come find me. I’ll help you in whatever way I can.”

Jiang Chen had wanted to give them each a Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill before they left, but when he thought of the fact that they weren’t even true qi masters yet, it would be damning them to disaster if he gave them such a gift. Trouble may even come looking for him.

Jiang Chen decided to gift it to them later.

An innocent man getting into trouble because of his wealth was all too often seen in the world of martial dao.

Chapter 277: Curtains Open On The Great Selection

After continual rumors of the great selection, the atmosphere around this event finally reached its peak within the sixteen kingdoms.

Almost all practitioners who fulfilled the requirements were each fighting for a piece of cake just for their chance to try.

On this day, Jiang Chen brought his personal guards to register within the capital.

The registration period would last for half a month.

There were hundreds of registration sites.

Particularly for the Skylaurel Kingdom, as it was one of the four great kingdoms, there were many who'd reached the basic requirement of the advanced true qi realm.

In the entire Jiang manor, apart from Jiang Chen, Ke Mu, Shen Yifan, and Bi Yun were also participating in the great selection.

Jiang Chen had once spoken to Gouyu privately, but her attitude had been resolute and she'd had no interested in the great selection. She'd emphasized that her intuition told her that following Jiang Chen was far greater than joining any sect.

Although she didn't publicly criticize Ke Mu, Shen Yifan, and Bi Yun's decision, she privately thought very little of them. She felt that they'd thrown away the watermelon in order to pick up a sesame.

Setting aside the question of whether or not they'd be able to make it through the great selection, even if they could, they wouldn't receive too many resources from the sect with their potential. It was better to remain by Jiang Chen's side.

When had Jiang Chen not done right by his people?

Of course, Gouyu could only keep these thoughts to herself. Everyone had their own ambitions, and she was just his follower and naturally wouldn't say much else.

The registration procedure for the great selection wasn't complex. One had to supply proof of identity, test their strength, and verify their age.

They would receive the participation medallion after passing these three parts.

Of course, the medallion was tied to each person's identity and could not be transferred. Once lost, the practitioner would lose their right to participate.

Jiang Chen was quite renowned in the kingdom by now, and his

appearance immediately caused a furor at the registration station. Many young practitioners even cleared a path for him, wanting to let Jiang Chen register first.

Ordinarily speaking, no one should be offered the right of way in the world of martial dao, particularly in the matters of registration. No one could even think about cutting in line then.

The fact that he could inspire practitioners to voluntarily give up their place in line showed that Jiang Chen had a place in their hearts.

However, he waved his hands and turned down everyone's good intentions with a smile. He was signing up with three personal guards and didn't want special treatment.

When they saw that Jiang Chen wasn't about to cut in line and was standing there with everyone, these ordinary disciples felt even more kindly disposed towards Jiang Chen.

They'd almost forgotten that they were here to sign up as they made their greetings to Jiang Chen and started chatting.

Jiang Chen was also quite easy going. Even when some of them asked him for pointers, he didn't hesitate to converse with them.

In this regard, his popularity grew even higher.

Those who'd received his pointers were overjoyed and their eyes

sparkling with excitement.

People with higher abilities of comprehension restrained the delight in their eyes, meditating where they stood in order to digest the pointers Jiang Chen had given them.

With this, the registration site that Jiang Chen had selected became extraordinarily crowded.

In the end, even the person in charge of registering everyone wanted to abandon his station and listen to Jiang Chen's lecture.

After all, Jiang Chen's reputation lately had simply been too great.

Thanks to the processing of the gossip mill, everything he'd done had become synonymous with legends.

That a practitioner from a foreign land had gone up against stronger powers time after time, but had always won!

Everyone had thought at first that he was relying on Ye Chonglou's support.

But this time, when the honored tutor had gone to the Precious Tree Sect, Jiang Chen had used his own power to capture sect geniuses Iron Dazhi and Zhou Yi!

When this news spread through various channels and had been embellished by this game of telephone, Jiang Chen had become the youngest legend within the capital without a doubt.

Without Ye Chonglou's help, Jiang Chen had taken down two earth spirit realm geniuses and had even captured a group of law enforcement disciples by himself!

When this news traveled, Jiang Chen's fame shot upward, unstoppable in its momentum.

In actuality, the hearts of the ordinary practitioners held a particular longing for the sects. This feeling, apart from yearning, was also mixed with a bit of distaste and even envy for the sect disciples.

On what basis that they were out there in the ordinary world, fighting tooth and nail for a bit of resources and yet these sect disciples could sit within their homes, enjoying vast amounts of resources, becoming the proud sons of the heavens? Why could these sect disciples throw their weight around in the mundane world and have no one within their sights, stepping on faces as they would?

While ordinary practitioners envied the sect disciples, they were also quite ticked off about their demeanors.

And Jiang Chen happened to fulfill their various negative feelings. He'd beat them into a pulp, stepped on them and pulled them down from their thrones, thereby ripping through the facade

of their geniuses and thoroughly made them lose face!

One had to say, they'd found a psychological comfort with Jiang Chen and a place to vent their emotions.

In this regard, it wasn't too hard to understand why the mundane practitioners viewed Jiang Chen as a hero.

At first, they hadn't accepted Jiang Chen as they felt that he was just someone who depended on the great tree which was Ye Chonglou. But now, Jiang Chen could still stomp on the sect disciples without the honored tutor!

What did that mean?

It meant that Jiang Chen was an ordinary genius, making him the hope of ordinary practitioners, and the role model that they should strive to emulate.

Jiang Chen hadn't thought either that his surprise appearance would cause such an uproar.

Normally, registration should have taken only an hour, but it took ten to twelve hours for him before he was allowed to leave.

This scene also made the three followers who were also registering pause and think for a moment. They couldn't help but doubt themselves, was it a wise move that the three of them were joining in the great selection?

However, they knew that since they'd made their choice, there was no way to turn back now.

Fifteen days registration period actually wasn't a generous amount of time. It was a good thing that those who reached the minimum requirements didn't want to miss out and made haste, making it so that there weren't very many left who needed to sign up in the last two days.

Three days of preparation followed the end of registration.

Jiang Chen made use of this time to make some basic preparations.

This initial selection was of no difficulty towards Jiang Chen. He knew that his goal was the ultimate selection in the second round.

He wasn't that interested in becoming the true disciple of an origin realm practitioner.

However, he truly needed that kind of core resources. In his current stage, only the sects controlled the core resources of the sixteen kingdoms.

Jiang Chen was well aware that with the rise of his martial dao, he could not possibly avoid the sects.

Since he couldn't avoid them, then he would face them with aplomb. The demeanor of his past life allowed him to be able to put anything down in front of him.

"Although I, Jiang Chen, possess the memories of my past life and thus hold an unparalleled advantage, this body is only of average quality in this world. If I can't put my pride down and join the sects, then I will only meet stronger and stronger young geniuses in the future. In this vast world, not all of them are as childish as Iron Dazhi..."

Jiang Chen thought through things after he'd made up his mind.

He must try his hardest in this great selection!

There were around fifty thousand who'd reached the advanced true qi realm below the age of 40 in the Skylaurel Realm.

All of the four great kingdoms could field this number.

The second rate kingdoms were around ten thousand.

The third rate kingdoms, such as Eastern Kingdom, could send around two to three thousand.

After the disaster of the Soaring Dragon rebellion, it was in last place without a doubt, along with the Darkmoon Kingdom.

After the Darkmoon Kingdom's failure to invade the Eastern Kingdom and the thorough defeat by Jiang Chen, they'd suffered great losses and their number of elites diminished.

The number of people from the two kingdoms were less than a thousand. It was a true tragedy.

Within the sixteen kingdom alliance, all of their numbers added together were almost four hundred thousand!

Although this number was enormous, it still fell far short of the four great sects' expectations.

They'd thought that the total would exceed five hundred thousand at the very least, or perhaps even reach a million. They hadn't thought that there'd be less than four hundred thousand suitable candidates.

The smaller the denominator was, the less choice they had in selection.

……

The legacy territory of ancient times sat in the center of the sixteen kingdoms, within the third rate Redflame Kingdom.

With the legacy territory within its boundaries, that should've been a boon to the Redflame Kingdom. However, it was an absolute nightmare instead.

With the legacy realm here, the four great sects naturally wouldn't let any strong kingdoms appear around it.

Why was that?

It was naturally because they were worried that the Redflame Kingdom would grow too strong and thus control the realm, threatening the four sect's positions of power within the sixteen kingdoms.

The four great sects could not afford to let this situation happen at all.

Therefore, the strongest kingdoms and four great sects of the alliance had all formed an accord that limited the development of the Redflame Kingdom, continuously halting it at the stage of a third rate kingdom and never allowing it to have any hopes of growing strong.

Whenever a genius appeared within its borders, they would immediately be taken out of the Redflame Kingdom, absorbed into the sects and brainwashed into becoming loyal to the sects unto death.

In this regard, it was impossible for the Redflame Kingdom to grow strong.

The royal family of this kingdom were also puppets and had

seemed to accept their fate, never rebelling even once.

However, the number of participants from this kingdom was slightly better than the Eastern and Darkmoon kingdoms. It was third from last.

It was actually rather surprising that the shame of being last hadn't landed on its head.

Three to four days were needed to travel from the Skylaurel Kingdom to the Redflame Kingdom. Jiang Chen had made sure everyone was settled at home before leaving.

He obviously couldn't take the Swordbird Army with him, so he left them to Gouyu and directed them to protect home.

Jiang Chen brought the Goldbiter Rats with him, however.

The key thing was that the Millionditch Stone Nest could be placed into a space ring and thus made it easier to carry around.

The most defining factor was that no one knew anything of the legacy realm. So one additional bit of preparation was one more bit of insurance.

The participants from the Skylaurel Kingdom reached the Redflame Kingdom in less than a day.

As for the Redflame Kingdom, it was a bustling spot of activity as many participants had already arrived.

Chapter 278: The Four Great Forefathers

On the outskirts of the Redflame Kingdom was an enormous plain. All the nearly four hundred thousand participants were gathered here.

The participants' faces held barely contained excitement, they'd just been notified that the highest levels of the four great sects were about to arrive and announce the selection rules for them.

They'd heard that not only would the executives of the four great sects arrive, but even the four great forefathers!

The four great forefathers had always been a legendary existence within the sixteen kingdoms.

Even many sect disciples had never caught a glance of them, never mind these ordinary practitioners.

Even the senior echelon of the sects couldn't see the forefathers just because they wanted to.

The forefathers represented the highest levels of power within the alliance. Invincible, they held life and death in the palm of their hands.

When they heard that the forefathers would appear to talk to them, how could this not cause the young practitioners to jump for joy?

Some youngsters with particularly vivid imaginations even dreamed of having some special potential that catches the eye of the forefathers, then they would've really made it and would walk amongst the clouds.

There were quite a few with such wild fantasies.

Particularly when it came to youngsters, who didn't harbor a few daydreams? The age of teenagers and twenty somethings was precisely the age filled with imaginings.

Many of them had never seen the highest levels of the four great sects, not to mention the forefathers.

However, Jiang Chen's expression was as calm as his heart.

He hadn't come here to sightsee and gawk at some senior executives. He had come for the final battle.

Even though it was just a group selection of ordinary practitioners right now, Jiang Chen didn't allow a single ripple to appear in his heart.

With his knowledge, it was impossible for him to grow excited about an origin realm practitioner even after he'd reincarnated. It was even less likely for him to be full of idol worship like the others.

In his past life,, even experts that were hundreds of thousands of times stronger than these venerated origin realm practitioners were extremely polite in front of Jiang Chen.

He completely ignored the fervent atmosphere around him as he activated the Boulder's Heart, temporarily entering a state of meditation.

When four hundred thousand people gathered, even if everyone only whispered, the scene was like a great boiling pot, continuously bubbling over with a hubbub of voices.

"Ho!"

A roar suddenly sounded in the air like a crack of thunder.

It dispersed into countless rumbles of thunder and seemed to cover the sky in an instant, making everyone's blood boil and silencing the plains immediately.

Four hundred thousand practitioners abruptly fell silent.

"Haha, Sunchaser you old monster, are you trying to put on airs from the beginning?" Another wild and unbridled roar traveled through the air.

Four beams of light tore through the clouds. Filled with a stern divine aura, they were as if celestial beings descending upon the earth. All sorts of light and splendor resounded through the sky.

A strong presence immediately enclosed an area of a thousand li.

In his meditation, Jiang Chen's blood slightly sped up, causing him to open his eyes and use God's Eye to look upwards.

Four beams of light hovered in the air in four different areas.

Three men, one woman, four venerated origin realm practitioners!

"The four great forefathers of the great sects!" Jiang Chen's heart raced as he narrowed his eyes to look at the four figures, standing there as if they were gods descending upon the earth.

Such strong auras were indeed something he'd never experienced before from Ye Chonglou. Jiang Chen had no doubt that these were the four people who controlled the core power and resources within the sixteen kingdoms, standing as representatives of the four great sects.

The Purple Sun Sect, the Precious Tree Sect, the Flowing Wind Sect, and the Myriad Spirit Sect.

Jiang Chen's gaze first stopped on the elder who was second from the left. Dressed in a green robe, and with a hat like a crown on his head, an unearthly feeling exuded from his body as his long mustache trailed to his chest. A sense of tranquility spread out from between his brows, as if he was completely set apart from the

struggles of the world.

“This must be venerated elder Thousandleaf of the Precious Tree Sect?” Jiang Chen decided.

The first elder on the left was tall and stocky, his eyes like lightning as a stern awe suffused them. Fiery red robes offset his entire being like a fireball as he flared and blazed, giving others a feeling as though he could send the world up in flames.

Jiang Chen could almost be certain that this person was the venerated elder Sunchaser of the Purple Sun Sect.

The third from the left was a lady, as clean as ice and as pure as jade. Wearing white clothing, she looked like a fairy amongst the clouds. She was middle aged, yet appeared exceedingly beautiful.

This was naturally venerated elder Icemist of the Flowing Wind Sect.

The one on the right was a brawny man. His outfit was the wildest amongst the four, as his clothes were as ragged as a quail’s tail, appearing quite disheveled. He had a head full of hair like an untamed lion’s mane, thrown haphazardly over his shoulders. The spirit creature beneath him was even odder as it had nine heads, a perfect combination with this wild, stocky person. The two of them together appeared even more ferocious and made others naturally respectful and fearful.

This person must be venerated elder Ninelion of the Myriad Spirit Sect.

Jiang Chen had heard of the four great forefathers from Ye Chonglou, and although he lacked exact knowledge of them, he could still discern who was who now that he had seen them in person.

They were origin realm practitioners alright, a single careless syllable from them was enough to make the entire place quiet down. Even a spirit king rank practitioner would be unable to produce this aura.

Jiang Chen lauded them in his heart.

“It’s… it’s the four great forefathers!”

“Venerated origin realm practitioners? My god, am I dreaming?”

“Hahaha, it really is them! Grandpa, da, your child has finally seen the four great forefathers! Be well in the underworld, and protect your child so as to emerge from the masses in the great selection and become their personal disciple! Your child will make use of the opportunity to bring honor and glory to the ancestors so that I may strut with pride!”

After a moment’s petrification, the ones with higher levels of training out of the four hundred thousand recovered their wits first, full of agitation as their lips trembled and tears gathered in

the corners of their eyes.

The four great forefathers were the totems of the sixteen kingdoms, their absolute idols!

How would they not be greatly moved and have a face full of tears now that they saw that the forefathers had come themselves?

Figures continued to shoot out from the air. However, these ones knew their places, and found their positions behind the forefathers.

These people were obviously the senior executives of the four great sects, the judges of the initial selection.

“Sunchaser, since you like to make a scene, why don’t you go ahead?” The wild and stocky Ninelion elder spoke with a smile and a shake of his unbound hair.

Sunchaser of the Purple Sun Sect smiled faintly and didn’t refuse. He spurred the steed beneath him and cantered a few steps forward.

“A vibrant atmosphere of martial dao has always flowed within the sixteen kingdoms. With the four great sects as the banners, this atmosphere has only grown richer, spreading to the neighboring sixteen kingdoms. Today, we are gathered here, because the moment to select the geniuses for the sects has arrived. After consultation between my fellow daoists and I, today, we give you

ordinary practitioners a chance to rise head and shoulders above your peers, an opportunity to carve out a noteworthy figure. Thus, this old man hopes that you will make use of this opportunity to enter our sights and thoroughly unearth your potential."

Venerated practitioner Sunchaser was known for his stern personality, always emanating a feeling of oppression.

"Perhaps you might think it unfair that you have to go through an initial selection before obtaining the right to compete with sect disciples."

"I can tell you now that there is nothing unfair in this. Fairness has never existed in the world of martial dao. You were born in the mundane dust and they were born into the sects. Your starting line was different. Although this may be cruel, in the world of martial dao, a birth of low circumstances is often an original sin."

"Now, the four great sects are giving you a chance to shake off your destiny of low birth, and giving you a chance akin to that of a carp transforming itself into a dragon. If you can make use of this chance, I promise you that you will receive the same opportunities as the sect disciples. In the second round of selection, the sect disciples won't receive special treatment, and the rules will not favor them. You will see fair competition when it reaches the second selection!"

The crowd grew agitated, fair competition!

At least ninety percent of the four hundred thousand had been

worried about this.

They'd been worried that having ordinary practitioners participate was just a formality, that the final battle would be conducted between the sect disciples.

They feared that they, being ordinary practitioners, would just be supporting characters.

But elder Sunchaser's words had thoroughly dispelled their hesitations and filled their hearts with emotion.

If there was no bias towards the sect disciples within the second selection, then they might have a chance!

Even if they couldn't reach the final sixteen, they still had a chance to enter the sect if they displayed their entire potential, right?

As long as one made it into the sect, it would indeed be like a carp transforming to a dragon with a great bound upstream, leaving the mundane world behind!

"Of course, don't be too optimistic either. Since it's a selection, it will naturally be harsh. Competition will be fierce. You must be mentally prepared for the despair on the level of a thousand calvary trying to squeeze onto a wooden bridge."

Venerated elder Sunchaser's voice was like a ringing bell,

reminding all practitioners not to be happy that early.

"There are around four hundred thousand of you, but less than ten thousand will make it into the second round. After that, no more than thirty percent will be chosen by the sects. That is to say that out of four hundred thousand of you, only three thousand will be able to make it into the sect at the end."

The ratio of three thousand to four hundred thousand was the equivalent of choosing one out of every hundred.

This ratio was indeed cruel, but to those listening below, they became extraordinarily excited.

As high as three thousand?

This number had exceeded their expectations.

After all, ordinary practitioners still had a bit of self consciousness when facing the sects. They both yearned to enter and knew just how difficult it would be to set foot in one.

In their eyes, it would be a lot if one thousand made it in.

To think that there would be three thousand!

Jiang Chen also sighed slightly when he heard this number, "It looks like the four great sects are feeling no small sense of urgency.

To take in three thousand all at once means that each sect will receive almost a thousand people.”

This truly hit home just how alarmed the sects were.

Chapter 279: The Five Trials Of The First Selection

Indeed, it was as Jiang Chen had thought, the four great sects felt a great sense of urgency these days.

If it wasn't for this sense of crisis, with the level of status the four great forefathers had, they would never appear in front of ordinary practitioners, much less speak to them.

Forefather Sunchaser continued, announcing the rules.

"I trust that everyone's received a small bit of intelligence with regards to this time's great selection. I am here to emphasize the rules. The great selection is divided into three stages. The first stage is the initial selection. Once you pass, you'll enter a second round that will last three years with the disciples of the four great sects. The strongest 64 will be chosen from this group and they will enter the final round. From there, the strongest sixteen will be selected and divided accordingly amongst the four sects, receiving personal guidance from the forefathers. To speak candidly, they will become our personal disciples, even true disciples!"

Personal disciples personally receive guidance from the forefathers.

But, true disciples were disciples that could inherit the forefather's legacy, an even more advanced level than personal disciples.

The three stages of the great selection were clearly delineated.

The first stage was to pick out the cream of the crop, about ten thousand from four hundred thousand people.

They would then join the sect disciples in entering the second round of the great selection.

This stage would be the longest, running for three years straight.

These three years would not only be the second round, but also a cultivation process. Hidden potential and strength would come to light in this stage, and competition would be fierce.

This round would rank the top 64 candidates.

These 64 would then enter the third stage, where the final 16 would finally emerge.

These 16 participants were destined to be the final winner.

Of course, many of those present lacked the ambition to mount a challenge to reach the list of the final 16.

They didn’t feel that their strength gave them the right to contend with those preeminent sect disciples.

However, they could make a play for one of the three thousand slots to enter the sects.

That was a more reasonable goal.

“Remember, we are taking a holistic approach in this time’s selection. You may not have the best potential, but if you display other unique talents in other areas, you may still have the chance to enter the sects. If these talents are particularly extraordinary, then you may receive added attention. The quota for us four old folks are four personal disciples, but if you have particular skills in other areas, we will open a backdoor for you. Of course, the caveat is that your potential must be great enough to draw our attentions.”

“For instance, if you have incredible skill in the dao of pills, or you possess a remarkable affinity in the area of taming spirit creatures. Or if you have a masterful grasp of ancient glyphs, constructing mechanisms, comprehension of formations, or others, then hope exists yet to enter the sects.”

Forefather Sunchaser expounded in as much detail as he could, and paused after these words. He wanted to give the audience some time to digest these messages, and give everyone sufficient time to analyze their own potential.

“This means that even if I lose on the basis of martial dao potential, I still have a chance if my potential in other areas is equally as stunning?”

“Tsk tsk, my teacher said that I have an innate sensitivity for formations, perhaps I’m a formation genius?”

“Pfft, keep dreaming. Formations aren’t that easy. But me however, I’ve had an ability to communicate with spirit creatures since my youth. Perhaps I’ll become a disciple of the Myriad Spirit Sect!”

The Myriad Spirit Sect was the sect most adept at training and raising spirit creatures. Almost all its disciples had talents in this area.

Therefore, when one fought against a Myriad Spirit Sect disciple, not only would one fight against the practitioner, but one would also have to contend with their opponent’s contracted spirit creature.

It was possible that the contracted spirit creatures of some of the more unbelievable disciples would be stronger than the master!

“Heh heh, good, this is fantastic. My potential for the dao of pills has never been able to find an avenue to showcase itself. This is my chance, my goal is the Precious Tree Sect!”

The Precious Tree Sect was the undisputed king of pills within the four great sects. Any youths will potential in the area of pills would be setting their sights on the Precious Tree sect.

“Humph. These daydreaming idiots. In the world of martial dao, it’s naturally martial dao that is king. So what if you use unconventional methods to advance into the sect when your martial dao is lacking? You’ll just be a servant for others. Only martial dao is the undying legend and the king of all! In this life, my focus is only on martial dao. I will use the sword in my hand to enter the Purple Sun Sect!”

These were naturally the words of a young man focused on martial dao.

When it came to the atmosphere of martial dao and its foundations, the Purple Sun Sect was undoubtedly the strongest.

As for the remaining Flowing Wind Sect, it didn’t measure up to the Precious Tree Sect in terms of the dao of pills, nor was it the Purple Sun Sect’s equivalent for martial dao legacy, and it was naturally below the Myriad Treasures Sect in terms of taming spirit creatures.

However, the Flowing Wind Sect had a skill that no other sect could best, and that was the ability in unearthing geniuses.

The Flowing Wind Sect had a set of methods that was particularly adept at unearthing geniuses with undiscovered potential and digging out gold from the sands.

It was this skill that had enabled the Flowing Wind Sect to discover many geniuses. These special methods and its uncommon foundations put it completely on par with the others in the four

great sects.

Every practitioner had a sect that they were particularly disposed towards.

Some liked the Purple Sun Sect's emphasis on martial dao, others liked the Precious Tree Sect's focus on pills, yet others leaned towards the Myriad Spirit Sect's invincibility in taming spirit creatures, and of course there were those who wished that they had special talents that would be identified by the Flowing Wind Sect.

However, they were still a bit worried.

"So how is this first stage going to be conducted? How will they discover if we have uncommon potential?"

"Yeah, and with so many of us, what if they miss one?"

"Don't you worry, I don't believe that they wouldn't have considered these problems since they're conducting this selection!"

"The four great sects possess great arts, they naturally have their ways. Stop fussing."

With the four forefathers' hearing, they heard snatches of all of the various conversations taking place beneath the stage.

Forefather Sunchaser laughed heartily, “There must be those amongst you that worry how we will discover your potential amongst the hundreds of thousands of participants?”

“I can tell you, it’s not difficult!”

Sunchaser’s tone was confident. “Unless you purposefully hide your potential and don’t wish to be discovered, the tests will be enough to fully display your talents!”

“And now, I will explain the rules of the first stage.”

“There are five trials in the first stage. We’ve combined particular characteristics of the terrain of the legacy territory to build the tests.”

“The first trial is one of the heart. In the world of martial dao, regardless of what you potential is, you must pass the trial of the heart. If you fail to pass even that, then you are destined for mediocrity in this world. Without a strong heart on the path of dao, you will amount to nothing in the end!”

The trial of the heart was the first one!

Jiang Chen privately applauded Sunchaser in his heart. These were rules set personally by the forefathers alright! To put a trial of the heart as the first one, this proved their status as origin realm practitioners.

Those who had entered the origin realm all knew how difficult it was to form a spirit infant.

Ye Chonglou had continuously failed to advance because he hadn't placed enough emphasis on the strength of the heart.

The forefathers had no relationship with Ye Chonglou and naturally wouldn't give him any pointers.

Seeing the forefathers set a trial of the heart as the first test indicated that they knew that strength of the heart was a vital prerequisite to assailing the origin realm.

"The second trial is one of innate talents. You will face many decisions in this trial. You can choose a test of martial dao, a test of pills, or a test of formations. Of course, the best thing to do is to run through all of them once. You will have more opportunities to excavate your own potential this way!"

To put a trial of talent as the second test, that made sense as well.

It wasn't that those with ordinary talent couldn't raise their level of training to perfection in the world of martial dao, but that they were as rare as the scales on a dragon compared to geniuses.

Jiang Chen had once heard of such an example in his past life. The person in question had been called Han Li and was born quite ordinary with no spirit base in his body, but had become the strongest in his world and ascended to the world of immortals in

the end.

However, examples of practitioner with mediocre talent training to the level of perfection were pitifully few and far in between.

This was also to say that talent was still quite important on the path of training.

The potential of Jiang Chen's body could only be characterized as ordinary, but he could raise that through the various methods he'd gleaned from his past life.

"The third trial is one of endurance and potential. In this trial, you will face the Endless Mountain. There are ten thousand steps in the mountain, divided into ten floors. The level of floors and steps you can take will partition your endurance and potential. Someone else will explain the exact rules to you in detail before you enter."

"The fourth trial is one of practical combat. Combat cannot be avoided on the path of martial dao. This will test your skills in actual fighting and your comprehension of martial arts techniques. If the trial of talent was to test your innate skills, then this one is to test your understanding and skill in actual combat."

Talents and comprehension were similar, but still different.

Innate talents were the potential that one was born with, such as Long Juxue's azure phoenix constitution. That was an innate

talent, and a premier one at that.

Comprehension was one's powers of understanding.

It was difficult to say whether talent or understanding was more important in the world of martial dao. But if one possessed both, then they would be the 'genius' that people often spoke of.

To test endurance and potential first, and then skill in practical combat, this was to avoid the injuries of the combat trial affecting the previous trials. This arrangement was reasonable as well.

Jiang Chen also inwardly approved of this. They were origin realm old monsters alright. They had fully considered details from all aspects and weren't haphazardly designing the first selection.

"The fifth trial may sound a bit silly, but it's something that no one can overlook. We will be testing fortune in this trial. Fortune appears as something abstract and intangible, but it's something that cannot be ignored in the world of martial dao. Some have extraordinary potential, others have superb powers of comprehension, but why can they not make it to the peak of martial dao? What are they lacking? That would be fortune. There was once a great practitioner who was suddenly struck to death by lightning during a journey. This is a classic example of lacking good fortune. So do not treat this trial lightly."

Jiang Chen had to be impressed by the four forefathers when he heard about this last trial.

From the looks of things, these four forefathers were indeed at the level of a preeminent existence of the sixteen kingdom alliance!

Chapter 280: Three Sects Fight Over Jiang Chen

The five trials of the first selection were: first – trial of the heart, second – trial of talent, third – trial of potential, fourth – trial of combat and fifth – trial of fortune.

Jiang Chen was hard pressed to find flaws in the design of these trials, even with his past experiences.

Just as Jiang Chen was thoroughly turning the meaning behind these five trials over in his mind, Sunchaser's voice sounded once again. "Through these five trials, what potential you possess, what abilities you have, and how far you can walk in the future, will be divided out."

The first selection would choose ten thousand from four hundred thousand participants to advance onwards.

The ten thousand would then participate in a second selection with the disciples of similar ages from the four sects.

Three thousand lucky participants would then receive the right to enter the sects.

But of this three thousand, it was uncertain how many of them would make it into the final sixty four.

After all, the opponents that these three thousand would face were the sect geniuses.

It was a pessimistic outlook on how many slots for the final sixty four would be taken by ordinary geniuses.

“Alright, this is all I will say with regards to the selections for now. There will be people specifically in charge of each trial and they will explain the rules in detail for you. Remember, before you enter, you must surrender your registration token for a participant token, a uniform, and a mask. Let me remind you that participation in the selection is anonymous. You are not allowed to reveal your real identity. Why is this, some ask? The answer is simple, this is to prevent cheating and ensure that the four great sects make their selections fairly.”

“It will be the same case in the second selection. You might ask if the sect disciples will be anonymous as well? Of course not. They are already part of a sect and they are only participating in the selection to compete for a slot in the final sixty four. They do not need to be anonymous.”

It wasn’t difficult to understand this rule either.

The mundane practitioners all had different backgrounds, nationalities, and naturally, they had certain relationships with the four great sects.

In this way, unhealthy competition could form as relationships prevail over rules.

If they conducted the selection anonymously and make it so that the four great sects were unable to recruit on basis of relationships, then recruitment would be able to be conducted through fair competition.

Of course, the rules were thus, but there were still room for cheating.

Nothing could be perfect, and the rules could only minimize the possibility of cheating as much as they could.

Some particular situations were unavoidable, and there was nothing for that either.

Take Jiang Chen for example, his trademark style would be recognized sooner or later in the second selection.

His light was too bright to be hidden, not to mention that there was no need for him to conceal anything in a selection like this. He would face the preeminent geniuses of the sixteen kingdoms in the final competition. If he hid too much of his strength, it would be a lack of responsibility towards himself.

“Alright then, come and collect your participant tokens, uniforms, and masks according to your nationality.”

Forefather Sunchaser left the stage after announcing the rules and he left it for those in charge of the details.

The four sects had sent thousands of their middle and upper management to the great selection, demonstrating how highly they viewed this year's event.

Jiang Chen stood in line, neither impatient or restless.

Suddenly, white light flashed in front of his eyes as a figure landed in front of him.

It was a senior executive riding a spirit creature. His style of dress was quite similar to forefather Ninelion of the Myriad Spirit Sect, and his steed bore the unique mark of the Myriad Spirit Sect.

This person was most likely upper management in the Myriad Spirit Sect.

"Heh heh, young friend, I recognized you with a glance from the crowd of four hundred thousands. You're Jiang Chen right?" The person wore a smile on his face as he appeared quite benevolent and kindly.

"Allow me to introduce myself. I am Wang Tuo, the vice head of the Myriad Spirit Sect. I've heard that young friend Jiang Chen orchestrated a thousand spirit birds to set up a formation and captured two earth spirit realm disciples of the Precious Stree Sect in the Skylaurel Kingdom?"

"Vice head Wang has a wondrous intelligence network." Jiang

Chen smiled faintly.

"Haha, it's most likely that everyone knows about it. Young friend Jiang Chen, I don't like to waste time with blather. I'm here to invite you to join my Myriad Spirit Sect. I wonder if the young friend would be interested?"

"Oh? Isn't vice head Wang's recruitment like this against the rules?" chuckled Jiang Chen.

"The selection hasn't started now, has it? It's not a violation as long as the selection hasn't started. As long as young friend Jiang Chen nods, I will immediately take you and make you my personal disciple. You won't need to participate in the first selection at all, and you can go directly to the second selection."

Wang Tuo, the vice head of the Myriad Spirit Sect, was personally asking Jiang Chen to be his personal disciple! The participants in area around Jiang Chen immediately erupted into a furor when they heard this.

Everyone immediately looked at Jiang Chen with admiration.

This kind of treatment had fallen into his lap from the sky! He could bypass the first selection and enter the second selection, and he wouldn't have to worry about fighting for a place in a sect. He could directly jump ahead to fighting for a place the final sixty four!

Sounds of astonishment sounded from all around.

There was admiration and envy.

All eyes were on Jiang Chen. They all thought that he was going to soar into the skies with one step.

There was a faint smile on Jiang Chen's face.

Although the Myriad Spirit Sect was one of the four great sects, it wasn't Jiang Chen's first choice. His first choice, and only choice, was the Precious Tree Sect.

He had his sights set on the Precious Tree Sect precisely for their reputation as being the leader for spirit medicines.

What he needed most right now was spirit medicines and the best spirit medicine resources.

Although the Myriad Spirit Sect was good in the area of taming and raising spirit creatures, it wasn't Jiang Chen's first choice. Besides, there was really nothing the sect could teach Jiang Chen with regards to spirit creatures.

In the same regard, they may not even have the right for Jiang Chen to teach them anything.

He was hesitating over how to politely turn them down when

another pulse of spirit power flashed right next to him as a woman touched down.

"Vice head Wang, recruiting before the selection begins is not the thing to do." A smile played about her lips as hints of temptation and promise were held within. Her every move and sway were quite alluring. "Young friend Jiang Chen, I am vice head Jiang Rou of the Flowing Wind Sect. You and I have the same surname, maybe we were even part of the same clan five hundred years ago. I am here with orders from the Flowing Wind forefather to recruit you. As long as you... "

"Daoist Jiang, what do you mean by this? The order of arrival has to be respected in all things, no?" Wang Tuo felt a bit alarmed when he saw Jiang Ruo's sudden interruption and her tug on the heartstrings with her mention of their shared surname.

"Heh heh heh heh... " Jiang Ruo tittered delightfully. "Vice head Wang, what are you worried about? The choice lies with young friend Jiang Chen. If he's already predisposed towards a certain sect, then he has his choice already. What use is there in the two of us yelling at each other?"

Wang Tuo gave a soft snort. "Daoist Jiang, you've even employed your unique seduction art. This is a vicious competition already. Who amongst young men can resist your art?"

Jiang Ruo's eyes shone as she laughed, "If you have any tricks up your sleeve, vice head Wang, bring them out as well!"

Wang Tuo called out, “Young friend Jiang Chen, if you’re not satisfied with a position as my personal disciple, even the forefather of my sect would be willing to take you as a disciple. It’s not impossible for him to take you as a personal disciple if your talents in training spirit creatures are extraordinary!”

He had upped the ante.

Jiang Ruo was about to add to her terms as well when a soft voice called from above, “Friends, this isn’t quite the thing to do, hmm? You’re attempting to steal one of my kingdom’s talents from right in front of me?”

“Eh?”

Jiang Ruo and Wang Tuo’s expression changed when they saw who had arrived. A hint of wariness could be seen and they smiled with some difficulty.

The person who had arrived possessed an uncommon air and he was as if a graceful willow tree welcoming the breeze. He was the head of the Precious Tree Sect, Xie Tianshu.

Xie Tianshu was the current sect head and his position was second only to forefather Thousandleaf. He even ranked ahead of esteemed elder Iron Long.

In his capacity as the sect head, he had naturally heard of Jiang Chen’s reputation in the past couple of days.

He'd actually been keeping an eye on Jiang Chen in private, but he hadn't been able to make an appearance to recruit Jiang Chen because of the circumstances. He was the head of a sect after all.

Jiang Chen and esteemed elder Iron Long's clan was in the midst of furious unpleasantries. He'd have to wait for this wave to die down even if he wanted to recruit Jiang Chen.

Otherwise, his performance as a sect head would come off as too hasty, lacking of good bearing and a complete loss of understanding the greater picture.

However, now that his competition, Wang Tuo and Jiang Ruo, were openly stealing his target, Xie Tianshu found it hard to sit still!

Setting aside the matter of Jiang Chen's potential, just his ruthlessness in handling the Iron family made Jiang Chen worth recruiting.

After all, the veiled struggles and open confrontation between the Xie and Iron family in the Precious Tree Sect was an eternal theme. If Jiang Chen could become a thorn in the Iron family's side, then there was no reason not to recruit him.

"Heh heh, sect head Xie, Jiang Chen was in the Skylaurel Kingdom for two years and the Precious Tree Sect didn't make a move. You can't dictate what we want to do with who you didn't want, can you? Not to mention, what's the purpose of the great

selection this time? It's to unearth talents! You try to disallow us from recruiting someone you don't want. Now, this is a public oppression of the genius Jiang Chen and to make it so that he never can make a name for himself?" Wang Tuo chuckled oddly.

"Indeed, indeed. You speak like your Precious Tree Sect values talent, but I've heard that some within your sect have been suppressing Jiang Chen regardless of the cost. You don't want a genius such as him, but you dare say that we can't have him either? What kind of logic is this?" Jiang Ruo wasn't about to take this lying down either.

Xie Tianshu's face lost all color thanks to their words, and he was in quite an awkward situation.

He'd lost quite a bit of face in the span of a moment. That's true, Jiang Chen was in the Skylaurel Kingdom for so long, yet the Precious Tree Sect had failed to recruit him and they had allowed a bright pearl to be covered in dust. This was indeed the sect's negligence.

However, Jiang Chen had only recently started displaying such potential, and he himself had only started noticing Jiang Chen in the last couple of days.

Thanks to Jiang Ruo and Wang Tuo's words, it appeared that the Precious Tree Sect had been purposefully neglecting Jiang Chen.

Xie Tianshu was worried that Jiang Chen would be unhappy and he would have thoughts of which of the other two sects to join.

However, everyone around Jiang Chen was flabbergasted by this turn of events.

The first selection hadn’t even begun! Jiang Chen was already being fought over by the senior executives of three of the sects, with the sect head of the Precious Tree Sect showing up in person!

Chapter 281: The Purple Sun Sect's Decision

Although Jiang Chen's name was quite famous within the sixteen kingdoms, apart from within the Skylaurel Kingdom, anything that was known about Jiang Chen had all been built on rumors.

Since it was just rumors and gossip, many were still refused to accept Jiang Chen deep within their hearts. They didn't believe the rumors, feeling that they painted a picture of Jiang Chen larger than life.

However, at this moment, the vice heads and sect head of three sects were setting aside their identities and openly extending invitations towards Jiang Chen in front of everyone!

The most crucial thing was, theoretically speaking, their actions weren't against the rules.

The rules said that no cheating was allowed after the first selection had started.

They didn't say that the sects couldn't recruit before the first selection started. It was right and proper if someone recognized value where it lay right then and was willing to use rich rewards to recruit someone.

Although Xie Tianshu felt a bit awkward, he was the head of a sect after all.

After being pressured by Wang Tuo and Jiang Ruo, he smiled faintly, “A treasured blade’s edge is honed through repeated sharpening, plum blossoms that make it through winter smell even more fragrant. Although Jiang Chen has met some setbacks in the Skylaurel Kingdom, my sect was thinking of the greater picture and wanted to go to greater depths to test him. Reality has also proven that Jiang Chen is indeed suitable for the Precious Tree Sect, and is worthy of the sect recruiting him at all costs.”

At all costs.

These were solemn words.

Wang Tuo and Jiang Ruo looked at each other, seeing worry in each other’s eyes.

If the Precious Tree Sect was willing to do whatever necessary to recruit Jiang Chen, then their offers wouldn’t be able to compete with that.

After all, Jiang Chen’s foundations were in the Skylaurel Kingdom, his connections lay there as well. If the Precious Tree Sect paid no heed to the cost in recruiting him, then they would have a great advantage.

Wang Tuo grew worried, “Jiang Chen, you have such extraordinary potential in raising spirit creatures, and can be described as a rare genius that comes around once in a thousand years. The Myriad Spirit Sect alone is the most suitable sect for you. The Precious Tree Sect allowed you to languish in the

shadows, not only not helping you, but suppressing you all around as well. How is that the proper attitude towards a genius?”

Jiang Ruo didn’t back down either, “Jiang Chen, perhaps your potential isn’t limited to just raising spirit creatures. Our Flowing Wind Sect is most adept at unearthing hidden talents. Perhaps there are other potentials and great powers hidden within you. Only the Flowing Wind Sect within the sixteen kingdoms can uncover the utmost limit of your potential.”

Everyone’s words made sense.

They each emphasized their advantages and were extravagantly florid with their words, as if flowers were raining from the sky.

However, Jiang Chen’s prime target was the Precious Tree Sect. He was participating in the selection because of that sect’s spirit medicine resources.

Although the Myriad Spirit Sect was quite strong in training spirit creatures, he didn’t think that he’d be able to learn much from them.

It was true that the Flowing Wind Sect was skilled at unearthing potential, but Jiang Chen was well aware where his potential lay and was even more so aware of his advantages.

His worry wasn’t how to unearth his capabilities, but that he had too many of them.

As for the Purple Sun Sect, it never entered Jiang Chen's consideration, no matter how he looked at things.

Although he'd long since decided on the Precious Tree Sect, he didn't intend to declare his tendencies at the moment.

To do so now would make the Precious Tree Sect think less of him, and think that he was only worth this much. They had only asked offhandedly, and he had come running as soon as they'd beckoned.

This didn't fit Jiang Chen's personality.

If he were to enter a sect, they would have to be fighting each other for the honor.

The sect head putting in an appearance?

Jiang Chen didn't give a rat's ass about that at all. You're the head of the sect alright, but isn't it too late for you to express your sincerity now?

Where were you when the Iron family was making trouble for me again and again?

You want me to run to you with gratitude now that you've come and shown your old face?

Think again!

Since the master of the Precious Tree Sect was forefather Thousandleaf, then he was the one who had to extend the invite!

Besides, Jiang Chen didn't want to give rise to rumors that he'd entered the sect using a backdoor.

I, Jiang Chen, can enter the sect on the basis of my own strength. What need have I for you, Xie Tianshu, to play the good guy now?

.....

Over where the forefathers were, apart from Sunchaser, the other three were in a stunning accord with what was transpiring over there. No one stood out to object.

It would've been ludicrous had the three forefathers stepped out to fight over a mundane disciple. Even though Jiang Chen had already left an impression on them, things had yet to progress to the final stage of the selection. With their positions as an origin realm forefathers, they wouldn't step out to fight over a disciple.

Even though Jiang Chen's performance was quite stunning and had made some eye-catching moves, showing off some extraordinary potential, but at their current stage on the path of martial dao, they had seen too much already.

They had seen too many geniuses with potential.

Yet how many of those had been able to make it to the origin realm in the end?

Only the four of them had appeared in nearly a thousand years.

Although they thirsted for talent, they still trusted only their eyes as proof and wished to observe the true talents of the various geniuses through the first selection.

Sunchaser from the Purple Sun Sect wrinkled his brow slightly when he saw this scene.

The other three had sent their sect head or vice heads, and only the senior executives of the Purple Sun Sect were notable in their absence.

This made forefather Sunchaser feel a bit disgruntled.

Even if you don’t care about this young man, at least put on an act? Four hundred thousand ordinary disciples represent four hundred thousand pairs of eyes.

What will they think of our sect when they see how enthusiastic the other three are towards this young man?

People could possibly think that the Purple Sun Sect was too

arrogant.

"Zixu, what's going on over there?" Sunchaser couldn't help but send a mental message to Purple Sun Sect head Zixu Zhenren.

Zixu Zhenren also felt quite awkward when he witnessed this scene.

It wasn't that he didn't want to recruit Jiang Chen, but once he heard of the feud between Jiang Chen and his sect's Shuiyue faction, he resigned himself to give up on that notion.

This Jiang Chen had come from the Eastern Kingdom and had a death feud with the Long Juxue genius of the Shuiyue faction!

When he heard the name "Long Juxue", Zixu knew that there was no hope for Jiang Chen to enter the sect.

Although it'd been less than two years since Long Juxue entered the sect, Master Shuiyue had used a monumental amount of effort to push Long Juxue from the peak of true qi master to the earth spirit realm half a month ago!

Long Juxue, a genius girl less than twenty years old, was already in the earth spirit realm!

This wasn't to say that the Purple Sun Sect lacked geniuses with this level of training, but Long Juxue was different. She'd entered the sect only less than two years ago. Her rate of improvement was

truly the definition of leaps and bounds.

The advantage of the azure phoenix constitution beneath the attentive care of the sect pushed Long Juxue forward at such a rate that the other preeminent geniuses within the sect could only tsk in amazement.

Even though her level of training wasn't in the lead of the geniuses within the sect, her potential laid bare. Everyone was well aware that the second selection was three years long.

In these three years, Long Juxue's level of training was certain to see a significant increase!

Master Shuiyue's expectations for her were the peak of the earth spirit realm at the lowest, meaning the sixth level spirit realm.

And that was only her lowest estimate.

With such incredible potential like the azure phoenix constitution, if she had enough resources and fortuitous encounters within these three years, it was possible that she could break through to the sky spirit realm.

She could even continue further into the sky spirit realm as well.

The azure phoenix constitution, a genius found once in hundreds of years, was practically born for the martial dao. Her potential, her powers of comprehension, her bloodline – they all enabled her

to take to any technique and method like a fish in water. Once she successfully practiced them to perfection, her power would also far exceed that of her peers.

Although Long Juxue was now only at the fourth level spirit realm, the executives of the Purple Sun Sect had long since listed her as one of the six most likely to make it into the final sixteen.

Apart from Long Juxue, the other five were almost all at the peak of the earth spirit realm, even with those incredible existences of the sky spirit realm.

Long Juxue was only at the fourth level spirit realm and was treated as on par with the premier geniuses within the sect. From this, it was obvious how extraordinary her potential was.

It was because of this that when Zixue Zhenren heard of the death feud between Jiang Chen and Long Juxue, he had given up the idea of recruiting Jiang Chen without a further thought.

Although Jiang Chen had a great reputation lately, from Zixu's perspective a few talented tricks still paled far in comparison to Long Juxue's azure phoenix constitution.

Zixu could only answer honestly when the forefather asked him, "Forefather, Jiang Chen and Long Juxue of the azure phoenix constitution both hail from the Eastern Kingdom and a death feud exists between them. One mountain cannot hold two tigers, so our sect can only give up on this Jiang Chen."

Sunchaser immediately understood once he heard this explanation.

He mentally put Jiang Chen on his blacklist. If he had a feud with Long Juxue, then he was the Purple Sun Sect's enemy.

Even Sunchaser had to admit that Long Juxue's potential made him want to take her as a true disciple.

He was merely waiting for Long Juxue to emerge from the masses during this time's great selection before taking her as a true disciple.

In this regard, Sunchaser's mentality grew detached, and he settled on the attitude of watching a good show as he watched the three sects fight one another. He was quite disdainful of them. Is it worth fighting over someone destined to die?

"I say, you three, to send out your sect head and vice heads to recruit a mere mundane disciple, don't you think you are raising a great fuss over nothing and damaging the repute of your sects?" Sunchaser chuckled.

Ninelion from the Myriad Spirit Sect barked out a laugh. "Old monster Sunchaser, don't take such a high and mighty tone. Who doesn't know that Jiang Chen has a death feud with one of your geniuses and thus you can't take him. What are you acting so aloof for?"

Ninelion’s personality was a bit disagreeable as he mercilessly exposed Sunchaser’s sham.

Chapter 282: Jiang Chen Refuses

Sunchaser laughed heartily, “Since all of you are aware of the matters behind the scenes, why go to such lengths in recruiting him? This Jiang Chen has offended the genius with most potential in my sect. What greatness can he amount to if he is destined to die within this great selection? Is he really that worthy of having all of you chasing after him?”

“Tsk tsk, I can’t listen to you talk.” Ninechaser rolled his eyes. “I’ve rather heard that it was those so-called sect geniuses who were almost destroyed by Jiang Chen in the mundane Eastern Kingdom. They had to rely on some of their senior brothers bullying the weak to limp away from the scene.”

“Humph. That was then and this is now. Long Juxue had just washed away the evil humours that plagues the azure phoenix constitution, and had yet to deploy her full potential. Now that she’s entered my Purple Sun Sect, it is as if the dragon is returning to the sea. She’s destined to overturn rivers and oceans, and steal the very heavens and the moon. A mere ordinary brat is destined to be her stepping stone, and an inconsequential one at that.”

Sunchaser had the most domineering personality out of all the forefathers.

It was forefather Thousandleaf who smiled faintly. “Why are we old folks standing here discussing such a boring topic? How many extraordinary geniuses have fallen to the hands of nameless nobodies in the end when pursuing the path of the martial dao? Although both you and I are of the origin realm, we are not gods,

so what matters can we set in stone?”

Although he spoke conservatively, it was obvious that he was quite dismissive of Sunchaser’s attitude – as if no one on earth could defeat him.

The old folks were indeed a bit envious of an innate constitution, but a good potential didn’t represent everything.

At least, Long Juxue had been forced to almost the brink in the mundane world by Jiang Chen and had almost lost her life. This was a stain on her life and was destined to become one of Long Juxue’s internal demons.

If she didn’t eliminate it, she would have no hope of setting foot into the origin realm in her life.

If she couldn’t enter the origin realm, then all was as intangible as the wispy clouds in the eyes of these old folks.

In the eyes of the origin realm practitioners, only the origin realm or those with the potential to enter the realm were worthy of entering their eyes.

Icemist smiled demurely, “Daoist Sunchaser, an innate constitution is indeed rare, and difficult to find once in a hundred years. The fact that the Purple Sun Sect was able to find it in a mundane kingdom was indeed the Purple Sun Sect’s blessing. However, with my Flowing Wind Sect’s abilities in uncovering

potential, I can see that Jiang Chen embodies great potential and power. And this power may not necessarily be inferior to an argus phoenix constitution."

The Flowing Wind Sect was adept at discovering geniuses and excavating the potential of their disciples.

Although forefather Icemist's words were spoken as gently as the spring winds of March, they had an aura to them that made one have to consider them gravely.

"Little sister Icemist, your old brother here normally wouldn't doubt your words. However, although Jiang Chen has a bit of potential, all is still hot air in the face of the argus phoenix constitution. Of this, I firmly believe. I think all of you know better than me what an innate constitution means."

Sunchaser's tone was also firm.

Ninelion laughed heartily, "And what of an innate constitution? If she can't get past Jiang Chen, he will forever be her internal demon. If she doesn't clear it away, do you think she will have any hope of entering the origin realm"

The strength of a spirit king practitioner's heart in assailing the origin realm was of utmost importance.

Having internal demons meant harboring latent threats in one's consciousness. In the process of breaking through, the backlash

formed by the internal demons made it very likely that the practitioner would be crippled at best, or dead at worst.

This was absolutely not alarmist talk.

Sunchaser chuckled, “It’s precisely because that Jiang Chen is Long Juxue’s rival to the death that he is fated to die by Long Juxue’s hand.”

Amongst the forefathers, none of them were willing to submit to the others.

It wasn’t that they liked Jiang Chen or thought that much of him, but that they didn’t want to see Sunchaser actually succeed in cultivating Long Juxue’s constitution.

It was true that the sixteen kingdoms needed geniuses.

However, humans were selfish by nature and all the elders had hoped that geniuses would be in their sect, and not in their competitor’s.

If all the geniuses had similar potential, then everyone could split them equally.

However, the advantage an innate constitution had was simply too great. The other forefathers were more or less a bit jealous.

Once an innate constitution broke through to the origin realm, then the advantages of their potential would be even more fully displayed. The rate in which she grew stronger would be limitless.

Once that kind of situation formed, the balance of the four great sects equally dividing up the sixteen kingdoms would more than likely be broken.

As the forefathers sparred verbally, Xie Tianshu, Wang Tuo, and Jiang Ruo had all returned to their own camps.

Judging from their appearances, it seemed that no one had gotten the upper hand and successfully recruited Jiang Chen.

When Wang Tuo came to Sunchaser, he said dejectedly, “Forefather, your subordinate was incompetent and unable to recruit Jiang Chen. Please pass down your judgement.”

“Haha, Wang Tuo, even sect head Xie of the Precious Tree Sect made a personal appearance. This was not your fault.”

Xie Tianshu smiled wryly, “Forefather Ninelion, I was incompetent and also didn’t recruit Jiang Chen.”

“Oh?” The forefathers turned their gazes towards Wang Ruo, thinking that Jiang Chen had been convinced by the Flowing Wind Sect.

Wang Ruo didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. “Please don’t

look at me this way, forefathers. Jiang Chen isn't as simple as everyone thinks."

"Oh? What's going on here? Wang Tuo, speak up." Ninelion was immensely intrigued. The three sects had set forth but hadn't succeeded in swaying a mundane disciple?

Wang Tuo spoke with depression, "Jiang Chen said that since he'd come here, he didn't want the four hundred thousand ordinary practitioners to feel that the four sects were a place that one could backdoor into. His reasons were quite noble and dignified. He said for the face of the four sects and so that everyone would think it's fair, he still wanted to participate in the great selection and use his own strength to make it into the sects so that no one would have any reason to speak ill of him."

Jinag Chen had indeed said so.

He hadn't been able to find a more noble and dignified reason.

This reason had been respectable and irrefutable.

The forefathers looked at each other, at a loss of what to do as they started laughing wryly.

Sunchaser also couldn't help but laugh, "It looks like we've underestimated Jiang Chen's personality. This personality isn't one of an elite genius, but one of a narcissistic, self indulgent idiot. This is just as well. Since none of you have decided on him, Long

Juxue will be even more unperturbed in killing this brat. I also don't have to worry about the possibility of erupting in open hostilities with one of you."

Sunchaser laughed heartily as he felt that Jiang Chen was arrogant in his youth. Even though he had potential, he lacked the mentality to go with it.

He knew full well that he would possibly meet oppression from Long Juxue in the great selection, but he didn't understand how to grasp the one thing that might save him.

What need was there to fear a young genius who knew only the situation but didn't know how to judge the hour and seize the opportunity.

Sunchaser looked only more favorably upon Long Juxue killing Jiang Chen now.

The other forefathers also felt slight ripples of emotion in their hearts upon hearing this. To be honest, they didn't really know what to make of Jiang Chen's choice from their perspective.

As much potential a young genius had, he had no need to be so arrogant as to put on airs in the face of sect recruitment.

Indeed, in the eyes of these senior executives, they felt that Jiang Chen was putting on airs.

When a young man did so, that meant he wasn't mature enough. When one was like this, unless he was truly an unparalleled genius, his future would otherwise be worrisome.

Those present had been anticipating Jiang Chen becoming Long Juxue's internal demon.

They felt slightly disappointed now.

This Jiang Chen didn't even have the most basic grasp of what was an appropriate action to take in a situation like this. Could he really withstand the threat of Long Juxue in the great selection?

Although the selection was anonymous, if Jiang Chen could make it to the final stage, he was sure to be recognized.

At that time, once Jiang Chen and Long Juxue stood on the dueling stage, it wouldn't be difficult for her to kill a young man with no protection from a sect then.

In the eyes of these senior executives, the smartest move that Jiang Chen could take now was to join a sect, and then make use of the first selection to take a teacher, receive some pointers, and gain some good equipment, thereby adding to his resources to fight against Long Juxue.

In the eyes of the forefathers, this was merely a small interlude in the end.

Their original intentions were to discover geniuses through the selection. This was the true purpose!

The process of four hundred thousand participants receiving their participant tokens, uniforms, and masks was also a monumental undertaking.

It was a good thing that the four sects had dispatched enough people this time, so that all participants had received their tokens after two hours.

Jiang Chen took his token, changed into his uniform, and put on his mask.

He looked around and saw that it was a mass of silver-white masks around him. It was indeed difficult to make anyone out.

The most marvelous thing was that this uniform could actually mask a person's aura. This negated the method of using a person's aura to determine one's identity.

"Remember, all of you must maintain anonymity before the selection ends. If anyone lets their mask or uniform drop from you during the selection, that will result in automatic disqualification. Don't think you can slip through the cracks as there is a miniscule spirit glyph embedded within the uniform. We will know when it departs from your body."

Jiang Chen made a small probe when he heard this and

discovered that this was true.

"It looks like that the four great sects are indeed valuing this time's great selection. The amounts spent on the uniforms and masks already are likely great indeed, not to mention the monumental costs of opening the legacy realm of the ancient times according to tutor Ye." Jiang Chen sighed in his heart.

His fighting spirits were naturally heightened when he saw how much emphasis the four great sects were placing on this selection.

Forefather Sunchaser's voice sounded again when everyone had received their participant tokens, "Alright, the legacy realm has already been opened. All participants, move out!"

The legacy realm was within the Redflame Kingdom.

The four hundred thousand strong army had arrived on a sea of clouds after roughly one hour. This ocean of clouds billowed indistinctly, giving one the impression that they were walking amongst the stars at a glance.

Many dots of light rippled through the ocean, as if untold numbers of leaping carp atop a mighty river, full of life and movement.

Jiang Chen could sense the strong spirit power field around him and knew that this was likely the entrance.

“Alright, you will be fully within the legacy realm less than thirty li after entering this ocean of clouds.” Forefather Sunchaser and the others transformed into four streaks of light and led the charge after he finished speaking.

The other senior executives also followed closely behind and set out.

Jiang Chen was in no hurry as he fell in step with the rest of the army, making his way in.

Although Jiang Chen had lived two lives, his emotions were thrumming a bit with excitement right now as well. This could be marked as the first time he was truly greeting a challenge for the first time in his two lives.

Chapter 283: The First Trial, Path Of Rebirth

After threading through the ocean of clouds, everyone's vision gradually cleared up, and they discovered that they'd already entered a world vastly different from the one they'd just been in.

Lofty and soaring peaks towered in the distance. As if numerous circling ancient beasts, they were so tall that they could reach the Big Dipper, and so mighty that they could dominate the nine heavens, giving one an awe inspiring feeling of overwhelming strength.

The senior executives of the four great sects had been waiting for quite a while within the legacy realm.

"Remember, you are now standing in the legacy territory of ancient times. You must heed instructions with your every movement within the territory. It is very likely that you will be buried here if you disregard instructions and go off on your own. This is absolutely not an empty threat."

The legacy territory of ancient times was widely acclaimed as the most mysterious of all territories in the sixteen kingdom alliance.

"Alright, let's not waste time in further talk. You will face the first trial next, the trial of the heart. This trial is called the path of rebirth. You will be divided into a hundred different areas and enter the path. The path that you will embark upon is the same difficulty for everyone, but different scenes will appear according

to the composition of your hearts. This trial will be testing the strength of your heart. The duration of the trial is limited to ten days. If you cannot make it out within ten days, then you will be deemed as having failed the first trial."

"Those who fail will be sent out of the legacy territory."

A cold voice sounded in everyone's consciousness.

"This trial is also the one with the highest failure rate. Two thirds, or even more, of those assembled here may be disqualified."

On the path of martial dao, strength of the heart was of the utmost importance.

If one could not make it past a trial of the heart, then any potential one had was simply empty talk. If a practitioner couldn't even raise the strength of his heart, then he would never ascend to the peak no matter what he did.

After all, if one had insufficient strength of the heart when assailing the origin realm, one would never break through to it.

The ultimate goal of the four forefathers was to select geniuses with the potential to make it to the origin realm.

The path of rebirth?

Jiang Chen turned these three words over in his heart. They sounded quite mystical. This name would not have been arbitrarily bestowed.

Was this a road in which one had to experience the cycle of life and death?

Jiang Chen readily accepted this. He'd lived two lives, what aspect of reincarnation hadn't he experienced? What joys and sorrows hadn't he tasted?

"I have an advantage in this trial as well. Setting aside the fact that these practitioners can't measure up to my experiences, my practice of Boulder's Heart is enough to give me an enormous advantage in a competition between mundane disciples."

Jiang Chen was full of confidence.

"Remember, the time allotted for the first trial is ten days. If you can complete a circuit of the path in ten days, that means you've passed. If you can complete it in eight days, that means your strength of the heart is above average. If completed in five days, that means you are absolutely a genius in the matters of the mind. If you can finish in three days, then you are an unsurpassed genius in this regard."

The voice continued on faintly.

"Incidentally, if you finish within three days, your scores will be

directly sent on towards the forefathers and you'll receive special attention. Although your identities will be temporarily masked, your participation tokens will be highlighted in front of the forefathers and receive their particular notice. I trust you don't need me to explain the meaning of this advantage?"

"What? Special attention from the forefathers?"

"My heart of martial dao has always been resolute. I'm definitely going to strive to finish within three days!"

"I have a hope of ascending to the skies in a single leap if I receive the forefathers' notice. Wonderful! I've always emphasized training the heart normally, this is surely my chance to shine!"

All the practitioners kept speaking words of encouragement to themselves to bolster themselves psychologically.

"Alright, we'll now be divided into groups. There are a hundred areas in total and each will absorb three to four thousand people. However, the path of rebirth is a lonely one. You will not run into each other on the path. Therefore, you won't need to worry about conflict from each other in this trial. You are always alone on the path of rebirth, remember this."

Four hundred thousand people wouldn't run into each other when walking the same path?

All the practitioners were quite astonished.

Jiang Chen was rather noncommittal. Since the path of rebirth was a legacy territory, then everything was possible.

An art that merely folded space was just a parlor trick in the hands of the ancient heavyweights. Jiang Chen would be able to experience things for himself once he entered this path of rebirth that was shrouded in mystery.

Since everyone was wearing a mask, there was no fear of revealing their identities. Jiang Chen naturally had no need to conceal his strength.

“Let’s display my talents to the utmost!” Jiang Chen decided in his heart.

The groups were quickly divided, and Jiang Chen was sent to the second area.

Each area had their own organizer, and the one in charge of the three, four thousand in the second area led them to an enormous, empty field.

“Do you see this? This empty field is a formation. You will enter the path of rebirth when the formation activates. Remember, where you start is also where you finish. This is to say that when the formation activates, where you appear is your starting and finish line. What you need to do is to set off from the starting line and walk forward until you end up at the finish line. You must do a complete circuit of the path.”

“The starting line is the finish line?”

“Remember, don’t think of getting up to any tricks. If you stay where you are without moving, and don’t walk down the path of rebirth, that is equivalent to forfeiting. You’ll be sent out after ten days. Another important thing to remember is that once you set out on your path, you can only move forward, not backward. Once you go backwards, the path of rebirth will be thrown into chaos and you’ll be disqualified immediately.”

Since the starting line was the finish line, some who had jumped to a different conclusion immediately began to think that if they stayed where they are, would that count as having walked the path?

When they heard this warning, those who were harboring these kinds of thoughts received a great shock and immediately gave up on this cheat.

A breeze suddenly grew in the air around the empty field. The dust in this surroundings began to follow the gust as a large, circular air current started to churn the ground beneath it.

Bam!

As the dirt and dust flew, the practitioners within the second area began to disappear where they stood as the formation activated.

“Path of rebirth, here I come!”

Jiang Chen was full of expectations at this moment as he set off on the path of rebirth with a strong desire to conquer it.

His body suddenly wavered as his feet seemed to set foot on something. Jiang Chen then opened his eyes and saw that his surroundings had changed to lush greenery.

Large trees gave shade to the grass beneath them as the fragrance of flowers and birdsong permeated the surroundings. This scene almost made Jiang Chen doubt, was this truly the path of rebirth?

In Jiang Chen’s eyes, the path of rebirth should be as dank and frightening as the path to the underworld, full of nefarious and evil things.

Why was the path of rebirth so peaceful, as calm as a paradise separated from the world? Relaxation grew in people’s hearts as they greatly enjoyed the surroundings.

“This kind of scenery is as though it’s an immortal realm. Just what kind of path of rebirth is this? It’s basically a magical road to the immortal world.” Jiang Chen tsk’d with amazement in his heart.

He spun a few times where he stood and discovered that the trees and grasses here were actually all spirit plants! The fruit on the

tree branches were all spirit fruits that would've been impossible to run into in the mundane world.

The least of all the exotic flowers and grasses would be hailed as an utmost treasure within the four sects.

"Mm? There are so many spirit items on the path of rebirth? If this is so, why are the four sects still so poor and weak?" Jiang Chen was astonished as he looked around. His heart suddenly trembled as Boulder's Heart suddenly wavered. "Ah, no! This is the path of the rebirth, all I see may be an illusion."

Jiang Chen's reaction was quite fast as he immediately woke up from this illusion. He shook his head and cast aside these extraneous thoughts. He carefully deployed God's Eye to observe these plants, but still found it difficult to discern whether they were real or fake.

"Amazing, whether it is real or fake, the fact that the path of rebirth can set up such a strong illusion and give rise to such strong temptation is incredible. Ah, forget it, I'm here to walk the path and cannot linger here in nostalgia."

Jiang Chen shouldered the sights of temptation around him and moved his feet, walking towards the front.

He kept practicing his Boulder's Heart, warning himself not to look backwards, not to look backwards. If he did and witnessed such temptation again, he may very well start walking backwards.

According to the rules, once you selected your direction on the path of rebirth, you had to keep following it without turning back. Once you turned back, the path of rebirth would be engulfed in chaos and you'd be directly disqualified.

Under the steadying influence of the Boulder's Heart, no more ripples arose in Jiang Chen's heart. That little bit of mental wavering he'd experienced when he'd just entered also vanished without a trace.

Jiang Chen's heart still palpitated with fright even after walking for a while.

"I've experienced two cycles of life and practice Boulder's Heart, but still almost lost myself in that scene just now. Can it be that the stronger one's strength of the heart is, the greater the temptation of the path of rebirth? I was almost mesmerized by the sights just now, if I'd moved to pick any of them, would I have lost myself forever?"

Jiang Chen felt that he'd been lucky when he thought about it.

He'd been quite confident towards this path of rebirth, but it was because he'd been too confident and too relaxed that had nearly led him to failure.

"It looks like I cannot relax my guard in any aspect of the great selection. Once my mind relaxes, the various tests of the trial of the heart will take advantage and slip in."

Jiang Chen slowly came to a few conclusions as a thought flashed through his mind, “Can it be that the path of rebirth reflects out the participant’s mindset? What I currently need the most are spirit medicines, and the first scene I was greeted with was countless numbers of spirit ingredients. Perhaps the others would’ve seen something else entirely?”

Jiang Chen was even less likely to relax after thinking these thoughts.

If the path of rebirth could reflect the participants’ mindset, then the path of rebirth would become stronger the greater the participant was. The stronger the determination within your heart, the greater the tests the path of rebirth would give to you.

Indeed, one had to use that bit of truest intention in their consciousness to overcome the stubbornness of the heart.

The trial of the heart and the path of rebirth wouldn’t be that easy to pass.

He’d been shown up as soon as it’d started, but Jiang Chen didn’t become nervous. Rather, he privately rejoiced. To be treated thus as soon as it started meant that the situation could serve as a warning that he could not afford to continue insuch a lackadaisical manner. He must treat this trial seriously.

As he walked, the scenes in front of his eyes continued to change.

He seemed to have gone through many days in an instant, weathering the four seasons and going through a cycle of life and death.

A thundering, crashing mighty river suddenly appeared in front of him.

The swift waters roared fiercely with a large racket. They churned and roiled in their motion, vibrating the heavens as if the skies were collapsing and the earth was cracking.

There were three bridges across the river in front of Jiang Chen.

“The first test of rebirth, Bridge of Helplessness” was written on a stone marker on the shore.

Notes:

[The Bridge of Helplessness is a bridge every soul has to cross before entering the Underworld, much like the Styx in Greek mythology.]

Chapter 284: Trial After Trial

The three bridges were obviously there for Jiang Chen to choose from.

Although there were no clear indications on the path, Jiang Chen was well aware of the fact that there was only one bridge that was the right path.

Choosing the wrong bridge meant that he was out, because there was no way to backtrack on the path of rebirth. One could only keep moving forward.

Jiang Chen looked out on the bridges and he saw that there were shadows moving on the bridges in the mist. Although his line of sight wasn't the best, he could still see figures moving about on all three bridges.

This meant that there was someone on each of the bridges.

"A moment, didn't they say that one is always alone on the path of rebirth? Why is it that there are figures on all three bridges?"

Jiang Chen felt that it was a bit odd and utilized the God's Eye to peer upon the bridges.

Indeed, there were people walking on all the bridges towards the shore on the other side. Each bridge was filled with many people.

It looked like the bridge was quite slippery, as people continuously fell off the bridge and landed in the frothing river waters below.

The even more frightening thing was that when they fell into the waters, it was like falling into a pot of boiling oil as their bodies melted, leaving behind only a pile of white bones in the blink of an eye.

“How can this be?” Jiang Chen was startled. White bones could float on top of the water? Judging from the water’s momentum, it could basically churn everything away, so how could it possibly leave the bones behind?

If one of the three bridges was the right one, why would the people on them fall down instead?

“This is a trial of the heart and not of the others. Everything on these bridges must be fake.” Jiang Chen made his judgment.

He stood there for a moment and he went over all the clues in his mind again, suddenly feeling a flash of inspiration.

“Yes yes, they said that one is always alone on the path of rebirth. How is it possible that other people would appear? Since this is a solitary path, then everything I see must be illusionary. Everything, including even these three bridges, must be an illusion. These figures are just a reminder for me.”

Those stark white bones were an illusion.

Even that roaring river was most likely fake as well!

Having practiced the Boulder's Heart, Jiang Chen's instinct would continuously give himself hints as soon as these kinds of thoughts appeared, seeking to make the thoughts more resolute.

He gave a long whistle and ignored the three bridges, leaping directly into the frothing waters.

When he stepped on the water, Jiang Chen discovered that it felt like he'd stepped on something hard. He took a close look and realized that he was still on the flat plains.

What great river in front of him? What bridges? Where had all the figures and white bones gone?

"Indeed, fabrications. It was all just a fabrication." Jiang Chen sighed softly, even more impressed by the person who had brought the path of rebirth into existence.

If one didn't have strong power of the heart on this path of reincarnation, and lacked sufficient powers of deduction and logic, or overlooked the organizer's words, then he would've surely embarked on the wrong path as soon as he'd set foot on any of the three bridges and he might've been disqualified immediately.

It was precisely because Jiang Chen had remembered that

sentence — you are forever alone on the path of rebirth and you won't bump into anyone.

Since this was a trial of the heart, it wouldn't be so silly as to make people choose a meaningless decision and rely on luck to make it across the swift river.

Since it wasn't a game of chance, this meant that it was most likely that the three bridges were fake.

The river then was fake as well.

Jiang Chen's deductions were reasonable.

"Perhaps the words on the stone marker were a hint. What is the Bridge of Helplessness? It's a bridge on the path to the underworld. Perhaps the three bridges were called thus to hint that if you took these bridges, you wouldn't be able to make it past the path of rebirth at all."

These were Jiang Chen's thoughts.

"If anyone else meets the bridges, I believe that many of them will be disqualified. The word of at least two thirds of participants being disqualified in the first trial were most likely not an over exaggeration. It's very possible that many would've fallen in the first test."

After all, the three bridges were right there, and according to

customary logic, many would choose to pass through one of them.

If one's heart was resolute and their powers of deduction strong, then one might consider the fact that without any clear hints, it was a game of chance if one would select the right bridge when it came down to choosing one amongst the three.

But it was a bit nonsensical to have a game of chance here. The path of rebirth was one of the trials, why would a game of chance be used to determine a practitioner's future?

"I wonder if my three followers can make it past this trial?" Jiang Chen suddenly thought of his three followers who were also participating in the selection.

However, he didn't have time to consider.

The path of rebirth's continual tests had made it so that Jiang Chen didn't dare think lightly of it anymore. Its first test had been enough to shock him slightly.

The test of the Bridge of Helplessness made Jiang Chen treat the trial with even more gravity.

Even though he had his advantages, it would be difficult to ensure that he'd have full confidence in passing if he relaxed his guard.

Jiang Chen suddenly felt a wall of heat hit his body, as if a strong

current of hot air was rushing towards him from the front.

A stone marker suddenly appeared in front of him.

The second test of rebirth — Ocean of Divine Ashes.

Wham, wham, wham

Fire columns that shot into the sky were hovering on the path ahead, like ancient fire dragons spitting out gouts of flame.

Jiang Chen looked out and he saw that it was a vast expanse of fiery ocean wherever he looked, with no end in sight. The fiery ocean filled the heavens, and the tongues of flames gave rise to a mass of burning flames, giving one the feeling that they were in a fiery purgatory.

The strong scene of fire continued to rampage wildly, projecting the feeling that it would break through the boundary and rush to Jiang Chen's feet.

"Ocean of Divine Ashes?" Jiang Chen halted and frowned as he looked at the fiery ocean.

His first thought was that this fiery ocean was an illusion.

However, that feeling that everything would go up in flames, and the fiery ocean that felt like it would burn everything in sight

made his entire body burn hotly as well. This kind of suffocating feeling felt quite very real indeed.

“There is no way backwards on the path of rebirth!” Jiang Chen had once again reached an obstacle and he was faced with a difficult decision.

Roar, roar.

Several red twisters rose in the fiery abyss, roiling with immense fire spirit power like crazed fire dragons and they hurtled towards Jiang Chen.

That momentum that they had was as if they were hated rivals with Jiang Chen and they wanted to swallow him where he stood.

Jiang Chen was shocked, and his first thought was to back up.

But a thought continuously appeared in his heart, and that was that he couldn’t retreat.

There was no retreat on the path of rebirth!

The path would be thrown into chaos as soon as he took a step backwards and he’d be disqualified.

“Fake, fake, it’s all fake. As real as it feels, it’s still fake.” Jiang Chen repeated to himself.

When this thought grew in his mind, he grit his teeth and charged forward, rushing headlong into the fire dragons.

He actually really wanted to activate the Lotus of Fire and Ice and see how it'd do, but reason told him that it wasn't time yet. If anyone was surveilling this trial, his trump card would be revealed there and then.

The ravaging fire dragons crashed into Jiang Chen, dispersing into nothingness like a soft breeze.

Jiang Chen rushed into the fiery ocean like an arrow loosed from the bow.

As he neared the unbridled heat waves, they continued to weaken and waver until they slowly disappeared.

"Fake again!" Jiang Chen wiped off some sweat. "It was a frightening thing to be caught between life and death. Even though I knew it was fake, it was still tough to charge into an ocean of fire. Since there is no way to turn back on the path of rebirth, I can only move forward. But to be honest, how many practitioners would dare make such a decision in the heat of the moment?"

Jiang Chen's performance at the Ocean of Divine Ashes was much more resolute than before.

His Boulder's Heart had also thoroughly been deployed to full

effectiveness as he'd triumphed over that feeling of fear.

They said that one felt great horror when caught between life and death, but if they could triumph over this life and death, they would discover that this trial of life and death was still just an illusion.

After the Ocean of Divine Ashes, Jiang Chen's mentality was even more bolstered.

The two trials had enabled him to slowly become used to the tests on the path of rebirth.

"No more hesitation, I need to keep moving. There will surely be more tests on the path of rebirth." Jiang Chen made his way hurriedly and he didn't hesitate any longer.

After the two tests, Jiang Chen didn't run into anything else for a full half day.

The day passed, and night descended upon the path of rebirth.

As night fell, the inky black sky seemed to be an enormous monster filling the skies, making one's emotions become heavy involuntarily.

Jiang Chen continued to walk as he discovered that he'd arrived on a path of flowers and shrubbery.

It was a sea of flowers that greeted his eyes.

The faint fragrance from the flowers seemed to follow him wherever he went, suffusing the air with fragrance.

“Jiang Chen you brat, I’ve waited for you for so long. You took your time getting here!”

Jiang Chen suddenly heard a sound as he looked around and discovered that he’d made it to the tutor manor beneath the cover of the night.

Those quiet surroundings, the familiar doorway, and the familiar figure. It was Dan Fei!

“Come on, I’ve waited for you for a long time.” Dan Fei smiled sweetly and walked forwards with the flowers’ fragrance, grasping Jiang Chen’s arm.

“Sister Dan Fei?” Jiang Chen started slightly.

“Still calling me sister at a time like this? Are you really a dunderhead?” Dan Fei’s jade finger poked at Jiang Chen’s forehead softly.

Her lithe figure softened as she collapsed into Jiang Chen’s embrace. Jiang Chen’s body grew hot as he held a soft, sweet

smelling body in his arms.

Her skin was as flawless as jade, her breasts firm and perky, and that kiss that imprinted itself on Jiang Chen's lips was oh too real.

In the next moment, Dan Fei's slender hands had actually reached down and grabbed Jiang Chen's private parts.

Suddenly, the light clothes on her body began falling to the ground like a peeled egg, glistening and unblemished, full of a fatal temptation.

Chapter 285: A Myriad Of Illusions, Heart As A Boulder

Dan Fei?

Jiang Chen shook his head slightly, his heart was as calm as still water.

Although he'd been slightly taken aback when Dan Fei had appeared, it wasn't enough to stir any bit of desire of him.

It wasn't that he didn't find women pleasurable, but that the ambiguous feelings between a man and a woman didn't exist between him and Dan Fei at all.

As real as this illusion was, it was still fake.

If the illusion had been Gouyu, that might've been enough to mesmerize Jiang Chen for a second, because Gouyu's style was indeed that bold and straightforward in her loves and hates.

However, there was none of that kind of draw between Dan Fei and Jiang Chen, and even if there was, this wasn't something that Dan Fei would've done.

Hoo!

Jiang Chen exhaled a long breath as his eyes shot towards the

front like lightning. His footsteps moved forward resolutely.

The illusions around him vanished like the mist.

He appeared in the ocean of flowers once again as fragrance wreathed itself around him.

“There seems to be something in the fragrance of these flowers. They seem to be producing a type of stimulant that gives rise to illusion, controlling one’s body and consciousness.”

Jiang Chen didn’t linger as he quickly strode forward.

Since he could only move forward on the path of rebirth without turning back, he continued to walk forward without hesitation!

He walked roughly four to six hours like so as the night deepened.

A soft call suddenly sounded by Jiang Chen’s ears.

“Chen’er.”

What was that? Jiang Chen’s ears twitched. He’d heard a voice! The voice was low, but he could hear it very clearly.

“Chen’er.”

He heard it even more clearly this time.

“Father’s voice?” Jiang Chen’s thoughts raced as he immediately told himself, this is an illusion, it must be an illusion!

Illusions would continuously pop up on the path of rebirth, and phantom sounds as well. Everything was fake!

Jiang Chen kept repeating that to himself.

However, the more he stressed this to himself, the more real the voice beside his ear became.

“Chen’er, save me, save me!” Jiang Feng’s voice was in obvious pain, as if he was suffering through the agonies of the eighteen hells.

“Chen’er, I found intelligence of your mother in the Upper Eighth Realm, but was captured by them. They tortured me with countless methods and they wanted me to reveal where you were… Chen’er, you’re my child. I wouldn’t betray my son even if I died! Never! … ah!!”

This voice kept surging into Jiang Chen’s ears like a magic spell.

Although Jiang Chen kept reminding himself that all of this was illusion, the voice kept weaving itself around him and it wouldn’t

be dismissed.

A towering tree suddenly appeared in front of Jiang Chen.

Someone was hanging on the tree. He was covered with wounds as his hands and feet were nailed to the tree with long nails.

“Chen’er, don’t come close! Go! Leave! They’re using me as bait to lure you in! You have yet to grow in your strength and you can’t fight them, go!”

The person hanging on the tree suddenly lifted his head, yelling wildly at Jiang Chen with a head full of wildly bedraggled hair.

It was Jiang Feng!

Three scabs criss crossed Jiang Feng’s face at the moment, splitting his entire face open and appearing quite frightening.

There wasn’t a single bit of unmarked skin on his body as it was dotted with wounds.

The most horrifying thing was that there were black beetles crawling all over the tree, and long, pliable creatures waving enormous tentacles around, continuously feeding off of Jiang Feng’s blood and nibbling away at his wounds.

Only stark white bones were left of Jiang Feng’s calves after a

short while.

Suddenly, a group of black clothed practitioners poured out from the two sides of the great tree, each of them holding the leash of a ferocious beast in their hands.

All of these beasts were in the origin realm!

Roar!

When the beasts roared, their presence reverberated up to the heavens, as if the entire sky and earth would be shattered by their roars.

Roar!

The fierce beasts howled and started running towards Jiang Chen.

Jiang Feng used all of his strength to scream hoarsely, “Chen’er, run for your life! Flee!!”

Flee?

One had to say, this illusion was quite realistic. Even though Jiang Chen kept repeating to himself that this was all fake, his heart still wavered in the moment that he saw his father’s state.

It wasn't that his heart was weak, but the blood ties between father and son made his heart tremble almost uncontrollably in that moment.

It was innate, a resonance between bloodlines that could not be done away with.

However —

Jiang Chen had trained the Boulder's Heart after all. If it'd been anyone else in this illusion, they might have been gradually consumed by the illusion.

But Jiang Chen hadn't believed what was in front of his eyes from beginning to end.

His father had indeed gone to the Upper Eighth Realm, that was correct.

But a test of this level wasn't enough to defeat Jiang Chen.

As he looked at the beasts pouncing towards him, Jiang Chen didn't back up, but he pushed off his feet savagely and charged at the tree.

"All you illusions, break!"

Jiang Chen's Divine Aeons Fist smashed heavily into the great

tree, sparkling with the light of the mysteries of the ages.

Wham!

The mysteries of one cycle of blooming and wilting were contained within that punch, and it too counted as a cycle of rebirth.

When he flung that punch out, all of the illusions vanished cleanly like clear glass being shattered.

“The path of rebirth can grasp everyone’s points of weakness alright. The Bridge of Helplessness was testing judgment, the Ocean of Divine Ashes was testing courage, Dan Fei’s appearance tested my resolution, and this was a test of rationality in the face of family.”

Every test was able to grasp the weakest part of everyone’s hearts.

This trial was something else, alright.

However, Jiang Chen’s Boulder’s Heart was even stronger and it wasn’t defeated by this level of illusion.

Although he didn’t know how many more tests lay in front of him, he still charged forward without hesitation.

Night passed as the daybreak of the second day arrived.

With the advent of down, the psychological pressures of night also began to slowly decrease.

However, this trial was also an enormous drain on one's mental resources.

Jiang Chen's Boulder's Heart hadn't been depleted much, but if the other practitioners hadn't had special methods to train their mental strength, they would be weaker and weaker in the face of the tests to come if they didn't sit down and meditate.

The more their mental strength was drained, the more pressure they would feel from future tests.

Once they'd exhausted themselves and lacked sufficient mental strength, they might very well be swallowed by the illusions and become one of the failed statistics.

Although Jiang Chen had met many tests along the way, this level of testing was not enough to truly impact his mentality.

The Boulder's Heart was now at the seventh level, and his heart was as strong as a boulder. Even a little bit of impact wasn't enough to affect him.

Keep moving forward!

Jiang Chen had no stray thoughts in his mind as he moved forward without any interference.

He saw an awe inspiring palace in the distance after roughly an hour.

The words “Myriad Treasures Pavilion” were written on it.

He looked around and saw no other path. He would have to enter the Myriad Treasures Pavilion to continue forward.

Jiang Chen warned himself that this place was another illusion again.

With that firmly in mind, he walked into the pavilion. A voice traveled to his ears as soon as he set foot inside.

“Welcome to the Myriad Treasures Pavilion. The pavilion is a wondrous place on the path of rebirth. You can select any method or martial art technique you want here, or any divine weapon, miraculous pill, or rare and exotic creature... remember, you can only choose one out of all the treasures here.”

.....

The four forefathers were gathered in a place outside of the path of rebirth.

Icemist sighed lightly, “One third of the mundane practitioners have been disqualified up until now. This is indeed a stunning number. It looks like even ten thousand would be hard pressed to remain out of the four hundred thousand to walk the path.”

They’d estimated the two thirds would be eliminated on the path as it had layers upon layers of trials. To practitioners with weak strength of the heart, this would be a very, very difficult trial for them.

But a third of the group had been disqualified after less than a day. At this rate, the amount of people disqualified may far exceed their original expectations.

“Although the path of rebirth is not easy, it just so happens to test the strength of the heart. If they cannot even pass the trial of the heart, then the ones disqualified are just mediocre talents and they have no future ahead of them whatsoever. Since they are trash, what point is there to sigh with regret over them once they are out?” Sunchaser snorted.

He had no particular feeling towards the numbers of people disqualified.

What he cared more about was how many could remain, and if there were any dark horses that could enter their line of sight.

He felt that with the resources in the mundane world, there was no way that any geniuses that could fight for a spot in the final

sixteen could exist amongst them.

Thousandleaf sighed, “They have yet to reach the hardest. The Myriad Treasures Pavilion is the biggest test of all. The last test after the pavilion is even greater. The rate of failure will be highest in the last two tests. I wonder if anyone’s made it to the pavilion yet?”

The forefather’s couldn’t see what was happening in the path of rebirth.

All was revealed only when the practitioner left the path of rebirth.

Ninelion laughed. “It’s only been less than a day. If someone’s already made it to the Myriad Treasures Pavilion, then their pace is simply too fast. I surmise that many are still dithering in front of the Ocean of Divine Ashes and some are even stuck in front of the Bridge of Helplessness?”

Icemist also nodded. “Indeed, if anyone’s made it to the Myriad Treasures Pavilion, then they would be an unparalleled genius. The strength of their heart of dao would be such that we would be hard pressed to find such a genius even in the four great sects?”

“What are you lot worried about? We’ll receive a notification as soon as someone passes through the pavilion.”

They couldn’t see what was happening on the path of rebirth

from the outside world, but the pavilion was the only part of the path of rebirth that had a connection with the outside world.

The ancient venerated expert who had created the path of rebirth must have had his reasons for placing the Myriad Treasures Palace here. The outside world would receive notifications as soon as someone passed through the pavilion.

Chapter 286: One With Genius Strength Of Heart Has Appeared!

However, just like they'd said, one had to indeed possess an incredible amount of strength of heart to make it to the Myriad Treasure Pavilion in half a day's time.

Even if they were the four forefathers, the strength of their heart when they were young wasn't up to the level where they could make it to the pavilion in half a day on the path of rebirth.

Setting foot into the pavilion was when the real tests began.

The level of illusion within the pavilion was higher than all those that had come before it.

If all the temptations, horror, and illusions of life and death were unable to defeat one with a strong strength of heart, then they would then face boundless temptation within the pavilion.

Those who could resist the temptations of methods and divine weapons were few and far in between.

After all, in the world of martial dao, particularly mundane practitioners, almost everyone lacked martial arts techniques and methods.

It was precisely this deprivation they had that made them hunger

for these items. Since they hungered for them, how many could remain as unmoving as a mountain and refrain from browsing through them or not touch any of them at all?

"Even those with a strong strength of heart will most likely pass the Myriad Treasures Pavilion on the third day?"

"The third day?" Sunchaser smiled faintly. "Younger sister Icewind, you're always so optimistic. A mere mundane practitioner passing through the pavilion on the third day? In my eyes, that's completely impossible. Only the premier disciples of a sect can pass through the pavilion on the third day. I'd estimate that less than five of those exist in each sect, and these are the ones who have specifically trained in methods to strengthen one's dao heart. If it's those who have never focused on the mental arts, then I would estimate that they wouldn't be able to pass through the pavilion in less than five days."

The organizer in charge of the first trial had once said that one would pass if they completed the path in ten days. Completing it in eight days was above average, while five days meant that one was a genius in the matters of the mind, and making it out of the path of rebirth in three days was an unparalleled genius difficult to find in even a hundred years, and sure to gain the attention of the forefathers.

After all, not even many of the premier geniuses of the four great sects could make it through the path in three days.

"Old monster Sunchaser, you seem to be quite dismissive of the mundane practitioners, even though you were the one who

discovered a genius with the azure phoenix constitution in the ordinary world." Ninelion laughed sarcastically. "Can it be that you don't wish for another genius to appear in the mundane world?"

Sunchaser smiled faintly, "It's not that I don't want to, but just that I'm objectively analyzing the situation. The ordinary world is still the ordinary world in the end. The resources out there are less than one percent of what the sects have. The rate in which geniuses will appear there are naturally less than one percent of the sects. How many geniuses do our four great sects boast of? In this regard, you will also know that finding a genius in the mundane world is akin to looking for a needle in the haystack."

Thousandleaf smiled faintly and shook his head, not saying a word.

A cry of shock suddenly came from the control center. "How can this be?"

"This... this can't be right?"

"No way? Someone made it through the Myriad Treasures Pavilion already? Hasn't... hasn't it only been half a day? It's not even been a full day!"

"What a... a perverse genius! Is the mundane world is truly giving birth to such a perverse existence as this?!"

“Something must be wrong with the hints or with the path of rebirth itself. There’s no way that anyone could’ve made it to the Myriad Treasures Pavilion in just half a day, much less than pass through it.”

“Indeed! How many can withstand the enormous temptation of so many treasures within the pavilion? How can ordinary practitioners pay no heed to them? Impossible!”

The forefathers wouldn’t personally oversee the first selection.

Those who were crying out with shock were the senior executives that had been selected from the four sects and put in charge of overseeing the first trial.

The forefathers were all flabbergasted to hear waves of these undignified exclamations. Their gazes all drifted to the control center.

The control center would receive a notification whenever someone cleared the Myriad Treasures Pavilion. A green figure would appear for each person who had passed through.

“Ridiculous! The path of rebirth is a legacy territory of the ancient times, how could there be a mistake?” Thousandleaf hectored and was the first to rush over.

Icemist also hurried over as well.

Ninelion looked at Sunchaser with a supercilious smile. “Old monster Sunchaser, since you were so certain that no one would pass through the Myriad Treasures Pavilion in three days, then I trust this must be an error with the path of rebirth, hmm? Haha!”

Ninelion seemed to have middling relations with Sunchaser, and naturally wouldn’t give up this opportunity to crack a sarcastic quip with the latter.

Sunchaser also felt extremely put out at this time.

Someone had passed through the pavilion in only half a day? This sounded like bullshit no matter how he thought about it.

However, he was an old monster of the origin realm and naturally knew that the path of rebirth was a legacy from an ancient expert. It was impossible for anything to go wrong with it!

This meant that someone among the mundane practitioners really had passed through the pavilion. With their speed in clearing the trial in less than a day, it meant that this person has well beyond surpassed many of the ultimate geniuses within the sects!

The strength of this person’s heart was at a frightening level!

Although Sunchaser felt his face burn thanks to Ninelion’s mockery, he didn’t have the time to to be bothered by this right now. He set aside his reservations as well and made for the control

center.

A green figure had appeared on a smooth, rock mirror in the control center.

“Incredible, incredible!” Ninelion murmured to himself. “Many good talents are indeed concealed amongst the mundane practitioners. It appears that there have been flaws with the method our four sects have used in selecting disciples in the past. We were too heavily biased against mundane practitioners in the past.”

The four sects had always selected disciples from within the sect previously, passing the tradition down through the generations. Although they had set up sites in the mundane world, thereby making them the so-called outer sites of the sects, none of the four sects particularly valued the outside sites. Those who were sent to these sites were either marginalized characters within the sects, or those who had no future within the sects and would rather go enjoy fame and fortune in the ordinary world.

Because the sects didn’t value the outside sites, that made the channels in which ordinary practitioners could enter the sects quite narrow.

After all, the outside sites held few selections in the mundane world.

And the sites held an equally few amount of selections for the outside sites.

One might come around every five or ten years, and they were held infrequently at that.

To the young practitioners, ten years would make them miss out on too much of the prime years of training and the best period of training in their lives.

Therefore, the fates of the majority of mundane practitioners were decided at the moment of their birth.

This wasn't to say that there were none who could change their destinies and make a turnaround to enter the sects, but those were few and far in between.

"Daoist Icewind, with your vision, did you see that such a genius existed amongst the mundane practitioners?" Thousandleaf's face was also filled with incredulity.

A wry smile stole across Icewind's beautiful face. "Daoist Thousandleaf, although my Flowing Wind Sect is adept at uncovering genius, a process is still needed to do so. Would you believe me if I said I could discern someone's potential with a first or second impression?"

Thousandleaf chuckled, "That's true, it's just that this kind of genius is simply too rare. There may be premier geniuses or those with extraordinary potential in our four sects, but ones with such strong strength of heart are as rare as dragon's scales and phoenix feathers."

A light shone out of Ninelion's eyes, "Can it be one of those geniuses with an innate strength of heart? I remember something called the Heart of a Ruler that only geniuses with an innate strength of heart possess. They possess immense strength of heart and are not disturbed by outside interference, as unmoving as a ruler..."

"Don't delude yourself." Sunchaser laughed coldly. "Our sixteen kingdom alliance is a territory with the most diminished existence amongst the Myriad Domain. I've never heard of a genius with the Heart of a Ruler in the history of the Myriad Domain, why would we have the luck to run into one?"

Ninelion also chuckled, "Well, I don't know who was the one who said just now that it was impossible for one of the mundane practitioners to walk out of the Myriad Treasures Pavilion within three days."

Sunchaser spoke faintly, "There is always an exception within this world. Not to mention that although it's impressive they made it out of the pavilion, they may not necessarily pass through the final test."

"Do you think the last test would stump someone who could easily walk out of the pavilion?"

"You never know." Sunchaser chuckled.

"Sunchaser, I feel that you're arguing for the sake of arguing.

How about this, if this person can make it through the path of rebirth, then your Purple Sun Sect will not set your sights on this genius and allow us three sects to fight over him, how about that?" Ninelion tried to provoke the other.

"Old monster Ninelion, why do you always voice these naive words at your age? I may have some personal opinions, but a selection is a great event for the sect. There is no relationship between the two. Back out of the competition? Why should we back out when we have a genius on our hands?"

"You admit now that we've met a genius?"

"It's a rare thing to have strength of the heart. Their future performance remains to be seen. If their potential is mediocre and talents in other areas are nothing, then they are still useless trash in the end."

Sunchaser's words still made some sense.

Strength of heart was merely one guarantee when assailing the origin realm. However, it would be useless if a practitioner lacked both the sufficient martial dao potential and the ability to train to the origin realm.

Potential was equally important on the path of martial dao training.

But if one lacked strong strength of heart and having only

potential, one wouldn't be able to go far on the path of martial dao.

It would just be a waste of this strong dao heart.

However, even though Sunchaser's words made sense, the other forefathers obviously weren't paying him much heed.

What they were paying more attention to was keeping an eye on this mentally invincible genius and seeing how he would do in the next trial.

If this one's potential and other areas were all not bad, then he would absolutely be a talent ripe for shaping. Even if his strength was insufficient to make it into the final sixteen, he would still be worth cultivating in the long run.

"Just who is this genius?" The figure of Jiang Chen suddenly appeared in Thousandleaf's mind. He himself didn't even know why he'd suddenly had this thought.

Perhaps the only one who'd left an impression on him from the four hundred thousand was Jiang Chen.

Except, forefather Thousandleaf hadn't himself discovered anything special from Jiang Chen.

Of course, Jiang Chen also floated across the minds of the other forefathers as well. After all, he was the only one who'd left an impression on them before the trial.

However, when it came down to a genius of the heart, no one was certain who this person might be since he was merely one person out of the four hundred thousand participants.

It was impossible for them to ascertain the person's identity after he put on both the mask and the uniform. They could only use the participant token to remember this participant's number, and keep an eye on this number in the future.

As for who was behind this token, that would have to wait until the final reveal.

Chapter 287: A Thousand Attentions Concentrated On One

Jiang Chen breathed out lightly as he spoke ruefully, “The Myriad Treasures Pavilion? If I hadn’t seen countless numbers of treasures in my past life, I might have actually stopped to take a look. The level of the illusions in the Myriad Treasures Pavilion is much more advanced than those before. If any ordinary practitioner actually makes it to the pavilion, I’m afraid many will stop there.”

Jiang Chen had seen everything beneath the heavens, so he had a certain degree of immunity towards the temptations of the Myriad Treasures Pavilion.

Not to mention that his powerful mental strength kept reminding him that this pavilion was illusory. It was fake, and not real.

In the end, the most realistic illusion would still remain a mere mirage.

Items such as methods and martial arts techniques provided the least temptation for Jiang Chen. He doubted that even those from stronger factions within the Myriad Domain would attract his attentions, much less the ones in the possession of the sixteen kingdoms.

As for divine weapons and those rare and exotic spirit creatures, since he knew it was all fake, he had a natural immunity to them

and didn't even pay them a glance.

He saw and thought no evil, so he didn't take the bait no matter how tempting it was.

Therefore, Jiang Chen had spent almost no effort in passing through the pavilion.

He also gave no thought the possible reactions in the outside world at the moment, and never would've guessed that his strong momentum in passing through the pavilion had given rise to spirit discussions regarding this genius. An uproar and fervent atmosphere had been incited.

When he left the pavilion, Jiang Chen rubbed his eyes after taking a few steps, he seemed to think that his eyes were playing tricks on him.

The person in front of him was the organizer for the trial of heart, and the man was equally nonplussed to see Jiang Chen.

"Why are you already here? Give me whatever you selected from Myriad Treasures Pavilion."

"What I selected?" Jiang Chen started. "That pavilion is merely an illusion, what could I have picked?"

The organizer arched his brow, "Things are both real and illusory on the path of rebirth, who told you the pavilion was fake? How

will you pass the test when you didn't select an item?"

"Real and illusory?"

"Cut the blather. Either you select a treasure and hand it over to me so you can pass, or I'll disqualify you right now." The organizer's tone was remote.

Jiang Chen was thrown into a bit of disarray, but he organized his thoughts and a hint of a smile appeared on his lips.

He suddenly stepped forward and sent a punch crashing down, "Fakery and tricks, all are illusory. Begone!"

The organizer was pulverized into a cloud of mist with that punch and dissipated where he stood.

In the next moment, the scene shifted to one of lush trees providing shade. Jiang Chen had returned to where he'd started out from.

A voice sounded at this moment, "Congratulations for passing the path of rebirth!"

Jiang Chen was given no time to resist before a surge of strength took him out of the path.

His figure appeared at the testing center for the trial of the heart

in the next moment.

When he appeared, pairs of eyes that numbered in the hundreds all shot straight at him. Their gazes seemed to bear the intent of burning through the mask and uniform to see who Jiang Chen really was.

“Participant, congratulations, you’re the first to pass! You need not speak, just hand over your participant token and we will record your results so as to form your final grade.”

Not speaking was obviously to avoid someone recognizing him based on his voice.

After all, everyone present was an expert, particularly the four forefathers. They might be able to discern the person behind the voice if he spoke up.

Jiang Chen gained his bearings before confirming that he had indeed made it out of the path of rebirth and returned to the outside world.

The four forefathers had long since agreed that they should not personally appear after the testing results were out. It would be considered intervention if they did.

However, all of the forefathers were itching to break their own rules at the moment, wishing to speak a few words with this heaven defying genius.

He’d spent less than a day to walk the path of rebirth. This performance was truly the epitome of heaven defying.

The forefathers had no doubts whatsoever that even amongst their premier geniuses, there would likely be less than three who could make it through the path of rebirth within three days.

Maybe not even a single one of them would be able to!

According to the rules, those to complete the first trial could enter the designated rest area and wait for the end of the ten days. He would then be led to the next trial with the other participants.

Jiang Chen was led to the rest area and sat down cross legged, he then started to meditate.

After this mental trial on the path of rebirth, Jiang Chen’s mental strength seemed to have risen, while Boulder’s Heart seemed to be showing subtle signs of a breakthrough.

Naturally, Jiang Chen hoped to make use of this opportunity to once again raise the level of his Boulder’s Heart.

It was an art that bore greater difficulty in training than the God’s Eye or Ear of the Zephyr.

It was rare that there was a chance to train the strength of one’s

heart. Jiang Chen had truly gained a lot this time.

To pass through the path of rebirth in one day, this was truly an astonishing performance.

When he walked into the rest area, many senior executives of the sects all stretched their heads in his direction and peered at him, casting looks of surprise and shock at him with blatant curiosity.

If it hadn't been for the strict rules, they definitely would've run up to Jiang Chen and torn off his mask, so as to see just who this person was.

The forefathers were also feeling a great agitation of emotions right now. They really, really wanted the ten days to hurry up and pass by so that the next trial could begin.

The next trial tested talent.

If this person continued his heaven defying performance in the next trial, then it would prove that this person was an unparalleled genius of an age, and someone worth recruiting and training at any cost.

The path of rebirth was difficult alright.

Although there was one perverse genius, no one else emerged from the path of rebirth in the next three days.

There were a few that had higher strength of heart who walked out on the fifth day.

The numbers grew noticeably higher on the seventh and eighth day, increasing to a deluge on the ninth and tenth days.

The ten days passed by quickly.

There were only seventy thousand left of those who had truly passed through the path of rebirth.

Those who hadn't made it out or were disqualified halfway were directly kicked out of the legacy realm. They didn't even have the right to linger around.

After all, a shocking amount of spirit power was necessary to maintain the legacy realm.

The fewer the number of people, the lesser the drain on resources.

Those who had been disqualified all naturally became trash in the eyes of the sects. They wouldn't continue to waste resources on trash.

These were the rules of martial dao survival — immediate discardment of those of no value.

Apart from Jiang Chen, the group of participants who had made it out within five days also received additional attention, naturally.

Because of the appearance of Jiang Chen, all the organizers in charge of the trials were incredibly enthused.

They patently wanted to see just how this genius of the heart would perform in the future trials.

Would he continue his heaven defying performance?

Or would he sink down to the masses and reveal mediocre potential?

All of the organizers were expectant in that second, full of anticipation towards this divine level dark horse that had emerged from the mundane practitioners.

Jiang Chen stood amongst the seventy thousand, listening carefully to the rules of the second trial.

“The second trial isn’t to test how high your level of training is, but how great your talents can be. Of course, we are also testing other talents apart from martial dao. We greatly welcome you to test all your talents. After all, we are looking for talents in all areas in this selection, and not just limiting ourselves to martial dao.”

“Alright, I now announce that the second trial has begun.” The trial had officially begun with this announcement.

The tests of the second trial weren’t actually that complicated.

To put it plainly, it was a test of spirit roots.

What was a spirit root? Long Juxue’s innate azure phoenix constitution was an example of one.

The spirit root is a measure of how much potential there is in your body, what level, and approximately how far you could walk along this path.

Potential was equally vital on the path of martial dao.

If it’d been the former Jiang Chen attending this trial, he would be kicked out immediately.

However, after two years of reforging and a slew of corrections, and add on to that the absorption of the Flaming Heart of Ice, Jiang Chen’s potential had been thoroughly transformed through this series of heaven defying changes.

His potential and spirit ocean were both superb and extraordinary now.

The most important thing was that he had absorbed the Flaming

Heart of Ice, which was the essence of the Lotus of Fire and Ice.

One had to keep in mind that the Lotus was a plant spirit that ranked in the top ten beneath the heavens. Thus, its immense potential was plain to see.

The second trial was once again divided into a hundred testing sites. Jiang Chen was again placed in the second area. There were only a few hundred participants left in each area now.

What he didn't know, however, was that his participant token was now the subject of much scrutiny after the first trial.

Although he could occasionally feel all sorts of strange, covert looks at him, but with his personality, he wouldn't become timid or shy because of surreptitious attention from the outside world.

Inversely, it actually make him more forthright.

Since he was participating in the selection, then he would stun all those present with one amazing feat!

Since he didn't feel any malice from those subtle glances, he paid them no heed.

"Tsk tsk, did you see that? That perverse genius is in our area. It's going to be his turn soon."

“Sigh, I’m sure that the forefathers already have their sights set on him. If he’s extraordinary in the trial of potential as well, then this kid will have vaulted to new heights and soared to the skies in one leap!”

“What need is there to be extraordinary? His future would be limitless as long as his potential is not bad. If his potential is extraordinary, then he’ll be number one of the first selection without a doubt, and an unprecedented genius who absolutely has the right to vie for one of the final sixteen slots!”

“The final sixteen? That won’t be easy. Countless numbers of sect geniuses will be competing for a place on that list. As an ordinary practitioner, even if he possesses astounding potential, his foundations are shallow and he hasn’t had enough time to build them up. It will still be difficult for him to surpass the sects’ geniuses.”

These comments were all captured by Jiang Chen’s Ear of the Zephyr.

He reacted rather nonchalantly at this time as it just so happened to be his turn.

Chapter 288: The Trial Of Talent, Jiang Chen's Choice

The trial of talent was much more simple and straightforward.

Jiang Chen had undergone something similar in the Eastern Kingdom.

Although there were slight differences in testing potential and testing level of training, it was more or less the same.

"May I inquire which tests you would like to undertake?" When the organizer of this trial saw Jiang Chen's participant token, he recognized the genius from the first trial and so his tone and gestures all became uncommonly polite.

He was deathly afraid that he might give offense to this genius with the slightest bit of inappropriateness in his tone, and that the other would remember him because of that and implicate his sect for it. If this genius rejected his sect because of him, then the forefather of his sect would certainly scalp him and pull out his tendons for it.

There were tests of martial dao, pills, glyphs, formations, and taming spirit creatures in the trial of talents.

According to the rules, the second trial would also run for ten days.

However, if one were to participate in every test, that still wouldn't be enough time.

Therefore, all participants had to make a decision.

They should make the best use of these ten days to choose the tests that they had the most confidence in. Otherwise, if they wanted to participate in all of them and attend to one thing whilst losing sight of another, they would end up with nothing in the end and fail to display their best talents in the trial.

"I will only participate in the test of martial dao."

Jiang Chen's goal was very clear, his ultimate goal was martial dao.

As for the other talents, he felt no need to test them at all. Within the range of the sixteen kingdoms, he didn't feel that anyone existed who would be able to measure up to him with the other talents.

There was no need to test them.

The organizer started and immediately smiled, "Good, you're the genius of the trial of heart alright. Your dao heart is as resolute as a boulder and different from others!"

He was indeed different from others, most other participants would choose at least two or three tests.

Jiang Chen was the first to choose only one test.

One had to know that those participants who dared choose only one meant that he had the utmost daring and vigor.

After all, choosing only one test meant forcing one down a desperate path.

If his results were subpar, then he wouldn't have the chance to continue participating in the selection and would be disqualified immediately.

But if he'd chosen two or three, he'd still be able to look forward to the other tests even if he failed in this one.

Participants would be able to continue as long as one of their tests met the standard.

"Just one?"

"This genius of the heart is indeed invincibly confident."

"Tsk tsk, a genius indeed. Geniuses always do things differently from others."

"If this genius has uncommon talents, then a miracle will have been born in our sixteen kingdoms, one that has arisen from the

mundane practitioners!”

“Indeed! For a mundane practitioner to have this level of talent, he is on par with the premier geniuses of the sects! For a genius such as this, if given enough time, he will walk a further path than the sect geniuses and create even more miracles!”

“Precisely, a mundane practitioner makes progress through grueling and arduous conditions. The difficulty inherent in this is not something that a privileged sect disciple can measure up to.”

As the voices conversed, Jiang Chen had arrived in front of a cave with the organizer.

“The test of martial talent is one that tests your control, affinity, and mastery over the powers of nature. The powers of the five elements are present in nature, and that is exactly what this test is focusing on.”

“There are countless caverns here, and each one embodies the power of one of the elements. These caverns are divided into three difficulty levels, easy, intermediate, and difficult. Participants are to decide upon a level of difficulty and remain within it to perceive the power of nature. The greater the difficulty and the longer you remain within the cavern means the greater your potential in this area.”

“For instance, if you select a metal attribute cavern, then you will receive boundless testing from the element of metal within.”

“Is all clear?”

Jiang Chen nodded; the rules weren’t hard to understand.

“Mm, since you understand, then begin selecting the difficulty of your test. If you choose the easy level and remain within for three days, that will be considered a pass and you will be noted as one with lesser spirit potential.”

“If you pass the intermediate difficulty level, you will be noted as one with intermediate spirit potential.”

“If you choose the difficult level and remain within for three days, then you will possess superior spirit potential.”

“This should be relatively clear as well?”

Jiang Chen chuckled, “Difficult is the highest level? How is one tested if born with an innate constitution?”

Although Jiang Chen didn’t possess an innate constitution, he was still rather curious.

“Haha, if it’s an innate constitution, then one would definitely have superior spirit potential. With the foundation of superior spirit potential, an innate constitution would absolutely give rise to unusual phenomena in the earth and sky, so it’s not difficult to discern. Besides, the senior executives of the sects naturally have their ways of testing innate constitutions. However, innate

constitutions are a once in a hundred years occurrence. In all these years, I've only heard of the Purple Sun Sect happened to pick up a treasure."

Picked up a treasure? Jiang Chen smiled. He knew of course that the organizer was speaking of Long Juxue with the azure phoenix constitution.

He also knew that having an innate constitution in a small place like the sixteen kingdom alliance was indeed a rare thing.

But one had to say that with Jiang Chen's breadth of vision, a mere innate constitution wasn't much of a big deal.

In his past life, which of his disciples hadn't possessed an innate constitution?

To those who were at the level of the heavens, an innate constitution was just a basic requirement. One wouldn't even have the face to show themselves in front of everyone else in the heavens without possessing even an innate constitution.

"Alright, please make your selection now."

"The difficult level and the fire and ice attributes." Jiang Chen had long since made his decision.

"What?" The organizer was startled.

Since the genius in front of him had quite a bit of pride, the organizer didn't think much of him selecting the difficult level.

The rare thing was that he had selected the two attributes of fire and ice.

Everyone knew that fire and ice didn't mix, just like oil and water didn't play nicely with each other!

There was limited martial dao knowledge within the sixteen kingdoms. Most martial dao practitioners could only develop potential in one attribute.

Only particularly special geniuses could develop two attributes.

The advantage of an innate constitution was that they were born with perfect affinities for all five elements, and possessed complete potential with all five from birth.

"Is there a problem?" Jiang Chen thought he'd made a mistake when he saw the organizer express his shock.

The organizer hastily waved his hands, "No, no problem at all."

However, the organizer privately cursed, this genius was simply too perverse. The difficult level was his first reaction, and he'd chosen two attributes that were the antithesis of each other.

Setting aside the results of this test, this heaven defying method of testing was already enough to cause jaws drop in shock.

“Can it be that all geniuses are freaks?” The organizer smiled wryly in his heart.

Indeed, in the organizer’s eyes, Jiang Chen’s decision was simply too odd.

“Alright, can we begin now?” Jiang Chen wasn’t much interested in the organizer’s emotional changes and just wanted to get through the testing.

“Of course you can, right away.” The organizer laughed ruefully. “Look over there, those two caverns are the difficult level testing sites. One of them holds the spirit vein of heavenly fire, another the spirit vein of heavenly ice. Remember, the difficulty level of this test is exceedingly high and the environment will be quite abominable. Hurry and leave if you cannot withstand it, don’t lose your life in there.”

The organizer spoke a reminder out of good intentions.

Jiang Chen’s gaze swept in a meaningful way around the caves.

He lifted his foot and stepped into the cavern with the spirit vein of heavenly fire. He decided to start with the attribute of fire!

Once he set foot inside, Jiang Chen suddenly felt that he'd gone from spring to summer. A fiery feeling immediately spread throughout his entire body.

There was another world within the cavern. It was a sea of colorful and radiant rosy clouds wherever he cast his gaze. It was if the very air was a fiery red.

This feeling was like he'd suddenly gone from an icy cavern to the mouth of a volcano.

Jiang Chen could feel his very pores shriveling with the heat. Waves of heat beat down on him as the flaming clouds around him continued to gather, forming a fiery tornado of cloud that roiled towards Jiang Chen.

This feeling was as if the great waves were lashing the beaches, making Jiang Chen's breathing speed up slightly as well.

Although this level of heat wave wasn't fatal, the continuous burning, continuous increase in temperature, and continuous feeling of being baked alive was enough to slightly discomfort Jiang Chen.

He'd have to stay within this environment for a full three days before he could be considered as having passed.

Jiang Chen circulated the qi within his body to refine the heat wave that was continuously beating down on him. The currents of

fire attribute essence continuously injected themselves into Jiang Chen's spirit ocean beneath his guidance.

"Mm? The essence of this fire attribute is this pure?" Jiang Chen also felt slightly surprised when he started absorbing it.

The purity of the fire attribute power within this cavern wasn't the least bit inferior to spirit rank fire attribute medicines, and it was approaching the purity level of saint rank medicines.

"The organizer said that the testing site of the difficult level embodied a spirit vein of heavenly fire. Can it be that the heavenly fire is concealed within the depths of this cavern?"

As these thoughts went through Jiang Chen's mind, he activated the Lotus of Ice and Fire in his body and six red vines grew out around him after a short while.

Each of the vines grew swiftly and each of the lotus petals were enough for three to four fully grown men to lie on them.

There were twenty to thirty petals on each of the lotuses.

Sensing the sustenance within the fire spirit power, the six lotuses immediately displayed great vitality like they were foodies having starved for millions of years. They began to furiously soak in the great feast in front of them and absorb the fire spirit power within the cave.

Chapter 289: A Freak With The Boulder's Heart

With the aid of the six fire vines, it became much easier for Jiang Chen to absorb the fire attribute spirit power.

The six fire vines coiled around Jiang Chen, greatly decreasing the stress on him, as well as doubling his effectiveness in absorbing the spirit power and halving the effort to do so.

"The Lotus of Ice and Fire has been fretting about lack of nourishment for a while, and here comes this perfectly made cave. Tsk tsk, I've worn out iron shoes in my search, but have found what I needed right here. It's a pity that I can only manipulate six vines at a time, or the rate of this absorption would be even faster. In the end, I'm still too weak."

Jiang Chen felt a bit regretful. If he could release more vines, then the rate of his absorption would be even faster.

The faster they took in nourishment, the faster the Lotus would grow.

The faster the Lotus improved, the more it would raise Jiang Chen's level of training. It would naturally be of great aid to Jiang Chen.

The six fire vines greedily took in the endless fire attribute essence in the cavern, continuously filling his spirit ocean after

Jiang Chen's refinement.

Jiang Chen's spirit ocean had been forged by the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill. Although he didn't possess an innate constitution, thanks to the pill, his spirit ocean also possessed the basic foundations of the five elements.

It was just the the two attributes of fire and ice that had been developed first, thanks to his encounter with the Lotus of Fire and Ice. They were temporarily the major direction that Jiang Chen was training in.

Although he wanted to train the other three attributes, he hadn't had the same kind of heaven defying opportunities that he'd had with the Lotus. The speed in which he trained the other three was naturally far below the fire and ice attributes.

There was an abundance of fire spirit energy within the cavern, so Jiang Chen's Lotus was as if a fish in water.

To other secular practitioners, this was a test.

But to Jiang Chen, this was a vacation, and something even more leisurely than a vacation.

……

"Tsk tsk, a full day has passed. This freak of a boulder's heart is indeed strong. He's the first amongst the ordinary disciples to take

on the difficult level.”

The outside world had already given Jiang Chen the nickname “freak with a boulder’s heart” because his performance in the first trial had been too perverse. How would he have made it through the path of rebirth in a day if he didn’t have a boulder’s heart?

Therefore, everyone could only use this nickname to refer to him before his true identity was revealed.

“Heh heh, geniuses are all lone wolves. This freak of a boulder’s heart has such a resolute dao heart that he must have his own opinions. He never would’ve trained such a resolute dao heart if he was just a mediocre talent. In my opinion, this person is completely confident of his success.”

“Indeed, a true genius must have this kind of charisma.”

Jiang Chen had no idea that outside gossip about him had already reached a feverish pitch.

What he could feel was that since the second day of his arrival, the fire spirit power in the cavern had grown noticeably wilder.

The tornado of flame kept churning around everything as if countless ancient beasts were crashing about the cavern and seeking to tear all life within it to pieces.

As for the Lotus, it had noticeably grown stronger after a full day

of absorbing the fire spirit power. The enormous fire lotus petals seemed to have no limit as they devoured the fire that crashed around them.

“This fire is so strong and the fire spirit power is noticeably more lively. It looks like the level of difficulty of the test is increasing day by day.”

Jiang Chen had also discovered this. However, since he had the protection of the continuously strengthening Lotus, Jiang Chen’s body wasn’t injured at all. He was held safely within, completely without pressure and as noncommittal as the clouds and wind.

The second day passed by silently as well.

On the third day, Jiang Chen once again discovered that the fires within the cavern had the intensity of an erupting volcano, fiercely and unceasingly spewing forth.

Tongues of flame licked up all over the walls of the stone cavern, like a flock of countless fiery birds rising to the roof.

Judging from the looks of things, it looked like the strength of the fires had more than doubled since the second day.

However, the Lotus had fed richly for two days straight, and naturally didn’t feel the slightest pressure when faced with a situation like this.

If this had happened on the first day, the six fire vines may have been slightly pressured in the face of these rampaging flames.

But after two days of conditioning, the six fire vines could handle this situation with aplomb.

In the outside world, the third day brought an odd atmosphere amongst the organizers.

“The third day is going to be over soon, which means this freak with the boulder’s heart should have no problem whatsoever in passing through the test!”

“Doesn’t this mean that this candidate has superior spirit potential?”

“Superior spirit potential and a heaven defying dao heart... what an absolutely perverse being. Can it be that the heavens has bestowed great fortune upon our sixteen kingdom alliance?”

“Haha, those sect disciples will finally not be lonely anymore. How much pressure and challenge will they face now with such a secular genius?”

“Challenge, pressure?” Some refused to play along with this. “Don’t speak too early. The foundations of a sect genius aren’t something that a secular genius can measure up to. Even if the freak with a boulder’s heart wants to challenge the sect disciples, his starting line is far behind them. If his age is above thirty, he

will have missed the prime period for training, no matter how good his potential and dao heart are."

The best ideal time for training on the path of martial dao was before the age of thirty.

If one didn't fully uncover their potential before the age of thirty and didn't lay their foundations, then one's potential would be limited no matter how gifted they were.

Even though this person's words weren't pleasant to hear, it was still the truth.

However, someone immediately leapt out to object.

"Above thirty years old? How is that possible? How could such a genius be hidden for 30 years?"

"Yes, it's best that he's a teenager or twenty something. If this is the case, he absolutely has the right to challenge those sect geniuses, and even put them beneath his feet."

The organizers conversed animatedly. Most of them still desired to see a genius rise up from the secular world.

Although they were of the sects, they would still be happy to see such a heaven defying miracle.

The third day finally passed beneath the attention of all those assembled.

However, the freak of the boulder's heart still hadn't emerged from the cavern.

"Hasn't three days gone past already? Why... why hasn't the freak emerged yet?"

"Can he have lost track of time because he was too engrossed?"

"Indeed, perhaps he really has lost track of time."

"Humph, you lot are optimistic. Why don't you say that he couldn't withstand the trial of heavenly fire and was burnt to a crisp?"

"Impossible!"

"What's impossible? Does one's potential have to be strong just because they have a strong heart of dao? Who set down those rules? Not to mention that mundane disciples have no foundations whatsoever and don't know the might of the elements of nature. It's said that newborn calves are not afraid of tigers. It's not impossible that he could've been swallowed by the heavenly fire!"

The person speaking had been someone who had been jealous and unaccepting towards the so-called genius with a strong dao heart. He was one of those stubborn folk who didn't want to see

the rise of a mundane disciple.

The freak with the boulder's heart, the alleged genius still hadn't walked out from the cavern after three days.

Therefore, his first thought was that the so-called genius had been swallowed by the flames.

Otherwise, what reason did he have to stay within the cavern after the three days were up?

However, according to the rules, the duration of the trial was ten days. Even the organizers couldn't venture into the cavern to investigate within the ten days.

"Ai, the mundane world still lacks experience in the end. A country bumpkin didn't know the complexity of things when he took the challenge and ended up paying the price with his life. What a pity, what a shame for that strength of heart and talent." The person tsk'ed and his tone held a few traces of taking pleasure in another's misfortune.

"Tsk tsk, do you Purple Sun Sect people always derive pleasure from others' misery? Or is it that you're afraid the rise of a mundane genius will threaten the so-called innate constitution that also hails from the secular world in your Purple Sun Sect?" Someone couldn't help but retort when he heard this fellow kick a person when he was down.

The Purple Sun Sect executive smiled, “Deriving pleasure from other’s misfortune? Is there a need for that? Not to mention, even if a genius of the heart has ordinary talents, what right does he have to be mentioned in the same breath as Long Juxue with the innate constitution? An innate constitution to be threatened? You must be joking. Is an innate constitution something that any random cat or dog off the streets can threaten?”

“Stop arguing, both of you. The limit of ten days has yet to arrive and no one knows what happened in the cave. What evidence do you have that he’s been swallowed by the heavenly fire?”

“Is there any evidence needed? He passes the test after three days. He still hasn’t emerged after the deadline, isn’t this obvious enough already? Or is it that it’s an enjoyment to remain in a cavern with a spirit vein of heavenly fire?”

“Humph, the style of a genius is never something that a frog at the bottom of a well can discern. We should wait and see and see what happens!”

No one could convince anyone else, but no one was truly willing to accept the reality that a genius even the forefathers were watching had fallen, just like that.

Four days had passed, and he still hadn’t emerged from the cavern.

In this regard, the ones that’d always thought the genius had perished became even more proud.

“He would’ve emerged a long time ago if he could after four, five days. It looked like this so-called genius still couldn’t hold up beneath the trial of fire. I think it’s time everyone set aside their expectations and accepted reality.”

“Mm, even the fifth day is almost over. He would’ve come out a long time ago if he could’ve. It looks like it’s not a wise thing to have too much expectations towards a mundane disciple. Ai!”

Most of the organizers who’d supported the freak with the boulder’s heart all had dim and dejected expressions.

Although they still didn’t wish to accept reality, the more time that elapsed, the dimmer hope became.

At this moment —

Bang!

An enormous bang came from the cave and rumbling noises traveled out from it. It seemed as if the skies were falling in, the earth was cracking, and a great earthquake had struck the cavern.

Chapter 290: The Endless Mountain

The feeling of the land ripping asunder continued for a full hour before it slowly weakened.

Thick smoke that accompanied a volcano eruption billowed out of the cavern continuously.

The air was filled with hazy ash and it obscured everyone's vision for a while.

When all of the smoke had cleared, all the organizers looked at each other, their faces full of surprise.

It was obvious that some violent change had happened in that cavern. In this regard, it looked like the freak with the boulder's heart was most likely dead.

At this moment, an organizer rubbed his eyes as his pupils suddenly shrank swiftly, peering into the cavern entrance with a look of incredulity.

A figure imprinted itself into the eyeballs of all those assembled.

This figure was the freak genius that they had been discussing about endlessly just now.

"How... how is this possible?!" The Purple Sun Sect executive,

who had been talking negatively the most just now, was utterly flabbergasted.

He'd been the one mouthing off the most, certain beyond a doubt that this so-called genius had long since been devoured by the heavenly fires.

Jiang Chen's appearance at the entrance to the cavern at this moment was a undisputed slap to his face.

"The fire attribute test is over, can I enter the cavern of ice now?"

Jiang Chen walked up to the organizer and handed his participant token over, asking faintly.

All of the organizers had exceedingly rich expressions on their faces. It was the head organizer who reacted first and chuckled, "Of course, of course."

Even though they didn't know what had happened in the cavern, but what that important now? The participant had made it through the trial and he had emerged safely, what had happened in the cavern no longer mattered.

The most important thing was, a true genius had appeared!

The four forefathers also learned of what had happened here in the first moment. Thanks to the rules, they couldn't fight over

recruiting this person right now.

But the four forefathers were all ablaze with passion in their hearts in this instant, all of them were plotting on how they'd run their recruiting plan.

To finish the path of rebirth in one day, this genius of the heart was enough to make all the premier geniuses of the four sects lose face completely.

He then finished as superior spirit potential in the trial of talent.

His performance in the two most important trials could only be described as 'perverse'. It wasn't the type of performance that an ordinary disciple should have at all.

Even if the preeminent geniuses of the sects participated in these trials, their grades wouldn't be as thus either.

"When did such a genius appear in the mundane world? No matter what, I must have this practitioner." Even Sunchaser had changed the attitude he'd held before the path of rebirth.

He had indeed been prejudiced against the mundane disciples.

But at this moment, those prejudices had completely vanished without a trace. Jiang Chen had used the truth to prove that geniuses still existed in the ordinary world.

However, if Sunchaser knew that the genius beneath the mask was the Jiang Chen that he'd previous said would be destined to die, his expression would've been a sight to watch.

"This one has set his sights on martial dao and he ignored all other tests of talent. With such a strong heart of dao, my Purple Sun Sect has the strongest heritage of martial dao of all the sects. Apart from my sect, what right do the others have to recruit this genius?"

Sunchaser had always had a supreme feeling of superiority on the path of martial dao.

The other three forefathers were also continuously making and revising their plans at the moment.

Thousandleaf of the Precious Leaf Sect also mentally listed the Purple Sun Sect as his strongest competitor.

"The Purple Sun Sect already has a genius with an innate constitution. If this genius is also taken by them, then the situation of the four sects being on equal footing will likely be thoroughly broken in a few decades. No matter what, I must recruit this genius to the Precious Tree sect. We must have him at all costs! Although my sect has a bit of a gap with the Purple Sun Sect in terms of martial dao heritage, we rank an undisputed first amongst the sects with our resources. As long as we employ the temptation of superior resources, this genius may not choose the Purple Sun Sect. After all, the Purple Sun Sect already has Long Juxue. Even if

this genius goes to them, he will always be regarded as just the one with the second greatest potential."

Thousandleaf had quickly grasped the pros and cons of the Purple Sun Sect.

The Flowing Wind Sect and Myriad Spirit Sect were in a comparatively weaker position when it came to recruiting martial dao geniuses.

"My Flowing Wind Sect sect is less than the Purple Sun Sect when it comes to martial dao heritage, and less than the Precious Tree Sect when it comes to resources. However, the strength of my sect in uncovering potential is unparalleled amongst the four sects. Add to that my sect's tradition of dual cultivation, if I can hit this point home, this martial dao genius may come to my sect after all!"

These were the thoughts of Flowing Wind's Icemist. The flowing Wind Sect had many female practitioners and all sorts of beauties in the sect.

This was most likely their best point to make if they wished to recruit martial dao geniuses.

As for the Myriad Spirit Sect, although they ardently desired to recruit this martial dao genius, they also knew that they had the least advantage out of all the sects.

However, the Myriad Spirit Sect always had their particular

focus in recruitment.

“Although this genius of the heart is a rare find in a hundred years, if this old man were to choose, I would still rather go with Jiang Chen. He can tame large numbers of spirit creatures and setup formations. My sect has never seen this level of spirit creature genius in all our history. I can give up competing for this genius at hand, and I can also use this opportunity to make the other three sects give up competing for Jiang Chen.”

Ninelion was more interested in Jiang Chen, but he never would’ve thought that the genius that everyone was so enthusiastically discussing at the moment was Jiang Chen.

Another five days silently passed by.

When Jiang Chen once again walked out of the cavern of ice, the organizers were looking at him with gazes of practically gazing at an immortal.

Alright, so he was a genius of the dao heart.

So he was of superior spirit potential, fine. However, his two attributes were both of superior potential, and ones that were antithesis to each other at that.

This was unheard of!

“What an insane genius! To have dual attributes means that he

will have more choices regarding which martial arts techniques he wants to learn from, and his path of martial dao will naturally be broader. He will have more of an advantage in practical battle. This genius was practically born for martial dao!”

The organizers all had to raise their thumb in approval in their hearts. Even if one was jealous and envious beyond belief of this genius, you still had to admit that he was a defining genius of the ages.

This genius was sure to become a thorn in the side of the sect disciples in the final selection.

They could almost see how many sect disciples would be trampled beneath his feet in the final selection!

The organizer held Jiang Chen’s token and looked at it again and again before recording Jiang Chen’s results in it.

“Congratulations, young man. Your fire and ice potential are all of superior potential. I must say, some of your caliber has a fighting chance with the sect disciples. Good luck!”

This organizer had quite an open demeanor. Jiang Chen smiled when he heard these words, “Thank you for your encouragement.”

Another round of people had been cruelly disqualified after the end of the second trial.

Nearly half of the seventy thousand was gone.

Less than forty thousand made it to the third trial.

An enormous mountain was in front of them in the distance. It looked like it towered into the heavens as it shot straight into the clouds, as if it was on the same level as the clouds. Countless numbers of clouds surrounded the peak, making it look like a mountain of immortals and giving rise to endless imagination.

“This mountain is also known as the Endless Mountain. There are a hundred thousand stairs, and each ten thousand steps is one floor. You will have qualified if you make it to the fifth floor. The sixth floor marks you as above average and the seventh floor marks you with excellent potential. The eighth floor indicates that you are worthy of the title of genius, and the ninth floor means that you are on par with the geniuses of the four sects. If anyone can make it to the tenth floor, then you have reason to be proud of yourself. Even the premier geniuses of the sects cannot make it to that floor.”

Although the Endless Mountain was towering, it wasn’t as simple as just increasing numbers of stairs.

“This is a magnetic Endless Mountain. The magnetism of each floor and the difficulty of each floor will double as you pass them. Therefore, you’ll find it easy at the beginning, but you’ll find each successive step more difficult as you go up. So if you use too much strength at the beginning, you may exhaust yourself before you reach the fifth floor and you will be unable to proceed. Remember, the magnetism of the Endless Mountain will make your body feel

heavier as you climb. You will feel your steps become more leaden with each stair you climb."

The organizer explained the rules in detail.

"Of course, in order to stimulate your potential and reward your advancement, some unique opportunities will await you starting on each floor after the fifth. If you're lucky, you'll receive some unexpected gains from there. Of course, you can only linger for two hours before you attempt the next floor, so you only have two hours in which to try your luck. Otherwise, if you tarry for longer than two hours, that means you've given up on climbing and the mountain will bounce you out, thus concluding your trial."

"Alright, these are the rules, begin!"

Jiang Chen looked at the stone steps with golden sparkles at the bottom of the towering mountain, sighing with emotion in his heart.

"A magnetic Endless Mountain! To think that such a mountain exists in the mundane world." Jiang Chen couldn't help but sigh.

Perhaps these organizers, including the forefathers, all knew that this mountain had incredible magnetism and it could attract all matter, creating an immense magnetic force field that would dictate its operations.

However, this was only one of its ordinary functions.

The true experts of ancient times would refine the mountain into a treasure, it could be stored and summoned, and they could manipulate it with their hearts.

Jiang Chen was also rather curious as he looked at this enormous mountain. Could it be that this mountain was one of the treasures of those ancient experts?

Figures continued to shoot past Jiang Chen like flying birds. When they landed on the stone steps, they climbed up using hands and feet like monkeys, deathly afraid of falling behind.

Jiang Chen cleared his mind of all thoughts and he took a deep breath in, and he bounded for the stone steps of the magnetic, golden colored mountain.

Chapter 291: A Magnetic Storm

Just as the organizer had said, there wasn't much pressure from the magnetic golden mountain at first. Climbing was as effortless as climbing a regular mountain.

The magnetic field fluctuated slightly on the second floor, but its influence was negligible to a practitioner.

Jiang Chen surged to the third floor in one go.

The magnetic force on the third floor was noticeably stronger than the second floor, but it still wasn't enough to affect Jiang Chen's footsteps.

Of course, he wasn't the type to just heedlessly charge forward with brute force.

It would be an easy thing for Jiang Chen to break through to the fifth floor with his training of third level spirit realm.

After all, this was just the first selection, one that was geared towards ordinary practitioners. Its level of difficulty wouldn't be so hard that someone of the third level spirit realm wouldn't be able to pass it.

When he reached the fourth floor, Jiang Chen started seeing some who had charged forward too quickly and run out of strength. They sat on the steps of the fourth floor, planning on

meditating to recover their strength.

Jiang Chen also sighed when he saw this.

“These fellows don’t understand that haste does not bring success. This is the magnetic golden mountain. The longer one sits down to meditate, the greater the magnetic pull will become on one’s body. To meditate on this mountain is to fall into a pit of their own digging.”

Jiang Chen had studied magnetic golden mountains in his past life and knew the characteristics of such mountains.

Once caught in a mountain like this, one could never sit down and meditate because there was no spirit power for you to absorb.

How would you replenish the spirit qi in your body without any external source?

It wasn’t that there was no spirit qi on the magnetic golden mountain, but in keeping with the name, the spirit qi had the magnetic force of the metal element and its great killing force embodied within it.

Unless one was a practitioner born with a natural affinity for the metal element, once a practitioner began absorbing the magnetic force of the metal element, it would be akin to absorbing sharp knives into one’s spirit ocean. In the end, it was just a slow form of suicide.

“You there, keep moving if you don’t want to die. To meditate on a magnetic golden mountain is absolutely courting death.” Jiang Chen snorted coldly but still issued a voice of warning.

He didn’t bother to see if they had listened, and went on his way.

He’d only spoken out of kindness. As for whether or not they listened to him, that wasn’t something he could control.

If they didn’t listen to his warning and ended up with a face full of ashes or even lost their lives, it would be their own fault.

Jiang Chen’s footsteps flitted lightly as he proceeded at an even pace to the fifth floor.

The fifth floor was a line of demarcation.

Reaching the fifth level meant one had passed the third trial.

Although thirty to forty thousand people were participating in this trial together on the magnetic golden mountain, he hadn’t run into many of them.

All of the participants had been deposited on different areas and regions, scattered on every corner of the mountain.

On the fifth floor, Jiang Chen could clearly feel that the

restraining force of the mountain had suddenly multiplied.

"The fifth level is indeed different from the previous floors. If one isn't at the level of a true qi master when they arrive at the fifth floor, they would likely be unable to continue the challenge."

However, since he made it to the fifth floor, he'd passed.

"The organizer said that some fortuitous occurrences would occur at the peak of each floor starting from the fifth, like a lottery. Shall I go try my luck now that I've passed the fifth floor?"

Thoughts raced through Jiang Chen's mind. There was a ten day limit to each trial anyways. He was in no hurry.

He took a spin around the peak of the fifth floor. With Jiang Chen's dao heart, he could deploy both God's Eye and Psychic's Head at the same time. Nothing was concealed to his perceptions.

However, Jiang Chen almost splurted out in laughter after he'd taken a look around.

The organizer had spoken the truth. The encounters and items on the peak of the fifth floor were indeed rare and valuable for ordinary practitioners.

However, with Jiang Chen's current level of training and breadth of vision, these items were useless to him. He didn't even have the desire to stretch out his hand.

“Forget it, let’s leave these items to those in need of them.”

There were precious few opportunities for secular practitioners to advance. These items were all undoubtedly priceless to them, and treasures that they could never have too many of. If utilized properly, they would truly have the ability to change their fate.

Jiang Chen wasn’t the sort to take all the advantages for himself. Since he couldn’t use any of these, why fight the ordinary practitioners for them?

He naturally couldn’t be bothered to do something that harmed others and didn’t benefit himself.

Jiang Chen arrived at the sixth floor in the span of a moment.

The magnetic force had become even stronger at this floor. The very air seemed to be inundated with sharpened needles.

The currents of the air seemed to pierce the skin.

Jiang Chen knew that this was a manifestation of magnetic force. However, to a third level spirit realm practitioner like Jiang Chen, this kind of discomfort was as effective as a gentle rain.

What Jiang Chen hadn’t foreseen was the number of practitioners that had already arrived at the sixth floor.

He smiled wryly in his heart, “Although the organizer had continuously emphasized not to charge too hard, these ordinary disciples seem to be quite confident in themselves.”

Jiang Chen naturally had no desire to contend with them for anything.

He had his own plan. This was a long race, and those in front may not necessarily be the ones who made it to the finish line.

He wanted to proceed at his own tempo and not be affected by the outside world.

Those who had made it to the sixth floor were, at minimum, all true qi masters.

When he arrived at the peak, he discovered that several geniuses were conducting a carpet style search of the place.

It was obvious that these fellows had tasted some of the sweet fruits of victory on the fifth level and so were even more enthusiastic in this level in the hope of receiving more fortuitous encounters.

Jiang Chen took a casual look around. The treasures of the sixth floor were indeed on another level compared to the fifth.

However, they were still mostly suited for true qi masters, with some also useful for half step spirit realm practitioners.

In Jiang Chen's eyes though, these items still weren't worthy of his notice. They were definitely not worthy of Jiang Chen reaching out to pick them up.

Some other spirit realm practitioners seemed to have come to a similar conclusion.

They didn't deign to linger in the sixth floor after casting an eye around, and instead made for the seventh floor.

Those that had the right to make for the seventh floor were all of the spirit realm.

A half step spirit realm could make it into the seventh floor, but they would need to make an extraordinary effort.

Therefore, when they made it to the seventh floor, the regard with which the geniuses held each other became complicated.

There was some wariness, some caution, and even some enmity.

After all, the ones who had made to the seventh floor were well aware that they were each other's greatest competition.

Since they were competition, it was a normal thing for them to

stay guarded around each other.

Jiang Chen could also feel some gazes with traces of enmity and provocation coming his way. Apparently, even with his efforts at keeping a low profile, he had still elicited some attention by making it to the seventh floor.

It was a good thing that participants knew nothing about each other, and that no one knew of how exemplary his performance in the previous two trials had been.

If they knew, they'd likely think twice before provoking Jiang Chen.

Of course, Jiang Chen wasn't the slightest bit bothered by these boring gazes. He was entirely contemptuous of such low level tricks.

Not to mention that they were restricted from attacking each other during the trials. If anyone broke this rule, they would be disqualified even if they had passed through the first selection. They would have no chance of making it into the second.

The speed of the air currents had become noticeably faster after making it to the seventh floor, and the prickling feeling of the air had increased as well.

Even Jiang Chen couldn't be as leisurely as he was before.

However, although his forward motion had been slightly impeded, this was still not enough to bring him to a halt.

After an hour, he'd arrived at the peak of the seventh floor.

Not many could make it to the peak. Across the ground, practitioners were scattered in twos and threes, all panting severely and seemingly quite weakened.

As Jiang Chen scrutinized these practitioners, he knew they had no strength left to challenge the eighth floor.

As Jiang Chen leisurely walked forward, another group of practitioners arrived with dragging, weary steps.

He still didn't touch the so-called treasures on the seventh floor.

When he arrived at the eighth floor, the air currents around him burst into a bedlam of discordant noise, one moment sounding like shining spears and armored horses, and the next the furious beat of battle drums. Intermittently, one could hear the cacophony of horns, or the long howls of ferocious beasts.

The ear piercing sounds drilled into his eardrums, accompanied by the feeling of blades in the air and a far stronger killing intent.

A twister several meters thick suddenly came into existence in the air, taking away one of the ordinary practitioners with it.

It appeared as though a fierce beast from ancient times had just swiped a person away with a tongue.

“Ah!!”

The person only had time to emit one ghastly scream before he vanished without a trace in the twister.

“A magnetic twister?” Jiang Chen’s thoughts raced as he suddenly recalled something frightening.

A magnetic twister was a strong twister on the magnetic golden mountain, a vortex formed after the metallic air currents had become randomly mixed up. It could be big or small and was incredibly frightening.

When the magnetic twister reached several meters wide, it was strong enough to engulf a practitioner of the small spirit realm.

The appearance of the magnetic twister would infinitely increase the difficulty of the mountain.

With the strength of this magnetic twister, even Jiang Chen couldn’t let down his guard.

He deployed Psychic’s Head again and continued climbing.

As savage the magnetic twister was, it wasn’t like it came without warning. He would greatly decrease the danger to himself as long as he avoided the eye of the twister.

Therefore, at the heart of it, it wasn’t about how to fight the twister, but how to evade it.

Chapter 292: Treasure Of The Ninth Floor, The Thundercloud Tree

Thanks to his studies in his previous life, Jiang Chen knew some of the secrets of the magnetic gold mountain.

Therefore, he had a unique advantage when climbing up the mountain.

Although the magnetic twister was quite frightening, its appearance was usually accompanied by minute magnetic pulses. So as long as he made the correct judgment call and stayed alert, he would be able to avoid the eye of the twister.

As long as he evaded the twister, he wouldn't have to worry about being churned to death.

Of course, if he had enough strength, he'd be able to completely ignore the twisters. But that was been another matter entirely.

With the level of magnetic twisters within the eight floor, earth spirit realm practitioners would still be able to break free if they were caught within.

With Jiang Chen's level of training, he was confident he'd be able to struggle free of the twister if caught.

However, even though that was the case, it would still be an

enormous drain on his spirit reserves if he did so, and Jiang Chen didn't want to take the risk.

Jiang Chen had given up his pursuit of speed in favor of a sure and steady pace.

With that in mind, he spent a lot more time climbing the eighth floor of the magnetic gold mountain.

When Jiang Chen arrived at the peak, the number of practitioners that greeted his eyes could almost be counted on one hand.

Jiang Chen knew that if one didn't wasn't at the second or third level spirit realm, it would be exceedingly difficult for them to reach the peak of the eighth level.

"Things sure are different at the top. The quality of the treasures have been increasing with the increased numbers of steps found on each floor. Although the treasures on the eighth floor aren't enough to make my eyes redden with desire, they're decent enough."

Since they were finally decent enough, Jiang Chen didn't abstain any longer and began to unabashedly assess the area.

He didn't tarry long afterwards. The organizer had said that they couldn't spend more than two hours at the peak of any area, or they'd be disqualified immediately.

He started climbing the ninth floor without the slightest hesitation.

The air currents on the ninth floor were like actual knives and spears, flashing with light and shadows as they hurtled towards him.

In addition to the magnetic force that fettered one like a shapeless vine, it was impossible to completely lift one's foot.

Even Jiang Chen didn't dare take this floor lightly as he held the nameless saber in his hand for the first time.

He had to leverage the power of his weapon and cleave through the air to ensure that he could continue to advance.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

The nameless blade carved the way as it slashed through one minor twister after another as Jiang Chen continued to climb.

It was a good thing Jiang Chen had a deep understanding of the magnetic golden mountain.

When he put his blade techniques to use, he tried to meld with it the metal attribute potential within his spirit ocean.

In this regard, every step he took on the ninth floor was quite firm and resolute, as if he was moving against the current in the great ocean.

The magnetic golden mountain kept sending out attacks on the ninth floor, almost completely lacking a pattern. Danger lurked behind every corner and a new test filled every second.

Jiang Chen had felt he'd spent a lot of time on the eighth floor, but it was sheer heaven compared to the ninth level.

He didn't turn to look back, but used his peripheral vision to sweep his surroundings and discovered that there were no other practitioners moving forward.

"Did they all fail out of the ninth floor?"

Jiang Chen was also slightly surprised. He knew that premier geniuses were hard to come by amongst ordinary practitioners.

However, the four great sects had set up some sites in the mundane kingdoms and supported a lot of outer disciples. There were bound to be some geniuses amongst them.

Those outer disciples were also taking part in the first selection.

The disciples that Jiang Chen had met in the seventh and eighth floor had mostly been from the outer disciples of the sects.

Of course, Jiang Chen guessed that he wasn't the only one to make it to the ninth floor.

"Whatever, it means nothing to me whether someone else has made it here. My goal is to climb to the top and experience what it means to be the king of the hill, overlooking all the other minor peaks!"

Jiang Chen wasn't distracted as he continued climbing up the stairs.

Each floor had ten thousand steps, and he'd spent almost no effort to climb all ten thousand in the earlier levels.

But each step of this ninth floor was taken laboriously and arduously.

He spent a full day and weathered tests from countless magnetic twisters before setting foot onto the peak of the ninth floor.

"Hoo!"

There were no magnetic twisters at the peak of the ninth floor.

All was calm here, and he could finally take a break. However, he knew that the lack of a magnetic twister didn't signify the lack of a magnetic force.

This was the magnetic golden mountain after all. The restraining magnetic force was omnipresent.

The terrain was flat here, making for an ideal resting place.

But of course, Jiang Chen wouldn't waste time here. But this was the ninth floor, and according to his theory, the items here would be much better than those on the eighth floor.

If you were to say that the treasures on the eighth floor were just barely adequate, then those on the ninth floor may result in additional surprises!

"Mm? This is the Thundercloud Tree?" Jiang Chen's eyes suddenly snapped to a golden colored tree.

"This place actually has a Thundercloud Tree?" Jiang Chen began to recall what he knew about the tree.

The Thundercloud Tree had its place amongst the ranking of things beneath the heavens.

This particular one was likely only of medium to lesser quality. In the greater picture of things, no one would even pay attention to this tree if it grew by the side of the road.

After all, the experts beneath the heavens had seen too much,

and a mere lesser Thundercloud Tree wasn't enough to capture their attention.

However, Jiang Chen was uncommonly surprised at this moment, as if he'd received a priceless treasure.

The Thundercloud Tree was one of the more useful metal attribute spirit trees. It had many uses, such as the ability to be forged as part of a divine weapon. Practitioners who walked the path of thunder and lightning would find this even more of a treasure, because it could attract thunder, and was curiously effective at that.

Attracting thunder was just one of its many uses.

Apart from that, the Thundercloud Tree could neutralize many poisons. Having a branch of it in hand made one almost impervious to ten thousand evils and immune to a hundred poisons.

Apart from this, metal attribute practitioners could even refine and absorb high level Thundercloud Trees to forge their own bodies.

If it was a divine rank Thundercloud Tree, once it was absorbed into the practitioner's tempered body, then the body could be labeled invincible.

No matter how many wondrous arts one had, a practitioner could

never separate from their bodies.

Therefore, to body cultivators, the Thundercloud Tree was a priceless treasure.

A tempered body was more useful than any armor or external defense. This meant that one's own body was the pinnacle of defense. It was almost impossible for a practitioner on the same level to defeat an opponent possessing a tempered body.

Even if they were one or two levels ahead of their opponents, it was still an extremely difficult matter to destroy a tempered body. If one didn't have the aid of a divine treasure, fists and feet alone would be hard pressed to damage a tempered body.

Using the nameless blade in his hand, Jiang Chen used sixty percent of his strength to viciously chop down on the thickest branch of the Thundercloud Tree.

He too was quite excited about this tree. The branches and leaves were broad and full grown, and he wanted to take some for use in the future.

Clang!

A clear sound of impact rang out as Jiang Chen felt his hand go numb, with only a faint trace left on the tree.

The sharpness of the nameless blade and sixty percent of Jiang

Chen's strength had only left a faint mark!

Even he was slightly surprised by this scene.

"I've heard that the Thundercloud Tree is so durable that it cannot be damaged. It looks like this is true!" Jiang Chen smiled wryly and looked at the edge of the nameless blade. It was a good thing that the quality of the blade looked to be on par with the Thundercloud Tree. It hadn't been chipped at all

He was certainly in a quandary now.

He would likely have to expend tremendous strength to pick a branch of the Thundercloud Tree.

If Jiang Chen were to hack away like this with no thought to the cost, he'd have no problem cutting down two or three branches within the allotted time.

However, once he had used up all his strength here, what would he use to challenge the tenth floor?

Would he give up before he'd climbed up to the tenth floor?

This obviously wasn't Jiang Chen's style. Since he'd reincarnated, he hadn't allowed himself to give up part way even once. The desire to challenge the tenth floor was far greater than his desire for the Thundercloud Tree.

“The Thundercloud Tree is precious, but this is only the peak of the ninth floor. If I can make it to the tenth floor and reach the peak of this magnetic golden mountain, then the treasure that awaits me there will surely be more valuable than this wood!”

Jiang Chen also warned himself that he couldn’t be blinded by the profit at hand.

Restraining his desire for the Thundercloud Tree, Jiang Chen was about to walk forward when he suddenly remembered something. He smacked his forehead, “How could I have forgotten? The Goldbiter Rats devour everything related to the metal attribute. This magnetic golden mountain is the best stage for them to display their talents!”

Jiang Chen’s eyes, gazing at the Thundercloud Tree, started to sparkle again.

He immediately took out the Millionditch Stonenest and let the Rat King out.

“Ole Gold, I need your help again. This magnetic golden mountain brings almost no pressure to you. Take a look at this Thundercloud Tree. Can you remove it, roots and all, within two hours?”

Jiang Chen’s appetite had grown with the aid of the Goldbiter Rats.

He’d only wanted two or three branches before, but was now thinking of uprooting it entirely.

The Goldbiter Rat looked around with shock, “This really is the magnetic golden mountain. This... this is a heaven for my Goldbiter Rats!”

“Don’t be touched, take a look at the Thundercloud Tree first.” Jiang Chen hastened to speak up in reminder when he saw the Rat King look around in stupefaction.

Chapter 293: The Thundercloud Golden Beetle

The Rat King smiled diffidently after Jiang Chen's reminder and he started circling the Thundercloud Tree. He grinned after a moment, "Young master, I can uproot this Thundercloud Tree in an hour. But it won't be able to be replanted after it leaves the soil of the magnetic golden mountain. Are you sure you wish to dig it up by the roots?"

This question stumped Jiang Chen.

"Young master, this Thundercloud Tree is quite rare, and it may be a shame to dig it up by the roots. How about I pick some branches for you? It will be enough for your uses."

Jiang Chen smiled wryly, "Ole Gold, this doesn't seem like you. When did you have so much compassion?"

The Rat King smiled awkwardly "Young master Chen, I... sigh. I'll listen to you."

Jiang Chen spread out his hands. "Maybe, I won't be able to make it into this magnetic golden mountain in the future. Since the tree is right in front of me, this is my fortuitous occurrence. If I don't take it now, it may become my downfall in the future. Dig, dig it up by the roots!"

Jiang Chen hadn't touched any of the treasures on the previous

floors because he didn't wanted to cheapen himself and fight with those ordinary practitioners for items he had no use for.

However, Jiang Chen could absolutely make use of this Thundercloud Tree. It had so many uses that he wouldn't naturally pass it by.

In the operations of the heavens, there was a reason behind every gesture and movement.

The Thundercloud Tree was here, and so was Jiang Chen. This meant that their fates were destined to intersect.

Jiang Chen knew full well that the laws of heaven operated according to their reasons and he naturally wouldn't pass up such a fantastic treasure.

The Rat King didn't protest after seeing Jiang Chen being so resolute. He cocked his head and then prepared to burrow into the ground. He planned on digging out the ground that the Thundercloud Tree stood on and thoroughly cut it off.

"Hold!"

A stiff voice sounded from atop the tree at this moment. It sounded very unpracticed, and it was using the ancient beast language.

The Rat King started and stopped his burrowing movements,

turning and flashing up the tree with a curious speed.

Jiang Chen also lifted his head in surprise. He too could understand the ancient beast language.

Both he and the Rat King hadn't detected the presence of other life on this tree!

Flap, flap, flap.

The Rat King darted to and fro through the Thundercloud Tree, more agile than a monkey in its fluid movements.

"Hmm?" A golden streak of light suddenly shot out from the tree. Jiang Chen's gaze followed the streak and he noticed a Golden Beetle the size of a fist was dancing around frantically, flapping its gossamer wings.

"Thundercloud Golden Beetle?" Information about this creature immediately popped into Jiang Chen's mind.

This Thundercloud Golden Beetle depended on the Thundercloud Tree for survival, so the tree was also called the Golden Beetle Thundercloud Tree.

Due to their close relationship, the beetle was aptly named the Thundercloud Golden Beetle after the tree.

The beetle was only the size of a fist, but it was obviously suffused with extremely abundant spirit power. Its intelligence had already reached the level of being able to speak the ancient beast language.

Although Jiang Chen knew that the Golden Beetle was an exceedingly intelligent being, the fact that it could speak the ancient beast language meant that its bloodline was absolutely not that inferior.

A Golden Beetle with an inferior bloodline would not be able to speak the ancient beast language at all.

The Rat King narrowed his eyes and he looked covetously at the flapping wings in the air, greed written all over his face.

It was obvious that this Golden Beetle had a noble bloodline, giving the Rat King a heretofore unprecedented urge to feed.

It was obvious that although the beetle possessed a noble bloodline, its level of training was nowhere near the Rat King's.

The Thundercloud Golden Beetle wasn't a type of creature that was skilled at battling.

However, it had a great reputation in the world not only because it possessed many of the advantages that the Thundercloud Tree possessed, but also many of the positives that it didn't have.

The golden exoskeleton of the beetle could be used to craft battle armor. This armor was no ordinary armor, it was one that would make the wearer invisible.

The beetle had another stratagem especially for escaping. For practitioners, this meant that if they assimilated a Thundercloud Golden Beetle, they would gain an additional art that would save their lives.

Once the beetle's art was deployed, it could befuddle many. If a spirit realm practitioner practiced the beetle's art and utilized it well, he would be able to outwit even an origin realm practitioner!

At the heart of it, the Golden Beetle's stratagem was an art on how to pretend to be dead, and using a fake death to allow one's true body to escape and confuse the enemy at the same time.

The Rat King of course wasn't paying attention to the Golden Beetle's art. In actuality, the Goldbiter Rats' methods of escape wouldn't be any inferior to the Golden Beetle.

What it cared more about was the Golden Beetle's bloodline, which was a noble bloodline.

If he swallowed it, then it might be an undeterminable catalyst for the evolution of the Rat King's bloodline.

In this moment, the Rat King's mind was filled with only thoughts of devourment, feeding, devourment, and feeding!

“Young master Chen, can I have this Golden Beetle?” Although the urge to feed was topmost in the Rat King’s mind, he was still well aware that he needed to obtain Jiang Chen’s permission first.

“Old King, what are you in a hurry for? This Golden Beetle understands the ancient beast language and it possesses a noble bloodline. It would be a waste if you devoured it.” Jiang Chen wasn’t the type to not share in the wealth with those below him, but he wasn’t willing for the Golden Beetle to be swallowed just like that.

The Rat King was depressed, “Young master, this beetle’s bloodline is pure. If I devour it, then it may stimulate the evolution of my bloodline! You promised me… ”

“Ole Gold, the evolution of your bloodline was indeed our agreement, but this Golden Beetle is not yet your food. Not to mention that although you have the methods to enter the dirt, you aren’t omnipotent. It’d be difficult for you to catch this beetle.”

The Golden Beetle had hovered nearby all this time, its eyes darting around intelligently, seeming to be listening to Jiang Chen and the Rat King’s words.

The Golden Beetle was extremely surprised to see a human speaking the ancient beast language.

“Human… thank you.” The Golden Beetle’s voice was like a shy girl’s, marked with a few traces of shyness and hesitation.

It had obviously heard the conversation between Jiang Chen and the Rat King, knowing that it had been this human who had prevented the Rat King from carrying out his nefarious intentions.

"You don't need to thank me. I don't have to kill you, but you have to make it worth my while." Jiang Chen faintly said.

The Rat King was skilled at burrowing through the ground and so he didn't have many skills in taking down the beetle, but that didn't mean that Jiang Chen had no tricks up his sleeve.

The Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice was the best weapon for an ambush.

However, he didn't want to take that step yet.

The beetle looked frightfully at Jiang Chen, "What... what can I do?"

It had obviously been a short while since the Golden Beetle's heritage had awoken. It could speak the ancient beast language alright, but it spoke rather stiffly and stiltedly.

"What can you do?" Jiang Chen smiled. "What do you think that you can do that will make it worth it for us to allow you to live?"

"I... I don't know either." The Golden Beetle was a bit lost, but it

immediately said proudly, “It won’t be that easy for you to capture me on this magnetic golden mountain either!”

“I don’t need to capture you. I just need to dig up this Thundercloud Tree by the roots and leave you no resting place. You’ll be dead without a doubt then!”

These words were obviously very useful as they hit upon the Golden Beetle’s weaknesses in one go.

“Don’t… don’t… don’t do that human. I… know that you’re not a ruthless and cruel person. I… can tell you a great secret!”

“A great secret?” Jiang Chen smiled. “You were born on this mountain and you don’t even know how big the outside world is. What secrets can you speak of?”

The little Golden Beetle grew anxious. “The secret I speak of has to do with this mountain!”

“Oh?”

“I’ll tell you as long… as long as you swear not to capture me or destroy the tree. You and that dirty rat both have to swear to the heavens!”

The Rat King growled lowly, obviously greatly dissatisfied with the beetle’s terminology of “dirty rat”.

“Swear to the heavens?” Jiang Chen lightly stroked his chin and revealed a meaningful smile. “I don’t think any sort of secret is worth more than a Golden Beetle and a Thundercloud Tree.”

“No, that’s not all!” The Golden Beetle hastily cried out. “This secret is absolutely worth more. It will give you the chance to refine the entire magnetic golden mountain! Would you say that this is valuable or not? At that time, whether it’s the Thundercloud Tree or myself, we’ll all be yours. Everything on this mountain will be yours!”

“What?! Refine the mountain?” Jiang Chen’s face changed slightly.

The Rat King snorted coldly in successive times. “You’re going crazy in your desire to live, aren’t you? How is it remotely possible to refine a magnetic golden mountain?”

The Rat King plainly didn’t believe the beetle.

However, Jiang Chen’s facial expression grew grave. His knowledge of the mountain wasn’t something that the Rat King could aspire to.

In the ancient times, a magnetic golden mountain was indeed a treasure that many great experts refined. The mountains could be large to the point of covering the heavens, or as small as a speck of dust.

In the greater plane of existence, there were external experts that no one dared to offend and they all had magnetic golden mountains.

After all, the might of one of these mountains was simply too frightening when it was refined into a treasure.

The level of this mountain was obviously far inferior to those held by the great experts, but if he could refine it into a treasure, it truly was much more valuable than any Thundercloud Tree or Thundercloud Golden Beetle. Much, much more valuable!

“Human, think about it. I can tell you that in order to refine the mountain, not only is strength needed, so is a bit of technique. I just so happen to know this secret, and it lies on the tenth floor of the mountain.”

One had to say that the the Golden Beetle’s words were quite, quite tempting.

With his knowledge of the mountain, if he could refine it, then that would greatly increase his advantages. Even if he met a sky spirit realm practitioner, he’d be able to face them head on if he brought out the mountain.

It wasn’t an advantage that some sticks from the Thundercloud Tree could bring him.

“Young master Chen, don’t you listen to its bullshit!” The Rat King had been with Jiang Chen for a long time and he knew that he was a bit swayed when he saw Jiang Chen’s expression. The Rat King hastily called out in his haste.

“Little golden beetle, what if this secret you speak of is fabricated?” Jiang Chen coldly asked.

“It won’t be! I can also swear to the heavens that if I speak false, I am willing to become your food!”

The Golden Beetle was likewise panicked and hurriedly explained.

Chapter 294: Marching Onto The Tenth Floor!

Jiang Chen possessed unusual strength of heart, given his level of training in Boulder Heart. Thus, he could tell that the beetle didn't seem to be lying from its expression and words.

Once the notion of refining the magnetic golden mountain began to bud within Jiang Chen's heart, it became unstoppable.

"Ole Gold, since I promised you that I'd aid you in evolving your bloodline, I'll surely continue to try my best. However, you can't have this golden beetle today."

Jiang Chen turned his head and said to the Rat King.

The Rat King sighed in resignation. He knew that the fate of his tribe depended entirely on Jiang Chen.

If he didn't have Jiang Chen's help, he'd be unable to change the fate of his tribe, even though he was the king. Therefore, he had to listen to Jiang Chen.

He also knew that Jiang Chen was a man of his word. Since he'd promised to help them evolve their bloodline, he'd definitely do what he'd promised.

"Young master, I'll do whatever you want, so long as you

remember that the fate of the entire tribe of Goldbiter Rats rests in your hands. Besides, I wouldn't have been able to capture this beetle without the young master's help."

Although the Rat King was a bit reluctant, it still recognized the situation that it was in, and made the painful decision.

"Alright then, little golden beetle, I now swear to the heavens that, so long as your secret is of value, I won't make a move against this Thundercloud Tree, or you."

He smiled at the golden beetle and swore another oath immediately afterwards. "May I be executed by heaven and destroyed by earth if I break my word."

"Mm. You're not as capricious or as slippery as other humans I've met. Alright, I'll tell you the secret of the magnetic golden mountain."

"According to my inherited memories, this magnetic golden mountain should be a treasure from ancient times. Whoever makes it to the peak of the tenth floor will have a chance to refine this mountain. However, there are many conditions needed to refine the mountain, the most important of which are to pass the tests on the tenth floor."

"Tests?"

"Yes, the tenth floor is different from all nine floors before it.

There'll be more tests than strong magnetic storms. When you pass the tests, you'll gain the chance to refine the mountain for your own use, but only if you're able to find the magnetic heart, and refine it within two hours."

"The magnetic heart?" Jiang Chen's eyes darted around. "Where is this magnetic heart located?"

The little beetle shook its head. "I don't have any memories of where the magnetic heart is located either. I only know that the Lord of the Golden Seal has the magnetic heart. The only way you can obtain it is if you defeat the lord."

Jiang Chen knew a lot about the magnetic golden mountain and knew that each mountain would have different characteristics based on its master's preferences.

As for this Lord of the Golden Seal, although he didn't know what it was, he knew that it was surely a strong spirit that'd been nurtured with the magnetic golden mountain's essence, and was the ultimate protector of this place.

"What level of strength does the Lord of the Golden Seal have?"

If the lord's strength was mediocre, then he could give it a try. But if it's strength was so much that he had no chance against it, then he'd likely be quick to give up on this idea.

This kind of spirit had no human emotions at all, and wouldn't

listen to reason when it started to act wildly.

Although Jiang Chen wanted to refine the magnetic golden mountain, he knew that there was no point in them going towards it like moths to a flame.

“I’m not sure what level of strength the Lord of the Golden Seal has. If I recall correctly, the strength of the lord is dependent on the mountain’s spirit activity. If you happen to run into it at a time in which the mountain is erupting, then no one will be able to pinpoint how strong the lord is. If there aren’t great ripples in the strength of the mountain’s force, then the lord won’t be too strong, even if it is awake.”

The little beetle’s words strongly reminded Jiang Chen of something.

“That’s right, this mountain was once used as a testing ground in ancient times. Since this mountain belonged to an ancient mountain, it definitely won’t be subpar. If an origin realm practitioner came to this mountain, and stimulated this magnetic spirit power, then the result would surely be stronger than the level that’d occur if it were stimulated by us—ordinary practitioners. The stronger the stimulated spirit power, the more awake the lord will be. So the interesting aspect of the mountain is that it becomes stronger when it meets the strong, but weaker when it meets the weak. Is it that it’s testing the practitioner’s potential, not his actual level of strength or combat experience…?”

Jiang Chen finally understood things and was delighted. “If this mountain grows stronger as its opponents grow stronger, then

although many practitioners have arrived this time, because they've all confined their activities to below the fifth level, they haven't given rise to too much magnetic activity. If this is the case, doesn't that mean that even if the lord on the tenth floor has awoken, his strength will still be at a tolerable level?"

Jiang Chen had some more thoughts as he contemplated the magnetic heart.

"To hell with it all! With great risk comes great reward. I can't stay on the ninth floor much longer. The testing period runs for ten days, and the first nine floors used up at least three of those. That means I only have seven days to conquer the tenth floor."

"If the Lord of the Golden Seal is truly that mighty, then I'll retreat immediately. However, I won't give up as long as a strand of hope remains." Jiang Chen made up his mind.

The temptation that the mountain offered was obviously much greater than that of the Thundercloud Tree and Golden Beetle.

Not to mention the fact that these two were part of the mountain. If he managed to refine the mountain, then they'd naturally become his!

And of course, since Jiang Chen had promised that he wouldn't kill the golden beetle, he naturally wouldn't go back on his word.

The light of enthusiasm shone within Jiang Chen's eyes as he

looked towards the Rat King. “Ole Gold, are you interested in braving the tenth floor with me? You’re like a fish in water on this magnetic golden mountain.”

The Rat King chuckled, “Don’t you go provoking me young master. I’m gonna say this first—you have to think of me if there happens to be anything good on the tenth floor!”

Jiang Chen smiled, “Don’t you worry, you’ll share in the profits.”

The Rat King’s eyes creased in a smile, and he charged up to the tenth floor like a flash of lightning, murmuring, “I’ll scout ahead.”

The Goldbiter Rats were normally timid and cautious, but just as Jiang Chen had said, the Rat King was like a fish in water whilst on this mountain.

In an environment such as the magnetic golden mountain, the Goldbiter Rat’s abilities were greatly enhanced.

Therefore, the Goldbiter Rats wouldn’t even be afraid of an origin realm practitioner whilst on this mountain!

Origin realm practitioners would be restrained by the force from the mountain, while the opposite was the case for the Goldbiter Rats.

Not to mention the fact that the Rat King truly wanted to help Jiang Chen refine the mountain.

Once Jiang Chen made this mountain his own, in the future, his Goldbiter Rats would have an even more appropriate home. It was better than always hiding away in their nest, stored within Jiang Chen's space ring.

An environment like the magnetic golden mountain would be of utmost benefit to both the growth and evolution of the Goldbiter Rats.

Jiang Chen didn't hesitate either, dashing up to the tenth floor when he saw the Rat King streak forward.

The little golden beetle heaved a long sigh of relief as he watched Jiang Chen and the Rat King disappear.

"That human was quite strange... and he understands the ancient beast language? He... he actually really wants to refine the mountain? However, if it's refined by him, then won't he become the mountain's master, and therefore my master in turn?"

The little beetle's consciousness had awakened not too long ago, and so apart from instinct, it relied on the memories within its heritage to think.

Therefore, its thoughts towards the outside world were quite simple and naive.

Jiang Chen had long since been mentally prepared regarding the

tenth floor, but when he actually set foot on it, he discovered that the tenth floor was indeed quite different from the previous nine.

If it wasn't for the fact that he was seeing it with his own eyes, Jiang Chen would've almost suspected that he'd arrived back in the outside world.

There was no end to the verdant forest. All of it was as a beautiful, green ocean.

Stone stairs stretched out endlessly through the forest, forming a winding path amidst a secluded place with no end in sight.

"Is this... is this really the tenth floor?"

If it wasn't for the stairs giving off the same feeling as before, Jiang Chen would've absolutely suspected that he'd left the mountain.

"Mm, can't get careless. This mountain was refined by an ancient expert, thus it's normal for all sorts of scenes to appear. If I'm mesmerized by the scene at hand, then there might be another magnetic storm that churns me away the next second!"

Jiang Chen followed the steps, and continued climbing upwards.

He'd climbed three, four thousand steps before too long.

There were ten thousand steps on each floor, yet he'd climbed between three and four thousand steps in one go, and hadn't met any obstacles at all.

There were faint magnetic pulses in the air, however the feeling was the same as what he'd felt in the first three floors—so faint that it was almost negligible.

It was also a good thing. These faint pulses reminded him to never be off-guard while he was in the magnetic golden mountain.

A terrace appeared about a third of the way up.

The terrace was several hundred acres wide, like a big courtyard. However, there was an enormous statue that stood proudly and aloofly in the middle of the courtyard.

Some humanoid sculptures were also scattered randomly around the statue. Each of them seemed almost lifelike in appearance, as if they'd been built according to actual, human proportions. Their features stood out amidst the flowing lines of their clothes and their accessories. Their gestures and expressions were also incredibly vivid.

The situation seemed to be one where real people had simply fallen asleep whilst standing up, and that a single crack of thunder would be able to wake them all up.

"These sculptures are incredibly lifelike!" Jiang Chen felt that

things were slightly odd. Ever since he'd set foot on the terrace, a strange feeling had risen in his chest.

The sculptures were all standing on the terrace in twos and threes, following no particular pattern, as if they were pedestrians rushing to and fro on the streets.

However, Jiang Chen quickly discovered an area of commonality, in that all of the sculpture's heads were slightly lifted and looking in the same direction.

It seemed as if all of their attention had been caught by the same thing in the moment that time had frozen them.

Jiang Chen followed their gazes, and noticed that they were all focused on the eyes of the giant statue.

Suddenly, the giant statue's eyes seemed to blink.

"Eh?" An extremely ominous feeling suddenly rose in Jiang Chen's heart.

Chapter 295: Danger Lurks All Around

Just as the sense of danger enveloped him, the enormous statue's eyes suddenly opened, and a frightening beam of light shot towards him with no forewarning.

In that critical moment, Jiang Chen closed his eyes and the Boulder's Heart formed a layer of protection around his consciousness.

The beam of light shot straight into his eyes and attempted to pierce his consciousness through the eyes.

The mental defenses of the Boulder's Heart blocked this beam of light.

Jiang Chen felt his consciousness waver strongly as it was almost shattered by this blow. His muscles tightened in response, and the feeling arose like he was about to freeze spontaneously.

"This is bad!"

The ominous feeling grew even stronger in Jiang Chen's mind as he restrained that feeling of horrified fright in his heart, picked up his feet, and ran frantically forward.

He knew that he couldn't spend even a second longer in this place.

The beam of light shot out from the statue's eyes was enough to pierce through a soul, attack it directly, and then completely turn the person into metal and thus into a humanoid sculpture!

Jiang Chen was now a hundred percent certain that those humanoid sculptures weren't poured out of metal at all, but candidates who had once appeared on the tenth floor.

It might have been decades ago, or hundreds of years ago, or even thousands of years ago.

The legacy realm of ancient times had seen generations upon generations of people, and countless numbers must've braved the magnetic golden mountain as well.

Those randomly scattered sculptures were definitely practitioners who had once passed by here and hadn't been on their guard against the metallic eyes of this statue.

This was simply too frightening.

Jiang Chen ran up a few hundred steps in one go, slowing down only when he was far, far away from the statue.

He was still a bit frightened when he thought of what hd just happened.

If his reaction had been a little slower just now, or the defenses of the Boulder's Heart a tad bit weaker, then he would've surely

joined the ranks of the sculptures.

Even with the speed of his reaction and the Boulder's Heart defending against the majority of the light beam attack, that attack had been enough to make him suddenly feel like his body had been poured full of lead, his muscles immediately stiffening as well.

There had likely been less than five percent of the original strength left in the light beam attack after it had broken through the defenses of the Boulder's Heart. This less than five percent had been enough to almost hold him in place! This frightening might was enough to cause cold swear to pour from Jiang Chen's body.

He kept circulating the fire spirit power from the Lotus within his body, slowly refining the remnants o the metallic beam attack in his body.

Of the five elements, the fire of the south was the antithesis of the metal of the west. The power of fire was a natural check on the power of metal.

Beneath the refinement of the fire Lotus, the slight bit of metal power that had stolen into his body was slowly cleaned up and Jiang Chen's body slowly recovered itself.

"The beauty of the tenth floor was just a temptation alright. Although it's not as frightening as the magnetic storm, but the evil golden eyes of the statue is more terrifying than any magnetic storm."

Jiang Chen's heart still palpitated in fright.

There was at least a warning to the magnetic storm as there were always some warnings before the twister formed.

However, this evil eye was completely perverse. Its eyes had suddenly opened and the beam had shot into his soul. The speed of that attack had been as fast as light and caught him completely off guard.

If it hadn't been for Jiang Chen training the Boulder's Heart to the level of being able to deploy it with one heartbeat, that evil gaze likely would've invaded his soul and turned him into a sculpture.

Frightening. All too frightening.

To count the steps, he'd walked precisely one third of the three thousand steps in front of him.

"Can it be that there are three tests on the tenth floor, and that the evil golden eye of the status is just the first?"

Jiang Chen postulated and felt that this was very likely.

If this truly was the case, then the path up to the second test would be relatively safe.

Indeed, things were as Jiang Chen had calculated. Nothing much happened to him between three thousand and six thousand steps.

“It looks like the meaning behind the tests of the tenth floor is more deliberate than the previous nine floors. Those on the previous nine floors were all random, but there are noticeable signs of the tests being planned on the tenth floor. Therefore, what will be the second test?”

Jiang Chen also knew that there was no way back now that he had made it this far.

He walked up all six thousand steps and had neared two thirds of the way according to his mental calculations.

If things really were as he’d simulated, then he wasn’t too far from where the second test was.

Jiang Chen’s gaze suddenly froze as soon as he followed this thought through to the end.

There was a large ravine in front of him. It was as if an ancient god from the heavens had lifted a giant axe and viciously carved it into the mountain.

This long ravine was like an enormous scar on the side of the mountain. Grotesquely shaped rocks were at the bottom, giving rise to awe to onlookers as soon as they’d taken a look.

Jiang Chen stood in front of the ravine and looked outwards. If this was the outside world, a third level spirit realm practitioner could fly for short periods of time and could make it past this ravine.

However, thanks to the restraining force of the mountain, Jiang Chen estimated that he'd have to split his trip into three, four trips before he could fly over the ravine.

But, grotesquely shaped rocks dotted the surface of the ravine and there was no place he could push off from at all.

"Can this be the second test?" Awe grew in Jiang Chen's heart as he looked at the intersecting rocks beneath him.

If this ravine was the second test, then all would absolutely not be as calm as it appeared on the surface.

This calm could be harboring an exceedingly frightening test.

"Who cares about all this, time waits for no one." Jiang Chen's thoughts moved as he immediately called upon six vines of the fire Lotus, forming a bridge over the ravine.

Since there was no bridge on the two sides of the ravine, Jiang Chen planned on using the Lotus to form a temporary bridge.

He needed to leap three or four times to clear this ravine. His lotuses would help him push off six times.

That would be more than enough if he didn’t run into any accidents.

The Rat King wasn’t as unbridled as before at this moment and also hopped onto the first fire lotus with Jiang Chen.

Whoosh, whoosh.

His figure cutting through the air, Jiang Chen landed on the second lotus with another leap. The enormous size of the petals was enough to accommodate several adults, so it was more than enough to support Jiang Chen.

One of the grotesque rocks below suddenly moved and emitted a sharp sound.

That sharp sound suddenly broke through the peace of the ravine, and all the rocks started moving, as if ancient creatures awakening from their slumber.

Their bodies twisted as they transformed into different beings, surging upwards from the bottom.

Although these beings all looked different, all of them were shaped like weapons, exuding a frightening intent to kill.

“Kill him, kill him!”

“How can a human blaspheme the magnetic golden mountain?! Kill!!”

“It’s been a long time since a human has barged into the tenth floor, kill! Kill! Kill!!”

The golden monsters all shrieked and shrilled with stilted language. Those were the cries of wild beats and were extremely irritating to the ear.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

Countless numbers of grotesque rocks squirreled out of the ravine and transformed themselves into weapon shaped monsters with a shake of their bodies, surging straight to Jiang Chen with extreme ferocity.

It looked like these golden monsters had a primal hatred towards humans. They seemed to have been instilled with a particular notion that they had to kill any human they saw.

Jiang Chen’s body was surrounded by thousands of golden monsters in a second.

Clang!

Jiang Chen’s nameless blade swept out as it brushed off the two

golden monsters out in front. His body leapt upwards again beneath the aid of another fire lotus as his blade struck out once again.

This strong stroke was enough to rip four monsters into shreds. Metallic fragments rained down into the ravine below.

However, killing four monsters was just a drop in the bucket compared to the thousands of them present. It made no change in the situation.

The countless numbers of golden monsters swirled towards Jiang Chen like locusts. He dodged and weaved but was still unable to evade them all.

However, his body was midair and had no place to push off from. He'd used up all the strength in his body and was about to fall!

The distance of his jump was not yet enough to reach the third fire lotus.

His position was quite awkward. If he fell down now, he'd be doing so in the empty space between the second and the third lotus.

Without leverage, a free fall was inevitable unless he grew wings.

It was a good thing that Jiang Chen didn't panic in the face of danger. The nameless saber danced like a mad demon, blocking all

golden monsters that tried to attack him.

Although the monsters numbered many, they weren't enough to contend with Jiang Chen one on one.

However, he also found it hard to extend his strength fully as he hung in midair.

Seeing that he was about to fall into the ravine and into the nest of the countless golden monsters, Jiang Chen's heart raced as he deployed his spirit ocean to the utmost.

He summoned the third fire lotus vine and it grew bigger, shooting towards the direction Jiang Chen was descending it. The petals opened and dragged Jiang Chen away with them like a large mouth.

This sudden development surprised all of the creatures.

"Kill him, kill!"

All of the creatures exploded towards the third fire lotus.

The fire lotus vine was as if a water snake as it weaved and threaded, suddenly flinging Jiang Chen towards the fourth lotus.

The strength of this throw was uncommonly fast and stunning, leaving the creatures no time to react.

“Cleave!”

A creature in the shape of an enormous golden axe chopped straight toward the fourth fire lotus, like it was a small mountain in itself. Judging from its momentum, it wanted to destroy the fire lotus along with Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen was also rather ticked off by these golden monsters.

He formed a seal with his hands as the three lotuses in front moved swiftly towards him. Their vines turned into flaming red ropes as they latched onto the golden axe creature, holding it in midair.

The petals of the four lotuses opened at the same time as four gouts of flame rushed out, akin to four fire breathing dragons and cooking the creature alive.

Beneath the power of the true flames from the lotuses, the creature was swiftly burnt to a crisp.

Chapter 296: The Lord Of The Golden Seal

Although the golden axe creature had been burnt to cinders, it was far from enough to cow the other monsters. Their lack of consciousness had erased all fear of death, or even the notion of death itself.

Countless monsters shot out from the ravine, their numbers ever increasing. They'd cut off all paths of retreat in the span of a few minutes.

Jiang Chen may be swift, but he wasn't faster than them.

An endless tide of monsters greeted him no matter where he looked. Feeling the pressure, he hastily summoned all six fire lotuses to his side.

A tough battle was ahead of him.

His scalp tingled with numbness at the sight of the boundless golden tide. This wasn't an even battle, it was just shameless bullying from a mob

The fighting capabilities of one or two golden monsters was nothing to fear, even eight or ten of them together weren't too strong.

However, hundreds, thousands, and even tens of thousands of the golden creatures had gathered in one place. Their accumulated

killing aura was an incredibly terrifying thing.

Jiang Chen himself could only barely manage to stand firm in the face of that lethal intent from the wall of golden creatures with the aid of his six lotuses.

If it was any other practitioner, they likely would've already been devoured to the point where not even bone fragments were left.

"This won't do, there won't be an end to the fighting if this continues. There's no point to all this other than just wearing away at my resources. There's no end to these creatures. If I fall into their tactics, I'll be dead without a doubt!"

Although there was temporarily no danger to his life, Jiang Chen was still greatly anxious.

Bam! Bam!

The nameless blade also began to awaken a fierce aura as it pulverized some of the golden creatures.

However, this kind of defense was analogous to putting out a fire with a cup of water. To the countless golden creatures, killing two or three was as harmless as scratching an itch.

"What to do?" Jiang Chen's thoughts spun furiously as he tried to think of a way out.

He'd only come to the second test of the tenth floor and was already feeling this pressured. He hadn't even met the Lord of the Golden Seal that the little beetle had spoken about.

If the lord's power awoke, wouldn't he be able to destroy Jiang Chen with just a finger then?

Jiang Chen became even more worried the more he thought about this.

He could no longer afford to delay. The ten days limit would be up at this rate before he saw the Lord of the Golden Seal.

At this moment, the rat king's body's suddenly flashed out and he cried out, "Young master Chen, release my children!"

This shout rather reminded Jiang Chen, and a flash of inspiration shot through his mind. It was like a man whose muse had deserted him suddenly looking up and seeing endless snowflakes of good ideas descending upon him.

That's right!

There were an uncountable number of golden creatures alright, but would they outnumber the Goldbiter Rats?

Once the Goldbiter Rat tribe was released, their numbers would

start from the billions.

This type of spirit creature liked to nibble on all sorts of metallic objects as well. Their affinity for the metal attribute was beyond anything.

They surged out of the Millionditch Stonenest without a moment of hesitation.

The Rat King's children had been cooped up in their home for far too long, so it was easy to imagine the level of their pent up energy as they came surging out.

If it could be said that the ravine had previously been the golden monsters' domain, the situation had been utterly reversed in an instant.

The golden colored tide beneath him was slowly overcome, partitioned and devoured piece by piece.

What replaced it was an ocean of Goldbiter Rats. The entire ravine was filled with their figures in the span of an instant.

This had been so easy that even Jiang Chen found this incredulous.

He almost had the mentality of taking a stroll through the park as he sauntered leisurely to the other side of the ravine. He retrieved the fire lotuses and watched the Goldbiter Rats wreak havoc

amongst the golden creatures.

The entire ravine had been thoroughly trampled by the Rats in about an hour.

There weren't even any bones left of the golden creatures. All had been cleanly devoured by the Goldbiter Rats in a short while.

Even still, the Rats still seemed to be a bit unsatisfied. They even seemed to want to start munching away at the magnetic golden mountain.

It was a good thing that the Rat King kept them all firmly in check; all the Rats went docilely back into the Millionditch Stonenest after their king released his aura.

"Young master, how about that?" The Rat King looked proudly on as he cast an expectant look at Jiang Chen, wanting recognition for his contributions.

"Not bad, not bad. The strength of your children are going to be advancing greatly after eating so many of those creatures. If you're lucky, some of them may even have their bloodlines advance naturally. This depends on their fortune as well."

Jiang Chen naturally had to give a few compliments at this time. It wasn't like saying those words cost him anything.

The Rat King seemed to be quite satisfied with Jiang Chen's

compliments as he beamed, his six golden whiskers twitching proudly.

Jiang Chen looked resolutely upwards.

He'd already walked two thirds of the steps in the tenth floor and would reach the peak after this last bit.

At this moment, Jiang Chen had thrown thoughts of this being a trial of potential to the back of his mind. What filled his mind now was to challenge the highest peak and refine the mountain for himself!

"Ole Gold, let's go!"

Jiang Chen recalled the Goldbiter Rats when he thought of the little beetle's words.

If the Lord of the Golden Seal was as the beetle had said, waking up the more it suffered from outside interference, then the wisest decision was to recall the Goldbiter Rats.

Otherwise, if the lord was overly awake, even if all the Goldbiter Rats attacked together, a strong aura fluctuation was enough to destroy the entire tribe.

Jiang Chen had seen much and knew that the greater a being was, the easier it was to destroy the lives of those on a lower level.

Although he didn't know what level the Lord of the Golden Seal was, of one thing he was certain. Since the lord depended on the mountain for survival, and the original ancient in charge of the mountain has designated it as the last keeper of the trials, then it would be quite a challenge.

There were still three or four thousand steps left before he reached the peak of the tenth floor.

"There is no way I can turn back now that I've gotten so far. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. I still have to meet him no matter how strong the Lord of the Golden Seal is. Retreating in the face of difficulties is the act of a coward."

With this in mind, Jiang Chen no longer hesitated and dashed straight up to the peak.

All would be determined in this final battle!

The surroundings had once again returned to those of the eighth and ninth floors in the three thousand stairs. Magnetic twisters and turbulence danced in the air.

It was a good thing that Jiang Chen was prepared.

Contrary to when he faced even stronger magnetic storms on the ninth floor, Jiang Chen didn't lose track of his steps as he placed one foot in front of another on his way to the top.

Jiang Chen was forced to use the Lotus of Fire and Ice to protect himself when a magnetic storm came with unexpected ferocity and swiftness.

The Lotus stood as one of the top five plant spirits beneath the heavens, so even the ferocious magnetic storms could only buffet it around, unable to destroy it.

However, this largely impeded his forward progress as well.

It took him a full day to finish climbing the last three thousand stone steps.

When he finally set both feet onto the peak of the mountain, he could almost see the stars swaying above his head as magnetic storms bayed like wild beasts next to his ears.

Dust and sand swirled in his vision. It was a desolate scene of irregular flying rocks.

“This… this is the peak of the tenth floor?”

Jiang Chen found it hard to believe his own eyes. The environments at the peak of every level had always been relatively calm.

But the savagery with which the magnetic storms whipped

around at the peak of the tenth floor made it extremely difficult to even stand in.

Jiang Chen stayed rooted, as if his feet had been poured from lead. Desolation greeted his eyes as he gazed across the peak, as if this was a place that humans shouldn't have come at all.

Jiang Chen suddenly felt the ground tremble slightly beneath his feet.

His expression changing rapidly, he immediately dashed to a side and looked back with alert, wary eyes.

Spiderweb cracks rapidly crept across the the surface of the rock strewn ground, expanding at an ever increasing rate

Bam!

Countless numbers of rocks hurtled into the sky, some reaching heights of over several thousand meters. It seemed to be raining rocks all of a sudden.

Jiang Chen protected his vitals, never shifting his gaze from the epicenter of the cracks

There, an aura vortex formed, greedily sucking in all the magnetic twisters around it, and funneling them all into the ground below.

“Lord of the Golden Seal?” A frightening thought flashed through Jiang Chen’s mind.

Wham!

In the next moment, a mystical beam of light blasted its way to the sky as an enormous figure crawled up from within the vortex. It rose like a mountain emerging from the ground, and continued to rise upward.

Before long, it was twenty or thirty feet high.

The giant figure shuddered, and then sprang forward like a loosed arrow, gathering the enormous aura in the air, aiming straight for Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen’s hands spread out as six lotuses formed a barrier in front of him, their large petals catching all the flying rocks like nets spread across the heavens.

“Human!”

The figure roared lowly, not articulating very clearly. Rather, it seemed to be an alien race voicing human language, stilted and unpracticed.

Jiang Chen looked up at this enormous figure, which clocked in

at twenty, even thirty feet tall. It looked to be formed completely of metal. The corded muscles seemed to be poured bronze, giving off an invincible feeling.

“Lord of the Golden Seal?” Jiang Chen asked automatically.

“Mm? You know my name?” This enormous giant was indeed the Lord of the Golden Seal.

The lord seemed to have just woken up. This sentence was much clearer than the one it’d voiced before.

“Lord of the Golden Seal, ultimate protector of the magnetic golden mountain, am I correct?” Jiang Chen was happy rather than surprised to see that the being was willing to converse with him.

Things would be easy as long as it was willing to talk.

Jiang Chen also wanted to make use of this opportunity to observe this Lord of the Golden Seal and see if he could find any weaknesses. After all, these muscles that looked like they’d been cast from metal gave one a scalp numbing feeling just looking at them. Jiang Chen didn’t feel that he had the strength to engage in direct battle.

The Goldbiter Rats?

They were strong, but Jiang Chen wasn’t sure if he would

thoroughly provoke this lord if he released the Rats, and result in his opponent awakening to another level.

Jiang Chen didn’t want to run the risk of causing the Lord of the Golden Seal to awaken to a higher level unless he was forced to.

Besides, judging from the way the lord was currently slurring its words, it seemed rather low level for now.

Chapter 297: The Test From The Lord Of The Golden Seal

The lord's enormous body suddenly took a step forward.

It pointed his thick arms and spoke lowly, "Human, don't think of playing any sort of tricks. On this magnetic golden mountain, all your thoughts are reflected through this magnetic mirror."

The figure's arm swept in an arc as it spoke. It seemed to turn stones to gold as golden flecks shimmered up from a radius of several hundred meters. They formed countless numbers polished metal mirrors. They were scattered with some sort of pattern all around, segmenting the air into an endless number of fragments and seemingly pulling Jiang Chen into an alternate universe.

All of the mirrors were reflecting a countless number of Jiang Chens alongside with all of his thoughts.

Jiang Chen was greatly astonished as a few rumors regarding the magnetic golden mountain floated up in his mind.

These mirrors were formed of the magnetic force of the mountain altering gravity, causing temporal rifts to form and disrupting dimensions.

These magnetic mirrors not only could reflect all beings beneath heavens, they could even reveal a person's thoughts. They were incredible beyond imagination.

Jiang Chen knew that there was certainly some wondrous telepathic abilities on these mirrors that they could depict a person's thoughts.

However, thanks to this, he was forced to be on the passive side.

Jiang Chen deployed the Boulder's Heart and concealed all of his thoughts.

Indeed, his thoughts were blocked as soon as the Boulder's Heart was activated. All of the mirrors suddenly lost their subject and the images within them became blurry and indistinct.

"Mm?" The Lord of the Golden Seal started. "Human, you've practiced the arts of the heart and mind? With your mere capabilities at third level spirit realm?"

This Lord of the Golden Seal was strong alright, it'd sized up Jiang Chen's level of strength with one look.

"However, it's still useless even if you've concealed your thoughts." The lord's tone was remote. "There are only two outcomes for all humans who reach this place."

"The first one ends in death."

"The second one is that they pass my test and become the master

of this magnetic golden mountain." The lord's tone was very brittle, completely lacking human emotion as if a pre-programmed system. "There is no third alternative."

Even the four forefathers possessed only surface level knowledge of the magnetic golden mountain.

They'd naturally never come to the tenth level before.

"You've sealed off your consciousness so that the mirrors cannot detect your thoughts. Your skills are quite good. This lord says one more time, either pass the test or die."

Jiang Chen knew that the lord was likely not blustering.

"How does one pass the test?" Jiang Chen asked. He knew that he was caught between a rock and a hard place now. Judging from this figure's tone, there was no way out for him at all.

"Very simple. Answer one of my questions, then take one of my blows."

"That easy?" Jiang Chen was incredulous.

"Easy?" The figure laughed coldly. "Anyone who's ever come here has also said the same thing, but they've now all become ghosts haunting the mountain."

“What?” Jiang Chen was slightly startled. “There were others who have been here before?”

“Others? There have been countless numbers of people who have come here ever since ancient times. However, as time elapsed, those who have come have been becoming weaker and weaker. It’s because of this decrease in strength that the level of my awakening has become lower and lower.”

“Ai, this is actually quite a lonely thing. When can I fully awaken again?” The Lord of the Golden Seal sighed.

“Level of awakening?” Jiang Chen immediately thought of the little beetle’s words. Then, the golden beetle’s memory heritage was correct? The level of awakening of the Lord of the Golden Seal is indeed determined by the level of strength of practitioners who make it thus far?

The stronger a challenger was, the more magnetic force he would provoke out of the mountain, and the stronger all the tests on all floors.

The stronger the level of awakening from the figure as well.

Jiang Chen’s shifting thoughts were reflected by the mirrors. The golden being snorted coldly, “It’s that busybody little beetle who told you my name alright. Humph. That’s of no matter. On this mountain, the rules are impartial to all who makes it here!”

“Human, make your choice! Either be killed or face my test!”

Obviously, no one would choose to be killed on the spot.

Jiang Chen was confident that there was a ray of hope in answering a question for the test.

“I choose to face the test.” Jiang Chen’s eyes were resolute as he met the golden being’s eyes.

“Good!” The Lord of the Golden Seal nodded faintly. “Although no one’s ever successfully passed the test, I can feel that you’re a little bit different from the others. I hope your answer will not disappoint. Remember, the quality of your answer will determine the difficulty of the next test.”

“What do you mean?” Jiang Chen’s gaze focused sharply.

“If your answer is satisfactory, then perhaps my blow will be very gentle and just a symbolic gesture. If your answer disappoints, then you will face a fierce blow at my full strength.”

The Lord of the Golden Seal broke out in a wide grin as cruelty raced across its face. “You should know that out of all those who have come before, their answers have greatly, greatly disappointed me.”

“So they all died from one of your blows at full force?”

“Yes, you’re quite smart.” The golden being laughed coldly. “You will be the same. Don’t think that you’ll have any trump cards or special abilities that will be able to withstand one of my wild blows. Remember, the magnetic mirrors are reflecting all of your thoughts and I know full well all of your trump cards. Therefore, my wildest blow will take into account all of your abilities and won’t give you the slightest chance to survive.”

“This is to say that my life and death will be determined by how I answer this question?” Jiang Chen was a bit speechless.

This Lord of the Golden Seal was an interesting character alright, to set down such an… interesting rule.

“Don’t think I’m odd, I’m just a puppet of the one who created the golden magnetic mountain. Everything I do is a function of a strand of thought that he’s left in my body. Only those who pass the test will receive the magnetic heart, be able to replace the original master, and claim the mountain, receiving the heritage of the magnetic golden mountain. Before that, what compels me is the will of the original owner.”

“Original owner? Who was he?”

“I don’t know.” The Lord of the Golden Seal shook his head. “He’s only left a strand of will in my body. I know nothing of when and how this mountain appeared. Ever since I was born and became conscious, I’ve been under the control of this will. I don’t know who the original owner is and cannot receive any answers in

the magnetic golden mountain."

The being's expression darkened. "Alright, human. I've spoken a lot more with you because you seemed a bit different from other humans. It's your turn to answer my questions next."

Jiang Chen's expression was severe as he nodded. "Alright, ask away."

"My question is this. How is a spirit creature such as me, with no parents, no flesh and blood, formed out of energy between the heavens and earth to leave this mountain? Am I able to exist if I leave this mountain?"

"Is this one question?" This was plainly two!

"It's two questions, but there's only one meaning underlying them." The golden figure responded coldly.

Jiang Chen smiled, "Lord of the Golden Seal, I only ask you, will your blow be lighter if my response is satisfactory?"

"Stop talking nonsense! If your answer is satisfactory and not empty bluster, then I will definitely be satisfied. As long as I am satisfied, then I will hit lighter. Remember, don't use nonsense to fool me. Those who had come before tried to play some tricks and enraged me instead."

Jiang Chen nodded and smiled leisurely, "Those who had come

before of course had no way of answering your question. However, I'm an exception."

"Oh? You're this confident?" The lord smiled coldly.

"Yes." Jiang Chen was greatly self assured. "I can tell you now that between the heavens and earth, the countless numbers of spirit creatures are mostly free. But your spirit body is formed and nurtured from the magnetic mountain, and it won't be that easy to break free of it. But of course, there are still methods to."

"Mm?" The golden being was expressionless as it fixed its eyes on Jiang Chen. The mirrors sparkled and twinkled, attempting to reflect Jiang Chen's thoughts.

However, the defenses of Jiang Chen's Boulder's Heart made the mirrors come up empty handed.

"Alright, human, I admit that you're different from the others. The others responded almost without thinking that I can leave the mountain and still live afterwards. However, the mirrors quickly reveal their true, inner thoughts and unmask their lies. In reality, they didn't know the answer to this question either and was just fawning up to me with their answers."

"You're different from them, you're also smarter. At least, I am unable to find evidence of you lying. Therefore, I won't use my full strength in my blow, just seventy percent. Although you may not be able to withstand it, you'll at least have a chance to live." The Lord of the Golden Seal adhered to its principles.

The golden mirrors couldn’t reflect his inner thoughts and so the being couldn’t find evidence that Jiang Chen was lying. Therefore, it wouldn’t use its full strength in the next blow, just seventy percent of it.

Jiang Chen laughed heartily, “My answer is not yet complete. Does the Lord of the Golden Seal not have interest in hearing me out?”

The golden figure froze, “What do you mean? You… you have a way to help me leave/“

Jiang Chen nodded his head resolutely. “I naturally have my ways, but I can tell you that it won’t be easy.”

“How difficult will it be?” The being asked.

“Difficult, very difficult. It will be impossible without the outside help.” Jiang Chen sighed.

“What do you mean?” The Lord of the Golden Seal kept a close eye on the mirrors. He noticed that thus far, the human hadn’t lied and the mirrors hadn’t shown any sign of movement.

Therefore, he decided to keep asking.

“Tell me. No matter how difficult it is, as long as you tell me

truthfully, no matter how unrealistic it is, I can control the strength of my next blow to be at thirty percent of my strength. If at thirty percent, you'll have a fifty percent chance of living."

The Lord of the Golden Seal was now truly tempted.

Chapter 298: A Transaction And A Compromise

Since the Lord of the Golden Seal was a spirit entity, it was a bit less crafty compared to humans.

Since it'd spoken thus, it was a true representation of its thoughts.

Jiang Chen mused silently and nodded, "Your power has to awaken to the point of surpassing the level of this mountain if you wish to leave. However, you also know that your body was formed and nurtured from the mountain. As high as your level of awakening can get, it will never surpass that of the mountain itself. Thus, this is a paradox. Theoretically speaking, you can never leave the mountain, unless..."

"Unless what?" The being asked anxiously.

"Unless you receive outside aid or the master of the mountain is willing to forgo the mountain and allow it to be fully absorbed by you, allowing you to become the mountain or the mountain become you!"

"You mean for the mountain and I to fully become one?" The figure asked.

"That's roughly it, but with the will of the original master controlling you, how will you possibly become one with the

mountain?”

The Lord of the Golden Seal was greatly depressed when it heard this. “So this means I have no hope of escaping? I can’t attain the freedom that I want?”

“I don’t think that’s what I said?” Jiang Chen ruefully smiled.

Two beams of light shot out of the Lord of the Golden Seal’s eyes. “Then you mean… ?”

“My meaning was quite clear, you have two ways ahead of you. Firstly, the will of the original master no longer controls you and so you are able to assimilate the mountain, or secondly, you receive outside aid.”

“The will of the original master no longer controls me?” The golden figure murmured to itself. Joy suddenly appeared on its face. “Human, if you pass the test and I give the magnetic heart to you, you will become the master of the mountain. Then, the will of the original master will no longer control me, and so that means I have hope of becoming one with the mountain?”

“Theoretically, yes. However, if I refine the magnetic heart, then the mountain is my mountain and I most likely wouldn’t want you to absorb it.”

“Don’t want me to? Why?” A violent light shone from the golden figure’s face.

“You also know that I’m of the third level spirit realm and I am weak. This magnetic golden mountain is a treasure that will protect my life. So tell me, why should I give it up?”

The golden figure snorted coldly, “Aren’t you afraid that I will kill you with one wave?”

“You can’t kill me because the will of the original master controls you. Since you are satisfied with my response, you can only use thirty percent of your power in your blow. I have hope of surviving such a blow, and I will be able to refine the magnetic heart according to the rules set by the original master. I will be your new master after refining the heart. At that time, any one of my thoughts will be enough to control your life and death.”

The Lord of the Golden Seal was depressed. It’d discovered that after making all these logical loops, it’d ended up trapping itself in the end.

This was indeed the case according to the rules left behind in the will of the original master.

Since it was satisfied with the challenger’s answer, then it could only use thirty percent of its strength in the next blow.

If it disregarded this rule, then it would automatically disassemble, and it would have no idea when the next time it would wake up would be.

“Human! As long as you forgo the mountain and let me absorb it, I swear to protect you for a thousand years. I will be your servant for a thousand years, is that enough time for you to grow into your strength?”

The Lord of the Golden Seal thought of this compromise after a moment. In its eyes, this was already a great concession.

That faint smile still remained on Jiang Chen’s face as he shook his head. “I cannot give up the magnetic golden mountain. And, even if I agree, you’ll spend at least a thousand years absorbing the mountain. Therefore, even if you swear, you’ll be unable to protect me for this thousand years. I don’t have the interest to wait a thousand years for you either.”

“Human, don’t you push your luck! Aren’t you afraid that our talks will fall through? If I go against my master’s will and kill you, I’ll just disassemble and keep sleeping. I will awake again one day. However, if you die, you’ll be unable to revive!” The Lord of the Golden Seal threatened.

“There is sense in what you say, but I can also promise that even if you awaken ten thousand times in the future, you won’t meet someone like me. Only I can help you leave the mountain and attain the freedom you yearn for. Apart from me, those who’ve come before me and those who will come after me will be unable to do so. You can gamble on this if you don’t believe me!”

Jiang Chen had also grasped the golden figure’s psychological

weak point at this time.

Indeed, the being froze when it heard these words.

A pair of bronze eyes stared at Jiang Chen. Its enormous body would be able to crush this human to death by just taking a few steps forward.

This was without any doubt at all.

However, the Lord of the Golden Seal couldn't see any fluctuations in the magnetic mirrors. That meant that this human wasn't lying.

If a person lied, the images in the mirrors would fluctuate greatly.

But the mirrors were calm without the slightest ripple. What did that mean?

This meant that this human's words were true without the slightest lie. The mirrors couldn't find any flaw and agreed with his words.

Kill this human?

The Lord of the Golden Seal had always been a violent one. It'd brutally killed the countless numbers of humans who'd come here

since ancient times.

However, it wavered now.

Because, its dream of freedom had never been so close to fulfillment. It'd never seen any hope from anyone.

However, this young human gave it glimpse a ray of hope.

Killing a human was an easy thing for the Lord of the Golden Seal to do. However, if it killed this human in a rage out of shame and broke the rules set by the master, it would fall to pieces and wake up again after some unknown time.

It wasn't even sure if the consciousness that woke up in the future would be it.

"Can't kill him, can't kill him. This human is my only hope of obtaining freedom." The being restrained its inner savagery with effort.

"Lord of the Golden Seal, I have a suggestion, are you interested in hearing it?" Jiang Chen's voice sounded leisurely at this point.

"What... what suggestion do you have?" The being hastily asked.

"I said that there were two methods. I can't bear to give up the mountain, but there is another way apart from having you absorb

the mountain. Receiving outside aid will enable you to obtain your freedom all the same."

"What outside aid?"

"Hope is minuscule with outside aid. If you can meet another treasure like the magnetic golden mountain in the future, you can possibly leave the mountain if you leverage the strength from it. However, treasures such as this mountain are hard to find."

"What's the point of all this talk if it's hard to find? Do you want me to compromise with you because of some minuscule hope?" The golden figure said unhappily.

"Of course not. My suggestion is that I refine the magnetic heart and obtain the mountain. I will try my best to hunt down treasures for you in the future. If I can't find any, when I grow into my strength and no longer need the magnetic golden mountain, I will naturally help you absorb the mountain and make it become part of your body, helping you thoroughly obtain your freedom. How about that?"

Jiang Chen offered his final suggestion.

"Lord of the Golden Seal, you can refuse, but this is the only condition that I can agree to." Jiang Chen's tone was quite final.

The Lord of the Golden Seal huffed heavily, heaving loudly, apparently it was quite conflicted as well.

Suddenly, the being's gaze focused on Jiang Chen again. "Human, you are merely at the third level spirit realm, on what basis can I believe that you will grow into your strength? How many years will I have to wait?"

"How long was it until you achieved consciousness?" Jiang Chen asked faintly.

"I... I've never counted, I think it was around a hundred thousand years?" The golden being murmured faintly.

"A hundred thousand years?" Jiang Chen smiled. "A hundred thousand years is too long. I don't need a hundred thousand, I will only need ten thousand years to grow into my strength."

"Humph, who doesn't know how to bluster? What gives you the right to say that?"

Jiang Chen spoke proudly, "What gives me the right? The fact that I'm standing right here, the fact that you want to kill me but can't bear to. Is that not reason enough?"

The Lord of the Golden Seal was started and it couldn't retort.

How many had made it to the tenth floor since ancient times, and how many had there been who'd been stronger than Jiang Chen?

However, those who had made it so that it'd couldn't bear to kill them and continuously chip away at his psychological defenses, this human in front of him had been the only one.

This young man seemed less than twenty years old, but he was abnormally self assured. He was coolly composed even in front of him.

It was as if the matters of life and death were nothing in this young man's eyes.

This kind of breadth of mind and shrewdness, this kind of bearing and aura made the Lord of the Golden Seal revise his estimate of Jiang Chen.

However, what truly tempted the being was Jiang Chen's words.

The Lord of the Golden Seal was well aware that the young man in front of it wasn't just talking drivel. He truly understood the relationship between the Lord of the Golden Seal and the mountain.

He also truly knew how to help the being break free of the mountain and obtain its freedom.

The Lord of the Golden Seal looked at the resolute young man and gave a long sigh, murmuring to himself, "Alright, alright. It seems that I have no choice."

“Young man, I want to hear an oath from your lips.”

“I can do that.” Jiang Chen raised three fingers to the sky and spoke gravely, “I, Jiang Chen, swear in the name of the heavens and earth that I will help the Lord of the Golden Seal break free of the magnetic golden mountain in the future. If I still have yet to succeed in ten thousand years, then I will let the Lord of the Golden Seal absorb the mountain to gain his freedom. If I break my word, may the heavens and earth rip me asunder.”

The Lord of the Golden Seal nodded after hearing these words and it opened its arms, making all the magnetic mirrors transform into dots of star light and vanish without a trace.

“Jiang Chen, be prepared. You have to take one of my blows according to the rules. However, I will control my strength to ten percent in this blow. If you cannot take even ten percent of my strength, then you are destined to be unworthy of the magnetic golden mountain!”

The Lord of the Golden Seal’s massive legs took a few steps forward, like it was a moving mountain, its aura overwhelmingly powerful.

Chapter 299: The Disappearance Of The Magnetic Golden Mountain

Since the Lord of the Golden Seal had thought through things, then this blow with ten percent of his strength was following the rules of the original master.

If he didn't follow the rules and went against his master's will, the Lord of the Golden Seal would immediately be wiped out and his consciousness dispersed, only able to passively wait till the next time he awoke.

Legs as thick as columns charged forward, stomping heavily on the ground. The entire mountain seemed to tremble.

"Watch my blow!"

The being's muscular arms threw out a punch.

Although there was only ten percent of the being's strength in that blow, it still encompassed the essence of the mountain, freezing even the air around Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen only felt that a mountain was charging forward at him, a mountain that bristled with gleaming blades.

Laughing wryly, he had to admit that the strength of the Lord of the Golden Seal was incredible indeed. But if he'd decreased the

level of his strength to ten percent, the power behind this punch was still something that a third level spirit realm would be able to handle.

Six lotuses formed a neat blockade as their petals seemed to form layers of tenacious barriers of air, holding up beneath the brunt of the fist.

The six lotuses bent backwards beneath the force of the invincible punch.

However, the flexible petals still fully blocked the entirety of the strong fighting aura.

As strong as the Lord of the Golden Seal was, the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice wasn't ranked among the top five of all plant spirits for nothing.

Although it's currently evolved state was lower than that of the Lord of the Golden Seal, it was six against one now, and the golden being had only used ten percent of its strength in this blow. So although the Lotus was currently a bit weaker, it didn't suffer any damage.

"Mm?"

The Lord of the Golden Seal looked at the six lotuses, then raised its fist and looked at it, shock written all over his face.

“Jiang Chen, there’s something odd about your lotuses.”

Jiang Chen smiled. “Don’t underestimate this Lotus. If it evolves into its final form, then even you at your peak may not be its match.”

If the Lotus was to evolve to its final form, even the supreme experts of all planes of existence would find it to be a thorny opponent. But this Lord of the Golden Seal was just a spirit creature on the magnetic golden mountain. When their ultimate forms faced off, it truly wasn’t a match for the Lotus.

“That strong?” The Lord of the Golden Seal asked in amazement.

“The Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice can rank amongst the top five of all plant spirits. How strong do you think it is?” Jiang Chen chuckled as he countered with a question.

“Top five?” The Lord of the Golden Seal was flabbergasted. It murmured, “Jiang Chen, you really are a perverse existence. You don’t seem like a third level spirit realm practitioner at all. Some origin realm practitioners may not even know as much as you, nor have such quality equipment as you.”

Jiang Chen was indifferent. “The magnetic heart?”

The Lord of the Golden Seal threw back its head and said loudly, “Don’t worry, since you’ve passed the test, the mountain is immediately passed down onto you according to the will of the

original master. The magnetic heart is here!”

The Lord of the Golden Seal suddenly extended its arms. They started endlessly transforming amidst shimmering golden lights and had transformed into two sharp swords after a short while.

“Open!”

It waved its arms and the swords turned into flashes of golden light, slicing into the ground.

A crack slowly formed and continued to grow.

Golden light shot to the heavens from the crack, like the golden rays of the sun spilling out over the earth, bathing one with an exceedingly holy feeling.

The being’s arms pointed upwards as the golden light dissipated into mist and continued to rise.

A golden item the size of a goose egg slowly rose from the ground into the mist.

“Go!” The Lord of the Golden Seal pointed its arms. The golden item turned into a beam of light as it shot towards Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen mobilized the lotuses to secure this item.

“The magnetic heart?”

The Lord of the Golden Seal nodded. “The mountain is yours after refining this magnetic heart. You will inherit it and can manipulate it as you will. It can be big or small and answers to your thoughts.

Joy crept over Jiang Chen’s face. He’d striven so hard for so long and had finally welcomed the moment in which the magnetic heart appeared.

The organizers of the third trial were rather bored.

Six to seven days had passed. Most of the candidates had either been disqualified, or had no strength to continue on after the fifth level.

Of course, the numbers of people who exited didn’t quite match up to the numbers that had entered.

However, those who hadn’t made it out by now was very unlikely to emerge, unless they continued moving forward and continuously assailed the highest peak of the mountain.

However, according to the knowledge of the organizers, these ordinary practitioners basically had no possibility of taking another step further after making it to the eighth level.

“I’ve heard that the freak of the boulder’s heart has yet to

emerge?”

‘Indeed, it’s the seventh day already. If he still hasn’t come out, he should’ve made it to the ninth level by now. The magnetic storms of the ninth level are quite frightening. Ai, I hope such a great genius doesn’t fall in the magnetic storms.”

“I doubt it. A genius is a genius and is born with immense luck. Didn’t someone say he would die in the cavern of the vein of skyfire? And what now?”

“That’s true. A true genius is different from the masses. If this freak of the boulder’s heart is really that kind of genius, he will possess his own kind of luck and won’t fall that easily.”

“Right, so let’s wait patiently. Before the deadline of ten days, what happens inside is a mystery. The mountain will automatically bounce him out if he’s still alive after ten days. If he died within the mountain, then the so-called genius was just a shooting star.”

“Ai, the sixteen kingdoms have been quiet for so long with nothing exciting happening in the four sects. How many years has it been since such a perverse genius has appeared? I really don’t want such a good seed to fall just like this.”

“Who knows? It looks like there’s less than twenty thousand left after this third trial?”

A beam of golden light filled the void betwixt the sky and heavens as they were talking. It lit up the skies, piercing everyone's eyes so that no one could open them.

Everyone closed their eyes involuntarily and didn't dare take a direct look, as if the golden light was ending the world.

Bam crash thud!

Enormous thuds, on the order of heaven and earth collapsing, rang out as if countless gods were cavorting about in the heavens, or thunder and lightning had begun to rampage wildly across the skies. Lightning flashed and thunder cracked, as explosions continuously shattered the air.

That golden light that accompanied the noise become brighter and brighter, lighting up everything. It felt like that the golden glow was the only color left in the world, and no one dared open their eyes.

in that moment, even the forefathers felt that armageddon had arrived. Their bodies seemed to be lonely rafts afloat in a raging ocean, buffeted to and fro as their fortunes were wrested from their control.

There seemed to be an invisible force, coiling around them, hobbling their footsteps and shackling their bodies.

"Magnetic force?" The forefathers were privately astonished.

How could they not know this feeling!

The enormous magnetic force gave them the impression that their bodies, their very lives weren't under their own control.

"What's going on?" Sunchaser's face darkened and was about to open his eyes to take a look when the terrifying golden light seemed to pierce towards his eyes like sharp swords.

A sense of danger swept him as he immediately closed his eyes, not daring to face this light.

The other forefathers, shocked, were also in similar circumstances. However, in this situation, they were powerless to do anything and could only activate all their defenses, protecting their sect and probing about with their consciousness, trying to sense what was going on.

However, the golden light seemed to have swallowed everything. No matter how far or deep their consciousness probed, all they could sense was a hazy mist of golden light, an unformed world of chaos without any clues or hints at all.

It was a good thing that this golden light wasn't maintained for long.

After fifteen minutes, it started to slowly fade and disappear.

The immense oppressive feeling also faded from around the

forefathers. Everything was as usual when they'd opened their eyes again. All of the organizers were also crawling out of various corners with looks of shock and astonishment.

Judging from everyone's expression, no one knew what had happened.

Suddenly, an organizer looked dead ahead as his entire face twisted, the muscles on his face twitching rapidly.

He extended a finger and pointed ahead as if he'd seen a ghost, "Look... look. Everyone, hurry and look. Look..."

"Look what? A ghost?" An ill-tempered organizer beside him followed his colleague's finger with his gaze.

"What?!"

"Eh, where's the Endless Mountain?"

"The magnetic golden mountain disappeared!" The organizer who'd sneered at the other for having seen a ghost now also looked like he'd seen a ghost as he started crying out.

Everyone looked to the front after hearing these words, with their expressions becoming unified as they did so. Everyone looked like they'd seen a ghost.

The magnetic golden mountain, that towering and boundless mountain had truly disappeared!

Everything was flat to the eye, as if there had never been any mountain!

It was as if a god had moved away that awe inspiring, endless mountain.

“What’s happened? Was that golden light the dismantlement of the mountain?”

“That’s crazy! What kind of power would make the magnetic golden mountain fall to pieces?”

“Can it really be a god that had descended and moved the mountain away?”

The organizers discussed hotly, filled with shock, confusion, and befuddlement. They’d never heard of anything like this, much less seen anything like it.

A towering mountain had disappeared, just like that.

How great must one’s arts have been to move such a mountain?

Even the forefathers had likely never heard of anything like this, much less the others present?

The stronger one became the more one trained in martial dao, that was true.

However, to destroy a small mountain in one blow, even the forefathers likely couldn't do this.

But to move a towering mountain away, even the forefathers couldn't do so if their strength increased tenfold!

Moving mountains and shifting seas, chasing the stars and stealing the moon, those arts only existed in legends.

Even origin realm practitioners couldn't do so.

But, where was the magnetic golden mountain? If no one had moved it away, then where had it gone?

Chapter 300: Interrogation And Friendly Indications

Everyone looked dumbly at the empty field in front of them, their minds buzzing with questions.

The magnetic golden mountain had vanished right in front of their eyes. This scene had destroyed all the knowledge that they had painstakingly built up throughout half of their lives.

The four forefathers had also come in pursuit of answers. The four figures stood out in front, looking at the empty ground left in the wake of the vanished magnetic golden mountain. Shock was writ large in their eyes.

They looked at each other, traces of wariness beginning to appear in each other's eyes.

Even the forefathers wouldn't be at ease if changes had taken place in the legacy territory of ancient times.

The appearance of this bizarre scene belied their previous self assurance.

Jiang Chen was now sitting cross legged with the other disciples that had passed. He had arrived in the midst of this crowd when the golden light exploded, catching no one's attention nor appearing out of place.

As for the golden magnetic mountain, he'd naturally put it away by now.

And of course, he wouldn't give even the slightest clue of his involvement in such an earth shattering issue.

Although his potential was quite strong, much trouble would come knocking on his door if the secret that he'd refined the golden magnetic mountain was leaked.

He would never place himself in the midst of trouble before he had gotten a full grasp of all the aspects of a situation.

The forefathers came up empty handed after looking at the scene for quite some time.

The organizers in charge of the third trial all presented themselves in front of the forefathers, undergoing interrogation.

After all, they were in charge of the trial. The four forefathers hadn't seen things firsthand and such had no idea what had happened.

However, they still came to no conclusions after questioning everyone.

"Logically speaking, this is the seventh day of the trial of potential, if it was to disappear, the mountain would vanish only after the tenth day. It's gone, just like that. Have you interrogated

the ordinary disciples?" Sunchaser asked.

The organizers were speechless. Interrogate? How do we interrogate them? It's not as if ordinary disciples can cart away the golden magnetic mountain.

"Stop joking old monster Sunchaser. There must be a reason for the mountain vanishing, and it has nothing to do with the ordinary disciples. Even the four of us combined and our strength increased tenfold, we likely wouldn't be able to move this mountain!" Ninelion laughed oddly.

Sunchaser snorted as his dark gaze swept over all of the disciples that had completed the trial with a trace of coldness.

There was less than twenty thousand left after the third trial.

However, all of them felt a mountain's worth of pressure descend upon them under the severe gaze of forefather Sunchaser. Their breathing hitched as their meridians expanded, and their blood starting frothing. It was as if they'd all spontaneously combust if Sunchaser exerted the slightest bit more pressure.

"Those who have passed the seventh floor, present yourselves in front of me!" Sunchaser roared out sternly.

Some disturbances occurred amidst the crowd as the participants who had surpassed the seventh floor all walked warily to the front row.

They had all brought their participant tokens over to register their results when they'd left the mountain.

"Take out your participant tokens." Sunchaser said faintly.

Jiang Chen was privately alarmed as he knew that it'd be difficult to get past this now.

All of these practitioners had long since been bounced out by the mountain, and their tokens registered with their results shortly thereafter.

Jiang Chen's token had yet to be registered, and that meant he'd still been on the mountain when the mountain had disappeared.

Indeed, as the tokens were inspected, Jiang Chen's unregistered token was quickly discovered.

"It's him!" The organizers naturally recognized this token. It was the freak with the boulder's heart that they'd been discussing!

"This genius didn't fall in the magnetic golden mountain alright!"

"But, the mountain's gone and disappeared, how could he be alright if he was on the mountain then?"

“Can it be that he has something to do with the disappearance of the mountain?”

“Tsk tsk, he’s in for it now that forefather Sunchaser has his eye on him.”

The organizers discussed hotly amongst themselves. Some looked at Jiang Chen with sympathy, others with the look of delighting in another’s misery.

Sunchaser stood with both hands behind his back, his expression remote. Although his gaze wasn’t as severe as before, it seemed to lock onto Jiang Chen, as if not even a single hair on Jiang Chen’s body could escape his gaze.

“Explain yourself. Why is your token unregistered?”

His tone was faint, but was suffused with an enormous aura. Seemingly there, and also not, was a blade of judgement hanging over Jiang Chen’s head.

If an origin realm practitioner leveraged even thirty percent of his aura, it was still enough to send a third level spirit realm into spasms.

Sunchaser had leveraged precisely thirty percent of his aura.

Jiang Chen’s eyelids twitched faintly and his heart was as still as water in the face of Sunchaser’s oppression. He didn’t resist, just

swayed slightly and pretended to be at the limits of his endurance.

"What would the forefather have me explain? I had yet to complete my test and thus my token was not registered. Isn't that normal?" Jiang Chen asked in confusion.

"Huh. Young man, don't get up to any tricks in front of me. The mountain wouldn't have vanished for no reason. You were still within it when it disappeared. Speak. What did you see inside? Or rather, what did you do inside?"

Sunchaser's tone grew a bit more severe.

He added another ten percent aura. When forty percent of Sunchaser's aura descended onto Jiang Chen, the latter's body grew much heavier all of a sudden. Shapeless strength pressured the blood vessels and bones of his body, as if wanting to roll him up into a ball.

Sweat poured down his forehead, but Jiang Chen refused to take even a half step back. He lifted his head and said stubbornly, "Forefather Sunchaser, I only sought to climb to a higher level on the Endless Mountain. I was still within the mountain before the trial was over, what was untoward about that? If participating in the trial is a crime, then I ask forefather Sunchaser, what is the Purple Sun Sect doing in the great selection? Is it just to glorify yourselves in front of the ordinary practitioners?"

Jiang Chen had never been kindly disposed towards the Purple Sun Sect. Now that he was being publicly interrogated by this old

monster and subjected to the continual pressure of the origin realm aura, he was naturally enraged. The pride in his bones made him loudly denounce the forefather.

“Tsk tsk, stiff upper lip huh?”

Sunchaser snorted coldly and increased his aura by another ten percent.

Even an earth spirit realm practitioner would find it difficult to hold up beneath fifty percent origin realm aura for long.

Jiang Chen’s face was beet red but even more stubborn, his aggrieved expressions exploding all of a sudden. He threw his head back and started laughing wildly, “So this is the Purple Sun Sect and an origin realm forefather. You of the origin realm are suppressing me, your junior. How mighty and lofty you are! That’s right, you’re an origin realm forefather and can easily trample me, but don’t think of making me a scapegoat and forcing me to heel! Even if you kill me today, I’d like to see what you bring out to stopper the mouths of all practitioners beneath the heavens!”

Jiang Chen’s facial muscles began twitching in the face of Sunchaser’s continued pressure. It was as if countless mountains were weighing down on him.

“‘Enough!” Ninelion roared and stepped forward, sending his aura crashing into Sunchaser.

Wham!

The two forefathers' strength hurtled into each other, giving rise to countless air currents and forcing organizers on all sides to continuously back up.

Thousandleaf also stepped forward and chuckled. "Daoist Sunchaser, the disappearance of the mountain isn't something that either you or I can determine. Why vent your spleen out on a young man?"

Icemist also spoke up, "Forget it, both you and I know that there is no way a young man can move away the magnetic golden mountain. Not to mention that if this young man is involved with this matter, that is his fortuitous occurrence as well. All sorts of fortune exists in the world of martial dao, why must Daoist Sunchaser be fixated on this?"

Ninelion chuckled, "Hear that old monster Sunchaser? A just cause enjoys abundant support while an unjust cause finds little support. It won't do if you'd like to cover the skies with one hand. Our four sects cannot afford to lose the face involved in bullying a young practitioner."

Sunchaser's face darkened as he surveyed the three forefathers and looked at Jiang Chen again.

His face suddenly split into a grin as he said coldly, "The three of you, stop pretending to be on the side of good. You've just set your sights on this young genius. Don't think I don't know your

schemes.”

Sunchaser’s gaze shot towards Jiang Chen again after speaking and he smiled faintly. “Young man, I had only wanted to test you earlier and determine the depths off your potential and talents. Not bad, not bad. You’re the once in a century dao heart genius alright. For a young man to have such pride and a resolute heart of martial dao, your potential is limitless. I was treasuring such a talent and thus couldn’t help but test you. I’m sure that you will understand my efforts with your intellect and wit.”

Sunchaser certainly was an origin realm practitioner alright. The speed in which he twisted black and white around was nothing short of incredible.

If Jiang Chen truly was an ordinary genius, then in his youth, he would’ve surely been convinced and greatly gratified by Sunchaser’s show.

He was only testing you because you had entered his vision. That was suppression, it was treasuring talent, a show of love. What did that mean? That meant he looked upon you with favor and wanted to recruit you.

However, Jiang Chen was still Jiang Chen after all, not just some ordinary practitioner.

His previous lifetime of a million years had enabled him to be perceptive of the minutest detail.

So as flawless as forefather Sunchaser's act and words had been, it appeared a completely phony fraud in Jiang Chen's eyes.

Jiang Chen wasn't the sort to be easily led astray by the nose like this. The more Sunchaser was thus, the more Jiang Chen was on his guard.

"This old monster Sunchaser is strong and flinty one second, then gentle and warm another. His personality reverses in a heartbeat, and is a sign of crafty, slippery person. I must keep an eye out for him in the future, no matter what."

Jiang Chen had come to some conclusions in his heart, but still maintained a look of being incredibly overcome by this attention. "This kid is dull and didn't understand the forefather's efforts previously, and almost misunderstood the forefather."

Sunchaser nodded with a faint smile. "That is right, you are promising and worthy to be taught. I've heard that you only chose to be tested for martial dao in the second trial. Such a resolute heart of martial dao is truly impressive and honorable."

There was a long established rule that the four sects had to compete fairly and could not recruit during the selection.

Ninelion laughed coldly upon hearing Sunchaser's words. "Old monster Sunchaser, what a good show. It's easy to hoodwink the young, but not your peers. Not to mention that private recruitment is forbidden during the great selection, don't you think you're overstepping yourself?"

Sunchaser smiled faintly, “I’ve only complimented him a bit, what recruitment is this?”

“Pah! You shameless old thing! You compliment his resolute heart of martial dao and say that he shows promise and is worthy of teaching. Do you think the three of us are brainless idiots and can’t make out such naked hints?” Ninelion blustered in protest.

“Daoist Sunchaser, we’re all smart people, why act in this way?” Thousandleaf smiled faintly.

“Alright, the third trial is over. Let’s keep moving and head directly into the fourth trial. Us old fellows should not overly intervene.” Icemist tried to gloss over the situation.

Jiang Chen made use of this opportunity to take his place amongst the group again, but was on his guard against Sunchaser.

He was well aware that Sunchaser was keeping an eye on him.

Chapter 301: The Fourth Trial, The Perverse Genius Continues

No matter the reason why an origin realm old monster had set his sights on him, Jiang Chen still felt quite ticked off about it.

However, as daring as Sunchaser was and as domineering as his personality was, he still wouldn't be able to directly harm Jiang Chen whilst he was within the legacy territory.

After all, there were three other forefathers present within. Doing as he pleased would surely enrage the other three sects.

Less than twenty thousand candidates of the original four hundred thousand remained after the first three trials had ended.

Even so, that was still an impressive number.

The fourth trial was practical combat, which was the most likely to result in injuries out of all of them.

The remaining twenty thousand candidates were the cream of the crop. With fervent eyes and vigorous spirits, they were all chomping at the bit, craving the opportunity to show off their skills in the fourth trial.

"The fourth trial tests one's practical combat capabilities, as well as one's martial arts techniques."

The organizer pointed at a smooth stone marker, several acres wide, far off in the distance.

“Do you see that smooth, gleaming stone marker?”

Twenty thousand pairs of eyes that in turn belonged to the twenty thousand present practitioners all looked over in unison.

“In a moment, the stone marker will display a martial arts technique called the ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death’ The details of the technique will be fully displayed on the marker. You will have, at most, three days to both learn and grasp it. Remember, the focus is on learning and grasping it. That means that you can only simulate how to use it in your mind, but cannot actually practice it. You will enter the ‘Great Hall of the Netherworld’ to be tested after three days. There are countless secret chambers within the Hall, and each chamber in turn holds golems of varying levels. These golems will only use the ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death’ to spar with you. There are ten levels to the secret chambers, and you have three chances to take the challenge. Those who rank in the top 8,000 will advance to the next trial. All those who remain will be eliminated.”

“You’re surely curious how the rankings will be determined?”

“According to the rules of ranking, it will be determined by the level of the secret chamber you challenge.”

“Some of you may want to ask how the rankings will be

determined if two candidates challenge a chamber of the same level?”

The organizer chuckled. “If the difficulty of the secret chamber is the same, then the amount of time used to complete the challenge will be used to determine ranking. The shorter amount of time used in the same level of difficulty, the higher one’s ranking will be. If the amount of time elapsed also happens to be the same, then whoever finished grasping the ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death’ first will be ranked higher.”

There were only ten levels of difficulty in all, which of course meant that there would be a large amount of candidates challenging the same level.

It was a logical thing to use elapsed time to more finely determine rankings. Whoever used the shorter amount of time would have a higher practical combat strength.

If both used the same amount of time, then whoever comprehended the technique faster had superior powers of comprehension. This too, made sense.

In this regard, the rankings would be very easy to determine.

All of the twenty thousand left had excellent skills of understanding. They naturally understood the rules in a single attempt.

Everyone warned themselves to be on full alert. Only eight thousand of them would be left after this trial.

No one wanted to be disqualified; everyone wanted to be part of the eight thousand left.

Competition existed in every form, whether the level of difficulty in the challenge, the time spent in the challenge, and even the speed of comprehending a new technique.

At that moment, all practitioners felt a strange sense of pressure.

The level of the competition was palpable when more than half of the remaining twenty thousand was slated for elimination.

Jiang Chen sat cross legged in the midst of the crowd, presenting an extremely low profile with lowered head and eyes, concealing his brilliance.

“The ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death’?” Jiang Chen searched for this technique in his consciousness, but sadly found nothing in his past life pertaining to this technique.

“This is likely an ordinary technique, so it’s quite normal for me to have no memory of it.” Jiang Chen smiled inwardly.

With his knowledge of martial dao, the fact that he’d never encountered this technique before didn’t present a problem.

The powers of comprehension from his past life were readily apparent. Just like the national treasure, the “Eastern Amethyst Qi” method in the Eastern Kingdom, he’d carelessly practiced the two foundational techniques of “Amethyst Cloud Palm” and “Eastern King Point” to the legendary realm without a second thought.

That would mark the point where he’d thoroughly conquered the proud Princess Gouyu.

Perhaps the “Obscure Seal of Life and Death” was of a higher level than the “Eastern Amethyst Qi” method, but in the end it was all the same to Jiang Chen.

The organizer called out just as Jiang Chen was musing, “Alright, the four trial begins now!”

Lines of text appeared on the smooth, gleaming marker.

The text was carved quite clearly on the enormous stone marker.

Jiang Chen looked up and committed the entire text to memory.

His strong consciousness and memory were naturally something that other practitioners couldn’t measure up to.

The ten thousand characters of the technique were branded into

his memory after one read through, incapable of being obliterated.

Jiang Chen focused his attentions after memorization and entered a state of meditation.

“The ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death’ is a seal technique that simulates all beneath the heavens to form a hand seal of life and death. All beneath the heavens are encompassed by this life and death…”

Jiang Chen started to ponder the theory of this technique.

Just as he thought, this technique wasn’t a particularly advanced one, and was most suited for those of the small spirit realm.

Anyone below that realm who attempted to practice this technique would find it a bit difficult.

Those above that realm would find this technique a bit useless.

Of course, if any technique could be trained to the realm of great perfection, then that was another matter entirely. Even if an earth spirit realm practitioner practiced this technique to great perfection, the force behind it would be quite frightening.

The innate level of a technique could determine many things.

However, the level of training of a practitioner could also

determine many things as well.

Of course, at this moment, Jiang Chen's mind was purely without extraneous thoughts.

He was going through countless iterations of this technique.

There was a very stringent aspect of the fourth trial in that one could only simulate how to use this technique in their minds before taking on the challenge. Actual practice was disallowed.

If you wanted to practice, you had to enter the "Great Hall of the Netherworld", and you only had three chances to practice.

One could perhaps choose a lower level room the first time to verify the results of one's understanding.

One would then move onto a higher level the second time, continuing to gain more practical experience.

The third time however, had to be approached with utmost caution. One had to select the highest level possible in their challenge.

It'd be a huge loss if one didn't make it into the final eight thousand because they had chosen too low a level.

One had to say that this kind of testing method was quite harsh.

It made great demands on a practitioner's powers of comprehension.

All candidates wore serious expressions.

Every minute after the start of the trial was quite precious.

Jiang Chen had gained a thorough rudimentary understanding of this technique after two hours.

After four hours, he could go through all the motions very smoothly.

After six hours, Jiang Chen rose to his feet and walked up to the organizer, "I want to take on the challenge."

The organizer had been dozing off, obviously completely unprepared as well.

Ordinarily speaking, there were three days given for learning.

Even a genius with superior powers of comprehension would need at least one or two days, right? Therefore, the organizer hadn't thought at all that someone would take on the challenge on the first day.

"What? Challenge?" He blanked. "Now?"

Jiang Chen nodded.

“Then... alright, come with me.” Each trial had a different organizer, so the organizer of the fourth trial was unfamiliar with the “freak with the boulder’s heart” and his thoughts didn’t travel in that direction.

Otherwise, if he had known that the subject of so much gossip was standing in front of him, then he might not have been so shocked.

“This quick?”

“Taking on the challenge after six hours? Has this fellow practiced the ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death” before? Can someone learn it within six hours?”

“Eh, I heard that there was a genius who emerged from the previous trials. Everyone called him the freak with the boulder’s heart. Is it him again?”

“Oh man, that really is possible!”

“Tsk tsk tsk tsk. A genius is a genius alright. But, to take on the challenge after six hours, isn’t that too arrogant? Won’t the other practitioners feel dejected?”

“Oh shut up. Since you know he’s a genius, then you should know that we don’t register in his line of sight at all. His

competition are those sect disciples in the next selection, those preeminent sect geniuses!”

“Is that so? There will be quite a show to watch then. The genius disciples of the four sects would never think that a genius born in the ordinary world could stand shoulder to shoulder with them. His conflict with them will be a sight to see!”

Jiang Chen headed directly into the Hall with the organizer, paying no heed to the talk in the outside world.

The Great Hall of the Netherworld was exceedingly spacious with countless secret chambers, scattered all over like the stars in the sky. Ten rows of ten rooms were enough to accommodate the several thousand testing at the same time.

There were ten rows because of the ten different levels. They started off from level one and proceeded in an ascending fashion to level ten.

“Do you see these ten secret chambers? The difficulty increases in ascending order. You have three chances, with your best score being recorded. However, remember that if you fail even one of the three chances, you’ll be disqualified. Therefore, think carefully when you select a room, because you cannot afford to fail.”

The organizer was rather kindly and patient as he took the time to explain the rules in detail.

Jiang Chen nodded. He’d actually formulated a plan long ago.

Chapter 302: Passing Easily

“I will challenge the fifth level.” Jiang Chen said.

“What?” The organizer was startled. To start off at the fifth level, wasn’t that too risky?

“The fifth level is equivalent to second level spirit realm. You’ll face a golem of the second level spirit realm within, and you can only deploy the ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death’. Have you made your decision?”

The organizer was rather kind hearted as he spoke a reminder to Jiang Chen because he felt that this young man’s decision was simply too risky.

Ordinarily speaking, those who could pass the fifth level were absolutely able to rank in the top. They had hope of being in the top eighty, not to mention just the top eight thousand.

Usually, the wisest choice for candidates was either the first or second level secret chambers.

That would be the equivalent of a true qi realm golem. Candidates could get in some practice, familiarize themselves with the technique, and warm up.

To challenge the fifth level on his first try, this was an absolute joke! Did this candidate want to shoot himself in the foot?

Jiang Chen flashed a friendly smile to express his gratitude. He did indeed feel the organizer's kindness through his reminder.

He still nodded resolutely, "Yes, the fifth level. I've decided."

Seeing that the candidate himself was this firm, the organizer naturally couldn't force him to go against his will. He sighed lightly and nodded, "Alright, this is the entrance to the fifth level. You will enter by yourself. Remember, the time of your challenge will become the basis of your ranking."

Although the organizer didn't know who Jiang Chen was, he still rather admired such a young man with such daring and courage.

Jiang Chen stepped forward, pushed open the door, and felt it close slowly behind him.

The organizer looked at the slowly closing door and shook his head lightly, "When had the ordinary disciples become thus impulsive? The ordinary disciples in my memory have always been quite cautious due to lack of resources and knowledge. They've always been timid and fearful. This young man is rather odd."

The other organizers had walked over by now.

It was obvious that they were also curious about the candidate who had finished understanding the technique in six hours. They couldn't help but ask, "What level did that candidate choose?"

“Guess!” The organizer purposefully put on an air of mystery.

“I’m guessing it would be the first level, the lowest level. That fellow likely wants to make use of the easiest level to determine his battle capabilities.”

“Indeed! He must want to deepen his understanding through practical combat. If he could fully digest this technique in six hours, then his powers of comprehension would be much too strong!”

“It’s also possible that he’s practiced the ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death’ before?” An organizer proposed. He didn’t believe that anyone would be able to fully comprehend a technique in six hours.

“Heh heh…” The organizer smiled bizarrely. “He chose the fifth level.”

“What””

“The fifth level? You’re joking!”

“That’s impossible! To attempt the fifth level after learning about this technique for six hours, unless he wants to die, it’s complete horseshit that he wants to fight against a second level spirit realm golem with an unpracticed technique!”

The organizer shrugged his shoulders with a wry smile, “Believe what you will. He’s gone into the fifth level chamber at any rate.”

“Crazy, truly mad. Even if he is the freak with the boulder’s heart that they mentioned before with incredible potential, he’ll still be beside himself with regret if he comes out worse for the wear after attempting such a difficult level!”

“The young are arrogant, perhaps his earlier successes have inflated his head?”

“The ordinary practitioners still lack that bit of calmness without the cultivation from the sects.”

The organizers all sighed with emotion, patently not thinking much of Jiang Chen’s actions.

The organizer also sighed, “I also subtly hinted to him all this, but he was quite resolute and didn’t seem to be someone who could be convinced.”

“Then it’s right he should suffer for his lack of flexibility.”

“Uh huh, if he really is that freak with the boulder’s heart, then the four sects will still fight over him even if he fails the trial.”

This was also the truth. Although this was a trial and the rules were the rules, Jiang Chen’s previous performance in as a genius of the heart, superior spirit potential, and being the last to be

bounced out of the magnetic golden mountain destined him to be a hot commodity.

The doors to the chamber opened again as the organizers were chatting.

Jiang Chen walked out with a leisurely expression. It looked like the edges of his clothes hadn't even been ruffled, that he'd gone in only for a cup of tea.

"What!" The organizers all goggled. "What are you doing out here?"

"Can I not leave after the exam is over?" Jiang Chen was taken aback.

"What? Over?"

It was indeed over. When the organizers confirmed this point, their expressions became quite a sight to see.

They had thought very little of him, but this candidate had taken care of the golem of the fifth level with a shake of his body. This candidate had settled things so quickly as if it had been as simple as killing a fly.

Had cheating occurred?

There were countless eyes surveilling the secret chambers. A candidate would be immediately disqualified if they used any other martial arts technique.

This was to say that this candidate truly had used the ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death’ to pass the exam and crush the gatekeeper of this level.

Jiang Chen’s results were recorded in his token.

The organizer’s tone was noticeably more polite when he returned the token to Jiang Chen. “Young man, will you continue your challenge?”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “I’ve gained some knowledge in this battle. I need to digest these new findings and will come again after an hour.”

After an hour later!

All the other organizers were stunned. There were a full ten days allotted for this trial.

There was no need for the candidates to be in such a hurry.

The main organizer sighed as he watched Jiang Chen walked out. “We’ve truly grown old. When did such a perverse genius appear in the mundane world?”

“Haha, interesting, how very interesting! I really want to know who this fellow is behind the mask!”

“I’m guessing that it’s one of the outer disciples of the four sects, stooping in order to conquer, biding his time in order to emerge from the masses in the great selection.”

It wasn’t that the organizers thought too little of the mundane disciples, but that their first thought was still that it made more sense for such a genius to appear in the outer arms of the four sects.

Even though it was the outer arms, they were still somewhat linked to the sects even if they couldn’t enjoy the core resources of the sects.

It was possible that a couple geniuses would appear in the outer arms of the sects every now and then.

Jiang Chen appeared as he said he would after an hour.

He once again jumped levels and wanted to challenge the seventh level.

The fifth level was the equivalent of second level spirit realm, but the seventh was at the peak of third level.

He was one step away from the earth spirit realm, and the difficulty of the seventh level was much greater than the fifth level.

Some of the organizers looked at Jiang Chen with an odd look upon seeing that he'd risen to the seventh level in one go.

They didn't dare suspect this crazy genius now, but they also wanted to see how far this genius could go.

When the door to the seventh level secret chamber closed slowly, the main organizer sighed once again. "We had thought that he was the crazy one, arrogant beyond belief and having the vision of a frog in a well from the ordinary world. It turns out that we were the ones with the limited outlook instead."

These words made some of the organizers unsure of whether to laugh or cry.

Although they didn't care for these words, they made sense.

The golem of the peak of the third level was indeed much stronger than before.

Jiang Chen realized that this golem wouldn't be a pushover as soon as he came face to face with it!

However, he too was at the peak of the third level spirit realm as well. Add to that his various advantages, he would still be able to

flit through this level with ease.

But, Jiang Chen didn't pursue a quick fight this time.

On the contrary, he was actually sparring with the golem, making use of it to train himself.

If he'd sought speed in the first challenge, then he was aiming for slowness in the second challenge.

He would be able to comprehend the essence of this technique through a slow battle.

He was going to make use of this opponent with the same level of strength as him to harden himself, continuously perfect the 'Obscure Seal of Life and Death' and pursue the legendary realm of mastery.

He was well aware that he could challenge at most the eighth level of difficulty if he reached the level of perfection.

Although the difficulty of the eighth level was enough for him to be on top, Jiang Chen's goal was the challenge the highest level of difficulty. He would challenge the peak since he had entered the trial. Such was the true essence of martial dao.

The golem in the highest difficulty level was the equivalent of an earth spirit realm practitioner at fifth level spirit realm.

However, the golems wouldn't be as capricious nor as wily as humans.

However, the level of their strength was there. Jiang Chen wanted to make use of practical combat to increase his understanding of the 'Obscure Seal of Life and Death'. Using practical combat to increase his own combat skills was his strategy.

He would have hope of battling the tenth level chamber golem only if he comprehended the legendary realm of this technique and deployed it beyond the level of great perfection.

Bam!

Jiang Chen flung out a hand seal that was the same as the one the golem was forming. His body danced like the falling leaves as his left hand cast out another seal.

Wham wham wham!

The blows rang out continuously as air currents suddenly exploded in the chamber, forcing high pitched sounds from the air, witnessing the ferocity of the fight.

Chapter 303: Jiang Chen's Goal

"It looks like this freak with a boulder's heart is finally going to get his comeuppance?" An organizer chuckled.

"Mm. It's not necessarily a bad thing for a young genius to get a face full of dirt."

"Things are a bit odd this time. He finished with the fifth level difficulty in less than fifteen minutes, but he's been in the seventh level chamber for two days? Even if he is having a difficult time, it shouldn't take him this long, should it?"

Indeed, it'd been two days since Jiang Chen had started his second challenge.

Meanwhile, the other practitioners had also started their challenges in these two days.

However, Jiang Chen had yet to emerge during this time.

The organizers even started to wonder if Jiang Chen was up to the challenge!

In truth, Jiang Chen hadn't sunk into a difficult battle like the outside world had thought. On the contrary, he had made tremendous gains.

Through sparring with the golem, his comprehension of the ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death’ had continued to increase and there were signs that he was about to break through from the great perfection stage.

“All life is encompassed within life and death. The seal of life and death embodies the mysteries of life and death. If I combine the mysteries of the Divine Aeons Fist, I wonder if it would mesh with the mysteries of the seal of life and death?”

Jiang Chen suddenly had an exceedingly fascinating thought.

The Divine Aeons Fist was indeed an incredible technique. He had often combined it with other techniques to obtain stunning results.

The mysteries of Divine Aeons Fist were greatly enhanced when combined with the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice.

Jiang Chen had also added in the Divine Aeons Fist when practicing the “Moonshatter Flying Daggers”. When combined with the Divine Aeons Fist, the Flying Eagle Form and Pouncing Tiger Form had combined the rhythms of the wind and the wildness of water to thoroughly injure an earth spirit realm Silvermoon Monsterape in the Autumn Hunt.

It was apparent that the mysteries of this technique had the ability to make what was foul and rotten into rare and ethereal.

Jiang Chen had new gains every time he deepened his understanding of the cycles of blooming and wilting.

Thus, unexpectedly, marvelous effects once again appeared when he combined the Divine Aeons Fist with the Seal.

“Eat my seal!”

Jiang Chen extended his right hand and made a pushing motion as a seal rushed towards the golem with a severe, lethal wind.

His left hand drew a circle at the same time, forming another seal brimming with the mysteries of neverending life, completing the circle of life with the seal that his right hand had formed.

The power generated by the two seals instantly doubled. The enormous strength, seemingly capable of making the heavens and earth tremble, crashed down on the golem.

Bam!

The golem was struck directly and smashed into the wall, shattering into a million pieces and tinkling downwards.

Jiang Chen was overjoyed. Indeed, the power of the Seal after being combined with the mysteries of life and death caused it to break through great perfection in the span of a second, exceeding the limits of the “Obscure Seal of Life and Death” and reaching the legendary realm.

This blow was as if he'd truly triggered the powers of reincarnation, completely pulverizing the peak third level spirit realm golem!

The great door opened slowly.

Jiang Chen had completed the second challenge!

Only three days had passed.

This was to say that Jiang Chen still had seven days to challenge the tenth level. Of course, he'd also used two of his chances and had only one left.

After resting for half a day, he once again appeared in the Great Hall of the Netherworld.

As for the other practitioners, only a few of them had shown uncommon skill thus far. The organizers were all rather bored.

As organizers, their greatest joy was in discovering geniuses.

But so far, apart from the freak with the boulder's heart who'd stunned them again and again, none of the remaining candidates had particularly delighted any of them, even when some were clearly ahead of the pack.

None even came close to the freak genius, much less be on par with him.

Therefore, when the bored organizers saw Jiang Chen again, delight crept across their faces.

The appearance of the freak with the boulder's heart meant that the time for boredom had passed, and exciting thrills had arrived.

"Taking the challenge again?" The main organizer's face was wreathed in smiles.

Jiang Chen nodded. Why else would he be here?

"What level do you plan on challenging this time?" The organizer's eyes was full of expectation.

He'd been worried that Jiang Chen had jumped to too high a level in his first challenge, and he'd had actually wanted to convince him not to be impulsive. But now, he seemed rather concerned that Jiang Chen might go for something too low level.

Multiple pairs of eyes stared fixedly at Jiang Chen, full of anticipation.

He'd even completed the seventh level, so that meant he had to at least challenge the eighth level.

If he completed the eighth level challenge, that meant his strength was on par with the best of the sect geniuses. Not to mention the extraordinary potential of this candidate, together it meant that in the future he would absolutely soar on top of the sect geniuses and vault into the ranks of the most elite geniuses!

“Let’s raise the bar even higher this time. I plan on challenging the tenth level.” Jiang Chen said.

“What?”

“The tenth level? The highest level?”

“Going to the tenth level from the seventh? Isn’t... isn’t this too ridiculous?”

The organizer’s minds were once again struck dumb by Jiang Chen. They knew of his strength, none of them denied that now. They even looked forward to him challenging the eighth or ninth level.

However, they hadn’t dared to think of the tenth level.

One had to understand that the tenth level was equivalent to the peak of the fifth level spirit realm. With the fighting capabilities of an ordinary practitioner, even if one wasn’t limited to a single martial arts technique, challenging that kind of level was simply offering themselves up for torture!

There weren't that many past the fifth level spirit realm amongst the twenty and thirty year old geniuses in the sects either.

Although this secular genius had amazed everyone time and time again, he was going for the top this time! The fifth level was a level reserved only for the preeminent sect geniuses.

Forget the tenth level, for a mundane practitioner to challenge the eighth level was already an absurd act.

The organizers stared at each other, dumbfounded. In the end, the main organizer was the first to find his voice. "The tenth level is equivalent to the peak of the fifth level. Young man, are you sure about this?"

Jiang Chen nodded his head resolutely. "Yes."

Since he'd come to participate in the great selection, Jiang Chen had given no thought to reigning in his strength. Eternally striving to be number one on the path of martial dao, that was the notion all practitioners held in their hearts.

Most people could never be number one due to restrictions from their potential. But any practitioner with the slightest aspiration and ambition would never give up the fight to be first.

Once they lost that urge, they would also lose the motivation to move forward.

Only when a practitioner stands at the peak and looks down on all life at their feet could they experience the cruelty and joy of training.

One would only comprehend the true meaning of martial dao in the struggle between life and death.

The doors to the tenth level of difficulty opened as Jiang Chen's upright figure strode slowly into the room.

Several of the organizers felt rather woozy in this moment, as if they were witnessing the birth of a legend and the descent of a genius.

In that instant, that lonely, proudly upright figure deeply imprinted itself on their minds.

And, they would likely find it difficult to erase this impression for the rest of their lives.

The secret chamber of the tenth level was much more spacious than all the others.

The golem that was equivalent to the peak of the fifth spirit realm brought with it an overpowering aura as it stood in the middle of the chamber. It seemed to be as though a butcher, showing not the slightest hint of human emotion as it awaited the next thing to lie across its chopping board.

Wham!

The golem immediately slapped out a seal burning with flames as it saw Jiang Chen, sending it hurtling towards Jiang Chen. This was one of the moves from the ‘Obscure Seal of Life and Death’.

Seal of Hellfire!

Jiang Chen didn’t dare treat this lightly as he circulated the power of his ice attribute and formed a “Seal of Frostchill” and dodged lightly to the side, flanking the golem.

The golem’s only flaw was that it didn’t possess human intelligence. Apart from their instinct to do battle, they lacked the ability to adapt to a situation.

Jiang Chen’s greatest advantage was the memories of his two lives and the intelligence of two lifetimes.

In terms of actual combat strength, Jiang Chen’s strength at third level spirit realm was obviously not up to directly facing off against the golem.

If he didn’t use any other methods, it would be exceedingly difficult for Jiang Chen to gain the upper hand using only the “Obscure Seal of Life and Death”.

The golem waved its arms without waiting for Jiang Chen to react, sending an infinite array of seals rushing towards Jiang

Chen.

This kind of wild attack was an obvious attempt to seal all the space within the chamber and force its opponent into a corner with no retreat.

As long as it locked down all the space, then all that was left for the golem to do was torture its opponent!

Jiang Chen quickly saw through the golem's fighting style but was still inwardly shocked. "This golem has an abundance of energy and would likely still not be exhausted after three days and nights of fighting. If it maintains such a crazed level of attack, the entire chamber will be sealed off by it sooner or later. Then, I'd become a sitting target!"

Jiang Chen's rich battle experience t helped him react immediately.

However, the golem would never tire, and the ferocity of its seals grew in strength. Although Jiang Chen could react quickly, but no matter how quick his speed was, he was still only flesh and blood.

This back and forth sparring had continued for less than an hour before Jiang Chen knew that he wouldn't be able to hold up for long if he continued to passively take this beating.

"I must restrict its movements so it can't continue to act this wildly." Jiang Chen's thoughts spun furiously as he suddenly

changed tactics, forming several seals in rapid succession. In an instant, he sent out dozens of elongated seals and formed a chain of spirit power.

The golem leered as it threw a vicious punch towards that spirit chain.

When he saw this, Jiang Chen immediately moved like a swimming fish and dodged behind the golem. His arms moved furiously as endless seals flurried out like a howling blizzard.

“Let’s see if the magnetic force can slow down this golem!”

Chapter 304: The Decision Of Victory In The Midst Of Risk

This particular seal had departed from Jiang Chen's usual dragon-like momentum, and had transformed into one that seemed as harmless as a snowflake.

Only Jiang Chen knew that his seal contained magnetic force, which he'd formed into countless restraining forces, and was now raining down countless seals to form a magnetic force-field.

This technique was still the "Obscure Seal of Life and Death", but he'd infused the magnetic force from the magnetic golden mountain into it, and had turned it into a spirit chain imbued with magnetic restraining power.

Even if this battle were to take place in the outside world, it's likely that very few would've understand the intricacies of his moves.

Those with a keen eye would only be able to see that Jiang Chen had used the seal in order to coalesce a force-field.

Before the force-field was fully formed, the magnetic force didn't have much restraining force to it. It flowed through the air, and was exceedingly difficult to discern.

However, once it took shape, the restraining force it produced would be incredibly frightening.

Jiang Chen had only refined the magnetic heart a short while ago. Otherwise, he'd be able to temporarily freeze the golem by forming a small magnetic storm.

Jiang Chen was confident that he'd be able to destroy the golem if he was able to gain even a split second advantage.

This golem was quite strong with its power sitting at the peak of the fifth level spirit realm, but even a human practitioner at this level wouldn't dare to simply stand there and take a harsh blow from someone at the peak of the third level.

Unless the person in question had some heaven defying armor, or had trained in some techniques that aided their body.

Otherwise, the full blow of someone at the third level spirit realm would still be enough to destroy the defenses of someone at the peak of the fifth level spirit realm.

Of course, this was just an idealistic daydream. Jiang Chen's control of the magnetic force—at this stage—was still at a bare minimum. It was far less than adequate to form a miniature magnetic storm.

However, the constant flow of the magnetic force was still enough to obstruct the golem, decrease its momentum, and generally slow down its movements.

Once its speed was decreased, the threat at it posed would be greatly decreased.

Indeed, once the magnetic force-field had been formed, the situation in which the golem had been advancing one-sidedly and cornering Jiang Chen was slowly reversed.

Jiang Chen also gradually gained control of the greater picture from his passiveness.

However, the tenth level was still the tenth level after all. The golem's wild and ferocious attacks were only slightly affected by the magnetic force.

It'd be difficult for Jiang Chen to destroy the golem this easily.

However, thanks to the magnetic force, Jiang Chen had additional insurance which had reduced the power of his opponent by thirty percent.

With this balancing of the scales, Jiang Chen was roughly on par with the golem.

"To think that I'd only be on the same level as the golem after utilizing the magnetic force. The difficulty here is truly on another level."

Jiang Chen reflected with emotion as he continued to trade blows with the golem.

The two sides were so well matched that neither held the upper hand, resulting in a stalemate.

Jiang Chen was already employing the “Obscure Seal of Life and Death” at the legendary realm, but his cultivation level, compared to the golem’s, simply had too much of a difference. It wasn’t very likely that he’d be able to defeat this golem without using any other techniques, or deploying any other arts.

“Unless I can use the Lotus, or haul out the magnetic golden mountain, it’s going to be tough for me to bridge the gap between our levels, even though I’m deploying this technique to its maximum potential.”

The difference between the two realms was simply too great.

The stalemate between the two continued.

Three days passed...

Five days passed...

The battle raged on. Jiang Chen had already taken many pills to replenish his spirit power, but the golem seemed to have an infinite source of spirit power, and seemed as if it would never tire.

“This fight has continued for five days, and I have at most one or

two days left in me. Can it be that I, Jiang Chen, won't be able to defeat a golem, something without flesh and blood, in the end?"

A draw was something very unacceptable to Jiang Chen.

As a practitioner with extreme ambitions, Jiang Chen would never be willing to accept a result as meaningless as a draw.

"The path of rebirth has honed the strength of my heart. I also absorbed a great deal of spirit energy in the caverns of heavenly fire and water that has yet to be fully melded into my spirit ocean. If I'm able to transmute this energy to use in my training, then perhaps I can assail the fourth level of the spirit realm, and step foot into the earth spirit realm."

"My strength will surely increase greatly once I set foot in the earth spirit realm. I'm on par with this golem at the moment, and neither of us are able to gain the upper hand. However, I'll have a ninety percent chance of destroying the golem once my strength increases. Should I take the risk?"

Jiang Chen debated the two decisions in his heart.

However, it wasn't a difficult decision to make for someone with courage.

He came to a conclusion in almost a second.

"How can a mere golem at the peak of the fifth level spirit realm,

with no flesh, blood, and subpar intelligence, block the progress of my trials?”

Jiang Chen no longer hesitated when his thoughts reached this point. He decided that even though it was an enormous risk, he was going to assail the next level.

He’d be able to make use of the surge in strength when he broke through to the earth spirit realm to destroy this golem!

Jiang Chen began to circulate the spirit power within his body without another thought, and simultaneously began attempting to breakthrough to the next level!

To continue fighting, and try to assimilate the spirit essence within his body at the same time... this greatly taxed Jiang Chen’s mental capabilities. This was splitting his heart for two completely different purposes.

It was a good thing that his heart’s strength was particularly strong, thus he barely managed to balance out the two efforts.

During the trial of talent, Jiang Chen had chosen the highest difficulty caverns, and had then absorbed all the essence of heavenly fire and water within them.

Those essences were still concentrated within his spirit ocean, still yet to be digested.

As he simultaneously continued to fight the golem and assimilate the essence at the same time, Jiang Chen knew that he was currently facing the most difficult challenge thus far in his life.

Two hours passed.

Four hours...

Six hours...

Time continued to pass on. Thanks to his distraction, Jiang Chen wasn't able to fully devote himself to the battle. As the pressure on the golem let up, the golem's counter attacks also began to grow in strength.

It was a good thing that his magnetic force field continued to operate within the chamber.

In this regard, although the golem wasn't as threatened by Jiang Chen, the restraining force of the magnetic field was still present.

Therefore, as strong as the golem's attacks were, it still wasn't able to truly injure Jiang Chen, thanks to its restricted movements.

In the outside world, almost all of the candidates had completed their trials by now.

However, because Jiang Chen had yet to emerge from his trial, the organizer of the fourth trial was unable to announce the end of the stage.

After all, everyone knew that the tenth level's chamber was the main focus of this trial.

Now that it was the last day, if the freak with the boulder's heart technique was still unable to win out over the golem, then Jiang Chen would be deemed to have gotten a draw.

A draw didn't count as a fail, but it wasn't a success either. His results would then reuse the results of his last attempt, which were from the seventh level.

Of those who'd participated in this time's selection, those who'd successfully passed the seventh level were few and far in between.

However, of those rarities, there were actually three who'd made it past the eight level.

Since this was the case, the organizers held even more anticipation towards Jiang Chen.

"It looks like we underestimated the potential of the secular practitioners previously. There seems to be quite a few geniuses in the ordinary world. There were even three who made it past the eighth level. This was rather out of my expectations!"

“Those who’ve made it past the eighth level are usually only the outer disciples of the four great sects, so they’re still sect disciples at the end of the day.”

“That may not be the case. None of their identities have been revealed yet, so no one knows if they’re from the four great sects.”

“Is there really any need for doubt? If they weren’t the outer disciples of the four great sects, how could they have sufficient resources to develop as they have? I suspect that that freak with the boulder’s heart is one of the outer sect disciples as well. He must have some deep foundations, and was waiting to stun everyone with these moves in the great selection.”

“Heh heh, I’d thought that that freak would rank number one when he passed the seventh level difficulty earlier. To think that there were three that passed the eighth level. That means that, if that freak can’t pass the tenth level by the rest of the day, his results for the trial will be based on the seventh level. He’ll be in fourth place then.”

“That kid was truly arrogant as well. If he’d solidly and steadily maintained his path, I feel that he’d have had plenty of hope in completing both the eighth or even ninth levels of difficulty.”

“Indeed, but to be able to hold on for so long in the tenth level’s difficulty without being defeated, he must have stunning battle capabilities as well. If he were slightly more cautious, he would’ve been almost guaranteed success in the eighth level. He’d have a seventy to eighty percent chance of success at passing the ninth level as well. What a pity, geniuses are always so proud of

themselves, and must always challenge the peak."

"Indeed. What a pity, such a pity. If he doesn't rank number one in this trial, then this will instead be a disgrace, a regret for him. The most preeminent geniuses should always be on top in every test. If he fails this test, then the luster his image holds will be greatly reduced, even if he is a genius."

"Not to worry, there's still half a day left. Perhaps this freak with the boulder's heart is waiting to give us a surprise? Don't forget about the third trial. If it wasn't for the the magnetic golden mountain disappearing, who would've thought that he'd climbed to the ninth floor and was about to challenge the tenth?"

Jiang Chen had told others that he'd only made it to the ninth level, in order to keep his abilities a bit of a secret.

The organizers were waiting outside, full of expectations, as Jiang Chen continuously assailed his spirit ocean with the two great forces of spirit power in his body.

As two columns, one of fire energy and one of water energy, continued to assault his spirit ocean, his spirit ocean continuously expanded in turn.

He'd reached a critical moment in striving to break through to the fourth level.

"The spirit essence of both heavenly fire and water are indeed

domineering. Whether I succeed or fail, all will be determined now!” As Jiang Chen thought this, the two great currents of spirit energy leapt up like a soaring dragon and pouncing tiger, crashing into each other inside of his consciousness.

Wham!

Jiang Chen suddenly felt the inside of his spirit ocean tremble as the two thick spirit veins actually broke apart into numerous thin rivulets, as gentle as a breeze and rain showers in spring, as they slowly assimilated into his spirit ocean like they were nourishing everything within.

His entire spirit ocean slowly became as pure and ethereal as land right after a rainshower.

Chapter 305: The Fifth Trial, Destruction Valley

Jiang Chen's spirit ocean had just endured the baptism of tumultuous waves and became as beautiful and impressive as a rainbow after the rain.

"Is... is this the allure of the earth spirit realm?" Jiang Chen could feel the spirituality and strength of his spirit ocean and how it embodied endless life force.

Compared to the previous small spirit realm, there was a noticeable increase in quality.

Wham, wham, wham.

Jiang Chen briefly deployed his spirit ocean and could feel the subtle accents of both thunder and wind in his spirit ocean.

It seemed that the level of one's spirit ocean in the earth spirit realm was indeed quite extraordinarily different!

Jiang Chen could feel that the level of his spirit ocean was twofold, or even threefold what it'd been before.

He could feel vigorous vitality suffuse his entire body and boundless life force surging and flowing within his body, as if a slowly awakening beast wanting to burst out of the bonds of its

imprisonment.

“Good, good! To make a breakthrough in the midst of battle, this ought to sweep away all the dejection of the past couple of days!” Jiang Chen felt a wave of heroism rise when he felt his strength increase.

He deployed the Seal and threw out a seal.

Wham wham wham!

This seal actually carried with it the breath of a dragon and roar of a tiger, vibrating with spirit energy, giving others a suffocating feeling as it broke through the air.

The earth spirit realm had indeed brought Jiang Chen a noticeable leap forward in the quality of his spirit ocean.

Bam!

The golem took a few steps backwards when it was struck by that seal.

Jiang Chen was in his element, akin to a duck taking to water. Enormous inspiration suddenly surged in his mind as his comprehension of the “Obscure Seal of Life and Death” was suddenly elevated. He delivered blows that were as powerful and unconstrained as a heavenly steed soaring across the skies. Each seal was as if executing a freehand brush stroke, fluid and natural.

Jiang Chen handled all movements dexterously, like an immortal from another realm, ethereal and intangible, but as impressive as the myriad scenes of nature beneath the heavens.

The “Obscure Seal of Life and Death” encompassed all beneath the heavens, and all its hand seals were formed from the heart through comprehending all scenes upon the world.

The seal suddenly seemed like the ancient mountain ranges of old, repressing monsters and evil.

The seal then seemed as if the boundless, raging oceans devouring the earth.

It abruptly became the dragons soaring through the nine heavens, and then a tiger howling through the mountains.

One moment like the crack of thunder, another the arrival of the aurora borealis.

Such a seal of life and death brimming with an immense aura suddenly gave rise to all various phenomena in the universe, indicating that Jiang Chen had deployed the Seal to a realm that he never had before.

The power behind this attack had also risen by two to threefolds since Jiang Chen had broken through to the earth spirit realm.

Add to that the restraining force from the magnetic force field, the golem sank into the role of passively suffering a beating in the span of a second.

This scenario was like the golem was Jiang Chen's training tool, and solely existed to be pummeled by Jiang Chen.

Countless numbers of seals blasted into the golem. Even though the materials making it up were heaven defying and its defensive capabilities utterly astonishing, it still wasn't enough to bear up beneath this destructive assault.

Bam!

The final seal crashed into the golem like a blow of thunder and wind, completely destroying the golem.

Jiang Chen slowly wound himself down and looked down at the remains of the golem on the ground, also thinking that he'd been lucky.

Based on his own calculations, it'd been almost ten days. If he hadn't been decisive in the last moment and achieved a tangible breakthrough, he wouldn't have had a single hope of destroying this golem.

The joy of breaking through to the earth spirit realm and passing the test in the last second brought about the result of two joys descending upon Jiang Chen at the same time, resulting in great

gains.

When he opened the door, countless pairs of eyes focused on him in the same instant.

“What? He… he’s emerged?”

“This… this means he’s defeated the golem?”

“Isn’t the time not up yet? The golem will naturally stop when time is up. The golem hasn’t stopped, so what is he doing out here?”

“Can it be that he really defeated the golem?!”

According to the rules, the door to the secret chamber wouldn’t open before the golem was defeated. The golem would only stop and the doors open when time was up.

However, there was still half an hour until the final deadline. According to the rules, the golem shouldn’t have stopped yet.

The doors naturally wouldn’t open if the golem hadn’t halted.

After all of the organizers’ brains had hiccuped with shock, they suddenly recalled something.

“The golem won’t stop before the time runs out. This means that this candidate actually passed the tenth level of difficulty? How, how can this be?”

“Tsk tsk, he’s the freak with the boulder’s heart alright. A true genius! And we were saying that three people had passed the eighth level of difficulty. It seems that they are destined to be the backdrop for this genius. The most preeminent of geniuses must trample over the bodies of others to become the most brilliant star in the sky!”

“This was the tenth level of difficulty! This freak of the boulder’s heart not only has a strong strength of heart, exceptional talent, but his ability in practical combat is this frightening! This was the equivalent of the peak of the fifth level spirit realm. Can this young man’s level of training already be at this level?”

“I had thought words saying that he had the right to challenge the the most preeminent geniuses of the four great sects were hyperbole, but now it looks that he truly does have the right to do so.”

“Indeed, don’t forget that there are three years for the second selection. If this time is utilized well, then this genius will surely soar to the heavens.”

“I have not the slightest doubt that this genius isn’t the slightest bit less than any of the sect geniuses. It was a pity that he hadn’t been discovered by the sects before. If he had been on the same starting line as the sect geniuses, he may be the first amongst the younger generation now!”

The compliments cascaded down upon each other with increasing degree.

Of course, they didn't think that their praise was too high. For a secular genius to reach this level, they were well aware of what this meant.

If such a genius had received the sect's full resources from the very beginning, then he truly would be on par with all the sect geniuses.

The main organizer didn't dare put on any airs now when he accepted Jiang Chen's token.

No matter what the future was, the organizers all knew that this young man was destined to soar to the skies, unstoppable in his momentum.

Therefore, even though he was an organizer, he didn't dare treat this genius lightly.

The three who had passed the eighth level of difficulty were all privately put out to see Jiang Chen walk out from the secret chamber.

However, they all had to admire him as well. This kind of ability did indeed give them the feeling of gazing upon a high mountain.

After recording these results, the organizer returned the token wreathed in smiles. “Congratulations, passing the tenth level of difficulty has truly opened our eyes. You are the first amongst the secular disciples, and your placement cannot be challenged by any.”

This wasn’t mere praise, but purposeful flattery already.

Jiang Chen smiled as he accepted the token, “This one is unworthy of the organizer’s regard.”

After Jiang Chen had emerged from the secret chamber, the fourth trial was officially announced to have come to a close.

What followed then was a tense period of ranking. Of course, there was no doubt about who was at the top.

The top eight thousand candidates were quickly ranked.

Those below the top eight thousand were all sent out of the legacy territory of ancient times. The victors triumphed and losers were discarded. Such was the cruel reality of this selection, with no room for the slightest bit of personal relationships.

The ones who remained, particularly those who ranked further to the back, all breathed silent sighs of relief.

However, they knew that competition would only grow greater in the remaining challenges.

The sects would only select three thousand in the end, this meant that five thousand out of their group were destined to pass by the doors of the great sects.

However, if any of those rejected had given a stunning performance in the second trial, they would still receive particular attentions going forward and still had a ray of hope.

“Alright, four trials have now passed of the five. You eight thousand are quite lucky to make it into the fifth trial. I will tell you now that no one will be disqualified in the fifth trial.”

“What? No one will be disqualified?”

“No one is eliminated in the fifth trial? That means all of us are qualified to enter the four sects and receive the boundless glory of being a sect disciple?”

The candidates were all beyond themselves when they heard that no one would be eliminated in the fifth trial.

“Don’t be too excited too early, there are only three thousand slots to enter the sects. The fact that no one is being eliminated in the fifth trial doesn’t mean that all of you have entered the four sects. The fifth trial tests fortune. Fortune and luck are intangible and mysteriousness. Whether or not you believe it, fortune and luck are present in the path of martial dao. The stronger one is and higher the comprehension, the more one will sense their existence.”

“In this trial you will enter a place called ‘Destruction Valley’ for ten days. In this trial, all of you will encounter various fortuitous encounters, challenges, and even danger. How your life will be will materialize in this trial. If your luck is strong and fortune steady, then the lucky star may shine upon you and you may pick up a treasure even by bending over. If you lack good fortune, then you may run into disaster every three steps and a calamity every five steps. You make sprain your ankle when you walk and choke when you drink water…”

Of luck and fortune, Jiang Chen was a devout believer.

In his understanding of everything in his past life, he naturally had a deep understanding of fate and the heavenly law. He also knew that whether it was ordinary folk or the Celestial Emperor, none could escape the being affected by fortune.

“I was the son of the Celestial Emperor from the moment I was born, so it has to be said that my luck was quite good. However, my meridiens were crippled from birth and I couldn’t train, this meant that I was lucky but with no fortune. With this reincarnation, setting aside the matter of luck and fortune, at least I can train. At least I grasp my destiny in my hands. If I happen to be blessed with luck and fortune as well, then it would make perfection even more perfect. If I lack this in this life, then I will use my strength and abilities to triumph over this destiny. The ancient adage goes that man’s will, not heaven, decides, and that the world is determined by man. Fate exists, but it is not incontrovertible. Within the operation of the heavenly law, the most inferior fortune will have a silver lining, and the best destiny will always have some flaws. I have obtained the Bewitching Lotus

of Fire and Ice in this life and the magnetic golden mountain. Who says I have no fortune? This is obviously not that case. But if this had landed on anyone else, then they may not have been able to make it their own. Thus, it can be seen that opportunities are only given to those who are prepared."

Jiang Chen's thoughts became even clearer when his thoughts traveled here. "I believe in fate and fortune, but cannot lose myself in this. In the end, destiny is held in one's own hands."

Chapter 306: The Strong Determine Their Destinies

The strong controlled their fates.

The weak were directed by their destinies.

Jiang Chen's heart was more resolute than anyone's in that he would be the one to dictate his own destiny in this life. He would never be a weakling and be at the mercy of the fates!

The organizer's voice continued to sound by his ear as he made up his mind.

"Alright, everyone rest tonight. Destruction Valley will be opened tomorrow. You will face the trial of fortune for the next ten days."

All the remaining practitioners all began to wind down and rest after the main organizer's order.

Jiang Chen sat cross legged and began to solidify his training at the fourth level spirit realm.

To breakthrough in the midst of battle was a very risky move. Now that he had a night of rest, he naturally was going to make use of this to solidify his training.

After all, hed'd been splitting his concentration when battling the golem and had been unable to stabilize his new level.

He would make use of this time to rectify the situation.

Out of the five trials, four had passed, and his results had been the most noteworthy among the rest, head and shoulders above the other practitioners.

Although Jiang Chen was happy, he didn't forget himself.

"To emerge from the masses of the secular disciples is but a warm up act. The true challenge of this great selection is in the second selection. I must emerge from the second selection and obtain a spot in the final battle. I'd rather like to see how exceptional the first class geniuses of these so-called four great sects are!"

The mighty sentiment of heroism rose in Jiang Chen's heart.

"In the world of martial dao, hiding one's capacities and biding one's time may result in self protection, but a lack of revealing one's abilities may result in being bullied and suppressed wherever one goes. I, Jiang Chen, either chooses not to show my light, or stun all with a single move. With my current foundations, the sixteen kingdom alliance can no longer contain me, so why should I continue to hold myself in check?"

When he thought about the Purple Sun Sect disciples' arrogant faces in the Eastern Kingdom and how his hated rival Long Juxue

had been taken away when she'd been about to be destroyed, a repeated sense of repulsion grew in his heart.

So what if he had the Skylaurel Medallion in the Skylaurel Kingdom? Those from the Precious Tree Sect had provoked him without fear time and time again, oppressing him, and even desiring to drive him into the ground. If it hadn't been for Ye Chonglou's protection, his circumstances might have been even worse.

The forefather from the Purple Sun Sect had even interrogated him with a harsh air for the matter of the magnetic golden mountain in the legacy territory.

As a practitioner, no matter strong or weak, would have their own self respect on the path of martial dao.

The oppression of power had not only not crushed Jiang Chen's feelings regarding martial dao, but had sparked his own pride and his rebellious feelings.

"How dare a mere sixteen kingdom alliance think of suppressing me? How dare they restrict me at every step? Why must I cower and bow in front of these people?"

"The strong determine their own destinies. From now on, I will not retreat even half a step in this sixteen kingdom alliance. If no one troubles me, I will not make trouble for them. If anyone troubles me, I will return it to them tenfold!"

Jiang Chen had thoroughly stabilized the level of his spirit ocean after a night and had cleaned out all the impurities from his body. With this, Jiang Chen's spirit ocean grew even stronger.

One had to say, a spirit ocean crafted from the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill was indeed superior. Jiang Chen could clearly feel that his spirit ocean was brimming with potential, and the more his realm rose, the more apparent the boundless feeling of this potential.

"Perhaps the potential of this body is far below than that of an inane constitution, but through my efforts and my abilities in changing my destiny, I trust that I will walk a further path than those with so-called innate constitutions! So what of a constitution? Potential determines only the height of one's starting point, but doesn't determine how far one will be able to go!"

Jiang Chen thought of Long Juxue and all their prior grudges.

"Long Juxue, I hope your innate constitution doesn't disappoint me when we meet again."

Jiang Chen opened his eyes as an almost intangible beam of golden light pierced through the clouds, somehow reflecting the splendor of the rising sun.

"Mm? To think that the level of the God's Eye has also risen after I've broken through to the earth spirit realm. In that case, I can train the last two moves of the 'Moonshatter Flying Daggers'.

Jiang Chen stood up happily. It was about time for the fifth trial.

The eight thousand lucky practitioners were all gathered outside a mountain valley.

“The fifth trial is about to begin. I will emphasize this one last time. No one will be actively eliminated in this trial, but that doesn’t mean that no one will be eliminated. Remember, the only way you will be eliminated in this trial is by death.”

“There are those who will set foot on the golden path in this trial as well as those who will walk upon the path of hell. Everyone has their own fates. There are no restrictions in this trial. The only thing you must do is to stay alive.”

No restrictions?

What did this mean? This meant that the rules allowed candidates to kill and scheme against each other.

“Mm? These rules encourage the candidates to fight each other?” Jiang Chen’s thoughts spun exceedingly quickly, quickly gleaning this meaning from the organizer’s words.

Of course, he was utterly fearless.

“I hope nothing happens. If any idiot dares set his sights on me,

then it's his unlucky day." Jiang Chen laughed coldly in his heart.

The organizer smiled remotely, "There are no rankings in this trial. All those who remain alive will make it into the second selection. But of course, not only will danger exist, but so will various gains. Various dangers exist within Destruction Valley, but they lie amidst numerous treasures. Remember, it is said that fortune walks closely with risk. Finally, whatever you obtain and however much you gain, it will belong to you. The sects will not be able to take the slightest bit away. Now, whoever doesn't wish to take this risk can step out. There is still time to change your mind."

Doesn't want to take this risk?

That was a useless question. Of those who had made it to this step, who wouldn't think that he was a proud son of heaven, someone born with great fortune?

How could they have passed through the four trials and made it to this step without luck and fortune?

Fortune in the face of great risk!

The eight thousand practitioners were well aware that there would be untold risk, challenge, and gain in this trial.

This was a gamble of who had the better luck and stronger vitality!

To train in martial dao, one should never fear danger or yearn for life. That was one of the basic psychological requirements of each practitioner.

Therefore, the only thing that greeted the organizer was a reply in unison. “We have no regrets and are willing to strive with our lives!”

Gratified, the main organizer smiled and waved his hands. “Since this is the case, come forward. There is a transportation array at the entrance that will take you to Destruction Valley. Remember, ten days time. Stay alive and meet with more fortuitous occurrences!”

All the practitioners surged through the entrance with looks of excitement.

The organizer also sighed in his heart as he watched the figures disappear through the entrance. “What a pity. If I was ten or so years younger, I wouldn’t be willing to pass this opportunity by. It’s a pity that it’s exceedingly difficult to open a doorway to the legacy territory.”

A great price had to be paid to open the legacy territory.

Therefore, even those of the four great sects likely would only have one chance to enter the legacy territory in their lives.

Most of the sects had never set foot into the Destruction Valley.

The forefathers had paid a great price and could still only keep the entrance open for ten days. All participants would be automatically ejected when ten days was up.

This was why the organizer was feeling thus, that these secular disciples were incredibly lucky to encounter the great selection and the moment when the forefathers were cultivating talents with complete disregard for the price.

When Jiang Chen followed the group to the entrance of the valley, a beam of white light surrounded his body and swallowed his body, sending it into the valley.

Jiang Chen's vision returned to normal after the white light had vanished.

He deployed God's Eye and Psychic's Head to the extreme, cautiously assessing his surroundings.

A noticeably desolate valley and a lush forest greeted the eye. Every large tree seemed to be ten thousand years old, only able to be spanned by many people holding their hands together.

The body of one person seemed particularly small in this deep valley, particularly under those towering trees. It was as if Jiang Chen had stepped into a giant's world.

He recalled the organizer's warning that everyone's experience in Destruction Valley was different. Some could pick up a treasure with a bend of their waist, others could sprain their ankle just walking on the path.

This was to say that no one knew if treasure or fatal danger awaited ahead of them in Destruction Valley.

Jiang Chen wouldn't be rash whether it was for treasure or danger.

Staying alive would always be the highest priority.

Jiang Chen looked around and still didn't feel any sense of danger from his surroundings. He felt that the sunlight filtering through the canopy gave one a very leisurely feeling.

"The sun is shining so gaily in this Destruction Valley. It's truly hard to believe that this is a place brimming with danger." Jiang Chen sat down cross legged and leaned against a tree.

He felt that the surroundings were rather a nice place for training.

At least there was sufficient spirit power.

The breeze was pleasantly warm, the swaying tree branches and dappled sunlight gave Jiang Chen quite a lazy feeling. He vaguely felt a desire to rest here.

This desire became uncontrollable when it appeared. It was like a psychological hint, making Jiang Chen's emotions more and more relaxed and at peace.

It was like the rhythm of the branches swaying were the most wondrous lullaby in this world, continuously destabilizing Jiang Chen's mental defenses.

"I should rest since the surroundings are so lovely." This notion kept rising in Jiang Chen's mind, continuously hinting at him.

"Hmm?" A disharmonious thought suddenly rose in Jiang Chen's consciousness. "Why can I rest after arriving in a foreign place?"

Countless hypnotizing thoughts immediately surged in his mind, attempting to shoo this stray thought away.

Chapter 307: The Divine Tree Of Dreams

“What’s going on?”

Jiang Chen suddenly shook himself awake just before he drifted off to sleep. His strong strength of heart transformed into a bolt of lightning towards his consciousness, cleaving apart his sleepy internal demon.

Wham!

Jiang Chen felt his brain buzz continuously.

He regained clarity in the next moment, his forehead beaded with sweat. He’d almost... almost really fallen asleep just now.

What was going on?

Jiang Chen’s heart palpitated with fright as he sprang up and away like a rabbit.

He had truly been one step away from falling asleep just now.

However, the strength of the heart of an earth spirit realm practitioner was great. How was it possible that he’d almost fallen asleep, with no forewarning at all?

Without a doubt, the problem didn’t lie with him.

Since it wasn't an issue with him, then it was an issue with the environment. This seemingly placid forest embodied a frightening power to hypnotize people.

Jiang Chen sniffed the air as a thought passed through his mind. "The Divine Tree of Dreams?"

Some memory fragments from his past life jumped out in Jiang Chen's mind. He looked at the towering tree and compared it to the information regarding the "The Divine Tree of Dreams". As he continued to compare the two, he felt that the two were a complete match with no differences whatsoever.

"The Divine Tree of Dreams soars hundreds of meters upwards. Its silver white sap seeps continuously from its branches and it doesn't have any color or fragrance. It can numb the heart and mind and help one sleep... The rhythm of the tree's swaying will create a wondrous ripple that promotes quick sleep... "

Information regarding this divine tree all matched against the data in his mind. There wasn't the slightest bit of aberration.

"Disaster is imminent with every three steps in the Valley of Destruction. It looks like this wasn't an empty bluster. However, karma makes a full circle, and fortune lies behind every disaster. In the same vein, disaster may lurk behind good luck. The sap of this Divine Tree of Dreams doesn't have any color or smell, but it possesses an enormous hypnotizing effect. If I can collect this in large quantities, I will be sure to find use for it."

With just a little bit of time, Jiang Chen immediately thought of many uses for it . He was delighted, “Fortune follows on the heels of disaster alright! The sap of this tree is an absolute treasure. It’s a pity that the tree is too big. It would be something wondrous if I could transplant several of them.”

Jiang Chen sighed, but he didn’t feel too regretful.

He held his breath and he reminded himself not to follow the swaying of the tree with his eyes as he took out his tools and started collecting the sap.

The sap was sticky, but it kept oozing out of the branches and so it wasn’t that difficult to collect.

He had gathered quite a bunch after a while.

“That’s about it. If I continue lingering, despite my ability to hold my breath, it would be a sticky situation if this sap seeped into my consciousness.”

Jiang Chen didn’t get too greedy and he transferred all of the sap into his space ring, leaving swiftly. This patch of divine trees stretched about three to five li into the distance.

He made it out of that area in a short amount of time.

Taking a deep breath in, Jiang Chen had the feeling of being a lucky survivor of a disaster. He'd been this close just now to being thoroughly hypnotized.

"I wonder if the other practitioners have run into the Divine Tree of Dreams? If everyone runs through this patch of forest, then I'm afraid that many will not make it out of the Valley of Destruction alive."

He'd almost fallen victim, even with his great strength of heart. Those with slightly weaker mental fortitude would've fallen asleep almost immediately.

The most frightening part of the forest was that once one fell asleep, if they didn't wake up in time, it would be an eternal sleep after falling asleep deeply. It'd be difficult to wake the victims up again.

However, Jiang Chen hadn't studied this tree in particular in his last life and he only knew that this tree would become stronger, the more stronger the opponents it met.

The stronger their would-be victim's mental strength was, the more sap that the tree would secrete and the stronger the swaying of the branches.

The hypnotizing abilities of the tree would also increase if it met someone with strong strength of heart.

No matter what, Jiang Chen felt quite lucky. He didn't dare take things lightly now that he'd been taught such a humbling lesson.

The terrain was complicated in the deep valley. Although there were many advantages to Jiang Chen's God's Eye, he still wasn't able to see as clearly into the distance as he could in the outside world.

All sorts of dire and ghastly screams and roars sounded in his ears. The sounds didn't seem to be of human origin, so they most likely belonged to the violent creatures within the Valley of Destruction.

The fact that eight thousand humans had suddenly rushed into the Valley of Destruction would surely break the peace of the valley.

The strong creatures that lived within the valley would then inevitably attack these unwelcomed guests. After all, no one liked to be disturbed within their own territory.

Jiang Chen didn't mind this. With his expansive consciousness, he'd be able to more or less judge where the strong creatures were.

He'd just circle around them or hide if they were too strong.

"There will be no problem at all if I just stay where I am for the next ten days. However, this trial of fortune is about gains in the face of risk. What is the point of me entering the valley if I'm not

taking any risks?”

Jiang Chen was naturally unwilling to be a coward.

“I now have the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice and am currently at the earth spirit realm. With the magnetic golden mountain and all sorts of other trump cards, I will still be able to put up a fight even if I meet a spirit rank creature. Not to mention, I also have the ultimate ace of the Goldbiter Rats.”

Jiang Chen had great courage due to his superior abilities, and he began adventuring through the Valley of Destruction.

All their gains within the Valley of Destruction were theirs alone. This was a free chance to make it big, and, thus, Jiang Chen would naturally not let it go.

He wouldn’t hesitate even in the face of great risk.

He bumped into a few candidates along the way, but he always avoided them adroitly.

Jiang Chen didn’t wish to meet anyone face on.

Everyone was a competitor here. Even if he didn’t possess the desire to harm others, that didn’t imply that others wouldn’t harm him.

Jiang Chen had to evade them them because he didn't want to be tailed. If any idiot sought to do anything to him, he'd have to deal with a whole slew of irritating matters.

Therefore, he purposefully avoided the crowds along the way and attempted to go where fewer people were.

However, eight thousand people had indeed surged into the valley after all. It would be a bit unrealistic to be able to completely evade everyone and play to his heart's content by himself.

He was still able to bypass a lot of unnecessary trouble though.

Jiang Chen had seen many of his peers battle and kill each other over the past day. There were various reasons, such as fighting over a paltry spirit medicine, or killing each other over a dead spirit animal. There were also fights for no reason at all, killing each other purely for the reason of doing away with the competition.

Jiang Chen witnessed all sorts of ugly situations over the past day.

"Are these idiots worried that they're not stirring up enough trouble? Kicking up such a fuss for such small matters, do they think that the Valley of Destruction is their own backyard?"

Jiang Chen shook his head with a wry smile. Even if these disturbances didn't result in great trouble, small irritations were

sure to follow. He didn't want to become mixed up with these people.

Before long, he'd arrived to the precipice of a cliff and gazed out towards the mountain face in the distance.

He'd been attracted here by a strong sense of the fire attribute. Standing on top of a jutting rock almost completely in the empty air, he shaded his eyes and looked out.

A flower bloomed with fiery flames in the midst of the clouds, unfurling proudly on the mountain face.

"To emanate such a strong sense of fire spirit power from such a distance, the level of this flower certainly won't be low. It must be a heavenly treasure."

Jiang Chen looked out, but even the God's Eye couldn't determine what kind of flower it was.

The mountain face on the other side was three thousand meters away. There was no way that he'd be able to pick the flower if he couldn't fly through the air.

However, if he could make it to the bottom of the mountain face and climb upwards, there might be a trace of hope there.

"What a pity, if I could've brought the Goldwing Swordbirds and flown through the air, I would've been able to obtain it with

extreme ease.” Jiang Chen sighed in his heart and then thought of the Rat King.

However, Jiang Chen didn’t want to alert his enemies beforehand.

The Rat King was at the spirit rank level, and if he accidentally ran afoul with the stronger local spirit creatures, then he’d be in great trouble.

Therefore, Jiang Chen didn’t want to bring out the Rat King unless he had no other choice.

As he was thinking, Jiang Chen suddenly arched an eyebrow and looked towards the mountain face. There were actually two figures at the bottom that were slowly crawling their way up towards the fiery flower.

Good items had a huge attraction, and others had clearly also been attracted by the flower’s abundant spirit power.

And, looking at those people, they were in a noticeably better position than Jiang Chen-right below the flower. He, on the other hand, was watching from across the great divide, and couldn’t do anything unless he grew wings and flew.

“What a pity that someone’s beaten me to the draw.” Jiang Chen was sighing when his expression suddenly froze, and an uneasy feeling surged to the fore.

Two balls of flame flew out at this time on the mountain face. Upon closer inspection, they were actually two fire ravens, shooting towards the two climbers like two red streaks of lightning.

The fire ravens opened their mouth and sent a gout of flame forth, which transformed into a cloud of fire and spewed towards the two.

The two on the wall didn't even have time to react before they were struck by the flames. When the flames hit them, it was like a hot fire touching kindling as they immediately started burning up.

"Ah!!! AH!!!!"

Ghastly screams rang out through the entire valley, echoing amongst themselves.

Two burnt corpses disengaged from the mountain wall in the next moment, landing with two dull thuds.

No other sounds could be heard from them.

Jiang Chen had watched the rapid action with unblinking eyes, and had only come back to himself when the two fell into the valley.

“Right, the spirit lifeforms beneath the heavens will not exist by themselves on a mountain wall. It’s said that nothing is solitary, and everything is connected. This wondrous flower must have its own protectors, and it might be the companion to another stronger lifeform, even.”

Jiang Chen looked at the noble and pure flower, feeling a few more traces of desire grow in his heart.

Even the Lotus within his body was stirred to action, obviously determined to obtain this flower.

Chapter 308: A Frightening Massacre

Jiang Chen took a few steps back and hid his body within a crack of a random rock outcropping.

The scene he'd just witnessed cooled his head.

Based on his visual estimation, the strength of the fire ravens just now were the equivalent of the human first level spirit realm. If it was just the two of them, then they weren't much of a threat.

However, according to Jiang Chen's speculation, if this wondrous flower brimming with spirit power was indeed the companion of another spirit creature, then it wouldn't just be two fire ravens guarding it.

He was basically certain that the two fire ravens were just the small fry.

For two fire ravens equivalent to the first level spirit realm to only be pawns, then most likely, an incredibly frightening level of existence was hidden within this mountain face.

"It looks like I can only use wits instead of brute force. I've also got to investigate how many more fire ravens are hidden within the mountain face."

As a stranger in a strange place, although Jiang Chen had his sights set on the flower, he didn't give in to his impulses.

If there was a nest of fire ravens within the mountain face, with their strength and agility, they were a group that even Jiang Chen was unwilling to irritate.

So he decided to observe for a moment and wait for the right moment.

The fact that the first two mountain climbers had been burned to death didn't dampen any of the candidates' fervor. After a few more hours, a batch of practitioners swung into view.

It looked like they'd come prepared.

"Hmm? Coming in a group? Now this is strange." Jiang Chen was rather surprised to see a group of more than ten together.

He had seen too much slaughter and battle along the way.

These fellows could actually set aside their differences and form a group. It seemed that no enemy was forever, only profits were eternal!

Jiang Chen decided to conceal himself. Since they had come in a group, then let them try their luck first. Whether they could or not, at least Jiang Chen could get a better handle on the situation.

As the old saying went, the mantis stalks the cicada, unaware of

the oriole behind.

If this group of people somehow succeeded in taking that flower, then Jiang Chen didn't mind being the oriole and taking it from them instead.

If they failed, then Jiang Chen would at least know roughly how many fire ravens were hidden within the mountain face.

They would've accomplished something if they could flush out the trump cards of the fire raven army.

This group of people had obviously absorbed the lessons of before. They set up camp for a long while beneath the mountain face and discussed their plans, in no hurry to make a move.

Below the mountain face was a deep mountain valley below, with there was several hundred meters between the deep valley and the wondrous flower.

Jiang Chen utilized Ear of the Zephyr in an attempt to hear what they were discussing.

The clouds within the mountain valley could block vision and affect his God's Eye, but there were no obstacles within these vast plains for his Ear of the Zephyr, so he could actually make out some words.

They were indeed discussing how to pick the flower.

One of them said, “We must first pick this flower and then fight over it according to how we discussed before. Now, let’s draw straws to make this fair.”

“Then let’s draw straws. Four of us will climb and the others will cover them, fighting the fire ravens.”

Although a distance of several hundred meters was quite large, it was still no problem to the practitioners unless it was a completely vertical climb with no footholds.

Even so, when one reached the spirit realm, one would be able to climb as long as there was the slightest area to push off from. One would be more limber than a monkey.

What they feared were the attacks from the fire ravens.

If it hadn’t been for the fire raven ambush, the two climbers from earlier still would’ve been able to land safely as long as they could grasp onto the slightest area and slid down the mountain face.

Therefore, as long as they had cover, those climbing up wouldn’t face much danger.

Even though this was the case, there weren’t that many willing to take this risk.

After all, no matter how small the risk, it was still a risk. What if there was not just two fire ravens here, but a nest of them?

What if these so-called comrades felt they were outnumbered when they saw the true numbers of the ravens and retreated?

A hastily thrown together team in which everyone didn't know the identities of the others naturally wouldn't be that reliable. It was obvious to see that no one would lay their lives on the line for others.

Everyone was quite unwilling to take this risk, so they could only draw straws in the end.

The results were quickly revealed, with four practitioners chosen. They were all a bit unwilling, but had to toe the word of the agreement they'd agreed to earlier. If they didn't, they would become everyone else's enemy. They could only drag their feet and start making their preparations.

The others all breathed a long sigh of relief when they weren't chosen and rushed the four onwards.

When the rushing got slightly out of hand, one of the four said, "Stop rushing us. I'll speak frankly before we go up. All of you must swear that even if there are too many fire ravens later, you must cover us until we land before fleeing. Otherwise, if you flee first and leave the four of us, we'll be dead without a doubt."

His words reminded the other three, who all nodded in agreement.

“Right, these words are spoken truly. All of you must swear not to get cold feet, or we’re not going up to be cannon fodder.”

“Makes sense, swear! You must swear to the heavens and earth, or there is no power behind the oath and you can leave us behind at any time. What use is a verbal agreement?”

It was normal that no one trusted anyone else in a newly formed team.

Although the others weren’t happy about it, in order to make the four climb up, they all had to swear oaths that they wouldn’t leave their companions behind in the face of any danger. They would cover the four until they landed safely on the ground and then flee.

If they broke their word, they would be condemned by the heavens.

In the world of martial dao, the oaths to heaven and earth were the most secure.

It was said that whilst one may deceive the human heart, it was impossible to do so to the heavenly law. Whoever did so and went against their oath would have an exceedingly gruesome downfall.

Seeing that their companions had all taken oaths, the four could

no longer find any excuses to delay.

They started climbing carefully, holding a weapon in one hand and climbing equipment in the other. In actuality, with their strength, they didn't need any climbing tools at all.

The climbing equipment was simply there as additional insurance. If the fire ravens attacked, these tools could be leveraged to stabilize their bodies in midair, freeing up their hands and feet to handle the fire raven attacks. They wouldn't be killed without trying to defend themselves.

Jiang Chen appraised them from a distance. There were more than a dozen people in this group and they were going about their activities with great fanfare. They all also looked to be first level spirit realm.

It looked like they were outer disciples of the four sects.

However, no one could make out anyone else behind the masks. The most incredible thing was that the masks could also conceal everyone's voices, so everyone spoke with the same voice.

Of course, Jiang Chen suspected that even through the masks, uniforms, and change in voices, disciples of the same sect could still communicate through previously agreed upon signals.

Thus, if there were disciples from the same sect in this group, they'd still hold the advantage.

Even though this was a loud and noisy group, seeming to have strength in numbers, Jiang Chen still had a hunch that this group would find it difficult to succeed.

He looked at the four people who'd kept climbing. They'd already reached two thirds of the way to the flower.

They'd be able to close in on the wondrous flower burning with holy fire if they climbed a little bit more.

At this moment —

Chirp, chirp, chirp.

Countless ear piercing cries sounded.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh.

Fiery streaks shot out from the mountain face in a neverending stream .

One, two, three... ten... hundreds... thousands.

Thousands of fire ravens had shot out in almost an instant, covering the skies above the mountain face and forming red clouds, transforming the sky into a flaming red ocean.

Jiang Chen wasn't unfamiliar with this scene at all.

When he'd commanded the Swordbird Army above the Second Crossing in the Eastern Kingdom, its scale had been thousands, tens of thousands greater than this.

But he'd been the master, the ruler of the Swordbirds then.

And now, he was a bystander who could just as easily become the victim.

These two feelings were absolutely disparate.

The sharp bird cries broke through the air. The ear piercing sound waves created by the thousands of fire ravens cawing at once formed a massive force field.

The sharp sound waves were shapeless blades as they sped towards the candidates.

The candidates were also obviously scared out of their minds. They didn't even have time to raise their weapons before the randomly intersecting bird cries cut them into fragments of flesh and blood.

The four on the mountain face didn't escape either. The tumultuous sound waves formed an ocean, locking down the entire

vicinity of the area.

This scene was as if the candidates had been thrown into an enormous blender in midair. The density of the attacks rendered them completely helpless.

Jiang Chen's scalp tingled with numbness from this sight.

Even a sky spirit realm practitioner would have to avoid such concentrated attacks, much less those of the small spirit realm.

One would easily die with regret if they weren't careful.

Perhaps only the origin realm old monsters could make use of their incredible origin realm aura to make mincemeat out of the fire ravens.

Otherwise, even at the peak of the spirit realm, one would likely still be unable to withstand this sound wave force field.

"Tsk tsk, to think that the fire ravens would have such a strong force field attack apart from fire. They're a meat blender! It was a good thing that I wasn't impulsive, or I would've suffered as well for my haste."

Jiang Chen felt all his hairs stand on end as he suppressed the impulsive feeling in his heart.

He observed for a bit and noticed that even through the fire ravens were strong, their king had yet to appear.

This meant that an even stronger ruler of these fire ravens had yet to reveal himself.

A king who could control such a large flock was destined to be different.

Just as he was observing, Jiang Chen felt a frisson of warning as the fire raven army then flapped their wings in unison. Each seemed to have been trained as they turned their heads towards the mountain face, continuously nodding their heads as if paying their respects.

They were as reverential and in awe as if they were welcoming their king!

Chapter 309: Fire For A Hundred Li

The thousands of Fire Ravens were all at least at the first level spirit realm, and their stronger brethren were even at the third, fourth level spirit realm.

When all these Fire Ravens released their spirit power in unison and waved their flaming wings, the enormous spirit power formed a large wave and made the trees on that mountain face quickly wither, shrivel, turn into ash and dust at a speed that could be visibly observed by the human eye.

Waves of hot air beat down on Jiang Chen even from afar, making him feel like countless needles were stabbing into him in an exceedingly uncomfortable fashion.

“That these Fire Ravens have released their spirit power and formed this fire attribute force field means that they are surely summoning their leader. It looks like the king of the Fire Ravens are about to appear.”

Jiang Chen was privately astonished. The destructive abilities of a couple thousand fire ravens were vastly superior to the million strong Swordbird Army he’d possessed before!

After all, the Swordbirds were all mortal rank creatures equivalent to the human true qi realm. None of them had advanced to the spirit rank and couldn’t form a strong spirit force field.

Their abilities were naturally nothing compared to these spirit rank fire ravens.

Not to mention that it was obvious the king of these fire ravens were about to emerge.

“Chirp!”

A desolate chirp broke through the air, as sharp as an arrow, full of boundless presence like it would break through the air.

The might of this chirp from the king actually cause the mountains his subjects to cry out in response. The waves of response rolled and echoed through the sky.

Jiang Chen’s face immediately changed when he heard this voice.

From this presence alone, the fire raven king’s level of training was at least on par with the Goldbiter Rat King!

He could even judge from this stunning posture that this king was likely half step origin realm.

Jiang Chen didn’t know whether to be surprised or dejected now.

He hadn’t thought that the struggle over this wondrous flower would give rise to such a large disturbance.

Indeed, a crack suddenly appeared in the mountain face as a spray of stunning sparks spewed forth, shooting towards the red clouds.

As the red clouds churned and covered the skies, a Fire Raven King that was as large as one of the ancient elephants of old appeared.

The Fire Raven King's wingspan was quite astonishing. He could encompass almost a small mountain with his outstretched wings.

The Fire Raven King's feathers were all red, and he seemed to be bathing in red flames as a red haze surrounded him. This made the king seem even more like one of the four mythical creatures, the vermillion bird, being reborn as his immensely awe-inspiring aura flared and lorded over all.

Chirp ——-

Another long chirp rang out as the Fire Raven King shook his wings and took to the sky, forming a marvelous line and rising like an enormous pillar of flame. It was quite an impressive sight.

The thousands of fire ravens below all began cawing excitedly, chirping and calling out as well, full of worship for their king.

It was like their king was their totem, their god.

Jiang Chen prayed inwardly when he saw this scene, "Go, hurry

and go. Take your children and descendants and go for a walk. I'll be able to pick that flower if you give me even fifteen minutes."

Jiang Chen still hadn't lost hope. That kind of wondrous flower was something one could only wish to stumble upon within the sixteen kingdom alliance, and he was absolutely not willing to give it up.

Missing it would result in regret for a lifetime.

However, he also knew that even if he didn't know the exact details behind this Raven King's training, he knew that this wouldn't be a character to antagonize lightly, just judging from the Raven King's presence.

It would be an absolute disaster to provoke this Raven King, and the level of the repercussions wouldn't be any less than when he'd been surrounded by the rat tide.

"Children, the day in which the Cloudflame Flower blooms is the day in which this king assails the saint rank. But disgusting, pathetic humans have dared pollute our territory in this valley and disturb the peace of the Valley of Destruction. Isn't this hateful?"

"Hateful!!"

"Do we kill them or not?!" The Fire Raven King continued to caw mightily.

“Kill!” Thousands of ravens cried out in unison.

These ravens all had their own consciousness after entering the spirit rank and all spoke the ancient beast tongue.

The hairs on Jiang Chen’s body stood on end when he heard these words. He only had one thought in his mind, the practitioners in the valley were in for it!

Jiang Chen knew that the double provocations from the two batches of candidates had thoroughly infuriated the Fire Raven tribe. Even the Fire Raven King had been disturbed. It looked like a bloodbath was about to visit the humans currently in the Valley of Destruction.

“I command you, in my name as the Fire Raven King, all within a hundred li must be set on fire. Even one li less than a hundred is unacceptable. All that you pass must be turned to cinders!”

The Fire Raven King gave the order, full of severe majesty.

“Fire for a hundred li…”

“Fire for a hundred li, all turned to ashes!”

All of the Fire Ravens started wildly agitating in great excitement after hearing these words. All of the Fire Ravens shot out like loosed arrows in all directions after receiving their king’s order. They transformed into streaks of fireballs and started spreading

out in the vicinity.

Jiang Chen's heart sank when he saw this.

"This is bad, with the Fire Ravens' fire spirit power, all the places that they cover will be turned to ash and cinders. Nothing will be left alive!"

A strong sense of danger hit Jiang Chen.

His first thought was to retreat, but he quickly dismissed the notion.

It was obviously too late to retreat. The thousands of Fire Ravens had already spread out, and with their speed, a human on two legs would never outpace them.

To run out at this moment was to become their living target and seeking death!

Jiang Chen was strong, but he wasn't strong enough to the point where he could be chased to death by thousands of Fire Ravens at once, not to mention there was a king at the peak of the spirit rank.

Jiang Chen had heard the king earlier in that he was planning on using the Cloudflame Flower to assail the saint rank, the equivalent of the human origin realm.

As confident as he was, Jiang Chen didn't think that his training was enough to meet a Fire Raven King at the peak of the spirit rank in battle.

Jiang Chen wouldn't have been so arrogant as to publicly meet the king in battle even in the outside world, not to mention this was Fire Raven territory.

"Remain calm, I must remain calm." Jiang Chen kept reminding himself. "I'm only courting death if I run out at this moment. all the Fire Ravens have gone out at this moment, and I would run out straight into the middle of their operations. Even if the Fire Ravens don't attack me, the fires burning within this hundred li will prevent my escape. They shouldn't have discovered me hiding in here for now."

Jiang Chen's emotions became calmer the more dangerous the situation was.

He'd calmed himself in this moment between life and death. The only silver lining was that he was hidden in a stone crack a far distance from the mountain face and had yet to be discovered.

It was also that he possessed adept methods of concealment, otherwise the Raven King's consciousness would've easily discovered a human even a far distance away from the mountain face.

The dire sounds of human cries and wails continuously traveled

to Jiang Chen's hearing at this time.

These sounds were close and far, panicked or ghastly.

"Ah! What is this?!"

"They're spewing fire! Oh, heavens, help! Someone help me!"

"Fire is just fire, but there's fire on all sides, we've been surrounded!"

"Flee! Hurry and flee! We can't be cut off by the fire or we'll be dead without a doubt!"

All sorts of sounds faded in and out, filtering into Jiang Chen's consciousness through the Ear of the Zephyr.

Jiang Chen sighed, "What an undeserved catastrophe. These candidates may have no idea what the Cloudflame Flower but have been unexpectedly embroiled into this. What an unexpected misfortune."

He knew that only practitioners outside of this hundred li would have the hope of escaping. Otherwise, their king had said to set fire to a hundred li, and precisely a hundred li would go up in flames. No matter how fast they were, the candidates would never be faster than wingbeats of the Fire Ravens or the swiftness of the fires.

They’d be hard pressed to escape even if they grew wings.

The thousands of fire ravens circling in the sky had completed cordoned off the surrounding area, and the fires were spreading faster and faster.

The momentum of the fires were akin to the tides, continuously pushing forward and expanding. A radius of a hundred li in the immediate area had been turned into a fiery ocean.

The fire had spread so quickly and ferociously that those caught up within it had no time to escape.

Apart from humans, even other life caught up within the firs had no chance of escaping.

Various desperate wails and screams, numerous ghastly growls and furious roars were all futile in this world destroying fire ocean.

Jiang Chen had occupied high ground on this cliff and so the fires hadn’t made their way up yet. However, the direction had been set and the flames kept roaring upwards.

Wave upon wave of hot air crashed into the cliff as if the tidewaters.

Judging from this situation, Jiang Chen’s hiding place would be

engulfed soon.

He raised his head to look up into the sky and saw that the Fire Raven King hadn't moved. He'd remained hovering in mid air and exuded a boundless, severe countenance, as if releasing his majestic dignity upon his children and descendants.

"Damn it, that king isn't moving. I'll be revealed if I move the slightest bit beneath his purview and he'll discover me."

Jiang Chen inwardly cursed the Raven King. He'd wanted to wait for him to move away and make use of the opportunity to pick the flower.

It looked like that'd been idiotic daydreams. The Raven King was obviously not leaving the Cloudflame Flower's side and wouldn't let his precious out of his sight.

"Damn, at this rate, even if the king doesn't discover me, I'll be baked to a crisp by the heat waves."

Jiang Chen knew he'd be in great trouble if this continued.

The flames would burn for three days and nights once they started. However, Jiang Chen would've still been confident in making it out if the Raven King hadn't been there.

But since he was here, destructive attacks would quickly follow if Jiang Chen made the slightest move.

With the might of this king, Jiang Chen didn’t think he’d be able to withstand a blast of his flames.

Chapter 310: The Bewitching Lotus Of Fire And Ice, Flying Through The Earth

Jiang Chen's situation became quite awkward in this regard as he could neither retreat nor advance.

He would come face to face with the Fire Raven King if he went out with a nine out of ten chance of dying, or have no chance of living at all.

If he didn't go out and remained where he was, Jiang Chen didn't think that he'd be able to shoulder the burden of the temperature of these flames and the ever encroaching fire.

He thought of the Rat King. However, he wasn't confident himself that the Rat King being able to create a tunnel within the cliff in such a short amount of time.

The fire was so close at hand that it was practically singing his eyebrows.

Summoning the Rat King would also surely alert the Raven King.

If the two creatures at the peak of the spirit rank met in battle, the situation would become even more chaotic.

"No, the Rat King is timid and he will surely be shocked when he feels the aura of the Raven King. His battle capabilities will also be

greatly affected as a result."

Jiang Chen thus dismissed the thought of summoning the Rat King.

"The Lotus?" Another idea popped into Jiang Chen's mind.

"Yes, the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice!" Jiang Chen suddenly thought of how he made use of the six Lotuses in the second trial to protect his body in the cavern with the spirit vein of heavenly fire, preventing the fires from rampaging into his body.

However, the current fiery situation was noticeably tenfold more frightening than that in cavern at least.

After all, the cavern was just a testing site and the fires were under control. They weren't ravaging wildly like the fires in front of him currently were.

These fires were now purposefully set out of control by the Fire Ravens, continuously moving forward. The degree of their destruction was absolutely more than even the tenfold estimation he'd previously made.

His thoughts racing, Jiang Chen immediately deployed the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice.

The immensely strong Lotus vines continuously explored beneath the ground.

Now that he'd broken through to the earth spirit realm, he could control twelve lotuses at any given time.

Half of the vines were of fire, the other half of ice.

The fire lotuses were on the outside, and the ice lotuses on the inside.

Jiang Chen curled himself up and jumped into the petals.

The twelve vines burrowed into the ground, going deeper and deeper.

He could still feel the heat from the outside world in the beginning, like it would burn through through the earth's surface and spear through to the land's core. As the Lotus continued to drill down however,, the searing feeling faded and things became much easier to bear.

"Hmm?" The Raven King's conscious suddenly flickered, seeming to detect something. His savage gaze shot in Jiang Chen's direction.

He investigated carefully, but he didn't find anything.

"That's odd, I felt a ripple of something just now, why isn't there anyone there?" The Raven King also felt that it was odd.

However, the Raven King was also highly proud and he paid no heed to it. He thought that it was some armadillo type spirit creature that was drilling deep below to flee for its life.

The Raven King was conceited by naturally and naturally, he disdained further investigation of what was going on.

In addition, although the Fire Raven tribe was strong, their advantage was still in the air after all. The Fire Ravens would be unable to deploy any of their strengths once they entered the ground.

Jiang Chen was safely enclosed in the midst of many petals as he sat cross legged on an ice lotus, safely in the depths of the earth.

He didn't know how far down he was either. He only knew that it was quite dark and cool all around.

Jiang Chen knew that he'd most likely arrived at a place very deep in the ground as he couldn't the strong heat waves from the outside world.

"The Fire Raven tribe is indeed brutal and savage. I wonder how many candidates will die from the fires burning for a hundred li? Of the eight thousand who entered the realm, I'm afraid that at least a third or even half of the group will be burnt to ashes..."

Jiang Chen also sighed inwardly when he thought of the cruelty

of this spirit creature race.

However, he wasn't the sort to be so emotional as to grieve over the passing of spring. Although he felt a bit sad at the downfall of his own kind, the path of martial dao has been this harsh since ancient times.

This trial tested fortune.

One could only say that the practitioners in that radius lacked sufficient luck.

"Judging from these fires, they'll burn out in about three days and nights. I'm in no hurry to go out, but that Cloudflame Flower... "

Jiang Chen still felt a bit of regret when he thought about the Cloudflame Flower.

However, the Fire Raven King wasn't budging at all, and so Jiang Chen had his hands tied.

Although he had countless methods and all sorts of divine arts, it was almost impossible to steal the Cloudflame Flower out from beneath the Raven King and the Fire Raven army.

Even if he got lucky and somehow obtained the flower, one mouthful of fire from each of the Fire Ravens in the army would be enough to reduce him to cinders where he stood.

As strong as one person's strength was, there was no way for him to fight back when he was faced with thousands of opponents.

It was only possible when he had overwhelming strength and could kill all the Fire Ravens with a flip of his hand.

If he really did have that kind of power, then he wouldn't necessarily be interested in the Cloudflame Flower.

Jiang Chen thought for a moment and he felt that he had no clues as to how to resolve this situation. He decided to throw it all to the back of his head and sit down with aplomb, meditating with crossed legs.

The air was thin below the ground, but with Jiang Chen's level of training at the earth spirit realm, he didn't have a constant need for fresh air like ordinary people.

In the earth spirit realm, a practitioner wouldn't have to worry about the thinness of the air even if they were living below the ground for ten days or half a month.

After all, they would be able to breath in their spirit ocean.

This was how practitioners with a high level of training could meditate for months on end. They would've transformed external breathing into internal breathing as they meditated, eliminating the need for outside air.

Jiang Chen cautiously arrayed the twelve lotuses in formation around him, so that he'd be able to protect himself if anything happened.

"I hadn't thought that I'd be surrounded by danger in this trial of fortune. Does this mean that I have large amounts of luck, or lack of good fortune?"

Jiang Chen felt that he couldn't draw one overall generalization when it came to fortune and luck.

He could only say that fortune and disaster went hand in hand.

When the Cloudflame Flower had appeared, many practitioners had felt that this was an enormous stroke of luck. Even Jiang Chen's first thought had been so as well.

However, the Fire Ravens' appearance and their actions in setting a radius of a hundred li on fire had turned this fortuitous occurrence into disaster.

Therefore, Jiang Chen's understanding of fortune and luck had deepened by quite a bit.

"Just as I'd thought, what looked like fortune actually concealed disaster, every cloud has a silver lining for what appears to be danger. I am currently forced to flee for my life, but who knows when things may take a turn for another in this situation?"

Jiang Chen's thoughts traveled down this path, bringing a better mood with them.

It was a fiery ocean in the outside world right now anyways, he decided to ignore everything, throw all stray thoughts to the side and organize his gains and losses over the past couple of days.

Overall speaking, Jiang Chen's gains had been enormous after entering the legacy territory.

He'd trained his strength of heart on path of rebirth and passed the most arduous test of mental strength.

If you are not reading this novel on Wuxia World, translated by etvolare, you are not reading the most complete or update to date version of SOTR.

In the caverns of heavenly fire and ice, Jiang Chen had used the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice to absorb boundless spirit power.

He'd become the greatest winner in the third trial and refined the entire golden magnetic mountain. Although it didn't seem that useful now, it was without a doubt, an enormous treasure, and its uses would become more apparent when he grew in strength.

It could be said that in the long run, the benefits from the magnetic golden mountain wouldn't be any less than the Lotus.

In the fourth trial, Jiang Chen had broken through the shackles of martial dao in practical combat and entered the earth spirit realm. This was naturally a significant gain as well.

And now, in the fifth trial of fortune, he'd collected the sap of the Divine Tree of Dreams at the very beginning, adding this to the long list.

Therefore, Jiang Chen didn't lose hope even though he was trapped underground right now. He wouldn't give up this easily unless the Cloudflame Flower had been thoroughly devoured by the Fire Raven King.

Jiang Chen sank into a state of meditation after going through all this.

He'd been on the move since entering the earth spirit realm and he had lacked the time to meditate. His various martial arts techniques hadn't had time to be consolidated with his new level of training.

Jiang Chen took advantage of these three days to thoroughly meld them together.

There was no concept of the passage of time below the earth.

Three days passed silently.

When Jiang Chen emerged from meditation, he had gained a lot

again.

“I wonder if those incredulous fires in the outside world have retreated?” Although Jiang Chen had been in a meditative state for these three days, the unending darkness still gave him a bit of a stifling feeling.

“I need to go out and take a look. If the Fire Raven King is still present, then I have no hope of taking the Cloudflame Flower and I should stop wasting my time here.”

Jiang Chen settled on this notion and he located the appropriate direction beneath the ground. He continued to drill into the rocks with the Lotus.

He suddenly felt the rocks around him start trembling with a roar.

The fact that such a strong vibration was occurring in the depths of the stone rather surprised Jiang Chen. His first thought was that underground lava was about to erupt.

However, he quickly realized that these ripples weren’t from beneath the earth, but from the rocks surrounding him.

Although the vibrations were rather large, they were a bit of a distance away from him, and so even though Jiang Chen could sense the strength of this movement, he couldn’t detect any immediate danger.

“Can it be that a strong underground creature is passing through?” Jiang Chen guessed.

He took a close read of the situation and reaffirmed his belief in this speculation.

“That’s right, the vibrations are so frequent that an underground life form must be passing by, and at a high speed at that. It can move at such high speed through the rocks, and a bit faster than the Rat King’s drilling speed at that! In addition, this momentum is like a fierce dragon fording a river. Its aura and presence isn’t similar to the Rat King’s cautious style at all. Just what kind of strong, underground creature is this?”

Puzzlement weighed heavy in Jiang Chen’s heart. He felt this all a bit hard to understand.

This place should be the Raven King’s territory, and so logically speaking, there shouldn’t be another strong life form around.

However, the violence of these tremors were obviously from a strong life form, and Jiang Chen could be certain that this kind of creature that could fly through the ground was definitely not the Raven King.

One Raven King was already enough to give Jiang Chen a migraine. If he added another creature moving through the earth like it was on flat ground, then even with Jiang Chen’s methods and countless trump cards, he’d be in for a world of trouble!

Jiang Chen immediately stopped the Lotus' explorations and retracted all signs of his presence to avoid disturbing this creature.

Chapter 311: A Massacre Between Two Kings

It was a good thing that the enormously strong creature wasn't paying attention to its surroundings and it hadn't detected that a human was hiding in the neighboring rocks.

The sounds of thunder rumbled through the rock as the being moved further and further away, until it disappeared.

Jiang Chen sighed slightly, "The spirit creatures of the Valley of Destruction are really strong. Although many fortuitous encounters await the secular disciples in this valley, danger also looks behind every corner."

He finally knew why no one would be eliminated in this trial.

Was there a need to eliminate people? How many would make it out alive?

What was the point of eliminating anyone with such a high mortality rate?

Jiang Chen was almost starting to wonder if even three thousand would survive from the eight thousand that had entered the valley.

The four sects had said they wanted to select three thousand people to enter the sects, but Jiang Chen felt that not even three thousand would survive after this trial.

But of course, it was a pessimistic estimation.

“I don’t need to worry about these things. Everyone has their own fortune and we all walk our own paths. I, Jiang Chen, must focus on my own road.”

Jiang Chen thought no more of the matter after his thoughts had travelled here.

However, after that enormous disturbance, Jiang Chen was even more cautious.

It didn’t seem like the world below ground was that much safer either. The one behind that disturbance was something not in the slightest bit inferior to the Fire Raven King.

This kind of creature could very well threaten his life, so it was logical for Jiang Chen to be so cautious.

A lotus vine squeezed out of the rock wall in a nondescript corner of the cliff, probing the proximity whilst Jiang Chen remained hidden in the crack in the wall.

His scalp tingled with numbness as he gazed downwards with the God’s Eye.

Everything was charred cinders, like it was the aftermath of Armageddon. There wasn’t the slightest bit of green or life that greeted the eye.

It was like this area had been abandoned by the heavens and had become a barren wasteland in the universe.

Jiang Chen once again looked at the mountain face with the Cloudflame Flower. Complete destruction was present, the flower no longer existed.

The most frightening thing was that there were countless criss-crossing gouges and deep swipes on the pockmarked mountain face. It looked like a strong power had raked over it as the gouges were several meters deep.

Jiang Chen was flabbergasted by the destruction.

To create such deep and long gouges on the mountain face meant that it wasn't an ordinary powerhouse that created them.

Jiang Chen knew that this was something that he never would've been able to do. It wasn't hard to form gouges on the rock walls, what was difficult was to create such organized, deep, and long gouges.

They didn't look like they'd been done on purpose, but they were natural traces left by a strong creature walking past.

"Just what happened here?" Jiang Chen dumbly looked at the tattered surroundings as he murmured to himself.

Through the God's Eye, he could tell that there was no life left in the surroundings. It was like the Fire Ravens and the strong lifeform had never existed.

Or, perhaps this strong power had vanished with the arrival of this scene of desolate devastation.

"Impossible!" Jiang Chen didn't believe his eyes. If such a power could make all the Fire Ravens disappear in a second, it would be simply too frightening.

Jiang Chen squirmed out of the crack in the wall and he had the sudden feeling that he was the only one left beneath the heavens as he trod upon the cracked, burnt earth.

There was still a bit of warmth left in the earth beneath his feet, seeming to remind Jiang Chen that it hadn't been long since this scene had taken place.

Charred soil greeted his eyes wherever he walked. The vast forest had been reduced to cinders and the towering trees had been reduced to ashes.

The closest things that he could find to life were the countless number of skeletons. He could judge from their shapes whether they were humans or spirit creatures.

When he looked at this scene of utter destruction, Jiang Chen could only sigh. He'd seen at least a hundred skeletons on his way.

And this was only the area that he was passing through. Given that there was a radius of a hundred li, the numbers of those who died was surely greater than three thousand.

Jiang Chen met swift time. He wasn't met with any harassment or danger along the way.

It seemed that all of those alive in that radius had been burnt to death, and all life had been buried in the rampaging flames.

"The Cloudflame Flower is gone and the Fire Ravens are also gone... just what happened here?" Jiang Chen's mind was full of questions.

However, he was a broad-minded person and so even though he hadn't obtained the Cloudflame Flower, he didn't feel particularly regretful. All gains and losses were up to fortune and luck.

Even though he hadn't obtained the Flower, it didn't seem to be such a bad thing now.

When he looked at the scene of misery and suffering, and the skeletons strewn all over the ground, he rejoiced in that at least he was still alive.

To have the ability to travel through the end of the world after all of this had hit, he felt a kind of happiness that was something that the skeletons lying on the ground didn't have —

The happiness of living.

As for the Cloudflame Flower, since it was destined not to be his, Jiang Chen naturally didn't care much about it.

Although the item was nice, it wasn't as good as being alive.

When he walked a bit more, Jiang Chen suddenly took a sniff. He had fully extended all his senses and he had abruptly detected a hint of blood in the charbroiled air.

Although this hint of blood was faint, seeming to be far away, Jiang Chen was certain that it absolutely was blood.

Practitioners were very sensitive.

"The scent of blood is in the air, is there a battle taking place?" The thought flashed through Jiang Chen's mind as he quickly followed that hint of blood.

The fires had raged for a hundred li for three days and nights, so logically speaking, there should be nothing left alive after this. Without living creatures, why would there be a battle?

"Can it be the Fire Ravens? Or have more humans barged in?"

He considered it carefully and felt that it wasn't quite right. The

few survivors lucky enough to be alive would be scrambling to leave this destroyed area, how would they dare come in here?

"Hmm? What's that?" Jiang Chen could smell the blood scent becoming heavier and heavier. His God's Eye suddenly wavered as he saw blood spots on the road in front of him.

Jiang Chen followed the blood forward and he suddenly halted his footsteps.

There were many corpses on the path in the plains in front of him — the Fire Ravens.

Each Fire Raven was the size of a human being, but these Fire Ravens were all in an exceedingly gruesome state at the moment. It looked like they'd been hit by some enormous power and they were all a bloody mess.

Some had even been flattened into a meat pancake.

If it wasn't for their unique red feathers and the sharp beaks, Jiang Chen probably wouldn't even have been able to recognize that these corpses had been those proud Fire Ravens from a few days ago.

"The Fire Ravens alright!" Jiang Chen's heart grew stern, the memories from the past three days resurfacing in his mind. How arrogant and surefire had the Ravens been then?

They'd been high spirited and vigorous, considering themselves to be without peers three days ago. They'd practically been the ultimate ruler of this area with the leadership of the Fire Raven King.

However, their corpses were now haphazardly thrown all over the ground, and judging from the looks of things, there were at least three to five hundred corpses along the path.

What kind of frightening power was this that it'd been able to slaughter almost five hundred Fire Ravens like this?

Cold strands grew in Jiang Chen's heart as he looked at this scene.

This didn't halt his forward progress however. The more bizarre things were, the more he wanted to investigate the matter.

Chirp chirp chirp chirp!

Ear piercing chirps suddenly disturbed Jiang Chen's thoughts. He wasn't unfamiliar with these chirps — they were from the Fire Ravens.

These chirps seemed extremely anxious and even panicked at the moment. In addition, judging from their numbers, it seemed that a large group of them was chirping at the same time.

"What's going on?" Jiang Chen could tell from these sounds that

the Fire Ravens were all hurtling in the same direction without care for anything else.

Things seemed rather urgent.

“I’m going to go take a look.” Jiang Chen came to this conclusion and he also moved swiftly in that direction.

Roughly thirty li away from his current location, an uncountable amount of Fire Ravens were circling anxiously over a destroyed and desolate patch of land.

The Fire Raven King that Jiang Chen had seen last time was also here. What was different was that he was covered with injuries, and many of them kept seeping blood. His proud, flame red feathers were also askew and he looked quite bedraggled.

However, even though he’d lost the look of a king, the Fire Raven King was still just as ferocious. His feathers were all upright and his vicious gaze was nailed firmly on the ground, brutal and ruthless.

There was an enormous spirit creature on the ground almost a hundred meters long. It was crouched on the ground and panting heavily.

It kept snorting like a cow and it sent the dust on the ground flying all over the place.

The beast was enormous and its waist was four or five buckets thick. It was covered with red scales and each of them gleamed with a cold, sinister light.

“Stupid bird, so I stole one of your Cloudflame Flowers, is there a need to fight to the death for it?” The enormous creature panted as it asked lowly.

The Fire Raven King was incensed, “Idiot bug, don’t you know that this Cloudflame Flower is my only hope of assailing the saint rank? Your theft of my flower is destroying my only hope of advancing. I want you to die and then I will swallow your flesh and blood!”

“Pfft, you? Half of your children and descendants are dead and you yourself only have half a life left, and you still want to kill me? When did a peak of the spirit rank dare speak so loftily as to kill me, a saint rank spirit creature?” The enormous creature’s tone was filled with disdain.

The Raven King sneered, “Saint rank creature? That’s right, you are of the saint rank, but don’t think that I can’t see that your life is at an end and your training is about to dissipate. This is why you threw caution to the winds to seize my Cloudflame Flower in an attempt to slow down your training draining a way. It’s a pity that your strength and noble bloodline are still no match for age in the end. You’re old, so old that you can’t even handle me of the peak of the spirit rank. So today will be the day of your death!”

The Fire Raven’s tone was full of hate and killing intent.

Chapter 312: Desperate Battle, Each With Their Own Plans

This enormous creature was a saint rank spirit creature?

Jiang Chen hid himself and observed from afar. He couldn't help but glance at the enormous creature when he heard the Fire Raven King's words.

A name immediately floated up in his mind — the Redscaled Firelizard.

As an offshoot of the ancient dragon tribes, there was indeed a bit of the dragons' lineage within their bloodlines. Although it had been continuously diluted through the generations, the Redscaled Firelizard still possessed many of the dragon tribe's characteristics.

The scales on its body, for instance, were formed in a shape unique to the dragon tribe.

Its limbs, although slightly different from the dragon tribe's claws and possessing far less attacking power, was still quite similar in form to the dragons.

Regardless of how diluted their lineage had become, they were still the descendants of dragons.

Therefore, the Redscaled Firelizard possessed heaven defying

strength, and equally incredible potential to ascend. Being at the saint rank, it was equivalent to one of the old origin realm monsters overseeing the selection.

A saint rank sounded quite impressive, but when considering a dragon lineage, the level of this Redscaled Firelizard was actually rather low.

The fact that this Firelizard was about to die at the saint rank indicated that it had a minuscule amount of a dragon's lineage within its body.

Otherwise, with the might of the dragon lineage, it shouldn't have stopped at just the saint rank.

When a saint rank spirit creature passed on, it would've usually lived for at least ten thousand years.

After all, spirit creatures enjoyed a longer lifespan than humans.

If a human origin realm practitioner didn't run afoul of disaster, they could usually live for three to five thousand years. Luckier ones lived for seven to eight thousand years. There were even rumors of ones living past ten thousand years.

In contrast, under normal circumstances, spirit creatures would live for even longer.

Whether a spirit creature or a human practitioner, when the end

of their lifespans approached, it was unavoidable that their training would slowly dissipate. They would revert back to a mortal being, finally withering away and dying of natural causes.

Judging from the Raven King's words, the sun was setting on the Redscaled Firelizard. It was nearing the end of its life.

It was also obviously unwilling to accept the fact that its training would slowly start to dissipate.

Even if it was an old monster that had lived for tens of thousands of years, it still couldn't face death noncommittally. Before the light in its eyes would fully extinguish and it had passed on, it would continue to struggle.

Jiang Chen suddenly recalled that he'd felt a strong disturbance in the ground when he'd still been traveling through the depths of the rocks.

Now that he thought about it, that must've been the Redscaled Firelizard moving.

It must've been targeting the Cloudflame Flower.

The Redscaled Firelizard must've been pursued all along the way because it'd stolen the Flower. The dead Fire Ravens along the way was also most likely because of the Firelizard.

The Cloudflame Flower was a heavenly treasure, and if the

Firelizard swallowed it, it would indeed nourish it to a certain point and decrease the rate at which its training would dissipate, slowing the arrival of death.

However, to the Raven King, the Cloudflame Flower was its life, the key point of whether or not it'd be able to evolve to the saint rank.

It had naturally flown into a rage after the Flower had been stolen and brought the entirety of the Fire Raven army down in hot pursuit.

They'd fought continuously along the way and had finally stopped the Redscaled Firelizard.

At the battle's end, both sides were grievously injured, unable to dispatch the other with another blow.

As strong as the Raven King was and as numerous as its descendants were, at the end of the day, he was still at the peak of the spirit rank. His advantage lay in the numbers of his army and his agility.

The effectiveness of a peak of the spirit rank was largely mitigated when faced with a saint rank spirit creature. Therefore, it couldn't do away with the Firelizard all at once.

Although the Firelizard was a saint rank creature, it's candle was nearly burnt out, and was barely clinging on with its claws. It was

highly likely that half its training had already been lost.

It was because its current level of training was only twenty, perhaps thirty percent of its peak that it had been run into the ground by the Fire Ravens.

Otherwise, with the Firelizard's usual level of training, wiping out the Fire Ravens would've been a matter of minutes.

"A saint rank spirit creature is indeed something not to run afoul of. A saint rank creature in the last stages of life is still strong enough to kill half of the Fire Ravens. It looks like as fierce as the Raven King is, he doesn't have much of an upper hand."

Jiang Chen could tell that although the Firelizard was heaving, obviously exhausted, the Raven King wasn't much better off.

At least, it wasn't fully confident of being able to thoroughly kill the Firelizard.

Otherwise, with the Raven King's ferocity, why would he waste so much time in empty blather? He would've commanded his children and descendants to besiege the Firelizard.

Crouched on the ground, the Firelizard roared lowly and spoke in a conciliatory tone, "Stinky feathers, I've already swallowed the Cloudflame flower. If you keep forcing me, it will only cause great devastation to both sides. How about this, we stop, you let me refine this Flower so that I can recover part of my training. If I

have a chance of living, I will be certain to repay you in the future with something ten times more than this."

The circumstances were greater than the person.

If this was during ordinary times, the Firelizard would've never spoken in such a humble tone to a creature sitting at the mere peak of the spirit rank.

But now, it couldn't afford to waste time. One more minute wasted meant one less minute left in his life.

In order to live, the Firelizard didn't mind lowering its posture and trying to strike a deal with the Raven King.

The Raven King wasn't having any of it as it sneered, "Stop? Are you senile in your age or do you take me for a chick? Where do I go to find you after I let you go? Besides, even if you refine the Flower, you're just slowing the advent of death. Do you think you can defy the heavens? Do you still hold onto the hope of prolonging your life and returning to your peak? Stop dreaming! Even if you can prolong your life and return to your peak, how will you repay me? Your first task then is likely to kill me in revenge!"

The Firelizard hastened to say, "I can swear to the heavens that I will never seek revenge upon you."

"Forget it!" The Raven King cawed. "I won't let you go even if you talk a hole in the heavens. You'll be dead sooner or later, so

why not die now and let me get a mouthful of fresh meat. Although your body is old and life is fleeing you, but the matters of lineage will never age. Your heritage will always be there. If I devour you, breaking through to the saint rank will be an easy matter even without the Cloudflame Flower. Hahaha, stupid lizard, you said you're about to die, so you should've stayed in your cave to await death. Yet here you come, running into my territory. This is a fortuitous occurrence that the heavens have given to me to break through to the saint rank!"

The Raven King was beside himself with pride as excitement gleamed in its fierce eyes.

It turned out that the Raven King's goal hadn't been to retrieve the Flower at all, but to devour the Firelizard!

The bloodlines of a saint rank spirit creature were exceedingly noble. The Raven King was naturally very clear on this.

He would only have a fifty percent chance of breaking through with the Cloudflame Flower, but if he could devour a saint rank spirit creature's bloodlines, then he'd have at least a ninety percent chance.

Not to mention that he would access the heritage of memories written within a saint rank creature's bloodlines. This would be an added bonus for the Raven King.

Therefore, even without the Cloudflame Flower, the Raven King would never let the Firelizard go.

A violent beam shot out of the Firelizard's bright copper eyes as it started laughing crazily. "Eat my flesh and blood? You soggy excuse of a bird, what a lofty tone you have. A base creature of the spirit rank dares cast covetous eyes on the bloodlines of the dragon descendants?"

"Hahaha, descendants of the dragons alright. This is precisely why this king must devour you and take the heritage of memories from within your bloodlines!" The Fire Raven King's tone was crazed and arrogant.

The Raven King suddenly threw its head back and cawed.

The surrounding Fire Ravens suddenly shot madly towards the Firelizard from all directions like loosed arrows .

It looked like the Raven King had hardened his heart to use strength of numbers to exhaust this Firelizard to death.

The Firelizard was at the end of its tether as it crouched on the ground. There wasn't much left of its training.

However, it was still a saint rank creature. The Raven King knew that his opponent may die at any time, but still didn't dare to take the field himself.

He knew that once this saint rank creature started rampaging, even if it was its final breath, the power it could call upon would be

exceedingly frightening.

As greedy as the Raven King was, he didn't dare take the Firelizard's last strike.

Therefore, he sent his children and descendants to mob the Firelizard and use them as cannon fodder to chip away at his enemy.

It only had one breath left. Given enough time, the Raven King would be able to bash it to death with all his troops!

The Firelizard had been noticeably enraged by the Raven King, the repressed emotions within its heart were about to explode. It'd enjoyed a noble bloodline throughout its entire life, when had it ever been so humiliated?

Today, it was being subjected to indignity because it had lost its position and influence!

To be thus bullied by a pack of low down Fire Ravens — it, a saint rank creature, a descendant of the dragons, had lost all face!

"Feathered dumb animals, die!"

The Firelizard roared as its tail swept in an arch, forming a devastating whip several hundred meters long and sending out countless sparks of lightning.

Crack crack crack!

The very air seemed to collapse from this blow from the tail. The hundreds of Fire Ravens diving down were caught up in the light and churned into bits of flesh and blood, scattering randomly to the ground.

The weakest of these birds were at the human small spirit realm.

However, all of them had died with a single sweep of their opponent's tail.

The Firelizard was a saint rank spirit creature alright. The power encompassed within this sweep had completely exceeded the spirit rank, giving the Fire Ravens no time to even escape.

However, this blow had exhausted even more of the Firelizard's feeble, remaining strength.

Huff, puff.

The Firelizard panted heavily as it rasped out, "Stinking feathers, let's see how many more you can sacrifice! When you're done, you'll be alone. Even if you advance to the saint rank, who will you rule over? Keep sending them if you're not afraid of death. I won't be able live, but I still have some confidence in taking you with me!"

The Firelizard also knew that it would be hard pressed to escape from this situation.

However, spirit creatures tended to be fierce and violent by nature. Even if they died, they would take down their opponents with them!

Chapter 313: Earning A Profit Without Working For It

What the Redscaled Firelizard had mentioned was precisely what the Raven King was most fearful of.

Although the Firelizard was in its death throes and could breathe its last at any time, this didn't mean that the Firelizard lacked methods to kill the Raven King.

The Raven King clenched its beak tightly and stared hard at the hundreds of his children and descendants that had been killed in an instant. His heart was also constantly dripping blood.

Until now, he had always been quite proud of how the Fire Ravens had proliferated to this scale.

But the price paid for chasing the Firelizard had simply been too great. At least half of his children and descendants were dead.

At this rate, he wouldn't have many left after he had killed the Firelizard.

He was caught between a rock and a hard place now.

He could either continue to attack until the Firelizard died, or wait until it breathed its last.

However, it was obvious that it wouldn’t die that quickly.

Even if a saint rank creature was at the end of its life, its life wouldn’t be drained that easily. Particularly after the Firelizard had swallowed a Cloudflame Flower and had greatly replenished itself.

Given enough time to refine the Flower, even if that couldn’t extend its life, it would be able to recover fifty to sixty percent of its training for a short period of time.

When it had recovered that much, the Raven King knew that he wouldn’t be able to withstand the Firelizard.

Therefore, he couldn’t afford to wait and had to keep fighting.

Only through continual battles and harassment could he ensure that the Firelizard didn’t have enough time to refine the Flower.

But of course, if this was the case, the price would be heavy. The Raven King himself didn’t dare take the field, so he’d have to fill that gap with the lives of his children.

Even though the Fire Ravens followed whatever orders their king issues, he felt the twinges of a guilty conscience in commanding them to continuously go to their deaths.

He had less than one third of his original descendants left. At this rate, they would be quickly eliminated.

“Children, don’t dive, use your wings to engage in long range attacks!” The Raven King gave the order.

Although wing attacks weren’t as powerful as diving, it could at least harass the Firelizard.

The Raven King didn’t seek to immediately kill the Firelizard, but drag things out until it died.

Long range attacks could both chip away at it and not have to worry about counterattacks.

This was one of the advantages of the Fire Ravens.

The feathers on the Fire Ravens had quite a specialized function. They protected their bodies like a layer of armor, making it difficult for even an arrow to penetrate.

Therefore, shooting out their arrows meant that they lost a feather with every shot taken.

This was actually a self detrimental method of attack for the ravens.

However, self harm was better than suicide. After receiving their orders, all the Fire Ravens escaped the Firelizard’s damage range and shot their arrows at their enemy.

The feathers were like arrows and may not have caused great damage by themselves, but given this large scale attack, it was still a trial for the belaboring Firelizard.

Pop, pop, pop. These feather attacks connected with the Firelizard like a shower of rain, emitting a crisp tinkle when they connected.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but sigh from the distance, "The Firelizard is almost invincible with the defensive power of its armor. Attacks from within the same level of training won't make a dent at all. Its thick flesh and skin behind the scales possess equally astounding defensive abilities. These long range attacks likely won't do anything at all. However, the Firelizard is remaining where it is without moving. It looks like it really has exhausted quite a bit of its energy. It also looks like the dissipation of its training has been quite severe."

However, even so, to be able to completely ignore the missile attacks from hundreds of Fire Ravens still made Jiang Chen inwardly tsk in amazement at the Firelizard's defenses.

"Such heaven defying defensive capabilities is definitely of the dragon tribe alright. If a Firelizard on the brink of death can still muster such defenses, it's likely that human practitioners on the same level would be completely outclassed if it was at its peak?" Jiang Chen sighed.

His footsteps became even further glued to the ground as he

watched this battle.

He'd been a bit worried beforehand, but now he'd fully relaxed. Neither the Firelizard nor the Raven King were at their peak.

The Firelizard was hanging on to life by its claws, and the Raven King was covered with injuries after such a ferocious battle and likely possessed less than half of its strength.

Jiang Chen had no fear of two spirit creatures in these conditions.

When a kingfisher and a clam were locked in combat, that was only to the advantage of the fisherman.

Jiang Chen decided to stay and see if he could become that fisherman.

If the Raven King had hardened its heart to pursue this to the end, then he would take the field himself in the end.

But as long as the Raven King and Firelizard clashed with each other a few times and mostly exhausted each other, it'd be much easier for Jiang Chen to earn a profit without working for it.

As for the remaining Fire Raven army, although Jiang Chen was still cautious of them, he had his ways of handling them.

After all, the numbers of Fire Ravens left now were less than a third of their original number. After a long battle, their battle strength had been greatly depleted as well.

Even if Jiang Chen didn't have the Goldbiter Rat army, he'd be able to use the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice and the magnetic golden mountain to take on the Fire Ravens.

Of course, the caveat was that both the Raven King and the Firelizard were heavily injured.

The situation was now laid out in front of him, and only a single last push was required.

Jiang Chen could also see that the Raven King had the utmost confidence in his strategy. However, the Firelizard didn't care about harassment tactics like these at all.

These feather attacks weren't having the slightest bit of effect.

Perhaps, the Firelizard was enduring the attacks in order to start refining the Flower.

He'd be able to thoroughly absorb the spirit power from the Cloudflame Flower as long as he utterly refined the Flower, and recover at least fifty to sixty percent of his training.

The Fire Ravens would be in grave trouble then.

Jiang Chen almost wanted to remind the Raven King that these kinds of attacks were futile and was basically giving the Firelizard time to refine the Flower.

However, reason told him not to be impulsive. Jiang Chen was well aware that if he showed himself now, the Raven King would rain crazy attacks down on him.

It wasn't that they were enemies, but that the Raven King wouldn't allow a third party to appear in this moment and disturb its plan of devouring the Firelizard.

"Raven King, ah Raven King. You're so afraid of death, yet seek to devour the descendants of the dragons? The moment the Firelizard refines the Cloudflame Flower is the moment you die!"

When a saint rank creature recovered fifty to sixty percent of its training, killing a peak spirit rank creature was as easy as playing with a toy.

Even though the Raven King was highly mobile, he likely wouldn't have time to even flap his wings when faced with absolute power and a fully formed aura.

When a saint rank creature expanded its aura, all spirit rank creatures within a radius of a hundred li would be reduced to cowering in fright.

A trace of anxiety flitted across the Raven King's fierce eyes when he saw this.

He could also see that this stalemate wasn't the right move, and only grew more and more anxious as time went on.

He cawed shrilly and shook his enormous wings, folding them in a dive.

He'd decided that even if he'd had to take a risk, he'd personally attack and not allow the Firelizard time to refine the Cloudflame Flower.

Otherwise, the Fire Ravens were doomed for extinction!

The Raven King shook his wings and turned them into two gleaming knives, churning up a frightening presence and diving down like a flash of lightning.

The Raven King's agility and speed were its greatest advantages, and these two blades that flashed like lightning happened to deploy his advantages to the limit.

Red light flashed as bright as the sun, making for the Firelizard's head.

Its target was clear — the Firelizard's eyes!

The Firelizard was covered in defenses as strong as iron. Its scales would be something difficult to break through.

However, weaknesses existed in even the strongest of defenses. The Firelizard's weakness happened to be its eyes. There were no scales covering it and it was the only weak point that the Raven King could attack.

"Filthy lizard, die!"

The Raven king leered and the red light cleaved into the Firelizard's eyes at the peak of the Raven King's speed.

"Auraugh!!!!"

The Firelizard was in the midst of refining the Flower and was already distracted to begin with. Adding the Raven King's extreme speed and his opponent's less than ten percent availability of strength, the latter actually didn't react in time!

Pfft, pfft!

A bloody crack formed in the Firelizard's lantern-esque eyes as blood splurted out.

This sudden blow overwhelmed the Firelizard with pain. Blood shot out of both eyes as it started howling in pain.

The Firelizard was even more passive after losing his vision.

His enormous body rolled around on the ground, and his sturdy metal whip of a tail lashed through the air wildly like a crazed demon.

Bam, bam, bam!

The Firelizard's tail continuously smashed into the ground, forming a deep moat whenever it landed.

The ground started caving in beneath the Firelizard's maddened attacks.

Before too long, the ground around the Firelizard had sunk in by quite a few meters.

"Amazing, amazing." Jiang Chen swallowed, as he witnessed the destruction wreaked by the wrathful Firelizard.

It looked like the deep gouges on the mountain face had indeed been formed by the Firelizard, surely left behind when it went to take the flower.

"The Raven King is also quite wily to attack the Firelizard's eyes. Without its vision and its decreased strength, the Firelizard will be in great trouble then!"

Jiang Chen was also paying a great deal of attention to the situation, and he actually started cheering for the Firelizard in his heart when he saw its injuries.

“The Firelizard won’t die this easily. It’s best if it can give the Raven King a fatal blow before it dies. Only then will I be able to profit handsomely.”

Grievous injuries on both sides was something Jiang Chen wished to see the most.

He didn’t care about the Cloudflame Flower at this point. Either one of the spirit creatures in front of him was worth more than the Flower!

Chapter 314: A Crazy Battle

The Firelizard seemed to have completely lost its mind.

Its tail smashed the ground continuously as its head butted randomly, its body arching and flexing.

It was as if the ground had attacked it instead of the Raven King. Therefore, it wanted to vent all of its ill temper on this great patch of land.

Dust and dirt flew as the sound was loud enough to shake even the heavens.

Jiang Chen's ear drums throbbed even though he was so far away. It was fortunate that his Boulder's Heart was abnormally resolute so that he would not suffer any mental damage.

"Strange, how strange, even though its eyes have been attacked, this Firelizard, this saint rank beast, shouldn't have flown into such a violent rage?"

Jiang Chen felt that things were quite amiss. As violent as the Firelizard was, it still wouldn't attack so randomly. It was a saint rank spirit creature after all!

To expend its energy like this was to add fuel to the flames, didn't it understand that?

Bam bam bam!

The ground caved in a bit more whenever the Firelizard pounded the earth. Dust and dirt covered the skies like a smokescreen, making it difficult for the Raven King to approach.

Suddenly, a thought flashed across Jiang Chen's mind — the Firelizard wanted to escape!

Indeed, the Firelizard did indeed burrow into the ditch that was several meters deep. Half of its body was already beneath the ground, and only its tail kept pounding the earth, sending gouts of mud waves into the air and befuddling the Raven King.

The player in the game is blind, whereas bystanders see through everything.

Jiang Chen had seen through the Firelizard's intentions, but the Raven King still hadn't seen things clearly.

The Raven King only abruptly understood the Firelizard's intentions when the latter's body had completely drilled into the ground.

He threw back his head and cawed sharply, the fires of his fury began burning as he commanded the remaining Fire Ravens to attack the ground together.

This species, the Fire Ravens, were most adept at breathing

flame.

However, this technique was ineffective against the Redscaled Firelizard, so the Fire Ravens hadn't bothered attacking with fire until now.

This immunity was naturally still the case.

All of the Fire Ravens immediately angled their wings into blades one by one when they received their orders and hurtled towards the ground.

The Firelizard may have burrowed into the ground, but with the current condition of its body, it wouldn't get far.

The Fire Ravens hacked into the ground as though their lives depended on it and kept digging, continuously breaking into the deep ditch on the ground.

The Firelizard's tail was quickly exposed.

It only had a sliver of strength left, so its speed had naturally been greatly affected. Originally adept at flying through the earth, the Firelizard actually hadn't had time to flee due to the pursuit from the Fire Ravens.

The Raven King sneered as his wings turned into blades and chopped viciously at the Firelizard's tail.

A clear collision sound rang out, as though metallic weapons were clashing against each other.

The Raven King became even more ruthless and increased his speed, crazily raining down blows in the same area without a pause in momentum.

The Firelizard's scaled armor was indeed strong, but it still required physical strength to maintain. There was less than ten percent of its original strength and spirit within the Firelizard's true body and it was truly at the end of its tether.

The strength it had left in its body was negligible, so it could only depend on the natural defenses of its scales for protection.

With a blow or two, only faint marks appeared on the scales of the tail.

But the blows kept crashing down and after thirty or so hits, a deep injury was apparent on its tail.

It was clearly a deep cut as fresh blood seeped out of that wound.

The Fire Ravens were a bloodthirsty race and the Raven King's violent nature was completely provoked after he saw blood. He cawed and summoned flock after flock of Fire Ravens to attack the same areas.

Gouts of blood shot out and the Raven King started cawing excitedly, opening its beak wide to swallow all the arrows of blood.

This was the blood of a descendant of the dragons, the Raven King was naturally not going to let that escape his reach.

“Caw!!!” The Raven King was extraordinarily proud of himself when he tasted the blood. He cawed and strutted around, venting the glee in his heart.

He would take his opponent’s life while it was injured!

When The Fire Ravens spotted fresh blood being shed, they attacked even more fiercely.

The Firelizard’s lower half continued to be revealed as more dirt was excavated.

The Fire Ravens were obviously not satisfied with just attacking one injury as they began to strike to other areas.

The Firelizard seemed to have completely lost its ability to defend itself and allowed the Fire Ravens to attack it with impunity.

As the saying went, a sufficient number of ants would be able to bite an elephant to death.

Since the Firelizard had no ability to counterattack, the Fire

Ravens grew even more bold in their attacks. Add that to their advantage in numbers, their consequences of their assault was quickly apparent.

Injuries started dotting the Firelizard's body as the Fire Raven army carved out new wounds.

Blood shot in all directions, stirring the Fire Ravens into abnormal excitement as they cawed madly and attacked crazily.

"No way, the Firelizard is going to croak just like this?" Jiang Chen found the current scene of one sided torture from the Fire Raven army quite unbelievable.

But just at this moment, there was a small movement in the surrounding ground.

Wham!

Abruptly, the surrounding earth convulsed violently, as though it had exploded.

An enormous vortex had formed beneath the ground and was rapidly rising, churning up various bits of dirt. Under the influence of a strong aura, the dirt was transformed into attacks as lethal as violent arrows.

Bam, bam, bam!

The pieces of dirt were all harder than metal and connected solidly with the Fire Ravens in the surroundings with a frightening aura.

Because they'd been too close to the vortex, the Fire Ravens were left defenseless. As fast as their reactions were, they had no time to dodge or evade.

Ghastly cries rang out as almost none of the Fire Ravens had time to escape. They were hit by the rocks and dirt and crashed down one after another.

At almost the same time, the Firelizard's body suddenly straightened like a legendary dragon emerging from the seas.

Its enormous body rose in a straight line, like a small mountain ascending from flat plains.

Its mouth opened as those alarming teeth bit towards the Raven King.

The Raven King also responded extraordinarily quickly as he retreated with a shake of his wings. He wanted to use this speed to evade the Firelizard's last strike.

It was a pity though; the Firelizard had perfectly calculated everything. How could it possibly let the Raven King escape?

As the Raven King moved backwards rapidly, he suddenly felt an aura churning towards him from behind that could topple mountains and overturn seas.

The Firelizard's scar-ridden tail had swept up to attack with a thunderous force, blocking all avenues of retreat for the Raven King.

"Stinking feathers, die!" The Firelizard had weathered the blows for so long in wait to strike out with this lethal blow.

It hadn't made a move before this and had taken all the hits in order to numb the Fire Ravens so they would relax their defenses.

It had nurtured those schemes for this one blow.

Its goal? To swallow the Raven King!

The Raven King swept his tail in an arc and was uncontrollably shoved forward thanks to the strong wave of aura.

The Firelizard's maw had opened in front of the Raven King and its tongue was protruding as well. It seemed that it wanted to wrap its tongue around the Raven King and swallow him alive.

As calm as the Raven King was, this time, his expression underwent a drastic shift. He was well aware that if he was swallowed by the Firelizard, he would completely become its food.

The Firelizard was likely going to receive more nourishment from swallowing him and absorbing the spiritual energy in his body than it would from the Cloudflame Flower.

This might even greatly slow its advent of death!

However, one had to know that the Raven King had no place to go at the moment. His body had been fenced in by the Firelizard's aura, and he had no strength to soar upwards.

This was because his speed had already been restricted and if he were to take to the skies, he would likely be bitten in half by the Firelizard.

Life or death would be decided in this second.

The Raven King's violent nature had been completely provoked in this instant. He made up his mind and decided not to keep running, but to leverage the aura being projected by the Firelizard's tail to turn into a streak of red light and shoot towards the Firelizard's maw like a flying sword.

He shifted all the strength on his body as he accelerated.

He was betting everything on this final strike.

If he could dive into the Firelizard's mouth with this charge,

straight into his opponent's internal organs, he'd be able to attack the Firelizard's insides.

The Firelizard was covered with scales on the outside that were incredibly difficult to break through.

But its internal organs were its weakest point. As long as the Raven King could evade the two rows of blade-like teeth and dive into the Firelizard's mouth, he'd was assured a seventy to eighty percent chance that he'd be able to finish off his opponent once and for all.

After all, the Firelizard was a spent force now and he lacked even a tenth of his usual strength.

The Raven King felt that whoever lived or died would be decided in this moment.

Either he'd be bitten into two by the Firelizard, or he'd be able to fly through and grind up the latters' organs!

This was a battle in which death was guaranteed, and one of them had to die after this!

Jiang Chen immediately understood the Raven King's intentions when he saw this decision and he couldn't help but admire the Raven King's violent nature and decisiveness.

The blur of red light streaked forward like a shooting star and it

charged into the Firelizard's bloody maw.

The Firelizard smirked, most likely seeing through the Raven King's intentions as it abruptly closed its mouth.

Crunch!

The Raven King had pulled himself into a straight line with his claws at the very end.

The Firelizard's mouth was like an enormous pair of forceps, it just so happened to close on the Raven King's legs!

The Raven King had fallen just a bit short in his last strike.

However, he paid no heed to that now as he used his blade-like wings to furiously cut into the Firelizard's mouth.

One had to say, the Firelizard had used up almost all of its remaining strength in these consecutive attacks. Although it was biting down on the Raven King's legs, it had no ability to stop the Raven King from rampaging in his mouth.

Clack, clack!

The Raven King continuously sliced away at the Firelizard's tongue and fresh blood oozed out between the two rows of sharp teeth. The scene looked truly horrifying.

Even so, the Firelizard was still abnormally resolute, grimly biting down and stopping the Raven King from penetrating further into its body.

It was apparent that this was the final stand in the battle between the two spirit creatures.

If the Firelizard loosened his mouth, the Raven King would be sure to dive further in and churn up all his organs. Even the gods or immortals then wouldn't be able to save him.

And if the Raven King couldn't make it into the Firelizard's insides and remained clamped here, his injuries would slowly worsen as well. Not to mention that he was expending a great deal of effort in this battle, and he had no faith in how long he'd be able to hold out as well if the battle of attrition continued!

The two spirit creatures were both at the ends of their energies, but neither one of them wanted to give up. This was when they were competing on who was more ruthless and who could make it to the end!

Chapter 315: Jiang Chen's Rich!

Jiang Chen's mouth also grew bitter when he saw that the fight between the two spirit creatures had escalated to this point.

To think that a saint rank creature and peak of the spirit rank creature had devolved to beating each other up like children. They were using the most basic, most shameless, and most primitive ways to fight now.

The Raven King pierced the air with shrill screeches as his two wings kept hacking every which way in the Firelizard's mouth.

The Firelizard's several meter long tongue was almost completed minced by now.

The enormous pain made it start spasming.

But even so, the Firelizard still grimly hung on to the Raven King's legs and didn't let go.

Legs pinned, the Raven King could neither advance nor retreat. There was nothing left for it to destroy in the immediate surroundings.

It was also apparent that the damage within its mouth wasn't enough to immediately kill the Firelizard. If this dragged on and the Raven King was the one to run out of strength first, then he really would become food for the Firelizard.

The Raven King's brutal nature fully emerged at this time.

He pushed off on his legs and snapped the tendons and flesh of his legs amidst a mess of bloody gore!

He folded his wings in a dive and streaked down the Firelizard's throat, into it's chest.

The Raven King had actually given up on his legs and crippled himself to dive into the Firelizard's chest in order to give it a fatal blow.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but admire the Raven King's character and courage when he saw this.

He was also slightly delighted to see that the battle had developed to this point. He knew that his chance had arrived.

The Firelizard knew things had taken a bad turn when he discovered that the Raven King had forsaken his legs to dive into its body. It kept roaring and slamming its body on the ground, trying to shake the Raven King out of its body that way.

However, the Raven King's target was clear. How was it possibly willing to come back out after it'd entered its enemy's body?

The Firelizard's harsh cries died down slowly as time went on. Its

writhing, crashing body slowly quieted down into listless struggles until its breath finally stopped.

A pair of bloody eyes was still open despite being destroyed by the Raven King. It looked like it'd died with everlasting regret.

A spirit creature of the saint rank still hadn't made it through in the end.

Jiang Chen's heart was also pounding as he watched what had happened. A being as strong as a saint rank creature had seen its cultivation continuously dispersing at the end of its life and had been so helpless in the face of a life threatening disaster.

The cruelties of the path of martial dao were quite apparent. Even one as strong as a saint rank creature could be brought down by a group of beings inferior than it in moments of weakness.

"It looks like there is no realm of everlasting life on the path of martial dao. We are all as minuscule as the ants in the face of an overwhelming disaster."

Jiang Chen's emotions were also greatly shaken at this time, and he further reaffirmed his goal to pursue the paramount existence of martial dao. Only at the paramount existence would one enjoy eternal life and revel in the heavenly law.

A dragon swimming in the shallows would be teased by the shrimp, just as a tiger is insulted by the dogs if it goes down to the

low lands.

This saying was fully illustrated by the Firelizard's body.

Jiang Chen knew that his chance had finally come after watching for so long. He had been taking the risk in not leaving because he was waiting for an opportunity such as this to arise.

When a kingfisher and a clam were locked in combat, the one who benefited was the fisherman.

Jiang Chen strode out leisurely from the corner. His sudden appearance shocked the remaining Fire Ravens and they all started cawing.

The Firelizard's last blow had destroyed almost all of the Fire Ravens. There were less than ten left and each of them was more or less injured.

These Fire Ravens were naturally of no threat to Jiang Chen.

He walked lightheartedly towards the Firelizard corpse as eight of them came diving down at him, as if he hadn't seen them.

As the Ravens dived, eight vines, tipped by enormous fire lotuses, erupted out of the ground. The petals were as if large mouths, with each lotus devouring a Fire Raven.

Despite their level of cultivation at first or second level spirit realm, the Fire Ravens could put up no resistance whatsoever as they were devoured by the fire lotuses.

They didn't even have time to caw out desperately.

Jiang Chen circled past the Firelizard's body and released the Goldbiter Rat King. "Ole Gold, leave me the core and scales of this Firelizard. You and your tribe can have the remaining flesh and blood. By the way, this Firelizard is a saint rank creature."

"What? A saint rank creature?!" The Rat King's shifty eyes gleamed with excitement as he licked his lips greedily, almost drooling in his desire.

"Mm hmm. You've been yammering on about bloodline evolution. Here's a chance. I forgot to tell you, this Firelizard has the bloodline of the dragons. Although it's been quite diluted after being passed down through so many generations, but a dragon's descendant is still a dragon's descendant. Do you understand what I mean?"

The Rat King bobbed his head up and down rapidly. "Understood, understood. Young master, just what happened? How could a saint rank creature..."

The Goldbiter Rats were a cautious and timid race by nature. Even if one placed it in front of a lavish meal, it would still ask detailed questions about who, what, when, where, and why just in case it somehow got into a great deal of trouble.

Jiang Chen smiled, “Just tell me if you want it or not.”

“Yes, yes I do!” The Rat King hurriedly said.

“Then that’s the end of it. However, you need to take care of a problem first before you can enjoy this lovely meal in peace.”

“What is that?” The Rat King hastened to ask.

“It’s very simple. There’s a Fire Raven King within the stomach of the Firelizard, but it’s at less than 20% of its full strength. It may be just a bit stronger than you in its prime condition if it kept its aerial advantage. If you were to really battle with him, he wouldn’t be able to withstand your drilling abilities. Tell me, are you afraid of facing a Raven King that’s missing his legs and at less than twenty percent of his full strength?”

“Less than twenty percent of his full strength?” The Rat King asked cautiously.

“Twenty percent would be an overestimation. But you need to be quick. It may break through to the saint rank if it eats the Firelizard’s core. You should make haste since it’s only just gone inside. If you pass this chance on by, it will no longer exist.”

The Rat King didn’t dare linger when it heard these words and quickly slipped into the Firelizard’s bloody maw.

Jiang Chen felt a fierce struggle ensue from within the Firelizard after a short while. It looked like the Raven King had met the Rat King in battle.

However, the fight didn't last long. It was exactly as Jiang Chen had guessed, the Raven King didn't even have time to swallow the Firelizard's core before it was interrupted by the Rat King.

Two spirit creatures at the peak of the spirit rank started laying into each other right in the middle of the Firelizard's stomach.

The Raven King, at less than twenty percent of its strength, was quickly overcome.

The Rat King came drilling out with the Raven King's corpse in hand shortly. The Raven King was now unrecognizable thanks to the Rat King nibbling on him.

Jiang Chen conveniently stored the cores of the Raven King and Firelizard.

The value of an original spirit creature's core was priceless, worth cities.

The Raven King's core was at the peak of the spirit rank and equally valuable.

The Rat King didn't dare lust over these cores. He knew that he couldn't set his sights on anything Jiang Chen wanted, or his tribe

would lose a great deal because he tried to save a little.

A sumptuous feast greeted the Goldbiter Rats next.

There were so many Fire Raven corpses and the Firelizard corpse at the scene. It was enough for the Goldbiter Rats to eat handsomely.

Just the Firelizard alone was astonishing enough.

There were also thousands of Fire Ravens, each as big as a person.

This feast lasted four hours, and the Goldbiter Rats were still not quite fully satiated. However, they'd gained quite a lot from this meal.

The Rat King licked his lips and belched. As the king, he'd eaten the most and further had eaten the best, most nutritious parts of the Firelizard.

After the flesh and blood were devoured, Jiang Chen put the Firelizard's scales away. This being had been so big that its scales were enough to forge armor for a hundred, two hundred people.

Of course, he would never do such an extravagant thing. It would be an absolute waste to use the scales to make armor for others.

Jiang Chen didn’t overlook the remaining Firelizard skeleton either.

These bones were so durable and hard that apart from the Rat King being able to munch on a portion, the other Goldbiter Rats had insufficient levels of cultivation to even bite down on them.

That even the Goldbiter Rats, a race eminently adept at devouring their food, couldn’t bite down on the bones, spoke to how hard this skeleton was.

“These are all good items. They’d make fine weapons.” Jiang Chen would naturally never pass up anything that had value.

The Raven King’s feathers, particularly his tail feathers, were all as sharp as arrows. It was a prime choice to craft them into weapons, flying daggers, or arrows.

“Haha, these gains are much better than one Cloudflame Flower!” Jiang Chen was in great spirits as he took inventory of his gains.

He’d almost been buried in a sea of fire when he tried to go for a Cloudflame Flower. Who would’ve thought that he’d have such an encounter after evading that disaster.

The Valley of Destruction was indeed a place of great heights and depths. What was heaven one second could be hell the next.

Jiang Chen didn't want to waste anything and collected all the feathers of the ordinary Fire Ravens as well.

These Fire Ravens were all of the spirit realm, having strength equivalent to the small spirit realm. Their wing feathers would be fantastic for crafting into flying daggers and arrows.

When one used spirit rank material to forge weapons, the resulting weapon would be a spirit weapon without needing further refining by a weapons master.

If a weapons master had a high degree of skill, then the capabilities of the weapon would be even more amazing.

How could Jiang Chen waste such good material? Even if he had no use for it, he would be able to give it to his people.

These items would be an incredible treasure for them.

A thin figure stood on top of a slope on the outskirts of the charred area, staring off into space at the destruction in front of them.

"Jiang Chen ah Jiang Chen. If my guess is right, you're that freak with the boulder's heart. I hope you weren't in the path of the fiery blaze."

The person murmured to themselves and was lost in thought for a while.

Chapter 316: Since You're All Courting Death, Then Go Die!

This person was wearing the uniform and mask of a candidate, but a strong sense of concern and even a bit of worry flashed through their eyes.

This person had been searching the Valley of Destruction for a few days at this point. But no matter how far they searched, they never found a sign of the freak with the boulder's heart.

Although this person kept telling themselves not to think wild thoughts, they couldn't help but consider a few pessimistic ideas as time passed.

The person's eyes suddenly gleamed as they looked incredulously ahead of them.

A figure had dashed out of the charred land and destruction ahead!

It was as shocking as seeing a survivor after Armageddon.

"It's him, the freak genius with the boulder's heart!" The large stone hovering over the person's heart was abruptly laid to rest when he saw the figure dash out of the burnt area. "Thank goodness he's not dead. I knew that he wouldn't die that easily…"

The person standing on the slope felt waves of emotion upon seeing this figure dash out from the rubble. An uncommon light shone out of his eyes; he was both gratified and proud that this freak genius had escaped from sure death.

This person only tamped down his emotions when he saw the outline of the freak genius approach. He sprang back and vanished quickly into the thick growth of the forest.

“A happy journey and great success to you, Jiang Chen.” The person said silently in his heart.

It was obvious that this person was treating Jiang Chen and the freak genius of the boulder’s heart as the same.

……

The figure who’d run out from the rubble was indeed Jiang Chen, the only survivor within a hundred li. However, he didn’t know that another person on the outskirts of the destruction had already realized his identity.

He stopped outside of the zone of destruction and detected the unique fragrance from the flowers and trees in his surroundings. He suddenly felt like he’d been reborn again.

His nose had been wrecked by the charred smell that had pervaded the air over the past couple of days.

When he took an estimation, he realized that only half of the allotted time had passed since he'd set foot into the valley.

With the rewards he'd reaped, Jiang Chen no longer took great risks and instead decided to proceed slowly and surely.

The strength of the Firelizard and the Fire Ravens had given Jiang Chen a thorough lesson, letting him know that he couldn't run about at will within the Valley of Destruction.

One could easily be swamped by calamity.

Standing at the top of the slope, Jiang Chen's gaze suddenly cooled slightly as he snorted softly. "These bastards. They're charging over here with such aggressive momentum, do they think to make a target of me? Reckless and blind!"

More than dozens of figures had already appeared around the slope. Their auras were imposing and it was obvious that they were headed straight for Jiang Chen.

He was rather surprised at first. Where had all these people come from?

However, he immediately understood afterwards. This immense blaze must have alarmed many, and the nearby candidates must've gathered to either watch the show or observe the happenings.

However, with his emergence from this patch of rubble, he'd

immediately become a walking target.

These people all acted in marvelous accord, charging for the top of the slope without discussing it beforehand. It looked like they all wanted to do something as despicable as robbing an owner when his house was on fire.

It was several dozens at first, but it became apparent as more and more candidates surged in from all directions that all the practitioners in the surrounding area had come over when they received the news.

A hint of a cold smile appeared on Jiang Chen's lips.

Although there were no rules in the Valley of Destruction, and it wasn't forbidden to fight each other, these candidates should've first weighed up their own abilities before wanting to so blatantly take advantage of the situation.

"Idiots who don't know the meaning of death."

Jiang Chen's expression remained fearless as he gazed at the continuously growing crowd of candidates in front of him. When one was at his level of cultivation, strength in numbers meant absolutely nothing.

Jiang Chen sat down cross legged on a high piece of rock. As if a deity, he exuded a stern aura even without flying into a rage.

The candidates all stopped when they reached a distance of several hundreds of meters from Jiang Chen.

However, the candidates all started forming concentric circles around Jiang Chen, subtly wanting to encircle him with rings of restraint.

Jiang Chen's closed eyes suddenly opened as they shot out a stunning, stern light. He laughed coldly, "What? Are all of you coming here to beg for food?"

Although no one knew the identity of the one beneath the mask, everyone was quite clear that this was the genius freak of the boulder's heart that had swept the first four trials.

If they'd been in ones or twos, they wouldn't have dared to approach.

However, courage grows in numbers and this group had miraculously lost a bit of their fear and gained a bit of ambition instead.

"Sir, let's speak frankly here. You must've gained quite a bit in walking out of that ocean of fire. We've all dithered around here for so many days, worrying and fretting. You should show us your sincerity, hmm?"

A candidate who had likely been chosen as the de facto leader smiled coldly.

There were two others by his side, forming a triangle of power with the leader.

Jiang Chen could tell that their strength was likely the strongest amongst the group. This was why they'd been nominated as the leaders.

"Worry?" Jiang Chen could help but break out in laughter. "I have no relationship with any of you and thus I have no need for your worry. Speak fast if you've something to say, and let it out if you have to fart. Don't approach things obliquely and bullshit with me. I haven't the slightest interest in listening to your drivel."

Worry?

How could Jiang Chen believe utter tripe like this?

All of those present were strangers, and who would worry about a stranger in the world of martial dao?

These self righteous excuses were both fake and disgusting.

If they'd come out forthrightly and said they were going to rob Jiang Chen, he would've at least acknowledged them as petty criminals who were willing to stand by what they'd said. He only felt complete repulsion when they tried to engineer these crude reasons.

“Hahaha, looks like you’re a direct person!” The person in charge laughed heartily. “Since this is the case, we won’t conceal our thoughts. You have two choices.”

“One, leave behind all that you’ve gained and get the hell out!”

“Two, stubbornly resist and make enemies out of all of us.”

The leader waved and indicated the nearly one hundred strong group around them, putting on a “I’ve got you in the palm of my hand” expression.

The candidates all assented when they heard these words. They all shouted in high spirits, applying psychological pressure to Jiang Chen.

Their postures were absolutely one of taking advantage of their numbers to bully the few and engage in open robbery.

“I can also give you two choices.” Jiang Chen’s tone was faint as he completely ignored the crowd. He extended two fingers, “One, get the hell out now! Two, die!”

“What?!” The leader actually thought he’d misheard. He was both angry and entertained. “Kid, are you crazy? It’s one against a hundred of us spirit realm practitioners here. Do you think you can really defy the heavens? What a clueless idiot!”

“Yeah kid! You’re not going to give up until failure stares at you

in the face, huh?”

“Stop wasting time with him. He’s refusing our good natured toast and wants to drink a forfeit instead. This kid’s asking for a beating!”

“Yeah, this fellow hogged the limelight in the previous trials. It’s about time that we destroy some of his arrogance in the Valley of Destruction. Otherwise, won’t we be continuously trodden underfoot by him?”

Those assembled finally voiced their real thoughts.

They weren’t here to just rob things, but to publicly suppress Jiang Chen.

An unsurpassed genius whose scores were far in excess of everyone else to the point of being a crane amongst a flock of chickens. How would these mundane geniuses be able to accept that?

Therefore, everyone had unconsciously formed an accord that they had to defeat this freak genius and not let him take away everyone’s glory, making it so that no one could make a name for themselves.

“So noisy.”

A shrewd light suddenly shot out of Jiang Chen’s God’s Eye as he

spat out two words, roiling up waves of qi that rippled outwards with the sound of thunder.

The one hundred candidates suddenly felt it difficult to breathe. Their ear drums kept reverberating as if thunder was crashing right in front of them. Their blood thrummed through their veins as dizzy spells caused them to waver and feel nauseous.

“Useless trash!”

Jiang Chen laughed coldly and pushed off on both feet, shooting towards the outside as if an eagle taking to the skies.

It wasn’t that he wouldn’t be killing anyone, but that it was meaningless to kill the group assembled here in one go. Although they were greedy, not all of them deserved to die.

Therefore, Jiang Chen planned on ignoring them.

However, everyone’s thoughts when he dashed out was that Jiang Chen was afraid and didn’t dare meet them all in battle. He was running away!

No one detected his sliver of kindness.

“He’s getting away, kill him!”

“Stop him, kill!”

Crazed roars and yells sounded behind him.

The three designated leaders all had levels of cultivation between third and fourth level spirit realm. They were quite remarkable amidst this year's candidates.

It was because they were stronger that their courage was correspondingly greater.

When they saw Jiang Chen make for the outside and expose his back to them, they all felt that this was a perfect chance.

The three of them all wielded their weapons at the same time as they blasted their auras, bringing all their strength to bear in attacking Jiang Chen's back.

At that moment, the air seemed to freeze.

A hint of a chill travelled down their necks in the next moment. Their bodies all seemed to freeze in the air.

Crack!

Crisp breaking sounds rang out at almost the same time.

Three large heads, still wearing their masks, separated from their necks and shot into the sky.

In the next moment, three headless bodies crashed into the ground, emitting dull thuds.

Bam, bam, bam.

Dust, sprays of fresh blood from their necks, and a strong sense of bloodshed flew and permeated everywhere on the slope.

The three heads landed afterwards, with their eyes still open. Wide open with despair, their final expression was one of shock and deep fear.

Everyone was shocked senseless by this scene.

They hadn't seen how Jiang Chen had made his move at all. They've only seen a flash of light and the three strongest amongst them lose their heads.

This kind of strength, this speed, and these devastating moves made the hundred or so assembled here shiver with cold, as if they'd fallen into an icy cavern.

How... how was this a fight? This was pure slaughter!

Chapter 317: No Doubt About The Champion Of The First Selection

Three corpses, three heads.

They had been overweeningly arrogant just a second ago, haughtily demanding Jiang Chen hand over his possessions or die.

Their heads had been separated from their bodies in the next second. They'd died with everlasting regret, and had been subjected to a fate even worse than dead dogs as their corpses were randomly strewn.

There was nothing more convincing than death.

Fear was writ deep in the other candidates' eyes. Their masks hid their faces, frozen in rictuses of horror, from each other.

How could strength in numbers overcome this kind of strength?

To put it bluntly, if the other wanted to kill them, he'd be able to do away with all of them in fifteen minutes. Not a single survivor would be left.

Too fast! The speed of his move had been faster than a shooting star.

Even combined, the three strongest among them hadn't been

able to take one of the other's blows.

If it came to the rest of the group, the other would likely kill them in a second even if they charged as ten apiece.

The difference between them was akin to a grown, stocky man trampling a baby. They weren't on the same level at all.

Pairs of terrified eyes looked at the three corpses. They didn't even have the courage to look at Jiang Chen. Only fear was left in their hearts.

Jiang Chen had executed three people with a single move rippling the air.

He vanished beneath the slope with a twist of his body.

He had no interest in paying attention to a group of senseless practitioners.

After this battle, their dao hearts had been stripped away and they were now useless. They would never see any improvement on the path of martial dao.

Jiang Chen didn't even have the interest to kill such trash.

"Birds die for food, people die for wealth. These people dared scheme against me when their own skills weren't up to par. They

were truly seeking death!”

Jiang Chen shook his head and had vanished without a trace with a few leaps and bounds.

The one hundred candidates finally breathed sighs of relief after Jiang Chen had disappeared.

They hadn’t even had the courage to breathe in that moment. They were deathly afraid of attracting a life threatening disaster if they caused the slightest sound.

The feeling of having narrowly escaped death soaked their backs with sweat.

They tragically discovered that this freak genius didn’t even have the inclination to kill them.

This was the truest tragedy.

This was also when they truly discerned the gap between them and the freak genius.

They now fully understood how weak they were, so weak that others couldn’t even be bothered to kill them.

“Frightening, that was simply too frightening.” A lucky survivor spoke in a trembling voice.

“I didn’t even see him flash a weapon with that move! Three spirit realm practitioners were dead, just like that. Are... are we dreaming?”

“Laughable. So laughable. We may not even be an ant in his eyes, but us laughable ants dared scheme against him.”

Jiang Chen’s figure vanished into the great forest, and the figure who’d disappeared into the forest earlier suddenly reappeared beneath a large tree.

“Someone who could survive in the ocean of fire isn’t a simple character indeed. How comical that that group of clowns tossed away their lives like that because they were too overconfident.”

This person had always been keeping an eye on Jiang Chen, and their mind was even more certain now that the one who had survived the ocean of fire was definitely Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen kept a low profile over the next couple of days, keeping to areas with few people. He wasn’t afraid of other candidates raising a hand against him again, but he didn’t want to be dragged down by those idiots.

The Fire Ravens had been irritated by those two groups of practitioners last time and set a two hundred li diameter circle on fire.

After his travels over the past couple of days, Jiang Chen knew full well that this Valley of Destruction was hardly a simple place. If they had even a saint rank Redscaled Firelizard, they would certainly have other stronger beings.

He'd been lucky once and met a saint rank creature at the end of its life, but that didn't mean he'd always be this lucky.

If he ran afoul of a saint rank creature in normal condition, he'd be in dire straits even with his extraordinary abilities.

After all, a saint rank spirit creature was the equivalent of an origin realm cultivator. They'd be able to easily trample all cultivators below the spirit realm.

He maintained a low profile over the next couple of days, prioritizing safety above all.

Therefore, although he ran into a few challenges now and again, he was able to resolve them all without much effort.

Although he didn't run into any more opportunities to strike it rich, he still gained quite a bit from these small skirmishes.

The Valley of Destruction was indeed a place where treasures were littered all over the ground. Jiang Chen made great use of the experiences from his previous life and uncommon powers of judgment. This resulted in the occasional surprise from these small skirmishes.

As the days passed without unexpected developments, the end of the ten days finally arrived.

All of the candidates were sent out of the valley.

Jiang Chen took a look around when they exited and noticed that there really was less than half left of the original eight thousand!

Even the four great sects were quite surprised by this casualty rate.

When they took a tally, they discovered that there were only 3,500 candidates left. This meant that 4,500 out of the original eight thousand that had entered had fallen into eternal slumber within the valley.

This death rate was greater than fifty percent!

Jiang Chen also knew though, that if the Fire Ravens hadn't gone on a rampage, the death rate wouldn't have been so high.

"Everyone can see that only 3,500 are left of the original amount that entered. However, instead of depression,you should rejoice. Compared to those who died in the valley, you are the lucky ones. With this, you've passed the trial of fortune and are the ones who are truly lucky."

Honestly speaking, not many of the survivors felt any remorse for those who had died. They were actually privately delighted.

That so many had died meant half of their competition was gone as well. This also meant that their chances of entering the four sects had greatly increased.

The four great sects were recruiting three thousand. There were only five hundred more than that left now.

“I must congratulate you here, because most of you are destined to receive the right to enter the sects.”

“The first selection is complete. We will rank you according to your participant tokens. Your rankings will also be transferred over to the three year second selection, becoming your advantage there. However, I must also remind you that in the second selection, you will be facing competition from sect geniuses. Your scores will become meaningless in front of the true geniuses.”

The overseers doused the lucky survivors with this note of warning.

“Alright, rest for a moment and hand over your participant tokens. We will announce the ranking tomorrow and award you tokens for the second selection. Remember, your number for the second selection will be the same as your ranking for the first.”

Jiang Chen was without a doubt the champion of the first

selection, and he was far ahead of the pack at that.

Because he was this confident, he was different from the others and wasn't worried about his personal gains and losses.

"Are the sect geniuses finally putting in an appearance?" He was actually a bit excited instead.

The ordinary cultivators amongst the sixteen kingdom alliance no longer posed any challenge to Jiang Chen. What he needed now was experience and sharpening from the sects.

These so-called sect geniuses would be the best starting point for Jiang Chen's rise.

He sat cross legged, without a word, all night.

Everyone's emotions became agitated the next day, because the ranking would be announced in a short while.

Jiang Chen lifted his eyelids slightly, his heart as calm as water in the face of this fervent atmosphere.

The results of the first selection caused no ripples of interest in his heart now. His goal was the second selection, the final sixteen, and the so-called premier geniuses of the sects.

"Everyone, please be quiet. The rankings are out. Now, we will

hand out participant tokens for the second selection according to your ranking in the first selection.”

Each participant token had its corresponding number and results.

But realistically speaking, everyone knew that there was no doubt about first place. It was surely the freak genius with the boulder’s heart.

They were more curious about just who this person was? Who was behind the mask? This was their primary concern.

Indeed, there was no suspense whatsoever about who ranked first!

The overseer handed the first token to Jiang Chen and smiled quite amiably. “Young man, you’re the undisputed champion of the five trials. This number one token to you is both an honor and a burden. I hope you understand its weight and meaning, and prepare yourself accordingly.”

The overseer spoke sincerely and offered earnest wishes. He moved to award the second token after a small speech of encouragement.

The second token was given to a skinny candidate. There was also some speculation about this person’s identity.

However, the owner of this token had also kept a low profile and never gave away any hint of his identity.

The tokens were awarded one by one to every candidate.

Of those who ranked towards the front, they were those that were happy, proud, and some who felt this was rather matter-of-fact. Of course, there were those who felt they hadn't shown off their best side.

Those who ranked towards the back were correspondingly more subdued.

After all, five hundred of those remaining would be eliminated. Those that ranked lower naturally ran the highest risk of having that happen.

Jiang Chen hung the token for number one on his waist, completely ignoring the looks of envy aimed at him from all sides.

"Alright, everyone has received their tokens now. The number on it is your ranking for the first selection. You will face the even more competitive second selection next. Remember, although not many will be eliminated in the second selection, the ranking from this round will impact your fate in the sects. Your scores will determine what level of benefit you receive from the sect. The higher your score, the greater your benefits. Therefore, if you've reserved any strength in the first selection, release it all in the second!"

Everyone’s blood frothed with excitement at these words.

The sects! They were finally seeing the doors of the sects open wide and wave at them!

Chapter 318: Rules Of The Second Selection, The Eternal Spirit Mountain

The 3,500 qualifying candidates from the initial tests were led to the foot of an enormous mountain.

The mountain extended into the distance and was wreathed in cloud and mist, giving off an impressive, yet sacred feeling.

There seemed to be a few buildings and pavilions fading in and out of sight amidst the clouds.

“Do you see that? This is the Eternal Spirit Mountain, and the site of the second selection. The Eternal Spirit Mountain has been present in the legacy realm since the ancient times. Countless eons have passed, and only this Eternal Spirit Mountain has remained steadfast.”

The overseer’s tone was full of respect. He too seemed to filled with great admiration for this mountain.

“I have to say, you’re all quite lucky. You’ve passed the initial selection and can train on this mountain for three years. Three years here is equivalent to thirty years in the outside world.”

Three years here was equivalent to thirty years in the outside world?

This meant that the concentration of spirit qi within the mountain was ten times that of the outside world? Surprise showed on all of the candidate's faces after hearing these words.

They also reaffirmed their faith to endure and not be eliminated. Even if they didn't gain the identity of a sect disciple, they would do this for the three years that was worth thirty years of cultivation!

"The Eternal Spirit Mountain is split into four quadrants: the sky spirit quadrant, the earth spirit quadrant, the mystic spirit quadrant, and the yellow spirit quadrant. Without a doubt, the sky spirit quadrant is the best out of all of them. However, it's something that you can't even think of just yet. That quadrant belongs to the premier geniuses in the four sects, and only a hundred of them have been arranged to occupy the sky spirit quadrant in this selection. They were all handpicked from their sects, and any one of them could trample any one of you here!"

The overseer's tone was faint, but still embodied that pride unique to sect members.

Trample all of us? Jiang Chen smiled coldly in his heart. He didn't think much of these words, but also couldn't be bothered to retort.

Only after a fight was one revealed to be a dragon or a worm. It wasn't something that could be settled by flapping one's lips.

"You're ordinary practitioners, and although you've emerged

from the first selection, you're still only the foremost amongst ordinary disciples now. You still need to undergo another stage of evaluation before being acknowledged by the sects. As such, to receive the true acknowledgement of the sects, you must start from the bottom. Therefore, most of you have been assigned to the yellow spirit quadrant."

Sky, earth, mystic, and yellow. Four levels.

The yellow level was without a doubt the lowest.

As heaven defying as the ordinary practitioners were, they still truly hadn't undergone the sects' real testing yet. Therefore, it wasn't too absurd that they'd be allotted the yellow spirit quadrant.

So although a couple of dissatisfied murmurs came from the assembled candidates, no one reacted too strongly. As much as they didn't want to accept things, they knew this was the harsh reality of the world of martial dao.

It wasn't that easy for an ordinary practitioner to receive the acknowledgement of the sects.

"Of course, not everyone is going to the yellow spirit quadrant. To commend those who displayed exemplary performance in the first selection, the top ten will be sent to the mystic spirit quadrant."

“The mystic spirit quadrant has roughly double the concentration of spirit qi in the yellow quadrant. It is undoubtedly greatly superior to the yellow level.”

Jiang Chen smiled sarcastically when he heard this. So it seems that he’d been assigned to the mystic level. At least his starting point wasn’t too low!

The overseer continued, “Of course, these levels aren’t set in stone. You each have the chance to change your destinies in this trial. It’s up to you if you can alter your fate. You may be in the yellow level now, but you can absolutely challenge the mystic level if you work hard enough. In the same vein, even if you start off in the mystic quadrant, don’t think you can remain there and enjoy the peace. If you don’t work hard and improve fast enough, you too may be kicked down to the yellow level.”

“You must be very curious if there are any rules for advancement here? I can tell you clearly that yes, there are. Moreover, they are very fair and very clear.”

“The rules of advancement change every three months, and the basis for the change is your talents and strength. To be more precise, it’s a reflection of your battle strength. Every person in each quadrant must complete a hundred challenges a month. The win rate of these hundred challenges will determine your rankings. The strongest ten will advance one level, and the lowest performing ten will be demoted a level. You may ask, how will one be demoted from the yellow level? It’s already the lowest. I can tell you that forty candidates will be eliminated from the yellow quadrant in three months. 160 of you will be eliminated each year.

That will make 500 in three years. Therefore, those of you in the yellow level are in the most precarious position. Those in other quadrants will be demoted at most, but the last 40 of you will be eliminated."

Three months was the duration of a cycle, and each candidate had to complete a hundred challenges in each cycle, with their ranking determined by their win rate.

This was rather fair, but there weren't that many slots for advancement.

There were only 10 in each quadrant every three months.

However, as little as that seemed, it wasn't that paltry either. If one couldn't even make it into the top ten of their level, then even if one was a genius, in the end, their potential was limited.

Not to mention that with three months being a cycle, one year had four cycles, and by extension, twelve cycles in three years.

This meant there were twelve chances.

If a person couldn't even grasp twelve chances, then it wasn't fate being unkind, but their own lack of ability.

However, how would they go about these challenges, and who would they challenge?

Jiang Chen was perplexed, and so were those around him.

Three months was roughly ninety days, and it wasn't a difficult thing to complete a hundred battles in ninety days.

"Master overseer, who are we challenging with the hundred challenges? The overseers? Or others?"

"Yeah, you should at least talk about our targets?"

Indeed, this was the issue that people were most concerned about.

The overseer smiled slightly, "I knew you would be concerned about this question. I'll explain the further division of the four quadrants first. The four quadrants are divided into the sky, earth, mystic, and yellow levels, but this is only an overall division and not particularly fine tuned. When it comes down to you, all of you will be divided into four levels of first, second, third, and fourth."

"Taking the yellow spirit quadrant for example, the 3,500 within it will also be divided into these four levels. The levels are naturally determined by your selection scores. As for the sect disciples, they will be divided up according to their potential and strength. Overall, this is fair."

The four quadrants of sky, earth, mystic, and yellow spirit.

The four levels of first, second, third, and fourth.

This meant that the participating candidates had been divided into sixteen levels.

First level sky quadrant, second level sky quadrant... all the way to fourth level yellow quadrant.

“In summary, there are a total of sixteen levels amongst you all across the four quadrants. Each level within the quadrant is labeled the first, second, third, or fourth level. The one hundred challenges will be comprised of challenging the twenty five candidates in each level in three months. Do you understood?”

It wasn’t hard to understand such rules.

Four levels and twenty five challenges each made precisely for a hundred challenges.

However, how would they choose their opponents?

“You must also be wondering how you would choose your opponents? Very simple. It will be random selection within the levels. In order to ensure the rights of each candidate, the same opponent won’t appear twice!

Random selection!

This meant that they would meet a hundred different opponents for each cycle's challenges.

This meant that certain people would be luckier and others unluckier, to a certain degree. It was a good thing that twenty five challenges had to be made per level. Being unlucky once didn't mean always being unlucky.

So speaking overall, this was actually quite fair. Each challenge would equally be against a strong candidate or a weak one. Unexpected surprises would have a very low chance of occurring with a hundred challenges, so one had to rely on their strength to the end.

"Remember, the scores are calculated from your win rates. If you're the one receiving the challenge, you can only accept it, but whether it's a win or loss — that won't affect your win rate. Therefore, it's a hundred challenges in name, but there's no way that you will be fighting only a hundred times. You could be the challenger or the one being challenged. When we calculate the rates, we will pay attention only to the times in which you were the challenger."

Jiang Chen had thought of this question before as well, and his confusion had been finally resolved with these words.

With this, the frequency of battles would be quite high! One had to both complete a hundred challenges and fend off an unknown amount of challenges.

On average, each person would likely fight two hundred times.

This meant that there would, on average, be two battles each day.

This was far more difficult.

“I trust that you realize that you will not have the same number of battles as the person next to you. If someone is unlucky, they will fight many more times. However, this may not be a bad thing. To use an example, if two candidates have the same win rate, then the one who was challenged more frequently will have the advantage and the higher ranking.”

“Don’t dismiss this advantage. According to our simulations, multiple people will have the same win rate. Therefore, it’s very likely that the final ten that advance will all have the same win rate and the list will be determined by the number of challenges.”

The rules were quite detailed, and so thorough that each one of them could affect the outcome.

The Second Selection: Mystic Quadrant Arc

Chapter 319: Fourth Level Candidate In The Mystic Spirit Quadrant

One was at a certain disadvantage if they were challenged too often. Therefore, it was quite reasonable that the one who had been challenged more often would rank further ahead when multiple people had the same win rate.

“I’ve already explained the basic rules to you. The majority of you are in the yellow spirit quadrant. The keeper of the yellow quadrant will assign you to various levels according to your ranking in the first selection. Those who are first shouldn’t be proud, and those who are fourth should not lose hope. This is because you have three month to change your destiny. Will you rise to the mystic spirit quadrant or be eliminated? You have three months to decide what kind of fate you want.”

“If you don’t rise to the next level this time, you still have eleven more chances. There are still many opportunities, and you yourself will decide if you’re a worm or a dragon. The strong control their destinies and the weak complain about their fates. I hope that you are all of the former and don’t complain about the rules or whine that they’re unfair. All of you are under the same rules and although there are possibly some differences in difficulty, they are still fair overall.”

The overseer had gone to quite a bit of effort to warn these candidates.

“Alright, this concludes the explanation of the general rules. Each quadrant is different, and the keeper of each quadrant will

explain things in greater detail when you enter the mountain. Now those who were ranked in the top ten please step forward. The others can follow this path and go up to the yellow quadrant."

When he looked at the top ten cultivators of the initial selection, the overseer's expression grew a bit warmer and he smiled slightly, "I will personally lead you to the mystic spirit quadrant."

The yellow quadrant was filled with ordinary practitioners and so there was no point in the overseer overly fawning up to them.

These ten however, were the strongest in the first selection and so they had a bit of a future ahead of them.

Thus, it was understandable that the overseer would have a slightly better attitude towards them.

The overseer placed his hands behind his back and he walked in another direction, while they followed.

They finally reached another passageway after four hours. The words 'Mystic Spirit Quadrant' were carved on a stone marker in large, ancient script. A powerful, ancient presence exuded from them, as if dragons were flying and phoenixes were dancing.

"Come, you will be candidates of the mystic quadrant once you enter. There are advantages and disadvantages to being here."

"The advantage is that your starting point and environment is

different to the yellow quadrant."

"The disadvantage is that your opponents are sect disciples. As low as their levels may be, they are still sect disciples in the end."

The overseer admonished them repeatedly, "It's best that you know beforehand that sect disciples aren't like the opponents that you met previously. Any of the sect disciples that could make it to this place are not ordinary characters. Even a fourth level disciple in the mystic quadrant is stronger than the most exemplary of the ordinary practitioners. You must conduct yourself well when you enter and eke out space for survival amidst the cracks. For you, if you can ensure that you aren't demoted at the end of the first cycle, that will be a great victory already!"

The overseer's heart still tilted towards sect disciples. Even if an ordinary disciple was at the peak, they were still heavily disadvantaged when it came to sect disciples.

Therefore, he felt that although these ten had been sent to the mystic spirit quadrant, their final destiny was still demotion and being beaten back to the yellow quadrant in three months time.

Shaking his head, the overseer didn't seem to want to overly knock down their confidence. He smiled, "All is possible within the world of martial dao, and there is no meaning in merely overtaking others. You must continuously improve and trample your opponents beneath your feet. This is the true path to a genius' rise. Let's go! We reach our destination, which is in front of us."

Jiang Chen also heard the overseer's words. However, his heart was like a boulder and so he treated those words as only reference. He didn't become dejected because of his words, and he wouldn't become too full of himself because of the overseer's encouragement.

Jiang Chen had his own rhythm and plans.

He would remain true to his own heart and walk his path.

He sensed the subtle ripples of spirit power along the way and he couldn't help but sigh that the Eternal Spirit Mountain well deserved its name. The concentration of this spirit qi was extraordinarily high.

It was a type of enjoyment to be able to cultivate in such surroundings, especially when it was compared to the ordinary world.

"The spirit power ripples of the mystic quadrant area are already thus, then what about the earth and sky quadrants? What kind of strong power is encompassed in those?"

A hint of expectation grew in Jiang Chen's heart regarding the earth and sky quadrants.

"Three months!" Jiang Chen thought silently. "I must be part of the top ten in these three months and enter the earth spirit quadrant. I'll only have the right to compete for the sky quadrant

from there!”

Jiang Chen was well aware that only the most exemplary of disciples from the four sects had the right to take up residence in the sky quadrant.

The overseer had said that the disciples in that quadrant had all been carefully selected. There were only a hundred slots.

It was easy to see the fierce level of competition that existed.

“The sky quadrant… ” That region had now risen in his heart as his goal.

“Long Juxue possesses an innate constitution and she has enjoyed the various resources of the sect. She has more advantages compared to me, and her constitution must’ve been fully deployed over the past two years. She must be in the sky quadrant this time. If I don’t go there, how will our previous grudges be resolved?”

Jiang Chen hated Long Juxue from the depths of his heart.

This wasn’t just that they had absolutely irreconcilable differences, but also because he was well aware of Long Juxue’s scorpion-like personality.

If she grew in strength, she would never let him off the hook.

Although Jiang Chen was confident, he didn't think that he would be able to fight against the entire Purple Sun Sect by himself right now.

Even though Long Juxue wasn't the equivalent of the Purple Sun Sect, the sect would absolutely pour forth all of its strength and resources for her.

An innate constitution was an ultimate treasure for a sect on the Purple Sun Sect's level — a treasure found once in a thousand years!

If they didn't put her on a pedestal, a stronger power would steal her away sooner or later.

Therefore, Jiang Chen was clearly aware of the fact that the selection was likely the best opportunity to make a move against Long Juxue.

If he missed this opportunity and allowed her to soar to the skies, it would be much more difficult to kill her in the future.

The overseer's voice sounded once again as Jiang Chen was deep in thought. "Here we are, follow me inside."

An enormous building sat on the mountain, presenting a grand sight. It looked as awe inspiring as a sect.

There was a world all of its own within. It was an exceedingly

spacious area, giving one the feeling of an endlessly twisting and turning landscape.

The courtyard was even more majestic.

The expansive courtyard could accommodate tens of thousands of people.

Several thousand sect disciples were listening to some overseers' lectures. All of them stopped when they saw that there were newcomers.

The keeper in charge was tall and stocky, with a well rounded forehead and a deep gaze in his eyes.

"Master Fang, these are the top ten from the secular disciples. I've brought them here according to the rules." The overseer in charge of the secular selection smiled a bit fawningly at the keeper.

"Mm, allow them to approach." The tall Master Fang had on a stern expression on his face.

"Alright, you guys, go on over and stand at the back." The secular overseer said and turned to Master Fang again. "My mission is complete. I will take my leave then, Master fang."

Master Fang nodded his head aloofly and didn't keep him.

Jiang Chen and the other nine secular disciples all walked to the back of the formation.

When they passed the sect disciples, all of them had hints of jeering smiles on their faces and their eyes were full of disdain.

It was obvious that the sect disciples thought nothing much of these so-called secular geniuses.

Genius?

It was almost public opinion that all the geniuses beneath the heavens came from the sects.

The ordinary world had geniuses? That was a colossal joke! In the eyes of sect disciples, all secular geniuses were village buffoons. They were wandering practitioners if put nicely, country bumpkins when not.

Therefore, they didn't bother concealing their disdain when they saw the ten secular disciples join the formation.

How were mere ordinary practitioners worthy of being mentioned in the same breath as sect disciples?

"Alright, your identities are all the same from this moment on. You are all candidates of the mystic quadrant in the Eternal Spirit Mountain." Master Fang said faintly. "That the ten of you could emerge from the masses means that you have your uncommon

areas. However, the rules are the rules. You've just arrived from the ordering world, and you can be ranked as only fourth level mystic quadrant candidates."

As they'd expected, although the ten of them had been lucky enough to enter the mystic quadrant, they were assigned to the lowest level in that quadrant.

The fourth level was the lowest and the bottom of the barrel in all of the quadrants.

However, Jiang Chen had no protests against such an arrangement. So what about the fourth level? There was no meaning to the current divisions in either case.

The real determinant of advancement wasn't one's level, but one's win rate at the end of the cycle.

Jiang Chen's heart was rather calm when he faced the blatant scorn from the sect disciples.

It was the natural order of things that sect disciples had their eyes on top of their heads and looked down on secular practitioners. Jiang Chen had no plans to huff and puff at them.

That was simply too boring!

True strength was gained through fighting!

Chapter 320: An Explosion Of Enmity

Master Fang's voice sounded again, "We are all assembled here now and you all know the rules so I won't say much more. Now, I'll just go over some details you should take note of."

"The first detail — in each three month cycle, you must each complete a hundred challenges. If you don't complete this number, whether due to injury or other reasons, then each challenge you miss will become a loss. For example, if you complete only eighty challenges in three months and you won forty challenges, then the twenty that you lacked will also count as losses. In this regard, your score will become twenty wins and sixty losses, and your win rate calculated from this."

"The second detail is that if you feel that the opponent challenging you is too strong, you can choose to forfeit to protect yourself from injury. Your opponent will win without having to fight, and each forfeit will also be deducted from the fights you win."

"The third detail is that although we encourage only determining who is the victor instead of death matches, casualties are inevitable amongst these challenges. Each person is responsible for their own life."

"The fourth detail, all forms of personal fighting are strictly prohibited during this time. If you're lucky enough to avoid being caught, we can't do anything to you. But if you are caught, you will be punished harshly."

“The fifth detail…”

Master Fang listed out all the details without a hint of impatience.

Jiang Chen listened quite carefully, fully committing each detail to heart. Victory lay within the details, so under no circumstances could they be ignored.

“Alright, I have clearly gone over the details. If you still have any questions, you may ask me within the next two hours, after which I will no longer entertain your queries”

Upon hearing this, the sect disciples all asked questions proactively. Everyone was quite eager and touched on a variety of issues, but the questions raised all revolved around this trial.

Although Jiang Chen didn’t ask any, he listened quite carefully, focusing especially when he heard someone ask something he was more concerned about.

“Master Fang, I’d like to ask how many people are within the earth spirit quadrant?”

“There are a hundred within the sky quadrant, five hundred within the earth quadrant, three thousand in the mystic, and 3,500 in the yellow.” Master Fang provided precise numbers for everyone.

“Then will they be undergoing the same tests in these three months?”

“The content of the tests in the yellow and mystic quadrants are basically the same. They vary upon reaching the earth spirit quadrant, and become even more complicated in the sky spirit quadrant. The tests may not all be the same. If you can make it to the earth or even the sky quadrant, then someone will naturally explain their general gist to you. Don’t think that much for now for there is no advantage in reaching beyond your grasp.” Master Fang’s tone was distant.

“Master Fang, I’d like to ask if the sixty four selected for the final competition will all be chosen from the sky spirit quadrant?” Another disciple asked.

“Yes indeed. The sixty four candidates will all be chosen from the sky quadrant. Therefore, you must try hard and aim for the sky quadrant, even if there is only a slight hope of success. Although the great majority of you will be destined to fail, but as the keeper of this quadrant, I’d rather like to see how many geniuses will emerge from my area and make it into the earth and sky quadrants, and even the sixty four places. If even one of you number amongst the sixty four, then I will feel proud in this regard!”

The sky quadrant were filled with the most premier geniuses.

On the other hand, the mystic quadrant was filled with the weaker sect disciples with lower potentials.

This division was drawn up according to their usual performance in the sects. Ordinarily speaking, there might be some hope for someone in the mystic quadrant to challenge the earth level.

However, it was a farfetched daydream to think someone in the mystic realm could shoot to the sky quadrant.

For someone in the mystic quadrant to make it into the list of sixty four was even more impossible!

“Alright.” Master Fang waved his large hand. “I will now split up the territory. First level disciples will have a residence to themselves. Second level disciples will live two to a residence. Four to a residence for third level, and eight to a residence for fourth level.”

The candidates naturally had to have a resting place throughout the testing period of three months.

The differences between the four levels were thoroughly apparent with the division of residences.

The first level candidates had the highest honor of having a residence to themselves.

Although the second level disciples didn’t live alone, they would naturally have more peace and quiet with fewer people around. During cultivation, the largest taboo was an excess of people and

noises since cultivation would be adversely affected by too many distractions.

One naturally possessed a larger advantage with fewer people around.

As for third level candidates, although there were more people with four to a residence, their treatment was still better than the fourth level candidates.

Eight people to a residence was undoubtedly quite crowded. The most critical thing wasn't just that it was crowded, but also with such levels of noise,small conflicts were inevitable.

"The fourth level candidates do indeed face discrimination wherever they go." Jiang Chen sighed inwardly. However, he also knew that these were the rules and couldn't be changed.

What he could do was to shake off this identity as soon as possible.

All the candidates were allotted their residences after around two hours. As a fourth level candidate, Jiang Chen was assigned to one of the residences closer to the back.

The number of his residence was nine hundred something.

Jiang Chen didn't mind. Since he couldn't change anything at the moment, he might as well make the best of what he was given.

He grasped his residence token and searched according to his number, finally locating his residence after walking twenty to thirty li.

The mystic spirit quadrant had built layers of residences at the halfway point of the mountain.

The first level residences were at the peak, with second, third, and the fourth level residences following beneath them.

“Heh heh, the fourth level candidates are lower than everyone alright. Not only do they live eight to a house, but they’re located on lower geographic terrain compared to the others. Indeed, when one’s rank is low, one is stepped upon wherever one goes,” Jiang Chen reflected.

Although this wasn’t literally being stepped on by others, the layout of the residences made it very apparent — the first levels sat loftily on high ground, stepping on the other levels beneath them.

Jiang Chen finally saw where his house was located as he continued walking.

There was already a figure loitering outside the house. The thin figure walked up to Jiang Chen in welcome.

“Are you staying here as well?” The person wore the uniform and mask of a secular disciple.

“Yes, and you’re the first runner up of the first selection, candidate number two.” Jiang Chen had an impression of this figure.

The person started slightly and smiled, “I didn’t think you’d actually remember me. I observed you when they were handing out the tokens and you didn’t pay any attention to anyone at all. How do you know of me?”

Jiang Chen had indeed not paid much attention to the rankings of others, but that didn’t mean that he didn’t remember them.

His memory was quite strong. As long as he paid a little attention, he’d basically remembered all those who ranked in the front.

However, he naturally wouldn’t explain anything now and smiled, “You live here too? This means that all the secular practitioners live in this house?”

Jiang Chen actually didn’t mind that. All the secular candidates were wearing masks and no one knew anyone else which meant that no one would have to put up with attitude from anyone else. This was rather nice.

Jiang Chen felt that he’d rather live with the secular candidates than with the sect disciples.

The skinny candidate number two smiled ruefully, “That’s what I thought too, but we’ve actually been separated into five groups. Each group has been arranged with six other fourth level sect disciples. This means that we’re the only secular candidates in this house.”

Jiang Chen was rather surprised that the secular disciples hadn’t been all grouped into one house.

It looked like cohabitation with the sect disciples was inevitable.

He didn’t like that, but wasn’t particularly against it either. Although it was the same house, each person had their own room.

“Let’s relax and enjoy it since we’re already here. Let’s go in instead of loitering around outside.” Jiang Chen smiled faintly and walked inside.

Candidate number two caught up to him and asked, “There’s not that many of us secular candidates and we’ll be discriminated against wherever we go. What should I call you, brother? We should rally together since we’re beneath the same roof. What do you think?”

Jiang Chen smiled, “Since everyone called me Boulder during the first selection, you can call me Boulder.”

Candidate number two blinked blankly before replying, “Alright, Brother Boulder, you can call me Xiao Fei.”

Jiang Chen nodded and the two were about to walk in when they heard a crude and arrogant voice complaining inside.

"The f*ck. I heard that two ordinary candidates were assigned to our house? How freaking unlucky. We, noble sect disciples, need to share a roof with ordinary trash. Who the hell arranged this?! This is an insult to us!!"

Before even seeing him, it was likely the speaker was just as vicious as his tone.

He was likely one of those tyrannical and domineering bullies.

Another sinister voice spoke up afterwards, "Brother Tiger, we all know that you're someone who values face. In my opinion, you should show them up in the very beginning. Let them know that ultimately, ordinary practitioners are just village sparrows with no right to live together with us phoenixes from the sects."

"Yeah, Brother Tiger, let them know who's boss! They need to know that sect disciples are an existence they always have to look up to, not something these mundane ants can be on par with."

That vicious voice chuckled now, full of self pride. "Don't worry, we'll teach those two bumpkins a lesson when they come so that they'll obediently carry out our commands."

"Brother Tiger is Brother Tiger! We brothers will leave it all to

you! Come to think of it, it's not a bad thing to gain two slaves to order around."

Jiang Chen and candidate number two looked at each other, a wry expression in their eyes.

Enmity had already exploded before they'd even set foot into the house!

Chapter 321: Jiang Chen Demonstrates His Power

As he felt the explosive enmity from the yard, there weren't that many ripples that rocked Jiang Chen's heart.

It was said that dragons did not cohabit with snakes.

According to Jiang Chen's personality, these fourth level candidates didn't warrant the slightest attention from him. If it wasn't thanks to the rules, how would he share the same roof with them?

Given the circumstances, although he was unwilling, he didn't turn his face away.

Besides, how could the enmity of these fellows scare him?

He pointed his foot forward and kicked the door open. Jiang Chen's eyes swept the inside and noticed that the yard was rather spacious.

There were two rooms on each side of the courtyard, with eight in total. It was obvious that each candidate would have their own.

He was about to set foot into the courtyard when a wide figure came walking over. The figure immediately asked unceremoniously, "Who the hell are you to dare barge into where

cultivators live?”

The voice was crude and gruff, belonging to that Brother Tiger that the others had mentioned earlier.

Jiang Chen flicked a faint glance around and noticed the other five living in this residence had all gathered. The others were split into two sides and had fanned out, subtly preventing them from advancing.

“Are you deaf? I’m speaking to you!” A sect disciple’s superiority complex made Brother Tiger feel like he’d been gravely insulted when he saw that Jiang Chen’s gaze was distant, as if the latter couldn’t even be bothered to look at him.

“And who the hell are you? Haven’t you heard of the saying that good dogs don’t get underfoot? With you blocking the door like this, those who know will know you live here, those who don’t will think you’re the guard dog.” Jiang Chen smiled coolly.

Jiang Chen then creased his brow and flourished his sleeves like he was shooing away irritating flies in front of him, shouting, “Move, get out of my way!”

Brother Tiger was quite stalwart, big, and tall. When he saw Jiang Chen flourish his sleeves, the former leered and prepared to teach Jiang Chen a lesson.

However, in the moment that Jiang Chen’s sleeves waved,

Brother Tiger only felt that a mountain seemed to be pressing down on him. His breathing became labored and he subconsciously moved to the side.

This movement had seemed to be in accordance with Jiang Chen's words. Jiang Chen had told him to move, so he'd moved.

Jiang Chen passed by him and smiled faintly, "Seems like you've got a brain."

Brother Tiger's face flushed beet red as he exhaled explosively before finally recovering his breath. He was utterly baffled by what had just happened.

He roared out, "Brat, stop right there!"

Jiang Chen took a few more steps forward and saw that the other five sect disciples were still standing in front of him, blocking off all directions. It looked like they had no intention of letting Jiang Chen by.

Jiang Chen suddenly paused and stood in the center, a smile playing about his lips as he surveyed his surroundings.

He crossed his arms in front of his chest, smiling faintly. "Alright, out with it. Who's the boss here?"

Jiang Chen could also tell that this Brother Tiger was a minion. He'd been egged on by others to stick his head out.

In actuality, this fellow was absolutely not the boss of this residence. Someone who was all brawn and no brains would never be the boss.

Jiang Chen looked around and locked his gaze on a fair skinned young man standing to the south.

This person had had a remote expression with some traces of a smile on his face the whole time. The hint of restraint and pride in his eyes was the epitome of a sect disciple.

It looked like this person was the true boss of the courtyard.

Indeed, when Jiang Chen looked to him, everyone else's gaze also flitted to him.

This made Jiang Chen even more certain that he was the true leader of this residence.

The young man's brow creased slightly as Jiang Chen locked his gaze onto him, seemingly quite displeased with Jiang Chen's gaze. He seemed to feel that this was a deep offense to him.

"An ordinary practitioner dares to size me up in this manner?! What a country bumpkin, completely lacking in manners!"

Snorting softly, the young man said lightly, "I've heard that the

top ten of the secular disciples have been assigned to the mystic quadrant. They were rather lucky. However, didn't the overseer of the first selection teach you what to do once you entered? Didn't he teach you that you needed to keep your head down in front of the sect disciples?"

"It looks like you had moved the winds and rain in the first selection and brought that feeling of superiority into the second selection, hmm?"

The young man smiled coldly and stared frostily at Jiang Chen, his tone remote.

"Listen up! This young sir will represent the sect disciples and give you a lesson. Ordinary practitioners will always be ordinary practitioners. You're destined to roll around in the dust of the mundane world. Even if you're lucky and enter the sect, you'll only be at the bottom for others to step on, order around, and act as a background for. Remember, whether here or within the sects, you're always lower than others!"

The young man stretched out a hand and said, "Now, I'll announce the five rules of this residence."

"One, the two of you will live in the two rooms to the north. You are to never approach the other rooms without our orders."

"Second, the two of you will be in charge of all the errands in this residence."

“Third, you will hand over to me your monthly stipend and rewards.”

“Fourth, you are servants here and will answer when summoned. You will be punished with kneeling the first time you are remiss, a beating the second time, and death the third!”

“Fifth…”

Jiang Chen suddenly laughed and interrupted the other person’s flowing speech, smiling faintly, “Does this mean you really are the boss of this place?”

Someone immediately cried out next to him, “Kid, what bullshit are you spouting? My senior brother Cheng is of the fourth level spirit realm! If it wasn’t for the fact that he only recently broke through, he’d absolutely be able to be worthy of the earth quadrant with his current level of cultivation.”

“Heh heh, kid, recognize the situation you’re in. If senior brother Cheng says something in this residence, no one else dares to say anything else. If you understand the rules and play your part as a servant well, you’ll be able to weather the next three months well. If not…”

Jiang Chen spread out his hands and asked, “Senior brother Cheng is it? Which room do you live in?”

The young man frowned, seemingly above answering Jiang

Chen’s question.

Someone immediately toadied up to him and said, “The south side is king. Senior brother Cheng lives in the southern room, of course!:

Senior brother Cheng had a face full of lofty self pride and didn’t speak up otherwise.

Jiang Chen nodded and said to senior brother Cheng, “Go and pack your things. I’m commandeering the southern room.”

The scene quieted down instantly when he spoke.

Everyone had flabbergasted expressions, wondering if they’d misheard.

What? He’d told senior brother Cheng to pack his things because he was commandeering the room? Had... had this brat gone mad?”

“Kid, are... are you crazy? Senior brother Cheng has just explained the five rules to you, are you deaf and didn’t hear them?”

“Ordinary disciples and country bumpkins have no idea of the immensity of the universe. Senior brother Cheng, it looks like there’s a need to make them understand the rules!”

Jiang Chen's face grew cold. "Rules? Who made the rules? I only have one rule. Whoever offends me will pay the price!"

Jiang Chen paid no mind to these idiots after he spoke, and shot into the southern room like lightning. His speed was so fast that no one caught a clear glimpse of him.

After a short while, the luggage within the southern room were all thrown out, landing heavily on the ground.

Jiang Chen walked out and waved at candidate number two. "The room has been cleaned, do you want to come live in it?"

Candidate number two had already seemed to know that Jiang Chen would be so fierce. He chuckled and walked towards the southern room without a trace of fear.

This scene completely shell shocked the six sect disciples.

Senior brother Cheng's pale face immediately flushed red. "Brat, you don't care when you die huh?!"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "Since the southern room is good, why can we not take up residence within it when you can?"

Senior brother Cheng shook in his rage, "You ordinary ant! You filthy dog! Are you fit to live in the southern room?! Inferior beings should live in inferior rooms. The northern rooms are where trash like you should live!"

“However, you’ve now deeply offended me. It’s too late even if you want to live in the northern rooms. I now announce that you can only sleep in the courtyard!”

Senior brother Cheng’s tone was highly arrogant, as if his every word and sentence could determine everyone’s life.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly instead of growing angry when he heard these words. He advanced slowly towards senior brother Cheng.

“You’re right, inferior beings should live in inferior rooms. Therefore, the northern rooms are really suited for you.”

Jiang Chen’s aura increased with each step he took.

He’d destroyed even a golem at the peak of the fifth level spirit realm earlier. What did he fear from a fourth level disciple?

Although Jiang Chen’s level of cultivation was only at the fourth level spirit realm, thanks to a spirit ocean crafted by the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill and his various fortuitous encounters, Jiang Chen’s current aura was likely even on par with a cultivator at the peak of the earth spirit realm.

That a minor character who’d just entered the earth spirit realm kept threatening him — this naturally ticked off Jiang Chen by quite a bit.

He might have been able to overlook provocation, but this fellow had been spouting off words such as “trash”, “inferior”, and “village bumpkins” one after the other. Although Jiang Chen didn’t want to actually fight with him, he knew that if he didn’t put this fellow down, he’d been in for no end of provocation in the future.

As opposed to making concessions to keeping the peace, he might as well settle things once and for all today and set the tone for what’s to happen in the residence. From today forth, he, Jiang Chen, would be the boss of this place, and his word was law!

Whoever ran afoul of him would be in for it!

As Jiang Chen advanced, senior brother Cheng only felt a slight pressure weigh on him. His breathing then became labored, and then he realized that his spirit ocean was being continuously compressed like a balloon, in danger of exploding at any moment.

“This!”

Senior brother Cheng’s face changed greatly as great drops of perspiration dripped down from his forehead.

Jiang Chen was expressionless as he continued to speak noncommittally, “Senior brother Cheng is it? A sect disciple hmm? Five rules huh? Out of all that, I only ask, whose word is law now?”

Chapter 322: Now Who's Boss?

No matter how incisive one's words were, they weren't as convincing as a pair of iron fists.

No threats were as direct as directly threatening one's life.

That senior brother Cheng, who'd been overweeningly arrogant just moments before, was completely frightened out of his senses. He felt that his spirit ocean would collapse at any time and was truly scared out of his mind.

When it dawned on him that this pressure came from the ordinary disciple in front of him, there was no doubt that he had been shocked senseless and almost peed his pants.

His face was ashen as he stammered, "Your... your word is law."

"Louder, I can't hear you!" Jiang Chen purposefully raised his voice.

Senior brother Cheng almost wanted to cry but had to raise his voice, "Your... your word is law. From today onwards, your word is law in this yard!"

"Who's going to live in the northern house?" Jiang Chen asked again.

“I’ll live in it.” Senior brother Cheng was completely humiliated, but he didn’t dare not answer.

“Who’s inferior? Who’s the trash? Who’s a dog?” Jiang Chen continued.

Senior brother Cheng completely broke down as he sobbed, “Me, it’s me!”

This exchange of words completely stunned the other disciples in the yard. They were all shellshocked as they couldn’t believe their eyes. Was this really senior brother Cheng?

He was this weak in front of a secular disciple and had lost his composure so?!

Was this still the senior brother Cheng that they admired and who was loftily on high?

Jiang Chen smiled faintly as he retracted his aura and shouted, “Get the hell out of here. Your five rules were quite nice, so now I’m commandeering those as well. The six of you are my servants starting from today. You must answer when I call for you. You can resist, but don’t blame me for not reminding you that the price of fighting back will be ten thousand times worse than being a servant.”

Jiang Chen smiled coldly and brandished his sleeves, walking back to the room on the left of the southern side.

Candidate number two also walked up and pointed his thumb up at Jiang Chen, smiling, “Brother Boulder is domineering alright. That’s how you should treat bullies like these guys. You were too awesome. I’ll follow you from now on!”

Jiang Chen nodded absentmindedly. “Your room isn’t this one.”

Candidate number two blinked and immediately understood that he was being told to leave. He rubbed his nose, “You’re no fun brother Boulder. Forget it, I’ll go back to my room. Thanks to brother Boulder today, I don’t have to be a servant and can lie in the southern room.”

A complicated look appeared in Jiang Chen’s eyes as he watched candidate number two walk out.

For some reason, he felt that this person was quite mysterious. There also seemed to be a power hidden within this person.

Jiang Chen even suspected that if he hadn’t made a move, then this “Xiao Fei” would’ve able to take care of all the sect disciples in the courtyard himself as well.

Of course, this was just speculation.

The six sect disciples standing outside were all as dejected as roosters who’d lost a fight. Some of them had obvious expressions of being unwilling to accept this outcome.

“Senior brother Cheng, just what is going on? Why did you…”

Senior brother Cheng waved his hand and said dispiritedly, “Let’s talk inside.”

All of them surged into a room and one of the more hot tempered ones couldn’t help but say, “Senior brother Cheng, you lowered your head to those country cultivators just now? Were… were you putting on the ruse of injuring yourself in order to win?”

“Yeah, senior brother Cheng, you’re playing with that kid, right? Letting him climb high so that he will get a nasty fall down, right?”

“Haha, this must be the case. I knew that our senior brother Cheng would submit to mere ordinary disciples. This is quite creative, letting them soar to the clouds first and then slapping them down in a mess with one hand. Not bad, not bad. This new way of denying face and stepping on someone afterwards is creative indeed.”

Senior brother Cheng had black lines running down his face as he cursed in his heart. Are all of you guys truly brainless? Or are you on being sarcastic on purpose just to jeer at me?

Injuring himself in order to win? Only bird brains such as these could possibly think up of this!

“Tiger and Sixie, the two of you pack your things and move to the

northern rooms.” Senior brother Cheng said with a darkened face.

“What?” The stockily built Tiger immediately jumped up. “Why? Senior brother Cheng, are you joking? The northern rooms are the worst off, so why am I the one living there? Didn’t we agree that it would be those two ordinary disciples are staying there?”

Senior brother Cheng frowned, “I told you to go. What are you standing here blabbing away for?”

Tiger threw his head to the side, “I’m not going. You go if you want.”

It was likely that he’d seen senior brother Cheng’s cowardly display just now that Tiger had suddenly lost a lot of his usual respect towards senior brother Cheng, and his tone wasn’t that polite either.

Senior brother Cheng slammed his hand on the table, “What, do you think because I can take care of those two ordinary cultivators that I can’t do the same to you?”

Tiger’s temper also rose as well. “You were the one who arranged everything before but now you’ve changed your mind. I’m perfectly happy in my room on the west side and I’m not going to the one on the north side, no matter what you say!”

Senior brother Cheng flew into a rage as someone said on the side, “Senior brother Cheng, just what’s going on here? Do you

mean you weren't acting just now?"

"The f*ck was I acting about!" Blood vessels once again popped out on his pale face. "I almost lost my life just now! Do you guys think you're awesome and think I was shit just now? It's not that I'm taking you down a peg, but all of you together wouldn't put up enough of a fight against me, much less him! You'd be courting death!"

When had the fourth level spirit realm senior brother Cheng ever spoken such depressed words? This was obviously helping someone else become powerful and overlooking his own strength!

The entire scene was shocked senseless when his words rang out.

They all knew senior brother Cheng very well. This fellow was a narcissistic, arrogant, cocky person who rarely complimented others.

However, he was actually voicing such words now!

What did this mean? This meant that all this cowardly actions and words just now were real and not an act!

Judging from his currently enraged expression, he was obviously not joking.

The faces of the five others finally changed at this moment.

“Senior brother Cheng, what do you mean you almost lost your life? Does that secular brat have some tricks up his sleeve?”

“Yeah, that kid looks crude beyond belief and he doesn’t look that strong. Not to mention, even if he is a genius among the ordinary cultivators, how can he compared to us sect disciples?”

The sect disciples were still too used to being on high, lofty grounds and having no respect for anyone at all. They viewed the ordinary world as shit and had never properly looked at anyone from there.

If it hadn’t been for that moment leaving such an impression just now, senior brother Cheng almost wondered if he’d been delusional and had been hallucinating just now.

But that kind of feeling of teetering between life and death would never lie to one.

In actuality, he wasn’t sure what had happened either. He’d only felt that he was a skiff in the midst of raging oceans, likely to be devoured at any time.

In that moment, it was as if someone else was controlling his life and death, consciousness, movement, and everything was outside of his control.

Otherwise, with his cultivation and mentality at the earth spirit

realm, how would he have lost his composure thus?

Senior brother Cheng was also extremely irate with his companions repeated questions. He snorted, “You guys are welcome to try if you don’t believe me. I’ve already said this much, so if any of you want to die, go ahead. I won’t stop you.”

No matter how much the others were skeptical, they all somewhat believed after seeing senior brother Cheng thus.

“But…” There was still someone reluctant, “Senior brother Cheng, does this mean that this fellow is the king of this residence in the next three months? We have to listen to his commands and become his servant? Isn’t this a colossal joke?”

“Right?! We’re still sect geniuses at the end of the day, and where will our face be if word gets out that we obeyed the commands of an ordinary cultivator?”

“Indeed, us sect disciples would rather die and be humiliated. I can’t afford the loss of face that comes with being ordered about by a mere mundane ant.”

Senior brother Cheng rolled his eyes and said woodenly, “I’m not repeating myself. You guys can go try for yourselves if you don’t believe me.”

The others in the residence had all looked to him as their leader. Now that he was surrendering all of a sudden, the others felt a bit

put off and didn't know what to do.

They discussed for quite a while but couldn't come up with a plan.

They could only surmise from senior brother Chen's words that this ordinary cultivator was incredibly strong to the point where even the former couldn't make a stand.

Senior brother Cheng would've never given up so easily if this wasn't the case.

When everyone saw their leader accept his lot, they knew that it was impossible to expect him to make another move.

If even their leader at the earth spirit realm didn't have the courage to challenge him again, then how would they, whose cultivation was far less, have the guts to?

All of them sighed as they weren't willing to accept things, but had no ability to change the situation.

The results of the first selection hadn't been revealed to the sect disciples, so these fellows naturally didn't know how strong these mundane cultivators were.

If they'd known that a freak genius with a boulder's heart had appeared in the first selection, then this show likely wouldn't have played out today.

Jiang Chen was sitting in his secret chamber at this moment. He'd used the Ear of the Zephyr to listen in on those other fellows just now.

It seemed that senior brother Cheng had accepted the results, but for the others, not so much.

However, with Jiang Chen's observation of that sect disciple, would he truly have submitted that easily? I don't think so!

This person was quite shrewd and had likely already guessed that it wasn't safe to speak in the residence, so he hadn't dared say anything at all and could only stammer inconclusively.

Jiang Chen understood that the more someone was like this, the more dangerous he was. Although he appeared to have accepted his lot on the surface, he was actually cooking up some sinister plot in the shadows.

"Humph. Dancing buffoons who aren't even able to take one hit! How would I, Jiang Chen, be afraid of some clowns? Whether this senior brother Cheng accepts things or not, I have hundreds of ways to take his life if he irritates me again." Jiang Chen thought and paid no more attention to the reactions in the outside world.

He was in the mystic spirit quadrant now and had entered the territory of the second selection. He was facing all the sect geniuses.

If even the fourth level mystic quadrant disciples were fourth level spirit realm, then what of the first level?

There were also the geniuses in the earth and sky quadrants...

“It looks like the four great sects have indeed kept some young talent in reserve.” Jiang Chen thought.

Chapter 323: Increase In Armor Level, Art Of Refining The Body

However, Jiang Chen wasn't scared by these circumstances. On the contrary, he was rather excited. He'd previously been worried that the sect disciples would be too incompetent, and wouldn't present him any challenge at all.

It looked like he'd thought about it too much.

Since there were already fourth level spirit realm disciples in the mystic quadrant, then there were surely geniuses with astounding talent in the higher levels.

Jiang Chen's blood boiled slightly when he thought about the challenges ahead of him.

He also looked forward to this kind of a feeling. This was an experience that he hadn't had in his past life; it was something unique to cultivators. And although he was well read in theories and knowledge, he'd still only been a bystander on the path of the martial dao.

"I used my aura to suppress senior brother Cheng just now, and also deployed some techniques to control one's consciousness. It looks like the effects were quite good. Senior brother Cheng lost his sense of self, and wasn't able to control both his motions and his words. That means this technique wasn't just meant to suppress someone else's aura, but could also control their consciousness as well. It looks to me like I truly need to practice

the techniques of both the mind and the heart.”

Thus far, Jiang Chen hadn’t trained in any techniques that could control the mind. However, in the course of practicing Boulder’s Heart and Psychic’s Head, it was inevitable that he’d encounter this field.

He’d simply dipped a toe into this area just now, and had been surprised by how good the effects had been.

Of course, this had only pointed out a general direction for him. He didn’t have the time to specifically practice this kind of technique during the selection.

He’d received quite a bit from the five trials of the initial selection.

His two attributes of fire and water had, thanks to the Lotus, advanced rapidly during the trials.

However, for a genius of all five elements like Jiang Chen, although simultaneously training in both the fire and the water attributes put him above the majority of the other cultivators, it was still a bit unbalanced for him.

The Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill had crafted his spirit ocean, and expanded his domains, equipping Jiang Chen with potential in the five elements that most lacked.

Ordinarily speaking, only someone born with an innate constitution would possess the ability to simultaneously train in all five elements at the same time.

Even though the advantage conferred to him by the Opening Heavens Pill wasn't as superior as having an innate constitution, it was still the equivalent of thoroughly re-molding him.

Although his progress in the other three elements was relatively slower, it didn't impact his strength, nor the advancement of his combat abilities.

However, if his efforts were to bear fruit in all five elements, then both his strength and combat abilities would naturally be even more stunning.

"So the saying goes, and goes well, that ideals are full and lofty, but reality is scarce and lacking. Although I've benefitted from the Opening Heavens Pill in crafting my spirit ocean, I lacked the fortune to develop all five elements at the same time, due to a lack of resources. The Lotus speaks to my water and fire meridians, while the golden magnetic mountain is a treasure trove for my metal meridian."

Jiang Chen's concentration had finally arrived upon the golden magnetic mountain.

It was undoubtedly an enormous treasure vault, as it could form a forcefield that could decrease his opponent's speed, restrain his opponents, and protect himself. It could swallow everything when

it formed a magnetic storm, and could churn up everything in its path.

Its metallic spirit power could also help Jiang Chen coalesce a spirit vein of metal. If he then trained in a body-refining technique and crafted an indestructible body, then could then make it so that his body was as strong as both metal and rock; undefeatable, and impervious to blades and spears.

If he could fully control the magnetic golden mountain, then he'd also be able to summon the golden, weapon-shaped monsters at any time. They weren't that strong in single combat, but their powers of destruction en masse were quite strong and stunning.

That evil golden eye was even more frightening, as it could petrify people with a single glance, turning them into golden colored sculptures.

Of course, the most terrifying thing was the awakened Master of the Golden Seal. If he could thoroughly control the mountain, and fully awaken the Master, then its battle strength would simply be beyond Jiang Chen's imagination.

He'd met a Master of the Golden Seal that had had only a fraction of its power available to it, and it had used only 10% of that fraction to attack Jiang Chen, but he'd still felt that it'd been difficult to defend against.

If a Master of the Golden Seal struck with its full strength, Jiang Chen strongly believed that even the combined efforts of the four

forefathers would be hard-pressed to defend against it.

Of course, a peak Master of the Golden Seal wasn't simply available at his beck and call. That was just a lovely daydream before he'd fully mastered the mountain.

Jiang Chen also hadn't forgotten that there were still the Thundercloud Golden Beetle and Thundercloud Tree on the ninth floor of the mountain.

Whether it was the beetle's bloodlines, or the tree itself, they were both great treasures.

Apart from that, Jiang Chen had gained even more from the Valley of Destruction.

The cores of the Fire Raven King and the Fire Ravens were all valuable fire attribute items. The Raven King's tail feathers were also prime material to refine into weapons.

The Red-scaled Firelizard was even more of a treasure trove. Although the Goldbiter Rats had made off with its flesh and blood, the scales of the Firelizard had heaven defying powers of defense. Its bones were so hard that even the Rats hadn't been able to nibble on them. It was thus apparent how strong they were, and how crucial they were to crafting weapons.

Jiang Chen took out two scales at the moment, and held them up. The two of them together would just barely cover the upper half of

an adult's body.

The Firelizard's enormous size also meant that there were roughly two hundred scales on its body.

Jiang Chen also had armor on his body now; it was the skysilk soft armor that Princess Gouyu had given him while they were in the Eastern Kingdom.

This armor was truly invincible in the true qi realm, but now that he'd entered the spirit realm, its protective effects had become negligible.

"A good piece of armor represents half an extra life in crucial moments. If I don't use these Firelizard scales well, it'd be a reckless waste of a good gift."

Jiang Chen decided to personally reforge the skysilk armor, and incorporate the two Firelizard scales into the soft armor.

The two scales would instantly increase the defensive capabilities of the armor by at least ten times.

The Red-scaled Firelizard had even been able to defend against the Fire Ravens at a time when it's cultivation had decreased to 20% of its original.

Of course, the scales were only able to display their strongest defensive capabilities when they were actually on the Firelizard,

and combined with its spirit power.

As sophisticated as Jiang Chen's methods were, he'd likely only be able to display a third of the scales' original defensive capabilities if he refined the scales now.

However, a third of their original capabilities was already astounding enough.

If he could refine the core of the Firelizard one day, then he'd be able to fully display the scales' defensive capabilities.

However, Jiang Chen knew that it wouldn't be that easy to refine a saint ranked creature's core.

He didn't even dare to think of this matter before his cultivation had entered the sky spirit realm.

However, incorporating the two scales into the skysilk soft armor wasn't a difficult thing—not with Jiang Chen's experience.

He spent four hours fully incorporating the scales into the soft armor. When he was finished, the soft armor didn't look any different from the outside.

The only physical difference was that it'd become slightly heavier, there were no differences on its exterior.

However, the soft armor brimmed with a amount of faint spirit energy now, giving one the feeling that it was an uncommon item.

“The saying that ‘those who specialize in civil subjects are poor, and the ones in the martial dao are rich’ is true indeed. Even sect geniuses, much less ordinary disciples, would be hard pressed to find something like this soft armor for their own use. The path of the martial dao is intricately intertwined with both money and resources.”

Jiang Chen had been born in a third rate kingdom, and had had no money or resources. He’d made it to this point completely due to the memories of his previous life, and the unending efforts he’d made in this life.

Use the armor of the Fire-scaled Lizard as an example—if it hadn’t been for his decisive actions to follow the development of the battle, he likely wouldn’t have had any gains in the end.

“With the increase in this armor’s level, I feel that even earth spirit realm attacks will find it difficult to injure me. Of course, nothing is absolute in this world. Some strong attribute attacks are another matter entirely. However, it’ll be impossible for any fire or water attacks below the sky spirit realm to injure me.”

The Firelizard naturally possessed the fire attribute, and was thus immune to it. Water attacks would also be greatly weakened under the defense of its scales.

Jiang Chen started to meditate after completing the

modifications to his soft armor, rummaging through the memories of his past life. He wanted to locate a body-refining technique.

There were many such techniques, but he'd have to carefully choose one that was suitable for him.

"The Buddha's warrior attendants, nine variations of transformation? This art uses the essence of metal, along with the power of fire and water, to refine an indestructible body. This is the one!"

The "Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods" was also known as the "Nine Variations of Buddha's Warrior Attendants".

This technique made his eyes light up.

Various experts before him had used this art to refine their bodies all the way from an ordinary mortal, to an undying legend beneath the heavens.

It was because of this that there were countless heritages and variations of this technique.

"There are nine levels of the Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods. The first five are to refine the skin, flesh and blood, tendons and bones, five organs, and true origin. The last four go beyond one's body, and begin to transform into the various forms of demons and gods, utterly unfathomable in their depth.

The first five steps were both simply just to lay a foundation, and to forge an indestructible body. The last four steps of the advanced art were something that he couldn't even imagine currently.

Jiang Chen knew very well that if he could lay down firm foundations, he'd be invincible in the spirit realm.

Even when he entered the origin realm, his indestructible body would make him peerless, compared to others on his level. If he could display the transformations of demons and gods, then that would be utterly incredible. He'd be able to easily trample opponents of the same level, and even those of higher levels.

"This is the one, the Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods! I have boundless metallic essence thanks to the golden magnetic mountain, and have an incomparable advantage in fire and water thanks to the Lotus. It's almost as if this art was tailored for me."

Jiang Chen stopped searching, and decided to train in this particular technique.

Chapter 324: The Hundred Challenges Arena

A night passed. Jiang Chen opened his eyes to revel in the feeling of a new day as sunlight streamed into his room.

The morning sunshine and mountain breeze gave one a very homely feeling. However, each candidate also knew that the true challenge had arrived.

Jiang Chen had also seen some success after practicing the “Nine Transformations” for a night. When he had first called upon the essence of metal power and focused it onto his skin, he’d only felt a slight pricking pain.

This pain wasn’t noticeable at first, but as his training deepened, it felt like tens of thousands of embroidery needles were constantly stabbing into his skin.

Although this level of pain wasn’t enough to cause someone to break down, it still didn’t feel good by any means.

Jiang Chen was someone who could endure pain very well, and he didn’t even crease his brow when continuing to use the essence of metal power in order to further refine his skin.

As time went on, his skin grew used to the tempering from the essence of metal and the sensation of pain slowly decreased.

He knew that no art was easily trained. There would be countless inevitable trials and tribulations on the path of cultivation.

When it came to refining the body, there was a commonly accepted principle in the world of martial dao.

Those who lacked great determination would not be able to endure refinement of the body. Refining the body was a kind of self torture, and sufficient courage was needed to place oneself within the eighteenth level of hell.

There were those with ordinary potential who fought their way to the top, step by step, just through refining their bodies.

It could be said that the art of body refinement had cleaved a new path to attain the peak of martial dao for those with ordinary potential.

However, it was a path that was much more difficult than ordinary cultivation.

Those who could truly make it to the peak of body refinement were as rare as phoenix feathers and dragon scales.

However, once a cultivator made it to the peak of body refinement, their battle strength was, without a doubt, much stronger than their peers of similar cultivation levels.

Fierce battle strength, incredible explosive power, and a death-

defying fighting spirit were all traits unique to body refiners.

The first level of Jiang Chen's "Nine Transformations of the Demons and Gods" was just to temper his skin. All the pain that he felt was just the smallest taste of things to come.

The higher his level grew, the tougher the trials would be on his body.

Jiang Chen was also well aware that since he'd chosen to refine his body, this meant that he would have to be prepared to accept the pain and suffering of eighteen levels of hell as well.

However, Jiang Chen wasn't an ordinary body refiner in this regard. He had many methods that could help him decrease his pain a bit in the process of refining his body.

Knock knock knock.

Knocking sounds came from the door. Judging from the footsteps, he knew that it was his neighbor, Xiao Fei.

He opened the door to reveal candidate number two's face.

"Brother Boulder, it's about time to assemble. We should go."

Jiang Chen nodded, as he knew the rules.

All candidates had to report to the Hundred Challenges Arena every morning during these three months.

The Arena was built in the core area of the mystic spirit quadrant, with a hundred rings built within. Each candidate had to take their place within the Arena every morning.

According to the rules, the successive sixteen hours starting from the morning (TN: precise time given is 7am – 9am) of each day were open for challenges. All candidates had to remain within the Arena and could not leave.

This was because each candidate was not only a challenger, but also someone to be challenged.

This rule did not apply after a candidate had been challenged three times in the same day, and they were allowed to leave first.

Their name would then be struck off the list and they would no longer be able to receive more challenges that day.

This was a type of protection for the candidates.

Otherwise, if one was unlucky and was selected seven or eight times a day, they'd die of exhaustion, even if they weren't beaten to death.

At the same time, each candidate had to complete one challenge a day.

By ruling that that each candidate had to complete a challenge a day, this ensured that the hundred challenges would be able to be completed within three months.

Jiang Chen exited his room and left the door unlatched. Although he hadn't left anything inside, he still didn't want anyone coming in to disturb his room. Therefore, Jiang Chen left a few marks around the doorway.

If anyone moved his door and entered his room, he'd find out when he returned.

"Brother Boulder, how are your preparations?" Xiao Fei asked probingly.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "Not bad, you?"

Xiao Fei barely mustered a smile, "My strength is far less than Brother Boulder's. I'll try my best."

His attitude was quite humble, but Jiang Chen could tell that Xiao Fei's true strength was absolutely not what he'd displayed thus far.

The two of them walked out to discover that the other six sect disciples had left quite early.

It looked like they'd slipped out early in order to avoid any awkwardness. They were deathly afraid of bumping into Jiang Chen and being ordered around like a servant.

As sect disciples, they couldn't let go of the pride rooted in their bones.

Xiao Fei smiled, "These fellows look like they're truly afraid. They left early and didn't dare meet with Brother Boulder. What a vindicating feeling!"

Jiang Chen smiled slightly, and felt that although it was possible that they were scared, he didn't feel that these fellows would accept their new lots quite so easily. It was likely that more developments were in store.

However, just as Jiang Chen had said, they could resist, but the price of resisting was far worse than the price of being a servant.

It took them fifteen minutes to make it to the Hundred Challenges Arena.

A hundred elevated rings stood in the vast expanse of the Hundred Challenges Arena, giving one an impressive and awe inspiring feeling.

Candidates of various levels were already sitting cross legged around the Arena.

As Jiang Chen and Xiao Fei wore the uniforms of secular disciples, they stood out greatly as they walked across the ground. Xiao Fei looked around and discovered that the other ordinary practitioners were all cowering within the corners. It looked like they'd been thoroughly whipped into shape by the sect disciples.

When they saw Jiang Chen and Xiao Fei appear, a strange light appeared in some of their eyes. It seemed that they were waiting to watch a good show, and that their hearts would be assuaged only when they saw Jiang Chen firmly driven into the ground.

Jiang Chen could discern their thoughts from their eyes.

"What a pathetic bunch. What are they doing in a selection if they don't dare to retort against these sect disciples? Just because they've had some tough times, they want to see us go through the same. They don't even have a bottom line of a decent human being. These people deserve to be stomped underfoot."

Jiang Chen originally had a few traces of sympathy for these secular disciples, but that little bit of sympathy vanished completely when he saw the expression and looks in their eyes.

Xiao Fei also seemed to detect the enmity coming from them at all sides.

The sect disciples all had unfriendly looks on their faces. It was obvious that word of what had happened in their courtyard had spread amongst the sect disciples.

“Brother Boulder, it looks like we have trouble.” Xiao Fei said lowly.

Jiang Chen creased his brow, “You can go off on your own if you’re afraid of trouble. You can even kiss up to the sect disciples, I won’t stop you.”

Xiao Fei chuckled, “I don’t have much to my name, but I’ve got a stubborn temper. The more they want to suppress me, the more I won’t let them succeed. Brother Boulder, you want to get rid of me? Heh heh, I’m not moving!”

If it was in ordinary times, Jiang Chen wouldn’t have cared what this fellow was thinking. But in comparison to the other disciples all submitting to the sect disciples, at least candidate number two had some self pride and hadn’t bowed his head to the sect disciples.

Therefore, Jiang Chen didn’t feel any distaste towards him.

“You, kid. Come over here.” An impolite voice suddenly sounded from the left.

Jiang Chen didn’t even seem to hear the voice as he continued walking forward without the slightest pause in his footsteps.

“Hey! I mean you two! The two with the masks! I’ve heard you’re the first and second place candidates in the first selection? Tsk tsk, aren’t you cocky eh!”

If Jiang Chen answered these idiotic provocations every time they came up, he'd never have time to do anything else.

However, the more he ignored them, the more annoyed they became. A figure flashed as it blocked Jiang Chen's way, with arrogance and domination written all over his face.

"Kid, you're cocky! If a sect disciple is calling out to you, it means we are honoring you! Who the hell do you think you are to be so discourteous?"

"Piss off." Jiang Chen had only two words.

"What? You... you told me to piss off?"

Jiang Chen said no more and reached out a hand, grabbing the other's shirt with incredible speed and sending out extreme strength with the shake of his hand. He flung the other out twenty or so meters, like he was throwing away a dead animal.

The person didn't even have time to react before crashing down helter skelter over the ground, the very epitome of bedraggedness.

If it wasn't for the rules, Jiang Chen would've sent him flying with one slap.

Although the person was in a sore state, he wasn't injured. His face was feet red as he'd just been tossed aside like trash beneath the stares of everyone assembled. This was howling shame!

To add insult on injury, Xiao Fei actually started applauding, as if craving nothing more than to stir up chaos.

“Wonderful, wonderful! What a nice Tripped Dog Form, right on!”

The sect disciple almost spat out blood when he heard these words. Tripped Dog Form! This was insinuating that he was a dog!

“Brat, who are you calling a dog?? The sect disciple flew into a rage but was still wary of Jiang Chen and so didn’t dare to charge forward.

Xiao Fei chuckled, “Whoever blocks the way is the dog, do you need me to teach you that?”

The sect disciple howled with indignation as another disciple stepped out at this time. His expression was remote as he actually looked a bit similar to senior brother Cheng.

“Let me introduce myself, I’m Cheng Zhen. I heard from my younger cousin that you were quite arrogant in the courtyard yesterday. I don’t know what you, a mere secular disciple, have to be arrogant about. I warn you, if you dare do anything to my cousin, I will make you regret arriving in this world.”

Threats upon threats! To blatantly threaten another in front of the Hundred Challenges Arena, these sect disciples were truly

unbridled.

Chapter 325: The Challenges Begin

Jiang Chen didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He didn't understand where these sect disciples got their confidence and their feeling of superiority from.

Although Cheng Zhen was much stronger than his cousin, it seemed from his tone that he was assured that he would have complete domination over Jiang Chen.

Stupefied, Jiang Chen raised an eyelid and said faintly, "That sounds like a threat?"

"Yes, I'm threatening you." Cheng Zhen smiled coldly. "Secular disciples should have the self awareness of being ordinary dirt. Since no one has taught you how to act in front of a sect genius, I'll trouble myself to teach you about how you should act and behave yourself."

Jiang Chen sighed lightly and shook his head, "What a pity."

"Pity what?!" Cheng Zhen flew into a rage.

"It's a pity that the rules don't allow personal fighting. Otherwise, I'd be able to teach you right now that you need to be able to back up your lofty words with real ability, or you'll find that you're actually just full of hot air."

Cheng Zhen's face darkened as his expression grew long.

“Slow witted brat, this means that you’ve made up your mind to go against me?”

Jiang Chen said faintly, “You’re thinking too much. Going against you? What makes you think that you’re worthy?”

To be honest, the Cheng brothers really weren’t worth Jiang Chen going to any effort for them.

As a sect disciple, Cheng Zhen’s arrogance knew no bounds. The sense of superiority when facing ordinary practitioners was even more full blown.

In his eyes, so-called ordinary geniuses was just selecting a tall person from a crowd of shorties. They weren’t worthy of being put side by side with the sect disciples at all.

He felt that he was a proud phoenix when facing ordinary geniuses, and they were just base hens.

Hens were supposed to lower their eyes and heads in front of noble phoenixes and bow to their every wish.

So when he heard Jiang Chen’s words, Cheng Zhen wanted to explode with rage. He was arrogant, but he didn’t think that there’d be someone even more arrogant than him in the mundane world!

The rage in his chest was almost to the point of erupting.

As the two faced off against each other, a stern yell suddenly came from the Arena. “The hour has arrived, all cultivators be silent and welcome the main examiners!”

The examiners had finally arrived.

With their arrival, the candidates naturally didn’t dare to make a fuss. These were people who would decide their fates.

Cheng Zhen ferociously glared at Jiang Chen, “You’re lucky kid. You better pray that you don’t get me or I don’t pick you, or else, I’ll make it so that you don’t even have the ability to get off the ring yourself!”

“Is that so? Then I should really thank you for letting me know how hard I should punch you.” Jiang Chen shrugged and he had a careless expression on his face.

Such empty threats were unamusing jokes to Jiang Chen.

The keeper of the mystic quadrant, the man surnamed Fang, was standing in front of the Hundred Challenges Arena. Roughly two hundred supporting examiners were standing beside him.

The Arena needed to record wins and losses and scores, so naturally, a lot of helpers were needed.

Master Fang's presence was stately and wherever he swept his gaze, all candidates sitting cross legged stood up. No one dared put on airs and remain seated.

Master Fang's cold gaze paused briefly between Jiang Chen and Cheng Zhen, leaving behind a meaningful look.

His gaze then immediately swept in another direction.

Cheng Zhen's neck shrunk a bit as he felt the back of his head grow cold and fear rise in his heart.

Had Master Fang noted his movements just now?

Jiang Chen however, was rather open minded about it all. Everything had resulted from Cheng Zhen's provocations. He didn't have a guilty conscience and he didn't even fear anything even if this keeper sided with the sect disciple.

However, it appeared for the moment that Master Fang didn't intend on sheltering anyone. He didn't even seem prepared to get involved.

"The hour is almost here. The challenges begin from this moment on. We will select the list of challengers at random and without order. The first batch of one hundred to be chosen will take their place in the rings."

No matter a cultivator's level or ranking, everything was random. Cheating could be thus avoided in this manner.

"Remember, the victor of the challenge can continue to battle today. Theoretically speaking, we have no restrictions on the victor. You can continuously challenge others until you fall or you no longer wish to battle for the day. As for those who fail in their challenge, you won't have the right to challenge others for the rest of the day."

"Those who have failed in their challenge must leave the ring. We will select others to fill empty rings."

These challenges only counted the score of the challenger. As for those who had been challenged, they had to leave the ring no matter if they won or lost.

Jiang Chen had to admit that there was quite a bit of difficulty to these challenges. If someone had just been challenged and was selected to challenge someone else in the next fight, then that meant they would fight two times in a row.

If a challenger kept winning, then theoretically speaking, they could continue battling.

This was very advantageous to the candidates with extraordinary strength, particularly the first level ones. They would be able to fight several times a day if they had overwhelming strength.

Jiang Chen was rather filled with anticipation at this thought.

“Remember, each fight can only last 30 minutes. If no one has beaten their opponent or neither side has conceded the match during this time, it will be up to the judges to determine who has won. Victory will be awarded according to the development of the battle. The side that is deemed to be the passive one will be denoted the loser. Remember, there are no draws. If you cannot defeat your opponent, at least strive to suppress them in the ring.”

There were no draws. Every battle had to have a conclusion.

That was the harsh reality of the challenges. Jiang Chen believed that this rule would make everyone strive to their utmost, because if you didn’t knock your opponent completely down and fought for the full 30 minutes, the drain on your body’s resources would be enormous.

Therefore, each candidate had to think of all ways possible to defeat their opponent as fast as possible.

With sixteen hours a day for battling, there would be four matches every two hours. This meant that each ring would host 32 matches a day.

The one hundred elevated rings could host 3,200 matches.

With the three thousand total candidates in the mystic quadrant, there would be three thousand matches if everyone submitted one

challenge. The facilities would be enough to accommodate all the activities.

"The challenges now officially start. I will now draw the first batch of challengers. Those who are selected must immediately take their place in the ring. Your opponents will also be selected at random."

Everything was at random, but there would certainly be some coincidences.

But regardless, this process was fair overall.

The first batch of a hundred competitors was quickly selected, but Jiang Chen's name wasn't part of it. Some of those selected were delighted and others were incredibly nervous. There were also those who were calm, and some who were expressionless.

"It's a pity that I wasn't in the first batch." Jiang Chen actually really wanted to go up early. Sadly, it was rather normal that he hadn't been selected in the first hundred.

Xiao Fei on his side also sighed, "We weren't selected. Eh, wasn't that fellow ranked number 7 in the first selection? He was selected."

Indeed, in of the first batch, there was one secular disciple.

There were only ten of them in the mystic quadrant, and one of

them had been selected in the first hundred!

“I wonder how the fighting competencies of ordinary practitioners measure up in the mystic quadrant?” Xiao Fei seemed to be murmuring to himself.

All of the selected cultivators quickly entered the rings, and their opponents were also swiftly selected.

Xiao Fei seemed quite excited as he pulled Jiang Chen in various directions, walking to and fro.

It was obviously unrealistic to watch all one hundred rings at the same time. Xiao Fei wanted to pick a few of the more exciting fights to gain a better understanding of the strength of the sect disciples.

Jiang Chen wasn’t quite as fervent as Xiao Fei, and his Psychic’s Head could be deployed to cover the entire Arena if he wished.

However, he was resigned to being tugged about by Xiao Fei.

They hadn’t gotten far before an examiner stopped them, saying, “Wandering is not allowed during the fights. Go back and observe from where you are. Prepare to enter the ring at any time.”

It wasn’t that the examiner was purposefully being mean, but that it was true that a victory could be determined at any time on this stage. If a challenger failed, they would immediately need

another candidate to take their place.

If the selected replacement couldn't be found, then that would delay the proceedings and affect operational efficiency.

It was a good thing that there was some higher terrain around the rings, and one could get good line of sight when they stood on the high terrain. Xiao Fei was enraptured as he kept commenting on the matches, he was quite caught up in everything.

Jiang Chen watched for a bit and more or less, he had gained an understanding of the situation.

Most candidates were at the third and fourth spirit realm in the mystic quadrant, with almost no fifth level spirit realm.

Although there were four levels with this quadrant, there wasn't much difference between the various sect disciples.

Jiang Chen also knew that strength was a factor in assigning levels, but there were certainly other factors as well. Potential for example, battle strength for another. Strength of the heart or family background... those were certainly all taken into consideration as well.

With the mundane practitioners for instance, no other factor was even considered for them. Their births had determined that they would only be fourth level.

Results started appearing on the rings after fifteen minutes roughly.

Around thirty rings were emptied and new challengers quickly chosen.

Jiang Chen was full of anticipation as he kept waiting for himself to be chosen.

However, he and Xiao Fei were never selected. They weren't in the list of challengers, nor were they selected to answer the call.

He felt quite bored after a while. As of now, no strong match ups had occurred yet.

The secular disciple that Xiao Fei had been keeping an eye on still lost in the end after a hard fought battle. His first challenge was a loss!

As Xiao Fei watched the candidate leave the ring with weariness written on his body, he couldn't help but sigh, "It's truly difficult for a mundane disciple to rise above the crowd."

Although Jiang Chen agreed with this viewpoint, he merely smiled faintly and he didn't say anything.

Chapter 326: Xiao Fei Dan Fei, Jiang Chen Takes The Field

Jiang Chen remained where he was, but that didn't mean he wasn't paying attention to the outside world.

His Psychic's Head had been in continual operation all along, and he could feel unfriendly looks shoot towards him from all directions.

He didn't even need to look to know that it was the Cheng brothers and their henchmen.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen heard Master Fang voice a name he was more familiar with — Han Xianke.

Han Xianke was one of the disciples of the Precious Tree Sect, and had even fought with Jiang Chen for a bit, regarding the matter of the Five Winged Lesser Dragon during Ye Chonglou's birthday banquet. However, friendship grew from an exchange of blows and Han Xianke had actually become quite loyal to Jiang Chen. He'd even wanted to become Jiang Chen's follower.

When they met again in the capital of the Skylaurel Kingdom, Han Xianke had even helped Tang Long's little brother, making his symptoms vanish with medicine.

Although Han Xianke had the temper of a sect disciple, he wasn't a bad sort and at least was someone who kept his word.

He'd said that day during the banquet that if he lost to Jiang Chen, he would become Jiang Chen's servant.

He didn't deny this matter afterwards or refuse to owe up to it. Instead, he'd waited in the capital for Jiang Chen to fulfill the terms of his bet.

From this perspective, Han Xianke's character was quite decent.

However, Jiang Chen had erupted in open hostilities with the Precious Tree Sect after Han Xianke had returned to the sect and Jiang Chen hadn't had the opportunity to get in touch with him again.

To think that they'd meet again in the mystic quadrant!

Since he was familiar with this name, Jiang Chen naturally paid a bit more attention.

The odd thing was, when Xiao Fei heard Han Xianke's name, he actually looked at Jiang Chen and saw the latter open his eyes, casting a glance at Han Xianke's ring. Xiao Fei's heart trembled slightly.

"He... he hadn't been paying attention to the matches earlier, but opened his eyes immediately when Han Xianke appeared. This means he know Han Xianke. Indeed... if I'm not mistaken, this freak genius is Jiang Chen!" Waves of emotion rose in his heart.

However, none of this was revealed behind the mask.

“I know he’s Jiang Chen but he doesn’t know who I am. Sigh… he probably doesn’t know either that I can thoroughly determine who he is thanks to Han Xianke.” Xiao Fei’s heart was in a turmoil.

Behind the mask, Xiao Fei was actually Dan Fei.

She hadn’t even told the old tutor when she signed up for the selection. She herself didn’t even know why she was here.

It wasn’t that she aspired to the sects, but that there was something she couldn’t give up in the depths of her heart. It weighed down and occupied all of her heart.

She actually knew full well that all of this was because of Jiang Chen.

However, she had been afraid and hadn’t dared face this reason.

She’d kept deceiving and comforting herself that she was only very competitive and wanted to prove herself against the so-called sect geniuses.

However, she was well aware of the true reason, and that was she wanted to witness the journey of Jiang Chen’s rise.

Jiang Chen also hadn't disappointed her. He'd easily stomped all the obstacles along the way and had become the champion of the first selection.

Other people may not know who the champion is, but Dan Fei had spent many days with Jiang Chen and could deduce his identity from the various details.

The most critical was that she had absolute confidence in Jiang Chen. She'd always felt that Jiang Chen would absolutely emerge from the masses with unstoppable momentum.

It was because that she was thus predisposed that she was more certain than anyone that this freak genius was Jiang Chen.

She'd been ninety nine percent sure of her hunch, and the last bit of uncertainty had been dispelled after Han Xianke had appeared.

This was because she had witnessed all the various grudges between Jiang Chen and Han Xianke as she'd been a participant in the old tutor's birthday banquet!

Many of the Precious Tree Sect disciples had been selected, with Jiang Chen not reacting to them at all.

He'd only opened his eyes when Han Xianke had been chosen.

This was enough to explain everything.

As the old tutor's direct disciple, Dan Fei had never fully revealed the depths of her cultivation. She'd advanced rapidly in the last two years thanks to the honored tutor's efforts and her potential had been fully developed.

In terms of cultivation level, she could absolutely rank in the top ten of the mystic quadrant.

However, she hadn't wanted to expose her identity. She'd wanted to fully witness Jiang Chen's rise first.

At the moment, Jiang Chen's thoughts were all on Han Xianke's battle. He had absolutely no idea that it was Dan Fei by his side.

"Han Xianke's fighting skills aren't too bad. It looks like he should be able to win this fight."

Indeed, Han Xianke defeated his opponent before too long just like Jiang Chen had predicted, claiming his first victory.

If a challenger won, they could continue to accept challenges.

Han Xianke obviously had some ambitions as he decided to continue after thinking for a short while.

However, Jiang Chen smiled ruefully when his opponent appeared. This new opponent was obviously a first level candidate,

and judging from his presence, he was a Purple Sun Sect disciple like the Cheng brothers.

“Things aren’t looking good for Han Xianke.” Jiang Chen sighed in his heart.

One had to say, Jiang Chen possessed quite a keen eye. Han Xianke’s earlier advantages were almost all restricted to a fault in this battle. He couldn’t hold on in less than fifteen minutes and was defeated.

In this regard, his chances were over today. Completing two challenges in a day and having one victory and one loss wasn’t too bad.

However, for someone who wanted to make it into the top ten, this was only a middling result.

Jiang Chen could subtly see that amongst the four sects, the Purple Sun Sect was the most domineering. The matches were even more intense when they faced off against Precious Tree Sect disciples.

The other two sects seemed to have ordinary relations with the Purple Sun Sect.

However, the fighting strength of the Purple Sun Sect disciples were indeed a bit stronger. Their win rates were obviously higher.

“It looks like the Purple Sun Sect does indeed have more of an advantage in the area of martial dao. The four sects all have their specialities, but this selection focuses on fighting and so it’s understandable that the Purple Sun Sect has a bit of an advantage.”

Although these were Jiang Chen’s thoughts, he didn’t have any longing for this sect.

In terms of martial dao heritage or foundations, even ten Purple Sun Sects wouldn’t measure up to even one tenth of Jiang Chen’s memories. In terms of martial dao, he’d be the last person who needed to kiss up to anyone.

Just as he was lost in thought, his name was called.

Another batch of rings had been emptied and new challengers were being picked. This time, the champion of the first selection numbered amongst them!

“Brother Boulder, it’s your turn!” Dan Fei couldn’t help but cry out. Emotions rippled through her heart. She’d been anticipating all along to see Jiang Chen shine and dominate the selection.

And now, this moment was finally here.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and nodded, walking towards the elevated rings.

An examiner guided him to the appropriate one.

“According to the rules, you are to select your own opponent. All opponents will be selected at random.”

Jiang Chen nodded. He didn’t care who his opponent was or their level. The hundred challenges would be spread out evenly in the end, and he’d face twenty five candidates from the four levels.

Although it was at random, this distribution would never change.

Jiang Chen’s luck was quite good as his first opponent was a third level opponent from the Flowing Wind Sect.

The person selected was obviously not too happy. After all, the matches in which one was selected were the most meaningless. They wouldn’t count as part of your win rate no matter the result.

However, when he saw that Jiang Chen was wearing the uniform of a secular disciple, this candidate’s expression became quite lively.

“My luck’s not bad to get an ordinary practitioner, hahaha!” The person rejoiced. “Although this won’t count in my win rate, if my scores are the same as someone else in the end, then I will rank further ahead since I was challenged for often. Although this won’t count, it’s nice to add a notice to the number of times I’ve been challenged. Perhaps this will become the defining fight in determining my ranking? I wish these ordinary practitioners would pick me everyday!”

It was more than apparent that the sect disciples had an overwhelming amount of prejudice against the secular disciples.

They all felt that the secular disciples wouldn't stand up to a single blow at all.

Jiang Chen's opponent wasn't immune to this mindset either, traces of his mentality could be gleaned from his proud mindset.

"Secular practitioner, it's an affront to the eyes that you stand in this ring. Recognize the greater situation that you're in and concede the match." The Flowing Wind Sect disciple said arrogantly.

Jiang Chen crossed his hands in front of his chest and stood to the side of the ring.

He paid no attention to who his opponent was once he set foot in the ring. His only thought was to defeat them!

"Make your move." The Flowing Wind Sect completely dismissed Jiang Chen and puffed his chest out.

Jiang Chen nodded and didn't waste time in talk. He lifted his feet and his body moved like lightning. He formed a hand seal that transformed into a ball of flame as ferocious as a tiger, slapping it towards the Flowing Wind Sect disciple.

“Pfft. Tricks and foolery.” The disciple couldn’t help but laugh when he saw this move. It was the most basic and crude of moves — the “Obscure Seal of Life and Death”.

“Haha, it’s the “Obscure Seal of Life and Death”. This secular disciple is so pathetic. He doesn’t even possess a decent method. If I recall correctly, this technique is the basic technique that everyone has to practice for the entrance exams to the four great sects?” Those watching beneath the stage also started jeering.

“The ordinary world is a poor and desolate place. It’s normal that they don’t have any good techniques. Tsk tsk. To think that I’d thought that the first amongst the ordinary world would possess a certain level of skill. It looks like he was quite disappointing indeed.”

“Then this is your fault, you shouldn’t have had any expectations in the first place. If he truly was a genius, why would he have floundered about in the ordinary world?”

“True that, a real genius wouldn’t be buried even if he was born in the ordinary world. Our junior sister Long Juxue for example. She was born of the ordinary world but a phoenix amongst men, destined to soar into the skies!”

Chapter 327: Defeat With A Single Blow, A Dominating Jiang Chen

The jeers and mockery continuously rang out from beneath the ring. They all harbored extremely malicious intentions, using techniques to directly transmit their jeering to Jiang Chen's ring.

It was obvious that they were doing this on purpose to Jiang Chen. Their goal was to strike a heavy blow to his confidence and destroy his dao heart as a champion of the first selection.

These sect disciples were mostly unkind folk.

As the champion of the first selection, Jiang Chen did indeed have a very eye catching title and naturally became the sect disciples' primary target.

The Flowing Wind Sect disciple truly did laugh when he saw Jiang Chen use the "Obscure Seal".

He knew that secular disciples were pathetic, lacking in resources and techniques, but he hadn't thought that they'd be this poor.

The "Obscure Seal" was akin to the most rudimentary technique for a three year old, something that everyone had to learn.

You're using such crude techniques against me, a sect disciple?

The Flowing Wind Sect disciple was already figuring out how to use the most devastating method possible to torture this secular champion out of the ring.

However, these thoughts didn't remain in his head for long, as in the next moment, his expression changed.

The flaming hand seal actually became a sea of flames within the span of a breath, roaring at him from all sides.

When he wanted to strike a stance and defend himself, he discovered that the air around him had suddenly all seemed to be set afire, all burning up in flames.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh.

No matter how far he backed up, he found that he was unable to fully retreat out of the range of this ocean of fire.

One move was enough to dominate everything beneath the skies.

Bam!

The frightening hand seal slammed into the the Flowing Wind Sect disciple's chest like a charging bull.

An arc was transcribed through the air towards to the ground in the next second, accompanied by a ghastly scream that ended in a

thud.

One move. A vaunted sect disciple had been defeated in a second by a secular disciple, using the crude technique that they'd completely looked down upon.

Some of the other sect disciples in the audience were even midway through a jeer, but the battle scene in front of them stoppered their mouths up like a large mantou. They were left tongue tied, unable to voice a single word.

Face slapping, this was true face slapping!

The irrefutable truth in front of them was the most direct and harshest way of slapping their faces before their mockery had even finished.

These fellows all felt their faces burn.

As they burned with humiliation, they were also uncommonly shocked.

Was this an ordinary disciple? He'd used one move, a seemingly ordinary "Obscure Seal", to completely defeat a sect disciple.

Defeating a sect disciple wasn't anything out of the ordinary. The extraordinary part was that he'd used only one move in a single second. The impact of this absolute advantage was simply too great for the sect disciples beneath the stage.

Although that unlucky bastard had only been of the third level just now, how weak could any of those who had made it to this time's selection be?

There were countless disciples amongst the four great sects and only a few thousand had been selected to join. Which one of them weren't the cream of the crop? Which one hadn't triumphed over scores of opponents within the sects before receiving the right to come to this legacy territory of ancient times?

However, he'd been defeated, and been defeated in a very humiliating way.

There were many ways in which one could be defeated. This was without a doubt, one of the worst ways.

All sorts of jeering and mockery had flown Jiang Chen's way before the match, but they had all been silenced in a second. The obvious display of the enormous gulf between the two was a surefire way to lose the most face in defeat.

However, beneath the stage, Dan Fei was highly agitated, her heart pounding fiercely. She had simulated this scene in her mind countless times.

This scene had finally stepped out from the fantasies and taken place right in front of her.

“Jiang Chen, the lordmaster wasn’t wrong about you alright. He once said to me that you would soar to the skies in this selection, and that all the sect disciples would bow their heads in front of you. I’d always felt that the honored tutor was overshooting the truth. But now, it seems that it was my vision that was limited compared to the lordmaster. You lifted an ordinary ‘Obscure Seal’ to new heights and gave birth to such a vision. What kind of perverse, gifted powers of comprehension are these?”

Dan Fei’s martial dao potential was actually quite strong. Although it wasn’t up to Jiang Chen’s level, but given the old tutor’s personal tutelage, her comprehension of martial dao was naturally not weak.

She naturally knew that those could give rise to such phenomena from an ordinary technique were all geniuses with perverse levels of comprehension.

In the levels of martial arts techniques, this was the legendary realm, the highest level of comprehension.

If Dan Fei could understand this, then the other cultivators present could also understand this. Therefore, the examiner was also greatly shocked.

In that singular move, the examiner seemed to see the shadow of a genius move in front of him.

This kind of comprehension ability was absolutely at the legendary realm.

“Indeed, the ordinary world isn’t as worthless as rumored. First, there was Long Juxue’s constitution, and now this champion of the first selection who lives up to his reputation. His comprehension of the ‘Obscure Seal’ alone is far in excess of the usual sect disciples’. This champion is worthy of expectation.”

The examiner also came to this initial conclusion in his mind.

“Do you wish to continue your challenge?” The examiner asked Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen nodded. He’d finally received this chance and would naturally continue.

“Alright, your second opponent is of the second level, Iron Chuanfeng from the Precious Tree Sect.”

Iron Chuanfeng? Precious Tree Sect?

The corners of Jiang Chen’s mouth twitched. Could it be such a coincidence that he’d run into an Iron family disciple? This was enemies seeing red when they met!

Although his opponent didn’t recognize him, Jiang Chen grew irritated when he thought of Iron Can’s ugly face.

Dan Fei also couldn’t help but smile beneath the elevated ring.

What a small world that he'd run into the Iron family disciples in the ring.

It looked like Iron Chuanfeng's unlucky day had arrived.

However, he obviously didn't feel this way at the moment. Although he wasn't in the direct line of descendant in the Iron family, he was still of a notable family in the Precious Tree Sect and so thought quite highly of himself.

"Kid, I don't know what methods you used just now, but there's no prestige in defeating a useless trash of the Flowing Wind Sect. I, Iron Chuanfeng, am from an aristocratic family in the Precious Tree Sect. I'm on a different level compared to that riff raff. You're unlucky that you got me!"

Jiang Chen smiled coldly, "So noisy!"

The Iron family all seemed to have a bad habit, and that was a love for running their mouths.

This Iron Chuanfeng was obviously a stellar member of his family, he also couldn't stop talking. He'd also learned the arrogance and surefire cockiness of his family in spades.

However, Jiang Chen had even given Iron Dazhi a beating. What did he care about an Iron Chuanfeng?

He took a step forward and raised his arm, creating another

flabbergasting scene.

Jiang Chen repeated his move from earlier and sent out another “Obscure Seal of Life and Death”.

He’d used the same move in the same ring with a different opponent. He’d even used the same posture and aura when delivering his blow.

This made all those observing the match so surprised that their eyeballs almost fell out of their sockets.

Everyone knew that in matches between cultivators, the biggest taboo of all was using the same move repeatedly.

Particularly in fights between experts, if one used the same move too many times, it would certainly be seen through by the opponent. This was akin to picking up a rock to smash it down on one’s own foot.

He’d used that move to defeat the Flowing Wind Sect disciple just now, and had repeated himself when faced with the even stronger Iron Chuanfeng.

As crude as the techniques the secular disciples had, they shouldn’t be this poor, right? He didn’t even have another technique to use?

The sect disciples started hollering and booing again.

Those who had been mocking before once again ran their mouths. Although they really wanted to hold things in and not say anything, they still couldn't help but say a few sarcastic things.

"He's got no more tricks to play, how laughable!"

"So pathetic. I thought he was really something when he defeated the Flowing Wind Sect disciples, it looks like that's the only thing he knows."

"When one repeats a technique too often, it will always been seen through. It seems this is all the secular champion is good for. I'm going to predict that he'll be thoroughly tortured into defeat by Iron Chuanfeng."

"Heh heh, so this means that the differences between the secular disciples and the sect disciples are all encompassing. Not only are they poor in resources, but the difference in methods and knowledge are also fatal as well."

Even the examiner frowned when Jiang Chen made his move.

"Has the secular champion not practiced any other techniques before? Has no one ever taught him anything? The greatest taboo of all is to repeat the same technique."

Beneath the stage, Dan Fei was at ease and indifferent. If there was anyone fully confident in Jiang Chen right now, that was Dan

Fei.

This was because she knew his identity and knew of his past glories. Even a genius like Iron Dazhi had tasted defeat at Jiang Chen's hands, much less than an Iron Chuanfeng of a collateral line?

With her knowledge of Jiang Chen, there was meaning to him repeating the same method. This was to awe his opponent as well as express his contempt.

This move embodied the disdain that Jiang Chen had for the Iron family.

Iron Chuanfeng was also greatly enraged as he charged forward, "Kid, you're looking to die by repeating the same move!"

The words "same move!" had just sounded when Jiang Chen's hands suddenly moved as gently as the willow tree's branches.

Iron Chuanfeng suddenly felt like he was enveloped in an irresistible whirlpool, tugging him to and fro, making him stumble over his feet.

How would he know that Jiang Chen had combined magnetic power into this whirlpool? A seal disturbed the air and formed a forcefield.

Iron Chuanfeng was like a marionette in this regard, his body no

longer under his control.

Such an incredible scene was painted right in front of everyone's eyes.

Iron Chuanfeng's body seemed to move towards Jiang Chen of its own volition, sending himself right into that enormous hand seal.

The seal deeply indented itself onto Iron Chuanfeng's chest, leaving behind a large imprint on his chest.

The enormous force surged forward relentlessly and Iron Chuanfeng fell helplessly down from the ring like a broken kite.

Bam!

The incredible thud when his body crashed into the ground shook everyone as well, making their hearts spasm violently.

The same ring, the same move. Another unlucky bastard had been sent off stage.

Everyone in the audience sucked a breath in as a look of shock and contemplation appeared on even the examiner's face.

Chapter 328: A Small World Between Enemies

When the Flowing Wind Sect disciple was thrown off stage, one could have argue that it happened because he'd underestimated his opponent and hadn't been fully prepared.

But the same couldn't be said about Iron Chuanfeng, and what of him? The same result!

The same fate had befallen him without any tricks, or any beating about the bush. It'd even looked like Iron Chuanfeng had put himself forth willingly to accept the blow.

This scene was simply too bizarre.

Those who couldn't keep themselves from jeering earlier found that they'd once again been slapped in the face. Pa pa pa. Clean and crisp slaps.

They all felt as disgusted as though they'd eaten flies.

They could curse at the Flowing Wind Sect disciple as trash, but Iron Chuanfeng was a second level candidate and of the Iron family in the Precious Tree Sect. He absolutely wasn't trash.

The disciples who had been irresponsibly making sarcastic remarks all had to admit that they likely truly had underestimated

this secular disciple.

It looked like they needed to sincerely reflect on their prejudices towards secular disciples as a whole after this. Put another way, would they have done any better than Iron Chuanfeng if they'd taken the stage?

When their thoughts arrived at that point, all the candidates who'd been booing silently faded back into the crowd, a bizarre fear rising in their hearts.

They didn't want to admit that they were afraid, but one had to say, after two dominating victories, Jiang Chen had stoppered their mouths.

Dan Fei couldn't help but applaud and cheer when she saw this scene.

This cheer stood out quite a great deal. All the sect disciples casted exceedingly complex, if bearing slight traces of hatred, looks at her.

Dan Fei knew that she was inviting hatred and grudges with her actions. These sect disciples would hate her from the depths of their hearts.

However, she didn't care in the slightest. She liked seeing Jiang Chen show off his might and glory. She couldn't stop herself from applauding him.

Not only did the looks shooting at her from all around not give her any pressure, but they made her more excited instead.

All the other secular disciples quite admired Jiang Chen's performance, and were a bit jealous at the same time.

However, his performance gave them a bit of confidence. At least he'd won some face for them.

Up until now, even very few sect disciples had achieved two wins, much less than secular disciples.

There were also none who had won so easily and cleanly.

That Jiang Chen had swept his matches so easily naturally won him a lot of attention. Even the sect disciples who wouldn't previously spare another thought for secular disciples began to silently size up Jiang Chen.

Some of the first level disciples had previously felt their identities were too lofty and so hadn't even bothered to observe the situation in the Arena. Only the quickly spreading whispers in the crowd disturbed them.

"Two in a row and in one second? Is it that his opponents are too weak or that this secular champion possesses strength well above the norm?" These kind of questions rose in a first level candidate's heart.

“Humph. When has such a perverse genius appeared in the ordinary world? This fellow is spending too much time in the limelight. He better pray that his luck holds and that he doesn’t get me, or I’ll take him down a few pegs. Otherwise, these secular disciples will truly think that the sect disciples are all trash!”

Even some of the first level practitioners with otherworldly mentalities were disturbed from their meditations and began to notice Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen actually also knew that his moves would arouse attention from many sides.

However, since he’d chosen to stand in the ring, he no longer had any hesitation.

Since he’d chosen the way of perverse strength, then he would fully demonstrate it to his heart’s content on this stage.

“Do you wish to continue your challenge?” The examiner looked at Jiang Chen and asked.

“Continue.” Jiang Chen didn’t even hesitate.

The examiner had also seemed to guess that he would choose to continue as he nodded and selected the next opponent.

His next opponent was a fourth level practitioner from the Flowing Wind Sect. Although this fellow didn't wish to accept the situation, he was much more cautious compared to the two before him.

He seemed to guess that he would be defeated as well, but he didn't want to be as bedraggled as the two before him. He didn't want to become the backdrop for the secular champion's victory. Therefore, he immediately put up his defenses when he set foot into the ring, putting on the posture of defending himself with everything he had.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and moved forward, surprising everyone again with the same move.

This move seemed to have some kind of endless magic to it as no matter what they did, they couldn't avoid it.

Even though this third opponent had struck a posture of hard defense, he still had nowhere to go in the face of this move and was hurled off the stage with a look of despair.

"Can you not be this cruel?" He was thrown off the stage with this sad sigh.

However, he was rather lucky in that he actually found himself landing on his feet, and landing solidly at that.

With this, it looked like he had voluntarily jumped down.

This fellow may have had a thick face, but he knew that this was a result of the other person showing mercy. He grinned and suddenly had a feeling of wanting to hold his head up high.

Damn straight, I lost too.

I was also defeated with one move.

But I looked good and lost with flair. At least I landed with both feet and my landing pose was damn elegant.

Weren't those two fellows before, a third level and a second level, also thrown off stage? They were so pitiful looking. How could they compare to me, someone who landed so dashingly and with such poise?

This fellow actually started beaming when he thought about this and strolled back to his own camp. He was rather unique to be able to hold such a mentality in defeat.

However, he was also well aware that this secular champion hadn't relegated him to the same fate as the two before him because he'd maintained a humble posture after setting foot in the ring and hadn't spoken arrogantly. Perhaps it was this attitude of someone on the weaker footing that had enabled him to save this little bit of face?

As his thoughts travelled here, not only did this sect disciple not

hate Jiang Chen, but he slightly admired and even felt grateful towards him. He felt that although he had been defeated, there was a lot more face retained in his defeat compared to the two poor sods before him.

In this regard, those with discerning eyes grew even more shocked.

They finally understood that there had been great meaning behind this secular disciple using the same move all along. And, judging from their posture, it was obvious that he was doing so with skill and ease. Everything was under his control.

When looking at his third opponent, it was obvious that the champion had shown mercy. Otherwise, with a mere fourth level candidate, how was it possible that he hadn't suffered any harm after being thrown off stage?

To be able to extend and retract his strength so easily, this level of strength made all candidates present sink into deep contemplation.

The examiner sighed with admiration, "This secular champion is indeed a martial dao genius. To be able to use this technique to such a level, isn't something just anyone can manage. To be able to turn the foul and rotten into the rare and ethereal is absolutely the hallmark of a genius."

"Continue." Jiang Chen said only this when faced with the examiner's questioning gaze.

Another opponent came into the ring and was once again thrown out with one move.

The same thing repeated when the fifth person came up!

Five opponents, the same move, but no one was able to break through this nor avoid the awkward situation of being defeated with a single blow.

Dan Fei was incredibly excited and kept applauding madly.

In this moment, the sect disciples didn't even have the effort to spare on hating Dan Fei. They were all worried about one thing now.

That was — if I went up, how would I handle this move? How could I avoid the awkward situation of being defeated in one move?"

"Is this secular champion purposefully coming to the mystic quadrant to make a mess of things? This style of battle is simply too domineering? How will the rest of us live after this?"

"Damn it, this fellow must be purposefully slapping the face of the sect disciples. A secular village bumpkin cultivator who doesn't understand how to quit while he's ahead. The hell!"

The Cheng brothers also had an ugly expression on their faces.

They also felt slight regret in this moment as well. Judging from this secular champion's posture, it seemed that the strength of both brothers combined wouldn't be enough to fight against him.

If they met in the ring, they would be taken care of mercilessly. In the span of an instant, a sense of terrified fear filled their hearts. They continuously prayed that they wouldn't be picked to meet this guy.

However, sometimes this world was just that coincidental.

The sixth opponent selected for Jiang Chen was Cheng Zhen.

Cheng Zhen, Purple Sun Sect, first level in the mystic quadrant.

Although he was a first level candidate, he had the feeling of wanting to weep but being unable to shed a tear. When it came down to it, he was also a cultivator of the fourth level spirit realm.

His younger cousin Cheng Lan was also of the fourth level spirit realm, but that was because he'd had a fortuitous occurrence lately that had helped him break through.

But he, Cheng Zhen, had broken through a year ago and thus his strength was vastly stronger than his cousin's. But in this moment, he truly didn't possess any confidence.

It wasn’t that his opponent was overwhelmingly strong, but that they were too bizarre.

He’d fought five matches up until now, but likely even the examiner had yet to figure out what this fellow’s methods were.

He used that singular move from beginning to end, and it was such a domineering and strange move. To outsiders, it looked like there was nothing to it. It seemed quite ordinary.

But when one took to the ring, it seemed that all challengers were ripe for the picking and had no form of defense.

Cheng Zhen almost wanted to suspect that this fellow was using some sort of evil, fey way!

However, the victor was king in the ring. Who cared what methods were deployed? The methods weren’t important, the results were.

Cheng Zhen walked up with a complex jumble of emotions. Although he didn’t have a firm emotional footing, the mentality of a sect disciple was still strong.

Cheng Zhen suppressed his emotions with effort. He knew that he couldn’t become timid. Once his presence became weaker than his opponent, it’d be even more difficult to win.

“I don’t believe that there’s no flaws to this guy at all! And, why do people always wait for him to make the first move? Why can’t I act first?”

Cheng Zhen seemed to receive boundless inspiration in the span of a moment. That’s right, why didn’t he make the first move? He suddenly felt all the others were idiots. One knew full well that the secular champion’s move was hard to resolve, then why not take the initiative and attack?

Jiang Chen stood to one side of the ring, looking at Cheng Zhen with a supercilious smile.

Enemies certainly lived in a small world. They had met in the ring in such a short amount of time.

Chapter 329: A Mad String Of Victories

“And what are you laughing at?” Cheng Zhen was enraged by Jiang Chen’s smile. That a secular disciple would dare to display such a bizarre smile in front of him was the height of provocation and disdain.

“Karma. This indeed is karma. The cosmos always have some marvelous arrangements. Cheng Zhen is it? If I recall correctly, you wanted to teach me how to be a person just now? You crowed that I better not pick you, or you’ll beat me so hard that I wouldn’t even have the energy to leave the ring?”

Cheng Zhen’s face was stony, “What are you strutting on about? Do you really think that there are no opponents left in the mystic quadrant just because you’ve beaten a few minor characters?”

Jiang Chen laughed heartily, “You’re right, I’m quite proud. However, not because of my string of victories, but because I’ve finally found a right and proper excuse to beat you up.”

“Presumptuous!” Cheng Zhen flew into a rage and jeered. “From beginning to end, all you know is that one move. You may not think it’s embarrassing, but as an onlooker, even I feel that you’re embarrassing. Switch to another move if you have what it takes!”

“You’re not worthy.” Jiang Chen shook his head faintly.

Cheng Zhen wasn’t someone lacking in subtlety, but Jiang Chen’s arrogant attitude still sent his blood pressure soaring. He

roared out angrily and infused his fists with boundless power, screaming raspily while leaping into the sky.

He yelled, “Die, you cocky kid!”

Cheng Zhen had actually struck out first! A sect disciple, a first level candidate in the mystic quadrant, had struck out first in an ambush!

Those watching the match, particularly the Purple Sun Sect disciples, all felt their faces burn hotly and had quite a guilty conscience. Sect disciples valued their face above all.

However, Cheng Zhen’s actions were setting aside his face for the purpose of winning. It’d be alright if he won, but if he didn’t, then he’d have to hide his face behind a mask when he went out in public in the future.

Cheng Zhen’s fists punched out continuously as streaks of boxing aura formed strong air currents and danced through the air. The air was filled with the shadows of these fierce punches.

“This… this is the Divine Corona Fist!”

“Tsk tsk, he is of the Purple Sun Sect alright. Their martial heritage is truly superb. The moves of the Divine Corona Fist are as if the corona of a sun itself has cast a divine glow through the air, devouring all, destroying all!”

Cheng Zhen grimaced savagely as his boxing aura erupted. Thousands of shadow punches congealed into an aura that held the intention to destroy all and twisted itself forward, hurtling towards Jiang Chen's ribs.

A divine corona, a punch that destroyed all paths before it.

Cheng Zhen had spent ten years submerged in and contemplating this method. He'd long since trained it to almost the perfection realm. Now as he deployed it to the limits of his abilities, the power that he'd dredged up was even a bit stronger than his usual condition.

Jiang Chen smiled coldly. He had to say that Cheng Zhen's ambush slightly surprised him.

However, there was only surprise.

Under normal circumstances, Jiang Chen may have moved to the side and evaded the blow, before turning around to attack Cheng Zhen's weak point.

However, he'd been so arrogant before and had provoked him, stepped on him. Jiang Chen wasn't the sort to seek revenge for the slightest grievance, but he would also not allow this person to prance around in front of him like this.

Therefore, Jiang Chen didn't even look as he brought all the spirit energy in his body to bear, activating his shield and meeting

that boxing aura head on.

Cheng Zhen held the initiative. Jiang Chen would find it impossible to win with a single move if he evaded the blow or tried to negate some of the boxing aura.

He was aiming for victory with one move.

Perhaps he could give up on this principle for others, but when faced with Cheng Zhen, defeating him with one move was both the best comeback and the greatest humiliation.

Therefore, he decided that he would throw Cheng Zhen out of the ring even with taking this blow to the face.

The boxing aura hurtled down like a raging storm, making all those around question if they were seeing things. Jiang Chen's body was akin to a butterfly flitting through flowers, moving against the current of the boxing aura.

Bam, bam, bam!

As countless strands of aura smashed into Jiang Chen, he raised his hand and flung over a hand seal that he'd been nurturing for quite some time.

When Cheng Zhen saw that Jiang Chen was actually rising to meet his boxing aura, he was privately delighted that the kid wasn't evading his blow. 'He's going to die!'

Therefore, Cheng Zhen gloated and prepared to admire the view of Jiang Chen's broken bones, shattered organs, and a ghastly death after spewing out blood.

However, this hotly anticipated scene didn't take place.

A shadow flashed in front of his eyes as Jiang Chen's large hand seal made its way to his chest.

"How is this possible!?" A despairing thought raced through Cheng Zhen's mind as a crisp breaking sound sounded from the middle of his chest in the next second.

The bones in his body seemed to break one after another as he fell off the ring in a dire fashion, fresh blood spewing wildly from his body.

The clear breaking sounds made all the candidates' teeth ache in sympathy. Although they weren't the ones injured, they all knew that these breaking sounds likely meant that Cheng Zhen had been completely crippled.

Bam!

Cheng Zhen fell down helter-skelter, dust flying in all directions.

"Brother!" His younger cousin Cheng Lan ran over in great

fright. Cheng Zhen was dead to the world, his body limp and barely breathing, unable to dredge up even the strength to reply.

Cold gripped the hearts of all the candidates standing beneath the ring as sweat poured from their backs. They looked at Jiang Chen standing in the ring with fear in their eyes.

This secular disciple wasn't one to let grudges sit overnight alright.

Cheng Zhen had said earlier that he would beat up this candidate so badly that the latter wouldn't be able to make it off the stage. Looking at this, hadn't Cheng Zhen's words come true on him?

However, even though those assembled were afraid, they also lacked sympathy. The disciples of the Purple Sun Sect didn't have good relations with others in the first place.

In addition, Cheng Zhen was a strong rival in this quadrant. It wasn't necessarily a bad thing that he'd been sorely injured. There were even some who felt that it'd be best if Cheng Zhen died just like this. There would be one less competitor in the picture and the Purple Sun Sect disciples would hate this secular disciple. The two have them would sorely injure each other in their struggles.

Dan Fei clenched her fist lightly and cheered inwardly. She had reined herself in this time. After all, this person had been beaten to the point where blood was flooding out of him. It'd be a bit jarring if she were to applaud and cheer.

One move again!

The candidates in the arena, including even the first level candidates, all had to seriously consider Jiang Chen at this moment. They started contemplating this matter repeatedly in their minds.

Was this move truly infallible?

The most frightening thing was, the aura from Cheng Zhen's attack had already reached Jiang Chen. How could he have remained unharmed and counterattacked with that lethal blow?

All sorts of hard to resolve riddles made the candidates beneath the rings feel as if a large stone was resting on their hearts. It was uncommonly heavy.

Even the premier first level candidates couldn't help but list Jiang Chen as a strong competitor.

He'd won six matches in a row with one move. "Perverse genius" was insufficient to describe this type of momentum and method!

No matter how they simulated the match in their minds, they realized that this ordinary move of the "Obscure Seal of Life and Death" was an unresolvable dilemma for them.

"Continue your challenge?"

“Continue.” Jiang Chen had fought six matches in a row but wasn’t in the least bit tired. He’d won all of them quite easily and had barely expended any of his resources.

Cheng Zhen’s boxing aura had been quite strong, but the blow from a mere fourth level spirit realm could offer no harm whatsoever in the face of the scales of the Firelizard’s scales. It’d only made his breathing hitch for a slight moment.

However, Jiang Chen knew that it’d been because of the Firelizard’s scales protecting him. Otherwise, it would’ve been very difficult for him to truly slap out that seal.

Jiang Chen once again threw his opponent out of the ring in his seventh challenge.

The same thing happened in the eighth challenge. There were no ripples whatsoever.

A strange phenomena had developed in the mystic quadrant. No one was paying attention to the matches in the other 99 rings.

Almost all eyes were focused on Jiang Chen. Everyone’s attention was directed here.

Everyone was curious to know when this fellow would finally stop his challenges. Was there anyone who could stop him in the mystic quadrant?

The stampede continued in the ninth challenge, the tenth challenge.

Two hours had passed as Jiang Chen racked up an astonishing ten straight victories, and he was still continuing his matches.

Even the keeper Master Fang was shocked by now.

It wasn't unusual to see ten straight victories, but these had come about through using the same move. This was a development that one couldn't help but pay attention to.

They were all curious — did this young person know any other techniques? Or did he really know only one technique and was using it to dominate all?

Or was it that he had other techniques, but no one here thus far had been worthy enough for him to use the others?

Dan Fei was also selected as time passed on, and so began her matches.

However, she wasn't as patently perverse as Jiang Chen. She began to feel the limits of her energy after three victories. Dan Fei managed to hold on until the end when she faced off against a first level candidate, but was ultimately deemed the loser. After this, her score was three wins and one loss.

Jiang Chen's domination was still continuing at this time, and he'd already reached an incredible 18 wins.

Judging from his posture, he had no intentions of stopping.

Master Fang was also privately shocked. "To think that this secular champion has such martial dao potential? It's a pity that he is showing his light too much and doesn't know the importance of reining himself in. However, his appearance may not be a bad thing. These sect disciples have started to exude too heavy an aura of arrogance. It's a good thing that someone can temper them. These sect disciples can taste an inkling of what it means to know that there is always someone stronger than you, despite how strong you may be. "

Master Fang actually had an enormous distaste for the arrogance that sect disciples comported themselves with.

Therefore, he was quite admiring of Jiang Chen's dominance, and in fact was rather supportive of it.

Except, out of a mindset of treasuring talent, he felt that it wasn't necessarily a good thing for a young man to show off his edge so much.

However, he didn't understand Jiang Chen. The fact that he was doing so was because he had the ability to do so.

The 19th win, as well as the 20th win were also equally easy.

The candidates beneath the stage were even more subdued now. They could observe almost no flaws in Jiang Chen.

Was there any doubt as to the results of the challenges in the mystic quadrant if things continued like this? First place was absolutely earmarked by this secular champion!

If there were many amongst the sect disciples who was unwilling to accept this result, then all that was left in their hearts now was a prayer. A prayer that this fellow wouldn’t select them next!

Chapter 330: The Perverse Genius With 25 Straight Victories

According to the rules, someone undertaking a challenge would not be selected by other challengers.

Therefore, it was unrealistic to hope that he would be selected by others and leave the stage.

“Does this fellow know some kind of strange magic? I don’t believe that a mere ‘Obscure Seal’ could be so strong that no one can withstand it!”

“I too have my suspicions, but so what if it is? In the ring, the victor is king. If you’re that good, how about you go up!”

One had to say that the world of martial dao was indeed this wondrous. Jiang Chen had been subjected to almost unanimous eye rolls, disdain, and contempt ever since he appeared in the mystic quadrant as a secular disciple.

However, following the appearance of his resplendent win rate of twenty straight victories, many sect disciples unwittingly became his supporters.

The strong are the noble. In the world of martial dao, strength was what won respect in the end.

The Flowing Wind Sect disciple that had been Jiang Chen's third opponent earlier chuckled, "It looks like after all these matches, I seem to have given the best showing after all. At least I could retreat intact after meeting him in battle."

This fellow had no sense of shame at all in blowing his own horn. Everyone around him wanted to throw up.

Who doesn't know that you were just lucky? He didn't hit you with any strength at all! Your so-called retreating intact was successful just because you put on the best act of being useless, and that's why he didn't muster his strength behind his blow.

However, everyone could only think these thoughts and couldn't actually voice them.

All the practitioners were on tenterhooks as they tried to guess how many more victories this perverse genius was going to rack up. Jiang Chen however, stopped of his own accord after 25 straight victories.

It wasn't that his energy was flagging or that he was running out of steam, but that he felt that life would be too boring afterwards if he did everything that was meant to be done over three months in a single day.

Thus, it was best to stop while he was ahead, and so he stopped when he'd achieved 25 victories.

Everyone sighed a breath of relief when he stopped. At least today's torment was over and done with.

According to the rules, he wouldn't have any more chances to issue challenges today as soon as he stopped.

He could only wait to be challenged.

When Dan Fei saw Jiang Chen walk down from the elevated ring, what was a genius? Here was a true genius!

Compared to Jiang Chen, all those so-called sect geniuses were just ferocious in appearance but feeble in essence.

Before Jiang Chen had demonstrated his power, all of them had been overweeningly arrogant and felt that secular disciples were nothing more than ants.

Yet, once Jiang Chen had showed off his strength, all of these so-called geniuses became dejected and beaten, deathly afraid that they would be chosen next.

The contrast in these two attitudes made Dan Fei's impression of these so-called geniuses sink even more.

Jiang Chen on the other hand, was quite calm. This was all that these disciples amounted to since they'd been sent to the mystic quadrant. They were only of a third-rate existence in their sects as well.

Jiang Chen hadn't set his sights on these practitioners from the very beginning. However, such were the rules and it wasn't possible for him to soar to the sky quadrant from secular beginnings.

The mystic quadrant was just a stepping stone in his rise. Jiang Chen hadn't exerted himself at all.

"Nicely done brother Boulder!" Dan Fei stuck out a hand and slapped Jiang Chen's in celebration.

Jiang Chen chuckled. "And how did you do?"

Dan Fei chuckled. "I won three and lost one, my results far less impressive compared to yours. Brother Boulder, you truly gained face for us ordinary practitioners this time. Our lives will likely be better after today, and they won't dare to look down on us."

Jiang Chen didn't care if anyone looked down on him. He wasn't here to pay attention to other people's opinions.

The other secular practitioners all walked up to congratulate Jiang Chen at this moment as well, obviously wanting to take shelter in his shade.

Jiang Chen never did have much interest in forming cliques, and apart from Xiao Fei, he truly didn't care for any of these guys.

Therefore, he didn't reject their voluntary expression of interest, but neither did he respond enthusiastically. He only responded perfunctorily and sat down cross legged, focusing his attentions inwards.

He was selected once again in the afternoon, and won cleanly.

Jiang Chen wasn't selected again for the remainder of the day.

The day was concluded with Master Fang's announcement, and the first day of matches was over.

The fights were bustling this first day, and the hundred rings had hosted five thousand matches. This meant that each ring had hosted fifty matches or so on average.

"Brother, I'm Liu Wencai of the Myriad Spirit Sect. I'm hosting a party tonight, would you like to come and have a drink? It will be held at residence number seven of the first level."

A Myriad Spirit Sect disciple with strange shapes tattooed on his face walked up to Jiang Chen with several others in tow, calling out heartily to him.

Dan Fei smiled faintly upon seeing this scene. She knew that because of his astonishing performance, people were beginning to cozy up to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen had always been the sort to return kindness tenfold.

Since Liu Wencai was quite polite, Jiang Chen wouldn't face the other with a remote expression. He only smiled faintly, "Brother Liu, the mission for the hundred challenges trial weighs down heavily, and I dare not hold things up because of drinking. If we are lucky enough to meet again when we leave the legacy territory, I will certainly take the initiative to be host and drink with brother Liu."

Although these were just pleasantries, Jiang Chen had delivered them so gracefully that no one's face was lost.

Liu Wencai laughed heartily and clapped his hands together. "Brother speaks the truth. Drinking would indeed hold things up, this is my oversight. Brother's exuberant display of glory today truly gives rise to admiration from the depths of my heart. To be honest, I'd always thought that I could make it into the earth spirit quadrant, but after seeing your perverse performance today, I'm now a little uncertain!"

Liu Wencai's residence was number seven within the spirit quadrant, this meant that he was the seventh seed in this quadrant.

His words were half humble and half fawning up to Jiang Chen.

"That brother Liu is so full of humility that this means you are no ordinary disciple. There is surely great hope for brother Liu in making it to the earth quadrant."

Liu Wencai had won three matches today, which was not a bad showing. However, who would dare to boast about their scores in front of a perverse genius who had won 25 in a row?

When he saw Jiang Chen thus, Liu Wencai knew that it would likely be difficult to invite this secular genius to join him tonight.

He smiled dashingly, “In that case, I will not disturb you brother. I just hope that we can be friends when we leave the mystic quadrant. To be honest, there aren’t that many who I truly admire in this quadrant. You are definitely the first. Based on your beating of Cheng Zhen alone, I feel that you are a true man who clearly defines his grudges and boons. Frank and forthright, that suits my style alright! Hahaha.”

Although Liu Wencai was just a candidate in the mystic quadrant, his demeanor was quite grand and magnificent, giving one an inexplicable feeling of goodwill.

Even though Jiang Chen hadn’t agreed to his invitation, he had a rather good impression of this Liu Wencai.

Another group drew near as they were speaking. Judging from their dress, they were Purple Sun Sect disciples.

The leader had a red dot in his forehead like an eye. His long hair was thrown over his shoulders with quite a wild air to him.

His nose bridge was high and firm, eye sockets slightly sunken,

giving his features a slightly different feeling from ordinary folk.

Liu Wencai's expression grew a bit unnatural when he saw this person. It was apparent that even the seventh seed Liu Wencai felt greatly wary with this person's arrival.

Jiang Chen wasn't that predisposed towards the Purple Sun Sect disciples and turned to leave.

"Hold." The loose haired man said faintly.

Jiang Chen's footsteps paused, but he didn't turn back. Dan Fei's eyes flitted over the newcomers, wanting to discern their intentions.

"You don't need to posture such. Since you've participated in the selection, at the heart of it all, you want to join a sect and pursue the boundless martial dao."

The person's voice sounded out smoothly and penetrated quite strongly.

"Allow me to introduce myself, I am Guo Ren, Purple Sun Sect disciple, living in first residence of this quadrant. Are you interested in coming to a gathering at my residence?"

This Guo Ren was obviously much more shrewd and possessed a better demeanor than Liu Wencai. At least, no traces of emotion could be gleaned from his tone.

Jiang Chen didn't turn back and said faintly, "Not interested."

Guo Ren chuckled. "Purposefully moving by yourself, a lone wolf. If I guess correctly, you must be a wandering practitioner in the ordinary world? Since you are participating in the selection, that means you are interested in the sects. It's not that I boast, but if you seek to pursue martial dao, then my Purple Sun Sect is the lord of this realm amongst the four sects."

Guo Ren was full of confidence after delivering these words. He was completely matter-of-fact and paid no attention to Liu Wencai who stood on the side.

Liu Wencai felt a bit awkward and could only shake his head and smile ruefully.

Guo Ren rolled his eyes, "Liu Wencai, what are you smiling about? Do you have any objections to my words?"

Guo Ren was the first seed of this quadrant and his cultivation level was even higher than Liu Wencai's. His very words were quite domineering when he opened his mouth.

Liu Wencai wasn't the sort to compromise out of consideration for the general interest as he smiled slightly, "You speak your bit and I smile when I want to. Aren't you trying to control too much?"

Guo Ren said proudly, “This truth won’t change no matter how much you disapprove. In the path of martial dao and the sixteen kingdom alliance, it will always be the Purple Sun Sect at the peak. Your Myriad Spirit Sect can’t change this, and neither can the Precious Tree Sect or Flowing Wind Sect!”

He lifted his chin slightly after speaking and said to Jiang Chen, “Brother, it’s exceedingly rare for a secular disciple to have potential such as yours. I now represent the Purple Sun Sect in recruiting you. The grudges between you and the Cheng brothers were a result of them being blind and bearing inferior skills. If you nod your head and join my sect, then these small frictions can all be forgotten.”

Guo Ren was quite eloquent as he marketed the Purple Sun Sect. His words and their connotations were filled with a strong sense of authority.

However, he didn’t know that of the four sects, the one Jiang Chen hated the most and was least likely to join was the Purple Sun Sect.

Jiang Chen lifted his chin and laughed softly, “In the arena, the victor is king. I don’t know what friction and grudges are there? Are you recruiting me on behalf of the Purple Sun Sect, or representing it in threatening me?”

Guo Ren probably hadn’t thought that Jiang Chen would respond thus and blinked, finally laughing.

“Whether it’s threatening or recruiting, I would be reaching the same goal by different means. As long as your goals lie with martial dao, the Purple Sun Sect will always be your ideal choice.” Guo Ren brimmed with confidence.

He felt that he’d been polite enough already in speaking so much. He had been quite courteous and considerate. If this fellow still didn’t know how to play the game, then he really didn’t know how to appreciate favors.

Chapter 331: Purple Sun Sect, I'm Not Interested

Liu Wencai didn't say anything as he stood off to the side. He looked at Jiang Chen noncommittally. I wonder how will this secular genius choose?

Jiang Chen suddenly laughed and turned to Dan Fei, "Brother Xiao Fei, what would you do if someone tried to recruit you using this kind of tune?"

Dan Fei smirked. She was very familiar with Jiang Chen's background and naturally knew of his grudge with Long Juxue. She even understood more than anyone that Jiang Chen and the Purple Sun Sect would never walk the same path.

"Forgive me for being blunt, but recruiting in this manner is being too full of it. Beneath these heavens, our sixteen kingdom alliance occupies but only a piece of sky that is the size of a hand. Some people like to strut around in their superiority here, but they're just demonstrating the very reason why they are stuck at the bottom of the well. They don't know the immensity of heaven and earth."

Dan Fei's words added fuel to the flames and closed off all possible areas for negotiation.

Jiang Chen flicked a glance at Dan Fei upon hearing these words. This fellow is rather quick-witted, he knows to answer according to my thoughts.

Liu Wencai was also slightly surprised to hear these words. He'd only paid attention to the secular champion before, but hadn't thought that this candidate number two also possessed quite a personality.

This was rather interesting.

These words were an obvious slap to Guo Ren's face. He'd always thought highly of himself and styled himself as the first genius of the mystic quadrant, lord of above all with no one worthy of his gaze.

Now that he was stuck on his cocky pedestal with thanks to these two secular disciples, Liu Wencai felt greatly satisfied and that this was such a wonderfully gleeful day.

Jiang Chen said faintly, "Brother Guo, this brother Xiao Fei's attitude is basically my attitude. As the saying goes, a dissidence of opinions makes even a single word a waste of breath. Have a good day."

Jiang Chen had no good feelings towards Purple Sun Sect disciples at all. It was already a great restraint on his part that he hadn't burst out cursing vulgarities at them.

Guo Ren knew that this secular disciple had some abilities and so could be arrogant, but he hadn't thought that when he, the first seed, personally took to the field, he would receive such cold treatment and even got mocked at!

“Brother, is this your attitude against my Purple Sun Sect?” Guo Ren’s tone grew cold.

“Firstly, you don’t represent the Purple Sun Sect. Secondly, Brother Xiao Fei is right, you are a frog at the bottom of a well. You only know of the Purple Sun Sect beneath these heavens, and don’t know that there is no limit to this universe. Lastly, I’m not interested in the Purple Sun Sect.”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and floated away, leaving behind a flushed Guo Ren shaking in his rage.

This was the outcome that Liu Wencai was most delighted to see. It was more exciting to see Guo Ren act the fool than he himself winning a hundred times in a row.

He chuckled before turning to leave.

Fire spat out from Guo Ren’s eyes as he stared fixedly at Jiang Chen’s departing figure. If looks could kill, he would’ve killed Jiang Chen a thousand times over.

“Senior brother Guo, this kid doesn’t appreciate favors. Although he has potential, he’s still courting death.”

“Indeed, senior brother Guo, he’s just a cocky secular disciple. No need to pay him any mind. So what if he had 25 straight victories in a row? He’s just lucky in that he didn’t select any candidates in

the top ten. If he landed in your hands, this kid would absolutely be tortured to death!”

Guo Ren felt a bit better as his entourage fawned up to him for a bit, but he didn’t lose his rationality because of this.

He was well aware that if he truly met this cocky secular disciple in battle, he may not have the greatest shot of winning.

This fellow’s strength was already at a throne level. Otherwise, with Guo Ren’s personality, he would’ve never personally recruited someone.

It was because he wasn’t confident in defeating Jiang Chen that he’d thought of recruiting the latter by using his identity as the first seed and the Purple Sun Sect’s reputation to bring Jiang Chen under control.

It was a pity that with all of his scheming, he hadn’t known that the person he wanted to recruit hated the Purple Sun Sect to the point of that he would not even share a bed pan with them!

“Humph, cocky secular disciples are like those who suddenly come into great wealth. He can enjoy momentary glory that he has right now but it won’t last long. Even if he makes it to the earth spirit quadrant, there are geniuses aplenty there and there will naturally be someone who will torture and step on him. How dare a mere mundane ant disdain my sect?! He’s courting death!”

Guo Ren bit off his words as he waved his hand and left with his group. He was already planning on how to move against this arrogant prick.

He absolutely didn't want someone challenging his position of first seed in the mystic quadrant.

On their way back to the residence, Dan Fei smiled, "Brother Boulder, was my response too much just now?"

"Too much? I rather feel that you weren't savage enough." Jiang Chen laughed.

"Heh heh, so I was not savage enough? Then if that fellow bothers us again, I'll be even more vicious."

Jiang Chen asked, "Aren't you afraid of offending the Purple Sun Sect?"

Dan Fei chuckled, "Your genius outstrips my talents and you have a far greater potential. Since you're not afraid, what I should be afraid of? Besides, the Purple Sun Sect isn't my top choice."

Jiang Chen grew curious, "Then what is your first choice?"

Dan Fei was stumped by this question as she became lost in thought, "What is my choice?"

She actually had long since come to an answer to this question. She was here not for the four sects as she would always be Ye Chonglou's disciple.

She was here only because of one decision. She wanted to follow Jiang Chen and witness his rise.

However, how could she possibly voice her thoughts right now?

She laughed lightly after a long while, "All will right itself when the moment comes. I'm rather curious, what is your first choice?"

Jiang Chen paused and said openly, "If I am to speak of my first choice, that would be the Precious Tree Sect. However, I've never spoken of this with anyone. I feel that we've hit it off, so I don't mind telling you."

Dan Fei started and thought, the Precious Tree Sect alright.

They pushed opened the door to their residence to discover that none of the other sect disciples had returned. It looked like they were purposefully avoiding Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen had enjoyed the limelight greatly in today's battles and he had been undefeated. These sect disciples were naturally afraid of running into Jiang Chen.

Particularly Cheng Lan, with the condition of his older cousin being unknown after his beating, he had no desire to come back

and see Jiang Chen.

What could he do even if he came back anyways? Even his cousin hadn't been able to fight Jiang Chen, would he be able to exact any revenge with his abilities?

Dan Fei smiled, "These fellows look like they've been scared out of their wits. It's best if they don't come back, things will be quieter for us anyways."

Jiang Chen didn't care either way if these fellows came back or not. He practiced the Boulder's Heart and could tune out the world around him. He had no fear of being disturbed by them.

He pushed open the door to return to his room and saw that Dan Fei was dithering over whether or not to enter. He laughed, "What are you hemming and hawing around about? Are you afraid that I'll beat you?"

Dan Fei chuckled, "I got scared by your order to leave yesterday."

Jiang Chen couldn't help laugh as he thought of yesterday's happenings. Candidate number two had entered his room then and had been swept out the door with "your room isn't this one".

Come to think of it, it was rather weird. After having interacted with each other for a day, Jiang Chen felt much more kindly towards this candidate number two. He somehow felt that they were already quite familiar with each other.

Perhaps it's because candidate number two's actions were up my alley?

This was indeed the case when he thought about it. When they'd bumped into Cheng Zhen's provocation at the Arena, candidate number two hadn't withdrawn, but had chosen instead to place himself in Jiang Chen's camp.

When he'd won in the ring, this fellow had ignored the looks of those around him and publicly cheered and applauded.

When Guo Ren had come to throw his weight around, he hadn't submitted to the Purple Sun Sect's despotic power and had chosen to side with Jiang Chen instead.

This kind of accord had resulted in Jiang Chen's basic acceptance of this person.

When Dan Fei saw that Jiang Chen hadn't sent her on her way, she knew that her new character had won Jiang Chen's acceptance. She was also gratified by this.

In that moment, she rather felt that this new identity was quite interesting. She could say many and do many of things that she couldn't usually.

"Brother Boulder, to be honest, the Purple Sun Sect may truly be most with your martial dao potential. Even though the Precious

True Sect is good, it is still far inferior to the Purple Sun Sect in terms of martial dao heritage." Dan Fei brought up this topic.

Jiang Chen chuckled, "The gain or loss of a day or night matters not on the path of martial dao. I have my reasons for ranking the Precious Tree Sect first."

"What reason?" Dan Fei purposefully laughed with a light tone. "I've heard that the Purple Sun Sect has taken in a new genius disciple who's a stunning beauty, they call her Long Juxue or something. She has an innate constitution and apparently all the disciples of the four great sects are striving their utmost to become her cultivation partner. With your talents, you would be in a favored position if you joined the Purple Sun Sect."

Dan Fei purposefully spoke thus and laughed herself as well.

Jiang Chen started and shot a look as sharp as a blade towards Dan Fei. Has this fellow guessed my identity in his sudden mention of Long Juxue?

However, upon closer sensing, he couldn't feel any malicious intent. He smiled wryly inwardly at his suspicions.

"Brother Boulder, are you mad?" Dan Fei couldn't help but ask when she saw Jiang Chen sweep a glance over herself but didn't say anything.

Jiang Chen said lightly, "Brother Xiao Fei, you should've played

along with that Guo Ren just now if you're interested in Long Juxue. Now that you've thoroughly offended the Purple Sun Sect, you've also blocked your own path in pursuing Long Juxue."

"Heh heh, I have a clear estimation of myself and don't have that kind of ambition. Not to mention that Long Juxue has a cluster of admirers around her. It may not be a good thing for whoever eventually ends up with her, wouldn't you say so, brother Boulder?"

Jiang Chen was noncommittal. He truly wasn't that interested in the topic of long Juxue.

"Brother Boulder, can I ask you a question?" Dan Fei gathered up her courage to ask.

"What is it?" Jiang Chen felt it slightly odd and felt that Xiao Fei was likely someone wet behind the ears as he would talk about these matters in a very lively fashion. It was apparent that his temperament wasn't mature enough.

However, Jiang Chen's mental defenses relaxed slightly when he saw that the other was like a child.

"I wanted to ask that since brother Boulder has such stunning potential, do you... do you have someone that you care for, ever since you've embarked on your path of cultivation?" Dan Fei was blushing furiously behind the mask as she asked this question.

If it hadn’t been for the mask, her expression would be the epitome of shyness right now.

She had gathered up all her courage and used the dual cover of the mask and her identity to ask this question. She only felt completely drained of strength after speaking and could barely keep herself upright.

Chapter 332: Dan Fei And Her Deeply Rooted Affection

Jiang Chen hadn't thought that brother Xiao Fei would be such a busybody, but he had no misgivings. After all, brother Xiao Fei was a young sprig and happened to be in the emotional haziness of youth. Wasn't this the time of his life in which he was most concerned about the relationship between men and women?

He flicked a glance at the other and saw Xiao Fei fixated on him with a very serious look. An ardent desire to hear the answer was written all over his face.

Jiang Chen thought for a moment. In both his past and present lives, although he'd had many bosom friends, he truly hadn't had any loves that had etched themselves in his heart.

He sighed dejectedly, "No."

This response had dimmed Dan Fei's shining gaze by quite a bit. She'd been circling around all the other topics for the purpose of asking Jiang Chen this question.

She wanted to see from Jiang Chen's attitude if he had any feelings for her. Even the slightest bit would be good.

However, Jiang Chen hadn't given her the answer she wanted.

Dan Fei fell into a despondent mood all of sudden, her heart quite filled with bitterness. Did she not possess enough charm and allure in the end to make it into his sights?”

“If you don’t have any romantic interests, then do you have any bosom friends whom you have feelings for?” Dan Fei didn’t give up hope as she continued to ask.

Jiang Chen smiled, “Brother Xiao Fei, you’re acting a little weird today. Why do you keep asking about the affections between a man and a woman? I’ve a few bosom friends, but for love, perhaps fate has yet to arrive.”

Dan Fei then hastened to ask, “Those who are worthy to be Brother Boulder’s bosom friends are surely not ordinary people. Can it be that they are still unworthy of Brother Boulder?”

The faces of a few girls associated with him in this life flashed through Jiang Chen’s mind.

Eastern Zhiruo, that innocent little girl. His relationship with her was that of pity for a similarly afflicted person.

Eastern Gouyu, a friendship forming from a fight. Jiang Chen admired her direct personality, but if one were to speak of feelings beyond that, Jiang Chen still felt that it had yet to reach that stage.

Wen Ziqi, cutely docile like the girl next door, but she was only Jiang Chen’s follower. It was impossible for this to develop any

further.

The only female he'd come in more contact with in the Skylaurel Kingdom was Dan Fei. Jiang Chen rather admired this impish girl, but he obviously had no particular feelings for her.

The lady has feelings, but the gentleman was not so inclined.

Jiang Chen smiled when his thoughts traveled here. "It's not a matter of whether they are worthy of me. Fate and destiny are still the determinants in relationships. When fate comes knocking, there is only a hairs breadth that separates us from marriage. Alright, it's pointless for us cultivators to continue to dwell on matters like these. Brother Xiao Fei, we still have difficult fights ahead of us tomorrow, so let's rest early."

Jiang Chen couldn't handle this continued string of questioning anymore and could only gently once again shoo his guest from his quarters.

Dan Fei felt lost as she walked out, her retreating figure appearing a bit depressed.

Jiang Chen felt a bit odd watching her walk out. Brother Xiao Fei seems a bit odd right now. Does he have something that's difficult to speak of?

However, Jiang Chen had no desire to further explore this matter.

The 25 consecutive fights earlier in the day hadn't resulted in many gains for Jiang Chen. That kind of utter domination was just a warm up for Jiang Chen, he hadn't actually had many gains.

It wasn't that he hadn't had any at all, because he'd at least familiarized himself with the sect disciples' methods and learnt more about their overall situation.

Although the sect disciples in the mystic quadrant were of the lowest levels, he was still able to make an initial estimate from this foundation of the sect geniuses in the earth spirit and sky spirit quadrants.

"The sect disciples aren't actually all that worthless. If I hadn't had those encounters in the first selection, I actually wouldn't be winning this easily."

It'd looked like he'd easily won the twenty five matches, but it'd actually took all of his current knowledge and talent to pull it off.

The gains from the first selection had especially greatly increased his strength.

The first trial of the heart had perfectly elevated his mental strength.

The second of talent had allowed him to absorb two spirit veins, forming a solid foundation for him to assail the earth spirit realm.

The third of endurance had granted him the magnetic golden mountain, which was quite a haul in itself.

The fourth of actual combat had enabled to him to use this opportunity to break through the shackles of martial dao and ascend to the earth spirit realm.

The fifth in the Valley of Destruction had resulted in so many gains that no further elaboration was needed.

It could be said that before the first selection, Jiang Chen's cultivation of third level spirit realm would have still enabled him to win in the mystic spirit quadrant with his various methods, but he would never win this easily. He'd have to use many of his trump cards, such as the Da Yu bow, the nameless saber and the Moonshatter Flying Daggers, or even the Lotus of Fire and Ice.

If he had to bring out these items, then his cover would've been blown.

Now that his cultivation had greatly increased and he'd returned to his original nature, he was actually moving through the mystic quadrant with ease using that one move.

What was he relying on? He was leveraging the foundations and refinement brought to him from the first selection.

If he hadn't encountered thus in the first selection, how could

Jiang Chen possibly have reached the level of appearing dull when in fact intelligent?

Jiang Chen possessed more confidence after the battles of the first day.

Although sect disciples were indeed very different from secular practitioners, there wasn't a particular difference between the candidates of the mystic quadrant and the top geniuses of the mundane world.

If it wasn't for their fortune of being born into the sects, they might not have gotten any further down the path of martial dao compared to secular disciples.

Of course, it was also because the secular disciples had a lower birth that they possessed a drive and hunger that was to their advantage.

Jiang Chen continued to practice the "Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods" later that night. This art wasn't something that could be mastered in a day and a night.

It was a good thing that Jiang Chen was controlling the entire magnetic golden mountain after refining the magnetic heart. The magnetic power was boundless and inexhaustible from the mountain, so abundance of resources wouldn't be a problem for him.

Jiang Chen noticeably felt that his muscles had become more tenacious after another night.

“At this rate and with the inexhaustible magnetic force within the mountain, I will definitely succeed in training to the first level of the Nine Transformations within three months.”

There were two main points of difficulty in training the Nine Transformation.

The first was the requirement of boundless magnetic power. This required a lot of resources.

The second was subjecting the body through what felt like the trials of purgatory. This needed very strong endurance.

If both of these conditions were met, then only time was needed to practice the Nine Transformations. Of course, with any technique, comprehension was quite important.

Jiang Chen had the memories of his past life, and so he had no problems at all with comprehension.

As he opened the window and felt the morning breeze wash over him, Jiang Chen felt completely relaxed and happy. This Eternal Mountain was indeed a wonderful place to train in.

Spirit power was also abundant even in the mystic spirit quadrant. This made Jiang Chen sigh with admiration.

He truly did feel a bit of yearning for the earth and sky quadrants now.

“Mm, the time is about right, it’s time to go.”

Jiang Chen took a look at the hour, closed the windows, and walked outside.

When he pushed through the door, he was greeted with the sight of Xiao Fei leaning against one of the pillars and holding a branch in one of his hands. She was plucking each leaf off the branch absentmindedly and throwing them down the little gutter beneath the roof near the front door. The leaves drifted alongside the flowing water in the gutter.

“Brother Xiao Fei, what are you so lost in thought about?” Jiang Chen smiled in greeting.

Dan Fei abruptly came to herself when she saw Jiang Chen and threw the branch away. She said evenly, “Good morning Brother Boulder.”

“It’s not early, the hour is almost upon us. Let’s go.”

“Mm.”

Dan Fei recalled her sleepless night the past evening as she’d

turned over Jiang Chen's words. She'd thought of the bosom friends that he spoke of and fretted over her position in his heart.

She'd mused on his words. The matters of the heart rely on the hand of destiny. When fate comes knocking, there is only a hairsbreadth that separates us from marriage.

"Can it be that I, Dan Fei, really lack that little bit of fate with Jiang Chen?"

Dan Fei's heart was in disarray as she lost herself in a reverie, unable to sleep all night. She had no heart to sleep as the sky slowly brightened and she stood beneath the roof, lost in space. It was only when Jiang Chen had appeared that she'd been startled awake.

Although Dan Fei's age was a few years older than Jiang Chen, she was still an inexperienced girl at the end of the day. Her standards were high because of Ye Chonglou, and all the men she'd ever met had flocked to her, trying to please her with all sorts of schemes and wanting her favor.

However, Dan Fei had never given them the time of the day.

What young girl didn't have daydreams? As impish and extraordinary Dan Fei was, she was still drawn to the ordinary world in that she too harbored thoughts of romance in her heart.

Except, the door to her heart had always been tightly shut.

Until Jiang Chen's sudden appearance.

The door had almost been knocked open before she'd put up any defenses.

That time during the honored tutor's banquet, Jiang Chen had used almost his power alone to save the fate of fourth prince Ye Rong when faced with oppression from all sides.

He, a secular disciple, had been as noncommittal as he could be, and even the honored tutor had been stunned by him in the end.

He had stolen the limelight with his actions and words.

That time, although Dan Fei had noticed Jiang Chen, she still didn't quite accept him. However, as time passed, Dan Fei found that she could uncover various miracles from Jiang Chen time and again.

It was like there was a limitless supply of secrets from this young man.

Everything had been raised to another level during the battle with the Silvermoon Monsterape in the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt. Jiang Chen had thrown all caution to the wind and saved her when she was in danger.

Afterwards, not only had he not berated her for acting alone, but he'd saved her again and tended to her wounds. He even taken in the sights of her buttocks.

From that moment on, Dan Fei knew that she had thoroughly entangled herself into his net for the rest of her life.

Except, the demureness of a lady had led her not to reveal this.

Just like all girls in love, she fantasized about the day in which Jiang Chen would show up with flowers and gifts on her doorstep to profess his love for her.

However, the happenings afterwards had made Dan Fei finally understand that although she was a born beauty and enjoyed the attention that thousands had lavished on her alone, there was still a type of man in this world who would never go after her like how the other men did.

When she finally understood this and wanted to take the initiative, the great selection had started.

Jiang Chen was finally going to bid farewell to the mundane world and enter a sect.

Dan Fei was like an ordinary girl in that moment, heartbroken, depressed and wallowed in self pity. However, the honored tutor's words woke her.

He said that all matters on this world belonged to those who fought for them. Those who didn't ended up with nothing.

All sorts of achievements resulted from ploughing first and harvesting later.

Dan Fei suddenly saw the light at the end of the tunnel and went through various lines of thought. She actually made use of the honored tutor's closed door cultivation to disguise herself and registered for the great selection!

She'd followed Jiang Chen ever since.

Chapter 333: Reactions After A Crazy Streak Of Wins

Naturally, Jiang Chen didn't know that it was actually Dan Fei walking by his side as brother Xiao Fei. Even if he did learn of her identity, he wouldn't have known that she had walked such a twisting, emotional path.

Ever since he'd arrived in this world and been pushed along by fate, he'd had no spare time to contemplate the matters of the heart. He was actually quite dense in this regard.

And, as the son of the Celestial Emperor in his past life, although he'd had many bosom friends, his emotional world was a blank canvas.

Because of his yin constitution, he'd been wrapped up in the great ways beneath the heavens and he had completely focused his concentrations in this area, leaving no room for distractions at all.

This was because he could not have children with his yin constitution, so his dedicated focus on the great ways was actually a type of escaping the situation and self denial.

It was because of this special occurrence in his past life that Jiang Chen's world of relationships was actually completely blank. He was completely clueless in both his past and present life.

The two walked together, but each was lost in their own

thoughts.

“Brother Xiao Fei, you’re a bit absentminded today. It would be a grave disadvantage to enter battle like this.” Jiang Chen spoke up in reminder.

Dan Fei was startled and finally came to herself after these words. That’s right, I’m in the midst of the hundred challenge trial. If I can’t place in the top ten, I won’t be able to make it to the earth spirit quadrant. How will I follow Jiang Chen’s path then?

Dan Fei hurriedly brushed away her emotions when her thoughts traveled here. She spoke seriously, “Thank you for your reminder, Brother Boulder. I was wrapped up in thoughts of my life and I had gotten distracted.

Jiang Chen smiled, “Us cultivators have no need to dwell on such things. The strong can change their destiny, so what need to wallow then?”

Jiang Chen was quite sincere in voicing these words.

When he arrived in this world, he too had been unable to shake off the worries of his past life. He’d spent a long time to become used to his identity in this life.

When Dan Fei heard Jiang Chen’s opened minded words, her heart grew warm as she smiled, “Brother Boulder doesn’t look that old, but you make convincing arguments. How odd is that!”

Jiang Chen chuckled as he thought that brother Xiao Fei was quite perceptive. He could come to such a conclusion from my words and actions!

With two lifetimes of experience, Jiang Chen was naturally much more steadier than most young men.

The two had arrived on the outskirts of the arena as they chatted.

Compared to yesterday, the overweeningly proud sect disciples had all docilely set aside their hostility.

When they saw Jiang Chen appear, all of them murmured in their hearts, wondering how many matches this perverse genius would challenge today.

Even more of them were praying that this fellow wouldn't be picked that early today. Otherwise, it would become a disastrous or a day of torment as soon as he was selected.

The later, the better. It'd be best if he was selected at the end of the day! This way, no matter how strong he was, he'd be able to take part in one or two matches at most. The day would be over by then.

This would be to the satisfaction of all.

Dan Fei was the first to be selected today. She quickly achieved three straight wins, and her third win was against a first level candidate. She finally won in the end after a tough fight.

With the three wins and one loss of yesterday, Dan Fei voluntarily gave up her right to issue more challenges after three wins. In this way, her score became six wins and one loss.

Jiang Chen had been keeping an eye on the matches and he too felt that things were odd. Just who was brother Xiao Fei? Judging from his techniques and ability, he shouldn't be ordinary or undistinguished.

There was also none of the bearing of an outer sect disciple on him. Could he be a wandering practitioner?

But, how did wandering practitioners possess such sophisticated techniques?

Jiang Chen felt that it was quite odd. Logically speaking, it wasn't unusual for ordinary practitioners to have good potential. But the level of techniques they practiced were usually on a lower level.

Brother Xiao Fei however, possessed techniques that were noticeably not inferior to those of sect disciples. This was a strange phenomenon.

Jiang Chen came to no conclusion after turning over this matter

in his mind, but he didn't ask Xiao Fei when he alighted from the ring.

There was no need to probe some secrets if no one was asking about them. To do so was to make oneself unwelcome.

It was as if the heavens had heard the prayers of the spirit quadrant candidates today. Jiang Chen's name was announced late into the afternoon on this day.

Jiang Chen was a bit perplexed as he watched the matches play out. He almost suspected that the examiners had done something to bury his name.

Otherwise, it was impossible that his name hadn't been selected after such a long time.

However, there was no need to suspect the examiners. Although he was a bit dejected, his desire to do battle had yet to reach exploding levels.

It would also be understandable if the examiners wanted to suppress his limelight a bit and not allow him to be too crazy.

After all, with this momentum, he'd be able to complete a hundred challenges in three or four days.

This kind of situation would be undoubtedly a cruel, psychological blow to the other candidates.

Jiang Chen's name was finally called near dusk.

There was only four hours left in the day at this point.

Having waited all day, Jiang Chen's mentality and fighting spirit was no longer at their peak. Therefore, he didn't continue after achieving another five straight wins and updating his score to thirty straight wins.

However, this was still quite a stunning score for two days.

Apart from Jiang Chen, the next highest ranked person was the first seed of the spirit quadrant, Guo Ren of the Purple Sun Sect.

He had achieved eighteen straight wins over two days and he hadn't lost once either.

Apart from this, there were also two others who had achieved ten straight wins.

Adding Jiang Chen and Guo Ren to the mix, that meant there were four who had achieved ten straight wins.

Although Dan Fei's score of six wins and one loss was high, she had yet to rank in the top ten.

That night, several core examiners gathered together in the

examiners' residence area.

"Master Fang, was something done to the secular champion's name today?"

"Indeed, logically speaking, he shouldn't have appeared so late."

"That fellow is truly perverse. He'd been selected so late, but he still completed five straight wins. The spirit quadrant is too easy for him indeed."

The examiners were all talking lively with everyone trying to get a word in.

Master Fang smiled and he was noncommittal in the face of everyone's discussion and speculation. Truthfully, things were as everyone was guessing, he had indeed done something to the list of names.

It wasn't that he wanted to suppress Jiang Chen. He actually wanted to protect Jiang Chen. In his eyes, a secular genius was to be congratulated after achieving such results. It was quite stunning.

However, this young man only knew how to show off his strength and he didn't know how to rein himself in. That wasn't necessarily a good thing.

Much was hidden in the depths behind a selection for the sects.

This selection also wasn't limited to just these three months. There were too many twists and turns over three years, in which one had to be hardened and tempered by them.

To make such a strong showing in the beginning, geniuses like these may not make it to the end.

Master Fang was acting out of a thought of treasuring talent in placing a small pit in his progress to slow down his momentum. It would be best if his actions could remind this young man.

It they couldn't, at least Master Fang would be able to slow down his speed and make it so that others don't set their sights on him that quickly.

There were none who could threaten him in the spirit quadrant. But what about the earth and sky quadrants?

If this young man displayed too much of his abilities and offended too many people, relationships between the sect disciples were complex and intertwined. Who could guarantee that others from the sects wouldn't suppress this young man?

This secular genius was stunning in the spirit quadrant, but he was still too naive for the sky quadrant. It'd be best if he didn't keep such a high profile before he'd fully grown into his strength.

Master Fang actually meant well in the end.

However, these matters could only be conducted clandestinely. He naturally wouldn't admit what he'd done in the face of curiosity from the other examiners.

He was the keeper and head examiner, his word was law. If he didn't want to admit to things, the others would never get to the bottom of things.

Not to mention that the other examiners were possibly very happy to see him do this. After all, these examiners were from the four sects as well. Not everyone was as fair and impartial as Master Fang.

Anyone with a bit of selfish intent wouldn't want this secular genius to occupy too much of the limelight and dominate all the sect disciples. Appropriate suppression may be right up their alley.

Several Purple Sun Sect disciples were gathered in the first residence of the spirit quadrant.

This first level residences were all solitary houses, spacious and bright, and it was an absolutely wonderful place.

"Senior brother Guo has achieved eighteen straight victories now. Such good news, congratulations! Our Purple Sun Sect well deserves the title of first amongst the four great sects."

"Heh heh, it was an unworthy placement to assign senior brother Guo to the mystic quadrant. He shouldn't been in the earth or even

sky spirit quadrants.”

This flattery actually made Guo Ren sweat a little. He did think that he was worthy of the earth quadrant.

But as confident and arrogant as he was, he knew he was quite a bit off from the sky spirit quadrant. The sky quadrant was absolutely not some place where he had the right to set foot in.

Only the best disciples had the right to enter the sky quadrant.

He spread out his hands to stem the tide of flattery from his peers. Guo Ren turned his head to ask, “Cheng Lan, how is your brother’s injuries?”

“Senior brother Guo’s pill had power to overcome a desperate situation. My brother is conscious again and he can regain sixty to seventy percent of his strength in a few days. However, his battle plans are all completely ruined.” Cheng Lan’s tone was a bit dejected as he then bit off his words viciously, “It’s all that animal’s fault! That village buffoon is truly ill mannered. Senior brother Guo, I hope to see you thoroughly torture him to defeat in the ring.”

Guo Ren nodded and didn’t express any weakness.

“Although that fellow is arrogant, he does possess a bit of strength. Even with my strength, I’m not wholly confident in being able to torture him to defeat. However, this fellow considers

everybody and everyone beneath his notice and that truly cannot be forgiven!”

Guo Ren grew immensely irritated when he thought about the shame he’d felt yesterday in his recruitment offer being turned down.

“Indeed senior brother Guo, we can’t allow that fellow continue to act so wildly. Otherwise, he’ll wreck senior brother Guo’s great plan to be first.”

Guo Ren felt like his heart had been bitten by a poisonous snake when he heard these words. He was thoroughly put out.

These words were piercing to his ears, but they were the truth. With this fellow’s momentum, he’d already won thirty matches in a row and was completely putting his eighteen victories to shame.

As long as this fellow was here, his plan of taking first had almost no possibility of succeeding.

“I must be the victor!” Guo Ren waved his fists viciously in the air. “Which of you has a good plan? Start thinking. I will treat well whoever gives me a good plan!”

Chapter 334: An Insidious Plot

The Purple Sun Sect disciples all obviously looked to Guo Ren as their leader in the mystic quadrant. When they heard Guo Ren speak thus, they all enthusiastically offered ideas in a massive brainstorm.

Some proposed surreptitiously beating Jiang Chen up.

Others wanted to use poison to cripple Jiang Chen's cultivation.

Yet some also advocated using profit and gain to buy off Jiang Chen, and have him purposefully lose a few matches. As the saying went, there were no eternal enemies, just eternal profit. They didn't believe that Jiang Chen wouldn't submit in the face of enormous profit.

Of course, there were voices that harped on about buying out those that walked with Jiang Chen, and use them to make a move against him.

There were quite a lot of ideas, but after close consideration, it seemed that none of them were viable.

It was a good idea to surreptitiously beat him up, but they first would have to be able to even hit Jiang Chen.

Using poison to cripple his cultivation sounded good, but who would go? If this didn't succeed and the matter was exposed,

everyone who'd be involved in planning this matter would be done for.

As for buying him off, it sounded feasible, but how much profit and resources would be needed to bring Jiang Chen over to their side? No one had any idea.

And, to be honest, they were all second or third rate characters in the sect. How much wealth did they possess to buy someone off?

As for buying off someone by his side instead, this was even more of a crappy idea. There was only one other by his side, and that was that candidate number two, who took completely after Jiang Chen.

That fellow's temper was even worse than that of the perverse genius. Get him to become a turncoat? They were best off erasing this idea as early as possible.

Suddenly, a unlikely figure with a reddened face and white teeth chuckled, saying, "Senior brother Guo, I have a plan here that may succeed."

"What?" Guo Ren flicked a glance at the person but didn't think much of what he'd said. This guy relished in the pleasures of women and didn't possess much ambition. What kind of good idea would he have? Therefore, Guo Ren wasn't much enthused after this fellow offered an idea.

He also seemed to know that Guo Ren wasn't too inclined to

speak with him, but he didn't grow irate. He smiled obsequiously, "I am indeed inferior to everyone when it comes to battle strength, but however, I truly do have a scheme."

He spread out his hand upwards as he spoke, revealing a pill bottle that had appeared in his hand.

"Senior brother Guo, this is medicine that this younger brother uses to liven things up with plucking flowers. The powder in this bottle is without taste or smell, and is one of the newest and most precious things I've gained lately. Once this is activated, the masculine, yang energy within one's body will be elevated to an explosive level. This cannot be easily used if there aren't a handful of girls nearby. This is because this medicine can catalyze the yang qi within one's body to an almost maddened state within a short period of time. If the user doesn't pluck the flowers in time, it's quite lucky that his blood vessels will burst and he'll die from his body exploding."

Guo Ren had furrowed his brow at first when he began listening to this long-winded explanation. He felt that it was an affront to his bearing. But the more closely he listened, the more he seemed to identify a possible path.

This medicine would be able to catalyze the yang qi within one's body and make it roar to life in a short period of time.

This was the key!

This medicine that added to the fun was so domineering; what

kind of consequence would there be if this fellow accidentally breathed some in?

Where would he find girls to pluck and vent his energies with on such a short notice in the mystic quadrant?

It wasn't that there weren't any, there were many female disciples from the Flowing Wind Sect in this quadrant. But as brazen as he was, would he dare openly pluck them?

This was courting death!

But if he didn't find an outlet to vent his energies, then the raging yang qi would cause his blood vessels, and even his entire body to explode ...

A sinister smile floated onto Guo Ren's face in that moment.

"Xiao Yu, your idea is not bad. However, in order for this to succeed, someone must approach him and gain his trust. How would this be easy?"

Upon further thought, Guo Ren felt that although this was a good scheme, there was quite a bit of difficulty in executing it.

Xiao Yu was shocked and flattered by Guo Ren's acknowledgement and smirked slightly, "Senior brother Guo, the amazing part of this medicine is that it is tasteless and odorless. We just need to dump a little bit somewhere he will pass by. Unless he

doesn’t breathe, he’ll be in great trouble if he takes in even a little bit.”

“Oh? Just what is this that it’s thus wondrous?” Guo Ren’s interest was piqued.

“This medicine is called ‘Smile of the Goddess’ because it’s said that even the gods and goddesses will be unable to withstand it when they take it. It is comprised of nine items of extreme yang, all incredibly lewd in nature.”

“Mm, even if this is the case, a cultivator puts up high defenses when training. It may become apparent if you scatter it in front of his door.” Guo Ren thought for a moment and felt that some traces would be apparent if scattered in front of Jiang Chen’s door. With this fellow’s cultivation level, he may very well detect it.

In actuality, any medicine that was said to be odorless or tasteless would never be entirely so.

The perceptive abilities of a cultivator weren’t something that any ordinary person could aspire to.

Even the slightest hint could lead to discovery. Although he wasn’t afraid of failure, Jiang Chen would be on even higher alert once this failed and it’d be harder for Guo Ren to plot against him in the future.

“Everyone think, is there a way that he wouldn’t be on his guard

at all?” Guo Ren looked around the group and encouraged everyone present to rack their brains.

Cheng Lan suddenly said, “Senior brother Guo, I think we can only target that candidate number two if we want this guy to be completely off his guard. Although this fellow is also strong, he’s not as inexplicable as that freak. These two are always seen together. If we can do something to that candidate number two…”

This suggestion gave Guo Ren quite a bit of inspiration.

He slapped his thigh as his eyes lit up. “Yes, Cheng Lan, this is a good suggestion. If this powder also takes effect on candidate number two, then he’ll issue a plea for help from his companion because he won’t know what’s going on once it takes effect. As long as that freak comes to investigate, the powder will also stealthily steal into his body. At that time, those two men might even take a tumble in the bedsheets bare naked, hahahaha…”

Guo Ren couldn’t help but laugh himself when he thought of the depravity that would ensue.

All the Purple Sun Sect disciples started snickering as well. It was apparent that they were all very excited by the thought of such a depraved and shameless scene.

“Cheng Lan, with your observation of them, how likely do you think that candidate number two will fall victim?” Guo Ren calmed down.

Cheng Lan thought for a moment, “Candidate number two seems to have a good level of cultivation, but he also seems to be bothered by some matters of the heart. He’s often lost in space with his attention wandering. I think there is great hope for success if we start with him. However, it’s not likely that I’ll succeed with my strength. Perhaps senior brother Guo should take the field to assure success.”

Guo Ren’s strength was absolutely the first amongst all the Purple Sun Sect disciples in the mystic spirit quadrant.

He sighed lightly when he saw everyone’s ardent expressions. He also knew that it would not be the best if he didn’t undertake this operation himself and had someone else do it.

“Alright, it looks like I should personally do this. Let’s talk about a plan first.” Guo Ren decided to do it himself after he thought about it.

However, even if he was doing it himself, he still needed a plan. It would be impossible to pull things off flawlessly without a perfect plan.

……

As for Jiang Chen and Dan Fei, they’d returned to their residence.

They pushed open the door to find that the six others were all

missing.

Dan Fei smiled, “Those fellows seemed to have hardened their hearts to avoid us.”

Jiang Chen smiled back, “This is best. It will be less noisy this way.”

Their two rooms neighbored each other on the south side. Dan Fei squeezed out a smile when they arrived at Jiang Chen’s door. “I think I’ll go back to my own room.”

Dan Fei actually really wanted to go in, but she was afraid of being shooed out by Jiang Chen again. Although Jiang Chen didn’t know that she was Dan Fei, it still saddened her a bit when he showed her the door.

Jiang Chen smiled carelessly and nodded, not saying much and entering his room afterwards.

Dan Fei lightly bit her lip and stood at the door for a slight while before entering her room as well. She sighed faintly as her thin frame leaned on the door.

She felt quite conflicted right now. She truly wanted to reveal her identity and express her feelings towards Jiang Chen, but she also worried that this would impact Jiang Chen’s emotions and affect his upcoming matches.

“I can’t be this selfish and disrupt his current tempo because of my own wishes. He needs to soar to the skies right now, and if I impact his development because of affairs of the heart, I will not be at peace for the rest of my life. Forget it, forget it, if we truly lack this kind of fate in our lives, I will just look at him silently and support him, admiring his stunning talents. Isn’t it also quite joyous to admire his rise as a genius?”

Dan Fei suddenly heard the sound of knocking on the window as her heart dwelled in turmoil that was as chaotic as a tangled skein. Her heart leapt gladly, does he know it’s me and so is knocking on my window to come find me?

Her face reddened immediately afterwards and she lectured herself slightly. She truly was full of whims and fancies, thinking all sorts of wild thoughts. Why would he come knock at my window if he knew it was me?

However, upon closer listening, there was indeed the sound of someone knocking at my door.

“Who is it?” Dan Fei’s emotions were a tad disarrayed as she vainly tried to keep them in check. She walked to the window and asked lowly.

“I’m here on behalf of others to deliver a gift to you.”

Dan Fei cracked the window open a bit but saw a punch flying straight towards her face.

It was a good thing that her reaction was swift as she turned her head a bit and evaded it. She shouted, “What kind of mad villain are you to dare ambush someone on private property?!”

The voice laughed oddly and vanished without a trace, its whereabouts unknown.

Dan Fei felt rather baffled, who was playing a prank? Or was this a threat? As fierce as this punch had been, it obviously hadn’t held much malicious intent within it.

The person behind it had left immediately after sending this punch over, whether it’d connected or not.

It looked like a prank no matter how she looked at it. Dan Fei was perplexed as she shut the door, wondering if she should report it to the examiners.

She thought about it carefully and decided that this wasn’t a particularly important matter. She hadn’t been injured at all either. It was likely that the examiners wouldn’t be able to find much of anything if they came to investigate.

Jiang Chen had also come knocking at her door by now, “Brother Xiao Fei, I heard something from your side, is everything alright?”

Dan Fei calmed her emotions and opened the door to let him in. She described what had just happened to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen jumped out the window when he heard what had happened and investigated for a while, flipping back in through the window.

His brow creased, Jiang Chen said, “Whoever came possessed a high level of skill. He didn’t leave even a footprint behind and had completely concealed his presence. There are no traces at all, so it’d be futile to summon an examiner.”

Dan Fei nodded, “It looks like someone couldn’t hold themselves back and wanted to use these little tricks to disturb us.”

“Dancing clowns. They’re using some tricks that can’t see the light. Have no fear, if they come back again, I’ll make sure that he can’t leave.”

Jiang Chen walked up to Dan Fei and patted her shoulder, “Just a small interlude, don’t worry. I’ll go back first, feel free to summon me if anything happens.”

After a few days of coexisting through difficulties, Jiang Chen had grown more accepting of this brother Xiao Fei. He started walking outside as he spoke, but his nose suddenly twitched slightly and he frowned.

Chapter 335: The Effects Of The Extreme Aphrodisiac

Wait, something's wrong!

Jiang Chen's perceptions were incredibly sensitive due to training the Psychic's Head. He hadn't noticed something was out of the ordinary when he'd first entered.

But, as he was about to walk out of the door, he could subtly feel that something was wrong.

"What wrong?" Dan Fei asked when she saw Jiang Chen frown.

Jiang Chen's tone chilled slightly, "Don't you feel that there's a faintly discernible presence floating through the air?"

Dan Fei sensed attentively for a while and shook her head with a lost expression. "No."

"Hold your breath." Jiang Chen's expression changed as he immediately opened the door and all the windows.

He then tugged on Dan Fei's sleeve and dragged her out the door into the yard.

Dan Fei was shocked by his sudden action, but with her understanding of Jiang Chen, she knew that something was surely

up at this point. Knowing his steadiness, he would never act so impulsively otherwise.

"Brother Boulder, what's going on?" Dan Fei asked.

"Of all the precautions I took, I still didn't defend against this." Jiang Chen's expression would be quite ugly at this point if he hadn't been wearing a mask.

He'd always been quite careful and had entered his room with utmost care whenever he returned. He would only enter after observing the surroundings for quite a while.

He was afraid that someone would plot against him and deploy all sorts of unscrupulous methods.

However, he'd been on his guard against his own room but he hadn't done the same for brother Xiao Fei's room.

He took in large breaths of air from the outside but could still feel the blood in his veins circulating at a faster speed.

There seemed to be a ball of flame slowly burning in his body. He felt a very strange feeling of countless bugs crawling over his body.

"I've been poisoned!" Jiang Chen's first thought was that he'd been poisoned. However, when he sensed carefully, he didn't find any traces of being poisoned.

Where was this bizarre feeling coming from if he hadn't been poisoned?

"This... is bad..." Jiang Chen could feel a bizarreness in certain parts of his body. His body leapt away as he dodged back into his own room.

He sat down cross legged and circulated the Boulder's Heart, planning on controlling this sudden impulse.

However, the Boulder's Heart could only restrain the wild fancies of his mind, but couldn't tamper down the instinctive impulsiveness of his body.

As naive as he was in the ways of men and women, Jiang Chen understood by now that he hadn't been poisoned, but a depraved aphrodisiac.

He felt the blood in his body circulating at a continuously faster pace. An enormous impulsive feeling continued to agitate in his body, making him feel like an inflating balloon.

"What kind of lewd poison is this that it could be so domineering?" Jiang Chen was shocked. He'd downed successively numerous spirit medicines that would reduce internal flames, but it was still insufficient to repress that strong impulse.

His body was like it was about to explode, as a ball of flame

roared fiercely three inches beneath his navel. He was tough as iron, as if an ancient, fierce beast that was about to break free of its seal.

"Who would be so treacherous to use such a bizarre poison to entrap me?" Jiang Chen was extremely depressed. He was an old hat at using poison, but although he had some knowledge of aphrodisiacs, he'd never studied them.

Unfortunately, this was what he'd happened to fall victim to this time.

The door creaked open.

Dan Fei walked in hastily and was greeted with the eyes of a wild beast.

When she saw Jiang Chen's reddened eyes and his crazed look of hunger, Dan Fei was enormously startled, "Brother Boulder, what's wrong with you?"

Jiang Chen was immediately enraged when he saw her walk in. He roared, "Just who are you?!?"

"I..." Dan Fei was completely perplexed. She had no idea why Jiang Chen was asking her this.

Jiang Chen's eyes spat fire. "I was too naive and actually trusted you. To think that you had colluded with the sect disciples to plot

against me!”

A roaring sound exploded in Dan Fei’s mind as she became completely shell shocked. I… plotting against you? What… what??

Even if I, Dan Fei died, I would never scheme against you.

“Brother Boulder, I… I swear to the heavens that I really didn’t plot against you. What’s going on? Your eyes are so red.”

It was a good thing that he was sitting cross legged on the ground. Otherwise, the sight of his greatly peaked privates would likely scare Dan Fei out of her wits and send her scurrying for cover.

“You didn’t plot against me? Then how come I’ve fallen victim to this poison but you’re completely fine without any symptoms? The poison originated from your room, and you dare say that it had nothing to do with you?” Jiang Chen flared his aura. If the other moved at all or had any suspicious traces in his tone, he would absolutely strike out with all his strike and kill the other immediately.

“The poison originated from my room? I… I really don’t seem to be poisoned. But, I really didn’t plot against you. I’m right here right now. If I’ve done anything against you, you can kill me with one blow!” Dan Fei was almost to the point of tears as well. She’d never seen Jiang Chen in this state.

Even someone as calm as her had been frightened. She was stupefied and her voice was trembling. Dan Fei was almost crying.

“Impossible!” Jiang Chen shook his head. “My defenses are stronger than yours, so there’s no reason that I’m poisoned and you’re unscathed.”

Dan Fei also thought it odd. She believed that Jiang Chen would never talk random nonsense. The poison must’ve originated from her room.

However, it was also true that she hadn’t been poisoned.

“Brother Boulder, what poison have you been afflicted with? Is there an antidote to this poison? Should I go alert the examiners?”

Jiang Chen stared fixedly at the other and saw that their panic and disarray didn’t seem to be an act. He couldn’t help but think, does he really not know? Does this really have nothing to do with him?

Jiang Chen was quite skilled in reading others and could tell that brother Xiao Fei wasn’t putting on a pretense. If the other really did have collusions with the sect disciples, he should be hiding in the shadows at the moment and watching everything unfold, not walking in to place himself at Jiang Chen’s mercy.

However, why was it that he had been poisoned but Xiao Fei was alright?

Could it be that he was naturally immune?

In terms of being resistant to poison, his body was absolutely resistant. But that medicine was obviously not poison and just an aphrodisiac. Technically speaking, it wasn't a poison.

It was precisely because this wasn't a poison that Jiang Chen had succumbed to it.

His enemies had also been quite thorough as they hadn't made a direct move against Jiang Chen, but Xiao Fei instead.

What did this indicate? It meant that his enemies feared him and wasn't certain of their success in front of him. This was why they had acted against him indirectly through Xiao Fei.

This way, his mental defenses had been greatly lowered.

One had to say, this was a good plan and it'd been calculated quite precisely.

Dan Fei threw all other thoughts out of her mind at this point and walked over with concern. "Brother Boulder, there must be an antidote to this poison. Tell me and I'll go look for it now."

Jiang Chen reached out a hand and halted her in her footsteps. "Don't come any closer!"

Dan Fei's body trembled slightly. As she looked at his reddened eyes, she knew that he was absolutely in immense discomfort at this moment and suffering greatly.

She stood there dumbly, feeling as if blades were cutting into her heart. She deathly wished that she could take Jiang Chen's place and suffer on his behalf.

But, why was she completely safe and sound? Dan Fei completely didn't understand.

"Poison... heh heh, it wouldn't be a problem if it was poison. But this isn't poison at all, but an aphrodisiac. Of extreme masculinity and yang, it's stoking all the yang qi in my body and is increasing the rate of my circulation. If I don't vent this yang qi, my body will explode. If I'm lucky, I will end up with a cultivation deviation, immediate death if I'm not. I have no way of treating this poison or treating its symptoms if I don't know the recipe of this medicine."

"What?" Dan Fei lost her voice in shock. She hadn't thought at all that it'd be this kind of poison.

She immediately understood why she hadn't been affected. This poison of extreme yang was obviously only effective on males.

She was a girl, so how could she possibly be affected?

Dan Fei was completely shell shocked in that moment and

completely frantic. She was full of self accusation. “It’s all my fault, it’s all my fault! If I hadn’t opened the window, that person wouldn’t have been able to scatter the powder in with the force of his blow. If I hadn’t emitted a sound, Jiang Chen wouldn’t have come to my room…”

This was a plot of successive elements.

The origin of the poison was her.

“The enemy made their move on me because they knew they wouldn’t succeed if they targeted Jiang Chen directly. Therefore, they used me to attack him indirectly. I… I’m so useless! It’s all my fault, I dragged him down!”

Dan Fei’s heart was in a wild disarray as guilt stoppered her chest. She truly wanted to fall on her own blade to atone for her wrongdoings.

“Brother Boulder, it’s all my fault!” Dan Fei murmured in an anguished tone. “Kill me, it’s all my fault! They knew I’m useless so they made their move through me to get at you. It’s all my fault in the end. If you want to vent your anger, kill me with one blow…”

Jiang Chen snorted coldly as he sweated profusely. He also knew at this moment that this matter truly had nothing to do with Xiao Fei.

He could only blame the enemy for being too cunning in using their method to make their move.

But why hadn't Xiao Fei succumbed to it? Jiang Chen still didn't understand, but he had no ability to contemplate this now.

The blood vessels of his body were all frothing. It was a futile exercise no matter how he tried to restrain himself or regain a calm state of mind.

The kind of impulse was like an ancient beast about to break free of its cage. He needed to vent himself like a roaring deluge of water, and only the relations between a man and a woman could give him relief.

Jiang Chen's mind was already a bit hazy at the moment, and his dao heart as firm as a boulder was slowly succumbing.

The instinctive power of his body was overwhelming everything now.

"It isn't that there are no female cultivators within the mystic quadrant. There's a ton in the Flowing Wind Sect. But since the enemy is using this kind of method to plot against me, he must have laid more plans. If I try to engage in illicit relations like a rapist, then I will surely fall into their trap. Not to mention that I, Jiang Chen, am an upright man. How can I do something as shameful as forcing myself upon others? I'd rather die than do something like that!"

Jiang Chen's internal struggles made his breathing become faster.

"You... get out." Jiang Chen's eyes spat out fiery sparks. Although this matter had nothing to do with Xiao Fei, he was unwilling for others to see him in his current state.

Dan Fei shook her head resolutely, "No, I'm not leaving. It's all my fault, so if we're going to die, I'll die with you!"

"Die? Do you think it's a matter of death? Do you really have to see me make a fool out of myself?" Jiang Chen was roaring like a wild beast by now as he began to rage out of control.

Chapter 336: Jiang Chen, Let Me Help You

This was a torture even worse than death; the extreme forces of masculinity and yang had formed a situation where the yang in his body had been isolated.

It's been said that nothing would grow when only yang was present, and that nothing would be born if only yin was present.

Whether it was the operations of heaven and earth, or simply the human body, even the gods would be hard pressed to pull off a miracle if one's yin and yang were out of balance.

Therefore, Jiang Chen knew that this was indeed a fate worse than death.

Dan Fei was equally stubborn in this moment and shook her head firmly, "I'm not leaving, not unless you beat me to death!"

"Get out!!" Jiang Chen roared. "What the hell can you possibly do here, apart from irritating me?!"

"I..." Dan Fei had no time to spare for her own feelings after being yelled at. Her mind was a chaotic mess currently, and she felt guilty and wanted to help. However, apart from helplessly throwing her hands up in this situation, she didn't know what she could do.

She only had a single thought in mind right now, and that was

that even if she were to die, she'd die with Jiang Chen.

"Wait a second..." Dan Fei suddenly thought of what Jiang Chen had said amidst the havoc in her mind. "Jiang Chen said that this was an aphrodisiac of extreme masculinity. It's currently causing his yang qi to increase exponentially, and in turn his blood to froth. His body will explode if he doesn't vent his yang qi, with a cultivation deviation being the least serious consequence, or immediate death as the most serious... Does this mean that he'll be saved if he's able to expend his yang qi?"

Dan Fei seemed to realize something when her thoughts reached this point. Her heart abruptly shuddered, and a red flush crept up her face behind the mask.

Although she was inexperienced in the ways of men and women, and didn't usually think about things like this, she still knew a little bit about this matter since she was still a woman over twenty years old.

Her body shook as she felt both her mouth and tongue go dry, and her heart crashed about in her chest.

"Did he mean... that when he spoke of venting his yang qi?" Dan Fei only partially understood. She was also afraid that she'd misunderstood, but had a subtle feeling that this was indeed the case.

Although she was both hesitant and bashful, when she thought about the fact that she was the source of the torment that Jiang

Chen was currently suffering through, her guilt triumphed over her shyness in an instant.

She swiftly walked over to Jiang Chen and held him up, “I think that... I think that I can help you.”

Jiang Chen had almost been consumed by the flames raging inside his body at the moment. He sighed ruefully when he heard these words, “Hurry and leave while I still have my rationality. If you don’t, I’m afraid that I might really beat you to death once I’ve lost control. How can you possibly help me? You’re a man too, don’t you understand that a balanced amount of yin and yang is needed to resolve this kind of aphrodisiac?”

“Yin and yang... do you... do you perhaps mean the pleasures between a man and a woman?” Dan Fei asked in a low voice as her head trailed in embarrassment, a flood of red blush at the nape of her neck.

She was an untested girl and so she didn’t even dare think about these matters ordinarily, not to mention actually talking to someone about them.

She’d gathered up almost all of her courage in order to ask this question. After she asked it however, she felt completely drained.

Jiang Chen rasped out, “So what? Are you able to go out and grab a girl? What’s the difference between that and a rapist? Not to mention that, since the enemy had this kind of sinister plan, they’ll definitely be on their guard against us doing such a thing.

We might be walking straight into a trap if we leave.”

Jiang Chen was well aware that this plan had to have many interlocking elements to it. He’d have to think of a way to take care of his needs once he found it impossible to control his urges any longer.

There were quite a few female disciples within the mystic quadrant.

If they laid in wait, and laid an ambush for him to walk into, they could then arrange for him to gain a title of illicit relations with women, and in turn ruin his reputation. They might even kill him at the scene.

Dan Fei knew that Jiang Chen had spoken the truth, and felt the utmost admiration for him. He was already in this sort of state, yet still didn’t wish to ruin a girl’s innocence. This was proof of what level of character he had. I, Dan Fei, have no qualms about giving my innocence, something that I’ve kept safe for twenty years, to him.

When her thoughts reached this point, Dan Fei’s voice became as small as a mosquito’s as she said lowly, “It’s my fault, so I should make amends to you. It... would be bad if any other innocent girl lost her innocence.”

“What?” An explosion rang out within Jiang Chen’s mind as a body as warm as jade lightly slipped into his embrace.

His final line of defense completely imploded at that second.

As for Dan Fei, she found it hard to repress her bashfulness when she felt the ball of fire and rampaging energy beneath his navel.

.....

No one knew how long that night lasted, nor how many conquests were mounted—it seemed as if fierce gales and winds never ceased all throughout the night.

The completely new experience almost made Dan Fei faint a few times.

When everything had returned to a state of calm, Dan Fei's mind slowly regained its clarity as she gazed upon the man that lay quietly next to her. His mask was askew—underneath were Jiang Chen's sharply delineated features.

This face had appeared in Dan Fei's dreams countless times. and had made her toss and turn throughout many nights.

The two were now fully exposed to each other. Tears glimmered in Dan Fei's eyes as she lightly kissed Jiang Chen's body. A sense of contentment and pride, along with a complicated sort of feeling, rose up in her heart.

"Jiang Chen, I have no regrets. I will never have any regrets."

Dan Fei didn't know where Jiang Chen had brought her whilst they'd been enraptured in the throes of their passion. She looked around, but all she saw was darkness. They seemed to be underground.

As she gazed at Jiang Chen's fast asleep form in peaceful repose, Dan Fei suddenly had a strange feeling that perhaps... this was the true Jiang Chen?

Dan Fei's first taste of a night-long conquest had left her extremely tired. She struggled to her feet, but almost didn't dare to take a step forward due to the aches and pains she felt.

Dan Fei put her clothes back on, and resumed her identity as Xiao Fei.

"Jiang Chen, I hope the story of this night doesn't give you any psychological pressure in the future." Dan Fei knew that Jiang Chen had been completely lost in a frenzy of passion during the night, and had had no idea who she was.

Since he didn't know, Dan Fei didn't want to use this night to tie Jiang Chen down. As much as she wanted to spend the rest of her life with him, she didn't want to use this sort of method to achieve her goal.

She didn't want Jiang Chen to think that she'd offered her body simply so she could spend the rest of her life together with him.

With Dan Fei's self-pride, using her body to tie a man down wasn't something that she'd do.

"Last night was something that I owed you. You wouldn't have been poisoned if it hadn't been for me." Women were thus odd. Once they'd given their body to a man, they would think of him in every detail. and try to make the best of the situation for him.

Sitting down cross-legged, Dan Fei slowly calmed herself. However, a feeling of happiness blossomed in her heart whenever she turned her head to gaze at Jiang Chen sleeping soundly.

If it was possible, she wished that this moment could last forever.

If time stopped right now, at this precise moment, Dan Fei felt that she'd be the happiest woman in the world.

"Ugh..." Jiang Chen slightly rolled over and abruptly opened his eyes. His mind immediately cleared up.

"Uh... brother Xiao Fei, why is it you?" Jiang Chen was slightly surprised to see the cross-legged Dan Fei, and memories of last night began to flood his mind.

"Brother Boulder, are you alright?" Dan Fei restrained her emotions with great effort as she asked faintly.

“I... did I do something? Brother Xiao Fei, you...” His memories from last night came to a screeching halt at this moment.

Jiang Chen vaguely felt that he’d done many ludicrous things last night. There was the perfect figure of a wondrous girl, whom had allowed him to pluck her many times imprinted in his mind.

But, was it all simply a dream?

Jiang Chen didn’t think so as he gazed at Dan Fei with a few interrogative hints in his eyes.

Dan Fei smiled faintly, “Brother Boulder, where have you taken me? The hour is almost here, we’ll be late if we don’t leave.”

Jiang Chen’s mind was a mess. He could hear that something was wrong from Xiao Fei’s words, but he couldn’t articulate what exactly was wrong.

The matters from last night were quite clear; they likely weren’t a dream.

Then, brother Xiao Fei is a girl?! An explosion erupted in Jiang Chen’s mind as he suddenly understood a lot. Why hadn’t brother Xiao Fei fallen victim to the poison? And how had he vented his excessive yang qi?

There was only one possible explanation to all this.

Brother Xiao Fei wasn't a boy, but a girl!

Jiang Chen found himself in quite a predicament behind a mask right now. He'd taken a girl's innocence!

"Brother Boulder let's go." Dan Fei knew that Jiang Chen would surely have many questions in his heart right now.

However, Dan Fei didn't want Jiang Chen to have too much of a psychological burden, so she'd planned on burying this deep in her mind, and archiving it permanently.

"Brother Xiao Fei, yesterday..."

Dan Fei spread her hands out, "Accidents are inevitable in life. Last night's matter was something that I owed Brother Boulder. If you feel guilty, then knock down those damned sect disciples savagely and vent our ill temper on them. If you manage to step on all of those sect disciples, I'll be greatly gratified when we meet again in the world."

Jiang Chen was in complete disarray. Brother Xiao Fei was both admitting that she was a girl, and that what had happened last night had truly happened. And judging from her tone, she obviously didn't want to talk about it anymore.

He sighed lightly, "Xiao Fei..."

“Brother Boulder seems so dashing in the ring, why are you so awkward and stilted right now? We don’t have much time, let’s hurry up and leave. If you insist on acting thus, I’ll think less of Brother Boulder.”

Jiang Chen knew that there was no way for him to change the situation, and simply nodded. He ordered the Lotus to take them to the round.

In his last lucid moments yesterday, he’d instinctively told himself that he couldn’t consummate this relationship in the room, and had thus activated the Lotus in order to bring them underground.

It was then that Dan Fei discovered that they’d been on an enormous Lotus flower last night.

This marvelous occurrence made her heart tremble once again. She found that she was able to understood less and less of Jiang Chen.

This lotus was able to extend and retract as it wished? Dan Fei suddenly understood why Jiang Chen had been unable to emerge unscathed from the Fire Ravens’ rampage.

With this strange lotus, Jiang Chen had been able to tunnel into the ground; so what of the fire burning for a hundred li?

The two returned to the surface and checked the time. There was

only fifteen minutes left until they had to gather.

After Dan Fei had gave her body to Jiang Chen, her girlish notion of being worried about personal gains and losses had actually been cleanly swept away.

She kept telling herself that from today onwards, she was still brother Xiao Fei, and that she couldn't affect Jiang Chen because of any personal relationships.

Women were made of water, and thus her personality was as gentle as water right now.

All her thoughts were pointing in one direction right now, and that was that she simply couldn't impact Jiang Chen's trials.

To do this, she had to pretend to be as strong as possible, and never let the matters of yesterday become a psychological burden for Jiang Chen.

Chapter 337: After Joy Comes Sadness For Guo Ren

The group of Purple Sun Sect disciples were gathered in Guo Ren's residence.

"Cheng Lan, are you certain that those two weren't in the rooms?" Guo Ren laughed sinisterly as he asked.

Cheng Lan hated Jiang Chen with a burning passion after his cousin had been beaten up, so he nodded very affirmatively, "Senior brother Guo, I took the risk of being beaten to sneak peeks twice, and there was no one in their rooms. I looked all over the residence, there was no one."

Guo Ren frowned, "Odd, where could they have gone?"

Cheng Lan leered, "Perhaps they couldn't withstand their hunger and ran out, running afoul of the restrictions in the mystic quadrant and were destroyed?"

Apart from the residences in the quadrant, only free access was given to the Hundred Challenges Arena. The other areas were restricted areas that not even the examiners dared venture into. If candidates barged into them, only death would await them!

Xiao Yu didn't care at all as he said with an uncaring expression, "Senior brother Guo, don't you waste effort worrying about this. Even the gods are unable to withstand the Goddess Smile poison,

not to mention a mundane cultivator. In my opinion, those two have probably exploded somewhere already and died."

Guo Ren was a cautious one. He wanted to see the person if they were alive, or their corpse if they were dead. If he didn't, he'd always feel a bit uneasy in his heart.

"Indeed, senior brother Guo, that aphrodisiac is so domineering that those two are definitely dead without a doubt since they couldn't find women. I feel that we shouldn't gather here anymore. What if an examiner finds that they're missing and traces it to us in their investigation?"

Guo Ren wasn't worried about this and smiled coldly, "The f*ck will they investigate about? The dead can't bear witness, how will the investigate?"

Another disciple said, "The time is about now, let's go to the Arena first. We'll be docked if we're late."

All of the candidates nodded and headed towards the Hundred Challenges Arena.

When they'd reached the outskirts of the Arena, Guo Ren at the front suddenly halted his footsteps.

There was a figure by the side of the road that was stately and reserved, his presence quite dominating.

“It’s him?” The Purple Sun Sect disciples behind Guo Ren were all flabbergasted. How was it possibly him? Shouldn’t he have been afflicted with the Goddess Smile and exploded from its effects?

Had that kid found a woman to vent his energies into last night?

That wasn’t right either! None of the Flowing Wind Sect female disciples had been plucked last night.

Not to mention that they had set up plants everywhere last night. This fellow would’ve been discovered if he’d dared approach a female disciple.

Since he hadn’t plucked a female disciple, then how had he dispelled the effects of the Goddess Smile?

Guo Ren remained calm as he waved his hand and indicated for his peers behind him to remain calm and not reveal their weak points. Don’t confess everything without receiving a single blow from the cane!

“Guo Ren.” Jiang Chen’s tone was remote, but anyone could hear the unbounded killing intent embodied in this voice.

“Don’t explain and don’t try to deny. Admit it if you’re a man.”

“Admit what?” Guo Ren smiled coldly. He wasn’t a fool.

“It’s fine if you deny it. Whether or not you did it, I’m marking your name down as the responsible party. You better pray every minute and second from now on that you don’t select me. Otherwise, you’ll end up worse than Cheng Zhen.”

Jiang Chen snorted coldly as he pushed off his feet and vanished like the wind from the vision of those assembled.

His warning sounded again in the air, “If any of you assembled here today can come to me and admit your faults, I will be able to forgive you. Otherwise, if any of you meet me in the ring, you better pray for yourselves.”

This wasn’t a warning anymore, but a naked threat.

“The hell, he’s so damn cocky!” A Purple Sun Sect disciple couldn’t help but curse.

“How is this possible? He… he seems completely fine?” Xiao Yu stammered as his face was ashen.

He’d been the one to think of this plan and offer up the aphrodisiac. He’d tried the Goddess Smile before, it was absolutely a terrifying thing.

He’d brought out his precious treasure in order to fawn on Guo Ren. If it hadn’t been for kissing up to his senior brother, he wouldn’t have wanted to bring out something so precious at all.

But, when he saw the other brimming with energy, Xiao Yu knew that his plan had failed.

As he looked at his peers cast interrogative glances at him, Xiao Yu angrily retorted back, “What are you looking at me for? Can it be that my medicine was fake? Anyone who doesn’t believe me can try it for themselves!”

“Shut up!” Guo Ren spat out. Wasn’t it to voluntarily confess by discussing this matter openly in a public space?!

With the other’s strength, if they were hidden in the shadows not too far away, he might’ve already heard Xiao Yu’s words.

Xiao Yu had also seemed to realize that he had lost his composure and muttered, “”Anyways, there’s definitely nothing wrong with it, there must be something else at play here.”

Guo Ren actually didn’t suspect the aphrodisiac either. His guess was that the fellow had indeed found a woman to vent himself.

Could it be that all his plants hadn’t been enough to keep an eye on that fellow from making a visit to the Flowing Wind Sect?

Guo Ren became paranoid all of a sudden as well.

“This is the end of the matter. No one may bring this up again.” Guo Ren ordered.

All the other disciples nodded in agreement. They really would reveal their involvement if they kept discussing it. Although this wasn't a big deal, someone would have to be the unlucky one and take the fall if an investigation was mounted.

Cheng Lan asked timidly, "Senior brother Guo, that kid threatened us just now. Although the chances of our group meeting them in the ring aren't high, it's still a possibility. If we truly meet him in the ring, this kid is vicious and ruthless..."

Guo Ren snorted, "What, you want to be a traitor and sell out your brethren?"

Cheng Lan hastened to say, "There is undying enmity between me and him, how is that possible? Senior brother Guo, I'm worried that there will be others who can't stand up to this and secretly tattle."

Guo Ren's gaze darkened as he swept his eyes in a circle. "Remember, whoever goes behind my back to be an informant is to make an enemy of the entire Purple Sun Sect. Watch yourselves!"

The other Purple Sun Disciples all had distressed expressions on their faces as they were caught between a rock and a hard place.

If they didn't turn informant, they would definitely be beaten to death if they met in the ring. The other had said that he would make them end up worse than Cheng Zhen.

Half of Cheng Zhen's body was basically paralyzed. If they were worse off than him, then wouldn't that be beaten to death?

If they turned informant however, they was betraying their own and their peers would definitely beat them to death when all came to light.

In the span of a moment, all the disciples who had participated in this matter were incredibly conflicted. No one had thought that a mere secular disciple would be able to inflict such agony on them.

Upon returning to the Hundred Challenges Arena, Jiang Chen's demeanor was noticeably more frosty.

After the accident of last night, he had calmed down much more. He had always gone about things cautiously before, but hadn't thought that he would still accidentally fall victim to a plot.

The hearts of those in the sects were wicked and malicious indeed.

It seemed that he'd underestimated just how treacherous the sects and sect disciples would be.

Dan Fei also sat cross legged by Jiang Chen's side, but could feel the coldness emanating from him. She knew that Jiang Chen had been thoroughly enraged by these sect disciples.

A maddened Jiang Chen, a truly enraged man made even Dan Fei's heart palpitate. She knew that the Purple Sun Sect disciples were in for it now.

However, things were a bit strange over the next couple of days. Jiang Chen's name always appeared only when the day was about to end.

There was only three to five challenges worth of time left to him at that time.

Therefore, after five days had passed, Jiang Chen had only achieved 45 successive victories when adding together the 30 from the first two days.

No matter how dense Jiang Chen could be, he could detect that someone must've done something to his name. One day could be deemed an accident, two days could be coincidence.

To be selected only when the day was close to its end five to six days in a row meant that someone was purposefully compressing his time.

They didn't want him to be selected early and complete another frightening round of straight wins.

As long as he was selected late in the day, he wouldn't have much time to issue challenges. He would at most obtain three successive wins before the day was up.

His name would be shuffled in again on the second day.

“Huh! Using these methods to shorten the tempo of my challenges and compress my time, the Purple Sun Sect is truly all powerful huh!”

Jiang Chen wasn’t the sort to swallow insult and humiliation silently. When the day’s contests were over, he made straight for the keeper, Master Fang.

“Master Fang.” Jiang Chen’s gaze was faint as he looked at this expressionless keeper.

“Heh heh, the secular genius, freak genius of the boulder’s heart. 45 successive wins. Not bad, not bad!” Master Fang was rather polite. “Tell me, what do you need?”

“I just want to ask if shortening my time in the ring and making my name appear in the last moments everyday is Master Fang’s wishes or the wishes of some other organizers?” Jiang Chen cut straight to the point.

Master Fang was a bit surprised and looked at Jiang Chen for a while before chuckling, “Are you guessing? Or have evidence?”

Jiang Chen responded noncommittally, “It wouldn’t be hard to find evidence either.”

Master Fang couldn't help but smile as he nodded forthrightly. "I will explain since you know. It is indeed my hand behind this matter."

Jiang Chen was rather surprised, he'd thought that Master Fang would never admit to things.

He creased his brow upon hearing this confession, "Is there a reason?"

"Yes, but it will certainly be different from what you're thinking." Master Fang smiled faintly. "I guess you must think since I'm of the sects, I'm shortening your time to suppress your rise and am indirectly helping the other sect disciples cheat, am I right?"

"Is that not so?" Jiang Chen asked unceremoniously back.

Master Fang sighed slightly, "Forget it if that's what you think. I won't do so starting from tomorrow and treat you fairly. However, young man, have you discovered that although your momentum has been restricted and your time compressed, thus far there is no one who has been able to surpass your results and the speed of your challenges?"

Jiang Chen thought carefully and felt that this was indeed the case.

A thought struck him, was Master Fang doing so not to suppress

me?

“Your advantages are too apparent in the mystic quadrant and since you’re already firmly sitting on number one, why use such exaggerated methods to place first? Why invite so much hate from all sides? The relationships between the four sects and their disciples are complex and intertwined. If your reputation is too great here and travels to the earth and sky quadrants, do you wish to attract boundless enmity before you even set foot into those two areas?”

Chapter 338: Guo Ren Breaks Down

These words made many thoughts run rapidly through Jiang Chen's mind. When he looked at Master Fang again, he saw that the keeper's eyes were clear, without the slightest hint of schemes or duplicity. On the contrary, there was a bearing of perfect impartiality.

Had he possibly mistaken Master Fang's intentions?

Master Fang sighed lightly, "That an ordinary disciple has such talent as yours is truly uncommon. However, it may not be a good thing for you to rise so swiftly as you lack foundations within the sects. As the saying goes, even the strongest will break easily when faced with numerous enemies. It's not necessarily a bad thing to suppress your momentum for a bit."

Master Fang explained patiently when he saw that this young man didn't possess a stubbornly hotheaded temper. He was also doing this out of good intentions to truly succor such a secular genius so that Jiang Chen could develop smoothly and not attract endless oppression in his rise.

With Master Fang's understanding of the sect disciples, if this secular genius hogged too much of the limelight, the sect disciples would think of ways to move against or suppress him if they felt threatened.

Even though Master Fang was one of the sects, he had no desire to see this happen.

Jiang Chen was silent as he bowed, “Master Fang has expended much effort and thought on my behalf, but I have tried to measure your stature by my own desires. Please forgive me if I have given offense.”

Master Fang smiled dashingly, “Good, it’s rare for a young man to have such a demeanor as yours. Remember, a great man knows when to yield and not to yield. I have heard of your grievances with the Purple Sun Sect disciples. I can promise that I will not favor any side. Your old scores can be settled in the ring, and I will absolutely not interfere.”

“You know everything?” Jiang Chen was greatly surprised. He’d thought that Guo Ren had conducted his business completely unknown to anyone.

Master Fang said faintly, “Although I don’t know much, I know the general sequence of events. Don’t worry, no one will make trouble for you if you are able to exact your revenge in the ring.”

Jiang Chen had indeed had his head clouded by enmity over the past couple of days.

His mind cleared as he heard Master Fang’s words.

Indeed, it was not too late if one of noble character took his revenge ten years later.

There was plenty of opportunities within the three months, what was the need to be in such a hurry?

After he took his leave of Master Fang, Jiang Chen had thoroughly calmed down by the time he returned to his residence.

Ever since the events of that night, Dan Fei started to keep a purposeful distance away from Jiang Chen. They always returned to their own rooms after the day and never visited each other.

It wasn't that Dan Fei was putting on airs, but that she knew if she went to his room after this matter, she would distract him.

Dan Fei didn't want to be that selfish. She was even less willing for Jiang Chen to see her in a bad light feel that she was a frivolous woman of loose morals.

……

The Purple Sun Sect disciples who had schemed against Jiang Chen also lived through a torturous existence over the next couple of days. Cheng Lan and the others didn't dare return to the residence at all. They didn't even have the courage to approach.

They were worried that if they returned, they wouldn't even know how they died.

Therefore, they all depended on others for shelter over the next couple of days. Although this was quite irritating, there was

nothing to be done about it.

They wouldn't dare go back no matter how much courage they borrowed.

Even Guo Ren was on edge, much less than Cheng Lan and the others. He was constantly fretting about whether or not he would be selected by Jiang Chen.

It wasn't that Guo Ren was afraid, but that no matter how he thought about things, he felt that this secular disciple was rather mysterious. He really couldn't understand how the effects of the Goddess Smile had been nullified.

All sorts of mysteries abounded on this candidate.

Thus, Guo Ren felt uncertain, and honestly speaking, the other had used one move out of the "Obscure Seal of Life and Death" to bring out 45 consecutive victories — as confident as Guo Ren was, he was aware of the differences between the two of them.

Now that things had developed to this point, he couldn't naively think that the other only knew this one move. How was that possible?

As much as he might lack in techniques, it was impossible for him to only know that one move.

The days of great anxiety passed for the next four to five days.

The anxiety in Guo Ren's heart didn't decrease, but grew stronger instead.

He knew that if he didn't settle this matter, it would always wind around in his heart and become an internal demon.

The more he was afraid of meeting the other in the ring, the more likely this would become an internal demon after days and months of accumulation!

He lost quite a bit of his appetite for food and drink over this.

"No, this can't continue. I will surely break down when an internal demon forms." Guo Ren knew full well that if this dragged on, his own mentality would collapse even if he didn't meet that secular genius in the ring.

The internal demons were unable to be seen or felt, but something incredibly frightening.

Once a thought was born, it was impossible to stop the formation of an internal demon.

One had to eliminate the source of the internal demon in order to fully exterminate it.

"I need to either pull this secular genius into my camp or kill this him. Resolute and effective measures need to be taken to resolve this as soon as possible." Guo Ren was well aware that the source

of his internal demon was from this secular genius.

“From previous experiences, the chances of killing him or scheming against him are all low, unless even stronger senior brothers from the sect descend upon the mystic quadrant to kill him.” Guo Ren knew that he was daydreaming. This was impossible.

“If I can’t’ kill him, I can only use strategies to mollify him and buy him off.”

“This fellow’s temper is stubborn and nasty. He’s completely dismissive of my sect. How easy will it be to buy him off? We’re now as incompatible as fire and water, I would only make things worse if I try to bribe him.”

Guo Ren suddenly thought of someone at this time.

He arrived at the examiners’ section after fifteen minutes and knocked on a door.

There was a Purple Sun Sect examiner instead. Although he wasn’t the main keeper, he was still someone with a bit more influence.

The examiner opened the door and was slightly surprised to see Guo Ren. “Guo Ren, what are you doing here?”

Guo Ren was vexed after closing the door, “Uncle-master Daoyan,

this disciple is in great trouble.”

“What happened?” Uncle-master Daoyan valued Guo Ren quite a bit and thus was filled with expectations towards the latter.

“Everything is because of that secular genius.”

Uncle-master Daoyan sighed, “Guo Ren, if you’re here to ask me to cheat for you and suppress this character, that is likely not going to happen. The four great sects are a mutually restraining and supervisory force on each other in the great selection. I will surely be censured by the other examiners if I abuse public power for my own gains.”

Guo Ren hastened to say, “How would this disciple ask the uncle-master to do such a thing?”

“Then what would you ask me to do?” Daoyan relaxed a bit when he heard that Guo Ren didn’t want him to cheat.

“Uncle-master, I’ve formed a grudge with that secular genius and he’s proclaimed that he’ll have me end up in a state worse than Cheng Zhen if we meet in the ring. I plotted against him first in this matter and so this has already become my internal demon. This disciple is worried that if this continues, the internal demon will consume me.”

Guo Ren didn’t dare play any tricks at this moment and speak candidly.

Daoyan emitted a long sigh after hearing these words, “Guo Ren, ah Guo Ren. What do you want me to say? What did you have to provoke him for?”

Guo Ren spoke, depressed, “I’d been anticipating the title of champion of the mystic quadrant with all my heart, but then some animal comes out of nowhere, throwing a wrench into my plans. Uncle-master, do you think I can endure this?”

Uncle-master Daoyan sighed, “Lack of forbearance in small matters upsets great plans. This secular genius has extraordinary potential and all examiners are expecting him to be the champion. Since this is unstoppable, why be a mantis trying to stop a chariot? If you truly dislike or hate him, why not wait until he reaches the earth quadrant and ask other stronger peers to take care of him? Besides, this fellow is overly dominating and is too fond of the limelight, but doesn’t know the meaning that even the strongest will easily break when faced with numerous enemies. When he reaches the earth and sky quadrants, the premier geniuses there will absolutely not tolerate him. His fall is just a matter of time.”

Guo Ren wasn’t in the mood to listen to this. His only thought at the moment was how he could resolve this internal demon!

“Uncle-master, please give me guidance on how I should react?”

Daoyan was silent for a while and asked, “In your estimations, how much guarantee of success would you have if you faced off against him in the ring?”

Guo Ren smiled ruefully, “To be honest, I had thirty to forty percent assurance of success before the internal demon appeared. But now, I haven’t the slightest bit of confidence.”

Daoyan wasn’t the least bit surprised by this answer.

“How confident are you in ambushing or scheming against him?”

Guo Ren smiled wryly, “I had felt completely assured of success before, but I’d still failed. This fellow is exceedingly odd and I truly cannot obtain a good measure of him.”

“Then this means that you can neither win in a fight or in the darkness. Then there’s only two choices.” Daoyan smiled ruefully.

“Which two? Please shed some light, uncle-master.”

“One, voluntarily admit defeat if you meet in the ring. This is a chance to triumph over yourself. If you can remember the humiliation of surrender and become stronger after tasting defeat, it will be a strengthening experience. However, there is also risk in taking this action. If you admit defeat in the ring, you’re certain to face mockery from all sides. If you cannot endure the jeering, that will in turn become an even more stubborn internal demon and thoroughly destroy your dao heart.”

Guo Ren thought for a while and felt that his dao heart wasn’t that strong. He smiled wryly, “Uncle-master, what is the second

option?”

“The second option is merely a choice, but it’s unknown if it will prove effective.” Daoyan also seemed uncertain.

“Uncle-master, please express your views.” Guo Ren was trying anything in a desperate situation.

“The second choice is that I contact this secular genius privately and tempt him with various conditions to first steady our side with him. The best would be to spend a bit of money to buy him off, appease him, using logic and emotion to close on a deal and neutralize his enmity towards you.”

This was actually the plan that Guo Ren had thought of before, and he’d come precisely to ask uncle-master Daoyan to speak on his behalf.

As an examiner, Daoyan’s presence was more convincing than Guo Ren, and he was even more stronger representative of the Purple Sun Sect.

“Uncle-master, let’s choose the second option. I didn’t bring much to the selection to this time, but I am willing to share my blade of Millennium Brightfire Grass with uncle-master upon our return to the sect.”

Guo Ren also knew that it was impossible to not put forth some principle if he wanted uncle-master Daoyan to try his best.

“Mm, I’ll do my best.”

Guo Ren nodded firmly, “As long as uncle-master can reach an accord with him and stabilize our situation, I will absolutely rally together the other senior brothers to take back all we have lost and more when I reach the earth and sky quadrants.”

Guo Ren gritted his teeth. He’d chosen to temporarily compromise, but he truly didn’t want to. He only wanted to have the situation in hand. With Guo Ren’s personality, once he made it past this hurdle, he would absolutely make the other spit out their bones and flesh for compensation!

Chapter 339: Are You Threatening Me?

“Who is it?

After last time’s lesson, Jiang Chen had set up several lines of defense around the residence. As soon as he felt someone attempting to enter the residence, Jiang Chen was immediately alerted and shouted out.

His body shot out like an arrow to see a figure standing in the middle of the yard. The intruder’s face was covered, only his pair of eyes showing.

“Young friend, perhaps we can chat for a bit?”

An unwelcome guest in the middle of the night likely had unkind intentions. Jiang Chen wasn’t interested in dilly-dallying with him.

“Will you leave yourself, or do you want me to call for the law enforcers?” Jiang Chen frowned.

“Don’t misunderstand me, young friend. I have no malicious intentions. I’m just here on behalf of others to be a mediator and peacemaker.”

“Peacemaker?” Jiang Chen laughed coldly. “Who asked you to pay a visit?”

“Don’t be in a rush, young friend. With your potential, you are destined for great things, why hold a grudge in this mere mystic quadrant? It matters not who asked me to come here today. As an examiner of the mystic quadrant, I assure you that I deal fairly in all matters. I am here today to advise you that taking a step backwards in forgiveness will dispel all ill will, resulting in peace as wide ranging as the open skies.”

“Taking a step back in forgiveness?” Jiang Chen burst out laughing. “If I take a step backwards, they will take ten forward to bully me. Don’t beat about the bush, did Guo Ren ask you to come?”

“Heh heh, young friend is a smart character indeed.”

“Go back and tell him that some bottom lines are not meant to be crossed. Once they are crossed, that conflict will only end at death. I respect you as an examiner, but I trust that this trip isn’t truly an official action. Otherwise, why would you conceal your face?”

“Young friend is indeed sharp minded, I am impressed. He regrets the previous matters as well, and so have asked me to come see if there is any compensation that can be made. Young friend, if you have any requests, feel free to raise them.”

Jiang Chen spread out his hands and shouted, “Shut your trap! You think my principles can be bartered over? Go back and tell Guo Ren that the only thing he can do is to pray that he won’t meet me in the ring. This is all I have to say, I won’t be seeing you out!”

Jiang Chen was incensed. Mediator? Peacemaker?

At the end of the day, it was just all tricks from the Purple Sun Sect! Jiang Chen needed only to think with his knee to know that the masked examiner was someone from the Purple Sun Sect, paying a visit on Guo Ren's behalf.

He also knew full well that these sect disciples' so-called reconciliation was just smoke and mirrors. Their fanged, true forms would reappear after a while and they would deny all knowledge of an agreement.

People like Guo Ren possessed a scorpion's heart and would never sincerely want to make peace.

Besides, the matters of that day had completely crossed Jiang Chen's bottom line. He'd destroyed a girl's innocence with his hands. Although she hadn't said anything, Jiang Chen was well aware what an enormous sacrifice this was to a girl.

Could an innocent girl's innocence be glossed over so easily with such an insubstantial word?

Jiang Chen would never agree to this.

When the masked man saw Jiang Chen speak so assertively, his brow furrowed, "Young friend, is there really no room for discussion?"

Jiang Chen laughed coldly, “Unless he dies.”

The masked man’s tone grew cold. “Die? Do you think this matter would be resolved if he dies? Let me tell you, that would only make the matter worse. Killing a Purple Sun Sect disciple is akin to stirring up a hornets’ nest. Furthermore, Guo Ren is quite popular within the sect. If you kill him, you will face unbounded revenge in the earth and sky quadrants in the future. You have enormous potential, why destroy your own future for a dispute caused by personal feelings and block your path forward?”

Since persuasion had failed, the masked man had resorted to threats instead.

Jiang Chen laughed heartily, “I have my own way, who has the ability to block it? Is my future something others can destroy? A hornets’ nest? What a joke! On the path of martial dao, whether a dragon’s den or phoenix’s nest, all who block my path will be smacked to death!”

The masked examiner had seen arrogant disciples before, but never any as arrogant as this.

He was so enraged that he almost spat blood. He snorted successively in cold laughter. “Good, good, good! It looks like you refuse to repent until you fail completely! I’d like to see how miserable a death that you, a so-called genius, will have in the end!”

“Kid, remember that from today forth, the Purple Sun Sect will

deploy all possible resources to suppress and force you out. Just wait for the Purple Sun Sect's sword of judgement to behead your dog of a head!"

The masked examiner's attitude switched as quickly as flipping the pages of a book as his tone matched his sinister threats.

Just as Jiang Chen had threatened Guo Ren and the others, the examiner was also trying to plant the seeds of fear in Jiang Chen's heart through threats, and try to create an internal demon.

However, Jiang Chen's mental strength wasn't something that trash like Guo Ren could aspire to. His Boulder's Heart was completely immune to this kind of threat.

He smiled faintly, "I'll be waiting. Now, I have two words for you, GET OUT!"

The last two words rolled forth like the spring thunder. The thunderous roar of the two words immediately suffused the surrounding area of the mountain slope.

The examiner's expression immediately changed drastically as he cursed silently, this kid is devious! He didn't dare linger as he sprang up, taking off faster than a hare bounding away.

There was naturally great purpose in Jiang Chen shouting out. He wanted to wake the entire mystic quadrant and the examiners so he could attract the law enforcers.

To put it frankly, he wanted to frame the masked examiner.

He had visited a candidate's residence in the dead of the night and had threatened to suppress him. If evidence of this was uncovered, that was absolutely an enormous disaster and he was sure to be censured by the other three sects.

Therefore, when the examiner heard Jiang Chen's yell, he knew that things were bad and hastened to leave.

At this time, Dan Fei also entered the yard through her door.

"Brother Boulder, your lofty and unyielding spirit is greatly admirable. This person must be an examiner from the Purple Sun Sect. He tried hard and soft tactics to force you to compromise and definitely didn't truly want to reconcile with you."

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "How would I not see through their tricks? What does this mean? This means Guo Ren is afraid."

"Guo Ren has great ambition but little talent, and has no possibility of reaching the great dao. His dao heart is thus weak, it's likely that Brother Boulder's threat has already become his internal demon. At this rate, Brother Boulder doesn't even need to do anything before Guo Ren collapses without even battling."

Jiang Chen agreed and nodded, "Calling in reinforcements, it looks like Guo Ren has exhausted his tricks. I declined his offer

today, so I should likely keep an eye out over the next couple of days to prevent him from leaping over a wall in desperation."

Once an internal demon was formed, it was exceedingly difficult to get rid of. One had to eliminate the source of the internal demon in order to get rid of it.

Jiang Chen was so strong that Guo Ren was in a quandary as for what to do to him. He could only resort to desperate measures to eliminate the source of his internal demon!

A patter of footsteps came from outside the residence as they spoke.

The law enforcers had come in search of the disturbance.

Jiang Chen opened the door, and the group of law enforcers walked in with Master Fang at their head.

"We heard a roar here earlier, was it from you?" Master Fang's tone was quite dignified, as if he didn't know Jiang Chen at all and wouldn't let private affairs interfere with public matters.

Jiang Chen nodded forthrightly, "In response to Master Fang, there was a masked man here earlier who claimed to be an examiner of the mystic quadrant, but was here on behalf of the Purple Sun Sect to threaten me. I ask Master Fang to be the judge of this matter."

Master Fang frowned. “Something like this truly happened?”

“Absolutely, my roommate can bear witness.”

Master Fang looked to Dan Fei. She was unafraid as she met his gaze and said resolutely, “Although we secular disciples have lowly births, we are also not trash to be shoved around by everyone. This person claimed to be an examiner, but stood on the Purple Sun Sect’s side in suppressing us. I’d rather like to ask Master Fang, is this selection really as impartial as the four sects have said it is?”

Master Fang nodded, “Where is everyone else in this residence?”

“We don’t know. They don’t return at night and are like this everyday. We don’t know what they’re up to.” Dan Fei responded.

Master Fang shouted, “Summon all the examiners here immediately!”

Some law enforcers immediately dashed out the door to notify the examiners.

There were roughly two hundred examiners from the four great sects. They quickly made their way here.

As the head keeper of the mystic quadrant, the other examiners were unable to ignore his commands.

“Everyone, these two candidates say that an examiner came here to threaten them. I have only one question—who was so bold as to do such a thing and publicly break the rules of the selection? Who dared privately approach the candidates and threaten them?”

Master Fang was also seizing on this pretext to vent his feelings. He wasn’t of the Purple Sun Sect and naturally would never stand on their side to protect those of that sect.

It was deadly silent at the scene. All the examiners didn’t dare say anything as great waves of emotions rippled through their hearts.

Who was it? Who’d dared been so bold as to openly threaten the candidates?

“Recount what transpired here.” Master Fang encouraged Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen read a trace of encouragement from Master Fang’s eyes and knew that the latter was encouraging him to make a big deal of things.

“I was training in my room just now and heard someone appear in my yard. He said he was here representing the Purple Sun Sect to lobby me. When that failed, he immediately changed his tune to threaten me and said he would deploy all of the sect’s strength to suppress me and force me out. Therefore, I suspect that this person is someone from the Purple Sun Sect.”

Since Master Fang was supporting him, Jiang Chen naturally didn't mind directly roasting the Purple Sun Sect over the fire.

"Kid, don't you slander us!"

"Do you have proof?! Lack of proof means you're framing us!"

"My Purple Sun Sect is open and straightforward, what need do we have to threaten you, a mere secular disciple?"

"There must be someone setting my sect up and purposefully framing us!"

The examiners from the Purple Sun Sect all spoke up in denunciation.

Jiang Chen looked around and locked on one of the examiners. He snorted coldly in his heart, you were cocky and unbridled when you visited just now and only wore a mask. You didn't change your body shape likely because you thought you had me?

Jiang Chen pointed directly at that person, "He's the one."

The person's body shook slightly as he shouted, "Kid, do you know that the crime of framing another is not a small one?"

Jiang Chen laughed coldly, "Stop putting on an act! Before you came, you likely didn't think that I'd blow this matter up so you

only carelessly concealed your face, but did nothing to your body shape. What, you were so arrogant and domineering when threatening me just now, have you turned into a turtle retracting into your shell now and don't dare own up to what you've done?"

This person was indeed uncle-master Daoyan whom Guo Ren had reached out to. He had thought that Jiang Chen wouldn't suddenly use this strange tactic, and just as Jiang Chen had postulated earlier, he was forced to be the passive one all of a sudden.

However, as proud as he was, he also knew that he absolutely couldn't admit to things now.

"Master Fang, this kid is slandering me. I ask Master Fang to punish him harshly and destroy the ill wind that dares besmirch the examiners!" Daoyan was actually filing the suit first, even though he was the guilty party.

Master Fang snorted coldly, "Where were you just now?"

"I was resting in my room." Daoyan responded easily.

Chapter 340: Guo Ren Breaks Down, Jiang Chen Is Champion

Jiang Chen also knew that if this fellow flat out denied his involvement, there was truly nothing Jiang Chen could do about it. However, Jiang Chen didn't want to beat him to death. Even if a crime couldn't be pinned on him, Jiang Chen was happy to pull the examiner's leg for a bit.

Jiang Chen snorted coldly, "You dare commit those actions but don't dare to admit to them. Coward! I don't know who you are, but I hadn't thought about using the rules to bring your crime to light. I only want to tell you that a coward should never threaten others. A coward's threat is the weakest and most useless of all. Remember, I'm going to stir up that hornets' nest of yours. You better go back and pray with Guo Ren that he won't meet me in the ring!"

Jiang Chen made a cupped fist salute to Master Fang after speaking, "Master Fang, since he wishes to deny this, then this becomes a mystery without clues. Please make your judgement."

Master Fang thought momentarily, "It's impossible to judge this matter without a witness. Let it end here."

He mused silently for a bit after speaking and raised his voice again, "I'll say this again. If it's discovered that an examiner has privately approached a candidate, let alone threatened one, the punishment will not be light!"

Master Fang beckoned with his hand after speaking and led the group out.

As Dan Fei watched Jiang Chen's expansive demeanor and carefree chatter in front of the assembled examiners, her heart was tied even more closely to his lofty sentiments and her affections knew no bounds.

This was the truest, most uncommon man in her heart, a real man able to hold up the heavens!

Dan Fei had a vague feeling that, as long as Jiang Chen was present, no matter how weak or strong, senior or junior the others were, they would all be relegated to being Jiang Chen's supporting characters in the end.

This man seemed to have been born to be the main character.

Even if he kept a low profile, even if he purposefully concealed his talents, there were always various fortuitous encounters that propelled him to take center stage.

This had happened time and time again without exception.

Jiang Chen was actually calmer after erupting in open hostility with the Purple Sun Sect. His mind had been previously clouded with hatred, but it was now much clearer.

"Purple Sun Sect! One of my goals in participating in this time's

selection is to stomp on all of the Purple Sun Sect disciples. It looks like this is destiny, and I am fated to feel irreconcilable hatred for them and be unable to even share the same sky!”

“Since this is the case, then come at me! Let me see just how frightening the so-called hornets’ nest of the Purple Sun Sect is, and how perverse their geniuses are!”

Jiang Chen’s personality made him prefer death to submission, and never acquiescing to someone taking a hard line.

Since the Purple Sun Sect had attempted to bully him time and time again, Jiang Chen’s only choice was to resist until the end.

“Brother Xiao Fei, I’m thoroughly breaking with the Purple Sun Sect. I’m afraid you’ll become embroiled into this in the future. Are you…”

“Don’t worry about me. I already made all my preparations when I came here.” Dan Fei waved her hand and said faintly, “It’s late, get some rest.”

Dan Fei walked back into her room after saying this.

When she closed the door, Dan Fei leaned back listlessly on the door. All that calmness and that strength had been an act she’d put on for Jiang Chen.

Her goal was to make Jiang Chen feel that she wasn’t a burden,

so that she wouldn't affect his dao heart.

The only thing was, this kind of pretense was truly very tiring.

However, Dan Fei had no other choice. What else could she do other than this? Could she spend her days in unabashed displays of affection after revealing her identity and allow Jiang Chen to lose himself in her tenderness?

This was absolutely not what she wanted to see.

……

Guo Ren was also suffering greatly in his residence at the moment. He'd completely collapsed when he had learned that his uncle-master Daoyan had failed and had nearly revealed his identity in the process.

His last bit of effort had all been for naught, and it hadn't brought about any effect.

Guo Ren's eyes were bloodshot and his expression ugly as he spat out his words, "A mere country bumpkin who doesn't know how to appreciate the good! Kid, are you forcing me here?!"

A violent light exploded in his eyes. He was obviously formulating some sort of extreme scheme.

Guo Ren's chest suddenly felt tight as he kept thinking, and he spewed out a mouthful of blood. His body softened as he actually fell straight down.

Guo Ren's internal demon had flared up and the flames of his heart had surged up, making him break down where he had stood!

Although the news was kept under wraps, it still traveled quickly, causing the entire mystic quadrant to go crazy!

For the candidates of the other three sects, this was absolutely a most delightful piece of news to see and hear. It was most gratifying, worthy of such widespread jubilation that everyone rushed to tell each other. This was of great satisfaction!

The news of first seed Guo Ren of the mystic quadrant being frightened into forming an internal demon, and how he had been so incensed that he'd spat blood, quickly made the rounds.

Those who had joined Guo Ren in plotting against Jiang Chen mourned the loss of one of their own kind. Like felt for like, and they all felt that this ill fate was about to quickly descend upon their own heads.

The other Purple Sun Sect disciples who hadn't participated in this matter were all shellshocked and all came to ask what had occurred behind the scenes.

The disciples of the other sects were almost unanimously gleeful

in the face of the misfortunes of others, and some even added insult to injury!

Guo Ren had always been tyrannically domineering and had no respect for anyone. Just because he was ranked first in the mystic quadrant, he'd been haughty and self-conceited, always having his eyes at the top of his head.

Now what? How did karma taste?

He'd been so terrified by a secular disciple that an internal demon had formed, and he'd even spat blood. It was obvious that he was crippled for life!

"Such delight, much joy!" Liu Wencai of the Myriad Spirit Sect couldn't help but want to forcefully toss back some cups of wine as he sat in the yard of his seventh residence. He'd been humiliated that day when he'd failed in recruiting Jiang Chen.

Liu Wencai hadn't argued with Guo Ren then because he'd been fearful of Guo Ren's strength as the first seed.

Now that he'd heard of such wonderful news, Liu Wencai was naturally the epitome of elation. He felt that today was the best day ever since he'd participated in the great selection.

The other first level candidates who'd had nothing to do with this were also a bit fearful as they exulted in the misfortunes of others. They weren't afraid of Guo Ren, but of Jiang Chen.

Just where had this mysterious, domineering secular genius sprung out from? How much talent did he have that even the mighty Guo Ren had formed an internal demon and had been so enraged that he'd spat blood?

Guo Ren was absolutely not unworthy of his place as the first candidate in the mystic quadrant. None of the other first level candidates dared say that they were stronger than Guo Ren.

"It looks like even though we're down a Guo Ren, we've gained an even more mysterious, more frightening secular genius. The championship of the hundred challenges in the mystic quadrant is still something that I believe will be tough to obtain."

This was embodied in a sigh from the second residence of the mystic quadrant.

Guo Ren became the laughingstock of the entire mystic quadrant overnight, and the title of the freak genius of the boulder's heart became illustrious on the contrary.

If it was said that his previous, incredible 45 successive wins had placed Jiang Chen at the center of attention, he had now become the mountain within the hearts of the mystic quadrant candidates after the night had passed.

An insurmountable mountain.

Almost all of the first level candidates bowed their heads with resignation in the span of a night.

In this regard, Jiang Chen's momentum met even less resistance. Almost all of the people he selected surrendered voluntarily or put up a weak front, because they knew that if they feigned weakness, they could at least retain face and get off the stage in a respectful way.

An incredible legend of 100 straight wins was born after half a month!

This was a score that surpassed the ancients and galvanized the contemporaries, an absolutely insane record!

Things weren't over yet. All the candidates banded together and requested that the name of the freak genius of the boulder's heart be eliminated from the list of challengers.

Not only did they not wish to be selected by Jiang Chen, they didn't want to pick him either.

Whether it was the challengers or the ones to be challenged, none of them wanted to meet the secular genius in the ring.

This seemingly ludicrous petition forced the examiners to seriously consider it.

After requesting feedback from all of the candidates, the final

result was—

His position as the champion of the mystic quadrant was accepted, but the caveat was that he be struck from the list of challengers.

This was a change that Jiang Chen hadn't anticipated.

He hadn't thought that he'd turned into an existence that everyone revered, akin to a tiger that all feared. But since everyone admitted his position as the champion, he was happy to take a break and have his name dashed off the list.

Otherwise, having to appear at the Hundred Challenges Arena everyday and wait to be called upon was indeed a restriction for someone who had completed the hundred challenges early on.

Finally, all parties reached an accord. Jiang Chen was bestowed the title of the champion of the mystic quadrant, and his name was eliminated from the list of participants in the Arena.

All the candidates breathed a sigh of relief when this outcome was announced, particularly the Purple Sun Sect disciples. They felt their spirits revive again.

After this unlucky harbinger of doom left the lists, they would never have to fear accidentally selecting him again.

To Jiang Chen, this meant that he had temporarily graduated

and was a free man.

Without the unexpected factor that was Jiang Chen, the matches of the mystic quadrant finally started proceeding normally. However, eye-popping performances also decreased.

There were no longer crazy phenomena such as ten or twenty successive wins.

Jiang Chen would visit the Arena now and then to keep an eye out for Xiao Fei's matches. However, he discovered with resignation that Xiao Fei seemed to be purposefully keeping her distance from him.

A month into the matches, Jiang Chen discovered that Xiao Fei's movements became even more untraceable. She would avoid him whenever Jiang Chen appeared.

Three months finally passed in the end.

In the final announcement of scores, Jiang Chen was the undisputed champion. The slots from second to tenth were almost all filled with first level candidates.

Except the seventh.

The seventh was Jiang Chen's neighbor Xiao Fei.

This meant that of the ten spots from the hundred challenges in the mystic quadrant, two of them had been filled by secular disciples. Even the sect disciples were amazed at this outcome. They were resigned to the outcome but unwilling to actually accept it.

As for the other eight secular disciples, their scores had been more ordinary. Four of them ranked in the last ten and were going to be demoted to the yellow quadrant come next week.

Jiang Chen and the other top ten candidates were to enter the earth spirit quadrant at that time.

Jiang Chen wanted to excitedly congratulate Xiao Fei when he returned to his residence, but he found the place empty and that she had long since moved out of her room.

Xiao Fei had left the premises!

Jiang Chen was stunned. Now was the time to celebrate her being in seventh place. Where had she gone now?

He looked all over and returned back to the Arena, but couldn’t find any trace of Xiao Fei at all.

When he still couldn’t find her at nightfall, Jiang Chen began to feel a twinge of an uneasy premonition. Had the Purple Sun Sect made a move on Xiao Fei?

Alarm bells began to clang in Jiang Chen's mind as he sped towards the examiners' section.

Chapter 341: Jiang Chen's Sudden Insight, The Examiner Comes To Visit

"What? He left?" Jiang Chen was petrified.

When he'd come to Master Fang's to ask him to launch an investigation, he hadn't thought he'd receive this response.

Master Fang nodded. "Indeed, he came to find me just before the results were announced today. He didn't ask about his ranking, but only requested to depart from the Eternal Spirit Mountain."

"Did he say why?" Jiang Chen was quite depressed and felt a bit lost.

"No." Master Fang laughed wryly and sighed softly. "This person is quite strange. I told him that his ranking was seventh and that he would be moving to the earth quadrant, but he couldn't seem to care any less!"

"Was he possibly threatened by someone?" Jiang Chen couldn't help but ask.

Master Fang thought for a moment and shook his head, "It didn't seem like it. His emotions seemed quite calm, but his desire to leave seemed quite strong. It didn't look like he'd been threatened by anyone. It rather looked like he'd seen through everything and was asking to leave of his own accord."

Jiang Chen's mouth was full of a bitter taste as he was stunned senseless in that moment.

From beginning to end, he'd only known that the other was called Xiao Fei, and was a girl dressed as a guy.

If it hadn't been the accidental events of that night, he might've only thought that it was a pity that seventh place candidate had left just like this.

But after the events of that night, there was an apologetic feeling that remained in Jiang Chen's heart. Although she'd kept saying that she was the one who had dragged him down and caused him to fall victim to a plot, so that night had been something she'd owed him, Jiang Chen wasn't the sort to be unappreciative when he'd benefited handsomely.

"Forget it, she must have her own thoughts if she'd wanted to leave. We will meet again if we're destined to in the future. If we're not, then there's nothing to be done about that as well."

Jiang Chen sighed in his heart and attempted to comfort himself that way. He wasn't the loveless or faithless sort and still felt a bit lost on his way back.

However, he didn't know that a thin figure was standing amidst the trees and shrubbery, keeping an eye on him as he made his way back from the examiners' section.

This figure was Dan Fei, and her body was trembling lightly at the moment, her nose sniffling slightly as she was overcome with emotion as well.

“Jiang Chen, the fact that you’re so anxiously searching for a chance acquaintance means that you’re a loyal and faithful true man. However, I must go now and I can’t accompany you through your adventures in the earth quadrant. I hope… all goes well for you, that you can hack through the waves and billows and step on all those cocky so-called sect geniuses beneath your feet. I believe that all geniuses within the sixteen kingdoms are dim and lackluster in front of your radiance.”

Dan Fei sighed lightly and only turned resolutely to walk down the mountain when Jiang Chen’s back had vanished in the distance.

……

Jiang Chen returned to the residence, standing in the hallway for a moment and watching the water flow beneath the eaves of the roof.

He remembered that Xiao Fei liked to stand in this hallway and watch the fallen flowers being carried away by the waters.

Suddenly, a moment of insight flashed through his heart as he began to laugh heartily.

“Us cultivators have long had our fates set, why should we worry about troubles of our own imagining? Xiao Fei has left, but I remain. These are all the paths that we’ve chosen, why sorrow or fret?”

Jiang Chen had a sudden insight and his feelings abruptly lightened. After his enlightenment, he felt as carefree as the winds and clouds as all his emotions flowed away on the surface of the running water.

“Indeed, everyone has their own path. If our paths intersect, then we will meet again. If they do not, then we will not walk together.” Jiang Chen’s feelings abruptly calmed down after his comprehension.

He laughed heartily and turned to walk back into his room.

Another brisk wave of laughter also sounded from the outside at this moment, “Young friend Boulder, for what do you laugh so heartily? From the sound of this laugh, it’s one of great understanding and insight.”

The owner of this voice was Master Fang of the mystic quadrant. They’d only just parted, but here he was, paying a visit to Jiang Chen?

“That Master Fang is deigning to lower himself to come visit me, my little yard is graced with your presence.” Jiang Chen smiled as he stepped forward in welcome.

Jiang Chen was actually quite admiring towards Master Fang.

He was at least one of the few characters who were impartial and just amongst the sects.

“What, you don’t welcome me?” Master Fang chuckled.

“Not at all, not at all. Please, come on inside Master Fang.” Jiang Chen welcomed Master Fang into his room.

The two sat cross legged as Jiang Chen didn’t put on airs either, bringing out a jug of Nine Magnificence Dew wine and taking out two cups of old vines, pouring wine into both of them.

The look in Master Fang’s eyes changed immediately when the wine was poured. He cried out in shock, “This... this is the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine?”

“Master Fang is indeed someone who recognizes value. Please.” Jiang Chen raised his cup.

Master Fang’s eyeballs were about to fall out of his sockets in his stare, his eyes firmly glued to the cup.

His mouth was slightly pursed and his nose kept sucking in air, his demeanor immediately changing greatly, as if his very soul had been lured out of him.

Jiang Chen smiled inwardly to see this. Here was another lover of wine, someone who likely was even more of an alcoholic than vice head Shi of the Myriad Treasures Palace.

“Master Fang.” Jiang Chen called out again.

Master Fang suddenly came to his senses as he smacked his head and started laughing, “Hahaha, I hadn’t thought, hadn’t thought at all that I would have the fortune to drink this wine again in my life.”

He lifted the cup of old vines in both his hands as he spoke. His manner was as if the most reverent believer worshipping the image in his heart, an absolutely pious posture.

Master Fang threw back his head after draining the cup, narrowing his eyes and shaking his head from side to side slightly. He was tasting, evaluating, and conversing with the wine.

Indeed, to true wine lovers, they would feel that a good wine had a spirit to it, so their wine tasting was akin to conversing with good wine.

Jiang Chen looked at Master Fang’s form. He was completely serious and the epitome of reverence. Jiang Chen couldn’t help but become grave and respectful as well.

Although Master Fang also loved alcohol as much as life, his bearing was so much better than vice head Shi’s. Vice head Shi

loved drinking as well, but his was a type of crude and unappreciative drinking.

Master Fang was an elegant alcoholic. His current state of shaking his head back and forth was similar to one of a poet writing sentimental verse to the moon and air, full of a learned and refined air.

Master Fang sighed after a long while as a look of gratitude shot out from his eyes. His next moves made Jiang Chen's mouth drop open.

Master Fang actually stood up to bow deeply towards Jiang Chen!

"Master Fang, this cannot do." Jiang Chen hastened to get up and return the gesture.

"It can, it can." Master Fang sighed in succession. "You've let me drink a wine that is as marvelous as though it'd been crafted by the gods. It is a natural order of heaven and earth that you accept my gesture."

"There are many who have a love of wine in the four great sects, and some of them often gather together to discuss the fine wines they've drank. One of them happened to mention the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine before, but no one else present at the gathering had tasted it before. That person was quite proud in that moment, and everyone else's splendor was suppressed by him. This wine had almost become our internal demon after that gathering. Therefore, when you took out the jug and the cups of

old vines, I voice these words subconsciously."

Master Fang spoke of an old matter between him and the wine.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but laugh. "So it turns out this has happened before."

Master Fang laughed, "I'll have something to talk about if we meet again. That person only sipped that little half cup previously, how could he experienced what I enjoyed today? Hahahaha!"

Master Fang's expression was animated and he was quite excited, clashing with his previous image of a stern examiner.

Jiang Chen smiled ruefully, thinking that alcohol was indeed something that could cause one to unmask themselves and reveal their true personality. Master Fang was rather a forthright man.

"Since this is the case, Master Fang should drink some more so that you have more to talk about when you gather again." Jiang Chen smiled. "If you don't mind, please take the entire jug."

Master Fang laughed heartily, "There are no gains without effort, you're bribing an examiner!"

This was naturally a joke. The tests of the mystic quadrant had concluded by now and Jiang Chen was the champion. There was nothing about this that would be a bribe.

Jiang Chen smiled, “There’s been a saying since ancient times of setting up a banquet to thank one’s teacher or master. Although Master Fang isn’t my teacher or master, you have helped me understand some theories and thus are more than worthy of this jug of wine.”

Master Fang was rather open as well, “Then I shall accept this with a thick face.”

To a lover of wine, whether they were the crude type or the elegant kind of alcoholic, they always lacked resistance to beautiful wine.

When Jiang Chen saw him put away the wine carefully, he laughed, “Master Fang must have some words of wisdom to impart to me in traveling here. I am all ears.”

“You, kid, are truly a freak. All the disciples in the mystic quadrant now call you a freak and are incredibly happy to hear that you’ll be leaving the area. They’re acting as if they’re sending off a god of plague, wanting you to leave as quickly as possible.” Master Fang joked.

Jiang Chen was at a loss for words, “Am I really that unpopular?”

“Alright, all joking aside, let’s be serious now. I had indeed wanted to chat with you this time.” Master Fang was quite forthright. “You won’t be coming back to the mystic quadrant after your departure. We may not have any interactions in the

future. I have been aloof all my life, so much so that only a few people are capable of entering my eyes. You, young man, are one of the few."

Jiang Chen listened intently. He knew that Master Fang was opening his heart up to him in interacting with him. The two were more like friends in this moment, and not of examiner and candidate.

"My personality is one that doesn't like young folk who keep a high profile. However, you are different. I've always felt that you are hiding a great power within you. You seem high profile, but you're different from those arrogant sect disciples. I had been quite dismissive of your initial string of victories, but then felt that I had underestimated you upon further thought. Different people undertaking the same matter can be cocky for some, and confident for others. I slowly saw confidence in you, and not overweening arrogance."

Sincerity shone in Master Fang's eyes.

"Young man, I won't recruit you on behalf of the sect. I've come here only to give you a word of warning that the human heart is incomprehensible in the four sects. You must be on your guard in the earth and sky quadrants. Some people will go to all measures possible when they scheme."

Jiang Chen felt slightly touched. That a sect elder who had no relationship with him and nothing to ask of him could speak thus was truly a difficult thing.

Master Fang was indeed a warm hearted and compassionate person. This kind of honest personality was a rarity within the sects.

Jiang Chen spoke seriously, “I will take Master Fang’s pointers to heart.”

“Kid, you likely have your own thoughts even without my pointers. I’m rather anticipating to see the day in which you soar to the skies.”